<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Teen And Up Audiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archive Warning:</td>
<td>No Archive Warnings Apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category:</td>
<td>M/M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fandom:</td>
<td>Hamilton - Miranda</td>
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<td>Relationship:</td>
<td>Alexander Hamilton/Thomas Jefferson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stats:</td>
<td>Published: 2017-10-31 Updated: 2019-04-09 Chapters: 60/? Words: 204530</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**the mess we're in**

by allonsy_gabriel, Sanna_Black_Slytherin

**Summary**

A news article pushes Secretary Thomas Jefferson out of the closet and right into the arms of one Secretary Alexander Hamilton, the human embodiment of a headache. What follows would be a romantic comedy, if it weren’t for the fact that the main characters are Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton.

Act I (.5) now complete!

**Notes**
This is the fluffy fic inspired by a desperate need for something non-angsty because *stay alive* happened. And then it kind of Evolved.

Enjoy!

See the end of the work for more notes

- Inspired by *stay alive* by Sanna_Black_Slytherin
In which Thomas Jefferson regrets ever getting out of bed but also not getting out of bed soon enough, reporters ask the hard questions, and elevators are Public Enemy Number One.

Thomas was awoken by an incessant beeping coming from his phone. Internally cursing the person who had the gall to text him at—he threw a quick look at the clock—seventeen past four in the morning, he fumbled for his phone blindly. He groaned when he saw the sender, because it just figured that only Hamilton would be spamming him with texts at the crack of stupid. The man clearly had no sense of time. Thomas genuinely believed that Hamilton wasn’t a hundred percent human—he seemed to be above some fairly basic human necessities such as sleep and food. James swore up and down that he had once witnessed Hamilton working for five days without a break, driven by nothing but coffee and sheer willpower.

With another curse into the empty air, just because he could, Thomas turned on his side, finally picking up his phone. He had been meaning to buy a longer phone charger that actually allowed him to use his phone while lying on his back, but he never seemed to get around to it. He winced as his back protested the uncomfortable position he was in, shifting into something that wouldn’t haunt his back for the next week.

Thomas blinked as the light from the screen was glaring into his eyes. He reduced the screen’s brightness, before thumbing open the conversation with Hamilton, and scrolling down to the most recent messages. His eyebrows rose as he skimmed through them. They were either angry ravings of a desperate lunatic, or—

Actually, Thomas didn’t know what else they could be.

From: caffeine fiend

Jefferson, you need to get here asap

Answer your goddamn phone dammit

Your going to regret it if you don’t

*you’re

I’m not being an asshole just get to the White House asap

Get here before the press does

Thomas groaned. What hare-brained scheme has Hamilton cooked up this time?

‘Sorry if that doesn’t convince me.’ Thomas replied, because unlike some people, Thomas knew the meaning of the word ‘concise’. He sent the message, hoping that it would be the end of it. His stomach turned as his brain began to conjure scenarios of what on Earth Hamilton could have done to warrant this. He already dreaded coming into work later.

Thomas sighed, collapsing back onto his back, his phone still clutched in his outstretched arm. How
he would have loved to just be able to fire Hamilton. Unfortunately, he didn’t have that kind of power. Besides, even though he hated everything that Hamilton stood for, he had to admit that the man himself was insanely intelligent and had single-handedly revived the American economy from the utter clusterfuck that had been the Jackson Administration.

Though Thomas loathed to admit it, Hamilton’s arrogance wasn’t unfounded. He wasn’t called Washington’s right-hand man for nothing.

Deciding that he wasn’t going to get more sleep either way, Thomas sat up to check his missed calls. Twelve from Hamilton—Jesus Christ on a stick, the man had no self-restraint, and it showed—and two from the president.

Shit.

Thomas clicked on Washington’s contact. His finger hovered over the call button. Did he really want to know what had happened? Knowing Hamilton, it was probably yet another story from the Washington Herald about how Thomas was ‘a man with no scruples’ (as opposed to Burr, whom Hamilton had called ‘unprincipled, bankrupt, and despicable’, something which, oddly, seemed to have ruffled Burr’s supposedly unruffle feathers, or John Adams, whose entire life, according to Hamilton, has been ‘one continued insult to good manners and to decency’, in response to which Adams had accused Hamilton of a ‘superabundance of secretions which he could not find whores enough to draw off’; it didn’t quite have the effect on the immigrant that Adams had hoped for—Thomas knew for a fact that Hamilton had hung the article on the wall behind his desk like some sort of prize).

If Hamilton was messaging him at four in the morning just to tell him that he had publicly insulted him again—well, Thomas wouldn’t be responsible for his actions. He could already imagine the headlines: BREAKING NEWS: STATE SECRETARY THROTTLES TREASURY SECRETARY AND THROWS BODY INTO POTOMAC!”. Oh, well. A good Secretary of the Treasury was hard to come by, but Thomas was confident that Washington would be able to find a replacement.

Gathering his courage, Thomas clicked on Washington’s phone number. He unplugged his phone from the charger—his back certainly wouldn’t thank him if he had tried to bend down to be within the reach of the charger—and lifted the phone to his ear.

The call rang twice before Washington answered. “Sir,” Thomas began politely, “I sincerely hope that there’s an emergency, otherwise you will find yourself one Secretary of the Treasury short.” Washington didn’t react to Thomas’ joke, which in itself set off warning bells in Thomas’ head. “Sir?” Thomas tried again, his voice uncertain.

Washington cleared his throat. “You would do well to come in, Secretary Jefferson,” he said formally. “Now would be a good time.”

“Sir—” Thomas started.

“That is not a request, Secretary Jefferson,” Washington said sharply.

Thomas swallowed involuntarily. It wasn’t that he was intimidated by Washington—although the man was somewhat unnerving, Thomas had ceased to be cowed by his presence a long time ago—but something in his voice gave Thomas pause.

“Understood, sir,” he said, trying not to feel like he was capitulating.

Washington paused awkwardly. Thomas waited to see whether he would explain what the hell was
happening that apparently required Thomas’ presence in the middle of the goddamn night, but all Washington said was, “Good. Good,” before disconnecting the call.

Thomas stared at the screen long after it had gone dark. He exhaled loudly before standing up and heading for the shower.

*What have you done this time, Hamilton?*

Despite his best efforts, Thomas didn’t make it to the White House before the first horde of reporters (or ‘blood-thirsty vultures’, as James liked to call them in private). No less than two security guards gave him pitying looks as he stepped through the metal detector. Thomas smothered the feeling that threatened to rise in his throat. He considered asking them what the hell they thought they knew, but upon glancing at the clock, he realized that he was already running late. He didn’t have the time to play cat-and-mouse with a pair of security guards.

Thomas steeled himself as he stepped into the empty elevator. The ride was quiet. He busied himself with dusting off the imaginary specks of dust from his suit. When the door pinged, indicating that he had arrived, he had almost been able to calm his nerves. Whatever had happened, it wouldn’t affect him. If Hamilton had tried to attack him publicly, the only one who would look like a fool would be Hamilton himself. Thomas was *fine*.

The door opened. For a brief moment, Thomas saw nothing save the flashes of a camera going off and off and off. He raised his hand to shield his eyes from the bright light, even as he felt his legs take an involuntary step backwards. His grip on his laptop bag softened, and it clattered to the floor with a soft rattle.

Meanwhile, the voices were assaulting him with one question after another, merging together into one continuous stream of words until Thomas couldn’t tell where one question ended and another began.

“Secretary Jefferson, are the rumours true?”

“Sir, is it true that you’re gay?”

“Mr Jefferson, care to comment on—“

“What’s your stance on the GOP’s LGBT policy, given the recent revelations?”

The voices kept hammering on, demanding an answer that Thomas couldn’t give them if he wanted to.

How had they even found out? *Nobody* had known. Thomas had been careful—he had never dated a man, never gone out with anyone, never gotten so smashed that the alcohol would impair his self-control. He had never once made a misstep. He did everything *just right*.

And yet.

He gritted his teeth. How come Hamilton, a man who had made every mistake imaginable and then some that had seemed impossible until he made them, was fine, was impervious, while Thomas just collapsed into this *useless mess* every time something even remotely personal came up? It wasn’t even that it wasn’t fair, though that was certainly part of it—it just *didn’t make sense*. Statistically, it was impossible for Hamilton to skate his way through life on nothing but unadulterated luck and determination, and yet there he was, youngest Secretary of the Treasury in history.
Suddenly, he felt someone wrap their hand around his wrist. He couldn’t hold back the relieved sigh that escaped him.

“Come on,” hissed an all-too-familiar voice. Thomas’ stomach did a somersault. On one hand, he hated that Hamilton had seen him in such a vulnerable state, but on the other, he would give anything to get away from the reporters and their questions and their flashing cameras and oh shit.

“Move back!” he heard Hamilton shout at the reporters. “Can’t you tell that he’s having a panic attack? Give him space, I said!”

Way to go, Hamilton, Thomas thought bitterly. Announce to the world at large that Thomas Jefferson can’t even get out of an elevator without completely losing it. Then again, that had always been what he wanted, wasn’t it?

The only reason Thomas wasn’t suspecting Hamilton of being behind this was because the man was already in a position of more power than Thomas. Again, it didn’t make any sense. What would he hope to gain from it? Thomas was hardly the only Republican opposing his dumb bill—if anything, James was its main critic, at least in the public’s eye—and removing him wouldn’t swing things in the Democrats’ favour.

However he looked at the situation, Thomas could not see what Hamilton would have to gain from getting Thomas fired—because fired was what he would be, of that Thomas had no doubt. The administration couldn’t afford this kind of scandal, not right now. At least Washington was polite enough to do it face-to-face, instead of over the phone. Jackson wouldn’t have extended him the same courtesy. It was yet another reason why Thomas had accepted a job offer from a Democratic president, despite being as against federal government as they came. Washington was a genuinely good person, if a little misguided and who had—Thomas chanced opening his left eye to get a glimpse of Hamilton—regrettable taste in advisors.

The crowd of reporters parted before Hamilton like the Red Sea before Moses. There was an apprehensive mood in the air as Hamilton led Thomas through the room, Thomas’ eyes still closed. Some of the reporters—the smart, experienced ones—flinched back. They feared Hamilton, Thomas realized, try as they might to hide it, and Hamilton knew it. His acerbic pen and biting words had on more than occasion, given five minutes and a computer, torn down a lifetime’s worth of journalism.

Hamilton didn’t stop until they were several corridors away from the public areas. “You can open your eyes now, Jefferson,” he deadpanned. “They’re gone.”

Thomas opened his eyes, coming face to face with dark-brown eyes that belied a cleverness Thomas had come to respect, if not like. He looked away, swallowing again. He felt rather than saw Hamilton’s sharp eyes follow his Adam’s apple with something akin to calculation.

“Here.” Hamilton pressed something into Thomas’ hands.

Looking down, Thomas recognized the briefcase that he had dropped in the elevator. His throat swelled up with an emotion he dared not name, constricting his intake of breath. “Thank you,” he finally managed.

Hamilton nodded curtly, as if dismissing Thomas’ words. “It was nothing. Don’t worry about it. Now, Washington wants to see you,” he continued, for once the picture of conciseness. It just figured, didn’t it, that the one time Thomas wished for him to elaborate, Hamilton would choose to keep silent.

Thomas bit his lip, fighting the urge to curl up into a corner and cry. This day had gone to shit
already, and it wasn’t even seven in the morning. Thomas didn’t want to stick around to see how it would develop. Unfortunately, it didn’t seem like he had any choice in the matter. He nodded. “Lead the way.”

Hamilton snorted. “What does it look like I’m doing?” he retorted. Thomas stifled a biting response. Hamilton sighed as he took up the lead again. “I told you to get in early,” he began. “You could have avoided it altogether.”

“Avoided what? The reporters?” Thomas laughed hollowly. “If you think they can be avoided, you clearly don’t understand our beloved capital,” he said dryly.

“May I remind you, Mr Ambassador To France, that I’ve been here for longer than you have?” Hamilton replied, oddly calm, his words lacking their usual heat—like he was going through the movements without really meaning them.

Thomas closed his eyes. “You can let go of me now,” he said quietly. One part of him wished that Hamilton would let him go—he wasn’t a child, and the last thing he needed was for his political nemesis to get even more blackmail on him than he already had—but another part needed the physical contact that Hamilton’s hand provided to ground him.

Thomas briefly wished that he had James by his side. James would have known what to do, how to turn this whole thing around. Then again, Thomas realized with an abruptness that cut into him like a knife, James might not feel inclined to help him this time—might not want to talk to him anymore. It felt like someone had poured cold water all over him.

Hamilton glanced down at where he was still holding Thomas’ hand in surprise, like he had forgotten that he was even doing it. He tightened his grip. “No,” he said resolutely.

Thomas quirked an eyebrow. “No?” he echoed. “Hamilton, let go of my hand.”

“No,” Hamilton repeated loudly. “I remember you breaking down in the elevator. Don’t tell me that was anything but an anxiety attack, Jefferson. I know one when I see one.”

Thomas scoffed. “I don’t need your pity,” he snarled.

In response, Hamilton dug his fingernails into Thomas’ skin, the nails sharp enough to leave marks. Thomas hissed. “Stop it, you idiot!”

The pain stopped.

“Well?” Hamilton finally asked, voice curiously empty of emotions. No, Thomas corrected himself, it wasn’t empty; it contained too many emotions for Thomas to be able to distinguish any particular one.

“‘Well’ what?” Thomas snapped.

“Do you still want me to let go of your hand?” Hamilton asked pointedly.

‘Yes, you psychopath,’ Thomas was on the verge of saying, but didn’t, because Hamilton had a point—he needed someone to help him right now, and, as much as he hated it, there was no one available but Hamilton. He sighed. In for a penny, in for a pound. “Social anxiety,” he finally admitted in lieu of an answer. “Thank you for grounding me.”

Hamilton shrugged. He didn’t deign Thomas’ words with a reply.
They walked in a comfortable silence for a moment—probably for the first time in their acquaintance, actually. Thomas’ mind was echoing with unformulated questions, questions he didn’t know how to ask, questions he wanted to blurt out but couldn’t, questions he wasn’t sure he wanted an answer to.

He finally settled on, “You don’t hate me for it?”

Hamilton snorted. “For what? Your sexual orientation? That would be like throwing bricks in glasshouses, Jefferson, and I’m not that much of a hypocrite,”—Thomas was on the verge of telling him that yes, he has in fact reached that level of hypocrisy—“and besides, why should I hate you for being gay when I can instead hate you for your stupid political opinions?” Hamilton went on.

Thomas blinked. A slow smile made its way onto his face. “Fair enough,” he admitted. He glanced around the room, taking notice of the way everyone would avert their eyes, their voices suddenly going quiet as they passed by. His fingers clenched into fists almost compulsively. “You’re the only one, it seems,” he remarked quietly.

Hamilton snorted. “Are you really surprised though?” he shot back cynically. “You’re the most prominent Republican in the White House, the rumour mill has it that you’re being considered for the Republican presidential nominee in the next election, and now this?” he gestured at Thomas, who kept himself from fidgeting. “I’d be gossiping too, if I didn’t have better things to do with my time.”

Thomas huffed. “Like what? Destroying our country’s economy? I’ve seen your most recent proposal, and let me tell you”—he stopped in his tracks, pointing his index finger at Hamilton—“that thing is never going to pass.”

Rather than reply, Hamilton did the thing Thomas had least expected him to: he licked Thomas’ finger experimentally. Thomas withdrew his hand quickly, a look of utter disgust on his face as he wiped the finger on his suit trousers. “What are you, five?” he demanded.

Hamilton grinned up at him, his face oddly lascivious. “I figured that you were into that sort of thing now,” he replied with a shameless shrug.

Thomas couldn’t stop his face from flushing. “What the—why—” he spluttered. “Hamilton! What the hell do you think you’re doing?!”

Hamilton cackled. “I figured that now that you’re out, I’m going to need to treasure moments like these. I mean, I can’t just let them… slide.” He made another lewd gesture that had Thomas grimacing. What was the man thinking? Oh, right: he wasn’t. “Imagine the possibilities,” Hamilton giggled, making Thomas wonder what the hell he had been smoking.

“I’m going to politely ask you to back off before you lose your damn hand, Hamilton,” Thomas said lowly.

Hamilton snickered. “I didn’t peg you for that kind of person,” he waggled his eyebrows suggestively.

Thomas scrunched up his nose in distaste. “What in the everloving—“

Hamilton shrugged. “You can’t fault me for making gay jokes at your expense, Jefferson,” he said defensively, “not when you’ve made a thousand jabs at me being an immigrant. It’s only fair play, after all.”

Thomas gaped. “It’s only—The hell it’s not!” he yelled. “I was just outed in the worst way poss—”
“Yeah, about that,” Hamilton cut him off brusquely. “Do you have any idea who could have leaked it to the press? Any jealous boyfriends? Careless one-night stands?”

“I swear to God, Hamilton, if you waggle your eyebrows at me one more time, I’m personally going to burn them off,” Thomas threatened, eyes flashing angrily.

Hamilton smirked. “You haven’t answered my question,” he observed lazily.

Thomas dragged a hand through his hair. “No. There hasn’t been anyone in—a very long time.”

Hamilton raised an eyebrow. “That someone sounds like a pretty likely suspect to me,” he said.

“Just stop it, okay?” Thomas hissed. “I dated once, and it was in senior year in high school. We were together for all of three weeks. That’s not a ‘pretty likely suspect’,” he parroted Hamilton, pitching his voice high, mocking the immigrant.

Hamilton scrunched up his nose. “I do not sound like that.”

“And I am not an idiot,” Thomas retorted. “I know the attitude the Republican base has towards anyone who’s not straight. Me being black was problematic enough—no point in throwing in yet another factor to make them hate me.”

Hamilton tilted his head. “If you knew that they’d hate you if they found out you were gay, why didn’t you just register as a Democrat?” he asked curiously.

Thomas threw up the hand that wasn’t still in Hamilton’s grip in the air. “Is it really so hard to believe that I genuinely believe that the federal government is a shitty idea, and that we would be far better off with a smaller one? One that would actually listen to its constituents, instead of these”—he gestured at the rooms around them—“power grabs that D.C. has going for itself. That’s not helping anyone, except maybe the politicians.”

“And all this time, I thought you were a Republican so you could hang out with your fellow assholes,” Hamilton replied easily.

Thomas tugged his hand away from Hamilton’s grasp. Hamilton’s hold on his wrist tightened. “Says you,” Thomas snarled. “You’ve single-handedly managed to widen the left-right divide through a ten-page letter to the editor of the New York Post!”


“Exactly!” Thomas slashed a hand through the air to emphasize his point. “To smear your political opponents, almost all of whom happen to be Republicans!”

Hamilton huffed. “You’re just mad because everyone’s attention has been on Monroe lately.”

“Are you even listening to yourself?” Thomas demanded.

“I try not to. It interferes with being nuts,” Hamilton quipped.

Thomas sighed. “I feel like I’m talking to a brick wall. Everything just”—he snapped his fingers—“bounces right back.”

“Oh, look,” Hamilton said easily, pointing into the distance. In front of them, Thomas could see the door to the Oval Office looming like an ominous omen.

Thomas swallowed. He tugged away his hand. This time, Hamilton let him. The shorter man looked
up into Thomas’ eyes. “Are you going to be okay?”

Unable to speak, his throat suddenly choked up, Thomas nodded.

Hamilton’s eyes narrowed. “Do you want me to accompany you?” he asked carefully.

Thomas bit his lip, turning Hamilton’s offer over in his head. On one hand, it would be less mortifying to be let off in private, with no witnesses to witness his last humiliation; on the other hand, Hamilton no doubt already knew better than Thomas what would be said. He had already seen him lose his composure in the worst way possible. Thomas couldn’t imagine how Hamilton’s image of him could be in any way worsened by whatever would happen in that room.

Feeling oddly like he was signing off on his own death warrant, Thomas nodded. He stifled a hysterical laughter as he imagined how he would have reacted not twenty-four hours ago if someone had told him that he would have voluntarily chosen to keep Alexander Hamilton, of all people, at his side.

Hamilton stepped up to Washington’s assistant—Tench Tilghman, a man with a strict face and a sweet tooth the size of the Grand Canyon—who was seated behind an oversized desk with papers covering the whole surface, and, smiling charmingly, asked whether Washington was available.

Tilghman nodded sharply. “He is expecting Secretary Jefferson,” he said, his eyes never leaving Thomas.

Thomas suppressed a shudder. He felt as though he was being studied under a microscope—and has been found lacking.

Hamilton glanced at Thomas. “Are you sure—”


Hamilton shrugged. “I haven't tried, but in all probability yes.”

Thomas sighed, rubbing the bridge of his nose. “Just—let's go.”

He nodded at Tilghman, who had been observing their interaction with visible amusement. Hamilton made a show of gesturing at the closed door. “Lead the way, princess.”

Thomas took a deep breath, then pressed down the handle, trying (and failing) not to feel like he was walking into his own execution. He hesitated. Did he really want to do this? He didn’t need to; he could just throw his things and run.

Thomas started when he felt a hand on his shoulder. Looking down, he met Hamilton’s eyes. “You’re going to be fine,” Hamilton assured him. “Washington won’t fire you or anything.” He huffed. “Not for being gay, at least. Now, as for your political opinions…” he trailed off pointedly.

Thomas felt disinclined to believe Hamilton’s words. Just because he hadn’t sent him away yet didn’t mean that he trusted Hamilton. Thomas wouldn’t put it past him to pretend to comfort him, just to stab him in the back not five minutes later. The man knew nothing of loyalty.

He hadn’t realized that he said it out loud until Hamilton crossed his arms in a huff. “Give me some credit,” he drawled. “At least I’m not Burr.”

Thomas conceded that Hamilton had a point—a weak point, but a point nonetheless.
He opened the door and stepped inside.

Inside the office, Thomas’ eyes were immediately fixed on the desk, where the president was hunched over a stack of documents. Thomas glanced around the room, wondering whether he would ever get to step inside of it again.

Hamilton closed the door behind them, making Thomas jumps slightly. Washington look up at the noise. His eyes snapped to Thomas, who stood awkwardly in the middle of the room, unsure as to what to do with himself, clutching his briefcase limply.

Washington put away the pen he had absentmindedly been using as a drumstick—a habit that annoyed Thomas to no end, especially at formal dinners where the utensils took the place of the pen. The president stood up, gesturing at the couch. “I would say that it's a good morning,” he began, “but I believe that it's clear exactly how untrue that statement is,” he said self-deprecatingly. “Please, sit.”

Thomas sat down opposite the president. As promised, Hamilton sat down next to Thomas, his presence unexpectedly comforting to Thomas.

Washington cleared his throat. “Alexander, thank you for rescuing Secretary Jefferson from the reporters, but this does not concern you. You are dismissed.”

On any other day Thomas would count that as personal victory. As it was, all he felt was a hollow pang in his chest.

Hamilton looked at Jefferson, a clear question in his eyes. It was Jefferson's turn to clear his throat. “With all due respect, sir, Hamilton is here at my request.”

If Washington was surprised, he didn't let it show. “Very well.” He nodded, locking eyes with Thomas. He sighed. “This is a mess,” he summarized.

Thomas forced himself to smile. “Indeed, sir,” he agreed.

“It puts me in quite a bind,” Washington went on, “and it could not have come at worse time.”

Thomas’ stomach twisted into a knot. He knew where this was going, and he didn't like it.

Beside him, Hamilton reached for Thomas’ hand, squeezing it lightly. Washington’s eyes followed the movement, a sharp glint in them. “Gentlemen…?” he trailed off pointedly.

Thomas withdrew his hands hastily. Even if he couldn't salvage his job, he would not destroy his reputation—especially not by association with Hamilton. Even if Hamilton himself seemed impervious to the fluctuations of the public opinion, Thomas didn't have the same immunity.

Thomas shook his head. “It's nothing that you need to concern yourself with, sir. Please continue.” He motioned for Washington to keep talking.

Washington glanced between them for another moment before looking down. “As I was saying,” he took up, “the timing is quite problematic, especially when taking into account the ongoing diplomatic negotiations with India.”

Thomas leaned forward. “Sir, you don’t need to mince your words. I am aware of the fact that my presence would be an active hindrance to any attempts at a treaty renewal.”

Washington leaned back, his eyes widening in shock. ”My God, good man, what are you saying?”
Thomas swallowed heavily. He had been dreading—maybe not exactly this moment, but certainly a moment like this—since he had accepted the position. Here went nothing. “You will have my resignation on your desk this afternoon, sir.”

“No!” Washington exclaimed with surprising fervour. “The last thing I want is for you to resign.”

Thomas paused. His eyes snapped to Washington in bewilderment. “You… don’t?” He hated how uncertain, how vulnerable, he sounded, but surely he had misheard. Surely Washington wasn't so insane as to allow him, the center of a huge scandal that could potentially bring down his entire administration, to keep his job?

Washington shook his head. “No. You are one of the most intelligent people I’ve had the pleasure to know. Your efficiency is remarkable, your insights startling, and your attitude refreshing. I would not be able to find a more competent Secretary of State if I tried.” Hamilton coughed pointedly. Washington rolled his eyes. “Alexander, we both know where your talents lie, and subtlety and careful diplomacy are far from it.”

"I—Sir—" Thomas began haltingly.

“You did not think that I would fire you, did you?” Washington asked in surprise.

Hamilton didn’t bother stifling a grin. “That was exactly what Jefferson expected.”

"Sir, what do you propose then?" Thomas asked, trying to stomp down the glimmer of hope that flared up within him.

Next to him, Hamilton leaned forward, clearly as curious as to Washington's plan as Thomas was.

This time when he glanced between them, Washington's eyes held an amused twinkle. "My initial plan had been for you to make a statement—tell the public that your sexuality is your private business”—and really, Thomas could not believe that he was sitting in the Oval Office of opposite the President of the United States, discussing his sexuality like it was some sort of an international crisis—”but this works so much better!” Washington clapped his hands in a parody of an enthusiastic Santa Claus about to hand out gifts to children, all the while glancing between their hands with a calculating look.

Hamilton blinked in confusion as Thomas' stomach flipped again. Washington could not be suggesting what Thomas thought he was suggesting.

"Sir," Thomas started forward, "pardon me for saying this, but it's a monumentally stupid idea.”

Washington smiled. "On the contrary, Thomas, I think that—”

“What are we talking about?!" Hamilton burst out.

Thomas sniffed. “The president is, in his infinite wisdom," he snapped, “suggesting that we date. Aren’t you supposed to be a genius? Do keep up.”

“Pretend to date,” Washington corrected.

Thomas threw up his hands in the air. “Oh, that makes it so much better!” he drawled sarcastically, infusing his words with enough venom to fell an elephant. “Sir, I’m sure it hasn’t escaped you that Hamilton and I can’t stand each other.”

Washington smile grew. “One of the benefits of this arrangement would, of course, be fostering
cooperation between your respective departments—which, since the two of you took office, has been at an all-time low.” Washington’s voice bordered on admonishing.

Thomas gritted his teeth, squashing an instinctive wave of guilt. He refused to be reprimanded for it. It wasn’t his damn fault that Hamilton was an uncooperative asshole of unprecedented standards who was so self-absorbed that he couldn’t even see beyond the end of his nose.

“Of course, you could choose to decline,” Washington barreled on, his tone implying that Thomas would do no such thing. “You could have that press conference, but that would send the message that you thought that you had something to hide.”

“And Hamilton and me suddenly coming out with our ‘relationship’”—Thomas made air quotes—”wouldn’t?” He snorted derisively. Was Washington delusional? Has the presidency finally gotten to him?

Washington shook his head. “Not if we play the ‘you are coworkers who didn’t want their personal relationship to interfere in their professional one’ card.”

Thomas stared. While he had immense respect for the president and his outstanding service to this country, he couldn’t help but wonder—

“And you are even real, sir?” he demanded.

Washington’s face shifted into what Thomas recognized as his politician face. “I assure you, Secretary Jefferson, that I am very much real—as will be the fallout from these revelations, so I suggest that you make up your mind as to what course of action you want to take before this becomes a scandal.”

“Hey!” came an indignant shout from Alexander. “Is nobody going to ask me whether I want to do this?”

Thomas very pointedly did not start at Hamilton’s voice. He had almost forgotten that there was an additional person in the room. He turned to look at Hamilton speculatively. Here was Thomas’ ally at last. Although Hamilton and he had never seen eye-to-eye on one single matter, this, they could unite behind. There was no way Hamilton would agree to Washington’s plan. “Since the president, for some godforsaken reason, possibly as a result of his inevitable loss of sanity, actually listens to you, tell him how uniquely ill-advised his plan is!” Thomas barked.

Hamilton glanced between Thomas and Washington, and Thomas could almost see the cogs turning behind his eyes. When he finally spoke, his words were carefully measured, so very uncharacteristic of him that Thomas’ mouth fell open. “Actually, I happen to agree with the president,” Hamilton said confidently.

Thomas had a sudden urge to clean his ears, because had he just heard—? “You can’t be serious,” he drawled.

Hamilton scoffed. “Jefferson, I may not think before I speak”—Thomas did not bother stifling a snort, because that was the understatement of the year, if not the century—”but have you ever known me to be anything but brutally forthright?”

Thomas conceded that the immigrant had a point. Still. “If you’re saying this just to rile me up…” he let his sentence hang in the air unfinished.

Hamilton rolled his eyes. “Despite what you might think, the world does not actually revolve around you. I sincerely believe this to be the course of action with the highest chance of salvaging the
reputation of this administration—which you”—Hamilton paused to glare at Thomas—“unfortunately happen to be a part of.” A beat. “The fact that it seems to bother you is merely a lucky side-effect.”

Thomas barely refrained from wiping that smug smirk from Hamilton’s face. Turning to Washington, he gestured between himself and Hamilton. “See, sir? Do you honestly believe that this would work?”

The question had been rhetorical, but Washington answered regardless. “I think it just might.”

Thomas let himself slam gracelessly against the backrest with a groan, before opening his eyes to glare at Hamilton. “You’re sleeping on the couch,” he warned.

Hamilton’s smirk widened. “Who says that we’re going to live in your house?”

“Because I sure as hell am not putting my foot inside the dump you like to call a house,” Thomas retorted.

Hamilton’s nose wrinkled. “What’s wrong with my apartment?” he asked indignantly.

“It’s just that—an apartment!” Thomas threw up his hands, as if Hamilton was missing something crucial. “It’s tiny, it’s cramped, and Augeas’ stables have been known to be cleaner.”

“My apartment suits me just fine.”

“Yeah,” Thomas agreed. “It’s as shitty as your personality.”

Hamilton’s eyes narrowed in suspicion. “And how do you know what it even looks like?”

Thomas waved dismissively. “Lafayette has sent me pictures. I’ve never been so traumatized in my life.”

Washington cleared his throat. “Gentlemen, I think that we have gotten slightly off-track,” he said pointedly. “You can hammer out the finer details later. For now, I need to know whether you are amenable to this arrangement.”

Thomas exchanged looks with Hamilton, who nodded decisively. Shaking his head, Thomas waved a hand. “Yeah, fine. Sure,” he said, sincerely hoping that it wouldn’t blow up in any of their faces—or, when it inevitably did, that Hamilton would bear the brunt of it, though that was about as likely to happen as Burr was to express an actual opinion. Honestly, Thomas had no idea how the man had gotten elected senator.

“Good. I will have Angelica call for an impromptu press conference.”

Washington’s smile was wider than it had any right to be. Thomas had a sneaking suspicion that the president was enjoying this. He was oddly invested in Thomas’ love life.

How was this his life?

Hamilton was practically bouncing up and down as they walked down the corridor, unable to contain his energy.

Thomas rolled his eyes at the shorter man’s antics. “What’s wrong with you?” he asked. “One would think you’re enjoying this,” he said mockingly.
Hamilton’s face flushed. “Don’t be ridiculous,” he snapped. “I’m just really looking forward to Madison’s face when he hears about this.”

Thomas stopped short, his eyes widening in horror. Of course. James. Even if he didn’t want to talk to Thomas anymore, he deserved to find out what was going on from Thomas himself.

He hadn’t realized that he had pulled out his phone until a hand wrapped itself around his wrist. “What do you think you’re doing?” Hamilton hissed, suddenly close to Thomas. Too close for comfort.

“Let go of me, you psycho,” Thomas retorted. “I’m going to call James, and I’m going to explain this mess to him.”

The grip on his wrist tightened. “You can’t do that,” Hamilton insisted. “Don’t you see? The more people who know the truth, the higher the chance that someone’s going to leak it to the press, and then we’re in deeper shit than we already are—and I would like to keep my job, thank you very much.”

“James wouldn’t do that,” Thomas spluttered.

One of Hamilton’s eyebrows shot up into his hairline. “Oh, really?” he drawled. “You’re telling me that the Speaker of the House wouldn’t use damaging information about one of his party’s potential presidential candidates—and don’t lie to me, you and Madison practically are the party leadership; I know you’ve been asked—to assure that a candidate he no longer approves of will not get elected into the highest office in the land? I thought you were smart.” Hamilton unknowingly threw Thomas’ earlier words back at him.

Thomas’ hold on the phone loosened, which was all Hamilton. In the space of a blink of an eye, Thomas’ phone was in Hamilton’s hands, sliding into the immigrant’s pocket.

“There,” Thomas sneered. “You have my phone. Can you let go of me now?”

Hamilton glanced down with a start, only now seeming to notice the proximity between them. The tips of his ears reddened, and he let go of Thomas’ wrist as though burned. He stalked off towards the Press Briefing Room, his posture stiff. Thomas had no problem with keeping up with Hamilton’s short steps.

Hamilton’s cheeks were still flushed slightly when they walked into the room adjacent to the Brady Room.

“How do you want to rehearse?” Hamilton asked abruptly, swirling on the spot and fixing Thomas with an oddly intense look.

Thomas’ throat constricted. “No,” he managed. He wouldn’t do any better, and it would give him a chance to overthink it and come up with a multitude of excuses. He couldn’t do that.

Hamilton sniffed. “Just follow my lead, and try not to screw up too much, and whatever you do, do not contradict me.”

At that, Thomas rolled his eyes. “I’m not stupid,” he said curtly.

“Could have fooled me,” Hamilton retorted. One hand on the handle to the Press Briefing Room, he quirked an eyebrow. “Well? Are you coming?” he said before opening the door and strolling into the room confidently. Thomas took a deep breath, steeling himself, before following.
As he glanced around the room, filled to the brim with whatever reporter had been milling around the White House, hoping for a bite of Thomas, Thomas stomach was filled with dread. Hamilton stepped up onto the podium, practically oozing confidence. Thomas wished that he could have had even a portion of that—he himself was practically a shaking mess, managing to hide it only through years of practice.

Still, Thomas wasn’t sure whether it had been a good idea to leave Hamilton in charge of the impromptu press conference. Thomas could still recall their most recent prank war. Hamilton was the sort of person who thought that it was acceptable to swipe Thomas’ $2000 fountain pens for a cheap ballpoint pen, or to bribe his secretary to exchange Thomas’ usual coffee for decaf, or to stick Thomas’ laptop to his desk with superglue, or to pretend to burn Thomas’ first editions of Bacon and Locke, or to smear butter on the door handle to ‘Thomas’ office, or to throw crumpled papers across the room at Thomas’ head and hope that one of the sticks in his hair.

Mentally, Hamilton was the equivalent of a five-year-old. Thomas didn’t trust him further than he could throw him, and he certainly did not trust him with his career. Clearing his throat, he stepped up to Hamilton’s side on the podium. Hamilton’s eyes snapped up to him, shock giving way to amusement. Thomas barely had any time to prepare himself before Hamilton reached out and grabbed his hand in full view of the press, squeezing it in reassurance amidst the sudden whispers.

Before Thomas had any time to process what was happening, Hamilton was talking. Thomas only hoped that he wouldn’t let good mouth run rampant, or both of their careers would go down the flames in what was sure to be a spectacular scandal.

“There have been rumours concerning Jeff—Secretary Jefferson’s sexuality. We are here to put these rumours to rest.” Hamilton said. He lifted up the hand that was still holding Thomas’ up for everyone to see. The reporters in the back, who had previously not noticed their joined hands, gasped.

“Secretary Jefferson is gay, and he and I have been dating for the past nine months,” Hamilton went on, seamlessly spewing bullshit right and left. So much for ‘brutally forthright’, Thomas thought derisively.

The reporters wrote frantically, accepting Hamilton’s word without question like it was gospel coming straight from the mouth of Jesus himself. It was amusing, in a way, and had Thomas not been so nervous about the whole thing, he would have almost looked forward to seeing what they would be able to piece together from Hamilton’s ramblings that would have been worthy of the front page.

“This information was kept from the general public as to dissuade rumours of nepotism,” Hamilton went on, the indifference in his voice gradually giving way to an impassioned zeal. “Both Secretary Jefferson and I have risen to our respective positions solely on merit, and our personal relationship had sprung about as a result of frequent association at work, not the other way around, and to imply otherwise is an affront to everything the both of us have achieved.

“Now, Thomas and I have been forced into an awkward position by this morning’s Politico story. In the end, we chose to go public with our relationship because we believe that a confirmation was worlds better than rumours spiraling out of proportion. We didn’t want this administration’s reputation unnecessarily tarred—especially when this isn’t even a scandal.” Hamilton absentmindedly massaged Thomas’ palm. Thomas should have minded the touch, but any distraction from what was happening was a good distraction. Beggars couldn’t be choosers. “We believe in full transparency—though this is one matter which really shouldn’t concern the American public. We’ve performed our jobs to the best of our abilities, and will continue to do so.

“Essentially, as far as our daily duties are concerned, nothing has changed.”
Thomas thought it best to stop Hamilton before he began spewing something so ludicrous that not even the press, which Hamilton had all but eating from his palm by now, could swallow. He cleared his throat, quietly enough that only Hamilton would have been able to hear.

Hamilton glanced at him quizzically, before turning to the press. “But I’ve talked for a while now—I’m sure that you’re getting bored with me.” He flashed the press another winning smile, which some of the reporters almost unconsciously returned. “Let Thomas talk.” It was the first time since Hamilton had introduced himself to Thomas that he actually used Thomas’ first name within Thomas’ earshot. It sounded odd coming from Hamilton’s lips—not necessarily good or bad, just… odd.

Thomas stepped closer to the microphone. He cleared his throat, flashing Hamilton a smile which he hoped looked fond. “Thank you, Alexander,” he said, cursing himself at how formal he sounded. “This wasn’t how I had planned to come out.” His laugh was a little strained. The reporters were silent, watching him, judging him. “I hadn’t actually given any thought to coming out. Up until Alexander, my love life—well, let's just say that it hasn't been a priority for me.”

Thomas paused. He glanced down at the podium, wishing that he had some papers to shuffle, just so that he could keep his hands occupied somehow.

Hamilton glanced at Thomas pointedly when the pause was getting too long and the silence uncomfortable.

Thomas grimaced. He cleared his throat again. “As Alexander said, we are by no means ashamed of our relationship; we simply didn’t want everyone to dissect what should essentially remain private business”—the irony of the situation didn’t escape Thomas: he, the primary conservative representative in the executive branch and the foremost candidate for the Republican presidential nomination for 2020, was sounding like the poster boy for the liberal agenda—“between the two of us.”

A sea of hands shot up as soon as Thomas stopped to take a breath. “Secretary Jefferson—” several of the reporters shouted.

“I wasn’t done,” Thomas interrupted the reporters, eyes hard. “My sexuality has probably been the hardest thing to come to terms with. It’s not easy to realize that you’re different than the rest, that you don’t fit into the society’s definition of ‘normal’. When I was a teenager, I ignored it. I didn’t even want to think about it, didn’t want to talk about it. Even now, I hear the comments people make, and, though they aren’t aimed at me, I feel physically ill, because that could just as well be me.”

Thomas took a deep breath in an attempt to steady himself. He lifted up the hand holding Hamilton’s for everyone to see. “Alexander has made me realize that my sexuality isn’t anything to be that should be hidden away like a shameful secret. Being gay has never been a Republican or Democratic issue, and it should never be.”

He stopped, glancing hesitantly down at the podium like it held the answers to all of his problems, even though he knew that it didn’t because it was just a fucking piece of wood. Yeah, this is how low he has sunk.

Noticing Thomas’ hesitation, Hamilton turned to Thomas, giving him an encouraging smile, and yes, Thomas could see why people would think that they were in love, because it was as though a switch had been flipped: Hamilton’s entire body practically screamed infatuation. Hamilton was a good actor, Thomas had to give it to him.

“Thomas, love, do you want to take a few questions?” Hamilton asked him, tenderly running his
thumb over Thomas’ knuckles, glancing up at Thomas with what could only be described as ‘puppy eyes’.

Thomas swallowed, forcing a smile onto his face. He wished that he was better at this—not for the first time, he envied Hamilton his ease with people. “Sure,” he said quietly. “Let’s do a few questions.”

It was as though a virtual dam had been opened.

“Sir, how will this affect your negotiations with India?” one of the reporters shouted.

Another reporter shouted, “How can you profess to espouse individuality when everything you say and do in fact advocates conformity to society’s norms?”

Hamilton snapped his fingers. “One question at a time,” he ordered. Thomas had a sudden vision of Hamilton trying to control a roomful of pre-schoolers, chasing them frantically whenever one stole his pen, making chaotic hand gestures and glaring at them. He was hard-pressed to stifle the hysterical giggle that threatened to overwhelm him.

Once the reporters quieted down, Thomas pointed at a woman in the second row. “Yes?” he asked expectantly.

The woman straightened her back, pen poised to take notes. “How do you expect the federal government to stay out of people’s lives when you yourself have advocated for banning abortion as a medical procedure, and have openly criticized the retired Republican senator Barry Goldwater’s comment that ‘You don’t have to be straight to shoot straight’ concerning the ‘Don’t Ask Don’t Tell’ policy?” Thomas hadn’t thought it possible that anyone but Hamilton could say so much in one breath, but there she was. “How can you honestly say that you don’t want a government that interferes in people’s lives when your very ideology is to do just that?”

Hamilton shifted. Thomas saw him glancing at Thomas uncertainly, as though Thomas was going to break like glass. He gritted his teeth. He wasn’t fragile.

“That’s your opinion on the matter,” Thomas told the reporter, measuring his words carefully. “I don’t see it the same way you do. I don’t think that my behaviour contradicts my beliefs. In fact, I fail to see why any of my beliefs would be, as you seem to imply, hypocritical.” The reporter shrugged slightly, as if to say ‘You said it, not me’. “If anything,” Thomas went on, “I would argue that they are strengthened by me being who I am. Besides, you can’t equate promoting the murder of living beings, which the liberals seem intent on doing”—Thomas glanced over at Hamilton, whose pleasant smile was giving way to a glower—“and criticizing a careless and, frankly, distasteful comment on the matters of our national military policy made by someone who has no knowledge on said matters.”

“Sir, with all due respect,” the reporter interceded, her time implying that she meant anything but, “how do you not consider banning abortion an infliction on someone’s individual freedom?”

Thomas force himself to sign, as if bored with the reporter’s stupidity. “I already told you: I will not advocate the murder of any of our citizens.”

“They aren’t American citizens yet!” the reporter objected.

“But they will be.” Thomas was proud of how steady his voice was. It barely shook, even as Thomas felt like he was on the edge of another panic attack. “And what gives you the right to end their life before it has even begun? If you can’t find it in yourself to be disgusted by the idea that you’re killing a human being, think of all the potential you’re robbing them off—all the things they’ll never do,
sights they'll never see, accomplishments that will never be. In what world does it seem fair to take that away from someone? What if your parents had considered aborting you. Would you have liked to never do the things you've done?"

“I wouldn’t have had an opinion, sir,” the reporter retorted angrily, “because I would never have been born in the first place to be able to have an opinion.”

“Exactly,” Thomas smirked in satisfaction, as if she was proving his point for him. “You never would have existed. That’s one human life, extinguished just like that.” He snapped his fingers. “Now, what kind of a public servant would I be if I didn’t care for every American life, be it born or not? Just because they haven’t left their mothers’ bodies doesn’t make them any less human, any less worthy of living a life.”

“Sir—” the reporter tried again.

“The Republican party's ideology is built on the Bill of Rights,” Thomas went on. “Every American citizen has them, be they born or unborn. I can't deny basic human rights to anyone, even if they aren’t born yet—especially if they aren’t born yet. I have to defend the unborn children's rights, because it's becoming increasingly clear that the Democrats will not do so. They seem to forget that everyone was created equal, which means that nobody has a right to decide who lives and who dies.”

The reporter cleared her throat. “The exact quote is that ‘all men are created equal,’” she corrected haughtily, “and to me, it’s alarmingly obvious that your misogyny and sexism blinds you from the truth.” By the end of her statement, she was glaring.

Thomas waved her away dismissively. “As much as I would love to debate this with you further,” he said dryly, “we are on a tight schedule. Next question?”

The wave of hands appeared even faster than the first time around.

Thomas felt the urge to slam his head against the desk. It was going to be a long day. Judging by the not-quite-stifled groan coming from his side, Hamilton concurred with the sentiment.

“You were laying it on a bit thick in there,” Thomas told Hamilton as soon as they were out of the room.

Hamilton shrugged. “They bought it, didn’t they? That’s all that counts. It doesn’t matter if they think we’re so infatuated with each other that we can’t keep our hands off each other, as long as they know that we get things done.”

Thomas was on the verge of saying that no, that wasn’t all that mattered—he wanted to actually have a career after this—but paused. Realistically, his political career was, in all probability, over. It would be a wonder if the Republicans accepted a gay party leader, let alone a gay presidential candidate. The fact that they accepted Ken Mehlman as Chairman of the Republican National Committee was nothing short of a miracle—and it hadn’t been without reluctance, either. Thomas didn’t want to become another Roberto Arango, shunned by his political party just for being who he was.

He wasn’t about to switch parties, either—there was this thing called loyalty that Burr wasn’t familiar with, and Thomas didn’t think he could stomach spewing liberal propaganda—everything he has always abhorred—just to get elected. What kind of a person would that make him?

A hand landed on his shoulder, startling him out of his thoughts. He glanced down, meeting
chocolate-brown eyes.

“You spaced out,” Hamilton said matter-of-factly. He sounded like he was just stating a fact, but there was a curious look in his eyes.

Thomas shook his head in response to the silent question. He shrugged off Hamilton's hand, tensing up when it merely moved to settle snugly in Thomas' palm. Thomas tried to tug away his hand, but Hamilton's hold only tightened.

“People are going to be watching us,” Hamilton explained, his acerbic tone belying the fake smile curling his lips. “At least try to look like you're not actively fantasizing about my imminent death.”

Thomas forced his face into a neutral expression. Hamilton studied him critically. “Better,” he finally declared.

Thomas huffed. “I'm glad that I have your approval.” His voice was practically dripping with sarcasm. “How long do we have to do this again?” Thomas realized that they hadn't talked about it. Shit. It should have been the first thing on his mind.

Hamilton shrugged. “For as long as it takes for this craze to die down,” he said casually, as though it was obvious.

Dread pooled in Thomas’ stomach. “And then what?” he demanded.

Hamilton blinked owlishly. “Then we break up,” he drawled, the 'duh' in his voice all but audible.

Thomas soon his head. “That's the worst idea you've ever proposed. That'll cause another uproar. It's be worse than if we hadn't ‘come out’”—he made air quotes—”in the first place.”

He waited for the realization to sink in, watching in morbid fascination as Hamilton's face morphed into one of horror.

“Shit,” Hamilton intoned.

For once, Thomas was inclined to agree with Hamilton.
In which there is kinkshaming, Jefferson throws parmesan and bizarre insults, Sally is too pure for this story, and, while Hamilton fucks up, he does not, in fact, sleep on a couch.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“It's your fucking fault.”

“How is this my fault?! You were the one running your mouth off.”

“I didn't think—”

“That much is painfully clear.”

“You're hardly helping!”

“This situation is beyond salvation, in case you haven't noticed!”

“You could have stopped me! This is just as much your fau—”

“I've realized a long time ago that stopping you isn't an option,” Thomas snapped. “Believe me, I've tried.”

“Don’t guilt me into feeling ashamed of actually being decisive,” Hamilton snapped. “It’s clear that nobody else in this fucking town wants to be responsible for making a single decision. Burr once held up a Starbucks line for fifteen minutes choosing a drink.”

Thomas groaned. “Aaron Burr is an unprecedented level of indecisiveness in himself. Don’t compare the rest of the politicians—which you are, by the way, so don’t try to exclude yourself from this—with that”—Thomas was at a loss for words—“obsequious deceiver.”

“No,” Hamilton agreed. “The lot of you are just conniving charlatans who double-cross each other whenever it suits you. That’s much better,” he drawled sarcastically.

Thomas groaned. “Hamilton, you may as well be reciting the terms and conditions of iTunes for all the fucks I give about what's coming out of your mouth,” he deadpanned. “I really couldn't care less about what you think you have to say.”

Hamilton frowned. "Then better buckle up, because do I have a lot to say—in several languages, in fact, since I'm fluent in English, French, Spanish, Latin, Arabic, Hebrew—"

"Also bullshit," Thomas muttered under his breath. “Can you shut up for just a few seconds to let me get a word in edgewise?” Hamilton clammed up faster than an oyster. Thank God. “Now, may I please have my phone back?” Thomas held out his hand expectantly. When Hamilton hesitated, Thomas heaved a sigh. “I'm not going to call James and tattle to him about us the moment you give it back to me. Pinky swear,” he added mockingly.

Hamilton rolled his eyes. He rummaged in his pockets, before dropping Thomas’ phone unceremoniously into his outstretched palm.

“Thank you,” Thomas drawled patronizingly.
He threw a quick look at the display to make sure that Hamilton hadn’t tried messing around with his phone. Everything looked the same as he had left it. Maybe he was overestimating Hamilton’s immaturity. Then again, Hamilton hadn’t had time to do anything with it, considering that he had been at Thomas’ side since the second Thomas stepped out of the elevator.

“Now, if you’ll excuse me,” Thomas said abruptly before Hamilton could begin anew, “I have work to do.” He needed to get away from Hamilton, needed a moment alone to process, to plan, to think.

Hamilton pursed his lips. “I doubt that,” he retorted. “All you do all day is sit in your swivel chairs, eat mac and cheese, and talk shit about your opponents.”

Feeling daring, Thomas ran a finger along the underside of Hamilton’s chin. “You’re confusing us again, darling. Don’t you have some very important financial matters to attend to?” he asked impatiently.

Hamilton snorted. “You know as well as I do that any ‘financial matters’ that are of interest to me are being blocked by the Congress, mostly because you are the one doing the blocking,” he emphasized. “Honestly, it sounds to me like you’re trying to get rid of me.”

“Yeah, but you’re like a rotten fish—even after you throw it out, the smell stays with you. See you later, Hamilton.” Thomas shot Hamilton one last smirk before he set off towards his office.

Only when he cleared his morning schedule with his secretary, locked the door to his office, assured himself that he was alone, and put away the briefcase he had been carrying since he got in almost two hours ago, did he allow himself to process. He pressed his back against a nearby wall, letting his head fall back with a soft thud, and slid down, no longer able to remain standing. He felt his energy drain out of him, leaving him exhausted. It should have been impossible to feel so tired, so worn out, at—he checked the clock—quarter past nine in the morning. It wasn’t even all Hamilton, either—the revelation and the stress and the press and, yes, Hamilton, it had all accumulated, until Thomas couldn’t begin to hope to figure out what was up and what was down.

Thomas closed his eyes, exhaling loudly. He felt his thoughts begin to spiral out of control and forced himself to relax. It didn’t do for him to have a panic attack now—he needed to be on the top of his game to be able to stay on top of whatever new tidbit of info that could be thrown his way. At least he didn’t have any meetings with the Indian delegation until Monday. Thank God for small mercies. Hopefully, that would give him enough time to put together some way of avoiding what was shaping up to be a diplomatic disaster.

He had never done well in the public’s eye if the subject wasn’t his political views and plans for America, and now, he found himself right in the middle of what could be the greatest controversy of this century, if not since Nixon. He just hoped that he wouldn’t end up the same way as the Republican president. That was not the kind of legacy he wanted to leave behind, even if Hamilton was determined to be remembered either way.

An oppressive cloud spread over Thomas for the rest of the day. He couldn’t shake off the stares he knew were following him. People whispered about him behind his back, pointing fingers at him, as if saying ‘Yeah, that’s the guy whose career just went down in shambles, and he’s dating Alexander Hamilton! Can you believe it?’.

His skin was crawling with the unwanted attention, and he almost felt as though he was suffocating. Was this how every day was going to be like from now on?
At one point sometime after lunch, when Thomas had once again locked himself up in his office under the pretext of needing to work undisturbed, Sally knocked on the door. “Secretary Jefferson?” she called out. “Secretary Hamilton left a coffee here for you.”

Thomas hesitantly opened the door just slightly ajar. He peeked through the opening, sniffing the air suspiciously. “Hamilton brought me a coffee?” He couldn’t keep the incredulity from his voice. He couldn’t even decide on which part of the sentence to emphasize. Hamilton couldn’t even take care of himself, let alone another human being. For him to take a break from working long enough to go down to Starbucks or whatever other massive coffee shop chain he was frequenting was nothing short of a miracle.

“Yes, sir,” Sally said readily.

“Huh,” Thomas muttered under his breath, nonplussed. Wonders never ceased, it seemed. He cleared his throat for appearances’ sake. “Well, tell Secretary Hamilton that I thank him for the coffee but I will not be so easily bribed.”

The corners of Sally’s mouth twitched. “He said you’d say that,” she told Thomas. “He added that you should just ‘accept your damn coffee,’ ” she said, making air quotes for emphasis. “Sir.”

Thomas huffed. “Just—tell him to eat.”

“With all due respect, sir, I will not get in the middle of what seems like a lovers’ quarrel between you and Secretary Hamilton,” Sally politely but decisively shot him down.

“It’s not—we’re not—” Thomas began, all but sputtering, before remembering that yes, people did think that he was sleeping with Hamilton. “We’re not fighting,” he finished awkwardly.

The look Sally gave him implied that she very much doubted that, but she dropped it.

Thomas refrained from slamming his head against the closest flat surface. He didn’t know why it mattered what Sally thought of him and this whole mess—she was a professional, and would do her job regardless of her personal opinion of Thomas. On second thoughts, Thomas reflected, maybe that was precisely why it mattered.

He cleared his throat, gathering himself. “Thank you for telling me.”

She glanced away pointedly, as though knowing that Thomas’ words hadn’t been meant for her ears. “I’ve been fielding questions from Monroe’s staff all day,” she said conversationally. “Thought you might want to know.”

“Thank you,” Thomas said in relief. At least one person in this damn building could be relied upon.

Sally smiled. “You’re welcome, sir. Now, as for your afternoon appointments, there are a few things I’d like to go over with you.”

Thomas was beyond exhausted by the time it was time to head home, and there hadn’t even been a cabinet meeting. God only knows what state he would have been in, had he been forced to deal with Hamilton’s obstinacy on top of everything else.

Thomas picked up his things and headed for his car, shooting off a quick text to Hamilton, telling him to get his ass out of his office or else. He absentmindedly waved goodbye to Sally, who was still typing away on something, the lazy pace indicating that it wasn’t anything of import. Probably a
quick email to her boyfriend—John, was it?

To Thomas’ surprise, Hamilton was already waiting when Thomas arrived in the parking lot. Hamilton glared at Thomas. “Well?” he snapped.

“Mood change much?” Thomas muttered under his breath as he unlocked his car and watched Hamilton get in. Clearing his throat, he raised his voice. “I thought I’d have to drag you from your office kicking and screaming.”

Hamilton pointedly didn’t look Thomas’ way. “The faster we get this over and done with, the faster I can get back to work.”

“Of course,” Thomas muttered. “Work, work, work. It’s always work with you, isn’t it?”

Hamilton huffed. “Just drive, Jefferson,” he said darkly, pointedly not glancing at Thomas.

It was the most uncomfortable drive Thomas had ever been privy to. They made a short pit stop at Hamilton’s home—though the apartment was really stretching the definition of that word, resembling a shabby shack rather than an actual place for a living person to inhabit—to pick up the most essential of Hamilton’s thing, before continuing on to Thomas’ house.

The moment Thomas parked outside of the mansion, Hamilton practically shot out of the car, clearly not wishing to be in Thomas’ presence for longer than necessary. That was fine by Thomas. He wasn’t exactly delighted with the arrangement either.

Thomas got out of the car in a leisure fashion. “Why are you in such a hurry? You can’t get in without a key anyway,” Thomas couldn’t help mocking Hamilton as he grabbed his briefcase and closed the door.

Hamilton glared. “Just open the fucking door, you jackass.”

Thomas clucked his tongue. “Rude,” he said in disapproval. He stepped up, swatting Hamilton away from the door, and unlocked it. Hamilton breezed through the door like he owned it. Thomas calmly followed, automatically locking the door behind them. It figured that Hamilton would have no sense of self-preservation. Well, he would need to teach Hamilton to lock the damn front door behind him.

Thomas dropped his keys into the bowl with a quiet clang. He made a sweeping gesture. “Well, welcome to my humble abode. It’s not Monticello, but I suppose that nothing’s perfect.”

Hamilton stared. “You’re so full of shit,” he intoned drolly.

“Thank you, darling,” Thomas replied sarcastically. “Now, you’re free to go anywhere you want, except my study. That’s off-limits for your prying fingers,” he told Hamilton offhandedly. “Oh, and don’t even think about breaking into my liquor cabinet. I’ve seen the guzzle you generously call alcohol.” He snorted. “The good liquor’s wasted on you.”

Hamilton scrunched up his nose in the way that Thomas has come to know meant that he was sincerely regretting every decision he’s ever made that had lead up to this moment.

Thomas was distracted by Hamilton’s hair, which was unruly even after Hamilton’s best attempts tame it, stray hairs sticking out of the ponytail. Hamilton quirked an eyebrow. Thomas looked away with a slight flush, realizing that he had been caught staring.

He glanced down at his phone. Still no messages from James. He tried to pretend that the lack of communication didn’t sting. He could see where James was coming from—if their positions had
been reversed and James had been there one whose career was about to go down in flames in the political backlash that was sure to come, Thomas would be hesitant about associating himself with him. It didn’t mean that it wasn’t upsetting. James was his best friend. Politically speaking, they were a power couple that was all but unbeatable.

To lose all of that, and over something that shouldn’t even matter…

It hurt.

“I suppose I’ll have to give you a spare key,” Thomas muttered, combing his hands through his afro in an attempt to distract himself from his dark thoughts.

Hamilton snorted. “That would be a good idea if you want me to live here for the foreseeable future,” he agreed, sarcasm practically tangible in his voice.

Thomas rolled his eyes. “‘Want’ is too strong a word,” he told the immigrant as he crossed the room, coming to a stop in front of a small, wooden box on the wall. He opened it and stared at the keys inside. He grabbed a pair haphazardly and tossing them to Hamilton, who fumbled, trying to catch them before they fell to the floor with a clang. Thomas snorted. “I shouldn’t be surprised that your coordination is shot to pieces,” he taunted. “You’re operating on—what? five hours of sleep?” Hamilton remained suspiciously silent. “Four?” Thomas guessed, biting down a smile. “Three?” he taunted.

“Would you just shut up?!” Hamilton demanded. “My sleeping schedule is fine.”

“The dark bags under your eyes would beg to differ,” Thomas pointed out.

“I hate you,” Hamilton declared.

“Trust me, the feeling is mutual,” Thomas said as he shrugged off his coat and moved to hang it onto a hook. “Now, I hope that you don’t mind mac and cheese for dinner.” He took one look at Hamilton’s disgusted face and laughed. “Of course, if you had it your way, you wouldn’t eat at all. Unfortunately, I have to play the caring boyfriend, or both your daddy and the press will have my hide for letting America’s darling starve.”

“Washington isn’t my father,” Hamilton immediately protested, even as he copied Thomas’ movements. He scrunched up his nose at the sight of Thomas’ purple suit jacket.

Thomas smirked—luckily, out of Hamilton’s view. “The fact that you knew who I was referring to without me having to specify it just made my point for me.” He opened the fridge, rummaging in it for a moment.

“To whom,” Hamilton immediately replied.

Thomas paused mid-movement, his hand wrapped around the parmesan. “What?”

“It’s not ‘to who’. It’s ‘to whom’.”

“No one likes grammar Nazis, Hamilton.” Thomas tossed a bit of the cheese in Hamilton’s direction. Hamilton sputtered, swatting away the parmesan as though it were a fly. Thomas didn’t bother stifling a grin. The image had been well-worth wasting a bit of parmesan.

Hamilton huffed. “So.” He made a show of looking around the room, taking everything in. “Which couch am I supposed to be sleeping on?”
Thomas leveled him with a decidedly unimpressed look. “Did you honestly think that I’d let you sleep on a couch?” Hamilton’s silence spoke volumes. Thomas groaned. “You did, didn’t you? Look, I’m not a terrible host. Sure, you may be the bane of my existence, but, call me Southern if you want, but I’m sure as hell not going to let you sleep on the couch, comfortable though it is, when there’s a perfectly good guest room down the hall.”

Hamilton blinked. “I hadn’t expected—” he finally began.

“That my ‘delicate Virginian sensibilities’ would extend to treating you like an actual human being?” Thomas finished, throwing in the pasta into the water with more force than was strictly necessary. “You know, with every time I speak to you, I gain a deeper understanding of exactly how fucked-up you are as a person,” Thomas said conversationally. “Sorry to disappoint you, but I’m not about to let you sleep on the couch like you’re some sleazy husband caught sexting his younger co-worker.”

“And that, right there,” Hamilton pointed his finger accusingly at Thomas, who swatted it away like it was an annoying insect, “is discrimination, plain and simple. Sleazy husbands aren’t the only people sexting their co-workers.”

Thomas turned his head ever-so-slightly to raise an eyebrow at Hamilton. “Is there anything you’re not telling us, Hamilton?” he drawled slowly. Maybe, just maybe, Hamilton would finally realize how utterly ridiculous he was sounding.

Hamilton snorted. “I wouldn’t use government property to sext,” he told Thomas, his voice the embodiment of affront, “so stop giving me that condescending tone.”

Thomas let out an exasperated sigh. “Right. I’m forgetting that I’m talking to the greatest oversharer in our political history.”

Hamilton glared. “It’s called transparency—not that you’d know what that is,” he said snottily. “You might want to look it up in a dictionary.”

Thomas rolled his eyes. “You publicly apologized because you considered having an affair. You literally have no room to talk. Oh, and by the way”—Thomas waved the spatula at Hamilton, mockingly brandishing it like a sword—“if you ever share any ‘personal details’ about our relationship with the press, I can promise you that your beloved debt reform won’t see the light of day, and I won’t even care if it will kill my own career.”

Hamilton grinned lasciviously. “You just don’t want people to know that you’re a bottom,” he said lazily.

“Hamilton!” Thomas slammed the spoon against the table. It clattered to the floor with a loud twang! as Hamilton’s grin widened.

Hamilton’s smirk widened. “It’s true,” he breathed delightfully. “I was just making a joke, but you actually get off on—”

Before he realized what was going on, Thomas had grabbed Hamilton by the lapels of his jacket and dragged him to within inches of Thomas’ face. “Shut up,” Thomas hissed, glad for the fact that the lighting was dim enough to hide his flush. Hamilton would never let him live this down. “You don’t know anything about me.”

Hamilton raised his hands defensively. “Relax, jackass. I was just making a joke. I hadn’t realized that it would get your panties in a wad,” he snickered. “Then again, you’d probably like that, darlin’,” Hamilton added, changing his accent to imitate Thomas’ on the last word.
Thomas tightened the fist holding Hamilton in place. He saw Hamilton’s eyes widen imperceptibly—whether in fear or realization of some sort, he couldn’t tell. “You know, at first, I thought that you weren’t human,” he began faux-casually. “You couldn’t be, not with the hours you somehow managed to pull off and your sheer efficiency. But now”—he chuckled—“now I realize that you’re just as human as everyone else. Just another flawed, defective human.”

Hamilton’s breathing came erratically, and something flickered in his eyes—fear it was, then, Thomas thought, oddly hollowed out. Thomas couldn’t even bring himself to feel triumphant, because, in the next second, Hamilton’s eyes briefly twitched down, before glancing up at Thomas in amusement. “You’re getting off on this,” he said gleefully. “You are so fucking weird, Jefferson.”

Thomas stiffened. He let go of Hamilton, as though burned. He pushed Hamilton away. “Get away from me, you fucking pervert.”

Hamilton pretended to dust off his jacket. “With pleasure, asshole.”

Thomas shook his head. He picked up the spoon he had dropped. Clenching his hand around it, he said, “I don’t understand you,” he admitted. “You agreed to this, but it’s clear that you hate me more than Jon Stewart hates Arby’s. Did you just agree to this to try to make my life hell?” he demanded.

Hamilton scoffed. “As I’ve already told you, me agreeing has little to do with you and a lot to do with wanting this administration to retain a mantle of credibility, which this Politico story would just rip apart. I like my job the way it is, thank you very much. Believe it or not, I want to help people, but it’s much harder to pass a bill that would help millions of Americans when you don’t stand a chance in hell of getting Congress on your side because someone”—he glared at Thomas—“decided to be a secretive asshole. Which, by the way.” Hamilton held up a finger. “I know that you’re convinced that this bill exists for the sole purpose of pissing you off, but it doesn’t. I don’t actually care what you think about it. I care about the fact that you actively oppose it, and thereby are actively compounding to the economic struggles of many Americans—the common folk, people you claim to want to represent. So sorry if I’m not jumping at any opportunity to play house with you,” Hamilton snapped. “I’m doing this because I have to, not because I want to.”

Thomas closed his eyes. “There are bedrooms down the hall.” He pointed down the corridor, proud of how steady his voice was despite his internal turmoil. “Just choose one. The purple one is mine. You can't have it.”

Hamilton snorted. “I would never have guessed,” he drawled. “I don’t want your shitty bedroom anyway, Jefferson.”

Thomas’ eyes blazed. “Is everything a joke to you?” he demanded.

Hamilton shrugged. “Funny things are. Now, as delightful as this conversation has been, I have things to do, none of which includes you.”

Thomas flushed. “Hamilton!” he yelped, scandalized.

Hamilton smirked when he saw how Thomas was fuming. “See you in the morning, Jefferson.”

With that final parting shot, Hamilton exited the kitchen, leaving Thomas in equal parts infuriated, flummoxed, and weirdly—almost morbidly—intrigued. If nothing else, Thomas’ life had just become much more interesting, and, strangely enough, Thomas couldn't even bring himself to mind Hamilton's company as much as he thought he should have.
Chapter End Notes

yo, gabe here! if you wanna Yell at us, we'd appreciate it!!
In which there’s cabinet meetings and shouting and this right here is why George Washington resigned in the first place. Also, awkward kisses.

Chapter by Sanna Black Slytherin

Chapter Summary

Thomas’ POV got monotonous, so here’s Alexander’s. Also, the characters eat omelettes because the writers don’t eat, period.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Alexander woke up to the smell of an omelette. He sat up, glancing around in bewilderment. He wracked his sleep-addled brain for a moment, wondering where the hell he was, before the events from the past twenty-four hours came back to him in a flood. He collapsed back onto the bed. Jefferson’s bed. Well, not his personal bed—that would be a step too far even for Alexander—but seeing as it was his house, all things in it, including the bed, were technically Jefferson’s.

Who, if the smell was anything to go by, was making him breakfast. Thomas Jefferson was making him breakfast. What the hell. After last night—Alexander winced at the memory of how he ran his mouth without thinking it through, and wasn’t it just fucking typical of him to screw up his fake relationship on the first evening—Alexander didn’t think that Jefferson would be in the mood for doing anything for Alexander, except maybe sell off his internal organs on the black market.

Alexander tried to remember when he last woke up to the smell of food, and came up empty. That probably said a lot about him, but he would need at least two cups of coffee before he could approach being classified as awake.

Curious, he made his way to the kitchen, following the smell. Although he hated to admit it, the house was… nice. Tasteful. Not something he would have expected of Jefferson. He had expected garish, over-the-top, everything-done-in-shades-of-purple decorations, but so far, the only crime against humanity and common sense he had stumbled upon was a large painting of Francis Bacon in the bathroom, whose eyes seemed to have followed Alexander as he showered. He shuddered at the reminder.

After multiple failures at finding his way back—Jesus Christ, this house was huge—Alexander succeeded in tracing back his steps from the previous evening. Alexander was half-expecting one of the staircases to suddenly lead to a different location like it was something out of Hogwarts. Jefferson really needed to hire an architect to design a map of this place.

Standing victorious in the kitchen doorway, Alexander was greeted with the sight of Jefferson standing in the kitchen, dressed in nothing but sweatpants and a tank top—the most informal look that Alexander had ever seen on Jefferson—a purple apron around his waist, stirring what looked to be an omelette. A very fancy omelette, too, by the looks of it. Alexander found himself unwittingly drawn to the food.

it was an oddly domestic scene. Alexander thought he could get used to it. Not that he wanted to, but still—he could. The sight made Jefferson seem almost like a human being, instead of some
emotionless robot whose sole purpose of existence was to antagonize Alexander.

His stomach churned quietly, informing Alexander of the fact that yes, there was some perfectly edible food there, and it would really be in his best interests to eat it, rather than try to chug down a pot of coffee as was his usual breakfast.

“What are you doing?” Alexander asked, more out of a lack of anything else to say than a genuine need to know. He had eyes; he could see.

Jefferson rolled his eyes even as he moved around the kitchen with an ease that bespoke of years of practice. “What does it look like I’m doing?” he shot back.

Alexander huffed, crossing his arms. “For all I know, you could be planning to murder me with that spatula.”

“Oh, no,” Jefferson drawled, his voice drier than the Atacama Desert. “You’ve uncovered my secret plan. Whatever shall I do?”

“Shut up, asshole, and answer my question.”

Alexander noticed the way Jefferson’s shoulders tensed up. He followed the outline of his muscles through the tank top, not even feeling guilty about it, because, though he may hate the guy, there was no denying that Jefferson was stunningly handsome. If one was into that kind of stuff, of course, which Alexander definitely was. Jefferson had been the one in the closet—Alexander has taken every opportunity to shout out his sexuality for everyone to hear ever since he got into politics.

Alexander stepped around Jefferson and made to scoop up a bit of the omelette onto a fork, only to be halted by an unexpected hand on his wrist. “Don’t poke the food while it’s still cooking. It’s unethical, not to mention just rude. Has your mother taught you nothing?”

“My mother died before she could teach me the finer details of cuisine culture,” Alexander found himself snapping.

Jefferson stared at him nonplussed for a moment, before abruptly letting go of his wrist. Alexander massaged it absentminded—Jefferson had a surprisingly strong grip for someone who did nothing but prance around in velvet suits all day.

“Well,” Jefferson said at last, breaking the uncomfortable silence, “I suppose that it’s never too late to learn. After all, with enough tenacity, you can teach an old dog new tricks.”

“I guess,” Alexander muttered, for once at a loss for words.

Clearly, he wasn’t the only one, as Jefferson visibly wracked his brain for something to say. “Did you sleep okay?” he finally asked.

Alexander shrugged. “It was fine, though your sheets are way overpriced.”

Jefferson scowled. “Just because you enjoy sleeping on hay doesn’t mean that everyone else does. Believe me, your back will be thanking me later.”

Alexander rolled his eyes. “Sure,” he said skeptically.

“Well?” Jefferson suddenly snapped. “If you want to learn how to cook, get over here and grab a ladle.”
Alexander glanced down at the omelette. He scrunched up his nose in disgust. “What’s that red thing?” He pointed at a red smudge

Jefferson rolled his eyes. “That’s a tomato, Hamilton,” he said slowly. “Didn’t you have those in the Caribbean?” he taunted.

“That’s not a kink, Tomatoes are just that good.” Jefferson drawled sarcastically, smacking Alexander’s fingers for extra emphasis, resulting in a loud yelp from Alexander. “Because tomatoes are amazing. They are fresh and healthy, and delicious, and provide you with—”

“Is that another kink?” Alexander’s eyes narrowed as he took in Jefferson’s euphoric expression. “Because let me tell you, it’s just not normal to wax so much poetry about a fucking tomato.”

Jefferson’s expression clouded over. “It’s not a kink. Tomatoes are just that good.”

“Uh-huh,” Alexander said skeptically, dragged out his response. “Right. Listen, that facial expression you’re wearing right now? The last time I saw someone look like that out of it, I had just sucked their dick.” Jefferson choked on air, flushing at the implications of Alexander’s words. Alexander smirked in satisfaction. “You’re going to have to be more convincing than this if you want me to believe that it’s not a kink.”

Jefferson groaned. “Why do you have to sexualize everything?” he asked rhetorically.

Alexander shrugged, his smile lazy and sordid. “It’s a particular talent of mine.”

“So I’ve noticed,” Jefferson said darkly. He turned off the stove plate, grabbed two plates, and divided the omelette evenly. He pressed one of the plates into Hamilton’s chest. “Eat your fucking omelette.”

“You’re going to have to convince me that it is not a kink.”

Jefferson shrugged. “The utensils are in that drawer over there, but you can eat with your bare hands if you want.”

Alexander sniffed. “And here I almost thought you were a decent human being. Thank you for divesting me of my illusions.” He glanced around the kitchen, eyes narrowing when he noticed the lack of a certain something.

“Where do you keep your coffee?” he demanded.

Jefferson rolled his eyes. “Why does this not surprise me?” He pointed silently at one of the cupboards, watching as Alexander made a beeway for the coffee. “Don’t drink me out of my coffee.” He untied the apron and hung it up on the hook next to the doorway.

Alexander hummed. He opened the cupboard that Jefferson had pointed out. At least five different types of coffee greeted him. He took out all of them. Even knowing Jefferson’s singularly barbaric tastes regarding everything edible, there ought to be at least one decent coffee brand somewhere in his collection. From what Alexander remembered from back when he had worked with Madison on that project for the House, he recalled that they shared similar preferences for coffee. Here was hoping that Madison was a frequent enough guest of Jefferson’s that the Secretary of Asshattery and Terrible Life Choices had purchased some decent coffee.

“What’s this?” Alexander studied the coffee packages critically. He turned the package, reading on the back. “St. Helena Coffee? What is this monstrosity?”
Jefferson rolled his eyes. “It’s proper coffee, not the drizzle you consume with worrying frequency.”

“There’s nothing wrong with Nescafe,” Alexander growled.

Jefferson snorted haughtily. “Now look who’s pandering to the masses. At least try Jacob’s if you want to pollute your body with the instant-brew sludge.”

“Occasionally, the masses are right. It doesn’t happen often, but statistically, it has to happen sometime,” Alexander told Jefferson. “And you accuse me of being a snob.”

“That’s because you are,” Jefferson replied easily. “Now, if you’ll excuse me, I need to take a shower, and”—he sniffed, his nose twitching in disgust—“so do you.”

“Fuck you,” Alexander said absentmindedly, already opening the package and sniffing the coffee. He closed it immediately. “It’s disgusting.”

“Just give it a try,” Jefferson said over his shoulder. “If you don’t like it, I already know that you have atrocious taste in fashion, so it won’t exactly be a surprise. But it will do you some good to drink proper coffee for a change. And look,” he threw up his arms into the air. “I haven’t died of poisoning yet.”

Alexander wrinkled his nose. “Sheer dumb luck,” he muttered, to the sound of Jefferson’s receding laughter echoing down the corridor. “‘Proper coffee’ my ass. You are an elitist pig, Jefferson!” he shouted down the corridor. “Don’t think I won’t use this against you!”

Thomas Jefferson @TJefferson
If two people are arguing on Twitter and you only remember one of the names, the other is Alexander Hamilton.

Thomas Jefferson @TJefferson
Conversationally, if you can’t remember either, Alexander Hamilton is arguing with Donald Trump.

Alexander Hamilton @AdotHam
@TJefferson At least I HAVE opinions that I stand by, unlike most of the GOP, who change stances more often than I change socks, and who (1/9)

Like any new workplace couple—whose workplace just incidentally happened to be the White House—they carpooled into work.

Well, it wasn’t like Alexander had a choice, considering that he used to take the subway into work, and Jefferson’s house was on the outskirts of Washington, and how did this guy ever get to work on time, anyway, considering the traffic?

Jesus. Was this how it would be for the foreseeable future? Jefferson had a tendency to get up far earlier than Alexander did. It was torture. If Alexander ever needed any proof that Jefferson was inhuman, this right there was it.

“Ready?” Alexander asked. Their fingers brushed briefly. Jefferson flinched almost imperceptibly, and something that Alexander wasn’t able to identify flashed through his face.

He watched Jefferson swallow softly. “Yeah,” the Virginian said, not sounding certain at all.
Alexander scoffed. “Listen, Madison sounded more sure of himself when I asked whether he preferred to increase background checks on gun purchases or support increased taxes for the one percent.” He quirked an eyebrow almost mockingly. “Care to try again?”

“Yes, I’m ready,” Jefferson repeated with much the same gusto.

Alexander sighed. He grabbed Jefferson’s hand, intertwining their fingers. He tried not to think about the way it fit so nicely in his own. “Let’s do this,” he said, more for Jefferson’s benefit than for himself, and made a note to self to draw the media’s attention to himself. Jefferson clearly wasn’t dealing well with being in the public eye over such a personal matter.

“Come on, tomato fucker,” he ordered. “Let’s get this show going.”

He watched in satisfaction as, almost involuntarily, Jefferson’s lips twitched up into a slow smirk. “I think, under these circumstances, that it’s better if you call me Thomas,” he drawled.

Alexander stared at the hand Jefferson was holding out. He couldn’t help but imagine that it was actually a snake, poised to strike as soon as Alexander fell into his trap. Jefferson had never given him any reason to think otherwise of him. At the beginning of their acquaintanceship, even though Jefferson’s reputation preceded him, Alexander had tried to give him the benefit of the doubt, but it had been for naught. Jefferson was incorrigible and ignorant—so set in his ways that nothing could shake him.

With what felt like a mountain of dread, he finally shook the hand. “In that case, you need to call me Alexander,” he grinned with false bravado.

Thomas stared at him for a moment. “Alexander,” he finally said, rolling the name around in his mouth like he was trying a foreign dish.

Alexander pulled on Jefferson’s—Thomas’—hand. “Time to face the fans.”

“With all due respect, sir, I cannot, in good conscience, stand by as our country is torn apart by bad planning. I—nay, we—must oppose government-funded programs such as Medicare and Medicaid,” Thomas was saying, watching with amusement as one of Hamilton’s eyes kept twitching. One of Hamilton’s hands was gripping his pen tightly enough to turn his knuckles white. “You people do know that we have a federal debt that keeps growing every year, right? We can barely pay off our annual interest tax as it is—something the Secretary of the Treasury should be well aware of,” Thomas added sharply. “We can’t afford to have a thousand government-funded programs when we can’t afford the spending.”

Hamilton rolled his eyes. "It's called restorative taxes, instead of constant tax cuts for the one percent," he drawled. "That's how we pay off our national debt, and that's how we fund the programs. That's what my financial reform is mainly about—which you'd know if you ever bothered reading it before dissing it."

Thomas shook his head. "And how do you propose that an elitist Congress agrees to that?"

Hamilton shrugged. "I'll find a way, but you can't use the argument that we don't have the money. There is money to help people in need. People are simply too greedy.

"Additionally," he went on, "we need to raise the minimum wage. The minimum wage was meant to be the minimum amount of money a person needed to earn to be able to support their entire family on that money alone. Besides, if we raise the minimum wage, the people can support themselves, we
reduce the amount of people who live off government subsidies, which leads to a reduction of the rate of incarceration because people will not resort to crime since they have money, an increase if the happiness of the general population, it redirects the money for other purposes, and an increase the circulation of money.”

“Hamilton, do you even hear yourself speak?” Thomas demanded. “You’re stripping the high-income class of their hard-earned money.”

Hamilton scowled as he stood up. “I wouldn’t say it’s hard-earned,” he refuted Thomas. He continued to speak even as he walked around Washington’s chair, coming to a stop in front of Thomas. “After all, the businessmen aren’t the ones doing the work, are they? The real chores are done by the people that get ignored.” He pressed a finger against Thomas’ lips. Thomas refrained from biting it. Unlike certain people, he wasn’t a child. “You claim we’re stealing jobs—well, Peter Piper claimed he picked them, but he just underpaid Pablo.”

Thomas shook his head. “‘We’? What are you talking about?” Indeed, the rest of the cabinet was staring at Hamilton with varying grades of bafflement and/or chagrin. “And get that finger away from my face before I bite it off.” Thomas could have sworn he heard a snicker behind him. No doubt some idiot thinking something entirely erroneous about himself and Hamilton. As much as he hated it, there was very little Thomas could do about it.

Hamilton rolled his eyes. He let his hand fall back to his side reluctantly. “‘We’ as in every person you’re trying to consign to living on the poverty line. ‘We’ as in every person who doesn’t own enough to be able to afford their own private yachts—and no, Jefferson, I know about them,” he declared.

A feeling of dread settled in Thomas’ stomach. While he wasn’t ashamed of the fact that he did, in fact, own a yacht, he hadn’t been advertising the fact for the world to know. How had Hamilton ever found out? Where had he gone snooping? Thomas had told him that his study was off-limits. Typical Hamilton.

“Go to hell, Hamilton,” Thomas said, rolling his eyes in annoyance.

“Don't swear in front of the fucking president,” Hamilton scolded, a shit-eating grin on his face.

Washington cleared his throat. “Gentlemen, while I thank you for assuring everyone that your personal life doesn’t affect your professional one”—several cabinet members nodded in agreement, while others still looked dubious—"I suggest that you stick to the subject at hand. Stop being at each other's throats. Focus. Now, i presume that Secretaries Hamilton and Jefferson are finished. Does anyone else have anything of relevance to contribute?"

Nobody moved, almost as if they were afraid that, should they speak, Alexander and Jefferson would eat them alive.

"Good," Washington nodded decisively. "Now, let's move on to Secretary Wolcott's infrastructure report."

"You just had to open your big, stupid mouth, didn't you?” Thomas snapped as soon as they were alone in the corridor.

Hamilton’s eyes were blazing with anger. "If you expected me to just sit quietly by while you tear apart my life's work, you are sorely mistaken."
Thomas scoffed. "You have no intelligence."

"And you"—Hamilton jabbed Thomas' chest with a finger—"have no compassion."

Thomas blinked. "What are you talking about?" he demanded.

Hamilton stared at Thomas in astonishment. "You really don't see it, do you?" he finally asked, before shaking his head violently. "No, of course not. Why would you? Now, if you'll excuse me, I have things I need to do."

Thomas frowned. "This discussion isn't over."

Hamilton put his hands on his hips. "Unless you've decided to get your head out of your ass and get yourself something called empathy, I have better things to do with my time."

Thomas took an angry step forward, opening his mouth to retort. The words froze on his lips as he heard approaching footsteps. He exchanged startled looks with Hamilton.

"Shit, someone's coming," Hamilton hissed under his breath.

Thomas leveled him with a distinctly unimpressed look. "You think?" he replied sarcastically.

Something flashed through Hamilton's face. Before Thomas could process what was happening, Hamilton grabbed Thomas by the lapels, pulling them together and pressing their lips into something that, had it been less violent, it might have passed for a kiss. As it was, the surprised oomph Thomas made was muffled by their mouths. Hamilton's other hand sneaked its way around Thomas' waist. Their lips clashed, and Thomas marveled briefly at how surprisingly soft Hamilton’s lips were. He responded instinctively. They clashed for dominance for a brief moment before Hamilton’s stubbornness won out.

They heard the footsteps rounding the corner and coming to a sudden stop as the person took in the two men.

Before Thomas could get used to it, Hamilton pulled away. He glanced at the person—the Democratic Congressman Rutherford from Alaska, Thomas’ mind registered—and feigned surprise. “Hello, congressman,” Hamilton said pleasantly. “Fancy meeting you here.”

Right. Thomas took a deep breath, forcing his breathing to slow down. It was for the cameras. For the public. Thomas had almost forgotten about that, in all honesty. That explained Hamilton’s odd behaviour. Why would it be for anything else? Thomas didn’t want it.

The congressman cleared his throat. “Well, I see you’re both very busy,” he said awkwardly. “I’m just—I have a meeting with the president.”

“The Oval Office is this way,” Hamilton said offhandedly, pointing in the general direction of Washington’s seat of power.

Thomas nodded, and if his smile was a little forced—well, who could blame him? Hamilton was hardly the most pleasant person to be around, let alone pretend to like.

Hamilton leaned into Thomas’ personal space. “Could you look any more pained?” he hissed quietly, his voice in direct contrast with the smile on his lips. Had the congressman glanced at them, he would have thought them simply two people in well, in love—though how anyone could be in love with the tiny self-centered ball of condensed fury and outrage that was Alexander Hamilton, Thomas could simply not understand, no matter how stunning Hamilton’s eyes were. Not that they were, of
course. That would be ridiculous. Thomas might be gay, but he still had taste.

The congressman nodded in thanks, then strode off as quickly as his short legs allowed him, looking distinctly uncomfortable.

When the footsteps receded and all was quiet once again, Thomas opened his mouth, but Hamilton was faster. “Fuck it. Stop it. Just stop all of”—Hamilton gestured at Thomas—"this."

Thomas crossed his arms. “You just gestured at all of me.”

“Yeah. That. All of you. Just. Stop. Stop talking, stop thinking, stop breathing, stop existing.”

Thomas glared. “Oh, I’m sorry if my existence inconveniences you,” he drawled, infusing as much venom into his voice as he could. “I’ll be sure to stay away from Washington’s golden child.”

“I’m hardly his golden child,” Hamilton argued.

Thomas laughed openly. “You might as well buy him a ‘Number-One Dad’ mug,” he mocked.

“Like you’re the pinnacle of maturity,” Hamilton sneered.

“I like to think so, yes,” Thomas replied, rolling his eyes and crossing his arms. “At least I don’t insult an entire political party on social media on a daily basis.”

“You screeched when you saw a spider yesterday,” Hamilton pointed out.

Thomas glared. “I did not,” he protested. He honestly tuned out whatever long-winded and undeniably rude thing Hamilton said next, simply because he valued his continued sanity.

It was going to be a long few months.

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Washington sighed as he stapled his fingers together, looking not so much as a supervillain as as an exasperated parent as he stared at the two cabinet members in front of him. “So,” he began evenly, “Congressman Rutherford tells me the two of you have been… getting into character, so to speak.”

Thomas glared at Hamilton through the corner of his eye. “So to speak,” he repeated. “Although I still maintain that the stunt served no purpose. Yes, we kissed. We could have just as well have let him find us arguing. It may have been better, actually, as it would show that we’re still just as committed to our beliefs and values as ever. Now, we just look like a pair of horny teenagers trying to cop a feel any chance we can get!” he finished angrily.

“Look,” Hamilton cut in, “as far as the public is concerned? We’re in love, and we are finally able to express it in public. It’s an invigorating feeling, and I don’t doubt that the American public will understand it. If anything, it’ll help us, especially you. You’re in love with me, Jefferson. You have been in love with me, and now you can act on it whenever you want.”

Thomas snorted. “In case all this has already gone to your head and messed with whatever’s left of your brain cells, I’m not actually in love with you. If I wasn’t forced by circumstances to do this, I can assure you that you’d have been the very last person I would have kissed. My list of kissable people goes George Clooney, then Anderson Cooper, then the world’s men, then the world’s women, then Mike Pence, then Donald Trump, then a swan, and then you.” He picked off his fingers as he listed.
“Swans tend to bite,” Hamilton said slowly, as though explaining something to a toddler.

Thomas glared. “And what does that tell you about my inclination to be near your mouth?” he retorted.

Hamilton rolled his eyes. “You agreed to this, remember?” he reminded Thomas.

Thomas growled. “I’m already beginning to regret that decision.”

Hamilton suddenly smiled gently. “Look, in the interest of this… charade, let’s agree to a temporary ceasefire. I’m sincerely sorry for calling you a liar and as quick on the uptake as a koala.”

Thomas forced a strained smile onto his lips. “No, you don’t.”

Hamilton’s smile twisted into something Thomas didn’t want to study too closely. “No,” he agreed, stepping on his toes to whisper the words into Thomas' ear. "Sometimes, I have dreams where I staple your fingers to your face."

Thomas flinched away almost out of habit. “If you have to insult me, at least come up with some original insults,” he snapped.

Washington groaned as he watched the back-and-forth. He put his head in his hands, silently wondering whether it was too late to back out now.

Chapter End Notes

Yay! There's a bit of Plot here! Tell us what you thought—we really appreciate it!
In which James Madison has a lot of feelings, nobody likes Alexander Hamilton, and we get to the ‘politics’ part of the Modern Politics AU. Also: the chapter where the authors do Over-The-Top research on Indo-American relations for shits and giggles.

Chapter by Sanna_Black_Slytherin

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Thomas rubbed his temples. He felt like his head was going to burst. He tried to shut out the shouts coming from all around him, but it was a futile effort.

He had been in a meeting with the Indian envoy for well over two hours, and so far, they had not shown an inkling of a will to cooperate. One of them, an old man with a beard longer than Hamilton’s ridiculous ponytail, seemed to be unable to go two minutes without insinuating that Thomas would burn in hell for being gay, and the rest of the emissaries weren’t much better. Well, except for the actual Indian ambassador, praise the Lord and all the saints, but she seemed content to lean back and watch as her fellow countrymen were ripping Thomas into shreds.

Frankly, Thomas was fucking fed up with it.

“I hope that we can all be professionals here,” Thomas began again.

One of the diplomats—Sarna—cleared her throat as she leaned forward. “With all due respect, Secretary Jefferson, how can we trust anything that comes out of your mouth when it has just been revealed that you’ve deceived your own people for months?”

“I fail to see how my personal life pertains to this discussion,” Thomas replied stiffly.

The person on Sarna’s left chuckled. “Mr Jefferson, do not pretend to be ignorant to the fact that India is not, shall we say, very warm to people who fornicate with others of their own gender.”

How curious, Thomas thought. The man knew the word ‘fornicate’, yet couldn’t put together a grammatically correct sentence if his life depended on it.

Then again, if Thomas was honest with himself, he couldn’t speak a word of Hindi, so he supposed that he shouldn’t start throwing around stones.

Sarna cleared her throat. “Yes, Mr Agarwal, thank you for the reminder of our country’s attitude towards homosexuality,” she said sharply. “Gentlemen, please leave us. I would like to speak to Secretary Jefferson alone.”

If the men were startled by her sudden request, they didn’t show it. Some tarried, and Agarwal even threw her an irritated look, but Sarna didn’t let herself be affected by those.

Once the door was shut behind Agarwal, Sarna leaned forward. She fixed Thomas with an intense look. “Our relations have certainly been somewhat cold in the decades before the turn of the century. You wouldn’t want to go back to that, would you? Especially not on account of something as trivial as your sexuality—but I will get to that in a moment,” she began. “The period when you opposed our nuclear development and we were forced to side with the Soviet Union was a sad period in both of our histories, but desperate times called for desperate measures. You weren’t innocent in that,
either: you failed to hand over Warren Anderson for criminal prosecution for the deaths of thousands of our civilians. Don’t pretend to be so innocent, Secretary Jefferson."

"I am not. We are not. We never claimed that we were entirely blameless."

The ambassador studied his face. "Yet you continue to give off the impression that you are," she said after a moment. "Do you know how grating your American holier-than-thou attitude is?" she asked idly.

Thomas was tempted to remind her that America wasn’t the one to conduct illegal underground nuclear tests close to the Indian-Pakistan border, but kept his mouth shut. It wouldn’t do to escalate an already-tense situation.

“The remaining sanctions were lifted by President Bush, and ever since, the relationship between our countries has been nothing if not flourishing. I see no reason to change that.”

The diplomat snorted. “Do you know that I got a call from President Kovind telling me that I would be wise to cease any and all negotiations with you, and wait until a more viable American negotiator is selected?” she suddenly said. “A lot of people, the president included, wouldn’t be happy if they knew I continued. In a way, I’m going against the president’s orders by even allowing this meeting to take place.

“My opinion of you has changed—not because you have come out as homosexual, Mr Jefferson,” she said indifferently, “but because you concealed that fact from everyone else. Was it not your boyfriend—Secretary Hamilton, was it?—who said that public servants owe their constituents and their business partners full transparency? Well, you have not delivered.

“But I am willing to look past that fact.” She folded her hands on the table.

“If?” Thomas raised an eyebrow, even as his stomach twisted in anxiety. This statement has never been preceded by anything good, and God only knew what she would ask for.

She drummed her finger against the tabletop, seemingly lost in thought, but Thomas knew that glint in her eyes. He had seen it before during many a different negotiation, and it never boded well for him. Whatever would come out of her mouth, Thomas doubted that he would like it.

“A larger strategic autonomy from you,” the diplomat said bluntly. “Allowing an increase to our nuclear arsenal—and no, don’t bother protesting, Secretary Jefferson. I know that you are more than capable of convincing the right people to agree to a change of any minute details in the Civil Nuclear Cooperation Initiative. Nothing changes on your part. Also, lowered taxes from imports of electronics and machinery.”

“And what does America get out of this agreement?” Thomas quirked a challenging eyebrow.

The diplomat looked up. “We don’t back out of a partnership with you, of course.”

Thomas’ smile was sharp as he replied, “Out of the question. If you want us to agree to this, you need to lower taxes on pharmaceutical and oil imports.”

The diplomat crossed her arms. “Work with me here, Secretary Jefferson,” she implored. “I don’t want to return home empty-handed.”

“I already am,” Thomas shot back. “I’m willing to give you more leeway than any other person the president might choose to send in my place. God forbid he sends John Jay.” Thomas shuddered internally. “Do you know what I think, Mrs Sarna? I think that President Kovind didn’t ask you to
pull out. I think he asked you to press me for as many advantages as you could—try to back me into a corner by playing good cop to his bad cop.” Sarna’s mouth thinned into a line, but she didn’t correct him. “Now, I’m willing to accept that deal, on one condition: India either needs to sign the Nonproliferation Treaty, or you are no longer allowed to participate in nuclear commerce. And there’s no way we are lowering taxes on machinery.” Hamilton would have his head if he allowed that to happen.

“Then we get restricted access to those of our civil resources under IAEA safeguards,” the diplomat shot back.

“Only under authorized IAEA supervision.”

“I’m trying to promote national interests within a multi-polar world.”

“So am I,” Thomas retorted. “I’m thinking in terms of both of our countries’ interests. You’ll find that I am quite accommodating to India’s core national interests, and willing to acknowledge your outstanding concerns.”

Sarna leaned back in her chair, a position strangely reminiscent of the way she sat earlier. She bit her lip, staring up at Thomas thoughtfully. “I think it is doable,” she said finally, “but let me clear it with Kovind first.”

For the first time that day, Thomas felt something akin to hope. “I wouldn’t expect anything less, ma’am.”

■ ■

“Secretary Jefferson, Speaker Madison is waiting in your office,” Sally said as soon as Thomas entered. “He wants to see you.”

Thomas stopped. He furrowed his brows. “Madison? James?” he asked hesitantly, not daring to get his hopes up quite yet.

Sally nodded. “Yes, sir.”

Thomas blinked twice. “What does he want?” he asked.

“He didn’t say.”

Thomas took a moment to take a deep breath and calm his nerves. “And how long has he been waiting?”

“Roughly fifteen minutes, sir,” Sally replied.

Thomas nodded. “This is fine, this is completely fine,” he muttered as opened the door.

“Hello, Thomas.”

There was James, sitting on the couch, flipping through a binder with a label Thomas couldn’t read. He couldn’t help but wonder if that was on purpose.

A pause. “So I see that I’m no longer persona non grata in the GOP?” Thomas said lightly, raising an eyebrow. “Aren’t you scared that you’re going to ‘catch the gay’?” He made mocking air quotes.

James rolled his eyes. “We both know that’s not what this was about,” he said evasively. “You can’t ‘catch the gay’.”
Thomas snorted. “Tell that to Governor Pence.”

“Pence is a fuck-up and we both know it.”

“Then why did my own best friend stop answering my calls?” Thomas demanded. “Why was I alienated like I had fucking ebola?”

“Because you’re gay,” James said bluntly. “You’re a prominent figure in a political party that openly opposes any sorts of relationships but the most traditional ones, and you were just outing. Your career is, frankly, in flames, and I wasn’t about to get burned.”

“Do you hate me for it?” Thomas asked the same question he had asked Hamilton on that first day.

James shook his head. “Why would I?”

“You’re not disgusted? Not even a teensy-tiny bit?” Thomas challenged. “Doesn’t it weird you out that I like men—that I like the taut feel of their stiff muscles as I—”

“Thomas,” James cut him off brusquely. “We both know that I don’t like to discuss sex. I know what you’re doing; stop trying to purposefully wind me up.”

It was as if, with those words, the fight had gone out of Thomas. He slumped against the door, absentmindedly running his fingers through his curls. “It’s just—”

“I’m sorry that you had to go through this, but I won’t apologize for trying to save my own career. Your career is about to shatter into a million pieces, and there’s no point in me going down with you. But I don’t have to explain this to you: I’m sure you’ve already thought about this. You’re clever and ambitious. You would have done the same, were our positions reversed. It’s not about whether or not I consider you a friend; it’s about the political disadvantages that are associated with affiliating myself with you.

“Besides, I won’t lie: I needed to distance myself from you to reevaluate what I thought that I knew about you. I felt betrayed—I was angry that I had to find out that my best friend is gay and dating his political nemesis from a newspaper. And not just any newspaper, Thomas—the New York Post! And Hamilton? Are you serious? Out of every man on the planet, you just had to go with the one that nobody can stand? What could be cause of more damage to your reputation than you being gay? Dating Alexander Hamilton, that’s what! He—he’s the embodiment of everything we stand against!

“All of the sudden, not only are you gay—you’re gay and entangled with someone who is, objectively, the enemy! Your whole ideology is under fire, everything you’ve ever claimed to believe in is being questioned and torn to shreds, and for what? Does he have some sort of blackmail on you that I don’t know about? Talk to me, Thomas, because I don’t understand you!” James yelled. He paused to take a deep breath, red in the face. Thomas absentmindedly wondered when his asthma was going to kick in. It’s been five minutes without a single cough—that must be a personal record for James. “You know, everything else aside, I don’t even care that you’re gay, I care about the fact that you’re dating that dickwad.”

The room was silent for a moment as Thomas and James stared at each other in calculation.

“But I’m not going to just ditch you,” James said quietly. “You mean more than that to me. If you really thought that a two-decade long friendship means so little to me as to be unable to stand up in the face of a little adversity, I’m truly sorry that your faith in me is so low.”

Thomas stared at James’ diminutive figure for a moment, hating how awkward the moment felt. He hadn’t felt as uncomfortable around James since their first year in college, when they were
roommates and Thomas developed a small-yet-utterly-mortifying crush on him. That had been an uncomfortable year.

“How come I’m suddenly okay to be around?” Thomas asked, mostly out of a need for something to say.

James tilted his head. “The dust has settled, so to speak. People are suspicious, yes, but, surprisingly enough, they are remembering your otherwise stellar record. CNN might have helped a bit there,” he added with an amused smirk. “I don’t know whether you’ve been following the coverage of what Blitzen has taken to calling the Jefferson Gayfair”—Thomas spluttered—“but the sheer amount of mudslinging they’ve done seems to have convinced Fox News that you can’t be that bad a person if CNN still hates you despite being gay. That, in turn, led to—”

“The GOP being willing to give me a chance,” Thomas finished breathlessly. He could scarcely believe what he was hearing. For the first time in a week, he felt something akin to hope blossom up within him. He felt oddly giddy.

James grimaced. “I wouldn’t call it a ‘chance’ exactly,” he corrected Thomas. “Conservative voters aren’t going to want a gay president, no matter what else he has going for him, but the other politicians don’t seem quite brave enough to try to kick you down from the position of leadership quite yet. We will see what happens when election year rolls around, but for now, the consensus seems to be that as long I remain by your side to temper whatever ‘gay’ ideas you might have that would ‘ruin the reputation of our esteemed party’, you may stay.” James rolled his eyes in exasperation.

Thomas rolled his eyes. “Calling abstract concepts ‘gay’ is, frankly, absurd. Ideals and morals can’t be attracted to ideals and morals of the same gender. It’s idiotic,” he huffed before continuing, a bit of indignation in his voice. “And I’m not about to suddenly start supporting Hamilton’s asinine ideas just because I’m dating him. We’ve been dating for several months, in case you’ve forgotten, and I’m still me.” He gestured at himself. He hated to have to lie to his best friend, but desperate times called for desperate measures. Besides, it would only be until he could figure out how to end his ‘relationship’ with Hamilton without causing a massive backlash. “I’m not about to let him swoop me off my feet and take me to Camp Leftist Idealism.”

James stifled a smirk. “I hate to say it, but Ted Cruz seems to be under that exact impression.”

Thomas’ mouth fell open. “How is that man even real?” he demanded.

James shrugged. “Beats me. He’s slimier than Hamilton, and, no offense, but that says a lot.”

“None taken,” Thomas said automatically. He forced a smirk onto his face. “You know what they say: hate the sin, lo—feel affection for the sinner.” He was impressed with himself for being able to say those words without vomiting up his breakfast. It was an absurd concept to even consider: *Thomas Jefferson* in love with *Alexander Hamilton*. The hell would sooner freeze over.

The moment was ruined a second later by *who the fuck else* but Thomas’ fucking boyfriend.

“I’m going to kill you,” Hamilton growled as he swung open the door, storming into the office as though he owned it. He was glaring daggers at Thomas, but hadn’t, in all probability, noticed James yet. Sally stood in the doorway, an apologetic look on her face.

Thomas shrugged, a self-satisfied smirk on his face. “You can’t run for president with a homicide record.” He dismissed Sally with a sharp jerk of his head.
“I can't run for president period,” Hamilton snapped, no small amount of bitterness in his voice. “Your ancestors made sure of that.”

“My ancestors were slaves,” Thomas reminded him. “They hardly had a say as to the contents of our Constitution.” He tilted his head. “Out of curiosity, what did I do to piss you off this time?”

Hamilton’s eyes flashed dangerously. “You know exactly what you’ve done,” he hissed. “You’re a dirty, backstabbing, lying—”

“Of course I lie,” Thomas said easily. “That’s, like, 60% of politics, and I, love,”—Thomas flashed him a look that, meant for anyone else, would have been flirtatious, but, well, Hamilton—“I was born for politics. I have great hair and I love lying.”

“Your memes are worth as much as your ideas—that is, worthless,” Hamilton spat. He clenched his fingers into fists. Thomas gave him about fifteen seconds before he threw a temper tantrum.

"You know," James said slowly, glancing furtively between the two, "I think you've finally provided me with a definition of 'sexual tension'. Thank you," he added sarcastically. “Quick question: how have you two not killed each other yet?”

Hamilton started, swirling around to face James. Thomas rolled his eyes. For a certified genius, Hamilton could be so fucking oblivious. “Madison, I’m a delight to watch.”

“Ignore him,” Thomas advised.

“I wasn’t planning on doing anything else,” James assured him.

Hamilton crossed his arms, and there it was. The tantrum. “You fucking let India bully you into lowering our import taxes on electronics.”

Thomas shrugged. “To be fair, they did agree to lower theirs on pharmaceutical and oil imports.”

“More than that,” Hamilton went on, seemingly ignoring Thomas’ response, and wasn’t that just fucking typical, “you let them increase their nuclear arsenal!”

Thomas frowned. "How do you even know this stuff? It's still under wraps. It's classified."

Hamilton waved a hand dismissively. "It doesn't matter how I know it. What matters is how could you have allowed this to happen?"

"Doesn't matter how—" Thomas sputtered. "Of course it matters how you came to know this! It means that the State Department has a leak! I need to know who it is."

Hamilton crossed his arms. "There's no leak. Trust me, you'll be wasting your time looking for one.”

“How very touching, darling,” Thomas drawled condescendingly. “But I don't buy it.”

“And you’re missing the point, Jefferson!” Hamilton went on. “You’re looking to drive this country into financial ruin!”

“No, that one’s all on you, darling.”

Hamilton’s diminutive frame almost shook in anger. “You just love taking rules and breaking them into tiny little pieces and ignoring them, don’t you?”

“It says the person who wouldn't know a rule if he sat on it and it shattered,” Thomas shot back.
“Aren’t you precocious,” Hamilton drawled.

Thomas snorted. “And the award for the most fractious person of the week goes to Alexander Hamilton.”

James’ eyes were still flitting between the two men. An uncomfortable expression made its way onto his lips as he said, “Well, it’s clear that this is a quarrel best solved in private. I’ll just”—he made a helpless gesture at the door—”leave, shall I?”

“No!” Thomas made an abortive movement towards James, his hand wrapping itself around his friend’s wrist as if trying to physically stop him from leaving Thomas alone with Hamilton. “Don’t go.”

James quirked an eyebrow. “If you harbour any illusions that I’m going to stay here and watch you make out with your boyfriend—which is what this is inevitably going to result in, I see it now—you are sorely mistaken.”

Thomas glared at Hamilton. “No. Hamilton was just about to leave, wasn’t he?” he asked him pointedly.

“Dream on, you slimy bag of dicks,” Hamilton said heatedly. “I was just getting star—”

“Getting ready to leave.” Thomas pushed Hamilton through the still-open door to his office. It wasn’t exactly hard, considering the fact that Hamilton was, by the looks of it, severely underweight, while Thomas made a point to train at least twice a week. He closed the door and locked it behind him. He leaned against it as he shot James a satisfied smirk.

There was a bang on the door. “You can’t just shut me out!” Hamilton yelled from behind the door.

“I just did,” Thomas shot back. “I’m six foot three, and you’re five foot super tiny. You’re severely underweight, Hamilton. Moving you wasn’t exactly a difficult task. You should consider going outside every once in awhile. Maybe then, you might actually shape up.”

“And be as ostentatious as you are?” Hamilton snorted. “No, thank you. And, for your information, you’re six foot two. You Virginians and your goddamn imprecision,” he muttered just loud enough for Thomas, who was still leaning against the door, to be able to overhear.

“No need to sound so acrimonious.”

“No need for you,” Hamilton spat through the door, “to act like you’re fucking God’s gift to American politi—”

“Goodbye, Alexander!” Thomas yelled before turning around and rubbing his temples.

He looked up to see James, a look akin to horror on his face. “I’ve never really understood romance,” he admitted with a slight shudder, “but it must be some powerful stuff if it makes you willingly deal with that.”

Thomas sighed and ran a hand through his hair before pulling a bottle of wine from a drawer in his desk and offering a glass to James. “You’re telling me,” he muttered.

James took the drink and sipped as he took the seat across from Thomas. “Would you like to join me for dinner—say, Friday?” he asked abruptly. Thomas could’ve swore he saw something flicker in James’ eyes for a moment, and felt the overwhelming urge to punch himself—In all this mess, how had he forgotten that James had been separated from his closest friend, too? “And no, I don’t mean
that as in a date,” James continued dryly. “Just because you were a secretly gay Republican, doesn’t mean we all are.”

Thomas laughed. “Of course,” he replied.

James smiled at him and down the rest of his wine before standing and dusting off his coat. “Well then,” he said, “I’ll see you Friday, Thomas.”

“Friday,” Thomas agreed.

James was halfway out the door when he stopped. “Oh, and Thomas?” he added over his shoulder. “For the love of everything that’s holy, please don’t bring your boyfriend.”

Chapter End Notes

This is usually the part where we’d write something witty to get you to comment, but James Madison.
In which Thomas takes Alexander out on a date. Yes, it’s a French restaurant. Yes, Thomas orders what essentially amounts to fancy mac and cheese. No, Alexander isn’t impressed.

Chapter Summary

And Jemmy James Madison comes to dinner.

Chapter Notes

strap in, y'all. shit gets Wild.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The dinner went surprisingly well, all things considered. Once they got past the initial awkwardness—which, in itself, was killing Thomas, and he could have bet that James felt similarly on the issue—the conversation turned, unsurprisingly, to politics, and if there was one thing Thomas and James are good at, it was discussing politics.

Still, Thomas couldn't help but notice the sideways glances James would throw his way every now and again whenever he thought Thomas didn't see. They were harmless—merely questioning, really—but it was still infuriating.

Finally, Thomas had enough.

"Stop. Just stop," Thomas cut James off mid-rant about Senator Warren. He pushed away the plate, fixing James with a pointed look. "I know you're dying to ask me something.”

James shifted uncomfortably. “I don't know what you mean,” he replied smoothly, and if Thomas didn't know him as well as he did, he would be inclined to believe him.

As it was, Thomas merely raised an eyebrow. “If you're going to lie to me, put a little more effort into sounding convincing, will you?” he drawled. “I've known you for twenty-three years. I think I know by now how you look when you're itching to say something but aren't, for some reason.”

“That's the thing!” James burst out. “We've known each other for twenty-three years, Thomas! How is it that this is the first time I find out that you're gay? Couldn't you have told me? I know that we're Republicans and that our party isn't exactly open to challenging traditional values—which, in most cases, is great, because we do need those values to be able to remain who we are in this ever-changing society consumed by libertarian idealism—but you didn't truly think I'd cut you off?”

The lack of any response spoke louder than any words could have.

James sighed. He leaned forward, staring down at Thomas’ hand gripping the fork as if evaluating the danger level it posed. Finally, after what felt like hours, James reached out to cover Thomas’ hand with his palm.
Thomas let out a breath he hadn't realized that he was holding. He knew that James wasn't exactly fond of physical contact, and he knew how much this seemingly simple gesture must have cost his friend.

“I'm sorry,” he replied sincerely. “It just—it wasn't a big deal for me. I don't like to prioritize my love life over my career—that has always come first. It didn't seem to matter so much, especially when I don—didn't, for the longest time, even have a boyfriend. Or whatever you want to call Alexander,” Thomas tried to joke, but James merely frowned. Things sighed. “I'm sorry; I really am. I wish I could take back my decision not to tell you, but I can't. It honestly wasn't because I didn't trust you. I did—I do. It just wasn't important.”

James' eyes snapped down to their joined hands. Ever so slowly, he squeezed their hands. “I'm not going to tell you that it's okay, because finding out something so crucially important about your best friend since middle school from a gossip rag really isn't okay, but I'm going to get over it. I know that you regret it and that you wouldn't do it again—not that you could, since pretty much the entire world knows you're gay by now,” he added, a slight rebuke in his voice.

Thomas rolled his eyes. “Yes, James, if I ever find myself hiding my sexuality, I'll be sure to tell you first,” he drawled sarcastically.

James scoffed. “That also goes for if you and Hamilton decide to get married—and here are three words I never thought I'd utter in the same sentence,” he muttered quietly.

Thomas grimaced silently.

“But enough about that,” James changed the subject, suddenly well businesslike. “I'm sure you're interested in an update on what's going on inside the party.”

“Yes, please,” Thomas said immediately, hoping that he didn't sound as desperate as he felt.

If James’ chuckling was any indication, he didn't succeed. “Well, then.” James cleared his throat. “Let's begin with the disaster that is the Alabama senatorial election. Roy Moore…” James trailed off, a strange expression on his face. “He's even worse in person than on television.”

Thomas frowned. “Surely he can't be that bad?” he asked hopefully.

James sighed. “Thomas, I am not exaggerating when I tell you that Roy Moore, if elected, has the potential to destroy the credibility of the Republican Party.”

Thomas rubbed his chin. “Fuck,” he muttered under his breath.

“Exactly,” James agreed. He let out a deep breath, before glancing at Thomas again. “I hate to ask you this, and I sincerely hope that you won't be offended by this, but have you done anything that… might merit a sexual harassment scandal in the future?” he asked delicately. “I'm sorry that I have to ask, but I need to be certain that I can trust that you will not be anyone Roy Moore before we proceed,” he added hastily.

Thomas snorted. “James, as the entire civilized world knows by now, I'm gay. I don't make it a habit to approach any woman with those kinds of intentions in mind.”

“You of all people should know that women aren't the only victims of sexual harassment,” James said, a tone of reproach in his voice.

“I haven't assaulted anyone, James,” Thomas cut in, but his mind flickered back to that night, so long ago.
No. That was entirely consensual, he reminded himself. They’d both been sober, even. Thomas was fine.

“Okay,” James said with visible relief in his voice. “That’s good. You know,” he said conversationally, “I’m starting to think that, by the time the fallout from this MeToo affair has settled, we will find ourselves with quite a few empty spots in our party.”

Thomas blinked. “You mean to use this to weed through the bad eggs in the party?” He couldn't keep the incredulity from his voice.

James shrugged. “What better time?” he asked rhetorically. “We’ve been meaning to do it for a long time, but we never had the means or the excuse. I can't deny that a few new faces would be a fresh breath not only for our voters but also for ourselves. We represent the people, Thomas, the people and their constitutional liberties, but I can't help but notice that several of our fellow Republicans have forgotten that, only working to further their own interests.”

Thomas felt his lips split into a small smile almost despite himself. “And since it's most likely the same people who tend to harass subordinates—”

“I'm hoping to eliminate them all in one fell swoop, yes,” James finished smoothly.

They exchanged a knowing look, and this right here, this was what Thomas had missed—being able to communicate his thoughts by a mere glance, knowing that James would be able to understand what he meant and that Thomas wouldn't have to explain everything. This seamless partnership. He had been afraid that he had lost it irrevocably.

James finally broke eye contact, glancing down at the hand that was still covering Thomas’. Ever so slowly, as though afraid to break a spell, he withdrew his hand.

“I can't say that I disagree,” Thomas said approvingly. “Besides, the world could do with a few less Roy Moores or Al Frankens.”

“I thought you might think that.” James leaned back in his seat. “Unfortunately, that's not our only problem.”

Thomas sighed, feeling oddly as though James’ every word was aging him. “Let's hear it, then.”

—

“We’re going on a date, Alexander. Ever heard of one?” Thomas announced, entering the room, waving his arms dramatically for emphasis.

Alexander blinked owlishly, looking up from his laptop. Thomas couldn't help but think that he looked downright adorable as he absentmindedly chewed on the tip of a pen he wasn't even using, the corners of his mouth as ink-stained as his fingertips. “What?” he asked in bewilderment. “Why?”

Thomas rolled his eyes. “Because,” he said slowly, as if addressing a remarkably dull child, “we’re dating, you idiot. That’s what couples do.”

Alexander rolled his eyes. “Next thing you know, we’re going to be sharing a bank account and buying a dog,” he muttered under his breath.

Thomas smacked him over the head with the briefing he was holding. “Shut up and put on a shirt that doesn’t look like you bought it at Walmart in the nineties and have been sleeping in it ever since,” he snapped.
Alexander looked down at his, granted, slightly wrinkled shirt. “What’s wrong with what I'm wearing?” he asked.

“If you went on a date in that,” Thomas drawled patronizingly, “everyone would immediately know this whole thing is a fake.”

Alexander crossed his arms defensively. “And why is that?”

“Because I would never allow any boyfriend of mine to wear that shirt in public. Your”—Thomas waved his hands frantically—“I do what I want thing might have flown before, but it’s sure as hell not going to fly now. Now go change,” Thomas ordered, pointing down the hall in the direction of Alexander’s room.

“Fine, okay. Calm the fuck down, Tim Gunn,” Alexander mumbled as he shuffled off to his room.

“It figures you’d be such an uptight ass about clothes, considering how much time you've spent in the closet.”


“What?” Alexander snapped. “Have you finally decided that I can attend such an illustrious event in my own fucking shirt?”

Thomas made a show of pretending to gag. “As if,” he scoffed. “No. I’ve simply remembered that you haven’t done any laundry in three weeks”—he ignored Alexander's indignant protests of “I’ve been busy!”—“and that all of your shirts are covered in ink, espresso, and cheap curry. Now, go take a damn shower while I get you a sweater.”

“What? No!” Alexander let out a sound that suspiciously resembled a squawk. “I’m not wearing one of your purple monstrosities, and—”

“You lost the right to have an opinion on this when you began to resemble a hobo.” Thomas wrinkled his nose in disgust. “We’re not going to be seen together in public with you smelling like cheap take-out and looking like you just went dumpster-diving. Go. Shoo. I’ll have something for you when you get out.” Thomas all but shoved Alexander into the bathroom before turning back to his own closet.

Part of him wanted to have Hamilton wear the most ostentatious, obnoxious, garish sweater he owned, just to piss Alexander off.

But another part of him…

Another part of him wanted to live long enough to see if his career was actually in shambles and thus didn’t want to be murdered by an angry finance gremlin with an unhealthy caffeine addiction.

Ten minutes passed before there was knock on Thomas’ door. Thomas was honestly surprised Alexander had enough decency to knock instead of just barging in like he owned the place.

“Here,” Thomas said as he opened the door and tossed Alexander the sweater. He was about to turn around so he could change into something more appropriate for the occasion when his eyes landed on Alexander.

Fuck.

Thomas felt his heart stutter, just a bit.
Hamilton wasn’t *bad-looking* on any given day, not by any means, but Thomas had never thought of him as particularly *attractive*. It might’ve been the dark circles under his eyes that made him look like an overgrown raccoon, or the perpetually greasy hair that he never seemed to get around to washing, or even the fact that Hamilton just had the look of someone who didn’t entirely have their life together.

And yet, his eyes couldn’t help but linger on the sight of Alexander fucking Hamilton, standing before him dripping wet, clad in nothing but a towel.

Thomas swallowed, feeling oddly as though his throat was constricting. He felt the need to reiterate his former statement: *fuck*. He had *not* signed up for this.

Thomas tore his eyes away from the sight before him. He focused on Alexander’s face, scrunching his features up into an expression that he *hoped* conveyed ‘I am incredibly disgusted by this and definitely did *not* check you out fuck off’, before managing, “Put on some fucking pants, you heathen.”

Alexander, thank whatever deity that might be listening, seemed to buy Thomas’ look and didn’t comment on Thomas’ staring. “You know, for being gay, you sure don’t appreciate a stunning”—he twirled for emphasis, and Thomas averted his eyes because *nope*, he was so not doing this—”man when he's right in front of you.”

Thomas forced himself to snort in what he hoped was a condescending fashion. “Maybe it’s not me, it’s you.”

Alexander came to a sudden halt mid-turn. The abrupt movement caused the towel to slip slightly from Alexander’s hips, and why was Thomas so fixated on that stupid, *useless* piece of fabric?

Alexander feigned a gasp. “Thomas Jefferson, are you calling me *hideous*?” he pretended to clutch his heart. “What kind of a fake boyfriend are you?”

Thomas rolled his eyes. “The kind that will kick your ass if you don’t put on this sweater.”

“This better not be fucking *magenta*,” Alexander mumbled before sulking off to his room.

*Alexander’s* room. When had *that* happened?

Fuck Hamilton. Possibly literally.

That *dick* looked *too cute* in Thomas’ sweater. For one, the man was *tiny*. He looked like a kid playing dress-up and had to roll up the sleeves *four times* just to be able to use his hands. For two—and the fact there even *was* a two was a fucking *crime* in Thomas’ book—Alexander, against his protests, looked *really* good in purple.

And *damn*, Thomas was going to have to talk to Alexander's friend Mulligan because those pants fit *exactly* the way they were supposed to.

“Wow,” Thomas said, doing his best to keep his voice as dry and detached as possible, “You almost look like someone who lives in a first-world country.”

“*Ha ha*,” Alexander intoned flatly. “Is that an immigrant joke? Because if it is, I might have to punch you.”

“No, it's just crazy to see you without your hair coated with Severus Snape levels of grease,”
Thomas shot back.

Alexander threw a piece of paper at him because he was mature like that. “Where are we going, anyway? And don’t say—”

“It's a surprise.”

“I swear to God, Thomas, if you take me to get French food, I will personally escort you to hell.”

“Oh yes,” Thomas replied. “Because you know the way so well.”

“I lived with Laf for two years. I've had enough of French cuisine,” Alexander growled.

“Lafayette is more American than most natural-born citizens. Hell, I’d say he should be president some day, if it were possible,” Thomas said flippantly.

It seemed to have struck a nerve.

“Who even came up with the natural-born citizen clause? It seems to me that, if you come to America at age ten, or fifteen, or even twenty,” Alexander began, and Thomas felt himself rolling back his eyes so far that he was absolutely positive that he was going to be able to see his brain, “if you made the active choice to come to America and embrace this new nation and all that it entails, if you made that active choice and put in that much active effort and became involved in the political situation and actively tried to improve the lives of so many Americans—if they got into all of that and actively applied for a citizenship.”

“Alexander, please.”

“Now compare that to someone who just happens to be born in this country—who, through sheer coincidence—happened to be born American.”

“Alexander.”

“Are you honestly going to try to convince me that that person, who knows nothing about American politics, is more qualified—has more right—to be President of the United States than the immigrant who dedicated their life to improving American lives? In what universe is that fair?”

“Hamilton, I swear——”

“Isn’t America supposed to be the land of opportunity—a place where you can become anyone?”

“Are you fucking done?!” Thomas shouted. “Goddamn, man! This—this isn't the fucking Senate floor, it's my living room.”

“Yes, but——” Alexander tried to argue.

“Alex. The only person here is me, and we both know I think everything to come out of your mouth is utter horse shit, so you can stop campaigning for a second!” Thomas yelled, throwing his hands in the air before rubbing them over his face.

Alexander glared at him for a moment before sighed and raking a hand through his hair—a gesture that shouldn’t have been as endearing as it was.

“Do you know how it feels like to know that you're never going to be able to achieve your dream—the thing you want the most in the entire world, more than anything?” Alexander asked, his eyes ablaze. "I want to be president. I truly believe I would be good at it, and good for the country. I care
about the American people more than you fucks ever will. But I can't be president. I'm not eligible. Do you know how that feels?” he asked rhetorically, not expecting an answer.

Thomas stared at him for a moment. “Actually,” he said, “I do. You’re not the only one with big dreams, Alexander. You know that I was up for the Republican nomination—hell, everyone knew it. Somehow, I’d managed to make myself the forerunner in a race that had never been open to people like me. And now?” There was a long, distinct pause. “Now, there is no chance of that happening. I’ll be lucky if I make it out of this with my career intact, never mind in any sort of position of actual power. You can get out of this. You’re the youngest Secretary of the Treasury in history, for God’s sake. You? You’ll be fine. I’ll crash and burn.”

The two men stood in silence for a moment, absorbing and thinking over each other's words.

“Well then,” Thomas said, straightening his plum colored tie, “I believe we should get going. Our reservations are in thirty minutes.”

Alexander sighed and nodded. “Yeah,” he agreed, running a hand through his hair one last time. “Yeah. Let’s go.”

“Did you purposefully pick the most pretentious place you could think of, just to piss me off?” Alexander asked as they pulled into the parking lot.

Thomas glared at him. “The whole world doesn't revolve around you, you know,” he drawled. “And you call me self-absorbed.”

“That's because you are, Thomas,” Alexander said as he rolled his eyes.

“Is it so hard to believe that this place just has good food?” Thomas asked.

“With you? Definitely.”

Thomas huffed and stepped out of the car. “Hurry up, asshole,” he snapped, “This place is hell to get reservations for, and if we lose them because you made us late, I’ll tell the press about your stupid crush on Hayden Christensen.”

Alexander glared at him, even as he grabbed his hand. “You do that, and I’ll ‘accidentally’ let it slip that you, the illustrious, professional, put together Thomas Jefferson, spend all your time at home in purple, fuzzy pyjamas pants and ratty old bunny slippers,” he countered.

“I hate you,” Thomas muttered.

“Love you too, darling,” Alexander cooed, and they walked into the restaurant, hand in hand.

Thomas patently ignored how natural it felt.

“I swear, that stuff is just—just fancy kraft,” Alexander said with a sneer. “Cooked inside a flaming wheel of parmesan? What the fuck? Who even does that?”

“It is not,” Thomas argued. “It’s got white truffles on it! It’s—it’s—”

Alexander crossed his arms in a huff. “It’s overpriced mac and cheese, Thomas.” At Thomas’ look of outrage, he shrugged. “I’m simply calling it as I see it.”
“You uncultured heathen. This is a highly sophisticated dish which the European high society would kill for. It’s penne pasta cooked in a flaming parmesan wheel—”

“Mac and cheese,” Alexander drawled slowly, dragging out the words.

“—filled with cognac and topped with white truffles,” Thomas went on, ignoring Alexander’s interruption. “It’s not my fault you ordered spaghetti with spinach and garlic.”

“I like eating things I can pronounce, thank you very much,” Alexander retorted.

“Oh, like you don’t speak French,” Thomas scoffed.

“I don’t flaunt that fact like certain other people whose pronunciation isn’t even that good.”

Thomas glowered. “Just because you’re resentful—” he began haughtily but was cut off by a curt laugh.

“Oh, this isn’t resentment talking,” Alexander informed him mirthfully. “It’s reality. I’m being completely objective.”

“Lafayette told me that my French has improved by leaps and bounds,” Thomas protested, anger mounting.

“Yeah, improved. That doesn’t mean that it’s good. Newsflash: your French still sucks.”

Thomas’ eyes flashed. “Well, not everyone’s childhood was bilingual.”

“Don’t make this about me,” Alexander snapped.

“You already made it about you.”

“Just because I didn’t order a hundred dollar flaming pasta, which is definitely fancy mac and cheese—” Alexander began.

“And then you insulted me!” Thomas retorted

“And now you’re making a scene!” Alexander hissed.

Thomas felt his skin crawl but staunchly ignored it. “As if you don’t live for ‘making a scene’,” he scoffed.

“Not like this,” Alexander replied, his voice still low. “People will notice. We’re supposed to be in love.”

Thomas glared at him for a moment, before relenting. He slumped in his chair dramatically enough that the movement could have been used as an audition tape for Hamlet.

“Now,” Alexander started, easily grabbing Thomas’ hand from across the table. Thomas couldn’t help but admire Alexander’s acting skills. “Ostentatious pasta aside, how was your day?”

“You were there for most of it, you ass,” Thomas grumbled.

Alexander rolled his eyes. “Yeah, but we work in different offices,” he said as if it explained everything. “Plus, Washington called you into the Oval after the cabinet meeting. What was that about?”
Jefferson snorted at him. “Just because we’re together doesn’t mean I’m spilling confidential information to you, Alexander,” he said. “It’s… how to put it… above your pay grade.”

Alexander glowered at him. “But Thomas—”

“No, Alexander,” Thomas said, rolling his eyes again. All this time around Alexander had left him in a constant state of wanting to roll his eyes.

“You’re the worst,” Alexander griped, “And, just for your information? I actually grew up trilingual. I also speak Spanish.”

Thomas couldn’t help but feel a bit impressed. “Wow,” he said. “Now I know you can talk about me behind my back in three languages.”

“Did you not listen to me earlier?” Alexander retorted.

“I try not to,” Thomas mumbled under his breath, earning him a glare from Alexander.

“I told you that I’m fluent in seven languages,” the man stated, pride evident in his voice.

“Seven?” Thomas asked incredulously, “I thought you said—”

Alexander shrugged. “You cut me off before I could get to Russian.”

“No,” Thomas said, “I’m calling bullshit. That—that’s definitely bullshit.”

“You’re bullshit,” Alexander shot back.

“Anyone who uses ‘you’re bullshit’ as a comeback cannot be fluent in seven languages,” Thomas snapped.

“And why is that?”

“Because, between seven languages, there must be thousands of better replies than you’re bullshit!” Thomas said, throwing his hands in the air.

Alexander stuck out his tongue in a characteristic display of immaturity.

Thomas groaned. He put his face in his hands. “I’m dating an actual six-year-old,” he muttered. “What have I done to deserve this?”

“You want that list in alphabetical or chronological order?” Alexander shot back.

“I must have been a horrible person in my last life,” Thomas went on, squeezing his eyes shut, a pained expression on his face.

“You wouldn’t doubt it,” Alexander replied flippanly.

“I’ve probably killed someone. Probably also tortured several people.” Thomas dug his fingers into his curls. “Nothing short of supporting slavery could have merited this level of punishment—and even then, I must have actively held slaves.” He opened his left eye briefly to glare at Alexander.

Alexander scoffed. “Don’t be such a drama queen, love. Save it for the cameras.”

Thomas whipped his head around, fear suddenly shooting up his spine. There were cameras? Here? He’d chosen this place, partly because they had great wine and fucking amazing food, and partly
because they had a strict ‘no paparazzi’ rule.

“Thomas. Thomas, babe, _look at me,_” Alexander rushed to say. “It was a _joke_, man. There are no cameras. It’s fine.”

Thomas visibly relaxed, running a hand through his curls. “_Fuck,_” he mumbled.

Alexander squeezed his hand—at some point, he’d taken it again, and Thomas hadn’t even noticed. “I’m sorry,” he said. “That was a real dick move, I shouldn’t have mentioned it—”

“What.”

It came out as more a statement, as if Thomas was too shocked to even use the proper inflection necessary to say it as a question.

“‘What’ what?” Alexander asked, clearly confused.

“Did you just… _apologize_?” Thomas asked.

“Yes?” Alexander asked, becoming more uncertain of himself. “Is that, like, a big deal?”

“You… just _apologized_… to _me_,” Thomas said slowly, as if he was struggling to comprehend the concept.

Alexander blinked. “It’s not the end of the world.”

“I’ve never heard you apologize,” Thomas intoned. “To anyone. Especially not to me. This is cause for a national holiday or something,” he grinned.

Alexander rolled his eyes. “It’s not a big deal.”

“Don’t worry. I won’t tell anyone. Wouldn’t want to besmirch your reputation of being an insensitive asshole.”

“You’re a dick,” Alexander snapped.

Thomas smirked. “Yet another comment that proves you can’t possibly know seven languages,” he drawled. He motioned to a waiter—a man dressed in a garish outfit that only Alexander Hamilton would consider appropriate formal attire—and whispered something into his ear.

The man nodded. “Yes, sir. Right away, sir.”

Alexander blinked. “What did you order?” he demanded.

Thomas allowed himself a small smirk. “The dessert.”

Alexander rolled his eyes. “Let me guess—it’s some sort of ridiculously overpriced French ice cream.”

“It’s not ice cream,” Thomas protested.

Alexander scoffed. “I see you’re not denying that it’s overpriced French garbage.”

“It’s not _garbage_.”

“Keep telling yourself that, asshat,” Alexander shot back.
Thomas pouted. “Don’t diss crème brulée. Besides, we’re at a five-star French restaurant, darling. Everything is overpriced and French.”

“Hah!” Alexander all but shouted triumphantly. “So you do admit it’s overpriced.”

“Not if you consider the quality of the food,” Thomas retorted. “You know what? I’m not going to argue with you about this. We both know that your taste buds have pretty much been killed by the sheer amount of black coffee you consume daily. You’ve lost your cuisine criticizing privileges.”

Alexander gaped. “That’s ridi—That’s not how it works!” he burst out.

Thomas smirked as he leaned back in his chair, watching as Alexander started off on another rant. Alexander really was something else entirely—and entirely too much fun to rile up.

They arrived back at the house at around nine, both of them apparently unsure of what to do next. For a moment, they simply stood in the living room, awkwardly toeing the carpet, before Alexander finally said, “That was… nice.”

Thomas swallowed. He fiddled with the keys. “Yeah,” he agreed. “I guess it was.”

“We should… do it again sometime?” Alexander asked, scratching the back of his head.

“Oh, yeah. Sure,” Thomas muttered. “I should, y’know, get to bed. I’ve got meetings tomorrow—important stuff, way above your pay grade—and I need to be well rested, so…”

Alexander was nodding so fast that Thomas was half sure he was going to snap his neck. “Sounds good,” he replied quickly. “I have stuff, too—not that you would understand any of it, you have the fiscal sense of a half-eaten bagel—and I need to do some writing and, um, other stuff, so good night, I guess.”

“Good night,” Thomas said before turning and all but sprinting away from the suffocatingly awkward situation in the room.

He locked the door to his room the second he was inside, eternally grateful that he had his own attached bathroom so he wouldn’t have to leave the comfort of his own room for the rest of the evening.

It had been nice. It’d been nice to sit opposite of Alexander, to argue about inane matters with no pressure on either of them to impress the other, with no expectations to do well, with no consequences.

It’d been nice to have a discussion with someone—besides James—who could match him tit for tat.

He shouldn’t have enjoyed Alexander Hamilton’s company, but he did.

What the fuck.

Chapter End Notes
hey, yell at us, please.

-gabe
In which Alexander is a disaster. That’s it, that’s the chapter, guys.

Chapter by Sanna_Black_Slytherin

Chapter Summary

Alexander makes bad life choices. So does Thomas.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“Here,” Thomas said, handing Alexander a pan and a package of ground beef. “Brown this.”

“Huh?” Alexander asked, the look of unadulterated confusion on his face undeniably cute.

“Cook the meat in the pan. Cut it into little pieces with the spatula. Tell me when it's all brown,” Thomas replied with faux exasperation.

Alexander huffed and turned back to the stove.

He dropped the meat into the pan and turned the burner on high.

“What are you doing?” Thomas asked, turning the heat down to medium. “Are you trying to burn ou-the house down?”

“I'm cooking it!” Alexander protested.

“You’re—” Thomas sputtered. “You’re defacing it! Vandalizing! Cooking isn't all about getting it done quickly! It has to be done well!”

Alexander stared at him for a moment before turning back to the stove and grumbling, “That just seems inefficient.”

Thomas huffed. “Cook on medium. Try not to kill yourself, or my food.”

Alexander muttered something under his breath about killing something of Thomas' other than his food, and angrily pushed the meat around with a spatula.

“You have to drain it,” Thomas said once the meat was brown enough to meet his standards.

“What?” Alexander asked, his eyebrows scrunched together in a way that inexplicably reminded Thomas of a caterpillar.

“The grease. You have to drain it,” Thomas explained slowly.


Thomas handed him a spoon. “Just spoon out the grease and put it in this jar,” he ordered. “Don't spill it.”
“Thanks, asshole,” Alexander snapped. “I never would’ve guessed you’re not supposed to spill it.”

He spilled it. Not only did he spill it, he spilled it all over his left hand, shrieking and immediately running over to the icebox.

“Alexander, stop!” Jefferson yelled, grabbing him by the back of his collar. “Do they teach you anything in the Caribbean? You don't put ice on a burn!”

“I'm ignoring that blatant racism because I'm in extreme pain,” Alexander hissed through his teeth.

Thomas rolled his eyes and turned on the tap, making sure the water was just the right side of lukewarm before shoving Alexander's hand under the stream. “Don't move,” he ordered, “I'll get you a bowl to stick your hand in when your arm gets tired. And you don’t put ice on a burn because you’ll just make it worse with adding frostbite to the list of injuries, and then you’ll have wished you only had a burn.”

Alexander glared at him, but nodded.

“What kind of pizza do you like?” Thomas asked as he pulled a stainless steel bowl from a cabinet.

“Why?”

“Because you dumped the meat all over the floor, so now, we can't have tacos,” Thomas explained slowly, as though talking to a five-year-old.

“Oh,” Alexander replied. “Um, Hawaiian?”

Thomas gagged. “We're getting half pepperoni, half supreme, and if you ever mention putting pineapples on pizza again, I’m throwing you out of my house,” he said snobbishly.

“Of course you'd be one of those people,” Alexander sneered. “Acting like pineapple has defiled pizza, as if it hasn't already been defiled.”

“People who spill boiling grease all over their hands don't get to have opinions,” Thomas snapped.

“Oh, fuck you,” Alexander countered. “People who frequently wear magenta waistcoats don’t get to have opinions, but that’s never stopped you.”

“Leave my fashion choices out of this,” Thomas replied. “At least all my clothes are clean!”

“Mine are clean too!” Alexander protested

“Only because I make you wash them!” Thomas shouted, taking a step closer to Alexander.

The man looked about to fire back a response when his face screwed up and he hissed in pain. “Shit,” he muttered. Thomas noticed that Alexander had hit his burned hand on the edge of the sink, and had to remind himself not to feel sorry for the little imp, even if his hand was red and blistered and looked really fucking bad.

“Maybe we should go to the emergency room,” Thomas suggested. Hamilton bit his lip and shook his head.

Thomas suddenly had the overwhelming urge to wrap him up in a hug and force him to take better care of himself.
He ignored it.

“Alexander fucking Hamilton, if we don’t go and you spend the next two weeks whining about being unable to type, I’m feeding you to Washington’s dogs,” he said instead. “I’m sorry that I put it as a question. We are going.”

“But—”

“No buts. I’m going to get some gauze and bandages, you’re going to call Washington and tell him you might not be able to come in tomorrow. Lord knows we could all use a break from your incessant yapping,” Thomas said before turning and all but fleeing from the room.

Alexander’s hand required prescribed burn cream, many bandages that needed changing daily, and disuse for at least a week.

Of course, Alexander Hamilton being Alexander Hamilton, that particular piece of advice went out of the window as soon as Alexander got out of the hospital. Thomas glanced at his boyfriend, rolling his eyes at his antics, before snatching the phone from Alexander’s hands, ignoring the yelps of indignation.

“No,” he said sternly. “The doctor said not to strain your hand, and I know you. I’ve figured out that whole ‘but I just need to finish this one sentence’ thing you’ve got going on. That sentence turns into a paragraph, which turns into a fucking trilogy. You don’t get your phone until you prove that you can use it responsibly—and no, the whole argument about how medical advice doesn’t apply to you because you’re superior to everyone else isn’t going to cut it here, love.” The grin Thomas gave Alexander wouldn’t have looked out of place on a shark.

“But—” Alexander began.

Thomas pressed a finger to his lips, effectively silencing him. “Shhh. I don’t want to hear it, so stop whining. Seriously, I’ll literally confiscate your computer if you don’t give it a rest.”

Thomas Jefferson @TJefferson

@twitter What have you DONE?

It was one of those rare days when Thomas had been caught up with his work for the time being, and had a few hours of free time. As was his wont, he was stretched on the couch, reading a worn-out copy of *Gulliver's Travels*, determined to finally finish the book while he still had time—before Alexander would inevitably interrupt him with some inane detail that needed fixing, or some obstacle that needed to be overcome. Honestly, how that man had made it to—what was Hamilton again? twelve?—was beyond Thomas’ comprehension.

Besides, the fact that Thomas hadn’t read the book yet was, according to James, nigh-on a crime
against humanity. He had said so himself, if not in as many words.

Suddenly, Thomas heard the rustling of fabric somewhere above him, and saw, out of the corner of his eyes, Alexander brush past him, a flurry of movements. Even when he was in the privacy of Thomas’ home, Hamilton was a hurricane, sweeping up everything and every one around him into a whirlwind of chaos. In the confines of his mind, Thomas was beginning to reconsider his initial assumption that Hamilton’s behavior was only to put on a show. An increasingly more plausible, and not a little terrifying, possibility was that this was simply who Hamilton was.

Thomas glanced up from the book when he heard the sound of boots echoing against the marble floor of the foyer. “Hey, where are you going?” Thomas called after Alexander’s retreating back.

Alexander turned ever-so-slightly, fixing Thomas with a glower, even as he was putting on his ridiculous green coat. “You’re not my mother,” he shot back. “I don’t need to report all of my movements to you.”

“No, but I am supposed to be your boyfriend,” Thomas reminded him, ignoring Alexander’s inarticulate scoff, “and I’d rather not find out that you’ve been gruesomely murdered from a gossip magazine when they call me for a comment.” He sat up, watching as his boyfriend got dressed, and nope, this was so not the direction in which his thoughts should be going.

Alexander snorted. “Woah, morbid much?” he taunted. “And I hardly think that I’m going to get murdered by books.”


Alexander rolled his eyes. “Yes, books,” he said slowly, as if talking to a small child. “Bundles of paper with words in them. You’re holding one right now.”

Thomas rolled his eyes. “I know what a book is,” he snapped. “But why are you—“

“Despite your beliefs to the contrary, your collection of books does not, in fact, include all books relevant to a long and prosperous life. I’m going to the library.”

Thomas looked down at *Gulliver’s Travels*. He suddenly came to a decision, bookmarked the page, and closed the book. “Then I’m going with you,” he said resolutely, standing up.

Alexander gaped. “You are not,” he immediately refused. “I don’t need a chaperone.”

“Um, yes, you do,” Thomas drawled. He moved to the hall, and made quick work of putting on his shoes and his jacket—which was very much fashionable, Alexander, thank you very much.

Alexander made another sound that sounded vaguely derisive. “If you think that you’re just going to stalk me to the library, you’re very much mistaken.”

Thomas fixed Alexander with a challenging look. “And what are you going to do to stop me?” An eyebrow shot up past Thomas’ hairline. “Talk me to death?”

“If that’s what it takes,” Alexander said vehemently. “I’m not going to have my reputation tarnished by your presence.”

The other eyebrow rose to join the first one. “You could do with far worse than me,” Thomas told him. “We’re both bibliophiles—and if you think you’ve read more books than I have, you’re sorely mistaken—and you’ve already tied yourself to me when you agreed to date me.” He paused. “Fake date me, that is,” he amended.
Alexander scrunched up his nose. “You’re obnoxious.”

“Takes one to know one,” Thomas shot back seamlessly.

“I’m a little bit obnoxious; you, on the other hand, are a level of obnoxiousness of hitherto inconceivable standards.”

Thomas scowled. “And this is why I’m the gentleman of this relationship. At least I don’t insult my significant others without cause.”

“Yes, you do. And I’m pretty sure that you get hard just by thinking about mac and cheese.”

Alexander crossed his arms. “So there.”

Thomas stared incredulously at Alexander’s self-satisfied smirk. “What on Earth are you even talking about?” How had they even gotten to this subject?

One of those days, Thomas was going to cut into Hamilton’s brain to see how it worked, because every second listening to Alexander prattle left him dizzy and more than a little unsettled.

Alexander shot Thomas a challenging, who scrunched up his nose in disgust. “If a fight is what you want, I literally have evidence of you jerking off to your debt plan,” he all but growled. “Trust me, if I’m going down, you’re going to be right there with me.”

Alexander’s expression shifted into a shit-eating grin. “Sorry to inform you, my dear Mr Jefferson, but I’m more of a topper, really—and you’re not exactly my type.”

Thomas flushed. “That’s not—I wasn’t—What is your type?” he asked, mainly to save himself from the fumbling and stuttering that was sure to follow.

If Alexander was thrown off-balance with the question, he didn’t let it show. “Not assholes.”

“In other words, you wouldn’t date yourself,” Thomas retorted.

Alexander shrugged. “Can you imagine what a world where there’s more than one of me would look like?”

Thomas shuddered. Now that was an image he didn’t need in his head.

“Now, if you’re quite done being a dick, mother,” Alexander said condescendingly, “I’m going to the library, so kindly fuck off.”

Thomas scoffed. “After having endured all of this? There’s no way I’m letting you go to the library by yourself.”

Alexander glowered, before he seemed to come to a sudden decision. “Fine,” he snapped. “Come with me, but don’t whine when you’re bored.”

“You really don’t know me if you think I could be bored in a library,” Thomas shot back.

“Also, I don’t want you alienating the librarian,” Alexander warned, “so if you have any problems with the selection of books, kindly keep them to yourself.”

“The things I do for you…” Thomas trailed off with a dramatic sigh.

“You don’t do them for me,” Alexander cut in. “You do them for yourself.”
With that, he opened the door and stepped outside, ignoring Thomas’ protests. He considered slamming the door in his boyfriend’s face, but decided against it. He needed the infuriating yet inexplicably handsome Virginian on his side if he was going to get his bill through the House.

“Rude,” Thomas said once he had caught up with Alexander.

“Something you should be familiar with, then.”

Thomas shook his head. “You’re unbelievable, you know that?”

There was something odd in his voice, something Alexander couldn’t place. When he chanced a glance at Thomas’ face, his lips were curled up in a tiny smile. What surprised Alexander was that it wasn’t angry or mocking or patronizing, as Thomas’ smiles tended to be. No, the sharp edge was gone, and in its place was… something.

It was different, but Alexander would be lying if he said that he didn’t like it.

He quickly shook himself of such a, frankly, blasphemous thought. “C’mon, Jeffershit,” he said instead, rolling his eyes and biting his cheeks to prevent a grin of his own, “We’ve got a library to visit.”

DC Public Library @dclp
The DC Public Library would kindly like to remind all of its visitors that shouting of any form, however justified, is not allowed on the premises of the library.

DC Public Library @dcpl
We would also like to ask @POTUS to please control his staff.

DC Public Library @dcpl
And finally, we’d like to inform @POTUS that he still owes $4967.20 in overdue book fees. We would appreciate if they were paid.

“My God, would you just be quiet?” Thomas shouted as he slammed the front door and threw his keys into the bowl.

“I’ve never been able to shut up before, why start now, when everyone is listening?” Alexander yelled back.

“You—God, do you hear yourself?” Thomas shot back, standing toe to toe with the immigrant.

“What did you want me to do, Jefferson?” Alexander spat. ”They shoved a microphone in my face and asked a question!”

“You didn’t have to answer!” Thomas snarled

“Of course I did!” Alexander screamed. “I wasn’t—I wasn’t going to stand there useless! Of course I’m going to say I disagree with conversion therapy! Of course I’m going to condemn anti-gay hate crimes! In case it has escaped your notice, Jefferson, I’m gay!” Alexander took a moment, simply glaring up at Thomas with something like disgust in his eyes. “The real question is, why are you upset? I know you hate it just as much as I do! What’s the big deal if I say we’re both horrified by the
murder of a thirteen year old girl at a pride parade, huh? Tell me!”

“Everything you say?” Thomas snarled. “It all reflects on me. Yes, it was terrible. Horrible, even. I hate it, and I hope that he burns in hell for it. But when you stand on the White House lawn and say that neither of us are going to tolerate homophobia of any kind? That’s not okay! Do you know how much of my party you just completely alienated?”

Alexander’s eyes flashed with anger. “If your colleagues are going to abandon you because I spoke out against hatred, then you need to find new colleagues.”

“I can’t!” Thomas retorted. “I can’t afford to pick and choose my allies anymore! I have to take what I can get, and what you just did? I’d be surprised to have enough supporters to get elected as a shit scooper!”

“Then—”

“There is no then, Hamilton,” Thomas growled. “For all your lectures on my need to think of others, you sure as hell don’t give a damn about me.”

“If you’d help me get my bill through the House, you’d have an ally in me—along with a lot of Democrats”

“Did it not occur to you that I don’t actually want to whore out my values for a bit of popularity?” Thomas retorted. “If I’m going down, so be it, but I will not be remembered as the man who betrayed his values just so that he would be able to stay for a little longer.” He sighed. “Look, no matter how much you beg, I can’t, in full conscience, support your debt plan,” Thomas said resolutely.

Alexander crossed his arms mutinously. “And why not?” he retorted.

“Why?” Thomas floundered for a moment. “For starters, no one likes taxes, and particularly not an increase in taxes.”

Alexander snorted. “You mean your rich benefactors don’t like an increase in taxes,” he corrected. “And if you’d read the damn thing, you’d know that it actually gives low- to mid-income families a tax cut. Isn’t that supposed to be your voter base?”

Thomas gaped. “You—!” he finally exclaimed, frustration evident in his voice. “It’s not about my ‘rich benefits’,” he made air quotes, “not that I have any. I’m not bribable.” Not anymore, at least.

“That’s not a proper word.”

“You get my point.”

“Well, I don’t believe you,” Alexander said skeptically.

“And I don’t care that you don’t believe me. I’m telling you the truth. Besides,” Thomas tried another approach, “doing taxes is already difficult, and you’re only making it harder.”

Alexander huffed. “You know, this discussion would be more productive if you’d actually read what you’re so set on being against, because it’s painfully obvious that you haven’t even opened it,” he drawled. “If you’d done that, you’d know that the plan significantly simplifies doing taxes.”

“Oh, really?” Thomas crossed his arms to mirror Alexander’s. “And how would you do that?” he challenged.
Alexander’s grin was sharp—dangerous. “I’m glad you asked,” he chirped. “You know, the Swedes have this system where they just open this app, you log in, you review how they’re doing with taxes and whether they have to pay an additional amount of money or get money back, depending on how the economy is currently, and then you press accept. I’ve been told that the whole process takes less than five minutes. They don’t have to file papers; they can do it all online.” The expression on his face could only be likened to a cat that had caught the canary. “How’s that for simple?”

Thomas scoffed. “It figures you’d fall for a socialist, Scandinavian.”

“And what is that supposed to mean?” Alexander demanded.

“Exactly what you think it means.”

“You’re such a dick,” Alexander snapped. “If I stay here any longer I’m going to resort to violence, so I’m going to get coffee. Don’t wait up. Asshole.”

He grabbed his coat and stormed out of the house, leaving Thomas to stare blankly after him.

---

_Merida_ @TJefferson
@AdotHam Please pick up conditioner while you're out. Someone used all of mine.

_Alexander Hamilton_ @AdotHam
INNOCENT UNTIL PROVEN GUILTY @TJefferson

_Merida_ @TJefferson
@AdotHam You said it, not me. Also, answer your goddamn phone, because I’d rather not have to talk about domestic matters on Twitter. I don’t want to resort to Twitter to get you to pick up toiletry essentials.

Chapter End Notes

Hey

Feel free to yell at us
“You’re going to ruin America because I drank Putin’s vodka.”

Chapter Summary

In which Thomas realizes that he’s actually honest to God dating Hamilton, shit shit shit.

Chapter Notes

!!WARNING!!
things get a Bit Steamy here. not Super steamy, but... be wary.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“No, no. No. I refuse,” Alexander argued.

“You can’t just refuse,” Thomas scoffed, “What are you, seven?”

“Well, at least I’m not an elitist, francophilic, oblivious, entitled—”

“I just want mac and cheese, Alexander.”

Alexander glared at Thomas. “You always want mac and cheese!” he shouted as he threw up his arms in the air. “All we have in our cart is mac and cheese, tomatoes, vanilla ice cream, and wine!”

“Why don’t you go pick something out then, huh?” Thomas snapped.

“Because the last time we separated in a grocery store, you went home without me!” Alexander reminded him.

Thomas folded his arms over his chest. “Well,” he drawled, “I guess I’ll just have to come with you.”

“You’ll just whine the whole time!”

“It’ll give you a taste of your own medicine,” Thomas said sharply before dropping four more boxes of mac and cheese in the cart.

Alexander groaned before tugging Thomas along. “Come on,” he said insistently. “I’ve heard that salad’s good. And potatoes. And meat. And literally anything but mac and cheese,” he added pointedly.

Thomas rolled his eyes. “You’re not exactly helping your case.”

“I’m going to lock you in the freezer if you don’t follow me,” Alexander threatened, tugging at Thomas’ sleeve like an impatient child.

Thomas huffed and followed the little gremlin through the store.
For their one month anniversary, Thomas declared that they were going to watch a movie—mostly because watching Alexander work himself into an early grave was by no means fun. Alexander protested, and Thomas overruled said protests. Thomas put on *The Shawshank Redemption*, Thomas’ all-time favorite movie.

Thomas passed Alexander a glass of wine. Alexander stared at it suspiciously. Thomas rolled his eyes. “I’m not going to poison you,” he informed Alexander. “Look”—he took a sip of his own wine—“it’s perfectly safe.”

“You mean *your* glass is perfectly safe,” Alexander muttered.

Thomas scoffed. “You’re being ridiculous, but fine. Let’s trade.” He deftly switched the glasses. “Drink,” he ordered.

Alexander sniffed the wine but drank obediently. He made a satisfied hum. “This is good,” he conceded.

Thomas let a small smile curve his lips. “Of course it’s good. It’s Chardonnay from 1987, after all,” he said primly, as though speaking about one of the seven wonders of the world. “Then again, I wouldn’t expect you to know your wines, considering the sludge you frequently consume. Remind me why I’m wasting perfectly good wine on someone of your tastes?” he asked rhetorically.

“Because you’re a pretentious fuck who can’t help but show off, even to his fake boyfriend,” Alexander replied immediately. He drained the rest of the glass.

Thomas sighed. “You don’t drink it like it’s a shot,” he told Alexander as he refilled the glass. “You’re *supposed* to drink it with dignity.”

“Bullshit,” Alexander said, but he followed Thomas’ advise.

They settled on the couch. As soon as the movie started, Alexander’s eyes became glued to the screen. Thomas didn’t know whether Alexander had never seen the movie or whether he simply enjoyed picking apart every single scene, and he didn’t care enough to ask.

Somehow, without Thomas noticing, Alexander’s head had come to rest on Thomas’ shoulder. Thomas found that he didn’t mind as much as he probably should. It was as if a spell had fallen over them.

Alexander suddenly giggled hysterically. Thomas blinked, looking away from the screen to stare down at Alexander in consternation. “Are you okay?” he asked.

Alexander waved away Thomas’ concerns. “It’s just”—he hiccupped—“occurred to me that this”—he gestured at himself and Thomas—“is both ironic and really, really hilarious.”

Thomas rolled his eyes. “Just watch the movie, nerd.”

It was relaxing, in a way. *The Shawshank Redemption* was a movie he had seen too many times to count, both with his siblings and with James. Watching it was a comforting familiarity in a reality that was changing too fast for Thomas to be able to keep up.

Thoughts were flashing through his mind. Thomas let them. It was cathartic to let his mind wander freely after a day—after a month—as arduous as this.

In the background, Andy was holding a passionate speech, a glare in his eyes. Thomas didn’t have to listen to the dialogue to know which scene they were watching. It was nice.
Thomas chanced a glance at Alexander, who was still halfway curled up against Thomas as he was babbling on about something in regards to the movie. Frankly, Thomas didn’t know what he was saying, and he doubted whether Alexander himself knew.

He was adorable, Thomas realized.

The thought lingered, even as Thomas tried to dismiss it.

A single lock of hair was sticking to his forehead. Thomas frowned. He brushed it out from Alexander’s eyes, before deciding to comb through Hamilton’s hair. He stilled as he heard a soft moan escaping from Alexander’s lips. He glanced down at Alexander, who wasn’t even pretending to pay attention to the movie at this point—his eyes were glazed over, the expression on his face the embodiment of pure bliss. Thomas wasn’t sure whether he hadn’t misheard it. Maybe he was drunker than he thought. He shrugged. There was only one way to test it. Thomas repeated the movement, and the sound came again.

A smirk crept up onto Thomas’ lips. Oh, this was a very interesting development.

Slowly, Thomas repeated the movement, watching in fascination as Alexander’s breath hitched with every stroke. Alexander nuzzled his head into Thomas’ hand, seeking more contact.

Somehow, without Thomas noticing it or even seemingly doing anything, their mouths had bridged the distance. Alexander’s lips brushed against Thomas’, his breath smelling faintly of alcohol (and really, was Alexander that much of a lightweight? He couldn’t have drunk more than two glasses of wine).

Ever so slowly, Thomas’ lips parted, giving way to Alexander’s persistent demands.

It felt seamless, as though that was the natural progression of things, as though that was how this—the indescribable thing between them—was always going to end, except that was wrong because this was Hamilton he was thinking about, Hamilton he was kissing, and he should stop it before they cross a line they won’t be able to return from, except it suddenly seemed like that line had been crossed a long time ago—maybe when he dragged Alexander, kicking and screaming, on that date; maybe when he invited Hamilton to live with him; maybe even when Hamilton reached out to him in that elevator.

Thomas didn’t want it to end. It felt too good to be true, and he was afraid that he was going to wake up any second to a reality where Hamilton hated his guts and didn’t want to be within ten feet of Thomas.

Thomas started as he realized just how much he hated the thought of that happening. He didn’t want to lose Alexander. He couldn’t afford to lose him. Was it the alcohol talking? Thomas couldn’t tell—and he didn’t know which possibility frightened him more.

The kiss was lazy and prolonged, not rushed as everything else with Alexander seemed to be. Alexander’s tongue was exploring the inside of Thomas’ mouth. The man himself let out a whine, and Thomas couldn’t even bring himself to be surprised at the fact that Hamilton didn’t even seem to be able to shut up when making out. The man wouldn’t be able to tell what silence was if it sat on him.

Thomas made the mistake of glancing down into Hamilton’s lap. His breath stilled. What was unmistakably Alexander’s erection was straining in his pants. Thomas’ mouth watered as his own dick twitched. He didn't bother to hold back a groan. He didn’t—couldn’t—deny that he was more than a little turned on by this, even as his mind screamed at him that this was Alexander Hamilton,
Jefferson, get a fucking grip, the manifestation of everything Thomas despised. He didn’t have to look down to know that he was in a similar state to Alexander. His jeans—God, why had he chosen to wear jeans, of all things?—suddenly felt just a little too tight.

He wondered briefly how Alexander tasted, before shutting down that train of thought. It really didn’t help matters.

They should stop. They needed to stop.

The pressure on Thomas’ lips increased as Alexander shifted, aligning their bodies in a straight line. Thomas tensed up as he felt a hard length press up against his thigh. Hamilton rubbed his hips against Thomas’, searching for friction, his movements growing frantic. Thomas’ breath hitched as he felt his erection stand fully straight, twitching with every circle Hamilton made, straining against his pants. He grabbed Hamilton’s hair, pulling it sharply. A low moan came from Hamilton’s throat. The sound went straight to Thomas’ dick.

Thomas was almost painfully hard, and the worst part was that he was enjoying it.

That thought finally pulled him up short. He pushed away from Alexander, frantically flailing in an attempt to get off the couch. He stood up, and Alexander—no, Hamilton—fell to the floor with a loud thud.

“What the hell?!” Hamilton demanded, grunting in pain.

Thomas pressed a hand to his face. It came away sweaty. He felt dizzy, light-headed, as though he had been dehydrated. The room seemed to spin. He wobbled, before stabilizing himself. Conscious of the way his erection was still embarrassingly obvious, he shifted, facing away from Hamilton. He cleared his throat. “I’m going to bed,” he announced, not bothering to wait around for Hamilton’s response before leaving.

“What the—Thomas!” Hamilton yelled behind his back. “Jefferson! What’s wrong with you, asshole?”

Thomas was quietly asking himself the same question.

What the fuck had prompted him to respond to Hamilton’s kiss? Who had even kissed whom? Thomas had been convinced that Hamilton had initiated it, but now that he thought about it, he wasn’t all that certain.

Thomas shut the door to his room and fell on his bed. He needed to stop. Think. Breathe.

Once his heart rate had gone down enough for him to think clearly, he allowed himself to think about what had happened.

He’d kissed Hamilton. Or been kissed by Hamilton. Either way, it didn’t make a difference. They’d kissed—and quite enthusiastically, too—for no reason. There were no cameras, no reporters, no White House staff or gossipy citizens. No one was there to see them, they didn't have to be ‘in love’.

And yet, they'd kissed, and had been headed somewhere with it. What’s more, Thomas had enjoyed it—immensely, if the way his jeans still felt too tight was any indication.

Why?

He didn’t love Hamilton. Hell, he didn't even like Hamilton! He couldn't stand him! So why was he suddenly fifteen again, blindly following the first thing that held any promise of getting him off?
Thomas groaned into his pillow. This whole thing was a mess. He was dating Alexander Hamilton—it couldn’t even be considered ‘fake dating’ at this point anymore, no, they were actually dating—and would be for the foreseeable future. How has this become his life? This wasn’t part of the plan. The plan had been to stay in the closet at least until after he was president, if not indefinitely. The plan had been to say he was too committed to his job, to his constituents, to get involved in a relationship, and, if that plan lost its marketability, then he would find some sweet girl who wouldn’t mind having a gay husband if it meant never having a worry in the world. The plan had been to ignore all of this, forever.

What had happened? What would happen? Would he be tied to Alexander forever? Would he ever get his life back? Was this all he would ever have, fantasies and ‘so close’s? Would he be swept under the rug, just another nameless politician in a sea of nameless politicians, remembered by history only as someone who could have been?

The thought made him sick.

He was dating Alexander Hamilton. His career had gone up in smoke—no, not even smoke; smoke was too understated for something like this. His career had gone up in flames. The majority of his party still wasn’t speaking to him, and he couldn’t even blame them. No one in his family had contacted him since he’d been outed. And the icing on this fucking shit-cake? He had kissed Alexander. Of his own accord. And enjoyed it.

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He was dating Alexander Hamilton. His career had gone up in smoke—no, not even smoke; smoke was too understated for something like this. His career had gone up in flames. The majority of his party still wasn’t speaking to him, and he couldn’t even blame them. No one in his family had contacted him since he’d been outed. And the icing on this fucking shit-cake? He had kissed Alexander. Of his own accord. And enjoyed it.

Thomas pulled the blankets up to cover his face. His life was in shambles, he allowed himself a little drama.

And shit. He had referred to Hamilton as ‘Alexander’ in his head—had been doing that for quite a while, now that he paused to think about it.

Fucking wonderful.

Thomas ran a hand over his face and threw off the blankets. He had, thankfully, gotten his situation under control and wouldn't have to long for death any more than he already did as he shuffled to the kitchen.

Thomas didn't drink anything stronger than wine. He simply didn't enjoy the feeling of his throat being flayed every time he took a drink. He had beer with his family—high society or not, they were still from Virginia, and no self-respecting Southern man drank wine. All that being said, Thomas wasn't the type to have whiskey or vodka or rum on deck.

On the other hand, he did have a bottle of vodka he had received from President Putin for his thirtieth birthday. It was an odd gift, Thomas had to admit, and odder still for the fact that the president of Russia did not simply give away Russian Standard to anyone, especially not the American Secretary of State. Still, it did not do to refuse, and so Thomas had hidden it away in the deep recesses of his liquor cabinet. He hadn’t planned on ever drinking it, but these were extenuating circumstances. All Thomas wanted to do was forget that it had ever happened—forget that Alexander had ever happened. A 40% vodka, no matter how vile, would accomplish that.

Thomas grabbed a glass from the cupboard and poured himself a drink. He drained the glass with surprising speed and refilled the glass.

An unspecified amount of time later, Thomas heard movement behind him. He looked around and smiled. Alexander was standing behind him, his nose scrunched up as though he had smelled something foul. Thomas did wish that he would stop grimacing. It was marring his gorgeous face.
“Are you drinking vodka?” Alexander asked disbelievingly.

Thomas nodded sagely. “Putin’s vodka.” Thomas tipped his chair precariously close to the edge. He dimly recalled that his sense of balance had thrown up its hands and left after his fourth glass. *Oops.* He giggled.

Alexander stared. “Putin’s vod—Never mind. *Why* are you drinking vodka?”

Thomas’ wide smile widened. Didn’t Alexander know? It was *obvious.* That wonderfully sharp mind of his must have figured it out by now. Still, he *had* asked a question, and it would have been rude of Thomas not to answer. “Because I kissed you. I kissed you, and I liked it.”

Alexander froze.

“I’m trying to forget that part,” Thomas went on blithely, staring up into Alexander’s brown eyes. “Because—because—because you’re my *enemy* and we’re always at each other’s throats, except now we’re not and you’re unfairly handsome, even in that ugly jacket of yours, and I shouldn’t develop feelings for you because it wasn’t part of my plan but I did anyway, or at least I *think* I’m developing feelings for you, and I’m terrified of what that means for me and for you and for us and for this country, and you scare me sometimes because you’re so unpredictable, and did you know that you have the most gorgeous eyes?” he said breathlessly.

Alexander started. “Thomas, I think it’s best that we get you to bed,” he said resolutely. He reached out to Thomas, trying to get him to stand up.

Thomas chuckled. He wrapped his hand around Alexander’s wrist, dragging Alexander down so that they were face-to-face. “Does that bed have space for two?” he asked lasciviously.

Alexander’s nose twitched. “Thomas, your breath *stinks* of alcohol. Like, I know that I’m bad, but you?” he gestured wildly. “I haven’t seen anyone so wasted since—well, ever, and I went to college with John Laurens and Hercules Mulligan.”

“Yes,” Thomas mused. “John Laurens. Your little boy *friend.*” He drew out the word, tasting it. “Tell me, Alex,“ he switched subjects abruptly, “are you still sleeping with him?”

Alexander’s cheeks flushed. “Thomas, what does that—”

“Because if you’re not, I’ll humbly get in line.” Thomas tried to wiggle his eyebrows, with little success. His eyes fell down to Alexander’s lips. “They look very kissable. Your lips, I mean,” he clarified, his words becoming slurried. “And they *are* kissable—I should know, I’ve kissed you—and they’re also so very soft, and they make me feel nice and sort of *not* soft, if you know what I mean,” Thomas winked.

Alexander’s mouth fell open. “Thomas—” he stuttered. He swallowed, averting his eyes from Thomas. “How much have you had to drink?”

Thomas shrugged. The motion caused him to finally topple from the chair. Alexander instinctively wrapped an arm around Thomas’ waist to prevent him from falling. Thomas grinned up at Alexander. “Just enough to get you, I guess.”

Alexander let go of Thomas as though burned. Thomas fell to the floor with a pained ‘oomph!’ Alexander stepped back. “Thomas,” he said slowly, “I think you should probably be quiet before you say something you’ll regret.”

Thomas snorted. “That’s rich, coming from you. When was, like, the last you *ever* shut up?” he
asked, peering up at the man through his lashes as he smirked. “All you ever do is talk and talk and talk. It’s kind of hot. I want to kiss you when you talk. It’s a far better use of your mouth.”

“Ooooookey,” Alexander said, dragging Thomas to his feet and looking over him, most likely to make sure Thomas wasn’t hurt. Alexander cared. When did he start caring? When did Thomas start caring that he cared? Probably about the time he stopped being evil and started being kind of cute. “That’s enough. Time for bed. I’ll call Washington, because there’s no way in hell you’re going in tomorrow, fuck.”

“Fuck, no,” Thomas immediately protested. “Fuck if I let you destroy the financial—finac—the money thing that we have going on.”

Alexander bit back a smile. “If you can’t even pronounce the word, you’re in no state to debate it. You’re going to have a massive hangover tomorrow, which won’t help matters. Here, drink a little water before you go to bed.” He grabbed the empty glass and filled it with water, then pressed it to Thomas’ lips, clutching the vodka bottle in his other hand.

“You’re going to ruin America because I drank Putin’s vodka,” Thomas whined, dripping water over his shirt as he tried to talk while drinking. “Someone has to fight you! Who’s going to fight you, huh?”

“What, are you Superman and I’m General Zod?” Alexander asked, using Thomas’ ramblings as a distraction to drag him to his bedroom.

“Nah,” Thomas said lightly. “I’m more of a Lex Luthor. He’s president, you know. I’d like to be president too someday.”

Alexander rolled his eyes. “So you keep saying.”

“Plus, I’m pretty sure that Luthor slept with Superm—”

“Don’t,” Alexander cut him off. “Here.” He opened the door to Thomas’ bedroom and pushed Thomas inside. “Go to sleep.”

“But I’ll be lonely,” Thomas complained.

Alexander raised an eyebrow. “Of all the come-ons I’ve heard from you in the span of the last ten minutes, this has got to be the worst one so far. Did you actually expect it to work?”

“No, no, I’m not even trying to have sex with you right now,” Thomas argued, “although I wouldn't protest if we did. So hush your dumb face. I just don’t want to be alone. Everyone is leaving me alone lately, have you noticed? I’m pretty fucking sick of it. My party left me. My friends left me. My fucking family left me. Like they’ll catch the gay just by being near me.” His voice turned bitter at the end.

Alexander blinked at him. “Are you telling me,” he began, “that the distinguished, noble, esteemed Thomas Jefferson wants a friend?”

The expression on Thomas’ face could only be described as a petulant grimace. “Fuck you,” he said emphatically. “I just want to not feel like I’m a complete human failure. You’re an asshole. Why are you so cute if you’re an asshole? Assholes shouldn’t be cute. You’re an oxymoron. And a normal moron. Moron.” Thomas grinned as he repeated the word.

“Listen, do you want to be my friend or not? Because the signals I’m getting? They’re pretty damn mixed,” Alexander quipped, finally shoving Thomas onto the bed.
Thomas grinned up at Alexander through the velvet canopy. “Kinky. Aren’t you going to buy me dinner first?”

“Go to sleep, Jefferson.”

Thomas pouted. He patted the space next to him. “Only if you join me,” he told Alexander.

Alexander raked a hand through his hair. “God, I wish I was videoing this. I’d make a killing on AFV,” he muttered. He stared down at Thomas’ still form spread out gracelessly on the bed, before glancing over at the almost empty bottle of vodka he was holding. “Note to self: send President Putin my regards,” he muttered under his breath, before joining Thomas on the bed, careful to keep a modicum of distance between them.

Chapter End Notes

and here you go. this is ring's favorite chapter, so we hope you enjoyed it!! tell us what you think!!
This is why Thomas Jefferson does not get drunk, ft. Alexander yelling (for good reason)

Chapter by Sanna_Black_Slytherin

Chapter Summary

In which Thomas panics, party-wide duel challenges are issued, and Alexander is the aggressive toddler that gets kicked out of the day care center.

Chapter Notes

The sheer encouragement from all of you is heartwarming! Thank you to everyone who has reviewed so far! We always appreciate your support.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Thomas opened his eyes—and immediately wished he hadn’t.

It felt as though all of Congress was having a rave in his head, while the seven vertically-challenged people were mining some metal he couldn’t remember the name of from his skull.

He blinked furiously. Could someone shut off the fucking sun?

“I’m afraid that’s not possible,” said an amused voice from beside him.

Thomas froze. Of all people—

“Hamilton, what are you doing in my bed?” he demanded, whipping his head around to glare at him, wincing at the pain that shot through his head at the movement and silently praying what he suspected had happened hadn’t.

Alexander scoffed. “No, we didn’t have sex—though not for your lack of trying,” he added cheerfully.

“What the hell are you talking about?” Thomas hissed, trying to take in the sight before him.

Alexander was propped up on a pillow next to him, his laptop in his lap, typing away at a speed that only worsened Thomas’ headache.

“Apparently you think I’m ‘cute’ and ‘unfairly handsome’.” Alexander paused in his typing to make air quotes. “Who would have known an actual whole bottle of 40% vodka works as such an amazing aphrodisiac?” His smirk couldn’t have been wider if he were the Cheshire cat himself.

Thomas groaned, closing his eyes and trying to shut out the sound of Alexander typing. This could not be happening.

“Oh, it is,” Alexander assured him, and fuck it, Thomas really needed to work on not saying the first thing that was on his mind. Brain-to-mouth filter, Jefferson. Hamilton must be rubbing off on him. Or
maybe it was the vodka. Fuck Russian Standard. Fuck Putin. Fuck politics.

“Please just kill me,” Thomas grumbled, flopping back down on his pillow. “And get out of my bed, Jesus H. Christ.”

“That’s not what you said last night,” Alexander sing-songed brightly.

Thomas glared. “I was drunk.”

“Yes, which means that your restrictions were lowered. You don’t become an entirely different person when you drink; there’s a whole saying about it, y’know. Children and drunks don’t lie.”

“In vino veritas,” Thomas muttered.


Thomas scrambled desperately out of bed, ignoring the fact that his head still felt like the aftermath of fucking Chernobyl, but his legs became entangled in the sheets. He crashed to the floor with a thud. He could hear Alexander’s laughter in the background.

“If you’re worried about coming in today, don’t,” Alexander said when he got his snickers under control. “I’ve already called the president and told him that you wouldn’t be able to make it today.”

“What did you say?” Thomas grunted, trying to untangle himself from the silky sheets. “If you mentioned something even distantly related to the vodka—”

“Don’t worry. You’ve mysteriously caught some sort of stomach bug, and you don’t want to risk spreading it around the White House. I wouldn’t want to insult the president by insinuating that President Putin’s vodka was better than his wine, or whatever it was he had given you for Christmas last year.”

“A 1948 Merlot,” Thomas corrected. He paused for a moment. “Wait,” he said suddenly. “If I’m sick, why are you here? You should be having a field day! No one at the White House to tell you how fucking asinine your ideas are? You should be on this shit like reporters on a sex scandal.”

Alexander hummed. “I’m being a considerate person, staying at home to take care of my sick boyfriend.” Was it only Thomas’ imagination, or could he actually hear Alexander’s shit-eating grin?

“No, you’re being a dick.”

“I can be both.” There was movement, before Thomas felt Alexander’s hands gripping the sheets. “Stay still,” Alexander snapped, yanking a part of the infuriating fabric. Thomas was going to burn those sheets. They were clearly the work of the devil, and hated him. Plus, Hamilton had slept in them. Gross. “I can’t help you get out if you’re wriggling around like a baby.”

“I do not—”

“I swear to God, Thomas, if you finish that sentence, I’m going to leave you here and actually go back to the White House,” Alexander threatened, jerking the covers hard enough that they tore in two.

Thomas glared at him. “Fine,” he snapped. “But I’m going to get my laptop, and you are getting out
Alexander huffed. “But yours is so much comfier than mine!” he whined.

“Yeah,” Thomas said. “Because it’s mine. Shoo.”

Alexander crossed his arms. “I’m a vampire, Sookie. Now that you invited me in, I’m not going to leave.”

“You’re insufferable, is what you are,” Thomas said, pushing shoulder. “Go.”

“No.”


“Love you too!” Alexander called as Thomas stomped down the hallway. “And coffee, please, while you’re at it! Black, no sugar.”

Thomas muttered something under his breath along the lines of ‘I know your fucking coffee order, Hamilton’ as he opened up his refrigerator. The little tin was hidden in the back, behind the heavy whipping cream and leftover chicken alfredo. Thomas grabbed it, along with the cinnamon vanilla creamer—just because Hamilton was a fucking heathen demon monster who drank black coffee didn’t mean he was. Five minutes later, he kicked open his bedroom door, holding two cups of coffee, a red solo cup, and the tin.

“Thomas. It’s ten a.m., and I’m pretty sure you’re still at least, like, five percent drunk,” Alexander said, eyeing the red cup even as he accepted his cup of coffee.

“It’s not alcohol, you idiot,” Thomas replied with a snort. “Someone here has to be a responsible adult.”

Alexander stared at him for a moment. “Judging by last night, I’d say that person is not you,” he said dryly. “What’s with the cup, then?”

“It’s nothing,” Thomas said, waving Alexander off. He put the coffee on the nightstand and grabbed his laptop from his desk before crawling back in bed next to Hamilton.

He was in bed next to Hamilton.

Fuck.

When he glanced up, Alexander was still staring at the cup in suspicion.

Thomas unscrewed the lid of the tin and put a lump of tobacco under his lip.

Alexander made retching sounds. “How can you even”—he gestured at the tin and his lip haphazardly—”eat that?”

“I’m not eating it,” Thomas told him haughtily.

“What are you even doing then?” Alexander demanded.

“It’s chewing tobacco, you heathen. I thought you might be familiar with it—what with being from the Caribbean and all.”
“God.” Alexander grimaced. “And just when I thought we were bonding over you being a horny drunk, you simply had to go and be a racist who chews tobacco.”

Thomas glowered at him. “You don’t have to stay,” he sneered. “And it’s better than smoking.”

Alexander stared. “You smoke?” he asked disbelievingly.

“Of course not. I’m not an idiot.”

“Well, obviously you are. You’re going to get gum cancer. You could die. Your teeth could fall out! You can’t be president with no teeth!”

“And you could die from eating three times a week and running solely on caffeine and spite. Everyone has a hamartia, Alexander.”

“Yours being offensiveness by sheer existence.” Alexander scowled. “Also, I’m not kissing anyone who eats tobacco.”

“Who said anything about kissing?” Thomas squeaked.

“You did. Last night. Repeatedly. Persistently. With a gusto I thought solely reserved for proposing terrible ideas like a mac and cheese national holiday and fucking trickle-down economics. Like, there’s a reason you’re in charge of foreign affairs and I’m in charge of the economy.”

“And you’re doing such a marvellous job,” Thomas drawled.

Alexander glared. “I’d be doing better if a certain someone didn’t try to stop my every move.”

“And I wouldn’t have to try and stop you if you weren’t robbing people of their hard-earned money,” Thomas countered. “It’s an unfair world, every person for themselves. If you don’t foster a spirit of competitiveness and striving to better oneself, you’ll just end up with a lot of people who do nothing all day. Like Russia.”

“You didn’t seem to mind Russia last night,” Alexander retorted. “Besides, you do realize taxes are necessary, right? And that your salary is literally entirely comprised of taxpayer dollars? All two-hundred thousand of it?”

“I’m not saying that we should abolish taxes entirely,” Thomas began slowly.

“No,” Alexander cut him off brusquely. “Just abolish taxes for the one percent, the people who can afford it, and leave the rest to fend for themselves in a system that would as well eat them alive as help them.”

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“Why should it be everyone’s job to help the people who aren’t working hard enough? The one percent has earned their money. Why do they need to donate it to the people who haven’t worked a day in the life?”

Alexander snorted. “Are you trying to convince me that people like Donald Trump have actually worked for their money? Try again, Jefferson. Look, I know what it’s like to start at the bottom and climb your way up—scaling that impossibly slick wall, where grabbing onto one wrong ledge could cost you everything you’ve accomplished—and I can tell you that it wouldn’t have been possible without the financial support I’ve received from the federal government. If you want everyone to be happy, if you want people to have an equal chance at success, you need to provide the opportunities for the people who can’t buy them. Otherwise”—he spanned out his hands—“you’re going to end up with genius-level McDonald’s workers who didn’t even finish their high school education because
they couldn’t fucking afford it.”

Thomas rolled his eyes. “I hardly believe there are any geniuses working at McDonald’s,” he argued.

“You can’t know for certain though,” Alexander argued.

“Don’t make the Santa argument.”

“I’m not making the Santa argument. I’m telling you that statistically, there are geniuses who could be contributing to society with magnificent discoveries, but, because of their economic situation, are forced to work at fast food chains.”

Alexander was practically shouting at this point, having completely foregone his laptop in favour of gesticulating wildly. It wasn’t unusual behaviour on his behalf, but there seemed to be some sort of peculiar vehemence behind his words. Typically, during these sorts of arguments, Thomas chalked it up to performance nerves, but there was no reason for Alexander to get so passionate about it at home.

Unless…

“Did you work at McDonald’s?” Thomas asked, dawning realization creeping up on him.

Alexander looked away and scratched the back of his head. “It wasn’t McDonald’s,” he said quietly, “but…”

“Why?” Thomas asked incredulously.

“Because we didn’t have money,” Alexander snapped. “Is that truly so hard for you to understand? How do I need to say it for it to get through your thick head?”

“But you had a full ride to Columbia!” Thomas argued.

“Yeah, that was college,” Alexander pointed out. “When I was a kid? Life isn’t kind to single moms on Nevis, and the government was willing to, well, turn a blind eye on a little kid working the register at Burger King when he’s supposed to be at school.” There was a pause where Alexander took a breath before plowing on. “Besides, my scholarship didn’t cover food or toilet paper or literally anything else you need to survive—”

“Alexander—”

“So, yeah, I’m not a fan of unrestricted free-market economies,” Alexander spat. “And neither should anyone with any shred of morals or fucking human decency.”

Thomas stared at him for a moment. “I—didn’t know,” he finally said, voice barely above a whisper. “If I—I mean—”

“Cut it out. It doesn’t make a difference whether you knew or not. What matters is that you weren’t considering anyone else—only yourself. Besides, I don’t need your pity. It’s all in the past. What I do need is for you to stop being a heartless bastard and show that you don’t despise your fellow human beings. Let them keep their dignity. Let me help them.” There was something in Alexander’s eyes that Thomas dared not name. Naming things made them real.

“I…” Thomas stared at Alexander, somehow captivated, unable to look anywhere other than those massive brown eyes.
“You’re robbing these people of their chances. A chance at life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Aren’t those ‘inalienable rights’ that we are supposed to defend at all costs?” Alexander asked, and Thomas found himself stuck, not knowing what to say.

So he didn’t say anything, instead reaching for his red cup and spitting the tobacco into it.

It served it's purpose. The spell was broken, and Alexander went back to gagging at Thomas’ habits.

“That is so gross,” he complained. “You’re going to smell like dip and bad decisions.”

“As opposed to coffee and daddy issues?” Thomas countered.

The look Alexander gave him probably had a body count. “Every time,” he all but growled, “every time I think, ‘Wow, there might be a human under all that self-righteousness, assholery, and hair gel, you go and say shit like that, and I’m reminded that, nope, you’re still just Thomas ‘Probably The Reincarnation Of Satan Himself’ Jefferson. You know what? Fuck you.”

Thomas sat, unable to do a thing, as Alexander gathered his things and left the room. He assumed he was just going to his own room, most likely to mope, but instead he heard the front door slam shut.

Shit.

Alexander still hadn’t come back that evening, and Thomas was beginning to panic.

Yes, they’d fought since they’d started dating. How could they not? Alexander was, well, Alexander, and Thomas has never been one to sit idly by and let idiocracy be spewed about his house like some sort of political vomit; however, it had never come to this. It wasn’t even the first time Thomas had brought up Hamilton’s father! There was no reason for Hamilton to just storm out like some sort of bridezilla.

What if he was hurt?

What if he was dead?

Thomas’ career really couldn’t handle a dead colleague-slash-boyfriend.

Fuck.

Fuck.

He’d tried calling him, tried texting him, tried even fucking private messaging him on Twitter. Nothing. He had texted Angelica, who knew even less about it than Thomas did; he had contacted Laurens, who didn’t even deign to pick up; hell, he had even called Washington (a conversation that would haunt him to his dying days, and probably would be a part of his own personal hell), but no one knew where he was.

Thomas was about to call the entire fucking FBI when his text tone went off.

From: caffeine fiend

I, Alexander Hamilton, challenge you, Thomas Fuckhead Jefferson, to a Duel. Meet me at constitution gardens and bring your fucking fists you overzealous purple asshat.
What the fuck, Hamilton?

His phone chimed again. He glanced at it. One of his eyebrows went up as he read it.

**From: Jemmy**

*Why has your boyfriend just challenged me to a duel Thomas wtf*

*Wait. Check your Twitter.*

*Dear God Thomas get your boyfriend under control before he murders our whole party*

Thomas would be lying if he said he wasn’t properly terrified as he opened his Twitter.

*Alexander Hamilton @AdotHam*

*I challenge you to a duel @GOP*

*James Monroe @J.Monroe*

*@AdotHam Hamilton, this is a public message.*

*Alexander Hamilton @AdotHam*

*@J.Monroe So?*

*James Monroe @J.Monroe*

*@AdotHam You can’t be serious. You can’t challenge AN ENTIRE POLITICAL PARTY TO A DUEL.*

*Alexander Hamilton @AdotHam*

*@J.Monroe WATCH ME*

Thomas didn’t know whether to be amused, annoyed, or worried. He went with all three as he grabbed his coat, shoved his feet into the first pair of shoes he saw, and ran out the door.

Alexander looked like a mess. He was wearing the same clothes as he had been this morning, which, now that Thomas thought about it, were also the same clothes he’d been wearing yesterday. His hair was falling out of its ponytail, the dark circles under his eyes were more pronounced than ever, and his shirt had more than a few suspicious stains covering.

“Is that blood?” Thomas asked, trying to hold the—obviously drunk—man around the waist to keep him from falling over completely. Alexander shoved him away.

“John got mad at me,” he muttered. “Said—said that I was a dick, ‘cos I just stopped seeing him all
the time. I told him to stop being stupid ‘cos I had to be your boyfriend now, and he punched me.” Alexander said something else under his breath before turning to Thomas and crossing his arms over his chest. “And you don’t even care! You—you’re a bad boyfriend! First, you kissed me, then you said you didn’t want to kiss me, then you made me sleep in your bed, and then you brought up my dad! What the fuck?! I—I don’t bring up your family, ‘cos I’m a nice person and I know family is off-limits! You’re just... the worst! You’re the worst, and now I have to fight you, Jefferson.”

Thomas took a step back. “Alexander—” he began, but he was cut off.

“No! I thought—I thought we could be, like, friendly! I thought you were getting better! I thought ‘cos, like, your beliefs are terrible, but you can be okay sometimes and you make me breakfast, so I thought maybe we didn’t hate each other anymore. And then you said all kinds of shitty things and said stuff about my family and I realized that you do hate me, ‘cos that’s all you can do! All you can do is hate and hate and hate and hate and—”

“Alexander!” Thomas shouted over the younger man’s ranting. “C’mon, let’s go home, okay? We—we can talk, or something. Just come on—”

The rest of his sentence was cut off as Alexander’s fist hit his mouth.

“What the hell?” Thomas yelled, holding a hand up to his now bleeding lip. “Did you just punch me?!"

“Yes!” Alexander said. “Because—because you—”

All at once, it was as if all the fury and frustration that had been acting as the wind in Alexander’s sails had disappeared, leaving Alexander looking small and drained and sad.

Thomas didn’t know what to do. His lip was bleeding, leaving his face hot and sticky, and he had his—boyfriend? ex-boyfriend? enemy?—his something leaning against him like Thomas was the only thing keeping him afloat. It was fucking eleven-thirty and they were in the Constitution Gardens, and Alexander was crying.

“Are you ready to go home now?” Thomas asked quietly, and felt Alexander nod against his chest. He sighed. “C’mon, darling, let’s get you home.” He grabbed Alexander around the waist as they walked.

He didn’t even think about the pet name until they were in the cab on the way home, Alexander asleep on his chest.

“||

“You know,” John said conversationally, glancing over at Alexander and Jefferson from across his kitchen table, ‘I didn’t believe any of the shit I read in the newspaper about you and Jefferson. I mean, really?’ He made an exaggeratedly disbelieving sound. “You two are about as good a match as fire and water—”

“I’m fire,” Alexander said immediately. “I’m hot enough.”

Jefferson snorted. “The only thing you set on fire is my patience,” he taunted.

John hadn’t spoken with Alexander in what felt like years, even if, in reality, it was a mere two months, and had wanted to catch up with him. He had invited Alexander over to catch up on what he had missed, which, going by what the newspapers were saying about him and Jefferson, was a lot. Of course, Alexander being Alexander, he had, in turn, taken the liberty of inviting his beau, without
telling John, because why would he ever.

Thus, this.

John pondered absentmindedly whether killing Alexander would be worth all the hassle of hiding his body, because he had not signed up for this shit. Talking to Jefferson, socializing with Jefferson like it was an everyday event, was the last thing John had been prepared for.

Almost like he could read John’s mind, Jefferson threw John a warning look, as if to remind him of what the consequences would be, should his boyfriend be rendered out of order.

Oblivious to the silent exchange over his head, Alexander stuck out his tongue at John. “It’s a good thing you’re gorgeous, love, because I’m afraid that you don’t have much going on for you in terms of personality,” he retorted.

Unseen, John was watching the two as one would a game of tennis, eyes flickering back and forth between the two men in front of him.

Jefferson’s eyes flashed with something Alexander couldn’t identify. It was gone as quickly as it had appeared. “Are you admitting I’m handsome?” he teased.

Alexander shot Jefferson a withering look, his voice nothing short of disdainful as he said, “In your dreams maybe.” Alexander didn’t seem to notice the way Jefferson stiffened at his words, but John most certainly did.

John rolled his eyes. “Do you two need a moment?” he drawled. “Because the longer I’m watching this, the more I feel like you’re going to jump each other any moment now.”

Alexander’s head snapped around. He fixed John with a look. He was on the verge of snapping at John, at the verge of demanding that he take back his words or explaining the whole situation, but something stayed his mouth. His eyes widened as he came to a startling realization.

“He wasn’t bothered by John’s words. He didn’t mind John implying whatever the hell it was that he was implying.

God, Jefferson must really be getting to him if Alexander wasn’t even bothered by his best friend insinuating that he was fucking Jefferson. Jefferson should come with a warning label along the lines of “Prolonged exposure leads to loss of sanity and grip on reality.”

He filed it away for future analysis, then scrapped it. He wasn’t in the mood for self-reflection right now—or ever, really, if the subject of said reflection was his feelings regarding Thomas Jefferson.

“I don’t know about you, Laurens,” Jefferson said conversationally, “but I, at least, have something called impulse control.”

John snorted. “Yeah, right,” he said skeptically. “Especially considering how mature you two act.”

“That’s us. Mature individuals,” Alexander chirped, beaming at John, his smile all teeth, while stomping on Thomas’ foot under the table.

The taller man glared at him mutinously.

John huffed. “I’m feeling oddly like a third wheel here;” he muttered. “Which is weird, since, y’know, I slept with you for four months.” He caught the way Jefferson’s mouth drew into a thin line, as if the man couldn’t decide whether to be upset or appalled by the mental image John’s words
undoubtedly gave him. Still, John realized as he looked closer, there was something else there, something he couldn’t identify right away. He filed it away for later analysis, turning back to the conversation just as Alexander was opening his mouth to speak.

“But,” John went on, “I can see that it’s real. It’s actually honest to God real. What the fuck, Alexander.” He fixed his friend with a glare. Alexander fought the urge to fidget. Ignoring Jefferson’s presence entirely, John went on. “Do you even realize who that is?” He gestured at Thomas. “That’s Thomas fucking Jefferson, one of the leaders of the Republican party—the party that, might I remind you, quite literally wants to legalize guns and outlaw abortions and thinks that it’s okay for innocent people to be shot by cops so long as they’re not white. Not two months ago, I was subject to an hour-long rant about how Jefferson was the ‘most asshole-ish asshole to ever exist!’” John made angry air quotes. “How are you okay with dating that piece of shit?!” By the end of his monologue, John was breathing laboriously.

Jefferson coughed pointedly. “You do realize that it’s rude to talk about someone as though they’re not here, right? I would have expected such crude behaviour from Alexander—his early education was somewhat lacking, after all—but you have no such excuse.”

Alexander gaped. “Excuse you?!” he finally snapped. His hands clenched into fists. “Care to repeat that?”

“Not particularly, no,” Jefferson drawled, and John could practically see that Alexander was seriously contemplating asking John to help him throw his boyfriend into the Potomac, and, well, John couldn’t deny that it wouldn’t be tempting.

Thomas glared at him.

A moment later, it became apparent that he wouldn’t even have to ask, as John turned back toward Alexander, a look of shock and something akin to disgust on his face. “How are you okay with this? Just—just look at him, Alex! What the hell?”

Alexander grimaced sheepishly. “I’m sorry, John,” he said apologetically, “but you know me”—he ignored matching coughs from Jefferson and John that sounded suspiciously like “Unfortunately.”—“and you know know love. Love can’t be denied, and when it finds you, you just have to deal with it. You can try to deny what life throws at you, but ultimately, it’s much easier not to.” He wrapped an arm around Thomas’ waist, drawing him as close as their chairs would allow. “I love Thomas,” Alexander said, a sappy look on his face, and if Thomas didn’t know the truth, he might even be inclined to believe him.

John opened his mouth, undoubtedly to say something, but a beeping sound from his phone cut him off. He unlocked his phone almost lazily, throwing a cursory look at the screen. His eyes lit up, and a faint smile crossed his lips. He typed out a reply, before pocketing the phone again.

Alexander quirked an eyebrow. “Was that Lafayette?” he asked curiously.

John rolled his eyes. “Yes, it is, as a matter of fact. And do you know why you could guess that?” A beat. “Because, unlike other people, I’m not a secretive asshole about my love life. I actually tell my friends if I’m dating someone.”

Alexander rolled his eyes. “Yes, point taken.” He waved a hand, as if trying to dispel John’s words. “Now, where were we?”

“We were just about to discuss why you fell head over heels for a first-rate dickwad like Thomas Jefferson,” John said cheerfully, ignoring the choked sound coming from Thomas’ throat, “the same
Thomas Jefferson who you used to rant to me about.”

“Whom,” Alexander corrected, before throwing a glance at Thomas. “And he’s right, you know. I may love you, but you are a dickwad. Your policies are crap.”

“At least I’m not robbing people,” Thomas said with a huff.

Alexander scowled. What the hell “A fair economy is not robbing people.”

“What you’re trying to do is not what I’d call a fair economy,” Thomas snapped.

John watched the two argue back and forth. He observed, and what he discovered unsettled him. Underneath the cutting retorts lay fondness, genuine fondness, something that John would not have thought would apply to Alexander and Jefferson. In that moment, watching Alexander and Jefferson’s interactions—not quite aggressive, the sharpness of their words somewhat blunted by the way they said them, John truly understood. Any lingering doubts as to Alexander’s claims were rapidly disappearing, leaving John dizzy, afraid that, should he let his guard down and allow himself to relax, he too would disappear into the whirlwind that was shaking reality, twisting it to the core.

Against all possible odds, Alexander and Jefferson were in love.

What the hell was the world coming to?

He pulled out his phone again, and opened up his conversation with Lafayette. Hopefully the Frenchman would be able to make sense of what the hell was going on.

Chapter End Notes

Again, thank you for your continued support! Don't forget to tell us what you think, and we'll see you in a week.

Don't forget to smile, and remember: everyone matters.
In which there’s a Christmas party and mistletoe and Dirty Santa and oh my

Chapter Summary

Thomas Jefferson, Armadillo Activist; or, How James Madison Defeated Mistletoe.

Chapter Notes

Merry Christmas!

An early update because Lord Knows if either of us will have the time tomorrow.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Alexander Hamilton @AdotHam
Tax plan coming up on debate. Prepare yourselves to be amazed. #taxplan #house

Paul Ryan @SpeakerRyan
@AdotHam You lack any kind of legitimacy to be in a position of power of any kind. How @POTUS decided that it’s a good idea to let such a bastard be Sec. of Treas. is beyond my understanding. You’re not only unintelligent but frankly incompetent.

Thomas Jefferson @TJefferson
@SpeakerRyan Don’t you fucking dare call @AdotHam a bastard ever again. I may hate his opinions because they’re literally shit, but I can’t deny that he’s risen to his position on his own merits—unlike certain other people, who have had their entire lives handed to them on (1/3)

Thomas Jefferson @TJefferson
a silver plate. It’s hypocrisy at its zenith, and it’s simply disgusting. And @AdotHam is the furthest thing from incompetent. Arrogant? Yes. Obnoxious? Yes. Infuriating to the point where you want to strangle him? Yes. But he’s not incompetent. If anything, he’s too competent (2/3)

Thomas Jefferson @TJefferson
for the position he’s currently occupying. He could give a four-hour State of the Union on the spot if asked. I would like to see how many other people could manage that. (Also, @AdotHam is far better-looking than you are.) (3/3)

Thomas Jefferson @TJefferson
“I might disagree with your opinion, but I am willing to give my life for your right to express it.” — Voltaire

Alexander Hamilton @AdotHam
@TJefferson You do know that Voltaire didn’t actually say that, right

Thomas Jefferson @TJefferson
@AdotHam Aaaaand there it is. Thank you for having my back, darling.
“No,” Thomas snapped, looking at the horrific object in Alexander’s hands. “I would rather die.”

“C’mon, it’ll be fun!” Alexander insisted, waving the sweater in front of Thomas’ face.

“Looking like a craft store vomited on me is the opposite of fun, Alexander,” Thomas pointed out.

Alexander pouted. “But we’d match! It’d be fucking adorable,” Alexander countered. “You may act as if your heart is made of coal and broken dreams, but I saw you looking at cat gifs yesterday. I know you’re susceptible to cuteness.”

Thomas glared at the shorter man for a moment before snatching the hideous garment from his hands. “Fine,” he huffed. “But if we’re doing this, we’re doing it right. We may look like a pair utter morons, but we ain’t going to be a pair of half-assed utter morons.”

Alexander snorted into his hand.

“What?” Thomas demanded. “Is making me wear this piece of glittery garbage not enough? Do you have to laugh at me as well?”

“You said ‘ain’t’,” Alexander said through his giggles.

Thomas rolled his eyes. “I am from the South, Alexander. Occasionally, I do Southern things. Get over it,” he said dryly. “Now, I’m going to get the Santa hats. Don’t get drunk off eggnog or anything equally ridiculous while I’m gone,” he ordered, before disappearing into one of the corridors.

“Why do you get the Santa hat? It doesn’t even fit over your hair!” Alexander protested as Thomas shoved a pair of reindeer antlers on his head.

Thomas huffed. “Because someone”—he glowered in Alexander’s direction—“insisted that we dress up, and I invoked my spousal right to call first shots. Now hush. Washington looks like he’s about to speak.”

Alexander grumbled something under his breath—Thomas picked up something about ‘writing’ and ‘sketch’—but thankfully shut his mouth, even as his lips curled downwards into a scowl. Thomas’ eyes lingered on Alexander’s lips. He was hit with the sudden impulse to kiss the expression away. He curled his hands into fists, his nails digging painfully into his skin because no way was he kissing Alexander in front of all of his co-workers. He had standards that he had to uphold—and even if he didn’t, the knowledge that it was all pretend, that none of Alexander’s affection was real, was kind of a mood killer.

Not that Thomas wanted it to be real, of course.

Said standards didn’t stop Thomas from surreptitiously wrapping an arm around Alexander’s waist, and pulling him closer to Thomas.

Alexander shot him a look that bordered between annoyed and confused and opened his mouth to comment, but any remark he was about to make was cut off by the president clearing his throat at the
front of the room. He was wearing a jingle bell studded sweater over his normal button up and holding a glass of eggnog in his hand. “I would just like to formally thank you all for coming to the second annual White House Christmas Party. Gifts for Dirty Santa go under the tree, snacks go on the tables against the left wall, the eggnog is off limits for any interns under twenty-one, and Angelica will begin judging the ugly sweater contest in fifteen minutes,” he said with a smile before raising his glass. “Merry Christmas to all of you!”

Everyone raised their glasses in response and cheered.

“Five bucks says Burr gets super wasted before we even open gifts,” Alexander whispered into Thomas’ ear.

“We were roommates with him, I guarantee it’ll happen,” Alexander replied confidently. “Now c’mon, it’s a party. We can’t just hide in the corner all night.”

Now that was a lie. Thomas was a master at hiding in corners. He could make hiding in corners and not talking to people a sport. He could stay in the corner all night. There were no diplomats to socialize with, no sponsors to put up a façade in front of—only the White House staffers, along with a few select others that shared a friendship with the president. No big deal. Thomas would be very much fine in the corner.

Alexander rolled his eyes. He grabbed Thomas’ arm. “Come on,” he whined as he all but dragged Thomas into the crowd.

“It’s like you take pleasure in torturing me,” Thomas grumbled.

Alexander shot him a quick grin. “I’ve got to get my kicks somehow,” he teased. He stopped abruptly in front of the snack table, and Thomas followed suit. With reflexes that Thomas hadn’t known Alexander to possess, the shorter man grabbed a paper plate and began piling it high with pinwheels and little smokies. “Are planning on eating, or were you just going to drool over my food all night?” he asked pointedly once he caught Thomas staring.

“I was being a good boyfriend and letting you serve yourself first,” Thomas grumbled his way through an explanation before taking a plate of his own.

Alexander snorted in disbelief and made his way down to the drinks. He ladled himself a small glass of eggnog, then grabbed a larger cup of Pepsi. Alexander seemed to feel Thomas’ inquisitive stare—the Virginian knew that Alexander wasn’t one to turn down the offer of free alcohol—and glared at him over his shoulder. “I thought it’d be better to be sober in front of my colleagues,” he muttered in lieu of an excuse.

Thomas nodded and poured his own small glass of eggnog, recent events still fresh on his mind. He didn’t want a repeat of that night, and he certainly didn’t want to make a fool out of himself in front of the president.

And just like that, they were being pulled back into the frankly overwhelming and terrifying throng of people loitering around the couches. Alexander was quickly dragged into a discussion with a young woman—Alice or something, Thomas wasn’t really paying attention. She seemed vaguely familiar, but Thomas couldn’t place her. She was in all likelihood some sort of aide or intern.

Thomas resigned himself to his spot on the couch, nursing his drink and catching little snippets of
different conversations around him, when movement under the massive Christmas tree in the corner caught his eye.

“Alexander…” Thomas interrupted hesitantly. “I almost fear to ask, but why is your gift moving?” He gestured at the poorly-wrapped box—Thomas had offered to help, but Alexander had been insistent that he could do it himself, dammit—which seemed to rattle every now and again.

Alexander shrugged. “You’ll find out if you get it,” he said mysteriously. His very words put Thomas on edge because Alexander was very rarely quite so dismissive. Whatever was inside that box, Thomas didn’t want anywhere near it.

Thomas rolled his eyes. “Jesus Christ,” he swore under his breath.

“Just Alexander will do, love,” Alexander said with a wink before turning back to his discussion.

Sometimes, Thomas wanted to strangle the little imp.

“Oooh!” Alexander suddenly exclaimed, showing the exact amount of self-restraint of a five-year-old who just couldn’t wait for Christmas to come already. “Lafayette’s over there.”

“Lafayette?” Thomas echoed, scanning the crowd for the familiar shape of 5’10½’’ of boisterous Frenchman joy.

“Yeah!” Alexander all but shouted into Thomas’ ear, waving a hand in the air enthusiastically. “Laf! Lafayette! Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier! Over here!”

Thomas glared at him. He rubbed his ear, hoping that Alexander hadn’t rendered him deaf, because wouldn’t it just be typical. “Are you sure you’re not drunk?” he hissed.

“Yup!” Alexander said happily. “Laf! Dude! C’mere!”

He finally seemed to have caught the Frenchman’s attention, to both Thomas’ horror and delight.

On one hand, Alexander would no longer be shrieking in his ear like a dying screech owl.

On the other, he was going to have to talk to Lafayette.

It wasn’t as if there was any ill will between the two of them—on the contrary, Lafayette was probably Thomas’ closest friend, behind James of course—but Lafayette was also incredibly close to Alexander. He’d often regaled Thomas with tales of his petit lion, long before Thomas had made Alexander’s acquaintance.

It said something about Lafayette’s storytelling abilities that, before actually meeting Alexander, Thomas had been quite excited to work with him.

Lafayette knew both of them well.

Very well.

Well enough to tell if either of them were lying, certainly.

“Alexander, darling, are you sure this is a good idea?” Thomas whispered as Lafayette made his way through the crowd.

“Of course! Laf is great. You know that, you’re good friends with him—”
“Exactly. Alexander, tell me, if anyone was able to tell that this little tryst of ours is… unconventional, who would it be?” Thomas pointed out, drawing Alexander closer to him.

Alexander turned to stare at him. He didn’t seem to be bothered by their proximity, but then again, Thomas could not rule out the possibility that he simply hadn’t noticed it yet. An elephant could have walked right past him and he wouldn’t notice. “If John and James fell for it, I have no doubt Laf will too,” he teased lightly. “Relax, Thomas. It’s Christmas. No one is going to put us under the microscope the moment we let our guards down. It’ll be fine.”

Alexander shot Thomas a thousand-watt smile, pressed a quick kiss to Thomas’ cheek, and turned to Lafayette, who’d finally waded through the crush of bodies that had overtaken the sitting room.

“Laf!” he yelled loudly, grinning at his friend, “Merry Christmas!”

Lafayette simply crossed his arms and fixed the two of them with a glare.

Thomas could already feel his heart rate picking up.

“What the hell is this?” Lafayette demanded, gesturing between the two of them.

“What do you mean?” Alexander asked innocently, taking Thomas’ hand and giving it a squeeze.

“Why did I have to learn of your little paramour from a gossip magazine and have it confirmed by John fucking Laurens?” Lafayette asked. “You both have my number, do you not? Why is it that, the last I heard from either of you, you were at each other’s throats like dogs, and now you are acting like a pair of—of sappy teenagers, oui? Why is the only person to have contacted me about this John fucking Laurens? You both have my number, do you not?” Lafayette inquired. Thomas cleared his throat and was about to reply when he was cut off when Lafayette threw his hands up in the air. “I know you do! You know how? Because not six months ago, all I heard from either of you is how much you despised the other! All I hear is ‘Gil, how do you stand him? He’s insufferable!’ and ‘Laf, he’s such a fucking asshole!’ And then my John texts me saying that the pair of you are in love, and now here you are, acting like you’re—you’re à l'eau de rose!”

Thomas glanced at Alexander, who shook his head with a shrug. Thomas rolled his eyes and elbowed him in the ribs.

“Do I have to remind you two that not all of us are capable of telepathy and still need words to communicate effectively?” Lafayette snapped, interrupting their nonverbal exchange.

“We’re sorry?” Alexander offered, more as a question than an answer.

“No you are not,” Lafayette said, his glare softening into a light glower. “But what I don’t understand is why? Why did you not tell me? Thomas? You know I would’ve accepted you with open arms, mon ami. You had no reason to be afraid.”

“I couldn’t tell anyone,” Thomas countered. “Not even James. It wasn’t anything personal, Gil.”

“Begging your pardon, it very much feels personal,” Lafayette retaliated. “I would not have outing you. In case you haven’t noticed, I’m not exactly straight.”

“I know, Gil,” Thomas repeated, “I’m not saying you would. I just couldn’t.”

Lafayette sighed and flopped down on the couch across from Alexander. “I understand,” he finally grumbled, “I guess I am simply upset that you did not tell me earlier. Do you know how many double dates we could’ve gone on by now?”
Alexander seemed to see this as a shortcut to the end of this awkward conversation. “With you and John?” he asked pointedly.

Lafayette grinned. “He’s told you then?”

Alexander snorted. “You could say that,” he supplied. “I turned up at his house a month or so ago, completely wasted, after a bit of a spat with Thomas. Little shit fucking decked me before going on about how stupid I was and how happy he was with you.”

Lafayette’s eyes widened. “He punched you?” he asked, his voice in equal parts angry and worried.

“Yeah, but it’s fine, Laf. I fucking deserved it,” Alexander said with a shrug.

Thomas had the sudden urge to pull Alexander closer, to keep him from doing any other phenomenally stupid shit that would no doubt end with him hurting himself. He was unsettled by how natural this urge felt.

Lafayette must’ve caught the look in his eye—of course he did, fucking perceptive French bastard—and smirked. “It seems your boyfriend disagrees,” he drawled.

Alexander looked up at Thomas over his shoulder, his eyebrows knitting together before he huffed and turned back to Lafayette. “Of course he does,” he muttered. “He disagrees with every fucking thing I say.”

Thomas swatted the back of Alexander’s head. “Maybe if you didn’t have the manners and opinions of a barnyard animal—”

“I have the opinions of a barnyard animal? At least I believe in equality—”

“No, you believe in equity—”

“Because, short of removing the problem itself, which is fucking hard to do, that’s the best way to level the playing field, to ensure everyone gets an equal shot at a good, prosperous life! We work to better the lives of the common people, the people who need it, Thomas, not to add even more fluff to the pockets of the people who already have resources to spare!” Alexander protested.

Thomas rolled his eyes, about to counter with an argument of his own, when Lafayette cut between the two of them.

“And here I was, thinking I’d finally been granted a chance at a peaceful conversation with two of my dearest friends,” he said dramatically, “I should’ve known better than to cling to such fantasies!”

Alexander laughed and fell back into his element, trading easy banter with Lafayette and other guests, captivating their fellow party goers with his enthusiasm and the bright, optimistic glint in his eye.

Thomas smiled and rolled his eyes, taking the time to look around, tuning in in the middle of Alexander’s rant about ‘the oddity of boasting fair and equal elections whilst still maintaining the archaic practice of the Electoral College’. “Speaking of oddities,” Thomas interrupted, “where’s Franklin? I can’t seem to spot him, but I know for a fact that Washington sent him an invite.”

Alexander’s nose twitched, as it tended to do whenever the subject of Benjamin Franklin came up. “Who cares? He’s not here, and good riddance, I’d say,” he surmised with distaste.

Thomas snickered. “You’re just jealous because he outdoes you at every step,” he teased. “Are you
“Yes,” Alexander said emphatically.

Thomas’ eyebrows scrunched up in thought. “You can’t deny that the man has his uses,” he observed. “He probably wields more power than you and I combined.”

Alexander scowled. “That’s part of what scares me,” he admitted. “If Franklin actually set his mind to doing something useful with his life for a change, there’s nothing anyone could do to stop him.”

“Useful?” Lafayette’s eyebrows shot up. “Are you implying that—”

“Yes,” Alexander cut Lafayette off mid-sentence.

Thomas snorted. “It’s a good thing, then, that Franklin doesn’t seem to have a lot of interest in the career of evil overlord.”

“At worst,” Lafayette reminded Alexander, “he would be a benevolent overlord.”

“Oh, because that makes me feel so much better,” Alexander countered. His voice was practically dripping with sarcasm.

Thomas rolled his eyes. “Just drop it, okay?” he told Alexander. “As it is, Franklin’s life essentially consists of sending kites in thunderstorms for shits and giggles, visiting foreign prostitutes, and writing almanacs. He’s hardly a threat to your person.”

Alexander grumbled something along the lines of “You never know.”

“Besides,” Thomas added, “you’re not going to get very far in D.C. if you keep antagonizing Franklin. You were right in that he does have more power than you and me combined. Face it, Alexander—you need to make your peace with the man. The world is wide enough for you both.”

“Tell that to Franklin,” Alexander muttered, which Thomas studiously ignored.

“Alright, everyone!” Washington’s voice called from the front of the room. “If everyone could gather around the tree, I think we’re about to start dirty Santa.”

Thomas glanced at the—still moving—box Alexander had dragged in before looking back at the man himself. He was fairly certain that the look on his face couldn’t be described as anything but fear.

Thomas allowed himself to be dragged onto the floor near the tree, Alexander plastered to his side, still chatting with Lafayette and—Alice? Allison? Alivia?, she’d introduced herself to Lafayette only moments ago; Thomas really should’ve been paying attention.

Thomas was just resigning himself to the idea of sitting shoulder to shoulder with some random person he vaguely knew from work when someone tapped his shoulder. He shook himself out of his reverie and looked up to see James, a small, tight grin on his face, peering down at him. “This seat taken?” he asked, gesturing to the patch of carpet next to Thomas.

“Yeah, by you. Now sit down before some upstart-ish intern tries to network with me or something equally horrible,” Thomas whined, tugging on James’ sleeve, dragging him down next to him. “Have you been here all evening?”

“Washington invited Dolley, and she decided to bring me along as her plus one,” James explained
Ah, yes,” Thomas replied, a small smirk playing on his lips. “Wouldn’t be a real celebration without James ‘Life of the Party’ Madison.”

James rolled his eyes. “I’ve heard enough sarcasm in the House this week to last me a lifetime. Don’t you start as well.” He attempted to glare, but Thomas wasn’t swayed by his façade.

Thomas opened his mouth to retort but was interrupted by the president. “Thomas, it’s your turn to draw,” Washington said, holding an upside-down Santa hat under Thomas’ nose. Thomas reached in and withdrew a small slip of paper bearing the number seven.

James went next, pulling twenty-one from the hat. He glanced at the gifts, then averted his eyes. It was no use thinking which gifts would be left when he would get to choose. As number twenty-one out of twenty-eight, he would hardly get much to choose from. A smarter choice for him would actually be for him to steal an already-opened gift.

Thomas himself pulled a five.

He chatted lightly with James as the rest of the people drew their numbers. Alexander drew a thirteen, and why wasn’t that the least surprising?

Eventually, everyone had a number. Thomas watched as the first four people—a man Thomas could not recognize, probably a friend of Washington’s, John Jay, Abigail Adams, and another woman—opened a present each, apparently satisfied to open gifts rather than to steal them for the time being.

Thomas, as number five, picked a small, nondescript-looking package. It looked harmless enough. Even though he was practically burning with curiosity, he was not touching Alexander’s gift with a pole.

He opened it, to reveal an ornate Christmas tree ornament. It was quite beautiful.

It was also stolen from him by Angelica, who was number six. Thomas glared at her and opened another gift—this time a quesadilla maker. He shifted his glare to number seven as she stared contemplatively at Thomas’ gift. She withered under his look and quickly picked an unwrapped gift.

Lafayette was number eight. He glanced at the gifts, and then picked Alexander’s moving box of doom. He struggled for a second with the bow, because of course, Alexander wasn’t capable of just making a normal bow like normal people and instead had to make some elaborate nightmare, before finally opening it. He stared inside it. He blinked once, as if not quite sure of how to react.

Lafayette opened his mouth, but what came out wasn’t English. Or French, either. At least, not comprehensible French.

Thomas listened to the barrage of French words coming his way, his ears trying to filter out the gratuitous chatter and try to put together the essence of what Lafayette was saying. It was more difficult than Thomas would have anyone believe.

Thomas felt a sense of foreboding as he glanced at the box still in Lafayette’s lap, still rattling ominously. Jesus Christ, what was Alexander’s idea of a gift?

Washington furrowed his brows. “What is he saying?” he addressed the question to Thomas. “What’s so damn funny?”

Thomas shook his head. “He’s slurring. I can’t keep up with him—it’s becoming unintelligible, and
Alexander, you’re not helping;” he added sharply in a vain effort to get his boyfriend to stop laughing already and calm Lafayette down.


Thomas was quiet for another moment. “Something about—un animal vivant? Living animal,” he translated quickly in response to everyone’s empty stares. Honestly, Thomas thought with irritation, did no one else speak French? This was supposed to be the elite of D.C. If this was the best of the best, then they were doomed. The thought was gone in a flash as Thomas focused back on Lafayette. “En mouvement. Moving.” He turned to Alexander, his eyes gleaming with fury. “Did you bring a living animal?” he demanded. If Alexander had brought a kitten, or worse yet, a puppy, to a party where one-third of its participants were allergic to fur, James included, Thomas was going to kill him, his career be damned.

Alexander nodded, his body still twitching with laughter. “Un dasypodidae,” he managed.

“A what?” Thomas didn’t recognize the word.

Alexander’s English obviously deteriorated exponentially whenever he was laughing. Either that, or he was back to ignoring Thomas again.

Thomas turned back to Washington, frustration evident in his eyes. “I’m sorry, sir. I didn’t know that he had bought a fucking living animal,” Thomas apologized for Alexander, simultaneously throwing sullen looks Alexander’s way.

“Hey, I think I know what the word was,” piped up the intern next to Alexander—although she had widened the distance between them noticeably since Alexander began rolling around on the floor and making a complete fool out of himself. Thomas still couldn’t remember her name. It was frustrating. “Armadillo.”

Thomas found that his jaw had fallen slightly ajar. “Armadillo?” he echoed. He suddenly wished that it had been a puppy.

She nodded vigorously. “Here.” She practically pressed her phone into Thomas’ face. “Here’s the Wikipedia article.”

Thomas pushed it away with more force than he had intended. “I know what a Wikipedia article is. But really, an armadillo?”

“You just saw it yourself, sir,” she retorted sharply, suddenly defensive. “Are you saying that Wikipedia’s lyi—”

“I’m not saying that I don’t believe you. I’m saying that I can’t believe that my boyfriend brought a live armadillo to a game of dirty santa,” Thomas snapped, effectively silencing her.

“I can,” James muttered under his breath.

On second thoughts, so could Thomas. What had he been expecting? For Alexander to act like the mature adult he supposedly was? This practically reeked of Alexander. He was told not to bring any animals of the furry kind, so he brought one of the scaly kind. A wild one. Who carried leprosy. Of fucking course.

The person next to Lafayette finally pried the box out of Lafayette’s hands and put it down on the floor. Everyone leaned forward to get a look at the content of the box, and sure enough, was a living and breathing armadillo was moving around the box, looking scared and cornered and like it would
have liked to be literally anywhere but here.

Thomas turned to Alexander, who seemed to have calmed down significantly, fury in his eyes. “An armadillo? Really?” he hissed into his boyfriend’s ear.

Alexander shrugged shamelessly. “Really,” he confirmed cheerfully.

“You do know that armadillos can give people leprosy, right? They are the only wild animals, other than humans, upon which the picky *M. leprae* can stand to live.”

Alexander tilted his head. “You know, sometimes I almost forget that you’re essentially a walking encyclopedia, and then you say things like that,” he replied, neatly sidestepping the question. “Also, are you calling humans wild?”

Thomas snorted. “Certainly when they kidnap unsuspecting animals and bring them as gifts for their own amusement. I’m not seeing what’s so utterly civilized about that.”

Alexander scoffed. “Of all times for you to become a compassionate human being, it just had to be right now, over an armadillo?”

“I’m plenty compassionate!” Thomas insisted.

Alexander glared. “Tell that to the poor kids you want to chuck out of the country for something out of their—”

Washington cleared his throat. “If you’re quite done, gentlemen,” he said pointedly, “I think all of us would like to proceed. Preferably before the gifts”—he cast a dubious look at the armadillo that seemed to be moving around in its box with ever-growing frenzy, which Thomas could very much understand—“escape.”

Alexander shot Thomas one last cold look. “Armadillo activist,” he ridiculed.

“Animal tormentor,” Thomas retaliated in kind.

“Unlike some people I know, at least I stayed within the budget,” Alexander grunted.

“Because you stole your gift.”

Alexander crossed his arms angrily. “I didn’t steal the armadillo from anyone,” he protested.

Thomas breathed out loudly. “No, forgive me my mistake. You kidnapped it.”

Washington’s eyes flitted between them. “Or,” the president suddenly drawled, “you could share this undoubtedly fascinating piece of gossip with the rest of the class. It’s not like we have anything else to do,” he said sarcastically.

As soon as Washington looked away, looking for whoever was number ten—Thomas didn’t bother to check—Alexander stuck out his tongue at Thomas, whose only response was an eye-roll. Really, this was all the maturity his boyfriend was capable of showing. *Face it, Thomas,* he told himself, *you’re dating a six-year-old with a fixation on rounding up poor, wild animals.*

An idea suddenly occurred to him. Thomas leaned closer to James, taking care to keep at least a modicum of distance between them. Even if he wasn’t all too aware of how everyone’s eyes would flicker to him every now and again, still endlessly curious and starving for gossip (which Thomas had no intention of giving them). “You need to steal the armadillo,” he hissed into James’ ear. “We
need to release it back into the wild.”

“And you don’t think anyone else will do it?” James retorted.

Thomas made a point of glancing around. “Have you seen the people here?” he hissed. “Half of them are just as bad as Alexander. Washington would probably make it America’s new mascot. Angelica would threaten the press with it. Jay would probably unleash it on unsuspecting interns. I shudder to think what Laurens would do, given half a chance.”

“Now”—James looked vaguely disapproving—”don’t you think you’re being a little harsh?”

“No,” Thomas stated forcefully, a little louder than he had intended. “I know these people. Someone needs to save this poor armadillo.”

James sighed. “Fine. I’ll help you. I’ll steal the damn thing.”

Thomas inclined his head. He watched as, one by one, people either opened new gifts or stole the ones already opened. Alexander found himself holding a fluffy blanket with dinosaurs. He looked like a kid on Christmas morning, about to tear into his neatly-wrapped presents.

James, as promised, stole the armadillo when it was his turn, though he pushed the box as far away from himself as he possibly could, a faintly nauseous look on his face.

The game went on, even as people every now and again threw curious looks at the armadillo, thinking that they were being sneaky.

Thomas had expected someone to steal the armadillo from James—maybe even Alexander, simply to spite Thomas—but, to his surprise, no one did. Thomas’ quesadilla maker was, on the other hand, stolen by none other than Bernie Sanders, which prompted Thomas to steal back his original gift in the form of the handmade Christmas ornament, glaring at anyone who so much as breathed in his direction.

Once the game was finished, James quickly closed the box again, though not before Thomas made sure that there were holes for the armadillo to breathe through. “I’m far more comfortable with holding it when the lid is on,” James told Thomas, shifting the box to his other arm.

Thomas rolled his eyes. “You can give it to me for the time being,” he offered. “It was my idea; I can hold it for a while.”

“You would?” James all but breathed in relief. “Thank you.” He pressed the box into Thomas’ arms with far more force than was required. “Don’t get me wrong, it’s not that I don’t like pets in general, I just—”


James seemed beyond grateful. “If you tell me where you’re putting it, I’ll come get it before I leave,” he promised.

“Sounds good. I’m about to go see if I can find a vegetable tray I can pillage for the poor thing,” Thomas said, peering down into one of the air holes to see the poor creature scrabbling at the sides of the box.

The night continued somewhat more smoothly after that. Thomas made frequent trips to the snack
table to snatch pieces of lettuce or tomato for the armadillo, who ate everything it was given.

“Jesus Christ, Alexander, did you feed this thing at all?” he asked after his fifth trip.

Alexander’s lack of response spoke volumes.

“This is animal cruelty,” Thomas said haughtily.

“You know what else is animal cruelty?” Alexander shot back. “Refusing to protect their ever-shrinking habitats from deforestation and climate change!”

Thomas stared. “How are you making this about climate change? This is about you being fucking inhumane to an innocent animal that was kidnapped by a hairless monkey and had no possibility of escape. Don’t you dare—”

“I didn’t kidnap the armadillo!” Alexander insisted. “I found it on the side of the road! It probably would’ve been smushed if I hadn’t been so gracious and saved it!”

Thomas threw up his hands. “Oh, because that’s just so much better!” he shouted. “You found the poor thing close to death, and the first thing that pops into your mind is, ‘I know! This will make a perfect dirty Santa gift!’”

“It got a reaction, didn’t it?” Alexander countered. “Unlike the—what was it you brought? A bottle of wine? The souls of the innocent children you’ve devoured?” he mocked.

Thomas scoffed. “And you accuse me of being heartless. This was downright malicious. All you care about is being at the center of everyone’s attention, isn’t it?”

Noticing that they seemed to be attracting quite a bit of attention, Thomas grabbed Alexander’s sleeve with the arm not currently holding the box. “Come on,” he hissed. “People are beginning to talk.”

Alexander rolled his eyes. “Let them,” he protested. “People always talk, and I, for one, am not finished.”

“Oh, neither am I,” Thomas said ominously, “but I’d like to continue this discussion away from prying ears.”

A few feet away, Aaron Burr swayed on his feet. He grabbed a table to stabilize himself, then grinned lazily. “Is this kinky thing or something?” he tried to whisper to the person next to him, but his vocal control seemed to be shot to pieces after—Thomas did a quick estimation—four glasses of wine, and his voice carried all the way to the pair.

Thomas raised an eyebrow. “Is he drunk?” he asked Alexander, momentarily forgetting the armadillo he was holding.

Alexander nodded, a shit-eating grin on his face. “Told you,” he said smugly, wiggling his eyebrows for emphasis. He stuck out his hand. “Pay up.”

Thomas snorted. “In your dreams, maybe. As it is, any bet you and I may or may not have made tonight is void and null on the grounds of you bringing a fucking armadillo to the party. A leprosy-carrying armadillo,” he repeated forcefully. “Besides, you said he’d be wasted before we opened the gifts. Seeing as I am currently holding your gift of a fucking armadillo, dear God, I’d say you didn’t win jack shit.”
Burr’s wife, Theodosia, finally decided to take matters into her own hands. She distracted Burr with an ease that bespoke of years of practice as she grabbed the drink out of Burr’s hands.

Alexander’s eyes followed the movement. Thomas sighed. He tugged rather insistently on Alexander’s sleeve, all but dragging him across the room to the relative privacy of another corner. The closest person was Democratic Congressman Rutherford from Alaska, another close friend of Washington’s, and he was still standing a fair distance away.

They were standing just in the doorway to the adjoining bathroom, and Thomas was about to continue his crusade to convince Alexander that *kidnapping helpless animals was not okay*, when across the room someone started shouting.

“Oh mon Dieu!”

Lafayette’s accent had gotten noticeably thicker, his ponytail was coming undone, and he was leaning against John Laurens like he was the only thing keeping the Frenchman upright.

In fact, by the looks of it, he was.

“Look, John, look!” Lafayette insisted enthusiastically, tugging on John's sleeve like a child who wanted their parent to come with them to see the pandas already. “A—Alexander and Thomas are under the mistletoe! That—that’s so—ç’est trop mignon!”

Thomas hardly dared to look up.

Thankfully, he didn’t have to because a moment later Alexander confirmed it for him.

“Shit,” he muttered. “Stupid fucking mistletoe! Like—because it wasn’t easy enough for people to be creepy and pressure others into shit they don’t want to do! Now, there has to be a stupid fucking plant that magically absolves the rules of consent—”

“Alexander,” Thomas interrupted quietly. “It’s just a plant. There’s no law saying we have to kiss.”

“Yeah, but if we don’t, it’ll look weird, especially since we’re dating,” Alexander pointed out heatedly.

Thomas felt the bottom of his stomach drop out. “Oh,” he whispered. It wasn’t that he didn’t like the thought of kissing Alexander—except yeah, he did because while Alexander was quite a good kisser, as Thomas has had the chance to find out several times, Thomas didn’t like him that way. Right?

The point was that even if he had liked Alexander that way—which, again, he didn’t—he didn’t want to pressure Alexander into kissing him just because some tradition said so. It felt too much like taking advantage of him.

“Yeah, ‘oh’,” Alexander snapped, before running a hand through his hair and rolling his shoulders. A moment later, he looked perfectly relaxed, almost like he was going to enjoy this. “So. C’mon, then,” he prompted, his lips curling into a smirk around the words.

_Fuck_, flashed through Thomas’ mind. Should his stint in politics ever flop, Alexander could making a killing from acting.

Thomas’ eyes flickered between Alexander’s for a moment, before he let his eyes travel further south. Alexander’s lips looked quite kissable—not that Thomas would admit it out loud. The last thing the coffee gremlin needed was a larger ego. It barely fit inside the Cabinet Room as it was.
Thomas slowly placed the armadillo’s box on the floor, ignoring the unpleasant feeling in his stomach as he heard the armadillo struggle to escape. Soon, little thing. Soon. Just wait a little longer.

“Well?” Alexander’s voice was barely louder than a whisper. “Aren’t you going to kiss me? The proper Southern gentleman and all? Courting me?”

Thomas scoffed. “Believe me, if I was courting you, you’d know.”


Thomas stilled. He really was, wasn’t he?

It had become almost second nature to make dinner for two at this point, and, well, he liked to cook his own favourite dishes, but he had long since given in to Alexander’s complaints that ‘they were only eating mac and cheese’, and had taken to sometimes making Alexander’s favourite food as well.

Only last week, they had gone out to yet another restaurant and had had a long-winded discussion about the Emu War that they still hadn’t finished.

Oh, God. He had been subconsciously actually treating Alexander as his boyfriend. He had been courting him. How had he not noticed? These things were kind of hard to miss.

“Hey”—Alexander’s voice snapped Thomas out of his musings—”you know that I was only teasing, right?”

Yes, Thomas knew that.

Somehow, that made it worse.

Rather than answer Alexander’s question, Thomas leaned in and pressed his lips against Alexander’s. He tried to make the kiss as brief and neutral as possible, but some of his grief and frustration and anger still made its way to the surface, and the kiss ended up being a little more forceful than Thomas had intended.

Alexander took a teetering step backward before regaining his balance, his arms coming up to wrap around Thomas’ shoulders as he returned the kiss. His fingers sunk into Thomas’ curls, absentmindedly massaging Thomas’ scalp, and a quiet moan escaped Thomas. It was swallowed up by Alexander’s lips.

Somewhere behind Thomas’ back, Lafayette was cheering. Someone else was wolf-whistling. Thomas resolved to track them down and have the FBI freeze their credit cards.

Thomas finally pulled away from Alexander, removing his hands from Alexander’s hips—when had that happened, anyway?—and rubbing the back of his neck.

Alexander looked nigh on indecent. His lips were red and swollen, his hair was a mess, and his reindeer antlers looked one light breeze away from falling off his head altogether. The look was borderline inappropriate for public, and yet Thomas couldn’t tear his eyes away from his boyfriend.

He looked like he was about to say something, but was cut off by a crying Frenchman barrelling into him, with Laurens right on his heels.

“Laf, man, what’s wrong?” Alexander asked as Lafayette hugged him tightly.
“It is—it is Christmas, mon petit lion, and everyone is so happy!” Lafayette stuttered out. He grabbed onto Thomas now, pulling him into the hug with more force than necessary. “And I just—I just love everyone so much and I’m so happy you two have found love in each other and—”

Laurens sighed and carefully wrenched his boyfriend off of Thomas and Alexander. “Alright, Lafayette, sweetheart, babe, let’s get you home, okay?” he said, wrapping an arm around Lafayette’s waist.


John rolled his eyes affectionately. “Yeah, we’re just going to head home, okay?” he said. “We should probably leave these two lovebirds to their own devices anyway, right?”

Lafayette smirked. “Oh, yes!” he said, wiggling his eyebrows at Thomas and Alexander. He leaned into Alexander and whispered something in Alexander’s ear in French that Thomas couldn’t make out, but whatever it was, it left Alexander redder than a tomato. Thomas decided he didn’t want to know.

Thomas quietly slipped away from the conversation, taking the armadillo with him. He wound up back at the snack table, lingering over the sodas and slipping broccoli under the lid of the armadillo’s box.

He was scanning over some beverages of the adult mind—fuck, fine, he could admit that he just wanted to get drunk and forget that this entire night ever happened—when something in particular caught his eye. Thomas furrowed his eyebrows as he stared down at the object in question. Why did this bottle look familiar?

“Oh, that?” Washington’s voice started Thomas out of his reverie. The president was gesturing at the unopened bottle on the table. “That’s a Christmas gift from President Putin—a Russian Standard. I’m being told that it’s quite good.”

Thomas’ eyes widened in horror. No fucking way. Fuck no.

“Hey, what’s this?” Alexander’s voice suddenly piped up from beside Thomas. “Is that—” he began before bursting into giggles. “It is! It’s Putin’s vodka, isn’t it?”

Washington tilted his head. “Technically, it’s my vodka now,” he corrected Alexander, “but if you’re referring to the source of its origins, then yes, it could be described as Putin’s vodka.” His lips curled up into a small smile.

Thomas crossed his arms mutinously. “It’s not funny,” he hissed into Alexander’s ear.

Was it only Thomas’ imagination, or could he actually hear Alexander’s shit-eating grin?

“Actually,” Washington said, “I’d like to talk to the two of you, in private, if you don’t mind.”

Thomas glanced over at Alexander, who shrugged and shook his head as if to say, I have no idea what this is about.

The two mean discreetly followed Washington out of the main room into a different sitting room, just down the hall.

They’d barely sat down when Alexander said, “Sir, I don’t know what this is about, but whatever it
is, I promise you, *Thomas started it!*”

Thomas glared at Alexander and smacked him on the shoulder.

Washington glanced between the pair of them quickly and raised an eyebrow. “This is exactly what I wanted to talk to you two about,” he said.

“What, Alexander’s astounding immaturity?” Thomas scoffed.

“The fact that Thomas is insufferable?” Alexander retorted, glaring at Thomas.

“It wasn’t even one of your better insults, Alexander. If you’re not going to bring your A-game, don’t play at all,” Thomas drawled, and Alexander huffed.

“Do you see what I have to put up with, sir? *Every day!* All he does is *purposely antagonize me!* All day!” Alexander cried, throwing his hands in the air. “Ridiculous piece of cocky purple velvet.”

“Oh, you know you love me,” Thomas crooned.

Alexander shoved him. “Oh, you *wish*—”

“Gentlemen,” Washington cut in sharply before the argument could escalate, “I simply wanted to know when the relationship between you had become, well, *real*.” He put his hands on his hips in an eerie parody of a sulking teenager.

Thomas suddenly choked on his own saliva. He took solace in the fact that Alexander didn’t seem to be doing much better.

Thomas had, of course, come to terms with the fact that he was, technically, in a relationship with Alexander. They were, by definition, *dating*. But what Washington was implying, that there were *feelings* behind such an arrangement, was—

“Mr. President, sir, no offense, but that—that’s a *ridiculous* idea to even *consider!*” Alexander sputtered.

Thomas couldn’t help but agree.

*Yes,* he found Alexander physically attractive, but that didn’t mean he had *feelings* for the man! Washington himself had been the one to suggest this arrangement

Washington looked taken aback, his eyebrows furrowed together as he stared at them. “I—I apologize,” he said, confusion apparent in his eyes. “I just assumed I—since the two of you—and the mistletoe—”

“No,” Alexander said curtly, shaking his head forcefully. “There’s nothing between us.”

Thomas swallowed. He suddenly found that his throat had dried up and that no words were forthcoming. When Alexander glanced his way for confirmation, all he could muster was one nod. This apparently satisfied Alexander, who turned back to Washington, leaving Thomas in a state of emotional disarray.

Alexander was right: there was nothing between them per se. So why, then, did his words leave a tight knot in Thomas’ stomach?
They eventually returned to the party, a sort of tension between them that was so thick that Thomas was pretty sure you could scrape some off with a knife and smear it on a bagel.

“I’m going to get a drink. Want anything?” Alexander asked, looking anywhere but at Thomas. The conversation with Washington was clearly still on his mind.

“If there’s any coke left, I’ll take a glass. Thanks,” Thomas replied just as uncomfortably.

Alexander disappeared into the crowd, leaving Thomas alone with an armadillo under his arm. This whole evening was fucking surreal.

Thomas’ eyes found James across the room. He followed his friend’s movements, mostly because it gave him something to do, and also because he knew that James was a complete lightweight and God only knows what would happen if he left James alone here with the alcohol. It wasn’t that his friend had a problem with alcohol by any means, but, well, accidents happened.

Thomas suddenly tensed up as he saw where James was heading. Or rather, what was above where James was about to be.

The mistletoe hanging from the roof. Honestly, Thomas was beginning to acknowledge that Alexander might have had a point about the fucking thing.

James stopped right under it because of course he did.

Suddenly, someone said something, which led to a wave of whispers, and then silence. In a move that almost seemed synchronized, the rest of the room turned their heads to look at the mistletoe James had stopped under.

“Well,” someone chuckled, “it seems that not even the Almighty James Madison can defend himself against the mystical powers of mistletoe.” Unless Thomas was sorely mistaken, the voice sounded like it belonged to Henry Knox.

“Of love, you mean,” someone else chimed in. They both snickered, and in the silence, the sound echoed across the room.

A small scowl formed on James’ face. He glanced up at the mistletoe, and oh, Thomas recognized that face. James had an idea. James grabbed a nearby chair and stepped up onto it, taking his own sweet time. He untied it and threw it down to the floor, then stepped down again, his movements unhurried, like it was nothing but an afterthought. “I think this little plant has caused enough trouble for one night, don’t you?” he asked no one in particular, picking up the sprig of leaves and berries and tossing it in the trash.

It was silent for another moment before someone yelled, “You can’t do that!”

“Oh, I think you’ll find that I can,” James chided the person, voice perfectly calm. “It’s an intrusive tradition that honestly has no place among mature adults.”

Suddenly, Alexander appeared by Thomas’ side. “Oh, so now you want to talk about ‘intrusive traditions’?” he made air quotes. The room glanced his way.

“Alexander,” Thomas interrupted, standing up and stepping between his boyfriend and his best friend. Everyone’s eyes snapped to him. “You don’t like it either. James just solved the problem. There’s no need to create a scene.”
Alexander twirled on his heels. “Oh, no need to create a scene, is there?” he seethed. “What about the times you people create a scene every time a woman asks for some basic human rights? The right to decide what to do with her own body? The same right that you just said that I should give Madison? Tell me, how is this any fucking different from abortion?!” Alexander placed his hands on his hips. If looks could kill, Alexander would be facing a homicide charge right now.

Nobody spoke as everyone’s eyes were flitting between Thomas and Alexander as if watching an intense tennis match and waiting for one of the participants to make a mistake.

“Are you fucking kidding me?” Thomas asked. “Are you—are you serious? We—you—just—we are not doing this, not right now.” Alexander sneered and opened his mouth but Thomas covered it with his hand. “No,” he spat. “We are not having this conversation right now. We shouldn’t have to have this conversation at all, Jesus H. Christ, but we are definitely not having it here, at the fucking White House Christmas party. Just shut up, okay? Call it bipartisan cooperation and let it go, or I swear to God.”

James cleared his throat. “Well then,” he said, glancing between the two of them, “I think I’m going to go get a drink. Leave the armadillo here.” He pointed at the chair he had used to take down the mistletoe.

And he was gone. A single white berry from the mistletoe still lying on the floor was the only evidence that he had been ever there in the first place.

Alexander’s eyes narrowed, and he said something that suspiciously like ‘go fuck yourself’ from behind Thomas’ hand.

The crowd watched them for another moment, before slowly returning to their own conversations, though their eyes flickered back to Thomas and Alexander every now and again in case there was a new development.

Thomas sighed, suddenly feeling very tired. “Come on,” he said. “Let’s go home.”

Alexander glanced around at the crowd. For a moment, Thomas thought that he would continue to argue with him, but strangely enough, he didn’t. Thomas didn’t know whether to be grateful or worried. “You know what?” Alexander said quietly, watching as the intern he had talked to before was sitting next to a pile of blank white papers, gesticulating wildly as she was explaining something to the congressman from earlier. Several paper airplanes were lying scattered around them. “Let’s.”

They left quietly after saying goodbye to the president.

They didn’t speak on the ride home. When Thomas unlocked the house, Alexander shot inside faster than Thomas could blink. When he finally threw the keys into the bowl, Alexander was long gone.

Chapter End Notes

Comments and kudos are the best Christmas gifts you can give!
Interlude: James Madison

Chapter by Sanna_Black_Slytherin

Chapter Summary

In which James Madison proves his badassery as he seamlessly kicks every politician in their collective asses. Also, there's a slight heating problem leading to slightly larger internal angst.

Chapter Notes

Pence is in DC because of Important Political Business.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

James sighed as he straightened the papers in his hand, rearranging the piles of paperwork stacked precariously on his desk. It was monotonous work. Important, yes, but monotonous. James was qualified for so much than filling in paperwork, but someone had to do it, and he was the only congressman with high enough clearance to do this particular part.

Well, James corrected himself, he and Minority Leader Yates, but he had a sneaking feeling that she would have bitten off his head if he brought it up with her—something about her being overqualified for mindless paperwork duty, not that Madison would understand. James snorted derisively. For self-styled social justice warriors, Democrats were annoying, all-around uncooperative, and had a special talent for alienating any possible allies. Didn't they realize that they'd need help if they wanted to actually implement any sort of change?

He needed a distraction, an excuse, anything so that he wouldn’t have to fill out any more of this blasted paperwork. That was all James was asking for.

Almost as if it was reading his thoughts, his phone let out a little come that informed James of the fact that someone's tweet had mentioned him by name. That would do as far as excuses went.

Curiosity peaked, James reached for his phone. Unlocking it, he scrolled down briefly, coming to a stop on a tweet, and all but groaned as he saw that it was penned by James T. Callender—a despicable human being, a journalist only in the loosest definition of the term. His current employer was the Herald—he had previously worked for the Post, but had gotten fired when he turned against his employers and benefactors, as was the case with every other job he had ever held. He was unreliable, traitorous, and a hypocrite of the highest degree.

James T. Callender @JamesCallender

With the recent revelations regarding Secretary Jefferson’s long-repressed homosexuality, many Republican lawmakers wonder whether there is something more to @JamesMadison and @TJefferson's personal relationships...
James pushed away his phone, absentmindedly locking it. He had read enough. He closed his eyes, but it was as if the words had been burned in behind his eyelids. Even when he closed his eyes, he saw them in front of him. He rubbed the bridge of his nose.

*Well.* James hadn’t intended to come out, but it also wasn't like he had been secretive about his distaste of sexual jokes or things of that sort.

Besides, this still was better than the paperwork in front of him. James gave it a baleful glare, and he swore that the pile returned the glare in turn. Yes, coming out it was. Maybe he could garner enough pity from Yates to get her to help him out with it.

*James Madison @JamesMadison*
@JamesCallender First off: I’m not gay. I'm asexual. That means that, unlike most people, I don't solely think with my dick. In more polite terms, that means that I'm not interested in sex with either gender.

*James Madison @JamesMadison*
Second: Even if I wasn't, I am deeply offended by the fact that you seem to be under the impression that I would seek to hide any relationship with Thomas Jefferson, one of the greatest people I know. I'm not gay, but facing a choice between @TJefferson and the likes of you, @JamesCallender, I know which I'd choose.

*James Madison @JamesMadison*
Third: To my not inconsiderable knowledge, nobody has raised questions about my sexuality, or even the lack thereof. You just needed a news story, and didn't even bother to do any sort of research before you published a story that has no basis in reality.

*James Madison @JamesMadison*
I know that it's hard for people to differentiate between platonic and romantic relationships, but please do try. There's a huge difference, if you'd just care to notice.

*James Madison @JamesMadison*
It's annoying when a hypersexualized society doesn't even bother to make an attempt to educate themselves about things that don't understand, instead just trying to erase them and pretending they NEVER existed in the first place.

*James Madison @JamesMadison*
Fourth: Thomas Jefferson is my best friend, and has been for over two decades. I will not see our friendship slandered because you are an opportunistic and needy child who would accuse anyone of anything for even a scrap of attention.

*James Madison @JamesMadison*
In short: I'm not into anyone, let alone Thomas Jefferson, who is my dear friend, emphasis on friend, and You. Repel. Me. @JamesCallender

His diatribe finished, James put down his phone. His lips curled up into a minuscule smile almost despite himself. While he hadn't exactly planned to make this part of himself known to the public, he would much rather do it than have yet another, albeit false, gay scandal on Thomas’ hands, and the
GOP needed someone at least remotely sane to keep them on track, and James didn't exactly trust the majority of what passed for the GOP leadership. Besides, it was oddly satisfying to use his sexuality—or rather, the lack thereof—as a legitimate argument against obnoxious reporters.

He didn’t bother going back to the paperwork. Instead, he stood up and made his way to the coffee machine, pressing a few buttons and waiting for the coffee to brew.

As James was staring down at the brown liquid dripping down into the hard paper cup, he pondered on what he had just done. Technically, the political backlash would be minimal. The GOP had no idea what asexuality even was, so they’d need some time to digest the situation before taking a stance, which would give James a little sorely-needed time to do damage control and sway the opinion to his side before it was too late.

He knew that, from a political viewpoint, he probably still should not have written what he had, and, under normal circumstances, he would not have. He had more self-control than that. The fact remained, though, that it had been a long day, with one Republican congressman after another refusing to pass their latest bill on traffic regulation; only last week, Pence had told him that he intended to challenge both him and Thomas for party leadership, citing ‘misaligned beliefs’ as reason for a need of a change of leadership; what felt like an eternity ago, although it could not have been more than two months ago (two months and ten days ago, James knew almost painfully well), his best friend had been forcibly outed as gay, and since then, the Republicans had been losing voters, losing trust, losing their connection to the people. Everything seemed to be going to hell lately. The Republican party felt like organized chaos.

And then there was this fucking paperwork.

Callender’s was simply the last in a long series of losses, and it was simply the strain that broke the camel’s back. It didn’t help that Callender was one of the people who had been fuelling the rumours since the Gayfair.

On the other hand, this would probably win him some sympathy points from Yates, who would probably agree to do the rest of James’ paperwork.

James was started out of his thoughts when his phone chimed.

Peggy Schuyler @Tomahawk
DAMN. Is any of the GOP leadership actually straight

*Alexander Hamilton* @AdotHam
@Tomahawk They're still all straight-up assholes.

*Alexander Hamilton* @AdotHam
But also DAMN. I’d be lying if I said I wasn’t terrified and not a LITTLE turned on @JamesMadison ;) #definitelythinkingwithmydick

*James Madison* @JamesMadison
Hamilton, please spare me your flirting. Don’t you have a boyfriend?

James barely had the time to put down his phone before it chimed again, this time with a message from Thomas. He sipped at his coffee as he read the messages.
From: Thomas

That was
What the h e l l James
That was amazing
Magnificent
I’m in awe

*slow clapping*


To: Thomas

Don’t turn into Hamilton with all that teen speak. You’re an adult, Thomas.

It never came up, but it wasn’t as if I was being tight-lipped about it. It was all there for those who knew what to look for. I wear a pair of black rings on my fingers, for God’s sake.

I haven’t exactly been HIDING it.

And you have known for a very long time that I’m uncomfortable with subjects like sex, Thomas. A five minute Google search would have given you all the information you needed.

The fact that all of you are living in, and are complicit to the creation of, a hypersexualized society is what prevents you from seeing that.

Even YOU seem convinced that I’d eventually ‘grow out of it’ or something—and don’t bother denying it, Thomas, I know the kind of looks you give me when you don’t think I’m looking.

Also, tell your boyfriend to stop flirting with me. It’s beginning to creep me out.

Having finished the replies, James drank the rest of his coffee and threw the paper cup into the trash. He shrugged on a coat and stashed the unfinished paperwork into his satchel, before stepping outside.

“Sir?” his secretary asked as James closed the door to his office.

“Clear my schedule for the afternoon, and tell all visitors that I’m currently unavailable as I’m dealing with a situation that just came up,” James automatically ordered, his mind coming up with an excuse at a moment’s notice.

The secretary quirked an eyebrow. “And what are you really doing, sir?” he challenged.

James allowed a smirk to show on his lips. “I’m going to use my newfound status as a pure and
innocent cinnamon roll to get Yates to do my paperwork,” he told William easily. He trusted William Bradford, as much as anyone could trust anyone in D.C.. The man was reliable, loyal, and eager to prove himself—practically the opposite of Callender.

William smiled as his attention returned to the computer. “In that case, good luck, sir.”

With every step he took into the Democratic portion of the building, James couldn’t help but feel as though he was being silently watched—dozens of pairs of eyes silently following his movement as he strode through the building. He felt like he was about to fight his way through an army of enemies hell-bent on his destruction—as though he had stepped into shark-infested waters, and was being watched to judge whether he was a good snack.

Was this how Thomas had felt when he had been outed? At least James had done it himself, and asexual didn’t scream abomination against God quite as much as gay did. So there was that.

James continued to walk with all the confidence he could muster, because he would be damned if he let the bleeding heart liberals see just how much their whispers and looks affected him.

He wasn’t stopped, and wasn’t sure whether he was grateful or annoyed. The people didn’t seem so much to part before him as the sea before Moses—no, nothing so dramatic, though he wouldn’t have put it past Hamilton to have trained his flying monkeys to do just that—as simply hadn’t found themselves in his way to begin with. Was James any more religious, he would have been inclined to call it destiny.

He finally came to a stop in front of the door leading to Congresswoman Yates’ office, which was opened ajar. Yates’ secretary looked up as she heard the footsteps. Her eyebrows shot up when she recognized James. “Speaker Madison,” she said courteously. “If you’re here to see Congresswoman Yates, I’ll check if she’s currently busy.”

James’ eyebrows shot up into the air. He had never before been offered any favours by Democrats, not for free, and certainly not without a lot of effort on his part beforehand. This newfound ease was… exhilarating, and not a little bit daunting.

“Thank you,” he said politely.

The secretary stared at him for another second, as though trying to analyze him, before she nodded and pressed a button on her phone. She spoke quickly for a moment, presumably with Yates, before gesturing for James to enter Yates’ office.

“Tell me something, Speaker Madison,” Yates began without preamble, spreading her arms out in her armchair. “Is none of the GOP leadership straight?”

“Oh?” James raised an eyebrow. “Is this really what you want to talk about?”

“I mean”—Yates gestured around her office—”it’s not like I’ve got better gossip, and this brings the Republican hypocrisy about avoiding all ‘unnatural’ sexualities onto a whole new level.” She snickered.

The other eyebrow joined its companion on James’ forehead. “I wasn’t aware that our internal politics were of such amusement to you,” he said dryly.

Yates waved a dismissive hand. “Oh, we need something to talk about sound here. You know,” she continued conversationally, “for a long moment, a lot of us were convinced that you and Jefferson
are fucking.” James grimaced at the mental image her words called up. She merely snickered at his facial expression. “You looking like someone had given you a disgusting onion to smell wasn’t exactly helping, you know. We all thought it was some elaborate scheme to hide the greatest gay relationship to ever exist in politics. We even had betting pools—elaborate ones, at that, if I may say so myself. Some were even about when you and Jefferson would finally decide to ‘come out’.” She chuckled as she made air quotes. “In hindsight it probably should have been a hint to all of us that Hamilton refused to take part in the betting. He knew every detail about Jefferson’s love life, and he didn’t share, that slimy snake.”

James was growing concerned by the second as to the level of involvement Yates was showing in Thomas’ love life. James was his best friend, and he didn’t want to know a fraction of what Yates did. How did Democrats ever get anything accomplished between making betting pools about their rivals’ love lives?

“But”—Yates sighed, suddenly serious, as she pushed away her pen—”that didn't turn out to be the case. Sure. Jefferson's gay, but you definitely aren't. And it was very brave to come out as you did. I know that not a lot of people would have that—especially not a lot of Republicans. Forgive me for saying this, but your party isn't exactly known for being welcoming to minorities.

“You're potentially facing ostracization from your own party, and your political career might well be over, but you did it anyway.” She smiled. “You did the right thing, Speaker Madison, despite terrible odds.

Well. James wouldn't quite go that far. As far as the GOP was concerned, conservatives would, in all probability, eventually equal asexuality with lifelong celibacy, and that was something highly praised in the conservative circles. And even if they didn't, James had several ways of swinging this to his advantage.

Unlike coming out as gay, coming out as asexual wasn't quite the political death sentence Yates seemed to think it was, but for now, James would let her believe that.

Besides, he hadn't actually said anything. She had simply drawn hey own conclusions.

He stood before her as she continued to shower him in pretty yet ultimately pointless praise.

“Well?” she finally asked. “What can I do for you?”

A small smile crossed James’ lips. “I'm glad you asked,” he replied smoothly. “As a matter of fact, I do have a bit of paperwork that I need help with.”

Yates leaned forward. She stapled her fingers together. “And how do I come in?” she pressed, oddly perceptive.

James allowed his shoulders to slouch almost imperceptibly, a movement Yates picked up on. “I have a few… let's say, pressing problems, within my party that I need to attend to, and you're the only congressperson with high enough clearance to fill it out these papers.” He subtly pushed the papers towards her.

“Oh,” Yates made a sounds of understanding. “Well, I'd be a terrible human being if I didn't help you—and anyway, it's about time for some inter-party cooperation, wouldn't you say?” She laughed softly, and James joined in. It was the first thing Yates had said today that he could safely agree with.

“Well, then,” Yates finally said as she accepted the papers from James, “I wish you all the best of luck in solving your problems. You're one of the most cooperative Republicans I've ever worked
with, and I'd hate to have to change that. Just one small favour?” Her earnest voice stopped James in his tracks.

“‘Yes?’ James asked over his shoulder.

“Please don’t try to shove this down, okay? The world is in desperate need of more positive LGBT+ representation, especially regarding asexuality.”

James swallowed. Carefully tightened his grip on the doorframe. “I'll think about it,” he said evasively.

He heard a huff. “Vague as always, Mr Madison. Very well—I guess this is the most that anyone can ask.”

James’ next stop was Pence’s office. He was downright delighted to find the entire office in a state of barely-contained frenzy.

He approached the desk of Pence’s secretary, knocking twice on the wood to announce his presence. He held in a snicker when he saw the secretary twitch at his sight, not having noticed his approach. “H-hello, Speaker Madison,” the secretary squeaked. “I didn’t hear you.”

“Hello, Miss Clinton,” James said politely. “I trust you’ve had a calm day so far?”

Behind them, there came the sound of shattered glass. The secretary winced as James grimaced.

“That's not quite how I would put it, sir,” the secretary offered finally. She shuffled her papers, which quite frankly already looked like a mess. “Is there anything I can help you with, sir?” she asked, smiling up at James, desperately trying to hold on to whatever remained of her dignity.

“As a matter of fact, yes,” James said, the small smile still in place. “I was wondering whether Governor Pence has the time for a brief meeting.” James leaned against the desk, ever-so-slightly turning his body so that he could get a glimpse into the office.

The secretary moved with him, blocking his view. She was no longer smiling. “I'm afraid that Governor Pence is quite busy,” she said coldly.

James quirked an eyebrow. “With what? Breaking glass? Throwing around vases?” he mocked her. Let me rephrase myself: I will be meeting with Governor Pence in five minutes. It is your choice whether it will be on the privacy of his office or”—here, James gestured around them—“here, in this hall. Honestly, I'm fine with either, but I doubt that Governor Pence would like for everything that I have to say to him to be spread to the public."

The secretary swallowed. “‘Yes, sir. I'll tell him, sir.”

James didn’t deign her words with a reply. He waited as the secretary entered the chaotic room, catching a glimpse of the disarray within before the secretary closed the door behind her. He heard shouting coming from behind the closed door. Only then did he let a smirk spread across his face.

Mike Pence had long been a thorn in James’ side, but at the same time, he had always been a solid symbol. He was pure, he was absolute, and he had a way or drawing in the far-right conservative voters, and had a stellar record at that. James had never had sufficient reason to challenge Pence’s position.
Well, until now.

James’ hands relaxed. He absentmindedly trailed his fingers along the secretary’s desk. Smooth. Plywood. Pence could be accused of many things, but a lack of taste wasn’t it.

“The governor is ready to see you now,” the secretary’s chirpy voice said suddenly, shaking James out of his musings.

He shot her a quick smile. “Thank you.”

He stepped around her, serenely walking towards the office as though he owned the place. Which, in a very indirect way, as the leader of the party Pence belonged to, he did.

Pence’s office was empty apart from Pence himself. It looked like the room had been hastily evacuated. James absentmindedly smiled. All that effort, just for him? Oh, Pence, you didn’t have to. How sweet of you.

James let the door close quietly behind him. He took in the office—hastily cleared from the staffers, with the papers and various objects put down haphazardly where they had previously been held up and waved and pointed to. He skimmed over several reports, but only recognized a few as the House-issued bills to be discussed in the future. The other papers were unknown. James made a note to have Thomas look into them in the future.

“Speaker Madison,” Pence said with a forced smile, drawing James’ attention back to the man himself. “What an”—Pence’s lips curled up into a tiny mockery of a smile as his voice took on a condescending tone—”unexpected surprise.”

James didn’t react. He had learned when to exercise patience, and it wouldn’t do to lose his temper or play his cards too early. This was a sensitive matter.

“Indeed.” James smiled. “I see that I interrupted a”—he made a point of looking around lazily, eyes taking in the chaos that reigned in the office, before glancing back at Pence, where he was met with more patronization—”moving party, or was it an impromptu meeting? In any case, by the looks of it, it must have been wild.”

James’ smile slowly faded as he fixed his eyes on Pence. “I’m beginning to tire of the chase, so let’s just through it, shall we, governor?” Pence’s smile became rather fixed at James’ words. “We both know that you were the one to spread the rumours about myself and Thomas.”

Pence turned his back on James. “I would not stand here and be baselessly accused.”

“What about ‘base fully ’ accused?” James countered.

Pence stilled. He glanced over his shoulder, meeting James’ eyes. “What do you mean?”

“Well”—James was twirling a pen he picked up from a nearby shelf—“what if I, theoretically, of course, were to go public with the information that you are trying to frame be as unfit for party leadership?” His smile had a sharp edge, and James saw that Pence was physically holding himself back from flinching away.

Pence clenched his fingers into fists, then forcibly relaxed them. “You have no proof.”

“Theoretically’, I said,” James reminded him. He put down the pen he had been playing with, and trailed the edge of the shelf with his finger. “Then again, when has physical proof ever mattered to our party? After all, it’s easier than ever to accuse someone of something they may—or may not—
have done. All it takes is a few words, a few clicks and ticks, and send! There it is. Out for all the
world to see that Mike Pence got so greedy, so power-hungry, that he couldn’t simply stay in line.
No, Mike Pence had to make it a huge affair, had to accuse the friend of Thomas Jefferson of being
engaged in, what was it?” James pretended to think for a second. “‘A more personal relationship’.
You couldn’t have been less subtle if you’d let Hamilton dictate that tweet.”

Pence snorted. “These allegations are unfounded and you know it.”

“And I tell you again: the GOP isn’t in particular need of unequivocal proof. Tell me,” James
suddenly switched tracks, leaving Pence bewildered, “what was your plan for the rest of the higher-
ranking officials that just happened to stand in the way between you and party leadership? Would
they too just so happen to secretly be gay? And don’t scowl like I’ve just cursed you six ways to
Sunday,” James chided Pence coldly. “You just accused me of being gay; I think you’re more than
able to stand hearing the word.

“How can you even live with yourself, knowing that you would willingly tarnish the reputation of
yourself and others, in a vain effort to climb the power ladder? I, for one, wouldn’t want to be seen
as nothing but a petty politician who will do anything to destroy his enemies, even go so far as to
make things up. In a way, I admire the guts it took. I didn’t think you had them.”

“What do you want?” Pence finally snapped.

“Nothing, of course. Why would I want anything? By your own confession, you haven’t done
anything.”

Pence nodded stiffly. “Of course.”

“But say that you had,” James went on, his eyes fixed on the window facing the Lincoln Memorial.
“Theoretically, of course. I would appreciate it if you did not run for re-election. It would be bad for
our public image if it were to become public that one of the core symbols of conservatism was
throwing false accusations at foremost politicians in our country. Theoretically, of course.”

“Theoretically, of course,” Pence echoed. “I see.”

James’ smile was benign as he said, “I was hoping you would.” He glanced around again. “Well, I’ll
leave you to your moving efforts, governor. I have a feeling that the practice might come in handy
soon.”

James knew exactly what the whispers were saying.

*James Madison was asexual.*

*James Madison was unnatural.*

*James Madison was celibate.*

*The Republicans were an insult to the conservative way of life.*

*James Madison was a virgin.*

*Neither of their leaders were straight.*

*The Republican way of life needed a change.*
James Madison was a saint sent by the Christ Himself to purify the human race.

(James had scoffed at that last one, even as he sent it to Thomas with the caption ‘Bow To Your Savior’.)

In all honesty, James didn’t care. So far, he had accomplished more in that day than he had in the entire past month. The ends often justified the means.

(Besides, watching his fellow Republicans flounder around in confusion, grasping after a manual on how to act when your Republican party leader comes out as uninterested in sex, was, in hindsight, quite entertaining.)

For the first time in a long while, James had the luxury of actually eating lunch outside of his office, not stumped by paperwork or mutinous politicians or whatever else life decided to throw at him. Never one to let an opportunity pass him by, he invited Senator Sanders, counting on the fact that the man was more interested in discussing politics than recent scandals. Not one to disappoint, Sanders had begun expatiating socialistic propaganda as soon as he had sat down. James smiled kindly as he ordered for them, before throwing himself into the discussion. This was nice. This was simple. This didn’t require backstabbing or managing incompetent adjutants or doing damage control for Thomas and Hamilton.

This right here—this was what James had gotten into politics for. Changing the world. Helping people, and stopping those who would rather seek to do harm than good. Debating what was the right thing to do, and swaying others to see the world as he did. That was what James loved, what he would dedicate his life to doing, and he’d be damned if he let the likes of James T. Callender take that from him.

Alexander Hamilton @AdotHam
Hey @JamesMadison is that a no to the threesome?

Thomas Jefferson @TJefferson
@AdotHam ALEXANDER

James Madison @JamesMadison
@AdotHam … I’m not even going to dignify that with a proper response.

“The heater is out,” Thomas said as he stumbled up from the basement.

Alexander simply blinked at him for a few moments before saying, “What?”

“The heater went out,” Thomas repeated impatiently. “I already called, it’ll get fixed tomorrow while we’re at work, but it’s not working right now.”

“You’re kidding me,” Alexander muttered. “This is a joke, right? You live in one of the swankiest houses in D.C., and your heater went out? Didn’t you buy a fancy, expensive heater that’s maybe, I dunno, not supposed to do that?”

“Yes, I did, thank you for your concern,” Thomas drawled.

“Then why is it out?!” Alexander shouted, throwing his hands in the air.
“I don’t know! My God, you’d think this whole thing was some elaborate plot to kill you or something,” Thomas snapped.

“It very well could be,” Alexander mumbled in a huff. “In that case,” he continued, pulling his coat tighter around himself, “I’m going to go put on thicker socks and a pot of coffee. Don’t wait up.”

He stomped down the hall like some sort of petulant T-rex. Thomas couldn’t help but roll his eyes as he watched him go.

Thomas was shutting down his laptop and putting his glasses on his bedside table when his door flew open. He just about jumped out of his skin. He looked up, startled. The sight before him only served to confuse him further.

There was Alexander, of course, but he looked more like a misshapen lump of cloth than an actual person. He was wearing fuzzy pants tucked into what appeared to be two pairs of fuzzy socks, which were themselves tucked into a pair of bunny house slippers. On top of that, Thomas could just about make out the top of a turtleneck and the hood of a sweatshirt peeking out of collar of Alexander’s sweater. He was also wearing a beanie, a pair of gloves, and a blanket tied around his neck like a cape.

“What the fucking hell,” Thomas muttered under his breath.

“Scoot over,” Alexander demanded bluntly, wasting no time with pleasantries because since when did he?

Thomas blinked in bewilderment. “I beg your pardon?”

“Scoot over,” Alexander repeated. “My fingers were numb so I put on gloves, but now I can’t type or hold a pen properly, so I can’t work, and it’s so cold that I can’t concentrate enough to read, so I decided to go to bed, but it’s too damn cold to sleep, so scoot over.”

“You want to get in bed with me,” Thomas summarized simply, unable to get over his shock at Alexander’s proposition to put any proper inflection behind the words.

“It’s not like we haven’t done it before,” Alexander remarked flatly. “It’ll conserve heat.”

Thomas didn’t know what to do. On one hand, this was his bed and that was Hamilton and Thomas didn’t enjoy giving himself nightmares; besides, Alexander looked properly miserable, and Thomas wasn’t going to deny how much joy that brought him; on the other hand, Alexander did look really fucking miserable: he was shivering where he stood, even in all his layers—and dear Lord, it looked like he was wearing his whole damn closet, and then some—and Thomas couldn’t help but feel pity for the man.

“Fine,” he finally relented, throwing back his blankets and moving a little to the left to make room for Alexander. “C’mom, you great big pansy. No shoes in the bed, there are pillows to your right, and get in here quickly—I’m getting colder just looking at you.”

Alexander beamed at him. He kicked off his slippers and pulled off his gloves before grabbing a pillow and climbing in bed.

“I’m going to sleep,” Thomas declared. “So for the love of God, keep it down. And no funny business, got me?”
“Gotcha,” Alexander replied, burrowing under the blankets. He pressed his face into one of the pillows, making satisfied sounds.

Thomas swallowed at the sight, before abruptly turning around and facing the other way. He couldn’t deny it, and didn’t even bother trying: Alexander was adorable.

Thomas slipped back under the blankets, before clicking off the light. “Goodnight, Alexander,” he whispered into the dark.

“G’night, Thomas,” came Alexander’s quiet reply.

Thomas fell into an easy sleep.

Thomas didn’t know what was going on when he woke up, only that he was pressed into something soft and warm that smelled like coffee and ink.

It wasn’t unpleasant in the slightest, and so Thomas nestled closer, nuzzling his face into the silky hair that smelled like aloe vera and—

Hair.

Oh God.

Thomas was almost too afraid to open his eyes.

Almost being the operative word.

He eventually gathered the courage to carefully open one eye, praying to every god in every pantheon he’d ever heard of (and some that he was pretty sure he was making up on the spot) that what he thought was happening was not happening.

It was.

Dear Lord, it was.

He was spooning Alexander. His arm was fucking wrapped around Alexander’s waist, for fuck’s sake.

Thomas jerked back as if burned.

Fuck.

He leapt out of bed a moment later, hissing as his feet hit the cold floor and ignoring Alexander’s unintelligible protests.

Fuck, fuck, fuck.

When did this happen?

Alexander didn’t know why Thomas had been acting weird all day, but he did know that when he opened their front door after work, he was hit in the face with a warm blast of heat.
Central heating.

Alexander couldn’t imagine living in a world without it.

God bless America, and God bless heaters. And whoever invented them. (Probably Thomas Edison, that pretentious prick.)

Still, that didn’t answer the question: what the hell was up with Thomas?

Chapter End Notes

This has been James 'more badass than you without even trying' Madison, Thomas 'I'm gay but no homo' Jefferson, and Alexander 'I just want H E A T' Hamilton.

Happy 2018 everyone!
In which Alexander has astraphobia, Thomas has monophobia, everyone’s a thesaurus, and the authors enjoy naming chapters far too much.

Chapter Summary

Alexander and Thomas deal with panic attacks. They try to comfort each other, with only partial success because they’re both failures at life.

Chapter Notes

*reads recipe* A little hurt and comfort, a little angst, three fuzzy blankets, and two point forty-seven panic attacks. *mixes well* *Thomas Jefferson appears in Powerpuff girls outfit*

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The weather was horrible. The weather channel had been crying storm for three days now, and it seemed that their precious predictions were finally coming true. Thomas wrinkled his nose as he glanced outside as the rain kept bombarding the windows at a rate that made Thomas tired by just looking at it. How delightful. While Thomas didn’t have anything against storms per se, they left behind a gloomy mood that was quite counterproductive to getting any work done.

“There’s a storm outside,” Alexander murmured under his breath.

Thomas scoffed. “So what?” He didn’t look up from his laptop.

Alexander bit his lower lip. He bundled himself up tighter in the blanket he had commandeered sometime earlier, burrowing his face into the fluffy fabric. “I don’t like storms,” he confessed.

Thomas was on the verge of snapping that he, too, didn’t like several things, like Alexander’s fucking financial reform or communistic tendencies, but Alexander didn’t see him bitching about it, when he actually glanced over at Alexander. Whatever words he had been about to speak died on his tongue as he processed the picture before him.

Alexander looked downright miserable—there was simply no other word for it. His hair was a tangled mess, not that Alexander noticed; he was looking at the computer without seeing anything he was reading; his fingers were gripping the blankets with such force that Thomas was surprised that he hasn’t torn it apart yet; he was on the verge of crying, for God’s sake, his eyes rimmed with red lines, and all for the sake of some fucking thunder.

Thomas had seen Alexander stare down senators and lobbyists alike, and, on one memorable occasion, both Vladimir Putin and Fidel Castro simultaneously, and come out victorious. To see him brought down by something as trivial as a storm was more than slightly disconcerting.

All in all, the immigrant was a sight for sore eyes. Thomas couldn’t get rid of the sneaking suspicion that he was missing something important here.
Thomas made a split-second decision. He pushed away the document—an actual physical file that he had been handed earlier that day, the information too sensitive to be digitalized yet—and focused his attention on Alexander. “Hey,” he said softly. “You know that you can talk to me, right?”

“It’s nothing,” came the muffled reply from somewhere inside the blanket cocoon that was Alexander. “You’ll just think I’m being ridiculous.” Thomas opened his mouth to contradict Alexander, but he went on. “You know how I know that? Because even I think this is ridiculous. This is just some fucking lightning, right? It shouldn’t be scary by any measure, not any more than any other natural phenomenon. Statistically, earthquakes cause much more damage than storms. They actually destroy houses and move entire bits of land, and storms just, kind of, move things around a bit. And yet—” Alexander broke off his rant.

Thomas moved to sit next to the speaking ball of fluff. He carefully put a hand on Alexander’s shoulder, or at least on what he thought was Alexander’s shoulder. It could be awkward if he misjudged that—really awkward, depending on by how much. Thomas ignored the part of his mind that began running calculations on what the probability was of Thomas having touched Alexander’s ankle instead of his shoulder. “Hey,” he repeated himself. “That’s okay. Fears aren’t exactly rational, you know.”

The ball of fluff huffed. “How do you know that it’s a fear?” it spat.

“Because it has you, one of the most rational and, yes, intelligent men I’ve ever met—though if you tell anyone I said that, I’ll deny it until the day I die—up in a twist, and I know first-hand how phobias tend to manifest. Plus,” Thomas paused, “you just confirmed it for me.”

The ball of fluff harrumphed. “I’m no longer speaking to you,” it muttered.

“Doubt it,” Thomas replied, “seeing as I’m the only person here and you have a complete inability to shut up for more than five minutes.”

Alexander opened his mouth to protest before realizing that, in doing so, he'd only prove Thomas correct. He narrowed his eyes from his blanket cocoon and huffed.

“Look,” Thomas began, “you've got two viable options here: sit there and suffer in silence, or fucking talk to me.”

Alexander snorted from beneath his fluffy fortress. “Thomas Jefferson wants me to talk to him?” he asked. “Call the fucking national weather service, they're going to want to hear about the sudden blizzard in hell.”

Thomas rolled his eyes. “Shut up and tell me what's wrong, asshole,” he demanded.

Alexander raised an eyebrow. “Do you want me to shut up or talk? I can't do both. I'm getting a lot of mixed signals here,” he taunted.

Thomas rolled his eyes and shoved him lightly.

Alexander, at that moment little more than a fuzzy burrito, wasn’t able to use his arms, and couldn’t catch himself as he fell off the couch, hitting the ground with a thud and an exceptionally undignified screech. “What the fuck, Jefferson?” he demanded.

Thomas winced. “In my defense, I honestly didn’t mean to hit you that hard.”

Alexander scowled. “Yeah, right,” he said dubiously. He turned around, away from Thomas, and pressed his face back into the couch. “Fuck off,” came the muffled words.
Thomas sighed. He moved to sit on the floor next to Alexander. He studied Alexander in silence, before, as if about to approach a feral animal, carefully putting an arm around Alexander’s shoulder. He felt Alexander stiffen before he gradually relaxed.

“You know, Storm Frederick's going to clear away any day now,” Thomas murmured, abortively trying to cheer Alexander up.

Alexander glowered up at Thomas. "Is that what they're calling it now?" he grumbled.

Thomas bit his lip, unsure of how to continue. “Do you want to… talk about it?” he asked awkwardly.

“No,” Alexander spat, pulling his blankets tighter.

Thomas couldn’t help but feel relieved. He didn’t know what he would’ve done if Alexander had said yes. “Well then,” he replied, “Is there, uh, anything I can do to help?”

Fuck. Thomas was neither qualified nor equipped to handle this situation.

“[You could always fuck off],” Alexander muttered.

Thomas couldn’t help but feel relieved. He didn’t know what he would’ve done if Alexander had said yes. “Well then,” he replied, “Is there, uh, anything I can do to help?”

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Alexander merely huffed, resting his head on Thomas’ shoulder in silence.

They remained like for what felt like eons, the silence somehow simultaneously uneasy yet oddly comforting.

Alexander eventually broke the silence.

“There was a hurricane,” he said simply, almost as if he owed Thomas an explanation. “On St. Croix. We knew it was coming, we were told to evacuate, but how do you evacuate a whole island in two days?”

Thomas didn’t reply. He couldn’t, really. What could he say? Alexander was, after all, right.

“We—the Stevenses and I—we didn’t manage to get off the island in time.” Alexander was babbling
now. Thomas didn’t know whether to stop him or, indeed, if he even could. “We had to stay up on the second floor. I don’t know how long it lasted, exactly, but it felt like forever, and when we finally went back downstairs…” Alexander’s sentence trailed off, his words evaporating into the air.

Thomas was about to nudge him, to prompt him to continue, when another clap of thunder echoed through the house. At the sound, Alexander squeezed his eyes shut, pressing his hands over his ears.

“Alexander?” Thomas asked cautiously.

Alexander merely shook his head in response. Thomas sighed and ran a hand through his hair. Alexander pressed his face into the crook of Thomas’ neck. Thomas stilled at the touch but didn’t make any move to move away. He carefully wrapped an arm around Alexander’s waist, drawing the other man closer to him.

“Breathe,” he murmured quietly into Alexander’s ear, hoping to hell that he wasn’t about to fuck everything up. “Just breathe. Listen to my voice.”

As steadily as he could, Thomas began reciting the periodic table from start to finish, every so often stopping to make an off-handed remark about an element or other. Finally, Alexander’s breathing gradually seemed to have evened out, and when Thomas looked down again, the man was sound asleep, shamelessly using Thomas’ shoulder as a pillow.

Thomas sighed as he looked Alexander over. He contemplated moving, but there was a chance that him moving would wake Alexander up, and considering the state Alexander was in when he fell asleep, he didn’t want to subject Alexander to that.

Instead, he righted one of the blankets covering Alexander, then, as slowly as he could manage, turned to grab his laptop and resuming his work.

---

Alexander didn’t quite meet Thomas’ eyes the next day as he sat down opposite Thomas, a coffee mug in hand. He stared at it as though it held the answer to every question ever asked. “So,” he finally said, still not looking Thomas in the eye, “About yesterday.”

Thomas glanced up. “Yes?” he asked, his voice deceptively light. He was curious as to how much Alexander remembered, or how much he would admit in telling.

Alexander still refused to meet Thomas’ eyes. “Thank you.”

Thomas tilted his head, a small smile curling up the corners of his lips. “You’re welcome.”

“Also, never bring it up again.” Alexander took a sip of his coffee. “I already have people poking fun at me because of my background—I don’t need to give them additional incentive because ‘Alexandew Hamilton is afwaid of stowms’.” Alexander said mockingly, adopting a childlike voice.

Thomas rolled his eyes. “I’m not that much of a dick. Besides, you haven’t used that moment in the elevator against me, and I’m not about to throw the first stone here.”

Alexander’s only reply was a dubious snort.

---

Thomas wasn’t sure how he had found himself at the bottom of the miserable hole that was the dark recesses of his mind. Or rather, he did, but thinking about it was doing him no favours.
He had been editing a treaty about oil import rates, the symphony recording of *Les Misérables* playing in the background, when his thoughts began to wander, jumping from the treaty to exchange rates to the Treasury Department, to how pissed Alexander would be if Thomas reduced their plastic export taxes—and yes, Hamilton, he was aware of the fact that there was no such thing as an export tax, but it was easier to say that than ‘the import tax each separate country was obliged to pay as they bought commodities produced on American soil’—to Alexander’s presence in his life.

For however long he was going to stay in Thomas’ life, as it were. Loathe though Thomas was to admit it, he was beginning to enjoy having Alexander around. He was all Thomas really had left—apart from James, but James was his friend. Alexander was different.

His fingers abruptly stopped mid-word, his index finger hovering over the ‘N’, before falling limply to the keyboard and staying there.

*Fucking Joseph and Saint Mary.*

Alexander was the only family he had left. For all it mattered, he might as well be dead to his biological family. To them, he was worth less than the dirt on their driveway—at least with that, they knew exactly what it was, and had paid quite a bit of money to find good gravel that would show off their status. Thomas, for all that he had accomplished—and his accomplishments were far from insignificant, if he could be so bold—was a disgrace to them, to the Jefferson name. No matter what he would do, it could never make up for being gay.

For being a freak. A faggot. Unnatural.

Thomas couldn’t change that part of himself, and he had long since resigned himself to the fact that, should they find out, he might consider himself permanently uninvited to Thanksgiving—or so he had. For all his supposed preparations, it still felt like a blow to the stomach, knocking the air out of him and leaving his gasping for breath.

His family would leave him. Had left him. Thomas didn’t know which. All he knew was that they weren’t going to be in his life anymore. Not his siblings, not his father, and certainly not his mother.

Thomas was surrounded by people, and still, he was so very obviously *alone*.

And as for Alexander? Alexander could leave whenever he wanted. He wasn’t bound to Thomas by anything. He could leave at a moment’s notice, and there was nothing Thomas could do to stop him, nothing he could offer that Alexander would want.

At best, Thomas had his best friend, but that was it. Thomas had James and a *fake boyfriend*, and sooner or later, Alexander will leave. It was an inevitable fact, as much a given as the fact that dogs barked or that the sun exerted a gravitational pull on the planets to keep them in orbits. Alexander will tire of Thomas, or he'll get a better opportunity, or he'll deem that Washington's reputation has been 'saved', and he'll leave Thomas, and then Thomas will be very much alone.

Really, *really* alone. Quite possibly forever. After all, Thomas’ career was all but over. Who would want a wash-up like Thomas Jefferson? He didn’t fool himself into believing that he would amount to anything in the political sphere after Washington’s term was over. No government, be it Democratic or Republican, would want a black, gay Republican.

Thomas swallowed. He clenched his hands into fists, forcing himself to take calming breaths in an abortive effort to derail his thoughts.

This *right here* was why Thomas didn’t like to reminisce.
Thomas collapsed back onto the couch, feeling all of a sudden as though his energy had been drained out of him.

He didn’t much feel like working now.

Chapter End Notes

*sees angst creeping into our happiest fic* *attempts to beat it back with a broom*
*fails*

whoops
In which all evidence indicates that, as Alexander Hamilton does have a birthday, Alexander Hamilton is in fact a human being, although his ability to drink two large coffees in less than a minute seems to suggest otherwise.

Chapter by Sanna_Black_Slytherin

Chapter Summary

Otherwise known as the Ned Stevens chapter.

Chapter Notes

Happy 263th birthday, Alexander Hamilton! In lieu of fancy graphics from last year, here's a +6k chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Alexander’s rapidly approaching birthday caught Thomas completely by surprise.

It wasn’t that Thomas didn’t know Alexander’s birthday. It had actually been one of the first things they had made an effort to learn about each other when this whole thing had started, if only for the sake of realism.

It was just that he had… forgotten.

It wasn’t his fault, Thomas repeatedly told himself. If anything, it was Alexander’s fault for having a birthday at the most hectic time of the year. Or, more accurately, it was his parents’ fault for getting it on nine months before the most hectic time of the year.

Point was, Alexander’s birthday was in four days, and Thomas had no idea what the hell he was going to do. He hadn’t imagined that Alexander would stick around for long enough for it it actually be a concern.

He ran a hand through his hair. He needed ideas, good ideas, and he needed them fast.

“I miss Ned,” Alexander said bluntly as he grabbed his coffee from the kitchen counter.

“Come again?” Thomas asked from his spot at the kitchen table.

“I miss Ned,” Alexander repeated. Thomas raised and eyebrow and gestured in a way that made it clear that that did absolutely nothing to clarify. “My foster brother,” Alexander finally explained.

Thomas choked on his crêpe. He coughed a few times in an abortive attempt to clear his windpipe, downing half a glass of milk in the process. “I’m sorry,” he managed to get out between coughs. “I must’ve misheard you. I could’ve sworn that I heard you say that you have a foster brother.”
Alexander sighed dramatically. “Maybe that’s because that’s what I said,” he replied slowly, as if speaking to an extraordinarily slow toddler.

Thomas rolled his eyes. “That’s ridiculous,” he drawled. “You don’t have a foster brother.”

Alexander sniffed. “No offense, but I think that I know whether I have a foster brother better than you do,” he argued. “His name’s Ned. He’s a park ranger upstate. His family fostered me after my cousin died. We were roommates in college. We’re Facebook friends and everything.”

Thomas still looked skeptical, so Alexander pulled out his phone with a huff. A few taps later, he was holding it out in front of Thomas’ nose, a photo pulled up on the screen.

Thomas’ eyes widened in shock. “Holy shit,” he muttered, eyes flickering between the two men on the screen.

It was a photo of Alexander, certainly, but, more than that, it appeared to be a photo of two Alexanders.

The two were nigh-on identical.

“Are you sure that he isn’t your long-lost twin brother?” Thomas asked,抓着 the phone to examine the photo closer. He tried to zoom in on the image, but the phone was plucked out of his hands before he could.

Alexander glared at him with an intensity that Thomas frankly thought his remark didn't merit. “Please don’t,” he snapped angrily. “We got enough of that back on the island. Now, I’m controversial enough as is; I don’t need my boyfriend starting rumours about my parentage.”

“But you’re identical!” Thomas protested, pointing helplessly to the phone.

“We’re probably related somehow,” Alexander finally conceded. “It’s a small island. Practically everyone is related somehow. But no, we’re not biological brothers.”

Thomas leaned over Alexander’s shoulder to get another look at the picture, his brows furrowing as he studied the picture. At first glance, he had thought they were identical, but—his eyes snapped between the person he knew to be Alexander and the guy who had to be this Ned—that wasn’t quite right, was it? Alexander had a freckle on his cheek and longer hair, and the dark circles under his eyes were much more prominent. There was something else there, too, something that made Alexander so clearly Alexander, but something Thomas couldn’t put his finger on what it was.

No, Thomas concluded finally, they weren't identical, but he couldn't figure out what the damn difference was, and it was pissing him off.

“When was the last time to saw him?” Thomas eventually asked, settling back into his seat. Studying the photo for any longer would most likely be crossing into the ‘being a creep’ territory, and anyway, he didn't think that he'd get much more out of it. He would need to actually meet this Ned if he was to solve this unexpected mystery.

“About a year and a half ago,” Alexander replied, even as he absentmindedly locked his phone and pocketed it. “You know what it’s like. We don’t exactly get days off.”

Thomas nodded. “Destroying the traditions and values our great country was built upon does seem like a full time job, I’ll give you that,” he said with a grin.

If looks could kill, Alexander would be facing murder charges. “Almost as time-consuming as
stripping away the rights of hardworking Americans in favour of pandering to billionaires,” he snapped, his smile all teeth. “But I suppose it takes all types, doesn’t it? Progress is the child of conflict.”

Thomas chucked a nearby napkin a his boyfriend. “Fucking liberal idealist, I swear,” he grumbled the way one would say ‘cat hair on evening suits’ or ‘people holding up the Starbucks line trying to settle on a drink’, before standing up. “Grab your shit; we need to leave.”

Alexander stuck out his tongue at Thomas. “You’re just bitter because you have a meeting at seven-thirty and I don’t,” Alexander replied, grabbing his to-go-cup and briefcase.

Thomas scrunched up his nose. “I’d never be so infantile,” he objected. “Just get your shit together and get in the car.”

Alexander outright cackled. “Yes, I can see the maturity practically oozing from you,” he said mockingly, barely ducking a crumbled-up napkin Thomas threw after him.

Thomas’ calculating eyes followed Alexander out of the room.

If nothing else, he mused, he now knew what he was doing for Alexander’s birthday.

■ ■

The blinking light on Thomas’ phone signaled a new Facebook Messenger notification. Thomas grinned as he clicked on it.

From: Ned Stevens

Then I guess I’ll see you Thursday!

■ ■

Thomas was straightening his sweater when the doorbell rang at ten in the morning the next day.

He and Alexander had both been generously ‘granted the day off”—which was Washington’s way of saying ‘do not come in unless the country itself is on fire”—after Alexander had offhandedly mentioned his birthday being the next day, and Thomas had promptly taken full advantage of his mandatory vacation: he had woken up early; had actually gotten some exercise in, something he’d been sorely missing these these past few months; had finished the book he’d been reading; and had taken the time to eat something at least semi-healthy for breakfast, before beginning to make his cleaning rounds around the house.

Alexander being Alexander, he had taken this opportunity to lock himself in his room all morning, pouring over some essay that would most definitely end up being a least 25,000 words long and all but impossible to understand for people with an IQ of below 140.

Thomas was understandably surprised, then, when he heard the man call out, “I’ll get it!” from his room when the bell rang. Alexander’s words were immediately followed by a thud and a crash and a particularly graphic string of expletives—Thomas would bet good money that he’d forgotten to take off his headphones before getting up, and that, as a result of that, his things were scattered all over the floor. He stifled a grin at the mental image, before following his boyfriend into the hall.

He stopped at the balustrade, staring down at the image before him. He blinked, then blinked again,
just to make sure that he hadn’t imagined things. A man looking almost exactly like Alexander was standing before him, before Alexander. Thomas shivered. The photo really hadn’t exaggerated their likeness. Two Alexander Hamiltons were quite literally the conservative nightmare.

He heard a yelp of “What are you doing here?”, followed by an “Alexander, is that how you treat family?”

Thomas stared at the sight for another moment—it really was a terrifying sight, and the picture didn’t nearly do it justice—before shaking himself from his reverie. He plastered on his most charming smile and stepped around the corner. “Well then,” he said, grinning as both Ned and Alexander turned, as though synchronized, to face him. It was damn near unsettling. “Alexander, are you going to invite him in, or are you just going to let him freeze to death on our front step?”

Alexander glared at him. “I was getting to that,” he said. “I do have manners, y’know. I might not be a proper Southern boy,” he said mockingly, “but I’m not a heathen.”

Thomas snorted and rolled his eyes. “You almost had me fooled,” he drawled. “Our guest is still shivering on the steps like a Victorian street waif.” He then grinned at Ned. “Seeing as my boyfriend is more interested in talking about his manners than actually putting them into practice, allow me to welcome you to our home,” he said, making an exaggerated sweeping gesture.

Ned smiled as he walked in, offering his hand. “Ned Stevens,” he introduced himself. “I’ve heard a lot about you.” There was a mischievous smile on his face, and Thomas nearly face-palmed. This guy wouldn’t know proper acting technique if they hit him in the face. He was being the very opposite of subtle.

Thomas shook his hand. “Thomas Jefferson,” he replied, for the sake of tact not acknowledging the latter part of Ned’s statement. “It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

Alexander scoffed from behind them. “I can already tell that this was a terrible plan,” he muttered. “The two of you are going to gang up on me. I can practically feel it.”

At that, Ned laughed. He threw his head back, his eyes crinkling at the corners. “Relax, Alex,” he teased, shoving Alexander’s shoulder playfully. “It’s not as if you can’t take a few jokes.”

Thomas raised an eyebrow at the interaction. “Would you like anything to drink?” he asked politely, leading Ned to the couch.

“Just water will be fine,” Ned replied with a smile. “I’m trying to cut out on the sugar, y’know? Starting the new year right and all of that.”

“Hippie,” Alexander muttered, but there was no heat behind his words.

Ned just grinned. “You’re just upset because I, unlike certain people, actually succeed in keeping my New Year’s resolutions for longer than a few hours.”

Alexander huffed. “That’s because your New Year’s resolutions suck.”

“No, it’s because I have this nifty thing called self-control,” Ned shot back.

Alexander crossed his arms. “I’m quickly beginning to remember why I hadn’t invited you over yet.”

“Because you were ‘busy protecting the rights of the people’ and ‘stopping arrogant assholes from destroying the country’. I suspect it also had something to do with one of those assholes being your boyfriend,” Ned replied easily. “Which, speaking of.” He turned around to face Thomas, peering
closely at him. “I don’t know how much Alexander has told you about me, but I can promise you that I can make your life considerably more difficult if you ever hurt Alexander,” he said pleasantly, his smile still broad. “I don’t care if you’re the President of Earth himself—if you hurt Alexander, I will pay you back in kind.” His smile widened. “Let’s hope that you never break his heart then, eh?”

Despite knowing that it had been coming, Thomas found himself swallowing. He didn’t want to admit it, but he was a little intimidated by Ned Stevens. He had nothing on Washington, or even James, mind, but Thomas couldn’t deny that he was somewhat intimidating in his own way.

Alexander rolled his eyes. He stepped in between Thomas and Ned, slapping Ned on the shoulder. “There’s no need to go all ‘big brother’ on Thomas,” he admonished Ned. “In case you don’t remember, I can defend myself just fine.”

Ned glanced at Alexander, and something unspoken passed between them. Thomas was glancing back and forth between them, as though he was observing a game of tennis, trying to decipher what was going on.

Ned eventually sighed. He ran his fingers through his hair. “I know that you can,” he assured Alexander. “I just worry.”

Alexander smirked. “Don’t worry.” With that, he took a few steps towards Thomas until he was standing right next to him. He wrapped an arm around Thomas’ waist and drew him in closer until there was nary an inch between them. He threw his other arm around Thomas’ neck, and then Alexander's mouth was on his, and Thomas' mind kind of short-circuited. He made a small surprised sound, which was quickly muffled by Alexander's lips against Thomas’.

Thomas was a little surprised at how quickly he reciprocated it. He grabbed the front of Alexander’s shirt, dragging him closer still, eliminating any remaining distance between them. If Alexander noticed anything different about Thomas’ reaction, he didn’t show it. His eyes were gleaming mischievously, which told Thomas more than enough about his intentions for this kiss.

*Fine.* If he wanted to make Thomas uncomfortable in front of Ned, that was absolutely fine. Two could play at that game.

His mouth twisting into a smirk, Thomas gathered his courage, before his tongue darted out, teasing Alexander's lips, probing them to try to find a way in. He smirked as one made itself apparent, and then his tongue was inside Alexander’s mouth. It was an odd feeling. He had never kissed Alexander quite like this. He couldn’t exactly say whether it was good or bad—it was different, but it wasn’t unpleasant.

It was Alexander’s turn to let out a quiet whimper as Thomas’ tongue began to explore his mouth. Thomas hummed as he closed his eyes. While he hadn’t come to a decision regarding whether he liked it yet, he could safely say that he did like the way Alexander’s mouth twisted and shaped itself according to the motions of Thomas’ tongue.

Actually, Thomas thought, it wasn’t half-bad. He liked Alexander’s reactions to him, and liked the way he tasted.

*Wait.*

*Shit.*

*What.*

Thomas’ eyes flew open. He forced himself not to freeze up at the thought, remembering that they
still had an audience, even as a large part of him wanted to break the kiss and run away screaming.

He could not have just thought what he thought that he had thought.

This was Alexander Hamilton. No matter what other endearing qualities the man had—and Thomas still wasn’t quite certain that there were any—there was no way that Thomas would have actually enjoyed kissing him.

And yet, Thomas thought clinically as his body clung to Alexander’s on autopilot, that was exactly what was happening. He heard a quiet moan, and realized with horror that it had come from him. He realized that he was flushing, and hoped to hell that it was of embarrassment. Any other option was… unthinkable. Thomas squeezed his eyes shut as his grip on Alexander’s shirt tightened. He was never going to be able to live this one down. This was it—he had destroyed his career, and any chances he had of creating an amicable relationship with Alexander’s foster brother. After all, he had all but ravished Alexander in front of Ned, and that was a sight that no sibling, foster or otherwise, ever needed to see.

After what Thomas could only guess was at least half an hour, Alexander finally pulled away. His face was slightly flushed and there was a small grin playing on his lips as he turned back to Ned. “See?” He gestured at Thomas. “He’s completely harmless, and he loves me too much to hurt me.”

Ned rolled his eyes. “Careful. You almost sound like you’re an actual human being with feelings, instead of a workaholic robot.”

Alexander winked. “Also, I doubt he’d survive for a single week without my legendary blowjob skills,” he said as he made an obscene gesture. Thomas’ flushed deepened as his mind almost involuntarily conjured up images that were decidedly not appropriate for a conversation with Alexander’s foster brother.

Ned laughed. “Now there’s the Alexander I know,” he teased.

Alexander snickered. He ran his tongue around his lips, wetting them. Thomas’ eyes followed the movement. “Yeah, well, it’s hard to teach an old dog new tricks,” Alexander said, his lips curling into a smirk.

There came a sound from the kitchen, and all three men turned their heads towards it. Alexander rolled his eyes. “That would be the coffee,” he said in exasperation. He turned to Thomas. “I didn’t know that you put it on.” There was a clear question in his voice.

Thomas shrugged. “I figured that that, if nothing else, would get you out of your room.”

Alexander snorted. “You know me too well.” With that, he went into the kitchen, only to stick out his head again. “Coffee?” he asked Thomas and Ned.

“Tea, please,” Ned said politely, seeming to resign himself to a non-water beverage. “No sugar.”

“If you don’t get me one, I’ll just drink yours,” Thomas added nonchalantly.

Alexander spluttered. “If you so much as dare to look at my coffee…” he trailed off, glaring at Thomas, who shrugged.

“Then you’d better bring me a coffee.”

Once Alexander was out of sight, Ned turned to Thomas, leaning in to whisper in his ear, “Hey, thank you for inviting me. It’s good to see Alexander again.”

Thomas smiled at him. “I know he’s happy to see you too,” he replied. “Although I do have one request.”

Ned cocked his head to the side, resembling, just a little bit, a confused puppy. “What’s that?”

“Keep him out of the house today, would you?” Thomas asked. “I’m getting a few of his friends together this evening, and I’d prefer for it to be a surprise.”

Ned grinned. “Of course,” he quickly agreed. He placed hand on Thomas’ shoulder as his smile growing impossibly wider. “Thank you,” he said, his words oozing with sincerity, “for doing all this for him.”

Thomas ignored the feeling that stirred in his stomach. “No need to thank me,” he said charmingly. “He’d my boyfriend; there’s not a lot that I wouldn't do for him.”

Only after the words were out of his mouth did he realize just how much veracity there was to them.

His mounting panic attack was interrupted before it could even begin. “Hey, Jefferson, stop flirting with my foster brother,” Alexander said as he came into the living room, holding three mugs. He pressed one of them into Thomas’ hands, then handed the other one to Ned. “I honestly don't know how you could have given up coffee,” he teased Ned, even as he casually leaned up against Thomas’ side. With the hand that wasn’t holding the coffee, Alexander wrapped an arm around Thomas’ waist again, his hand coming to rest on Thomas’ hip as though it had every right to be there. Which it did, Thomas struggled to remind himself, seeing as how they were dating. It, face, it would be outright odd for them not to act affectionate in front of a guest. Alexander’s behaviour made complete sense.

Why, then, did Thomas want to push Alexander away, yet simultaneously keep him close by and never let go? Why did Alexander's touch feel as though it was burning Thomas, and yet, like a moth to the flame, he couldn't force himself to resist it.

The birthday party took longer to prepare than Thomas had expected, mainly due to the active interference of one John Laurens and his French boyfriend, who had taken to chasing each other around the house with banners, waving them around like swords. Thomas sighed. If this was how they had behaved in college, his respect for Alexander was growing by leaps and bounds, because God knew that it would have been impossible to study with either of these as a roommate.

(Though, in all honesty, as he had almost expected Laurens to challenge Thomas to a duel the second he entered the house, one could also make the claim that the preparations were going significantly better than expected. The subject was open to interpretation.)

At least Mulligan wasn’t actively acting like a five-year-old with no impulse control. As they were preparing the food—wherein Mulligan had been banished to hacking duty after he had nearly set the soufflé on fire—Thomas regaled him with tales of Alexander and his newfound doppelgänger.

“It’s almost as though he has figured out a way to clone himself,” Thomas finished, “and I swear that I will go insane.”

Mulligan hummed. “Fuck yeah, one’s enough!” he agreed loudly—although, Mulligan seemed to do everything loudly. “There was one wicked party way back when,” he continued, “and man, it was wild. You should have seen the kind of stuff Alexa—” He caught sight of Thomas’ darkening
expression. “Yeah, you probably don’t need to hear that,” he said hurriedly. “Just—let’s leave it at one Alexander being enough.”

Thomas rolled his eyes and poured the cake batter he’d been mixing into a pan. “Would you put this in the oven once it’s finished preheating?” he asked. “I need to go make some last minute calls.”

Mulligan nodded, and Thomas hurried back into his room.

Thomas quickly called both Angelica and Washington, double checking that they were, in fact, coming, and that Angelica was bringing her sisters before he fell back on his bed.

 Fucking hell.

Thomas, as a rule, avoided parties if he could help it. Oh, he knew how to throw a great party, knew how to charm a crowd. He had to. You don’t get people to donate to your campaign by locking yourself away in your room all your life.

But goddamn if it wasn’t exhausting.

Thomas allowed himself a good five minutes to relax, to sit in the silence and prepare himself for the night ahead before he forced himself up.

It was showtime.

■ ■

Thomas received the designated ‘almost home’ text from Ned at 7:30, and ordered everyone into their respective hiding places.

He was pretty sure Lafayette and John were making out behind that houseplant, but he decided not to bring it up.

Five minutes later, the front door swung open, and Alexander flipped on the lights.

It was cliché. It was corny. It was cringe-worthy. Thomas himself would’ve scoffed and sneered had anyone ever so much as mentioned it four months ago, and yet here he was, jumping out from behind his couch and yelling, “Surprise!”.

Alexander socked him square in the jaw.

“Jesus fuck, man!” Thomas shrieked, covering the sore spot on his chin.

“Oh shit, shit, shit ass motherfucker,” Alexander muttered under his breath, looking up at Thomas and then around the room and then up again. “Thomas, oh God, I’m so sorry, I didn’t mean to, it was just a reflex—”

Thomas nodded and waved him off, throwing a glare at a cackling John Laurens over his shoulder. “It’s fine,” he gritted out. “Barely felt it. You’re so tiny, it was like being punched by a fruit fly.”

“Shut up, I know how to punch,” Alexander grumbled before pulling Thomas’ hand away from his face. “Here, stand still, let me see.”

“I’m fine, Alexander—”

“Fuck, Thomas, I’m so sorry. Ned, could you please go get some ice? I think—”
“Alexander, I swear, I’m okay, I don’t need ice—”

“It’s going to bruise, shit—”

“It’s not going to bruise—”

“I’ve been in enough bar fights to know when something is going to bruise, Thomas, now shut up so I can—”

Someone cleared their throat.

“Happy birthday, Alexander,” Washington said from behind them, an awkward smile on his face.

That seemed to be enough to break the tension in the room, people milling about, taking turns telling Alexander happy birthday as Alexander sat next to Thomas on the couch, glaring whenever Thomas attempted to removed his make-do ice pack.

“You know,” Laurens said conversationally from his spot on the armchair opposite Alexander, “last year, Alexander said that all he wanted for his birthday was to punch you in the face. It, uh, looks like he finally got his birthday wish.” Thomas wanted to get rid of the smirk on Laurens’ face, but he had a hunch that this party had reached its punching quota already.

“This isn’t even the first time,” Thomas grumbled, earning shocked looks from the whole group.

Alexander glared at Thomas before holding up his hands in a placating manner. “We had a… minor spat. I was drunk. I’m not saying it was right, but…” Alexander shrugged in a way that seemed to say ‘shit happens’.

“Was that the time you challenged the entire Republican party to a duel?” Mulligan asked. “Because, fuck, man, I saw that and I didn’t know whether to go help defend your scrawny ass or place bets on who’d win in a fight between you and Madison, because you’re both so freaking tiny.” He snickered, ignoring Alexander’s scowl at the mention of his height.

“It… might’ve been that night,” Alexander admitted.

Angelica glowered at him over her glass of wine. “Do you have any idea what kind of headache that gave me?” she snapped.

“Let’s not bring work into this, okay?” her sister—Eliza, if Thomas’ memory served him correctly—said, trying to mollify both parts. “Lord knows we could all use a break.”

“Amen to that,” Lafayette said, raising his glass and resting his head on John’s shoulder. Everyone raised their glasses in agreement—even Alexander, after a nudge from Thomas.

“So, Ned,” John cut in. “You grew up with Alex?”

Thomas ignored the way his stomach curled at the easy way the nickname fell from John’s lips.

“Yeah,” Ned replied with a grin—was he ever not grinning?—“I don’t know how either of us survived that, to be completely honest.”

“So you’ve got stories?” John prompted.

Alexander’s eyes grew comically wide. “No,” he whined. “No, no, Ned, please, don’t—”

“John, my friend, I’ve got more stories than you would believe.”


“It’s my birthday!” Alexander complained, not sounding unlike a petulant child. “You guys can’t bully me on my birthday!”

“So when Alexander was, like, thirteen, he had this pair of jean shorts, and he thought they were the hottest things on the planet,” Ned began, his voice slipping into that of a narrator’s.

Alexander groaned and covered his ears. “Kill me, please,” he said dramatically. “Spare me the indignity.”

Thomas silenced him with an absentminded kiss. Alexander glared up at him mutinously, but remained silent. The exchange had gone unnoticed by the rest of their group, who were listening to Ned.

“So he’d wear these stupid shorts, which were at least two sizes too big, with this bright fluorescent polo and flip-flops, and he thought he was hot shit,” Ned continued. “I remember he came up to me and told me about how he was planning on wearing that outfit to ask out this one girl, and I swear he was just so confident and proud—”

“I’m kicking you out of my house,” Alexander grumbled as the rest of the group laughed.

“Is your name on the deed?” Thomas asked, covering his mouth to hide the little smirk that crept up on his face. Alexander opened his mouth to reply, but Thomas shook his head. “I didn’t think so,” he answered, “Therefore, you can’t kick anyone out. Ned, by all means, continue.”

The party went on as such for a while. People told stories—Alexander showing up to a class three hours early after John changed his alarm, the time he went clubbing with Hercules and Lafayette and slipped on a drink and face-planted in the middle of the dance floor, the memorable occasion when Alexander showed up on Eliza’s doorstep with a wad of gum the size a golf ball in his hair; they laughed, they drank, they laughed.

Somehow, the topic had drifted to birthdays past, and Ned elbowed Alexander in the side.

“Remember the time Mama made an ice cream cake for your birthday and it melted before we got to eat it? We just ended up pouring it into cups and drinking it like a smoothie?” he asked.

“Yeah,” Alexander agreed, smiling widely. “Back before you became a boring old hipster who didn’t eat sugar.”

Thomas frowned. There was something wrong with Alexander’s expression. His eyes flickered between Alexander and Ned, sitting next to him and likewise laughing.

Thomas peered closely at Alexander’s face, before his mouth formed a tiny circle, and a soft sigh escaped him.

Oh.

Oh.

So this was why Alexander and Ned didn’t look identical.
He looked at Alexander again, this time taking the time to study every detail in his expression. Alexander was smiling, yes, but he didn’t really smile. It wasn’t the kind of smile that could light up the room. It was the kind of smile politicians offered at state galas.

Thomas’ breath hitched. Almost all of Alexander’s smiles looked like these.

When Alexander smiled, it was less genuinely happy. It was more teeth and tight lines around the eyes—almost like he had taken the time to practice a normal, happy smile—and it was almost perfect, close enough that, unless he stood next to Ned, whose smile is what Alexander's should be, nobody could tell the difference.

Thomas swallowed as his mind led him down to the inevitable conclusion: Alexander was rarely, if ever, actually, truly and genuinely happy. He faked the happiness, forced it out, and yes, he seemed content, but he wasn’t actually happy.

And yet, for some goddamn reason, Alexander seemed satisfied with not being happy.

Thomas’ frown deepened as his stomach seemed to do a somersault that left him slightly nauseous. This wasn’t the Alexander he had come to know. The Alexander he knew would have sought happiness at any price, would have fought tooth and nail for his heart’s desire, and would have reached his dreams no matter what it took, unless—

Unless Alexander didn’t really want happiness; or, more accurately, he wanted it, yes, but he didn’t value it above everything else.

Thomas sighed, dragging a hand through his hair, even as the party went on around him. Now this, this was typical of Alexander—putting his duty and career above his own needs. Not that Thomas was one to talk, seeing as how his plan had been to render himself permanently single so that he could serve his country, but still. Thomas was happy. Not all the time, but most of the time, he was happy.

Alexander though? He didn’t seem truly happy any time.

God, Thomas thought to himself, way to be a fucking downer.

“You know, I kinda wish Madison was here, just so he could spill all the nitty-gritty details about little baby Jefferson,” Alexander said, grinning up at Thomas—forced, tight around the edges, too bright—and snapping Thomas out of his thoughts.

“I’ll have you know I was perfectly dignified as a child,” Thomas replied haughtily, trying to regain the composure that his revelation had snatched from him.

“Sure,” Alexander said, rolling his eyes. “And John’s as straight as a board.”

“Hey!” John cried. “I’m offended you would even imply such a thing, even sarcastically—”

The rest of his words blurred together as Thomas let himself be sucked into the noise and the commotion of the party.

The house was silent when Thomas got up.

He stretched several times in his bed, then glanced at the clock. 11:49 am. Well. It had been a long time since Thomas had slept in that long, and he had been grateful that he had had the forethought to
tell Washington last night that they wouldn’t be able to come in the next day. To this, Washington had looked at them critically and told Thomas that maybe it was for the best. Thomas agreed, because Alexander was snappy on a good day; Thomas didn’t want to see how he was when he had a massive hangover.

There were still decorations loitering all around the house from last night, and someone—Thomas suspected Laurens because really, who else?—had left three cans of beer on the floor, thankfully empty. Thomas glanced around. Nothing else seemed to have suffered any damage—except Alexander’s pride, maybe.

Miraculously, everyone bar Ned had succeeded in leaving at the end of the party. Washington, not all that drunk to begin with, had, of course, been picked up by Secret Service, and Angelica’s sister—not the youngest one, mind, who, by the end of the night, could barely stand up straight—had somehow managed to remain sober enough to coax her sisters into a cab, and Laurens and his posse decided to walk home, never mind the fact that it was early January and everything outside looked like it had turned to ice. Thomas only allowed it because Lafayette looked sober enough to still be able to get his bearings around him, and even then, he didn’t truly relax until he got a text from said Frenchman telling him that they had made it safely home and that Mulligan was crashing at their place.

Alexander, for his part, had fallen asleep sometime during hour four of the party, his head pressed into Thomas’ neck. Thomas couldn’t resist running his fingers through Alexander’s hair every now and again, even as he winced at the distinctly uncomfortable position they had found themselves in. He wasn’t twenty anymore, Alexander, really.

Once Ned decided to go to sleep and everyone else had left, Thomas carried Alexander to his bed. He debated whether to take off his shirt, but every time he made an attempt to do so, his stomach seemed to do a somersault. Thomas finally decided to leave him as he was, because two in the morning was not the time to deal with his possibly-existent feelings for Alexander Hamilton. He had draped a blanket over him, turned off the lights, and closed the door, before going to bed himself.

Thomas made his way to the kitchen, absentmindedly wondering whether Alexander would have a hangover. He had anticipated it, and had drunk a glass of water before going to sleep so as to stay hydrated, but Alexander had simply… collapsed into Thomas’ arms.

Yeah. There would definitely be a hangover, and Thomas would be lying if he said that he didn’t feel a bit gleeful over it.

Thomas busied himself with scrolling through the phone while waiting for the coffee to brew. A Republican lawmaker from Idaho had been caught quite literally with his pants down with yet another man in yet another bathroom, and really, how often can you make the same mistake?; the Chinese were trying to pander to India by threatening to put up sanctions against trade with Pakistan; and Kim Kardashian was pregnant—again.

Nothing of interest—or rather, nothing that needed Thomas’ immediate attention. His department knew how to deal with the Chinese, Thomas had about as much interest in the Kardashians as he did in the life expectancy of a fruit fly, and Thomas could only snicker at the thought of the poor Idahoan when he would inevitably come face-to-face with James, because the usual excuses of ‘you know how it is’ or ‘I’m a fairly wide guy, if you know what I mean’ wouldn’t exactly fly with the Speaker of the House.

Eventually, he heard footsteps coming down the stairs. Alexander entered the kitchen, looking like a complete nightmare. His hair was standing up in odd directions as though he had stood outside in the wind and then had been struck by lightning; the dark circles around his eyes were more pronounced
than usual; his eyes looked like they belonged on a dead person; and his mouth was twisted into a grimace.

He made a beeline for the coffee, and Thomas wordlessly handed him a mug. Alexander nodded in appreciation, before drinking the whole thing in one go and what the fuck, Alexander. He poured himself more coffee, half of which he also drank in an instant. Thomas’ eyes were growing with terror as he watched what the hell Alexander was doing.

“Are you okay?” Thomas finally asked, because someone had to say something to break the silence, and Alexander’s behaviour was beginning to worry him.

Alexander held up a finger. He finished his coffee, then looked up at Thomas. “Not so loud,” he hissed quietly.

Thomas snickered.

Alexander glared at him pointedly.

Thomas rolled his eyes. He turned towards the fridge. “Whatever. I’m making breakfast. Want some bacon and fried eggs?” he asked. “I’ve heard that it’s good for a hangover. And, you know, for your body as a whole, since it’s food,” he added reprovingly, “and you don’t eat.”

Alexander huffed. “This is not the time to discuss my eating habits,” he told Thomas.

“There’s never time with you to discuss your eating habits,” Thomas muttered as he took out enough food for two portions. He wasn’t sure whether Ned wanted breakfast, but Ned, unlike Alexander, seemed like an adult not on paper only, and was probably capable of making his own breakfast.

Alexander watched in silence as Thomas puttered around the kitchen, preparing breakfast. He sipped at his coffee, and when had he even procured another cup?

“I’ve never really celebrated my birthday before, you know,” Alexander eventually said into the silence, his voice soft enough that Thomas had to strain to hear him, “and this was amazing, and I’m glad I could celebrate for the first time like this, thank you.”

Thomas paused in his movements. Slowly, he turned around to face Alexander, and couldn’t help but marvel at what he saw on his face. There was sincerity in Alexander’s eyes, yes, but what was even more astonishing was the slight smile on Alexander’s lips, the smile that curled up around the corners of his mouth and seemed to light up the entire room.

Alexander was smiling. Actually, really smiling. Thomas’ breath hitched, and he suddenly found it hard to speak.

“You’re welcome,” he said eventually, which seemed to ruin the moment. “Now, eggs?”

Chapter End Notes

We hope that you enjoyed it! Tell us what you thought :)
In which Thomas has a gay midlife crisis despite not actually being middle-aged and being perfectly aware of the fact that he was gay. In the interest of accuracy, it could be better described as an Alexander Hamilton crisis.

Chapter Summary

A Revelation occurs, and James is Fed Up.

Chapter Notes

it's short but it's a doozy

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Alexander was in a suit, a *fucking hideous green suit*, and his hair was clean for once; simply slicked back as opposed to tied into a ratty ponytail.

He stood in front of the cabinet, speaking so passionately that Thomas almost forgot that what he was saying was utterly ridiculous *bullshit*.

Almost.

There was a hole in Alexander’s argument, one so small most people wouldn’t even notice, a small chink in his otherwise impenetrable armor.

It was all Thomas needed.

“Alexander, darling,” he interrupted. “I love you, but you’re an absolute moron.”

Thomas didn’t even have to think before he said it, the words coming to him naturally.

Too naturally to be a lie.

There was a minute of silence from the Virginian and then a silent, “Oh,” as he breathed the word. Alexander glanced over at him and noticed that, for once, the man was refusing to make eye contact.

And then the moment was over and Thomas proceeded to rip Alexander apart as if nothing had changed—because, in a way, nothing had.

Thomas didn’t know what to *do*. He was *in love* with *Alexander Hamilton*, a man who, undoubtedly, despised him. He loved him.

The thought made Thomas simultaneously giddy and nauseous.

There was only one thing to do.
Thomas had never been more thankful for Alexander’s willingness to work through the night. He arrived home, alone, at around eight.

He was drunk by eight-thirty. It was truly quite impressive, seeing as the only alcohol he had in his house since the vodka incident was expensive wine and the absolute sewer water Alexander called beer.

Alexander.

He was… wonderful. Gorgeous, intelligent, and enough of an asshole for Thomas to tolerate—in their case, it was less about opposites attracting, and more along the lines of ‘two people from different sides of the asshole spectrum’. Alexander cared about so many things. Yes, they were dumb things, but he still cared about everything.

Except for Thomas.

Before, Thomas had been willing to acknowledge that Alexander was handsome and that some part of Thomas was attracted to the infuriating dwarf, but that was a case of physical attraction. There was a world of difference between possibly wanting to fuck someone and getting up at the crack of dawn to make them breakfast. Which, now that Thomas thought about it, he had been doing since the first morning after Alexander had moved in.

Fuck. How has he not noticed it before? Wasn’t he supposed to be a fucking genius?

What was Thomas supposed to do? Confess his love for Alexander? He discarded the idea as soon as it had appeared in his head, scoffing for good measure. Fair chance of that happening. There was no scenario where Alexander wouldn’t reject him and, most likely, laugh at him, and Thomas had no desire to be mocked for all eternity. After all, the foolish, naïve, weak Thomas Jefferson lost the unspoken game they had been playing—the do not develop feelings game. Alexander had pushed him too far—or maybe had not pushed far enough—and Thomas had fallen hard.

Which brought him back to his current situation: sprawled out on his couch like a cat at nine in the evening, still clutching the wine bottle in his hand. He scowled at the bottle. Somehow, it must’ve been its fault. Or Putin’s. If not for that fucking vodka, Thomas never would have acknowledged his attraction to Alexander—at least not in actions.

Except it hadn’t been the vodka’s fault, had it? Thomas vaguely recalled that there had been wine involved long before any vodka had entered the equation. He smirked at the wine bottle. So it had been its fault all along. Thomas knew. Ha.

Still, that didn’t help him in his current dilemma. Thomas peered at the bottle. He considered chucking it against a wall, but scrapped the idea, because while watching the bottle shatter into a thousand pieces might be satisfying, it would be a waste of perfectly good alcohol, and Thomas didn’t feel like getting up for another bottle. Plus, he’d probably have to clean it up afterwards—unless he hired a cleaning service, but there was no way a stranger was going to go browsing through Thomas’ stuff. It was private. Not that that has ever stopped Alexander.

And he was back to Alexander again. Why did everything always seem to come back to that bastard?

He needed to talk to someone, needed to share this realization because it was huge. Life-altering. It changed everything. Maybe. Or maybe not. Still, Thomas needed to shout at someone. Normally, he’d go for Alexander, but seeing as he was the cause of this particular problem, and one that he had already concluded couldn’t be shared with Alexander for obvious reasons, Thomas had to re-
evaluate his choices.

Jesus, who else was his friend? With whom did he actually talk? He could hardly talk to his esteemed Republican colleagues. He already knew how that conversation would go: “You’re going to burn in hell, Jefferson,” they’d say, not unkindly, with a conviction that could only come from true belief. Yeah, because that was exactly what he needed at the moment. So no political acquaintances, then.

Sally? Right. She was his secretary, not his therapist, even if it felt like that at times.

Washington? He would only pity Thomas, and Thomas didn’t need pity, dammit. Besides, he didn’t want to make things even weirder between them than they already were.

Martha? They had gone out of touch years ago, and what did it say about him that he had already reverted to his list of college friends?

James. He could call James. Thomas opened his mouth to say something, but all that came out was an illegible slur. He closed his mouth again. On second thoughts, maybe talking wasn’t the best idea. Texting. Texting was good.

He fumbled with his phone for a moment, almost dropping it, before he managed to unlock it.

**To: Jemmy**

shit shit shit
jemmy i have a process
*problem
fuck it

**From: Jemmy**

How drunk are you?

**To: Jemmy**

not enogh
enough
i did not think thris thro

**From: Jemmy**

I’ve never heard you so completely butcher the rules of grammar. Did you finally drink Putin’s vodka?
To: Jemmy

no that one was consumed a long time ago
in a galaxy far far away
i’m drinking
idk something else
cavit? i think its cavit
or montrachet
its french
alexander speaks french. did you know that
hes very good at it
hes very goof with tongues

From: Jemmy

Thomas, there are certain things I don’t need to know about you. Your sex life with Hamilton is one of them.

So, you’re drunk on your $1000 wine.

To: Jemmy

thats not the problem
the problem is hamilton

From: Jemmy

Yes, you’ve been saying that for years now.

To: Jemmy

jemmy i love him
im in love with him
help
From: Jemmy

Not to burst your bubble, but that’s generally what happens when you date someone for a long time, Thomas.

I’m sorry, but how is this news?

Thomas glared at the phone, as though hoping that it would self-combust. James was being decidedly unhelpful.

To: Jemmy

NO YOU DONT UNDERSTAND

I LIKE

LOVE LOVE HIM

IM IN LOVE LOVE WITH ALEXANDER

this is a travedy

tragesty

its really really Bad jemmy

From: Jemmy

You’ve been in love with him, according to yourself, might I add, for the past five months.

To: Jemmy

NO YOU STILL DON’T UNDERSTAND

THIS IS A PROBLEM

From: Jemmy

Why?

From: Jemmy

Thomas?
From: Jemmy

Thomas, why is this a problem?

From: Jemmy

Did you pass out? Are you okay?

From: Jemmy

You’d better be asleep, not dead. I have enough on my plate without having to arrange your funeral. You’re getting a Caesar quote on your tomb.

From: Jemmy

Why am I even bothering?

It was safe to say that the next morning, Thomas didn’t exactly feel like a spring chicken. It was also safe to say that he felt as if he had been beaten over the head with a spring chicken.

And, of course, Alexander wasn’t helping, because when did he ever.

“Did you have a party without me or something? Why was I not invited?” the man teased as Thomas stumbled into the kitchen with all the grace of an elephant on crack. Thomas flipped him off, before making a beeline for the mugs.

Alexander only laughed—and fuck, Thomas didn’t have time to be momentarily floored by how amazing Alexander’s laugh was—and turned back around to the coffee pot.

“Don’t drink it all, you dick,” Thomas grouched as he rummaged through the fridge.

“Someone’s snappy this morning.”

Thomas glared at him. “If not for my absolute love for this country and my desire to serve her, I would have killed you years ago,” he said.

“That’s what they all say.” Alexander waggled his eyebrows. Thomas desperately tried to derail the train of thoughts from which that movement led him.

“This is my kitchen. I know where the knives are,” Thomas threatened without much heat. He watched as Alexander merely rolled his eyes and turned his back on Thomas.

“Thomas, dear, I’ve lived here for three months. I know where all the knives are, and I have the advantage of not being fucking wasted,” Alexander replied. “Or hungover, which is arguably worse for your chances in a physical fight.”
“You’re still diminutive enough for me to squash.”

Alexander scoffed. “Careful. I have a spoon and I’m not afraid to use it.”

“Can you even reach that high?”


“We’re back to petty joke junction, then?” Thomas countered. “I thought we’d gotten past that, dear.”

“You’d have thought, huh?” Alexander agreed. “And yet, here we are. Then again, you’ve never really been big on progress, right Thomas?”

“Progress doesn’t mean the systematic loss of the principles our nation was founded upon—”

“Um, when those principles included slavery and the oppression of every minority, uh, ever, yes it does. It one-hundred percent does,” Alexander insisted.

“So you want to get rid of liberty and justice for all?” Thomas shot back. “Wow, way to fight for the little guy, Ham.”

“I want to get rid of the hypocrisy and the between-the-lines bullshit—”

“It is too fucking early,” Thomas snapped, “to listen to your inane, asinine social justice warrior rants. I would like ten minutes of peace while I drink my fucking coffee, okay? Ten minutes, and then I’ll pretend to listen to you spout your idealistic, unrealistic, idiotic liberal tirade, alright? Sound like a deal?”

Alexander glared at him. “Good morning to you too, sunshine,” he spat before marching off to his room.

Thomas didn’t let himself dwell on how much it hurt to watch him go. He promised himself that he wouldn’t.

Chapter End Notes

!!!
welp.
one down
one to go
;)

Chapter End Notes
In which Alexander owns a pair of leather pants, and Thomas definitely did not wear a dress.

Chapter by Sanna Black Slytherin

Chapter Summary

The Leather Pants Chapter Because Ring Is Watching James Bond And That’s As Good A Reason As Any To Write This Chapter And Also Ring Doesn't Feel Like Writing Royal

Chapter Notes

So. Uh. This is the leather pants chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

From: caffeine fiend

Am I not free to take my leave? The world has put upon mine shoulders a weight of insurmountable proportions, and all I request in this moment is the warm embrace of a mattress and throw, and a pillow upon which I may rest my head. And yet I am deprived of even this, by the tedious nature of my circumstances and the irrefutable weight of my ambition.

From: caffeine fiend

I do admit I play myself a God among men; foregoing such human necessities as rest and sustenance in favour of the pen or the book or the sword. But be me now not weary? Be me now not worthy of a single fleeting moment of reprieve? Be me not worthy of the peace and tranquillity that comes with a mind (even such an active mind as mine) at rest?

From: caffeine fiend

Rubbish, the lot. Lies and deceit, every word. And yet I am not paid my due, instead looked over by Morpheus and all his minions and left to wither away in the piercing light.

From: caffeine fiend

I long for sleep like the dry and cracking earth longs for rain; like the birds long for sky that they may stretch their wings and feel their freedom; like the child in winter who sits upon their sill and dreams of the flowers and fragrances of spring.
Yet it does not come to me.

From: caffeine fiend

Sleep has been made my enemy, for as long as my memory may serve and possibly even longer still. It wards its doors against me and tells its children to keep away, steer clear and take the other side of the path should they see me approach. I am seen as Cassius if sleep were Caesar; Judas, were it Christ; the fiercest servants of hell were it the most noble warriors of heaven.

From: caffeine fiend

I pray it will at last put aside our bitter feud and embrace me in its arms, allowing me a second’s rest before the grinding gears and callous cogs of the world again begin to turn.

To: caffeine fiend

How much coffee did you drink today? Also, it's 2 am.

From: caffeine fiend

I’m not sure, I lost count after the 14th cup

To: caffeine fiend

My god

Goodnight, Alexander

Good fucking luck

“What the hell is this monstrosity?” Thomas demanded, all but storming into the living room.

Alexander blinked owlishly. “What are you talking about?” he demanded.

“I’m talking about”—Thomas held up a piece of clothing, looking for all the world like it had personally offended him—”this.”

Alexander furrowed his brows as he looked closer at the clothing in hand, before he snickered. “They’re just leather pants, Thomas. You’re acting like they’re a crime against humanity or something,” he teased. “What are you doing with them, anyway?”

Thomas frowned. “I was trying to see if you owned any clean clothes,” he snapped. “And they might as well be,” he continued decisively. “Where did you even get them?”
Alexander bit his lip in thought. “It was five years ago, I think,” he finally estimated. “Relax, I don’t wear them anymore, not since I was appointed to Washington’s cabinet. Nowadays, it’s just a relic from a time gone by.”

“A time gone by?” Thomas echoed disbelievingly. “And what time might that be?”


Thomas shifted, unconsciously mirroring Alexander’s posture. “I’ll have you know that I went clubbing too when I was in college.” He held up the pants again. “I just didn’t commit any crimes against fashion while doing that.”

Alexander scoffed. “No, of course not. So what did you wear? It couldn’t have been anything even remotely interesting. Up until, like, two and a half months ago, you had the whole ‘no homo’ façade perfected.” He pretended to think, then snapped his fingers. “I’m guessing slacks and a suit that practically scream heterosexual.”

Thomas rolled his eyes. “You really have no room to insult my fashion tastes, Mr Comes To Work In Vomit-Coloured Suit.”

“It’s emerald.”

“Vomit-coloured,” Thomas repeated. “I know what emerald is, and that certainly isn’t it. And besides, despite the illusions you seem to harbour, my choice of clothing wasn’t limited to”—Thomas made air quotes—”‘slacks and a suit’.”

Alexander snickered. He closed the laptop in his lap, putting it onto the table next to the couch, before standing up. “You wore jeans, didn’t you?” he taunted.

“I would never.”

“Khakis?”

“Who the hell do you take me for?”

Alexander tapped his chin, pretending to think. “Okay, so you went clubbing, but you claim that you definitely didn’t wear slacks, or khakis, or jeans, and you seem pretty adamant to deny any knowledge of the existence of any leather pants on your part.” He clasped his hands loudly. “There’s only one obvious choice left, then. You went clubbing in a skirt.”

Thomas choked. He suddenly found that he couldn’t seem to get enough air as his mind conjured up unwanted images. What the fuck, Hamilton.

“It’s nothing to be ashamed of, really,” Alexander went on gleefully. “I think you’d look rather dashing in a skirt. I admit that I didn’t really have you pegged as a skirt kind of guy, but hey, you learn something new every day, right?” He shrugged.

“I did not wear a skirt!” Thomas finally managed to find his voice.

Alexander waggled his eyebrows. “A dress, then? That, I’d pay to see. Pray tell, does Madison perchance have pictures?”

“There was no dress!” Thomas protested helplessly.
Alexander’s mouth widened into a self-satisfied grin. “There so was a dress,” he drawled, dragging out the words slowly.

Thomas’ grip on the leather pants tightened. “I’m not having this discussion with you,” he said through gritted teeth. “Besides, you really can’t call my fashion choices outrageous and then dress like a two-cent hooker,” he added, waving with the piece of clothing in question.

Alexander quirked an eyebrow. “Two-cent hooker, was it?” There was a clear challenge in his voice. He stood up abruptly. “Give these to me,” he said. Not waiting for Thomas’ response, he snatched the pants from Thomas’ hands. “Wait here,” he ordered, before slipping away.

Bewildered, and with a sneaking suspicion beginning to form in his mind, Thomas did as Alexander ordered.

Some five minutes later—not that Thomas kept count or anything—he heard footsteps from the corridor. He glanced up just in time to see Alexander enter the room again. He was wearing those fucking pants.

Fuck.

Thomas’ breath hitched in his throat as he gave Alexander a once-over, letting his eyes linger briefly on certain areas because damn, Alexander filled out those pants damn well. Almost too well.

Thomas wasn’t about to go around claiming that these pants were custom-made for Alexander, but it was pretty damn close. It was as if they were designed for the express purpose of ruffling Thomas’ feathers in the worst way possible. It shouldn’t be possible for Alexander to look this good in leather pants, of all things. Liam Hemsworth, maybe. Matt Damon, probably. George Clooney, certainly.

Not Alexander Hamilton.

A light cough from Alexander interrupted Thomas’ internal monologue, and he snapped back to reality with the awful realization that he had been checking out Alexander’s ass.

Damn you, Hamilton, Thomas cursed internally. I’m trying not to fall in love with you here, you absolute ass, and you’re making it exceedingly hard, looking as gorgeous as you are, and it’s frankly beginning to piss me off.

“So?” Alexander asked pointedly as he twirled on the spot before striking a pose. “How do I look?”

Thomas forced himself not to stare openly at the way the pants clung to every curve of Alexander’s legs. Miracle of miracles, Alexander seemed to have an actual figure under all those atrocious Walmart jeans of his, and wasn’t that just wonderful for Thomas’ psyche. If he focused just a little, he thought that he could make out the vague outline of Alexander’s crotch, leaving very little to the imagination. He briefly wondered whether the pants were in any way exaggerating the size of Alexander’s dick because, well, damn, before shutting down that train of thought.

No. Nope. Not going there.

Fucking Alexander Hamilton and his fucking leather pants.

Thomas had the sudden urge to scream until he was out of breath—which, if he looked at Alexander for much longer, he would be regardless.

Why was this always happening to him? What did Thomas do to deserve being tortured like this—seeing it all before him, and knowing that he wasn’t allowed to have any of it?
The light caught on Alexander’s pants, and Thomas’ eyes were drawn to his ass again. His hands clenched themselves into fists, his nails were digging into his palms with enough force to leave lasting marks in the skin.

“I—” Thomas suddenly found that he couldn’t seem to draw in enough oxygen. He swallowed. He made a helpless gesture at his bedroom. “I need to—I forgot that I—I have work to do.”

He bolted into his bedroom as quickly as his dignity, or whatever was left of it, anyway, would allow. He shut the door and threw himself onto his bed, squeezing his face into his pillow with all the drama of a teenager whose heart had just been broken. For emphasis, he grabbed another pillow, pressing it over his head in a vain effort to try to shut out the world.

This just wasn’t fair. Alexander wasn’t allowed to be as gorgeous or as smart or as witty as he was. He wasn’t allowed to make Thomas fall in love with him, or, worse yet, want to fall in love with him; want to be in a relationship with him, in a real relationship; want to treasure him like the gift he was; want to hold him in his arms forever and never let him go.

Thomas wanted all that, and it only made the pang in his chest all the worse, because he knew with blinding certainty that he wasn’t allowed any of that with Alexander—that he was never going to be allowed any of that with Alexander.

Thomas pressed his face tighter into the pillow.

Fuck Alexander Hamilton.

When he finally came out, Alexander was nowhere to be found. Luckily, neither were the leather pants. Thomas resolved to burn them when he got the chance, because they were clearly the devil’s creation.

For the rest of the afternoon, Alexander’s absence was looming over him like the ominous cloud it was. Try as he might, Thomas found that he couldn’t quite concentrate on the work in front of him. The letter were blurring together, dancing in front of his eyes and he growled when he realized that he had been reading the same paragraph for the past ten minutes. It was as if the list of reports his secretary had sent him was taunting him with its mere existence.

He sighed in frustration, then closed his laptop. There was no use trying to get any of the reports done, not while it was clear that his mind was elsewhere.

Thomas eventually decided to make dinner—mac and cheese, simply because Alexander wasn’t there to voice his protests. If the asshole actually deigned to show up for dinner, he’d simply have to eat what was served. After all, Thomas didn’t see him making any effort to make food.

Something hit him, then. On a hunch, Thomas decided to check Alexander’s room. Maybe the coffee gremlin had gone into hiding to sulk, and had simply forgotten the time. If so, it wouldn’t have been the first time it happened, at any rate.

He opened the door slightly ajar, and couldn’t help the smile that blossomed up at the sight that met his eyes. Alexander was curled up into a ball on his bed, dressed—thankfully—in sweatpants, a blanket partially covering his shoulders, his loose hair looking like some sort of inverted halo as it surrounded his face. The laptop lay abandoned by the foot of the bed. Thomas marvelled for a moment at how eerily still he was when he slept. It was as though all of the energy filling him up during the day simply drained away, leaving nothing behind.
Thomas shook his head. Sentimentality would get him nowhere. Moreover, he knew that he had limited time before his dinner was burnt, and he very much wanted to eat.

Thomas tiptoed into the room, careful not to wake the shorter man. He draped the blanket entirely over Alexander’s shoulders, and closed the laptop, before turning off the lights on his nightstand. He crouched down next to him and studied his face for a moment. Like this, Alexander looked almost peaceful. Thomas resisted the urge to drag his fingers through Alexander’s loose hair. On an impulse, Thomas snapped a photo of Alexander, before leaving the room and quietly closing the door behind him.

Alexander was clearly exhausted. Now that he thought about it, Thomas didn’t recall when Alexander had last gotten a solid night’s sleep. As much as Thomas would tease him about it later, Alexander needed his beauty sleep.

Thomas smiled at the thought, before heading back to the kitchen to see whether the mac and cheese he had begun making was still salvageable.

Alexander still hadn’t come out of his room by the time Thomas was making breakfast the next day. His waffles had long since gone cold, all that was left of the coffee Thomas had brewed were dregs—not that would stop him, but still—and Thomas was about to leave for work, and still, Alexander hadn’t made an appearance.

Thomas had to admit that he was getting worried.

After finishing the mac and cheese last night, which, yes, happened to be salvageable after all, he had gone out, taking a cab to James’ place so that he wouldn’t have to worry about driving home afterwards. They had talked and drank expensive French red wine into the wee hours of the morning, the familiarity of the scene causing Thomas to relax, before Thomas had called another cab and headed home.

He’d been exhausted and on just the wrong side of tipsy when he’d arrived home, and had headed to his bedroom without sparing Alexander a thought.

Thomas had simply expected Alexander to stumble into the kitchen this morning and grunt incoherently until he’d chugged bout a pint of coffee.

Instead, Thomas was packing his briefcase and re-re-straightening his tie, cleaning his glasses one last time, and grabbing his to-go cup, and Alexander was still nowhere to be seen.

Thomas was about to leave anyway—he had a very important phone call to make in about forty-five minutes, and he could not be late—when he stopped in his tracks.

When the hell was the last time Alexander had overslept?

Had he ever overslept?

Fuck, when was the last time Thomas had known Alexander to get up any later than 7:00?

Thomas sat down his briefcase by the door and slowly made his way to Alexander’s room.

The door was closed, as usual, and nothing but darkness was coming from his room. If Alexander had woken up after Thomas had visited last night, he didn’t bother to turn on the lights.

“Alexander?” Thomas asked quietly.
No reply.

“Alexander,” Thomas repeated, more insistently this time, tapping softly on the door.

Nothing.

Thomas huffed and pushed open the door. “Alexander, I swear on all that is good in this world, if you have your godforsaken headphones on again, I will—”

His words clogged up in his throat as he took in the sight before him. His fingers lost their grip on the handle.

Alexander was still slumped sideways in his bed, his skin unusually pale. His laptop was exactly where Thomas had left it last night, and a glass was shattered on the floor, the water spilled all over the floor. Had it been there last night? It couldn’t have, right? How could Thomas have missed it? It had been dark, but it hadn’t been that dark.

“Oh God,” Thomas muttered and he rushed to his boyfriend’s side. He placed two fingers against his wrist.

Nothing.

Thomas felt as though he was going to throw up.

He took a calming breath, then placed his fingers under Alexander’s jaw.

It was faint, but it was there. A pulse.

Thomas could have wept with relief. He nearly did.

He called 911 a second later.

“Nine one one,” the dispatcher said, “what is your emergency?”

“My boyfriend passed out,” Thomas rushed to say, feeling his throat tighten up. He felt as though his chest was shrinking, becoming too small for his lungs to be able to fill up with air.

No, he cut off that train of thought, not right now. He quickly put his phone on speaker, running his hands through his hair frantically.

“What is the location of your emergency?”

“Sixteen-sixty-one, Crescent Place—here, in town—” Thomas said haltingly. Words—indeed, his throat in general—seemed to be failing him, now of all times, now when he needed them the most.

This couldn’t be happening.

“Sir, take a few deep breaths for me,” the dispatcher ordered. Thomas tried, he really did, but his lungs didn’t seem to be working. He tried harder. His breath hitched, but at last, some oxygen seemed to be entering his body. “Now,” the dispatcher continued, “can you tell exactly when your boyfriend passed out?”

“Uh, I’m not sure,” Thomas said, wincing at his words. God, what the fuck kind of boyfriend was he? Fuck, Alexander could’ve been like this all night, and Thomas hadn’t even bothered to check on —
“Do you have any estimation, sir?” the dispatcher interrupted Thomas’ dwindling thoughts.

“Somewhere between about eight o’clock last night and about thirty minutes ago,” Thomas rambled off mindlessly. It was the best estimation he could give the dispatcher.

“Sir, if you don’t mind me asking,” the dispatcher began, “what is your name, and the name of your boyfriend?”

“My—my name is Thomas Jefferson. My boyfriend is Alexander Hamilton,” Thomas stated, as if he even needed to go on after saying his name. After the fuck-up that was the Gayfair, the whole fucking country—no, the whole fucking world—knew that he was dating Alexander. Alexander, who was white as a sheet and still slumped over in his chair.

“Is Mr. Hamilton breathing?”

Thomas admired the dispatcher’s ability to stay calm. It wasn’t everyday that the Secretary of State called 911 because their boyfriend—who just so happened to be Secretary of the Treasury—was unconscious in his bedroom. Not that the dispatcher knew that last detail.

“Yes,” Thomas said. “He had a pulse, too, but it’s really faint.”

Thomas felt like his heart was about to burst through his chest.

“Paramedics are on their way, Mr. Jefferson,” the dispatcher was still speaking in a soothing voice. “They should be there shortly. In the meantime, please lay Mr. Hamilton on his back. You may stay on the line if you wish.”

That wouldn’t be a bad idea, actually. Thomas nodded. He knew that whoever it was he was talking to couldn’t see him, but he wasn’t sure he could trust himself to speak at this particular moment.

He carefully picked Alexander up—he was light, too light, and Thomas’ mind raced over every time Alexander had skipped a meal, or picked at his food and left most of it on his plate, and claimed that he was fine or had more important business to attend to, and fuck, Thomas really was a bad boyfriend, wasn’t he?—and laid him down on the bed, situating him in such a way so that his limbs weren’t at any awkward angles.

“Please be okay, you fucking asshole. You—you can’t die, not today, not now—” Thomas whispered as he stared at Alexander’s prone form. His chest was rising and falling in miniscule increments. He was vaguely aware that the 911 dispatcher was still on the line, and could hear everything he was saying, but he couldn’t bring himself to care. “You have to live, okay? You know why, don’t you, you little shit? You know why? Because I’m fucking in love with you, that’s why. I’m in love with you, you asshole. I’m in love with you, and you don’t even know it. You—you wouldn’t want to miss that, huh? You wouldn’t want to miss the opportunity to laugh at that, would you? I swear, you stay alive, and I’ll tell you. I’ll tell you, and you can laugh at me all you fucking want. Just—just don’t fucking die, okay?”

He was rambling—babbling—making promises he couldn’t keep and making very little sense, but he couldn’t stop.

The text tone on his phone went off.

Washington.

Of course. He’d forgotten to call the president. In his frantic worry for Alexander motherfucking Hamilton, he’d forgotten to call the Leader of the Free World to tell him that, no, it didn’t seem like
he’d be able to come in today.

Before Alexander, Thomas had never missed a day of work.

He pulled up his messages and began typing.

**To: Washington, Jemmy, Laurens, Gil, The Scary Schuyler Sister**

Alexander is currently unconscious. I’ve called 911, but neither of us will be able to make it today. My deepest, sincerest apologies.

It wasn’t much. In fact, it probably raised more questions than answers, but Thomas didn’t have the ability to think about that right now, not when Alexander looked like death warmed over.

A few minutes later, there was a knock at the door. Thomas knew that he had to move to open it, to guide the paramedics into the room, to show them where Alexander was, but he was loathe to leave Alexander—as if, as soon as Thomas let Alexander out of his sight, the man would disappear on him.

At another knock, he tore himself away from Alexander, rushing down, past his long-forgotten briefcase, past the stairs and the coats and the shoes, and opened the door.

“Where’s the patient?” the paramedic in front asked Thomas.

Thomas swallowed. He mutely pointed upstairs. He watched as the paramedics pushed past him, rushing upstairs with a stretcher. When he tried to follow them, he was stopped by one of the few that remained downstairs.

Thomas stared, transfixed, when they carried Alexander down on that same stretcher. His eyes were silently following his boyfriend’s still body as he was carried out of their house and into the ambulance.

A few minutes after that, Thomas found himself in the back of that same ambulance, sitting vigil by Alexander’s side while the man in question was laying still on the stretcher, hooked up to more tubes and machines than Thomas cared to think about.

There’d been no official diagnosis yet, but the words flying over Thomas’ head were malnutrition, dehydration, and sleep deprivation. He knew what they were, and yet, at the same time, none of the meanings registered. It was as if he understood the meaning behind each word separately, but couldn’t piece them together. Nothing seemed to be clicking in Thomas’ brain, almost as if his brain was in a permanent state of denial.

He hated it, hated everything about this, but he couldn’t seem to be able to shake himself out of the panic that was twisting and itching its way through his veins.

Thomas sat next to Alexander’s bed the entire day. While the nurses went back and forth, flickering past the two of them like distant phantasms, he remained by Alexander’s side. Occasionally, their chatter would reach Thomas’ ear, but it didn’t make much of a difference.
This was, Thomas mused bitterly, the only time that he had ever seen Alexander so quiet.

He hated it.

He had spent the first two hours fighting the urge to hold Alexander’s hand, to card his fingers through the man’s hair, to move closer to him. He gave up halfway through hour three, gingerly taking Alexander’s hand in his own. After all, Alexander was his boyfriend, and Thomas cared about him more than he could readily admit to himself. He was well within his rights to hold Alexander’s hand if he wanted to. When Alexander woke up, he could protest Thomas’ manhandling of him all he wanted.

Alexander had regained a little colour over the past two and a half hours, his face no longer ash-gray and frigidly cold to the touch.

Thomas squeezed his eyes shut. God, how the hell had this happened? How had Thomas allowed this to happen? Alexander was still and silent in his hospital bed, looking so empty, and Thomas had somehow let it happen.

He squeezed Alexander’s hand tighter.

———

Thomas lost track of time around hour four, unable to distinguish each second from the next or the one before, lost in his thoughts.

He was drawn back into the real world by a knock at the door.

“Mr. Jefferson?” a nurse asked, poking her head into the room, “There are some guests here to see Mr. Hamilton, and I was wondering if—”

“Send them in,” Thomas muttered, praying that the exhaustion and sadness in his voice weren’t as glaringly evident as they felt to Thomas.

The door opened again, and there, in all his tall and intimidating glory, was George Washington.

“What happened?” he immediately asked, taking the seat on the other side of Alexander’s bed.

“From what I’ve heard? Malnourishment, dehydration, and sleep deprivation,” Thomas replied quietly, rambling off the list that he had heard more times than he’d care to count. “I’m not sure when it happened. He had been fine yesterday afternoon. I was at James’ all evening, and then I just assumed he was working this morning, but when I went to check on him…”

Thomas couldn’t finish his thought, couldn’t get the words out from under the force of the memory of finding Alexander, sprawled sideways on his bed, for a moment unable to think anything but he’s dead.

Washington pinched the bridge of his nose. “He was just… passed out?” he asked. “Not hurt or anything?”

“There was a broken glass on the floor, but no, nothing else,” Thomas said slowly. “Sir, if you’re trying to imply that I’d hurt Alexander in any way…” he trailed off, voice dark.

“No, no, nothing like that,” Washington said, but his tone belied his words. Maybe that hadn’t been exactly what he was implying, but Thomas could see that it had crossed his mind. Washington had considered the idea that Thomas would have hurt his precious little golden boy—like he thought that
Thomas didn’t care about Alexander, like he thought that, even after more than four months into this ruse, Thomas didn’t give a shit.

Thomas choked on the hysterical laughter building in his throat.

The whole world though he was in a legitimate relationship with Alexander Hamilton, and the one person who knew the truth, who knew the whole thing was a ruse, thought Thomas had tried to assassinate him.

He didn’t know which was worse.

Chapter End Notes

#sorrynotsorry
Chapter Summary

brain: hey let's write more hospital angst
us: … that’s… not… a… good… idea…
brain: sure it is leT'S GO, MOTHERFUCKERS,

Alexander woke up a few hours later to a room full of more people than he believed was allowed by hospital policy.

Hospital policy. Because, for some reason, he was in the freaking hospital.

Crowded around his bed were Thomas, John, Lafayette, and Washington himself, all of them staring at him expectantly like they were waiting for him to bestow upon them the greatest wisdom since ‘whoever hath smelt it, they be the one who doth dealt it’.

Instead, he blinked a few time and blearily muttered, “Huh?”

The group continued to stare at him for a moment before Thomas broke the silence. “You little shit,” he said. “What the fuck were you thinking? Dehydration, malnutrition, and sleep deprivation? Do you have a death wish that you forgot to mention? What the fuck, Alexander?” By the end, he was shouting, waving his arms about like a madman.

“Oh,” Alexander so eloquently began, “I’m sorry?”

“You’d better fucking be. My God!” Thomas snapped.

From somewhere in the throng of people, someone cleared their throat.

“It’s good to see you awake, son,” Washington said, placing a light hand on Alexander’s shoulder. “We were all very worried about you.”

“But seriously,” John cut in, “What the hell were you thinking? I got a text at 7:30 in the goddamn morning from Thomas fucking Jefferson, saying you had passed out and were being rushed to the fucking hospital!”

“I’m sorry,” Alexander repeated. He didn’t know what else to say.

No one spoke for another moment.

“Hercules will be here in twenty minutes with McDonald’s,” Lafayette finally broke the silence.

“Is that allowed?” Alexander asked skeptically, brushing the hair from his face.

He was so glad that there wasn’t a mirror in this fucking hospital room because if Alexander looked even half as bad as he felt, it was a miracle that he hadn’t been pronounced dead yet.

“I do not care!” Lafayette exclaimed. “You are in here because you starved yourself, mon ami, and if they want to stop you from eating, I will have words.”
Alexander couldn’t stop the weak chuckle that escaped his throat, which quickly dissolved into a hacking cough. Immediately, Thomas was at his side, a comforting hand on his back. Alexander could hear a tap running, and a moment later, John was holding a paper cup full of water under his nose.

“Drink,” he ordered.

Alexander found that he could not refuse.

Another moment passed in silence.

“You’ve been granted two and a half weeks of medical leave,” Washington said abruptly. “And after that, it’s been suggested that you work from home for another week.”

Alexander choked on his water. “What?!” he screeched, his voice cracking as he fell into another coughing fit. Once he recovered, he glared at Washington. “You can’t! I—I can’t just not work. The economy doesn’t just stop because I got sick—”

“Maybe you should’ve thought of that before you worked yourself half to death,” John snapped.

“It was going to be a month of medical leave and three weeks of working from home, but Thomas argued that that would be counterproductive, both for you and the country—” Washington continued.

“He’s right!” Alexander argued. A small voice in the back of his head was screaming even as he said it because what has the world come to that Alexander acknowledged that Thomas could actually be right about something? “Sir,” he tried again, “please, this seems a bit extraneous, wouldn’t you agree? I’m fine. I’ve slept, Hercules is bringing food, I’m sure all these tubes they’ve got me hooked up to are pumping me full of vitamins and minerals and whatever—I’m perfectly fine. I don’t—I don’t need a vacation because I passed out!”

“No,” Washington said evenly. “You need this because you’ve proved incapable of taking care of yourself.”

“That’s absurd!” Alexander spluttered, indignation infusing his voice. “I’ve been taking care of myself since I was eleven. I hardly need sympathy and pity now!”

“I refuse to have this conversation any longer,” Washington barked. “You are on mandatory medical leave, Alexander. That’s an order.”

Alexander glared at Washington even as he sank back into his—frankly horrible, even by his standards, he couldn’t imagine what Thomas would have thought of them—hospital pillows. “You said that Herc was bringing McDonald’s?” he asked abruptly, rubbing his eyes.

“He’s bringing a ten-piece McNugget Meal and a medium fry, don’t worry,” John assured him.

“You’re a godsend, John Laurens,” Alexander replied, running a hand through his hair and cringing at how disgusting it felt.

“I believe you mean ‘You’re a godsend, Thomas Jefferson’, considering I’m the one who told him to get it,” Thomas said with a snark, his arms crossed over his chest.

Alexander raised an eyebrow, and Thomas rolled his eyes as if to say ‘we’ve been together for months, of course, I know your McDonald’s order’. Alexander snorted and rolled his eyes right back.
“Could y’all please refrain from the creepy telepathy shit until after we’re gone?” John cut in. “It’s gross.”

“Like you and Laf are any better,” Alexander shot back. He craned his head to the side a bit before grinning triumphantly. “He’s got his hand in your back pocket! How are we the gross ones?”

“You two have been together longer, yes? Therefore you win,” Lafayette said easily.

Alexander glanced over at Thomas, who was glaring daggers at the back of Lafayette’s head.

Alexander himself was about to make what was no doubt going to be an incredibly intellectual and witty comeback when the door opened, and in shuffled Hercules Mulligan, holding three massive McDonald’s sacks.

“I come bearing gifts,” he announced, holding the food over his head like a trophy.

“Putting the glad in gladiator yet again, my friend,” Lafayette said, snatching one sack and rummaging through it.

“Alex! You’re awake!” Hercules said after throwing a napkin at Lafayette’s head. “It’s good to see you, y’know, conscious, man. I thought Jefferson was going to have a fucking conniption.”

Thomas gasped, before narrowing his eyes. For a moment, all Alexander could imagine was some old school Southern belle, expressing all of her indignation over the fact that her neighbors had insulted her sweet tea.

“Two Big Macs and a large fry. I believe those belong to you, my little Laurens,” Lafayette said, passing the food to John, who seemed on the verge of salivating. “A grilled chicken salad, for the President,” Lafayette continued, handing Washington his salad. “A bacon, egg, and cheese McGriddle and hashbrown. Thomas’, I presume. I’m guessing this sweet tea is also yours. Three—three, Hercules?—Double Quarter Pounders and a Doctor Pepper. A McChicken for me, and last but not least, a ten-piece McNugget meal and medium fry for mon petit lion.”

Alexander immediately tore into his food. Now that it was here in front of him, he was realizing exactly how hungry he was. He took a bite of a fry and groaned. “God, I’ve never been happier for the soul-sucking fast food industry,” he said around another fry.

“It’s almost like you’re a human who needs food to survive,” Thomas snapped.

Alexander debated whether or not to throw a french fry at him, but decided the food was too precious to be wasted on getting stuck in Thomas’ hair. “You act like I was willfully trying to starve myself,” he countered. “It’s not like I was trying to die or anything. I just… have better things to do.”

“Better things to do?” John repeated skeptically. “What’s more important than making sure you don’t die?”

Alexander opened his mouth to reply but was interrupted by someone’s lips against his own.

“Shut up and eat your chicken,” Thomas said once he pulled away, leaving Alexander staring up at him with a confused expression on his face.

“That was both impressive and disgusting,” John said from behind Thomas. “I mean, congrats on making him shut up, but I also didn’t need to see my best friend kissing Thomas fucking Jefferson.”

“It’s not like you haven’t seen it before,” Alexander replied, finally getting his wits about him.
John only rolled his eyes in response.

Alexander took a moment to look around the room. Lafayette was chatting with Washington in the corner, gesticulating wildly as he ate his sandwich. John was munching on a handful of fries that he had snatched from Lafayette when the Frenchman wasn’t watching and was whispering something into Hercules’ ear. And Thomas…

Thomas was staring right at Alexander.

Alexander met Thomas’ gaze, a defiant look in his eyes.

Thomas did not blink; if anything, his eyes only narrowed further, a challenge of his own.

Alexander snorted. He didn’t know what the hell Thomas was thinking, and he wasn’t sure that he wanted to.

Well, if Thomas wanted to play this game, Alexander decided, that was fine. Just fine.

Alexander crossed his arms as he attempted to stare Thomas down. He certainly wasn’t going to be the one to break eye contact first.

A loud cough from his side started him. “If you’re both quite done with this staring contest of yours,” Lafayette said mockingly, “we need you both in the land of the living.”

Alexander furrowed his brows. “Why?” He still didn’t break eye contact with his boyfriend.

“Why?” Lafayette echoed incredulously. “Maybe because you almost died like the irresponsible child that you are? Is that good enough for you?”

Alexander scowled. “I didn’t almost die,” he protested. “I just—”

“Fell unconscious because you worked yourself into exhaustion,” John snapped. “You’re fucking lucky that Jefferson had found you when he did.”

At that, Alexander did break eye contact with Thomas, only to fix John with what he hoped was an intimidating look. “I’m fine.”

“No, you’re not,” Thomas added his two cents. “Alexander, what the hell were you thinking? You can’t ignore your body’s needs like that!”

Hercules, who had hitherto been silent, now sighed. “Alexander, let me put this into terms that you can understand: if you push yourself this hard, you will not be able to do your work as effectively in the future, which will, in the long term, do more harm than good.”

Washington huffed. “I would not have put it quite this way, but Mr. Mulligan is essentially right. Son, you can’t work so hard that you collapse on us,” he said helplessly.

Alexander’s eyes flashed in anger. “Your Excellency, for the umpteenth time, I am not your son.” He then turned to address the rest of the people in the room. “Listen, guys, as much as I appreciate this mutual bonding moment—which I don’t, just in case you missed the sarcasm—I can actually take care of myself. I’m an adult.”

“A Alexandre—” John began.

“Don’t ‘Alexander’ me,” the man in question retorted. “I’ve survived just fine on my own before. Besides, I’ve worked like this my entire life, so right now? Is a little too late to start mothering me.”
“Maybe if you actually *made an attempt to take care of yourself*, we wouldn’t *have* to mother you,” Thomas snapped.

“I don’t have time!” Alexander shouted, visibly startling his companions. “You—you all, you don’t get it, alright? I don’t have *time* to relax or take sick days or make a ‘real meal’ or get eight-to-ten hours of sleep a night! I can’t just *sit back* and wait for things to come to me, okay? Because they *won’t*, they *won’t* come, and I’ll have wasted time.”

“Alex, you’re twenty-nine! You—you’re not about to *wither up and die of old age or anything*!” John yelled angrily. “If anything, completely neglecting your health is doing nothing but *taking away* time!”

“How do you know I’ll even *make it* to old age, huh?” Alexander countered, “Look, guys, this whole thing is touching, really, but I’m *fine*. I just need to work, okay? I feel like—You never know when the bottom’s going to fall out. Yeah, I’m fine *now*, but Washington—Your Excellency, sir—is terming out in a few years, and then *who knows*. I’ve got to work while I can, make a difference while I can—”

Lafayette’s eyes flashed with thinly-veiled fury. “Alexander, I love you like a brother, but you are quite possibly the *stupidest* genius I’ve *ever* met. No, not even met! Ever *even heard of*! Mon Dieu, is that big head of yours full of anything besides cotton?”

“What do you *mean*?” Alexander snapped.

“You are the *youngest Treasury Secretary in history*! You are practically the *Head of the Democratic Party*! *Most people dream* of achieving *half* of what you’ve accomplished!” Lafayette shouted. “And yet you insist on—on *basking* in your *melodrama*—”

“I *am not melodramatic*!” Alexander protested.

“Alex, man, I hate to be the one who breaks it to you, but you’re the most melodramatic person I’ve ever met,” Hercules deadpanned.

Alexander spluttered, gesticulating wildly. “This is—lies! Lies and slander and—”

“Alexander,” Thomas interrupted his boyfriend’s impromptu rant. “You’re not getting out of medical leave, and I’m not about to let you just go off and *starve yourself* all over again, so you might as well save your breath.”

Alexander gaped at his friends. They simply *didn’t understand*. He couldn’t just *stop*. He couldn’t sit idly by and watch the opportunities he might have had slip through his fingers, couldn’t sit by knowing that people were *suffering* and that he wasn’t doing anything to stop it, that he was giving it his all, knowing he was running out of time—

“Alex?”

John’s voice broke through the spiral, his hands—no, not *his*, someone else’s—on Alexander’s chest and cupping his face. He glanced down. Thomas’ hands.

*Thomas.*

Thomas was brushing his thumb over Alexander’s cheek with one hand while his other hand rested right above his heart. “Breathe, m’kay, darling?” he asked.

Alexander glared at him but nodded. He sucked in a deep breath.
"There you go," Thomas said soothingly. "You know, one would think that the guy in charge of this whole money thing that we’ve got going on would be able to remember how to breathe," he added teasingly.

"Well, I think that you should fuck off," Alexander grumbled.

Thomas merely smiled in response, whilst John, Hercules, and Lafayette laughed.

"Seriously, man," Hercules said after he recovered from his mini laughing fit, "it'll be okay. You can take a break for once. You’re not going to suddenly become irrelevant or obsolete just because you’re not shouting down the White House corridors every day."

Alexander huffed, before fixing him with a glare.

*They didn’t understand.*

Thomas would never admit how grateful he was when Laurens and his crew—and, yes, the president—finally left. He knew that it wasn’t fair, that he wasn’t the one stuck in a hospital bed and hooked up to a *Millennium Falcon*’s worth of wires and machines, but he couldn’t help but sigh in relief as Washington closed the door behind him.

“Oh, thank *God*,” Alexander muttered, echoing his sentiment, and Thomas turned to face him, a bewildered expression on his face. “Don’t get me wrong, I love those guys,” Alexander quickly explained, “but they’re a bit much, you know? Especially when they’re smothering you, and you can’t even escape *because you’re tied to a damn hospital bed.*”

Thomas couldn’t do a damn thing to stop the chuckle that built up in his throat. “Smothering, huh?” he asked, crossing his arms over his chest as he gave Alexander a once over. “I dunno about you, but from where *I’m* sitting? It looks like you *could* use a little smothering.”

Alexander rolled his eyes. “Of course you’d think that. You’re worse than the rest of them combined!”

“Pft,” Thomas said, silently praying that Alexander couldn’t see the blush quickly sneaking its way up his face. “*Me*? Smothering *you*? Alexander, I dunno if your little tumble knocked loose a few brain cells, but I’m not exactly the overly caring type. Especially not when it comes to loudmouthed Caribbeans with horrible opinions.” Even as Thomas said the words, however, he could feel the Burr aftertaste they left behind. He wondered if his words sounded as fake as they felt.

“Sure, *Tom,*” Alexander said, raising an eyebrow.

“Don’t call me that,” Thomas snapped, running a hand through his hair in an attempt to get a grip on the situation.

This whole thing was a mess. How could Alexander have pulled shit like this? How could Thomas *not have noticed*? Alexander was literally working himself to death, and he didn’t even care; what was worse, he seemed to think that it had been justified—*necessary,* even.

Thomas didn’t know if he was sad, scared, or pissed off.

God, if this was what being *in love* was like, then Thomas *really* didn’t understand the appeal.

“You’ve got to stop this,” Thomas finally muttered, just loud enough got Alexander to hear.
Alexander huffed. "Oh, I’m sorry," he drawled. "I wasn’t aware that you were suddenly my mom instead of my boyfriend."

"Would you just listen for once?!" Thomas snapped. "At this rate, you’re going to die before you reach fifty!"

Alexander scoffed, though Thomas didn’t know whether it was at Thomas’ words or his estimate. "I know what I’m doing."

"Do you really?" Thomas asked. "Because me walking in on you slumped over on your bed like a fucking corpse doesn’t really make it seem like you ‘know what you’re doing’!" He made air quotes to emphasize his words.

"That was one time!"

"Oh, obviously, because you seem so ready to change your ways and start a new, healthy lifestyle! Hasn’t it occurred to you that one time is more than enough?!"

"Would you just fuck off—"

"Hamilton, I swear to God—"

"So we’re back to last names now?" Alexander challenged.

"There seems to be no reason for me to assume that we are on a first-name basis,” Thomas snarled, “considering you still don’t give a damn about anything I have to say!"

"You’re so fucking petty!" Alexander shouted.

"Oh, yes, sue me for being concerned when I was told that my boyfriend is literally dying because he doesn’t care enough to take any sort of care of himself!” Thomas replied in kind.

"I’m not—I’m not suicidal or anything!” Alexander refuted. “You’re acting like I stepped in front of a train instead of skipping a few meals and missing a bit of sleep!"

"A—A few meals?!" Thomas retorted. He felt rather than heard his voice growing more high-pitched. "You passed out! You had to be rushed to the hospital in an ambulance! I had to call 911 and explain that the Treasury Secretary of the United States was in some sort of—some sort of coma!"

"A coma? Now, who’s being overdramatic, huh?" Alexander crossed his arms.

Thomas closed his eyes and took a few steadying breaths before he had to actively restrain himself from ripping his hair out. “I can’t have this discussion with you, not right now,” he muttered, standing up and grabbing his coat. “I’m going to run home and grab some fresh clothes. Just—just try to stay alive until I get back, okay? Don’t kill any nurses or smuggle in any, I dunno, economy magazines or some shit. My God.”

Thomas shook and head and stalked out of the hospital room.

Miraculously, he managed to get back home, if only for the sake of whatever was left of his reputation, before he let go. He threw open the door, barely letting it close before he all but lost it.

“God fucking damn it!” he yelled, taking off his jacket with such force that he was surprised that he didn’t rip it in half.
That little shit!

What was he thinking?

Was he blind?

Did he really think so little of himself?

Why did he think that?! Didn’t he see that he mattered?! That he was important?! That people cared about him?!

*That little shit.*

Thomas didn’t know what to do. He was pacing up and down the foyers, clenching and unclenching his fists as he walked in an abortive effort to calm down.

A few meals.

*A few meals.*

How did Alexander not understand? Yes, he was accomplishing things now, but what about the long run? Was he truly so short-sighted? He overdoes it once, and once becomes twice, and twice becomes three, four, five times, and suddenly, *there’s nothing they can do.*

“Fuck!”

Thomas spun on his heels, his fist flying into the wall with a *crack.* He felt a jolt go through his fist when it came into contact with the wall, which startled him out of the blind fury.

He pulled back his hand, taking labored breaths as he inspected the damage. His knuckles were a bit scraped and bloody, yes, but the wall had paid the real price. There was a softball-sized hole in the drywall, little chunks of plaster falling to the floor as dust scattered through the air, catching in the lamplight.

“*Shit,*” Thomas muttered, absentmindedly wiping his hand on his shirt before putting his knuckles up to his mouth. He looked around his entryway for something to hide the evidence of his little breakdown. His eyes fell on a little houseplant that was about the right height, and he moved it in front of the hole. It wasn’t the most inconspicuous thing in the world, but unless one was actively looking for a hole in the wall, it wasn’t overly noticeable.

Thomas rubbed his head before going to his bathroom. He took a quick shower and pulled out his first aid kit. He moved like a robot, going through the motions as he washed his hair, his body, his face, dabbed antiseptic on his knuckles. He quickly wrapped a bandage around the bleeding part of his hand before changing into a pair of sweatpants and a t-shirt, because there was no way in *hell* that he wearing *slacks* while *sleeping at a hospital.*

Finally, he went to gather the things he was taking back to the hospital. Sweater, jeans, glasses. Deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste. Socks. Comfortable shoes. A book.

A moment’s pause as he stood outside Alexander’s room, debating whether or not he should pick up something else for the man to wear.

He quickly made up his mind and ducked into the—frankly *filthy*—room.

God, did Alexander have *any* clean clothes?
Thomas swiftly grabbed the first somewhat-clean clothing he could find before leaving the house.

As much as the man infuriated him, frustrated him, made him want to scream and, yes, apparently punch walls, Thomas was anxious to get back to Alexander.

Thomas rested his forehead on the steering wheel as he stopped at a red light.

What kind of mess was he in?
In which Alexander is a whiny toddler which doesn't surprise Thomas in the slightest, and the houseplant from Chapter 12 makes another cameo.

Chapter by Sanna Black Slytherin

Chapter Summary

Alexander likes to quote musicals, Thomas worries, and the wall takes a beating. Also featuring, Border Collies vs Work: An Evaluation.

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the late update. It's been a crazy week. Anyway. Here's a long chapter to make up for it.

Also, hey. Hi. Keep in mind that Alexander has a problem but he's getting better and he has Support. Because like. It helps.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Alexander was released from the hospital two days later. Two days of whining and complaining and grumbling and attempting to work whilst hooked up to a fucking IV and wearing an assless hospital gown and yelling at nurses when they took away his computer because work was ‘counterproductive to recovery, Mr Hamilton, you need to unwind’.

“Oh, sweet, sweet freedom!” Alexander yelled as he burst through the hospital doors, spinning in the cold February air. Thomas almost expected him to fall on his knees and begin kissing the ground.

Thomas couldn’t help but roll his eyes. “Just get in the car before you catch pneumonia or something,” he muttered as he all but shoved Alexander in the right direction.

“Don’t push me,” Alexander growled, instinctively swatting away Thomas’ hand.

Thomas scoffed. “I wouldn’t have needed to push if you didn’t behave like a toddler with an inflated sense of self and anger management issues.”

Alexander pointedly didn’t look at Thomas as he said, “Well, you are an imbecilic cur.”

Thomas would deny it until his dying day, but hearing Alexander’s insult was oddly comforting. If his mind was sound enough to hurl slights at Thomas, then he was going to be alright.

Thomas watched as Alexander got into the car, and no, he did not hover, no matter what Alexander said.

“So, just to remind you,” Thomas said as he pulled away from the parking spot, “you are going to be on hospital leave until next Monday.” Why did he have a sneaking suspicion that he was going to have to remind Alexander of this numerous times?
Alexander let out a noise that sounded like a cat being mauled by a meat machine. “That’s almost two weeks!” he protested indignantly.

Thomas shrugged. “It wasn’t my call. If it had been, you’d’ve been out for longer. Be happy that the president can’t seem to function without you for longer periods of time.” He chanced a look at Alexander’s face. “There’s no need to look like your dog just got run over,” he said with a scoff. “The whole point of this is for you to relax.” He joined the flow of traffic heading for the highway.

“I don’t need relaxing,” Alexander retorted.

“Clearly, you do, or you wouldn’t have passed out in your bedroom,” Thomas snapped.

“Isn’t the whole point of my bedroom that it’s mine? That I can do whatever the hell I want there?”

“Not if what you’re doing is endangering your life.” Thomas pressed his foot just a little harder on the gas pedal, and the car accelerated unexpectedly. He winced as he had to break.

Alexander glared. “Oh, I see how it is. You Republicans are all for freedom to make your own choices without having someone else throw their decisions onto you, until it’s someone else exercising their free will and you’re the ones not being able to stop them.”

“I hardly think you chose to pass out on your bed,” Thomas snapped. “Had you your own way, I’ve no doubt that you would’ve kept working until you actually died.”

“That’s not for you to decide.”

“I won’t be accessory to murder.”

Alexander scowled. “Despite what seems to be the general belief, I’m not actually suicidal.”

Thomas huffed. “Could have fooled me,” he mumbled, instinctively tightening his grip on the wheel.

“Oh my God, Thomas!” Alexander finally shouted. “Could you not just trust me on this one thing? I’m not—I’m not an idiot! I’m not stupid! I don’t want to die, alright? I don’t! Not now. And you know what? Everyone acting like I’m waiting for the first opportunity to slit my wrists isn’t helping!”

Thomas knuckles were white as he gripped the steering wheel, unable to look over Alexander.

Fuck.

“I’m sorry,” he whispered after a quiet moment.

“Don’t be,” Alexander all but spat. “There’s no point in being sorry if you’re not going to change your actions. If you’re really sorry, treat me like I’m a human instead of a porcelain doll.”

Thomas didn’t know how to reply to that. It was becoming a theme.

It seemed that the moment he needed the words the most was the moment that they vanished entirely. ■ ■

Alexander fled to his room the moment they arrived home, barely sparing Thomas a second glance. Thomas tried desperately to ignore the sick feeling that arose in his stomach at the action.

He could hear muffled music coming from Alexander’s room—some sort of rap music, unless Thomas was mistaken. He wrinkled his nose. Rap was an insult to all things musical. Music was
something that came from the soul, something that played on one’s emotions and drew out one’s most inner wishes and dreams, not… that.

Classical music, on the other hand, was another matter entirely. Now that could not be mistaken for anything but a reflection of one’s true being.

Thomas spent several minutes putting about the house. Eventually, though, he could no longer postpone the inevitable. Dread coursing through his body with every step he took. Damn it. He had no real reason to feel intimidated. It was his own house, damn it. He had nothing to fear, especially from Alexander. His boyfriend was hardly about to attack him. Yes, he had lashed out at him earlier, but that was… if not excusable, then at least understandable, from Alexander’s point of view.

He stopped outside of Alexander’s bedroom. From this close up, the rap was even louder than before—no doubt blasting through the loudspeakers of whatever device Alexander had set his mind to torturing. He hadn’t even bothered with headphones; no doubt it was Alexander’s way of giving Thomas the middle finger in the most subtly annoying way. He would call it passive-aggressive, except there was nothing passive about it.

He knocked on the door, which garnered no reaction. He sighed, briefly considering leaving Alexander to his own devices. After all, he was an adult, and even Alexander couldn’t be so stupid as to repeat his mistakes so quickly, right?

Thomas shook his head. No. He had to talk to Alexander.

He knocked again, louder this time, with the same result.

“Alexander?” he yelled over the noise. “Open the door.”

The music stopped. Thomas heard shuffling in the room, before the door was abruptly wrenched open to reveal an irritated Alexander, his ruffled hair even more messy than usual.

“Yes?” he snapped. “In case you didn’t notice, I’m busy.”

“You’ve made that perfectly clear,” Thomas muttered.

“You’ve made that perfectly clear,” Thomas muttered.

“Then speak now or forever hold your peace. Unlike you, my time is a valuable resource, and you’re wasting it.”

A heavy feeling settled in Thomas’ stomach, even as he knew, rationally, that Alexander was just angry at the fact that he wasn’t allowed to do official work and was taking it out on Thomas. It had little to do with Thomas, and what little it did, he could take. He was a big boy; he could handle a little heat.

He made a pacifying gesture with his hands. “I just wanted to make sure that you were okay.”

Alexander huffed. “Of course I’m okay. Why wouldn’t I be okay? After all, it’s not like I’ve been denied my work and my passion; it’s not like someone tried to rip out my very lifeblood and my—”

“I get it, okay?” Thomas scowled. “You’re pissed because you’ve been benched.”

Alexander stared up at him. “No, I don’t think that you get it,” he said unexpectedly. “And you probably never will.”

With that, he shut the door again, leaving Thomas to his grim thoughts.
Alexander came out only briefly during the morning, and even then, it was only to visit the bathroom.

With every shut door, Thomas’ heart broke just a little more.

When noon came around and there was still no sign of Alexander, however, Thomas finally put his foot down. Enough was enough. Alexander needed food, and he needed to talk to a human being.

“Alexander!” he yelled as he banged on Alexander’s door. “Come out, or I’ll drag you out!”

He had fully expected to be ignored, like the first two times he had tried to get Alexander’s attention in the morning, but to his surprise, the door swung open, revealing Alexander, who was glaring up at Thomas mutinously. At least he was in a better state than the last time Thomas had seen him.

“What is it?” Alexander demanded irritably.

“Food,” Thomas said curtly. He turned on the spot and returned to the kitchen, hoping that Alexander would get the hint and follow him willingly.

Thomas could hear Alexander’s footsteps padding on the floor behind him. “If it’s mac and cheese again, I refuse,” he warned.

Thomas scoffed as he took out the plates. “You have no room to speak at the moment. You need to eat, and it’s all too clear that you're not going to do it unless someone physically watches over you.”

“I’m not some toddler who needs constant surveillance.”

“Convince me of that first,” Thomas returned.

Alexander huffed and crossed his arms as he sat down at the table. He glared up at things mutinously.

“So far, you’ve only proven my point,” Thomas pointed out as he set a plate in front of Alexander.

“Salad?” Alexander asked skeptically.

“It’s healthy, Alexander. Not that you’d understand the meaning of the word if it fucked you sideways with a cactus,” Thomas snapped, sitting down opposite of Alexander with a salad of his own.

“It looks like the Witch’s whole fucking garden! Greens, greens, nothing but gree—”

“Stop stalling and eat, Alexander,” Thomas ordered, pointing at Alexander with his fork.

“You do know that humans need protein, right?” Alexander challenged, not showing the slightest inclination to want to touch the food.

The man glowered at him mutinously, before stabbing a piece of spinach with the sort of aggression usually reserved for MMA fighting or burning the ex’s belongings after a bad breakup. “There better not be any fucking tomatoes in this, or I swear to God—”

“No tomatoes,” Thomas interrupted Alexander's rant with exasperation. “Promise.”

Alexander sighed one more time and rolled his eyes, perfectly conveying that “this is completely
plebeian and below me and I’m only doing this to humour you,” before shoving the salad into his mouth.

Thomas decided to count it as a victory. He had a sneaking feeling that they were going to be few and far in between as it was.

Thomas, unfortunately, was not in fact on medical leave, and had to return to work the following morning, much to Alexander’s chagrin.

“This is sabotage!” Alexander shouted as Thomas straightened his tie. “Republican sabotage to undermine Democratic efforts! You—you think you can get away with this?! You’re crazy! Insane! Absolutely delusional! I won’t stand for it!”

Thomas leveled Alexander’s fuming face with a flat glare. “What I’m doing,” he explained slowly, “is saving Secretary Knox from further drowning in three departments’ worth of work. Trust me, Knox will save you more than enough paperwork for when you return..”

“You know how else would be a good way to go about doing that?” Alexander snapped, tapping his chin in faux-contemplation. “Letting me do my job.”

“Yeah, no,” Thomas replied curtly, picking up his to-go cup.

“I’m not suddenly incompetent simply because I was hospitalised, and I’m tired of people treating me with like I am!” Alexander shouted, something Thomas didn’t want to name grating against his words; something that left Thomas’ stomach in knots. “I’m not an idiot, I’m not a child, and I refuse to be treated as such! I refuse to be—to be looked down upon!”

By the end of his tirade, Alexander was red in the face, his hands clenched into fists and his back impossibly, rigidly straight.

“No one is looking down—” Thomas began, but was cut off by a cold laugh.

“They’re not? Really? Wow. Could’ve fooled me. Immigrant, orphan, bastard, whoreson—what would you call that if not ‘looking down upon’, huh?” Alexander challenged, eyes blazing with fury. “And now, on top of all that, I’m suddenly some sort of—what was it? Ah yes: a toddler with an overinflated sense of self, an irresponsible child who needs to be mothered because I’m too stupid to take care of myself!”

Alexander’s voice was shaking—in fact, his entire body was physically trembling—with rage, his eyes bright. A fire wasn’t even the right description. He was a hurricane, his movements as wild as the wind, with thunder in his words and lightning in his eyes.

“No, Alexander growled. “Go. Leave. Get out.”

“This is my house!” Thomas yelled, dropping his briefcase so as to throw his hands in the air.

Alexander’s eyes narrowed. Thomas watched as his fingers clenched into fists. “You have work, don’t you? Give Washington my regards, and tell him that, should he come to his senses and decide I am still fit to do my job, he can mail all of my missed work to my apartment,” he spat before turning on his heel and marching back to his room, slamming the door behind him.
Thomas swallowed, desperately determined to convince himself that the pain in his chest was definitely anger and not heartbreak.

It couldn't be.

Thomas couldn't afford it.

Alexander was, much to Thomas’ surprise, still at the house when Thomas returned that evening.

“I thought—” Thomas began hesitantly.

“I don’t want another scandal,” Alexander snapped, “which is what me stropping home in the middle of a mini blizzard would ultimately lead to. So, as much as I despise it, I’m staying.”

Thomas did his best to hide the wave of relief that washed over him.

“That said, I absolutely will not be spoken down to or ordered about, and if I hear a single condescending word, I will leave, consequences be damned. Capiche?” Alexander continued.

There was an acerbic edge to his voice, and Thomas could that he could do little but nod.

Alexander raised an eyebrow. “Glad we’re on the same page, then,” he said, his tone finally shifting from all-out hostility to simple aggravation.

“Do you want anything for dinner?” Thomas asked, setting down the folders and files he realized that he had forgotten to put down. “We don’t have much in the way of ingredients, but I know a good Chinese place; we could have something delivered.”

Alexander bit the inside of his cheek as he seemed to ponder the offer. “Do they have good noodles? And cheese wontons?” he finally asked.

Thomas scoffed. “No,” he drawled sarcastically, “I’m about to order us shitty takeout. Of course they have good noodles and wontons. You insult me by even suggesting otherwise.,” he snarked.

Finally—finally—Alexander cracked a smile, and damn it if Thomas didn’t feel like falling to his knees and thanking every sort of higher power that might have existed.

“What are you doing in your room all day long?” Thomas asked out of curiosity, although he had a bad feeling that he would come to regret the question. “Because I know you, and you’re suspiciously quiet. Do I need to tell Washington that you’re sneaking around with work behind his back?” he asked pointedly.

it was day six of what he had taken to calling Alexander’s Enforced Leave And No Alexander This Isn’t A Punishment Just Relax For Once.

Alexander shrugged noncommittally. “I’m working on book.”

Thomas wasn’t sure if he was more unsettled by Alexander’s answer, or the dull tone in which it was delivered. He sighed. He wasn’t sure why he had been expecting any other sort of a response, to be perfectly honest. “Aren’t you supposed to be resting?” he asked pointedly.

Alexander frowned. “That is how I rest,” he protested. “It’s not my fault that none of you believe me
when I tell you that.”

Thomas sighed. He pressed his head into his hands, as if to show just to which lengths Alexander had driven him.

He looked up abruptly as something occurred to him. “You need to get out of this house,” Thomas declared.

Alexander’s fork clattered against the plate quite loudly. “Ex *cuse* me?”

“It’s not healthy to sit cooped up in one room all day,” Thomas went on. “You need fresh air if you want to recover.”

Alexander’s eyes narrowed. “I’m recovering just *fine*, thank you very much,” he snapped. “And did we or did we not agree that you would keep your oversized fluffy head out of *my* business?”

“I’d tell you the same even if you weren’t on medical leave,” Thomas returned.

Alexander’s eyes narrowed, “Really?”

“Really,” Thomas confirmed.

“I don’t believe you,” Alexander said after a pause.

“It doesn’t matter whether you believe me,” Thomas said, ignoring the way his stomach twisted into knots. “What matters is that you’ll go on a walk with me outside.”

“If you wanted me all to yourself,” Alexander said with an unexpected leer, “all you had to do was just *say so*.”

Thomas swallowed loudly. No. Nope. There were a million reasons why he shouldn’t take Alexander up on… what was it he was even offering? *Was* he offering something?

In the end, what stopped Thomas was the knowledge that Alexander didn’t mean any of what he had said. Even if he had played Alexander’s game, it would only serve to hurt him by reminding him of all the things he could never have.

Thomas grimaced, “Not like *that*, Alexander.” *Exactly like* that, *Alexander*. “I mean that I think that it’s a good idea for you to breathe something that isn’t the stank of your dirty laundry.”

Alexander stared at Thomas for a long moment. “Fine.” His nostrils flared. “But only because I’ve hit writer’s block anyway. I’m not doing it for you, you massive mother hen.”

Thomas rolled his eyes. It was such an Alexander thing to say, and honestly, he shouldn’t find it as endearing as he did, but it seemed that being in love had a way of shifting not only one’s priorities but also one’s opinions.

They made a week before Alexander noticed.

(Thomas had frankly thought that it’d take longer; Alexander was as blind as a cyclops wearing an eyepatch.)

“Why is there a plant here?” Alexander ask, gesturing to the fern that stood in front of the immortalisation of Thomas’ rage.
“I thought it looked nice,” Thomas evenly replied, not looking up from his laptop. Better to act like it was a completely rational decision and not draw attention to it.

“Well it *doesn't,*” Alexander stated bluntly. “It's right in the middle of where people walk, *and* now there's a big empty space in the corner.”

“I'm so sorry that *my* moving of *my* houseplant in *my* house has upset you,” Thomas drawled, the sarcasm hanging in the air like a particularly cynical piñata.

“I'm moving it back. It's throwing off my groove,” Alexander replied a moment later.

“You most certainly are *not.*”

“It's going to *bug me!* Just sitting there, *knowing* that it's *fucking up* the feng-shui of the whole house!” Alexander yelled, and Thomas could practically *feel* him flapping his arms about like some sort of frantic pigeon.

“That's unfortunate,” Thomas said. “You’re still not moving the plant.”


“But *Alexander*—” Thomas mimicked mockingly.

“Please? Pretty please?” Alexander asked.

“What are you, six?” Thomas shot back.

“It was worth a shot,” Alexander grumbled. “What if I just moved it back for a second, and then you could decide which way you like better?”

“I've *already* decided!” Thomas argued. “*That's why I moved it in the first place!*”

Alexander huffed and stomped back into the main room, glaring at Thomas with his arms crossed over his chest. “Can you at least tell me *why* you like it better where it is now?” he asked.

Thomas shrugged. “I just do,” he replied.

Alexander looked like he was about to *explode.* “*That doesn't mean anything!*” he yelled. “What, is *Burr* contagious? Are you suddenly incapable of giving me a straight answer?”

Thomas, monetarily stunned by Alexander’s sudden rage, said the first thing that came to mind.

“Nothing about me is straight, Alexander.”

“You're deflecting,” Alexander noted. His eyes narrowed. “What are you hiding?”

“I'm not hiding anything,” Thomas denied immediately.


“According to Google Translate, you are,” Thomas pointed out.

Alexander didn’t bother replying to his comment. Instead, he stared at the wall. “I’m moving it,” he said suddenly.

“Don’t you *dare,*” Thomas said sharply.
Alexander’s smirk was mischievous. “Oh, I think that I do.”

Thomas tried to stop Alexander, but the shorter man slipped under his arm. He nudged the pot a few feet to the left, revealing what Thomas had been trying to hide: a fist-sized hole in the wall.

Alexander stared at it speculatively. He tilted his head, as if that would change anything.

“You punched a wall,” Alexander said slowly. He stared at Thomas. “A wall,” he repeated for the sake of clarity.

Thomas turned away, feeling his face flush with embarrassment.

“Hey, you pack a good punch.” There was definitely glee in Alexander’s voice.

“I don’t want to talk about it,” Thomas said abruptly, turning around and heading for the stairs.

He distantly heard Alexander chase after him. He stopped when he felt a tug on his sleeve. Not looking at Alexander, he said, “Let go of my sleeve.”

“No,” Alexander said resolutely. He was oddly serious.

“Let go, Alexander.”

“No. Thomas, if you would just explai—”

“What do you want me to say, Hamilton?” Thomas swirled on his heels, and locked eyes with Alexander, who instinctively took a step backwards. Thomas’ lips twisted into the mockery of a grin. “Do you want me to tell you that I was worried about you—about your health, about your sanity, about your life, and all that time, you never—”

“You don’t need to worry about—”

“—you never listened to me! To my concerns! Like right now, for example!” He gestured wildly at Alexander, who flinched. ”You never listen! You never think about how this erratic behaviour of yours affects people around you!”

“No, don’t interrupt me now! Damnit, you will listen to me, for once!” Thomas yelled. His eyes were blazing with fury. “You are a reckless idiot who has so little regard for his own life as to actually be dangerous, as you’ve shown a week ago, and yet you wonder why Washington has benched you?! You don’t; you only sleep when your body physically shuts down; your bloodstream is at least three percent caffeine at this point! Your lifestyle is so unhealthy that it will be a miracle if you make it to thirty-five!”

He paused to draw in a breath. He glanced at Alexander to see if the other man would take this chance to interrupt him, but Hamilton stayed oddly silent. In fact, he refused to meet Thomas’ eyes, which only incensed Thomas further. How could he be so disrespectful as not to even deign to look at Thomas when he was talking?! Didn’t he realize what was at stake?

No, of course he didn’t. That was the crux of the problem.

“But that’s not the worst part!” Thomas went on angrily. “The worst part is that you do all of this without even noticing, and you pay no heed as to how this affects the people around you! I know that this is surprising, considering what an inconsiderate asshole you are, but you have people who
actually care about you! Laurens cares about you! Angelica cares about you! Lafayette cares about you! Washington fucking loves you like his own son, and don’t you bother denying it! He looks at you like you hung the fucking moon. No matter what you do, you’re infallible in his eyes! You’re the perfect Alexander Hamilton, and you don’t even care!” There were tears gathering in Thomas’ eyes. “But guess what, asshole? I care about you!”

After Thomas’ confession, it was as though all the energy had been drained from his body. His shoulders slumped down, and his hands fell uselessly to his sides.

Alexander still hadn’t said a word.

Thomas wished that he would.

He took a calming breath, ignoring the way his voice hitched, and added, “So stop pulling this shit, because I don’t know how much more I can take.”

Finally, Alexander glanced up at Thomas. Brown eyes met brown.

Alexander exhaled silently. Thomas watched listlessly as his Adam’s apple bobbed.

God, he was so tired. All he wanted to do was go to bed and never have to deal with reality again. How had everything become so damn exhausting?

Alexander seemed to come to a decision. He took a hesitant step forward, then another, until he was merely inches away from Thomas. He looked searchingly into Thomas’ eyes. Thomas didn’t know if he found what he had been looking for. He didn’t know which to hope for.

They were silent for several moments, before Alexander finally spoke. In a quiet voice that bespoke of just how much this had affected him, he said, “I’m sorry.”

Two words.

It was but two words, and yet they were priceless to Thomas.

Alexander did not apologize. Especially not to him.

He really meant it.

(Or so Thomas hoped.)

Thomas sighed. He dragged a hand through his hair. “I should apologize as well. I shouldn’t have exploded like that. You were just being, well, you. God knows I should be used to it by now,” he said sourly.

He started when he felt something brush against his hand. Looking down, he saw Alexander cover Thomas’ hand with his palm. His thumb traced his knuckles.

“You shouldn’t apologize,” Alexander said sincerely. “You were just overwhelmed, and I was a thoughtless dick and forgot to account for you in all of this, and this was just the straw that broke the camel’s back. Anyone would have snapped.”

“That doesn’t give me the right to do it.”

Alexander shrugged. “I honestly don’t care whether it did or didn’t. I deserved it.” He was silent for a moment. “I think that I needed it,” he confessed. He stared up at Thomas in silence for another moment. “Thank you,” he said eventually.
Something built up inside Thomas’ throat. What gave Alexander the right to be this—this endearing, when he had a few seconds ago wanted to tear him into bits and pieces?! This piece of shit shouldn’t have been able to be this captivating, this charming, when he simultaneously made Thomas want to tear out all of his hair in frustration.

This was not how affections were supposed to work. Thomas was supposed to have hated Alexander, not have fallen in love with him; and since he had, the least his brain could have done was create a filter to make some of Alexander’s habits more tolerable. Wasn’t that what the endorphins were supposed to do? What the hell was happening with his hormone system?

It just figured, didn’t it, that Alexander was too annoying for even love to be able to muffle his habits.

Thomas covered Alexander’s hand in his own, and squeezed it gently.

“Hey,” Alexander said quietly, “I really am sorry. I didn’t realize that this affected you so much.”

Thomas was too tired to even quirk a sarcastic eyebrow, because really, Alexander?

“I—” Alexander drew in a sharp breath. “I can’t promise that I’ll do better, because we both know that I’m a workaholic and I tend to… get lost in my work. But.” He paused, then let out a long breath. “I’ll try not to pull any more three-day shifts, okay?”

Thomas blinked. He was silent for a long moment. Had Alexander seriously just said— “Three day-shifts?” he asked disbelievingly. “You’ve got to be kidding me.”

Alexander grimaced. “I know that it sounds bad—”

“That’s because it is,” Thomas interrupted.

“—but I did actually keep track of how much I had slept and eaten. Or rather, my assistant did,” he admitted.

This time, Thomas did roll his eyes. He needed to have words with Alexander’s assistant.

“Speaking of food,” Thomas said, “I’m making lasagne. Feel like helping me?”

Alexander snorted. “Trust me, you don’t want me anywhere near the kitchen. I tend to burn stuff just by being near it.”

“Then it’s a good thing that you’ll be preparing the salad,” Thomas said as lightly as he could manage—which wasn’t much, but it was the effort that counted, wasn’t it?

He snickered when he heard Alexander’s groan.

“Greens, greens, nothing but greens. Parsley, peppers, cabbages, and ce—”

“Alexander.”

“Asparagus and watercress and fiddlefern and—”

“Alexander!”

“What?” Alexander stared up at Thomas innocently.

Thomas shook his head. “You’re impossible.”
Alexander laughed. “You love me anyway,” he teased.

*God help me, yes, I do.*

Of course, Alexander wouldn’t have been Alexander if he hadn’t made several attempts to get back to work. All of them ended exactly the same: with Alexander stomping angrily at the security check-in.

“Sorry, Secretary Hamilton,” the security guard said with a shit-eating grin, impervious to Alexander’s basilisk glare, “but we’ve received personal orders from the president not to let you in until February.”

Alexander crossed his arms. “The president isn’t infallible,” he muttered. “Just let me work in peace.”

The guard shrugged. “Be that as it may, *sir*,” she said, drawing out the honorific like it was an amusing word, “I won’t go against the president’s orders, and I doubt that you’ll find anyone else here who will.”

Alexander internally cursed is biss as he was shown out of the White House. Just who did Washington think he *was*? It was almost like he thought that he was the president or something.

“Hey, why don’t we have a dog?” Alexander asked absentmindedly the next day.

Thomas suddenly found himself choking on his tea. He had to lean forward to clear his lungs when it became obvious that his brain had confused his trachea with his esophagus. When he glanced up again, Alexander was smirking.

“You utter bastard,” Thomas managed. “Wasn’t it you who complained about this in the beginning? Something about buying a dog and sharing a bank account?”

“Us? Share a bank account?” Alexander pretended to think for a moment. “Uh, *no*. You’re not touching my money. You’d probably waste it on clothes or something equally frivolous. Like, there’s a reason I am the Secretary of the Treasury, and not you.”

Thomas crossed his arms. “Back to talking like a teenager, are we?” he teased.

“Says you,” Alexander shot back, but his voice was playful. “Now, about the dog?”

“Dream on.”

Alexander’s smirk didn’t fade. “I’m thinking along the lines of Labrador.”

“Alexander.”

“Or maybe a German Shepherd.” There was a mischievous twinkle in Alexander’s eyes as he spoke.

“Alexander.”

“Actually, I’ve always wanted a Border Collie. I’ve heard that they’re smart, and as much as I’m doing my best, my brilliance doesn’t entirely counterbalance your idiocy.”
“Alexander!”

“Yeah, a Border Collie it is.”

“I feel like I should get a say in this, considering that I’ll be the one stuck actually taking care of said dog.”

“You would get a say, but you lost any sort of credibility the second you supported trickle-down economics.”

A sigh. “And we’re back to this.”

“No, we’re not back to this. We never left it, and will not leave it until I succeed in convincing you of what a load of bullshit that theory is.”

“Your impressive vocabulary strikes again. You know, it’s moments like these that make me doubt that you are fluent in seven languages.”

“Well, what do you want me to say? That the theory of trickle-down economics is inherently flawed at best and intentionally malicious in that it targets the working class at worst? That it is based on assumptions that, frankly, do not align with human psychology? That it is a system of—”

Thomas rolled his eyes. “Alexander, I get it. You don’t like trickle-down economics.”

“That’s putting it lightly,” Alexander muttered, then perked up. “But you know what I like? Dogs.”

“We’re not getting a dog,” Thomas countered, but his protest was admittedly weak.

There was a moment’s pause as one of Alexander’s eyebrows slowly drifted towards his hairline.

“I don’t have a fence, and neither of us are home often to give it the care it needs,” Thomas finally put forth.

Alexander grins. “So if you did have a fence…” he trailed off pointedly.

“Are you willing to work less to care for this dog, Alexander?” Thomas asked sharply.

For a moment, the thought crossed his mind that maybe—just maybe—Alexander might say yes.

If he did, they’d own a dog by the end of the day.

The idea that Alexander might lie to him didn’t even cross his mind. Alexander liked to bend the truth, yes, and he certainly omitted certain facts to make things seem different than they were, but he rarely outright lied. It was one of his best qualities—not that Thomas would admit it out loud; Alexander’s ego was inflated enough as it was.

It seemed, however, that fate was once again against him, as Alexander scoffed. “If this is your roundabout way of getting me to ‘relax’,—he made air quotes—‘it’s not going to work.”

Well. At least Thomas tried.

“How is it my roundabout way? You brought it up!” he pointed out.

“Whatever,” Alexander snapped. “I’m still not taking off any work.”

“Not even for a Border Collie?” Thomas offered faintly.
Alexander snorted. “As much as I like those, there are sacrifices, and then there are sacrifices, and I’m fairly sure that the economy of our nation takes precedence over my whims. The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few and all that,” he said dismissively.

Thomas groaned. “You’re going to be the death of us both.”

Chapter End Notes

We love opinions! What did you think?
In which Thomas is high as hell, Alexander is affectionate, people ship Jamilton, and James Madison Did Not Sign Up For This.

Chapter by Sanna_Black_Slytherin

Chapter Summary

Thomas goes to the dentist, gets high, has a panic attack, and is an idiot. All in a day's work.

Chapter Notes

As my co-writer has been afflicted with a grave case of Slowus Internetus, I'm afraid you'll have to endure another chapter posted by me ;)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

James Madison didn’t know what he was expecting that day, but this definitely hadn’t been it.

Thomas and Hamilton weren’t at work. Thomas was getting a root canal or something, and wouldn’t be fit to drive afterwards, and Hamilton was still under informal house arrest so hardly had a choice but to stay with him. It was, all in all, wholly unextraordinary.

That was before James’ phone blew up. He wished he meant it literally.

From: Hamilton

help

thomas is fucking high out of his mind

he’s clinging to me like a cuddly octopus

i physically can’t drive

we’re stranded at the dentist

help

To: Hamilton

You’re kidding me.
From: Hamilton

i fucking wish i was, madison
i wish i was

James stared at his phone for another moment, pinching the bridge of his nose and trying to surmise how this was his life.

He sighed. He was going to regret this.

To: Hamilton

Where are you?

James sighed as his driver pulled into the dentist parking lot. There, just as he’d said, was Hamilton, with Thomas all but hanging off of him.

James got out of the car, even as he could feel the migraine coming on. “So,” he said, glancing between Hamilton and Thomas. He was about to continue when—

“Jemmy!”

In an instant, Thomas had let go of Hamilton in favour of nigh-on literally scooping James up into a hug. James visibly stiffened. As a rule, he wasn’t fond of hugs. Or physical contact in general, really. This definitely wasn’t his forte. He had only come here to help Hamilton drive Thomas home. He hadn’t signed up for… this.

“Thomas…?” he said gently. “Let go of me, please.”

“But Jemmy is my best friend!” Thomas argued.

James felt his face heat up. He focused his eyes firmly on Alexander's face.

“I know, sweetheart, but right now, James has to get us home, and he can’t do that if you’re hugging him to death,” Hamilton—no, Alexander, because right now, they weren’t talking in any official capacity, instead trying to take care of a mutual dear friend—explained gently, still pulling Thomas away.

“But Jemmy is my best friend!” Thomas argued.

James felt his face heat up. He focused his eyes firmly on Alexander's face.

“I know, sweetheart, but right now, James has to get us home, and he can’t do that if you’re hugging him to death,” Hamilton—no, Alexander, because right now, they weren’t talking in any official capacity, instead trying to take care of a mutual dear friend—explained gently, still pulling Thomas away.

Thomas let go of James as if burned. “I didn’t mean to hug you to death!” he shouted. “Are you okay? Does it hurt?” He began petting and touching James’ face in a fashion that, if possible, only made James even more uncomfortable. James would be lying if he said that it didn’t feel invasive.
“I’m fine, Thomas,” he replied awkwardly. It was a transparent attempt to get Thomas to just stop touching him, and had Thomas been any more lucid, he would have seen through James’ lies.

Instead, Thomas just smiled. “You’re my best friend. I would be so, so sad if I accidentally hugged you to death,” he explained.

“You’re my best friend too, Thomas,” James said, still incredibly tense.

Finally, Thomas stopped touching him, going back to looping his arms around Alexander and burying his face in Alexander’s shoulder.

“Thomas, dear, let’s get in the car, okay?” Alexander asked, softly running his fingers though Thomas’ hair, a sappy grin on his face. Any lingering doubts James had about Alexander’s feelings for Thomas curled up and died in that moment.

“Stay with me?” Thomas mumbled.

“Of course, love,” Alexander assured him, all but dragging Thomas in the direction of the car.

James let out a breath he hadn’t realized that he was holding. He loved Thomas dearly, but this was… too much. It was all too much sometimes, and even when it wasn’t, he wasn’t exactly comfortable with unexpected physical contact.

He vaguely heard someone behind him snap a picture. He would have turned around and tell them to cut it out, except… well, why should he do that? It was obvious that Thomas and Alexander were in love, and the sooner the masses get past this, the sooner James would be able to focus on subjects that mattered, because apparently not even Congress was immune to gossip. Let the giggling teenagers spread the photos of Thomas half-hanging on Alexander, and let them move on, because far too much time’s been spent discussing the Jefferson-Hamilton matter, as Congress calls it to make celebrity gossip sound formal, and while James understood the need for discussing the matter of two major party leaders from across the political spectrum being in a relationship and hiding it, he didn’t understand the obsession that some people apparently had. The pictures would hopefully quench most of the interest around them.

James sighed and climbed into the driver’s seat, looking back in the mirror to see Thomas and Alexander, cuddled together as Thomas pressed kisses to Alexander’s cheeks. He glanced back at the road, feeling decidedly like the third wheel. He had never felt like that around Thomas—though that might have been because Thomas had, for obvious reasons, never dated.

“Aleeeeeeex,” Thomas whined. “When we get home, can we take a nap?”

“Do you want to take a nap?” Alexander asked.

“Mmm-hm.”

“Then I guess we’ll take a nap,” Alexander said, grinning at Thomas’ antics. “Dear Mr. Madison, care to take us home?”

Alexander didn’t know what to think, what with Thomas Jefferson making himself fucking cozy on Alexander’s lap. He didn’t know whether to panic or to just go with it.

Thomas rested his head on Alexander’s shoulder. “I’m tired,” he muttered.
“Then sleep.”

“But—”

“Sleep, sweetheart,” Alexander said, deciding to just *roll with it*. He kissed Thomas’ temple and ran his fingers through the man’s curls.

Thomas closed his eyes and relaxed against Alexander’s chest. “I like it when you call me sweetheart,” he murmured, already sounding half asleep.

Alexander tried to hide his shock, choosing to just continue his ministrations, combing through Thomas’ hair and holding him close. “Goodnight, sweetheart,” he whispered.

Thomas woke up with a headache and fuzzy memories and a warm body pressed against his. “You awake?” Alexander whispered from beside him, his computer in his lap.

Thomas jolted up before he could even think. “Yeah, ‘m up,” he muttered, rubbing his eyes. He’d been *sleeping*. On *Alexander. Again.*

When had this become a recurring thing?

“Good,” Alexander said, shoving his laptop at Thomas, an image blown up on the screen. “Because you need to see this.”

Thomas squinted at the photo for a moment before his eyes went wide. It was *them*, in the dentist’s parking lot, *together*. Thomas had his arms wrapped around Alexander’s middle and his head on Alexander’s shoulder. Alexander seemed to be mid-laugh, his head thrown back, and he appeared to be holding Thomas up with an arm around his waist—though how *that* munchkin could support Thomas *at all* was a mystery.

They looked happy, they looked comfortable, they looked relaxed.

To put it simply, they looked *in love.*

Thomas blamed his throat clogging up on the residual effects of whatever drug they’d pumped him full of. “Shit,” he muttered.

“You can say that again.”

“Shit,” Thomas repeated obediently. “How many pictures are there? Who has them?”

“As far as I can tell?” Alexander said, “There about six different shots. As for who has them, well… At this point, it’s safe to say *the whole internet.*”

“Fuck.”

“Pretty much,” Alexander agreed. “Could be worse, though.”
“How?” Thomas asked. How could it be worse? How could anything be worse than being shown an image of this, of exactly what Thomas wanted? What could be worse than seeing this and knowing he could never have it?

“We could’ve been making out,” Alexander pointed out, and Thomas scoffed. That would be better. Not for his career, no, but for him. He knew that, realistically, if he wanted to, he and Alexander could be having sex every fucking night. They were both attracted to each other; they already lived together; it was what was expected at this point.

But it wasn’t what Thomas wanted.

No, what Thomas wanted was this, this picture. The two of them, together, happy. Not because the sex was great—although Thomas knew it would be—but because they had each other.

That was what he wanted, more than anything.

And he’d never get to have it.

Alexander suddenly frowned. "Hey," he said slowly, "what's 'Jamilton'?"

“Secretary Schuyler, what can you say about the photos circling the internet of Secretaries Hamilton and Jefferson—”

“Secretary Jefferson had a root canal three days ago,” Angelica explained, unable to believe that her job now consisted of explaining why two of her colleagues were spotted all but spooning in a public parking lot. “The pictures seen online were taken while he was still under the effects of anesthesia. Moreover, the pictures were of two consenting adults in a healthy relationship, both outside of work, and should not be the items of public speculation.”

Be as it may, Angelica would definitely be having a talk with those two later.

Thomas tossed his briefcase onto his bed, before gracelessly collapsing onto it. He felt drained of energy. His back was hurting him—probably as a result of a bad work position, which he had been meaning to get around to fixing, but with all that has happened, he simply hadn’t had the time. He let out a tired sigh, feeling his eyelids fall shut almost on their own.

His day had been exhausting, to say the least.

He had a meeting scheduled for nine in the morning with a representative from Indiana who was determined to get Thomas’ honest opinion on the subject of gun restrictions because surely he wasn’t going to change his mind how that he was, well…

“Dating Hamilton?” Thomas had quirked an eyebrow. He was about to explain just what he was doing with Hamilton, but his stomach churned at the thought of the lie. It hurt because while everyone else thought that he was dating Alexander, Thomas himself was all too aware of the fact that he wasn’t.

It stung.

The representative had flushed at his words and stammered something about having other urgent
business to attend to and could they please reschedule to another time?

After that, Thomas had some time before he had another scheduled appointment, so he had wanted to get some work done, but he had barely had the time to power up his computer before Sally had popped her head into his office and informed him that Washington wanted a word, sir, and now.

Feeling not unlike an unruly teenager about to be sent to the principal’s office, Thomas made his way to the Oval Office. It was curious, he thought absentmindedly, how, despite having been in it too many times to count, Thomas never failed to be intimidated by it—by its history, by the things it represented, even by its sheer shape.

He wondered whether it was different for the president, for whom it was almost a second home.

It was one of his dreams to find out.

Washington wanted an update on the negotiations with India. He had expressed some concerns with India’s delegates, specifically Ambassador Sarna’s secretary, and while Thomas shared some of his apprehensions, it wouldn’t do to worry the president without due cause. He had more important matters to attend to than a capricious misogynist who didn’t believe that Sarna was doing the job he thought himself qualified for. No, that was a matter for Ambassador Sarna, and Thomas… Well, he had thick skin. He could deal.

Washington didn’t look convinced by Thomas’ assurances, but he also did not call him out on it. Thomas left his office somewhat uneasy, feeling Washington’s eyes follow him well into the corridor, even past the point when he knew that it was physically impossible for Washington to actually see him. The president tended to have that effect. Thomas was only grateful that Alexander didn’t seem to have inherited the trait.

Then, when he finally thought himself free, Angelica showed up like a vengeful jack-o’-lantern, fixing him with an accusing glare as she berated him for being so idiotic and really, Jefferson, she wasn’t his personal PR representative and nowhere in her job description was there anything about explaining to the press why he was dangling from Alexander’s arms like a toddler desperate for attention, and yes, she was perfectly aware of the fact that he had gotten a root canal, but so had she, and she had never acted as foolishly, and did he even think about what this could do to the credibility of Washington’s presidency?

It was a solid hour before he found a way of escaping her grasp, only to run into the representative from that morning, who picked up their conversation as though no time had elapsed since he had left Thomas’ office in a hurry, prattling on about silencers here and licenses there in a voice that was uniquely in its monotony and repetitiveness. The man had no charisma to speak of, some part of Thomas’ brain remarked. How he had been elected to an office was beyond even Thomas’ not inconsiderable understanding.

When a chance for escape, in the form of one Senator Schumer, made itself available, Thomas took it. He offered the representative a hasty goodbye, very pointedly not making any sort of promise to continue their discussion—or, more accurately, the representative’s rant—at a later date, and made his way to through the corridors of the White House—and really, which thoughtful architect had designed this virtual maze, because Thomas needed to have words with him—and did not stop until he had reached his car. Only then did he let himself relax.

He drove home as if in a daze. Later, he would barely remember how he got home, let alone how he didn’t crash the car. Was this how little energy Alexander always functioned on? No wonder he always looked like a racoon. Thomas was astounded that he even had the energy to move, let alone hold an intellectual debate, because Thomas most definitely did not.
He made a mental note to monitor Alexander’s sleeping habits.

When Thomas felt that enough time had passed that he could not longer justify wallowing in self-pity like a toddler throwing a tantrum, he got up. He took a quick shower, feeling himself relax under the hot downpour of water. He changed into something more house-appropriate, because despite what Alexander seemed to think, Thomas did not actually spend all of his time in suits, magenta or otherwise. No, sweatpants would do just fine.

He headed downstairs, dinner already in mind, when he passed Alexander’s room. The memory of Alexander, pale as the sheets in his bed, barely breathing, flashed through his mind, and he had to stop and reach out and steady himself against a wall.

Breathe in, Jefferson. One, two, three. Breathe out. Four, five, six. Repeat.

In.

One, two, three.

Out.

Four, five, six.

When he felt that his world was no longer swirling when he opened his eyes, he knocked lightly on Alexander’s door. No response. He knocked again, with the same result as before.

Ignoring the way his stomach seemed to be doing somersaults with a speed that would have put Charles Blondin to shame, Thomas carefully pushed the door open, and peered into the room. It was empty, save for Alexander’s things, which were, as always, scattered all around the room with no thought to where they ought to be.

Thomas swept his eyes around the room, as if to ascertain that Alexander wasn’t hiding in some corner. Rationally, he knew that it wasn’t like Alexander to play such childish tricks, and really, there was no reason for Alexander to even be in his room, but every time he blinked, he saw Alexander in his bed again, and this was not just something that he could ignore. Alexander, his boyfriend, had almost worked himself into an early grave, and Thomas needed to make sure that it did not happen again—even if he had to cajole or—and?—threaten Alexander into being reasonable.

Okay. Alexander wasn’t here. That was good.

Still, he did not move from the spot.

He knew that he was being unreasonable, that hovering in the middle of Alexander’s bedroom, but something, almost a compulsion of sorts, held him in place.

“Snooping around my room, are we now?” came a voice from behind Thomas.

Thomas jumped at the sound. He turned to its source, and saw Alexander lounging in the doorway. His lips were drawn up in an amused smile as he stared up at Thomas.

“I wasn’t snooping,” Thomas defended himself.

“Uh-huh,” Alexander drawled. He crossed his arms. “Then I suppose you were just window-shopping?” he mocked.

Thomas’ eyes flashed with anger. “Look, Alexander,” he snapped, “you were hospitalized not so
long ago after I found you on this very—”

Alexander rolled his eyes. “Will you ever stop bringing that up?” he asked rhetorically.

“—on this very bed,” Thomas went on, glowering at Alexander, “looking as though you were already chatting up Charon himself, so excuse me if I felt the need to go inside and check that it wasn’t happening again, alright?”

“How could it have?” Alexander said with a snort. “You’ve barely let me be alone at home for more than an hour. You’ve been watching my movements like a hawk. I can’t even take a piss without you noticing, let alone—” He waved a hand, a vague movement that Thomas did not even bother to interpret. “Never mind.”

“You know,” Thomas said, crossing his arms, mirroring Alexander’s posture, “I’m not sure that I like the way you avoid this. Actually, no. You know what? I definitely don’t like it.”

Alexander positively growled. “Just—shut up and come here.”

With those words, Alexander bridged the distance between them, throwing his arms around Thomas’ torso and drawing him in for a hug. Thomas stiffened for a moment, before forcing himself to relax. This was fine. Just fine. Just Alexander being… friendly.

Should Thomas be worried? Alexander had never been friendly when they were in private before, not to this rate, never so casually, as though this was normal for them. Not a word, not a gesture, indicated that Alexander was anything but convinced that this was what their relationship was now. Hugging.

Well. Thomas could work with that. Alexander clearly didn’t mind, and Thomas, well, he wasn’t exactly taking advantage of Alexander if Alexander liked it, was he?

■ ■ ■

It wasn’t as if Alexander didn’t understand. It wasn’t as if he didn’t realize the consequences of his actions or whatever other faux-philosophical bullshit people were trying to push on him. It wasn’t even that he didn’t care; of course he cared! All he’d been fighting for, as long as he could remember, was a chance. Why would he throw it away?

But he had so much work to do.

There were opportunities available now that were likely never going to be presented again. He was having ideas now that he would never have again. The perfect word, the perfect phrase, the perfect plan, they each only lasted moment; how could Alexander say no to that moment? How could he interrupt the perfect flow of thought, how could he hinder so many possibilities?

No one had ever understood, but Alexander had long since stopped expecting them to.

*Your mind just works differently,* a teacher on Nevis had said, *it's full of shortcuts. Most people just have the main streets, Alexander. You've got the back roads.*

It hadn't been a perfect explanation, but it was the best Alexander had received.

Yes, it was unhealthy. Yes, it was in no way sustainable. Yes, it was most definitely going to come back and royally bite him on the ass.

And yet…
Did Alexander have any other option?

Everyone said he had time, but how could they know? He was only here for so long. He could only do so much. He didn't have time to waste, and if that meant eating once or twice a day and losing a bit of sleep, then that was the price of progress.

Alexander was here for a *reason*. He had his mind for a *reason*. He hadn't lived through everything, he didn't have his skills, simply so he could brag about it.

With great power comes great responsibility and all that.

Alexander was incredibly lucky—*ridiculously* lucky. What kind of person would he be if he *ignored* everything he'd been granted, knowing he had the capability to help others but simply deciding not to, knowing he had so much potential and letting it sit to *rot*?

It was the price of progress. The eggs necessary to make the omelet. The things sacrificed to bring about something better; a better world.

But *fuck* if it didn't hurt sometimes. Not when Alexander was “suffering”, exactly—exhaustion and hunger were old friends at this point—but in moments like these.

When Thomas stood in Alexander's room, a look of panic visible on his face, his fear palpable around him, heavy and sticky like the summer air back on Nevis. Thomas' terror was the ninety percent humidity in July, sticking Alexander to his clothes and making every movement twenty times harder than it should have been.

These were the moments that hurt the most.

Alexander didn't know what to do, not really. He'd never been good at this, this whole *comforting others* thing, especially when he'd been the reason they needed comfort in the first place.

He'd done his best, had wrapped his arms around Thomas’ waist and buried his face in the other man's chest—surely the man didn't hate it *that* much; he *had* spent a good chunk of the previous day clinging to Alexander like a limpet.

It seemed to work. Thomas relaxed, and after a moment it seemed that all that remained of his panic the slight way he shook in Alexander's embrace.

Alexander ate dinner that night—potato soup topped with bacon and cheese and those little green circle things and absolutely delicious (not that Alexander would ever admit it)—and smiled through the whole thing.

He didn't mention how guilty he felt.

He should’ve been working, should've been trying to help people who didn't get to eat homemade potato soup and didn't have millionaire boyfriends whose stupidly soft sweaters they can steal; instead, he was grinning and playing house with a man who supported cutting Social Security penchants to help fund a tax cut for big oil.

Suddenly, Alexander's soup didn't seem so appetizing.

“I've actually got something I should be—Schumer wants me to look over the draft of a bill before he lets it on the floor, you know the drill—so, uh, I'm going to—”
Alexander didn’t know why he couldn’t get his words to form proper sentences, didn’t know why his stomach was suddenly churning like a tempest over the ocean.

Thomas seemed as if he was about to protest, probably to chastise Alexander for working when he should be eating, as if he hasn’t been eating when he was supposed to be working, but he didn’t.

Good.

Alexander didn’t know how much more of that—that incessant worrying that never seemed to stop—he could take.

Instead, Thomas nodded and told Alexander to take his bowl to the sink on his way to his room.

Alexander happily complied.

As it turned out, there were a few upsides to the whole root canal ordeal.

One, Thomas no longer felt as if people were stabbing his gums at any given moment.

Two, apparently that had been all that was needed to convince Alexander to allow their relationship to be more… affectionate.

Still. There was photographic evidence of him making an utter fool of himself. If his career had had any chance of survival after his outing, they had just gone up in flames. Again.

This was beginning to get repetitive. There was only so many times a person could concern themselves with a lost career before they stopped giving a damn, and Thomas feared that he was pushing that limit.

Chapter End Notes

So. There was that. Oops? *sheepish smile*
In which Ring and Gabe decide to write a Valentine’s Day chapter the day before Valentine's what the fuck why are we like this

Chapter by allonsy_gabriel

Chapter Summary

It’s ten thirty p.m. on February 13th as I start this. Please comment ‘F’ to pay your respects to my sleep schedule and sanity.

Chapter Notes

Ring would like to add that this was 90% Gabe and that they’re just acting as a beta here because Gabe is clearly insane to try to write an entire chapter in less than 24h and yet here we are. Also, Alexander’s rant is what Ring used on their actual Valentine’s Day card, scaring the hell out at least five people.

It was six in the morning. Thomas was enjoying the peaceful silence and serenity that came with the world before dawn, pouring a mixture of eggs, bacon, cheese, and chives into a hollowed-out baguette as he casually sipped his coffee and peered out the kitchen window, admiring the delicate lace patterns of the frost and the soft singing of the few birds that had decided to stay for the D.C. winter.

It was wonderful, the tranquility in the air seeping through Thomas’ skin, allowing him to collect his thoughts and just rela —

“Happy Heteronormativity And Commercialized Affection Day, asshole!”

*Six in the goddamn morning.*

*What the fuck, Alexander.*

Alexander came barrelling around the corner, shattering the calm like it was glass and he was a drunken African bull elephant.

“What in the hell —” Thomas sputtered, just about dropping the measuring cup that held the last of his egg mixture. “Are you *kidding me*?! Are you *trying* to give me a heart attack?! Just because you’re perfectly content to keel over before you see forty doesn’t mean we *all* are, my God—”

“What do you know what today is?” Alexander demanded, his hands on his hips, looking like he was just looking for a fight to pick ( *why* was he already looking for a fight, *the sun wasn’t even up* —and people assumed that *Thomas* was the morning person out of the two of them).

“Um, before you came in, it kinda seemed like it was the first day of *peace* I would’ve had since *October* —” Thomas snapped, glaring at Alexander before going back to his breakfast.
“It’s Valentine’s Day!” Alexander shouted, and Thomas saw Alexander throw up his hands into the air from the corner of his eye.

“Yes,” Thomas agreed impassively, an inscrutable expression settling on his face.

He knew the date. He also knew not to expect a damn thing because this was Alexander Hamilton, and even if they were really together, which they weren’t, Thomas would be a fool to think that any sort of ideas about romantic gestures might cross Alexander’s mind. “And?”

“And Valentine’s Day is bullshit, that’s what!” Alexander said emphatically, “It’s nothing but a capitalist scam, designed to make people currently in a relationship spend unnecessary money in a fruitless attempt to ensure undying love and devotion. For those not in a relationship, Valentine’s Day is simply added pressure to identify themselves within the context of a romantic relationship, whipping them into a frenzy that only the presence of a partner can relieve. It furthermore perpetuates the myth that the pinnacle of all human life is to fall in love and be in a romantic relationship, which leads to a hypersexualized and hyperromanticized environment, which is not good for anyone, be they interested in romance or not!”

By the end of his rant, Alexander’s face was the same shade of red as the hearts on all those cards and boxes of chocolate and teddy bears he professed to so profusely hate, and his breathing was so heavy that one might have imagined that he just sprinted a full marathon, which was a laughable idea because Alexander and sports were two words that shouldn’t even be in the same sentence, let alone related.

Thomas crossed his arms over his chest and raised an eyebrow. “You done?”

Alexander glared at him. “For now,” he grumbled, plopping down in a seat at the kitchen table. He crossed his arms mutinously.

Thomas snorted. “You're unbelievable, you know that?” he asked. “You do realize you're raging against an international day of love, right? That, typically, humans see love as a good thing, that should be celebrated, commemorated —”

“But it shouldn’t be commercialized! Love shouldn't have a price tag or a terms and conditions manual! That's the whole point of love! And it shouldn't be used to guilt people either! The whole Valentine's Day thing might have been something to be celebrated in the past, but as it is, it’s just a greedy money-making ploy that exploits people's desires to be included and valued and uses them to make a profit—”

“So, the answer was no. You weren't done,” Thomas muttered, rolling his eyes. He massaged the bridge of his nose as he listened to Alexander’s diatribe.

“—and here’s another thought: if you need a specific day of the year to remind you to actually be a decent significant other, then you probably shouldn't be a relationship! Love isn't a ‘one day a year’ thing—”

Thomas placed his eggy bread in the oven and poured himself another cup of coffee. He was going to need it.

“—and also that whole idea permeates the toxic ideal of a ‘perfect couple’, one that's most likely a pair white cishet people in a sexual relationship, which completely ostracizes a large portion of the population! It's absurd and ridiculous and I cannot support it!”

Thomas leaned back against the kitchen counter and silently counted to twenty. When he reached the
number and Alexander still hadn't picked back up his half-baked ramblings, Thomas let out a sigh.

“*Now* are you done?” he asked.

Alexander sighed and slouched down further into his chair. “Yes,” he conceded.

Thomas about cried in relief. “Good,” he said simply. “I'm going to get ready. Tell me when the timer goes off. Don't try and fight the whole Hallmark company.”

God, it really must have been a testament to how far gone Thomas was for that little imp that as Thomas left the room, all he could think about was how much he loved him.
In which Alexander watches football, gets drunk, hires a mariachi band, and commandeers Thomas’ bed (not necessarily in that order).

Chapter Summary

These guys only talk when they’re drunk and it’s starting to be worrying.

“There are leftovers in the fridge, and I just bought groceries yesterday, so they should last you a week. I’m leaving you the car keys—for the love of God, please don’t wreck my—”

“Thomas.”

“—car. Don’t cook anything more advanced than kraft or PB&J—or, even better, make a salad. It’s healthy, it would do you some good, and I bought some vegetables just in case you want to—”

“Thomas.”

“—do it. Don’t poke around my study, and don’t nag James about your stupid bill, because I’ve already advised him to ignore you if you do. If you need to access my office for some godforsaken reason, though you really shouldn’t need to talk to Sally; I know you have her phone number. She has orders not to leave you there without supervision because God knows what you’d do if—”

“Thomas!”

Thomas paused mid-sentence. “Alexander,” he said evenly.

Alexander crossed his arms. “I’m not a kid; you can leave me home alone, you know,” he said with a petulant pout.

Thomas snorted. “Doubtful.” He paused. “Unfortunately, I have no choice. I need to be at the G20 summit, and your presence would be… detrimental, to say the least. Remember: don’t overwork yourself. Just because you’re allowed to work from home doesn’t mean that you need to overdo it.”

“I do not overdo things,” Alexander said with a glower.

Thomas scoffed and rolled his eyes. “Alexander, dear, all you do is overdo things,” he drawled. “Anyway, stay out of my room, don’t break anything, don’t get yourself killed and, for God’s sake, don’t buy a dog. I’ll see you in a week.”

“What, no goodbye kiss?” Alexander joked, tilting his head to the side and smirking in a way that would be nothing short of an invitation were it directed at anyone else.

As it was, Thomas simply rolled his eyes again and grabbed his suitcase by the handle. “Two weeks,” he warned. “I expect to return to my house still standing and you still alive. Don’t disappoint me,” he repeated, before stepping out onto his doorstep.

Alexander didn’t know if this technically counted as disappointing. Not that he cared, really, but it’d be a lot harder to convince Thomas to buy him a new mattress if he was pissed.
Because of course, of course, his mattress would break the second night of Thomas’ two-week long trip. Alexander actually thought the only reason it didn’t break on the first night was because on the first night, Alexander didn’t sleep.

Correction, in the interest of accuracy: he did sleep, but only after his body saw fit to crash at four in the morning. One moment, he was working on the annual report of Minnesotan trade with its sister states, and the next, he was awoken by the sun blaring angrily into his eyes. He noted absentmindedly that he had dozed off sometime between the grain import and the calculation of the exact cost of the electronics produced in said state.

He would have been ashamed, except, well, there was nothing to be ashamed of, was there? Thomas was the one who thought that Alexander was overworking himself by working eight hours a day; Alexander knew his limits, no matter what Thomas said.

The only downside of the whole ordeal was that Alexander’s back had, apparently, gotten used to sleeping in a bed that probably cost more than Alexander’s monthly salary—which said a lot. Mostly, however, it said quite clearly that Alexander needed to sleep in a goddamn bed if he wanted to be able to walk the next day, and really, Hamilton, you’re not as young as you used to be, so stop pretending that you’re twenty again. You can’t just go on a party spree the entire night, and still ace an exam the following morning. That wasn’t how physiology worked.

It was with a heavy heart that Alexander capitulated to his back. His spoiled back, no less. Fuck Thomas for that, anyway. It was his fault. Fuck Thomas, and fuck his stupidly comfortable beds.

However stupid the whole thing was, Alexander wasn’t an idiot. He got the message, damnit, and thus did the obvious thing.

The alarm on his phone would go off at two in the morning, at which point in time Alexander would move his work to his bed. Boom. Problem solved,

And Thomas said Alexander couldn’t take care of himself. Showed how much he knew.

Night two found Alexander in his bed, merrily typing away on his laptop.

It was just his luck, wasn’t it, that just as he had decided to turn in and actually get some sleep, the fucking mattress broke, because of course it did. It seemed that even when Thomas wasn’t present, his spirit was still making Alexander’s life difficult. Was it even possible for furniture to be sentient?

Alexander groaned as he pressed his face into the pillow. For a moment, he contemplated staying in his bed, because moving seemed like an altogether bad idea now, but the more rational part of his brain—the part that sounded like Angelica—informed him of just how bad an idea that was. His back was hardly going to thank him for that, was it?

An idea began to form in Alexander’s head. There was a bed he could use. A very much unoccupied bed. A bed whose owner’s fault it had been that Alexander’s body had gotten used to these kinds of luxuries in the first place.

It was only fair, then, Alexander supposed, that he used Thomas’ bed—at least for this night because there was no way he was going to go off looking for a new mattress at—he checked the time—three in the fucking morning.

Nope. Not happening.

Thomas’ bed would just have to do.
With that decided, Alexander grabbed his laptop and his covers, and unceremoniously marched down the hall to Thomas’ room and plopped down on the bed.

It was a nice bed.

Alexander knew this, of course. This wasn’t the first time Alexander had crashed in Thomas’ bed—and wasn’t that a pleasant thought, Jesus H. Christ. It was, however, the first time he’d actually gotten to really enjoy it. Usually, he was too focused on not contaminating himself with the Jefferson bacteria to allow himself to relax. Not now. Now, he could stretch out and snuggle into the pillows to his heart’s content, without having to worry about suffocating on Thomas’ stupidly fluffy hair in his sleep.

Besides, the bed was right there exactly when Alexander needed it the most. It was like it was meant to be. Not that Alexander believed in destiny, but, well… There were coincidences, and then there were Coincidences.

This was one of the latter kind.

And his brain was officially done for the night, if he had begun to internally capitalize words. Maybe he did need some sleep.

He resolved to shelve the topic of destiny for later and tugged the sheets tighter to his body.

Yes, he decided right before falling asleep, the bed was quite comfortable now that Thomas wasn’t there.

■ ■

Alexander knew that he should probably get out of Thomas’ bed. He should actually go buy himself a new mattress, come to think of that, or at least steal the one from the guest room up the hall from his own room.

He did neither.

He wasn’t entirely sure why. He rationalized it by saying that the bed—Thomas’ bed—for all its faults, the main one being the fact that it was Thomas’, was very, very soft. Nice, too. If one subtracted Thomas from the equation, the bed was actually quite flawless,

Besides, what kind of nemesis would he be if he didn’t take every opportunity to fuck with Thomas? And what opportunity was greater than stealing Thomas’ own bed?

So, no, Alexander didn’t exactly try too hard to obtain a new mattress. In fact, he didn’t try at all. And anyway, Thomas was going to be gone for at least another two weeks; Alexander had time. Wasn’t it Thomas who always told him to relax and take it easy? Well, here was Alexander: relaxing and taking it easy. Thomas should be grateful that Alexander didn’t get a new mattress.

With that thought, Alexander opened his laptop and resumed his work from last night.

■ ■

The mattress continued to be a Non-Priority Issue, so much that Alexander had, in all honesty, simply forgotten about it a few days later. To be fair, it wasn’t exactly hard to do that: Thomas’ bed was genuinely comfortable, and Alexander wasn’t really looking forward to moving back.

So he didn’t.
Instead, he moved some of his stuff to Thomas’ room. It was easier that way, anyway. Carrying a briefcase of documents and a handful of clothes was certainly easier than carrying an entire mattress. So. There. He had a legitimate, logical reason for staying in Thomas’ room.

He moved his shampoo, conditioner and body wash into Thomas’ bathroom. It was more efficient this way. Now, he didn’t have to waddle around in nothing but a towel to get from the shower to his sweaters. Besides, Thomas’ shower was huge; it wasn’t as if he didn’t have room for another few bottles.

Meanwhile, his bed—his old bed now, he supposed—lay forgotten.

The trend continued for the rest of the week.

Slowly but surely, more and more of Alexander’s belongings made their way into Thomas’ room. His phone charger was plugged into the outlet by the bed; the pile of his clothes on one of Thomas’ chairs grew taller by the day; a stack of his books sat on the nightstand next to his reading glasses.

Alexander thought nothing of it. It was the natural progression of things, wasn’t it? That was what happened if one commandeered an entire room.

By the end of the second week, Alexander had once again fallen asleep under the covers in Thomas’ bed—his bed, now—burying his face in the pillows, as comfortable as he’d ever been, as if it was something he had always been doing.

His head hit the pillows, and he closed his eyes with a contented sigh, drifting off to sleep with surprising ease.

It slipped his mind that Thomas would be returning from his trip, which was an impressive feat in itself. It wouldn’t have seemed like such an easy thing to forget—Alexander only had one boyfriend, and his ego was certainly large enough to fill up at least a half of any room he entered, so it wasn’t as if Thomas Jefferson was forgettable. Alexander could offer no excuse other than that he had honestly forgotten, and even that seemed too feeble an excuse to be used.

Then again, Alexander had always been rather good with excuses.

Thomas sighed as he unlocked the door and tried to get into the house as unobtrusively as possible. It was three in the morning, he has just gotten off the first possible flight from Paris (while, any other time, he would have been delighted to have the chance to appreciate the French culture—their cuisine was to die for, after all—he could not help but count down the days until the summit was over and he could return home. God only knew what Alexander could have done to his house in Thomas’ absence. Hell, he had half-expected for the house to be on fire when he got back), and he didn’t want to wake up Alexander. Knowing him, he had fallen asleep an hour ago or so; Thomas loved him more than he had ever thought possible, but he didn’t delude himself into thinking that Alexander actually followed through on his promise to take care of himself. Hell itself would freeze over before Alexander Hamilton showed signs of self-care.

Then again, considering that hell was exothermic, and therefore exuding heat and decreasing in energy as it expande—

Thomas cut off that thought before it had the time to fully form. Maybe he was not tired than he had previously thought.
Yes, sleep was a good idea.

He dropped off his stuff on the couch, resolving to deal with them in the morning—actually, no, he wouldn’t have the time—after he got back from work in the afternoon, he headed for his bedroom.

He opened the door and froze.

Alexander was in his bed.

“You commandeered my bed,” Thomas said dumbly, too stunned to form any coherent thoughts. *Alexander* was in his *bed*.

*Shit.*

Alexander shrugged noncommittally. “You told me to sleep, so.” He glanced around. “I’m sleeping. Or I *was*, before *someone* woke me up.”

“Not in *my bed*, you weren’t,” Thomas protested, then amended to, “*aren’t*.” He paused. “You’re not sleeping in my bed. How did this even *happen*?”

“Cliff notes,” Alexander muttered as he pressed his face into Thomas’ pillow, and Thomas struggled to make out his words, “my bed broke at three in the morning, and I couldn’t be bothered to buy a new one, and yours was available. So.” He stared at Thomas in open challenge, as though daring him to say something.

Thomas did not raise to Alexander’s bait.

Thomas sighed as he glanced at Alexander, then at the space next to him.

He knew a lost battle when he saw one, and he didn’t have enough energy to argue with Alexander at the crack of stupid. Besides, if he kicked Alexander out of his bed, there was always the possibility that Alexander wouldn’t go to sleep, just to spite Thomas.

Actually, that sounded *exactly* like something Alexander would do.

“Move,” he ordered, before crawling into bed next to Alexander. He made a point to turn his back on Alexander, tugging the covers over himself.

“Hey!” Alexander protested, and then Thomas felt the blankets being torn out from his grip. The cool air suddenly assaulted him. “Don’t hog the blankets.”

Thomas turned around to face Alexander. “You’re the one hogging them,” he snapped.

Alexander’s nostrils flared. “No, I’m *not*.” He tugged on the blankets, but Thomas held on to them as tightly as he could.

Finally, Alexander seemed to give up his attempts at regaining complete control of the blanket situation and shoved a few blankets in Thomas’ direction before rolling over onto his stomach and nuzzling into the pillows.

Thomas accepted the blankets with naught but a quiet grumble, and the two men silently agreed to share the blankets and settled into an uneasy truce.

Thomas pressed his face into the pillows, inhaling slowly. Even the pillows smelled like Alexander’s shampoo—the fucking *pillows*. Thomas was torn between the urge to burn them as quickly as
possible, and scooping them up for safekeeping because Alexander Alexander Alexander was all over them.

At a moment like this, Thomas could almost imagine that he had Alexander, that he could hold him and touch him and have him and be with him.

Almost.

A word that sticks edgewise into the throat to strangle one.

Thomas stifled a frustrated scream.

Almost made all the difference in the world.

They never really got around to buying Alexander a new mattress. In their defense, Alexander seemed happy enough with the arrangement—his bed was always made these days, and his sheets always clean—and Thomas certainly wasn't complaining either.

And if Thomas slowly minimized the space between them—if he, two weeks later, fell asleep with an arm wrapped Alexander's waist—then that was his own personal business.

Thomas enjoyed football. He enjoyed watching football. He enjoyed virtually every aspect that football entailed, except maybe hospitalization.

Alexander, on the other hand…

“How do you watch this?” Alexander all but demanded to know, staring at the television with something akin to horror on his face. “A bunch of grown men are risking brain damage over a scrap of leather!”

Thomas rolled his eyes. “It’s cathartic,” he explained. “I can’t go around tackling everyone who pisses me off, so I watch professionals do it instead.”

“That’s bullshit.”

“You say that,” Thomas teased, “but you don’t even know how many times your stupid face remained intact only by the good graces of the Virginia Tech football team.”

Alexander flipped him off and opened up his laptop. “Please tell me you never played,” he said as he began to write.

Thomas was oddly silent.

Alexander glanced up. He met Thomas’ eyes. “Oh my God,” Alexander all but shouted in delight. “You did! You actually played football! What the hell, Thomas?”

“I was in high school, Alexander, trying to live the heterosexual dream. Cut me some slack,” Thomas grumbled, crossing his arms and taking another drink of his wine. “Besides,” he muttered, “the boys were cute.”

Alexander spat out his soda. “Holy shit,” he said. “That’s—that’s fucking golden. Thomas Jefferson played football so he could ogle cute boys in the locker room.”
“I played because it was fun,” Thomas insisted.

“And because you could ogle cute boys in the locker room.” Alexander had a shit-eating grin on his face.

“You’re making me sound like a pervert!” Thomas accused. “I’ll have you know I was good.”

Alexander wiggled his eyebrows. “I just bet you were.”

“I’m calling Washington and tell him that he’s going to have to find a new Treasury Secretary because his current one is about to mysteriously disappear,” Thomas muttered.

“Oh, I’m so scared. What are you gonna do, throw a football at me?” Alexander mocked.

“I hate you,” Thomas said, whacking Alexander with a pillow.

Alexander just laughed and said, “Love you too, babe!”

Thomas pretended it didn’t make his heart sing.

He did not, however, have to feign the irritation when, not five minutes later, Alexander tweeted: ‘tfw you only play high school football to check out the other guys @TJefferson’.

Thomas was going to kill the little shit, consequences be damned, and Washington was just going to have to find himself another impudent immigrant.

---

“Thomas, Thomas, Tom,” Alexander leered, running his hands over Thomas’ chest as Thomas dragged him inside the house.

He was demanding Washington never have an open bar at the Governors’ Ball again.

“Tooooom—”

“Yes, Alexander?” Thomas snapped.

Alexander smirked up at him through hooded eyes and long lashes. “Maybe you should take me to bed,” he muttered, taking Thomas’ hand and kissing his knuckles with more finesse than someone so inebriated should ever possess.

Thomas swallowed. “No, Alexander,” he replied. He wished he could just drop the insufferable immigrant.

“I know you want to,” Alexander whispered. “You wanted to, before. You begged, begged me to get in bed with you, and I’m sure that if I’d taken you up on it, you would’ve begged me to spread you out and—”


Alexander just grinned up at him.

Thomas hauled Alexander into the living room before stopping and all but shoving him onto the couch.

Alexander pulled Thomas down with him.
“Tom,” Alexander sighed as Thomas fell on top of him, his voice low and raspy.

Thomas scrambled to his feet, doing his best not to look at Alexander. Alexander, spread out on the couch, palming at his crotch; his hair a mess, his mouth wide open, and his slacks tented—

That was enough of that.

“I’m going to bed,” Thomas choked out abruptly before all but sprinting to his room.

Fuck.

Alexander woke up the next morning on the couch, his head pounding like a bass drum. On the end table next to him was a large glass of water, a few tablets of aspirin, and a note. In the back of his mind, he vaguely recognized Thomas’ handwriting.

_Drink some water, asshole. Don’t throw up on my couch. I’ll see you when I get home._

~Thomas

“Feeling any better there, Sean Connery?” Thomas asked as he pushed the front door open.

Alexander glared balefully at him from the couch. His hair was pulled up in a frankly horrendous bun and the bags under his eyes large enough to be marked as a carry-on at an airport. “Fuck you,” he spat.

“I’d really, _really_ rather not,” Thomas drawled, hanging his coat on the rack. He spared Alexander a glance, raising an eyebrow, wondering whether or not he should mention anything that came up the night before.

He wanted to. Wanted to throw Alexander’s own words back at him, wanted to grin and say, ‘alcohol only lowers your inhibitions, but it doesn’t change who you are’, and grin and watch Alexander balk and sputter and scramble for the words Thomas was sure were going to be there because they were always right there at Alexander’s beck and call.

But he also didn’t. Didn’t want to open that door, didn’t want to see where it would lead, not now that things were _almost_ good, _almost_ where Thomas wanted them to be.

Instead, he simply removed his suit jacket and undid his tie, toed off his shoes, removed his laptop from his briefcase, and sat down in the chair opposite of Alexander.

He had just finished uploading the latest version of a briefing he was giving Congress about the progress of the talks with India, when Alexander scoffed from his spot across the room.

Thomas slowly looked up. “Yes?” he asked, hoping that his tone didn’t betray every ounce of exasperation and exhaustion he had been feeling for the past few days.

“I know what you’re thinking, and I can _absolutely_ assure you that anything I might’ve said last night was complete bullshit,” Alexander said bluntly. “I’m not into you, Thomas. I was drunk and horny and you were the closest warm body, _so forget about it_. At least I didn’t wax poetic about your mouth or eyes or whatever.”
Thomas swallowed. He felt his heart sink to his feet, and the only things keeping it from hitting the floor and shattering into a million, billion pieces were his purple and grey argyle socks.

This could not be happening. He could not have heard Alexander correctly.

(He did. He knew that he did.)

He cleared his throat. “Obviously,” he said dryly, his mouth twisting into a bitter smile, rolling his eyes so Alexander couldn’t see the absolute agony in them. “I’d never dare to think otherwise.” This, at least, was true. Thomas had vowed that he wouldn’t get his hopes up when it came to Alexander’s affections, wouldn’t strive to have them, and last night, he had almost broken that promise to himself.

Alexander seemed content with Thomas’ answer—or at least content enough to drop the subject and turn back to his work.

Thomas waited for another five minutes and then fled the room as inconspicuously as possible.

He didn’t see Alexander again until the man crawled into their bed that night.

They were halfway through Alexander’s second week of working from home, and Thomas was just about ready to strangle the little gremlin.

“Alexander fucking Hamilton!” Thomas yelled as he burst through their front door. “What in God’s name was that?”

“I have absolutely no idea what you’re talking about,” Alexander said, never looking up from his computer (Thomas had no idea what he could possibly have been working on; he was weeks ahead of schedule; to Thomas’ knowledge, there had been no economic crisis since Washington booted him out of his office for his enforced vacation, and he was fairly sure that Alexander would have screeched it into his ear if there had been—and then probably blamed it on Thomas, because that’s what Hamilton did).

“No idea my ass,” Thomas snapped.

Alexander looked up at him, his eyes wide enough that, was Thomas anyone else, he would have been convinced that Alexander was nothing but a beacon of innocence and purity and had probably been a puppy in his past life or some shit like that. “I’ve been here all day, Thomas. I don’t know what fresh hell you think I could’ve stirred up while sitting on our couch,” he said, just the slightest inklings of a smirk tugging at his lips.

“All day, Alexander. All day, I’ve had to sit through song after song after song!” Thomas lamented, looking like he was moments away from tearing at his hair and covering himself in ashes. “And, yes, I admit that it was nice at first, if slightly obnoxious, but all day? How much did you pay them? Did you agree to put their children through college? Do you have some sort of mariachi blackmail I’m unaware of?”

Alexander, it seemed, couldn’t hold himself back any longer and burst from the force of his laughter, doubling over on the couch, shoulders shaking. “Oh—oh my God, that’s—mariachi blackmail—your face—”

“As Treasury Secretary, shouldn’t you value making wise financial decisions as opposed to—to whatever the hell that was?” Thomas all but shouted, throwing his hands in the air.
Alexander took a moment to collect himself before grinning like a thousand watt light bulb and saying, “Thomas, dear, that is the best financial decision I’ve ever made. I’m just sorry that I wasn’t there to bear witness to it.”

And, for a moment, Thomas almost considered his day of torment to be worth it, if only because of the smile on Alexander’s face.

*Almost.*

*Sticks edgewise. Throat. Strangle.*

*Strangle.*

No, Thomas concluded after some thought, he wouldn’t *strangle* Alexander, tempting though it was.

No. But—

“We’re having salad for dinner,” Thomas decided, and relished in Alexander’s corresponding groan.
Interlude: Concerning Hogwarts Houses (as told by A. Hamilton)

Chapter Summary

A mini-chapter on the nerdiest topic ever to hold you over until we put up the real chapter.

Chapter Notes

We originally planned to post another chapter today, but we weren’t done with it, so you have this instead. The chapter we planned to post will (hopefully) be up Wednesday.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Thomas, have you ever thought about the direct correlation between the Hogwarts houses and modern day gender roles?” Alexander asked as he flopped himself down on the couch, startling Thomas into all but smashing his keyboard.

“I can’t say I have,” Thomas drawled once he’d regained his bearings. “I typically spend my time thinking about the best way to benefit the American people, seeing as that’s, y’know, my job.”

“The best way to benefit your donors, you mean,” Alexander muttered, earning him a light swat on the head. He glared at Thomas before continuing. “Anyway, it’s really quite interesting because while Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff may be the houses founded by women, when you look into common portrayals of women in media, it doesn’t line up exactly like that.”

Thomas stared at him for a moment before shutting his laptop.

He knew when a battle was lost.

“First, Hufflepuff,” Alexander said with all the seriousness he usually reserved for holding elaborate presentations during cabinet meetings—the kinds that could go on for hours if the coffee gremlin was left uninterrupted. “This is obvious. One half of the common one-dimensional woman stereotype, Hufflepuffs are kind and loyal and patient and compassionate and hardworking.

“All in all, they’re the ‘perfect woman’—not overbearing, nor not the type to grab the spotlight. They’re the ‘women should be protected and given the lighter work and obviously aren’t as up to par as men’ side of the equation.

“The fact that they also get the label of ‘not being good at anything’, not being smart or brave or ambitious, also perfectly plays into this ideal.”

Thomas opened his mouth to add something but was cut off before he could even begin.

“But then, we have the other side of the stereotypical woman, Slytherin. Slytherin is the seductive fiend you hear every drunk guy at a bar complaining about, every Bond girl, and almost every
Angelina Jolie character.”

Thomas sighed and rolled his eyes, resigning himself to the knowledge that he wouldn’t be able to get in a word edgewise for at least five more minutes. He glanced at his laptop, quickly calculating the odds that he would be able to get away with returning to his work while Alexander kept ranting. The odds were unfortunately very much against him.

This was the man he loved. Incredible. Fucking incredible.

“Ah, women,” Alexander continued, his voice dripping with sarcasm and faux-disdain. “Cunning and tricky. Impossible to trust. More than willing to turn their backs on you and leave you for the newer, better thing at any chance. If a girl isn’t viewed by society as a Hufflepuff—as a perfect docile housewife—she’s viewed as a Slytherin.” Alexander huffed and crossed his arms. “And I’m not even going to get into the vilification of ambition and cunning and the stereotyping of Slytherins in general, but it’s nonetheless absurd.”

Thomas simply hummed, only half listening. By now he’d mastered the art of giving Alexander enough attention to satisfy his spotlight-craving tendencies whilst simultaneously drowning out enough of Alexander’s incessant babbling to remain sane. He didn’t know how he would’ve survived otherwise.

“Anyways, Slytherin is the other ‘feminine’ house, not Ravenclaw,” Alexander said. It sounded like a closing statement if Thomas had ever heard one, and he opened his mouth to finally, finally say something, when—

“As for the other two, well, Gryffindor is, obviously, nigh on every masculine stereotype ever created shoved in one spot: brave and chivalrous and daring and reckless and the hero,” Alexander continued, and Thomas felt his self-control starting to wane.

“And the ones they miss? The Gandalf characters, which almost always also happen to be men? Sherlock, Q, Spock, the geniuses, the wise, the creative and brilliant, the innovators? Well, there’s Ravenclaw. It’s amazing! It’s like we as a society just decided to match archetypal gender roles to these four distinct traits, and when you look at each individual one, in relation to the Harry Potter stories and the world today, it reveals a lot of the cultural expectations placed upon people based on their gender.”

Thomas didn’t say anything in response to that. When it was clear that Alexander was, for the moment, finished, he rolled his eyes. “Done, are you?”

Alexander gaped. “You can’t just—dismiss all of that like it doesn’t matter!” He began waving his hands haphazardly, and Thomas leaned away so as not to get swatted by any stray limbs flying into his face.

“Yes, I can,” Thomas shot back. “It’s not essential to our work.”

“But it is essential to society at large,” Alexander insisted, and Jesus, if the man put as much energy into passing bills through Congress, the Democrats would long ago have had America in their grasp.

“So go write an article for the Post,” Thomas said flippantly as he began skimming another document, his mind already miles ahead. “I’m sure they’ll appreciate it,” he drawled.

Alexander crossed his arms mutinously. “You know what? I think I will.” He turned on his heel, most likely to go get his laptop and start typing out a whole fucking book on societal expectations based on gender or whatever the hell he had been ranting about, when he stopped and turned back to
look at Thomas.

“You’re such a fucking typical Slytherin, by the way,” Alexander fired off his parting shot.

Thomas stilled, his fingers freezing mid-air. He looked up at Alexander. “What,” he said in a low voice, “did you just say?”

Alexander smirked, most probably triumphant at having gotten a reaction out of Thomas. “You’re such a fucking typical Slytherin,” he repeated dutifully.

Thomas rested his hands on the sides of his laptop. “First off, that’s just goddamn disrespectful against an entire House to stereotypize—”

“Which isn’t an actual word,” Alexander chirped happily.

“—them like that, and wasn’t that what you were literally just saying?”

Alexander crossed his arms. “Not really. I mean, yes, but also no—which you would have known, had you been listening.” The reproach was clear in his voice.

“And second,” Thomas went on, ignoring Alexander’s words with patented practice, “I’m not a Slytherin. I’m a Ravenclaw.”

Alexander choked.


“Your House?” Thomas retorted. “You belong in Ravenclaw about as much as Gilderoy Lockhart does.”

Alexander glowered. “That’s a low blow, Jefferson, and yes, as a matter of fact, I do belong in Ravenclaw. I mean, I’ve gotten some mixed results as to my secondary House, but overall, Ravenclaw—”

“There’s no such thing as a secondary House,” Thomas interrupted. “You’re in one House. That’s it. The Sorting Hat doesn’t just list off all Houses in order of compatibility.”

“Oh, yes because everyone is completely one-dimensional, ruled by a single characteristic that defines them for their entire life. It’s not like people change, evolve, or grow. No, inspector. Of course not.” There was enough venom in Alexander’s voice to fell an elephant. “Personal growth isn’t a thing. It’s almost as though the Hogwarts House system has a few fatal flaws and maybe isn’t the best the system ever. It’s not like there are, I don’t know, other personality tests that might work better. Like—again, I don’t know—the MBTI test, or the Alignment test, or the True Colours assessment.” By the end of his rant, Alexander was glaring daggers at Thomas, who merely rolled his eyes again.

“You were the one who brought it up, dear,” he drawled sarcastically. He only noticed the slip after it left his lips.

Alexander huffed. “I’m just saying. It sucks.”

Thomas snorted. “Okay. You’ve said it. Now, can you let me go back to work?”

Alexander stared at him for a long moment, his mouth slightly agape. “You… You just don’t care,”
he said finally. “You don’t care at all.”

Thomas was shaking his head. “I care. Just not about this.”

“This is important.”

“This doesn’t have a physical effect on people’s lives like the policy we shape does. You can pretend all you want, but ultimately, this isn’t what improves people’s lives. The proposals we make, the bills we pass, do. So”—he gestured at Alexander—”shoo. Let me work. You can stand there and scream and rant about Hogwarts Houses and unjust tests all you want, but let me actually help people.”

Alexander let out an angry hiss, before turning on his heels and storming out of the room.

“Fuck you, Thomas Jefferson.”

Chapter End Notes

it's tiny and controversial.

it's alexander as a chapter.

hopefully you enjoyed it.
Chapter Summary


Chapter Notes

This is the Actual chapter that was supposed to be up on Monday, that the Harry Potter Interlude replaced. So, without further ado, here's the 'George Washington's Questionable Life Choices' chapter. Enjoy!

Thomas had always considered George Washington to be a reasonable man. A little optimistic, yes, a tad too lenient towards Alexander, that went without say, but, at his core, a reasonable and realistic man.

It didn’t come as much a surprise when Washington announced that he would be taking a week-long break due to his recent cardiovascular problems. It was a badly-kept secret within Washington’s senior staff that the president had begun worrying about his health a few months back. He had evidently since consulted with his doctor, who concluded that, while there was nothing glaringly wrong with him, it would do his adrenaline levels some good if he took a short vacation—reduced his stress, so to speak.

No, that was all perfectly natural.

What did come as a surprise, on the other hand, was that Washington declared that he, Thomas, would be accompanying him.

“Along with Alexander,” Washington then added with a pointed look shot Thomas’ way, as though he expected Thomas to throw a temper tantrum at the news, which was completely unreasonable, in Thomas’ opinion—Thomas was the mature one; it was Alexander who tended to act like a spoiled toddler when he didn’t get his way.

“Not that I don’t trust your judgement, sir,” Thomas said slowly, his tone belying his words, “but if the point of this trip is to relax and reduce stress, then I’m not sure bringing along both Alexander and myself is the best course of action.”

Washington glanced over at him. “It’ll be good for all three of us,” he stated evenly, and Thomas was amazed to discover that he sounded like he actually believed himself. “Surely you and Alexander could use it. I know how, uh, stressful the past few months have been, and I think this would be a good opportunity for you both to let your guards down.”
Yes, Washington was a good man; a responsible, rational, reasonable man; a man who was also, apparently, completely incapable of subtlety.

How had this man become a politician again?

Thomas resisted the urge to groan. “If you insist, sir,” he gave in. “Is there anything else you wish to discuss?”

“Not right now, no,” Washington replied dismissively. “If you could just tell your… Alexander about our plans, that would be nice.”

Thomas nodded as he left the Oval Office, wondering the hell Washington had just signed them up for.

“Washington wants us to go on vacation,” Thomas told Alexander bluntly. He figured that the easiest way to get it over and done with was to use Washington’s ‘subtlety is for lesser beings’ approach.

Alexander barely looked up from his laptop as he said, “In case it has escaped his notice, I’m already on vacation.” He absentmindedly continued typing even as he glanced at another document that lay next to him.

Thomas sneaked a glance over Alexander’s shoulder in a furtive attempt to discover just what was so fucking important that Alexander had to work on it during all of his time off, but Alexander, quick as a viper, closed down the tab with a few rapid clicks and shortcuts.

“It’s rude to read over the shoulder,” he told Thomas angrily.

Thomas shrugged. “You do it all the time.” Then, before Alexander had any time to think up a retort, he continued. “Washington wants you to go on a vacation with him.”

The fingers stopped as Alexander finally looked up. “Okay?” he said uncertainly, blinking in confusion. “Why?”

“I’m apparently also coming,” Thomas continued. “It’s supposed to be—what was it? Ah, yes. An opportunity to ‘let our guards down’. Thomas made air quotes.

Alexander gaped. “What is—I mean, it’s a nice thought, sure, but I’m not a damsel in distress that needs to be rescued from you!” he protested.

And once again, Alexander made it all about himself. Thomas wasn’t even surprised.

“The world doesn’t actually revolve around you, you know,” Thomas said conversationally. “I, for one, have better things to do with my time than lounge around all day because the president is convinced that it would be ‘beneficial for my health’.”

Alexander scoffed. “Do you even realize how utterly hypocritical you sound?” He gestured down at himself. “You’re literally forcing me to ‘rest’”—he made air quotes—“because you think that it would be ‘beneficial for my health’,” he threw Thomas’ words back at him.

“Those are hardly equivalent,” Thomas objected. “I actually take care of myself.”

Alexander groaned. “Are you still on about that? I’m not about to start skipping breakfast, lunch, and
dinner.”

“That statement is worrying in itself,” Thomas said slowly. “But you’re missing my point. This idea of Washington’s is idiotic.”

“As opposed to your ideas,” Alexander retorted, “which are all idiotic.”

Thomas sighed. “I thought we were past puerile insults. Here.” He reached into his pocket and took out a two-dollar bill, and handed it to Alexander. “Buy yourself better insults.”

Alexander stared at the outstretched hand in stupefaction. “Who even carries two-dollar bills anymore?” he asked absentmindedly before taking the bill and shoving it in his pocket.

Thomas rolled his eyes. “I do,” he replied before continuing. “However you feel about it, we’ve been ordered to take a vacation by the President of the United States. I hardly think we can refuse.”

Alexander huffed and ran a hand through his hair. “This is ridiculous,” he muttered before looking up at Thomas. “Ridiculous, but I won’t deny it does have a few upsides. For one, we won’t have to keep up the honeymoon act.”

Thomas felt his stomach drop as he laughed, a weak chuckle that he hoped and prayed didn’t sound as forced to Alexander as it did to his own ears. “Lord knows we could both use a break from that,” he replied. “Maybe if we’re lucky we’ll even get our own rooms.”

Alexander laughed even as Thomas felt dread build up in his throat like bile.

When a long, black car pulled up outside of Thomas’ house the next day, it took all of his will power to calmly and professionally carry out his bags instead of locking himself in his room and pretending that he didn’t exist.

Three days. That was all. Three days of acting as if the last four months hadn’t existed, as if he and Alexander were the same as they were in October, as if the world hadn’t so much tilted on its axis as completely abandoned it.

Three days of knowing that his life was all some sort of fantastical fever dream, and that, in reality, Alexander would love nothing more than to only see his face when he was spitting in it.

Excellent.

Thomas was an adult though. A professional. A high-ranking official in the most powerful nation in the world. As such, he coolly handed his things to the Secret Service agent standing in front of the door, before slipping inside the car.

Alexander rushed out of the house five minutes later, balancing a suitcase, his briefcase, his laptop bag, and a cup of coffee in his arms as he stumbled his way to the vehicle.

“Sorry, sorry, I didn’t notice the car, and then I realised I’d forgotten to pack a few things, and then —”


Alexander shut up immediately.

Thomas needed to learn how to do that.
“Are we ready to go?” Washington asked, glancing between the pair of them, raising a pointed eyebrow.

Thomas looked over at Alexander, trying to figure out what had the president so perplexed, when it dawned on him.

They sitting next to each other. Not even next to each other, no, they were practically on top of each other.

Thomas felt his face burn as he scooted to the window, trying to maintain some sort of dignity, hoping beyond hope that Washington would chalk the whole thing up to force of habit.

“Yes, sir,” Thomas said once there was a good two feet between himself and Alexander.

Washington rolled his eyes. “Please, Thomas, this is supposed to be a get away from all of that. Call me George,” the president insisted.

Thomas hesitated, but when two pairs of eyes glanced at him expectantly, he gave in. “George,” he acquiesced. The name sounded odd coming from his lips.

A smile crossed Washington’s lips, before he settled back in his seat and closed his eyes, clearly intent on getting some sleep on the ride, even as Thomas knew that he didn’t expect to be able to, which was a natural consequence of being in close proximity with both Thomas and Alexander for a prolonged amount of time.

Thomas, on the other hand, occupied his time by scrolling through documents on his phone.

It was… nice. Surprisingly nice. Almost suspiciously nice.

Thomas was waiting for the other shoe to drop. Or, knowing Alexander, an actual elephant, because he had stopped putting things beyond Alexander after the man had hired a mariachi band to stalk him for an entire day and hadn’t even had the decency to feel ashamed for it.

That being said, Thomas certainly wasn’t complaining. God knew he needed to relax.

Not meeting Alexander's eyes, he closed his eyes and settled on for the ride. He absentmindedly heard Alexander open up his laptop and being typing away again.

Thomas couldn't help the small sigh that escaped his lips at the sounds, because wasn't that just typically Alexander? This was a chance for Alexander to relax and take care of himself, but all Alexander seemed to be capable of was working.

Work, work, work.

He needed to talk with Alexander about that, preferably sooner rather than later.

■ ■

“Well, gentlemen,” Washington said awkwardly a four-hour drive and a trek up the hill later, ignoring the Secret Service agents around them, “here are your rooms. Alexander, yours is on the left. Thomas, yours is on the right.”

A heavy feeling built up in Thomas’ stomach. So. They had separate rooms.

Logically, he should have expected it—hell, Washington all but told Thomas that this trip was a way for them to stop having to act the perfect couple—and it was a nice thought, but…
They hadn’t slept apart for almost two weeks now, and Thomas was surprised at how quickly he had grown used to that steady presence at his side every time he—if not went to sleep, because God knew that Alexander kept some inhuman hours, then at least when he woke up.

He chanced a glance at Alexander, and wondered briefly whether the shorter man felt similarly. Probably not. Alexander didn’t reciprocate Thomas’ feelings. To him, Thomas was merely the annoyingly intelligent political nemesis who existed solely for the purpose of destroying his plans—not unlike a supervillain, if Thomas had to hazard a guess.

Alexander’s face was inscrutable.

It hurt, more than he cared to admit, to know that he didn't matter to Alexander as much as Alexander mattered to him, but he was starting to learn how to live with the knowledge—even if it tore him apart a little every day to know that while Alexander was slowly taking over his world, Alexander’s own world would go on turning even if Thomas had just up and disappeared.

“I’ll leave you two to get settled,” Washington said, glancing between the two of them before leaving for his own room.

Thomas swallowed as he glanced at Alexander.

He had been so sure that he could do this. Now, however, he wasn’t so sure.

Thomas had promised himself he wouldn’t be hurt by Alexander, that he wouldn’t allow the little gremlin hat much power over him.

He’d broken that promise almost immediately.

Alexander wasted no time falling back into their old routine, sneering whenever Thomas entered a room and scoffing whenever he opened his mouth.

And God if it didn’t hurt.

Thomas knew—he knew—that nothing about Alexander’s feelings for him had changed. But he’d be lying if he said that he hadn’t hoped. Hoped that somewhere between the easy affection and the softer words, something had become real. Maybe not love, but something.

He should’ve known better.

“Pass the salt.”

Thomas looked up from his eggs. “Excuse me?” he asked, raising an eyebrow.

“Pass the salt,” Alexander repeated slowly, and Thomas scoffed.

“Just because we’re not at home doesn’t mean we can't act civil—”

“Just pass the salt, Jefferson,” Alexander snapped.

Thomas’ jaw clicked shut as he shoved the salt shaker in Alexander’s direction. “I think, I’m going to excuse myself to my room. I was just about to finish a particularly good book when breakfast was ready. Mr. President, Secretary Hamilton,” he said as he stood and left the table.

He rushed to his room as quickly as he could without destroying the last few remains of his dignity.
and practically threw himself down on the bed.

How had he thought that he could survive this?

Alexander barely glanced up as Thomas grabbed his plate and made an exit. In his mind, he was composing an essay in response to Governor Palin’s suggestion to lower the taxes for enterprises with a yearly turnover of over one billion, which in all honesty was bullshit.

Washington was silent after Thomas left, and while that in itself wasn't by any means unusual, it was an uncomfortable sort of silence.

Alexander finally looked up and meet Washington's eyes. “Yes?” he asked expectantly.

“What was all that about?” Washington asked as he gestured with his head at the seat that Thomas had just vacated.

Alexander shrugged. He honestly didn’t know what Thomas’ problem was. One moment, he was more than okay with Alexander leaning against him—Thomas made a very comfortable pillow, after all, and the ride would have been so much nicer if he had been allowed to use him as such—and the next, he was jumping away from Alexander as though his very presence was anathema to him. Alexander had been confused for a moment, before he set his eyes on Washington and his eyes lit up in realization.

Oh.

Oh.

That made sense. Thomas was afraid of losing face in front of Washington. Why, Alexander couldn’t comprehend, as Thomas didn’t have that much dignity to begin with, and Washington knew fully well that Thomas was gay, but Alexander had long since given up trying to understand what went on in that Virginian mind of his.

Okay, then. If Thomas wanted distance in front of Washington, that was what he would get. It was just another facade in his life, Alexander supposed. It wasn’t as though he hadn’t been putting up one mask after another his whole life. It wasn’t exactly a hardship for him to pretend to hate Thomas (which he didn’t, not anymore; while he didn’t exactly like Thomas, he no longer hated him, either; his ardor had cooled down and settled into a grudging respect, maybe even an odd sort of affection) for Washington’s sake.

Oddly enough, however, Thomas hadn’t reacted like Alexander had expected at all. Instead of returning Alexander’s snubs word for word, he had curled in on himself, metaphorically speaking seeming to become smaller with every insult directed at him. Alexander noticed, of course he did—no matter what Thomas liked to think, Alexander wasn’t entirely oblivious, and living from each other’s pockets for several months tended to make even the least observant of people take notice when one’s partner’s behaviour changed so abruptly and on so grand a scale as Thomas’ had.

Alexander pursed his lips. He hadn’t anticipated that.

It was almost…

It was almost as though the past few months simply hadn’t happened.

Alexander was, in all honesty, at a loss as to what to do.
Washington was still staring at him. “Alexander,” he spoke in a voice that might as well be screaming ‘I don’t believe you’.

Alexander’s shoulders hunched. “I honestly don’t know,” he insisted. “He’s been acting... off,” he admitted when Washington’s stare didn’t let up.

“Off?” Washington’s eyebrow shot up. “Is it serious?”

Alexander bit his lower lip. “I don’t think so, sir, but as someone has been keeping me away from work,” he emphasized his words with a glare in Washington’s direction, which Washington seemed immune to, “I can’t tell for sure.”

“You aren’t going to get me to change my mind,” Washington warned.

Alexander stifled the urge to roll his eyes. “Yes, sir,” he said demurely.

Washington cleared his throat. “Well, this is a chance for you and Thomas to get away from each other and this whole charade, but I would recommend that you at least talk to him.”

Alexander sighed. “I understand, sir.”

Washington gifted him with a slight smile. “Now,” he said encouragingly, “tell me more about this project of yours.”

Alexander grinned as he obligingly launched into a diatribe, the topic of Thomas temporarily forgotten.

Later that day, Alexander hovered outside of Thomas’ bedroom. With a steadying breath, he knocked loudly on the door.

He was met with naught but silence, and Alexander fought the bulge forming in his throat, fought the sensation of asphyxiation that threatened to overwhelm him. He took a calming breath, trying to get his nerves under control.

A moment went by, then another, and another, and still Thomas did not reply.

Alexander dragged a hand through his hair, his fingers catching on a few knots, before raising a hand to knock again.

Before he could do that, he heard Thomas’ voice call out, “Come in.”

Was it only Alexander’s imagination, or did he sound subdued?

No, Alexander reasoned, that couldn’t be it. That was preposterous.

Thomas Jefferson did not simply sound subdued.

Alexander pushed the door open, peering inside carefully. He saw Thomas lying on his bed, a book in hand and a few papers scattered around him. His glasses were perched on the end of his nose, and the only light in the room came from the bedside lamp. He looked, well, subdued.

It was odd, somehow. It shouldn’t have been; Alexander had seen Thomas relaxed before, he fucking slept with the man every night, but somehow this was different. Alexander’s mouth felt oddly dry.
“If you want to stare at me all evening I’ll just send you a picture,” Thomas grumbled as he licked his thumb and turned the page of his book.

And just like that, whatever mystical bullshit spell Thomas had cast over Alexander broke, and Alexander narrowed his eyes at him before walking in the room and dropping unceremoniously only one of the arm chairs.

“I haven’t seen you much today,” he said, trying his best to keep his tone even. Contrary to popular belief, he was actually capable of tact.

“That’d be because I’ve been here all day,” Thomas replied dryly, still not looking up from his book.

“Why?”

“Because we’re here to relax, and, believe it or not, listening to you yammer on about economic policies in Alaska isn’t my definition of relaxing,” Thomas snapped.

Alexander was going to be rational about this. He could be diplomatic, despite the impression Thomas seemed to be under.

“What’s going on with you?” Alexander demanded. “You don’t want to seem all chummy with me in front of Washington—I get that. I’m ‘bad’ for your reputation, though God knows that your reputation’s in tatters as it is—but you’re suddenly acting as though I have the fucking plague. What’s your fucking problem?”

Okay, so maybe the diplomatic angle didn’t work out.

Thomas’ fists were clenched so tightly that Alexander could have sworn that he saw his palms turn white. “My problem?” he hissed, slamming his book shut. “How is any of this my problem? In case you haven’t noticed, I’ve got enough problems without you deciding to burst into my room just to fucking shout at me like I stole your juicebox on the damn playground!”

“You’re the one who suddenly decided I was fucking Undesirable Number One or some shit! You want space, fine! You don’t want Washington to think we’re doing… whatever it is you think we’re doing, fine! That doesn’t mean you need to act like I’m some sort Slitheen or—or whatever! Washington knows that nothing is going on between us because in case you’ve forgotten, he’s the only one who knows that this whole Romeo and Julian thing is fake!” Alexander shouted, throwing his hands in the air. “You don’t have to treat me like I’m a particularly slimy frog that you found in your pillowcase!”

For a moment, Alexander could’ve sworn that he saw something flicker in Thomas’ eyes, but upon further reflection, he came to the conclusion that it was just the reflection of the lamp off of his glasses or—or something. The Thomas he knew was nothing if not pragmatic—he simply did not do emotional sentiment.

“We’re not supposed to like each other, Alexander,” Thomas said slowly. “Washington brought us here so that we don’t have to pretend we’re the fucking protagonists in a shitty teen love story.”

“Yeah, I know that,” Alexander agreed. “That’s fine. So we’re not hanging off of each other like fucking koala bears twenty-four seven. But we don’t hate each other, Thomas. There’s no way he’d expect us to live together for four months and still hate each other. You don’t have to suddenly pull out all the ‘no homo bro’ stops to convince him that we’re not fucking because once again, he knows we’re not fucking.”

There was a moment of silence before Thomas sat up and crossed his arms over his chest. “Then
what the *fuck* was that at breakfast?” he demanded.

Alexander tilted his head in confusion. “What do you mean ‘what the fuck was that at breakfast’? It was *breakfast,*” he said in confusion.

As he stared into Thomas’ face, Alexander felt any progress that he’d made in the last five minutes crumble like a sandcastle when the tide came in.

“No, it was you acting like an asshole for no fucking reason. You pull *that* nonsense and then try and scold *me* about not being friendly enough? I dunno what you smoked before you came in here but it must’ve been some pretty strong shit,” Thomas shot back.

“I thought that was what you *wanted!*” Alexander protested. “I thought that we were playing it cool or whatever! After the car ride and ‘Lord knows we could both use a break’ and all that!” He crossed his arms in front of his chest mutinously. “I thought you wanted us to go back to—well, I wouldn’t call it *normal* at this point, but back to how everything was before, but even then you didn’t treat me like some sort human snot ball and honestly—”

“Alexander,” Thomas interrupted. “For the love of God, shut up.”

“But—”

“*Shut up,*” Thomas hissed. Alexander reluctantly complied. “I think there’s been a bit of a misunderstanding here, so I’m going to suggest you actually try listening instead of running your mouth for once in your goddamn life.”

Alexander glared at him but didn’t say anything. If Thomas was offering an explanation for why he’d suddenly become a sullen teenager who locked himself in his room all day because he was feeling like the entire world was against him—which was laughable, as Thomas was quite possibly the only person who has never even been within a mile of bad luck in his life before this mess—then Alexander was willing to listen.

Thomas was silent for another moment. There was something about him, something in his eyes, something about the set of his brows and the pursing of his lips, that put Alexander on edge. He was thinking about something, turning something over in his mind, and doing his best to look like he wasn’t, and Alexander had a feeling that he wouldn't like what he had to say.

“Well?” Alexander prompted. “You wanted me to listen; I’m listening.”

Thomas rolled his eyes. “You…” he trailed off, looking almost pained. “You’re right.”

Alexander choked on air. “Excuse me?” he asked. “I think I must’ve misheard you, I could’ve *sworn* I heard you say—”

“You’re right, you inconsiderate heathen,” Thomas snapped. “I was—am—worried about what Washington would think. Yes, he *knows,* but he already asked us about this once, Alexander, and I’d rather not have a repeat performance. Congratulations, you found me out. Now, make your laughter and insults quick, I’d like to get back to my book.”

But, try as he might, Alexander couldn’t find it within himself to laugh.

“Thomas, he *knows,*” he insisted. “He *knows* that there’s nothing between us, that there’ll never be anything between us. We don’t have to be at each other’s throats all the time.”

Thomas glared at him. “No, that’ll only happen once you inevitably say something utterly imbecilic
and I have to do my duty to the American people and shut you up before you cause irreparable
damage to our great nation,” he drawled, the faintest hints of a smirk on his face.

Alexander couldn’t explain the sense of relief that swelled up within him, but all the same, he found
himself scoffing and rolling his eyes good-naturedly. “Irreparable damage?” he echoed in disbelief.
“I’ll have you know that since I’ve taken office, our GDP has grown by at least five percent each corner—”

“Yes, along with the national debt—”

“Deficit spending is a common and reliable tactic used in order to boost economic growth! Pump
priming, Thomas! It’s what got us out of the Great Depression—”

“No, World War II is what got us out of the—”

They were off, falling back into the natural beat and rhythm of debate, rising and falling and meeting
each other at every turn like it was second nature.

Alexander grinned. He had no reason to complain.

Thomas hadn’t known what to say. Alexander had shouted him into a corner, coming in and
throwing everything out of order just as he always did, and, just as always, Thomas had found
himself almost entirely unprepared. He had felt like the Valjean to Alexander's Javert, caught
unawares at all turns, begging him for mercy in not so many words, and denied every time.

Thomas hadn’t known how to justify his actions, hadn’t known how to answer without confessing
his feelings and taking a sledgehammer to the delicate balance he’d found between reality and
whatever sort of fantasy world he’d allowed himself to live in.

And then Alexander, amazing, brilliant Alexander, had gone and done it for him. He created the
perfect explanation, and practically gave it to him all wrapped up with a bow.

It would’ve been rude to turn down such a thoughtful gift, and Thomas was nothing if not a beacon
of affability.

So he’d swallowed his pride and said the words, the two little words he absolutely hated, and braced
himself for the taunting and the teasing and the jeering insults.

Instead, he’d gotten something much worse.

“There’s nothing between us. There’ll never be anything between us.”

It had been said so gently, like it was supposed to be a comfort rather than the blow to the guts that
Thomas felt it as, like it was supposed to be what Thomas wanted to hear.

For a moment he felt as though all of the air had been knocked from his lungs, leaving him sputtering
and gasping for breath, for anything, before he brushed it off. He had done it: he had saved face—
had glared at Alexander and said some not-at-all veiled insult and let them fall back into the ebb and
flow of it all, the easy push and pull of conversation, only in part actual arguments and part the
simple banter between two people who were somehow, against all odds, unequivocally close.

Thomas allowed himself to breathe.
That evening, Thomas heard his bedroom door open and close in quick succession, before a set of feet padded softly across the floor, coming to a stop on the edge of Thomas’ bed.

Thomas wordlessly scooted over to make room for Alexander, who clambered into Thomas’ bed.

“Young bed’s softer,” Alexander murmured quietly, as though afraid to wake Thomas. “I couldn’t even sleep in mine.”

Thomas couldn’t stifle the fond smile that crossed his lips.

Alexander nuzzled his nose into the deep of Thomas’ neck, and breathed in sharply. His breath tickled Thomas’ face. Thomas tried desperately not to enjoy it—he really did—but he could recognize a lost battle when he saw one.

He sighed as he settled in again, one of his arms slung over Alexander’s waist—though whether to draw him closer or to keep him at a distance, he didn’t know.

It was both. Probably both. Or the latter, at any rate.

(It was the former.)

Thomas shouldn’t have been surprised to see Alexander hunched over a laptop at six in the morning, a half empty cup of coffee next to him on the kitchen table and the coffee pot itself almost entirely drained. It was hardly an unusual scene. By all accounts, Thomas should’ve been used to it.

And yet…

“What are you doing?” he huffed, looking around the mess Alexander had created.

“Working,” Alexander replied curtly, the answer coming as quickly and monotonously as some sort of pre-recorded explanation that came with his programming.

“Alexander,” Thomas began, pinching the bridge of his nose. “We are here specifically to not work.”

“Actually, we’re here to relax,” Alexander countered.

“That’s what I just said,” Thomas pointed out as he made his way across the room, blindly reaching for what he sincerely hoped was a mug. His eyelids felt like they were glued tight, and every attempt to open them led to a prickling sensation that shouldn’t be as painful as it was—but then again it was five in the morning, and Thomas was only up because Alexander had accidentally kicked him whilst climbing out of bed and Thomas had been unable to fall back asleep. Once awake, he couldn’t fall back asleep, so he had decided that he might as well begin his day with a nice breakfast—the kind that he usually didn’t have the time for.

For God’s sake, Thomas had just wanted to make himself some French toast, enjoy a nice cup of coffee, and then go sit on the back porch in a vaguely uncomfortable deck chair and read his damn book, not make sure his fucking boyfriend didn’t accidentally work himself back into the hospital. Was it too much to ask for a calm morning?

“No,” Alexander argued, momentarily glancing up from his computer. “You said we’re here to not work. Believe it or not, those two things are not mutually exclusive.”

Alexander stopped writing, and fixed his eyes on Thomas. “Is it truly so hard to understand that work relaxes me?” he asked rhetorically.

“Yes!” Thomas cried out. “Yes, it is! Work isn’t relaxing. It’s a scientifically proven fact that work increases your stress levels, which is literally the opposite of what we’re trying to accomplish here.” He sighed, putting his hands on his hips. “Alexander,” he continued beseechingly, “you promised that you’d take care of yourself.”

Alexander glared at Thomas as he let his fingers rest on the keyboard. “Well, you can go ahead and tell your scientific papers,” he said scathingly, “that for me, working is more relaxing than not working. I’m actually more stressed when I don’t work, because when I am working, at least I feel like I’m doing something constructive, whereas sitting still is useless and a waste of time and I can’t just sit down to read a book when my head’s filled with thoughts about how I could be helping others but I’m not because I’m being selfish.” He stopped abruptly as he realized what he had said. He averted his eyes back to the screen, where some document or other was staring up at him accusingly, as if trying to say, ‘Aren’t you going to do something? I’m hardly finished, you know.’

Alexander heard rather than saw Thomas shuffle across the room.

“Alexander…” Thomas said softly. “We need to talk about this.”

Alexander’s shoulders squared. “There’s nothing to talk about,” he protested.

Alexander couldn’t see Thomas’ face, but he could imagine the way Thomas’ mouth pursed into a thin line.

“If you’re going to lie to me, at least have some respect and make it a good one,” Thomas said primly.

Alexander glared at him over his laptop. “I wasn't lying,” he said sharply. “There's nothing to talk about. Believe it or not, people relax in different ways. My way just so happens to be working.”

“Because you think not working is selfish,” Thomas repeated, raising an eyebrow.

“Because it is selfish!” Alexander said emphatically. “Wasting talents and abilities and resources on nothing is, inherently, selfish. It's the definition of the word.”

“Taking three days to rest isn't selfish! It's the bare minimum to self care!” Thomas argued.

The look Alexander gave him would've scared Medusa herself. “Look,” he murmured, his voice as cold as ice and sharp as a blade, “you want me to take better care of myself? Not work myself into a panic? Not drive myself crazy? Then let. Me. Work.”

Thomas stared at him for a moment before crossing his arms over his chest. “Why?” he demanded. “Explain it. You've got the words, you're so adamant about using them, then do it. Tell me why on earth I should sit back and watch you go until you physically can't go anymore.”

Alexander blinked twice and closed his laptop. “I need to—”

“No,” Thomas interrupted. “No, you don't. You're not going to die because you took three days and just allowed yourself to rest.”

“Shut up!” Alexander shouted. “Shut up! I need to know! I need to know I’m doing the right thing, I
need to know that I'm making a difference, I need to know that somehow, someway, I have control over my life and my situation and that everything I'm doing I'm doing for good. Yes, I've got the words, but they're doing no good just piling up in my head! No good for me, no good for anyone else! I need to know that what I'm doing is right, and I need the control to be able to fix it if it's not. And the best way to do it—not the only way, I admit, but the best way? Working. So just—just let me have it.”

Thomas took a step back for a moment, arms falling to his sides.

How the fuck was he supposed the respond to that? He didn't even fully understand what that had been, struggling to sort through the words and piece them together until they made sense, until the picture they presented wasn't one of such desperation and weariness.

Whereas the words put Thomas on edge, they seemed to ease Alexander, the tension seeping out of him until he looked worn out, slumping back against his chair as if a great weight had been lifted off of him.

Thomas didn't know what to do. He knew what he wanted to do, yes, but he supposed pulling Alexander close and shaking him until he understood that there was no shame or harm in caring about yourself was maybe overstepping the boundaries of whatever tentative friendship they'd established.

Instead, he sighed, ran a hand through his hair, and moved to refill the coffee pot. “How long have you been up?” he asked, even though he kind of knew the answer. Alexander had woken him up when he'd gotten out of bed, and Thomas had struggled to fall back asleep for what felt like about forty-five minutes. That didn’t even take into account the possibility that Alexander had just laid awake in bed for Lord knows how long before deciding to get up.

“What time is it?” Alexander asked, scratching the back of his head.

Thomas glanced at the clock on the microwave and grimaced. “Almost 5:30,” he groaned. “AKA, way too fucking early.”

“I woke up at four, so it’s not too bad,” Alexander said with a shrug.

“And you went to bed when?” Thomas demanded, placing his hands on his hips.

He was suddenly assaulted by the mental image of himself as some middle-aged mother, wearing a fuzzy pink bathrobe and curlers in his hair, with Alexander as his disobedient son.

He silently congratulated himself on not hurling all over the pristine kitchen floor. Being a parent was bad enough, but being a parent to Alexander?

No. No no no. Just. No.

Alexander had, apparently, said something whilst Thomas was mentally trying not to gag repeatedly, and was looking at Thomas with his arms crossed and an eyebrow raised.

“Uh, sorry, could you say that again?” Thomas asked.

Alexander scoffed. “If you’re going to ask a question, at least listen to the answer. No one likes repeating themselves,” he replied haughtily, causing Thomas to snort, before continuing. “I said I went to bed at roughly 12:30.”

Thomas had never considered himself a religious man, but he sometimes caught himself silently
asking God, ”*What the fuck, man?*”

Usually, those ‘sometimes’ involved Alexander.

Actually, *all* of those ‘sometimes’ involved Alexander.

“Pray tell,” Thomas began slowly, steepling his fingers under his nose, “what part of you have to take better care of yourself or you’ll die do you not understand?”

“I had work!” Alexander argued.

“I can concede to the point that, yes, you do in fact seem less, well, *manic* after working, but that doesn’t mean I’m going to let you keep going until you *die*!” Thomas shouted, gesticulating wildly. “I feel like we’ve discussed this!”

“You don’t get to dictate my life!” Alexander yelled back. “You’re not my keeper!”

“But I am your *friend!*”

For a second, the room was silent, save for the steady drip of coffee into the pot, before Thomas sighed and carded his fingers through his hair.

“I suppose I can understand you working so much,” he said. “And if it’s genuinely helpful, I can even support it—to a point. But you have *got* to start sleeping more. And eating more. Preferably, you should also be exercising and drinking more water, but I’m aware that that’s pushing it.” He threw up his hands in frustration. “So, *please,* if you give even a single shit about our… *relationship,* then you will *at least try* to get better. *Actually try,* not just nod along so that I’ll shut up and you can get back to whatever the hell it is you’re writing. Got it?”

Alexander was, for a drawn out moment, miraculously silent, worrying his lip between his teeth, before sighing. “I got it,” he repeated. “I can’t promise I’ll be better *immediately,* and if you think this gives you *any* authority to boss me around, you are *absolutely wrong,* but I promise I’ll try.”

The whole of heaven could’ve opened at that moment and showered them in the divine chorus of a thousand angels, each shitting twenty-four karat gold bricks, and Thomas wouldn’t have felt any better than he did in that moment.

Alexander realised that he had in all probability made a shitty decision almost immediately. He had just willfully handed personal, private, detrimental information to his political nemesis.

And yet…

Thomas. Thomas, who was his self-proclaimed *friend,* who *actually cared about him,* who, somehow, was the person who he was closest to.

On that moment, Alexander realized that he didn’t *want* to hate Thomas. He didn’t even want to *dislike* Thomas. Yes, the man’s opinions were absolutely hot, steaming piles of rotten elephant shit, but Alexander *didn’t want to hate him.* And, maybe even more surprisingly, *he didn’t want Thomas to hate him.*

The realization probably should have scared him more than it did, but he had more pressing issues on his mind. He was being dragged outside for some ‘fresh air’ whilst he wrote, and most of his trains of thought were directed towards finding ways of escaping this cold, damp prison, so Thomas’ personal
opinion of him wasn’t exactly the A-1 topic on his mind.

Still, this merited some thought. Maybe later, when Thomas was asleep—one of his favourite hobbies, it seemed.

George wasn’t blind—had never been. He saw things other people didn’t, or avoided seeing, and that has always served him well. He couldn’t help the people around him, or the people across the country, or anyone, if he couldn’t even identify the problem and its cause, now could he?

He didn’t consider himself willfully ignorant, either. Shying away from something didn’t necessarily erase its existence, and so, it was better to be aware of that something earlier rather than later, in order not to be caught unawares.

He had honestly never expected that ‘something’ to be his State Secretary’s infatuation with his Treasury Secretary though. That had been a complete surprise.

Oh, he remembered that they were supposed to be pretending to be in love, and, to their credit, they had succeeded in fooling the entire world, including their best friends; but while to Alexander it was just that—pretending—George would have to have been deaf as well as blind not to notice the way Thomas stared at Alexander—the phrase ‘like he hung the moon and stars’ came to mind, except that wasn’t it either, because that would imply that Alexander was Lucifer the morningstar, and Alexander was many things but the devil he was not; and Thomas clearly agreed because, despite his numerous protests to the contrary, the look on his face—which was obvious if one knew what to look for—belied his words—as did, for the matter, his entire body language.

George would have had to have been a fool to miss the glances Thomas shot at Alexander, or the way he always gravitated to Alexander’s presence in any given moment, or how he was perpetually aware of everything Alexander said and did, as though Alexander had a homing beacon on him. Thomas remembered the way Alexander preferred his coffee; he knew of those of Alexander’s quirks that escaped even George, despite their long acquaintance; and he fought a smile even when Alexander did something that clearly annoyed him. Thomas indulged Alexander in a way that was unprecedented for ‘just friends’, or whatever Alexander and Thomas thought that they were.

All evidence pointed at one simple, if unbelievable, conclusion: Thomas Jefferson was in love with Alexander Hamilton.

Unfortunately, after the long years that he had worked with Alexander, George considered himself something of an expert at reading Alexander’s moods, and for better or for worse, he could tell that Thomas’ feelings were unreciprocated. It was a pity, too, for Thomas was a good man, and although their political affiliations differed—for even though George was registered as an independent, he tended to lean more towards the liberal end of the spectrum than the conservative in most issues—George wanted him to be happy. After the revelations of the past few months, George had come to realize just how much Thomas had given up for his career. His sexual inclination and political leaning being what it was, it was surely impossible for Thomas to find a long-term romantic partner with whom he wouldn't have had to sneak around like a teen afraid of being caught by his parents. Now, though, he wouldn't have been able to hide even if he wanted to, considering that the entire world knew that he was gay, so he was—if not free to pursue whomever he wanted, then at least it would have made no difference, since everyone was already completely aware of Thomas’ orientation. Nobody would have noticed if Thomas and Alexander began to actually date, and Alexander was, in a way, the perfect partner for Thomas. He was, intellectually speaking, his equal—and George could count on one hand the people that could boast of that. They complemented one another, and George didn't doubt that, should they get their heads out of wherever the hell they kept
them—in all probability Narnia, from what George had seen of their interactions—they would make each other genuinely happy.

George chanced a look in Alexander’s direction. The man in question was glowering at Thomas as he gesticulated wildly to emphasize some point or other that he was trying to make—George didn’t know what, as he had stopped listening to him a solid ten minutes ago. The sheer fact that Thomas was still listening to him only attested to just how hopelessly in love with Alexander he was, as surely no one else would have willingly subjected themselves to listening to Alexander prattle on about whatever topic was on his mind.

No, George wasn't blind, nor was he willfully ignorant, but, as he observed the pair, it dawned on him that Alexander just might be.
In which Thomas finds out what book Alexander is working on and Jesus fucking Christ this man never stops does he

Chapter by Sanna Black Slytherin

Chapter Summary

Alexander returns to work, and learns the importance of knocking.

Chapter Notes

*Sees no one around. Throws up chapter. Runs away*

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“What the hell are you even working on?” Thomas asked as he sat on the end of the couch at Camp David.

Washington slowly looked up from his sudoku, glanced between the two of them, smiled and went back to his puzzle, seemingly content to just let the two of them go at it.

“I know for a fact that you are on top of all your work,” Thomas went on, “your tax bill is already in Congress, which means that you can’t possibly be messing with it, so what are you doing?”

Alexander grinned, and Thomas immediately regretted his decision to ask. “Thomas, my dear,” he all but purred, “I thought you’d never ask.”

“I take it back,” Thomas stated. “I don’t want to know. Just—Just don’t do anything that will cause a war, please. I’ve got enough on my plate without that.”

“It’s a book!” Alexander said enthusiastically, completely ignoring Thomas, because when did he not.

Thomas bit his cheek to keep from smiling. God, who had given Alexander permission to be so cute? Instead, he rolled his eyes. “Okay,” he drawled. “You wanna tell me what it’s about, or do I need to guess?”

“Basically,” Alexander began, and Thomas could already tell that there was no way he’d be able to escape the veritable avalanche of words that Alexander was about to dump on him, “it’s a complete compilation of of all of my fiscal knowledge, including both summaries and in-depth explanations of multiple economic systems, theories, and policies, along with full commentary of my opinions and/or experiences with each, and a rating on a scale from one to five.”

Thomas took a moment to comprehend what, exactly, had just been said to him—in one breath, no less, and how the fuck had Alexander even managed that?

He tried to form an intelligent response. What came out was a “What.”
Alexander shrugged ever-so-slightly. “It’s something I’ve been working on. I figured: there’s a lot
that I know about this, and wouldn’t it have been a pity if it all went to waste when I eventually pass
away? So”—he gestured at himself—“it’s a project.”

Thomas blinked, still too flabbergasted to form a coherent response, let alone the kind that Alexander
usually expected of him.

The thought crossed his mind to berate Alexander. He was violating their agreement, fragile though
it was. Alexander had said that he would take better care of himself, and yet here he was: working
himself halfway to an early grave.

He opened his mouth, the words on the tip of his tongue, waiting to be unleashed onto the world, but
froze.

Hadn’t this—*exactly* this—been what Alexander had talked to him about earlier, when Thomas had
all but barged in and demanded to know what Alexander had been thinking to *still* work during a
freaking holiday? Alexander wasn’t like him, wasn’t like other people. Work didn’t stress him—the
lack of it did.

If Thomas took away his work, it would have the opposite effect than the one he was going for, and
he doubted that Alexander would agree to drop his… project entirely during their holiday. In all
probability, all that would happen was that he would have ostracized Alexander, and all for nothing.

This was the crux of the problem, wasn’t it?

The trick, Thomas realized after some consideration, wasn’t to get Alexander to stop working
entirely, but to get him to take short breaks every now and again. He probably wouldn’t even mind
food if he could eat it while working—God knew that Thomas had eaten enough lunches on the run
that he wouldn’t be able to criticize him for it—and maybe, just maybe, if he felt like he did enough
work, he would be able to temporarily put it aside to sleep and shower and talk and pretend like he
was a normal human being rather than the robot Thomas sometimes thought him.

Besides, Thomas stood firmly by the idea that if Alexander didn’t eat, he would collapse at some
point, and then he’d be of no use to anybody. He needed to stay sharp, and it was easy to make
careless mistakes when one was hungry and sleep-deprived.

He said none of that out loud. Thomas knew how, and when, to pick his battles, and right here and
now was neither the right place nor the right time.

Instead, he leaned forward—not enough to invade Alexander’s space, although damn if he didn’t
want that, Alexander’s small frame tantalizingly just inches away, but just enough to show interest.
“May I read it?” Thomas asked tentatively. He fought the urge to take a deep breath and breathe in
Alexander’s scent. That would be *definitely* crossing the creepy line.

He fully expected to be shot down—after all, despite how close they have grown these past few
months, Alexander had never made it a secret that he thought that Thomas had all the economic
competence of a squirrel on cocaine, or maybe of Scrat from *Ice Age*—but, to his surprise, Alexander
didn’t yell at him; he merely glanced at him thoughtfully, as though trying to gauge Thomas’
sincerity, before nodding. He clicked a few times on the keyboard, the sounds echoing in the sudden
silence as though they were gunshots, before handing over the computer to Thomas.

Thomas’ eyebrows furrowed as his eyes skimmed the document. He paused to read an arbitrary
paragraph.
“The presently dominant financial intermediation theory holds that banks are merely financial intermediaries, not different from other non-bank financial institutions: they gather deposits and lend these out. In the words of recent authors, “Banks create liquidity by borrowing short and lending long”, meaning that banks borrow from depositors with short maturities and lend to borrowers at longer maturities.”

Huh.

Thomas pursed his lips.

This was actually pretty good. Then again, this was Alexander—he wouldn't accept anything short of perfection.

He skipped down a few pages.

“In making this discovery, Smith founded what is known as classical economics. The key doctrine of classical economics is that a laissez-faire attitude by government toward the marketplace will allow the “invisible hand” to guide everyone in their economic endeavors, create the greatest good for the greatest number of people, and generate economic growth.”

Thomas skimmed the rest of the page, but stopped when he unexpectedly came to another paragraph, vastly different from the others. He blinked in confusion as he read it.

“Laissez faire, telle devrait être la devise de toute puissance publique, depuis que le monde est civilisé ... Détestable principe que celui de ne vouloir grandir que par l'abaissement de nos voisins ! Il n'y a que la méchanceté et la malignité du cœur de satisfaites dans ce principe, et l'intérêt y est opposé. Laissez faire, morbleu ! Laissez faire !”

Thomas paused. In French? Why in French of all languages? Yes, Alexander had said that he was fluent, and technically so was Thomas, so he didn't mind per se, but most anglophones weren’t, and there was no need to flaunt it so overtly.

He chose another paragraph at random. His brows furrowed as he read on.

“Marx predicted the fall of capitalism and movement of society toward communism, in which “the people” (that is, the workers) own the means of production and thus have no need to exploit labor for profit. Clearly, Marx's thinking had a tremendous impact on many societies, particularly on the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) in the twentieth century.”

Well. Alexander was nothing if not thorough.

“Keynes believed that there was only one way out, and that was for the government to start spending in order to put money into private-sector pockets and get demand for goods and services up and running again. The validity and desirability of Keynes's prescription for a sluggish economy—using government spending to prime the pump—are still debated today.”

Aaand there was Alexander's favourite theory. Thomas had wondered when he would get to that.

“Another strand of the literature stresses the interrelation between social exclusion, social capital and the occurrence of poverty and recognises the importance of the structural characteristics of society and the situation of certain groups. Social exclusion
and social capital theories are, among all the reviewed approaches, arguably the ones that focus most on understanding the intrinsic processes that allow deprivation to arise and persist. Nevertheless, the wide definition of poverty considered under these theories comes at the cost of being less precisely defined and more challenging to quantify and address by policy.”

Something caught Thomas eyes. His eyes narrowed as he focused on one paragraph in particular.

“Trickle down economics is another economic theory that decrees that the way to increase the wealth of the destitute working class is to let the wealthy elite flourish, which would result in an economic ‘cup’ being filled; when that cup is full, the money would ‘trickle down’ to the working class—ergo the theory’s name.

“It is based on the assumption that all humans are, at their core, not selfish assholes compassionate beings.”

Thomas fought the urge to roll his eyes. He noticed that Alexander has drawn small skulls around the commentary of Mellon’s theory, though how he had managed that, considering that he was writing in Word, Thomas couldn’t figure out. Thomas couldn’t help but find them adorable, even as some part of him screeched in horror.

Alexander grinned. “So?” he asked expectantly. “What do you think?”

Thomas was about to say that this whole thing was insane (privately adding ly cute ), when he stopped. With a start, he realized that the question wasn’t rhetorical. Alexander was actually asking his opinion. On economics.

Thomas fought the urge to look out the window in search of flying pigs.

“It was… good,” he finally managed.

Alexander frowned, clearly unsatisfied with Thomas’ comment. “‘Good’?” he echoed. “Just good? That’s it? It can’t be ‘just good’! It has to more than good! It has to be perfect!”

Thomas rolled his eyes. “Fine, it’s perfect,” he drawled.

Alexander huffed. “It doesn’t work that way.” He grabbed his laptop and tucked it against his chest, as if to protect it from Thomas.

“Then what do you want me to say?” Thomas inquired, raising an eyebrow.

“Something intelligent, preferably. Just because you have the fiscal sense of a particularly dimwitted cow doesn’t mean you don’t any opinions on the matter!” Alexander replied, a scowl set on his face.

Thomas took a moment to glance over at Washington—why, he didn’t know—and found the man peering at them over the top of his puzzle book. The moment he noticed Thomas looking at him, he grinned and went back to his sudoku.

Thomas’ expression clouded. What did he know? What did he think he knew?

Thomas was pulled from his thoughts by an insistent poke at his cheek. “Thomas?” Alexander asked, eyes narrowed as he withdrew his finger. “Are you even listening?”

Thomas just stared at him for a moment. “Did you just poke me?” he asked incredulously. Alexander smirked.
“You were off in La-la land or something,” Alexander said briskly, as only he could. “My methods are odd, yes, but they get results, unlike some people’s.”

Thomas ran a hand over his face, trying to seem as exasperated as possible at the obvious taunt, when, in reality, he was trying to prevent Alexander from seeing the obvious blush he knew was creeping up his face. “Anyway,” he drawled sarcastically. “Back to before you decided to get my attention the same way my three-year-old nephew would. Your book.”

At the mention of his project, Alexander practically beamed, and Thomas felt his heart twist. “Yes?” Alexander asked eagerly, not even attempting to sound composed.

“It’s very informative, and you have, lo and behold, managed to keep your opinions restricted to the commentary section, meaning that if someone wanted to use this book for purely academic or educational purposes, it’d be quite easy to do so,” Thomas said dryly. “Your commentary, while biased, does actually seem to be rather insightful. It is, overall, a good book.”

The smile fell from Alexander’s face. “Good isn’t enough!?” he repeated angrily. He glanced at his laptop, and his eyebrows furrowed as he read a section. “It’s the French part, isn’t it?” he asked finally. “It makes me seem snobbish.”

“You do come off as a bit elitist there,” Thomas allowed.

“Which, coming from you, means that I might as well be claiming that I’m the King of England,” Alexander translated seamlessly.

Thomas let out a snort. “I’d pity the country who had you as royalty, let alone a king. You’d be the kind of person who’d sleep with the first best person, then run away when it became a scandal, only to sleep with another five people and exacerbate it.”

“I would not,” Alexander protested. “I’d… like… fall in love. And I’d only sleep with the people I’m in love with.”

“So, yourself?” Thomas parried. “You might as well be Narcissus himself.”

“I think that you’re confusing us again, darling,” Alexander shot back.

They seemed oblivious to Washington’s eyes watching their exchange—indeed, they seemed oblivious to Washington’s presence in general, almost as though it slipped their mind somewhere along the way.

“Oh, I sincerely doubt it. If your ego was any bigger, it would need a separate political party. Who knows, it might even get a majority in Congress.” By the end of his comment, Thomas was smirking.

Alexander shook his head. “You’re fucking impossible. Why I even bother sometimes is beyond me,” he muttered under his breath. “You’re like bad breath that refuses to go away despite daily cleaning.”

Alexander’s words washed over Thomas, and despite knowing—or desperately hoping—that Alexander was joking, that this was nothing but friendly banter, he felt as though he had a bucket of cold water poured over him. He shivered unwittingly. He cursed himself for being as affected by Alexander’s words as he was; Alexander, after all, spewed insults with every breath he took, and if Thomas was to start worrying over all of them, he would have nervous breakdown—and sooner rather than later.

Thomas forced himself to drop that train of thought. When he glanced at Washington for a second,
he saw an all-too-knowing look in his eyes, and looked away just as quickly. Instead, he met Alexander’s eyes, and saw that he was looking at Thomas with concern. Thomas smiled in an attempt to set Alexander at ease, but the smile turned a little frayed at the edges. Alexander’s frown deepened.

“Thomas?” Alexander asked, taking a step forward. He was close, so close, close enough that if Thomas simply leaned down, he would be kissing him.

Close, unbearably close, and yet so far away.

“Yes?” Thomas replied, wincing as his voice broke over the word.

“Are you okay?” Alexander’s voice was unexpectedly gentle, which, in itself, set off several bells in Thomas’ head.

Thomas shook his head. “Yeah, I’m fine,” he assured Alexander.

Alexander’s eyes narrowed. “Really,” he drawled, before shrugging dismissively. “Well, if you say so.”

“I do,” Thomas said with as much conviction as he was able to muster. It would have been easier, had he actually known whether what he was saying was true or not. As it was, he remained in that grey area of doubt in between the Sea Of Positive Certainty That He Was Fine, and the Mountains Of Despair Because Hell He Was Not, and he didn’t know which side unsettled him more.

Alexander glanced down at his laptop, and clicked away at the book for a few moments, before looking up owlishly. “Hey,” he said quietly, “you know that if you’re not, I can, like, cut back on the teasing, right?” he asked, and for once, there was uncertainty in his voice.

What.

No, seriously, what.

Alexander did not simply do uncertainty. That would be like—Thomas floundered for an apt comparison—like… like a lion questioning whether or not to eat a zebra or the hummingbird staying still or something. It just didn’t happen.

“I’m fine, Alexander,” Thomas assured quickly, desperately willing the moment to be over already, for the look in his eyes—one that, on anyone else, Thomas might even have called love—to fade.

Alexander looked over him once more, staring Thomas dead in the eye; Thomas found himself slipping, sinking under the waves of Alexander’s eyes, large and dark and—

“If you insist,” Alexander finally replied with a shrug before turning back to his work.

Thomas took a few moments and tried to force his heart out of his throat.

They returned to D.C. that next evening, and Alexander had never been happier to unlock the front door to their overpriced, pretentious house.

Yes, Camp David hadn’t been the awful trip he had expected but Alexander wasn’t really a “country retreat” kind of guy. Or any ‘retreat’ kind of guy.

But, even more importantly, returning home signalled the end of his so-called vacation.
Thank God.

Alexander thought that he’d go crazy if he stayed in this damn house for one more day.

He felt a little bit like a child returning to school after the holidays, eager and excited and making sure everything was perfect for the following day. He had his clothes laid out—his favourite green suit, which was not vomit green, fuck off. Thomas—had packed his lunch (if only to be spared from Thomas’ reproving looks), had his go-cup ready to be filled, had already showered, had his briefcase packed, and his laptop was fully charged.

“Just go to sleep, my God,” Thomas grumbled from his spot next to Alexander in bed.

“I can’t!” Alexander protested. “I just want it to be morning already!”

Thomas huffed and turned over so that he was facing Alexander. “You know what’s a good way to make the morning come faster?” he asked. “Sleep.”

Alexander glared at him in reply. “Shut up,” he grumbled. “Your hair is too poofy. It’s going to suffocate me.”

“You know why my hair is so big?” Thomas asked, an unexpected grin on his face.

“No,” Alexander said slowly, trying to see where this whole thing was going. “Why?”

“It’s full of secrets,” Thomas replied solemnly.


“It’s from Mean Girls,” Thomas said, as if that was supposed to clear up everything.

“Mean Girls?” Alexander repeated.

“You know, with Lindsay Lohan? And Tina Fey? Amy Poehler? You go Glen Coco? Too gay to function?” Thomas rattled off.

“Now you’re just saying words,” Alexander accused. “I mean, I’ve heard of Lindsay Lohan and those other two, but I have no idea what the hell you’re talking about.”

Thomas looked to be somewhere between mortally offended and sincerely concerned. “That—you’ve never seen Mean Girls?” he asked.

“No?” Alexander replied incredulously. “I didn’t really have a ton of access to movies on the island, and when I got to America, I was mostly focused on keeping my scholarships and having enough money to buy both coffee and cereal. I’m not exactly pop-culture savvy.”

“That’s a sin,” Thomas declared seriously. “Tomorrow, after work, we’re watching Mean Girls. This isn’t up for discussion. Now goodnight.”

And with that, Thomas rolled back over, mumbling under his breath at how it was no longer surprising that Alexander’s opinions were terrible, since he obviously had no priorities.

“Sorry for putting my education and citizenship status before watching some movie about teenage girls,” Alexander snapped, but didn’t carry on about it, instead favouring to burrow deeper into his pillow and make another attempt at falling asleep.
“God, it’s good to be back!” Alexander said as he practically bounded up the steps to the White House.

He had missed this. He had missed that feeling that he was doing something, accomplishing something; he had missed walking up these steps and knowing he was making a difference.

It was freeing.

“You were working from home, not taking a semester abroad,” Thomas pointed out as he joined Alexander up the steps. “There’s no need for dramatics.”

“Thomas, dear,” Alexander began with a grin, “In case you haven’t noticed, my whole life is dramatic.”

Thomas snorted and rolled his eyes. “Are you planning on going inside, or were you just going to dance around on the steps all morning?” he asked, raising an eyebrow.

Alexander felt his face split into another smile as he waltzed up to the security guard by the door and held up his ID. “Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton,” he said happily, his grin growing even wider as he was allowed inside.

“Welcome back, Secretary Hamilton,” the security agent said, and Alexander felt waves of relief wash over him.

He was back. Back to work, back to doing what he was good at, back to knowing that he wasn’t wasting what he’d been given.

It was incredible.

Inside the White House was chaos. People were scurrying back in forth, passing papers and answering phones and everyone chattering at once.

It was absolutely perfect.

Alexander had to keep himself from skipping down the halls.

■ ■

Alexander arrived at the cabinet meeting fifteen minutes early, his laptop and legal pad tucked under one arm and a pen tucked behind his ear, taking great satisfaction in the looks of utter dismay he received from his rivals—Thomas included—as they realized just what was about to happen.

“Alexander, darling, could you please not?” Thomas asked as he pulled Alexander to the side of the room.

“Not what, dear?” Alexander asked, doing his best to seem as sweet and innocent as he could.

Thomas didn’t fall for it.

Thomas never fell for it.

It was part of why it was so fun. It made Thomas Thomas, and Alexander honestly wouldn’t have it any other way.

“We both know what,” Thomas hissed, looking about two seconds away from dragging Alexander to an empty office and shaking some sense into him. “You’re going to go on a two-hour speech
about everything you’ve even *vaguely considered* since you got out of the hospital—nay, since you *landed* in the hospital, even—and you’re going to make everyone else late for any other meetings they have today; you’re going to propose some *ridiculous* semi-communistic scheme, and when someone—most likely *me*—tries to remind the good people of this cabinet *why* it’s so ludicrous, you’re probably going to stand on a table and make a scene and start ranting about *ignoring the plights of our citizens* or something equally absurd.”

Alexander smirked. “I’ve got to, uh, what’s the phrase? Stay on brand?” he replied. “Need to remind you lot *exactly* what you’ve been missing.”

“I can assure you, no one’s forgotten,” Thomas said dryly.

Alexander’s grin widened. “I guess it’ll just be for fun, then,” he said with a wink.

Thomas’ surprised laughter echoed in his ears, and Alexander realized that he’d never heard a more beautiful sound.

“Thomas!” Alexander threw the front door open with maybe just a *tad* more enthusiasm than necessary, and winced as it banged against the wall before continuing. “Thomas Peter Fuckhead Randolph Jefferson, you will *not* believe what Adams said to me, that little *asshole*, I swear to God —Thomas?”

Alexander stopped, throwing a confused look around the living room. It was empty. The kitchen was also empty, as was the study, and, as far as he could tell, the library—it was too large to check in its entirety, but Thomas wasn’t at his normal location in the armchair in the back.

“Thomas?” he called, slipping out of his coat and hanging it on the rack. “Thomas? Are you here?”

There was a muffled shout from down the hall.

“Thomas?” Alexander repeated, louder.

“Bathroom!”

Alexander huffed as he made his way back to their room and practically kicked down the bathroom door, only to be greeted by an undignified screech.

Okay, so maybe Alexander hadn’t thought this all the way through.

“What the *fuck* are you doing, Alexander?” Thomas shrieked from his position in the bath.

Alexander quickly averted his eyes, but he found that he couldn’t unsee the sight before him.

Thomas was lounging in *magenta water* that smelled like fucking *flowers*, and he had some sort of *face mask* on, like some sort of boujee Hollywood starlet.

And there were *bubbles*. Fuchsia bubbles were lathered in his hair and on his beard and, thank every deity ever thought to exist, covering his junk.

“I, uh, just wanted to tell you about this dumbass email Adams sent me,” Alexander replied, still staring pointedly at the sink as though it had all the answers in universe.

“So you barged into my *bathroom*? My God, are you *crazy*?” Thomas snapped.
“I admit that, on second thought, it may not have been my best plan,” Alexander admitted.

“You don’t fucking say! Jesus fuck, Alexander, get out!” Thomas shouted.

“But—” Alexander spluttered.

“OUT!”

“Okay, okay, I’m going, fine.”

Alexander would deny running into the door frame for the rest of his life.

Thomas was acting strangely again.

Alexander pursed his lips as he drummed his fingers against his desk. In front of him was the treaty that Thomas had been able to secure with India in Alexander's absence, and Alexander was supposed to be reviewing it and proposing adjustments if necessary, but he couldn't focus. The letters were swimming before him, and whenever he tried to make anything out, the word squiggled just out of Alexander's reach.

He sighed as he pushed away the document, and massaged the bridge of his nose.

Alexander had thought that the talk back at Camp David would have resolved any lingering, and in a way, he was right—Thomas was no longer acting as though Alexander was going to slit his throat the second he got even the slightest opportunity—but every now and again, he felt Thomas’ eyes on him and when he turned to look, Thomas was glancing away furtively. It wasn't just the bathroom incident, either, because he had been acting oddly before, too—before they visited Camp David, come to think of it. Had Alexander done something? He didn't think so, but then again, Thomas had different standards on ‘acceptable’ than Alexander.

Alexander was many things, but he wasn't stupid. Something was up, and he would get down to the heart of the matter, if only for the sake of his sanity and the continued health of his neck.

Judging by the equally obvious glances that Washington keep throwing the two of them, he knew—or at least suspected—what was going on, but whenever Alexander approached him about it, he simply shook his head and told him that he had no idea what Alexander was talking about, but if he had any concerns, maybe he should talk to Thomas?

Alexander huffed. He did enough of that already, thank you very much, and although Thomas was surprisingly pleasant company for a Republican who professed to oppose government interference but in reality wanted to regulate every aspect of people's lives (he found it ironic that the conservatives who preached freedom from government and limited government we're usually the ones to abuse government powers the most—like Poland, where the very conservative government as using its powers to limits personal freedom of certain individuals, and Alexander had listened to enough of Thomas’ arguments to know that it was exactly what conservatism in America was supposed to stand against), he had no intention of getting entangled into whatever problem Thomas had concocted this time. The last time he did, after all, Thomas had gotten it into his head that he was Alexander's babysitter.

And so he observed Thomas. What he saw only served to confuse him further. It was as if Thomas acting perfectly normally, returning Alexander's volley of insults word for word, only to suddenly freeze with a distant look in his eyes.
Alexander couldn't draw any conclusions, at least none that wouldn't make him sound like the most egotistical person to exist since Narcissus himself or guarantee him a place in the local mental asylum.

Clearly, further study was needed.

Chapter End Notes

Coming up next: bills bills bills also Jemmy James (literally that's it that's the chapter)
In which we return to the 'politics' part of the Modern Politics!AU, ft. Jemmy James

Chapter Summary

Chicken noodle soup and gun bills. What fun.
Also Inside: we learn why Thomas should leave the all-nighters to Alexander.

Chapter Notes

HEY!!! IMPORTANT INFO!!!

the following chapter was written by a 15 y/o and a 19 y/o, each without any sort of notable experience with American politics, and each without any sort of experience in negotiations such as the ones described in the following chapter. if this feels unrealistic, that's because it is. sorry. we're doing our best.

One morning, about six months in, Alexander woke up to a quiet house.

It wasn’t a completely unheard of occurrence, of course, but this time something felt… off about it.

Over the last few months, a sort of routine has been established. Somehow, Thomas always woke up first and would begin making some sort of breakfast, be it omelettes or French toast or pancakes or even fucking poptarts. Alexander would eventually stumble out of his room, grumbling about needing coffee before downing the entire pot Thomas had made. They’d sit, they’d eat, they’d talk, and, more likely than not, get into some sort of argument before parting ways to get ready for the day.

The whole thing came as natural as breathing by this point.

And, as Alexander stood in the silent, empty kitchen, staring at the note on the fridge that simply said, ‘See you at work. Don’t ruin my house’, he realized he missed it.

The thought was so shocking, so disturbing, and terrifying that Alexander didn’t pay enough attention getting ready to notice that he had his shirt on inside-out until Thomas casually mentioned it during the cabinet meeting.

Alexander’s demeanour was a hard one to explain. It wasn’t one fixed thing like Burr, who had one facial expression for all situations—if anything, Alexander was as far from Burr as humanly possible—but instead seemed to be constantly shifting. One moment, he was giggling over some crude joke Laurens had texted him, or he was perfecting paper wasps to flick into Thomas’ hair, or he was pulling shit like the fucking mariachi band stunt, and then something would flip, and he would withdraw, hide himself away in his office and work for hours on end, his posture rigid and the look
on his face deadly serious.

He was either seven, a goofy kid without a care in the world, or sixty-seven, subdued, determined, and with a look on his face that said he’d seen the world, he understood the world, with all its best and worst parts.

Thomas didn’t know how to explain it; he didn’t know which, if either, were the ‘real’ Alexander, and he didn’t ever know which to expect.

“Secretary Jefferson?” Sally asked through the intercom.

“Yes?”

“Secretary Hamilton is here to see you,” Sally replied.

“Send him in.”

Alexander was in his office not a second later. “I need a meeting with you and Madison,” he said bluntly.

Thomas laughed. “Sorry, I’m not about to set my best friend and myself up for a hazing—”

“My tax plan is in the House, and I need it passed without being torn to shreds,” Alexander cut in simply.

Thomas nodded, working to mask the surprise on his face. This morning, Alexander had thrown a toaster strudel icing packet at Thomas’ head because Thomas had drank the last of the grape juice. He’d put it on Alexander being ‘professional’, but he’d worked with the man long enough to know that professionalism had nothing to do with it.

“What are you proposing?” Thomas asked slowly, folding his hands on top of his desk.

“We need this tax plan, and we need it as it is,” Alexander replied quickly, still not sitting down. He rarely sat at all. “I’m willing to make a compromise.”

“Such as?” Thomas asked.

“You’re aware of the SHARE Act, I assume?” Alexander asked.

Thomas rolled his eyes. Alexander knew he knew about the SHARE Act. They’d debated about it over dinner two nights ago. “Yes, Alexander,” he drawled. “What about it?”

“I can persuade my party to help it get through the Senate,” Alexander said.

“And how is that anywhere near a good trade?” Thomas asked. “You’re asking us to help pass a plan that is fundamentally against our beliefs, in exchange for, what, getting a relatively minor bill over one hurdle? This close to election season?”

“We’ll discuss it at the meeting.”

“I haven’t agreed to a meeting, Alexander,” Thomas reminded him.

Alexander grinned for the first time since entering Thomas’ office. “Like you said, it is getting close to election season. Washington’s approval ratings are good, and you know it. Meanwhile, the biggest thing you and yours have accomplished in the last year is a minor tax cut for the oil industry. The
most you can do with my tax plan is mangle and modify it, but at the end of the day, it's still a Democratic tax plan passing through Congress. You need to pass something, or you're going to lose by an even greater margin than the last election. Think it over, Thomas.”

“No,” James said immediately. “Absolutely not.”

Thomas furrowed his brows. “You haven’t even let me speak.”

James crossed his arms in a huff. “You used ‘Hamilton’ and ‘dinner invitation’ in one sentence. That’s enough for me.”

“James, don’t be unreasonable,” Thomas pleaded. “Let me explain.”

James stared. “Me? I’m the one being unreasonable?” His voice was dripping with scorn. “Listen, Thomas, I’ve known this guy for longer than you have been dating, or whatever the hell’s going on between the two of you. I know the way his mind works. I’ve been called a multitude of horrible and unwarranted insults, ‘traitor’ being among the mildest, because he got it in his head that just because we worked together once means that we have to do so forever. I’m a Republican and I’m not going to change my stance, no matter how much he begs and screams and cajoles and threatens. Unlike others,” he added with a pointed look in Thomas’ direction.

Thomas rolled his eyes. “My beliefs haven’t changed just because I’m dating Hamilton,” he said in exasperation.

“Haven’t they?” James retorted unexpectedly. “I’ve been watching you, as has the public, and there are a few places where you differ from your previous stances.”

Thomas scowled. “Isn’t a man allowed to change his mind during the course of his lifetime? Aren’t you the one who tells me that a willingness to admit that you’re wrong and change accordingly is a characteristic of an open mind?”

“There’s a difference between being open-minded and abandoning your principles for the sake of a warm bed.”

Thomas flushed. “It’s not like that between us.” No matter how much Thomas wished it was.

“Then how is it, exactly?” James threw up his hands into the air. ”Please tell me, because from my perspective, it looks like Hamilton’s using you, and you’re perfectly willing to go along with it as long as you get to keep your boy toy.”

“He’s not my boy toy,” Thomas growled.

James closed his eyes, massaging the bridge of his nose. He sighed. “Sorry. I didn’t mean it that way,” he apologized. “But you do have to admit that it’s a mite suspicious that you’re suddenly ready to mingle with the Democrats just as Hamilton needs his bill passed through the House.”

“We haven’t succeeded in passing any legislation that might get us the support of more than our core base of voters,” Thomas shot back, feeling oddly as though he was parroting Alexander’s words back word-for-word. “We need to have something to show for our efforts, and so far, every proposition we’ve put forward has been blocked by the left. It’s our only chance of passing a decent bill.”

James huffed. “And how much of what you just said was Hamilton?”
“That doesn’t matter,” Thomas said evasively, which was an answer on its own. James’ snort spoke volumes. “What matters is that I’m right. We need to do something, show that we are a force to be reckoned with, or the swing voters might go vote Democrat come next election.

“Look, Jemmy, how long have we been trying to pass a fucking gun bill? Like it or not, Hamilton has a point. He’s a major member of his party, his name carries influence, and if he gets behind SHARE, we have a fucking chance at this.”

James stared at him for another moment. “And he wants what in return?” he questioned, rubbing his head.

Thomas hesitated. This was the part that was the least likely to go over well, knowing James. “He wants his plan through the House with minimal tampering,” he replied eventually.

James blinked. “Care to take that again?” His voice was deceptively calm, but Thomas sensed the storm underneath his words. “I thought you just said that you wanted to give Hamilton unlimited power to restructure our economy the way he sees fit. A gun bill, no matter what’s in it, isn’t worth nearly enough to give Hamilton free reigns like that.”

“Well then what do you propose we do?” Thomas finally snapped. “We can’t end the year with nothing, not this close to the midterm elections. If we do, the damage could take years, if not decades to repair—building up confidence in voters isn’t an overnight job, despite what some might believe. You know that. We can’t throw away countless years’ worth of hard work over something that’s not even going to matter.”

“Not going to matter?” James repeated incredulously. “Thomas, have you forgotten basic economics? Of course it’s going to fucking matter.”

“It’s going to pass anyway!” Thomas shouted. “They only need a fifty percent majority, and it’s by a stroke of sheer luck that he doesn’t have that already! One way or another, Hamilton will get the votes he needs, and I’d rather we get something in return.”

“Besides,” Thomas added, a bit of his smirk on his face, “Once it gets through the House, it goes to the Senate, and Hamilton didn’t say a word about that.”

James frowned. “He already has the majority in the Senate, Thomas.”

“Exactly!” Thomas argued. “It’s going to pass, James. We let it through the House scratch free, and then we do our best to rearrange his ludicrous ideas into something reasonable once it gets to the Senate; but, even if we do modify it, it’d still be Democratic tax plan. There’s no way to make the voters happy, so we might as well take what we can get, do our best once it reaches the Senate floor, and gain something from it that would.”

James didn’t speak for several moments, massaging temples in an effort to stave off the headache he could already feel building up. “Very well, I’ll give it a shot. However, I’m not promising my support,” he warned.

“And I’m not asking you to,” Thomas assured him. “Just hear Hamilton out.”

“On one condition,” James said.

Thomas stilled. “Yes?” he asked hesitantly.

“Do not let Hamilton cook,” James deadpanned in the most serious of voices. “I’ve had the dubious honour of trying the results of his culinary escapades. Suffice to say that it’s not an experience I’d
The doorbell rang at precisely 7:30 the next evening, just as Thomas was finishing dishing up the chicken noodle soup (because yes, Alexander, he could cook something other than mac and cheese, so kindly fuck off).

“Alexander!” he shouted, taking the final bowl to the dining room. “Would you get the door?”

“He’s your best friend!” Alexander countered from his room.

“You are the one who wanted this dinner, and besides, my hands are kind of full,” Thomas replied, putting down the bowl and wiping his hands on the towel on his shoulder.

Alexander said something Thomas couldn’t really hear through the walls before stomping out of his room in a huff. He flipped Thomas off before opening the door with an amazingly fake grin. “Speaker Madison,” he said, his words dripping with faux-pleasantry. “Welcome.”

“Secretary Hamilton,” James replied, his expression inscrutable. He entered the house and removed his coat, looking as if he was about to speak on the House floor, as opposed to visiting his best friend’s house.

“Good evening, James,” Thomas said as he entered the living room, already holding out a glass of wine to his friend. “I feel you may need this before the night is over.”

James took the drink with a smile. “The house looks nice,” he remarked, looking around.

Thomas rolled his eyes, understanding the hidden meaning behind the words. “Just because he lives here doesn’t mean I’m going to let him wreck my home,” he deadpanned, to which James snorted. “If you end up staying over, your bedroom is still free.”

Alexander and James both stared at Thomas for a moment before speaking at the same time. “Thomas, I really don’t think that’s appropri—”

“Why does he have a bedroom?” Alexander demanded.

Thomas blinked twice. “Not—not for that, James! My God, no! Just—just in case you don’t want to drive home in the dark!” he insisted.

Alexander sighed in relief, a small shudder running down his spine. “Thank God,” he drawled. “If there’s one thing I’d like to avoid, it’s getting fucked over by two Republican asshats,” he cracked a smile.

James choked on his wine. “As you’re no doubt aware,” James managed once he got his breathing under control again, “I would like to avoid sexual encounters of any kind, but with you especially.”

Thomas glared Alexander’s way reprovingly. “Now that that… debacle is dealt with,” he said, “dinner is on the table, and then I believe we have some work to do.”

“Think, Madison,” Hamilton snapped. “You let it slip that Thomas convinced me, of all people, to all but support a pro-gun bill? Thomas’ credibility is—well, probably not saved, but definitely helped. I’m aware of the word about the rumour mill, I know I’m being painted as some sort of cunning
seducer, toying with Thomas’ head and changing his beliefs or whatever. With this, it can be said that the, uh, persuasion works both ways. One of your leading party members is re-established as reliable, and you get a bill through. All I’m asking is for an easy way through the House.”

They’d been negotiating for hours, seemingly to no avail. Alexander was trying to think of every selling point he could come up with to pitch this. Finally, he’d pulled out the big guns. He hadn’t wanted to play that card, hadn’t wanted to hold Thomas’ precarious position over them like a dog with a bone, but clearly, that was how low they had sunk.

A twitch of one of Madison’s fingers from its position on the table was the only visible sign that Alexander had hit a nerve. Alexander glanced at Thomas, expecting some sort of reaction. Thomas was many things—covertly racist, insufferable, cocky, not-so-covertly sexist and obnoxious, to name a few—but an actor he was not.

Or maybe he just sucked when it came to faking relationships because he looked about as impressed and moved as a fucking Greek statue.

A Greek statue with fucking pretentious facial hair.

“No offence to Thomas,” Madison began, “but I’m not willing to offer up the values of my entire party to you on a silver platter just to stabilize my best friend’s position with the public. The people care more about taxes than guns, Hamilton—”

“Do they, though?” Alexander countered. “I agree, they should care more about taxes than guns, but do they? Especially since the majority of tax increases will be for the upper class. Most of your constituents won’t feel the brunt of this plan and you know it. No, your concern is less for the citizens you represent and more for the lobbyists your pocketbook represents—”

That garnered a reaction, just as Alexander had hoped. Thomas’ posture snapped straight in a moment, the icy look in his eyes melting and giving way to something Alexander equated more with an inferno. Madison’s grip on his spoon was so tight that Alexander was surprised it didn’t bend.

Alexander grinned. This he could work with. “Or,” he offered, “or, you allow my plan through the House—just the House, mind you—and, in return, you get a bill passed. You get something to show for your work, as opposed to numb ass-cheeks because your butt fell asleep from all the sitting you do. The choice is yours, gentlemen.”

Thomas and James shared a look, the sort of look Alexander knew meant something, but couldn’t pinpoint what that something was.

“And the SHARE Act passes? With bipartisan support?” Thomas asked.

“If by ‘bipartisan support’ you mean ‘without us kicking up a massive fuss and voting it out the moment it hits the floor’, yes,” Alexander confirmed, making sure to maintain his poker face.

Thomas sighed and stretched out his hand. “I believe that is an arrangement we can agree on,” he said with a sigh.

Alexander groaned as he threw himself onto the couch. “I imagine death so much it feels like a memory,” he muttered into the pillows.

Thomas stood in the doorway, a partially wet towel in hand, watching with amusement as Alexander all but collapsed onto the couch. “Alexander…”
“This is it.” Alexander listed up his head to tell the air. “This is how I die.” He let his head fall back onto the pillows.

Thomas rolled his eyes. “Don't be dramatic,” he scolded his boyfriend.

Alexander let out a whine. "Food coma is the worst.”

Thomas snorted. “You ate one bowl of chicken noodle soup.”

Alexander scowled. “It was bigger on the inside.”

“Sure it was.” Thomas wiped off his hands on the towel.

“I am dead,” Alexander declared.

Thomas shook his head fondly. “Stop whining,” he told Alexander. “It’s unbecoming. Now, get your royalist ass up and help me with the dishes.”

Alexander glared at Thomas. “I’m not a royalist,” he protested.

“You just wish that there was some way to elect Washington for life,” Thomas filled in.

Alexander’s face clouded over. “He’s a good president!” he objected. “The best!”

“Why, because he listens to you?” Thomas retorted. “That makes him a puppet. And don’t think that this non-sequitur got you out of doing the dishes. I suggest that you get up now, before I decide that you can do all the dishes by yourself.”

Alexander scrunched up his nose as he reluctantly rolled off the couch, miraculously landing in a crouching position before standing up. “Get Madison to help you.”

“James is a guest,” Thomas informed Alexander. “Just because you have no manners to speak of, doesn’t mean that we all do.” He threw the towel at Alexander, who instinctively caught it. “Get your ass over here. Now.”

Thomas groaned as he reviewed the text he had written so far. It did little to cheer him up because it only went to highlight just how much he hasn’t written yet.

Not for the first time, he wished that he had Alexander’s way with words. Alexander never had the problem that he lacked the right words, no, it was more of the opposite problem: he had too many of them. Had he been in Thomas’ place, he would have finished this hours ago and had probably done it better than Thomas. For all of his faults, and Thomas was intimately aware of just what they were, Alexander was nothing if not thorough.

Then again, had Alexander been in his place, he would not have delayed writing a summary of the negotiations with India until the day before Washington wanted it on his desk. Possibly, he would have had it finished even before Washington had had time to open his mouth because that’s the kind of shit Alexander did.

Still, there was something to be said for Alexander’s way of doing things. Had Thomas had any sort of foresight, he wouldn’t have needed to pull an all-nighter because he needed to finish the document that he has been delaying because the deadline was the next day and it’s urgent.

Thomas glanced furtively up at the clock, which cheerfully informed him that it was quarter past
midnight. It did not, however, offer to help him with his report—and Thomas wasn’t sure whether he would have accepted its help anyway. Clocks tended to make collaborators.

He made himself focus on the document before him and began typing again.

At one, even Alexander closed his laptop and called it a night, though not before giving Thomas a somewhat concerned look.

“Do you want coffee?” Alexander unexpectedly asked. “Or tea?”

Thomas snapped up at the sound. “Huh?” he intelligently replied.

Alexander rolled his eyes, looking much put-on, but his eyes were twinkling with amusement.

“Coffee. Tea. Hot beverages that just so happen to contain caffeine. You look just about ready to collapse; you need energy. So, do you want anything to drink?”

“Coffee, please,” Thomas said, stunned. He hadn’t… He hadn’t expected Alexander to notice. Alexander usually didn’t notice things unless they were right under his nose, and sometimes not even then.

By Alexander’s standards, this was… thoughtful. Considerate.

Was Alexander ill? Should Thomas call the doctor? (The worst part was that it wasn’t even a joke. It was a legitimate concern.)

Alexander gave him a cursory glance before disappearing into the kitchen. Thomas listened absentmindedly as Alexander busied himself with the coffee machine. He emerged a few minutes later, holding Thomas’ coffee like some sort of victory prize that he alone had the honour of holding.

“Here ya go, darlin’,” Alexander said as he offered Thomas the mug with an exaggerated bow.

Darlin’?

Thomas would deny it forever, but his stomach fluttered at Alexander’s words.

What the hell? Maybe Alexander was ill after all.

Before Thomas could process what was happening, Alexander was bending down so that they were face to face, and he pressed a sloppy kiss to Thomas’ cheek, before backing away with a self-satisfied grin that practically screamed mischief.

Ah. Of course.

Thomas hoped that none of the disappointment he felt showed on his face, even as he felt crestfallen inside.

To Alexander, this was nothing but another part of their ‘gay chicken’ game, just another way to mess with Thomas. Thomas didn’t dare tell Alexander that he had won that game several months ago. Alexander could be ruthless if he wanted to, and Thomas didn’t want to give him more ammunition.

Thomas forced a matching smirk onto his lips, even as it felt a little frayed around the edges.

“Goodnight, darlin’,” he said, faux-flirtatiously.

Alexander threw him a wink, before disappearing up the stairs, Thomas’ eyes following him until he was out of sight.
Once he was sure that Alexander was inside his room, door closed, Thomas slumped into the couch, letting out a sigh as he did so. He ran a hand through his hair. He glanced at the coffee standing innocuously on the coffee table in front of him.

Suddenly, he no longer wanted the coffee.

It served as just yet another reminder of what he couldn’t have. He could pretend all he wanted, but it was clear to him that Alexander didn’t want him the way Thomas cid, didn’t want to spend all of his hours with Thomas, didn’t even like him all that much.

Thomas knew that all too well.

He didn’t know how much longer he could do this for, but he couldn’t bear to hear a rejection from Alexander’s lips. As long as he didn’t bring it up, there was some hope. Very little hope, but any hope was better than outright rejection.

Even Thomas realized how pathetic and absolutely needy he sounded.

□ □

Thomas was still awake by the time his morning alarm rang. He muted the damn thing, and rubbed his eyes, feeling exhaustion wash over him like a tide. On one hand, the report was all but done—there were only a few paragraphs that he needed to add, and he could do that before he went to work; on the other hand, he was tired beyond belief.

God, was this what Alexander put himself through every day? It was torture in its purest form.

Knowing Alexander, he hadn’t bothered putting on any alarm. He had always woken up early enough by himself, used Thomas’, or hoped that Thomas would wake him up in time.

Thomas had half a mind to let him sleep. It was petty vengeance, he knew, but he couldn’t help it if he wanted some justice for the way he had felt yesterday.

He smothered that feeling. It hadn’t been Alexander’s fault. For once, Alexander had been nice, had been thoughtful; it wasn’t his fault that Thomas was a pathetic mess barely able to control his emotions.

Besides, Thomas tried to convince himself, it wasn’t the end of the world. Granted, it sucked that Alexander didn’t return his feelings, but so what? It wasn’t as if that was the first time it happened to Thomas. Growing up gay in a deeply conservative state led to quite a few unrequited crushes that Thomas knew that he could do nothing about. He had tried not acknowledging them, even, once, but that hadn’t worked out. Still, over time, as his career progressed, it became easier to ignore those impulses to grab the other guy and snog him senseless.

With Alexander, it was markedly different. Alexander knew that he was gay, knew that and wouldn’t use it against him because he shared his tastes—not that he could have, anyway, even if he wanted to, as the entire world knew that he was gay.

Thomas typed away for another few minutes, absentmindedly listening for the sounds of Alexander being awake—footsteps, the door, the shower, anything—but there was nothing but silence. Thomas sighed as he closed his laptop, and headed to wake Alexander.

He knocked on their bedroom door, then, when he heard nothing, carefully opened it. He was met by the sight of a pile of blankets forming cocoon-mountain hybrid on his bed. If one strained their imagination, one could perhaps even imagine that somewhere under that mountain of blankets and
what-not was Alexander. There was not enough scientific evidence to back up that theory, however.

“Good morning, sunshine,” he chirped, mustering enough energy to look cheerful for a moment.

“G’way,” said the pile of blankets.

Thomas leaned against the doorway and pretended not to notice just how much he wanted to close his eyes and just rest for a moment. Just a moment. A moment wouldn’t hurt, would it?

“You’re still here,” muttered the pile, startling Thomas out of his thoughts. “I can sense you, hovering over there like those vultures from Ice Age II.”

“Does that mean that you won’t be coming in today?” Thomas shot back. He glanced down at himself. God, he looked terrible. He needed a shower, as well as a change of clothes.

Alexander sat up so quickly Thomas was surprised he didn’t pass out. “Don’t,” he snapped.

“Calm down, calm down. No one’s asking you to skip work; it was a joke,” Thomas grumbled, rubbing his eyes.

“You look like hell,” Alexander said flippantly as he tossed aside his blankets—those blankets, how Thomas wanted to crawl under them and sleep for about twelve hours.

“Hey kettle, this is pot,” Thomas replied, before his voice turned brisk. “You’re in charge of breakfast. There are eggos in the freezer. If you drink all the coffee, I will throw your laptop in the Potomac. Do not test me.”

Alexander snorted and rolled his eyes. “If I didn’t know better, I’d think this was your first all-nighter,” he teased.

“My first one since college,” Thomas corrected him. “Because I, unlike some people, value my health.”

“You’ve pulled all-nighters before now,” Alexander argued. “We had to stay at work all night that one time—”

“I napped in my office,” Thomas interrupted. “Now go. You have coffee to make.”

Alexander huffed but did as he was told. “You’re cute when you’re grouchy,” he commented off-handedly as he left the room.

Thomas found himself torn between killing Alexander and kissing him.

He decided on a happy medium of scoffing and aggressively shutting the door behind Alexander.

■ ■

“Uh, Thomas?” Alexander asked as Thomas entered the kitchen, making a beeline for the coffee pot.

Thomas didn’t respond, too enraptured by the massive cup of coffee he was dumping an honestly unhealthy amount of sugar into. He still wasn’t entirely certain that it wouldn’t give him diabetes—his mental calculations had fallen a bit flat—but risks had to be taken. For the greater good. Or something.

God, he needed sleep.
“Thomas?” Alexander repeated, tapping Thomas’ shoulder. “Are you okay?”

“As okay as can be expected,” Thomas replied, taking a long drink of his coffee and rubbing at his temples.

“If you say so,” Alexander said, doubt lingering in his voice. “I only ask because… well, no offence but you kinda look like you’re but one step away from death.”

“You’ve already said this, Alexander.”

“I know, I know, it’s just we need to leave in ten if you want to get there in time to show Madison your report before presenting it before Congress, and your socks don’t match, and you don’t have your contacts in, and I know for a fact that you don’t have a clean jacket that matches your tie, which isn’t tied properly, by the way,” Alexander rambled.

“One,” Thomas began, glancing at Alexander over the top of his cup, “how the hell do you know that I have James look over my reports before I present them? Two, why do you know what all of my jackets look like and what ties they match? Three, no one is going to look at my socks, you fucktard. Four, I like my glasses, thank you very much. Five… I can’t remember what else you said but fuck off.”

Alexander looked in equal parts amused and concerned for Thomas’ life. “Whatever you say,” he finally conceded. “But I’m bringing one of your jackets and a tie that matches. I can’t verbally destroy when you look like this. It wouldn’t be classy. It’d be like kicking a fucking puppy.”

“Since when do you care about class?” Thomas asked. “And, for the record, I’m not a puppy. For one, I do not pee on the floor.”

“Since you started staying up all night and looking like you were dressed by a seven-year-old.” Alexander rolled his eyes. “Honestly, Thomas, you can’t just steal someone’s whole brand like that,” Alexander replied snippily.

Thomas groaned and pinched the bridge of his nose. “My God,” he muttered. “This is starting to feel like some sort of Freaky Friday nightmare scenario. What’s next, your opinions start making sense?”

Alexander scoffed. “Don’t be ridiculous. Now, come on. At this rate, we’re going to be late, and I don’t want to be the one having to explain to Washington why you showed up to cabinet meeting looking like you spent all night getting to know the opposition.”

Thomas grimaced, rolled his eyes, and followed Alexander out the door.

Thomas wanted to die.

Actually, literally, completely wanted to die.

Not only was he exhausted, but Alexander seemed to have decided to be some sort of new combination of utterly insufferable and entirely adorable.

How the hell he did it, Thomas would never know.

Something else he didn’t know was: why today, of all days? Why today, when Thomas’ self-control had packed its bags and left somewhere around three-thirty in the morning?
Then again, Alexander always did have the most terrible timing.

Thomas ‘laid’ his head against his desk with enough force to possibly give him a minor concussion.

Today was either going to end with Thomas kissing Alexander, or tying him in a sack full of rabid dogs and throwing said sack into the Potomac. Either way, the problem of Alexander Hamilton would be solved.

There was a knock on the door.

“Come in,” Thomas called out, not lifting his head from his desk.

“Secretary Hamilton sent this, sir,” Sally said.

Thomas shifted his head just enough to see what she was holding.

A suit jacket, a tie, and a ginormous cup of coffee with a sticky note attached.

“Send him my—” Thomas paused as he thought it over—” reluctant thanks.”

The jacket wasn’t anything flashy, just a grey blazer, and the tie was a plain violet bow tie, but it matched the jacket, unlike the purple, blue, yellow, and red paisley monstrosity Thomas had blindly snatched from his closet that morning.

God, why did he even own this tie?

Thomas picked up the coffee from where Sally had placed it on his desk and peeled off the sticky note.

_Drink me_

_(And stop acting like a whiny six year old who missed nap time. Please.)_

Dear Lord almighty, that man was absolutely unbearable.


_Fucking Alexander._ He couldn’t even let Thomas be properly annoyed with him, because the moment Thomas thought that it was safe to rant about him, he turned around and did… this. It was a thoughtful gesture, and Thomas hated how affected he let himself be by it.

Thomas rested his head back on his desk and groaned.
The morning that would later become known as The Morning started out normally enough. Alexander woke up after getting an astonishing three and a half hours of sleep to the sound of Thomas’ pretentious classical music and bacon cooking. He took a moment to stretch and pop his back before his need for coffee became too great and he forced himself out of bed.

Thomas was in the kitchen, attempting to hum every part in some old orchestral piece that, by the sound of it, had no chance of being any younger than at least a hundred and fifty years. Alexander could tell that he was wearing his glasses, as opposed to his regular contacts, that he was barefooted, and that a pair of obnoxiously plaid boxers were visible above the waistline of his baggy, pink pyjama pants covered in purple elephants.

Thomas quickly went from humming what sounded like the violin part to some sort of low instrument—a tuba, maybe?—and Alexander suddenly felt like someone had taken a frying pan to his face. His breath hitched.

He loved him. He loved this asshole.

He loved Thomas Jefferson.

He loved Thomas’ stupid smug grin and the way his old childhood stutter picked up when he talked too fast. He loved the way he looked when he played violin, he loved arguing with him, he loved holding his hand, he loved his smile, he even loved how worked up he got—how passionate—when he was fighting for his—still horrific and undeniably wrong—beliefs.

He loved Thomas.

There was only one thing to say.

“Well, shit.”

His world was crashing down around him, turning upside down. Hell itself could freeze over and Alexander wouldn’t notice. And yet, he was perfectly fine. In fact, he realized, he had never been better.

Thomas finally turned around, his eyebrows scrunched together in a way that Alexander couldn’t imagine describing in any way other than frankly adorable, and opened his mouth to say something. He never got the chance. Before either could blink, Alexander had crossed the distance separating
them, roughly pressing their lips together. Granted, it wasn’t the most romantic of gestures, but it got the point across.

They kissed like it was second nature. Alexander’s hands came up to cup Thomas’ cheek even as Thomas instinctively looped his arms around Alexander’s waist. The whole thing was seamless, natural, as if this had been the goal all along: to come together, Alexander’s lips parting as Thomas pulled him closer, closer, and closer still, until it was impossible to differentiate between the two.

As suddenly as it began, the spell was broken, and Thomas was pointing his fork at Alexander as if he were brandishing a sword, and all Alexander could think in that moment was, wow, he must be really far gone, because he couldn’t even find the gesture anything other than oddly endearing and charming.

“What the hell?!” Thomas all but shrieked. He stepped back. His posture shifted into defensive.

“What the fuck was that?”

Alexander just grinned. “I believe the kids these days are calling it a kiss, and it was a damn good one, if I say so myself,” he quipped.

Thomas looked like he was about to stab him with his pointy kitchen utensil. “Are you fucking kidding me?!” he hissed, his eyes narrowing.

For the first time, it dawned on Alexander that this might not have been the best plan, but he didn’t admit it. Instead, he heaved a sigh. "Yes, I know that it’s hard to believe that someone as great as me could love someone as, well, you as you," he said impatiently, "but lo and behold, it hath happened."

This didn’t seem to be the explanation Thomas was looking for. "One," he began, "how the fuck did you know I felt the same? I could still hate you! You don't just kiss someone! Christ, Alexander, aren't you the one who lectured me on consent?"

And Alexander had thought he was in love before.

“Two, are you fucking kidding me?” Thomas continued, apparently unaware of the frankly massive pair of heart eyes Alexander was sporting. “Really? For three fucking months, I just have to sit here, thinking you can’t stand me, and then you fucking say you love me? What the hell, man?!”

“Three months?” he repeated.

“Yes, three months!” Thomas yelled, waving his fork around in his rage. “Three months, and the whole time you act like everything is fucking hunky-dory, and then you come in and kiss me! What the hell, man?”

“I was going for ‘sweeping you off your feet in a grand gesture of my love’,,” Alexander said. “’Y’know, like in all those cheesy rom-coms?’

“Are you kidding me?!”

Alexander paused. “No?” he asked uncertainly. “Besides, you can't know unless you try. If you would have still told me no after I kissed you—well.”

Thomas dropped his fork. It clattered to the floor, but Alexander paid it no heed, seeing as he had precisely zero point two seconds to brace himself before he was gathered back up into Thomas’ arms.

When they broke apart for the second time, Thomas didn’t pull away. Instead, he rested his forehead
against Alexander’s, locked eyes with him, and said, “I hate you so much.”

Alexander just grinned up at him. “I love you too. Now shut up and kiss me again, you ass.”

Nobody had ever left him satisfied—and yet, as he looked at Thomas, grinning through a pancake, he thought that he might be, this time. Thomas was unlike anyone Alexander’s ever met. He was refreshingly enigmatic. One moment, Alexander fucking hated his guts with an indescribable intensity. He hated his shitty personality, his stupid opinions, hated everything about him. The next moment, he was blinded by how much love he had for him.

He hoped that this would work out. Now that he thought about it, the two of them together made a lot of sense. No wonder people bought it nine months ago, even if it hadn’t been without a fight.

The next day, Thomas and Alexander walked into the White House, hand in hand—just as they had nearly every day for nine months. Except now, when their shoulders brushed, they didn’t glare at each other; when Thomas pointed out a particularly interesting plant, Alexander didn’t dig his nails into his hand and tell him to ‘be quiet, no one cares’; Alexander’s yammering didn’t garner him a step on the foot and an ‘apologetic’ smile that was threatening around the edges.

Instead, when Alexander placed a light kiss to Thomas’ cheek outside the man’s office, Thomas beamed at him, and Alexander winked before sauntering away, a newfound spring in his step.

“Good morning, everyone, and thank you for joining us,” Alexander said easily from his place behind the podium. “I would like to start out by saying that, obviously, neither I nor my partner are acting as Secretary of Education, and, in all transparency, neither of us have much in the way of experience with the American Public Education system; that being said, we understand the value of such an institution, and as such are here today to show our full, bipartisan support of the teachers around the country who have chosen to walk out in protest of the frankly outrageous underfunding of our public school system.”

From his spot beside Alexander, Thomas took a deep breath and smiled at the cameras flashing around him before taking the microphone. “Teaching is, truly, one of the most important occupations in our country today. They are the ones responsible for educating and preparing the newest generation of Americans for their future roles as leaders of our great nation. Without them, none of us would have had the ability the achieve the progress and success we have today. Teachers are the key to our education system, and our education system is, in turn, the key to the American dream. To defund and undervalue both education and educators is to defund and undervalue the future of the United States.”

“And as such, we, as leaders in this country, cannot sit idly by as something so crucial to the advancement of our nation is overlooked again and again. We urge state legislatures to make the right decision and choose to increase funding for schools all around the country,” Alexander stated.

“Thank you very much for your time,” Thomas finished with a small smile, taking Alexander’s hand and giving it a light squeeze as they nodded at the crowd of reporters and news anchors.

For the first time in a while, the noise and the lights didn’t bother Thomas at all.
obviously something different about it. It felt new, it felt happy, it felt real.

Apparently fucking not.

“I love you, you asshole,” Alexander snapped as he dropped his lunch on the table. Thomas slowly looked up at him from some probably maybe kinda important briefing.

“I love you too?”

“No,” Alexander said quickly, and one of Thomas’ eyebrows seemed to be intent on climbing into his hair, “No, like, I seriously love you.”

Thomas nodded. “Okay,” he replied, “Good to know. The feeling’s mutual. Now, this is incredibly important, and I need—”

“I love you, and everyone else is like ‘meh’. Like, what the hell? This is a big deal!” Alexander continued, plopping down in his seat with enough force to shake the table.

“Alexander, darling, you’re being self-centered again,” Thomas drawled. “And, in case you forgot, it was a big deal. Nine months ago, if you care to remember.”

“Yeah, but now…” Alexander began, before punctuating his statement with a few wild gesticulations, and Thomas simply rolled his eyes. “I’d think someone would notice that I actually have feelings for you besides unadulterated loathing.”

Thomas finally turned to face him. “And why, exactly,” he began, “do you care?”

Alexander paused for a moment and bit his lip. “It’s important to me,” he said finally. “It’s important to me because you’re important to me, and the fact that we’re fucking in love is important to me, and therefore it should be important to everyone else!”

Thomas would later deny his following blush, and instead pressed a quick kiss to Alexander’s lips. “As far as everyone else knows, you’ve been in love with me for at least nine months,” he explained. “But it’s different now—”

“I know that, you know that, but no one else does. I guess we were just really good actors,” Thomas concluded, and couldn’t help but grin at Alexander’s pout. “Now that that crisis is resolved, I have an actual problem to deal with, so if you’d excuse me.”

Alexander just huffed and ate his lunch, shoulder to shoulder with Thomas.

And if they ended up holding hands by the time they were done? That was their business.

Alexander wasn’t an idiot. In fact, he was a genius, with the test scores to prove it. He’d built his whole life upon it, upon the fact that he was smart, that he had the brains, had the words, had the ability to make a difference.

At that moment, however, he felt about as intelligent and observant as a sea slug.

He was in bed—they were in bed, practically knotted together—attempting to silence the noise in his head, attempting to simply sleep, when it happened. Thomas, his Thomas, with his arms wrapped around Alexander’s middle and his head resting above Alexander’s own, pulled him closer and quietly, oh so quietly, murmured, “Finally.”
And the world stopped spinning.

Thomas had said three months, yes, and Alexander had heard him, but he hadn't really thought about it, hadn't really considered it, until now.

*Three months.*

Alexander tensed up as he quickly ran through a mental list of everything that had happened in the last three months.

The vacation with Washington.

The governors’ ball. The morning afterwards.

Thomas’ root canal.

Every little moment whilst Alexander was stuck at home.

The hospital.

Alexander felt his stomach turn.

*Three months.*

How many times had Alexander scoffed or sneered or spat at Thomas? How many times had he thrown his words back at his face? How many sharp words and harsh looks had he tossed in his direction in the past three months?

Alexander’s head was spinning like a top, his stomach churning like the sea in a storm, his heart frozen in his chest.

A kiss against his temple. A hand carding through his hair. “You know, people tend to sleep better when they’re not as high-strung as a fucking tightrope,” Thomas murmured into his hair.

Alexander didn’t know what to do.

Alexander didn’t know what to say.

“Alexander?” Thomas asked, concern oozing off of him in waves.

“I…” Alexander tried to say something—*anything*—but nothing would come out, everything clogging up in his throat.

How many times had he hurt Thomas, just in the last three months?

“Thomas…” Alexander began softly, blindly reaching for Thomas’ hand and squeezing it, needing an anchor, a person, Thomas, *anything*, there, before his thoughts spiralled out of control.

“Yes?” Thomas said when it became clear that Alexander wouldn’t say anything else.

Alexander choked on all the words in his throat, rising and falling and tumbling over for each other in a mad dash to escape. Words would rise to his lips only to be tugged back down a second later.

“Talk to me, darling,” Thomas insisted, tugging on Alexander's arm until he rolled over.

Alexander shook his head wordlessly. He tried to find the right words, but, like sand, they slipped
through his fingers, right when he needed them the most.

What did he want to say? What could he say? ‘I’m sorry for being a dick to you’? Like that even covered everything that Alexander had done wrong. ‘I’m sorry for playing with your feelings and dragging you along for a quarter of a year’? Yeah, no. ‘I’m sorry for being this pathetic fuck-up that you had the misfortune of falling in love with’? A little conceited, but it had potential.

“You mean to tell me that the only time you ever shut up is when I’m literally asking you to talk?” Thomas teased, but the concern in his eyes undercut his tone.

Alexander shrugged. He glanced down at his hands, but quickly averted his eyes when he realized that one of Thomas’ hands was still intertwined in his.

“Come on, Alexander,” Thomas prompted. “Talk to me.” A beat. “You know, this silence is beginning to worry me. What’s wrong?”

Alexander looked away from Thomas’ inquisitive stare.

“Alexander fucking Hamilton,” Thomas finally snapped. “What the hell is going on?”

“I’m sorry,” Alexander blurted out, forcing out the only words he could trust in that moment.

Immediately, Thomas tensed up, his eyes narrowed. “Sorry for what?” he asked, and just the tone of his voice set Alexander on edge.

“I—I just… three months,” Alexander replied, anxious for Thomas to understand. He couldn’t fully put into words what he was feeling—nay, he did not dare, for fear of what he would discover—but he needed Thomas to understand.

He did.

He always did.

Well, always when it came to this, at least.

“I’m not mad, Alexander,” Thomas said, something in his voice that Alexander guessed was supposed to be exasperation, but in actuality just sounded like fondness. Like admiration. It sounded like, Alexander suddenly realized, Thomas. It sounded like nearly every other word Thomas had uttered in the past three months. “I knew what sort of oblivious, unbearable, annoying, asshole-ish mess I’d gotten myself into,” the taller man went on, ignoring Alexander’s internal crisis. “I still know, actually. You’re a dick, Alexander Hamilton, and I love you anyway.”

Alexander blinked twice in bewilderment. “But how? I—I’m the worst, honestly, what the hell, and you’re just going to lie there and tell me that you love me?” he asked in an incredulous voice. Then, all at once, it was as if the dam had broken, and everything spilled out like some sort of goddamn apologetic pyroclastic flow. “Are you not mad? How are you not mad? I’d be fucking pissed, to be completely honest. Actually, I am fucking pissed! I fucking toyed with your heart! What the hell was I doing?! Just—how?! What the fuck?! I—I’m an idiot. That’s it. That’s—that’s just it. I’m the stupidest genius in the whole motherfucking world! And, no, that doesn’t mean you’re right about anything—your policy ideas are still shit—but you, as a person, are actually incredible—well, maybe not incredible; you’re a huge asshole, but so am I, so I guess it works, but either way I love you and yet, I spent so long just making your life undeniably shitty! Jesus H. Christ, what the fuck?! What the fuck?!”

Alexander stopped for a moment, trying to collect his breath and his thoughts, when Thomas raised
an eyebrow and asked, “You done yet?”

“What?” Alexander asked. “No! I mean, yes, if you have something to say, but oh my God, Thomas, I’m so sorry, I understand if you want me to fuck off and get out of your bed or your house or whatever—and shit, I commandeered your bed, what the hell was I thinking, and you just let me force myself into it—and really, just know that I am so, so sor—”

“Sorry. You’re so sorry,” Thomas interrupted with a small grin. “When you start repeating yourself is when you need to stop, darling.”

“But—”


Alexander’s jaw snapped shut with an audible click.

“Thank you. Now, I’m going to try and make this as clear and concise as possible because it is late and I have a meeting with the president tomorrow—”

“Thomas, babe, meeting with the president is your job—”

“Yes, so be quiet so we can get this over with and I can get enough sleep to do that job properly,” Thomas said in exasperation, “because I, unlike certain other people, am a human being who needs sleep to function.”

Alexander snickered despite himself, Thomas’ all-nighter still very much prominent in his mind. “Yeah, you could say that,” he agreed, before sobering up. “But go on. Sorry that—”

“You interrupted me,” Thomas finished for him. “Yeah, I get it.” He spread out his arms. “Alexander Hamilton, you are infuriating. You are the most frustrating, annoying, exasperating”—and Thomas was quoting a dictionary again—“person that I’ve know. Your opinions not so much don’t make sense as are completely illogical and flimsy and insubstantial and just unsustainable in the long term. You yourself are the most attention-drawing, reckless, oblivious, and idiotic genius to ever grace the Earth. You leave socks all over the floor, and your things seem to spontaneously scatter themselves out all over the house, for all that I try to contain them. You spread chaos everywhere you go.

“And yet I love you, hard as that is to believe.” The corners of Thomas’ lip began to twitch in the beginnings of a smile. “I love you, not despite of who you are, but because of it. I know that it seems crazy—and it is, I won’t deny that—and yes, do you piss me off at least four times a day? Of course you do; you wouldn’t be you if you didn’t. But do I wish you were different?” He met Alexander’s eyes squarely. “Never.”

Alexander’s eyes widened in—shock? surprise? Thomas wasn’t sure, but it was definitely something in that direction.

“And—” Thomas went on, only to be interrupted by Alexander.

“And?” Alexander prompted.

Thomas sighed. “Did I forget to mention the part where you keep interrupting me at the most inopportune of moments?” Alexander pointedly mimicked locking his lips and throwing away the key, and Thomas smirked. “Perfect. Now, where was I? Ah, yes. And, you can’t forget that the dickishness was not exactly one-sided. Now, did it, at times, feel as if you were purposely ripping my heart out of my chest and putting it through a blender? Yes. Yes, it did. But if memory serves me right, and let’s be honest, it almost always does, I did call you a ‘morally bankrupt communist puppet
leading a corrupt squadron of irrational left-winged idealists’ three days ago, and that couldn’t have felt nice.”

Thomas watched Alexander’s reaction closely, discerning as much as he could from the furrowed brows and the way he gnawed at his bottom lip. If Alexander’s hair hadn’t been tied up in a ponytail, Thomas was certain that he would have been biting it. Based on the data Thomas had collected from other, similar experiments—of which there were many, and all of which were sorted under *The Care and Handling of Reckless Caribbean Immigrants* in Thomas’ mental filing cabinet—he could conclude that Alexander had realised they had reached an impasse:

In a startling turn of events, Thomas had forgiven Alexander, and Alexander, well, hadn’t.

Thomas really needed to call NASA and warn them about the sudden influx of pigs with avionic abilities.

“So what you’re *saying* is… you’re not upset?” Alexander asked tentatively, and Thomas could have sworn that he felt his heart tie itself into a knot.

“How on Earth could I be upset when I’ve got you right here with me?” Thomas asked sincerely.

He was going for cute, comforting, and romantic.

Apparently, judging by Alexander’s sudden onslaught of laughter, he had missed the mark slightly.

“Oh my God,” Alexander managed between bouts of guffawing laughter. “That—That was the *sappiest*, most *clichéd* thing you have *ever* said! Dear *Lord*, did you steal that from a Hallmark script? I swear, that sounds like something straight out of B-list teen romance novel that’s probably just some sort of ‘quirky’ spin off of Romeo and fucking Juliet!”

Thomas scoffed and rolled his eyes. “Oh, because you could do *so much better*,” he teased, trying not to laugh as he pulled Alexander closer.

“Oh, I *so* could,” Alexander argued. “I most definitely *could*. But,” he paused, smirking up at Thomas, “I actually think I’m just going to kiss you instead.”

He did.

Thomas wouldn’t have had it any other way.

“Happy anniversary,” Alexander said as he waltzed into Thomas’ office and dropped a package of Tasty Cake cupcakes on his desk.

Thomas groaned. “Of *all the days* for a filibuster—”

“Democracy waits for no man, sweetheart,” Alexander teased, sitting down across from Thomas and taking his hands.

Thomas ran his thumb over Alexander’s knuckles and sighed. ”You’re the party leader in all but name,” he pointed out. “Couldn’t you just *call* and ask them to *not do this*?”

Alexander laughed, kissing the back of Thomas’ hand. “You mean to tell me that listening to Bernie Sanders read the entirety of *Julius Caesar* isn’t the romantic evening you had planned?” he teased.

Thomas groaned again.
“Oh, *hush,*” Alexander chided. “Angelica is ordering pizza, and Washington’s getting his ‘home brew’ from the residency. It may not be rose petals and French wine, but we’ll still have a nice night, with the additional bonus of unsettling any homophobes.” He grinned. “Always look on the bright side of life, Jefferson.”

Thomas rolled his eyes and got up from behind his desk. He pulled Alexander close and kissed him soundly. “Could you at least request he read something better than *this*?” he asked once they broke apart.

“Not a Shakespeare fan?”

Thomas scoffed. “Not a Caesar fan,” he corrected.

“What would you prefer, then?” Alexander asked. “Newton’s *Philosophy of Nature?* I’m sorry, but we’re not all *massive nerds*—”

“Tolkien would be nice.”

Alexander paused, looking thoughtful. “Tolkien, I can get behind.”

Thomas scoffed at that. “If you couldn’t get behind Tolkien, this relationship would *never* work,” he said.


“You have *no room* to talk, Alexander,” Thomas said.

Alexander just rolled his eyes, pulling Thomas in for a hug and another brief kiss. “A *year,*” he muttered. “A *whole year.* Can you believe it?”

“No,” Thomas admitted. “Putting up with you? It feels like it’s been a decade *at least.* I think I’ve gone gray at this point.”

Alexander shoved him away, but he was smiling. “Putting up with *me?*” he accused. “I’ll have you know I’m a fucking *delight.*”

“Oh, yeah,” Thomas replied with a snort, “and Stalin was just *misunderstood.* You’re an obnoxious ass *and you know it.*”

Alexander shrugged. “Yes, well, you’re a ostentatious *prick,* so we’re even,” he shot back.

Thomas smiled and ran a hand through Alexander’s hair, his grin growing ever wider as Alexander all but melted into the touch. “A match made in heaven, I suppose,” he conceded.

Alexander kissed him again.

Chapter End Notes

Would you look at that. It only took five months and 110k words to get them together.

And with that, Act I of this fic is officially concluded. Some news: we are going on a
five-week long hiatus (give or take a week), to catch up on sleep and studying, get some writing done in advance, and let you guys enjoy the domestic life of Alexander&Thomas, because, when we come back, it’s back to Crazytown Politics. They may have gotten together, but their story has only just begun.

We hope that you've enjoyed the story so far! We'll see you in a few weeks! And remember: comments are the best gift you can give <3
Welcome Back After Hiatus, aka Fluffity Fluff, aka In Which Thomas Jefferson Is Going Home

Chapter Summary

And Alexander Tags Along To Fight All Virginian Conservatives, Which There Are Many Of Since This Is Fucking Virginia

Chapter Notes

GUESS WHO'S BACK
BACK AGAIN

it's These Two Idiots (and Thomas and Alexander, we suppose)

we know we said five weeks, but.. finals. musicals. internships. college classes. theatre. life. trying to survive the reign of donald trump. it's been a busy time.

but! we're back, and back to our regular update schedule!

and if you thought there was drama in act I, well,,, hold on to your socks, folks.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Thomas was pretty sure that the whole butterflies in your stomach thing was supposed to stop, eventually.

It’d been months since he’d started dating Alexander—really, actually dating him—and Thomas still felt simultaneously giddy and absolutely flabbergasted every time he even thought about Alexander.

Waking up in the morning with Alexander lying beside him, curled up into Thomas’ chest and occasionally clinging to his shirt, was like waking up from a dream and into another dream, except this one was even better. Getting to work and placing a kiss to Alexander’s cheek as he headed for his office, only to be pulled down into a ‘real kiss, not some half-assed bullshit’ was like something straight out of a fairytale. Going home with him every night, holding hands in the car and cuddling together on the sofa as they each did their separate work, was nothing short of breathtaking.

Thomas was no relationship expert by any means, but he was almost certain that, at some point, the honeymoon phase was supposed to end—that’s why they called it a phase.

“Hey, babe, do you want anything from Starbucks?” Alexander asked, not even looking up from the report in his hands. He was sitting on the couch in Thomas’ office, claiming that it was easier to work there, away from ‘fucking capitalist asshats’ (Thomas thought it better to avoid reminding him that Thomas himself was a so-called ‘capitalist asshat’), and had, apparently, gotten a notice from someone that some aid or intern or whatever was going on a coffee run.

Honestly, Thomas wasn’t sure that Alexander didn’t have something on his phone that alerted him
every time caffeine became available. Or was about to. Or whatever sorcery shit he pulled.

“Yeah, iced—” Thomas began.

“’Iced coffee, not too much milk, two scoops of sugar, no espresso, my God, Alexander, that much caffeine will kill you someday’,” Alexander recited in what Thomas could only guess was supposed to be a Southern accent.

As it was, he sounded like a drunk Colonel Sanders trying to speak whilst yodelling.

Because Thomas was a mature, respectable government official who handled international affairs for the most powerful nation in the world for a living, he had enough self-control to keep from sticking his tongue out at his boyfriend.

Instead, he threw a paperclip at him.

“Arrogant ass,” he grumbled, before continuing, “If you knew, why’d you ask?”

“I’ve heard that it’s the polite thing to do,” Alexander replied, taking the paperclip and slipping it into the rubberband keeping his hair up. “Thanks for this, by the way. Someone keeps stealing mine.”

With that, Alexander finally met Thomas’ eyes, a wide, sincere smile on his face.

Thomas couldn’t have been happier.

Thomas didn’t know why, exactly, they had been called into the Oval. There was no scheduled meeting between the three of them for another two days, and, as far as Thomas knew, there hadn’t been any sort of crisis lately that would require a special, private meeting between Alexander, Washington, and himself.

So sue him if he was a bit nervous as he took a seat on the couch in front of the Resolute Desk.

“Sir, if you don’t mind me asking, why are we here?” Alexander asked, his leg bouncing as he perched on the edge of his seat. Thomas barely even noticed he’d placed his hand on Alexander’s knee until Alexander covered it with his own.

Washington sighed. “That,” he replied, looking pointedly at where their hands were now clasped between them. “That is why you are here.”

Thomas glanced at Alexander from the corner of his eye even as he withdrew his hand, clearing his throat.

“If you could elaborate, sir,” Alexander said, the small pout on his face seeming to toe the border between petulant and adorable.

“I thought there was no way the pair of you could possibly cause more disruptions in this building than you already did. I thought that, surely, the hours-long shouting matches and decidedly unsubtle quote-unquote call out posts on social media were the peak of workplace disturbances within this administration,” Washington went on, his tone somewhere between disbelief and exasperation. “But somehow, somehow, you two have managed to become worse.

“I could handle it earlier in the year—you two were just settling into your relationship, I knew you
would go through your honeymoon phase, and that was fine, but, gentlemen, it has been months, months, and still, just yesterday, I was told that the pair of your scarred Vice President Adams when he walked in on the two of you making out in Thomas’ office!"

Thomas looked over at Alexander from the corner of his eye and was thankful that the little shit at least had the good sense to look thoroughly chided, even if Thomas could see just the barest hints of a smirk on his lips.

“The two of you are grown men. Professionals. Some have even claimed geniuses—the finest minds of our time! Why, then, must you act like a pair of—of teenagers, copping for a feel every chance you get?!” Washington seemed to have found his stride now. “I don’t understand! You live together, for God’s sake! Surely you can keep all of that at home! And it’s not even just that! Yesterday, Tench spent half an hour looking for you, Thomas, and where were you?”

Thomas didn’t reply.

“In Alexander’s office,” Washington continued when it became apparent that Thomas wouldn’t answer the question. He looked mere moments away from throwing his hands in the air in a ‘fuck it’ gesture. “You were in Alexander’s office, drinking Starbucks on his couch, apparently.”

“Sir—” Alexander started.

“Alexander, son, I’m happy that you’ve found love, honestly, but there is a line,” Washington interrupted. “Please, please, just… try and maintain some level of professionalism.”

Alexander toed the line between amused and ashamed. “Yes sir,” he replied quickly. “Sorry, sir.”

Washington sighed again and looked over at Thomas. “And you, Jefferson?”

“I’ll be sure to act in a way that is more fitting for someone of my status in the future, Mr. President,” Thomas replied neutrally, ignoring the way Alexander was nudging his foot.

Washington ran a hand over his face. “Good. Good. Now, I’ve got a press conference in twenty, and I fear Ms. Schuyler will have my head if I don’t look over my cards beforehand. You’re both dismissed.”

As Thomas left the Oval Office, Alexander at his side, he could have sworn he heard the President muttering something like a prayer for patience.

“I believe that we all know why we’re here,” said James.

Thomas fought the urge to straighten out his suit as he nodded.

Ryan’s eyes narrowed. “I believe that the specifics have been somewhat vague,” he admitted.

He was seated at the head of a long table, which was filled with the entire leadership of the Republican party. Among the attendees were McConnell, Ryan, Pence (though what the man was still doing here after his public feud with James, Thomas had no idea), Mehlman, Thomas, and of course James himself.

“We are here because of the MeToo affair,” Thomas said curtly.

Mehlman crossed his fingers together into a square. “Hashtag MeToo,” he added.
There came a scoff from someone several seats down, but none of the attendants even glanced in the direction of the sound, choosing to ignore it.

James cleared his throat. “Secretary Jefferson and former Chairman Mehlman are essentially correct. There has been an uproar over the accusations of several GOP officials of sexual harassment. It’s a major problem, not only because it’s hurting our public image but because these allegations may very well be true, which implies that our very own officials don’t believe in the inalienable rights of man and woman to personal freedom, which, yes, include the right to say no to sex. This is an intervention, if you will.” He paused, making sure to meet everyone’s eyes before he continued. “I will not tolerate sexual harassment in this party. We have all been elected, by the people, trusted, by the people, and we cannot repay the trust the people have placed in us by being duplicitous and acting contrary to our policies.” He surveyed them. “If any one of you has, at any point, done something of this sort, I would have you quietly approach me and withdraw your right to the seat you are filling. If you then choose to confess and apologize, that is your business, and I cannot make you do anything that pertains to your personal life, but if you have any love for this party, don’t disrespect it by ruining it with your careless actions.”

Cornyn harrumphed. “That is all nice and sweet, Mr Speaker, but how do you expect anyone to renounce a lifetime of work and engagement over one small misdemeanor?” he demanded.

Thomas listened to the discussion with mounting dread growing within him. It was as if his insides had tied themselves into a knot that threatened to suffocate him.

It had been consensual.

He hadn’t forced himself upon anyone.

*It had been consensual.*

But had it, really?

When Thomas looked up again, Tony Parker was crossing his arms. “It’s in the nature of any red-blooded man. Or most men,” he added at a glance from James. “I don’t expect you to understand. It’s like being presented with a sirloin steak and being told you can’t eat it.”

At that, James’ eyes narrowed, and Thomas fought an urge to smirk. He had a feeling that he knew what was coming.

“Well,” James began slowly, leaning back so as to be able to survey the entire table without turning his head back and forth, “funny that you should bring that up, because, as a matter of fact, I presented my two dogs with a pair of actual sirloin steaks, then told them ‘no’.

“Now, Pepper, my older dog, is a bit more well-mannered than Salt, who’s a hyperactive terrier with the attention span of a sleep-deprived Hamilton.” A few heads turned to look at Thomas at the comment, but he didn’t react beyond a light scoff. “What happened was the following: Pepper didn’t even approach the steak, as she has been trained not to touch that which isn’t hers and which I haven’t explicitly allowed her to—be it food or toys. When she heard the ‘no’, she turned away and disappeared, as she realized that the steak definitely wasn’t for her and she wasn’t going to get it anyway.

“Now Salt, being a little younger and somewhat less well-trained, initially approached the steak, but when I told her ‘no’, she backed off immediately. Note that she didn’t argue, didn’t nag, didn’t manipulate, didn’t try to badger me into giving her the steak. She was told ‘no’, and she complied.”
James stapled his fingers together as he stared into the eyes of every person seated at the table with detached amusement. “So, essentially, if you are using that analogy to excuse rape, you’re saying you have less self-control and fewer basic social manners than two of my dogs.” He finally smirked. “That also probably means you should be neutered and kept on a leash.”

Thomas could no longer keep the grin off his face as he watched the faces of the rest of the guests. Some had paled during the course of James’ speech, while others looked like they had suddenly bit into a sour lemon.

Leave it to James to destroy their arguments by using his dogs—which, Thomas knew from experience, were exceptionally well-trained. If James ever decided to quit politics, Thomas had no doubts that James could make a decent living as a dog trainer.

Mehlman unexpectedly whistled into the ensuing silence. “Well, Speaker Madison, you seem to have an airtight argument.” His smile, however small, looked genuine. “Gentlemen, I cannot in good conscience not support the speaker’s plan.”

There was a general murmur of assent, though Thomas did see some dissatisfied looks being exchanged.

He squared his shoulders. Well, no one could win everything. As long as the dissentients didn’t try to ruin the GOP, they could disagree in private all they wanted. It was a free country, after all.

Thomas first brought it up while the two of them were sitting on the couch at home, each working on their own projects in companionable silence.

“Washington is terming out soon,” he said, his voice much less casual than he’d intended it to be.

Alexander simply nodded, never looking up from his work.

“What means there’s going to be a new president.”

Alexander nodded again.

“What if, hypothetically, I was that new president?”

That certainly caught Alexander’s attention, his head snapping to face Thomas, his eyes wide.

“What,” he demanded, his voice so dry that there was nothing about them that even gave the impression of a question.

“Just a thought,” Thomas hurried to add. “Nothing is set in stone, not yet. I haven’t even asked James about it, and no one really knows how the party would react to it. There are a lot of variables, but just hypothetically. And I thought I should bring it up with you first, seeing as how we’re in a committed, stable relationship and all—”

“You want to run for president?” Alexander asked.

“I mean, maybe, if everything—”

Alexander crossed his arms. “It’s a yes or no question, Thomas. If I wanted to be dating Aaron Burr, I would be.”

Thomas all but recoiled at the thought of Alexander with Aaron Burr before squaring his shoulders
and saying, “Yes.”

“Thomas—”

“Xander—”

“Don’t call me—”

“Just hear me out!” Thomas shouted. “I’ve been thinking about it for a while now. You know it’s always been my goal, and now everything seems settled enough for me to have a chance. I will have to ask James about it, but in most of the polls I’ve seen, the majority of people would support a gay president. I wouldn’t be able to garner the support of the whole GOP, of course, but most of them are sensible—” Alexander momentarily interrupted him with a disbelieving laugh, and Thomas swatted his shoulder. “Oh, shut up. They’re sensible enough to understand that me being gay doesn’t make me an immoral person. As for the votes I’ll lose, well, I’m sure I’ll be able to sway at least some of the more moderate left.”

Alexander stared at him for a moment. “And where does this leave me?” he asked. “I’m not going to endorse you, Thomas. I won’t abandon you, but I certainly can’t support you. Either I end up looking like I’ve given the middle finger to my beliefs, or I look like I don’t care about you, or, worst of all, I’ll look wishy-washy.” The look of absolute horror on his face shouldn’t have been as adorable as it was. “Besides, to run an effective campaign, you’d have to quit your job! You’d give that up?”

Thomas held up a hand. “We’re not talking about giving up anything yet. Full-scale campaigning won’t begin for another year, at least. I just thought I’d let you know that I’m thinking about it,” he said. “Besides, there’s talk around the party of Donald Trump trying to run again, and if that happens, well…” He paused. “I shudder to about the fate of this nation.”

The subject of Thomas running for president didn’t come back up for another month. A month of dancing around the subject, a month of both of them pretending that Thomas’ prolonged meetings with Madison and other party officials were just day to day business, a month of ignoring the thing that lay like a river between them.

Until…

“I’m running for president.”

Thomas immediately regretted the words. Not because he regretted the actions behind the words, but because he wasn’t fucking Alexander, he had tact.

Alexander slowly closed his laptop, his eyes drifting up to meet Thomas’. “It’s official, then?” he asked.

“Official to those who matter—”

“The American people matter, Thomas—”

“You know what I mean,” Thomas interrupted, waving off Alexander’s sanctimonious babbling. “The party leaders know. Now, I don’t have the full support of the GOP—”

“As I was saying,” he continued. “I don’t have the full support of the GOP, but I have the support of most of the higher-ups, James included. And as for those who aren’t backing me, I highly doubt that, when push comes to shove and I win the nomination—”

“Wow, Thomas, maybe you should work on your self-confidence—”

“Would you stop interrupting me?” Thomas finally asked, throwing his hands up in the air. From the corner of his eye, he could see Alexander’s self-satisfied smirk. “Puny little curr,” he grumbled.

“Love you too, dearest,” Alexander cooed, pressing a kiss to Thomas’ cheek and grinning. “Now, continue. No more interruptions, I promise.”

Thomas huffed but proceeded. “When I win the nomination, they’ll hardly have a choice in the matter. Unless your side of the aisle somehow finds Jesus incarnate and convinces him to run for the Democratic seat, I don’t think they can really justify not endorsing me.”

Alexander stared at him for a moment. “You do realise that your base almost entirely consists of conservative Christians, right?” he asked slowly. “And, newsflash, babe, you’re not exactly the poster child for the Bible Belt anymore.”

“I know,” Thomas conceded, “but I’d like to think that the Republican Party cares more about actual issues than something as inconsequential as who I’m dating.”

Alexander snorted. “Ever the optimist.” He paused. “Also, it’s whom,” he added.

“Point is,” Thomas said, taking Alexander’s hand, “I’m announcing it to the public soon, and in a month or so I’ll start campaigning. I need to know how you feel about this.”

Alexander sighed, running his free hand through his hair. “I suppose if any of you lot have to be the leader of the free world, I’d prefer for it to be you. At least I know you have a heart,” he confessed, a small smile on his face.

Thomas positively beamed, leaning in and kissing Alexander, his arms wrapping around the other man’s waist. “I love you,” he muttered once they’d broken apart. “Although James would make a good leader too.”

“Please don’t talk about Madison right now. You’re killing the mood.”

“Alexander…”

“Okay, fine,” Alexander pretended to whine. “I love you too” he continued, the conviction in his voice enough to make Thomas swoon and blush like some sort of silly school girl.

God, he was in deep.

Thomas surveyed the crowd. It was a rather large one. A lot of people had come to hear him speak. That tended to happen when one had been the subject of the greatest outing since Poles had outed the Russians out of their country.

On one hand, it was great, because the fact that he had a large audience meant that people were still interested in him, and he had a shot at this.

On the other hand, people.
Thomas’ eyes finally settled on a slight woman, some distance away. That was good. That was safe.

Picturing the audience naked had never worked for Thomas. Rather than set him at ease, it had weirded him out to the point where he couldn’t stick to the script and stuttered and fumbled his way through an awkward performance.

He swallowed and fought the urge to reach for the water bottle. He didn’t need to drink, dammit. He just needed to, well, speak.

How did Alexander make it look so effortless again?

Well. In for a penny, in for a pound.

“That you for all for coming!” he began brightly. Okay. So far, so good. “It’s great to have you all here. I mean, I know that you could all probably be doing better things”—shit, Jefferson, don’t sound so self-deprecating, no one wants to elect a president with no self-esteem—”not that I’m not interesting”—aaand too much the other way; nobody wanted an elitist snob who can’t see past their own nose, either—”but you get it.”

Someone blinked.

Thomas internally cursed.

The cameras flashed because of course they did.

Thomas briefly tried to remember just whose idea it had been to allow the cameras. Ah, yes. His own. Way to go, Jefferson. Show off that 170 IQ of yours.

“Now, I won’t be boring you with going off about who I am, because you find that out for yourself with a quick Google search—or ask your kids to do it for you, they’re supposedly brilliant at that—and we have limited time and more important things to get through. Suffice to say that my name is Thomas Jefferson; I am the current Secretary of State, and, before this, I served as the Governor of Virginia, and a delegate in the Virginia House of Representatives before that. I like helping people, given half a chance. That is what I am good at.

“Now, as anyone who hasn’t been cosplaying Obi-Wan Kenobi and living as an Amish hermit for the past one and a half years knows, I’m gay. I’m openly gay and dating Alexander Hamilton.” Thomas waited for the murmurs to die down before continuing. He made sure to glance in a different direction this time. “That in itself, however, does not change any of my policies or values that I’ve had since before coming out. I am still the same person whom you elected Governor of Virginia, or before that. I still stand for the same principles: the rights of the states, the right to bear arms, the right to choose what you want and need for yourself, rather than have it forced upon you by the federal government. In short, I stand for the freedom of the individual.”

Thomas snickered quietly as he shifted his eyes to another person.

“Someone dear to me—you know who you are—recently pointed out to me that I’m not exactly the poster child for the Bible Belt anymore, to which I replied that I’d like to think that the Republican Party cares more about actual issues than something as inconsequential as who I’m dating. That person then proceeded to be a grammar Nazi and told me that it’s whom, not who.” A few people laughed, and Thomas let a small smile creep up onto his lips. “Regardless of the possible grammar mistakes, I still hold on to that belief. I believe that the people will make the right choice. I refuse—refuse—to believe that people are so blinded by who one’s partner is that they will not elect a legitimate, competent candidate as president.”
“I don’t want to have a repeat of four years ago, when we almost elected a man whose very existence was undermining the very foundations of democracy. That is why I intend to run for the presidency in 2016.”

The cameras flashed again.

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They were sitting on the couch when Thomas’ phone went off, Alexander curled up under Thomas’ arm and still somehow still managing to use his laptop as Thomas read over another briefing on the North Korean Nuclear Crisis.

Thomas pulled his phone out of his pocket and scanned the message. And then looked at it again. And again.

“Who is it?” Alexander asked, not looking up from his computer.

“My mother.”

That got Alexander’s attention. “Are you serious?” he asked, turning to look over Thomas’ shoulder.

“Completely,” Thomas muttered, rereading the message for what had to be the seventh time. “She wants me to come down for a few days next month. I’ve already accepted. Of course, I’d feel much better about the whole situation if you were to join me.”

Alexander’s movements stilled. “Really?” There was something in his voice that Thomas didn’t want to analyze.

Thomas rolled his eyes. “No, I make it a habit to joke about inviting my boyfriend to meet my conservative family. Yes, really.”

Alexander blinked. “Well, if you’re sure…” He trailed off.

Thomas sniffed. “Yes, I’m sure.” He tapped his phone a few times. “There. I just told Mother that you’ll be accompanying me.”

Alexander’s eyes narrowed. “Did she actually invite me?”

“Well, she didn’t not invite you,” Thomas said simply.

Alexander snickered. “Why, Mr Jefferson, how positively Slytherin of you.”

Thomas swatted at his boyfriend, who easily ducked the hand. “Don’t insult me in my own house.”

“I thought that it was our house,” Alexander teased.

“Don’t use my words against me.”

Alexander flashed him a brilliant smile. “How can I resist, though, if it’s so easy?”

A few hours later, and it seemed Alexander had new ideas about the whole trip (and wasn’t that just typical).

“But have you thought about how closely this follows—” he started, but was cut off by Thomas’ long-suffering sigh and statement of:

"I know."

“I mean, it’s a bit suspicious that this invitation comes so closely after—”

“I know.”
“Actually, more than a little—”

“Alexander,” Thomas cut him off with the little amount of patience he had left, “I know.”

Alexander’s eyes narrowed. ”So why aren't you—"

"Shut up, Alexander."

Alexander slumped back in his seat. “It feels like you’re not listening to me,” he complained.

Thomas rolled his eyes. “Oh, am I the one not listening to you?” he mocked.

“Yes!” Alexander exclaimed, happy to finally be able to convey his thoughts.

Thomas groaned and let his head fall onto the table with a soft thud. “It’s like talking to a brick wall,” he told no one in particular. “Everything just”—he made a vague back-and-forth gesture—“bounces right back.”

Alexander cheerfully went on ignoring Thomas’ muttered protests. “They’re only contacting you now because it might boost their image or whatever. Honestly, Thomas, you shouldn’t give them the satisfaction. You’re not fucking Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, they don’t get to bully and ostracize you and then suddenly become your biggest fans the moment you prove yourself useful!”

“Have you thought that maybe, just maybe, I don’t want to remain estranged from my entire family for the rest of my life?” Thomas drawled. “And that I might like to speak to my parents again before they die?”

“They’re using you!” Alexander protested.

Thomas groaned and resisted the urge to tug at his hair. “And I used them for the first eighteen years of my life! I’m not going to turn down an opportunity to make amends with my family, Alexander!”

Alexander huffed and crossed his arms, for a moment looking the perfect picture of a petulant toddler. “Fine,” he grumbled. “Whatever.”

It took all of Thomas’ ever-thinning self-control not to flip him off.

As they stepped off the plane in Charlottesville, the only word Thomas could possibly think of to describe the atmosphere surrounding them was ominous. Dread seemed to be leaking from the floor, creeping up Thomas’ legs to his chest, its frigid claws getting nearer and nearer to his—

“You okay?” Alexander’s voice cut through Thomas’ ever-darkening thoughts like a hot knife through butter. “You look kinda pale.”

Thomas managed a smile. “I’m fine, darling. It’s just a bit chilly in here is all,” he replied, running his thumb over Alexander’s knuckles.

Alexander clearly didn’t buy it. His eyes narrowed and his whole face pinched in an expression that clearly said ‘you’re full of shit, but I’m not going to press. Yet.’

Alexander couldn’t even keep his opinions to himself when he was silent.

Thomas grinned despite himself. God, he loved this man. “C’mon,” he said, giving Alexander’s hand one last squeeze before dropping it. “I’m sure Mother has sent a car.”
“Sent a car?” Alexander repeated incredulously. “So she’s going to guilt you into visiting after cutting you off for over a year, but she won’t come pick you up from the airport?”

Thomas glared at him for a moment. “My parents wouldn’t meet me at the airport if I was returning from being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize,” he replied. “It’s nothing personal, it’s just not what they do.”

Alexander scoffed and rolled his eyes.

“Just come on,” Thomas huffed before grabbing Alexander’s wrist and dragging him off to the baggage claim.

Alexander didn’t know jack-shit about cars, but even he knew this was a nice car. And not just a nice car—Alexander had ridden in plenty of nice cars, be it with Thomas or Washington or the occasions in which it just wouldn’t do for the Treasury Secretary to arrive at whatever event in a shitty Camry—but a nice car. The kind of car that made him feel like a dirty little kid in the Caribbean, like he was unworthy or lesser compared to the obvious wealth that oozed from the seats. Alexander was pretty sure that was the desired effect.

“Do you need to pee or something?” Thomas asked, raising an eyebrow.

Alexander waved him off. “I’m fine, don’t worry,” he muttered, shifting in his seat.

“Well, you’re squirming like a damn worm. Just relax, okay? I can have Julian turn on the TV if you want, you can yell at Sean Hannity or whatever, just calm down,” Thomas snapped, but his eyes belied his the-devil-may-care attitude. He rested his hand on Alexander’s knee.

Alexander just shook his head. “I’m good,” he repeated, forcing himself to smile up at Thomas. “Just a bit restless from the flight, I promise.”

Thomas nodded, bringing his arm up to drape around Alexander’s shoulders, and Alexander willed himself to sit still. “So,” he began, hoping to distract himself from the ever-growing itch under his skin, “what’s Monticello like?”

“We’re not going to Monticello until later this week, darling,” Thomas corrected with a lazy smirk. As anxious as this whole situation made Alexander, it seemed to put Thomas at ease. “Right now, we’re headed to Shadwell.”

Alexander baulked for a moment before asking, “What’s Shadwell?”

Thomas pulled him closer. “It’s the family home where I grew up. Monticello’s just the summer estate; technically, I’m not supposed to inherit it until Father dies—that is, if I’m not disowned first—but it’s mine in all but name. I’ve actually redone the place recently. You’ll love it,” he rambled on, an easy grin gracing his features.

Alexander, however, felt his stomach roll. He knew Thomas was rich, knew he came from money—it was actually impossible not to know—but that didn’t stop his surprise. He’d seen pictures of Monticello—a large, red brick mansion surrounded by acres of land, intermittent with groves and gardens and streams. It was huge, and no doubt cost a fortune.

Alexander had, for some reason, always assumed that Monticello was where Thomas grew up, where his family lived. Now, to hear that it was just the summer estate, that Thomas’ family had not
one but two separate manors while Alexander had grown up in the little two bedroom flat above the shop where his mother worked... Inadequacy bubbled up in his stomach.

“Oh,” was all he could manage for a moment, before mentally shaking himself. “Then what’s Shadwell like?”

Thomas seemed oblivious to Alexander’s crisis, pressing a kiss to his hairline before continuing. “I used to think it was a castle,” he said. “It’s large and white, with pillars and terraces and these huge windows with black shutters. My siblings and I, we used to play knights and dragons, running around with sticks and cardboard shields, ducking behind columns and beneath the stairs and in the little nooks and cubby holes in the walls.”

For a moment, Alexander felt himself relax, carried away on the image of a young Thomas giggling as he raced down the halls, brandishing his stick like a Viking’s longsword. “That sounds wonderful,” Alexander admitted.

“Mother would get so upset with us,” Thomas proceeded, his tone a bit wistful, a bit melancholy. “The girls weren’t supposed to get so dirty, and Randy and I weren’t supposed to be so loud in the house, but we never cared.”

Alexander took a moment to study his lover, to take in the way the warm Virginia sunlight caught him through the window, the relaxed way he lounged in his seat, a content smile on his face as he toyed with the ends of Alexander’s hair. Alexander himself leaned up, just a bit, to kiss him chastely before resting his head on Thomas’ chest.

The static under his skin wasn’t gone, but as he relaxed into his boyfriend, he could ignore it.

“Here we are,” Thomas said as they pulled up in front of a large gate.

Alexander peered at the property spreading out before them: acres upon acres of gardens, forest, and farmland. And in the middle of it all: a large mansion, as ostentatious as any Alexander had ever seen—and Alexander had once been to Madison’s personal estate that the man had turned into a dog hotel in all but name. That, as impressive as it had seemed back then, was nothing compared to what he was now seeing.

“Here?” His voice sounded a little faint even to his own ears. “This is where you grew up?”

Thomas nodded silently. Alexander was oddly grateful that his boyfriend didn’t speak; he didn’t think that he had it in him to formulate an intelligent answer. It had been a long time since he had been made to feel quite so inadequate, but this whole trip seemed to have as its express goal to do just that.

Thomas seemed to read Alexander’s thoughts, for he had reached for Alexander’s hand, intertwined their fingers, and gave the hand a gentle squeeze.

“Don’t worry,” he said quietly. “They’re not going to approve of you—"

“I certainly hope not,” Alexander muttered under his breath.

“—but their opinion doesn’t matter,” Thomas went on.

Alexander fixed Thomas with a scrutinizing look. “It seems to matter to you,” he pointed out.
Thomas stared at Alexander, before glancing down and focusing on his fingernails. “Well…” he trailed off, his head in the clouds, then seemed to gather his wits about him. “It shouldn’t matter to me.”

“And I shouldn’t skip sleep every other day, but we are who we are,” Alexander parried. He fixed Thomas with an expectant look. “It does matter to you. Their opinion matters to you.” It wasn’t a question.

Thomas let out a sigh. “I guess,” he admitted at length. “It’s just that… it shouldn’t,” he repeated himself, as if mere repetition would change anything.

Alexander snorted, but let Thomas take his time.

Thomas’ eyes were still on his fingers, although why anyone would think that examining their fingernails for this long was a good excuse to avoid confrontation, Alexander would never understand. True, others—dumber people—might believe him, but if there was one thing Alexander had never been, it was dumb. It was, in Alexander’s opinion, too blatant an excuse not to be glaringly obvious, and Alexander almost wished that Thomas would have at least shown him the courtesy of making up a believable lie if he was going to lie about being okay.

Unless…

Alexander’s brain came to a sudden halt.

Unless Thomas wanted Alexander to know but didn’t know how to go about telling him.

Honestly, that sounded just like Thomas.

Alexander shook his head in exasperation. His eyes flickered to their interwoven fingers, and he returned the squeeze from moments earlier.

“It’s going to be okay,” he murmured quietly. “I know that your father isn’t going to be happy with me here, or with us in general, really, but I’ll try not to intentionally start any arguments.” He paused and took in Thomas’ grateful eyes. “If he provokes me, however,” Alexander felt compelled to add, “all bets are off.”

Thomas leaned back in his seat. “I would have expected no less.” He took another moment to gather himself, before sighing. “Okay. Let’s go,” he said, almost to himself, as he pushed open the car door.

For a moment, Alexander felt as if he couldn’t get his legs to move; it was almost as if his body itself was saying nope, no way. He huffed and shook his head, doing his best to table his hesitations for the time being before following Thomas to the front doors of the gigantic house in front of him.

He thought that he heard Thomas whisper, “Well, here goes nothing,” before ringing the doorbell, but it could just have been his imagination.

The door was opened by a short woman in a black and white dress. Unless Mrs Jefferson was into cosplay, which Alexander seriously doubted, this was the Jeffertsons’ maid. It just figured that they’d have a maid. They probably had more than one, actually, but Alexander had forgotten to ask. It seemed that there were a lot of things he had forgotten to ask Thomas, or else a lot of things he hadn’t wanted to know. Granted, it wasn’t like him to run away from his problems, but it also wasn’t like him to follow his boyfriend into hostile territory like a lost puppy.

The woman stared at Thomas with dark eyes. “Master Thomas,” she said finally. “It’s been a long time, sir.” She glanced at Alexander silently but didn’t voice any questions she might have had.
Thomas smiled, and if the smile seemed a little strained around the edges… Well, who but Alexander could tell? Hopefully not the maid. “Too long,” Thomas agreed. “Isabel”—he motioned for Alexander to step forward, and Alexander did—“this is Alexander Hamilton, my boyfriend. Alexander, this is Isabel Bagwell, our housekeeper.”

Alexander plastered a grin on his face as he shook her proffered hand. If Thomas wanted him to be charming, charming was what he would be. “Enchanted, ma’am.”

He wondered if it would be weird to kiss her hand like some sort of aristocratic gentleman. Probably not; Thomas seemed to come from the kind of life where shit like this was still done, no matter how outdated the tradition.

Still, Alexander had standards.

He let go of Isabel’s hand, and the woman stared at it, as though scrutinizing a foreign entity. It wasn’t a hostile look, either; if anything, it just looked… lost.

“Yes, Alexander thought somewhat viciously, gay people are aliens, and we leave slime wherever we go, so make sure to wash your hands after coming into contact with us.

Thomas rolled his eyes, which meant that some of Alexander’s thoughts must have shown on his face.

“Are my parents currently home?” Thomas asked Isabel, suddenly all business-like.

Isabel’s eyes snapped back to Thomas. “Your mother is, sir, but Master Peter has left on business and will not be back until the evening, sir.”

Thomas stifled a small sigh. Alexander could sympathize. It would have been much easier to tackle both parents at the same time. As hard as that conversation would be, at least he wouldn’t need to have it twice.

Then Alexander blinked, and Thomas’ artificial smile was back in place. “Thank you, Isabel,” he said politely. “Would you please have Terry bring up our bags into my rooms?”

Rooms?

What the hell.

Isabel curtseyed. “Of course, sir.”

Alexander trailed after Thomas as he made his way into the house. Somehow, without needing to be told, Thomas knew where to find his mother, although Alexander’s head was already swirling at the number of turns they had taken. Thomas had failed to inform him that his family estate was a literal labyrinth.

Then again, that seemed like such a typical Thomas thing to do.

Thomas came to a stand-still in front of a non-descript door. He seemed to steel himself—though why, Alexander wasn’t certain, though he had his suspicions.

Alexander pressed a hand to Thomas’ shoulder, reminding him of his presence. Hopefully, it would help ground Thomas in the here and now, instead of whatever past memories he had become trapped in.
“Hey,” he said quietly, “it’s going to be okay. No matter what happens there,”—he indicated the room with his head—”you have me, remember?”

A wan smile made its way onto Thomas’ face. “I know, darling.” With that, he raised a hand and knocked on the door.

There was a heavy silence for a moment, before an older feminine voice said, “Come in,” in the most patronizing tone Alexander had ever fucking heard, and he had spent time around Mitch McTurtle, or, God forbid, Ted Cruz.

Alexander shot Thomas a look that said ‘Are you kidding me?; Thomas steadily ignored it in favour of pushing open the door.

Alexander’s eyes took in the room. It was a living room—or would have been, if not for the sheer amount of small sofas and unfinished paintings and decorations that looked too gaudy to be seen outside of an IKEA furniture catalog, and what the hell was this place even—one which was empty except for one woman lounging in one of the couches.

Next to him, Thomas very carefully did not freeze.

“Thomas,” Mrs Jefferson said coolly as she looked at them. She dismissed Alexander with barely a glance, instead locking eyes with Thomas.

Thomas inclined his head. “Mother.”

“It’s good to see you,” Mrs Jefferson said in a tone that implied the exact opposite. Her eyes rove over Alexander’s slight frame. “How… nice of you to bring a friend.”

Alexander made as if to cross his arms, his earlier promise to Thomas not to pick fights with his parents already forgotten, but Thomas’ tight grip on his arm stopped him.

“Mother,” Thomas repeated, his voice frigid, “this is Alexander Hamilton, my boy friend. You might have heard.”

Thomas’ mother let out a strangled sound at the back of her throat. She let her eyes flicker over Alexander, silently sizing him up with calculating eyes, and honestly, if anyone had asked Alexander to describe a live Cruella de Vil, this woman would have been it.

“Pleasure,” Cruella finally said. Her mouth curled up in distaste.

Alexander’s nostrils flared. “Likewise, ma’am,” he drawled, infusing his words with enough venom to fell an elephant.

Cruella de Vil looked taken aback; next to him, Thomas looked to be on the verge of strangling Alexander. Alexander reconsidered his decision to tell Thomas that his mother was the real-life equivalent of a puppy-murdering, dalmatian-obsessed crazy lady.

Suddenly, Alexander had an idea.

He turned to look at Thomas, a malicious smirk on his lips. “Thomas, love,” he emphasized, and took great pleasure in watching Cruella de Jefferson stiffen almost instantaneously. Ha. Take that. “I knew that you said that your mother is an absolute charmer, but I hadn’t expected this warm a welcome.” One of his hands sneaked its way around Thomas’ waist, the fluidity of the movement indicating months of practice.
Thomas’ eyes narrowed as he shot a warning look Alexander’s way. Alexander ignored him easily, watching in satisfaction as Cruella’s hands clenched into fists, her nails digging into her skin hard enough to leave lasting marks.

“Yes, well.” Thomas’ mother cleared her throat. “I will leave you to settle in.” With that, she turned on her heels and left, trying not to look like she was hurrying out of the room.

Alexander blinked as he watched her leave. He absentmindedly leaned against Thomas, and a warm hand wrapped itself around the back of Thomas’ neck. “Is it just me, or was that last bit… weird?”

Thomas’ eyes fluttered closed when a thumb began rubbing circles over his tense muscles. “You shouldn’t have provoked her,” he admonished.

Brown eyes met brown. “I didn’t provoke her!” Alexander protested.

“So what would you call that little stunt, hm?” Thomas asked, raising his voice and pointing in the general direction where his mother had disappeared.

Alexander pouted. “I just…” he trailed off, searching for the right words.

“You just were being purposefully offensive, when you knew exactly how she feels about us,” Thomas finished for him.

“Well, maybe she should learn to deal with it!” Alexander argued, his voice increasing in volume.

Thomas had to bit his lip to stifle a grin when he noticed Alexander had raised himself up on his toes.

Instead, he sighed and placed a kiss on Alexander’s forehead. “We just got here, darling,” he mumbled, running his hands over Alexander’s arms. “If she does ‘deal with it’, which is a strong if, it’s not going to be immediately.”

Alexander huffed and crossed his arms. “It just pisses me off,” he muttered. “People being assholes to you pisses me off.”

Thomas’ expression softened. “Oh, Alex.” Just when he thought that Alexander couldn’t be more perplexing, he went around and pulled shit like this and showed that he cared.

“Don’t Alex me,” Alexander snapped. His nose scrunched up in disdain. “One, John calls me Alex. It’s weird if you do it. Two, I can’t just stand here while the Wicked Witch of the South treats you like toe scum!”

Thomas narrowed his eyes. “She’s my mother, Alexander,” he reminded him. “Out of all the people in the world for you to put on your little guard dog act for, she is quite possibly the worst.”

“So you don’t deny that she treats you like toe scum!” Alexander pressed on.

“Give her time,” Thomas insisted. “We’re here, aren’t we? That’s certainly progress.”

Thomas didn’t mean to sound bitter or resentful. He knew that it’d do nothing but escalate the situation; he knew that one surefire way to get on Alexander’s shit list was to hurt Thomas personally, and that once one was on that shit list, one was stuck there.

He didn’t mean to, and yet…

“I’m going to fight her,” Alexander declared solemnly. “Just because she gave birth to you doesn’t give her the right to treat you like scum! In fact, it means that she shouldn’t! That’s sort of the whole
“You will do no such thing,” Thomas replied. “My mother's parenting methods aren't the most sentimental, I'll give you that, but she's not a bad parent. This whole thing blindsided her—”

“Yeah, a year ago!” Alexander interrupted.

“Just drop it, would you?” Thomas snapped. “This is my family, whether you like it or not. Let's try and not get me kicked out of my own house, okay?”

Something finally seemed to click within Alexander, and he sighed and nodded. “Fine, fine,” he relented. “I just don't like seeing you hurt, y'know? Making your life hell is my job.”

His voice was teasing, but there was something in his eyes that tore at Thomas' heart. “I love you,” he said, kissing Alexander quickly. “Let's go to our rooms, alright? I'll give you the grand tour.”

Alexander threaded their fingers together, and they were off.

“And this,” Thomas said as he pushed open another door, “is the library.”

He smirked as he heard Alexander gasp.

The room wasn't massive, especially not compared to some of the other rooms they'd toured, but it was practically filled with books. Each wall was lined with bookshelves, and each shelf was stuffed to the gills. In the middle of the room was a cluster of incredibly comfortable chairs, each flanked with their own coffee table and reading lamp.

Thomas himself had, on more than one occasion in his life, referred to this room as heaven.

“Of course, it's got nothing on my collection at Monticello, but it's alright,” Thomas continued flippantly, his grin growing as Alexander glared at him.

“You think you're so cute,” Alexander accused, but there was no real bite behind his words.

“I prefer strikingly handsome, or maybe devilishly charming,” Thomas retorted, wrapping his arms around Alexander's shoulders.

Alexander rolled his eyes and easily removed himself from Thomas' grasp, but remained holding his hand even as he made his way to a bookshelf, running his fingers over the spine of a large blue book titled Candide, ou l'Optimisme. “How many do you have in here?” he asked, his voice quiet and vaguely awestruck.

Thomas couldn't help but chuckle. “I don't know the exact number, but I'd guess high hundreds to just above a thousand,” he replied. “I've read most of them.”

Alexander scoffed. “You have not.”

Thomas grinned. “Some of them twice,” he added.

Alexander shoved his shoulder good-naturedly. “If you're going to be an asshole I'm going to dump you for your library,” he threatened with an impish smile.

“Oh, I'm sure the press will love that,” Thomas replied with a grin of his own. “I can see the headlines now: Secretaries of State and Treasury, Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton, Break
“It’s good, if a bit long,” Alexander conceded, pulling a large brown tome from one of the shelves. “Personally, I prefer Treasury Secretary Leaves State Secretary for Books. More concise, cuts right to the chase.”

Thomas just about choked in his effort to stifle his laugh. “Since when have you been a fan of conciseness?” he asked.

Alexander simply shrugged before tugging Thomas over one of the couches. He shoved Thomas down into the cushions before flopping down on top of him, nestling his head in the other man’s lap as he cracked his book open.

“Oh, so I’m your body pillow now, am I?” Thomas inquired, grabbing one of the books off of the end table next to him with one hand and carding his fingers through Alexander’s hair with the other.

Alexander simply hummed his agreement, already enthralled with the text before him.

Thomas simply huffed and rolled his eyes before cracking his own book open. There were worse ways to spend an afternoon.

The couple was only interrupted later that evening when Isabel poked her head through the doorframe and cleared her throat. “Master Thomas?” she asked when neither of the two men looked up from their books.

“Yes?” Thomas asked, peering over the top of his book.

“Your father is home, sir,” Isabel replied, her eyes lingering on the floor.

“Oh.” Thomas quietly put down his book. “That’s… Tell him we’ll be right down, would you?” Isabel nodded and scurried away, leaving Thomas and Alexander alone in the library.

“You gonna be alright?” Alexander asked, sitting up slowly and closing his book.

Thomas did his best to smirk. “Oh, honey,” he drawled, “I’m always okay.”

Alexander laughed, but the concern never left his face. After a moment he stood, wincing as his knees cracked. “Shit,” he muttered. “I’m getting old.”

“You’re younger than I am,” Thomas countered, grinning wider as he stood with ease. “Guess it’s true. Black don’t crack.”

Alexander glared at him. “You spent twenty minutes complaining about how much your back ached after you fell asleep on the couch,” he reminded Thomas. “I wouldn’t start if I were you.”

Thomas waved his comment off, straightening the cuffs of his sleeves and fixing the tuck of his shirt as he made his way down the hall.

“What’re you primping for?” Alexander asked as he followed behind. “We’re going to see your dad, not the Queen.”

Thomas glanced at Alexander over his shoulder. “My dad’s a very no-nonsense man,” he replied. “Here, I messed up your hair, let me fix it.”
Alexander swatted away his hand. “My hair’s fine,” he snapped.

Thomas rolled his eyes. “Normally, it’d be fine,” he agreed, “but you don’t know my dad. He’d find fault with anyone’s appearance.”

“If he’s going to insult me no matter what, then what’s the point of ‘fixing me up’?” Alexander bristled.

“The difference”—Thomas’ words came out slowly, as though he was speaking to a toddler—”is that if you don’t make an effort to look nicer, he’ll know, and he’ll make your life so much more difficult.”

Alexander crossed his arms. “I can just, you know, not care,” he drawled.

Thomas’ hands clenched into fists. “Well, you may have that luxury, but I do not,” he snapped. “So please, just let me straighten your ponytail. For me.”

For a moment, Thomas was knocked off his feet by the realization that this was his life. He was introducing his boyfriend to his family. His boyfriend, who just so happened to be Alexander Hamilton. Alexander Hamilton, who seemed to soften as Thomas uttered the words for me, as if the mere thought of helping Thomas, of loving him, was enough to chip away at the walls Alexander had built around himself.

Alexander sighed. “Fine,” he mumbled. “But don't make it too tight! It hurts when it's tight.”

Thomas rolled his eyes and quickly pulled the hair tie from Alexander's hair, holding it between his teeth so he could run the tangles out of Alexander's hair with his fingers before pulling it back up.

Once Alexander looked satisfactory, Thomas grinned and kisses his temple. “Please try and refrain from disembowelling my father on sight,” he requested dryly. “Employ a little of the sensitivity that I know is lodged somewhere in the dark recesses of that brain of yours.” Thomas snorted even as he said that. Alexander was about as sensitive as a cactus.

Alexander sighed but nodded. “I make no promises, but I can try,” he conceded.

Thomas placed another swift kiss on his cheek. “That's all I can ask,” he replied. He took Alexander's hand and led him down the stairs.

Chapter End Notes

thank you for reading this absolute beast of a chapter! please tell what your think!
In which the shit hits the fan

Chapter by Sanna_Black_Slytherin

Chapter Summary

Alexander finds out exactly why Thomas isn't keen on talking with his family, and Fox News is blasting in the background. All. The. Time.

Chapter Notes

Warning: Explicit homophobia.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

His father was standing in the foyer, his graphite grey suit perfectly pressed and his burgundy tie in an impeccable knot.

For a moment, Thomas paused, frozen under the scrutiny of his father's gaze. For half a second, he didn't fully comprehend why Peter Jefferson was glaring at him like a slug he'd stepped on, before he realized he still had Alexander's hand in his own.

He quickly dropped Alexander's hand, instead moving to straighten the collar of his shirt. It suddenly felt too tight—everything felt too tight—his skin felt two sizes too small, the room around him seemed to shrink, folding in on itself until all that was left were the two Jeffersons and Alexander.

The frigid silence persisted for another minute before Peter cleared his throat. “Son,” he began. “It's good to see you.”

Thomas took another step forward, doing his best to keep from fidgeting. He was the Secretary of State, for God's sake. He dealt with foreign powers on a daily basis. He could greet his father without turning into a stuttering, anxious mess.

“It's good to see you too, sir,” he replied.

Peter looked over him for a moment before turning to peer at Alexander. “I see that you brought a friend,” he drawled, his voice low and reproachful.

“Yes, sir,” Thomas hastily answered, jumping in before Alexander could speak. “Father, this is Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury and my”—there was a split second’s hesitation before Thomas continued—“boyfriend. Alexander, this is my father, Peter Jefferson.”

Immediately, Alexander stuck out his hand. “It's a pleasure,” he stated evenly, the ‘sir’ almost glaringly absent, his face plastered with that smile, the practiced one, the one Thomas had noticed had been fading away, replaced by one that was real and sincere and happy.

The reappearance of the shallow, forced smile on Alexander's face tore at Thomas’ heart.
Peter, on the other hand, didn’t seem to have noticed the strained edges of Alexander's smile. For a moment, Thomas’ father said nothing. He shook his hand a second later, and finally replied with a, “Likewise.”

Alexander withdrew a moment later, and Thomas did his best not to grimace as his father not-so-subtly wiped his hand against his pants.

Desperate not to let a heavy silence fall over them and suffocate them, Thomas forced himself to smile. “I assume that you just returned from a construction site? Or a meeting?” he asked his father.

“Meeting,” Peter replied curtly. “I’ve quit visiting construction sites if I can help it. I’ve got people for that.”

Thomas could all but hear Alexander’s questioning glance, even as he resolutely kept his eyes on his father. “What is it you’re working on right now? I haven’t heard,” he prompted, wishing beyond wish to keep the conversation as far away from Alexander as possible.

“A new church downtown,” Peter answered, his words casual, flippant, even, but there was an obvious sharp undercurrent to his tone. “We’ve given them a forty-five percent discount. Call it community outreach.”

Thomas felt his throat clog up. “That—that’s wonderful, Father,” he choked up, feeling his insides crumble as he heard how quiet, how pathetic, how weak he sounded, even to his own ears.

Peter Jefferson merely smiled—a tight, threatening thing that ripped away at Thomas’ gut. “For a while, they were, well, wary of accepting our generosity,” he stated smoothly. “They questioned our loyalty to the church. Not that I can blame them. I’d be suspicious, too, if I were in their shoes.”

Thomas was sure he was shrinking, folding in on himself like some sort of twisted origami, two inches tall and about to be crushed under his father’s perfectly polished dress shoes like a roach.

“Excuse me, what?” Alexander's voice suddenly cut through Thomas’ looming panic. “You can’t possibly be implying what I think you're implying.”

“Alexander,” Thomas hissed in warning, grabbing his boyfriend's arm.

“I can imply whatever I want,” Peter retorted, narrowing his eyes. “This is my house.”

“So having your name on the deed gives you the right to bully your son? Your son who, might I remind you, holds one of the highest offices in the country! Thomas has, in this respect, done nothing wrong!” Alexander yelled. His hands clenched into fists almost unwittingly.

“And that, Mr. Hamilton, is where our opinions differ,” Peter Jefferson sneered, and every warning bell in Thomas’ mind went off at once.

Alexander seemed as if he were a moment away from tearing Peter's throat out with his teeth, but Thomas cut him off before he could get to it. “Father,” he said swiftly, “if it's no trouble for you, I'd like to take Alexander back up to my rooms. We've still got some unpacking to do, and I'd like to get all settled in before dinner.”

Thomas’ father stared at him for a moment, seemingly trying to weigh the pros and cons of the situation, the pros most likely being that he no longer had to interact with the queers, and the cons being that said queers would be alone together in a room in his own home, doing heavens—or hell, more accurately—only knew what.
Finally, he settled on an answer. “You may go, but while you're in my house, there will be no displays of… affection,” he spat out the word like a curse. “This home will not be stained by your sins.”

Thomas closed his eyes. It wasn’t that he hadn’t been expecting anything of the sort, exactly; it was more that he had been hoping against hope that his father wouldn’t actually say it. He should have known better, should have anticipated his father's reaction better.

Why had his parents even invited them here, since it was clear that their hostile attitude towards any couples but the most traditional hasn't changed? What was the point? Thomas opened his mouth to reply; unfortunately, Alexander beat him to it. “We'll try to be quiet, but Thomas has a tendency to be loud whenever I fuck him.”

Silence.

Complete silence.

Thomas could probably have heard a pin being dropped.

His father had probably never actually heard words like these being spoken aloud, let alone had expected Thomas’ partner to be the one to do so.

Thomas honestly considered strangling his boyfriend right there.

Alexander was out of his goddamn mind; that was the only explanation.

Thomas felt his face flush as he choked on his tongue; he chanced a look at his father, but glanced away when he saw that he was staring at him with varying levels of horror and disgust. It had probably been Alexander’s goal, come to think of it: he was trying to trigger a response from Thomas’ father.

“Go,” Peter snarled. “I'll see you both at dinner.”

For a split second, Thomas thought he was going to continue, but then he simply narrowed his eyes and gestured at the stairs, as though banishing them away from his sight—which, come to think of it, he could be well have been doing. Thomas quickly nodded and snatched Alexander by the wrist before dragging him up the stairs.

“Alexander!” he hissed into Alexander’s ear. “Are you actively trying to get me disowned?!”

Alexander looked absolutely livid. “How can you stand for that?” he all but growled. “You're a grown-ass man, he can't just—you had to ask for permission to leave, like some sort of school boy wanting to leave the principal's office! What the hell?!?”

Thomas sighed and continued to pull Alexander along until they reached Thomas’ room.

“You can't say those things, Alexander!” he snapped once he was sure the door was firmly shut and locked. Alexander had his back to Thomas, but Thomas could tell he was seething. He continued. “I know you don't get it, I know it pisses you off and you've got this ridiculous inability to know when to shut up, but my God! You'd think somewhere in that massive head of yours there'd be a shred of common sense, but apparently not!”

“Why does this even matter so much to you?!” Alexander demanded to know.
“Because they're my family, Hamilton!” Thomas hissed, fury cracking in his eyes. “And I know that to you, that probably doesn't mean anything, but to me, it does!”

At those words, Alexander whirled around, coming face to face with Thomas.

Thomas had seen Alexander angry. In fact, for the two and a half years that he'd known the man, he'd practically only seen him angry.

This, however, this was something else entirely.

When Alexander was mad, he was an inferno, crackling and popping and roaring, his whole being ablaze. He seemed to dance, wild and uncontrolled.

But as he faced Thomas there, in the entrance to Thomas’ rooms in Shadwell, surrounded by all the evidence of Thomas’ past, every plaque or certificate or gilded accolade, there was no fire behind his eyes.

Alexander had, on occasion, described the hurricane that destroyed his home all those years ago. Thomas had always been able to conjure the visual of it, yes, but rarely was he able to conjure the feeling Alexander was describing.

The eye of the hurricane.

A dreadful, saturated quiet.

A yellow sky.

Thomas could feel it now.

“You're right,” Alexander said, his voice even, level. “Obviously I don't have a shred of common sense because if I did, I would've left by now. I would've left the moment an arrogant asshole in a suit decided to try and humiliate and shame me and my boyfriend for simply existing, and if I had two shreds of common sense, I would’ve taken said boyfriend with me instead of just standing there and letting it happen.”

The sneer in his voice clung to Thomas’ intestines, even as Alexander whirled back around and stalked off to some half-secluded area of Thomas’ bedroom, leaving Thomas alone with his thoughts.

Thomas had hardly spoken to Alexander in the last few hours since their fight, occasionally asking a question and receiving a half-formed grunt in response, when their weighted silence was interrupted by a knock on the door.

“Yes?” Thomas called out, glancing up from his phone from his spot in an armchair on the other side of his first room.

“Master Peter has instructed me to inform you that dinner will be served in thirty minutes, and that your presence is mandatory. Sir,” the servant said through the door, tacking on the title at the end almost as an afterthought.

Thomas barely suppressed his groan. “Of course. Thank you,” he said instead, dragging a hand across his face and scratching at his chin.

He heard the tale-tell sound of footsteps getting ever-further away, and once he was for certain that
whoever it was that delivered the message was out of earshot, he allowed himself to sigh.

“You know,” Alexander’s voice called from the back room, “are you sure your dad didn’t turn away a witch from his home when he was younger? Because the similarities between him and a certain fictional character are striking, to say the least.”

Thomas huffed and glared at Alexander from the corner of his eye. “So you’ve decided it’s okay to talk to me now?” he asked, arms crossed over his chest. “Did you take the elevator or the stairs to get down from your moral high ground?”

Alexander rolled his eyes. “Actually, there was a ladder,” he drawled slowly. “It was pretty rickety, kinda old. I don’t think it gets much use.”

Thomas snorted but didn’t reply.

“I’m sorry, okay?” Alexander pressed. “I… that was a dick move, and mostly uncalled for—”

“Mostly?!”

“Like, 83% uncalled for, but that’s not the point. The point is I’m sorry, and I’ll do my best to not get you kicked out of your house,” Alexander offered, sticking out his hand as if they were agreeing to some sort business deal instead of making up after a fight.

Thomas stared at him for a moment. This obnoxious, intolerable, absurd little man.

God, did he love him.

Now, if only he could trust him to behave around his father. At dinner. Which was in thirty minutes.

Fuck.

To Thomas’ surprise, Alexander admirably subdued when they came down for dinner. Thomas had almost expected an outburst as soon as Alexander laid eyes on Thomas’ father, but no. Alexander was behaving nicely; he was almost polite.

As far as Thomas’ father was concerned, however…

“Son, bless the food, would you?” Thomas’ father asked.

It took a disproportionately long time for Thomas to figure out that he had been talking to Thomas. He glanced up and met his father’s inscrutable eyes.

“Yes, sir,” he said automatically, even as he felt his insides tie themselves into a knot that threatened to suffocate him.

His eyes turned to the food, and remained there, fixated, as though he could find the answers to his problems in the spaghetti bolognese in front of him. His father had asked him to bless the food. He hadn’t done that in… almost seven years now. It was odd, certainly, to be returning to old habits.

A sudden fear gripped Thomas. What if he couldn’t remember the words? What if he messed up? What if his father deemed it inadequate? What if—

“Thomas.” His father cleared his throat. “We're waiting for you.”
Thomas' mouth dried. For a moment, he was inundated with fear, anxiety, apprehension, before he took a deep, steadying breath, and let it out again. He opened his mouth and simply let the words pour out. He knew that he was taking a risk on this—what if nothing happened, what if he didn’t remember?—but it seemed that old habits did die hard, for, even as his brain was slowly working itself into what Thomas had affectionately named Panic Mode, his tongue knew what to say.

“Bless us, oh Lord, and these thy gifts which we are about to receive from thy bounty through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

Thomas let out the remains of the breath he had drawn in. Well. That went well.

Thomas’ father looked at Thomas quietly for a long moment, before nodding once, decisively, and that was that.

They were allowed to eat.

Thomas avoided Alexander’s searching look as he scooped up food onto his plate. He knew that, should he meet his boyfriend’s eyes, he would see worry as well as a certain amount of anger that Alexander would try his best to hide, but he didn’t want to deal with that, didn’t have the energy to deal with that, not after the day he’d had.

A heavy silence fell over the table as everyone focused on their food and avoided addressing the elephant in the room.

“So,” Peter said into the silence, as he turned to address Alexander. “I’ve heard that you consider yourself something of an expert on politics.” Thomas smothered an urge to scoff. Alexander was the fucking Secretary of the Treasury. Him not knowing politics would be like Van Gogh not knowing the colour wheel, or Beethoven not knowing how to read sheet music, and yet, for some godforsaken reason, Thomas’ father had decided to be a condescending dick, which would inevitably lead to a fight.

Great. Wonderful. Fucking dandy.

“Tell me, then:” Peter continued, “What’s your opinion on sanctions against China for their hostility towards Taiwan?”

Thomas barely had the time to close his eyes and send a small prayer up to whoever was listening—if, indeed, anyone was—before Alexander opened his mouth. At this point, Thomas was just praying to whichever god it was that watched over tortured souls of adorable outed Republican gay politicians at family dinners that this wouldn’t turn into a bloodbath, and wasn’t that an extremely low bar to set for ‘happy family dinner’?

“I support Taiwan not having split from China in the first place when they became communists, but now, it would cause more harm than good to have them rejoin China; furthermore, I respect their freedom of choice to be their own country, even if I don’t agree with their choice. Also, it’s a stupid-ass idea to intimidate America’s greatest trading partner by trying to put sanctions on them. The last thing we want is a trade war with China.” Alexander crossed his arms, looking as defiant as Thomas had ever seen him. “Anything else?”

Thomas blinked.

That… was surprisingly controlled, it being Alexander. Sedated. Composed, even.

Thomas peered closer at the man next to him. Who was he, and what had he done with Alexander Hamilton?
Peter floundered for a moment, seeming to have realised he'd lost whatever game it was that he'd been trying to play, before pursing his lips and turning back to his pasta. “Well,” he muttered, “That's certainly one option.”

Thomas didn't know who to be more scared for, his father or his boyfriend.

For a moment, quiet hung over the table like a woolen blanket, when finally Peter spoke again. “Your brother and sisters are coming down in a few days,” he said, his eyes piercing into Thomas like a blade. “They were all very excited to meet your new… friend.”

Thomas thought about correcting him, but he recognized a lost battle when he saw one. For a moment, he feared that Alexander would speak up, because of course he would, but Alexander remained unusually silent.

“I'll be glad to introduce them,” Thomas said diplomatically. “It’s been a while since I’ve seen them. Lucy’s got two little girls, right? Katherine and Emeline?”

God, it’d been so long. Thomas could remember when he couldn’t go a week without talking to Lucy, when he and Randy would party on weekends and when Elizabeth would call him randomly, asking for advice on civics homework. And now? The last he’d seen of any of his siblings was at Thanksgiving two years ago. He’d kept up with them, of course. He might be estranged, but he hadn’t been unfriended on Facebook yet; he saw the pictures of Lucy’s little girls, of Randy’s engagement to his girlfriend, Michelle, and of Elizabeth’s college graduation. But he hadn’t seen them, hadn’t spoken to them, since he’d been outed.

With a pang in his chest, Thomas was suddenly made aware of just how much he missed them.

Just as suddenly, the icy weight that had been hovering over the dining table seemed to disappear as Jane Jefferson smiled, the first genuine grin Thomas had seen from her since his arrival. “Oh yes,” she said. “They’re absolutely precious. You know, I was worried when Lucy said she was having twins—one baby is difficult enough, and what with the way economy had been going lately, and the tuition rates of good schools around here, and Charles is wonderful, bless him, but he’s not a mother, he won’t be able to be as helpful as she would like—but the girls are absolute angels, the sweetest little things! I’ll show you pictures this evening, Lucy just sent me new ones from their church dedication, they’re adorable, really.”

By the end of his mother’s tirade, Thomas had metaphorical whiplash. His mother had never been a sentimental women. She was far from the type to coo over cute animals or a heartfelt story or a child’s drawing, and yet here she was, a proverbial fountain of affection.

“That’d be great,” Thomas said, hoping he didn’t sound too shocked.

“Of course, we’ve offered to help them with school costs and all of that. In fact, we’ve made up one of the spare rooms into a playroom. You should’ve seen your father try and put together the dollhouse. You know, with all his experience on construction sites, I thought he’d be alright at that sort of thing, but he spent hours trying to piece that thing together,” Jane continued. “Lucy brings the girls over once a week anyway, so I can watch them while she goes to have some adult time. Lord only knows how much I could’ve used some time away while raising you lot.”

Thomas didn’t bring up that Lucy and her husband, Charles, each made enough money to comfortably cover any tuition fees necessary to send the girls to private school, nor did he mention that Jane had had plenty of ‘adult time’ whilst raising Thomas and his siblings. Instead, Thomas opted to smile and nod along, not willing to disturb the tentative calm that had descended over the table. It was peaceful. Nice.
Unfortunately for him, his father did not share the same sentiments. “I take it you haven’t heard from your siblings since you ‘came out’?” Peter asked, his last two words dripping in disdain.

Thomas took a deep breath, willing himself to stay calm. “No, sir,” he replied steadily, wanting nothing more than to hold Alexander’s hand beneath the table, to allow himself some small comfort.

“It’s unfortunate, really, that you’ve decided to make such poor life choices, even though you’ve seen how much strain it’s put on your family,” Peter went on, his words light even as his eyes were damning.

Thomas never got the chance to respond, any of his possible rebuttals drowned out by the sound of Alexander’s anger and frustration finally boiling over.

“Excuse me?” he asked, the fire in his voice the polar opposite of Peter’s chilling words. “You can’t possibly think that this was a choice, that Thomas chose any of this!”

“But he did, didn’t he? Isn’t he willing engaging in your so-called relationship? It was his choice—”

“Father, please—”

“You think if he could choose, he would’ve chose this?”

“Alexander—”

“I didn’t think he would! I thought I had raised my son to be better than this—”

“Better than this?!”

“Alexander, stop—”

“Your father is right, Thomas. We taught you better than this. Surely you must see—”

“Sexuality is not something that can be taught—”

“Mr. Hamilton, if you don’t mind, this is a conversation between my wife, my son, and I—”

“Your son, my boyfriend, whom I love, whom you are supposed to love, unconditionally—”

“WOULD YOU ALL PLEASE STOP?!?” Thomas finally yelled, slamming his fork on the table. Immediately, silence reigned over the dining room in Shadwell. “Thank you,” Thomas continued. “Now, Mother, Father, I can assure you that this—Thomas raised the hand he had, at some point in the chaos, linked with Alexander’s—was not something I chose. What I chose was whether or not to act on it, whether to allow myself some small happiness or to force myself to wallow in loneliness and misery for the rest of my life. I couldn’t—can’t—be happy with a woman, not the way I am with him.” He jerked his head to indicate his boyfriend. “That being said, Alexander”—Thomas turned to glare at his boyfriend—“what happens between my family and I is between my family and I.”

For a moment, no one said another word, before Thomas sighed. “I think I’m going to excuse myself. Mother, Father, I hope you both have a good night, and I will see you in the morning.”

And with that, he got up, placed his napkin atop his plate, pushed in his chair, and left the dining room, waiting only for the sound of Alexander’s footsteps behind him.

Later, as he prepared himself for bed, he felt, more than heard, Alexander’s presence draw up behind
him. He ignored it, choosing instead to focus on his reflection, and if he brushed his teeth for longer than necessary, well, who would be able to tell?

He waited for Alexander to speak; he was certainly not going to breach the awkward silence between them, not when it wasn’t even his fault.

Eventually, Alexander spoke.

“I’m sorry,” he said bluntly.

Thomas didn’t look up, didn’t meet his eyes. “Sorry about what?”

“I’m sorry that I ruined the family dinner,” Alexander said sheepishly. “It’d been going well—you were talking to your mother, and you looked happy, and I ruined that, and for that, I’m sincerely sorry.” Thomas nodded, and spat out the foam in his mouth into the sink. “Though, to be fair,” Alexander went on, “it was largely your father’s fault since he was the one who started it and—”

“—and you just escalated it,” Thomas finished for him. His grip on his toothbrush tightened. He rinsed his mouth with water, before continuing. “See, I can’t accept that kind of apology, not when you begin to apologize, only to end by saying that it’s someone else’s fault entirely. I can’t accept it when you can’t take responsibility for your own actions; you always try to lump it over to someone else, blame someone else, for the things you wreck.”

He watched Alexander’s reflection through the mirror. If he had hackles, they would have been raised. “Then why am I here?!” Alexander demanded. “Why am I here?! Because it seems, to me, as if you’re hiding me from your family, as if I’m a shameful stain on your otherwise spotless reputation! Why did you drag me all the way here if I was such a problem?!”

Thomas sighed. “You’re here because you wanted to be.”


“Because, as insane as it sounds, because you’re you, you help to calm me down. You ground me. I needed someone on my side to help me withstand my parents’ fury.”

“Let me guess,” Alexander conjectured with no small amount of irritation, “if I hadn’t agreed, you would’ve asked Madison.”

“Well, he is my best friend, and he has a much calmer temper than you,” Thomas reasoned.

“Then why didn’t you ask him to begin with?!” Alexander yelled, throwing his hands in the air. “Why even bother with me?!”

“Because, in case you’ve forgotten it, you absolute dumbass, you are my boyfriend.” Thomas glared at his boyfriend’s reflection. “You, not Madison.”

Alexander snorted. “Believe me, if he ever fell for anyone, it would have been you,” he muttered.

Thomas threw up his hands into the air. “But he won’t! He doesn’t like men! And I don’t love him that way, either, so this discussion is moot!” He steadied himself, both physically as well as mentally. “I fear that we’ve gone off-track. I wanted you here, because you’re my boyfriend. For some insane reason, I love you. You complement me. Forgive me for wanting my other half to be there to support me through my parents’ homophobic rants.”

“ Mostly your father’s,” Alexander muttered under his breath.
“And this! This is exactly what I’m talking about!” Thomas gestured to his reflection, then thought better of it and turned around to face Alexander. The mirror really didn’t do justice to the self-righteousness in his boyfriend’s eyes. “You just have to go and make things worse! Nobody asked you to defend me or my sexuality.”

“No,” Alexander agreed with a sarcastic drawl, “it’s kind of a thing boyfriends do without needing to be prompted.”

“Since when have you been one to do things ‘because they’re the thing everyone does’?!” Thomas demanded, taking a step closer to Alexander. “You’ve made an entire career out of going against the status quo!”

Alexander crossed his arms. “Are you asking me to just abandon you to your father’s—sorry, parents”—wrath?!’

Thomas brought up his right hand to massage the bridge of his nose. “No, I’m asking you to stop picking fights. If I want help, I’ll ask for it, but I won’t alienate my family further than I already have.”

“Your family shouldn’t have been alienated just by you revealing your sexuality,” Alexander pressed.

Thomas sighed. “No, they shouldn’t have,” he agreed with Alexander, “but things are seldom fair.” The words sounded oddly final, for all that Thomas hadn’t intended it that way.

They were both silent for a long moment, staring at each other, Alexander with mutinous anger, Thomas with pleading.

Alexander looked away first. He let out his breath, and ran his fingers through his hair. “Fine.” He sounded as if saying the words cost him physical pain. “I won’t defend you against your father if he starts spouting bullshit again.” He paused. “You do realize how insane that sounds, right?” he asked to ascertain.

Thomas nodded. He opened his mouth to reply, then thought better of it, and, wrapping a hand around Alexander’s waist, drew him in for a lazy kiss.

It felt like ages when they finally separated, and when they did, they were both out of breath. Thomas leaned his forehead against Alexander’s.

Thomas saw a smile curl itself around Alexander’s lips.

“Well,” Alexander murmured, his breath ghosting Thomas’ lips, “I suppose that I might be convinced to drop it.” His voice took on a suggestive tone, and Thomas fought a smirk.

They didn’t speak much after that.

Later that night, as they may curled together in bed, Thomas couldn’t help but thank the universe for small blessings. While being subjected to his family’s disappointed, dismay, and overzealous homophobia was in no way ideal, as Thomas pulled Alexander closer to his chest, he understood it could be so much worse.

Hell, the fact that his father had allowed the two of them to stay in the same bedroom was a miracle in and of itself.
He was about to drift off to sleep, comforted by the knowledge that, no matter what else occurred, he had Alexander, here, with him, when the man himself suddenly shifted, turning so that he was facing Thomas instead of being curled into Thomas’ chest.

Thomas didn’t say anything at first, simply taking the time to look over his boyfriend—his boyfriend—to appreciate the fact that this intolerable little man was his, but, unsurprisingly, Alexander wasn’t content to merely bask in the silence between the two.

“So,” he started, chewing on his lower lip. “Our… discussion at dinner got me thinking.”

Thomas raised an eyebrow, plainly gesturing for Alexander to continue even as he did his best to ignore the pit of unease that was settling in his stomach.

“Obviously, that whole spiel about you choosing to be gay was nothing but a crock of bullshit, but…”

Alexander trailed off for a moment, and Thomas watched as something akin to fear bloomed on the man’s face. It took Thomas aback. Typically, Alexander hid his fears beneath layers of outrage and righteous fury, never choosing to appear scared if he could appear angry, and so to see such anxiety apparent on his face was more than a little disquieting.

“If you could choose,” Alexander continued, “would you have chosen this?”

“This?” Thomas asked, confused as to what, exactly, Alexander meant.

“Any of this—all of this. Being gay, being with me, just—this,” Alexander explained, the trepidation on his face growing with every word.

Thomas didn’t know what to say. Obviously, he’d choose Alexander—he’d already chosen Alexander. He might not have chosen to fall in love him—God knows he actively tried not to fall in love with him—but once the opportunity to act on those feelings had presented itself, Thomas had chosen to jump on board and never look back.

But, if given the opportunity to be straight, would he be?

The very thought of it made his stomach curl. One part of him, the objective, rational part of him screamed yes, obviously. If given the chance to regain all the former stability of his career, to have his family back, to be free of all the doubt and guilt that seemed to always be on his heels, turning it down would be idiotic. And yet, another part of him, the part that seemed to bloom whenever Alexander smiled, the part that blossomed as Thomas held the smaller man against his chest, that part screamed love at the top of its lungs, seemed vehemently against anything that would push Alexander away.

Thomas didn’t know what to say.

Luckily, Alexander didn’t seem to mind, taking Thomas’ hand in his and sighing. “Nevermind,” he said. “That’s not important now. I love you.”

Thomas knew he should say something, that Alexander’s sudden dismissal of the topic couldn’t possibly be a good sign, but in that moment, he couldn’t bring himself to argue, simply thankful for the opportunity to opt out of replying. Instead, he pressed a quick kiss to Alexander’s forehead and muttered, “I love you too.”

Sleep seemed to avoid him that night.
The next morning, Alexander was in a mood.

Thomas knew—he fucking knew—that this would happen. He knew that, in choosing to just allow himself the small comfort of simply falling asleep with his boyfriend without first getting them into what was sure to turn into some sort of knock-down-drag-out, full-on brawl, he’d resigned himself to one of Alexander’s moods.

It started with Thomas waking up alone, the other side of the bed rumpled and cold, with a note lying on Alexander’s pillow, almost illegible through all the swirls and flourishes of Alexander’s ridiculous handwriting.

*Off to find coffee. Be back soon. —A.*

It continued with Alexander stumbling back into the room twenty minutes later, holding two coffee mugs and with a large, green book tucked under his arm. He set one cup on the nightstand and, without a word to Thomas, made his way to one of the chairs in the corner.

Thomas took the coffee with a muttered thanks, almost unable to keep from smiling as he took a sip. Even when pissy, Alexander made his coffee exactly how he liked it.

“Good morning,” Thomas finally said, just for the sake of getting rid of the oppressive silence in the room.

“Morning,” Alexander mumbled on autopilot, not looking up from his book.

“How’d you sleep?” Thomas asked, picking up his phone and scrolling through the list of new emails he had to reply to.

“Well,” was Alexander’s only reply.

Thomas scoffed. “Thank you, my beloved,” he drawled, “for such startling insight.”

“No problem.”

It was as if Alexander had been put on factory settings mode, replying with only pre-programmed responses.

And it was, frankly, *pissing Thomas off.*

“So,” he began. When he only got a hum in acknowledgement, he continued. “James and I are working out what my official economic policy should be, and we’ve decided that I’m going to completely abolish Medicaid, along with taxes for the top one percent.”

“Good for you,” Alexander muttered, clearly—almost painfully—not listening to Thomas.

Thomas crossed his arms. “Alexander,” he drawled, “are you listening to me?”

“Mmmmm,” Alexander hummed noncommittally.

Thomas’ eyes narrowed. “*Hamilton,* what did I just say?”
“Are you listening to me?” Alexander parroted obediently, still not fucking looking up.

Thomas’ hands clenched into fists. “Alexander, this isn’t funny,” he growled. He ran his fingers through his curls with a sigh. He had a sneaking suspicion that he knew what the problem was. It had been gnawing at him since he had woken up. “Is this about yesterday?”


“Don’t play dumb, Alexander!” Thomas burst out, then forced himself to calm down. He let his hands unclench. “When you asked me—”

“If you could choose, would you have chosen this?”

“This?”

“Any of this—all of this. Being gay, being with me, just—this.”

“—about whether I’d have chosen this,” Thomas said as calmly as he could. “And I didn’t reply.”

Alexander’s eyes weren’t moving. He had given up the pretense of reading, but he hadn’t looked up yet. “I thought that was a clear enough response on its own,” he muttered.

Thomas shook his head, then realized that Alexander wouldn’t see it. “It wasn’t,” he refuted. “I just… needed time to think.”

“Which was as clear a denial as you could have given me, you polite shit.”

“Stop twisting my words!” Thomas threw up his hands in frustration. “Just—listen to me!”

Finally, Alexander looked up. He closed his book, without a care as to marking the page he had been on. “Then talk,” he all but ordered.

Thomas fought a sudden urge to hide away in a corner, away from Alexander’s piercing gaze. Instead, he swallowed. “I just… I wanted to make sure that I wouldn’t give you an answer I hadn’t thought through,” he explained at length.

“And now that you’ve thought it through?” Alexander prompted. He didn’t exactly look mollified, but the anger that had before been on his face had receded somewhat, though it hadn’t disappeared completely.

“I’d never choose to not love you,” Thomas said evenly, the words themselves full of feeling, but his tone painfully unsentimental.

Alexander wrinkled his nose. “It took you over ten hours to decide that,” he retorted.

“Well, sorry if I didn’t want to give you a shitty answer,” Thomas snapped. “You asked me a serious question, and it merited a serious response. I wouldn’t just give you a Hallmark cliché—you deserve better, Alexander.”

Finally, finally, the crinkles around Alexander’s eyes softened, and the sneer faded into a soft smile. “I’m glad,” Alexander murmured, before drawing in Thomas for a lazy kiss, grinning into Thomas’ muffled sounds of surprise.

“And Thomas?” the shorter man added when they separated. “Thank you for your honesty. I appreciate it.”
“I’ve gotta say,” Alexander commented offhandedly two days into their visit as he grabbed another handful of the popcorn he had procured from God only knew where; it certainly hadn't been from Thomas’ parents, seeing as they didn’t eat popcorn, “apart from the thing at the start, your parents haven't commented on this”—he held up their joined hands for emphasis—”as much as I would have thought they would.”

Thomas shrugged, though he had to work on maintaining his cool. Mentioning of his parents tended to have that effect. “They ignore it,” he said simply.

Alexander turned his head so that he was looking straight at Thomas. “What, the gay?” he asked rhetorically.

Thomas let out a snort. “Yeah.”

Alexander blinked. “How,” he said so dryly it lost any premise of being a question.

“Well, you don't make it easy, for one thing,” Thomas pointed out. “But they manage. It's beneficial for them: I'm running for president, and even if I don't win, my career doesn't seem to be over. It's not to their advantage to ostracize me.”

“Anymore,” Alexander muttered.

Thomas didn’t dignify that with a response. Instead, he rolled his eyes. “Besides,” he continued, “they’ve got practice. Looking back, teenage Thomas wasn’t particularly skilled in the art of subtlety.”

Alexander snickered. “I can just imagine how horrified they were when they discovered gay porn on your computer.” Alexander paused. “Did they even have computers in the 1850s?”

Thomas swatted Alexander over the head. “You're only two years younger than me, so don't try pulling the age card. And I am not having this conversation with you,” he warned Alexander when the other opened his mouth.

Alexander pouted. “And here I had been holding out hope for finding out more about hormonal Thomas Jefferson, acne and all.”

“I did not have acne,” Thomas protested feebly.

Alexander smirked as he held up his phone. “Your mother's Facebook says otherwise," he said mischievously.

Thomas gaped. “How did you even get—Never mind. Give me that!”

He reached for the phone, but Alexander scooted just out Thomas’ reach. “You know,” he said conversationally, “even if you manage to get ahold of this, it's out there on the internet. You can't delete things from the internet.” He sounded as smug as Thomas had ever heard him.

Thomas glared, the “Watch me try” almost audible.

“Look at this!” Alexander cooed as he scrolled through the Facebook page. “You were such a cute little thing!”

“I swear to God, I’ll kill you, Hamilton,” Thomas all but growled, looking ready to pounce for the
Alexander simply grinned. “Call it payback,” he said gleefully.

“Payback?” Thomas repeated incredulously. “For what?”

“Ned,” Alexander replied simply.

“Ned?” Thomas asked. “You mean when he came over for your birthday a year ago?”

“Yup,” Alexander answered. “You got my dirt, now I get yours. Call it a quid pro quo.”

“You are unbearable,” Thomas grumbled. In the back of his mind, he idly pondered the fact that he wasn’t at all surprised at how Alexander held a grudge for a whole fucking year.

Alexander responded with a smirk and a wink. “Right back at ya, babe.”

“Honestly, could you please not—” Thomas pleaded.

“Oh, is this you and Madison? This is great, oh my God,” Alexander cackled.

“You're such an asshole, I swear,” Thomas grumbled. Alexander simply beamed at him, his eyes seeming to twinkle happily in the lamp light.

Fuck, Thomas loved him.

“Takes one to know one,” the Treasury Secretary piped up, still scrolling through Facebook.

Thomas sighed, accepting the fact that there was no way he’d win this battle, short of hacking into Alexander’s phone and changing the password. “If you're going to torment me, at least do it somewhere comfortable,” he mumbled, leaning against the headboard and praying Alexander understood what Thomas meant without Thomas actually saying it.

Thankfully, he did.

(Alexander always understood this kind of stuff.)

He curled up into Thomas’ chest, pressing a quick kiss to Thomas’ jaw. “You okay?” he asked quietly.

Thomas sighed. “I'm as okay as can be expected.”

“So, not okay at all?” Alexander prompted.

“Not not at all,” Thomas protested.

“But not good.”

“No,” Thomas conceded. “Not good.”

Alexander sighed. “I don't get why you're so hell bent on this,” he said. “All it's doing is hurting you.”

“I couldn't not, Alexander,” Thomas argued.

“If you insist,” Alexander conceded.
They spent the rest of the night that way, curled into each other, Alexander's head pressed against Thomas’ chest, the pair of them chatting quietly until long after the sun had set.

They sat together in the library the next day, Alexander pouring some House bill that aimed to further regulate the amount of waste industries were allowed to dump into rivers per year, and Thomas flipping through a stack of memos he'd been faxed—faxed, like this wasn't the fucking 21st century—from his office.

Alexander turned the page, the rustling of papers just soft enough to fail to completely muffle the words he was muttering. “Lotsa eatin’, lotsa prayin’, lotsa learnin’ ‘bout the views on the Fox News that’s always playin’,” he sung under his breath, just loud enough for Thomas to hear.

Thomas’ glare was half-hearted. He didn’t reprimand Alexander, because, frankly, he hadn’t said anything untrue.

Instead, he said, “I hate that musical.”

Alexander stared, and his mouth fell slightly agape. “Are you kidding me?!” he demanded. “In Transit is, like, the best musical!”

Thomas made a sound in the back of his throat. “I thought that was Venice,” he remarked nonchalantly. “In any case, you’re wrong. Les Misérables is the way to go.”

Alexander shrugged. “You only like it because it’s situated in France,” he complained.

Thomas shrugged. “While that’s not the main reason why I like it so much, it is a nice bonus.”

Alexander snorted. “I bet that you’re the kind of pretentious fuck who listens to the French version instead of the English one because it’s ‘closer to the true spirit of the book’.”

“First of all,” Thomas began, “it’s called the brick. Second, I hardly think that you, of all people, should go around dissing Victor Hugo’s writings, considering that you both abuse punctuation marks to the point where you end up with a three-page sentence.”

There was a minuscule pause. “It’s the Louis-Philippe one, isn’t it.” It wasn’t a question.

Thomas threw up his hands. “It’s the Louis-Philippe one!”

Alexander’s eyes narrowed, before he suddenly switched to French and began… reciting? What the hell?

Thomas raised a hand to forestall Alexander from launching into a full rant. “Alexander, relax. Just”—he dragged his fingers through his hair—”ignore my parents. They’re incurable, but, in their own ways, they mean well.”

Alexander let out a disbelieving scoff, but, glancing at Thomas, backed off, though the high arch of his eyebrows betrayed his thoughts.

“Fine,” Alexander snapped. “I won’t get in the way of your fucked-up family drama.”

“Thank you,” Thomas replied; he did not quite sag with relief, but it was a close call.

He had a bad feeling that Alexander’s promise wasn’t going to last very long.
Alexander hadn't meant to overhear it, honestly he hadn't. It just... happened. One moment, he was fiddling with the microwave, trying against all odds to get it to cooperate with him and make him another popcorn batch, and the next, he heard voices that sounded suspiciously like Thomas’ parents from the adjoining room.

"Peter." Mrs Jefferson's voice was heard amidst the silence. "Our son is going to hell."

"Don't talk about it," Thomas' father snapped. "Maybe it's a phase. Kids nowadays have 'phases', right?" Alexander could practically see the air quotes that accompanied the word. “I once disappeared for a month into the mountains with my friends when I wanted to prove a point to my parents,” he muttered, as if that was the same thing as being gay.

Mrs Jefferson sighed. "Thomas is thirty-two, hon,” she reminded her husband. “As much as I wish it was just a phase,” the word was sour on her lips, “I can’t imagine that it is. What I mean is,” she continued when her husband didn’t reply, “Thomas is hardly a masochist. Do you really think that he would torture himself with enduring the presence of that infuriating, coarse, barbaric immigrant if it was just a rebellious phase?"

Mr Dickhead Supreme sighed. “You’re right,” he admitted. “I just—I wished that we could have—”


Fix him?! What the hell. Who even did that anymore.

Apparently, the Jeffersons. All Hail the Holy Script.

(Never mind the fact that even Alexander knew enough about Christianity to know that Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross absolved humanity of its former sins, thus rendering the Old Testament invalid, but that clearly did not matter to the Jeffersons because Gays Are Evil.)

A heavy silence settled in the air, stifling Alexander even though he wasn’t even a part of this conversation, this was so unfair.

“What do we do?” Thomas’ father finally said.

Alexander could almost see the shrug of Mrs Jefferson’s shoulders. “I don’t believe that there’s much we can do,” she confessed. “I just—I wished that we could have—” She trailed off, bitterness tainting her words.

The microwave beeped harshly, shocking Alexander as he had long since forgotten about it. He almost fell over, but managed to hold on to the counter in the last moment. It would have been pretty freaking awkward if one was discovered to be eavesdropping on the parents of one’s boyfriend while said parents were talking about said boyfriend’s unfortunate relationship status, and while Alexander had never shied away from confrontations, he had made a promise to Thomas not to antagonize his boyfriend’s parents if he could avoid it.

As quietly as he could, Alexander took out the popcorn from the microwave and promptly fled the room.

He had heard enough.

How had Thomas—a young, idealistic, impressionable Thomas—managed to survive to adulthood with these people? The environment was about as toxic as they came, short of conversion camps.
Thomas didn’t know where Alexander was.

This was worrying at the best of times, because God knew that Alexander could do enough damage under normal circumstances, but this was Virginia, and they were visiting Thomas’ parents; Thomas’ very liberal boyfriend was visiting Thomas’ very conservative parents.

It didn’t take a genius to figure out what would happen once Alexander got started on something (though disownment came to mind).

With a sense of foreboding, Thomas set off in search of his boyfriend.

Finding Alexander wasn’t hard: all Thomas had to do was follow the sound of Fox News playing in the background, which it always was at his parents’; it was more or less a given that Alexander would be in the vicinity so that he could insult the hosts—Sean Hannity was a particular favourite of Alexander’s.

“—and for another thing, the mere idea that ignoring something will make it go—”

The living room it was.

Thomas headed that way, following the loud voice that could be no one but his boyfriend.

When he entered the living room, and of course he had been right, Thomas was met with a most peculiar sight: Alexander was pacing in front of the television, waving his arms angrily as he yelled at Hannity’s face that was plastered all over the, even by Thomas standards, oversized television.

“—you realize that if you just keep avoiding the issue and say that ‘this isn’t the time to talk about gun control’, it’s never going to come up because there’s always a shooting or other, hi Thomas, and honestly, you can ‘send your thoughts’ to the families and friends of the victims, but it’s not going to change the fact that they’re gone, that they’re dead. Nothing can change that, and you need to get that through your thick head! What we can do is try to prevent this from happening again! We can try to make sure that we don’t have more mass shootings!”

Thomas cleared his throat. Alexander paused mid-rant. “Yes?” he said expectantly.

Thomas arched an eyebrow. “Are you having fun?” he drawled.

“No!” Alexander yelled. “Fox is being ridiculous again! Going on about how ‘shootings are an unavoidable part of nature’ and how it’s not time to talk about gun control now. It’s insane! If now’s not the time to talk about it, when will there be time to talk about it? Because there will always be another mass shooting, or another trigger-happy megalomaniac with easy access to firearms!

“How is it that kids need to do drills not only on what to do in case of an earthquake—which, in all fairness, is an inevitable phenomenon of nature—but also in case a person comes into the school, armed with a firearm? That’s not an inevitable phenomenon of nature! That can be stopped! It can be changed! We can change it! And mass shootings, school shootings, are far more common in America than earthquakes!

“In 1996, there was a primary school shooting in Great Britain, where sixteen children and one teacher were shot. And afterwards, British lawmakers passed restricting handgun laws in the UK, and there hasn’t been a school shooting since! That was twenty-two years ago, Thomas!” Alexander threw up his arms. “Why can’t America pass a law like that?!”
“Because we’re not the UK.”

“Well, maybe we should be!” Alexander spat. “Clearly, they’re much more sane than we are! At least they care about their citizens! But we? For all we promise to do things, it’s nothing but empty words! We watch as yet another shooting happens; we send our ‘thoughts and prayers’; but we don’t act! We won’t help these people by sitting on our asses, not when we have the power to change things!”

Alexander paused for breath.

“Thomas, love, two weeks ago was the biggest mass shooting in the United States history! That’s bad in itself, but that’s a record that’s been set twice in just the three years that I’ve been Treasury Secretary!” Alexander threw up his hands. “It’s frankly ridiculous! One hundred and sixty-three people have died just in the past two years due to mass shootings! That’s a number that, if it came from any other source, we would have long since done something to keep from growing! Gun violence should not be a staple of American life. And the sad thing is that the GOP—your party—will say that it’s too early to talk about gun control, but guess what? For those victims last night, it’s far too late.

Alexander fixed Thomas with a cold look. “Do you really want to help America? Help me do something that the past two administrations haven’t been able to do: pass any kind of common sense of gun control legislation, that the vast majority of Americans want. For once, just for once, don’t listen to the NRA. We don’t represent the NRA; we represent the people.”

In the background, Sean Hannity was still going on about something, complete with a chart with Senator King’s name on it.

Alexander turned to glare at the host in question. For a long moment, all was silent around them.

“You know,” Alexander finally said, “I swear that I’ll get an interview with Sean Hannity one day, just so that I’ll be able to wave my hand and say hi to your parents, because I can bet everything that I own—”

“A fairly tame bet,” Thomas muttered.

“—that they’ll be watching,” Alexander went on, ignoring Thomas’ scathing comment.

“You act as if you don’t practically have NPR on speed dial,” Thomas shot back. “There’s no shame in being well-informed, Alexander. You of all people should know that.”

“It’s not ‘well-informed’ if ninety-six percent of all that information is bullshit!” Alexander protested.

“And who are you to say it is, hmm?” Thomas retorted, folding his arms over his chest. “What, do you have a masters in journalism tucked back somewhere that I’m unaware of?”

“It’s not a masters, but I did triple-major in journalism, economics, and poli-sci—”

“My God, I’m so glad I didn’t know you in college,” Thomas muttered. “I would’ve gone grey. You’re that kind of person.”

“Point is,” Alexander continued, “Fox News has the credibility of a smashed mango, and your family is, although it physically pains me to say it, too intelligent to be led along with that fuckery like dogs following a bone.”

“Or maybe,” Thomas countered, “my parents simply like to get their news from people who share
“That’s part of the problem!” Alexander shouted, throwing his hands in the air. “No one listens to opposing ideas anymore! It’s not just a problem with your side, either. Everyone does it. We isolate ourselves from anything that could be classified as ‘other’. We avoid contradicting views, we refuse to hear someone else’s side of the story, we refuse to even consider any sort of cooperation! Even Google does it for us now, too—there are literally algorithms that are employed to give you news that Google thinks will make you happy, which means that everyone gets different kinds of news! Everyone thinks it’s their way or no way, and if you can’t see the consequences of that kind of polarization, you’re—” He growled. “Just. Fuck everything.”

“No, by all means, keep going,” Thomas encouraged, sarcasm practically dripping from his voice.

Alexander glared at Thomas. “Do you think that this is funny?” he demanded. “We are living in a vicious circle of miscommunication and misunderstanding that is exacerbated by technology, and it’s all of our own making! Do you honestly think that Congress can’t get anything done now? Wait until the only contact people get with others who don’t agree with them is at awkward family dinners, when everyone is raised in their own little bubble, never exposed to anything besides their own infinitesimal, unthinkably limited worldview!”

“Alexander—”

“Don’t tell me I’m being irrational or that there’s nothing we can do about it,” Alexander growled, “because I swear to God—”

“Christ, Alexander, would you stop for one moment and listen to me before you decide you already know what I’m going to say? Isn’t that what you were just talking about?!” Thomas snapped.

Thank every deity to ever possibly grace the good earth, Alexander’s mouth clicked shut. Thomas could barely contain his sigh of relief.

Thomas dragged his fingers through his curls. “I’m not having this discussion with you,” he said after a pause. “I’m not. You’re just going to argue with me no matter what I say, simply for the sake of arguing—and don’t argue with me on that, either, because I know you—and I don’t want that. We’re here supposedly on holiday, and although you may not know what the word means,”— Alexander flinched—”I have every intention of relaxing.”

Alexander glared at Thomas, silently stewing in his anger. He abruptly turned on his heels and stormed out.

Thomas watched his boyfriend leave, and felt a heavy weight settle somewhere on his shoulders.

Chapter End Notes

Tell us what you thought!

On another note: our chapter length has been fluctuating back and forth a Lot. What do you feel is a reasonable length that you feel up to reading every week?
In which Thomas Is a Dumbass and We Experience the Great Battle of Alexander VS Church

Chapter Summary

Say hi to the Jeffersons!
(and Jemmy, he’s here too)

Chapter Notes

disclaimer!!! we mean no offense to Christians!!! i (gabe) am Also a Christian, so we know y'all aren't all the Westboro Baptist Church; also, Alexander acts like a little shit in church, but that's Sort Of just who he Is as a Person, so... :) 
also, in the Twitter portion, there Should be links there to photographs, but i couldn't Find any,, so the photo is described in double paranthesis (()). I know it's not the Most Formal writing thing in the world, but,, please have mercy
that's all!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Thomas had given up on “playing straight”, as Alexander called it, by day three—not that he’d been trying too much to seem straight in the first place. Any reservations he’d had when they arrived were thoroughly forgotten as he held Alexander’s hand on the way down to breakfast.

It wasn’t as if there was any point in trying to hide it. The whole country—practically the whole world —knew that Thomas Jefferson was in love with Alexander Hamilton. There would be little point in crawling back into the closet, now that everyone knew that it existed.

He'd almost forgotten the impending arrival of his siblings, sitting in the library with Alexander's legs in his lap as he reread Watership Down , munching on the bowl of popcorn that sat between them.

It was until there was a knock on the door, followed by Isabel saying, “Your siblings have almost arrived, Master Thomas,” that Thomas actually remembered where he was, what he was in the middle of.

“I'll see them in the den, Isabel,” he called out, shoving Alexander's legs off of him.

“Hey!” Alexander whined. “I was comfortable!”

“Tough luck,” Thomas replied. “Lucy is almost here, and I'm all but positive she's bringing Charles and the girls, not to mention Randy and Elizabeth.”

“The whole fucking Brady Bunch is coming, aren't they?” Alexander asked.

Thomas chose to ignore that comment, instead halling himself to his feet and dusting off his shirt.
“Come on,” he said, taking Alexander’s hand and pulling him to his feet. He all but tugged Alexander along as they made their way down the stairs.

“What, not going to pretty me up this time?” Alexander asked.

Thomas glanced him over and huffed. “My siblings are less… particular about appearances, but if you wanted to smooth out your shirt and wipe the butter off your face, I wouldn’t be opposed,” he replied, chuckling as Alexander quickly scrubbed his hand over his face and tugged at the hem of his shirt.

“So, what’s the rest of the Jefferson clan like? Am I about to be assaulted by a horde of obnoxious colour palettes and over-the-top hair?” he questioned.

Thomas rolled his eyes. “You know you love my hair,” he said.

“Yeah, because it’s attached to you. On anyone else, I think it’d make me want to slit someone’s throat.”

Thomas huffed and rolled his eyes. “You’ll see soon enough, won’t you?” he said in lieu of answering Alexander’s question.

He didn’t want to admit that he knew as little about what to expect as Alexander.

God, how had this happened? How had so much changed? It seemed like just yesterday that he and Lucy were digging through anthills, trying to find the queen, or climbing the trees in the little wood near the edge of the property. They used to be inseparable, Lucy and him, and now… now, well. Thomas was about to see his big sister for the first time in two years.

Alexander seemed to have caught on to where Thomas’ train of thought was headed, taking his hand and squeezing it reassuringly.

Thankfully, Isabel, bless her, had warned them of Thomas’ siblings’ impending arrival with enough time for them to get down to the den and get properly situated before they heard the front door open, and bringing with it the clamour of a great deal of chattering voices.

Thomas dusted off his pants and rose to his feet just as Lucy stepped into the doorway.

His sister was almost exactly as he remembered her—short, but not petite, with her hair in cornrows that were then tied up in a neat bun, fashionably dressed in an array of turquoise and coral, her large square sunglasses perched on her head and her lips curled into a smile.

The only big difference between this Lucy and the Lucy in Thomas’ memories were the two little girls at her feet.

Thomas felt as if the air had been punched out of his lungs. “Lu,” he stuttered, unable to keep the grin off his face. “Hi. It's good to see you.”

Lucy looked him up and down, lips pursed, before sighing and rolling her eyes. “Come here, Tom. I'm not going to bite,” she said, her tone exasperated but fond.

Thomas didn’t need to be told twice.

His big sister was quick to tug him down into a hug, squeezing his shoulders and mussing up his hair as she smiled.
God, had Thomas missed this.

“Good Lord, Tom,” she said once they pulled away. “What on earth were you thinking? First you keep all—all this”—she gestured at both Thomas and Alexander, who was shifting from foot to foot off to the side—“from us, and then you just stop talking for two years? Did turning gay also turn you into an idiot?”

Thomas thought he heard Alexander choke on a laugh, and he shot a glare at the man over his shoulder. “I’m sorry, Lu, really, I just thought—”

“No, you didn't,” Lucy interrupted Thomas before he could offer any excuse—though really, what excuse could he have offered that would have made up for the lost time? “You didn't think. You panicked, like you did when Amayah Bolton asked you out in the ninth grade. Except instead of faking a migraine for three days, you became a fucking hermit for two years!”

That was definitely a laugh Alexander was trying to stifle. Of course, his boyfriend would find this amusing, instead of being, say, supportive and helpful. Thomas thought that he heard Alexander mutter something akin to “Hermits United” behind him, but he chose to ignore his dumbass boyfriend.

“Lu, please, think about it from my end?” Thomas pleaded. “I—We—This is hardly—”

“Cut the crap, Tom,” Lucy cut in, her hands on her hips. “Did you really think that we would just shut you out? Like you're not our brother? I mean, I won't claim that I understand it or whatever, but it hardly came out of left field, and it doesn't change the fact that you're our family.”

Thomas didn't really have a reply.

Lucy sighed. “I know what Mom and Dad think,” she began again, “But, Thomas, did you really think we'd all just follow them blindly? We're hardly children anymore.”

For a moment, the room was silent, the only sound around them being the quiet ticking of the family clock in the background. Finally, Thomas looked away from his sister's face, meeting the eyes of his other two siblings who were standing behind Lucy; Elizabeth had, at some point, picked up one of the little girls, who was playing with her curls. Randy was trying to subtly hush the other child, who was babbling at her mother's feet.

Thomas ran a hand through his hair. Of all the options he'd considered, being chewed out by his big sister for not coming to her and the rest of his deeply conservative family for support after being outed was not one of them.

“I…” he started, but his sentence died in his throat.

Lucy seemingly decided to have mercy on him, her smile returning as she rolled her eyes. “What I'm saying is, we missed you, Tom.”

Thomas grinned. “I missed y'all, too.”

And just like that, the tension dissipated like steam.

Elizabeth got to him next, struggling to wrap her arms around his neck even as she stood on her toes.

Randy grinned at him as he slapped him on the back, laughing and saying, “It's good to see you, man.”
“Now that we've got this week's episode of the Jefferson family soap opera out of the way,” Lucy said with a smirk, “I believe a few introductions are in order.”

Thomas coughed once, twice, before turning to Alexander and taking his hand. “This is my boyfriend, Alexander Hamilton,” he told his siblings, and he definitely didn’t imagine the smug grin that crossed his boyfriend’s face at the introduction. Sweet baby Jesus, but Alexander was being insufferably smug—worse yet, it was *hot*. Something flickered inside of Thomas.

Fuck, no. This was *so* not the right time for this.

Fucking stupid know-it-all boyfriends and their fucking stupid smirks.

Thomas clenched the hand that wasn’t holding Alexander into a fist, hard enough to leave nail marks. It hurt, but it was sufficiently distracting.

When he felt that he could speak, Thomas continued with the introductions. He distantly noted that there couldn’t have passed that much time, as no one was giving him weird looks for stopping mid-speech.

“I Alexander, these are my siblings. That’s Lucy—she’s my older sister. She’s married to Charles Lewis—very nice guy. They have two daughters, Katherine and Emeline.”

“Yes. Right.” Thomas cleared his throat. “Now that’s Elizabeth. She’s just graduated college.”

“I’ve got a position at Stanford,” Elizabeth said proudly. “Mind, it’s grad teaching, but still...”

Thomas’ mouth fell open. “Really?” Elizabeth nodded. “Congratulations!”

Thomas grinned. He opened his arms, then glanced at her hesitantly, clearly fighting with himself over whether to hug her or not. Elizabeth scoffed and solved his internal dilemma by closing the distance between them and embracing him.

A cough reminded them that, no, the introductions weren’t over yet.

“And that’s Randy, my younger brother.”

“Not by much,” Randy interjected. “Besides, I’m far more mature than you.”

Thomas made a show of rolling his eyes, but it was evident to anyone that knew him that his heart wasn’t in it. “Keep telling yourself that.” He turned to Alexander. “Now, he’s engaged to Michelle, I don’t see her around, so...”

“She's back home,” Randy offered. “Said it might be easier if we kept the relationship drama to a minimum.”

Thomas nodded. “When’s the wedding?” he asked.

“September,” Randy replied with a grin. It fell a moment later as he frantically started digging through his pockets. “I’ve got— shit, it's in here *somewhere* —got it!” And with that, he withdrew a pale yellow envelope from his jacket and handed it to Thomas. “There's your invite. Michelle didn't send it with the others—didn't really know if you'd want to come or anythin’—but she told me to give it to you.”

Thomas carefully took the envelope, turning it over in his hand. There, on the back, in delicate
cursive that was far too neat to be his brother's, was his name.

Thomas said, “We'll be there,” without a second thought.

“Now then, Kate, Emmy? Could you come here?” Lucy asked as she squatted down, and Thomas’ attention was once again pulled back to the two little girls toddling around the coffee table.

They each smiled and they slowly made their way over to their mother, who scooped them up in each arm. “Kate, Emmy,” Lucy said softly, “This is your Uncle Tom, and his boyfriend, Alexander.”

Thomas stared at the two little girls for a moment, blinking awkwardly as he tried to figure out what to say. “Uh,” he finally forced out, “hi.”

“Secretary of State and Presidential Candidate Thomas Jefferson, ladies and gents,” Alexander teased, rolling his eyes. He carefully took each of the little girls’ hands and kissed their tiny knuckles, a silly little grin on his face. “Your uncle is a bit of a doofus, I’m sorry,” he muttered quietly, glancing back at Thomas as if he was hiding some sort of great conspiracy.

One of the little girls—Thomas couldn’t tell them apart, and, frankly, had been a bit distracted by Alexander talking to very small children—stared at Alexander for a moment before she started giggling and clapping her hands. “Doofus!” she cackled. “Doofus doofus doofus!”

Her sister quickly caught on, and soon the den was full of the giggles and high pitched shrieks of “doofus!”

“Thank you, dear, for turning my nieces against me,” Thomas deadpanned. Alexander winked at him over his shoulder.

“That’s my job, babe.”

Thomas glanced at Lucy, Randy, and Elizabeth, trying to read their expressions for—something. Disgust, maybe. Fear. Judgement.

He instead found Lucy looking at them fondly, Elizabeth seeming to be a second away from saying, “awwww!”, and Randy trying to stifle his laugh behind his hand.

“What?” Thomas asked.

“Look at you, all domestic,” Lucy cooed teasingly. “My little baby brother, all grown up and in love.”

“Screw off, Lucille,” Thomas scoffed, careful to mind his language as the small girls in front of him seemed to be enraptured with his hair.

He winced as one of the girls tugged at a particularly sensitive curl.

“Speaking of domestic, you need to change. We’re going to the zoo as a family, the three of us and your beaux and the girls. I promised them zebras,” Lucy said, grinning at the sight of her brother getting smothered under the onslaught of toddlers.

“The zoo?” Thomas asked.

“Yup,” Elizabeth cut in. “Don’t pretend that your fancy federal job makes you mature and stuff. We’re going to the zoo, and we all know you’re going to absolutely lose it when we get to the
aviary."

Alexander snickered from behind him. “You got a thing for feathers, babe?” he asked.

Thomas subtly flipped him off behind his back. “When are we leaving?” he questioned, trying to gently detangle his nieces’ fingers from his hair.

“Four-thirty. We should get there by five, and then we can stay until seven. If we’re lucky, it’ll have cooled down by then,” Lucy replied.

Thomas nodded, taking a step back. He almost couldn’t believe how well this was going. After everything, he’d expected some hostility, or even some sort of tension between the four of them, and yet here he was. Alexander, at his side, with an arm looped around Thomas’ waist—though when that happened, Thomas wasn’t sure—his siblings in front of him, real, honest smiles of their faces, an invitation to his brother’s wedding in his pocket, his nieces playing with his hair, planning on going on a family zoo trip.

It was almost too good to imagine.

“Y’all are taking all of this… well,” Thomas finally noted. His eyes flitted between his siblings. “I’d’ve expected you to—”

“Be dicks about it?” Randy filled in. He shrugged. “Like Lucy said, we don’t understand it, and I’m not about to start attendin’ parades or anythin’, but you’re… you. You’re our brother, Tom. Mom and dad may have their panties in a bunch over you likin’ dick over pussy”—Alexander’s eyes darkened, and he opened his mouth to say something, but a well-placed shove of Thomas’ elbow took the air out of him before he could say anything—”but it doesn’t matter to us.”

Something inside Thomas twisted. It wasn’t unpleasant, per se—it just was.

“Besides,” Elizabeth added, the barest hint of a mischievous smile on her lips, “it wasn’t as if we didn’t have our suspicions; there’s only so long a guy can stare at his male friend’s ass before you become suspicious.

■ ■

Alexander Hamilton @AdotHam
To everyone who still thinks @TJefferson is a Serious Politician Guy, I present you with this: tiny.url/4jd7GT9o

Thomas Jefferson @TJefferson
@AdotHam You said you weren’t taking pictures!

Alexander Hamilton @AdotHam
@TJefferson That’s politics, baby ;)

■ ■

Metro Richmond Zoo @metrorhmdzoo
Secretary of State and presidential candidate @TJefferson visited today with Secretary of the Treasury @AdotHam and had some fun on our Treetop Zoofari course! tiny.url/sm72lx89p

Metro Richmond Zoo @metrorhmdzoo
Metro Richmond Zoo would also like to thank Secretary Jefferson for making a commitment to support conservation efforts during his presidency!
When Alexander first heard Thomas say that they were going to church, he honest-to-God thought that Thomas had been kidding. Yes, he knew that his boyfriend was religious—or believed in God, at any rate, with all the pomp and fanfare that it entailed but without the free-of-charge bigotry—*for the most part*—but he had never, not even once, seen Thomas go to church. The concept, for Alexander, was as familiar as, say, the existence of Yeti, or a ten-hour night’s sleep. It may well exist, but it didn’t happen *to him*.

When Thomas glared at Alexander pointedly, Alexander revised his opinion.

“Church?” He couldn’t keep the incredulity from his voice. “Really?”

Thomas raised an eyebrow. “What’s wrong with the church?”

Do you want the list in alphabetical or chronological order? Alexander almost asked, but held his tongue; it wouldn’t do to piss his boyfriend off even more than he had already done. Instead, Alexander waved his hands, as though trying to smack non-existent objects. “It’s so… churchy,” he finally managed, feeling not a little just as helpless as Susan had been to stop her family from disappearing on her and leaving her all alone to fend for herself in the world.


Alexander turned a glare on Thomas. “Very funny.” He sniffed. “But honestly, it’s so… religious.”

“Well, you’re not wrong,” Thomas deadpanned. “The church *does* happen to be affiliated with religion. I’ll even give you a hint: it’s called Christianity.”

Alexander crossed his arms across his chest. “I know what it’s called!” he burst out. “I just… You do know that I’m not religious, right?” he asked suddenly.

Thomas snorted. “I’d have to have to be blind as well as deaf to miss every single time that you’ve shouted to anyone who will listen about how *religion shouldn’t be a part of our government, really, it’s a good thing that atheists like me are here to* —”

“I get it,” Alexander cut him off curtly, but the glare didn’t fade from his eyes. “This, then begs the question: why are you dragging me to church, of all places?” he asked suspiciously.

Thomas sighed. “Because my mother wants to go.”

“And?” Alexander prompted.

There was a heavy pause. “And she wants us to go.”

Alexander made a sound of understanding. “Ah. Okay. I get it.” His voice almost unwittingly took on an unexpected gentleness. “Let me guess: she’s got it into her head that if we go to church enough, we’ll be ‘saved’” —he made air quotes—”or whatever.”

Thomas grimaced. “The term you’re looking for is ‘salvation’,” he corrected, “but you’re essentially correct.”

Something suddenly occurred to Alexander, and he felt a smirk make its way onto his lips.

Oh, *shit*.

“It follows logically, then,” he spoke slowly, “that there will be an obnoxious priest who’ll hold a
sermon about how ‘God’s path’ is the ‘right path’.” The fingers were working overtime.

Thomas analyzed Alexander’s words; not finding anything suspicious with them, he nodded hesitantly.

Alexander reigned in the urge to rub his hands together in a manner that only befitted a villain whose Evil Plan, trademark and all, was about to come to fruition.

This would be *awesome*.

---

To: Jemmy

SEND HELP.

From: Jemmy

???

What’s happening?

To: Jemmy

BETTER YET: COME TO VIRGINIA.

From: Jemmy

Thomas?

To: Jemmy

Alexander was in church today.

He kept giggling through the entire sermon.

From: Jemmy

He was on his phone?!

To: Jemmy

No. He was reading the Bible.
From: Jemmy

How do you laugh while reading the Bible???

To: Jemmy

Apparently, he seemed to find it hilarious that Jesus Christ and Satan had the same nickname, aka Morning Star.

Alexander watches Supernatural. A Lot.

It’s a recipe for disaster.

From: Jemmy

Goodness gracious, Thomas.

You literally had one job: control Hamilton.

To: Jemmy

Yeah, one would think that it’s a fulltime job, but it’s not.

It’s really not.

It’s like. 2.5 x a fulltime job.

From: Jemmy

Thomas…

To: Jemmy

Also, Alexander almost wore leather pants to church. He’s a /government official/, and while I can’t deny that he looks damn good in them, it was almost a crisis

I needed to physically stop him from doing that.

From: Jemmy

I really don’t need to know about Hamilton’s attire other than the fact that he has one. I most certainly don’t need to know about your thoughts on it.

T M I Jefferson.
To: Jemmy

So you see my problem.

From: Jemmy

To be honest, you did bring it on yourself.

To: Jemmy

Aaaaaand there’s the best friend I know and love.

From: Jemmy

…

Fine.

I’m coming.

Don’t blow up anything.

To: Mad-ison

#me: 1 church: 0 thomas: *in tears*

From: Mad-ison

Hamilton, you’re an adult. Behave like one.

When he wasn’t busy terrorizing Thomas’ parents with his secret liberal agenda, Alexander seemed always to be scribbling on something, or typing one thing or another. It wasn’t his economics book, that had been published a few months ago, and was already being considered “revolutionary”, which pleased Alexander to no end, but it was definitely something.

Which was concerning to say the least.

“You know what’s funny?”

“No, Thomas, but you will undoubtedly tell me soon.”
Thomas ignored the jab. “I think that my parents don’t quite know what to do with you anymore.”

“‘Do’?” James echoed blankly.

Dusk was rapidly approaching, and the two men had taken to sitting outside and sipping sweet tea—or, as Alexander called it, “partaking in an infernal Southern bonding ritual”, whereupon Thomas had unextended his invitation.

When Thomas didn’t reply, James put down his drink, then leaned back in his chair, and fixed Thomas with an expectant look, silently commanding him to go on.

“Well, they know that you’re not straight,” Thomas finally continued, “but you’re not attracted to men, either, so—”

“They’re torn.” James’ mind jumped from A to C, not needing a B.

Thomas inclined his head. “Precisely.” He ignored the pang that went through him at the reminder that, unlike with James, Thomas’ parents made it almost painstakingly clear how they felt about Thomas’ sexuality. For all that his family was an eclectic bunch, when it came to homosexuality, they presented an unfortunately very united front—or at least, they used to. Thomas’ siblings, while not about to start attending pride parades (then again, neither was Thomas, and he was the gay sheep in the family), were willing to learn. They kept an open mind, and for that, Thomas was eternally grateful.

Thomas shook his head, and noticed that James had gone back to sipping his drink while Thomas had avoided a minor meltdown.

Another moment passed in silence.

“I still don’t understand what you’re doing here.” Thomas sounded plaintive even to himself.

“Are you kidding me? Hamilton against your parents?” A snort. “This is prime entertainment, Thomas.”

Thomas put his face into his hands with a groan. “I need a new best friend,” he declared to the world at large.

James didn’t dignify that with a response.

Alexander peered up at Madison. “What are you”—he poked Madison with a spoon—“doing here?” He whacked the spoon against the table to accentuate his words.

Madison shrugged, but there was a lazy smirk on his lips. “I heard that Thomas had convinced you to come down to Virginia, and that, I had to see for myself. Alexander Hamilton, terrorizing the poor people of Shadwell, Virginia with his secret liberal agenda,” he drawled, his Southern accent more pronounced than usual, and really, was it the Virginian air that brought out the most horrible accent in everyone? “Besides, the Congress is in recess, and I, unlike other people, know when to take a vacation for my own good.”

Alexander didn’t bother stifling a groan as he let his head slam against the table. “Will everyone just stop bringing this up ?!” he bemoaned.

Madison snorted. “I wouldn’t count on it, Hamilton.”
Alexander let his head fall back with a groan.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoyed! tell us whatcha Think!
In which Thomas achieves the impossible

Chapter by Sanna_Black_Slytherin

Chapter Summary

Also known as, Alexander takes a walk.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“Thomas, do you have a moment?” Thomas’ mother asked. It was he and Alexander’s last day at Shadwell. In a few hours, they’d be at Monticello, away from the stifling tension walls in which the walls of his childhood home seemed to be saturated.

Thomas frowned. He put down the encyclopedia he had been skimming. “Yes,” he replied carefully. “What do you want to talk about?”

Thomas’ mother sighed. “Listen, I know that we haven’t always seen eye to eye on certain matters”—a euphemism if Thomas ever heard one—”but I want to remind you that I love you. Always.”

Thomas’ eyes softened almost unwittingly. “I know that, mother.”

“And I know that you think that this is right, that there’s nothing wrong with two men being together,” his mother went on. “Well, you need to understand where I come from, sweetheart. I don’t approve of you and… Alexander,” she said the name with distaste, “because I am genuinely terrified that I won’t see you in the afterlife, because I'll go to Heaven, and you'll go to Hell, because that’s where sinners go, and you are sinning, and we will be eternally parted.”

Well, that fucking hurt.

Thomas hid a wince, but his mother wasn’t quite done yet.

“But I'm glad that you found happiness in this life. I just…” She paused for a moment, gathering her thoughts. “I just hope that it’s worth eternal damnation,” she finally finished.

Thomas gritted his teeth. “I am not—” he began, before realizing that his protests wouldn’t change anything. His mother would be still as stubborn and as stuck in her old ways as before. He sighed, and let his hands fall to his sides. “Never mind.”

He tried to meet her eyes, but found that she was steadily studying the steel-grey carpet on the floor that wouldn’t have looked out of place in the private fortress of an average Sith Lord.

Thomas tried to put himself in his mother’s shoes. It wasn’t easy, but channeling views he had been raised to believe in wasn’t impossible, either.

By her logic, however twisted and perverted it was, she had lost her son forever when he decided to indulge his ‘unnatural desires’. Maybe she had a little time with him now, but she would lose him in death. She wouldn’t be reunited with him in Heaven, as she was convinced was where she would
go, as, by that same logic, Thomas would go to Hell.

She was afraid; not of Thomas, but for Thomas. Afraid of what that would mean for him, for his soul, for his eternal life. They would be parted in the afterlife, with no chance of repentance for Thomas.

How charming.

Thomas forced himself to swallow. He hadn’t contemplated much of what would come after death, not since he had stopped attending church when he realized just how toxic their homophobic rhetoric was to a gay teenager so deep inside the closet, he might as well have met Dean Winchester; he hadn’t, but now he did.

Just what did this relationship mean for him? Was there even a point to this?

Was there a Heaven? A Hell? How—what merited an entrance?

Aaaaand his mother was back to staring at him in concern.

Thomas shook his head. “I’m fine, mother,” he offered—an empty platitude, they both knew, but Thomas’ mother didn’t call him out on it.

“I hope that he makes you happy,” Thomas’ mother spoke again. She said it coldly, but this was as close to approval as Thomas were going to get from his mother.

Without hesitation—

“He does.”

The drive to Monticello was tense. Alexander wasn’t exactly sure what Ma and Pa Jefferson had said to Thomas, but he had a pretty good idea, and damn if it didn’t piss him off.

It had obviously affected Thomas as well. Alexander could see it in the way he held himself, his back rigidly straight and his hands clenched into fists at his sides. He shied away from Alexander’s touch, hell, he hardly looked at Alexander.

They rode in almost complete silence, only speaking to ask their driver (his name was Julian, and apparently he’d been chauffeuring Thomas around since he was in diapers, and had some pretty fucking amazing stories) to turn up the air conditioning or change the radio station.

It was hell.

A few times, Alexander tried to start a conversation, but whether it be about the absolute shitshow that was their departure from Shadwell or just anything, Thomas refused to speak.

By the time they pulled into the Monticello driveway, Alexander was about to fucking explode. “Thomas!” he demanded as Thomas stalked to the front door. “Thomas, babe, you’ve got to talk to me.”

Thomas still didn’t reply, instead sneering and practically stomping off.

“Fine!” Alexander shouted after him. “Run from your problems! Real mature, Thomas!”

Julian sighed as he stepped out of the car. “Let him go,” he said, opening the trunk and pulling out
Thomas’ three suitcases and Alexander’s beat up duffle bag. “He’ll come out when he’s ready.”

“Oh yeah, because he’s got a history of coming out voluntarily,” Alexander grumbled, taking his bag and one of Thomas’ from Julian.

“Secretary Hamilton—” Julian protested.

“Seriously, man, just call me Alexander,” Alexander argued. “And let me help you. All this… fancy rich people shit weirds me out.”


“Yeah, I’m sure. It’s the least I can do, right?” he said. “You’ve had to put up with our shit all week— with Thomas’ shit for his whole life—you deserve a hell of a lot more than help carrying luggage.”

“If you insist,” Julian replied.

Alexander, despite himself, grinned as he headed inside.

When Thomas finally came out of whatever hole he hid in to cope, it was with a knock at the door to the room Alexander was staying in and a shout of, “Put down your computer, we're going on a walk!”

“What the fuck do you mean, ‘going on a walk’? A few hours ago, you wouldn’t even look at me, and now you want to go on a walk?” Alexander asked as he opened the door. “Besides, we're in the middle of Nowhere, Virginia! There's nowhere to walk to!”

Thomas sighed and rolled his eyes. “We're not walking anywhere, we're going on a walk,” he explained as if it was the most obvious thing in the world. “Put on your shoes, let's go.”

Alexander grumbled as he pulled on his shoes and followed Thomas to the front door. “So we're just going to be pointlessly walking around?” he questioned.

“It's not pointless, it's pleasant,” Thomas argued. “Fresh air, the great outdoors, vitamin D, exercise.”

“I'm going to get bug bites and blisters and complain the whole time,” Alexander protested.

“I'd expect nothing else. Come on.”

And just like that, Thomas strolled out onto the Monticello grounds.

Alexander didn’t fail to notice that he hadn’t commented on Alexander’s statement about earlier.

“This is boring,” Alexander complained.

Thomas felt a quiet pang. He ignored it.

“This is how I've come up with all my best ideas. Nothing like fresh air and sunshine to get the brain going,” Thomas replied with an easy smile.

Alexander scowled. “You know, for someone who wants to cut back environmental regulations, you're a fucking tree hugger,” he muttered.
Thomas ignored him and instead tugged him over to a small thicket of trees and shrubbery. “Look!” he said, pointed at a few vaguely trumpet shaped yellow flowers. “Honeysuckle!”

“You know, I think I prefer darling, or maybe—”

Thomas glared at him over his shoulder. “Could you be something other than absolutely intolerable for five minutes?” he asked.


Thomas rolled his eyes and turned back to the flowers. He carefully plucked one off the vine, pinched off the tip, and pulled out the centre bit, sucking at the small bead of nectar that caught at the end of the flower.

“What are you doing?” Alexander asked.

“It's honeysuckle,” Thomas replied, as if that cleared up anything.

“You're licking a flower,” Alexander pointed out, and yes, Thomas was in fact now licking the centre string-slash-tube bit.


“Bullshit,” Alexander protested. “No way in hell are you supposed to lick flowers.”

“Try it,” Thomas insisted. He picked two more buds off the bush. “Here. You take off the end, and then you pull out the middle bit—it's called the style—and the sticky part on the end—the stigma—catches on the nectar inside the flower, and then you suck on it. It's good.”

Thomas demonstrated each step as he said it, and Alexander watched on with skepticism evident on his face.

“If this is some weird country bullshit that's going to make me sick or something—” he started, and Thomas shook his head and chuckled.

“It's not, I promise. You can eat the flowers and the pollen, just not the berries. Actual, people used to use honeysuckle to treat kidney stones and liver disease. It won’t hurt you,” Thomas assured him.

Alexander eyed the flower warily, but finally took it from Thomas’ hand. “So I eat this and my liver will forgive me for all that tequila in college?” he asked.

Thomas rolled his eyes. “Just try it.”

“Fine,” Alexander finally relented. He carefully mimicked the actions Thomas had performed earlier, sucking the bit of liquid that formed at the end of the flower.

It was good. Sweet. Kind of weird, but not as weird as some of the other shit Alexander had tried in his life.

“So?” Thomas asked. Alexander huffed.

“It's not bad,” he admitted begrudgingly. Thomas smiled.

“Lucy and I would spend hours sitting under this bush, eating all the flowers. One time, we gave a handful of the berries to Randy, and he was sick for days,” he said.

“You don’t seem to mind,” he replied.

They walked a bit further past the tangle of bushes, the scent of the honeysuckle still wafting through the air, when suddenly Thomas stopped under an oak tree. “So,” he said, leaning against the tree. “About earlier.”

Those seemed to be the only words Alexander needed to hear. “Yeah, about earlier,” he snapped. “What the hell, Thomas? I get that your parents said some shitty things, and I know it must’ve hurt like hell, but shutting me out doesn’t solve any of that! I—I’m supposed to be here for you! I’m supposed to be the person you turn to and lean on and trust when that sort of shit happens!”

“It’s not that simple,” Thomas argued. “It’s not that I don’t trust you—don’t give me that damn look, it’s not that. It’s… they said a lot of things, Alexander. I needed to think.”

“About what?” Alexander needled, his eyes narrowing.

“Don’t,” Thomas replied. “Don’t get all defensive now, it wasn’t about that.”

“About what, Thomas?” Alexander asked again.

“About whether or not they were right! I know that everything they said was bullshit, you don’t have to—to test me or whatever it is you’re trying to do,” Thomas said. That seemed to placate Alexander a little, his hackles seeming to lower.

“Then what was it about?” he asked.

“That’s what I’m trying to get to,” Thomas replied, glaring at his boyfriend.

There was a pause. Thankfully, Alexander had the sense to realise that this was not the time for another smart ass remark, and instead simply waited for Thomas to continue.

“I had to think about what they meant by it—why they said it,” Thomas finally admitted. “My parents… they want what they think is best for me—not that excuses what they said. They care, Alexander, even if they don’t show it in the best of ways. I had to figure out how to react to that, to everything that happened this week. And, while I love you dearly, you’re not the best at letting others focus on anything besides you.”

Alexander scoffed, but seemed to be appeased. “Okay,” he muttered. “Sorry I got so… jumpy.”

Thomas chuckled and shook his head. “To be honest? I’d be concerned if you weren’t jumpy after all of that.”

Alexander smiled, and finally it seemed real, genuine, the sort of smiles he let Thomas see when they were at home, when, as Thomas was coming to realise, Alexander knew he was safe.

Thomas couldn’t help but grin in return.

They would be okay.

“Oh God, I never thought I’d be so happy to be back in the same town as Mitch fucking McConnell,” Alexander muttered as he stepped off the plane in DC.
Their stay in Monticello had been short, but it had been what Thomas had needed after the absolute shitshow that had been his week.

And yet…

“I suppose it’s alright,” Thomas replied as he took Alexander’s hand.

Alexander scoffed. “Don’t act like you’re not glad to be home.”

Thomas stalled for a moment, glancing over at the man at his side.

No, DC wasn’t the rolling hills and fields of Monticello, but it had some things that Monticello never would.

Here, he had the freedom to hold Alexander’s hand and know that they could feel safe, feel accepted. Here, he knew Alexander could be comfortable and happy. Here, the smile on Alexander’s face wasn’t strained to forced around the edges. Here, he and Alexander had built something together.

“Well,” Thomas said, grinning down at Alexander. “There is no place like it.”

Chapter End Notes

Alexander is honestly such a troll.

Tell us what you thought! Comments make our day!
“Mr Jefferson,” Martha’s head popped around the corner of the doorframe, her blonde hair falling around her shoulders as she did so, “The Washington Post is reaching out for a comment regarding Mr Hamilton’s statement about reducing the coal mining industry.”

Thomas pursed his lips. He automatically stamped down the tiny twinge of guilt that arose whenever he looked at Martha. Even though it had been years ago—and certainly hadn’t been wrong—he still felt uneasy around her, to the point of sometimes questioning his decision to bring her on as his campaign manager, before he was abruptly reminded of the fact that, oh yeah, she was one of the most frighteningly competent people Thomas has ever met. If ever there was a person who could get him—a young, black, gay Republican—elected, it was her.

Well, her and Kellyanne Conway, but Thomas had standards.

“Tell them that my partner’s personal opinion in no way reflects mine,” he finally told her once he had gathered his wits about him. “Then find Alexander and have him brought to my office.”

Martha nodded once, decisively, before her head vanished around the corner as quickly as it had appeared.

Thomas’ eyes followed her departure as he leaned back against the desk with a sigh before he circled his desk. He settled back in his chair and grabbed another document for him to purview.

He had known, when he first announced his candidature, that it would be a long and exhausting and thankless process that would make him want to tear out considerable parts of his hair and scream at the world at large for being so fucking blind that they couldn’t even be trusted to elect someone decent, but even he hadn’t expected this; he hadn’t expected one of his main obstacles to be his very own and very liberal boyfriend, who shouted his opinions on everything ranging from the invasion of Iraq, to pre-sliced bread, to people who held up the Starbucks line for fifteen minutes deciding on a drink (more commonly known as Aaron Burr), to anyone who would give him five minutes of their day.

In retrospect, he really should have expected it though.
With another sigh, Thomas leaned back in his chair, paper in hand.

No rest for the wicked, it seemed.

Thomas was honestly just trying to go pick up a sandwich that didn’t taste like potting soil pressed between two pieces of cardboard. On any other day, he would’ve sent an aid or intern or literally anyone else out to get it, but that day he felt like getting up and stretching his legs.

He should’ve just sent an intern.

“Do you really think a queer is qualified to run the country, Mr. Jefferson?’’

*God*, sometimes Thomas really wished that ‘free speech’ was just a little less free.

“How can someone with such depraved personal morals be trusted to do the best possible job for our great nation, Mr. Jefferson?’’

Honestly, some people just *needed* to be removed from society, for the good of said society if nothing else.

“Mr. Jefferson, in a Christian nation such as ours, you can’t really expect people to allow themselves to be governed by a bunch of fag—”

“Would you shut up?!’’ Thomas finally snapped, turning to face the reporter and, fuck his awful, rotten luck, the cameraman, the camera pointed straight at Thomas in the hopes of catching him doing what he was just about to do. Thomas’ eyes were blazing with barely suppressed anger. “Yes, I do think a gay man is qualified to be president if that gay man has the necessary experience and education, which I do. Also, my sexuality doesn’t mean I have ‘depraved morals’ or whatever other nonsense you’ve been spouting—it just means that I like men! And as for your statement about our so-called Christian nation, I think you’ll find a little something called the separation of church and state within our wondrous Constitution, which means we’re no more a Christian nation than we are a Muslim nation, or a Buddhist nation, or a Hindu nation. Now, if that is *all*—” he paused for a moment to scan the motley crowd of protesters and crack reporters—”I’m actually on my way to lunch, and I need to get going. Ciao.”

Thomas rolled his shoulders and made his way to his car, ignoring the flash of cameras following him out.

*James leveled Thomas with an inquisitive glance. Thomas fought the urge to fidget. He had forgotten just how easily his childhood friend could make him feel as though he were just that—a child.*

“What do you want me to say?” Thomas asked helplessly.

*James crossed his arms in front of his chest. “I want you to look me in the eyes and tell me, truthfully, that you want to do this.”*

*There was a long pause, as Thomas didn’t reply.*

*James’ eyebrows crinkled. “Do you want to do this?” he asked again.*
Thomas nodded once.

James sighed. “You do realize the levels of scrutiny you will face? Washington was one of the cleanest candidates in recent history, and even he was almost drowned by the amount of attention the media, as well as the opposition, paid to his every mistake. You will, pardon me, have it so much worse as an openly gay and black conservative candidate. You will be degraded, your every move will be discredited, your every decision questioned.”

“So basically what happened when I came out,” Thomas summarized, fighting to maintain the casual tone in the face of James’ seriousness.

James was shaking his head before Thomas had even finished speaking. “It will be worse. Imagine that, and multiply that by three. That’s how bad it would be. Do you really want to subject yourself to that?”

“It almost sounds as though you’re trying to dissuade me from this.” Thomas’ tone was still light, but there was an edge to it. “Don’t tell me that you’re thinking of running for office yourself.”

James rolled his eyes. “Thomas, I’m more than happy where I am right now. Realistically, we both know that I wield considerably more power as Speaker of the House than you would as the figurehead of our nation, and with less of a responsibility should everything go to hell. As Speaker of the House, I actually get things done, instead of shaking hands and looking striking in a suit. No, I’m quite comfortable working from the shadows for now.” His frown lines deepened. “But I’m worried about what a toll this will have on you. Look at what the presidency did to Washington.

“I’m not trying to dissuade you from running, but what I am trying to do is remind you of the risks involved. You’ve certainly, if I know you at all, thought of the obvious ones, but just as I’m sure that you’ve thought about the impact this will have on your private life, I’m sure that you haven’t given a thought to the impact this will have on your mental health—or your relationship with Hamilton,” he added, “which is volatile enough as it is, without any additional incentive thrown into the mix.”

Thomas pulled a face. “Way to ruin a conversation,” he told his friend. “I’m not sure how things work in cakeland, but here in America, if you want to convince someone not to do something, insulting their significant other is not a good move.”

Only James’ reputation as a serene and austere politician dedicated to serving in the best interests of all American citizens prevented him from swatting at Thomas.

They’d discussed it a while back before Thomas even brought it up to Alexander, and at the time, Thomas had taken the whole conversation as—well, not a grain of salt, but he certainly hadn’t given it any significant consideration. It was a sacrifice made for the greater good and all that.

Now, however, he sort of wished he’d given it more thought.

“I’ve seen the press coverage, Thomas,” James said. “It’s not pretty—from either side.”

Thomas fought the impulse to end the call there and then “I know,” he said through gritted teeth. “James, I love you dearly, but if you just called to state the obvious, you might as well hang up. I’m a bit busy to have my time wasted by—”

“It’s not too late to back out,” James interrupted Thomas. He seemed unfazed by Thomas’ barrage of thinly-veiled insults, but Thomas knew that underneath that Ice Prince Illya Kuryakin facade of his, Thomas’ words hit closer to home than he’d admit.
Suddenly, it was as if all the fight went out of Thomas upon hearing James’ words. Thomas leaned back in his seat, exhausted, spent, the weight of the past days crashing down on him as abruptly as if he had traveled in the time-space continuum and suddenly found himself in a foreign landscape with a dozen alien species just itching to get closer to him.

“Except it is,” he murmured quietly, so quietly that James probably had to strain to hear him.

“Thomas—”

“But I want to do this, James.” A hesitant pause. “No, I need to do this. Can you understand that, James? Have you ever wanted something so badly, you ached with it? That you couldn’t imagine backing down? That you know that you would spend the rest of your life regretting that moment when you said ‘no, I can’t do this’, because if you had just waited, had endured, you might have been able to make it, to achieve your dream, to help more people than you’d ever imagined possible?” A sharp intake of breath. “So no, James, I can’t back down. Not now.”

It was James’ turn to be silent for a long moment.

“And you’re absolutely sure?” he finally repeated.

“My God, James, yes. I’m absolutely, positively, 100% sure,” Thomas sighed, rolling his eyes for good measure.

“Well, then,” James replied evenly. “I would suggest scheduling an emergency press conference, since, as you yourself noticed, you’ve got quite the shitshow on your hands.”

He hung up with a click.

Thomas pinched the bridge of his nose as he called Martha into his office.

Fuck.

Just—

Fuck.

Thomas didn’t get home until eight-thirty that night. Granted, it was hardly the latest shift he’d pulled since joining the Washington administration, but that hardly mattered as he kicked off his dress shoes at the door.

Fifteen minutes later, he was comfortably situated on the couch, his suit replaced by fluffy pants and a robe, and his briefcase replaced by the television remote and a glass of merlot. A piece of perfectly buttered toast sat on the table beside him, smeared with jam and topped with the raspberries he’d bought over the weekend in a last-ditch attempt to get Alexander to eat something healthy for once in his life.

At that moment, life was good. There were no international crises to deal with, no campaign workers to interview, no well-meaning but no less obnoxious boyfriends to worry about. Just Thomas, some aloe-infused fuzzy socks, and whatever was up next on his Netflix queue.

“What the fuck?”

Damn it.
Well, hello to you too,” Thomas grumbled, taking another sip of his wine.

Alexander simply stood in the doorway, apparently trying to stifle his giggles. “Oh don’t mind me,” he continued, a little smirk on his face. “Go on, get back to your soaps and your cheese platter. Enjoy yourself, Karen.”

“Just because you haven’t relaxed since the seventies doesn’t mean none of us have!” Thomas retorted.

“I wasn’t even alive in the seventies!” Alexander protested.

Thomas grinned. “Exactly.”

Alexander threw up his hands. “You’re making even less sense than usual,” he declared with an ungodly amount of flair for stupid o’clock. His eyes then narrowed. “Scoot over,” he demanded.

Thomas’ eyebrows shot up past his hairline. “What, so that you can sit here and ridicule my tastes in television?” He scoffed. “No, thanks.”

“Please,” Alexander said.

Thomas stared at him for a moment, eyes narrowing even more before sighing and throwing his hands in the air. “Fine!” he relented, scooting over just the slightest bit. “But if I hear a single peep out of that overly large mouth of yours, I’m locking you out of the house.”

Alexander nodded, but Thomas didn’t miss the flash of confusion and concern that crossed his face for a moment.

Thomas dutifully pulled up Parks and Rec and took a sip of his wine, but it was hard to really relax, to really enjoy Leslie Knope’s latest shenanigans when he could feel Alexander’s worried gaze trained on him.

“What?” he finally snapped. “Wh—Why are you staring at me like—like I’m about to explode?”

“No reason,” Alexander replied, reaching across Thomas for the piece of toast. Thomas quickly slapped his hand away.

“There’s more bread in the kitchen. You want some toast, you make it yourself. This is mine,” he argued. “And don’t ‘no reason’ me, Hamilton. I know you, and you don’t do things for no reason.”

“So I can’t look at my incredibly attractive boyfriend without an ulterior motive?” Alexander questioned, and Thomas huffed.

“You can look, but what you’re doing is dissecting me with your eyes,” Thomas pointed out. “It’s unnerving.”

Alexander sighed and looked away, his arms crossing over his chest. “It’s nothing—”


Alexander still didn’t respond.

“Look, we’ve got to talk to each other, okay? You’re obviously worried about something, and I don’t—I don’t like seeing you worried, so tell me that way I can fix it, or help you fix it, or whatever,” Thomas insisted, pausing the show.
“I’m worried about you, dipshit,” Alexander shot back. “I’m worried about you because ever since we got back from Virginia, you just seem so worn out and you haven’t been eating or sleeping as much, and yeah, it’s hypocritical for me of all people to get worried over shit like that, but damn it, Thomas, I’m used to that sort of stuff, you’re not, not to the same extent.”

Thomas was taken aback, to say the least. “Alexander—” he began, but Alexander cut him off with a glare.

“Don’t,” he muttered. “Just—don’t.”

“I’m not going to deny that the past few weeks haven’t been busier than usual, but what with the campaign and all, it’s to be expected. You’re the one who said I shouldn’t resign until closer to primaries,” Thomas argued.

“And I stand by that!” Alexander insisted, “But…”

“But?” Thomas prompted.

“I don’t want you to burn yourself out, okay?” Alexander admitted.

“Oh, that’s rich—”

“I know it is!” Alexander protested. “I’m not stupid, Thomas. I already said I know it’s hypocritical, but it’s the truth!”

“So you’re worried,” Thomas stated, trying to back up the conversation to some rational point. “I’m not going to tell you to not be worried because it’s not helpful, but I am going to point out that what I’m doing right now? This is all to make sure that I don’t end up passed out on the floor of our bedroom.”

“And you’re fine? You’re sure you’re fine?” Alexander pressed, and Thomas had to laugh at the sheer absurdity of the whole situation. Alexander was worried about Thomas not taking care of himself? What sort of Through the Looking Glass nonsense was this?

“As fine as I can be while not only trying to handle international diplomatic relations but also running to be the Leader of the Free World,” he offered.

Alexander finally laughed. “I guess you’ve got a point,” he admitted.

Thomas rolled his eyes and looped an arm around Alexander’s shoulders, pulling him closer before pressing a light kiss to his temple. “I usually do, sweetheart,” he muttered, ignoring Alexander’s incredulous scoff in reply.

Yeah, they’d be okay.

“But even objectively, that’s pure bullshit.” Alexander was waving his hands as he articulated.

Thomas snorted as he absentmindedly turned the page of the newspaper he was reading. Alexander honestly thought it ridiculous that anyone, let alone any boyfriend of his, still subscribed to a physical newspaper. Everything was digitalized now for a reason, and yet Thomas, ridiculous and floppy and sweet Thomas, insisted on buying a physical copy every day, no matter how many times Alexander reminded him of the waste of resources that entailed. It wasn’t so much that Thomas didn’t give a damn about the rainforest as that it simply didn't occur to him that what he did exacerbated the
destruction thereof.

Alexander's eyes narrowed. “And I suppose that you have a better idea,” he challenged.

Thomas’ lips curled into an unwitting smile. “Of course,” he said haughtily. “I’m an Objectivist.”

“A what?” Alexander asked.

“An Objectivist. I believe in Ayn Rand’s philosophy of—”

“I know what an Objectivist is, Thomas,” Alexander interrupted. “What I don’t know is how you believe in any of that bullshit.”

“Bullshit?” Thomas repeated incredulously. “You mean valuing the rights of the individual? The very basis and foundation of our country was built upon?”

“No, I mean the absolutely selfish and elitist concept that puts your own needs before the needs of everyone else!” Alexander yelled. “We live in a society, Thomas. With other people. You can’t only do what’s in your best interest!”

“And why is that?”

“Are you—have you lost your mind?! In order for our system of government—the government literally you work for—to function, people have to work for the well-being of other people, even if it doesn’t benefit them! That is the whole point of a republic!” Alexander shouted, taking another step into Thomas’ personal space.

“The only way that would be the point of a republic would be if you could call a globe pointy,” Thomas retorted.

Alexander's hands clenched into fists, and his eyes blazed dangerously. “You know what?” he snapped. “I’m going to be the mature adult for once and, instead of telling you to fuck off, I’m going to be productive.”

He stormed off, followed out of the room by shouts of, “Don't you fucking dare bring your Twitter followers into this, you overgrown lizard!”

\[\text{From: POTUS}\]

I would greatly appreciate it if you and Sec Hamilton stopped using the OO for sleepovers. It’s not what it was made for.

\[\text{To: POTUS}\]

Understood, sir.

\[\text{From: POTUS}\]

Don’t think I didn’t notice that you haven’t told me you wouldn’t do it.
To: POTUS

I don’t like to lie, sir, and that would constitute as one.

Besides, sir, you *do* know Alexander, right?

From: POTUS

Point taken.

“Where have you been?!” Alexander hissed at Thomas, who sat down beside him after making some vague bullshit apology for being late. “I’ve had to try and keep Frederick occupied for the last”—he quickly checked his watch—“forty-five minutes!”

Thomas sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose. “Phone banking,” he muttered. “Martha insisted that I do some myself, and it’s exhausting.”

“So couldn’t you just record something and send it to everyone instead of, I dunno, abandoning the love of your life to a crazy British socialite?” Alexander snapped.

“Gentlemen?” Washington asked, raising an eyebrow at the two of them. “Is everything alright?”

“Yes, sir. Of course, sir,” Thomas said quickly. “Just explaining to Secretary Hamilton the reasons for my delay, Mr. President.”

“And what were those reasons, Secretary Jefferson?” George Frederick interrupted. “If you don’t mind my asking, of course.”

Thomas stifled the urge to roll his eyes. Of all the obnoxious foreign dignitaries in the world, Frederick was one of his least favourites—an opinion that was widely agreed upon in Washington. No matter the side of the aisle, everyone hated George Frederick. In a way, it was something to be cherished; nothing united people of differing political beliefs as much as the universal hatred for George fucking Frederick.

“Campaign matters,” Thomas replied quickly, trying his best to keep his words from being too clipped.

“Ah,” Frederick muttered, his nose crinkling in distaste. “And how is the trail, Mr. Secretary?”

“Good,” Thomas answered. “I seem to have a surprising amount of public support, for which I’m grateful. I’m excited to begin a new chapter in helping the American people.”

It was a clearly rehearsed response, one that he and Martha had gone over a few times.

To Thomas’ relief, Frederick didn’t seem to notice—or if he did, he simply didn’t care.

Washington stapled together his fingers. “As I was saying, there are a few points which I would like discussed…”
Two utterly miserable hours later, Thomas and Alexander finally stumbled out of the Oval Office and into the sweet taste of freedom.

“God, I hate that guy,” Alexander muttered under his breath. “He’s such a pompous, arrogant, big headed idiot. Every time he opens his mouth I can feel the stupidity sticking to me.”

Thomas scoffed. “I, personally, didn’t know it was possible to be that condescending and patronizing,” he said.

“And that’s saying something,” Alexander grumbled.

Thomas couldn’t help but chuckle at that. “He’s one powdered wig away from his very own 17th-century oil painting. He’d fit perfectly into that self-centered culture.”

Alexander swatted at Thomas’ arm. “You’re a dick,” he said, not without affection.

Thomas rolled his eyes. “It’s not as if you weren’t thinking it.”

They walked for a moment in compassionate silence.

Alexander looked up from the phone he had been fiddling with. “Hey, you wanna stop for dinner?” he suggested. “Herc texted me the other day about this Thai place nearby. Apparently, their dumplings are ‘blessed by God himself’.” He made air quotes.

Thomas stopped and turned to stare at his boyfriend. Alexander likewise stopped, throwing Thomas a confused look.

“Sure,” Thomas agreed slowly before leaning forward and peering into Alexander’s eyes. “Are you feeling okay?”

“Yeah, of course. I just want dumplings,” Alexander replied flippantly.

“You never want to stop for dinner,” Thomas argued. “Something about it being frivolous and wasteful and whatnot.”

“You know well, maybe I just want to get some really good dumplings with my really hot boyfriend who’s had a really long day and probably doesn’t want to eat a bagged salad while doing campaign work all evening.” Alexander countered heatedly. “Ever think of that?”


Alexander positively beamed. “I love you too,” he said, threading his fingers through Thomas’.

Thomas kissed him on the cheek, and together they made their way out of the White House.

(Later, Thomas would make a mental note to shake down Hercules for his other restaurant suggestions.)

“According to Politico, you have exactly a 37.8% chance at winning the election,” Alexander told Thomas matter-of-factly during one of the rate pauses between bouts of clicking away at his laptop.

“Oh?” Thomas looked up from a report one of his assistants, Jenny, had given him.
He wouldn’t have admitted it out loud, but he was grateful for the interruption. His head was beginning to swell from everything that was shoved into his brain all at once. Even when he was the State Secretary, he usually had time to digest the information he was given, but now, he was expected to suddenly know everything he was given and to create in-depth plans based on information he was given once in passing. Certainly, he had help, but at the end of the day, it was Thomas’ responsibility to get his message across.

Alexander nodded. “Yeah, but you only have a 42.9% chance of winning the Republican nomination in the first place.” He tilted his head with consideration. “The remaining 57.1% are”—he adopted a mocking voice and hand movement to match—’’lyin’ Ted’, ‘phony Mark’, and ‘1 for 44’.” His voice changed to normal. “Oh, and there are rumours that Darth Fuckface might try to run again.”

Thomas snorted loudly. “That’s hardly worthy competition,” he pointed out.

Alexander shrugged. “You know that, I know that, but the people might not. Remember, a lot of these people—especially Drumpf—pander to people’s fear, and while that’s a disgusting tactic, you can’t argue that it’s not effective. People like to believe that their life is only miserable because there are people out specifically to get them. People don’t like to accept personal blame for their own actions, and much rather prefer to have a target they can point at and say “my misery is their fault”, and some candidates are giving them a very convenient one.”

“What do you suggest I do to counter that?” Thomas challenged. “Do I allay their fears? How?”

Alexander shrugged minutely. “You’re the one running. You could try to allay people’s fears, or you could argue that the bullshit your opponents is spouting is just that—bullshit—but you can’t let it go unaddressed, lest people think that it’s real. Remember, Drumpf almost won by that tactic.”

“Except he didn’t,” Thomas reminded him. “He didn’t win, and that’s what counts, in the end.”

Alexander’s eyes narrowed. For a long moment, he silently observed Thomas.

“Very well,” Alexander eventually snapped. “If you refuse to acknowledge this, on your head be it. I was just trying to be a helpful, supportive boyfriend.”

Thomas shook his head. “Thank you, but I think that, if anything, I am well-equipped to handle the intricacies of Republican politics.”

Alexander sniffed. He didn’t bother with a reply.

Something in Thomas’ stomach churned at the thought of Alexander spurning him. He shoved it down and focused on his work.

Chapter End Notes

Comment and tell us what you thought!
Alexander Hamilton vs The Republican National Convention

Chapter by Sanna_Black_Slytherin

Chapter Summary

In which Alexander livestreams the whole convention, and the RNC takes one look at Alexander and runs.

Chapter Notes

for a fun drinking game, take a shot every time alexander does something ridiculous—alternatively, chug a whole bottle of the drink of your choice every time a republican does something Horrible, but it’s still not as horrible as anything republicans do in Real Life

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Thomas fought the urge to groan. It wouldn’t be dignified for a major presidential candidate to do that. It wouldn’t. Don’t do it, Jefferson. You’ve faced worse.

“—and here, dear viewers, you see a specimen of the Speakerus of the Housus family tree. This specimen is particularly sleazy and specializes in back room deals—”

Beside Thomas, James growled. “Thomas, get your Hamilton under control before I have security remove him,” he snapped, and Thomas didn’t even blame him, because what was Alexander even fucking thinking?

Oh, right; he wasn’t.

“Alexander, I love you dearly, but what are you even doing here?” Thomas tried again.

Alexander smirked. “Washington all but kicked me out of the White House for the remainder of the week, so I figured I could—”

“Come troll the GOP convention instead of sulking at home?” Thomas finished.

“The GOP is actually a good motivation for writing, because it has to be the largest congregation of idiots and judgmental assholes in the country.” As if to underscore his point, a man several meters away lifted his cup of coffee to drink from it, only discovering that its temperature was about twenty degrees too hot for human consumption, let go of the drink, which fell onto his clothes and covered his new white shirt in a great brown stain. That would probably leave a mark. Oh well.

Thomas threw up his hands. “Put away the phone, and goddamn stop livestreaming everything!”

Alexander furrowed his brows. “Why? Is this a secret Mason club meeting or something? Is it invite only? Because I feel like I should count as plus one.”
“No, but—”

Alexander stopped his words with a finger to Thomas’ lips. “Transparency, my dear Jefferson. Transparency is key. The voters need transparency.” He cleared his throat, before turning to James. “So, would you say that the GOP is limiting the rights of American citizens to participate—”

Thomas threw up his arms. “Shut up, will you? The adults need to talk, Hamilton.”

Alexander stuck out his tongue, before zeroing in with the camera onto Thomas’ face. “Really mature, Jefferson.” He then turned the camera onto himself. “Since we’ve just been thrown out of overhearing the secret conservative agenda, let’s go hunt down Anderson Cooper. I’ve heard rumours that CNN sent the silver fox himself to monitor this convention, and damn, isn’t that a way to stick it up to all the homophobes in a twelve-mile radius.” He winked, then set off in a seemingly arbitrary direction.

Once Alexander did disappear from view, Thomas let out the groan he had been holding back. “I’m going to skewer him one day,” he told James, who merely snorted.

“Let’s get going, or they’ll begin without us.”

—

Alexander Hamilton @AdotHam
@andersoncooper and I are in the snakes’ nest and they don’t believe in universal health care so my bite’s getting worse. SOMEONE SEND HELP.

Thomas Jefferson @TJefferson
@AdotHam Have you ever heard of ‘oversharing’?

Alexander Hamilton @AdotHam
@TJefferson Well, at least *I* don’t scream at someone that I want to fuck them.

Thomas Jefferson @TJefferson
@AdotHam No, you send an article to the @nypost.

Alexander Hamilton @AdotHam
@TJefferson That was ONCE, and I apologized. And I didn't even DO anything, really. John’s forgiven me. We’re friends.

—

Alexander Hamilton @AdotHam
@andersoncooper is honestly the only bright spot of this whole convention. Watching him argue every Republican into a corner is a new source of entertainment. Besides, he cuts a striking figure in that dark-blue suit. @TJefferson better watch and learn.

Anderson Cooper @andersoncooper
@AdotHam I’m flattered by the praise, Secretary Hamilton.

Thomas Jefferson @TJefferson
@AdotHam I know you’re doing this to annoy me. Congratulations. It's working.

Alexander Hamilton @AdotHam
@TJefferson If you want me to stop, you need to stop running for the nomination of the Asshat Party.
Thomas Jefferson @TJefferson
@AdotHam You really can’t sympathize with people who don’t worship the ground you walk on, don’t you?

Alexander Hamilton @AdotHam
@TJefferson Haven’t you heard? In your own words, I’m ‘medically incapable of empathy’.

Alexander Hamilton @AdotHam
I haven’t heard so much bullshit in one sitting since… well, the last GOP debate.

Alexander Hamilton @AdotHam
Republicans love freedom of speech, until it’s about something they don’t agree with.

Alexander Hamilton @AdotHam
I’ve got to give @TJefferson credit for always wearing the most ridiculous outfits. It’s a talent.

Thomas Jefferson @TJefferson
@AdotHam I will not be goaded into a petty Twitter feud with you, Mr Haven’t Done Laundry Since Easter.

Alexander Hamilton @AdotHam
Watching the Republican national convention is like watching an increasingly gaudy fashion show. Are they trying to make a point with this?

Thomas Jefferson @TJefferson
@AdotHam The more important question is: what point are *you* trying to make with these tweets?

Alexander Hamilton @AdotHam
@TJefferson A magician never reveals his tricks ;)

Alexander Hamilton @AdotHam
Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Assholery and Hypocrisy: A Story By The GOP Leadership

“So I get that you’re doing this whole gay thing,” Ken Blackwell began, his just-that-bit-too-nasal voice torture to Thomas’ ears, “I really do. It’s appealing to the more moderate voters, and it’s nothing if it attention-catching”—Thomas barely refrained from commenting that his sexual orientation was not a publicity stunt—“but why Hamilton, of all people? Couldn’t you have picked someone more… suitable?”

Thomas’ eyes narrowed. “‘Suitable’ as in ‘malleable and subservient’, or ‘suitable’ as in ‘furthers our agenda’?” he questioned.

To his credit, Blackwell didn’t blush when Thomas called him out on it. “The latter, of course. No one is requiring anyone to be mindless slaves,” he added quickly.

“Funny that you bring it up, then,” Thomas told him. “I hadn’t mentioned any such thing.”
This time, a faint redness did creep up Blackwell’s cheeks. “Mr Jefferson, stop twisting my words. I was simply saying that, out of all homosexual men you could have chosen, you just had to go and choose the one who would create the most political chaos and would be the least help.”


Thomas rolled his eyes. “I can’t go about choosing whom I fall in love with any more than you can.”

“Yes so,” Blackwell muttered.

“Believe me, I found it just as horrible when I first figured it out,” Thomas replied, doing his best to provide some levity to the conversation that he could see quickly headed south. “Now then, I believe we had some more pressing matters to attend to?”

“I'm here with current Republican candidate Thomas Jefferson, who has decided to comment on the outspoken remarks made by his colleague and significant other, Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton,” Audie Cornish said, smiling broadly at Thomas. If she was trying to put him at ease, she failed miserably.

Thomas did his best not to sigh and pinch the bridge of his nose. Radio interview or not, body language was important. “Thank you, Ms. Cornish,” he said instead.

“Of course, Secretary Jefferson. Now, Secretary Hamilton has made comments concerning your stances on a variety of issues, from healthcare and education to birth control, and they've all gained a great amount of traction. Given your relationship with Secretary Hamilton, both in a professional and private sense, your response has been widely awaited. So, secretary, what is your response?”

Thomas took a deep breath. “I believe that both Alexander and I have made it clear that we've both retained our political opinions on each other's policies, despite our personal relationship. I wouldn't expect him to support all of my ideas and decisions in regards to policy, just as I'm sure I wouldn't support all of his.”

“So what you're saying is that your adversarial relationship in the political sphere has not changed due to your private engagements?” Cornish asked, frowning slightly.

“Of course,” Thomas replied sharply, “and I'm sure anyone who's kept up with the news can attest to it. I stand by my opinion that Alexander's ideas of what America is supposed to be are ones that would corrupt the very ideals and values our great country was founded upon, dismantling our democracy as a whole.”

The reporter tilted her head. “That is a rare example of maturity in modern politics,” she finally complimented.

Thomas very carefully didn’t say that it wasn’t so much a question of maturity as it was that both Thomas and Alexander were stubborn individuals who would yield when Hell itself froze over. He wouldn’t be lying, but if people made assumptions that benefited him, that benefited them, then so much the better.

"Of course. Let's proceed."
While some say that it was Secretary Jefferson’s policies regarding the sudden influx of immigrants, which have been called ruthless by supporters and critics alike, others speculate that it was the presence of Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton that was the deciding factor in giving Jefferson the nomination.

Carly Florina, CEO of Hawkett-Packard and one of the figureheads of the pro-life movement, commented. “It was really a question of—it was really all about Hamilton remaining as vocal as usual about his opinions about Jefferson as—you know—before. Before the Gayfair. And really, if the main Democrat disapproves of his policies that much, even when they’re—together—partners—anyway, yes, so he can’t be that bad.”

Speaker of the House James Madison added, “I guess you could say that, in a very, very roundabout way, Hamilton did help Jefferson win the nomination. It’s ironic, isn’t it?”

When reached for a comment, Secretary Hamilton had this to say about his criticism of Jefferson: “His policies are atrocious. Inhumane, even. Like, who does that?” When pressed if he would support Jefferson’s actions, were he elected president, he gave this enigmatic response: “As a wise person once said: I will follow you to the ends of the Earth with only mild complaining.”

Make of that what you will, readers.

This leaves one question on everyone’s mind: is America ready for its first gay president? And a conservative, no less? Are we, as a nation, prepared to embrace this brand new era of politics, one in which America’s gay power couple could arguably be seen as a physical representation of America's political situation: apart and very much different, yet able to cooperate? The Democrats being the yin to the Republicans’ yang?

That remains to be seen.

One way or another, however, the American people will have their say, come November.

“So, what do you think?” Alexander asked, turning so that he was facing the journalist next to him, even as his head was propped up on his hand.

Anderson Cooper blinked at him once. “About?” he prompted.

Alexander waved his hand in a vague motion. “About all this,” he replied.

Cooper sighed. “That was infuriatingly vague coming from someone known for being aggressively to the point. Do you mean the convention?”

Alexander shook his head. “No,” he corrected. “The party. Their values.”

Cooper fixed him with a pointed stare. “That’s not for me to say. I’m a neutral party here; I report what’s going on, without adding any moral values to it,” he reminded Alexander.

The secretary shook his head again. “No, that’s what you’re supposed to be doing, but we both know that during Hurricane Katrina, you had no problem with calling out everyone on their bullshit,
regardless of their party affiliation, so don’t hide behind the ‘we’re just here to show what’s going on’ façade. You’re literally America’s emotional journalist,” he argued.

Cooper sighed again, rolling his eyes. “Yes, as a person, I do have views, and not all of them align with the official GOP policies,” he began, and before Alexander could interrupt him with another torrent of words, he held up a hand. “But I shouldn’t be the one going on tv and expressing those views.”

Alexander huffed and turned away. “You’re no fun,” he grumbled. “You’re literally the buzzkill in a room full of conservative assholes who’d rather put a stake through my heart than let me onto that stage.”

“That’s because you keep livestreaming the whole thing,” Cooper reminded him. “That’s understandable.”

Alexander crossed his arms over his chest, looking not unlike a whiny five year old. “I feel the love,” he mumbled.

The journalist beside him did his best not to laugh.

“I never knew that there was so much paperwork involved in running for president,” Thomas muttered to himself as he signed, yes, yet another document, and seriously, where was Martha getting those things from? This was borderline insane.

Alexander snickered. “What, do you think that these things just file themselves?” he mocked his boyfriend.

Thomas sniffed. “I refuse to believe that Trump even knew of the existence of these documents, let alone read and signed them.”

“‘Better than Donald Trump’ is a very low bar to set,” Alexander pointed out. “It’s like setting a standard for food that goes ‘didn’t kill me, ergo will eat it every day from now on’. That’s not how things work. That’s not normal. I hate to say it, but you need to aim higher than that.”

“I’m so glad you think so highly of me, darling,” Thomas muttered.

“I’ll think better of you when you do something to deserve it!” Alexander called as he sauntered out of Thomas’ home office.

“Love you too, you prick!” Thomas yelled back, but he couldn't keep the smile off of his face.

Chapter End Notes

Tell us what you thought!
In Which the Fourth of July Happens

Chapter Summary

IT’S THE FOURTH OF JULY, AND YOU AND I WERE FIRE, FIRE, FIREWOOOOORKS

a brief reprieve from all the Crazy Politics of the story so we can focus on some Cuteness And Humor

Chapter Notes

Ring would like to point out that for all that the Americans are big on having the month before the day, their most important holiday is literally named [day] of [month] instead of [month] [day]th. Meanwhile, Gabe would like to point out that, as with most things, America doesn’t care. We do shit our way, damn the consequences.

“Is this all really necessary?” Alexander asked as Lafayette handed him another bundle of fireworks.

“Your paramour is running for president, yes?” Lafayette questioned as he added a package of sparklers to the pile in Alexander’s arms.

“So it would seem,” Alexander replied with a pointed glance towards the massive building across from the firework stand that read Vote For The Future, Vote Jefferson. “And he’s not my paramour. This isn’t some secret, sultry rendezvous.”

Lafayette paid no attention the last part of the statement. “Well then, it’s completely necessary,” he said with a tad more enthusiasm than Alexander thought the statement required. “You cannot try to be president of America and not go all-out on America Day!”

Alexander huffed and rolled his eyes. “It’s a gratuitous excuse to further inflate our country’s already immensely overgrown sense of patriotism—”

“Hush,” Lafayette interrupted. “It is not the day for your cynicism, Alexander. The country is flawed, yes, but you must also appreciate the wonders and beauties of it. That’s the point of this holiday, no?”

“I can’t believe I’m being lectured about the ‘wonders and beauties’ of the American spirit by a Frenchman,” Alexander grumbled.

“You love America,” Lafayette stated confidently. “You wouldn’t be where you are if you didn’t.”

“In case you haven’t noticed, Laf, just because I love something doesn’t make it perfect,” Alexander countered.

“Are we talking about America or Thomas?” John asked as he rounded the corner with even more fireworks in his arms.
“I think both,” Lafayette replied, placing a quick kiss to John’s hair.

Alexander pretended to gag, but he couldn’t help but smile at his friends.

When Thomas had first pitched the idea of this Fourth of July Extravaganza to Alexander, he’d been… *skeptical*, to say the least. The whole thing just seemed like yet another massive campaign event, full of elbow-rubbing and glass-clinking with some minor explosions thrown in for the novelty of it.

And then he’d gotten the text from Laf, saying how excited he was, how he planned on coming up early with John and Hercules (apparently he’d been asked to bring a *plus two*—if Thomas thought he was being subtle, he *wasn’t*) in order to “help set up”—read: *gossip*.

When Alexander asked Thomas about it, the asshole had the *audacity* to *smile and wink*, like some sort of teen starlet.

God, sometimes Alexander *hated* how much he loved that snobbish, flamboyant ingrate.

Thomas had shoved the four of them out the door with a credit card and orders to buy enough fireworks to put Vegas out of business.

Alexander was about to ask where their fourth musketeer escaped to when a booming laugh from behind him gave him his answer.

“*Jesus Christ*, Herc, you can’t *do* that! I’m holding *explosives!*” Alexander snapped once he managed to force his consciousness to return to his body.

“Yeah, Herc, wouldn’t want the future First Lady getting hurt, now would we?” John teased, and Alexander glared at him.

“I will *not* be the First Lady. If anything, I’ll be a Senior Adviser or something,” he argued.

“Besides, he won’t *win*. He can’t win. America hasn’t sunk *that* low.”

Hercules snorted. “Dunno if you’ve noticed, man, but your boy toy is leading in the polls,” he pointed out.

Alexander huffed. “I have faith in the American public,” he mumbled.

“But you don’t deny he’s your boy toy?” John asked with a smirk.

Alexander tossed a package of smoke bombs at his face.

The *Alexander, no,*” Thomas yelled after him. “*You cannot!* You don't even *like* Independence Day!”

“It’s just one sparkler, Thomas. I get that you're having your hoity-toity campaign event, but at this point, there’s no damage I can do with a sparkler that I haven’t done *without* one, so.”

Thomas crossed his arms over his chest. “You are *intolerable.*”

“I think you mispronounced *adorable.*”

“I think *you* mispronounced *sleeping on the couch!*” Thomas countered.

Alexander scoffed as he held the lighter to the end of the sparkler. “Yeah, right. We both know that
won't work—oh fuck!"

Thomas watched the scene in front of him unfold like it was in slow motion. The lighter that Alexander had been using to light the sparkler had missed the mark, and instead of catching on the fuse of the firework, it caught on the cuff of Alexander’s shirt.

“Oh shit, oh shit!” Alexander yelled, dropping the remaining fireworks as he stared at the flame in horror.

“Alexander!” Thomas screeched, unable to tear his eyes away from the madness in front of him. “What are you doing?! Put it out, put it out!”

“How?!” Alexander shouted.

“I—I dunno! Stop drop and roll! Something!” Thomas yelled in response.

Alexander simply stared at him, his expression somewhere between panicked and confused. The flame was growing.

Thomas did the only thing he could think of.

On the upside, the fire was out.

On the downside, Alexander’s previously white shirt was now both charred and covered in a massive purple wine stain.

Alexander blinked at Thomas incredulously for a moment.

“I told you not to play with the explosives,” Thomas reminded him.

Alexander simply glared. “Now I have to go change,” he mumbled.

“Now you have to go put your arm under lukewarm water, cover it with the leftover burn cream from the Ground Beef Incident, and wrap it,” Thomas countered. “And then change.”

“That really doesn’t seem necessary—"

“Alexander, you were on fire!”

“So you thought it was hot?” Alexander replied with a shit-eating grin.

Thomas wished he had another glass of wine to throw at him.

“What happened, man?” Hercules asked as Alexander exited his and Thomas’ bedroom in a new shirt.

“Nothing,” Alexander said quickly. Hercules raised an eyebrow in disbelief. “Okay, so I might have had an issue with a lighter, but it wasn’t a big issue—"

“What the fuck, dude? You lit yourself on fire?!” Hercules questioned.

“Say it a bit louder, would you?” Alexander hissed. “I don’t think Angela Merkel heard you!”

“How the fuck did you manage to—"
“We’re not going into it—”

“Man, wait until I tell Laf and John, oh my God,” Hercules wheezed, finally breaking into laughter.

“No!” Alexander protested. “You cannot tell them! They’ll never let me hear the end of it! Hell, John will probably make a t-shirt about it!

“I’ll make a t-shirt about what?” John asked as he poked his head into the hall, Lafayette right behind him.

Alexander loved his friends, but damn if they didn’t have the worst timing humanly imaginable.

“Nothing!” Alexander said quickly.

“Ham lit himself on fire with a sparkler!” Hercules interjected.

“He did what?” John asked, his face splitting into a massive grin. “Dude, Alex, how on God’s green earth—”

“It was an accident!”

“Well I’d definitely hope so,” Lafayette interrupted. “If you were purposefully trying to light yourself on fire, I think we’d have bigger issues.”

“You guys are horrible,” Alexander grumbled. “You’re no longer my best friends, I’m replacing you with Burr!”

“Bullshit,” John argued. “You know you love us, Alex!”

“Not anymore!”

“Besides, the only thing lamer than Aaron Burr is…” Lafayette trailed off after a moment.

“Nothing,” Hercules stated confidently. “Nothing is lamer than Aaron Burr.”

“He is the worst,” Lafayette agreed.

“If you tried to replace us with Aaron Burr, we’d have to have you committed, man,” John added.

Alexander stared at the three of them for a moment before huffing and rolling his eyes. “Fine,” he snapped. “But you guys are on thin fucking ice.”

“I see you recovered from your debacle,” Thomas said evenly as he looked over Alexander’s fresh shirt and the barely-obvious bulk of a bandage underneath the left sleeve.

Alexander glared at him. “I don’t want to hear it,” he muttered.

“Should’ve thought about that before you lit yourself on fire,” Thomas argued.

“I’m surrounded by assholes,” Alexander mumbled under his breath.

“That’s politics, darling,” Thomas retorted.

Alexander sighed and rested his head against Thomas’ chest as he stared at the sky. “So when are the fireworks supposed to happen?”
“Any minute now,” Thomas replied.

A moment later—

“Your speech was good."

“Kept it simple. No one wants to hear me talk when they could be watching glitter bombs explode,” Thomas explained.

Alexander scoffed. “Like that sort of thing has ever stopped you in the past,” he countered.

Instead of dignifying the comment with a response, Thomas pulled Alexander closer to his chest.

The first firework went off just then, filling the sky with a rainbow of sparks.

Thomas couldn’t help but smile at the look of pure, innocent, childish wonder on Alexander’s face.

He pulled the smaller man up by his lapels and kissed him against the background of technicolor starlight.
“Huh,” said Alexander, staring at his phone with an intensity usually reserved for proponents of trickle-down economics—with a kind of morbid curiosity, as though he honestly hadn't thought that these kinds of things were still a thing.

“What is it?” Thomas asked, peering at Alexander over his shoulder.

“I, uh, I was invited on Ellen,” Alexander replied, still staring down at the screen in mild consternation. “To talk about you.”

Thomas snorted rather ungracefully. “I don’t know what’s more shocking,” he replied dryly, “the fact that someone wants you to talk, or that they want you to talk about me.”

“Hey!” Alexander exclaimed indignantly. “A lot of people want to hear me talk—”

“No, darling; a lot of people are obligated to hear you talk. There’s a difference,” Thomas corrected him ruthlessly.

Alexander threw a hair tie at him. “So, should I take it?” he asked after a moment. “Technically, should we take it? They didn’t ask for you explicitly, but it’s implied that if you wanted to come, they’d save you a spot on the couch.”

Thomas stopped what he was doing for a moment and actually considered the proposal. “What do they want to know?” he asked. “What would we be discussing?”

“According to the email? It’d be sort of a ‘the man behind the magenta suit’ thing. They don’t want, like, policy information, they just want to know about you,” Alexander stated, looking closer at his phone.

“Oh yes, because who cares about the policies that will be running the country when you can have funny anecdotes —”
“As it turns out? Most of the American public,” Alexander interrupted. “Approachability is key. You need to seem like a real, actual person, not just some fear-mongering, anti-immigrant robot.”

“And you’ll make me seem approachable?” Thomas asked in disbelief.

“To your target audience? Yup,” Alexander replied. “They’re watching Ellen, so obviously they don’t have that much of an issue with the whole gay thing. Now, me talking about what a fucking dork you are? They’ll eat it up.”

Thomas narrowed his eyes. “I’m not putting you on national television so that you can make a fool out of me,” he objected.

“I won’t!” Alexander protested vehemently. “Okay, maybe just a little, teensy tiny bit, but only in the most loving way—”

“You say that, but you know the moment she brings up a topic heavier than Pinterest cake designs, you’re going to go on a rant about something —God only knows what,” Thomas pointed out.

Alexander crossed his arms, frowning up at Thomas. “We’re not even going to discuss politics!”

“Alexander, my darling, my love, you could be talking about whether or not fairies exist, and somehow you’d make the discussion political.” There was an accusation in Thomas’ voice.

Alexander bit his lower lip in thought. “Well…” he drawled, “as a matter of fact, in Iceland—”

Thomas threw his hands in the air. “It’s like you’re trying to prove to my point for me!”

Alexander huffed. “You have to admit that you can see the appeal of all of the idea,” he went on, ignoring Thomas. “She’s—she’s an LGBTQ icon; her show is watched by just about everyone in America, no matter their party affiliation! The people who’ll disapprove of it, already also disapprove of everything you do. Plus, maybe I can convince people that, lo and behold, there is a heart in there somewhere beneath the layers of dickishness and bad decision making, and really, you could spare some time to sit down and talk now that all you have is time since you’ve turned in your White House badge and are focusing on your—”

“Alexander, stop,” Thomas snapped. “Fine. Have it your way. Tell them that we’re both coming on, if only so that I can act as a filter for your natural idiocy.”

Alexander positively beamed. “Yes!” He looked for all the world as if he was seconds from hopping up and down like a sugar-crazed five-year-old or a particularly bouncy chihuahua.

Thomas stifled the urge to groan.

Maybe he should give more than five seconds of consideration to important decisions such as this.

—

Thomas was officially regretting every single one of his choices that led up to this moment.

“So you two have been together for how long again?” Ellen asked.

“Publically?” Alexander countered. “Two years, this October.”

Ellen smiled. “So, will America be hearing any wedding bells chime soon, or…?”

Alexander choked on his water. “Oh, God—I—Uh—”
He glanced at Thomas, who resembled a deer caught in the headlights, seemingly also having been afflicted with the same paralysis.

“I’ll take that as a no, then,” Ellen cut in with a chuckle. “Sorry, didn’t mean to scare you there.”

“No, no, you’re fine,” Thomas reassured her, waving away her concerns. “I suppose it’s just something neither of us have given much thought, right, Alexander?”

“Yeah, marriage is sort of… not on the agenda, right now,” Alexander agreed, but even as he said it, he couldn’t help but imagine it. He and Thomas, under some flowery pavilion in matching tuxedos, exchanging vows, their first dance…

God, who knew that being in love turned you into such a fucking sap?

“Not that it’ll never be on the agenda, but… yeah, definitely not at the moment,” Alexander finished awkwardly, tugging at his ponytail. Thomas raised an eyebrow at him, and Alexander just shrugged.

“Anyway,” Ellen said, seeming to recognize the tension in the atmosphere. “Secretary Hamilton, you know Secretary Jefferson better than just about anyone—”

“As in James Madison, current Speaker of the House?” Ellen asked, leaning forward in her seat with a wide grin, her eyes glinting like she had just found a gold mine.

Alexander had to resist the urge to cackle like a cheesy supervillain. “Oh, of course!” he said, smiling as Thomas shot him a look.

“Care to share?” Ellen asked.

“Gladly,” Alexander chirped cheerfully.

Thomas shot him a glare, which Alexander was all too happy to ignore.

“Well, first of all, Thomas has a thing for mac and cheese.” He threw up his arms. “I swear, left to his own devices, all we would ever eat is mac and cheese. And not even the good stuff with the breadcrumbs! He likes Kraft! You’d think that someone so hoity-toity would at least go for Cracker Barrel or something, but no!”

“I have it once a week, tops!” Thomas protested, but there was no stopping Alexander now.

“He also sleeps under at least seven blankets at all times. It’s July, in D.C., and Thomas is wrapped up in three fleece blankets and a comforter and wearing his shiny purple reading glasses—”

“That’s an absurd exaggeration,” Thomas protested. “Besides, I wouldn’t need extra blankets if someone didn’t sleep with the window open like a heathen.”
Ellen laughed from her chair. “It seems like you both have your hands full,” she commented idly. “Now, you’re obviously both immensely talented, and you’ve both got the resumes to prove it, but what I want to know is, are there any secret talents that either of you have that you could show us?”

“Is surviving on nothing but caffeine and sheer force of will a talent?” Thomas asked. “Because if so, Alexander is the most talented person I’ve ever met.”

“Oh, hardy har,” Alexander replied, rolling his eyes. “You’re hilarious. You oughta quit this whole politics bit and go on the road.”

“And leave you without anyone to keep you in check?” Thomas countered. “The entire country would catch fire within the span of a day.”

Alexander glared at him, but eventually just huffed and turned back to their host. “As you can see, Thomas has a talent for being a pain in the ass. Besides that, however, he’s also crazy good at the violin. I remember when I first moved in, I’d hear him play in his office, and I thought it was the radio. But then, one day I walked in to ask where he kept the extra towels, and there he was, playing the violin in his robe and fuzzy slippers.” A dreamy expression crept up onto his face. “It was rather… charming, actually.”

Thomas snorted. “I was playing Ludovico Einaudi’s Primavera, mostly because the season six Game of Thrones soundtrack—The Light of the Seven, I think it was called—”

Alexander rolled his eyes. To Ellen, he said, “He pretends that he doesn’t watch Game of Thrones, but God help you if you ever get him started on the characterization of Jaime Lannister and”—here, Alexander made air quotes—“‘how unfairly he’s being treated by fans when he’s such a complex character’. Really, Thomas, you’re not fooling anyone.”

Thomas sniffed with disdain.

Ellen bit back a smile. “Secretary Jefferson, I believe that you were talking about your violin…?” she trailed off pointedly, almost physically pushing the conversation back on track.

“Oh, no.” Thomas shook his head. “I was just saying that I wasn’t doing a very good job of playing that. My rendition of anything Einaudi is terrible.”

Alexander rolled his eyes. “Ignore him, he’s just being self-deprecating. He’s amazing; I might record him playing some time so that you’ll see that I’m not lying.”

Thomas glared for what felt like the umpteenth time. Why had he agreed to this again? “You wouldn’t dare.”

Alexander flashed him a smirk. “Wouldn’t I?”

Ah, yes. That’s why.

Ellen cleared her throat, drawing the attention of the two men back to her. “So, Secretary Hamilton, I hear your first interaction with Secretary Jefferson was… interesting, to say the least,” Ellen prompted with a smile on her face. Alexander resisted the urge to groan.

They’d discussed mentioning this, the quote-unquote “meet cute” between him and Thomas, but as he sat there, on television, in front of a live studio audience, then Thomas grinning like the cat that got the cream because he was the worst, he felt his face heat up.

“Oh, yes, Alexander, do tell,” Thomas added with a positively evil grin.
“You’re on the couch for the rest of the month, asshole,” Alexander snapped, running a hand through his hair. “Okay, so, disclaimer: I was young when we met, like, twenty-six, all fresh-faced, right off being Washington’s head speechwriter during the campaign, just nominated to be Treasury Secretary, and Thomas… well, he was sort of a big deal, y’know? Youngest governor in the history of Virginia, poised to run for Senate, and even then there was talk about him running for president when he eligible, and I’d heard a few of his speeches, so when we met…”

Alexander trailed off, feeling his face heat up.

“Yes, darling?” Thomas prompted, looking no less obnoxiously smug about it. “What about when we met?”

“So Washington brings me into the OO, and he says, “Hamilton, I’d like you to meet the man I’m nominating as Secretary of State,” and then—then—out strolls Thomas, from behind a shelf or something, in a pastel pink suit—”

“It was not pastel pink—” Thomas interrupted, and now it was Alexander’s turn to grin.

“Look, babe, if I have to air all my embarrassments out in front of the American people, so do you,” he countered. “So anyway, Thomas sashays into the room—honestly, how no one figured out you’re gay before they did is a goddamned miracle—and, well, I, uh…” Alexander took a moment to clear his throat. “I might have had a minor crush on him, okay? And so I sort of panic and introduce myself, but I call him Mr. Jefferson like an idiot, and then I shake his hand too hard, and then I panicked more and word vomited something about trade relationships with Canada, realized what I’d done, and then quickly excused myself to the restroom.”

The audience, bless them, ‘oooh’d and ‘awww’d like Alexander hadn’t just exposed one of the most mortifying moments of his life in front of millions of people.

“Alexander, darling, you had a crush on me?” Thomas said, pulling Alexander out of his spiral of embarrassment. He took Alexander’s hand, rubbing his thumb over his knuckles in a way that, to most, seemed like meaningless affection, but Alexander knew what was going on. He knew that Thomas recognized when Alexander needed something to ground him, and he was grateful for that. Grateful for Thomas.

Thomas’ lips quirked.

“I grew out of it,” Alexander grumbled. “The moment you opened your mouth at that first cabinet meeting.”

Thomas laughed then, showing off those perfect white teeth and his fucking dimples like he knew what he was doing.

Knowing Thomas, he probably did.

Such an obnoxious jerk.

And yet Alexander loved him.

Fuck, he loved him.

Ellen tapped her desk with her pen several times in quick succession, drawing Alexander out of his thoughts. “I think I speak for everyone when I ask: what do you do in your free time? What does a Treasury Secretary even do?”
Alexander snorted, friendly but derisive at the same time. “What’s this free time you keep speaking of?”

Ellen tilted her head in curiosity. “Care to elaborate?”

“Well,” Alexander tilted his head, giving Ellen a thoughtful look, “Thomas is running for president, and he’s obviously facing opposition through dicks like Rick Santorum and Sarah Palin, who would rather see America fall into distress and disarray than have a gay president. That’s sort of a full-time job—”

“A little bit like being your boyfriend,” Thomas cut in.

“So it’s a good thing that he resigned as State Secretary,” Alexander went on, ignoring Thomas’ interruption. “Plus, now I might actually be able to get some work done since I won’t have to spend half my time protecting the country from his stupidity. As for me, I think everyone sort of knows that I don’t exactly do breaks—”

“Understatement of the century,” Thomas grumbled.

Alexander glared at him before continuing. “When I’m not attending to my duties as Treasury Secretary, I’m working on some other projects, be it research for my other undertakings, or providing commentary on recent developments in international economics, or just lending my voice to social justice movements.”

Ellen smiled again. “I can’t argue that you haven’t been heard.”

Alexander chuckled. “Indeed.” His expression then grew serious. “In all honesty though, I’m happy with what I’ve been doing, and I’m planning on continuing my work for as long as people will let me.”

“Speaking of work.” Ellen pursed her lips. “There’ve been rumors about some kind of an internal conflict within the Democratic party,” she said bluntly with the same kind of fervor that made her one of Alexander’s role models.

Thomas snorted. So much for not touching politics. Still, she had lasted longer than he’d have thought.

Alexander shrugged. “Well, yeah. We’re currently discussing the future of the party; conflicts are to be expected. Honestly, I’d be more worried if people weren’t arguing, because that would indicate that they don’t see the endeavor worth their effort, that they don’t want to waste their energy fighting for the future of the party because they don’t believe that it has a future. This, in a weird, roundabout way, is good.”

“Is that your way of saying that you encourage infighting?” Ellen asked.

Alexander grimaced. “I wouldn’t say that I encourage it, exactly, and I’m not about to start off Hunger Games: Democratic Edition, but infighting is a sign of the fact that people still care about the party. It shows that we, as a nation, haven’t fallen into mindlessness and blind worship, like back when Donald Trump tried to run.”

Ellen made a nondescript noise in the back of her throat. “Actually, some people have been comparing Secretary Jefferson to Mr. Trump.”

Alexander let out a derisive snort. “Thomas is a thousand times better than Trump. Then again, that’s hardly a difficult requirement to meet, as literally almost everyone is better than Trump. But, say,
Burr wouldn’t be a good candidate, either. He’s too”—Alex grimaced—”vague. If I had to choose a Republican I’d least hate out of Burr and Thomas, I certainly wouldn’t be going for Burr.”

The corners of Ellen’s lips curled up into a soft smile. “That almost sounds like an endorsement,” she warned him.

Alexander laughed heartily. “Me, voting for Thomas? No, never in a million—nay, billion —years—but I can attest to the fact that Thomas Jefferson is, despite his many, many faults, at heart, a good man. I’d certainly trust him with America more than the majority of the candidates on both aisles of this electric fencefuck, simply because I know where Thomas stands, and I can trust him to stick to his opinions. If this was any other election, I’d support the other person, but it’s not, so I don’t. Thomas would genuinely make a good president. If nothing else, at least he won't undermine the very foundations of democracy as it is.” He shrugged. “Better the devil you know.”

“‘The devil’?” Thomas echoed. “Now who’s sleeping on the couch?”

Alexander stuck out his tongue at his boyfriend. “Still you,” he shot back, as petulant and as infantile as ever, because when was he not.

Thomas held back a groan. He turned to the audience, which had been watching them with rapt contemplation. “Ladies and gentlemen, I give you Alexander Hamilton, Treasury Secretary, and actual baby.”

“So you mentioned earlier that Secretary Jefferson is, well, no longer Secretary of State,” Ellen stated after the audience's laughter died down. “Obviously, it's so that you can focus on running your campaign after winning the Republican primary, but I imagine it's had some sort of effect on your relationship. I mean, it all started because you met at work, didn’t it? Doesn’t the fact that Secretary Jefferson no longer has access to the kinds of classified information that you do affect your relationship?”

Alexander shrugged. “I mean, a bit, I guess? It'd be unrealistic if it didn’t.”

“He can no longer rant about whatever came up at work to me,” Thomas added helpfully.

Alexander rolled his eyes. “There’s probably something in that statement that should offend me,” he retorted, “but essentially, Thomas is correct. Since I've been forbidden from speaking to him about the things that happen at work, we've had to find more topics outside of work to talk about.”

Thomas snickered. “I was shocked too when I first realized that Alexander was trying to make small talk.”

“It wasn’t that bad!” Alexander protested.

Thomas raised an eyebrow. “You asked me whether I liked Simpsons,” he reminded his boyfriend.

“It’s a valid question!” Alexander threw up his hands into the air, then, turning to Ellen, continued. “Turns out, my own boyfriend doesn’t like the epitome of American entertainment!”

Thomas huffed. “That’s rich, coming from you,” he pointed out. “You think that Monty Python is the pinnacle of humor.”

“That’s because it is,” Alexander insisted.

Thomas crossed his arms. “You,” he told Alexander, “are no longer allowed to voice opinions on humor.”
“And who’s going to stop me?” Alexander challenged. “You?”

Ellen cleared her throat. With a start, Alexander was reminded of the fact that he was sitting before an audience that drank in his and Alexander’s argument the way a parched man would water. “As much as I’m enjoying this discussion, and I have no doubt that the audience is as well”—the deafening roar dispelled any lingering doubts in Alexander’s mind—“I do believe that we have an interview to conduct.”

Alexander watched as a faint flush made its way across Thomas’ cheeks. As much as he wanted to revel in the fact that his boyfriend was blushing on national television, he wasn’t heartless.

“Yeah,” Alexander apologized with a chuckle, “we’ve been told that we can get… a little sidetracked. Sorry.”

From: ninja turtle man

I love how you’re x1000 more gay the moment you’re w jefferson

To: ninja turtle man

So you saw the interview with Ellen?

From: ninja turtle man

hell yeah I saw it

I don’t think there’s a soul in Gwash’s administration that didn’t

there may or may not have been a betting pool as to whether you’d make out

To: ninja turtle man

Listen John I have Standards

From: ninja turtle man

yeah and makign out on live tv is way above them

To: ninja turtle man

1. It wasn’t live tv
2. *making
From: ninja turtle man

fuck you man

To: ninja turtle man

*your

From: ninja turtle man

a l e x

Chapter End Notes

yell at us pls
In which there’s very little politics for such a politics-centered chapter

Chapter by Sanna_Black_Slytherin

Chapter Summary

Or, politics, freak-outs, and kids loitering random offices.

Chapter Notes

So. This happened. It took us a longer time than expected. Sorry for that.


“Sir, if you would just listen—”

“No,” Alexander snapped, whirling around to face the poor man who’d dared to try and speak over him. “No. This—he—does no one else remember who it is we’re talking about? William Bradford? The guy who, two years ago, was a staunch Republican and then flipped, out of nowhere? The guy who spoke out against the LGBTQ community for years, who man numerous crusades against women’s rights, who said refugees were just taking advantage of our country? That William Bradford? You’re telling me he won the Democratic primary?!?”

“Sir, the people voted—”

Alexander was about point two seconds from ripping his hair out. “He had no official support, no major endorsements,” he muttered, “so how did this happen?!?”

“Voters—”

“Voters shouldn’t have even known he was an option! He shouldn’t have been an option!”

“Secretary Hamilton, if you could please sit down,” someone said pointedly. “This meeting must continue. Please save your temper tantrums for later.”

Alexander did so, if only so he could bang his head on the table.

“You have to win,” Alexander said as he walked in the door, dropping his bag on the floor unceremoniously.

Thomas carefully put down the stack of papers he’d been rifling through. “I beg your pardon?” he asked slowly.

“You have to win,” Alexander repeated, sinking down onto the couch as he babbled. “You have to.
You have to beat Bradford, you have to be president, you have to—"


“Somehow,” Alexander mumbled, resting his head against Thomas’ shoulder. “Oh God, this is so bad.”

“Thanks for the vote of confidence, darling,” Thomas drawled, unable to identify the feeling in his stomach.

“I officially support you,” Alexander said, his voice muffled by Thomas’ shirt. “Not *officially* officially, of course, because God knows Adams will have me unseated the moment he catches wind of it—this is probably all his fault anyway, the bastard—but oh my God, Thomas, *you have to beat him*. He can’t win. He’ll *destroy the whole planet*. Seriously, I’m pretty sure he doesn’t believe in climate change; he’ll kill us all.”

“Alexander, dearest, not that I’m not *elated* by sudden your rousing endorsement, but what the hell is going on? How on earth did Bradford win?” Thomas questioned.

Alexander simply groaned.

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From: Hamilton

Madison, I need your help

To: Hamilton

What is it?

From: Hamilton

I wouldn’t come to you unless it was urgent

To: Hamilton

Just tell me what the problem is.

From: Hamilton

And you know how much I loathe doing this

To: Hamilton

Hamilton, spit it out, for God’s sake.
From: Hamilton

Thomas has locked himself in his room and refuses to come out.

To: Hamilton

I’ll be there in twenty.

“How long has he been in there?” James said as soon as the door closed behind him, not bothering with small talk.

“Around forty minutes,” Hamilton reported dutifully.

James stared at Hamilton in incredulity. “Are you telling me,” his voice was deceptively light, “that you only deigned to call me after you knew he’d been in there for twenty minutes?!”

Hamilton winced, as though James had exploded on him. He hadn’t, of course, but it had been a close call. Hamilton had a peculiar talent of wearing out even his remarkable patience. “I mean, I didn’t know that there was a problem at first,” he said defensively. “He just walked out on me, slamming the door behind him.”

That answered part of what had happened, at least, but, “And that didn’t set off any warning bells in your head?! Does Thomas storm out of a room so frequently that you just dismiss it?!” James sounded harsh even to his own ears.

Hamilton flinched at his tone, but James couldn’t bring himself to regret them.

“Thomas likes his space,” Hamilton retorted defensively.

James stormed upstairs without another word.

He came to a stop in front of the door leading to Thomas’—and, unofficially, Alexander’s—bedroom. He raised his hand to knock.

“Go away, Alexander,” Thomas’ voice muttered from within.

“Thomas, it’s me.” James intentionally raised his voice so that there would be no doubt as to his identity. “Will you let me in?”

A silence followed.

“I hadn’t thought that Alexander would actually have called you,” Thomas said eventually. “Didn’t think he’d have the guts.” A short pause. “Just goes to show how little I know.”

“Thomas, what is this about?” James tried again. “Hamilton wouldn’t tell me.”

Thomas snorted derisively. “I’d have expected him to shout it from the rooftops for everyone to hear. ‘Oh, poor little Thomas doesn’t know how to be a president!’” Thomas pitched his voice into a poor—if amusing—imitation of his boyfriend’s clipped tones.
James frowned. He stored away the fact that Thomas apparently thought Hamilton fully capable of revealing his partner’s weaknesses to the public; that needed to be addressed if Thomas was to be president, but he had more pressing issues to deal with, such as—

“Thomas, trust me when I say that no incoming president knows how to be one. You learn on the job. It’s not like there’s a handy manual lying around the White House for all newcomers to read—or, if there is, its existence has to be the most well-guarded secret in the whole damn history of America.” James heard a choke from behind the door, and smothered a smirk. “You know, I spoke to Andrew Jackson the other day, and he admits that he didn’t have any clue either.”

"Don't equate me with Andrew fucking Jackson," Thomas snapped, and if he focused, James could just about hear the glare in his best friend's voice. “He committed legal genocide in the name of preserving family values, and we both know it.

James grimaced. “That was an unfortunate comparison, I’ll give you that. The point is, Thomas, no one is ever truly prepared for it, simply because there is no job equal to the leader of the free world. That’s a whole new level of responsibility.” James paused. “And I realize now that I’ve probably just made everything ten times worse,” he conceded sheepishly, "but honestly, you're as prepared as you can possibly be. You've worked both as Governor of the State of Virginia, and as Secretary of State—you have plenty of experience both on both a national and an international level. And if you're worried about the areas your experience doesn't cover, don't; your boyfriend is the freaking Secretary of the Treasury, and I have no doubt that he will point out any and all mistakes you will make, in excruciatingly painful detail. And then you have all of your advisors. You have me. Yes, the final decision will fall to you, but you won't be alone. You will have support.

“Will you make mistakes? Yes, of course you will. To err is human, and mistakes are unavoidable.” James allowed a trace of humour into his voice. "Just remember that genocide is bad, and you're all set to beat Jackson."

The door suddenly opened, and James was met with Thomas’ deadpan stare. “Wow,” his friend said dryly. “You sure know how to cheer me up.”

James shrugged as he took in the sight before him. Thomas’ eyes looked tired, and his voice sounded harried. His usually messy hair was even more disheveled than usual, to the point where it resembled a hay of grass getting caught up in a hurricane—which, James supposed, was an apt symbolization of what had probably happened.

In short, Thomas looked like a teenager who had been awoken after staying up all night gaming with his friends and stuffing himself with popcorn, only to realize at four in the morning that it was a school night. Not that James was speaking from experience.

“That’s what friends are for,” James said softly, offering Thomas a comforting smile. “Now, will you let me in, or will I have to stand in this doorway until Hamilton kicks me out for ‘defiling his home’?” The air quotes were all but there.

Thomas scoffed. “Technically, it’s my home, and if I want you standing here, there’s nothing he can do to change your location.”

James raised an eyebrow. “I’d like to see you try to convince Hamilton of that.” He stepped around Thomas and let himself into his best friend’s bedroom. Thomas closed the door behind him. “Now, let’s see what you’ve been doing here in the—Is that Doctor Who?!”
James' eyes narrowed. "What did you do, Hamilton?" His voice was little more than a growl.

Hamilton almost subconsciously took a step back, all in an effort to create some space between himself and the shorter man. "I didn't do anything, I swear!"

"Well, he certainly wasn't like this the last time we spoke," James snapped.

Hamilton shrugged helplessly. "We were just—just talking. We were watching the news, and I started talking about the immigration crisis and how it desperately needs better measures in place—and don't you dare deny it, Madison, you know that it does, the system we have right now is outrageous and ruthless and tosses the individual to the proverbial hungry wolves when it should help and support them until they can get back on their—"

"Hamilton."

"So I was telling him what I just told you, and he asked what specifically I would have done, because promises are all good and well but we need specific measures and actions to be taken, and I agree, don't get me wrong—"

"Hamilton."

"And so I told him, There's actually quite a few obvious measures that the office of president allows you to take—which I know because I once researched the various powers granted to the president for Washington, and let me tell you, it's absolutely fascina—" Hamilton cut himself off at seeing the thunderous expression on James' face. "So then there's all the bills you can get past Congress if you just know which buttons to press, and again, I have..."

Hamilton went on rambling, but James didn't listen to him anymore; he didn't need to. In a flash of horrible realization, he realized what had happened.

Hamilton practically exuded an air of hypercompetence. Just hearing him talk about bills and orders and whatnot gave James a minor headache, and he had almost two decades of experience with various levels of Congress to serve as a filter. Thomas, on the other hand...

Thomas... well, didn't.

Thomas was a governor, and the former Secretary of State, but what he was not, was a congressman. Senator. He had nothing on Hamilton's bottomless well of knowledge—a well that Madison had once upon a time contributed to filling with useful tidbits about this and that, about the dos and don'ts, back when he thought that Hamilton might be a useful ally in the Washington administration.

It seemed that Hamilton had since found ways to deepen his already startlingly good grasp of the inner workings of Congress.

Thomas didn't have that.

Of course, the logical ramification would be that Thomas panicked. That made sense. Faced with the fact that there was someone who seemed to be able to do the job he was, on some part, dreading, Thomas backed away and curled up into himself.

Sometimes, James wished that he didn’t know his best friend so well. It'd honestly make things so much easier.

"Hamilton, for God's sake, just shut up," James finally snapped.

To his eternal surprise, Hamilton did as he was told.

"Do you have any idea as to why Thomas has locked himself in his room?" James demanded, taking
care to temper his voice.

Hamilton blinked at him owlishly. “Obviously not,” he said in a way that made it perfectly clear just how stupid he thought James was being. “That’s why I called you.”

Ah.

Well.

James could see why Thomas had fled the room.

“You need to think before you speak,” James all but growled. “I know you enjoy not giving a shit about anything but yourself, but you can’t do that anymore. This whole thing you do, this—this air of superiority and over-competence, it has to stop. Thomas is going through enough without you reminding him just how underprepared he is for all of this.”

“What?” Hamilton replied with all the wit and intelligence the occasion deserved.

James sighed. “All you do is remind him that he has no clue what he’s doing,” he pointed out. “You go on and on and on, acting like some sort of omniscient god of American politics, highlighting every little detail Thomas never thought of—would never think of—pointing a massive neon sign at all the gaps in his knowledge, and it’s hurting him!”

Honestly, James hadn’t meant to shout. It just… sort of happened.

“I’m trying to be helpful!” Hamilton retorted, but James noticed how he seemed a bit cowed. “He… If he’s going to do this, he’ll need every resource he can get. There’s no way he’ll be ready, but there’s no way any one person could be, so if I can be there to think of things or offer ideas or do anything to help him, I…” Hamilton trailed off, blinking rapidly, before shaking his head. “God, he’s going to be president, Madison. He needs to be. Bradford, that asshole—I don’t know what siren song he sang to win our primary, and it’s honestly causing a whole host of new headaches for me and the party, but he sang it, and honestly, if it’s between him or Thomas? Well, I know whom I prefer.” Hamilton took a deep breath. “Thomas needs to win. He has to, and he has to be amazing, so if there’s anything I can do to help him become more prepared, you can bet every dollar in the GOP war chest I’m going to do it.”

James pinched the bridge of his nose. “Just…” He waved his hands, as if trying to dispel the bullshit Hamilton was spewing, but even he had to admit that what Hamilton said did make some kind of sense. Thomas would need all the support he could get in the days—months—years ahead. God knew that he’d have enough people questioning his every move as it was. He was setting a lot of precedents, breaking a lot of unspoken rules, and not everyone was comfortable with this shaking up of the status quo. Just… ”Just try to be more gentle about it, okay? Don’t shove Thomas’ lack of knowledge into his face. He’ll learn, I know he will, but… give him time. Don’t be such an obnoxious autodidact about it.”

Hamilton shrugged. “It seemed to have worked just fine for Franklin.”

“Franklin is another level of player entirely,” James pointed out, “and anyway, Benjamin Franklin isn’t the one who’s dating the future president of the United States, Hamilton; you are. I expect you to behave as befits the First Gentleman.”

Hamilton pursed his lips. “I don’t like that,” he declared with all the bluntness of Mitch McConnell’s wit. “I think I’ll be First Lad instead.”

James heaved another sigh. Why did everything have to be so blasted difficult with Hamilton?
“Martha?” Thomas asked, glancing between the woman sitting at the desk and the girl sitting on the couch next to it. “You are aware of the child in your office, yes?”

“What? No! I thought that was a scarily realistic mannequin and you were about to tell me you’re dropping out of the race to pursue your secret passion for fashion,” Martha deadpanned, looking up from her monitor to glare at Thomas.

“Who’s the kid?” Thomas questioned, looking back at the girl, who had a pair of headphones on and her nose stuck in a phone.

“My daughter. I’ve mentioned her a few times. Mary?” Martha reminded him. Thomas took a moment, peering at the child. He did vaguely recall Martha mentioning having to pick someone up from school and pictures that on her desk that, when he sneakily looked down at them, yup, there was this same little girl, her toothless grin and squinty smile eyes somewhat familiar.

“Oh,” Thomas said. “She, uh, is she adopted?”

Because honestly, the kid on the couch looked nothing like the woman behind the desk. Martha was blue-eyed and red-headed, and occasionally seemed to be more freckle than actual skin, while the girl, Mary, was tan with a head full of brown curls and bright brown eyes.

“Nope, she’s mine,” Martha corrected.

“You sure?”

“Pretty sure I remember the nine months of crazy hormones followed by eight hours of torture,” his campaign manager snapped, “so yeah, I’d say I’m sure.”

Thomas huffed and crossed his arms. “Remind me to never get you, Lu, and Sally together. I don’t think I’d survive.”

Martha scoffed. “So, did you have an actual reason to come visit me, besides interrogating me about my daughter?” she asked.

Thomas nodded. “I need you to update the calendar of events for this weekend, I’ve just gotten a call…”

He went on, pointing to various meetings. The girl on the couch was all but forgotten.
“Ted Cruz is a meme!”

“No, Ted Cruz is a disappointment.”

Or, pre-election nerves, election nerves, drugging your significant other, and vodka. Not necessarily in that order.

Chapter Notes

So! The long-awaited (if you call a week a 'long wait') chapter is here! Without further ado, enjoy!

“The latest virtual polls show that 57% of Americans believe that Republican Thomas Jefferson beat Democrat William Bradford in the first debate between the major party candidates that are heading to this year’s presidential election,” Megyn Kelly stated confidently. “The win comes as a shock to many, as many previously saw Bradford as the shoe-in winner due to Jefferson’s tumultuous personal life and the many scandals revolving around both he and his partner and political rival, Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton.”

Thomas sighed and turned off the television.

At least the majority of people understood that his being gay didn’t equate to Bradford’s not understanding actual governmental policy.

Honestly, how the man made it this far would forever remain a mystery.

And yet, the fact that Thomas beat him came as a shock, a surprise, for the sole reason that Thomas was gay.

Thomas couldn’t stop himself from groaning as he ran a hand through his hair.

Thomas? Thomas, babe, you with me?” Alexander asked, drumming his fingers on the table between them.

Thomas blinked a few times to try and shake himself out of his stupor.

He’d been to seven states in the past three days. This was the first time he’d spent any actual time with Alexander in five.
At this point, Thomas was pretty sure that running for president was more tiring than actually being president. At least then, he’d be able to sleep in the same bed the majority of the time.

“Yeah, sorry, I’m just... really tired,” Thomas mumbled, rubbing his eyes.

For a moment, Alexander was silent, and then he sighed. “Okay,” he said. “Stand up. Take off your shirt and go lie on the bed. I’ll be in there in a minute.”

“Wha—Alexander, no. I—What part of really tired do you not get? I’m not in the mood for whatever it is you have in mind—”

“What I have in mind is a fucking massage, asshole. Get your head out of the gutter,” Alexander cut him off none too gently. “Go. Shoo. I’ll be in there in a minute.”

Thomas sighed but did as Alexander said. To his dismay and embarrassment, he was so tired that he was barely able to undo the buttons on his shirt, and ended up flopping face-first onto the bed with his undershirt still wrapped around his arm.

“Christ, you’re a fucking mess,” Alexander said as he entered the room. “At least take off your shoes—you’re going to get the sheets dirty.”

“You’re one to talk,” Thomas retorted, his words stifled by the pillow his face was buried in. “Since when do you care about the sheets?”

“Since I’m the one who gets to dirty them. C’mon, off with the shoes. I love you, but I am not touching your feet.”

Thomas grumbled under his breath, but obligingly toed off his shoes.

“You know, I think I liked it better when I was the grouchy, sleep-deprived workaholic one and you were the exasperated and concerned one,” Alexander told him as he sat down on the edge of the bed. “I am not grouchy.” Thomas’ words were muffled, his face pressed into one of the pillows.

“Thomas, babe, I love you, but when you can hear someone scowling, they’re usually grouchy,” Alexander pointed out, and Thomas heard a sound like a bottle was being opened.

“What’re you doing?” he asked, propping himself up so that he could look over his shoulder at Alexander. “Alexander, you said we weren’t doing anything—”

“It’s massage oil, you perv,” Alexander replied, rolling his eyes. “Angelica’s little sister—you know Eliza—gave it to me a few years ago for Christmas. I’ve never used it before.”

“Oh, that’s a shock.”

“Listen, do you want a message with...” Alexander paused to read the label, “a refreshing blend of lavender and lemongrass—what the fuck even is this stuff?”

“I don’t know, and honestly, I don’t really care,” Thomas said flippantly, re-burying his face in his pillow.

“Okay, okay, sheesh,” Alexander muttered, and Thomas couldn’t quite clamp down the wave of guilt that tumbled over him. “Just a warning: I’ve never actually done this before, so this might be weird—”

“Darling, with you? I’d expect nothing less,” Thomas interrupted. “You’d probably find a way to
make it weird even if you were a professional masseur.”

Alexander laughed, and Thomas took a moment to thank whatever deity might exist for this utterly ridiculous man he got to call his.

“Alexander fucking Hamilton, you little fucking shit—”

“You rang?” Alexander replied, his head popping up from behind his laptop screen.

“Give me your fucking phone,” Thomas growled, his hands on his hips.

To his credit, Alexander looked properly terrified. As he should.

“Um, can I ask why my phone is being subpoenaed?” he asked.

“It’s the only way I can be sure you won’t singlehandedly destroy my credibility on Twitter, you miscreant,” Thomas snapped.

“All I did was post a video—”

(Of me singing!) Thomas interrupted. “You—I am trying to run a serious presidential campaign, and you go and post a video of me singing showtunes!”

“Everyone loves The Greatest Showman!”

“I am trying not to seem like a walking gay stereotype—”

“You wear magenta suits on a regular basis—”

“It’s a meme now, Alexander—”

“You’ll be popular with the youth!”

“I am the Republican nominee for the presidential election! I cannot be a meme!”

“Ted Cruz is a meme!”

“No, Ted Cruz is a disappointment,” Thomas snapped. “Now take it down or else.”

“Or else what?” Alexander challenged.

Thomas smirked. “You remember all those stories Ned told at your birthday?” he inquired.

“Oh God,” Alexander whispered, the fear apparent in his eyes.

“I know for a fact that your friend Laurens recorded all of them,” Thomas continued. “And I also know that Lafayette knows his password and owes me a favour. So take it down.”

Alexander huffed and pulled out his phone. “Fine,” he grumbled, the pout securely fastened to his face. “You know, while we’re talking about this, there’s nothing wrong with acting like you’re gay. Plot twist: you are gay. We’re in a gay relationship.”

Thomas glared at him. “You know why I can’t,” he replied. “And, before you say it, no, it’s not some secret internalised homophobia.”
“It’s in part internalised homopho—”

“Alexander Hamilton, I just you think very carefully before you finish that sentence. I have Gil’s number pulled up right now,” Thomas warned.

Alexander flipped him off as he handed Thomas his phone.

“Except,” Alexander then said, “you know, this is the internet. The video had probably already been copied onto a thousand websites. I know I’d do it if I was in their place.”

“Alexander!”

“Here.”

Thomas felt something be pressed into his hands. He lifted up his head, and managed to open his left eye the eyelid of which felt like it weighed approximately two baby elephants. He was holding a warm container.

Okay.

Wait.

What.

Alexander’s scrutiny was virtually palpable. “You look like shit,” Alexander said bluntly. “And that’s coming from me.”

“What’s this?” Thomas gestured at the container, fixing Alexander with both eyes.


One of Thomas’ eyebrows rose past his hairline.

“I can’t believe that I’m the one telling you to take care of himself,” Alexander criticized his boyfriend.

“You don’t have monopoly on bad life decisions, you know,” Thomas muttered.

“No, but I can pull off the ‘haven’t slept in three days’ look; you, meanwhile, look like what you’d get if you crossed The Walking Dead zombies with the undead from Game of Thrones. Now, eat.” With that, Alexander pressed a spoon into Thomas’ open palm. Thomas reflexively clenched his hand around it. “Don’t make me feed you; it’d be embarrassing for the both of us. Then take a nap. I need to make a few phone calls.”

Having said that, Alexander left as quickly as he had arrived, leaving Thomas with more questions than answers.

Thomas sighed, staring down at the soup with bemusement.

That… was almost sweet of Alexander.

Weird, but sweet.
To: Adams Jr

Quincy

From: Adams Jr

What do you want, Hamilton?

To: Adams Jr

Is that defensiveness I hear?

If that’s about your brother, I had nothing to do with that

You can’t turn someone gay

Attraction doesn’t work that way

Not that you conservative wankmaggots would understand that

From: Adams Jr

Is there a point to this besides insulting me?

To: Adams Jr

It’s sweet how you think that insulting you isn’t reason enough to text you

But yes, I did actually have a point

Thomas has been running on approximately 0 sleep these past 72h

I gave him macy’s

Also slipped in a sleeping pill

From: Adams Jr

… Into a sealed container? :/

To: Adams Jr

I have my ways ;)

From: Adams Jr

Quincy
Anyway, until Thomas stops looking like a zombie from the sims, you’re the face of his campaign
Don’t blow it

From: Adams Jr

No, that’s your job.
Take care of Thomas.

James entered his office, only to find his swivel chair already occupied.

By Hamilton.

Who was twirling one of his favourite pens.

“Madison, I have a question,” were the first words out of Hamilton’s mouth.

James crossed his arms. “Get out of my chair,” he told Hamilton.

How did he even get in? Who had had the marvellous idea to let him in?

James was going to have a long talk with security.

Hamilton leaned back in his chair. “You’ve known Thomas for a long time, correct?”

James dropped his bag unceremoniously onto the desk, swatting Hamilton’s hand when he reached for it. “That’s usually the meaning of the expression ‘old friends’, yes. Now, could you please——”

“By that logic, you’ve known Thomas during his college days, and therefore, during his clubbing days.”

“What ridiculousness are you blathering on this time?”

“And Thomas told me this most curious tidbit about himself the other day——well, the other month, actually, but that’s a minor detail——”

James had had enough. He snatched his pen from mid-air. “Hamilton, Thomas may indulge you, but I won’t. Get out of my chair before I call security.”

Hamilton pouted, but mercifully stood up. “Relax, Madison, I just wanted photos of Thomas in a dress.”

That brought James up short.

“What?”

Did he actually hear Hamilton ask what he thought he asked?

Hamilton beamed. He stepped around the desk, stopping in front of James. “What I said.” The smugness was all but palpable in his voice. “Photos of Thomas in a dress. Now.” He casually leaned against James’ desk, and didn’t this just summarize Hamilton in his entirety? Barges into a room as though he had every right to be there, only to say something so outrageous that people stopped
paying attention to his first faux pas and focused on his words, because what was coming out of his mouth was so weird and so bizarre that they couldn’t care about the fact that Hamilton wasn’t even supposed to be able to be there in the first place.

“Thomas… never wore a dress,” James enunciated slowly, quietly wondering whether he was missing something—whether this was Hamilton for something else. Did anything happen? Was Hamilton trying tell him that Thomas was in trouble? What could he do?

Hamilton had a gleam in his eyes as he spoke, “So you’re saying that he did wear a skirt? He told me he didn’t, but, well, you know how Thomas is about these things…”

James told himself to be patient. He took a deep breath, then let it out. You can’t strangle Hamilton, no matter how much you may want to. “When, exactly, do you think Thomas wore a dress?”

Hamilton’s smirk grew downright predatory. “Why, when you went clubbing, of course. Well, when he went clubbing, more specifically, but I’m assuming that you went with him. Call it a hunch.”

James rubbed the bridge of his nose. It was too damn early to try to decipher whatever code that may be hiding behind Hamilton’s words. “Sorry to disappoint whatever fantasy you’ve concocted in that head of yours, but Thomas has never worn a dress in his entire life.”

Hamilton crossed his arms. “What did he wear, then?”

James mirrored his stance. “You have a weird fixation on Thomas’ fashion choices,” he told Hamilton. “If you so desperately want to know, go ask Thomas. I’m not going to rat out my best friend to someone poking his nose where it doesn’t belong.”

Hamilton stuck out his tongue, and oh yeah, James was reminded of just why he wasn’t inclined to share anything with him——Hamilton was the adult equivalent of a toddler, and with the temperament to match.

“You are a joykill,” Hamilton declared.

“Lovely.” James’ voice was infused with enough venom to fell lesser beings. “Now, if you’d be so kind, the door is that way.” He gestured at the object in question.

Hamilton glanced at the door, then back at James. “I’ll be back.”

“Is that a promise or a threat?” James asked idly. “Begone, coffee fiend.”

Just for that, Hamilton flipped him off.

Alexander was bouncing.

Actually, legitimately bouncing.

It was distracting.

“Would you stop it?!” Thomas eventually snapped, shooting his boyfriend a glare.

Alexander smirked. “Oh, I’m sorry. Am I a disruptive presence?” he exclaimed in mock sincerity.

“You’re doing this on purpose,” Thomas accused him.
“Of course he is, Jefferson,” said Angelica, breezing past the two men, a bowl of snacks in each hand. “I'd have thought you would have been used to it by now.”

Thomas closed his eyes. “Yeah, you'd think that, wouldn't you?” he muttered under his breath. “You'd really fucking think that.”

“Hamilton, get your ass over here!” Martha called from across the room. “I need your help with moving this table.”

Alexander groaned. “But Thomas is taller and—and stronger, and all,” he whined.

Martha put her hands on her hips. “Don't be petulant. And Thomas is the star of the evening. He doesn't need to help. He needs to relax.”

“In a few hours, he might not have the time,” Angelica added. “I've heard that being elected president does wonders to an abundance of free time.”

Alexander groused as he helped Martha and Angelica move the tables into a manner known only to them—something about creating a center in the middle of the room where everything could mingle, while at the same time allowing for some privacy in the corners, should anyone want that. Privately, Alexander thought it hilarious that the room where the Republican candidate for president was awaiting the results was to be centralized, but he knew that if he were to point that out, Angelica would kick him over the balcony, consequences be damned.

Why was Angelica here, anyway? Wasn't she still Washington's Press Secretary? Wasn't this a conflict of interest of some sort?

“Not really,” Angelica spoke behind him, and Alexander realized that he had spoken out loud. “I'm here on my private time, not as Press Secretary.”

Alexander crossed his arms. “You know that that's now how it works,” he retorted. “No matter if you're technically on the clock, you still represent your administration. You can't just magically snap your fingers and make everyone forget your affiliation to it.”

“No,” Angelica agreed, “but I, as a private citizen, have a right to be wherever I want. Besides,” she added, “isn't that hypocritical, Mr Treasury Secretary?”

“That's different,” Alexander defended himself weakly. “I have a known and very public connection to Thomas.”

Angelica hummed. “It's not really that different, if you think about it,” she pointed out. “You online, I'm actually surprised that you're not hunched over some paperwork or other.”

Alexander's eyes narrowed. “Why is everyone convinced that I'm incapable of taking a break and actually enjoying life?” he asked sharply.

“Because you're not,” Angelica replied simply. “You're kind of infamous for that. Just wait—if there's anything people will remember about you after centuries, it'll be that you work non-stop.”

“Such a vote of confidence,” Alexander grumbled. “I am touched.”

“Are you done with the tables?” Martha came to a stop before them. “Good. Then get started on mixing the drinks. Remember, keep it on the low with the spirits.” She stared at them, at Alexander, as though daring him to argue with her.
Fortunately, Alexander did still retain some of his survival instincts. “As you command.” He made an exaggerated bow, then ducked Martha’s smack.

“Behave, children,” said the tiny human being that was allegedly Martha’s as she walked past them, typing at something on her phone. “It's actually quite sad that I have to tell you to be mature. Like, that's weird.”

“Thank you, sweetie,” said Martha, looking distinctly and unbearably smug—so much so that, for a moment, Alexander could only see Thomas before him. They looked nothing alike, granted, but they had the exact same mannerisms when they smirked, down to the way the corners of their mouths curled up ever-so-slightly at the end. For a brief second, Alexander could almost be fooled into thinking that they were related.

He blinked, and Martha was back.

Alexander shook his head. It was preposterous, of course. First, Thomas and Martha looked nothing alike, so even if they were related, it’d have to be through some obscure fifteenth cousin thrice removed, and the odds of that having happened were, well, astronomical. Then there was the fact that they were roughly the same age, so any biological relation simply wasn't possible, not to mention that there was the very real possibility that, seeing as how they were good friends, they could have just, will, picked up on each other's mannerisms, and this was just insane.

At which point Alexander realized that he had just spent the past five minutes creating conspiracy theories about his gay boyfriend’s relationship with his female campaign manager, and resolved to spend less time on YouTube.

Alexander rubbed his hands.

“Where do we start?”

Thomas was keenly aware of his campaign staff trickling in one by one. They each stopped to greet him, whether by a shake of hands or a few quiet words, before moving further into the room and mingling with the earlier arrivals. The routine was almost… soothing, and if Thomas was any less tense, he’d take the time to appreciate its natural elegance.

As it was, it felt like his nerves were on fire.

This was it.

Only hours left.

These people, they were all here for him.

Was he ready for this? Probably not. But time waited for no one, except maybe Time Lords, and nope, it so wasn't a good idea to have watched the season finale of Doctor Who with Alexander yesterday, because apparently his mind now thought it acceptable to make obscure science-fiction references, and wow, America really was about to elect its first nerd president, wasn't it?

His stomach churned unpleasantly. In a few hours, it would all be over. He'd either be the next president of the United States, or he wouldn't, but it would all be over, at least.

"Hi there, hotshot," Alexander's voice derailed Thomas' train of thought. "Penny for your thoughts, or is that too cheap—what’s the exchange rate these days?" When Thomas didn't chuckle at his
boyfriend's honestly atrocious pun, Alexander grew somber. "What's going on, Thomas?"

"This is it," Thomas whispered. "In a few hours…"

“You’ll be the president-elect,” Alexander finished.

Thomas frowned at his boyfriend. “You don’t know that,” he pointed out.

Alexander scoffed. “Well, who else is it going to be? Bradford? Yeah, right.”

Thomas rolled his eyes. “Glad you prefer me over a spineless turncoat,” he drawled. “Really lifts my spirits.”

“It’s better than the alternative, isn’t it?” Alexander countered.

“I suppose it is,” Thomas admitted.

They relapsed into silence as they watched the party-goers move around the room in something that most resembled a very convoluted, if silent, group dance, or maybe a battle technique.

“Do you remember your speeches?” Alexander asked quietly. “Is there anything you want re-written last minute?”

Thomas scowled. “You do remember that you’re technically not a member of my campaign, right? You’re not my speechwriter.”

“No; I’m better than your speechwriter. I mean, Gordon Wood?” Alexander crossed his arms, as if the mere name was offending his liberal sensibilities. Which, knowing Alexander, it probably was. “You really could have done better, Thomas.”

Thomas opened his mouth to argue, then closed it again with a sigh. “No. Just. I’m not—You’re not going to goad me into this fight. And don’t say that you’re not trying to,” he cut his boyfriend off before the other could voice his protests. “I know you, remember?”

Alexander rolled his eyes. “Fine. Be that way.” He scrunched up his nose in a telltale show of petulance.

Thomas took advantage of the silence to once again study the crowd. There were so many people there—so many people that were placing their hopes and dreams and their very future on him, and suddenly, it was all he could do to stop the panic from settling in. What if he failed these people? And he would—he knew that he would fail them eventually. He wouldn’t be enough. Maybe someone else—James or Alexander or someone—one would be good enough for them, would get them what they want and need and deserve, but Thomas wasn’t it.

He had no idea what he was even doing. How had he even found himself here? What hopes did he have of changing the country? He had virtually no experience, much less than people normally did, no matter what James claimed.

This was a disaster.

It was as if the room had suddenly shrunk, and Thomas struggled to draw in a breath and he needed to get out before it became too much too much too much—

With an abruptness that would have shocked even him, had he been conscious of it, Thomas turned on his heels and headed for the balcony exit, but was stopped by a hand wrapping itself around his
"Thomas?" asked a hesitant voice.

Thomas didn’t want to meet the dark brown eyes. “I need air,” he declared.

Alexander frowned. “Are you okay?”

“Yeah, I’m fine. I just need air.”

Alexander tilted his head. “That doesn’t sound very fi—”

“Just drop it, okay?” Thomas snapped.

Alexander raised his hands in the universal gesture of surrender. “Fine. Do your thing. I was just trying to help,” he told his boyfriend curtly, “but if you don’t need me, I’ll be over there with Angelica, actually celebrating, unlike other people.”

“Nothing’s set in stone yet,” Thomas repeated for what felt like the umpteenth time.

Alexander sniffed. “Yes, it is, and it’d be a good idea if you started to get used to the idea. You’ll be president.”

Thomas glared at his boyfriend. Didn’t he see that Thomas needed to get out of here? “Let go of my arm.” His voice was as cold as the evening November air outside.

Alexander blinked down at his hand, as if only then realizing that he had grabbed Thomas’ arm. He loosened his grip, and Thomas snatched back his arm. He cast a surreptitious glance around the room to see if anyone had noticed their altercation, but apart from a questioning look from Martha, people seemed more inclined to pay attention to their conversation partners or the TV or even—especially—the drinks than whatever new set of crazy their candidate and his boyfriend were up to now.

Or maybe it was selective ignorance.

Either way, it was working out for Thomas.

With one last glare in Alexander's direction, Thomas opened the door and stepped out onto the balcony.

He was instantly assaulted by the cool air, so typical for the break between autumn and winter. He took a steadying breath, and his fingers almost involuntarily tightened around the railing.

He was okay.

Well, no, that wasn’t quite right.

He wasn't okay, but he was going to be okay.

Probably. It was hard to tell, what with him about to become the president of the United States—and fine, maybe it was a little too early to call it yet, but apparently Alexander’s unyielding enthusiasm was something infectious. If this was how Alexander dealt with all of his obstacles—if his method was to nag at them and repeatedly remind them of what he wanted to happen until they bent to his will, no matter the cost—then Thomas was starting to see just how Alexander had risen up from the muck and the grim he had been born into, becoming one of the most influential individuals in the American public of this decade.
Thomas wasn’t sure of how long he lingered outside before the door opened, letting out some pleasantly warm air.

“Thomas.” Alexander stepped up to his side. “You better?” He put a tentative hand on Thomas’ shoulder.

Thomas wordlessly nodded, not trusting himself to speak quite yet.

Alexander’s other hand settled on Thomas’ other shoulder, and he carefully began to rub circles across his shoulders. Thomas unwittingly relaxed as the tension he hadn’t even known was there practically drained away, leaving him oddly exhausted and yet more rested than he had felt in a long time.

“I love you,” Alexander said, and Thomas was pretty sure it was the shortest statement Alexander had ever made.

He sighed and turned to face his boyfriend. “I love you too,” he replied quietly.

“Hey, look at me,” Alexander insisted. “You’re going to be alright, alright? Even if—God forbid—you lose, it’s not the end of the world. Is it a big deal? Yes. Will it suck? Yes. Will the earth continue to spin on its axis as it revolves around the sun? Yes. So… just take a deep breath and just try and enjoy it, okay?”

Thomas scoffed even as he did as Alexander suggested. “You’re one to talk,” he pointed out.

“You wouldn’t have it any other way,” Alexander countered with a little smirk on his face.

The worst thing was, Thomas considered, that Alexander was right.

They stood in silence for a moment, each left to his own thoughts.

“They have started calling the states,” Alexander eventually murmured. “That’s what I came out here to tell you before I got distracted by all the… you -ness.” He waved a hand to indicate Thomas’ figure. “Indiana and Kentucky have already been closed. It’s 11 to 8, in Bradford’s favour.” There was a barely audible quaver in Alexander’s voice

Thomas’ throat felt like it had been clogged.

That didn’t matter. Not really.

Early results were often deceptive.

It didn’t really matter who was leading right now; everything could change, and often did, at the drop of a hat at any moment.

“Do you want to come in?” Alexander’s voice broke through Thomas’ mental recitation of the many, many ways this could go south.

Thomas hesitated.

Alexander silently offered his hand in way of support.

Thomas stared down at it for a long moment. There was a long moment of silence, only sporadically shattered by the sounds of a car engine or an airplane above them. This was, after all, Iowa.

Seeing his dilemma, Alexander offered him a soft smile, free of judgment, not expecting Thomas to
reciprocate, just giving him comfort because he cared, and the breath caught in Thomas' throat.

This… this was good. This was nice, even. He needed this—this reminder of just why he was doing all of this—dating Alexander, running for office, standing up for people he had, for years, actively discluded from his identity.

Finally, after what felt like at least three Years of the Lamps, Thomas took Alexander’s hand. “Sure,” he said, ignoring the way his throat felt like it had been chewed out by something taken straight out of the more grotesque side of Tolkien.

Alexander and Thomas re-entered the hotel room, drawing many a look in their direction. Thomas swallowed and ignored the whispers that accompanied the looks.

Alexander grabbed two drinks from a nearby tray, and handed one to Thomas, before dragging him over to the TV. Alexander almost subconsciously wrapped the arm not holding a drink around Thomas’ waist.

It must be weird for Alexander too, Thomas realized, feeling suddenly overwhelmed by the sheer implications. Standing here with his very conservative boyfriend, it must be the very anathema to all he believes in, and yet Alexander remained right by Thomas’ side, simply because Thomas needed him.

Thomas turned to Alexander, opening his mouth, about to say something, anything, about this odd dedication of Alexander’s, but one look at his boyfriend told him that the man was glued to the TV, and had a plethora of issues with the electoral map—specifically, the blue parts.

It would seem that wonders never cease.

“I mean, it’s not that bad,” Martha was saying uncertainly. “It’s 123 to 104 to Thomas. We can just about win this thing.”

“Bradford can’t win,” Alexander butted in ostentatiously, because when did he not. “He’s just too dumb to run this country, plain and simple.”

Angelica snorted into her drink. “Says the autodidact.”

Alexander rolled his eyes. “Here I am, being altruistic and all, and you take every opportunity to shatter the illusion.”

“If it shatters so easily, it wasn’t worthy of keeping alive,” Angelica retorted seamlessly.

Angelica stuck out her tongue. “I’ll allow you this one refraction,” he declared grandly.

Angelica rolled her eyes. “How magnanimous of you,” she drawled. “Oh fuck. We just lost Jersey.”

“Honestly, fuck Jersey.” The tone of Alexander's voice betrayed that he was pouting, the mixture of anger/helplessness/annoyance that he currently felt was frustrating him beyond his ability to express in mere words.

Angelica glared. “We need Jersey, Hamilton,” she reminded him. “Or, at any rate, your boyfriend does.”

Thomas slowly let the incoming numbers wash over him, numbing him, until his world had
narrowed down to a stream of numbers and a constant murmured commentary from… MSNBC, probably, since Alexander had a tendency to assault any tech that showed Fox News.

He focused on the commentary, because that, at least, kept him from spiralling into despondency and darkness.

Connecticut: Bradford.

Delaware: Bradford.

Maryland: Jefferson.

And so it began.

Thomas hadn’t noticed that Alexander had at some point disappeared until he appeared at Thomas’ side, pressing another drink—this one non-alcoholic—into his hand.

Thomas carefully took a sip.

Huh.

It was surprisingly good.

Calming.

“Thank you,” he murmured to Alexander.

Alexander flashed him a silent smile.

Pennsylvania: Jefferson.

Rhode Island: Bradford.

Tennessee: Jefferson.

“Hey, guys, there’s this super funny video about a guy answering spam emails,” piped up Martha’s kid. “James Veitch. It’s hilarious.”

Martha gave her daughter a scolding look. “Can we take it later, honey?”

The kid sniffed. “Just thought I’d light up the mood, but if you want to wallow in nerves and anticipation and self-pity, it’s your funeral. Just trying to be helpful.”

“Well, don’t,” Alexander snapped.

The kid shot Alexander a sullen look. She didn’t speak again.

Arizona: Bradford.
Iowa: Jefferson.
Nevada: Bradford.

Hold on a second.

He won Iowa? Iowa? How?

“Didn’t I lose their caucus?” Thomas couldn’t quite keep the disbelief from his voice. This was ludicrous. Granted, good ludicrous, but still ludicrous.

Alexander shushed him. “They’re just about to call Montana. This might be it.”

“Who’s talking now, huh?” Martha berated the short man. “Shut it, Hamilton.”

In any other situation, Alexander would have stuck out his tongue at her. As it was, he didn’t rise to the bait, his eyes glued to the MSNBC commentator that kept prattling on and on about numbers and chances and whatnot.

It was as if the whole room held its breath.

Nary a person dared make a sound.

This was it. The moment they had been waiting for.

Finally, after what felt like an eternity, the grey state of Montana turned red.

A huge cheer erupted around the room. People were smiling, jumping with happiness, laughing.

“Yes!” Alexander punched the air. “Bradford lost!”

Thomas was staring at the map, at the now red state. Rationally, he knew what it meant, but it was as if the implications were yet to sink in.

“Thomas!” It was Alexander, who had slunk his arm around Thomas’ shoulders, and was now drawing him in for a hug. “Congratulations!”

Thomas numbly went along with the hug, although he couldn’t find the energy in himself to reciprocate.

This was happening.

This was real.

He was the next president of the United States.

The MSNBC commentator told the American people as much.

“Congratulations, Mr President-Elect,” said someone over Thomas’ shoulder. When Alexander finally relinquished his boyfriend, with great reluctance, Thomas turned around and saw both Martha and Angelica standing there. There was a wide smile on Martha’s face. “I knew you could do it.”

Angelica’s lips were pursed, but it was clear that she, too, was fighting a smile. “I guess you haven’t fucked up too badly,” she relented.

“Coming from you, that’s, like, really high praise,” Alexander pointed out, never one to back down
from an argument, even if he had to create one first.

Thomas tuned out Angelica’s response. It somehow didn’t seem as relevant right now as the fact that, oh yes, he was about to become the president.

“Oh God,” he murmured.

“What’d you say?” Alexander asked, turning from Angelica back to Thomas.

“Nothing,” Thomas replied. “I just… give me a second to process.”

Alexander furrowed his brows. “Are you okay?” He wrapped a hand around Thomas’ forearm, and ran his thumb along a line visible only to himself. “You look as if you’re about to faint.”

“I’m fine.” When Alexander just raised a pointed eyebrow, Thomas shook his head. “No, really. I’m fine. Or, I’ll be fine. Again, need to process this.”

Alexander snorted. “You’re so slow on the uptake sometimes,” he said, not unkindly.

Thomas snorted. “When you’re elected president, we’ll see how well you’ll do.”

Alexander glared. “We both know that I can’t be president. Don’t be rude by reminding me of it.”

His expression suddenly brightened. “On the other hand, since you’re president now and all, if you want to see me become president, there's a few things you could—”

Thomas held up a hand. “I'm going to stop you right there. Give me at least a few minutes to process this before you try to bribe your way into my good graces.”

Alexander shrugged shamelessly.

Thomas exhaled.

He may be the next president—

 shitshitshit he was the next president he was so not prepared how was this his job—

—but at least some things remained the same.

Thomas tightened his grip on Alexander's hand.

As long as he had Alexander on his side—as long as he had Alexander's support—he was going to be fine.

Thomas’ phone buzzed.

Ah. That would be Bradford.

“Ignore him,” Alexander muttered into Thomas’ shoulder.

Thomas choked. “I can't just ignore the concession speech.”

“Sure you can,” came the swift reply. “Bradford's an idiot.”

“Behave!”

Alexander pouted. “I am.”
Thomas swatted the back of his head, and just like that, the equilibrium was regained.

“Two-hundred and forty years ago, a group of individuals assembled in a church in Philadelphia. They were ordinary men from all different walks of life, but they had a single dream: A nation built upon the principles of liberty, freedom, justice, and equality. I stand before you this evening to thank you all for your dedication to furthering that dream.

“We are gathered here tonight not to celebrate the victory of one person or one campaign or one party over another, but in celebration of our great nation’s commitment to democracy and the good of all Americans. No matter what side of this election you stood on, whether you had Jefferson or Bradford on your bumper sticker, you helped in forwarding that commitment.

“I spoke to Senator Bradford just a moment ago, and I congratulated him on a well-run campaign. It’s encouraging to see someone so devoted to their beliefs and to the betterment of this country and its citizens, and for that he and his campaign have my utmost respect. Senator Bradford has spent many years as a trusted public servant, and that sort of dedication is why we are here tonight.

“I would like to thank my good friend and Vice-President-Elect Quincy Adams. You’re a great man, and America is blessed to have you at her service.

“I would also like to thank the people without whom I would not be standing where I am today. James, you’ve been by my side through it all, and I’m truly honoured to call you my oldest and closest friend and ally. Thank you for all you’ve done for me, and I hope I’ve made as much of a positive impact on your life as I know you have on mine.

“And Alexander… I love you, and every day I get to spend with you is as close to a blessing as I can claim. You mean the world to me, darling, and I can’t thank you enough for all the support you’ve given me in the past few months, although if you post one more picture of me on Twitter, I will steal your laptop and lock it up in the attic.

“And to my wonderful campaign staff, you’ve been the glue that’s kept this whole thing together. For some of you, this was your first time around the block, and for others it’s a trip we’ve been making together for years, but I am grateful for the contributions of each and every one of you. A long time ago, on the outskirts of Charlottesville, Virginia, a little boy with crooked teeth had a dream of one day becoming president; it is thanks to all of your hard work that that dream has been realised, and I hope that, no matter what the future holds for you, you are able to look back at this moment with pride knowing that you did your part in making history here tonight, and that you know that you will always have my thanks.

“You know, it’s easy in times like these to dismiss politics and our government as nothing more than a battle royale between competing egos, a childish squabble between two different brands of narcissism, and I’ll admit that I understand why people would think that, I really do. It’s easy to think that when you see all the mudslinging and trash talking and bitterness between people, and it’s even easier when you see a system, a system that’s supposed to work for the people, instead leave millions to fend for themselves. It’s easy to think that politics is a petty, heartless business when you see the way this country treats its veterans—those very same brave men and women who fought for us and our freedoms—while the people in power turn a blind eye to their hardships. It’s easy to be disheartened when you speak to those who have been involved in another mass shooting because somewhere along the line, the system failed to provide someone the mental health care they needed. It’s easy to think that no one cares when the those who are supposed to work to better this nation instead fight against those who need their help the most, when you see the sorrow and the need in the eyes of the factory workers and coal miners who’ve lost their jobs because crippling taxes and
regulations are running their employers out of business.

“Yes, it is easy to believe that the business of the American government is an uncaring, corrupt one, but right now, I would like for us all to take a moment and look into the eyes of the people in this room. The people who stood up against this system and said no more. No longer would they stand by and watch as their fellow citizens were taken advantage of by the institution sworn to help them. In these eyes I see hope, hope for a future in which this nation returns to its roots of individual freedom and hard work and morality. I see those who believe that this country, these United States of America, this incredible land we all call home, is the greatest nation in the world, and will continue to be for years to come.

“You have elected me because you believe I will work to further that goal, that dream, that hope of an America that puts the needs of the powerless many above the wants of the powerful few. That hope of an America that stands firm and proud and strong in the face of tyranny and oppression, be it foreign or domestic. That hope of an America that will hold these truths to be self-evident: that everyone is created equal, and that we are all endowed with the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

“You have elected me to be your president, an unspeakable honour that I will take as seriously as any other undertaking in my life. You have elected me because you believed in me, and I hope that, in the next four years, we will create an America that believes in you.

“Thank you.”

Alexander was staring at a bottle before him like it was about to explode any moment.

Thomas approached him. He, too, turned to stare at the object before them. “What’s that?” he asked.

“That,” said Alexander, prodding at the bottle as though it might react, “is a gift. For you,” he continued when Thomas merely arched an eyebrow. “From Vladimir Putin. Apparently, it’s a thing that he sends every new American president a bottle of vodka.” Alexander paused. “Except, you drank all of Washington’s.”

Thomas stiffened. Why—When—How did Alexander even remember that? How much did he remember?

“What.”

“Yup.” Alexander popped the ‘P’. He suddenly grinned as he turned to Thomas. “Just don’t drink it all in one go and proceed to try to hook up with whoever’s closest, your couch, your bed, and your emotions. That’s, like, the worst way to keep in touch with yourself.” He snickered at his own joke.

Thomas glared. “I hope you choke on your spit.”

“Oh, you love me anyway.”

“I’m struggling to remember why.”
In Which Thomas Jefferson Puts the Ass in Assassination

Chapter Summary


Pleasedon'tkillusweresorry

Chapter Notes

ibegofyouspareus

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Thomas had thought that one of the upsides to actually being elected president was that he didn’t have to campaign anymore—and yet here he was, November twelfth, standing in the middle of a fucking rally.

He’d asked if this was necessary, really, this pseudo-victory tour he was on for the rest of the month, but Martha had assured him that, yes, they needed to do this. He needed to do this. A grand thank you, she’d said, a show of commitment to the American people, the whole shebang.

(Thomas had argued that, really, being a competent president who does his job and works for the American people was a big enough show of commitment, and one that really mattered, but apparently, despite being the president-elect, Thomas wasn’t qualified to make those sorts of decisions.)

So there he was, in the middle of Kentucky, about to step behind a podium and make some washed out, cliche speech about how grateful he was for the citizens of Insert City Name Here, Kentucky, and for their support in the election.

JQ stood to his right, with Louisa on his arm.

Alexander was nowhere in sight.

Thomas stepped slowly onto the stage and into the glare of the mid-morning sun. The early chill had still yet to abate. The low murmurs of the crowd washed over him, causing a knot to tie itself in his stomach.

It wasn’t unpleasant, per se, it just… was. Just like Alexander wasn’t.

It wasn’t as if Thomas hadn’t invited Alexander to attend, and it wasn’t as if Thomas didn’t understand why Alexander chose not to attend. He remembered the precise moment Thomas had offered Alexander a spot on this stage, and every other stage he’d be standing on in the next month.

“Why the fuck would I want to attend a Republican victory tour?” Alexander had asked between bouts of incredulous laughter. At least it hadn’t been derisive. Thomas wasn’t sure if he could have stopped himself from throwing a punch if it had been. “Seriously, Thomas. I love you—God knows
I do—and we’ve got a good thing going here. Let’s not push it.”

Thomas considered it a miracle that Alexander was even joining him on the trip, and so when Alexander said he’d be staying in the hotel downtown while Thomas stood in front of a bunch of rowdy Kentuckians, Thomas didn’t argue.

(Even if he did secretly suspect Alexander would probably show up in the crowd of protesters that were swarming the outside of the convention center.)

(That fucking adorable asshole.)

Thomas smiled as he finally stepped up to the mic, his head swimming with images of his ridiculous boyfriend trying to throw popcorn at Thomas through the TV screen back at the hotel.

“Good evening, everyone!” he began, “And thank you for joining us to—”

He didn’t even get to finish the phrase.

Alexander was trying to ignore Thomas’ face on the screen in front of him, if only because Thomas would have that stupid, charming smirk on his face and if Alexander saw that he would swoon like a teenage girl and miss him and then for one, tiny, horrific moment, he would wish he was at a Republican victory rally.

And God dammit, Alexander wasn’t going to put his conscience through that sort of pain.

He couldn’t, however, help but look up when he heard Thomas’ voice, like that slimy Southern motherfucker was the Pied Piper, and as such, Alexander witnessed the very moment his whole world burned to ash around his feet.

For a moment, Alexander couldn’t even comprehend what he’d just seen. One moment, Thomas was thanking the crowd of people gathered in the convention centre, and the next he was gone, crumpling behind the podium as blood sprayed.

“The President-Elect has been shot,” someone was saying, but Alexander couldn't process what was happening.

It simply wasn’t possible.

Because Thomas was the President-Elect.

And Thomas couldn’t have been shot.

Not Thomas.

Never Thomas.

There was a knock on Alexander’s door. “Sir, please open the door,” a voice said from the hall outside his room.


However, Alexander couldn't open the door. Alexander couldn’t move.

Because the President-Elect had been shot.
And the President-Elect was Thomas.

“Mr. Secretary, please open the door, or we will open it by force.”

Thomas had been shot.

There was a banging at the door.

_Thomas had been shot._

A loud clatter, footsteps getting nearer.

_Thomas could die._

Someone was shaking Alexander’s shoulder.

Why?

Why were they here?

Why were they with him?

Why weren’t they with Thomas?

_Thomas had been shot._

Why wasn’t Alexander with Thomas?

Why hadn’t Alexander been there?

Thomas had been shot.

Alexander wasn’t there.

Thomas could die.

_Alexander wasn’t there._

_His Thomas._

Alexander had abandoned him.

_His Thomas was going to die._

_And Alexander couldn’t stop it._

He felt something inside him burst as the world went dark.

Chapter End Notes

telluswhatyouthought

butpleasedontmurderus
The Gratuitous Background Chapter, Or, Who Dis?

Chapter by Sanna_Black_Slytherin

Chapter Summary

Meet Martha Wayles, Thomas’ campaign manager.

Chapter Notes

Enjoy your mostly angst-free chapter! You’ve earned it! :)

Martha Wayles was born on the 30th of October in Virginia General Hospital.

She weighed six pounds and two ounces. She had three older brothers, and a younger sister. She was a happy child.

Martha Wayles was nothing remarkable; unlike her mother, she was not a renowned writer or, indeed, someone with any appreciation for any pre-21st century literature. Unlike her father, she didn’t have the right mind or mindset for corporate businesses.

She eventually went into law, at her aunt’s prompting. It made good money, it was respectable enough, it would set her up with decent connections. She fell into campaign work—slowly, at first, putting in a few hours at the local Young Republicans branch here and there. She didn’t really mean to become a serious political operative. It just felt like it happened so quickly: one moment, she was phone banking for a district judge race, and the next she was co-ordinating the press appearances of the President-Elect.

She didn’t regret a single minute of it.

Even as a child, she had been a quiet one—never making a mess, never complaining, always taking things in stride. As if to balance out the lack of chaos she herself caused, fate had seen fit to give her bad luck with relationships.

Correction: terrible luck. The worst kind.

It started out well enough. In high school, she had two boyfriends: first Mickey Johnson, a jock with a secret talent for painting, who was hiding behind a façade of what Martha hadn’t realized until much later was toxic masculinity, and Tim Myers, a sweet and adorable nerd who had a fascination with studying the social structure of bees.

They seemed both nice, until one realized that they both cheated on her; Mickey with one of the junior cheerleaders, and Tim… Well, Tim cheated on her with Charlie Alphons, with whom he had been doing a group project for advanced geography.
It was just her luck that, out of every guy at school, she had seen fit to date the gay one.

For a while, she laid off dating, and focused her energy on her education. It just figured that that was the time her body had chosen to actually fill out and mature. All throughout junior and senior year, she’d had to field progressively more overt advances from various jocks—and nerds—and one or two rebels, too, come to think of it—all of whom were eager to get into her pants.

Martha’s dedication had paid off when she was accepted into Hampton University. That was like a dream come true for her. She’d also sent in an application to the standard colleges—Columbia, Stanford, NYU—of course, but her dream choice had been Hampton.

And so Martha Wayles had headed off to college, full of hopes and dreams, her entire future before her.

There, in freshman year, Martha had met Thomas Jefferson, then halfway finished with his law degree. He was an introspective and absolutely brilliant law student, if somewhat awkward, but his apparent gawkishness dissipated after a few conversations with him. He was sweet, intelligent, talented, and devilishly handsome, and before Martha could blink, she had developed a crush the size of the Grand Canyon on him.

He had always given off an odd vibe, but try as she might, she couldn’t put her finger on what it was that bothered her about him. At the time, she didn’t care that much about it. Every guy had his issues, and Martha had long outgrown her need to solve everyone’s problems.

Even when Martha had first begun flirting with Thomas, all light-hearted talk and jokes, tension seemed to ooze out of him. Still, he was responsive, and, while guarded with his smiles, when he did give her one, it felt like Martha’s stomach was full of butterflies fluttering to and fro.

It didn’t take that much convincing to get Thomas into her bed.

Out of all of her hookups, Thomas was perhaps the most on-edge, the most apprehensive, but Martha had chalked it up to performance nerves. She had a feeling that he hadn’t done this kind of thing before, and she very much still remembered her first time.

She had been unusually gentle with Thomas that night.

When she woke up in the morning, Thomas was gone, a soreness in her body was her only proof that he had even been there in the first place. That by itself earned the night a position on her Top Three Worst Hookups list.

She moved on, like she always did—ignored the fuzzy feeling in her guts that appeared whenever she spotted him across campus, reading a book or taking notes with a pile of textbooks next to him, or chatting with his friends. By that point, Martha was no stranger to relationships turned sour.

After Thomas, Martha had dated John Skelton, which turned out to be simultaneously her longest and most disastrous relationship.

She was content, at first, or so she told herself; he wasn’t her Mr. Right, by any means—if Mr. Right existed at all, which by that point, she was seriously doubting—but he was alright. Handsome. Relatively smart. Occasionally funny.

They were together for two months when Martha started noticing the first signs.
John wasn’t happy with the fact that Martha decided to keep the child, saying that he wasn’t about to take care of “some brat”. Martha wasn’t happy with the way he kept leaving at midnight for the nearest bar that would still serve him, only stumbling back home at four thirty after being thrown out, his steps shaky.

She really didn’t like when, one night, he decided that, rather than drink the whiskey, he’d like to throw the bottle at her head.

Things ended pretty quickly after that. Martha had taken her things, and just left. The clean end was almost cathartic, in a way. She wouldn’t have wanted her daughter growing up around John, anyway.

Her life went on. She dated, fell in love, and got her heart broken. One would have thought that she’d have learned her lesson, but Martha’s heart was a firm believer in making the same mistake no less than seven times, just to make sure that it was a mistake.

Out of everyone she had dated, she had only really kept in touch with Thomas, and only because he hadn’t cheated on her—which, fair enough, was a tragically low standard to compare successful break-ups to, but that was what Martha’s life was, apparently.

When Mary was born, Martha’s burgeoning career was put on hold. When the choice was between her career and her daughter, there was no choice at all, not really. Mary took precedence over everything.

Martha’s few first years as a single mother were extremely harrying. She had known this would happen—had anticipated it, even, and had expected for it to be hard without any sort of support from Mary’s father—but it was still exhausting, to the point where some days, she felt as though she was losing her sense of self in favour of preserving her ‘mom’ persona for Mary.

These were the things you were never told about single motherhood: it robbed you of who you were, leaving you hollow inside, and yet, you wouldn’t take back a single moment of it.

Mary was her everything. She fell in love with her the moment she laid eyes on those black curls, the wide eyes, the little button nose.

Mary was unmistakably her father’s daughter.

Martha eventually finished her education, worked a few years at a minimum-wage restaurant, before landing a job at the DA’s office. It wasn’t the kind of life she had envisioned when she was young, but it was what she had been dealt, and she did the best she could.

She worked a few years at the DA’s office, before a senator from Massachusetts offered to make her her assistant campaign manager for her re-election. The hours were murder on her sleep schedule, but Mary loved to travel and see the country, so Martha accepted the offer.

Flash forward another few years. Martha had been successful with the Massachusetts senator, and the job offers just kept coming. Martha gradually got used to the work. It grew on her, and it turned out that she was quite good at it, too.

When Thomas came out of the closet—or was dragged out of the closet, more accurately—Martha was livid. Not at Thomas—although the way he had led her on and let her believe that there could have been something between them was rude enough to merit a place at Hannibal Lecter’s table—but at herself, and her taste in men. This was the second guy she had dated who turned out gay, and
those were her decent exes (or so she assumed; she hadn’t bothered to keep track of Tim).

Then, once she had had some time to process it, she found that there was a genuine smile on her face.

Thomas was her Harry Bright, it seemed. Or maybe she was his Donna Sheridan. The jury was still out on that one.

Martha was eventually approached by Thomas regarding his presidential campaign. Quite honestly, Martha had agreed more out of respect for their friendship than because she’d thought that he—a black, gay Republican—had a chance to win anything, let alone the highest office in the country. (Still, if anyone could overcome those odds, it was Thomas. He had always been the brightest and the best them all.)

With Thomas came Alexander Hamilton, Thomas’ boyfriend of who the hell knew how long, and wow. Martha had always considered herself fairly liberal—she’d dated two gay guys, for Christ’s sake, and had been more offended by the fact that they were using her as a beard than the fact that they were into other men—but Hamilton took the cake, the frosting, and the fucking cherry too, while he was at it. She took an instant liking to him, but try as she might, she couldn’t wrap her head around what made Thomas like him. Hamilton was pretty much the epitome of everything Thomas hated, was the very personification of every value Thomas had opposed, no matter how hypocritical of him.

The more Martha got to know Hamilton, the harder it became for her to fathom how the two could ever have kept their relationship a secret for several months. Hamilton was prone to talking about everything—no way he hadn’t babbled to someone about it.

Still, Hamilton’s hypercompetence and seemingly endless contacts came a long way to helping her deal with the backroom talks of Washington, D.C.. Hamilton was… nice. Actually, genuinely nice. Helpful, even, if he felt like it, or if they were driving home a point that Hamilton happened to agree with.

Thomas may have been suitable for the presidency, but Hamilton, Martha came to realize, was made for it. It was just sad that a person as destined for the office as he was would never be able to hold it, because some dead white men two centuries ago decided to be xenophobic. (She had once made a mistake of bringing that topic up with Hamilton, and was consequently subjected to a thirty-minute rant, and Jesus, didn’t the man ever stop?)

Then came the election night, and with it, unthinkable results.

No one, not even Thomas, not even Hamilton, had been more blown away by them than Martha.

Thomas had won.

Somehow, miraculously, but for the grace of whichever fucking deity had been listening, Thomas Jefferson had won the election.

She exchanged a warm look with Thomas, congratulating him, before they were both swept up into celebrations and planning and preparing and just about a million things that needed doing yesterday.

Post-election preparations, meetings, talks, and negotiations were, if it was even possible, even more gruesome. It almost made Martha miss the old good days, where it was just them, the team, and the next event.
At the victory tour rally, and Martha’s world shattered.

When she heard the gunshot and saw Thomas go down, her heart stopped. She stood as if petrified, looking on as Thomas collapsed before her very eyes.

No.

This couldn’t be happening.

Not Thomas.

Please not Thomas.

She couldn’t go through it.

Mary couldn’t lose her father before she even had a chance to get to know him.

Martha couldn’t lose Thomas.

No.

Chapter End Notes

"Oops my hand slipped" -- the authors, 2k later
They wouldn’t let him in the waiting room.

He’d asked.

He’d begged.

He’d pleaded.

He’d demanded.

He’d threatened.

He’d bribed.

They said that it was for Thomas’ protection. That, as President-Elect, they couldn’t take any chances, and since Alexander was neither immediate family nor official staff nor Thomas’ spouse, he was denied access to even the fucking waiting room.

So Alexander sat in one of those god-awful plastic chairs in the hall outside the waiting room and watched as John fucking Quincy got to see his possibly dying boyfriend before he did.

“How is he?” Alexander asked as JQ re-entered the room.

“The bullet entered just above his lower back. They’re trying to remove it now,” JQ replied.

“So he’s okay? It didn’t hit any organs or whatever? He’s not going to—going to die, is he?” Alexander persisted.

“Not that anyone can tell.”
“God, this whole thing is so *stupid!*” Alexander shouted. “I should—I should be able to see him! He’s—he’s my—”

Alexander couldn’t get out the word. His *boyfriend.* Fuck, it sounded so *childish,* like they were a couple of eighth graders awkwardly holding hands behind the fucking bleachers.

Thomas was—well, not his *everything,* but a *good chunk* of his everything. *No single thing* mattered to Alexander as much as Thomas did—and wasn’t that a fucking *terrifying* thought to be having here, in the hallway adjacent to the waiting room.

*Fuck.*

Alexander was going to be sick.

Madison arrived a few moments later, looking more harried than Alexander had ever seen him in a pair of khakis and a massive sweater. It was odd, seeing Madison in such casual clothes after only seeing him in suits for the entire time Alexander had known him.

But, then again, Alexander thought dryly, he’d never seen him when his best friend had been *shot* before.

Everything was *wrong.*

They wouldn’t let James in either. Turned out best friend status didn’t count for much.

Alexander tried, and failed, not to feel vindicated.

“He’s in surgery,” Alexander muttered—whether to himself or to James, he didn’t know. “The bullet was lodged in his spine.”

“When will he be out?” James asked, taking the seat next to Alexander.

“I don’t know,” Alexander said, before raising his voice, “*because no one in this hell-hole will tell me anything!*”

“But he’s stable?” James asked.

“Yeah,” Alexander mumbled.

“Well, that’s something, at least,” James replied quietly.

“Have you heard anything about the shooter?” Alexander asked, tapping his foot.

Somewhere in the background, someone had the news. Alexander couldn’t pinpoint the channel, but they were talking about Thomas—*the President-Elect was rushed to St. Matthew’s after the shooting.* *Vice-President-Elect John Quincy Adams released the following statement—*

“His name was Aiden McPeak.” James was rambling, as though reading off a list. “History of mental illness, registered member of the Westboro Baptist Church—”

“Was?”

“He was taken out moments after the shooting started,” James answered.
“Good,” Alexander growled.

They sat in silence.

Alexander didn’t know how long he and James sat there, staring at the wall or their phones or the door or the television at the end of the hall, but eventually, he was shocked out of his reverie by shouts at the end of the hallway.

“He is my brother! I don’t care if he’s the second coming of Christ, I want to see him!”

James turned and raised an eyebrow at Alexander, who shrugged, eyes wide.

“Ms. Jefferson—”

“Lewis.”

“Ms. Lewis—”

“I am his next of kin, I have the right to see him—”

“Ma’am, even if I could allow you access to the President-Elect, I wouldn’t be for a while longer. He’s still in surgery, and—”

“James? Alexander?” Lucy’s voice called out, having spotted the two men at the end of the hall.

“Why are you two—”

“Apparently, being the President-Elect’s significant other isn’t enough to be allowed into the fucking waiting room,” Alexander replied, voice harsher than he intended, as he stood up.

His back ached.

Stupid fucking hallway chairs.

Stupid fucking hospital.

“So neither of you have seen him either?” Lucy said, her voice as quiet as Alexander had ever heard it.

“No,” Alexander muttered, running his hand through his hair. “I think James is trying to figure something out—there’ve been rumours that Thomas is going to offer his some cabinet position or something, so he’s trying to use that to say he’s part of the administration and get inside, but…”

“So far, nothing,” James finished for him, getting up and standing at Alexander’s side.

James Madison. At Alexander Hamilton’s side. Together. Allies, if only in this one thing. God, what had happened? Why had this happened? How had this happened?

Alexander still couldn’t really understand it. He was still expecting Thomas to swagger out the door into the hall in some ridiculous, impeccable suit, hair perfectly styled, that stupid, incredible smile on his face.

“So… no one knows what’s going on? My brother was shot, and no one knows what’s going on?!” Lucy asked, her voice steadily rising.
“JQ and Martha are in the waiting room, but they’ve been told not to tell us much,” James answered, and if his voice took on an angry tone… Well, Lucy didn’t blame him.

Lucy slumped down into Alexander’s chair. “Fuck,” she whispered.

“That about sums it up,” Alexander agreed.

For a moment, Lucy didn’t say anything, simply stared at the wall. Then—

“My baby brother might die.”

Alexander felt the world tilt on its axis again. The floor shifted.

Because she was right.

Thomas might die.

*Thomas could die.*

Thomas could die, and what would the last thing Alexander had said to him be?

What had been the last thing he’d told Thomas?

He couldn’t remember.

Something along the lines of “fuck off, asshole”.

*Dear God.*

Alexander felt himself stagger backward into the wall.

“Alexander?” James asked.

It sounded like he was underwater.

He might not ever get to see Thomas again.

*He might not ever get to see Thomas again.*

His last words to the love of his fucking life might be “fuck off, asshole”.

He might not ever hear Thomas laugh again.

He might never see that smile again.

Or rest his head against that chest.

Hold his hand.

Kiss him.

Tell him he loved him.

*Did Thomas know he loved him?*

Did he really, *truly* know?
The room swayed.

Did Thomas know?

Would he ever know?

Would he ever know that Alexander couldn’t imagine life without him? That trying to think of a future in which Thomas wasn’t there was impossible? That Alexander wanted to spend the rest of his life with him?

Thomas had just gotten where he wanted to be. All the work and the effort and the pain of the last two years had just begun to pay off, and now…

It could all be over.

The room swam and spun and swirled like Alexander was on one of those centrifugal force rides at a carnival, everything blurring together in a dizzying, sickening haze.

Alexander doubled over and was sick on the pristine hospital floor.

---

Thomas was out of surgery—or that was what they were saying, at any rate. It wasn’t like anyone was giving Alexander any clear information.

He didn’t know how long he’d been sitting in that fucking hallway. James was still with him, but Lucy had been allowed to go into the waiting a few hours ago.

Or maybe it had been a few minutes ago.

Alexander wasn’t sure at this point.

But Thomas was alive. Out of surgery, and alive.

“Speaker Madison,” someone—one of JQ’s security team?—said, stepping into the hall. “Vice-President-Elect Adams would like to speak with you.”

“Is it Thomas?” James and Alexander asked simultaneously.

“I’m not at liberty to say, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Secretary.”

“Alright,” James replied, standing to his feet.

“What’s wrong with Thomas?” Alexander asked, doing his best to control the hysterics that he could hear creeping into his voice. “Is Thomas okay? Is he alive??”

“I’m sorry, Mr. Secretary—”

“Please, please. Give me something. Anything,” Alexander pleaded, hating the way his voice cracked at the end, the way he sounded so desperate.

“I’m sorry.” The man's voice was carefully devoid of any inflection.

“James?” Alexander asked.

James sighed, rubbing his forehead. “I will… tell you as much as I can,” he finally said.
Alexander nodded. A silent thank you.

James followed the security officer back into the waiting room.

“He’s alive,” James’ voice suddenly said above Alexander's ear.

Alexander started. He hadn’t seen—or, indeed—heard him enter the hall. But that wasn’t the important part.

“But?” he pressed James.

“The bullet shattered a number of vertebrae in his lower spine,” James replied, his voice carefully even. “He’s currently in a medically-induced coma. They’re planning on sending him into another surgery soon, to see if they can repair the damage, but if they can’t…”

“Yes?”

“We’re looking at the possibility of full lower-body paralysis,” James admitted.

The room was spinning again.

“But he will wake up?” Alexander forced himself to ask. “He’s not… he’ll wake up?”

“Most likely,” James confirmed.

Alexander took a deep breath and rested his head against the wall. “Why did they want to talk to you?” he asked, his tone flat.

“Thomas is going to be in recovery for the foreseeable future, whether or not this next surgery goes well,” James began, “but—”

Alexander didn’t need to hear the rest.

“Well then,” he muttered. “Congratulations, Mr. Vice-President-Elect.”

“Alexander—”

“I know, I know. You don’t want this any more than I do.”

James ran a hand through his short hair. “There’s no precedent for this,” he reminded Alexander. “Technically, I am the current Speaker of the House, but we’ve just had elections. The new House could unseat me come December.”

“But as for right now, you are the Vice-President-Elect.”

“Yes.”

For a moment, silence reigned.

“It’s what he’d want,” Alexander finally offered—a cold comfort. James looked at him out of the corner of his eye, confusion evident on his face. “If he were awake,” Alexander clarified. “If he were awake, he’d want you to be there if he couldn’t.”

“If Thomas were awake, I wouldn’t have to do this,” James countered.
“Good point.”

“But,” James continued, “as Vice-President-Elect, I do have a few privileges.”

Alexander scoffed. “I’d hope so. God knows the job needs some upsides.”

“Alexander,” James cut in. “I can grant clearance to specific individuals.”

“Wait, what?” Alexander asked. “You—you mean if JQ had just—”

“JQ was… unaware.”


“It’s what he’d want,” James echoed Alexander’s earlier words quietly.

If the hallway was depressingly quiet, then the waiting room was manic.

Secret Service swarmed, staffers and aids shuffled papers and muttered to each other, their words little more than a buzz in Alexander’s ears. Nurses crisscrossed the room seemingly randomly, every TV in the room was turned to a different news channel. Martha was on the phone with her daughter, James and JQ were talking to a doctor in the corner, and Alexander…

Alexander was trying to keep his head above water.

Thomas had been moved into his second surgery just after he’d been allowed in the room. Since then, there’d been no updates.

“Sir?” someone said. “Mr. President-Elect?”

The room fell silent.

“Yes?” JQ snapped, breaking the sudden tension in the room.

“The French Ambassador is outside. He says—”

“Tell him we’re sorry, but now is really not the time,” JQ interrupted. “He can take his questions to —”

“It’s Lafayette,” Alexander cut in, drawing everyone’s eyes to him. “He’s a friend.”

“Be that as it may, Hamilton, he can’t just—”

“I’ll vouch for him,” Alexander promised. “No… sensitive information”—he spat the phrase—”will get out.”

JQ quirked an eyebrow. “And who will vouch for you, Hamilton?” he retorted. “Who watches the watchers?”

Alexander clenched his hands into fists. “I wouldn’t betray Thomas’ trust,” he insisted. “I wouldn’t.”

“Leave it, Quincy,” James unexpectedly spoke up in support of Alexander. “It’s a futile argument. Let the Marquis de Lafayette in.”
JQ narrowed his eyes. “Madison, you may be the effective VP-Elect, but don't forget that Thomas —”

“Needs all the support he can get,” cut in a voice in a distinctive French accent. Lafayette raised an eyebrow at the three men as he entered. “And I'm his friend.”

JQ crossed his arms. “How did you—”

“That is for me to know and for you to never discover, oui? Do not worry, Adams, it is not a flaw in your security that anyone else could take advantage of.”

“One unlawful entry is one too many,” JQ grumbled.

Lafayette seemed completely unbothered, taking the seat next to Alexander

“How is he?” he asked quietly.


“Alo…”

“That's literally all I know,” Alexander said helplessly, running a hand across his face.

“That’s it?” Lafayette couldn’t keep the incredulity from his voice.

Alexander nodded. “We aren’t together in the legal sense, so technically, I have no right to see him,” he muttered bitterly.

Lafayette sighed. “This whole—This is… a mess.”

“Oh yeah? What gave you that impression?” Alexander snapped.

“Do not get short with me, Alexander,” Lafayette retorted. “I am not the enemy here.”

Alexander let out an unsteady breath. “I know. Trust me, I know. I’m just…”

“Frustrated?” Lafayette supplied when it became clear that Alexander wouldn’t continue.

“Yeah.”

They were silent for a moment.

“And the worst thing is,” Alexander finally went on, “the worst thing is that the last thing I said to Thomas was something like ‘fuck off, asshole’.”

Lafayette whistled lowly. “That is… not ideal,” he agreed.

“This whole thing is about as far from ideal as possible,” Alexander pointed out gruffly.

“Non, that is not true,” Lafayette corrected. “Your dear Thomas is still alive, is he not? Don’t be so down on yourself, little lion.”

Alexander wished he could take comfort in his friend’s words.

As it was, they rung hollow in his ears.
Someone leaked to the press that JQ had been given the title President-Elect.

Someone leaked that Thomas was at risk for paralysis.

Someone leaked the biggest fucking governmental secret in years.

No one knew what they were doing.

Someone leaked that, and what was going on in the waiting room now almost made Alexander long for the peace and quiet of the hallway an hour ago.

Not for the first time, Alexander wished he had something, anything, to do, that didn’t involve wanting to strangle this entire fucking administration.

As if replying to a prayer, one voice—one shriek—could, even in the midst of the chaos, suddenly loudly be heard above every other.

“I demand to see my son!” demanded an all too familiar voice behind the door leading to the reception.

Alexander’s eyes narrowed. That crow

The sheer gall, to come in and demand to see a son she had shunned just because he wasn't the way she had imagined for him to turn out, just because he loved the 'wrong' person, all because he was now important. How dare she just barge in and claim that she cared when she so obviously didn’t?!

That—that hag!

Alexander’s fingers twitched around an invisible throat.

Calm down, Hamilton, his rational part said. Take a deep breath. Remember what you told Thomas: You can’t be elected president with a homicide record.

They wouldn’t find out though, countered a small voice in the back of his head.

You can’t murder Thomas’ mother without him, the rational part pointed out.

Alexander sort of hated rationality.

“Ma’am, no one may see Secretary Jefferson—”

“He is the President-Elect, or have you all forgotten that in your mad scuffle—”

“Ma’am, please—”

“He is my so—”

“He’s about as much your son as that aide over there!” Alexander finally shouted, rising to his feet and blinding pointing to a corner where he was pretty sure someone was standing. “You don’t get to claim him as your son after abusing him—”

“I have done no such thing!”

“Really? You call him an abomination, claim he is a disgrace, just because—”

“Were it not for you, he wouldn’t be in this situation!” the witch screamed. “Had you—had you not
corrupted him, no one would have had any reason to shoot him—"

Alexander didn’t see red.

He didn’t see anything at all.

One moment, he was standing in front of his seat, his nails drawing blood as they dug into his palm. The next, he had the crone against the wall, his arms braced on either side of her head.

“Don’t you ever, ever, say that—that I would—that I somehow—”

“Alexander!” Lafayette shouted, appearing at Alexander’s side and sounding like he’d said it multiple times already. “Alexander, mon ami, please. Take a step back.”

“But—but she—”

“Yes, she did,” James said, appearing at Alexander’s other side. “But you can’t go around slamming elderly women into walls.”

“Do you even know—”

“Probably better than you do,” James interrupted, glaring at the she-devil still pressed against the wall. “Doesn’t make this any less inappropriate, Mr. Secretary.”

Alexander blinked twice and glanced around the room.

Everyone was staring.

Multiple people had their phones out.

Alexander could already see tomorrow’s headlines.

He staggered backward.

“There you go,” Lafayette murmured, taking him by the wall. “Have a seat, shall we? I think Mr. Madison is about to have a few words with his staff regarding the use of personal phones and other recording devices in secure areas.”

Alexander just nodded blindly as he sunk into his chair.

He could still feel the people’s stares on the back of his neck.

He could still feel Thomas missing by his side.

Chapter End Notes

DON’T KILL US JUST YET PLEASE

OR IF YOU DO AT LEAST LEAVE A COMMENT FIRST

(on another reading, it’s not Actually that long but it Felt horribly long whilst writing it. so.)
For Alexander, waking up in the morning, in a cold bed, the spot next to him chillingly empty, with no Thomas to curl up against or cling to, was like waking up from a nightmare and into another nightmare, except this one was even worse.

This couldn’t be happening.

It couldn’t. These things happened to other people.

Thomas couldn’t be in a hospital, hanging onto life by the merest of threads and the wonders of modern medicine and, it seemed, sheer fucking willpower because of course, he would. That was part of what Alexander loved about Thomas—his stubbornness, and his unwillingness to give up even in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds.

To think that Thomas would give up now, of all times…

No, the idea didn’t even bear considering.

Thomas had to endure, had to get through this. There was too much Alexander hadn’t told him—and too much that he had, that he wished he could take back.

Alexander sighed as he reached for his toothpaste, only to curse as half the tube spilled over onto his fingers.
Wonderful. Just fucking great.

Treasury Secretary Attacks First Mother

Hamilton Melts Down Amidst Assassination Crisis

Democrats Rocked By News of Party Leader’s Violent Tendencies

Unfit For Office? Hamilton’s Mental Stability Questioned In Wake Of Recent Outbursts

America was rocked this week by the attempted assassination of President-Elect Thomas Jefferson. Two days ago, the President-Elect was about to step out and make a speech in the chilly November, when his words were stopped by a lone shot through the back. Since then, America has held its breath, eagerly awaiting any and all news of the condition of its—hopefully—future president.

And yet, the story of the day is not about the radical group that had attempted to assassinate the 46th President of the United States, or even about the impact and precedent such a death, if anything, would create. No, dear readers, this morning, it was broken that Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton, and infamous Democrat boyfriend of President-Elect Jefferson, had had an altercation with Mrs. Jane Jefferson, the mother of the President-Elect.

Albeit physical in nature, the altercation itself did not result in any injuries, but the entire debacle has led everyone to ask: is Hamilton, a man so short-tempered, fit to be in a position of power? Many have speculated that President-Elect Jefferson would designate Hamilton as his national security advisor, a position which does not need the approval of Congress to fill. This lack of oversight had caused some unease among the American voters.

Recklessness, aggression, a lack of forethought—are these truly the traits of a man suited to advise the leader of the free world?

“Alexander,” Lafayette said as Alexander shut off his phone and leaned back against the chair. “Mon ami, look at me.”

Alexander ignored him as he stared down at his phone.

Three days.

That’s how long it’d been since he’d seen Thomas’ face, heard his voice. Three days where he stayed in that godforsaken waiting room until someone kicked him out, and returned the minute they’d let him back in.

Most people had taken to coming every six or so hours, almost like they’d all agreed on shifts or...
something.

Then again, most people weren’t waiting to see if they would ever speak to the love of their life again, and most people hadn’t tanked their whole career in a single action.

But Alexander?

Alexander had barely moved.

“Alexander Hamilton,” Lafayette snapped. “Look at me this instant.”

Alexander begrudgingly met Lafayette’s eyes.

“I swear, you have the temperament of a toddler,” Lafayette muttered before continuing. “You can’t hide in this waiting room forever.”

“You’re right,” Alexander agreed. “I’m only going to hide until Thomas wakes up.”

“Alexander…” Lafayette let his sentence trail off pointedly.

“What do you want me to do, Laf?” Alexander asked, trying to ignore the way the words caught in his throat. “Leave him? Go on acting like everything is peachy-keen while my—my—Thomas is lying half-dead in a hospital?!”

“Mon Dieu,” Lafayette finally murmured after a moment of silence.


“We’ve finally found the one thing that’ll keep you from working,” Lafayette replied, going for a smile.

It sounded like it should’ve been a joke, but there was no smile on his face—no laughter in his eyes, because...

Because it was true.

Alexander Hamilton, the man who never stopped, would put the world on hold for Thomas Jefferson.

“Fine,” Lafayette finally snapped. “Stay. I’ll have someone fetch you some fresh clothes and a bagel or something.”

“Thank you.” Alexander’s eyes didn’t stray from the door to Thomas’ room.

He didn’t even notice when Lafayette slipped out of the room.

“Mr. Hamilton—”

“But really, I feel like this is a discrimination of my rights as his spouse, albeit in an official sense. There’s physical—”

“Mr. Hamilton, if you would just let me—”

“—proof of our relationship right there out on the internet, which I should very much think should
serve as proof of my rights to see Thomas, and if you say—"

“May I say something?”

“—that it’s not, I can quote at least three other cases in which media activity has sufficed as proof of relationship and right to see spouse—”

“Alex, you’re repeating yourself.”

“—in which case I’m going to file a case for discrimination based on sexuality and hetero—”

“Alexander Hamilton, let the good doctor speak!” Lafayette barked, and acknowledged the grateful look the doctor shot him.

Alexander paused. “Sorry,” he said, looking not at all sorry.

The doctor cleared his throat. “As I was saying—or trying to—we have decided to allow you visitation right with Secretary Jefferson, so long as you fill out the necessary paperwork.”

“Wait, seriously?” Alexander asked, his eyes wide.

He caught a glimpse of James rubbing the bridge of his nose in exasperation in his peripheral vision.

“Yes, Alexander,” the man muttered. “God help us.”

“So I can see Thomas? Can I see him now? Can I be there when he wakes up?”

“You may see Secretary Jefferson after you have filled out the appropriate paperwork and spoken with his secret service team,” the doctor corrected. “And, no, you may not be there when he wakes up.”

“President-Elect Jefferson,” Alexander corrected him stubbornly. “Or don’t you think he’ll recover?”

“I’m not implying anything, Secretary Hamilton,” the doctor tried to backpedal, “I’m merely—”

“Really?” Alexander challenged. “Because it sure feels like it, when you’re using his former title.”

“Alexander…” James trailed off pointedly.

“Besides, it doesn’t seem to have occurred to you that Thomas might ask for me, his… significant other, when he wakes up from a three-day long coma,” Alexander pressed. “Which he most definitely will, so you might as well just cut out the middleman and let me be in the room.”

“Don’t push your luck, Alexander,” James hissed.

“Mr. Hamilton, it doesn’t seem to have occurred to you that we are already bending over backward to accommodate your requests, despite your lack of authority in this situation,” the doctor snapped. “In layman’s terms, just sign the damn paperwork.”

“But—”

“Mr. Hamilton.”

Lafayette groaned. “I am watching a train crash,” he complained.

“Train wreck,” James absentmindedly corrected, his voice equally horrified. “If this was BuzzFeed,
it’d be an article along the lines of *Annoying Man Gets His Way Again.*”

“*Oui. It is, how to say, educational.*”

Alexander crossed his arms as he tried to glare down the doctor, before finally throwing up his arms into the air. “*Fine! Just give me a pen! I’ll do it, if it’s so important!***”

“*And with that,**” James murmured, “*we have a response to what happens when an unstoppable force meets an immovable object. Now we just have to figure out which one’s Alexander.*”

“*It’s almost entertaining,**” Lafayette agreed.

Still, neither of the men could bring themselves to smile.

---

“*Mr. Hamilton, a word?***” the doctor said as he entered the relatively empty waiting room.

Even the President-Elect became old news sooner or later, Alexander thought bitterly.

“*Yes?***” Alexander replied, standing up and wiping the cracker crumbs off his (very wrinkled) khakis.

“*Is Thomas okay? Will he be waking up soon? Is he awake now?***”

“Mr. Jefferson is currently stable, and we will be taking him off the medication that is currently keeping him comatose, but we feel as if there are things you should know about his condition,” the doctor explained.

Alexander had never before been so elated and terrified in his life.

“What? What about his condition? Is… he’s not, like… well…”

Alexander didn’t know how to ask it without sounding like the biggest dick this side of hell.

*He’s not mentally impaired, right?*

God, he was the worst.

“Mr. Jefferson has sustained major damages to his spinal cord—”

“Yeah, I’ve heard. Possible lower-body paralysis—”

“*Definite* limitation of gross and fine motor skills from the waist down, for an extended period of time, possibly permanently,” the doctor interrupted.

Alexander felt his jaw drop. “*He… what?***”

“Right now, the best-case scenario we’re looking at is that he’s able to walk with assistance, like a cane, but even then, he wouldn’t be able to travel long distances without a wheelchair—”

“But he’ll be okay? He can still—he can still do everything *important,* right? FDR was in a wheelchair, and he’s arguably one of the best presidents in American history—”

“He should be able to perform most of his presidential duties—”

“Okay then,” Alexander interrupted. “Okay then. Good. That’s—that’s what I wanted to hear. When should he be waking up?”
“It’s not as simple as that. Waking up from a medically induced coma is like turning on the lights using a dimmer. It could take days,” the doctor said. “And, you haven’t been granted access to the President-Elect until he’s fully regained consciousness.”

Alexander glared at him. “Sure,” he countered. “Because when the President-Elect asks to see his significant other, you’re going to tell him ‘no’, right? That’s going to go over great with Thomas. Just let me get my camera and you can get right to it, yes?”

“Mr. Hamilton—”

“This has been a great chat, doc. Thanks,” Alexander snapped, before turning on his heel and returning to his seat.

He fleetingly thought that at least Thomas would now have a valid reason to walk with a cane. He’d probably revel in that, the show-off.

“Secretary Hamilton, a comment?”

Alexander almost recognized the journalist. She was part of the press corps, sure, but she wasn’t one of the ones everyone knew about. She’d probably cornered Alexander in an attempt to become one of the ones everyone knew about. God knew it was hard enough to make it in the business these days.

Or maybe she was just a journalist trying to do her job and inform the American public about the goings-on of their public servants and Alexander is a cynic. Who knew.

“Not today, sorry,” Alexander replied, hands still in the pockets of his coat as he made his way up the hospital steps.

Thomas had been almost conscious yesterday. Not awake, but getting there. He mumbled something, according to James, but no one could make much of it out. Apparently, it started with an A.

Alexander was really trying not to get his hopes up.

“Mr. Hamilton, really, I insist. The American people want to know—”

“I’m really sorry, but right now, I really don’t care about what the American people want to know,” Alexander gritted out between clenched teeth. “Now, if you’d excuse me—”

“You have repeatedly spoken in support of victims of assault, and in support of the free press, and yet in the past week your actions—”

“My actions?” Alexander hissed. “In the past week, my…”

Boyfriend.

It still sounded too little. Too insignificant.

“Thomas was shot,” Alexander continued. “Just—Just try pretending you have a shred of empathy
or-or compassion, and imagine something like this happening to you. He is—he’s my—If this had happened to anyone else, you wouldn’t—”

Alexander took a deep breath, doing his best not to scream.

“So, no. No, I don’t have a comment or a tagline or anything. I have a comatose significant other whom I’d like to get back to, if you don’t fucking mind,” he finished.

He didn’t notice the journalist press stop on the recorder on her phone.

“Alexander,” James said as he all but marched into the waiting. “Are you capable of doing anything but making every situation you’re in worse?”

“I can also write a killer tax plan,” Alexander deadpanned. “But I am curious, what’d I do this time?”

James narrowed his eyes and shoved a phone into Alexander’s hands.

*New Recording Shows The True Instability Of The Treasury Secretary!*

Well, shit.

“I’m going to skin her,” Alexander muttered under his breath.

“Alexander…” James trailed off, a note of warning in his voice.

“So this is… not great,” Alexander admitted, “but why does it bother you? I’m not a part of Thomas’ administration. I’m not a part of your—no offense but full offense—trash fire of a party. Shouldn’t you be happy if I tank myself?”

James blinked at him.

“One, shouldn’t you care if you ‘tank’ yourself? Two, you’re practically married to the leader of our party. Your actions reflect upon Thomas, and the last thing he needs is bad press. The last thing any of us needs is bad press,” James said slowly. He narrowed his eyes and leaned closer to Alexander. “Are you sure you’re alright? I mean, you’ve made a lot of stupid decisions, but usually when something threatens your work you’re more, well, Hamiltonian about it.”

“By that logic, you guys still will since I’m more closely affiliated with myself than what you guys are,” Alexander argued.

James rubbed the bridge of his nose. “That’s not how it works,” he replied slowly, as if going to painstaking lengths to explain a convoluted problem to a toddler. “We’re the ones in power, so it doesn’t matter how ‘closely affiliated’ you are with yourself, and do you have any idea how stupid that sounds?” James shook his head. “On second thoughts, you probably do, and that’s why you’ve said that. My point is, it’s not your credibility that’s on the line. Your supporters already think you a crackhead, just a competent one; no, it’s Thomas that this reflects badly on.”

Alexander crossed his arms. “I still fail to see the problem,” he muttered.

“You can’t just—You—” James stopped and looked at Alexander. “I’m going to assign you a
bodyguard,” he finally told him.

“I can take care of myself just fine!” Alexander protested. “I don’t need some glorified babysitter!”

“Clearly, you do,” James countered, “since you have the impulse control of a cranky toddler.”

James could practically see the moment that Alexander’s infamously thin self-control shattered into a million tiny, tiny pieces.

“Oh, so you think a toddler could accomplish everything I have, huh? Because, you know, there’s a reason my supporters think I’m a competent crackhead,” he retorted heatedly. “You think it’s easy to climb out of crippling poverty and make a name for yourself despite everything life throws at you, despite losing both of your parents by age twelve, despite seeing your cousin kill himself at thirteen, despite seeing your whole town flattened by a hurricane and offered no relief? Despite everyone you meet kicking you to the curb because of course, you’re not worthy of people’s attention, nevertheless their respect! Because you’re not like them, no, you’re the dirt on their shoes, you’re the kind of person they want to be able to point at when they’re feeling miserable and say, ‘Well, at least I am not him,’ with that aristocratic sneer of theirs—of yours—that I’ve seen on your face too many times than I care to count! What do you have to say to that, Mr. Entitlement-Personified?”

“I’d say,” James said slowly, once it became apparent that Alexander wasn’t going to continue, “that I owe all the toddlers of the world an apology.”

At that moment, his phone chimed, and James read the message with a frown before glaring at Alexander, who was looking at him expectantly. “And now,” James continued, carefully tucking the phone back into his pocket, “it seems I must go and clean up the baby’s mess. See you later, Alexander.”

He stalked out of the waiting room.

Leaving Alexander alone.

Again.

Chapter End Notes

i dunno if this makes Any Sense but! i hope you enjoyed! shout at us!
In Which Thomas Wakes Up From His Longest Nap Ever

Chapter by Sanna_Black_Slytherin

Chapter Summary

Nurse: "Sir, you’ve been in a coma for a week."

Thomas: "Wow, I can’t wait to see my flourishing and organised presidential administration and happy and stable boyfriend!"

Chapter Notes

We're sorry for the late post date... :(  

I'd like to begin by saying that we're really grateful to have such amazing and dedicated and kind readers, and we're thankful for all the support that you keep on giving us! We really couldn't have done even half of this without you :)  

Now, for the sadder (more sad?) news: We're not going to be able to post a regular chapter next week due to a) Real Life, b) theatre, c) school, d) camp, and e) blueberry pies, so we're going to focus our efforts on making the chapter you get in two weeks to be extra awesome. Something to look forward to!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

There was noise all around him.

That was the first thing he noticed.

Noise everywhere. Overwhelming noise. He couldn't focus, couldn't pinpoint what it was that made the noise, or even where the source was.

Why was there an insistent beeping sound? There was he? What was going on? The last thing he remembered was…

He wasn't sure.

He groaned quietly, wishing for it all to just stop because it was too loud loud loud.

The noise stopped immediately.

Everything was blurry and out of focus. Every sound was muffled and distorted. The whole world seemed to be swimming.

Everything was too bright.

The haze was too thick.
He couldn’t think.

Why couldn't he remember?

“Mr. Hamilton?” a nurse said, peering into the waiting room. “The, uh, the President-Elect would like to see you.”

Alexander about face planted in his scrabbled attempt to stand up. “Thomas? He asked for me?”

“Yes, sir.”

“And I can go see him? Now?” Alexander asked quickly.

He’d been waiting for this since they’d announced that Thomas was mostly conscious. Borderline coherent. Whatever.

James and JQ had gone into Thomas’ room about forty-five minutes ago, and Alexander had been counting the seconds ever since.

“You’ve got thirty minutes, and then the President-Elect will need quiet so he can rest,” the nurse replied.

Alexander swore he’d never moved so quickly.

The corridors passed by in a blur. Had he later been asked to recall where he had passed, he wouldn’t have been able to recount it if his life depended on it.

Finally, he stopped at the door to Thomas’ room. His hand curled around the knob before he even had time to think.

“How is he?” Alexander asked as he entered the room, doing his best to keep his voice low. Contrary to popular belief, he did have a concept of what was the appropriate volume for most situations.

He just didn’t act on it, most of the time.

But for Thomas? If that was what it took to get Thomas back?

Alexander would never speak again.

(Well, maybe not never again, but definitely dramatically less.)

(If the situation was absolutely dire.)

“How is he?” James replied quietly.

Alexander’s eyes were glued on Thomas’ still form. It was the first time he’d seen Thomas since he’d left the morning of the rally.

God, he looked so…

Frail.

If there was one thing Thomas Jefferson should never be, it was frail.
He was pale and thin, thinner than Alexander had ever seen him. His normally meticulously trimmed beard was shaggy, his hair was flat and messy. He seemed completely devoid of energy.

It was so wrong.

“I thought he was awake?” Alexander whispered without taking his eyes off Thomas. Thomas definitely did not look awake. His eyes were closed and he was so, so still.

“He was,” James replied. “He woke up just long enough to complain about the noise and ask where you were before falling back asleep.”

Alexander couldn’t help but scoff. “Sounds about right,” he muttered, carefully sitting down in the seat next to Thomas’ bed.

James gave him a knowing look. “You’re going to stay here until the nurses kick you out, don’t you?”

It was a rhetorical question, so Alexander didn’t bother answering it.

“Any idea of when he’ll wake up again?” he asked instead.

“No.”

“You know,” JQ said casually, edging towards the door, “I think I’m going to get a coffee.”

It was a transparent gesture. He was the acting President-Elect. He could have had seventeen different aides each get him a different coffee from a different coffee house.

Alexander appreciated it anyway.

“In some ways, this is even worse than the waiting room,” James murmured, taking the other seat.

Alexander nodded in agreement. “At least then we didn’t have to…”

See it.

It was an awful thing to say—to think, even—but it was true.

Out there, they were able to think of Thomas as what Thomas was. Cocky, arrogant, charming, charismatic, energetic, passionate, alive.

But in the room with him, there was no denying just how hurt he was.

It was almost disturbing.

“He’ll be alright,” Alexander said resolutely. “He’ll bounce back from this. In three weeks he’ll be swaggering around in some horrifically bright suit and twirling his cane like it’s a fucking baton. He’ll be fine.” He sounded as though he was trying to convince himself as well as James.

James nodded, and let the silence fill the space between them.

The next time Thomas woke up, the world was no longer simply a blob of too-bright lights and too-loud noises. He could actually make out a white hospital room—dark and quiet and empty, save from two figures in the chairs next to Thomas’ bed.
James was asleep in his chair, his head tipped back against the wall, and Alexander…

Alexander was flipping through something on his phone, the blue light on his face highlighting the bags under his eyes, the way they were red-rimmed, the scraggily, scruffy, unkempt and overgrown “goatee” (if it could even be called that at this point) on his face.

He obviously hadn’t noticed Thomas was awake.

“I get shot once, and you end up looking like a homeless forest hermit,” Thomas mumbled, wincing at the hoarseness in his voice.

“Thomas!” Alexander said, his head jerking up so quickly that Thomas had to wince in sympathy.

“Alexander,” Thomas replied with a grin. “Good to see you didn’t burn our country to the ground in my absence.”

Alexander smiled and moved to sit on the end of Thomas’ bed. “You know, I’m so happy you’re awake, I’m not even going to argue.”

“Maybe I should get shot more often then,” Thomas quipped.

The reaction was immediate.

“Are you fucking kidding me?” Alexander asked, narrowing his eyes. “I’ve been worried sick!” he went on. “Honestly, you were shot and I wasn’t there and what was I supposed to think? I wasn’t told anything at first and had no way of knowing if you were even alive, because officially, we’re not in a legally binding relationship, so I’d love it if we could get married because I’m not going through this shit again and I really wouldn’t want you to have to go through it if our situations were reversed, and I had to go through James and fucking JQ to get access to him—JQ! Do you realize how humiliating it had been?!—and—”

Thomas had been content to let Alexander’s rant wash over him, but one word in particular registered in his mind. “James?” he echoed.

Alexander furrowed his brows. “Yeah. James Madison. You know, your best friend? The one asleep right there?” He phrased it like a question, before his face took on a concerned look. “Oh God, tell me you’re not having memory problems. What do you remember? You do know who James is, right? Do you know who I am?”

“I would hardly have let some random stranger talk my ear off,” Thomas couldn’t help but snap. He regretted it instantly when Alexander looked hurt at his reaction. “Sorry; that was uncalled for. I do remember everything, or at least I think I do. I was just… surprised, I guess, that you referred to James by his first name. The last time I saw either of you, you were at each other’s throats.”

Alexander looked down at the bed. He had subconsciously wrapped his fingers around the white sheets.

“I guess that there are some experiences you can't share without ending up liking each other,” he murmured.

Thomas stared at Alexander for a long moment. “You know,” he eventually said, his voice a complete deadpan, “only you could propose and in the same sentence quote Harry Potter at me.”

“Would you even call that a proposal?” Alexander shot back.
Thomas inclined his head. “You asked me to marry you, so yes.”

“Yes, as in, you’ll marry me?”

“Yes, it was a proposal.”

“Oh.”

It felt like a massive bubble Alexander had been holding in his chest had popped—no, ‘popped’ wasn’t the right word, as it implied enthusiasm or excitement at the news. No, it was more like a balloon had been deflated slowly and anticlimactically, in a way that completely and entirely unsatisfying and disappointing.

“Alexander—”

“No, it’s fine,” Alexander insisted, unable to meet Thomas’ eyes as he scratched at his beard. “I get it, really. You—”

“Alexander. Are you going to actually listen to me, or just assume you know what I’m going to say?” Thomas cut in, one eyebrow perfectly raised.

Alexander’s mouth shut with an audible click.

“Now,” Thomas continued, “yes, that was a proposal, but also, yes, I do want to marry you.”

Alexander’s eye grew so wide Thomas was almost certain they took up half his face.

“Wha—you—you mean—you’ll—seriously?” he stammered.

“What do you mean ‘seriously’? I wouldn’t have said yes if I wasn’t serious.” Thomas barely stopped himself from rolling his eyes.

Alexander stuck out his tongue. “Well, excuse me if I’m a bit shocked that Thomas Jefferson said yes to a proposal that was anything less than twelve-dozen roses, a string quartet, and a candlelight dinner at the top of the actual Eiffel Tower.”

Thomas secretly thought that not even all the lights in Paris could outshine the grin on his stupid, insufferable fiance’s face.

He said none of that out loud, of course.

“Well, I wouldn’t be opposed to any of that.”

“Too late!” Alexander argued. “You already said yes! No takesie-backsies!”

“Takesie-what now? I thought I was the one that’s supposed to be only half-coherent.”

“Maybe you are. You’re the one who agreed to marry me.”

Thomas closed his eyes with a groan. “Sweet Jesus.”

For a moment, they simply sat there, taking in the sight of each other. Thomas’ eyebrows furrowed when he noticed the dark circles under Alexander’s eyes, indicative of several missed night of sleep. His hair was even messier than usual, which was an achievement in itself, and his eyes held a haunted look that was halfway between crazy and desperate, though it seemed to be hidden behind a veneer of calm for now. His fingers kept twitching, the way they did when Alexander was running
on too much caffeine and approximately zero sleep.

The sight surprised Thomas not at all.

“So, what’d I miss during my beauty sleep?” Thomas asked. He tried for a joking tone, but judging by Alexander’s quirked eyebrow, he had overshot by a mile.

“That’s not funny.” Alexander told Thomas sternly. “I didn’t even know if you’d survive, let alone wake up, and then you do, but you keep making these jokes, and they’re so tasteless, and I’m struggling not to throttle you right here and now, because—”

“Because you can’t be president with a homicide record,” Thomas quipped.

Alexander rolled his eyes in exasperation, but he couldn’t help but crack a smile at the plebeian joke.

“We’ve been over this so many times, Thomas,” he reminded his boyfriend.

“And yet you still find it funny.” Thomas parried effortlessly, before he grew serious once again. “And you’re avoiding the question. What did I miss?”

Alexander shifted. His eyes focused on a spot on the wall just over Thomas’ head. “Well, you know, the usual…” He trailed off meaningfully.

“Alexander.” Thomas’ voice was warning.

Alexander swallowed. “Okay, so I may or may not have done a few things…”

Thomas let out a huffed sigh. Why was it that he had almost come to expect these things?

Oh, right. He has known Alexander for longer than five minutes, that was why.

“Hamilton, what did you do?”

“I mean, it technically wasn’t my fault—okay, fine, technically technically, it was, but it really wasn’t, because that reporter kept asking and nagging and I wasn’t in the best mindset”—when was he ever?—“and I really don’t see what the whole fuss is about, either, as it should only reflect badly on myself, not on—”

“Alexander!” Thomas had to raise his voice to get his boyfriend to stop talking and just listen to him, but the effort left him gasping after air.

For one terrifying moment, he thought that he wouldn’t be able to catch his breath, and that this was it—he was going to die because Alexander Hamilton couldn’t stop talking—there was a certain symbolism in it—but the moment passed, and he could breathe again.

Was this how Jemmy felt all the time? Thomas’ respect for his best friend reached a new level.

For a moment, Thomas thought Alexander was going to say something—probably to ask if he needed water or pillows or for him to fight a nurse—but, wonder of wonders, he didn’t. Thomas wasn’t sure how to feel about that.

Thomas took a deep breath. “What on earth did you do?”

Alexander bit his lower lip as he glanced down at the sheets, still not meeting Thomas’ eyes, damnit. “So I’m going to remind you that you are hooked up to about twelve IVs and a heart monitor that alerts the doctor every time it spikes, so please try and do your best not to strangle me, okay babe?”
“That is… the opposite of reassuring,” Thomas muttered under his breath. “I’m going to ask one last time, and I expect an answer: What did you do?”

“Your mother showed up on that first day,” Alexander mumbled, scratching the back of his neck. Thomas’ posture straightened subconsciously.

“I may have shoved her against a wall,” Alexander continued, rushing his words so quickly that, to Thomas, it felt like he was spitting words, spit and crumbled sentences and all.

“Excuse me?”

“I… Look, it was a really fucking bad day, okay?” Alexander snapped. “I had just spent eight hours in a goddamn hallway, getting all my updates from John fucking Quincy Adams, the Massachusetts equivalent of that useless paperclip from Word, and then I was finally in the waiting room, and she just burst in, demanding to see you like she has any right to claim she loves you or… something, and I just… I couldn’t. I couldn’t handle it.”

“So you shoved my mother against the wall?!” Thomas couldn’t believe his ears. Whatever he had expected when Alexander had become so shifty and very obviously hiding something, this wasn’t it. No, this was so much worse.

Fuck, Hamilton.

Why?

“To be completely fair, I’m pretty sure James would’ve done it if I hadn’t,” Alexander continued, oblivious to Thomas’ internal monologue. “So, in a way, you should thank me; I saved your best friend from a scandal—and probably a few broken bones, given his state of perpetual illness.”

Thomas closed his eyes in resignation. “Alexander, however you’re trying to spin it, this isn’t a good thing. It’s very, very much not a good thing.”

“Well, what would you have me do?” Alexander shrugged helplessly.

“I don’t know, maybe exercise some minimum modicum of self-control?!” Thomas burst out.

“Well I didn’t hit her, so I’d say that was the modicum of self-control I used,” Alexander pointed out before continuing. “So then someone must have leaked it to the press, because there was an article about it. Something about how I was quite clearly ‘insane’ and ‘dubiously qualified to be associated with the president in any capacity’. “ Alexander made air quotes.

Thomas blanched. “And…?”

“And nothing,” Alexander shot back, but the shifty look on his face didn’t disappear. “Why would you expect there to be more?”

“Because you’re you,” Thomas said simply. “Causing a scandal is what you do. It’s at least sixty percent of your primary purposes. Actually, I’m half convinced that’s why Washington hired you. In comparison, you make everyone else seem like a rational, reasonable adult.”

“Or maybe he needed someone with actually sound policy ideas to balance you out,” Alexander shot back.

Thomas shook his head. “I’m not getting into that fight. Not right now. You tell me what else you’ve
done, and then I’ve got an administration to fix, since *a certain significant other* has torched it during my absence.”

“You mean since a certain *fiance* torched it during your absence,” Alexander reminded him, that stupidly wide smiling reappearing on his face.

Try as he might, Thomas couldn’t find it within himself to regret a single thing that led up to that moment.

Except, perhaps, for the ‘getting shot’ part.

That, he could have done without.

Chapter End Notes

I present to you, alexander "what do you mean you can't propose to someone in an insult" hamilton

Comments are like cookies—you can never give us too many!
Chapter Summary

What the title says. That's it, that's the chapter, guys. (Also, politics. And wedding planning fluff. But mostly Thomas being Bitter™.)

Chapter Notes

So. We're back. Again. Studies kind of get in the way of writing.

A shout-out to Gabe, for writing well over half of this. You're amazing, love <3

“Mr. President-Elect, you are not well enough to move,” the nurse insisted for what had to be the two-hundredth time. Thomas closed his eyes and sighed, doing his best not to scream.

God, this was ridiculous.

Was this how Alexander had felt after his hospital stay?

Useless?

Infantilised?

Thomas almost understood his constant frustration.

“Well I can’t very well just sit here—”

“Actually, you can,” James interrupted dryly, turning the page of the packet of... something he was reading.

Technically, JQ was still the President-Elect, which—don’t even get Thomas started on that. He was fine, mentally. He could do his duty—that the American people chose him to do, mind. The only upside of the whole thing James being the technical VP-Elect. Instead of having to preside of the House (how James did that, Thomas would never understand; it seemed like he was corralling 435 bitchy cats most of the time) he got to be here, with Thomas.

Actually, he was supposed to be with JQ at their headquarters, but...

Formalities.

“James—”

“Thomas, I swear to God, you’re a worse patient than Alexander,” James said.

Thomas scoffed. “I promise you, I’m not.”
James mumbled something that sounded strangely like “likely story”.

“He tried to sneak back into the White House no less than four times.”

“You just tried to climb out of your hospital bed whilst literally being connected to three IVs and a heart monitor.”

“Those… aren’t comparable at all,” Thomas argued.

It sounded weak, even to his own ears.

James scoffed. “You’ve been dating the man for over a year; he was bound to rub off on you somehow,” he muttered. “Better this than your politics.”

“Actually,” Thomas said, clearing his throat. “We’re, uh, engaged.”

He was expecting some sort of reaction. Maybe James dropping his papers, maybe him demanding to know when, where, how it happened, maybe him asking to see the ring (probably not that last one, honestly, but something).

Instead, James just nodded. “Congratulations. Text me when the tux fitting is; I’m afraid none of mine will fit your colour scheme.”

“I—Okay.”

“The first presidential wedding in over a hundred years, and it’s going to be between two queer men of colour,” James muttered. “Our nation’s founders will be rolling in their graves.”

“Is that a bad thing?” Thomas asked.

“In this respect?” James replied. “Hardly.”

“I hope you know that you’re my best man,” Thomas said simply, leaning back against the pillows.

“I’d be offended if I wasn’t, to be perfectly honest.”

“It’ll probably be you, Gil, Randy, and whoever I have to have for political reasons,” Thomas continued.

He’d found himself thinking about it almost obsessively since Alexander had proposed.

Their wedding.

Because they were getting married.

God, Thomas felt like a middle school girl, dwelling over colour palettes and menus and bridal parties, but he couldn’t help it.

He was getting married. To Alexander. There would be a wedding. Wedding pictures. A wedding cake. A first dance. RIng.

Thomas had to physically stop himself from swooning over the idea.

When the hell had this happened?

When had he become such a romantic sap?
“By my count?” James replied—shit, had Thomas said all of that out loud? Maybe the drugs were doing more than he previously thought. “About a year and a half. I’m so glad you finally noticed.”

Thomas rolled his eyes. “Are you sure I can’t even look at whatever it is you’re—”

“No.”

“But—”

“No.”

Alexander,” Thomas said evenly as Alexander entered his hospital room.

“Yes, sweetheart?”

“It seems there are a few things you forgot to tell me about while I was… out,” Thomas continued, trying his best not to snap.

He actually had self control.

Unlike, apparently, his fucking fiancé.

“Oh?” Alexander asked, taking his now customary spot on the end of Thomas’ bed.

“Yes,” Thomas all but growled, throwing his phone at Alexander. “‘New Recording Shows the True Instability of Treasury Secretary’? Are you fucking kidding me?”


“Yes, that! My God, Alexander! You’re not stupid, so what the hell is your explanation for this?!” Thomas hissed, gesturing to the phone.

“Have you actually listened to the recording?” Alexander asked, staring down at the phone, his bottom lip between his teeth.

“I didn’t think that was really necessary,” Thomas admitted coldly. “I can imagine what was said. You can’t—you can’t threaten the press! I shouldn’t have to tell you this!”

“Listen to it!” Alexander replied, his voice rising. “You can’t scold me like this if you haven’t even listened to it!”

“I’m sorry if I don’t want to listen to you tanking your own career!”

Alexander’s face was screwed up in a sneer as he opened his mouth and then closed it.

And hit play.

“Mr. Hamilton, really, I insist. The American people want to know—”

“I’m really sorry, but right now, I really don’t care about what the American people want to know. Now, if you’d excuse me—”

“You have repeatedly spoken in support of victims of assault, and in support of the free press, and
yet in the past week your actions—”

“My actions? In the past week, my… Thomas was shot. Just—Just try pretending you have a shred of empathy or—or compassion, and imagine something like this happening to you. He is—he’s my—If this had happened to anyone else, you wouldn’t—So, no. No, I don’t have a comment or a tagline or anything. I have a comatose significant other whom I’d like to get back to, if you don’t fucking mind.”

“So,” Alexander said dryly. “Anything else you’d like to yell at me for while I’m here?”

“Alexander—”

“What, Thomas? What do you want me to say? That I regret it? Because we both know I don’t—”

“Thank you,” Thomas finally cut in. “For… caring.”


“No,” Thomas corrected, “But maybe they didn’t think you did. And you proved them otherwise.”

“Obviously I care about you! I—I don’t know if anyone’s noticed, but I’m in love with you, dipshit. Caring is like… It’s the whole thing,” Alexander argued. “How could people not think I care?”

“Well, you do have a pretty extensive history of calling me an asshole and saying you’d meet me in hell,” Thomas reminded him.

“Out of love!”

“You’re ridiculous.”

“Speak for yourself, you arrogant piece of fushia velvet.”

“See—this right here? This is why people wonder.”

“I guess people are just too stupid to recognise loving banter,” Alexander said with a shrug.

“This is why people think you’re elitist,” Thomas pointed out.

The look on Alexander’s face was pure indignation.

“I’m elitist?” he asked. “Sorry, Mr. Let’s-Go-Visit-My-Family’s-Summer-Manor!”

“You said you liked Monticello!”

“Me liking it doesn’t make it any less your family’s summer manor,” Alexander pointed out. "Summer manor. Summer manor.”

“So you do like it?” Thomas asked.

“Yes, but that’s not the point—”

“Good, because I was thinking we could get married there,” Thomas said over whatever other nonsense was pouring out of Alexander’s mouth (he loved him, he really did, but if he listened to
more than 75% of what Alexander said he’d go absolutely batshit crazy).

Alexander’s tirade slowly petered out. “Huh?”

“I thought we could have the wedding at Monticello,” Thomas repeated slowly, as though talking to a particularly slow toddler.

“Giving yourself a bit of a home field advantage there, huh?” Alexander asked.

“Yes, well, we can hardly get married in the undergraduate dorms at Columbia, now can we?” Thomas replied, rolling his eyes. “I mean, I suppose we could get married in Nevis, but seeing as I’ll be the president, I thought we should probably set the venue in the United States.”

“Yeah, probably,” Alexander muttered, looking down at his hands.

Thomas would be worried about the posture if he couldn’t see the massive, dorky grin Alexander was failing to hide.

“What is it?” he finally gave in to his curiosity.

“Nothing!” Alexander insisted quickly. “I just—I keep remembering that this is happening. We’re getting married. You’re going to be Thomas Hamilton—”


“It does not!” Alexander protested. “Better than Alexander Jefferson. Do you even know how pretentious that sounds?”

“Not anymore pretentious that your current name. Seven syllables, Alexander. Seven. It takes almost as long to say your name as it does to say the opening of the Pledge of Allegiance!”

“Changing my last name to yours wouldn’t make it any shorter! It would actually make it longer. Besides, I don’t want to besmirch my image by tacking your last name on to all my policies—”

“Update, genius! You’re marrying me! You’ve already besmirched yourself!” Thomas pointed out, throwing his hands in the air.

“Well there’s no reason to make it worse, and besides, I proposed, so it would make sense that you’d take on my—”

“This is ridiculous,” Thomas snapped. “We’ll just… keep our last names, at least until we’re both out of office, and then we’ll hyphenate. Alright?”

“Fine,” Alexander agreed. “Fine. And we’re still not getting a joint bank account.”

Thomas scoffed. “You’d spend all my money on coffee and ink cartridges.”

“You’d spend all mine on stupid pink velvet suits like you’re goddamn Louis XIV,” Alexander retorted.

“It’s not pink, it’s fuschia—”

“That’s even worse!” Alexander exclaimed, and Thomas leaned back against his pillow, feeling better than he had in a long time.
Thomas was halfway through Milton’s *Paradise Lost*—a little light reading that Thomas had nagged James about until the other man acquiesced—when there was a loud crash. Thomas started at the interruption, and fought to stifle a groan once he discovered that the source of the disruption was his very own boyfriend, who looked like he was trying to carry four thick tomes of what looked like 15th century Spanish laws, judging by the state of the books.

“What”—Thomas’ voice was perfectly deadpan—”do you think you’re doing?”

Alexander opened his mouth. “I’m going to look up—"

That was as far as he got before he was interrupted by his long-suffering boyfriend, who continued, “Obscure laws that aren’t going to help our current situation?” At Alexander’s surprised look, Thomas let out a snort. “I know you, you massive dork.”

“There’s this thing called setting a precedent,” Alexander retorted hotly, “and you have absolutely no room to call me a dork, seeing as how you’ve memorized the entire *Principia Mathematica*.”

“That’s because it’s a good book,” Thomas defended himself. “I’d even argue that it’s the most important science book in post-antique history, since it lays the foundations and principles on which all modern sciences are built.”


“Well, I don’t know,” Thomas said slowly. “Theodore Roosevelt was special himself…”

“Don’t even start,” Thomas cut him off. “Now sit down and relax for a hot sec. You look just about ready to collapse.”

“I can’t relax,” Alexander protested, “not while everything’s going to hell in a basket, especially one of my own making!”

Thomas raised a surprised eyebrow. “Oh, so you do acknowledge that you fucked up?” he asked, nonplussed.

“I didn’t ‘fuck up’,” Alexander retorted heatedly, before visibly calming himself. “But… I do admit that I could have handled certain things a little better.”

“In other words, you fucked up.” Thomas snickered.

Alexander’s only response was to pout.

Thomas wordlessly patted the spot next to him on the bed. “Come join me.”

“Sister Edelina will have my hide,” Alexander protested weakly, even as he jointed Alexander on the couch, his complaints falling on deaf ears.

Thomas quirked an eyebrow. “And since when do you care?” he shot back.

“Since now.”

“Yeah, right. You’re impossible.”

“Pot, meet—”
“I’m nowhere near that bad.”

“No, you’re worse.”

Thomas rolled his eyes. “Why did I agree to marry you again?”

It was a rhetorical question, but Alexander answered anyway.

“Because you love me.”

“Incorrigible is what you are.”

“Why, thank you. That might be the kindest thing you’ve ever said to me.”

“Incorrigible.”


President-Elect Headed Home After Week Long Coma

The President-Elect Thomas Jefferson was released from Walter Reed AMC yesterday afternoon after a three-week stay. The President-Elect was admitted November 12th after being shot twice by a man with close ties to the infamously anti-gay Westboro Baptist Church. After remaining in a medically-induced coma for a week, and spending another two in recovery, the President-Elect has returned to his home in Alexandria with his significant other, Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton.

Though he has been released from hospital, Jefferson has not yet officially reclaimed his title as President-Elect, which was passed over to his VP-Elect John Quincy Adams in the aftermath of the assassination attempt. However, sources say it is only a matter of time before he resumes his duties and role as President-Elect, and that Jefferson is still in close contact with the exiting administration and is working on the transitions of power within the White House.

Alexander didn’t sleep.

That in and of itself wasn’t unusual—it was a rare night when Alexander slept for longer than five hours.

This was different.

This wasn’t pulling all-nighters in order to perfect his tax plan or to rework an aspect of his budget proposal or in a writing frenzy. After those night Alexander seemed exhausted, yes, but not drained. Not worn.

He still sparked and cracked and popped with his usual electricity.

But ever since the rally, he seemed…

Empty.

He was powering, pressing along like nothing was wrong, but it was visible in his eyes, his posture, his stance. It was audible in his voice. Sometimes, one could even feel it, like the air air around his was just void.
And he wouldn’t tell Thomas why.

Thomas had his suspicions, of course. He couldn’t imagine what exactly Alexander had been through in the last month, but he was sure it had been something close to hell.

If he was being completely honest, he thought Alexander had had it worse than he did.

But it wasn’t getting better.

Thomas had been home for almost a week now, and still Alexander seemed to be little more than a reanimated corpse.

He’d go to bed next to Thomas, but when Thomas woke up the next morning, the bed would be empty—cold—and Alexander would be at the desk—Thomas’ desk—hunched over his notes or computer or some massive book, a new coffee mug at his side.

“You’ve got to stop this,” Thomas finally insisted. “You—you’re not going to do this anymore. We—haven’t we had enough of this? I just got out of the hospital, and I will be damned if you get sent in because you collapse—again—out of sheer exhaustion and stubbornness!”

Alexander blinked. “What are you talking about?” he asked.

“Wha—What am I talking about?” Thomas exclaimed. “You haven’t slept for longer than thirty minutes since we got home! Maybe longer, I don’t know! It's killing you, Alexander!”

“Well it’s not like I’m trying not to sleep,” Alexander pointed out evenly.

“Then what is it, Alexander?” Thomas pressed, searching for his cane.

“Nothing.”

“Bullshit.” Having found his cane, Thomas began the arduous process of standing up. It was tedious work, but he managed even without Alexander’s help—not that his boyfriend looked like he felt inclined to help Thomas, in his current mood.

“Nothing new.”

Thomas scoffed. “Then why do you look like a new, fresh version of hell?”

“Who knows,” Alexander replied dryly, turning back to his laptop.

“No,” Thomas snapped. “You’re not doing this. I thought—I thought we were past this! Past the whole ‘never talking about our issues’ thing!”

“What on God’s greatfucking green earth gave you that impression?” Alexander asked.

“Just—just shut up and listen! Goddamnit, Alexander, we sound like broken records! How many times are we going to have to go through all this before it sticks?!” Thomas asked before taking a deep breath and steadying himself against the bedpost. “Just talk to me, Alexander. Tell me what’s wrong.”
“There’s nothing you can do—”

“I. Don’t Care. Tell me, you stubborn, idiotic moron.”

Alexander glared at him, but the effect of it all was somewhat ruined by the fact that he looked too
tired to swat a mosquito. “It’s nightmares, alright?” he finally admitted. “I can’t sleep, even if I want
to.”

“Nightmares?” Thomas repeated slowly.

“Yes, nightmares. My ass is being handed to me by my own fucking subconscious. It’s hilarious, I
know,” Alexander replied dryly. “They should pass in a few months, tops.”

“How do you know?”

“That’s about how long they’ve always lasted.”

“Always?” Why was this the first time Thomas was hearing about his boyfriend—no, his fucking
fiancé—suffering from recurring nightmares? “How often has this been happening?”

Alexander pointedly didn’t look at Thomas as he shrugged. “As long as I can remember,” he offered
simply, as if he hadn’t just confessed to having lifelong nightmares that he was completely fine with
accepted as a fact of life.

And Alexander accused Thomas of being problematic.

“A Alexander…” Thomas began gently. “Have you—Maybe—”

“If you’re about to suggest that I ‘talk about it’, I don’t want to hear it,” Alexander snapped. “I’ve
had enough of people telling me what I should do. Well, guess what?! I’ve been doing just fine my
whole life not talking about this. I see no reason why I should start doing so now.”

And that response right there, in itself, said more to disprove Alexander’s point than Thomas ever
could.

“Well?” Alexander asked expectantly when it became clear that Thomas wasn’t going to say
anything.

Thomas raised his hands in the universal gesture of surrender. “I can’t force you to talk about it.”

Alexander stared at Thomas in confusion, looking unsure of how to react to Thomas’ easy
acceptance.

“But.” Thomas went on, “if you ever do find yourself ready to talk…”

“I know where to find you, and all that.” Alexander pushed his way past Thomas, who wobbled at
the sudden movement, and steadied himself with his cane. “I know. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I have
matters of actual importance that need doing.” With those words, he stormed out of their bedroom,
unheeding of his state of undress.

Thomas watched Alexander leave with a huff, a worried look on his face.

This wasn’t sustainable.

It wasn’t so much a question of if Alexander was going to collapse, as when.
Thomas was just hoping that he would be there to catch Alexander when he did, because Alexander certainly didn’t look inclined to catch himself.

Jefferson & Madison Do A 180 On Gun Control!

“This is bullshit!” Alexander yelled, all but slamming his laptop on the kitchen table.

“What is it this time?” Thomas asked casually, taking a bite of his French toast.

“I’ve been railing you about background checks and those stupid 3-D printer guns for how long? And it takes you getting shot to actually care?” Alexander snapped, waving his arms about like one of those inflatable men outside of used car dealerships.

“You know, I thought you’d actually like the fact that James and I are reconsidering our stance on gun control. God forgive me for thinking my agreeing with you would actually make you happy,” Thomas replied dryly.

“It’d make me happy if you actually agreed with me!” Alexander pointed out. “But you don’t, you just got shot and this is nothing but a knee-jerk reaction to—”

“And then I saw what you were talking about,” Thomas interrupted. “I… I admit that, maybe, the fact that it took me being shot to see it might, well, might not be the best reflection upon my character, but I do agree with you, at least to some extent.”

When he chanced a look at Alexander, he saw that his boyfriend—no, fiancé—looked gobsmacked. Absolutely, positively gobsmacked. Like Thomas had announced that he was secretly the king of France, or had an evil twin, or… Something.

Thomas didn’t know how he felt about that.

He didn’t know why, exactly, Alexander looked like that, either. Surely they agreed often enough for that utterly ridiculous look on his face to be unwarranted. In fact, they had agreed just yesterday that Ted Cruz was possibly the slimiest person to ever step inside Congress. Granted, everyone thought Ted Cruz was slimy, but it was the principle of—

“Stop doing that,” Thomas finally snapped. “You’re going to catch flies if you don’t close your mouth.”

Alexander grinned. “You said I was right! And you were wrong!”

“I didn’t say I was wrong—”

“I never thought this day would come—”

“Alexander—”

“I’d like to thank my parents and God and the academy—”

“You’re an atheist and an orphan.”
“Wow, sweetheart, way to hit where it hurts,” Alexander replied, that annoying little smirk on his face. He was enjoying this way too much.

“You’re horrible.”

“You agree with me.”

“Well, statistically, it was bound to happen sometime,” Thomas muttered.

Alexander just continued smirking like the little rat he was and shouldered up next to Thomas. “You loooove me,” he said in a sing-song voice.

“My critical sin.”

“But, seriously, you guys are going to support background checks? And regulations on assault weapons?” Alexander asked, his eyebrows furrowed. “You know what that’s going to do to your approval ratings? Your NRA score?”

Thomas bit the inside of his cheek. Yes, he knew what it was going to do to his reputation. It’d take a hit, especially with the far-right, who he was supposed to be trying to win back.

He just…

“I don’t care,” Thomas finally told him. “I’m doing what’s right. Someone once said ‘We don’t represent the NRA; we represent the people.’”

Alexander pulled back for a moment. “Did you just quote me to me?”

Thomas stuck out his tongue. “It was supposed to be meaningful and sentimental,” he informed his fiancé.

“Oh, it was,” Alexander agreed, “It was also just ridiculously cheesy.”

Thomas swatted Alexander across the head and rolled his eyes.

“I do appreciate it,” Alexander continued. “What you’re doing. Even if it’s hypocritical and took you forever and a near death situation, you’re doing the right thing, even though people would prefer you not to. That’s… brave. Admirable, even.”

Thomas bit his lower lip to restrain the absurdly large smile that threatened to bloom across his face. “Alert the presses,” he said as dryly as he could. “Alexander Hamilton thinks I’m admirable.”

Thomas was expecting Alexander to bounce back with a joke or a quip or some sort of witty comeback. Instead he pulled back, a deadly serious look on his face. “Of course I think you’re admirable,” he said. “Thomas, you’ve worked so hard to achieve what you think is right. Even if your definition of ‘right’ is, at times, a bit repulsive, you’re still trying to make things better, even though you’ve, frankly, been through the shitter. You’re trying, and that’s admirable. You’re a good man, Thomas.”

Thomas opened his mouth and then closed it again.

“Thank you, Alexander,” he finally murmured.

In his mind, he was flying.
In Which Thomas Is The Actual, Literal President (God help us all)

Chapter Summary

Also known as, a fictional character still makes a better president than the *actual president*.

Chapter Notes

These babies are growing up so fast...

(There's a Massive Historical Reference in this, and I have an internet cookie for whomever points it out in the comments first.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Thomas was awoken by an incessant beeping coming from his phone. Internally cursing the person who had the gall to text him at—he threw a quick look at the clock—twenty-six past five in the morning, he fumbled for his phone blindly. He groaned when he saw the sender because it just figured that only Alexander would be spamming him with texts at the crack of stupid. The man still had no sense of time, despite Thomas' best efforts to teach him otherwise. Thomas still wasn't sure Alexander was a hundred percent human—only some sort of alien robot unsure of actual human physiology would pull the kind of stunts Alexander pulled on a weekly basis. Thomas had once witnessed him working for five days without a break, driven by nothing but coffee and sheer willpower, and had almost had an aneurysm.

The messages were both remarkable and completely and utterly commonplace, but that was to expected, given the date.

**From: caffeine fiend <3**

Are you up yet???

This is so stupid

We’re not getting /married/

Yet

We can be in the same room!

In less than twelve hours you’re going to be the President. The actual, literal president.

SURELY you can tell them we’re allowed to sleep in the room

Thomas???
‘It’s a security measure. I don’t have any say in it.’ Thomas replied.

Then, ‘I love you too.’

He got a response a moment later.

From: caffeine fiend <3

Doesn’t make this suck any less

Thomas chose not to engage further.

He tried to fall back asleep—if there was any night he needed to get plenty of rest, it was this one—but after about twenty minutes of helplessly rolling around in bed, he finally gave up and blearily climbed out of bed.

Today, he would be inaugurated.

This time tomorrow, he’d be the leader of the free world.

Right now, he needed breakfast and a chai latte.

He grabbed his cane and stumbled his way to the kitchen, trying not to dwell on the silence in the halls and the Secret Service agents lingering in the doorways.

It was odd to not have Alexander here with him, but it really hadn’t been Thomas’ call. If he’d had his way, he and Alexander would both be here at Monticello, instead of Alexander staying at their home in Alexandria.

As it was, he wouldn’t be seeing Alexander for another—he glanced at the clock on the stove—four hours.

Thomas sighed and went about making himself some breakfast, doing his best to ignore the anxiety sitting in his stomach.

“You look nice,” Thomas said as Alexander climbed into the car.

Thomas had managed to make it through the morning without any major incident. It had been a bit difficult to pull on his suit, but he’d made it through.

His stomach never settled, and he’d ended up losing his omelet to the toilet before leaving.
Monticello, but he chalked it up to pre-inauguration nerves. He’d have liked to see a person who wasn’t nervous about being inaugurated as the president of the United States (and then punch them in the face, because that person would be even more obnoxious than Alexander, who was already toeing the line in that matter).

“You don’t look half bad yourself.” Alexander replied, a grin on his face. “I think this is the least colorful outfit I’ve ever seen you wear. Really, not even a patterned tie?”

“There’s precedent for this, you know.” Thomas pointed out. “Technically speaking, you should be in a modest-yet-stylish dress.”

Alexander rolled his eyes before giving Thomas another look over. “You okay?” he asked quietly. “Your hands are shaking.”

“They do now,” Thomas answered dryly, trying not to sound too bitter about it. Really, he’d gotten through the whole assassination attempt debacle with relative ease. Things could’ve—and honestly probably should’ve—been so much worse.

“More than usual, asshole,” Alexander said.

“I’m fine,” Thomas assured him. “Just nerves.”

“Do you have your speech memorized?” Alexander asked

“Yes, Alexander.”

“Do you want me to—”

“No, Alexander.” Honestly, sometimes it felt like Thomas was Alexander’s babysitter, not his fiancé. And all of Alexander’s fretting didn’t exactly make things better for Thomas, either.

“Fine, alright,” Alexander finally ceded. “Just… you’re gonna kill it, okay? Except not literally, because that would be weird and also possibly illegal.”

“Alexander—”

“But you’re gonna kill it, metaphorically, and then you’re going to kill being president. You’re ready for this. You’re qualified for this. You were meant to do this. The people picked you to do this.”

Thomas sighed and nodded, reaching up to straighten his tie.

Alexander swatted his hand away. “I got it,” he insisted. “I like the glasses, by the way.”

“You do?” Thomas asked. They were new—everything was new—with rounder frames than he was used to.

“Yeah,” Alexander assured him. “They make you look like a hot college professor. You know, the ones who were just, like, dreamy and you couldn’t concentrate in their class because of it?” Thomas totally did, but he didn’t need Alexander to know that. He had enough blackmail to hold over Thomas’ head to last him several lifetimes, while the reverse wasn’t true. “Yeah, you look like that.”

“So you think I look dreamy?” Thomas asked, raising an eyebrow.

“Babe, eighty-five percent of the American public thinks you’re dreamy,” Alexander retorted.

“I don’t think presidents are supposed to be dreamy,” Thomas pointed out.
“Seriously?” Alexander countered. “Have you *seen* Franklin Pierce? Presidents are *definitely* supposed to be dreamy. Ever seen a photo of Rutherford B. Hayes? Jesus, *that man could rock a suit.*”

“Flattery will get you *nowhere,* darling.” Thomas rolled his eyes.

“Oh, I beg to differ—”

“You literally *insulted me* until I fell in love with you,” Thomas pointed out. “*Obviously,* flattery is not your strong suit.”

“Surely I said *something* complimentary—”

“You once told me that I looked like an over-enthusiastic troll doll, and that I had the political intelligence of one, too.”

“Yeah, okay, but that was a long time ago—”

“That was *two weeks ago,* Alexander.”

There was a short pause.


For a while, they sat in a comfortable silence.

Of course, it didn’t last.

“I’m proud of you,” Alexander said quietly.

“I beg your pardon?”

“I’m proud of you,” Alexander repeated. “You saw what you wanted, and you *went and got it,* and… and you’re going to make the world a better place. I can *feel* it. I know that I don’t say it often, but that’s what I think. I’m genuinely proud of you, love.”

“Oh,” Thomas said, barely louder than a sigh. “Thank you, Alexander.”

The car pulled into the White House.

★★

It was strange, sitting on that sofa next to Washington, as his *successor,* as his *equal,* but there Thomas was, shaking hands with him and smiling for the cameras until his cheeks hurt.

“How is Alexander coping?” Washington asked as the camera flashes finally died down.

“Technically, he has a job until noon,” Thomas replied.

“So he’s in denial?”

“Absolutely.”

Washington chuckled and shook his head. “Out of everyone in this administration, I never thought it would be you two,” he admitted.

Thomas let out a snort. “To be fair, sir,” he said, “neither did I.”
“...and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States,” Thomas finished, letting the smile he’d been holding back creep onto his face as he shook the Chief Justice’s hand.

“Congratulations, Mr. President,” Alexander said as he handed the Lincoln Bible to an aide.

“Oh God,” Thomas muttered, hoping no microphones picked it up. “I’m the president.”

Alexander laughed and placed a kiss on Thomas’ cheek. “Yup,” he replied with a grin. “God help us all.”

“Mr. President, your inaugural address,” someone commented from behind Thomas. Thomas rolled his eyes good-naturedly and turned to face the crowd in front of him.

He was president.

He was the Commander in Chief, about to address his fellow citizens and the world for the first time.

No time to process. He could have his moment of panicked realization later. Right now, he had a nation to address.

“Remember to breathe!” Alexander hissed.

Thomas didn’t even bother hiding his smile.

“Friends and fellow citizens,” he began, “I stand before you here today, after being called upon to undertake the duties of the first executive office of our country, to express my greatest thanks for the favor that has been bestowed upon me. I am sure that the task is above my talents, and I assure you I am approaching it with the appropriate levels of anxiety that the greatness of office and the weakness of my powers so justly inspire. A rising nation. Spread over a wide and fruitful land, crossing all the seas with the products of their industries, setting an example for nations who feel power and forget the rights of their citizens, rapidly advancing to destinies beyond what our mortal eyes can see—when I think about these things, and see the honour, happiness, and hope that this beloved country is committed to, I cannot help but feel humbled by the job I have been chosen by you, the American people, to take.

“And yet, I do not despair, for I know that I shall find in our great Constitution examples of wisdom, of virtue, of zeal, that I shall rely upon for guidance in times of difficulty and hardship.

“And to our men and women of Congress, and to all those associated with you, I look forward to the encouragement and guidance and support you will provide me with as we safely steer this great vessel we call the United States, even amid the conflicting elements of a troubled world…”

He didn’t miss a single word.

“Ah, there we are,” Alexander said as Thomas stepped out of the bedroom (well, their old bedroom—it was mostly empty, now). “There’s the Thomas I know and love.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Thomas asked as he straightened his bowtie.

“You’re back to looking like a cocky piece of purple velvet—"
“I’m not even *wearing* velvet!” Thomas argued.

“You’re wearing a lavender button-up!”

“What’s wrong with lavender?” Thomas asked, smoothing out a wrinkle in his vest. “I’m the president; I can wear whatever color I want.”

“One, that’s not how it *works*, two, we don’t even *match*!”

“And whose fault is that, hm? You’re the one that went for *emerald*,” Thomas pointed out. “I can’t be blamed for your poor fashion choices.”

“You love it when I wear green, don’t try and deny it now,” Alexander retorted.

Thomas couldn’t even argue.

Alexander looked *amazing*.

“Who says we have to match?” Thomas asked. “I’m the *president*—”

“You can’t keep using that—”

“You’re the First Gentleman—”

“First *Lad*—”

“Who’s going to look at us and say, ‘wow, can you believe they didn’t color coordinate.’?”

“Every morning talk show host,” Alexander replied dryly. “Especially since you’re supposed to be ‘fashion savvy’. He made air quotes. “Even before you came out, everyone called you that. God only knows why; magenta isn’t really a good color for anything, but especially not for *clothes*. The *point* is that it’s clearly your fault that we didn’t match, since I couldn’t have possibly been expected to know better but *you* definitely should have.”

Thomas swatted him. “You’re the worst,” he told his fiancé.

Alexander rolled his eyes. “Pot, kettle, and all that. Anyway,” he switched subjects, “unless I’m very, very wrong, morning shows are going to start calling me with offers for sit-down interviews, about you. Opinions?”

Thomas took a moment to marvel at the fact that Alexander bothered with his opinion, before clearing his throat.

“Don’t call me a spineless, heartless toadstool on national television,” he said. “Or any variation thereof.”

“So calling you a cowardly, uncaring mushroom is out, too?” Alexander challenged.

Thomas rolled his eyes. “In a perfect world, yes.”

“Well, fuck, there goes my whole interview.”


Alexander was wearing his hair down, and it was taking all of Thomas’ self-restraint not to run his fingers through it.
Being in love had done some weird shit to his impulse control.

“I can fix it myself,” Alexander insisted. Thomas just clicked his tongue.

“Executive order, I get to fix your hair. Now come here.”

“This is an obscene overreach of presidential power—”

“As an annoying little man once said, ‘the elastic clause is there for a reason, you fluffy-haired idiot,’” Thomas retorted.

Alexander scowled but stood still and allowed Thomas to smooth out his hair. “You do know how to dance, right?” he asked. “Because we’re going to a ball, and I need to know if I need to brace my toes for your massive fucking boat feet to be stomping all over them.”

Thomas did his best not to be offended. “I do not have boat feet!”

“Babe, your feet could have their own area code,” Alexander quipped. “But seriously, this is important. We’ve got this, and then the wedding, and probably other shit, too, and I need to know if we’re going to need to invest in presidential salsa class. Can you dance?”

“Yes, I can dance. I took lessons in college,” Thomas replied. He gave Alexander a final once over. “C’mon, our car should be here any minute.”

“Wait wait wait, you took dance lessons in college?” Alexander asked.

“I had a free elective and they offered beginning ballroom dance,” Thomas explained. “I’ve got two whole semesters under the belt.”

“So you know the guy part?” Alexander asked skeptically.

“No, Alexander, I outed myself to the instructor and the whole class and asked to learn the girls part,” Thomas drawled with enough sarcasm to last Douglas Adams five sentences. “Christ, what do you think?”

Alexander rolled his eyes. “Well, lucky for you, I learned both parts.”

“Yes, yes, shove your liberal ‘freedom of speech’ in my face, why don’t you?”

“Okay, okay, jeez,” Alexander said, rolling his eyes. “Calm down, Mr. President. I’m not trying to pick a fight, I’m trying to determine the inevitable fate of my toes.”

“I know, I know, I didn’t mean to snap,” Thomas muttered, running a hand over his face. “Just… today’s been stressful.”

“Oh really? I hadn’t noticed. Never would have guessed. Who’d’ve thought that being the Leader of the Free World would be stressful?” Alexander replied, but there was no heat behind his words.

“You’re an asshole.”

“Yup,” Alexander agreed easily, taking Thomas’ hand into his own. “Hey, Thomas?”

“Yes, Alexander?”

“I love you,” Alexander stated casually, the smile on his face ever-growing.
“I love you too.”

“Please don’t step on my toes. I swear I won’t hesitate to chew you out in front of all of D.C."

“If one more lobbyist asks me for ‘a moment of my time’, I might lose it,” Thomas hissed into James’ ear as came up behind the man.

James didn’t even flinch.

“Did you really expect your inaugural ball to be free of politics, Thomas?” he asked, taking a sip of his drink.

“I thought maybe, maybe, they’d give me twelve hours before swooping down on me like starving, desperate vultures,” Thomas admitted. “Call it common courtesy.”

James scoffed. “You overestimate our colleagues.”

“Well pardon me for having hope.”

“Speaking of annoying pains in the ass—”

“He’s getting me some punch,” Thomas interrupted.

“What a gentleman,” James muttered.

“He’s trying.”

“How many arguments has he gotten into tonight?”

“With me, or other people?”

“Jesus Christ.”

“I prefer ‘Mr. President’, actually.”

James looked like he wanted to toss his drink onto Thomas’ (very nice) suit. “Twenty-six years,” he said. “Twenty-six years of this.”

“Oh how far we’ve come,” Thomas replied with a grin.

“Thomas, Thomas, oh my God, you will not believe the conversation I just had with Mary Fallon, oh my God! She’s insane!” Alexander said emphatically as he all but skidded to a stop in front of them.

Thomas shared one last look with James and took a long drink of the beverage Alexander had barely managed to hand him in his excitement and took a moment to let himself just soak in what was happening.

Times were changing, certainly.

Thomas couldn’t wait.

Chapter End Notes
Tell us what you think!
“No.”

“Please?”

“No. Absolutely not.”

“Thomas…”

“Don’t give me that look, Alexander. I said no, and that’s final. We're not getting a dog.”

“But why not?”

“Because I know that you’d forget about it within a week, and then I’d be saddled with feeding it and making sure that it is being walked.

“I so am responsible enough to handle that!” Alexander protested.

Thomas glared at him over his reading glasses. “The whining really isn't helping to show why you're mature enough for this,” he told his fiancé. “You're not capable of taking care of yourself, let alone another being completely dependent on you.”

Alexander crossed his arms. “You're exaggerating.”

“Really?” Thomas challenged. “Who would go out with it and feed it? And don’t say ‘Secret Service’; that’s not their job.”

“I’d be fine. The dog would be fine,” Alexander insisted.

Thomas snorted derisively. “Yeah, right. You’re the equivalent of a hyperintelligent toddler.”

“Whom you agreed to marry,” Alexander reminded him.

Thomas rubbed the bridge of his nose. “God only knows why. And you bringing that up as the only argument at your disposal also isn’t a good sign. Listen, Alexander,” he tried again, “if you can prove to me that you can take of yourself, we can start discussing getting a dog. As it is, it took you over a year to tell me—your boyfriend—that you're suffering from chronic nightmares and insomnia.”

Alexander glared at his fiancé. “Not this again,” he snapped. “It’s none of your business.”
“And that attitude is exactly what I’m talking about,” Thomas took up seamlessly. “Until you fix it, I’m tabling this discussion. I’m not exposing a dog to misery and unhappiness just because you decided on a whim that labradoodles are ‘cute’.”

“We’re not getting that kind of mutt,” Alexander shot back. “I was thinking more along the lines of an American Staffordshire Terrier.”

Thomas gaped silently for a moment. When he regained his ability to speak, it was to let out a scoff. “Yeah, no. We are not getting a terrier. Do you have any idea how much energy they have? They’re the dog equivalent of you, except that they can’t just channel that energy into fighting everyone on Twitter and writing dozens of pages of essays. Even if—and that’s an if—you could take care of a normal dog, a terrier is an entirely different level of responsibility, one neither of us has the time for. Plus, keep in mind that the dog would have to be hypoallergenic. The most I can justifiably agree to is a Brittany.”

“How do you even know so much about dogs?”

Thomas shrugged. “James has seven of them,” he said simply.

“Seven?” Alexander echoed in disbelief.

“An Aussie—that’s an Australian Shepherd—two labradors, a Border Collie, a Cairn Terrier, a Welsh Springer Spaniel, and a Dachshund.”

“How does he even have the time for them?”

“Because he’s a responsible adult who makes schedules, and follows them, and doesn’t have to spend half of his energy babysitting you.” Thomas’ voice was brutally honest.

Alexander whistled. “Savage burn.”

Thomas sighed. He adjusted his glasses, then stared into Alexander’s eyes. “Are you going to be here all day? Because I’ve got things to do.” He gestured at the paper he had been reading.

Alexander pouted. “You’re no fun,” he declared.

Thomas rolled his eyes. “Shoo. Go torture someone else. Unless that someone is a reporter. Please don’t do that. I don’t need another scandal on my hands.”

“I can just feel the love,” Alexander retorted, his voice infused with an amount of venom that would fell a smaller elephant. He twirled on the spot. “Well, then, fine,” he went on dramatically. “If you don’t want me here, that’s fine, Mr Busybody.”

“I’m the president, Hamilton; of course I’m busy. Or did you imagine that the president sat around on his ass all day, twiddling his thumbs?” Thomas paused. “Hold on; don’t answer that. I don’t want to know.”

Alexander stuck out his tongue at Thomas. “Fine. Be that way.”

And then finally, finally, Thomas was left alone, with naught but his own thoughts and the document before him to keep him company.

“Alexander, can we talk?”
Alexander paused, and looked up at Thomas. “Sure,” he said amicably. “What’s up?”

Thomas drew in a breath he hoped wasn’t too shaky. “You remember the conversation we had about your nightmares?”

Immediately, Alexander’s curious expression shut down, only to be replaced with barely-concealed irritation. “I told you that I could handle it. Stop making it your business, because it’s not.”

“Funny, that; I’d’ve thought that when my fiancé is plagued by nightmares to the point where he literally couldn’t sleep, it sort of automatically becomes my business,” Thomas snapped, now properly annoyed. “We need to talk about this, Alexander.” The you need to talk about this went unspoken.

“No, we don’t,” Alexander insisted stubbornly.

Thomas closed his eyes in frustration. “You’re not running yourself into the ground. Not on my watch.”

“Then fucking look away, because there’s nothing you can do about it anyway,” Alexander told Thomas, voice defensive. “It’s not as if there’s some sweet magical cure for sleeplessness. Believe me, I’ve looked.”

Thomas furtively reached out to Alexander, who flinched at the movement. Thomas bit back a dismayed grimace. “Alexander…”

“Don’t,” Alexander retorted curtly. “This is exactly why I hadn’t brought this up earlier. I knew that you’d react like this, and I neither want your pity, nor do I need it. This isn’t something that can be changed, so I’ve accepted it and moved on. This is my reality, Thomas, and you need to deal with it. End of story. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I’ve got things to do.”

“Alexander, stop, I didn’t mean it li—”

Thomas’ protest was met with naught but silence as Alexander had already vacated the room.

Thomas sighed, running a hand through his curly hair as he did so, ruining the hairstyle his hairdresser had given just a few days ago. This wasn’t how he had imagined this conversation would go.

Then again, what had he thought would happen? That a bit of nagging was going to make Alexander compliant and ready to talk about all of his problems all of a sudden? Yeah, right. The man was practically the walking definition of ‘stubbornness’.

*Good job, Jefferson. You fucked that one up really well.*

With a sigh, Thomas returned to the dossier he had been handed by his Defense Secretary, and settled in to read.

---

“James, I can’t do this,” was what James heard as soon as he picked up the phone. Thomas’ words were tinged with panic as he spoke.

James froze mid-step. “What’s wrong, Thomas?” He cast an absentminded look about the corridor, silently scanning it for possible eavesdroppers that he might have attracted during his sudden stop.
He heard a sharp intake of breath through the phone. “I’m—I’m supposed to be reviewing a file—it’s a conflict, a deep-seated hate—it doesn’t matter, anyway, it’s not important—just suffice to say that we’ve majorly fucked up in that area.”

Well, that was specific. It wasn’t as if America made a career out of sticking to the Truman doctrine like leftover muck to a shoe.

“And I tried to come up with a way to reimburse them—these people, who have suffered through no fault of their own—but I realized that, really, there’s nothing we can do to ever earn their forgiveness  

And didn’t it just say everything about America that James still couldn’t tell what Thomas was referring to?

“—because we’ve invaded their lands, driven them from their homes, appropriated their resources  

Still not helping.

“—and now we expect them to forgive us just because we apologized? A bouquet of flowers and a ‘Sorry!’ card just doesn’t cut it. We can’t keep being so presumptuous and arrogant and self-righteous, not with the kinds of things we’ve done. Did you know that we’re the laughingstock of the international community? The butt of their jokes? All because we blunder our way into situations that might have been resolved diplomatically but for our ignorant interference, and then blame ‘pre-existing local conflicts’ for the mess we leave behind.” There was a sigh. “What a mess.”

James could have told Thomas that ages ago.

He rubbed the bridge of his nose in an attempt to alleviate the headache he could feel coming on.

“You’ve been put in a very difficult situation, Thomas,” he began carefully, testing out his words before saying them in case something were to trigger Thomas again, “but I believe in you. You can do it. You need to at least start making recompenses, else we’ll never get anywhere. Whoever they are, they deserve that much.”

Thomas was silent for a long moment.

“You’re right,” he finally admitted. “I just… wished that I could do more.”

“So do I,” James murmured.

Thomas’ laugh sounded a bit too forced, a bit too sharp, for it to be entirely genuine, but James was relieved to hear it all the same.

“I’ll do my best,” Thomas promised. A pause, then, “Oh, and James? Thank you. You have no idea what this means to me. You, your support, your presence, just being there…”

“You deserve the best I can offer,” James replied.

“You’re giving me more than that,” Thomas vowed. “Really, thank you. I appreciate it in more ways than I can express.”

“No problem, Thomas. You know that I’ll always be there for you.”
"I want a sleepover," Alexander demanded.

Thomas quirked an eyebrow. "A sleepover?" He stood up, wincing as the movement sent a shot of pain through his back. His glance at the clock was a symbolic gesture rather than an honest effort to check the time. "Now?"


"Didn't we have a sleepover last week?" Thomas wondered idly, even as he felt his resolve start to crumble.

"So what?" Alexander replied defensively. "You can never have too many sleepovers."

*Touché, Alexander. Touché.*

But it wasn’t as if Thomas was good at refusing his fiancé—especially when said fiancé was notorious for avoiding sleep and averaging four hours of restless sleep a day. A sleepover might actually do him some good.

“Sure,” he agreed, and if it was a little too easy… Well, *Alexander* was hardly about to argue, was he?

---

**From: caffeine fiend <3**

#CanonJesusIsBetterThanFanonJesus

**To: caffeine fiend <3**

You can't keep texting me in the middle of my own cabinet meetings.

**From: caffeine fiend <3**

:(

**To: caffeine fiend <3**

Alexander, d o n o t

You're making me feel terrible as it is.

**From: caffeine fiend <3**

You *should* feel terrible. Your policies are shit.

Except *not*, because literal shit can be used as a fertilizer to improve our steadily declining domestic agriculture
So in a way, your policies < shit

To: caffeine fiend <3

I so do not have time for this.

From: caffeine fiend <3

That’s because, deep down, you know that your policies are terrible

To: caffeine fiend <3

I recall that you told me that you were proud of me a few weeks ago. Whatever happened to that?

From: caffeine fiend <3

I still stand by that. I’m proud of *you*. I am not, however, proud of your shit>policies

To: caffeine fiend <3

I’m going to be the adult here and end this conversation right now.

From: caffeine fiend <3

Awww, Thomas, come on
Don’t be that way
Thomas?
Thoooooomas?
Thomassssss
Goddamnit answer me you asshole
Don’t ignore me
I feel ignored
See I feel like I’m talking to a wall, not my fiancé
Who’s supposed to be supportive
And shit
*and your policies

Fine, be that way

Twitter loves me more than you do anyway

---

*Alexander Hamilton* @AdotHam

Republicans are hypocrites. Say they’re ‘pro life’, but only that of the foetus. What about the life of the woman? They’re ruining it by making her care for something she hadn’t wanted, maybe that had been forced (1/4)

*Alexander Hamilton* @AdotHam

upon her, because she didn’t have the possibility of *not* being in that situation.

“God, send us someone to cure AIDS, cancer, etc., etc.” (2/4)

*Alexander Hamilton* @AdotHam

“I did, but you forced her to carry an unwanted pregnancy to term, forcing her to become a single mother with limited income, having to sacrifice her college dreams in order to provide for her unwanted child.” (3/4)

*Alexander Hamilton* @AdotHam

Let’s face it: the reason a fetus has more rights than a woman in America is because a fetus still has a chance of being a man. (4/4)

*Caz Tasker* @CazTasker6

@TJefferson Control Hamilton. Hes a goddamn nightmare.

*Thomas Jefferson* @TJefferson

@CazTasker6 I can either control Hamilton or run a country. I can’t possibly do both.

---

“Why are you awake?” Thomas asked, his voice heavy and thick with sleep as he stumbled into Alexander’s room (office, more like—he never slept in there, but his desk was still littered with papers and coffee mugs and books and pens).

“The words are moving,” Alexander mumbled, not looking up from his computer.
“I beg your pardon?”

“They’re **going,**” Alexander said emphatically. “They’ve been **stuck** for a week now, and they’re finally moving.”

“Oh-kay, that’s enough for one night,” Thomas muttered, rubbing his eyes. “I’m making an executive order—you’re going to bed. Now. Turn it off.”

“I can’t,” Alexander insisted. “Thomas, I *can’t.*”

“That’s bullshit and you know it,” THomas argued. “It’s—**three fifty-seven,** Alexander. You *have* to sleep.”

“It’s—Thomas, it’s *not* bullshit, I promise! I—I *need to—”

Alexander finally looked up. His eyes were wild and hazy, glossed over from what was probably sleep deprivation and dehydration. Thomas sucked in a breath.

God, it always scared Thomas to see Alexander like this. He was always a little… *frenetic,* but when he got like this, when the normal electricity he seemed to emit grew into something sharp and overpowering and manic, like a lightbulb that was so bright it seemed seconds from shattering…

It was like Thomas was standing on a metal rod in the middle of a lightning storm.

“Why?” he asked quietly. “Why do you do this? Why do you ‘need to’ do this?”

“Because—because I *have* to write. I’m all picked apart, Thomas, all separate and disconnected and my writing—it’s like the glue that holds me all together. It’s like I’m scooping out my thoughts and then rearranging them into something *good*—”

“Alexander,” Thomas interrupted, carefully placing his hand on top of Alexander’s.

It was shaking.

“Alexander, I need you to listen to me, alright?” Thomas whispered. “You *have* to sleep. You *have* to take a break.”

Alexander’s eyes were so wide, Thomas was almost afraid he’d fall into them.

“But if I stop—”

“You can restart,” Thomas cut in. “You can start again tomorrow and the day after and the day after *that.* But right now? Right now you need to *rest.*”

Alexander didn’t move. Didn’t speak. Just stared at Thomas with those wide, almost crazed eyes.

“I need you to rest,” Thomas finally said, tugging gently at Alexander’s hand.

Alexander finally broke, his posture slumping over as he stumbled his way to his feet.

---

**Chapter End Notes**

So... Opinions? *Ring hides behind Gabe* Good? Bad? Tell us what you thought! ;)
Hey, guys! Gabe here! I just wanted to let y'all know that there is No update this week, which is... no bueno, I know, but! Life has been Hectic recently (like, Real Fucking Stressful), and writing has sort of been put on the back burner. So, the chapter that was supposed to be put up this week will come up the Next week, and then the week after that, well...

There may be a lesson in knot tying

Who tf knows

Anyway! That's all for this week! See y'all later!

-Gabe
The Corrupt Bargain (or, In Which J.Q. Adams is... the Worst)

Chapter Summary

Welcome, folks, to the Adams... mess. The Adams mess. (Also known as, That Time Jefferson Almost Started A War Over Pajamas.)

Chapter Notes

Sorry about the wait! Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

From: JQ
Are you awake

To: JQ
I am now

From: JQ
Could you send someone to let me in?

To: JQ
In? The oval?

From: JQ
The White House

To: JQ
The White House?
From: JQ

I left my keys at home

“Who the hell keeps texting you at five in the morning?” Alexander grumbled, rolling over so that his face was buried in Thomas’ shoulder.

“Oh, you’re one to talk—”

“I’m your fiancé; I get special privileges.”

“What, to torment me?”

“Yup, it was a signing bonus.”

“A signing—”

“I’m signing the marriage certificate. Whoever is texting you, however, is not, so what’s up, buddy?”

Thomas sighed.

A grumbly, sleepy Alexander was somehow more obnoxious than the usual almost collapsing of exhaustion Alexander.

But, also, adorable.

God, Thomas was screwed.

Maybe literally, if he was lucky.

“It’s JQ,” he muttered. “He locked himself out.”

“Out? Of the White House?”

“So it would seem.”

Alexander lifted his head just so he could scoff and roll his eyes. “I don’t think I have to say anything about the competency of your administration—”

“You’d just sound repetitive, darling,” Thomas agreed. “I think I should go let him in.”

“Or,” Alexander said, “You could have someone else do it, and stay in bed. With me. Your fiancé. Whom you love dearly.”

Thomas didn’t even have to think about it. A moment later, the text was sent to Louisa Harvie, his head of White House staff.

“Now come here, I’m cold,” Alexander said, scooching impossibly closer to Thomas.

He was tucked under Thomas’ arm, his head on Thomas’ shoulder and his feet beneath Thomas’ calves, clinging like a limpet.

Thomas had asked a few times about Alexander’s… cuddliness. The man was not stingy with his affection, which had surprised Thomas in the beginning, but he’d become even more tactile recently.
“It’s, uh, coping. Stuff,” Alexander had said quietly in a moment of unprecedented openness. “Helps keep nightmares away. Y’know.”

Thomas hadn’t pushed.

He certainly wasn’t complaining.

God only knew he himself was probably a bit starved for affection.

“Why is he even trying to get into the White House at five in the morning?” Alexander murmured, his eyes closed as he nuzzled closer.

“Phone call with Taiwan at six,” Thomas replied.

Alexander let out a scoff. “And you say I’m a disaster.”

“You are.”

“You love me.”

“I do.”

Mr. President?” Sally said as she poked her head into the Oval.

“Yes?”

“The British Foreign Secretary is here,” Sally replied.

Thomas just about choked.

“I thought that meeting was tomorrow!” he hissed, his eyes wide.

“It was moved, sir. We told you this morning at the—”

“Yes, okay, I get it,” Thomas rushed to say. “When will he be arriving?”

“He’s here now, sir.”

“Damn it all.”

This was… bad, to say the least, not in the least part because Thomas was still in his pyjamas.

Or, not really in his pyjamas. He had more sense than that. But he’d figured this morning that he’d have desk work until late afternoon, and that, really, no one would be looking at his legs or feet all morning, and what was the point of being President if you couldn’t wear your fuzzy pants to work once in a while.

So. Business on top.

Comfort on bottom.

Fuck.

“Where is the meeting going to take place?”
“The Diplomatic Reception Room, sir,” Sally reminded him slowly, looking mostly exasperated and a bit concerned.

Thomas swore again. “Yeah, of course, just give me a—”

“The Minister has been waiting for fifteen minutes—”

“What?!”

“We thought you knew your schedule and were simply caught up in a meeting or—”

“All right, all right, okay,” Thomas finally muttered. “I’m coming. Just… have someone let Minister Merry know… nevermind. He’ll see soon enough.”

“Mr. President, I’m sure I don’t have to tell you that this whole thing is something of a—”

“Clusterfuck, yes,” Thomas interrupted.

At least the pants weren’t that bad. The grey and red plaid almost matched his suit jacket.

Who was he kidding.

Fucking hell.

“No one is to tell Alexander about this, understand?” Thomas ordered as he passed Sally on the way out of the Office.

She smirked.

“Of course not, sir.”

“…”

“So how was your day? Anything… interesting happen?” Alexander asked at dinner that night, a grin spreading across his face. “Any… dignitaries… you’d conveniently forgot about meeting?”

Thomas shot his fiancé a glare. “Who told you?”

“Can’t say.”

“Alexander—”

“They asked for anonymity in exchange for—”

“Was it James?”

“…Possibly.”

“My God, sometimes I wish you two still despised each other.”

“…”

“Sir, Vice President Adams is on the phone.”


“It seems the Eisenhower Building was flooded, sir.”
“How on God’s green earth—”

“Apparently, Mr. Vice-President forgot to turn off the faucet in his en-suite before he locked up last night, and—”

“My God.”

“Thomas, please can you talk to your fiancé?” JQ asked as soon as he was allowed into the Oval Office.

Technically, he was supposed to follow some form of etiquette when approaching the president, but Thomas had all but done away with that, at least in private company.

“What’s he doing now?” Thomas asked, not looking up from his papers.

“Turning kids gay.”

Thomas slowly raised his eyes. “I thought we’d gone over this,” he said. “No one can just turn kids gay, not even Alexander. No matter how much he may try.”

“Thomas, just… when was the last time you turned on the news?”

“Not recently enough, I assume,” Thomas grumbled.

JQ hastily handed Thomas his phone.

It was a YouTube video of a Fox News broadcast that had gone up…

Forty-five minutes ago.

Thomas rolled his eyes towards the heavens and prayed to every deity he could think of.

Just one goddamn day of peace, I’m fucking begging you.

He pressed play.

“‘If a child thinks they’re gay, we should encourage and accept that, not dismiss it due to age and perceived experience! I say children, and teenagers especially, should be allowed to experiment and figure out what they like without fear of judgement or retribution—’”

Thomas groaned.

What. Had he done. To deserve this.

JQ gesticulated wildly. “You can’t deny it, Thoma—”

“Hush,” Thomas snapped, rubbing his temples. “For one, he’s not turning kids gay, and for another, why is this my problem?”

“He’s your fiancé!”
“Yes! Fiancé, not pet. This—is not my circus, nor is it in any way my monkeys. So, is there anything else you need to discuss?” Thomas snapped, the or are you done wasting my time very much apparent, even if it was not explicitly stated.

“That’s it, I just thought—”

“Yes, yes, I’ve gathered what you thought, JQ. And, actually, what I’m thinking is why you thought this issue was so pressing you had to not only inform me of it, but do so in person.”

“I—”

“You know, sometimes, I see why Alexander says my administration is incompetent,” Thomas muttered. “You’re dismissed. Oh, and if your dad wants to call me about Alexander turning your brother gay, please tell him not to. I’ve got more important things to do than to mediate the Adams-Hamilton enmity.”

JQ left the room without another word.

Alexander,” Thomas said as he closed the door to their bedroom. “What the hell?”

“Huh?”

“Don’t huh me, you asshole,” Thomas said yanking the laptop from Alexander’s hands.

“Hey!”

“First Gentleman Speaks Out Against Presidential Administration’?” Thomas asked. “Really?”

“Well we both knew I wasn’t going to shut up and sit there and look pretty just because—”

“Alexander,” Thomas said, taking a deep breath and carefully placing the laptop on the bed. “Could you please explain to me why you are hell-bent on single-handedly ruining the credibility of my entire administration?”

“In alphabetical or chronological order, dear?”

Thomas slowly closed his eyes. “Okay,” he muttered. “Okay, here’s the deal. You have to stop this. Have to. You can speak out against policies, or ideals, or whatever, but for the love of God, could you not go on national television and attack me and my staff personally?”

Thomas didn’t even realise he was yelling until Alexander’s eyebrows shot all the way up to his hairline. “Okay, okay, I get it, calm down,” he muttered quietly, not meeting Thomas’ eyes.

It was a little disquieting.

Thomas sighed and ran a hand through his hair. “I’m sorry I yelled,” he finally murmured.

“No, you’re right,” Alexander replied. “We… we’re a team, right? Even if I disagree with what you and your people say, I should respect you enough to not try such cheap shots under the belt. I’m sorry.”

“And, as a team, I should respect you enough to keep from yelling at you like you’re some sort of… cartoon underling or something. We’re both dicks, here. We’re both at fault.”
Alexander nodded and rubbed the back of his neck, but still didn't look up at Thomas, who furrowed his eyebrows and stepped closer to pull Alexander into a hug.

“Are you okay?” he whispered into Alexander's hair.

“Yeah,” Alexander answered just as quietly. “Just… tired. I guess. Between not having work and you being off president-ing—which I don't resent you for or anything, don't worry—I've been, y'know…”

“Not great?” Thomas prompted.

“No,” Alexander agreed. “Not great.”

Thomas just squeezed him tighter. “I love you,” he said. “And I'm sorry I'm gone so often, but just think, in a few months? We'll be married. You'll be able to come with me everywhere. No more staying here while I'm off, God knows where—"

Alexander scoffed, but Thomas could see the beginnings of a smile. “Oh, yes, because sitting around with all the First Ladies and Prime Ministers’ Wives will be so much fun,” he told Thomas in a perfect deadpan.

Thomas chuckled. “Y'all can share knitting patterns and discuss tasteful china patterns,” he said.

“Fuck off,” Alexander muttered, and Thomas smiled.

They'd be just fine.

Jefferson Lashes Out: “My mockingbird is smarter than my entire cabinet.”

“Thomas?” Alexander asked. “Since when have you had a mockingbird?”

“I don't,” Thomas replied, flipping through the pages of his book.

They were sitting on their bed, lamps on, in their nice, matching silk pyjamas (a gift from Gil as an ‘engagement present’), Thomas with The Fellowship of the Ring, and Alexander with a copy of the New York Post, like some sort of 80s family drama.

“Then why has this article cited at least six sources, most of them named, and some of those actually credible, each claiming that you've repeatedly claimed you have a mockingbird who's smarter than your entire cabinet?” Alexander pressed. “I'm not mad,” he quickly clarified. “Actually, this is the best news I've heard in a while, but seriously. If you have a mockingbird, I want to meet it.”

Thomas felt himself blush. “That was… an unfortunate accident,” he said.

Alexander’s stare turned incredulous. “What? How? How did you accidentally lie about having a bird that's smarter than your cabinet?”

Thomas cleared his throat. “I, uh, called Samuel Dexter a dumbass and a dick,” he admitted.

Alexander choked.

“It gets worse,” Thomas continued. “There was press in the room, I didn't notice—”
“How do you not notice—”

“And I panicked and said that I was comparing him to my mockingbird named Richard—”

“How the fuck—”

“I panicked!” Thomas defended him. “It was the first thing I thought of!”

Alexander was laughing so hard Thomas was afraid he would fall off the bed.

“Alexander, this is serious—”

“Oh, I'm sure it is,” Alexander stated through bouts of breathless laughter.

“Dexter has threatened resignation—”

“Well if he's worse than your imaginary mockingbird, I'd say good riddance!”

Thomas flipped him off, turned off his lap, and rolled over under the sheets.

Yet, when Alexander somehow ended up nuzzled under his arm two hours later, Thomas couldn’t find it within himself to be upset.

---

“Adams, why is there a dog in my office?”

"Ah. That's Satan. Don't worry about him."

"Adams. Why is there a dog called Satan in my office?"

---

“An alligator.”

“Yes.”

The room was silent save for Thomas’ cane echoing against the marble floor.

“There’s an alligator. In the bathroom.”

“Pretty much.”

One could hear a needle being dropped.

“That you got from Lafayette.”

Occasionally, the silence was interrupted by a scratching sound at the door.

“Got it in one.”

What had Thomas done to deserve this? And why did Alexander have to sound so damned chipper?

“And what,” Thomas said, voice deceptively calm, “did possess you to believe that any gift from the Marquis de Lafayette was trustworthy?”

Quincy rolled his eyes. “I hadn’t expected the French ambassador to gift me an alligator,” he
drewled. Alexander snickered. Thomas resisted the urge to smack him into silence.

“Have you ever *met* Lafayette? He’s the French equivalent to a toddler that shares everything he *shouldn’t* with the world, alligators and lions and all.

“And you!” Thomas turned on Alexander, who had been smirking in Quincy’s direction. “What on Earth were you thinking? Quincy, I can understand—he’s only met Lafayette in formal settings, where he does a good job of playing an adult—but you have known Gil for the past two decades! You know what he’s like!”

Alexander remained stubbornly silent.

A realization suddenly dawned on Thomas. “Unless…” he began, “unless you *wanted* Quincy to accept the alligator.”

Out of the corner of his eye, Thomas saw Quincy’s hands clench themselves into fists.

“I plead the fifth,” Alexander said evenly.

“Alexander—”

“It’s my *constitutional right*, Thomas.”

Thomas rolled his eyes to the heavens.

Dear God, whatever past-life-Thomas had done to justify the universe inflicting this sort of punishment on him, he hoped it had been fucking *worth it*.

“Why?” he asked. “Why do you thrive off of chaos?”

“Gotta get my kicks in somehow.”

Thomas forced himself to take a deep breath, then let it out. In, out. Once he was fairly certain that he wouldn’t snap at either of the men at the table, he continued, “And now, and more importantly, why did you lock the alligator in the bathroom?” Also, how? Thomas very carefully didn’t ask.

Alexander fidgeted. “Well, you see…”

“There was no other place for it,” Quincy finished for Alexander.

“No other—you know what? Fine. Whatever.” Thomas ran a hand through his hair, fingers tangling through his locks. “This is *so* not my problem,” he muttered, before clearing his throat. In a louder voice, he said, “Deal with this, gentlemen. I don’t care how, but there better not be an alligator in the bathroom—or anywhere else in the White House—or in our house in Alexandria,” he added as Alexander was opening his mouth, “when I return.”

Alexander leaned back, crossing his arms in front of him with a pout. “But what do we *do* with it, then?” he challenged.

Thomas shrugged. “I don’t know; give it back to Lafayette, for all I care.”

“Or we could find someone else we hate to re-gift it to,” Alexander said suddenly, cheerful once again. “It’s a gift that keeps on giving.”
Quincy closed his eyes. “Or, we could call the local zoo. It’s pretty much their job to deal with wild animals.”

“Wild animals, yeah; wild animals in the bathroom, not so much,” Alexander pointed out. “I’m serious; can’t we just, like, Fed-Ex it to Bill O’Reily or Sean Hannity or something?”

“You can’t just Fed-Ex wild animals, Alexander,” Thomas snapped. “My God, first the armadillo, now this?”

“I wasn’t going to Fed-Ex the armadillo!”

“No, you were just going to late it be shuffled around from place to place in a cardboard box until it died. Tell me how that’s any better?”

“I’m sorry to interrupt this… dispute,” JQ said. “I think I’m going to call animal control. This is their job, you know, and if anyone will know how to solve this, it’s them.”

There was a moment of silence.

It seemed JQ was good for something.

Thomas stood up. “Well, gentlemen, you look like you’re on top of things,” he said hurriedly, “so I’ll just… return to the Oval Office. Just… lose the alligator, will you?”

Chapter End Notes

Tell us what you think!
The night before, Thomas couldn’t sleep.

Well, could sleep even less than usual. Turns out the presidency was even more high-stress than he had imagined, and he’d discovered why Washington always kept his head shaved. The grey hairs seemed to be reproducing at a rabbit-like rate.

At this rate, Thomas would turn into Alexander within the month.

(It plagued his nightmares.)

He’d thought he’d been restless on the night before his inauguration, but even then he’d gotten a bare six hours.

The night before his wedding, however, Thomas Jefferson barely even closed his eyes.

He hadn’t had much in the way of a bachelor party—it was sort of hard to go been plastered when one was the Chief Executive of the most powerful nation in the world—but James had come over with Gil, Randy, Lucy and (unfortunately) JQ for a drink or two (or five, on Gil’s part), and that had been… pleasant.

“Tomorrow you’ll be a married man, mon ami!” Gil had said with a wide smile, raising his glass in the air. “Another round!”

“I’ll pass,” Thomas muttered, rubbed his temple. “God, I’m getting married.”

“My baby brother’s getting hitched,” Lucy said with a smirk. “I’m so proud.”

“And your parents are…?” Gil asked, his question hanging in the air like the Hindenburg—ready to explode and kill everyone at any time.

“Not coming,” Randy said, scratching his chin awkwardly. “They called yesterday, actually. Said I ‘didn’t need to feel pressured to do this’ and all that horse shit.”

“I’m sorry about all that,” JQ said awkwardly.
Thomas sighed and leaned back in his chair. “It’s fine,” he said. “I didn’t expect them to come. Not like they’d have any part in the ceremony, anyway. I’m not exactly a bride that needs to be given away.”

“Let’s discuss something else, yes?” Gil insisted. “Surely between all of us, we have some funny stories about our dear Mr. President.”

Thomas rolled his eyes. “Or, and this is just a thought, we could not do that. Have some respect for the dignity of the office of the president and all that,” he suggested.

Of course, because life had a way of hating him, he was studiously ignored.

This was going to be absolutely horrifying.

Thomas could just feel it.

“Didn’t we visit Stratford-upon-Avon one summer in college?” James asked, a wicked smile upon his face.

Thomas groaned.

“Oh, I know this story!” Lucy said with a smirk of her own.

“I believe I do as well,” Gi agreed. “You visited right after.”

“Well then, if we all know it, there’s no need to—”

“C’mon, Tom,” Randy interjected. “Just because you’re president doesn’t mean you have to have a stick up your ass at all times. Let James tell the damn story.”

“Fine,” Thomas muttered. “But I’m going to need another glass of wine.”

Lucy snickered as JQ passed Thomas the bottle. “So, James,” she said. “Where were you?”

“Oh, yes,” James continued. “So we travel to Stratford-upon-Avon one summer and, of course, visit Shakespeare’s original home—”

“Because you’re fucking nerds,” Randy interrupted.

“Precisely,” James agreed. “So, first, Thomas spends almost the entirety of the trip complaining about the travel conditions—”

“I’ll admit I was a bit stuck-up in college—”

“Oh, a bit?” James asked. “I wasn’t sure you knew how to do your own laundry until you were twenty-five, and I still haven’t ever seen you buy a drink less expensive than $35 a glass—”

“Anyway,” Thomas interrupted. “We went to see Shakespeare’s house—”

“And mon ami knelt down and kissed the floor!” Gil suddenly exclaimed. “I remember this, yes!”

“You did what?” JQ asked, a look of disbelief on his face.

Thomas huffed and crossed his arms. “It was college, no one had any sense,” he defended. “Also, how do you know this stuff?” he asked Lafayette suspiciously, to which Gil simply shrugged.
“Oh, I beg to differ,” James argued.

“James, you wore a yellow button up under a grey vest or sweater every day and worked yourself so hard that it permanently damaged your health,” Thomas countered.

James scrunched up his nose. “I fail to see what that first fact has to do with anything.”

Thomas scoffed. “Admit it, Jemmy. We were all stupid in college.”

“Wait a second!” Lucy suddenly shouted, startling Thomas so much he almost fell out of his seat. “You were gay in college!”

Thomas blanched for a moment. “Yes…” he agreed cautiously.

“But you liked someone! You used to go on and on and on about their eyes and their smile and how smart they were—”

“Lucy, we don’t have to talk about this,” Thomas insisted, suddenly understanding where this was headed. “Seriously, please—”

“So there was a boy!” Lucy continued. “Whom you liked! There must have been!”

“Lu, please—”

“Madison!” Gil interrupted. “You went to college with Thomas! You must tell us who it was.”

James balked. “I honestly haven’t the slightest,” he said. “We sort of kept to ourselves. I don’t even know who else Thomas spent enough time with to—”

“Oh my God,” JQ suddenly whispered, looking more horrified by the second.

“What? What is it?” Lucy asked, looking all too pleased.

“No one say a word,” Thomas demanded. “None of you say a thing—”

“Mon Dieu.” Gil coughed. “This is—this is the most incredible thing I’ve heard since… well, since that time my college friend tried to start a revolution over badly-made coffee.”

“What’s so funny?” James asked, seemingly oblivious to the plight at hand.

“No one say a word,” Thomas demanded. “None of you say a thing—”

“Wait, what.”

“Really, I don’t get it,” James insisted.
“It’s nothing,” Thomas rushed to assure him. “They just—ignore it.”

“Thomas, I’m not an idiot; it’s not ‘nothing’—”

“James,” Randy finally said. “Thomas had a crush on someone he knew in college, and you just said the only person he really knew was you.”

Thomas could see the exact moment everything clicked. James’ eyes grew almost comically wide as he choked on his drink.

“I—Thomas?” he finally sputtered out.

Thomas swore he was going to implode.

“Yes, God, yes,” he admitted, throwing his hands in the air. “I had a crush on James! He was cute, I was gay, and had no other friends. It was a perfect storm. I was nineteen, for Christ’s sake. Can we move on now before I die of embarrassment?”

The whole room burst out laughing. Whereas before, it had simply been Gil’s semi-drunken cackling, it was now a damn uproar. Thomas was sure they were going to laugh the whole White House down.

“Does Alexander know?” JQ finally asked.

“No,” Thomas said, “And he won’t ever.”

“Thomas, mon ami, I must tell him! This is the best news I’ve received in decades!”

“Let me guess, right after the coffee revolution that wasn’t?” JQ chortled.

“Gilbert du Motier, I swear on my life, if you call Alexander—”

“You’ll what? I’ve got diplomatic immunity and everyone loves me. Give it up, Thomas,” Gil said, pulling out his face.

Thomas only barely resisted the urge to bang his head against a wall, and instead, downed the rest of his drink before refilling his glass.

“Thomas?” James asked, rubbing the back of his neck awkwardly as a faint flush spread across his features. “While I am… flattered—”

“My God, James, please don’t,” Thomas all but begged. “ Seriously, just… can we just agree to never discuss this again?”

“Oh, no,” Lafayette all but cackled as he reached for his phone. “Alexander simply must know this!”

Thomas’ eyes narrowed, and he reached for Lafayette’s phone, but either he was more drunk than he had estimated and was transmitting his intentions, or Lafayette had astoundingly good reflexes for a guy well through his third glass of wine, because Thomas was met with nothing but the cold floor as Lafayette danced out of Thomas’ reach gleefully, phone in hand.

“Oh, stop it!” the Frenchman scolded Thomas. “You are looking like, how you say? A kicked puppy.”

“Gil—”
“Call him, Lafayette,” Lucy said. “Please.”

Gil smiled and pressed call.

“Thomas?” Alexander asked over speakerphone. “Are you okay? You’re not having second thoughts, are you? Please don’t be, Thomas. I know I talk too much, and I’m abrasive, but—”

“Alexander, mon ami,” Gil said, interrupting what was probably about to be a heartfelt if not sort of embarrassing tirade. “Your beloved is not planning on calling off the wedding, relax.”

“Laf?” Alexander questioned. “What are you—why do you have Thomas’ phone?”

“We have something we need to tell you,” Lucy replied, the devious smile on her face only growing.

“Lucy? Is this some sort of set-up?”

“Yes!” Thomas yelled. “Yes, it is! Please, Alexander, just hang up and spare me—”

“Well now I’m definitely staying on the phone,” Alexander replied. “Way to show your hand, babe.”

“Told you he’d want to hear it,” Gil said smugly.

Thomas flipped him off.

“What is it?” Alexander asked, clearly doing nothing to mask the eagerness in his voice. “Come on, Laf, you can’t hold out on me now—”

“You are such an ass,” Thomas whispered.

“Your Beau had a crush on dear Mr. Madison in college!” Gil shouted.

Lucy was laughing again.

Randy looked like he was about to pull out his video camera.

JQ was twiddling his thumbs.

James was holding his face in his hands.

And Thomas?

Thomas wanted to die.

“PAY UP, LAURENS!”


“Thomas, babe, I love you, God knows I do, and I’m mostly sorry for taking joy from what must be a really, really embarrassing moment for you, but a bet’s a bet,” Alexander said from over the phone.

Thomas could hear the grin in his voice.

He tried very, very hard not to smile back.

(He failed.)
(Fuck being in love. Seriously. Fuck it.)

“Wait, you bet on this?” JQ asked.

“Uh, hell yeah, like, four years ago—”

“Technically,” a new voice that Thomas could identify as John Laurens piped up, “the bet was that they were fucking, not that they liked each other, plus, it sounds like your boy toy was the only one who wanted to get busy, so. Suck it, Alex.”

“Dear God,” James murmured. “Alright, alright, I think that’s enough. Thomas, tell Hamilton you love him and… whatever else usually happens at the end of these sorts of phone calls—”

“Trust me, James, you don’t want to know—”

“I believe you wholeheartedly,” James insisted. “Thomas. Please, stop this before it… continues.”

“I love you,” Thomas said, taking the phone and turning off speaker phone. “I’ll, uh, see you tomorrow.”

“Or, I could sneak in toni—”

“You’d be in cuffs before you reached the fence, and I’m not bailing you out on our wedding day,” Thomas reminded.

Alexander chuckled, and Thomas could picture the face he was making—eyes crinkled, laugh lines and dimples on full display, hair falling loosely in his face—with remarkable clarity.

“I love you,” he repeated quietly.

“I love you too,” Alexander answered. “Sleep well, asshole.”

“See you… around,” Thomas said lamely.

Alexander laughed once more and hung up.

After that whole fiasco, the night had started to wind down, which then led to Thomas, lying awake in bed, sixteen hours before he was getting married.

His suit was hanging in a garment bag from the doorframe of his closet. Grey slacks, navy tailcoat, off white vest, navy-and-red patterned tie, red pocket square. Tomorrow—or later that day, really—a rose would be pinned to his lapel and he’d walk down the aisle, arm and arm with Alexander.

He pulled his phone out and pressed call.

There was an answer not a moment later.

“Hey,” Thomas whispered, aware that his drawl was more pronounced with the lack of sleep. “I just needed to hear your voice.”

Thomas had been asleep for an hour when he got the first text.
From: caffeine fiend <3

I really hope you’re not going to leave me at the altar

I’d m u r d e r y o u

But seriously Thomas

Fuck Thomas what if something like the shooting happens again I can't go through it again I had to wait in the waiting room for TEN HOURS like some third rate hooker

Don’t make me go through that again

Don’t leave me at the altar

To: caffeine fiend <3

Alex, I love you dearly, but we were just on the phone for an hour and it’s *4 am*

Go to bed

From: caffeine fiend <3

Is that a ‘no alex I’m not going to leave you at the altar’?

I really hope it is

Thomas?

Thomaaaas

T H O M A S

Fine

Sleep

I should do that too

Nvm

I just found Cornyn’s old essays

Petition to send them corrected and proof-read to him

*proof-reada

*proof-read damnit

Petition signed
To: caffeine fiend <3

Wait Alexander no

From: caffeine fiend <3

ALEXANDER YES

Turns out Alexander no was correct because I tried to get to my desk but I stubbed my toe on the chair and it hurts really bad so there goes /that/ plan

Here’s to hoping I can still walk down the aisle

To: caffeine fiend <3

My God.

Alexander had never been a sentimental man. He’d never laid in bed at night and imagined grand ceremonies and candle-light dinners and meeting The One. He didn’t sit around thinking about little babies with his eyes or nurseries decorated in pastels or family holidays. He was sure, if someone wanted to, they could psychoanalyze the shit out of that, but Alexander didn’t pay much attention to it.

Funnily enough, he was paying attention to it now, because he was pretty sure it was all about to go swirling down the drain.

They were walking each other down the aisle. With no bride to be seen, no parents present to give anyone away, they’d decided this would be best.

Arm in arm, down an aisle littered with red and white rose petals towards Washington, who stood under a massive arch wrapped in honeysuckle and hummingbird vine.

It took all of Alexander’s concentration to actually make it to the altar. Everytime he glanced to his right, he’d see Thomas, the cut of his suit and the wind in his hair and the smile on his face, and he’d have to forcefully remind himself that he couldn’t just stop right there, that he had to keep walking.

He was pretty sure the feeling was mutual, if Thomas’ sideways glances and sequential stutter-steps were anything to go by.

By the time they made it to the arch, Alexander felt almost drunk on it all, on the giddiness in his bones and the smell of flowers in the summer air and the weight of Thomas’ hand in his and the way Thomas’ eyes creased at the edges.

He was so caught up in it all that he missed the dearly beloved.

“The grooms have each chosen to recite their own vows of commitment to each other,” Washington said, finally snapping Alexander out of his haze. “Secretary Hamilton, if you would.”
Alexander cleared his throat and resisted the urge to wipe his hands on his pants as he stared up at Thomas. “So,” he began, wincing at the casual filler word.

Thomas minutely shook his head and laughed through his teeth, his eyes shining with what Alexander distantly recognised to be tears.

“I, Alexander Hamilton,” he began again, “vow to take you, Thomas Jefferson, exactly as you are. I vow to take your virtues and your vices in equal measure, and I offer you mine in return. I vow to always be by your side, no matter what may lie ahead of us in the future. I vow to provide you with any help or comfort you may need, and I vow to turn to you when I need those in return. I vow to strive to make every day we share together better than the one before it, and above all, I vow to love you, as infinitely and unconditionally as I am capable. I’m yours, Thomas,” he said quietly, squeezing Thomas’ hand, “for as long as you’ll have me. This I do solemnly vow.”

There was quiet on the grounds for a moment, and then Washington cleared his throat. “President Jefferson, your vows,” he said.

Thomas blinked twice, a slight blush rising on his cheeks. “I, Thomas Jefferson vow to take you, Alexander Hamilton,” he stated, and Alexander felt his own cheeks heat up as Thomas drew out his name a little, “as my husband, my confidant, my most trusted advisor, my partner in all things. Loving all that I know of you, and knowing I will love all that I shall come to know, I vow to stand by you and for you and with you from now until my dying breath. I vow to have faith in you, to respect you, and to support you through all life may bring us. I vow to ask for forgiveness and give it in return, to remain loyal and true, and to walk with you in our mutual pursuit of happiness. This I do solemnly swear.”

Alexander bit his lip and rolled his eyes up to the heavens, praying that the tears he could feel welling in his eyes didn’t slip down his cheeks.

“The grooms shall now exchange rings,” Washington said. Alexander managed to tear his eyes away from Thomas just long enough to see the proud smile on his face. “Mr. Laurens, I believe you’re holding President Jefferson’s ring.”

Alexander heard John rummaging through his pocket and rolled his eyes with a smirk.

Thomas scoffed inaudibly in reply, and John handed the ring to Alexander.

“Secretary Hamilton,” Washington continued. “If you would repeat after me. With this ring, I do wed.”

“With this ring, I do wed.”

“And with it I do bestow.”

“And with it I do bestow.”

“All the treasures of my hands, mind, and heart.”

“All the treasures of my hands, mind, and heart,” Alexander finished, slipping the band onto Thomas’ finger.

“Speaker Madison, if you would present Secretary Hamilton’s ring,” Washington said.

James quickly handed Thomas a ring, and Alexander felt his heart skip a beat as Thomas took his left hand.
“Mr. President, if you would repeat after me. With this ring, I do wed.”

“With this ring, I do wed,” Thomas repeated slowly, his eyes never leaving Alexander’s.

“And with it I do bestow.”

“And with it I do bestow.”

“All the treasures of my hands, mind, and heart.”

“All the treasures of my hands, mind, and heart.”

Alexander knew Thomas was speaking at a normal volume, but at that moment, as the ring was placed on his finger, it almost felt like a whisper, something intimate and sacred between just the two of them.

“Gentlemen,” Washington continued. “You may kiss the groom.”

It was seamless. Perfect. They came together in a way that spoke of years of practice, of devotion, like the sea meeting the shore. Effortless. Inevitable.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” Washington stated as they pulled away, “it is my great honour to present to you the President and First Gentleman of the United States.”

The crowd applauded.

Cameras flashed.

Alexander and Thomas walked back down the aisle, hand in hand.

Chapter End Notes

Opinions?
“So,” Alexander said as he sat in the back of the limousine, his head rested against Thomas’.

“So,” Thomas repeated, a little smirk on his lips.

Alexander blushed and whacked his shoulder. “Shut up, asshole,” he muttered. “We’re married, you’re supposed to be nice to me.”

Thomas kissed him quickly. “Better?”

“Much,” Alexander agreed. “Actually, that’s what I was going to mention before someone interrupted me. We’ve got forty-five minutes before the reception, which is plenty of time for—”

“No.”

“But Thomas—”

“No,” Thomas repeated.

Alexander huffed and crossed his arms. “You look really nice, by the way. I didn’t get to say that earlier,” he muttered.

“Because we were getting married?” Thomas prompted, grinning widely.

“Got it in one, babe,” Alexander confirmed.

“You look really nice, too,” Thomas replied.

“Oh yeah?” Alexander asked, sitting up straight. “Then maybe—”

“Still no.”

“Damn it,” Alexander whispered. “You’re the worst, you know that right? We have time, and I know you want to, and you’re just sitting there, all distracting and shit, and it’s just—you’re the worst.”
“Is that why you married me?” Thomas needled, raising an eyebrow.

“Absolutely,” Alexander stated, scooching closer to Thomas. “You’re the only person who’s as intolerable as I am. It’s a match made in heaven.”

Thomas smiled and leaned down, capturing Alexander’s lips in another kiss.

He didn’t have to say anything.

They both knew he agreed.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the President and First Gentleman of the United States of America!” Laurens yelled over the microphone as Thomas and Alexander entered the room.

“It’s First Lad,” Alexander grumbled, but Thomas saw the smile on his face.

The ballroom was huge, with a dance floor in the middle and massive centerpieces of white roses on each of the tables, and at the head of the room stood a long table in front of yet another arch.

Laurens stood at the center, holding a mic and a champagne flute. “Now, he continued, “as our esteemed gentlemen of the hour make their way to the front, I’d like to make a short toast—short because I’ve been told this is a formal reception, so I’m not allowed to tell any long, embarrassing stories about Ham Slice over there. So, instead, I’m going to say some short, probably meaningless words about my best friend Alexander that he will no doubt give me critiques over after all of this because he’s just that sort of guy.”

“Did you sign off on this?” Thomas asked Alexander, who shook his head.

“So Alexander is… the most all or nothing guy I’ve ever met,” Laurens stated, “in every single way you can think of. The guy has never even met a grey area. He’ll go on about how he avoids superlatives or some shi—stuff like that, but if you looked up the word extreme in the dictionary, you’d see this guy’s face plastered right next to the definition.”

There were some titters throughout the ballroom, a few nods.

“What I’m trying to say is, when Alexander loves you, he really loves you,” Laurens said, grinning at Alexander over the mic. “He’s not—he’s not faking it, it’s not a short-term fling. He’s not half-doing it—hell, he’s not capable of half-doing it. When Alexander Hamilton says he loves you, he does, and he’s prepared to do every thoughtless, reckless, stupid thing in the universe to prove it, and to show it. Basically, Thomas—I can call you that now, right? You married my best friend, so I’m going with yes—you’re so, so lucky to have him, I hope you know that, and I hope you both know you’ve got people in your corner, always.”

Thomas scoffed and averted his eyes.

Fucking dusty ballroom, making his eyes misty.

“Raise a glass,” John said. “To Thomas and Alexander!”

The ballroom cheered.

Were food testers really necessary?” Alexander asked. “Like, what if this stuff is poisoned? Now
we’ve just doomed this poor bastard.”

“Alexander, darling, A, it’s his job,” Thomas began. “B, the food is ninety-nine percent not poisoned —”

“Then why—”

“But it never hurts to be cautious,” Thomas finished. “I don’t—I don’t want to think about something happening because we didn’t do this. I don’t think—I couldn’t bear knowing—”

“Thomas, babe,” Alexander interrupted, unwittingly paraphrasing what Thomas had just said. “You’re fine. I get it. I was just wondering. Besides, you’re right. That—that’d be a bummer, frankly.”

“A pretty big bummer,” Thomas muttered.

“Like some sort of crazy, plot twist, season-finale cliffhanger. Oh no, the president is poisoned, leaving his dashing husband dramatically clinging to his body as we fade to black,” Alexander said, moving his hand in a dramatic, rainbow-like gesture and grinning. “Will he make it? Will they ever recover? Will there be some big scandalous affair that occurs while he’s in the hospital? Find out next time on Stereotypical and Dramatic Gay TV Death: West Wing Edition.”

Thomas couldn’t help the little, choked laugh that escaped him, even as he tried to stifle it around his glass.

The food testers returned with their food.

“I can’t believe you got the fucking fancy mac and cheese,” Alexander went on, gesturing at Thomas’ plate. “Like, alright, catering from the restaurant where we had our first date, that’s suitably romantic and cheesy, I can appreciate that, but then you get that stupid, stupid pasta, like an asshole. I see right through you, you know. You weren’t trying to be sentimental, you just wanted your fancy ‘white truffles and cognac’ kraft.”

Thomas stared at him for a moment. “Maybe it’s both,” he said quietly.

Alexander laughed.

“You know,” Thomas continued faux-casually, “that was the night I realized I liked you. Not even like-liked you—”

“Like-liked me? What are you, nine?”

“That was the night I realized I liked your company. I liked having you around. It scared the living hell out of me,” Thomas finished honestly, poking at his pasta.

“Hey, Thomas?” Alexander asked, placing his hand on Thomas’. Thomas looked over at him. “Yes, Alexander?”

“I like having you around, too,” Alexander replied, kissing the corner of Thomas’ mouth.

He must have, at some point, become ambidextrous, because he finished his food without ever letting go of Thomas’ hand.
“I can’t believe our first dance is to fucking Frank Sinatra,” Alexander muttered. “Like we’re from the fucking 40’s.”

“You love it,” Thomas whispered back as he led Alexander around the floor.

Alexander scoffed. “Whatever,” he said. “At least it’s not some stupid classical waltz.”

“You’re a pain, you know that?” Thomas asked as he spun Alexander out. Alexander rolled his eyes and smirked.

“Just for you, babe.”

“And that laugh, wrinkles your nose, touches my foolish heart,” Thomas hummed under his breath as he pressed another light kiss to the top of Alexander’s head.

“Are you trying to serenade me?” Alexander asked.

“Is it working?”

“Maybe.”

“Lovely, don’t you ever change, keep that breathless charm, won’t you please arrange it, ‘cos I love you, just the way you look tonight,” Thomas continued quietly, focussing on the way Alexander was biting his lip to keep from smiling. He carefully dipped him, a little smirk teasing the edge of his lips. “Just the way you look, tonight.”

Alexander scoffed and leaned up to kiss him as their audience clapped. “You’re such a fucking sap,” he murmured. “A massive, dorky, cheesy sap.”

“It’s my wedding, cut me some slack,” Thomas replied as the song changed to what Thomas recognized as Nat King Cole’s version of Unforgettable.

“I can’t believe we’re having a smooth jazz wedding,” Alexander complained.

“It’s classy, and you can’t say you don’t like it,” Thomas retorted.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Gil approaching him, Laurens on his arm. “Mon petit lion, if you don’t mind, I think I’m going to slip in and steal this dance with the President,” he said with a smile. “But I’m sure mon amour would be more than happy than you drag you around for this song, yes?”

Laurens smacked Gil on the arm. “Out of the two of us, you’re the one more likely to do the dragging. Don’t pretend you can dance, we all know you can’t,” he said.

Alexander grinned. “In that case, have at it. Thomas, dear, good luck,” he said, letting go of Thomas’ arm to take Laurens’.

Gil pouted as Laurens threw back his head and laughed.

“They are so mean to me,” he complained. “I need better friends.”

Thomas shook his head as he took Gil’s hand. “I’m leading,” he said, leaving no room for debate.

Gil groaned. “I am not that bad!”

“I’m sure Ms. Antoinette’s feet beg to differ.”
“I was seventeen!”

“And you haven’t improved since,” Thomas said, carefully guiding Gil around the room.

“You wound me, Thomas.”

“File a complaint with the embassy.”

Gil sighed, stutter-stepping to avoid crushing Thomas’ toes. “Who would’ve thought, out of all us, you and Alexander are the first to, how you say, *get hitched,*” he said casually.

Thomas stole a glance to where Alexander was laughing as he spun Laurens under his arm.

“Well,” he said. “Sometimes things just… work out.”

Gil snorted. “I am sure *working out* did help, yes,” he quipped.

Thomas hoped no one could see his blush. “You know what I mean,” he said. “I didn’t expect it either, but…”

“You wouldn’t change a thing,” Gil finished for him. “It is cliche but true.”

Thomas chuckled. “Yeah, I guess you’re right.”

“Of course I am right, Thomas. I am French, we are fluent in the language of love,” Gil replied haughtily.

Thomas rolled his eyes. “Oh yeah?” he asked. “Then how come I don’t see anything shiny on Laurens’ third finger?”

“Because I didn’t want to overshadow your special day, mon ami,” Gil answered easily, pausing their dancing for a moment to reach into his pocket and pull out a small velvet box. “Trust me, I shall wait until you and Alexandr have left, make sure you have everyone’s attention for as long as you’re here.”

“How considerate of you,” Thomas said.

“Yes, I thought so too,” Gil agreed, completely oblivious to the sarcasm (or, maybe, just purposefully ignoring it).

Thomas smiled and shook his head. “Best of luck to you,” he said as they crossed paths with Alexander and Laurens again. He stopped and touched Laurens’ on the shoulder. “Excuse me, but I’d like my husband back if it’s all the same to you.”

Alexander grinned. “Oh, possessive,” he teased, taking Thomas’ hand again.

“I think I’m allowed to want to dance with my husband on our wedding day,” Thomas said.

“I think I agree with you,” Alexander said with a wide smile.

“Well then,” Thomas said, pulling Alexander against his chest. “What are we doing just standing around, hm?”

Alexander leaned up and kissed him again as the couple started gliding across the dance floor.
“Alexander fucking Hamilton, if you shove that cake in my face, I swear to Go—”

Thomas’ words promptly dissolved into incoherent sputters as a piece of chocolate cake was smashed in his face.

■ ■ ■

“C’mon, c’mon,” Alexander insisted, tugging Thomas along by the sleeve. “We’re gonna miss our flight.”

“We’re taking Air Force One to Camp David. We can’t miss our flight—it’s literally impossible,” Thomas retorted.

“Thomas,” Alexander repeated. “Just… hurry up.”

Thomas sighed and allowed Alexander to pull him up the tarmac.

Once on the plane and out of their suits, Alexander quickly handed Thomas a sleep mask and earplugs. “Sleep,” he urged.

“Alexander, it’s seven-thirty—”

“Please?” Alexander said, eyes wide. “I just—you’re going to want to have plenty of rest for tonight, okay? I promise.”

“Alexander, I already told you, we cannot stay up all night having—”

“Not—not for— whatever, just— do it, alright? Look, even I’m doing it, so I won’t be up for you to talk to—”

“Oh no, an hour and a half of peace and quiet, whatever shall I do,” Thomas replied monotonously. Alexander glared at him.

“Fine,” Thomas said, taking the mask and earplugs and begrudgingly putting them on before leaning back in his seat. “You’re awful and I know you’re hiding something.”

He didn’t hear Alexander’s reply.

■ ■ ■

Someone was shaking him. Someone—someone was—

“Thomas! Thomas Jefferson! Wake up, asshole, we’re here,” Alexander shouted as Thomas sleepily removed his earplugs and mask.

“Really?” he asked. “How long was I out?”

“Uh, roughly?” Alexander asked. “Seven hours.”

“Seven hours?!?”

Alexander grinned widely. “Yup,” he said, offering Thomas his arm. “C’mon, sleepyhead, we’re getting breakfast.”

“Breakfast?” Thomas asked. “Alexander, love, it’s two in the morning —”
“Not quite,” Alexander replied, snickering.

“What—”

It was then that Thomas realized the cabin was lit up from natural light as well as the bulbs in the ceiling, and he cautiously peeked out the window.

Alexander was right. It was morning.

“How the hell—”

“Just come on, okay? We’ve got reservations, and they were a *pain* to make.”

Alexander led Thomas off the plane, hand in hand, and as Thomas ducked out into the sun he realized where they were.

“*Paris?*” he asked, eyes wide.

“Yup,” Alexander said noncommittally. “Pick up your jaw, babe. It’d hardly be dignifying for people to see the President catching flies in his mouth.”

“We’re in Paris,” Thomas repeated.

“Last I checked, yes,” Alexander replied, walking with Thomas down the tarmac and to a black SUV.

“How?” Thomas asked. “We—they said we couldn’t—for security and—”

“I have my ways,” Alexander answered cryptically. “And we’re only here for a few hours, and no one should know, and there’s *so much* security *everywhere*, but… Surprise?”

Thomas tugged him into a kiss by the lapels. “My God, I love you,” he whispered.


“Are we getting breakfast at the *Eiffel Tower*?”

“Possibly,” Alexander said after a moment of silence.

“Oh my God.”

“What, you’ve never done that before?” Alexander asked.

“No! Have you?”

“Oh, God, no. I just thought it’d be something you’d done, Mr. Oh-Yeah-Let-Me-Casually-Order-$100-French-Food-On-A-First-Date,” Alexander countered.

Thomas couldn’t even find it within himself to roll his eyes. “You’re incredible,” he said sincerely as they were escorted out of the car and up to the doors.

Alexander blushed and looked away. “Shut up,” he muttered as they headed up the elevator.

They arrived at the second floor quickly, and the elevator doors opened to reveal what Thomas had to guess was the restaurant, except it was completely empty, sparse, and undecorated, save for a man
holding a violin who stood beside single table in the middle, laid with a white cloth and topped with a candle and single, red rose.

Thomas felt tears bloom in the corner of his eyes.

“So I know it’s not the top of the Eiffel Tower, or dinner, or a string quartet, or twelve dozen roses, or a proposal, but there is a candle, so…” Alexander trailed off, gesturing towards the table. “I hope it’ll do?”

Thomas couldn’t stop smiling as he sat down.

“It’s perfect,” he breathed out.

He meant it.

Chapter End Notes

hey guys! it's gabe, what's up?

so here the deal.
we're going on hiatus.
not a long hiatus! just. like. a month, to pre-write some stuff and get work and studies and life under control. i hope this chapter is enough to tide you over in that time, and we're both so, so grateful for all the support we've gotten so far. thank you all, truly.
Chapter Summary

The year is 2014, and little over a week ago it was revealed that Democrat Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton, is in a relationship with staunch Republican Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson. Now, it’s time for the midteeeeeeeerms!

Chapter Notes

Y’ALL THOUGHT WE WERE GONE?
well we Were and still Are.
i wrote this in 20 minutes.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Hey, shithead!” Hamilton yelled as he opened the door and dropped his bag on the floor.

Thomas looked over his shoulder and groaned. The little prick hadn’t even had the decency to hang up his hat or coat, just tossed it all on the floor next to his ratty old briefcase.

“So,” Hamilton continued, plopping himself down on the couch next to Thomas, a stupidly wide grin on his face. “Did you like my performance?”

Thomas narrowed his eyes. “You call going on CNN and yelling for forty-five minutes a ‘performance’?” he asked incredulously.

“Yup.”

“Then no,” Thomas replied shortly. “Frankly, I hated it.”

“Good,” Hamilton snapped. “That means I was doing my job.”

“Oh, really now?” Thomas retorted. “Last I heard, your job was to manage the finances and overall economy of our great nation, not to shout at Wolf Blitzer until his beard fell out.”

“My job is to encourage the American people to do their civic duty,” Hamilton answered. “Even if some people have made it their goal to disenfranchise and dissuade the public in some sort of disgusting, heartless power grab, I am not going to let that stop me from promoting the people’s right to vote in a free and fair election—”

“Alright, alright,” Thomas interrupted. “Are you capable of being quiet for three seconds?!”

Hamilton crossed his arms and raised his eyebrows, but remained silent.

Thomas wanted to rip the little goblin’s hair out.

Was this going to be his life? Was this what he’d been doomed to? Was this God’s punishment? Oh,
“I despise you,” Thomas stated plainly.

Hamilton’s smile dripped with sarcasm. “I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

For a moment, the living room was silent. Then:

“Have you voted, then?”

Thomas scoffed. “Of course,” he replied with a roll of his eyes. “I went and voted early last week.”

Another beat of silence. “You?”


“Confident,” Thomas answered.

"I wouldn't be if I were you."

Thomas scoffed again. “Hamilton, you’ve seen the numbers as often as I have,” he said, only somewhat condescendingly. “You know who votes and who doesn’t. I’m sorry, your people? Don’t.”

The immigrant looked like he was about to explode.

“They will,” he argued. “You—you lot think you’re invincible, you think you can win on—on fear and hate, but guess what, jackass? We’re over it! The American people are over it. They’re going to vote—hell, they are voting, I saw it myself, and you did too! The people are active, they care. You guys aren’t going to coast by on bigotry and apathy voters, and if you really think so little of the citizens you are here to serve—”

Thomas stood up, rolled his eyes, and made his way to the kitchen.

He’d heard enough.

From: caffeine fiend

/twenty-four/ governors

a majority in the senate

a majority in thirty-three state governments

a close minority in the house

and you thought people weren’t going to vote!

THE PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN, JEFFERSON

GET FUCKED

Chapter End Notes
in case you missed the underlying message...
GO VOTE
you heard me, americans.
VOTE
V O T E
DO IT
PLEASE
I B EG
NEITHER OF US CAN, BUT YOU KNOW WE WANT TO
DO IT FOR US
FOR THOMAS
FOR ALEXANDER
FOR THE ARMADILLO FROM CHRISTMAS
JUST
please
vote
thanks
“Mr. President?” Sally asked, peering through the door. “Your husband is here to see you.”

Thomas had to take a moment to tamp down the smile that began to split his face the moment he heard the ‘h’ word.

“Tell him I can’t mention anything about the immigration bill right now, he’s just going to have to wait until dinner,” he replied.

“You can tell me whatever you want, you little shit!” Alexander yelled from behind the door. “I’m your husband!”

Sally grinned and rolled her eyes. “He also has… what is it? Alexander?”

Alexander said something that Thomas couldn’t understand.

“He says he has French onion soup and crusty bread for you,” Sally continued, “But he’s not giving it to you unless you let him in.”

Thomas debated it for a moment. “Fine,” he finally said, “But I have a press conference in forty-five minutes, so we have to be quick.”

Sally raised her eyebrows and Thomas narrowed his eyes. “Don’t,” he said. “Just… let him in.”

Sally scoffed. “Sure thing, boss,” she said.

Alexander blew into the room a moment later, a clear Tupperware of soup topped with a cardboard box full of what Thomas knew to be crusty bread in one hand and his briefcase in the other.

“How are you?” he asked, passing the food to Thomas, who opened each container carefully and allowed himself a moment to just enjoy the scent of two of his favourite comfort foods.
Thomas glanced up at him. “You know,” he said vaguely. “Busy.”

Alexander rolled his eyes and tugged a chair up in front of the Resolute desk. “You know that you can actually tell me stuff, right? It’s not above my clearance level or anything. Spousal privileges and all that,” he said with a smirk.

Thomas scoffed and rolled his eyes. “You know what’s in the bill,” he said evenly. “Hell, you practically wrote the damn thing.”

“Thomas, babe, I dunno if you’ve noticed, but I’m not a Senator—”

“Oh, you might as well be,” Thomas countered. “You’re on the phone with them every night—”

“I’m a good writer, and they’re allowed to consult with experts—”

Thomas rolled his eyes and let Alexander’s impassioned tirade wash over him as he took a bite of his soup. And then—

“Where’s your food?” he asked.

“Huh?”

“Your food. You only brought one thing of soup. Where’s yours?”

“Oh, I already ate,” Alexander said flippantly.

Thomas narrowed his eyes.

“I did!”

Thomas’ eyebrows lifted and his lips pursed.

“Okay, so, maybe it wasn’t a lot, but we’re not all six feet of muscle and hair gel and poor political decisions—”

Thomas interrupted him by breaking a piece of his bread in half and handing it to him, and pushing the container of soup to the middle of the desk.

Alexander glared at him for a moment.

Thomas just nodded towards the soup.

Alexander sighed and dipped his bread in the soup before continuing his rant.

This time, Thomas didn’t try and hide his smile.

“Tomorrow, the President is supposed to weigh in on the recent Senate immigration bill that would make it easier for refugees to receive asylum. It would also increase the number of legal immigrants allowed in the country from places like Central and South America and the Middle East each year. The President’s spouse, First Gentleman Alexander Hamilton, has been a vocal supporter of the bill, he himself being an immigrant from the Caribbean island of—”
Thomas clicked off the television and ran a hand over his face, leaning back into the pillows against his headboard.

These were the moments that tore him up inside.

Years ago, this wouldn’t have even been a discussion. He’d know what he believed, he’d know what his party believed, he would have trusted that belief, and he would have followed through with it.

He knew what was expected of him.

In the shower, Alexander was singing as the water ran, his voice somehow both reedy and rough, clipping over consonants and grating over vowels.

Thomas restrained himself from tugging at his hair.

Two perfectly crafted statements lay on his dresser.

One for each side of his mind.

His speech writers had looked at him like he was insane when he’d requested them both.

The bathroom door swung open with the sort of gusto and gravitas only Alexander could achieve.

Thomas hadn’t even heard the water shut off.


Thomas sighed and glanced over at him, dressed in a fluffy white robe (Thomas had said it came with the house—it was a lie, but he knew it was the only way Alexander would accept the gift), his hair tied up in a towel. He was squinting—he’d been doing a lot of that, lately, but every time Thomas insisted he go get his eyes checked he just huffed and rolled his eyes.

“I’m fine,” he said. “Tired.”

Alexander’s eyes narrowed further, this time from skepticism.

“Allright,” he conceded after a moment. “Scoot over, then. You’re hogging the bed.”

“You’re one to talk.”

“Just—scooch. I’m getting cold.”

“Might I recommend pants, then?”

Alexander scowled and quickly tugged on a pair of flannel bottoms under the robe. “Okay,” he said. “Now you can move.”

Thomas finally moved a bit to the right, allowing Alexander to crawl in bed beside him and burrow in next to him, tangling their legs together and burying his face in Thomas’ shoulder.

Thomas huffed a little laugh.

“Yeah, you need me to scoot over so you can use none of the extra room, and instead choose to use me as a body pillow.”
“Hush,” Alexander muttered.

These were the moments Thomas cherished the most. The quiet times, when they let their walls down, when they didn’t have to be the Jefferson and Hamilton, but could just be Thomas and Alexander.

“I love you,” he whispered. “You know that, right?”

“Like the back of my hand, sweetheart,” Alexander answered, placing a soft kiss to Thomas’ shoulder.

Thomas sighed and tried to force his mind to rest.

President Jefferson States Senate Immigration Bill ‘Needs Work, but is Ultimately the Best Direction for the Country’.

“President Jefferson, the latest progress on the trade discussions with the EU,” Secretary Dexter said, placing a folder on Thomas’ already cluttered desk.

Thomas sighed and glanced at the document. “And this is taking the recent Brexit vote into consideratio—”

“Of course, Mr. President,” Dexter replied, his voice clipping the ends of his words.

Thomas knew that relations with his Treasury Secretary were… strained, ever since the unfortunate mockingbird incident, and that Alexander's presence didn't do much to help matters, but Thomas still trusted him to do his job.

Did mean he couldn't offer it to Alexander as light reading later.

Part of being a good leader was using every available resource to achieve the best results.

“Thomas! Mon ami! It is so good to see you, even if it's under such unfortunate circumstances!” Gil exclaimed, holding Thomas by the shoulders before pulling him into a hug.

“Unfortunate? You know something I don’t Motier?” Thomas asked, only half joking.

Gil scoffed. “I only mean that I should not have to arrange a diplomatic meeting in order to see my friend,” he explained. “I’d much prefer it if we weren’t required to wear these suits and mind our tongues.”

Thomas rolled his eyes. “How’re things with Laurens?” he asked.

Gil sighed happily. “We are to be married in the spring,” he said. “And call him John. He’s practically your brother-in-law.”

“That’s quite an unorthodox definition of a brother, Gil.”

Gil just laughed. “Now, I hear there is actual business meant to be discussed at this meeting, oui?” he asked, opening his briefcase with a grin.
Thomas grinned and nodded. “Macron is still visiting next month, right?” he asked. “To discuss the climate accords?”

“Last I heard, that was the plan.”

“Last you heard?” Thomas asked. “Gil, you’re the French Ambassador to the United States—”

“Which is why I hear fairly frequently, Mr. President,” Gil countered easily. “Speaking of, I’m supposed to let you know that the French government urges you to back the Congressional immigration and refugee bill. Honestly, Thomas, the refugee crisis is only getting worse, and not only is your country bigger than all of Europe, excluding Russia, of course, but you also have so many more resources, and if America is going to be the moral compass of the world, you must take some sort of action—”

“Gil,” Thomas interrupted.

“Yes?”

“I can’t—I just—”

“Why not? You are the president, non?”

“You know that’s not how that works,” Thomas countered. Gil huffed and rolled his eyes. Honestly, Thomas considered it a miracle that anything ever got done.

 Александр emerged from the closet holding a pile of fleece sheets and woolen blankets, looking a bit overwhelmed.

 “Alexander? Are you alright?” Thomas asked, furrowing his brows as Alexander teetered his way to the bed.

 “’M good, thanks,” Alexander grumbled from behind his blanket pile. “’S just getting cold, so I thought I’d put on the warm sheets—”

 “You know we have people for that, right?” Thomas asked incredulously.

 “Can a man not just put on his own fuzzy sheets?” Alexander retorted. “I’m not—I’m not fucking Cleopatra, I don’t need to be waited on hand and foot all the time.”

 “Alright, alright, fine,” Thomas conceded, holding his hands up.

 Alexander scoffed and unceremoniously dropped the linens on the bed. “Do you even know how to put on sheets?” he questioned.

 Thomas wrinkled up his nose in distaste. “Of course I know how to put on sheets. What, do you think my mother put the sheets on my dorm bed in college and I just haven’t washed them or changed mattresses since?”

 “I thought you might have, like, a housekeeper. I’ve never seen you change sheets—”

 “Alexander, darling, how long have we lived together?”

 “Roughly two and a half years,” Alexander replied slowly.
“And, in that time, have you ever seen a housekeeper at our house?”

“Well—”

“Our house, not the White House.”

“No…”

Thomas huffed and rolled his eyes, kissing Alexander’s temple. “You’re impossible,” he muttered. “Now, come here. As much as I’d love to see you fight to reach all the corners of the bed at once, I feel like that wouldn’t be the loving husband thing to do. Give me that end of the sheet, let’s go.”

Thomas was elbow deep in a briefing over the Iran nuclear deal when his phone started ringing.

Really, it was sort of annoying. He was president, didn’t people have any respect for his work hours?

Thomas quickly pulled out the phone and checked the caller ID.

Martha Wayles.

“Martha, I’m pretty sure I was promised at least three years before we started discussing any more campaigning. In case you haven’t noticed, I’m still recovering from the last round of nonsense—”

“Excuse me, is this President Jefferson?” a man’s voice asked.

Not Martha.

Definitely not Martha.

“Uh, yes?” Thomas asked, turning away from his computer and paperwork. “Who is this?”

“We collected this number from Ms. Martha Wayles’ phone. She was your campaign manager, yes?” the man continued.

“She is, yes,” Thomas insisted, growing angry. “Who are you? Why do you care? What’s going on with Martha?”

“Sir, please, my name is Joseph Caterwall, I’m a doctor at Sibley Memorial Hospital. I know you’re a busy, um, I know that you’re doing some very important work, but we need you here as soon possible,” the man said.

Thomas felt a lump welling up in his throat.

“Why?” he demanded to know. “What’s wrong with Martha?”

“Sir—”

“What’s wrong with Martha?”

“Mr. President, Ms. Wayles has just died in a car accident. We need you to come to pick up your daughter.”

Chapter End Notes
mwahahahaha

If you wanna yell at me (Gabe) on tumblr, find me at allonsy-gabriel!!!
In Which Mary Jefferson Comes In Ten Years Late With A Starbucks: “So what’d I miss?”

Chapter Summary

Time for the M-bomb! (No, not the My Immortal one. Ring’s been forbidden from writing it. Ring is disappointed, but Ring doesn’t want to face Gabe’s wrath.) (No one wants to face Gabe’s wrath, tbh. It’s got a .2% survival rate.)

Chapter Notes

Hey! Sorry this chapter is so short, and sorry for that last cliff hanger, but! I really think y’all are gonna like where all of this is headed!

Warning: none of this is accurate. This isn't how any of this works. I know. I'm sorry. Please just... suspend disbelief a little... and enjoy the story...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“A car...” Thomas said, his voice trailing off. He shook his head. “And you’re sure it’s Martha Wayles? Absolutely, one-hundred percent sure—”

“Yes, Mr. President. There was a collision at the Minnesota-Benning’s Road intersection. The other driver ran a red light and hit the car on the driver’s side. Ms. Wayles died upon impact.”

There was a pause.

“I’m sorry, sir, I know this must be difficult, but we need you to come pick up your daughter—”

“Why do you keep saying that?” Thomas asked. “I don’t—I don’t have a daughter. Martha has —had a kid, yes, but—”

“You’re referring to Mary Elizabeth Wayles, correct?” the doctor asked.

“I think that’s her name,” Thomas said slowly, wracking his brain. Yeah, that was it. Mary. Kid on the couch. Looked nothing like Martha, watched silly YouTube videos...

“So you know the child?”

“Barely—listen, Doctor, Martha’s parents live in Ohio, I can give you their number, I’m sure they would be more than willing to come get Mary—”

“Ms. Wayles’ parents passed away a year and a half ago, sir,” the doctor interrupted. “We already looked into it. And besides that, you are the girl’s closest living relative.”

“I promise you, I am not,” Thomas repeated.

“You’re listed on the girl’s birth certificate as her father,” the doctor said. “And in the mother’s will.”
Thomas balked. “Excuse me,” he said. “Can I have a moment, please?”

“Of course, sir, but we really do need the girl to be picked up as soon as possible—”

Thomas sat his phone down.

A daughter.

That night had so long ago—at least ten years, if not more—and Thomas…

Suffice to say, it wasn’t one of his proudest moments.

He’d been up to his elbows in denial, in self-loathing and disgust, so desperate to prove to both himself and everyone else that he was normal, and…

He shuddered at the memory.

And now? Now, apparently, he had a child, a daughter, that Martha had never told him about. That little girl on the couch, with her curls and her smile. It’d all been so familiar. Nothing like Martha, but something so similar…

To him.

Oh God.

He was going to be sick.

“Mr. President? Sir?” the doctor was asking—Thomas could just barely hear his voice through the phone’s speaker.

“Y-Yes?” Thomas stuttered, holding the phone back up to his ear. “Sorry about that. I-I’ll send someone down to pick up the girl immediately.”

“Sir, it has to be you. You’re her legal guardian—”

“Already?” Thomas whispered. “Surely, there’s some sort of process—”

“You were named in Ms. Wayles’ will, and on the girl’s birth certificate. I’m afraid you and your spouse are the only people eligible to pick up the girl.”

Thomas about choked on his own tongue.

Alexander.

How was he going to do this? How was he going to tell Alexander?

How would Alexander react, knowing that Thomas had made such a mistake, had done something so…

Despicable.

Thomas had heard the tales of Alexander’s father, of how he’d left Alexander and his mother with nothing but shame and broken hearts. How was Thomas any better? How would Alexander be able to look him in the eye, knowing what Thomas had done?

“A-Alright,” he finally murmured. “I’ll be there—I’ll be there as soon as I can.”
He hung up with a click.

He didn’t take a motorcade. In fact, he didn’t even tell anyone but his head of Secret Service and Sally that he was leaving.

He still knew how to drive, he still knew how to use Google Maps.

He didn’t… he didn’t want to freak the kid out any more than necessary.

The kid.

*His kid.*

He had a child. A small, human person he had to protect, to raise, to care for.

Thomas shocked his head as he made his way down the hospital corridor. His hand shook where he clutched the handle of his cane—he still had to use it in private, though he made a large push to go without it for public functions.

He was glad for it, now. It was something to hold on to, something to steady him.

God, what was he doing?

He soon rounded the corner into a drab, generic hospital sitting room—slate grey carpet, dark blue chairs, sand coloured side tables, unrealistic fake plants, grey-blue-and-beige coloured abstract paintings. The only spot of real *true* colour in the room came from the pink hoodie, blue backpack, and periwinkle sneakers of the little girl sat on one of the chairs with her legs curled up and her face buried in her knees.

Her frizzy brown curls were tied up on the top of her head, her large, bright purple glasses sat on the chair next to her, and Thomas knew, if she looked up, he’d be greeted by a pair of bloodshot brown eyes and a face full of freckles.

His eyes. Martha’s freckles. His nose. Martha’s smile.

*His daughter.*

He tried to clear his throat as gently as possible as he took another step closer to the girl.

She didn’t react.

He took another step forwards and coughed quietly.

She didn’t move.

“Mary?” he finally whispered, wringing his hands awkwardly on top of his cane.

Mary’s eyes snapped up to meet him, red and puffy with tears that left shiny tracks across her cheeks. “Mr. Jefferson,” she muttered, rubbing at her face. “Are—are you here because—because of my mom?”

Thomas nodded. Mary took a deep breath. “She’s—she’s already—”

The words cracked like they were splintering off in her throat.
“I know,” Thomas murmured.

“Then why are you here?” Mary pressed, her words sharp as she curled in tighter on herself.

Thomas inhaled for a moment and steeled himself as he lowered himself into the chair next to her.

“Mary,” he said slowly, feeling the way the name rolled off his tongue, “do you know anything about your father?”

“He’s not around anymore,” she replied. “I don’t—I don’t think he even knows about me. Mom—Momma said he… he was a good man, but not the right man.”

“So you don’t… you don’t know who he is?”

“No…” Mary trailed off, staring at Thomas with wide eyes. She was a smart girl—she had to be, with her parents—and Thomas could tell that things were going to fall into place at any moment.

“Mary,” Thomas repeated. “I… I’m, your dad.”

The girl’s eyes looked like they were about to pop out of her head.

“You were right, your mother didn’t tell me. I—I didn’t know, actually, until the hospital called, but, Mary, I promise, if I had known—”

“You… you’re my dad?” she repeated quietly.

Thomas scratched the back of his head. “Yes…” he muttered.

“You—I have a—and—”

“Mary, Mary, honey, I need you to take deep breaths for me,” Thomas interrupted, lightly placing his hand on the girl’s shoulder. “Come on, that’s it. In through the nose, out through the mouth, just like that.”

He continued to coach the girl until her breathing leveled out.

And then, all at once, the floodgates opened, and the girl was crawling into his lap and burying her face into his shoulder as she cried.

Thomas froze for a moment before raising his hand to rub across her back, making soft shushing noises like he’d heard Lu make at Katy and Emmy. Slowly, the girl seemed to come back to herself, the shaking and sobbing quieting as the last of the tears seeped into Thomas’ shirt.

“There, alright. It’s okay, Mary,” Thomas murmured. “You—you’re going to be alright. I promise.”

The girl nodded, and Thomas inhaled slowly. “Let’s get out of here, okay? I just—let me sign a few papers, get your stuff, and we can leave okay?”

“But Momma—”

“I’ll take care of it,” Thomas said.

Tears began to well up in the girl’s eyes again, but she bit her lip and nodded again, climbing off of Thomas’ lap and carefully pulling on her shoes as Thomas went up to the reception desk.

They’d be okay.
He’d make sure of it.

Chapter End Notes

Please tell me what you think!

Update: Benjamin Hill has created this beautiful piece of art for this chapter. <3
In Which Things Proceed To Go From Baffling To Complicated, Pass Worrying, And Stop At FUBAR

Chapter by Sanna Black Slytherin

Chapter Summary

Thomas shares the news. Alexander reacts both better and worse than Thomas had imagined.

Chapter Notes

So! Ring is… kind of back? Yay! And with a chapter, co-written by the both of us, this time.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The drive back to the White House was… solemn, at best.

Mary had taken to clinging to Thomas like a limpet, although he didn’t know if it was genuinely because he was her father, or if it was purely due to her needing physical comfort.

As for Thomas, he was doing his absolute best not to dwell on the finer details or repercussions of what had just happened.

He had a daughter and they were going home. That was what was important. Whatever happened past that…

Thomas blinked rapidly, trying to dispel the tears that were gathering in his eyes.

Crying would do him no good.

Alexander had texted him seventeen times in the past thirty minutes, asking where he was, amongst other things.

Every time his phone buzzed, Thomas’ stomach flipped. Because as much as he’d like to ignore it, facing Alexander was inevitable.

Thomas just didn’t know if he could do it.

Mary sniffled from her place beside him. “Am I… am I going to stay with you, now?” she asked quietly, her voice muffled from where her face was buried in Thomas’ sleeve.

“Yeah, kid, you are,” Thomas replied quietly, trying to decide between keeping both hands on the wheel and trying to comfort the girl in the passenger seat.

Fuck.
He was a father.

There was no way in hell he was ready for this. He was unprepared, ridiculously so, and yet there was no turning back now.

“We’ll have someone bring your things from home over, we’ll get a bedroom all set up,” he continued. “It’ll… it’ll be different, but…. It’ll be okay.”

Not good.

Thomas didn’t think he’d ever be good.

But, God above, did he hope he’d be enough. Enough for this little girl who was now his.

“Okay,” Mary muttered.

“And you can still go to the same school,” Thomas continued, noticing his own babbling and unable to stop it. “We—we’re going to try and keep this whole thing under wraps. Not because of you, just because… it’s complicated…”

“I get it,” Mary whispered. “You’re the president. Everything is complicated when you’re the president.”

Thomas couldn’t help but chuckle at that.

“Is Alexander nice?” Mary finally murmured again after a moment.

For a moment, Thomas paused.

“I mean, you’re… nice. Momma likes—liked you, and you’re the president, so you’ve got to be a good person, probably. Right?”

“I like to think I’m a pretty good person,” Thomas admitted. He didn’t comment on the girl’s assumptions that just because someone was president meant they were good. No need to remove the rose tinted glasses just yet.

Especially not now.

“Alright, I thought so too,” Mary said. “But Alexander… he seems… snappish.”

“Snappish?”

The girl finally sat up a bit, wiping her eyes. “I dunno,” she muttered. “He just… he snaps. A lot. I see him on the news, sometimes, and when I had to sit in Momma’s office during campaign time, and he always seems… mad. And he yells a lot. And…”

The girl trailed off.

“Yes?” Thomas prompted cautiously.

“I don’t think he likes me,” Mary finally admitted. “But if you—if you’re my dad, and he’s your husband, then—”

“Then he’ll get over it,” Thomas interrupted. “Alexander is… loud. And, you’re right, he can be a bit snappish sometimes, but he’s good too, Mary. And I don’t think he doesn’t like you. I think he was just… stressed out.”
“He must be stressed out a lot,” Mary mumbled. Thomas smiled. “I actually think you two will get along, if you just give each other a chance.”

“How would you know?” Mary asked. “You’ve met me four times.” Thomas blinked rapidly, trying to process the sudden shift in Mary’s demeanor.

“Uh,” he said, rather unintelligently. “Call it a hunch.”

That seemed to appease the girl for the moment, and she leaned back against the car seat. Thomas couldn’t help but note the change in the atmosphere.

Thomas did his best to sneak he and Mary in through the “back door” of the White House—a secret sort of entrance that was the result of an old service tunnel being turned into an impromptu garage that led straight to the residence—but he should’ve known it would be a moot point.

He was the president.

It was hardly a sneaky occupation.

They were caught almost immediately by Alexander’s chief of staff, Angelica’s sister Eliza, who glanced between Thomas and Mary for a moment before pulling out her cell phone.

“Who are you calling?” Thomas asked quickly.

“Your husband, sir—”


“Sir, Alexander has been worried sick—”

“Eliza—”

“First you go missing, and then we all hear the news about Martha, and Alexander didn’t know what to think—”

“I know, Eliza!” Thomas snapped. Eliza lowered her phone slowly, one eyebrow raising.

“I know, Eliza, really, but please. Just tell him to meet me in our living room, okay? Tell him I’m fine, but—”

“Why don’t you tell him yourself?” Eliza snapped. She looked down at Mary again. “If this is what I think it might be, he deserves to hear it from you, not from me.”

“That’s why I need him in the living room!” Thomas whisper-shouted. “So I can tell him!”

Eliza stared at him for another moment before pressing a button on her phone and holding it back up to her ear. “Yes, Alexander, it’s me. Yes, I’ve found him. He’s going to meet you in your living room. He has something he wants to tell you. No, I can’t say. Alexander. Alexander. Alexander! Just meet him in the living room. Alright. Bye.”
She turned back to Thomas, her lips pursed and her eyebrows raised. “Okay then,” she said. “He’ll be there. Good luck.”

She looked at Mary again and bit her lip before crouching down in front of the girl. “I’m so sorry about your mother,” she whispered. “But everything’s going to be okay. Your dad, he’s… difficult, but he’s a good person, alright?”

Mary nodded.

Eliza kissed her on the forehead and smiled. “Welcome to the White House,” she whispered, before turning on her heel and heading back down the hallway.


Eliza didn’t turn back.

Alexander was waiting in the living room, just like Eliza said, mindlessly typing something on his phone and tapping his foot, obviously nervous.

Thomas took a deep breath and cleared his throat.

His husband looked up immediately, and a moment later had Thomas wrapped up in a hug. “What the hell, you asshole?” he asked a moment later. “Would it have killed you to just text me back like, I dunno, a normal sane person ?”

Thomas huffed a small laugh and tilted his head to the side, rubbing his neck. “Actually, there was, uh, a reason I didn’t reply.”

“Yeah, and?” Alexander prompted.

Thomas took a step back and gestured to Mary, who was still standing in the doorway.

“You know Mary, yes?” he asked.

Alexander blinked twice. “Uh, yeah,” he said slowly. “You’re, um, Martha’s kid, right? Listen, I know it doesn’t help, but I’m sorry about your mom, really. I get it, trust me.”

Mary just nodded, and Alexander glanced at Thomas, who cleared his throat again. “Martha and I…” he began, “we were friends for a long time. All in college, the whole—the whole time I was, you know, figuring things out.”

Alexander furrowed his brows. “Okay…” he said slowly.

“I was insecure, up to my eyes in self-loathing and homophobia and I thought—I thought maybe—”

Alexander sucked in a breath as his eyes darted between Thomas and Mary. “Thomas,” he said quietly, his eyes narrowing.

“AAlexander listen, I—”

“Why didn’t you tell me?”

“I didn’t think I needed to—”
“You have a daughter, Thomas. How is that—”

“I didn’t know!”

“How in God’s name—”

“Excuse me?” Mary asked, taking a step forward and tugging on the end of her hoodie. “Should I—Should I go?”

“You’re fine, kiddo,” Thomas replied, turning to face the child. “You can—”

“You can go, if you want,” Alexander interrupted. “Thomas—Thomas and I have some things to discuss, and if you don’t want to hear them—”

“Don’t be mad at him,” Mary cut in. “Mister… Mr. Jefferson, I mean. Don’t be hard on him. He's doing as well as he can,” and Thomas’ heart just about broke. Here was Mary, his daughter—who couldn't be older than, what, twelve?—whose mother had just died, who had just been uprooted from her life as she knew it, and she was the one who was strong for Thomas. She was defending Thomas from his own husband.

Just how fucked up was that?

Be that as it may, it had the desired effect: the angry look in Alexander's eyes softened, and he gave Mary a curt nod. “I know he is.” The glance he shot at Thomas was impossible to discern.

“Thank you for the concern, but I'll be fine,” Thomas told Mary as gently as he could. “He's my husband.”

Mary wrinkled her nose. “Well, if you're sure…”

Thomas reigned in a heavy sigh. “Yes. Why don't you check out the bedrooms and see which one you like the best?”

The look Mary shot him told him that she saw through his facade, but was either too tired to argue, or just didn't care enough to.

The moment the door shut itself behind Mary, Alexander turned on Thomas. “How could you not tell me that you had a daughter?” his husband hissed.

Thomas threw up his arms into the air. “Because I didn't know!” he retorted for what felt like the umpteenth time.

“You've been saying that, but I find it hard to believe that you didn't know you had a child with your campaign manager and old friend!” Alexander seethed.

“I've been trying to tell you: Martha hadn't told me! I've found out literally an hour ago!”

“That's not the kind of thing you hide from your co-parent, especially if you are as close as you two were!”

Thomas’ nostrils flared in barely-concealed irritation. “Well, take it up with Martha, because that's exactly what happened.”

The meaning behind his words didn't sink in until they were out of his mouth. Thomas wanted to curse himself.
Alexander shook his head. “Honestly, I don’t have a problem with the whole ‘you have a kid’ part. It was a long time ago, way before me, and you’re so painfully gay that there is no way you could have kept on sleeping with her. What your did before is your personal business. What I do have problem with, however, is that you hadn’t told me.”

Thomas rolled his eyes. “Weren't we just over this?”

“If by ‘over this’, you mean that you made crude remarks and avoided questioning, then I guess,” Alexander snapped.

Thomas closed his eyes and took a deep breath. In and out. This required a calm state of mind, before either said something they couldn’t take back.

In and out.

He opened his eyes again, and met Alexander's malcontent eyes squarely. “Do you trust me?” It was a simple question, and yet so complicated.

“Well, yes, but—”

“Then please trust me when I say that I had no idea that I had a kid, let alone that the kid was Mary, until today.”

Alexander narrowed his eyes for a moment, looking Thomas up and down, before sighing and running a hand through his hair.

“Okay,” he said. “I believe you.”

“Thank you.”

“That being said, this is still…”

“Hard?” Thomas offered.

Alexander scoffed. “That’s one way to put it,” he muttered before plopping down on the couch and running his hand over his face. “We… there’s no way we’re prepared to have a kid, Thomas. I—You’ve said it yourself, I’m not exactly great at keeping myself alive, nevertheless a kid…”

Thomas took the seat beside him and wrapped his arms around Alexander’s waist, burrying his face in Alexander’s hair. “We’ll figure it out,” he whispered. “I—I’ll call Lucy, have her come down and help us for a while. It’ll all be okay.”

“We’re parents, Thomas.”

“Yeah,” Thomas murmured, “Yeah we are.”

“Mary?” Thomas called out as he walked down one of the residential hallways. “Mary, where are you, kiddo?”

“In here,” a small voice replied from inside a room to Thomas and Alexander’s left.

The two men shared a look before Thomas rapped his knuckles against the doorframe. “Can we
“Come in?” he asked quietly.

“I guess,” Mary answered.

Thomas winced and carefully pushed open the door.

Mary was sat on the edge of the bed, her fingers twisted in the lavender quilt.

She looked so out of place, that little girl in her bright pink hoodie sitting in the middle of such a massive room.

“Is this the room you like?” Thomas asked softly, shuffling awkwardly a few feet from where she sat. Mary nodded.

“Okay then, we’ll, uh, we’ll have someone run by your house and—”

“Mr. Hamilton?” Mary interrupted, looking up at Alexander, who, for his part, seemed absolutely shocked to be addressed as such.

“Uh, yes?” he asked slowly.

“Do—Is it—Are you alright with me being here?” she asked. “Because I don’t—”

“Mary, kid,” Alexander cut in, cautiously taking a seat next to the girl. “Of course I’m alright with you staying with us. I—I’m sorry if it didn’t seem like that, earlier, but I was just… surprised. I wasn’t expecting it, and I was, frankly, a little scared because this is a little scary, for all of us. But it’s going to be okay, okay?”

“Okay,” Mary muttered, rubbing her eyes.

“And you don’t have to call me ‘Mr. Hamilton’,” Alexander continued. “In fact, please don’t. It makes me sound like a stuffy old guy who looks like one of the bankers from *Mary Poppins* .”

Thomas snorted and rolled his eyes, but took that as his cue to sit on Mary’s other side.

Not close, but… there.

Fuck, why was he so bad at this?

“And you can just call me Thomas,” he said, his words stilted.

“Alright,” Mary said. She was slouched over, her arms crossed in front of her stomach as she nawed at her lip.

The silence that followed her words lingered.

“Okay then,” Thomas said abruptly, rubbing his hands together as he took to his feet. “I, uh, I dunno about y’all, but I could eat, so… dinner? Mary? Any preferences?”

He cringed at how strained his voice sounded.

“I’m not hungry, really,” Mary mumbled. “I—I think I’m just going to go to bed.”

“Are you sure?” Thomas asked. “We’ve, uh, the cooks make really could chicken, or pizza, or—”

“I’m sure, Mr.—Thomas,” Mary insisted.
Thomas looked over at Alexander, who mouthed *don’t push it*.

“O-Okay then,” Thomas replied, scratching the back of his neck. “Well, you can sleep in here, for tonight. I’ll see if anyone has anything more comfortable for you to sleep in, if not, I’ll, uh, well. We’ll figure it out.”

“Thank you,” Mary said. “Goodnight.”

Alexander stood and took Thomas by the elbow, leading him out of the bedroom. “Goodnight,” he answered, shutting the door behind him.

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“Mr. President?” Sally asked as Thomas slouched down in his chair. “Your sister is on the phone, and the moving company has asked what your want from Ms. Wayles’ house.”

Thomas sighed and rubbed his temples. Alexander kissed his forehead. “You talk to Lucy, I’ll deal with the movers,” he muttered.

“Thank you,” Thomas replied before shaking his head lightly. “Sally?” he asked.

“Yes sir?”

“Put Lucy through.”

“Yes sir.”

With a deep breath, Thomas picked up his phone.

“Thomas?” his sister asked immediately. “Are—Are you alright? I saw what happened to Martha, and Ms. Hemmings said it was urgent—”

“I’m okay, Lu,” Thomas answered. “I—I’m alright.”

“Oh thank God —”

“Lucy, I need you to come up for a while,” Thomas cut in. “I—Things are complicated, and I—I need you up here.”

“Thomas, what happened?”

“I… Martha had a kid, Lu.”

“I know. We were Facebook friends.”

“You were—? Whatever, okay. Point is,” Thomas took a deep breath. “The kid… she’s mine.”

“She’s what ?!”

“I didn’t know!” Thomas insisted immediately. “I didn’t know until today, I swear. But… she is, Lu. She’s mine, and I…”

“It’s okay, Thomas,” Lucy said a moment later. “It’ll all be alright. I’ll be up there first thing tomorrow.”

“Thank you, Lucy. Really, I don’t know—”
“Don’t worry about it,” Lucy interrupted. “I’m your big sister, Tom. What else am I here for?”

Chapter End Notes

Tell us what you thought! Remember: comments are the best Christmas presents you can give us! <3
In Which There Is Christmas and Emotional Whiplash

Chapter Summary

Brace yourselves for some Feelings.

Chapter Notes

Guess who started writing this on the 23rd... me...

im emotionally drained send help

In other news! Happy Holidays! Hope life treats you right going into the new year.

Life was complicated.

That in and of itself wasn't new—it seemed life was always complicated when it came to Alexander and Thomas. But this...

The funeral was a short and somber affair. Mary sat in the first pew, silent, with unfocused eyes. Thomas and Alexander sat directly behind her.

They’d offered to sit with her.

She’d said she wanted to be alone.

For the next few days, Mary rarely left her room. When she did, she spoke to no one.

She hardly ate. Thomas was willing to be she wasn’t sleeping, either.

“What do we do?” he asked Alexander one night as they sat in bed.

Mary had asked to eat in her room again, but when the housekeeper went to fetch the dishes an hour later, the food looked like it hadn’t been touched.

Alexander sighed and leaned back to rest his head against the bed frame. “I don’t know,” he replied after a moment. “She has to eat, yeah, but… after something like that?”

He didn’t continue.

“A Alexander?”

“Yes, sweetheart?”

“What did you do?” Thomas asked quietly. “After... when…”

He didn’t know why he couldn’t bring himself to say it. He was an adult, he was the president, he should be able to approach this whole thing like a grown-up, not some scared child.
For a moment, Alexander didn’t respond. Thomas was about to tell him to forget it, to ignore him, when he finally began speaking.

“I got angry,” Alexander whispered. “I… I was so mad. Mad at my dad for leaving us, mad at the doctors for not giving her the medicine she needed, mad at everyone else for not caring, mad at her for leaving.”

There was a pause.

“Mad at myself for being alive when she wasn’t.”

“Alexander—”

“I know it was stupid, Thomas—”

“That’s not what I was going to—”

“But you were thinking it,” Alexander rebuked. “Listen, I know the whole thing is—it’s irrational, I get that, but… that’s how it is, when these things happen. NO one thinks rationally after something like that.”

“But you got better,” Thomas pointed out.

“And so will Mary,” Alexander said gently. “With time, sweetheart. You’ll see. It’ll be okay. Not like how it used to be, yeah, but it’ll be… it’ll be good.”

Thomas sighed and rubbed his face. “Okay,” he murmured.


“I love you too,” Thomas replied, burrowing under the blankets.

Maybe things would be better in the morning.

Things were decidedly not better.

They’d decided not to send Mary back to school until after the holidays, but after a week and a half, they thought it’d be good for her to start working on some school work that she was missing, to “take her mind off of it,” as Alexander put it.

That went… poorly.

“I don’t want to do this,” Mary argued. “It’s stupid! ‘Write what Christmas means to you’? I’m not six.”

“I know, kid,” Alexander said, “I’ll admit, it’s kinda dumb—”

“Alexander—” Thomas tried to cut in, to remind his husband that they were supposed to be encouraging Mary to do her homework, not support her pre-teen rebellion.

“But it’s what the teacher assigned,” Alexander continued. “And you can’t just pick and choose what assignments you do.”

“Uh, yeah I can,” Mary said. “It’s a free country.”
Alexander looked all wound up and ready to go with what would surely be some sort of *tirade* about the intended meaning behind the phrase ‘it’s a free country’ and the way it had been *widely* misused to excuse poor behaviour and decisions, but Thomas decided to spare them all.

“You can’t if you want to keep your grades up,” he cut in.

“What if I don’t *care* about my grades?” Mary countered. “I’m in *sixth grade!* No one cares about your grades in sixth grade!”

“I care about your grades,” Thomas pointed out.


“Because I care about you!”

“Well, stop caring! I don’t *need* you to care! You—you’re not my *dad!*”

Thomas felt like he’d been slapped in the face, all the words ready on his tongue dissolving like cotton candy.

“Mary,” Alexander said lowly. “You have to do your work. This isn’t up for debate.”

Mary opened and closed her mouth a few times before snatching the paper out of Alexander’s hand, glaring at them both a final time, and slamming the door in their faces.

Alexander exhaled and ran a hand through his hair. “Well,” he said. “That went…”

“Awfully,” Thomas finished.

“Yeah.”

They stood there in silence for another moment.

“She’s right, you know,” Thomas said. “I—I’m not her dad.”

“Thomas—”

“I’m not, Alexander! I’m—I’m just some guy who *happened* to provide her with 23 chromosomes, and now we’re all trying to act like that makes me her *parent*—”

“You didn’t know.”

“I *should have* known—”

“How?” Alexander asked seriously. “How would you have *ever* known?”

“Mary’s age, the fact that Martha was single the whole time I knew her—”

“That—Thomas. Listen. Listen to me, okay?” Alexander said seriously, taking Thomas’ hands in his own. “I know what a deadbeat looks like, and you? You are *not* a deadbeat. You just didn’t *know*. If you had, would you have done the same thing?”

“No!” Thomas protested. “I—I would’ve—I would’ve done *something*. Been there, to see her, to know her, to—”

“Exactly,” Alexander interrupted. “You didn’t *choose* to not be there, and if you’d *had* the choice,
you would’ve been there. You… maybe right now, you’re not her dad, but you are her father, and you’re all she’s got.”

Thomas stared at him for a moment, willing his heart rate to return to normal. “What if I mess it up?” he asked quietly.

“Everybody messes up,” Alexander replied easily. “You just gotta do better next time.”

Thomas nodded and took one last glance at Mary’s door before heading back to the Oval.

Oh, the sweet relief of only being responsible for a country, instead of a child.

Lucy arrived in a whirlwind of luggage and baby toys and silk pillowcases.

“Where’s my niece?” she asked after taking a seat in the living room.

“In her room, I think,” Thomas answered, shifting uncomfortably from his place on the chair opposite of her.

Lucy blinked at him. “Well then,” she said. “Why are we sitting here?”

“Because—Lu, listen, Mary, she’s… upset.”

“I’d think so,” Lucy said simply. “Her mother just died, Thomas. She’s allowed to be upset.”

“But she’s not eating, or sleeping, and I’m afraid—”

“Exactly,” Lucy cut in. “She’s upset, and you’re afraid. That’s parenting, Tom.”

“But I’m not a parent!” Thomas argued.

Lucy raised an eyebrow. “I suggest you get over that train of thought right now,” she said. “You have a daughter, Thomas. Like it not, you’re a father.”

Thomas huffed. “She doesn’t want me to be her dad, Lu,” he explained. “That’s—That’s sort of the whole thing, right now. I’m trying, but she won’t let me—”

“It’s been a week, Tom,” Lucy pointed out. “The girl went from having a mom and no dad to having a dad and no mom in the span of an hour, I think it may take a bit more time for her to get used to it.”

“That still doesn’t mean I’m going to be a good dad,” Thomas countered.

Lucy sighed and patted the spot next to her. Thomas raised an eyebrow but moved to sit next to his sister, who wrapped her arms around him.

“I know this is hard,” she whispered. “I can’t begin to imagine what this is all like, but I do know it’s got to be hard, and I’m sorry everything is turning out this way. But you know what else I know, Tom?”

“What?” Thomas mumbled into his big sister’s shoulder, feeling oddly like he was thirteen again and helpless to do anything.

“You’re going to be a great dad,” Lucy assured him. “Maybe not immediately, but you’ll get there.”

“Neither do I, Tom,” Lucy agreed. “Neither do I. Now, c’mon, let’s go see my niece.”

It was Lu who brought it up first. The White House had been decorated already, of course. Alexander had called up a lady who had been an interior decorator for children’s homes in D.C. and had handed her the reigns with an awkward shrug and a humble request of, “I dunno, green and gold and white, I guess? Preferably something not hideous?”

The Residency, however, was quite bare.

The decorations from the house in Alexandria had been brought in, had been set up by housekeeping staff, but Thomas didn’t have near enough for a whole White House.

So, on December 18th, Lucy stood in the living room with a hand on one hip and a toddler on the other and said, “We need to decorate.”

Alexander looked up from where he was sitting, his laptop open on the coffee table and a number of loose papers and books scattered around him.

“What do you mean?” he asked. “It’s already decorated. See? Tree.”

He gestured at the tall green tree standing in the corner, strung with purple ribbon and gold and silver baubles.

Lucy rolled her eyes. “What do you think, Kat? Do you think Uncle Lexi and Uncle Tom need to put up more decorations?” she asked the child in her arms.

“Yeah!” the baby shouted, waving her arms around.

“You know, I never agreed to that name,” Alexander pointed.

“Tough luck,” Lucy said. “Kat, can you go get your sister? Please?”

“Okay!” Kat replied, waddling off as fast as her chubby little legs allowed.

Lucy grinned at her daughter and rolled her eyes around.

“You know, I never agreed to that name,” Alexander pointed.

“Tough luck,” Lucy said. “Kat, can you go get your sister? Please?”

“Okay!” Kat replied, waddling off as fast as her chubby little legs allowed.

Lucy grinned at her daughter and rolled her eyes. “I’m going to call Thomas and see how much he has left to do today,” she said. “You go get Mary.”

“Are you sure about that?” Alexander asked. “She kinda wants to be alone—”

“And she also kinda needs to know she’s still got a family who loves her and wants her around. Now, shoo. Get Mary. I’m going to see if there’s any way I can get Hobby Lobby to deliver—”

“Get Micheals instead,” Alexander interrupted, climbing to his feet with a sigh. “Less homophobia. If we’re gonna do this, we’re going to do it without endorsing anti-gay corporations.”

“Got it,” Lucy agreed, pulling out her phone.

Alexander shook his head and made his way to Mary’s room.

Two hours later, the whole Hamilton-Jefferson-Wayles-Lewis clan stood, again, in the living room,
up to their shins (or, in Kat and Em’s case, their chins) in Christmas decorations.

The little girls had Christmas bows on their heads. Lucy and a begrudging Mary were wearing elf hats. Lucy’s husband, Charles, had on reindeer antlers. Alexander had been talked into putting on a Santa hat, and Thomas…

“I am *not* putting that on,” he argued, holding the offending object as far away from his body as possible.

“Come on, Tom,” Lucy argued. “Don’t be a Scrooge.”

“I’m not being a *Scrooge*—”

Alexander snickered. “Thomas, we’d match,” he pointed out. “Plus, it’s not like anyone else will see!”

“You just like it because it makes me look like an idiot,” Thomas countered. Alexander shrugged.

“I’ll admit, it’s part of the appeal,” he conceded. “It’s just also hilarious, and we’re all dressed up, so that means…”

“*Fine,*” Thomas relented, snatching the piece of fabric out of Lucy’s hand. “But if I hear anything—*anything*—about this from any news outlet—or hell, even *Tumblr*—you’re going to be spending Christmas with JQ and Louisa. Got it?”

“I got it, I got it,” Alexander agreed. “Just put it on, you drama queen.”

Thomas grumbled under his breath as he tied the apron around his waist and shoulders.

The front was patterned with a red top and a white bottom, with lace around the bottom hem and some kind of craft-store fluff around the top.

“Looking good, Mrs. Claus,” Lucy quipped, a shit-eating grin on her face.

Thomas looked around for some sort of sympathy, but all he got was a shrug from Charles that said ‘what are you gonna do?’

“This is ridiculous,” Thomas muttered.

“There should be a hat around here somewhere—”

“No,” Thomas snapped. “Don’t—Don’t we have decorating to do?”

Again, he looked around the room at the cluster of people surrounding him. Everyone was in different states of hysterics, with Alexander looking like he was about to pass out from laughing.

Even Mary seemed to be smiling behind her hand.

Thomas sighed and picked up a strand of garland.

He figured it was worth it.

Christmas itself was… bittersweet.
They’d had the whole flock over on Christmas Eve—Lucy and her family, Randy and Michelle, Elizabeth, even Ned and James (they’d invited John and Gil, but they seemed to have… plans)—and it’d been fun, yes. It was a massive, festive cacophony of wassail and presents and frankly horrific sweaters that had ended with Ned pulling out pictures of Alexander, age thirteen, in tacky light-up, jingling elf ears that made it seem like Ned was some sort of embarrassing, nostalgic ghost of Christmas Past. After that, Alexander had insisted everyone return to their respective houses/hotel room, if only for his steadily rising blood pressure.

Christmas morning, however, was subdued.

The presents had been found when they were cleaning out Martha’s house. A small pile of gifts stacked on the top shelf of her closet, each already brightly wrapped and topped with a glittery bow.

Thomas had carefully placed them under the tree after everyone had retired on Christmas Eve, sitting them next to the few presents that Thomas and Alexander had each purchased, and when the three of them had gathered on the couch the next morning, Thomas could see the tears welling up in Mary’s eyes as she gingerly picked up one, covered in shimmering gold, and read the tag.

To: My Favourite Dork

From: Mom ♡

For a moment, Mary didn’t even open it, just ran her thumb over the words written in cramped, looping red Sharpie.

Finally, she started peeling away the tape with the sort of precision usually reserved for neurosurgeons and people playing Jenga.

The journal inside the box was made of dark brown leather and covered in a gold paisley print and tied closed with another strip of leather. A package of drawing pencils and charcoals sat on top of it.

Mary carefully removed the pencils before undoing the knot and opening the journal, revealing another note on the first page.

“Mary” Christmas to my little teeny-bopper. You’re going to be the best of all of us. I love you so, so much.

~Mom

Thomas watched as Mary held the book close to her chest and rapidly blinked her eyes.

He glanced over at Alexander to see his husband’s eyes equally misty.

“Mary” Christmas, indeed.
In Which Mary Continues To Just,,, Steal Hearts and Blow Minds

Chapter Summary

fuck school fuck grown-ups fuck capitalism

Chapter Notes

Hey! Sorry about the impromptu hiatus! we decided to take a mini-break for the holidays/first week of classes, but we're back now! hope y'all had a good two weeks!

As agreed, Mary returned to school after the winter break, although not without some… protests.

“This is the stupidest goddamn thing I’ve ever had to do,” she said, the harsh words sounding odd in her high-pitched, childish voice.

“What, get an education?” Thomas asked, raising an eyebrow at her from across the table.

“Going to school,” she countered. “There’s a difference.”

“Mary, you need to have some sort of normalcy in your life, you need some sort of social interaction —” Alexander tried to insist, but was interrupted by Mary’s annoyed huff of breath.

“It’s so stupid—”

“Why?” Thomas asked. “Why is it so stupid? It’s not hard, you’ve clearly demonstrated that. So why is it so stupid?”

Thomas watched as Mary's face crumpled a little. "It just—it does—"

"That's not an answer, kid," Thomas pointed out. "Tell me why school sucks, and I'll consider letting you stay home."

Mary bit her lip. "It's... the other kids are... I just don't want to have to deal with them," she admitted, her eyes fixed squarely on the kitchen table.

Thomas felt his heart rate ratchet up. "Mary, if those kids are bullying or harassing you—"

"No, no, it's nothing like that," Mary protested. "They just..."

"They just what?" Alexander asked.

"They're going to ask questions," Mary muttered. "What happened and why I was gone and where I'm staying and—I just don't want to deal with it. I don't want to be the weird girl with a dead mom and no dad."
Thomas felt the knife in his gut twist.

"Plus, they won't let me read ahead in the science textbook even though I already know all about biomes, and they don't let sixth graders take art, and none of the other kids really talk to me ever except when they want me to be in their research group," Mary went on. "It just sucks."

Thomas looked over at Alexander, who shrugged as if to say she has a point.

"Okay," Thomas sighed. "How about a deal. You got to school this week—"

"You said if I explained why I could stay home!"

"No," Thomas refuted, "I said I'd consider it. This is me considering."

He purposefully didn't look at Alexander, who was probably doing his best not to snicker at what he'd dubbed Thomas' Attemptive Dad Voice (apparently, it was a lot like his Caring President voice, except with more self-confidence issues).

"Anyway," Thomas continued. "You go to school this week, and if, in the end, it's just been horrible and awful and stupid, then we'll look into other things, okay?"

"Other things?" Mary asked.

"A transfer, private tutor, online school, shaving your head and sending you off to live with Tibetan monks for six years. Something."

Mary snorted a bit at the last one and rolled her eyes. "Okay," she finally relented.

"One week."

"One week," Thomas agreed. "Now hurry up, your ride is probably here, and you don't want to be late."

Mary's eyes widened as she stuffed her lunch pail in her backpack and the rest of her bacon in her mouth. "Uh-kah," she said, nodding. "Ah shee oo eh-uh!"

A moment later, she was out the door.

"Did you understand any of that?" Thomas asked Alexander, who shook his head and shrugged.

He was smiling like he'd just heard some sort of secret, something that would probably end a third of GOP lawmakers' careers.

"What's with the face?" Thomas asked. "Our daughter just confessed she has no friends, is unhappy with her school, and then spoke in tongues as she left, and you look like Newt Gingrich found a gym sock in his coffee."

Alexander grinned wider and simply said, "She has your laugh."

A few hours later, Thomas sat across from Lucy, who gracefully flung a piece of tomato out of her salad and onto a napkin next to her plate. "Well, first of all, I'm not here to tell you how you should parent your kid—"

"Lu, that is literally why you're here," Thomas retorted. Lucy narrowed her eyes and jabbed her fork
“No,” she said, “I’m here to provide advice and moral support while you figure out how to parent your kid. Anyway, that being said, I think the first thing you should do is see about getting Mary enrolled in a community art class.”

“A community art class?” Thomas repeated incredulously.

“It’s a good way for her to express her feelings in a productive way, it’s a nice way to make sure that, whatever happens with her school situation, she still has regular social interactions and at least some sort of routine, and she’s shown a genuine interest in it,” Lucy pointed out.

“Alright,” Thomas conceded. “I just don’t like the thought of so many people knowing she’s my kid, y’know? Easier for the press to get wind of it, easier for… other people to get wind of it—”

“Send her with Sally and Dearborn,” Lucy said, referring to Thomas’ head of security. “They can act as her parents, or her aunt and uncle, or something.”


“How about you ask Mary?” Lucy prompted, raising an eyebrow.

Thomas sighed and scratched at his beard. “Yeah, I guess I probably should.”

“Thomas, you can’t be afraid to talk to her,” Mary insisted. “She’s not an idiot, she’ll notice you’re avoiding her, and then what will she think?”

“You’re right, you’re right. God, you and Alexander and your always being fucking right—”

“Thomas,” Lucy interrupted. “Go talk to the kid, okay? I’ve got to go check on Kat and Em.” She threw away her salad box and pushed the napkin of tomatoes towards Thomas. “Thanks for lunch, Tom.”

Thomas groaned as he tossed one of the tomato halves into his mouth.

*God.*

“Beginners Painting with Mr. John Trumbull,” Alexander said, looking up from his laptop. Mary was sat on the couch next to him, peering over his shoulder at the pictures of the studio and the instructor and the paintings by previous students. “Look good to you, kid?”

“He does a lot of portraits,” Mary commented, taking the laptop and scrolling through the webpage.

It was the first time Thomas had ever seen someone take Alexander’s laptop without having to tranquilize him first.

“Is that good or bad?” Thomas asked.

“Good,” Mary said easily. “Usually I draw the people from the stories I read, so this’ll be good.”

“What kind of stories?” Alexander asked.

Mary blushed. “Just, uh. Y’know. Silly stuff. You probably wouldn’t know about it or—”
“Try me,” Alexander countered, grinning at Thomas over Mary’s head.

“So, right now I’m in the middle of this series called *The Inheritance Cycle*. It’s… it’s kinda like *Lord of the Rings*, a little bit, except with more magic and dragons and this badass princess elf named Arya—”


“You say cuss words all the time, Thomas,” she pointed out. “Yesterday you were talking about ‘effing Schumer and effing Pelosi’, and you called Alex the d-word like twenty minutes ago.”

Thomas mouthed *Alex*? at Alexander, who shrugged. Thomas rolled his eyes. “Yes, well, I’m an adult—”

“That’s not a valid argument,” Mary countered. “You being older than eighteen doesn’t magically change the meaning of the words and make them less mean. It just means you’re old enough to probably know better, less mean words to make your point and you just choose not to.”

Thomas’ jaw about hit the floor, and Alexander was visibly shaking with silent, poorly contained laughter.

Finally, after what felt like eons, Thomas managed to stutter out, “Yes, well, this is a ‘do as I say, not as I do’ situation.”

“Those are the worst situations,” Mary grumbled.

“Sorry,” Thomas replied.

“You’re not.”

“Perhaps not. Doesn’t mean I don’t see how sucky it must be.”

“You’re a jerk, you know that?” Mary asked, but Thomas could see she was almost smiling.

“Yup,” Thomas replied.

Alexander scoffed. “Mary, I’ve got a secret for you,” he said.

Mary just tilted her head.

“We’re all jerks. All of us. Everyone.”

“Not everyone—”

“Thomas, name one person in this whole town that isn’t a jerk.”

“Uh… Eliza? She seems nice. A little bit omniscient and scary, but nice.”

“She’s a Schuyler, I swear they’re all all-knowing,” Alexander mumbled. “But I guess you do have a point.”

“When I’m a grown-up, I’m not going to be a jerk,” Mary insisted.

“Good plan, kid,” Thomas replied, a little smile on his face. “That’s a good goal to have.”

“I also kinda want to be, like, kinda the president, but I don’t want anyone to know I’m the president.
I wanna be a secret president. Is that a thing?”

“Yeah,” Alexander answered. “It’s currently called the First Lad.”

“Thomas?” Alexander asked as he stepped out of the bathroom, rubbing the towel over his hair. “Babe? You still, like, awake?”

Thomas narrowed his eyes. “Possibly.”

Alexander grinned and threw himself onto the bed next to Thomas, taking Thomas’ hand in his own. “Great, because I was thinking—”

“Alexander, no. We just—”

“No!” Alexander interrupted rather emphatically. “I mean, uh. No. Not that. I had this idea in the shower, okay? So you’ve heard about the Green New Deal, right? Basically, it’s this plan to revamp the economy based on renewable energy as opposed to oil or coal or whatever—”

“I’ve heard,” Thomas grumbled.

“Well, if we initiated a gradual increase on income tax, starting with people who make over, say, five million a year, and did it so you paid seven-to-ten percent more on every million after five million, and we used that money to fund—”

“Alexander?”

“Yeah?”

“I love you. Goodnight.”

Chapter End Notes

give us a shout

if you wanna give me (gabe) a shout on tumblr, find me at @allonsy-gabriel
Art Lessons and Possible Blackmail

Chapter by Sanna_Black_Slytherin

Chapter Summary

In which Ring looked at the story and went “Hmmm I like it but how about some angst”
*reaches for angst jar*

Chapter Notes

Sorry in advance. Well, not sorry for this, but sorry for… You know what, just read it.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Mary felt like the following week probably lasted just about seven milennia years. Probably, she was immortal, or she’d somehow died of old age and been transported to the worst afterlife ever. Probably, all the elephants were now extinct and humans were driving around in those crazy dune-buggies from that one weird desert movie she watched a little but of from behind her mom’s couch a few months ago.

That’s how long that week was.

And yet, somehow, someway, Friday came.

Finally.

“You seem… chipper this morning,” Alex said as she took her seat at the kitchen table.

Mary just shrugged. “It’s Friday,” she replied. “No more school.”

“You’ve got at least one more day of school, kid,” Thomas stated as he put a plate of French Toast in front of her.

Mary wasn’t 100% sure how she felt about Thomas yet, but he did make really good breakfast, so he was maybe not awful.

Probably not awful.

Most likely definitely at least pretty okay.

“Anyone can do school for one more day,” Mary pointed out. “One more day is easy. It’s all the days that’s horrible.”

“Fair,” Alexander admitted. “And hey, think about it that way: You have the John Trumbull thing after school. It’s worth looking forward to.”
“You know, you didn’t have to pick me up from school,” Mary muttered.

Alex smiled. “Probably not,” he agreed, “but here I am anyway.”

“Isn’t this, like, risky?”

“Probably, but ‘risky’ is my middle name.” Alexander flashed her a grin.

Mary snorted. “I thought it was James.”

Alexander blinked. “How do you know—You know, I really don’t want to know. I rescind my question.” He then grew more serious. “Remember our deal?”

Mary’s eyes narrowed. “You’re not going to go back on it, are you?” she asked with suspicion.

Alexander shook his head. “That’s exactly what I was going to tell you. The deal still stands. If you don’t want to attend that school anymore, you don’t have to. We won’t double cross you or try to go back on it. We made a deal, and we’re going to uphold our deal.”

Mary blinked, nodding slowly. She… hadn’t expected that. She didn’t know what she had expected, but it hadn’t been for Alex to have been as open and as forthright as he had.

“Thank you,” she said quietly.

Alex offered her a smile. “It’s the least we can do, kiddo.”

Mary glared. “I’m not a kid.”

Alex let out a laugh. “Sure you’re not. Anyway, I’m taking you to the art college community thing. I’m going to drop you off with Sally and Dearborn. They’re going to pretend to be your guardians while you have fun discovering the magics of pigment and finely-grained natural rocks and so on and so forth.”

Mary rolled her eyes. “You’re such a nerd,” she informed Alexander.

Alexander smirked. “Just wait until you hear Thomas talk about the history and social influence of the potato, then we’ll see who’s the true nerd between us.

“And kid, one more thing.” Alex waited while she glowered at the way he referred to her. He offered her a smile. “I know that right now, everything feels like it’s about to collapse, like you’re trying to breathe but can’t get enough air, like everything you do will be in vain, and it’s fine to feel that way, you need to remember that however true it feels, it’s anything but.” His smile turned wistful, a little wry. “And I know that making friends and reaching out is the last thing you feel like doing right now—I know, I’ve been there—you rarely gain anything without taking a few risks.” He paused, pursing his lips, before saying, “Okay, I’ve delayed you long enough. You’re probably anxious to go paint on stuff and give the laundry machine a nervous breakdown when you come back. Chop, chop, off you go.”

“■ ■ ■

Alexander knew that parents tended to be protective of their children, that they tended to worry and coddle them and try to shield them from all harm that might ever come to them, but this was going a bit too far.

“I don’t deserve to be her father,” Thomas was saying as he paced the room. “I don’t deserve to stand
here and worry and make decisions about her life. But there's no one else to do it.”

Alexander rolled his eyes. “Thomas, relax. She’s going to be fine. She was honestly mostly annoyed when I picked her up at school. She’s going to be happy at that art class.”

“But what if she’s not?”

Alexander sighed. He finally put away the book he had been reading, and fixed his husband with a pointed look. “There are two bodyguards with her. The most dangerous thing she has to fear is not getting clay or permanent paint on her clothes,” he told his husband. “Now will you stop fretting and go talk to the Portuguese president before he decides to up and leave?”

Thomas huffed. “Thrown out of my own study.”

Alexander stuck out his tongue. “Leave already.”

Mary shuffled along, picking up a few acrylic colours and a palette, then chose a table at random. She also picked up an A3 paper and some clips, just in case.

She had been introduced to the other participants. Most were her age, with a few older teens also in attendance. There were a few parents milling around, so her fake ‘guardians’ didn’t look too out of place, but she still felt weird pretending to be someone she wasn’t.

It had been a little awkward, but not more than when she had changed schools every time her mum moved for the sake of her career. She was no stranger to being the new kid; she knew the routine. At least here, there were no lockers for older kids to push the newcomers into.

A cough interrupted her thought process. She glanced up from her acryl colours, and met hazel eyes.

“Hi,” said the owner of the hazel eyes. “You’re new, right? Thought I’d drop by to say hi. I’m Tom.” The boy offered a hand. Mary stared at it for a long moment.

Alex's words echoed in her mind. You rarely gain anything without taking a few risks.

Well, what the hell.

“Mary,” Mary said quietly. She shook Tom's hand, then, biting her lip, decided to take a leap. “Tom’s my dad's name, actually,” she offered.

“Oh?” Tom gave her a bright smile that Mary, despite everything, found herself reciprocating.

“Yeah, though he usually goes by ‘Thomas’. It’s a bit old-fashioned for my tastes”—here, she grimaced—“but it’s his choice, and all that.”

“Oh. Huh.” Tom shifted, clearly grasping for another topic. His eyes fell on the materials in front of her. “So you’re into acrylic painting, yeah?” Tom motioned towards the objects in question. “I’m more of a hand painting person myself, but acrylic colours are cool too. I’ve just never seemed to be able to master getting the shading right.”

The corners of Mary’s mouth twitched. “Do you want me to show you? I’m quite good at it, actually.”

Tom’s smile widened. “I’d love that.”
sparklingforb
uh so I found this photo of first lad “down 2 fight u” alexander hamilton picking up a kid from school. It’s an article for y’all to read. Opinions?

taruiticro
ALEX HAMILTON HAS A DAUGHTER GUYS YISSSS

cleromancy
actually, speaking as someone who works with genetics, that doesn’t make sense. like sure it seems like it from a distance but the genetics say nope

i ran a face recognition program (let’s hear it for free company software XD) on the kid and hamilton, to see if it would find it a close match, and nope. 19% match. that’s within the range of random sample (source ).

buuuut then i ran the kid and jefferson, because, well, why not, you know

and it came up

76% match

that’s a familial match.

ram4ham
p r e s i d e n t t h o m a s j e f f e r s o n h a s a k i d

I REPEAT PRESIDENT ACTUAL GAY ICON HAS A DAUGHTER

00qlove
i can’t even

“Alex, have you checked the news?” was the first thing Sally said when Alexander answered his phone.

“Uh, no,” Alexander said slowly. “Should I?”

“Yes, you should. Hold on.” Sally was silent for a moment as she shifted to loudspeaker and typed something into her phone. “I’ve sent you an article. The New York Post has caught you picking up Mary from school, and there’s now a discussion as to whether she’s your illegitimate daughter or Thomas’.”

He let out a string of expletives, forgetting for a moment that he was still on the phone. He skimmed the article. “Fuck, this is bad,” he muttered. “Not confirmed-proof-bad, but still…”

“This could hurt Thomas, yes,” Sally finished, reminding him of her presence. “I can’t reach
Thomas,” she went, “and he needs to react to this, preferably as soon as possible.”

“I’ll try to get a hold of him, Sally,” Alexander promised. He then pursed his lips. “Is Jefferson Actually Gay?” Seriously? They’re accusing the president of the United States of having an affair, and that’s the best headline they can come up with? Also, math doesn’t seem to be their strong suit. They do know that children don’t pop up immediately after you’ve had an affair, right?”

“Hamilton…” Sally trailed off, a note of warning in her voice.

Alexander rolled his eyes. “Yes, yes, I’m going to look for Thomas. Let my inner wordsmith be a little insulted, will you?”

Sally let out a sigh. “Just tell Thomas to call me, okay?” With that, she ended the call.

Alexander let his hand fall to his sides as his phone beeped, informing him of the empty line.

Just what had he done?

Chapter End Notes

*smiles innocently*
In Which Shit, As It So Typically Does, Hits the Fan

Chapter Summary

Alexander’s little fatherly outing has big consequences, and nosy reporters reclaim their title as The Biggest Pains in Thomas’ Ass

Chapter Notes

Whew! Sorry about the sadness that is this chapter. Sorry about the angst. Sorry.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Next up on the pod: Former-Secretary and Current First Gentleman Alexander Hamilton is the subject of yet another round of speculation after being seen in downtown D.C. with a young girl, who some are claiming to be his daughter—”

“Okay, can I just say I think this whole thing is bullshit? Of everyone in Washington, people think Hamilton is the one who’s capable of keeping a secret lovechild hidden away for, what, twelve years?”

“Yeah, alright, I get that, but Dan, if it’s not his daughter—”


“Anyway, the point is, Hamilton’s been spotted with a kid, and now people are wondering whether or not the President is really gay.”

“This has got to be the stupidest debate to come out of modern politics. ‘Oh, let me just pretend to be a member of marginalized and fiercely discriminated against group of people who are ruthlessly hated by the members of my very own political party because that’s definitely the best political strategy’—”

“I mean, he is the President, so obviously—”

“He got shot, Jon.”

“Fair point, but—”

Alexander couldn’t listen to any more. He sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose as he paused the podcast, leaning back in his chair.

Three days.

That’s how long this nightmare had been dragging on for.

Neither he, Thomas, nor Mary had left the White House in three days.
There’d been no press conference. No word from the OO. Nothing but radio silence from the West Wing since the Post had published that stupid, stupid article.

Alexander had written up draft after draft after draft of the statement, but nothing seemed right. He couldn’t figure out how to phrase it just right, how to word it in a way that didn’t cast blame or suspicion or a million other possible things upon Thomas or Mary.

How ironic, that he was the one in the least precarious position of this whole shit show, considering it was all his fault.

He’d just wanted to help. He wanted to be there for Mary like no one ever was for him. Thomas, God help him, didn’t know what to do or say, and even if he did, he was still trying to overcome the massive fucking guilt complex he’d developed.

(And people said Alexander had emotional issues.)

That left Alexander with doing his best to help this kid who was now his, kinda, apparently, and, in typical Hamilton fashion, fucking it up stupendously. That was on top of Thomas having barely said a dozen words to him since the article had broken, and around half of those words were expletives.

Actually, about a quarter of everything Thomas had said to him in the past three days had been some conjugation of fuck.

There was a knock on Alexander’s office door, and he sighed, rubbing the bridge of his nose. “Come in,” he called out, scratching out a poorly-worded sentence.

Eliza grimaced as she stepped through the doorway. “You look terrible,” she said bluntly.

Alexander shot her a half-hearted glare over the top of his desk. “You don’t say.”

“Angelica asked me to tell her how you and Thomas are doing without her being around to put out all your, quote, ‘moronic political gas fires’.”

“Well, you can tell her to, A, not fucking well, and B, to politely fuck off.”

“That bad?”

“You said it yourself: it’s terrible.”

Eliza's eyebrows crinkled. “How’s Mary doing?”

Alexander shrugged. “Not sure,” he replied. “I’ve sorta been camped out in here for the past few days.”

Eliza blinked at him. “Are you serious?”

“Uh, yes?”

“Why?”

“Because it’s my job to clean up this mess. I created it, I pick it up.”

“And what does Thomas think of all this?”

Alexander scoffed. “He made it pretty damn clear that he wanted me to make myself scarce for a while,” he muttered bitterly.
Eliza sighed and shook her head. “You two baffle me, you know that?” she said. “I’ve never met two people who are so smart, and yet such idiots.”

Alexander gave her a mocking smile. “My dearest Betsey, tell me what you really think.”

“I think you need to go talk to your husband like the adult you supposedly are, I think you need to talk to your daughter, and I that Sally and I deserve raises for being your fucking couples therapists.”

Alexander sighed and ran a hand through his hair, but ultimately nodded. “Just—just let me finish this, okay? I need—I need—I need to finish this.”

After a moment, Eliza shook her head and placed the file of papers—probably what she’d come to give him in the first place—on his desk. “Fine,” she conceded. “But… Alexander, you’ve got to face it all eventually. Hiding away isn’t doing anything but hurting the situation.”

“Thank you, Eliza,” Alexander said, grinning sadly. Eliza rolled her eyes. “There’s fresh coffee in the pot out in the atrium. Just so you know.”

“Best of women,” Alexander commented as she shut the door behind her.

Thomas didn’t know what the hell he was supposed to do.

Mary had once again confined herself to her bedroom. Lucy was doing her best to maintain some veneer of normalcy within the residency. Alexander had locked himself away in his office and only emerged to collect a fresh set of clothes and the occasional sandwich. And Thomas?

Thomas was panicking.

His approval rating had plummeted.

James was down in Virginia while Congress was in recess, so he couldn’t even talk to his best friend. It felt like the walls were closing in on him, and he couldn’t escape.

“Mr. President?” an aide—Allison, from that ill-fated Christmas party—said, poking her head into the door of the Oval Office. “Ms. Hemmings said it was fine for me to come in.”

“Oh,” Thomas said dryly. “Yes, sorry. Uh, what… what do you have?”

Allison carefully handed him a stack of papers, covered in ridiculously cramped and curly scrawl. “The statement Mr. Hamilton drafted for the press, sir. He said he wanted you to look over it and make any revisions you deemed necessary.”

Thomas looked at the woman for a moment. “What did he really say?”

Allison scrunched her mouth a bit. “I believe his exact words were: ‘Fuck it, just have Thomas make sure this isn’t utter bullshit.’”

“What does he plan on ever asking me about it in person?” Thomas asked.

“Ms. Schuyler seems pretty adamant that he should be over to see you soon. Apparently, he promised.”

appreciate it.”

Allison nodded and left, leaving Thomas alone with the stack of papers.

Alexander’s handwriting was a mess. The first few times Thomas read it, scrawled in the margins of Washington’s notes at cabinet meetings and along the tops of briefing and reports that passed over Thomas’ desk, Thomas wasn’t sure how anyone ever understood enough of what he was writing to actually implement whatever plans he had written up. It was pretty, sure, but not practical.

So much of Thomas’ own life followed that same logic. Optics, and formalities, and about a million other substanceless gestures.

He scoffed again. He sometimes felt like he didn't recognize himself in his mirror reflection. He had become so bitter, so jaded.

So much power, so little freedom.

Alexander’s address was good—of course, it was. If there was one thing Alexander was good at, it was words.

Not secrets. No discretion. Not inconspicuousness or subtlety.

Just words.

“When’s the soonest we can get a conference scheduled?” Thomas soon asked Sally, who glared at him.

“You know, I’m not your Press Secretary—”

“Sally.”

“Probably tomorrow morning.”

“Good,” Thomas said, nodding a few times. “And I don’t want the New York Post there.”

Alexander finally ventured out from his study that evening, telling Thomas that there were ingredients for spinach tomato pasta in the fridge, so he didn’t need to call the White House cooking staff.

“Since when can you make pasta?” Thomas asked.

“Since you hit the campaign trail and I got sick of eating Taco Bell every night,” Alexander replied readily.

He didn’t meet Thomas’ eyes.

“If you get Mary, I’ll set the table and stuff,” he continued.

Thomas blinked at him.

“Are we not going to talk about it?” he asked incredulously.

Alexander bit his lip. “I suppose we can, although I don’t what we’d say that hasn’t already been said.”
Thomas’ brows furrowed. “Alexander, tomorrow we're going to tell the world we have a daughter—”

“I’m aware—”

“Don’t you think we should, I don’t know, discuss how this will affect us? Our lives? Our careers?”

“Again, I think it’s been discussed enough.”

“By Anderson Cooper and Tucker Carlson, Alexander! Not us!”

Alexander turned away as he pulled out a pot from beneath the counter. “Things will continue,” he stated. “We go through with getting Mary that tutor like we promised her last week, we get her a better security detail, we tell anyone who wants to use our family as a money-making ploy to fuck off, and we move on.”

“We move on?!”

“Yes, okay?!” Alexander shouted. “We move on! What else would we do, Thomas? Would you rather resign? Move back to Monticello and hide away for the rest of your life?”

“No!”

“Well then, what do you suggest we do?”

Thomas gaped at him for a moment. “Don’t you turn this on me, Alexander. I’m not the one who got us into this mess!”

Alexander threw up his arms in frustration. “Look, I fucked up, I get it!” Alexander snapped. “Believe me, I know I screwed the fucking pooch on this one, but at least I tried. At least I don’t become some sort of fragile China doll the moment Mary comes into the room! At least I care!”

Thomas staggered backward as if he’d been hit.

Alexander’s words seemed to catch up to him a moment later.

Those words. Alexander was always so cunning, always so premeditated, always knew exactly what to say, where to land the deadliest blow.

Alexander’s eyes widened in horror as he registered the meaning behind his words. “Thomas, I’m sorry, I didn’t mean—”

“I’m going to bed,” Thomas interrupted him brusquely. “We have a joint press conference tomorrow at nine.”

With that, he turned and left.

The press conference was, to put it simply, a disaster.

Their podiums were a foot apart, but Thomas felt as if Alexander was miles away.

At least I care!

Words got stuck in Thomas’ throat, came out flat, dissipated in the air like smoke.
“Mary is my daughter,” he stated, his words shaking as his fists curled and uncurled at his sides. “Her mother was Martha Wayles. We were involved in a relationship soon after I completed college, in a misaligned attempt to prove to myself and others that I was something I’m not. Alexander and I have taken Mary in in the weeks since her mother’s death, and we will continue to care for her.”

A camera flashed.

Thomas flinched.

“We—we ask for privacy, for both ourselves and Mary, in the days ahead. She is a child, and we intend to give her as close to a normal childhood as we possibly can. Thank you.”

Reporters shouted. Lights blared. Thomas moved from the podium in a sort of haze, stiff as he followed Alexander out of the room.

He didn’t look back.

Chapter End Notes

lemme know if you know what podcast alexander is listening to, and tell us what you think!
Chapter Summary

#World’sMostEloquentMenSuckAtCommunication

Chapter Notes

it’s not late!

hahaha, y’all probably thought we’d forgotten, but n o. here we are, throwing some more angst and easily resolvable conflicts your way, because how the fuck else would we start out our weeks?

it’s 21.40 and i just got home and i haven't had anything but espresso and instant mac and cheese in 36 hours send help

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Not-So-Star-Crossed? White House Insider Tells of Icy Atmosphere Within the Residency.

They both insisted Mary continue her lessons with Mr. Trumbull as soon as possible, and they agreed to hire her a private tutor.

It seemed as if that was all they could agree on.

Deep down, Thomas knew it was childish. He knew Alexander hadn’t meant it, not really. He knew his husband had a temper, had been exhausted, probably hadn’t eaten more than a few cheez-its over the preceding days. He knew.

Unfortunately, his fucking heart hadn’t picked up on that.

The words rang in his ears for days.

At least I care!

At least I care!

At least I care!

Over and over, haunting like church bells before an execution.

The thought of it made Thomas scoff.

When had he become such a drama queen?

He still didn’t speak to Alexander past the necessary good mornings and there are leftovers in the
“You’re an idiot,” Sally said, glancing at him over the top of her computer screen. “And I’m leaving early tonight.”


He decided not to mention the idiot part.

“Eliza and I are going to dinner.”

“Like a date?”

Sally rolled her eyes. “Yes, like a date. Just because your love life is teetering on the edge doesn’t mean all of ours are.”

“It’s—Alexander and I aren’t teetering on the edge!”

Sally scoffed. “Could’ve fooled me,” she muttered. “You have a meeting with Speaker Madison in forty-five minutes.”

Thomas couldn’t help but sigh in relief as he made his way into the Oval Office.

That was something he could handle.

It was probably something he needed, honestly. He and James hadn’t really talked, politics or otherwise, in what felt like forever.

“I don’t suppose I need to tell you that you’re acting like a moody protagonist in a poorly written teenage love story, do I?” was what James began with.

Thomas sighed and rubbed the bridge of his nose. “James—”

“You need to get it together, if not for your relationship, then for your career. Your approval ratings are already dropping—the last thing you need to do is give the media another reason to demonize your relationship with Alexander.”

“I still don’t understand when you two got on a first-name basis—”

“Thomas.” James' voice was hard, interrupting Thomas mid-word. "As obnoxious as he is, he’s practically my brother-in-law. There are things more important than opinions and pride.”

Thomas wasn’t so stupid as to not pick up on the double meaning in that declaration. “He thinks that I don’t care about Mary,” he said instead, trying to keep his voice from shaking.

“No he doesn’t.”

“James, he said—”

“Dear Lord, Thomas! You’re a grown man! You’re the president! Stop wallowing in self-pity, act like an adult, and talk to your damn husband!” James finally snapped. He took a moment after to take a deep breath. “Now, if we’re done discussing that crisis, there is the matter of discussing what bills you’d like to see on the House floor…”
Thomas exhaled, nodded, and allowed himself to get lost in the strategy, James and Alexander’s words each still lingering in the back of his mind.

“Alexander?” Thomas asked quietly as he entered the bedroom that evening. “Can we, uh, talk? Can we talk?”


He looked perfectly calm. Perfectly collected. Perfectly controlled.

It would’ve fooled anyone else.

But Thomas? Thomas knew. He knew Alexander’s particular brand of neuroticism like the back of his hand.

Alexander needed work. He depended on it. He needed something to think about, to puzzle over, to figure out and concentrate on so that he didn’t spiral into—

Nightmares and shaking hands and Alexander, Alexander passed out on his bed, a glass of water tipped over on the floor and a faint, slow pulse—

And when things got worse? When Alexander was stressed, or upset, or hurting? He focussed and worked on every little thing.

He’d confessed it one day after a particularly bad night, when he’d spent four hours on the perfect speech and read three books and his facial expression hadn’t changed from a faux-serene mask since he’d gotten out of bed.

It was easier, apparently, to perfect everything else than to confront the issue.

Thomas had left him to it. Maybe it had been a stupid decision, but it was what Alexander had wanted, and he’d been busy and productive all day, and he’d eaten, and Thomas didn’t really want to be the one to ruin it all.

And now, here Alexander was, still and quiet and a million other unnatural, eerie, uncomfortable things.

It made Thomas’ stomach hurt.

“I know what happened with Mary—I know it wasn’t your fault,” Thomas forced out, hoping and praying for some of his formerly unflappable demeanor to return to him.

How long ago had it been, when he’d been hailed as one the most articulate, level heads in Washington? When he’d been seen as poised and unshakable? Had three years changed him so much?

Had Alexander?

“Oh,” Alexander said quietly, his eyes cast down onto their comforter. “Well. Thank you.”

“And I’m sorry I acted like it was. The whole situation has been difficult, and I know you’re just trying your best, and we both knew it wouldn’t be a secret forever, so I’m sorry. I’m sorry I put so much on you, I’m sorry I haven’t been there for you and Mary the way I should be, the way a husband or—or father should be,” Thomas continued.
Alexander swallowed, his Adam’s apple bobbing up and down as he nodded. “I’m sorry too,” he finally murmured, as quiet as Thomas had ever heard him. “I—I know you care, and I should—should have never said you didn’t. I can’t imagine how—how *fucked up* this must be for you, and I—”

“Hey, hey, whoa.” Thomas interrupted, pushing himself over to Alexander’s side. “Are you—Alexander, are cry—”

“*Shut the fuck up, asshole.*”

“Okay,” Thomas said quickly. “That’s—it’s fine.”

“It’s *not,*” Alexander insisted. “I just—I want to do this *one thing* right. Just this. It’s—the opportunity is here to *help* her, to be everything I always wanted for myself, for Mary, and instead I—I shat the bed *so hard*—”

“Alexander, Alexander, darling,” Thomas cut in. “Stop, look, listen to me, okay? You haven’t—you haven’t *fucked up* any more than I have, alright? You—we’ve both stepped in it, okay? You don’t have to take all the blame, okay?”

Alexander exhaled slowly and shook his head, rubbing his eyes. “God, fuck, damn it,” he muttered. “I’ll—I’ll need to *get it together,* I just—this whole thing hit close to home, you know? I mean, shit. Someone might as well be reading from the *Sad Bastard Orphan’s Playbook,* and I *wrote* that fucking book, and—”

“Breathe, darling. *Breathe.*”

“Yeah, yeah, okay.” Alexander agreed, pausing and sucking in air. “Anyway, I’m sorry I’ve been so weird about this—”

“Honestly, if you *weren’t* weird I’d be concerned,” Thomas replied dryly. “Just… don’t hide anymore, okay? You don’t hide, I won’t freak out about, uh, being a dad.”

“Alright,” Alexander said, a small smile on his face.

Thomas couldn’t help but chuckle as he stuck out his hand. “Well then, Secretary Hamilton,” he said slowly with an ever-growing smirk, his words a perfect imitation of all those words he said at all those cabinet meetings. “Have we reached an agreement?”

He almost expected Alexander to glare at him, to start on some long, drawn out, indignant spiel about how Thomas could stuff his *agreement* up his stuck-up Southern ass.

Instead, Alexander scoffed and rolled his eyes. “Secretary Jefferson, I think we, in fact, have.”

It wasn’t for another forty-five minutes, when Thomas had his face half-buried in Alexander’s hair and was almost asleep, that he realised what Alexander had said.

“It’s *President* Jefferson, you disrespectful fuck,” he mumbled, and promptly fell asleep to the sound Alexander’s laugh.
tell us what you think and also press A to send me your thoughts and/or prayers as i try not to accidentally die :)

In Which We Interrupt Your Regularly Scheduled Story Arc for Some Bullshit

Chapter by allonsy_gabriel

Chapter Summary

Happy Commercialized Affection Day

Chapter Notes

oh man i wrote this in 14 hours and so much espresso oh jeez why do i keep doing THIS

in case you didn't notice, there was no chapter monday! that was because i decided to write this instead. decided, and then didn't until 8.30 this morning.

because that's how you write a compelling story, folks. by waiting until the last possible minute and then throwing a hail mary. (or, alternatively, hinting and winking at upcoming arcs for literally a year, all while meticulously creating the arc in your free time, and then naming the arc mary)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Thomas wasn’t sure what he was expecting. On one hand, it was a day celebrating love, and Thomas was certainly (if not embarrassingly) in love.

On the other hand, he was in love with Alexander “Happy Heteronormativity and Commercialized Affection Day” Hamilton, so…

“What’s that?” Thomas asked, gesturing at the dark red envelope on the kitchen table.

“Your Valentine, obviously,” Alexander replied, the 'you dumbass' unspoken but still clear.

“Oh yes, obviously, because if there’s one thing Alexander Hamilton is known for, it’s liking Valentine’s Day ,” Thomas retorted.

“Just open it, you pompous, puffed-up prick.”

“Points for alliteration.”

“Points for you being intolerable —”

“I do aim to please—”

“ Open the card you asshole .”

Thomas scoffed and rolled his eyes, but did as Alexander asked.
The card was… weird. Very Alexander. *You made flowers grow in my lungs, and although they are beautiful I cannot breathe.*

“Uh, thanks,” he said, raising an eyebrow. “Is this… is this that Japanese hanahaki stuff? You know that’s for unrequited love, right?”

“I don’t know!” Alexander said, throwing his hands in the air. “I was—I was trying to be romantic—”

“You know, *normal* flowers would have done the trick there—”

“While still acknowledging the ridiculousness of our current consumer culture and the absurd pressures it places upon society,” Alexander finished, crossing his arms over his chest.

“Of course,” Thomas said, rolling his eyes. “Well, I… I appreciate it, even if it implies I don’t love you and it’s killing you.”

“*That’s not what I—*”

Thomas huffed and shut him up with a kiss.

**

“Mary? Whatcha up to, kid?” Alexander asked as he looked over his daughter’s shoulder. She was up to her elbows in construction paper and coloured pencils and—God help their living room carpet—glitter.

“I’m making Valentines,” she said casually, drawing a little butterfly on a folded piece of paper. Alexander started sputtering. “For who?”

“My art class?”

“Mary, Valentine’s Day is—”

“A ridiculous side effect of our current consumer culture that places absurd pressures upon society?” Mary interrupted, raising an eyebrow in a way shockingly similar to the way her mother used to.

“Uh, yes,” Alexander finally replied.

Mary shrugged. “It’s also a day where I have an excuse to use glitter and eat a lot of candy, so I’m gonna do it.”

“Okay—”

“Plus, Thomas says you need to lighten up and try to enjoy life without worrying about it being politically correct,” Mary added.

Alexander choked on air. “I—I enjoy life—”

Mary’s second eyebrow raised to join her first. “Coulda fooled me,” she muttered before turning back to her pile of paper and folding up what appeared to be an envelope.

**

Alexander was just thankful they had a chef on-call.
Thomas wasn’t sure what he was expecting. On one hand, it was a day celebrating love, and Thomas was certainly (if not embarrassingly) in love.

On the other hand, he was in love with Alexander “Happy Heteronormativity and Commercialized Affection Day” Hamilton, and he’d already gotten something—a weird, almost creepy something, but something nonetheless—so when he walked into the dining room in the residency that evening, to say that he was surprised was… an understatement.

“What—What’s this?” he asked, staring at the table in front of him.

There was a candle in the center. A red table cloth. Cloth napkins, glinting silverware, and two gleaming covered platters.

And Alexander, awkwardly nudging the carpet in his fuzzy pyjama pants and one of Thomas’ Hampton Alumni hoodies.

“It’s, uh. Valentines dinner,” he said, his voice catching in the middle. “I, erm, I realised that maybe I should, you know… maybe just enjoy the holiday, even if it is a marketing scheme designed purely by corporations in order to trick people into feeling guilty and spending money on things they don’t need.”

“Alexander—”

“And it only half worked, by the way. I did feel guilty, but I didn’t spend any money on things we don’t need—”

“Alexander —”

“Although, I did call Chappelle back in to make this, so maybe I forced someone else to spend their holiday feeling guilty, and maybe he then spent money on things he didn’t need—”

Thomas interrupted his ridiculous husband with a kiss. “It’s perfect,” he said quietly. “I love it.”

“Good,” Alexander replied, visibly sagging in relief. “Because I love you.”

Thomas smiled. “I love you too.”

Chapter End Notes

my blood is currently 85% caffeine
please tell me what you think
“Thomas,” Alexander asked, poking his head into Thomas’ study, “Did you order Taco Bell?”

Not much surprised Thomas at this point. He’d seen so much, experienced so much, that by now, things that ought to shock him mostly just left him… mildly interested.

This, however—the thought that maybe he ordered Taco Bell to be delivered to the White House — this got him.

“No?” Thomas replied, although it was much closer to a question that an answer.

“Well, apparently there’s a guy here with a Doritos Locos Tacos twelve pack that was bought in your name,” Alexander said.

“I didn’t even know Taco Bell delivered.”

“They don’t, I think it’s a Uber Food thing.”

“Uber Food?”

“I don’t know!”

“Did you say my tacos are here?” Mary asked, sticking her head out of her bedroom door.

“Y— your tacos?” Alexander asked incredulously.

“Uh, yeah. All we’ve got in the kitchen is ingredients for Thomas’ weird pasta, and I don’t know how to use presidential room service, and neither of you looked like you’d be finished working
anytime soon, so I just… ordered tacos,” Mary stated easily. A beat passed and her face started to crumple. “Was that wrong?”

Thomas took a moment to assess the situation. “I… suppose not,” he finally said. “Although, if you’re hungry, you know you can just tell us, right kiddo?”

Mary’s expression clearly stated that, no, she did not know that.

“Mary, kid, we’re your… legal guardians,” Alexander said. “It’s our job to take care of us. Literally. Legally. It’s our job. You’re the first priority, alright? Ev—”

“But you’re the President and the First Gentleman,” Mary interrupted. “What if you were, like, deciding whether or not to blow up North Korea, and it was really serious, and I just walked in like, ‘Uhhhhh yeah could I please have a peanut butter and fluff sandwich?’ and then you got so distracted that you couldn’t decide what to do, and then we all got blown up and the world was sent into a nuclear holocaust?” She paused a moment to take a breath, apparently unaware of the expressions on her parents’ faces. “That… that’d be, like, really bad.”

“Mary…” Alexander trailed off.

“For one, I can promise you that there will not be discussions of blowing up North Korea in this house for as long as I’m in charge of it,” Thomas said, and Alexander snorted. “What?”

“You say like a dad talking about watching scary movies!” Alexander pointed out through his giggles. “I can promise you there will not be any discussions of watching the Purge in this house as long as I’m in charge of it.” Like, babe, it’s international diplomacy, not an R-rated horror film!”

Thomas crossed his arms and grumbled under his breath as Mary and Alexander both continued to snicker. “Okay, okay,” he finally insisted. “The point is, Mary, you don’t have to worry about something being too important or too serious for us to have time for you. And if you still feel like it might be, you can always call Lucy, she’s—”

“She’s the one who told me to buy the tacos. All the spicy ones are for her.”

Thomas groaned as another round of laughter broke out around him.

“I’m going to kill your aunt,” he grumbled. “I swear, I’m going to do it.”

Alexander only laughed harder. “Can’t be president with a homicide record, babe!”

Thomas glared at him. “Watch me.”

**

“I think we need to stop swearing so much,” Thomas said as he sat next to Alexander on their couch, each with a book in hand.

“Why?”

“Today I heard Mary calling someone on some TV show a ‘tasteless fuckwaffle’, ” Thomas said evenly.

It took Alexander five minutes to stop laughing.

“Do—do you know why?” he finally managed to ask between wheezing, gasping breaths.
“I think it had something to do with someone using artichoke on *The Great British Bake Off*.”

Alexander seemed to consider something for a moment. “That’s fair,” he finally conceded. “Artichoke is a garbage vegetable.”

Thomas blinked. “Alexander,” he said slowly, “We can let our daughter go around calling people a *fuckwaffle* because they used a quote-unquote *garbage vegetable* in a cooking show.”

Alexander sighed. “I mean, I *guess* —”

“*Alexander*.”

“Alright, alright, no more swearing around Mary,” Alexander huffed.

For a moment, silence reigned.

Then,

“What if it’s *really funny*?”

“I hate you.”

**

James was the one who mentioned it to him first, surprisingly enough.

“There’s a bill being written in the House that I think you may be particularly interested in,” he said casually, as if he was bringing up a lunch recommendation and not important legislation for the most powerful nation on earth.

“That so?” Thomas asked, just as nonchalant.

“Ocasio-Cortez wants to get rid of the natural born citizen clause,” James continued. “She’s already got a few people to cosign off on it. They’re mostly freshmen Democrats, and if it continues to only grow traction in that circle, I doubt it’ll even be worth the CNN news ticker. However, if someone… *influential* were to catch wind of it and start supporting it, I doubt it’d be able to stay such a non-issue.”

“Wait, what?” Thomas asked. “She—They want to repeal the natural citizen clause? As in, in the Constitution? They want to *amend the Constitution*?”

“So they say.”

“And this would get rid of—”

“The rule stating only someone born a US citizen may run for President,” James interrupted. Thomas wasn’t fond of the look on his face.

“That would mean Alexander—”

“*Exactly,*” James pressed. “Thomas, if he hears about this, it'll be all he talks about for… *forever,* really. It's not a popular stance, so far as I've seen. It's not one we need so closely affiliated with the leader of our party.”

“Good policy, bad politics.”
James gapes at him for a moment. “Thomas, you can't be serious—”

Thomas glared at him. “Don't play that game with me, James,” he said. “You know that clause is bullshit, don't act like it isn't.”

“Be that as it may —”

“I know, I know. Jesus, James, I've been in the game as long as you have. I know that it's unpopular, I know it won't appeal to the base,” Thomas admitted.

“So you won't tell your husband?” James asked.

“I won't tell him,” Thomas conceded. “But if he finds out on his own, there's nothing I can do.”

“There is something —”

“Last time I messed with his phone he locked me out of our room for 17 hours. He figures it out, that's it. I'm out.”

James sighed. “I do suppose that's all I can ask of you.”

Thomas scoffed. “I'll let you know if you need to prepare for the landfall of Hurricane Alexander.”

**

Mary didn’t cry.

Thomas didn’t think much of it at first—in fact, he didn’t think of it at all. It didn’t even cross his mind that hey, maybe my daughter, who just went through a traumatic life experience, should probably be more visibly upset about it until he was sitting on the couch next to Lucy one night, each with a rather large glass of wine.

“I think I got about three hours of sleep last night,” she said, rubbing at the bridge of her nose. “The twins cried for God knows how long.”

Thomas raised his eyebrows and nodded, as if he understood the feeling, even though he didn’t because…

Mary didn’t cry .

Or, at least, not around Thomas. Thomas didn’t think he’d seen her be anything but apathetic, angry, or vaguely caustic since Christmas.

Which, admittedly, was…

Troubling.

As if she could read his mind, Lucy glanced at him over the top of her glass and said, “So, how’s Mary doing?”

Thomas scratched the back of his neck. “I think… she… Lucy, she doesn’t seem sad .”

Lucy stared at him for a moment. “Thomas, have you looked into taking her to counseling? At all? I know you mentioned it once, but have you or Alexander actually scheduled any sort of appointment?”
Thomas couldn’t meet her eyes.

“Thomas…”

“I guess we got caught up in everything—”

“Thomas.”

“I know, I know. We need… we need to get on that.”

“I’d say so.”

“Lucy—”

“She’s your daughter, Thomas. You can’t just forget things like that,” Lucy scolded.

“I know! I know, trust me. I just—”

Lucy sighed and scooted closer to her brother. “I’m sorry,” she said, quietly. “I didn’t mean to come down so hard on you. I know you’re doing your best.”

“My best isn’t enough.”

“That sucks because it’s all you guys’ve got,” Lucy pointed out.

Thomas sighed again. “Yeah,” he muttered. “Yeah, it is.”

Chapter End Notes

please let me know what you think!

if you want to talk to me on tumblr (about this or just,, life and general), my user is allonsy-gabriel!
Chapter Summary

Alexander Knows and Thomas is Conflicted.

“Eliza, would you happened to have any idea where my husband is?” Thomas asked as the young woman stepped in the room.

She blinked at him twice. “Last I checked,” she began slowly, caution bleeding into her every word, “he was in a meeting with Representative Cortez.”

Thomas pinched the bridge of his nose and sighed.

Two weeks.

He’d managed to keep the whole natural citizens’ clause ordeal a secret for two godforsaken weeks, and now it was all about to explode in his fucking face.

God damn it.

“Great,” he said. “Wonderful. Do you have any idea when this meeting will be over?”

“There wasn’t a time frame, sir.”

“My God,” Thomas groaned.

“If I may, sir,” Eliza interrupted. “Maybe you hadn’t tried to keep Ms. Cortez’s plan a secret in the first place, Alexander wouldn’t currently be in the middle of a meeting that’s already lasted three hours.”

Thomas glared at her.

“It’s not like I didn’t want to tell him,” he pointed out. “It’s just… Alexander. He’s a loose cannon, Eliza.”

“And?” Eliza asked. “You married him.”

“I know—”

“You literally signed up for this.”

“I know—Eliza, look, this whole thing is… messy, and complicated, and it needs to be ironed out and polished and given proper consideration before it’s tossed out to the masses. You know just as well as I do, the first thing Alexander will do once he’s out of that damn meeting will be schedule some sort of press event or news appearance,” Thomas stated.

“Maybe,” Eliza conceded. “Or maybe you two could have talked about this. He’s not an idiot, Mr. President. He understands political strategy. If you two actually communicate, I think you’d be
surprised to see how much you’d agree on.”

Thomas stared at her for another moment, then sighed. “I—Fine, yes, alright,” he said. “Have him
meet me once he’s done. We’ll talk about it over dinner.”

Eliza looked at him for a moment. “You know, sometimes I wonder how you two ever got to know
each other well enough to fall in love in the first place,” she stated.

“You learn a lot about a guy from the six hour financial speeches he gives,” Thomas said with a
shrug.

Eliza raised her eyebrows but didn’t say anything else as she left Thomas’ office.

**

“So,” Thomas said as he stabbed a stuffed mushroom cap. “You and Ms. Cortez seemed to have had
a lengthy discussion.”

Alexander raised an eyebrow. “So we did,” he said.

Thomas sighed. “We both know what it was about,” he pointed out. “There’s no need to play coy
when we’re on the same team, Alexander.”

“We’re on the same team?” Alexander asked, genuine shock colouring tone. “Are we discussing the
same thing, here?”

“If you’re talking about Representative Cortez’s plan to overturn the natural born citizens clause,
then yes.”

Thomas was almost sure Alexander was going to drop his fork. “And you support it?” he asked,
clearly surprised.

“I support talking about it,” Thomas conceded. “I’ll admit, I’ve yet to hear or see the full details of
Ms. Cortez’s plan, so I don’t know if I support it, but…”

Alexander stared at him for a moment. “So you’d speak in favour of it?”

“I don’t know,” Thomas admitted.

“You just said we’re on the same side!” Alexander pointed out. “You said—”

“And I just said I haven’t heard it yet, so I’ll wait with judgment until I do,” Thomas retorted in line.
He sighed, rubbing the bridge of his nose. “It’s… Alexander, it’s not going to be popular. No matter
how it comes to be, it’s not going to go well with my base, it’ll alienate part of my coalition—”

“Who cares if it’s unpopular?” Alexander asked, his voice steadily becoming louder as he spoke.
“Since when has politics been about doing what’s popular?”

“Since the beginning of politics,” Thomas interrupted flatly. “That’s the point of a democratic
republic, darling.”

“Well, maybe what’s popular isn’t what’s right!” Alexander snapped. “Maybe we should be willing
to lose power for the greater good!”

“I’m not saying I’d oppose it, I’m just saying I may not run the news circuit in its favour!”
“So now you’re sitting on the side—”

“Alexander —”

“You have the chance to do some real good, and instead—”

“The president has nothing to do with Constitutional amendments! You should know that, Mr. Expert-In-Constitutional-Law—”

“Your words carry weight, Thomas!”

“So I can’t just go around throwing my weight behind something I haven’t even read!” Thomas insisted. “My God, Alexander, I’m not saying I’m not going to support it, I’m just saying I’m not sure yet! Even you can’t be sure yet, I don’t think the bill’s even been written yet!”

Alexander stared at him for a moment before sighing. “It’s… she’s drafting it right now,” he said, his voice at a more normal volume. “That’s why she came to talk to me. She wants my help writing it.”

Thomas was silent.

“You see?” Alexander continued. Thomas tried to ignore the pleading tone in his voice. “This is my dream bill, Thomas. This… This is what I’ve wanted since I got into politics, and now I get the chance to help write it myself. I need you to be in my corner on this one.”

“And if it passes?” Thoma asked. “If you do it? Amend the Constitution?”

Alexander bit his lip. “I think we both know what happens then,” he said quietly.

“You’ll run.”

“Yes.”

“As soon as possible.”

“Yes.”

“And if it gets done in the next three years?” Thomas pushed.

“Thomas…”

“I deserve to know, Alexander,” Thomas pressed on. “If I’m going to be in your corner, I need to know exactly what that corner entails.”

“I’ll… Thomas—”

“You’ll still run. Against me.”

“If the moment feels right,” Alexander finally said, meeting Thomas’ eyes flatly.

Thomas set his fork down on his plate. “Alright,” he murmured. “I—I won’t saying anything right now. I can’t say anything right now, so don’t ask, but…”

“I understand,” Alexander said.

Thomas nodded and picked up his fork.

Neither of them spoke for the rest of the dinner.
These Are What We Call Hard Feelings (Or, In Which Gabe Has Been Working 75 Hours a Week, and These Words Came From Some Exhausted Delirium)

Chapter by allonsy_gabriel

Chapter Summary

it’s sappy okay

Chapter Notes

let’s not read too deeply into the personal implications that made me write this, okay?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Alexander couldn’t remember that last time he’d seen Thomas or Mary.

Well, that was wrong.

He’d seen them both that morning at the breakfast table, each hunched over a plate of waffles, the looks on their faces so similar it made Alexander’s heart ache like he was some sort of sappy middle-aged soccer mom.

He’d (sneakily) snapped a photo, because apparently, he was that dad now, planted one kiss on Mary’s forehead and one on Thomas’ lips, and called out his goodbyes as he rushed out the door.

And thus, ‘not remembering’.

Alexander wasn’t sure how long he’d been locked away in his office, but it was certainly long enough for him to have missed lunch and dinner.

There were ink stains all over his hands, painting his fingers black and blue. At least seven tabs were open on his computer, one of them playing some sort of movie soundtrack with violins and a pipe organ. Four cups of coffee were scattered around his desk, each absolutely empty. At some point, his tie had ended up wrapped around his wrist like a bracelet.

Alexander knew it was time to call it quits. It wasn’t even as if he’d be stifling some rush of policy writing genius—no, he’d been banging his head against the metaphorical wall for the past hour and a half, switching between Elizabeth Warren’s latest book and a Word document he hadn’t edited in… a while.

Yes, it was time to pack it up. Time to head back to the residency. Time to face the look of disappointment on Thomas’ face when he stumbled in at some ungodly hour for the fourth night in a row.

God, Alexander would almost rather sleep in his office instead.
But no.

That’s not how relationships worked, damn it. Especially not relationships that were acting as ‘healthy’ role models for impressionable young children.

Instead of scrounging around for a pillow and afghan to throw over his cramped little loveseat, Alexander rolled his shoulders, popped his neck and back, and closed all but one of his internet tabs.

The music was nice.

He carefully pulled out the old, beat up leather journal he kept in the bottom left drawer of his desk, checked to make sure he had a full cartridge in his favourite fountain pen, and continued the letter that was covering the last few pages.

And I know that the last thing you want from me right now is a note or an excuse or any other sort of wordy adult pacifier, but Christ, Thomas, sometimes this is all I can say. Sometimes it seems like the only words my mind can form are ones about you.

Which is, you know, is problematic given my occupation and entire reputation.

I know you don’t believe it, Thomas, especially not right now, but you’ve got me absolutely fucked. I mean, completely.

Do you know how hard it is to write this fucking bill when I know that it’s just going to piss you off? When I know it’s going to upset you? When I know that not only is this going to hurt you, but every moment that I spend in this godforsaken office is a moment that I could be spending with you and our kid?

It’s a constant struggle, choosing between what I should do, what I’m supposed to do, what, in some cases, I need to do, and what I want to do.

Because right now, all I want to do is toss my goddamn computer out the fucking window and march down to the residency and kiss you until you stop trying to fucking fight me about it.

Do you know how fucking weird that is, Thomas? Do you know what it’s like to have all your priorities shift like that? To just sit by and watch your core values get taken apart and moved around like some sort of moral and emotional Jenga tower?

You make me want to not care, sometimes.

That’s not to say that I don’t care. You’re not that special.

And this opportunity won’t ever come again, Thomas. Not while we’re alive. Not while I can do anything about it. I’ve got to do this and I’ve got to do this now, even if sometimes I don’t want to.

Because I love you so goddamn much, but I’d hate myself forever if I saw this chance and I didn’t take it.

I have to do this.

I know you hate it, and I’m sorry. I really am. I wish this wasn’t how this shit had panned out, babe. Trust me.
Trust me and know that absolutely none of this is personal. I promise you, if any other president — and I mean any other president — was in office, you can bet all of Monticello I’d be doing the exact same thing.

It’s just too important for me to ignore.

I’m not entirely sure why I’m writing this. I know your explanation would be — ’You’ve overdosed on caffeine, Alexander. You’re losing your mind and you need to eat something and get some rest. Honestly, it’s a miracle you’re still alive.’

And maybe you’re right. I can admit that. I’m a grown-up.

And maybe none of this makes sense, but it’s too damn late for that, now. It’s too damn late for much of anything, to be completely honest. It’s late, but I don’t want to face you when I know exactly what you’re not going to say. I don’t want to see that, Thomas.

But I’m going to, if only because my sofa isn’t comfortable at all and I don’t want Mary to have to see me stumbling down the hall in day-old dress pants.

No kid needs to see that.

I love you, Thomas. I love you even when I think it’s driving me a little bit insane.

Yrs. For Ever,

Alexander

And it was late, and Alexander was exhausted, so if he forgot to put everything away? If he left that little, scuffed journal lying open on his desk?

No one could blame him.

**

“Mr. President?”

Sally had her head poked into Thomas’ office, which in and of itself wasn’t very unusual, but the look on her face was… concerning.

“Yes?” Thomas asked, bracing himself for the worst.

God, he hoped it was something that wasn’t world ending.

“I have something here that I think you should read. Laura just brought it in from Secretary Hamilton’s office, but it’s addressed to you. At least, part of it is.”

Thomas felt his eyebrows furrow of their own accord.

“Al...right,” he said. “If you, uh. Insist?”

Sally crossed the room and placed an old red-leather journal face-down on Thomas’ desk, most likely open to whatever it was that was addressed to Thomas himself.
He tried to tamp down his growing dread as he flipped it over.

_Thomas,_

_I shouldn’t be writing this._

_God, that sounds guilty as fuck, shit._

_Before you panic, don’t. This isn’t some dirty confessional where I tell you I’ve been fucking my secretary. I’m just saying that because technically I should be helping edit Representative Cortez’s bill, not writing some fucking love letter to my husband that he, in all likelihood, won’t ever read._

_But writer’s block is a motherfucker, except when it comes to you, so here the fuck I am._

_Christ, I hope Eliza doesn’t walk in. That’d be embarrassing._

It was so painfully and wholly _Alexander_ that Thomas almost felt like the air had been knocked out of him.

How long had been since they’d talked like that? Like _themselves_, instead of like their speech writing teams?

(Or, in Alexander’s case, whatever split personality resided within him that allowed him to trick the American public into thinking he was a serious politician.)

Thomas exhaled and continued reading.

**

“Alexander, we need to talk,” Thomas said when his husband finally emerged that evening, his hair half tied up and a rather impressive ink stain smeared from his temple to behind his ear.

Alexander stopped dead in his tracks. “Yes?” he asked, his voice the sort of forced-calm that Thomas hated with a passion.

“I saw your letter,” Thomas said, deciding to cut to the chase. “The one in your journal. Laura found it when she was cleaning your office and figured I should read it.”

Thomas wasn’t sure what sort of reaction he was expecting. Anger and indignation that he’d read it without Alexander’s permission? Relief that his journal hadn’t been lost? Embarrassment that Thomas had seen something so personal?

Whatever it was, it wasn’t what he got.

Instead, Alexander simply took a deep breath. “And?” he asked.

“And what?”

“You read it. You said we need to talk. I’m not an idiot, Thomas. I know that means you’ve got some feelings about it.”

“I—I never said you were an idiot,” Thomas rushed to say, feeling the conversation take an unwelcome tilt in a dangerously unpleasant direction. “Alexander, darling, I’m not mad, alright? This—I this isn’t me trying to pick a fight.”

Alexander’s hackles seemed to lower.
“Okay then,” he said. “What… what do you want to talk about?”

Thomas took a deep breath. “You know I’m not…” he paused for a moment.

Fuck words.

With a roll of his eyes and a huff, Thomas stepped forward and cupped Alexander’s head in his hands, dragging the shorter man up into a kiss.

He felt Alexander’s hesitation. His confusion. The constant whirring of the gears and cogs in his brain, the perpetual overthinking that made Alexander Alexander.

He felt him finally, finally relax.

One of Alexander’s hands round its way around Thomas’ shoulders while the other rested on his hip, pulling him ever closer.

Thomas tilted his head down just enough to break the kiss for a moment, his forehead resting against Alexander’s as he allowed himself to close his eyes and just breathe.

And then—

“You’ve got to stop this self-imposed exile shit,” he murmured, impossibly quiet and impossibly close. “You’re insufferable and, frankly, an asshole, but if you hide away in that damn office of yours for one more day I’m going to have them knock it down, historical monument or not.”

And, like a goddamn blessing from heaven, Alexander smiled.

Chapter End Notes

hopefully this made some sort of sense, and hopefully y'all liked it!

if you want to tell me your Thoughts, you can do that in the comments (we try and reply to everyone) OR you can find me on tumblr @allonsy-gabriel
Hey there! It's Gabe, what's up?

So it sort of dawned on me yesterday that, since this story has become more popular than I could literally ever imagine (thank y'all so much, btw) there's a very high likelihood that a lot of you weren't reading this Hot Mess this time last year, and thus probably are unaware of The April Rule (and even if you were around last year, in which case holy SHIT thank you for your continued support).

The April Rule is basically just that we don't update in April.

It sucks, I know, but just so y'all get a glimpse into Why we don't update in April, here's a list of some of the Stuff I'm Doing In April

1. Musical rehearsals until 21.30 every night
2. Having a job on Saturdays
3. Taking ACTs, AP tests, EOIs, et cetera
4. Doing choir concerts
5. Learning a whole ass instrument
6. Trying to take care of myself so I don't go Full Alexander
7. Applying to universities and shit

So. That's that. I'm really sorry about this, but life is Hectic in April, and y'all deserve better than half-assed filler, so. Thank you for bearing with us, and I'll see you all in May!

Yrs. For Ever,

Gabe

Tell us what you thought!
Works inspired by this page:

Ship It by AWalkingParadox, What happens when an unstoppable forever meets an unmovable object? No, really, I'm curious, by AWalkingParadox

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!