Guns N' Roses Oneshots

by Sootgremlins

Summary

A collection of oneshots about Guns N’ Roses. Different relationships from chapter to chapter.

Notes

So, here we go. I plan to write a couple little drabbles, but I'll also take requests or prompts if anyone wants to do those. Enjoy!

Come chat/request, my tumblr is: @youre-in-the-jungle-baby
When Izzy gets home he’s hit with the smell of something burning and the sounds of Axl bitching. Steven’s sprawled out on the couch with the TV blaring, most likely an attempt to drown out Axl. The light flickers in the hallway casting shifting shadows across the floor. There’s no immediate sign of Slash until a door comes flying and he comes out yelling something about a snake (if one got out again, Izzy will kill him).

It’s all way too much so he makes a b-line to his room and shuts the door. He can still hear yelling and smell the monstrosity Axl is growing- cooking, he meant cooking, in the kitchen. He doesn’t bother taking off any clothing when he sinks into the bed. If he buries his head deep enough in his pillow, he can pretend that everything is quiet and that Duff is laying beside him. But Duff is working late tonight and it’s raining so the traffic will be bad so Duff won’t be here with him anytime soon.

Someone yells, probably Axl, and something crashes and the TV is somehow cranked up even louder. Izzy wants to sink into the bed and never deal with any of the obnoxious people he calls friends again. He just wants Duff. He tosses around for a few minutes, it feels like everything is causing friction. It’s an itch that doesn’t go away, it just gets worse every time he rolls over. He jerks up in bed and wrestles out of his shirt and pants leaving him in only his underwear. The sheets don’t drag across his skin like the material of his clothes do.

He lays there and squeezes his eyes shut till they hurt and holds his breath. He can’t deal with this right now. It’s been a long day and his head is pounding and everything else is beginning to hurt. There’s no point in him yelling at the idiots making it sound like a war zone right now, they might shut up for thirty seconds but everything will come back full force just as quickly.

Right when he feels like it might be the breaking point, he hears the sound of the front door over the din. There’s the sound of talking that he can’t hear through the door and the TV is turned off. He lets out a shaky breath of relief. Even if the silence is momentary, he’ll take what he can get.

Then, his bedroom door opens. He’s about to tear whoever dared disturb him a new one when he catches the scent of Duff’s cologne. He turns his head and peeks out from under the covers to see the man standing in the doorway. Duff gives him a little smile and carefully shuts the door behind him.

“Hey, sweetheart,” he says softly and Izzy is pretty sure that his shitty day just got ten times better. Duff walks over to the bed and shrugs off his jacket and toes off his boots.

“Can I lay down with you, or do you want space?” Duff asks. Izzy feels himself melt into the pillows as he nods. Only Duff would ask him, most people just invade his space no matter what he says. Not Duff, he always asks, he always makes sure Izzy feels comfortable. God, he loves that man.

Duff smiles again and slides under the covers and pulls Izzy into his arms. Izzy melds himself against Duff’s chest and he finally doesn’t feel like his skin is burning. He makes a soft noise when Duff threads his fingers through his hair and gently runs his blunt nails over his scalp. Only Duff could be that gentle with him.

“Don’t you have work?” Izzy asks, breaking the blessed silence.

“Got off early,” Duff answers. Izzy sighs into Duff’s chest and doesn’t push that any further. He’s not about to look the gift horse in the mouth. Duff moves one hand to the back of his neck, careful
not to pull on his hair too hard.

“Made the boys be quiet, pretty sure they didn’t even know you were home,” Duff says. Izzy nods. He hates getting like this, he wishes he could be like Duff and handle the chaos all of the time. He just can’t keep running like that 24/7.

Duff worms around in the bed till they end up nose to nose. Their shared breath mingles in front of them, and Duff strokes a piece of dark hair back from Izzy’s face. Izzy closes his eyes when Duff plants a kiss on his forehead. He moves down to his cheeks, gently across his eyelids, his nose, and featherlight over his lips. Izzy wishes he could save this moment forever.

The world is at peace for a moment, and Izzy clutches at the fleeting seconds. The soft patter of rain is the only noise in the house and Izzy doesn’t know if he should be scared or amazed that Duff could make everyone shut up for this long.

He’s not sure how long they lay there, legs tangled together with gentle kisses and soft words that spill from Duff’s mouth. Izzy feels himself drifting when there’s someone banging on the door and he jerks back to reality. Duff sighs, and gives a tired chuckle before sitting up, “What do you assholes want? There's food in the fridge.”

There’s a moment of shuffling before Axl’s voice comes through the door. “No I'm not hungry, can I come in? Slash let his fucking snake out again and we’ve looked everywhere but in your room.” Duff closes his eyes and rests his forehead against Izzy's. Izzy lets out a soft chuckle.

Before either of them can move there’s a set of pounding footsteps in the hallway, “I found her, she was in the shoe rack!” Steven shouts.

“Don’t yell, didn’t you hear Duff tell you to shut it earlier!?” Axl yells back, and Duff runs a hand down his face and Izzy is trying his best not to smile too much.
When Steven wakes up with a headache his first thought is that he just has a hangover. Except, he didn’t really drink last night. He feels like shit in general, but maybe it’s the lack of sleep. Yeah, that’s it.

He wants to roll over and cuddle with Duff, but when he forces his eyes open, there’s nothing but cold sheets and an empty pillow to greet him. He sighs and stretches, ignores the fact that he feels like he got hit by a truck, and tries to sit up. He rolls out of his nice, warm bed and shivers when his feet make contact with the cold floor. He takes a deep breath and starts to the door. It creaks open and he wanders into the kitchen.

Slash is hunched over with his head on the table and a plate of eggs in front of him. His hair is sprawled across the table. Axl is on the other end shoveling eggs into his mouth like he hasn’t eaten in days. He’s lost in thought when an arm slips around his waist and someone presses a kiss on to the top of his head.

“That’s disgusting!” Axl calls from the table, mouth still full of scrambled egg. Steven rolls his eyes and resists the urge to flip him off. Duff just chuckles and slips away again. Steven tries not to whine at the loss of the warm contact. He slips into an empty seat at the table. When he pokes Slash’s shoulder and receives a growl for his efforts. Axl snorts and chugs half a glass of milk in one go.

“What’s wrong with him?” Steven huffs leaning back in his chair. He feels achy now, but there’s little point in complaining to anyone.

“He’s just pissy that he got way to drunk last night and now he’s paying the price,” Axl shrugs.

Steven nods an looks back at Slash. He probably feels like shit too. He’s jerked back into reality when Duff sets a plate down in front of him. Moments later, Duff takes up his position across the table from him. The taller man smiles, and Steven tries not to hurl at the smell of the eggs. Don’t get him wrong, he loves it whenever Duff cooks for him, but his stomach has other plans for him. He takes a tentative bite and swallows. His stomach lurches. Duff and Axl are chatting (or maybe arguing, it’s hard to tell sometimes) about something in the background. Steven stands up and carries his plate to the trash to scrape off the eggs before going to the sink.

“You okay?” Duff asks, “Didn’t look like you ate much.”

“Yeah, m’good,” Steven mumbles. He walks as quickly as he can without arousing suspicion to the bathroom in the hallway. He shuts the door behind him and takes a shaky breath. His stomach lurches and he falls to his knees beside the toilet. His stomach gives up whatever was left of last nights dinner and today’s breakfast. He coughs and spits up the last of the bile. His hand shakes when he tries to brush his hair back from his face.

“Stevie?” Duff’s voice brings him back to reality.

“The doors open,” he calls back softly. The door clicks open and he lets his head rest against the cold porcelain.

“Oh, babe,” Duff murmurs and carefully sits down beside him. Steven heaves again and Duff gently pulls his hair back. He wipes the tears that have formed in his eyes away with the back of his hand.

“Sorry,” Steven whispers. Duff runs a soothing hand over his back.
“Sweetheart, why are you sorry? You’re sick, why didn’t you say something?” Duff asks.

“I didn’t want to bother you,” Steven says. Duff stands up and slips from the bathroom. Steven feels a hot tear roll down his cheek as he coughs up more bile. He must look disgusting, he realizes. Everything aches and his throat burns. The taste in his mouth is enough to have him heaving up nothing.

The door opens again and Duff is kneeling beside him again, “Breath, you gotta breath, baby. That’s it, deep breaths.”

Steven blinks and feels Duff press a glass of water into his hand. He looks at Duff, who carries a worried expression on his face. Duff drags a wet cloth over his face. The cold cloth is a relief against the warm heat of his cheeks.

“You’re okay, I’m here,” Duff murmurs stroking his hand through Steven’s blond hair.

“Thank you,” Steven sighs. He sniffs and weakly runs a hand over his face.

“Do you think you’re done?” Duff asks.

Steven nods slowly. Before he can say anything else, Duff is scooping him up off the floor. Steven instinctively clings to Duff, arms wrapping around his neck. Duff pushes open the door with his foot and walks toward the living room. Duff carefully sets him down on the couch. Steven sighs when Duff presses his hand against his forehead.

“You don’t have a fever, that’s good,” Duff says. Steven whines when he feels Duff start to pull back. Duff chuckles and sits down beside him. Axl shuffles into the living room and looks down on the couch.

“You lovebirds okay?” Axl asks. Beneath the harsh exterior of his tone, Steven hears the slight worry in his voice. Usually, it’s Axl who ends up getting sick. Steven nods and presses up against Duff’s side. Duff pulls him closer and Steven closes his eyes.

“If you start to feel sick again, just tell me,” Duff says winding a strand of Steven’s hair around his finger. Steven makes a small noise of agreement.

Slash stumbles in and yawns. He gives a small smile to Steven. Steven watches Saul grab ahold of Axl’s waist and pull him down onto his lap as they both flop down on the armchair. Axl gives a squeak of protest before settling in. With the arm that isn’t wrapped around Axl, Slash makes a grab at the TV remote.

Slash clicks through a few channels before landing on an old Star Trek episode. Axl groans and throws his head back against Slash who smiles nestles down further in the chair. Duff leans down and places a kiss on Steven’s nose.

“You might get sick,” Steven murmurs softly.

“I think I’ll take that chance,” Duff smiles. Axl makes a fake gagging noise from across the room before he’s cut off by Slash’s lips.
Chapter Summary

He’s won, Axl was the one to come crawling back. But he can’t find any satisfaction in seeing the man he loves broken.

Chapter Notes

The title is stolen from Led Zeppelin, hope you all enjoy!

When Slash wakes up at three a.m. to the sound of someone banging on the door to his apartment, several things cross his mind. One, unless someone has died there is no valid reason to wake him up at this ungodly hour. Two, there is no one he knows that would bother to come wake him up at ass o’clock in the morning in the first place. So, it’s either going to be really important, or one of his drunk friends come to crash on his couch. He really hopes it’s just the second one.

Briefly, he considers ignoring it and just falling back to sleep. But the knocking shows no signs of letting up. He growls and throws off the sheets stomping over to the door and not bothering to pull on a shirt. You’re really fucking crazy if you think he cares about what he looks like before the sun comes up. He almost trips over a pair of shoes by the door before he throws it open to reveal the poor soul he’s about to kill for disturbing him. It’s not Duff or Steven standing there, high or drunk and looking for a place to stay, it’s Axl. Of course, it had to be Axl. Slash’s hand is gripping the door so tightly that he worries something will break (it could be him or the door, he’s not sure at the moment).

Axl fucking Rose. It had been two miserable weeks since he had seen him. Two weeks of bad sleep, drinking, and poor choices. Two weeks since Axl had slammed to door on him with a final screaming rendition of the words that had felt like a knife in his gut, ‘We’re done,’ and here he is. Slash considers throwing the door shut on the man in front of him, it would only be fair that he got a chance to do so. He can’t. Slash stands there, wondering if he should break the silence when Axl does for him.

“I don’t give a fuck what you do when I’m done, but hear me out,” he pauses and Slash watches the muscles in his jaw tense under the skin, “I can’t fucking sleep without you. I have to get blackout drunk to make it through the goddamn night.” Axl finishes and his eyes seem to pierce into Slash’s soul. They look fresh with unshed tears, but there are no signs of him breaking yet. Slash doesn’t answer, not sure his vocal cords would cooperate if he tried, he just lets the door swing open the rest of the way and he steps aside. Axl is still looking at him, reading him like a fucking book as he steps inside. Slash should feel embarrassed at the state of himself post break-up, but after Axl’s confession, he can’t find any shame. Axl sits down on a part of the couch not covered in clothes or trash and runs a shaking hand through tangled hair. He looks like shit. Slash can see the wear he’s been through, the dark circles under his eyes more pronounced in the dim light after Slash flicks it on.
He sits down on the opposite end of the couch. The silence is even more deafening than normal and he feels like climbing a wall. He’s won, Axl was the one to come crawling back. But he can’t find any satisfaction in seeing the man he loves broken. He could throw him out, remind Axl that it was he who had left and ended it. He can’t. Instead, he looks up to meet Axl’s gaze that had fixed itself on him. Axl lets out a bitter laugh and runs a hand over his face. He looks thinner than the last time Slash saw him. Slash blinks and cocks his head, what the hell was he supposed to do?

“Well? Aren’t you going to say something? Go on, call me an asshole and a self-centered dick. I’m sure I’ve heard it all,” there’s a sneer that catches Axl’s lip when he spits the words out like they might burn him if left unspoken. He looks broken. The silence settles again over them.

“You can spend the night if you want,” Slash says. There’s not much else he could say. They’re both too damn proud to bend and apologize or admit defeat so this is as close as it’s getting at the moment. Axl blinks and looks at Slash like he’s sprouted a second head and started speaking German. Slash stands up and Axl jerks to his feet like they’re connected by a string. Slash doesn’t look behind him as he walks to his bed. He hears Axl pad after him. Slash sinks down onto his side of the bed and when Axl doesn’t follow he fears he’s pushed too far too fast.

He lets out a breath when he realizes Axl is just slipping out of his shoes. The bed sinks down and he doesn’t dare move. The energy Axl lets off is like a wild animal, tense, ready to spring away or lash out in fear. When he feels Axl settle beside him, he rolls over to face him. It should be awkward when Slash pulls Axl to his chest, but it’s not. It feels natural to do. To hold him close and let him feel loved. Axl lets himself be pulled into Slash’s chest with no resistance. There’s still a tension, but not anger, fear. Slash knows when Axl is afraid, knows he covers it with biting remarks and lashing words. Knows that he can also freeze up and turn away, throw up walls in seconds. Slash brings a hand higher up on Axl’s back, rubbing small circles over his t-shirt.

The tension leaks out of Axl and Slash feels him yawn against the skin of his neck. Neither of them has had much sleep in weeks and if he takes a deep breath, Slash can almost forget about the pointless argument that broke years of slow work built up into a relationship. When Axl’s breathing evens out Slash lets himself slip away into sleep.

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Slash wakes up to cold sheets and a sinking feeling. When he sits up he fears that Axl had slipped away from him, swept off again forever. Then he smells coffee. He smells coffee and the sounds of someone in the kitchen. He takes a breath. Still a chance.

He stands up and makes his way into the kitchen and is greeted with a sight he thought lost to him forever. Axl is leaning against a counter, mug clutched in his hands. He only has boxers a t-shirt that Slash now recognizes in the morning light as one of his. Something catches in his throat as he stands in the doorway.

“I figured,” Axl pauses and chews his bottom lip. Instead of finishing his sentence he turns and picks up a second mug and offers it to Slash. Slash moves forward and accepts it. Their fingers brush over each other as the mug is transferred and Slash feels the moment stretch into a thousand.

It’s so normal it hurts. The way that Axl makes coffee for him, the common sight of Axl stealing his clothes that never fails to make him feel a pang of emotion (love, his brain supplies), and how the light catches his hair through the window and makes him look like a damn angel in the mornings. Slash doesn’t have to do much, the silence doesn’t suffocate anymore. It allows themselves to collect their thoughts. When Slash sips the coffee, Axl watches. The action speaks more than words. It’s a second chance. They both are offering second chances. Slash has no fucking idea if this will work. If it’ll ever work, but he’ll be damned if he doesn’t try. He has his other cracked and battered half with him again.
Never Judging (Duff x Izzy)

Chapter Summary

Steven is the first to notice. Which is odd, he thinks, since he was high most of the time. Still, he manages to connect the dots first (he’s always been pretty good at that, even if no one notices).

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The first time he sees it is after a show. They’re all tired, Axl is pissy, Slash is drunk, but Izzy and Duff seem to be for the most part grounded. Axl goes off with some girl, Slash already chasing the bottom of another bottle and Steven flops down on a shitty couch tucked up against a wall. It had been a good show, and he’s still riding the wave of adrenaline that threatens to crash and leave him beached. He enjoys it while he can. He catches sight of Duff in the other corner of the room, and then he sees Izzy. Duff has his fingers locked into the other man’s, both have a cigarette that dangles from their lips. He blinks and looks again. They’re holding hands. It’s hard to tell the dim light, and at this point slightly crowded room, allowing them to be shielded in darkness in a corner. It’s probably nothing, hell, maybe it is just a trick of the lighting. It buzzes in his mind for a moment before he silences it. But Izzy has a small smile that he hasn’t seen in months and if holding Duff’s hand causes him to do that, Steven won’t judge.

The second time is when they’re all on the tour bus. It’s late and everyone is asleep, Steven figures. He removes himself from the rather cramped position on the couch and shuffles back towards the bunks. Slash and Axl are passed out in their respective beds, fair enough, but Izzy’s bunk is empty. Duff’s bunk is very full. Even in the dark, it’s easy enough to see the shock of blonde hair on the pillow, then there’s a splash of dark locks spread next to it. It belongs to Izzy Stradlin. Steven stands there for a moment. They’ve all had a few drinks, nothing major, not enough to warrant passing out on your friend's bunk because you couldn’t make it up to yours. But Duff looks like he’s a peace for once, and if sharing a piece of shit bed with Izzy is what does it, Steven won’t judge.

The third time is when Steven becomes very sure that he’s seeing something that's private. He finds himself stumbling out of a bar they’d stopped, passing by a back alley. There's the noise of someone, or someones, scuttling about back in the depths of the dark, and Steven means to keep moving, he swears, but something stops him. By the light of the street lamp, he sees two people he knows. He sees Izzy pressed up against the brick of a building, Duff’s arms at his waist, mouths locked. He should keep walking, he really fucking should, but he waits a moment. He watches Izzy break for air and pant out into the night air before he looks back at Duff. But even in the dark Steven can see the way he looks at Duff, with something akin to love, and if kissing Duff lets him feel that, Steven won’t judge.

Steven is fine with it. Fuck, he’s been with guys before. He doesn’t give a shit as long as his friends are happy. He’s perfectly content to move on with his life with the knowledge two of his closest friends are probably fucking in the back of the bus as he tries to scrounge up something to eat. They’re parked in the middle of god knows where halfway between gigs. Slash had left an hour ago, Axl slipping out thirty minutes later to go get wasted. In hindsight, he realizes, Duff and Izzy most likely assumed he’d left with them. So when Duff comes shuffling up from the back with only a pair
of boxers on, he’s not sure who’s more surprised. Probably Duff. This normally wouldn’t be a problem, they’ve seen each other in various states of undress hundreds of times before, but this time there's another feature worth noting. Steven is very, very sure that Duff did not have love bites covering his neck and working down his chest thirty minutes ago. Before either of them gets a chance to speak, Izzy comes into the kitchen wearing the same shirt that Duff had been wearing before they had both disappeared. Steven watches Duff’s mouth open then snap shut once, then twice before takes pity on them.

“I already knew,” he says. He had assumed before, but this was definitely definitive proof that there was something between the two. Duff blushes and Izzy looks unamused. “I don’t give a fuck though.” If possible, he thinks Duff’s blush gets darker.

Izzy shrugs, “If you tell anyone I’ll gut you with a rusty knife.” Steven nods, Izzy seems so calm that he can’t tell if the statement was a way of relieving tension, or an actual threat. It could be both. Steven goes back to digging through a cabinet in hopes of finding something other than drugs or booze. Izzy seemed satisfied, yawning and walking back into the depths of the bus.

Steven finds half a bag of stale crackers which he rips open with glee. Duff is still standing there, having given up trying to cover up the warks with his hair or by crossing his arms. “How long have you known?” Duff asks softly. Steven swallows a mouthful of crackers before pausing to consider his answer.

“I don’t know,” he shrugs, “I mean a little while I guess.” Duff sighs and rubs his temple. Steven considers his next question carefully before he asks, “Are you happy?”

Duff glances back toward him for a moment, “Yeah, actually.” Steven nods and pops some more food into his mouth and leans back on the counter.

“Then it doesn’t matter how long I’ve known. If it makes you happy, do what you want,” Steven says. Duff gives him a small smile and turns back to disappear back to wherever Izzy had holed up at.

“Just don’t fuck in my bunk or anything like that! You hear me, McKagan?” Duff turns and flips him off and Steven chuckles. He won’t ever judge them.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you to all who have left comments and kudos, I love you all so much! I apologize for any grammar/spelling errors, I wrote this running on four hours of sleep. :-(
Late Night Love (Slash x Axl)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Slash is drunk. It’s mostly from the alcohol, but he fears he’s almost equal incapacitated by Axl. It’s the smell; the sweat, cologne, the general sent Axl seems to carry with him. Slash can smell it when Axl pins him against the door to their room as it floods through him. Every part of him screams out for the man who’s sucking bruises along his collarbone (low enough to dip behind a t-shirt, even drunk, Axl is thinking of the little things). Slash knows that they should stop, wait till they’re a little less tipsy before they do this, but he can’t stop now.

He claws at Axl, holding onto any purchase his can fingers sink into. His hair, the back of his neck, belt loops of his jeans. He needs to be closer, needs to melt into Axl. A voice smothered by his growing arousal and the booze tells him they’re making noise. He’s making noise, he realizes, needy little cries that claw their way free of his throat, but if anything they seem to urge Axl on. He tries to bring their hips together. He can’t seem to coordinate his hands or legs enough to succeed, but Axl seems to get the hint. Axl comes up for air and tugs him toward the bed. Slash goes ever so willing. His knees hit the mattress and buckle backward as he falls down into the sheets. Axl’s all over him, spreading across all the bare skin that he can dig his fingers into. Slash wrestles his way out of his shirt and begins to regret how tight his jeans are. Axl follows suit and strips off his t-shirt before he goes back to kissing Slash until he can’t breathe. Slash can’t help himself from licking a stripe up Axl’s throat relishing in the slight shudder he is rewarded with. He sits up and hugs Axl close to his body feeling skin on skin. Axl slings his arms around his neck and gives an experimental roll of his hips.

Slash groans and when he meets Axl’s eyes there’s a smirk that hangs off his well-kissed lips. Slash has about three seconds to worry about what that look could mean before Axl starts to grind down on him. His hands fly to the red head’s hips with a bruising grip that anchors him as Axl counties to make obscene movements against him. He throws his head back and exposes a pale column of throat for Slash to have his way with. He knows it’ll be over before it even begins if Axl keeps up the brutal pace of thrusts, but he makes no move to stop it. Axl sighs when Slash mouths over his throat settling so suck at the hollow of his collarbone.

Something inside coils hot and tight, and bucks his hips up to meet Axl’s. The man on top of him shudders and almost goes limp against him as he continues. Axl’s finally here, they’re finally doing this, and he’s going to cum in his pants like a fucking teenager, he thinks. Axl is going to too if the noises he’s making are any indication.

“Sla-Slash please- oh god,” Axl whines and redoubles his efforts to get them both off. They’re past the point of forming coherent thoughts, it’s just the animal pursuit of pleasure at this point.

Slash manages to get his brain to function enough to answer, “Please what? Tell me what you want, princess,” he stops when his voice breaks slightly and Axl lets out a frustrated growl. He takes pity on him and resumes his ministrations. Slash lets a hand wander from his waist and brush across his chest. His fingers settle against the pierced nipple that Axl so proudly flaunts and gently rubs over it. Axl gasps and loses his rhythm for a moment, jerking forward. It’s Slash’s turn to smirk as his rough fingers play over the new spot he’s found. Axl lets out a broken sob-like noise and digs his hands into Slash’s hair, tugging.

Slash knows he won’t last much longer, but a stubborn streak makes him want to watch Axl finish
before he does, “Are you gonna cum for me, baby?”

Axl gives a startled moan and his hips only make it a few more thrusts before he buries his head in Slash’s shoulder. Slash follows him a moment later, to lost in pleasure to care about the mess that he hasn’t left in his jeans in years. Once they stop panting Slash gently lifts Axl off his lap and lays him down on the bed. He stands, giving his shaking legs a second to adjust, before he strips of the rest of his clothes. He does the same of Axl, tugging off his pants with only the weak lift of hips given in assistance. He makes it to the bathroom and gets a wet rag to wipe himself off with. He does the same of Axl and tosses the now soiled towel to the floor.

He almost falls back into bed with Axl at his side. His mind is still reeling to catch up with him. He looks over at Axl, his eyes closed and face not as drawn as it was during the day. He looks softer in the dim bleeding light from the bathroom and a street lamp out from outside the curtain covered windows. He reaches out and runs his fingers through Axl’s hair. Axl sighs and pushes up into the touch.

Cautiously, Slash moves closer to Axl. When he meets no resistance he throws his arm over the other man and draws him closer to his chest. Axl squirms for a moment, and Slash fears he’s gone too far, but Axl only throws an arm over Slash’s side. They lay like that for a moment in silence.

“I can hear you thinking,” Axl says, and his voice is a little muffled from where his lips brush against the skin of Slash’s chest. Slash can’t help but smile as he listens to Axl.

“I just,” Slash pauses for a moment, “I’ve wanted that for a long time.” He finishes, he waits for Axl’s response hoping that there will be some mutual feeling there.

“I think I have too,” Axl whispers. Slash lets himself relax, there’s a raw vulnerability to his voice that speaks volumes more than the actual words. Slash pulls him closer, ignoring the sweat in favor of getting to hold him close.

Chapter End Notes

This is my first time writing smut (well, I guess something sorta smutty), so feedback would be great. Hope it wasn't terrible.
Duff knows something is wrong when Steven turns down dinner. It’s a bit like a dog, you know they’re sick when they don’t eat. And it’s not exactly like Stevie to turn down pizza. He’s a bit more quiet, reserved, and Duff is worried. Steven’s supposed to be the one who makes them talk about their feelings forces everything out into the open and still smiles at him. There’s no smile on his face tonight.

“Babe,” Duff says quietly when they’ve both sat down on the couch. He scoots closer, nuzzles his nose into the crook of Steven’s neck and inhales the scent there. Blond curls tickle his nose, as he tries to press further against him.

“What?” Steven answers. There’s something in his tone, it’s not exactly anger or impatience, it just sounds tired. Too resigned for the normal ray of sunshine that he seems to be like on a good day.

“Talk to me?” Duff whispers. He searches out his hand which had been lying dormant in his lap and links their fingers together. He squeezes, but the other hand stays limp in his.

“Nothing to talk about,” Steven says, and before he can stop him, he shoots up from his spot on the couch and walks to the bedroom. Duff freezes and blinks for a moment. What was that? His mind races for an answer. Did he forget a special day? Birthday? No, last month. Anniversary? Nope. Holiday? Definitely not. Fuck, there’s got to be something he forgot.

Whether it’s his fault or not, he needs to make this better. There’s nothing around their house that makes a good gift, they haven’t been grocery shopping all week. He glances at the clock and decides he has time to run out and grab something before it gets too late. It’ll probably be good to give Steven some space for twenty minutes too. He throws his jacket on, grabs his keys, and quietly slips out the door. Although in past experiences he's found it better not to wait, it seems like the only good option right now.

When he makes it to the store he pauses, wondering what to grab. He ends up in front of the flowers, specifically looking at the roses (Cheesy? Yes. But who gives a fuck if they make his boyfriend happy?). He settles on some fresh red roses and darts off through the store in search of a few other items.

By the time he makes it to the cash register, he’s amassed a variety of peace offerings. The woman behind the register gives him a knowing look as she scans; roses, an abnormal amount of chocolate, ice cream, microwave popcorn, and a bottle of Jack Daniels. He tries not to fidget as he hurriedly finishes up and makes it out of the store. The car ride home is painfully slow and when he gets home he quickly sets the bags down and puts the ice cream in the freezer.

The bedroom door is still shut, and he slowly walks over. He gently knocks on the door, “Stevie, can I come in?”
There’s silence for a moment, and he pushes the door open. When he sees the scene before him, his heart throbs and his stomach twists uncomfortably. Steven is curled in the corner of the room. He’s wearing one of Duff’s sweatshirt that was huge on his smaller frame. The part that shocked Duff was the tear tracks running down his face. Steven looks at him and sniffles. Duff almost sprints across the room and falls to his knees before him.

“Baby?” he asks, not sure what to do. Steven has fat tears welling in his eyes, some spilling over. Steven lets out a tiny sob that he had been trying to hold back and Duff can’t wait, he lunges forward and pulls the shorter man into a hug. Duff grips him tightly, pulling him into his lap locking his arms around him and burying his face in his hair.

Steven hiccups into his shoulder and his hands fist at the back of Duff’s shirt. Duff rocks him back and forth, whispering small reassurances, and hoping he’s making things better. Somehow, he worries this is his fault. Why else would he be this upset? He tries to fucking hard, but he knows sooner or later he’ll slip up, he’ll not be good enough. He can’t dwell on that now, he has to focus on his boyfriend.

Steven does eventually start to calm down. There’s only the occasional lurch of a dying sob that works his way out of his throat. He leans back far enough for Duff to pepper his face with kisses. Duff catches a tear on his thumb and brushes it away. Steven sniffs again, leaning into the touch.

“S-Sorry,” Steven says after a pause.

Duff furrows his brow, “You don’t have anything to be sorry for, Stevie. Why are you sorry?”

“For all the cryin’ and shit,” Steven says looking down at his lap, leaving Duff with a view of the top of his head.

“Don’t have to be sorry,” Duff says gently and pushes his chin up so their eyes meet again.”What happened?”

Steven closes his eyes briefly as if debating what to say before continuing, “My dad. He called me today.” He stops, and pulls in a shuddering breath that comes out as a sigh, “Said he, ‘didn’t want a fag like me’ coming home.” Steven says the last part quickly.

“Oh, sweetheart,” Duff sighs and pulls him into an even tighter hug. He runs his hand up and down his back, not sure what he can say to fix this. He knows that both of their family life’s aren’t ideal, but he also knows how much Steven likes getting to see his younger sister over the holidays.

“S’Okay, I know I am. Just a piece of shit fag with no fucking future,” Steven whispers into his shoulder.

“No. Don’t talk about yourself like that,” Duff says. “You’re not.”

He squeezes him tight again. They sit like that till it starts to get uncomfortable, Duff’s legs starting to fall asleep. "You know what I’ve got?" He asks giving a small smile to Steven.

“What is it?” Steven answers quietly.

“Well, lots of good shit. How does some booze and sugar sound?” He earns a small chuckle from Steven at that. He scoops him up bridal style and carries him into the front room. Steven squirms for a moment, hiding his face in the crook of his neck. Depositing him on the couch he comes back with all of his little gifts. Steven’s eyes light up at the flowers, and Duff carefully hands him the bouquet. He laughs when Duff sits down beside him, managing to juggle a gallon of ice cream, two spoons, a bottle of booze, and several chocolate bars.
Steven curls into his side and works at getting some ice cream while Duff grabs the remote and flips through the channels. Duff’s hand curls around Steven, keeping him pressed up against him. It’s a solid warmth at his side.
By the time Duff realizes he’s falling in love, he’s already so far gone it’s a surprise he’s just now wrapping his head around it. When it happens, it’s almost cliche, but at the same time, it makes sense. It’s like this was always going to happen this way and there was no avoiding it. All the paths lead here, and he’s finally made it.

The clock reads 9:14, and the sun is filtering in through a crack in the blinds onto the bed. He wakes up when fingers thread through his hair and carefully run across his scalp, most likely adding to the case of bed head he knows he has. He cracks open his eyes and slowly blinks. It’s so soft and warm and nice, that he could just melt there. He could sink into the ridiculous amount of blankets they seem to have and never even think of coming back to the real world.

“Damn, sleeping beauty wakes,” Slash chuckles, still letting his fingers wander through his hair. Duff grunts and digs his nose into a pillow and squeezes his eyes shut. He hears Slash laugh again and he can’t help the smile that pulls at his lips. It’s almost involuntary at this point. When he opens his eyes again he looks up at Slash. It’s stupid, but he looks like a fucking angel with his hair spread across a pillow and sunlight shining behind his head. Duff reaches up to tuck a stray curl back behind his ear and Slash leans to gently kiss the back of his hand. That’s when it hits him like a fucking train. It’s a punch to the gut, the air leaving his lungs and the universe zooming in on him. He went and fell in love with Slash.

When he was younger, he threw the word around. Love. It was never a big deal, he was young, and consequences be damned he would find someone to love. But this is different.

Slash’s eyes flash with something and his lip curls into a small smirk as he plants another kiss on his hand. His lips travel to his fingertips, the rough patches from years of playing the bass and a lifetime of experimenting with other instruments. Slash blinks up at him, still managing to look innocent and angelic while he begins to suck on one of his fingers. Duff sucks in a breath and watches for a moment. He needs to tell him. And he needs to tell him before Slash jumps on him and he loses all his thoughts to a hazy lust of the morning.

He tries to focus, but it turns out to be rather difficult when he’s wearing minimal clothing and in bed with a very, very hot guitarist. Before he can stop himself he blurts, “I think I’m in love with you.” He remembers to take a breath when he’s done and shove down the stirrings of panic, now is not the time for that. Slash stops his ministrations and blinks at him. Why was it so easy to tell a high school girlfriend, but with Slash it’s like his life depends on the answer? Because this one matters, you idiot, a voice in the back of his head whispers.

Slash seems to snap out of his daze and lurch up and connect their lips. The morning breath is the last thing on his mind when he feels Slash cling to him, hand still in his hair. This is a good sign, he tells himself trying to quell the anxiety that still lingers, a really fucking good sign.

Slash pulls back panting slightly and Duff can’t look anywhere but his perfect lips, “I love you too.” Duff lets his chest deflate and pulls Slash back up against him, relishing in the feeling. The other man squirms closer, tangling their legs letting one tease in-between Duff thighs. His brain short-circuits for a moment because he’s in love and so is Slash.
Chapter End Notes

Just a bit of plotless fluff, sorry for grammar errors I wrote it pretty fast. Feedback is always welcome :)

When Slash watches Axl on stage she knows she’s fucked. Thank god her hands seem to play of their own accord at this point because otherwise, she knows she would have messed up. She ducks her head down to let her hair cover her eyes. Axl’s ass looks way too good in those leather pants and when she twists her hips, Slash can’t help but stare. Oh yeah, she’s pretty fucked.

They finish the show and stumble backstage, Duffy picking up a bottle of vodka from a nearby table and Stevie ducking off to another room. Slash sits down on a couch and makes a grab at a cup of what she assumes is booze. Her assumption is right, as she takes a gulp that burns down her throat. Axl strips off her shirt, leaving her clad in only a bra that leaves little to Slash’s imagination before throwing the sweat covered top at Izzy. There’s an undignified squawk from the brunette and Axl cackles and flips her hair back looking around the room.

Slash feels something heavy curl and settle in her gut. Axl will probably go out and find some pretty boy to bring back to the hotel room tonight and leave Slash alone. She shouldn’t feel that way about her bandmate, her friend, but there’s no switch to flip on or off for her stupid feelings. Stevie slips back into the room and curls near Izzy on the couch. Her hair is damp from the sweat from smashing away at her drum kit for the past two hours, but she’s still smiling.

“Good fucking job guys, we killed it tonight,” Axl croons as she flops down in a chair. Slash huffs and sinks further back into the couch. “Drinks, anyone?” Axl adds on, running a hand through her red hair glancing around the room.

“No, think I’ll go back to the hotel. Maybe pick one of those pretty boys I saw by the bar and take him back with me,” Stevie grins picking at a thread in her jeans. Izzy hums in agreement and shoots a look at the blonde next to him. Duff is too preoccupied with chasing the bottom of a bottle to join in the brief conversation.

“Slasher?” Axl sighs glancing over at her. Slash jerks her head up, mind reeling with what to say. Just go back to the hotel and get high and pass out? Or suffer through a night of Axl hitting on anything with a pulse (except for her, of course) and getting wasted in a shitty club? Oh, what fun decisions to be made.

“Dunno, I’m kinda tired, aren’t you?” Slash shrugs. Axl huffs and crosses her arms and damn, it’s really, really, hard not to look at her boobs at the moment. She pins her gaze back to the floor and kicks at the dingy carpet with a boot.

“Fine, I’ll go back with you losers,” Axl says with an eye roll tagged on at the end for good measure.
It's quiet for a moment before Izzy stands up and stretches, “Come on, fuckers let's go then.”

The ride back to the hotel is uneventful for once, and by the time Slash is back in her room, she’s beginning to think she can make it through the night without embarrassing herself. That's until Axl barges through the door.

“Dude! Do you ever fucking knock?” she says trying to sound more annoyed than she is. Axl shrugs and throws herself down on the bed and Slash notices that she’s somehow gotten ahold of one of her old and rather ratty t-shirts and a pair of sweatpants.

“Hmm, and why should I have to?” Axl smirks at her. She swallows and hopes the room is dark enough to hide the heat that gathers in her cheeks. Axl sighs and rolls over, grabbing at the covers and wrapping herself in them halfway with a satisfied sound settling into the bed.

“M'gonna shower,” Slash grumbles under her breath as she makes her way over to the bathroom.

“Sure thing, sweetheart,” Axl calls from the bed before she can slam the door to the small bathroom. She strips out of her clothes and throws them in a heap on the floor and turns the water on.

The shower is nice, the grime and sweat from the show finally washing off of her and flowing away down the drain. She’s snapped out of the peaceful moment when someone pounds on the bathroom door, “Slash, I gotta grab a hairbrush, can I come in?”

“Since you finally found out how to knock, yes,” Slash calls back sweeping the hair back from her face. The door clicks open and Slash can only vaguely make out the blurry outline of Axl’s shadow through the shower curtain. She leaves a moment later and the door clicks shut again.

When the water begins to run cold, she reluctantly turns it off and brushes the curtain back. She blindly reaches out to grasp the towel she had left by the sink before she got in, but her fingers only make contact with the cool material of the counter. Shaking her hair back, she looks around the room. Where are all the fucking towels? The shelf which had held extra is now empty and she realizes that her clothes are no longer in a pile in the corner.

“Axl!” she yells as loud as she can through the door. There’s the sound of a thump and then a brief silence. “You little shit, I swear to fucking god, if you don’t give me the damn towels back I will kill you!”

“Hmm, haven’t seen any towels out here. Maybe call room service?” and she can hear the smile in Axl’s voice, the little quirk that tugs her lips up and makes her eyes sparkle. Fucker.

“Axl, this isn’t fucking funny!” she yells back.

“You could come out here and get some clothes if you need,” Axl says and she can hear the sound of a suitcase being unzipped. She’s going to kill her as soon as she can get her hands on some fucking clothes.

“I'll give you ten seconds,” Slash growls brushing off the faint shiver from standing soaking wet in the bathroom.

“Or you'll do what? Come out here and take them from me?” there’s a challenge in her voice and Slash can feel her temper spike. It’s not like they don’t do shit like this all the time, it’s not even the fact that Axl has seen Slash naked before. It’s like Axl knows that she wants her, and just dances around it laughing at her.
She glances around the room and her eyes fall on the only piece of cloth left in the room. Of course, Axl would leave a damn hand towel for her. She grabs it and presses it against her crotch, figuring she’ll somehow come out of this with a scrap of dignity intact, and throws open the door. If the way Axl is lounging on her bed is any indication that she wasn’t expecting this, her face certainly is. Slash growls and grabs her t-shirt and pants that was placed on the bed and swiftly turns back to the bathroom, the door slamming.

She pulls them on, not caring that her hair is still dripping wet. Gripping the sink, she takes a deep breath and steadies herself on the sink. Fuck. She blinks at her reflection in the mirror readying herself to face the red headed terror that’s taken up residence on her bed.

Flinging the door open, she crosses her arms and stands in the doorway, glaring. Axl has the decency to look a little bit ashamed, but she holds her ground sitting on the bed, “Well, are you done fucking with me for one night? Jesus, why do you always have to be such a dick?”

Axl jerks her head up, “Come on, man, you know I was just joking around, right?”

Slash raises an eyebrow and Axl seems to sink further back. She almost, almost, feels bad about yelling. It’s just what Axle does, she probably has no idea what it feels like for Slash, “Fine, why don’t you just go bother Izzy or someone?” Slash sighs and drags a hand down her face.

He can almost see Axl deflate a little bit, “Yeah- yeah, sure.”

Axl stands up and she shuffles toward the door lacking the normal hop in her step. Slash feels his chest tighten at the sight, “Axl.”

Axl stops with her hand on the door and Slash watches her knuckles turn white with the force that she grips the door with, “Yeah?”

Slash moves forward, but she doesn’t remember the time in between. She lets her hand brush over Axl’s, pulling it off the door, “Hey.” She says softly.

“Don’t be sorry,” Axl murmurs and her head is lowered so that the strands of red fall over her face. And no, this isn’t right. Axl doesn’t do this. She doesn’t bow or bend to anyone, ever. Let alone let this get to her.

“Don’t be sorry,” Slash says again, and then their mouths meet again. Axl sighs against her mouth and Slash presses her body closer till they seem to click together against the door. She should stop for a moment, they should stop for a moment. But she doesn’t, she just keeps kissing her. It’s like Axl is pulling all the coherent thoughts from her brain, she can’t keep up with a train of thought when Axl is pressing herself closer and closer to her.

Slash moans and roughly shoves Axl back onto the door. She feels Axl make contact with the door and runs her hands down Axl’s sides in a silent apology. Axl breaks for air and slings her arms around Slash’s neck panting slightly. Slash dips her head down so she can get at Axl’s neck, priding herself in the little sounds Axl has started to make. She lets her fingers brush at the hem of Axl’s shirt, the rough calloused pads creeping along the soft skin of her stomach. She can really feel Axl. The way the toned muscles twist underneath the pale skin, the warmth that seeps through her.
“S-Slash,” Axl whines when her hand creeps high enough to brush against a nipple. Slash hums and moves her lips back up to connect again. Axl digs a hand into her damp hair and Slash pushes even harder against her body. Axl huffs again and shoves at Slash’s shoulders. Slash lets herself be moved back toward the bed until her knees buckle back and she rolls back onto the bed. Axl looms above her now, smirking again as she works her way on top of Slash. She leans down to kiss her again, till they’re chest to chest on the bed.

Slash lets her fingers brush over the waistband of the grey sweats that hang low on Axl’s hips. She looks up at Axl, and fuck, if that’s not the hottest thing she’s ever seen, “We should really,” she stops mid-sentence when Axl presses into her touch, “We should- we should talk about this.”

“Less talking,” Axl whispers when she bends to tug off her shirt. Slash’s mind blanks at that moment, because, honestly she never thought she’d get his far with Axl. Axl gently grabs her hands, pulls them up and places one on her side and the other on her breast, all while smiling down at her. Slash blinks for a moment and Axl leans forward to kiss her again.

Axl grinds her hips down, seeking friction and throws her head back. Axl fucking Rose is giving her a lap dance. Axl fucking Rose is moaning and grinding on her thigh. She would’ve punched someone if they told her that was how today would end. She rips her shirt off, drawing Axl’s eyes back to her chest.

Slash feels a sudden surge of possessiveness when she watches Axl with her head thrown back and bottom lip caught in her teeth. She sits up and manages to flip them both over with Axl pinned beneath her. Axl makes a small noise and her eyes flash open. Slash slams their lips together again. She tugs at the drawstring of Axl’s pants and draws them over her hips, “You sure?”

Axl nods furiously lifting her hips to help with the process of shedding their remaining clothes. Slash kicks her way out of her own offending garments, leaving them both naked. She takes a moment to admire Axl, her eyes wandering down her now naked body. Axl slides a hand over the curve of her ass and squeezes, bringing her attention back to the present. When their eyes meet, Axl looks more timid. Just a touch more vulnerable than she had been moments ago. Slash leans down and presses wet kisses all the way down her body, stopping to give more time to her tits and attention to the sharp jutting bone of her hips.

Axl whimpers and Slash takes her time purposefully skirting around what she knows Axl wants, “Slash, please. Quit teasing, dammit.” Slash smirks against the soft skin of her inner thigh before she dives in. Axl almost screams and suddenly there’s a pair of thighs wrapped around her neck and two hands in her hair. Fuck, this shouldn’t be as hot as it is. Axl squirms and Slash continues licking and sucking reveling in the taste of Axl. She lets one of her hands up to fondle at Axl’s breasts, earning a sharp cry.

“Fuck! Slash, just like that,” Axl pants as her hips buck up towards Slash’s tongue. Slash feels like she’s glowing under the praise, and soon Axl is reduced to broken whimpers and half-spoken words that die as soon as they leave her lips. She focuses back on her task, and Axl pulls her hair even tighter and she groans against Axl.

She can feel the muscle in Axl’s thighs tense around her head and she flicks at Axl’s nipple with her free hand. Then, Axl really does scream. It’s better than the wails that she throws out on stage because this is real. Axl babbles something out before she slumps back against the bed. Her legs loosen and hands retract as Slash pulls back licking her lips. Axl has a blissed-out expression on her face and Slash leans up to kiss her, licking into her mouth. She knows that Axl can taste herself on her lips.

Slash jerks when she feels Axl’s hand creep between her legs. Axl gives a weak smile and kisses her
again. Her fingers dance across her clit and Slash whimpers into Axl’s mouth. The sounds are swallowed back by Axl who’s fingers never falter. Slash feels pleasure coil tight and hot in her gut, and she grinds down against Axl’s fingers.

“Come on, Slash. I know you’re close,” Axl whisper in her ear, voice lower and rougher now. Slash groans when everything finally snaps and the wave crests. She slumps against Axl. Who places her arm across her shoulders. Slash rolls to the side, not wanting to crush her partner. It’s quiet in the room now and Slash glances to her side at Axl. Her eyes are closed now that her breathing has returned to normal.

“That was amazing,” Axl whispers into the dim light of the room. Slash chuckles and lets out a sigh.

“Yeah,” she pauses, “It was.” She tugs at the sheet and drapes it over both of their bodies. Axl curls into her side, tugging at Slash’s arm till her head rests on it as a pillow.

“Holy fuck, are you done?” comes a muffled yell from the opposing wall. “Jesus fucking Christ can we all get some sleep now?” Slash’s eyes snap open at the sound of Stevie’s voice from the other room. There’s the muffled sound of a crash and then some whispered conversation before the silence settles again. Axl pauses for a moment before she throws her head back and laughs.

Chapter End Notes

I know it's kinda long, it got away from me when I was writing it. Feedback is always amazing :)
Duff watches Axl pace. It’s oddly comforting, the back and forth pattern hasn’t changed in the last half hour. It’s a nice constant in comparison to the sporadic banging of Steven on his kit and Slash tuning his guitar.

Axl whips back around and stares at the wall above his head with an empty gaze. It’s probably Izzy again. Most of the time these days it seems to be Izzy. It’s Izzy not showing up to practice, dealing on dangerous corners, passing out when he shoots up. But he gets it, although he’s no model citizen himself, he worries about the rest of them.

He’s started pacing again. Forward to the far wall, then back across passing by the door. Duff isn’t sure what they’re supposed to be doing today, they don’t have a gig for at least another week and no one has been able to compose anything that wasn’t shit of late. Sometimes he thinks they come here just to act like things are going well. If they all show up, they’re putting in the effort, right?

Axl stops dead in his tracks. No one else seems to notice. It takes him two strides to get to the door, and he’s gone. Duff doesn’t move for a moment. When Axl gets like this, you let him. The only reward for making sure he’s okay is the black eye he’ll give you. He glances back and Duff and Steven. Lost in their own world chatting about something that Duff can’t quite understand.

There’s not a lot to do now.

In some weird way, he gets it. It’s different for him he assumes, but the base is still the same. Sometimes you just can’t control it. When his chest gets tight and his visions turn into a tunnel and it’s just that much harder to remember he has to breathe. Like when Axl shuts down and doesn’t look anyone in the eye and turns into a caged animal before he runs and runs and doesn’t come back for days.

He stands up and follows in Axl’s footsteps from moments before. He doesn’t bother to come up with an excuse for the other two. When he makes it outside and the bright light hits him, he reaches into his pocket for his pack of cigarettes. Lighting one, he shoves his hands back into his jacket and debates what to do. The spur of the moment to go find Axl is fading as he realizes he has no idea where Axl goes.

The sound of cars passing by seems to fade into the dull drone of the world around him. Axl wants to get away, where does he go? The hell house is the obvious choice, no one is planning on being back there till at least tomorrow. So, he starts the journey back, absentmindedly flicking away the butt of his smoke when he’s done.

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When he gets back the door to the house is unlocked. He’s not sure if that’s a good sign or a bad sign (it could be someone just forgot to lock it before they left, there’s not much of value anyway). The house is oddly silent. He throws off his jacket which lands in the vague direction of one of the
couches before he walks back to the bedrooms.

The door to Axl’s room is wide open, but no ones inside. He reaches his door and pauses with his hand on the knob. Slowly he pushes it all the way open. The only sign of life in the room is the human-shaped lump under a pile of blankets at the center of the bed.

“Ax?” he calls out hoping that by some miracle Axl will just pop up and they can go back to the studio like nothing happened. It’s a little far-fetched even for him.

The lump shifts slightly, but nothing else. Duff sighs and kicks off his boots and they hit the wall with a satisfying thump, thump. The floor creaks under his steps as he moves to the bed. Carefully, he tugs back the blanket and is met with a tousled mess of red hair splayed across the bed. He lays down beside him, hoping that he won’t get a broken nose for his troubles.

It takes a moment, but he locks an arm over Axl’s chest, pulls him till his back meets his chest. He buries his nose in Axl’s hair and it smells like that flowery shampoo he always denies using. His fingers press into his chest and he can feel Axl’s heart beating under his palm. It’s steady, just like the way he paces across a room.

“You’re okay,” Duff whispers, and he’s never been good at this part, words don’t seem to cooperate with him when he comforts someone. He’s always offered a more physical front to it, touch speaks so much more than any bullshit that spews out of his mouth. Axl tenses like someone just shot electricity through every muscle in his body and Duff just grips him tighter. He can feel the sharp counters of Axl digging into him and the way the bones move and the muscles twist before he lets out a sigh and goes limp. He doesn’t let him go.

They lay there like that until Axl wiggles in his grip and Duff loosens his hold in case he wants to leave. Instead, he turns in Duff’s hold and buries his face in Duff’s chest, his free arm wrapping back around to Duff. He clings like they’re in an ocean and Duff is the only hope of staying afloat. Duff squeezes his eyes shut, he can feel Axl’s heart closer to his own now. Axl feels fragile. He’s smaller pressed against Duff like this, the way he hooks a leg over Duff’s hip, his hand clutching the fabric of his t-shirt.

“No,” Axl says so quietly you’d miss it if there was any other noise in the room. Duff’s heart pulls in a way that he doesn’t want to overanalyze at the moment. There’s still such defiance in the world like his only pride comes from being able to hold his head high even after someone beats him down.

It takes Duff too long to realize that the wetness that seeps into his t-shirt are tears.
Izzy passes him his lit cigarette, dangling between his thin fingers in the moonlight. Axl takes it and casts a considering look up at the sky before he taking a drag and watching the smoke curl up into the air until it’s gone. There’s a full moon out tonight. It hangs low and heavy against the night and if Axl stares at it long enough he can forget.

He can forget he’s sitting with his feet dangling from the back of Izzy’s truck.

He can forget the bruise that’s forming on his left side from where that bastard had one too many, yet again.

He can forget that sick feeling that swaths him like a fucking disease when his father drags him to church again, and again, and again.

He can forget the way that he catches himself looking at Izzy when he knows no one else is.

He can forget this shit hole of a town and all its people.

Izzy’s shoulder is close enough to brush against his, and the warmth that radiates through the air between them seeps into his skin like a breath of fresh air on a spring morning. It’s nice here, away from everyone. The backroads that take them far enough away from everything for Axl to be able to breathe, finally. There’s no one to impress, except Izzy, and long ago he’s learned that was a futile pursuit.

Something about the moonlight strips him down until he’s nothing. He’s flipped inside out and left there, sitting with his feet swinging in the air like the five-year-old child he never got to be. So he blames it on the moonlight when he leans in until his head falls against Izzy’s shoulder. Izzy doesn’t tense or jerk away, instead of his arm winds back over Axl’s shoulders where his hair is just long enough to almost reach his shoulders.

Izzy’s thumb presses into his shoulder, rubbing in tiny circles. When he passes the cigarette back Izzy he lets their fingers touch just a little bit longer than he should, and it seems like a stupid thing to think about when his left side is pressed up against Izzy anyway. He’s too tired to worry about that though, or maybe he just doesn’t care.

“You hair is getting longer,” Izzy says and it seems loud with the background of bugs chirping in the grass. His hackles rise for a second because he can hear his step-father in those words, and it’s barely quelled when Izzy tightens his hold around him, “Looks nice.”

He settles again, for some reason hearing that from Izzy is better than listening to girls coo over it in school. Izzy draws his arm back enough to tug at the ends, running his fingers through the copper strands. Axl wants to say something, but words die in his throat as fast as he can think of them. Izzy’s hair is getting longer too, long enough to offer a little shroud around his face when he lets it fall over his ears.

Izzy stubs out the cigarette and flicks the butt into the grass. Axl bites back a snappy comment when Izzy pats his lap with his free hand. Part of Axl’s brain screams at him that crawling into Izzy’s lap is something he most definitely should not do, no matter how nice it looks-

But something else says ‘fuck it,’ so he goes with that.

He swings his leg over and Izzy’s hands fall on his hips when he seats himself. It’s dark enough that
he figures the dusting of blush across his cheeks is lost to the shadows. Izzy’s thighs are warm through the worn denim and his hands are steady. Everything is solid underneath him, the world coming into focus around them.

“Hey,” Izzy whispers, and Axl can still smell the smoke on his breath. To his credit, he does a good job of looking anywhere but Izzy’s mouth.

“Hi.”

Izzy tips his chin back and reaches to lightly press a kiss to his forehead. Axl screws his eyes shut when his breath catches. It’s so much harder to forget everything when his mind won’t let him. He lets his head fall into the crook of Izzy’s neck while the moonlight hits his back.
Summer Heat

Small town smoke clings to him like a second skin, the thick summer air not yet cool enough to be any relief from the day’s heat, the hood of the car hot underneath him. His cigarette hangs between his lips, just barely a kiss of weight to remind him of its presence. The spot overlooks a ravine, over further the horizon and its golden blob of sun hanging like honey melting out into the world.

It’s not a hidden spot, not the ones he knows to go to when his step-fathers on a warpath and everyone else is out to get him, waiting and watching for him to fuck up big enough to really smack him down hard. The same spot he’d taken the girl from his chemistry class here last year- kissed her in the front seat and gone home and ripped off his shirt the same night because the smell of her perfume made him want to stick two fingers down his throat.

The spot where Izzy had found him with a switchblade touching his wrist, cold metal ready to burn a line too deep in his skin. Out of breath and panicked, eyes wider than Axl had ever seen so young and fucking naive- because Axl knew pain like Izzy knew loneliness- their sick companions trailing them like wolves after wounded prey. It’s where Izzy had talked him down, ripped the knife out of limp fingers and thrown it into the tall grass and weeds at the crest of the hill and held onto him so hard his ribs had hurt. Axl didn’t cry that day. Izzy had, angry tears, betrayed emotions so evident. That Axl would have the fucking audacity to leave him, what right did he have to do that, to leave just like that without so much as a fight.

He’s older now, he can’t say smarter, but he’s older and summer is ending again and he doesn’t know what the hell he's supposed to do with his life. He’s done with the girls and with the bullshit in his house, he’s got Izzy and he’s got his cassettes crammed into the glovebox and records in his room.

Sometimes he thinks about the knife. Sometimes he thinks about the gun in his bastard fathers bedside- the one he’s taken out and stared at, all pretty and sleek and dangerous and deadly. Sometimes he thinks about his mother’s pills on the bathroom counter, all sizes, and colors that he could grab a handful of.

It all comes back to the switchblade long gone in the grass.

Would he have done it?

Could he really have done it if Izzy hadn’t come after him? That’s the real torture. Not about dying, it’s never really about dying, it’s about his will. How badly does he really want to tap out of this shit hole before he’s gotten the chance to crawl out? It’s not something he can think about too long, razor's edge of dangerous ideas that he likes to walk.

The grass rustles and crickets offer up a spare passing sound in the silence of the breeze. His fingers itch for something, but he’s not sure what yet, a fight, a punch, something cracking under his knuckles like rocks under a boot.

He wants someone to test him right now, take a swing at him and see how it ends up in the gravel and blood when it’s finally dark out. He wants to crawl back to Izzy’s house because he knows his mom won’t be home anyway, and kiss him too hard and stay up with him and needles dancing across records and jumping over scratches before he crawls back away in the morning.

He hates how much he wants it.
That he can kiss Izzy slow and soft or fast and dirty or some hazy combination of the two, and that he likes it. Fuck, he needs it.

He flicks the butt of his cigarette to the ground, grinding out its spark into the yellow summer grass and runs his fingers over the door handle before he gets in. The air still feels stagnant, relentlessly the same all the time, recycled second rate dreams to go along with it. The engine sputters to life with the turn of the key and he waits for a moment before driving off. He gives one last look to the tall grass.

By the time he’s back in town, windows rolled down and the sounds of people and finally meandering their way home for the night and others just creeping out of their respective holes in the ground- like some to the bars and others someplace else (there’s always order to the routine they have, and god knows he can see it). He goes slow enough, not quite sure where he would be rushing to anyways.

He parks the car back outside, careful to not slam the doors too loud, Amy’s probably home now and he doesn’t want her to question where he’s going. She tries her best with what she’s been given, keeping her fucked up brother out of some trouble if she can catch him, but he doesn’t need that tonight. It’s a reasonably short walk to Izzy’s house, lights all off already, darkness curling up in the shadowy foundations of the house as the sun loses its hold over the day.

Izzy looks tired when he opens the door for him, bloodshot eyes that don’t quite look at him in the way they normally do. Axl isn’t sure what happened to him, maybe it's the same empty feeling he gets too when he looks around him. The thing is, Izzy could get out. Izzy can play his guitar and he’s smarter than he ever lets on, Axl can see it.

"Hey," he says, and his voice sounds shot for no reason, and he can’t help but wonder if it has something to do with a mother who’s never home and an empty house drowning in the heat in the summer and that much colder during the winter.

The corner of his lip twitches up into a smile, and he takes a step forward to lean against the door frame. The summer is going to kill them both, Lafayette claiming more victims as another season rolls on. Izzy steps back, and Axl walks in, boots over the threshold and onto the battered wood floor. It doesn’t take them long to float up to Izzy’s room, everywhere else seemingly too baren to sit together in. Always too empty.

Axl has always thought Izzy was beautiful. He’s always had the long hair Axl had longed for, thick and dark brown in the sunlight and almost black in the night. He’s liked his nose, cigarette smoke curling up around it, scrunched up when he’s laughing at something that Axl’s said, but already forgotten because he’s too busy staring at his smile. He’s prettier than all the other people in the town, all broken and worn out looking. Even when he tries to act like he’s Keith Richards, shirts always unbuttoned and jacket hanging off of his shoulders, a smoke held between his fingers, the same hand that can dance across Axl's hand and slip between his fingers.

He pulls Izzy closer to him, and with all the grace he can muster, tugs him further until Izzy straddles his lap. The collar of his shirt worn and lose around his neck, pale skin moving with each breath he takes. Axl presses his lips over his collar bone, barely open-mouthed but still chaste. Izzy shivers against him, his hand flying up to Axl's shoulder. His lips move, shifting up his neck and against his jaw, never staying in one place for too long. He doesn’t give in to the sweet call of Izzy’s lips yet, relishing in keeping this for himself.

“I think I love you,” Izzy whispers, and Axl can feel his jumping pulse and the way his grip is so close to shaking, “You don’t have to love me back, but I think I love you.”

Axl closes his eyes, and they’re melting together for a moment, too close like stars spinning together
until its knocked out of balance and they come crashing together in a silent explosion that leaves 
them mixed up and thrown back out together in the empty space. He kisses his lips then, Izzys 
shaking and Axl doesn’t have any words to soothe that. It's just the summer heat.
Izzy finds his blue-haired punk on the streets of LA, red leather on black boots and not a cent to his name if he had to guess. It’s all part of the elaborate costume that you have to put on if you want to even think about making it, moving into someone else’s shell and calling it home until you grow into it and everyone forgets it’s not yours, to begin with.

They fit well, for lack of a better description.

He makes Izzy listen to The Clash and talks about Johnny Thunders and his Heartbreakers until he falls asleep curled on the end of the couch. Izzy never has the heart to throw him back out onto the street. And when Izzy wakes up the next morning he stares at the stove for a few minutes before quietly cracking an extra egg into the pan and then balancing another plate on the wobbly table in front of the couch.

They lie across from each other on the same mattress two months later, and it smells like weed and old smoke and the fundamental rot that grips at the whole place like it’s eating itself away from the inside out. The Stones are playing in the background on a record player Izzy had found in a dump that still worked. The record itself from Duff, a gift that he’d shoved across the table to Izzy on a slow Saturday night. Duff would spend every last dollar for a new record, just as soon as he’d slip a cassette into a jacket pocket and run home with it, a kid with a new toy to present to Izzy and play for him so he can hear it for the first time (or hundredth).

His hair is growing out, and he’s taken to bleaching it. Izzy likes it, it looks different on him at least, something new. He’d left the empty box on the bathroom sink with a crooked smile at Izzy the first time he’d done it. It was a good enough excuse to touch his hair, that felt just as soft as he’d thought it would.

He finds that Duff fills in the cracks that he didn’t know he’d had.

He kisses him for the first time in a back alley with grit under his boots and cheap liquor in his stomach. They walk home and slip between the gaps in the streetlights and over the lines in the sidewalk and the night air seems to sober him up by the time they’re a few blocks away from the bar and neither of them has spoken. He doesn’t mind the warm feeling that lingers on his lips long after he’s laying alone in bed.

It doesn’t feel that different the next morning, except Izzy gets the feeling he shouldn’t have done that. In the back of his mind, he’s always known Duff would probably be destined to go find himself a pretty cookie cutter girl to marry, and that would be that. It still doesn’t make it feel like anything has changed. He still opens the almost empty fridge and stares into it before he makes himself a cup of shitty coffee that he drinks leaning against the counter. He leaves a mug for Duff out beside him.

The first time he sees Duff cry, it’s raw, ugly, and so honest that it cuts deep enough into Izzy that he stops for a second. He was supposed to be the one who was always there for him, their stupid unspoken agreement that they wouldn’t bail out on each other. He can’t even remember when he’d decided that, but he can’t forget that he did. You’re not supposed to hurt someone when they trust you like that. Duff is yelling at him, but his hands are shaking and his voice is cracking on every sob that makes it feel like there’s glass being shattering inside of him.

It’s the first time in a while that he goes to sleep alone. There’s no easy way to tell someone that you’re doing what you’re doing because you think it’s best for them. It’s just not that simple.
The words in his mouth feel stale when Duff comes back two days later. They keep their distance until Izzy can’t stand it, and the words come out of his mouth anyway. He keeps blinking the whole time, and he wonders if Duff can see right through him, or that he’d even care.

They're not done yet.

His hair is still soft, getting longer with brown roots that aren’t blonde like the rest of it. His lips still make Izzy’s chest get tight when they kiss. Izzy still makes him eggs in the morning and leaves extra coffee in the pot for him too. Except now Duff falls asleep with his head halfway onto Izzy’s pillow and wakes up with an arm over his chest.

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