

In the Jungle

by

britbojangles

Kurt/Blaine || AU || NC-17

With his life in shambles, Kurt moves back home to Lima to start again. While trying to finish his degree, he takes job at an animal shelter, working under the insufferable, yet stunning, Dr. Anderson. Things go awry when they try to mix business and pleasure. The pair must decide if their relationship is worth dealing with ill-fated events and an immovable object named Keenan.

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Prologue

It was a tale as old as time. Kurt was cramped in the front seat of his sedan trying to straighten his clothes. He told Keenan time and time again that he had an interview, but that didn't save Kurt's collar from being grabbed at or his tie from being messed up.

With a groan, the young man adjusted the black tie. It felt simple; too simple. Kurt Hummel was accustomed to vibrant colors and extravagant clothing. Not anymore. Times were hard and cut backs were necessary. The first thing that went was Kurt's wardrobe. All he had left were jeans, slacks, dress shirts, and scrubs. *It's just as well. I don't have anywhere to go.*

He checked his teeth and eyebrows -cleaned and trimmed to perfection-before stepping out of his car. Lima No Kill Shelter. It wasn't Marc Jacobs or even a high end department store, but it was something. It was something he was qualified to do and it would handle their bills while he and Keenan were staying with his parents.

Kurt walked into the shelter and towards the reception desk. There sat a tiny, dark haired girl fiddling with her phone. The young man stepped closer to the desk and cleared his throat. "Ummm...excuse me. I have an interview with Dr. Anderson. My name is Kurt Hummel."

The girl, Rachel if the name tag pinned to her scrubs was correct, looked him up and down for a moment before pointing to a seat on the far end of the room. Tired after a night without sleep and irritated by the morning wrestling match he had with Keenan, he shot her a scowl and stomped towards the chair. If he didn't need the job, he would have left. Her attitude was unnecessary. *Rude!*

After sitting for almost an hour, Kurt stood and walked back to the reception desk. His blood was boiling and the way Rachel popped her gum as she played with her phone wasn't helping to calm him down.

"Excuse me." He began, receiving a groan in response. "I had an interview almost an hour ago and I'm still waiting. Is there an issue?" Unintentionally, his voice rose as he spoke.

He didn't realize it until a throat cleared behind him. When he turned, he was greeted by one of the most beautiful creatures he'd ever laid eyes on. From the toes of his Sperrys to the broad shoulders covered by his red, crew neck sweater, he was gorgeous.

The beautiful features didn't stop at his shoulders. He had the fullest lips Kurt ever had the pleasure of seeing and his eyes were a comforting shade of golden honey. "Is everything okay?" He asked.

Kurt, who was having difficulty forming words, nodded. *Everything is fine now.*

"Are you sure? It got so loud that the dogs started barking." Beautiful Honey Eyes responded.

Embarrassed, Kurt's face flushed. "Ummm...sorry. I've just waiting for my interview for over an hour and..."

Honey Eyes cut him off by holding up his hand. "Kurt? My goodness, I'm sorry." His demeanor changed in an instant. His smile grew quickly. "I had no idea you were here or I would have been out ages ago. I'm Dr. Anderson." He shot a pointed look at Rachel; one that said 'we'll talk about this later', before crossing the room and offering his hand. Kurt took it readily and gave it a firm squeeze.

"It's quite alright." Dr. Anderson smiled and continued to shake Kurt's hand. He didn't pull away until Rachel spoke up.

"I'm terribly sorry, *Blaine*," she annunciated his first name, letting it be known that she was privileged enough to get to say it, "I forgot to let you know he was here."

The doctor wasn't buying it. "I'm sure." His tone bit like a rabid dog. Kurt watched as she sank back into her office chair. He didn't look away from her until he felt the doctor's eyes on him. "I'll understand if you have to reschedule, Kurt. We've wasted enough of your valuable time for today."

Kurt had a mile long list of things to accomplish that day but, 'becoming employed' was his most pressing matter. "I can stay if we can do this now."

He watched the doctor nodded. "Of course. Just follow me." They headed towards the door that the doctor entered from. Just before reaching the doorway Kurt saw Dr. Anderson turn to his receptionist. "Being that we've already wasted enough of Mr. Hummel's time, I hope you can understand why we don't want any interruptions during his interview."

The doctor turned back around, triumphant smile intact, and led Kurt to a tiny office. It was literally the size of a walk in closet. *I would know.* Crammed inside were an oak desk and three chairs – one behind the desk and two in front of it. That was it. Honestly, that was all that would fit. "Please, have a seat." Dr.

Anderson motioned to one of the seats in front of the desk before taking his own behind it. It wasn't like other veterinarian's office Kurt ever sat in. There weren't flashy, expensive statues of animals lining the book cases; instead, there were plaques and pictures of the doctor with various animals. Instead of pictures of family and friends on the wall, there were posters of patched up animals saved by various organizations.

"So, Kurt, can I call you Kurt?"

"You have been since I got here." The doctor stilled momentarily, his smile faltering. Kurt noticed it and chuckled. "I'm kidding. Kurt is fine with me. I've been Kurt for twenty – five years."

The doctor let out a sigh of relief. "You had me going there. So, Kurt, I've gone over your resume a million times and I can't see any reason not to hire you. I checked your references and they were superb. Your former employers had nothing but amazing things to say about you. Honestly, if you can just tell me why you want the job and we can get your paper work started."

Kurt stared at him with wide eyes. "Really? Ok..ummm... well..." He wasn't expecting it to be so easy. "Well, first, I love animals."

"Everyone loves animals." The doctor mumbled.

A bit startled, Kurt started again. "Ummm...well, when I was little I had a cat and.."

Dr. Anderson held up his hand. "Come on, Kurt. Tell me why you honestly want this job. I've interviewed five people for this job and I get the same song and dance. I'm not trying to sound abrasive, but I just want an honest answer. I've heard a million 'when I was little' stories and I just want an honest response.

Kurt shot up an eyebrow. "Honestly, I want this job because I need it. I need to make a living while I finish my degree at OSU. I'm qualified to do this and, while it's not my first choice, it'll keep food in our stomachs and a roof over our heads. It'll take care of us until I finish."

"Who's us?" *Really? That's what you got from everything I said.*

"I have a five year old, Keenan. We're staying with my parents right now because our lives went to shit in New York." Dr. Anderson nodded. "Was that honest enough for you?"

The doctor smiled and pulled open one of his desk drawers. He began to fill them out. "These are the forms I need from you. The top is a drug screening form. Take that to Lima Labs and they'll take a urine sample. The others are basic: emergency contact, tax forms, insurance forms." He handed the young man a manila folder and pulled a post it off his stack. He jotted something on it and folded it up. "This is what I can pay you."

Kurt grabbed the paper and unfolded it. It wasn't a great salary, but it was enough. Anything was more than nothing; which was exactly what he was making at the point in time. "Looks good."

Again, Dr. Anderson smiled. "Great. Can I count on you to be here early Monday morning? It'll be a half day. We'll finish up some paperwork and go over the job expectations."

"I'll be here." Kurt responded, standing from his chair. He held out a hand to the man and waited for him to take it. He wasn't waiting long. Dr. Anderson grabbed his hand and gave it a firm shake. Just when the young man –newly employed young man- attempted to pull away, the doctor gave it a squeeze.

"Can I be frank with you, Kurt?" He asked.

Kurt smiled. "That depends, can I be Sammy?" *Lame joke. That's a lame joke.*

Dr. Anderson didn't seem to think it was lame. Once he caught on, he let out a hearty laugh. Once it subsided, he smiled. "Anyways, I just wanted to say that if someone asks you why you want a job, they always want the truth. Honestly, I had a tech applicant with far more experience than you lined up for this job." Kurt's face fell. This guy didn't want him for his expertise; he wanted him because he felt sorry for him. "But, she refused to tell me the truth. She went on and on about a pet named Scooter – first he was a cat, then she was a dog- and I wasn't into it. I even asked her to just give it to me straight. She wouldn't. When I realized that I wasn't going to get what I wanted out of her, I started looking again. That's when I found your resume. You left these little notes in the corner of your paper that made you a real person, not a robot. That and the fact that I appreciate your honesty are the reasons why I'm hiring you. Those are the things that are important to me; important to this place. I need real people to work here and I need those people to be honest. You're both."

Kurt smiled. "Well, thank you for that. I'll remember that when I interview for my next job."

"I hope that won't be too soon. You haven't even started here yet."

"It won't be."

"Well, we'll see you Monday. Have a great weekend, Sammy."

As he headed towards the door, Kurt turned and smiled. "You too, Frank."

The newly employed veterinarian technician walked into his father's garage with a smile plastered on his face. "Dad, Keenan." He called as he sidestepped passed his father's working employees. "Dad! Keen! " He tried again.

"What?" It was his son. *He knows better than to answer me like that!*

"Excuse me, young man!" Kurt called back, still stepping through the throngs of workers. Moments later, he heard the pitter patter of tiny footsteps headed towards him. Just behind the footsteps, he saw his father trying to catch the child.

Kurt threw open his arms and scooped the little boy into them. "Sorry, Daddy. I meant to say 'what, sir'." Kurt shook his head but didn't say anything. They were making progress. He looked down at his son and smiled. Keenan was the closest thing Kurt had to a twin. With the exception of his hazel eyes and his blonde, curly hair, they looked identical. "Did you get your job, Daddy?" The little boy asked.

Burt showed up a moment later. He instinctually keeled over and tried to catch his breath. *That kid is fast.* "Yeah, son," He began once the light headedness went away, "did you get the job?"

Kurt smiled at them – two generations of Hummels before his eyes- and nodded. "Yeah. I start Monday." Before Kurt knew it, Burt had his son and his grandson gathered in a tight hug.

"I knew you'd get it. I'm so proud of you, kiddo."

"Me too, Daddy. Me too."

The twenty – five year old did his best to hold his emotions. Hearing his father and son say they were proud of him was the closest he ever got to a heavenly experience. It was magical and amazing in ways

that he barely understood. "Since we knew you were going to get it, I had Carole whip up your favorite dinner. Wanna tell him, Keen?"

The little boy started dancing in his father's arms. "Whoot whoot. Taco salad. Oh yeah." Kurt giggled as his son continued to wiggle and giggle in his arms.

"Awesome." And it was. Not only was he having dinner with his family –one that he loved more than anything- but he was also gainfully employed by a fairly attractive doctor. Things were looking up. He couldn't wait to see what happened next.

Chapter One

"Get. Off. Of. Me." Kurt growled from beneath his pillow. After a weekend spent playing with his son and niece at the park, he was beat. He refused to accept that it was Monday morning already. But alas, it *was* Monday, and he had to wake up. Even if it wasn't for work, Keenan wouldn't let his father stay in bed if his life depended on it.

Gently, Kurt nudged his son off his back and rolled out of bed. He sat with his feet dangling over the edge and stretched his tired limbs. His back cracked and his knees creaked. *I'm so old.* "Daddy! Daddy! Hurry up! Grandma made you a special breakfast. You have to eat it before you leave." Keenan shouted excitedly as he bounced on the bed behind Kurt.

It was usually something that Kurt didn't allow but he was making an exception. Everything was an exception before coffee. When the bouncing vibrations became too much, Kurt hoisted himself up and padded across the tiny room. Immediately, he thanked his stars that he'd showered the night before. If he dressed quickly, he would have enough time to get Keenan ready to go to the shop, eat a quick breakfast, and grab Starbucks on the way to work.

He dug quickly through the closet that he shared with his son. It was nestled on the far side of their shared room. That was another reason Kurt hated believing that the morning had come so quickly. Since he and Keenan shared the tiny room in the basement, it wasn't difficult for one to hear the other. Kurt, ever the light sleeper, heard his son every time he climbed out of bed to use the restroom and he heard every time his son sighed in his sleep. The situation wasn't ideal, but they were making it work.

I guess that's what happens when you move back in with your parents. Since Finn, Quinn, and their daughter, Beth, never officially moved out –and because Dad charges them an arm and a leg for rent- they got dibs on living quarters. They chose the entire first floor. Burt and Carole occupied the top floor and Kurt and Keenan were left to the basement. Neither minded terribly. The walls were thick, so the sounds of Finn and his high school love arguing about who knew what were muffled.

"Put these on, Keenan." Kurt threw the clothes he picked out for his son onto the little boy's bed and then began to grab his own. For the sake of saving time, he stepped into the closet and dressed there, nearly tripping over his own feet when he tried to pull his powder blue scrub bottoms on.

Eventually, once he was dressed in his scrubs and New Balances, Kurt stepped out of the closet –*how fucking poetic*- and smiled. Keenan was perched on his bed, dressed as expected, attempting to tie his shoes. "Want some help?" Kurt asked as he crossed the room.

The little boy shook his head. "I can do it." Then, with his tongue sticking out from between his teeth, he tried again, and again, and again. After a number of times, he finally asked for help. Kurt, still saddened by the prospect of his little boy's ever growing independence, agreed eagerly.

Once the boys were ready, they went upstairs to eat breakfast with their family. "You ready for your first day, Kiddo?" Burt asked as he reached for a piece of bacon. He was surprised when his grandson smacked it back. "Come on, Keen. Not you too!"

"Daddy said your heart got attacked once. He said all the bacon and gas station salami did it. I don't want them to do that again, so no bacon for you!" Burt's mouth fell open. *What the hell?* Burt asked himself as he grabbed for a piece of wheat toast.

Kurt smiled at his son. *That's my boy.* "I'd love to stay and watch my son kill your food related dreams, Dad, but I have to leave." Burt and Keenan smiled at him. Both were proud of Kurt for starting a new job so quickly after the relocation.

The young man stood from the table and moved towards his father. He hugged the man's shoulder, thanking him for watching Keenan until he found a more permanent child care option. He then flitted around the table to his son. Keenan stood up in his chair and threw his arms around his father's neck. "Bye, Daddy. Have a good day at work. Make new friends. Don't talk to strangers."

Kurt smiled. "Yes, sir. And I'll tell you about all the animals I find." Keenan's eyes lit up. He was an animal lover in every sense of the word. In New York, they had three cats and a puppy. Nathan wouldn't let the pets relocate to Ohio, however. *It's funny that he had no problem letting Keenan and I go, but he refused to let the animals go. Shame.* "Bye, Buddy. I love you."

"Love you too, Daddy."

Kurt's morning at work wasn't as pleasant as the morning he had at home. When he arrived at the shelter, Rachel informed him that Dr. Anderson was running late and he wanted Kurt to clean the kennels. It wasn't something Kurt was used to, but he did his best. He had an amazing time playing with the animals, allowing them out of the kennels long enough to stretch out their bodies, but placing them back promptly. Since Dr. Anderson hadn't arrived yet, he wasn't sure if he was supposed to let them out.

As Kurt finished the last kennel, one with a scrawny Jack Russell in it, he heard the door behind him open. He quickly turned and was met by a smiling Dr. Anderson. "There you are, Sammy. I've been looking for you forever." He beamed as he crossed the room. "I decided to get everyone coffee in honor of your first day and it took a bit longer than expected. Then, I realized that I didn't know your order, so I had to guess. I hope I got it right."

The tech raised an eyebrow towards his superior as he took the cup. "What are you doing in here anyways? I was going to show you this when I gave you the grand tour later."

"What do you mean? Rachel told me that this was where I was supposed to start. She showed me in and even brought me the cleaning supplies. I was shocked since she seemed so stand – offish the last time we met." Kurt watched intently as Blaine's face fell. *What did I miss?* He thought as he played with his coffee cup.

"I'm so sorry, Kurt." *Apology. That's not good.* Kurt, who ultimately missed his opportunity to get Starbucks that morning, took a sip of his drink. The taste exploded in his mouth. It was rich and creaming and...*my coffee order.*

"Shit! You got my order!" He shouted. Blaine tilted his head to the side, obviously confused by his employee's outburst.

"I'm sorry."

"No. Stop saying that! You got my order right!"

"I think we're talking about two different things here." Blaine replied, still confused. "I was saying sorry because Rachel is the one that supposed to clean the kennels and you...?" He trailed off lamely, hoping Kurt would finish.

Damn her. Strike two, Rachel. "I'm thanking you for the coffee. I'm also flailing because you got my order right. I was with the same guy for six years and he had never got my order right." Blaine shot him a self satisfied smile. The tech rolled his eyes at the man. *I never knew cocky looked so nice on someone.*

"I'm glad to hear it, Sammy. I'll have to bring you coffee more often if it's going to make you flail." Kurt shook his head and continued to drain his cup. "Let's go into my office and talk about what your actual duties are. There is a pissed off guy in the waiting room that's insisting that we pay him for the strays he brings in, so I think we'll let her deal with that since she decided it was necessary to make you do her job." Kurt nodded. He liked that idea. He liked that idea a lot.

Kurt's first day went well. He and Dr. Anderson, Blaine as the man insisted that everyone call him, spent their time in the office, going over the day to day. Kurt was advised of his actual duties and what was expected of him. The pair then returned to the kennels. Blaine took his time introducing Kurt to each of the animals and allowing them to become familiar with the new technician. (*"Of course I named them all, Sammy. Would you want to walk around without a name? Would you want someone to call you 'guy' all the time? Neither do they."*)

One thing that struck a chord with the tech was the obvious love Dr. An-Blaine had for the animals in his care. He treated them all as if they were his own pets. He petted them when they wanted him to and held them when they whined. They were like his children. It warmed Kurt's heart to watch Blaine, someone who truly cared, helping in such a way. He wished more people would do the same.

With his half day over, Kurt bid adieu to his new colleagues, including Rachel, who shot him a disapproving look. When no one else was looking, he flicked her off and headed out the door. Whatever her issue was, Kurt wasn't going to let it bring him down.

Kurt's first month at the shelter went swimmingly. He and Blaine became fast friends between working on the animals and staying out of Rachel's line of fire. One day, while they were stitching up a cat, the doctor turned to his tech and smiled. "Do you have any lunch plans for today?" He asked as he petted the animal's dull fur. He was nearly starved and in dire need of food. They had to finish stitching him first, however. He was in one hell of a cat fight and he'd come out worse for wear.

The tech shook his head. "No. I usually bring lunch but I forgot today. My son was being particularly difficult this morning."

"Great!" The doctor beamed. "Well, not great that he was being difficult, but great that you don't have any plans. I was hoping we could go out to lunch. You've worked here for a month and I feel like I barely know you. That doesn't sit well with me." Before Kurt could answer, Blaine turned back to the animal they were working on.

"I was thinking San Jose's. They've got food to die for."

"I haven't even agreed yet." Kurt replied, handing his boss another utensil. They were nearly finished. Thank goodness. All he wanted to do was scoop the poor baby into his arms and hold him until his wounds healed and he was ready to be adopted.

"You will, Sammy." Blaine replied, a hint of arrogance in his voice. The tech scoffed as he watched Blaine finish the procedure. It was amazing to watch the doctor work. His hands treated everything as if it was fragile and he worked with a sense of compassion that could not be matched. "Alright, we're all done."

Kurt smiled down at the animal. Despite being awake for his stitching, he was calm. He hadn't moved an inch while Blaine was fixing him. Logically, Kurt knew it was because he couldn't feel the area that was being patched, but that was neither here nor there. "What do you want to name him, Sammy?" The doctor asked as he tossed his gloves in the garbage can.

An exasperated breath left Kurt's mouth. "Really? I told you we can't name all these animals, Blaine. Let the people that adopt them give them names." He insisted. They had this conversation each time a new animal came into the shelter.

With a wicked grin on his face, Blaine shook his head. "No! They all deserve names, Kurt. Would you want to walk around without a name?"

"And again with this!" Kurt sighed, throwing his hands in the air dramatically. "What happens when a little girl comes in here and she wants to name him Presley? What are we going to say to her? 'Sorry, his name is already Pikachu'." He mocked.

Unfortunately for him and the point he was trying to make, Blaine's eyes lit up. "Pikachu. It's perfect!" Kurt's shoulders slouched as he watched his boss carefully pick up the cat. "You want your name to be Pikachu, don't you? Yeah you do." He cooed.

Meow

"You hear that, Sammy. He loves it." Blaine gingerly placed the animal in a comfortable spot and watched him fall asleep. "We'll check on him when we get back from lunch."

"I still haven't agreed to go out to lunch." Blaine rolled his eyes and began to wash up. "Are you just going to ignore me, Frank?" The doctor nodded and continued scrubbing his hands. "Fine! We'll go to lunch, but you're paying."

"Here are your waters, sirs. Are you ready to order?" The waitress asked as she placed the glasses on each man's respective side of the table. Blaine nodded. He was ready to order that morning. I'm starving. *I hope I'm not pregnant. No. I haven't had sex in like....more than nine months.*

"I'm ready. Are you ready, Sammy?" Kurt rolled his eyes but chuckled none the less. He was starting to wonder if Blaine remembered his first name or if he would forever be 'Sammy' in the doctor's eyes.

"Yeah."

"Great. I'll start with the queso con jalapeno, and then follow with a Mexican salad. Afterwards, I'd like a shrimp fajita with the beans, rice, and a second Mexican salad. Do you guys serve like half Chimichangas here? I'd like one but not the whole thing." The waitress nodded and wrote down the order.

Kurt was stunned. *Holy Finn. He eats like a freaking horse.* "And you, sir?" She asked, turning to the tech. He was so stunned by Blaine's large order that he nearly forgot what he'd decided to get.

"Umm...I....I'll just have a grilled chicken salad." He advised as he refolded his menu and handed to her. It was Blaine's turn to be stunned.

"Wait! What? No! That's like...you have to eat more than that!" Quickly, he turned to the waitress and smiled. "He'll also have a vegetarian fajita."

"No I won't. I can't eat all of that!" Kurt insisted.

"Take it home to your son then. He'll love it."

"If I take it home to him, then I have to take one home for my niece too and I'm not doing all of that."

Oh no! "Make that two vegetarian fajitas." The doctor shouted as the waitress stepped away from the table. Kurt was flabbergasted.

"No. I...fine. I'm paying my part of the bill. I won't have you just....ordering food for random members of my family."

Blaine shook his head. "Get real, silly. I'm not letting you pay. I asked you to come eat lunch with me so I pay. And I can order food for whatever random family members I choose." Kurt leaned back and crossed his arms over his chest. Blaine was being a child in his eyes. *I can order food for whatever random family members I choose.* His internal voice mocked. "You look like a little kid, Sammy. It's adorable."

You act like a little kid. The thought made Kurt laugh. It felt like they'd reached a wavelength that was all their own. "You wanted to get to know me. What do you want to know?" He finally asked.

The doctor nodded emphatically. "Everything. Tell me about Kurt; Kurt outside of work. What kinds of things does Kurt like? What kinds of things does he do with his son?"

"I'm not Sammy anymore, Frank?" The tech asked, raising an accusing eyebrow.

"You're Sammy at work. I know Sammy. I want to know Kurt. Like, you said you're back in school. What are you going to school for?" The waitress chose that moment to bring Blaine his appetizer. The doctor took a moment out to thank her before turning his attention back to his guest.

"Fashion. I used to be quite the fashionist-o and I like the idea of people wearing clothes that I've designed. Obviously that will be difficult here, but I hope to make it into that world one day." Blaine nodded along. He seemed to be genuinely interested.

"So," he began between bites of his appetizer, "one day, I could be wearing clothes designed by you. I think that's really cool." Kurt smiled shyly. He liked the idea as well. At the moment, he was trying to figure out

which outfit he would put Blaine in. He had a few sketches at home that would be perfect. Corduroys. *I really want him in corduroys.* "Tell me something else. This is getting interesting." He probed.

"Well...umm...you know about Keenan." Kurt began. He was promptly cut off by his friend.

"Yes. Tell me about your son. You said he's five? He's about to start Kindergarten?" Kurt nodded. Both were true.

"Well, Keenan is...my best friend –which sounds kind of pathetic, but I don't care- he's the most open minded, sweetest little boy I know. Sometimes, like this morning, he can be a spit fire, but he mostly means well. He...God, I'm about to be one of those dads that just goes on and on about their kid. I really don't want to bore you."

As quickly and genuinely as possible, Blaine shook his head. "Don't feel like that. I want to know. I love kids. I love meeting parents. Just like every child is different, every parent is different. I don't have kids, so I don't know. But...it's fun to hear about all the things kids get into."

So, Kurt continued. "Well, he's definitely unique. He's a very 'free love' kind of person. He's always hugging people and kissing people. I just...he doesn't care. He doesn't see anything other than loving whomever he's with. And he will love them to pieces if they let him."

"He sounds adorable." Kurt beamed. In his eyes, Keenan was every positive adjective that Kurt could think of. "Are you going to be bringing him by one day? Maybe he'll find a pet to take home. As you know, we have tons of eligible pets that need adopting."

The tech chuckled and shook his head. "Absolutely not. We've got a cat now and I'm not sure if Keenan and I can handle another. I also don't know if my parents would be too keen on the idea of us bringing home another family member."

"So you're staying with family?" Blaine asked. By this point, their meal was being placed on the table. Kurt nodded. *Yep. Staying with family. Kind of pathetic, huh.*

Kurt shrugged as he twirled his fork around his salad. "Yeah. We...yeah. We stay with family."

"I'll add that to the short list of conversation topics that take the smile off Kurt's face. I won't bring up again." Kurt watched as he slunk back into his chair and began to devour the food in front of him. *Great, now I made him feel awkward. Smooth move, Kurt.*

"It's not that...it's just...a lot led up to us coming back here from New York and...it's still kind of a sore subject." The doctor nodded.

"I get it. I think we've all been there a time or two. But...just...if you do ever want to talk about it, I'll be there to listen." Kurt smiled.

"Sounds great."

"Good!" Blaine's mood was visibly lighter. "Now, let's eat."

"I'm not eating all of this."

"Bullshit! I paid for this! You're eating!"

"We need to go boxes; we've been here for like 2 hours."

Blaine rolled his eyes. "Everything is fine. Rachel has my number if she needs me. Now, sit back and enjoy your food." Just as Blaine advised, Kurt leaned back and took a bite of his salad. It was delicious.

Chapter Two

Keenan wasn't sure what happened. One moment he, his father, and his Grandpa Burt were getting ready to walk into Target to shop for school clothes and supplies and the next, his father was crying and apologizing. It happened so quickly that the five year old barely had time to react. Luckily, Grandpa Burt was there. *He knows what to do.*

The little boy watched from the backseat as his grandfather patted his dad on the back. "It's not a big deal son. He doesn't care." Keenan then watched with wide eyes for his father's reaction. "It's his first year of school. I'm sure he's more concerned with making new friends than he is with where his clothes come from." Grandpa Burt wasn't helping much. With each word, the little boy heard his father's sobs grow in volume.

"He should care." His dad sobbed. "He's never had to get clothes from Target before. It makes me feel like a failure. I've failed him."

Keenan realized quickly that they were talking about him. His daddy didn't want him to wear clothes from Target. *I don't know why. Target is awesome.* Wanting to make his father feel better, the little boy spoke up. "I don't mind, Daddy. Target is awesome."

It didn't help. Keenan watched as his father's body slouches over the steering wheel at his admission. "Don't say things like that, Keen." He sobbed.

Keenan looked to his Grandpa Burt for help. He didn't want to upset his father, but he wanted him to know that things would be okay. Besides, clothes weren't as important to him as the Transformers backpack he'd been eying for weeks. That was the reason he didn't mind getting his clothes from the department store. They were the only place in town that sold the backpack.

"I know it's difficult to handle when you can't give your kids what you think they need, I've been there." Keenan wasn't sure what he needed but he knew he wanted that backpack. "But sometimes you've got to settle for doing your best. Keenan doesn't care. Do ya, buddy?" On cue, the little boy shook his head.

"See, he doesn't mind. So buck up and let's go get your little guy some clothes and school supplies. We gotta make sure he's well prepared for Kindergarten." Keenan saw his grandfather wink through the rearview mirror. He offered a smile in return. *Good going, Grandpa.*

He watched as his father's heart wrenching sobs turned into light sniffles. "Are you okay, Daddy?" He eventually asked. As much as his heart went out to his father, he really wanted to go into the store. His seatbelt was already undone and he was sitting on the edge of his booster seat. He couldn't wait to get into the store. Unfortunately, he had to wait. His daddy would want to 'fix himself up' before going into the store.

"Yeah. I'm fine." His daddy replied as he wiped his nose with the tissue that Grandpa Burt offered him. "Give me a second and we'll go inside. Sorry about this, guys." He sniffed.

Keenan watched as his grandfather waved a dismissive hand towards his son. "Forget about it, son."

"Yeah, Daddy." Keenan mirrored his grandfather's gesture by waving his hand just as dismissively, "Forget about it."

For the first time since his father's Equinox pulled into the Target parking lot, Keenan saw a smile spread across his father's face. "You two are ridiculous."

"But you love us."

"I do."

"FINE! FINE!" Kurt was at his wits end. An hour into shopping and he was done; plain and simple. "We'll get the backpack first. Okay? Are you happy now, Keen?" He watched as his son nodded enthusiastically. *He better agree.* Kurt thought. After an hour of whining and complaining, Kurt was finally giving in. Usually he wouldn't do so without a fight, but he had a headache and he needed a break.

Burt, who watched his son and grandson argue from the sidelines, stepped in. "There's a Starbucks at the front of the store, son. Why don't you go check that out and I'll take Keenan to get his backpack." Kurt sighed in relief. That sounded amazing.

"Is that okay with you, son?" He did his best not to sound condescending. He loved his son with all his heart, but sometimes the little boy worked his last nerves. Once again, Keenan nodded enthusiastically. Kurt did his best not to squeal. Coffee. He was going to get coffee....alone....without a child in toe....*Can you feel my excitement?*

Kurt watched as his father and son headed towards the backpacks. Once they were out of his sight, the tech traipsed towards Starbucks with a smile on his face. The line was unbearably long, but that was neither here nor there. A few minutes in line was long enough to calm his nerves and ready him for yet another round of trying to pick out school clothes for his son.

Luckily, Kurt wasn't waiting long. The staff was efficient, so he was giving his order before he knew it. Or he was trying to. Just as his mouth opened to speak, he was cut off by the person behind him. *Asshole!* "He'll have a Grande nonfat mocha." *Wait, I know that asshole.* Quickly, Kurt turned. Just as he suspected, it was Blaine. "I'll also have two medium drips." Blaine shot him a warm smile before stepping up to pay for all three drinks. Kurt stood by, a questioning look on his face.

After Blaine paid, the pair made their way to the end of the counter. Kurt was the one to break the silence. "Thank you for buying my coffee. I...ummm...what are you doing here?"

"Am I not supposed to be here?" The doctor asked as the couple in front of them grabbed their cups. Kurt flushed a bit –*shit, where did that come from*– and offered a shrug of his shoulders. He had no idea why he didn't expect to see Blaine in line for coffee. The doctor bought Starbucks for the office every morning. Of course he would be at one of the dozens of Starbucks in Lima.

"It's not that. I just....I was hoping to avoid you. Well...not just you...everyone. I wanted to avoid everyone because..." He motioned towards his clothes. His jeans were looser than he liked them, but they were great for chasing Keenan around the store if the boy got a wild hair about himself and decided to run off. Then there was his shirt; an old Abercrombie t-shirt that he grabbed out of clean clothes just before running out the door. Lastly, there was the oversized cardigan sweater than hung loose off his lithe frame and clashed starkly with his t shirt. "....I assumed no one would be at Target this early, so I kind of threw on whatever."

Blaine, dressed in his form fitting khaki shorts and Ralph Lauren shirt, smirked. *Bitch!* The doctor's smugness was frustrating at times. "You always look great, Kurt. I don't know why you wanted to avoid people." The tech rolled his eyes at his boss. If Blaine Anderson, DVM, was anything, he was courteous.

"Blaine!" The barista shouted. The pair turned towards the man and gathered their drinks.

"Two drinks? You're looking for one hell of caffeine high!" Kurt commented as he took a sip of his drink. He watched as his boss shook his head.

"One is for my friend. He likes to drink complicated coffee and my mind couldn't handle it before I had my own cup. So, he got what I got." Kurt did his best not to be disappointed. So what if he'd formed a slight crush on his boss over the past few weeks. It didn't mean anything. So what if Blaine had friends that probably slept at his house the night before and then joined him for coffee early on a Saturday morning. It was his life. He was allowed to have overnight, sex friends. *Oh God. What the hell am I thinking?*

"Early morning coffee buddies after a *long* night." Kurt accused after another sip of his drink. *Smooth, Hummel.* Blaine's eyes went wide at his words. He looked shocked and a bit confused.

"What? NO! God no. He's more of a 'call me at 2 am because he's wicked wasted and needs a place to crash until he finds his keys; which are probably in his car so we'll have to call a locksmith' friend. I've known him since high school." To say Kurt was relieved was an understatement. Blaine's description was too detailed to be a lie in the tech's opinion. "Speaking of..." Kurt noticed his boss looking over his shoulder. He quickly turned. *I wish I hadn't done that.*

Walking towards them with a smirk on his face, was a tall man in sunglasses. If Kurt was the same person he was at sixteen, Kurt would have described him as cool. From his Hollister hoodie down to his flip flops, he looked cool; with the exception of his jean shorts. *I can't look at the jean shorts.* "Hey, Bas. I got your coffee." The doctor shouted, making the man cringe.

"Mmm....." The man grunted in response. He strutted towards the men and grabbed the cup from the vet. Instantly, Kurt felt inadequate. The man was tall and muscular in ways that he wasn't. The man took a sip before turning to Kurt. "And who are you?" He asked in a voice that made Kurt never want to speak again.

"This is my new tech, Kurt." Blaine offered. Sebastian nodded and gave Kurt a once over.

Eventually, the doctor held out a hand to the tech. "Hi, Kurt. I'm Dr. Sebastian Smythe. It's nice to meet you." His smile was a bit too bright for the tech's liking and the fact that he was a doctor made Kurt feel the size of an ant. Being the polite man that he was, Kurt took his hand despite his insecurities.

"Nice to meet you, Dr. Smythe." They shook hands for an acceptable period of time before pulling apart. "Well, I'd love to chat but I've got to get back to my dad...and Keenan. I'll see you Monday, Blaine." He offered each man a nod before walking away. He couldn't wait to get out of there.

"I see you got your coffee." Kurt smiled at his father as he held the cup up in acknowledgment. Indeed, he had gotten his coffee. "Great. We got the backpack, so let's get the show on the road." The three Hummels went through various racks in the children's section, trying to find clothes for Keenan to wear to school. It was as frustrating as any shopping trip the three took together. When Kurt held up a shirt or pair of pants that he liked, Keenan shot them down. He claimed they were too dressy for school. Likewise, when the little boy held up a flimsy t-shirt or elastic waist pants, Kurt shook his head. *My son is not wearing elastic waist pants.*

They went back and forth for what felt like hours. "I said no, Keenan." Kurt shouted. His wits no longer had ends. They were gone, along with his sanity. "We've discussed this before. You can't wear white shirts because they clash with your skin and you always get them dirty. I'm not saying it again." The little boy huffed and crossed his arms. "I don't care if you're mad."

Burt tried not to laugh as the scene unfolded. Kurt and Keenan were quite a pair to watch. They both had heads made of stone and tongues sharp as knives. Their disagreements made for a great show in Burt's opinion. Posted against a clothing rack with his arms crossed over his chest, the eldest Hummel watched his son and grandson argue over clothes. *I don't miss those days.*

He remembered standing with Kurt in the middle of a department store, shortly after Lizzie's death, and arguing with him over clothes. It went a lot like the scene in front of him was going. Back then, Kurt took the Keenan approach. He would show his father clothes and Burt would turn him down. Kurt, much like Keenan was doing now, would then argue his case. That was where the similarities stopped. Burt never actually listened to Kurt's side of things. Too afraid to be the dad that let his son go to school in a pink dress shirt and sensible heels, Burt always shot his son down. At least Kurt listened to Keenan's argument. *He's a better man than me in that respect.*

He continued to watch the two argue. For a moment, Keenan seemed to have the advantage. He was rounding the corner to his closing argument when they were interrupted. "We meet again." A voice sang from the distance. The three Hummels turned in its direction.

"So we do." Kurt replied, a slow smile creeping across his face. He looked between the doctor and....the other doctor before turning back to his family. "Keenan, this is my boss, Dr. Anderson. Blaine, this is my son, Keenan." Blaine's face lit up. He'd never seen a picture of his tech's son. It was amazing how similar they looked. With the exception of their hair and eye color, Keenan was a spitting image of his father.

The doctor took a knee in front of the child and extended his hand. "Hi, Keenan. I'm Blaine. How are you?" Keenan took the doctor's hand and gave it a firm shake. *Damn those Hummels have a firm grip.* Blaine thought as the little boy introduced himself.

"It's a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Blaine. Are you shopping for school supplies too? Daddy and I are. School starts Monday, ya know." Kurt shook his head as he stepped forward to pull his son away from his boss. If he didn't, the little boy would talk his head off.

"I'm not shopping for school supplies. We're actually just grabbing a few things. Oh..." He motioned for Sebastian to step forward. "This is my friend, Sebastian."

"Dr. Smythe." The taller man corrected as he extended his hand to the young man. Keenan seemed hesitant to take it. No one was sure why until the little boy spoke.

"Dr. Smythe, are you wearing jean shorts?" Keenan asked as he took in the man's attire. *Oh no.* Kurt thought, willing his feet to move. Unfortunately, he was glued to his spot and he knew what was coming next.

Sebastian looked at his shorts and then back towards the boy. "Yes, young man, I am."

"Oh....." The four men watched as the little boy examined the shorts, "Dr. Smythe?"

"Yes."

"My daddy said that the only people that wear jean shorts between the ages of ten and thirty are whores. Are you a whore, Dr. Smythe?"

Kurt, absolutely mortified, shrieked. "Keenan! You can't....you apologize to Dr. Smythe right now!" He shouted. *I should really learn to watch my mouth. He repeats everything.* "I'm so sorry, Dr. Smythe. I'm so...."

He didn't stop speaking until he heard Blaine's chuckle, the same low chuckle that erupted from his lips each time Kurt said something to piss Rachel off. When he looked around, he noticed that his father and Sebastian were laughing as well. "Come on, guys. Don't encourage him."

Sebastian shrugged. "Don't worry about it, Kurt. He's just a kid."

"A kid that needs to learn to watch his mouth." Kurt turned his attention to his son. "You and I are going to have a serious discussion when we get home." He shook his finger at his son as he spoke. *He knows I mean business when I shake my finger.*

Keenan was confused. Literally confused. *What did I do? He says it all the time. Why can't I?*

"It's no big deal, Kurt. It's just...don't worry about it." Blaine offered. Kurt continued to apologize until the two groups went their separate ways. *Great! I have no idea how I'm supposed to face him again on Monday.* He thought glumly as they finished their clothes shopping.

"Stop fucking laughing, Blaine. It's not funny!" Sebastian shouted as they headed towards Blaine's car. Ten years of friendship with Blaine should have taught him that he could only take the veterinarian in small doses. An hour here and a half hour there was it. He never learned that lesson though; especially not the previous night. Against his better judgment, Sebastian called his longtime friend to pick him up from the bar. Then, he spent the entire morning paying for it. *Fuck my life.*

"But it is!" Blaine shouted between bouts of laughter. When they reached his black 7 Series, the veterinarian unlocked the doors so that he and Sebastian could climb in. He continued to laugh.

"Why is it funny? Some kid just called me a whore!" Sebastian shouted, slamming the door behind him. That caught Blaine's attention. He wasn't angry with the child, or with Kurt, he was angry that Blaine thought the situation was funny.

"It's a new car, Seb! Don't slam the doors. And you're just mad because that kid just called you out for what you are. I love you to death, man, but you're a whore. You will literally fuck anything you can get your hands on."

Sebastian shook his head. That wasn't true. "I've never fucked you."

Blaine nodded his head. That was true. "That's because I have self-respect, unlike some people. You live for entitlement. You act like you're entitled to have sex with everyone and then you do it. That's a whore." The young man put the car into drive and began to navigate the parking lot. As their conversation ran through his head, a theme arose. "Speaking of entitlement, why did you continue to introduce yourself as Dr. Smythe? It made you sound like an ass."

"Does it bother you that I introduced myself as Dr. Smythe? Half the time, you introduce yourself as Dr. Anderson, so you're just as much of an ass as I am." Another truth. Blaine often asked people to refer to him as Dr. Anderson. Not Kurt, however. From the moment they met, he knew he wanted the young man to refer to him as Blaine. *I wonder why.*

Sebastian wanted to know as well. "And since we're on the topic," his friend began, "your tech called you Blaine. Rachel Barbra Bitch at least calls you Dr. Blaine most of the time. What was up with that?"

"I..."

"Dude!" Sebastian shouted, causing the veterinarian to slam on the breaks.

"What? What happened?"

"I just realized that you never let your employees call you by just your first name. You make them all call you Dr. Blaine because you like to overcompensate for your height and your presumed tiny dick."

"That's not tr-"

"But you let this guy....and his kid, call you Blaine. That can only mean one thing." Blaine waited. He wanted to know what great conclusion his friend came up with. "You like him." Focusing solely on the road, Blaine didn't respond. He didn't like Kurt. Did he? He wasn't sure. Kurt was a great guy with an amazing personality and a killer sense of humor, but he was also a father that was fresh out of a supposedly bad relationship. Blaine wasn't sure if he could handle he fall out from that.

"No I don't." He finally answered. He flicked on his turn signal just before turning into the bar parking lot. They needed to try to locate Sebastian's keys before wasting money on a locksmith.

"Yes you do. You like him but you're hesitant. I get that. He has a kid after all."

"No I don't. Now get out and look for your keys."

"Yes you do." Sebastian retorted. The pair climbed out of the car and began the search for Sebastian's lost keys. "You like him and you want to play house with him and his kid."

"No I don't."

"Yes you do."

"No I don't."

"Yes you do."

Blaine tried to ignore his friend, but Sebastian refused to let up. He went on and on with his theory until the veterinarian finally shouted, startling nearing passersby. "No I don't."

"No you don't."

"Yes I do....wait...goddammit!"

"I knew it!" Sebastian shouted, all searching halted in that moment as the cardiologist reveled in his win. "I knew you liked him. I saw you guys when you were getting coffee. You were all 'hey, Kurt. I love the way your lips wrap around the edge of that coffee cup'. And he was like 'oh, Blaine, watch me fellate this coffee cup.'." Sebastian mocked. Blaine rolled his eyes and returned his eyes to the ground.

"None of that happened, Sebastian." The veterinarian sunk down to his knees and began to feel around the ground for his friend's keys.

"Maybe not, but you guys were thinking it. On top of that, you paid for his damn coffee...with my credit card. You had balls to do that, so I know there is something going on there."

A shiny object caught Blaine's attention. He thanked his lucky stars because it was the distraction he needed from his friend's ridiculous scenario. Just below the driver's side tire, lay Sebastian's keys. Blaine quickly grabbed them and tossed them towards his friend. "There. Now you can go home and leave me alone about this because nothing is going on."

"Mmmhmmm..." Sebastian didn't seem convinced. "Say what you want now. I understand; work ethics and what not. Just make me a promise. When you start pounding his alarm, make sure you call me with details." Blaine watched as his friend climbed into his car and drove away. *Idiot.*

Later that night, while Blaine was laying in bed watching Dr. Dolittle –*obviously this is my favorite movie*- a thought crossed his mind. It was about Kurt, oddly enough. Unlike his usual thoughts about Kurt, this thought wasn't about how amazing scrub pants made the tech's ass look and it wasn't about the way the back of Kurt's top slid up, exposing the tiniest bit of skin on the man's back, when he leaned over to grab something. Instead, his thought was about the incident at the store.

"Move, Pikachu. I need to get my phone." The cat stared at him with uninterested eyes. Pikachu did that a lot; it was part of the reason Blaine chose to adopt him. Well, that and the fact that he fell in love with the animal the second Kurt named him.

Frustrated, the doctor reached over the cat, towards his night stand. As quickly as he could, he scrolled through his phone book, looking for Kurt's number. He needed to tell him something. *10:59. Oh...not good.* Kurt had a child, so it probably wasn't a good idea to call him so late.

A text. I'll send him a text.

Just realized that your son told me that he school starts Monday. You can't work on his first day of Kindergarten. You need time to cry over the fact that he's growing up too quickly. We'll see you at work on Tuesday. – Blaine.

Chapter Three

Just realized that your son told me that he school starts Monday. You can't work on his first day of Kindergarten. You need time to cry over the fact that he's growing up too quickly. We'll see you at work on Tuesday. – Blaine

A smile stretched across Kurt's face as he read Blaine's message the next morning. More than anything, he wanted to be home when Keenan got home from his first day of school. He didn't want to ask for time off, however. Luckily, a slip of his son's tongue earned him a day off from work. His paycheck would suffer that pay period but it was worth it.

Monday morning came quicker than expected. Not only was it Keenan's first day of school, it was also Kurt's. He was going back to school after years of being away. The thought pressed against the back of his mind as he dressed his son for school. He wasn't nervous, he was anxious. After two years of tech school, he knew what to expect in the classroom. That wasn't the issue. The issue was the thought of starting over from scratch. His degree didn't exactly transfer easily into fashion.

"I don't want to wear that shirt." Keenan pouted just as his father pulled the red polo shirt over his head. It was the last thing Kurt wanted to hear. He'd spent all evening trying to pick out the perfect outfit for his son to wear for school, just have the little boy shoot his choice down. *No. Just no.*

Kurt stared down at his son with a scowl on his face. "We're not going through this today, Keen. You're wearing what I tell you to wear. This is not up for discussion." He watched as his son crossed his arms over his bare chest and scowled back. "I'm not kidding, little boy. You're wearing this shirt if it's the last thing you do. Now hold your arms up so I can help you into it."

Keenan shook his head defiantly. "No. I want to wear my Batman shirt with the cape!" The little boy growled. Kurt was stunned.

"You got that shirt when you were three. It's too small. You're not wearing that to school." Keenan continued to refuse to wear the shirt and Kurt continued to demand that he did. After an intense, yet brief wrestling match, Keenan ended up in the shirt that his father picked out and Kurt ended up with a smile on his face.

"Do you want me to walk you to your classroom?" Kurt asked. He was already going to do it, but he wanted his son to feel like he had an option in the matter. He saw his son shake his head in the rear view mirror. "Too bad, buddy. I'm taking you in to meet your teacher."

"Awww...Dad!" Keenan whined. "We already met Miss Pierce. I'm a big boy now. I can go to her classroom by myself. Promise." Kurt sucked in a hesitant breath. *Nope. Not gonna happen.*

"Sorry, buddy. It's better if I go with you. I don't want you getting lost."

"I won't." Keenan shouted. "I swear I won't get lost. I'll be fine. Please, Daddy, please." Whining turned to shouting and shouting turned to pleading. Keenan knew he wasn't going to win the argument. *It never hurts to try.*

"Sorry, honey." Kurt wasn't. "I have to talk to Miss Pierce about something, so I'll be walking in with you." Kurt parked at the far end of the parking lot –it was the closest he could get to the building due to first day congestion- and shut off the car.

"What do you have to talk to her about?" Keenan shouted. His father's head shot quickly, causing the boy to shrink in his seat.

"Grown up business. Lunch...money....naps....stuff. Just stuff." Kurt didn't need to speak to his son's teacher but he needed an excuse to walk into the school with the boy. Keenan huffed and shook his head. His dad never stuttered. *He's lying.* It was just as well. He *was* a little scared and it *would* be nice to have his father's hand to hold.

The building was huge- Baby Hogwarts as his father referred to it- and crowded. There were children scrambling in all directions with their parents scrambling just as hurriedly behind them. As they walked through the school, Kurt noticed how many children were clinging to their parents for dear life. It made him proud; not that the children were clinging to their parents but because his son was not. Keenan held his head high as he walked through the school; clinging only to his father's extended pinky finger. *I guess he is a big boy. When the hell did that happen?*

As they walked down the Kindergarten hallway, Kurt saw children crying and begging their parents not to leave. He saw teachers trying to herd the children into their respective classrooms and parents trying to

keep their cool until they were safely out of public view. "Keenan, it's so nice to see you again." Father and son turned to see the smiling face of Miss Pierce nearing them. Her blonde ponytail bounced as she walked and her smile widened when Keenan waved at her. "Are you ready for your first day at school, buddy?" Keenan nodded enthusiastically. *So ready.*

"It looks like you're in good hands, Keenan. I guess I'll just....go." Keenan and Miss Pierce smiled and nodded. It was time for him to go. Kurt pulled his son into a tight hug and whispered supportive words in his ear. When he stood back up, it was with tears in his eyes and a lump in his throat. His little boy was growing up too quickly.

"Bye, Daddy. Have a good day. I can't wait to see you when I get home." The little boy shouted as he headed towards the classroom. Miss Pierce hung back a moment as he blended into the sea of children.

"Bye, son. Make new friends. Don't talk to strangers." Kurt whispered as he backed away.

"There is a parent's party in the parking lot. If you bring your cat, they'll let you cry with them." The teacher said before heading towards her classroom, leaving the young father standing utterly confused in the hallway. *I don't even know where to start with her.*

As he walked back down the hallway and out of the building, Kurt he didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Whether to sob with the other first timers lining the hallway or to laugh at the more experienced parents pushing strollers as they yelled their joyous goodbyes towards elder their children. Who said his son was allowed to grow up? *Not me.*

Kurt cried and ate ice cream most of the day. The pattern continued up until it was time to get his son from school. The drive was too long yet not long enough. What if his son had a horrible first day? *What if he comes home in tears just like I did on my first day?* Kurt shook the thought out of his head. Keenan was far more adapted to life than he was on his first day of school.

His fears came back tenfold when he saw Keenan walk out of the school. He looked sullen. "How was your first day?" Kurt shouted when his son was close enough to hear.

Keenan sighed as his teacher handed him off to his father. "This boy, Timothy, who sits next to me didn't want to be my friend. I even offered to let him use my crayons, but he said no." Kurt's face fell with his son's as they walked towards their car. *That's no fun.*

"That's his loss. I'm sure you made lots of other friend's though." He exclaimed in an attempt to brighten his son's mood.

"I guess. But then, all these *girls* kept asking to play with me. They wanted me to push them on the swings and they kept chasing me around the playground. I kept saying no thank you but they didn't listen. They were annoying." Kurt lifted his son into the car and buckled him in. Once they were on the road, the young father tried not to smirk as he son told the horrific story of his afternoon with Sidney, Taylor, and Mikayla, the little girls that wanted to be his *friends*. "....and Mikayla kept trying to hold my hand, Dad. I was like 'no thank you, Mikayla. I don't want to hold your hand'." The little boy whined on their way home.

"Oh no!" Kurt droned. "I'm so sorry about that. It must have been awful."

"You have no idea, Daddy. That's why I like hanging out with boys. They don't want to hold my hand. They just want to wrestle and eat. Girls like to play boyfriend and girlfriend. I don't want to be anyone's boyfriend *or* girlfriend."

"I hear ya, kiddo. I don't want to be anyone's boyfriend or girlfriend either."

The Hummels and Hudsons listened attentively as Keenan and Beth told the stories of their days. Keenan couldn't seem to stop talking his horrific encounter with the girls and Beth couldn't stop talking about her new bff '*who wears my same shoe size, loves Justin Bieber as much as I do, and wants to have sleepovers all the time*' Amanda. The family smiled and nodded at each story. The group was relieved that the children had a mostly eventless first day.

Once his stories were finished and dinner was over, the two watched television together. The tech had an hour or so left until he had to leave for his own first day and he wanted to spend that time with his son. "I fed Kel again, son. I thought we had an agreement." It wasn't the best conversation to have before leaving for classes, but it was one that needed to be had.

Keenan sighed and curled his body into his father's side. He knew what was coming next. "I'm sorry, Daddy. I forgot." He watched with pitiful eyes as his father's head shook back and forth.

"I've told you that he's your cat, so he's your responsibility. Don't make me regret getting him for you. I can easily take him to work and have Dr. Anderson give him to a little boy that won't forget to feed him." Speaking of Blaine; Kurt pulled out his phone to send the doctor a message. The day before, he was so excited that he forgot to thank his boss for the time off.

I'm so rude. Thank you so much for giving me today off. I owe you one. – Kurt.

The little boy groaned. "I won't. I promise. Please don't give Kel to another little boy. I'll feed Kel when I get home from school tomorrow. I won't forget again." Kurt smiled and kissed his son's hair. His threat was empty but Keenan didn't have to know that.

"One chance, kid." Keenan nodded, curls bouncing as he did so, before turning his attention back to the television. Moments later, Kurt's phone buzzed.

Don't worry about it. How did his day go? – Blaine

Be still my beating heart. In six years, Nathan never asked about Keenan's day. It was refreshing in a frightening way to have another adult –other than my family of course- care about his son's day. As quickly as he could, he responded.

With the exception of the little girls that wanted him to be their girlfriend and the little boy that refused to be his new bff, he had a great day. –Kurt

I have to hear this story tomorrow. Rachel is glaring at me and you have your own class to get ready for. Have a great first day. See you tomorrow. – Blaine.

Kurt couldn't help but smile. Blaine, Dr. Anderson -*whatever*- asked about his son's day and remembered that it was his first day of classes. If he wasn't adamantly refusing to be someone's boyfriend –*or girlfriend* – then Blaine would be his first choice as a contender for his top title. Unfortunately, with so many things going on in his life, a boyfriend was not an option. He was trying to rebuild his and Keenan's lives from scratch. Having another person to think about would complicate matters. "You better get going, Daddy, or you're going to be late on your first day." Kurt checked his watch and jumped off the couch. His son was right. He had thirty minutes to get to class or he'd be late. Kurt hated being late.

"Mind your grandparents. I'll see you when I get home. Love you, son."

"Love you too, Daddy." The little boy shouted as he watched Sandy try to teach Squidward karate. Kurt smiled at his son before heading out the door. He couldn't wait to get home so he could tell his son about *his* first day of school.

Keenan smiled as his father left. *Kids these days. Always late for something.*

Kurt took a seat at the table at the back of the room. He was a 'back of the room' kind of guy. He unpacked his materials quickly and waited patiently as the other students began to enter. Two caught his attention immediately. A tall brunette with a skeptical look on her face and a feisty looking Latina entered the room only moments after he did. "I'm just saying, Santana, I think that girl was into you. You should have given her a chance." The Latina rolled her eyes in her friend's direction as they made their way towards the back of the room.

"She may be into me, but she's can't handle this." She responded. The girls continued towards the back of the room, only splitting up when they reached the table Kurt was seated at. The two made their way around the table and pulled out the chairs positioned on each side of the young man. He tried not to make his shock evident. There were empty seats all around the room but the two women chose to sit next to him. Now I know how Keenan felt.

The two plopped down in their seats at the same time. "You always say some girl can't handle all of that." The brunette commented. "That's why you spend all your nights alone. Shame shame!"

"Whatever, Whitley." The Latina spit out her name as if it were the seed of a supposedly seedless grape. She leaned against the desk, invading Kurt's space, as she spoke. "You're one to talk about spending nights alone. When was the last time you had dick?"

"Around the same time that you last had a girl go down on you after you went down on her." The girl shot back triumphantly. Kurt leaned back in his chair, away from their line of fire. They were brutal. "Suck on that." The girl snapped her finger before leaning back in her seat and turning her attention towards the front of the room.

Kurt sank uncomfortably back in his chair. Moving would be too obvious, so he was doomed to a class of sitting between the girls as they bickered back and forth; or so he thought. "I like your shirt, Catfish. It screams 'I can't think straight, let alone dress straight'." *That's my cue to leave.* As quickly as possible, he began gathering his things.

Whitley noticed and quickly spoke up. "Wait. Don't go. That's just her way of saying she actually likes your shirt. If she didn't, she would have left it at 'I like your shirt'."

"That's very '*Mean Girls*' of her." Kurt quipped as he laid his materials back down on the table. Whitley nodded. She knew.

The brunette stuck out her hand to the tech as he reclaimed his seat. "I'm Whitley. That's Satan...I mean Santana." Kurt turned to the girl and nodded hesitantly. He wasn't sure what to make of either woman. They were...interesting to say the least.

"I'm Kurt. It's nice to meet you, Whitley." Kurt gave the girl's hand a shake before turning to the Latina. "It's also nice to meet you Mistress Satan." Santana smiled and took his hands. *They're not so bad.*

The first hour of class drug by. Each student received their course syllabus and then had to introduce themselves. It was mundane in Kurt's opinion. Apparently, Santana and Whitley shared that opinion. "I want to claw my eyes out." Whitley whispered as the teacher went on about the importance of history. *'You can't have a future if you don't know your past'.*

"Let's skip out after break and go get wasted." Santana suggested. "Maybe I can take something home tonight." By something, Kurt knew she was referring to a girl. After the 10 minute conversation she and Whitley had about what it looked like to 'be all up in that' Kurt was certain that at least one of them was gay.

"Yeah." Whitley turned to Kurt and smiled. "You too, Kurt. You can give me shopping advice."

Kurt's eyebrows furrowed as he stared at the girl. "What makes you think that I could give you decent advice about shopping?" He knew the answer. She was basing her assumption on a stereotype. *'He's gay so he must be able to shop.'* While it wasn't untrue in Kurt's case, he hated being stereotyped.

"Marc Jacobs pullover, skinny jeans –probably designer, but I'll have to see the label to be sure- and Ralph Lauren loafers. If you can't give me advice about shopping then I don't know who can." Kurt smiled to

himself. *She knows her stuff. We may have to chat sometime. Just not now. I'm not leaving class to get wasted. As tempting as that sounds.*

"I can't. I have to go straight home after class."

Santana chuckled. "Daddy has you on a tight leash, I see."

"No. I have a little boy to get home to." Whitley's eyes went wide, as did Santana's, though the Latina was trying to pretend to be uninterested.

"Picture!" Whitley shouted. "I need a picture! NOW!" The entire classroom, including the teacher stopped and turned to look at the trio. "Ummm...sorry. I got into the lesson. We're talking about Marie Antoinette? They should *pitch her*. If they didn't like her...they should have gotten her out of there."

The teacher raised an accusatory eyebrow before turning back to the class. Whitley turned her attention back to Kurt and Santana instantly. "Picture." She whispered excitedly. Kurt pulled out his phone and flipped through a few pictures for the girls. Before they knew it, class was over.

"Here are our numbers, Kurt. If you ever need a sitter-"

"From her not me." Santana interrupted. "I don't do kids."

Whitley continued undeterred. "Or you just want to hang out. Call us." Kurt nodded and pocketed the numbers. Now he knew how Keenan felt on his first day. *It's nice to make new friends.*

Chapter Four

Kurt's week went by quickly. Gone were his first day jitters, only to be replaced by a cool, calm serenity that overtook him in the mornings and didn't go away until he was nestled in his bed at night. Each day was seemingly more pleasant than the last. Keenan didn't argue about school clothes and Kurt was already ahead in his studies. Things were perfect. *Almost.*

As time passed, Kurt and Blaine grew closer. Well, as close as two completely platonic, work friends could be. They always spent their lunch breaks together –much to Rachel's disdain- and they slowly began to text each other at night.

One text turned to two.

Two turned to text conversations.

Text conversations turned to phone calls.

"How was class today?" Blaine asked the following week. Kurt smiled. It was always nice to be asked by his father or Carole –*hell, even Quinn takes an interest-* but having someone completely unrelated, someone who didn't have to care, ask him made his insides feel warm.

The tech rolled over on his bed, pushing his books aside. "It was fine. Whitley spent the entire class period trying to find adjectives to describe my ass and Santana kept trying to get me to go out with them afterwards. Honestly, I'd love to and all, but I just don't have time. When I get out of class, I have to come home and get Keenan ready for bed and...it's just not plausible for me to go out after school...or work...or ever really."

There was a prolonged silence on the other end. *Did I say something wrong?* "So you never go out. Like, when you leave work, you always go straight home?" Blaine sounded skeptical.

"Yes." Kurt sat up in his bed and looked towards Keenan's side of the room. It was a little past eight, so his son was knocked out, snoring lightly as his chest rose and fell. Quietly, Kurt crawled off his bed and headed towards the room door. He didn't want to wake his son. *It's a school night after all.*

Once he was in the hallway, the young father pulled the door closed and headed outside. "Where else would I go after work?" Kurt made his way through the house and out the front door. It was a warm September night, so Kurt forwent a coat on his way out, only grabbing his slippers.

"I don't know. Out with your friends maybe? On a date?" Kurt ignored the fact that Blaine almost sounded hopeful when he said the word. The tech scoffed as he dropped his body down onto the porch swing.

"I hardly have time to date. Even if I did, I don't know if I'd be ready. I told you-

Blaine finished his sentence; it was their *thing*. "That you just got out of a long relationship and you're not sure if you're ready to get into anything again. No one's saying you should go get married, Kurt, but I do think you should consider spending some time with people that aren't related to you. I know you love your family, but hanging out with your family all the time has to get stale." *He speaks the truth*. Kurt loved his family with all his heart but he often yearned to spend time with people whose lives weren't centered on wrestling children into bed and getting juice stains out of white clothes.

"I.."

"I'm sorry, Kurt. That was out of line. I guess I just don't get it because I'm not a parent; a single parent at that." Blaine quickly apologized. He hadn't meant any offense; he was just trying to understand. He couldn't imagine his life without Friday night drinks with his boys or the occasional concert in Columbus.

"No...you're right it's just...have I ever told you about what happened with Nathan?" Blaine remembered that Nathan was Kurt's ex, but they'd never had a serious discussion about what happened to cause the tech to move back home.

"No. You just....Kurt, I'm your friend and all but you don't have to tell me. I know some things are private and...I don't want you to feel like you have to defend whatever decision you've made to me. I get it. You like spending time at home. There's nothing wrong with that."

Kurt pulled his legs onto the porch swing and wrapped his arms around them. "Oh, I know there's nothing wrong with that." Kurt shot back with an air of playful defiance. "I want to tell you though. Honestly, you're my only real friend here. I mean, I text the girls from school every once in a while, but you're the only one I see on a regular basis. Other than Keenan, you're like my best friend."

Friend zoned. Blaine didn't reply, instead enjoying the moment of silence he'd dedicated to any chances of possibly being with Kurt in the future. "You're my best friend too, Sammy. No lie. I feel like I can tell you anything." Kurt felt a smile creep across his lips. It'd been too long since he'd had a best friend.

"Like when you told me about how you used to try to find household objects to masturbate with when you were younger."

Blaine screeched so loudly that Kurt had to pull the phone away from his ear. "What the fuck, Kurt? I told you that with the understanding that we'd never bring it up again. I was a terribly lonely, terribly horny teenager. I had to do something." Kurt's head flew backwards as he laughed. He couldn't remember how the conversation came about. One minute they were speaking on a topic over lunch and the next, Blaine was giving him a play by play of his adventures with a shower head as a teenager.

"I'm sorry." Kurt chuckled. "I'm just...okay. I'm sorry. I'll never bring it up again."

"Good."

"Anyways, back to our original topic of conversation. Now, if I tell you this story, I have to tell you the whole thing. Are you up for that?"

"Yeah." Blaine responded as he made himself comfortable in his bed. Whatever Kurt had to say, he was ready to listen. He would always listen.

Kurt smiled and took a deep breathe. *Here we go.* "So, when I first arrived in New York, a few weeks before I was supposed start my freshman year at Parsons, I met Nathan. Well, I ran into Nathan. I was wandering around Times Square with my dad, looking up at all the buildings, and I ran straight into this guy. He was...*beefier* than I was, so the collision didn't affect him, but it knocked me straight to the ground. I was mortified."

Blaine chose that moment to cut in. "I bet. I'd be completely destroyed if I ran into someone and fell on my ass in the middle of Times Square."

"Thanks for that, Frank. I really appreciate it." Kurt replied sarcastically. "Anyways, the guy I ran into was super sweet and he helped me up. He dusted me off and then he smiled at me and told me that I might want to look at what's in front of me, rather than what's above me. That's when I really looked at him. He

was...uggg...Frank, he was gorgeous. He was completely built with this.....naturally tanned skin and he was tall and.... He had this...hair. His hair was like....jet black but it....Frank...Nathan was *fine*!"

The doctor looked down at himself, a frown forming on his face as he did so. He wasn't ugly, per se, but he definitely wasn't *fine*. He was on polite side of dwarfism and his stomach wasn't as tight as it used to be. His six pack was an actual six pack....of beer, so his stomach stuck out just a bit. He was scrawny in other places and...yeah, not fine. At least not in his opinion. "And he had this accent. At first, I couldn't place it, but later, he told me was from South Africa."

Blaine hummed as Kurt spoke. "Anyways, after he dusted me off, he asked me if I was new to the city. When my dad said I was, he offered to show us around. The rest was kind of history. We started dating a few weeks later and I moved in to his apartment after my freshman year of school was over. That's when things got a bit weird. He was always gone or leaving. We didn't spend as much time together as we had before. He was always busy. When I brought it up, in the middle of my sophomore year, he..."

The tech took a deep breath. That single incident had been a major table turner in their relationship. "He....got so mad. He kept saying that I was clingy and that I needed to back off. Being that I was totally in love with him and 100% certain that I'd be with him forever, I was heartbroken. I thought he was the love of my life, so it was hard for me to accept that he was basically tiptoeing around everything I was saying by calling me needy."

"My Spidey senses are telling me that, somehow, this story is also going to solve the 'Great Keenan Mystery'."

Kurt hummed. "You're Spidey senses would be correct. After he left me crying on the floor, I called up a girl that I thought was my friend and we got wasted. I'm talking, woke up the next morning and had no idea what happened the previous night wasted. After we oriented ourselves, she went home and Nathan came back with flowers and apologized. As far as I was concerned, the night before was a misstep in this metaphorical dance that Nathan and I were participating in."

"How poetic of you, Sammy."

"Shut up, Frank." Kurt tried to sound light and playful. It was difficult, however, when he felt awful. "It wasn't a misstep though; it was a complete trip up. A few weeks later, when things were better, the girl called me and told me she was pregnant. I remember congratulating her and asking who the father was."

Then, when she told me I was the father, I just kind of shut down. In my eyes, there was no way in hell that I could have been her baby's father."

"But there was a way, because, apparently I don't think vagina is that bad when I'm completely tore down drunk." Blaine snorted. Immediately, he felt bad. Kurt was pouring his heart out and he was laughing. *Not a great idea.* "Umm...yeah."

"Wait, Kurt. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to laugh at you. Once, when I was drunk, I kissed Rachel. Seriously, that's worse than playing Marco Polo in some girl's junk." In return for his blunt observation, Blaine received a giggle from his tech. It was the sweetest sound he'd ever heard.

"Have you ever considered the fact that, maybe, that's why Rachel doesn't like me? She's probably all hung up on your Anderson charm." Kurt giggled. He rested his phone between his knee and his ear, listening to the hearty sound of his friend's cheerful laugh. It was light and airy in ways that made Kurt's heart flutter.

"Absolutely not. While I do have a certain charm about me, I know for a fact that Rachel has an imaginary boyfriend that she's head over heels in love with."

The tech rolled his eyes. "I'm sure. Anyways, I freaked out. I avoided her for a few weeks until she called and said she was getting an abortion. Then, I freaked out again. I begged her not to but she wouldn't give in. So, I told Nathan. I told him that I'd cheated on him and I told him about the pregnancy. Oddly enough, he was supportive...and understanding. He took the blame for that night and told me he would talk to the girl. And he did. He talked to her and she called me the next day. She said she wasn't into the 'mom scene' -"

"I didn't know being a mom was a 'scene'." Blaine interrupted.

"Neither did I." Kurt closed his eyes and let the memory of that play out before his eyes. He remembered sitting on the floor in the middle of his apartment, thanking Sarah like his life depended on it. In actuality, another life depended on it; the life of his unborn child.

The tech remembered promising Sarah that he could father the child alone and that he wouldn't bring her up if she didn't want to be brought up. She was very insistent that she wanted nothing to do with parenting. "Kurt?" Startled, Kurt's head shot up and his phone hit the ground. He picked it up quickly and held it to his ear. "Are you still there?" Blaine asked, concerned by his friend's silence.

"Y-yeah." The young father stuttered. "I'm here. Just...you know...living in the past. Where was I...oh...right. Well, like I said, Nathan was super supportive and he said he wanted to be a father with me. He told me that he'd always wanted children and we were getting our chance a little early. So, we ran with it. We got a bigger place –Nathan scored an amazing job right out of college- and we told my parents. It was great."

"Then, as Sarah got closer to her due date, I realized that, despite Nathan's great job, I needed to be able to help out. I needed a job. I looked into fashion, but things were too competitive for my tastes, so I looked into my second love; animals. I got a job at a small shelter in Queens. That's where I met Adam; Dr. Crawford as you probably know him. He's the one that gave me the 'glowing' review."

He heard Blaine snicker on the other end. "Kurt, I didn't check your references. I was just fucking with you."

"You jerk! You lied to me!" Kurt did his best to sound scandalized. He failed miserably. In the end, he and Blaine ended up sharing yet another round of giggles over the phone. It was nice. He'd laughed far more during their conversation than he had in years. As his laughter subsided, Kurt laid back against the porch swing. It was late, but he wanted to finish his conversation with his friend. "Dr. Crawford, Adam, was a lot like you," *Except for the fact that I never found him even mildly attractive*, "he was very supportive and just an all-around great guy. He was always there for me."

Kurt went on to tell his friend about Keenan's birth and Nathan's role in it all. "With the exception of the fact that he flat out refused to sign Keenan's birth certificate, things were great. He woke up for late night feedings and we did family park days. Eventually, however, things got to be too much. I dropped out of school and spent my time at the shelter or at home with Keenan. After some pushing on Adam's part, I enrolled in correspondence classes to get my tech degree and worked at the shelter in my free time. Things were great...until they weren't."

The climax. It was the point Blaine had waited patiently to reach. He enjoyed hearing the rest of Kurt's story, but he wanted to know where everything went wrong. "He pulled away from us slowly; missed dinners here and broken promises there. Just after Keenan's fourth birthday, he left. He literally packed everything while we were away from home and he left; no explanation, no apologies."

"Damn." Blaine whispered.

"Yeah. But he came back and he apologized. He said work was rough and that he needed to clear his head. So, I took him back. But then he did it again and, when he left the second time, I knew he wouldn't be back. The night before, we had a huge fight about Keenan's schooling and he said some pretty nasty things. Keen went to a private preschool and-"

"Hold on." Blaine interjected. Kurt's mouth shut instantly. "What the hell is a 'private preschool'? Is it like a private regular school? Did he have to interview for this school?" Kurt advised that Keenan had interviewed for the school and was admitted. Blaine could barely believe his ears. "What kind of interview questions did they ask him? 'Hey, kid. What precautions do you take to ensure that you won't wet yourself during naptime?'"

Kurt rolled his eyes at his friend as he tried to make himself comfortable on the wooden swing. *I'm going to regret lying on this thing in the morning when my back is killing me.* "Anyways" Kurt replied dramatically in an attempt to rein the conversation back in, "Keen and I tried to stay in New York after Nathan left. Eventually, I found out that we were behind on a lot of bills, so I drained my savings to save my credit. Things just kind of tumbled down hill after that. I wasn't making enough to keep Keen in his school, so I had to un-enroll him and I was so far behind on the rent that we practically had one foot out the door. Adam, my old boss, found out and offered to pay for us to come back here. Accepting his gratitude was the hardest thing I ever did."

"And the smartest."

"And the smartest." Kurt agreed. "But that's what leads us to where we are now. Keenan was very attached to Nathan, even if Nathan didn't feel the same way. When his Papa left him, I was all he had left. So he's very attached. With everything he's been through, I don't feel right ditching him to go hang out with friends."

Kurt jerked out of the seat when he saw the living room light turn on. He quickly made his way to the door and peeked inside; it was his father. Father and son shared a brief before Kurt stepped back outside. It was cooling down. In the hour or so he'd been outside, the temperature dropped at least ten degrees. "But you wouldn't be ditching him." Blaine argued. "It's perfectly normal to go out and be an adult from time to time. I'm not saying that you should go out and party every night of the week, but I think it's healthy for an adult to get out and enjoy adult company from time to time."

Kurt opened his mouth to plead his case, but Blaine wasn't finished speaking. "That's why you should come out this Friday night. A bunch of my friends get together on Friday nights for drinks and we'd love to have you."

Probably not going to happen. Kurt ran a hand through his hair, searching for a way to turn his boss down. It sounded fun –*so fun*– but he couldn't. "Yeah, I...."

"If you can find a babysitter. Hell, if you find one that charges, I'll even cover the cost. I just really want you to come out with us. Please." He was begging and he didn't care. He hated the thought of Kurt slaving away at work all day just to go home to tackle the hardest job on Earth. Kurt needed to unwind and he could if he went out with his friends on Friday.

"I....uggggg..." Kurt groaned. "If I can find a babysitter for Friday and if Keenan goes to sleep before I leave, I'll come out Friday. I'm not making any promises though, Frank. If this doesn't work out then I don't want any grief over it."

Kurt could hear the smile in his friend's voice when he responded. It made his insides warm. "Great! I'm so excited. But you have to promise to at least try. Please try to find a sitter because we could have so much fun. I promise I won't get too drunk."

"The fact that you're promising not to get too drunk lets me know that you will probably get too drunk. People don't just start out with promises like that." The pair shared a laugh before saying their goodbyes. They'd see each other at work the next day.

Kurt shoved his phone into the pocket of his sweatpants and walked back into the house. He was surprised to see his father sitting in his recliner, watching television. "Dad, it's almost midnight, what are you doing up?" The tech asked as he took a seat on the couch.

Burt looked over at his son and smiled. "Nothing. I just forgot to mention earlier that Carole and I wanted to take Keenan to the theater on Friday to see *Wreck It Ralph*. Maybe you could go and do something while we're gone. Ya know, go be an adult or something."

The tech could barely believe his ears. Had his father heard his conversation with Blaine? Was this his way of helping out when he felt Kurt needed it? A million thoughts ran through Kurt's head in a matter of seconds. "You're thinking too loudly, son. Listen, I was once in your position. I was a single dad with a

mountain of responsibilities and no time for myself. Unlike you, I didn't have a support system, so I ended up doing a lot of it myself. It wore me down, kid. Let me tell ya. So, I'm offering you the opportunity to do the things I couldn't. You gotta take care of yourself too, Kurt. So, we're kidnapping the kid on Friday, you can have him back Saturday morning. No negotiations."

Kurt hopped off the couch and ran towards his father. He enveloped the man in a tight hug, resting his head gingerly on the man's shoulder. "Thank you so much, Dad."

Burt waved his hand nonchalantly. "It's nothing, son. Now, go out and have fun on Friday. Get a little drunk, dance a little crazy, and have the time of your life." Kurt pulled away and smiled down at his father. "But don't get anyone pregnant. I didn't tell you that the first time because of....ya know...*gay*...but I'm telling you now."

"I get it, Dad. I won't get anyone pregnant. Sheesh." The pair chatted about meaningless topics for a moment before Kurt excused himself to bed. He had an early morning and he couldn't wait to tell Blaine that he had a babysitter for Friday. While he was hesitant to go out, he was also relieved. He hadn't been out since before Keenan was born, so it was long overdue. As he descended the stairs into his room, he noticed that the closet light was on. Obviously Keenan's doing. Whenever the boy awoke to an empty room, he turned on a light.

Kurt crossed the room quickly and turned off the light. He then made his way over to Keenan's side of the room. Quietly, the father leaned over the bed and placed his ear to his son's nose. *Still breathing*. It was something that his parents did to him when he was younger and something that he'd adopted with Keenan. The father shot one last glance at his little boy –sprawled awkwardly across the bed and dead to the world- before climbing into his own bed.

Just before falling asleep, a thought crossed Kurt's mind. It was enough to make Kurt shoot up in his bed. *I'm going out Friday...which is in two days....what the hell am I going to wear?*

Kurt advised Blaine the next day that he found a babysitter for Friday. Excited wasn't a word that began to explain the doctor's reaction. He let out an excited squeal that frightened his already hesitant patient. "I'm sorry, buddy." Blaine ran a soothing hand over the Spaniel's side. "Calm down."

The tech stepped over from his spot against the wall to help his boss calm the animal. A few soothing rubs of the animal's back and he was relaxed. "I told my friend's that you'll be there on Friday and they're all psyched." Kurt hummed, watching as the doctor continued with the animal's physical.

Once in a while, Blaine rattled off random things about the animal. "We definitely want to check his T4 levels. His family says he's gaining weight like crazy and he's been kind of a bitch lately." Kurt chuckled as he made a mental note.

"Are you thinking that it's his thyroid?" Blaine nodded but didn't take his eyes away from the dog. "I'll get on that. Also, who all is going out on Friday? Anyone I might know?" The answer was probably no, but he asked anyways.

"Sebastian. He'll be there. As well as some other guys I went to school with." Kurt tensed immediately. He didn't dislike Sebastian. *He's just a bit....pretentious?* He immediately shook it off. He didn't know Sebastian –Dr. Smythe- well enough to judge him. "Hey, don't worry. He's not as bad as he seems. He was actually really excited that you'd be there."

Kurt smiled and watched as Blaine finished with the animal; hands working gently and precisely as he finished up. The way he worked, the way his hands moved, made Kurt think that Blaine was definitely a skilled lover....*VETERINARIAN. I think he's a skilled veterinarian. He's good at his job. Shit!* "I...ummm..." The tech ran a hand over the back of his neck. "Okay. If you want, I can start getting the blood work done and..."

Blaine smiled and excused himself from the room, needed to speak with the family about their pet. Kurt was relieved. Thoughts like that were bound to get him in trouble.

Friday came more quickly than either man anticipated. Before they knew it, both men were rummaging through their closets, looking for clothes to wear out. Blaine wasn't a rummager. He usually threw on whatever smelled clean and ran out the front door. So, the fact that he couldn't find a single shirt that fit the way he wanted it to or a pair of pants that made his ass look 'fan-fucking-tastic' caught him off guard. Eventually, he decided on his favorite jeans –cuffed at the ankle to show off his new loafers- and a cardigan sweater that he sweater from his high schools. *Which I'm wearing simply so that I can gloat about*

the fact that I can still fit it. Blaine twirled in the mirror and sighed. His ass didn't look 'fan-fucking-tastic'. It looked 'o-fucking-kay' but that would have to fucking due.

Frustrated, Blaine snatched his keys and his wallet from the table near his bedroom door and stalked through the house. He grabbed his phone as he passed through the living room and out of the house. Once he was locked up, Blaine began to walk. Murphy's, the bar they usually met at wasn't very far from his home. With the exception of his car, Blaine wasn't a luxurious man. His house was quaint and located in a less than favorable part of town. And an ugly shade of green. *God, I have to paint it soon.* Blaine's face scrunched as he examined his tiny home. It wasn't much, but it was his. The doctor began to walk towards the bar. If he was lucky, Kurt would already be there. The prospect excited him. And that was frightening.

Kurt kissed his son goodbye just before the boy was whisked out the front door by his grandmother. "We're going to party pretty hard tonight, son. *Wreck It Ralph* and ice cream. Don't hurry home for us. We could be out all night....9 o'clock. 10 o'clock. You never know with us." Burt chuckled as he pulled his son into a warm embrace. "Have fun, okay. Hang out with some friends and we'll see you in the morning."

"Okay." Kurt sighed. As his time of departure neared, he grew more and more nervous. At one point, he had his phone in hand, ready to call Blaine and cancel. "I'll probably be back before you guys though. I don't see myself staying out all night."

Burt shook his head and headed towards the door. "I told Finn to deadbolt the door just in case you try to come home before we do." Kurt's face fell. *Geez, Dad. Kick a guy out why don't ya.* "You deserve this, Kurt. Enjoy it. And remember what I said. Don't get anyone pregnant." His father warned.

Kurt nodded and watched his father head out the door, jogging a bit to catch up with his wife and grandson. With the group headed towards the theatre and the house practically empty, the tech decided to get ready. He'd put it off long enough. *Who knows, maybe I'll have a good time.*

His good time did not start at home. After what felt like an eternity of searching, he finally found an outfit that suited him for the evening. It wasn't too dressy –*who would I be trying to impress?*– but it wasn't too casual. It was a perfect mixture of the two; a white Henley with a black vest, skinnies, and boots. Not too much, not too little. *Just right.*

Kurt twirled in the mirror, examining his outfit. He sent a million silent 'thank yous' to Whitley for suggesting consignment shops in the area. Slowly, he was rebuilding the clothing army in his closet. *Always a good thing.*

Once he was satisfied with his appearance, Kurt gathered his things –keys, wallet, cell phone- and headed towards his car. I might as well head out. Nervous was an understatement. Kurt was petrified. The problem was, he wasn't sure which scared him more; the prospect of having a great time or the prospect of having no fun at all. Either way, he was about to find out.

Blaine leapt from his seat the moment he saw Kurt enter the smoky bar room. As usual, Murphy's was empty. The residents of Lima preferred the glitz and glamour of big city, Columbus clubs to the quiet, bar atmosphere that Murphy's offered. That was the main reason Blaine and his friends chose to meet there every Friday night. It was peaceful, and there was rarely any chance of bothering anyone because of the lack of Friday night patrons. "Kurt!" He screeched as he crossed the tiny room. When Kurt turned in his direction, the veterinarian stopped in his tracks. The one time he'd seen Kurt out of scrubs was at Target. The oversized jeans and baggy cardigan were a stark contrast from the formfitting attire he'd adorned for the evening. *Oh my....*

"Be nice, guys. Blaine's got a total boner for him." Sebastian whispered to the group at the table. Eyebrows shot up and heads tilted. The men were confused.

"You don't actually think we'd be mean to him, do you? He looks adorable." Jeff replied, staring at the scene in front of them. Blaine was speaking animatedly with the man, waving his hands around, as they stood in the doorway.

"I don't mean to him, I mean to Blaine. We get a little rough with one another, but Blaine really likes this guy."

Hunter shot his friend a skeptical look. "Did he tell you that he really likes him, Sebastian, or are you making assumptions once again?" He received a glare in reply. Blaine didn't have to tell Sebastian that he

liked Kurt. The doctor could tell. The way Blaine's eyes lit up like a gaudy Christmas tree when he spoke about his employee was enough to let Sebastian know that he was smitten.

"I just know, okay!" He whispered harshly. Reluctantly, the men that surrounded the two high top tables nodded. They would be nice if it meant that Blaine would be happy in the end.

"...you...you...whoa, Kurt. I can definitely tell you're a fashion major." Blaine watched as Kurt's face fell. The tech began to play with the hem of his vest. "What? What's wrong?" The doctor quickly asked. Seeing Kurt's face fall was enough to make his heart hurt. He never wanted to see that look again.

"Is it too much. I mean...I know you said we'd be coming here, but I didn't want to underdress and I didn't want to overdress and....should I take off the vest? Is it too formal?" Kurt rambled nervously. A smile spread across Blaine's face as he admired his friend.

"It's not too much. It's perfect. You look great." He exclaimed. Much like a rubber band would, Kurt's smile snapped back. He was truly pleased by the compliment.

"Thank you." He replied, a slow blush creeping up his face. As they stood in the doorway, talking about events that took place between the time they left work and the time they arrived at the bar, Kurt's resignation began to melt away. When he was with Blaine, he was always comfortable. That was a frightening feeling for the tech. He was comfortable with Nathan and everyone knew how that story ended.

Kurt shook his head and then wiggled the rest of his body. Shake out all your stress, Keen. It was a stress reliever that he used with his son and he was not ashamed to say he used it himself. "Ready to go meet the guys?" Blaine asked once Kurt was all shaken out. The tech nodded. *As ready as I'll ever be.*

"The happy couple!" Nick shouted earning a smack on the back of the head from his boyfriend, as Kurt and Blaine neared. Luckily, neither heard the comment. "I mean...hey, look...it's them. How exciting!" He flinched at the flash of hair to his right. He thought Jeff was going to hit him again.

"Hey guys." Blaine greeted excitedly as he pulled out Kurt's chair. Kurt thanked him and took his seat. "This is my friend, Kurt. Kurt, these are the guys. I'll let them introduce themselves." With a group wave, the men began to introduce themselves; from left to right around the two tables they went.

"I'm David. It's nice to meet you, Kurt." The first man said. He extended his hand and Kurt gave it a firm shake. *Damn, he's got hell of a grip.*

"Wes."

"Hunter."

"You've met me before. So, introductions are not necessary." Sebastian leaned across the table and gave Kurt a handshake, smiling as he leaned back. Maybe he'd been a bit harsh during their initial meeting. There was no time like the present to make up for that.

"Jeff."

"Nick." Kurt shook each man's hand. When they reached the last person, the man sitting directly next to him, the introductions stopped.

"Dammit! Why does she have to be such a bitch? When you leave, you don't get to make decisions about home." The man growled as he typed furiously at his phone.

Kurt turned to Blaine, who offered an explanation. "That's Trent and-"

"And my whore, soon to be ex-wife is pissing me off." The man growled. "I swear! It's like...okay...." Trent set his phone down on the table and looked up at his friends. "Tell me if I'm wrong. She left. She left her family. Am I wrong for telling her to mind her own business when she starts griping about the fact that my mother is watching Kay tonight? Please, let me know if I'm wrong."

Kurt empathized with the man. He knew that feeling to an extent. Nathan never tried to contact him after their split, but Kurt was certain he would be just as hostile as Trent if the situation were to arise. "She doesn't get a say." He whispered. Shocked, the table turned to him. "I'm sorry," He quickly apologized, "It's not my business, but I've been there and she doesn't get to complain when she left them without regard for their wellbeing."

"Thank you!" Trent shouted. "See, guys! He gets it." The table, mainly Blaine, was shocked. He hadn't expected Kurt to react that way. If anything, he was apprehensive to have Kurt and Trent near one another due to their similar situations. He didn't want misery to have its company. That would only lead to a bad time. "Let's not talk about that though. We're too sober and I'm too angry. Let's get some shots." Cheers went around the table as Trent waved down their waitress. Kurt smiled. It was bound to be an interesting night.

"Wait...wait...wait." David shouted over the group. An hour into his time with the guys and Kurt couldn't stop laughing. It was amazing. The guys were wild and crazy; everything that he'd missed out on years ago. Before Keenan came along, Kurt was never one to go out or party. He was a homebody and he liked it that way. He had to admit, however, being out with Blaine and his friends was a nice change of pace. "Your...your son's name is Keenan," the man –a lawyer none the less- shouted, "and he has a cat named Kel. Mind blown!"

Kurt giggled as he sipped on the drink that Blaine ordered for him. He couldn't be sure because his memory was clouded by the alcohol, but he was almost certain that Blaine had ordered all of his drinks that evening. "Yeah. Keenan actually named him." He chuckled lightly as David's face lit up.

"Shut up! Who *looooooooooooooooooves* orange soda?" He shouted, earning a round of giggles from the intoxicated men at the table.

They answered in unison. "Kel loves orange soda."

David held his arms open as if belting out the final notes of a power ballad. "Is it true?" He shouted.

"Mmmhmmmm...I do, I do, I do-ooooooo!" The men replied. Kurt laughed so hard at their antics that his body leaned sideways. Luckily, Blaine's shoulder was there to catch him. Too drunk to sit back up and too comfortable to care, he allowed his head to rest against his friend's side. He didn't notice the way the table quieted or the way Blaine's body tensed at the contact.

Hesitantly, the doctor pulled his arm from beneath Kurt's chin and rested it lazily on the man's shoulders. *Take a chance.* He pulled Kurt closer, allowing him to get comfortable once again. "This okay?" He asked his voice a bit breathless from the contact.

Kurt nodded into his side and reached absently for his drink. He was very comfortable. "So, Kurt," Trent said as he put down his drink. He was leading the pack as far as drinking went. Kurt's heart went out to the man; he was obviously having a hard time dealing with his divorce. "What school does your little guy go to?"

"Independence Elementary." Kurt slurred. *I guess I've had quite a few as well.*

"My little girl goes there." Trent replied, raising his hand to get the waitress's attention. "Her teacher is....is....shit..." Trent's eyes moved back and forth as he racked his brain for the name of his daughter's teacher. I hope he doesn't ask who Keen's teacher is. I don't have a clue right now. "...it's...it's...the cat lady. She....she kept telling me to take my cat somewhere."

He earned a few skeptical looks from his friends; but not from Kurt. "Yes!" He shouted. "Yes! That's Keenan's teacher. She told me to bring my cat to school so I could cry with other parents." Blaine and his friends looked at one another as Kurt and Trent discussed the unorthodox teacher. "Wait...what's your daughter's name?" Kurt snuggled further into his boss's side. *So comfy.*

"Mikayla." Kurt gasped, jumping away from the warmth and sitting up straight in his chair.

"Your daughter is Mikayla!" He screeched. "Ahhhh....she's trying to be my new daughter in law."

Kurt and Trent went back and forth sharing their experiences with the budding love between Keenan and MiKayla. By the end of their lengthy conversation, they'd agreed to get the children together for a play date....and maybe a future wedding date if Keenan would just put a ring on it.

"I'm going to the restroom." Blaine whispered into Kurt's ear. During the course of the tech's conversation with Trent, the young man migrated back towards Blaine's side, snuggling close to him and reveling in the comfort. Kurt looked up at his friend and nodded.

"Okay. I'll be here." Kurt's body swayed as he sat back up, watching Blaine as he went away. A few drinks later, Blaine hadn't returned and Kurt was beginning to get worried. "Should I be worried about him?" 'I' not 'We'. He asked. The group looked at once another before bursting into another fit of laughter.

"He started drinking like an hour before you got here. He's probably cuddled up with the toilet." Hunter offered between bouts of laughter. Kurt -nervous at the prospect of Blaine being alone and sick in the bathroom- stood from his seat and staggered his way towards the sign that read 'restrooms'. He pushed the door open with his shoulder and walked in. The tech released the breath he didn't know he was holding when he saw Blaine leaning against the far wall, playing with his phone.

"Are we boring you?" Kurt asked, startling the doctor. Blaine quickly slid his phone into his pocket and shot his tech a lopsided smile.

"Never. I was just looking up numbers to some cab companies. We're all pretty wasted, so I don't want any of us to drive home. I didn't want to ruin everyone's time with all this grown up talk so...." He replied breathlessly. Kurt suddenly looked far more amazing than he had when he'd walked into the bar hours ago. His mind told him that it was the alcohol, but he knew better. It was the amount of fun Kurt was having. *Fun looks good on him.*

"How grown up of you." The tech cooed as he neared his boss. Blaine's breathe hitched as Kurt strutted across the tiny room. No wonder he'd gotten a man as 'fine' as Nathan. Whether Kurt knew it or not, he was gorgeous. His body was like a work of art. Michelangelo, Monet. Matisse. Van Gogh. None of them could have created a piece of work as perfect as Kurt's body.

"Y-yeah." Blaine stuttered as Kurt neared. He was too far away to touch but close enough to smell. They both reeked of alcohol but there was something else there. It smelled sensual, erotic....Kurt. "I....ummm..."

"How are you getting home?" Kurt asked, propping himself up on the wall next to Blaine.

"I walk. I...ummm..live really close by and...after everyone leaves, I just...ya know. Walk."

"Is that safe?" In an instant, Kurt's entire demeanor changed. He went from unintentionally sexy to protective and caring. "What if something happens?"

Blaine shrugged. Nothing had happened in the two years he'd been doing it. He assumed it was safe. He lived less than a block away. "I'll be fine. You, on the other hand, need a cab. I don't want you driving home to Keenan in your condition."

Kurt smiled, barely showing teeth. "I was actually going to head to the diner I saw next door. I don't have to get Keenan until the morning, so I figured I'd go there, drink some coffee, and sober up."

"Or," Blaine interjected. "You could make sure I get home safe and have coffee there. I have coffee, ya know. Good coffee. Coffee...that doesn't suck."

Kurt nodded emphatically. "Yeah. That....I'd love to have coffee with you. It's far cheaper than drinking diner coffee all night. The company won't be so bad either."

"I hope not." Blaine replied. *I hope not.*

Chapter Five

Maybe Kurt spent far too long in New York and not enough time visiting home while he and Nathan were together. Had he visited home more often, he would have known that coffee was slang for making out. Blaine obviously knew. He had no qualms about the fact that Kurt was laying between his spread legs, shoving his tongue down his throat. "You feel so good, Kurt!" Blaine moaned as he bucked his hips upward, searching for friction. He needed it like he needed air.

Kurt met him halfway. He ground his hips down, allowing their hard cocks to brush against one another. The result was Earth shattering. Stars exploded behind Kurt's eyes as their bodies slid together once again. It'd been far too long and he needed it. And, based on the sounds from the man beneath him - "Fuck, Kurt. I need you" - Blaine needed it as well.

"What do you need?" Kurt asked as he began to kiss his way down Blaine's body, nuzzling his nose into the man's shirt, but not letting the fabric that stood between him and a presumably beautiful body stand in his way. "Tell me what you want!" He groaned. He eventually reached the place where Blaine's cardigan met his low rise jeans. He nudged the top up with his nose and nibbled on the newly exposed skin; reveling in the sounds that the veterinarian made.

"Nnnngg...fuck. Touch me. I don't...fuck...gah...fuck...I don't care how. Just please do it." Kurt smirked as Blaine panted beneath him. He ran a skilled hand up Blaine's thighs and over his zipper, earning a relieved gasp. "Please." That was all the begging Kurt needed to hear. He hadn't been a virgin in years and, even when he was faced with his first cock, Kurt never hesitated. He would show Blaine that same respect. As quickly and graciously as he could, the tech undid his boss's belt and unzipped his fly.

As he slid the zipper down, he nestled his nose into the tiny bit of hair that stuck out from beneath the gray waistband of Blaine's boxers. He inhaled deeply, enjoying the sweet musk that Blaine's body emitted; rustic and woodsy and....completely Blaine. The tech slowly pulled the unzipped pants down, followed quickly by Blaine's boxers. He bit back a moan at the sight before him. It was magical. *Holy crap!*

The vet's legs were toned in all the right places and his stomach was....perfect. Both were drizzled a light layer of hair. And then there was Blaine's cock. It was far bigger than Kurt imagined, stood proud, and

flushed an angry shade of red. "God, Kurt, please. Touch me." Blaine moaned once again, drawing Kurt out of his awestruck state.

Kurt wasted no time. He positioned his hands on either side of the man's hips and leaned forward. He stuck out his tongue just a bit to catch the tip as he leaned forward. He felt Blaine's body seize beneath him as he ran his tongue lightly over the head, circling the slit. "Fuck...I..." Kurt didn't waste time listening as Blaine tried to find words. The tech stretched his lips around the head and sunk down slowly. He took Blaine's impressive dick inch by inch. "Kurt....I....ugggg..." Blaine attempted force his hips towards the slick, warmth of Kurt's mouth only be held down. *Feels so good.*

The vet lifted his head slightly to see over the expanse of his chest. He watched in awe as Kurt's head bobbed up and down on his dick. The sight was almost as amazing as the feeling. Seeing Kurt take his entirety without hesitation –*and with no hands*- was....extraordinary. "Fuck."

For a moment, they made eye contact. Blaine's eyes shone with surprise and admiration while Kurt's shone something sinister; tempting. "You do that so well." Blaine moaned. Kurt smirked, cock still in his mouth. He continued to suck and lick until his mouth grew tired. Slowly, he pulled off and looked up at his boss.

"Do you have any lube?" He asked innocently. It was a direct contrast to how he looked. His lips were red and kiss swollen and his face was covered in a deep red blush. His face looked absolutely debauched. Blaine reached towards his end table and pulled out a bottle of opened KY. He passed it down to Kurt without hesitation. He then watched as Kurt coated his fingers. Blaine was practically buzzing with anticipation as Kurt sank down on his cock once again.

It was much different the second time around. Not only did he have the pleasure of having Kurt's skilled mouth sucking on his cock, but he got the pleasure of feelings Kurt's finger push slowly inside of him; wiggling just a bit to make room as he forced it past Blaine's tight ring of muscles. *It's been too long.* Thus, the cycle began. With each retraction of Kurt's finger, Blaine whined and with each thrust into his heat, the vet preened. It was agonizingly slow, yet steady; everything they needed in that moment.

One finger turned to two and before they knew it, Blaine was grinding down on three of Kurt's fingers and begging for more. "Please! Fuck." He was breathless and unable to articulate. "Please. More. God. Need you. Want your cock." He panted as he swiveled his hips on his tech's fingers.

"Are you sure?" Kurt asked as he pulled away from the elder's throbbing dick. Blaine nodded quickly. He'd never been more certain of anything. Ever. In his entire life. The tech shot his superior a smile before easing his fingers out of Blaine's ass. He sat back on the couch and marveled at the sight of Blaine's gaping hole. It was red and abused, begging to be filled.

Without a moment's hesitation, Kurt began to undress. He quickly undid his vest and tossed it aside before working himself out of his shirt and undershirt. *What? Layers!* Blaine leaned back on his elbows and watched with a renewed interest. Kurt was beautiful; simply put. His torso was slim and trim in all the right places. *How did that fool ever leave him? He's a god.* And then Kurt's pants and boxers came off. For the first time in his life, Blaine was truly at a loss for words. *AALKJSFKAJSDLKFJA!* Not only was Kurt's body amazing but his dick was.....*AJKKASDFJFLKDK!* It didn't make sense. He was so big. It was almost comical. Kurt's dick seemed worlds too big for his lithe frame.

Absently, Blaine reached out and gave Kurt's neglected cock an experimental stroke. He watched as his tech leaned into the touch, letting out a long moan as he did so. "So big." Blaine whispered. Kurt chuckled as he rummaged through his wallet for a condom. *Yes, I always have a condom in my wallet. You never know when you're going to need to prevent an accidental pregnancy.* Blaine caught sight of the brunette's hand movements and offered assistance. "Do you want me to put it on for you? I want to....like a lot."

Kurt smiled and shook his head. "I have to make sure it hasn't expired." He replied as he squinted to read the print on the foil wrapper.

"They expire?" Blaine shouted incredulously. "What the....?" Kurt shrugged. In his right mind, he would probably come up with a million and one answers. But, he was drunk, so not a single one came to mind.

"Looks like we're good." Kurt pulled the wrapper open with his teeth and plucked the rubber disk from its home. He then rolled it down his aching cock and slathered himself with lube. He was ready. "Lay back some." Blaine did as he was told and laid back on the couch. He tossed one leg over the back of the couch and let the other fall over the front. He was completely spread out and ready; waiting and wanting for Kurt.

The tech lined himself up and pushed in slowly, head falling back as he slid slowly into Blaine's excruciatingly hot, and completely inviting body. "So tight..." He whined as he continued lose himself inch by inch inside Blaine. When he looked down, he noticed a strained look on the vet's face. "Are you okay?" His hips stilled instantly. He didn't want to continue if Blaine was in pain.

The vet nodded. "Yeah. Fine." He gritted out. "Just...give me a minute. It's been a while."

"Okay." So he waited. And waited. And waited. What was actually a ten second time frame felt like years when his dick was aching to stroke the insides of a lover's walls. Eventually *-years later-* Blaine told him to proceed: with caution. And thus Kurt's descent into the euphoric bliss that was Blaine's body began once again.

Eventually, Kurt bottomed out and he began to retract. As he did, he leaned forward and captured Blaine's lips in a heated, sloppy kiss. Their bodies moved together as Blaine's body rocked and Kurt's hips rolled on the couch. It was far from the intimacy that either man wanted but it would do. They barely made it home from the bar and the bedroom was too far away to be realistic. So, they settled for the couch. And it served them well.

"God, fuck...Kurt. Right there." Blaine shouted when Kurt pressed against the one spot inside of them that made his eyelashes curl. The vet threw his arms around the tech's neck and scrambled to pull his body closer. His nails dug into the younger man's back, leaving ugly, red lines that would need tending to once they were finished. Neither man cared, however. In that moment, the only thing that mattered was how terribly close they both were.

Kurt snapped his hips forward, hoping to hit the spot again. He knew he had when he felt Blaine's writhing body arch against his chest. "There?" He panted as steadied himself on one hand, snaking the other between their bodies and grabbing a hold of Blaine's leaking cock. He used the precum that was beaded around the slit to lubricate his descent before stroking it in time with his thrusts.

"Ye-Yeah." The elder stuttered. "Right there. Just like that!" Kurt smiled, snapping his hips once again, as he stroked Blaine. "I'm...uggg...so close." The man beneath him moaned. Kurt was close as well. Unbearably close.

"Then come for me, Blaine. Come for me." It was a harsh, whisper of a command. It was also effective. Moments later, Blaine was spurting white ribbons across his hand and across their chests; whispering Kurt's name as he fell over the edge.

Kurt released Blaine's cock and steadied himself on both hands. He then snapped his hips *-one, two, three times-* before shouting Blaine's name and digging his nails into the cushions of the couch. He came long and hard, buried inside Blaine's willing body.

In a moment, hours seemed to pass. "If you can get up, I'll go get us something to clean off with." Blaine offered from beneath him. When Kurt opened his eyes, he looked down to see Blaine smiling up at him. He nodded and slowly pulled out, taking care not to hurt Blaine as he did so. Once he was completely free from Blaine's vice grip, the tech collapsed on the couch, barely missing Blaine as he rolled off the piece of furniture, and tugged the condom off. "Hand me that. I'll dispose of it." Kurt couldn't work up the energy to thank him. So, he laid there. Moments later, he was asleep.

When Blaine returned moments later, he found Kurt fast asleep on his couch. Not wanting to wake the obviously worn out man, he quickly wiped him down before climbing onto the couch next to him and pulling the throw that hung on the back of his couch over them. "Night Kurt." He whispered before falling into a peaceful sleep.

Walk walk fashion baby work it move that bitch crazy

Walk walk fashion baby work it move that bitch crazy

Walk walk fashion baby work it move that bitch crazy

For ten minutes, Kurt allowed himself to imagine that the repetitive lyrics were a figment of his imagination. Unfortunately, as the lyrics seemed to grow more incessant by the moment, Kurt began to realize that his imagination was not so imaginative. The tech groaned as his eyes slid slowly open. He quickly shut them in an attempt to block out the sun. *My head hurts so bad.*

The sun and the fact that his son was nestled against his back made the situation worse. "Keenan, get off of me." He huffed as he attempted to turn on his side. It was fruitless. Keenan wasn't relenting. *And he's naked?* In a second, Kurt shot up and stared around the room. It wasn't the room he shared with his five year old. And the naked person next to him wasn't his five year old. It was...Blaine? The memories of the night before flooded back to Kurt in a moment's time. "Oh my God. Oh my God. Oh my..."

Kurt tried to catch his breath as a Blaine turned. "Some people prefer to call me Blaine."

"Oh my God, we slept together!" Kurt shrieked. He felt sick. What seemed like a great idea the night before now felt...he didn't even know. He didn't regret sleeping with Blaine he regretted...."What time is it?" He

shouted. Blaine covered his ears and slid a pillow over his head. It was too early and his head hurt too badly. "Don't hide from me!" Kurt shrieked once again, pulling the pillow from over his friend's face.

With a groan, Blaine reached for his phone, which he'd left abandoned on end table the night before. He squinted as he tried to make sense of the numbers on the screen. "Ummm....8:30." He finally answered.

Kurt screamed. *Really, he is doing too much of that this morning.* "Stop that, Kurt. All that screaming is bad for the baby." Blaine pushed out his abdominal muscles and rubbed over them with his hand. He received a harsh glare from Kurt.

Walk walk fashion baby work it move that bitch crazy

Walk walk fashion baby work it move that bitch crazy

Walk walk fashion baby work it move that bitch crazy

"Fuck! That's my alarm. Shit. Oh my God. Oh my...Keenan. I was supposed to be home last night!" The tech stumbled off the couch and made a mad dash to grab his clothes. Seconds later, he was completely dressed and heading out the front door. Later, when telling the story of his night to his friends, Blaine wouldn't leave out the part where he was disappointed that Kurt didn't make an attempt to say goodbye.

Kurt retrieved his car from the parking lot of Murphy's and sped home. Too many stop lights and a million stop signs later; he pulled into his front yard. Oddly enough, Quinn and Finn were outside and they looked like they were having the tell all, end all of marital spats. "No...NO!" He heard Quinn shout as he pulled his Equinox into his designated parking spot. Well, the one he'd designated for himself after he and Finn got into an argument one afternoon. "You're a liar, Finn Hudson. I hate you!" Quinn was seething. Kurt was almost too afraid to get out of the car. Then he remembered that he was supposed to be home hours ago and that Keenan was probably already having a fit. He had to get out of the car.

Cautiously, Kurt made his way out of the car and into the house. Thankfully, Quinn was so busy ripping Finn's head off that neither noticed him strutting down the walk of shame in yesterday's clothes. He was not so lucky when he entered the house. His father noticed him the second his toe peaked in the door. "Long night, son?" Burt asked from his spot on the couch. When Quinn and Finn started arguing hours ago, he sent them outside. *It's better to wake the neighbors than to wake my grandbabies!*

Kurt stiffened at the sound of his father's voice. When he turned to the man –*who looks smug as ever might I add*- he immediately began to apologize. "Dad, I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to stay out late. I was...I'm so sorry. And Keenan." The young father tried to keep the tears at bay. It was almost impossible when he thought of how frightened Keenan must have been to wake up without his dad in the house. "I'm so sorry."

"Whoa...whoa...whoa. Calm down, kid. It's okay. Keenan is asleep in our bed with Carole and Beth. He was knocked out when we got home. Besides, if this sloppy look is any indication, you had an amazing night last night."

Kurt smirked and ran a hand across his face to dry his tears. "Yeah. It was fun." *Amazing. Oh crap. I left Blaine like it was nothing. I should call him.*

Burt nodded. "Goddammit! Finn! You're lying. You left right after everyone else got home last night! I work doubles at that damn diner and go to school all day while you do nothing. Burt's always offering you shifts at the shop but you won't take them. You're always finding ways around having an actual schedule. And now you're leaving in the middle of the night while our daughter is sleeping. What is wrong with you?" Both men cringed. Quinn was going to kill Finn one day. He couldn't hold a job, he was passive aggressive with parenting and –in the eyes of Burt and Kurt- he was holding Quinn back. She was a bright young girl that made a mistake in her past. She paid every day for that mistake in the eyes of the Hummel men.

"She's really laying into him." Kurt commented absently.

"Just like you're laying into yourself about being out. So you had a good time, so what? Bask in that glory. And go take a shower before your kid wakes up. You reek of booze." Kurt smiled and excused himself to his room. He did reek of booze....and sex. Luckily, his father didn't pick up on the sex part.

As Kurt stepped out of the shower, he pulled a towel around his waist. He was lucky for his timing because the bathroom door flew open just moments later. "Daddy!" Keenan shrieked as he leapt into his father's arms. "I missed you last night. We had so much fun."

Kurt smiled towards his son. "You did! Great, kid! I'm so happy you had fun. Let me get dressed and you can tell me all about it." Keenan nodded and headed out of the bathroom. Kurt followed closely behind

him. As the little boy began to make his way up the steps, he noticed something about his father. Something that caused him alarm.

"Daddy?" He asked hesitantly, a low quiver in his voice. "Oh my gosh, Daddy. What happened to you back?" Kurt's breath caught. In an instant the memory of Blaine dragging his nails down his back as he fucked him mercilessly.

"Ummm...I..." Keenan was faster than Kurt's mind, before the young father knew it; his son was dragging him up the stairs. "Wait...I have to get dressed, Keen. I only have a towel on!" Kurt insisted. Keenan was unrelenting.

"No! Grandma has to fix your back. Did you get attacked by a bear in your sleep?" Kurt groaned. This was going to be bad. "Grandma!" Keenan shouted as they reached the top of the stairs. "Daddy got attacked by a bear in his sleep. It ripped his back up. Can you help him?" The little boy drug his father towards his grandmother and spun him around. "Look."

Carole did her best to hold back her laughter. She was young once and she knew exactly what kind of *bear* tore her step son's back up. "Ummm....I'll get the first aid kid."

"Oh God, please, Carole. No."

"What's all this shouting about?" Burt asked as he entered the living room a moment later.

"Look what the bear did to Daddy's back, Grandpa! Grandma's gonna help him though." Keenan shot an admiring look at his grandmother. *He's such a Grandma's boy.* Kurt thought as he tried not to let his humiliation show.

"A bear? Huh?" His father questioned a hint of teasing in his voice. And just like that, Kurt's resolve was gone. He flushed an embarrassing shade of red as his step mother tended to his back.

"An angry bear?" Kurt offered.

Burt and Carole shared a laugh as she finished up. "Okay, Kurt, all better. Maybe you should tell that *bear* to be a bit more careful next time." Carole suggested as she put away her first aid kit. Kurt nodded.

"And tell that bear it better not be able to get pregnant." Burt added.

"Yep. I'll do that...." He trailed off as he ran down the stairs. *God, I'm so embarrassed.* In New York, during times like this, he would have retreated within himself and thrown himself wholly into caring for Keenan. In Lima, things were different; in a good way.

Throughout the day, as he listened to Keenan talk about his amazing night and while his son played on the playground at the park, he text the friends he'd made the previous night. While he made dinner, he conference called Whitley and Santana and told them about his night. Oddly enough, they both sounded proud. Proud Mommas. Whitley kept shouting. During his day, he called all his new friends and made plans for later dates. He was a new Kurt and he was making New Kurt decisions. Unfortunately, of all the calls he made, he forgot to call Blaine. He wouldn't find out until Monday just how much that hurt his boss's feelings.

Chapter Six

"Keenan, you have five seconds to walk out this door or I'm leaving you." Kurt shouted from the foyer. They were supposed to leave fifteen minutes ago. Unfortunately, after spending the evening trying to reach Blaine and arguing with Finn, he fell asleep late, thus he woke up late. If they left at that moment, he would still be late but not drastically so. "I'm leaving now Keenan, with or without you."

A moment

Keenan barreled through the house and out the front door.

After dropping Keenan off, Kurt headed straight to work. It was 9:05 when he pulled into the parking lot. He was five minutes late but he was sure Blaine would understand; Blaine always understood.

The tech stepped into the shelter to find that they were extremely slow. There wasn't an animal or person in sight, save for Rachel and their volunteer, Marley. "Morning, Kurt." Marley greeted with a smile. Kurt smiled and waved at the girl. He often felt sorry that she had to spend her days exclusively with Rachel.

"You're late. Dr. Anderson has been waiting for you." Rachel quipped as she pecked away at the screen of her phone. Kurt rolled his eyes and headed towards the back. *Thanks for the reminder Rachel; I already knew I was late.*

Kurt hung his jacket and headed to Blaine's office. If he was lucky, they'd have a chance to talk before the day officially began. It'd taken him the entire weekend to work up the courage to speak with Blaine about their encounter on Friday night, but he knew it would only take a second for that courage to disappear.

He knocked lightly on the closed door. When he didn't receive a response, he turned the knob and pushed the door open. He found Blaine sitting at his desk, texting away at his phone. "You're late." Blaine stated without looking away from the device.

"I know. Keenan was-" Blaine held up a hand, cutting off his tech's explanation.

"Kurt, this is a place of business. If your personal affairs keep you from getting to work on time, then you need to consider another line of work". Kurt was taken aback. Everyone was late from time to time and he knew that Blaine understood that. *What's going on?* "Maybe you should go clean the kennels," -Rachel's job- "for a while. Also, we have a surgery this afternoon. Please don't be late for that."

Unsure what to say or do, Kurt turned and left the room without a word. He spent the rest of the morning cleaning the kennels and receiving smug looks from Rachel. *Bitch!*

Lunch time was more of a disaster than the morning had been. When Kurt finished cleaning the kennels, he went searching for Blaine. It was just past noon and the tech was starving.

He checked Blaine's office, then the front. The vet was nowhere to be found. "Have you seen Blaine, Marley?" He asked after he'd made the circle around the building for the third time. The girl smiled.

"He and Rachel left for lunch a few minutes ago. He asked me to tell you to go to lunch once you finished cleaning the kennels." Kurt's heart sank with his mood. He and Blaine always ate lunch together. It was the reason he stopped packing a lunch for work.

Kurt quickly thanked the girl and headed towards the back. He was hungry and he didn't have time to sit around and dwell on the fact that Blaine left him behind. If he hurried, he would be able to run through the McDonalds drive thru and be back in time for their surgery.

In the short distance from McDonalds back to work, Monday went from bad worse. Kurt received a call from his stepbrother just as he parked his vehicle. It was not the kind of call he wanted on a bad day. "I don't care Kurt. Quinn and I pay rent, so we deserve the apartment above the garage." His brother shouted at him from the other end of the line.

Finn was referring to the newly remodeled space that Burt completed the previous night. It had two bedrooms and a bathroom; it was perfect. It was also promised to Kurt when he decided to move back home.

"That sucks, Finn, because Carole and Dad said that Keen and I could move in there. You didn't even want out until you heard that I was getting it and Quinn *still* doesn't want it." He huffed. Kurt's hands gripped the steering wheel as he attempted to reign in his anger. From the moment his father announced that the apartment was finished and that he and Keenan could start moving into it, Finn was angry. He then spent the entire evening telling Kurt how angry his was. The tech didn't care then and he didn't care now.

They went back and forth for a few moments. Eventually, Kurt checked the time on his dash -not wanting to be late for a second time- and ended the conversation. "Unlike you, some of us have to get back to work.

Bye Finn." He hung up his phone and pocketed it before heading back inside. His lunch sat untouched in the passenger seat.

Taking Rachel to lunch was the worst idea Blaine ever had. *Literally*. When she wasn't complaining about the food, she was going on and on about her boyfriend, Finn. *I still think she's imagining him. She has a very vivid imagination*. Regardless, Blaine didn't care. He didn't care that Finn was sweet or that he loved her but they couldn't be together for whatever reason that Blaine didn't give a fuck about. All he cared about was eating....and maybe a bit of intelligent conversation.

Too bad I'm mad at Kurt. The tech was the only intelligent conversation he could think of. *Oh well. I waited all Saturday for him to call me and he blew me off*. Blaine was hurt. After Kurt ran out on Saturday morning, Blaine waited patiently by his phone; willing it to ring. Eventually, he realized that Kurt had no intentions of calling and tossed his phone aside. Sunday night, he received a few calls from Kurt but chose to ignore them. It was too late. The night obviously hadn't meant as much to Kurt as it did to him. *Which sucks because I really like him*.

That morning, Blaine knew he was being harsh, but his brooding mood outweighed his compassion for the tech and his situation. Compassion won out in the end, however. When he returned from his horrible lunch with Rachel he noticed Kurt, sitting alone in his car, shouting into his phone. He looked lonely and hurt. In that moment Blaine realized that Kurt had a million things going on in his life and not all of them surrounded him. *I'll talk to him. I might have had a free weekend to be angry but Kurt may not have had time to think*. He would talk to Kurt, apologize for his earlier behavior, and find out where he stood in the tech's eyes; if anywhere.

Blaine watched as Kurt entered the building. He also watched as the tech made a beeline for the restroom. Once the door closed, he walked towards it, hoping to meet Kurt on his way out. He heard the faint sound of sniffing coming from behind the door. He hoped he was wrong; that his ears were deceiving him. The last thing he wanted was to be part of the reason Kurt was crying. Unable to take it any longer, Blaine headed out front to tell Rachel to send in the family of the dog they were performing surgery on. After a brief conversation, he took the dog and headed towards the operating room. Kurt was already there when he arrived. He was setting up their utensils, looking absolutely miserable.

"Hey. Um...you've met Danger. He's our patient today." Kurt nodded as he washed his hands. *I wouldn't talk to me either if I made me feel like crap.* Blaine sat the dog on the table and watched as the animal laid down. *He's so calm. I'm glad he doesn't know how sick he might be.* The dog had a tumor and they needed to find out if it was cancerous or not.

Blaine headed towards the sink and cleaned himself up. In his peripherals, he could see Kurt readying the animal. If things remained as they were, it was going to be a long, quiet procedure.

They worked in near silence for a moment. The only words shared between the two were requests for objects need in the procedure. That didn't bode well with Blaine, so he made an effort to turn things around. "Kurt, I'm so sorry for this morning. I was just upset that you didn't call this weekend. That doesn't excuse my professional actions towards you."

Kurt worked silently for a moment, before responding. "I was scared. I've never done anything like that before –well...except for that one time I got that one girl pregnant- and...I didn't know how you felt about the situation. I had no way of knowing if you had done that before and it scared me. We might be friends, but I had no way of knowing if you took friends home to have sex on a regular basis or not. I mean...that came out wrong."

Blaine, whose eyes never left his work, snorted. "I understand what you meant. And trust me when I say, I don't just take people home and have sex with them. I don't really do anything like we did Friday either. Before then, it'd been a long time since I...yeah. Can you hand me-" Kurt handed him his scalpel before Blaine had sentence out of his mouth. It made the vet smile. Kurt was an amazing tech, amazing enough to know what he needed before he finished the request.

Once the lines of communication were open, things ran smoother. They were able to work together more fluidly, which benefited both them and the animal. "And I'm sorry for not calling you. I started to call you Saturday but then I got scared. I told you that I wasn't looking for any type of a relationship but then Friday happened and I was so confused. Friday meant a lot to me. I've never felt that comfortable and....safe. I just...this is a lot for me. That's why I didn't call you until last night."

Blaine hummed as he worked. He remembered the conversation Kurt was referring to. He remembered how adamant Kurt was about avoiding romance in favor of finishing school and taking care of his son; a

noble yet lonely set of ambitions. "So what do you want? How do you feel about everything that happened? I mean....Kurt, I'm not going to lie, I like you a lot. You're sweet and funny and....I feel like, as unconventional as it is, I could have something special with you. I know you've got things going on in your life but....I know I like you."

"I....I like you too and..." Kurt took the utensil from his boss and handed him another. Their surgery was almost complete. "if we...I....I need you to understand that Keenan comes first. Whatever happens, I need you to understand that if he needs me or...I don't know...if we were on a date or something and he needed me...I'd drop everything and run. My dad did it for me and I'm going to do it for him. But...I'd...I'd like to see if this goes anywhere." The tech stuttered. He'd never been good at expressing his feelings.

"Cool. So, it wouldn't be inappropriate if I asked you out sometime?" Blaine asked.

Kurt smiled and watched as Blaine began to suture the sleeping animals. "Are you making plans to ask me out on a date?" He asked.

"Yeah. I guess I am."

"I'd be okay with that. We'd have to work it around-"

"Keenan and school?" Blaine finished. Kurt nodded. Everything in his life revolved around those two things. "I can work with that." They finished the surgery in a comfortable silence. Once they were finished, they allowed the animal to recover from his anesthesia and returned him to his family with promises to call once they received his test results. "Let's go into my office and talk." Blaine offered once the family walked out the door. Kurt nodded and followed his boss down the hall. *Talking is good. I like to talk.*

Kurt led the way to Blaine's office. Since the door was usually unlocked, the tech was able to open it without a key. Blaine followed him in, shutting the door behind them. He watched as the tech made his way towards his usual chair; the one on the far end of the desk near the window. The vet took the chair behind the desk and shot his employee a shy smile. *It's funny how that works. We've smiled at each other a million times but this one feels different; fresh, new, and so full of promise.* Speaking of smiles. "Kurt, I wanted to apologize again for earlier. I heard you crying in the bathroom and it killed me to know that I contributed to that. I never want to know I've made you sad."

The tech visibly shrank. He didn't want anyone to know about his mini breakdown in the bathroom. Least of all, he didn't want Blaine to think it was his fault. It wasn't. The day as a whole overtook him and he wasn't able to cope. "It wasn't you. Today was just a rough day. Sometimes things are hard and I didn't do well with it. It wasn't you that set me off, though. I've been arguing with my stepbrother since last night and he hit some nerves."

"Anything you want to talk about?" Blaine asked. He hoped Kurt would open up to him. *Like I did for him last Friday. Oh...bad joke.* He had before and it was nice. Regardless of what happened, he wanted the open and honest nature of their friendship would remain intact.

Kurt sighed. He and Blaine were friends above all else, so he assumed it was plausible for Blaine to be interested in the happenings of his life. "My dad finished an apartment over the garage for Keenan and me last night. Before I moved back home, he offered it to my brother and his wife and they declined. When I decided to move Keen and I home, he told us we could move in when he finished it. Now, my brother wants it and I'm not willing to give it up. He says it's because he and his wife need the space but I know that's not true. In the beginning, he thought the apartment was going to look bad since it was my dad's first time doing a major project alone. Then, when he found out that I was getting it – for free – and he saw how amazing it looked, he decided he wanted it. I'm not in the mood to fight with him, but I'm not giving up on this. He's not getting that apartment."

"That sucks." Blaine replied sullenly. He remembered fighting with Cooper when he was younger, but they'd grown close over the years. Now, all they fought about were details of the vet's sex life. His brother never failed to be unrealistically interested in the kinds of men Blaine slept with. "If you want, I can write you a prescription for something that will calm your nerves while you're going through this."

The tech shot his boss a scandalized look. "Blaine! I know we're a bit unorthodox around here, but that's downright unethical; not to mention very, very illegal. You're not a people doctor. You can't just do that." Kurt insisted. Blaine waved him off as he pulled out his prescription pad. He jotted down notes on the pad before tearing off the top page off and sliding it across the desk. Kurt immediately slid it back. "I'm not taking that. You're going to rip it up and we're going to pretend that none of this ever happened. I'll be fine. I've dealt with my brother's bullshit before."

"Kurt," Blaine began, staring intently at the tech, "do you trust me?" It was an odd question to ask during the commission of a crime in Kurt's eyes.

"Ummm...."

"Do you trust me?" The vet asked once again. Slowly, Kurt began to nod. Deep down, he did trust Blaine. "Good. Now take this and take the rest of the day off. Go spend some time with Keenan before you have to go to class and call me tonight if you get a chance."

"I'll make a chance to call you tonight." Kurt assured as he slid the prescription into his pocket. He would shred it when he got home but he wouldn't tell Blaine that.

"Okay. Well, then I'll talk to you later." Kurt smiled and stood from his chair, tossing a goodbye over his shoulder as he exited the office.

Once he was in his car, he pulled the paper out of his pocket. He wanted to see what Blaine wrote him an illegal prescription for. *Hell, if it's good enough, I might just fill it.* He joked to himself. He would never do such a thing. He was surprised Blaine suggested such a thing. He was an upstanding individual and veterinarian. He wasn't a law breaker.

Date Night QD PRN # unlimited.

Kurt snorted and placed he prescription back into his pocket. *That's definitely a prescription I'll be filling.* He thought as he pulled out of the parking lot.

Chapter Seven

I forgot to tell you girls what Blaine did. [ATTACHMENT] -Kurt

On his way home from class, Kurt sent Whitley and Santana a picture of the prescription Blaine wrote him. He meant to tell them in class, but their conversation was centered around a girl that Santana met the night before. So, he opened his favorite messaging app and filled his girls in.

KLADFLJA;FLKDJA;SLDKFJA THAT'S SO FUCKING SWEET! OMG....WHEN YOU GUY S GET MARRIED, THIS WILL BE A GREAT STORY TO TELL YOUR KIDS. -Whitley

Once in the driveway of his childhood home, Kurt pulled out his phone and read the message. His eyebrows scrunched as he did so. Marriage wasn't in his vocabulary at that point.

I just threw up in my mouth. -Santana

Kurt sighed at her message. Santana was never one for romance. She preferred hitting and quitting. Often times, Kurt wished the girl would allow herself to swoon just once. Her life would be much more pleasant if she did so. Kurt was sure hooking up was fun, but things were always nicer when it was with someone that cared. *Like Blaine and I. Speaking of...*

Kurt: Whatever Satan. You're getting a bit ahead of yourself, Whit. I'll talk to you guys later. I have to go put my kid to bed, fight with my brother, and call in a prescription. I'll talk to you two tomorrow.

Figures you'd want to get that /filled/ asap. ;) -Whitley

He wants as much of that /filled/ as he can get. -Santana

I knew you guys were going to take that there. -Kurt

Kurt pocketed his phone and walked into the house. If he was lucky, he could have Keenan in bed and his argument with Finn finished with enough time to call Blaine before midnight. "Daddy!" Keenan screeched

the moment the front door opened. "Look at the new Avengers pajamas Grandma bought me. They're so cool." Kurt smiled as his son trotted into the foyer to show off his pajamas. Beth wasn't far behind.

"And she got me these Justin Beiber pajamas. Do you think they're pretty, Uncle Kurt?" The tech smiled down at his niece and nodded. Beth, a spitting image of her mother, looked pretty in everything she wore.

"You guys look great!" He exclaimed as he threw his arms around the two children. "But it's late and I think it's time for bed." The children groaned as they followed Kurt into the living room. "Beth, go have your mommy tuck you in. Keenan, come with me."

"Can we read a story before bed?" Keenan asked as they descended the stairs into the basement. If things worked out as planned –*and if Finn backs the hell off*– they wouldn't be trudging into the cold basement for much longer. Instead, they would be crossing the newly finished, hardwood floors of their new apartment. Kurt tucked his son into bed as asked him what story he wanted to read. "Can you read me Love You Forever?" Keenan asked. Kurt felt his heart leap. It was their story. He quickly grabbed the book and crowded himself next to his son on the boy's bed. As Keenan curled around him, Kurt began to read. He often changed the words so that the story suited their needs.

"A father held his new baby and very slowly rocked him back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. And while he held him, he sang:

I'll love you forever,

I'll like you for always,

As long as I'm living

My baby you'll be."

Kurt continued the story as Keenan succumbed to sleep. Once he finished the book, he looked down to find his son fast asleep. *It never fails.* The young father untangled himself from Keenan's body and climbed off the tiny bed. It was time for a new one. Kurt kissed the sleeping boy on his forehead before placing the book on the nightstand and heading upstairs. He had a few things to take care of.

"Kurt!" Burt shouted from the living room when he heard the basement door open. "Can you come in here? We decided to have a family meeting." The tech groaned as he made his way towards his family. They only held family meetings when situations were too far out of hand to be handled civilly.

Burt smiled when he saw his son enter the living room. He received a light smile in return. It hurt the father's heart to see his son with such a sullen look on his face. He knew what his son was thinking. Kurt thought he was going to have to fight for something that was already given to him. Burt and Carole would not stand for that. They promised the apartment to Kurt months ago and were not going back on their decision. They called the family meeting to let Finn know that they were not going back on their decision. Kurt and Keenan would move into the apartment and that was final.

The tech took a seat in an empty armchair at the far end of the room. He pulled his feet into the chair and rested his head on his knees. He was unbelievably tired, but the evening was far from over. He had a load of laundry to start and he still needed to call Blaine. "Let's start guys." His father began. Kurt watched as his father planted his feet on the ground in front of his seat and leaned forward, practically hovering over the coffee table. It was his no nonsense posture. *He's not taking your shit tonight, Finn.* From the corner of his eye, Kurt caught his stepbrother staring just as intently at his father's posture.

You're going to get it now, Kurt. "We're obviously here about the apartment." Burt stated as he turned his body towards his stepson. "Now, Finn, we offered you the apartment before we knew Kurt and Keenan were going to be moving home. You declined. When Kurt called to tell me they were moving back, I offered him the apartment. Unlike you, he accepted it. There isn't anything you can do about that. He said he wanted it, you said you didn't. He gets the apartment."

Finn's face turned a bright shade of red. He was angry. "That's not fair. I pay rent; I should be able to change my mind if I want to." He huffed as he crossed his arms over his chest. His mother did her best not to roll her eyes. *I can't believe he just said that.* "Quinn, Beth, and I need the space. We shouldn't have to continue to live in this house while Kurt gets to move into a new, awesome apartment for free."

That was Kurt's cue. "I won't be living there for free!" He insisted. "I'll be paying lights and water up there. Besides, no one is forcing you to live here. There are plenty of apartments in Lima; you're free to move into one of those." He retorted. He noticed Quinn snicker at the comment.

There is no way in hell I'm paying rent at one of those overpriced places. Finn better just shut up and enjoy what we have. Personally, she didn't want the apartment over the garage. Beth often got cold when she

slept and the space was rather drafty. She also didn't like the prospect of having to purchase her own cable and internet package. She was already paying all of their necessities –rent, groceries, gas, car insurance-and their luxuries –cell phones, extra snacks and unnecessary groceries, and Finn's tickets to the millions of car shows he liked to attend- by herself, she didn't need any more bills. "I think Kurt and Keenan need it. We're fine where we are." She offered. In return, she received a glare from her husband. It was just as well. That's all they did nowadays. They either fought or glared at one another.

"I think that's settled then." Carole chimed a bit too enthusiastically in an attempt to break some of the tension in the room. Finn and his wife were shooting tension at one another like bullets. "Kurt and Keenan will move into the apartment."

"No!" Finn shouted, earning a round of groans from the group. As he pled his case, Kurt pulled out his phone and sent Blaine a text. Who knew when their family meeting would reach its conclusion? *If Finn has anything to say about it, we'll never be finished.*

I might kill my brother. Would you be angry if I had to call you collect later? –Kurt

He received an instant reply.

Kill is a harsh word. What's he doing? I'd always accept the charges! ;) –Blaine

He's fighting for this apartment. He only wants it because I'm getting it. He didn't want it before. His wife doesn't even want it. –Kurt

Bummer! I'd hate to have to visit you in jail. I've been squeamish about them since that one time....- Blaine

Kurt furrowed his eyebrows. He was certain Blaine would have mentioned doing hard time.

What one time? – Kurt

That one time I drove by the jail in town. It looked so scary that I made sure never to end up there. –Blaine

The tech let out a loud snort, startling his family. "See, Kurt's not even paying attention. He obviously doesn't care about the apartment. That's why I should have it!" Finn insisted. The group was far too interested in Kurt and his phone to hear him.

"What's got you laughing, Kurt?" Quinn asked with a kind smile on her face. The tech flushed a warm shade of red as he shrugged. "Or should I say who has you laughing? I know that look anywhere."

Kurt pulled a strained face and put away his phone. "Ummm...it's..."

"It's the bear!" Burt accused, pointing a finger at his son. When Kurt didn't respond, the father knew he was right. "So is there something going on between you and the bear?"

"What? It's Blaine, Dad. I'm texting Blaine." *Oh no...*

Carole's eyes went wide with recognition. Last week, Kurt told her he was going out for drinks with his boss. "Your boss is the bear?" She asked.

Burt gasped dramatically. "You had sex with your boss? Holy crap, Kurt! You better make it good for him or he'll fire your ass!" Kurt groaned and let his head fall back against the chair.

"This is uncomfortable." He groaned. "Can we please talk about the apartment and how Finn's not getting it?" For the first time all night, Finn agreed with him on something. Finn was extremely uncomfortable talking about his brother having sex. It wasn't because Kurt was his brother, it was because *gay....things* made him uncomfortable. *I'm not like a homophobe or anything, I just...it's weird okay?!*

"You're right, son. Finn is not getting that apartment and this conversation is over. We would, however, like to meet the bear sometime. If he's going to cause you bodily injury, we at least deserve to see his face." With that, Burt stood from his chair. He extended his hand to his wife and helped her out of her seat. Together, they headed to their room. He'd recorded Matlock and they needed to watch it before they went to bed.

Quinn followed shortly afterwards, heading upstairs to check on her daughter before starting a pile of homework. That left Kurt and Finn in the living room. As he stood from his seat, Finn glared at his brother. "This isn't over." He hissed before walking away.

Just as he reached the hallway, Kurt shouted after him. "I think it is, Finn. In fact, I know it is. By the weekend, I'll be moved in and you'll be ass out." He watched as his brother huffed down the hallway.

After checking on Keenan, Kurt pulled on a light jacket and stepped outside to call Blaine. Never again would Blaine be able to say that he didn't call.

The moment Kurt started to yawn, Blaine made him hang up. After a round of 'you hang up' 'no, you hang up's, he was finally able to get the tech to end the call. That didn't stop them from texting one another, however.

Friday night? Maybe after you get Keenan to sleep? I promise you'll be back before late. We won't let last time happen again. –Blaine

The vet placed his phone on his chest as he sprawled out across Hunter's couch. He'd holed himself up in his house through the weekend and he needed to get out. So, he made the short journey to his closest friend's house. *And by closest, I mean closest. As in he lives a few blocks away and not across town like those other jerks.* "Blaine, close your legs. I already told you I'm not even the slightest bit bicurious, so I'm not interested." Hunter quipped as he returned with their beers.

When Blaine looked down, he noticed how his body was strung across the couch, causing his basketball shorts to ride up his thighs. "Shut up." He shouted. "I've already told you that whether you're gay, straight, or bi, you're not good enough for me. I require a real man and you don't fit the bill." When Hunter shot him a shocked look, Blaine threw on his best bitch face and turned back to his phone. He was anxiously awaiting a text back from Kurt.

"Who does fit the bill?" Hunter asked as he turned on the news. As a police officer, he liked to keep up on current events. "Kurt? You two obviously got cozy last weekend." Blaine blushed and nodded. *Yeah, Kurt definitely fits the bill.* "Yep, you don't even have to say it. I see that stupid smirk on your face." His friend teased. Blaine wasn't listening. He'd just received a text from Kurt. That was a far more pressing matter than confirming his friend's suspicions.

Where would we go? Keenan usually goes to sleep around 8 on Friday nights and Dad has to run to Toledo on Saturday, so I don't want to keep him up too late. –Kurt

The vet frowned as he tried to think of somewhere for them to spend their first official date. He wanted it to be special, but he also wanted it to work well with the timeline Kurt provided. He racked his brain for a moment before coming up with an idea that would be fun and suited their timeline.

20th Century Lanes. I can pick you up at 8:30 and they close at 11. That means I can have you home by midnight. If that's okay. –Blaine.

The instant response made the elder smile.

Sounds perfect. I'll see you then...well and I'll see you tomorrow at work but you know what I meant! ;) –Kurt

That I did. Go to sleep. I'll talk to you tomorrow. –Blaine

I am. Night, Frank. –Kurt

Night, Sammy. –Blaine

Chapter Eight

Kurt closed the book in his lap and looked towards his son. As expected, the little boy was sprawled across his tiny bed, fast asleep. The tech slipped out of the bed and headed towards his side of the room. He grabbed his phone and sent out a quick text to his date.

Keenan just fell asleep. I'll be ready in 15. –Kurt

He then tossed the phone onto his bed and began to get ready. True to his word, he was ready a few minutes later, allotting him enough time to speak with his father before he leaves. Before he exited the room, Kurt kissed Keenan on his forehead and whispered his love into the boy's ear. He then headed up the stairs, pulling the bedroom door closed behind him.

"Keenan is asleep. He's in his bed and I closed the door. You don't have to do much; just check in on him every so often." The tech said to his father as he pulled on a light jacket. September was turning into October and it was a bit chilly outside. Burt grunted and nodded but did not take his eyes away from the television. He knew the deal. He'd check on Keenan a few times and Kurt would be home before he knew it. Despite the previous weekend's events, Burt knew his son. He knew how much it killed his boy to stay out all night –away from his son all night – so he had faith that it wouldn't happen again. Not that he minded. He liked the idea of Kurt going out to enjoy himself. He'd spent too many years being miserable.

"Am I getting to meet the bear tonight?" Burt asked. Kurt groaned. *I hate how they call him that.* He advised his father that, no, he would not get to meet 'the bear' that night. *Maybe another time.* "Alright, but make sure he knows that I will not hesitate to hunt a bear down if he hurts my boy."

"Okay, Dad!" Kurt groaned. He crossed the living room and planted a kiss on top of his father's bald head. "I should be home before Carole." He called as he headed towards the door. It was a joke since Carole was working an overnight shift, and he was glad his father took it as such. As he walked out the front door, he heard his father chuckle.

Blaine squinted as he drove down the barely lit suburban street. Kurt gave an address earlier in the day and Blaine was trying to find it. Unfortunately, the houses on Whitman Avenue didn't have house numbers listed on the mailboxes. They were on the houses and that made them difficult to see when the porch lights weren't on. *The residents of Whitman Ave. don't seem keen on using porch lights, I see.*

He drove slowly, attempting to read the numbers on the dark porches from his car. *Someone's going to think I'm doing a drive by. Oh crap! I hope they don't call the police. The man is always trying to hold me do-* Blaine's thoughts stopped when he noticed a figure standing at the end of the street, looking around. It was Kurt. And he looked perfect.

The way the streetlight illuminated his body made him look like an angel. His untucked, green dress shirt, painfully, tight jeans, and brown shoes –*which probably match his brown belt* – told another story. Kurt looked sinfully delicious. Over the week, they'd discussed the direction they wanted their *relationship* to take, so Blaine would have to be the picture of a choir boy. *Damn.* He really wanted to put his hands on Kurt in his skin tight jeans.

The moment the veterinarian realized that he was parked in the middle of the street, staring down at the man beneath the streetlight, he pressed lightly on the gas and allowed the car to creep forward. It only took a moment for the angel –*I mean Kurt* – under the streetlight to notice him coming. As he pulled closer, Blaine noticed the giddy smile spread across Kurt's lips. He seemed excited. *Good. I'm excited too.*

Blaine undid his seatbelt and attempted to step out of his car. Kurt, fast a gazelle with his mile long legs-beat him to the punch, swinging open the car door and plopping down in the passenger seat before the vet knew what hit him. "Ummm...I was gonna...door." Blaine stuttered as he took a good look at Kurt; a better look. *Well, goddamn!* Kurt's tragic beauty was illuminated by the moonlight and his outfit was far more impressive than Blaine originally thought.

"Well, I...ummm...thank you." Kurt teased as he fastened his seatbelt. His eyes flicked from the buckle up to meet Blaine's. There was a moment. It wasn't life changing and the ground didn't shift beneath their feet, but there was a moment, a realization that they were in the exact right spot at the exact right time. Blaine decided to capitalize on that moment. Parked in the middle of the street, he leaned over the center console and captured Kurt's lips.

Their mouths moved in perfect synchronization. Blaine raised his hand to cup the tech's cheek and allowed his tongue to move along the younger man's lower lip. Luckily, Kurt parted his lips, allowing the

vet access. Their tongues wrestled for a moment before Kurt pulled back. He took a deep breath and tried not to flash his cheesiest of cheesy smiles. "I waited all week to do that." Blaine whispered as he rebuckled his seat belt.

"Well, the wait is over." Kurt replied. With that, they were off.

The drive to the bowling alley was short and sweet. Before either man knew it, they were pulling into a space at the far end of the parking lot. Blaine killed the engine and started to unfasten his seat belt. He didn't get to open Kurt's door when he first picked him up, but he was damn sure going to open it for the start of their date. While the tech was still trying to undo his seatbelt, the vet hopped out of the car and jogged around to Kurt's side.

He smiled down at the surprised look given to him by the tech as he stepped out of the car. "And people say chivalry is dead." Kurt teased. He watched with an overwhelming sense of unexplainable pride as Blaine closed the door behind him before leading him towards the bowling alley.

"What can I say? I've always tried to be quite a gentleman."

"You're doing a great job."

Kurt stopped just short of the entrance and stared off into the distance. Blaine furrowed his eyebrows as he tried to see whatever Kurt was staring at. "What? Is everything okay?" He finally asked, unable to see whatever was catching his date's eye.

"Nothing. Just...do you see that red truck over there?" Kurt lifted his arm and pointed towards a small truck on the far end of the parking lot. Blaine followed the arm straight to the vehicle. He then nodded. "It looks just like my brother's truck, but he should be at home. Quinn is working tonight and my dad won't watch Beth unless Quinn asks. I know for a fact that she didn't ask."

"It's probably not him. If he's supposed to be home, then he's probably home. Do you know what I saw on our way up?" Kurt shook his head. He'd seen the truck almost as soon as they exited the car, so he hadn't noticed much else. "I saw Rachel's car. And I know it's her car because she's the only person I know with

an 'I break for Barbra' sticker on her bumper. I hope we don't run into her." He heard Kurt groan next to him.

"I wouldn't even be able to deal with it if we ran into her." Kurt admitted. *Me neither.* Blaine held the door for the tech and watched as he sashayed in the door. Kurt's brother's clone truck and Rachel's unfortunate presence were not going to distract him from his beautiful date. *No. Way. In. Hell.* Once Kurt was inside, Blaine followed suit.

"Gross. Gross. Gross. Gross!" Kurt whined as he slid his feet into his rented shoes. *They're warm. Why are they warm. Ewwww.....* Blaine, who was seated next to him on the bench chuckled and shook his head. He didn't reply, however. He couldn't exactly disagree. The thought of wearing shoes that hundreds of others had worn was disgusting. It was bowling, however. It went with the territory.

"Ready?" Blaine asked once his shoes were tied. He stood quickly and held out his hand to Kurt. The tech took it with a smile. Together, they walked to an empty lane at the end of the alley. "Did you want to go first?" He asked awkwardly. Dating was almost a foreign task to the vet. It'd been years since he'd taken someone out and even longer than that since he'd taken someone to a bowling alley. Kurt bit his lip, but nodded none the less.

"Remember what I said. I haven't bowled before. I'm going to need a lot of help. A lot!" Then, for good measure, Kurt pouted and fluttered his pretty, little eyelashes. *Oh, that's not fair.* "Will you help me, Blaine?" *What the fuck?* The vet gulped as his head broke into a slow nod. He couldn't very well say no. Not when Kurt was staring at him with those baby blues that made Blaine's knees weak. "But I want you to go first. I want you to show me how it's done."

Again, Blaine nodded. There was something about the way Kurt was looking at him that made him cautious of speaking. The way Kurt fluttered his eyelashes and pouted just a bit made Blaine not trust the words that could come out of his mouth. So, he nodded. Short and sweet. *Just like me.*

Slowly, the vet walked towards the lane and grabbed a bright orange ball from the rack. He lined himself up with the middle of the lane, pulled back, and released the ball. It flew down the lane and knocked over three pins. *Bam. And that's how you do it.* Blaine turned around with a smug look on his face. So it wasn't a

strike, who cared? He still hit something. "You're up, Kurt. Come here." He watched as Kurt jumped up and sauntered over. "Okay, grab your ball."

"Left or right?" Kurt asked, confusing the veterinarian. When the younger man burst into a fit of giggles, Blaine realized what he'd said. Slowly, he began to shake his head. "Just kidding." Kurt chuckled as he picked up the highlighter yellow ball from the rack.

"Har har har." Blaine walked Kurt towards the lane, allowing Kurt to step forward. Blaine stepped behind the tech and put his hands on the younger man's hips. "Alright, spread your legs just a bit." He watched intently as Kurt followed his directions by spreading his legs shoulder width apart. "Great, now arch your back a little bit.

Kurt followed his directions. "What exactly does arching my back to the point that I'm practically sitting in your lap have to do with bowling?" Kurt asked over his shoulder. He barely caught the sly smirk on his date's face.

"Oh...nothing much. I just wanted to see you arch your back." Blaine whispered hotly into his ear. At that, the pair broke into a fit of giggles. They were so consumed by their laughter that they didn't notice the pair watching from the distance.

Finn noticed it first. A snort. Not just any snort, however. This snort was very distinct. It was nasally and a bit undignified. He knew that snort. He'd known it for years. Quickly, he began to scan the room. The roar of laughter that accompanied the snorts was growing louder by the moment. It couldn't be far.

Suddenly, out of the corner of his eye, he found the sources. As he suspected, one of the laughing parties was his brother. *I'm so screwed*. As quickly as he could, Finn gathered his and Rachel's garbage and made his way to the trash can. They had to get out of there. Kurt would surely tell his wife if he found him out with another woman. As far as she knew, he was at home. He wasn't, however. He asked Burt to watch Beth so that he could go speak with a friend about a job. That was obviously a lie. He was lying about quite a few things these days. He was lying about Rachel because he didn't want his wife to murder him in his sleep. He was lying about being unemployed because he didn't want his wife to think that he had any money to offer her when he filed for divorce. He was lying about a lot and he was not ready to stop. Not by a long shot.

Rachel returned a moment later with a smile on her face. She immediately noticed her boyfriend's pale complexion. "What? What's wrong? Did Quinn call you? Is she complaining again? I don't understand why you don't just leave her." Slowly, Finn shook his head.

"No. Kurt and his date are here. We have to go. They can't see us." Finn huffed as he shrugged his jacket on. Rachel had to understand. She had to. He had a plan. He had a timeline. He knew she was growing frustrated but he couldn't rush things. "I know you're upset-"

"Is he with Dr. Anderson? Oh my Barbra. They're on a date!" She squeaked. "Oh...right. Kurt. Sorry for interrupting." Finn opened his mouth to speak but was cut off once again. Rachel was good at that. "It's always about Kurt. Just like when we were in high school. While he was running around that fancy prep school, you were working weekends to take me on dates....oh and to take care of Quinn after she got pregnant. I just..." Finn knew what was coming. Their arguments about things always ended the same. "I'm so tired of being a secret. I was a secret in high school because you were stupid enough to get your girlfriend of the time pregnant and I'm a secret now. I'm just so tired of-"

Finn was done. "I get it, Rachel. I do. You're tired of this. I'm sorry. I just want to make sure I can take care of you once we're actually together. I can't do that if Quinn takes me to the cleaners because she found out I was cheating on her from my stepbrother. So, if you could, grab your coat and let's go." With a huff, Rachel grabbed her jacket and stomped towards the door. *He is so making this up to me.*

Blaine knew something was up once they reached their third frame. *Miraculously*, for a first time bowler, Kurt was amazing. Nope. Blaine didn't believe it at all. Just as Kurt was about to take his turn, the vet shouted from his seat. "Liar!" He watched as Kurt turned on a dime.

"Excuse you?" The tech asked with a hint of playful warning in his voice and a sexy smirk on his face.

"You're a liar. There's no way you've bowled strikes on your last few turns unless you've bowled before. I've been doused. Had. Bamboozed. Hoodwinked." Kurt bit his lip in the most adorable way and shrugged.

"I guess you caught me. My friends and I bowled all the time in high school." Blaine shook his head at the confession. "Are you mad at me?" Kurt asked innocently in a not so innocent way. It never ceased to amaze Blaine how Kurt could look so innocent and so sinfully delicious at the same time.

The vet shook his head. He wasn't mad. He was impressed. Kurt played the part so well. 'Can you help me hold this ball?' *'Can you show me how to throw this again? I forgot.'* *'Is my butt supposed to stick out this far? I feel silly.'* It was all a game; a game that Blaine would like to play again one day. "Never that." The vet stood from his seat and walked towards his date. He turned the younger man towards the lane and placed his hands on his hips once again. "I had a hell of a good time teaching you how to do it, so I can't be mad." He whispered.

He watched as Kurt shivered. They'd agreed to take things slowly. Things progressed so quickly the previous weekend and it ended up with both of them harboring hurt feelings. Neither man wanted to experience that again, so they would take things slow until they were both completely comfortable with the situation. Luckily for them, as adults, that didn't mean that they couldn't play around a bit. Light, teasing touches and flirtatious games were completely acceptable as far as they were concerned.

Once Kurt wiped the floor with Blaine, the pair gave up their lane in favor of grabbing beer and pizza from the concession stand. Food in hand, they sat at the first table they found and began to eat. In between bites of too greasy pizza and sips of beer, they learned a lot about each other. Not only did Blaine find out that Kurt was an amazing bowler, but he also found out that Kurt attended his Alma Mater. At different times, they were each students at Dalton Academy.

"So you started the year after I graduated. That's crazy." Kurt nodded as he chewed his food. If it weren't for the great company, he'd be dead. The pizza was awful and he'd kill for a salad at that moment.

"All four years. I got bullied pretty badly in middle school and my dad refused to tolerate it. When he heard about Dalton's zero tolerance policy he pissed himself. He couldn't believe that there was a school like that in Ohio and he wasn't about to let it slip through his fingertips." Blaine nodded as Kurt spoke. More than anyone, he knew exactly why such a place was important to kids in Ohio. Gay, straight, black, white. It didn't matter. Dalton was the place where boys went when they'd fought long and hard just to be put down in the end. It was safe and comfortable.

"I know what you mean. That's the exact reason I went to Dalton. I only went for three years. I started my freshman year at a public school but I got the crap beat out of me at a school dance. My parents freaked out and transferred me immediately. They may not have agreed with my sexuality but they weren't going to let me be beaten up." Blaine admitted. He watched as Kurt nodded in response. "Personally, I loved Dalton. I fenced there. I met my first real boyfriend there. I was a Warbler and-

Kurt's eyes went wide. "You were a Warbler?" He asked. Blaine shot him a proud smile and nodded. Being a Warbler was the best experience he had in high school. "Shut up. I was a Warbler. I barely made it in and I only had one solo in four years, but I was a Warbler."

Blaine's jaw dropped. Literally. If he didn't pick it up soon, it would probably hit the floor. "No way. What's your range? I bet its killer. Something about your voice tells me it's amazing. God, we have to do karaoke one night." Kurt nodded emphatically towards his date. *That's obvious.*

With one word, their entire date stopped. "Countertenor." Kurt watched as Blaine's entire body went ridged. He looked as if he'd seen a ghost. Without a word, the vet pulled out his phone and began to type excitedly on it. A moment after he finished, it rang.

"Hel-....I know. Right! I-...I think he was. Wes...Wes. Are you okay? Can you hear me?" Blaine pulled the phone away from his ear and checked the screen. "I think I just broke Wes." He said as he slid his phone into his pocket. Noticing the curious look on his date's face, Blaine elaborated. "Wes and David were members of the Warbler's Council when we were in school. For years, we waited for a countertenor so that we could open up our song selections. Some songs just don't sound right with a bunch a deep voices. Anyways, we never found one. Now we find out that there was an amazing one that joined the Warblers right after we graduated." Blaine shook his head as he thought about all the missed opportunities the group suffered due to the lack of variety in their range. "We would have begged you to sing solos. Literally begged. We would have taken all the solos and given them to you...and well to me too but that's because I'm awesome."

Kurt chuckled at Blaine's enthusiasm. "I doubt it. In four years, I only had one solo and it was-"

"*Straight Up*. I was there." Blaine finished. He watched as Kurt's mouth joined his on the floor. "Wes heard that you guys were doing something different and we went to see it. Honestly, we didn't think it was going to work. But then, there you were, right in the middle of a bunch of beat boxing, dancing guys, belting out Paula's greatest hit. We saw you -Wes, David, Trent, Hunter, Seb- we all saw you guys kill it. We started to go back and talk to you guys but you all seemed busy celebrating an amazing show so we left."

Kurt couldn't believe it. Blaine had been present at his greatest performance in...ever. That night, he'd taught Ms. Abdul a thing or two about performing and Blaine had seen it. The tech could barely wrap his head around it. "I can't believe you-"

"Last frame everyone. We will be closing in fifteen minutes."

Without a second thought, the men finished their food in silence. Moments later, they returned their shoes to the rental counter and walked out the front door; hand in hand.

The drive home was filled with a comfortable silence. After an amazing evening together, the two were exhausted and ready for bed. *Beds. Separate beds. They'd done the singular bed thing the previous weekend. Well, technically, we did couch since we never made it to the bedroom.*

Before they knew it, Blaine pulled in behind Kurt's car and parked. "Looks like we're here." He stated lamely. He didn't want the night to be over, but he knew it had to. Kurt had a child to get home to while Blaine had...cats. *They're probably pissed because I think I forgot to feed them. Shit!*

Kurt nodded hesitantly. Yep, their date was over. "What sucks is the fact that I'm not ready to be here yet." Blaine grunted. He wasn't ready either. "But, I have a long day tomorrow and I've got to get some sleep." The vet nodded. Earlier in the evening, Kurt told him how he, Keenan and two of his girlfriends were going shopping for furniture for his new apartment. "What are you doing tomorrow?" The tech asked, in no rush to leave the car.

"Sitting on my ass at Hunter's house with the guys. It's our thing." He replied nonchalantly. He received a grunt from Kurt. If the vet didn't know any better, he'd assume that Kurt was a little jealous. He understood, however. He couldn't imagine never having time to sit down and just hang out. Kurt was always going, going, going. Fuck smelling the roses, Kurt smelled the coffee and kept it moving.

Eventually, the pair exited the car and Blaine walked his date to the door. Standing in each other's personal space on the front porch, the pair locked eyes. "I had such an amazing time tonight." Blaine whispered as he laced his arm around the younger's man waist and pulled him closer. "I hope we can do this again."

Kurt placed his hands on the vet's chest and leaned in a bit. "We will." In second's time, the pair closed the short between them and locked lips. Neither would ever comprehend how their lips fit together so perfectly. Neither had time to dwell on the thought. Before too long, their mouths weren't the only things moving together. Their tongues, never ones to be left out, found each other and began to wrestle.

Eventually, when air was necessary, the pair pulled apart. A loud, lewd pop sounding as they did so. "Can I call you tomorrow?" Blaine asked breathlessly. Kurt would never cease taking his breathe away.

Kurt grinned. "I'd be disappointed if you didn't." With that, Kurt stepped back and watched as Blaine left the porch and headed towards his car. He waved as Blaine stepped into his car and again as the car backed out of the driveway. Once he was out of sight, Kurt unlocked the front door and stepped inside.

He hummed as he slid out of his jacket and as he walked through the dark house. As far as he could tell, everyone was asleep. "Want you to make me feel like I'm the only girl in the world." He sang as he danced down the hallway. He felt like he was on cloud nine. Being with Blaine made him feel light and airy. "Want you to-"

"Have a good night, son?" Kurt jumped back at the sound of the unexpected voice. He backed up a few steps and poked his head into his father's office. There, sat in his office chair with Kel on his lap, was Burt. He looked particularlyevil. *Holy Mojojojo*. Kurt watched with a cautious eye as his father petted the cat.

"Dad, you look like Dr. Evil. What are you doing up this late?" Usually, if Kurt had to do something late – which was never- his parents checked on Keenan a few times and then headed to bed. It was alarming that his father was still awake at such an hour.

"Just making sure you got home okay. From what I saw from here, it looked like the bear got you home just fine. You two also looked cozy, so I'm going to assume that the date went well." Kurt groaned because –*really, Dad? Peeping out your office window to see what's going on outside.*

"I have to get up early, so Kel and I are going to go cuddle and then fall asleep. You should too, Dad. You have to get up early tomorrow." Kurt stepped into the office and picked the giant, black cat up from his dad's lap.

Just as he walked out into the hallway, he heard his father shout towards him. "You're cuddling with Kel, huh? Didn't you just have enough cuddling out on the porch with the bear?" he shouted. Kurt smirked and rolled his eyes.

"I wish you'd stop calling him that." He hollered back.

"No chance in hell, son."

Kurt and his son left the house early the next morning. They had a date with a pair of ladies and they did not want to be late. "Are you going to make me drink coffee, Daddy?" Keenan asked as he watched the scenery passed by his window.

The tech furrowed his eyebrows. "What? Why would I do that?" He asked, utterly confused.

"Because we're going to Starbucks to meet those girls." Keenan's tone let Kurt know that his son thought his question was by far the stupidest thing he'd ever heard. Apparently, going to Starbucks meant that everyone was required to drink coffee in Keenan's eyes. *Why didn't I know that?* Kurt thought to himself as he shook himself.

"No. The world will never be able to handle you on caffeine. That's why you can't drink soda....tea...and definitely not coffee." He advised. The young father heard his son grunt from the backseat. It was such a Hummel thing for him to do. As much as Kurt hated to admit it, he –just like his father and son- was a grunter. *When someone says something I'm not into...grunt. When someone says something that I wasn't listening to....grunt.*

Once they pulled into the parking lot, Kurt unfastened his son's seatbelt and helped him out of the car. Hand in hand, they walked from the parking lot towards the building. As they walked, Kurt looked around for Whitley's car. When he didn't see it, the pair walked inside. While it wasn't cold outside, it was chilly enough for his son to need a small jacket. He didn't want him to get sick. *That would be awful.*

The building was packed and the line was a mile long. "Can I go find a table, Daddy? As long as you can see me?" Keenan asked when he saw the line. Kurt shook his head. There were too many people around and it would only take a moment for him to lose sight of the table. *Umm...hell no.* He watched as his son pouted for a moment but eventually relented. As more and more people entered the building, Keenan decided that it was best to stay near his father.

Fifteen minutes later, Kurt and Keenan were waiting for Kurt's coffee. Keenan had an orange juice in one hand, a piece of coffee cake in the other, and a smile on his face. He loved the coffee cake from Starbucks. When he and his Daddy lived in New York, they stopped at Starbucks on their way to his daycare every morning. He missed that. His Daddy never had time for early morning Starbucks coffee cake anymore.

"Grande Nonfat Mocha for Kurt." The barista shouted. Kurt stepped forward to grab his cup with the hand that was not holding his son's. Just as he reached for it, it was snatched up. Kurt turned, face fixed with the best bitch glare he could muster –*which is a pretty damn good one right now because no you did not-* and sought out the hand that held his coffee.

"Thanks for waiting for us." Whitley snarked as she looked Kurt's cup up and down. Kurt sighed and rolled his eyes as he snatched the cup. "Yo, barista!" She shouted once her grip loosened on the cup. "Grande Mocha Frap and Grande White Chocolate Mocha." She shouted. From behind her, the entire line groaned.

"Umm...ma'am...you're going to have to..." Santana chose that moment to step forward and spoke.

"Have to what? Unless you want me to tell your manager that you're discriminating on us by sending us to the back of the bus, Imma need you to just do it."

Everyone turned and looked at the woman. "Discriminating?" The barista asked with a confused look on his face.

"I'm a Latina lesbian. We'll pretend that you already knew that and..."

Whitley stepped in and spoke up. "And that you were not too pleased to hear it. We wouldn't want you to lose your job, so you should just do it." Dumbfounded, the barista walked away. Moments later he returned with their drinks and a request for them never to return. "That's like the third Starbucks that we've been banned this week. What is wrong with these people?" Whitley asked as they followed Kurt and his son to the table they'd picked out.

Both women watched intently as their friend lifted his son into one of the chairs at the table. "Be careful not to make a mess, son." The young father warned as his son took a bite of his cake.

"Omg. You're such an adorable dad, Kurt." Whitley cooed as she took a sip of her coffee. Kurt smiled at her and took a sip of his own.

"Why thank you. I try." Kurt replied. "Oh...where are my manners?" He turned to his son who was staring at the women across from him intently. "Keenan, these are my friends Whi-" As usual, he was cut off.

"Auntie Whitley." She reached across the table and shook the boy's tiny hand.

"And I'm your Auntie Snixx."

Keenan's head tilted. "Snickers?"

"Snixx. We'll let it slide this time. In no time, you'll have it right." Keenan smiled and nodded. He couldn't wait.

The group spent a while in Starbucks mapping out their plan of attack. They would hit all of the second hand stores on Jefferson's Mile in search of furniture, décor, and household objects for Kurt's new apartment. Halfway through, they'd break for lunch. Then, at the end of the day, Burt would meet them to pick up the furniture. They would all then head back to the house to decorate. Depending on how late it ended up being, Santana and Whitley would probably stay over. Kurt honestly hoped it was late because he was dying to tell someone about his date with Blaine the previous night. Unfortunately, he couldn't do that with Keenan around. It was far too soon to bring up his newfound dating life around his son.

Three consignment shops into their day and Kurt was let down. Either the furniture was ruined beyond repair or it was far too big for the space. It was frustrating. "If this place is a bust, let's go to lunch. I think Keenan's getting cranky because he's hungry.

"He's probably bored to death. Watching you flip cushions on couches is boring as hell." Santana quipped as they walked into the store. "If I were him, I would have been running around by now acting a damn fool." Kurt rolled his eyes and walked directly towards the furniture area. When Santana noticed Keenan following him, she grabbed the boys arm. "Come on. Let's go over there and see if they have anything fun. Let him handle the furniture by himself."

Keenan stared at her with wide eyes. She'd said the magic word: Fun. "We have to let him know I'm with you though." He whispered.

"Kurt," Santana shouted, "Whit and I are kidnapping your kid and holding him hostage on the fun side of the store. Have a good time flipping cushions." The three watched as Kurt waved towards them as he began pulling the throw pillows off couches. "Damn, he's on a mission."

"You have no idea." Keenan said as he shook his head. The group walked towards the opposite side of the store; the side with the clothing and the toys. The pair looked back at Kurt, who was still examining

various pieces of furniture, before making their way towards Whitley, who was perusing the clothing racks.

Whitley flipped through a few dresses aimlessly. She wasn't interested in any of them. They were all boring or Laura Bush conservative. She wanted something sexy....and cheap. "I said I'll buy you a toy, Keenan, but you have to remember I'm not spending more than twenty dollars here." She heard her best friend say to her other best friend's son. It made her laugh. It also made her think.

Quickly, she pulled out her phone and flipped through her song list. When she found the song she was looking for, she turned the volume up and began to sing. "I'm gonna pop some tags, only got twenty dollars in my pocket." Santana recognized the song and began to laugh. It was their go to song for second hand shopping.

Soon, Santana joined in. She picked up Keenan and twirled him around as she did so, causing the boy to break into a fit of giggles. "Draped in a leopard print. Girls standing next to me. Probably should have washed this, it smells like R. Kelly's sheets-"

"Pisssssssss." Whitley added. She continued to flip through the dresses –*bad, bad, ugly....oh my God*- as the song played. She stopped singing when she saw it. It was.... "Oh, you're coming home with momma." She pulled the dress from the hanger and draped it over her arm. She couldn't. There was no way she could leave that store without that dress.

When she was finished with the dresses, she made her way towards Keenan and Santana. They were dancing around in an aisle, earning disgusted looks from fellow customers. The brunette rolled her eyes. They obviously didn't know how to have fun.

"They had a broken keyboard. I bought a broken keyboard." Santana sang. She and Keenan were having a great time. They were singing and dancing. Keenan didn't know the words, but that wasn't the point. He was having fun. From what Kurt told him –pure, unadulterated – fun was something that the little boy hadn't had since Nathan left. Try as Kurt might, his son was in an emotional ditch and the tech was having difficult time pulling out of it. If she could help the situation by dancing around like a fool in the middle of a thrift store, she would.

Out of the corner of her eye, she noticed an empty rolling bin. She'd watched moments before as an employee brought it out to stock clothing. When said employee had his back turned, Santana swiped the bin and placed Keenan in it. She then began rolling him around the store in it. The excited squeal that left the boy's mouth was enough to let her know she'd gone the right route.

"I'm...I'm hunting, looking for a come up. This is *freaking* awesome." Whitley continued to sing as she scanned the racks. Every so often, she'd look up to see Keenan and Santana zooming past her with rolling bin. Of the three, none of them noticed the look of pure disbelief on Kurt's face as he watched the scene unfold. They also failed to notice the manager walk towards the tech and ask him to stop them. Lastly, the missed the sight of Kurt stomping across the store towards them, a look of disapproving determination on his face.

"You three better stop now!" Kurt hissed, startling the group. As quickly as she could, Santana pulled Keenan out of the rolling bin and sat him on the ground. "Do you guys know the manager just tried to kick us out? If it hadn't been for the fact that I'm buying a bunch of her furniture, she would have done it." Keenan continued to laugh and tug on Whitley's hand to continue to play.

"Kurt, look at him. You said it yourself, he's hasn't really been happy since you moved home. Look at him. He's happy." Whitley whispered to her friend. His anger immediately began to diminish.

Kurt sighed and watched his son. It was like he was watching him in slow motion, running around the girls' legs; a toy in one hand a smile so wide his eyes resembled crescent moon.

"You're right Whitley, but can we please knock it off in the store. I don't really feel like getting kicked out. Who gets kicked out of The Salvation Army?" The girls snickered and turned away. If only he knew how many Salvation Armys they'd been kicked out of.

When he didn't receive an answer, Kurt sighed. "Do you have anything you need to pay for? I'm starving?" Keenan held up the giant giraffe he'd found and Whitley held up the dress. "Do you need that?" Kurt asked his son. Keenan shrugged. *Not really, but I want it.* Santana grabbed the giraffe and advised that she would be paying for it. With a shake of his head, Kurt turned to Whitley. "And you? That is literally the ugliest dress I've ever seen. It looks like it just fell off some girl in a bad 70s movie. Mint green? Ruffles? Really?"

His friend is unfazed by his criticism. "Whatever. Don't act like I don't know that. I figured I couldn't leave a crime against fashion like this on the rack. I'm gonna buy it and then we're going to have a 'burn the dress' party one night." At that, Kurt looked intrigued.

"That'll be \$2.40." The cashier advised after ringing up both the dress and the giraffe. Santana pulled her wallet out of her purse and purchased both. Burning dresses. She was down.

"If you're serious about that, we can build a bonfire in my backyard tonight after Keen goes to sleep." He whispered towards his friends. Both girls nodded emphatically. "Hell, we'll get some beers and light that bi-" Keenan turned a wary eye towards his father, "that *thing* on fire. It'll be great."

"Can we go eat now, Daddy?" Keenan whined as they walked outside. Kurt looked down at his son and nodded. With his furniture purchased, he was finally ready to have lunch.

"And what can I get you, little man?" The waitress asked, turning her attention towards the curly haired little boy. They chose to eat at Sandy Bottoms, a beach themed restaurant just a few blocks from the thrift shop. They'd eat and then head back to the store. The items Kurt purchased had to be picked up before the store closed at 5:30. It was a quarter to four, so the group had a while.

Keenan shot the waitress an award winning smile. "What do you have light on draft?" There was an audible gasp that rang out from the table. It was followed by a round of low chuckles.

"Keenan!" Kurt shouted, staring at his son in disbelief. *This is why people think I can't take care of my child.* "What the....ugggg....he'll have water." The waitress, obviously uncomfortable with the situation. She quickly jotted down the drink order and walked away. Once she was out of ear shot, Kurt turned to his son. "Are you kidding me? Where did you even hear that? No one at this table even ordered a beer."

Keenan worried his lip between his teeth. Uncle Finn told him that it was a cool way of ordering Kool Aid. Everyone liked Kool Aid. "Oh my God. That was perfect. You're now officially Auntie Whitley's favorite nephew." Whitley shouted between cackles. Santana seconded her statement. Keenan was great.

"Sorry, Daddy. Uncle Finn always says that and he said it was Kool Aid. I really wanted Kool Aid."

"Well you're getting water, it's better for you."

The group didn't have to wait long for their drinks or their food. Before the clock on Kurt's phone hit 4:30, they were eating. Just as Kurt raised his fork full of grouper to his lips, his phone buzzed on the table. He instantly grabbed it and began to go through his messages.

Things took longer than expected, we haven't even left yet. I probably won't be back in time to get your stuff. I'm sorry, kid. -Dad

Kurt growled, clenching his fist as the sound left his lips. That was the last thing he needed. If he didn't get the furniture that day, the store would resell it. Sure, they'd give him a refund of his money, but he didn't want that. He wanted the furniture he picked out. He was certain that he'd be able to find another sectional somewhere around town, but he knew none of them would be the rustic orange color that Kurt knew would look amazing in the space.

Keenan, mouth full of chicken nuggets, turned to his father. "What's wrong, Daddy?" His voice was high and innocent.

"Nothing. Just....Grandpa Burt can't go get our furniture and now....I don't know." He did know. He'd have to call and ask Finn to do it. It was the last thing he wanted to do, but he didn't have any other options. He didn't know any other people with trucks and....*I really want that damn furniture.*

He quickly rattled off a text to his father.

It's alright, Dad. Maybe you and Carole should stay a while and have a date night. I'll handle it. -Kurt

And then he began to dial Finn's number. Midway through, his screen changed, indicating that he had an incoming call. It was from Blaine. *Well, I have to answer.* "Hey stranger." He cooed into the phone, earning the attention of the entire table. They watched intently as his scowl turned into an excited grin. He was always excited to talk to Blaine, especially when they were off the clock.

"Hey. Sorry I didn't call earlier. I remembered that you were supposed to be out with Keenan and your friends and I didn't want to call too early." Kurt did his best not to squeal. Blaine remembered. It was too sweet.

"It's okay." he began. He knew he sounded like a thirteen year old girl who'd just received a call from the boy he had a crush on but he didn't care. Blaine made him feel like a thirteen year old girl sometimes. "We're actually eating a very, very late lunch right now. What'd you do today?"

Blaine made an uninterested noise. *"Ehhh...we're all just hanging out at Hunter's house. He's got the biggest television, so we often head over here to watch it."*

"Well, that's cool. Hey, can I call you back? My dad can't get the furniture I just bought and I need to find a truck. I have to ca-" Blaine cut him off.

"Hunter. He has a truck. If you need us to come get it, we can." A spark raced through Kurt's body. It bounced around his limbs and struck his heart like lightening. Blaine offering up someone else's vehicle to move his furniture was one of the sweetest things someone had ever done for him. Unfortunately, he couldn't accept.

"I'd love that but-"

"No buts." Blaine interrupted. *"He's right here and he's saying he'll do it."* Kurt listened as the phone shuffled.

"Hey, Kurt. It's Hunter. We're not doing shit. We can get your stuff. Just let me know where it's at."

"I don't know how I'm supposed to pay you guys back for this." Kurt admitted. That was what was holding him back. Aside from the few girlfriends he'd had over the years –ones that listened when he cried over Nathan and babysat when he had to work- he'd never had friends to call when he was in a bind. It was different; nice.

He listened intently as Hunter scoffed. *"We're your friends now, Kurt. You don't have to pay us back. Just tell us where we need to be and we'll be there; all of us."* Kurt rattled off the name of the store and the address. Together, they made plans to meet there by five.

"The waitress is here with our check. Will you tell Blaine that I'll see him in a little bit?" Hunter agreed and Kurt hung up. When he looked away from the table, he noticed three sets of eyes staring at him intently.

He shook his head, cutting off any and all questions they may have had and slid his card into the black folder that held their bill. Moments later, they left.

After a short walk, the group found themselves back at the consignment store. Instead of walking in, they made their way around the building towards the back where they'd parked their cars. To their surprise, Blaine and the guys were already there, loading up the furniture.

Sebastian noticed them first. He instantly threw up a hand, motioning them over. Kurt waved and began to walk towards them. Whitley and Santana –who felt it necessary to carry Keenan for whatever reason– followed closely behind him. "I hope it's okay that we told them we were here to pick up your stuff." Sebastian shouted as they neared.

The tech nodded. He wasn't looking at the surgeon, but he heard what the man said loud and clear. He was looking past him at Blaine, who was helping David load his couch into the back of Hunter's truck. The way the elder's tight sweatpants hugged the curves of his hips and the way his t-shirt flexed with his muscles as he lifted the furniture was enough to make the tech forget where he was.

The men had an assembly line going. Just behind Blaine were Wes and Hunter. They were carrying out another piece of the sectional. Behind them was Trent, carrying the pictures the tech purchased. It was interesting to see. The group worked in perfect tandem until the truck was packed. Once they were finished, Kurt ran over to thank them. "Thank you guys so much for coming out. I don't know what I would have done without you." He shouted excitedly, not taking his eyes off Blaine.

The vet blushed, knowing the gratitude was for him. *Well, mostly for me. I was the one that suggested that we help after all.* "It's not a problem, Kurt. We're all friends." Blaine replied, stepping a bit closer to the man. He was so lost in Kurt's eyes and the smile on the tech's face that he didn't realize the audience they were garnering. Slowly, the group began to gravitate towards the men, forming a small circle around them in the giant parking lot. It wasn't until Trent spoke up that the men realized that they weren't alone.

"I just put those pictures in my car and, with Wes and David riding with me, I don't think there will be room for you, Blaine." Trent did his best to sound genuinely sorry but failed miserably. Maybe it was the huge smile on his face or maybe it was the halfhearted shrug. Neither man was sure which it was, but they both knew he was up to something. "Maybe you should ride with Kurt."

The tech stepped forward and crossed his arms over his chest, shooting Trent an inquisitive look. Santana noticed the look and stepped forward next. "Yeah and...with all of the stuff in your car, it might be best if Keenan rides with us. We can follow you to your house." The Latina suggested. *Oh, they're good. But not good enough.* Keenan stepped forward next.

"But I want to ride with Daddy. Dr. Blaine can ride with you guys." He shouted. Each member of the group noticed the way Keenan's scowl matched his father.

"Damn, that's your kid, Kurt." David shouted.

"No Maury necessary."

"And you are the father."

Whitley took charge of the situation. She kneeled down next to the little boy and looked him in the eyes. Eyes that were oddly similar to Kurt's doctor boyfriend's eyes. *I wonder if Dr. McCuteAss over there is Kurt's baby momma.* "But Jerry the Giraffe is riding with us. What if Dr. Blaine plays with him? That wouldn't be fair. He's your toy; you should get to play with him first." Keenan gasped and turned a pair of wide eyes towards the doctor.

"You wouldn't!" He hissed, disgusted at the thought. "You can't. Oh no....you're riding with Daddy." Immediately, the boy turned on his heel, grabbed his Auntie Whitley's hand and marched towards her car. He left no room for objections or discussions. His decision was final.

Kurt turned to the doctor and offered a shy smile. "I guess you're riding with me." He watched as Blaine, who wasn't hiding the excited look on his face well, nodded emphatically.

"Yep. I guess I am." And with that, they were off to unload the furniture. Kurt was ecstatic. As much as he wanted that day to be a fun day with his girls and his son, he was excited that Blaine got to play a role in it. It was funny how things like that worked. Before, in his former life, he would have hated to have his man around while he hung out with others. Nathan was often angry and possessive. He knew that Blaine was different. Maybe it was his warm, inviting personality or maybe it was Blaine's openness and willingness to take a situation and run with it. Either way, Kurt was excited.

In just a few short hours, Kurt found himself wanting to include Blaine in many things. He wanted to take Blaine with him when he went out with his girls and he wanted Blaine to join him and Keenan when they went to the park. He wanted to weave Blaine into his life; into Keenan's life. Blaine was different –special– and it didn't take the tech long to realize that. In his eyes, Blaine could be the thread they needed to mend the giant hole that Nathan left when he walked away. If Kurt was honest, he'd admit that he wanted Blaine to be that thread.

Alas, Kurt couldn't be honest with himself just yet. It was too soon and he and Keenan were still too fragile. It was just as well. He could wait. He *would* wait. Because, in the end, the best things were worth waiting for.

Chapter Nine

Not long after the short drive from the store to Kurt's house, the guys had everything unloaded. It was safe to say that the tech's mind was blown. A task that would have taken him and his father hours only took a matter of minutes for Blaine and their friends. With everyone helping out, they had his tiny living room crammed with furniture in no time flat. After taking a moment to map out his plan of attack, the tech turned to the group that stood silently behind him. "Thank you all so much. I couldn't have done it without you." He then turned a pointed eye towards his son. "Any of you." He emphasized; earning a bright smile from the little boy.

Blaine stepped forward and beamed at the man. "We were happy to do it." He exclaimed, earning a round of snickers from the people behind him. Maybe he was a bit too enthusiastic, but he didn't care. He enjoyed the time he got to spend with Kurt that day. *Who wouldn't be excited to spend time staring into those eyes?... While cars honked behind us because the light was green and we were still stopped...*

"Thank you, Blaine. Now, my dad and I won't have so much to carry in later." More than anything, that was the most exciting part of Kurt's day. Later –or tomorrow, whichever – when things had to be moved from their basement room in the house to the apartment, they wouldn't be exhausted from moving furniture.

The veterinarian's face fell. Without anything else to move, he and the guys had no reason to stay. Well, no plausible reason unless Kurt invited them to stay, which felt like a long shot. The tech was on Daddy Duty after all. "We can help you bring that stuff up." The elder insisted a bit too enthusiastically.

Sebastian rolled his eyes but agreed on behalf of the rest of the group. From the moment his friend found out that he had an opportunity to help the tech out, he was as excited as a child on Christmas morning. So, he bit the bullet and offered up his and his friends' services once again. Blaine was often a loner when it came to affairs of the heart –going it alone, only loving his cats- so it was nice to see him searching for a partner to take that journey with.

Kurt quickly shot them down. "I can't ask you guys to do that. You've done so much already." And they had. They'd taken time away from their busy lives to help him once; he wasn't going to ask them to do so again.

"You're not asking. We're offering." Hunter advised. "Now tell us where this stuff is. I want to get this done and then get some pizza."

"PIZZA!" Keenan shouted as he threw his arms in the air. Never in his entire life had an idea sounded so nice. "Daddy, I want pizza." He watched as his father groaned and rolled his eyes. I'm so freaking tired of pizza. "We can order from Dominos and you can get one of those bread bowl things with the creamy noodles in it."

"I guess that solves that problem." Kurt turned to Whitley and glared. In return, he received a smug smile. She knew how to play the game and she played it well. It was obvious that Kurt and Blaine wanted to spend time with one another, but were unsure how to do so in a way that involved the entire merry group. *That's alright; I've got this under control.* Once her stare down with Kurt was at its conclusion, she turned to her new nephew. "Why don't you show Auntie Snixx and me where your new room is? We can find a place for your new little friend," she pointed to the giraffe, "before these guys start moving things in. We want him to be safe when they bring in the big furniture." She watched as the little boy nodded.

Safety first. Keenan held his giraffe close as they made their way across the apartment into his new bedroom. It was going to be difficult sleeping away from his Daddy but it was time to leave the nest. He was a big boy and big boys needed their very own big boy rooms. "This way, ladies." He waved his aunts towards his room. He couldn't wait to show them.

With Keenan and the girls in the room making use of the abundance of space, Kurt turned towards his front door and headed out towards the house with the guys. Quickly, Blaine caught up with him and they fell into step with one another. "You look great today. I just...thought you should know that." Kurt did his best not to blush. He failed miserably.

"Flattery will get you everywhere, Frank." He replied as they reached the front door of the house. Kurt slid his key into the lock and turned it. Suddenly, he became nervous. It was the first time he'd ever brought a guy home technically. During their six years of dating, Nathan never wanted to visit his family in Ohio. He always complained about the difference in culture between New York and Ohio and the lack of 'kick ass things to do'. While Kurt couldn't disagree with him, it still hurt.

The tech pushed the front door open and welcomed the men into the house. "Welcome to my former humble abode." He stepped aside and allowed each man to enter. He then began to usher the men towards

the basement. The evening before, many hours prior to his date with Blaine, he and Keenan packed their belongings into moving boxes in anticipation for their migration to their new home.

Each man followed closely...well, with the exception of one.

Blaine hung back from the group. Being inside Kurt's house was new and exciting. He liked being able to see the place that the younger man called home for most of his life. As he passed through the foyer, Blaine noticed the chaotic arrangement of pictures that lined the walls. The Hummels seemed to throw up pictures as soon as the ink was dry. Blaine wasn't able to hold back the smile on his face as his eyes roamed the picture.

Next to one with the guy in the uniform holding the baby –*Sammy told me his brother's father was in the military, so that must be them*– was a picture of a tiny woman holding a chubby little boy. Their features were remarkably similar. They shared the same alabaster complexion and dimples. Then there were their eyes; matching shades of blue and green with sprinkles of gold and gray. That had to be Kurt and his mother. The thought stopped the veterinarian in his tracks.

He remembered Kurt telling him that he'd lost his mother when he was very young. It was a shame. The love in the woman's eyes as she stared at her son and not the camera was something that Blaine yearned for his entire life. His parents were often too busy for him, so he'd missed out. It seemed cruel fully comprehend it. "Can I help you?" Startled, Blaine jumped at the sound of the unexpected voice. When he turned, he was greeted by the warm smile of a beautiful young woman. The woman quickly extended her hand, noticing the man's hesitation. "I'm Quinn and you're in my house."

"Oh....ummm....Kurt...." He stuttered, taking her hand. *Holy firm grip. What is it with these people?* "He....we're helping him move up to the apartment. I'm Blaine." The veterinarian watched as an amused smile spread across Quinn's lips.

"Oh...okay. It's nice to meet you, Blaine." The two stood staring awkwardly at one another before the blonde woman spoke again. "So, you and Kurt went on a date last night. He told me this morning that he had a lovely time." Blaine grinned. Hearing that Kurt had a nice time from someone other than the tech was comforting. That made it real. "I hope you guys go out more. I haven't seen him smile like that in years."

"I want to make him smile more often."

"Good. But be warned, if you hurt him, selling your soul to Satan won't save you from the wrath of Burt Hummel." The veterinarian's eyes bugged from his head. Because...*holy shit!*

Trying to save face, Blaine began to speak. "I...ummm....I'm not trying to..."

Quinn waved him off. "I believe you. I just thought you should know. We're kind of a tight knit family – especially Burt and Kurt-and hurting one of our own will not go over well." Blaine nodded intently. *Message received; loud and clear.* Quinn smiled. "I figured as much. With the moving that was taking place downstairs completely forgotten, Blaine followed the blond through the house into kitchen. She offered him a cup of the tea she'd been preparing prior to hearing the group of men enter the house and he graciously accepted.

The pair sat down on the stools that surrounded the tiny island in the middle of the kitchen. "He really likes you, Blaine. Like...really likes you. I hope you won't take advantage of that."

Blaine sat his tea down on the counter and stared at the young woman for a moment. Where did he start? He wanted to put her worries to rest, but he was stuck on the fact that, according to her, Kurt really liked him. "Did he tell you that? Did he like say it? How did he say it? Was it along the lines of 'Oh, Blaine. He's cool. I think I like that guy.' Or more like 'Oh my God, Blaine is super cute. I can't even function some times. He has great hair and fantastic abs.' Which seems more accurate?"

Quinn chuckled into her cup and shook her head. In the few moments since they'd met, Quinn knew she liked Blaine for Kurt more than anyone she'd ever seen him with. "I'd say it was more along the lines of 'do you think it's too soon to start dating, Quinn?'" Blaine sucked his bottom lip into his mouth and waited for her to continue. He had to hear more. Weeks ago, Kurt was telling him that there was a chance he wouldn't seek out dating prospects for a while –possibly years- but now there was a chance. Kurt was considering jumping back into the dating pool....*with me.* "I told him that, if he likes you, he should take a chance. He's scared but, I think he wants to take a chance with you. So, don't screw it up." Quinn pointed a warning finger at the vet. She meant business.

"I won't."

"Good. Because it's not just him. He and Keenan are a package deal. A lot of guys aren't ready for that but; Kurt seems to think you are. He's always telling me how interested you are in Keen's day and you're very understanding when it comes to his schedule. Don't ever lose that. It means the world to him that you put so much effort into trying to start something with him. Don't let him down....or Keenan. If you do, there won't be any type of thing with Kurt." She warned.

That brought an entire slew of new questions about the vet. "Speaking of Keenan, I haven't really spent any time with him. I've been so.....with Kurt and....I don't know. Do I wait until Kurt brings it up or do I take matters into my own hands?"

Quinn shrugged as she stood from her stool. "I can't tell you that because I don't know. Just do what feels right." With that, she turned on her heel and exited the room; leaving Blaine to wonder what to do next. *I guess I should go help them move that stuff.* Blaine stood from his seat and walked his cup to the sink. Once it was rinsed and placed lightly into the sink, Blaine headed down stairs. *I'm missing time with Kurt after all.*

When Blaine entered the tiny basement room, the rest of the group already had Kurt's bed dismantled and ready to move to the apartment. *Kurt's bed...tehe.* "There you are." Kurt said, sounding a bit relieved. Blaine couldn't help but blush. *He's relieved to see me.* "We were going to move Keenan's boxes if you want to move those." The tech suggested as he grabbed his box spring. *And holy shit that's amazing.* The fact that Kurt could sling around a queen sized box spring like it was a piece of paper was...*oh God.*

David was the one to pull Blaine out of his trance. "Uhhhh...Blaine the boxes are over there." Blaine nodded and walked towards the boxes, never taking his eyes off the flexing muscles in the techs back.

He walked towards the side of the room that looked like it could belong to a little boy. Sure enough, there were boxes marked 'Keenan's crap' and 'Keenan's fragile crap'. Blaine grabbed a large box and a smaller one marked 'fragile'. He piled them one atop the other and carried up the stairs behind the others.

Blaine headed towards the room that Keenan and the girls went into earlier that day. Just as he was hauling his load in, the women were leaving. "We're going to grab he pizzas, Kurt." Santana shouted as

they made their way towards the door. Kurt, still attempting to navigate the box spring into the room grunted but offered no other reply. "Your kid is in the room."

Blaine thanked the women and offered to pay for the pizzas. And then Hunter offered. Then David and Wes and finally Sebastian . "I thought this was my way of paying you guys back. I should pay." Kurt shouted as he tried to shove the box spring through the tiny doorway.

The group looked at one another and then turned their attention back to the girls. *Silly Kurt. Where did he get the idea that they were going to let him pay for their pizza?*

"*YOU* can buy the beer." Santana suggested. Kurt nodded and began to fish through his wallet for money. While he was doing so, Blaine slipped a few twenties out of his pocket with his free hand and handed them to the Latina. "What's this for?"

"The beer." He received a smile in return.

"I like you, Munchkinlander." A moment later, Kurt walked over to the group and handed Santana a few bills. He really didn't have the money to be spending but he couldn't say no. Everyone banded together to help him. He at least owes them a beer. Santana waved him off. "It's already been taken care of." She advised just before turning to follow Whitley out the front door.

The moment they left, Kurt turned to his boss and stared at him over the boxes the man was carrying. "I had that."

Blaine smiled. "I know, but these guys drink a lot of beer. They'll drink you out of house and home. Besides, you don't owe us anything." With that, Blaine turned towards the Keenan's room and headed in. He left Kurt completely dumbfounded in his wake.

Keenan looked up from his spot on the ground and smiled at the vet. "Hi, Dr. Blaine." He greeted as he petted his to giraffe. "Ooohhh, that big one has my name on it. That one too." He shouted as he hopped up.

Blaine nodded enthusiastically as he placed the boxes on the ground in the middle of the room. "Anywhere in particular you want there boxes?" He asked. The boy was too busy rummaging around the boxes to reply.

"Were you careful with this one Dr. Sir? It has my grandma's tea set in it and it's very fragile." Blaine nodded as he helped the little boy pull the box down and set it on the floor. He watched as Keenan's pulled back the flaps of the box, exposing a mess of items wrapped in newspaper.

"I was very careful. I guarded them with my life. And you don't have to call me Dr. Sir or Dr. Blaine. Just Blaine will work just fine."

Keenan offered a short nod he was barely paying attention. He was far more concern with wrapping the tea set. "Okay, Just Blaine. Can you help me with these? I don't want to break the pieces."

So, Blaine and Keenan sat on the floor and unwrapped each piece. Before long, they were surrounded by newspaper and a lavender tea set.

"This is really cool, Keenan. Maybe we would have a tea party one day." Keenan's eyes lit up.

"Like now?" *There's no time like the present.* Blaine thought. Quinn told him to make it happen one way or another and the opportunity placed itself in his lap.

"Absolutely." The pair sat on the ground in Keenan's bare room and exchanged fake tea and imagined tiny sandwiches that 'no offense but you'll never make them like Daddy does so you shouldn't waste your time'. Minutes turned into an hour and neither the veterinarian nor the child cared that they were missed.

"Did Blaine ditch us again?" David was fine with helping Kurt move, don't get him wrong, but it was Blaine's idea and, once again, Blaine was pleasantly absent. *Again, not that I have a problem with helping Kurt. He's cool and we could all use a helping hand from time to time. Let's make love, not war.*

Kurt, who had a trash bag full of linens hoisted over his shoulder, replied. "He and Keenan are having a tea party in Keen's room. I went to go find out why my son was so mysteriously quiet and there they were, sat cross-legged on the ground, drinking fake tea and talking in bad British accents." He rolled his eyes at the thought of his son and his -well, we haven't decided on a title yet - sitting on the floor repeating the line 'please sir, can I have some more'. "Their accents were actually so bad I thought they were pretending to be Jamaican. It took me a minute to realize they were trying to imitate our neighbors across the pond." He joked.

"Your son has a tea set?" Sebastian asked. As quickly as Kurt's head whipped in his direction, Sebastian knew his question had come across wrong. He quickly held up his hands in defense. For some reason, the thought of having Kurt angry with him was frightening. "I didn't mean it like that. I was just going to say that most people get funny about what toys are appropriate for children and I think it's amazing that you'd let your son have something that he likes, rather than something you deem appropriate based on his gender."

Kurt's expression softened considerably. "It was my mother's but Keenan took a liking to it, so I let him have it. It was as simple as that." He slowly let the oversized bag fall from his shoulder and to the ground. "My dad let me have what I wanted –regardless of how people felt about it – when I was little and I want it to be like that with Keenan." Each of the men nodded.

"I think that's really cool, Kurt. My ex whore," *I still don't know her name. He's always calling her 'My whore ex-wife' or 'my daughter's whore mother',* "hated the fact that I used to buy Kay footballs and trucks for gifts. I didn't care. My baby girl likes to play basketball and she likes run her trucks through the mud. That doesn't mean that she's weird or that something's wrong with her, it means that she's a country girl and she likes what she likes." Trent explained.

"That's not just a problem with your ex *whore*, Trent, it's a problem with society. One parent sees another parent allowing their child to be who they want to be and do what they want to do and it's a huge issue. There are these imaginary rules that society has created and if you don't abide by them, then you're weird and your child is weird as well." Wes decided to use the conversation between Kurt and Trent to his advantage. If he could turn it into a full blown conversation about social standards and taboos, he could rest for an hour...maybe two. *I like to rest. I'll just sit here on my ass and throw together sentences that sound like they're on topic. It's going to be great. I'm so excited.*

His plan worked well. Before he knew it, Wes's friends were engaged in a heated conversation about expectations placed on the youth of America. "Adding to that," Sebastian shouted over the others from his place on the couch, "if a child doesn't follow the norms set in place, then he or she is labeled. I used to tell my mother's party guests that I couldn't wait to be a 'pretty bride' when I grew up and they all went around talking about Elaine's gay son. I was too little to know what being gay meant but they were all labeled me. Then, when I came out, my parents started receiving calls about how everyone already knew and how it wasn't surprising. Honestly, I was just being a little kid and I thought the dresses were pretty. I wanted to be pretty too."

Kurt nodded. *Yep, I've been there.* "That's like when I was little. I liked to wear nice clothes and I hated getting dirty, so I was dubbed the 'gay kid'. I didn't even have time to figure out who I was or what I wanted before people were telling me who I was based on things I did when I was little."

"You're an awesome dad, Kurt....oh you too, Trent." David received a throw pillow to the face from Trent's direction for his comment.

"I try. It's hard but all we can do is try. Right now, he's having fun and being a kid. I'm not going to take that away from him. Kids grow up too fast these days and I know Trent knows what I'm talking about." Trent nodded. Yeah he did. It felt like just yesterday when his daughter was a tiny baby, clinging to his pinky finger. "I figure that things will happen one of three ways. One day, Keenan will either ask me to drive him on a date with a girl, with a boy, or he'll ask me to help him pick out a cute bra. Whichever it is, I'll be there for him. As for right now, it's too soon to make any assumptions. He's got all the time in the world to figure out who he is."

"Preach!" Hunter shouted. He was about to make another comment but was cut off by the front door. It swung open so violently that it crashed into the wall that sat just behind it. Every man in the room jumped.

"Is my wife here?" Finn shouted towards his stepbrother, completely ignoring Kurt's guests. Slowly, Kurt's head tilted to the side because....*you did not just walk into my home without knocking AND yell at me. Have you lost your damn mind?*

"Excuse you!" The tech shouted.

"Aww man. That's your ass, bro." David muttered as he turned away. He had a feeling that the fit that Kurt was about to show was going to be too gruesome to watch.

"I don't know who you think you are but-"

Finn cut him off. "I'm looking for my wife." Without further explanation, the giant man stomped through the house in search of his wife. Kurt sat dumbfounded as Finn peeked in his room and then into the kitchen.

"She's not here." The tech finally shouted. He stood from the spot he'd commandeered during their conversation and began to follow Finn as he walked towards Keenan's room. Finn peeked inside the door,

in search of his wife, and rolled his eyes at the sight he received instead. His nephew and the man from the bowling alley were seated on the ground with flowered hats on their heads, playing with the tea set that Finn begged Kurt not to let the little boy have." Quickly, Finn turned towards his brother.

"You need to stop letting him play with things like that before people start to think he's a sissy." He stated matter of factually.

Kurt's eyes went wide. "You need to get out of my house before I kill you. Your wife isn't here so you have no business here." Finn knew how to push his step brother's buttons and that was one of them. Finn was always unreasonably afraid that Kurt was going to 'turn his son into a sissy'. If he stopped to think for a moment, he would have realized that Kurt's focus revolved around making sure his son grew up to be. Without a reply, Finn pushed past his brother and stomped out of the apartment. Kurt watched him go, but turned his attention back to the scene in the bedroom moments after the front door slammed. Luckily, Blaine and Keenan were too engaged in their fun to notice the disturbance caused by Finn. *Thank goodness.*

Whitley and Santana returned a while later with Pizza and beer in hand. They also had a very excited Beth in toe. "Uncle Kurt," she shouted as she dashed through the front door, "I saw pizza! You know how much I like pizza!" Kurt watched as she bounced from foot to foot.

"Well then grab a seat and one of these guys will make you a plate." Just as he finished his sentence, Quinn dashed through the front door.

"Beth! I told you not to come up here and bother Uncle Kurt's guests. Get your behind down stairs right now." Before Beth could stand, Kurt turned to his sister in law.

"It's fine, Quinn. You know how much Keenan loves having Beth around and you might as well stay too. We've got enough pizza for you guys." Everyone, especially Trent, nodded enthusiastically. *What? I just want people to eat pizza.*

Hunter leaned over to the man, who was smiling giddily as he watched the blond accept the offer. "Dude, she's married." He whispered. *Yeah, I know. Doesn't mean I don't think she's gorgeous.*

"Yay!" Kurt jumped up and clapped his hands together. I'm going to get Blaine and Keenan. I think they'll be both be disappointed if they miss the first round of food." With that, he turned towards the room they were playing in.

He peaked in first. They were still seated on the floor, as if they hadn't moved since Hurricane Finn stormed the apartment. "You see the hat?" Blaine shouted, causing Keenan to break into a heartfelt round of giggles. "I. Am. *Mrs. Nesbitt!*" Keenan's head reeled back as his giggles turned into a hearty belly laugh.

Kurt cleared his voice. "Well, Keenan, Mrs. Nesbitt, the pizza is here. Would you two like to join us?" Blaine flushed considerably as he pulled Keenan's 'Sunday best' hat off. When he looked up, the little boy was already trotting towards the door. The tech noticed the veterinarian's blush and waved it off. "I've been Mrs. Nesbitt a few times. Don't be embarrassed." The young man extended a hand and Blaine graciously took it. Once the elder was off the floor, they headed into the living room. "So much for waiting for us, guys." Kurt shouted as they entered the room. The group already had pizza handed out and drinks in hand. *Jerks.*

Once the food was gone, Wes and David offered to grab the rest of Keenan's things from the basement bedroom while Quinn and Kurt washed their children at the house. It was well past each child's bedtime. Once the moving was finished and both children were tucked safely into Beth's bed –they often shared a bed when the adults were outside. It felt safer that way. Beth could keep an eye on her little cousin even when she was asleep. She was maternal in that sense. –Quinn and Kurt joined the rest of the group outside.

It was far chillier than it had been during the day. The night was unforgiving like that sometimes. Luckily, Kurt tracked the weather and knew to throw on a hoodie before walking outside. And...well, a pair of yoga pants because they made his ass look amazing. Hopefully Blaine would notice.

He and Quinn made their way across the large back yard towards the group chatting merrily around the firepit that his father dug years ago. "Hurry up, Hummel. I'm ready to light this bitch, it's about twenty below and I can't feel my toes!" Whitley shouted as they neared.

"I know. I'm coming, I'm coming." Kurt stepped between David and Hunter's seats and towards the fire pit. He made quick work of lighting it. Within a few moments, a bright fire was roaring before him. When he

turned to sit, he noticed that the only available seat was located next to Blaine. He also noticed that the veterinarian was staring intently at him. *Muffin accomplished!* With a sway in his hips, Kurt walked towards the empty seat and plopped himself down. He then grabbed the beer that Blaine was holding towards him. This is nice.

"Could they be more obvious?" Hunter whispered towards Whitley. The two spent a majority of the evening enjoying one another's company and watching Kurt and Blaine interact. They enjoyed the former almost as much as they enjoyed the latter. The two were doing their best to navigate the tricky waters of a budding relationship, thus making for very entertaining programming.

"I'm sure it'd be far more obvious if they suddenly started fucking." She whispered back. *Oh and here's my number.* She left out the last part, however. Hunter was cute and sweet. Maybe they could try something later, but not now. She was far too focused on helping her friend get some cute, doctor dick.

The pair continued to watch the young men interact. They were adorable. Eventually, Hunter leaned in again. "Can I ask you a question?" Whitley turned a questioning eye towards him. What kind of question did he have? Hesitantly, she nodded. "Ummm...I don't mean this offensively if I'm wrong but....are you and her dating? I mean, you seem close and..." He ended his question with a lame shrug.

Whitley chuckled. "Hell no. She's my best bitch for life, but that's as far as it extends. I'm as straight as a pole except when I need to be a bit *flexible*." *I'm such a slut. He has great arms though.*

Hunter nodded excitedly as he sat back in his seat. *Awesome.* "So.....could I possibly get your number?" He asked. Damn, he wanted her number.

Whitley held out her hand expectantly. When Hunter didn't respond, she rolled her eyes. "Give me your phone. I'll put it in."

"So...uh....Quinn...." Trent wasn't sure why, but sitting next to Quinn made his palms sweat. She was pretty and seemed to be very sweet. *She's also married, idiot.* "How long have you been married?"

Quinn turned to him, shooting him a pair of the brightest greens he'd ever seen. They made his knees weak. "Too long." She groaned. Kurt told me Finn raided his apartment earlier, so you saw what I'm dealing with." She groaned between sips of her beer. Trent nodded. He'd been there.

The pair sat in a comfortable silence for a moment. While Quinn stared out at the crackling fire, Trent used his peripherals to examine her. He wasn't checking her out, per se, he was examining her profile? It wasn't his fault though. Quinn was a classic beauty. Whether she was wearing a flowing ball gown or an oversized t-shirt, large sweatpants, and pulled back hair –which was what she was wearing when she stepped out of the house with Kurt- she was gorgeous.

"I was there once." Trent informed as he tore his eyes away from the woman. "My wife was sleeping around on me and she was barely a mother to our daughter. I had to get out. So, I am. Our divorce isn't final yet, but it will be soon. Once it is, I'll be free."

Quinn looked impressed. "That's pretty courageous, Trent. Sometimes, I wish I had that kind of courage sometimes. Finn is a bit much to deal with. Sometimes I just need a break." She admitted. She almost felt guilty. Finn had his flaws –tons of them- but the last thing she wanted was to break up their family. She watched as Nathan's absence killed Keenan and she refused to let that happen to Beth.

"Sometimes staying for your kid is the most courageous thing you can do. Just remember, Quinn, take care of yourself too. I know you love your little girl, but you can't take care of yourself then you can't take care of your little girl."

"I'll remember that. Thanks, Trent."

"Pssst....David. David. Whisper to me." Wes shouted over the roar of flirtatious laughter coming from Hunter and Whitley's direction.

"I'm whispering to you." David shouted back.

"Cool!"

"Thank you for coming to rescue today." Kurt whispered. He turned his body towards Blaine as he spoke. He read in that one book, that one time, that body language a primary candidate for letting someone know he was interested in them. He was definitely interested in Blaine.

The veterinarian shot him a warm smile. "Always." If Kurt would allow it, Blaine would always be around to help him. He wanted to be around. Everyone needed help from time to time and the vet was willing and able to provide it.

"You know they're all watching us, right. It's like everyone is waiting to see what our next move will be." Kurt was anxious. His knee wouldn't stop jumping and his heart wouldn't stop pounding. "What will our next move be?"

"What do you want it to be?"

Blaine's question threw the tech off center for a moment. He knew what he wanted, but he also knew what was customary....at least in his eyes. They would date for a while and then one would ask the other to be exclusive. When he opened his mouth to respond, his conversation with the guys about social standards raced through his head. As a child, Kurt Hummel was never one to conform. Why should he as an adult? "I....ummm...I think I want to be with you."

"You are with me, silly." Blaine responded. Out of the corner of his eye, the vet noticed Kurt's hand hanging limply over the edge of the chair. With little thought, he reached out and grabbed it, lacing their fingers together. "I know what you mean though. I think I'd like to be with you too. I'd like to see where this takes us."

"Me too." Kurt admitted. He was relieved that Blaine felt the same way. The possible let down from his confession was....*phew....glad I dodged that bullet*. "I'd like to take things slowly, though. I come with baggage and that baggage means a lot to me. He also has feelings and.... I'm going to have to ease him into the idea of me seeing someone."

He received an enthusiastic nod in reply. *Slow. I can do slow. Nice and slow*. "Yeah. Yeah. Whatever you need; I really like you, Kurt, and I'm willing to take things as quickly or as slowly as you need."

"And we need to be professional at work. Whatever is going on, we can't let it affect our work." Blaine's reaction wasn't nearly as enthusiastic to the second term. *I really, really, really wanted to hump him on my desk and he's completely taking that option off the table...or desk.* "I'm serious, Blaine."

The vet threw his hands in the air dramatically and groaned. "Fine. No taking your virtue at work. If I'm getting a boyfriend out of it, then I guess I'll survive."

"Oh, you are most definitely getting a boyfriend out of it, so you'll have to make do."

Beth jolted up in her bed at the sound of a crash just outside her bedroom door. It only took a moment for her little cousin to start whining in his sleep because of the noise. "Shhh....Keen. It's okay." She cooed as she stroked his curls. She hoped he'd fall back asleep but a moment later; he was seated next to her on the bed.

"What was that?" He asked as he rubbed the back of his hand over his eyes.

"I don't know." She admitted. She did know. It was probably her daddy. He'd been looking for her mommy all day. Unfortunately, her mommy was avoiding him. That was happening a lot these days. Whenever her mommy could, she walked the other way when she saw the man headed in their direction.

Moments later, her bedroom door swung open and her father flicked on the lights, burning the children's tired eyes. "Where is your mother?" He asked with a total disregard for the half asleep trance the children were in. The children shook their heads. "Dammit."

Beth watched as her father backed out of the bedroom, slamming the door behind him. Keenan turned to face his cousin. "Beth," he began wearily, "why does your daddy always seem so angry?"

The girl shrugged. "Mommy said he has a stick up his butt."

"That would make me angry too." Keenan admitted as he tried to fall back asleep. Beth followed suit and they lay in her bed, wide awake, for a few moments. Realizing that sleep was a fantasy at that point, the children climbed out of her bed and made their downstairs. Grandma Carole always left snacks downstairs and they both assumed food would help lull them back to sleep.

As the children crept down the stairs, they heard the sound of shouting from the kitchen. *I guess Uncle Finn found Aunt Quinn.* "- been looking for you all day."

"Well....I took Beth shopping for more school clothes and then we went up too see Kurt's new place."

There was some shuffling and then more shouting. Not wanting to be seen, but wanting to listen, Keenan and Beth sat down on the stairs and placed their ears to the wall. "So you go out and spend money like we've got money to spend and then you hang out with Kurt all day? He's the enemy. He took that apartment away from us." Keenan's uncle shouted.

They heard his Aunt Quinn sigh. "First, I make that money, so I can spend it how I please. Second, Kurt's not an enemy; you're just an idiot. I told you time and time again that I didn't want that damn apartment."

The shouting stopped instantly. As much as Keenan wanted to believe it was because they were no longer angry at one another, he knew that wasn't the case. His confirmation came moments later when his Aunt Quinn huffed down the hallway in the opposite direction of the stairs. She hadn't even noticed them sitting there. "I'm not hungry anymore." Beth whispered, breaking the silence. She sounded sad. Keenan hated when his cousin was sad.

"Wanna help me find my daddy then? If your mommy is in, then my daddy has to be around here somewhere." Slowly, Beth nodded. She might as well. The pair climbed to their feet and began to search the house for Kurt. They purposely avoided the kitchen. They knew Beth's daddy was in there and they didn't want him to yell at them for being up late at night.

The duo made quick work of the first floor. They checked bathrooms and closets but there were no traces of Keenan's father anywhere. Just as Keenan gave up his search for his father between the cushions of the couch, Beth called out for him. "Come over here, I found him." Keenan scurried over and plopped down next to her on the bench seat near the window. "Look." Keenan looked. He did not like what he saw.

Eventually, Kurt's guests began to leave. Some had to work in the morning while others just wanted to go home and cuddle with their sheets. Before long, Kurt, Blaine, and Quinn were the only ones left outside around the dead fire. "Well, boys, I believe I've avoided my husband long enough. Keenan can stay in Beth's bed tonight if you guys want to...." She left the conclusion of her sentence open for the sake of the

men before her. Maybe they wanted to spend more time talking. Or maybe they wanted to spend some time to have sex.

Kurt and Blaine watched her walk away, trying not to laugh at her departure. As tempting as the thought was, they were taking things slowly. They wanted their new found romance to flourish based on things other than sex.

The moment the front door closed, Kurt turned to Blaine. The moonlight did wonders for his beautiful features. "I think I should go, Kurt. I'd love to stay and all but....it's late and Trent made me promise to bring his car back in the morning."

"I was wondering how you were getting home." Kurt admitted. *Not that I wouldn't have taken you. I would have.*

Blaine shrugged as he stood from his chair. He offered his hand to Kurt and watched as he did the same. "I would have gotten there somehow." Their fingers laced together perfectly as if they'd been practicing to do so for years. "You never have to worry about me."

"Noted." Together, the pair strolled leisurely towards Trent's parked car. They weren't in a hurry. The early hours of the morning were upon them and self-promises to sleep in were already accepted.

They reached the car far too soon. "I had a great time with you today." Kurt whispered as they inched closer to one another. Before too long, they were crowded in each other's space, searching each other's eyes for the meaning of whatever they were feeling. "Thank you again."

"No need to thank me." Blaine whispered as he laced his arms around the taller man's neck. He elevated himself a bit on the tips of his toes and urged Kurt's head forward. Their lips met in the middle. This kiss was far tamer than the one from the previous night. It was a gentle reassurance that no, they weren't rushing into things and yes, they both feel was worth acting on.

When they pull back, they smile at one another. "I'll call you tomorrow?" Kurt asked. It was an unnecessary question. Even if Blaine said no, the tech would still call him the next day.

"I hope so."

"Uncle Kurt and....what's his name, Keenan?" The little boy sat stone still for a moment as he watched his daddy kiss Dr. Blaine. It took him a moment to realize that Beth was speaking to him.

"Ummm...Dr. Blaine."

"Okay. Uncle Kurt and Dr. Blaine sitting in a tree. K-I-S-S-I-N-G. First comes love. Then comes marriage. Then comes the baby in the baby carriage." The girl sang. Keenan's eyes went wide. Reluctantly, he tore them away from his father and his friend.

"What?" He asked. "Marriage? Baby?" Nothing Beth said was making sense.

Beth rolled her eyes. *Haven't you ever heard that song?* "You know what's going on, right?" When Keenan shook his head, Beth groaned. *Little kids sometimes.* "Keenan! Your daddy and Dr. Blaine are kissing. That means they're going to get married and have another baby. Then, Dr. Blaine will be your new Papa. It'll be just like before."

Keenan's expression fell instantly and his eyes began to well with tears. His daddy was so sad before. Things were just starting to get back to the way they were supposed to be. His daddy was smiling again and that would probably all go away if what Beth was saying was true. "Aren't you excited, Keenan? A new daddy."

You're excited enough for the both of us. Rather than being mean –Beth didn't deserve that– Keenan chose not to answer. No, he wasn't excited. And he wasn't going to take the situation sitting down. If it was the last thing he did, Keenan would make sure his daddy was happy. That couldn't happen if Blaine was around.

Chapter Ten

Monday at the office was pleasant. The two men danced around the building as if they were on Cloud Nine. They were. Outside of work, they could finally say that they were together. Not that people were asking right and left, but that wasn't the point. The point was that they were together and they were happy about it. *I know I am.* Blaine thought as he walked through the office, dodging clients and employees alike.

The days grew busier as time went on and Blaine was in dire need of lunch. If he didn't avoid, avoid, avoid until he reached his office then he wouldn't get to eat. He and Kurt alike knew that going out to lunch was an impossibility that day. So, they planned to meet in Blaine's office to eat some of the pizza that Blaine ordered for the office to ensure that they all ate that day. Thus, Blaine avoided. He kept his eyes low and walked briskly towards his office.

When he rounded the corner to his office, he noticed that the door was already open. The fact that Kurt was already in his office was exciting the veterinarian. He picked up his pace until he was in front of the door. "Blaine, I need you to-" Rachel began. Quickly, the vet stepped into his office, slamming the door shut behind him.

"That wasn't very nice." Kurt teased. Blaine rolled his eyes as he crossed the room. He stopped in front of the tech and leaned over, capturing his lips in one swift motion. Kurt kissed back, instantly. Their lips danced for a moment before the tech pulled back. "What was that for?" He asked, a cheesy smile splashed across his face.

The vet smirked. "Because I missed kissing you. It's been too long."

"Saturday. It's been since Saturday." Kurt corrected. He pointed his finger at his boyfriend to emphasize his point. "Besides, we're supposed to be eating. We don't have time for lunch today and we'll both be half starved to death by the end of the day if we don't eat now."

"And that was too long ago." Blaine whined. "I wanted to kiss you on Sunday and I wanted to kiss you this morning. Besides, you're far more delicious than pizza." Blaine leaned forward again and Kurt reluctantly allowed their lips to meet. They spent their entire lunch break devouring each other's mouths instead of the food that sat forgotten on the table near them. *It's okay. Blaine tastes better than pizza as well.*

The work week was a mess of too many patients and not enough time for one another. As they raced past one another to help their respective patients, Kurt wondered if he'd made a mistake. Between work, school, Keenan, Blaine's obligations, and sleep, they hadn't spent time together since Saturday. *And it's Thursday.* They'd just gotten together and they were already having issues making time for one another. *Maybe we rushed into this.*

A moment later, Blaine smiled at him from across the room and Kurt knew that their relationship wasn't a mistake. They were off to a rocky start, but, hopefully, there would be a light at the end of the tunnel. "We'll work something out." He whispered to himself as he began to run tests on the puppy in front of him.

Then, later that day, an opportunity to work something out fell into his lap. While he was scarfing down his homemade sandwich on his makeshift lunch break, he received a text message from Quinn. The timing and situation were perfect.

Not working this weekend because I'm taking Beth to a kid's workshop. I wanted to take Keen too!? -Quinn

Kurt's eyes lit up. He loved kid's workshops. He quickly text her back.

We'll be ready early. - Kurt

Since Quinn worked weekends at Home Depot, he and Keenan were able to participate without any resistance. Keenan had all the tools and the child sized work outfit to go along with his budding carpentering skills.

Ummm...you weren't invited. What part of I want to take KEENAN with Beth and I did you not understand? Take Dr. ASSderson out for breakfast or something. - Quinn

Kurt remembered Quinn exchanging numbers with Santana and Whitley during the gathering in his backyard. It was apparent to him that she'd been in contact with one or the other because 'ASSderson' was not something Quinn Fabray-Hudson would come up with on her own. Not that she wasn't clever enough to do so; she was, she was also classy and she didn't use language of the sorts when she could avoid it. *They're bad influences on her.* The tech shook his head and sent his sister-in-law a quick reply. Breakfast with Blaine sounded lovely.

You don't have to tell me twice. -Kurt

The tech then slid his phone into the pocket of his blue scrub top and headed back into the building. He was greeted by a very displeased Rachel. *What's new?* "Dr. Anderson has been looking everywhere for you!" She hissed, hands on her hips. Kurt shoved past the girl in search of his boyfriend *-boss...he's my boss when we're here.* The tech eventually found him exiting his office.

"Lurch told me that you were looking for me." Blaine's body whipped around at the unexpected voice. He'd only just told Rachel to have Kurt find him.

"Yeah. I just wanted to make sure you ate. It's crazy around here today and I don't want you waiting until you got home to eat." Blaine advised. He fell into a casual step as he made his way towards the front office. Kurt's pace fell in sync with his boyfriend's *-boss's whatever.*

"Yeah." He eventually replied. Blaine's concern was endearing. "Keen helped me make a sandwich this morning."

Aww Keenan. Blaine liked hearing about the little boy. He was sweet and fun. He was also the motivation that kept Kurt going when he felt like standing still. Blaine hoped he would have such motivation one day. "How is he?"

Kurt shrugged as they rounded a corner. "He's fine. He spent yesterday helping me grocery shop. Oh.. Speaking of my little man, Quinn is taking him to a kid's workshop at Home Depot on Saturday morning. Did you want to grab brunch with me?"

Blaine's eyes lit up as he held the door the separated the back offices from the waiting room open for the tech. "Yeah. That would be perfect." Kurt's return smile was almost as bright as his own.

"Great! I'll pick you up around 10."

"Can't wait."

Snails moved faster than the remainder of their work week. The clinic was extremely busy and the men spent their days zooming past one another rather than sparing a moment to say hello or to engage in a

brief chat. There were no moments to spare. Each day that week, their office was packed from wall to wall with pets and their parents. Each had one issue or another. Some were easily fixed, while others required extensive testing and further research. The pair barely had time to acknowledge one another before they were darting off in whichever direction required their presence.

By late Friday afternoon, Blaine was antsy; anxious. He was excited for their date the next morning but he was fairly convinced that he couldn't wait that long to have a moment alone with the tech. So, he didn't.

Just as Kurt was about to hurry past him in the hallway, Blaine grabbed his arm and drug him into the nearest room. Surprisingly enough, it was their supply closet. "What the...!" Kurt shouted. In an attempt to keep their location a secret, Blaine cupped his hand over the tech's mouth. He held a finger from his free hand up to his lips.

"Shhhhhhhh..." He waited for a moment before removing his hand. Blaine knew that Kurt was glaring down at him. It didn't matter that the room was draped in complete darkness or that he couldn't make out Kurt's features despite the man's face only being inches from his own. Blaine knew. "I'm sorry for-" Kurt cut him off.

"You scared the shit out of me!" Kurt's harsh whisper bounced around the room before taking residence in Blaine's ears. *Yep, he's pissed.* "You could have just asked me to meet you in your office. You didn't have to drag me into a supply closet!"

The vet sighed. "But I missed you." He whined. "We've both been busy all week and I just wanted a few moments with you. If I thought we had time to go into my office and talk, I would have asked you. But I haven't seen you all day -*ALL WEEK*- and I just wanted a few minutes of peace with my boyfriend." After Blaine's admission, he felt his boyfriend's body relax in front of him.

"Awww...Blaine, I'm sorry. With work and school and Ke-" The tech stopped speaking when he felt his boyfriend's finger press against his lips.

"Don't apologize. I know you've got things going on. Hell, I've been passing out during the seven o'clock news, so there is no need to apologize." Blaine heard his boyfriend snicker.

"The seven o'clock news, babe? Really?" The term of endearment warmed the vet's heart. *I'm his babe.* "Do you fall asleep with your cats?"

"Yep, and I am not ashamed." Blaine proudly stated. "But I didn't bring you here to talk about my boring, old home life. I brought you in here to talk about us."

Kurt leaned in closer. Blaine could feel the younger man's warm breath against his lips. "What about us?" Kurt whispered. And damn if that wasn't sexy. In a split second, Blaine decided that talking may not be the best idea considering the fact that his brain was short circuiting. *Kurt is so close. So close that I could lean in and...*

Before Blaine could finish his thought, his body reacted. The vet leaned in, capturing his boyfriend's lips. The tech was caught off momentarily. That did not stop him from reciprocating, however. While his mind attempted to catch up, Kurt's body took charge. His lips pressed firmly against the soft, wet lips that caused his knees to buckle slightly.

What should have lasted mere seconds continued for uncounted minutes. As each second ticked by, the kiss became more intense. Growing bolder with each ticked second, Blaine opened his mouth and let his tongue slide across his boyfriend's lips; begging -needing- entrance.

He was promptly rewarded. Kurt's lips parted like the Red Sea and Blaine seized the moment. The veterinarian plunged his tongue into the all too willing mouth and allowed it to roam. "Mmmmmm..." And if the sound of Kurt's low moan didn't get him going, then Blaine didn't think anything would. Slowly, he backed the technician back towards a wall lined with shelves -all holding food or supplies of some sort- and pressed their bodies together. He wasn't going to let Kurt get away with making such a noise only once. No, he was going to make sure that noise left Kurt's mouth and traveled to his ears over and over...and over again. *When in Rome, right?!*

With Kurt's back pressed against the shelves, Blaine slid his knee between the tech's thighs and parted them slowly, allowing his body to slide between them. "Mmmmm..." There it was again. "Mmmmmmm..." And again Kurt let out a sound against his lips. "Ngggg...Blaine." Unbeknownst to the vet, his lips were not the cause of Kurt's demise into satisfied oblivion.

Head still rested pleasantly in the clouds; it took the vet a moment to realize what was happening. His hips were moving of their own volition and providing the technician with a sensation that his body approved of. Professionalism at work be damned.

With realization finally set in, Blaine snapped his hips forward once more, this time he knew what he was doing. He listened intently as Kurt made yet another noise against his lips. *He sounds so good.* While Blaine knew that they had sex the night that Kurt went home with him, he couldn't recall specifics. The day after their drunken escapades, Blaine couldn't have told anyone how much the sound of Kurt's throaty moans turned him. He also wouldn't have been able to tell them that he would trade a lifetime of air to have Kurt's arms draped over his shoulders, tugging at his shirt -pulling him closer- without hesitation.

They were sliding. Not Kurt and Blaine; they were pleasantly smooshed against the shelves. Well, Kurt was smooshed and it probably wasn't very pleasant. The shelves were raw wood, built by a friend *-for free-* and they did not look comfortable. "Mmmmmmm..." Kurt didn't sound uncomfortable. Maybe it was the sliding; Blaine's lips slid from Kurt's gorgeous mouth to his edible neck and his hands slid from Kurt's delicate waist, down to his perfectly round ass.

Blaine rolled the clothed flesh in his palms as he ground his hips into Kurt's once more. Unlike before, the vet could feel the outline of Kurt's inflated cock against his own. It fueled the fire inside of him. Blaine ground harder and more intently, listening to Kurt fall apart in front of him. "We shouldn't be doing this." Kurt panted into the vet's ear after pulling their mouth's apart and resting his head on the man's shoulder. Instantly, the man's hips stilled. He felt his technician pull back, presumably staring into the darkness in the direction of Blaine's face. "Why'd you stop?" He asked, sounding completely confused.

Blaine's eyebrows furrowed in the dark. "Wh-what? You just said..." He was cut off by his boyfriend.

"I said we *probably* shouldn't be doing this. I did *not* say that I wanted to stop doing this." Blaine let out an intrigued hum in reply and leaned forward once again. Just before their lips would have met, the closet door swung open. The two turned towards the light with wide eyes. It was Marley.

"Ummm...hi guys." She stared awkwardly at them for a moment. "Ummm... Dr. Anderson, Kitty Wilde is here with her cat. She says that Miss Kitty Wilde is refusing to eat."

Marley shifted from foot to foot in the hallway as identical pairs of owl eyes bore into her. "She named her cat Miss Kitty Wilde?" Kurt asked incredulously. He remembered the girl from a few weeks prior. She stormed the offices one day requesting a black cat with blue eyes. It was specific but, luckily for her, they had just what she was looking for.

The volunteer nodded, much to Kurt's disdain. He scrunched his face and shook his head into Blaine's shoulder -which he was still clutching as if it were a lifeline. "I don't approve of Kitty Wilde naming her kitty, Miss Kitty Wilde. It's weird." Again the volunteer nodded.

"Well, she's out here and she needs to speak with you, Dr. Anderson." The vet, still dumbstruck by the situation, nodded absently. "Oh and, Dr. Anderson," Marley added as she began to walk away. The vet kept his eyes trained on her as she spoke. "You might want to let go of Kurt's butt before you go out there. It might be difficult to explain that to some of our clientele." The vet's hands flew away from Kurt's ass as if it had shocked him. He then watched as Marley walked away.

When she was gone, the men turned towards one another. They quickly untangled their bodies and rushed out of the closet. Not a word was spoken between the two of them. One week in and they'd already broken one of the rules they'd created for their relationship. If they couldn't survive a week, then they were doomed.

Marley loved Dr. Anderson. Okay, maybe love was a strong word. *I'm not John Hinkley, Jr and he's not Jodie Foster.* Marley greatly admired Dr. Anderson. He was caring, compassionate, and everything the young girl wanted to be when she was older. Two years into her undergraduate degree and she had a firm grasp on what she wanted from her future. When she was finished with her undergrad and her graduate schooling was complete, Marley wanted to be a veterinarian. She wanted to be just like Dr. Anderson. She wanted to work tirelessly to find homes for the animals that she had and she wanted to have room for more. Marley wanted to provide a safe haven for animals that were hurt or neglected and she wanted to have the final say in the adoption process; just like Dr. Anderson.

Shortly after high school graduation, Marley began to volunteer at the shelter. The moment she laid eyes on the veterinarian that ran the shelter, she was a goner. He was gorgeous and unbelievably kind. Later - not too much later- she found out he was also gay. One night, when she'd stayed late to help close up, a man knocked on the locked front doors. Marley dashed towards the door and opened them. When she asked what she could help the man with, he advised her that he had a date with Dr. Anderson -Blaine, he said. Marley was extremely let down when she realized that she had no shot with the doctor. The feeling did not last. Once the young woman became better acquainted with the vet, she realized that they were much more qualified to be friends and colleagues - *'Marley, employers and employees sounds so formal. One,*

you don't work here, two, I'm not that guy. You're my colleague.' - than lovers. They shared a lot of the same interests and they had absolutely no sexual chemistry. *That's what great friendships are made of, right?*

Marley watched as men came and went. She watched as Blaine tried to date but failed miserably. "I'm just not good at dating." He would say. Or, "He tried to hold my hand and I had this whole other hand that I had no idea what to do with. Was I supposed to put it in my pocket? Should I have held on to my belt loop? Would that have made me look cool? What happens to the other hand while one of your hands is being held? Does it get lonely?" Marley laughed with him each time. As time passed, she realized why Dr. Anderson stayed as far away from dating as he could. He was kind of a dork and most men understood that by the first date. It was their loss, though. She knew her boss was a catch.

The day Marley met Kurt Hummel, she swooned. It wasn't because he was a total hottie like Dr. Anderson - *not that he's bad looking*- but because he was adorable. Marley hated to admit it but she classified Kurt as gay the moment he introduced himself. In hindsight she hated that part of their meeting but, what was done was done. She couldn't take it back. None the less, she swooned. Kurt was sweet, bubbly, and completely Dr. Anderson's type; whether either of them knew it or not.

Somewhere around Kurt's second week at the office, Marley noticed something. It went unnoticed to the untrained eyes around her, but she saw it plain as day. The group -Dr. Anderson, Kurt, herself, and another volunteer named Unique- were all lounging against the front desk on a particularly dead Wednesday afternoon and Kurt was telling them a story about his time in New York. "...and I tried to walk into the bank and I got stuck in the revolving door. It took me a freaking hour to get out of that damn thing." Kurt exclaimed, earning chuckles from the group. "When I got out, I shot the door a bird and dashed towards the nearest Duane Reade to see if I could get cash back. I was done with freaking ATMs that day."

As she laughed, Marley's attention turned to Dr. Anderson. He was staring at Kurt with the biggest, most unabridged, and most unashamed heart eyes she'd ever seen. From that day forth, Marley hoped that Kurt would return the doctor's affections. Blaine deserved it and, from what she'd heard, Kurt deserved it as well.

Finding the two in the supply closet was both shocking and exciting for the young girl. While they'd been acting different all week, she hadn't expected to see the doctor pull his only technician into a supply closet. Then there were the noises. Kurt made noises that should have been deemed illegal. They were positively sinful. The girl stood with her ear pressed to the door for a few moments before being dragged away by Unique. Apparently they had a difficult client and they needed to find Dr. Anderson. Marley sent her friend

away, promising to return with the doctor. And she did. Blaine walked out into the waiting room just behind her. From her desk, Marley watched as the doctor spoke with Kitty about her...kitty, Kitty. "She just won't eat. I gave her my dog's old food and she just sits there." The girl whined.

Marley watched as the doctor and shook his head. He did a quick one over of the animal before standing and staring down at the seated woman. "She looks fine to me." He replied. "Honestly, I only looked at her so that I could say this without a doubt. First, she's not too fond of your dog's food. Second, I'm pretty sure my tech told you upon adoption that she's not too fond of dry food either. Are you feeding her dry food?" The woman glared up at him; confirming his suspicion. "Go to Wal Mart and buy her some wet food. If she's still not eating, bring her back in." With a huff, Kitty grabbed her kitty and stomped out the front door. *She won't be back.* Marley thought cheerfully. Dr. Anderson was right. After a few weeks of dealing with the same issue, Kurt figured out why the animal wouldn't eat. It was picky and hated dry food. When they switched it to wet food, the cat seemed happy; content.

Dr. Anderson watched the woman leave. Once she was out the front door, he turned to Marley and asked for a moment of her time. She knew why he wanted to talk, so she made quick work of standing from her desk and following the man towards his office.

Blaine motioned for Marley to enter first. Once she was inside and seated -in Kurt's seat. Blaine wasn't sure why, but that bothered him.- he closed the door. He then walked to his cushy office chair and plopped down. They stared at each other for a moment. When it was evident to the vet that Marley wasn't going to say anything, he spoke up. "Well, I guess I'll start. I brought you in here because of what you saw in the supply closet earlier. That was completely unprofessional and probably very uncomfortable to see. For that, I'm sorry." Marley wanted to assure him that it was okay -she really did-but she kept her mouth shut. When Dr. Anderson had something to say, it was best to let him speak. The girl offered a curt nod instead.

"Great ummm..." Marley watched as the vet tried to run his fingers through his overly gelled head, only to be met with resistance. "So...I know that I don't really have a right to ask you this but..." Blaine was floundering. Never fear, Marley was there to save him.

"It's okay, Dr. Anderson, I'm not going to tell anyone. Kurt's a great guy and so are you. I don't want to be the one that causes that to fall apart because I can't keep my mouth shut. Besides, I made a bet with myself that it wouldn't take you guys long to get together. I had fifty/fifty chances of winning, and I won." The girl watched as the man's shoulders sagged in relief.

The pair spoke for a few moments before Marley stood to leave the office. As she passed through the halls, a slow smile crept across the volunteer's face. She was excited for Dr. Anderson and Kurt. They were two men that spent years trying to navigate the raging river of love and, in her opinion; they were finally getting it right. If things were going as well as she perceived them to be, then maybe she would start hunting for a dress to wear to their impending, imaginary wedding. *They look like a summer wedding couple. Oh...maybe I'll look for a date too. Yeah, I'll start looking for a date.*

Kurt padded through their tiny apartment in search of his son's shoes. Supposedly, they were left in the vintage, flea market chest by the front door -their rightful resting place- the night before but they were conveniently absent when Kurt opened the chest that morning. The young father checked beneath the couch and in the tiny space that his father made into a pseudo laundry room. The shoes were nowhere to be seen. "Keenan, I don't know where you put them, but you better find them." Kurt shouted as he padded through the house. With his son, there was no telling.

The tech received a low whine in response. Apparently, Keenan didn't remember where his shoes were. "Daddy, I put them...in the box by the door. I swear. I don't know what happened to them." *You didn't put them in the chest by the door because if you had, they would still be there.* Kurt didn't say that, however. He was keen on picking his battles and this battle -on the morning of his date with Blaine- was not one he was willing to fight. "We have to find them, Daddy. Aunt Quinn and Beth will be here to get me soon. I can't go barefoot. I mean, I could and that would be really, really awesome, but I don't want to. My piggies will get cold." A moment later, Keenan was standing before his father with one of his legs cocked in the air. Kurt watched bemusedly as his son wiggled his toes.

"Well then you need to grab a different pair of shoes from the chest or you need to find your other ones." Keenan's shoulders sank. Kurt knew his son wanted to wear 'cool, super awesome, new' Avengers sneakers with his also new Avengers shirt. All courtesy of Carole, of course. Much like himself, Keenan was often too preoccupied with matching to worry about convenience; namely, his father's convenience.

"I'll go look in my room again." The little boy advised as he traipsed back towards his bedroom.

Kurt nodded and pulled his phone out of his pocket. It was a quarter to nine and he still hadn't showered yet. He would have done so already if he hadn't forgotten to set an alarm, thus waking up late. It must have been in the Hummel-Hudson water that morning because Quinn called an hour prior and said she'd also

forgotten to set an alarm so she and Beth were running late as well. The tech fired off a quick text to his boyfriend.

I woke up late, thus we're running late. I'm thinking 10:30 instead of 10. Is that okay? -Kurt

He waited a few moments for a reply, but when he received none; he slid the phone into his pocket and headed towards his son's room. Next to the nightstand, kicked just beneath the bed, were Keenan's shoes. His son swore up and down that he'd checked every inch of his room. *"I looked everywhere, Daddy, I promise. My shoes are gone. I think someone stole them."* He'd said. Kurt shook his head as he crossed the room and leaned over to pick up the shoes.

"Found them. Sit on your bed and I'll slide them on you." Keenan skipped excitedly across the room and plopped down on his unmade bed. He watched his father expectantly as the man tied his shoes. Normally, Kurt made his son attempt to tie his shoes before stepping in, but they were both running late, so he skipped that step. With the shoes tied and Keenan's outfit complete, Kurt helped his son off the bed and walked with him towards the front door. He slid his feet into the house shoes next to the door and began the long trek down the stairs and into the main house. Beth and Quinn were putting the final touches on their outfits. Kurt waved as he and Keenan walked up; catching their attention.

Beth scurried away from her mother and opened the side door for them. "Uncle Kurt! Keenan!" She screeched. Keenan let go of his father's hand in favor of running towards his cousin, enclosing her in a tight hug. "Keenan, I like your clothes. Do you like mine?" The girl did a quick twirl. Keenan nodded approvingly at her jean skirt, leggings, and 'Team Jacob' t-shirt.

"You look amazing, Beth. As always." Kurt commented. He then leaned down to the girl's level and whispered in her ear. "And I'm Team Jacob too, so I approve." The little girl beamed up at him. Her Uncle Kurt was easily the best dressed person in the entire universe, so his approval of her clothes meant the world to her. Little did she know, Kurt always approved of her clothes.

"We're going to stop by McDonalds and get a quick breakfast and then we're going to get lunch afterward. Don't expect us back until later this afternoon." Quinn advised as she shooed the kids out the front door. Each had their kid's workshop toolboxes in hand and were jogging merrily to the car. Kurt shot her a grateful look as she followed behind them. "Have fun." She shouted back towards him. The tech nodded. He would indeed have fun.

Blaine rolled away from his normal spot on his bed in favor of the cooler sheets on the other side. He buried his head in the unused pillow and began to fall back asleep. Just as his mind was teetering between the real world and the land of dreams, his phone rang. He reached blindly between the sheets for his phone. He and Kurt fell asleep texting the night before so his phone became his bed mate that evening. Once he found it, Blaine held it to his face. He had a text message from Hunter, asking about his plans for the day. The vet replied that he was having brunch with Kurt but would more than likely be free the rest of the day. As he was about to turn his eyes away from his phone, he noticed a text from Kurt.

As quickly as his tired fingers would allow him, Blaine opened the message.

I woke up late, thus we're running late. I'm thinking 10:30 instead of 10. Is that okay? -Kurt

What time is it? He wondered. The message was sent just before 9 am. When his eyes were focused enough, Blaine checked the time on his phone. 9:45...*are you serious?!* Quickly, he sent Kurt a response.

Just woke up. 1030 is fine. I'm so sorry. I forgot to set an alarm. 10:30 is great. I'll be ready.-Blaine

Between me, Quinn, and yourself, we make all adults look bad. None of set an alarm, so we all of us woke up late. Shame on us.- Kurt

Blaine chuckled and shook his head. He was relieved that Kurt wasn't upset that it'd taken him so long to text back. They sent texts back and forth for a few moments. Eventually, Kurt stated that he needed to grab a show and that he'd see the vet soon. Once Kurt was gone and the messages were dried out, Blaine crawled out of bed and headed towards his shower. *He's taking a shower and I'm taking a shower. We're practically showering together. Shit. Don't think like that, Blaine. I don't want to walk into a restaurant full of people with a giant boner...or do I?*

Half an hour later found Blaine sat on his front porch -completely dressed and ready to leave- waiting for Kurt. As the time neared 10:30, Blaine grew more and more nervous. What if Kurt didn't show up? What if he changed his mind? The vet's heart sank momentarily. Then, like a knight on his noble steed, Kurt pulled into Blaine's driveway. The vet jumped to his feet instantly, a huge smile painted across his face.

Blaine watched from the porch as the tech stepped out of his car. As usual, he looked amazing. With his tight black jeans that were tucked snugly into his sleek, knee high boots, and his dress shirt that was tucked into those skin tight jeans...Blaine bit his lip. *Because damn!*

The vet watched intently as Kurt leaned into his car and picked something up. Well, he couldn't be sure if that was what Kurt was doing. Blaine's eyes were trained on the man's ass. *Dat ass tho!* He watched as the man's hips wiggle before seeing the man pull back. Kurt closed the car door, finally giving Blaine a glimpse of what he was doing in the car. He was indeed grabbing something out of the car. It was red and yellow and made Blaine's heart leap. Flowers. It was a bouquet of flowers. "Sorry I'm late." Kurt blushed as he headed towards the house and the man that stood in front of it.

Blaine blushed and ducked his head. "You...yeah. It's fine...I was...late...woke up late and...yeah." Kurt grinned as the man stumbled over his words. The younger man made his way up the steps until he was stood on the step just below Blaine. For the first time, they were the exact same height.

"I bought you these. That's why I'm extra late. I was on my way over and couldn't help but think that this date wouldn't be complete without flowers." He thrust the bouquet into the vet's hands nervously and watched him examine them. After a moment, their eyes met once again. "So...do you like them."

Blaine leaned forward and captured the tech's lips. The kiss was light and sweet. When he pulled back, he smiled. "I love them. Let me put them in some water and then I'll be right out." Kurt nodded as Blaine scurried into the house. Moments later he exited the house and the pair was on their way.

IHOP: The International House of Pancakes. It wasn't much but it wasn't busy, so the men were pleased. They were seated quickly and their orders were taken before they knew it. With coffee before them and their waitress off to give their order to the kitchen, Blaine and Kurt were left to themselves.

They sat and stared at one another for a moment before Blaine, feeling a bit more confident than he had when their date first started, reached across the table and laced their fingers together. Kurt smiled at him. "I'm really glad that you asked me out, Kurt. I was going crazy." The vet admitted, blushing a bit.

"I was scared silly; especially after I did it. I kept thinking that guys you've dated before probably took you to high class restaurants and I brought you here." Kurt used his free hand to motion around the

restaurant. The early bird crowd of retirees was clearing out, leaving just them and a family with a few children that were a bit too rowdy for Kurt's liking. He silently thanked his lucky stars that Keenan knew how to act in public.

Blaine shook his head, quickly. "It doesn't matter where I am, it matters who I'm with. I'm happy that I get to be here with you. That's all that matters to me." The answer seemed to please the young man; if his blush was any indicator. "And...sorry about yesterday. It was...I didn't mean for things to go that far. I just missed you and...we've been so busy and..."

"It's okay. I didn't exactly stop you. I understood. I'm just glad Marley was fine with it. That could have ended badly; which is why we can't let it happen again." Blaine nodded as Kurt spoke. *Nope. Not gonna happen again. Not. Gonna. Happen. Ag-...maybe it will happen again but not yet.* He couldn't be sure.

When the waitress returned with their food, the pair enjoyed their food in a comfortable silence. The purpose of their date wasn't to spend all of their time talking. They just wanted time with one another. They wanted to enjoy having one another near. It was comforting. Frighteningly enough, the thought of only being comfortable when someone else was with him made Kurt uncomfortable. He hated feeling like his comfort depended on Blaine's presence. The truth was, however, that a lot of his comfort did depend on Blaine and his presence.

"So, what are you doing today?" Blaine asked as he placed his fork on his empty plate.

"I don't know. Keenan is at a kid's workshop right now but we'll probably do something later. I'm not sure yet. Dad re-implemented Saturday night dinners, so I'll probably just spend my evening grumbling at Finn and crossing my arms angrily." Kurt gave Blaine a demonstration of how his evening would go. The vet chuckled as he watched Kurt uncross and re-cross his arms, imitating frustration. "What about you?"

Blaine shrugged. "Ehhh...not sure. I think I've talked Hunter into adopting Sadie so I'll probably take her over to his house tonight." Kurt let out an excited squeal. Blaine always went above and beyond for his job. When the animals were at the shelter for a certain period of time without prospects of being adopted, Blaine took them home and searched for a family for them on his own time. That got the animals out of the shelter and freed up space for others. As of that day, Blaine had five cats at his house and only two belonged to him.

Kurt clapped his hands together. "I hope Hunter takes Sadie, she's such a good cat." Blaine hoped so as well. Sadie was friendly and caring. Unfortunately, a giant, ugly scar that ran from his mouth to his ear usually turned prospects off to the animal. It was disappointing that a superficial characteristic was so off-putting.

"Me too. She's a great animal and Hunter always plays with her when he comes over. So..." The waitress brought their check, interrupting their conversation. Kurt grabbed for it and shoved a few bills into it. He turned to Blaine, as if to say something, but was interrupted by the sound of his phone.

"Oh, crap. It's Quinn. I have to take this." He advised as he stood up. Blaine nodded and watched the man walk towards the door to take the call.

"Your birdhouse looks amazing, Keenan." Quinn smiled as her nephew painted the tiny house he'd built. Keenan nodded proudly. When he returned home, he'd show it to his father and Daddy would hang it up somewhere.

"Thanks. When we leave here, I'm going to show it to, Daddy. He's going to love it." Keenan replied excitedly. Quinn grinned at her nephew.

"We're going to lunch first and then we'll go home to see your daddy." She advised. She watched as her nephew's face fell.

"He's not coming with us?" He asked. He dropped his paintbrush and turned his full attention to his aunt.

"Well," What was she supposed to say? Kurt asked her not to tell his son about his date with Blaine. He wanted to do that himself. Just not yet. "Ummm...Daddy probably already ate. So, no, he won't be there."

"How do you know that? He might be starving right now. We can't let him starve. I think we should go by the house and get him before we go out to lunch. I don't want him to be left out." Keenan's eyes plead with the woman.

"Ummm..." Quinn was at a loss. The purpose of lunch was to give Kurt time with Blaine. Since Kurt was picking the man up and dropping him off, she was sure he wouldn't be home if they stopped by before heading to the restaurant. Then what would she tell Keenan. After a moment's worth of brain racking, she

came up with an answer. "Your daddy went out to breakfast with friends," plural...more than one "he won't be hungry. So, it'll just be us." She hoped her answer was sufficient for the little boy.

Unfortunately, it wasn't. Keenan's father only introduced him to one friend and it was the one friend that Keenan did not want around. It was the friend that would make his daddy sad if he kept hanging out with him. In a moment's time, he made a decision. He pushed his project away and placed his hands on his stomach. "Aunt Quinn." He waited until she looked away from Beth and in his direction. "Ummm...my tummy hurts. I think I need to go home."

He watched as his aunt sighed. Moments before he'd been fine. Then again, kids could be fine one moment and nauseous the next. Their bodies were odd like that. "Well, why don't we just go home after this? We'll lay you down and bring you soup. Grandpa Burt is there, I'm sure he'll lay with you until your daddy gets home and then I'll take Beth out to lunch." *Since I promised and I hate breaking promises to her.*

Keenan shook his head from side to side. "No. You said you'd take Beth out to lunch. I think you should call my daddy to get me." Quinn sighed; feeling utterly defeated and advised her nephew that she'd call his father. She watched as the smile returned to the boy's face. It wouldn't be there for long.

"We have to go. I'm so sorry. Keenan is sick and I have to pick him up from the kid's workshop. I'm so, so, sorry." Kurt half shouted when he reached the table. Before he finished his statement, Blaine was out of his chair and shrugging on his jacket. "I'm so, so..."

The vet held a finger over the younger man's mouth. "Don't worry about it. Your son is sick, let's go." Kurt nodded and followed the vet out of the restaurant. They climbed into the car and were off in the direction of Home Depot a moment later.

Keenan's eyes lit up when he saw his father rush into the room. "I'm sorry, Quinn. Had I known that he didn't feel well this morning, I wouldn't have sent him with you." The young father scooped his boy into his arms and held him close.

Quinn waved him off with a skeptical look. Kurt wasn't sure what the look was for, but he decided later would be a better time to ask about it. Now, his son was sick and needed to be taken home. Well, after they took Blaine home.

Kurt carried the little boy to the car. He opened the back door and placed the boy inside. "What are you doing here?" Keenan asked when Blaine said hello to him. His daddy wasn't supposed to bring *Dr. Blaine. Dr. Lane. Dr. Blame. Dr. B. Lane.* Keenan liked the last one. It felt like some of his better work.

Dr. B. Lane smiled dumbly at him. *He has a dumb smile.* "I was with your dad. We rode together so he's going to take me home. Then he's going to take you home and make sure you feel better. It's not fun being sick." *Well no duh.*

Before Keenan could respond, his father stepped into the car. "Honey, we're taking Dr. Blaine home and then we're going to go home and lay down. If your tummy is hurting then you don't need to be running around. To bed we go." Keenan nodded curtly as they drove away.

When they reached Dr. B. Lane's house -*ugly house. He has a stupid, ugly house-* Keenan watched as his father and his dumb friend giggled and stuttered until the doctor stepped out of the car. "Call me later, Kurt." He said, earning a laugh from the boy's dad. Then, Dr. B. Lane turned to Keenan, "I hope you feel better, buddy." Keenan nodded and watched as the door shut. *Thank goodness.*

Once the doctor walked into his house, Kurt turned towards his son. "It's just you and me, kid."

A giant smile graced the little boy's face. "Yep." And that was how he liked it. Just him and his daddy. If he was lucky, that would be the last time they saw the doctor. *Hopefully.*

Chapter Eleven

The week of Halloween was a busy one. Between midterms, trying to ready Keenan for Halloween, Blaine's work obligations, and their general day to day, Kurt and Blaine barely had a moment to breathe, let alone speak. They made time, though. Every evening that week, after Keenan was tucked away in his bed, the pair could be found seated on the top steps in front of Kurt's apartment. Thursday night was no different. The pair cuddled together, trying to use their body heat to keep from having to go inside, and talked. They didn't want to wake the sleeping boy and Blaine didn't want to go home. So they huddled together and hoped for the best.

"You know how I told you that I was taking Keen trick or treating for Halloween?" Kurt asked, as he rested his head on his boyfriend's shoulder. He felt Blaine nod. "Well, apparently that's only a half truth. Since it's our first Halloween here, I wasn't aware of the huge party my family throws every year for the parents and the kids. I know it's short notice but...did you want to come? I'm sure you already have plans but..." Kurt bit his lips and looked up from his boyfriend's shoulder. His eyes met a pair of honey ones. They were kind and caring; everything Kurt wanted from a pair of eyes.

Blaine smiled down at him. "Well..." He began playfully. "I was going to go party with my boys tomorrow night." He watched as the sparkle in his boyfriend's eyes die momentarily. "But, I think being with you and your family would be way more fun, so I'd love to come to your Halloween party tomorrow night." Kurt exhaled against his body; obviously relieved that Blaine would be in attendance.

"Great! Trick or Treating ends at 8 so the party will start about 8:30." Blaine nodded and took note. He'd have to call his friends and cancel but he knew they'd understand. They'd been very understanding over the past few weeks when it came to matters that involved Kurt. *Whatever! I'll handle it.*

The pair enjoyed the rest of their time together in silence. Both far more concerned with being in each other's presence than exchanging words.

Halloween day was hectic at the shelter. Once again, people were flying around like mad men and women, doing their best to help their patients as best they could. Well, mostly. While Blaine was assisting Mr.

Schuester and his wife, Mrs. Pillsbury-Schuester choose the cleanest animal possible -*I'm not sure what they mean by that*- Kurt and Unique propped themselves against a far wall in the waiting room and picked apart Rachel's outfit. Blaine suggested a casual Friday in honor of Halloween that Monday and everyone - with the exception of Rachel- declined. They worked in an animal shelter for goodness sake. *I'm not ruining my good clothes here!*

"My five year old dresses better than she does." Kurt turned his nose up as he spoke. He hated sounding snotty but she looked awful. Her plaid, pleated skirt, her reindeer sweater - *it's never acceptable to wear that; not even during Christmas*- her knee socks, and loafers made his eyes hurt. He couldn't help but turn his nose up.

"I think my grandmother threw that outfit out in the 70s." Unique commented. She couldn't start or end with Rachel's outfit. *No ma'am. All of that is a no no.*

"My dad wears flannel," The tech began. He and his work bestie cringed simultaneously. "and even he would know that Rachel's outfit is a travesty. It's just...how did she come up with that?"

Unique snickered and rolled her eyes. "Her closet couldn't handle all the ugly she was cramming into it and threw up on her." The pair broke into a fit of laughter. It continued until Blaine spoke up, startling them.

"Ummm...despite the fact that I had to put my glasses on because Rachel's outfit dried out my contacts, I'm going to need you two to get back to work. And I'm going to need you to stop talking about her. Regardless of how she is, it isn't nice." Kurt and Unique turned to the man, each offering him an unamused look. "What?" He asked. "It's true. You wouldn't want her to talk about you, so don't talk about her." Again he earned looks from the duo.

"Get back to work, guys." The pair huffed and walked away. Blaine chuckled as they went. They weren't exactly wrong. Rachel's outfit was...he cringed and got away as quickly as he could. With each passing moment his eyes hurt more and more. *Poor girl. Poor unfashionable girl.*

Rachel hated everyone. *LITERALLY!* She hated her coworkers for not participating in casual Friday and she hated her boss for coming up with the stupid idea. Her theater friends would have participated. They

would have participated so much that casual Fridays would have been banned. That's how hardcore they were. Unfortunately, the people in her office were not as amazing as her theater friends at the Lima Community Theater. And they were certainly far less amazing than her theater friends in Chicago. *I miss them.*

Rachel rested her chin in her palm and thought about all the people she left in Chicago when she moved back to Lima to be near Finn. People weren't even the extent of it. She traded everything she loved for the one person that brought her happiness. She left the theater and took a job with mindless peasants. She gave up her loft for a grubby apartment just off the interstate. She gave up singing for disgusting animals. *All for Finn.* She did everything for Finn. Then, Finn had the audacity to, once again, tell her that she couldn't attend his family's annual Halloween party. It was the biggest party in East Lima and she wasn't invited and that made her angry. She brooded over the fact for most of the afternoon. Then, she received a text message that changed everything; that made everything okay.

(1/2)Don't know if you remember me but it's Britney S. Pierce. I went to McKinley High School with you in my last life. I still have five more since I've only died four times. Anyways, Finn Hudson-do you remember him? He went to school with us too. I think he's still has nine lives left.- is having a huge Halloween party and all the old gang is invited. Wanna come? His address is 415 Whitman Ave. Have a good day. -Brittany

A slow smile crept across the secretary's lips. She quickly sent Brittany a reply, advising her that she'd be at Finn's party. If he wasn't going to invite her, then she would go under the pretense of the glee club. It was perfect. She could spend the evening with the man she loved and also scope out what progress he'd made with leaving his wife. *Perfect. Just perfect.*

Keenan toed the mulch on the playground. He felt bad. Kind of. He knew Mikayla wanted to be his friend but he'd spent the past few months pushing her away. Then, she tried to be nice to him that day during art by letting him use her crayons and he yelled at her. *It's not her; it's me.* Keenan was having a bad day; well bad week. Despite the fact that he was able to pull his daddy away from Dr. B. Lame on Saturday, his father spoke with the man throughout the weekend. The thought made the little boy furious. He just wanted his daddy to stop being friends with Dr. Blaine. Why couldn't his daddy do that?

Whatever the reason, Keenan knew he had no right to take out his frustrations on Mikayla. She was just trying to be nice and he'd yelled at her. He had to apologize. Which was why he was toeing the mulch nervously. Nobody liked to apologize but that didn't mean that it didn't have to be done. *She cried for gaga sake!*

Keenan took a deep breath and checked his pocket for his apology present. It was a flower sticker that he'd gotten a few weeks ago from Miss Pierce for finishing the week with all green marks. Green meant good in their classroom and Keenan was always good, so he always got prizes at the end of the week.

With his head hung, Keenan made his way through the sea of his classmates -all begging him to play with them because he was kind of a big deal at school- towards Mikayla. She was seated on the ground beneath a tree with her knees pulled to her chest and her forehead rested against them. "Can I sit down?" He asked awkwardly. He watched as she nodded.

The little boy plopped down next to her and pulled the sticker out of his pocket. After a few moments of sitting in silence, Keenan spoke up. "I'm sorry I yelled at you in art class." He eventually blurted. He received a sniffle from the girl; which sucked because that meant she was crying...again. *And it's all my fault.* "I just...I'm having a rough week and I took it out on you. I'm sorry. I brought you a present." He held out his hand, presenting her with the sticker.

Only then did Mikayla's head pop up. Through blurry, tear filled eyes, she stared down at it. After what felt like an eternity to the little boy, she grabbed it and shot him a smile. "Thank you, Keenan." *Much better.* He thought proudly to himself. "I'm sorry for always bothering you. I won't do it anymore." Her smile fell a bit as she spoke.

Gone was the pride that Keenan once felt. "Don't do that. I like being your friend. It's just...you always ask me to be your girlfriend and I'm just not ready for that kind of commitment. I have all kinds of things going on in my life and...I'm not ready to be someone's girlfriend. Maybe when I'm seven."

"But can we at least be friends. My daddy is friends with your daddy and...I still think you're cool...and fun." Keenan nodded. He liked that idea. Mr. Trent seemed cool that day at his house and he was the kind of friend that he wanted his daddy to have. *Mostly because he likes mommies and not other daddies like Dr. B. Lame.*

"Sounds cool to me. Do you want to have a tea party someday? I have a really cool tea set and I need a cool friend to play with it with me." Mikayla sighed in relief. She may not be getting a girlfriend but she was getting a cool friend. *Always a bribe's Maine; never a bribe.*

"Yeah. Maybe we can talk our daddies into taking us to the park someday too."

"Yeah, maybe. I've got some stuff I'm dealing with though."

Mikayla scooted close to Keenan and gave him her undivided attention. "What are you dealing with? I might be able to help." A smile crept across the little boy's face. Maybe being friends with Mikayla would be beneficial as well as fun. It was a win win.

Kurt left work a few hours early that day. He promised his Dad and Carole he'd pick up a few things for the party, he promised Blaine he'd buy candy to leave in a bowl on his little, green porch with a note that read 'please take one', and -most importantly- he promised his son that he'd pick him up from school that day. The little boy insisted that he needed extra time to get ready. *Like father, like son.*

The young father waited in line with the other parents as the children were escorted out of the school and to their cars. He watched Keenan's eyes lit up as he neared the car. That look, the wide eyed, excited look of his son's face as he stepped into the car, was what Kurt lived for each day. The look was a fresh breath of air in a world that sometimes seemed suffocating.

"Daddy! You came!" Keenan screeched as he climbed into the back seat. Kurt undid his seat belt and leaned into the back seat. He quickly fastened his son into his booster seat before reclaiming the driver's seat. "I'm so happy. Now we can get ready for trick or treating soon! Woo hoo!" The little boy shouted.

Kurt chuckled and began to follow the line of parents out of the school parking lot and towards the grocery store. They had things to buy before heading home to get ready. While neither the father knew it, neither of them could wait to get home to get ready. Each excited about the evening that lay ahead of them.

Once their shopping was complete, Kurt and his son drove by Blaine's house to drop off the candy they'd picked out. Had Keenan know from the beginning that the candy he so carefully picked out was for Dr. B. Lame, he would have opted for the off-brand licorice instead of the giant bag of Snickers he picked out. Needless to say, he was not pleased.

"I'm just going to drop these on the porch and then we'll head home." The little boy sighed in relief, allowing his boneless body to rest easily. The fact that they weren't staying was a good sign. He couldn't imagine having to sit in Dr. Blaine's big, ugly house all afternoon.

From the backseat, Keenan watched as his father trotted up the steps, tossed the candy down on a porch, and then trotted back to the car. *In and out. Take that Dr. Lame!* Keenan and his father made no other stops on their way home; much to the little boy's pleasing.

Hours later, Keenan -a lion, his father -dressed as a firefighter, Quinn - gracing the streets as Cinderella, and Beth- who threw a fit until her parents let her go as Danica Patrick, walked back to the house; exhausted after an evening of trick or treating. The moment the front door flung open, the excited children rushed the house. "Grandpa! Grandma!" Keenan shouted. "Come see us!"

Moments later, the grandparents waltzed down the stairs hand in hand. As they rounded the corner, the smiled at their grandchildren; both seated on the floor rummaging through their candy. Carole was dressed as a pirate and Burt was 'Guy That Owns A Tire Shop'; unoriginal in Kurt's opinion but who was he to judge? *At least he dressed up.*

Carole leaned towards the children and smiled. "Did you guys get good stuff?" She asked as she watched her grandchildren haggle for pieces. *I hope they know we're checking all of that before they eat it. All. Of. It.*

The children nodded. "We did pretty well for ourselves." Beth answered. She then noticed a look on her cousin's face and revised her statement. "Well, except for the lady that gave us oranges and water. Uncle Kurt threw a fit."

"Who gives children oranges and water on Halloween? We spend all year trying to make them eat right. Can they have a little reprieve? Please?!" Firefighter Kurt shouted. The children giggled at the outburst while the adults shot him wide eyed stares. He shrugged each of them off and turned towards the mirror

in the hallway. The last time he checked his watch it was a quarter to 8:30. That meant that Blaine would be arriving soon and Kurt wanted to look great when he did.

Late. Late. Late. Blaine was late. He stopped by the grocery store on his way to Kurt's house for the party and lost all track of time. People stopped him left and right to compliment his costume. Those who actually recognized him asked him questions about their animals. That was one of the few downfalls of his job. When he had somewhere he had to be, people stopped him to talk about their cat's bowel movements or lack thereof. "...and he's just been acting crazy. Do you think it's all this, Dr. Anderson? Is it because of this Halloween nonsense?" Mr. Figgins, one of Blaine's regular clients, asked.

The vet sighed as he looked longingly towards the floral department. It was so close, yet so far. "Ummm...no. Halloween has nothing to do with your dog's moods." He advised. "Bring him to the office on Monday and I'll see why he's acting 'crazy'." The man nodded and bid the vet a good day. *Thank goodness.* Before he could be stopped again, Blaine dashed towards his destination. Unfortunately, Miss Holliday was there and she always had questions about her birds. *Great!*

A good forty-five minutes later, Blaine left the store with a large bouquet of flowers and not a bit of his sanity. He was mobbed with questions while he picked out the flowers, again during check out, and once again as he exited the store. If he didn't know any better, he would have let himself believe that he was the only veterinarian in town. He knew that wasn't the case, however. He just happened to always be around. He also happened to be the one that would stop what he was doing -regardless of what that was- and speak with people. Before, he did it because he had nothing better to do. Now, he questioned that past decision. When he'd finally found a life, he couldn't get away from being that nice guy that stopped when people needed him too. Because of that, he was late. *Crap!*

The vet rushed towards his car as quickly as he could. Once inside, he started it up and tore out of the parking lot. *God, I'm late. I'm late. For a very important date.*

Miraculously, by 8:30, the party was in full swing. Guests began to arrive shortly after Carole advised the children to clean up their candy and they hadn't stopped arriving yet. The first floor was jam packed. Wall to wall adults and children -all dressed in their own unique way- visited with one another. Kurt did his fair

share of visiting but his attention was on Keenan...*and my phone*. When he spoke to Blaine earlier that day, his boyfriend promised to be there at exactly 8:30. Sharp. On the dot. And, as of 8:45, the technician hadn't heard a peep; not a single damn one.

"Daddy, pick me up!" Keenan shouted as his father made his way towards the window to check for Blaine's car. The young father stopped mid stride and picked the boy up. He rested his son onto his hip before continuing his journey.

One look.

And another. Then another. A final quick glance out the front window. Each proved to be fruitless. Blaine wasn't there. The tech let out a frustrated sigh before turning his attention to his son. "You know," he began as he smiled down at the tiny face that was staring expectantly up at him, "you're really getting too big for me to carry around like this."

Keenan shook his head from side to side and then buried his face in the crook of his father's neck. "Nope! Never." The boy mumbled into his shoulder. Kurt chuckled and rubbed the expanse of his son's back. Together, they made their way back towards the guests; chatting merrily with party goers as they went.

I'm late! I'm sorry. I got held up at the grocery store and then I got stuck in traffic. I'll be there in five minutes. -Blaine

The vet tossed his phone in the passenger seat as he pulled onto Whitman Avenue. He wasn't a fan of phones and driving but he needed to contact Kurt. Forty - five minutes after he should have arrived, he was still in his car. He didn't want Kurt to worry more than probably already was, so he shot off a quick text and hoped that his boyfriend received it.

From down the street, Blaine could make out the Hummel house. His eyes widened as he neared. There were cars everywhere. His eyes darted from side to side in search of a parking spot. There wasn't a single free space from 401 Whitman Ave to 421. The vet's foot pressed down on the break, halting the car.

He grabbed his phone to call his boyfriend and noticed a text instead.

I'll meet you outside. There's nowhere to park out there. -Kurt

The vet's eyes snapped up and he saw Kurt, once again, standing under the streetlight. When the man turned in his direction, Blaine noticed the small person perched on his hip. Obviously, it was Keenan. Slowly, Blaine released the break and pressed lightly on the gas, causing his car to creep down the street.

He pulled up next to the figures beneath the streetlight and rolled his window down. "Hey guys. Sorry I'm late." He shouted from the car. Kurt smiled and carried his son around to the passenger's side of the car. Blaine watched as he pulled the door open and plopped down -child still in hand- into the seat.

Kurt waved him off. "Don't worry about it." Blaine watched as he adjusted the little boy in his lap. "It's just around the corner. Drive to the end of the street." The vet nodded and pressed lightly on the gas. Keenan sitting in Kurt's lap without a seat belt was causing him concern but he knew Kurt wouldn't do anything to put his son in danger. So, he drove.

They rode in relative silence, Kurt advising his boyfriend to take a left and then another sharp left. Meer seconds after pulling away from the curb in front of the Hummel household, Blaine parked his car in a nearby space. "The park is back there and this is the parking lot. You won't have to worry about traffic or your car getting dinged." The tech advised as he lifted Keenan, then himself out of the car.

The three stood awkwardly for a moment; Kurt watching to see what his son was going to do -Keenan seemed reluctant to walk outside when he found out who they were meeting, Blaine trying to figure out who to greet first, and Keenan brooding over the fact that -once again- Dr. Lane was infringing on his time with his father. *Not cool.*

When Kurt realized that neither of the men before him were going to speak, he attempted to break the ice. "Look, Keenan, Blaine is a lion too!" He motioned towards the elder and his costume.

Blaine smiled as he examined Keenan's costume. Indeed, they were both lions. "I'm the Cowardly Lion from The Wizard of Oz." He advised. Keenan did not look amused. "Are you Simba?" *Because, hello...best costume ever. Simba is my favorite.*

Keenan scoffed. "No!" He hissed, throwing his arms across his chest. "I'm Rumble Roar. I'm the headmaster at Pigfarts. It's on Mars, ya know." The veterinarian and the young father stared absently at the boy.

'Pigfarts?' Blaine mouthed to his boyfriend. Kurt shrugged. He had no idea what his son was talking about. An hour ago, he was a simple lion. *Now, his lion has a biography. Kids and their imaginations.* "Well, I think that's awesome. You're totally awesome, Keenan."

Before the boy could accept his praise, he heard something; a voice. "Keenan!" The voice rang out through the cool October night and towards the group. They each turned towards it. There, stood on top of the hill that separated the Hummel house from the park in her racing jumpsuit, was Beth. "Keenan! My mom is passing out punch and cookies to everyone. Come get some before my daddy eats them all." *Dr. Lame can have Daddy right now; I'm going to get cookies!* Before another word could be spoken, Keenan tore out of the parking lot and over the hill. He darted past his cousin and into the house, leaving the two men alone.

"So," Blaine shot his boyfriend a bashful smile, "Sorry I was late. I stopped to get flowers for you and got stopped by a million people on my way through the store." He watched as Kurt's face transformed into an adorable pout. "Then, I figured if I was going to get you flowers, I needed to get your step mother flowers - I'm meeting her for the first time after all and I want to make a good impression. But then, I knew I needed to get Quinn flowers if I got Carole flowers and I needed to get Beth flowers if I got Quinn flowers. In the end, I ended up with a giant bouquet for your whole family. Then I realized that I forgot my guitar and had to go get it. It's still okay that I brought it, right?"

Kurt rolled his eyes and closed the distance between them. Blaine was adorable when he rambled, but it was time for him to shut his mouth and put those lips to use. The playful glint in his eye must have been the indicating factor for his boyfriend, because it was Blaine that closed the space between their lips. Slow and lazy; sweet and relieving. Their kiss was all of that and more.

When they pulled apart, they spent a moment staring into one another's eyes. Then, Blaine ruined the moment. "Sir, there's a fire in my pants and I think I might need your extinguisher to put it out."

Kurt stepped back, gaping at his boyfriend. "Really? Did you really just use that on me? The Cowardly Lion would never use such pickup lines." He teased. He watched as a smirk formed across Blaine's edible lips.

Their pair spent another moment in the parking lot before retrieving Blaine's items from the car before heading towards the house. Hand in hand, they walked over the hill and into the house. They were both ready for the fun filled night that lay ahead of them.

"This is my step mother, Carole." Blaine extended his hand to the pirate. "She's a nurse." Kurt added absently. He scanned the bodies for his child and his niece. He knew they were somewhere. Over the drunken singing of Finn's former classmates and the hushed argument in the hallway, he could hear the children laughing.

Eventually, he spotted them near the front door. They were digging in their candy buckets, once again. He watched bemusedly as they fisted out handfuls and thrust them into the faces of a few party guests. He then turned his attention back to his boyfriend and his parents. *The children are fine. I don't need to worry about them...it's the guests I'm worried about.*

"...and how did you decide to become a veterinarian?" Carole asked. Kurt tilted his head to the side and listened intently. That was a question that plagued him from their first meeting but he always forgot to ask it. They were usually extremely busy with work or trying to put together personal meetings with one another that it slipped to the back burner, almost forgotten.

The technician turned his gaze to his boyfriend and waited for his reply. When Blaine noticed that all eyes were on him, he flushed considerably. "Well...it's going to sound kind of stupid."

Carole waved him off. "My son still believes in the Easter Bunny. Nothing sounds stupid to me anymore." She advised.

"Okay. Well, when I was little, I thought I was a superhero; Nightbird. One day, Nightbird was trying to ward evil spirits away from his house and he got hurt." *Is he really talking third person right now?* Kurt wondered. "He fell in a pile of leaves and cut his hand on a twig." *Yep. He is definitely talking in third person.* "He cried for a while until someone came to help him. It was his neighbor, Dr. Spencer."

Kurt and his stepmother listened intently as Blaine told them about his time with Dr. Spencer. "He took Nightbird to his house and tried to clean his cuts. Nightbird was hesitant. He told Dr. Spencer that, since he was part bird, he needed a doctor that could fix birds, not people. Dr. Spencer told him...oh wow. I always do that when I'm telling this story...Dr. Spencer told me that he was an animal doctor and that's when I wanted to become an animal doctor too."

The pair cooed at him. Blaine, never one to turn down attention, listened excitedly as they gush over his story. "You ever work on bears?" Someone asked. The three turned to see Burt Hummel nearing them. Kurt and Carole shook their heads at the man while Blaine stared blankly.

"Ummmm...bears?" He questions. It was an odd question.

The man elaborated. "You know...your own kind." Burt watched as his son grew flustered and as the veterinarian grew more and more confused.

"Ignore him, Blaine." Kurt hissed. "This is my father, Burt Hummel, and he's just being silly." Each man extended a hand. *What is up with these people and their grips?* Blaine wondered as Burt offered his tiny hand a firm shake.

"Nice to meet you, Bear." Blaine nodded dumbly before letting his newly released hand fall limply at his side. He was confused. So confused. Kurt shot him a look that said he'd explain later and the two continued their conversation with the parents. It was the nicest evening out either man could remember having in quite a while.

Keenan barreled across the room and straight into his father when he saw what was happening. They were close; too close. Once in a while, Dr. Blaine rested his hand on his daddy's shoulder or his daddy shot the man a 'grown up' look. It was infuriating. Unfortunately, he couldn't do much about it that evening. Mikayla told him to wait until after Halloween to put his plan into action. *'If your daddy gets mad he might not let you go trick or treating. You don't want that.'* He didn't, so he would do his best to keep his cool. *Those stupid looks aren't helping though..*

Keenan received a bit of reprieve via one of his Uncle Finn's loud friends; the one that his Aunt Quinn spent the past hour glaring at. The little boy wasn't sure why his Aunt Quinn didn't like her but he knew that he wanted to take glaring tips from her. She was almost as good at it as his daddy was. "We should sing Disney songs like we did in school." The woman in the giant, yellow Belle dress shouted. "Uncle Finn's friends shouted and cheered. They liked the idea.

Keenan liked it as well. Disney songs were a specialty of his and his father's. They'd been singing duets together since longer than the little boy could remember. And probably longer than that. Keenan couldn't be sure.

So, the little boy scurried across the room and into his father's legs, nearly knocking the man over. "Daddy! Daddy!" He shouted excitedly as he danced from foot to foot. He watched as his daddy and Dr. B. Lame

turned their attention to him. "Uncle Finn's super loud, lady friend just said we're singing Disney songs. We have to sing together. HAVE TO!" He insisted.

Kurt nodded excitedly. *Yes!* He loved singing with his son. Deep down, he kind of liked the idea of possibly singing with Blaine, but he'd never turn down an invitation from Keenan; never. Before letting his son tear him away from his conversation, he turned to Blaine. "Finn's friends are very organized. There's probably a sign-up sheet somewhere. Come with us and we'll all sign up. We have to sing." Blaine nodded. *Yes. Singing is a definite.*

Together, the three made their way through the crowd towards the woman that Keenan kept describing. When they found her, both Kurt and Blaine's mouths dropped. "Rachel!" They shouted together. Keenan pinched each of them, poked them both in the side, and advised them that he would be waiting for his Cokes later.

"What are you doing here?" Kurt hissed at the girl. While she made a beautiful Belle, she was still a pain in his side.

Rachel looked up at him, a smug smile painted across her face. "Brittany invited me." She pointed to the girl -dressed as a cat- in the corner.

"Miss Pierce?" The blond turned around and smiled when she Kurt. "Mr. Hummel. I didn't know you'd be here. Keenan!" She beamed. The little boy wiggled his hand away from his father's and ran over to give his teacher a hug. "How are you? Has your Halloween been going well?" She asked.

"Really good. Earlier Auntie Snixx gave me and my cousin each a bag of Snickers."

Miss Pierce clapped excitedly. "Well, when we share our trick or treating stories on Monday, you'll have to tell the class about that." Keenan nodded towards her.

While his son entertained his teacher -apparently an old friend of Quinn's- Kurt and Blaine turned their attention towards Rachel. "So you're crashing my family's party because you know Brittany? That's not cool."

Rachel scoffed. *Please. I don't need to crash this lame party!* "Hardly." She snarked. "I also went to school with Finn."

"Who's Finn?" Blaine asked. He knew who Rachel's Finn was -that imaginary, or maybe not, boyfriend she claimed to have- but he was curious about Finn's relationship to Kurt. In hindsight, he was certain he'd heard Kurt say the name before, which sparked his curiosity. Did Kurt know Rachel's boyfriend.

"My stepbrother; Quinn's husband." Kurt answered, never taking his eyes off of Rachel. Blaine's mouth fell. *Rachel's Finn was Quinn's Finn; Quinn's husband, Finn?* He hoped not. He hoped that things were not going the way they seemed to be going. *"We'd be together all the time if he didn't have other 'obligations'."* Rachel told him once. He remembered the statement because she spat the word 'obligations' out as if it were doused in piss. "Whatever. I'm assuming you're the frustrating Rachel that Quinn always spoke of. If so, I'll also assume that you're the power hungry, attention whore of the group, which means that you have the damn sign-up sheet to sing. Put Keenan and I down and put Blaine down as well."

Rachel huffed and wrote their names down on the paper. Once she was finished, she decided that Kurt and Keenan would go first and Blaine would go last. "You're up, Kurt. Don't mess up your song. I would hate for your little boy to suffer because of your musical naivety." Seemingly out of nowhere, a hand flew up, smacking Rachel in the shoulder. The group turned to see Whitley glaring at them. *Santana dumped me for that blonde cat, so I've been people watching and texting Hunter. It sucks that he has to work tonight. Someone has to keep the streets of Gotham safe though.*

"Don't talk to him like that. If I hear it again, I'll cut your nose off and send it to Africa for the hungry children. They can feed off that thing for years." Whitley shot towards the girl. Rachel gasped and placed a hand over her nose. Whitley *-the sexiest lady police officer in the room if I say so myself-* shot the woman a look, causing her to scurry away.

Kurt pulled his son away from Santana and Miss Pierce and said goodbye to Blaine and Whitley. "I'll see you guys afterwards." He hollered over them as he and Keenan headed towards the hollowed center of the room. "And good luck, Blaine. This may not be a contest but we're going to blow you away." Shocked and enticed. Blaine was both at once. *Oh...Mr. Hummel and Little Mr. Hummel...you're going down.* Guitar case in hand, Blaine took a seat on the couch. Whatever they had planned, he had to top it. *Thems were fighting words.*

"Oh...yeah! Keenan!" Carole shouted from the sidelines. Burt fist pumped towards his grandson from behind her. They watched as their grandson preened. He loved praise.

"Show 'em what the Hummel's are made of." The little boy nodded, earning an eye roll from his father. Kurt was perched on the floor near the fireplace, waiting for the music to start. When it did, he sat back and watched his son perform. It was one of his favorite pastimes. While Keenan loved most things, he was partial to performing. *God, he's me twenty years ago.* Kurt thought.

I'm gonna be a mighty king

So enemies beware!

From his seat, Kurt spoke his part. One day he'd love to sing a real duet with his son, but not that night. That night was Keenan's night to shine and Kurt wasn't going to take that from him. When his son was older, they'd sing together all the time. While he was a five year old lion, Kurt would let his son's voice grace the ears of their party guests. *One day though. One day.* "Well, I've never seen a king of beasts with quite so little hair."

Keenan turned and smiled at his father. *He always gets all the right words in all the right places.*

I'm gonna be the mane event

Like no king was before

I'm brushing up on looking down

I'm working on my ROAR

"Thus far, a rather uninspiring thing."

Oh, I just can't wait to be king!

Blaine watched excitedly as Kurt hit each of Zazu's lines. He was amazing. Then, there was the look of love that fell over the man's face as he watched his son perform. It wasn't just a look of love, however. Mixed pleasantly with the love in Kurt's eyes was a look of pride. Blaine understood the look. If he was Keenan's father -hell, as his dad's boyfriend- he would be proud. Keenan's performance was amazing. The little boy had an amazing voice that projected well throughout the room. When the vet was able to pull his eyes

away from the little boy, he noticed the other people around the room. Each looked as impressed as he felt.

Keenan rang in the last note with a smile on his face. The room exploded with applause. He deserved it. Blaine watched from the couch as hugs went around. When the group cleared a bit, he stood and walked over. "That was amazing, guys. Holy cow. Keenan, you have an amazing voice." The little boy's grin widened. He loved singing and he loved having people tell him that he did it well. *I don't care that it's Dr. Lame. I like people telling me that they like my voice.*

"Thank you." He whispered shyly. He then trotted off in the direction of his cousin. She was holding up a plate with cake on it. He wanted cake.

Kurt watched his son leave. When he was gone, he turned to his boyfriend. "He loves praise." He commented.

Blaine hummed. Who didn't love praise? "He's got an amazing voice. I wish you'd sung more, but it was a treat to hear him sing. That's a lot to follow. I hope you know that."

"I do. That's why I was happy we were going first."

Kurt and Blaine sat together on the couch and watched some of the guests belt out the best of Disney. Whitley and Santana did a rousing performance of 'Hakuna Matata'; putting on their best Timon and Pumbaa act. They actually made the meerkat and warthog look like imposters. They should have been cast in the original roles.

A group of Finn's old glee club members sang 'Be Our Guest'. Again, just like the performances before them, they were amazing. Once everyone finished, it was Blaine's turn. He had the perfect song for the perfect performance. He was going to tastefully put Keenan and Kurt to shame; more so Kurt. He would gladly lose to Keenan in their imaginary contest.

The vet grabbed his guitar plopped down in front of the fireplace and began to strum. From the confused looks on the faces of the party goers, they'd never heard an acoustic version of the song he was about to sing. *They're about to be blown away.*

Let's get down to business

To defeat the Huns

Did they send me daughters

When I asked for sons?

Cheers rang out from the guests. Oh yeah. You know the song. Slowly, people began to sing with him. When he located Kurt, he noticed that his boyfriend was singing as well. It was nice. *Kind of like our first duet. Well...not really but one day.*

You're a spineless, pale

pathetic lot

And you haven't got a clue

Somehow I'll make a man

out of you

"Is this song about sex?" Burt whispered to his wife. Dr. Bear was talking about making someone a man and his eyes were trained perfectly on the mechanic's son. *All this while Kurt's holding my grandson. That's not appropriate.* "I thought they were supposed to be singing Disney songs."

The mechanic listened as his wife sighed. *What?* "It is a Disney song, Burt. It's from Mulan."

"The movie with the girl who chopped all her hair off but still looked like a girl but everyone thought she was a boy." His wife nodded. "Whatever. It still sounds like he's singing about sex...in front of my grandson...Bear better watch out."

(Be a man)

We must be swift as

the coursing river

(Be a man)

With all the force

of a great typhoon

(Be a man)

With all the strength

of a raging fire

Mysterious as the

dark side of the moon

Bear continued to sing in his son's direction. Don't get Burt wrong, he wanted his son to be happy, but singing about gay sex in public was a bit more progressive than he liked to be with children in the room. He also didn't like hearing some man sing about making his son a man. Especially when... "Hey, Bear." He shouted over the singing. "I think my son was the one that made you a man last month."

All sound in the room died instantly. Blaine, Kurt, and rest of the adults in the room turned and gaped at the man. "What?"

"Dad!"

"Ummm..." Blaine looked most comfortable of all.

"It's not a big deal, guys. I just wanted everyone to know how the Hummel men do things."

In an attempt to save himself any further humiliation, Blaine began to strum again. *I'm not sure how I feel about any of that.* He thought as his fingers danced across the guitar strings.

When the music began again, Keenan pretended not to care. Stupid Dr. Blaine and his stupid guitar were stealing his thunder. *Everyone thought he was so cool. Well, he's not. Stupid guitar. Stupid Mulan.* Keenan immediately took the thought back. Mulan was an awesome movie.

(Be a man)

We must be swift as

the coursing river

(Be a man)

With all the force

of a great typhoon

(Be a man)

With all the strength

of a raging fire

Mysterious as the

dark side of the moon

Keenan felt his father's chest vibrate against his hand. When he looked up, he saw his father singing. He hated that. He didn't want his daddy to sing. He didn't want to sing either. It was hard when the lyrics were so catchy.

In the end, the little boy couldn't help himself and he finished the song strong with the stupid man and his stupid guitar. Then his hands got their own brains and they clapped despite his decision to be the only person not clapping. *Stupid hands.*

Hours later, Keenan was curled into his father's side -fast asleep- on the couch and Kurt was watching Burt speak with his boyfriend. He tried to eavesdrop but they were too far away for him to hear. He rubbed his hands across his son's back, soothing his child in his already peaceful sleep.

Moments later, Kurt witnessed his father and Blaine exchanging a handshake. He continued to watch as his father walked towards him and scooped the sleeping child off the couch. "I'm gonna take him upstairs with me and Carole. I figured since the guests are gone, Finn and Quinn are upstairs fighting about whatever, and you've got company, that me and Carole could keep the kids tonight. Don't stay up too late." Kurt smiled and thanked his father. He then watched as his father and his son headed towards the master bedroom.

"And then there were two." Blaine commented as he took the spot that was once Keenan's.

"Indeed." Kurt replied. He scooted a bit closer to his boyfriend and leaned his head on the man's shoulder.

"Your dad was just telling me that he was sorry for calling us out like that. I knew he didn't mean it but...he seems like a good guy. I like him. I like your whole family." *Well, maybe not Finn, I'll deal with that later though.* "What was up with your dad calling me 'Bear'?" He watched as Kurt cringed. He really didn't want to tell that story. He had to, however.

"Okay, when I got home the morning after we..." He rolled his wrist, expecting Blaine to catch up. The vet did so immediately. "Well, I hopped in the shower. Just as I was getting out, Keenan ran into the bathroom. I had a towel on but nothing else. He saw all the scratches on my back and decided that a bear attacked me in my sleep. That little boy dragged me through the house telling everyone that I'd been attacked by a wild animal in my sleep. The adults already knew what happened and...that's...now you're 'The Bear'."

Blaine did his best not to laugh. He really did but it was difficult. Kurt's family was so happy, so open with one another. His own family was all business and secrets. Despite the embarrassing nature of the situation, he was kind of excited that Kurt's family had a nickname for him. That felt like a bit of security in an insecure world.

The pair sat in silence for a while, cuddling on the couch. They'd spent the evening learning new things about one another and it felt nice to just sit. "You know, had Keenan not asked me to sing that song with him, I would have asked you to sing another with me." Kurt whispered out of the blue.

"What would that song have been?" Blaine itched his nose; the paint was starting to irritate his skin. He'd always been sensitive to having things on his face *-that could be turned into a pun if I wasn't so damn tired.* That coupled with the fact that the room was extremely hot when it was crammed with the people, he could feel it sweating off and then drying again.

The tech stood from his seat, causing the vet to tip slightly. When he sat back down, he had Blaine's guitar in hand. "Only my favorite song ever. Have you seen Aladdin?" He listened as Blaine scoffed. Not only had he seen Aladdin, but he knew exactly what song the tech was referring to. Slowly, his fingers began to pick at the strings. With a few knowing looks, he realized that Kurt expected him to start. So he would and it would be their first duet. Hopefully, one in a long line of many.

I can show you the world

Shining, shimmering, splendid

Tell me, prince, now when did

You last let your heart decide?

Kurt chuckled at his boyfriend's changed lyrics. The song was no less perfect. When had he last let his heart decide?

I can open your eyes

Take you wonder by wonder

Over, sideways and under

On a magic carpet ride

Blaine watched excitedly as Kurt joined him for the chorus. Angel. Kurt had the voice of an angel. It was light and airy and...so beautiful.

A whole new world

A new fantastic point of view

No one to tell us no

Or where to go

Or say we're only dreaming

The vet sat back in his wonderment as Kurt took the next verse. It was a sight and sound to be witnessed.

Unbelievable sights

Indescribable feeling

Soaring, tumbling, freewheeling

Through an endless diamond sky

Amazing. Simply amazing. So amazing that Blaine almost forgot his add ins. He stumbled a bit over a few lyrics but that wasn't his fault. He just kept staring at me and the sounds coming out of his mouth were...could he be any more perfect? *Is that possible?* He assumed so.

A whole new world

He sang loudly. For the time being, they'd completely forgotten about the others in the house. They were in the middle of an act almost as intimate as sex and others didn't exist in that moment.

Every turn a surprise

Kurt hoped so. Each moment with Blaine felt like an exciting adventure and he hoped that this wouldn't change once their honeymooning was complete.

With new horizons to pursue

Each day was new to Blaine. Years of dating closed him off to love for too long. With Kurt, the possibility of finding someone special to take in each day with seemed plausible. *I can only hope.*

A thrilling chase

A wondrous place

For you and me

Just after he finished the last note, Blaine sat his guitar down and leaned across the couch, capturing Kurt's lips in a sweet kiss. For the first time in their journey through the new world they were exploring, the vet felt like he had a map; a guide that would lead him where he wanted be. That place was wherever Kurt was.

Chapter Twelve

The magical Halloween evening that Blaine and Kurt shared together in no way compared to the entire month of November. Unfortunately, they weren't on the same scale, so comparison was not possible by default. While Halloween night was majestic and beautiful; November was rough on the couple. The weather outside was not the only thing that was chilly. During the month, Keenan grew colder and colder towards the situation between his father and his boyfriend.

In the beginning, Kurt was none the wiser. He continued to work, study, and sneak out for dates while his son was supposedly sleeping. One night in early November, he and Blaine were having a late dinner at an expensive restaurant of Blaine's choosing. It was their first evening together since Halloween. The pair dressed up in their finest clothes and met at the tiny, Italian establishment.

When they were led to their table, not long after they arrived because Blaine called the night before to make reservations, Blaine took care to pull Kurt's chair out and the tech did his best not to blush. The vet ordered the finest bottle of wine and tipped the waitress enough to have him send the violinist over to play for Kurt. The evening was one of the most magical of Kurt's life.

"You're too much." The younger man giggled as the man began to serenade him in what sounded to be fluent Italian. *Could he be more perfect?* Apparently, he could be. When the violinist finished playing, the tech watched his boyfriend motion for the man to lean in and then watched as Blaine whispered in his ear. The man gave a few curt nods and then began to play once again. *I know that tune...*

You put the boom-boom into my heart

You send my soul sky high when your lovin' starts

Jitterbug into my brain

Goes abang-bang-bang 'til my feet do the same

But something's bugging you

Something ain't right

My best friend told me what you did last night

Left me sleepin' in my bed

I was dreaming, but I should have been with you instead.

Wake me up before you go-go

Don't leave me hanging on like a yo-yo

Kurt giggled and clapped and sang along with the unconventional rendition of the song. Apparently, Blaine was far more perfect than he'd ever imagined. When the man was finished, he tipped the violinist before turning his attention towards the tech. "So..."

"You're amazing." Kurt's dreamy tone put the smile into Blaine's evening. If nothing else happened that evening, he would go home a happy man; a very happy man.

"I think you're the amazing one, Mr. Hummel." The vet reached across the table for the younger man's hand. He pulled it to his lips and kissed the knuckles, earning a shy smile from Kurt. He could live a lifetime on those smiles.

Keenan shot up from beneath his blankets; partially because it was pitch black in the room and partially because he knew he wasn't in his bed. Whatever he was lying on was far too hard to be his bed. The little boy fisted his eyes and then opened them wide. Once they were adjusted to the dark, he noticed a lamp on the far end of the too hard not bed. The little boy crawled to it and turned it on.

Living room. He was in the living room. Not the living room in their apartment, however. He was in the big house living room. The little boy left down from the couch and headed directly towards the big window by the front door. Maybe his daddy was outside with Dr. Blaine. As much as he hated the idea, he had no other explanation for the situation.

Not only was his father not outside with Dr. Blaine but his daddy's car was gone. The little boy let out a whimper. *Where's my daddy?* He wondered as tears began to well in his eyes. Keenan sniffled. *Maybe he left like Papa did.* The thought stung. Daddy promised never to leave but he wasn't there.

The little boy pulled his knees to his chest and buried his face in them. As his head hit the skinned bone, he noticed a light flicker on in the hallway. Near the switch was his Grandpa Burt. "What's wrong, kiddo?" He asked as he padded barefoot across the hardwood floor.

Tears trickled down his face as his grandfather scooped him up. "Where's my daddy?" He asked the man. He heard his grandpa sigh.

"He's...out. He'll be back soon. Do you want to come sleep in the bed with me and your grandma?" He asked, hoping that it would get his grandson's tears to stop.

"Where?"

"Just...out."

"Can you call him?" Keenan asked. He just wanted his daddy to come back.

Burt was at a fork in the road. He remembered being in the same situation all those years ago. He remembered the one date he went on a year after Kurt's mother passed. It ended in tears. His son cried so loud and so hard that he nearly choked on his saliva. After an hour of trying to calm the child, Mrs. Tyler - a neighbor that volunteered to watch the child that evening- was forced to call his father. Burt spent the entire night calming his little boy.

That night hurt. The moment he stepped in the house, Burt knew that his dating life was on hold for a while. A while turned into ten years. That night, Burt's social life died. While Burt wasn't the kind of guy to go out all the time, he hated feeling like a hermit in his home. But he did it. He did it for his son. The eldest Hummel knew Kurt would do the same if the slightest indication of necessity reared its head. He didn't want that for his son. Burt gave up years of his life; he didn't want Kurt to do the same. "Why don't we just go to sleep? Come on. He'll be home soon."

"My tummy hurts." Yet another fork presented itself. He didn't want to call Kurt away from his date but, if Kurt said he didn't feel well to a babysitter all those years ago, Burt would have wanted a call. He was certain his son felt the same. The grandfather ran a hand over his tired face.

"Are you sure?" He received a whine from the little boy. "Fine. Give me a minute and I'll get him on the phone. Just...go lay with your grandma." Burt watched as the little boy stumbled sleepily down the hallway and into the bedroom to lie with his sleeping grandmother. *I hate doing this to Kurt but I know he'd want to know.*

Kurt giggled as Blaine's lips tickled his wrist. When the waiter asked them if they'd like to order dessert, Blaine replied that he already had dessert, taking Kurt's arm and peppering light kisses from the elbow to the wrist. "You need to stop, baby. People are starting to stare." Kurt giggled. And they were. Eyes from all over the restaurant were fixed on the two men that were being intimate in the corner.

The vet removed his lips from Kurt's arm, looking towards him as he did so. "Let them stare." He whispered before resuming his kissing. Kurt shook his head but did not ask his boyfriend to stop again. It was sweet.

Blaine's lips danced softly across Kurt's skin, tickling the man's sensitive skin enough to cause the man's hand to flex. The vet did not stop. The balling and release of Kurt's fist was not enough to stop him. The sound of Kurt's phone was, however.

The technician used his free hand to dig the phone out of his pocket, frowning when he saw the name on the screen. He looked towards his boyfriend, whose head hung midway between his arm and upright. "It's my dad." Kurt whispered worriedly. His dad wouldn't call unless it was necessary and Keenan would be the only reason for a necessary call. The phone rang twice more before Kurt realized that he needed to answer it. "Hello?"

Blaine sat back in his chair and watched as Kurt's expression went from bad to worse. He looked panicked and nervous. *Something's wrong.* "Okay, Dad. Okay. Yeah. Love you too. Okay. Bye." The vet watched as his boyfriend hung up the phone. The man's eyes remained downcast on the table for a moment before turning towards him. "Keenan's sick. I have to go home." He stated disappointment laced in his voice.

Momentarily, Blaine's face fell. He wasn't ready for the evening to be over. It was perfect; fantastic. It was everything Kurt deserved and everything Blaine needed. *Selfish. You're selfish, Blaine. His son is sick.* "Call me when you get him." He eventually muttered, feeling guilty with every word he spoke. It sucked; plain and simple, the situation sucked.

The frown on Kurt's face deepened a bit. "Yeah. I'll call you." He whispered. Playing in traffic seemed much more enjoyable than watching the smile fall from Blaine's face when he announced that he had to leave. "I'm really sorry, Blaine." And he was. Blaine looked so disappointed and Kurt was the reason for that. He hated being the reason Blaine's smile wasn't shining across the room.

An apology. He offered me an apology because he has to go be a father. The veterinarian sighed. He felt worse than he had before. "Don't apologize. I'm the one that should be apologizing. I'm just.... it just sucks that you have to leave. I understand though and I really hope Keenan feels better." The man stood from his chair and kissed his boyfriend's lips. When they pulled back he smiled. "Get out of here. You have a sick kid at home." He teased. Moments later, Kurt was gone and Blaine was left with the check and a full glass of wine. *Might as well drink it. This glass is the only company I'll have for the rest of the night.*

"...and our professor was so pissed that he asked Whitley and Santana to leave. I mean, I understood his side of it. We were talking in the middle of his lecture. Anyways, when he asked them to leave, Whitley busted out with '*And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going*' and then...all hell broke loose." Kurt finished matter of factually. A few days after his son's surprise stomach ache, the men decided to try to recreate the date that went unfinished.

Blaine chuckled from across the table as Kurt recounted the chaos that ensued after his friend's impromptu performance. *This is nice.* The couple decided to forego the muss and fuss of a fancy restaurant, choosing to grab burgers and shakes at a 50s themed establishment not too far from the veterinarian's home. The relaxed atmosphere made their repeat date - *dare I say*- more exciting than the original. They were enjoying themselves; footloose and fancy free. There were no expectations. The only hope either man had was for an interesting evening together. As it looked at that moment, they would receive nothing but.

"And what did your professor say?" Blaine asked expectantly. He reached across the table and laced Kurt's fingers into his own as he waited for a reply.

"He dismissed us early and told us not to come back until we were ready to learn." Kurt replied sheepishly. There was something about Blaine's skin against his own that made the tech's insides twist in the most delicious way. Blaine, who noticed the reaction that bordered on shyness, winked at his

boyfriend. He watched as his boyfriend's smile grew wider. The two sat, grinning like madmen at one another, until their food arrived.

"Here's your food. Do you gentlemen need anything else?" Patty, their waitress, smiled at the men adoringly as she sat their food in front of them. Each man shook his head. They didn't need anything. "Alright, I'll be back in a few then." They watched the woman, probably in her early fifties or sixties but they couldn't be sure, walk away before turning to their food. *Bon appetite.*

Blaine grabbed his burger with both hands and quickly held it to his mouth. The moment his teeth sunk through the bun, past the vegetables and sauces, and into the meat, Blaine was in love. *This must be what Heaven feels like.* The veterinarian allowed his eyes to slip shut as he took another bite, moaning from the taste alone. *Sex. This is what it's like when a mouth has sex with food. This is illegal. Or it should be. No...because then I can't buy it. There would be dealers to buy from. There are always dealers. Where would they sell though? Corners? They'd need like a cart. No...a cart would garner too much attention. Coolers? Will this taste the same if I go home and warm it up? Would it taste the same if the dealers cooked it and-*

"-laine...Blaine!" The veterinarian allowed his eyes to open slowly. Across the table, Kurt was staring at him with a grim look on his face. Quickly, Blaine sat his burger down. Whatever Kurt was saying while he was worrying about thinking of ways to make the completely legal burgers accessible if they were ever to be banned from production.

"Huh?"

"I said I have to go. Dad just called and said Keenan isn't feeling well...again. I'm really sorry. I know this was supposed to be our do over date but...I'm really sorry." *Really. Really. Really. Really sorry.* Kurt stared at his boyfriend for a moment, waiting expectantly for the man to respond.

Don't...get...upset. Blaine took a few deep breathes and repeated the words in his head.

As of the past few days, the words were a prayer to his body. He prayed that it wouldn't react to Kurt's words in a way that would make the man upset. "Okay." He eventually responded, keeping his voice as even as possible.

Kurt tugged his bottom lip between his teeth. Blaine seemed...disappointed. *Who isn't?* Kurt didn't want to leave but...Daddy Duty called and that had to come first. That would always come first. Above all else, he was a dad and that meant he had responsibilities. "I'm so sorry, Blaine. I don't know what's wrong with him? I...he...I think I'm going to make him a doctor's appointment. I'll..." The technician waved his arms around, trying to catch the words that floated in the atmosphere around his head but could not seem to find the landing pads scattered across his brain. *Where is air traffic control when I need it? Dammit!*

Blaine shook his head. He told himself it was so Kurt would not feel the need to continue his unnecessary apology but that was a lie. In actuality, he was shaking his head out of disappointment. Once again, he was being left to enjoy *-and I use that word very, very, very loosely-* dinner alone. "It's alright, Kurt." *It's not, but I won't tell you that.* "Things happen." *Always.* "Go. I'll grab the bill and I'll call you tomorrow."

Kurt was already out of his seat. He nodded emphatically as he shrugged on his jacket. "Thank you. I'm so sorry." Before Blaine could, once again, tell his boyfriend that no apologies were needed, the man was out the door. The veterinarian shot a look at Kurt's barely touched food. With a sigh, he waved down Patty. He was tired -in every sense of the word- and wanted to go home. With the check paid and his jacket hung haphazardly over his arm, Blaine exited the restaurant. He had a date. Unfortunately, it wasn't the kind of date he was expecting. *Captain Morgan, here I come.*

I wonder how long I can walk at this angle. Not long after their second interrupted date, Kurt noticed a shift in his relationship with Blaine. Like a picture hung off center, the shift couldn't be noticed by an untrained eye. If examined closely, the slant of their relationship couldn't be ignored. It wasn't until Kurt backed away enough to truly examine the picture of their relationship as a whole that he noticed the slant.

Work. The shelter grew busier as the cold set in. Animals were being brought to them in preparation for unforgiving weather and leaving just as quickly as people began to gear up for the holiday, gift giving season. It wasn't unusual to see one staff member running in one direction while another ran in the opposite. Kurt and Blaine spent their days doing just that. Unlike before, however, there were no flirtatious looks tossed between them; no kidnappings into the supply closet. *Not that I was expecting it.*

During exams and surgeries, there was no playful banter. They were all business, all the time. That was Kurt's first clue. The shelter was his home away from home. There were always cheerful, talkative people around to brighten his day; namely, his boss. Blaine wasn't cheerful and he definitely wasn't happy. Not

anymore. Instead, he was focused and intense in a way that Kurt had never seen him; in a way that Kurt didn't like.

Time away from work helped focus Kurt's eyes on the state of their relationship. As they crept towards Thanksgiving, any time they may have had for one another dwindled away. Blaine was either busy or asleep. They rarely talked on the phone and they never had time to travel to one another's house. While the situation irked Kurt to no end, Blaine seemed not to care at all. The foundation of their relationship seemed to be crumbling before it was finished drying.

"Can I ask you ladies, something?" Two weeks into November and Kurt was at his wit's end. For the first time in a long time, he didn't have a date for Friday night. He and Blaine always went out on Friday nights. Unfortunately, Blaine called earlier that evening and said that he couldn't make it. *'I've been neglecting my friends lately. I can't keep bailing on them. We'll go out next week.'* They wouldn't. Kurt wondered if his boyfriend considered his words before saying them or if they flew out of his mouth like sparks away from a fire. The following week was Thanksgiving and Blaine would be visiting his parents and brother in Florida, just as he had every year for the past three years. *Being in another state makes it just a bit too difficult to go on a date.* Kurt didn't mention that part when Blaine was breaking their date. No, he put on his bravest face and pretended that it didn't hurt. Moments after Blaine disconnected their call; Kurt called his two best friends and asked them to stay at his house. That was how the three ended up sprawled across his tiny living room watching reality television.

Santana turned from her spot on the floor towards her friend. He looked worried; anxious. *Something's not right.* Kurt never looked worried. If anything, when something was eating away at him, Kurt put on his best bitch face and continued on. The fact that she could see the intense worry on his face by the light of the television set her on edge. "If it's about Hunter's mad bedroom skillz -with a 'z'- then you'll have to ask Whit. I have no knowledge of what he can do with a night stick and a pair of handcuffs." She joked, attempting to lighten the mood.

Kurt's eyes widened as his head shot towards the girl on the recliner with her face buried in her phone. "Whitley!" He shrieked. Reluctantly, the girl tore her eyes away from the device and focused them on Kurt. "Why the hell didn't you tell me?"

"I don't know. It's not like...a big deal or anything. We just...fucked a few times...last night." Kurt was stunned by her nonchalance. He was a mess the night after he and Blaine had sex and they only had sex once. *Maybe that's the problem. Maybe he's ready for more sex and...I'm not sure if I'm ready to muddle this already complicated situation with that.* "What did you want to talk about though? If we keep talking about my sex life then I have to participate. If we talk about you and your many issues, I can pretend to listen and continue to text Hunter."

Santana was in the mist of a fit of giggles when she noticed the disapproving look Kurt was giving their friend. *Oh...I'll shut up now.* "Whatever. Anyways, Blaine has been a bit distant lately and I'm not sure why. Like tonight; he cancelled our date and said we'll go next week. He's not even going to be in town next week and-"

"I'm going to stop you right there." Kurt's mouth snapped shut. He watched with wide eyes as Santana's body slid from her spot on the floor to the free spot next to him on the couch. Unbeknownst to him, while he was watching Santana, Whitley commandeered the free space on the opposite side of his body. "Whitley and I have had one rule for as long as I can remember. And, as one of our closest friends -our bestest gay- you must abide by this rule."

"That's right." Whitley chimed, causing Kurt to jump. *Seriously, when the hell did she sit there?*

"No bitching and no whining over no man or-"

"No woman!" Whitley finished strong. Kurt's shoulders slumped. *Now who am I going to talk to?* It sounded as if the girls didn't want to hear his issue. Whitley noticed the change in posture. "But that doesn't mean that you can't tell us your issue and that we won't offer you our advice. We're just not big fans of 'oh my god, he doesn't like me...cry cry cry!'."

The technician immediately perked up. "Okay. I can do that. Basically, Blaine has been distant lately and I'm not sure why. I know our past few dates have been rough-"

"Rough how?" Santana's voice dropped an octave, making it sound far more dangerous than usual.

"Just...Keenan has been getting sick lately and I've had to run out on a few dates. I feel like Blaine's mad at me for having to go home and be a dad. That scares me because he's known from the beginning where my priorities lie." Kurt thought back to his interview with the veterinarian. When Blaine pushed for a reason

for Kurt's application, the possible technician made it clear that he would do any and everything for his son. *That's how it's been since the moment he was born.*

"Have you taken him to the doctor?" Whitley's question rattled Kurt's mind. "I mean, if he's been sick, then he needs to go to the doctor." Kurt considered taking his son to see someone a few times but Keenan always seemed fine when he was home.

He shook his head. "Whenever I think about it, Keenan tells me that he's okay. I always wait until he's not feeling well again but that's always at night. Maybe he's got some sort of weird night bug."

"Or maybe he doesn't like Daddy being gone at night with his boyfriend. How did he take it when you told him about you and Blaine?" Again, Kurt stiffened. *Well...I haven't really thought of that.* "You have told him, right?" Slowly, Kurt shook his head. Did it matter? "Why?"

A sigh slipped from the young man's lips. "Because I don't want to be that guy that allows his son to get attached to a man that might not stick around. Blaine and I are still feeling things out and I need to know where we are before I let Keenan know what's going on." *There, I said it.*

Whitley snorted next to him. "Oh honey, your son is a bit more intuitive than most children. He already knows. His 'late night tummy aches' are his way of telling you without telling you. It's so obvious."

Kurt tilted his head and ran through his son's most recent behavior. Hindsight was a bitch. There were little moments here and there that should have been indicators. Kurt missed them all. He missed the overly excited smiles during dinner and the way his son's face fell the moment it was time for bed.

"Don't over think it, honey. Talk to him. Be honest with him. Then, talk to Blaine. Tell him what's going on. Get them together and let them see how the other is. Blaine's been ready, I can tell. You just have to get Keenan ready. I'm sure that will remedy those pesky stomach aches."

Kurt nodded before turning his attention back towards the television. That's what he would do. He would speak with Keenan in the morning and then speak with Blaine shortly after. *Soon, it has to be soon. He's leaving on Tuesday afternoon for his parents' house.* Whitley grabbed his hand, earning his attention. "And to make sure that you don't have any interruptions while you talk to Blaine, we'll watch Keenan. I love your dad to bits, but I'm sure he's a bit of a pushover with his only grandson. He probably doesn't think twice when Keenan says he needs you. We do. Auntie Snixx and Auntie Whitley don't play those games."

Santana spoke up next. "Damn right. If he wants his daddy, I better see blood." *Oh God.* If Kurt didn't know the girls so well, he would be scared for his baby boy. Luckily, Kurt knew his friends like the back of his hand and he knew they would take great care of his son. He just hoped that it would be worth it. In the end, he still had to talk to Blaine. *I hope this goes well.*

Keenan stirred momentarily in his bed but avoided waking up at all cost.

Warm.

Bed.

Sleepy.

He smiled to himself as he pulled the blankets over his head, keeping his eyes firmly pressed together. Sleep. Sleep. Sleep. Unfortunately, his father didn't get the memo. A moment after the boy snuggled with his blankets and his plush Optimus Prime, his father walked into the room. "Keenan. Are you awake, honey?"

"No." The little boy replied. "Sleeping." He listened as his father chuckled. A moment later, he felt his warm, blankets being pulled away. "I'm sleeping, Daddy." He whined.

"No you're not. Get up before I drag you out of bed by your ears." Kurt teased. He watched as his son scurried out of bed. *Not the ears!* "That's right! Come on, I made breakfast for us." He watched as his son's face lit up. Together, the pair made their way towards the kitchen hand in hand. The girls left long ago, so Kurt and his son were able to enjoy an intimate breakfast alone. Not once did Kurt bring up the conversation from the night before. He didn't want to prepare his son for anything until he knew that there was something to prepare for.

Blaine is pleasantly surprised when Kurt asked -insisted- that they enjoy dinner together that evening. He was hesitant. *Do I want to waste my time getting ready when he'll just have to leave early? Probably not.* Blaine did his best not to be pessimistic but that was a difficult task. Two failed dates in a single week gave him reason to feel as such. As far as he was concerned, the date would end like the others and he would be

stuck footing the bill while Kurt ran home to his little boy. Despite the sinking feeling in his stomach, Blaine dressed to the nines. He wanted to be passé about the situation *-I really do-* but he couldn't. In the end, he was still going out on a date with Kurt and he still wanted to look his best.

The first hour of their date went well. After the initial discomfort subsided, Blaine and Kurt were able to enjoy themselves. Unfortunately, someone else was not.

"Auntie Snixx, where's my daddy?" Keenan asked when he finished eating dinner. He watched as Santana looked towards Whitley. Whitley, who was cleaning the mess in Kurt's kitchen left by their cooking adventure, stared back at the Latina. It only took an instant for Keenan to realize that he was not going to like the answer. "Huh? Where is he?" He asked again.

Santana turned towards her nephew and offered him a sad smile. "He's...he went to go hang out with a friend, Keenan. He'll be back in a little while. In the meantime, Miss Pierce showed me how to make turkey pictures with our hands, so we're going to do that until he gets back. Okay?" She watched closely as Keenan's head began to shake from side to side. *No. That's not okay.*

"Can you call him? My tummy hurts!" He asked, tears glistening in his eyes.

Whitley left the kitchen when she noticed the tears. *No. You're not doing this to us, little boy.* She stooped down until she was eye level with the sitting boy and stared into his giant, hazel eyes. "Keenan," she began in her best maternal voice, "do you know about the boy that cried wolf?" The little boy's curls shook as he turned his head from side to side. "He was a boy that lied about something until no one believed him. Then, when something really happened, people didn't believe him."

Keenan sniffed. "Okay? But my tummy hurts. I need you to call my daddy." *I don't dance with wolves and I definitely don't dance with them. So, please just call my daddy.*

"Your tummy hurts a lot when your daddy is away." Santana replied. "The reason Auntie Whit told you that story is because we're starting to think that your tummy isn't actually hurting. We're starting to think that you just say that because you don't want your daddy to be away."

The little boy's face crumpled instantly. "My tummy hurts and I want my daddy. You need to call him before it hurts more." He insisted as tears streaked down his face. "I want my daddy and I want him now!"

Whitley placed a hand on the sobbing boy's shoulder. *This is progress, right? He kind of implied what I've been thinking. I think.* "We're not calling your daddy, Keenan. If you were really sick, then we'd call him. Since you're not and you lied to us, we're not." The young woman's words acted as a detonator. In a matter of seconds, Keenan went from being a disheartened little boy to being a human wrecking ball. *I should have just called his damn dad.*

"And our cat sprayed all over Cooper. Cooper is such a diva that he just fell on the ground. He seized for a moment and then started freaking out. He ran around the house screaming that the 'devil cat' marked him for death. I remember my dad shaking his head and then carrying Cooper upstairs. My mom already had a bath run and he just tossed Coop in." Kurt and Blaine chuckled lightly for a moment. The evening was going far better than either man expected.

For the first time in what felt like too long, the pair was able to enjoy each other's company. The atmosphere was feather light; a stark contrast to the tension that hung between them every day for the past week. Blaine reached across the table and laced their fingers together. To his hand, it was like coming home. Electricity raced through his body as he ran his thumb over the back of the technician's hand. Finally, things were looking up.

"Get down. NOW!" Santana shouted as she dashed towards the glass coffee table that her surrogate nephew was stand on top of. The child, with his tear stained cheeks and snotty face, jumped off the table and darted towards the kitchen. "Get back here. Do not make me chase you!"

"NO! I WANT YOU TO...CALL MY DADDY NOW! RIGHT NOW!" He shrieked over his shoulder. The little boy flung himself haphazardly into the kitchen, knocking a potted plant off its stand. The sound of the plant hitting the ground and its base shattering caused the boy to jump. *Uh oh.*

Whitley dashed towards the crashing sound. She stopped on a dime when she noticed the glass scattered around the child's feet. "Keenan! Don't move!" She insisted. Unfortunately, the little boy didn't listen. As he turned to run away, his tiny, shoeless foot stepped down onto a piece of glazed glass. The shriek that came out of the boy's mouth was enough for Santana to pick up her phone and call his father. She wouldn't have

called for an imaginary stomach ache; she was definitely going to call when he was hurt, however. *Kurt will kill me if I don't.*

"Blaine, we need to talk about something." Kurt watched as the light in Blaine's eyes dimmed a bit. *I did that and it makes me feel awful.*

Blaine sighed and unlaced their fingers. He crossed his arms over his chest and stared at his boyfriend. "Can we please not do this now? Can we just enjoy ourselves?" He asked flatly. *We were having such a nice time. I don't want to talk about anything heavy right now.* "We're about to order dessert and...just please."

Kurt fidgeted in his seat for a moment. *We really need to talk.* He opened his mouth to speak but the words were cut off by the sound of his phone. Just like each of their recent dates, the call was from the person watching his son. "I really have to take this, I'm so sorry." He watched as Blaine stood from his seat.

"That's fine, Kurt." It didn't sound fine. The tone of the veterinarian's voice let Kurt know that it was indeed not fine. "Take your call. We're going to do things a bit differently this time, however. Instead of you taking a call and then leaving, I'm going to leave while you take your call. It's probably your push over father calling about your son's 'suspicious' stomach aches. Call me when you've got time for me, Kurt." With that, the veterinarian turned on his heel and walked towards the exit. He left a stunned Kurt in his wake.

The technician watched as Blaine bustled past the hostess and out of the front door. He didn't take his eyes off the door until he realized that his phone was still ringing. As quickly as he could, he answered it. "Hello?" He greeted wearily.

"Twinkie Winkie, it's Tana. I just wanted to let you know that Keen stepped on a piece of glass." The air rushed out of Kurt's lungs immediately. *Glass? How?* "He's okay though. Whit called Carole over and she said he'll be fine. He doesn't need stitches or anything, it's a little cut and we got the bleeding to stop."

"I'll be right there." Kurt waved to their waitress and asked for the check. The woman nodded and scurried off to get it. "I have to pay and then I'll leave."

"Don't worry about it. We've got it under control now. Oh and I also wanted to tell you that you need to talk to Keenan about your relationship with Blaine. He threw the tell all, end all of temper tantrums and

that's how he got hurt. You can do that when you get home though. Enjoy your date." *Enjoy your date. Yeah right.* Blaine was long gone and Kurt was stuck with a bill that he was afraid to look at. So, he didn't. When the waitress brought it over, Kurt handed her his credit card and waved her away. He'd go online to check the bill later.

"My date walked out when my phone rang, so I'm headed home now." He replied sullenly. *I guess this is how Blaine feels whenever I have to leave. This feeling sucks.*

"I'm sorry, babe. We'll see you when you get here."

Santana wasn't joking when she said Keenan threw the tell all, end all of temper tantrums. Kurt was not prepared for the mess that greeted him when he walked into his tiny apartment that night. There were papers strewn across the living room, turned over pieces of furniture, and a busted plant pot scattered across the kitchen. "Oh. My. Jesus H!" He exclaimed as he tip toed around the box of Tide that must have been chucked across the room at some point.

Whitley poked her head from behind the kitchen wall. "Hey, honey. Sorry about your date." She offered her friend a sympathetic smile before turning back to her cleaning. Kurt made his way towards the kitchen to see the girls cleaning...*is that the fish taco on the ceiling?...food ruminants off the walls?*

"What the hell happened?" He asked incredulously. As he looked around the tiny room, he tried to calm his breathing. His cookbooks were scattered around the room, empty food containers that held left overs not two hours ago were tossed about, and the pictures that once lined the countertops were scattered across the floor. "Keenan did this?" It was a difficult pill to swallow. His son never threw temper tantrums. He never made outrageous messes and he never, ever threw things.

"Yeah but...Kurt, you have to talk to him about Blaine. This all started because he was upset that you were out with him. You need to explain to him that things with Blaine won't change things with you guys. Based on his reaction, I don't think he understands that." Whitley replied as she tossed another large shard of glass into the trash can that sat in the middle of the room.

Santana turned a suspicious eye towards her friend. "When the hell did you get all Freudian?"

The woman shrugged. "I took Psych 101 last semester. You know how people get after that class. We know everything." Kurt and Santana accepted the answer. *It is true.* Psychology 101 was the class that made everyone think they understood any and everything that people were feeling or thinking.

Kurt let his head fall backwards momentarily before moping towards his son's room. He'd hoped to hold off on the conversation for a while, but there was no time like the present. *Especially after he destroyed my freaking house.*

Keenan reclined against his headboard and stared at his foot. His grandmother came by hours ago to care for it after he stepped on a piece of glass. She pulled the glass out, cleaned his foot, and wrapped it up. Then, she asked his Auntie Snixx to put him in bed and prop his foot on a pillow. There he sat until his father entered his room a while later. "Keenan, how are you feeling?" His father asked as he positioned himself gingerly at the end of the bed. The little boy tucked his head into his chest, refusing to answer. *You freaking ruined my house. You're going to answer me.* The father thought. So, he tried again. "Keenan, I asked you a question." Kurt's voice came across far more stern than it had the first time.

With a sigh, Keenan replied. "I'm...my foot hurts." He whined. He watched as his father nodded. A moment of silence passed as Kurt lifted his foot to examine it. "Grandma Carole came over and fixed it up. It feels better than it did." The little boy added.

"I'm sure it does. Whitley and Santana told me about what happened. They told me about your fit -which was very hard to miss. Seriously, this house is wrecked- and they told me that Grandma took care of you. What they didn't tell me was how this all started." Obviously, that was a lie. Kurt knew but he wanted his son to say it. "Care to tell me what the issue was?"

He watched as his son bit his lip and downcast his eyes. "Come on, son. Let's talk." Kurt scooted further up the bed until he and his son were face to face. It's like I've been here before. He had. Years ago, when he was the small child and his father was dating again, Kurt was the one with explaining to do.

Tears welled in Keenan's eyes as his father waited for an explanation. He wasn't sure what he was supposed to say or do but...*I can't tell him. He's gonna be soooooo mad.* "I got angry." He eventually replied.

"Obviously, Keenan. Tell me what the issue was. Tell me why you felt the need to throw things around our house. Tell me why you broke that plant pot. You know better. So, tell me what the issue was." Kurt tried to hold back his disappointment but it proved to be a difficult task.

"I hate when you go out with Dr. Blaine." Keenan eventually sobbed. Kurt's stern face softened a bit. "You're always with him and I want you to stay here, with me, forever." Kurt watched his son shed tears for a moment before crawling across the bed and pulling the boy into his arms. He hugged the child to his chest as tightly as he could.

"I'm not going anywhere, Keenan. I'll always be with you." The father whispered. "Just because I leave from time to time doesn't mean that I'm going to stay away forever." He wouldn't. He couldn't. Nathan may have left with no intentions of returning, but Kurt was not Nathan. Kurt's entire world centered around the little boy that he held in his arms.

"Papa did." Keenan mumbled into his shirt. "Besides, Dr. Blaine is mean and I don't want him around you."

Kurt pulled back and lifted his son's chin, forcing the boy to make eye contact. "When was Blaine mean to you?" The technician couldn't remember a time when the two were alone together -*besides the tea party and that ended well*- so he had no idea when Blaine would have had an opportunity to be mean to his son. If it happened, however, Kurt wanted to know when and how. *There isn't a person on Earth that will get away with being mean to my son. Hell hath no fury like me beating on your door.*

"I don't know. He just looks mean." Keenan whined.

Kurt sighed and shook his head. "Son, Blaine isn't mean. He's actually really nice. He makes me happy and, if you give him a chance, I'm sure he could make you happy too." Once again, the fact that Kurt pushed so hard to keep the two apart weighed on him. *I think I made a mistake. A big one.* It was done out of love, however. He refused to allow his son to get attached to someone that may or may not stick around.

Keenan shook his head. "He'll make you sad." Keenan fussed. "And I don't want to give him a chance. I just want you to stay with me. Beth told me what's going to happen if you go with him instead of staying with me."

The father raised his eyebrow, wondering what his niece told his son. "What did Beth say?" *Gaga only knows what a nine year old thinks will happen when two single adults get together.*

Keenan shifted in his father's lap, careful not to move his injured foot. "She said you guys are going to get married, have another kid, and leave me alone. I don't want to be alone."

"Whoa! Okay. First of all, Nobody is getting married or having any kids anytime soon. Secondly, like I said before, I'm never leaving you. You will always be stuck with me. When you're thirteen and you want me out of your face, you'll be stuck with me. When you're twenty – one and wishing that I'd stop calling you every day, you'll just have to deal with it. I'm never leaving you and you won't be able to do anything about it." Kurt replied triumphantly. He watched as his son smile. The boy seemed to enjoy his answer.

"Promise?" Kurt nodded. That was a promise he could make and keep. "Okay. Do I have to like Dr. Blaine?" Gone was the smile, only to be replaced by a slightly disgusted look on the little boy's face.

"I'd like you to try." Kurt answered. "I can't force you to like anyone, but I'd like you to get to know him before you decide that you hate him."

"Fine!" Keenan mumbled through gritted teeth. "I'll try. But if I don't like him then I don't like him. Please don't make me like him."

"I would never. Now, I need to talk to Blaine about some things. I was going to see him, but I'll call him if it makes you more comfortable." The father watched as his son tapped his chin thoughtfully.

Eventually, the little boy replied. "If you go see him, do I have to go? I don't think I should have to get to know him tonight."

"Will you throw a fit for Auntie Snixx and Whitley if I leave you here?" The boy shook his head emphatically. "Will you apologize if I leave you here?" Keenan's head shakes quickly morphed into a nod. He owed them a huge apology and all of his Power Rangers. "Okay. You can stay here while I go talk to Blaine. We have an understanding, though. If I leave you here, you have to be an angel. Then, someday soon, Blaine is going to hang out with us and you're going to get to know him." Reluctantly, Keenan nodded. *I don't want to, but I'll do it for Daddy. Dr. Lame better not be mean though. I'll...I don't know what I'll do but it won't be nice.*

"Daddy, will you be here in the morning when I wake up?" Keenan asked as his father stood next to his bed.

Kurt smiled down at his son before leaning over to kiss his forehead. "I'll always be here when you wake up."

Once their conversation was complete and both parties were comfortable with the outcome, Kurt tucked his son into bed. He then walked back into the kitchen and told the girls to stop cleaning. He would finish when he returned. Santana and Whitley dropped the sponges instantly before making their way to Kurt's bedroom, the only room in the house unaffected by Keenan's temper tantrum. They propped themselves on the bed and turned on the boy's television. They left his bedroom door open so they could listen out for Keenan while they watched television.

In the meantime, Kurt text his boyfriend. With all well at home, he needed to work things out with Blaine. Sooner, rather than later.

We need to talk. Can I come over? - Kurt

Blaine sat on his couch staring at the black screen of his television for what felt like hours. He wasn't sure who he was more angry with; Kurt or himself. The situation with Kurt was frustrating, but his own reaction was...deplorable. *I can't believe I said that stuff to him before I left. He didn't deserve that. He'll probably never talk to me again.* Blaine didn't know how wrong he was. Moments after the thought danced around his mind, he received a text.

We need to talk. Can I come over? - Kurt

God, he's going to break up with me. Blaine's fingers shook as he replied.

Of course. Listen, I'm so sorry for what I said at the restaurant. It was out of line. - Blaine

We'll talk when I get there. - Kurt

The veterinarian sighed and tossed his phone aside. He was left to await his fate and that scared him half to death.

Kurt arrived shortly after Blaine received the final text. When the elder opened the front door, he noted that Kurt was wearing different clothes -black leggings, an oversized 'Hummel Tires and Lube' shirt, and snow boots. The snow wasn't thick, but Blaine knew that Kurt's feet were far more susceptible to the cold than most people's.- and that he looked absolutely exhausted. Without speaking, the veterinarian stepped aside and allowed his boyfriend to enter his tiny home.

The technician stood awkwardly in Blaine's tiny hallway as his boyfriend closed the front door. He didn't want to assume that he was allowed further inside, so he stood. When Blaine turned to him, Kurt noticed the heart wrenched look on his face. "I'm so sorry about what happened at the restaurant, Kurt. I was...disappointed, but I shouldn't have lashed out at you the way I did."

A frown formed on Blaine's face when Kurt didn't reply. *He's really breaking up with me.* "Blaine, I'm..."

"Breaking up with me. I know." Emotion wove itself between each word. *I'm not going to cry. I won't. Okay, I am.* As quickly as he could, Blaine turned away from the technician and made his way into his crowded living room. The house he lived in was once his grandmother's. Upon her passing, he inherited it. It didn't take long for the vet to decide to leave things the way she left them; with a few exception of course. As years passed, he added bits and pieces here and there. Next to her giant bookshelf full of gaudy figurines and knick knacks was Blaine's oversized television. Next to the old recliner with the woven, multi colored throw was his stereo system.

Blaine plopped down on his couch and allowed his hand to fall into his hands. His palms caught his tears as if they were snowflakes during the first real snowfall of winter.

Watching Blaine walk away was difficult, especially since he had everything backwards. Kurt hadn't sought out Blaine to break up with him. He simply wanted to talk. So, he followed the young man into the living room and plopped down next to him. The moment his weight hit the couch, his boyfriend's tear filled eyes peered between his fingers. "I'm not breaking up with you, idiot. I actually came to apologize for leaving all those times during dinner and for making all this more difficult than it needed to be. Keenan wasn't having stomach aches, he was just nervous about me dating. He actually thought I wasn't going to come home. He threw me a million and one signals and I missed all of them."

Blaine ran the back of his hand over his eyes, drying his tears. He made the assumption that Keenan was faking, but he never realized how serious the situation was. He simply assumed it was because the child was spoiled. Not once had he considered that the little boy was honestly frightened that his father

wouldn't come home. *I should have figured that out.* It made sense. After losing one parent, the boy had to be frightened out of his mind about losing a second. "I still shouldn't have called your father a push over and I shouldn't have let all this get to me." He eventually replied.

Kurt nodded absently. "True. That was kind of uncalled for. But, that's behind us now. I've talked to Keenan about us and, while I've been reluctant about it in the past, I believe it's time that you and Keenan spent some time together. I know once he gets to know you, then he'll love you as much as I do."

Blaine's eyes widened at Kurt's statement. "You love me?" He asked excitedly. Kurt's eyebrows furrowed as he ran his statement through his mind again. It wasn't until he did so that he realized what he said. *Oh shit!*

"Ummm...I didn't mean to say that." He watched as Blaine's smile fell a bit. "No...not that I don't...I...we've been going through a lot and...we haven't really dated properly yet and...it's..."

"You didn't mean to say it yet?" Kurt nodded, a slow blush creeping up his neck as he did so. "Don't worry about it. I understand. We kind of fell into this relationship and we still haven't had a chance to do this right. I understand what you meant and I'm happy to wait until we've had a chance to work on this before we get too deep with our feelings." Kurt breathed a sigh of relief. Thank goodness.

"In an attempt to get where we're trying go, I have an idea. You want me to spend time with Keenan and Keenan wants to spend time with you. Keenan can have you all to himself while I'm in Florida. No contact for you and I. Keenan can have you to himself all week. Then, when I get back on Friday night, you and I go on a date. Saturday, you, Keenan and I hang out. Do you follow me so far?" Kurt nodded. Not only did he follow, he loved the idea. Sort of. He wasn't keen on spending a week without contact with Blaine, but he was sure that the week would be exactly what his son. "Lastly, Saturday night, you and the girls go out and I watch Keenan! *BAM!* Amazing idea. Praise me and my fabulous!" Blaine held his arms in the air and waited for Kurt's praise. He received a skeptical eyebrow in return.

"I'm not sure about the last part." He replied hesitantly. It wasn't that he didn't want Keenan and Blaine spend that time getting to know one another, it was that he wasn't sure if Blaine could handle his son. *Keenan is a firecracker from time to time; tonight was an indicator of such.*

"Why?" Blaine whined, falling back against the couch. "It's an awesome idea."

"It is, it's...not that I don't want you to watch Keenan it's...I'm scared for you to watch Keenan. He can be a handful and I don't know if you can handle him."

The veterinarian's mouth hung open. "I can totally handle your kid." He replied incredulously. "He'll see how awesome I am and be the perfect angel I know he can be."

"If you think so."

"I do. So, that's settled. Next week I'm watching Keenan for a few hours while you enjoy yourself. Now, get over here. When I was upset, I moved my flight up so I'm leaving in the morning. Come cuddle until you have to leave." Kurt did just that. Together, the couple cuddled on the couch until Kurt had to leave. As he drove home late the night, he smile to himself. The way it looked, things were going to be just fine.

Chapter Thirteen

Thanksgiving with Blaine's family was a unique affair. The four adults were still becoming reacquainted with one another after years of distance. Each day that Blaine sat in the tiny guest room of his parent's beach front home, he wished he hadn't pushed them away like he did.

As a thirteen year old, frightened teenager, anything other than 100 percent acceptance of the things he told them was not tolerable. So, when they didn't immediately jump for joy about his sexuality, Blaine shut them out. He stopped sharing with them, cutting them out of his life when he went to college. Only three years ago, when he got word of his grandmother's passing, did they reconnect. It was then that the veterinarian found out the truth behind his parents' reaction.

Apparently, they weren't as bothered as they seemed. Shocked was a more appropriate term. While staring down at the freshly filled plot that would hold her mother's body for all eternity, Julia Anderson explained her side of the story to her youngest son. "We were shocked, honey. One day you were a little firecracker that ran around saying that you wanted to marry Britney Spears. You always hung out with girls and you never showed interest in boys. Finding out that you were gay was shocking. We weren't angry though; just shocked."

Blaine went on to tell his mother that, as a child he thought marriage was interchangeable with 'best friends forever' and that he never hung out with boys because he knew he was different and he didn't want them to pick on him. Their conversation ended with a hug and a promise to make up for lost time. So, a few holidays each year, Blaine and Cooper traveled to Florida, others the veterinarian and his parents traveled to New York to visit Cooper, and all the ones in between were spent in the tiny, green house that Blaine called home.

The night before Thanksgiving was spent at Julia's favorite restaurant, Pablo's. It was a tiny Mexican restaurant nestled in the heart of the tiny, backwoods town that the eldest Andersons moved to after their retirement. The night was spent drinking house made Tequila, laughing, and getting caught up with one another. By far it was one of the best buildups to Thanksgiving thus far in Blaine's opinion. *It would be better of Kurt was here though. It's always better with Kurt.*

Thanksgiving day, Quinn busied herself by offering to assist Kurt and Carole with the meal. As Kurt's first Thanksgiving home in ages -he usually opted to work through the holiday and venture home for Christmas- the dinner was expected to be extraordinary. While Kurt cut, mashed, and sprinkled, Quinn cleaned. She cleaned the living room and the kitchen, as well as the dining room. She cleaned and cleaned until she couldn't clean anymore.

She told herself that it was her way of helping Carole and Kurt prepare for dinner, but that was a lie. She was cleaning as if her life depended on it to keep her mind off her absent husband. He left early that morning to grab extra potatoes before the stores closed and hadn't returned yet. *Ignorance would be bliss right about now.* For a moment – a single, solitary moment – she wanted to pretend to be clueless about what was happening in her marriage. She couldn't however. She knew and that hurt.

Five days. Five freaking days. Each day that passed without contact with Blaine felt like a lifetime. By Thursday, Kurt was nearing his breaking point. Even when there was no time to spare for one another, they still spoke on occasion. Even if it was by way of a simple text message, the lines of communication were open. Not while he was in Florida, however. The couple agreed to close the lines of communication that week and Kurt was a mess. *I guess this is what happens when you love someone. Oh, there's that word again. I hope I didn't freak him out too badly when I said it. He brushed past it and that makes me nervous.*

The week as a whole wasn't a bad one. He and Keenan cleaned their house together, they visited his mother's grave, and they spent the week enjoying one another's company. As days went by, Keenan seemed more content with the idea of his father's possible comings and goings as far as Blaine was concerned. One afternoon, he even asked if his father would be going out with Blaine when the veterinarian returned from his trip. Hesitantly, Kurt replied that he would be. Relief spread through his body when his son ended the conversation with a simple 'okay'. All and all, home was well despite the longing in Kurt's heart.

"Quinn, where the hell is your husband with my damn potatoes?" Kurt shouted through the busy house. Before he left for New York, Thanksgiving was always a busy affair for the family. The sound of Kurt and Carole clanking pots and pans together in the kitchen as they zoomed to and fro, preparing the giant meal could be heard throughout the house. Only the sound of the television -usually the game if Burt had his way- was enough to match the sound of pots clattering and the occasional dropping of a dish. *I've missed this.*

The young father checked the turkey *-not quite finished, but soon-* as he waited for a reply. "Quinn!" He shouted when he received no reply. "He left four hours ago! Even with crowds at the store, he should have been back."

"I don't know where he's at." The hurt was evident in the young woman's voice. Quickly, Kurt closed the oven and turned to her. She looked tired; frustrated. "I text him but he hasn't replied." She stood still in the middle of the kitchen with her arms hung limply at her side. She looked defeated.

Kurt made short work of closing the distance between them and pulling her into his arms. "Oh, honey," he whispered into her ear, "don't look so sad. If you're lucky, he'll piss me off before the end of the day and I'll make you a widow. At least then you'll get Social Security Life for Beth and that's more than you're getting from him now." Quinn's shoulders shook as she laughed into her brother-in-law's shoulder. *He always knows how to make me feel better.* "Why don't you go check on our monsters, I'll call him."

Quinn shot Kurt a grateful smile as she walked away. With the expectantly disheartened blonde out of the room, Kurt pulled his phone from the pocket of his jeans and dialed his step brother. *He has a lot of freaking explaining to do.*

Parting is such sweet sorry...shallow? Sparrow? That sounds right. Parting is such sweet sparrow. No. That doesn't even make sense. Whatever. It just sucks that I have to go home. Finn pulled his t shirt - *the one Kurt says I can't wear to dinner because we're not cave people. I don't even think cave people wore t shirts. They wore like...togas-* over his head before turning his attention to Rachel. She looked far more beautiful with her messy bun that slung from side to side whenever she moved her head and her oversized, purple shirt that read 'I Love WICKED'. More than anything, he loved her. That was why it hurt so badly to leave; to return home to his loveless marriage and his mounting responsibilities.

Rachel watched her boyfriend expectantly as he dressed. She hated the thought of him leaving. She opened her mouth comment on her displeasure when Finn's phone chimed from his pocket. Instead of words, the woman let out a frustrated sigh. It's probably her. "You might as well answer the phone. It's probably your irritating wife." Rachel watched as her boyfriend's face fell. *That was probably low, but it's true.*

Finn's face fell. It wasn't his wife, her he could deal with. It was his stepbrother. Over the past few weeks, Finn's patience with the man dwindled away. It was more of a direct result of Finn's jealousy than

anything else. Kurt had it all. *Kurt always has it all.* He had the son, the attentive father, the credit score, the future, and -as of lately- the perfect significant other. Finn had nothing. He had a wife that he couldn't stand to sleep next to and a girlfriend that he couldn't be with. *Damn I don't want to answer this call.* So, he didn't. He let the call go to voicemail and began his farewell to his girlfriend. Unfortunately, Kurt was relentless if nothing else. The technician continued to call until Finn gave in and answered his phone.

"What?" He shouted into the phone. *You're cutting into my time with my girlfriend.* Finn shot Rachel an apologetic look, to which she responded with an eye roll.

"Attitude much?" Kurt scoffed into the phone. "Rudeness aside, where are you? Dinner is almost finished and I need those potatoes. We ran out an hour ago and we're not having Thanksgiving dinner without mashed potatoes. There is no way in hell. NO. WAY. IN. HELL. FINN!"

The man groaned as his stepbrother complained through the phone and into his ear. When Rachel asked who was on the other end, he mouthed 'Kurt' in response. Her eyes melted into the giant, brown orbs of sympathy instantly. Kurt was the worst. "I hear you, Kurt. I'm sorry. I decided to stop by one of the guys' house. So sorry that I ruined the homecoming Thanksgiving for the prerogative son!"

"Prodigal son, Finn. Prodigal." *Jerk. God, I hate when he does that.*

"Whatever. I'll get the damn potatoes and I'll be home in a few." Finn hung up before his brother - stepbrother- could respond. Finn quickly pocketed his phone and turned to his girlfriend. "I have to go. They're bitching about potatoes."

Rachel nodded. "I know." She did, to an extent. "What I don't know is how long this is going to continue. It's been over a year, Finn. I'm ready to move on with our lives. I'm tired of the calls to come home. How much longer?" The woman sat up straight as she watched her boyfriend near her front door.

"Not long. I...I want Beth to have one more nice Christmas before this all goes to hell." He admitted. He loved his daughter and he wanted her to finish the year happy. He knew from his experience with Keenan that happy memories were to be cherished because they often came to an end. All good things ended eventually. "I'll be back tonight. Quinn is off tomorrow so she'll sleep in."

"What about Black Friday shopping?"

"She doesn't do that. I'll be back when she and Beth go to bed. I just have to be gone before they wake up." Finn placed his hand on the doorknob and shot one last longing look at his girlfriend. He hated leaving her. "I love you."

"I love you too." She replied. A moment later he was gone and she was left ready herself for Thanksgiving dinner with her fathers. *Yay. Dinner with dads and a promise that things will get better. I've never been more thankful.*

"Why couldn't we eat Thanksgiving dinner outside when we were younger?" Cooper asked. The pleasant Florida weather and the setting sun served as a beautiful backdrop for the Anderson family's Thanksgiving near the beach. Earlier that day, Julia advised her son's to dig a patio table out of their garage and to set it up on their back deck. Cooper and Blaine did just that. They -along with their father, Jay- then watched as Julie flitted and fussed for hours, turning the patio into a paradise fit for the occasion.

Julia rolled her eyes as she pushed a piece of long, white hair away from her face. Years ago, her hair would have been pulled back into a tasteful bun; one that would elongate her neck -drawing attention to whichever extravagant piece of jewelry she decided to wear. Then again, years ago, she wouldn't have been caught dead attending a family function in a floral dress and flip flops. *My, how times have changed.* "Because you two would have complained the entire time about the heat." She replied dryly.

"I wouldn't have complained." Blaine added absently. There was something about the day that kept his head in the clouds. His mother thought it was the heat, his father chalked it up to the season. Cooper knew better, however. *Something's up.* Being the loving, caring, fantastic elder brother that he was, Cooper decided to find out what that something was.

"Really, B? You wouldn't have complained about the heat? Weren't you the one that cried for two hours when it hit 80 in Ohio?" He asked. Cooper watched his younger brother push the potatoes around on his plate; over the dressing and past the turkey. "Huh?"

"Yeah! Eighty in Ohio? Who did that?" Blaine murmured.

"I know. I mean, it gets hotter than that every single year, but you decided to cry that year? How old were you when that happened?" Julie snickered into her wine, listening as her eldest continued his line of

questioning. Blaine continued to answer each and every question with an answer that made it seem as if he was paying attention. He wasn't. When he was a child, she often caught him in whatever lie he'd told that day through the same method.

"Sixteen."

Cooper snapped his fingers. "Yep. You were sixteen. What a wonderful age! I remember being sixteen. I remember getting my driver's license and falling in love. You know about love, don't you Blaine? I mean, something has your head in the clouds right now. What's his name?"

"Kurt." Blaine answered as he lined his green beans next to one another with his fork. He was oblivious to the table full of eyes staring at him until all hell broke loose. Moments later, when questions were flying at him from every direction, he wondered how his family went from the calm, collected group of civilized individuals to a group of people that couldn't wait their turn to talk or be answered.

"How long have you and Kurt been together?"

"Why haven't we heard of him before now? Seriously, son, you've been here for almost a week."

"I started doing research on this 'being gay' and I'm here if you need any advice. I read an article online about...pleasuring each other. It was very informative."

Blaine's head shot towards his father. "Dad!" The veterinarian gasped, a scandalized look that he couldn't quite seem to master painted across his face. "Why would you even do that?"

Jay turned towards his wife. She shrugged. "A few years ago, you said that we needed to be more informed before we spoke with you about things of this nature. So, we got informed." She stated matter of factually. The truth danced around Blaine's ears for a moment. Years ago, when he was still angry, he told his parents that the things they said were inappropriate and hurtful. He told them to educate themselves before they brought up the subject again. *I didn't think they'd go that far though.* "That's neither here nor there, however. We want to know all about this man. What's he like? Have you met his parents? Do you see a future with him?"

He's amazing. They're nice and I hope I have a future with him. "He's a father." Blaine blurted. Of all their questions -asked and unasked- Blaine would have responded the same. The man leaned forward against

the table and gauged each person's reaction. Cooper seemed intrigued. Blaine could see the wheels in his brother's head turning; mapping days at the beach or at the park. *Good. I like that idea.*

Next, Blaine turned to his mother. The way her eyes danced back and forth beneath the long lashes that she passed down to her sons was never a good sign. Who knew what kinds of plans she was making for poor Keenan. *She's probably planning something elaborate that he'll be too young and frightened to comprehend. Those are her 'Oh, I don't have any grandbabies, so I'll spoil whatever child I can get my hands on' face. I swear she'd spoil the kids down the street if their parents didn't get so frightened by her excitement.*

Jay Anderson's reaction was the one that Blaine had to watch closely. His face remained unmoved, completely rigid and cold. "I've heard that can be *complicated*, son. Are you ready to deal with those *complications*?" He asked, tone harsh and unwavering as it was years ago.

Blaine nodded. "I already am. Our relationship has been a bit rough on his son, but we're working on it." He explained. *Or, we're trying to work on it.* Truth be told, he had no idea what his return to Lima would hold for him. Plans sounded nice when they were made, but he knew that things didn't always work out as expected. He hoped their plans for the upcoming weekend would. *I really don't want to lose Kurt.*

"Divorce will do that to a child." Jay replied; his voice sounding every bit as business like and robotic as the veterinarian remembered it. "Speaking of, how has the ex taken it? That can also be *complicated*."

"He's...not in their lives anymore?" Blaine watched as his mother gasped and held her hand to her chest.

"That poor angel. Losing a parent can be so difficult."

Quickly, Blaine's head shook from side to side. "Oh...well...he didn't lose a parent like that. Ummm...his other father...left." *Wait for it. Wait for it.* After moment passed and Blaine's father hadn't responded, the veterinarian's eyes darted towards him. A few more moments passed and Blaine continued to wait. *I wish I knew what he was thinking.*

Above all else, in his old age, Jay Anderson wanted his sons to be happy. Years ago, when he was young and unattached to the way his sons and wife felt, the most important part of his day was reputation. Reputation. Reputation. Reputation. Who thought what about him when, where, and why. Those were the things that he cared about and that mentality caused him trouble time and time again.

The day Blaine came out was the day that Jay realized that reputation was something that had to come and go. It was something that couldn't be dwelled on because there were more important things to worry about; namely, his family. If Jay's life still revolved around reputation and the fact that money was power, he would not be pleased with his son's decision to date a jilted father. Being the man he'd grown to be, Jay couldn't miss the sparkle in his son's eyes as he spoke of the young man that obviously held his heart. "That's his loss. I hope that you'll conduct yourself in a better manner with him."

That's as good as an 'I love you' and an approval letter in my book. "I will, Dad. I'm trying."

Julia squealed. "Great! I'm so happy for you, son. You've never talked about a guy with us, so I have a feeling that this one is special. I can't wait until we get to meet him over Christmas holiday." Blaine reeled backwards in his chair. *Christmas? What?*

"That's not at my house this year, is it?" His brother, father, and mother nodded. "Since when?"

"Since we had it at my house last year, squirt." A mouth full of food would not stop Cooper from speaking. It never had and it never would.

"And we had it here the year before." *Oh. Crap. That's right.* "So, we'll be meeting him and his little muffin next month." Julia shouted excitedly. Blaine watched as his mother clapped her hands together, grinning like a madwoman.

"Maybe Coop will bring someone this year." Blaine stated, trying to take the attention off his relationship with Kurt. He was out and proud about it, but he wasn't used to talking about anything relationship related with his family. It was nice -an exciting change of pace- but it was also tiresome and he was ready to speak with the man that clouded his brain, rather than about him.

"Keenan Derek Hummel, get a move on it. Washing your hands shouldn't take fifteen minutes!" Kurt shouted up the stairs. Most of the family was sat around the dining room table in their Thanksgiving best, waiting to eat. Waiting was the operative word. Kurt sent his son and niece upstairs to wash their hands ages ago and they still hadn't returned. "Keenan Derek! Beth Rose! Dinner now!" He shouted again.

Moments later, two giddy children raced down the stairs side by side. The technician stopped them before they hit the first floor. "Stop right there!" He instructed. "Did you guys actually wash your hands or did you

let them hang under the stream?" He asked as he reached for their hands. He examined each child's fingers and nails before letting them fall.

"We washed them, Daddy. Smell." Keenan held up a hand for his father to smell. Kurt did just that. He held his son's hand to his nose and sniffed. "See!" Kurt nodded. He did see. Before the children could hold up dinner any longer, he shooed them away to the dining room. He then followed closely behind them.

Moments later, the family was sat around the table with their plates heaped high with food. "Before we start eating, I think we should all say what we're thankful for." Burt stood as he addressed the table. He had a million and one things to be thankful for and he wanted to share them with his family. *Despite the fact that they're all groaning and rolling their eyes, they want to share the things they are thankful for with me. And if they don't, I don't care. My table, my rules.*

"I'll start." He announced. "I'm obviously thankful for all of you but I'm especially thankful that Keenan gets to spend his first Thanksgiving with us. We've missed you, buddy and we're glad you're here." Keenan beamed at his Grandpa Burt. *Best grandpa ever!*

"I'm happy I'm here too, Grandpa!" He shouted as he reached for his fork. He didn't see the point in letting his food get cold while everyone else said what they were thankful for. *I'll eat while they talk.* Unfortunately, his father had other ideas. The second Keenan reached for his fork, his father popped his hand away and shot him a glare. The boy sat his hands in his lap and resigned to the fact that he would not be eating while everyone shared spoke their piece. *Not fun.*

Carole spoke next. "I'm thankful for all of you as well." She began before smiling to each person sat at the table. "But, as a proud grandmother I'd have to say I'm thankful for my grand angels." Once again, Keenan and Beth preened. They loved the fact that everyone was thankful for them.

Next to Carole was Beth. "I'm thankful for Justin Bieber. He's made some mistakes, but so have we all. I think we should all forgive him and be thankful that he's okay and for the music he gives us." Quinn pinched the bridge of her nose as her daughter spoke. *Really? Well, she's nine so I guess I'm glad she is thankful for something.* The mother spoke next.

"I'm thankful for Beth and..." She wanted to Finn but she was having a difficult time being thankful for her husband after his four hour absence. "I'm thankful for life. Yeah, I'm thankful for life."

"Yeah, well," Finn interrupted. He was a bit perturbed that he was not on his wife's list. "I'm thankful for new beginnings." *With Rachel.*

Kurt noticed the tension between the two and spoke up. "Okay. I'm thankful for Keen obviously and all of you for welcoming us back with open arms. I'm also thankful for-"

Suddenly, conveniently, Burt broke into a fit of fake coughs. "Bear." He injected into the middle of his fake fit. Kurt blushed considerably.

"Yes, I'm thankful for Blaine."

Carole shook her head. "Nope, you have to call him Bear. Say you're thankful for the Bear, Kurt."

"The Bear?" Keenan turned towards his father with wide eyes. "But the Bear scratched you all up. That's nothing to be thankful for."

The adults at the table chuckled. While intuitive, Keenan was still a child and he often showed it through his wide eyed innocence. "Kurt was definitely thankful for those scratches." Quinn mumbled to her brother-in-law's dismay.

"Swing batter, batter. Swing." Burt sang out.

"Okay, guys. There are children at the table. Let's reign it back in." If there was one thing Kurt Hummel was good at, it was staying composed and putting on the best forced smile around. Those skills saved him from certain embarrassment time and time again.

"Come on, let's eat."

Hours later, when dinner was finished and his father was tucking him into bed, a thought crossed Keenan's mind. "Daddy." The little boy watched as his father turned his attention towards him. "We were so busy talking about Baseball and the Bear that I didn't get to say what I was thankful for."

Kurt smiled. "Tell me now. I'm listening." He whispered. The father crawled into his son's tiny bed and wrapped his arms around the little boy. "Tell me what you're thankful for, Keenan."

"I'm thankful for you. I know I've been sad about Papa, but I never stopped being thankful for you. You always make me feel better when I'm sad." Kurt's eyes fluttered in an attempt to keep the tears from falling. *Leave it to Keenan to say the sweetest things.* "Also, I guess I'm thankful for Dr. Blaine. I don't like him yet, but he makes you smile and I like seeing you smile. So, I'm thankful for him too. I guess. Since he makes you smile and all." *Yep, I'm a goner.* A stray tear slid down the technician's face.

"We're thankful for you too, baby boy." Keenan, pleased with the reply, hugged his father tighter. "We're thankful for you too." Moments later, both were sound asleep in Keenan's bed.

Wait.

Wait.

Wait.

Don't text. We agreed to meet here.

Wait.

Wait.

Blaine hated waiting. He would wait for Kurt for a lifetime, but not if he didn't have to. Friday night, mere hours after he stepped off his plane from Florida, he was seated Cedar River - a local seafood restaurant.

The veterinarian's knee bounced rapidly as he waited. 7:30. 7:31. 7:32. Text. 7:33. *Oh, wait. Text.* Blaine quickly skimmed past the home screen to his messages.

Keen insisted on hugging me a million times before I left. I felt like I was going to war. I'll be there in a few. - Kurt.

Phew. Blaine sat his phone down and motioned for the waitress. When she arrived at his table, he ordered drinks for himself and Kurt before continuing to wait. Luckily, the wait wasn't nearly as long as it felt. At 7:38, Kurt stepped into the restaurant looking more beautiful than the veterinarian remembered. *Me-ow!*

Blaine watched for a moment as Kurt eyes danced around the restaurant in search of his date. Even with a coat that reached down to his knees and a scarf wrapped tightly around his neck, Kurt looked spectacular. "Over here." The vet eventually shouted. Kurt's head turned immediately, a small smile spreading across his face when their eyes met.

Kurt crossed the restaurant quickly, dodging other patrons and wait staff. The moment he reached the table, Blaine stood and planted a kiss on Kurt's plump lips. "I've missed you." He whispered.

"Me too. But...you. I missed you, not me." Kurt babbled. He plopped himself down in the chair that Blaine was holding out for him and grinned like a fool when Blaine pushed it in. "Thank you."

Blaine nodded as he took his own seat. "So, tell me about your week. Tell me everything." And Kurt did. He told his boyfriend everything about his week, excluding the moment with Keenan the night before. Rather than getting Blaine's hopes up with the words of a sleepy child, he would wait and see what came next. If all went well, he, Keenan, and Blaine would be enjoying themselves the next day and Blaine would have a first-hand account of the little boy's appreciation for him.

Blaine awoke the next morning with a smile on his face. His date the previous night ended well. Literally. As the clocked danced towards midnight, the veterinarian realized that, for the first time in nearly a month, he and Kurt were going to complete a date. There would be no calls from home and no rushing out the restaurant door. It was perfect.

That wasn't the tip of the ice berg, however. Kurt followed him home and the two spent a better part of the early hours of the morning making out on his couch. At one point, Kurt climbed onto his lap and ground down until the veterinarian came in his pants. It was perfect. So perfect. *And it's only going to get better.* He thought as he climbed out of bed.

An hour later, his doorbell rang. *I know who that is.* The man squealed as he dashed down the stairs and towards the front door. He opened it with an overexcited grin on his face. "Hi guys!" He shouted. The man received an equally as enthusiastic wave from his boyfriend and a curt nod from Keenan.

Blaine invited the duo into his house, explaining that he needed to put on his shoes. "Sorry, I know I said eight but I over slept." He admitted. *Because I was coming down from an amazing orgasm. Oh crap, kid in the room. Wait, he's a kid not a mind reader. They can't read minds...right?*

"It's okay. Keenan and I had a moment with shoes this morning as well. Didn't we, buddy?" Kurt patted his sons shoulder, earning a nod in reply.

"I couldn't find them again." The boy mumbled.

Blaine offered the boy an understanding smile. "I know how that goes. I think my cats hide them around the house. Maybe Kel hides your shoes."

The veterinarian watched as a thoughtful smile spread across the boy's face. "Please don't give him excuses to use later." Kurt begged. *That's the last thing I need.*

Blaine winked at his boyfriend before turning his attention back to his shoes. Moments later, he shrugged on his jacket and followed the Hummel's out the front door.

Never in his life had Blaine fathomed the amount of work that was involved with getting a child from point A to point B. The night before he and Kurt decided to take his car on their outing. That meant moving Keenan's booster seat - *"He's still too little to sit without one."* - grabbing Kurt's bag - *"spare clothes in case anything happens"* - and fussing over food - *"Be careful, Keen. Don't spill that or you will have to clean it up."* Blaine enjoyed each and every minute of it. Kurt was a pro in his own right and that was expected. *He's been doing it for five years after all.* Blaine was a rookie, but he was more than willing to learn.

"Why are we getting know the highway?" The little boy asked as he watched the scenery pass. "Are we going to Alaska?" Blaine shot a quick look at his boyfriend before returning his eyes to the road. *Alaska?*

"Not sure where you got that idea, but not all roads lead to Alaska, son." Kurt replied.

"Oh."

A spell passed without further conversation. When Kurt was certain that his son was not going to ask any more questions he leaned his body towards his boyfriend and whispered into his ear. "You'll get used to his random observations if you hang around long enough."

Blaine grinned to himself. "Guess I'll be getting used to it then."

"I hope so."

The shiny car that Dr. Blaine drove pulled into one of many empty parking spaces once they reached their destination. Feeling the car stop, Keenan's head shot towards the window in an attempt to pinpoint their location. Early in the winter, not much snow had fallen, meaning that the boy did not have much issue locating a sign. *W-W-Walrus T-Tails Animal. I know that word. P-p-parts.* "Walrus Tails Animal Parts?" Keenan questioned. *Who would want to visit a park all about Walrus tails?*

Blaine and Kurt chuckled from the front seat. Each was undoing his respective seat belt, in anticipation for their trip inside. Kurt turned met his son's eyes in the rearview mirror and smiled. "Wagon Trails Animal Park, baby. Good try though. You're going to be reading Charles Dickens in no time."

Keenan nodded smugly to himself. *Yeah, probably. I am the best reader in my class. Miss Pierce told me so.* "So, we're riding a wagon with animals? Won't we be cold? It's like no degrees outside." The little boy watched as his father rolled his eyes. No response. His daddy stepped out of Dr. Blaine's car *-it's all black like the Batmobile-* before making his way to Keenan's door.

"Won't we be cold, Daddy?" The boy asked again when his father opened the door. "Won't the animals be cold?" Keenan watched as his daddy turned to Blaine. Oh, am I supposed to ask him? "Won't we be cold, Dr. Blaine? I don't want to freeze."

Blaine stepped out of the car before turning his attention to the little boy. "We're not going on the wagon ride. We're doing something else; something special. It'll be something that none of your friends can come here and do."

The little boy's eyes lit up considerably. "Really?" He asked, almost afraid to hear the answer. What if Blaine said no? That wouldn't be very nice.

Keenan watched Blaine smile and nod. "Yep. I have an inside connection so we'll be doing something that only we can do. It's special and it's only for you." The veterinarian stated proudly. He had a right to be proud. The look of excitement on Keenan's face was enough to pull the sun out from behind the cloud and melt a million pounds of snow. In that moment, Blaine felt as if the smile on the little boy's face was everything. *This must be how Kurt feels when Keen smiles at him.*

"Okay. Let's go then." And they went. Kurt helped his son out of the car, grabbing the child's hand as he jumped out of the backseat. Together, the trio trekked into the park for a day of fun.

Kurt watched as his boyfriend knocked lightly on a door labeled 'Dr. Cohen-Chang'. The man rapped three times on the door before it opened. A tiny woman with the world's largest smile peeked from behind the frosted glass. "B. I've been waiting." The woman flung the door open and threw herself at Blaine.

My boyfriend. Mine. Back away, hag. Kurt scrunched his face, watching with an eagle's eye as the woman hugged his boyfriend a bit too long and a bit too close. When they pulled apart and turned toward him, Kurt offered his friendliest smile. *Well, as friendly as I can manage at the moment.* "You must be the boyfriend." Dr. Cohen-Chang beamed. "Geez, B. You didn't tell me he was smoking hot. Great way to leave details out, dork."

The funny thing about words was that they could change a person's mood in a matter of seconds. Kurt gravitated from frustrated -and maybe a tiny bit jealous- to excited as soon as the words left the girl's mouth. "I'm Kurt." He extended his hand to the woman and waited for her to take it. She wasted no time. Dr. Cohen-Chang grasped his hand and dragged him forward into a bone crushing hug. Luckily, Keenan noticed his father's discomfort and tugged on his hand. When the over excited woman let him go, Kurt stepped back and motioned to his son. "And this is my little guy, Keenan."

"Cutie!" The woman squealed. She instantly slid down to her knees, making herself eye level with the child. "I'm Tina. It's nice to meet you, Keenan." Much like she'd done with his father, Keenan wasted no time taking the woman's hand.

"Nice to meet you, Miss Tina."

"Listen to his manners." Tina cooed as she before standing slowly and motioning for the trio to follow her. As she led them down hallways and between buildings, she explained her relationship with Blaine. Kurt listened intently, hoping that their relationship was nothing like his with Sarah. *If Blaine has a child that he's yet to tell me about, I...I can't even.*

As it turned out, Blaine's relationship with Tina was nothing like the one Kurt had with his son's mother. "I remember our first day of rotations. I was scared out of my mind. Blaine wasn't though. We worked in the same clinic and he just...he knew everything. He saved my butt a few times. Clients asked me questions and I started stuttering. Blaine didn't bat an eyelash. Whenever my words started jumbling, he swooped in like a superhero-"

"Nightbird!" The veterinarian exclaimed to the dismay of his fellow veterinarian and his boyfriend.

Tina continued undeterred. "-and explained everything. I was so grateful for him. He saved my future reputation more than once." She boasted. Kurt nodded as she spoke. There was something about the way she talked about his boyfriend that made the technician proud.

The quartet passed through another hallway -Blaine and Tina sharing stories from graduate school as they went- until they reached a door marked 'Do Not Enter'. "Alright, we're here."

Keenan looked at his father while Kurt had his attention fixed firmly on Blaine. Each thinking the same thing. *Do not enter usually means you're not supposed to enter.* Tina noticed their hesitation and offered a bit of explanation. "I'm the veterinarian for today. Blaine asked for a favor, one that causes no harm and won't get me in trouble, and I agreed. Do not enter is for everyone else. You guys are fine." Father and son offered the woman curt nods before following the veterinarians through the door.

Keenan scrunched his eyes as he stepped foot into...the jungle? With glass? The little boy's head turned to and fro as he took in his surroundings. "What exhibit is this?" His daddy asked. Keenan gripped his father's hand tighter. *Exhibit? Lions live in exhibits. Or at least they did in Madagascar.*

Miss Tina smiled. "We're in a koala exhibit. In college, Blaine and I used to gush over them." She explained. Like before, Miss Tina stooped down in front of the wide eyed child. "You see, Keenan, the koalas here are

my friends. Would you like to meet some of my friends?" The little boy turned a pair of pleading eyes towards his father. *Please say I can. Please say I can. He silently prayed.*

His father stared back. "Well, buddy? Do you want to meet some of her friends?" Keenan nodded emphatically because....*duh!*

"Everyone wants to meet koala bear friends, Daddy. That's obvious." The little boy scoffed. Blaine chuckled as Tina excused herself. She promised him a koala after all. "Have you ever held a koala bear, Dr. Blaine?" The two men and the little boy headed towards a nearby bench and plopped down.

"Koalas aren't bears, Keenan. They are marsupials. And, no, I've never held one before." Blaine begrudgedly admitted. *One day though. One day I will hold a koala and it will love me. It will love me forever.*

Again, Keenan furrowed his eyebrows. "What's a...what's that? What are koalas if they aren't bears?" He asked his father. *Dr. Blaine is okay....I guess, but Daddy has all the answers...to everything...always.* Keenan's daddy was the smartest, coolest, most nicest person he knew. *He's probably the most smartest person ever, but that will take a long time to prove.*

"They're marsupials. That means that they have tiny pouches on their bellies that they carry their babies in." His father replied. *Boom. Told you. Daddy is the smartest person ever.*

"I have a Marisol in my class. When she's a grown up will she have a pouch on her belly to carry her baby in?"

Keenan watched as his daddy shot Dr. Blaine an amused look. *What's so funny?* "No, son. Marisol will not have a pouch for her baby when she grows up. I mean...I don't think she will. You can't really tell anymore. With all the advances in science, she might very well."

"Anyways," Dr. Blaine interrupted, "Tina is heading over with the koala for you, Keenan. Are you excited?" The child nodded. *Yes! We already went over this! I'm going to be the coolest, most awesomest kid in my class.*

Keenan watched as Dr. Tina neared, a tiny ball of fur in cuddled close to her chest. As she got closer, tiny tremor of terror shot through the child's body. For the first time, he realized that holding a wild animal was scary. *Maybe this wasn't a good idea. I'm going hold a bear...no, a Marisol. She's kind of scary. What if it bites me? Or scratches me?* Quickly, the little boy scooted across the bench and into his father's lap.

"What's wrong, buddy?" Dr. Blaine asked. Keenan shook his head.

Kurt wrapped his arms around his son absently. It was second nature after years and years of practice. When the boy was safely snuggled, he leaned towards his boyfriend, who seemed confused by his son's reaction. "He's a bit scared." He whispered. Blaine nodded and scooted closer to the Hummel men.

"It's okay, Keenan. He's not going to hurt you. And look, Tina brought you a tiny one to hold." Blaine replied, an anxious plead in his voice. *Please except that answer. Please. We were so close to having an amazing time.* If Blaine claimed not to be anxious about the possibility of the day not going well, then Blaine was a liar. He was petrified. If things didn't go well that day, then his relationship with Kurt was as good as dead. So, for the sake of what he wanted to be a very, very long relationship, the veterinarian hoped the child would accept his answer.

Through parted fingers, Keenan did as Blaine told him to do. From behind his hands, he was able to see Dr. Tina and the bear -*Marisol* approaching. Slowly, he dropped his hands from his face and pulled away from his father. The koala didn't look nearly as frightening as it had moments ago. *I can do this.*

Tina squatted next in front of the little boy. "Keenan, I'd like you to meet my friend, Kat. He's a joey."

"Your not bear is a Marisol, cat, koala named joey?" *Whoa!*

Blaine stepped in before Tina could. "A joey is a baby koala. So, our not bear, marsupial, koala is a joey -or a baby koala- named Kat; with a 'k'." He explained.

"Oh. Okay."

An hour later Kurt, Blaine, and were still at the park, each with an arm full of koala. Kurt enjoyed watching his boyfriend and son interact. He couldn't even begin to imagine them spending the evening together. *Squeal...cute!* The way Blaine helped Keenan feed his koala and his son's reaction was so adorable that Kurt had to take a picture...or fifty. By the end of their time at the park, the group was all smiles and Kurt had a phone full of pictures that were so sweet that the technician assumed he'd need a root canal.

"You guys ready for lunch?" Blaine asked on their way back to his car. The veterinarian couldn't hide his excitement when Keenan was the one that answered.

"Yes! Let's get lunch." The boy shouted, throwing his arms into the air while his father buckled him into the backseat.

"Yes!" Blaine repeated. "Let's get some lunch."

The trio headed back to Blaine's house after lunch. That was where they parted ways. The veterinarian scurried inside to tidy up while Kurt ran home to ready himself for his date and to prepare Keenan for his evening with Blaine. Neither would admit it but each was anxious and excited for the evening that lay ahead of them.

Around six, Blaine was darting excitedly across the living room to answer the front door. "Hey, guys!" He shouted, causing the little boy to jump. Keenan was half asleep on his father's hip, damping Blaine's mood. *Wake up, come on. We're supposed to have fun tonight.*

"Hey, honey. He already took a bath but I didn't feed him because he wed still full from lunch" Kurt handed the child over as he went through Keenan's nightly routine. "He'll probably fall asleep around ten. He likes to be read a story before he goes to sleep though. He knows my expectations, so you shouldn't have any problems."

Blaine waved him off. "I'm sure we'll be fine." I *hope*. "Go enjoy your evening." Without thinking -because it felt like the most natural course of action- Blaine leaned in and kissed his boyfriends lips. He immediately drew back when he felt Kurt's body go rigid. "Oh...I'm sorry...I..."

"Don't worry about it. He's still partially asleep." Kurt didn't have a problem with affection, he had a problem with the most possible reaction that said affection might illicit from his son. "Call me if you have questions or problems."

"We're gonna be fine." Kurt smiled at the two before turning towards his car and walking away. Blaine stood in the doorway, Keenan dozing on his hip, until the car was out of his driveway and down the street. "Here goes nothing."

"Do you have any toys?"

"No."

"Video games?"

"Nope."

"Candy?"

"Your dad said no candy."

Keenan groaned. His time with Dr. Blaine wasn't turning out to be what he expected. Dr. Blaine didn't have any toys or fun stuff. All he had was cats and old people stuff. *Boring.*

"I just ordered a pizza. It should be here soon." Dr. Blaine advised a moment later. "Do you want to watch a movie while we wait?"

Once again, Keenan sighed. "I guess but no Gun Smoke or MASH. I have to watch them with grandpa and its boring."

"I think we can do bit better than that."

Blaine led the child into his living room and told him to make himself comfortable. Keenan did just that. Blaine watched as the little boy -clad in Star Wars, thermal pajamas- climbed onto Blaine's floral couch. "Okay, Keenan. Are you ready to have your mind blown?"

Keenan nodded emphatically, despite his boredom. Anything. He would do anything to at that point. *Anything.*

Blaine shot the child a million watt smile. From time to time, people told the young doctor that he'd be great with children because he was one trapped in an adult's body. That was not the case. The moment Keenan asked for a toy, Blaine knew he was in trouble. *Toys? Games? Candy?* Why hadn't he thought of any of that? Blaine knew for a full week that he would have the child and he hadn't once thought to ask his boyfriend to bring over things that his son might like. *In my own defense, Kurt didn't offer and he's the dad for goodness sake. What am I going to do with that man? I think he deserves a spanking. Mmmm...spanking.* "Blaine!" The veterinarian's head snapped to attention at the sound of his name. "You said I was going to have my mind blown." *Right. I forgot.*

The vet made his way around the old, cedar coffee table to a nearby shelf. It was filled with movies. Not just any movies, however. This shelf was filled with the movies that shaped Blaine's life.

Blaine gathered the movies into his arms and walked back to the couch that Keenan was sitting on. Arm jam packed with movies, Blaine plopped down next to the little boy. He presented the child with his collection. "These, my tiny friend, are the greatest movies ever made. I have every animated Disney movie to come out. Take your pick."

Keenan eyed the movies excitedly. *Now we're talking.* The little boy's eyes bounced back and forth, looking for covers that didn't look familiar. *Beauty and the Beast; seen it. Mulan; seen it. The Lion King; duh, seen it a million times. Li-Lie. Lie-Lile. Lile-o. Lile-o and...Sticks. Lile-o and Sticks.* "What's Lile-o and Sticks?"

The little boy watched as the veterinarian's eyes went wide. "What?" He gasped dramatically. "Lilo and Stitch is...you just made your choice little man. The fact that you haven't seen this movie is...a travesty. We're watching it now." Keenan nodded as Blaine put the other movies back into their rightful place before inserting the movie into the player.

Keenan scooted over when Blaine took the space at the far end of the couch. Together, they skipped the previews in favor of beginning the movie as soon as possible. Keenan remained quiet throughout most of the first few scenes, completely enthralled by 626 and his upcoming, implied adventure. It's Disney after all. There has to be an adventure of some sort. It was only when Nani has taken Lilo to the pound and allowed her to adopt the 'dog' that Keenan speaks.

"You could be Stitch." The boy stated absently without taking his eyes from the screen. *Because you're kind of ugly, but I guess you're kind of nice.*

Blaine's eyes lit up instantly because...*obviously Stitch is the coolest alien dog in the universe. I'm not an alien dog but he basically just said I'm the coolest person in the universe.*

"Thanks, Keenan." The little boy quirked an eyebrow but offered no reply. Together, the two watched the movie until the doorbell rang. "That must be the pizza. Stay here, okay." Keenan nodded. *Where else am I going to go?*

Santana slapped Kurt's hand. "Stop checking your phone. We've only been here for an hour. That's hardly enough time for your son to stab Shrinky Dink and burn his house to the ground."

One hour. The longest hour of Kurt's life. When in New York, Keenan went everywhere with him. They bought groceries together, paid bills, and ran errands together. Nathan wasn't one for 'babysitting' -*It's not babysitting when it is your child*- so Kurt and Keenan were constantly attached at the hip. With the exception of the hours that Kurt spent at work, they were always together. Call him crazy, but Kurt liked it that way. He liked knowing what his son was doing and with whom.

Throughout the child's life, only a handful of people ever babysat him. Usually, they were individuals that Kurt trusted with his life. His dad, Carole, Finn, Quinn, and most recently, Whitley and Santana were some of the only people that could say they'd ever done the job. All were different in one way or another, but they all had one thing in common -varying levels of experience with children. Blaine had next to none. Kindhearted and compassionate as he was, Blaine's interactions with children were limited to the few times Trent left him with Mikayla. And even those were only for a handful of minutes here and there. Blaine had no extended experience with children -not since he was one- and that frightened Kurt a bit.

Children were complicated, as the couple learned over the past week. They wanted when they need and acted out when they needed love. They were backwards and upside down in ways that pushed buttons and set off alarms. While Kurt knew that Blaine would be nothing but perfect with his son, his paternal worries flared a bit with each passing moment. *What if they aren't getting along? What if Keenan is crying? What if? What if? What if?* In his heart, Kurt wasn't worried, but his mind was his own worst enemy, so he couldn't keep it from running through possibly with every moment that didn't result in a text message or a phone call.

"Shut up." Kurt hissed towards his friend. The night was young and the bar was dark. They three friends decided to play the night on a casual note. They forewent dressing up in favor of dressing down. They agreed on jeans and tops that wouldn't draw too much attention but highlighted their assets. They then drove to the slowest bar in town -*no one drinks here...ever*- and chose the most secluded booth in the building. That night was about them, thus their frustration with Kurt's incessant phone checking.

Whitley, who'd been drinking since they arrived, shot her friend a shaky bird. "You shut up! You've been checking your phone like crazy. Stop worrying! They're probably having a good time. That's why they're hanging out. That's why we're hanging out. You are ruining that though, so grab a drink and get to it. You're killing my buzz."

They were right, as usual. Kurt was what his father liked to call 'a worry wart'. He worried and worried about any and everything that he could not control. He couldn't control the fact that Blaine hadn't called him, but he refused to be the anxious father that called and checked in. Keenan's fine. Blaine's fine. They're both fine and I'm just being worrisome. "Alright." He eventually sighed. The technician motioned for the waitress. "I'll have whatever they're having." Both girls threw their arms in the air squealed with excitement. Their reaction was infectious and, soon, Kurt found himself squealing as well. It was going to be a good night. *Tonight is going to be amazing.*

"Your total is...\$29.96." Blaine's mouth dropped as the delivery driver read off his total. *There was no way in...*

"I ordered a medium pizza and wings!" He half shouted. "How the hell is it \$30?" The delivery man shrugged and handed the boxes to the veterinarian. *I don't make the prices, dude. I just deliver the pizza.*

Aggravated, Blaine dug his wallet out of his back pocket and fished for cash. "All I have is a \$50."

"I have change in my car." The delivery man, advised. "Oh and..." The man pointed to something behind Blaine. Slowly, the vet turned. "Your...ummm...your kid." Sure enough, Keenan was standing behind him with tears streaked down his cheeks and a particularly heartbreaking expression painted across his face. "I'm going to-"

"Yeah." Blaine halfheartedly responded to the man. As quickly as he could, he dashed to the little boy's side and began to wipe his tears. "What's wrong, buddy? Are you okay?" Keenan's head shook violently from side to side.

"I wanna go home. I want my daddy." He whined. Blaine was at a loss for words. How had Keenan gone from the content little boy that was lying on his couch moments ago to the sobbing mess before him? Blaine had no idea. *What. Just. Happened?*

"Can you tell me what's wrong, Keenan?"

He watched as Keenan poked out his lip and crossed his arms over his tiny chest. "No! I want my Daddy! I want him now! Call him now!" The child insisted.

"Your change, bro. I got you-"

Blaine threw a hand up, silencing the man. "Keep the freaking change. Just go." He insisted. The entire time, the veterinarian did not take his eyes off the crying little boy.

"Whatever man. Thanks for the tip." As the man walked away, Blaine heard him mumble to himself. "Twenty dollar tip on a thirty dollar pizza. Sweet!" He chose to play the delivery driver no mind. There were more pressing matters to attend to.

Slowly, as not to scare the boy, Blaine padded lightly to the boy's side -leaving the boxes containing their food rested on the writing table next to the front door- and dropped to his knees. Once they were eye level, he spoke. "Can you please tell me what's wrong, Keen?"

"NO!" Keenan shouted. "I just want to go home."

"Please don't shout at me. If I call your dad, he's going to want to know why you're upset. I need to be able to tell him." Blaine reasoned. He wasn't entirely sure that was true, but it sounded nice. In all honestly, he knew Kurt would come without an explanation. He had before.

Keenan poked his lip out a bit more. He was reluctant to open up to his father's boyfriend. "I don't like that movie." He eventually whispered. Blaine did his best to hide his shock. *Really? But...it's an alien dog. Everyone likes alien dogs.* Apparently, Keenan did not.

"Why, buddy?" *Please let it be a good reason.* As much as Blaine liked Kurt, he didn't think he could continue a relationship with a man who fathered a child that did not like Stitch.

In an instant, Keenan's face transformed from harsh and angry to hurt and unhappiness. "Because Ohana doesn't mean family and, in families, people do get left behind and forgotten."

"Put your phone down, loser! They're fine. It's only been an hour. There is no way in hell anything interesting is happening at Dr. Dolittle's house. He and Keenan are probably fast asleep." Kurt sighed and slid his phone back into his pocket. *They're probably right.*

Close your mouth, Blaine. The veterinarian snapped his mouth shut. He didn't want Keenan to see that he was shocked or thrown off balance. He expected the little boy to say that the movie was too long or that some of the Hawaiian terms were hard to follow. Those were answers that Blaine could have handled. The one he received was as unexpected as it was frightening. For a moment, Blaine didn't believe that he was qualified enough to handle the conversation that someone obviously needed to have with the little boy about his very real, very strong emotions about the very real, very complex situation that was thrust upon him. The moment that his mind decided to give in -yes, he would call Kurt- a tiny tear trailed down Keenan's face. No, he wouldn't call Kurt. Kurt was out and he could handle the situation himself. *Hopefully.*

Blaine grabbed the little boy's hand and squeezed it. "Keenan, I know you're hurting. I know that the things that happened...before really...hurt...and...I'm sorry." Blaine chose his words wisely. Conversations with children were often difficult, especially when they were upset. "I'm sorry that those things happened to you and I'm really sorry that they made you sad. You won't always be sad though. Days will go by and you'll feel better and better."

Keenan sniffled every once in a while. He knew Dr. Blaine was right -*Daddy doesn't even cry anymore like he used to*- but the days until he stopped crying felt too far away. He wanted to feel better at that moment and that would start with Blaine taking the movie out and putting in something else. "You know what will help you feel better sooner?" Keenan shook his head. He didn't know, but he wanted to find out. "Understanding that people make mistakes. Your Papa made a big one. We're not perfect, but we do learn from one another. Your daddy isn't leaving you like your papa did. He's not perfect, but he's not going anywhere. Also, remembering that family is whatever you make it. Families change every day, but the people that really love you don't. They will always love you."

There was a moment of silence near the end of Blaine's speech. He was waiting, hoping that the things he said to Keenan would be enough to make the boy feel better; if for nothing than a few more hours. He would still tell Kurt about the incident but he hoped that it wouldn't require additional work on Kurt's part. The man was already doing more than his fair share of everything, everywhere he went. "Do you still want me to call your daddy? I can if you do."

Blaine watched as Keenan's tiny hands ran over his eyes, effectively drying his tears. "No thank you. I'll stay." The boy whispered. Blaine couldn't have been more pleased. "Can we change the movie though? This one really got me down."

"Yeah, we can change the movie. Go sit down and I'll get our pizza ready. Then we'll pick another movie and watch it."

"Okay." With that, Keenan was off.

"Alright, buddy. Your dad said 10:30 if you didn't fall asleep on your own." Keenan shifted his head into Blaine's side. Pizza, wings, 'Snow White', and 'The Little Mermaid' later, found the two curled into one another on the couch. When he noticed the boy's movement, Blaine looked down at him. Keenan did not look pleased.

"I'm not sleepy yet." He whined.

"I know, but you have to. You and your daddy are going to clean tomorrow and then you have to grocery shop." Blaine pulled unwrapped his arm from around the boy's tiny shoulders, causing the child to pout and chase the warmth that the veterinarian was taking away. "Come on, I'll read you a story. Your dad says you like that before bed."

"NO!" *Oh my God. What's wrong now? Things were going so well.* After the crying episode, Keenan was an absolute angel. He ate without spilling, he used his manners, and he even initiated their cuddling. *He's an even bigger cuddle wh-bugger than I am.* Blaine thought at one point. "Daddy is the only one that can read me stories. Everyone has something. Grandma makes up stories, Daddy reads ones out of books, Grandpa makes me watch COPS until I pass out, and Aunt Quinn just turns off the light and tells me to go to sleep because she's too sleepy and her feet hurt too bad for her to do any of that stuff. So, you have to have something special too."

Something special. Blaine's heart leapt. That was the reaction he'd waited for since the beginning. The moment he realized that he and Kurt were meant to be together and that Keenan came along with that, he wanted nothing more than to win the child's heart along with his father's. Finally, after too many days to count off the top of his head, Blaine's wish was finally coming true. "Don't you have a guitar? Can you sing me a song?"

A smile crept across Blaine's face. *A song. Of course.* He could do that. "Lay down and I'll bring you a blanket and my guitar. I know just the song to sing." Keenan nodded as he lowered his body into a resting

position. He used one of Blaine's ugly throw pillows to cushion his head and waited anxiously for his blanket. Moments later, Blaine came back with his guitar and the large blanket from his bed. "It gets cold in here, so I brought you this one."

"Tuck me in?"

Tucking Keenan in was easy. The boy zigged when Blaine needed him to zig and zagged when he needed to zag. With the boy tucked firmly into place, Blaine plopped down on the floor in front of the couch and pulled his guitar into his lap. "Alright. My Grandma Lena used to sing me this song. It's my favorite song. If you know it, sing along." Keenan nodded. *I hope I know it.* The little boy listened closely as Blaine began to hum and strum on his guitar.

We-de-de-de

De-de-de-de-de

De-we-um-um-a-way

We-de-de-de

De-de-de-de-de

We-um-um-a-way

In the jungle, the mighty jungle the lions sleeps tonight

In the jungle, the mighty jungle the lions sleeps tonight

A-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a-wimoweh

A-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a-wimoweh

A-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a wimoweh

A-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a-wimoweh

In the village the peaceful village the lion sleeps tonight

In the village the peaceful village the lion sleeps tonight

A-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a-wimoweh

A-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a-wimoweh

A-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a wimoweh

A-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a-wimoweh

Hush, my darling don't cry my darling the lion sleeps tonight

Hush, my darling don't cry my darling the lion sleeps tonight

A-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a-wimoweh

A-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a-wimoweh

A-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a wimoweh

A-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a-wimoweh

"I know this song!" Keenan shouted. Blaine nodded and winked on him. It was a silent invitation to join in. Keenan received the message loud and clear. Together, their voices rang out through the silent house.

A-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a-wimoweh

A-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a-wimoweh

A-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a wimoweh

A-wimoweh, a-wimoweh, a-wimoweh

When they finished the song, Blaine noticed the slow sag of Keenan's eyelids. It looked as if they were filled with cement, thus making them far too heavy to hold open. "Go to sleep, Keenan. Your daddy will be here soon." The little boy nodded and turned onto his side. "Good night, buddy."

He watched as the boy offered him a sleepy smile; which was all he had to give. "Goodnight, Stitch."

Chapter Fourteen

It was well after midnight when Kurt pulled into Blaine's tiny driveway. *Stupid Santana. Stupid Whitley.* 'You'll be fine.' They said. 'It's just fun.' They said. He wasn't fine. Four cups of coffee and a glass of water later, he finally felt confident enough to drive. His few drinks only caused a slight buzz, but -to Kurt Hummel- buzzed driving was as good as drunk driving. He did not approve and he would not be a part of it.

Kurt haphazardly threw his car into park -leaving it running because he did not expect to be long- and headed towards the house. A handful of knocks later and fewer replies than he had fingers, Kurt decided to call his boyfriend. Truth be told, it was late and Blaine probably fast asleep. Three unanswered phone calls served as confirmation that Blaine was indeed asleep. *Crap.* The father weighed his options -ring the doorbell which would wake Blaine and probably Keenan, he could continue to wait in the cold until his boyfriend answered his calls, or he could leave. None of his options seemed viable.

With a resignation that whatever option he chose would be the wrong one, Kurt leaned against the door frame. When he did so, the force of his heavy shoulder nudged the door open. *Why is the door unlocked? Why is it open?* Possibilities raced through Kurt's mind as he stepped into the house. As he looked around, he took in the fact that everything seemed to be in its rightful, cluttered place. "Blaine?" He called as he stepped through the foyer. With most of the lights on the first floor on, the young man was able to navigate through the hallway without much issue. "Bla-" Kurt's first glimpse into the living room sent his worry away.

Lying on the couch, wrapped in an oversized comforter and fast asleep, was his son. He looked comfortable -content- despite the awkward positioning of his body. Across from him, sprawled across the recliner -the one that was a bit too big for the room and whose burgundy leather clashed with the gaudy, floral furniture that Blaine refused to get rid of because it belonged to his grandmother- was his boyfriend. With one hand thrown behind his head and his body contorted he looked absolutely adorable. So adorable that Kurt hated to wake him. *I'll have to. I can't imagine him waking up and not being able to find Keenan. I would freak out.*

Kurt tiptoed across the room; he didn't want to wake Keenan until it was unavoidable. The little boy would wake up the moment he was picked up. Kneeling next to the recliner, Kurt gave his boyfriend a firm shake. "Blaine, baby, wake up."

In his sleep, Blaine grunted and rolled on his side, body facing away from his boyfriend. "No!" He huffed in his sleep. "Sleeping!" For a brief moment, Kurt forgot he was speaking to his boyfriend and was taken back to each and every morning of trying to wake his sleeping son.

"Blaine. Wake up baby. It's me." Kurt tried once again.

To the technician's surprise, Blaine turned in his sleep and began searching with his hands for the voice that was calling his name. "Come to bed baby. Come sleep."

"Blaine!" Kurt watched as his boyfriend's head shot up with a start. His wide eyes searched the room wildly, trying to figure out who, what, where, when, why, and how. When his eyes eventually focused on the man before him, a slow, sleepy smile spread across his face.

"Baby. What time is it?" He asked. Blaine cupped his boyfriend's cheek and pulled him in for a chaste kiss. Apparently, Kurt's answer was not nearly as important as the kiss he wanted.

Pulling back, Kurt smiled. "Just after two. Things got a little crazy and I ended up sitting at a diner for a few hours trying to sober up. I called you but now I know you were asleep. How did tonight go?" He asked warily. It looked as if all went well but he couldn't be sure until Blaine or Keenan told him so.

The two crawled to their feet -Kurt from the floor and Blaine from his chair- before Kurt received his answer. "It was great. We watched movies, ate pizza, and sang songs. He's so much fun, Kurt. I'm kind of jealous that you get to spend time with him more than I do. He's really cool to have around."

The sparkle in his boyfriend's sleepy eyes was like authenticity to Kurt's ears. It was a bit shocking. He hadn't expected to find Blaine gagged and bound to a chair with his son running rampant around the house, but he had expected to hear of a bit of resistance. Keenan is well adjusted but not that well-adjusted. "So nothing happened? No fits? No shouting matches? Nothing?"

The slight fall of Blaine's smile was all the indication Kurt needed. "Well, there was one instance. We were watching 'Lilo and Stitch' and -"

"Lilo and *what?*"

Blaine's jaw dropped. "Come on!" He half shouted. Blaine *quickly* realized that they were in the presence of a sleeping child and lowered his voice. "You don't know what 'Lilo and Stitch' is either?" Kurt shook his

head and Blaine tried not to wonder how they would work in the end. *It starts with lack of knowledge of Disney movies and it ends with him dealing crack. I don't know if I'm ready for that.* Hoping to keep his boyfriend off the pipe, the veterinarian explained.

"Okay, Stitch is an alien dog. Lilo is lonely. Ohana means family but Keenan said it doesn't mean family. Disney says that, in families, people don't get left behind or forgotten but Keenan said they do. I was getting the pizza and Keenan came in crying. He said that Ohana doesn't mean family and, in families, people do get left behind and forgotten. And..."

"Stop." Kurt's head reeled as he attempted to catch up with Blaine's rambling. "Okay. So, he was crying about a movie and-"

Blaine nodded. "He wanted me to call you so you could come get him. He wouldn't tell me what was wrong though. I hope I didn't overstep but I told him I couldn't call you if he couldn't tell me what was wrong." Blaine pulled a face. In the heat of the moment, he hadn't considered the fact that Kurt might have wanted a call. He hadn't considered the fact that Kurt may have wanted to handle that situation. *Man oh man.*

"It's okay." Kurt replied. "I do want to hear the rest of the story though." *Like now.* He wanted to know how Blaine handled the situation.

"Well, when he told me what was wrong, I told him that it's okay to hurt sometimes. I told him that people make mistakes, but he has people in his life that love him and that won't make the same mistakes as *others.*" The veterinarian didn't hide the disdain in his voice when he discussed the sensitive topic that put the little boy into distress. *I hope I never meet Nathan. If I do, I'll take him out at the knees so that we're the same size and then I'll punch him square in the face. He deserves it.*

Kurt laced his arms around his boyfriend's shoulders and pulled him close. "That was a perfect response. Thank you for handling that. I know it can be a bit rough but...thank you. I don't think most guys would have endured. The fact that you did speaks volumes to me and, I'm sure, I'll hear about how awesome you are when he wakes up in the morning."

Together, they turned their attention to the sleeping little boy on the couch. Their mirroring thoughts echoed throughout their respective heads as they watched the little boy kicked at something in his sleep.

Kurt watched his son sleep with a proud smile on his face. *He's so perfect. He gives me hell but he always makes it worth it. He's everything that I've ever wanted.* And he wasn't just talking about Keenan. Blaine was perfect. He cared; he gave and gave when it felt like he had nothing to give. He was everything Kurt wanted in a man and the technician hoped he felt the same.

If Blaine felt anything, it was love; undeniable, unexplainable, unadulterated love. The man in his arms was everything he once dreamed of. *How is he real? He endures. He's persistent, he has hope for the future. Despite everything life has handed him, he keeps going. I love him, just like he loves me.* The veterinarian's thoughts traveled to the night that Kurt unofficially told him that he loved him. He wanted to say it back, more than anything, he wanted to return Kurt's affections. He couldn't, however. He was stuck in a place of uncertainty; completely unsure of what the future had to offer them. He knew now. There was not a bit of doubt in his mind. He loved Kurt and he wanted a future with him. One day, he wanted Kurt, himself, and the sleeping little boy on the couch to be the Hummel-Andersons. He wanted to wake up in the morning to Keenan bouncing on the bed -curls flopping wildly in his wake. He wanted to wake up with Kurt snuggled close to his chest. He wanted all of that with both of them. He loved them and he saw a life and a future with them. One day. One day that hopefully isn't too far in the future.

"I don't want to clean my room. I want to go back to Stitch's house. It's so fun over there!" Keenan shouted from just inside his bedroom door. *I know. I freaking know. You've been telling me all day.* From the moment Kurt woke that morning, Keenan bounced off the walls with pent up energy. Every other word out of his mouth was 'Stitch'. While Kurt wanted to appease the boy -*trust me, I want to go back to Stitch's house too*- they couldn't. Their house needed cleaning, their cat was feeling lonely, and they had grocery shopping to do unless they wanted to starve over the next week. *Not actually starve though. I'm sure Dad and Carole would feed us if we were that close to starvation.*

"Tough tacos, little man. Now get that room clean so we can go to the store." Kurt shouted back as he wrestled the vacuum cleaner out of the tiny space next to his dryer. He listened as his son groaned before presumably returning to his cleaning duties.

"Can we go later? Like when my room is clean? Can I go play with his cats again? They're so cool?"

"You have your own cat -one that happens to be painfully lonely- here. Play with Kel." Kurt's son threw his head back with another loud groan. He loved Kel very much but Kel wasn't at Stitch's house. *Maybe I'll take him to Stitch's house to play with the cats there.*

"Daddy! Kel can come with us."

"CLEAN YOUR ROOM!"

November crept into December and, with that, the weather worsened. During the second week of the month -the week that is filled with Kurt's final exams for the fall semester- the school year's first snow day was called. Kurt received the call just after 6 am and spent the remainder of the morning hunting down sitters for his son. His father left for work early -far too early for the young father's liking- so he was not an option. Carole and Quinn were well on their way out the door to brave the snow and Whitley and Santana both had jobs of their own. Trent was in the same boat, eventually resigning to call his ex-wife and ask her to watch their daughter since 'That hoe doesn't work. You don't want to work, hoe, then you can watch my kid.' Much to his dismay, Kurt's only option was Finn. He couldn't afford to call out -*not with Christmas right around the corner*- and he couldn't afford to miss classes. It was only for a while. Finn won't screw up. *I don't think.*

An hour's worth of begging and a promise to bring home turkey jerky resulted in a mountain of stress being lifted from Kurt's shoulders. Finn agreed to watch his son and the technician was free to leave for work without having to pull out his wallet and hand over a handful of twenties to a teenaged brat with an attitude problem and a knack for popping gum. *Thank God.*

Kurt flitted around the kennels early that morning while the snow fell heavily outside. Rachel was on something that Kurt couldn't comprehend thus she wasn't cleaning up to standard. If there was one thing that Kurt couldn't stand, it was an unclean environment.

"I'm Kurt-alocious. My body stay vicious. Be up in the gym just working on my fitness."

Worst song ever. It was great cleaning music though. Kurt shimmied and shook his hips as he wiped the counter top clean. He was well aware of the few animals that were providing him with their undivided,

albeit completely bewildered, attention. He was not aware of the audience of the boyfriend variety that he'd earned, however.

Blaine propped himself against the door frame and watched his boyfriend perform as he cleaned. *So cute. He's soooooo cute.* "Delicious. But I ain't promiscuous. And if you were suspicious, all that shit is fictitious."

"You're not promiscuous? That's a shame." The veterinarian watched as his boyfriend jumped, startled by the sound of his voice. Kurt turned slowly, embarrassment evident on his face. Blaine watched as a body's worth of blood raced to the younger man's face. *Adorable.*

"How long have you been there?" Kurt squeaked. *Not long. Please say not long.*

Blaine shrugged. "Not nearly long enough." without another moment's hesitation, Blaine crossed the room and laced his arms around the brunette's hips. "So, back to the song. You're not promiscuous? I'm not sure how I feel about that."

A wry smile spread across Kurt's face. "Just a song, Frank. Don't take it so literally."

"That's what I like to hear." Their lips met in the middle, moving lazily together. Often times kissing Blaine felt like a lazy Sunday morning to the technician. It was like not getting out of bed when he didn't have to or waking up in the arms of the man he loved. It was perfect. They were perfect. *Life is good.*

The ability to leave the shelter for lunch that day was an unexpected miracle for both men. Together, the couple braved the snow to eat at a nearby restaurant; Tasty's - the best burgers and fries in Lima. The two squished themselves into a single bench seat, choosing to leave their jackets lying in the vacant bench. They snuggled together under the illusion of needing one another's body heat when, in reality, they just needed each others bodies. They were growing more dependent on one another by the day. Kurt often found himself wondering how long it would be until they reached the physical aspect of their relationship. *Not long I hope. I jacked off three times in the past two days. All because of him. Jerk.*

"How have finals been going? We haven't had much time together because of them." Blaine asked as he perused the menu with his free hand. The other was wrapped tightly around his boyfriend's waist...*where it belongs.*

Kurt shrugged. "Ehh. Three down, one to go. It's the one I'm worried about."

"History?" Blaine supplied absently.

"Yep. It's tomorrow evening at the testing center and I'm...I don't know. Our professor basically hates all of us now because Whitley and Santana discussed American Idol -very loudly- during his lecture on the thirteen colonies. He was so pissed that he canceled our last two classes and refused to give us a study guide. So, I've been cramming information into my brain, hoping something will stick."

Blaine hummed, still thumbing through the menu. *Burgers, burgers, or...burgers.* "You'll be fine. You're super smart. And, if all else fails, show your professor your amazing ass. That's an A+ ass." Kurt rolled his eyes and picked up his menu. Of course Blaine would suggest that he show someone his ass. *Because that makes sense. Well...if I think I'm doing poorly, I might have to do that. Yeah, I'll keep that in mind just in case.*

The couple filled their lunch hour with good food and even better conversation. Kurt invited Blaine to his first family dinner on Friday evening; an invitation that elated the veterinarian. In return, Blaine advised his boyfriend that his parents and brother would be in town for the upcoming holidays and -just as Kurt warned him about their family dinner- attendance was expected and mandatory. *'Blaine, the invitation might sound nice, but it's Carole's way of saying 'Bring your ass to dinner or back away from my stepson and grand angel.' There is nothing nice about it.'*

Both relieved and excited for things to come, they returned to the office. All seemed well that ended well.

Keenan was not having fun with his Uncle Finn and his Cousin Beth. While they were playing and having a good time, Keenan felt left out. It was as if his uncle didn't want him around. When they were building snowmen, Uncle Finn ignored his snowman in favor of helping Beth with hers. It stunk. Not just the situation. His snowman stunk too. It looked like a pile of snow with a stick nose. "Can you help me, Uncle Finn? It looks weird." The little boy motioned to the pile of dirty snow lumped before him.

His Uncle Finn shot his snowman a quick look before turning his attention to the little boy. "It's not that bad, Keenan. Just keep working at it."

"But can you help me like you're helping Beth? Please? It's all lopsided and I want to show Daddy when he gets home from work. I can't if it's just a pile of snow. He's already seen snow." Keenan insisted.

"Please." Keenan whined when he received no response from his uncle. He was desperate and -as far as the little boy could tell- Uncle Finn was uninterested.

"Stop whining!" His Uncle Finn shouted, all the while helping his daughter perfect the three snowballs would become her snowman's body.

On his only day off, the last thing Finn wanted to do was watch his nephew. He didn't have a problem with the little boy but he wanted to spend some much needed quality time with his daughter. After a long talk with Rachel, Finn came clean to his wife about the job he found. It was a way to get out of the house more. Rachel told him that if Quinn knew he was working, then she wouldn't think twice when Finn left home.

On the other some of that sword, Quinn now expected him to help with bills. It wasn't his idea of fun and it cut into the little bit of time he had with his daughter, but it put him one step closer to Rachel and one step further away from a situation that he wasn't happy with.

On one of the few occasions when he was off and Rachel was at work, Finn decided to spend time with his daughter. In his mind, they'd hang out, talk, watch movies, and enjoy each others company. He had no idea how long Quinn would keep Beth away once he told her that he wanted a divorce. Today was supposed to be the day that Finn used to cement his love in his daughters mind. Then Keenan happened. With Kurt in his face begging for help and his wife on the phone, Finn had a difficult time saying no. Then, Beth threw her two cents in and Finn was a goner. He did it for her and no one else.

Things went well for a while. Finn spent time with his daughter and Keenan entertained himself. *I never knew one kid could talk to himself so much.* From a distance, Finn watched as his nephew explained to no one at all that he planned to build the world's best snowman to show Kurt and...*Stitch?*

The snowman was the turning point in the day's events. It was the reason that Keenan started whining. It was the reason Finn was agitated, and it was the reason that, in Finn's mind, his daughter's day was ruined. "If you want to whine, you can go in the house."

Finn watched as his nephew turned his watery gaze to the pile of snow and then back to up at himself and his daughter. It felt like a challenge sent from the little boys eyes to his uncle. It wasn't. It was another plea for assistance. "Please. Help me. Please. I just want it to look nice." A single tear trickled down Keenan's face as he begged his uncle for help.

Finn was beyond frustrated. Gone was the fun in his daughter's eyes, only to be replaced by a bit of discomfort. *Leave it to Keenan to make her uncomfortable.* "Since you want to whine, you can go into the house and wait for your grandfather or your father to get home."

Keenan's mouth dropped and his eyes welled with tears. "But I didn't do anything. I just want-" His Uncle Finn cut him off.

"Go in the house, now!" He shouted.

But I didn't do anything. I just want help. Resigned to the fact that he was not going to get help, thus his ugly snowman would remain ugly, Keenan stomped through the snow to the house. *I want my daddy. I didn't do anything but I have to go in the stupid house. Daddy would have helped me. Beth would have too if her stupid daddy wasn't being such a jerk.*

When the child reached the house, he was livid. He hated getting in trouble when he hadn't done anything wrong. "And don't slam that door!" He heard his uncle shout. Keenan's face skewed with anger. If Uncle Finn was going to be angry with him, then Keenan was going to give him a reason to be angry. Keenan pushed the front door open and then flung it closed, sending a hung plant outside spiraling towards the ground. *Keenan 2. Potted plants 0.*

Finn watched in horror as his mother's dead plant hit the ground. That was it. He was finished with Keenan's attitude. It was almost as bad as his father's. "Honey," He began. Beth looked up from the tiny snowball she was packing with her gloved hands. "Stay here. I'll be back."

"Is Keenan in trouble? I hope not. We could have stopped making mine and helped him with his. I like making snowmen with him. His snowmen always have some crazy story. Once, his snowman had a weight complex. I don't think he knows what weight complex means but his snowman had one."

"Yeah. Keenan's in trouble." Beth watched as her father began to march towards the house.

"Is he getting a spanking?" She asked. "Uncle Kurt doesn't like spankings. He said Keenan has never had one and never will." When she was younger, her parents used to give her spankings. They stopped when her mommy decided that it wasn't the way she wanted to raise her daughter.

"Well, Uncle Kurt isn't here right now and his son is out of line. It's time someone whips him into shape." With that, Beth's father walked towards the house. She was left standing alone in the middle of the snow

with a sad looking snowman that Keenan worked really hard on and the perfect one that she and her father built. Oddly enough, she wished that her snowman looked like Keenan's. He made it himself and his daddy would be proud of it regardless of how it looked. Something deep down told her that her daddy wouldn't be proud of hers if it looked like Keenan's. *Sometimes I wish Daddy was more like Uncle Kurt.*

"He won't stop dragging his butt across the floor. It's disgusting. Now my son is doing it and...can you please help me? Do you know what it's like to have your kid drag their bare butt across the floor?" Sunshine Corazon had a million and one questions for the veterinarian that was examining her dog. She wanted answers.

"Yes." Kurt's absent minded response startled the veterinarian, the patient, and his owner. "Oh...sorry. I just...I feel your pain. We used to have a dog and my son used to mimic him when he did that."

The woman smiled. At least someone felt her pain. "What do you think is wrong, Dr. Anderson?" Her attention quickly turned to the veterinarian that was examining her baby's backside. Kurt took his spot next to his boyfriend and began to assist in the animal's examination.

A few 'hmmms' and 'uhhhhhuhs' from the veterinarian sounded throughout the room before Blaine spoke up. "His anal sacs seem to be inflamed. I don't see any sign of infection or worms, so that's our best assumption. It's a pretty quick fix, but it's not a very fun one."

"I'll do anything to help him and, in turn, help myself. Quinton, my son, took his diaper off and scooted across the carpet the other day. There was shit everywhere. Tell me what to do and I'll do it." Sunshine was at her wits end. *Shit everywhere. There was shit everywhere.*

"That's what you say now." Kurt's mumbled response earned a snicker and an elbow jab from his boyfriend. Their playful office antics grew more playful by the day. It was all thanks to the night Keenan spent with 'Stitch'. Things felt lighter; nicer. It felt like they could take on the world.

"Watch him for a while. I don't believe you'll have to do that anytime soon, but, if you do, you'll be prepared." Blaine held the door for Sunshine and her dog, Stormy. It made Rachel sick. Normally it

wouldn't, Dr. Anderson was cordial with all people. It was the way Kurt looked at him like a love sick puppy while he did it that made her nauseous. *Can't he get a life or something?*

She wasn't jealous, per se, of their relationship. She simply wished that she and Finn had the opportunity to be as carefree with their relationship as Blaine and Kurt were. *That's not jealousy. That's...I'm not sure but I'm not jealous.*

"Rachel, do we have any other appointments today?" Blaine asked as he leaned against the front desk. Before answering, Rachel turned her attention to Kurt. His back was to her and he was having a conversation with Unique; yet another person in the office that she couldn't stand. *He's so weird.* "Rachel?"

The girl's eyes quickly snapped back to her boss. He offered her a kind *-condescending if you ask me-* smile. "Sorry, Dr. Blaine. You don't have any more appointments today." She eventually supplied. The veterinarian seemed pleased.

"Good. I'm going to send you and Kurt home if that's alright with you. Marley and Unique can handle the front desk for a bit." With that, he walked away. The girl shrugged. She didn't want to be there anyways. She much preferred to go home and wait for Finn to join her later that evening. At some point, he would join her. It was a given.

Blaine followed his boyfriend to the coat closet, fighting with him the entire way. "Go get Keenan. You've been antsy all day to see him." Without any appointments scheduled for that afternoon -a shock and a blessing- Blaine felt it best to send his boyfriend home. Unfortunately, Kurt didn't seem to want to go. "I know you don't want to lose hours but I know you'd rather be home with Keen and I know you need to study; you *want* to study." The snow let up hours ago meaning that the roads were safe and the technician told him on more than one occasion that he felt a bit 'off' about leaving his son with his stepbrother.

Kurt needed to leave. The moment he pulled out of the driveway that morning, something uncomfortable settled in his chest. It was something that told him to turn around and head home. He didn't...he couldn't. He had to work. "I can stay today. I know nothing's wrong. Don't let my weirdness disrupt the flow of the office. You'd be shorthanded if you needed me." Kurt pouted, all the while shrugging his heavy winter coat onto his shoulders.

Together, the pair walked to Kurt's vehicle, pulling their jackets closer to their bodies as they braved the winter wonderland left by the previous night's storm. "You want to be home with Keenan and you have a final tomorrow. Call me tonight when you take a break from the books. I'll be up. We'll be fine without you."

"How are you so perfect?" Kurt asked. He truly wanted an answer. Blaine Anderson would claim to the end of time that he wasn't perfect but Kurt was beginning to wonder. He said all the right words and did all the right things. He was a Prince Charming in his own right.

The veterinarian offered a shrug. "Good genes I guess." Kurt rolled his eyes before pressing his lips against his boyfriend's. When they pulled apart, Kurt hopped in his car and backed out of the tiny, clinic parking lot. Blaine was right. He had a test and, more than that, he wanted to be with Keenan. It's not often that we get part of a weekday together. *It's best to utilize it while we have it.*

Burt left work early that day. With snow on the ground, the residents of Lima were home. Thus, business was slow. Shortly after lunch, the shop owner gave his guys the option to stay and clean the shop or go home without pay. He paid them exceptionally well, so his fellow mechanics chose to leave. They could afford to miss a few hours here and there. Just a bit after one, the shop was cleared of people, save for Burt. He decided to stay and do the cleaning himself.

Once the cleaning was done, Burt locked up and headed home.

The house was quiet when Burt walked in. Nothing could be heard but the humming of the refrigerator -*a shame since it was supposed to be top of the line*- and the pitter patter of dainty feet slapping against the pavement. "Grandpa!" Beth shouted as she flung her arms around his midsection. "I'm so happy you're here."

Burt hugged his baby girl back. "I'm happy that you're happy. Where are Keenan and your daddy?" The grandfather waited as the girl let her arms from around his waist. When she looked up at him, the excitement was gone from her face.

"Daddy is on the phone in your office and Keenan is in your room. He got a spanking."

"From Uncle Kurt?" Color him confused. Kurt was far more opposed to corporal punishment than Burt himself; which was saying something. In their eyes, there was always another way; another option.

Beth shook her head. "No. He's not home yet. Daddy spanked him. He shouldn't have though. Keenan didn't do anything. He just wanted help with his snowman and Daddy got so mad. He made Keenan go in your room because he wouldn't stop crying and Daddy had to make a phone call."

Burt listened with open ears to each word that came out of the little girl's mouth. He was shocked to say the least. "Umm...are you...you said your dad is in my office?" What was going to ask her? Was she telling the truth? Beth was no liar. She was too bushy tailed and Disney princess for that. Burt was certain the little girl still believed she would turn into a pumpkin for fibbing. The mechanic watched as his granddaughter nodded. "Alright, honey. Why don't you go keep Keen some company while I talk to your daddy?"

"Daddy said I had to leave Keenan alone until he was ready to act like a big boy."

"Then we won't tell him. Just go play. I'm going to go talk to your father." Burt watched as the little girl skipped down the hallway. Once she was gone, he made his way toward his office. He was on a mission and Finn had an explanation to give.

"When did he leave?" Finn reclined a bit in Burt's office chair, staring out the window. He called Rachel to see how her day was going and was informed that his stepbrother left work a bit early. *Great! That's what I need. Now I'll have to deal with him.*

"About twenty minutes ago. With the snow it'll take a bit longer for him to get home. Why are you worried though? His kid was being bad and you punished him."

Finn sighed. He wished it was that simple. Kurt was going to run his mouth and Finn wasn't in the mood to hear it. Just like he wasn't in the mood to hear Keenan's backtalk hours earlier. "It's not that, Rach-" The man stopped speaking when he heard the office door open. The last thing he needed was for Beth to hear him talking to Rachel.

"I need to talk to you, Finn." *Oh shit.* Beth seemed to be the least of Finn's problems. When had Burt returned home?

The young father spun in the office chair and was greeted by a particularly perturbed looking Burt Hummel. "Ummm...yeah..." He stammered. "Hey...dude...I'll call you back later." Before Rachel could respond, Finn disconnected the call. The very, very last thing he needed was for Burt to hear him talking to his girlfriend. That wouldn't sit well with his stepfather *or* his wife.

"She worth it?" Burt asked, taking Finn completely by surprise. "It's not like I didn't figure it out. The only thing that can make a man so tense, so oblivious to the fact that his wife is hurting and that his daughter misses him is another woman. The only thing that can force a man to lose his temper with a little boy that wants his help is stress about another woman."

The mechanic watched as his stepson's hands began to shake. "Yeah. I know." Burt continued. "I don't have firsthand experience because I wouldn't have ever done that to Kurt's mom and I'll never do it to your mom. I know people who've had affairs though. I had some of my best friends snap on me because they were so worried about their other woman; just like you did today with Keenan."

"Are you going to tell Quinn?" Finn asked. He hoped not. Just a few more weeks. He just needed a few more weeks. He wanted to be there when Beth opened her Christmas presents and he wanted to be there when his daughter rang in the New Year. He wanted to be a part of all of those things. He knew that wouldn't happen if Quinn found out before he was ready for her to find out.

Burt shook his head. "Nope. Just like I'm not going to tell Kurt that you spanked Keenan." Finn breathed a sigh of relief; one that Burt immediately picked up on. "Don't look so relieved. I'm not telling them because you are going to. You're going to tell your wife about the fun you've been having with another woman - maybe not today, but soon- and you're definitely telling Kurt that you spanked his son despite the fact that you know he's against it. Honestly, I came in here to handle that situation, but I think I'll leave it up to Kurt. He's far younger than I am and he's far more colorful when he's angry." With that, Burt left. Finn and his issues were draining of him of the last bits of energy he had. He needed that energy. *I've got two grandkids to play with after all.*

Stepping into the house that day was bittersweet for the young technician. He was ready to spend time with Keenan. So ready. Unfortunately, that time would also include studying. *Stupid studying.* Stupid finals that took time away from his baby boy. "Guys?" He shouted as he walked in the front door. His father's

truck was outside. Usually that meant that the sounds of Burt being wrestled to the ground by his two favorite grandchildren would be heard near and far. Not that day. "Where are you?"

To Kurt's surprise, Finn was the only one to answer. "Ummmm...I need to talk to you." The man whispered. Kurt's eyebrow raised. *Really?* "Can we do this now?"

The technician shrugged. *Why not?* Together the two walked into Burt's office and closed the door. Finn chose to stand near the door -if for nothing else, his own protection- while Kurt took the once occupied office chair. "What's up?" *Why are you acting so weird?* Finn seemed fidgety, uncomfortable. While they had their differences, Kurt knew his step brother.

The larger man rang his hands out, staring at the ground as he did so. God, he's going to flip out. "Ummmm...today, something happened." When Finn looked up, he saw his brother staring at him expectantly.

"Is everything okay? Keenan? Beth? They're okay, right?"

"Ummmm...yeah. It's just...Keenan got a bit back talk-y and...Kurt, I spanked Keenan." There was a wrinkle in time -a brief moment when time seemed to stop. In that moment, Kurt gathered his thoughts. He tried to comprehend how his son could go from running his mouth -something that kids did from time to time- to getting a spanking. Nothing added up. After a moment's thought, Kurt realized that his stepbrother was obviously on drugs and hallucinating from such.

"No you didn't." He stated matter of factually. "You didn't spank my son. You know that I don't believe in spanking children so, I know you didn't do that."

"I did."

Another moment passed before Kurt spoke again. "What made you think that spanking Keenan was appropriate? What God forsaken idea made you believe that spanking him would be okay?" Kurt shouted as he stood from the chair.

"He was back talking me." Finn shouted in his own defense.

"No he wasn't." Both men turned to see Beth peeking at them through a tiny space in the door. "He just wanted your help, Daddy." Kurt's mouth fell open. *Really? Are you kidding me?*

"Go to your room." The little girl's father shouted. As quickly as she came, Beth left. She scurried down the hall and up the stairs, lest she wanted to suffer the same fate as her cousin.

With Beth gone, Kurt turned his attention back to his stepbrother. "I'm going to walk away from this before I get really upset. You had no right to put your hands on my child. I don't care how you raise your child, as long as you're good to her. I choose how I want my child raised, how I want my child disciplined. You know how I feel about spankings. I've never had one and I knew that Keenan wouldn't either. Or at least I thought. Next time you feel that you've got an issue with my child, you contact me and I will decide his punishment. You don't have a choice in the matter."

"Beth is a child. She doesn't know what happened." Kurt wasn't walking away and Finn was growing angrier by the second. He loved Beth but she didn't know. She may have been there, but she obviously didn't pick up on Keenan's tone and blatant disrespect. "And maybe Keenan needed a spanking. He sat out there crying over a damn snowman. It's time he grew up. He threw a little temper tantrum, slamming the door shut and breaking my mom's pot. He needs to learn to be a man before it's too late."

Kurt shot Finn a disgusted look. "Really? Yes, Keenan was wrong for slamming the door. But you were wrong for acting like that because he wanted help. *HELP*, Finn! Just like Beth, he is a child; a younger and smaller child. A child with feelings and getting ignored by your uncle hurts. Moreover; getting a spanking as a child doesn't make a boy a man. I never got spankings."

Don't give me ammunition. "Maybe that's the problem." Finn mumbled.

Before Kurt could say something that he might regret later -*but probably not*- the young man walked away. As he passed the living room he heard his father shout that Keenan was lying in he and Carole's bed. So, Kurt made his way to the bedroom of his father and Carole. There, he found his little boy sniffing into a pillow. "Come on, buddy. We're going home."

Keenan's head shot up at the sound of his father's voice. Quickly, the boy scurried from the bed and into his father's waiting arms. Together, the pair left the house and headed to their tiny apartment over the garage.

"Dude, I got a weird call today." David and Blaine lay sprawled across separate pieces of furniture in the veterinarian's tiny house. The night was young and neither had plans. So, they made plans to have no plans together.

Blaine turned his gaze towards his friend. He watches proudly as the lawyer scratched behind the ear of one of his orphaned kittens. If all went well, the cat would leave with David that night and he would have one less animal running around the house. "Why was the call weird?"

David shrugged. "It was...doesn't Kurt have a brother named Finn?" In a second's time, Blaine was on his feet.

"Yeah."

"Well, I got a call from a dude named Finn, looking for a divorce lawyer. I got a weird- too close for comfort- feeling from him, so I declined. I was...it was just weird. He kept asking if he'd have to pay child support. Then he tried to haggle with me about child support. I told him that the courts decide those things, but he sounded like he needed to know. I told him to find another lawyer. I wasn't into it."

Blaine's shoulders sagged. The Finn, Quinn, and Rachel thing was getting out of hand. With every passing day, the secret weighed heavily on his heart. He needed to tell Kurt, but he couldn't help but wonder if the information would hurt his own relationship. Would Kurt be upset that he'd kept the secret? Probably. They'd just barely passed their first hurdle, a second one might ruin them before their official do over began. "Well...yeah. That's weird. Yeah."

"Yeah...and-" The ring of the doorbell stopped David mid-sentence. "Are you expecting company?" The lawyer asked. Blaine shook his head. Kurt was studying, Sebastian was hunting guppies to fuck into a mattress, Trent was home with MiKayla, Hunter was on a date with Whitley, Wes was on a date with his hand *-his words not mine-* and Nick and Jeff were each dating their beds. David was the only company he expected and David was already there.

"I'll be right back." Blaine stated absently. The veterinarian scurried through his house towards the front door. Being that his grandmother was unbelievably trusting, there was no peephole in the door. *"If you have a chance to look through the door then you might not answer. You should always open the door, Blaine. You never know what's waiting for you on the other side."*

Thirteen year old Blaine rolled his eyes. "Yeah. Wouldn't want to keep those serial killers out of the house." He snarked. The comment earned him a smack on the back of his head.

With a deep breath and prayer to nowhere, Blaine opened the door. He was surprised to see his boyfriend -bundled in his winter best- Keenan -bundled in pajamas and winter coat- a book bag, and a kennel full of a sleeping Kel. "Ummm...what are you guys doing here?"

Kurt's face fell a bit. "I know I should have called first but...can we come in? I can't think at home right now and...I'm sorry. I'm...I'm sorry. I shouldn't have come and invaded your night. We'll go and I'll call you later." Just as Kurt turned to leave, Blaine grabbed a hold of his backpack.

"Wait. I just didn't expect it. Don't leave." The look on Kurt's face was one of an unconvinced man. "Seriously. It's just me and David. We can hang out with Keenan while you get some studying done. It'll be fine. Please come in."

His boyfriend nodded, thankful that Blaine chose not to send them away. He wanted to be at his boyfriend's house but he wouldn't stay if Blaine was busy.

Blaine grabbed Keenan from his boyfriend's arm and ushered them into the house. When they entered the living room, the pair noticed David gathering himself and the cat he was petting. "What's up, Kurt? Hey little guy." David walked towards Blaine and Keenan, giving the little boy a high five. "As much fun as it would be to party with you guys -I know it gets wild with those juice boxes and early bedtimes- Phillip and I have to go. We have to go get acquainted with our home.

"So you're going to take him?" Blaine asked hopefully. The nod from his friend was enough to make his night that much better. *Not that I'm not having a great night. Keenan, Kel, and Kurt just arrived. That's pretty awesome.*

David saw himself out, leaving the three to themselves. When the front door closed, Blaine turned to his boyfriend, still holding the little boy on his hip. "What's up with the surprise visit? It's awesome. I just didn't expect it."

"Stuff at the house. I couldn't think and I darn sure couldn't study. I know it's a lot to ask, but can you watch Keenan for a little bit so I can at least try to get some studying in? Please." *I'm overstepping. Damn I'm overstepping.* Kurt hated asking his boyfriend to babysit but he felt like he had no other choice. After

the incident with Finn, he couldn't sit in the house. Every fiber of his being told him to march back down the stairs from his apartment and give Finn a piece of his mind. He couldn't, however. If he walked into the house and stomped a hole in Finn's abdomen *-I think I could if I tried-* then he would be no better than the stepbrother that spanked his child. *I'm so mad about that! Seriously...he thought that was okay? Is he crazy? How many times did Carole drop him when he was a baby? Obviously something is loose up there.*

Blaine turned to the little boy on his hip. "Do you want to hang out with me for a while? Would that be cool with you?" Keenan nodded emphatically. *Oh yeah. I even brought toys this time.* "Well, the man has spoken. I can definitely watch him while you study. If you want, you can go upstairs to my office while we play down here. It'll be quiet up there."

"Are you sure?"

"Positive. Now go." Blaine used his free hand to point Kurt towards the stairs. Once his boyfriend was gone, Blaine, Keenan, and Kel spread out the little boy's toys and began to play. *Much better than the night I had planned. Way better.*

A few hours after arriving at Blaine's house, Kurt still hadn't accomplished any studying. His time alone was spent brooding over Finn's actions. *Stupid Finn. Stupid, dumb jerk.* Kurt growled at the thought of the man. Hate was a strong word, but Kurt felt himself inching towards it. He didn't want to, but he felt himself hating Finn for laying a hand on his son. *Especially since Beth, Keenan, and my dad said Keenan didn't do anything wrong. Well, besides breaking the plant. I blame that on Finn as well. Kids are easily wound up and, as the adult, he should have been the adult in that situation. He shouldn't have antagonized him.*

"All that growling makes it sound like there is a wild animal in here." Kurt spun the expensive, office chair towards the voice. Propped in the doorway was Blaine. He had his arms crossed over his chest and a smug look on his face.

"What's up?" Kurt eventually asked. "Where's Keenan?"

"Asleep. We played for a while and then ordered take out. He told me you guys didn't eat before you left home. Then he told me that he was tired and asked me to tuck him in." A pout spread over Kurt's face. He

wanted to tuck his son in. "He only asked me because he didn't want to pull you away from studying. He said that you had a 'very important test and absolutely could not be bothered'. His words not mine."

Oh. The slight frown on Kurt's face was enough to cause Blaine to cross the room. He kneeled before the young man, smiling up at him. "Don't be sad. He wanted you - preferred you even - but we all know how important this test is to you. We want you to do well, baby. Don't be sad. He wasn't."

"Fine." Actions spoke louder than words and Kurt's actions let his boyfriend know that things were indeed not fine.

"Keenan told me what happened with Finn. I think you made the right decision by coming here. It could have been rough had you stayed." Blaine ran rubbed his hands over his boyfriend's thighs. Comforting. He wanted to comfort Kurt because he knew Kurt needed comforting. He would always comfort. Always.

The loud groan that Kurt emitted before he entered the room sounded throughout the room again. "It just makes me so angry!" He grumbled. "He had no freaking right and he didn't even care. You know, he had the audacity to say that I'm the way I am because my dad never spanked me. How am I? Is there something wrong with me? I work. I pay taxes. I raise my child and I'm trying to have some semblance of a normal relationship with a person that I love and...is...ugggg...he just makes me so angry!" And Blaine could tell. The way Kurt's fingers flexed and the way his face contorted was enough to let anyone know that the technician was angry. The anger wasn't at the forefront of his mind, however. The anger- important and definitely something they could discuss at a later time- was overshadowed by opportunity. Kurt was inadvertently giving him an opportunity and Blaine had to take it.

"I mean...JESUS! What the hell? I'm not a fucking serial killer and -"

"I love you too." Kurt's mouth snapped shut. Four words were all it took to effectively silence him.

"What?" *Because I'm sure I heard that wrong.* With the 'this' and 'that' in his life, there was no way Blaine loved him. He always had something outrageous going on in his life. He always had some issue. There was no normalcy in his life whatsoever. *No. I heard him wrong.*

He hadn't. "I said I love you too. I think you're amazing. You're an amazing dad. God, Keenan is so freaking lucky. Most little boys would kill for a father like you. The way you look at him like he's gold. I love that about you. The way you knew to walk away from Finn before you did something you were going to regret.

I love that about you. The way you're about to pick up this book so you can kick ass on this test tomorrow. I love that about you as well. I love all those things and more about you because I love you. And we will handle this Finn situation together if you'd like. Friday, when I come to dinner, we can sit down and talk. I'll have your back and support you. Because I love you."

Blaine leaned raised to his feet and leaned, supporting his weight on the armrests of the chair. When he and Kurt were face to face - nose to nose - he smiled. "I love you."

"I love you too." The technician whispered. Then, when his world was piecing itself together like a giant jigsaw puzzle of a famous work of art, he crashed their lips together.

As their mouths danced, Kurt thought about his day. The high he rode to work that morning and the low he experienced when he got home. The up and down should have made him seasick. He wasn't however. Two people acted as Dramamine, stopping the motion sickness before it started. Keenan and Blaine. They were his everything and, with Blaine's admission, Kurt had everything. Everything he wanted and needed in life was under Blaine's roof at that moment in time.

Blaine pulled back first; more for oxygen than anything else. His eyes sought out his boyfriend's immediately. The way the reading lamp hit them made them impossible to miss. They sparkled. Beautiful. As always, Kurt's eyes were beautiful. Just like the rest of him. "Why don't you study some more? You've got a test tomorrow."

Kurt shook his head, much to his boyfriend's surprise. "No. I know this stuff forwards and backwards. I'm just pushing myself."

"So are you and Keenan leaving?" *Please say no. Please. Don't go.*

"No." *SWEET!* "Why don't you go to your room for a while? Let me show you how much I love you." In Blaine's thirty years of life, he never heard an idea that sounded so nice.

"Let's go then."

Chapter Fifteen

"I thought I was supposed to be showing you how much I love you." Kurt rasped as his boyfriend's hands slid up and down the expanse of his pale, bare legs. The past few minutes wrecked his body. Everything moved in slow motion. The few steps from the office to the bedroom felt like a life time, the handful of seconds it took for Blaine to find his belt buckle in the dark felt like years, and the mere moments that it took for the man to undo his buckle and rip his pants and underwear down felt like they would never end. They had, however. Blaine, a magician in the dark, freed Kurt and his aching cock from their jean prison before pushing the man down onto the bed and climbing on top of him.

Blaine kissed every piece of exposed skin that his lips could find. For the sake of saving time on the off chance that Keenan woke up, the men kept their shirts on. The veterinarian's lips danced across the hair speckled legs momentarily before pulling away. Blaine turned his gaze to his boyfriend's face and smirked when their eyes met. "I already know you love me. I just assumed that, since you have a final tomorrow, you could use some help...relaxing."

"Yes. Y-yes." Kurt's body shivered at the thought. He could only hope that Blaine's idea of relaxation mirrored his own. *God, I hope so.*

Satisfied by the stutter in Kurt's voice, Blaine returned his lips to his boyfriend's legs. The elder started his journey on the far side of his boyfriend's flexing and unflexing thigh, making his way towards his boyfriend's center. The anticipation was killing him. Blaine could feel the heat radiating from his boyfriend's crotch. He could see his boyfriend's hard, weeping member in his peripherals. He was so close, yet so far. Too far.

Kurt's eyes rolled into the back of his head. He could feel Blaine's warm breathe against his shaft and he would be a liar if he said it didn't feel amazing. Too amazing. The slow churn in Kurt's stomach informed him that he would not last long. He couldn't. With months of flesh to flesh distance between their bodies, he was no longer immune to the man's touch. "Please. Hurry." The young man panted. Because...*now!*

Sensing his boyfriend's urgency, Blaine sucked the head of his boyfriend's cock into his mouth. He lapped and sucked on it before sliding slowly down the impressive member, reveling in the weight of it against his tongue. Heavy. It felt heavy for a cock. During college and thereafter, Blaine spent quite a bit of time

sucking dick. He wasn't a whore; he simply liked the feeling of having the most intimate part of his partner's body at his mercy. That being said, Blaine had a decent idea of acceptable and unacceptable size ranges. During their night of drunken sex, Blaine realized that Kurt was...large. It wasn't until Blaine had the vet's cock in his mouth that...*holy shit. It's huge!* In that moment, Blaine realized that he wanted to get as much out of sucking his boyfriend's cock as he could. *Who knows when we'll have a chance to do more of this?*

Kurt moaned loudly as his boyfriend worked his mouth up and down his dick like a pro. "God, baby. So close." The technician allowed his hips to thrust experimentally into the wet heat of his boyfriend's mouth. "Shit. So close."

Deja vu. Blaine felt like he was living his teenage years once again. As he thrust wildly into his mattress he remembered the mornings he awoke thrusting intently into his sheets. He was there once again. The only difference was that the man that he was sucking readily was real and not a figment of his imagination. "Come on, baby. I'm there...uhh...God. I'm right there." His boyfriend shouted. Blaine was as well. He was so close. He wasn't giving in just yet, however. Blaine would let Kurt fall apart and then he would follow suit.

The hum around his cock did Kurt in. It was low and throaty in a way that sent the technician's head into the clouds. Hands twisted into the sheets, Kurt arched off the bed and released his tension into his boyfriend's willing mouth. "Uhh...God. I love you, baby." Kurt shouted through his release.

Blaine's hips bucked wildly as his boyfriend rode out his orgasm. Moments later, the heat in the veterinarian's subsided as he came long and hard onto his expensive bed sheets. He could wash them. Or throw them away. *Whatever.* He didn't care. Not then at least.

Neither man intended to fall asleep bare assed in Blaine's bed that night, nor did they intend to wake up tangled together to the sound of the veterinarian's alarm the next morning.

Blaine stirred first. *Hate work. Hate getting up. Hate. Hate. Hate.* The veterinarian rolled in him sleep. When he did, he rolled into a body. A warm body. Blaine snuggled against the body. So warm on a cold day. Then the body moved. "What time is it?" the body asked.

Kurt. Blaine's eyes shot open. *Shit. Alarm. Kurt. That's not good.* "7:15. My alarm goes off at 7:15." Blaine commented absently. In a moments time the warmth was gone.

"Shit. Shit. We weren't supposed to stay the night. I have to go. I have to...shit." Kurt dashed around the room, pulling on his boxers and pants as he went.

Blaine was taken back to their first time together; the night they drunkenly explored one another's bodies on Blaine's living room couch. The next morning, Kurt raced around the house in an attempt to get home to his sleeping child. Back when they weren't together, he veterinarian was hurt by Kurt's rush to get out the front door. Today he understood why. Less than two hours lay between them and the start of their work day. Both still needed to shower, shave, and drink their morning cups of coffee. *And that doesn't even include what needs to be done to get Keenan ready for the day.* "Keenan!" The veterinarian shouted in a fit of realization.

His boyfriend nodded quickly. "Yes. I know. We have to head home to get ready. I might be a few minutes late." The technician shouted before darting down the stairs. Seconds –*literally seconds*- later, Blaine heard the front door slam shut. Quickly, he scrambled from the bed and to his bedroom window. Through the frosted glass of his upstairs room –the one he and Cooper shared when they visited their grandmother as children- Blaine could see his boyfriend hustling the tired, fussing child into his car. *One day, he won't have to rush home. One day he'll be able to sleep in and while I get Keenan ready for school. One day.*

The day passed in a blur. Kurt was indeed late for work; rushing in moments after 9, guzzling coffee as he went. Blaine listened attentively as Kurt recounting his steps from the moment he left the house until he walked into shelter.

Lunch wasn't an option for the two that day. Kurt was foregoing lunch to make up for being late and for having to leave early. *It's the day of my final after all.* Blaine, on the other hand, was swamped with work. Eating was not an option. With appointments booked on top of each other, he was needed in too many places to think about food. *I'll eat when I get home.*

Kurt left early that afternoon with a promise to call once he completed his test. And he did. From the sound of it, Kurt called the second he stepped out of the testing room. He squealed into the phone, gushing

over the fact that he had to put little to no thought into any of his answers. "I aced it." He shouted as he presumably exited the school. Blaine replied that he was proud of his boyfriend. Extremely proud.

Friday was a short day. The office was set to close a few hours earlier than usual and Blaine was excited about the decision he'd made months ago. Originally, the office was closing early so he could drive to Columbus for a concert. The show was cancelled not long after it was announced and Blaine couldn't be more thrilled that he'd forgotten to change the hours back to normal. It was the night of his dinner with Kurt's family and the veterinarian was nervous. He'd met them before –obviously- but that was a different time; a different atmosphere. Dinner would be an intimate affair. There would not be waves of guest crashing against him. It would be the Hummel-Hudsons and himself. *Man oh man.*

Unfortunately for the nervous man, the day flew by. One moment he was unlocking the doors and the next he was locking them back up. "I'm going to get Keenan from school. We'll see you tonight?" It was a question. Blaine hated that Kurt had to ask. The elder assumed that it was a result of the nervous energy that radiated from his body throughout the day. The couple crossed the tiny, snow splattered parking lot to their cars. The others left the moment the clock struck two. Kurt, however, stayed until Blaine was finished with his work. It was a good thing he did. After a day of light snowfall –enough to coat the ground with a thick layer of snow but not enough to cause concern for driving conditions- the weather began to clear up a bit.

"Yeah. I was going to stop by the store and grab a bottle of wine beforehand. I'll be there, though. At your house. I'll be there." *With your family. And your brother that I happen to know is cheating on your sister-in-law. Yep. Gonna be there.*

"Great!" Kurt leaned forward, planting a kiss on his boyfriend's lips. "We'll see you later." Blaine nodded absently as he watched Kurt enter his car. Following suit, Blaine climbed into his own and followed the younger man out of the parking lot. Only when Kurt turned towards the school did they part ways.

An hour after leaving work, Blaine was showered, shaved, and dressed for an evening with his boyfriend's family. With nothing left to do but wait, Blaine decided to stroll outside for a bit. Sometimes he watched the neighborhood children play and others he looked around for stray animals. It was freezing outside and he hated the thought of some poor angel, shivering outside without a home to call its own. *Not on my watch.*

There were no unloved angels around as far as Blaine could see. Something else did catch his eyes, however. A few houses down, the children that often liked to throw eggs at his car –*fucking brats*– were building a snowman. *Snowman*. Seeing Frick and Frack Evilbrats build a snowman –*one that will probably be as evil as they are*– gave the veterinarian an idea. Without a second to spare, the man dashed back into his house, grabbing his coat, wallet, and the bottle of wine he picked on his way home. Moments later, he locked up and headed out. He would be early but he hoped it would be worth it.

"Can I eat now?" Kurt's head hung forward. He was defeated. As usual, things flew out of control as dinner with Blaine and his family crept closer and closer. Dinner wasn't started, his apartment was a mess –*not that I'm bringing him up here. I mean....I don't expect to but...nevermind*. Topping the pressure sundae off like a giant, red cherry was Keenan. Since the incident with Finn, the little boy stuck close to his father and as far away from the main house as possible.

Kurt shook his head. He needed a break. Not a long break, just enough to clear his head. *Oh...and a shower*. His scrubs smelled of wet dogs and...*no*. "No. You ate a snack an hour ago and you only have a few hours until dinner."

Keenan groaned and stomped to his room. It was just as well. A spell of silence would do Kurt a bit of good. It was necessary and appreciated. Kurt made his way through the silent house. As he tiptoed past an unfolded basket of laundry and a pile of his son's shoes. *Definitely not bringing Blaine here tonight because I have no will or drive to clean that crap up*.

The moment Kurt's knees bent to take his rightful spot on the couch, a knock sounded at his front door. Exhausted and frustrated, the young father sighed. *Of course*. The moment he saw a light at the end of the tunnel it was ripped away by a single knock at the front door. Realization hit like a freight train. *I'm not going to get a moment to myself until I go to sleep tonight....or until I die; whichever happens first*.

Kurt stood slowly, drinking in the last moments of silence. Another knock sounded as he crossed his tiny living room. "I'm coming." He shouted harshly. *Damn. Give me a second*. With a bit more force than necessary, Kurt flung the front door open. He was quite surprised by the identity of his guest.

"Blaine?"

The veterinarian smiled. "Hey, babe." Before his boyfriend could respond, Blaine leaned forward, capturing his lips. The second their lips touched, the elder pulled back. "I know dinner isn't until later, but I was kind of hoping that I could do something with Keenan."

The man waited patiently as his boyfriend scanned his face with a skeptical eye. "Something like what?" Kurt asked, a hint of teasing in his voice. Just below that, however, was something barely audible. Kurt sounded a bit pleased; anticipatory. It was as if he was waiting for someone to take the child off his hands; waiting for a moment to himself. Not forever, obviously. Just for a moment.

Blaine felt he was the man for the job. "Yeah. I saw some kids –devil spawn- making a snowman and....I figure...." Blaine shrugged. There was something about the hopeful look in his boyfriend's eye that made it difficult to speak. "ya know....maybe I could help him make that snowman that Finn wouldn't help him with. Maybe?" *Please say yes. Otherwise, I'll have to find something to do for the next two hours.*

Hands propped on his hips, Kurt tried to understand the situation. "Let me get this straight. You," He raised a pointed finger to his boyfriend, "want to help my son make a snowman? By doing so, you want to give me a few minutes to myself? So I could....I don't know, take a shower in peace and then help with dinner?"

Blaine raised an eyebrow. "Ummm...yeah?"

The squeal that left Kurt's mouth started the elder. "Oh my God. Blaine, this is great! Thank you so much. I've needed a moment alone all day. I didn't get any sleep last night because I was still riding my adrenaline wave and....just....thank you." Kurt gripped his boyfriend's cheeks, pulling him in for a kiss. "Thank you."

"Yeah....ummm...." Blaine's response fell on deaf ears. Kurt was gone. In a second's time he'd flitted off to ready his son for an afternoon in the snow.

Bored and hungry. That's what I am. Keenan lay stomach down on his bed, drowning in his misery. All he wanted was a snack and a bit of his father's time. Was that too much to ask? Apparently so. His daddy was holding out on the snacks and time. *Not fair.* So, Keenan sulked. And sulked. And sulked.

Out of nowhere, his bedroom door opened and his father walked in. "Keen, would you like to build a snowman?" His daddy asked him. The little boy's eyes lit up.

"Yes!" He screeched. Of course he wanted to build a snowman. Who wouldn't?

"Cool. Blaine's here and he wants to build one with you while I shower and then help Grandma Carole cook. Will that be okay with you?" *Double yes! Snowman and Stitch. Best combination ever.* As quickly as he could, Keenan leapt to his feet and headed towards his bedroom door. His father was there to stop him before he could rush out, however. "You need a couple of things first. Shoes might be a good place to start. And maybe a jacket. Unless you'd like to catch a cold." *Absolutely not.* The last thing Keenan wanted was to get sick just before Christmas break. So, the little boy hurried around his room gathering his things.

When his jacket was zipped, his boots were tied, and his gloves, hat, and scarf were snuggled in place, the little boy ventured into the living room. He could barely hold back his excitement when he saw Stitch. "Hi, Stitch!" He shouted, waving excitedly as he did so. "Daddy said you came to build a snowman with me." *Please be true. Please be true.*

Stitch smiled and kneeled before him. "Sure did. I figured we could give your daddy some time to himself while we build the world's best snowman." Keenan nodded emphatically. Yep. He could do that. Nope. Not an issue at all. "Great. Let's go." Keenan grabbed Stitch's hand and they headed outside.

"I'm gonna build a snowman. Snowman. Snowman. I'm gonna build a snowman. Oh man, a snowman." Keenan sang as they trekked through the coated yard. He was excited and, from the look of it, Stitch was as well.

Kurt took a bath. Forget a shower, baths were where it was at after a rough week. With his relaxation set in, the young father climbed out and dressed for dinner. Blaine was dressed impeccably –gray dress pants, a button up, and a cardigan. *Bastard-* so Kurt needed to dress equally nice. After a few moments of pondering, the technician decided on skinny jeans and a Henley. So he wasn't dressed as fancily as his boyfriend. It didn't matter. He looked damn good if he said so himself. *Damn good.*

Dressed for dinner, Kurt pulled out an outfit for his son and headed down to the house. There, he helped Carole prepare their meal. Midway through the process, Kurt was interrupted. "He's really good with

Keenan, Kurt. I hope you guys can make it last." Carole stated absently. When Kurt looked up from the vegetables he was chopping, he noticed his stepmother's gaze was fixed on something just outside the kitchen window. Intrigued, he placed his knife on the countertop and joined her.

Just outside the tiny window were Keenan and Blaine. Together, they'd constructed a large statue of balls; three to be exact. From the window, Kurt watched as the men smoothed the sharp edges of the snowman's large stomach. They worked well together and they seemed to be enjoying each other's company quite a bit. "We're working on it." He whispered as he watched his boyfriend help his son stab the snowman's body with a stick that was meant to be its arm.

"Good! The three of you could use a bit of happiness in your lives and I think, as a group that is attainable." Kurt went over his stepmother's words in his head as he began his chopping duties once again. She was right. He, Blaine, and especially Keenan deserved a bit of happiness in their lives.

"We do. We're working at it. Everything takes time, but we're working at it." Seemingly satisfied with Kurt's answer, Carole resumed her dinner preparations. With only an hour to go, the two needed to work quickly to put food on the table. Unless they wanted to endure the wrath of a small, starving mob. *Nobody wants that. Let's keep the peace.*

Once the food was finished and the table was set, Kurt called his son and boyfriend into the house. Begrudgingly, the two abandoned their snow project –*It's not exactly a snowman anymore. He has too six tentacles, a stick guitar, and a dead leaves crown.*–and headed into the house. Once inside, they split up. Kurt sent his boyfriend to the kitchen to wash his hands and he sent his son to the restroom to change his clothes. When both were ready, the group entered the dining room. It was a show of unity if nothing else.

The trio plopped down in the only available seats at the table. Keenan sat between his father and his grandfather while Blaine sat between his boyfriend and Quinn. Next to the blonde sat her nine year old and across from them sat Finn. Blaine was extremely grateful that he wasn't sitting next to Finn. *I still have choice words for him after what happened with Keenan.*

"Thank you for joining us, Blaine. Family dinners have always been a big thing for this family. Kurt's mother insisted on them when he was little and we continued them until Kurt left home. We're bringing them back full force and I'm glad you could join us for that." Burt's kind voice boomed throughout the

room as he spoke. The eldest Hummel was gifted in such a way. He could speak in the lowest, gentlest tone known to man but his voice always carried an authority that captivated whatever room he found himself in.

Blaine grinned at the man. "Thank you, Mr. Hummel. I'm happy to be here."

"You some sort of exorcist?" Burt asked abruptly. The veterinarian's eyebrows furrowed. *No. I owned an Ouiji board once though.* "I'm just saying. You're talking to a Mr. Hummel and my dad's been dead for years. I go by Burt. Mr. Hummel is a box of bones now."

"Oh my God, Dad. That's not appropriate for the dinner table." Kurt groaned. *Hello. Not dinner conversation, especially in front of children. Geez!*

"Sorry, kid. I'm just saying. I go by Burt. I'll never be Mr. Hummel if I can help it. I don't let those little Phillys Kurt brings by call me Mr. Hummel and I won't let you call me Mr. Hummel. It's Burt or Dad. Ya know....whichever you're comfortable with. No pressure, Bear."

"Bear?" Keenan turned to Blaine with wide eyes. "Are you the bear that scratched daddy's back? Why would you do that? It wasn't very nice." The sound of Burt, Carole, and Quinn chuckling overcast Keenan's question and the shocked gasp that escaped Blaine's lips.

Kurt took a knife to his wine glass. The young man clanked it so hard that he nearly sliced it in half. "That's enough." He hissed, a slight flush creeping its way up his body. "Less talking, more eating." The adults at the table chuckled. *What am I going to do with these people?*

Dinner was comfortable for Blaine. Great food was only rivaled by great conversation. Sports. Cars. Kurt as a child. By far, that was Blaine's favorite topic. He loved hearing about his boyfriend's misadventures as a little boy. From the sound of it, the technician was much like Keenan as a child. "....and one time, he marched right into the garage and set up a folding table. Nobody knew what was going on, so we all watched him and his mom set up these containers. When they called us over they gave us each a brownie and told us to eat it. Then, when we were finished, Kurt stuck out his hand and asked everyone for a dollar. Apparently, his was in it to make money but forgot to tell us. You have no idea what it's like to be

milked for your cash by a six year old." The table broke into a fit of laughter as Burt recounted the activities of a younger Kurt.

Blaine turned to his boyfriend. "That's so cute, babe. Baby hustler Kurt. I like it." Beneath the table, the elder ran his hand along his boyfriend's thigh, giving his knee a firm squeeze upon completion. Assumedly, the small gesture of affection went unnoticed. Assumedly.

"No macking at the table." Finn barked between bites of his food. *Who do they think they are? Where do they think they are? This is Ohio. People can't just do things like that!* "Some of us would like to eat without seeing all of that?"

Kurt reeled back in his chair as if he'd been slapped. "Seeing all of what, Finn?" He asked, accusation laced in his tone. "Seeing two people enjoy one another's company?"

"Don't be like that, Kurt. You know what I'm talking about. The touching. The adoring looks into one another's eyes. It's not appropriate for the dinner table and definitely not appropriate for children." Finn whined. He had a plate full of food and a stomach full of nothing. The last thing he needed was an ear full of Kurt's bitching. *Not in the mood. Quinn's acting weird today and I'm not into it.*

Surprisingly, Kurt was not the one to respond. "I don't understand how giving and receiving affection from the person you love is inappropriate for the dinner table. And, as far as children go, shouldn't we encourage the behavior a bit. I'm not saying it's appropriate to make out in front of them but shouldn't we help them understand what is appropriate and what is not starting at a young age? The sooner they realize what they can and cannot do, the less likely they are to get in trouble for doing inappropriate things? Right? Please tell me if I'm wrong in my logic." Blaine waited eagerly for a response to his question. In no way did he intend to come across as condescending. Well, maybe he did. Finn's tone with Kurt was out of line and Blaine would not stand –or sit- for it. He was not going to let anyone disrespect Kurt or their relationship.

Finn stared at the veterinarian with wide eyes. "Are you serious? Do you think it's appropriate for kids to watch you to getting it on at the kitchen table?" Finn then turned his gaze to his brother. "This is what you want for your kid?" Finn could not believe his ears. *What kind of parent allowed their child to watch while his father did....that with his boyfriend? Apparently a father like Kurt.*

"Alright guys. Put your guns away, this pissing contest is over." Carole cut in. She would speak with her son later but, for now, she wanted to continue their lovely dinner. It was lovely at one point in time. Now...not so much.

Immediately, Finn and Blaine backed down. "I apologize, Mrs. Hummel."

"Hudson." Finn interrupted, earning the attention of the table.

"What?" Blaine questioned.

"Hudson. Her last name is Hudson." *Geez, could you be more dense?* Finn wondered. He was Kurt's boyfriend after all, so he probably could be.

"Oh...I'm....sorry. I..."

Carole cut in once again. Her son was putting poor Blaine through the ringer. "Actually, it's Hudson-Hummel. I hyphenated after I married Burt." She explained. Across the table, she noticed the aggravated roll of her son's eyes. "Don't act like you didn't know Finn. You were at the DMV with me when I had it changed on my license."

"You guys are boring me. Can we talk about something cool?" Keenan asked, drawing the table attention to himself. "Let's talk about pizza or Pokémon. Names are boring." The little boy whined.

Kurt rubbed an apologetic hand over his son's back. "Well, when you finish your food, you can go play. We wouldn't want to bore you to death." The father watched as his son's eyes lit up. Without another word, Keenan turned his attention to the food on his plate and began to eat.

Minutes later, once the agitated haze cleared, Keenan held up his plate in triumph. "I' dn daaay." He muttered through the chunks of feed that he was still chewing.

Kurt shook his head and rolled his eyes. "Just...sit the plate down, son and go." Keenan did not need to be told twice. Before anyone could comprehend what was happening, Keenan flew out of the dining room, Beth hot on his heels.

Burt pushed his empty plate across the table. "Well, since the kids are gone, I think we should started. We've all had a few days to calm down after the 'Great Keenan Spanking Debacle' so I think it's

w e shoul d

high time we talked about it." The table sat up, giving the elder their full attention. With the exception of Finn, everyone seemed eager to speak. "Now, I want to keep this civil. One person should speak and then the other. No talking over one another and no shouting. Got it." Everyone nodded. "Good. We're gonna go ten rounds. No hits below the belt. Finn, you start." Burt rang his imaginary bell, signaling the beginning of the fight that would ensue.

Finn sat forward in his seat, resting his elbows on the table; something his mother despised but he was too far from caring at that point. "Alright. Kurt, I think you're too soft on your son. That's why he runs his mouth so much. One day he's going to run his mouth to the wrong person –just like you used to do- and he's going to get beat up. I'm trying to make a man out of him since you won't."

Blaine couldn't believe his ears. Kurt was an amazing father. Kurt was....everything that every child needed in a parent. Who was Finn –of all people- to claim that he wasn't? "I was just trying to help. I don't want him to end up like..." Finn motioned his hand towards Kurt. "Ya know..."

"Gay?" Blaine bit out. *One, two, three...Seven....Slow breathes, count to ten. And then do it again.* Every word out of Finn's mouth pushed Blaine closer and closer to the edge. He was taken back to a time years ago, when things were far more complicated. As a teenager, he often heard views that paralleled Finn's. He was told that 'this' or 'that' made him gay. Nothing made Blaine gay. He was born that way. *I'm pretty sure I remember checking out the hot doctor that delivered me for goodness sake.*

In response, Finn offered a shrug. Yeah. I mean....I guess. "Really, son?" Carole shouted. The conversation was taking a turn for the worst. "If spanking makes you straight and not getting spanked makes you gay, then you should be the gayest of all the gays. I never spanked you and you did some off the wall stuff when you were a child." She explained. As the words left her mouth, Carole did her best to reign her displeasure with her son's point of view back in.

To an extent, Carole understood what her son was trying to say. Once upon a time, she shared the same views. She thought that being gay was a choice that misguided youths made when they wanted to rebel against their parents. *I'll admit it that was not one of my crowning moments. Cut me some slack, I voted for Bush twice.* Then, like a knight in fantastic armor Kurt stepped into her life and blew the lid off her thought process. With time and patience, Kurt proved to her that being gay was not a choice he made. *'Why would I choose to be publically mocked every day? Why would I choose to be so different that my father had to pay for me to go to a private school that we can't afford? Why would I choose that for myself?'* He asked her one stormy afternoon during his sophomore year. Carole kept that conversation with her and worked to

change her views on the world. It worked. Kurt showed her the truth and she was open minded enough to accept it. As it was, Finn seemed too set in his ways to accept the truth that was presented to him. Thus, years later, he sat with his misguided beliefs.

The table halted in the wake of Carole's outburst. It was Blaine that eventually picked the conversation up. "Adding to that," He began warily. *Adding to that, I will punch you in the throat to.* The veterinarian was fuming. Luckily, he and Kurt shared one brain that evening. Slowly, Kurt slid his hand from his side and laced their fingers together. Unity. Solidarity. Kurt and Blaine were a united front and they would stand as such. With the knowledge that Kurt stood behind whatever he said, Blaine began to speak again. "When I was a child, I got spanked for everything. I'm still gold star gay. Nothing makes you gay. You just...are or aren't. I mean...nothing made you straight. You just happen to like girls. Well, we just happen to like boys. If Keenan grows up and happens to like boys then...whatever. We'll be there for him; and vice versa."

We'll be there for him. Kurt's heart beat triple time. Blaine intended to be around when Keenan was old enough to start dating and beyond. *So he'll at least be around until Keen is thirty. That's an appropriate age for my baby to start dating.*

Finn was no nearly as receptive to Blaine's message. "You know what, why are you even in this conversation? You're not part of this family!" He shouted across the table. His blood boiled as he spoke. Who was Blaine to strut into Finn's house *-with his stupid hair and well-paying job-* and under mind him? *He's nobody.*

"I'm more a part of this family than you are." Blaine retaliated.

Finn reeled. "What's that supposed to mean?"

There were rises and pitfalls to being Quinn Fabray-Hudson. One of the rises was that everyone knew her. When she walked into any given store, someone knew her. They often gushed over how amazing looked despite the fact that she probably tired after working all day to support her deadbeat husband and adorable child. If she was ever in trouble, any given officer *-one that knew her from childhood or from time as a fellow classmate-* would stop and assist. Quinn never had to wait for things. When she walked into the coffee shop on her way to a long day at school or one of her two jobs, her coffee was ready and

waiting. When she went to the pharmacy, whatever prescription she needed was waiting. She received wonderful service wherever she went.

One of the pitfalls of being Quinn Fabray-Hudson was also the fact that everyone knew her. If anything happened with Quinn in the town of Lima, Ohio, word traveled. When Quinn –former Junior and Senior prom queen and head cheerleader- wound up pregnant, the entire town knew. When her parents threw her out of their house, the entire town knew. Likewise, when Finn got into a fight with his longtime friend, Puck, Quinn knew. Gossip was never in short supply with the residents of Lima and everyone knew everything.

The day started well for Quinn. She finished her finals with the confidence that she passed each and every one of them and she had the day off from both of her jobs; a rare occurrence. Knowing that Blaine was joining them for dinner, Quinn stopped by the grocery store to pick up a pie for dessert. She liked Blaine and she wanted him to feel as comfortable in their home as possible. That was where she heard the news that ruined her day. In the checkout line with a group of gum popping teenagers behind her and a frustrated grandmother in front of her, Quinn got the news that she expected but did not expect. She knew it was coming, but not right before Christmas.

The young mother sat quietly throughout dinner. Under normal circumstances she enjoyed listening to stories of Kurt's past. She loved hearing about the things he did as a bright eyed child. Tonight was different. She wasn't in the mood to listen to stories of the past. More than anything, she wanted to discuss the present. The opportunity did not present itself for a while. She refused to speak out of turn in front of the children –*they're young after all*- and she refused to ruin the dinner with Kurt's boyfriend with her problems.

After dinner, while the children were playing elsewhere in the house, the opportunity presented itself. Oddly enough, it was Finn that presented her with such an opportunity. For years, her husband took. Now, he was giving. *How poetic of him.*

"What's that supposed to mean?" Her husband asked.

Quinn knew what it meant. Apparently, Blaine did as well. "It means," she began. Her voice was hollow and her shoulders sunk. She wasn't sad for herself. She was heartbroken for her daughter. Ten days before Christmas and her daughter's world was about to fall apart. "that he knows that you're sleeping with Rachel just like I know you're sleeping with Rachel." A hush fell over the room.

Carole looked at Finn, who was also being stared down by her husband. If Carole didn't know any better, then she would assume that her husband knew as well. That hurt a bit. They shared everything. Something of this magnitude should have been made her business.

Quinn sat motionlessly and watched Kurt and Blaine stare at one another. She refused to look at her husband. Time and time again she was propositioned by men that she knew she'd be better off with. She stayed, however. She stayed by her husband's side through thick and thin; sickness and health. *We took vows.* As Quinn watched the once happy couple across the table, she noted their reactions. Blaine seemed frightened. Kurt made no effort to hide his shock. The last thing she meant to do was throw Blaine under the bus with Kurt. She was upset with her soon to be ex-husband. She did not want Kurt to be upset with Blaine. As far as she knew, Kurt was privy to the information but didn't tell her out of fear of hurting her. Apparently, Kurt was just as oblivious as she'd once been.

"How did you find out?" Finn eventually asked. There was no use denying it. Quinn already knew. The timing was horrible, he was nowhere near ready enough to leave but he had no other choice. Quinn knew.

The blonde shrugged. "A woman at the grocery store told me. Do you know what hurts most?" Finn shook his head; not that Quinn could see him. Her eyes were fixated on the look of disappointment that Kurt was shooting his boyfriend. "I've been unhappy for so long but I kept moving forward. If you knew how many times I almost packed up Beth and I to leave, it would blow your mind. But I didn't. I stayed because you promised to talk to me if we ever became unhappy enough to seek out companionship from someone else. You didn't though. You just did it. You slept with Rachel. You dragged this mess out until a week before Christmas."

"I'm sorry." Finn was sorry. He never wanted to hurt Quinn. He just wasn't in love with her anymore.

"You should be." Quinn scooted her chair out and headed towards the living room. "Burt, Carole," When the two looked up, she spoke again, "I called Santana and Whitley. They'll be here to help me pack our things. I can be out by the end of the night."

Burt raised an eyebrow. "Where are you going?"

Quinn shrugged. "I assumed I'd need to leave once this all hit the fan. I'll stay with them for a while until I figure something out."

"You don't have to leave, Quinn. You're family and family is always welcome here." Carole replied. Before leaving the room, Quinn promised that she would keep that in mind but, in the mean time she needed time away.

Finn left just after his wife, but the remaining occupants of the table were sure that he was not following his wife.

"Can I get this straight? You knew and you didn't tell me? After ten years of marriage, you didn't think it was necessary to tell me that my son was cheating on his wife? You didn't think that I needed to know that?" Carole was heartbroken. She couldn't seem to comprehend why her husband didn't feel she was on a 'need to know' basis with the situation.

Burt ran a hand over his face. He was exhausted. *Thanks a lot, Finn. You got me in trouble.* "I'm sorry, honey. I just....I only found out recently. No one told me, I just kind of figured it out. I told Finn to come clean. I didn't keep this from you. I just....I didn't want to talk out of turn. I wasn't sure until a few days ago and that was barely enough time to let you know. I was still trying to have Finn fess up to his wife." *Okay? Okay? Are we good now? Let's go watch COPS.*

Carole shook her head as she hastily stood from the table. "I'm sure, Burt. I'm sorry, I'm just a bit disappointed that you chose to keep that from me." With that, Carole left the dining room. Burt trailed quickly behind her. That left only Kurt and Blaine.

Blaine turned his gaze to the empty table before him. How had dinner gone so wrong? One minute everyone was enjoying themselves and the next, hell had broken loose. "Are you mad at me?" He whispered. He felt small; almost childlike. The look that his boyfriend gave him should have been confirmation enough. He needed to hear it, however.

"No." Kurt answered. Instantly, Blaine's head shot up. He did not expect that answer. The look in Kurt's eyes was one of hurt. Kurt was most certainly hurt and upset by the news that his boyfriend was aware of his knowledge of Finn and Rachel's affair. "How long have you known?"

Oh....yeah...he's gonna be pissed when I tell you this. "I started questioning it around.....Halloween?"

"Halloween." Kurt stated lamely. "You started questioning whether my stepbrother was sleeping with the front office bitch from work around Halloween. In the past month and a half did you ever consider that I might need to know that?" Kurt's voice rose a bit as he spoke. "Did you ever think that I should know? That Quinn should know what he husband was doing while she was out working to pay their bills?"

Blaine's head hung. "You said you weren't mad, but you seem mad." The veterinarian whispered. There was no use arguing the matter. Kurt had every right to be upset. Blaine concealed something and was caught.

"I'm not mad." Kurt shouted. His hands flew wildly in an attempt to make a point. "I'm....disappointed. I've been honest with you from day one and, in return, you've been honest. We've never really kept anything from one another and....I can't say that I'm not disappointed that you kept this from me. That's how this works." Kurt stood slowly as he spoke.

Blaine's heart began to beat wildly. "Don't go. Please don't walk away. Let's talk about this." He pleaded. The elder reached for his boyfriend's arm, grasping it firmly in his hand. If Kurt walked away, Blaine had no idea if he would return.

Slowly, Kurt pried the fingers from his arm. "I'm going to go check on Quinn. Once I know she's okay, I'm going to make sure Carole hasn't killed my father then, you and are going to take Keenan up to the apartment and put him to bed. We'll talk after that."

"Promise? You said you weren't mad, but I feel like you are." *Please don't be mad.* "I'm sorry."

"I meant what I said. I'm not mad. I'm disappointed but....that happens sometimes. We're allowed to be disappointed from time to time with one another. It's part of a relationship. Can you do me a favor and put these dishes in the sink. I feel like it's not going to get done unless one of us does and it and I called dibs on checking on Quinn."

Blaine nodded. He could do that. If that was what it took to make Kurt to be a little less disappointed with him, then he could definitely do it. "I'm sorry again." He half shouted as Kurt exited the room.

"Don't be!" His boyfriend's voice shouted back. "Life happens, sometimes you just have to deal with it." *Life happens. That's true.*

Alone with his thoughts, Blaine began to clear the dishes from the table. "That was one hell of a dinner." Blaine turned, a look of shock on his face, to find Keenan strolling into the dining room. "Beth and I heard you guys yelling from upstairs."

Eyes wide as saucers, Blaine gasped. "Keenan, did you just say 'hell'?"

"What? Everyone was yelling. I thought it was okay to say that if you're yelling."

Blaine's head jerked from side to side. "Ummm...no. Not okay. Ever. Don't say that!"

"Okay." Relieved that there would be no second servings of stress that evening, Blaine turned his attention back to his duties. The sooner he finished clearing the table, the sooner he would be able to travel to the apartment over the garage with his boyfriend and Keenan. "Do you want some help, Stitch?" The little boy asked.

Why not? "Sure, buddy." Together the duo cleared the table. They carried each dish to the kitchen –Keenan only being allowed to carry the smaller plates, one at a time- and placed them in the dishwasher. Keenan taught the veterinarian how to use his grandmother's fancy kitchen appliance before returning with the veterinarian to the dining room to finish their job.

Working in tandem, the young man and his father's boyfriend were able to clear the dining room out and put it back together in under an hour. "What do we do now, Stitch?" Keenan asked as he pushed the last chair in.

Blaine shrugged. "I don't know. Your daddy told me he'd be back soon so we could go up to the apartment."

"Are you in trouble? Daddy looked mad when he passed me."

Again, Blaine shrugged. "He said I'm not, but I'm not sure."

"Oh....can I tell you something, Stitch?" Blaine turned his full attention to the child and nodded. "When Daddy says you're not in trouble and then he walks away, that usually means that you're in trouble."

"Really?" He hoped Keenan was wrong. He hated the thought of arguing with Kurt.

"Yeah." Keenan replied sullenly.

"Damn."

Chapter Sixteen

As it was, Keenan was wrong; his father was not angry with Blaine. He remained disappointed throughout the weekend but was fine by the time he entered work on Monday. All smiles and pleasantries. With the exception of Rachel –who suspiciously called in for the remainder of the last week before their Christmas vacation- Kurt was pleasant with everyone.

The morning duties went by quickly. Unique and Marley manned the front desk while Kurt and Blaine took care of the animals. The appointments were staggered; a few here and a few there. The rest of the day was spent cleaning in preparation for their upcoming time off and working out schedules for each of them to check on the animals. Kurt and Keenan would take the Christmas Eve shift as they would be on that side of town. *'We visit my mom's grave on Christmas Eve as well as finishing errands. We'll be on this side of town for a while, so we can make sure they are fed, walked, and clean.'*

Blaine would take the Christmas Day shift. His parents loved visiting his workplace almost as much as he did. They usually found an orphaned animal to take home and care for. A few of Blaine's colleagues would take the weekend and Kurt and Blaine would both go in for a few hours the following Monday. In the end, the shelter and the animals would be well taken care of.

That day at lunch, the couple discussed their upcoming plans between sips of water and bites of food. "Are your parents and brother still flying in this afternoon? Are you leaving early to get them from the airport?" Kurt asked as he stabbed his salad a bit too forcefully. Honestly speaking, he was nervous. In all the time he and Nathan shared together, the man's parents never visited, and in turn, Kurt never flew with Nathan back to Cape Town. Meeting parents was a foreign task for the young father. *And I have a child. I wonder how they feel about that.*

Blaine- *pizza, so close but so far-* placed his food back down on his plate. He knew Kurt was nervous; and rightfully so. Blaine remembered the feeling of dread that raged war on his stomach the first time he met Kurt's parents. The entire day before, Blaine walked around with a queasiness that he could not shake. At one point, he called Wes, his pediatrician, and asked if there was anything that he could do to alleviate the feeling. *Yes, I still see a pediatrician. He gives me candy. Candy or blood tests. Candy by a landslide.* Wes told him that the feeling would go away once he met Kurt's parents. If it did not, he advised Blaine to drink two shots, eat a packet of Twizzlers, and call him in the morning. The feeling went away when Blaine sat down

with Kurt's family. He knew Kurt's would as well. *My parents aren't like Kurt's but they are excited. He should be too.*

"They are coming in, but I'm not picking them up. They always rent a car and drive over. Speaking of, My mom wants to know if you and Keenan are still coming over for dinner tonight. She found some recipe online before she left and she's excited to make it for a large group." Reluctantly, Kurt nodded. The house was still in a fit of disarray after the fateful dinner that shook his family's foundation. With the holidays upon them and Quinn and Finn avoiding each other almost as much as Burt and Carole were, Keenan and Kurt felt out of place. Getting out of the house was a great idea.

"Yeah. Keenan is excited. After everything you told him about your brother, he can't wait. He's even trying out nicknames for him." *Timon. Zazu. Mr. Dumbo.* Each time, Kurt shook his head and told his son to wait until he met the man before changing his name.

'It's only polite, son. You can't just change people's names before meeting them. It's not tactful.'

With each passing day, the tiny space reserved for Keenan in Blaine's heart grew. He was adorable; much like the veterinarian when he was a child. He was fun and quizzical. Keenan was everything that Blaine was as a child. At times, Blaine could easily imagine Keenan being his own. *He is what my child would be. Or at least what I'd hope my child would be.* "King Koopa. That's what I called him when I was little. Tell Keenan to call him that. Coop hates it."

"Then I'm not going to tell him to say it. The last thing I need is for Keenan to get on your brother's nerves by calling him something that he hates." Kurt reasoned.

"Oh, Cooper hates the name, but he'll love the fact that Keenan calls him it. Coop loves kids. He's been bouncing off the walls since I told him that you guys were coming over. He and Keenan have the same brain capacity, so they'll get along well together."

"I hope so."

"They will. Cooper can't count over ten and Keenan can't tie his shoes without help. They'll be good friends." Kurt hoped so. That would relieve some of his stress. *Then I would only have to worry about his parents. Ohhhh...my stomach. I think I should call Wes. I heard he knows what to do in situations like this.*

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4:50

4:55.

4:56

4:57

4:58

4:59

5:00

"Quitting time, folks. Clock out. Sign out. Do whatever you need to do. I'm locking those doors in thirty seconds, so you better not be in here, lest you'd like to spend your Christmas break in the shelter." Blaine shouted as he scurried to his office to gather his belongings. An hour prior, his parents called to say that they'd reached his house in one piece. They then spent their time sending texts back in forth about dinner. Now, it was time to leave and there would be men left behind if they did not hurry their behinds out of the office. Blaine was excited and he would leave his men in the trenches if necessary. *Well, not Kurt. I can't leave him. Unique and Marley are on their own if they don't hurry up.*

"Bye, baby. Keen and I will see you later." Kurt dashed past his boyfriend, only stopping long enough to plant a kiss on his boyfriend's cheek. "Love you."

Warmth spread over Blaine's body. "Love you too." He shouted as Kurt ran out the front door. Moments later, Blaine herded his volunteers out the side door. With everyone gone, Blaine checked on the animals one last time before locking up and heading home. He couldn't wait to see his family.

Oo0oO

The Anderson reunion was a joyous one. When Blaine walked into his house, he could smell the glorious aroma of his mother's cooking and his father's cigars. *I told him not to smoke in the house.* Blaine's train of thought halted when his brother's arms appeared out of nowhere, flinging themselves around the man's neck and pulling him close. "Little brother! Where's the rest of your family? Where is my new nephew and my other little brother? I need to ruffle his hair!" Cooper did just that to the vet.

Blaine laughed along. Thanksgiving was less than a month ago, but that didn't mean Blaine couldn't miss his brother. "Yeah right." The veterinarian chuckled as he pulled his head from beneath his brother's arm. "If you touch Kurt's hair, he will break your arm."

Cooper's eyes widened. "Are you serious?" Blaine nodded. *So serious.* He saw touching Kurt's hair as a death wish. A wise man would not touch the technician's hair if he was truly wise. Not even during sex. *Not even when he's sucking me off in my office like he did this afternoon while Unique and Marley watched the desk. Never. Nope. I really wanted to touch it though. It was there and my dick was in his mouth and....*

"Honey. So happy that you're home!" Blaine's attention quickly turned to his mother. He fell into her arms and hugged her as if he would never let go. "Where are your man and his little guy? They are still coming, right?" His mother asked anxiously. She'd just finished dinner and she could not wait to have everyone seated and eating.

"Yeah. Kurt wanted to shower and he had to bathe and change Keenan."

"Ahh...makes sense. I had two boys and you guys needed pressure washing before I could take you anywhere." Blaine smiled as his mother went on about how he and his brother used to run around looking as if they'd never been cared for. With their dirty hands and faces and their blown out jean knees. *And that's when we were teenagers. We were worse when we were kids.*

OoOoO

Hours later passed as the Andersons caught up on one another's lives. Occasionally, Blaine would check the time on his phone. Kurt and Keenan were supposed to be there by six. Six thirty rolled around quickly and was followed closely by seven. Kurt and Keenan still had not arrived and dinner was getting cold. Blaine wondered where his boyfriend was. *Damn, Keenan must have been dirty!* "Maybe you should call him, honey. It's snowing and the roads might be rough. Make sure they're okay." The veterinarian nodded as he dug his phone out of his pocket. His mother's concern put a kernel of fear in his mind. *What if something happened? What if....oh crap!*

The phone rang three times before being answered. "AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH....." Someone –presumably Keenan based on the pitch- screeched into the phone. "DADDY! I don't want to!" Definitely Keenan.

In the background, Blaine heard his boyfriend shouting. It was muffled but Blaine was able to make out a few words. ".....to God.SO MUCH TROUBLE....better...for help!" Kurt shouted. Help? What did Kurt need help with?

"Keenan," Blaine's breath sped up as he attempted to speak. What do they need help with? "Is everything okay? Where are you? Do I need come get you guys?" The veterinarian rambled worriedly into the phone. As he spoke, he garnered a small audience. His family watched nervously as he tried to get the little boy's attention.

"HELP ME, BLAINE! Daddy is so mad!" The little boy shouted. Blaine tilted his head in confusion. What was happening at Kurt's house?

"Why is Daddy...?" The sound of a scuffle on the other end silenced the elder. He was officially confused.

"Hello?" *Good. Kurt.*

"What the hell is going on? Where are you guys? Is everything okay?" Blaine rambled for a moment before being cut off by his boyfriend.

"My son is....Blaine, I don't even know. He took a bath and then refused to put on the clothes I picked out for him. He's been running around in those little freaking underwear with Batman all over them for two hours! I've been trying to dress my kid for two hours! I think. Honestly, I'm not even sure what time it is." Kurt's voice rose as he spoke, frustration leaving his mouth and entering Blaine's ears, causing him to wince. "And let me tell you...when he finally did get dressed, it was in this monstrosity that-"

"Wait!" Blaine felt a blow up coming and he would avoid it at any cost. He loved his boyfriend and he hated knowing that he was frustrated. Kurt was obviously at his wit's end.

Before, when Keenan was strictly opposed to his entire existence, Blaine wouldn't have been able to help. Now, he could and he would. "You told me that you like to pick your battles. I think you should tonight." Blaine listened to the deafening silence on the other end. "Hear me out." He added. There was something about Kurt's silence that was frightening.

"Okay."

"You were already nervous about tonight. You're about to meet my family and you're going to introduce your child to my family. That's nerve wrecking. I know the feeling. I felt the same way when I was meeting your family. And it was just me. I didn't have another person to think about then. So, to alleviate some of that stress, why don't you just like Keenan wear what he wants? You have so much on your plate already. I just-"

"Darth Vader mask, a pink tutu, striped tights, and a tuxedo t shirt." Kurt interrupted.

"What?"

"That's what he put on. My son is running around in a Darth Vader mask, a pink tutu, striped tights, and a child sized tuxedo t shirt. What kind of impression is that going to make on your parents? I want them to....I don't know. I want them to see me as someone that deserves you. How can I deserve you and take care of you when I can't even convince my child to wear the clothes I picked out for him for an important dinner?"

Finally, Blaine understood. Kurt's frustration and nerves were reaching a boiling point that evening. As many children did, Keenan was not cooperating and –on that evening- Kurt was not taking it well. *I have to help.* "Babe, my parents won't care how Keenan is dressed. Hell, Cooper will probably think it's cool. Don't let something so small keep you guys away. Just...come to dinner and everything will be fine."

"Promise?" Kurt sounded so hopeful.

"Yeah. I promise."

A sigh of relief left Kurt's lips. It was audible on Blaine's end. "Okay. Let me at least get him into a jacket and we'll be over. Great! Now I have to apologize to your family for our tardiness. Fabulous first impression, huh." Blaine smiled to himself. He could feel the eyes in the room fixed solely on him. They'd listened to his entire conversation. *I wonder what they're thinking.* "We're about to leave, honey. We'll see you soon."

They're still watching me. Oh well. "Alright, babe. We'll see you soon. Love you." Blaine shot his mother a warning look when she began to squeal with excitement. It was, after all, the first time any of them heard Blaine tell anyone other than a family member that he loved him.

"Love you too."

Moments later, once the call was disconnected, Blaine sat his phone down on the end table and looked up at his family. "What?" *If you have something to say, just say it.* His mother and father each shrugged. Cooper, on the other hand, was not letting him get off so easily.

"Did my baby brother just tell his boyfriend that he loved him? Did my baby brother just help his boyfriend solve a little guy related crisis? I'm impressed baby brother. You're growing up." Cooper scooted next to his younger brother on the couch and threw his arms around the man's neck. He often found it difficult to imagine his brother as a man. Yet, not ten minutes prior to that moment, Blaine proved himself as such. That could only mean one thing. *My goodness. I'm getting old.*

The veterinarian shoved his brother's body away from his own. "Shut up, King Koopa! I've been grown up since I grew up." The younger retorted childishly. The comment fueled the flames of a fire that Blaine knew lay dormant inside his brother.

"I've been a grownup since I grew up." Cooper mocked. And thus it began. Cooper and Blaine began smacking each other playfully in an attempt to win the argument that always seemed to linger between them.

"Shut up! You're just jealous because I have a super-hot boyfriend with an awesome child and you spend every night with your hand." Blaine shouted between slaps.

Cooper chuckled darkly. "Hardly, Squirt. I spend my evening with the finest of California's women."

It was Blaine's turn to chuckle. "How much does that run you on a nightly basis?"

A loud shriek erupted from Cooper's mouth as he doubled his efforts to hit his brother. "Ow, Cooper! You slapped me in the neck!" The young man shouted at one point. "Dad! He hit me in the neck!"

Jay turned to his beautiful bride of forty plus years and grinned. His arm was hung limply across her shoulders, and hers was rested across her abdomen. "Looks like we'll have a traditional Anderson Christmas after all." He whispered.

Julia grinned as she watched the scene before her. "It looks that way, darling. It looks that way." Together, snuggled on the love seat, Julia and Jay Anderson watched their boys bicker.

Oo0oO

With the understanding that wearing what he wanted meant that Keenan was expected to be on his best behavior, father and son were able to finally ready themselves for dinner at Blaine's. Keenan agreed eagerly to the terms and even opted to trade in his Darth Vader mask for the blazer that was meant to accompany the outfit his father picked out for him. Dressed for...*success*...the duo pulled on their winter coats, hats, and scarves, and left the house. Despite the snow on the ground, they made timely work of their trip from home to Blaine's house.

Before Kurt knew it, he was pulling into his spot in Blaine's driveway. *His spot. It sounded nice.* Then, realization hit him. Just inside the tiny front door was Blaine's family. His father, mother, and elder brother. They were all there....waiting. And we just happen to be an hour late. What they must think of me. Kurt turned his gaze from the house to the rearview mirror. Through it, he could see his son bouncing excitedly in the back seat. "What did I say before we left the house, son?"

"You said that I should be on my best behavior." Keenan confirmed. It lifted a tiny a small bit of weight off the father's shoulders. Keenan would try. Of that, Kurt was sure.

"Yep. Now, let's get in there. " The father stepped out of his Equinox, quickly making his way to the backdoor of the vehicle to unstrap his son. Moments later found the two on Blaine's porch, listening to a bit of commotion on the other side.

"You just hit me in the face!" Blaine's voice sounded through the door. With wide, cautious eyes, Kurt knocked. Whatever was going on in there, he wanted to find out. "Stop, Coop! I SAID STOP! Geez. That's probably Kurt at the door." The sound of shuffling throughout the house was heard by father and son. "Look at my hair! Do you want to know what Kurt is going to think of this? I'll tell you! He will not be pleased."

Kurt and Keenan stepped back when the front door flew open. The nearby streetlights illuminated the tiny bits of unkempt, frizzed hair that gained freedom from their gel prison during whatever Blaine recently partook in. They also made the tiny red marks that marred the man's skin more visible. "Should we come back?" Kurt asked nervously. *What the hell went on in there?*

Blaine shook his head rapidly. "No. Of course not. It's just...my brother is kind of an idiot." The Hummels nodded in unison. "Come in, guys. It's freezing out here." Kurt followed the cleared path left behind by Blaine. Once they were inside, Blaine closed the front door and the three stood in the foyer, each looking at the next.

Kurt wasn't kidding about Keenan's attire. *He looks like a pirate ballerina.* Blaine took in each piece that made up the little boy's ensemble. It was...unique. From his blazer down to the striped tights, Blaine could truthfully say that he'd never seen a child dressed as such.

While Blaine stared at him, Keenan stared at his father. *Are you going to say something? Stitch was fighting someone and you always tell me that fighting is bad.* His father's attention was elsewhere, however. His eyes focused themselves solely on Blaine.

What the hell was he doing? The question that plagued the young father's mind. Rather than letting it eat him alive, Kurt asked it. "What were you doing?"

Blaine's eyes tore away from Keenan and met his boyfriend's. "My brother was being stupid and hit me. Things went downhill from there."

"Right." Kurt smiled at his boyfriend and all his beaten glory. "I hope you're the only one that he likes to beat on like that."

Kurt and Keenan pulled off their heavy winter coats as Blaine responded. "I am." Some siblings did this or that, Blaine and Cooper fought. *And we're good at it. It's our thing.*

With the coats tucked in the closet behind the front door, Blaine and Kurt each grabbed one of Keenan's hands and headed into the living room to meet Blaine's family. The first person they noticed was a young man –older than Blaine but handsome none the less- fixing his tie on the couch. "HEY!" The man shouted. "You must be the b-f and the b-f-s. I'm Cooper." Kurt watched as the man stood from his place on the couch, and extended his hand. Kurt took it, offering a firm handshake. "Geez, you've got one hell of a grip!"

"I know!" Blaine threw in. At least he wasn't the only that noticed the death grip Hummels put on poor, unsuspecting hands. "Their whole family does."

Cooper wasn't listening. He'd positioned himself down on one knee, examining the child before him. "Hey, little guy, you must be Keenan. I'm Cooper." As he'd done with Kurt, the actor extended his hand.

"I'm not little." Keenan quipped. "You're just big."

"Oh, I like this kid."

Cooper and Keenan went back and forth as friends or siblings would while Blaine introduced his boyfriend to his parents. The veterinarian could feel the waves of nerves rolling off his boyfriend like raging water against unsuspecting rocks. Despite his nerves, Kurt remained composed. Blaine would always commend his boyfriend for such. "Kurt, this is my mother, Julia."

Kurt extended his hand to the impeccably dressed woman before him. Fashion sense aside, the woman was gorgeous. Pounds of her snow white hair were piled on top of her head in an elegant bun, accentuating her neck. There hung a simple necklace –diamond- that was the crowning piece of her outfit. *Knee length black dress –definitely designer- and....flip flops? That's....unexpected.* "It's lovely to meet you, Mrs. Anderson." Kurt took the woman's dainty hand into his own and offered it a light shake.

"Please, call me Julia. And it's lovely to meet you as well. Our Blaine has been going on and on about you since Thanksgiving." The woman's radiating beauty caused Kurt to completely forget his boyfriend's presence at his side. When he turned to the man, Kurt noticed that Blaine had also forgotten his presence. Blaine's eyes were fixated on the wrestling match that was taking place at his feet. Cooper versus Keenan. As it looked, they were going twelve rounds and Keenan was clearly winning.

Kurt's eyes traveled to the large man stood next to Blaine's mother. Jay Anderson: retired business man with questionable views on Blaine's lifestyle. From what Kurt was told by his boyfriend, his father supported him but often found it difficult to relate to Blaine when the young man came out of the closet. "It's a pleasure to meet you as well, Mr. Anderson. I'm Kurt." Kurt stuck his hand out and waited. And waited. *And waited.*

Jay Anderson could not make heads or tails of his son's boyfriend and child. The little boy –*they said it's a boy, right? The long hair and dance thing are throwing me off-* was scurrying around the floor with Cooper. They looked like animals. Like children. *Well....he is a child, I suppose.* Then there was Kurt. Over the years, Jay opened his mind to the ways of the world. For years, he sacrificed his relationship with his son over his sexuality. It wasn't a fair trade. Jay missed many milestones in his son's life because of his own bigotry. So, he changed, he allowed his mind to comprehend the fact that his son loved men.

That was the zinger. Blaine loved men. Kurt – a bit taller than his son with eyes as nervous as the day was long- was not the kind of man Jay imagined his son with. Big. Burly. Muscular. *A bear. Yeah. That's what they called it online when I was researching.* Kurt was none of those. While he was taller than Blaine, he was very.....pretty; too pretty for a man. It made Jay wonder. *How could Blaine love Kurt but not like women? I can't ask that. Julia will banish me to the couch and Blaine won't speak to me for another handful*

of years. Instead, Jay extended his hand, clasping Kurt's in his own. "Jay Anderson. It's nice to meet you, Kurt." The exchange was simple but it seemed just enough to calm the young man's nerves.

"Well, since we've got that out of the way, let's go into the dining room and eat."

Oo0oO

In Kurt's opinion, dinner was fantastic. He and his son ate side by side with the Andersons in perfect harmony. The food was amazing and the conversation was even better. Blaine's family made sure to include Keenan and Kurt in their table conversation and, in turn, the Hummel's included them in theirs.

At one point during the evening, Kurt watched as his boyfriend's father turned his attention to Keenan. "So, young man, what do you want to be when you grow up?" Jay asked as Keenan shoved a mouthful of homemade mashed potatoes into his mouth. *Please chew them first. The last thing anybody wants is for your food to go flying across the table.*

Silent prayer to child god answered. Keenan chewed and swallowed before replying. "I want to be a professional wrestler....and a hip hop honey....and a Pikachu." The little boy answered confidently. A hush fell over the room.

"Well," Jay eventually replied, "that's very ambitious of you. Make sure you do all of those things. Don't let anyone tell you that you cannot." Keenan nodded. *I won't. I'm going to be awesome. You can't hold awesome back.*

Jay eventually turned his attention to Kurt. "What about you, Kurt? Blaine tells us that you've gone back to school. That's quite an endeavor for a single, working father." Despite previous apprehension about the young man, Kurt grew on Jay during dinner. He was polite yet firm. Kurt obviously cared deeply for Blaine, as well as his child. *He's still very pretty. Too pretty for a man.*

Kurt placed his napkin in his lap before turning his attention to his boyfriend's father. "Well, I am studying fashion merchandising. I plan to start a line one day. Maybe I'll open my own shop. I'm not quite sure yet but I know I want to design clothes. If I go the shop route, I plan to sell some of my own clothes along with others from other designers." *Of course. Blaine's pretty boyfriend likes designing clothes. No, he's not what I expected at all. But he makes my son happy. I can't stand in the way of that. I won't stand in the way of that.*

"Also ambitious. I ran my own business for years. I sat on quite a few boards and I often had an entire fleet of employees. Once you've got your plans squared away, if you need any assistance, let me know. I'd be happy to give you a few pointers."

"Yes, sir. Thank you. My father said the same thing. His business is considerably smaller and he only has about five employees, but he's done well for himself. I'd be glad to have your advice. I feel like I'll need as much of it as I can get." Kurt's nerves returned in full force. Blaine told him that his parents were business people but the young man did not get the full effect of what his boyfriend meant until that moment. Jay Anderson was a business man. Business college. Business trips. Business meetings. He was a real business man. Kurt felt inferior. Suddenly, he and his family's accomplishments didn't feel like enough.

Unfortunately for the young man, his comment was enough to cause the conversation to continue. "What does your father do?" Jay handed his empty plate to his wife, who was clearing away the dishes. Keenan was hot on her heels. He wanted to help and she was more than willing to give him the opportunity to do just that.

"He's a mechanic." Blaine noticed the false enthusiasm behind his boyfriend's words. *Oh, don't feel like that.*

"Not just a mechanic, Dad. **The** mechanic. Everyone goes to Burt. He's like....a car doctor." Blaine added quickly, sensing his boyfriend's mood deteriorating. There was nothing worse than feeling inferior. "He told me once that he used to just do tires and lube but, when people kept coming for other car issues, he had to expand his shop and his business." The vet added.

Blaine should have known it would happen. *It happened to me.* During dinner at the Hummel's house, Blaine could not shake the feeling that he was inferior to his hosts. They were a tight knit family with love that stretched as long as the longest river. They shared anecdotes and joked with one another. They had a strong sense of family; a sense of family that Blaine did not have until he was an adult. Now, the tables were turned and Kurt felt inferior. A set of former business sharks. An actor. A veterinarian boyfriend. *Who wouldn't feel inferior? Kurt shouldn't. He's amazing.*

"Really?" Jay shot the technician an intrigued look. "You think he'd be up to talking cars? I bought a Trans Am-"

"Oh God" Julia groaned. *If I have to hear one more thing about that broke down, damn car I'm going to scream.*

"-a few years ago and I'm having trouble getting it going. I wanted to rebuild the motor-"

Again, Julia cut in as she picked dishes from the table. "You should just sell that piece of junk."

Jay, used to his wife's quips, continued undeterred. "-but now I'm second guessing myself."

Kurt waved his hand as if to brush Jay's apprehension away. "Don't do that. The minute you start second guessing yourself with a car, is the minute that the inanimate object you're working on wins. Tell me what trouble you're having and I can probably guide you in the right direction."

Dorito eyebrows –*sometimes I dislike my sons and the stupid names they come up with*- shot into Jay's gray hair. "You know about cars?" He asked, utterly surprised.

"Oh, yeah!" Kurt grinned. "After my mother passed, I had to go to the shop after school. When I was old enough, my dad got me a pair of coveralls and started teaching me about cars. He knew I didn't like to get dirty but, in his words 'getting dirty will be the least of your issues when your tire is blown in the middle of nowhere, on a stormy night'."

Huh. Jay tried to rebuild a car with Blaine once and it ended with his son storming off. Kurt was sprouting off words that his son refused to learn. Hubs. Sensors. Flywheel. *Well I'll be damned. Maybe I misjudged him by his pretty face. This guy knows what he's talking about.* "I'm sorry about your mother." Jay eventually responded.

Again, Kurt waved him off. "No need to be. You didn't kill her, cancer did. And if I ever get my hands on cancer..." Kurt trailed. The table erupted with laughter. Yes it still hurt, but what was life without laughter?

As the group began to wander in their own directions –Julia and Keenan to the kitchen to clean dishes, Cooper and Blaine to the living room with their glasses of wine- Kurt and Jay stayed at the table and discussed the elder's plan of attack for his vehicle. With each question from Jay's mouth, Kurt's nerves began to settle. *This isn't so bad.*

OoOoO

"What do you think?" Blaine asked nervously. Cooper's opinion meant a lot to the veterinarian. He was the one that told the vet to cut ties with his college boyfriend.

'He's too clingy, Blaine. He wants too much from you too soon.'

Cooper looked over the brim of his wineglass to his brother. Blaine seemed antsy; nervous. "I think....he's great. You've got a great guy and he has a great child. You guys seem like a little family. I saw the system you and Keenan had going at dinner. Whenever Kurt looked away, Keenan handed you his peas. That's what family is about. Having each other's back. Hold on to this, Blaine. I've always felt like each of us has one chance to get it right. This is your chance."

Blaine nodded; he felt that way as well. "I plan to hold on to them. Lately, they are all I think about. When Keenan is at school, I wonder how his day is. When Kurt is at home tucking Keen in, I wish I was there. I love them both and I want to make this work."

"Good." Seemingly satisfied, Cooper turned his attention back to his wine.

"When are you going to settle down with a little family?" Blaine asked. Cooper, having just hit forty, seemed to have no plans to settle down. Ever. In Blaine's opinion, that seemed to hold a sad future for the actor. No one to hold in the mornings and no one to fall asleep with at night. It was a life that Blaine once led. Never again. As long as he and Kurt were both breathing, Blaine couldn't imagine being lonely again.

"Not everyone wants nurseries and play dates, Squirt. Some of us are content with the way things are?"

Blaine scoffed. "Ominous much? What's that supposed to mean?"

The elder Anderson brother rolled his eyes. Leave it to Blaine to make Cooper break things down to their bare minimum. "It means that I've been seeing someone and we like the way things are." The actor's eyes travelled around the room. He was seeking out anything that was not Blaine. *Oh...look, one of Grandma Lena's old knitted blankets. I wonder if it smells like mothballs.*

"What? Who? Why didn't you say anything? When did this happen? Answer my questions!" Blaine sat on the edge of his seat, wine glass sat on the end table. Cooper had his undivided attention.

Cooper sighed. "Her name is April. She works on the set with me. She does the makeup for the show. We've known each other for years –she was the one that suggested that I get into Soap Opera acting- and

we started dating a few months ago. I didn't say anything at Thanksgiving because....how many girls have I brought home? Tons. Then, they go away and you guys never hear from them again. The fact that you had news of this caliber to share with the family was huge. I wasn't going to take away from that with someone that you guys would have seen as another random girl. You mean more to me than that and so does she."

"Cooper!" Blaine exclaimed as he leapt from his seat.

Oh no. Cooper knew what was coming next. In slow motion, his brother crossed the tiny living room. Here it comes. "Don't hug me, Blaine. Stop. Don't get sappy on me." The elder begged. His pleas fell on deaf ears as Blaine gathered his older brother into a tight hug. "Stop it before I tell mom."

Defiantly, Blaine hugged harder. After a moment's time, Cooper slapped his brother's hand away. "I said stop. *Mom!* He's hugging me!"

"Shut up and enjoy the love, Coop. Just enjoy the love."

Oo0oO

"Thank you for your help, Keenan." Julia looked down at the little boy at her feet. He was drying a spoon, the only piece of kitchen ware that she felt comfortable letting a child dry. He smiled up at her in a way that warmed her heart. *God, I've wanted a grandchild.* Her children were resilient, unfortunately. Neither claimed to want children, yet, here one was. He was at her feet for the spoiling. She couldn't wait.

"No problem, Miss. Dr. Stitch's mom." Julia laughed with the child. He was adorable.

"You can call me, Mrs. Julia." She informed. *Or Grandma Julia. No pressure though.*

Keenan nodded. "Okay, Mrs. Julia. Can I ask you a question though?" The woman nodded as she submerged her hands the soapy water once again. Neither she nor her mother before her used dishwashers. *They leave so much to be desired.* "How are you Stitch's mommy? Daddy is my daddy because he's older than me. You don't look older than Stitch. I know he's really old –older than Daddy- but you don't look older than Daddy?"

"Oh, Keenan. We will definitely have to keep you around." The little boy's grin grew wider. He liked the sound of that.

Oo0o0

Hours later, when the Hummels were back in their home and Keenan was tucked away in his bed, Kurt received a text from his boyfriend.

My family really likes you. I think they may be willing to part with me should it ever come down to the two of us. –Blaine

Kurt grinned to himself as he read the message. Just like his son, the technician was tucked away in his bed, ready for an evening of what promised to be amazing sleep.

I don't believe that. Your family loves you. I can tell. –Kurt

The response was immediate.

My mom wants to show you off to her friends. My dad can't get over the fact that you're so 'pretty' and Cooper is getting ready to propose. I think they like you. –Blaine

Good to know. –Kurt

Good night, beautiful. I love you. –Blaine

Love you more. Good night –Kurt

Oo0o0

The days leading up to Christmas were stressful for Quinn. After she and Beth returned home, the young – soon to be single- mother was left to wrap presents alone. Finn promised to do it at one point. That was before. Now, he was holding up camp at Rachel's house. He would not be wrapping their gifts that year. Thus, Quinn was sequestered in a room, wrapping her daughter's gifts.

The young woman sat in the middle of Burt's office, doing her best to wrap the gifts, despite her frustrations. *There's so much wrapping paper. How does Finn do this alone every year?* She was about to find out. There were a lot of things that she would need to learn to do on her own. She could not think of a single one at that moment but she knew there would be times when she needed a second person that she no longer had.

Quinn's thoughts were interrupted by a knock at the door. The young woman turned quickly to see Burt smiling down at her. "Need some help?" He offered.

The blond did her best to keep her face neutral. It was a lost cause from the start. "I've seen you wrap gifts, Burt." She eventually replied. Burt chuckled as he made his way into the room.

"Very true. I don't know where Kurt got his amazing abilities to wrap gifts from. Lizzie was as bad at it as I am. Speaking of Kurt. Why didn't you ask him to wrap the gifts? That's what Finn always did." *Oh. Well, that solves that mystery.*

"I'm sure he's busy. He probably has his hands full with Keenan and Blaine."

Burt plopped down in his office chair and studied the young woman. *Life has dealt her one hell of a set of cards.* She was strong, however. She could take it. "You know, I'm sure Kurt wouldn't mind wrapping these for you. I know you have a million and one things to do today. Besides, we all know you're going through it right now. Don't be afraid to lean on us. We'll be your rocks."

"How do you always know what I need to hear?"

Burt shrugged. "I'm a dad. I know these things."

"Well, I hope I'm half the mother to Beth as you are the father to Kurt."

"You already are." The duo smiled at each other for a moment. When the moment passed, Quinn leapt to her feet and into the elder's arms. When they pulled apart, she couldn't help but allow her grin to grow wider. "Now, go tell my son you need some gifts wrapped."

Quinn nodded emphatically. She would do that. *Then maybe I'll take Beth out for lunch. Hmmm...I like that idea.*

Oo0oO

"Are we going to see Mr. Kurt and Keenan yet?" Mikayla was high on adrenaline most of the day. With Christmas two days away and the prospect of presents at her feet, the little girl could not help but be excited.

Sometimes, I wish I had her energy level. Trent lay sprawled across his couch, watching his daughter bounce from cushion to cushion between the love seat and a chair. He was exhausted. And amazed. It was amazing that he managed to sneak a day off in during the holidays. Working at Walmart did wonders for his home life...*said no one ever.* Trent was on his thirteenth straight day of work and his day off could not have come soon enough. Unfortunately, he promised his baby girl in his sleep that they could visit Kurt and Keenan. *Damn my sleep.* "Not yet, honey. Daddy is tired. Let me rest my eyes....and my feet....and my head. Yeah. Let me rest for a bit."

Mikayla plopped down next to her father on the couch and nudged her cheek into her father's arm. "Come on, Daddy." *Ugg...the whine. Gets me every time.* "When you let me call Keenan yesterday, he said all kinds of stuff happened at their house. His Aunt Quinn and Uncle Finn are getting a divorce like you and Mommy and-" Trent was on his feet before his daughter finished her sentence. "Are we going?" She asked hopefully.

"Of course we are, honey. You wanted to see Keenan right?" Trent felt as if he'd been given new life. Something about the words that left his daughter's mouth acted as his second little girl nodded emphatically. *He's my best friend, of course I want to see him.* "Good. Go get your coat."

Trent was tired, so tired. But Quinn was going through something that he knew backwards and forwards. She needed comforting. *My mom used to tell me that I wasn't fat, I was comfortable. Comfortable people are the kind that do the best comforting.*

Oo0oO

"I'm sorry we can't spend Christmas together, Brit. You know how I do. I've got girls waiting in the wings for my Christmas time." Santana joked. She and her girlfriend –yes, girlfriend- lay in front of the fireplace that protruded from the far wall of Brittany's living room.

The blonde laughed. "Yeah right. Your Abuela is making you spend Christmas with your family and Lord Tubbington and I are spending time with mine. You're not that girl anymore. Don't pretend to be." Santana let out a long sigh. It was true. For the first time in years, Santana Lopez was a one woman woman. *I like it.*

"Hush you. Now, where's my present."

"I thought I gave you your present this morning. And in the car this afternoon. And an hour ago. And a few minutes ago while Lord Tubbington wasn't looking." Brittany responded.

Santana grinned. Those were great gifts –*seriously amazing*- but her girlfriend knew what she was talking about. "Don't give me that. I want my real present. I won't get to see you until after Christmas and I want my present."

Brittany giggled once again –one of the things Santana loved most about her- before rolling on her side and sliding her bare arm beneath the couch. When Brittany pulled her arm from beneath the couch, she pulled an unwrapped picture frame with it. "Lord Tubbington promised to wrap this for me but he's lazy. It's a picture of us," Brittany held up the silver frame for Santana to see. Beneath the glass and matting was a black and white picture of the blonde and her cat. "It's so you won't forget what we look like while we're apart for Christmas."

Don't cry. Hold it in. You're a thug. Santana was touched by the gift. It made hers feel insignificant. "Thank you. That's the....sweetest thing anyone's ever gotten me."

A satisfied grin spread across Brittany's face. "Glad you like it. Now, do me. Do me." *Don't tempt me.* Santana thought. The Latina reached blindly behind her body and pulled out a tiny, wrapped box.

"It's not as amazing as your gift, but I think you'll like it." Brittany snatched the box and tore the paper away. The teacher lifted the lid and stared at wonderment at the prize inside. It was an ABC pin with a ruler and a shiny red apple clustered together. Fit for a teacher. "Keenan saw it when we were shopping last week and he thought you'd love it. I told him to get it for you from him but he said he gave you a 'super freaking awesome best gift ever' on the last day of school. "

A glittery, paper apple with the words 'Wold'z Bets Teecher' scribbled across it in the little boy's sloppy handwriting. Brittany remembered it well. "Keenan did give me a pretty tough gift to beat." The teacher chuckled. "But this....this is sweet. I love teaching and I love that you got me this. Thank you, Tana."

The women's lips met momentarily. When they pulled back, Brittany gave Santana the best gift she could have received all year. "I love you." She whispered.

Santana, pessimistic by nature but a romantic at heart, let out a shaky sigh. "I love you too." She admitted.

Santana's heart grew three sizes that Christmas.

Oo0oO

"You. Me. Madden. Now!" Wes plopped a case of beer down on David's desk after letting himself into the lawyer's house with the key that he stole and then copied. *That's what friends do.*

David did not look away from his computer. He was too enthralled in his work. "Can't dude. Work."

Wes scoffed. *Work? Really? We're two days away from Christmas. As far as I'm concerned, work does not exist.* "It's not that important. Put it away and come back to it later."

"It is important." David retorted, a bit more harshly than he intended. Wes stood back a bit, giving his friend some room. Whatever he was working on was serious business. *SRS BIZNESS!* "Sorry, man." David felt awful. He never snapped at his friends. *I'm the mild mannered one after all.*

"What's got you so stirred up? What injustice has been done? What wrong are you trying to right?" Wes questioned. David sighed. It wasn't Wes's business but he needed to talk to someone.

"Nothing. Just....a divorce. My dad screwed my mom so bad in their divorce. Now, I got this....friend that's getting divorced and I want to make sure she doesn't get done the same way. I took the case Pro Bono. I want her to end up on top. I don't want her to get the short end of the stick."

Wes nodded as he pulled a chair next to David's desk. "Well, what do you need from me? For the next few days, I'll be your legal assistant. You cannot have sex with me though. I know what you and Brenda do when the lights are out." David smiled. Yep. He and his legal assistant were...an item so to say.

"I'm much too good for you Wesley. Don't forget that."

His friend scoffed. "Hardly. You mean you're much too small for me. Don't you forget that!" The pair went back and forth before getting down to brass tax. Some people would say that their idea of Christmas vacation was all work and no fun. Wes and David were all fun. They worked hard and played harder. More importantly, they made a difference. Wes knew that the case meant a lot to his friend because of his own mother's plight. The pediatrician was happy to help in any way he could. *I can't imagine a better way to spend Christmas.*

Oo0oO

"Move away from the television, Hunter." Whitley lay sprawled across the officer's couch watching her favorite primetime program. She could not imagine a better way to spend her Christmas vacation. With her family on the other side of the country and her friends with their own families, she and her equally orphaned not boyfriend –*we don't do labels. We do, however, do kinky shit in the bedroom* – decided to spend the holidays together. As the snow fell outside, she and Hunter lay cuddled on the couch, eating whatever was closest. *I'm getting so fat. I gained half a pound and now my size sixes won't fit. I'm a cow. Oh well.* Whitley shoved another slice of pizza in her mouth. If Hunter didn't care, then she didn't care. Hunter did not care from the looks of it.

"I'm getting the remote." Hunter threw his arms up defensively as his not girlfriend glared at him.

"Why? You're not changing the channel."

"Oh come on. We've been watching 'Sing' for two days. A bunch of high schoolers singing their hearts out about their problems. I get it. They have issues. Can we watch something else? Please?"

Whitley shook her head. Obviously Hunter did not understand. 'Sing' was not just a television show. It was a lifestyle. *A way of life!* "Don't! I love this show. I mean, come on. It's amazing. Ken and Blake are about to get back together. Don't you want to see that?"

Hunter shrugged. "Not really! Honestly, they creep me out."

"Why, because they're gay?" Whitley spat. *No. This will not work if he feels that way. I mean, he's friends with Blaine after all.*

The same thought ran through Hunter's mind. "Really? Blaine is one of my best friends. I don't care about that. It freaks me out because those guys kind of remind me of Kurt and Blaine. Ken and Blake. Kurt and Blaine. Kurt and Blaine. Ken and Blake. They even dress like Kurt and Blaine do. I'm sure, at some point in time, Kurt and Blaine sang 'Baby, it's cold outside' to one another and....the similarities are too weird. I don't like it. And come to think of it Sasha reminds me a lot of your best friend. Sasha. Santana. Santana. Sasha. It's fucking weird."

"Well, too bad. You invited me over. As a guest, you have to do what I say."

"You're not a guest." Hunter retorted. *You have a toothbrush in my bathroom and you tossed all my clothes out of the closet to make room for your own. You practically live here.*

"For the sake of my argument, I'm a guest. Now get your ass over here and watch television with me." Hunter's head hung. He was in a cuddling mood and Whitley was a supreme cuddler. Who was he to deny himself the right to cuddle with a cuddling champion? With slow, dragging footsteps, Hunter crossed the room and climbed onto the couch. Once they were situated, Whitley resumed watching her favorite television show. *'Sing'. Hunter. Sex. Beer. Best Christmas ever.*

Oo0oO

Sebastian raised his hand, signaling the bartender to bring him another of what he was already having. As the man sat the drink down before him, a dark stranger took residence in the chair next to the doctor. At first, Sebastian did not look up. Then, something about the man –*his accent. I'm a stickler for accents-* caught the Sebastian's attention. "Rum and Coke." The man said in his thick accent. The doctor's head shot up immediately. *Accent. I like.*

"You can put that on my tab, Jeffrey." Sebastian chimed.

The bartender rolled his eyes and he went to fetch the drink. "My name is Carlton. He knows that." The young man mumbled. Carlton followed instructions, however. Sebastian was –*afterall-* one of his highest tipping customers. The man that spent his weekends trolling for hookups was always generous with his money. Among other things. In Carlton's eyes, Sebastian was a catch. *I wish he realized that. He throws himself around like he doesn't matter.*

The doctor ignored the young bartender. Carlton –*yes, I know his name-* was a gorgeous, young man just trying to work his way through school. Uncharacteristic of his usual 'hit it and quit it' demeanor, Sebastian was taking a different approach with the young man. He was waiting; waiting for Carlton to grab life by the cajones and ask him on a date. Carlton wouldn't however, so Sebastian prowled. *One day he'll ask me out and we'll do more than fuck. He looks like he deserves romance. Until then, I have a hot....Aussie? sitting next to me and he looks ripe for the picking.*

Sebastian turned his full attention to the tall, dark stranger to his right. "So, what brings you here?" He asked seductively. *Because I know what can get you away.*

The man shrugged. "Just....checking things out, I suppose."

Sebastian nodded. Understood. "Well, I know something you can check out if you're interested."

The man grinned, toothy and wide in a way that made Sebastian a bit uncomfortable. "It'll have to be at your place. I'm just visiting." The man responded. He then stuck out his hand. "I'm Nathan."

Nathan. I like it. Sebastian's hand went out as well. "Sebastian. Let's get out of here."

"Lets."

Oo0oO

Keenan crawled into his bed and pulled his blankets up to his chest. Bedtime was upon him once again. He and Beth's countdown to Christmas was almost at it's close. One more day, then Christmas. One more day.

Kurt plopped down on the ledge of his son's bed, smiling down at the boy. "Do you still want me to read to you or was the song you made me call Stitch for good enough?" Keenan grinned. An hour before bedtime, the little boy begged his daddy to call Stitch for a song. Stitch sang a "White Christmas" to him in a way that made a bedtime story unnecessary.

"I don't need a story. I'm good." Keenan watched as his daddy nodded.

"Good. Now go to sleep. We're going to see Grandma Liz tomorrow and we're going to check on the animals at the shelter. We have a busy day and I need my right hand guy well rested." A spell passed as Kurt stared down at his son. His first Christmas without a Papa was shaping up better than the young father expected. Keenan did not seem to notice the absence of the other man nearly as much as he had before. "Rest your eyes, Keen."

Keenan's eyes slipped shut at his father's request. "Night, Daddy. I love you lots." The boy whispered.

"Love you lots more." Moments later, the boy was asleep. With one last longing look at the child, Kurt stood and headed to his own room. Just as he'd told his son, they had a long day ahead of them. *Rest will do us both a bit of good.*

Chapter Seventeen

"Are we going to your parents' house for Christmas?" Having Finn around at all times was Heaven on Earth for Rachel. Waking up in his arms was magical and falling asleep next to him was perfect. She felt like the luckiest girl in the world.

Finn ceased brushing his teeth momentarily to look at his girlfriend. Finally. Sneaking around. They no longer had to. Lying to get out of the house. It wasn't necessary. They were together and that was what mattered. Mostly. As they crept closer to Christmas, Finn began to notice things about Rachel. First and foremost, Finn noticed her need to assert herself as his official girlfriend. He understood –mostly. After years of being hidden away during high school and again upon their reconnection, Rachel wanted everyone to know that she was the girlfriend of Finn Hudson. Thus, she asked the question. Unfortunately, the answer she was going to receive would not be one she was pleased with. "I'm sorry, Rach. Quinn isn't comfortable with you being around Beth yet. She says that-"

"Why is she still bossing you around?" Rachel cut in. She leapt from her bed and was propped in the bathroom doorway in a matter of seconds. "You guys are getting a divorce! That's it. She doesn't have a right to tell you what to do anymore!" The young woman shouted.

The sound of Finn's toothbrush hitting the ceramic sink rang throughout the room. "Dammit, Rachel. I'm doing my best. If I bring you along then I risk not seeing my daughter for Christmas. I'm sorry but I can't do that."

Me or Beth. Rachel knew it was not a fair situation for Finn to be in, but she desperately wanted to spend Christmas with her boyfriend. *Even if I'm Jewish.* She would not partake in the traditions of the Hummel-Hudson Christmas but she hoped that the time spent together would bring her and Finn closer to one another. Also, she wanted desperately to have a relationship with his child. Beth was the most important person in Finn's world and Rachel wanted to join that. The little girl already held a tiny space in her heart –*she's Finn's daughter after all.*

"Besides, Kurt will obviously be there."

"Never mind." Rachel backed down as quickly as she could. Kurt. He was the reason she'd missed a full week of work. Kurt was snotty –arrogant- and an all-around pain in Rachel's perfectly shaped ass. "I'll just go hang out with my dads. I finally told them about you. They were excited."

Forgetting the toothbrush in the sink –its final resting place as it seemed- Finn shut off the bathroom light and stepped into the bedroom with his girlfriend. "Do they know about Beth? I know they spent a lot of time in New York while we were in high school, so they never found out about her or me marrying Quinn." He questioned nervously. The ex-football player –current personal trainer at Lima Xtreme, a new local gym- wanted to impress his girlfriend's fathers. He intended to marry her one day. That meant being honest with them. Finn wanted them to know about his daughter; to accept her.

"They know everything. They were disappointed that we snuck around but they are happy that you got out of your loveless marriage. They just want to see us happy. Oh, and they can't wait to meet Beth. Just like me. I can't wait to meet her."

"I know."

Rachel leaned in, kissing her boyfriend on the forehead. "But I will wait. I know that this is your last chance to spend a 'real' Christmas with your daughter. I just wanted to be part of it."

Finn grinned. Rachel was great; amazing. "You will be."

"I know."

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Kurt was at his wit's ends. Already. By ten that morning, he and his son had braved the crowds of three different stores. Wal-Mart –*because Dad ran out of wrapping paper last night and because Carole forgot yams-* a local dollar store –*apparently they couldn't tell me the house was out of paper towels while I was at Wal-Mart-* and Rosie's, a local florist. Rosie's was an experience all its own. Never had the young father imagined that a florist would be jam packed with customers on Christmas Eve. *Obviously I was wrong.*

Father and son stood patiently in the line, hoping that it would move steadily. It did not. So they stood. And stood. And stood. Eventually, they made it to the front of the line. Poetically, with he and his son standing in front of the counter and a room full of people behind him, the clerk made an announcement. "Sorry, folks. We're shutting down for the day. Merry Christmas all."

A few cries of outrage sounded behind the technician. Kurt did not move, however. He stood stock still, staring absently at the young clerk. "I'm sorry," He eventually managed. "You have a room full of people. What do you mean you're shutting down? There wasn't a sign that said you were closing at a specific time. You're obviously not out of flowers." Kurt motioned to the coolers of flowers behind the clerk. "How can you just announce that you're shutting down for the day? We're here to get flowers. Most of us have waited over an hour to get these flowers."

The clerk shrugged as she pulled the cash drawer from the register. "The boss is ready to go. Besides, it's Christmas Eve." Her response was lame at best and Kurt was not accepting it.

"So, you're shutting down early on Christmas Eve without any indication that you were shutting down early?" The young woman nodded. To Kurt, she looked like a bobble head. With her frizzy, red ponytail bouncing up as her chin tucked down, the father wondered she would continue if he flicked her nose. Probably not. "So, that's it? You're just going to kick us out on Christmas Eve?" Kurt was aware of the crowd behind him. He could hear their claps and grunts of agreement. The probability was high that they were all there for the same reason; a reason that the young woman had to understand. *She has to get it. I'll explain it anyways.*

"Do you know why we all come here for flowers?" *It never hurts to try a different approach.* The girl seemed thrown by the question. Kurt waved a few people out of his line of vision and pointed out the front window and across the snowy street. "Do you see that, over there? It's a cemetery. Most of us get our flowers from here because it's the closest flower shop to our buried loved ones. With that being said, I think you should put your little drawer back and help this line of people."

"Yeah!" A man behind Kurt shouted angrily.

"Sorry, sir. No can do. Besides, shouldn't you be preparing for the birthday of our lord and savior, rather than putting silly trinkets on the place that holds the body of your loved one? What about their souls? You can only get close to the keeper of that in a church. Go home and prepare for Christ's birthday. Your loved one will still be there after his birthday." *No. She. Did. Not.* Kurt's hands began to shake with every word out of the young woman's mouth. *She's just a child.* He told himself. *She can't be more than seventeen. Don't end her life now. Don't drag her by the rat's nest on her head across the counter. You'll go to jail and Keenan will have to visit you there.*

Keenan. Kurt looked down to see his son staring at the woman with the iciest pair of hazel eyes the little boy could muster. "Can we just go, Daddy?" The little boy hissed through gritted teeth. "I don't like this lady."

What was Kurt to do? His son was frustrated. He was frustrated. And the woman seemed unrelenting in her mission to make Midnight Mass. "Sure, honey." Kurt responded. Together, father and son turned and made their way to the door. As they went, the crowd parted like The Red Sea. Some patted him on the back for his efforts while others simply clapped.

"Merry Christmas!" The girl shouted just as Kurt's hand reached the door.

Kurt turned on a dime. "Oh....Happy Holidays!" He spat before storming out of the store.

"Happy Holidays!" Keenan mimicked. He then staged an equally dramatic storm out. If he was going to be like anyone, he was going to be like his daddy. *Daddy does the best storm outs.*

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"The poinsettias are beautiful, Mom." Blaine looked at the many arrangements. They were gorgeous. Some were large while others were small. "Can I ask a question though? Why so many? We usually do one for Grandma Lena's, one for Grandpa Roy's, one for Nana Antoinette, and one for Papa James. There are eight here."

Julia smiled at her son as they continued to load the plants into the back of the rental SUV. "Because. I want to give some to Kurt for his mother and for his stepmother's first husband. Poinsettias are nice and I figured he might want some." Blaine's smile broadened as he loaded the last of the plants into the trunk of the large vehicle.

"That's so sweet. I'm sure Kurt will love them." Julia winked at her son. They shared a moment -mother and son- before being interrupted by Cooper. Of course. It was always Cooper.

"Let's get this bitch going. I'm starving." Cooper shouted as he strolled from the porch. Blaine rolled his eyes just as his father's hand connected with the back of his brother's head. Some things never changed. And they wouldn't change. Cooper would always be infuriating and the family would always pretend that it bothered them. It didn't; not too much.

Once the flowers were loaded and secured, the quartet huddled into the rental car –Julia and Jay in the front while Blaine and Cooper squished into the backseat. Together, they headed to The Greater Lima Cemetery to pay their respects.

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Kurt sat in the front seat, dialing every flower shop that popped up in his online search.

No answer.

No answer.

'We're closing in a few minutes.'

'Sorry. We're locking up now.'

He could not win to save his life. A bouquet. He needed a simple bouquet of flowers to lay near the headstone of his dearly departed mother. Unfortunately, the Christmas plans of others were hindering him from getting one. "Ugggg....Keen." Kurt sought out his son's eyes through the rear view mirror. "We may be out of luck with the flowers. We'll have to see Grandma Lizzie without them." Keenan's lips dipped into an intense frown. *I know. Trust me, I know.* "I'm sorry, buddy."

"Why don't we call Stitch? He might have some flowers we can give Grandma?"

Kurt mulled over the idea. *He also might help me find my sanity after this nerve wrecking day.* Decision made, Kurt pulled his phone from the cup holder and dialed Blaine's number. Two rings later, his boyfriend was on the line. "Hey, baby. What's up?" Blaine sounded particularly chipper. *Good for him.*

"Nothing. Just....spent all day running errands with Keen and now I'm exhausted. On top of that, the flower shop across from the cemetery decided that they didn't participate in the season's merriment and kicked an entire line of people out of the shop so they could close." Kurt did his best not to sound bitter. It was difficult when he was so angry. *This is Blaine. You're talking to Blaine on Christmas Eve. He doesn't need your frustration.*

Blaine hissed into the phone. "That sucks, babe. There is this flower shop across from my grandparents' cemetery that did that to me one year. I screamed at the idiot clerk before storming out." Sounds familiar.

"Well, I've been going to Rosie's for years and I've never had them treat me like they did today. It was so disappointing."

"Rosie's!" Blaine exclaimed. "That's where I was. Wait! Are you still there? If so, you're right across the street from me." Kurt's head jerked wildly as he stared toward the cemetery across the street. What were the odds? What were the odds that his boyfriend's grandparents were buried in the same cemetery as his mother. *Actually, we should have known that. There is only one cemetery in Lima.*

"We're still here. We're trying to figure out a way to get flowers for my mom. Keenan told me to call you but you're already-"

"My mom bought poinsettias for your mother and Finn's father. She bought them for the graves. She thought it would be nice. We were going to deliver them later. I can meet you at the gate and you can put your mother's there now. I'm walking towards the gate. Where are you?" Blaine's rambling caused a chuckle to escape Kurt's lips. *Rambler. Damn Rambler.*

"We're in the car. We'll meet you over there." Never ones to say goodbye, the couple hung up. Then, Kurt turned to his son. "Calling Stitch was a great idea. He's meeting us across the street with something for Grandma Lizzie's grave." Keenan squealed with excitement as they exited the car. *Cool time with cool Stitch and Grandma Lizzie's grave. Cool.*

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Keenan screeched and scrambled as quickly as he could to Stitch when he noticed him standing near the entrance of the cemetery. Kurt thanked his lucky stars that they'd already crossed the street. At times, he wondered if his son's common sense would ever kick in. Times when the little boy decided to dash towards oncoming traffic only to be pulled back at the last moment or times when the boy did not pay attention while walking up and down stairs, only to be caught tumbling by the person behind him, solidified the fact that, no, his common sense would not likely kick in any time soon.

The veterinarian scooped the little boy up with his free hand and plopped him onto his hip. Hip baby. Kurt's eyes traveled to his boyfriend's free hand. There, Blaine balanced the plant that his mother purchased. "Hey, Keen. Are you and Daddy going to see your Grandma?" The little boy nodded.

"Yep. The lady at the flower shop was mean to us. It's okay now though. I told Daddy you would have flowers for us. I was right! YAY!" Keenan wiggled –danced as he liked to call it- in Blaine's arms. So much so that he nearly dropped the plant that he was holding. Luckily, Kurt was there. The younger man stepped forward and grabbed the plant from his boyfriend's weary hand.

The technician examined the plant. It was gorgeous. Full and lively. *Just like my mom used to be.* Before he knew it, tears were pricking the edges of his eyes. *It's just a plant. It's just a plant.* He continued to tell himself. It wasn't though. Like most things that were alive and well, Kurt was reminded of what his mother once was. That was before cancer took her. *Damn that cancer.* "You okay, babe?"

When did Blaine get so close? When Kurt looked up from the plant, he saw his son dashing into the cemetery and his boyfriend by his side. Kurt nodded. "I'm fine. Just...I have to go get him." Blaine waved him off.

"Don't worry about it. My dad and Coop are just around the corner. They'll catch him before he gets too far."

"Blaine!" It was Cooper's voice that cut through the chill December air. "Your son just faked me out. He's too fast for me to catch him." Kurt groaned. Of course Keenan outran Cooper. *Hell, he could outrun a freaking cheetah.*

"I gotta...." Kurt hitched his thumb in the direction of the cemetery. He received no response from his boyfriend. "Okay. We'll be back."

"Kay." Kurt offered a stiff nod, confused as to why his boyfriend was completely unresponsive. Keenan ran into the cemetery. *That's what I heard. What the hell did he hear?* Kurt shrugged and dashed in search of his son. He loved Blaine but he didn't have time for Blaine's clouded brain at that moment.

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Your son. The words ran through Blaine's head backwards and forwards. Never had he imagined that those words would warm his heart as much as they did. For a brief moment, Blaine felt like he could strip off his clothes and run the streets of Lima without fear of the unforgiving wind or mountains of snow. He wouldn't be cold if he did. His heart was warm after all.

"My son." Blaine liked the way it sounded. Blaine being Blaine, he said it again with more force. "My. Son." *His.* Not Nathan's. *His.* And Kurt's. That was how it should have been. Keenan should have been his son. He never would have left. Never. Not Kurt and not Keenan. Blaine would have stayed. He would have fought for them. *I will fight for them. Both of them.* Cooper's words lit a fire inside the veterinarian. He would fight for them. He would make sure they knew he loved them. Kurt was his boyfriend and, one day, he hoped Keenan would be his son.

One day, I'll be his Papa and I'll love him like he's never been loved before. One day. For the time being, Blaine would keep it to himself. The thoughts that ran through his head were heavy hitters. He needed to sort each thought out and make plans. He would. New Year's was just a week away. *I think that will be my resolution.*

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Snow crunched beneath Doc Martin's as Kurt scurried about the cemetery in search of his son. *I swear my day couldn't get any worse.* Kurt whipped his neck from side to side, hoping to catch a glimpse of the red beanie with the giant, blonde curls poking from beneath it. As much as Kurt disliked Keenan's mother, Sarah, he thanked his lucky stars for those curls. He wouldn't admit it, but Kurt often imagined that his son got his curls from Blaine. And his eyes. Keenan and Blaine were the only two people on the planet with gorgeous, honey hive eyes in Kurt's opinion.

"Keenan!" Kurt shouted as he made his way around the cemetery. His journey was not in vain. He knew where he was headed. His mother's grave. Past Derek Johnson –'loving father and son'- and Jessica Corey –'taken too soon'- Kurt made his way to his mother's final resting place. "Keenan!" He continued to shout on the off chance that Keenan had not run straight there.

Around a corner and up a small hill, Kurt noticed a bouncing red object in the midst of the blankets of snow. Keenan. Of course. He was a mere few feet in front of his mother's plot and he was running in erratic circles. *That's odd.* "Keenan! What are you doing?" Kurt shouted as he jogged the rest of the way.

"Playing!" The little boy replied, continuing to run in misshapen circles. *Obviously.* Kurt made it over the hill to find his son doing something that he did not approve of. He was running in small circles, chasing a tiny dog.

"Keenan! Who's dog is that?" Kurt asked as he snatched his son away from the animal. The dog –*probably a puppy*- whimpered when his friend was taken away.

Keenan shrugged. "I guess he's mine. He's a Christmas present from Grandma Lizzie."

What? Kurt was confused. "Grandma Lizzie gave you the puppy?"

"Yep. He was shivering on her headstone when I got here. Then, when he saw me, he ran up to me and started playing."

What? Kurt placed his son back on his feet and stepped toward the animal. The tiny, brown puppy was shivering. There was no collar on the animal and he looked starved. As a member of the animal loving community, Kurt would get him to a warm, safe place. He would make sure the animal was fed. He would not, however, let his son have the animal. "Can we feed Lizzie Borden when we get him home?"

A name? Really? "We're not taking Liz-the dog home. We'r-"

Keenan cut his father off, he had to. "Yes we are, Daddy. Grandma Lizzie gave me that puppy for Christmas. You're not going to take him away from me. What would your mother say?" *You little....brat!* Using his love for his mother against him. Keenan was a crafty child. On top of that, Keenan shot him the most pitiful, puppy dog eyes in the world. Only rivaled by those of the actual puppy. Kurt was stuck.

In an instant, the technician deflated. "Fine. But I have to take him to be seen by Blaine before you can have him. If all looks well then you'll have two pets. It'll be like having two kids. You still have to feed Kel and you'll have to clean up after this one until he's housebroken." Not really. Kurt would not make his son clean up animal poo. "And feed him. You have to feed him and play for him all the time. I hope you're ready."

"I am." Keenan squeaked, eying the dog. He wanted to hold him badly but he knew it would not happen. *Daddy and Stitch have to make sure he's okay before I can have him. I hope he is. I already love Lizzie Borden.*

"Good. Now come on. We need to go thank Grandma Lizzie for your puppy." Keenan nodded excitedly. Yes. He would definitely thank her.

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Blaine's initial shock wore off and he was able begin his search for his boyfriend and...son. *I still like the way that sounds*. He found them across the cemetery, stooped down near a headstone. Kurt's mother presumably. They were huddled close and Kurt was holding something in his arm. Gone was his jacket. He was shivering.

Without thinking, Blaine shrugged off his winter coat and headed towards them. Neither turned from the headstone. Blaine draped his coat over his boyfriend's shoulders. Finally, Kurt reacted. His head turned slowly until he and Blaine's eyes met. The veterinarian's breathe caught when he noticed that Kurt's celestial eyes were dancing in a sea of tears. "Oh. Hey." Kurt pulled an arm from beneath the coat and wiped away a stray tear. "You didn't have to give me your jacket."

"Where is yours?" Blaine asked, not noticing the bundle in his boyfriend's arm.

"He used it to keep Lizzie Borden warm." Keenan replied, staring longingly at the bundle in his father's arms.

Lizzie Borden? What? Kurt noticed the look on his boyfriend's face immediately. "Apparently, my mother – wherever she is in the universe- decided that Keen needed a puppy so," the technician unwrapped the bundle in his arms until a snout poked out, "Lizzie Borden."

Blaine's heart melted. The temperature was just above zero and snow was falling steadily. Had they not made it to the cemetery that day, Lizzie Borden may have frozen. "Are we taking her-"

"Him."

"Him to the shelter?" Kurt nodded.

"Yeah. We need to check him out and then I told Keen he can have him."

"Okay. One question though. Why Lizzie Borden?"

Keenan's mouth fell. "Why not? Lizzie Borden was only the coolest lady ever?" Okay, maybe Blaine had cause for concern when it came to the little boy. If he remembered correctly, Lizzie Borden took an ax and gave her mother forty wacks.

Out of the side of his eyes, Blaine noticed Kurt. He was shaking his head. "What am I not getting?" The veterinarian asked.

"Promise not to laugh?"

"No." Blaine replied. "I will not promise that. If it's funny, I reserve the right to laugh."

Kurt rolled his eyes. "Elizabeth Kate Borden." Kurt swept his arm towards the headstone that read 'Elizabeth Kate Hummel'. "It was her maiden name."

Don't laugh. Don't laugh. "Your mother's name was Elizabeth Borden?" Blaine eventually asked, still trying to hold back his laughter. Kurt nodded.

"Yep and my dad loved being the one to remind her of it. He called her Lizzie Borden every day until she died."

"Good to know. With that being said, Lizzie Borden definitely sounds like the coolest lady ever." Keenan grinned, nodding as he stared at his grandmother's headstone. He never met her, but he knew she was there. Somewhere, his Grandma Lizzie was there for him. Watching over him. Caring for him and his father. She was always there.

Kurt and Keenan returned their attention to the headstone. Noticing that the moment had passed, Blaine stepped back a bit, allowing them their privacy. One day, he and Kurt would bring her flowers and he would be introduced to the woman that should have been his mother in law. Today was not that day. Kurt and Keenan needed their time with her and Blaine needed to give them that time.

When they were finished, Kurt, Keenan, and Lizzie Borden joined Blaine. "Keenan, my parents are here, would you like to go to lunch with them and Cooper? Your daddy and I could take Lizzie Borden to the shelter and check him out then." The little boy nodded and the decision was made.

Not too long later, Kurt and Blaine were in his car, heading to the shelter and Keenan was in the rental with Blaine's family, heading to lunch. While they did not get everything they intended to do that day finished, Kurt and Blaine were not upset. The day ended just as it should have ended; with them together.

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"Alright," Kurt snapped his gloves off and tossed them haphazardly into a nearby trash receptacle. "We're dewormed, deflead, our nails are clipped, we've got our shots, we're all clean, and we're warming up. Do you feel better Lizzie Borden?" Kurt ran a hand over the dog's brown fur, earning a wag of the animal's tail. "Now we just have to wait for Blaine to finish checking on the others and we'll go home. How does that sound?"

Moments after Kurt bundled Lizzie Borden in a blanket from the supply closet, Blaine returned. "All looks well." He chirped as he made his way across the room. The veterinarian ran gentle hand over the animal's fur. "You look like you ate feeling better." The dog whimpered. *I guess that's as good as a yes.*

Blaine's eyes flickered up from the animal to its owner. Kurt was smiling warmly at him. "That's all thanks to you. You are amazing."

Blaine scoffed. Hardly. "Whatever. You could have done it by yourself. You have done it by yourself. All I did was handle something you could have clearly taken care of on your own. You were busy though." It was true. Kurt was gathering supplies to take home for Lizzie Borden.

"My mom text me while I was checking on the others. She said they got us to-go boxes from the restaurant and they also said Keenan is giving them the rundown of his future plans." Kurt quirked an eyebrow. *That couldn't be good.* "Yeah. He said he's going to marry a girl and a boy when he grows up. He wants two girlfriends; his words. Mom said Cooper is worshipping him as the greatest person since Jesus right now and much Dad is worshipping him as well. I think we should get back before he gets a big head about himself."

"Ya think." Kurt chuckled. Together they gathered Lizzie -and his belongings- and headed to the car. They had family waiting.

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Kurt, Keenan, and Lizzie Borden left Blaine's house late that evening. They had to get home and into bed so that Santa could come.

"You guys are stopping by here tomorrow, right?" Blaine asked as he placed the nearly sleeping child into his car seat. Kurt placed the kennel holding Lizzie Borden into the front seat before turning to his boyfriend.

"We wouldn't have it any other way. I can't give you your Christmas present if we don't." The younger man watched as his boyfriend's eyes darkened.

"Is it a naked present?" Blaine asked. "If so, I can have everyone out of the house in under ten minutes."

Kurt rolled his eyes. "It's not a gift like that, idiot. I do think you'll like it, however." Blaine pouted, earning a kiss from his boyfriend. "You look so pathetic when you pout." Kurt then climbed into the car. "We'll see you tomorrow, baby. Love."

"Love you too." Blaine shouted as he watched his boyfriend and....son....wave to him from behind the foggy windows of the car. "Drive safely." Blaine saw Kurt nod. Moments later, the engine sounded and Kurt was backing out of the driveway. Tomorrow. Tomorrow wouldn't come soon enough.

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Quinn sat on Beth's bed as the little girl dressed herself for the evening. Brand new Justin Beiber pajamas. *My how she's grown.* To Quinn, it felt like just yesterday when her little girl needed to be helped in and out of her pajamas. It felt like just a week ago when Quinn was changing stinky diapers and begging the little girl to sleep through the night.

"I look pretty, Mommy." It wasn't a question, but a statement. I look pretty. It was true. Beth always looked pretty. Even at a young age, Quinn knew that her daughter would gorgeous in a classic sense of the word. *I just hope that she doesn't let it go to her head like I did.*

"You look gorgeous, baby. So pretty." Quinn confirmed. "But it's time for bed. Santa cannot come if you're awake."

Beth scoffed. "Mommy, I don't believe in Santa anymore. The only reason I go along with it is because Keen does." *When did she grow up? Was it while I was working two jobs and going to night classes? Probably. Finn got to see her grow up. I didn't.*

"Well, whatever. Get your rear in gear and hop in bed. You don't get presents if you don't sleep." Beth plopped next to her mother on the bed. "Your father will be here in the morning. He and I want you to have a nice Christmas and that means involving him. We also want to talk to you afterward. We want to sit down and discuss everything that has happened between he and I. Will you be up for that, darling?"

Beth shrugged as she crawled beneath her covers. "Its fine, Mommy. I know you and Daddy are getting a divorce. Like, one kid a week comes into my class or to lunch and says their parents are splitting up. I know it doesn't mean that you guys love me less and I know it doesn't mean that I'll never see Daddy again. It means that you guys grew apart. I'm just happy that you guys aren't being mean about it. Susie, at my school, told me that her Daddy threw eggs at her mom's car."

"Wow!" Quinn did not see that coming. "Umm...okay. Well, we're still going to talk to you tomorrow, so get some sleep." The mother stood from her daughter's bed after planting a kiss on her forehead. "I love you Beth."

"Love you too, Mommy." Moments later, Quinn exited the room, her heart a little lighter than it had been since Finn left.

Quinn woke early the next morning. She and Carole had a tradition of baking cinnamon rolls for the family on Christmas morning. They prepared them the night before and baked them first thing in the morning. Throwing on a robe and a pair of slippers, the blonde made her way downstairs. From the smell of it, the rolls were already baking and the coffee was brewing. The house smelled delicious.

Rounding the corner, Quinn noticed Burt sitting at the kitchen island, watching his wife work. Since the fateful dinner that ended her marriage, Burt and Carole were in an unfamiliar place. They seemed to be at odds. Quinn hated it. Burt and Carole were the marriage that she aspired to have one day; not with Finn, but with someone. As time passed, they seemed to be mending the distrust that her husband's lies brought about.

"Hey, guys." The blonde said as she stepped into the kitchen. "Merry Christmas."

Burt looked over his shoulder and smiled. "Hey, darling. Merry Christmas." Carole, who stood next to her husband, held her arms open for the young woman. Quinn fell into them anxiously. Her day grew brighter as love radiated from Carole's body to her own.

When the two pulled apart, Quinn hugged her father in law. Bear hugs. That was the only way to describe them. Sturdy and strong, just like Burt.

"Quinn," Carole cut in, "we wanted to give you your Christmas present early. Why don't you sit down?" Quinn pulled away from Burt and took the bar stool next to him. When she was settled, she turned her attention to the couple.

"What's up?"

Burt smiled at her. "First, we want you to know that this gift is nonrefundable. You can't give it back and you cannot regift it. Do you understand?" The blonde furrowed her eyebrows, but nodded none the less. "Okay, now that we've got that out of the way...." Burt allowed the sentence to hang in the air as he slid a white envelope across the island.

Quinn quickly grabbed it, fumbling to open the seal. Once it was open, she stared at it in disbelief. It was a check. "Now, we know what you're thinking. You're thinking that this check is obscenely large. But, it's actually half of everything you paid us for rent and utilities over the past year. You're so close to finishing school and it's going to be tough." Quinn kept her eyes locked on the check as Burt spoke.

"You're going to be tired and you are not going to have time to work both jobs. So, we want you and Beth to live here for free and we want you to quit one of your jobs so that you can focus on your daughter and school."

"I can't."

"Yes, you can." Burt insisted. "You can and you will. If you live under my roof, you go by my rules. Now, I personally think you should quit the diner. Home Depot gives me an amazing discount because you live in my house and I'd like to keep that." Quinn chuckled at her father in law's reasoning. *Well, he won't be much longer.*

"Are you sure I can't give this back? I don't feel right taking it." She eventually responded. Her eyes were watering and her nose was running. She'd never received a nicer gift.

"Abso -freaking-lutely. You cannot give that back." Carole insisted. "Now get over here and help me with these rolls. They aren't going to make themselves."

Quinn jumped up and threw an arm around each person's neck. "Thank you, guys. Thank you so much."

"Merry Christmas, Quinn." They shouted in unison.

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"Get. Off. Me. Or. Die." Kurt groaned sleepily. It was far too early to be woken up. Far. Too. Early. Unfortunately for him, the assailant did not feel so. The bouncing on his back continued, much to the technician's disdain.

"Daddy, it's Christmas. We have to go down to the house to see what Santa brought us." Keenan's voice ran throughout the room with a chipperness that Kurt could not comprehend. The father wanted to shout –to scream- that it was too early for normal people to be awake. He could not. It was Christmas and his son was wide awake. There was no going back to the magical land of dreams.

With a sigh, Kurt rolled onto his side –sending his son toppling onto the bed- and sat up. There was no use prolonging the situation. Keenan was going to make sure his father was up and out of bed, regardless of how Kurt felt. "Give me a second to wash my face and brush my teeth. You should do the same. Then, we'll go down to the house." Keenan nodded eagerly, hopping out of the bed as he did so. *Presents. Presents. I can't wait to get my presents.*

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Father, son, and Lizzie Borden braved the snow in an attempt to get to the house. *At least 700 feet fell last night.* Or at least Kurt told himself so. The stairs from the apartment were covered with it and there was no sight of the tiny path that connected the house to the garage. So, they trekked. Through the snow and into the house. Once there, Kurt and Keenan pulled off their snow gear and hung it in the laundry room.

From the sounds of it, everyone was already awake. The house smelled of cinnamon and coffee and the sound of merriment could be heard from the family room. *Definitely awake.* The sound of his father's overzealous laughter could be heard from a mile away. It was melodic; mixing perfectly with the the sounds of Quinn and Carole's laughter in the background. Harmonious.

Kurt placed Lizzie Borden's kennel –*I have to return that to the shelter and buy him one tomorrow-* next to the door and the three walked into the living room. "Morning." Kurt greeted halfheartedly as he plopped down in an empty seat. Keenan took a spot next to his cousin at the foot of the Christmas tree.

Quinn scurried away the moment Kurt sat down. When she returned, she had a steaming cup of coffee for him. "You look like you need it."

"I do." Kurt mumbled as he used his free hand to grab the cup from her grasp. The first few sips were scorching hot, burning his throat in a way that he hated to admit that he loved. The next few went down just right. "Okay. Are we ready to start?" He asked when the cup was drank dry.

"We're waiting on my daddy, Uncle Kurt." Beth responded. *Oh Gawd. No. Not Finn.* Kurt put on his best award winning smile for his niece. She did not deserve his cattiness.

"Great." Satisfied, Beth turned her attention back to the lit tree. The twinkling lights caught her attention and refused to let go. While Beth was watching the tree, Kurt was watching the dog.

"What's he got in 'im?" His father asked at one point. It was a loaded question. Kurt believed that the dog was at least some part pit bull. From his large, block shaped head, down to his giant paws, and pronounced waddle, Kurt saw Lizzie as a pit bull. Blaine begged to differ. *'American Bulldog and something else.'* Blaine said. *'Maybe he's got some German Shepard in him.'* Neither could say for sure because –like people- dogs were all distinct and origin could not be determined solely on appearance. That was why Blaine insisted that they run a genetic test when regular business hours resumed.

"To be determined." The technician eventually answered. Burt let out a grunt before leaning back into his chair.

The small family waited an additional forty-five minutes for Finn to arrive. When he did, it was to the bright and smiling faces of his daughter, Burt, and his mother; all three were individuals that loved him unconditionally, despite his mistakes. Quinn offered a cordial smile but did not speak when her husband walked in. In return, Finn did not speak. The air between them was chilly, but not so much so that their daughter noticed. Kurt and Keenan were a different story. Still upset over his spanking, Keenan simply stared at his uncle. It was more than his father offered. Kurt kept his eyes fixed on the dog in his lap, not looking up at his stepbrother once.

What he did to Quinn was wrong, but I have no idea why I'm this angry at him. Wait, yes I do.

Kurt did know. The hurt. The betrayal. They were feelings associated with his time with Nathan. Nathan and Finn were now the same in Kurt's eyes. The raw feeling of disdain he had for his ex were now being projected toward his step brother. *Its his fault.* He cheated.

"Alright kids. Let's get this show on the road." Carole hollered over the now chattering group. The children snapped her attention toward their grandmother. "I know this will be a free for all but at least try to read the name of the person who gave it to you before ripping the paper to shreds." The children nodded. They would do their best. "Have at it then."

Chaos broke out around the tree as Keenan and Beth worked to open their gifts. They called out names as they went.

"From Uncle Kurt."

"From Santa."

"From Grandma."

"From Aunt Quinn."

"From Santa."

"From Daddy."

"From Daddy."

"From Daddy."

Finn seemed pleased with himself. For each handful of gifts that his daughter received from others, he bought her a mountains worth. It would never ease the guilt he felt but it would make his daughter smile.

Keenan stood from a spot amidst piles of discarded wrapping paper and walked hesitantly to his uncle. "This is from Daddy and me." he said as he handed the man the gift. Finn smiled and took it graciously.

"Thanks Keen. I'm sorry buddy. I forgot to get you guys something." Kurt held his breathe and counted to ten. Tradition. Each person received at least one gift from everyone else. The tradition started when Burt and Carole married years ago. For Finn to forget to get Keenan a gift was disappointing and upsetting to the technician.

"Its okay." Keenan replied. It wasn't; not in Kurt's eyes. Once again, he kept his mouth shut. *This is their day.*

The gifts went fast. Kurt received a check from his parents which he tried to return. *Oh well, it'll help with the surprise trip I'm planning for Keen's birthday.* He received a Home Depot gift card from Beth and Quinn. Which would serve him well since he'd decided to paint the living room in the apartment. He also received a handmade card from Keenan. *It'll look great on the Fridge.*

The children received toys. And toys. Electronics. Toys. And more toys.

Burt and Carole received handmade gifts. They insisted upon it. Keenan gave them a drawing of the entire family -one that included Stitch and a hastily drawn in Kel. Beth and Quinn gave them a handmade coupon for a ' Fine dining' experience at home.

'*We'll be your waitresses.*' Beth shouted at one point.

Kurt baked cookies. They were a health conscious recipe they he found one online but his father did not need to know that.

Finn gave them nothing. He also offered no explanations or apologies.

Quinn received her own handmade cards, as well as a spa package from Kurt and Keenan. She expected nothing from Finn.

Finn received the most of any adult. Each wanted to help him out of his imaginary rut before they knew of the affair. When they found out about it, returning the gifts was not an option. Kurt and Keenan gave him a book. 'What Color Is Your Parachute?'. The young father often spoke of going back to school and Kurt assumed the book could help him find his way. Quinn bought him nothing. Something told her not to waste her money. Beth made her father a card while Burt and Carole, much to Burt's dismay, gave him a check. Finn also received a new phone, a new gaming system, and a few sets of clothing. All were marked from Santa.

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The group enjoyed themselves despite the awkward air that hung between some of its members. When all the gifts were opened and the paper was cleared, Kurt and Keenan excused themselves. They still had to

visit Blaine's house. "We'll be back before dinner." Kurt shouted as he held Lizzie Borden to his chest, wrapping his jacket around both of them.

"You better be!" His father shouted back. They would. Blaine, Cooper, and their parents having dinner with old family friends that evening while Kurt and Keenan would spend the evening with their family.

The tiny trio made their way back to their garage apartment. There, they readied themselves for an afternoon with the veterinarian and his family. Luckily for Kurt, his son did not fight while being dressed. He stood still in his spot as his father pulled the long sleeved dress shirt over his head and even cooperated when his father helped him pull on his slacks. Kurt was surprised. Keenan was never cooperative while being dressed. Some days were worse than others, but there was always some issue while dressing. Keenan never fully cooperated. "Everything okay?" Kurt asked wearily. Maybe his son wasn't feeling well. And how awful is it that I have to ask if he's feeling alright when he's not arguing with me?

Keenan nodded. "Yeah. I'm just excited to go to Stitch's house. He told me that he has a really big surprise for me, so I don't want to waste time fighting when I can have a big surprise." The little boy explained. And damn if Kurt didn't wish he had a big surprise for his son everyday. Life would be so much easier.

Once Keenan was dressed and ready, Kurt readied himself. Not long after they entered the apartment, the duo gathered Lizzie Borden into his kennel and headed down to the car. They arrived at Blaine's house a short while later. The porch was decorated with lights and plants, items that were not there the day before. Kurt was not surprised, however. Mrs. Anderson told him that her son hated decorating for Christmas, but that would not stop her from doing so. Kurt liked that about his boyfriend's mother. She picked up where her family left off.

"You ready to go open presents with Stitch and King Koopa?" Kurt asked, craning his head to see his son who was still strapped into the backseat. The boy nodded eagerly. *Presents. YES!* Satisfied with the response, Kurt unbuckled his seat belt and stepped out of the car. He was nearly as excited as his son.

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An hour after leaving home, Kurt and Keenan were seated in Blaine's living room, enjoying stories of Christmas past for the Anderson family. "And one Christmas, Blaine got so angry that he tried to throw all the gifts in the trash; all because we didn't get him a damn Princess Diana doll. To think, we never figured

out that you were gay." Julia gushed between sips of her afternoon coffee. *Three in the morning. One in the afternoon. One after dinner. I may drink too much coffee...probably not though.*

Kurt chuckled. The stories of Blaine and his legendary temper tantrums always brightened his day. The time Blaine tried to flip a picnic table because the bow his friend's mother used on his birthday present clashed with the wrapping paper. The time Blaine cried loudly for hours -at one point even sliding bonelessly down the stairs- because his father forgot to set their VCR to record 'Trading Spaces'. There was also the time that Blaine threw Cooper's cds out the second story window because his older brother refused to play The Backstreet Boys on repeat. With every story, Blaine shrank further and further away from his boyfriend. *How embarrassing.* Kurt enjoyed the stories, however. They brought life to the myth that was Blaine Anderson. Apparently, not everyone was as perfect as they often seemed.

"Alright. That's enough embarrassing me." Blaine hissed midway through his mother's third story. "They get it. I was rough as a child. Can we get to opening the gifts now?" *Please.* The room chuckled at the man's discomfort.

"I'm with Stitch. I want some presents." Keenan chirped, earning a grateful smile from the man. Slowly, the family migrated from the family room to the second floor. There was an open space at the top of the stairs that held a few chairs and Blaine's Christmas tree. That was where the presents were.

When everyone was situated -Kurt, Keenan, and Blaine on the floor in front of the tree, Julia and Jay on a tiny floral love seat, and Cooper on the bench seat near the window- they began to exchange gifts. A majority of the gifts were given to Keenan. A toy car. A set of Legos that Kurt stared at with disdain. *If I step on one of those, they all go into the garbage.* A 3DS. A few art supplies. A keyboard. All things that Keenan mentioned in passing. All things that the Andersons picked out.

Each adult waited to open their gifts. They were far too distracted with the joyous look on Keenan's face to think about their own presents. So, as Kurt or Blaine called out their name, the person would thank them, then sit their gift aside for later. With this system, it did not take long for the gifts to be sorted. Before they knew it, Blaine was pulling the last gift from behind the tree. "Alright, buddy. This is for you from me. It's very special to me and I hope it'll be special to you." Blaine handed the flat, rectangular box to the little boy and watched as Keenan's little fingers danced across the shiny, gold wrapping paper.

"What is it?" Keenan asked as he pushed a long, blond curl away from his eyes. Blaine shrugged. He was not going to spoil the surprise. *I hope it is a surprise. If he doesn't like this then I think Kurt and I will have to break up. It's kind of the best present ever.*

"Why don't you open it and find out?" Kurt asked his son. He'd watched his son open gift after gift -each more extravagant than the last- so he was eager to see what Blaine thought would top what the boy received throughout the day.

Keenan tore into the paper violently, sending shreds of paper in every direction. When the paper was gone, he stared down at the box. "It looks like clothes. This is what daddy puts clothes in when they go under the tree. Stitch, clothes aren't a Christmas present." Keenan was heartbroken. This is worse than when Papa wrapped batteries and put them under the tree. Batteries aren't supposed to be wrapped. I don't care if I needed them for my car. It was a huge let down.

Blaine leaned forward and ruffled the boy's hair. "Just open it. I promise you won't be let down." Keenan did just that. He tore the lid of the box open and stared down at the gift inside. It was clothes. Not normal clothes, however. Keenan ran his hand over the outfit. It looked like..."Is this a superhero outfit? Am I a superhero now?" He asked excitedly. Blaine chuckled before pulling the boy into his lap. He then grabbed the box that sat on the floor and placed it in front of them.

"Remember when I told you about NightBird?" Keenan nodded. He remembered. "Well, this was his costume; his exact costume. There will never be another costume like this in the entire world." Blaine began pulling the costume out of the box. For years, it sat in his attic, completely untouched. A few weeks ago when he was strolling the toy aisle at Target trying to decide what to give the little boy for Christmas, he saw a poster. It was of a group of little boys in poorly made, generic costumes. The sign below the poster said, "Every little boy wants to be a superhero." Next to the poster sat a rack of mix and match costume pieces. After staring at the poster for what felt like an eternity, Blaine realized what he wanted to give Keenan for Christmas. It could not be bought at Target. So, the veterinarian returned home and dug out the costume that his grandmother made when he was a child. He cleaned it, folded it, and wrapped it. He then tucked it away under the Christmas tree.

"My Grandma Lena made this for me when I was little." Blaine pulled the costume out and began to explain the various pieces. He explained the gloves, the body, the boots, and finally the cape. Blaine held the perfectly constructed cape up for Keenan to see. He then let most of it drop in favor of holding up a

single corner. "Do you see these letters here?" He asked. Keenan nodded as he located the 'NB' in gold thread in the corner. "Do you know what that stands for?"

"Nightbird?"

"Yep." Blaine's fingers slid effortlessly to the next corner. "And these? Do you know what the BA stands for?" This time, Keenan shook his head. "Blaine Anderson. My grandmother wanted everyone to know that her grandson was the Nightbird. Now, do you know what this stands for?" Blaine pointed to the KH stitched just above the BA. Again, Keenan shook his head. "Well, that stands for Keenan Hummel. I want everyone to know that you are the new Nightbird. Wear this outfit with pride. Use it to protect and serve your fellow Earth walkers; human and animal alike. Do you think you can do that?"

Kurt watched as his boyfriend stared at his son with an intensity that portrayed his seriousness. Oddly - comically- enough, Keenan was returning the man's hard gaze. "I can do that. I can be The Nightbird." The little boy proclaimed. With that, just like in the movies, the costume was passed from a veteran to a rookie. The group applauded as Keenan was handed the box. None could deny that the scene was as endearing as it was comical. "I won't let you down, Stitch." Keenan proclaimed as he gently handled the outfit.

Blaine smiled and wrapped his arms around the boy. "You could never let me down."

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With Keenan's gifts out of the way, the adults began to open theirs. Julia received an iPad from her boys, something that she continuously said she would buy but never got around to. She received jewelry from her husband; a common occurrence. This piece of jewelry was different, however. Instead of gold or diamonds, it was a string necklace made with a crystallized jelly fish inside. Julia saw it at a vendor's booth during a local festival a few months back and Jay must have gone back to purchase it. Julia loved the necklace. From Keenan, Julia received a homemade picture frame with a picture of himself inside.

'So you won't forget what I look like when you go back to Florida.' He said. Julia snatched the boy from her son and hugged him close. He almost made her not want to return to their house on the beach.

The last gift Julia opened was from Kurt. The woman pulled open the box to find a set of glazed, ceramic candlestick holders inside. "My friend has a kiln and I've always loved pottery. Blaine told me the color scheme of your back porch so..." Kurt motioned nervously to the objects.

"They're great, Kurt. I've been looking for something to put around my outdoor center piece and these will accent the table perfectly." Julia was genuinely pleased. There was something about handcrafted gifts that warmed her heart. "Cooper, Blaine, you guys could learn a thing or two from Kurt and Keenan."

"Thanks for making our gift look bad, Kurt." Cooper grumbled.

"Yeah!" Shouted Blaine. Father and son chuckled amongst themselves.

Jay opened his gifts next. He received a gift card to his new favorite store, Best Buy, from his sons. *Do you know what you can get at Best Buy. I upgraded my phone and bought a new television all in the same place. Greatest place on Earth if you ask me.* He received a new day planner from his wife; something that he desperately needed. *Planning walks with the dogs on the beach and drinks with the guys is tough work.* Keenan gave the eldest Anderson a handcrafted soap box car that he'd made during one of his Home Depot Kids Workshops and Kurt gave him an All Things Cars: Trans Am book with his father's phone number written inside.

"Dad said if you have any issues with the car, you can call him. Honestly, I think he's just looking for yet another car fanatic." Jay nodded absently as he flipped through the book. It was just what he needed.

Cooper went next. Receiving an envelope full of Starbucks cards for himself and his girlfriend and a gift certificate for his favorite tanning salon back home from his brother. Keenan gave the man a giant King Koopa Mario Brothers poster that he'd found at the store. Kurt gave him a gift card for his girlfriend. "You get more when you give more, if you get my drift." Cooper nodded smugly. *I get your drift, Mr. Hummel and I like the way you think.*

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Finally, it was Blaine's turn. The veterinarian opened his gifts much the same way Keenan did. He took no prisoners and he showed no shame. "Awww...Mom, Dad, a 'Sex and the City' box set. God, I've wanted this since I was thirteen. Thank you." The veterinarian gushed.

Kurt rolled his eyes. "You know, Blaine, I'm not into stereotypes but you have been gay since like the beginning of time. 'Trading Spaces', Princess Diana dolls, 'Sex and the City' box sets. You were like my soul mate before I knew what soul mates were. I'm so happy that you are as gay as you are." Blaine squealed a bit before leaning over to capture his boyfriend's lips in a chaste kiss.

"Thanks, honey. I do my best to stay as gay as I can. You know...for us and all." He replied. He then resumed his gift opening. Next was Cooper's. "Dep, Cooper? Really? You got me a bottle of Dep?" Cooper nodded eagerly. *What? He likes hair gel.* "Whatever. I'm taking your tanning salon card back. I can't believe you bought me a bottle of Dep." Regardless of how frustrated Blaine was, he did not toss the bottle aside as he intended to do. It was an industrial size bottle and he was out of hair gel. *I'll just use it...for now. I'm still angry though.*

"This one is from me, Stitch. Look, I wrote your name on it by myself." Blaine leaned over Keenan's shoulder and admired the boy's scrawl. 'To: sTIICh From: KeeNAN'. The veterinarian smiled as he took the gift from the boy's outstretched hands and tore through the paper. It was a set of collage frames full of pictures of Kurt and Keenan. Upon closer examination, Blaine realized that the frames and their pictures were twins. There was two of everything. "We got two so you can have one for your desk at work and one for your room." The little boy explained. He then went on to explain each picture.

"This one is me and Daddy right after we got Kel. See the black cat? That's Kel." Keenan quickly moved to the next picture. "And this one was from my first day of school. Do you like it?" Blaine nodded eagerly. He loved it. Keenan worked his way around the frame, explaining each of the tiny pictures that made the border. He then moved to the middle picture, the biggest picture in the frame. "This is my favorite picture of me and Daddy. I was a baby. Daddy says I couldn't talk, but I don't remember. I think I could always talk and he just couldn't hear me." Blaine stared long and hard at the black and white picture Keenan was point to. It was of Kurt, holding an infant Keenan. Kurt had a smile on his face and his eyes shone nothing but love towards the little boy in his arms.

"I think that's my favorite picture too." Blaine eventually admitted. The picture was perfect because the subjects were perfect. Blaine sat staring at the picture for a while before gingerly placing the frames on a nearby end table. He would put them where they belonged later. "Alright, last gift." He advised excitedly. He could not imagine what Kurt got him.

"Okay, before I give this to you, just know that size does not matter."

"Yes it does." Cooper shouted, earning glares from the group. "Sorry."

Kurt picked up where he left off. "I had an awful time trying to figure out what to get you. I looked and looked and finally figured it out though. I hope you like it." Kurt hesitantly handed over the two gifts behind his back; one in an envelope and the other in a tiny, wrapped box.

"I'm sure I'll love it." Blaine said as he snatched the objects from his boyfriend's clutches. He tore into the envelope first. "Tickets?" He asked, a bit confused. Kurt nodded.

"For Aerosmith. I heard you singing one of their songs in the office the other day and, oddly enough, they are playing at Scandalz on New Year's Eve. I don't know why they'd play there but...they are and I got us tickets." Kurt shot his boyfriend the best smile he could. Honestly, he was wrecked. I wanted Blaine to like his gift more than he'd wanted anything all day.

Blaine examined the tickets carefully, eventually spotting what Kurt did not. "Who did you say these tickets were for?" He asked.

"Aerosmith." Kurt replied confidently.

"No." Kurt's smile faltered. "They're for Arrow Smith. I actually know them but I didn't know they were doing a New Year's concert. This is going to be awesome."

Kurt's eyebrows furrowed. "What are you talking about? Aerosmith."

"Not Aerosmith, Arrow Smith. It's an all girls Aerosmith cover band. They're amazing. I've seen them in a few shows and...this is definitely something we have to do for New Year's."

"I should have known that Aerosmith tickets wouldn't be that cheap. Hell, I should have known that Aerosmith wouldn't play at Scandalz. I'm sorry, baby." Kurt's mood soured. This was instantly noticed by Blaine who leaned over, once again, and offered his boyfriend a peck on the lips.

"Don't be like that. I like it, so it shouldn't matter. It was a gift for me, right?" Kurt nodded. "Good. I'm excited, so you be excited too." Shyly, Kurt nodded. It'd been a while since he'd seen a live show. It would be fun. "Now, onto the next one." Blaine tore the wrapping paper off the long box and flipped the lid. Inside sat an ink pen with his initials -including his professional title- etched into it.

"You're always losing pens and you always tell me that, if you had a pen that was special, you wouldn't lose it. So...I hope this pen is special." It was. Blaine was confident that he would never lose the pen Kurt gave him.

Kurt went last. Despite his best efforts to forgo his gift opening until he was in the privacy of his own home, Kurt was made to open gifts. Cooper gave him a Starbucks card and a set of headphones. "This one

will sing your ears off if you let him." Kurt put that tidbit on his list of necessary knowledge for dating Blaine.

Jay gave him a Rolodex. Apparently, he'd need one eventually. Jay even went on to tell Kurt that he didn't have to use it, but they made every desk look more professional. It made Kurt wonder if the one Blaine's desk was as much of a prop as the one he'd received would be. Next, Kurt opened the gift from Julia; it was a green gift certificate to a place Kurt never heard of. "I had no idea what to get you, so I asked Blaine. He told me that you like to shop second hand," *-please kill me now. Blaine told his well to do mother that I like second hand shopping. What was he thinking?-* "and that's something we have in common. I shop at this place all the time. One day, you and Keenan will have to visit us in Florida and you and I will go to this store. It's amazing." Kurt beamed. He liked the sound of that.

Being that Keenan and Kurt exchanged gifts at home, Blaine's gift was the last left to open. "Alright, I did my best." Were the only words out of Blaine's mouth as he handed the gift over. Kurt took it greedily. *Gimme. Gimme. Gimme.*

Unlike his boyfriend and son, Kurt opened his gift graciously. With slow and deliberate movements, Kurt was able open the gift without any mess. Once the paper and tape were gone, Kurt pulled the lid off the tiny cardboard box that was once nestle beneath the wrapping paper. He stared. And stared. And stared. When an eternity had passed, the technician finally looked up at his boyfriend. "Blaine? Is this a key to your house?"

Answer him. Answer him. Blaine smiled shyly at his boyfriend. "Yeah. It-" Before he could get the sentence out, Kurt was across the floor, crawling into his boyfriend's lap and wrapping his arms around his shoulders. Blaine sat back in shock as his boyfriend hugged him tightly. "It's...one day, I want you guys to move in-"

"Awww!" Julia and Cooper cooed in unison.

"Not today, I know we're still new at all this, but one day. One day it'll be you, me, and Keen. Until then, I want you to have somewhere to go when you can't bare to be at home. I just...I want to share this with you. All of this."

Kurt's lips sought out Blaine's quickly. The two kissed as if they did not have an audience. It wasn't until Jay cleared his throat that they pulled apart. Gently, Kurt rested his forehead against his boyfriend's. "I'd love to have a key to your house. Thank you so much. It's one of the best gifts I've ever gotten."

Blaine's smile grew tenfold. "God, I love you."

"I love you too."

"I love you guys too!" Keenan shouted, completely left out of the love fest. That would not do. The little boy watched as his father and Stitch pulled apart just enough for him to squeeze between them. Together, the couple wrapped their arms around the little boy, encasing him with their love and protection. A family. They might as well have been.

Chapter Eighteen

Just short of a week after the gift exchange at Blaine's house, Kurt found himself at the mall with Quinn, Santana, and Whitley. He'd dropped Keenan and his car off with his boyfriend hours before *-I used my new key to get into the house-* just before leaving to meet the girls. New Year's Eve. In New York, the streets would be crowded and Times Square would be unnavigable; thus the reason Kurt and his son chose to watch the ball drop on television from the comfort of their couch.

Ohio was different. There weren't crowds of people scattered to and fro. Instead, there were teenagers crowding the good stores at the mall and elderly people riding their scooters slower than walking pace in all the walkways. Surprisingly enough, Kurt was not bothered by the teenagers or the slow moving elderly. He had his girls on each side and a mission in mind.

"What are you looking for exactly?" Quinn asked as they passed an Old Navy. It was her first official girls' day without Beth in years. When Quinn began to dress the little girl that morning, her phone rang. It was Trent. He told her that Mikayla was anxious to see Beth *-'for whatever reason, I'm not sure. She's really pushing this though.'* and the man asked if Quinn would have a problem letting the little girl stay at his house for the afternoon. The blonde jumped at the chance to spend an afternoon without her daughter in toe.

Kurt smirked devilishly at the woman; his soon-to-be former sister-in-law. *She'll always be my sister in my heart.* "The show tonight." He answered simply. For the most part, it was the truth. He *did* need an outfit to wear out that evening.

Whitley rolled her eyes. "Now, tell us what we're really doing here. I'm all for shopping, but I know you've got us at this expensive ass mall for something other than a damn show. It's New Year's Eve. I should have started drinking at 12:01 this morning." One look at her friend and Whitley knew that the show was not at the top of Kurt's list of priorities.

Kurt chewed his lower lip intently as he looked from person to person. Quinn looked intrigued; she wanted to know what Kurt had in mind. Santana, on the other hand, seemed to be annoyed. School would be starting shortly, which meant less time with Brittany. *I'd much rather be with Brit than sitting at the mall with these guys. I like them and all, but damn.* "So...?" Whitley asked again.

The women watched as Kurt let out a defeated sigh. "Fine." The young man groaned as he led the girls to a nearby bench. One by one, the women perched themselves on the bench, bracing for whatever Kurt had to say. He seemed far too nervous to have anything good to tell. "You guys remember when I said Blaine and I were taking it slow?" Whitley and Quinn nodded.

"Wait!" Santana held up a hand to her friend. "You told us that in like August; before Keenan liked Blaine **AND** before the man gave you a key to his house. What does that have to do with anything?"

"If you'd hush, I could tell you." Kurt quipped, shifting from foot to foot. "Anyways, we...we've taken things really slow. **REALLY, REALLY** slow. And, all this time later, I'm tired of taking it slow. So...I need something really sexy to wear tonight." Kurt's word rushed together as he finished the sentence. *How embarrassing.* The technician told his friends everything but that did not make his current situation any less unnerving.

The mouths of his three friends hung to the ground. "Are. You. Serious?" Whitley asked. Dr. McFineAss was...well he was fine. She expected her friend to be tapping his ass at least...five...seven times a night. Hearing that they hadn't done anything since their drunken romp in August was...disheartening. "Damn."

Kurt nodded. "Yep. Damn." Four long months. Four *long, hard* months.

The sound of Quinn's voice snapped Kurt out of his sexually frustrated daze. "That's shocking, Kurt. Four months? That's longer than I've gone. Finn and I last had sex-"

"No! I don't ever want to think about you and Finn having sex. As far as I'm concerned, you plucked a hair off the top of Finn's head and that's how Beth was conceived. In my mind, you two have never been intimate. **NEVER!**" Quinn chuckled. Kurt was a character at times.

"Aside from the fact that The Jolly Green Giant and Pretty Pretty Princess were ever intimate," Santana began, "my mind is blown right now. How have you and Blaine not been getting it in all the time?"

Kurt shrugged. "We just haven't had time. With Keenan, school, and work, I've been exhausted. Then, Blaine has meetings and he works later than I do most of the time. He has a life. It's just...we're always so busy."

"Make time." Whitley quipped. Again, Blaine was hot. Kurt was hot. They should have been making things hot...in the bedroom...all the time. *I'll watch Keenan. I'll do anything for the sake of their sex life. How do they not have a sex life?*

"We try. I mean, I'd love to lie and say that we never broke our 'no sex in the office' rule but we have. I cannot tell you how many days I went home with dirt stains on my knees from being under his desk." His friends gaped. *Say what?* "It's not enough though. I hate not feeling that connection with him. I love Blaine so much and...I just want him to fuck me!"

The rise of Kurt's voice earned a few shocked stares from passersby. Santana rolled her eyes. *It's like they've never seen sexual frustration before.* "Keep it moving." She waved her hand dismissively at the onlookers. "There is nothing to see here." A bit disgruntled, their audience dissipated. "So we're here to get you dolled up to get some?" Kurt nodded.

"Basically. I want him to want me so badly that he can't take it by the end of the night."

The three girls smiled at one another before looking back to their friend who was, once again, shifting from foot to foot. "Challenge accepted." Kurt squealed as he jumped up and down. *I knew they'd help. Thank God they're helping. I need this. NEED this!*

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Three stores after Kurt's confession, things were going well. Or as well as they could be. When they entered the third store, Kurt still hadn't picked out an outfit. He had, however, found a pair of boots that were to die for. The girls -with the exception of Whitley- were apprehensive.

'The heel is huge. At least four inches. Are you...comfortable with that?' Quinn asked at one point.

'Skyscrapers and one story houses. That's all I'm going to say.' Santana added.

Kurt shrugged. The heel was higher than he'd normally go for, but the boots were sexy. Kurt loved them. So, he bought them. *They make my legs look miles long. Blaine won't be able to resist. He always says that he loves my legs. And...hello. Leather screams sex.*

The quartet rummaged the racks in search of the perfect outfit to mix with Kurt's boots. Easier said than done. If Kurt liked one thing, he hated another. Nothing seemed to accent his new shoes as perfectly as the technician hoped. *I hope my night isn't as disappointing as this shopping trip.* "What about this, Kurt?" Whitley held up a striped black and white tunic. Kurt crossed the distance between them and examined the item. It was a bit feminine for his taste but....*fashion has no gender right?*

He grabbed the article and headed to the dressing room. Moments after he entered, Kurt swung the door open for all to see. The top was skin tight, accentuating his muscles in all the right places, but it was also short. "What would you wear under it?" Quinn asked. "Jeans -regardless of how tight you like to wear your jeans- would be too bulky. You need something that will be seamless."

"He's not going to wear anything under it." Santana chimed. "He's trying to get laid remember?" The girls chuckled.

"True." Whitley added. "In fact, you might as well just leave the top and go in just the boots. I'm sure that'll get you laid."

Kurt chose to ignore the remark. *Although...Blaine might appreciate the naked-ness of it.* "Maybe tights. I'm not a fan of them but jeans won't work with these; regardless of how tight they are. We'll grab some tights on our way to the register. The top and the boots should be enough to draw attention away from them."

"Good idea, Kurt."

Whitley's head whipped around until her gaze was fixed on Quinn. "Good job, Kurt?" She shouted good naturedly. "I told him to get the top. You mean 'Good job, Whit'. To which I'll respond, 'I know. I am rather fabulous'."

The group of girls chuckled once again before turning to Kurt. He seemed pleased with his new outfit. "Is that it or are you guys going to look around?" The girls looked at one another. Quinn did not have money to spend aside from the inevitable lunch outing. Whitley road shot gun in Quinn's boat. She had money, but she needed to save it. No shopping for her. Santana -with money she was both willing and able to spend- simply did not like the store's selection. Each person shook their head. Nope. Nothing. "Almighty then. Let's check out and head to lunch." Together the group headed to the register; Kurt grabbing a pair of tights on his way to the front of the store.

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Christmas without Finn was not as difficult as Rachel imagined it to be. Three years. The couple spent three years hiding and being apart from one another. One day was a pebble's worth of time compared to the mountain that they were accustomed to. A comparison that could be made was the reaction Rachel had to Finn's return on Christmas night and her reaction to every other time Finn returned to her house

over the past three years. Mirror images. Rachel welcomed her boyfriend home *-our home-* with open arms and open legs.

The two spent the week making love and working; at least on Finn's part. The gym only closed on Christmas day, so it was back to work for him once the most important day of the year *-hello...presents-* was over. Rachel, having saved up bundles of vacation time, still had a few days before she had to brave the trenches; a few days before she had to face Kurt. Rachel became decidedly less confident when her boyfriend told her of his icy reception on Christmas Day.

'He was shooting daggers at me with his eyes, Rach. Then, when I said I didn't get Keenan anything, I swear I could see steam coming out of his ears.'

Rachel shook her head. Kurt was a child in her eyes. *'Kurt could have gotten Keenan something. I'm sure he tricked Dr. Anderson into buying the boy something. Dr. Anderson is too good for him.'*

'Blaine is a dick.' Finn responded. And their conversation continued as such. Finn would belittle Dr. Anderson as Rachel belittled Kurt. Rachel would then defend her boss *'He's really a great guy. He's very kind'*; Finn did not defend his stepbrother.

New Year's Eve afternoon, Rachel and Finn decided to switch up their smack talking, love making routine. Rather than sitting around worrying about others, couple decided to go out for lunch. Finn picked his girlfriend up from the house and they headed to the mall to eat.

The restaurant was crowded when they arrived. So crowded that they couple was seated in a corner near the bathroom; not an ideal location but that did not matter. They were together and it was nice. Until it wasn't.

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"I have to go wash my hands before I eat, ladies." Kurt stood graciously from the table and turned toward the men's room. Each of his companions had already gone to wash their hands. He, however, waited. *What? I want them to be freshly washed when I eat.* "I'll be back." He sing songed.

Moments later, Kurt exited the restroom, feeling cleaned and ready to eat. As he headed back to his table, he noticed something out of the corner of his eye. Large. Dopey. Badly dressed. Kurt's head whipped towards the subject of his peripheral's attention. Sure enough, it was who he thought it was. Tucked away

at a tiny table in the corner were Finn and Rachel. *It's like a late Christmas present. I have a bit to say to her and it would bring a little joy into my life to finally be able to say it.* Without a second thought, Kurt's feet changed course. He was no longer headed back to the girls. Instead, he made a beeline for his stepbrother and his jezebel.

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"Um...are mozzarella sticks vegan, Rachel?" Finn watched her consume them like water for twenty minutes before questioning her. When she finished a plate, she raised her hand and ordered more. It was weird. Rachel was never a fan of fried foods but she seemed to be thoroughly enjoying her fried cheese.

Rachel only stopped eating long enough to roll her eyes. "Of course they are." She stated lamely before resuming her eating. *Man, I did not know how hungry I was.* When the plate was empty, licked clean, Rachel raised her hand to motion for the waitress. Three appetizers later, she was ready to begin their actual meal.

"Well, well, well." *Uh oh. That's not the waitress.* Rachel turned slowly to be met by the -as expected-unapprovingly Kurt Hummel. "Look what the cat dragged in." Kurt cocked his hip, staring down at the 'loving' couple. Each wore an expression of shock and fear.

"W-what are you doing here?" Finn stuttered. Of all the things Finn needed in his life, Kurt's appearance was not one of them. Not by a long shot.

The technician shrugged. "I was headed back to my table when I spotted you guys. I just came over to say hello."

"Hello. Now, goodbye." Rachel snapped. The smug tone Kurt carried with him like a badge of honor was one of her many pet peeves. *Who was he to be smug?* Nobody. Kurt Hummel was nobody. Apparently, he did not receive that memo.

"No need to be rude, Rachel. You haven't been at work lately, so we have not been able to exchange pleasantries. How are things? Is home wrecking working out well for you?"

"Hey!" Finn's voice rang out across the back of the restaurant, earning stares from nearby guests. "Do not talk to her like that." His voice was low and dangerous, something that shocked Kurt to no end. In eight years of marriage, he'd never heard Finn defend Quinn in such a way.

Kurt tilted his head, questioning his stepbrother with his eyes. "I'm sorry. Did I offend you?" *Look. My voice can be low and daring as well. Except, when I make a dare, I follow through. What are you going to do?*

Finn instantly deflated under Kurt's icy glare. "Just...don't talk to her like that. She doesn't deserve it."

Oh my God. Mind officially blown. "She doesn't deserve to be talked to like that?" Kurt's rhetorical question caused yet another round of stares from onlookers. "Really? But Quinn deserved to be cheated on? She deserved to be left as a single mother? No. I don't think so. So, before you start going on about how someone doesn't deserve something, you should stop and look back at the things you've done to others; the things they didn't deserve."

Kurt's outburst shocked Rachel. Deep down, she felt like he was not talking about Quinn and Finn's situation. "Just because your ex left you high and dry doesn't mean that every relationship ends like that. Quinn admitted to being unhappy. The only thing Finn did wrong was deciding not to wait for everything to blow up in his face. He found a way out and he took the opportunity. If I remember correctly, that is exactly what you did when Nathan left you in New York with an apartment you could not afford and a child that was conceived by a friend that you fucked while still dating him. If Finn is a bad guy then you are too. Everyone cheats Kurt; even you."

The room temperature skyrocketed in a single moment. Kurt could feel his face and body burning with rage. Who did she think she was? While the similarities between Finn and Nathan were there *-I'll give her that-* Kurt did not feel it was justified to group him in the same category as the two. *Cheating is bad. Technically, I did cheat on Nathan. Deception is worse.* "You're missing the point, Rachel. I'm disappointed that Finn cheated on his wife, but I'm more disappointed that he lied. You have no idea what that lie could have turned into."

Finn scoffed. "It didn't turn into anything. Quinn was cool and I was free to leave. I got lucky. Most relationships like mine don't run as smoothly. There is fighting. Most couples like mine fight over everything when they reach this point. Money. Kids. Property. The way it's looking, Quinn is letting me off with child support and visitations every other weekend. It's as close to a relationship like yours as I'm gonna get."

A well-known fact about Finn was that he had an ability to reignite the fire inside of Kurt just when the flames were dying down. "What do you mean a relationship like mine?" He asked, voice dipping dangerously low for the umpteenth time during the conversation.

His stepbrother shrugged. "You know. When you guys break up, I assumed you just switched off partners. Like, Blaine will be Keenan's new Papa. And if you guys ever break up, then it'll be whatever guy is next. The kid can only belong to one of you biologically so the strings aren't as attached as mine are with Quinn. One of you can always walk away. It's kind of a cool option."

Kurt was floored. He'd gone over to tell Rachel off and, in turn, received a knowledge based video in Ignorance 101. "Are you...?" Was he what? Kurt could not make heads or tails of Finn's logic. "You are...a fucking idiot. And you," Kurt turned to Rachel, shooting the girl a glare, "get what you give. He wasn't afraid to cheat on Quinn, don't for a second think he'll be afraid to cheat on a crazy bitch like yourself."

With his piece said and the weight lifted from his shoulders, Kurt turned on his heel and walked back to his table. Never again. Never again would he make the mistake of bringing up Finn and Quinn's marital issues. Never again would he...*I'm just not going to do it anymore because I'd hate to hear what comes out of his mouth next. And her...I'll deal with her if I have to.*

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Blaine and Keenan crouched low to the ground, peering around the corner into the veterinarian's living room. "What do you see, Nightbird?" Keenan smiled over his shoulder at Stitch. The moment the door closed behind his father that morning, Keenan was out of his clothes and into his costume. He and Blaine spent the next few hours playing.

Realizing that he no longer had visual on their subject, Keenan's head whipped back around. He peered through long lashes at the object of their mission. "He's next to your mommy. He's looking at her while she pets Kel." The little boy advised.

"Good. Good." Blaine whispered. Embarrassment would never allow him to admit it, but Blaine did not sleep the night before. The prospect of spending an afternoon playing with Keenan while Kurt shopped was too exciting. So, he drank a few beers with his father and brother. After they turned in for the evening, the veterinarian sat around watching television into the early hours of the morning. When regular programming turned into infomercials, Blaine began to clean. Later, he cooked. It was all in anticipation of seeing the little boy that put a smile on the faces of the people that loved him. "Do you see any poop?"

Blaine watched anxiously as the boy scanned the room for poop. Lizzie Borden was not taking to potty training as well as hoped. So, the man and his superhero buddy were hunting messes.

"No." Keenan continued to scan the room with a careful eye, reporting back details to his sidekick as he went. "Lizzie Borden is still sitting by your mommy's feet. He looks jealous that your mommy is petting Kel. Kel needs love too, Lizzie Borden. Kel needs love too."

"Still no signs of poop though?"

"No, I-wait!" The two stilled instantly. "I see some. By the bookcase. A big, yucky glob of it."

Blaine offered a curt nod. "Good. Let's go get that poop." Together, the duo darted across the living room - startling Julia as well as the animals- to Lizzie Borden's mess. "Nightbird, I'm going to have to ask you to step aside for this one." Blaine advised. "This poop is radioactive and you're not immune to it. I am though."

Keenan nodded. He would not be touching radioactive poop. "But don't go far because I still need you. Someone has to hand me the cleaners in the bucket and the sponge. Can you do that, Nightbird?" The seriousness in Blaine's voice excited the little boy.

"Yes sir!" Keenan offered Stitch a solute. To which, Blaine saluted back. *Stitch and I make a great team.*

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Kurt did not allow his encounter with Finn and Rachel to ruin his appetite. Together, he and his friends ate until their stomachs were full and their wallets were empty. Throughout the meal and the ride home from the mall, Kurt kept the encounter with Finn and Rachel to himself. There was no need to rile Whitley and Santana up and he also saw no reason to upset Quinn. The woman carried around a tough exterior, but that did not mean she was ready to face her husband's new girlfriend yet. *If Nathan had done that to me...* Kurt's thoughts were cut off by the sound of Whitley's voice.

"Alright, we're here, Hummel. Get out so the girls and I can talk. But," She held up her finger to as Kurt reached for the door handle, "do not forget to call me in the morning. If you still have the ability to speak, that is. I have the image in my head of Blaine face fucking you to death, so I won't hold you to that phone call." With a wink, Whitley shooed her friend out of the car, speeding away from the curb the second his door was closed.

Crazy bitch. Kurt loved her though. He loved all of his girls.

When the car was out of sight, Kurt and his bags headed towards the house. He raised his hand to knock when he remembered that he had a key. *That's right. I have a key. My boyfriend gave me a key to his house.* Kurt dug around in his satchel until he found the ring that held his keys. Blaine's was the first one on his ring. The shiniest. The newest. Kurt jammed the key into the door and turned until he felt the lock snap back. He then turned the knob and pushed. The door opened instantly. Twenty years of unlocking doors and Kurt could not remember a time when the task was as enticing as it was then.

The house was silent. Kurt kicked the door closed behind him and crept around the house in search of life. "Hey!" The technician startled at the sound of Cooper's voice. "Hey, man, sorry. I didn't mean to scare you." Still wide eyed as the moment Cooper first spoke, Kurt nodded. "I was just excited to see you."

Again, Kurt nodded. *I knew the house was too quiet.* "Where is everyone? It's oddly quiet."

Cooper shrugged. "Blaine and Nightbird fell asleep a few hours ago in his room and Mom and Dad went out for a few hours. It's just me, Lizzie Borden, and the cats." Cooper motioned to the tiny congregation of animals circling the living room carpet. Lizzie Borden lay in the middle while Kel socialized with the other cats. Cooper modern day Dr. Dolittle in his own right.

"Right...well...I'm going to go make everyone lunch before the boys get up. Are you hungry, Cooper?" Kurt gingerly placed his bags in a nearby closet along with his jacket and boots.

"Always."

"Good. I'll make salad and some sandwiches." Kurt was halfway to the kitchen when he turned back to Cooper. "Oh and we're still on for tonight, right?" Kurt hoped. He really...really needed Cooper to watch Keenan.

The eldest Anderson brother smiled, shooting a wink at his brother's boyfriend from the couch. "Absolutely. We're as on as Blaine's engines tonight. Gentlemen, start your engines." Cooper made revving noises with his mouth, doing his best to simulate an engine.

Kurt shook his head as he walked away. *Done with him.*

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An hour later, Kurt woke his boyfriend and his...Nightbird. Together with Cooper, the group ate their sandwiches and discussed upcoming plans. Cooper and his parents would be leaving the following day while Blaine worked at the clinic for a few hours. Kurt and Keenan would be spending a fun filled Daddy and Son day out and about. Everyone had plans.

When the dishes were cleared and the Anderson parents had come and gone once again gone, Kurt turned to his son. "Are you sure that you're up for a night with Cooper? He said he wants to take you to the movies and then dinner. Are you going to be okay with that or do you want me to stay home with you?" Deep in the pit of Kurt's stomach, he wanted his son to beg him to stay home. It would be the little boy's first night with a non-family member so to speak. Nights with Burt and Carole were one thing. Nights away with Cooper -whom he'd only met a few times- were another story.

The little boy shrugged. "I'm fine with King Koopa. I want you and Stitch to have fun. You guys never get to have fun and I never get to hang out with new people."

Kurt offered his son a reluctant smile. Of all the kids in all the world, his had to be well adjusted with a knack for being independent. *Just great.* "Okay. Let's go get you ready then." Keenan nodded. He wanted to look pretty for his boy date with King Koopa. *He's a king after all. Kings have lots of toys.*

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After an hour long tutorial on how to strap Keenan's car seat into the vehicle, Blaine and his boyfriend waved Keenan and Cooper off. When the car was gone, Blaine turned to his boyfriend and smiled. "Just you and me now. I can't wait for tonight. This show is going to be amazing."

Kurt smiled back, leaning forward and kissing Blaine's lips. When he pulled away, Kurt allowed their eyes to meet. "It will be. Tonight is going to be amazing." It was a promise and a plea. He would do everything in his power to make the night perfect but he could only hope that things would work according to plan.

"When I'm with you, everything is amazing." With each passing day, Kurt felt himself swooning over his boyfriend more and more. With each passing day, Blaine proved himself to be every bit the man that Kurt always dreamed of.

The couple stood outside for a few moments, enjoying the quiet that surrounded them. When the chill in the air grew to be too much, Kurt pulled away. "Doors are in a few hours. I'm going to go get ready." With

another peck on the lips, Kurt flitted off, leaving Blaine standing in the snow. It was just as well. Blaine's mind was a whirlwind of questions. Since he gave Kurt the key to his house on Christmas Day, the veterinarian's head was a mess. He was excited to extend yet another piece of himself to his boyfriend but he worried that there was a possibility that he'd moved too quickly. Was Kurt ready to enter that realm of their relationship? It seemed so. Kurt took the key and ran with it. He even seemed pleased to be able to come and go as wanted. That was not what worried Blaine. *At least it doesn't worry me much.*

What worried Blaine was the other aspect of giving Kurt a key. The prospect of one day moving in. Kurt and Blaine prided themselves on taking things slowly. *We haven't even had sex since we started dating.* That was not the point, however. Well, it was but their lack of sex was not at the forefront of Blaine's mind. They still did things. The occasional blow job. A hand job in the supply closet. The two were sexually intimate even if they were not having Earth shattering penetrate sex. Moving in was on an entirely different level. It was the three of them -Kurt, Blaine, and Keenan- combining their belongings and living under one roof. The idea pleased Blaine. The reality frightened him.

Can Kurt commit to moving in? Blaine knew that his boyfriend was still hesitant about moving too quickly and with good reason. After the mess Nathan left the younger man in, Blaine did not blame him for wanting to take things slowly. But it was Kurt. And Keenan. With each day, Blaine could not help but see them as his present and his future. Blaine could see them all living happily ever after in the tiny green house that he called home. Maybe not today and probably not tomorrow. But soon. As soon as he could, he would broach the topic with Kurt once again. He would walk in with hopes and dreams on his shoulder and hope that Kurt would be willing to help carry the load.

Feeling a bit lighter, Blaine turned to the house and began trudging the snow to reach the warmth that the house always offered.

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With yet another glance at his watch, Blaine let out an agitated sigh. The show started at 8 pm. It was now 8:45. "Kurt, come on. We're late." He shouted up the stairs. While Kurt showed no interest in seeing the local bands, Blaine did. He loved live music of all sorts.

"I know!" Kurt shouted back. "I'm finishing now." Blaine scoffed. *Yeah right. He said that an hour ago.* The veterinarian had no faith that his boyfriend would be down any time soon. So, when another twenty minutes passed, Blaine was neither surprised nor disappointed.

Time continued to pass. When the clock struck 9:30, Blaine called up for his boyfriend again. "Come on, Kurt. Arrow Smith starts at 10. If we're not in the parking lot at 9:55 then we might as well not even go."

"Finishing now." Kurt hollered back. Blaine hoped so. In fact, Blaine carried so much hope that he began to gather his belongings. *Keys. Wallet. Phone. The animals are fed. Lizzie Borden is in his kennel. Cooper has a key. Keenan knows we'll be back later.* Blaine ran through a mental list as he paced the foyer. *Then Kurt and Keenan will go home tonight. I don't want them to go home but...*

"Sorry." The sound of Kurt's voice broke Blaine away from his thoughts. He turned quickly with the intentions of rushing his boyfriend out the front door. Thoughts, intentions, actions stopped when Blaine laid eyes on his boyfriend. "I didn't mean to keep you waiting." Kurt added to no avail. Blaine was awestruck. Words were...*how do I - words?*

Kurt was stunning. Standing with his hip cocked, hand rested lightly on it was the most beautiful man Blaine's eyes ever had the privilege of seeing. *Good Gracious.* Blaine let his eyes roam the figure before him. From the heeled boots that made Kurt seem impossibly tall to the tights that would no doubt flex and move with each spasm of Kurt's muscles. Then there was his top. Form fitting and low cut. Blaine could make out the base of Kurt's long, tender, delicate neck. The things that neck did to him. It was so...*God, he looks good.*

Blaine wet his lips. His mouth was watering but his lips were dry. So dry. Kurt could wet them. Blaine could think of a few ways Kurt could help keep his lips from drying out. *Mmmm...so good.* "Blaine?" When the veterinarian realized that his name had been called, his eyes snapped back into focus. Kurt was standing just in front of him; sexy as sin with a devilish glint in his eyes. "Is everything okay?"

More than okay. What could be 'not okay' about their current situation? Kurt was standing before him with what Blaine assumed were promises of future debauchery written across his face and smelling of spice and...*confidence?* Confidence. It was radiating off the technician in waves. Oh...*he asked me a question.* "Ummm...yeah. Show." Blaine nodded dumbly, trying to string words together properly in the presence of his own, personal sex god. "Show." He repeated lamely.

Kurt shot his boyfriend a grin -*cheeky if I ever knew one*- before stepping past him to grab his winter coat. *Damn I wish it was warm.* It felt blasphemous to have Kurt bundled up for the cold when he was the definition of the word 'hot'. *He should be able to keep himself warm.* Blaine did not voice his opinion. Instead, he followed his boyfriend out the front door to the car. *I'm in for one hell of a night.*

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When the men arrived at Scandals, the parking lot was packed. There was not a space available for what seemed like miles. So, they parked down the street and around the corner. From there, they walked; Blaine staying one step behind a still bundled Kurt. His view may not have been as amazing as the one he got in the foyer but the swish in Kurt's walk as he balanced himself atop the sky high heels was...so good. Blaine let out a low groan as his boyfriend's stride picked up. It was going to be a long evening.

When the couple entered the dark, smoky bar, they were met with a droves of people. They were standing here and there, making it difficult for the two men to find a table. Kurt wanted a table. *I'm getting a damn table. I cannot stand in these heels all night. I'll die. I'll have to have my feet amputated. Then, what will I do with all my good shoes?*

After a few moments of searching, Kurt spotted two people standing from a table. They were probably headed to the restroom, but tables were scarce and times were hard. They knew the rules. Standing from a table was like giving it away. As the men pushed their chairs in, Kurt grabbed his boyfriend's hand and pulled him in the direction of the table. The reached it just in time to see a figure placing his drink down. "Sorry about your luck. This is our table!" Kurt shouted at the person. When the figure turned, he chuckled.

"Kurt! Blaine! What are you guys doing here?" It was Sebastian. Of course it was Sebastian. Bar -gay bar. Men; gay and straight- everywhere. It was a Sebastian Smythe playground.

Kurt rolled his eyes as he slid Sebastian's drink across the table. He then unbuttoned his jacket and let it slide from his shoulders. Small action. Simple enough. However small or simple, it rendered his boyfriend and friend speechless. "We're here for the show. There isn't much to do in Lima, Ohio so we take what we can get." Kurt responded nonchalantly. He knew what he was doing to Blaine. Sebastian was an unexpected bonus; an ego boost.

"Show." Blaine replied dumbly.

Sebastian nodded, not once taking his eyes off of Kurt and his...damn. "Yeah. Show."

The technician gingerly placed himself in the seat, watching the two men stare at him. It was endearing. "What are you doing here, Seb? I thought you found some hot Aussie to make Carlton jealous. You know, Carlton is a good kid. You should just ask him out. Who knows, he could be good for you."

The mention of Carlton and Nathan brought Sebastian back to his bearings. "Yeah. Nathan-" Kurt fake gagged at the name. *Really? Why does his name have to be Nathan? Why can't he be Jack or Thomas?* Sebastian chose to ignore Kurt's action. "Is going to be back and forth for a while. He left this morning, he'll be back late in January. As for Carlton, he needs to man up and ask me out. Sebastian Smythe does not ask people out on dates. He asks them to go home and fuck. If Carlton wants up on this, he'll have to be the one to ask."

Kurt rolled his eyes. He was sure the action could not be seen in the darkness that hung over the bar but it needed to be done. Sebastian was an idiot. "You say that now. One day Carlton will be 'up on' something else and you'll be disappointed." When he was finished speaking, Kurt leaned against the back of his chair and crossed his arms over his chest smugly. Sebastian knew he was right.

"Whatever. You guys enjoy your evening." Sebastian snatched his drink from the table and stomped away. He knew Kurt was right and the thought alone was enough to send the doctor into a rage. *Carlton is not to be 'up on' anything unless it's this dick. I hope he understands that. Maybe I'll make that my resolution for the coming year. I will stop waiting and take action. Yeah. That sounds nice.*

With Sebastian gone, Kurt and Blaine had a few minutes to chat before the show officially started. "You look...hot tonight." Blaine purred into his boyfriend's ear. The veterinarian scooted his chair as close to his Kurt's as he could and threw his arm protectively -possessively- around the man's shoulders. They eyes of a thousand onlookers landed on Kurt the moment he stepped out of Blaine's car. *No. Mine.* Kurt was his and he wanted everyone to know it.

Kurt responded with a kiss on the cheek. "Thank you." He whispered back. "I wanted tonight to be special."

"It is. You have no idea."

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"Please help Scandals welcome, Ohio's one and only Aerosmith cover band, the ladies of Arrow Smith!" The MC bellowed into the microphone. Kurt, Blaine, and the crowd of people standing around their table clapped loudly. The room was packed, all anticipating the arrival of the women.

The lead singer, dressed as Steven Tyler, smiled as she stepped onto the stage. As quickly as she could, she made her way to the microphone. "Thank you all for coming. We're Arrow Smith and we're fucking excited that you guys chose to spend New Year's Eve with us." Again, the room grew loud and rowdy.

As she continued to speak, Kurt turned a surprised expression toward his boyfriend. "Is that Dr. Cohen-Chang?" He asked, astonished. Blaine smiled and nodded.

"It is. Believe it or not, we do a lot more than take care of animals." Kurt rolled his eyes. *Obviously.* Before Kurt could open his mouth, the band began to play. *Hey, I know this song. And Tina kind of sounds like Steven Tyler. That's pretty cool.*

Backstroke lover always hidin' 'neath the covers

till I talked to your daddy, he say

he said "you ain't seen nothin' till you're down on a muffin

then you're sure to be a-changin' your ways"

I met a cheerleader, was a real young bleeder

oh, the times I could reminisce

'cause the best things of lovin' with her sister and her cousin

only started with a little kiss

like this!

Kurt and Blaine swayed in their seats and sang along with the song. A New Year's concert was definitely the perfect way to spend the evening.

So I took a big chance at the high school dance

with a missy who was ready to play

wasn't me she was foolin'

'cause she knew what she was doin'

and I knowed love was here to stay

when she told me to

Walk this way!

Talk this way.

Blaine looked over a few times during the song to see Kurt completely transfixed by the scene on the stage. He was looking at each of the women as if they were Aerosmith themselves. They were rather amazing. That much was certain. Surprising to most, Tina Cohen-Chang was the perfect Steven. She was able to mimic his on stage mannerisms as if he'd taught her himself. Then there were the other girls; each playing their part as if they were born to play it.

When Blaine's eyes landed on Kurt once again, his smile grew wider. He was gorgeous. Amazing. There was something completely endearing about watching him try to catch the lyrics but missing them by seconds or getting them wrong completely. Kurt's misses were Blaine's gains. *God, I'm so love struck it isn't even funny.*

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That, that dude looks like a lady

That, that dude looks like a lady

Midway through the show, Kurt and Blaine gave up their seats to Sebastian and a few of his work colleagues. They did so with the understanding that Sebastian would watch their coats until the end of the

show. With business squared away, Kurt and Blaine pushed their way to the stage. They ended up at Tina's feet while she sang to the crowd. "I hate this song." Kurt shouted over the sound of the music.

She's a long lost love at first bite

Baby, maybe you're wrong but you know it's all right

That's right

Blaine furrowed his eyebrows. "Why?" He shouted back. With the droves of people shouting behind them, it was a wonder that he could hear his boyfriend.

"Because. I was the dude that looked like a lady." Blaine rolled his eyes as he snaked his arm around his boyfriend's waist.

Forgive me if I seem out of line

Then she whipped out her gun and tried to blow me away

"You don't look like a lady to me." Kurt smiled before turning his attention back to the stage. The bassist caught his attention. He'd been watching her all night. There was something strangely...alluring about her. Kurt was not sure why but he found himself wondering more than once if her ample breasts were as comfy as they looked. *I mean, they're just spilling over her top. They look like giant pillows. I could chop those suckers off and have pillows that rival downs.* Blaine must have noticed because he leaned over and shouted into Kurt's ear, barely audible to the technician. "Tia Von Titz. I don't think it's difficult to see where the name came from."

So baby let me follow you down (let me take a peek dear)

Baby let me follow you down (do me, do me, do me all night)

Kurt nodded dumbly. "Von Titz is right. Holy shit! Holy Shitz Miss Von Titz!" Blaine smirked. He knew. He remembered his glimpse at the Von Titz twins. Kurt drug his gaze away from the bassist and her Von Titz and back to Tina. She was running through the end of the song. At least Kurt knew the words this time. Once again, as he had many times that night, Kurt caught his boyfriend's eye. Blaine was staring at him. "Do me." He mouthed as Tina sang the line once again. Kurt watched as the elder licked his lips.

"I plan to." Blaine shouted back as the song ended.

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"10"

"9"

The crowd was in a frenzy. A new year was upon them.

"8"

"7"

"6"

Kurt and Blaine snuggled together next to the stage, people crowding beside and behind them. They were ready. All systems ago.

"5"

"4"

"3"

"2"

"1"

The moment Tina finished the countdown, Blaine's lips were on Kurt's, kissing him roughly. Kurt reciprocated as quickly and as passionately as he could. It was his first New Year's kiss. Nathan often went to parties while Kurt stayed home with Keenan. Each year, Keenan fell asleep before eleven. Kurt was always alone. Not this year. This year he had Blaine and hundreds of others to share the evening with. I'm so lucky.

"Alright guys. Last song."

Come here, baby.

You know you drive me up a wall the way you make good on all the

nasty tricks you pull

Seems like we're makin' up more than we're makin' love

And it always seems you got somn' on your mind other than me

Girl, you got to change your crazy ways

You hear me

Say you're leavin' on a seven thirty train and that you're headin'

out to Hollywood

Girl you been givin' me that line so many times it kinda gets like

feelin' bad looks good

Kurt pulled away from his boyfriend and screamed. This was one of his favorite songs. As the girls played, Kurt gravitated back into Blaine's arms. They were open and waiting for his return. The funny thing about Blaine -something that set him apart from every other man that Kurt met in his life- was that Blaine was always ready and waiting. He never backed completely away. His devotion and love were plentiful. For that, Kurt was grateful.

I go crazy, crazy, baby, I go crazy

You turn it on

Then you're gone

Yeah you drive me

Crazy, crazy, crazy, for you baby

What can I do, honey

I feel like the color blue...

Kurt sang the chorus at the top of his lungs as he swayed in his boyfriend's arms. Perfect end to a perfect evening. Well, almost perfect. There was one thing Kurt could think of that would top the evening off perfectly.

As they swayed, Kurt turned his body to face his boyfriend. Blaine's eyes were fixated on the stage. Utterly and completely fixated. *Probably on Tia. Her Von Titz are fantas-Titz. Bad joke. Don't care. I had a drink or two. Give me a break.* "Blaine." The veterinarian's head snapped instantly toward his boyfriend. "I love you, baby." Kurt whispered.

The elder smiled at him. "I love you too."

You're packin' up your stuff and talkin' like it's tough and tryin'

to tell me that it's time to go

But I know you ain't wearin' nothin' underneath that overcoat

And it's all a show

"Good. Because I want to spend tonight showing you how much I love you." Kurt gravitated forward until he was flush against Blaine's chest. For a moment, the crowd and the band were gone. It was just them. Kurt decided to make use of his imagined opportunity; the moment when it was just the two of them. As quickly as he could, Kurt surged forward, locking their lips together.

Kurt's actions took Blaine by surprise. Kurt was never one to shy away from physical affection, but he rarely initiated it. Especially in crowds as large as the one they were standing in. He did not miss a step, however. Surprise be damned. Blaine pulled Kurt closer -closer than seemed humanly possible- and kissed him back. Long and hard. Full of passion and desire.

Kurt wasted no time using his tongue to pry his boyfriend's lips apart. He poked and prodded until they slipped open just enough to allow him entrance. Then he roamed. He tasted. He sucked. He did all the things he knew Blaine liked. It was their evening and Kurt would do what he could to make it special for them. Both of them.

Never one to be outdone, Blaine did a bit of roaming, tasting, and sucking of his own. He allowed his hands to roam from Kurt's tiny waist down to the ample ass. If Blaine loved anything superficial about his boyfriend, it was the abundance that his ass came in. *Less is less and more is wonderful when it comes to asses.* Blaine clamped his hand over one of Kurt's cheeks and squeezed, causing Kurt to suck harder on his tongue.

"You guys are fucking hot!" Startled, Kurt and Blaine pulled apart. Each searched the crowd wildly for the person that was shouting at them -obviously they're shouting at us. We're kind of the best looking people in the room- to no avail. "Why'd you stop kissing?" Both men turned their attention to the stage. It was Tia- *Miss Titz if you're nasty.* She was leering at them as her hands ran effortlessly over the chords.

Kurt threw a wink in her direction. He then turned his attention back to Blaine. "Why don't we get out of here?"

Blaine hummed in agreement. "Why don't we?"

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Kurt offered to drive home that evening. As they passed the post office and the skating rink, Blaine noticed something. They were going the wrong way. "Baby. You missed a turn or something." Kurt shot him a brief smile before turning his attention back to the road.

"No I didn't. This is how I get home."

"Home? What about going to get Keenan?" Again, Kurt smiled.

"Cooper and I worked something out a few days ago. It's just you and me tonight, baby." Blaine liked the sound of that. Loved it in fact. A night alone with Kurt. *How about yes.*

Blaine chose not to speak the rest of the trip to Kurt's apartment. Instead, he chose to focus on the excitement that was churning in his stomach...*and the growth in my pants.*

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The second Kurt's bedroom door closed, Blaine pushed him roughly against it. The veterinarian slotted his legs between the younger man's and ground into him with his pelvis. Kurt moaned loudly, the sound bouncing off the four walls of the tiny room.

"I want you so bad." Blaine grunted into his boyfriend's ear as he bucked his hips once again. Their clothed cocks slid across one another, creating just the right amount of friction; not enough to make them cum but enough to satisfy them for the time being. "I want to rip your fucking clothes off."

Blaine's words were enticing; exciting. In Kurt's adult life *-I'll admit, I had some wild fantasies as a teenager-* he'd never wanted to ruin clothes so badly. "Do it. Please." He begged as his lover's lips danced around behind his ear.

"You sure?" *Because I will. I'll rip your clothes off and fuck you until you can't remember where you are.*

"Y-yes." Kurt's voice broke when Blaine's teeth caught his earlobe. "I've waited so long. Yes. Please." The young man's pleas did not fall on deaf ears. Slowly, too slow for Kurt's liking, Blaine's hands slid from his waist down and around to his ass. Like he had at the club, the vet gave each cheek a firm squeeze, kneading the covered flesh against his fingertips like a dough. When Kurt least expected it, Blaine took a firm hold of his ass and lifted him from his feet. Instinctively, Kurt's long legs wrapped around his boyfriend's waist.

The sound of Blaine's rough footfalls rang throughout the room as the veterinarian carried his boyfriend across the room. He was unsteady on his feet. Kurt was sucking on his pulse point and gripping his hair roughly. Blaine couldn't think. Thus, when they reached the bed, the elder stumbled, sending them both down onto the bed. They landed in a heap in the middle of the queen set, bodies still intertwined.

Upon catching his bearings, Blaine sought out his boyfriend's lips. When he made contact, Blaine capitalized. He immediately parted his lips and began to seek out his boyfriends' tongue. He needed to be inside of him in one form or another.

The tongues danced together, curling around each other as they fought for dominance. When Kurt pulled back -panting and flushed- Blaine shot him a questioning look. "What? What's wrong? Did I do something wrong?" He asked nervously.

Kurt's eyes shone in the dark. "No. Just...we're wearing too many clothes. I want you now but...you're still dressed and I'm..." Kurt proved his point by motioning to himself. Blaine quickly realized that his boyfriend was right. They were both fully dressed. Neither even bothered to take off their shoes upon entering the room.

"Right." Blaine pulled back, unpinning his boyfriend from the bed, and sat on his knees. He then began to work his way out of his clothes. First went his sweater. Then his undershirt. His Belt. His shoes. His pants. His socks. His boxers. When he was finished undressing, Blaine turned his attention back to his boyfriend. "Ummm...why are you still wearing clothes?" He asked curiously. Because I'm naked and I'm ready to go.

Kurt smirked. "Because you promised to rip them off of me." His breathy tone and sinful eyes were enough to set Blaine's body into motion. The elder scurried across the bed, pushing his boyfriend down onto his back and climbing on top of him once again.

"That I did." Blaine reached for the hem of Kurt's shirt and yanked it upward. With his boyfriend's help, the vet was able to get the shirt up and over his head without much resistance. When Kurt was free of the fabric confines, Blaine tossed it haphazardly on the floor. Slowly, he let his hands roam down his boyfriend's newly exposed skin.

Kurt moaned. The feeling of Blaine's finger tips on his goose flesh. The way the elder's fingers pinched his nipples lightly before continuing his descent. As Blaine's hands glided over the tights that Kurt chose for the evening, Kurt held his breath. He watched with wide eyes as the elder's hand slid down his toned thighs, only venturing off once to tease his dick with the palm of his hand.

The end of Blaine's journey came when he reached the boots that made Kurt's outfit more spectacular than expected. Kurt would always look amazing in Blaine's eyes but the boots added the perfect amount of sex appeal to his lover. The boots made the outfit. Legs that usually went on for miles traveled on for light years and beyond. Until that moment, Blaine had no conscious idea that he loved men that could list height as one of their many attributes.

The leather was smooth beneath his fingertips. "These are so hot." The words earned a hum of agreement from his boyfriend. They were. Kurt harbored not a single doubt about that fact.

Starting with the left shoe, Blaine worked Kurt's foot free before sliding the boot off. He then continued to the right foot. Following the same pattern, Blaine had his boyfriend's feet free of his shoes with time to

spare. Now, only one thing stood between Blaine and the man he loved. *These damn tights.* "I thought you hated tights?" The elder questioned as he slipped his thumbs beneath the elastic.

Kurt shrugged. "I do but...I couldn't fit jeans into those boots. Besides, you didn't seem to mind. They offered you the access you needed." True. The tights made various...parts of Kurt available.

"You didn't wear underwear with them?" Blaine's eyes widened as he peeled the spandexed material off his boyfriend's toned legs. Commando. Appreciated and slightly unexpected. When the veterinarian's hands found his technician's ass at the bar, he became painfully aware that something was missing. The telltale sign of briefs beneath the skin tight fabric.

Again, his boyfriend shrugged. "Where was I going to put them?" Another true statement.

Blaine tossed the tights aside absently as he stared down at his boyfriend. Perfect. Kurt's body was stunning. He had all the right features in all the right places. His chest was tone and muscled while his thighs and behind held the tiniest bit of baby fat that jiggled at the lightest touch.. *More cushion for the pushin'. I won't mention that to him though. He'll start trying to work out and then I'll be screwed.*

Moving up the bed, Blaine straddled Kurt's thighs and leaned down for a kiss. It was slow, caring. Less needy than the kiss they shared at the bar but no less passionate. Their lips and tongues moved fluidly. They were seamless. As they kissed, their hands traveled. One of Kurt's hands flexed and unflexed in Blaine's curls, tugging them lightly with each swipe of the man's tongue. The other rested at the base of the man's spine, teasing the top of the crack here and there.

Realization settled in Blaine's head as he continued to kiss his beautiful boyfriend. *This is Kurt -wild with lust and ready to fuck- begging me to give him my all. I could but it won't feel right. This is our first time together without an alcohol buffer. I want it to be nice for him. He deserves nice. He deserves to be worshipped. I'll worship him*

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Blaine's hands were everywhere. One moment they were tugging Kurt's hair loose of its hairspray prison and the next they were sliding across the man's thighs. He wanted to touch everything; wanted to memorize the contours and lines of Kurt's frame. Blaine needed to touch everything; needed to know the

places on Kurt's body that drove him wild. He would find out. He would worship Kurt as a god and familiarize himself with the mysteries that surrounded the man beneath him.

Blaine's hands continued to work various parts of the technician's body as they kissed hungrily. They roamed wild and unabashed, but soon slowed to almost a tease. He used his finger tips to gently ghost over Kurt's skin, causing him to moan and whimper under each touch.

A low, frustrated groan left Kurt's lips as Blaine's thumbs circled his hip bones. "What's wrong baby?" Blaine whispered into the man's ear. Before Kurt could respond, Blaine began to nip at his ear lobe; tugging it between his teeth and rolling it around with his tongue.

Kurt's response came low and huskily, causing a tingling sensation in Blaine's spine. "I need you to do something, baby; anything."

"I am doing something." He smugly replied as he trailed kisses down the man's pale chest and past his navel, stopping just short of his aching dick.

"You know what I mean!" Kurt snapped. *He's got me here and he's waisting our time messing around. He better stop before I get up and handle myself in the bathroom. I did it for years.* Stroking himself to completion was an option in Kurt's opinion; it was also an unsatisfactory one. He did not want to finish his evening in the bathroom with his had. *Not tonight.*

Blaine nibbled on Kurt's hipbone for a moment before pulling away, his chin brushing the tip of Kurt's bouncing cock as he changed position. Blaine curled his tongue and began to lick his way back up Kurt's body, tracing the valleys of his boyfriend's abdominals and trailing saliva straight to Kurt's collarbone. "Someone has an attitude." The doctor teases as he hovered above the man on all fours.

"I have a right! I put on those 'fuck me' clothes for a reason."

"True." Blaine stopped speaking long enough to suck a small hickey in the crevice between Kurt's collarbone and his neck. "You did so much to make tonight perfect. It was amazing, baby. I feel amazing because of it. I want you to feel amazing too." Pausing once again, Blaine relocated his lips to the space behind his boyfriend's ear. He made quick work of fashioning a love bite there as well. "Last time did not count. It was a night of alcohol and hormones. So, 'fuck me' clothes aside, I'm not going to fuck you. I'm

going to make love to you and it's going to be nice and...slow." The statement was punctuated with a roll of Blaine's hips; one that sent his boyfriend's head spiraling back against his pillow.

The signs of a protest threatened to leave Kurt's lips. Blaine did not allow it. Rather than allow his boyfriend to speak his piece, Blaine crashed their lips together, cutting off all possible counterarguments and words of resistant. Stop. No. Don't. Only when spoken in that order could Blaine stop. *He can't switch them around. No. Don't stop. Doesn't count.*

Pressing his body closer to Kurt's, Blaine rocked forward. The dry rub of their dicks sliding against each other was enough to calm their inner beasts. So, despite the pinching discomfort of the dry skin between them, he continued. Nice and slow. *Just enough to keep us on our toes.* "Do you have lube?" The veterinarian panted as he rocked forward once again.

Kurt nodded eagerly. He did. Lots of it. Kurt nuzzled his face into Blaine's neck, nipping lightly at the nape of his boyfriend's neck, as he reached blindly behind him. After much work, he was able to maneuver the nightstand drawer open and locate the lube. He thrust the tube into his boyfriend's hand as quickly as he could. The games were over. It was time to get down to brass tax.

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Blaine slathered a generous amount of lube over his fingers. They twitched and fidgeted as he did so. His body was abuzz with excitement for things to come.

Once he recapped the tube, he tossed it down on the bed. Fingers slick and ready for work, Blaine turned his focus back to his boyfriend. Kurt was laid across the bed with his legs spread wide. "Knees up." The elder ordered. Kurt reacted without question. He pulled his knees to his chest and wrapped his arms around them. His crack was left exposed; ready and waiting for Blaine's fingers.

Without a moment's hesitation, Blaine placed his fingers at the top of his boyfriend's crack. He then trailed them slowly down to the man's hole. His fingers bounced as it spasmed with anticipation. Blaine circled the rim a few times before easing his index finger in. Watching it disappear proved to be yet another highlight for Blaine evening. Kurt's body's willingness to accept what Blaine had to offer would always be a highlight of his life.

One finger turned to two. Blaine took his time exploring and mapping out every single stroke and movement that reduced his beautiful boyfriend to a puddle of stuttering mush. Soon three became four. Before long, Blaine was fucking his boyfriend with most of his hand and watching as the man fell apart before him. "Please fuck me, Blaine. Please. I'm so ready."

Nodding absently, Blaine removed his fingers. Slow and sure until his hand was free of the hot, wet confines of Kurt's inside. He left behind a gaping hole; a perfect resting place for his dick that evening. "How bad do you want me?"

Kurt grunted. Blaine already knew. Verbalization was not required. When Blaine did not ask again, Kurt lifted his head and looked down his body to Blaine. He was coating himself with lube; stroking slowly and letting his head fall limply backwards. "How bad do you want me?" Kurt challenged, mocking the tone the man used with him moment's prior.

"So bad." Blaine moaned as he continued to stroke. "God, I need you so fucking bad."

"You have me."

Blaine's head snapped forward, eyes locking with Kurt's. They stared for a few moments, eyes searching each other's for everything and nothing at all.

I have him.

He has me.

We have each other.

A moment of staring, eyes focusing and unfocusing on one another, offered a life time of promises to each man. This meant more to Blaine than it ever had with anyone else. It was a connection between two people; far more than sex would ever be. With them, it was not just sex. It was everything.

Blaine looked down at Kurt -ready and willing to entrust the veterinarian with his heart; his body. It was a powerful statement; a powerful action. Kurt would give him everything and, in turn, Blaine would do the same.

Dropping his now slick cock –the member only falling a bit before bouncing back to its stiff position- Blaine used his hands to crawl closer to his boyfriend. "You have me too." He whispered as he leaned forward to capture his boyfriend's lips. He used a single hand to steady himself while the other navigated his weeping cock to Kurt's waiting hole. It was time.

Pushing in was like finding home. As he inched in slowly, Blaine could feel the pieces of his life coming together. Then, as he inched out, he felt them slipping away. Each thrust and retraction was a new experience for the man. Learning the mountains and valleys of Kurt's insides would be a time consuming task. Blaine was not worried. *I have a lifetime of this to look forward to.*

With each thrust, Kurt grew more vocal. Having Blaine inside him was new and exciting. Oddly enough, it was also familiar. Déjà vu. Like they'd been there before. They hadn't. It was their first time in their respective positions with one another but that did not stop the familiarity from growing in the young man's chest. Being with Blaine was like eating the last piece of fine chocolate; something to be savored. So, no, they had not been together before but that but the warm feeling that it left in the pit of Kurt's stomach was something he'd felt before; something that he'd never forget.

Time ticked away as Blaine slowed his tempo to an agonizing pace. "Mmmm Blaine, m-more." In return, Blaine sought out Kurt's mouth with his own; kissing him tenderly when they finally met in the middle.

"I will baby, I want to make this last, I want to make it, ah-amazing for you." He increased the speed up just enough to make Kurt shiver at his touch.

"It already is, please, please move faster."

"Mmm-mmm baby – you know I – get what I – what I want." He breathed out between slow but powerful strokes. "You don't wanna see the tantrum I would throw if I, if I don't get what I want."

"Ugh fine, whatever. But, I – *shit* – I will remember this next time. Just think about that." With that Blaine picked up his pace yet again; effectively silencing his boyfriend.

The end was near for both men. Only the sound of their wet bodies could be heard over the cries and shouts that left their lips as they worked in tandem to settle the sexual energy that began to grow between them all those months ago.

Blaine collapsed first; sweating from exertion and trying to fill his lungs with the air that seemed to elude him. Kurt followed shortly after. His harsh pants were followed instantly by an explosion of stars behind his eyes and Blaine's name falling from his lips. The perfect end to the perfect evening.

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In the early hours of the morning, as the sun was beginning to rise, Blaine lay quietly in Kurt's bed. Kurt was wrapped tightly around his body -as he had been since he fell asleep hours before - with his head rested in the crook of Blaine's neck. He was fast asleep; swimming in the sleep that eluded Blaine at the moment.

Over the past few months, thoughts of the future danced around Blaine's head. They tested his psyche and his patience at times. They were often all consuming and unavoidable. That night, while Kurt slept, Blaine focused on those thoughts. He allowed himself to sort them out -one by one- and decipher what they meant for him. Then, he flipped them over and started again.

By sunrise, Blaine had each thought squared away. Blaine knew what he wanted and how he wanted to get it. That morning -for the first time in years- Blaine made a resolution for the New Year. There were 364 full days left in the year and Blaine knew how he was going to make each of them count. *Sometime in the next 364 days, I am going to marry Kurt. Not just propose. By this time next year, I want him to be my husband and I want Keenan to be my son. That's my New Year's resolution.*

Satisfied with his decision, Blaine turned his body towards Kurt's and fell into a peaceful sleep.

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Chapter Nineteen

January passed quickly. As the days marched on, Kurt and Keenan began spending more and more time at the veterinarian's house. It started off slowly. Kurt and Keenan would spend the night on weekends or on nights that Kurt had class. As the days passed, the father and his son began to stay more regularly. The more time they spent in Blaine's little, green house, the more possessions they required to make their visit comfortable.

As weeks went by and January melted into February, various items owned by the Hummel began to take residence in the Anderson house near Murphy's bar. Keenan's Simba plushie, a few nighttime books, piles of both Kurt and Keenan's laundry –clean and dirty, Lizzie Borden, Kel; they all ended up at Blaine's house on what seemed to be a permanent basis.

One February evening while Kurt was attending class, Keenan asked a question. The question was simple –only a few words- but Keenan worded it such a way that only a few words were required. *That's the funny thing about kids, they only need a few words to say what they need to say. Adults should learn from them.*

"When am I getting a room here, Stitch?" A room. The idea was not outrageous. "I mean, I'm over here a lot and I think it would be a good idea to have somewhere to put my stuff, ya know."

Blaine opened his arms for the little boy. Keenan dashed into them; long, wild curls flopping against his head as he did so. Blaine pulled the child –dressed in a new pair of Mario Brother thermal pajamas courtesy of the veterinarian- into his lap and shot him an inquisitive stare. "Do you want a room here; a room for you and your things?"

Duh. Keenan nodded emphatically. "Yep. We don't have to do anything to it, I just think it would be nice to have two rooms. Maybe Daddy can have a room too. I know you probably want your bed back. Daddy sleeps everywhere. He'd probably sleep right on top of you if you let him."

I would definitely let him. Blaine shook out his own set of curls –damp from a recent shower- to clear his head. "Ummm...I...why don't we get you a room first and then we'll....I'll....Daddy and I will discuss his sleeping arrangements later." He stammered awkwardly. *Kurt's sleeping arrangements are just fine, no*

discussion necessary. Keenan does not need to know that. Keenan's face lit up with the type of unadulterated excitement that only a child's face could portray.

"This is gonna be so cool!" The little boy shouted as he bounced on Stitch's knee. "I can't wait to get a bed and all new cool stuff for my new room. I know I said we didn't have to change anything but a new room needs new stuff. Like a bed. A comforter. New drawings for my new walls." Blaine watched the little boy list the things he would need to make his new bedroom livable. "Which room am I getting?" *Good question.* Blaine sat back in the leather, wingback chair that once belonged to his grandfather, and thought.

After careful thought, he responded. "I have no idea. Why don't we go pick one out?" Keenan was off Stitch's lap before the man had a chance to finish his sentence. Before Blaine knew what hit him, he was being dragged through the living room and up the stairs. Keenan was on a mission and would not stop until he found his new room.

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"Mmmmm...pillow top. God, I've missed you." Kurt's moan rang throughout the empty room as he burrowed his body beneath the welcoming sheets on Blaine's bed. That morning, he woke at seven only to return after ten that night. He was exhausted after a long day of life. "Oh God, I never want to leave you again."

Kurt buried his face in the pillows, willing himself to sleep. *I'm exhausted.* So exhausted that, after a brief bed check –*I had to make sure Keenan was asleep. He has school in the morning.*– the technician made a beeline for the bedroom. Blaine often stayed up late to care for the animals he housed or to work on fundraising efforts, leaving Kurt to fall asleep alone. That night felt no different than others. Kurt would pass out the second his body hit the bed and Blaine would be up later. That night was not like others, however.

"Starting without me?" Kurt's head whipped around to see his boyfriend smiling at him from the doorway. A smirk plastered itself across the veterinarian's face as he stared down at his boyfriend; the same boyfriend that was moaning and writhing in pleasure over a mattress moments before. "You're more vocal with that bed than you were with me last night."

Rolling his eyes, Kurt let his head fall back to the pillows. "I couldn't be loud. I did not want to wake Keenan." He mumbled, his cheeks flushing a bit as he spoke. When Blaine did not immediately respond, Kurt's focus returned to the king sized piece of heaven beneath him.

Moments later, when Kurt's attention was focused solely on his impending sleep, the technician felt the bed dip around him. "I know." Blaine whispered. The elder posited himself so that he was seated on the backs of his boyfriend's thighs. "Speaking of Keenan. He's decided that he wants a bedroom. He picked one out –it's down the hall and around the corner- and he wants to go shopping for a new bed and linens this weekend. I told him that it was up to you."

"Sounds good to me." The technician replied absently. Blaine's hands were sliding up and down his biceps tenderly, rendering Kurt's brain mush. "Whatever you guys want."

Blaine hummed as he slid his massaging hands to Kurt's shoulders. Almost immediately, he felt the tension the man carried around like a badge of honor begin to melt away. Leaning down just enough to press the minimal amount of weight on his boyfriend's back, Blaine began to kiss his way up the back of his boyfriend's neck to his ear. "Whatever I want?" A hint of teasing laced itself into the man's low whisper. *I want a lot of things in life; namely, you.*

Kurt shuttered. Blaine's breathe on his ear and the feeling of the man's already hard cock firm against the back of his pants drove him wild. "I....Yeah."

Blaine thrust forward, grinding his dick against his boyfriend's pert ass. "You sure? What if I wanted to do this? What if I wanted to do it like two teenagers trying to get off quickly?" He asked as he snapped his hips forward again. Truth be told, the long day and festive night with Keenan wore on Blaine. He was far too exhausted to go through the ins and outs of undressing, fucking, cleaning, and redressing. So, he took what he could get.

Kurt hummed as he shoved his face into the pillow beneath him. With a shift of his knees and an arch of his back, Kurt was able to poke his ass out just enough to provide Blaine the stability and friction he needed. Together, their bodies rocked. The sounds of their harsh, shuttering breaths and the rhythmic squeak of Blaine's bedframe were the only sounds that could be heard in the giant room.

With a stutter of his hips and Kurt's name on his lips, Blaine came first. He rode his orgasm like a tidal wave until it crashed. Sticky and satisfied, the veterinarian scooted away from his boyfriend's willing body

with the intentions of collapsing on the bed. Only then did he notice that Kurt was still working towards completion. *When did he pull that out?* It did not matter. Kurt was trying to finish and Blaine was more than happy to assist. Without a second thought, Blaine licked his dry palm and batted his Kurt's hand away. Blaine grasped his boyfriend's bare, leaking cock and began to stroke.

Blaine loved everything about his boyfriend's body: his hips, his lips, his fingertips. Of each and everything Blaine loved about his boyfriend's body, Kurt's girth commandeered the top spot. Blaine loved the fact that he could not close his fist around his boyfriend's fully erect cock. Maybe it was the thought that something larger than his finger span worked him open from time to time that turned Blaine on more than he could have ever imagined. Maybe it was the fact the length and width of Kurt's member seemed disproportionate to the man's lithe frame; something that also turned Blaine on. Either way, Blaine loved it.

"I'm gonna-" Kurt mumbled as Blaine's hand worked feverishly from tip to base. The drag was dry but it was sufficient to fit their needs. "Gonna...I'm..." Kurt's eye's rolled into the back of his head and his jaw slacked as his dick throbbed in Blaine's experienced hand. His cum flowed like water as Blaine stroked him through his finish.

A short while later, when the couple was cleaned and ready for bed, Kurt burrowed his face in his boyfriend's chest. Once his mind was free of the sexy, debauchorous thoughts that lingered just after the two did anything intimate, Kurt mulled over the idea of his son having a permanent room at his boyfriend's house. One question circled his mind as he considered the idea. "Do you want Keenan to have a room?" Hesitation was evident in Kurt's voice. He was not sure how he would feel if Blaine did not want his son to have a room. *Hurt. I'm pretty sure I would be hurt.*

The chuckle that left Blaine's lips rippled through his chest. "Of course. I want both of you to have a home here. I know we're not completely there yet, but I want us to be; someday."

Kurt released the breath he did not know he was holding. Relief spread quickly through his body. As it seemed, Blaine wanted all the things he wanted. "Me too. This feels like a good starting place. We can get Keen situated and then start -slowly- moving other things over. You will be knee deep in Hummel shit before you know it."

"I can't wait." If Blaine had his way, Kurt and Keenan would have moved in long ago. Unfortunately, like most things in life, their relationship was as unique as it was complicated. They could not move too

quickly for fear that things would go wrong and more others would end up hurt. So, they would move slowly. They would move slowly and Blaine would continue to wait until Kurt was ready to move their relationship forward. *Not too long, though. I have plans for us after all.*

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The day before Valentine's Day was a horrible day for Quinn. Well, not completely horrible. The mediation meeting that she and David had with Finn and his lawyer went well. The duo agreed on a visitation schedule and child support. They also agreed that Quinn would keep all property with the exception of the little, red truck that Finn drove. "My client does not mind that Mr. Hudson keeps the truck. There should be compensation, however." David mentioned near the end of the meeting. "Quinn bought the truck, after all."

If there was one thing that Quinn loved about David, it was his ability to see things that she did not see. She intended to give Finn the truck because she could not look at it any longer. It burned gas like a forest fire and it was an eyesore that could not be missed. David promptly changed her mind. He reminded her that she spent hard earned money on the truck while Finn flitted around with another woman. He did not intend to make Quinn angry; he intended to make her aware. And make her aware he did.

Mrs. Thompson, Finn's lawyer, looked from her client to the opposing council. "She already told my client he could have it for free."

David scoffed. The situation felt too familiar. His mother bought a vehicle for his father before their separation and it was taken after the divorce. When his mother's car broke down a few months later, she had no money to fix it and no vehicle to drive. David would not let that happen to Quinn. "No she did not. She told him that he could have it. She never indicated that it would be free. Quinn paid a thousand dollars for that truck, with depreciation, five hundred sounds fair in return. Unless he does not want the truck, of course. Quinn could have Burt fix it up and make far more than that from an actual customer."

Mrs. Thompson went back and forth with her client for a moment before agreeing that Finn would buy the truck. After the agreement was made, Mrs. Thompson shook David's hand and made a mental note never to meet with him again. *He's a shark. Next time I'll pass him off to someone else.*

That evening, during family dinner, was when Quinn's day began to spiral out of control. As the blonde spoke with Blaine and Kurt about Kurt's future plans to move out of the apartment –*making it available for*

me to move into- the doorbell rang. Carole called out that she would answer it, allowing the trio to continue their conversation. When they were finished speaking, the group grabbed their wine from the coffee table and headed into the kitchen. In two chairs, sat side by side, were Finn and Rachel. Quinn did a double take before walking out of the room. She remembered Rachel Berry from high school but they had not seen one another in years. There was a glow about Rachel that Quinn could not place and it bothered the blond. So, she walked away. It was not until Beth found her a while later that she returned.

Quinn sat silent a majority of the evening. She ate, passed food to those who asked, and watched. She watched Finn and Rachel interact with a very uncomfortable Burt and Carole. More so, she watched Rachel eat. If she remembered correctly, Rachel was a vegan and asparagus wrapped in bacon –*Kurt is going to kill Burt if he even looks at one of those-* was not a vegan dish. After a few moments of thought –the appetite, the glow- Quinn put together the puzzle pieces of the sudden reappearance of Finn at family dinner. "Are you pregnant, Rachel?" She asked suddenly, voice as cold and hard as her hair was long and blond.

The table quieted instantly. Every set of eyes at the table was fixed on the brunette. The girl looked from her boyfriend to her belly. When she felt brave enough, she lifted her eyes to meet Quinn's; they cold and hard. "Ummm....three months."

Three months. Suddenly, an event in Quinn's past made since. Without a word, Quinn stood from the table. She kissed her daughter on her head before whispering in her ear. "I think you should stay unless you are uncomfortable. Rachel is going to be part of your life and I think you should get to know her. If you don't want to today, then you can come with me. Whatever makes you comfortable."

"I'll stay for now." Beth replied. She was excited to see her father at family dinner once again and, deep down, she wanted to get to know Rachel. "If I start feeling weird about it, I'll come upstairs with you." Quinn nodded as she smiled at her beautiful daughter. Moments later, she was gone. She went up the stairs, around the corner, and to her bedroom. There, she curled herself in her comforter and cried herself to sleep. She did not cry for Finn or for the happiness he shared with Rachel. She did not cry for her daughter either. Quinn Fabray –the decision to return to her maiden name was an easy one- cried for herself. While others were moving on, Quinn felt stationary. Others were moving at light speed and she was standing still. *This sucks.*

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Valentine's Day ended much better than the day before. As a soon-to-be divorcee, Quinn offered to work for a love struck coworker at Home Depot. It was during her break that her drab day began to turn around.

Quinn sat in the outdoor break area that day. Normally, she holed herself away in a corner of the indoor one with a text book and a bottle of water. That day, she needed a change. So, she grabbed the sandwich she made the day before, grabbed her winter coat, and headed out into the cold. There, she sat enjoying the view of the customers as they came and went. In her spectating, Quinn missed a single customer; the one that would turn her day, and her life, around.

"It's a little cold to be sitting outside, don't you think?" Quinn turned quickly to the sound of the familiar voice. Her face lit up immediately in a way that she did not know it could.

"Trent! What are you doing here?"

The man shrugged before taking the bench seat next to her. "Kay Kay wants her room painted, so I figured I would come get some samples to show her before I head to work."

"Ahh...work on Valentine's Day; I thought I was the only one. Working is a single person's Godsend on a day like today." Quinn replied. The young woman sat the remaining piece of her sandwich back in the sandwich bag and pushed it away from her. "I jumped at the chance to work today; anything to keep my mind off things."

Trent furrowed his eyebrows. *As far as I knew, things were going well with the divorce.* "You okay? When you picked Beth up the day after the girls had their millionth sleepover, you said things looked positive."

"Rachel is pregnant; about three months. They came over to tell everyone last night. It only bothers me because, three months ago we had a moment when I thought things were okay. We were talking again and....then one weekend I got called into work and....yeah....that was three months ago. He got his mistress pregnant when I thought we were okay. I just...that makes me so angry. I didn't even wait to see anyone's reaction. I just left. I feel so stupid. I thought we were okay and he was humping her." Quinn allowed her head to fall into her hands. *I'm so, so, so stupid.*

"He's stupid. You're an eighty percenter." Trent exclaimed; appalled that Quinn would believe that she was anything other than phenomenal. When Quinn turned to face him, she had an inquisitive look on her face.

"An eighty percenter." He said once again. "We're never going to have one hundred percent of what we want in a partner. So, we have to decide; do we want an eighty percenter –someone with an amazing personality and a quirk or two- or a twenty percenter – someone that may look great on the surface but has enough quirks to drive us away. It's the 80/20 rule. We can only have eighty percent of what we want in a person. You are that eighty percent. You're funny and pretty; everything men want. You're also strong willed and sometimes you snort when you laugh. Some guys might not like it, but I think it makes you perfect. Finn was a fool for what he did. He'll realize that one day. By then, you'll be living the life you deserve."

The smile on Quinn's face bypassed her eyes and went into her hairline. Trent was....amazing. As their daughters grew closer and closer, Quinn found herself spending more and more time with Trent. During their time together, the blonde began to realize that Trent was everything she wanted Finn to be. Trent was attentive, kind, and resilient. Trent was....everything. "Thank you, Trent. And, for the record, you are the eighty percenter. Your whore, ex-wife was crazy to let you go."

"Tell me about it." The man groaned playfully. As time went on, he no longer felt the sting of his divorce. Each day he spent with his daughter and his friends was enough to help the man see that his life was just fine without his ex. *She's still a whore though.*

The two chatted for a moment before Trent excused himself. He still needed to grab samples for Mikayla's room before work. As he stood to walk away, Quinn called after him. "Hey, there is a Lonely Hearts dinner at Breadstix tonight. Do you want to go with me? Misery needs company, right?"

Trent's face lit up. He would go to the ends of the Earth with Quinn if she asked. "Text me the details and I'll meet you there."

Quinn smiled. "Great. I'll do that."

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"Why are we here, Whit?" Hunter hated Valentine's Day; single or not. It was a day when men were forced to share their affections with the one they loved. *Ridiculous if you ask me.* Whitley knew he cared for her, so why did he have to go out of his way to show it? *I shouldn't have to. At a Lonely Hearts Dinner none the less. It makes no sense.*

His girlfriend –yes, *we made it official recently*- shot him a glare. "Because, they've got all you can eat pasta tonight. That's why. So shut up and enjoy the evening." Hunter stood down instantly, not brave enough to question the woman. Hand in hand, the two waltzed through the crowded restaurants, smiling at the sullen singles around them.

As the couple took their seats, Whitley spotted a set of familiar faces. "Is that Quinn....with Trent?" Hunter's head whipped around quickly.

"It is. Huh...I never saw that coming. They look like they are having a good time." Indeed they did. They were laughing and seemed to be genuinely seemed to be enjoying one another's company.

"You didn't?" Out of the wings, flew Sebastian. The couple watched as he commandeered a chair from a neighboring table and pulled it toward the one that Whitley and Hunter sat at. "I saw it coming a mile away. He looks at her like she shits gold and, now that she's divorcing her jerk off husband, she can see what a great guy Trent is. You two are blind."

Whitley and Hunter looked from one another to Sebastian. "Where the hell did you come from?" It was Hunter that spoke.

Sebastian shrugged. "I was just...around. Carlton is still playing games," Hunter and his girlfriend shared a collective groan, "and so I came out. Nathan is out of town so it's not like I can fuck anything tonight."

"You're an idiot!" Whitley's thick New England accent emphasized her point. Sebastian had a chance to be with someone and he was squandering it away with his pride. He refused to ask Carlton out and he continued to sleep with random men. "He likes you and you're being an idiot."

"Whatever." The conversation died as the three turned their attention back to Quinn and Trent's table. The look that the two shared between them was enough to place a tiny grain of confirmation in each of their minds that Trent and Quinn were a future couple that they needed took an eye on. *One day, they're gonna tell us that they're together and I'm going to be there to squeal with her when they do.* Of that, Whitley was sure.

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Valentine's Day was a beautiful affair for Kurt and Blaine. Due to Kurt's class schedule, they were not able to go out for dinner that evening as most couples did. To make up for that, Blaine sent his boyfriend

flowers every hour, on the hour. Each time the delivery person arrived with flowers for Kurt Hummel, Blaine was given the opportunity to watch his boyfriend's face light up. Later, during lunch, Kurt paid him back with the most amazing round of hushed office sex that Blaine ever had the privilege of partaking in.

Late that evening, after Kurt and Keenan were tucked away at Blaine's house, the veterinarian headed across town the Hummel residence. Since a Valentine's Day proposal was out of the question due to time restraints, Blaine decided to begin work on a future proposal. *And I know just the guy to help me with it; Burt Hummel.*

Blaine called his boyfriend's father early in the week to set up a date and time for their conversation. He was pleasantly surprised to hear that Burt had time after he and Carole's Valentine's dinner plans. With plans for a meeting set, Blaine waited until his boyfriend and Keenan were asleep to leave.

A short while later, Blaine found himself sat on the Hummel couch sharing beer and conversation with Burt. "So...you're about to be a grandfather again, are you excited?" Blaine asked nervously. There was another question he needed to ask, but he was not ready quite yet.

Burt grunted from his recliner. "Yeah. I mean....the timing is horrible and I'm worried about Quinn but....Beth is doing okay with it and....I don't know. I just wish Finn woulda been smarter about it."

"Yeah." Blaine replied lamely.

"But that's not what you came here to talk about." Blaine watched as Burt sat his drink down, turning his body so that they were facing one another. "Speak your mind." Burt instructed.

The veterinarian let out a long sigh before beginning the long journey down the road to his purpose. "Well....I....Kurt means a lot to me. Well....Kurt *and* Keenan. They mean the world to me and....they're...my family. I think I...I would like to know if..." Regardless of where Blaine looked, he could not find the words he needed to finish his sentence. "I..."

"You?" As an older, wiser person, Burt knew where the conversation was going. He also knew that Blaine needed to be the person to mention it, rather than have it mentioned.

"I....want to marry Kurt and adopt Keenan." The conviction in Blaine's voice was not lost in the rushed, jumbled mess that left his lips. Burt knew Blaine meant it; he could hear it in his voice.

"So do it."

"I have your permission?" The idea was not unfathomable but the knowledge that he had Burt's blessing was what Blaine needed. He needed Burt to say he could have his son's hand in marriage.

"Do ya need it?"

Blaine's eyes widened. "Of course. Kurt will never agree if he finds out that I never asked you." Blaine watched as his boyfriend's father nodded. Kurt was old fashioned; despite popular belief. He liked home cooked meals, family bonding time, and courtship. A proper engagement –to include his fiancé asking his father's permission- was a given.

"Then you have it. Now, you wanna watch the highlights from the game? The Cavaliers played a crap game but..." The man threw his hands in the air. "Whatcha gonna do?"

That sounds like a good idea. Wait. No. That's not why I'm here. "Actually, Burt, I need your help. I've known that I want to marry Kurt for a while. Unfortunately, I don't know how to ask him."

A warm smile passed over the man's face. In an instance, highlights from the Cavaliers' game became a distant thought. "When Kurt was little, he used to sit on the hill between here and the park and look down on the kids playing. One day I asked him why he wouldn't go down and play with them. Do you know what he told me?" Blaine shook his head. *I have no freaking idea. Just like, I have no idea what this has to do with what I asked you.* "He told me he was waiting for Prince Charming to come get him. 'I'm gonna marry Prince Charming one day'. He said. Maybe it's time Prince Charming fetched him from that damn hill."

Without further explanation, Burt turned towards his television and focused on the screen. Blaine was left just as confused as he was enlightened.

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February passed as quickly as January. Work at the shelter picked up tenfold as the harsh winter began to lighten. Unfortunately, temperaments in the office did not lighten with the weather. Since the announcement of Rachel's pregnancy, she and the technician seemed to be at odds.....about everything. Some days, she would complain that Kurt was not carrying his weight around the office. To which, Kurt often replied that she was putting on weight. Other days, Kurt would shout at her for incomplete or

inaccurate paper work. In return, Rachel would state that the papers were filled out correctly and...'At least I don't have to sleep with my boss to ensure that my job is safe. I do my job well!'

By mid-March, Blaine was at his wit's end. Kurt and Rachel were once again at each other's throats and the veterinarian was exhausted by their constant back and forth. I can't keep watching this. It's bad for the office; bad for business. "You two." Blaine shouted across the empty waiting room. Kurt and Rachel's bickering ceased long enough for them to turn skeptical eyes towards Blaine. "Kurt get back to work. Rachel, follow me to my office." The sworn enemies shared a look before scurrying off as Blaine instructed. For the first time in a long time, the office was peaceful and silent. *I could get used to this.*

After a few moments of enjoying the silence, Blaine joined Rachel in his office. She looked nervous; twiddling thumbs and tapping her foot anxiously. "Am I getting fired?" She asked as her boss took his seat. "I can't afford to get fired. I have a baby on the way and-" Blaine held up a hand to silence the young woman. And the hush fell over the room. Rachel was silent in an instant.

"Nobody is getting fired. I'm just tired of the bickering that goes on between you and Kurt its-"

Rachel quickly interrupted. He is not putting all of this on me. "He starts it sometimes. He talks about my clothes, he calls me a home wrecker, he-"

"He is also wrong in this matter. Kurt has no right to talk to you the way he does. In the same respect, you have no right to speak to Kurt the way you speak to him. When you say things like 'You only have your job because Blaine needs something to fuck.' That's just as bad as what he says to you. I'm tired of the back and forth between you two. This office is tired of this matter. So, I'm going to give each of you fair warning; figure it out or leave. This is a medical establishment, not a warzone." Blaine shot his employee a final warning look before dismissing her.

He watched as the young woman hoisted herself –and her growing belly- out of her chair and walked away. When his office door closed, Blaine breathed a sigh of relief. *One down, one to go.*

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Down the hall from Blaine's office, Kurt rustled through the supply closet, putting together necessity bags for individuals that adopted animals from the shelter. Each bag held the same contents; a few pamphlets about caring for their animals, suggestions on food and treats for the animal, a magnet with the shelter's

number, among other things. Kurt was midway through stuffing a new bag when he heard his name being called. "Kurt, I need to see you in my office." *Oh...that's not his sexy voice, it's his 'bossy business voice'.....FUCK!*

Reluctantly, Kurt dropped the bag he was stuffing and trudged to his boyfriend's -boss's- office. Upon entering, Kurt closed the door behind him and took his usual seat. "What's up?" He asked as he lowered himself into the seat.

For a long moment, Blaine did not reply. When he did, it was not in a way that Kurt liked. " 'What's up' is that this issue you and Rachel have going is become a problem. I know you two have an issue but....this cannot keep going on. Marley and Unique are starting to comment; clients and prospectives are starting to comment. It's going too far and I need it to stop. I'm saying this as your boss and not your boyfriend. If you and Rachel cannot clear up your differences, I'll have to let one of you go."

Kurt's head tilted his head, an intense glint in shone in his eyes. "Rachel started this the day I came in for an interview. I did not even know who she was. To this day, I still don't know why she's so harsh towards me. The only difference is that I give it as good as I get it now. For once, I don't let her push me around and now we're having a conversation in the office and you're throwing around words like 'pink slips' and 'let go'."

From behind his desk, Blaine watched as his boyfriend -employee- crossed his arms over his chest defensively. *Oh....this is going to be bad.* Trepidation coursed through the elder's body as he considered his words. "I never said 'pink slips'." He replied lamely.

Kurt groaned in response. "Not in so many words!" Kurt's grew louder as he spoke. "Do you think I want to fight with her? Honestly? Do you think I want to see her home wrecking face all day, every day? No, I don't."

"That's enough, Kurt. I just wanted to forewarn you. I gave her the same warning. This has to end. No more fighting."

Once again, a silence fell over the room. Neither spoke. To Blaine, it was nerve wrecking. Kurt was not a silent person. He spoke his mind when and how he wanted to. His silence spoke volumes to the veterinarian. *This is bad. Really freaking bad.*

"I don't think Rachel and I will be able to stop fighting. I do not like her and she does not like me. Nothing is going to change that. With that being said, I think one of us will eventually need to leave the office. I think that person should be me." With each word that left his boyfriend's mouth, Blaine's jaw dropped further and further. Kurt wanted to leave. *That is not how this was supposed to go.*

"But..."

Kurt cut him off. "Can I go now? I was stuffing bags and we have a prospective coming in an hour. I'd like to have everything ready for her when she gets here."

Shocked and defeated, Blaine agreed. He waved Kurt to the door and spent the rest of the day avoiding both parties.

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That night, Kurt and Keenan chose not to sleep at Blaine's house.

The next night, they made the same decision.

Every night for a week, Kurt and Keenan slept in their tiny apartment over the garage.

Then, Kurt called out of work. For the first time in almost a year, Kurt called his boss –boyfriend- to advise him that he would not be at work. Blaine was floored. More so, he was worried. Was Kurt okay? Was he sick? *Or worse...is he looking for another job? I need to talk to him.*

Blaine did exactly that. When the work day ended, the veterinarian drove straight to his boyfriend's apartment, running two red lights and missing a stop sign in the process. Once there, the man raced up Kurt's steps and pounded anxiously on his door until it was answered. He needed an explanation. He needed Kurt. A week without Kurt in his bed and Nightbird by his side was torture. *I don't like this at all.*

Kurt opened the door in his pajamas, with a basket of laundry perched on his hip. "Blaine! What are you doing here?" He asked as he stepped aside, allowing his boyfriend to enter his tidied house.

"What am I doing here?" Blaine could not believe his ears. It was as if Kurt was speaking to a high school acquaintance that he had not seen in years. "You called out and I assumed you were sick or something. That's what I'm doing here." *Not to mention the fact that you've been avoiding me for almost a week.*

"Yeah....about that...." Blaine plopped his body down on Kurt's second hand couch and waited anxiously for an explanation. The way Kurt shuffled the basket of clean, white clothes from side to side. The way Kurt shifted from foot to foot. They were all signs that caused Blaine to assume that Kurt's news was not good news. "I had to work some things out. I'm sorry I did not let you know sooner. I'm sorry I made you worry."

Nervousness coursed through Blaine's veins. He could only imagine what Kurt needed to 'work out'. "What are you working out?"

Setting the basket on the floor before him, Kurt took the free seat next to his boyfriend. He then grabbed the man's hands and asked for his undivided attention. With each action and request, Blaine felt his heart sink further and further down into his stomach. "I've decided that.....I need to leave the shelter."

"No!" Blaine instantly protested. Aside from being an amazing boyfriend and father, Kurt was a phenomenal technician. He knew his duties inside and out. Kurt was passionate about the animals and a team player in most accounts. Blaine did not like the idea of Kurt's resignation at all. *Not one fucking bit.*

Kurt's thumb drew circles over the back of his boyfriend's hand. "Just listen, please." Reluctantly, Blaine nodded. He would always listen. "First, I'd like to apologize. I never should have allowed my personal issues with Rachel to bleed into our work area. It was unprofessional and I hope you can forgive me."

The warm smile that spread across Blaine's face was more of an answer than Kurt expected. Blaine had a way of smiling that warmed the young man's heart even when it was colder than the Arctics. "Of course I forgive you, baby."

"Good." Kurt continued. "I was wrong for that and I want to put that behind us. What I cannot put behind us is how I felt when I was being reprimanded by you. It left me with this taste in my mouth that I couldn't deal with. With that being said, I've made a decision. You and I," Kurt pointed between Blaine's body and his own, "we can't keep doing this. We're together all the time at your house and then we're together all day at work. I don't know if you know this, Frank, but our professional relationship is pretty unprofessional and I don't like that. So, I've decided that I am going to leave the shelter. It has nothing to do with you or Rachel; it has to do with me and the way I feel."

"But..." *No. I don't want your go. When will I see you?* Questions danced in Blaine's head as he sat silently – shocked- on the couch.

Kurt continued, undeterred. "It'll be after Keenan's birthday trip to Florida. When we get back, I want to start looking for other employment. That leads me to my second decision. Since we won't see each other at work once I find a new job, I've decided that it might be time for us to-

"Break up?" Blaine cut in. *Please say no. Please say no. I'm jewelry shopping right now and I swear I'll figure out a way to propose. Soon. I'll do it soon.* Blaine's lips remained sealed as thoughts danced swirled in his head.

Kurt scoffed. "What? No! I was going to say I'm ready to move in with you. Why would I break up with you? I love you."

With his nerves calmed and his heart floating back from the abyss of his stomach, Blaine chuckled. I'm an idiot. "I love you too."

"Good. Remember that when we get back from Disney next month. You'll be stuck with me then." Kurt leaned over to capture his boyfriend's lips. As their lips danced lazily together, an idea struck Blaine like a bolt of lightning. *Disney. We're going to Disney for Keenan's birthday next month. Kurt has been waiting for his Prince Charming for years. Maybe Disney World will help me make sure his prince finally finds him.*

Satisfaction set in. Blaine finally had an idea for Kurt's proposal. Kurt was finally agreeing to move in. Life was falling into place and the veterinarian could not be more pleased. *Not if I tried.*

Chapter Twenty

Kurt stretched his limbs as far as they would go as he rolled onto his side in Blaine's giant bed.... *well, our bed now....or it will be when we get back.* Regardless of the owner, the bed was large; large enough for Kurt to roll without disturbing his boyfriend.

The technician's eyes fluttered open slowly. The far wall was covered in photos of Blaine's family. The nightstand that held Keenan's Christmas gift. Both came into view the moment Kurt's eyes opened. Along with the wall and the night stand, Blaine came into Kurt's line of vision. He was sound asleep with Kel perched comfortably atop his chest. A lazy smile crept across the pale man's face. "Get off him, silly cat." He mumbled as he batted his hand toward the animal.

Kel stared at his owner momentarily before turning his head away and resting it lightly on the veterinarian's shoulder. "I said, get off!" Kurt hissed once more. *There is a time to cuddle and there is a time to get off my man so I can cuddle.*

"S'fine." A jolt raced through Kurt's body upon hearing Blaine's voice. *I thought he was asleep.* "He's not hurting me." Slowly, Blaine turned his head to face his boyfriend. He offered a smile. "Besides, he's going to miss us while we're gone."

Kurt hummed as he scooted closer to his boyfriend and his overweight cat. "We'll miss you too, Kel."

The cat turned his gaze from the far wall to Kurt, then to Blaine. To an old cat with old ways, Blaine was boring. So, he yawned; long and exaggerated. In response, Blaine yawned back. Kel liked the response, so much so that he patted the tip of the veterinarian's nose. He would miss them. A lot.

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Keenan woke bright and early one April morning. He could not sleep late. He was too excited. Miss Pierce told their class the day before that they would not have school that Friday. Then, they would not have school for an entire week. Spring Break, she called it. Though Keenan liked school, he liked the idea of not going to school more. *Especially since we're going to see Stitch's family in Florida.* They would spend Easter

with Stitch's family as well as Keenan's birthday. *I'm turning six.* Needless to say, the little boy could not wait.

So, he did not wait. The moment Keenan's eyes opened, his feet hit the ground. He was too anxious to lie around in bed all morning. Their flight left that evening but that was not soon enough. I want to leave now. He ran to the room that his daddy and his Stitch shared to inform them. When the bright eyed little boy pushed the bedroom door open, he caught sight of his father and his Stitch playing with Kel. "Daddy! Stitch! Kel! Stop playing and get ready! We have to get on the plane!" Keenan watched excitedly as his father and Stitch looked to one another. His excitement faded quickly. *Why aren't they getting up?* "Daddy! Stitch! The plane! We have to get on the plane!"

"The plane doesn't leave until later today, Keen. We've got time." Stitch chuckled as he lightly shoved Kel from his chest. Keenan watched as his Stitch *-yes mine and not anyone else's-* held his arms open wide. "Now come cuddle with us. The next week is going to be jam packed with fun in celebration of your birthday so we need to rest as much as we can now." Without a second thought or a moment of hesitation, Keenan dashed into them. He was still excited, but his excitement could wait if it meant cuddling with his Daddy and Stitch.

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Hours later, once their bags were packed and the animals were settle with Burt and Carole -who graciously offered to watch them while their boys were on vacation- Kurt, Blaine, and Keenan headed to the airport. Shortly after they made their way through security, Blaine's phone began to ring. He contemplated ignoring the call, until he checked his screen. It was Tina. "Hey, Tina!" He greeted as he waved Kurt and Keenan ahead. His shoes were still in his hand and the contents of his bag were still resting in the bin he was provided with. "I'll catch up with you guys in a second. Business." He offered. Kurt nodded lightly before taking hold of his son's hand and walked away. Over his shoulder, Kurt shouted that they were hungry and planned on stopping to eat before heading to the terminal. "Whatever makes you happy, dear." Blaine fired back.

Relief spread through Blaine's body instantly. Tina's call was in no way associated with business. "Sorry, Tina, I didn't want Kurt to hear us talking. What's up?"

The line was silent for a moment before Tina responded. "What's up?" She asked incredulously. "You promised to call me as soon as you spoke with Keenan about your plans and you never called. What did he say? Was he excited?"

Blaine shoved his feet into his shoes roughly as he tried to balance the bag he was repacking and his phone against his ear. Of all the times Tina chose to call him, this was by far the worst. The line of grumbling people behind him was growing louder by the second and the distance between himself and his boyfriend was increasing just as rapidly. "I....I haven't had a chance to speak with him yet and I really have to go. I think they want to eat before we get on the plane."

"But you will call, right? I'm dying over here! Besides, I'm doing you a huge favor by covering your shelter while you run off to Florida with your boyfriend and his son." The playful tone Tina used reassured Blaine that she was kidding. She was happy to assist him in any way possible.

"I know! Thank you so much for your help. I really appreciate it. And I promise to call you once I talk to Keenan. I have to make sure he is on board before I propose."

"Gotcha! Enjoy your trip, B. Don't forget to call me."

"Yeah, yeah. Bye." Blaine quickly hung up his phone and shoved it into the pocket of his pants. With a rushed apology to the people standing behind him, the veterinarian grabbed his possessions and dashed in the direction Kurt and Keenan moved in not too long before.

When their early dinner was over and the bill was paid, the three anxious travellers headed to their terminal. There was another hour before their plane was set to leave, adding to the trio's excitement. They were each ready for a vacation. They were ready to see Blaine's family again. One was ready to spend his birthday enjoying the super, awesome surprise that his father had planned for him while another was ready to leave Ohio if only for a week. Lastly, one was ready to take the biggest step of his life. He was ready to start a family and that journey would start in Florida.

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'Welcome to Jacksonville, Florida. The time is now 8:30 pm and the temperature is currently 79 degrees. Please stay seated through our descent.'

"Are you fucking kidding me?" Kurt barked, earning the attention of his boyfriend and a few nearby passengers. "Seventy-nine degrees. The sun went down a while ago so, by law, that means that it's supposed to cool down outside. What was it this morning, 110 degrees? This is outrageous." Kurt looked around to see if his fellow passengers shared his outrage. From the looks of it, they did. *Or they are really pissed that I'm screaming about the weather while they try to sleep.*

"Shh...baby. It'll be fine. There is a reason cars have air conditioners, ya know." Kurt's heart skipped a beat the second his boyfriend lay a reassuring hand atop his own. Bashfully, Kurt lifted his eyes to meet his boyfriend's. "Besides, it's much cooler near the ocean. Don't worry." Certainty and reassurance danced like old lovers in Blaine's hazel eyes.

"Okay." With one last adoring look, a quick peck on the cheek, the couple turned their attention to the sleeping child that insisted on sitting next to the window. With his body sprawled out in the chair around his seatbelt and his head rested lightly against the window, Keenan looked every bit of his age. He looked like the exhausted five year that he obviously was. The thought struck a note with Kurt.

Less than one year prior, Keenan was a completely different person. He was hurt; angry. He was a scared little boy trying to figure out why his papa no longer lived in their house. He was an angry little boy that spent his evening fighting with his father over his papa's sudden disappearance from their lives. The move from New York to Ohio worked wonders for the child and his temperament. Being surrounded by family that cared lessened the sting of Nathan's departure. It helped Keenan grow. Now, a year later, he was the happy, healthy little boy that Kurt always knew his son could be. Part of that was due to time but the rest was a direct result of Blaine's appearance in their lives. Blaine filled the void that Nathan left behind. *And he does it damn well.* Most days, Kurt barely remembered that his ex once played a part in Keenan's upbringing. *Sometimes it feels like it was always Blaine. I wish it had always been Blaine because it will always be Blaine.*

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The drive from the airport to the home of Julia and Jay Anderson was uneventful for the trio. Keenan slept as he had during the plane ride and after, while Kurt and Blaine did their best to make small talk. A late Friday night after a long day of airport hassles and travelling did not offer the couple much in the way of conversation.

"So....the beach tomorrow?" Kurt asked as he watched the miles and miles of trees pass. Was there a beach? As of yet, Kurt was not sure. From the looks of it, only trees took residence in this corner of the world.

A hum sounded from the driver's side of the car. "Yeah. There is an Easter egg hunt in town that my mom wants to take Keen to, so you and I can have some time alone. Then, church on Sunday for Easter." The veterinarian could feel his boyfriend's stare focused on him as he ran down their vacation itinerary. "It's not a 'preachy' church. It's a non-denominational church that my parents attend on holidays. I've been and everyone knows that I'm gay. No one will judge us and we're only going because everyone is excited that I'm finally bringing a guy home."

How can I say no to that? Kurt could; he knew he could. But he did not. Blaine's family was gracious enough to board them during their trip, so the least he could do was meet a few church friends. *Not everyone that attends church is small minded and judgmental.* He told himself time and time again. "Okay. Then Monday we hit The O for Keenan's birthday."

"Yep. We'll stay Monday and Tuesday. We'll drive back to my parent's Tuesday night. Then, Wednesday, we'll fly home."

Kurt rested his head against the headrest and allowed his eyes to slip shut. "I feel like we're going to be exhausted when the trip is over. As soon as we get home on Wednesday night, I have class. I might not work Thursday, I might stay home and catch up on sleep." Blaine chuckled, causing Kurt to shoot a look in his direction. "You're laughing now but I'm serious. You better ask Marley to fill in because I'm going to be tired."

"Seriously?"

"Uhhh...yeah!"

"Oh." Blaine mulled over the idea. His days with Kurt as his trusty technician – the Sammy to his Frank – were numbered. "But you can't leave me that day. I may need you."

"You won't." The confidence in Kurt's voice could be heard miles away. "You'll be fine. Besides, it may give you incentive to put out an ad for a new technician. I'm leaving the office, remember?"

"How could I forget? You're dumping me for another boss. I hope you won't let that boss take the liberties with you that I've taken. I'd hate to imagine another veterinarian bending you over their desk."

Kurt scoffed. "I'd never! There isn't another vet in the world that I'd let touch me. Well....unless Patrick Dempsey decides to leave acting for veterinary medicine. Should that happen, I would not be responsible for my actions."

"Good to know." The couple shared a laugh before allowing a comfortable silence to overtake them once again.

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"Mikayla, can I ask you a question?" As the weeks passed, Beth began to spend more time with her young friend. It was a direct result of the fact that her mother was spending more time with the little girl's father.

Mikayla looked up from her imaginary tea. Keenan was kind enough to let them borrow it while he was on vacation in Florida. 'Break my tea set and I'll break your face.' He warned as he handed the box that contained his most prized possession over to his friend.

"What do you think I should do about Rachel, my dad's new girlfriend? She's nice to me but she makes my mom so mad." Beth explained. As Mikayla pondered the point, tapping her chin lightly as she mulled over the fact, Beth nibbled on the peanut butter and jelly sandwich that her mother made for the occasion.

"Be nice to her. She might be nice back. It worked for Keenan. When he stopped being mean to Mr. Blaine, he saw how nice Mr. Blaine could be. It might work for you too."

"Hmmm..." Mikayla had a point. Once Keenan opened his mind and heart to the idea of Blaine being in their lives, he was able to see Blaine for the kind person he was. Rachel seemed nice enough, but Beth could not seem to open her mind or heart to the woman. *Maybe it's the baby*. One day her parents were breaking up and the next day, her father was starting a new family. While Beth did not disapprove –he and Mom were unhappy for a long time- she was reluctant to openly embrace her newly extended family. "I think about it sometimes but my mommy doesn't really like her."

"I don't think your mommy cares. She's too busy having fun with my daddy to care what your daddy is doing." The girls turned their attention from their tea arrangement on the back patio to the scene just

inside the kitchen door. Beth's mom and Mikayla's daddy could be seen laughing together as they tried to make dinner for the girls. They genuinely seemed to enjoy one another's company.

Beth nodded absently to herself. "I guess you're right. She doesn't seem to care. I just don't want to hurt her feelings by being nice to Rachel."

"You won't. You're mommy is an awesome lady, just like Keenan's Mommy Daddy. If you're happy then she's happy. Just like Mrs. Mr. Kurt. If Keenan is happy, then he is happy."

Beth furrowed her eyebrows at her young friend. "Keenan's Mommy Daddy? You mean Uncle Kurt?" The little girl nodded. "Uncle Kurt isn't a Mommy Daddy. He's just a daddy."

Mikayla's counter point came quickly, like a wildfire racing through a dry forest. "But he's pretty like a mommy."

Unbeknownst to Mikayla, Beth had a wildfire of her own. "But he takes off his shirt when we go to the lake. Mommies cannot take off their shirts in public." The nine year old declared triumphantly.

"Hmmm...good point." The girl's allowed the topic to drop in favor of finishing their tea party. Their timing was impeccable. At that exact moment, Trent took a chance. He swallowed every bit of fear he possessed and used it to take a step he hoped would be in the right direction.

"Quinn....ummm...I know you're still married but....would you like to.....gooutwithme?" The single father watched as the woman of his dreams tried to decipher his jumbled question. When her mind was able to make sense of the words, a smile eased its way across her face.

"I would love to go out with you some time, Trent." Excited for things to come, the pair made plans for the following week.

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April and Cooper arrived in Florida early Saturday morning. Both brimmed with excitement. Cooper could not wait to show off his girlfriend to his family and, in turn, April could not wait to be shown off. The drive from the airport was silent. Both parties were exhausted after their overnight flight.

"And, we're here!" Cooper announced as he killed the engine of his rental car. April took a moment to take in the scenery before replying. While it was no Los Angeles, the small retirement town that the Anderson parents lived in offered a certain amount of charm that April could appreciate. From the narrow bricked roads to the eclectic houses that lined the beaches, April found fascination in the tiny, Florida town.

"Do you think anyone is up?" April asked hesitantly. She hoped not. By West Coast standards, she should not be out of bed yet. By East Coast standards....*well...it's only seven, so I should still be asleep.*

Cooper unbuckled his seatbelt before shoving the car door open. "Who knows? Maybe. Maybe not. Either way, they are about to be. I haven't seen these guys since Christmas and I refuse to wait until later to introduce them to my beautiful girlfriend." Like an ice cube on set on hot cement, April melted. She was putty in her boyfriend's hands.

"Okay."

"Okay." Cooper mocked light heartedly. Before stepping out of the car, the actor Eskimo kissed his girlfriend. "Now, help me get these bags, woman." April rolled her eyes at her boyfriend's antics. She loved him to pieces; him and his crazy ways.

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"Fuck!" Blaine peeled his tired eyes open as something hot, wet, and undoubtedly beautiful engulfed his cock and slid its length slowly. It was early morning on the beach and the world outside the guest room window was beginning to come to life. *Much like my dick.*

Anxiously, Blaine tore the comforter away from his body. He received the shock of a lifetime in doing so. Nestled between his legs was Kurt. Beautiful, breathtaking Kurt whose skilled lips slid up and down the veterinarian's shaft with the greatest of ease. "Nothing beats waking up like this." Blaine panted as he watched his boyfriend's skilled lips stretch around his throbbing dick. "Nothing."

"Mmmhmmm..." Kurt hummed. The action sent shock waves through the elder's body. He would not last long. Both men were certain of the fact. The thrill of waking up in such a way, coupled with the excitement that always accompanied having to stay as quiet as possible would do the man in long before his time.

Kurt continued his ministrations, up and down Blaine's cock; taking his time to strum the head like a guitar with his tongue from time to time. The sounds that left Blaine's lips –soft sighs and hushed pants–

drove Kurt to continue. He loved the sound of Blaine falling apart. He loved the fact that he was the cause. "Fuck, Kurt, I'm gonna-" Jagged breathes sounded from the elder's mouth as he arched his back and thrust his dick further and further into Kurt's mouth erratically. "Gonna-Oh, God....Kurt!" Kurt continued to lap and suck as Blaine's body went ridged and hot spurts of cum raced down his throat.

As Blaine's contorted limbs returned to their normal, resting position, the veterinarian smiled. "That was....amazing." He gushed as he ran his fingers through Kurt's hair. "You are amazing." Kurt smiled up at him as he climbed to the head of the bed.

"I'm glad you think so. Now, I think you should show me how amazing you are." With a smirk on his face Blaine pushed Kurt back onto the bed and pinned him to the mattress.

"It would be my pleasure."

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Hand in hand, Kurt and Blaine descended the stairs of the Anderson abode. The smell of fresh coffee and the sound of laughter let the young men know that the others were up. "....and he got down on one knee and asked me to help him pick an outfit for the Day Time Emmys. I've never laughed so hard." Kurt's ears perked at the unknown voice. *It's April!* His mind shouted. He and Cooper spoke from time to time, so he was anticipating the arrival of the young woman. He needed another person that was on his level. Keenan was as good as family in his eyes –*they cannot seem to get enough of him*- and the rest of the household was actual family; blood relatives. Kurt liked the idea of having another person sitting on the outside, looking in.

A round of laughter raced through the kitchen and into the hallway. As the couple neared, it grew louder. "That sounds like something Cooper would do." Julia gushed.

The couple rounded the corner into the kitchen quickly, wanting to join the festivities. "What can I say? I'm an actor. Theatricality is in my blood. Oh...look who decided to join us." The small congregation turned to see Kurt and Blaine standing bashfully in the doorway. "Did you boys have fun sword fighting?"

"Cooper!"

"Cooper!"

"That is inappropriate!"

"You guys were sword fighting? And you didn't invite me?" The disapproving look on Keenan's face caused the blush that crept up Kurt's body darken. He quickly shot the actor a look, one that said 'I am going to kill you in your sleep for this'. "You guys always have fun without me! Sometimes, late at night, I hear you guys jumping on the bed! You never invite me to the fun stuff!"

Keenan sulked back into his chair –*I never get to have any fun-* and crossed his arms over his bare chest. The way things looked, the little boy, Cooper, and Jay were headed to the beach. If the bottle of sunscreen that sat on the table did not give the fact away, their shirtless bodies and swimming trunks did. Come to think of it... Kurt turned his attention to his boyfriend. No shirt –*something that I will never complain about-* and board shorts. *Oh...he's going to the beach too.*

"We don't leave you out of anything fun and we do not jump on the bed at night, Keenan." Blaine took a step towards the little boy as he explained the situation as delicately as possible. "I move a lot in my sleep and that is why you hear the bed. We don't have fun without you and we were NOT sword fighting." The veterinarian shot a pointed look at his brother as he dug himself out of the hole Cooper pushed him into.

The hard line set on Keenan's lips began to soften. "You promise?" He mumbled, still convinced that his father and Stitch had fun when he was not around.

Blaine knelt before the little boy, offering a smile and a reassuring pat on the shoulder. "I promise. Now, can we drop this?" Keenan nodded eagerly and the conversation was officially dropped.

Breakfast was a joyous affair for the group. Laughter and chatter filled the tiny kitchen as the group planned their day. "Okay, okay. I've got it all worked out." Julia announced near the end of their meal. "Kurt and April will go shopping with me," she stopped long enough to smile at each person. She was ecstatic about the prospect of spending time with the two people that her boys were over the moon for, "and Keenan, Cooper, Blaine, and Jay will go to the beach. Does that sound right?" Each person at the table nodded. She spoke the truth. "Great! April, Kurt, we're leaving in thirty, be ready." Seconds later, Kurt and April were dashing towards their respective rooms, neither bothered to say goodbye to the others at the table. Being presentable while shopping seemed far more pressing. *Besides, we'll see them later.* Kurt told himself as he dressed for his outing.

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"Keenan, I need to talk to you!" The sound of Blaine's voice was nearly lost in the wind. It was caught behind the sound of crashing waves and innocent laughter. For hours, the veterinarian watched as Keenan played with Cooper in the waves, built giant sand castles, and chased Jay in the sand. Blaine also participated. He ran, tagged, and tossed Keenan about until his back was sore and his energy was gone. With exhaustion setting in, Blaine felt it was time he spoke with Keenan about his plans. He would have to be discrete during their talk, however. Kurt worked long and hard to keep Keenan's surprise birthday trip to Disney World a surprise and Blaine would not ruin it.

"Yeeeeeeeeessssssssssss!" Keenan shouted as he dashed to his Stitch. Blaine stood next to the water, waiting for him expectantly. When Keenan arrived, the veterinarian extended his hand for the little boy to take. Keenan took it willingly. "What's up, Stitch?"

"Let's walk, shall we?" Blaine asked, bypassing the little boy's question. Keenan shrugged. He didn't care.

Together, the two walked the shoreline, only moving from their straight path for crashing waves. "What did you need, Stitch? I was having fun."

Blaine smiled down at the little boy. His wet curls flopped in the wind and his eyes shone bright like the sun. "I...." How did he begin? "Ummm...well....I love your daddy....a lot. And I love you too." A smile crept across the little boy's face. He loved Stitch too. "And.....I love that you guys stay at my house so much. I love that you and your daddy want to move in. It means a lot to me."

"Kel and Lizzie Borden want to move in too. They like your house because it's fun." Keenan interjected.

"And I love them as well. I'm happy that you all want to live there with me. It makes me feel like we're a family." *We've been a family for a while.* The words did not leave Blaine's mouth. He had to speak in a way that Keenan would understand. Regardless of how intelligent Keenan was, Blaine was not sure if the little boy grasped the concept of a blended family. Especially not after everything he has been through.

"I.....I've been thinking for a while that I want us to be a real family: you, me, and your father. I want to marry him and I want us to all live together." *And I want to adopt you.* Blaine would need to discuss that with Kurt before bringing it up with Keenan. It was only proper. "I want to know how you would feel about me marrying your father."

Keenan shrugged as he continued to sidestep the tide. "I don't know. I guess I'd feel sleepy. Daddy would probably make us do a lot of stuff if you guys got married, so I would be tired."

Not the answer I was expecting. "Is that all?" Blaine prodded hopefully. "Would you feel anything else?"

"Like what?"

"Would you feel sad or hurt or happy? Any of those?"

Keenan caught on quickly. "Oh...no. I would be happy. Daddy loves you too. You make him smile...a lot. I like it when he smiles. It makes me smile." That made Blaine smile.

"Good. I'm glad that it will make you happy because I'm going to need your help." Keenan listened intently as Stitch ran down his idea about proposing to Kurt. Little did the child know, Blaine was leaving out a very important detail.

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Shopping with Julia and April was exhilarating for Kurt. Too much time had passed since he spent an afternoon with two people that lived for fashion as he did. Whitley and Santana were great, but their passions lay elsewhere. Julia and April were different, they ate, slept, and breathed fashion trends and bargain buys.

Julia took them to the best shops in town, urging them to spend, spend, spend as they browsed. "It's on me." She announced each time she noticed hesitation on either Kurt or April's faces. She had a reply ready each time they declined. "Fine, it's on Cooper." Or "Fine, I'll get the money back from Blaine. You're his boyfriend, you should have no problem spending his money." Kurt did. He hated the idea of spending Blaine's hard earned money when the man was not available to agree to the transaction. *But....maybe I could pay him back. Yeah, I'll pay him back.*

Resaling with Julia was the highlight of Kurt's afternoon. The trio bounced from shop to shop, marveling over the previously owned items they had available. Designer clothes, antiques, collectables. They all sat ready and waiting to be purchased.

Kurt used Julia's Christmas gift –the gift certificate- at one of Julia's favorite shops. There, he bought gifts for his family back in Ohio. A sundress for Quinn, one for Beth as well, a model car for his father, and a sterling silver necklace for Carole.

Once the exhaustion of a morning filled with shopping began to set in, Julia suggested that they enjoy a light lunch together. April and Kurt readily agreed. A short while later, the trio found themselves seated at a tiny, beach café, enjoying the weather. "So, Cooper tells me that you and Blaine haven't been together very long. That's surprising because you two seem like you've known each other forever." April commented as she tore apart a piece of complimentary bread.

Kurt smiled bashfully towards the girl. "We haven't been together very long; we haven't even known each other a full year yet. But....it feels like we've know each other forever." A dreamy look passed over Kurt's face as he reflected on his words. In the handful of months they spent together, Kurt felt like he knew Blaine better than he knew himself. *In some ways, I do.*

"And your son is precious. He's so smart and so sweet. The three of you make the perfect little family."

Little family. The perfect little family. April spoke the truth. Kurt, Keenan, and Blaine fit together like pieces of a puzzle. They were the perfect match for one another; the perfect ingredients for the perfect nuclear family that Kurt often yearned for.

Julia agreed with April whole heartedly –*and not just because I'm dying for a grandchild over here.* "She's right. You guys are so amazing together. And this birthday surprise for Keenan is fabulous. When he's older, he'll remember the time his daddies kidnapped him and took him all the way to Disney World."

"I hope so." *And I'm not just talking about Disney World. I hope, one day, that Keenan sees both of us as his daddies.*

"He will." Julia placed a reassuring hand on top of Kurt's. "Trust me."

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A lazy Saturday evening –a day full of shopping, Easter egg hunting, and playing at the beach- dragged into a busy Sunday morning. Each member of the house was up bright and early in anticipation of the Easter service and the Anderson's family church.

"Why don't we stay here?" Kurt asked as he tried, once again, to fix his son's tie. "We could stroll the beach, maybe christen some sand?" Truthfully, Kurt hated the idea of attending church. For years, he was preached at –not to– about his 'sinful ways'. Regardless of Blaine said about his parents' open minded church, Kurt was skeptical. He tried any and every way he could think of to back out.

Unfortunately, his efforts were in vain. "Stop worrying, baby." Blaine batted his boyfriend's hands away from Keenan, opting to do the little boy's tie himself. "I told you these people don't care that we're gay. I also told you that these people are excited to meet the man that's stolen my heart. I've never brought a guy down here. I've met guys down here, but I've never gone through the trouble of bringing a guy to see my parents. You're all my mom talks about and now everyone's interest is peeked."

Kurt let out an aggravated sigh. "Fine. I'll do it for you and your parents. But please note that I shall not be dancing in any aisles. I also refuse to speak in tongues."

Blaine chuckled as he finished with Keenan's tie. "Noted."

Church was not as bad as Kurt imagined. Well...it wasn't bad in the beginning. Not until Keenan opened his big mouth.

It started with a single question from the pastor. Midway through the service, he called the children in the congregation up to the stage. With eyes as wide as a full moon, Keenan turned to his father. "Can I go?" He asked, begging with both his mouth and eyes. Kurt agreed readily. *What's the worst that could happen?* Hours later, Kurt kicked himself for such a thought because the worst had happened.

The pastor turned to the children and began to recount the days leading up to Christ's resurrection. "Now, before we continue, which one of you knows what The Resurrection is?" He asked the group of wide eyed children. To Kurt –and Blaine's– astonishment, Keenan was one of the children that raised a hand. "You." The pastor pointed to Keenan. "You're a guest in our church today, so why don't you tell us what The Resurrection is?"

Kurt's eyes widened and his jaw hit the floor as his son spoke. *No. Fucking. Way.*

"I don't know what it is, sir. But if your resurrection lasts longer than four hours, you're supposed to see a doctor."

The church was stunned into silence. A pin drop could be heard if there was a person in the room brave enough to drop one. Slowly, attempting to remain anonymous, Kurt closed his eyes and began to sink in his seat. Next to him, Blaine did the same. *Oh....my....Gaga. How embarrassing.*

"Ummm...uhhhh...good try." The pastor stammered as he tried to regain his composure. "Ummm....yes...well...should there be a second coming, we'll make sure to have a doctor available." A few members of the church chuckled as the pastor returned to his telling of The Resurrection. Any ill will or disapproving feelings toward Keenan or the parents that raised him seemed to dissipate in that moment. Kurt could not have been more grateful.

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Disney tomorrow. Are you excited? Does Keen know? -Whitley

Umm...no, he doesn't know. It's a surprise, Whit -Santana

Kurt might have slipped up. You don't know! -Whitley

It's still a surprise. - Kurt

Yes, I am excited. -Kurt

Let me see the ring. -Whitley

[Pic] Sapphires and emeralds. Just like his eyes -Blaine

Ohh...diamonds too. You know diamonds are a Kurt's best friend. -Santana

I'm aware. -Blaine

Have any of the guys said anything about Blaine? He's been a bit distant today. Did he tell them anything? -Kurt

Nope. -Whitley

Nada. -Santana

You didn't even ask. How the hell do you know? –Kurt

Because we do, damn! –Whitley

Hostile much? – Santana

A little much with the much, much? –Kurt

What? –Whitley

Que? – Santana

Did you talk to Keenan? Is he going to help you? –Tina

Yes. He's on board. It was hard to explain since I can't ruin his birthday surprise. – Blaine

Tomorrow is going to be epic. Keenan is going to turn six at Disney World and you're getting engaged to the man of your dreams! This is so exciting. I'M SO FUCKING JEALOUS! –Tina

I hope it works out that well. I had to pull SRS strings to put this together. SERIOUS! I'm talking....I'm going to owe people for the rest of my life. This debt will never be paid! –Blaine

CHARGE YOUR PHONE. I want you to take a million pictures. –Whitley

It's charging now. I also charged my camera batteries, Blaine's phone, and a random phone I found in his bag. You never know when you're going to need to use another phone to take pictures. –Kurt

Atta boy! Make sure you take pics in Cinderella's castle. LOTS OF PICS! –Whitley

DUH! Who do you think I am? –Kurt

I'm sitting on the balcony and I can hear you guys having sex. –Blaine

Now you know how I felt last night. –Cooper

If you don't take pictures of Keenan's reaction, I will kill you. –Whitley

I already promised that I would. Chill out. -Blaine

You better. -Whitley

YOU BETTER! -Santana

CALL ME WEN U GUYS LEAVE DISNEY 2MORROW. -Dad

Or I could call you in the morning. -Kurt

Or U could call me wen I tell U to call me. -Dad

Aye Aye, Captain. Love you. -Kurt

Love you too. -Dad

Have a great time tomorrow. -Quinn

I will. Have fun on your date. I want DETAILS the second I step off my plane. -Kurt

Night, ladies. -Kurt

Night, boo. -Whitley

Get some sleep, Hummel. We wouldn't want you looking like shit for your pics tomorrow. -Santana.

Good luck tomorrow, bro. Knock him dead. -David.

If he's dead, then he can't say yes, idiot! -Wes

Don't give Whitley any ideas. I feel like wedding magazines are going to start popping up the second she hears about this from Kurt. -Hunter

Carlton was on a date at the same time that I was out with Nathan. I'm so depressed. -Sebastian

Are you sure it was a date? –Blaine

The guy was sitting next to him and....LOOKING at him in this way. It just...it sucked. –Sebastian.

I'm sorry. For what it's worth, we told you to stop messing around and just ask him out! –Blaine

I know! It SUCKS SO BAD! I think I'm going to let Nathan fuck me to death tonight. –Sebastian

Wear a condom. –Blaine

Yeah. –Sebastian.

So, tomorrow's the big day. Are you ready? –Trent

Blaine looked over the balcony railing to the ocean. The moon sat in such a way that it looked as if one could run the length of the black sea to reach it. Blaine thought as he watched the waves crash. Was he ready? Life was full of commitments and Blaine intended to make the ultimate commitment the next day. He was committing to a promise. Some felt that marriage was the ultimate commitment. Blaine felt otherwise.

A promise to marry. A promise to stick through the tough times, even when he felt as if he could not. A promise to be at the end of the aisle waiting. Marriages were complicated but they came with a weight that held people together as they walked through life. Some people turned their backs on that weight, while others nurtured it. Engagements carried no weight. They were handshake deals that were only as strong as a person's word. *I promise I will be there when you get to the church. I promise not to run away because I've decided that this is not right for me. I promise not to give up on us just because we have no legal ties.*

Blaine quickly realized that he was ready to make such a promise.

I've never been more prepared for anything in my entire life. –Blaine

Chapter Twenty-One

Blaine lay awake late into the night and early into the morning. He was a ball of nervous energy on the verge of exploding. Today was the day. In a few short hours, he, Kurt, and Keenan hit the road to Orlando in celebration of the little boy's birthday. Blaine could not wait. He could not wait to see the look of pure joy on the child's face when he realized where they were going and he could not wait to see how Kurt would react to their little surprise. *Big surprise. This is fucking huge!*

Arrangements were made; set in stone. Blaine contacted a high school friend for assistance with his proposal. *If I got one thing out of my four years at Dalton, it was amazing connections. I mean....how many people know a higher up at Disney World; the happiest place on Earth? Well....probably all his friends. And his family. I'm just an acquaintance but I'm happy that he was willing to help.*

April also helped. Blaine spent his weekend getting to know his brother's girlfriend as she helped him prepare for his big day. The friendship they forged began with Cooper.

"Why don't you wear this, B?" The eldest Anderson son asked as he held up an outfit. For hours, Blaine tossed outfit ideas about and April and Cooper spent hours shooting them down. His attire would not be an issue if he was planning to propose to any other person on the planet. Unfortunately for him and his large collection of bowties, Blaine Anderson was proposing to Kurt Hummel; a fashion expert in his own right. Blaine could not wear just anything during his proposal. It had to be special....and acceptable.

The veterinarian went over the outfit with a critical eye. "Do you think that's appropriate?" He asked hesitantly.

"At Disney World? Really?" *True.*

"You're right. What about Keenan though? He's supposed to be part of this." April waved her boyfriend's brother off promptly.

"I can work with this. I can dress him in the exact same outfit?"

"Really?" *It's an intricate outfit. Forgive me if I'm a bit skeptical.*

"Really."

April's skill and quick hand blew Blaine away. Hours after her promise was made, the veterinarian held a child sized outfit that was identical to the one he was borrowing from his brother. Under the guise of necessity – "*It's just extra clothes, Kurt. You know how messy Keenan and I can be.*" - Blaine tucked the outfits into a backpack, along with the ring he purchased not long before. The veterinarian placed the sack beneath his side of the bed to keep his boyfriend from snooping. With the bag nestled away, Blaine lay in bed and thought about his future, their future. *It all starts tomorrow. Ready or not.*

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Dressing was a relatively silent affair that morning. Kurt and Blaine readied themselves quickly before hauling the few bags they would take to Orlando to the car. Once the trunk was packed, they returned to the house. Mrs. Anderson was brewing a pot of coffee for the boys while Cooper and April were doing their best to dress Keenan without waking him. Both silently thanked their lucky stars that the little boy was a sound sleeper. Thought he tossed to and fro in his sleep, he did not wake once.

"I'm going to go set him in the car." Kurt whispered. His coffee cup was now bone dry and he held a silent hope that they could hit the road before the sun rose. Blaine nodded and began to make his way to the car as well. They had a long drive ahead of them. On his way out the front door, Blaine was pulled aside by his father. He watched longingly as his boyfriend loaded the sleeping child into the backseat –something only a parent could make look so easy- before turning to his father.

Jay watched Kurt push the back door of the car closed and head to his own seat before turning to his son. "I just wanted to talk to you before you guys left. How are you feeling?"

The veterinarian's mind reeled from the question. How was he feeling? Nervous? Anxious? Excited All of the above. "I'm....ready!" *I'm ready! I'm ready!*

Jay winked and patted his son on the shoulder. "Good! I'm proud of you son. I won't lie, years ago, I couldn't imagine us standing here. I couldn't imagine you readying yourself to ask a man to marry you. It seemed so far away. But, here we are. The man of your dreams is sitting in the car, waiting to share his son's birthday with you. It's amazing if you think about it." *It is.* "I'm proud of you, son."

"Thank you, Dad." Father and son shared a quick, meaningful, hug before Blaine walked to the car. He, Kurt, and Keenan were about to begin the long journey to Disney World; the long journey to the rest of their lives.

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"Daddy?" Keenan woke just as the small family entered the Orlando city limits. "Are we back in Ohio? I didn't even get to say goodbye to Miss April or Super Cooper or Mrs. Stitch's Mommy or Mr. Stitch's Daddy." The little boy's lip quivered as he spoke. *I miss them already. This is an awful way to start my birthday.*

Keenan's eyes fixated on his father as the man turned in his seat. "No, honey," his father replied kindly, "we are not back in Ohio. You will see everyone before we head home." Keenan visibly relaxed. *Thank goodness. That answers one question.*

"Where are we?"

Stitch's eyes met his in the rearview mirror. "Orlando." The man stated simply. *Orlando. What kind of answer is that?*

"Okay?"

"We brought you to Orlando for your birthday. Happy birthday, little buddy!"

"Happy birthday, baby!"

The waves of excitement and joy rolled from the front of the car and hung over the backseat like a thick fog. They did not, however, deter Keenan or his line of questioning. "We're in Orlando for my birthday? Why?" A look was shared between his father and Stich. The exchange was brief, but not brief enough to go unnoticed.

"Because we don't get to come to Orlando every day." His father replied. "We have to do these kinds of things while we're down here."

"Oh....okay." Keenan replied giddily. *Maybe they have something fun planned for me.* He wondered as he watched the city buildings go by.

Their car eventually pulled into a parking lot. IHOP. Keenan loved IHOP. "Is this my birthday surprise? I hope so! I love pancakes!" Another look passed between his father and Stitch. *Why do they keep looking at each other like that?*

"It's part of your birthday surprise, honey." Keenan nodded to his father. *Okay. I can deal with that.*

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Breakfast was an exciting affair. Stitch informed the wait staff that it was Keenan's sixth birthday and, in return, they sang to him and presented him with a large stack of birthday pancakes. Keenan accepted them readily.

The small family ate in relative silence. They allowed themselves to enjoy the food on their plates without conversation getting in the way. Once their food was finished and the plates were licked clean, Keenan's father turned to him. "Are you ready for your birthday present?" He asked expectantly.

Keenan nodded excitedly. "Yes! Yes! I'm so ready for presents!"

"Okay." Keenan watched as his father dug into the giant, brown bag that he often carried around. *It's not a purse. Daddy said it's not a purse.* When his father's hand returned, it was clutching a blue gift bag. "Happy birthday, honey. It's from Stitch and I."

Six year old Keenan grabbed the bag greedily and tore it open. Beneath the tissue paper and the card that Keenan would read later –*probably. I should. I won't.*– was his gift. A bottle of sunscreen. *Really? They got me sunscreen? Am I allowed to be disappointed?*

"Ummm...where is the rest of it?" Keenan eventually asked. He'd torn the tissue paper out of the bag to see if there was something else beneath it. Nothing. Surely, there had to be more.

"That's it, baby! Happy birthday!" Keenan shot a confused look at his father. "Do you like it?"

NO! Keenan tossed the sunscreen back into the gift bag and threw the bag on the ground. "That's not a real gift!" The boy huffed. His face contorted as he spoke. *Worst birthday ever.*

Gingerly, his daddy gathered the bag and its contents from the floor. "Throwing something on the ground isn't very nice, son. You never know when you're going to need that which you threw."

Stitch nodded in agreement. "Yeah, buddy. You could need that soon....very, very soon."

Yeah right! Keenan did not believe the words for a second. *Besides, Mr. and Mrs. Stitch had sunscreen at their house. I could have used theirs.* Keenan kept his thoughts to himself. *Some kids get crappy presents but some kids don't get presents at all. At least I got something. I guess I should be happy. I guess.*

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The drive from IHOP to nowhere in particular was excruciating for Kurt. Not once during the planning stages of the trip did he realize that Keenan would be so disappointed. *I completely forgot that he's only six. He may be a wise young man, but he's still a six year old. Of course he can't make the connection between sunscreen and a fun day outside. What was I thinking?* The morning grew progressively worse as they drove towards Disney World. Silence engulfed the car and hung over the three individuals like a rain clouds.

"His mood will change the second we get there. Don't worry." Blaine offered as he gave his boyfriend's firm, reassuring squeeze. Kurt hoped so. For all he knew, Keenan's mood was so sour that not even Disney World could cheer his son up.

A short while later, not long into their drive Kurt received the relief that his body so desperately needed. It started when their rental car hit the highway. Keenan sat silent in the backseat for a majority of their drive. With each passing moment, Kurt's heart beat anxiously against his ribcage.

Then, cutting through the silence like a swift blade, Keenan spoke. Loud and excitedly, Keenan shouted to his father from the back seat. "Daddy! I just...I saw a sign that said Disney World. Is it around here? Do you think we'll see it on our way to wherever we're going? I hope so! That would be awesome!" The child rambled.

A wave of relief rushed through Kurt's body as his son spoke. Maybe the day would not end as badly as it'd began. *Maybe.*

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The ultimate test came when Blaine merged into the long line of cars waiting to enter the park. After seeing the billboard, Keenan spent the remainder of their ride brainstorming ways to see the Magic

Kingdom without entering the park. As far as he knew, they were driving back to the beach house that Blaine's parents owned.

Blaine maneuvered the vehicle effortlessly, following the flow of traffic as they moved slowly through the gates. "Where are all these people going? There are cars everywhere." Keenan commented as he pressed his face against the window.

"Happy birthday, baby." Kurt responded. It was the same response he offered for each of Keenan's other questions. Blaine knew Kurt was waiting. He wanted Keenan to figure out where they were going on his own.

"That doesn't answer my question." The little boy responded absently.

"Happy birthday, baby." Kurt repeated once again.

The car inched closer to the ticket window with each passing moment. It was only when Blaine was paying for their parking that Keenan caught on. "Wait. The arch above our head says Disney World. Why are you paying that lady to drive back to your mommy's house?"

"Happy birthday, baby." Kurt said once more.

The parking cashier smiled at the little boy before turning to Stitch. "He doesn't know?" She whispered. Kurt and Blaine shook their heads. *Nope. Not a clue.* "Are you waiting for a special time to tell him?" Again, they shook their heads. "Can I?"

"Sure." Kurt replied. He'd already resigned to the fact that he would have to change his son's name to oblivious. The billboards, road signs, and giant archway above their car that read 'Walt Disney World' were not enough for his son to realize where they were going

Blaine rolled down Keenan's window as Kurt pulled out his phone. Months ago, they agreed that filming Keenan's reaction was a must. "It's your birthday?" The park worker asked. Keenan nodded. "How old are you?"

"Six." He proclaimed proudly.

"Six is a magical birthday. Happy birthday, young man."

"Thank you."

"You're welcome. I hope you have magical birthday in the most magical place on Earth."

"Where is that?" Kurt tried to steady as excitement bubbled in his stomach. *Here it comes.*

"Disney World of course." The woman then turned her attention back to Blaine. Kurt and his camera chose to stay focused on Keenan and the shocked expression on his face. "Welcome to Disney World, gentlemen; the happiest place on Earth." With that, the woman waved their car forward.

Keenan's eyes were so large, they looked as if they would fall out of their sockets at any moment.

"We're.....we're going to Disney World for my birthday?" He asked hesitantly.

"Happy birthday, baby." Kurt responded. Moments later, the shouting started. It was loud and untamed. Pure joy and excitement rolled off the little boy in droves.

"We're at Disney World! We're at Disney World!" The little boy shouted as he bounced in his seat. More than once, Blaine was forced to tell the child to remain seated until the car was parked. Kurt caught each moment on his phone. That day was a day they would never forget.

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The crowds were outrageous. Blaine could not remember such a crowd, save for his time in New York as a college student. Even then, a majority of those crowds weren't anxious children. *This is crazy!* "So, we'll catch the trolley to the gate, buy our tickets, catch a tram or a ferry to the next gate, have our tickets scanned and then we're there."

"What?" Blaine's attention was pulled from the anxious children before him to his boyfriend. "All of that? Are you serious? We won't get there until nightfall." Blaine did not intend to whine but....*damn.....really? It's like trying to get into Fort Knox.*

"Why? Fairies don't fly fast? Tinkerbell looks like she flies fast." Kurt and Blaine turned their attention to the little boy. "What? She does."

"It's nothing, honey." Kurt grabbed his son's hand as he spoke. "Stitch is just being silly. It won't take us that long."

An hour later Kurt ate his words. They chose to ride the ferry to the park and were pleasantly disappointed when the water craft stopped midway through its trip to allow another passage. That coupled with the 'standing room only' accommodations that the trio found upon entering the ferry, Kurt was fuming. The day was not turning out as he expected.

One look at his son and boyfriend and all ill will subsided. Keenan was perched atop the veterinarian's hip and the two were in the midst of a hushed conversation. "What are you two whispering about?" Kurt called over the rowdy group of individuals that shared the ferry with them.

The two turned to him –matching looks of shock and fear written across their faces- and shrugged. "Nothing." They answered together. Kurt was skeptical but chose not to push the issue. Today was Keenan's day. If he wanted to share secrets with Stitch that he felt –for whatever heartbreaking reason.... *I'm really taking this hard. I want him to whisper with me. I'm Daddy after all-* he could not share with his father, Kurt would not push the issue....yet. He would not push the issue until they were back on Ohio soil.

What felt like an eternity later, Kurt, Blaine, and Keenan were pleased to say they were in line to enter the park. Even the gates were magical. Blaine and Keenan swayed to and fro in an attempt to get a look at the majesty that was Disney World. There was a train that passed by with smiling faces on it. In the distance, they could see Cinderella's castle. The two were amazed and excited in equal amounts.

Kurt handed his ticket to the gate employee and stepped forward. He watched intently as Keenan, just behind him with a giant smile on his face, did the same. When Blaine stepped up, the gate worker scanned his ticket and then advised him that his bag would need to be searched. The veterinarian paled instantly. The exchange was odd and it caused Kurt wonder. *What the hell does he have in there?*

"We'll wait by the gates." The technician advised as he grabbed his son's hand. Relief spread throughout his boyfriend's body instantly, causing Kurt to wonder yet again. *He's being weird.* The thought left as soon as it arrived. Keenan was tugging his father towards the gates after all.

Moments later, Blaine joined them. A wide grin was spread across his sun kissed face. *I will never be more thankful that Keenan dragged Kurt away. Had he been standing next to me when my bag was being searched, he would have seen the guard pull out the outfits in my bag and he would have watched as the man questioned me about them. Thank you, Keen.*

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Their day started on Main Street. There, Keenan met Mickey Mouse in the Town Square Theatre. From there, they continued to Tomorrowland. Blaine and Keenan drove race cars on the Tomorrowland Speedway while Kurt took pictures from the sidelines. They also met Buzz Lightyear and, most importantly, Stitch.

"My Stitch is kind of cooler than you are. No offense." The little boy said to the giant alien dog. Disney Stitch shrugged before turning to face Kurt's camera. When their time with Stich was up, the trio ventured to Cosmic Ray's Starlight Café for lunch. It was early but the walking coupled with Keenan's excitement left the bunch with grumbling tummies.

Fantasyland was far more exciting for Kurt and Blaine than it was for Keenan. The two ran about giddily, checking out every shop, boutique, and attraction they could before Keenan rushed them away. During a bathroom break between Tomorrowland and Fantasyland, Stitch made him promise not allow them to stay that land too long.

"That's where it's going to happen. If Daddy stays there too long, he'll want to visit certain places. He can't until we're –you and I- are ready."

So, Keenan urged them out of the area and into Liberty Square. They visited the Hall of Presidents –*boring*– and stopped for ice cream. The midday sun beat down on them like an angry drummer and ice cream seemed to be the perfect cure for the Florida heat.

"Thank you guys for bringing me. I'm having so much fun!" The little boy admitted between licks of Sleep Hollow ice cream.

Kurt and Blaine looked to one another before smiling down at the child. "It was our pleasure, baby." Kurt replied eventually. It was their pleasure. Seeing Keenan's eyes light excitedly when they arrived and watching him soak in the magic that Disney World had to offer was a wonderful experience for both men.

The afternoon continued as the morning had. The trio explored Tom Sawyer Island in Frontierland. In Adventureland, they met Tinker Bell in her magical nook. They climbed story after story of the Swiss Family Treehouse. They flew magic carpets. They also sat through a show full of singing, magical birds. Kurt and Blaine switched back and forth as appointed photographer as the other stood next to Keenan to capture the moment.

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"If we're going to see Cinderella's castle, we need to do it soon. The fireworks will start this evening and I want to see it." Kurt said as they strolled back to Main Street, U.S.A. That was Blaine's cue. Lightly – discreetly- Blaine nudged the curly haired little boy.

"Oh...ummm...bathroom. I have to go to the bathroom, Daddy." Keenan stammered. A day of fun caused Stitch's plan to slip completely from his mind.

Kurt looked from his boyfriend to his child. They were up to something. "Okay, I'll take you."

"NO!" Keenan shouted, causing a few passersby to stop and stare. "I mean....Stitch can take me. Take pictures of Cinderella's castle while we're there. We'll be right back." It was a plea. *Please don't come with us. That will ruin Stitch's surprise.*

"Ummm.....okay." Kurt replied hesitantly. *Those two are odd; the odd couple.*

As the two walked away, Kurt twirled in his spot, taking in the scenery. He'd seen the park, but he hadn't taken the opportunity to stop and enjoy the view. It was beautiful. People moved in the foreground as Kurt's eyes scanned the background. It was everything he imagined it would be; joyous, awe inspiring, magnificent.

Kurt's eyes danced to Cinderella's castle. From a young age, Kurt wanted to visit the prestigious castle. Each moment that he was forced stare at it –*so close but so far*- Kurt felt his resolve breaking. *I want to go to there. I want to....* Kurt's feet began to move of their own volition. *I want to....*

Daisy Duck.

"Hi!" Kurt said as the duck woman neared him. "Can I take a picture with you?" Daisy nodded and stepped close to the man. "Okay, say 'Disney World selfie!'" Kurt beamed as he held up his camera to take a picture with the character.

Once the picture was taken, Kurt backed away from the character. "Thanks, Daisy. If I must say, you looked fabulous." Daisy waved a dismissive hand at the young man. If she could, Kurt was sure the duck would blush. *God, I love Disney.*

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Blaine noticed the flash of cameras as he and Keenan entered Cinderella's castle. He could not blame his fellow patrons; he and Keenan looked phenomenal.

Cinderella met them in the middle of the castle. "Thank you for allowing me to do this here. I really appreciate it."

The young, blond girl smiled warmly. In a way, she reminded the veterinarian of Quinn. *If she moved down here, she would be a perfect shoe in for Cinderella.* "It's not my doing," the girl advised, "but if it was, my answer would have been the same. Your man is a lucky man."

"I'm the lucky one." The words flew out of Blaine's mouth without hesitation. He was the lucky one. Kurt and Keenan were everything and he thanked his stars every day that they walked into his life.

"How sweet. Why don't you tell these people," Cinderella motioned to the crowd of onlookers, "what's going on so they know what to expect." Good idea. *That's a damn good idea, Cinderella.*

Blaine pulled his hand away from the princess and turned to the crowd that was gathered behind him. "I know you are all on vacation -just like us- and I know you're probably tired -just like us- but I have a favor to ask of you. Any minute now, my boyfriend's resolve is going to break and he's going to come waltzing in here. When he does, I'd like to propose to him. I love him very much and I'd like him to be my husband."

A few 'awwws' went around the castle. "What I'm hoping is that you guys will help me. This little guy and I want to make this special for him because he is special to us. So.....if anyone is willing to take pictures with my camera and if you guys are willing to hold off on meeting Cinderella for just a moment, I would greatly appreciate it."

The group's decision was clear in a matter of seconds. One woman approached Blaine with intentions of capturing the special moment on his camera while a man approached him and agreed to record the moment with his phone. Blaine was awestruck. He believed that humanity as a whole was good and accepting, but beliefs and first-hand accounts were two different things. Seeing his fellow park goers so willing and anxious to help warmed his heart. "Thank you guys. You all have no idea how much this means to me." They did not. They could not. Blaine could not form words to show his gratitude for the situation.

If he could, he would share them. So, he settle for a few words of gratitude that he blanketed over the crowd. He hoped it would suffice.

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If this bitch does not walk away. Walk away, Daisy Duck. Walk away. A few minutes with the character turned into the half hour from Hell. Daisy Duck spent that long irritating the technician. Each time he tried to walk away, she stepped in front of him. When Kurt said that he was leaving, Daisy urged him not to. "Okay, my guys are taking too long, so I'm just going to meet them in Cinderella's castle." Kurt gritted through clenched teeth.

This time, Daisy did not stop him. *Thank goodness.* As Kurt walked away, he sent a text to his boyfriend. One that went unanswered.

You guys are taking FOOOOORRREEVVVERRRRR! I'll meet you in Cinderella's castle. I'm seeing this damn castle with or without you guys! –Kurt

With his text sent, Kurt pocketed his phone and wandered towards the magical castle that he once dreamed of living in. It's a dream come true.

Walking into the castle was surreal. *Probably because all these people are staring at me.* Kurt chose to ignore the inquiring eyes that belonged to the stone, still people. Not a single person moved as Kurt's eyes danced to and fro. Surprisingly, the interior of the castle was just as Kurt imagined it would be; grand. It was simply grand.

Kurt twirled in an attempt to take in every inch of the castle. Mid twirl, Kurt heard a voice; a wonderfully familiar voice. "Daddy!" Kurt's eyes sought out the sound that caused the perking of his ears. When he found his son in the crowd of people, Kurt smiled.

"Baby, fi- what are you wearing?" Keenan shrugged as he waltzed through the crowd and to his father's side. Without a word, the little boy grabbed his father's hand. "No...serious...what are you wearing? Where did you get that?"

"Stitch." *Figures. Only Blaine would scour the streets of Disney to find Keenan a-*

"Kurt." The technician's eyes left his son's attire in search of his boyfriend. When he found him, standing at the far side of the castle next to Cinderella, his heart stopped. *Or....at least I think it did.* Stood tall and proud like a knight in shining armor, was Blaine.....dressed as Kurt's very own Prince Charming. Kurt was not sure whether he should laugh or cry. The fact that Blaine and Keenan wore matching costumes was silly and endearing. *It's as if they know how much I loved Prince Charming as a child.*

Kurt watched as his boyfriend crossed the castle in slow, calculated strides. When he was so close that the young father could smell the man's Old Spice, Blaine did something that made Kurt's head reel. Meer feet from where Kurt and Keenan stood, Blaine grabbed his boyfriend's hand and lowered himself down onto one knee.

Oh my God. Oh my God. Oh my...this is not happening. This is not happening. I'm so dizzy, I think I'm going to pass out. They're dressed like Prince Charming. A big and a little Prince Charming. This is a dream. This has to be a dream. This is not happening. I sure as hell hope this is happening.

"Sammy," *Oh, God. I hope this is happening,* "Keenan told me once that all you wanted in life was someone to help you love him. I believe that and I want you to know that I am that someone." *Oh my God....this better be happening.* "You once told me that you wanted someone to share lazy Sunday mornings with. I am that someone. Those are the things I am and the things you want. Someone else told me that you used to wait on the hill next to your house for Prince Charming to carry you away. I want to be your Prince Charming. I want to be the person that carries you away –even if it's just for the evening. I want to be that man. I want to be the one that gives you everything you want in life"

Blaine paused momentarily to give Kurt time to catch up. He seemed overwhelmed. "I want to be the man that helps you raise the most interesting child in the world." Out of the corner of his eye, Blaine saw Keenan fist pump for himself. It brought a smile to his face. "I want us to be a family. In a way, we already are, but.....nothing beats being official."

Tears welled in Kurt's bulging eyes as he waited for it. *Oh my God. This is happening. This is fucking happening.* He watched as Cinderella handed Blaine a box. *It's in there. Oh...God damn, it's in there. He's got a...oh God damn!* "Kurt, will you-"

"Yes!" Kurt shouted before his boyfriend could finish the sentence. The round of applause started instantly. The applause was accompanied by a round of flashing lights.

"Marry me?"

"Yes! YES!" Kurt's body shook as his boyfriend slid the engagement on his finger. "Oh...my God, yes!"

Blaine helped himself up and engulfed Kurt into a relieved hug. When the excitement began to wear off and the crowd began to dissipate, Blaine turned to Keenan and smiled. "Did I do a good job, Stitch? I held Daddy's hand just like you told me." Blaine rustled the boy's unruly curls.

"You did wonderfully, little guy."

"I did my best, new daddy Stitch." With those few words, Blaine and Kurt's could nine day upgraded to a cloud ten.

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"You knew." It was not a question. Kurt sat on the balcony of their hotel room while Blaine put Keenan to sleep. Every few moments, the young man ran a shaking finger over the band that covered his left fourth finger.

Burt laughed on the other end of the line. "Of course I did. Who do you think told him about your longing to be whisked away by Prince Charming as a child?"

"Thank you. I can't wait to show you the video. It was amazing, Dad. Blaine did.....it was perfect. And Keenan....Keen was dressed as Prince Charming as well and....God. It was so perfect. Then, when it was over, Keen called Blaine 'new daddy Stitch' and it was perfect. God, it was so perfect. I'm so excited. I feel like we're finally getting out of the ditch Nathan left us in. We're happy. We're building a real family. It's just....perfect."

"I'm glad, you deserve perfect, son. Congratulations."

"Thank you, Dad."

"Now, tell me about my grandson's adventures at Disney World. I know Keen had quite a few adventures." Kurt sat back in his patio chair and shared the events of the family's exciting day.

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"Thanks for singing to me, Stitch." Keenan stretched and yawned as Blaine tucked him into the bed. "And thank you for my birthday present. I had an awesome time with you and Daddy."

Blaine smiled at the sleepy child. "Good. We wanted you to have a good day."

"I did." Keenan cuddled with his pillow as he began to slip into sleep. "Night, night, Papa Stitch. I love you."

For the second time that day, Blaine felt himself nearing tears. "I love you too, son. I always will." With a kiss on the child's forehead, Blaine tip toed out of the room. When the room door was closed, Blaine headed to the balcony to join Kurt, his fiancé.

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Chapter Twenty-Two

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"Wise men say

Only fools rush in But I can't help Falling

Kurt grinned as his fiancé whispered the words into his ear. Kurt snuggled closer to the man's side with each word that fell from the elder's lips. They were an open invitation for Kurt to get as close as he wanted because, as a couple, the two were as close as they could be. The moment Blaine proposed, their hearts became one and their minds functioned –if only in that moment- as one. Neither felt closer to another soul on Earth.

The plane ride from Florida to Ohio was tiring and uneventful. With the exception of Blaine's hushed serenade and Keenan's interrogation of their flight attendant, the trip was boring in Kurt's opinion. It was just as well. The moment they landed on Ohio soil, the trio would fall back into their everyday lives. Blaine and Keenan would go home to their warm beds and Kurt would catch a cab to class. *Yay college! Not really. I am beyond exhausted..but it was worth it.* The excitement on Keenan's face, the proposal, it was all worth the temporary exhaustion that Kurt felt.

Kurt parted with his fiancé and son at the airport. "Do you have your books, baby?" Blaine asked as he hoisted their exhausted son into his arms. Kurt nodded. Whitley had his books and would deliver them to him before class started. "Good. We'll see you at home. Love you."

The couple shared a chaste kiss before turning their collective attention to Keenan. His head lulled backwards as sleep began to overtake him. "Goodbye, Keen. You'll see me in the morning." Keenan's head jerked forward in a shaky nod before landing with a thump on Blaine's shoulder. "Love you guys. I'll see you when I get home."

Blaine smiled as his fiancé stepped into the back seat of the cab. As the car drove away, the man stood and waited. *Now I have to figure out how to get all this luggage and Keenan to the car. Kurt's a sneaky bastard. He only went to class so he could get out of helping me get this stuff. That's fine. I'm leaving it in the car.* With his decision made, Blaine began mapping out his plan of attack. It was going to be a long trip to the extended stay garage.

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True to his word, Kurt did not show up for work on Thursday. While Blaine was dressing that morning, Kurt was sleeping off a week's worth of fun. Blaine wanted desperately to be jealous. He could not be, however. While he and Keenan were turning in early the night before, Kurt was seated in a stuffy classroom with a handful of other working adults that desperately wanted a college education. Blaine's would be jealousy subsided each time the thought crossed his mind.

As Kurt predicted, his absence from work forced Blaine to begin working on an advertisement for the local paper.

'No kill shelter seeking FT vet tech with experience. Must be willing to work in a fast paced, team oriented environment. Experience preferred. We will not train you.'

That sounds harsh. Blaine cleared his document and attempted to start fresh. With Kurt, things came easily. Rachel wrote the ad and Kurt called the next day with the type of experience that made a potential employer's mouth water. Things were different this time around. *I'll actually have to work hard to find someone this time.*

'Veterinarian seeking FT vet tech. Must be awesome.'

Too unprofessional.

'No kill shelter seeking animal loving vet tech.'

Erase. Obviously they'd be an animal lover. Think, Blaine. Think.

'Gorgeous, sexpot veterinarian looking for-'

Why would I tell them I'm gorgeous? Whomever I have in for an interview will have eyes. They will be able to tell that I am gorgeous. I don't have to tell them. Erase.

Blaine fell back into his office chair with a sigh. Nothing sounded right and everything felt wrong. When it all felt like too much and Blaine's brain was fried, he resorted to his last option. Without a moment's hesitation, the veterinarian picked up his phone and rang the reception desk. "Rachel?"

"Yes?"

"Ask Unique to man the desk and come to my office please." Blaine listened to the silence on the other end of the line.

"Okay. I'll be there in a moment." Blaine disconnected the line and waited for Rachel's arrival. Since his return from vacation and Kurt's absence from work, the office seemed to run far more smoothly than it had in months past. Rachel was back to her old self and the tension that resonated around the office like a thick, musty fog began to dissipate. Blaine hated it. Why couldn't the two just get along? Why couldn't they put their differences aside? *Then, Kurt wouldn't be looking for another job.*

The knock that sounded Blaine's office door pulled him away from his thoughts. "Come in." He shouted as he closed his laptop. He watched intently as the office door opened. Rachel stepped inside slowly, closing the door behind her. "Have a seat." Blaine offered. He watched as the very pregnant, very large –*that kid is going to be huge*– Rachel did her best to gracefully lower herself into a seat.

"What can I help you with, Dr. Anderson?" *So formal.* Blaine looked over the young woman before him. *Pregnancy looks good on her.* Gone was the scowl that often crossed Rachel's face. It was replaced by a soft smile that was accented by her obvious pregnancy glow.

"I just...how is the pregnancy going? Do you know what you are having?"

"A girl. Another girl I suppose. Finn is excited. He wants to do things right this time. He is going to tell Beth when she comes to visit this weekend." Blaine nodded. A second girl. In his opinion, another girl could help Finn. His thoughts were often skewed and daughters had a way of helping their fathers see the light that often went unnoticed.

"That's lovely. I'm sure Beth will be excited. She is an amazing young lady and she has a wonderful way with younger children. She and Keenan often have a ball with one another."

A dejected look settled on Rachel's face. "I wouldn't know. Kurt hates me, so I've never actually met Keenan. Speaking of, I heard about your engagement. Congratulations."

"Thank you. And, for the record, you made your feelings towards Kurt known long before he made his feelings towards you known. You made him feel unwelcome from day one." Rachel opened her mouth to

speaking just as Blaine was raising his hand to stop her. "But that's not what we're here to talk about. Kurt has decided that, with the direction that our relationship is taking, he would like to leave the office."

"I don't want to be the reason he's leaving the office. I know that I've been rude to him but..... it was because I thought he was the reason Finn and I could not be together. Carole and his dad spent so much money on Dalton because he couldn't handle McKinley-"

"Kurt's parents spent money on Dalton because McKinley was not a safe environment for Kurt. Also, the reason you and Finn couldn't go out on dates was because he got his girlfriend pregnant and had responsibilities to take care of. None of that had anything to do with Kurt." Blaine reasoned.

Rachel visibly shrank as her boss spoke. She knew Kurt was not the cause of her issues with Finn, but that did not stop her from disliking him. While Finn worked long hours at the shop to take care of the family he never intended to have, Kurt ran around a fancy private school. The trade off did not seem fair. "Finn made his own mistakes, Rachel. They were never Kurt's mistakes to pay for. Now, as I was saying, Kurt is leaving the office and I'm going to need a new technician. Will you write an ad?" Rachel nodded. She would.

"Great. Make sure you mention that I need them to start as soon as possible and also mention that I have a great smile." The technician shot his receptionist an award winning smile. *I have a great dental plan.*

"Um....I don't think they will care about your smile. I also don't think Kurt would approve of someone caring about your smile."

Blaine waved Rachel off. "Kurt won't care; just as long as the person that I hire is not prettier than he is. He made that very clear. If anyone calls that sounds prettier than Kurt, tell them we filled the position." Rachel chuckled as she made her way back to the reception area. Rather than drafting Dr. Anderson's advertisement, she began drafting a letter to Kurt. As she neared her due date, Rachel realized that she wanted her child to have the same opportunities that Beth had. She wanted her daughter to know his entire family, including her uncle, his husband, and her cousin. That would not happen unless amends were made. Those amends started with her and Kurt.

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"Leeme 'lone. 'm sleepin'!" Keenan giggled as he bounced on the bed. Having fallen asleep as soon as he and Blaine arrived at home the night before, Keenan was anxious to spend time with his father. Unfortunately, his father was not anxious to leave his bed. Kurt's lack of motivation did not deter his son.

"Come on, Daddy! Stitch left this morning and someone has to feed me. Feed me, Daddy! Feed me now!" Keenan climbed onto his father's chest and used his fingers to pry his father's eyes open. Keenan watched his father's eyes jump frantically around the room. "I'm starving."

Kurt gently pushed his son from his chest and sat up on bed. "Wha' time izit?" He asked as he ran his hand over his tired face. Keenan shrugged.

"One one."

One one? "It's one o'clock? Are you serious?" Kurt leapt from the bed. How had he slept so late?

The little boy shook his head frantically. As each of his curls bounced, Kurt reminded himself to give the child a haircut. *He needs one before he goes back to school. I've been putting it off for too long.* "No, it's one one on your phone. One one two three."

One...one...two...? "Eleven twenty-three?" Keenan nodded. *Yep! That's it! I should learn to tell time.* "Oh my....you poor thing! You haven't eaten all morning? Why didn't Blaine wake me up? Crap! Crap! Crap!"

"He tried to but you wouldn't wake up. So he made me some toast and told me to come sleep up here with you. You were still asleep when I woke up again. Watching you sleep is boring. That's why I woke you up." Kurt was out of bed and on his feet by the time Keenan finished his lengthy explanation. "Can you feed me now?"

Kurt rolled his eyes. *Do I look like Seymour?* With Keenan, it was always about food...and glitter. *Goodness knows he's my son. Nobody loves glitter like we do.* "Yes, I'll make us some lunch. I'm surprised you let me sleep that long. Usually you wake me bright and early...super early.....too early for any normal person to be up."

Keenan hopped from the bed and grabbed his father's hand. Together, the two made their way to the kitchen. "Don't thank me, Daddy. I've been trying to wake you up since the clock said nine. You just wouldn't get up." *Gee thanks, kid. It's nice to know that you care that much about my rest.*

The kitchen came alive as Kurt prepared lunch for himself and his son. The curtains were opened, the animals stirred. The way a room came alive with the flick of a whisk always amazed the young father.

When Kurt was finished preparing their meal, he sat his little boy at the table with a plate full of food before him. Kurt then turned his attention to the animals. As quickly as he could, the technician filled Kel's food dish and took Lizzie Borden out of a walk. Blaine picked them up on his way home the night before and they hadn't been tended to since Kurt stumbled tiredly into the house after his late class. *Poor guys. They must feel so neglected.*

With the animals fed and happy, Kurt washed his hands and turned his attention to his own food. Airport food in no way compared to a home cooked lunch. Just as Kurt picked up his fork, his cell phone rang. *Of course. The second I get close to eating, someone wants to talk to me.*

Kurt's fork hit the table with a loud clunk. Something in his gut told him that if he ignored the call, whomever it was would simply call back. "Hello?" Kurt huffed without checking his caller ID.

"How was the trip, Cinderella? Meet any Prince Charmings?" Sebastian's voice ran cheerfully through Kurt's phone speaker. It was a far cry from the hollow man Kurt spoke to a few nights before.

"A few." Kurt replied wryly. "You sound happy. Did you finally ask Carlton out?" *Please say yes. It'll get me out of hearing about this Nathan guy again. He has a douche bag name.*

"Nope. That's why I called you. Nathan and I are going on a bike ride and I only have one bike. I called Blaine and he said I could borrow his. We're on our way over to get it." *Awww...don't awww...it's only cute if he's riding bikes with Carlton. And by riding bikes, I mean riding big, metal objects. I mean....bicycles....actual bicycles.*

"Ummm...yeah. Just come in when you get here and I'll get it out of the garage for you. But don't make this a habit. I don't want you riding bikes with anyone other than him. I ship Sarlton hard. Like....planned your wedding hard. Speaking of weddings, are you going to help me plan mine. The girls said they would help but I need another male perspective in this matter."

"Duh!" Sebastian shouted excitedly. "Blaine is hopeless when it comes to weddings. I, on the other hand, have planned two weddings in my day. I also have a trunk full of magazines hidden in the back of my

closet. I'll admit, I'm not as into it as you are, but I may have arranged a few ceremonies for my Transformers."

Kurt squealed excitedly. "Great! We'll talk more about it later. Right now, you're getting ready to ride bikes with a douche bag. When we talk about this wedding, I want your undivided attention."

"Why does he have to be a douche bag?"

"Because I hate his name."

"But I like his dick."

"And if you bring him in my house, I might hate his face. So leave him in the car."

"Your house?" Sebastian was stunned. "Really? You guys aren't wasting time. And, I'll still like his dick if you hate his face, so your argument is invalid."

"You," Kurt shouted, "are invalid! Come get the damn bike." The young man did not wait for a response before disconnecting the call. His brain was tired, his stomach was aching, and his food was cold. His peaceful day in bed was not turning out as expected.

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Rachel returned to Blaine's office with a copy of the classified advertisement just before lunch. "I kept it simple." She advised as she handed over the handwritten ad.

'Well known veterinarian office seeking experienced veterinarian technician. Full time hours and full benefits for qualified applicant. Please fax resume to 614-555-1245.'

Blaine smiled as he read over the advertisement once again. "Thank you, Rachel. This is exactly what I had in mind."

"Great!" Rachel exclaimed. "I'm going to head to lunch, did you want to come?" Blaine pondered the idea for a moment.

"Nah. I'm going to call home and check on Kurt and Keenan. If I give you cash will you bring me something back?" Rachel nodded eagerly. Honestly, she wanted to spend her lunch break making weekend plans with her boyfriend. She and Finn had Beth for the weekend and Rachel wanted to plan something fun. Maybe a mall trip or a trip to the zoo.

Moments later, Blaine had a twenty dug out of his wallet and instructions for Rachel to get him anything from wherever she went. "I'm not picky, I just want food." Rachel nodded eagerly before waddling out of the office. When Blaine was alone and the office was quiet, the veterinarian dug his phone out of his desk and placed a call to Kurt.

'You've reached Kurt –and Keenan- we cannot come to the phone right now. Leave us a message and we will call you back as soon as possible –but not too soon!'

Blaine chuckled as he listened to Keenan's adlibs. *My son is something else. Yep. My. Son. He said it himself.*

"Hey, guys!" Blaine's voice bellowed into the receiver. "I'm on lunch and I wanted to say hello. I guess you guys are doing stuff. Fun stuff. Without me. Boo! You guys suck! Call me later." As quickly as he hit send, Blaine disconnected the call. *Now all I have to do is wait. I have to wait for Rachel to bring my lunch and I have to wait for Kurt to call me back. Yay! I bet they're having fun. I want to be at home having fun. Damn.*

Little did Blaine know, Kurt was not having fun.

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Sebastian pulled his car into the driveway of Blaine's tiny, green house. For years, the elder advised his friend to buy a bigger, flashier home. For years, Blaine resisted.

'It was my grandmother's home, Seb. I can't just move. I've always felt safe here.'

Safe. Sound. Calm. Cool. Collected.

Sebastian understood the sentiment but that did not stop him from suggesting against it. He reasoned that Blaine would have a family one day and that his family would likely want another home.

'I'll cross that bridge when I get to it.' Blaine replied more often than not.

Look at him now. Blaine finally had his little family and they seemed perfectly content to spend their days in his little house. *I can see it now.*

Sebastian's mind wandered to what the house would be like once Kurt and Keenan officially moved in.

Keenan would run around the yard –dressed as Nightbird if Blaine had any say in the matter- chasing one of the millions of animals the veterinarian insisted on housing.

Blaine would congregate with his friends in the living room, carrying on and spilling food on the furniture. In turn, Kurt would scream at them, stunning everyone into a frightened silence.

Hunter and Whitley would be there. Sebastian imagined that his friend would nod dumbly as his girlfriend bossed him around. Kurt's two lesbian friends –I don't know their names but they often make me question my sexuality- would be there as well. They'll be....being gay and...doing....ya know...lesbian stuff.

As expected, Wes and David would be around somewhere talking about the women in their lives, the ones they refused to marry.

Then there would be Quinn and Trent –as well as their Brady Bunch daughters. That little family would giggle and gossip together and with the group. Trent would speak on whatever bone Wal-Mart chose to throw him that day and Quinn would talk about her job as a....whatever she's going to school for.

As expected –in Sebastian's mind- he and Carlton would be there as well. Since Kurt was gracious enough to ask for Sebastian's help with his wedding, Sebastian would do the same. He and Kurt would talk colors and guest list while Carlton and Blaine sat back and watched. They'll be too smart to interfere.

Then, when the planning was finished for the day, Sebastian would beat his friend in a game of 2k15 and Carlton would give him a congratulatory blow job. I haven't worked out how we will get from A to B but I'll figure it out.

"-astian!"

"What?" The driver barked back. *I'm fantasizing here! Hello!*

Nathan shot his buddy –and nothing more- a smooth smile. "Are you going in to get the bike or are you going to sit there all day?" *Oh. Right. The bike.* "I mean...I could go get it. I'd love to meet this Kurt fellow and ask him why he hates me so much."

"It's not you, it's your name. He hates your name. And, that's probably not a good idea. You and I are just...whatever we are...and Kurt has his mind set that I'm supposed to be with someone else so-"

"I'm not holding you back, Sebastian. If you want to be with someone else, then go be with them." Nathan waved at Sebastian dismissively. *I'm not here for you anyways. I'm here for-*

"Ehhh..." Sebastian shrugged at his passenger. "He's moving on. I should too. Not this you!" The doctor added when he noticed an uncomfortable look cross Nathan's face. "But...whatever. I'm going to get this bike. Come with me at your own risk. Hummel can be a bitch when he wants to." A wicked, sinister look crossed Nathan's face; one that Sebastian could not place. It raised his internal flags but not enough for him to question it aloud. Nathan was odd. *But he fucks like a stallion. That is a difficult quality to come by.*

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"Keenan Hummel! I swear to...." Once again –as he had every few seconds for the past half hour- Keenan dashed past his father without a care in the world and without a stitch of clothing. After a particularly messy lunch –*he obviously got that from Stitch. He never used to make such a mess!*- Kurt decided to bathe his son. In response, Keenan proclaimed that he would not be taking a bath.

'Baths are for looooooooooseerrrrrsss!'

"I this close to calling Stitch!" Kurt held up his thumb and pointer finger. They were so close that they touched. He was that close. That close to calling the man that promised to help him co-parent Hurricane Keenan. The thought alone was wonderful. So wonderful that Kurt found himself wanting to jump and shout for joy. Later. He would have to dance later. Now, he had to bathe his child and that would require all of his attention. All of it.

"I don't care! Stitch hates baths too!" *Damn, he speaks the truth.* Kurt often found himself dragging his boyfriend to the shower because he also felt that baths were for *loooooosseerrrrss!*

"If you don't get your curly haired behind in the bath tub right now-" The doorbell rang, cutting off Kurt's threat. The technician let out a frustrated sigh. Number one on his list of bad ideas was 'become a stay at

home father'. Never. He would never stay at home with his child. He respected every mother and father in the world that let their days revolve around their children and their children's care but Kurt was not made for the job. *I need a break sometimes. Like now. Maybe I can get whomever is at the door to bathe him. It's probably Sebastian. Maybe I can trick him into getting Keenan to take a bath. Hell, I'll even be nice to douche ba- Nathan if he does.*

"Coming!" Kurt sing-songed as he made his way through the house. Tastefully disorganized and mismatched. It was the only way Kurt could describe Blaine's house. An odd piece of furniture here or there. Random electronics placed next to knick knacks and awful figurines. It was Blaine's home though - *our home*- and Kurt could not imagine it any other way.

With a flourish, Kurt swung the front door open. "Sebastian, I need your help! Keenan is being ridiculous right now and I need another adult to help me-" A throat cleared, causing Kurt to stop mid-sentence. As his eyes traveled past Sebastian to the offending throat clearer, they grew wide with shock and disbelief.

"You need another adult to what?" Sebastian prodded, not taking notice to the look of confusion on Kurt's face or the look of pure, sinister joy on Nathan's. Moments passed before Sebastian realized that something was wrong. The way Kurt's mouth hung open was an indicator if nothing else. "Is everything alright?"

Kurt shook his head. *No. Things were not alright. Things were completely wrong.* "Nathan?"

Sebastian's mind reeled as he tried to catch up. There was something in Kurt's voice –an unanticipated realization- that shook the doctor to his core. *It's like they know each other.*

"Hey, Kurt. Where's my little boy at?" Seven words. Seven words that sent visible chills up Kurt's spine and seven words that broke Sebastian's resolve. Without a second thought, Sebastian turned to Nathan, a man that he once saw as a confidante, a friend.

"What are you talking about?" He asked, a hint of suspicion in his voice.

Nathan laughed loudly; sadistically. "I've been looking for them everywhere and you brought me right to them. And you let me fuck you. You cut months' worth of work in half and you gave great head. I think I won."

Before Kurt could stop him and before Nathan could react, Sebastian pulled back his fist and swung at the South African. There were two things Sebastian would not tolerate in his lifetime. He would not tolerate being used and, above all else, he would not tolerate individuals that hurt his friends or family. Nathan committed both crimes. He needed to be punished. In Sebastian's eyes, the five knuckles that connected with the man's jaw would be the perfect start of Nathan's punishment. *Yes, I mean start. Wait until Hummel snaps out of his trance. Better yet, wait until Blaine hears about this.*

Sebastian had neither time to gloat in that wake of his perfectly executed punch nor time to imagine all the horrible things Blaine –*such a tiny, tiny man*- would attempt to do to Nathan when he got word of the man's arrival. A single word from an innocent bystander killed Sebastian's mood and made him regret hitting Nathan. "Papa?"

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Chapter Twenty-Three

"Keenan, go in the house this instant!" Kurt shouted, not missing a beat. Sebastian watched as the little boys face crumbled.

"I wanna see Papa. I missed him." Keenan whined. Despite his father's instructions, his feet remained glued to their spot.

Kurt, lost in the realization that Nathan was standing on his porch with a bruised jaw nestled in his palm, did not hear his son's words. The child's pleas fell on deaf ears. "I Said go in the house...*now!*"

Get him out of here. Keep him away from Nathan. The less time they have together, the less Keenan will hurt when Nathan leaves again.

The words played on repeat on Kurt's head. His mouth moved of its own volition as he tried to prevent whatever mayhem Nathans visit would cause. It was sure to cause some sort of issue. Kurt would bet money on it.

"But I want to-"

"House! Now! KEENAN!"

"I hate you!"

Thus the mayhem began.

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Sebastian watched Kurt and his son argue. It was like watching two bulls fight. Each was headstrong and both refused to back down. The Simba and Mufasa of a different time and a different place.

Keenan broke first. Sebastian imagined that the stress of the situation and the hint of distress in his father's voice did the little boy in. Sebastian watched as the little boy shouted his hate for his father to the

heavens. He then watched as the broken hearted little boy turned on his heel and stalked angrily through the house. *Poor kid, he's mad and naked. That's never a good combination.*

Out of the corner of his eye, Sebastian noticed a hint of panic on Kurt's face. It started slowly, like a light summer rain, but quickly morphed into a monsoon. Kurt had no idea which way to go. His son needed him but Nathan needed to be dealt with. Kurt seemed conflicted and Sebastian knew his help was needed. "I'll go...Keenan. You just...deal with that." The doctor waved dismissively at the person before him. *I won't call him a man because he's not. A man doesn't leave and come back whenever it's convenient. A man is always around.*

Kurt nodded sullenly. Both he and Sebastian knew that dealing with Keenan would be the easier of the two tasks. Sebastian wanted to be the one to deal with Nathan, but he knew that it was not his battle to fight. Kurt needed to handle the...*person* and Sebastian would back him up however he could.

With one last concerned look at the front porch scene -Kurt collecting himself as the initial shock wore off and Nathan rubbing the tender spot bruised by the doctor's impeccable right hook- Sebastian turned towards the house. He left the front door open on the off chance that his presence was needed. When Sebastian was satisfied that he was not needed at that moment, the doctor made his way through the house to Keenan's room. There he found the little boy, curled in a tiny ball, sobbing on the floor. "Hey, buddy." Sebastian did his best to sound upbeat and positive. "How are you?"

The little, naked boy grunted an undecipherable response. "Do you mind if I get you dressed, buddy? It's kind of cold in here and I'm sure you're freezing."

Keenan grunted yet another response that Sebastian could not decode. "What?"

"I said I have to take a bath first!" Keenan yelled before tucking his head back between his folded arms.

Oh. "Ummm...do you need help with that?"

"I'm not a baby. You just have to run my water for me." Sebastian nodded as he held out a hand for the stricken little boy. After a few moments of indecision, Keenan took it and allowed the doctor to help him to his feet.

Once Keenan's bath was drawn and the child was settled into the luke warm water, Sebastian ventured back to the child's room to collect clothes. He laid each item out on the child's bed before allowing himself

to sink down onto it. *This is a mess. A mess that Blaine should be here for. Blaine needs to know what is going on.*

Sebastian pulled out his phone. Blaine needed to be there. He needed to be around to help Kurt deal with the consequences of a mistake that was never his. Kurt never asked to be left by a man that never loved him. Kurt never asked to have said man turn up just when his life was taking a turn for the best. *I've got to get Blaine here like...now.*

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Tina's appearance at the office early that afternoon was a surprise for Blaine. She was supposed to be on her own vacation until the next week. Then, she would return to her work at the zoo. Instead of resting at home with the mystery boyfriend she often spoke of, Tina was in Blaine's shelter, dressed to work.

"What are you doing here?" The veterinarian asked his friend as she strolled through kennels. He and Marley were doing checks on each of their resident animals, something he and Kurt did under normal circumstances.

Tina smiled at her friend. "Nothing. I came to see if you wanted me to take over so you could go spend some time with your boys. Keenan goes back to school Monday, so I figured you might want to go be with them." Tina offered her friend a kind smile.

Blaine's face lit up. *Awww...that's so sweet. I could eat her and her adorableness.* "Tina," The veterinarian gushed, "that's super sweet. I wish I could take you up on that offer. Sadly, I cannot. I need to get back into my work groove and you need to take a damn vacation. Seriously. Go home, take a nap, whatever you want. Thank you for the offer though."

Tina moved closer to her friend. She rarely offered her services, so Blaine would be wise to take advantage while the opportunity was available. "Come on, Blaine. You won't have these kinds of days much longer. Keenan will be in school and Kurt will be working wherever. Take my offer. You'll thank me later."

Hesitation passed over Blaine. He wanted to, really wanted to, but there was so much work to catch up on after a week away from the office. "I'd love to but...I can't afford to. I have so much work here and-" Blaine's phone rang, silencing the man. "Hold on, it's Seb."

"What's up, Seb? Did you get the bike?" Tina and Marley watched as Blaine's smile dropped slowly from his face. Whatever Sebastian was saying did not sit right with their friend. "Why? What's wrong?"

The mask went up. No longer could Tina and Marley read the expression on their friend's face. "Luckily Tina is here so I'll...give me about ten minutes and I'll be there."

Once the call was ended and Blaine's phone was nestled safely in his pocket, he turned to his girls. "Is your offer still on the table, Tina? I have an issue to tend to." Absently, the young woman nodded.

"Of course. What's wrong?"

"I have no idea but Sebastian said I needed to get home now." Blaine's voice rose to an embarrassing high pitch as he spoke. He was concerned, nervous of what awaited him at home. Sebastian hadn't said and each moment of unknowing caused knots to form in the veterinarian's stomach.

"Okay. Call me and let me know everything is okay." Tina shouted as Blaine raced through the kennels.

"Yeah!"

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Arms crossed over his chest, Kurt stared down the man before him. *Hardly a man. Pig. Douche bag. I seemed to have that right the first time.* "What are you doing here?" He asked again. Kurt hoped his voice would continue to hold strong and that his body would not shake. He wanted to show no weakness. He could afford to show no weakness. Nathan was like a fighting dog; he preyed on the weak. *I will not be his prey. Not again.*

The man before him chuckled. "I told you. I'm here to see my son. He seemed anxious to see me as well until you forced him away. Don't be like that Kurt." The way the man said his name sent shivers up Kurt's spine. His accent. *That's why I fell in love with him, right. He knew I loved a man with an accent. He's using that against me. It's like a fucking super power.*

Kurt shook his head and took a step back. Nathan took a step towards his ex and, again, Kurt took another step backwards. Nathan was poison in its purest form. There were no additives with Nathan. He was poison and he killed quickly. "He was never your son. He loved you unconditionally and you pushed him aside. You refused to sign his birth certificate and you didn't spend time with him. You never treated him

like he mattered even though you meant the moon and the stars to him. So, I'll ask you again. Why are you here?"

The two stared at each other for a moment. Nathan's cold and calculating and Kurt's stony and hard. Each wanted something from the other. Nathan wanted Kurt. Plain and simple. Kurt was loyal in only a way that man's best friend could be and Nathan found that loyalty valuable. Through their years together, each made mistakes. Nathan left a few times *-just once or twice-* and Kurt impregnated a friend. Regardless of such, they always gravitated back together, usually Kurt's doing. Kurt always ran back with the intentions of making their problems disappear. He then worked himself to death fixing their relationship. Nathan valued that loyalty.

That was why he needed Kurt back. Saying that Keenan was the reason for his return was easy. It was a lie, but it was an easy lie to tell. The child made Nathan the air that he breathed and it was well known that Keenan was the air that Kurt breathed. Get the child, get Kurt. Simple enough. In the long run, Nathan would have to endure years of pretending with a child that he did not care for, but that was a small price to pay for Kurt's loyalty. *This is why boarding schools exist.*

If Nathan learned anything from his father it was that he needed to keep a loyal companion at his side. Throughout the years, Nathan looked for one that was as loyal as Kurt without so much baggage. Over the past few months, Nathan realized that Kurt and his droves of designer baggage were far more appealing than his other options. Others carried baggage like shields of armor and were far less likely to drop everything and run if needed. Kurt would. Kurt had. So, Nathan made it his mission to get the young man back.

"Answer my question!" Kurt wanted answers and nothing else. He wanted to know the why of their situation. Nathan did not care for Keenan, he made it clear during their last few months together, so his answer was easily seen through by the technician. "Do not lie to me this time."

Nathan stepped forward once again. "Kurt," he raised his hand to cup Kurt's cheek only to have it smacked down roughly.

"Do not touch me. Answer my damn question. Why are you here? Why now? Why not when I was struggling to keep over a roof over Keenan's head?" Kurt's voice thundered as he spoke, sending Nathan reeling backwards out of the line of fire. "You say you're here to see your son but where were you when he was throwing fits because he was too young to understand that you were not coming back? Where were

you when I used every dime I had to save my credit and had to take money from Adam to get back here? Where the hell were you on his first day of Kindergarten? Christmas? I didn't see a fucking card from you. What about his birthday? You didn't help plan our surprise for him. You weren't around. You didn't care. So, tell me now. Why are you here?"

Kurt's chest rose and fell as he forced oxygen in and out of his lungs. He was a mess. A trembling, angry mess. A mess that still wanted answers. "Well?" The man shouted, causing Nathan to flinch violently. In his mind, Kurt would accept him back with open arms and they would leave together without a squabble. In reality, Kurt was furious and Nathan was frightened.

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"Well?" The sound of Kurt's raised voice wafted through Keenan's open, bedroom window. Keenan was still in the bathroom -though he made it known when he went from bathing to dressing- and Sebastian was sure that the little boy did not need to hear his father screaming at the man that broke his heart.

Sebastian pushed himself off the bed and made his way to the window. With a quick glance outside -*I have to make sure Hummel isn't murdering him*- Sebastian pulled the window down and locked it. What once was a loud commotion was now a muffled roar.

"What are you doing?" Sebastian jumped back a few steps and turned to the door. There, Keenan stood. Dressed in his pajamas with a bottle in one hand and a brush in the other.

"Nothing." The doctor squeaked. He moved quickly from the window. "What do you have there?"

Keenan shrugged before plopping down in the center of his bed. "Daddy sprays this in my hair," he held up the green spray bottle, "before he brushes it so I don't get tangles. Here's my brush." Keenan thrust the bottle and the brush into Sebastian's hand and then turned his back to him expectantly. *Someone has to brush my hair.*

With a dejected sigh -*I should have just asked Carlton out. I'm not made for child care*.-Sebastian sprayed Keenan's head and began to brush. For years, the doctor vowed not to have children. For years, he stuck to that vow. *Yet, here I am, brushing some kid's hair and hoping that he's not tender headed.* "So..." The air between the doctor and the child was awkward.

"So?"

"Are you feeling better? Did your bath help?" Sebastian felt like he was drowning. He wanted to have a discussion with Keenan but he could not get the words out. He could not ask the questions that he knew needed to be asked. So, he stuck with easy questions, questions that would be difficult to answer.

The child shrugged. "I guess. I still hate Daddy."

"No you don't." Sebastian brushed a single lock of hair until it was free of kinks. "You love your father. You're just upset." Silence settled between them as the man continued to brush. "And he was scared. You have to know that he would never yell at you unless he felt it was necessary. Your father loves you more than anything in the world and it broke his heart to hear you say that you hated him."

Keenan's head dropped a bit, along with his tiny shoulders. "I didn't mean to hurt his feelings, I'm just really angry right now."

"And that's okay. You're allowed to be angry. But you should choose your words wisely. Hate is a very hard word to hear, especially when you're doing your best to make something right."

Again, the silence overtook them. "I just wanted to see my papa." Keenan mumbled.

"I know and your daddy is trying to make sure things will be okay before going either way. He's a daddy so he has to make sure things are okay before he lets you do them. Does that make sense?"

Keenan nodded reluctantly. "I guess."

Good. Sebastian finished combing the child's hair without incident.

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Blaine's BMW raced through the streets of Lima to his house. His mind ran circles around itself as he maneuvered the vehicle effortlessly. His mind was a mess. For the life of him, he could not fathom what could be wrong at home. Sebastian chose the perfect time to keep his mouth shut. Usually, the man shouted from the rooftops and sprouted information like water fountain. *Thanks a lot, jerk.*

Pulling into his driveway was both relieving and nerve wrecking for Blaine. From the driver's seat, the veterinarian had a clear view of his house, his porch, and his screaming boyfriend. *Is he yelling at Sebastian? What could he have done?*

As quickly as the car was parked, Blaine killed the engine and hopped out. He dashed up the driveway to the porch without a moment's hesitation. "Kurt, what the he-" *That's not Sebastian.*

All movement on the porch ceased instantly. Kurt's shouts could no longer be heard from miles away and his finger was no longer jabbing angrily at the man before him. The man that Blaine did not know. He looked familiar, Blaine was certain of that. Why he looked familiar was a mystery. "Ummm...what's the problem here?"

Neither man answered. Instead, Kurt looked to the ground, seemingly trying to calm himself down and the stranger looked at Kurt. "Did Sebastian call you?" Kurt countered. Any malice that he felt toward the stranger was not carried over into his question to Blaine.

"He did."

"Good. I'll have to send him a thank you when I write *our* Christmas cards this year. *Our*. Christmas. Cards. From *OUR* family."

Okay? Blaine was more confused than before he questioned the situation. "Right. So...what exactly is going on here?"

The stranger, a tall, tanned man with an impeccable jawline and even better hair, smiled down at Blaine. He had the veterinarian by at least seven inches. "I can explain." *Oh...and he has an accent too.* "I came to see my son."

The puzzle pieces snapped instantly into place. Accent. Hair. Smile that could charm the panties off someone's grandmother. *This son of a...* Blaine lunged forward without thinking. It was Kurt that stopped him. The technician took hold of his boyfriend's wrist and did not let go until Blaine seemed content to keep his feet on the ground and his hands to himself. "You don't have a son." Blaine hissed as he took a step backwards, joining Kurt near the front door.

"Oh, but I do. He's an adorable five year old with curly blond hair and adorable blue eyes."

Blaine's fists clenched. He tried to hold his composure. *This guy makes it hard.* "Then you have no business here. *OUR* son is six and has got hazel eyes. You should probably leave now. You are upsetting my fiancé and I will not tolerate that." The stony look in Blaine's eyes sent shockwaves through Nathan. Again, he took a step backwards.

"We all make mistakes." Nathan offered.

"We do and you've made many. One of those mistakes was coming here. Please leave my property. If Kurt chooses to contact you at another point in time," *he won't*, "then I will support him. For now, you're upsetting him and you need to leave." Blaine did his best to keep his voice even despite the fact that he was raging internally. Nathan had no right to appear after so much time had passed. He had no right to upset Kurt, and possibly Keenan.

Nathan stepped back once again until he was at the porch steps. "Whatever. I see you haven't changed, Kurt. You're still depending on someone to fight your battles. The problem with that is, this isn't his battle. It's your battle with me and I will not back down."

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"Do you think they will let me go to Grandpa and Grandma's house? I don't want to stay here right now." Sebastian and Keenan sat cross legged on the little boy's bed and stared at one another. Neither knew what to say or how to say it.

"I can go find out. I'm sure it wouldn't be an issue." Keenan nodded before allowing his body to flop sideways onto the bed. *I just don't want to be here right now. I want to go see Grandpa Burt. He'll make me feel better. Just like before.*

Sebastian excused himself from the room as the child was splaying his limbs out in an attempt to get comfortable. He took the steps two at a time and darted across the front room. When he reached the front door - still open as he had left it - Sebastian noticed Nathan walking away from the house. "Is he leaving?"

Blaine, whose eyes never left Kurt, nodded. "Yeah. Hopefully for good."

"Good. Keenan wants to know if he can go to your dad's, Kurt. I'll take him if you want. He just really wants to get out of here for a bit." Kurt stood shaking near the door, not taking his eyes off the ground. More than anything, Sebastian wanted to gather his friend into his arms and tell him that things would be okay. While he shed not a single tear, Sebastian could tell that his friend was experiencing a whirlwind of emotions that centered on the situation that he'd been placed into.

"Yes." Short. Sweet. To the point. "I'll call ahead so they know he is coming." Kurt offered no other words as he pushed past his friend and made his way into the house.

"Do you think he'll be okay? He seems..."

Blaine shrugged. "He's angry; super angry, but he will be fine. He just needs to...cool off. He needs some space. If Nathan got any closer, I think Kurt would have hit him."

Sebastian chuckled. "It wouldn't have been the first time today." The look on Blaine's face was priceless. *If I had a camera, I would take a million pictures.*

"Kurt hit him? No way!" Suddenly, the two men were no longer respected healthcare professionals. Sebastian's boasting and Blaine's reaction sent them back in time to their Dalton days; the days when Sebastian would tell a story and Blaine would hang on every word like it was the first word ever spoken.

"No, dummy. I did."

With a nod of approval and an enthusiastic high five, relief spread through Blaine's body. *At least I got something out of this. Kurt is upset, Keenan is upset, and Nathan is ready to fight. It's good to know something rewarding came out of this situation.*

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Keenan and Sebastian descended the stairs a short while later. Keenan carried his bookbag full of clothes on his back and a sullen look on his face. Blaine hated the look.

The three met at the bottom step. "Buddy," Blaine crouched until he and the little boy were eye level, "Grandma is expecting you. Are you going to be okay? Do you need anything before you go?" Keenan shook his head quickly. "Okay. We'll come get you in the morning. I love you."

"I love you too Stitch." Blaine pulled the child into a hug and did not let go until he began to squirm.

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Kurt's resolve broke. Keenan loved Blaine. Keenan hated him. Keenan hated him for trying to help, for trying to protect him from the hurt that Keenan was not old enough to protect himself from. Angry tears streamed down Kurt's face as he ran the thoughts through his head once again.

This sucks so bad.

Pulling his feet into his chair, Kurt curled his body into a tiny, ball. He tucked his head into his knees and cried. Anger and hurt raced through his blood stream as tears raced down his face.

Things were fine. His life was finally going the way he always thought it would. He had a gorgeous child. He had a beautiful fiancé with an amazing job. His beautiful fiancé loved him and supported him in every way possible. Blaine was perfect. Their lives. Their relationship. Everything was perfect. And then Nathan came along.

Like most times in Kurt's life when he was over the moon with happiness, everything came crashing down in a single instant. Kurt's childhood was beautiful. He had a wonderful set of parents that loved him with all their hearts. Then his mother died. The magical childhood that Kurt grew accustomed to fell to pieces in an instant. '

Things returned to normal in high school. Or as normal as they could be. Kurt made friends, he joined the glee club at McKinley and he finally began to let his life piece itself back together. Then, the bullying started. Small incidences in the beginning. A few shoves and name calling. By the beginning of Kurt's sophomore year, the shoves turned into full on assaults and the name calling became death threats. Kurt transferred to Dalton shortly after the beginning of the school year and life continued as usual.

In hindsight, Kurt's meeting and subsequent courtship with Nathan was yet another downfall in his life. At the high point of his life -graduating high school, moving to the city of his dreams- Nathan came along. He tore Kurt down until he was a shell of his former self. Kurt made mistakes -big and small- and acted as he normally would not. He slept with a girl. He dropped out of fashion school to become a veterinary technician. He gave up. Now, Nathan was trying to bring him down again and Kurt had no idea how to stop him.

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Blaine closed the front door behind Sebastian and Keenan. Once Sebastian's car was out of the driveway and headed to the Hummel-Hudson house, Blaine pulled himself away from the window. He and Kurt hadn't spoken much since his arrival and Blaine felt that a talk was in order.

Finding Kurt was easy, knowing what to say to him was not. Blaine found Kurt curled in his grandfather's old, wing back chair. The leather chair was large, uncomfortable, and it blocked half the walkway between the foyer and the living room. Like most things in the house, Blaine refused to part with it.

"Please don't cry, baby." Blaine knelt before the chair, focusing solely on Kurt. He listened as his fiancé sniffled and he watched as his shoulder's shook. Blaine raised a hand to pet Kurt's bed hair. I would never do this under normal circumstances. He still won't let me run my fingers through it during sex. "Please, please don't cry."

Kurt's head snapped up and his eyes met Blaine's. "Why not?" He wailed, tears streaming unrelentingly down his face. "Keenan hates me. He loves you and he hates me."

Blaine's face softened. "What? No he-"

"He told me. He told me when I told him to go to his room. I just...I didn't want him around Nathan. I know Keenan likes the life we have now and he loves you more than he can express with words but he'll always have a space for Nathan in his heart. He'll always have that tiny little piece of his heart that belongs to Nathan. I knew that but...I just couldn't bear to have them spend time together when I know Nathan will leave again soon. He'll leave and this whole cycle will start over. Keenan will go back to being hurt and angry and then we'll have to fix him again." A fresh wave of sobs washed over Kurt's body.

"We'll handle this. You're not alone this time. I'm here and I'll help you deal with this."

"Then!" Blaine hoped that his words were heard. Kurt seemed so lost in his anguish that the veterinarian feared that everything he said or did would be lost in the sea of Kurt's misery. "There's Nathan. He just shows up after all this time as if Keenan and I are going to run back to him. God...and the way he looked at me. He makes me feel so weak and useless. I-"

It was Blaine's turn to interrupt and he had quite a bit to say. "You're not weak or useless. You're so strong. God, I wish you could see how strong you are. It's...truly amazing. And don't listen to what Keenan said. He's a child and he was hurting. Once he told me that it was peanut butter jelly time and it was actually buffalo chicken and pineapple pizza time. I waited all day for that peanut butter and jelly and it never came." Kurt snorted through his tears. *Success*. "Don't let this get you down, babe. You're amazing and I love you. Keenan loves you. And Nathan can go to hell. We'll get through this."

"Do you promise?"

"I promise."

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Later that evening, when Kurt was calm and the house was silent, Blaine ran over his conversation with Kurt once again. There was something that bothered him; something that ate him up inside.

Kurt felt weak where Nathan was concerned. He felt like less of himself and that did not sit right with the veterinarian. *I wish he could see how strong he is. I wish he could see himself the way I see.*

As the veterinarian readied himself for bed, an idea struck him. "Baby, what are you doing?" He called into the hallway. Kurt excused himself not long before to go do God only knew what.

After a few moments without a response, Kurt made his way into the room. He said he felt better but Blaine knew otherwise. The light that usually danced in Kurt's eyes was dim and the smile that usually graced his face was gone. "I called Dad to check on Keen. He said that Keen is fine. Apparently our son stole my dad's spot on the bed so now he's braving the couch because he doesn't have the heart to make his only grandson quote 'get the hell out'."

Those words. Our son. While they'd never properly discussed it, the idea of Blaine acting as a second father figure to Keenan was common place amongst the couple. Blaine wanted to share the responsibilities of parenting a child with Kurt and Kurt was willing to allow him that luxury. "I'm glad that he's doing okay. We'll talk to him tomorrow about everything that happened today."

Kurt crawled into their bed and snuggled into Blaine's side. "Yeah." He sighed as his eyes slipped slowly shut. That would not do. Blaine shimmied his body down until he and Kurt were eye level.

"Before you go to sleep I wanted to..." Blaine cut himself off with a kiss. He thrust every ounce of love he had for Kurt into that kiss, hoping that it would help the man's mood.

Kurt responded quickly. The second their lips met, Kurt began searching for more. Anything to help him forget the anguish of the day.

Their kisses were full of greed and want. Their tongues danced and their bodies shuffled until Blaine was lying flat on his back with Kurt hovering between his knees. "I want you inside me." Blaine whispered against the younger man's lips. "I want to feel every inch of you inside me. I want us to feel whole tonight; one whole unit." Kurt's head jerked forward in an attempted nod. Yes. He needed to feel whole again. He needed to be one with Blaine.

Blaine craned his neck to capture Kurt's lips once again; this time with more force. Their mouths moved fluidly together as their hands roamed each other's bodies. Clothes were shed.

Kurt broke their kiss. He let his eyes roam Blaine's naked figure beneath him. "I love you so much." He whispered into the night air. Blaine smirked in return.

"I love you too. More than you will ever know."

With his eyes fixed on Blaine, Kurt reached for their night stand. He pulled open the draw and rummaged around for a moment before retracting his hand with the lube tightly in his grasp. "Can I make a request?" Blaine asked.

"Yeah." Kurt replied expectantly. Whatever Blaine wanted, Kurt was happy to oblige.

"I love seeing you while we make love but I would love to do this on my hands and knees." Kurt leaned forward to capture his lover's lips.

"Then get on your hands and knees." He giggled.

Swift maneuvering was the key to their bedroom success. Blaine was able to flip his body with the greatest of ease. Once he was turned over, the veterinarian positioned himself on his elbows and knees. Then, he waited. Luckily, the wait was not long.

Kurt ran a slick, cool finger over Blaine's anxious hole. He watched as his fiancé shuddered in response. A moment passed as Kurt gently circled the whole, toying the ring of muscle that surrounded Blaine's tightness.

Blaine's back arched as Kurt pushed the first finger in. They'd spent the past few months engaging in late night quickies and early morning blow jobs. This was different. It was not a rushed stretch, though it was an anxious one. Kurt worked his pointer finger in and out of Blaine quickly. As his finger disappeared inside the man, Kurt felt his cock grow harder and stand taller. *Blaine looks so good with something sliding in and out of his ass. God, he looks even better when it's my cock.*

"Another baby. Please." Kurt nodded, though Blaine was not facing him. He added another finger as he scooted his body closer to his lovers. Straddled behind Blaine, Kurt began to grind his dick into Blaine's

right ass cheek. Some friction -any friction- was necessary. He watched as the man beneath him preened, moaning low in his throat and arching back against the cock that was rubbing against him.

"Fuck, baby. I'm ready. Just...God, get in me!" Kurt reached for the lube, which he'd previously discarded on the bed, and popped the lid. He poured a glob into his hand and used it to generously lubricate his aching cock. Emotions ran high that day and he needed to release his frustration as soon as possible. *Blaine's poor ass. I am going to tear him apart.* "Baby!" Blaine whined once more. Kurt could not seem to coat himself fast enough. Blaine was thrusting his hips into the mattress in anticipation of things to come. "I need you."

"I'm here, baby." Kurt scooted his body closer to his fiancé's once again. With one hand on Blaine's lower back and the other wrapped around the base of his dick, Kurt positioned himself. Before pushing in, Kurt ran the head of his dick over Blaine's anxious hole. Just a bit of teasing. *It's not that...*

"Fuck, Kurt. Please. Stop teasing me." With a smirk on his face, Kurt pushed the head of cock into his boyfriend. His toes curled instantly. Blaine was so tight and the sounds he made were intoxicating. "Don't stop, keep going." Blaine urged. Kurt was giving him time to adjust but, apparently he did not need it. So, Kurt continued. He slid in effortlessly until he bottomed out.

"So tight." Kurt's harsh whisper was met with a grunt from his lover. "How are you so tight?" Kurt pulled back and thrust in again. He loved the way Blaine's ass bounced against his hips upon impact.

"It's...all for you." Blaine pushed back against Kurt, needing to feel the pale man's thick cock deep inside him. "God...and you...you're so strong. Just...look at yourself." The one thing Blaine wanted more than dick - *and I love me some good dick*- was for Kurt to feel strong, to feel empowered, and to feel in control. "Look in the mirror baby."

Kurt's gaze lifted from the rippling muscles on Blaine's back to the mirror that hung on the back of their bedroom door. Blaine's eyes met his instantly. "Look at you baby. Look at yourself. You look so strong, so in control." Blaine panted as Kurt continued to pound relentlessly into him.

For a second, Kurt tore his eyes away from the scene in the mirror. It was too much. The way Blaine's face contorted with each thrust -leaving him looking pouty lipped and absolutely debauched- and the way Kurt could see himself disappearing into Blaine but from a new perspective. "No." Blaine insisted as he met Kurt's rapidly increasing thrusts. "Don't look away. Watch yourself. Watch yourself -fuck...right there, baby. *God*, that feels fucking amazing. Uh...*shit!*- fuck, watch yourself give it to me." Kurt did as he was told.

He watched as Blaine's willing body took each and every thrust he had to offer. In and out and then again. "That's what strong people do. They give to people that need and-fuck baby, I'm gonna cum soon. I can feel it." Blaine's thought was lost as he reached down and grabbed his leaking cock. His negligence left it stone hard and aching for a release.

Kurt thrust harder into his fiancé, needing him to cum. "I'm gonna...*fuck*...Kurt..." Blaine's hand moved rapidly as he tried to bring himself to a finish.

"I think Kurt is fucking you." The technician winked at his fiancé in the mirror, loving the way it made the man's face contort.

Within seconds -literal seconds- Blaine was cumming. His face went slack and his eyes rolled into the back of his head. "Fuck. You're amazing." He eventually huffed. Blaine rested his body on his elbows and braced himself for Kurt to finish.

Kurt worked feverishly, pumping in and out of Blaine's plump ass while watching himself in the mirror. He did look strong. He looked every bit the man that he didn't feel like that day. It was amazing. As was the telltale tightening of his balls.

With erratic thrusts and stilted breathes, Kurt came hard inside his lover. He continued to roll his hips as he filled Blaine with every ounce of frustration that he carried that day. When he was finished and his body was spent, Kurt eased his way out.

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They changed their sheets. They had to. They also wiped each other clean and pulled their night clothes back on. When all was done and the house was silent, they climbed into bed.

Blaine cradled his head in his palm as he stared at the man next to him. "How do you feel, beautiful?" His smile was lazy and his eyes shone with love and admiration for the creature that shared his bed.

"I feel...strong. Strong enough to deal with this. Thank you." Kurt lay on his back next to his fiancé, the love of his life.

"No need to thank me. You are strong and you can do this; we can do this. Together. We will handle this – and anything else that comes our way- together."

Chapter Twenty-Four

Kurt burrowed his head into his Blaine's chest and willed the man's 7:15 alarm to stop blaring from the nightstand. "Make it stop!" The brunette groaned. Blaine's chest rose and fell as he chuckled. Kurt was adorable in the mornings.

"I can't baby. If I made it stop then I wouldn't be up and awake for work right now." Kurt tightened his arms around Blaine's waist and shook his head into the man's chest.

"Nu uh! No work!" Kurt huffed. He reminded Blaine of Keenan in that moment. *Like father like son.*

Blaine pried his fiancé's arms from around his waist and placed them at the man's side. "I have to go to work. You have stuff to do today and one of us has to pay bills around here." The veterinarian joked. Kurt huffed against his bare chest, tickling the man's chest hairs. "What? I could stay home as well and neither of us could work. I'm sure Keenan wouldn't mind living in a box. Didn't that one lady call the homeless 'urban campers' at one point? We could do that."

Without a word, Kurt rolled off his fiancé's chest and encased himself in the bed's comforter. "Screw that. I wasn't made for washing in a restaurant bathroom. How would I do my night time skincare routine?"

"Exactly." Blaine stated triumphantly as he rolled out of bed. Truth be told, he did not want to work that day. He wanted to accompany Kurt to his father's house to pick up their son. Sadly, adulthood called and one of them had to pay their bills. *Being a grown up sucks.*

Blaine made his way to the restroom that he and his fiancé shared and began to ready himself for the day.

Shower. Brush teeth. Do hair. Gel. Gel. Gel. Boxers. Scrub pants. Matching top. Socks. Shoes are by the front door.

When the veterinarian exited his bathroom, he found the bedroom vacant. He was shocked. Kurt seemed content to stay in bed for a while so it was unexpected to find him out and about. Blaine made his way down stairs, searching for Kurt as he went. The sound of a clanking pan and muffled humming led Blaine to the kitchen. He watched from the doorway as Kurt poured two cups of coffee while swaying his hips to

the tune of 'Nine to Five'. Blaine couldn't help but smile. He had a lifetime of mornings like this ahead of him.

Eventually, the dance ended and Kurt turned around. "Hey, baby. I thought you were still in the shower." The younger man advised. Blaine watched his fiancé stroll across the kitchen and waited expectantly as Kurt pressed their lips together. "I made you coffee."

Blaine grinned as he took the filled mug from his fiancé. "Thank you, babe. I need this."

"I know." Kurt whispered as he backed away, giving his fiancé room to enjoy his coffee. "I also packed you a lunch. It's leftovers from the other night but someone needs to eat them. You know I hate wasting food. I also put a muffin in your lunch box so you don't have to stop for breakfast."

Blaine did not reply. Instead, he soaked in his situation. It was so domestic. Kurt was in the kitchen preparing his daily food while Blaine was preparing for work; though, at any point, Blaine could imagine their roles being reversed. He could easily be the one cooking while Kurt readied for a long day at work. Blaine loved the warm feeling that the situation left him with. *God, I love this so much.* The warm feeling did not last nearly as long as Blaine hoped it would.

"I'm not cooking tonight. I figured the three of us could go to Applebee's for dinner. Then, when we get home and Keenan is in bed, you and I can talk about this Nathan situation. We need to talk about it." Blaine gingerly sat his cup down and turned an inquiring eye to Kurt.

"Ummm... no we don't. We said all we had to say yesterday. As far as I'm concerned, we're done with him. If he comes here again, I'm calling Hunter and having him arrested." Blaine watched as Kurt's head tilted quizzically.

"What do you mean we don't have anything to talk about? This isn't something we can brush under a rug." Kurt's voice rose slightly as he spoke. Blaine could see him growing irritated. "Yesterday flipped our worlds upside down. Of course we need to talk about it."

Blaine shrugged and made a grab for the lunch Kurt had packed him. His fiancé's hands were faster and the brunette reached the bag first, holding it out of Blaine's reach. "What's your issue? It was a one-time deal. I told him to back off. I know he made a stupid remark about it not being over but I don't think he's that stupid. If he is, we'll have him arrested. It's simple."

"It's not simple!" Kurt huffed. "Keenan was a mess. Now he wants to see Nathan and I need your help dealing with this. I *WILL NOT* pretend this didn't happen because that will leave Keenan with doubt and questions. He's too young to have that much worry on his mind."

"He won't!" Blaine insisted.

"He will! Keenan will worry and our refusal to handle this situation will be the cause. I'm not doing this. And having him arrested! Really? He upset me but he didn't try to mug me. I think having him arrested is a bit much. I think we need to talk to him."

"Why?" Blaine's question and the accusation laced in his voice cut through Kurt like a knife. The edges were jagged and left Kurt's insides feeling as if they'd been fileted. "Why do you want to go through all of this? Why don't you just want to tell Keenan that we're moving on and help him do that? Why do you want to drag this out?"

"Because-" Kurt began. He felt like he had the day before on the porch. For a split second, it wasn't Blaine he was talking to. It was Nathan. Nathan with his suspicious eyes and agitated questions.

"Because? Because you don't want to move on from this? Because you don't want to get past the drama that Nathan brought to our doorstep? Maybe you still love him." Blaine's accusation hung in the air. Kurt was too stunned to speak and Blaine was too worked up to take it back. "Silence speaks a thousand words, Kurt. Is that it? Do you still love him?"

Kurt's face crumbled but he refused to cry. Instead he launched the lunch bag at his fiancé, hitting him in the chest, before making his way out of the room. Blaine wasted no time making his own exit. If Kurt was going to storm off, he was going to storm off as well.

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Keenan woke to an empty bed. Grandma told him the night before that she had an early shift. Keenan rolled over to his grandmother's side of the bed and spread his body out. Grandma and Grandpa's bed was *huuuuuuuuugggggee!* It was so large that the little boy could splay his body across it without worrying if he'd hit something or fall off. *I wish Daddy and Stitch would get a bed like this. Then we could share it and I wouldn't have to worry about one of them rolling over on me. Or drooling on me. Yuck.*

Keenan's pillow top wonderland was short lived. Just when the child was beginning to slip back into a peaceful sleep, he heard footsteps. Then a voice called out to him. "Up and at 'em buddy. I made breakfast." Keenan groaned. His grandfather was a horrible cook. *Probably the worst ever.* "It's Lucky Charms and a Pop Tart. Get up." Before Burt could repeat himself, Keenan was out of the bed and racing down the stairs. *Pop Tart for the win.*

Their breakfast was silent. Keenan gobbled his cereal happily and Burt watched him. When Keenan moved from his cereal to his Pop Tart Burt spoke. "We need to talk about some stuff." The man watched as Keenan's little eyes travelled from his pastry to him. Keenan seemed to know what they needed to talk about."

"About what?" The little boy asked as he put his pastry down. It would be cold when he picked it up but he did not dare eat while he and his Grandpa Burt were talking.

"About the 'big man' word you threw around yesterday. Hate is a very strong word, Keenan. Do you understand that?" Keenan nodded. He understood very well. The little boy wanted to inform his grandfather that he hadn't meant to cause trouble, he was simply upset, but he knew better than to speak while his grandfather was speaking. "Good. Your daddy was very sad, young man. You don't like to make your daddy sad, do you?" Keenan shook his head. *Absolutely not.* Burt smiled at the little boy. Their conversation was going well. "Good. Now finish your breakfast. Your dad will be here soon and you need some time to figure out how to apologize."

"Okay." Keenan's attention was no longer on his Pop Tart. He had more pressing matters on his mind.

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With Rachel at work, Beth at her mother's until the weekend, and a day off from work, Finn was bored. He should have been readying the nursery for the arrival of his second daughter, Captain Morgan Hudson. Rachel refused to name their daughter that but Finn thought it had a nice ring to it. *It's way cooler than Caroline Judy Hudson. Doesn't she know Judy is on the same level as Hattie or Bertha? Those names suck. Captain is awesome.* Alas, Rachel insisted that she had the last say since she was the one giving birth. *It sucks being the guy!*

Finn looked around the baby's room. He had a crib to put together, walls to paint, and no beer to drink. Without beer, there were no chances of the room being worked on. *Maybe Burt has beer.* Finn nodded to

himself. Though Kurt and Carole thought Burt quite drinking after his heart attack, Finn knew first hand that Burt kept a few cases in a hidden corner of the basement. *I'll have to get one of those.* With his decision made, Finn threw on a clean shirt and grabbed his keys. If all else failed, he could go to the store and buy a case. *I'd prefer not to. Free beer just tastes better.*

Finn reached his family's house in record time. He'd moved out months ago but he still had a key, though it looked as if he wouldn't need it. Burt's truck was in the driveway and the front windows were open. They never leave those open if no one is home.

Upon his arrival at the house, Finn killed the engine and made his way to the front door. It was locked, so he rapped at the door. "Who is it?" A tiny voice called from the inside. Finn knew that voice. It was Keenan. *That's odd.* Keenan and Kurt were supposedly moving in with Blaine, which meant they were spending fewer nights in Kurt's childhood home.

"It's Uncle Finn." The tall man called through the door. Seconds later, the front door opened. It was accompanied by a shout.

"Keenan! What did I tell you about opening the front door without an adult present?" Burt's voice boomed through the house as he stalked to the door. Keenan backed away from the door instantly.

"Ummm..."

"Ummm!" Burt replied.

"But it was Uncle Finn."

"And it could have been anyone pretending to be Uncle Finn. Do not open the door without me. Got it?" Sullenly, Keenan nodded. Finn watched in awe as the two interacted.

"Sorry, Burt. I always forget that he's not as old as Beth. She's old enough to recognize voices. He just listens for a name." Burt nodded. Keenan often pretended to be older than he was but, in actuality, he was still a child; a naïve child that didn't know better.

Finn stepped into the house behind his stepfather. "What can I help you with, son?" Despite Finn's many mistakes, his mother and Burt never treated him as any less than a son. He had a wonderful family. They supported him when he did well and lead him in the right direction when he did not.

"What's Keenan doing here? I thought he and Kurt were living with Blaine?" Fantastic family and beer aside, the question ebbed at Finn's mind.

He noticed his stepfather scratch the top of his bald head. It was a telltale sign of bad news. *He always does that when he's got something on his mind; specifically something that has to do with Kurt.* "Some stuff happened yesterday and Kurt's friend brought him over. It's for the best, I guess."

The two made their way to the living room. Keenan was playing with some of Beth's toys in Burt's office, so the living room was a prime location for the conversation Finn and Burt were having. "Did something happen with Blaine and Kurt?"

"No...just....Nathan made an appearance yesterday and it really upset Kurt and Keenan. Kurt was angry with him for popping up and Keenan was angry with Kurt for not letting him see Nathan. Words were said and feelings were hurt."

Finn's eyes grew large. "Dude! Did Kurt say something mean to Keenan? I'm shocked! Keenan is his whole world."

Where to Carole go wrong with him? Burt covered his eyes and shook his head. "No. Keenan told Kurt that he hated him. I talked to Kurt about it last night and Keenan this morning. They were both pretty worked up."

'No, of course it doesn't work like that, Finn!'

Rachel explained the finer point of gay relationships to Finn when they returned from the restaurant on New Year's Eve. Despite the fact that she and Kurt did not see eye to eye, she felt that her boyfriend needed educating.

'When someone leaves, like Nathan did, it's just like in a straight relationship. Keenan can't just trade in for a new father. He'll always remember Nathan. It's like my mother. She gave me to my fathers and tried to come back when I was older. It was difficult. I may have had two fathers but I still remembered her before my adoption. I was six when she decided to give me to them. It's like Keenan. He'll always remember. Everything you said at lunch was wrong; very, very wrong.'

"Can I talk to him?" Finn shocked himself and his stepfather with his words. He and Keenan hadn't spoken since the spanking incident; one that Kurt still fumed over.

While Burt wanted to say no, he felt that Finn may have had something he could offer his nephew; something to help him move forward. Burt would do anything to help his nephew move forward. Kurt, Blaine, and Keenan were a family that he believed in. Nathan was an unfortunate mistake in Kurt's past and Burt wished for him to stay there. "I guess. It's not like it could hurt anything."

Finn nodded excitedly. He had half of half of the beginning of a speech thought out already. "Cool. I'll be back."

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Keenan ran Beth's Matchbox cars over his makeshift track. Books, a few rulers, and a few pieces of furniture. They worked just as well as any track he'd ever used. Just as the little boy was about to release a car from the desk –down a ruler, across of a book, down another ruler, and finally to the ground- a knock sounded at the office door. When Keenan looked up, he saw his Uncle Finn standing at the door. "Can I come in, buddy?" Uncle Finn asked. Keenan nodded as he released the car from his grasp and watched it weave through his track.

Uncle Finn pulled up a chair and sat next to Keenan. "What are you doing?" The man asked. Keenan shot him a look. *What does it look like I'm doing?* Keenan kept his mouth shut. Being rude to his uncle was not a good idea, he learned that the last time they were together.

"Playing with the race car track I made." Keenan offered. His eyes never left the cars. One by one he sent them racing through his track. "Are you mad that I'm using Beth's cars? I know her and Aunt Quinn aren't staying here right now but-"

That was news to Finn. His eyes widened as the little boy spoke. "Where are they?" Finn asked on a whim.

Keenan scoffed. *This guy doesn't know anything.* "They are with Trent and Kay Kay. Like always." Keenan added triumphantly. It made him feel good to know things when Uncle Finn didn't. Keenan watched his uncle recline in the office chair. He seemed deep in thought. "Are you okay?"

Uncle Finn nodded absently. "Yeah. In fact, that's not why I'm here." Keenan's uncle seemed to shake off whatever thought was troubling him. "I came to talk about you and your dad. I heard what happened yesterday."

Keenan dropped the race car and plopped down on the floor. He drew his legs –still clad in his Transformers pajama pants- to his chest. "I don't want to talk about it." The child mumbled.

"How about this then? I'll talk and you listen." Keenan nodded against his legs. He could do that. "Okay. I know you were angry with your daddy but I don't think you should be. It's like..... You can't be mad at him for trying to protect you. I know I'm not like.... you might not want to talk with me about this because of our... *history*..." Finn shuddered as he thought about their last, real encounter, "but I get this situation. You were upset because your dad wouldn't let you see your papa. Like I said, he was trying to protect you."

"But I wanted to see him." Keenan whined. They were barely moments into their conversation and his eyes were already welling with tears.

"I know. It's like Beth. Had her mother told her that she couldn't see me after I left, she would have felt the same way. The only difference in her situation and yours is the fact that I didn't do to them what your papa did to you guys. I made mistakes, I left, but I never abandoned them. I never lost contact." The night Finn left, he felt no better than Nathan. It was only weeks later that he was able to see a clear difference between the two situations. Nathan was a coward; he ran and never looked back. While Finn ran, he never took his mind off the wellbeing of his wife and daughter. He loved Beth with all his heart and he wanted the best for Quinn. Unfortunately, the best for Quinn was not him and she was not the best for him. Their marriage was one of convenience and expectation.

"Everyone makes mistakes." Keenan's voice was defensive. "Everyone deserves a second chance."

Finn nodded. "You're right! Everyone deserves a second chance. Let me ask you a question, Keen. How many times does your daddy let you make a mistake before you get in trouble? Once? Twice?"

"Two times and then I get my toys taken away." Keenan answered. He knew that punishment all too well.

"Okay. So you get two chances before you get in trouble. That's reasonable. I got two chances with your Aunt Quinn. The first was in high school when she caught me flirting with Rachel. I told her I would never do it again. The second was when I left this past year. I will never have another chance with your aunt and I don't deserve one. I made my bed and now I have to lie in it." Finn did not want another chance with Quinn. Their ship had sailed, but he wanted his point to be made. He wanted Keenan to understand. "It's like your papa. Your dad gave him two chances and he left two times. After the second time, your dad decided it was time to move on. And you guys did. You came here. He met Blaine. You guys built a

beautiful family. Now your papa is back and he's asking for another chance. He's asking you guys to leave Blaine-

"Stitch. His name is Stitch."

"Fine. He's asking you guys to leave Stitch behind so that he can have another chance. Is that fair?"

Finn watched as his nephew tried to make sense of the point he was trying to make. "I guess not." The little boy eventually replied.

"That's right. It's not fair and your daddy saw that from the beginning. Trust your father, Keenan. I know kids think that their parents don't know anything or that we are just trying to make their lives hard, but that's not true. We do everything we can to save you guys from heartache. We do everything we can to make sure you guys are happy. We know a little more than you guys and we use what we know to make decisions. Okay?"

Keenan nodded reluctantly. "Okay."

With his mission accomplished, Finn stood to leave the room. He still had a crib to put together and that was not happening if he didn't get any damn beer. On his way out of the room, Finn turned to his nephew. The little boy was still sat in the middle of the room, staring at his feet. It seemed like a perfect opportunity for Finn to right at least one wrong. "Hey, buddy." Keenan's head shot up instantly. "I'm sorry for spanking you. I was worried about grown up stuff and I took my worries and frustrations out on you. I'm sorry."

Keenan offered him a sad smile. "It's okay."

"It's not, but the fact that you said it is will make me feel a little better."

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"I suck. I suck. I suck. I suck. I suck." Blaine banged his head against his desk in time with his chant. He knew he'd made a mistake the second he stepped out of his house that morning. He accused his fiancé of being in love with a man that broke his heart.... twice. *I'm such an idiot. And I suck.* "I suck. I suck. I suck."

"Most gay men do." Blaine's head shot up at the sound of the unfamiliar voice. *Well, unfamiliar for my office.* He would have known Whitley's voice anywhere. "But if you meant that you suck as in you're a douche bag, then you would also be correct." The woman stepped into Blaine's office, closing the door behind herself.

Internally, Blaine groaned. Nothing good could come from a random visit from Whitley. "I already know I messed up, Whit. I do not need to be reminded."

Whitley scoffed as the vet resumed banging his head against the desk. "If I just wanted to remind you that you're an idiot, I would have let Santana come. Right now, she's very willing to take that job on. Let me just tell you, she was on her way. If Brittany's vacation wasn't days from being over, Santana would have been here and she would have let you know how she feels about you."

With each word out of the young woman's mouth, Blaine's morning grew worse. Obviously Kurt called them while he was upset and that did not sit well with either woman. They loved Kurt like their child –odd to Blaine, but it was the only way he could explain their unwavering need to protect him- and they did not take lightly to hearing him cry. "I don't need you to remind me that I upset him. I already know."

"That means you know you made him cry? How could you think that he still had feelings for Nathan? How could you accuse him of wanting to run away with Nathan? Do you know that you and Keenan are the air that man breathes?"

Blaine rested his forehead against the desk. He knew that Kurt loved their little family but that did not change facts. Kurt didn't respond when the question was asked. "He didn't deny it."

"He shouldn't have had to deny it!" Whitley shrieked, her vowels becoming more drawn out as her accent intensified with her frustration. The more Blaine spoke the more frustrated she grew. "You should have known that the thought of Kurt and Nathan reconciling was an impossibility. Kurt would never hurt you like that and the fact that you suggested that he would really hurt his feelings."

"I suck. I suck. I suck. I suck." Blaine resumed banging his head against the edge of his desk. Whitley spoke the truth. He should have known that his fiancé would never hurt him in such a way. He should have known that Kurt wouldn't leave him to run after Nathan. Blaine didn't know those things though, they were not certainties, and he worried what that said about his relationship with Kurt. *I already have these doubts and we're not even married yet. What if I feel like this years from now? Could this be the beginning of*

the end? Doubt ate at Blaine's mind. There were too many 'what ifs' and not enough answers. Blaine hated that feeling.

"You need to make it right. You need to talk to him. When he called us this morning, he couldn't believe that you guys were fighting over Nathan. All Kurt wanted was for you to understand that kids need explanations. Even if the explanations are crap, they need something. I know you've never raised a child –I haven't either but I have plenty of friends with kids- but they are just trying to figure out the world around them like we are. Kurt gets that because he's had six years of observations. You, apparently, don't get that."

Fucking hell. Blaine let the idea that Whitley was presenting seep into his head. The words Kurt spoke that morning were the ones that Whitley was reciting for Blaine. This time, however, the words made sense. Blaine saw past his misguided accusation and understood what Kurt tried to tell him before. Blaine groaned. "I'm an idiot!"

Whitley watched triumphantly as Blaine cradled his head in his hands. "Yep, you're an idiot. You suck. You made Kurt feel like crap. Now he's worried about Keenan, Nathan, and you. It shouldn't be like that. He shouldn't have to worry about whether or not you trust his love for you."

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Kurt took short, reluctant steps up his father's walkway. He could not ignore the feeling of dread that bounced against the inside of his stomach. When his mother was sick –too sick for anyone to believe that she would recover-she asked Kurt to make her a promise.

'Promise me you will never ignore the bubbly feeling in your stomach. It's me telling you that something good is around the corner. Promise me you will never ignore the feeling of dread in your stomach. That's me telling you to be careful. I promise you that I will always take care of you. In return, promise me that you will let me.'

Over the years, Kurt kept his promise. The feeling of discomfort in his stomach that he associated with Nathan was so overbearing that Kurt could not imagine going back to him. *My mother would have hated him.*

On the opposite end of the spectrum, the feeling of warmth that overtook Kurt when he thought about Blaine and the life they were building was euphoric. There were days when Kurt felt high on the love that he and his fiancé had for one another. Today was not that day.

The ball in Kurt's stomach turned awkwardly. *Blaine thinks I would- God the thought makes me sick.* Kurt shook his head. He could not think about Blaine when he had Keenan to deal with. More than anything, Kurt wanted the rift between himself and his son to be mended. When he had no one, when the world felt cruel and uncaring, Kurt had his son.

When Sarah refused to be a mother and Nathan refused to love him, Kurt had Keenan.

When the world turned its back and Kurt was left crying on the floor, he had Keenan.

When Keenan went through his emotional recovery, Kurt had Blaine. Now it felt as if he had neither of them. *I hate feeling like this.*

Kurt took a step forward and rested his hand on the doorknob. "Hey, Kurt. I thought you'd never get here." Kurt's hand dropped instantly. He turned slowly at the sound of Nathan's voice.

"What are you doing here?"

"I told you this wasn't over."

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As early morning turned to late morning the sun began to float higher and higher into the sky. Keenan watched it from the window seat of his grandfather's office. He liked the sun. Sometimes he felt like the sun. Some days he floated high into the sky without a care in the world. Then his daddy pulled his balloon strings and Keenan floated back down. *Sometimes Daddy is the only thing that keeps me from going into space.* That was why Keenan worked so hard to think of an appropriate apology for his father. He was so determined that he pulled out one of grandfather's note pads and a pen so that he could remember everything he wanted to say.

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Keenan went over his list a few times. It was perfect. The list said everything that he wanted it to say. With his list complete, Keenan turned his attention to the front door. Through the window in Grandpa Burt's office, he would be able to see when his father arrived. *I can't wait. I want to answer the door and read him my list. I hope he likes it.*

Keenan waited. And waited. And waited. Just when he was ready to lay his head down and take a nap in the comfortable window seat, Keenan noticed someone nearing the front door. *Funky pink dress shoes. Rolled up pants that don't reach his ankles. That's Daddy!* Keenan was off the seat and out of the office before his father's body came into full view of the window. He had a list to read. *I hope he likes it.*

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"Dr. Patterson, what are you doing here?" Blaine was in the middle of an exam when one of his veteran colleagues entered the exam room. Dr. Patterson was an old friend of his parents and often volunteered at the clinic, despite his firm instance that he was completely retired.

The bald man strode through to Blaine's side and pushed the man out of his way. "Your secretary, Rachel, called me. Apparently, a woman in high heels yelled at her and then made you cry." Blaine scoffed. *That's not true. I didn't cry.... a lot.* "Somehow, that all equals a family emergency in her book. I'm here to take over for the rest of the day."

Blaine was both honored and relieved. Dr. Patterson was known around the area for his exceptional work and demeanor. The thought that the retiree would drop all his plans to come to Blaine's aid was humbling for the young man. "Thank you, Dr. Patterson. I do have.... something to handle and.... you have no idea how much it means to me that you stopped your day to help me. I don't know how I'll repay you."

Dr. Patterson grinned mischievously. "We'll discuss it later, young man. For now, get out of here." Blaine left before the elder man shoved him out of the room. He spoke with each of his staff members and his volunteers on his way out. He wished each of them a good weekend and told each of them –with the exception of Rachel- that he would see them Monday."

"I'll see you Tuesday, Rachel." Blaine shouted as he headed towards the front door. He heard the young woman's breathe catch as he passed. He turned and offered her a kind smile. "Take Monday off as a thanks for calling reinforcements. I appreciate it."

Rachel returned his smile. "No problem. Go fix whatever needs fixing before that girl comes back. She was.... yeah!"

"She was, but she got the job done." Blaine stepped out into the fresh April air and inhaled deeply. The air smelled wonderful, the sun felt fantastic, and the day would be great once he righted the wrongs of that morning. I have to make one stop first.

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"What are you doing here? Why are you at my father's house?" Kurt hissed as he backed towards the front door. He was furious. It was one thing for Nathan to show up on the doorstep of his and Blaine's home, it was another for Nathan to show up on his father's doorstep. "You need to leave."

Nathan scoffed. "I've been looking for you for months, Kurt. Did you honestly believe that, after all that research, I wouldn't have the address of every place you could possibly be? When you weren't at home this morning, I tried the garage. When you weren't there, I came here. And why do you keep asking why I'm here? I already told you that I would like to see my little boy."

Kurt scoffed. "He's not yours. He's mine and he is Blaine's. We are his fathers. We care about his wellbeing. We love him. You are just trying to ruin the good that I have in my life..... *again*. I will not let you do that. Not again." Nathan smirked.

I would give anything to smack the smirk off his ugly face. "Why are you resisting this? You know as well as I know that you and I will end up back together. You'll drop that smurf and you and Keenan will be back in New York with me. It's how this will.... hey there, buddy."

Kurt turned slowly. The front door was cracked open and Keenan's tiny face was nestled between the frame and the door. Kurt shut his eyes tight and willed his son to leave. *Please go. Please go. Please go.* When he opened his eyes and Keenan was still staring between the two of them, Kurt sighed. *Here we go again.* "Keenan, I need you to-"

"Please don't make me go, Daddy. I wrote an apology to you." Kurt's heart melted. Keenan wanted to apologize and Kurt had to break his heart once again.

"Yeah, Kurt. He wants to apologize. What did he say yesterday? Or right! He said he hated you because you refused to let him see his Papa. You're so mean." Kurt's breathe caught. He and Keenan needed to fix their issue, they did not need it drug back out. Nathan was treating it as if it were a fire. He was poking at it until the flames rose like the bile in Kurt's chest. *Stop. Stop. Stop.*

Kurt turned his face away from his son. Once again, he felt tears welling in his eyes. Between Blaine, Keenan, and assnat Kurt's emotions had the best of him. Luckily for the technician, his son was there and Keenan did not take kindly to people upsetting his daddy. "Don't say that to him. I want to apologize. I don't want to hurt his feelings again."

Nathan chuckled. It took every ounce of willpower Kurt possessed not to hit him. It was one thing to mess with him, it was another to mess with Keenan. "Don't you see, Keenan," Nathan stepped closer to the door that the child hid behind, "your father's feelings will always be hurt. Your daddy will always cry because that's the kind of person he is. He's weak."

"Shut up and leave, Nathan. Now you're not just upsetting me, but you're upsetting my child. No one upsets my son. No one." Kurt gritted through clenched teeth. He was no longer as upset as he was angry. His paternal instincts were in overdrive and his need to protect was peaking.

Keenan's own needs were peaking as well. His need to defend his father was overshadowing his need to see his papa. "Don't talk about him like that. My daddy is a good person. He's a good daddy. Unlike you. You're mean! Daddy did everything and all you did was make him cry... just like now." Keenan looked at his father through the crack in the front door. Sure enough, Kurt was crying.

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"What the hell is going on outside?" Finn barreled through the house when the shouting started. He found Burt in his office, watching through the giant window that Keenan once occupied. When he reached the window, Finn watched as Kurt resumed shouting at the man at the end of the porch; the man that looked suspiciously like Nathan. "That son of a bitch. I can't believe he came here." Finn huffed.

"Finn, go get my shot gun." Burt instructed, not taking his eyes off the scene. Finn's eyes widened as he turned to face his stepfather.

"What? Burt, no. You can't shoot him." Finn never believed that he would be the voice of reason for anyone. As it seemed, he would have to be that day. *Burt can't handle prison; not like it is these days. I've seen 'Orange is the new Black'. I know what happens in those jails.*

Burt tore his eyes away from the argument and rested them on his step son. "Why not? A warning shot to the shoulder never hurt anyone."

"I'm pretty sure that everyone that's ever been shot in the shoulder would beg to differ."

"—and all you did was make him cry....just like now." The eyes of both men widened. They knew that voice.

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"You always make him cry." Keenan hated yelling at his papa but he hated seeing his father cry more. It wasn't fair. Nothing about their situation was and, as it seemed, it never would be. "And, that's not fair. Stitch never got one chance to make daddy cry but you always get a lot. You always get chances to make him cry and that's not fair."

Keenan felt tears welling in his own eyes. His father must have noticed them because the man instantly stepped forward. Keenan shut the door partially. He did not want his father to brush away his tears. They were his tears and he wanted to keep them.

Kurt pulled away, a perplexing look painted on his father's face. "Buddy?"

"I don't want you to wipe them away. You always cry and nobody wiped your tears away before Stitch. You just cried them. It's not fair that you're always the one that has to cry. And it's really not fair that Papa is the one that always makes you cry. I'm tired of it. I hate when you're sad and I hate seeing you cry. You never cry with Stitch." The only exception being the happy tears that Kurt cried when Blaine asked him for his hand. Other than that, Kurt hid tears from his son in hopes of sheltering him from whatever hurt was directing his life at that point.

"If I have to give up my papa so that you won't cry anymore, then I will. I just want you to be happy and I know he doesn't make you happy." Keenan was shoved aside as the door opened. Then he was nestled in his father's warm embrace. "I just want you to be happy, Daddy. I know Papa doesn't make you happy and I'll do anything to make you smile. I hate when you cry."

Kurt kissed every inch of his son's face. Nathan stood forgotten in the background. "While this is sweet, I think you two need to reconsider. Your life without me will never be what it was with me."

"That's right. We'll be happy. Daddy won't cry anymore."

In the end, Keenan's need to keep a smile on his father's face far outweighed any need to see Nathan. He may have been young but the child remembered their life in New York. He remembered the nights his father cried himself to sleep and, more importantly, he remembered the days when his Papa refused to acknowledge the situation. "Isn't that right, Stitch?" Keenan greeted the man over his father's shoulder with a wide smile; one that Blaine readily returned.

Kurt turned to see his fiancé climbing the tiny steps that led to the front porch. He held a bouquet of yellow and red roses in one hand and his phone in the other. "That's right, Nathan. I'll never stand by while either of them cries. I'll take care of them like you didn't."

"Oh for the love of-"

"So you should leave, Nathan." It was Finn that spoke. He and Burt were perched in the doorway behind Kurt and Keenan. "And when you do, don't come back."

Burt spoke. "Because we'll all be here. Us and the hundreds of friends Kurt and Keenan have in Lima. We'll all be here to make sure that these two are happy. Unlike you, we all care about this happiness."

Nathan looked from person to person. "Kurt, this is your last chance." It was a last ditch effort. "I'm not coming back if I leave."

Kurt turned to him, his eyes were no longer glossy with tears. "I like the way that sounds."

With one last look at the group, Nathan began to walk away. "This is your last chance, Kurt. You're never going to meet another man like me."

"I certainly hope not." Kurt replied. He watched as Nathan crossed the lawn and stepped into the cab that he hadn't noticed when he first arrived. Unlike the day before, it felt like the fight might be over.

"Daddy." Kurt turned to face his son. The little boy's giant, hazel eyes shone beautifully in the sunlight. "I'm sorry for saying that I hated you. I don't. I was just sad. I didn't understand why you wouldn't let me see Papa until Uncle Finn explained what you were doing. I do love you. I love you and Stitch more than anything and I'll never say I hate you again."

Kurt pulled his son close, wrapping his arms protectively around the child. "I love you too; more than anything."

"And I love you guys." Blaine interrupted. His flowers were sat on the ground and he was kneeled down behind Kurt. "Ahhh...come on, group hug guys." Blaine wrapped his arms around his fiancé and their son.

"We love you Stitch." Father and son shouted in unison. Though he and Blaine had issues to work out, Kurt still loved his fiancé.

"What about us? We were reinforcements." The trio looked up to see Finn and Burt looking positively left out.

Keenan rolled his eyes and shook his head. "Get down here you big babies!" The two men scurried to their knees and joined the hug. The five men –whether they saw eye to eye or not- loved one another, and everyone on Whitman Avenue bore witness to their love that day.

Chapter Twenty-Five

"Mikayla, Beth, get your bottoms up and ready. We're already running late." A year came and went since Quinn and Trent began dating. During the first few months of their whirlwind romance, Quinn and her daughter took residence in the unoccupied apartmentt over the garage. That changed around Christmas. On Christmas Day, Trent took a page from the Blaine Anderson Playbook and presented Quinn with a key to his house. Quinn and Beth were fully moved into the house by February.

The year passed quickly. Quinn began doing nursing rotations at local hospitals as she neared the end of her degree program and she had a standing job offer with Beth's pediatrician. Trent was also doing well. He was training to become a store manager and his employees were painfully jealous of his gorgeous girlfriend. He was on top of the world.

Beth groaned as she rolled over in her bed. *I'm so tired!* She and Mikayla stayed up late the night before watching movies and eating junk food. Her mother joined them from time to time between fussing with Uncle Kurt and readying everyone's outfits for the big day. "We're tired, mom!" Beth shouted from her bed.

"Too bad!" Quinn's voice tore through the house violently. "I told you guys to go to sleep. You two chose not to listen! Up. Now." The girls groaned. They knew they had to get out of bed. Disobeying Quinn was not an option.

"We should get up, Beth. Your mom will kill us if we don't." Mikayla sat in her bed –hair piled high in a tangled mound- and rubbed her eyes. "Remember that day we were supposed to get up for breakfast with your grandma and grandpa and we didn't. She screamed so loud the neighbors came over to check on us."

Beth remembered the day well; so well that she jumped from her bed and made her way to the restroom. They did not need a repeat of that day.

An hour later, the blended family stood in the foyer of the house, putting the last touches on their outfits. "Quinn, you look spectacular. The dress, the hair.....everything. You look phenomenal." Trent gushed as he helped Beth into her coat. September was not nearly as frigid as December or January but it was not July either. The slight chill in the air meant the girls needed jackets.

Quinn blushed. "Likewise. I think you look strapping in a tuxedo."

"Strapping that donut belly." Mikayla interjected, earning a chuckle from Beth.

Quinn smacked Mikayla's shoulder.

Trent smacked Beth's.

The snickering stopped instantly.

"Whatever!" Quinn rolled her eyes as she buttoned the front of her light jacket. "I think you look great. As do you girls. Uncle Kurt did a great job picking out your outfits."

Mikayla and Beth wore matching, champagne colored dresses with giant bows that tied behind their backs. Mikayla insisted that Quinn do her hair in loose ringlets while Beth insisted on an up-do. Despite how alike their dresses were, the girls couldn't have looked more different. They were two ends of the same spectrum; similar but so terribly different.

"God, you guys look gorgeous. Where's my phone?" Quinn began to rummage through the giant purse that she often carried with her. Most days, it lugged her notebooks around so she could study on a whim. Today it held boxes of tissues, her phone, a digital camera, et cetera.

"We don't have time now, babe." Trent kissed his girlfriend's forehead. "Take pictures when we get to the park."

Quinn let out a frustrated sigh. They did not have time for pictures but she felt like she could not wait until they reached the park to snap a few. "I'll take some in the car. Come on girls, we've got a wedding to get to."

OoOoO

Wes and David arrived at the park early....or late. *We didn't go home last night. Those hoes were crazy.* The duo changed in David's SUV before strolling leisurely into the park.. The chaos had already begun. People were running to and fro, attempting to set up for the ceremony. Light blue and deep gold flowers were being hung from the gazebo that sat in front of the park's lake and chairs were being set up.

"I think we're way early, dude. Blaine just text me that he and Keenan are just getting out of bed." Wes held up his phone, offering his friend proof of that they were early.

David shook his head. "Damn, dude! I didn't think we were that early. I mean it's already....10 o'clock. The wedding starts at noon."

Wes offered his best friend a shrug. *My thoughts exactly.* Throughout the years....and the booze....and the girls...he and David remained best friends. They called themselves the Blasian –black and Asian-Persuasion. They partied hard and broke hearts. It was who they were and they accepted one another in light of that fact. The two shared many things, including thoughts. They always seemed to be thinking the same things at the same times.

"Do you think they have any food set up?" David asked. Wes shrugged next to him.

"Who knows. Even if they do, Kurt will kill us for eating before the wedding."

"Who said Kurt has to know?" David asked.

"Touche, David. Touche!"

OoOoO

"Do you understand why I get upset with you sometimes, Finn? The things that come out of your mouth are not always okay." Kurt and Finn sat across from one another at the Hudson-Hummel kitchen table. Shortly after the Nathan situation was settled, Kurt pulled his stepbrother aside. He advised Finn that they needed to have a conversation and shoved the giant man into the kitchen.

Their conversation started well. Kurt thanked Finn for speaking with Keenan and again for having his back with Nathan. Finn shrugged off the gratitude. He felt that Kurt shouldn't have to thank him for being a good brother. As far as either was concerned, it was the first time Finn acted as such.

As their conversation progressed, it became more serious.

Finn nodded. "I know, dude. It's just....I don't always know the right stuff to say and....the whole...gay thing is still pretty foreign to me." It was. To that day, Finn still had issues processing the fact that a relationship between a man and a man was the same as a relationship between a man and a woman.

"That's because you kept your distance." Kurt insisted. "All it took was a single conversation between your mother and me for her to understand that I was no different than you. She chose to listen and understand. You didn't. You pushed me away. I know I wasn't always the easiest person to live with –that time I was mad at you and told you that our parents spent your college fund on my Dalton tuition was not very nice- but I always wanted us to be close. We never were. You kept pushing at these things –my sexuality, the way I raise my son, my relationships- and I couldn't take that. I cannot take that. It breaks my heart because we're supposed to be family."

Silence settled between them as Finn took in Kurt's words. They were supposed to be family. Families cared for one another and they were honest with one another. Finn felt it was finally time to be honest. "Dude, I was jealous. Okay. You didn't have any responsibilities. You got to do whatever you wanted. I had to sit home with a girlfriend and a newborn. You got to go off to New York and college and stuff. I had to take care of Beth and Quinn. You had your own child and you still got the guy in the end. While I don't want a guy, I still wanted to be with Rachel and I couldn't. I couldn't be with Rachel and you got to be with Blaine. That pissed me off. A lot."

"Why didn't you ever say anything?"

"Because then we would have had to work on an actual relationship." Finn sighed. "I had so much going on in my life that the thought of working things out with you felt unbelievably difficult. So, I let things stay the way they were. I don't hate you, Kurt. I know you thought that for a while, but I don't. I just....I was a little jealous. Just a little."

Kurt scoffed. "You were a lot jealous and who can blame you. I'm fabulous."

A chuckle and a shake of the head were all Finn replied with. "What? You know it's true. I'm perfect. I'm also like a fine wine: I get better with age. Next to perfect in the dictionary, there is a picture of me."

"You're too much, Kurt."

Kurt continued undeterred. "Oh, I know. My head is huge. It has to be though because I have a giant crown that says 'Queen Bitch' on it. I'm basically what everyone else wants to be so I understand why you'd be a bit jealous. Don't be jelly, Finn. You can be this amazing too."

Finn stood from his chair and placed a hand on his step brother's shoulder. "I'll leave that to you. For the time being, I'm sorry and I'd really like to work on our relationship. I'm having another baby and you're getting married. Our families deserve to see us on the same page for once."

Kurt grinned happily. "I couldn't agree more."

"AHHHHHH!" Finn's mind travelled from the day, almost a year ago, when he and Kurt began to settle their differences. His daughter was screaming.

"Finn! Get the baby! I'm trying to curl my hair!" Finn groaned as he stood from the foot of his and Rachel's bed. As expected, Finn's family was running late. He and Rachel spent most of the prior evening trying to convince Caroline – *I may have lost the battle to name her Captain but her middle name is still Morgan*- that sleeping was socially acceptable during night hours.

Caroline's room was down the hall and around the corner. Finn knew the path well. The young father strolled absently to the room as he tied his tie. They had to leave as soon as possible and the baby was not dressed.

Finn entered the room just as he was putting the finishing touches on his neatly tied tie. He had Kurt to thank for that. His stepbrother spent three weeks tutoring Finn and it paid off. Finn could knot a tie with his eyes closed.

"Hey, pretty girl. You're up late." Caroline was as tall as she was round. Her short, brown curls framed her chubby cheeks, making her look every bit Finn's daughter.

Caroline screeched with excitement as he father lifted her from her crib. "Let's get you changed and ready for Uncle Kurt's wedding. He will kill us if we are late." *Literally kill us.* Finn added in his head. Caroline may have only been nine months old but Kurt would take no prisoners if they were not seated when the wedding began.

Finn carried the baby across the room and promptly changed her. Unlike Quinn, Rachel refused to take sole responsibility for their daughter's care. Equal responsibility meant Finn was forced to learn to change his daughter's diaper. Almost a year had passed since her birth and Finn was an old pro at diaper changing.

"We're going to get you some food and then get you ready for the wedding. Isn't that exciting?" Caroline deadpanned at her father. *Apparently, none of that is exciting to her.*

Finn carried his daughter downstairs. Once in the kitchen, he prepared her bottle with one hand while balancing her in the other. He was a pro at that as well. As he shook the contents of the bottle, Caroline relaxed in his arms. She was content to wait the few moments her father needed to prepare her breakfast.

Making the bottle was second nature to Finn. Before he knew it, he and his daughter were seated at the kitchen table and the girl was sucking greedily on the nipple. Finn's mind wandered once again as he daughter devoured her breakfast.

In the past year, Finn's life changed dramatically. Weeks before Caroline's arrival, Finn's divorce from Quinn was finalized. It was one of the happiest days of his life. He and Quinn shook hands following the proceeding and parted ways. Finn was relieved. Per their agreement, he had visitations rights to his daughter –every other weekend and every other major holiday- and his child support payments were reasonable. Finn felt like a winner that day.

The divorce was just the beginning of Finn's great year. Caroline came next. Shortly after the divorce was finalized, Rachel went into labor. Her labor was short and uncomplicated. Before Finn knew what hit him, he was holding his second daughter; his baby girl. Finn cherished that day –along with the day of Beth's birth- as the happiest days of his life.

The rest of the year paled in comparison to the beginning. Finn received a promotion at work to Lead Trainer, Friday Night dinners were once again deemed mandatory for all (including Rachel, Caroline, Trent, and Mikayla), he purchased a new vehicle with his own money, and he talked his girlfriend back into the theatre world. To Finn Hudson, the year was amazing. *And next year will be even better.*

OoOoO

Rachel stood in the doorway as her boyfriend fed their daughter. A year ago, she could not have imagined such a sight. Then again, a year ago, Rachel could not have imagined being excited for Kurt and Blaine's wedding. *Things change so much in so little time.*

So much changed in the past year that Rachel could barely wrap her head around it. She had a baby, she bonded with her boyfriend's daughter, she auditioned and received a leading role in a local play, and she made amends with Kurt –sort of. The past year was good to her.

As she stood in the doorway, Rachel thought about Kurt. *It's his wedding day after all.* Throughout high school, Rachel envied Kurt. He was footloose and fancy free. She, on the other hand, was living as the secret girlfriend of the one and only Finn Hudson. The day of Kurt's farewell party from the shelter, Rachel advised him of that fact.

"I used to envy you. I wanted my life to be as easy as yours seemed to be." Rachel watched as Kurt's face softened from the scowl that was painted across his face when she pulled him away from his boyfriend. "I always thought that people just gave you things. Then, when you got the job here, I felt like that again. It was like 'oh, there's Kurt Hummel. He's getting handed yet another opportunity.' Suffice it to say, I was jealous."

Kurt stared at Rachel for a pregnant moment before speaking. "I have worked hard for everything I have received. I know you think my dad and Carole just handed over money for Dalton, but they didn't. I worked every weekend for years to help pay for that tuition. As far as my job here, it had nothing to do with a handed over opportunity. During my interview, Blaine asked me to be real with him and I was. That was how I got my job. Blaine wanted something and I delivered. And by something, I don't mean sex." Kurt quickly added.

Rachel chuckled lightly. She knew very well that sex was nonexistent in the early days of Kurt and Blaine. During their Frank and Sammy days, Kurt and Blaine were nothing more than coworkers. "I know. I was just....I don't know. Blaine used to look at you in these ways, kind of like he is right now," Rachel and Kurt turned to see Blaine staring at the technician longingly from across the room, "and I knew you two were going to end up together. I hated the thought. You were going to get the doctor and I was still just a side piece for Finn."

"I don't think you were ever a side piece, Rachel." Kurt insisted. "He was more afraid of losing Beth than losing you, but that has nothing to do with you. She's his daughter and that was why things were the way that they were. Now you guys are having a baby and the three of you will be happy. Quinn and Beth will be happy. Everyone is happy."

Rachel smiled at Kurt, earning a smile in return. After weeks of preparing, the moment she was waiting for was finally upon her. "I know this past year has been rough for you and I but....I'd really like to apologize for how I've treated you. I had no right."

"Apology accepted."

"Good. We'll all be family very soon and I still haven't spent any time with Keenan. I'd love to get to know him and I want this one," Rachel motioned to her swollen belly, "to know her Uncle Kurt."

Kurt ran a hand over the swell of Rachel's stomach. "Absolutely. She can't be the most fashionable girl in daycare without help from her Uncle Kurt. Goodness knows neither you nor Finn can dress acceptably."

Rachel rolled her eyes fondly; Finn warned her that Kurt would likely make a comment about her clothing choices.

"I watched them Rachel. Kurt and all the girls sat around a camp fire and tossed in a dress; it was the same dress that you wore the night of our first date. Do you remember that dress? The green ruffly one that you donated? The said it was a monstrosity and the high heeled girl that hangs out with Santana tossed it into the fire. I screamed at them not to burn that dress because it used to belong to you and Kurt's face went white. 'That thing was a crime against humanity, Finn. If that is how Rachel dresses then I feel sorry for your child'. He said. So, don't be surprised if he jabs you for your clothes."

"And I can teach Keenan about singing. I've heard that he loves to sing."

Kurt scoffed at the brunette. "Yeah right! My son's voice is perfection. He does not need assistance, nor does he need lessons."

The two began to make their way back to the office party, their conversation continuing as they walked. "I heard him singing through the phone one day while you were talking to Finn. He was pitchy, Kurt. If you start lessons now, you can train his voice not to crack when he hits notes. I've already started with this one. I sing to her every day and I play Barbra through headphones into my belly while I sleep."

Kurt stopped midstride and turned a questioning eye to his stepbrother's girlfriend. "He's seven and....are you serious about the Barbra? That's a bit....much."

Rachel scoffed, picking up her stride once again. "Of course. And, seven does not mean anything. I won my first singing competition at six months because my birth mother started early. I learned and she will too."

"Or she'll be a mechanic, drummer, fitness trainer like her father." Kurt mumbled.

"What?"

"Nothing Rachel."

After Kurt's departure from the shelter, the office began to run more smoothly. Blaine was focused and the new technician was kind.

"Do you want me to dress her so you can finish getting ready for the wedding?" Rachel asked as her boyfriend burped their daughter.

"Yeah!" Finn held the little girl up for Rachel to grab. "And you look wonderful. Like...really great." Rachel smiled down at the simple, blue dress she'd picked for the occasion. It was not much but it fit and that made a world of difference.

"Thank you. I feel wonderful." Rachel grabbed her daughter with grabby hands and held her close. "And this one is going to look wonderful in the matching dress I bought her. Aren't you honey."

Caroline squealed, causing her parents to chuckle.

OoOoO

"Fucking goddamn tie. Fuck. This is why I hate fucking weddings. I even called those bitches and asked if it was black tie optional. That bitch fucking told me that if I showed up without a tie on he was going to strangle me with one of his spares. He has fucking spare ties for people that show up without them. Are you fucking kidding me?"

Sebastian struggled to perfect his tie. He always had issues with them. For the entirety of Sebastian's life, he struggled to perfect the knot of his tie. Kurt offered to teach him but, between Sebastian's rotations and other obligations, the doctor was left little to no time to learn.

"If you needed help, babe, you should have asked." Sebastian stared over his shoulder through the bathroom mirror. Carlton grinned wickedly back at him. "I've been tying these things since I was six." Sebastian did not respond, instead he let his hands fall to his sides and allowed Carlton to take over.

Sebastian's year was magical. Shortly after Nathan's official departure from Lima, the doctor took the necessary steps to make Carlton his.

"Carlton?" Sebastian's heart beat triple time as Carlton's light blue eyes sought him out from behind the bar. As expected, Carlton was working that night. He worked every night. When their eyes finally met, Sebastian's breathe caught. He knew Carlton was beautiful but there was something different about him that night. It may have been the way he did his hair that evening or it may have been the way he was staring at the doctor. Either way, Sebastian thought he was absolutely stunning; so stunning that he could not let their situation fall to the wayside once again.

"Dr. Smythe what are you-" The words caught in Carlton's throat as he took in the situation. Sebastian seemed frazzled. Demeanor aside, the giant teddy bear, flowers, heart balloons, and box of candy threw the bartender through a loop.

Sebastian sighed. "Sebastian. Please call me Sebastian." Carlton nodded absently, eyes fixated on the mounds of tacky Valentine's Day gifts that his faithful customer held in his arms. "And...Carlton," Sebastian stepped closer to the bar, "I think you are amazing. So amazing that I bought you all these things from the gas station that I passed on the way here."

"Why?"

"Because I felt like I couldn't show up empty handed. I've spent the past few months convincing myself that I was waiting for you to make a move. That wasn't true. The truth was that I needed time to figure out how to change the person I was for you. You know how I am. I come in here and I pick up guys to take home. I never wanted that. I wanted to come and pick you up from work and take you out to dinner. I wanted to ask you how school was and I wanted you to tell me about some asshole that cut in front of you at the bookstore. But I could never bring myself to do those things....at least not empty handed so...." Sebastian thrust the contents of his arms in Carlton's direction.

"Ronny!" Carlton shouted, seemingly ignoring Sebastian. "I need to take a break. Like now!"

Sebastian watched as an overweight man barreled from the backroom. "Why?" The man insisted. Carlton squared his shoulders. He shot a look at Sebastian and then back at his boss. Then, he did something that Sebastian did not expect.

Carlton fake coughed. To any doctor or parent on the planet, the cough was comically fake. "Because I'm sick. So sick that this doctor," Carlton motioned to Sebastian, "says I need to go home and rest."

Ronny stared Sebastian down. Oh, that's my cue. "Yes, he's terribly ill. He needs to go home and rest. Now."

"Whatever. I swear this is why I never hire kids. They always have something going on and goddamn..." The duo watched as Ronny waddled back to the kitchen, mumbling to himself as he went.

A few short minutes later, Carlton and Sebastian were crossing the parking lot. "You could have just done it." Carlton commented as he ran his hands over the bear that he kept close to his chest.

"Could have done what?"

"Just asked me. I always thought you were a catch....even when you didn't." Sebastian's heart skipped a beat. "You're a great guy, Sebastian....even when you're not so sure, I am."

"So...." The two stopped walking and their eyes met, "is that a yes?"

"It's a duh!" Carlton commented. He then crashed their lips together. It seemed like the logical next step in their dance.

"You know I hate asking for help." Sebastian turned from the mirror, allowing his boyfriend to fix his tie. He may have hated asking for help, but that did not mean that he hated when his boyfriend offered help. During the year that they'd spent together, Sebastian learned that Carlton loved to help and he was more than willing to accept that help.

"I know." Carlton commented as he worked on his boyfriend's tie. "But you know I love helping you. I mean, you helped me finish college. Whodathunk that a doctor could help this poor, little art student through a useless biology class."

Here we go again. Carlton was a born painter. From morning until night, the young man was covered in acrylics. Carlton often said that he shouldn't have had to take any classes that did not revolve around painting. Neither the college he attended, nor Sebastian, supported the young man's philosophy. "Biology is not useless. I wouldn't be able to fix this perfect little body of yours," Sebastian stared his boyfriend up and down, "without Biology."

"I think you mean Anatomy, honey, and we have a wedding to get to, so no fixing my perfect little body, right now. Also, your tie is finished. Grab your jacket and let's go."

Carlton was out of the room before Sebastian could stop him. *Stupid wedding. I wanted to skip. I love Kurt and Blaine but I love that ass more.* "Now Sebastian! Kurt asked us to check over things while he is getting ready. We need to leave now." With a sigh, Sebastian grabbed his jacket.

"Yes, dear!"

OoOoO

"Baby! Go get us coffee while we finish getting ready!" Whitley's voice rang throughout the house like a gong. It demanded respect and results. *At least I think so.*

Hunter poked his head in the bathroom a moment later. He was exhausted after his shift. He could not ignore his girlfriend, however. Whitley was frightening when she wanted to be. "Why can't we get it on the way? I'm tired, Whit!"

Santana and Brittany turned along with their friend. They were neither sympathetic, nor amused. "Because we need coffee now. We were up talking to Kurt all night and now we're tired. We can't have our pictures taken at his wedding with bags under our eyes."

"So put more makeup under your eyes. Come on, Whit! I'm exhausted. I haven't even gone to sleep yet. Throw me a freaking bone." She wouldn't. Hunter knew his girlfriend too well to expect her to be sympathetic to his needs. He loved her none the less and, in return, she loved him back. *We have a weird relationship but it works for us.*

Whitley crossed her arms over her chest. The last thing she needed was to fight with her boyfriend before the biggest day of her best friend's life. "Throw me a bone! I need coffee. Now."

The two stared at each other for an extended moment. That moment reminded Hunter of a million moments before. Alas, this moment would not end like the others. Had Santana and Brittany not been in the room, he and his girlfriend would have ended up on the floor....naked. That was how they worked. Somehow, someway, the two always ended up naked. *I'm pretty sure we have more sex than Kurt and Blaine. Our friends don't believe us, but we do.*

Hunter eventually decided on a compromise. "I'll get you coffee if you give me head."

Brittany gasped. "She's not a hooker, you can't bargain with her like that." Santana nodded beside her girlfriend.

It was Whitley's reaction that shocked them both. "Fine, but not now. Kurt will kill me if I get anything on this dress."

"Fine! In the car after the wedding."

"Fine!"

Hunter offered a curt nod to his girlfriend's friends before heading down the stairs. He left Brittany and Santana shocked in his wake.

"Did that really just happen?" Santana asked. She knew the relationship between Hunter and Whitley was different but she did not know it was that different.

Whitley shrugged! "Yeah and it was so sweet." The woman's face morphed into a touched pout as she relived the moment in her head. She missed the look on shock on her friends' faces. Over the past year, she'd missed quite a few looks because she was being wooed by Hunter and his charm.

Whitley was the first to finish college. While Santana had an additional year and Kurt had three, Whitley worked hard to finish in a speedy fashion. On the day of her graduation, with all her friends in attendance, Hunter serenaded her in front of an entire restaurant with an acoustic version of 'Bump and Grind'. Kurt and Brittany were mortified. Santana was impressed. She knew the song was her best friend's favorite.

When Whitley received her first official job –a marketing assistant at a local firm- Hunter sent her a cake. Most girls liked to receive roses at work, Whitley liked to receive ice cream cake. Then there was Valentine's Day. The two spent the evening fucking –*making love is like driving in the slow lane when you've got places to go*- and promising to brush their teeth before kissing the other in the morning. Just before falling asleep that night, Hunter whispered the sweetest words Whitley ever heard.

"If we get married and I put you on my checking account, the bank won't charge me for it."

Whitley smiled to herself as she replayed those words in her head. She knew her relationship with Hunter was odd to some but it worked for them. They had the same mindset and the same interests at heart. They cared for one another, though some did not understand their love. People like Kurt needed romance and

grand gestures. She did not. Whitley needed strength and stability. Hunter offered those things. *Rule 32: Enjoy the little things.*

"How can you think that was sweet?" Brittany asked, still appalled by the interaction. If Santana ever spoke to her in such a way, Brittany did not believe she would be able to handle it. The past year and a half with Santana was nothing short of wonderful. The Latina often showered her girlfriend with romantic gifts and words of encouragement. To Brittany, the exchange between Whitley and Hunter was perplexing.

"Ken did that to Blake in an episode of 'Sing'. Hunter knew that. It's so sweet."

A collective groan erupted in the room. "I don't want to talk about that fucking show again. Come on, Whit!" Santana huffed.

"What? It's my favorite fucking show. If you'd watch, you would understand. Ken and Blake are so perfect for one another. They are....God...fucking perfection!"

"Whatever! Hunter will be back any minute and we need to get this show on the damn road!" Brittany announced. The women turned back to their mirror and continued with their makeup. When Hunter returned a short while later, the women were primed, primped, and dressed to kill.

OoOoO

The morning was hectic for Blaine; extremely hectic. He and Kurt decided the night before not to share a bed before their wedding.

"We can't see each other, Blaine! It's tradition."

Blaine insisted that the tradition was only meant for a bride and groom, not a groom and groom. Kurt refused to hear his point. After a debate that seemed to last forever, it was decided that Kurt would stay with his parents and Blaine would stay at home.

The night before their wedding grew more complicated when the decision of Keenan's sleeping arrangements had to be made.

"I'll just take him to my father's house with me." Kurt insisted. He refused to acknowledge the fact that he needed his son as an emotional anchor before the biggest day of his life, but he refused to give up the fight.

Blaine shook his head. "But I'll miss him." The veterinarian stated simply.

"You will see him in the morning." Kurt replied simply.

With a stomp of his foot and a shake of his head, Blaine refused. "No! I'll miss him!"

"Are you pouting?" Blaine looked every bit the petulant child that Kurt knew he could be. He's lucky I love him.

"No!" Blaine huffed. He was pouting. He did not care. He wanted Keenan to stay for the same reason that Kurt wanted Keenan to go. Over the past year, Blaine grew accustomed to having Keenan only steps behind him. It was a normalcy that Blaine needed on the most abnormal day of his life.

"Fine!" Kurt eventually relented. "He can stay here! But you better have him at the park and ready by the time I get there. No messing around." Kurt jabbed a finger into his fiancé's chest to make his point. Blaine chuckled before pulling the man in for a kiss. It would be their last kiss before being joined as husband and husband.

Blaine regretted his decision the next morning. Of all the days that Keenan could have chosen to be difficult, he chose the day of his fathers' wedding.

"NO!" Keenan shouted from the top of the stairs. Blaine groaned. He and Keenan were in the midst of a heated argument and it seemed as if it would never end. Of course this would happen on the day of my wedding.

"Please, Keenan! We don't have time for this." Blaine begged. "I need you to change out of the Nightbird costume and into your suit. We have to leave!" Blaine was on the verge of tears. His perfect day felt like it was sliding through his fingertips.

"No!" Keenan shouted once again. Blaine felt his hands begin to shake. The day's inevitable anxiety had his nerves on edge and Keenan's behavior was dangerously close to sending them over the edge. I'm going to cry and scream. At once. I think they call that crying.

A knock sounded at the front door. Great! That's my parents. They're probably ready to go and I can't even get my son down the stairs. I should have let him go with Kurt. Kurt can handle this. Why can't I handle this? I've been doing this for a while now. Maybe I'm not meant to be a dad. I can't even get him down the stairs

and into proper clothes. Maybe this is all wrong maybe this is- Another knock sounded at the door. "Fuck!" Blaine huffed as he jogged to the door. "I'm fucking com-" Julia Anderson's disapproving face met Blaine when he cracked the door.

"That's a tall order of cussing for such a short man." *Short jokes. On the worst best day of my life? Really?*

"I'm not wearing that stupid suit!" Keenan shouted moments later. Jay and Julia looked to one another before turning to their son. He was a defeated man if they ever saw one. They moved instantly. Jay pulled his son into a stiff, awkward hug, while Julia bristled past them. The woman made a beeline for the stairs. Whatever the issue was, she would fix it.

Julia found Keenan huddled in his bedroom. He was so angry she could see the imaginary smoke blowing out his nostrils. "What was all that about?" She asked as she entered the room. She knew of course –*He doesn't want to wear that stupid suit. His words, not mine.*– but she wanted to know why.

Keenan shot his Nana –*I like calling her that*– an agitated look. "I don't want to wear that stupid suit." He grumbled. Julia was reminded of a six year old Blaine.

"I don't want to eat those stupid peas! They are yucky and they aren't candy!"

The woman smiled to herself. She then realized that she had a crisis on her hands and shook the thoughts away. "Why not? It's very nice. The vest matches your daddy's eyes." *Something I will never get over. Kurt and Blaine are so sweet. The dresses match Blaine's eyes and the vests match Kurt's. I have diabetes.*

Keenan shook his head angrily. "Because! If I wear it then I have to stand in front of all those people. Everyone will stare at me. I don't like it." The child insisted. Julia was shocked to say the least. As far as she knew, Keenan loved attention. The little boy was a born star in her eyes. He loved crowds.

"Why don't you want to be in front of everyone? They'll all tell you that you look handsome. I know you like hearing that." Keenan seemed to mull over the point for a moment before replying.

"I would." He said into his drawn knees. Julia chuckled.

"I know. So why don't we get this off you and get you into that suit. Then we'll go down stairs with Stitch. You know, he's really nervous about today. He just wants it to be perfect for your daddy. Will you help him make it perfect for your daddy?" Julia knew she was playing quite the card, but she had no other options.

It was do or die. Literally. If the wedding did not go off without a hitch, people would die. *Kurt is intense like that.*

"Okay." Keenan mumbled. Meer minutes later, Keenan and Julia descended the stairs. Julia had a giant smile on her face and Keenan was dressed in his tuxedo. Blaine let out a shaky sigh of relief.

"I don't know what you did, Mom, but thank you. You're the best."

"Anything for my baby on his wedding day." Julia replied.

Blaine beamed at his mother for a moment before turning to his son. "Thank you for changing, Keenan. It means the world to me that you put....whatever aside for your daddy and I today. Just...thank you."

Keenan nodded. "It's okay, Stitch. I want you guys to be happy today. Even if I don't want all those people looking at me."

"Was that the issue? You thought everyone was going to be staring at you? Why didn't you just say so?" Keenan shrugged. He didn't know. He also didn't know why the prospect of people staring frightened him. "Would you feel better about it if I held your hand during the ceremony?"

Keenan pondered the thought before nodding eagerly. "Cool. We'll hold hands and you won't have to worry about everyone staring at you."

"Thanks, Stitch. I love you."

"Love you too, buddy. Now let's go. I'm ready to get married."

OoOoO

So much has changed. Kurt lay awake in the guest bedroom of his father's house. In the course of two years, his entire world was turned upside down. He was taken from the darkness to the light by a single man and now he was marrying that man. The idea seemed preposterous. So much so that Kurt did not sleep the night before his wedding. The wheels in his mind were turning at an alarming rate and he could not seem to shut them off. Eventually, he stopped trying.

Memories raced through Kurt's mind like horses whose bladders were stretched far too thin. The past year was a treasure chest of memories that Kurt loved opening.

"Baby, I think you should consider it. I've got a prime candidate lined up for your job. He's not nearly as pretty as you are and...you have so much going on right now. Just...think about it." Blaine suggested for the millionth time. Kurt rolled his eyes. He had thought about it. A lot.

"Blaine, I just don't like the idea of sitting around all the time while you pay our bills. My father raised me to work hard and I cannot imagine doing anything but. I can handle this...all of this." Kurt replied as he often did. He saw this shake of his fiancé's head in the distance.

"You're not listening, Kurt!" Blaine huffed. "It wouldn't be me working and you not working. It's not like you're Peggy Bundy! Yes, I would be the one working a job that pays but you would be doing so much more. With the wedding, Keenan's dance lessons and football practices, and school, you've got a full plate. Why not step back from something if you can? I don't mind. Why do you?"

"Because I hate feeling like I'm being taken care of. I can take care of myself."

"But you don't have to. I want to take care of you and our son. Please let me."

Kurt smiled at the memory. Blaine wanted to take care of them, not the other way around. In the end, Kurt had let him. He put in his official resignation and focused on the other priorities that life handed him. It was lovely....for a while.

With nearly a year passed since his departure from his last job, Kurt was restless, he needed to work.

"I'm getting a job as soon as we get back from our fucking honeymoon. I cannot sit in this house any longer!" Kurt huffed one evening when his fiancé walked in the front door. "Do you know what I did all day?" He asked. Before Blaine could answer, Kurt continued. "I cleaned! I cleaned all day. Does it look like I cleaned all day? No! It does not! It looks like I haven't done anything. If I have a job, I won't care if it looks like I cleaned all day because I wouldn't have cleaned all day because I will have been working all day. Does that make sense?"

Blaine nodded immediately. "Good! So it's settled." Kurt skipped away happily, leaving his stunned fiancé at the front door.

Eventually, Kurt's alarm went off and he was forced to drag himself out of bed. An underlying feeling of doom struck him the moment he was away from his sheets. *Oh no. Oh no. Oh no.* The young man thought to himself as he climbed into the shower. He didn't know why, but something felt wrong. Very wrong.

An hour later, while Kurt was dressing, he realized what was wrong. A wrinkle. In the middle of his wrinkle resistant shirt there is a giant wrinkle. *Oh no!* Kurt ran on autopilot as he made his way through his family's house. "Iron! I need a freaking iron!" He screeched as he passed the kitchen, not once but twice.

Carole and Burt followed the frantic young man as he made his way back and forth. "Do you think he remembers that the iron is in the laundry room?" Burt asked before taking a sip of his morning coffee. Carole shook her head. "Do you think I should tell him? It might be good for him to run some of these nerves out."

"I'll tell him. He's already going to be a mess –this is Kurt we're talking about after all- he doesn't need an iron fiasco on his hands. Not this early." Burt nodded as his wife stepped into the hallway. Kurt was nearly past her when she reached out and grabbed his arm. "Kurt, honey, hand me whatever needs to be ironed and I will iron it. Go have coffee with your father in the meantime." Kurt offered a jittery nod and handed over his shirt. He then made his way into the kitchen and took a seat at the island.

"You okay, son?" Burt asked, knowing the answer. Kurt nodded and then shook his head. "Why are you not sure?"

"Because!" Kurt moaned. "I feel like everything is everywhere. My head is going a million miles a minute. My stomach is flipping and flopping. I feel like I have a rock in there and it won't stop fucking moving! It's...my shirt has a wrinkle in it." Kurt's last line came out so pitiful –so brokenhearted- that Burt had no other choice than to hug his son. He pulled the boy –*man, he's a man now*- flush against his chest and rocked him slowly.

"It's going to be okay, son. Stop worrying." Burt advised as he rocked his son. Kurt offered a grunt in return. "I'm serious. Stop fussing and let today happen naturally. It'll probably surprise you how well it goes."

"I don't think so." Kurt moaned again. "I've got this feeling that Mom is trying to tell me that something bad is going to happen. I keep hoping it's just the shirt but-" Kurt's phone rang, effectively cutting off his

whining. "Fuck!" Kurt did not want to speak to anyone until the wedding. *No one. That way I can't inadvertently snap at anyone.*

"What?" Kurt bellowed into the phone without checking the caller ID. Anyone that was brave enough to call him that day would have to deal with his attitude. *That included Blaine. I told him not to call me.*

"Is this Kurt Hummel?" The man on the other end asked. Kurt pulled the phone away from his head and examined the number. It was not one he recognized.

The young man placed the phone back to his ear, a look of confusion still painted across his face. "Ummm...yeah. Who is this?"

"Ronald Thompson, I'm officiating your wedding today. Or...I was." Kurt's heart stopped. *No. No. No. No.* "My ex-wife came into town last night as a surprise and-"

OoOoO

Burt and Carole cringed in the kitchen as Kurt shouted obscenities into his phone. The good news was that Kurt's shirt was ironed. The bad news was....*I hope that's not a nun on the other end of that line. Or a Pastor. Or a child.*

"....and I swear to fucking God I will..."

Again, the couple cringed. Kurt was furious. *I hope the person on the other end of the line doesn't have a weak heart.*

"....and you divorced that bitch for a reason!"

Or a weak stomach. Kurt is freaking scary.

"....and I will see you in Hell, asshole!"

Kurt jammed his finger into the screen of his phone to end the call. When he looked up, his parents offered their best supportive smiles. "I got that wrinkle out, honey." Carole held up Kurt's perfectly pressed shirt.

"It doesn't matter! The wedding is cancelled." Without another word, Kurt stomped off. *Worst day ever!*

OoOoO

"....and so I got down on one knee and said, 'April, would you do me the honor of dressing me for the Daytime Emmys'." Wes and David laughed at Cooper's story as if they hadn't heard it a million times before. Cooper was an old friend that they cared deeply for but he had a knack for retelling the same stories over and over again. "And she said-" Cooper was cut off by the sound of his phone ringing. "Excuse me guys."

Cooper stood from his seat and stepped away from the group. When he was out of earshot, he answered the unrecognizable number. "y'ello, Cooper Anderson speaking."

"Cooper!" The woman on the other end of the line shrieked! "It's Carole, Kurt's stepmother. I have a huge issue on my hands. Kurt is upset, Blaine's phone is off and I do not have the number to your parents. I need your help."

"Of course." Cooper responded. "Anything. What's up?" The actor listened as Carole told him the story of Kurt's wedding day plight. The smile on his face grew wider with each word she spoke.

"...and now Kurt is saying that the wedding is over and he's holed up in his room. I have no idea what to do to fix this!"

"Well, then it's a good thing I'm here for you, baby doll." Cooper loved to refer to Carole as 'baby doll' because he knew it made her blush. *I can practically see the blood rushing to her face now.*

"Cooper Anderson, be serious!" Carole chided, though the smile on her face was evident in her voice. "This is a huge setback for today. I need your help."

Cooper sighed into the phone. "Alright, I'm being serious and I can fix this. I happen to be an ordained minister. I can officiate the wedding." There was a moment of silence. Carole seemed to be processing the thought.

"You're kidding me, right?" She eventually responded.

Cooper shook his head. "Not at all. I've been ordained for about a year. I knew it would come in handy one day."

"A word of warning, Cooper." Carole's voice dipped dangerously slow. "If you mess around with this and you're not serious, we'll be attending a funeral today, not a wedding. Got it?"

"Got it."

OoOoO

"All you need to know is that I found someone for you. Finish getting ready while I do my makeup and while your father finishes with his tie." Carole shouted through the door of their guest bedroom. Kurt desperately wanted to know who Carole found to officiate his wedding on such short notice. Carole knew better than to answer that question. *If I tell him it's Cooper he'll probably start crying. We don't need that right now.*

Kurt wrenched the door open and stared anxiously at his stepmother. She was a lovely sight in flowing, tan mother of the groom dress. "Please tell me."

"No, Kurt. I don't have time. We have less than two hours until this wedding takes place and I still need to finish my makeup."

The groom scoffed. "You don't need makeup. Now tell me."

Carole walked off without a word. *I do not have time for this.*

OoOoO

Half an hour after Carole's call to Cooper, Burt's truck pulled into the parking lot that sat catty-corner to the park. The lot was filled with cars; some with in-state plates and others without. Kurt's heart sped up as he scanned the parking lot. *Looks like everyone made it. Oh shit...everyone made it. That means if I fall I will be falling in front of a hundred plus people. Shit.*

"You ready for this kid?" Kurt looked up to see his father staring at him from the front seat. The man's face softened when their eyes met. "Because, if you're not, we can get out of here. I've heard Florida is lovely this time of year. We could go hide at the beach for a while."

Unexpected tears welled in Kurt's eyes as his father spoke. "No thanks, Dad. I think Blaine would be disappointed if I didn't show up."

"I'm going to go find Blaine. I'll see you guys out there." Carole interrupted. She had no business with Blaine at that particular moment, but it seemed that Burt had business with Kurt. Private business that did not require her presence.

Father and son nodded in unison as the woman stepped from the vehicle. When she was out of sight, Burt insisted that his son take her seat. Kurt wasted no time climbing from the back seat to the front. "I'm just messing with you, kiddo." Kurt smiled at the name. He hadn't been called it in years. "I know you want this and I want this for you. Blaine is a great man and you guys have built a great family."

"We're trying." Kurt advised. "We are doing our best and....I'm ready for this. I don't know why but it feels like I've been waiting for this moment forever; not the wedding but....marrying Blaine. We had this...reprieve when we first met and....I don't know. I just feel like I've been waiting to marry him my entire life."

"You have been. Fate works like that. After you mom died, I thought I'd never marry again. I wasn't ready to entertain the idea of seriously dating someone for quite a while. It just so happened that I met Carole when my mind was finally ready to accept the fact that I was ready to meet someone. I know your situation with Blaine is different but the way Fate worked for you is not. You met someone when you were ready to meet someone, even if you didn't believe you were ready. You and Blaine were supposed to be together; I believe that with all my heart. I also believe that Blaine was always supposed to be Keenan's father. It was written in the stars somewhere....or the clouds....or whatever the hell that saying is."

A loud snuffle interrupted Burt's thought. In the passenger seat, his son was doing all he could to hold back his tears. Kurt was failing miserably. "Hey, come on, kid. Don't do that. Don't start crying."

"I can't help it, Dad." Kurt sobbed. "I haven't been able to help it all day. I don't know if it's because I'm overly excited or if it is because I have this horrible feeling about today. My emotions are everywhere."

Burt patted his son on the back. "It's neither of those things. You're like this because you are finally reaching the Promise Land. You are finally getting your Prince Charming and you know he's waiting for you, and only you. That kind of realization will do stuff to you." Burt pulled a packet of tissues out of his pocket and handed it to his son. "Keep those in your pocket. You'll probably need it during the wedding."

Kurt chuckled through his tears as he accepted the packet. "Thanks Dad. You're amazing and I love you."

"Love you too kid. Now let's go get married."

OoOoO

Kurt cried three more times that day. He cried when he saw his girls.

"Oh my God. You girls look amazing." He sobbed into Quinn's shoulder. The blonde patted his back in an attempt to sooth him. *He's seen these dresses before. Why is he so emotional about them now?*

He cried yet again when his son found him a while later. "Look at your little suit! And your haircut! You look perfect son! You...I..." Kurt scooped his son and stared at him through tear glazed eyes.

"Don't cry, Daddy. I look perfect every day!" Kurt chuckled before planting a giant kiss on his son's cheek; one that Keenan chose to wipe away.

The last time Kurt cried that day was when he met Blaine at the altar. The decision was made that neither of them would walk the aisle. Instead, the two sides of their wedding party filed in from their respective sides and met in the middle. The men handed off bouquets to the ladies before taking their spots and the ladies offered smiles or kisses in return.

Quinn received her bouquet from Finn. They took the steps closest to where the grooms would stand.

Whitley received her bouquet from Hunter. After a brief kiss, they took the steps just below the ex-husband and wife.

Santana and David exchanged pleasantries before taking the next steps. Brittany and Wes did as well. Finally, Mikayla –Beth claimed she was too old to play flower girl- and Keenan took their places. Much to everyone's dismay, Keenan tossed the bouquet to Mikayla, hitting her in the face. In exchange, the little girl wacked him back with them. Once the two were settled, they stood in front of Quinn and Finn.

Blaine and Kurt were the last to join the affair. They met in the middle and Blaine immediately took Kurt's hand. With his other hand, Blaine reached for Keenan. *I promised after all.* Kurt's tears started the moment his son's fingers laced with his fiancé's.

"What's wrong?" Blaine whispered. He was taken aback by Kurt's sudden burst of emotion. The brunette shook his head and used the tissues his father provided him with to wipe away his tears.

"Nothing, I've been crying all day. From the moment the Mr. Thompson called to cancel-"

"What?" Blaine's breathing sped up. "He cancelled? How? Why?"

Again, Kurt shook his head. "Don't worry, Carole said she found a replacement."

"Who?" Kurt shrugged. He had no idea.

"Dearly....." The two men gasped as Cooper took his official spot at the top of the gazebo steps, "*departed*....we are gathered here to join this man," Cooper motioned to his brother, "and this prettier man in *homely* matrimony."

OoOoO

Despite many mishaps, the wedding went off without a hitch. Cooper stumbled and bumbled his way through his duties but, in the end, Kurt and Blaine were still joined as spouses. Neither could have imagined the way that single fact would affect them. They were husbands, spouses. They were bound together for all eternity. It was perfect.

Kurt held his son close, nuzzling his face into the sleeping child's hair. Early in the evening, Keenan began to tire. He asked his father to hold him and Kurt obliged. That was how the young father ended up with a child wrapped around his body like a monkey. Keenan's legs were wrapped around his waist and the boy's lifeless arms were hung around his shoulders. His current situation did not stop Kurt from dancing with his husband. Ever the problem solver, Blaine grabbed his husband by the hips and pulled both the child and his father close. Together, they danced.

"Today was perfect." Kurt commented after planting yet another kiss in their sleeping son's hair.

Blaine smiled. "Today was perfect. And tomorrow will be perfect as well. Every day that I get to spend with you two will be perfect."

"How do you know that Frank?"

"I just do, Sammy. I just do."

The two danced with Keenan until Burt came to take him away. The little boy was set to enjoy a three day, two night stay at Casa De Hudmel while the couple enjoyed a few short nights in New York. It would be

their first trip to the city together. Neither could wait and, with guests saying their goodbyes, they would not have to.

Epilogue

"Oh, God. *Fuck!* Harder, Blaine!" Years together taught Blaine to listen when his husband made a request. The veterinarian snapped his hips forward, burying his cock deep inside his husband. "Just like that!" Kurt panted beneath him.

Blaine continued to fuck hard and fast into his husband until they were a spent heap of damp sheets and bodily secretions. "That was the best sex ever!" Blaine hummed in agreement. *I certainly think so.* The doctor lay boneless for a moment, allowing his eyes follow his husband into their newly remodeled bathroom. It was a project of Kurt's that took nearly a year to complete.

When Kurt returned to the room, he wiped them both clean. "You didn't grab clean sheets." The younger man commented absently, pointing to the soiled ones that adorned their bed. Blaine pouted. He did not want to get out of bed. Especially not for new sheets.

"We'll sleep on top of the comforter. You won't even be able to tell."

Kurt scoffed. "Yeah right. We're not in our twenties anymore. I can't just sleep on top of the comforter. This room is drafty and I need to be covered. That means you need to get new sheets."

"We're not in our twenties anymore." Blaine mocked as he rolled from the bed. "That's right, we're not. One of us will be joining all of his friends over the hill tomorrow. I forgot."

A scowl painted itself on Kurt's face. He spent the entire month prior trying to forget and Blaine felt it was necessary to throw the fact in his face. "I will not be joining any of you. I will be thirty-nine and one year. I will not be forty." He quipped.

Blaine chuckled as he left the room. "That's what we all said, Kurt. That's what we all said!"

OoOoO

Throughout the years, Kurt Hummel-Anderson built a life for himself and his family in Lima, Ohio. The thought alone still blew the man's mind. When Kurt was a teenager, he imaged leaving Lima and never returning. *It's funny how life works.*

Shortly after Kurt's wedding, he took a job as a sales associate in a local boutique. He worked there throughout college and thereafter. Kurt made a name for himself at the boutique. He rose through the ranks and eventually took over the tiny store. Kurt was doing what he loved, but he was not happy. He wanted his own store. He wanted to design clothes as he originally intended. He could not do that at the boutique.

On the eve of Kurt's thirtieth birthday, he made a decision.

"I want to start my own business."

He made the announcement late one evening. The children were in bed for the evening and he was sat with Blaine in the living room. A movie played unwatched in the background as the couple shared lazy kisses on the couch.

Blaine pulled back and searched his husband's face for sincerity. "Really? Now? We have so much going on right now."

Kurt nodded excitedly. "Yes! I have thought so much about this. I already have two employees in mind. Santana is a top bitch business shark, so she can handle my books, and Whitley has like....this following. She could do my advertising. I know they'd help me with this. I....I love my job but I'm not happy. I want to start my own store with my own clothes. Please say you support me. Please."

Regardless of what was going on their lives, Blaine could not resist Kurt's baby blues. His hesitation faltered instantly. "Of course I support you. I am, however, concerned that you will wear yourself thin."

"I won't!" Kurt insisted. "I promise I won't. I have to do this."

*"Then I'm on board. One hundred percent." Kurt bit back a squeal. **I don't want to wake the kids.** "Now can we have sex? Being a loving, supporting husband does things to me." Kurt nodded eagerly. **We are definitely having sex.***

OoOoO

Kurt woke late on the morning of his birthday. He was in no hurry to leave his bed. *If I get up then that means that I accept my fate. I don't. And I don't have any coffee. I have no reason to leave this bed.* Kurt knew his husband was running errands and that he would not be back for a while.

A while turned into three hours. Kurt was hiding under his comforter, willing sleep to come again, when he heard the front door open. The sound was followed by a parade of voices. Kurt knew each and every one. Cooper. April. Julia. Kurt sighed when his mother in law came to mind. Jay passed just after Thanksgiving a few years prior and the woman was never herself again. She put on her brave face when she was surrounded by family but Kurt knew she still missed her dearly departed husband. For months, Cooper and Blaine fought over who Julia would live with. Her broken heart and bad hip made it impossible for her to live alone. Cooper eventually won and Julia was moved to California. Julia was one of the few people that Kurt was genuinely excited to see that day.

Blaine's voice rang out above the others. "...no, I think he's still up stairs sleeping. Honey, take this to your father." A hundred watt smile crossed Kurt's face. He knew what was headed up the stairs. Coffee and-

"Hey, Daddy!" Abigail squealed excitedly as she tore into the room. The eleven year old plopped down onto the bed next to her father and shoved a giant cup of coffee into his hands. "Happy birthday."

"Thank you, sweetie. How was California?" Kurt listened intently as his daughter shared the tale of her California adventure. Abigail always had great stories to tell when she returned from her uncle's house. Cooper's antics and the little girl's exceptional story telling abilities always made Kurt feel like he could envision whatever she was explaining. *She got that from me. I don't care if she is Blaine's biologically.*

Abigail was a carbon copy of her father. She was compact with a head full of flowing curls and honey eyes that matched her father's and brother's. The girl's physical appearance was where the similarities ended. Abigail loved fashion, she had a quick wit, and a sharp tongue. She was Kurt's daughter and everyone knew it.

"That's great, honey. I'm so happy that you had a great time. I'm also happy that Uncle Cooper did not actually sell you while you all were in Mexico." Kurt commented at the conclusion of her story.

Abigail nodded. "I know. Aunt April stopped him. The second we crossed the border, he started going on and on about having a kid for sale. Aunt April punched him though and he stopped." *Typical Cooper.* The man was midway through his fifties and he still insisted on acting like a child.

Father and daughter lay in bed while Kurt finished his coffee. He sipped it slowly to prolong the inevitable. Eventually, he would have to leave the safety of his room and venture into the outside world; the world of forty year olds. "Daddy, why are you still in bed. It's almost noon."

Kurt groaned. He placed the drained cup on his nightstand and rolled towards his daughter. She was a sight to see in her Lilly Pulitzer dress. "Because! If I stay in bed long enough, today will pass and I won't have to deal with it."

"But it's your birthday."

"My *fortieth* birthday. I never imagined I would get this old." Kurt whined. The man threw his arms over his face to block out the sun that was streaming in the bedroom window.

Abigail raised a skeptical eyebrow. "So you thought you were going to die before you turned forty? I don't like that idea at all."

Kurt shook his head. "No. I just assumed I would quit aging at thirty-nine."

"It doesn't work that way, Daddy." Abigail chuckled. The little girl hopped off the bed and held out a hand to her father. "You have to get up sometime today. It might as well be now."

Begrudgingly, Kurt took her tiny hand. "I'll make sure to say that to you when you turn forty, smarty pants." Together, the two exited the room.

OoOoO

Julia chuckled at the put out expression that was painted across her son-in-law's face. She remembered the expression well. On her fortieth birthday, Julia booked herself a flight out of the country and did not look back. Later, she explained to her husband and children that she was looking for a time zone that was at least a day behind. She was chasing yesterday.

"It's okay to be forty, Kurt. We've all been there." She motioned to the group of friends and family that made their way to Kurt and Blaine's tiny, green house to celebrate. Whitley and Santana nodded behind the woman. Their fortieth birthdays were spent having sex with their significant others –Hunter and Brittany stuck around for the long haul- and drinking their feelings away.

"I remember on my fortieth birthday...." Burt's voice boomed throughout the room, earning the attention of each guest. "When I turned forty....Hmmm." Kurt's father stopped and attempted to retrace his thought pattern. Kurt's fragile heart went out for his father. The closer he got to his seventieth birthday, the less he remembered. From time to time, he would stop midsentence because he could not remember what he was going to say.

Quinn patted Burt on the back. As he and Carole aged, Quinn took over their care. She and her husband, Trent, spoke on the topic many times before the decision was made. "Your fortieth birthday was lovely, Burt. We ate cake and Beth sang you a song. She was so little then."

Burt smiled up at the blonde. "Thank you."

"Always."

"I don't even remember that." Beth added from the back of the room. Every day Kurt was amazed by Beth. She was no longer the gangly child that she used to be. *Now she's a gangly adult....just like her father.* Beth was like her father in many ways. The girl played drums in a band and worked full time at Burt's old garage. It was sold years to a young man with dreams of owning his own shop. Burt liked the young man because he reminded Burt of himself at a young age. The young man liked Beth because she was pretty. Years later, Beth and Terrence were engaged to be married. They ran the shop together. "It was so long ago."

Terrance chuckled next to his fiancé. "There have to be pictures somewhere. Please tell me there are pictures, Quinn." Kurt watched as the blonde shrugged her shoulders.

"Who knows?"

"I might have them." As usual, Finn's mouth was full of food as he spoke. Finn was an anomaly when it came to adulthood. The things that most people left in their childhood, Finn took with him on his journey through life. In a way, Finn was lucky. He was able to be 'that' kid when he was an adult. *I'm so jealous.*

Many people in Lima were jealous of Finn. He owned his own gym. His wife, Rachel, won a local Tony. His eldest daughter was an accomplished musician and mechanic, and his youngest was Harvard bound. Finn Hudson had an envy worthy life. Kurt was proud of him for the life he built.

"See, Caroline!" Rachel squawked. "There are pictures of Beth singing. That could have been you. That could still be you. McKinley has a glee club and they are far more accepted now than they were back in my day. You could still be a singer. You could be on Broadway." Kurt watched as Rachel pushed a stray piece of hair behind her daughter's ear. There was a storm brewing. There was always a storm when Rachel and her daughter had this conversation.

"I don't like to sing, Mom!" Caroline hissed. "Gosh! Besides, I don't have time! Between The debate team and honor society I am tapped out with extracurriculars."

"And she's a shoe in for Harvard, Rachel." Kurt added. Kurt loved music but he loved intellect far more. Caroline was brilliant and he hated when Rachel tried to snub her brilliance in the name of music. Over the years, the pair often fought over the topic. Rachel insisted that, as the daughter of Rachel Berry, it was expected that Caroline pursue singing. Kurt, on the other hand, believed that Caroline was a rare breed. She was smart, beautiful, and strong willed. She was what Kurt hoped his own daughter would grow to be. "She's also tone deaf!"

Caroline smiled at her uncle. He spoke the truth. The teenager could not carry a tune in a bucket, let alone with her voice. Her mother refused to accept it but, facts were facts. It's not a theory. *It is a proven fact.*

"Oh...go mind your business, Kurt. Call your son or something." Kurt rolled his eyes as he hoisted himself from his seat. *That's actually a pretty good idea.* No birthday would be complete without Keenan and, as of yet, the boy hadn't contacted him. A few months ago, while Keenan was visiting from college, the young man advised his father that a special birthday trip was not in his cards.

"I can't, Dad. I'm so sorry. We have three people on vacation this month and I cannot pack up and go home in the middle of them. I have responsibilities now."

Kurt was disappointed to say the least. "My birthday is the same day every year, son. Besides, you work at a coffee shop. You can't call out for a few days?" Kurt knew he was pushing his luck but his birthday would not be the same without his little boy; his grown little boy.

*Keenan chuckled. "Dad! You know I can't. That wouldn't be responsible. Besides, that's how I get my students. They let me advertise guitar lessons for free at the shop." A fond smile crossed Kurt's face. **Blaine taught him how to play guitar.***

"Stitch is really proud of you for teaching others how to play. It makes him really happy."

"Speaking of...where is he? I need some advice about a song I'm working

"He's at the college. He is teaching a class there this semester."

Disappointment wrote itself across Keenan's face.. "This sucks. I need his help."

"I know."

"And I'm sorry about your birthday."

Kurt shrugged. "Yeah....me too."

OoOoO

Blaine watched as the sun began its slow descent into the horizon that evening. Kurt's birthday celebration went off mostly without a hitch. It was only when Rachel brought up Keenan's absence that Kurt's mood turned sour. Blaine chose that moment to sneak away. He tip toed out the front door and stood silently on the porch. He was waiting for a response to his text.

How close are you? Your father is moping. –Stitch

He received a reply moments later.

Pulling into town. We'll be there in half an hour. Keep my dad smiling until then. –Keenan

We? –Stitch

Crickets! –Keenan

Blaine stared at his phone, intrigue filling his mind. We? Keenan never brought anyone home with him. Keenan drove from New York a few times a year and it was always alone. Whenever Blaine, Kurt, and Abigail visited the boy in the Big Apple, the young man never mentioned anyone worth bringing home. He had friends, tons of them, but Keenan was never vocal about one in particular. He always mentioned them as a group. The fact that he had someone with him was surprising to Blaine.

After his initial shock wore off, Blaine rejoined the party. He sought his husband out, finding him deep in conversation with Carlton and Sebastian. "Where were you?" Kurt asked once their conversation was over and the newly married couple was heading for the kitchen in search of their hyperactive six year old.

Blaine responded by kissing his husband on the lips. Kurt shot him a skeptical look but did not comment. Instead, he laced his arm around his husband's waist and directed Blaine to the next group of people that was waiting to speak with them.

OoOoO

I'm outside. I want to sneak in. Create a diversion. -Keenan

You? What happened to WE? -Stitch

STITCH! COME ON! -Keenan

Blaine chuckled to himself as he pocketed his phone. He would create the diversion his son requested with the expectation that they would discuss the newfound 'we' in Keenan's life at some point during the boy's *-man, he's a man now-* stay.

"Can I have everyone follow me into the dining room? I think it is time we cut the cake." Blaine advised. One by one, the small group made their way to the dining room. Kurt was the last to enter. Blaine watched intently as he took his seat at the head of the table. "Alright, wait here. I'll be right back with the cake. Then we'll sing 'Happy Birthday'."

The group shouted and hollered, much to the dismay of some of the elderly party goers, excitedly. Blaine felt for them. When his birthday surprise for Kurt walked into the room the shouts and hollers would be far louder. *I hope they all turned their hearing aids off.*

The group quieted down for a few moments. It was the calm before the storm. "Alright, guys. Here's the cake." Everyone looked but no one saw Blaine. His voice was travelling from around the corner. They did, however, see the cake. It was a single layer of nothing but chocolate.....and forty *fucking* candles. *These assholes.*

Kurt spent so much time staring at the cake that he nearly missed the person carrying the cake. When he realized that it was not his husband, his breathe caught. "Keenan!" He eventually screeched, once his voice began to serve its purpose.

The room erupted as everyone took in the sight of Keenan. He was far taller than his fathers, six plus feet to be exact, and he was built like a football player. Kurt and Blaine decided that it was a trait he must have inherited from his biological mother. Height and stature aside, Keenan looked just as he had all those years ago. He had a head full of unruly, blonde hair and a smile that lit up rooms. "Hey, Dad. Happy birthday. Sorry we are so late."

"We?" The group asked in unison. Blaine shook his head from the doorway. While they were in the kitchen, Blaine told his son to wait to share his 'we' news. *That kid, he doesn't listen.*

Quinn jumped first. "Who is 'we'?"

Followed by Sebastian. "Is he hot? You took that cute little thing to prom. He had a nice a-attitude." He corrected when his little boy and husband shot him matching glares.

"What's his name?" Trent asked.

"What is he majoring in?" His Uncle David questioned. "I hope he's a lawyer. When you make it big, you're going to need a damn good lawyer. I'd love to help you but....my bitches keep me busy these days."

"Same." Wes added. *Bitches love me. They cannot help themselves. I think it is the grey hair.*

"Is he a musician? We could have a great time with that. We could go and play a set at Scandals while you guys are in town." Beth suggested. Keenan nodded approvingly. He liked that idea.

One by one, the questions went unanswered. It was not until Kurt spoke up that the group stopped questioning and started listening. "It's not a boy." Kurt advised, earning the attention of the entire room, including his son. "I know he took a boy to prom and the first person he ever kissed was a boy but Keenan is not dating a boy now."

"How do you know that?" Blaine asked.

"Because I'm his father and I know everything." Kurt replied.

Keenan smiled at his father from the far end of the table. To everyone in the room, he looked like a young Kurt and or Blaine. He always had a bit of both of them in him. The group watched as Keenan motioned at someone in the hallway. Moments later, a gasp rang out in the room and Kurt was proven correct. His son was not dating a boy. He was dating a lovely black girl with long, straight hair and hazel eyes that matched her boyfriend's. "This is Tasha and she is my girlfriend. Tasha, this is my crazy family."

Tasha waved at the group. "It's nice to meet you all. Even though you all thought I was a boy." The group chuckled before returning to the cake.

OoOoO

Hours later, after the happy couple had been passed around a few times, Keenan pulled his father into an empty hallway. "Seriously, how did you know I wasn't dating a boy? You know I don't believe in being labeled. I could have very well been dating a boy." The twenty year old insisted.

Kurt smirked. "I'm your father, Keenan. I know everything. I had a feeling that you were dating a girl."

In response, Keenan scoffed. "Yeah right. Now tell me the real reason."

He was caught. Kurt was successful when it came to lying. Whenever he believed that he was getting away with something, he wore a self-satisfied smirk on his face. Over the years, Keenan grew to recognize that smirk. "Because I am subscribed to your Facebook feed. I see everything. 'Girlfriend and I are spending the weekend in Canada.' 'Baby girl and I went to Boston.' 'Playing backup for my GF at Cameo this weekend'. I know everything, son. Everything."

Keenan stared at his father, he was shocked. "Are you serious? Then you knew I was coming? I posted this morning that we were on our way."

"Nope. I was too busy trying to turn back time this morning." Kurt responded triumphantly.

The conversation between father and son continued as they made their way out of the house. Their intentions were to sit on the front porch and catch up. The two spoke often but it was never often enough. Unfortunately, Blaine and Tasha were occupying their seats.

"What are all of you doing out here?" Aside from Blaine and Tasha, others were crowded on the porch; including Abigail, Burt, and Carole.

Abigail turned to her father. "I'm going home with Grandma and Grandpa. I'll see you in the morning. Oh...and Uncle Cooper and Aunt Aprill told me to tell you that they took Nana Julia back to the hotel. She was tired. Everyone else is still inside."

Kurt pulled his daughter into a tight hug. "Have fun tonight and make sure your grandfather gets to bed alright." *Make sure he doesn't wander out of the house.* Kurt added in his head. Abigail nodded. Her father may not have asked her to explicitly watch over her grandparents but she knew that he wanted her to.

"Can do."

Once the trio was out of sight, Kurt and Keenan joined their significant others. "And what are you guys doing out here?" Kurt directed the question at the duo.

"Blaine is telling me some embarrassing stories about Keenan." Tasha offered. She looked over her shoulder at her boyfriend –their son- before turning back to Kurt. "That one told me that he never did anything embarrassing. I think twerking to Beyonce can be a little embarrassing for a boy."

Keenan gasped. "Why did you tell her that, Stitch? Come freaking on! Babe," Kurt watched their son move around the chair his girlfriend sat so that they were facing one another, "I was young. I was ten and I believed that Beyonce was my fiancé. I loved her and the music she brought into my life."

Tasha chuckled at her boyfriend. "It's okay. I think that's cute."

"Oh...then you'll love hearing about the time he used markers to make his face up like a geisha and then went around telling everyone that he was Lady Gaga." Kurt supplied.

Blaine nodded. He had a story of his own to tell. "Or the time he found the special lotion." Kurt cackled loudly next to his husband. Years after the incident, they could finally laugh about it.

"He's laughing way too hard and Keenan looks way too nervous. I have to here this story."

Oh yes you do! Blaine thought to himself before beginning the story. "As a joke, one of our friends bought us what she deemed to be a 'lifetime supply' of KY. It was a wedding present from her to us." Keenan groaned. Of everything he did as a child, this was the most embarrassing story of all. His father ignored his plight in favor of appeasing his girlfriend. *I'm not your friend right now, Stitch.*

"It was a gag gift. Anyways, a few weeks after we returned from our honeymoon, we noticed that a bunch of it was missing. No one was at our house while we were away so we had no idea what happened to it. For a while, we blamed one another. I would make jokes about him missing me so much during the day and he would do the same. We actually thought that the other one was....ya know....that much." Despite his age and experience, Blaine still blushed at the thought.

"Then, entire tubes started to go missing." Kurt picked up where his husband left off. "There was no lube bandit running around and all of our friends denied it, so we looked to Keenan. He was eight and, we hated to believe it but kids were doing crazy things at that time. Puberty hits earlier and earlier every year and, thought that maybe it'd hit our baby. So, we decided to talk to him."

One look at Keenan and Blaine knew that the man was beyond embarrassed. The veterinarian felt no pity for him. *My parents did it to me. Kurt's parents did it to him. We will do this to Abigail.* "Eventually we worked up the nerve to talk to him about it. It was after his bath one night. We knocked on his door and he told us to come in. Blaine and I were shocked when we opened the door. Keenan was standing in the middle of the room, in nothing but a pair of underwear, rubbing stuff all over his body."

"Kurt screamed." Blaine continued the story, giving his husband a chance to actually drink a glass of the one hundred dollar bottle of wine that was purchased for the occasion. "He asked Keenan what the hell he was doing and Keenan replied-" Blaine looked at his son expectantly.

With a groan, Keenan finished the story. "I said 'Oh...I found the special lotion you guys keep in the drawer by your bed. It smells good so I've been using it after my bath.'" The trio burst into a fit of laughter, much to Keenan's dismay. "Ha ha ha. Laugh it up guys. I have plenty of stories about you two and I'm sure your parents will have stories about you when I meet them."

Tasha shrugged. "I am perfectly fine with my embarrassing moments. I'll tell you myself if you'd like."

"I would." Keenan replied.

The small foursome continued to talk on the porch. They moved on from the topic of Keenan's embarrassing childhood hijinks in favor of other topics. Slowly, the clock neared midnight and the party goers bid farewell to the birthday man – *I haven't been a boy since I had a little boy.* In the end, only Keenan, Tasha, Blaine, and Kurt were left.

"I think I'm going to turn in guys. My thirty- ninth and one year birthday is over and I am exhausted." Kurt advised. He stood from his chair, motioning for Blaine to do so as well. Nothing would make him happier than to end his birthday by cuddling with his husband.

Blaine stood quickly. He gathered the glasses that were once filled with wine and made his way to the door. "It was nice to meet you, Tasha. Night Keenan. We will see you in the morning. And I'll see you upstairs, baby." Blaine shot his husband an overly dramatized, seductive wink.

Keenan chuckled at Stitch's antics. *I swear he still thinks he is thirty.* "Night Stitch."

"Goodnight Mr. Blaine." Tasha responded. Kurt bid the couple a good evening and began to chase his husband into the house. "Goodnight, Mr. Kurt."

"Night, Dad. Love you."

"Love you too!" Kurt shouted as he rushed into the house. The young couple chuckled. Kurt and Blaine were adorable.

OoOoO

When the sun rose the next morning, Keenan and Tasha were still seated on the front porch. Rather than sleeping, they spent the entire night talking to one another. It was their favorite thing to do together. They discussed Tasha's strict Baptist upbringing and they discussed Nathan. Keenan vaguely remembered him.

"Can I ask you a question, Keenan?" Tasha asked just as the sun began to peek over a large grouping of trees. Keenan nodded to her. *She can ask me anything.* Though their relationship was still new –*we have only been together for about a month*– Keenan felt something for Tasha. It was more than he felt for anyone he dated in his past. "Why do you call Blaine Stitch?"

Keenan's head hit the back of his chair with a thud. He had not expected that question. Not that I am opposed to answering it. "Ummm...it's a long story." The young man replied. It was a special story.

"I have time." Tasha confirmed. Keenan watched as his girlfriend made herself comfortable in her wooden patio chair. Keenan could not help but smile. Tasha was beautiful in every sense of the word.

"Once upon a time..." Keenan began, earning a chuckle from his girlfriend, "there was a little angry boy that was left with his father's new boyfriend. This little boy was still dealing with the loss of the only other father he knew. The little boy was very mean to his father's new boyfriend. While they were watching a movie, 'Lilo and Stitch' if I remember correctly, the little boy made an offhand comment about the new boyfriend reminding him of the alien from the movie. He asked the new boyfriend if he could that could be his new name. The new boyfriend obliged. Eventually the little boy, his father, and the new boyfriend grew closer and became a family. The name stuck around....just like the new boyfriend."

A dreamy sigh left Tasha's lips. "That's so sweet, Keenan. Your family is so adorable."

"Not as adorable as you are." Keenan stood from his seat and closed the distance between them. He pressed his lips firmly to his girlfriends. His body relaxed as she kissed him back. *She thinks my family is adorable. Maybe that means she will stick around. I would like that.*

OoOoO

Mornings were hectic at the Hummel-Anderson house. Kurt and Blaine could be found rushing past one another as they hurried to get ready for work. The morning after Kurt's birthday started as many others had. The two men raced about the house gathering work necessities. They shouted reminders at one another as they went.

"I am interviewing a new cashier today. I may be late getting home."

"I am leaving work early to help Marley with fundraising for the Humane Society. I may be home early."

"Abs is staying with my parents until tomorrow night. We are all expected for Friday night dinner and then we will bring her home."

"We should see if Coop, April, and my mom want to join us since it will be their last night in town."

The two men met near the front door. They exchanged 'I love you's and began to make their way outside. Both stopped dead in their tracks when they noticed the scene that was taking place just outside their front window. The kiss was tame but both men could see the affection rolling off the young couple and wafting into the air. Subconsciously, Kurt and Blaine closed the distance between them. Blaine stepped closer to his husband and wrapped his arms around the man's waist. He pulled the man close. They were something about young love that always pulled the two together like a magnet to its magnet.

"It looks like our son has finally found the Frank to his Sammy." Kurt commented. He nuzzled his nose into his husband's cheek.

Blaine hummed. "It does look that way. Tasha is wonderful. If they stay together, Keenan will be the second luckiest man on Earth."

"Who is the first?" Kurt asked curiously.

Blaine smiled up at him. Their height difference was the butt of many jokes. It never bothered them. "I am of course." Before Kurt could respond, Blaine crashed their lips together. He nipped and sucked at his husband's lips until they were red and swollen. When they broke apart, the men stared lovingly at one another.

The two held one another for a moment without speaking. It was Kurt that broke the silence. "Can I be frank about something with you?"

Blaine grinned. "That depends. Can I be Sammy?"

Queue Kurt Hummel patented eye roll. "I need you to know that can I love you...*Sammy*. I always have and I always will."

"I love you too, Frank. I love you too."

OoOoO

Finished. Hope you all enjoyed. For anyone reading To The Moon and Back, I hope to update within the next week. Thank you all for your support. It means the world to me that y'all take time out of your schedules to read these little pieces of fiction. A million thanks to Windsor. For those who don't know, she was Whitley in this AU.

Until next time...

