"Our love stayed alive only in summer, and summer love is seasonal." They were two kids on the golden coast of California, unlikely friends turned "Best Bruhs" when they were unfairly separated. Yet with a ring given, a promise made with it and they'd find each other again. Even if it took them years. Even if it took them halfway across the globe, Summer Love never felt so good.
Chapter 1

SOMEDAY: OUR LOVES OF SUMMER

THE CHILD

2001

I

~ Kurt ~

Mid July and a dazzling sunset accompanying the wind off the Pacific Ocean. Fresh and cool and astringent, smelling only faintly of the allegedly briny rot and beach debris, though the latter non-existent in sight, but a flawless stretch ranked by many tourists as the best beach in the United States, that of Coronado Beach. Coronado, the 'crowned one', an affluent resort city nestled across San Diego Bay from downtown San Diego, and its beach beating out those of Malibu, Santa Monica and even Venice Beach. It was one befitting a golden Californian coast, befitting a beachfront luxury hotel, with its crown jewel, the Hotel Del Coronado, long considered one of the world's top resorts, laying atop its shores like a sprawling beauty.

The signature red terra cotta tiled roof, classical columns and painted wood, paint so fumy fresh and white it lightened the head to a weight of the sea air itself, possessed utmost grandeur of Queen Anne Style architecture, carved into every room, carved into its body and kept unharmed from renovations throughout its one hundred and twenty year existence. Even the chandelier lit lobby, where an onset of new arrivals had booked in late afternoon, their names listed with an "enjoy your stay" parting them from the desk to their rooms, there to catch the remaining remnants of the dying sun the shade of vermillion, bittersweet orange and Barbie pink, all hot and sizzling as the water took on its reflection on the lapping waves, blood waves.

The rich color was spread upon thick puckered lips, those of Elizabeth Hummel's, yet only on the outer rim so as to finalize her work, a fully dimensioned mouth, having used two other similarly shaded lipsticks to create the perfect pout, now coming together down upon a tissue to rid her of the excess. Yet it did not flutter upon the vanity, but in little hands that brought it up to a little nose, smelling the scent of his mother's lipstick, Chanel, the femininity, the sophistication it brought to those now smiling lips as Elizabeth looked to her side and gazed upon her little son, his dreamy liquidy blue eyes lightening as if high off baby powder. And there she laughed as she wrapped her hand around his waist to bring him into her close and giggling.

The woman was a beauty, shape of an hourglass at the waist, the face sculpted in that of a heart with fair skin that gave off waves of heat like a pavement in summer sun and her eyes! Teenage flirty and happy-go-lucky, now dilated full on blue in excitement as her son sank his fingers into her waves of strawberry blonde hair let down from their silk ribbon pigtails and free to fall across her shoulders, strands even reaching down into her cleavage, an ample bosom that smoldered almost cheeky sexuality with breasts so creamy and soft, oh her son could remember how soft they were to the sensitive nerves at his fingertips, to his very lips now smiling as his mother's soft hands glided over the vanity like a pianist over a keyboard.

The perfume bottle was popped open, Elizabeth's perfume, Teint de Neige by Lorenzo Villoresi, the rosy hue of a powdered face, the fragrance of face powder. It was an aroma delicately permeated by the richness of the natural extracts of flowers, allegedly recalling the light, images and atmosphere of the belle-époque where now before a vanity mirror both mother and son could celebrate their fair
complexions amongst these bronzed Californians at dinner that evening, a final touch that left the boy giggling as a lone droplet of perfume unleashed from his mother's fingertip wove a ticklish trail from behind his ear and down his neck, the scent of clean diapers Elizabeth used to spritz rose oil onto when he was a full faced baby. Mommy.

Kurt himself was at a tender age, with his birthday memories of balloons and shimmering hand-lettered banners – HAPPY 8th BIRTHDAY KURT! – Still remembered back in May, two months ago. The way his eyes had blinked bright blue when snuffing out the eight wax candles atop his angel-food birthday cake that moistened his tongue even now. Whipped vanilla icing, the syrupy frosting, the way the cake had been damp and sticky in the center with such big pieces cut they had spilled over the plates, but such a good tasting cake. Never had he tasted such a cake, and the wish he'd made from right at the start. He could remember it and how he'd hoped it would come true as he'd nursed his sickish stomach after such piggy-piggy eating.

Angel in the face Kurt was. Rub a sugar scrub into the skin and it wouldn't sweeten, for it was as sweet as was possible with dimpled cheeks and eyes some believed disproportionate to his facial frame, they appeared too big and bluish. A walking talking Kewpie doll with hair the shade of chestnut brown and lips so tasty looking red it was as if a screaming strawberry had been brutally cut open and made to bleed all over them at birth, a blessing Elizabeth told him, inheriting the feature from her, but made fun of back in his Kindergarten, the rumored belief that he was behind the red Crayola shortage, how he either smeared them all over his 'big fat red tomato juice lips' or in fact ate them for pudding at lunch, along with the red Silly Putty.

Such immature accusations disheartened his mother but erupted laughter from his father, Burt Hummel, a burly man firmly built like a wood cutting lumberjack with a backward baseball cap and flannel wearing fashion sense that would often stain heavily from oil changes if overalls were forgotten. For Burt was a mechanic, Hummel Tires and Lube, his own business headquartered back in their home town of Lima, Ohio. He had been in the profession for some time now with his strong hands well known as the healer of many a dying an engine, though heavily noted by some for striking no single resemblance to his son both physically and emotionally, his small little son pressed to his mother's side, her own little clone doll of a son.

However, as if the now evening sea air had entered their family suite, in it was borne, it seemed, the wind of Burt Hummel, holding open the door with a "Kurt, come! Let's eat!" And a hand offered out to him to run over and take all the way down to dinner, enjoying the feeling of that little hand caught in his big calloused palm, one near to losing that hand it was so small, but never did either one let go, even as father and son hurried down flights of grand staircases as down a mountainside, breathless and gripping hands, past perplexed concierges and Elizabeth's amused cries to "Burt! Slow down!" Oh to Kurt, the safety of his laughing father, fine smelling of wood, tobacco and leather, that new car smell that was always on him. Daddy.

The Sheerwater was an expansive outdoor terrace, the Hotel Del Coronado's refined, yet casual oceanfront restaurant with a "Fish by the Sea" menu that took advantage of the restaurant's beachfront location and featured classic bistro-style cuisine with a focus on fresh and sustainable seafood, ladled on everyone's plates as Kurt and his parents were seated at their table, their faces flushed with cheeks rosy as ever as menus were distributed, orders made and dishes of Filet Mignon, Chicken and Crab Parperdelle and Pizza were laid before them all, conversation thick amongst tinkling glasses, laughter all around muffled by sheer white napkins with the air warm from the outdoor fireplaces and yet salty too, the salt from the sea, enough to taste.

Kurt would listen on to his parents as he ate, hearing them talk of the six hour flight and the amusing announcements the airline stewardesses had given them over the intercom. Hearing his parents speak of rapid journey to the hotel from the airport and of their next day's planned activities to visit the local
town. And in his speech, Burt would pause so as to watch as Elizabeth leaned over, her napkin in
hand to remove sauce, since dried, from the corner of Kurt's lips, his wincing features of
disgruntlement as if he'd much rather have licked it off instead for that was the extent of young
child's understanding of wastefulness, stretching a smile across her glowing face. Yet Kurt had been
so hungry. They all had. It had been a long day.

"So what do you think, son? Looking forward to tomorrow?" Asked Burt smiling as with the bill
paid and thanks made to the waiter, the Hummel's returned along paved white paths to the now lit
hotel, their skin no longer kissed by the soft breeze but warmer as Kurt once again found his hand
encased in that of his father's, a man of adventure, of wanderlust, no doubt a warrior if he'd been
born in another era and looking down at him as he nodded, smiling an assured "mmhmm" in
response.

"It'll be good to know if they run anything for children here in the hotel," voiced Elizabeth to Burt as
her hand came to land comfortingly on Kurt's back, swiveling that chestnut head, raising those eyes
so blue met blue, a cheeky smile in place. "Don't worry Kurt, it's not as if I'm planning on dumping
you in a ball playpen whilst your father and I pull a Bonnie and Clyde to go hijack a couple of
Segways through town, because we are upstanding citizens and we would so never do that… right,
daddy?"

"Right, because Bonnie and Clyde really would have chosen Segways to run from the law on,"
scoffed Burt. "Seriously, have you seen those things, they only go twelve miles an hour. Our little
guy will have hoisted our sorry asses behind bars before you'd figure out how to ride one in heels,"
Burt's laugh, a shortling rumble as he squeezed Kurt's hand. "Honestly Lizzie, what kind of example
are you setting our son. I'm going to have to audition for another Bonnie, you're just not making the
cut."

"Oh but Clyde I thought you loved me, I thought we'd be in this thing together forever and ever!"
Cried out Elizabeth as Burt shook his head in amused mockery. "Fine, Kurt and I will create our
own criminal duo and we'll pull bigger heists than you ever could with those butterfingers of yours
and he'll pay me to! The 401 (k) plan you promised me but never did because you were too busy
investing in the idea of copyrighting your own species of chicken with genetically engineered
mustaches."

"First of all, they were robot chickens and second of all, maybe I would have realized what totally
stupid idea that was before they all went Frankenstein on me if I hadn't found out about your affair!"
Accused Burt with a finger brandished. "That's right, Liz! I know about you and the er… the erm…
the cook!" Elizabeth gasped, a dramatic gasp. "That's right! The cook! I know what you've been
doing and soon your craving for chequered trousers and toque's will be all over town in a matter of
hours!"

"Oh God, oh Clyde I didn't want it to end like this," sighed Elizabeth dramatically, a hand shooting
straight to her forehead. "And in the sense that I totally didn't take your body's measurements in the
middle of the night for a custom made oven to bake you into a giant pie for us to eat, because you
now, I'm Mrs. Lovett like that, making pies out of men is kind of my life now," joked Elizabeth,
flicking her long wavy hair behind her with wistful hands, the sheer pride of a dramatic actor in her
air.

It was not adult humor the way Kurt understood it, it was so much more playful, of possibly his
caliber of playful so light and fluffy it hovered over him, Burt now asking, "How would I taste?"

Elizabeth pondered the question with a finger to her chin. "Bald," she laughed, petting her husband's
shaved head, and there again that pulsing laughter that had both of them hugging him as they
walked, "Oh Kurt," on their grinning lips, "Our little baby, we love you so much," their 'baby' smiling back.

"I actually think they have a camp here for kids where they do all sorts of stuff. We could check that out sometime tomorrow before we go," as with a release from his chuckles, his voice breathy but clear, Burt gazed upon his son, yet his son wished for his parents to keep playing, to kid around as they were with him caught in-between as their 'baby' and to not worry about him, for watching them was all he wanted, but with Burt's words, he looked up. "What do you think Kurt, you up for that?"

"I want to stay with you and mommy. You're so much more fun."

"Well of course we're fun Kurt, but there's no harm in checking it out, right?"

"There's loads of harm, that's why they try out mommy's lipstick on bunny rabbits."

"Yes, and if I see them trying to test out anything on you, you're outta there, okay son."

"S-sure, daddy," replied Kurt in the midst of nerves, the thought of other children, his heart beating fast like the overworking wings of a Hummingbird, wearing them out as Elizabeth suggested in an excited voice it was almost sung, "Oh, but let's just go see where it is now. It'll save us from searching tomorrow." And like that their route was changed, paused at the lobby desk for directions and off on their new course again, the small buckles in Kurt's sandals tinkling with each little frightened step.

Kidtopia Camp and Crafts were the hotel's facility for children aged four to twelve, featuring amongst the underwater murals and separate beach-themed rooms, a funhouse mirror and high-tech entertainment stations, all brightly colored with music painting the airwaves just as gaily, and all for play time, to play, though to Kurt, all excitement at the sight of those his age inside 'playing' served only to squeeze it all out, as if the last drop of moisture had been wrung with force from a washcloth. His toes were curling, feet turned inward and he could sense his palms sweat in that of his father's as he was turned to see Elizabeth crouching down to him, reassurance in her eyes, reassurance in her words as she took on her truest self, his mother.

Both father and mother were well aware of their child's status on the playground. Though Kurt could be sweetly charming when he wished to be, and not so timid and shy as to immediately duck for cover as if like a frightened animal, he was an enigma of a boy, with many of his peers failing to place him. A boy like no other with coordinated clothes never grass stained from the football fields, that rubber smooth skin never dirtied with mud but now sallow looking as he peered in through the glass in the door, into this play pen. That sickish-scared sensation in his curdling belly he felt at the top of a flight of stairs or looking out a high window or the idea of running too close to the edge of the surf of this very beach when a tall wave broke...

It would be said of me that I was unhappy. That my face, my very being encased in costume clothes and Ken doll hair, that my childhood was a lonely one and odd to see parents as best friends as mommy didn't have me when she was in her teens. I wasn't an 'accident', but strange all the same and I knew the concern when I saw it, mommy now saying before this kid's kingdom or whatever this child pen that had kids bouncing off the walls was called, "If you don't like it, you don't have to stay, but I swear Kurt that you can light up any room you walk in as brightly as you sometimes. You just don't know it." Oh, but I did know it, I just didn't like it, but mommy did, and daddy did too, my best friends who loved me. No, I was not unhappy.

Fifteen minutes remained before Kidtopia facilities closed, or so the supervisor let Kurt's parents know, slightly comforting, but nevertheless he entered as if entering a gladiatorial pit, there to be slain with whatever these children wished to slay him with. Or of course dismiss him as a mere
ornamental feature in human form. For he was "bonnie" enough to be ornamental. Cute, and not at all bad-looking thought the supervisor. As smooth featured as a wealthy lady's silk purse. He wouldn't last a second. Kurt was made of porcelain when plastic toys all around were ripped apart in the nibbling jaws of these children, put through hell and only to be disposed days later, but of course these exaggerated images were laughable and silly. Silly him.

The population in the room was unimpressive for a hotel the size of the Del, but there was still a little over a quaint amount with a crowd of kids younger than he sitting around a table finishing up their crafts, golden paper crowns atop their heads and tongues poking out of their mouths as small beads amidst mountains of glitter were set upon paper ladled with too much glue. Whilst over in the corner, a small crowd had gathered around the Dance Dance Revolution arcade, most of them girls dressed in tee shirts so long they were near to masking their cropped denim pants, the fashion of Californian youth, yet atop the dance platform were the flickering sights of a head, a male head, a boy's, bobbing up and down in time with the music.

Kurt's glassy blue eyes were the ideal jewels of observation as he came to sit atop a nearby stool, shifting awkwardly. He'd been invited by the supervisor to join in the activities with that plastered cheesy smile on her cheeks that must have ached her facial muscles after a full day of pulling it across her skin, but no, he said he was "fine" sat atop his little perch at the side, and sensing not to persist, she'd left him be. She'd already guessed that if you were to say hello to him or make a friendly remark in his direction like she'd done, breezing him in, eager to talk and laugh and exchange pleasantries as they'd entered, he'd lift his eyes quick and startled-blue and shrink back in the same reflex, for she'd seen it before in many other children.

Yet she couldn't get over it, as if she'd been kicked in the groin upon sight of those eyes, that this boy was so sweet looking, and of course too young to realize it. Probably didn't even care. He lowered those gems and turned away, mumble something polite and that was that, as if to say "don't look at me, please!" Well, if you insist. There were other children in the room, and boys, and they weren't shy, especially that one on the dance arcade, hitting all the right arrows with enough force in his legs to crack the glass from beneath him Such power, but grooving himself to the beat with such rhythm in his aura it won him the game as with the arcade's thunderous voice over, the dance had been killed with cheers of "whoop!" all around. Applause!

Childish chaos was near to breaking out around the arcade. A pair of girls were fighting in shoves for the next turn, yet as if everything was cool amidst it all, the boy, the dancing king atop his platform appeared unfazed, pleased even, as if the girls were fighting over him. Girls all around him enough to smother, following him as with a head nod to the music that had once again started up, the boy was moving once again with lips slightly pouted, almost boogieing out into the center of the room with masculine swagger and so much swagger it was almost ridiculous looking, yet it drew the girls in droves, had them all following suit and circling the boy in a dancing ring of feminine laughter, shimmering long hair and open baby toothed smiles.

To Kurt, boys were to be made aware of, to approach with caution, or to not approach at all for with boys you never knew how they would react. You never knew what cruel, coarse words might spring to their lips, and how their hands, quick as a boxer's, might leap out as much to call attention as to hurt, like an exclamation point at the end of a sentence, at the end of laughter directed at the face, accompanying a pinch so hard the red mark would show for hours like a pernicious little kiss on Kurt's waxy-pale skin. A boy's kiss. All boys he angrily liked to think. Even this show monkey with happy feet, thrusting hips and arrogant sexuality inappropriate for a boy his age, maybe eight, nine, perhaps even ten judging by the looks of him.

"This is for you!" Into Kurt's hand was suddenly thrust a paper crown by the shiny face of a little girl peering up at him with fingers soiled with crayon stains, the makers of a crown messily colored gold
alongside blue circles all filled in, imitating sapphires, he assumed, "to go with your eyes, because you have blue eyes, see?" And Kurt did see and he thanked her for it, watching her scamper back to re-join the others at the table. Yet there she looked at him from a distance thinking her gaze discreet, but it wasn't. A gaze heavy on his hands as they fiddled with the crown, white crayon cleverly used in touches upon each sapphire to imitate caught light, or the life in Kurt's eyes, such sparkle like glass she'd noticed, continued to even now.

This little girl of four with near albino white hair and glitter lodged underneath her finger nails observed Kurt like someone befitting every single paper crown made on their table. He was fascinating to behold, how he was, his very being, and all these kids with melanin heated to the top of their skin as if the sun had caramelized them like crème brulees, he was as fair as her own hair, and those eyes, how they now widened as with a voice amongst the dancing crowd came the order, "Come on baby, shake that cute li'l butt!" That dancing boy with all the older girls smelling of cheap pop stars and magazine nail polish. The type of boy that was common in the youth of California, silly looking to the girl as she now turned back to see… to see…

I don't think he'd meant to stay long. We were finishing up anyway by the time he'd entered, but such a shy entrance. Similar to my own shyness, but cute in a way, a sense of terrified coquetry, but he was gone now. He'd taken the crown I made him with no goodbye. Blue eyes was gone and the strange part of it was, I wasn't the only one to notice, but of course not. For the other boy, that dancing one had paused staring an approving smirk at the door and like that, I knew whose 'cute li'l butt' he'd been talking about. Oh, how his fair skin must have blushed indignant in his white top, shorts indeed tight about the buttocks in his cute Lottie sandals. Poor blue eyes, scared from that jocular affection he'd never in this life encountered, until now.

Glee

Coronado, lying on its peninsula and only connected to the mainland by the ten mile isthmus, named by the locals as the Silver Strand was host to many parks, theatres, restaurants and beaches, all tourist friendly and entertaining to new eyes, even to eyes of the young as with one look at the sea and the sense of enthrallment would overwhelm you, it's ceaseless rippling fluid movement. Oh how it would lap over you, and the wind in your hair as you'd ride the Segways, the raucous laughter one could hear from the playhouse, musical concerts of band quartets set in the park gazebo enough to ring the ears, the picnics of ice cream sandwiches, roasting bikini sunbathers, palm trees, candy parasols and always so hot, hot, hot!

Kurt's own skin was the scent of sunblock that only had it appearing all the fairer, leaving behind a whitish shiny sheen like residue of a cream too thick to be absorbed. His mother had lathered it all over him this morning, right after his shower, down the arms, across the nape of his neck, ears, face, legs, any stretch of flesh exposed to an unforgiving sun had been covered, to feel "blonde all over" as Elizabeth had put it had appeared, at first glance in the bathroom mirror, accurate. For pale was beautiful, pale was classic, as classic to his mother as her lipstick, and for Kurt she wanted this look, was pleased to see it on him throughout such a heated day with the sun kissing him without leaving so much as a mark, those red marks that burned.

Again, Burt was to laugh, the worrisome nature of his wife fretting over their son as he'd stood in the middle of the bathroom fully naked, the expression on his face, one of frustration proving such a comical act, such comedy overpowering those performed in the playhouses. Elizabeth in her stylish straw hat almost haloing her face, white maxi dress, white ensemble throughout, and keeping to the
shade as much as possible only allowing a little sun to grace her fair skin, her face with wavy strawberry blonde all around, she was adamant on keeping herself and the Californian sun as mere acquaintances, but to Kurt, the heat was welcomed, and to Kurt, the heat made him dizzy and the pleasurable kind, dizziness that made him laugh!

As it was, late afternoon and the sun's intensity had softened with father, mother and son returning to the hotel on lazy legs, a stroll so slow there was no swing of energy from Burt's camera as it dangled riskily from his wrist, a camera picture full of photos of his wife posed with her dress at the stroking hand of the breeze, and of course of his son, his little boy of adorable disposition in his clothes of pastel pales and baby Grafea rucksack, both of them often embraced before Burt, "Keep it there guys. Pose for the camera." Click! "Perfect." Elizabeth's arms wrapped around their boy, cheeks pressed together with blue eyed smiles wide in front of many a sunlit background, the beauty that was Coronado and showcasing a good day well spent.

And Kurt would sing to himself as along the paths to the hotel they journeyed, lagging a short way behind on floating feet with an ice cream in hand, wondering, just wondering why each little bird had a someone to sing to, sweet things to, "a gay little love melody." Humming the tune, he had a joyous energy that seemed to suffuse him. He loved music. It's effect on people. The way it was able to lift their hearts. To make them happy about life. About love. Romance, oh, it was a mystery to him. Like beauty, it had no obvious use, or any real clear necessity, yet he could not do without the idea of it. Yes, he wondered, he so wondered if his heart kept singing would his song go winging to someone who'd find him, "and bring back a love song to me.”

To the sounds of a spray, he would now stop abruptly, though the music would go on, accompanying this spraying of water that grew the instinct to enter immediately, to cool off, for this ice cream could only do so much, the way it itself was giving up as it melted with droplets trickling down the cone before they were lapped up by that warm tongue, this tongue that licked and lapped and licked, pink remnants on his lips licked away before his mother could come hurtling his way with a napkin to rub at his face. No. This ice cream was all his to consume but by God was the sound of that water spraying itching his clammy hot skin to make contact now, to throw himself under its mercy and to drench himself, just the word 'drench' so irresistible.

It was the Orange Avenue fountain. Of course! Circular in shape with baby bushes going right round and in its center, the spray, reaching high into the air with the slight breeze wafting a mist onto Kurt's skin as he neared, coming to a stop and for several minutes he stood eying it, the water he felt like dunking his naked feet into, slipping himself into it like a seal pup and playing with the water all but splashing about amidst his churning body, but he knew he'd get told off if he tried. It would be so cold, would recall images of the ice baths his father would immerse himself in when he'd been a college athlete and now occasionally his mother, her baths always perfumed with drops of her Italian fragrance as ice cubes would float all around.

Suddenly, with the sight of the fountain's tiled floor, an almost azure shade of blue, the most brilliant, an idea had Kurt rummaging his hands through the pockets of his shorts, feeling around for a coin, any coin that with his back to the fountain, he'd throw with his right hand over his left shoulder, or so his mother had taught him, and though this rather understated little fountain was no Fountain Trevi or Baroque boasting masterpiece from Rome, it was still a fountain capable of granting wishes, a new romance if two coins were thrown in and marriage if into the water three coins entered, again a little fact his mother had let him in on with her lips next to his ear as he'd giggled away into making his wish for a pair of heels at the time.

Disappointment was met upon no discovery, no coin, and with a cry of his name upon his mother's lips, he turned his head to see his parents further down the pathway waving him over, yet with rushed hands signaling to the fountain, he propped his rucksack onto the its edge and rummaged. A
map of Coronado with a note of his parent's cell as well as the number of the hotel in case he got lost, a keychain, a melted chocolate bar, certainly soft and sticky, but no- "yes!" Upon his smiling lips as down in the crevice of the rucksack, stuck in the corner and out was retrieved a coin rolling into his palm, a fifty cent piece, 'LIBERTY' embossed on the outer rim, a profile of John F. Kennedy in the center with 'In God We Trust' worded at the bottom.

How shiny it was, how silver it looked, as if it weren't made of alloy metal, but actual silver and how pretty it would look on the floor of the fountain, not that it was a wishing fountain. It was fairly ordinary. No coins littered its tiled floor, and like signs at zoos to 'not feed the animals' or visiting historical estates to 'not walk on the grass', Kurt suspected coin tossing wasn't allowed here either, but it was in his hand and it was a hand suspended over the water willing to drop and let gravity do its work. Yet on the verge of commencing the ritual, to ensure his wish would come true only through the steps, a voice sounded and like that, the coin was lost, falling through the air into the water too fast to retrieve, his wish wasted, his wish gone.

The lips pouted on his little pained face, Kurt quickly leaned over the fountain, clumsily, with almost depressed eagerness and peered inside, careful not to push in his baby Grafea rucksack as he did. The water was only shallow with his coin right there, blurred and distorted amidst the ripples and for a second he considered retrieving it, so close it was, but bad luck befell those who took coins out, or so it was believed. He wasn't going to do it, and he had no more coins on him. All but a pathetic sigh, the slumping of the shoulders weighed him down until with the sound of that voice in the air behind him and Kurt was quick to whip around, eyes alert, his body stiffening just perceptibly upon the sight, but stiffened all the same, still, and motionless.

There he stood, nearer to me than he had last night but not too close as he knew very well how I looked, how my body had poised itself ready to pelt, and there he was, hands in his cargo short pockets, his feat softly rocking on their soles with that arrogant smirk feigning innocence I couldn't stand, for he had made the sound I was sure of it, had distracted me into losing my coin, losing my wish. And standing there with the nerve to appear so confident! It couldn't be real. Had me thankful my buttocks were no longer facing him, but my legs were, my sandled little toes turning inward, my hand, oh how I wish he would stop looking upon my skin, my near white skin so fair and burning under those magnetic hazel eyes of his.

Kurt had not spoken of what had occurred in Kidtopia to his parents, sparsely decorating what he thought of the place with many words and only highlighting the experience with the makeshift paper crown the young girl had given him. His parents had not pursued the subject either, for they knew Kurt had been afraid of those inside. Those strong-willed easily definable in the large room, the ones you had to win over fast in school. You didn't get a second chance if you didn't. Without brothers or sisters you were alone. All you had was yourself and as Kurt had tried on his brand new crown in the bathroom mirror, his mother behind him adjusting it on his head, he'd not let her know of the boy with such confidence it had scared him inside.

Now and here, his parents had not wandered far, with his father admiring a gleaming 1950s red Cadillac Eldorado, its high tail fins and matching deck lid beauty panels the perfect vehicle for Elizabeth to pose herself next to in perfect pinup posture, seating herself on its hood in her blowing maxi dress and hat, snapped by Burt's camera as a few meters away their son stood trapped in similar fashion with the refreshing mist of the fountain's spray at the nape of his neck and a strange boy in front eying him, Kurt eying him right back, for it was the only thing he could think of to keep those hazel eyes from descending, to discover any weaknesses in his structure, anything to tease with words or anything to pinch hard, the burning kiss of a boy.

True to form, almost a cliché, this boy was good looking. Good looking enough to attract girls and good looking enough to know it himself with eyes hazel rich on a face handsomely boyish, his skin a
very fetching tan shade and his body bigger than Kurt's in a way he couldn't quite describe, similar he supposed to how the athletic boys at school were built with their already broadening shoulders and thickening hands. Vicious hands meant to hurt and twist the heads and limbs off countless Barbie dolls, Pepto Bismol making for a pink bloodbath but the girls' screams very much real in their bleeding ears, and not seeing this boy's hands, both hidden in his pockets as if at any moment they would whip out like pistols, it unnerved Kurt greatly.

"Sup," said the Boy, casually.

"Hello," said Kurt, reluctance rife within his bones as with counting seconds, he watched in silence as the Boy flitted his eyes from him to the fountain and back again.

"You want a little help getting your coin back?"

Kurt shook his head. "No, I don't want it back."

"Why not?"

"Because it's bad luck if you take a coin out of a wishing fountain."

"It's not a wishing fountain," said the Boy, snorting, "It's just a fountain. I think you're safe."

"I'm not going to risk it. It's just a- hey!" Said Kurt, gasping as the Boy jogged up to the fountain's edge beside him, took his hand and plunged it into the water, his tan fingers rummaging for the coin. "What are you doing?! Just leave it in there, I said I don't want-"

"Here you go," The Boy breathed, holding in dripping wet fingers Kurt's fifty cent coin, and like Kurt had predicted they'd be, they were thick fingers, with nails trimmed and callouses at the tip. One could tell a lot from someone just from the build of their hands, or so Elizabeth had told him once, and This Boy, just the way he'd shoved his own into the water as if like a hungry animal swiping its depths for fleeing fish, that hand was a great tool in the making.

"Keep it. You earned it."

"I don't want it," the Boy said disdainfully. "It's not my coin."

"It is now," said Kurt. "Spend it on whatever you want. Money can buy you happiness."

"No, it can't."

"Well, then I think you're using money wrong."

"It's fifty cents. Like I'm really gonna buy big with fifty cents," the Boy scoffed, his eyes squinted, seeing this boy's fair face, the way he came to stand with a hand hanging almost limply from the most delicate looking wrist you'd ever seen on a child, such a flimsy looking thing that could not be manhandled into accepting the coin for fear of snapping it clean off. No good forcing it open either, to dig the coin into its palm enough to cut, to bleed, a palm as soft as flan. This boy was to be handled with care.

"Buy a gumball or a doughnut, I don't know," said Kurt. "It's all yours. Have fun."

"No wait, take it."

"No thank you."

"Take it," insisted the Boy again, harder this time, his fingers now pinching the coin so hard Kurt
could see the ends of them whitening he now stood, now approached.

"Leave me alone."

"I'll throw it back in."

"The water's right there Big Spender."

'Plop!' And the coin was lying upon the tiled floor once again, though further away in position to the point where Kurt could hardly make it out amongst the haze, the ripples. The throw itself had had force behind it, uncoiled from the shoulder and straight through the arm, unleashed from someone who certainly knew how to throw, that someone sitting beside Kurt as both of them now found themselves looking into the water in such sullen silence it could not be mistaken for much else.

"Not that this wasn't a spectacular waste of time, but I have to go-"

"Wait," the Boy sighed, his hands diving deep into his pockets and rummaging frenziedly, both now resembling small animals as they writhed impatiently to bring forth a gold dollar coin, its surface dull and shineless. "Here, take this one, make a wish or whatever. I feel bad for making you drop your coin… because that was totally me. Sorry."

"Why did you do it?"

"You were just standing there not doing anything, I thought you'd fallen asleep."

"I was about to throw it in."

"No you weren't, you turned away."

"That's how you're supposed to throw coins in. Look," he said, demonstrating as he plucked the coin right out of the Boy's fingers and held it clearly before him, the air of a teacher with too higher nose about him. "You turn your back to the fountain, your wish already in mind and then with your right hand you throw the coin over your left shoulder. How do you not know this?"

"Well because I've always thrown mine in like a normal person. As long as my coin is in the water, I'm happy. I can go eat pizza or steal a Jaguar statuette from the bonnet of some rich dude's car, but your way is good too. Fancy. European."

"You steal car bonnet statuettes?"

"I also don't wear seatbelts 'cause I'm a badass thrill seeker and I wanna die." It was a response to which Kurt could not respond to, his face contorted into a frown which could only ever be seen as cute, as if he'd bitten into something icky sticky. "You throwing your coin in already? I wanna see this fancy little throw of yours."

"I'm going to, just… could you stand in front of me?"

"Why?"

"I don't want you behind me."

"Are you afraid I'll catch the coin, 'cause I won't do anything. See, hands in pockets," his hands in the air, surrendering, "not going anywhere. See? Good hands." Good hands? Yeah right.

"No I just don't want you to see my…"
"See your what?"

"I don't want you looking at my bottom alright?! So could you please just stand over there!"

"Your 'bottom'? You mean your butt?" Oh, how humiliating. Butt. So crude, a word he'd heard older kids use when hanging around in mall parking lots, gas stations and schools. 'Look at the butt on that blonde!' The word 'boobies' he'd heard thrown around as well, but 'butt'. He could only now brush past it with discomfort settled like led in bone marrow.

"Yes, now just-"

"But if I stand over there, I won't be able to see it, your cute l'il… 'bottom'."

"Argh! Forget it! You can have your stupid coin back, it's stinks anyway of palm sweat-"

"Okay, okay, I'm sorry, geez," said The Boy, chortling. "Make your dumb wish already, my eyes are on you and are… definitely… not going down… to your-"

"Seriously?! Are you for real?!"

"Okay, okay, my eyes are up." All through the wish they were up. Could have descended the fair boy had his eyes closed with the coin to his chest. So tempting, but upon catching those red lips in motion, like a prayer mumbling away, the Boy could not hide his now chuckling amusement.

"What?" Said Kurt, irritably.

"Nothing."

"Then why are you laughing?"

"Just your wish is all with its Dear Diary theme it's got going on."

"You don't even know what it was."

"Sure I do," said the Boy. "You wished you wanted this holiday with your parents to go well, that it'll go on to be one of the best holidays you'll have with them and that one you will remember it for a very long time. Oh, and that you see as little of the 'annoying boy who's way too tanned to be white' as possible." Said with such accuracy, Kurt not comprehend, mouth agape, his wish dying as the Boy frowned, "I'm not too tanned am I? There's got to be a little vanilla on me somewhere."

"You read lips?"

"Dude, come on, have you seen the lips on you? Whoa momma, easy on the man lipstick."

"I don't wear lipstick, and no I don't eat red Crayola crayons, and yes, I can take my head out of a cherry pie every once in a while!"

"You like cherries?"

"No!"

"How about potatoes?"

Kurt's brow drawn glare of confusion, his exhaustion from the heat as well as this entire encounter could not muster another forced word, pulling his face into asking 'what the hell?' For it was clear he would not be able to ask such a question with that word in it, not even if he replaced it with 'heck'. 
To the Boy, it was touching to behold. So cute!

"What?" He said. "Potatoes are right on, man. Cut them up and fry 'em and you've really got something."

"Well that's it," Kurt sighed, "you know my wish, it can't come true."

"It's no big deal, you haven't thrown the coin in. You can always make another one. A better one."

"I don't want a 'better' one," said Kurt. "I want the one I wanted in the beginning."

"Why, it was so hella lame. You gotta wish big, like I don't know, have a giant robot Triceratops suddenly crawl out of the sea onto the beach wearing bulletproof ammo on its back shooting missile targeted rocket launchers at the robot Tyrannosaurus Rex before it reaches the hotel from its journey of destruction through the town that once was Coronado. Pretty cool wish, huh. You go."

"I… Fine, I wish a giant spaceship suddenly appeared from a darkened cloud, lasered the hotel out of the ground and lifted it right into space by chains where everyone would wear air bubbles, whilst you'd be stuck down here with your robot dinosaurs getting trampled to death as they'd spiral out of control. How does that sound?"

"Awesome. Just don't tell me next time, otherwise it won't come true. I don't think you've quite grasped that part yet."

Kurt huffed. "And I don't think you've grasped that only wishes within reason have a chance of making it, not those that you've probably doodled on your test papers."

"Who says they do? Not all wishes come true, princess. Not even some of your Barney wishes, and though it probably doesn't help to make them in a fake wishing fountain, at least mine had kiss ass dinosaur robots in it, what does yours have? Happy time with the folks and 'help! Get this ass staring kid away from me.' I could follow you around this hotel and make sure you see me every day until you leave, it wouldn't be hard. Could be fun."

"And that would be your idea of a vacation? Stalking some random boy?"

"I've beaten every round of Dance Dance Revolution since I got here. I've gone surfing, I've gone water skiing, I even rented and crashed one of their bikes into a cactus which I'm pretty sure I killed."

"But why?"

"I don't know… you're cute."

Kurt blinked. "... You're just a creep in the making aren't you."

"And you're just one hopscotch jump away from a Disney princess wishing upon a star for a singing bug or a parsnip carriage," said the Boy, smirking. "Something's gotta give sometime."

Exactly what the Boy meant by this, Kurt didn't know, but it put him on edge, now lessened somewhat as with the breeze brought with it his mother's voice, shouting out to him, "Kurt!" His name let known clearly as he looked round to see her once again waving him over. "Kurt, come on! We'll be late for dinner! You can always come back tomorrow!" And Kurt with an obedient nod responded, yet with the sudden recollection of the Boy's dollar coin in hand, he returned it, his palm open.

"You can have it back."
"You didn't make another wish."

Kurt was about to protest, and hastily, yet genuine emotion lay inscribed upon those tanned features, that non chalant stance stricken with anxiousness. The Boy wanted Kurt to make a wish with his coin. Giving it back would only be the most effective insult he could throw at this boy, and Kurt did not wish to hurt as he now replied quietly, "… you're right, I didn't."

With coin to chest, his own breathing beating little chest, Kurt took a step back and with eyes closed, a new wish was made, and a silent wish it was this time, with no illustration upon his slightly upturned lips that quivered excitedly under the hazel gaze it felt so heavily. The waters behind him would know, since lit from within, tinting the hazing mist a mellow apricot glow with the sunset itself dying, the sky darkening. The late hour was fast approaching, yet he wished on until with irises bursting forth with the flicker of cathedral candles, like the genuine sapphires of his golden paper crown brought alive, he threw the coin with his right hand across his left shoulder into the fountain, a soundless entrance as it entered the rippling waters.

I watched him scamper off like a little mouse with those buckled sandals that sang like xylophone keys and those tight shorts framing a butt so petite, his teddy bear back pack hung so low it bounced off it with every step, all the while running without looking back, just like that, without even looking back at me. And I stood there watching him go as I had done in that Kid- crapia dungeon, back to the safety of his parents. God, I just wanted to grab the little thing and hold him close, see him squirm until he'd wear himself out. 'Cause this guy had nothing to fear. I was just kidding around. I wasn't gonna hurt him. Honest. I'm cool. I'm totally cool. People get hypothermia from looking at me 'cause I'm that cool. We could get along, 'cause… I see it.

~ PLEASE REVIEW ~

(But if you wish to criticize, may it be constructive. I'm not going to learn from my mistakes and improve if you vent.)

Author's Note: Hey, everyone! I'm back on the fan fiction scene with my new Puckurt story I hope you will all love. The idea for it came to me as I was finishing up on my previous work WMHS: The Tyrant of my Heart where upon I spent several months planning it before I began writing last fall. It's still not complete as of yet, which is a first for me as I've always finished my stories before uploading, but then again I've always ended up re-writing them so I will be taking my time with this one. The story is my first of the Romance/Friendship genre, my second Alternate Universe (AU) after New York City: Strut Your Way to Love and is rated Mature (M) for strong language, strong sexual themes, reference to alcohol and drugs, mature and crude humor, gambling and violence. Note that the majority of the spoken humor has been taken from Tumblr text posts and adapted for the story along with an abundant use of surfer slang and Californian lingo.

Disclaimer: I do not own the rights to the characters from Glee as I don't own the show. I'm not earning money from this and no copyright or trademark infringement is intended.

~ STAY TUNED FOR MORE BY FOLLOWING/FAVORITING ~
The next day was spent at the hotel, though a day having started late due to Burt's long lie in. Mouth agape and quietly snoring, the man had worn nothing on his upper body with the blanket only coming up mid chest, his forearm covering his eyes as if shielding them from the sun no longer kept at bay behind the open curtains. Both Elizabeth and Kurt had giggled on many ways to wake him up, water to the face or simply throwing Kurt onto his stomach enough to have him vomit last night's food, yet a pillow attack struck out, and growls befitting a waking beast had sounded, the stirring of the slumber stricken body as pillows had come down upon the man with enough playful energy to have them nearly burst their feathery insides. *Poof!*

Kurt had laughed, he'd screamed and he'd squealed as Burt had yanked him into a cuddle with strong arms never letting go, and Elizabeth too, both of them trying to escape in vain as they were encased in the man's grip, playful punishment for having disturbed his sleep and ending with many a time nearly rolling off the mattress onto the floor below, but soon enough the beast had risen and the bed had been made, Kurt had been plopped into a bubble bath with his mother kneeling by the tub styling his shampoo fluffed hair into different shapes and now down to brunch as it was too late for breakfast, Burt's early morning plans scuffed out as with a rumbling stomach, he led them all down with extra care not to run into the neighbors.

Continuously voted San Diego's best brunch by *San Diego Magazine* and *The San Diego Union-Tribune* readers, The Del's brunch had been long standing a favorite, pleased to offer seven distinct dining stations that created an interactive and luxurious progressive dining experience featuring seasonal chef's compositions and fresh local ingredients to "bring the kitchen into the room", that room being the Crown Room, considered the masterpiece of the architects Reid & Reid, and whose wooden ceiling allegedly had been installed with mere pegs and glue with not a single nail used throughout its entire construction. Yet with its crown shaped chandeliers and Persian inspired floral carpet, it was a fact many a time overlooked.

Kurt wove his way through each and every dining station in the room, admiring the silverware and presentation of the food with almost no intention of taking any of it, for it was too aesthetically pleasing to disturb, like museum art meant not to touch. Yet others touched, and to his reluctance so did he, ruining the displays, but bringing about a delicious palate of pancakes and fruit soon placed upon the white table cloth as with a watering mouth, he made quick work of eating to the smallest granular spec of powdered sugar and up! For seconds, questions regarding what had occurred yesterday afternoon at the Orange Avenue Fountain spurring his little legs that much faster as his mother watched him intently, her eyes amused.

The talk of the fountain, "It was a cute little fountain, don't you think so Kurt?" The talk of wishes, "Did you ever make a wish in the end?" To the mention of the Boy or 'new buddy' as Burt had named him, "Do you know that boy from somewhere?" It all brought about features in her son she knew all too well. He'd already claimed upon even the mention of coins that if he'd had a dollar for every time someone had said something stupid he'd be a millionaire by age two and now just watching as he hovered around the various dining stations with a full plate, now only cooling,
hovering some more, wondering around the large hot chocolate pot, stalling, and shooting them fleeting glances to see if they’d switched topic of conversation, guessing.

Oh Kurt. As if she didn't know exactly what he was doing, how silly he looked, as if he couldn’t remember where his table was and only returning when he’d found himself queuing for something he didn’t even want, fleur de sel from the salt bar it looked like that had Elizabeth laughing. Naïve as her son was as he returned, he believed it so be something his father had said, though with coffee held casually in hand, a look of reserved thought on Burt's face as he stared into the distance and Kurt dismissed it altogether, for his mother was quirky enough to be those who spontaneously burst into laughter upon a funny thought, or of course, there was him, her boy doll nervous on his little feet and stomach already full of chocolate sauce.

Yet just the mention of that Boy, the real sweetener to his mother's teasing tongue, Boy. It intrigued her. Just like it had intrigued both Burt as they'd watched the fountain encounter from the Cadillac Elderado, for this Boy, whoever he was, was just as much an enigma to Kurt as Kurt was to many other children and it unnerved him, Elizabeth now asking quietly, "the boy you were talking to Kurt, what was his name?" The syrup seemed to thicken in his throat. "Is he staying here at the hotel?" A long gulp of milk to ease its treacle like consistency down, yet swallowing so fast it burned. "Was he in Kidtopia with you?" And off Kurt was up again quick enough to nearly knock his chair to the floor in the wake of his mother's growing smile.

He held no plate in his little hands, with no appetite left to near one of the dining stations even if he had one, just an aimless route that had him greeting the surf and the meats, the scrambled eggs, and the California and Baja cheeses, all offering relief from Elizabeth’s questions about that Boy whom he wished to not to think about with his stupid smirk and coin spouting pockets. The dollar coin that had left that copper smell on his fingers. Was I supposed to wash them clean with soap, or wash my mouth out with the back of my toothbrush until my tongue swelled? The wish I'd made dirty like the ruddy dollar coin, dirty like a boy. Looking at his fingers now, rolling his tongue around his mouth, Kurt sighed. Clean fingers, clean mouth. Polished.

With eyes now peering into the blackcurrant juice tank as if goldfishes were swimming within, Kurt straightened with eyes wondering tiredly, stretching the far expanses of the room, but freezing in mid pan, his heart beating in his skin, for not too far away by the entrees was the Boy, tapping his plate against his thigh as he wondered about whistling, his head swiveling, searching eyes, those hazel eyes so hungry as they gorged themselves over the toasted coconuts and waffles, travelling over to the glazed ham, and to the juices with the familiar back of a fair boy blocking the third tank as he filled a glass long enough it seemed to overflow it, peering peripheral looks over his shoulder until his light blue eyes were caught and forced around.

He appeared as fair as he had the other day by the fountain, clothed differently but still as if his outfit had been left to fade in the scorching sun the colors were that pale, yet with the same buckled sandals, roman-esque, kindergarten, Lottie like and cute on those tiddy biddy feet. Whilst the Boy himself, Kurt was quick to observe, had only changed his tee shirt, with those same cargo shorts on, those flip flops and surfer beaded necklace once again on show, yet all modeled differently in a way from before. Kurt could not pinpoint as the Boy made his way over, his plate still empty as it hung by his side, yet brought up to cover his stomach as with a sudden grumbling, it sounded his hunger, Kurt now looking on with perplexed amusement.

"Sorry," the Boy chuckled. "I get hungry real fast after boogie boarding."

"You boogie board?"

"Nah, I surf. You don't have to wear those swim fin things that make it look like you have duck feet
and it's just cooler when you're standing on the board riding that wave like it's your bitch and one day, I wanna be able to do the tube ride. Just barrel through one. \textit{Bam}!

"Well… good for you. I'd say eat up for your strength and all but if you're planning on going back out there in the next hour, I'd probably hold off on the food. We wouldn't want you sinking to the bottom."

"You think I'd fall?"

Kurt shrugged. "You have to fall to get back up again."

"But you'd like to see me fall wouldn't you?"

"I'd like to see how the waves would react to you calling them your 'bitch'. Never underestimate the sea, because it can swallow you up, spit out your board and surf trunks and have you walking out of its waters naked if it wanted, and I'd guess that would be far more embarrassing having everyone on a crowded beach looking at your dinky doo than the talking tummy rumbles."

"I don't know, the tummy rumbles are pretty embarrassing, like farting, but it's in your tummy-Oh yeah! Next time you have the rumbles, grab the flab of your belly and mold it into a mouth. It'll totally look like it's talking Aztec or something, and when the rumbling stops, just draw a face on it and pretend to feed it with pizza. It's so frickin funny."

"You did that?"

"Yeah," the Boy grinned. "I drew the eyes on my nipples and the mouth across my tummy button. Tomato and cheese all across my stomach with little pieces of meatballs that kept falling off."

"Sounds messy."

"My mom totally freaked when she found me. Thought I'd got the plague or something. That and the meatballs weren't kosher klop meatballs."

"You're Jewish?" Asked Kurt surprised, for this Boy didn't appear Jewish. More a child of mother California where the waves were celebrated from underneath board balancing feet, where everyone hung loose on Aloha greeted beaches, 'Shaka' instead of 'Shalom', but "Shalom," now said as the Boy bowed with his hands pressed in mock prayer."

"Then why is your mom letting you eat here? She has had a look at the food about right?"

"Nah, I'm here with my dad," said the Boy as with a finger, he pointed over to one of the tables in the center of the room where there sat a man with his back to them, what looked to be from this distance a mobile phone pressed to his ear, a head that nodded from conversation and a face Kurt wondered looked anything like his son. "It's just us staying. He's not as harsh with the whole kosher thing. We like our pizza too much without those klop balls all over them. Bad Jews that way."

"You know, my mom once ordered pizza from two different places because she had coupons and they both got to the house at the same time, so we had a Pizza Hut delivery guy and a Dominos delivery guy both standing at our front door, and just like that the Dominos guy began singing 'Why Can't We Be Friends?' to the Pizza Hut guy who just… well, who just glared at him…"

"Where is your mom?" The Boy chuckled.

"Over there with my dad by the window. She's all for pizza. I mean her mind says Victoria Secret's model but her mouth just goes for the pizza. She thinks it's one of the greatest inventions behind
"Damn it, now I'm hungry for pizza. Do they have any here?"

"No, but they have lobster. Try eating that with your tummy flab."

"Pfft, lobsters are just fat spray tanned scorpions and I could totally take on a scorpion."

"It's alright, I'm pretty sure this one's dead. See, they even give you delicious butter to eat it with," said Kurt, hurrying over to one of the dining stations where there in its center lay the lobster, a big boy of a creature, surrounded by cheese tortellini, pine nuts and sun dried tomatoes.

The boy grimaced. "Nah, lobster just tastes like feet to me."

"It's clearly too refined for your crude taste buds."

"Whatever man, if they can taste the awesomeness that is a slice of double doughed Margherita and away from food that smells of underarm, I'm one happy dude. Crude all the way."

Kurt nodded, turning to leave. "Good luck with that-"

"No wait!" The boy said, grabbing hold of his arm. "I want you to meet my dad."

"Why?" Kurt said. "I have my own parents to get back to and I think they miss me over there."

"I know, but I kinda told him about you and the way you made wishes. Said you should have chucked me in the way I was with you, that or wish for land sharks."

"Land sharks?"

The Boy nodded. "A surfer's nightmare, man. I mean they're freaky enough with their jaws but give 'em legs and we'd all be hella fucked."

"Shhh," Kurt hissed, "you're not supposed to cuss like that here, there're people around. It's a bad word."

"Okay then. Shut the fudge up you little astronaut. What the helicopters are you doing? You son of a batch of cookies."

Kurt laughed. "Does your dad know you swear?"

The Boy glanced over at his father. "Please, I got half the library from him. Come on, I want you guys to meet. Are you eating anything?"

"Oh no, I've already eaten. I'm only here because my mom wouldn't stop asking me about you. She saw us by the fountain yesterday and wanted to know who you were and what happened, but I wasn't up for talking, came here and bumped into you... makes me think she planned this out all along."

"Dude," said the Boy, "a scheming pizza eating mom, she sounds way cool."

"I have a name you know--"

"Kurt, that's your name... Kurt... right?" Kurt blinked. Of course. His mother's call at the fountain, "Kurt!", the name repeated on the Boy's rolling tongue as he'd stared at the dollar coin in the fountain for several minutes, hands in pockets, now speaking as he introduced himself. "I'm Noah, like the
religious dude who saved a bunch of animals with his ark when God went totally ape shit with genocide. Great story for us kids.

Kurt's smile was weak upon Noah's attempted humor, yet upon the name in his mind and he frowned. It was odd to refer to this Boy as anything but "the Boy". Noah sounded like too nicer a name for his character. That his name would be like a weak kid on the playground. Chased after and viciously pulled apart letter by letter to form another, a name more befitting, but regardless Kurt mulled it over in his mind, echoing it through his skull. Noah. Hazel eyed surfer dude, Noah. It wasn't bad.

"Look, I know I've been a jerk, but I'm a cool guy. I respect the sea and I can totally fall to make it look like a kick ass move. I can do other cool stuff with my belly flab like make the folds look like a botched lip job and at sleepovers, when it's like four in the morning and everyone is trying to get to sleep, I'll totally be the guy to say something like "ass butter" out loud and have you laughing until you puke. Whadya think? Pretty cool, huh?"

Kurt shrugged. "I guess. I think you'd know more about it than I would. I'm kind of boring. All I do is wonder if my sarcasm's gotten to a point where I don't even know if I'm kidding or not, because I'm like that a lot if you haven't already noticed."

"That's cool," said Noah, grinning. "All I wonder about is if China has fancy plates called 'America'. Let me just swoop some food real quick and we'll go okay."

All dining stations were visited, with flashes of hunger darting across Noah's eyes on every stop, a comical look Kurt found, especially when it was contorted into one of repulsion over the garden dishes, the likes of the Cauliflower Au Gratin and Bloomsdale Spinach Salad. Yet it didn't take long for the plate to fill, near to overfilling at times. Oh how it nearly came close with the mountain of pancakes the boy had ladled on, the berry compote, the whipped butter, teetering dangerously on the chocolate sauce slick china that had the muscles in Noah's arms strained as he made their way over to his father's table on slow feet, Kurt, growing anxious the heavy plate would fall, keeping a watchful eye, both their little faces so concentrated.

Thomas Puckerman, the man who was darkly handsome like his son, with thick classic cut hair, fleshy smiling lips, the man whose brown irised gaze locked with Kurt's upon their arrival was quick to stand with cell put away and smiling a Hollywood smile. He was in his mid-thirties, had an actor's face with a certain posed assurance, and wore a white linen short sleeved shirt, belted beige shorts and flip flops, like a male model posing in the hotel brochure, this man who was so ever friendly and charming too, grasped hold of Kurt's little hand as if positioned for a hand kiss, speaking with enthusiasm as Noah introduced them once settling his plate on the table and there was Kurt, caught in-between, the attention of both males, swamping him.

Of course the boy could not get over the resemblance. Both father and son, so similar in the face, their Puerto Rican like skin tones to they're Californian vernacular, and so easily free they were together as if they'd hit it off only just yesterday. It was a father son relationship that was theirs, the teasing of best friends, and beside them was their guest, wide eyes so glassy blue, blood shaded lips, skin of a Botticelli maiden and Thomas found himself staring. Noah too through his many cheek bursting mouthfuls of food. Their little guest, sitting so small in his chair with hands placed in his lap spoke only when addressed, and nodding as frequently as when the occasion merited it, so many with Thomas's continuous stream of amusing anecdotes.

Arrived only three days earlier at the Hotel Del Coronado and staying for two weeks, the Puckerman's were regular California vacationers from Dallas Texas where Thomas owned his own thriving independent record company, "Puckerman Records", said with such pride in the voice, it
was as if the man were the CEO of a much larger organization. His wife, Connie, was at home with their new born child, Sarah, having not wished to travel so early on after the birth but having encouraged her 'best boys' to have fun on their stay with the promise that they'd bring her back photographs of the trip, the camera now raised as Kurt and Noah were pushed close together for a picture, the button pressed with the flash instant and bright enough to blind.

In its cheesy wake and Thomas would soon excuse himself for food. Yet upon his return and he noticed immediately that by degrees Noah had since shifted his chair closer to Kurt's, sliding his half eaten plate along with him across the table. His son, dark hair smelling of sea water he hadn't rinsed out, his breath smelling of chocolate. Noah, with that surfer necklace hanging loosely from his neck girls found cool, that goofy smile, America's handsome little dude, sharing the remains of his food with this little creature. One picking at the pancakes, often raising his fingers to his lips, then lowering them, only to nervously laugh upon Noah's words, and crude words most likely for Thomas knew his son. He knew when Noah was making a friend.

_He certainly was odd, this Kurt kid. Certainly not a Dallas kid. Not the kind of kid Noah would hang out with at school. He'd be too "intense". The only one never to miss a class, and always early, sometimes before the room was unlocked, I'd guess. The only one to show up "perfectly groomed". One to be so shy at times he'd jump startled at the sound of laughter. Wouldn't know how to even play like a normal kid, the others letting him know, "you don't belong. You're a freak!" But he would throw your heart out of rhythm; fuck your soul up with a single look, for damn was he a cute kid. His staggering lack of masculinity adorable and a real looker with those magnificent eyes so dream like. Enough to have stolen my son with them. Even me…_

The boy's parents were soon to appear at their table, ceasing Thomas's contemplation as if his attention had strayed beyond the power to draw it. They were Burt and Elizabeth Hummel, a couple with such warmth to them they would not look out of place in a family comedy, the father with a rumbling laughter that seemed to brew from the bowels of his gut to the mother with a feminine beauty of a Gil Elvgren pinup, a cheesecake model. _Mmm!_ Thomas's handsome smile grew pleasurably over shaking hands and he extended an invitation to them both for a late afternoon tour of the hotel Noah and he had previously offered to Kurt just now, for such a large hotel it was. A large maze to lose yourself in. One had to know their way around.

And oh, of course! "That would be lovely, Mr. Puckerman. Thank you," Elizabeth replied, sweetly, the Hummel's soon parting and waving goodbye as away Kurt left with his hand encased in his mother's, the boy in his own hurried yet sleepwalking way looking round at the Puckerman's before disappearing through the door. And oh how the Puckerman's had watched, the way Noah had _watched_, his hazel eyes almost yearning. How mother's at passing tables had observed the fair boy with the cutest face and trotting feet, an early beauty yes, now turning to his mother as she asked, smiling cheekily, though she already knew the answer, "What was your friend's name again, sweetie? I forgot." "Noah," Kurt replied, smiling widely. "His name is Noah."

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Glee

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San Diego! America's Finest City! And the birthplace of California, with its deep water harbor the realm of the U.S. Navy, the home to many white ships docked and sailing like ducklings in the bay. Its extensive beaches, Mission, Moonlight, Pacific, all so popular with busy boardwalks that creaked charm and roller coaster excitement! And its neck craning skyscrapers those of the One America Plaza and Symphony Towers resembling on the skyline as sharp tools jutting out from an overstuffed
toolbox, piercing the sky and leaking sunshine in waves as once again the temperatures sizzled upon its many dense urban streets. Ooh! Hot! Hot! Too hot to walk barefoot on like stepping on the embers of a fire as into the shade there was relief.

The Hummel's were only out for a stroll after their early brunch. Along sidewalks that would lead them wherever, to the open air ballpark of Petco Park to the Alcazar Garden and tropical trails of Palm Canyon, a city map in Burt's hand that would open rarely to help direction them throughout the walk to instead opt and ask the people, and such friendly people. Good looking too. Most of them Hispanic with bronzed skin tones that accentuated muscle for these were outgoing people. Knew the city inside and out. All the best places to visit, all the sights to see they claimed were not often included in many of the "places to visit" brochures handed to tourists as they pointed them to the real city adventures, parting, "Tenga un bueno dia y adios!"

They would venture along the bay where all the expensive yachts were harbored, seeing which one was the largest, the biggest! The whitest! And stopping at the Seaport Village, a waterfront shopping complex architecturally designed in an assortment of delightful Victorian and traditional Mexican buildings that if you forgot about San Diego, would become a quaint hamlet indeed in Mexico, goats and lambs that jangled their bells around their necks sipping at the water fountain beside little girls in embroidered peasant dresses where hidden in the square was the Louff Carousel, it's Broadway flying horses so beautiful with coiffed carved manes so blonde Kurt would smile as on he'd climb and around and around he'd fly.

Perhaps in this whirlwind of excitement, the hooves of this flamboyant cavalry like hip-hop beats to his ears, Kurt would see a haze, a fleeting escape to La Jolla, one of San Diego's affluent neighborhoods. It was a hilly seaside resort, a little kingdom by the sea they'd ride to with no care in the world. And there was much to see and in so little time. The Christian cross on Mount Soledad, the cove where the sea lions lay, the large playhouse, the shores that would blow spray in their faces, covering their skin with moisture with the wind whipping, glistening tears on Kurt's cheeks for his sensitive eyes watered easily and how fast he was spinning on these stallions, those tears observers would think of happiness let loose like liquid glitter. Like diamonds!

And fast, on the shuttle back home to Coronado. Quick, quick, quick! Returning to the hotel fifteen minutes late at 5:15pm to meet the Puckerman's by the main entrance, Thomas and Noah awaiting them, though not with expressions of impatience but with grins, having past the time recounting the best aerial surfs they'd seen demonstrated by professionals on their own trip down to Pacific Beach earlier that day. Those of the Superman Air. The Sushi Roll. The Rodeo Flip. Noah in mid move as the Hummel's approached them, an adventure flushed family with heat that had taken its toll on Burt, his forehead, nose, and cheeks all sun burnt but since treated with Noxzema Elizabeth had rubbed gently into his smarting skin on the journey back.

Thomas would laugh amongst them, smiling, "Yeah, the sun here can get some getting used to." Recounting it had taken a couple days for his wife to darken without burning for she too had light skin. How she envied the coloring of her husband and son, that sun kissed look that now Sarah had also. And Elizabeth inquired keenly after their baby daughter, wincing upon hearing it had been a difficult birth with a labor that had lasted several hours, unlike it had been with Noah, who allegedly couldn't wait to enter the world, shooting out from the womb as if on a banzai speed water slide even before the delivery room doors had swung shut behind them and right into the nurse's cradling arms, "Quite a trooper," she'd said, laughing.

All three adults now laughed as Thomas ruffled his son's dark hair and Noah too smiled, his eyes searching for Kurt. Yet only peering around Elizabeth did he find him, brushing down his clothes punctiliously and feeling at his eyes dried crusted tears he subtly brushed away with fumbling fingers. Noah would frown, rounding the Hummel's and coming to stand before the boy, his own flip
flops sprinkled in dry sand left from the beach, the briny salty smell of the ocean on him and his clothes he had not showered off. Yet it was a scent Kurt's nostrils would not pinch at. He'd grown used it. A slight difference between it and previous beaches he'd visited on the east coast, that of Coney Island and Cape Hatteras. Here, the sea scent was exotic.

Noah himself I found exotic. A creature like those surfers were on their boards. Someone from a strange land I had been wary of, who was now asking me, "Dude, are you okay?" An exotic boy I was now "friends" with, for we were, weren't we? I'd eaten pancakes off his plate earlier at brunch. He'd fetched me the glass I'd left behind on one of the dining stations when I'd needed a drink. And now he was concerned after I was exhibiting signs of distress. He was there peering at the corners of my eyes as I smiled and insisted I was alright, "I'm alright," and I laughed as his face neared mine closely with a tight lipped grin pulled wider and wider in silly mockery of himself as my laughter mounted, my blue eyes lightening in a way I never understood.

"They're just sensitive," said Kurt, all of them now promenading around the Windsor lawn on their tour, Thomas beside Burt and Elizabeth as he'd point to many areas, but to the two boys trailing slowly behind, barely anything he said was registered. "It's annoying because people think I'm crying, but I'm not."

Noah nodded. "I get that too, but when I'm sleeping. A lone tear will fall on my pillow and I'll think, "Whoa hold up body, I'm not that sad."

"Yes. Exactly. It's strange, isn't it."

"Kinda, but you know what's even weirder. To think you might be drinking the water someone drowned in. Or that you might be breathing in the same air that last left a dying person's lungs. Or that gift you gave someone that was wrapped in recycled paper might have been someone's suicide note. Or that the Box jellyfish has sixty four butt holes."

Kurt scoffed. "They do not."

"Sure they do," said Noah. "Sixty four pooping butt holes as they go around oceans stingin people."

"Is it true peeing on the sting can help?"

"Dunno, dude. Box jellyfishes are real bad ass stingers. Most venomous out there. I think you'd have to do a lot better than pee, but then there are times when you gotta pee like thirty five times so you might as well put all that stuff to good use. Extra concentrated super pee."

Kurt frowned, looking at him. "Thirty five times? Really?"

"Yeah. What is up with those days?"

"Your bladder Olympics? I don't know. It's weird."

Noah grinned. "Wanna know more weird stuff?"

"Go on."

"Cooleo. Okay, what if bagels are just acoustic donuts? Or bicycles are just acoustic motorcycles? What if books are just dead tattooed trees and bouquets are flower corpses killed in their mating ritual? What if spoons are little bowls on sticks and swans are larger, sexier ducks? Oh! And what if mascots are just jock approved furries?"

"You just humped my mind," said Kurt, blushing into his giggles as he took in Noah's raised brow.
"I mean… Gee, I've never thought of all those things in that way before. That's so cool."

"Totally."

"Do you know any more?"

"Well my mom is kinda self-conscious about the stretch marks she has left from her long pregnancy but I keep on telling her they aren't stretch marks as much as they are sick ass lightening tattoos."

"Oooh!" Kurt squealed "I like that one."

"You like words?"

"I do. Especially if they're witty like yours."

Noah snorted. "Pfft. I say crap like this all the time in class. Guess what kind of math trees do, miss. Twigonometry, Square roots, Geometree. And my teacher, she get so mad. She's always telling me to just shut up."

"Really?"

"Don't feel bad," said Noah. "I do it to drive her crazy. She says every time I speak an angel gets its period, whatever that is."

"She doesn't like your talent for language, does she?"

"Nah, if I want anyone to appreciate my talent for anything I want to be for surfing and food."

"You cook?"

"I eat. Nom, Nom, Nom."

Kurt laughed. "That's not talent, Noah. That's just your tummy."

"My tummy's got talent too, bro," said Noah, grinning. "When I drink a lotta milk my tummy goes sploosh, sploosh."

"I think you got your answer to your peeing thirty five times in a day phenomenon."

"Oh yeah, but I gotta get my coolcium, Kurt. That's the sacrifice I gotta make to feed my bones with liquid cool."

"Don't you mean calcium?"

"No. I mean, coolcium."

"Sounds like something parents would use to encourage their children to drink milk."

Noah shrugged. "They're the ones who've got parenting down, 'cause milk is awesome. Though too much of it kinda makes finishing cereal before it gets soggy the most stressful thing in life."

"Or finishing pancakes drenched in a sea of maple syrup," said Kurt. "You put so of it much on, it was like a race."

Noah grinned, apologetically. "Sorry. I would have finished it, I just had to make room for chocolate tart."
"How are you not fat?"

"No, but seriously, the chocolate tarts are amazing, dude. At first they kinda looked like poop tarts but then the waiter there said they were more like pop tarts, but for wealthy people instead of trailer trash."

"That was classist of him."

"Yeah, I think he needs a pop tart. Or one of these squidgy dessert dumpling thingies they also had that kinda had me thinkin was this silicone stuff my mom's friend is always talking about when she feels her boobs."

Kurt moaned. "Oh, I could do with a pop tart. I could do with just sugar, you know. I haven't had anything since brunch and I'm starving. All I'm running on is an empty stomach and the will to munch. To nom on something."

"You could eat my face."

Kurt blinked. "Pardon me?"

"You know," said Noah, "just nibble on it if you put your lips on mine, 'cause I heard that moving your mouth on a surface tricks your body into thinking you're eating and the hunger will cease. Wanna give it a go?"

Kurt shook his head. "As selfless as that is Noah, I'll pass, but thank you."

"It's not selfless, dude. I'm hungry too."

"Okay we really need some food. Where are you eating dinner tonight?"

"At the ENO Pizzeria," said Noah, nodding over to the hotel. "We've stopped goin to the Sheerwater 'cause a waiter there doesn't like me."

"Really?"

"Yeah, I told him to look in my eyes as I asked him if he'd spat in my food, 'cause if he had, I was about to spit on his whole life."

"Why would you ask him that?"

"'Cause the dude looked dodgy, bro," said Noah. "I saw him sneeze on someone's ice cream and try and pass it off as spritzy "magic water"."

Kurt sighed. "Really, Noah?"

"Believe me, Kurt he gave this couple fish so charred they were farting soot by dessert."

"That's more the cook's fault, don't you think?"

"Yeah, and he still went and served it. What a donk dode. Seriously."

Kurt smiled. "Well, I'll be sure to tell my parents, but we've never had a problem there."

"Hey, why don't you just have dinner with us?"

"Well, I-"
"Come on," said Noah, "It's the pizzeria and you know what that means…"

"Tacos?" Kurt teased.

Noah shook his head, obliviously. "No dude, pizza."

"Yes, but Noah, your dad will have made a reservation only for you two."

"We can always expand on it, right? Come on Kurt, come eat pizza with me. Pizza's awesome. Pizza's cool. Give me pizza and I'll do anything for you except share my pizza… except with you."

He grinned upon Kurt's blush. "You said your mom likes pizza, right? Plus, I can try and do that tummy eatin pizza thing for you. I know you wanna see it. I know you wanna."

Indeed, Kurt was intrigued, but he'd wait to tug on his mother's arm until the end of the tour, Thomas leading them past the Beach Village cottages and villas along the many scarlet pathways of the Vista Walk to the outdoor snack bars of the Sun Deck Grill and Sunset Bar, the main swimming pool with its many big cabanas and throwing the grand doors open wide as into the hotel they'd enter to view the spa and salon that offered massage therapy, body treatments and facials, the unique stores of which there were as many as fifteen, the elegant fairytale ballroom, the Windsor complex, the Garden room and the Carousel and Hanover Rooms, many of which had grown popular for business meetings, birthday celebrations and luxurious weddings.

Noah, who'd seen already the sprawling inwards of the hotel as if he'd exhausted it upon his first glance, knew of its trivia; the hotel the filming location for a number of movies, the most famous of which that of the comedy "Some Like It Hot" with Tony Curtis, Jack Lemmon and Marilyn Monroe he'd originally thought had been about chili. He knew the story of Kate Morgan, a woman who'd died in 1892 from a gunshot wound to the head on the exterior beach staircase of the hotel though with mere putative sightings of her "ghost", he dismissed them as paranormal rubbish. He knew of the hotel's Hollywood playground popularity in the twenties also. Its use as a "wartime casualty station" in World War II. Thanks to his father, he knew it all.

Yet what he wished to know was where Kurt's room was, the boy himself telling him he was staying in the Victorian building, Room 2036 that was not a long walk along the hall from the staircase and elevator as Kurt would now show him, both of them having parted from their parents to meet them back in the foyer in ten minutes. Noah would memorize the number, 2036, 2036, 2036, 2036. He then would show Kurt where he himself was staying with his father, also in the Victorian building, but a room overlooking the ocean, Room 2145, at the end of the hall. And Kurt too would memorize the number and long hallway, though much more subtly that Noah had, the boy having mumbled to himself as if an actor reciting his lines under his breath.

Soon this voice would rise into a droning pester, as like a buzzing bee about your ear you'd wave your hand agitatedly to rid, for descending the flights of stairs back to the reception, Noah would tell Kurt to ask his parents to have pizza with him and his father, to "ask 'em," "ask 'em, dude", "ask 'em," asking Thomas now, and loudly enough for all of them to hear, "Please dad, can the Hummel crew have pizza fun times with us? Please?" Elizabeth would smile at the helpless expression on her son's fair face, the boy mouthing, "I'm sorry". And she laughed. She was aware of how children were, making plans on their own, amazing plans! Extraordinary! And having so much pride in them as if they'd thought them through to the very last detail.

"Pizza sounds divine, Noah. Thank you so," the woman smiled, now curtsying dramatically, yet with a loss of balance she whipped back up, shocked, "Ooh! Too much." Her hands shooting to her cleavage for there in that moment it had felt her breasts had just been about to spill out from her top. Not a sight for a young boy! Though a sight Noah had seen none the less. His father to. Those pendulous pale breasts Thomas found did not look painful and aching like his Connie's when she'd
breastfeed Sarah, and far from flat when compared to that silicon obsessed friend of hers, but predominant and beautiful in that light top she was to change out of on returning to their suite, Burt and Kurt now waving as they stifled their laughter.

The ENO Artisan Pizzeria & Wine Bar was located at the west of the hotel, the wine bar itself showcasing its 2,800-bottle inventory glass-ensconced, floor-to-ceiling wine tower inside, whilst outside at the fire pit, gourmet wood-fired pizzas of Margherita, Funghi, and Pepperoni, amongst others, were served to diners as at a nearby table seating five, the Hummel's joined their new friends the Puckerman's for dinner, smiles all round, talking. For in conversation they were interwoven, the adults sat closely to one another as if what they spoke of was for their hearing only, or seemed to be. It did not perturb the two boys sat the other end, the mouth of the first knitted to the other's ear as if to lick it. As if to stick his tongue in and lick.

"And then I'd say…" Said Noah, whispering the rest as Kurt blinked.

"You'd say that? To a person holding a gun to you?"

Noah grinned. "Totally. "Hit me with your best shot', and that's how my life will end."

"What a way to go."

"And I wouldn't want my funeral to be quiet and respectful either. When I die I want my ashes mixed with surfboard soot and packed tightly in a coffin that will blow up with TNT so that it will rain on all the guests as Queen's 'Another One Bites the Dust' rocks on the speakers."

"Well all that noise would definitely be able to cover up my trying to casually open a bag of chips quietly in the middle of your eulogy," Kurt smiled. "Dearly beloved, Noah would have wished you all to remember him as rad. And that this funeral was tubular, and that he'll laugh at your small wiener in the shower when you don't know it."

"Totally!"

"I hope you wouldn't spy on me without me knowing, would you?"

"Why?" Noah smirked. "So I don't look at your bottom?"

"Why would you look there anyway?"

"Hey, I'm dead here, dude. Give me a break. Besides… you know, it's cute."

Kurt blushed. "Can a bottom be cute?"

"Anything can be cute, dude," said Noah. "A shower that has the water pressure of someone softly crying on you. The fact that they sell family sized Oreo boxes thinking people are gonna share them with their family, I mean, come on."

"I would share mine," said Kurt. "I would let them have as much as they'd want."

"You must be a hit at Midnight Feasts."

Kurt lowered his eyes, smiling in embarrassment for he knew what he was about to say next would elicit a reaction of surprise. "I've never had one."

"You've never… have you been to slumber parties?"

"I've had sleepovers, but we've not been allowed to talk after lights out."
"Really?"

"Yes, my friend Tina has parents who are strict. I don't know whether it's because they're Chinese or because they're not keen on the whole thing, but Tina has to earn herself the right to invite me over and by sleepover, it's a strong accent on the word 'sleep'."

Noah let out a breath he hadn't even known he'd been holding, saddened this is all Kurt seemed to know. eight, and he'd never had a slumber party. "That's rough, Kurt."

"It's okay," the boy assured "I'll invite her over to mine most of the time and we'll prop the covers of my bed up like a tent and talk to each other about anything from my hatred of accidentally tying one shoe tighter than the other and having to redo my entire life, to Tina's who doesn't believe in Colgate Whitening Toothpaste because it guaranteed her whiteness in fourteen days, and fifteen days later, she was still Asian."

"Huh, so you do actually have fun… just talking."

"If you're in good company, Noah you're able to have fun any which way. How are your slumber parties? Apart from you saying "ass butter" when everyone's asleep."

"They're way fun, dude. Video Games, Movies. Playin Snuggle Pirate to demoralize each other. And in the morning, rise and shine? Pfft. More like rise and dine. Where's breakfast?"

"Actually, when are those pizza's com-oh, here they are," said Kurt as three piping hot pizzas were placed on their table in flavors of Pesto, Goat Cheese, and Margherita, the latter already cut in slices.

"Yum," Noah moaned, licking his lips as he took a slice, greedy and quick, "I'm telling ya, being a pizza delivery driver would be great because no one would be disappointed to see you."

"Do you have pizza at your Midnight Feasts?"

"Sometimes, but it's mostly candy and potato chips. I got a stash in my room, even though my mom doesn't like me eating in there because I've got so many carpet crumbs she says it's amazing they haven't yet turned into penicillin molds."

Kurt smiled. "What does your room look like?"

It's awesome," Noah grinned. "I got a cool California surfer theme goin on everywhere. The walls, the bed, the furniture. Everything, dude."

"Mine's all pale and simple. It's like a little hideaway with hanging lantern lights on my walls and loads of comforters on my bed. My mom will always leave me a big jar of smoothie on my dresser too when I come home from school."

Noah grinned. "Your mom's awesome, Kurt."

"She is," Kurt smiled. "You know, she redid our house four years ago. Mirror, mirror on the wall. Sofa, sofa over there. Desk, desk in that corner. She was so glad to be getting the home renovated."

"Does she work?"

"She used to work for Laura Ashley. She's always been artistic, like me."

"Yeah?"

"Yes," said Kurt. "I'm going to open my own artsy shop one day where you'll be able buy lots of my
signature homemade crafts. My bestseller will be this pencil that I'll glue googly eyes on. It'll be worth two hundred dollars."

Noah scoffed, spilling a heavy splodge of tomato sauce on his shorts. "Dang."

"Don't move, I'll do it," Kurt insisted, taking hold of Noah's napkin and dabbing at the stain. "It'll stain if we don't deal with it now."

"What if I suck it out like they do with snake bites to rid the body of the poison?"

"You can't bend that far forward, can you? And you're not removing your clothes in public-"

"Oops!" Noah exclaimed, "How did that happen?"

"What did you-" Kurt paused, looking down in Noah's lap to find the boy's shorts dropped to his ankles, tanned thighs bare with plain blue briefs on show. He sighed with a rolling of his eyes, "Oh Lord."

"Mmm, breezy," hummed Noah happily as he returned to his pizza, opening and closing his legs. "This could start being a regular thing."

"What a privilege for me."

Noah eyed him, his eyes narrowing playfully. "Are you pulling that sarcastic stuff on me again, dude?"

"Yes," said Kurt. "And If I'm extra sarcastic it means I'm either flirting with you or you really irritate me and I can't handle your crap. Have fun figuring out which."

Noah smirked, wiping his mouth on the back of his hand. "Oh I'm gonna, Kurt. And I bet you're flirtin. I bet you think I won't catch on. That I can't and won't assume you like me? That I need you to blatantly tell me you do? That-"

"I'm not flirting with you, Noah."

Noah pounded his fists on the table. "Flirt with me!"

"No."

"Flirt. With. Me," Noah seethed, his fists balled on the table top.

"No, I won't."

"Fine," Noah huffed, taking another slice of pizza and holding it to his cheek. "I'll have the pizza instead." Looking at it, he whispered, seductively. "Hey there, baby. How about we take this to the bedroom? What's that? You want to bring along your friends, the chicken dippers? That's fine by me." Kurt laughed once more, watching on as his friend devoured his slice.

The eyes of the fellow diners would be drawn to their table. Oh, such a gentlemanly act is was for that tan boy to offer the last slice of pizza to his friend, the boy only have eaten two. And then to eye with amusement the tan boy's cargo short's slipping beyond his swinging ankles as he was soon reprimanded by his father to pull them back up immediately. This man, who they'd seen cast frequent aroused glances at the bosom of the strawberry blonde next to him, who was not displaying her breasts in a conspicuous way, wearing a floral silk halter top that plunged at her neckline but who now refilled her glass with wine as her husband eyed her with an expression of deepest pride,
leaning his elbows on the table as he casually tapped his thick fingers.

For dessert, chocolate truffles were served, Sea Salt Caramel, Lavender, Mocha, Peanut Toffee, and again outside eyes would see the frizzling crackle of electricity, this energy that pulsed through them, had them eating, and had them laughing. Those boys again, stealing the limelight. The youth that was luminescent on their vibrant faces. And the way that tan surfer boy was beaming at his friend. Liking him. Liking him. Liking him lots! Popping these chocolates into their mouths before they were all gone, and so fast too! The first boy having almost choked, but nope. False alert. It was a game they were playing. Like earlier when that same boy had had his stomach eat a slice of pizza. Absolutely disgraceful behavior. But they were just having fun.

I was pretty much a punkish clown. I just wanted to make Kurt laugh with me, the dude himself keeping me on my toes with his sarcasm that meant one thing or the other, but I liked to think it was flirting. Hell yeah! Flirting! I'd pucker up to him and he'd giggle it off until only after we'd left the restaurant for our rooms did he wave at me playfully, blowing me an exaggerated kiss, a giant "mwah!" made right at me as he winked my way and turned, running to join his parents. And I laughed. It was funny! It was really funny! As if it had great comedic timing to it. Like that Sugar Kane chick. The supreme female impersonator. Spot on! That had the feeling of a cola can freshly opened in my chest, fizzing in my veins and down under. Suddenly, I was hungry.

~ PLEASE REVIEW ~

(But if you wish to criticize, may it be constructive. I'm not going to learn from my mistakes and improve if you vent.)

Disclaimer: I do not own the rights to the characters from Glee as I don't own the show. I'm not earning money from this and no copyright or trademark infringement is intended.

~ STAY TUNED FOR MORE BY FOLLOWING/FAVORITING ~
Chapter 3

THE CHILD
2001

III

~ Tarzan & Gay Jane ~

It was bed time, nine o'clock, the sounds of teeth being brushed, the reflection of a child staring into the glass as he went in deep with his bright blue toothbrush, and careful not to brush too hard so as to not bleed his gums, careful to spit so as to avoid coughing violently, the mirror stained. Kurt, standing in only his pajama top and underwear, brushed with distracted attention, dug deep in contemplation he didn't notice his toothpaste coated lips, or even analyze the angles of his face from both head on and sidelong views he so often did when preparing for bed. Perhaps the ache in one of his back teeth from brushing it continuously for a minute or two should have stung enough to have him stop, but the pain was not registered.

The artisan cheese from the Margherita, the crust, the truffle chocolates that had been exotic confections he could still taste on his tongue. He thought of that evening's dinner, of their hotel tour. Brunch. Of Noah. He considered his relationship to the boy. A mere irritating acquaintance two days ago. Then to have begun addressing him by his actual name. Noah. "Noah". It did something to Kurt, the grip on his toothbrush either tightening or loosening, he was not sure. The sense of internalized terror with a relishing spark that this Dallas boy had very much befriended him, using that crude humor of his to have Kurt's laughter out into the air, and to claim it somehow as his own, that sonic sound his own grand trophy to keep for himself.

The water rinsed his mouth out thoroughly, the mouthwash he then succeeded it with only burned it afterwards, yet it was not registered like it should have been with little hands to his cheeks, a grimace. In thought, he condemned Noah's actions as pointless and fruitless. There was no point making friends on holidays for the end only culminated in both parties going their own separate ways. Yet the idea of a summer friendship to a boy like Noah was appealing. A popular boy within school and many sport fixtures, a wide social circle kept close by the gravitational pull of its center, Noah himself, and happy he was with these friends he had, most of them boys, with a few girls, could get along nicely with both sexes. And then there was me.

Would there be any more unscheduled run in's? Or scheduled? It was fun to pop out and be spontaneous. It was exciting! Noah, the Dallas boy adventurer, a little boy Theseus conquering the hotel's "What to do?" challenges in only days, waxing his own board for riding those Californian waves that rolled tiredly for the commanding surfer he was, exhausting them until he'd flatten them all from beneath his feet. He would make his own fun if need be, make it happen for himself, with his sights now on a boy who would only be out of reach. Early breakfasts, late dinners, the boy would hardly be about on the grounds of the hotel, on its long beach, there would be no sighting of his fair skin, and those eyes. Where would they be? Where was Kurt?

Burt had said their days were not to be spent solely in the hotel but mostly sightseeing the rest of the county, to go exploring! The mention of a trip down to San Deigo, to SeaWorld, to Legoland. To visit the Westfield Horton Plaza, the Natural History Museum at Balboa Park, and to take a ride on the Africa Tram through the free-range enclosures at the Wild Adventure Park in San Pasqual Valley, Cape buffalos, Southern white rhinoceroses, Ugandan giraffes, oh the sights! Each tourism leaflet taken from the hotel lobby lay neatly strewn on the table, and like bedtime story books with
their vivid pictures, the "posed" smiles of those children, it excited Kurt as he sat now in bed, the sudden knock on the door alerting his blue eyes sharply, nervous.

The laughter of his parents, he could hear it raucous and silly in the bathroom. He could feel his shivering anticipation, even more so when he was too short to reach the peephole in the door, his body mere inches from the knocking, and it was quiet knocking, timid, that had his hand on the doorknob, the golden light of the hallway soon streaming in on his now wincing eyes as he peeped around to find Noah standing there before him, smiling so slowly it was if the very action of stretching the lips made too much noise, adjusting the loose blanket he'd wrapped himself in as he did, pajamas underneath, those shuffling flip flopped feet with the crackle of a grocery bag in his hand freezing that smile in place, but a smile of excitement, pumped.

"Hey."

"What are you doing here?" Kurt whispered. He leaned his head out the door to examine the corridor, yet only a couple at the end fully attired in evening wear glanced fleetingly their way as they disappeared into their room.

"I came to see if you wanna hang out?" Raising the grocery bag, the boy smiled. "I have our Midnight Feast."

"We just had food, Noah. Dinner was two hours ago."

"So?"

"We had pizza."

"Dude, those pizza's were nothing. Like take one big bite and finish the thing nothing. They serve 'em way larger in Dallas."

Kurt sighed. "It's probably because they ordered the children's size for us, Noah."

"They did?" Noah blinked, narrowing his eyes. "My pop's gonna get it now."

"Yeah, you do that. Goodnight."

"No wait, come eat food with me Kurt, come hang out."

"Noah, I really can't. It's my bed time."

"You're on vacation, dude, there is no 'bed time'. You just go to bed whenever you want."

"Well I want to go to bed now."

"No, your parents want you to go to bed now so they can watch Cinemax."

"Is that what your dad is watching right now? But instead of sending you to bed, he sent you here?"

Noah shook his head. "Nah, I came here all by self. He doesn't even give me a bed time 'cause he knows I'd go way past it, but my mom, she'll tell me to go to bed even when I'm already in bed, and I'll say, 'I'm always in bed. You go to bed. Stop talking to me'."

"Well, bed is where I want to be right about now. I'm tired. See these eyelids, they're already closing. See my hair? Deflated." Kurt fingers pointed to his hair, that chestnut hair still poised and coiffed into the position it had been set in this morning, the work of the blow dryer perhaps, the work of a wet comb, hair gel even, yet with strands now loose around his hair line, sticking out of place at the top.
It had Kurt looking more like an actual kid than someone's Ken doll.

"That's why I brought a taste of sugar central with me," replied Noah triumphantly, lifting the bag up once again to rummage excitedly through its contents, though having to hunch his shoulders slightly to prevent his blanket from slipping to the ground. "I have marshmallows, jelly beans, red vines, chocolate kisses, cookie dough, peanut butter and I wanted to bring along those sticks that have sugar on one side with the other side you dip in chocolate, but they didn't have any at the store."

"Like you're not going to be slowly rotting your insides anyway. You're not going to be able to live after eating all that."

"Totally," Noah grinned, "We're gonna be so sick. Come on, grab your blanket and we'll go."

"I told you, I can't. Plus, I've already brushed my teeth and I really don't want to have to brush them again."

"Kurt, come on, you can't leave me to eat all this. We're a team; we gotta crunch down hard on this candy."

"You told me earlier you once shouted at a friend on Halloween saying, "There's no "we" in food! Get the hell away from me!"

"And look how much I've grown since then," said Noah, spreading forth his arms and dislodging his blanket from his shoulders where it fell and dropped to pool around his feet, and all for Kurt to gasp at, for apart from underwear, the boy was wearing absolutely nothing at all. "I shared my pancakes and pizza with you today and I'm now here up for sharing my candy fashizzle. Growth."

Kurt was so embarrassed; he could have slammed the door, and hard, with his cheeks so well kissed a rosy shade, it was if they'd been pinched repeatedly with every capillary burst and left to bleed profusely. Yet the image of Noah sitting defeated outside his door braving that bag by himself with a churning stomach, a night long gurgled cacophony of retching noises from a cookie dough smeared mouth, fingers stained with peanut butter, had him fetching his own blanket, folded and unused at the foot of his bed as the nights were too warm and occasionally too humid for extra layers, hurrying out with a quick word knocked on the bathroom door, a fleeting "staying at Noah's" as he ran, a goodbye to his parent's still echoing laughter.

The two boys, with their blankets billowing as like two princes hurrying through the halls of their own castle, were seen by a number of the guests, catching sight of the first of the two leading the way in only his underwear flashing from beneath his blanket, a swishing plastic bag in hand, with his fair companion behind him, his face almost contorted into exhilarated panic, unfastened sandals slowing in the wake of a hurry, hurry, hurry like pace not to get caught. The urgency, the emergency, so alert! It was the hotel's policy that guests remained fully clothed and presentable when in public, and to not run about either, perhaps a man's authoritative cry sounding after them, "excuse me young men! Will you..." Lost. The boys were already gone.

Kurt didn't know where they were going, he couldn't think, but he was a little boy and little boys weren't supposed to think hard, especially bonnie little blue eyed boys weren't supposed to worry, fret, calculate, still, he had a way of frowning like a midget adult, pondering such questions as: where was this strange boy taking him? Now arriving in the garden courtyard his suite balcony overlooked, why here? Rushing towards the pavilion where couples had exchanged vows on their wedding day, why here? And with the breeze cooling flushed skin, the moon illuminating that skin, shiny, gleaming as they collapsed to the floor panting, Kurt would not ask 'why here?' to the boy beside him, for none of this had to have him thinking hard anyway.
"Here," said Noah, offering Kurt a Kraft Jet Puffed Jumbo marshmallow. They'd since settled cross-legged amongst their blankets against the wall of the pavilion, and immediately Noah had thrust unceremoniously into Kurt's face, a bag of confection he could only wave pathetically away.

"That's okay, I don't want any." Yet again the bag shook in gesture, rolling the marshmallows nearer the harshly torn opening like an awakening avalanche set to fall. "No, I really do-

"Are we gonna do this again?" Said Noah, his words muffled from a mouth full of Jelly Beans. "It's our Midnight Feast and we're happy."

Reluctantly, Kurt accepted a single marshmallow and nibbled on it, chewing on its spongy surface and smiling as he swallowed. "Eating marshmallows always reminds me of the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man in Ghostbusters, you know? Marshmallow Fluff too, especially when he explodes and turns into molten marshmallow cream."

"Totally," said Noah, furiously working his tongue around his mouth as he removed stray pieces of Jelly Bean still glued to his teeth. "But that tubby soft-squeeze was like the worst monster ever."

"Who do you think is?"

"Hands down Godzilla, dude!" Noah grinned. "Ask me who last year, I would have totally gone with my bro T-Rex from Jurassic Park 'cause you know, T-Rex! But after you see Godzilla, there is no going back. The movie is just that awesome!"

Kurt frowned. "Didn't people say it was really bad?"

"People think too much," said Noah. "You don't go to see Godzilla to think, 'cause otherwise the movie's a total brain dead bust. You go to see Godzilla to have your eyeballs frickin' explode. I saw it with my dad at home. I was like, "Whoa!" and Godzilla's like, "Roar!" and I was like, "Whoa dude, nice teeth!" Why, what kind of movies are you into?"

"Disney," Kurt smiled. "I love Disney. I've seen every movie of theirs since Snow White and the Seven Dwarves."

"Meh. Disney's alright. Get the animators to start drawing in mutant iguanas crushing rich privileged girls and I'll tune in more."

"When I was six, my parents took me to see Tarzan, and they bought me the soundtrack. I wouldn't stop asking them for it." "Oh yeah," Noah grinned, "I saw that too. I wanna get all crazy ripped like him and kill mental ass leopards and have my body covered in battle scars. You know, to get badges of honor the organic natural way and stuff."

"I think organic is to do with food and growth."

"Whatever; our body grows some weird stuff. Like our hair. Hair is so weird. Your body is like, 'let's push all this protein out the head.'"

"Well you'd need a lot of it to be Tarzan," smiled Kurt, looking over Noah's hair, spiky trimmed and considerably shorter than his own, lack in color, or perhaps it was merely off black from a distance, up close the deepest brown he'd ever seen, yet in such low lighting it was difficult to determine as Noah ran a hand through it, almost ruffling it as you would a dog's fur coat.

"Yeah," he laughed. "I'd rock his man locks like a total rock star."
"You like rock?"

"Yeah, the psychedelic, soft, surf kinda rock. I got it from my dad. He knows all tunes. Got vinyls and cassette tapes everywhere in his study at home."

"Really?"

"Yeah, and he also makes me listen to a lot of cool indie bands, like really indie bands you'll have never heard of. Bands so indie they don't even record together. You have to buy five separate albums and listen to them all at the same time."

Kurt cocked his head. "What bands are these?"

"I dunno if they have a name," said Noah. "I think having one is too 'mainstream' for them, but my dad now thinks they're too 'mainstream' anyway so he's totally now rocking to seventies Japanese wave stuff or something. I dunno. He's definitely all about signing people no one's heard of under his label. It's the way he rolls at his record. Why, what about you? What do you like?"

"I don't listen to much music, and if I do, it'll mostly be Disney."

"Is that all you listen to? Just Musical theater stuff?" Kurt nodded. "Damn, you need your ears tuned to the right station."

"Like anything under Puckerman Records? Doing some unashamed family business promotion here are we?"

Noah shook his head. "Nah, you just get some educatin' in the classics is all I'm sayin'."

"Disney has plenty of classics. 'Some Day My Prince Will Come,' 'A Dream Is a Wish Your Heart Makes,' 'Once Upon A Dream.' They're songs my mom grew up listening to too, although the films gave her such unrealistic expectations of hair and how if you stroll into the woods and spontaneously burst into song animals aren't going to help wash your clothes in the river and you let you crash in their tree for the night."

"Okay," said Noah, sucking his sticky fingers clean and wiping them on his blanket. "Stick around in my room tomorrow and I'll play you some stuff."

"I don't know," Kurt hesitated. "Doesn't rock music make you do bad things because it has a lot of swears in it?"

"Maybe," Noah shrugged. "but I've always been like this, a cool ass dude with a huge dong, and if you want, you can bring along your Tarzan soundtrack. That Phil Collins guy I can handle, but the other stuff, not so much."

"Well I'm not here tomorrow. My dad's taking us again to San Diego for the day."

"Oh..." Noah paused, "When you comin' back?"

"I don't know. Dinner time I suppose."

"After dinner then?"

"It'll have been a long day and my mom will want me to have an early bedtime-

"What is it with you and bed times?" Noah asked. "You're gonna wake up way before ten, and if you're doin' that on your own free will, I don't trust you. Why do you need those extra hours? To
scheme on me? Eat my food while I sleep? Steal my money? Uh uh, nope."

"Steal your money?" Kurt frowned. "No, I'd lick your money so that if I'm charged with robbery, the money would be mine. I'd be a sneaky criminal like that."

"If I was a criminal I would do all my crimes on a scooter so the police would only see one footprint every few meters. They'd look only for a one-legged man with powerful jumping muscles instead of me."

"Don't you need powerful muscles for surfing anyway?"

"Sure," Noah nodded. "Your legs are like the power houses that get you up to your feet fast and help you carve your turns or hang ten on the nose, but powerful muscles all over are good too. The chest, your upper back and shoulders. Everything has to work in unison to keep you on the board always."

"I wish I was good at sports," Kurt mumbled.

"It's no biggie, dude. It's not for every-"

"Sike! I'm so good at sports!"

"Really?"

"No," Kurt laughed. "I hate sports, but I can dance."

"You can?"

"Yes. I'm learning Ballet because one of the teacher's in my school thought I had 'good coordination' when I ran down the hall once. She didn't see the part where I tripped and fell at the end, but yeah. Lots of pointing your toes, and trying to jump like birds too fat to take off."

Noah smirked. "Oh we are so gonna dance tomorrow, but none of that Ballet stuff. We've gotta really get down and boogie, you know, bust those moves, work those muscles."

"Ballet dancers need just as much muscle as surfers, more so for men because they have to lift."

Halting his movements, Noah's smirk widened. "Oh I get it now. You just wanna see girl panties."

"W-what?" Kurt exclaimed. "No!"

"You wanna lift a girl with your arm muscles and see their girly dinky doos."

"No I don't!"

Noah grinned. "Dude, I'm telling ya, stay away. Chick's crotches are dangerous. It's where tentacle monsters keep their life forces. And where they also hide small guns and throwing stars and all in a hole they deceptively call the 'Flower' that apparently poops some kind of-"

"Will you stop!" Kurt grimaced, clamping his ears.


"Yes you should! I really don't want to think of lady parts right now. I don't even want to do any of the things you said."
"Oh I get it, you want to be the one lifted."

"What? No I can't be lifted, I'm a boy. Only girls are."

Noah shrugged. "Yeah, so? You look pretty light to me. Why should chicks hog all the flying time? You need to talk to the head of Ballet or something and be like, "Hey, Mrs. Grand Supreme Ballet chick. I want to be thrown in the air by some dude. Make it happen 'cause I am not happy down here on the ground." Problem solved."

"Problem not solved. No 'dude' is going to want to pick me up. It would look... odd."

"Not it wouldn't," said Noah, puffing out his chest and grinning. "I'll be your dude. I'm totally strong enough."

Kurt smiled meekly. "No you're not, Noah. Your arms aren't that much bigger than mine."

"I have Puckerman Power juice pumpin' through my veins, that's all I need."

"What is that? A new protein shake or something?"

"Make fun," said Noah, flexing his biceps, "but these arms, they will grow, and baby, you'll be the highest one in the air when I'm finished with you."

"Yeah, you'll lift me up, drop me and I'll fall and break a bone or something, and I've never broken a bone which is just suspicious to me. I probably don't have any bones."

"Even easier," Noah smirked. "You'll be all floppy and as light as an egg roll."

"You can't lift me, Noah."

"Fine Ballet boy," said Noah, leafing off his blanket and set to stand, "let's try it out now."

"No, no," Kurt insisted, glancing about. "I'm eating, I'll throw up."

Settling back down, Noah grabbed his Jelly Beans. "Fine, but I'm lifting you tomorrow. With Phil Collins on my side, I have the strength of Tarzan in me."

"I don't know, I think I'll be too tired after-"

"Dude, come on! You can't crap on the excitement. It's like when people say, "Hey! I got a new computer!" "That's nice, but mine's better" or "Hey! I finally killed that guy who's been bugging me for weeks!" "What the hell, I'm calling the police." Unbelievable."

"Fine," Kurt relented, "I'll try to come by after dinner, but I can't make any promises. I'll just have to try to eat something that'll give me loads of energy instead of... this," gesturing to the candy.

Noah grinned. "Would you believe me if I said the only reason why I gave you some was to watch how you nibble like a hamster when you eat?"

"I do?"

"Yeah. You remind me of the hamster we have in our classroom at school. He's kinda like this." Kurt looked on as Noah comically demonstrated on a Jelly Bean the minimalism in his bites.

"Well that's it for this 'hamster'."
"No, eat it up," Noah chuckled. "We've got a whole lotta candy still to get through."

"Do you even have anything to spread the peanut butter on?"

"Sure," said Noah, removing the lid and shuffling closer. "Whatya gotta do is spread it all around your mouth and then lick it off, but if you don't get all of it, the other person has to lick off the rest for you."

"You better have a lizard tongue because I'm not licking off anything," said Kurt, grimacing as Noah finished applying the finishing touches, two fingers digging deep into the jar and wiping the remnants on the skin, as if face painting the symbols of a clan on the cheeks but with much less artistic precision. The boy smirked a peanut bearded smile, the look of a boy who'd just dunked the lower half of his face in the stuff, the look akin to that of a year's worth of foundation make up on the face.

"We'll see," he smirked as out came the tongue like an hungry animal darting from its cave, licking, furiously lapping up the peanut butter like a cat straining with fur caught on its hooked papillae with certain places hard to reach. The end of the chin, the tip of the nose, leaving skin damp from saliva, the tongue itself covered in unsightly brownish coating, but still Noah persisted, his face screwed up as Kurt looked on with a grimace.

"Yay! You did it!" Success. Yet fingers dipped once again and a stripe was made so far out of reach on Noah's face, his smile faded.

"My tongue, it's going in for the reach, but oh no, it can't, it can't make it-"

"I see what you're doing. Your tongue looks like it doesn't even fit comfortably in your own mouth let alone out of it."

"You're right. Maybe it would fit better in yours."

"Ew! Gross!" Kurt grimaced as Noah lunged forward, pinning him to the ground.

"Lick it Kurt, lick the peanut butter!"

"No!"

"No as in yes?"

"No as in back off!"

"Don't make this harder Kurtie-poo. Lick it!" With Kurt squirming on the ground laughing, as if in the midst of being tickle tortured, he writhed uncontrollably under Noah's looming peanut butter cheek, the heavy scent of the food paste picked up by his flared nostrils, the candy scent of Noah's breath all over him, this boy's body heavy on him.

So much excitement, the late hour creeping into the next and the next yet amongst the evening sea air, the waves, the sounds of children's echoing laughter coursed through the pavilion into the garden itself. It was spared the curse of exhaustion, kept alive in giggles as both boys eventually returned to the Puckerman's suite where Thomas Puckerman, a beer in hand, the knocking guilty (he could tell), opened the door to find his son and little friend before the threshold, hair matted in cookie dough like bubble-gum, faces resembling messes of badly applied muddy makeup, the remnants of peanut butter staining not only skin but pajamas and blankets with his son's tongue, quick like a gecko's, licking the side of his mouth to Kurt's laughter.
And like that! Sleepiness came quick! Guided through the Puckerman suite, a 'Junior Suite', smaller than the Hummel's yet still spacious with a gorgeous ocean view, a double bed shared between both father and son and a series of overstuffed arm chairs and couches which Kurt was invited to sleep on, yet not before having both boys scrub their faces clean, the pain of rinsing out the thick almost gooey cookie dough from their scalps, the harsh brush blows of the toothbrush. Noah had complained of his stomach, groaning it hurt. He was given pills only to fall asleep instantly whilst Kurt, tucked on the couch, was quiet, and sleeping soundlessly. Such a little thing had thought Mr. Puckerman, as the lights had gone out. So little.

The next day, San Diego! The morning having Mr. Puckerman escorting Kurt back to the Hummel suite, the fair boy having awakened immediately to scramble from the couch and alert as any animal primed for self-survival for it was off quick on the shuttle down to the city, a full day in the rich heat, strolling along the Reflection Pool at the Casa de Balboa, visiting the Serra Museum in Presidio Park with the Old Point Loma Lighthouse in the bay, and all the while willing his head not to loll on his shoulders as if wooden, for how that much tired he was from the sun, a mouth parched, perhaps dried, he thought, from the remnants of peanut butter he could still taste at the back of his tongue from the evening prior no matter how much he drank.

They would return late to a dinner once again at the Sheerwater, retiring early for the night, yet it was the Puckerman's suite door that opened to find their boy Kurt, flushed and smiling with his Tarzan soundtrack in hand, allowed only an hour's stay by his parents for intrusion was rude, to Noah's beaming face that welcomed him in. The boy had spent most of the day in the suite watching cartoons, having woken too late in the morning to wish Kurt a "bitchen" day and only stomaching a spoonful of cereal at breakfast, yet have given him enough energy to stroll around the Hotel on idle feet, making a wish of his own at the fountain and throwing the coin in, though he'd never admit it, like Kurt had. Oh, the blush that came when even thinking of it.

Now they were running around, bouncing on the bed as games were played, brought to light as quick as a match striking the box, the flame of fun that had Noah stealing his father's tie and tying it around his head, a Native American headband as he ran about, war whooping away! Now the carpet was scorching hot lava, the bed and chairs sinking islands with Kurt jumping from one to the other. The floor quick sand, bubbling acid, deadly tar pits he all nearly fell into on crumbling ledges! Noah the adventurer upon a wooden raft headed straight for a waterfall! Kurt steering a burning pirate ship upon a kraken infested sea, a whip like tentacle capsizing the hull with his cries for "help! Somebody please help me!" And help coming from... "Tarzan?"

"Yeah, Tarzan," smiled Noah down at Kurt's questioning face, the boy standing atop the bed with body poised heroically, fists on hips, chest presented as like a body builder would grandly show off to a judges' panel yet with the proud voice of a mere eight year old as he spoke. "You know at the start of the movie when his folks are escaping that burning ship, I'd get you on a lifeboat and row us to shore, and then we'd use the washed up wood to totally build an awesome tree house for us to live in."

"That's more his parent's story, not Tarzan's," replied Kurt, shaking his head. "The whole point of Tarzan is that he's an ape man raised by gorillas. If you want to be him, you're going to have to quickly make a pole from wood on the deck and pole vault us both onto shore. Come on, Noah. He wouldn't play it safe with a lifeboat. He's Tarzan."

Noah smirked at him, those hazel eyes now flickering like a candle's reflection in a glass orb as he pulled Kurt to his feet, nodding. "You're right. Hold on."

From one overstuffed chair to the next they jumped. Jump! Jump! Jump! The jagged giant rocks in the shape of human skulls with no amount of erosion fading those skeletal features away their
platforms, the same rocks the Kraken had slammed the ship into with Kurt scared he'd fall in and drown for how fast Noah was going, the boy's hand fiercely a hold of his own and never letting go, now using a piece of the ship's wood as a board to surf upon wrathful waves, nearing the already debris littered shore, but losing control and falling as the buoyancy of the board sank from under with only a combat roll as like from a moving vehicle did they end washed up on the sand, panting their little chests out, drenched with hands still in each other's.

It was just a bed with a strewn quilt, they were just chairs with their cushions near to falling off and this was just a hotel suite rooming childish make believe playtime, but it was good enough for the two boys as they lay beside each other staring up at the ceiling, having survived the vicious storm thanks to "Tarzan", golden brown Dallas surfer boy "Tarzan" who was now quick to jump to his feet, singing along to the final chorus of Phil Collin's 'Two Worlds', the song having played throughout their adventure, singing along to 'Strangers Like Me,' and to 'Son of Man' as if he'd conquered the world with Tarzan's distinctive, ululating yell on his lips, the victory cry of the bull ape ringing through the room as he ripped off his tee to beat at his chest.

Kurt was to look at Noah as if the boy was on a sugar rush, not safe to near in case he'd accidentally kick you in the middle of a jump stunt, or scratch you across the cheek when play fighting, but Noah didn't hurt him. Noah was careful of that. Even for a eight year old he knew when to stop, for Noah was Tarzan. Courageous, loyal and steadfast Tarzan when they played, danced even when he tugged Kurt up eagerly to boogie down and hard to Phil Collins, playing some more, now into an African uncharted rainforest, and only pausing to burst into spontaneous singing. To hunt and kill Sabor. And victory! Noah attempting to lift Kurt in the air as Tarzan had done with Sabor's corpse, only to have Kurt squirm out of his arms, laughing.

Now raining in torrents, freshly saved from a pack of baboons with mandrill like faces and up against the trunk of a tree, or up against the headboard of the bed, Kurt, with a wagging finger ordered Tarzan to "stay back! Don't come any closer!" He pushed at Noah's bare chest with his own bare foot, giggled as the boy fingered five little toes and watched as Noah with his 'confused', yet 'intense', 'focused' hazel eyes neared him on all fours, body crouched like a gorilla's with weight supported on his knuckles, completely disrespecting personal boundaries, took hold of his fair hand and placed their palms together, fingers touching and eyes connected, wavering slightly, only to crease as both now suddenly burst into waves of hysterical laughter.

We didn't know where it came from. The laughter that only sounded to me as if to diffuse an awkward moment, to diffuse embarrassment. It had been funny at first to see Noah as Tarzan, both of us reanacting the scenes from the movie. Yet this scene, Tarzan and Jane's first encounter, though comical, was not. Noah had always previously skipped 'You'll Be in My Heart' whenever it played. He said he didn't like love songs. That romance was "lame", yet I did not call him out on it when our palms were together, fearing he'd stop playing, even ask me to leave, but with the hour up and mom's knock at the door, I left anyway. I left Noah, the boy shaka signing me "chow dude". I left the African rainforests we'd made our own. I left "Tarzan".

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Glee

Down again to San Diego it was the next day and up into San Pasqual Valley, the sky overhead a fair fading blue, the air stirring with a warm dry wind and away from the smog-bound wicked city as the Hummel's visited the Wild Animal Park, an attraction Kurt could only view as coincidental after his time with Noah the previous evening. Spanning 1,800 acres, it was one of the largest tourist
attractions in the San Diego County, boasting the world's largest veterinary hospital located within a semi-arid environment, cypress, conifers and exotic foliage that at times seemed to swallow the many thatched and rustic wooden buildings that looked as if they'd been plucked right out of the fishing villages of the Congo or the movie set of Jurassic Park.

The shrieking sounds from beyond like kittens crushed, the roars almost bloodthirsty and growls amongst the laughter of children. For Kurt, viewing the many animals with a throat no longer raw from peanut butter, or from inhaling heavy smoke from a raging fire, those little sighs of wonderment would sound, perhaps a gasp upon smiling lips when he'd tug at either one of his parent's sleeves and point excitedly at one of the animals, often jogging Burt's arm in the middle of taking pictures, blurring them as if the colors had been doused in water. Other children would have been reprimanded, some even struck across their chubby faced cheeks, there to clutch in tears, but Kurt was left untouched, apologizing as Burt smiled forgivingly.

They progressively made their way from each enclosure to the next along serpentine paths, admiring the curving ivory tusks of the elephants, the lion's that reminded Kurt too heavily of Sabor's ferocious features to view comfortably from acacia trees, to the graceful lewed-neon pink plumaged flamingos of the Mombasa Lagoon's scenic watering hole, the pelicans, the storks with their long child bearing beaks, and the gorgeous iridescent green-and-blue peacocks strutting and shaking their heads in twitchy motions like Morse Code. The other visitors clucking and cooing with them. Clapping their hands to startle them. Strange to Kurt that the peacocks' widespread tails weren't erect but dragged ingloriously behind them on the ground.

All day he had been hearing himself utter flat, banal words for lack of a script, his thoughts on any which of these animals had been in Tarzan, and whether any had been in the rainforest kingdom Noah and he had imagined. Friend or foe? The rows of ominous vultures like furled black umbrellas to the monkeys, lemurs and gorillas chewing on seasonal fruits and fiscus leaves. The visitors were admiring them all, yet all Kurt thought of was Noah, of "Tarzan", the 'ape man'. How from the heat of the day did a sweat droplet, coarsened by talcum powder, inching past his collar and down his chest appear when the eyes of one of these so called 'gentle giants' landed on him, watched him, his anxiety growing under their unwavering dark eyed gazes.

It was a cue for Elizabeth to playfully hug Kurt around the shoulders, and to lead him towards the fragrant habitat of the Herb Gardens and Bonsai Pavilion, to enjoy the species with scents of cedar, rose and apple, the gnarled trunks of the tiny trees bent by the wind for it was too early to view the great Asian Savannah up in a tethered balloon, the idea of high altitude and vast sights of Ugandan giraffes and Grevy's zebra exhausting already little overwhelmed blue eyes, made so translucent in the hot San Diego sun there was a fear they would almost turn clear, yet Kurt moved. He was animated and smiling and clearly very happy to be among such exalted company of the animal kingdom, of his own parents. Just their wee little child of eight.

At last, late afternoon, hair still ruffled from the Flightline Safari, and cheeks pink as if one of the primates had crushed their berries on his skin, Kurt's teddy bear back pack was full of souvenirs, stuffed toys, action figurines and name tags, his teddy bear now a fat teddy bear that weighed him down, strained his back, but ignored. He looked up to see a lazy smile stretching across Burt's cheeks and Elizabeth sucking in her own as she, casting a sidelong glance at her son, chided yet seductive, for that was her way of drawing people in, "There's something I want you to see before we return to the hotel, Kurt. I think you'll like it." Shuffling them both on to the next bus down to San Diego, the journey quick and short into the heart of the city.

Kurt smiled in confusion, trying to think. Had he? The implication seemed to be that he had forgotten something essential, that this was something even his father didn't know of. Elizabeth was shaking her leg anxiously, looking out the slightly dusty window in impatience, "I hope it's not over," she
was saying, "Can't this bus go any faster?" She whispered in Burt's ear something that Kurt could not make out, not noticing the smile the man gave him as he observed the San Diego streets, from high tech skyscraper giants to streets with smaller, Spanish-style like houses, "haciendas" Kurt had once heard been used to describe them with fake adobe walls, glaring candy colored tiled roofs and windows, all cramped like miniature dollhouses.

At the next stop, they got off, but on the sidewalk overflowing with people waving around rainbow colored flags, hooting, applause abound. The cameras were flashing what appeared to be moving floats up ahead, some like cotton candy clouds pink, glittering and as brightly decorative as those seen in carnivals, Mardi Gras even, with near to nude muscular men dancing on the platforms to the amplified music, others dressed as women as like pantomime dames and blowing kisses from their lipsticked mouths, the confetti, the colored dust of every color one could imagine shot in the air by circus canons. It was a clamorous parade in which Burt, stealthy as a lion, lifted Kurt up onto his shoulders, there to see it in all its splendor.

Whatever this celebratory parade was, Kurt loved it. The sheer excitement and energy it stirred with traffic having been rerouted for blocks and thousands of spectators pressing themselves raucously up behind the police barricades, tossing rainbow flags underneath the floats, even the decapitated heads of fresh-budded red roses looking like deranged little birds. The crazed chanting all around and everyone's eyes so animated with cheeks glowing. It was a rainbow to the soul, as if a prism had exploded everywhere, the air even smelt of sugar somehow, candied apples, and not of exhaust fumes, his mother now shouting up at him, "Kurt! What do you think, sweetie?!" The smile as he looked down at her. She would never forget.

His fair cheeks would be painted with the rainbow and lipstick stained from "drag queens" they were called. A rainbow flag would be placed in his hand to wave himself until his wrist ached and his vision swam, to keep as a souvenir, and it would be seen in his hand all the way back to the hotel as only then did his parents inform him of what he'd been to. A gay pride parade, the first time he would hear and know of what the word 'gay' meant, and not as in carefree and happy, but the love two people of the same sex had for each other, the love between two men and two women, the hand holding Kurt had seen, the kisses. The word 'sexuality' used, but would be explained when he'd be older. He did not need to worry about that now.

Now that the dreamy haze of the long day was over, such a careening haze, to know that he was soon to go to bed was bracing somehow. In-between the sheets where his worn body could rest, even his cheeks from having smiled as radiantly as a high-wattage light bulb for most of the day, but what a day. Warm rushing fizzing in his blood! The happiness of it all that pounded in his heart. His thoughts were still whirring as his parents wished him goodnight, kissing him on the forehead and answering when he asked curiously, "Is it only humans that can be gay. What about animals?" Elizabeth laughed. "Yes animals too." And Kurt giggled. The idea of an animal gay pride parade at the park bringing forth a big smile as the lights went out.

With parents asleep, so was Kurt, a stuffed toy tucked under his arm as he slept. It was one he'd bought at the park's souvenir shop for a child half his age, maybe two or three, yet it had deeply moved him for reasons he did not know. It was a striped tiger, kitten sized; made of a soft fuzzy fabric you would want to rub against your face. It had golden button eyes, a funny flat nose, springy tickly whiskers, salmon-and-black tiger stripes, a pride wristband Kurt had managed to slip around its neck like a collar and a curving tail with a wire inside so you could move it up, down, even into a question mark, yet a mark now echoed on Kurt's wakening face as with blue eyes blurred in vision, he looked towards the balcony doors, left ajar for the cool air.

The sounds were unmistakably human, a young human, a boy or girl Kurt could not tell, but whoever it was, was imitating a wolf's howl, the pitch smooth but changing direction as many as four
to five times throughout, ending in a series of dog-like yelps similar to those of yearling pup like wolves. Though he knew howls were to assemble a pack, to pass an alarm to locate each other during a storm or in unfamiliar territory, a wolf's howl only saddened Kurt. To him, the wolf was in love with the moon and each month it cried for a love it would never touch. The moon, large and bright, littered with impact craters, Kurt could see. The moon so beautiful, at its fullest now as he stepped out onto the balcony, his tiger clutched tightly in his arms.

It was a view that looked over the entire courtyard, a view on the highest level amongst the white painted wooden beams all around like pretty beach scaffolding, with a breeze almost chilling enough to raise goose bumps to the skin, spreading along his arms, his bare legs. He rubbed at them, almost viciously, regretting not bringing along his blanket, as with winced eyes he looked about the sparsely lit garden, only the moon's strange undersea phosphorescence acting as illumination, the howls ever constant, now frustrating yet seemingly quieter as with a "hey! Kurt! Kurt, down here," Kurt looked down to see none other than Noah standing at the foot of the building, looking up at him with that cheeky smiling face he knew. "Noah?"

Kurt was now leaning over the balustrade, almost perilously, his tiger's fur wafting in the breeze as if it were trembling it was so afraid of heights. His mother would have yanked him away with a scream if she'd seen him, would have locked the doors for sure, but it was the strain of trying to hear Noah's reply after asking what he was doing here, to hear him shout "hi!", waving as if he hadn't heard what Kurt had said. Noah himself caught sight of Kurt shushing him with a finger to his lips, his brows frowning as he tried to make out what the child above was saying, but to no avail. The boy was too high up on his regal balcony to be heard and Noah, toeing off his flip flops and nearing the wall, only saw this as a challenge as he began to climb.

The tiger was nearly dropped as Kurt looked on in skin paling horror, stifling his gasps or perhaps tearful whines at the sounds in his mind. Of a hand slipping, a scream for help, for his name, and crack! On the cement below. The crack of a skull, the crack of a back broken. Flashes of a young corpse. Blood spread like strawberry jam. His ever urgent whispers were for Noah to stop, to climb back down, the risk he was putting himself through too high to continue. All that he said clamoured out of his mouth, though did not discourage the ascending boy, and ascending so quickly. His hands pulling him up, feet propelling him against gravity, making easy work of all these balconies as he rose, all so predictable and formulaic in architecture. Piss easy.

It was with a "hi" as like a "boo!" upon an unsuspecting child that Noah, catching Kurt off guard as the fair boy glanced back at his suite, climbed the final stretches, the tiger clutched so tightly to that beating chest the eyes were close to popping. And then there was silence. Kurt's breaths labored. That smile on Noah's face. It was evident on this vivid damp night, the sky partly cobbled in cloud, part open, a gigantic crevice into which you might stare and stare, what people typically did when standing on balconies at night, that simply appearing at his own to acknowledge this Dallas born surfer boy's presence wouldn't appease him, wouldn't have him returning to his own room. For Noah had wished to say hello his own way.

"Hey," said Noah, straddling the balustrade. "I figured it was too late to come knocking at your door like last time and I was scared to throw a stone at your window in case it broke and landed in your mouth and totally choked you or something so I gave the wolf howl a try. Worked pretty good, right?"

Kurt huffed. "What is it with you and talking to me at night? Why can't you come to me where you're not half naked in the hall or climbing my balcony?"

"I'm Tarzan remember. Tarzan never plays it safe."
"You could have died, Noah."

The boy grinned. "I know, right. It's like the second radical thing I've done today, this and at lunch I didn't want this family to judge me so I walked past them with two cookies on my plate and four in my pockets. Oh and later when I was standing in line for ice cream, I heard some lady behind me smack her kid and say, "don't put your fingers in your ass." I laughed so hard I passed out and woke up in the doctor's office."

"Why do you have to tell me this now? Why not tomorrow when the sun's out and shining? Tarzan likes the sun too you know."

"You're not around during the day, dud. You're always goin' off places. I mean what's so bad about stayin' at the hotel? I'm where the fun's at. Plus here we have kids sticking their fingers up their butts. That's pretty cool. Party."

Kurt sighed. "Do you even want to know where I was today?"

"I don't know," said Noah, shurgging. "You went to a Dunkin Donuts and learned that the employee dudes there really don't care about nothin' 'cause you ordered six hash browns and they gave you thirteen? 'Cause that totally happened to me one time."

"No, I went to the Wild Adventure Park. We saw all the animals on all the safaris and that's where I got my tiger, see? Do you like him?"

Taking hold of the animal, Noah looked it over with a frown. "Why is he pink with black stripes? Aren't tigers orange?"

"He's not pink, he's salmon."

"Like the fish?"

"Like the color, Noah. Orange and pink mixed together makes Salmon. Like green and blue make turquoise and red and blue make purple. Don't you ever finger paint or have coloring books at school?"

"Sure we do, but I never do any of that arty stuff. I don't know how to make anything out of a toilet roll and everyone knows macaroni is for eating. I mean, what are you doin' putting glue on macaroni? I'll put glue on you and stick you to paper. I'll make a freakin' masterpiece outta you."

"Well, this is salmon right here."

Noah shrugged. "Still looks pink to me, and what's with the bracelet thingy around his neck? What's 'PRIDE'?"

"Oh, after the park my mom brought us down into the city to see the Gay Pride Parade. It was so much fun. You should have seen it. They had floats and color dust and confetti and everything. I have one of their rainbow flags in my room."

"Oh, I've seen those before. I just didn't know what they were about. Thought they were the candy shop equivalent of a barber's pole or somethin'. Well here in California anyway."

"No, my parents told me it was about the celebration of love a man can have for another man and a woman for another woman, and that its completely fine and natural, because animals can be gay too you know. That's what 'gay' also means apart from 'happy', I think, but I never knew it."
"... I did."

Kurt blinked. "You did?"

"Yeah, it was a couple months ago and a friend of my dad's was asking him how he could explain gay couples to his kids. I didn't know then what gay meant so I kept listenin' and my dad was like, "If you can explain to your kids that an immortal man in a red suit travels around the entire world from his home at the North Pole on one night every year on a sleigh carried by flying deer, I think it'll be easy enough to tell them two guys are in love"."

"Was you're dad talking about Santa Claus?"

"Yeah, it was the day I realized that so called 'immortal' guy wasn't..."

"... Wasn't what?"

Noah shook his head. "Nothin'. Here, you can have your tiger back. Reminds me too much of the time the neighbor kid threw a cat at me and my thumb went up its butt hole. God, you gotta fear the cat butt hole."

"What is it with you and butts? They revolve your brain or something?"

"Have you seen 'em? They're the cushions of the body, dude. So round and squishy, you just want to take a nap on them, bare cheek to bare butt cheek."

"I don't think I'll rest my cheek on a bare butt cheek any time soon."

"What are you doin' tomorrow? And please don't say you're goin' out again 'cause we needs some hang out time. I needs my Jane here."

Kurt frowned. "Your Jane?"

"You know, Jane to my Tarzan," said Noah. "I needs my Jane to run around this place in undies and blanket capes like we're the freakin' kings of unemployment."

"I can't be Jane, I'm not a girl."

"Fine, you can be my Gay Jane. You can come down with me to the beach tomorrow and watch me surf. I'll be like Tarzan when he surfs on trees, but on water. Cool huh?"

Kurt hesitated. "What will you do if I'm not around tomorrow? What if my parents are taking me to Legoland or buying me a new Magic 8 ball?"

"Why do you need a new one?"

"Before coming here, I accidentally drank the liquid inside the old one and I was sort of predicting the future all day. My doctor said it was just water but I knew he'd die the next day anyway."

"And did he?"

"No," said Kurt, "but he came close. He choked on one of his own lollipops. It was a strawberry one. His favorite."

"Can you still predict the future? I wanna know if you're here tomorrow. Otherwise I'm gonna be stuck listenin' to my dad talk about signing on a band who want to release a concept album where all the song titles are taken from craigslist personal ads."
"What's Craigslist?"

Noah shrugged. "Ebay but you sell people instead. I don't know. Point is, I want my Gay Jane here with me. Can't be Tarzan without him."

"If I come along you won't try to hold me whilst you surf will you? You're still only Tarzan in his munchkin years."

"Still Tarzan. Tell me to undo a bra strap from a yuck babe, you know, a fat lady on the beach and I'll bring it to you."

"... I don't think that's the same as getting an elephant hair."

"You still need skill. Last time I did it I accidentally touched the wiener of the yuck dude sleeping next to her and they both ended up chasing me half way across the beach. It was so funny."

Kurt shook his head. "I don't think that's the same as a stampede either."

"Oh no, they were real chubbies. Knocked over big ass sandcastles, tripped over crawling babies. Chaos."

"How can you ever go back there without fearing they'll force feed you seaweed or stuff sand down your bum crack? They'd probably sacrifice you to a land shark if they knew how scared you are of them."

Noah scoffed. "I'd just go out surfing where they can't reach me. Jurisdiction my butt, the water's my territory. Badass thrill seeker on the waves, baby. Just watch me."

"OK," Kurt sighed, "I'll be there."

"You will?"

"Yeah, I don't think I have anything on tomorrow anyway."

Quickly swinging his leg over, Noah hopped off the balustrade onto the deck. "Awesome sauce! This is gonna be so cool! I can totally show you the move I've been workin' on. It's like a cutback but instead of turning the board back to the breaking wave you only do it a little before surging forward. Gives you a boost, and makes you go superfast."

"Show me whatever you want. Just don't go around touching bra straps or spaghetti straps or-"

"Spaghetti straps?"

"They're not really made out of spaghetti Noah. They're just called that because the shoulder straps on their clothes look like thin spaghetti pasta strings. I think my mom said they also call them noodle straps."

"What?" Said Noah, his eyes frenzied. "Who are these chicks wearing pasta on their bodies? I've never seen this."

"Noah-"

"Dude, come on. Spaghetti and noodle straps? If these chicks want to wear these they're gonna have to be careful, 'cause they will distract me from my surfing. I'll start thinking of spaghetti and I will get hungry and I will stop at nothing to get my spaghetti."
"Okay, I'm confused. You'd stop at nothing to get spaghetti straps if they were made of spaghetti or actual spaghetti?"

"Noah shrugged. "Whichever one is closer. I've told you I can outrun angry naked boobed women. I'll have my spaghetti to give me energy. Like Popeye and his spinach."

"I'm starting to think going to the beach isn't such a good idea."

"Dude it's alright, I'm only messin with you. I'm all about the surf. Total passion boy here for it. I'll come knock on your door after breakfast and we can go down together."

Kurt shook his head vehemently. "No, you're not climbing back down there, you'll sleep here. I don't want you dead before I can see your moves on a board."

Noah grinned. "Totally. Let's slumber party this bitch."

"You'll have to sleep on the couch but they're pretty comfy. I mean they're not the best but... Noah?" Turning around, he took note of Noah's gaze at the sky and words spoken with lofty resignation.

"You know what they say about a full moon? That it's the mistletoe of the night sky."

Kurt frowned. "No they say it makes people not sleep which makes them crazy which makes them spontaneously shape shift into werewolves."


"What? No."

"You want me to lift your pajama top to look at your undies? 'Cause that's what Tarzan did in the film."

"Yeah, and he got kicked in the face for it. It was a real class act. Now stop acting weird and come with me before my parents wake up."

Bringing a finger to his lip, Noah winced. "Ow I can't. My lips really hurt. Can you kiss them better?"

"Noah-"

"No, actually you should probably kiss me to surprise me then I guess punch me hard in the face so I don't get attached. Yeah, let's do that."

"No, I have a better idea. I'll kiss you slowly and then when you least expect it I'll jam my tongue down your throat so no one can hear your screams, swallow you whole and slither away like the feisty anaconda I am."

Noah grinned. "Neat! Would an anaconda really be able to fit me in its whole mouth?"

"Sure," said Kurt. "They said at the park that they have very flexible lower jaws so little surfer boys from Dallas would be no problem."

"Pfft, I'd just crawl right on out and kill the thing with my trusted spear head. No snake intimidates me."

Kurt smiled. "Because you're Tarzan?"
"That's right babe, I'm Tarzan. Ape man of the rainforest. Rockin' the loin cloth to hide my junk and swinger of vines as I'd lead my band of Donkey Kongs to banana country with Gay Jane by my side givin' me the sweet stuff."

"Go suck a lemon ape boy, I'm going to bed," retreating from Noah's overtly puckered lips now approaching, nearing and ready to leave behind something wet on his own, or perhaps on the side of his mouth from a miscalculation of trajectory, to slide across his cheek and to leave behind a saliva trail like that of disgusting slug mucus.

"I'm kiddin' Kurt. Kurt, I'm only-" The tan boy chuckled. "...Gee, you're so easy to mess around with."

The blanket from the foot of Kurt's bed was used to cover Noah that night, the boy sleeping on the couch with the cushions rearranged messily for his soon sprawling body that dangled floppy almost boneless looking limbs off the side, the feet, dirty at the soles, poking out at the end. You'd fear he'd roll right off, yet he wouldn't wake upon the thump he appeared that out of it. And there was Kurt in his own bed, falling back to sleep a little while after, his tiger tucked under his arm with the idea of having to explain to his parents in the morning upon their stumbled discovery of the other boy in their room prolonging the process, but eventually blue eyes rested and blue eyes closed, blind to hazel eyes now peering at him through the dark.

_He looked like any other kid as he slept, that tiger of his squeezed right into him so close and I stayed where I was on the couch with my blanket for Kurt was right, it wasn't all that bad. Yet I wasn't tired. The cold from outside, the climb. The thrill had seeped into my bones and I didn't know what to do with it except tire myself to sleep taking in the room, the belongings, Kurt. I guessed the dreams he was having, wondered if he'd shift incessantly, moan something incomprehensible, a name perhaps on a face crinkling like an infant's on the verge of tears, maybe even sleep walk into a wall, but no. He stayed put and I lay there transfixed upon the fair palm I'd put on my own against, and the pretty parted lips I'd puckered mine to, but never reached..._

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~ PLEASE REVIEW ~

(But if you wish to criticize, may it be constructive. I'm not going to learn from my mistakes and improve if you vent.)

**Disclaimer:** I do not own the rights to the characters from Glee as I don't own the show. I'm not earning money from this and no copyright or trademark infringement is intended.

~ STAY TUNED FOR MORE BY FOLLOWING/FAVORITING ~
Chapter 4

THE CHILD
2001

IV

~ Play Boys ~

Fear! A horrid start to a deep restful fair boy awakened from astonishing, skyrocket dreams early to find that his tiger was no longer beside him, the nook he'd created for it bare of that synthetic fur and on the verge of panicking only to discover it on the floor, perhaps having rolled off from tossing and turning, all harmlessly animated by said dreams. Dreams of running barefoot on the beach and laughing, the sand a silver blonde that had suffused a strange passionate strength in his body. He had jumped and skipped childishly, almost frivolously at the sight of the waves, and at the sight of a surfer on those waves, riding quick like a glimmering scaled fish breaking the water, a mere millisecond flicker before the disappearance.

There was Noah now on the couch, twitching, lurching and grinding his teeth as if he was stealthily riding upon his surf board, harsh waves beneath him that grew and morphed into a mouth hungry enough to gobble him up. Munch! Munch! Munch! Kurt could have laughed. The boy was energetic in sleep as he was out of it and he pondered if he ought to comfort him before he'd end up like his tiger, on the ground, but he didn't. Elizabeth was already looking on from the doorway, curious, looking at her son with a frown that only had him dashing across the carpet on pitter patter like feet, they were so small you'd hardly think they'd make a sound even in speed, and into the bathroom, the door shutting, the light turning on with a click!

Blinding white tile, mirrors reflecting mirrors, and there he splashed cold water over his face, the faucet turned on so strong he could not hear his mother's gentle knocks, her voice calling out his name, though capped at a volume that wouldn't wake her still dormant husband or the little boy on their couch. His sweet mother, already dressed in a white crocheted dress of pretty Persian inspired design with a turquoise bikini peeking cheekily from underneath as if she too had plans to go down to the beach as well, perhaps to join them where Noah would then be nervous to approach him like a child drinking from the bathroom faucet because they were simply too embarrassed to ask their friend's mother where the cups were in the kitchen.

Such a comparison was quick to squash Kurt's current ideas of lowering his head under the faucet with his lips parted, mouth open with ballooning cheeks, gurgling even until he'd choke and cough violently from rushed gulps of water, as on tip toes, he reached over the sink and turned it off, and extra tight so as for it not to drip. Yet it dripped anyway. Would have left his palm beetroot red if he'd applied any more pressure, his fingers dried on the canary yellow hand towel hanging neatly beside the sink, with his name no longer called from beyond, knocks since ceased at the door that he now unlocked and peered around to see Elizabeth at the far end crouching by Noah, the boy now awakening with Kurt's blanket crumpling around his body.

"Good morning, Noah," smiled Elizabeth. Noah blinked up at her with squinted, tired eyes, eyes he rubbed as he rose groggily to a slumped position on the couch, voice low as he spoke.

"... Hey... what's shakin'? ... Mrs Kurt."

Elizabeth giggled. "Call me Elizabeth, sweetie. Or Mrs. H if you prefer. I don't mind. Did you sleep well?" Noah nodded as the woman looked him over. "I see Kurt lent you his pajamas, and blanket.
That was nice of him."

"Yeah… it's real soft."

"That's because it's made of cashmere sweetie. It's a type of wool we get from cashmere goats. They have very fine, strong and light hair, so if you're ever looking for a blanket, try to find one that's made of this. It'll keep you warm and snug at night."

"Well this one sure was, Mrs H," Noah grinned.

"That's why I bought it for Kurt. He very much likes to be around soft things, but you didn't sleep here for the blanket did you Noah?"

"No um… Kurt let me in after I er… after I howled like a wolf from that er… garden place and it totally worked."

Elizabeth smiled. "You were howling from outside? When was this, sweetie?"

Noah shrugged. "I don't know. I just came round to see Kurt, wanted to see how my Gay Jane was doin' 'cause he's never around, and um… yeah, he let me crash on your couch when he said I couldn't climb back down the balcony."

"You climbed our balcony?" Gasped Elizabeth.

"Only 'cause Kurt and I couldn't hear each other," Noah answered, guilt now stammering his reply. "He kept on shushing me when I tried to shout because of the sleeping peeps around."

Elizabeth sighed. "Noah, next time you wish to see Kurt, please come to the door. Do not climb our balcony. If my son had stolen Rapunzel's scalp or if we'd had vines hanging off the sides it would have been different, but please, all you need do is knock. Okay, Romeo?"

"Sure thing, Mrs. H." Noah grinned. "You can count on me to come a-knockin'."

"Good, and you know we're also here during the day sometimes, so it's okay to come knocking to see Kurt then."

"But Kurt's not there during the days, Mrs H. None of you are. I come to your door and no one answers, and I had to climb your balcony last night just to see him 'cause he says he was too tired to see me… He probably forgot about me."

Elizabeth laughed. "He hasn't forgotten you Noah, don't be silly. Just yesterday when we were viewing the gorillas at the zoo, he mentioned they reminded him of you. In fact, I think your Tarzan themed play dates may have had him thinking of you many a time throughout our stay there. So you needn't worry."

"Wish I could go with you guys though," the boy said, pouting. "I wanna ride a kickass Safari and see the animals too, and gay pride fun times sounds hella dope."

"Kurt told you about that did he?"

Noah nodded. "Yeah, he even showed me his tiger and totally mando wristbandy thingy. It was cute."

Her smile widening, Elizabeth walked over to her straw tote bag by the dresser. "I have a spare, you know. Kurt may have bought you a little something from the zoo's souvenir store, but this can be
from me if you want it. Just a little taster from our day."

Noah smiled as she returned with a pride wristband of his own. "Thanks, Mrs H."

"Doesn't your father take you out from time to time?"

"If I wanted him to, sure," said Noah, sliding on the wristband, "but he knows I'm plenty happy doin' what the hotel has got goin' on, and the beach here is totes legit, so no pressure. It'd just be weird for me goin' to Legoland without a friend, you know? Not that dad's a lamo, but goin' with Kurt, rad, like these wristbands. We can be like total gay bros."

"Well, Kurt only took his own because he thought it looked pretty," laughed Elizabeth, "but I've yet to explain to him that when wearing this, it's not a mere accessory, but a way of raising awareness for gay people everywhere in a world that isn't nice to them. Okay, Noah. When you wear this, you're saying to everyone that you support them, that you believe in their right for equality."

Noah frowned. "What's the world's beef with gay people? Have they seen these bitchin' wristbands?"

"There are just people out there who don't trust what they can't explain, sweetie, and that's the ugly truth, but they'll see in time, as Phil Collins says if I remember so correctly."

"Cause Phil Collins keeps it real like that."

Patting the wristband around the boy's wrist, Elizabeth glanced over to the bedroom. "He sure does. Since May I've heard nothing but his voice. Kurt just loves that song. I mean, he'll play them all, but it'll be that one stuck on repeat."

"I always skipped it when we were playing… He didn't say anything."

"Well I admit it's not the best song to have when your swash buckling pirates or riding the back of rampaging dinosaurs." Noah's crestfallen eyes shot up to meet Elizabeth's. "That's right; he told me all your adventures. You two make quite the duo."

Lowering his gaze once again, Noah muttered glumly. "... the song's not that bad."

"So what have you got on today, Noah? We're staying at the hotel so Kurt's free."

"I know," he replied. "We're goin' down to the beach so I can show him some awesome surf moves I've been working on."

"Oh yes, Kurt has told me," said Elizabeth. "I hear you're quite the surfer."

Now in higher spirits, Noah nodded with a grin. "That's right Mrs. H. I'm gonna be a total allright dude real soon."

"Well then, we better get you ready. It's just gone eight now and you've yet to have breakfast—"

"I can't Mrs H. I'm not supposed to eat in the two to three hours before paddling out 'cause it will slow me down and won't digest quickly enough to give me any kind of shot in the arm, but I can drink water. Lots and lots of water… Yum."

Elizabeth blinked. "That's all you're to run on? Noah, even the L.A. diet has a cube of cheese to go with that."

"No I get all my energy from food I've already digested and stuck in my tummy bank," said Noah.
"See, what I ate yesterday will give me energy for the surf today."

"Well," Elizabeth sighed, "if you say so sweetie, but I know that I am in definite need of tea and Kurt will need a little something in him too before you go."

"Where is Kurt?" Asked Noah, looking to Kurt's empty unmade bed.

"He's in the bathroom, but he's been in there for quite some time. In fact, the last time I recall him having been in the bathroom this long was when he was four and I walked in on him making a 'potion' out of all my bathroom products. Said if I drank them I wouldn't have to bathe again—oh there he is. Kurt, is that you?"

"Hi," said Kurt shyly from around the bathroom door, only his protruding head and accompanying wave visible.

Elizabeth sighed, raising Noah from the couch. "Kurt, darling, what are you doing? Come out and say good morning to Noah before he goes."

"I can't… I'm naked."

His mother frowned. "What are you doing naked?"

Kurt paused, glancing briefly at Noah. "I'm having a bath. Can… can you help me run it?"

"Dude, just make some funky juice out of your shampoo and shower gel. You won't have to bathe again."

"What?"

"Darling, you don't need a bath. You can bathe in the sea. With all its vitamins and mineral salts, it'll be very good for you. How do you think Noah's skin here looks so healthy?"

Noah shook his head. "Actually, I wear a rash guard when I surf Mrs. H, and sometimes the suits too 'cause I'm a kid."

"Well in any case you have a lovely skin tone Noah," smiled Elizabeth, an arm around his shoulder. "You should count yourself lucky. It's a shade some risk skin cancer to get and even then it'll only turn their skin the texture of a weathered Louis Vuitton overnight bag."

Noah nodded. "In surf lingo, we call 'em sunnies. They're always bakin', always with the sunglasses."

"Well you can be sure I won't be joining them. Kurt and I share the same skin in that we burn rather than tan so neither of us can stay in the sun too long. We're just not used to the heat, are we Kurt?"

"How long can you stay?" Noah asked, anxiously. "I want to be with Kurt for as long as I can."

"Don't worry Noah, sweetie. He's all yours, but not before we get you back to your father. He does know you're here, doesn't he?"

"Well, before I left, I kinda made a fake me by stuffing cushions from the couch under the comforter and using my volleyball on the pillow for a head, so he may be freaking out about now."

"Okay," Elizabeth laughed nervously, "All the more reason to get moving. Kurt, say goodbye to Noah. I want you dressed and ready by the time I get back, alright."
Kurt nodded obediently. "Okay. See you later Noah."

Waving, Noah smirked. "S'laters, my Gay Jane!"

Soon ushered out in a flurry, an adult hand in the crook of the child's back, to that sound of their door closing firmly behind them and Kurt was stood still peering out from behind his own at the spot where they had once stood, his teasing mother beside a boy clad in a set of Kurt's own lent pajamas, the top creased across his stomach, the collar perhaps lopsided with the pajama bottoms having risen up to his navel during the night like high waisted underwear to reveal his ankles. Hair extra spiky as if rubbed vigorously with a balloon with hazel eyes tired, slightly pinkened from rubbing, but awakening, very much alive, as Kurt smiled only to jump at a voice from his parent's bed, his father now asking, "Did that boy just call you his 'Gay Jane'?

Of course, the flurry was soon to sweep across the floor of their room once again, amongst the hurricane that unmistakable strawberry blonde hair swishing under a straw hat, for as soon as Kurt had buckled on his favorite pair of white Lottie sandals, eye-catching pink tee shirt and lemon yellow shorts with a purple belt fastened tightly, it was sunblock "check!" Parasol "check!" Beach mat "check!" His mother's tote bag straining even with everything folded as neatly as could be as with a kiss to her still bed lounging husband, Kurt's own kiss to his tiger that he'd wished to bring along with him but advised not to at risk of losing it, yet with the pride wristband suggested by Elizabeth's winking smile, it was down to breakfast they went.

Earl Grey tea, fruit smoothies with bowls of oats dolloped in Greek yogurt and raisons. Elizabeth was the one to order both their breakfasts as Kurt sat with upright posture as if his spine had no curvature to it, napkin on his lap hardly ever used as with his miniature bites, his little lips would hardly stain, hardly chewing now as his mother informed him that Noah's father, Mr Puckerman would be joining them, chaperoning in fact for the whole day as she only planned to stay until lunch, asking her son now if he was comfortable with Mr. Puckerman, did he like him. Kurt answered simply with a nod and eying their two seated table, no newspaper folded back to a vertical strip and lain beside a black coffee. The first breakfast here without Burt.

In the foyer with little searching, it was Mr Puckerman who waved at them, calling them over with that Los Angelino suave somewhat reminiscent of a 1940s movie producer yet with a Texas pang that hooked the attention. "Elizabeth! Kurt! Over here!" A large drawstring jute rucksack slung over his shoulder, the admiring looks of the passing women around, with Noah by his side, dressed now in his own clothes of a red tiki shirt and flip flops, and smiling as the Hummel's approached, the only mother and son staying at the Del with the most remarkable blue eyes, so beautiful liquidy dream like that served not to see them but somehow inside them, entrusting these Puckerman males to lead them to the beach's crème de la crème hotspot.

Children in front, parents behind was the setup and Noah with his eyes so excited, face so flame like with it, was quick to walk in time with Kurt, their shoulder's almost bumping with the fair boy only now taking note of Noah's surf board tucked closely to the body under his arm, the leash dangling at the back, a board shaped almost like that of an Aztec spear head meant to slice right through the water like the bow of a ship. White in shade, with black wave inspired designs running along the sides it had the fair boy imagining them as ancient language inscriptions that when ridden on the waves would summon Neptune's horses to gallop the race to the beach, the spirit of every one of those great white stallion's aiding the surfer to the finish.

Oh, the sight of the Pacific Ocean, such vast open water, light reflecting off it like metal and always that cloudy blue, never the slate-gray of a rocky shore, never dark bitter green of a pond, even very little trailing seaweed and froth with every shift the water made. Upon first step on its golden beach, shoes were removed to venture out along the parasol and wind breaker studded stretch, through the
throng of half-naked people to their chosen spot where camp was set up with beach mats laid upon the sand so fine it was hardly a hindrance, their own sugar pill colored parasol erected with bags encircling the pole for support in case of turbulent wind, yet only air fresh, briny and wet with windborne spray welcomed them as they settled.

With the vibrant sea calling ahead, Noah's surfboard had to be waxed before the paddle, a standard routine he'd been advised to repeat every so often yet with personal tastes dictating he do it when 'glassy clean' faced waves were 'juicy' and not 'choppy', a gut instinct in the training. He'd since lodged his board firmly in the sand (with no sawhorses to balance it on) as with concentric circles, often interlaced with cross crossed motions of his hand, the boy rubbed the small cube of high temperature wax he'd fished out from his father's bag along the deck of the board, enjoying the way the wax often skipped over the forming bumps on the surface, the low pitched squeak it would make gritting his teeth into a satisfied open grin.

This grin was raised to his father, the man keeping watch in front and making sure his son was doing exactly what his instructor had said for him to do, though he already knew the boy could wax a board well. He'd seen him do it a number of times, for it hadn't taken long for him to catch on quick. Perhaps all this unnecessary overseeing was a wish to come across as a more attentive father than he'd previously let on when in Elizabeth's company, not that he thought she believed he and Noah were anything short of close, or that he was neglectful, but that when in her presence, the bond she appeared to share with her own son was difficult to match with his own, not to mention her beauty that had him all the more willing to please.

Elizabeth was indeed a beautiful woman, Thomas now glancing back at her sitting cross legged on the beach mat with her crocheted dress now off and bikini on full show, outlining her heart shaped ass like that Betty Grable bathing-suit pinup, and sitting in perfect pinup posture too as Kurt spread sunblock on her back, for she had already done the rest of her perfect body that morning, her fair luminous skin so perfect and not strewn with sunspots like most women her age, her legs not vein-splotted and fat at the knees either, but shapely like a dancer's, like a singer even with deep breaths that expanded her rib cage, one of those ribs that had so obviously been used to fashion the fair boy behind her, that sweet little creature of hers.

This was Noah's friend, one his son was trying to impress with all this unnecessary waxing. Oh yes, his father knew. A warm up, a precursor to the surfing later on with an invitation for Kurt to come comb the wax only to pause, his movements slowing to a halt as Elizabeth now came to sit behind her son, undressing him down to his white swimming briefs, a white so near to blending with the pale translucence of his skin, even the white sunblock was hard to detect with spritz! Spritz! Spritz! So many confident jets showering all around Kurt's body and blended by elegant fingers that mesmerized the eyes, Noah's eyes fixed, his own hand resuming the waxing though now in imitation of Elizabeth's motions on her son's body, as if caught in a trance.

Fellow beach goers passing by or even those neighboring close to the scene may have noted from out of sunglass tinted peripheral or direct vision the way these two Puckerman males were watching these two. That very handsome man breaking out in sweat; his shirt damp, his head steamy, all perhaps from the heat, yet the strain in his shorts, that outline, out of his scrotum his penis throbbed angry as a first over that strawberry blonde, even the innocent looking boy she was touching, the briefs showing the crack of his baby buttocks if he dared to look, yet decency overcame him as he now looked away with a clearing of his throat and a swift not to subtle rearranging of his manhood as he returned his attention to his son beside him.

Yet that boy, one they'd seen before riding the waves on that surfboard of his, good looking like his father though a punk in the making, remained watchful only to sneak suspicious glances of confusion down at his crotch, hidden by the board, shifting nervously, an erection of his own perhaps, yet at a
boy his age? It was unheard of, no? How old was the child? Eight, nine, maybe ten? Older looking than his paler friend, yes, but still. A sexual awakening in one so very young? Oh, it only rendered the scene even juicier! What a voyeuristic sight. So fascinating with fair mother and child finishing up, oblivious not only to them, but to everyone around, for no one had really seen what had gone on, not even the family several feet away.

"Now Kurt," began Elizabeth, placing the sunblock back in her bag, "even with this sunblock on I don't want you staying in the sun until you boil like a retired circus animal. If you start to smell something cooking, come right back. I will be here."

"Aren't you going to come watch Noah surf?"

His mother smiled, fleeting a glance over at the other boy. "I think he'd much rather you went and watched sweetie. Besides I've got a good view of the waves from here. I'll still be able to see him."

"I hope so. I think he's going to be great."

"I think so too sweetie. Be sure to encourage him out there. He's grown very fond of you, you know." Her son was quick to cease his movements as he eyed her curiously, rupturing a high melodious laugh from his mother. "Except for your headmaster, I've never seen someone take such a liking to you. He likes to call you his 'Gay Jane' does he?"

Kurt nodded. "Yeah, since he's Tarzan, I'm Jane, but because I'm a boy, I'm his 'Gay Jane'... It doesn't make sense, does it?"

"Well sweetie, gay means you're attracted to the same sex. So if Jane had been gay in the movie, she wouldn't have been with Tarzan in the end would she. With you and Noah, you'd have to find a male equivalent of the name Jane like, I don't know, Jack, and then you could call yourself Gay Jack. See how he likes that, or him Gay Tarzan. Whichever."


"Well if it means anything, I did give him our spare pride wristband. You're not the only thing he's grown fond of. See?" Pointing at Noah, she indicated to his wrist indeed encircled by the rainbow wristband. "Kurt, I want you to spend as much time with him as you want, alright. If he asks you to go play with him or if you wish to invite him to have breakfast or dinner with us sometime, don't hesitate. Just have fun."

"I already do, mommy. I've seen him every day since we got here."

"I know, but from now on, I don't want you to feel obliged to stay with mommy and daddy. You see us all the time at home and you only have a few days of this holiday left to spend with Noah so I want you to make the most of it. You may never see him again after this."

"No mommy, don't say that," said Kurt, his face stricken, a look of animal terror shining in his dilated eyes. "I won't have fun if I think about t-that."

"Oh my poor baby," his mother whispered, "come here." Trembling and breathless, and very warm and sobbing, his mother hugged him close, feeling his quivering shoulder blades, the tension in his spine. "It's alright. Everything's going to be alright."

"I don't won't to say goodbye to Noah, mommy," sniffed Kurt, blubbery into her shoulder, the words recalling the time she'd taken him for a swimming lesson at the town pool, half way across in breaststroke only to suddenly imagine his life without his parents, alone an orphan that had had him floundering, flailing as he'd cried, his goggles filling with tears, his lungs water, climbing out and
running into his mother's arms as he was now, his pale ghost face ever so damp, eyes raw. "I really like Noah."

Oh how it aggravated his mother's guilt. She was thinking she'd never felt so bad in all her adult life. To see her little boy in this state, Thomas now looking over in concern as he mouthed, 'is he alright?' To which she mouthed nodding in response, 'he's okay, he'll be fine'. Never again would she doubt Kurt's own fondness of Noah. She should have known better. Her son's emotions had always been more guarded than the average child.

"Sweetie, you don't have to say goodbye yet. Our holiday's not over and Noah's still here. He's not going anywhere. In fact he was the one saying earlier this morning that lately it felt like he wanted to see you more than you wanted to see him."

"That's not true!" Kurt protested, hands rubbing at his tear stained eyes. "I do want to see him. It's just that daddy's always taking us away from the hotel."

His mother smiled. "What if I have a talk with him?"

"Won't he be angry if we mess with his plans? I want to stay with Noah, but I still want to go to Legoland tomorrow."

"Well, what if we invite Noah along with us?" She said, pulling out a packet of tissues from her bag. "He's already expressed interest in coming along."

His face brightening, Kurt squealed. "Oh yes, mommy! Please can he come!"

"Of course he can. I'll have a word with his father, but can I leave it up to you to ask Noah yourself? I'm sure it would sound so much better coming from you, don't you think?"

"Thank you!" Her son exclaimed, throwing himself into her arms and jiggling them both up and down in rivets of excitement. "Thank you, thank you mommy! You're the best!"

Elizabeth laughed. "Now go on sweetie, or you'll miss your friend's moves."

The comb had since been raked through the wax coated board, made sticky, with Thomas applying the finishing touches as Noah adjusted the thin wet suit on his body, metallic grey, black with patches of cobalt blue the shade of lightning or the coursing of high powered electricity spaced evenly across the sides of the torso and shoulders, a "shortie", the sleeves cut short before the elbow and reaching just above the knees on the legs, all made of a material Kurt now tentatively raised his hand to touch as he felt the foamed neoprene from underneath his fair fingertips, a feeling so akin to what he imagined a seal's coat must have felt like, a shark skin even to resist abrasion, to keep that buoyancy, with Noah watching on, smiling.

And poof! In clouds of sand, in speed of a racing set of superhero comic book characters they ran towards the surf, one that shone from the sunshine, hurting their eyes, yet they couldn't look away, Kurt himself never looked away as with a lull in the waves, Noah walked his board right out into the waist deep water, laying his body on the deck as he found the optimum trim, now paddling with crawling strokes of his arms, the board now gliding as he cupped his hands to increase the pull and always balancing himself through the "chop", left side balanced, right side balanced, head, legs, all balanced, until zoom! He was off, already catching shallow broken white waver waves for the warm up. Oh yes, this little "fig" surfer was only getting started.

Where seawater caressed fair feet some swore were too light to sink into the damp sand from under, Kurt looked on with hands caught in a stirred finger fiddling clasp at his chest, perhaps anxious, but
more so excited as with Thomas now jogging up to stand beside him, he watched as Noah got out into the line-up, sitting up to straddle the board, catching wave after wave after wave, eventually hopping on and popping up to a standing position, though not to say he didn't wobble a tad, perhaps he fell in once or twice with a splash, but this boy was ever the resilient surfer, his father shouting for him to keep his weight centered and body slanted forward, and Kurt too shouting words of encouragement as Elizabeth looked on from afar.

Noah was on that board for more than two hours and for every minute of those hours he was a nervous wreck inside. Trying so hard to impress Kurt, to please his father. The pressure he was putting himself through. Even I could tell his little feet were trembling on that deck, the way he wavered on those waves, rushed himself to get back into position with impatience when he mistimed the sea, losing focus from distraction only to capsize and fall in. Poor boy. He was ever so worried but such a good sport for getting back up every time where soon after and he was riding those waves the way we knew he could, pulling those moves he'd told us about, and so grateful to us all for never straying as if he'd never faltered once. We were so proud of him.

Another hour passed, now midday though nearing one o'clock, with the sky a pale fading blue like a watercolor riddled with vaporous swift-scudding clouds, all evaporating from the heat and word from Thomas, drenched and dripping wet as he traipsed back with Noah's surf board in hand was that both boys were now playing in the ocean. Having been hard to get Noah off his board he'd gotten so into it, by the end wishing even to teach Kurt as the fair boy had splashed him instead, both frolicking to grab each other's legs from underwater like sea creatures of the deep, piggyback riding on Thomas who'd flipped them back into the water, underwater breathing competitions, water games like Marco Polo and tag, a whirlpool of laughter.

Yes, two boys, yet only one returned and less in assured air as he had been since they'd arrived on the beach, Kurt, now patted dry with his towel by his mother's hands who'd since packed her belongings to return to Burt in their suite as her son let both her and Thomas now that Noah had been called over by a group of children settled not too far from them, some of them Kidtopian, Kurt could remember. He was quiet, dusting off the sand that clung to his skin with faint wipes of his hand. He didn't want Elizabeth to leave him when he felt like this, abandoned and in fear, even saying he'd wanted to join her and dad, but with a kiss to his head and a "see you later, sweetie. Have fun," she'd left with a parting wave. "Just smile, Kurt!"

The fair boy practiced smiling at the towel beneath him, a small smile, no too shy, so pathetic. An open smile, no, too cheesy, too much gum on show. Thomas was to sit beside Kurt and catch every one of these smiles, the strangest boy he'd ever seen and the most insecure at such a young age. He felt sorry for him, wishing to give him money, one and five dollar bills so he could buy something nice for himself as he waited for Noah. Kurt, the kind of boy who obeyed, or who wanted to obey, so if you were responsible you would take care what you would tell him to do. When they would put their trust in you, it was a temptation worse than when they were distrustful. And at his age they were ever so naïve, would turn to anyone when alone.

There was a certain air of authority to Thomas. The square jaw and cheekbones Kurt knew Noah would inherit. The man had once been a swimmer in his twenties and still fit now with his body sturdy and compact, muscular even to add to that figure of dominance that reassured Kurt with safety. The boy talking to him now, he was smarter than you'd think at first glance. The eyes and baby voice misleading. The boy could talk earnestly about things with intelligence. He had a sense of humor. He laughed at himself – he wanted to enter theatre, such a Disney fan he was. A dream to sing in their movies, to dance in one of their motion pictures as the new Fred Astaire, a Fantasia sequel perhaps and if not, to become an artist, for he loved design.

Thomas could have listened as if he didn't believe Kurt, for the aspirations were high despite being
more realistic than those of others his age, Noah himself wishing to be a "bonerologist", "an alcoholic spine surgeon" or a "fire truck", but he'd sat close listening as if trying to believe and Kurt was grateful for such kindness, was comfortable with the man. Had been anxious at first when Thomas had placed his hand on his shoulder as part of a friendly gesture, but had gradually grown accustomed to it. The way he supposed they were here in California. Even if Mr. Puckerman was Texan. To Thomas such childlike fussiness was touching, he recognized it as a trait similar to those he'd seen in Elizabeth. Oh how they were so alike.

There now came Noah around the corner on running feet, still in his wet suit since dried and immediately taking in the sight of his friend and father talking, laughing quietly even and looking all cosy sharing the same bath mat, his father in fact awfully close to Kurt that had him approaching all the faster. I see you dad, trying to act all nice so as to steal my friend away when I ditched him which I know I'm a douche for doing and I suck pizza meatballs but he's mine. Go make your own friend. He came to stand in front of them with a permission request, that could both he and Kurt "go hang out and play beach volleyball with the rest of the awesome Kidtopia crew", yet it was a request granted only if they were to stay where Thomas could see them.

With the zip undone at the back and peeled off to reveal Noah in short trunks, it was the boy's own request that Kurt help rub sunblock on his back that had Kurt much surprised, though ever the obedient child he was, even to Noah, he came to position himself behind his friend only to slow when starting, the look of his hands upon Noah's back, for yes, indeed, Noah's skin had a very healthy tan to it, and yes, his own skin was "classic pale", but to see them coming together like this, touching, like an ice cream to a giant furnace, to have a tawny tan so heated it bubbled the sunblock like grease under those burning fingertips as fair as the innocence within Kurt. For outwardly, I was innocently composed, smiling like I loved it. Inside, I was screaming.

"We don't have to play just beach volleyball you know. Madison brought Twister Beach Mat and a couple of rackets we can use. And Joe has this Waboba Ball that skims and bounces along the water, it's totally cool... Kurt?" Kurt blinked, realizing he'd yet to respond. "Kurt what do you think?"

"Do we have to play with them Noah? I thought it was going to be just us together."

"Yeah, but they've got all the games, dude. Come on, it'll be fun. I might even 'cause another stampede of yuck babes and swamp monkeys. Now who doesn't want to see that shit go down."

"Language Noah," said his father. "You're not going to have people chase you just to see the way their bodies move independently from their main frame. You were lucky to come out alive the first time."

"Totally," Noah chuckled. "So, Gay Jane, are you in?"

"You know, instead of being Gay Jane, I think I'll be... Jack."

Noah blinked. "Jack?"

"Well I'm not going to be Clayton now am I," said Kurt. "He's evil, and I'm way too young to be Professor Porter."

"Yeah, but there is no Jack in the movie is there."

"No, but it makes sense this way. Noah, just because you put 'gay' in front of a name doesn't turn that person into a boy. Jane is still a girl, so I think I'll make a new character up myself. Jack. What do you think? The long lost brother of Tarzan who comes in search of him from England where they reunite where their parents died and say, "your mom was named "mom", my mom was named
"mom", dude, don't freak out, but I think we're related."

Noah pouted, picking at the sand as if something of his were being confiscated. "But I like calling you my Gay Jane. It suits you. Suits you more than 'Jack'."

"How does it suit me more?" Kurt frowned. "I'm not a gir-" His words, however, were cut short by Noah's utterances, under his breath repeating 'Jack' over and over as if tasting it.

"Gay Jack, Gay Jac-nope, not feeling it, bro."

"No, not 'Gay Jack' Noah, just Jack. Why do I have to be gay in this?"

"Tarzan's gay in this too, Kurt. How do you think we're supposed to get together in the end? Plus we're total gay bros anyway with our wristbands on, see? Pride for the win."

Kurt ignored the way Noah had extended his wristband out to him, asking in bemusement. "Whoever said anything about getting together? We don't have to follow the story. Most of what we've come up with doesn't even make any narrative sense."

"But-"

"Plus, you hate romance."

"I do hate romance, but only when they put in it movies like Godzilla," said Noah. "I mean, it's okay if the chick grabs the dude's waist, slips her hand in his pocket and steals his wallet. She doesn't even kiss him, just runs. That's cool, but it's the feelings that always get in the way, you know? When he's looking into her eyes, she's looking into his, and all I'm doing is throwin' popcorn at their faces, and I don't want to be throwing popcorn, I want to be eating it, 'cause popcorn's tasty."

"See, how is playing Tarzan any less action filled than a monster film? Romance would still get in the way."

"Yeah, but Tarzan's a Disney movie dude, and Disney movies always have a love story in 'em. That's where romance can actually work, and Phil Collins can sing about you being in his heart and stuff."

Kurt frowned. "But you don't like that song either."

Noah paused, though his eyes never strayed from Kurt's. "For you I can."

"Really?"

"Sure, the song's not that bad, you'll be in my heart," he sang. "yes, you'll be in my heart. From this day on, now and forever more. You'll be in my heart. No matter what they say. You'll be here in my heart, always... because there's no escape, got it? Once you're in my heart, you're stuck in there until the constant beating will blender you up into a milkshake, and that kids, is where love juice comes from."

Kurt giggled. "Tell me you won't sing the song like that when you play this game with your friends back home."

"I won't sing, period," said Noah, "and I wouldn't play Tarzan without you either. Godzilla, the Avengers or the Justice League I could play with my Dallas homies, but a game we made up together? Nah. It just wouldn't be the same."
Kurt was touched. "Or you could play it with an actual girl as Jane. See how that works out."

"Nah, they'd wanna be a Disney princess than a totally radical explorer dally like Jane. Not that I'd let them play as Jane, 'cause there's only one Tarzan, me, and one Gay Jane..." Swiftly raising his hand, palm facing Kurt for the "Tarzan Touch" he called it, he awaited the boy's word.

"... me."

Noah beamed. "Exactly. We can totally make romance bad ass Kurt. Just you and me. So what do you say? Wanna ditch this Jack dude and come play with us as my Gay Jane again?"

To Thomas, all this talk of homoeroticism midst a Tarzan game of all things had come out in such a flood of words, it had dazed him, for only moments ago had Kurt himself looked faint from the prospect of playing with those other children, that sickish sensation he could tell that rose up from the soles of his feet as if there was a tremor in the earth, to touching palms with Kurt now as his son's 'Gay Jane', and his son adamant on that name despite it being indeed nonsensical in such context. And the singing! His son never sang publicly, never sang such songs. And the pride wristbands! Apparel he'd questioned him about upon catching sight of it on his wrist earlier that morning, allegedly a gift from Elizabeth, for of course she knew of this.

Remembering, now thinking back to when he had seen both boys in play, the way his son had held Kurt's hand in his, had pulled him in, a hand always around him for protection. The way his son would speak as enthusiastically of Kurt as he had done after watching Godzilla, would look at him like a brand new ride opened at a theme park, his spontaneous, animated behavior around this fair boy so unlike the way he'd seen with any other friend from back home. Yet it was all innocent, really. His wife would assure him of this. That things were never the way they looked to outside eyes, and to Thomas, he supposed they'd played like any other normal kids, just like they were now as Noah led Kurt over to join the other children.

From beach volleyball to cricket to playing catch, many thought it was easy to laugh at this pale boy Noah had invited along. The way he would fumble about on the sand's uneven surface, with his swimming briefs (some believed had been ironed), slipping occasionally when he'd fall, to the way he would stand on the edge of a game and try desperately to remember every one of these kids names instead of excusing himself all the time with a pat to their shoulders, not that he did it often. This Californian crowd that Noah fit so well in, a crowd good looking enough to model for the Abercrombie & Fitch kids catalog, such self-confident kids envied and praised and adulated from kindergarten, and then there was little Kurt from nowhere.

Some speculated after his femininity for he wasn't boyish at all; sounded like a girl, face like a girl's. He tried to use the same surf lingo they used, but he'd either it use incorrectly much to their amusement or use words and grammatical phrases that had them exchanging looks. He had a little stammer too that he'd try to push past at their snickers, an eagerness in his body to vainly befriend them like an electric current that couldn't be shut off and must've left him exhausted, but whenever the center of attention in the game and he'd hesitate as if he was a on high diving board summoning the courage to dive, often costing his team the point, as if they weren't already trying to crush him with a word, a glance or even the hint of a sneer.

Yet there it was again, Thomas could plainly see, his son always as close to Kurt as he could get when the games allowed him, occasionally competing against each other on different teams, but not stopping Noah from offering the boy the thumbs up when the latter would glance and smile at him in that hopeful way when he did good, ignored by the others but never by Noah. Protected by his son when the kids would get impatient with him, wishing to punish him even with positions furthest away from the center, or even the entire game, his fair hand snatched up with Noah showing off both
their "wicked" pride wristbands, Tarzan defending his "Gay Jane" from the pack of gorillas who couldn't accept him, couldn't accept the "freak".

My mom would tell me once I'd recounted that afternoon to her that if I should ever marry anyone, may it be to someone like Noah, someone who would protect me in my time of need, someone who would go out of their way to help me even if took them beyond their time. I knew I didn't belong with those kids, no matter how hard I tried to make them like me. I wasn't what they wanted; my insides didn't match my outside, but God damn did I devastate them when Noah chose me over them. They couldn't have made themselves laugh at me then any more than the thought of death as he gently took my hand and stormed away, and the more he held onto me like I was something precious, the less I cared for anyone on that beach who didn't.

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Glee

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Hey there cutes, put on your dancin' boots and come dance with me
Come dance with me, what an evening for some Terpsichore
Pretty face, I know a swingin' place, come on dance with me
Romance with me on a crowded floor…

An outdoor dance night for all guests staying at the Hotel Del Coronado that evening, starting promptly at seven-thirty, ending at midnight, and an event Elizabeth was keen for all of them to attend after dinner, her words "we have to go" said as easily as pitching headfirst through a pane of glass. She'd paused on their return to their suite at the lobby desk to inquire for more information and to purchase tickets she later spread in her hand and fanned playfully in Kurt's face as they resumed the way back to their room, tickling his little nose, the fair boy laughing and squealing as he tried to swipe at them like a piece of string dangling over a playing kitten belly up on its back, before finally arriving with preparation thrown in an antic slapstick rhythm.

Kurt was to adjust his clothes by his bed, the red polo shirt, baby blue shorts, and citrus yellow jumper tied loosely around his waist, all while his tiger looked on from its position on his pillow and all to his mother's humming tune of Herbert Stothart and Harry Ruby's "I Wanna Be Loved By You", for he knew the song. He had seen the film 'Some Like It Hot' and had heard Marilyn Monroe's famous rendition a couple days before they'd left for California. Marilyn, as Sugar Kane Kovalchick of Sweet Sue's Society Syncopaters, the dazzling-blond ukulelist, the female body, buttocks, breasts, fleeing male saxophonists and pursued by their saxophones and not able to resist again and again, the men loving her for it, to not get enough of that hot ukulele.

His mother was cooing Marilyn-esque under her breath, cooing to the mirror's reflection of her husband winking at her from his seat on the bed as he adjusted his canvas yachting shoes, to cooing to Kurt with her full lips atop a body now dressed in a coral blossom tie-waist dress, the plunging V-neck and dolman sleeves so lightweight and drapey looking above the shape-cinching wrap waist that highlighted her feminine silhouette, a dress that promised moves on the dance floor, may even have changed her voice as she sang, the key rising to a higher pitch. The faint, breathy noises as if not knowing what they were and meant with Burt having to wrap his arm around her as if she'd twirl away, and she'd only had two glasses of wine at dinner.

The oval Windsor lawn, positioned west from the hotel and only a short distance away from the main building, had since completely transformed into a garden themed dance, a secret garden belonging to a sprawling mansion many years old. The white Edwardian pergola band stand, balustraded in grey
stone erected at one end with square faux stone panels resembling a slabbed patio on the ground, polished to reflect every light bulb and lantern sparkling like glass ornaments. Small potted flowers amongst cherub statues to Victorian glasshouse like plants, Parisian café woven chairs and tables for those resting by the side lines and all fully encircled by a tall garden trellis, wisteria hanging of it as if like flowered grapes ripe for the picking.

To every beholder, it was a sight of wonder and beauty, the garden scented with an odour of secrecy and mystery. Kurt had to blink sharply from amid the blaze of lights, ears pricking amid the band playing the fifties pop songs of Frank Sinatra to the rock and roll tunes of the King, music so loud and so well known, you felt your heart kick into its rhythm, bodies following suit. Little boys like Kurt had to be careful, sticking close to his parents so as not to be jostled from people pushing from behind in the cue, yet now entering the crowded dance and searching for a table. Conversation, amplified voices, and laughter, the music ending and up into the next song, one perhaps more up-tempo so you had to breathe more quickly just to keep up.

For Burt, a scotch. For his mother, a fizzy fruity prom-girl drink in a tall frosted glass with a straw, milkshake like, the near neon like liquid resembling those brightly colored alcoholic drinks Kurt had once seen at the bar, yet for him, a bottle of Hubert's old –fashioned raspberry lemonade as he observed through big blue eyes, couples sliding on the dance floor, some careening into others with music taking them back to the Swing era when U.S. army servicemen came to dance with their girls before going off to fight the Japs. "Come Dance With Me" – "Something's Gotta Give" - "All The Way". There was always dancing. A heated, festive confluence of smells, people clapping amongst flashing cameras. "I Could Have Danced All Night."

The band, a Dance Band of players dressed smartly in suits, continued to play and play loudly, and to this, Kurt's woven chair creaked from light bouncing, the dancer within him struck into movement, now pausing as his mother took his hand and whisked him away onto the dance floor where they danced close. She knew her son was shy dancing "close". Even touching proved uncomfortable. Had been an issue when it had come to certain positions in ballet that he'd tried to overcome but couldn't, yet with her, it was different. Kurt danced with his eyes sometimes open, sometimes shut tight as if hypnotized, soon a gem like glisten on both their skins, *the same skin, we shared the same skin*, fair mother and child on the dance floor.

Then it was Burt's turn with Kurt, taking his son's hand in his own once the boy had slipped off his Lottie sandals for his heels and toes by now were aching, and onto the dance floor again for round two. There he lifted Kurt to stand barefooted on his shoes like the child he was and to dance like that, a number of women unknown to them giving them looks of endearment, their eyes soft, Elizabeth's own blue eyes soft as she looked on proudly, now breaking sight as with a sudden *tap, tap, tap* on the shoulder, she turned around to see Noah and Thomas standing behind her grinning. "Hey, Mrs H." Now asking permission to join them, for there were no more tables around, and drawing up two spare chairs as she answered nodding, "of course!"

A mere four hours it had been since they'd last seen each other, a wave goodbye once they'd escorted Kurt back to his suite shortly after three, yet here were their familiar friendly faces with them again, the waitress scuttling off with Thomas's order for a brandy and Noah beside him, dressed smartly casual in a navy blazer, a striped tee of cherry red, white and blue, beige shorts and a searching head shifting irritably to catch sight of Kurt and Burt on the dance floor, for damn was it packed as the song ended, applause like swirls of sonic confetti descending on both father and son as the fair boy hurried to him upon sight. His Gay Jane, flushed from dance and coming to sit beside him as he downed his lemonade, eyes bright blue and smiling.

"Noah, I didn't know you were coming to this."
"Yeah," Noah grinned. "I was the one to get my dad to buy the tickets. I mean look at that dance floor, dude. You could fit like fifty Dance Dance Revolutions on it and that's some big ass platform I needs to be getting my groove on."

"I don't know. Will you be able to dance as well without the arrows?"

"I can dance plenty good without arrows. I've outgrown them like a pro. I don't need an arcade telling me how to move this body. Bow Chicka Wow Wow."

Kurt frowned. "How can you still move your body? You wore yourself out from all that surfing."

Another hour in fact had left the wet boy collapsing on the beach mat beside him.

"Ever heard of a power nap to power on through?" Noah asked, rhetorically. "]Cause I power napped the fudge out of my bed to come out to this sweet dig."

"Why is it called a 'power' nap? I asked my teacher and she said something about "fragile masculinity". Like, the world calls girls insecure but then they sell "manly yogurt" because boys can't eat yogurt unless the package is black and has the word "POWER" on it in big letters."

"I see where you're gettin' at. I mean, I dunno about yogurt, but I've seen how girl's shampoo be like: coconut, honey/milk, rose, tropical fruits, aloe vera, and boy's shampoo's be like: "ARCTIC ICE", "DARKNESS", "GUNS", "TESTOSTERONE", "PAIN". Personally, my shampoo is supposed to give my hair volume, but I really can't hear anything."

"Come on," Kurt chastised, smiling.

Noah shrugged. "Honestly though dude, I didn't call it a power nap to make myself 'manlier', it's just what they say. If I wanted to be manlier then would have slept outside on the gravel with a rock for a pillow and no blanket 'cause I want to catch hyperthermia like that. Beat up anyone who calls me 'cute', and eat a sheet of metal for dinner and not care that it would screw up my insides 'cause I have zero feelings. I literally can't feel anything 'cause I'm actually a robot with an iron hide meters long so I can't move."

"And you like the sound of that?"

"It sounds badass sure, but it's totally stupid," Noah chuckled. "I'd nap any day in a bed than on the ground, and I'd make it extra comfy too with a blanket made of that cashmere wool stuff your mom told me yours was made out of. Seriously, if you're not using it, could I borrow it sometime? Like tonight, and maybe the night after that, and maybe every single night after that for the rest of my freakin' life-Okay you're just gonna have to give it me."

"Why don't you just come over and sleep in our room?" Kurt smiled. "Then you can have as much time with my blanket as you want. As long as you aren't naked under it."

"Will your folks be okay with that?" Noah asked quietly, glancing over at Burt and Elizabeth. "And if your mom padlocks the balcony doors and tells me I can't go anywhere near them, I'll totally understand."

Kurt gasped. "You told her?"

"Kinda," Noah grinned with boyish repentance. "My main goals when at a friend's house are usually to the pet dog if they have one, to avoid the folks and to not clog the toilets, but when I'm sleepy, I'll do the exact opposite of those things. I might even put a pancake on your sister's head to keep her warm and safe... oh that reminds me, I gotta get my flip flops back from the garden."
Kurt smiled. "I'm sure they will let you stay over, Noah. We're leaving early for Legoland anyway."

"Legoland?" Noah blinked. "You're inviting me over for a sleepover just so I can watch you ditch me for Legoland?"

"What? No I-"

"I wanna go to Legoland! I mean, I like Legoland. You like Legoland. I like thing. You like thing. Friendship, but where's the friendship gone, Kurt? Where did we go wrong?!"

"No silly, you're coming with us to Legoland for the day."

Noah paused. "I am? ... Neat."

"I meant to ask you sooner but I guess I forgot."

Noah scoffed. "Dude, how can you forget to ask me to come with you to Legoland? It's literally that one place that's a land made from bricks that have holes in them to connect them to other bricks that are actually Lego, 'cause its freakin' Legoland bro!"

"I know, I'm sorry. I guess after what happened with your friends must have-""

"Pfft, they're not my friends. They were just a bunch of pro-bros and chicks who followed me around when I arrived here like they didn't know what to do with themselves."

"Really? But you were so up for playing with them on the beach-"

"I was up for playing with their games, not them," corrected Noah. "Otherwise what else is there apart from hearing 'em talk like they're Cali's when really some of 'em are just a bunch of Okies. At least I admit I'm Texan. Full blooded Dallas cowboys' fan-boy here."

Kurt frowned. "Then why do you speak more Surf lingo than you do Texan? To me you don't even have that much of a southern accent."

"It's stronger when at I'm home," said Noah, "but out here it changes and 'cause I come to Cali every year for the holidays, it comes out naturally. I can also tell who's a real Cali and who the fakes are, like those beach kids. If you wanna be friends with their kind, you have to be a butt hole. Not a full blown butthole because that's no fun for 'em, and if you're not a butt hole at all then that won't work either. A half way butt hole. Those are their kind of peeps."

"But you're not a butt hole. To me you're not... well, at first you were, but not now... Great, now you've got me saying words like 'butt hole'. Oh no."

"See Kurt," Noah smiled tenderly, "no wonder they didn't like you. You're just too cute. So cute I wanna kiss your cute stupid face and cuddle the shizzle outta you and hold your fudging hand and I hate you 'cause I don't think I've ever said cute so many times in a sentence before... and I think I'm starting to like it."

"You really hate me for that?" Asked Kurt naively.

"No, I don't hate you!" Noah exclaimed, laughing. "God Kurt, how are you so cute?! You should be tested so they can put your cuteness into snuggle toys that smell like fruit or something. You'd make scientists everywhere blush."

Kurt smiled. "I think you're cute, Noah."
"Stop," the boy chuckled, mimicking girlish coquetry, "You're making me blush."

"No," Kurt insisted, "I really do."

Noah grinned. "I think you're eyes make me shy... and stuff."

"I think... you're a mega-ripper... Did I use that right? That is the surfing term for a "great surfer" isn't it?"

"Yep and I think you're as cute as a sensitive chest raisin for trying." He elaborated upon Kurt's frown. "Sensitive chest- It's a nipple, but I thought you'd think it was a bad word, so I made up another name for it just for you... and stuff."

Kurt laughed. "I think you were really brave standing up to those kids for me."

"I think... I think when I fart, my willy goes hard."

"What?"

"I mean, you give me a boner. Not a willy boner, but a boner in my heart, a heart on, an affection erection."

"Is that what a boner is? A hard dinky doo?"

"Yeah, if you touch it a little it goes all hard, and sometimes it goes hard without being touched."

"Really?" Kurt smiled. "And you have one in your heart for me?"

"Yep. Tarzan wants to frickin' hold Gay Jane's hand so hard it's gonna blow his mind with how hecka rad his affection erection is."

"I don't think Tarzan and Jane ever held hands in the movie."

"They should've. Holding hands is totally punk rock," said Noah, putting on his best cop impression. "Stop! This is the police; you're under arrest for being too cute. Now put your hands where I can hold them... like this."

And like that, Kurt's hand was taken up in Noah's, taken up to his lips for a peck on the back, a smile so satisfied on the boy's lips, Kurt too, only to tense upon sight of those beach kids on the dance floor, sighing, "Oh no, they're here."

Noah followed his gaze, roaming his eyes over them as one might eye something ridiculous. "Yeah, and look how bad they're dancing. Boo! Get outta here!"

"Shh, Noah!" Hissed Kurt. "Other people will think you're booing them."

"Come on Gay Jane, let's show 'em how it's done" Coming to stand, he attempted to pull up, but the fair boy remained planted in his chair as if his buttocks were glued to the seat, a prank the kids would find funny no doubt, their hands trickling in the stuff as they'd tauntingly smile at their work.

"No they'll just laugh at me like they did on the beach," Kurt protested, "and their laughter is actually really pretty sounding. There's not a single seal bark amongst any of them."

"Your laugh is prettier, Kurt, like baby angels and peanut butter chocolate. Why do you think I try so hard to be funny all the time?"
Kurt blushed. "How can you say that? You made me eat a marshmallow because it reminded you of how your classroom hamster eats."

"Yeah, because you eat really cute that's why. Every little nibble you took, it hurt my heart."

"Oh yeah?" Kurt smirked. "Is it cute if I say 'nibble'?"

"Yeah," Noah laughed, "but don't say it again 'cause nibble's a cute word, and when you say it, it even looks like you're nibbling. So it's doubly cute."

"Nibble."

"Stop it, dude."

"Yum-Yum."

"Ah no, my affection erection, it's growing too big for my heart."

"Cuddle-butt."

"Stop! Before you kill me with cuteness," pleaded Noah laughing with a hand clasped to Kurt's mouth, but retracted upon the boy's lapping tongue. "Kurt, I promise you they won't laugh, I swear on my swag."

"No, not the swag, Noah. You love your swag. You said the wheels of your school bus go swag, swag, swag just because you're on it."

Noah smiled as he now raised Kurt to his feet, fair little feet he soon matched as he quickly kicked off his sneakers, wriggled his toes for air and spoke. "And tonight, it's gonna make us swag swingin' kings of that dance floor, baby."

It was like the opening of a sudden dance scene in a Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire movie, except with the burst of rock and roll music, "Stuck on You" – "Suspicious Minds" – "Heartbreak Hotel". Kurt was being pulled through the outer shell of gaily dancing couples, careful not to have his feet impaled with the heels of unsteady pumps, weaving in and out, all the pushing that scared him, and all the while gripping hard to Noah as they reached the more spacious middle of the floor, like the soft gooey center of a Turkish Delight, though soured by this group of kids, more like a gang with "the look" in their eyes giving away they'd been abandoned by Noah, that they hadn't "worked out" for him as friends, and they weren't going to forgive.

Did the swaggering king give a damn? Getting in-between me and Kurt now. Did they think he really gave a damn? Encircling me and him in separate circles. Their was almost to yawn and stroll away in interest immediately lost, perhaps cough, burp, even absentmindedly tug at his crotch in their direction as if he were alone and unobserved and wishing to get rid of a pain in the butt itch that didn't know when to quit, trouble making itches that ought to have been yanked from the floor by their parents who would vigorously shake and cuff them, to send them to their rooms and luckily no one would take notice, or if they did, they would give no sign, the spotlight on two boys coming together to dance with one another. "Burning Love."

No more of those kids with their barriers broken, barged through and pushed, the group like measly bowling pins as Noah had reached Kurt, one girl on the floor from an elbow to the back, another going off to "tell on them" from a pinch to the "sensitive chest raisin", but through this haze of excitement, roaring in the ears, with everyone's mood so merry, frantic even, it was hard to care as the kids dispersed, Noah and Kurt now the only ones left. For it was their turn to dance, their turn to laugh in delight with everyone else on the floor a mere blur like agitated water. They were the kids of
the evening performing their terrific little moves to Elvis, Kurt as energetic as a spitfire on his floaty feet with Noah's face gleaming like a car hubcap.

They were to dance long and hard until their bones creaked and joints ached, until their skin was oven baked hot, chests panting and only pausing for a bathroom break when Kurt had squirmed from the pressure to pee so strong from his earlier lemonade it had hurt him trying to hold it in to dance even longer with Noah, a hurt as sharp as a needle in between his legs. Yet Noah had joined him, Kurt laughing as the other boy peed loudly for "dominance" and so relieved Kurt was afterwards that he let Noah hold him on the dance floor, not pushing him away gently when he was too close, but sinking into him as they'd swayed to softer songs, and right up again to jitterbug, tango and even hula like native Hawaiians to those with beat.

It was the best night I think we ever had there. My swag everywhere, Kurt with me, and I swear I drank so much lemonade it shot out of my nose. I also lost my pride wristband on the floor when in mid move and we were there searchin' for some time where I totally lost my cool until we found it, or moreover Kurt found it. I saw my dad dancing with Mrs H, and I saw Mr H eying me and Kurt with a wink, as both of us by the end when the chairs were stacked, the band gone and the floor clear of people, were skidding across it on our feet as well as on our stomachs like baby penguins, singing the tunes of the night all the way back to the suite. Sure thing, the whole dance was a total ba roos, just me and Kurt, and I liked it that way. We both did.

~ PLEASE REVIEW ~

(But if you wish to criticize, may it be constructive. I'm not going to learn from my mistakes and improve if you vent.)

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~ STAY TUNED FOR MORE BY FOLLOWING/FAVORITING ~
The two boys that day, early morning, early wake up and en route to Carlsbad, north of Coronado, a decent forty minutes away by road from the hotel. They played The Licence Plate Game, Who's Closest and Word Chain, all with smiles, bouts of laughter, and the coach driven with the usual skill typical of a school bus driver with perhaps just an air of just-restrained mayhem to get to his destination as quickly as possible without having to hear playground songs about his vehicle's wheels, but this particular bus driver seemingly as excited as his passengers, thumping the steering wheel to whistled melodies and so spontaneously you'd swear he'd just that instant remembered the song after minutes of trying to recall how the tune went.

Such a buzzing coach, near full to capacity with other shiny faces of joyful children peering over the seats of those in front to see through the windscreen, only to complain for the toilet as their straining seat belts squeezed down on their bladders, the need to pee! The impatient cries of "are we there yet?!" In the middle of the fray, the two boys, sitting together with Kurt by the window dressed in an azure polo and pumpkin orange shorts, Noah, a 1975 California Surf Crew Printed tee of a much lighter blue and purple army cargos, their little flip flopped and Lottie sandaled feet often grazing the other's by the carefree swinging of their legs as with bodies turned inward and close, they spoke excitedly with bright faces so animated, so alive.

Often Noah, set in playful mood, would lightly tease with the odd flick of the fair ear, the nuzzling of his cheek against Kurt's, the smell of his breath the scent of morning staleness mixed with sweetish staleness like rotted wisteria if not for breakfast food earlier that morning. Even the puckering of his lips for a kiss that the fair boy would laugh off and right into a tumble as he and Noah would wrestle in their seats, awkward positions, squirmish struggling, often pinned by the arms, but those lips skimming just over the eyelid, the brow bone, the nose, but never on the lips, the suction much needed to leave behind that warm squelching moist kiss never made contact to Kurt's victory as Noah would launch himself at him once again for the-

Up ahead! And pointed out by Noah in mid wrestle from a mere fleeting glance out the window, a shouting "there it is!" as if signalling everyone on their sailing vessel for land from the crow's nest, there it was indeed, every young face pressed up against the glass now so foggy from condensation left from their rapid breathing they had to wipe at it furiously and just in time to see the theme park's sign stop before them as they rolled to a holt, 'Legoland California.' A park recently opened two years ago in March, the first Legoland in America and the third to be opened in the world after those in Britain, and already so popular, boasting three roller coasters, seven water attractions with a total of twenty one rides. This was gonna be awesome!

Storage compartments were emptied, the center aisle now a swarming sight of passengers hurrying to the exit with children squashed in-between, their faces muffled, arms wailing as if trying to catch breath with the sight akin to a slaughtering house meat line as out from the air conditioned coach and into the swamping twenty-one degree heat they escaped, right into the near stunted looking ticket lines. Last to exit the coach with a parting "thank you" to the nodding driver, the Hummel parents steered both boys off to the side and into the shade of a nearby fern tree, there to collect themselves.
and to set down clear instructions to them as to what to do if either one of them were to get lost, lost in this kingdom of Lego men and their bricks.

Pah! Brushed off by such childish confidence. They would not get lost, these two boys on an adventure, their own adventure, as from his baby Grafea rucksack, Kurt brought out the park's map they'd obtained back at the hotel desk, unfolding each section to reveal brightly colored lines along the pathways left by crayon, the blue lines squiggly, harshly drawn, evidently left from Noah's hand in comparison to Kurt's, pink, so much more focused, and applied with much lighter pressure, with each attraction fluorescent numbered in order and resembling very much a child's coloring maze, starting from the gates and off on a route both boys it appeared had thoroughly discussed the previous night under torch light, every step calculated.

They wouldn't even show Burt and I their map at first, one so large it could have covered them like a blanket and one so "top secret" it held more confidentiality than a government document, but eventually they let us in, presenting it as if in a school show and tell as I smiled openly. Kurt was just so happy to have Noah with him here, and Noah too couldn't help but grab his attention in enthusiastic urgency upon sight of something, both joined at the hip as they'd bounce in excitement in the ticket line, and I didn't want to interrupt that. For Kurt had never before had a friend like Noah to invite out to a park. The spare ride seat next to him would always be empty, but not today. Today, my son would have someone to raise his hands with to the sky.

Now, with tickets finally bought and the speeding pace was set, Noah and Kurt sprinting from the park's spinning turnstiles like marathon runners launched by the pistol's bang! And into the park! Their bodies like wind-up toys wound up enough to break their little clockwork motors all you were left with was the key and a puff of dust. Young bodies that would only pause to check the map as if seeking lost buried treasure, and off again! There was no chance for a breather, for you had to be as young as they were or lose them. As young as their legs were that raced so quickly Noah was to grow frustrated from his flips flops constantly flying off his feet that into his own back park he stuffed them in, and only taking them out to board the rides.

Dino Island! Duplo Village! Pirate Shores! The sound systems dotted and hidden in the foliage were playing Aqua as Kurt would fret at the sight of height restriction boards before ride entrances, his own height of four foot one that he'd attempt to tip toe up to reach the caricature's elevated palm indeed barring him from some Noah himself, with his height of four foot nine, was able to board, not he did without Kurt, a shrugging "total bogus looking ride anyway" as he'd check the map to the next with Kurt looking at him so grateful and so beholden to his friend, he'd hug Noah tightly, creasing the map but careful not to step on those bare feet reddened from running, smiling for Noah, and laughing his baby angel laugh he knew he'd like. Land of Adventure! Fun Town! Castle Hill! Occasionally both of them would stumble into mascots and pose funnily next to them, "Hold that look, boys!" And flash! Noah would search for the seam into the costume to poke at the actor within, with Kurt pitying them, no doubt a sweating mess inside as off they'd run to marvel at the life sized Lego statues of dinosaurs, of safari animals, even dragons that Noah would climb and ride like a lasso throwing cowboy, barely suppressing the urge to act like Godzilla when viewing mini New York City, smashing buildings and eating civilians with he and Kurt crashing their Lego cars as recklessly as Mario Kart racers at the Volvo Driving School, completely disregarding their promotion for "safe driving."

Miniland USA! Imagination Zone! Water Park! They lunched on burgers and ice cream, eating on the grass and there to pose for photographs as they chewed noisily, Noah's open smile displaying cheese stained teeth with a shaka waving hand, Kurt's, bright eyed with skin so luminous from perspiration he was like a doll left in the road on a summer's day, the plastic melting in the muggy heat, and heat hot enough to bubble the asphalt, but now so cool as into their swimming gear and
right into the water park they splashed, sloshing through the pools, drenching themselves in water
gun sprays shooting high into the air like elephant trunks jetting water, and the slides! The rafts! The
soakers! All permeating their skin to leave no stretch untouched.

Five in the afternoon with hair still damp and clothes splotched in patches left from improper drying
and favorite rides were quickly revisited, yet avoiding those that rotated like carousels for Noah had
previously staggered clutching his stomach from one earlier only to retch dangerously near to the
mini Lego White House, with a nursing time of only ten minutes on a nearby bench before he'd
jumped right back again. The lines too were not as long as they had been earlier, but long enough to
have Kurt forming Noah's slick hair into a miniature quiff to pass the time, a look posed with Elvis's
signature smirk before it was restyled into little spiked Mohawk, a now punkish looking Elvis as
Noah took hold of Kurt's hand with suave and onto the ride.

My hand would be imprinted with Noah's own in the flesh. It would even smell like it, the smell of
chlorine from the water and rancid burger cheese for he'd always take it, would always pull me
along like a steroid fueled Olympian competing in every event, for Jesus was he one excited boy, like
a puppy, in such a state of "cowabunga" happiness for a day so "coolophonic", so "cooleoleol", he'd
start spurtng surf lingo terms until his sentences no longer made sense, well, to my parents
anyway, but I knew he was enjoying this "dope" day, and "dope" because of me. I was the "dope" to
him as Lego was to Legoland, and Lego was everything here. Not that I thought I was everything to
Noah, not that he now favored me to such an extent… d-did he?

Through the revolving turnstiles and under the park's sign, there they all finally came to sit under the
same fern tree they had when they'd arrived, though the shadows flickering across the primary
colored ground akin to playground markings were now cast at a different angle, the sun traveled
further west in the sky from the late hour as all of them lounged in the shade, waiting for the
remaining passengers of their coach before the return to the hotel. Yet the boys were far from bored
as they entertained themselves with what they'd bought from their souvenir raid earlier, their back
packs chock full to explode with Noah fighting Lego key ring figurines with his kingdom dragon
sword and shield to reach Kurt and his bottle of "holy" water.

"What makes this water "holy"?" Asked Kurt. "It's just water in a bottle."

"Not if you do this," said Noah, uncapping the lid and upturning the bottle over his head, water
drenching his hair and face. "Ooh yeah, that's the stuff. Any water in this heat is holy, just like any
bread in the Antarctica is Jesus, so when you've lost your leg to frostbite or cannibal Eskimos, you'll
grow a new Jesus leg, even a Jesus sandal if you eat enough of him."

"That makes no sense," said Kurt, taking back his bottle.

"Maybe not, but your water has sure made me holy cool over here."

Smiling, Kurt glanced at his bottle. "I think I'll put pink dye in it next time, call it 'Unicorn Tears'."

"What would that be? Poison?"

"No. Perfume, and because of all the candy you've had me eating lately, my blood's sure to have at
least five pounds of sugar in it, just the thing to put on pancakes. That I'll call 'Angel Cholesterol.'"

"Really?"

"Yeah, it would look like good cholesterol but would spread like bad cholesterol. I'd probably have
to brand it as 'Angel Juice' for it to get past the type two diabetes health protesters, but yeah, I'd claim
the blood would be from fresh squeezed angel."
With a hand wiping down his dripping face, Noah smiled. "You could use a spiked torture cage to get it. The same The Blood Countess used."

"What Blood Countess?"

"She was some Dracula lady in Europe who went around killing girls for their blood, but instead of sucking it, she bathed in it to keep her young."

Kurt grimaced. "Did it work?"

"If the girls were "pure",," said Noah, quoting with his fingers. "Like if they didn't have cooties or something, but just think if she'd been able to bathe in your 'Angel Juice'. Angels are us pure as they come, so your blood would have kept her young as a fetus forever."

"But I'm a boy, and you said she only ever went for girls."

"Yeah, 'cause dudes were created in God's image or something, and sure she could have made him mega peeved if she'd started killing off his angels 'cause who else is there to trim his beard or to fluff up a cloud pillow for nap time, but you're not God's angel, are you Kurt."

The boy rolled his eyes. "Perhaps that's because I'm not an angel."

"Oh, you're an angel alright," assured Noah. "The one I've fought my way through kingdoms to get to, all totally messed up by dark magic. Their kids have been strapped down and forced to ride in railroad cars so fast their cheek folds flap in the wind, cities have been shrunk into miniature parks, some people have been turned into creepy mascots that never stop asking you if you want your picture taken with them, and the real killer, the lines, the never ever ending lines!"

"Is this land by any chance, Legoland? The land right behind you?"

"I, yes it is," Noah nodded. "I am Sir Tarzan, son of Lord Tarzan senior, leader of my gorilla group known for speeding when we need to poop and flinging it at evolutionists who say we're ascended from these 'humans' as you call them."

Kurt laughed. "You do know you're human yourself, right. You're the ape man."

"You sound just like the last evolutionist. Don't want to say anything but he sure could have used some of that unicorn perfume of yours when we were finished with him."

"Actually, I haven't as of yet perfected the formula. I tested it on a few pixies the other day and they all started turning into Unitatoes."

"Unitatoes?"

"Half unicorns, half potatoes. Unitatoes."

"Neat. Can you eat them?"

"Sure, why not," Kurt shrugged. "I think they taste like normal potatoes but more fabulous. It's the least I can do for receiving you looking the way I am." With a hand sweeping down his pristinely pressed polo, he eyed it in disdainful mockery. "My halo is being polished you see and my wings won't be ready from the dry cleaners until tomorrow. Also, it turns out; you can't play Iron Butterfly on a harp without breaking every string."

Noah eyes widened eagerly. "You tried to play death metal on your harp? And a band I introduced
you too? So mando! Which song?"

"In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida."

"Whoa, you're one badass angel."

"I know right. I just got so sick of the stuff they made us play in heaven orchestra that I needed to find my own sound, you know. Just break away from all those praise ye, praise ye hymns, and er... break my harp in the process."

"Like if a T-Rex said screw this, gave in its résumé to Jurassic Park to pursue an electric guitar career, but struggled to strum with its tiny arms, fueled by rage and an inner desire to rock." Tucking his hands in close to his body, Noah imitated the claws of a frustrated Tyrannosaurus.

"Isn't that what Barney the dinosaur did?"

"Ah dude, I hate that guy. He's the worst T-Rex ever. Just a fat lavender lizard that looks like a salamander."

"Oh yeah," Kurt giggled. "I can see the resemblance now."

"And his songs "I love you, you love me". All bogus crap, dude. If he ever came singing that at my school I'd sit his butt hole down on a cactus. That's right; I'd teach him not to cheat on extinction."

"What would you do with the other T-Rex?"

Noah grinned. "Oh he's the real deal, dude. He's my bro for sure. We would go rock together at the synagogue. Have everyone stand up and sing along with us like they do in Gospel, even old geezers who would head bang their kippah's to the ground in their pews, and you'd be there too."

"I would?"

"Yep," Noah nodded, his hands now in imitation of a guitar, fingers sliding down the frets. "With your harpy guitar, we'd all break away from reciting prayers and totally rock the place out."

"Why? Don't you sing often in your synagogue services?"

"Not as often as Christians. It's mostly during High Holiday services and special events, though mom takes us to the Friday night services every week 'cause that's when they bless us kids with a shawl over our heads and "juice" cause you know, we can't drink Jesus's alcoholic blood."

Kurt hummed. "That's what they make the children drink at our church."

"Hey!" Noah exclaimed. "What if the "juice" they give us is actually "Angel Juice"! We'd all be drinking your sugar blasted angel blood!"

"I'm not an angel!" Huffed Kurt. "I'm not even that into God. If I had my own church, my religious views would be the cold side of the pillow, and by pillows I mean thighs, because we all know thighs are the pillows of life."

"Well then can I rest my head on your pillows of life, angel? I sure am beat from my roller coaster travels, and I think riding all those untamed dinosaurs left me with sore butt globes. Might even have butt whiplash."

Kurt shook his head. "No, your hair's all wet."
"All the more reason to," said Noah. "I'll keep your thighs nice and cool and it would be a pity to blaspheme against your own cold pillow religion if I didn't." Sighing in relent, Kurt nodded. He watched as Noah came to lie supine along the edge of the high tree bed, adjusting to comfort as he lay his head in Kurt's lap, eyes up, lips smirking.

"Can you play with my hair?"

Kurt snorted. "You just want me to make you another Mohawk, don't you." And he laughed upon Noah's eager nod. "I can try to make it taller than last time, but I don't think it'll work Noah. You don't have enough hair."

"No, I just want you to play with it, that's all. I like it when you play with my hair."

"Do you let anybody else do this?"

"Unless you count my dad ruffling it sometimes when I make him laugh or when my friends and I give each other noogies when we wrestle, no. You're the first I've asked I guess."

"Because I'm your Gay Jane?" Said Kurt, grinning. "Here to stand in for your gorillas back in Banana Country to nit-pick your hair clean oh mighty ape man?"

"Because I trust you Kurt."

"What?"

"I dunno, I just trust you to be all gentle and stuff, and to not smother me or Chinese burn my face off."

Kurt winced. "Is that what your friends would do if they were me?"

"Well my face is pretty open to attack here," said Noah, chuckling. "With just one move you could gouge my eyes out and use them as Baoding balls."

"I'm good with just playing with your hair."

"Me too," Noah grinned, cooing under Kurt's running fingers.

The boy laughed. "You look so happy, like a puppy."

"Woof, woof!" Barked Noah, his tongue out, like a dog belly up for tummy rubs.

"Stroking your fur, petting your head. You're tired from walkies aren't you?"

"Woof!"

Kurt smiled. "You know my mom lets me braid her hair."

"She does?"

"Yes, it's what we do when we watch TV together. I'll start by brushing it out, and whilst I do she'll hand me barrettes as I style it into whatever I feel like."

"Really?"

"Yes, and she won't move until I've finished. Not even if whatever we're watching has ended."
"My hair's so short you can't do much with it," grumbled Noah. "Sorry."

Kurt shrugged. "At least there's enough to pet."

"And I'd totally hand you barrettes if I had any... and if I knew what they were."

"It's okay Noah," Kurt smiled. "I don't need any. I think your hair looks good the way it is. It's not the typical shaggy surfer look, but the Tarzan if he had a haircut look or the look lifeguards and bodybuilders have on Muscle Beach."

"Like bangin' nardudes?" Noah asked. "You can see me as one of them?"

"In a couple years if you don't grow out your hair, yes."

"Woah, short hair's bad ass."

Kurt nodded. "It's also more manageable. I have to be more careful with my mom's because it's longer. There's more chance of it snagging in my nails, but I've been brushing it for years, ever since I was drinking from the bottle, and by bottle, I mean Ovaltine with raw egg."

"Raw egg?" Noah frowned. "That's how Muscle Beach dudes eat 'em before they work out. They'll stick 'em in a blender along with milk, pickle and ketchup and drink it. It's totally mank."

Kurt nodded. "Well when I outgrew breastfeeding, my parents fed me food rich in nutrition to help me develop a good immune system, which I'd be fine with, but if this raw egg wasn't mixed in well enough, I would not be happy."

"What did it taste like?"

"You know how having seaweed rub against you when you're in the ocean is like having Satan slowly caress your legs and toes whilst smiling creepily at you and whispering, "mayonnaise"? Well, it's like that, but in your mouth."

Noah laughed. "Nasty... so when we get back, you wanna go swimming?" Kurt narrowed his eyes. "How about a raw egg?" A light shove. "What? If you don't want it raw, you could always hard boil it in your butt. They say it's warm enough in there."

"Do you want me to gouge your eyes out?" Huffed Kurt, tempted to roll the boy off his now damp lap and onto the ground below. "Your face is right there."

Noah chuckled, his stomach still convulsing with remnants of laughter. "How will I see your dude cuteness without my eyes, angel?"

"I am not an an-"

"Looking down at me, like you've flown from heaven with the sun eclipsing behind your head. Your skin so white, your eyes so blue. You're the cutest angel, get called it twenty three seven up in heaven."

Kurt frowned. "Why not twenty four?"

"Snack breaks," said Noah, suddenly wrapping his arms around Kurt's waist and looking up at him in assessment. "But even though you're cute, you give off this vibe you'll snap my neck if I disrespect you, and leave me here us Lego mascot fodder, so I'm careful."

"And what is it you have come to me for Sir Tarzan, son of Tarzan senior, the ape knight with
muscle man hair now bunking on my lap?"

"… To look at you like a blind dude seeing the sun for the first time."

Kurt's breath hitched. "… Noah."

"… Also to ask, why did God give snails five butt holes?" At Noah's sudden question, his sudden laughter as blue eyes morphed wide from the tease, Kurt playfully hit the boy upside the head.

"Well this conversation sure deteriorated fast." I would have hit him harder if I'd known he was mocking me, but he wasn't laughing at me, his arms still wrapped around me and sinking his face into my stomach, his near hot breath that tickled me into my own laughter. We were laughing together.

Their names called by adults and onto the boarding coach with its windows of parting views, Legoland waved goodbye and onto the journey home to the hotel with all children eerily quiet, their siren like calls from before no longer ringing, as if they'd all been subdued by tired parents with "just half" of a white pill that would taste like bitter flour on the tongue, there to make them sleep in a deep dazed stuporous sleep that would make their little hearts pound like slow measured blows of a sledgehammer and would turn their skin clammy as slugs, only to awaken with no recollection of the journey, perhaps even of the day if more than half of this pill had been given to them, the Legoland caps on their heads only there to jog the mind.

To stare at Noah asleep in the aisle seat next to him, that tanned face turned so Kurt could see every detail in dormant state, listing them all with whispering voice. The boy was his age, though older, born a year earlier. He was turning nine in August and entering the fourth grade in the fall, and therefore a "big boy" in Kurt's eyes, those older always "bigger" somehow, "fourth grade big" who'd study in the classroom next to theirs, eat at a different time, have their own part of the playground away from the hopscotch markings of the "babies" to the metal bars of the intertwined jungle gym set too high for Kurt to reach, for that had been set up as their base, their homeland in which fair faced little third graders would have no entrance.

Oh Noah. How was it he was here with Kurt? So kind with a face so very good looking, Kurt could not help but stare almost adoringly. "It's always lovely to have handsome young boys be your friend, Kurt," his mother had said, those hazel eyes now closed but when open, so warm and intense, for once you'd seen a boy up close in such intimacy, you'd carry his image inside you like a dream. Once you'd lived a friendship with a boy up close, you'd cherish the memory of him in your heart, and so would Kurt with Noah on his final day here in California, the golden state like a floating mellow island, something he'd known from the beginning. It could be seen on his fair face now pulled in a wounded expression as if stabbed. This child, stabbed.

Don't cry! It was going to be alright! Elizabeth placed her hand on his shoulder as she peered over his seat, the blue eyes of her son saddened, directed away from anyone as with sadness came thick iridescent tears and with Kurt, it was a curse, to any mortal, that whomever he should look upon when weeping and he'd break their heart, or so it felt like, the tearing, the wrenching pain now receding in his mother as he listened to her soothing whispers, plans that they'd arrive at the hotel to have dinner all together, them and the Puckerman's, and afterwards, attend the special event karaoke night the hotel was putting later on that evening. How would he like that? Listening so hard, it was like her son had gone deaf as he nodded, yes.

Noah was to remain unknowing of Kurt's shift in mood during the journey, the reason for it. "It would be best not to let him know now," Elizabeth had said gently. "We'll tell him later." Yet even awakening the boy upon their eventual arrival at the hotel, the evidence in Kurt's eyes in which a scrim of moisture continuously shone in the blue was there to be seen, though mistaken in Noah's
own heavy-lidded sight as what made them so glass like, a wakening sight so blurred like a camera lens too heavily coated in Vaseline, that Kurt had had to steady him at first on their return to their rooms, both of them giggling in silly nature as if intoxicated in a haze that wouldn't settle but suddenly interrupted by the grumbling of their little stomachs.

Then it was dinner time at the hotel's cabana set 1500 Ocean restaurant, there to dine from six to seven thirty outdoors on the beachfront terrace. All five of them were seated, eating, and Thomas was to chortle at the boys' fun anecdotes as they recounted their day, Noah often demonstrating the events with his cutlery, even with his food as he'd fly his bread like a toy roller coaster into his Pappardelle Bolognese that would splatter sauce across the white tablecloth to narrowly miss Kurt's clothes and onto his bare arm. His father scolded him lightly, "Noah, careful with the food," to which Kurt dabbed the greasy stain away with his napkin after rejecting Noah's apologetic yet boyishly cheeky alternative of having him lick it off for him.

They were soon to finish, with the setting sun dusting the sea line as the bill was paid with turquoise mints accompanying, now night and leaving behind an aura of shimmering luminescent candles on every table as they left the restaurant for a night of karaoke in the Coronet Room, adjacent to the Crown Room and off the lobby with floor to ceiling windows and chandelier, the latter dimmed in favour of gel lights, oranges, purples and pinks, all illuminating little circular tables so cosy, dotting the room, giving the air of an exclusive yet rustic New York City jazz cub, and at the front, the ground level stage where speakers stood tall on either side like black columns from the façade of a neoclassical wonder, the karaoke machine caught in between.

Observers, distracted from the current woman singing rather decently a rendition of "Moon River", took note that it took two of these small tables for the five new arrivals, the adults clumped close to each other on one whilst the two boys sat together on the next, their faces seemingly thrilled and listening on intently with smiles that would wince on notes missed. Yet every so often the tanned one would whisper smiling into the other's ear, him the raconteur, his fair friend, the reticent, for the fair boy appeared more at ease listening than speaking; when you listened, you didn't need to improvise, now leaning forward on his elbows, his little chest rising and falling with the urgency of his breath with both legs primly returned beneath the table.

Through a repertoire of well-known songs, "The Way We Were" - "Take My Breath Away" - "My Heart Will Go On" and sung by various brave souls with various degrees of talent and the tan boy would continue to whisper occasionally in the fair boy's ear, mere passing comments at times, others that had his friend's shoulders shuddering in giggles as if a tongue were in his ear tickling him, sweet nothings abound in words. Yet the observers' eyes were made to avert themselves when the tan boy would look sweepingly around the murmurous room as if he sensed them watching, and then, the shuffling, nearing his chair by degrees ever closer to his friend in a shy yet bold advance, the air of a mateo surfer snatching the first big wave of the day.

And the observers saw this, trying to not look his way as if this eight year old was the sun bright enough to burn their retinas, yet seeing him, like the sun, without looking, for to them, this was hardly a mere diversion but a crucial episode in a narrative to which they could neither give name nor would wish to. They all saw the way he now leapt up to sing "You've Got a Friend In Me" from Pixar's Toy Story, a country jazz song that had him swaying on rocking feet, a performance that slackened not their interests, with the boy sauntering up to his friend and crooning, Some other folks might be a little bit smarter than I am, bigger and stronger too. His fair friend blushing a smile. But none of them will ever love you the way I do, it's me and you boy.

The lyrics echoed in every observers' mind, "friends", new found of course with neither of them having known each other for long that was for sure. There were signs, but they were happy, like the first six months of a young couple's marriage with both now singing to Toy-Box's "Tarzan and Jane"
much to their own amusement, though with laughter driven not from the blatant sexual innuendos, but from an inside joke, or so what was guessed. My name is Tarzan, I am Jungle-Man. It was sticky bubble-gum to the ears, cheesy in the mouth yet look away and you'd miss it, this spectacle of innocent candied cavorsion with each putting on voices, the gestures grand and eaten up by all. Tarzan is handsome, Tarzan is strong, so listen to the Jungle Song.

Of course in the end they were applauded, of course as they bowed exaggeratedly to return to their seats they were cheered, the last two performances of theirs sheer silliness incarnate, but it was in the name of fun, a certain breath of fresh air from the incessant line up of ballads sung by muffin topped men and their rosacea faced wives. The boys themselves were flushed but smiling as their parents praised them with a round of colas for them both, soon drunk down worn vocal cords, down into expanding rib cages, the house of the diaphragm that many had believed sourced great young voices, singing voices, both attuned like switching on the radio. It was possible they had "the ear" for music too, certainly alongside talent for performing.

For the fair boy, the truth was he'd tried out for the choir at school, for he knew he could sing, he knew! His voice was always in melody at home and melodic to his own ears. "I Saw Three Ships" had been a favourite of his, but when the choir director had asked him to sing a different song, one he'd never heard before, he'd stared at the music sheet, stared at these notes that he'd not been able to read, and not be able to sing as the woman at the piano had played through the score to his lost confident, breathy, wavering, disappointing voice – not his! He'd asked, "Please can I try again?" The second time, his voice was stronger, but not by much. "Maybe next year, Kurt," the choir director had said, dismissing him politely. Not this time.

The fair boy was to take the floor for a solo. Solo, Italian for alone. All alone without his friend beside him, alone to stand on the stark lighted floor, blinking and squinting into the front row of tables where his family and friends were, and to begin his song where the lyrics he knew by heart would not blur in his mind, his throat would not seem to close. His voice did not hurry or choke with a tongue too large for his mouth, neither did he stammer, falter or lose his way to have another teacher dismiss him, an awkward pause of murmurs and muffled laughter when he'd ask for another go, only to have the unmoved teacher reply in a voice laced in irony so that more favoured pupils might laugh at his "wit" and at the object of his wit. "No."

He sang "I Wanna Be Loved By You" from Bill Wilder's Some Like It Hot and he was hailed for it. His boop boopie do so sweet! His padam, padam, patoodilidum, poo so cute you wanted to love him; you wanted to kiss him. His mother, who'd mouthed the lyrics along with her son during the performance, as if they had been singing together, lead the applause, which was her prerogative as a parent along with her husband, and his friend joined in eagerly praising him with the fair boy himself not staring at the floor and biting his lip till it almost bled his sedated heart yet beating in an effort to know if they all were lying consciously or were themselves innocently deceived, but now smiling triumphantly, for he'd sung well and he believed it.

"Dude," Noah smiled, "you sure can sing about wanting the love."

Coming to sit beside him, Kurt's heart was still racing, his legs still numb. "And for someone who said they'd never sing period, you did good too."

Noah shrugged. "It's karaoke, man. It'd be like taking your board out to the beach but never surfing like a total waxboy, or going to Comic Con and not dressing up in fruit boobs as every nerd's fantasy."

"Fruit boobs?"

"Yeah, cut a cantaloupe in half, stick both sides onto you and there you go. Fruit boobs." Kurt
frowned, scoffing at Noah's resemblance to a children's art show presenter. "And if you wanna get real detailed, stick on actual raisins for your sensitive chest raisins. Grapes are good too."

"So this is what you did in art class instead of being given coloring books. You learned how to make lady parts out of fruit."

"Not just fruit. I tried stuffing Jello down the back of my friend's underpants to get some serious bubble butt jiggle goin' on, but most of it fell down his trousers. The rest we're kinda thinking got absorbed by his skin. His pores are total over eaters like that."

Kurt grimaced. "Noah, that's gross. Why did he let you do that to him?"

"Because I promised to go around afterwards with a donut on my dong to get a girl in my class to eat around it."

"Oh my God, Noah!"

"What, dude? It was hard to find one with a big enough hole or one with not too much glaze so it wouldn't keep on sliding off. It got real messy down there."

Kurt rolled his eyes. "Well obviously, you were putting your wing wang through donut holes. Please tell me every one of them was burnt and every girl counselled."

"Nah brah. Half of them I put in the staff room Dunkin Donut box and the other half I hid in a girl scout's bag."

"You mean your teachers and the people in your town were eating those donuts without even knowing you'd worn them on your... thing?"

Noah chuckled. "Well I know the girls in my class won't have eaten one. I've totally ruined donuts for them all that's for sure."

"You're supposed to be nice to girls Noah, not scare them. How are you going get a girlfriend if you make them run from you?"

"I got a girlfriend."

Kurt blinked. "You do?"

"Cheyeah," Noah said. "She's totally real."

"She's totally real... Okay, what's her name?"

"Her name?" Noah hesitated. "Urm... Mysterious... Mysterious Blood Pyramid. She goes to a different school than I do."

"Where?"

"St. Aztec School for Babelinis."

"Really?"

"Yeah, and she's real into Disney, so you'll like her. She's got a totally neat idea for a princess."

"She does?"
"Just hear me out," Noah grinned. "A princess who can't sing. A pretty young girl who sounds like a beached whale when she tries to sing "Happy Birthday," so none of the musical numbers feature her until halfway through the movie she figures out she can rap like hell."

Kurt laughed "Noah, is your girlfriend imaginary?"

"Yeah," Noah said, grinning shyly. "But if she was, firstly, I'd never call her 'honey' in front of bees. They do not understand the concept of nicknames and will viciously attack her in hope of getting back what was taken from them. Secondly, she wouldn't be "naturally pretty", but supernaturally pretty, or a hot ass ghost, or a freakin' alien."

"An alien?"

"Yeah, I'd date the fudge outta E.T. Get some finger to finger action goin' on."

Kurt laughed, imitating the character. "E.T. phone Noah. E.T. give Noah happy huggy time with my glowing chest light."

"Totally," Noah chuckled. "I mean girls are cool and all with their strawberry smelling hair and it's so easy to make 'em faint when they see your wang, but aliens, they're like, let's go surf my spaceship on energy waves and make out."

"And E.T. would be the most convincing at Comic Con."

"Yeah, we'd totally win the costume contest."

"Just don't show them your fruit boob raisin nippled cantaloupes."

Noah frowned defensively. "Hey, I take pride in those fruit boobs. I just couldn't pull 'em off that's all. Not like you could though."

"Oh no," Said Kurt, shaking his head. "I am not modelling your orange fleshed lemons. I've got my own costume."

"Really? What?" Noah asked.

"Well it's a tough call. It's either Ken, Prince Philip or Gay Jane in jungle wear."

"Gay Jane! Gay Jane!"

Kurt nodded keenly. "Now that is a look I could pull off right there."

"And are you bringin' anyone along? Comic Con's a total zoo of inhaler taking nerds brushing off the basement dust. They're like spiders, and you could sure do with a Tarzan by your side."

Kurt frowned. "Nerds are like spiders?"

"Yep," Noah nodded, "Spiders can't run for extended periods of time because they have asthma. All spiders are nerds, even tarantulas. I mean, have you ever seen a spider dating a hot babe? I doubt it. A spider flashing his cash in the club? Nope. A spider pulling up beside you at the lights in a Lamborghini? Never happened. They've got so many eyes because they love reading. Nerds. All of 'em."

"Well then I guess I'll bring someone along."

"Cool, I-"
"Not you."

"Why not?" Noah asked, hurt.

"You left me for E.T.," Kurt snapped. "That wrinkled little mutant Sphinx thing with no legs. I'm not taking you back when you'd prefer to be with someone who abducts cows and likes to butt probe you with his own glowing finger. Nu-huh."

"Ain't no butt probin' going on here," Noah protested. "I'd sooner snap it off, say "lumos" and win the Harry Potter wand contest."

"You can only enter the Comic Con costume contest once as only one character... right? I mean I've never been. How does it work?"

"Who cares? All you ever win at those things is a trophy that technically belongs to the real manufacturer of your costume - your own mom."

Kurt shook his head. "Not this costume. I'd make it myself. Cream top, shorts and red hot vine swinging sass all the way."

"Sass is sweet," Noah grinned, "but do you know what's better? Tarzan goin with you to Comic Con, and you know what's better than Tarzan? Nothing, 'cause I'm Tarzan with a kangaroo pouch of garlic bread cause I know how to have a good time."

"A pouch is a little big for just one girlfriend."

Noah shrugged. "I'd have loads of girlfriends, and boyfriends, cause I don't friend zone people, I relationship zone them. You wanna be my friend? Too bad, we're dating."

"Does that mean we're dating? You and me?"

"Hella Kurt. We've got test tube blowin' chemistry up in this bitch."

The fair boy smiled. "That would help us beat the Chewbaccas' and the Indiana Jones' at Comic Con."

"Yeah, just have us cuddle our lips together and they'll spontaneously combust," chuckled Noah. "Then we'd win the trophy, hang with Captain America, shaka sign with Stan Lee and go about standing next to nerds embarrassed we look better than them."

"Wow, you're good at this boyfriend thing."

"Nah, call me your supreme overload boyfriend, baby. It sounds more hardcore, 'cause that's my job when on boyfriend duty, being hardcore."

Kurt laughed. "You are such a boy."

"But seriously Kurt, we should totally go to Comic Con. It happens every July and it's only like ten minutes away from here. We can go check it out. What are you doing tomorrow?"

"I'm er..." Kurt paused, his stomach sinking pitifully as he glanced over at his mother. "I'm not here tomorrow."

"Why, where are you going?"

"I'm leaving."
"What?"

"This was my last day here and my parents and I have to book out of the hotel by twelve tomorrow to catch our flight back home to Ohio... see, we were only staying a week here and it has been seven days. Time flies, right?"

"No, time flies when you're throwin' watches Kurt, and I'm not throwin' watches here," answered Noah, voice deepened to a tone that had Kurt's belly churning. "I don't want time to fly, or you to fly away with it. I want you to stay."

"Noah so do I, but there's nothing I can do-"

"Sure there is," said Noah. "Don't go."

Kurt's shoulders slumped with a sigh. "Noah-"

"Jane stayed with Tarzan, Kurt. She listened to daddy, jumped outta that boat and macked on her ape man like a good girl."

"Noah, please-"

"What about Comic Con?" Asked Noah, despairingly. "We were gonna do all that cool stuff. I... I didn't even tell you the plan I had to pimp up Darth Vader's cape. It was gonna be in pink leopard print."

"It was?"

"Yeah," said Noah, nodding, his head bowed. 'cause you said you liked pink and that it could look good next to black."

I had listened to Kurt. I had always listened to him, but now words of leaving, a twelve o'clock book out, a plane, flying watches, Ohio?! I slumped in my chair with a kid's desperate hope overlaid with a more adult fatalist knowledge Kurt would not stay, he would abandon me, I would hate him. Sitting there with his hands by his side's, palms facing upwards uselessly as if he didn't know what to do with them. You idiot! You're to grab onto your chair and never let go! Splinter your fingers bloody if you have to! Can't you put any damn effort into resisting?! I'm your friend! No, correction, your boyfriend! I was eight, sure, but I was old enough to be bitter, angry, to feel the injustice in all of this, and angry a second time! 'cause I'd known this would come.

The air had thickened uncomfortably, and the observers' sensed such thickening, watched as the tan boy was now lead out of the room by his friend's mother and there to talk just beyond the door as she crouched to his level. To some of them, the boy appeared despondent to her words, his head hung and not meeting her eye. Others claimed to see his fist rubbing his tearing eyes, the back of his hand used to wipe them away as he cried. To him, it was as if the whole day had now been the last of a cancer patient's, the doctor's having encouraged him to spend the few remaining hours with his friend before he'd die, the bed empty the next day, and a new family staying in that room that he'd knock at in hope, asking for Kurt… asking again.

All witnessing accounts of the woman hugging the child afterwards were constant, and they returned to their tables soon after. The boy then hugged his friend as they squeezed into the same seat, their arms wrapped around each other as if vines wound tight around a garden wall trellis, the tan boy's arms lean and strong like a growing boy's, whose underarms and often greasy or sea salted hair from the ocean you could smell, the tan boy with rough comforting ways like a small dog, rubbing his face against that of his emotionally battered looking blue-eyed doll of a friend, who hugged and hugged...
and hugged until rib cages were squeezed to wild heartbeats felt underneath, neither of them speaking and only turning to look at each other.

Fewer and fewer people were approaching the karaoke now, now realizing their voices merely rendered its repertoire absurd with the karaoke itself looking more like a toy instrument, an emblem of kindergarten toy life that belonged in the hands of children leaning nursery rhymes. There was no longer any fun in imitating the suggestive-seductive big-doll body movements of superstar singers, Mae West like, Little Bo Beep even in lurid commingling, the whole thing like mutton dressed as lamb to those even older. And their ideas were somewhat justified as those two little boys were seen once again by the karaoke with both microphones in their hands, tapping them awkwardly and standing in front of protruding unblinking all-knowing eyes.

There they sang "You'll Be In My Heart" from Disney's Tarzan, and it was as if they'd died since their previous comical songs only to return completely changed, like the kids they were, having realized the world wasn't what it seemed. They sang with such heart, facing and nearing each other with the tan one unnerving those in the front his emotion was so raw, raw enough to burst into a tantrum or sobb strangely without tears as he'd pound on his thighs, but I will be here, don't you cry sang his fair friend, and I may not be with you but you've got to hold on the tan boy sang back, that the audience would "see in time" of what they were to each other, these two boys just so young, everybody wanted to help them, save them and their hearts.

Glee

It was a goodbye to his bed that would soon be stripped by the cleaning staff of any remnants it had of him left. Goodbye was in the upholstered furniture, the white wooden shutters, the cream lily light bulbs below the fan. He waved goodbye to the balcony overlooking the garden patio, in its center, the courtyard pavilion with its glaring blood orange tiled roof and farewell to all else his blue eyes glazed over as with his wheeled suitcase in hand, standing beside his mother with their bags propped up neatly all around them, he looked on as Burt closed their suite door for the final time. A room no longer booked under the name "Hummel", their key card returned to the front desk in the lobby with the time reading 11:56am on Sunday, 22nd of July.

Elizabeth had flustered her disapproval at cutting it so close to the twelve o'clock check out deadline - "Burt, come on, we have to go already" - a voice like a frantic-comic radio voice directed at her husband as he'd gone around collecting every one of the hotel's "freebies" as he'd nicknamed them within their room from the products in the bathroom, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, to the sugar packets, fruit snacks and tea on the coffee tray that they had never once used throughout their stay. Kurt himself had taken a tube of Aloe Vera moisturizer, the tube like all the others, small at 50ml, but to be packed carefully away for in case of a spillage and it would stain his clothes with a cleaning process even more frustrating than the actual packing itself.

Kurt had been given the opportunity to go play with Noah as Elizabeth had offered to take care of his things, but he was eight, old enough to be doing it himself as he had folded his strange, fanciful pieces of brightly hued clothing, cotton mesh polos and tees, prospect shorts, soft woven jumpers and cardigans, in imitation of his mother's own hands and refolding them when they came out too big, even his much laundered "linen" and "under things" that became fiddly in his little hands, the many souvenirs squeezed together, his tiger too, cramming it all into his suitcase with temptation to sit on it and growing irritable from his mother's incessant words for him to "go see Noah," "go see Noah", "Kurt, don't, I can do this. Now go see Noah."
The young surfer dude, tanned with good looking face. Kurt had not seen that face since last night, and it had been dispirited when they'd parted for their rooms, no "chow dude," no "aloha, bro" not even a "later", but a "bye Kurt," his usual surf lingo so chill, so hung loose, only deadened on his tongue as he'd promised to meet up with Kurt the following morning before he'd leave, but to say what to him? "Bye, Kurt" yet a second time with that face so downhearted? It wasn't as if Elizabeth had half carried her son, half dragged him down to the lobby, alternatively begging and scolding him after he'd stayed to pack, stalled, too anxious to see Noah, for she knew not saying goodbye was another way to hang on, to pretend it all wasn't happening.

In waiting, I was a child lacking speech and comprehension, for Noah, he was not mature enough to comprehend the rage of my leaving, not the ecstasy of madness such rage could stoke, a madness that he would voluntary snap a rabbit's neck for me to stay, appearing before us now with Thomas by his side yet without a word, taking my hand to lead me outside the main entrance into the sun that singed my eyelashes and seared my eyes as if I'd been forced to look directly at it. Together again, the both of us appeared defeated. With wounds dug deep into our souls it really would seem one of us was leaving the other, and people around had the decency to look away as I looked at my friend, and he looked at me, such familiarity in those looks.

"Well, this sucks," Noah muttered, sitting them both down on a nearby bench beside the hotel sign. "Schwag sucks, and that's a ton of sucking."

"I know," said Kurt. "I don't feel too good about it either. Leaving is the worst thing that can happen on a good holiday, and I don't go on that many holidays so I'm not used to it."

"I'm used to it alright. Just not used to saying goodbye to new made homies the coolest in all Cali."

"… You're the first to ever call me that."

"Well coming from a surfer, you know it's true," said Noah, grinning. "You're cool Kurt, and rad, and don't let anyone change that r to an s."

"I suppose you never let others do that to you, right? Everybody likes you, Noah."

Noah shook his head. "Not all. I got neighbors who want my butt globes on a silver platter cause I went around jumpin' over their fences last summer to pee in their pools and write "Honk if Noah is Great" in sunblock on their backs."

"Did they come after you?"

"Sure they did. They knocked on our front door and shouted at my parents. Total riot, man. Then after, my ma said the dumbest thing to me, "This isn't how I raised you, Noah Puckerman", and I said, "Yeah it is. You literally raised me and here I am in all my awesomeness, howdying the neighbros and tinkling gold in their chlorine."

"Didn't your dad have anything to say about it? He was a swimmer wasn't he?"

"Yeah, but he said it was okay, just as long as I didn't make a yellow puddle. He's lax like that."

"Yes, he is," said Kurt. "I think you get it from him, that care free looseness. It's just so surfer."

Noah grinned. "Yeah, and it drives my ma totally wack. Even saying wack insteada crazy will make her nuts. She just doesn't like it when we use surf talk around her."

"Must have been another reason why she chose not to come here where it's the lingo."
"Too bad, cause she would have loved you Kurt."

Kurt frowned. "How do you know?"

"You're like the perfect son, dude. You dress good, you speak good, you say 'well' insteada good. All good, and it's not that my mom doesn't like my friends 'cause you know, what mom wouldn't love to have a bunch of totally amped up third grade bros water ballooning her house down with her slingshot girl panties, it's just that you'd be the one she'd ask over the most."

"Why? You don't think I'd be into water ballooning?"

Noah shrugged. "Wouldn't think you'd be as into it as my Dallas dudes, no. They're real doke that way and you're more-"

"Vanilla, I know," murmured Kurt, sighing. "Sometimes Noah when you talk of your friends I wonder why you ever tried to get to know me in the first place, to risk the pain of now having to say goodbye to me like this. I'm nothing like them."

"So?" Asked Noah. "What's your point? Aren't I allowed to make friends with people different from me? I'm friends with you aren't I?"

"Yes, but why?"

"Cause you're cool to be around."

"You didn't know that before you knew me."

"Dude, who cares?"

"I care!" Shouted Kurt. "If you'd only left me alone at that fountain, leaving this place would be whole a lot easier!"

Thrown, the tan boy exclaimed, "What?!"

"This is exactly why you never get attached to people when on holiday Noah! Because this happens! It's alright for you to come out here and make friends like they're a dime a dozen and not to even worry when the time comes to say goodbye to them, because at least you have all your "homies" to go back to, your "brohahs" on the soccer team, your homeroom slugger mates. You want to know how many friends I have back in Ohio? One, Noah. One."

"That Chinese girl, right?"

Kurt huffed. "Her name is Tina, Noah. Tina Chohen Chang, and yes, she's from China, but because she stutters so much half the time I don't even know what she's saying. Nobody talks to her, they laugh at the kyaraben lunchbox her mom makes her, and they all stick us both together in the corner of the playground they named "Cootie Town" because apparently we're infested enough with the dreaded "loser lurgi" to create such a place."

"Kurt, I-"

"I can't afford to lose the friends I make, Noah, because I'm poor in that way. Aside from my momma and daddy, I have next to no one in my life. So I hope you never take your friends for granted, because they love you, don't they?"

Noah nodded gently. "Sure."
"And you love them too, don't you? Every single one?"

"I guess."

"… You're lucky."

"… Yeah."

"Do you love me, Noah?" The tan boy's heart skipped.

"Hella, Kurt. I do," he breathed. "You're the Gay Jane to my Tarzan? And this ape boy's really gonna miss his angel in the Dallas Forest where he has friends sure, but that doesn't mean he's gonna have with 'em what he had with his Gay Jane, 'cause ain't no one out there like his Gay Jane, a whole lotta closer with him than he is with any one of them others, cuddle-cuddle close with kisses, or I as I like to call it, smash mouth-"

"Noah."

"… I'm not gonna find that with anyone else Kurt … You're my best bruh."

Kurt blinked. "I am?"

"Yeah," Said Noah, "and that ain't nothin' to regret about. Fountain or no fountain, I wanted to say hi. You looked like you needed someone to show you the world isn't just one massive "Cootie Town."

"Because there are people like you."

"You betcha."

Kurt smiled. "I will be better for having known you, Noah… even when I know I will probably never ever see you again."

"No Kurt, we will-"

"Of all the people in my life… why are you the one I have to say goodbye to?"

"You don't have to," said Noah. "Come home to Texas with me, Kurt. I'll rescue you from that loser school and bring you home. I'll be way attentive to your needs, I'll hang with you, make sure people see your have star quality like the Hulk in movies other than The Hulk, and on the see saw; I'll stay down for as long as you want."

"You'd do that all for me?" Kurt sniffed. "Where would I stay, where would I sleep?"

"Well we'd have to pull a whole E.T. hide you in the closet kinda thing, and I'd pass you morning water for food, cause dew drops looks like your beauty secret to keeping cute, and when we're at school, we'd totally mess with people and say we're to stay near each other always because if our pride wristbands stray too far apart, it'll destroy the universe."

"Does that mean I'm still your boyfriend, Noah?"

Noah grinned softy. "You know you don't need to ask, angel."

"Good, cause I already know when I'm older that I don't want to marry someone like you like my mom said, but you. I want to marry you."
Grin widening, Noah shook his head chuckling. "No, I wanna marry you, Kurt."

"You do?"

"Damn right! I wanna get down on one knee, propose and marry the fudge outta you so fast we'll have our first kid."

"What would you name them?"

"For a boy, Noahzilla."

"Um… no."

"How about for a girl, Noahzina?"

"Nope."

"Lizard?"

"That's not a name."

"Yeah it is," said Noah. "Lizard, and then she'll get the nickname "Liz" and everyone will ask "oh, is it short for Elizabeth?" but she will have to say "no, my name is Lizard."

Kurt sighed. "Noah, why? Why do you hate our unborn child?"

"What? I think it's a totally awesome name."

"I'm the one who's going to have listen to a peppy nurse scream for me to push and push in a delivery room and I'm not going to lose a push-up contest in front of my new born girl only to name her Lizard."

"What are you talkin' about? The mutant pterodactyl stork's gonna bring our baby, our awesome cool scaly skinned-"

"No Lizard."

"Dang," Said Noah, grinning guiltily. "Okay, you name her, but can I at least practice my slam dunks on her?"

"We are so not ready for this."

"I'm ready for you though. I have a little something for you." Diving his hand into his short pocket, Noah retrieved a silver surf ring. "Kickass, right? I bought two the other day at the jewelers place here for us both, and this one's for you. I tried to pick out the most surfer looking one they had."

"It's beautiful," Kurt muttered, tracing it with a finger. "How much was it?"

"A little doubloon heavy, but not as much as some promise stones they had that signified that whenever the wearer should ever become a burden, they have to jump into a volcano."

"Really?"

"Oh yeah. Surf jewelry's real spiritual. It can mean a whole lotta things like you're sure to get sweet nectar waves today yet tomorrow your shower water pressure is gonna screw you over with a range from "gently peeing on you" to "I fear for the safety of my nipples"."
"And what does this ring signify?"

"See those wave markings there," said Noah, indicating to the tiki influenced wave designs encircling the outer rim of the ring, the water itself almost embossed and made seemingly to raise from the silver. "They mean the sea will always carry you to shore, no matter how far out you are. Also, for any glass bottled messages you wanna send out. Also, me."

"You?"

"I want you to think of me when you wear it," Noah said softly, picking up the ring from his wide open palm and sliding it onto Kurt's outstretched finger. "Remember our time together that was more awesome for me than the breaks at Waimea."

Kurt smiled, admiring his gift, twisting it to make it look as if the waves were rolling. "Those must be some good breaks."

"Totally."

Kurt paused. "Wait here."

"Where are you…" He watched as the boy returned into the hotel on a run, only to return a few minutes later with a rose tartan blanket, familiar and folded against his chest.

"For you."

"Your blankie?" Said Noah, watching as Kurt sat once more beside him. "You're giving it to me?"

"I did buy you something at the Safari Park but I thought you'd prefer this. You always did say you liked it."

"It smells just like you," Noah murmured, his voice muffled from a nose dug deep in cashmere the scent of his friend's angel dust. "I'm never having my mom wash this."

"I used to use it as Aladdin's magic carpet, and sometimes as Snow White's red cape."

"Yeah?"

"I know it doesn't look like either of them, but that's what imagination is there for, right?"

"Sure. I used to pretend that I had my spine removed so I could go down stairs like a slinkie."

"Oh Noah, I'm going to miss you."

"Don't go," said Noah, gabbing his head. "I think there's gonna be something wrong with the plane or something. It's not fully functional, but a very convincing Lego replica, full scale and everything."

"Noah-"

"I mean it, Kurt. I don't want you goin' back home where you feel like an alien in your own skin. Stay, and I'll find a way to show you all the stars and planets that line your eyeballs."

Kurt smiled. "You already have."

There was a wish to protest further, to tighten his hold on fair flesh, but with a cry of her son's name from the main entrance, both boys turned to see a small crowd gathered outside, Elizabeth waving Kurt over dolefully, Thomas by her side with Burt handing their suitcases to the driver who was
swiftly stacking each one with such ease it was as if they were empty and into the large luggage storage of the minibus now parked outside, that white minibus that would drive the Hummel's to San Diego International Airport to catch a flight home to Ohio, and one that would have Kurt sitting awkwardly wedged in between his parents for the entire journey, silent, and listening as they'd both comfort him with words swirling about his head like gnats.

Saying goodbye to this boy Kurt Hummel now, saying goodbye to Noah Puckerman too, it crushed them together into a deep embrace where the tan boy grasped onto his fair friend's cotton polo and made to scrunch it, deform it in emotion as he held on tight, murmuring almost in anguish words so muffled with a voice so hoarse in Kurt's neck the boy himself didn't know what he was saying, just breathing hotly with Kurt's own face nestled in his. There he stroked Noah's surfer beaded necklace, inhaled that sea salted scent that pinched the nose to raise the unconscious, and rubbed his back, though he never patted it, never, for patting would signal the leave and Noah would only cling on harder, though inevitable to that word, "goodbye."

The hugging, pulled in for another hug, and hugging some more was broken as like a crying baby ripped from their mother's arms, Kurt pulled away from Noah, his fair fingers like ice in the tan boy's hands from his state of shock, his breath seizure like and harmful as he finally turned and ran to board the bus, there to disappear behind a closing door, but reappearing once more in view as in a window seat towards the front, Kurt was to press himself against the glass to catch one last look of his friend, Thomas now beside his son and waving. "We'll see you again sometime, kiddo," the man had said, his hand raised in a waving shaka sign, "hang loose." And Kurt had nodded, Noah himself now shaka signing him with a dolent smile, "goodbye."

My summer vacation in California of that year ended the second Kurt boarded that bus. I still had three more days remaining but I didn't know what the hell I was supposed to do without him, that the Hotel Del only appeared cavernous now, that its waves weren't worth surfing anymore and if I did I'd fall and punch my board until my knuckles would blister. My hands I could have used to hold on tighter to Kurt than I had done, the best friend I loved. It had been a friendship so strong it had physically shaken me, noticed by my dad that I'd stop making friends on holidays from then on, searching instead for Kurt in the friends I already had. No. Absolutely, there was only one Gay Jane of mine, and someday we would meet again. That was my promise.

The surf ring on Kurt Hummel's finger would soon be noticed by his mother, the woman catching sight of it sitting next to her numbed and faintly smiling son as he'd twist it around ever so slowly to an explanation she had to lean closer to hear. Yet it was not as if Elizabeth was looking at it with fastidious eyes when she frowned, but curiosity as she asked to inspect it, Kurt handing it over for his mother to turn it towards the light as if it were a puzzle, only for her to say, "Kurt sweetie, this isn't a spiritual ring, it's a promise ring." "A what?" Kurt would ask confusedly, and there as she slid the ring back onto his finger, she smiled. "It's a ring that signifies a promise." "What promise is that?" Her son asked as Elizabeth winked sweetly. "You'll see."

And whatever I would see, whatever this ring now promised, would lay sparkling in my mother's eyes for her to know until I'd find out for myself, until I'd come to realization. The ring itself would stay on my finger the whole way back, and though my dad assured me he'd have the photos of Noah and I developed as soon as possible, that we'd exchanged contact information with the Puckerman's for a possible near future reunion, the ring was my sole joy and comfort, not a heavy little thing with an almost choke like pressure around my finger, in fact a little loose, but on, twisting and turning to the sound of crashing frothy waves of California in my head, and echoing with it the promise I would hold to Noah whatever it was until we'd meet again.

~ PLEASE REVIEW ~
(But if you wish to criticize, may it be constructive. I'm not going to learn from my mistakes and improve if you vent.)

**Disclaimer:** I do not own the rights to the characters from Glee as I don't own the show. I'm not earning money from this and no copyright or trademark infringement is intended.

~ STAY TUNED FOR MORE BY FOLLOWING/FAVORITING ~
Chapter 6

THE BOY

2009

VI

~ Ulusaba ~

A hot winter, the baby days of June, and in the blinding-hot temperatures reaching eighty-nine degrees Fahrenheit, the daily mean of these soil crusting plains covered in burnt out dun-colored foliage the shade of faded fern within the Mpumalanga province of South Africa, set in the very heart of the Sabi Sand Reserve and not far from the bordering Kruger National Park, a high creature, sleek with wings the look of white feather, stretched wide and flew through warm humid air not sulfurous as swirling smog when it had taken off, but clean, now able to breathe in hard and deep as it descended gradually towards a private airstrip up ahead, preparing itself for a smooth or harsh landing, it had the choice to do either with altitude dropping.

Yet this creature was now no majestic animal to the squinted eye, it's engine like rumble, motors humming with propeller blades like whirring cleavers set to slice open any being's throat like the swipe of the lion's claw, but a white plane, Federal Air, reminiscent of 1940 American silver alloy passenger planes. Such a wonder of the modern world among nature. It had flown an hour and twenty minute flight from Johannesburg's O. R. Tambo International Airport with no delay or recorded disruption that was known of, now coming in to land on the stretch with a squeaky thud, a tad frightening for those on board, their hands holding on tight to their armrests, strapped belts that squeezed their bodies as they touched down in Ulusaba.

Ulusaba, the word meaning "fearful" in the native language of the local Tsongo Shangaan people, and named after the nearby Sabie River's once large concentration of Nile crocodile. They were once the proud owners of the land until their eviction to relocated nearby villages adjacent to the reserve, owned now by Sir Richard Branson as the "Ulusaba Private Game Reserve", home to an abundance of wildlife upon 13,500 acres of land with fences all removed, creating a much larger contiguous body of land available to the animals in the area, benefiting also the handful of the reserve's private game lodges, and allowing full access to much more extensive sightseeing views of the scarcer creatures around, counting the main "Big Five" game animals.

All fourteen passengers on the plane, moreover a jet, disembarked en route to the reserve's main entrance, thankful they'd taken journey by air than by road, a full six hours from Johannesburg that way, with a mother and son amid the line-up. The woman wearing cream chiffon shirt and shorts, since flattened from arrival but slightly wrinkled from the cross-country flight, looking over at her son from under her slope-brimmed straw hat and swiping a hand across his shoulders, dusting down his cricket sweater she now believed was a size or two too small, his pink tartan shorts she believed were cut too short above the knee and his grey plimsolls to finish at the feet, she had nothing to complain about, her son's bare ankle showing now in full.

It was strange to think that Kurt Hummel was sixteen years old; an age freshly turned not more than a week ago, a quiet, shy boy, yet startlingly pretty and obedient and whom his teachers loved and had kissed on the cheek goodbye after he'd gifted them with wine after his tenth grade graduation. Such a sunshiny good-natured boy this one was as well, unlike others who, when you approached them even with a determined smile on your face, stared and flinched as if they were expecting to be walloped, yes, there'd been some at that private all-boys school of his, Dalton Academy back in
Westerville Ohio, younger ones, who wet their pants when you came up to them unexpectedly. But Kurt wasn't one of these, wasn't like anyone else.

Kurt was a special case. His parents had enrolled him at Dalton at the age of thirteen after a few instances of bullying at the local school in Lima had gotten out of hand, verbal abuse, physical harassment, all much elevated from the alienation he'd received from peers back in elementary with evidence often having stained his clothes, some apparel having been taken all together with his blue bloodshot eyes having watered beyond repair, the reddened sniffing runny nose, it chilled his parents to recall it all, and though for him to board far from home, and at a price of $9000 a year, the zero-tolerance bullying policy of private education had persuaded them into one of the best decisions they'd ever made for their son, such a fine investment.

And from the first, Dalton had liked Kurt. Almost you could say, maybe it was an exaggeration, but almost you could say they loved him, this boy so quiet but paying attention and quick to smile, laugh at jokes, (and these jokes had been different, not made at his expense), and making a quaint group of wide ranging friends, many of those on the glee club Warbler committee to the daughter of the academy's chief patron, Al Motta, the wealthy business magnate, with his spoiled "treasure" girl Sugar having since grown fond of Kurt, her personal favorite to which she'd gifted him as a birthday present this vacation far too extravagant for him to pay for himself, but with all expenses paid already, a "Happy Sweet Sixteen, Kurt!" All for her best gay.

Indeed it was known by all who knew Kurt that he was homosexual, and speculated from acquaintances as they'd watched him from afar, those effeminate features, fleshy-pouty lips, milky white skin, passionate blue eyes, all far from pugnacious looking and whose manner was unconsciously feminine, this femininity fitted so snugly within him as a doll baby might be fitted snug inside a larger doll ingeniously hollowed out for that purpose, a manner followed by another, a rather subtle sense of provocativeness - at least, to all those around, it was supposed this particular manner was also unconscious. The boy was just such a charming creature, such a youthful little tease; he may not have even known it himself, looking so damn innocent.

I knew how I looked; features hardly matured from childhood, but my mind, yes. I liked to think I was intelligent, smart and inquisitive, not a "dummy" and certainly not dumb when it came to know how I felt. People of this world had known I was gay before I knew it myself, and were not ignorant enough to delusion themselves to think otherwise. I had known for a long time now, having come out to my parents at thirteen knowing of sexuality, educated in sex, curious of gender. I knew of Queer Theory and accounts of ensuing struggles with identity, but I was who I was. "Girly?" A trait that made me feel precious, yes. "Flirty?" I was only trying to be friendly. A "tease?" How did people view me? My looks like a short skirt pulled up too high…

At the lounge greeting, chefs, rangers, trackers, all staff members were to welcome the newly arrived guests, introducing themselves and serving around drinks among shaking hands, shaking hands with all including those of these two delightful Americans, mother and son, so fair with eyes as blue as pool water. It was their first visit to South Africa, they said, their first holiday in several years and a much appreciated birthday gift courtesy of a friend. "Motta, sure," a staff member had said, nodding with a smile to Kurt's blush, for even those at the reserve knew of Al Motta and his occasional business relations with Sir Richard, having accommodated the two along with a few other associates here in Ulusaba only last year in late October.

It was only after lunch served at one o'clock on deck overlooking the bush that all fourteen guests were led to their rooms, exhausted from travel, from seemingly endless ceremonial greetings by one set of hosts to another, with a full ten minute walk away from the reception for Kurt and Elizabeth as they were brought to their Rock Lodge Master Suite, perched high on the summit of a koppie with views over the vast lowveld and in the distance, the Drakensberg Mountain range. A suite of real
beauty, the look of a well-furnished room within a luxury treehouse, a private plunging pool on the balcony and all features from the furniture to the smallest table sculptures designed and incorporated with modern and traditional African art décor.

For this humble mother and son, the boy in private education with the friends in high places it had been heard, yet from a county seat city someplace in the north of the states, the total opulence of the reserve for them both was overwhelming, enough to have them sit down with awe struck expressions on the king sized bed they'd been informed was actually heated, those sheets warm to the touch. They'd barely asked any questions once their host, smiling and nodding eagerly, making little bows with his head, murmuring agreeing answers, had toured them extensively around the suite, even when the scheduled times of upcoming events and safaris had been pointed out to them, as if they weren't listening, but already in relaxation.

And it was only the two of us; Kurt and I for this one week vacation with Burt back home having insisted I take the second of the two places the Motta's had gifted us with. My dear husband, busy with trying to expand his garage business from Lima into Columbus, with plans of moving there if a deal could be made so that we'd be closer to Kurt. He needn't have to board anymore, for oh how his father and I missed him when he was away, making lovely friends we'd all met, even those wealthy enough to pay near $900 a night holidays for us. It was kindness Kurt had always dreamed of, and I knew he didn't wish to be made a charity case, because they knew of what it had been like for him. All my son wanted was to be loved like a regular boy.

"It's alright Kurt; we can unpack the rest tomorrow. As it is, I'm exhausted," Elizabeth sighed, resting herself on one of the living room recliners from an hour of unpacking, her hands in full memory of cotton, chiffon, denim, the various materials as Kurt came walking in.

"Well that's good timing," He said, "because I've just finished putting away my clothes with plenty of room left to spare."

"Enough room for mine possibly?" Elizabeth queried. "I think you've brought too many clothes with you."

"Well at least it's better than having too little," her son smiled.

"In this heat sweetie, wearing too little is what you'll end up doing," said Elizabeth. "I mean, how can you wear that sweater of yours? You must be baking."

Kurt shrugged. "My friends said it made me look like a Ralph Lauren model."

"They did, did they?"

"Yes, and since then whenever I wear it, it makes me feel like one."

Elizabeth looked him over. "It does look very good on you. Mind you, I think it looks good on all Dalton boys."

"You think so?" Asked Kurt.

"Well yes," Elizabeth nodded. "Your school is full of very handsome young men, Kurt. Most if not all of them could pass for models. I would have loved to be able to share my classes with them when I was your age, to be lab partners with one, to sit next to them at lunch, to sleep in the same dorm room as them, oh, I would have kissed my parents for months in thanks for having sent me to a school of stallions."

"Okay, I'm never wearing this sweater ever again," said Kurt, removing his top as his mother smiled.
"There we go."

Her son stilled, eyeing her. "I see what you did."

"Smart stuff, isn't it." Said Elizabeth cheekily.

Kurt narrowed his eyes. "Next time you use that on me, I'm telling dad."

"Oh, your father would have no worries about me straying sweetie. I'm grounded to that man no matter how good looking your friends are, and wow are they good looking-"

"Hey, the sweaters now off. No more."

"Alright, okay," relented Elizabeth. "Where did you get it again, I forget."

"They had a few spares in the small size left from the cricket team."

"I was going to ask whether Sugar had bought it you," his mother said. "She really oughtn't buy you all the things she does."

The boy sighed. "Well you know how frugal I am with money. I don't spend it on anything other than what I need, and it makes her really happy to know that she's the one who brings the extravagance into my life."

"What about your parents, mister?" Elizabeth challenged. "Don't we bring any in? Like Dalton, or those wonderful blue eyes I gave you?"

"Of course you do," Kurt replied, coming to sit on the recliner next to hers. "With Sugar it's more materialistic, but the fact that you, dad and I are still a loving family is a form of extravagance a lot of other broken families out there don't have, including Sugar."

Eyeing her son apologetically, Elizabeth sighed. "Oh yes, I forgot. How is she?"

"She's still a little delicate, but she's getting there," Kurt sighed. "She says the divorce won't be finalized until the end of summer."

"She really ought to have come instead of me," his mother said. "She could do without all that."

"I know," Kurt nodded, "but I wanted you to come. I see her all the time because she gets so bored with that private home schooling tutor of hers."

"What number are we on now?" Asked Elizabeth as he rolled his eyes.

"This one's the sixth."

"There aren't going to be any more in Westerville if she keeps on driving them crazy."

"I know," Kurt smiled. "It's the music tutors that run the fastest."

"I'll admit she doesn't quite have the ear for it. Well, not like you," Elizabeth grinned, seeming to perk up. "When are you going to audition for the glee club you have there? You have the voice, sweetie."

"I know, but-"

"And the drama productions and the creative writing club," his mother continued, "You'd be good
"Well, it's not that I haven't given it much thought. It's just that I haven't got round to-;"

"I know," Elizabeth interrupted. "If you're not with Sugar, you're with a boy, aren't you."

"No, mom," Kurt corrected, immediately. "It's because I've been working on my new blog, you know. The one about fashion and architecture I told you about."

His mother smiled. "Oh yes, how's that coming along?"

"It's coming along well actually," nodded Kurt, happily. "Not that anyone's going to read it, but all this African décor will make a great post."

"Well that's good," said Elizabeth, "but I would like to see you joining some of the clubs at school, even if Sugar or one of your boyfriends-"

Kurt huffed irritably. "None of them are boyfriends, mom. I've never had a steady boyfriend."

"Kurt, you have too many boyfriends," his mother protested, grinning as if to hush him with the obvious truth. "They ask you out on so many dates, I lose track sometimes."

"Yes, but none of them are steady. I'm far from being in love with any of them."

They were Luke, Ryan, Jacob, Jake, Dwayne, Dale, Mark, Hayden, Fraser, Max, Lyle, Bucky, Cass, Tommy, Eddie, John, Joshua, and many more, half of them not even students of Dalton. Soldiers, pilot instructors, barbers, actors, house painters, sons of lawyers, sons of bankers, trainee dentists, swimmers, high school athletes, high school wrestlers, sports coaches, young office temps, college grads, lifeguards at the local swimming pool, repairers of motorcycles, taking him everywhere, to the movies, the theater, to dances and baseball games. They took him ice skating, roller skating, to ice cream and billiard parlors. Taking him hiking, cycling, and boating on lake parks. Taking him to karaoke bars, and on moonlit romantic drives to make out point. The school bell would ring for the end of classes, and it would amaze some how quickly a boy would show up at the curb in his car, tap his horn from across the parking lot, wave and off Kurt would trot all smiles and bouncing hair as if he gave off a sexual radar, an actual sent like a dog, a bitch in heat, and every damn bisexual male dog in the neighborhood would show up panting and scratching the dirt. The way boys would stumble unconscious. Sometimes more than one of them showed up in his car to drive Kurt into town and laughing like a little boy, he'd flick a penny to see which car, which guy to take, yet the mystery of Kurt was that he hardly mentioned any of them in conversation, listing no names, keeping it all his own business.

It could be said at his age, he'd have boyfriends. It was only natural, but so many, and he was too trusting, too nice. If a boy had done anything with him when they'd be together it would only be because Kurt was too sweet, too docile, and too damn obedient to shove them away. As it was, on dates, some of them had taken out their "things" and had asked him to touch it and Kurt hadn't been disgusted or mad with them because hell, he had one himself, yet one time he'd jumped out from a boy's car when it had got too far and into another parked nearby, inside a couple - the boy he knew from Dalton - and had asked to hitch a ride back to the school with them, his own date driving close behind, ramming their car with his bumper.

And there had been other instances. One afternoon, a boy "Cass" had been expecting to pick Kurt up on a street corner only to see him with another guy, both of them arguing. The guy "Bucky" was older than Kurt, husky looking, a senior jock in a varsity jacket with Kurt complaining he'd followed
him and wouldn't leave him alone though he'd begged him and Cass had shouted at Bucky to get the fuck away, Bucky saying something in response that had Cass punching the fucker across the face, out cold, Kurt looking in horror as Cass had pulled him into his car and driven away but the fair boy was silent, hardly speaking and deaf to Cass's comforting words coming out angry to him, not allowing the boy to touch him, not even to hold his hand.

Most of them could be gentlemen if you insisted them to be. If the boy was fresh with Kurt, already showing his southern parts, he'd apologize and ask for another chance, Kurt always granting them that chance, with the boy on his best behavior from then on, but this fair boy knew he was making the horny bastards squirm inside, knew how those lengths grew bigger and bigger in those pants, allowing them to gaze at him longingly, to inhale his scent, to stroke his silky downy arms and even his legs to mid-thigh. He let them stroke his hair that would smell of shampoo, and even to comb it with Kurt providing the comb, sometimes handing them moisturizer to rub in if he had flesh on show, and allowing them to cuddle him, to kiss him…

_They didn't touch me where I didn't want to be touched. They didn't make me drink. They were respectful of me, in my cleaned white plimsolls; skinny jeans fitted but not too tight, my skin smelling of body butter. If they kissed me it was closed mouthed. I knew to keep my lips pursed tightly together, and they didn't force my lips open with their tongues when I did. I'd let them kiss me on my mouth, my neck, my arms – if they were bare. My eyes would be closed, my hands still in my lap, though I'd raise my forearm to push them away if I felt they wanted more. I'd become anxious if they shifted my clothing or tried to unbutton or unzip anything, because I knew it was sex that had drawn them to me, but it wouldn't be sex they'd be getting. Not from me._

"Love?" Laughed his mother. "You can fall in love. Your age, you can fall in love fast."

"Yes, but I'm not out to fall in love," Kurt replied. "It's all to have fun."

"Is Sugar still having "fun" with your friend Wes? I seem to recall you telling me she was quite taken with him."

Her son shook his head, giggling. "Only because she read in a dating magazine it was the fashionable thing to have an oriental boy toy on your arm. She'd adopt two Asian children if it said it was the trend."

"Honestly you two and boys," Elizabeth smirked. "They seem to like you more than you like them."

Kurt shrugged. "Well you know Sugar. She just gets tired of them so easily. Says straight guys are one of the most tedious of creatures around."

"She'd date you if she could," said his mother with twinkling eyes. "I think she's caught on how much fun these dates of yours allegedly are."

The boy smiled. "Oh, she has nothing to worry about. We have plenty of good times."

"You know, I can remember the first boy who ever took a fancy to you," said Elizabeth as Kurt looked over at her curiously. "He was your first boyfriend."

"Mom, I've never had a boyfriend."

"Alright, perhaps not in the conventional sense, you were only young."

Her son frowned, straightening up in his chair. "I was?"

"You'd just turned eight two months prior."
"So, when I was in elementary?" His mother nodded as he sighed. "Mom, I wasn't friends with any boy back then. They were all horrible."

"His name was Noah," said Elizabeth. "You remember him? You met him when we went on holiday to California and stayed at that Coronado hotel." Her son didn't say anything. "He was Texan, enjoyed surfing, spoke a lot of surf lingo."

"Oh yes!" Kurt exclaimed. "I remember him now!"

"You two had the sweetest friendship I had ever seen. You'd see each other every day, play with each other, go to the beach, go dancing, we took you to Legoland. You remember?"

"Yeah, yeah…" Kurt nodded, pausing with a low hushed utterance. "Wow… I haven't thought of him for a long time. He used to call me his "Gay Jane" didn't he."

Elizabeth smiled. "Yes, he was "Tarzan" and you were his "Gay Jane", and you'd sing all the songs from the movie together. He'd always ask you if you were free, always knock on our door, and he'd get upset when we'd go out and you weren't there. He actually climbed our balcony, do you remember? During the night just to see you."

"I know. I told him not to do it."

"I nearly got a heart attack when he told me," his mother grinned, "but yes, he was very fond of you Kurt, and it saddened you both when you had to leave."

"He gave me a ring, didn't he?" Kurt muttered, "and I think I gave him my blanket because he liked it so much."

"We bought you another when we came home, but yes, he gave you a ring. A promise ring actually. Had you wearing it for weeks afterwards trying to figure out what it meant."

"They're pre-engagement rings, aren't they?"

"Yes, but I don't think Noah knew that, or maybe he did, I don't know. I think it was just a promise that he'd sometime see you again."

The boy sighed. "We never did, did we."

"No, we did try to set things up, that you'd fly over to see him in Texas or he'd fly over to see you at home, but we could never settle on a date and we lost touch with them after a time. I think you stopped wearing the ring by the next year."

"We still have it, don't we?"

"Of course we do," assured his mother. "I think I put it with the rest of my jewelry just so we wouldn't lose it, that and the pride band you got when we went to see the San Diego Pride Parade, do you remember?"

Her son nodded. "Yes, you gave Noah one didn't you?"

"I did, and he wore it all the time," smiled Elizabeth. "You two just had the most innocent homoerotic friendship. Your father and I would talk about it all the time."

"You did?" Kurt asked as his mother nodded.

"Sure, we had money riding you'd be boyfriends by the end of the holiday."
"Mom, we weren't even boyfriends."

"Sweetie, he gave you a ring. It's like that Beyonce singer you like says. If you like it then you should put a ring on it?"

Kurt sighed. "Oh Lord..."

"That ring was the clincher. Your father owed me twenty dollars after that, but he'd known he was going to lose ever since he'd heard Noah call you his "Gay Jane"."

"You're not still betting on me are you?"

"No," Elizabeth laughed, "but I can if you want. Watching your father pay up is quite satisfying."

"You're terrible," said Kurt. "You were getting richer as I was saying goodbye."

"Yes, but I never spent it," replied Elizabeth, shaking her head. "Somehow I couldn't bring myself to."

"Why not?"

"It just didn't seem right."

"Did you have a friend like Noah when you were a younger?"

"I did, yes," Elizabeth nodded. "I was a little older than you were, around twelve or thirteen I think, but when I lived with my parents in New England, there was an Italian boy, his name was Pietro, and he lived down the street from us." Kurt smiled, listening on. "He had a thing for me, brought me flowers every day and he'd walk me to school, but one day there was an accident. His father had been making a bonfire, Pietro had got too close and I was told he'd died from his injuries soon after."

"That is such a sad story," Kurt muttered, his voice in sorrow.

"Yes, but I try to remember the times when he was alive and then it doesn't hurt so much when I remember him," said his mother. "So believe me sweetie when I say this, I understood your pain when you had to say goodbye to Noah, and when you had to say goodbye to Tina, your friend in elementary, when she returned to China after that, do you remember?"

Her fair son nodded. "Yes, I was the only citizen left in "Cootie Town"."

"I will always be there to comfort you if you have to say goodbye to any other friend," continued Elizabeth, "whether it be Sugar or those in The Warbles, but let's hope that doesn't happen."

Kurt scoffed. "No, I don't think Sugar will ever let me go."

"I don't think those Dalton boys will either," said his mother, smiling cheekily once more, yet Kurt didn't mind it so much this time, instead laughing a "oh mom," as if the teasing comment were a praise, one he could feel proud of himself.

"My fabulous gay son, having a way with the boys and girls. How do those Britney lyrics go again? All of the boys and all of the girls are begging to if you seek."

"Whoa okay, that's enough," said Kurt, standing up. "I really have to stop singing these songs when around you."

"Sing me something now."
"Oh mom, do I have to?"

"Go on, I need music. Sing me something from Disney. You always used to."

"I Wonder." He would sing the song as he brushed his mother's hair until it was as smooth as silk, and it would take very little time, for how lovely it was. Hair not as strawberry blonde as it had been, but a rosy brown, hair not coarse that would have the brush snagging through the snarls, would have Kurt tearing half her hair out of head if he persisted, only to throw the brush onto the chair in defeat, but no. There was no mounting frustration with a grab for the scissors to get those knots, snip, snip, snip, but easy reign, Sleeping Beauty's lyrics that had Kurt now singing in a radiant countertenor range, "I wonder, I wonder if my heart keeps singing will my song go winging to someone who'll find me and bring back a love song to me?"

In song and he usually would not think of anything else, yet Kurt's mind would stray to thoughts of Sugar and her parents' divorce. Al Motta, a man shabbily reated by his wife on grounds of "cruelty" for he had a temper, a business temper. He was "Italian, and never forgot a slight, and never forgave an enemy," with Sugar having inherited his hawk like nose and swarthy Italian good looks, yet was expected to be taken by her mother in her custody along with a large divorce settlement, and would only officially settle once she decided she'd sucked enough of her ex-husband's bone marrow. Oh, the divorce would be ingrained in their child's head like bowling pins struck by a vicious ball, Sugar there to reap the shame in such ugliness.

And then thoughts to his dates, to all those boys he'd seen for no more than a few weeks, some of them having ended rather unexpectedly, abruptly even, with not even a chance to see each other again to say goodbye, to those that had ended on good terms, or as good a terms as they could reach upon the nature of the "dumping," and Kurt would wince at that word, so harsh a term as if he'd taken them out with the trash, or had disposed of them along with waste in a infested landfill site. But sometimes it hadn't worked out, the youngest he'd dated, a Princeton bound poet, having been his own age, then fifteen, with the oldest, a race car driver, having been twenty-four, who he'd discovered belatedly had been engaged. To a woman.

Thoughts were to then come to finally settle on Noah, the boy he'd last seen when he was only eight years old in Coronado and Kurt would smile faintly at this, saying nothing, as if recalling those days like a fading sepia tinted photograph that could not be restored before it went blank, their own photos of the holiday he hadn't seen in years and stored in a cabinet in his father's study, there to gather dust, an ominous feeling it now brought. No recent word of that holiday, of Noah either until now. Yet with it and he could remember everything, every detail without his mother's help, without these cute anecdotes. The way he and Noah had hypnotized each other into that friendship. The way he paused now. The way his finger felt naked.

Glee

.

Evening time, and mother and son both would gussy up finishing touches in front of mirrors before dinner served punctually from eight till ten in the main hall. They had showered that griny smell of travel off themselves, slightly more energized after a long nap they'd taken on the quilt crumpled bed that now lay strewn in clothes and damp towel robes, the bathroom still a sauna of heavy condensation that wouldn't settle but would air into the bedroom like a moist fog, a mist, to reveal Kurt in a coral pink polo and cream jeans, printed canvas shoes at his feet, and Elizabeth following close behind, dressed in a turquoise blue maxi dress, the chiffon dissolving into a leopard print...
towards the bottom with printed plumerias in blossom at the hem.

They were about to leave, already late as it was with Elizabeth slipping on her Greek sandals as her son wafted over to the mirror by the wall, the only one free from condensation you couldn't draw a smiley face on with your finger, a white jumper in his hand and something on his ring finger, a ring, one he'd found by chance in his mother's jewelry bag that even she hadn't been aware of. Oh my... oh goodness gracious! Oh sweetie, w-what a surprise! It was Noah's promise ring! And it still fit! Yet barely as Elizabeth lightly teased him on their way over to dinner. "Have you grown at all?" And Kurt smiled faintly, the ring too tight to twist around comfortably as he'd used to with it, now saying, "Some things you just can't outgrow, I guess."

The ring would soak in his attention, the way it appeared to not of aged since the day it had been given to him, no apparent scratches or dulling of the titanium with the non-weathered markings still having that way of bringing on the sound of the ocean in his mind, those Californian waves, oh the memories! He'd barely glance upon entering the dining room and its African décor that carried right through it, some tribal features endearingly old and faded as if testaments to time; the steep roofs supported by both beams of wood and bark, the balcony doors thrown wide open to let in a cool slightly drafty breeze; a stone fireplace large enough to stand inside with a worn stone hearth nearby and long bare floorboards polished to gleam.

Wandering further in and they were welcomed by their host with a hand gestured to the long candle lit dining table in the center of the room, a twenty-four seater with napkins folded into Bishop hats before each chair, cutlery posed with porcelain boats filled with African violets, so many of the furnishings similar to those in their suite; old, antique safari hand-made tables and chairs; wall hanging African masks on tribal Aztec influenced patterned wallpaper, the many braided rugs, the hand sewn quilts on the armchairs, topped with needlepoint cushions, yet it all retaining a sense of modernity, for this was the latest trend in architecture Kurt had read, even with the African take on antique clocks that had him thinking of his grandmother.

The promise ring had fallen under her elderly gaze upon Kurt's visit to her home soon after his return from California, and he could recall smiling and smiling, even though his nostrils had pinched at her sour yeasty unwashed smell, her hair faded a dull grayish brown, oddly frizzed like shredded wheat with her face seemingly flattened, the skin sallow and minutely creased like crumpled paper that had been brought quickly back to life as her watery eyes had shone, her thin as a slit mouth smiling as he'd recounted to her everything, his "grand" adventure as she'd called it with this boy Noah she'd said sounded like "quite the character", his ring simply "charming." "Oh, to be young again," she'd laughed deeply, "Swept off your feet, and at only eight."

A month later, she'd died from heart failure, Kurt's story "God bless you child, I love you," having kept a smile on her face until the end and Kurt had been told this by his stricken mother at the funeral, both of them with Burt dressed with fastidious care and taste along with the other mourners. That day, he'd worn Noah's ring, and on the first day back at school, and on Noah's birthday he'd not been able to attend, and on the birthday after that, and then no longer, an eventual end, yet the records within his mind were blurred upon its abandonment, his forgetting of Noah's promise that had waited for this day, that he'd return to look and smile its way, and to slide the ring back onto his finger as if he were eight again, when he had treasured it.

Meanwhile, their host, a brown shirted, low browed woman with black hair skinned back and fastened at the nape of her neck continued to show them rather laconically in direction to their table, the sound of conversation and cutlery all around but to the sudden feeling of Elizabeth grabbing hold of his arm, her words a mutter, "Oh my goodness", and with blood rushing to Kurt's head to see a familiar man making his way towards them with a handsome grin, to hear his respiration and voice after eight years and heart pounding chaos was induced. It was Thomas Puckerman, dressed in shirt
and slacks and arriving before them with arms open wide saying, "Lizzie! Kurt! Hey!" Yes, the same man, Noah's father, Hollywood chap about town, Thomas.

Oh what a face these two were pulling. Kurt's lips, like his mother's, parted in a slightly foolish but wonderfully endearing gape, or so the Puckerman patriarch found them to be. Elizabeth was as lovely as he remembered, taking in her generously flowing maxi dress, the slight lentigo camouflaging on her rosy rustic features, even the plumbaceous umbrae under her eyes bearing freckles. And Kurt, now taller, slimmer, older. A teenager, though not with a complexion of that of an untidy high school boy or girl for that matter who applied shared cosmetics with grubby fingers to an unwashed face, but with a smooth tender bloom from his earlier childhood days when he'd used to roll with Noah in play on their hotel bed, two little tousled heads, together.

*It was so easy to think of them both as kids. The hilarious conversations I'd overhear, the muse of invention handing Noah absolutely anything to impress Kurt like the boyish hoodlum surfer he'd been until the end of that fatal summer in a final attempt to thwart fate, they'd escaped the hotel under some flimsy pretext to "talk", despite my thoughts they'd hide in the violet shadow of red rocks on the beach to engage in a brief session of avid kisses and caresses. Perhaps the greatest regret my own son ever had. Not to have ever got to kiss the one who got away. It had made of it a permanent obstacle to any romance throughout his youth since. The "Kurt" phase the account of an unsuccessful first tryst. But what if that one boy lost came back? What then?*

"Thomas," Elizabeth exclaimed. "Oh my goodness, Thomas Puckerman. Is that you?"

The approaching man laughed, bringing her in for a welcoming embrace. "Sure is Liz, how are you?"

"I'm well, thank you. I'm very well. I-… What are you doing here? We haven't seen you in years."

"I know, it's been a while, right." He turned to the familiar fair boy beside her. "Hey Kurt, how's it going?"

"Hi, Mr. Puckerman," Kurt smiled demurely.

"Look at you, all grown up. Wow. How old are you now?"

"Sixteen."

"Ah, yes," the man nodded. "Same age as Noah. How are you finding it?"

"Um… well, one thing I have noticed is that a lot of adults ask me about my plans for college and I'm always there thinking don't they want to know what my favorite color is? I mean, if they really want to talk of my education, I say the only reason I go to school is because I don't want to be an unemployed college drop out. I want to be an unemployed college graduate, but ever so more importantly, the favorite color people is aqua."

"Still the witty guy, huh," Thomas laughed. "I love it."

"How is Noah, Thomas?" Elizabeth asked. "How is your family doing?"

"They're good. They're all good. Connie still stays at home, and Sarah's nine now. So much like her brother. Just last week on a field trip her 4th grade class was standing on a hill and the teacher allowed all the kids to "roll out". Of course Sarah took it literally and actually rolled down the hill so she had to hold her teacher's hand for the rest of the day."

"That is so adorable."
"Yeah," Thomas chuckled. "And Noah, well, he's still the same dude you last saw in Coronado, Kurt. Even if he says he isn't, even if he might come across now as more of a Raphael, I still have Michelangelo for a son."

Elizabeth frowned. "I'm sorry, did I miss something?"

"Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, mom," said Kurt.

"Exactly," Thomas grinned. "His heart is still all about that "Cowabunga Swag". In fact, why don't I let you be the judge."

"Excuse me?"

"It'll be great to get your opinion-"

"I don't understa-"

"Because's he's here, Kurt."

Kurt blinked, his heart leaping. "H-here? Noah's here?"

"Yeah. He's in our suite right now waiting for you. I had the idea that whilst your lovely mother and I would dine here tonight, you'd be with Noah. I'm sure you've got a hella lot of catchin up to do."

"You mean we'll be eating-"

"In our suite, yeah," Thomas grinned. "A little weird I know, but it's all informal, all casual. I mean, that's okay with you, isn't it kiddo? I don't want to force you and your mother apart against your will or anything. I just thought you and Noah might want to be by yourselves."

"Oh, no, I er... I-I'm more than curious to see Noah again, Mr. Puckerman. Believe me I am. I was only thinking of the trouble bringing the food up all the way from the kitchen is all."

"Well, I hear it'll be a cold dinner."

"Oh, okay," Kurt laughed as Thomas frowned.

"why, what is it?" He asked.

"It's just that it's a similar arrangement to past suppers I've had with boys."

"Really?"

"Yes, I've had to fight my way out of quite a few actually. 'Soda, and I hope you like pizza and something cold to follow because we really don't want the folks around do we. It's so much more fun serving ourselves don't you think? And then after supper Kurt, you must be very tired, why don't you rest your feet on my lap. I know every move."

"Sweetie, I don't think there's any need to confuse those encounters aimlessly with Noah," Elizabeth pointed. "This isn't a date."

Kurt rolled his eyes. "Unlike all the others after you bought me a camouflage sweater last year to go "hunting for boys" at my school. Don't worry, I won't be measuring the distance from the sofa to the door when I'm with Noah, and I don't think there's any evidence he can run just as fast as the next boy either, although come to think of it, I do recall his incredible athleticism."
"Just this afternoon Thomas, Kurt and I were talking about Noah and Coronado."

Thomas grinned. "Is that so?"

"Yes," She nodded. "Kurt was telling me he remembered how, what was it, how Noah would freak people out in public restrooms by saying "come in" whenever they'd knock on the stall door."

"And whenever someone would step on his flip flop for it to come off, so would the head of the one responsible," Kurt said. "And how he wished his name was "Brad", so that he would be "75% rad"."

"And the ring," Elizabeth said, "you know, the same promise ring Noah gave Kurt, we found it in my jewelry. It was still there. Such a coincidence. In fact, you have it on don't you, sweetie? Show us the ring." Lifting his hand, Kurt presented the jewel to inspecting eyes.

"Ah yeah," Thomas nodded, grinning. "Noah bought one of his own too that was identical. Well, he asked me for the money and quite a lot of it too, the rings weren't cheap, but he really wanted to get them. One for you and one for him."

"It was so touching," Elizabeth smiled. "Oh Kurt, you have to make sure Noah sees it okay. Just casually work it into your gestures. It'll make it seem as though you're wearing it just for him."

"Well I have to find him first. Where is your suite, Mr. Puckerman?"

"Its Cliff Lodge One, that way," Thomas replied, pointing west. "But I'll have someone escort you. We don't want you getting lost along the way."

"Honestly Thomas," Elizabeth began. "It's as if you knew we were going to be here."

"I'll explain everything over dinner," Thomas replied, grinning. "It's a long story and I don't want to keep Kurt any longer than we have to."

"Alright," Elizabeth nodded, turning to her son as she ran a brushing hand along his shoulder. "Kurt, say hi to Noah for me when you see him, okay. I'm sure I'll run into him soon anyway, but it's been such a long time, and be friendly, and ask him how's he been and smile-"

"Mom, please, I can handle this."

"I know you can, sweetie. I know, I know. Just have fun. Smile!"

I was then promptly led from the main lodge by an attendant with a shiny forehead and plucked eyebrows and whose dark brown eyes had a funny way of travelling over me yet carefully avoided my own. Her words were polished and practiced as she inquired after my evening yet stirring brain thrushing thoughts only served to render my answers monosyllabic. Even upon our arrival at the magnificent Cliff Lodge Suite that allegedly offered guests the ultimate in safari luxury, the first lodge with its own private pool and a Jacuzzi for the second, and I barely worded an answer to the attendants comment on the "vulgar" décor, a kind of horrible hybridization between modern and African I myself appreciated. "Well, all I can say is give me vulgarity," I replied quietly.

They were in the suite's large multipurpose room, the bed and en-suite to Kurt's left, the adjoining living area just beyond with the balcony doors opened. In the living area, in place of where he supposed a coffee table had originally existed between the couch and its two accompanying armchairs, was a small dining table laden with two plates, two napkin Bishop hats, cutlery out for two, glasses for two, multiple sauce filled sauces with the food itself on a separate table. Kurt deliberated over it all, but how nervous he was! His legs shaking, his legs numb, his composure
groping and blundering to the edges of his former elegance. He could not believe this scheme. One that was a marvel of primitive art. Who had set it up? Who was responsible? Who was-

A sudden knock on the door and Kurt, turning round, would find it difficult to express with adequate force that flash, that shiver, that impact of passionate recognition to the rooted figure staring at him; that gaze smoldering and melting warm from hazel eyes; skin Texan tanned. His masculine handsome face was square in shape, defined in his youth. His near-black hair had been shaved into a buzz cut, except for a trimmed Mohawk, short and gelled in the center, and like a man on the beaches of Santa Monica or Malibu, both he'd wandered up and down himself many a time, he wore a starched white cotton shirt, loose, unbuttoned low at the collar with both sleeves rolled up to the elbow; wearing navy boot cut jeans and flip flops on his feet.

Kurt could not speak, a quavered high voice if he had, perhaps a croak, and too shocked to give to the tense moment a musical-comedy deftness he might have done with anyone else for that was his gift, a knack for desperate improvisation in which he would laugh gaily, smile a bright smile and wave at you to wake up, yet these were the fevered seconds running with that face before him he had not seen in eight long years, taking him right back to Coronado, to the Orange Avenue fountain where he and this boy had first met upon the toss of a coin, and to once again be in his company, his childhood friend known only for that week in July, so truly disbelieving, America's little surfer dude of California's waves, his Tarzan finally here, Noah Puckerman.

And by the door left ajar, Noah Puckerman looked right back, blind to the way the fair boy's white jumper appeared to nearly fall to the ground through lax fingers, the attendant beside him ready for the catch before it hit the braided rug, but just looking, now slowly nearing the two for he knew this was Kurt Hummel. He didn't have to look at the boy blankly in a few full minutes of unrecognition to know it was him, the same boy, that face so fair the skin looked as if it had been blanched from color left luminous from the heat, those lips so red, and those eyes! He had not forgotten those damn eyes that had fucked his heart and had fucked and fucked it and Christ! It was Kurt! Kurt! His Gay Jane, looking just the same, hardly changed, untouched. Kurt.

They cried out each other's names, "Noah!" "Kurt!" as if on a dock with one of them having returned from a long sea voyage, with the two young boys rushing to embrace each other, Kurt's embrace, a dancer's stealthy grace, and Noah, hugging him so hard he lifted the fair boy grunting in the crook of his right arm, all but crushing Kurt's ribs, his other arm coming to wrap itself around that slim waist, that large tan hand just above the boy's buttocks. There they dove their faces in each other's necks, their bodies pressed hard against one another's, and only pulling away to look at each other in hectic happiness, their hearts that beat ever so wildly, their eyes that could not believe. Oh my God, is that you? Smiling so nervously. Is... is that really you?

The host looked on smiling, staring at them both. They were old friends she imagined. Friends who hadn't seen each other in time that had stretched out too long, although, and her heart would melt at this, she would not rule out long lost lovers. The way they clung to each other. It was one of the most touching sights she'd ever seen. A fantastic movie moment she would remember for the rest of her life. The looks on their faces, just look at them. Both of them breathing out each other's names, fumbling hands that cupped each other's faces. She swore she saw tears falling from their eyes as she edged her way out the door, now allowing the two their privacy as they remained in each other's arms, hugging hard, their night only just beginning.

~ PLEASE REVIEW ~

(But if you wish to criticize, may it be constructive. I'm not going to learn from my mistakes and improve if you vent.)
Author's Note: Hey, everyone! I've decided to post Part II of my story early to coincide with the Winter Solstice. I just couldn't wait until summer. I'd had the idea of posting all four parts over four years but I don't have time for that so here I am, following in Madonna's Rebel Heart example. Chapter 6 here is my Christmas present to you all and I hope it was worth the wait. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! May you have sweet tidings of comfort, joy and Puckurt in 2015!

Disclaimer: I do not own the rights to the characters from Glee as I don't own the show. I'm not earning money from this and no copyright or trademark infringement is intended.

~ STAY TUNED FOR MORE BY FOLLOWING/FAVORITING ~
This night, the first night for Kurt in Ulusaba and not spent in the main hall sitting with strangers only met hours earlier on the flight here, some of them with stories to tell, yes, yet with others ill-smelling with perspiration, their underarms stained and of course well-mannered boys like him would be too polite to clamp his hands to his nose in fear of insulting them, his mother too, forcing on a fading smile, the glaze of boredom in her eyes, but it was the sound of an instant hiss like that of a cats at the uncapping of a bottle high up in the Cliff Lodge, filling his glass to the brim, lemonade bubbling over his fingers, a ticklish sensation! To have it gallantly tapped against with a root beer bottle that Kurt found himself dining with Noah Puckerman.

How was it that they were together again, with refreshments in hand in a South African private game reserve? How was it so, that Noah had known Kurt would be here and invite him for dinner, unless he'd known for some time, the planning that had gone into this, the answer, the explanation having further surprised the fair boy, for what a small world it was! One in which Noah's father, Thomas Puckerman and Al Motta knew each other after Thomas's growing independent record company, Puckerman Records, had allied with fellow successful music corporations, evolved through a convoluted series of corporate merges and acquisitions, and had attracted a host of Wall Street investing "wolves", including the likes of Motta himself.

And Kurt, his name had been carried through word of mouth though mouths drinking down flutes of bubbling champagne at a music event in Nashville Tennessee upon the topic of Dalton Academy, Motta having attended a recent meeting there with the headmaster and fellow governors only to mention through passing comment a boy, a close friend of his daughter's that had pricked Thomas Puckerman's ears, asking after him, "did you say Kurt Hummel?" Motta having smiled, "Charming little creature. Why? Do you know him?" And Thomas had said yes, years ago on a holiday to Coronado, through his son Noah, for Noah and Kurt had been close, even closer than Sugar was with him, a friendship that had abruptly ended when Kurt had left.

Motta's suggestion as Thomas had taken a somber swig of his champagne flute, "perhaps have them see other again. You'd know I set something up if my Sugar was without that boy's company for eight years." And Thomas had blinked, for it had truly been that long, later mentioning upon returning to Dallas the boy's name to his son at the dinner table that had swiftly stolen Noah's attention from his mother's potato burekas in an expression of soft nostalgia. His face soft, his eyes soft, all soft to that name, "Kurt", with Sarah, now nine, having inquired after him, only to be entertained by her father with "Tarzan and Gay Jane" anecdotes that had had her teasing her brother up the stairs until he'd slammed his bedroom door in her face.

That evening, there'd been too much on his mind! A swarm of thoughts, thoughts of Kurt, buzzing continuously about Noah's head, and invigorated from photographs of that holiday, only four to five of him and Kurt he'd kept in a box he hadn't opened for some time, one full of surfer jewelry; wooden rings, key rings in shape of surfboards with his name engraved, assorted beaded necklaces and handmade bracelets made out of hemp. He'd been quite the aficionado when he'd been that young grommet surfer with a punkish attitude; though no more with his surfboard stacked
somewhere in the garage, now a running back on his high school football team, an occasional baseball player, sometimes soccer, but no longer California's little dude.

I'd changed, looking at myself in these photographs, the way I'd looked then to how I was now, I knew I had. Not sudden but gradually, school breaks no longer spent in California, no longer speaking in that surf lingo bullshit, perhaps not as hung loose about life as I had been when I was a kid, but this was the problem, that Kurt would not recognize me when my dad and I set up this plan to invite him to this place through his Motta friend, that Sugar chick of his just the seal on the invitation that we knew would have Kurt accepting, 'cause Kurt could not know of this, of me, some creepy "Noah" dude he wouldn't remember from his past wanting to say hi. It would fuck everything up. But he had remembered. After all this time, Kurt remembered me.

Staring at Kurt, he knew he was staring as both of them sat comfortably on the couch, the fair boy's legs together in perfect upright posture as if he'd just been told to straighten up at his school desk by the whip of the cane, though coming naturally to him, comfortable even, unlike Noah beside him, slouching his broad body with legs spread wide in bawdy suggestiveness, utterly relaxed and content, a soft smile on his full lips as his friend sipped and sipped away at his lemonade. So thirsty! Now looking at Noah and laughing lightly, "What?" he asked, but Noah merely chuckled shaking his head and resumed to stare at him, his blood throbbing in both his temples for God, this was Kurt. He could not believe it was the same Kurt sitting with him.

He was pretty! Young, sweet-faced and pretty! Well dressed and pretty! His chestnut brown hair still groomed into that same side parting and pretty! His body slim and lithe, one he knew how to move well in, like a man who knew to wear a pin-striped suit instead of letting the suit wear him, so much grace and so elegant in movement, prettiness abound for his whole being was pretty to Noah, and it pleased him. Oh by his testosterone it pleased him, now coming to lean forward, elbows on his knees for a closer look at features some could have debated looked "exactly like" those holiday photographs. To others, he looked "nothing like" them. To Noah, he could still see that same boy child in Kurt, only now squeezed into a boy teenager.

He was aware of his own body, with people always having thought it to be precocious; his frame broad and compactly built like his father's, "mesomorph" with supple lean muscled arms, torso and legs, and heavier than the average athlete's. His coach on the football team would occasionally have all players shifting higher in the weight classes, and he'd even begun wrestling after school. The Mohawk had been his idea, his hair trimmed so brutally short it had risked him looking gaunt, yet instead highlighted his chiseled features and carved jawline; and around his neck, he wore a new surfer necklace, for his neck had grown too thick to wear those he'd worn as a child, his idea again now to wear one for Kurt this evening, something for him.

He asked me if I wanted to touch it, his necklace, and I was hesitant at first, so close a question boys had asked on my dates with them, the soldier, wanting to me to touch his medal pinned to his uniform, the well-dressed actor, his cufflinks, with all the others similar, before their zips were undone, but Noah wasn't like that. I could trust him to lean forward, have my fingers trace those beads and not have him expect me to touch him anywhere else, because we were friends, freshly reunited, nothing more, our relationship perhaps admittedly homoerotic as children, "boyfriends" I remember our status was before I left, but it was something to laugh about jokingly, to look back on those pet names we had for each other with embarrassed smiles.

"You remember Tarzan and Gay Jane?" Noah asked as Kurt nodded.

"I do."

"Why did we call each other that?"
"We were eight at the time and not disposed to discuss our reasons, or yours rather."

"Mine?" Noah asked, brows raised.

"As soon as I got you into Tarzan, you self-proclaimed yourself as him, remember?" Said Kurt, amused. "Then came "Gay Jane", but I think that was because you thought one good name deserved another."

"I guess I was thoughtful like that," Noah chuckled. "I wanted you to feel part of something."

"It certainly got us closer," Kurt conceded. "I know I was too reserved for my own good."

"It's alright," Noah shrugged. "You just thought I'd be a dick to you like everyone else had been, but I wasn't, 'cause I was that cool." He laughed. "No, but I was a total moron. I did a lot of stupid things, always shaka signing people, calling 'em "peeps", the crap I spoke, seriously, how did you not slap me?"

"No, I liked it," Kurt assured, smiling. "You sure could talk surfer talk. You taught me some words, I even think I remember some of them." He paused to rack his brain as Noah watched, intrigued. "A "Big Kahuna" was the best guy on the beach, "Scubetubeular" was for awesome underwater poundage, "stealing the beach" was how much sand you could take home in your butt crack and "cable" was to fart."

Noah laughed, impressed. "Oh man, you totally remembered!"

"I know, it's all coming back to me," Kurt said, smiling. "I remember I had to learn what they meant fast or I wouldn't know what you were talking about."

"Pfft," Noah snorted, "My talking wasn't much better. At school my teacher said I was book smart, but really I was just 99% bullshit and 1% dinosaur trivia."

Kurt laughed. "Well that and you wanted to grow your hair out in dreadlocks so that you'd have Tarzan's weave."

Running a large hand over his trimmed head, Noah chuckled. "Yeah."

"Whose idea was it for the Mohawk?" Kurt asked, eyeing the motion with curiosity.

"Mine," replied Noah. "I wanted to try on something new for high school, so I got my razor and started shavin'."

Kurt blinked. "Just like that?"

"Nah, I'd thought about it, and my friends were all real into me doin it, so I did. Besides, I knew I'd rock a Mohawk 'cause you once styled my hair into one, remember? At Legoland?"

"Oh yeah," Kurt smiled. "It was all wet from the water park. You did like that look didn't you."

"And you?" Noah asked, watching as Kurt looked his hair over. "What do you think?"

"I think it looks cool. You did a good job shaving the strip straight, but keep it trimmed. It looks good short."

Noah smirked. "Does it have me looking like a bangin nardude yet?"

"A what?"
"A bangin nardude," Noah repeated. "You don't remember?"

"Um…," Kurt paused. "I know "bangin" means hot, "nardude"… I don't know. An attractive guy?"

"Here, I'll give you a clue," Noah began, rising from the couch and flexing his arms.

"Muscle!" Kurt exclaimed, catching on.

"Fuck yeah!" Noah smiled as Kurt shook his head, laughing

"Of course, a hot guy with muscle."

Sitting back down, Noah chuckled, "You said if I kept my hair short, you could see me as one someday."

"I could and I can," smiled Kurt. "Noah, you are a bangin' nardude."

Noah grinned. "Yeah?"

"Yes, you're buff now. I mean, you may not have Tarzan's locks, but you've got his body."

"Totally," smiled Noah. "Have to look good for my Gay Jane, don't I."

"Aw, you didn't have to," Kurt laughed.

"Sure I did, 'cause now I can lift you."

"What?" Kurt asked, his laughter subsiding as Noah rose to his feet, hand held out to him.

"Come on, I said I would didn't I?"

"You did?"

"Yeah, when you said no dude would lift you in ballet, I said one day, when I'd grow guns, I'd be that dude."

Kurt was silent. "I don't do ballet anymore."

"What?" Noah frowned. "Why, Kurt?"

"Because no boy did lift me," Kurt replied quietly, "… so lift me, Noah."

"On it," Noah nodded, pausing as Kurt now stood before him, his hands on the boy's waist, he frowned. "Er… how do I do this? Is there a lifting position or some-"

"You think you can sit me on your shoulder?" Kurt asked.

"Sure, I can do that," Noah nodded, now moving to the space in front of the dining table with Kurt in front, Noah behind, asking, "Ready?"

"Ready," the fair boy replied, and lift.

"Oh my-"

"It's alright Kurt, I got you," assured Noah, steadying the boy as he came to sit on his broad shoulder, balancing him as he looked up. "You alright up there, dude?"
"Y-yes," the fair boy replied, his voice shaking through shudders, his breath heavy with panicked adrenaline! His smile! His laugh now a squeak and gaspish as if Noah's hands on his thighs and belly were tickling him, touching him, now spreading out his own arms wide like a swan might spread its wings for the flight. "N-noah..." he muttered, his voice above a whisper. "...This is amazing. I... I-"

"You can stay up there as long as you like," Noah smiled, walking slowly out onto the balcony, his grip kept firm on Kurt and lifting his head to see him poised so elegantly, the most elegant boy he'd even seen, there atop his throne, Noah's shoulder his own throne, with Kurt himself so happy! And giggling! Smiling! It was a sight that had Noah thinking all those weights, all those dumbbells, had been worthwhile. *Fuckin beautiful.*

"Thank you, Noah," smiled Kurt as Noah descended him from his perch and into his arm, returning the smile.

"Any time."

"Noah, are you seriously holding me with just one arm?"

"Dude, relax," chuckled Noah, returning inside. "You're as light as a silk scarf or a kimono sash or something. You weigh nothing," now bringing his other arm up under the boy's knees and coming to hold him like a bride.

"Another position?" Kurt laughed. "How many more can I expect?"

"Well, how many would you have done if you hadn't quit ballet?"

"None, that's the point. And I didn't really quit because of that, but because I lost interest in it."

"Bummer, 'cause you're real good at it. All that waving your arms and shit, it looked good."

"Really? That?" Kurt laughed. "I was just pretending to be a bird, or a stuck up king throwing cake crumbs to little peasant boys in the street."

"You were?"

"No, but I wouldn't be surprised if that's what ballerina bitches think of when they're lifted. You've got to work with what works best for you, I suppose." There was an awkward pause as Noah made no move to settle Kurt back down. "Noah," Kurt said. "You can put me down now."

"Not yet," Noah protested softly, running his eyes along the boy's body. "Just a little longer."

"Okay," Kurt muttered, smiling uncertainly as Noah watched him. "Noah, how long have you been working out?"

"Since ninth grade," the boy replied, swinging him softly from side to side. "I had to bulk up to make the varsity teams."

"And are you still surfing?"

"No," Noah replied, ceasing his sways. "I stopped after a while." Walking over to the couch, he sat down, Kurt still in his lap.

"How come?"

"Like you and your ballet, I lost interest in it I guess," Noah shrugged, bringing his arms around
Kurt. "We weren't goin' all that often to beaches and it's not like they had a surfer club at my school, so I stopped riding my surf board and started wearing a football helmet instead."

"Oh..." Kurt sighed.

"My dad took it hard," Noah continued. "He wanted me to keep at it, kept on to all my surfboarding stuff, wouldn't throw anything away just in case I'd change my mind."

"But you never did, did you?"

"No, but I swim though. I'm on my school's swim team. Helped with the body here, and I didn't want to forget totally about the sea."

Kurt smiled. "And I still dance."

"You do?" Grinned Noah, his friend nodding.

"A little ballet and contemporary. I'm not part of any club or anything, but sometimes in my dorm room, my matron will ask me to dance for her as she does the laundry."

"Really?" Noah chuckled, tightening his embrace. "You do that?"

"Anything to make it more interesting for her as she folds clothes, yes," Kurt nodded. "Her name's Yvette. She comforted me on my first night at Dalton. I'd woken up homesick, ringing my parents and begging them to bring me home and she was the one who found me crying by the receiver. Since then we've been close and I'll talk to her about a lot of things."

"Like what?" Noah asked.

"Fashion, food, architecture," listed Kurt, eyes on his hands as they sat comfortably on Noah's shoulder. "I'll tell her stories of when I was younger, and then she in turn will tell me stories of the things she's seen in the dorms over the years."

"Yeah?" Noah smiled, eagerly.

"I once told her when I was six, I was afraid of ghosts, so my mom gave me a hand held vacuum that I'd take around the house vacuuming the air with, so I'd get rid of all the ghosts."

The tan boy chuckled. "That's fuckin cute."

"And then she told me that soon after she began working at Dalton, she saw two boys having sex with each other in the dorm room toilets, but it wasn't gay they said, because they were "wearing a condom"."

"Ah dude!" Noah laughed.

"She said doing it where people tinkle isn't the best place," Kurt smiled, "but she did commend them on using protection, because if they'd been two lesbians, and they'd both ended up impregnating themselves, it would have been twice as bad."

"Ah man, they got so busted! What happened to them?"

"Well Yvette said she wouldn't tell," Kurt said, shrugging. "It wasn't in her heart to report them, they'd been properly ousted. I mean, they could protest as much as they liked but whenever she'd see them after that classically overcompensating when they'd flirt with girls she'd think "damn gurl, he gay."
"Ah dude," Noah chuckled. "She sounds hella cool."

"She is," Kurt nodded. "She's one of the few people I can talk about sex and dating openly with. She'll tell me, Kurt, you want a man with a strong jawline so you'll have a sturdy place to sit. A man with an attractive voice, man pecs that do the thing, arms that do the thing, basically any muscle that does the thing, but you also want a man who'll see you and think "yes" and will keep on thinking "yes" for a very long time, a man that will do anything to be your everything."

"Yeah?" Noah grinned warmly, Kurt's cheeks now blushing.

"She'll also tell me if he's a gentlemen, he'll hold my hair out of my face as I suck his dong, if he wants me to keep going but I've had enough I'm to say "sorry, I'm vegan." I'm not to let him coerce me into an awful sex position he got from porn, because chances are, my face will end up in his armpit and I won't know where my arms are, and that even the nicest and kindest of boys I know will want to cum all over everything in sight."

"Whoa… this Yvette chick keeps it real," Noah muttered, taken aback but impressed. There was a pause.

"I am gay… Noah," Kurt said quietly. "I think I've known ever since I learned what it meant. You remember? When my parents took me to see the San Deigo Pride Parade?"

Noah nodded. "Sure, it's where they got our wristbands."

"Yes, and seeing learning about what it was to be gay, it had me thinking. That and about our friendship."

"Really?"

"You have to admit at times it crossed the bromance barrier."

"Yeah," Noah chuckled, "I guess."

"And if I'd had a better understanding of how I'd felt or if I'd been old enough to realize it, I think I may have liked you more than a friend. That's how I knew from then on, that although I enjoyed the company of girls, there was something about boys; I'd feel different about them. That there was something there beyond friendship. I just didn't know what it was."

"So…” Noah smirked. "… You think you had a crush on me?"

"Noah-"

"Fuck yeah!" Noah exclaimed happily. "You were in total fambo with me weren't you?"

"I said I could have been!" Kurt protested. "I don't know if I was!"

"It's okay Kurt, don't worry," Noah chuckled. "I can totally see why you're into dudes. I mean, have you seen me? I'm all dude. With my sturdy jawline for you sit on and my muscles doin "the thing". I'm the guy your matron wants you to hook up with."

"Oh no, she wouldn't trust you," Kurt laughed, shaking of the head. "You're the kind of guy that if I felt for a condom in your pants I'd find ramen noodle flavor packets."

"Hey!" Noah pouted. "I always practice safe sex! Well I used to, until I mastered it. Now I'm permitted to practice Danger Sex."
"What is that? Barebacking?"

"Sure," Noah nodded, taking in his friend's gaping expression. "Kurt dude, relax! It just takes me twenty-five years to cum otherwise, and besides condoms do nothing for me. They make my dick feel inauthentic for the chick and it just creates too much distance between us. So instead, I pull out."

"I hope you're careful."

"Don't worry, I know what I'm doing. I would have knocked my girlfriend up a whole lotta times if I didn't."

"You have a girlfriend?" Kurt repeated, the wind thrown from his chest, a sudden ache, a sharpness running itself, scraping along his heart as Noah nodded.

"Yeah."

"Is her name Mysterious Blood Pyramid? From St. Aztec School for Babelinis?"

"What?" Noah frowned. "Nah, her name's Kitty. She goes to my school."

"Oh right," Kurt muttered, removing Noah's ring from his finger. "How long have you two been dating?"

"Since January," Noah replied. "She's a cheerleader. Total babe. She'll sit on my lap at parties and on my face in the bedroom."

"Oh... so I'm guessing you two have had sex."

"Yeah man!" Noah snorted, "I slept with her twice before, and you know how it is when you're dating someone new, it's all food and fucking, sleep, then more food, but mostly fucking."

"Yeah..." mumbled Kurt, looking down into his lap.

"You know one time she asked me to learn sign language with her so she could tell me how bad she wanted to fuck me in front of my parents."

"Well she certainly sounds like a keeper."

"What about you, Kurt? Have you done it?"

Kurt shook his head. "No, I haven't."

Noah frowned. "Why not, dude?"

"My virginity was made by Nokia, Noah, because it's unbreakable," Kurt joked. "In fact, I'm going to keep my virginity until it turns into delicious expensive aged wine."

"Won't anyone give you the D?"

Kurt snorted. "I didn't want the D. I wanted the A. I wanted to pass my classes."

"Wait, so you've never dated? Never had a boyfriend?"

"According to my mom I have too many boyfriends."

"You do? How many do you have?"
"A boy like me never tells," winked Kurt. "Besides they're not boyfriends so much as they are dates. They ask me out and they'll take me in their open top convertibles to wherever, fairgrounds, filming locations, derelict mansions, anywhere and there we'll talk and get to know each other."

"Really?" Noah asked, seemingly unimpressed.

"Yeah," Kurt nodded, "and if I like them and if they're good to me, I'll let them touch me and--"

"Yeah, baby," Noah hummed, smirking.

"And kiss me--"

"Ooh yeah, baby!"

Kurt rolled his eyes. "And then they'll take me home."

"What?" Frowned Noah, his smirk now gone. "That's it? That's how they end? Where's the hot sex?"

"There is no hot sex, Noah. I told you I don't have sex with them."

"Are they all swamp monkey ugly dudes?"

"No," Kurt protested. "Most of them have been real lookers, and they're all charming as state fair silver polish sellers, especially the older ones, because you can do whatever to them and they'll be fine with it, whilst in high school you high five a boy and they text you "what are we?" I date to have fun Noah, and I don't need "the D" for that."

Noah pouted childishly. "Sure, but you know what else is fun? Sex."

"Maybe I should live my sex life through you then," Kurt laughed. "You seem to be plenty healthy in that regard."

"You know what," Noah began, bringing his arms out from around Kurt and resting his fingers on his temples, eyes closed as he smiled. "I'm just gonna picture you getting some."

"What?!" Kurt exclaimed. "No Noah, you are not going to--"

"I see it! I see the D! I see it! And… wait… wait… wa-there you are, Kurt!"

"Noah!

"Fuck yeah, baby. I know you want it. You can deny the D all you like but we both know it ain't gonna last. It just makes you so sexually frustrated!"

"Noah! Stop!"

"Go on, take it! Take your blue ball frustration out on that D dude! I wanna see your orgasm have you grabbin at shit that ain't there, kickin lamps over, throwin pillows and your eyes rollin back as you recite ancient spells in languages of long lost civilizations!"

Kurt huffed. "Noah, will you quit already! Stop picturing me like that."

Noah shrugged, re-embracing him, "Hey, "you can be the most platonic man or lady friend in the world Kurt, but at some point I'm gonna wonder what you sound and look like when you cum."

Rising now from his friend's lap, Kurt sighed, "I need to eat some food. I'm starved."

Noah smirked. "Yeah, I bet you are."

South African cuisine, or the "rainbow cuisine" on glass oval plates and under silver platters, a whole multicourse from starter to dessert that only Kurt touched and was willing to try as Noah served himself only to food on the other end of the table, all non-kosher American food, food he'd much preferred over some of the repulsive African inspired delicacies he sometimes swore he saw movement in, for how he'd yearned for burgers and fries! Creamed salmon with canned corn on toast, tuna, cheese, macaroni, chicken parts in cream sauce with potatoes, fatty and gristly barbecued brisket and chocolate pudding and fruit Jell-O with marshmallows, his request to the chef to have it all served this evening, and ladling it all on his heavy plate.

In enthusiasm, they would talk through mouthfuls of their food, through catch up conversations of interests since evolved from elementary all made melodious through scattered anecdotes. Topics of travel, hypotheses, family. Of future prospects that had Kurt claiming rather haltingly, for he was not sure, the wish to study abroad in Europe, with Noah himself expressing his plans on earning either a sports scholarship to a college, a military academy or alternatively the LAMA College for Music Professionals in Pasadena California, having since learned to play both the piano and the guitar since their last encounter, and allegedly quite good, his voice, now low with a certain baritone range, Kurt could recall being as equally pleasing to the ear.

They were a sight so delightful, yet neither one of the boys was to notice the host from before, pressing her ear against the door, squinting through the key whole and watching as the larger boy would "wolf" down his food for seconds and thirds, with his fair friend "picking at" his own, as if he admired the way the light would reflect off the cutlery's silver, the tinkling chinking sound it would sing pleasant. At times he would speak eagerly and face the other boy full on as he did, yet upon a certain delicate topic the other would attempt to bring out, and he'd appear distantly taciturn, unwilling to carry it forth, either moving onto another, or as a distraction, serving himself more food, yet his plate would be as sparse of it upon return.

Noah wasn't the only one to inquire after my dating life. Most people did. The way I'd go on many, the way I apparently wasn't "satisfied" when none of them would "make it" as my boyfriend. Untrue words spoken from their riling demons, their frustration that I preferred to keep it quiet than leaked out to the world, Sugar having once stolen my notebook for not telling her about a boy or "conquest" I'd had, only to discover nothing of special interest, just pages with my many English class notes carefully written in my school-boy hand, with no heart shaped doodles in the margins, and no mention of the boy's name in any of the them, not a single male name listed in loopy letters, something that was not "normal" she'd said in a boy my age.

It was then in maddening strategy that Noah would talk of his own dating life. How plenty of "babes" had docked at "Porta de Puckerman" since fourth grade, the first few albeit short lived; three days, one recess, half a field trip, a certain unattractive neediness that had scared them all off yet now older with his guns, "arm" and "hammer", and the game had changed with Lothario seduction having had him "dating" most of the girls at his high school before his relationship with Kitty, as well as some more scandalous romances with older women, "MILFS", one a thirty-two-year-old divorcée he'd met at her son's pool party, a glamorous hard faced woman who'd "got her claws into my boy," as his own mother would lament to everyone.

Listening on to these accounts, heartbeat by heartbeat, each word like a sliver of ice entering that same heart and Kurt would still feel that pain within he had not anticipated. So many girls on Noah's tongue, most with no names, just faceless bodies with their "tits" and "asses", "pussies" he could all picture the tan boy had "fucked", that word so ugly, tainting his memory of him, vandalizing it as a
picket axe to a marble Greek sculpture. All this desensitized sex was devaluing his idea and high opinion he had of Noah, with the promise ring since slipped off and kept hidden in his pocket, not as close to the boy on the couch as he'd been, not as willing to touch him or be touched, that lap of Noah's a perch for that Kitty girl of his, not for him.

And Noah noticed this, asking now if he was alright to which Kurt would nod, smiling a convincing sweet smile, one the host, continuing to stare through the key hole, her senses acute as a whetted straight razor, could tell was strained, saying in a whimpered whisper, "poor boy," for he was no longer himself in this room, but in an instant, an actor with no script. Then the sudden excitement in the scene as the tan boy shot up with the idea of alcohol, "we need us some booze," from his father's room, his father himself down in the main dining hall with the fair boy's mother and wouldn't be up for some time, an event the host should have prevented, yet she never once opened the door, vodka, beer, tequila and champagne all now fizzing.

The mood appeared to lighten now! Eyes wincing from belly bursts of laughter. Laughter like cartoon kids. The talk now away from dating and sex to drunk anecdotes, high school pranks, naughtiness that reminded Kurt of what Noah had done when he'd been younger and he'd laughed, laughing so hard, perhaps from the champagne that went straight to his head, his glass mixed by Noah with copious amounts of lemonade, for his tongue was as virginous to alcohol as he was to sex, burning that wee little tongue now as the tan boy taught him how to take a vodka shot, no sipping but in one quick shot down the throat for no dangerous effects, though Kurt could still feel himself getting tipsy, a foreign weakness now rushing in his bloodstream.

It was like teaching him how to be a teenager, these sparkling beverages that made him feel "funny" inside, not drunk, but high; the champagne I'd heavily diluted with lemonade like a baby bottle for him, "delicious", "magical", the fizzy sensation in his nose, but he didn't like the way the light-headedness that followed, the giddy giggling lack of control as I'd whisper shit like "ass butter" in his ear, making him laugh as I rode the food trolley like Mario Kart, as I took out a lighter and burned my pubes, laying his hands on my flexed guns, "ooh!" he'd giggle, "flex again, Noah! Flex, flex!" Even touching my surfer necklace tickled him. Christ, he was just so fuckin cute! Like a child, both of us, we were kids again, playin, Kurt, my Gay Jane, me, his Tarzan.

"You wanna try the vodka?" Noah asked, as Kurt, still clutching to his champagne, shook his head.

"Oh no," he laughed. "I couldn't possibly."

"Sure you can. Here," Noah insisted, taking a fresh glass and filling it with vodka.

"Wait, can you dilute it?" Kurt asked. "I hear it's very strong."

"I'll put some cola in for you."

"Thank you Noah," Kurt sang.

"You know," the boy began, "I was in a relationship with this stuff when I first tried it."

"You were?"

"Yeah," Noah nodded, now twisting the cap back onto the cola bottle. "It's mostly been responsible for my own party buzz since last year. There was not one boring ass person I didn't find interesting without it. Also works as liquid photoshop."

"Noah," Kurt began, putting down his glass, "alcohol is never the answer."

Noah smirked. "I know, it's the question. Yes is the answer. That's when I'm at college, I'm gonna
major in Netflix with a minor in alcohol."

"Fine," Kurt said, "but promise me you won't become a drinker."

"I don't know," Noah shrugged, "I bet there a wholla lotta drinking games out there I haven't played yet."

Kurt paused. "How about this for a drinking game, drink plenty of water throughout the day to stay hydrated so that you make sure that you're at the top of your game."

"Nice try dude," Noah snorted, "but no one's ever gonna wanna play that."

"How about take a shot for every chapter you're behind in textbook reading?"

"Kurt, just drink your cola vodka," Noah ordered, handing over the vodka cola glass and watching as Kurt coughed upon first swallow. "What's wrong?"

"I think that nearly burned my wee little tongue," giggled Kurt, "but it tastes like liquid licorice, so I guess it's not all that bad."

"Wait until you try the pure stuff," Noah grinned. "It's a total raider fest."

"How many shots before you get drunk?"

"At least three. Depends on how you drink 'em, how strong it is."

"And how are you like when you get there?"

"When I'm drunk? Hungry and horny," Noah laughed. "There is no in-between. I'll raid the fridge for food and I'll try to find someplace to put my dick in, like a really big cheese hole or a banana skin or somethin."

Kurt giggled. "A banana skin?"

"Yeah," Noah nodded. "It works great like watermelon, but I kinda always fuck the peel too hard so it falls apart in my hand."

Kurt rolled his eyes. "Oh Lord."

"Yeah, I've done and said a lotta shit when I've been shacked," laughed Noah. "Snooring snow 'cause I said I loved winter once, when I don't. Snooring pollen once which is just plant sperm 'cause I said I loved nature, and I'm always like "whoa, what if honey is just bee cum?" Or "whoa, fingers are weird. Like, our arms just split into smaller arms… okay."

Kurt's laughter, so strong, near to tipping his vodka as he came to ask through his breaths, "And whilst you're drunk, do you speak in surf lingo?"

"I dunno." Noah shrugged. "Probably. It slips out from time to time anyway, and I have to remember to talk in actual English."

Kurt smiled. "You do realize all this time you've been talking to me that way."

"I have?" Noah gaped. "Damn it-"

"No Noah, don't scold yourself," said Kurt quickly. "I like your surf lingo. I want it come out."
"But its hella weak sauce sounding when you're not on the surf- damn it," Noah cursed. "I mean, it sounds outta place anywhere else but there."

Kurt shook his head. "I'm sorry, but the surf lingo sounded cooler."

"Yeah?" Noah asked, brows raised.

"You have one colorful mother tongue, Noah," Kurt smiled. "It's as if you're shaka signing, but with your mouth." The tan boy's mind darkened pleasurably. *I'll speak surf lingo in your mouth, baby. I'll speak it in-between your legs and make you scream.* Kurt continued, unaware. "I suppose it's one of the things that make surfer boys so attractive."

Noah grinned, now leaning closer. "Yeah?"

"They're so hung loose in the way they are, and just the way they ride those surfboards of theirs, you know they have good pelvic rhythm."

"Keep talkin," Noah smirked as he came to prop his head on his elbow.

"I mean, you know what I thought of boys originally," Kurt said. "I hated them. They can never walk up to a trash can and throw things away normally and how ironic of them to make fun of the gay kid only to draw penises on literally everything."

"Word," Noah nodded.

"And the way they call other boys "pretty boy" as an insult. I don't know about you, but that's flattering to me. Go on, call me pretty boy. Tell me I'm the prettiest boy you've ever seen."

Noah laughed. "Yeah, dude!"

"Sometimes, I just wanted to steal all their hoodies so they'd freeze and die in the harsh, unforgiving winter where women kind along with all the feminine gays would emerge in the spring victorious."

"Harsh," Noah chuckled.

"But when you meet the decent boys, faith is restored," Kurt sighed, smiling. "And if you meet a bad boy surfer guy with a good heart. Well, they're hard to resist."

"Yeah…" Noah murmured, staring.

"Oh, and the surfer necklaces, like dog tags, are very fetching."

"What about mine?" Noah asked, looking down at his own. "You like mine?"

Kurt nodded, touching it. "Well sure I do, but…" He paused as Noah frowned.

"What?"

"I guess you don't wear them anymore do you?"

"Nah," Noah answered. "My current clothing style is a combination of "shit I'm late", "shit its cold", with just a hint of "I'm too lazy to look socially acceptable for you losers."

"Actually what you've got on now looks good."

"Sure, now. I haven't seen you in years, I wanted to look good for this."
"Well you do," Kurt smiled. "In your cotton shirt and flip flops."

"Yeah," Noah chuckled. "I don't like wearing all too much on my feet. I'm always barefoot at home."

Kurt smiled. "You're still that surfer Noah."

"And you're still that cute boy with an ever cuter lil' ass."

Kurt gasped. "Noah!"


Kurt giggled. "Noah, how much have you had to drink? You dropped some possessives and a couple articles on the way."

"It's called talkin cute," Noah replied, reaching over for the vodka bottle on the table with a full on mouthful swig taken with haste. He eyed Kurt with a lazy smile before wrapping one strong arm around the boy's waist. "Kurt, you so pretty, and you so cute, how are you so cute?"

Kurt laughed. "Am I really that cute?"

"Are you kiddin? You're the cutest dude I know. As cute as pre-cum. I hope your date dudes tell you that."

Kurt laughed nervously. "They don't call me that as much as they call me "baby" or "babe", "sugar" or "puddin". But yes, they do call me cute. I think they know it makes me want to cuddle close with them."

"You cuddle with 'em?" Noah asked. "Like cuddle-cuddles? Complete with touchin of the booty?"

"I've had boys where you are right now in my lap," Kurt giggled, his friend looking it over as if for cooties. "We have such a good time. Once, I was cuddling with this boy, a senior on the track and field varsity team, and he had his head on my chest and he looked up at me and asked, "What were you just thinking about?" And I said, "Munchkin Cats", and he said, "Oh, your heart sped up and I… okay."


"No, I was genuinely thinking of Munchkin cats," Kurt insisted. "Walking and running around, and not making their jumps because their legs are too short."

"Whoa, poor guy."

"Don't worry. He didn't take it personally. In fact he began calling me munchkin sooner after which got him a lot of cuddles."

"How long were you with him?"

"Two weeks. I ended it because he went too far with it and started talking to me in baby talk. It wasn't attractive."

"Ah dude," Noah chuckled, taking another swig.
Kurt continued. "Another time I was with this boy, a college graduate, and I was trying to talk dirty to him, where I began to say "I've been a very bad boy," and he turned to me and said, "Why? What have you done?" and I didn't know what to say next so I said, "I've burned down a house."

"Really?!" Noah burst out.

"The worst part of it was he believed me until I told him I sucked at dirty talk, but he said he found it "endearing"."

"That is hella cute," Noah grinned.

"Then there was this home decorator I'd met through a friend who asked me if I wanted to watch an investigative crime show with him as a pickup line. Turns out it wasn't about crime as much as it was informative murder porn"

Noah frowned. "Those smutty spousal homicide shows that parent's jack off to, right?"

"What?!" Kurt asked, eyes wide in horror. "I didn't know parents were the main audience demographic, are they?"

"Yeah," Noah nodded. "I've had a couple MILFS ask me to watch those shows with them when their men don't, which is too bad for them, 'cause they don't know they're missin. All dolled up in their lingerie, silk sheets on the bed, they go all out and as soon as some dude on the show gets killed, they're fuckin all over me crazy horny, just letting me to tug on their hair as I ram the soul outta their bodies, and you know the best part about it is? I can be as rough as I like with 'em and they'll love it."

"Well..." Kurt began, clearing his throat uncomfortably. "I didn't like the genre. All that blood and sex, it wasn't for me. So instead he made me dinner in which afterwards we sat on his couch to kiss and cuddle, and he showed me his entire portfolio, every project he'd ever directed, some of them in very large affluent houses and I found it so interesting. He was very talented. I'd call him 'Mr. Architect.'"

"What do you call them?" Noah asked, curiously. "All these guys?"

"Usually by their names," Kurt replied, "but I'll have some who'll want me to call them something different, like "hottie" or "hot stuff". "Daddy" is a common one. I think the creepiest thing in the world is what society has done to that word, but a lot of guys are into it."

Noah's eyes widened, intrigued. "Really?"

Kurt nodded. "At first I thought, alright fine, if I'm going to call you that, you're going to have to give me twenty dollars and drop me off at the mall afterwards."

Noah chuckled, taking a drink. "Right on."

"But even still, I never knew what it is about that word that riled them up," shrugged Kurt, "It just does something to them. Gets them all... dominant and protective."

"Uh-huh," Noah moaned, his lips parted.

"Even if I were to call them "daddy" as a joke, they'd still get a boner and ask me to touch it."

"Do you?"
"Rarely, but if they've been good and if they're wearing underwear, I will."

Noah blinked. "Wait, so you don't actually touch their dicks?"

"No," Kurt replied. "Just the outline through their boxers. I'm not comfortable with going any further."

"Kurt, dude, you're a fuckin tease," Noah chuckled, chuckling at Kurt's face. "Playin that good little boy act, and bein innocent enough to make it seem like you've never seen a dick before, it'll drive them crazy, 'cause they know well-mannered dudes like you are into kinky shit behind closed doors. A respectful dude like you will like to get spanked until you're bruised and calm dudes like you Kurt will lose it when you cum." The boy leaned up. "We know your kind, baby. We know you want it."

Words slurred, but potent, the work of inhibitions lowered too far, too much vodka drunk with three quarters of the bottle gone, I could see. I could see a wispy cloudiness to Noah's eyes, the corneas too glossy and fleetingly losing focus, with his balance unsteady as if it would only take me to shift on the couch and he would roll of my lap and on to the ground with a thud, and even in my own tipsy state, an unpleasant light headedness of champagne bubbles in my brain, my sense dictated Noah had drunk too much, and I now knew what to expect from this, seeing that large erection in those jeans, poking through, as if it were unzipping them all by itself for me to touch, to prick my finger on his "prick", like the spindle of a spinning wheel.

"No, I don't want it, Noah," Kurt replied, seriously. "I really don't."

"Sure you do brah," Noah slurred out through a mouthful of vodka. "Just not one of those dudes belong with you, as I do. Not one of 'em is me and not one of 'em has my PhD."

"PhD?"

"My Pretty huge Dick," Noah replied, grabbing his crotch and swinging his vodka around precariously. "You've been sendin me signals all night."

"No, I haven't."

"Dude, no one can be that cute and not wanna get fucked so bad," replied Noah. "You want me."

"No, I do not."

"You can't let go of the fambo, Kurt," Noah continued. "I'll always be the first guy you made friends with and you'll always look for me in those guys."

"I've looked for you in no one, Noah. I haven't thought of you in years."

Noah snorted. "You want to have again what we had in Coronado. All this "fun" you say you only wanna have, you're just tryin to relive all the times we had, only this time, with "kissing", 'cause you wanted more with me. You wanted me, Kurt."

The fair boy shifted nervously. "Noah, you're drunk."

"Fuck yeah, I'm drunk!" Noah exclaimed. "I'm hungry for cheese with no banana peel to fuck." Kurt made to move away, but Noah stopped him. "Come on Kurt, let's have what we had. Just us two. Gay Jane and Tarzan again just like the old times. I've fucking missed that. I've fuckin missed you so much. Haven't you?"

Kurt sighed. "Yes Noah, I missed you too, but this is not what we had. This is not what I want."
"Don't talk to me like I'm one of your perfect "Mr. Architect" gentlemen 'cause I'm not dude," Noah exclaimed, incensed. "It's me. Noah. It's totally me. I got us together and now we can pick up where we left off."

Kurt huffed, pulling himself away. "Yes, as friends."

"No as boyfriends, Kurt," Noah corrected. "I was your supreme overload boyfriend remember? Hardcore bangin' nardude on your arm, and now baby, I'm gonna give you all the kisses and all the D you want."

"You will not," protested Kurt, falling back onto the couch by Noah's hand.

"Don't worry," the boy winked, "I know what I'm doin. I fuck dudes too." Kurt gasped, his back up against that of the couch's as Noah leaned over him, that breath tainted in alcohol, the intoxication ripe in the fair boy's pinching nostrils. "I like 'em, pale and petite. Sound familiar? Does it sound like I'm tryin to look for someone in them?"

"Noah," Kurt warned, "stop."

Noah smirked. "They all have thigh gaps, and sometimes wider ones than the chicks. So fuckin hot. You know what I do? I shove my dick in the gap and I fuck it raw. Feels like tittie fucking and I fuck 'em until I cum so violently."

"Stop it, Noah."

"Mmm, I bet you have a thigh gap, don't you Kurt," the tan boy drolled, "and a box gap."

Kurt laughed dryly. "I wish I did, but you see my balls are in the way."

"Don't worry," Noah replied, his grin drunk. "I'll reposition them so they won't be."

"Don't touch me," Kurt replied, disgusted.

"Damn," Noah said, whelping a moan like wine. "I'm hard as fuck for you, baby. I bet your ass is so tight it'll turn my dick into a diamond."

"Noah, please-."

"Call me daddy," Noah smirked, his hand poised over his zipper. "Touch my cock, touch it. Touch my cock and call me daddy."

"No."

"You're teasin aren't you?"

"No, you're making a pass and I'm turning it down that's all that's happening," Kurt replied. "I'm not going to be like everyone else you've slept with, Noah."

"And I'm not gonna be another of your blue balled date dudes, Kurt!" Noah shouted. "I'm your boyfriend. I'm the bad boy surfer dude you can't resist, you said it yourself!"

"I wasn't referring to you!"

"Bullshit!" Noah seethed. "It's me. It's me, Kurt. I know it's me."

"I have to go," Kurt said, shakily standing as Noah held on.
"No, stay. Kurt, stay please. I'm sorry."

"Better luck next time, Noah," Kurt replied, freeing himself, "Only not with me. Goodbye."

**Goodbye. Goodbye.** The word was said as easily as smashing a porcelain plate against the wall, that memory of that Coronado departure eight years ago and the tan boy's drunken heart was now pounding like that of a frightened rabbit's in the jaws of a cat. "No..." he whispered and now shouting, "No! No! No! You're not saying that word to me, you're not sayin goodbye Kurt, you're-Kurt! KURT!" Stumbling after the fair boy as Kurt turned around, Noah weak fallen on his knees and hugging his waist tight, head in his stomach, and pleading, "Kurt, don't say goodbye!" Lifting his face, tears streaming, "I... I LOVE YOU!" The fair boy gasped sharply. "I love you, don't go!" And again that round. "I love you, Kurt! I love you, but no fucking way!"

There was no warning to it. The way those words had hit him, pushing him back now as Kurt sat himself down on the corner of the bed with blue eyes startled, slightly parted lips breathing hard with Noah still clung tight around his stomach and still weeping a drunken wailing weep, near blubbering fat tears, the first time Kurt had ever seen Noah cry and the sick saddening sensation it made him to watch the boy reduced to such a state for this was what love did to people, this love stuff dangerous or so he'd heard. Even to big handsome boys like Noah, who'd fallen in love with him, like he'd always, always done, Kurt now thought, in Coronado and now here in Ulusaba with no one having told him to watch out! Watch out, young man! Watch out!

It was not the first time it had happened, a love confession, so many from so many boys in which he would have the habit of forgetting between the confessions. Amnesia like morning mist observed such episodes. They were intended to be romantic but a harsh jangling music interfered as Kurt had so much to think about, with the most recent having been strategically confessed on Valentine's Day. There had been no lines provided for him. He'd dared not laugh, but had protested in his soft, fading voice to this boy, this Jerseyan soccer player, "Oh, but you don't mean it, do you Luke?" And this boy Luke had said, "Yeah, I do. I love you, Kurt." Not even an hour later, Kurt was gone and this boy had been found weeping, his heart broken.

There was no pleasure in rejecting these love confessions, each one startlingly variant in their own way, but wishing Kurt's love in return he could not give them, their mouths he'd been unable to kiss any longer, flinching and turning away with a cry "I'm sorry! I can't! I can't love you! Forgive me."

This fair boy, torturing himself, guilt stricken with clotty moisture stinging his eyes, packing his sinuses, working its way into the crevices of his brain, hardened between his teeth as his matron would comfort him, saying, "First love is such sweet despair, Kurt. You can only break a man's heart once." And he'd protest he had not meant to deceive them! "Oh Kurt," Yvette had hushed, "My wondrous fair. How could anyone not fall in love with you?"

This curse, this damn curse of his and now with Noah struck down in a cloud of intoxication in his lap, his vodka bottle fallen by the couch and left to seep into the rug, his flip flops off, that certain "prick" of his now deflated in light of his high emotion. He would not remember these words, this confession, his crying, he would not remember anything after his first sip of alcohol, yet Kurt would. It would play continuously in his head like a film that would never cease with that knowledge that deep down and brought forth to light now like a water spring gushing from underground Noah cared for him more than he'd known, that he lusted after him, that he loved him, and it made Kurt blush embarrassed and excited, but he would not say a single thing.
Morning was up; it was the next day: 6:20am, and in the Rock Lodge master suit bed, Kurt lay awake in a motionless state with the sheets around him strangely neat and not kicked off from the heat, for he hadn't shifted much in the night, one so endless to him, one he hadn't been able to sleep easily at the start, enough to swallow full pills of chloral hydrate if he had any with thoughts of the previous evening mulling itself over in his head like hummingbirds, poisonous beaked hummingbirds pecking at his skin and in which he would quickly kill, shake his head, though the hummingbirds would not die, soon to flitter back only to be killed again, this whirring rhythm all to the footsteps of his mother up and about, dressed and in such happy good spirits!

She'd woken laughing twenty minutes earlier with her night having been so delightful in the company of their old friend, Thomas Puckerman. Her own son with Noah. Comparing what she'd been told to what Kurt himself had been informed of. Asking after Noah. How was he? How did he look? Asking after their food. How did they find it? The South African sweetmeats. I bet you kids had a swank time. Oh, to Elizabeth, the whole thing had been vivid in her mind, which had been slipping and skidding like ice cubes tossed across a polished floor. The Puckerman's were once again in their lives after so long, almost not taking note of her son's late return, his flustered state, his top crumpled from fists that had pulled and clenched at it hard, damp in splotches.

This top, this coral pink polo would be taken off immediately to be washed, and to be washed thoroughly, the skinny jeans too, his favorite canvas plimsolls printed in garden flowers were put together, put away. Yet his white cable knit sweater, he remembered he'd left it in the Cliff Lodge. It lay strewn in there alongside a solitary figure he'd last seen last night on the bed, twitching and lurching, moaning. The tan boy had fallen asleep in his lap with a fair hand to his Mohawk, caressing with soft strokes of those sparse dark hairs, "Once Upon A Dream" a lullaby lulling him away by a voice that had sounded so distant in his drunken state it was as if it came from underwater, his own dream approaching. In this way, the long night was endured.

In only his underwear, briefs to cover the shadowy member between his thighs, his fair chest bare, his nipples like eyes, bare, Kurt slipped from the plush bed and wondered over to the banister overlooking the living room below where with childlike curiosity he peered down and with childlike curiosity he peered everywhere with eyes of a freshly awoken kitten, "meow". He tried to speak the word, but it only came out croaky as if this kitten were being strangled; opening his mouth several times, feeling the shell inside with his tongue, sour and dry, his lips dry and parched and needing water, some moisture; he needed to get wet, to alleviate the dryness alcohol had done to him. He needed to get very wet, as into the en-suite he now entered.

Then, a sudden knocking on their front door, faint, as Kurt lowered himself in the steaming bathwater he'd lavishly sprinkled with fragrance salts, as you would prepare the bath of a god, the modern sleek tub almost cocooning him in its design as he sank in deeper, but to still abruptly upon the opening of the door beyond, voices, his mother's cry, "Noah!" And Kurt strained his ears for Noah's voice, perhaps the voice of a still swaying-drunk boy on their doorstep, his shirt undone and his erect penis still fighting to get out from those damn jeans, yet he could not hear Noah's words, so he washed fast, working his gelled pouf across his body and draining the tub as he got out, shushing the gurgling sound it made as he now strained his fair ears again.

"Come this way, Noah," smiled Elizabeth excitedly, leading him with a beckoning flick of her hand further into the suite. "I want to have a good look at you." The boy was made to stand in the light as she looked him over with a kind smile. "Well, haven't you grown."

"Chyeah, I guess." Noah grinned.
"So handsome, just like your father," Elizabeth smiled. "I knew you would be. Seems so long ago I was talking to you on our hotel couch, Kurt hiding in the bathroom and-

"Where is Kurt?"

"Funnily enough, in the bathroom," Elizabeth laughed. "Hold on." A quick walk to the en suite and she knocked on the door. "Sweetie, Noah's here. As soon as you're done, come say hello." Upon her return, Noah held out Kurt's sweater in loose fumbling fingers.

"I have his sweater. He left it in my room last night."

"Oh yes, he did," Elizabeth nodded, accepting it. "How was last night for you two? Did you have fun?"

"Yeah, it was totally awesome seeing him again," Noah nodded. "He hasn't changed at all."

"No, I suppose he hasn't," Elizabeth sighed, "but you'll see in time a few surprises along the way."

Noah grinned. "Cool."

"And you?" Elizabeth asked. "Do you think you've changed?"

"More than Kurt's done for sure, but I'm still the dude he remembers, or I hope I am... I dunno." The boy lowered his gaze to the floor as folding the balled up sweater, Elizabeth tilted her head.

"You're still that same boy you were to me, Noah," she said. "Our little surfer guy, I can still see him in you."

Noah smiled. "That's what Kurt said."

"Well of course he did," Elizabeth replied. "If I can, so can he. In fact, we were just talking about you before dinner."

"You were?"

"Remarkable coincidence, don't you think?" She laughed. "We were recounting Coronado, and we even found the ring you gave him in my jewelry bag."

"Really?"

"Sure," Elizabeth nodded, putting away the sweater and fetching the ring as on display in her hand it was now. "You remember this? You gave it him when we left and I've kept it in my bag ever since."

Noah frowned upset, picking up the ring. "He never wore it?"

"Of course he did Noah," Elizabeth giggled. "Many a time. He took it wherever he went thinking what the promise was once I'd told him it signified one, but when he eventually came to learn what promise rings really were, he didn't believe you'd been aware yourself that the actual promise of the ring was to remain faithful to him in a romantic relationship you'd never had, or was he wrong?"

"No," Noah replied, "I didn't know they had anything to do with that. I figured promise rings only became promise rings after you'd attached a promise to them or something."

_How cute_, Elizabeth thought as she now asked, "And what was that promise?"

"That I'd see him again someday."
"Why didn't you tell him?"

"In case I didn't," Noah replied quietly, his eyes on the ring. "and he'd forever resent me as that kid he once knew who broke his promise."

"Oh Noah."

"So instead I was the kid who made up a bunch of crap about the meaning behind the design and what it symbolized to cover it up, and make it seem more special," the boy went on, "not knowing he'd actually got it all totally ka-biffed in the first place, that he'd totally misunderstood what these rings actually were and was just basically asking his friend, "Hey dude, wanna get hitched," all along without him even knowing it." Sighing in frustration, Noah moaned. "God, I did not think this through."

Elizabeth shrugged. "So what if you didn't? At least you made good on your promise. You didn't break it."

"Yeah, I know," Noah muttered, stroking the ring, "but it's kinda awkward now knowing what it really is. Kurt's not gonna wanna wear it in case, you know, people get the wrong idea tha-"

"That you and him are together?" Elizabeth said as Noah remained silent, the ring his focus, his obsession as he nodded.

"Yeah, and... we're not together... we're not like that."

"Oh, don't worry about them, Noah," Elizabeth reassured. "Rings can mean whatever you want them to mean no matter what they were "designed" to be, and as far as you and Kurt are concerned, this one symbolizes your promise, and that's all that matters. Besides, Kurt had it on last night, didn't you see? On his pinkie finger."

Noah frowned. "I thought that was a different ring."

"No, he was wearing your ring," Elizabeth corrected, "and he had no reservations at all."

"Huh..." Noah mumbled, emotion heavy in his eyes.

"Noah, he did not forget you," Elizabeth assured. "He thought of you very fondly and I'm sure he would have worn that ring even if you really had promised to wait for him until you were older to maybe start something or even get married, I don't know. That's just Kurt."

"I missed him so much, Mrs. H," Noah said, his voice wavering as like a tremor. "I thought I'd left this whole thing too late, that I'd, you know, changed too much for him."

Elizabeth laughed. "Oh Noah, don't be silly. This whole encounter has been so unexpected and has come as quite a shock for us, so give him time and I'm sure you'll get back into the rhythm of being as close to him as you were. It has been eight long years." Leading him down in to the living room, she continued. "Besides, I believe people don't change so much as they grow, and boy have you grown, Noah. Look at you, look at the size of you. You're quite a big boy."

Noah chuckled. "Yeah, I guess."

"Your father tells me you you're on a lot of the varsity teams at school."

"Yeah, I do a lotta sports."
"I'm always telling Kurt to join some fixtures but he's always going off doing his own thing," Elizabeth replied. "No longer singing, or dancing. Did you know he's quit dancing?"

Noah nodded. "Yeah, he told me."

"I also had him lift me high into the air on his shoulder last night mom, did you know?" Kurt called. "And I'll also have you know, I've still got it."

Seeing Kurt again as he came to join them, it broke over Noah like the harsh stinging on the beach at Santa Monica when he'd surfed there as a child, his friend dressed in a pair of turquoise purple belted prospect shorts and a citrus yellow polo, white ankle socks on his feet that padded down the stairs from the bedroom and came together beside him. Kurt, prim and proper, fastidious about hair and clothes that some had mistaken for vanity with others, their eyes as sharp as ice picks, that had scrutinized and judged the way he was, so secretive-seeming and shy, vague in his responses and stammering when he was put on the spot, all mistaken for aloofness that those close to him knew him not to have, or have as much of now anyway.

To third party eyes of these two boys, Elizabeth, looking on, she could not help but revel in the warmth in her heart. Seeing them together again, talking and wishing each other a good morning and in each other's company, Kurt looking "very sweet and very bonnie" with such a smile on his fair face that bunched his full cheeks under his eyes, high school picture perfect and Noah, oddly shy and quiet, perhaps embarrassed from his earlier conversation with her, the ring still in his moist clenched palm or in awe of Kurt's sudden appearance. Either way, his skin was heated, hot, that blush simmering dangerously from under. It was clear he found her son attractive! The cutest male creature he'd ever seen outside Saturday morning cartoons.

And Elizabeth wondered after this, that this was sexual attraction, homosexuality, something Noah had known about even before Kurt himself with attitudes towards it far different in the bible belted south than up in Ohio. The Puckermans from Texas, a state that had some believing you couldn't have men with men. You couldn't have men-women. Men-women were freaks. Men-women were obscene. Men-women were fairies, fags, "preverts" A man wanted to strangle a fag as he would a lesbian "lezzie", fucking her till her brains spilled out and her cunt leaked blood, but fags were worse. There was something about these sick sorry freaks that made a normal healthy man want to lay hands on them and administer harsh punishment.

I knew Noah wasn't like that, or his father. They weren't "haters," the term I imagine they'd say in that surf lingo of theirs, perhaps next claiming sexuality had too many labels anyway, "fuck, just go for who you like bro." And I laughed inwardly at this for it was so very in their nature to be too "hung loose" to hate, that they'd met plenty of "pimpin wooly woofter surfer dudes" in the past, Thomas friends with some in music and Noah, Kurt. It wasn't my place to inquire after the boy's sexuality now, to ask what exactly it was he was feeling for my son; because I knew it was new, scary, and exciting, instead applauding them as they showed me their ballet shoulder sit, and leaving them be to talk, for I could take a hint. I knew it was my cue.

Kurt was to take a seat on one of the long armchairs and patting the space next to him, Noah joined him, dressed the fair boy could see in grey sweatpants, the same flip flops on from last night, the same surfer necklace around his neck, but a different top, an A-shirt. He'd been sick that morning with a hangover before coming, having glanced confusedly about upon waking to a wincing headache, the nausea, an alarming not-thereness in his bloodshot eyes as he'd worked his mouth as if something was caught inside with no clear recollection of last night's events except drunkenness itself when his father had had their chef cook him hangover food; pancakes, pickles, tacos and burritos, none of that disgusting African junk, and water, lots of water!
Then to the sudden thought, standing in the shower masturbating with fingers so clumsy, his hand lumberish, the act itself a personal hangover cure that had the orgasm rushing through his system with the rushing force of a drug hit. Kurt! What had happened to him? The boy gone, frightened off maybe, repulsed and Noah's sickening guilt now washed over him, for while intoxicated and he could recall behavior worthy of regret, words lost, but coming onto Kurt as like a fat cigar smoking creep copping a field on a squirming woman in his lap, he could remember. And he hit his head repeatedly against the tiled shower wall. The regret. His erection now wilted like a rotted flower. Regret. Why had he done that? Dude, what the fuck? Not cool.

I saw the apology in his eyes, his remorse that appeared now that my mom had gone. He was still lightly hung over and I had to commend him on covering it up well since coming in, but at this point, he was in his true state, and I smiled, for I couldn't be mad at him after we'd just reunited. We were only getting to know each other again. I had to see it differently, just the work of too much vodka, and how flattering of him to have found me attractive, empowering for me to have excited him down there in his pants, his hysterical love confession the most impassioned words he'd ever said to me, though all these things I would not speak of. Nothing, I just wanted us to be good again, no weird stuff. I just wanted him to be as happy as he'd been last night.

"How are you feeling?" Kurt asked, sitting himself down on the long chair and patting the space beside him.

Noah groaned. "You see it, huh?"

"Your hangover? Yes," Kurt nodded, sympathetically. "I'm guessing earlier it was the House of Flying Daggers up in that suite of yours, only with vomiting."

The tan boy shook his head. "Nah, I barfed twice and that was it. This isn't the worst I've had."

"I was going to say," Kurt said. "You're doing very well with it."

"That'll be the tacos."

"Tacos?"

Noah nodded. "Best hangover food, dude. That and beef burritos if you wanna go hardcore. Not for amateurs."

"Are you serious?"

"Spicy fries are good too, straight or curly, however you like 'em," Noah nodded. "There's also Mac and Cheese, hair of the dog if you want, and aspirin. You know, the pill with the big A on it."

Kurt smiled. "It's always nice to have instructions."

"I can get some of all of this if you need it," Noah said. "How you doin?"

"I'm alright Noah," Kurt replied, sitting Indian style on the long chair and so close to Noah, the boy's thigh was right there, tempting to pat for reassurance. "I got myself covered, thank you. I just had a cotton mouth that's all."

Noah grinned. "That's cute."

"Lie down," Kurt instructed, getting up. "I'll fetch you some water."

"Oh um… thanks," Noah smiled. Kurt rearranged the cushions and guided his friend down to lay
before fetching bottled water, uncapped and handed with a smile. "Thanks," Noah said. "Sorry about all this, about what happened."

Kurt waved his hand. "Don't worry about it. At least the police backup didn't have to be called in."

"But, I was a total nube-dude to you."

"You just got a little touchy feely, that's all. A little flirty. In fact I wondered at one point if this was how you got girls."

"Really?"

"Yeah," Kurt giggled. "Do they all fall as easily as that? Those MILFS and cheerleaders and all those others?"

Noah gaped, offended. "What?!"

"I'm kidding, Noah," Kurt laughed. "I'm kidding, but just to let you know that drunk Noah has no game."

"Not even a little?"

"Let's just say you're lucky you have a good looking jawline."

"I didn't have you sit on it, did I?"

Kurt smiled. "No, I'm sure it's plenty sturdy, but I was good with the couch."

"Good call," Noah grinned. "Do I still have my swagger?"

Kurt shrugged. "You'll have to walk for me again. It may just be the hangover that's giving it you and that's just perilous."

"Forget it," Noah sighed. "I already know my heart's full of slammin pizza love and swag."

"Pizza?"

"Yeah, didn't you know? I'm 80% water, 20% pizza and 100% swag."

Kurt frowned. "But that's 200%"

"That's what they all say," Noah smirked, "but I know I'm twice the man they'll ever be."

"Really?" Kurt asked, his brow perking. "Are you man enough to go to the spa with me?"

Noah frowned. "The spa?"

"Yes, I was thinking of going," Kurt nodded. "They have spa treatment rooms here and since I don't think it would be wise for us to do anything strenuous today, I thought we could go check it out, mmm? Nothing but eating, sleeping, perhaps choking on a cucumber slice from their water, and lying on your back getting your tummy rubbed like a big puppy."

"Nice," Noah smirked.

"Although," Kurt pondered, "we'll have to get the masseur to bring her laundry out with her. I'm sure you have washboard abs under there she might as well wash her clothes on."
"What? These abs?" Noah asked, riding up his A-Shirt to reveal his smooth-muscled torso and abdominals, six packed and flexed into up most definition.

"Bam!" Kurt exclaimed. "There they are! Abs like challah bread."

"Tasty," Noah chuckled.

"I also always forget boys have armpit hair so when they lift their arms up, it always stuns me."

Noah smirked. "What? Even mine?" Lifting his arms behind his head, bulging the muscle in them, Noah revealed his pits, a patina of fine dark hairs now on show and rather sexy to behold.

"And bam again!" Kurt cried out. "Welcome to the jungle!"

Arms still positioned up high, Noah queried. "Don't you have any?"

"No, I shave," Kurt replied. "Its how I customize away that hairy part of puberty. Sort of like a video game character screen."

Noah shifted, his senses and body perking. "You saying you're totally smooth?"

"That's for my masseur to know and you to find out," Kurt smiled cheekily. "So are you in, Mr. Big Man? They have the gym next door and I hear exercise ales hangovers too."

Noah grinned. "Sure, let's get touched and stuff. I'm man enough for this. I can "Man Zone" any place up you betcha."

"How do you do that?" Kurt asked, frowning. "How do you "Man Zone" a place?"

Noah shrugged. "I just stake out territory with my throbbing twelve incher and sagging ball sack and there, space claimed. It's now "Man Zone", where the raddest aircraft is the "hellacopter", the first rule of fight club is "don't look at my fucking boner when we fight", rule two, "don't talk about my baggy camo army pants that hide the boner", and finally, there is no "Subway", but "Domway". We tell you how you want your sandwich and you shut up and eat it."

"Wow, that's quite a zone you got there."

"Yep," Noah nodded. "We use "because I said so" as an excuse to date us, spells can only be broken by true love's high-five and we always judge good sex on a scale of fake pockets to nachos."

"I don't think I'd be "man enough" to enter that zone," Kurt said. "I think I'd fit better in that of the gays."

"How's it like there?" Noah asked.

"Oh you know, where we "practice homosexuality" because yes, we're training to be the best gays ever."

Noah snorted. "That term is bogus, dude."

"I know," Kurt agreed. "So is "think of the children." I mean, why is that used against gays? I hate children. I want to hurt their feelings. That's why I'm gay." Noah laughed as Kurt continued, smiling. "In the "Gay Zone", we don't say "get your facts straight", we say "get your facts gay", otherwise you'll be branded a homophonlic piece of shit. We don't say "sit up straight" either, because how very dare you, we'll sit as gay as we god damn please, bitch."
"Totally," Noah chuckled, pulling down his shirt and propping himself up on his elbow to face Kurt, smiling in anticipation.

"And finally," Kurt continued, "we have gay marriage, because voting against it is like baking a rainbow cake only to have a dick come up and scoop the rainbow out and leave you the icing. Marriage is open to us, and we can wear our cock rings out and proud, because that's how gays get engaged in "Gay Zone". We wear cock rings."

Noah howled a belly bursting laugh. "Dude!"

"That's how we roll under the rainbow," Kurt giggled. "We're 15% fruit loops, 30% pride parade buzz, 10% Celine Dion and 45% David Bowie's glitter makeup, because that stuff is what holds this freakin' zone together."

"Whoa," Noah chuckled. "Clash of the zones at the spa."

"That's right," Kurt smiled. "You better watch out "Man Zone" boy. I'm very strong. Like an ant. Ants can lift ten times their own weight and I can also lift ten times an ant's weight."

Noah laughed. "Aw dude, come on-"

"Yeah, and I can fight off maybe twenty snails. Twenty-one on a good day."

"Well guess what "Gay Zone" boy, I'll sneak into your house, cram something that doesn't fit in your fridge, force the door shut so that when you open it, it'll fall on you."

Kurt gasped. "You wouldn't dare."

Noah smirked. "And, although I used to be passive aggressive, I'm now aggressively passive. So don't mess with me, dude. I'll be right here. I'll fuckin' forgive you for comin' at me with your ant lifting snail fighting powers."

"You will?" Kurt asked. "I don't know, twenty-one snails is a lot of snails-"

"And I'll sneak into your bedroom, climb into your bed and fuckin' nap with you."

"Really?"

"Fifteen hour nap, dude," Noah nodded. "Hope you can stick it out, 'cause this man ain't goin' nowhere until nap time's over."

Kurt shook his head. "Until you flex your foot wrong, it cramps and you'll be thinking "this is it, this is how it ends"."

"Nu huh," Noah replied. "Nothin' ends till we're done nappin'."

"Well, I hope you use protection," Kurt smiled, "because I'll be kickin and thrashing around just to reach the-"

"Cold side of the pillow? I remember." Noah's eyes now appeared to soften considerably. "I've missed this, Kurt," he said, looking at his friend. "These silly talks we'd have when we were kids. I've never had them with anyone else since. They're nice."

Kurt smiled. "They are."

"I mean, I'd pick talking to you over nap time or acting like an asshole on Mario Kart."
"Wow," Kurt giggled. "I must be really important."

Noah grinned. "You bet."

"Although," Kurt began, "we have to be wary of how we are with each other, Noah. As kids it didn't occur to us, but now, we have be careful of the homoeroticism."

"The what?"

"You know." Kurt said, his eyes pointed.

"Oh dude, come on," Noah chuckled. "We're bros. We ride together. We die together. Sometimes we suck each other's dicks-"

"What?"

"We suck each other's dicks as friends," Noah reiterated, "but don't worry. Usually we'll just play video games, it's how guys are."

Kurt shook his head. "This isn't "Man Zone" anymore Noah. You have a girlfriend now. We have to have boundaries."

"I don't want boundaries, Kurt," Noah protested. "I wanna be free to hang with you however I like, and I'm not gonna let a chick nine thousand miles away get in the way of something I haven't had in eight years. Bros before hoes, dude."

"Even so," Kurt said, averting his eyes, "our friendship has to change."

"Do you want it to change?" Noah asked.

"No, but we can't get away with the same things we used to. It's not appropriate."

"Dude, fuck that," Noah argued. "If you don't want it to change, it won't change. I like it this way."

Kurt sighed. "I know, it's just-"

"We're totally tight like a vagina, Kurt. It's awesome."

"Yes Noah, but I feel like you're going too far with it."

Noah paused. "Did I say something to you last night that's brought this on?"

"When you said you had a girlfriend, yes."

"So this is all just because of Kitty?"

"Partly, yes, and partly because I feel like we're crossing a line," said Kurt, slumping. "Sometimes Noah, it feels like we're flirting."

Noah frowned. "You call this flirting?"

"When we're making fun of each other until one of us screws up and says something nice, yes," Kurt nodded, "and the way you came onto me last night was a definite wake up call."

"Fuck," Noah cursed. "I knew it was that. I freaked you out didn't I?"

Kurt sighed. "It's alright Noah, I'm used to it. I have boys back home doing it to me all the time."
They're not usually as drunk when they flirt, I don't have to say "Bibbity Bobbity, back the fuck up" as many times. I just think this may have been spurred on from the nature of our friendship is all. You're not attracted to me in that way, are you Noah?"

Noah paused. "No," he said, though he knew it was a lie.

"Okay then," Kurt replied. "So do you see where I'm coming from?"

"Yeah," Noah grunted, pouting, "but you can't change what our friendship is just 'cause I tried to dedicate my boner to you when I was shacked. I don't want it to, Kurt. I just want us to stay the same. I don't want anything to change, we just got here." He now shifted closer, his hazel eyes pleading. "Please, don't take Gay Jane away from his Tarzan, Kurt, They gotta be together to make sense, like sex in dyslexia and semen in amusement."

"Noah, I-"

"And they got they own zone, the "Jungle Zone"," Noah continued, shifting ever closer to the edge of the long chair Kurt feared he'd fall off, "where if we choke on our food, we keep eating, we can do backflips like pan flipping grilled cheese sandwiches and where the things we say during sex are "ooh, ee, ooh ahh ahh, ting, tang, walla walla bing bang"."

Kurt giggled. "You know, when we call them "zones", they sound as if they should belong in an amusement park. An adult's only amusement park."

"Life is a ride, dude," Noah grinned. "Roller coaster or surfboard, you gotta ride it all the way like the fierce brosiah hero you are, through all the zones."

"As we did in Legoland, remember?" Kurt smiled. "We did everything and you only rode the rides I was tall enough to go on."

Noah nodded, his eyes so very warm. "And I will again, 'cause it's you Kurt. It's us together in friendship sluttiness. Hangin' out slutty, bein' rad slutty, you strokin my hair slutty, and bein' cute n cuddly slutty. You feel me?"

"Oh Noah, yes I do," Kurt laughed, launching himself forward to cuddle Noah hard, both their bodies rolling in full on laughter upon the chair too small to fit them both, yet just about doing it.

"So are we good?" Noah chuckled. "Are we cool about this?"

Kurt smiled. "Yeah, we are. I guess I was just over thinking it, just as I over thought the time when you tried to become my friend in Coronado, or how just now, for 0.05 seconds I actually wondered if you really had a twelve inch penis."

"Sure I do, dude," Noah replied. "It's how I blow robbers away, with my massive dong that they have so much respect for me and my massive penis that they'll put all the stuff back and walk out. All because of my colossal member."

Kurt snorted. "You are such a liar."

"Nope, I'm the perfect guy to sleep next to at night," Noah said. "When you think you'll lose your dignity in front of robbers just 'cause you're there naked, weak and unprepared, I'll whip out my big flaccid dick and Bam!"

"Why do I have to be naked?" Kurt asked. "I'm not going to be naked."
Noah frowned. "Why not? Naked good. Naked bring better sleep. No jammies. Jammies stupid. Naked rules. Naked naked. Hell yeah." Kurt laughed only to abruptly cease as out of his sweatpants pocket, Noah handed him his ring. "Here. I know I wasn't all that clear about what it meant, but-

"I know about the promise, Noah," Kurt said, softly. "I know what it is, and thank you for not breaking it."

As if I'd ever have broken it, the promise he'd overhead whilst I'd been talkin with Mrs. H, ears strained to catch every word and now us lying together on this cramped long chair, the ring he took from me and held up for the both of us to admire, slid now on his pinkie finger. Whoa, we were pretty gay; bromance buddies, man lesbians, "homoerotic" as Kurt had put it, it was just... Whoa, trippy. Had we really always been like this? I guess I'd never noticed, it feeling natural and all, even the "flirting", but it was cute and I liked it. Being close with Kurt, I'd always liked it. The "Gay Zone", hello! But dude, was I in deep. This zone of rainbow cake, cuddles and Kurt. I'd fallen hard. I felt more, the sweet fambo feels I'd had as a surfer kid, they were stronger...

"Oh I never make promises if I'm not prepared to follow up on that shit," Noah replied, "Nu-huh. Nope."

Kurt smiled, feeling Noah's arms that had wrapped themselves around him in their laying languid state, tighten. "Really?"

"Yep," Noah nodded. "When I say now I promise to treat you as my Gay Jane forever that means I'm gonna have you live in a luxury treehouse by the sea with diplomatic powers over an entire jungle."

Kurt giggled. "Well, what do you know."

"Uh-huh, I go all out."

"Well, the spa will suffice for now. I'd be plenty happy there if you came with me."

"I already am, dude. Uber pumped over here to have a total dog day. Plus, I already got the place "Man Zoned" 'cause my dick gets there fifteen minutes before I do."

"Is that how you book appointments now?" Kurt asked to Noah's firm nod.

"You'll find our reservation under Tarzan, Jungle VIP. Very Important Penis."

Kurt laughed. "So efficient. Am I permitted in "Man Zone" then?"

"You're a dude, Kurt. Sure you are."

"I know, but you know me. I've never really been able to understand boys, except you, kind of, and you're all boy, aren't you Noah."

Grabbing his crotch, Noah smirked proudly. "You can say that again."

"Can you me teach me things about "Man Zone"?"

"Sure, if you teach me stuff about the "Gay Zone". Like, is it true gay guys don't really mentally undress straight dudes, just daydream of dressing them better?"

"All the time," Kurt nodded. "It's like a kink, but then we're distracted when they start jiggling their legs under their desks, I mean, why? Why are you doing that? Who were we hurting? We were just..."
trying to dress you in Dolce & freakin Gabbana."

Noah grinned. "You really wanna know the reason why they jiggle?"

"Tell me," Kurt sighed. "I've got fashion stunted straight boys to dress."

"Easy, 'cause ghosts are sucking them off."

And I laughed a high-pitched startled almost squeaky laugh I couldn't contain, Noah's humor so crude compared to all those I knew at Dalton, even to those I'd dated who'd been wary of their language, the topics kept clean with no profanity, thinking I would disapprove, believing I'd find them ineloquent, foul, obscene. Truth was, I thought it amusing, lying with Noah laughing and cuddling like I'd done on so many of my dates, like with a doll, except I was the doll. If my eyes were closed I didn't even know who it was, which one it was, and if it was just cuddling, and occasionally kissing, why was it so important which guy I was with? Not that I lost knowledge of who I was with now, who these big arms cuddling me belonged to. I knew it was Noah.

It was with Noah he went to the spa with, the Aroma Boma spa treatment rooms at the Rock Lodge they'd booked a session for hastily, though with much confused hesitation upon the amount of treatments on offer, the Balancing scalp and foot massage, the Aromatherapeutics massage, La Sole Reflexology and the Soul of Africa, each treatment tailoring the products of balms and African Miracle 'Marula' oils used on the skin depending on their needs, with Kurt having settled nicely on the Africology aromatherapy, Noah, the foot massage that had had their therapist Nica complimenting him on his "good looking feet" left strong and wide from years of surfing and swimming, real powerhouse muscles in those feet she'd massaged well.

It had been envious inducing to hear, for Noah had already a good looking body overall, and Kurt had so wished for the facial the full Bespoke African Facial Experience, but to remove his makeup for it, both foundation and concealer with the chance of anyone seeing, Nica, Noah, he could not do it. He was too self-conscious, with an uneven skin tone, redness in select areas, acne blemishes and under eye circles all made more evident on his fair complexion, an oily T-Zone too that would exacerbate in hot climates and yet all usually covered up so cleverly, blended in so subtly it was as if he had no imperfections, that he'd woken up like that, that his makeup was as seamless as his flesh, a second skin, an illusion he could not bear to break, to fade.

Outings with friends had been cancelled over this. Dates had been cancelled as well. He would feel ugly sometimes, spending an anxious twenty minutes on this makeup only to have it looking like a crust on his temperamental skin, botched and wiped off. He'd look over his body in the mirror from all angles, furiously moisturize away dry patches, stroke his skin and take note of how little flesh he had. His frame so slim, his chest, thighs, buttocks, his small waist boys on dates had tried to fully encircle in their large hands, such large hands! Why did boys have such large hands? Engulfing his own, his arms so thin like "beautiful handles on a petite little vase of a body," Yvette had told his mother once. "A good dancer's body like his will last a long time."

And to Nica as she massaged him, she could feel that dancer's spirit in his muscles, muscles that were not at all outwardly distinct on his body compared to his more muscular companion, but there under her fingertips, a lithe body she wondered floated on air when in dance, yet a body also riddled in tension she indeed felt, feeling the danger signs. This boy was so self-conscious of his appearance, like an animal trapped in helplessness, his creamy nakedness to him like a third party in the room with them to which he found to be such an awkward intrusion, anxiousness Nica had seen a lot of with past clients, in their closed wincing eyes, their naked-fish bodies so overweight their fatty sides had been like slabs of raw meat in her hands.

When he'd undressed in only a bathrobe, he'd anxiously smiled at me as if he'd almost been trying to
placate me, but on the table, though nerves evident, he'd let me do with his body as I willed. He let me come forward as if stalking prey, him the prey that throughout our thirty minute session the alarm he'd felt at the start he'd lost register of until he was thoroughly mine, until I was entranced, as if in the act of staring at him I was consuming him as he consumed me even when his eyes remained closed, fluttering them open occasionally as he might flutter his eyes at a boy advancing upon him to make love to him, for this boy on my table wasn't male, he wasn't defined by maleness, he was a mystery you wanted nothing more to do than love.

Nica would be handsomely paid for both Kurt and Noah's treatments, the masseur having learnt much about them from her vantage point just from the touch of her hands, Kurt, having blinked, dazed upon the end of their massage, looking at her as if for a moment not recognizing her as a brothel boy doped and medicated would not recognize the man who'd been fucking him, nor even exactly why, and that it had been going on for quite a while, and Noah, hung over with a body so well-built with a puffed out male bust and biceps, a boy of such swaggering machismo and sexual virility he could have taken her on the table repeatedly if he hadn't been in love with his friend, his body language saying it all and oh how she knew how to read bodies.

She'd seen his swollen erection sported throughout the massage, his feet erogenous zones, the feet of others a fetish of his and he'd caught a glimpse of Kurt's as they'd changed behind African screens, those pale petite feet that would sometimes rise on cute little toes when turning in a differing direction, a dancer's trait Kurt still possessed to reveal the soft vulnerable underside, the naked sole Noah had wanted to kiss tenderly, to lick, to wrap around his hard dick and fuck, but that had been all of Kurt he'd seen, a tease, knowing what must have blossomed under that soft bathrobe since that day Noah had seen the boy sprawled on a towel in only swimming briefs on Coronado beach. The sight his sexual awakening. His first ever erection.

He'd worked his hand furiously, hiding in the Aroma Boma rest room following his massage, locked in the toilet stall where for several rushed minutes he'd masturbated twice to the image of Kurt on that table, his lower body still so relaxed his legs had shivered when he'd come, powerful, and wincing as if peeing hot scalding liquid. He'd felt so ashamed, his head against the stall, eyes averted from the yards of semen dampened tissues in the bowl, and was passing off his sudden perspiration that had broken out on his forehead and beneath his arms almost stinging like red ants now on the gym's bench press, butterfly machine and dumb bells, eyes focused and not on Kurt who'd since perched himself on the windowsill seat watching him.

I didn't think I could look him in the eyes, his blue eyes that had no idea of what I was doing behind his back, having asked me why we'd come here after our massages, why I was working out instead of relaxing before exercising, my answer kinda vague. Christ, I didn't want to avoid looking in his direction in case I started wackin' off right there in front of him. I didn't want to turn the blind side of my face towards him when we'd share a room either, a wounded tenderness in my eyes when he'd speak to me unavoidably and even then not to look directly at him which would only puzzle and hurt him. It would totally schwag, and I didn't want that, so I kept it cool, as hung loose as I could. Seriously, I was cool as blue balls and I knew how cool those were.

"You know, last year I bought these yoga pants to exercise in and I stumbled across them when I was packing for this holiday with the tag still on and that is the whole story," said Kurt, looking down at them. "This will be just the third time I've worn them and that should probably give you enough of an idea of my relationship with the gym."

"You don't even go to the gym, do you?" Noah breathed out, from the bench press.

"No, I broke up with it. We just weren't working out."
Noah chuckled. "Dude, that's too bad." He placed the barbell back on its supports and came to sit up on the bench. "Maybe I can get you two back together. Get you on one of these bad boys."

Smiling, Kurt cast an eye around the quaint gym, an approximate twelve exercise machines along with a dumb bell rack for those to use nestled near him. Then, eyes cast on down on himself, his arms, legs, stomach, the areas he pondered over. "I suppose I could do with some toning."

"Do some cardio, it'll help," Noah advised. "And a few weights, but not too much."

Kurt frowned. "Why not? Don't you see me with muscle? Can't I too be a bangin' Nardude with guns so big I'll rip my sleeves off when I flex?"

"Nah dude, you rock the cute look," Noah asserted, grinning. "It's what makes you sexy."

Kurt's eyes widened. "Really?"

"Sure, cute and slim makes you totally babanees. You gotta work with what you got."

"Yes, but I think you're to develop it as well, don't you think?" Kurt queried. "It's like talent. You may have it, but until you develop it, it won't be all that it could be?"

Noah shrugged. "Maybe. Some peeps just don't have the talent thing whilst for others it comes naturally. Like havin' rhythm, wit or being so hot people follow you around and take pictures of you in public without you knowing."

"People do that?" Kurt asked, surprised to Noah's chuckle. "Oh, I wonder what it must be like to be that hot."

"Want me to fill you in?"

"Really? This has happened to you?"

"Sure," Noah nodded, making his way over to the Butterfly machine. "I've had chicks follow me around places. They've snapped pictures of me on the train, at the pool, at the grocery store. They even line up outside the boys' locker room at school to watch me workout and I'm always there goin' yep, everyone's lining up to see the Nugget Rocket. Everyone wants a ride on "The Puckwagon"."

"The what? "The Puck-"

""The Puckwagon"," Noah reiterated, blushing. "Yeah, nobody calls me Noah at school, they all call me "Puck"."

"As a nickname?"

"Kinda. They all call me "Puck". You know, from Puckerman. It was something I was tryin' on at first when I came to high school. A new name, a new bitchen hairstyle, a new attitude, and it stuck."

Kurt appeared confused, shifting on his seat. "Why would you want to try on another name? Don't you like being called Noah?"

"It isn't all that bad ass," Noah replied. "Except if you think of Noahs which is another word for shark in surf lingo, you know, Noah's ark, shark, sex shark, me," To Kurt's silence, he dismissed it. "Forget it, it's stupid, so I changed it. Now only my family calls me Noah, and you."

"... Puck." Kurt muttered, giggling to himself. "Reminds me of the character in A Midsummer Night's Dream, you know? Shakespeare's trickster."
"Sure."

"Do you have people telling you that often?"

"Not really," Noah replied, shaking his head as he took hold of the machine's handles. "The last person who did was my English teacher, but that was only because she couldn't call me "Puck" when I was doin' her on her desk after class. Said calling me after a mischievous fairy wasn't sexy."

Kurt gasped. "You had sex with your teacher?"

"Yeah," Noah smirked. "On my paper she gave me a "69, see me after class". She wanted it or nah."

Kurt blinked. "You actually took that as an invitation?"

"Hella, dude," Noah grinned. "Puck's self-summary is licker of clits, twister of tits and shooter of cum, and if you write sex positions on my paper, you win a tip to "you're gonna walk funny tomorrow."

Kurt shook his head. "Noah, sleeping with a teacher is something you just don't do. You're risking their job just because you were thinking with your ding dong."

"Well guess what Kurt," Noah said, pausing his exercise. "Some of us like to go a little further than touching dicks through undies."

"Yes and some of us don't like to break the law," Kurt replied hotly as his friend frowned.

"What's the big deal? You've dated a couple of your own teachers."

"No, I haven't."

"What about that one guy? Mr. Savvy or somethin."

"Savva."

"Right, what about him?" Noah asked. "Didn't you have a little thing with him?"

Kurt averted his eyes. "No, I didn't. I only saw him after class for extra sessions. I wanted to adopt a more mature writing style for my blog."

"Didn't you say he insisted on seeing every entry though? That you just ended up chatting? That you wrote poems together?"

Kurt rolled his eyes. "We were close, that's all. Nothing ever got drastic. Certainly not to the point where we were fornicating on his desk."

"I bet that's what he wanted though," Noah snorted. "He just never allowed himself."

"He never thought of doing such a thing in the first place," Kurt argued. "He didn't feel that way about me, Noah."

Mr. Savva, his English teacher this past school year, far from being a disciplinarian with his students, and a favorite among them, loved for his passionate disposition, his lopsided smile, with their yearning eyes always looking up at him for guidance, for approval, and with Sugar, for love as he'd once tutored her for a short period at the school, nicknaming him "Mr. Suave" for being the "hottest" teacher at Dalton, a young man in his late twenties, fit, dark haired and handsome, and walking with a limp from a boyhood accident that had given him a swagger, a certain distinction one would look at
and respect, looking just as strong and as amiable as William Levy, and a young husband too to a family, living comfortably on a private school salary.

For a fair boy who'd sit himself down in the middle of the classroom early before class would begin with his text books ready and open on his desk, Kurt showed signs of being very fond of his teacher, and Mr. Savva, who'd smile at everyone, perhaps missing a few in the room but always gracing Kurt, would grow very fond of him too, a rather shy and quiet student he found, who he'd encouraged to speak up more in class, to participate more in discussions, and who one day, catching the man by surprise, would approach him after class for an after school private consultation, asking for literacy help not only for essays, but for his architecture and fashion blog, a past time of his he'd said was a portfolio he'd wish to add to his college resume.

Mr. Savva had been touched by this. Kurt, a very promising student with a flowing writing style, and the sweetest he'd ever taught, a boy always so well groomed with his hair combed and uniform always neat and tight around him, even down to his trousers that would frame the globes of his ass if Mr. Savva had dared to look, a tight heart shaped ass he'd once seen in yoga pants on the sports field outside his second floor classroom window, Kurt himself like a decoration from the classy prow of a yacht or the silver hood ornament of a Rolls-Royce such was the eye catching nature of his appearance with pale luminous skin like an expensive doll's and cobalt blue eyes that seemed always just slightly out of focus as if allowing Mr. Savva entry.

So it happened from the winter of last year until May, Mr. Savva and Kurt had both started seeing each other after school, once or even twice a week, tirelessly talking of many things, sometimes unrelated to Kurt's blog, with one talk of theirs having strayed on too late, Kurt having missed his dinner at the canteen. Mr. Savva had driven him into town to buy him a sandwich, having returned to the school to drop him off afterwards, but had stopped a short distance about a mile and a half away so that they'd have more time to talk, to spend more time with Kurt, their conversations straying ever more personal, the man revealing unto the boy his undisclosed bisexuality, his love for his wife and two children, his love for his work, his passions.

It was all innocent; he would swear it was all innocent. Kurt was his student and he was his teacher and nothing in the several months of his "friendship" with him had the boy hinted at sexual flirtation or subterfuge as that Sugar girl had, never touching Kurt, perhaps having opened the car door for him to climb inside that evening and brushing his hand against his, gazed at him a little too longingly, unconsciously inhaled his scent, lost the thread of his words and stumbled and repeated himself when he'd speak animatedly much to Kurt's amusement, and to even carry the boy's image until he'd return to his overwrought household in which he was husband and father, climbing into bed, making love to his wife, and always to dreams of Kurt.

Then had come the last day of school and Kurt had stood before Mr. Savva's desk, the only thing in the room that had kept them apart all those months with a bottle of wine in his hand, chocolates too, a "thank you for all your help" on full smiling lips before he'd left, leaving his teacher's heart to throb after him, but the man had dared not show it. He'd told himself not to get involved, to never get involved, to never touch. He'd never allowed himself to feel for his students in such a way. His students having always had school boy and school girl crushes on him, the twirling of pigtails in his direction, the sighs, him the fantasy teacher they all wanted alone in the classroom, but now it was his turn and he was in love with one of his students.

Kurt would not know of any of this. He would not know that a day after he'd wished Mr. Savva a wonderful summer break, the man would drive all the way to Lima in hope of a glimpse of him, a sign of him, his thoughts obsessed with him as he'd stare from across the street at his house, 415 Whitman Avenue, waiting and waiting, and only with a sharp intake of breath would he watch a car pull up in front of it, Kurt climbing out with the driver, a boy, walking him to his door, a date, that
had sent a stab of shame, of hurt, to run through the man, watching the student he loved kiss another, the realization of it all now and there he'd pressed down on the gas pedal and driven away. And Kurt would have no idea. He would know nothing at all.

"Come on dude, you're like the sweetest jail bait," Noah grinned, the pace of his exercise now quickened. "Any teacher with a freaky Lolita boy complex and they'd be tryin to keep ten feet away from you with as much classroom furniture inbetween as possible. Any closer and they can't be held responsible for what their dick will do."

Kurt narrowed his eyes. "Is this how your teachers are with you? They all wish to have sex with you?"

"Uh-huh," Noah nodded, a gross smirk on his lips. "I mean, I don't make it a habit or anything. It's mostly to bump up my grades or help me pass a class, but sometimes there's just no turning off my game. I can't describe the ocean as "wet" any more than three times in Geography class or Ms. Doosenbury will jump my bones."

Kurt crossed his arms across his chest. "You know, I'm getting to know "Puck" more and more, but I think preferred him in A Midsummer Night's Dream."

"Huh?" Noah frowned, pausing his exercise.

"I don't like "Puck"," said Kurt. "I don't like his attitude. I don't like the way he is. I resent the name itself, "Puck", a pseudonym for a life you altered just to become "cooler" when you were always the coolest person I've ever known." Noah remained silent. "I'm sure, if I'd got to know "Puck" rather than the Noah I met in Coronado, we wouldn't now be friends."

"Dude, it's only a change in name. I'm still the same person."

"Really?" Kurt replied, swinging his legs over the side of the windowsill seat, feet on the ground. "From what you've told me I find there to be a distinct difference already. You have "Puck", Dallas' favorite whore hound, fuck boy and moronic gomer who'll call his teachers "babe", who'll think a girl's baby steps are to say "hi" and smile at him on day one and on day two have them suck his dick and who I heavily suspect to be a jerk, not ruling out, a bully." He eyed Noah's struck face. "Believe me Noah, Puck is not doing you any favors."


Kurt laughed, perching himself on the boy's thigh. "Tacos?"


Kurt smiled. "Oh, Noah is rad and as cool as the waves at Teahupó'o."

"Whoa..." Noah breathed, lips parted in awe.

"He's got that surfer swag that's shows real confidence, he'll make you laugh with his endearing boyish humor, and you know he'll be loyal and truthful with you, real nice and sweet."

"Sweet?"

"Oh yes, he's plenty sweet," Kurt nodded. "Do you want a fight?" He'll shout, and he'll kiss your
eyelids softly. "Do you wanna tussle?!" He'll say, and he'll nuzzle your neck."

Noah chuckled. "Whoa, we're talkin' sweeet, aren't we?"

"Yes we are," Kurt replied. "And as a friend of Noah's, let me tell you, I'm jealous of him. I'm very, very jealous."

"You are?"

"Well sure. Have you seen him surf? Have you seen him dance? Have you seen how he doesn't get jet lag from planes? He gets jet swag. I mean, do you know how unfair that is?"

Noah laughed. "Sounds like my kinda guy."

"And if I were his girlfriend, I'd be even more jealous." Kurt's voice was quiet. "Kitty has no idea who she really has on her arm."

Noah snorted. "A clingy needy piece of shit who just wants to cuddle, sleep, watch stupid movies and make out until he falls asleep as you play with his hair?"

"Isn't he the greatest?" Kurt smiled. "I bet he even sleeps with you so he can rest his freezing feet on you, take all of the covers and use you as a pillow."

Noah frowned. "His feet aren't freezing, his feet are hot. And he'd wrap you both up in the covers like a cocoon and have you use him as a pillow. On his left pec. Soft and cushiony like a boob."

"How is he like on dates?" Kurt asked.

"You mean those things he thought happened only ever on TV?"

Kurt paused, only now recalling Noah didn't date. Only fucked. As "Puck". "Okay… well, say you're on one with me. How would you start off?"

Noah gulped. "Um, okay… tell me about your weather hobbies… Fuck Kurt, I mean, tell me the weather… No! That's not what I meant. I was trying to ask what your hobbies are… um… Wonderful weather we're hobbing. Having! Fuck!"

"I've dated boys like that," Kurt smiled. "The ones with marshmallows in their mouths. They'll perspire looking worried, but once they relax, you'd be surprised. They do have game, they do have swag with punk rock powers and hella radness, and with Noah, he has all of these traits already. He's known for them. They just greatly soften when he really likes you. He'll turn into a nervous puppy, be as gentle as a puppy, as tender and as warm… I'm guessing. I mean, I've never dated him."

"No dude, you got it right on," Noah grinned. "Except all his game comes back in muscle puppy power when you're his. He makes a hella awesome boyfriend. Shows 'em a better time than a legend showin' kooks the tunnel love."

Kurt smiled, now high-fiving the boy. "That's the Noah I'm talking about."

"And I always keep my swag soft for my babe."

"Good," Kurt nodded. "As long as it's full Noah swag, not Puck swag. Puck swag stupid."

Noah grinned. "Fuck Puck, baby. He dead."

It would be a suspicion of Kurt's that Noah would be anything he wanted him to be, that "Puck" had
been so easily cast off to the South African winds like a handkerchief released over a mountain top after the fair boy's verdict, only having learned of the pseudonym minutes prior, a ridiculous name nobody could take seriously. "Puck", an evil trickster demon that Noah had swallowed and had engulfed his heart to lead an adolescent life drenched in debauchery now gone with him left to breathe in huge gulps of air, his pores unclogged, no longer suffocated, even though it had been "Noah" Kurt had been reunited with, "Puck" just his demon, his depraved demon Kurt had hated, had loathed for trying to ruin his idea of his poor, poor Noah...

Talking the way he had of the girls he'd slept with, the women, the mothers, the teachers, talking so crudely of their bodies, it frightened me. Noah wasn't like that. Noah was a good person, a cool and casual gentlemen who would respect girls as a surfer would respect the sea, would treat them right, and would love them as Italian men loved the female form. This was Noah, but this "Puck", this womanizer-woman-hater, had got his claws into him and I wouldn't have it, I wouldn't have Noah harmed, and Noah knew of the fight, now knew how Puck upset me, hurt me as if with every word this demon spoke, I was the one being stabbed with his cock, I was the "cunt", and God how that had hurt Noah more than any word Puck had ever said.

~ PLEASE REVIEW ~

(But if you wish to criticize, may it be constructive. I'm not going to learn from my mistakes and improve if you vent.)

Author's Note: This is the longest chapter of any story I have ever written. Originally it was to feature only the Cliff Lodge scene, but after revising my plan for Part II of this novel, I added another.

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~ STAY TUNED FOR MORE BY FOLLOWING/FAVORITING ~
The roar of the Land Rover! Kurt would mistake it for a jump like second with that of a lion's and he would be so chillingly convinced, his blood curdled until he was relieved to the rumble of the powerful engine beneath him, out now on the resort's afternoon game viewing with Noah, Elizabeth and Thomas, all of them sitting together towards the front of the open air car, a honeymooning couple at the back with their personal ranger and tracker, Phil and Kaizer, journeying them through the safari, speaking with exceptional knowledge of the wildlife of Ulusaba, the fauna, the animal behavior, astrology, geology, the local tribes and myths of the land, even weaponry, their rifles' scopes that could fix squarely on a predator and kill in a single shot.

Phil had been guiding at Ulusaba for around eight of his fifteen years as a ranger, British, a handsome gentlemanly air about him with breath smelling of fumes and chocolate peppermint he believed connecting nature and wildlife brought a sense of peace and new direction in life. He was also a real tennis enthusiast and would never miss out on watching the Wimbledon championships. Then there was Kaizer, a tracker for eight years, and working at Ulusaba for five. Black with full puffy cheeks and ever so friendly he'd share stories of many exciting drive sightings including a run in with a poacher and when a set of five lions had chased a leopard from its prey it had left in a tree only for one of the lions to climb up and get stuck in mid reach.

There! Up in a tree would be a leap of leopards scrapping for food, the carcass of a dead antelope hanging perilously from a branch, its limbs flopping as hyena would lurk below. Cheeks blushed at the sight of a lion mating with a lioness, the courting, the positioning; the male biting at the nape of the female's neck until she'd growl a snappish bite upon withdrawal. To see great elephants wading through the waters of the lake as if parting it with their size, washing themselves with a sense of play, their trunks like water guns jetting the spray all over each other, the herds of buffalos, hippos, crocodiles, and high in the sky, an eagle flying down to swoop three feet in front of them, a spitting cobra dangling from its mouth, shaken dead as a ragdoll.

It was all so exciting! Enough to squeal aloud like the dying squeal of the gazelle as the tiger's fangs punctured its throat. The sights were continuous, earlier that morning, having caught sight of leopards hunting impalas and warthogs on their safari walk, and yesterday, after Noah's post massage workout in the gym and subsequent lunch, having traversed in the open Rovers in their first safari game viewing only to stumble across African wild dogs hunting, let known to them by Kaizer, to be a rather rare sight to behold, the way they'd worked together to bring down a wilder beast, lunging out of control in their maddened state, only natural to them, all of these wild animals amongst nature with as little human interference allowed.

Those on the Land Rover would look wildly at these wonderful sights, some raising their cameras, some their binoculars, a myriad of winking flashes reflected from the sun, all trained upon the animals Phil and Kaizer would point out to them as they'd halt the car to scan the range, to seek any life and movement they could suss out, and Kurt too would look with an open smile, the boy reminded of his time at the San Deigo Wild Animal Park as a child, of the Africa tram he'd ridden with his parents through the enclosures that seemed so piffling and caged compared to Ulusaba's
13,500 hectares of land, of South African land, the soil rich African soil marked by their rover's tire tracks amidst a splotch like scattering of animal footprints.

On such rough terrain, the road remained even, though littered at times when amongst dense foliage and flora with bumps and shallow holes that had everyone laughing nervously, their lap belts tightened around them as the rover would teeter at perilous angles enough to fall, all hands gripping hard enough to bruise their fingers for sure, must have hurt them. Kurt's own hand would clamp down on Noah's arm right next to him, the large muscle itself sturdy and strong and squeezed with every shudder he swore was unintentional, and he would not be aware of it until he'd notice, retrieving it embarrassed as if Noah himself had swatted it away, that fair hand pressing on too tight, the touch itself alien, unwarranted, not wanted on his flesh.

It would be something Noah would pass off lightly with awkward chuckles, hardly worth mentioning, hardly harmless at all, if not masking the pang of hurt he felt inside every single time it happened, upon turbulence, and when Kurt would near shake him whole for his attention on animal activity he'd catch sight of on his side of the car like a child, one that would not be as fainthearted as expected, seeing prey struggle, seeing prey squirm, even when they'd come too close for comfort with a bull elephant that could so easily have charged their car to impale and flip them over, Kurt had withstood it all with glee and yet touching Noah and he'd be left unnerved, as if a tiger were seated beside him, one stoke of that fur and he'd lose his hand.

It was that childish fussiness I remembered when we'd been kids. Kurt respected other people's personal boundaries. He didn't touch them where he himself didn't want to be touched, or any longer than they'd be comfortable with, apologizing if he did. Dad had always found it touching, and it was cute, but there was pleasure in physical contact, as natural as it came to animals out here to rub against each other Kaizer had said was a sign of affection, lions stroking each other with their paws, elephants entwining their trunks, and now my arm slung across the back of Kurt's seat that had the hairs on the nape of his neck erect and tingling as my fingers played on his shoulder. I wanted our boundaries low with each other, everywhere and anywhere.

Midpoint along the journey and they stopped for a break, now the second one on the trip before a watering hole, the largest land depression in the area that attracted much of the wildlife to visit in great heard like abundance every day, rare black rhinoceroses, hippopotamuses, burchell zebra's and the common eland and great kudu now lapping their parched tongues at the water, some wading right through it and looked on from afar as the game viewing group enjoyed their own afternoon tea served at the hood of the rover, flasked coffee and Twinings, a selection of cookies offered in tins with Phil and Kaizer chatting animatedly with them all, Phil's dry sense of humor (one Kurt found so distinctly British) having them all in chuckles.

Noah had not wished for such beverages, instead sneakily swiping a hand full of cookies and two soda cans from the cooler bag in the hood of the rover for both him and Kurt to snack on as they sat themselves down against trunk of a nearby acacia tree away from the others, and Kurt would sit cross legged beside him, the tan boy splayed out chugging his soda and scoffing down his cookies so ravenously it would appear he fit right in the wild, a boy raised amongst animals, Tarzan, now wiping his crumb crusted lips on his arm and looking at his Gay Jane averting his blue eyes with an amused smile that the tan boy eyed, Kurt's pleasing profile with a radiance beating off his unnaturally white skin like white-painted stucco in the savannian heat.

"You likin how I'm eatin over here?" Noah grinned

"Oh yes," Kurt smiled. "You've really taken after the lions haven't you."

"What other way would you have me eat them? Perhaps a bit more... sexfully?" Kurt glanced at his
friend, only for those bushy brows to wiggle, the flirtatious precursor before Noah's mouth dug ferociously into his own palm, tearing into his cookie like a dog. Kurt giggled. "I don't know what you're laughing at," Noah said, bringing up his ravaged cookie crumbed lips. "I'm showin this cookie a good time. Sexy time to the cookie."

"Well I guess death by "sexy times" is the only way to go if you're a cookie," Kurt smiled as Noah chuckled.

"Totally."

"But the last thing we want is Phil knowing his cookies are going in such a way," Kurt began. "the British take their afternoon tea very seriously."

"Do they?"

Kurt nodded. "Oh yes. Yvette is British and she was raised in London where she'd often have afternoon tea with her mother in Mayfair's Claridge's when she was a child. She said it was the place to have it."

"Why?" Noah asked. "They serve tea that doesn't look like meat grease? Like, with the Chinese farmers from the plantations shipped over just to serve it you?"

"It is a five star hotel guested by royalty so it is good," Kurt nodded. "Appearance she said was everything and she even taught me the etiquette."

Noah smirked. "Neat, you wanna teach me some stuff?"

"Alright," Kurt agreed.

Noah wiped his hands on his shorts and scurried excitedly closer. "So, what first?" He asked.

"Well if you were wearing a hat and gloves, you wouldn't remove them and you'd only take the tiniest of bites from your food."

"Like this?" Taking hold of another cookie, Noah gnawed at it, his teeth bared and nibbling as a cascade of crumbs fell through his neckline into his top.

Kurt laughed. "Yes like that."

"Brah," Noah scoffed, "All I need do is imitate the way you yourself eat. You're still eating like my hamster in eighth grade."

"Well, at least I don't make as many crumbs as you do," Kurt retorted. "You're to make as little mess as possible. Similarly to how you'd sip at your tea, you'd make as little sound as possible."

"Like this?" Lifting his can, Noah drank his beverage pompously; his back straightened, his neck arched, his pinky finger protruding as Kurt laughed.

"Yes," the boy nodded, "and then you'd put your food back down on your plate."

Noah slumped with a sigh. "It would have taken them fuckin forever to eat this."

"They took their time when having tea."

"And what did they talk about?" Noah queried. "I'd be fresh out of words by the end, God damn."
"Their conversations were rather restrictive," Kurt admitted. "So they had to shift gears into French and German to entertain themselves."

"Well we got a whole safari around us dude and I ain't talkin about it in any language other than English and monkey."

Kurt frowned. "I didn't know monkey was in fashion."

"We're in the animal kingdom, Kurt," Noah said. "I wanna talk about how our Land Rover reminds me of the tour cars in Jurassic Park, all in monkey."

"Those cars had no drivers, Noah. They were restricted to a set route by tracks remember. At least we can stray from the road like the cars belonging to the park rangers."

"Sure, that's cool too," Noah nodded. "but wouldn't it be awesome if we had an interactive CD-ROM that when you'd touch the right part of the screen it'd talk about whatever you wanted it to."

"Well, we have Phil and Kaizer for that," Kurt replied, gesturing to the group a few meters away, "and though I have nothing against Richard Kylie, having a hunter and tracker with you is far more engaging, don't you think?"

Noah shrugged. "I guess. Their snipers are hella cool. Sure would like to hold one of 'em. Maybe go on a little game hunt."

"Okay firstly you wouldn't be able to hunt here. The animals are protected and secondly, no Tarzan of mine is going hunting."

"Gotta bring food to the table, bro," Noah replied as Kurt protested.

"Yes, but our table is overflowing with enough of it to meat sweat an ocean on your brow. My wardrobe is piling up with fur coats I swear hiss my name when I wear them, and what on earth am I do with the piles of ivory tusks? Mmm? Seriously, I could fashion the ribcage of a sperm whale out of them, or you know, carve out ten thousand little surfer charms for you to wear. It's getting out of hand."

"Hey, I like to spoil my Gay Jane from time to time," Noah smiled."Nothin wrong with that."

"Then spoil me with coconut water and the power to persuade you that we can't just rely on your "guns" as our home security system. There are some hungry-hungry lionesses out here. "Arm and Hammer" can't protect us from them all."

"You underestimate my guns, Gay Jane," Noah replied, flexing his biceps as he crushed a cookie in his hand.

Kurt sighed. "Yvette would be so proud."

"I'd be proud to wear those ivory surfer charms you'd make me," Noah grinned. "That's a real sweet idea."

Kurt blushed. "My art style is I'd say post-kindergarten scribblecore. They wouldn't be much to look at compared to the masterpieces they have at the resort. I mean, all those masks and figurines. It must take years to perfect such a craft."

"Nah," Noah said, shaking his head. "You'd be good at makin me bracelets, necklaces and kick ass shaman headdresses to practice my voodoo and shit."
"I don't know," Kurt muttered, grazing his fingers against Noah's surfer necklace. "They can get quite heavy, and I remember you once telling me the lighter the accessories you wear when surfing, the better."

Noah grinned, tenderly. "Some accessories are worth the heavy burden."

"Smooth, aren't you."

"As smooth as glassy seas, brah," Noah smirked. "Especially if you've got a little swell goin on there."

"Okay, now you're just talking about surfing."

"You raised the subject."

Kurt shrugged. "I like seeing you in your element, that's all."

"Don't worry," Noah smiled. "I'm already in it. This safari is swanky festy. I bet this it's a whole lot better than the one you went on in San Deigo, right?"

"Well yes," Kurt nodded. "This is a genuine safari. Think of it as Isla Sornar, Jurassic Park's Site B."

Noah nodded. "Ah right, got it."

"No paddocks, no enclosures. The animals have greater freedom to kill you and that's the kind of intimacy you want."

"Totally," Noah chuckled as Kurt continued.

"And the best part of it is, you're here with me this time round. We're together in the place we imagined we'd be as kids. We're actually in Africa, and I remember thinking of it in the San Diego animal park, how we would have all these animals in our jungle, but without you there with me to enjoy it, it wasn't the same."

"That's 'cause no safari's complete without Tarzan, dude."

"I suppose you were the star attraction they didn't have," Kurt smiled. "Too busy partying with the Big Five here in Banana Country."

Noah grinned, his body sprawled propped on an arm, leg bent at the knee. "Yep, just casually riding elephants and tryin to grow a beard to match Mufasa's giant ass mane. Oh, and gettin my gorilla peeps to build me my own Pride Rock. I wanna be sacrificing my haters on it, Aztec style."

"I wouldn't have known you'd have any haters."

"We're in the animal kingdom, Kurt," Noah replied, looking around. "It's a fight for survival out here; you gotta watch your back. Plus haters are fuckin annoying. They're always there tryin to dampen my zen like locusts descending on Mankato."

"You really have haters, Noah? At school?"

"Nah, high school's pretty chill for me. I was only thinking of you."

Kurt blinked. "Of me?"

"Yeah," Noah nodded. "Ny zen is ruined when I think of haters hatin on you."
"I don't have any haters, Noah," Kurt replied. "I've told you of Dalton's no bulling policy. Admittedly I have had boys in my dorm room tease me on my moisturizing routine I do every night in the bathroom, but it's okay. Their punches slide harmlessly off me and I slip-slide away down the halls like an oily little penguin."

Noah's body now became alert, pricked and sprung. "They punch you?!!"

"No, not literally," Kurt assured. "It's only teasing. Hardly hating."

"Sure as hell would sacrifice 'em if they ever hated on you," said Noah, his temper flustered. "No one hates on My Gay Jane. I'm telling ya, I'll turn thosefuckers into salsa dip and send 'em to some African God up there that'll appreciate my offering."

Kurt laughed. "And what would you hope to get in return?"

"Six month vacations twice a year, great game, and that every night shall be made hammock sex night."

"Hammock Sex?"

"Yeah, think sex swing gone Mayan."

"And who would you be having sex with?"

Noah wriggled his brows. "Wanna come tussle in my hammock tonight, Gay Jane? It's got real swaggin swing."

"Or we could fashion it into a large slingshot and catapult ourselves to see who can reach the moon the closest," Kurt suggested. "Or for a bonus, land on the back of an elephant and whoever does get the hammock for the night, or just sleep on the elephant. Whatever."

"Still think hammock sex would be hella better," Noah grumbled disappointedly with pouted lips. "I got my gorilla bros doin it all the time. They say that if you have it swinging enough to have you looping around and around, like a 360 vortex, it'll make you cum like crazy. Seriously we're talkin kamikaze orgasms."

Kurt smiled. "Well the gorillas sure know how to keep it exciting."

"Hella," Noah smirked.

"They don't have any here do they? Gorillas I mean, not hammocks."

"Nah, I think they're in the west of Africa," Noah replied, chuckling. "In the Congo or some place. It's where Tarzan was actually set."

"That's too bad. You would have been able to practice your monkey with them. Perhaps catch a hammock ride to your happy place."

"Where green M&Ms count as vegetables, bangin bunnies only accept high fives on their asses, and where I can say whatever the hell I want 'cause it's called freedom of spinach."

"Great," Kurt smiled. "Happy Hammocking. I'm going to talk to Phil some more. I feel like I'm missing out on some safari brain food-"

Noah grabbed his arm. "Don't go."
"I only want to find out more of the animals," Kurt said. "Maybe you can ask about their mating rituals, hammock boy."

"But we're good here," Noah protested. "We got a great view of the watering hole and I've set up a nest of cookie crumbs for us. Plus, you kinda exhausted the guy last time round."

"What are you talking about?"

Noah pulled a face. "Predator hunting tactics. The conservation status of each animal. Is a Zebra black with white stripes or white with black stripes? I mean, man you can you ask a man dry, dude."

"I'm curious is all," Kurt huffed. "It's not like I can go ask the animals themselves. They'll probably see my full cheeks, mistake me for one of their young and take me back to their nest. Bye-bye civilization."

"Nu-huh," Noah replied, shaking his head. "Tarzan shares his Gay Jane like he shares his food. With no one... except with his Gay Jane."

Kurt smirked. "Well Gay Jane would like to go play with the others now."

"But this is where all the cool kids hang out," Noah moaned. "Over here we masturbate the disappointment of our moms away and don't give a swag about anything."

"Masturbate?"

"Masturbate while smokin weed," Noah grinned. "Come on Kurt stay with me here, please?"

That word to "stay", and Kurt recalled his first night when Noah had begged him to "STAY!" The word now administered an electric shock through him and suddenly he could not move away from this boy any more than a chained animal clawing for its freedom, the flowing onset of water in his eyes furiously batted away into the blue but mistaken for flirtation as Noah, now encouraged, took on the act of a monkey, a curious monkey, crouched on all fours and supported on his knuckles. He settled Kurt back down with his fingers picking at the boy's clothing, sniffing him to his many giggles, sniffing the cookie in his hand and fed like a baby as Kurt flew it like an aeroplane into his mouth, laughing as Noah's nibbling lips tickled his fingertips.

In this play, like kids, and Noah crawled ape like towards him, his sounds, his chatter gorilla like with lips O shaped, "ooo", and all the while to Kurt's amusement as the fair boy was backed up against the trunk of the tree, the rough bark digging into his spine, the cutting pain and he was Gay Jane once more, and Noah was Tarzan, lifting his hand up for Kurt to place his palm against his, hands now together, hands cuddling, though hands no longer similar in size, but differing. Seen that Noah's was larger, a surfer's hand, masculine tanned, calloused at the fingertips, but tender at the palm, with Kurt's cutely delicate and slender, childlike small, so fair a white dress glove could have been mistaken for his flesh and so soft, so jelly cushiony soft.

They hadn't done this in years, but it came to their hands like nature. It was natural, the steps Kurt remembered to look from their connected palms to Noah's hazel eyes that were focused on him, intense as they'd always been, the eyes of an actor's sensual headshot, a whorish seductiveness for actors only wanted one thing, to seduce you. Noah was no actor, but he knew his own instincts when attracted, and he was deeply attracted to Kurt, his eyes indeed sexual and in yearning, but there was a tenderness that romanticized his movements as his hand travelled along the boy's outstretched arm, nearing him still on all fours to cup the side of his fair face, the sweetest face, dazzlingly pretty it elated his heart, made it throb like a fresh wound.
He wanted to kiss me. I'd seen that look on many a boy, the lips moist and puckered. His hand that would slide from my cheek to the back of my head to hold me in place as he'd kiss me full on the mouth, opening up my legs with his thighs in time with his tongue, his other hand on my waist gripping hard, his chest against my chest until I'd raise my forearm to push him away gently. I knew the moves, I foresaw them, but this could not happen, so I diverged his approach by sliding my arms around his neck and hugging him, my body clung and pressed up against his so hard I could feel the muscles on his chest, and there was a pause before he returned it, his big-boy arms pulling me in with his breaths hard and hot against my neck it made me shiver.

The encounter was witnessed from afar, Elizabeth looking on with the same unflinching attention as she had when looking at the animals, having long been drawn out from conversation with Phil as he'd shown both her and Thomas their route on the map splayed out on the hood of the car, to the sight of the two boys caught in an embrace that lasted several minutes until with a loss of balance they toppled on the ground in laughter with no attempt to get back up again, laying comfortably with Noah's arm beneath Kurt's shoulders and Kurt's head on Noah's shoulder, a favoured position to talk in Elizabeth could see, and she would not call them over until it was time to go, afternoon tea over with flasks and cookie tins, everything put away.

She would continue to observe them, sitting close in the Rover seat behind as they continued their journey, venturing upon many more animals, cheetahs, waterbucks and African buffalos until they'd reach the local village, Justicia, the last settlement before the Kruger National Park and not usually a destination on the game viewing trek, rather one on the cultural tour, but a one off visit on theirs as they all took in the plain sparsely scattered buildings, all painted light and creamy with the paint on some fading, peeling, some structures in bad need of repair though with the grassless yards and eyesore inducing plots of dry dusty land it all shabbily stood defiant in the hot African sun, charged with meaning, an emblem of these people's way of life.

Justicia was known as one of the communities aided by the non-profit organisation Pride 'N Purpose, Ulusaba's charitable arm established back in 2003 by members of the Ulusaba family themselves committed to helping disadvantaged areas, a total of six, living adjacent to the Sabi Sand Reserve with all their running expenses covered by Virgin Unite, and apart from two full-time members of staff, they relied exclusively on volunteers, offered even out to those staying at the game reserve if they wished to help, to donate or get involved in the projects Pride 'N Purpose ran including trips to crèche, local schools and infrastructure projects that Kurt and the others had been informed more about by Phil and Kaizer on their many game drives.

Their welcome to the village was to watch an acapella group of young men singing songs of Ulusaba in which Kaizer keenly joined in. Then to a local house to view a demonstration by two women in porridge making, a staple of the people since the beginning of time in which everyone was invited to try their luck at, even at making their own peanut butter that they served to the children hungry for seconds upon first taste. And onwards still to see a group of local boys performing the traditional percussive gumboot dance in bright orange patterned shirts representative of those they'd wear when working in the mines, singing along as they played their beats on their boots in unison, their bodies totally articulated with the polyrhythm in time.

Immediately next and they were led to the local preschool where they were once again welcomed hospitably, invited into the main hall by the teachers where all the children aged two to four were lined up in three long lines to sing songs. "Wheels on the Bus" - "Days of the Week" – "Ring a Ring o' Roses", even solos of the Big Five, and all sung with much gusto, their young vibrant eyes looking out to them, their energy high and enthusiasm not at all shy as Kurt knew he'd been when he'd been their age, now introduced to every child so well-mannered and intelligent as they all pooled around them, flanking them to be the ones to show them around their school with their little hands always tugging on theirs, sweetly chanting their names.
The younglings would find them all fascinating, people from a different world, a mob scene, feeding
time at the zoo, apes and monkeys with many having swamped around Elizabeth with her big bright
glassy blue eyes and long lashes and near blonding hair the colour the children had never seen before
except in fairy-tale books of princesses and you wouldn't have thought it real, but it was, and how
they all especially loved Kurt, milling around him with awe at his colourful clothing it startled their
wide eyes, his white-clear complexion almost translucent and how they loved Noah too, touching his
striped Mohawk as he jumped them on his back for piggy back rides, played tag, even taught them
the shaka sign, their little hands all hung loose.

Photographs were taken with everyone, the lens zoomed as far out as possible when at the school as
evry child had tried to cram themselves into the picture, some injuring themselves amidst light
trampling in the tight squeeze of many beaming faces, with Kurt and Noah always in the centre of it
all grabbing little hands reaching for them, Kurt hugging and kissing them like he was everybody's
sweetheart back home, both Thomas and Elizabeth now looking on as their two boys played with
many children who would've torn them limb from limb, for sure they'd have torn Kurt's wild-beaten
chestnut hair out by the roots, crazy in love they were with them both and Noah, who's eyes would
always find their way back to Kurt's in the crowd.

"Happy aren't they?" Thomas grinned.

"I think it may be the peanut butter," Elizabeth smiled. "It's done something to them." She looked at
the man beside her. "Thank you for doing this, for making this happen. It's done them so much good
seeing each other again."

"Well I always thought Kurt was good for Noah," Thomas shrugged. "A good influence I mean.
He's very polite and well-mannered. He makes good company for Noah. More so I think than any
other friend he has back home in Dallas."

"I seem to remember he had a lot of friends in school, didn't he?"

Thomas nodded. "Yeah, but the crowd he hangs out with now aren't the smartest of kids. Just a
bunch of meat headed idiots most of them. I mean, there are some I can stand, his best friend for one
he's had since the start of high school, Finn, a great guy who comes over a lot, but he doesn't keep in
contact with any friends he had when he used to surf and its shame, 'cause they were great guys."

"That is a shame," Elizabeth muttered as Thomas continued.

"You know he had a friend he'd surf with all the time when he was a kid. His name was Sam, sweet
kid with that blonde shaggy hair all the surfers had. Had Noah wanting to grow some himself but he
never had the patience." The man chuckled. "I knew his dad. Was a lifeguard at Pismo Beach, and
we'd road trip all along the Cali coast with them in their sandbox van and surf at Mavericks and
Trestles. We had the greatest of times."

"And what happened to Sam?"

"His family moved back to Australia," Thomas replied. "They were from Victoria and his father
found a better job there working at Bells Beach, which meant that we didn't see them as often as we
did on our breaks to California, until we stopped going."

"Are you still in contact with them?" Elizabeth asked.

"Sure," Thomas nodded, "His dad tells me Sam's now training for the Rip Curl Pro in Peniche. He
hopes to compete next spring."
"Is that a surfing competition?"

"Yes, it's the world's longest running surfing competition held every Easter at Bells Beach, but this one coming up is instead being held in Portugal."

"That is impressive," Elizabeth replied. "Does Noah know of this?"

Thomas nodded. "I did tell him and he says he's happy for Sam, but the extent of his relationship with that boy is in about the same condition as his interest in surfing. Pretty much out of the water."

"Did they grow apart?"

"They saw less and less of each other until Noah quit surfing. It was only ever that that kept them as friends and I think there's a little resentment Noah has against Sam for keeping at it when he didn't, so I know he still cares. I catch him watching the Rip Curl Pro whenever it's on as well as other surf competitions, so I'm still waiting until he gets over himself and gets back on that board 'cause he was damn good. He could've been great."

"How young was Noah when he met Sam?" Elizabeth inquired, watching as Thomas paused.

"He was six at the time. It's when he learned to surf. They learned together actually. Learned surf lingo together too, the works."

"And how long ago was it when they last saw each other?"

"It must be two or three years now."

"And yet it's Kurt he's with now," Elizabeth muttered. "He knew him for only a week eight years ago and if you compare that to how well and long he knew this Sam, well..."

"You know why, don't you," Thomas said, "I came to mention Kurt to him, sure, but I only suggested them seeing other as an idea. Noah was the one who jumped at it. It must have been what I'd imagined he'd be like if he ever decided to surf again, but he was so anxious to see Kurt. He was the one who chose Ulusaba. He was one who was insistent the invitation should be sent through a friend, not directly from him because he had this idea that Kurt had forgotten him. It was crazy."

"He did tell me his fear of Kurt forgetting him," Elizabeth smiled. "He used to think it even in Coronado, it was so adorable."

"You know how he feels about Kurt, right Liz? I'm not the only one seeing this, am I?"

The woman sighed, casting an eye over to the two boys in question. "No. Burt and I had our suspicions when they were children, but we didn't think much of it. They were so young. Now... I mean, I know Kurt's gay, but I don't know about Noah. I didn't want to assume anything."

Thomas chuckled. "Noah's... a free spirit. He's never labelled himself anything definitive, he's not into that. He just has this sexual freedom Connie thinks is as vast and as deep as the ocean, but only at home is he comfortable with it being known. He hasn't told anyone at school. There is still a lot of hate in that regard, so it'll just be girls he'll see and bring back, and always the same girl, pretty, popular, crazy talkative, but so often they'll turn out to be, I don't know, superficial and um... stupid."

"Oh right."

"He's seeing a girl back in Dallas actually. Her name's Kitty, his first ever "girlfriend" as all the
others have never lasted long, but I doubt this one will either. She's a horrible girl. Another cheerleader, another blonde. Connie hates her. Thinks she's "beastly". More so than any other of the silly girls we know he's only seeing because of how it is at school, the social pressures they have there just to fit in. It's ridiculous. He's not going for who he really wants."

"At this point, he may not know who that might be, Thomas," Elizabeth replied, sympathetically, "I'm sure he doesn't have an idea of who he's looking for or what to look for in them more than any other sixteen year old boy."

Thomas scoffed. "He has an idea, Lizzie. Most boys his age do."

"Well, Kurt goes out with all sorts of boys," Elizabeth replied. "Most I never meet, only hear of because he's at Dalton, but his matron assures me they're all very nice young men. He has a lot of fun with them."

"Yeah, I heard," Thomas chuckled. "I have the impression he has more boys' attention than he knows what to do with. Has he ever been in a relationship with any one of them?"

Elizabeth laughed. "Kurt likes to think not. He says he's never gone "steady" with a single one, never gone beyond kissing or any of that, which I'm proud of him for. He's says he's always been the one to draw the line there, but he sees enough of these boys for it apply regardless. He just has so many."

"He is a vision," Thomas said fondly. "He's got just the sweetest face and those eyes. They're killer."

Elizabeth now paused. "If Noah's feelings for him are what we think they are Thomas, then when it comes to when we have to leave-

"We'll sort something out," the man assured. "We'll find a way of having them see each other. I know what Noah feels for Kurt, and if he doesn't realize it, he's as stupid as the girls he dates."

"And are they always girls? Never boys? Not even a one?"

"None that I'm aware of," Thomas shrugged. "He hasn't nearly been as lucky as Kurt. I mean, he came out to Connie and I one day saying, "Swiggity swag, guess who's a fag." And we both sat there listening as he went on to say how he found both girls and boys attractive, but with Connie and I the only ones he's currently out to, who can he see? Who? To everyone he's "Puck" the lady killer. They don't know who he really is. None of them do."

"It's all part of growing up, Thomas," Elizabeth assured. "Children will go through phases, they'll change, and they'll make mistakes. Evidently in Noah's case, blonde cheerleader mistakes."

Thomas laughed. "I just wish he'd be himself, like he is now. Look at him," now pointing over to his laughing son. "Look how happy he is, and it's all because of Kurt. Kurt is the kind of person he should be with. My son used to make the sweetest friends when he was a kid, real keepers and now Kurt is one of the last he's held on to."

"And out of all these friends of his, if it were a boy he'd bring home instead of a girl-"

"We wouldn't care," Thomas replied, shaking his head. "Connie and I wouldn't treat them any differently. Just as long as they were both proud as hell to be with each other, it doesn't matter. And if it were Kurt he was with, I'd root all the more for them, because your son is one cute kid Lizzie. Sweet, soft and smart. How can anyone not fall in love with him?"

The final words lingered in the sun scorched air, and with so many soot particles kicked off the
dirtied soles of the running children, Elizabeth's eyes watered and her cheeks blushed from under Thomas's eyes, intense as he lingered them over her, her fair skin wearing little makeup but luminous from the heat, the expanse of her neck, the tops of her remarkable breasts displayed in a white flounced halter blouse that would often wiggle when walking as someone else in conversation might gesture with his hands, and Thomas knew he'd always catch himself looking at these breasts and at Elizabeth, this beautiful woman he knew not to look at in this way, but could not abstain from looking, for he was a man, and a man at most could look.

Thomas had many friends whose marriages had suffered from this wandering eye, the classic, a man's wife that had not been able to compete with the alabaster skinned, perky breasted girls, no longer able to win his body, or his soul. Their husbands taking little note of their emotional withdrawal as they'd get sucked off by the bespectacled secretary under the desk, their wives speaking with distant voices crackling like static on the speaker phone. Men, taking cursory note of whatever their wives were doing as they'd fuck the tattooed red headed waitress in their car, mostly that they'd leave often to visit others and always confronting their obstinacy. Men that had hurt, humiliated and angered their women in pursuit of young fresh flesh.

Thomas hadn't ceased loving his wife. He wasn't a man to take marriage casually with no instances of unfaithfulness to Connie, even when he would so often find himself the attention of many an attractive woman, a very handsome man he was himself with his masculine actor's face like Timothy Oliphant in A Perfect Getaway even now in his late thirties and with sex appeal he'd matured like fine wine allowed to breathe since their stay in Coronado it had weakened Elizabeth at the knees, her breasts jutted out, her lips pouted at a degree she quickly restored, for apart from her husband, never had she known a man as good looking as Thomas Puckerman, his gorgeous looks and gallantry his son Noah had inherited with such striking resemblance.

The Hummel blue eyed beauties and the Puckerman males found each of their families attractive, witnessed of by their fellow vacationers at the reserve, with both Puckerman's having shifted many an arousal induced erection, yet only one couple could benefit from this attraction and that was the two teen younglings sitting at the front of the Land Rover as they now returned to Ulusaba, Kurt leaning out the side and blowing kisses to the waving children, some chasing after them, stumbling and tripping over, the poor kids, with Noah close by his side, leaning over him and shouting "Chow lil' broskies! We'll miss ya! We'll never forget ya. Hang loose!" Not once, not twice but three times! A profound Zen truth you absolutely knew he meant.

Glee

Beep! The alarm for six, and up it was again the following day, an early rise for a yet another excursion with the Puckerman's as Kurt was to rise slowly from bed, Elizabeth up again before him, withdrawing to the bathroom to change and surprising her son by reappearing so quickly with the same clothes she'd worn yesterday, not counting the top, now in a Suzy summer piece and long colourful African beaded necklace that looked heavy but was worn light upon her chest, and there she was to grab him, entering him into the bathroom and out again, his face pretty in powder, with his hair somehow fuller and more sheeny brun like dripping Nutella than it had been, flattened from the pillow and dishevelled from yesterday's windswept Rover ride.

It would take little time for the boy to wake up though, and not from the water splashing his face clean, the colours of his clothes that wakened his corneas, a polo of scarlet pimpernel orange, blue denim shorts and white ankle cut converses, but the thought of seeing Noah again, a childlike
eagerness within him that wakened his morning lethargy like a tremor of the earth, this fragile crust of South African earth. The thought of seeing Noah, it made him feel so alive, not since he'd danced his legs raw to Yvette's applause, when in Junior High he'd flown over the high jump bar as graceful as the shepherdess in Jean-Honoré Fragonard's painting "The Swing", and when Noah himself had held him sky high on his broad shoulder, the white swan, the fair ballerino.

And it would be such a surprise, catching Kurt each and every time like profanity on his clean tongue, Noah, now tall, big and strong, and grown! No longer eight, but growing into an adult body approved by the girls at his school. Look at his arms! His chest! He has the V! God, he's so fucking hot. Even his knee cap is hot, and his hands! He'd make me squirt so bad with those hands. Excited of the changes in his body, it could be seen in Noah, for with Kurt here and he could sweep the boy off his feet, Kurt who was so slender and svelte, Noah could jog over to him at breakfast now and into a hug with arms he'd shamelessly pumped in pushups solely for this around Kurt's waist, bringing him in ever closer. Yeah… Melt into me, baby. Melt, melt…

The fair mother would see this embrace, her blue eyes warm to the sight yet her gaze would avert knowing the Texan father too could see what she saw, grinning "Good morning, Lizzie" as he came to kiss her on both cheeks, an almost sly glance at his son lengthening his hug with his friend a little longer than normal. Such a long hug! Intimate too. Kurt on tip toes, hands on Noah's shoulders, their faces close and smiling like idiots amidst surf lingo pleasantries before they pulled apart, and to those unseen who'd caught sight of everything from the start, what? No kiss? They are together, right? They can't just be friends. I hear they go to each other's beds at night. Seeing them sitting down for breakfast only, they'd have to wait for that to come.

And then, with their plates left squeaky clean, their cutlery clattering in mid dash, frantic, a maddening pace, off they'd go! All four of them whisked off in excitement, stomach's sick-full on ranger Phil's English breakfast and into the rover, Phil climbing into the driver's seat behind the wheel like Lindbergh into the cockpit of the Spirit of St Louis, revving the motor, shifting gears and accelerating into the full day scenic drive of the Panorama Route, a route known for its regional views of natural beauty along the eastern portion of the Great Escarpment, the Drakensberg Escarpment or "Dragon Mountain" in Afrikaans, after its mountainous appearance they all now awed open mouthed at in the bright-dazzling morning of this warm June day.

The Blyde River Canyon, their first stop. It was consumed in lush tropical foliage, red sandstone scattered amongst the green like a blaze, as if the enormous tress, hundred year old trees, were on fire. It was a large canyon of such fauna, such flora. All around was its wildlife. Over there! The Vervet and Samango Monkeys, and Bush Babies too by the Kadishi Tufa Waterfall. There, catching sight of the colourful feathered birdlife, the Purple-crested Louries and Cinnamon Doves by the weeping face of nature, with all four of them coming to stop at the Three Rondavels, known as the best viewing perch of the whole canyon with its massive large round rocks dotted around all-around said to be reminiscent of the houses of the indigenous people.

God's Window. The vantage point with its unbroken rampant cliffs that plunged into the lowveld, a vista, an escarpment of forests Eden-like in aesthetic appearance, full with cycads, orchids, lilies and proteas with the beautiful birds from before flying about them in a flurry of wings, quick darting little beaks and all with such exotic iridescent-crimson and blue feather wings that glittered like metal in the sun, beating so rapidly you only saw a blur as they fluttered over to the Bourke's Luck Potholes they viewed all from the crags above, walking along the many bridges that overlooked the potholes, its giant kettles that looked like tooth cavities in the rock, like bombs that had gone off and been allowed to leave behind little kolk like holes.

Pilgrims Rest. A small town in the Mpumalanga province marked in history as one of the Transvaal gold fields in the 19th Century, now protected as a provincial heritage site and museum, all pretty,
picturesque and photogenic with its original Victorian almost Amish looking buildings painted on leafy streets, rusted out cars and horse drawn carts covered in barrels for decoration with old gold mining ore cars recalling truths of gruelling and unhygienic conditions of the miners, most having been buried at the graveyard where there stood perpendicular to the others so that it would never see the sunrise, the infamous Robber's Grave, the robber himself an alleged thief of a miner's tent, a miner's "home", the most grievous offence.

Graskop. Its name Afrikaans for gr assy peak , another small gold mining camp town fourteen kilometres from Pilgrim's Rest, and their lunchtime stop at Harries Original Pancake Restaurant for freshly made pancakes boasted as the finest in all South Africa, pancakes with black cherries in liquor, pancakes with banana in caramel sauce, pancakes with dark chocolate mousse and milk tart custard, pancakes with ice cream, pancakes with cream or savoury pancakes for the main course, sweet for dessert, both courses ordered for everyone as whilst they waited, they looked through their many beautiful photographs taken, the sights of the route each a wondrous backdrop to their smiles as Noah admired his photos with both him and Kurt.

*We'd stuck close along the route, walking by each other's sides, sometimes as close as we'd been when posing in the pictures, each one looking hella good, Kurt and I by the plunge pools of the Treur River, the "Crystal Palace" at the Echo Caves, and so many hugangus waterfalls, the Lisbon Falls, the Lone Creek Falls, the Mac-Mac falls, each picture taken never having had dad or Mrs. H asking us to "scoot closer" to each other, 'cause I'd been there, I'd had that shit covered. Kurt was always in my arms or at least in one of 'em, and he'd never resisted. He'd always been soft and pliant, bringing himself close into me like I was his boyfriend. His big boyfriend. We looked like a couple and if I said I hadn't planned to make it look that way, I'd be fuckin lying."

Now, and this image would continue. Kurt ruefully complained, with a pouty pursing of his lips, of his tender aching feet and leg muscles, what with the hiking across the rough terrain, much more than he'd expected on a scenic drive, he impulsively stretched out his leg in a childlike gesture and caressed the calf that had Noah's hand moving like a wounded animal, clumsy to touch it with just the fingertips, like touching a hot stove, that fair skin of his, murmuring in tender confusion, "it's maybe a pulled tendon, dude. Another massage with Nica would do it." Yet his hands, ready to flip Nica off in favour of massaging Kurt themselves, were retracted blunderingly as pancakes now descended upon their table, both courses coming out in droves.

And through his own bites, Noah would lift his head out of his plate to watch Kurt eating across from him, not about to speak his name when he hesitated to ask how he found his food, not wanting to startle the boy into choking, but how in that instant Kurt looked up, his azure eyes widened even as the pupils were dilated, unseeing, enjoying his plate that much, the red cherry ice cream leaking from the side of his mouth like blood and licked up quickly like a cat, but dabbed away seconds later with the napkin for appearances sake as Noah chuckled, chocolate mousse dried in the corners of his own upturned grin as he too wiped away the remnants more slovenly with the back of his hand, leaning forward in his chair with his eyes on his fair friend.

"Whatya think?" Noah asked, flicking his eye to Kurt's plate. "Better than the ones at home?"

Kurt nodded. "They are very good. Certainly worth trekking along this route for. Even for the ice cream too."

"Can you bite into it?"

"What?"

"Ice cream," Noah said. "Can you bite into it? I've always thought people who can bite into it with their front teeth are on a whole different level. Like they can handle that much ice cold hadjama food
"No, my teeth are too sensitive," Kurt replied, shaking his head. "Can you?"

Noah grinned. "Sure. My teeth are hella strong. I can pop our rover's tires with 'em and go in for the kill."

"Kill whoever you like, but spare the tires," Kurt pleaded. "I can't walk all the way back to Ulusaba, I think I'm getting cramps... oh."

Noah watched as the boy lowered his hand to his calf. "Hasn't this ever happened to you when you've danced?" He asked.

Kurt nodded. "Yes, but it doesn't get any less unpleasant, only more so when I overexert myself."

"You were running around a lot."

"There's a lot to see on a panoramic route," Kurt replied. "I just didn't know South Africa had such nature reserves, they're beautiful. Mpumalanga is such a beautiful province. And did you know, there's a flight version of this excursion. I read about it on the leaflet. You can fly in a plane over the cascades and canyons and have a picnic in the lowveld at the end."

"Huh," Noah paused, "a picnic with swarms of bugs in the air where your sandwich can get pecked to crumbs in your hand by birds or pancakes with chocolate moussey goodness."

Kurt frowned. "Are you and nature not on good terms, Tarzan?"

"Hey, nature and I are plenty cool," Noah protested. "I mean, more so with the ocean than with the bug side of it. I don't think they like humans that much. Like, I wonder how many bullets have unintentionally hit them while being shot."

"More than a swarmful I'd think."

"Then there're the plants," Noah continued. "In eighth grade we had to look after our own plant for biology class and mine survived, not because I watered it regularly because I totally forget each time, but because I spoke to it. It had no plant bros to photosympathize with it when it was sad and I wanted to give it emotional support, but the only thing that actually benefited the plant itself was that I was breathing carbon dioxide on it to help it live."

"That is so cute," Kurt smiled as Noah nodded a humble blush.

"Yep, if you're feeling sad, go all psychoanalysis on a couch and speak to a plant. You'll help it live."

"I suppose you wouldn't be able to breathe out on plants in a plane would you," Kurt asserted, "even if you could take lovely photos of them as well as everything else from such a height."

"Yeah, you can't pose by any of the actual cascades and stuff in a plane. That's what makes our pictures better."

Kurt smiled. "Well then it's a good thing we did it this way."

"Are you happy we did?" Noah asked.

"Yes. I've really enjoyed this. Scenic drives and walking, I love them, and I know I'd surprise people by saying that because I don't appear like an outdoor boy. I mean, some boys have thought they were
taking a risk when they'd take me out places to jump across rock crags or cycle along rail trails, but if
the weather was nice and if there was always a good view, I was happy."

"That's cool," replied Noah, lowering his eyes to the table as Kurt continued.

"Once a boy took me out rowing and he was so anxious at the thought that I was hating it I insisted
on helping out with the oars and tiller. It surprised him, but it calmed him right down and I found out
I'm actually quite capable at the rear of a boat. I have good sense of direction. The rowing, however,
not so much."

"Huh," muttered Noah distantly, the talk of boys Kurt could see now upsetting him.

"But I don't want to even compare this to anything else I've been on," he added. "Even the company
can't compare."

"Huh?" Noah grunted, lifting his gaze to a hand on his forearm, a blue eyed wink. "Hell yeah!" He
now shouted, ecstatically, "and this isn't even a date. I be doin good."

Kurt smiled. "Yes, you are."

"I don't even have to kiss you."

"Too bad. Kisses make dates all the sweeter, like ice cream with pancakes. Hey, I wonder if I can get
my lips any redder with it."

Noah chuckled, watching as Kurt coted his lips in ice cream. "Dude, your lips are already as red as
Satan's dick."

"How do I look?" Kurt asked. "Am I pretty yet? I'm no longer tripping over my low self-esteem am I?"

"You look like a tramp open to getting hitched," Noah laughed. "Well, your lips do."

"Hey, I burn a lot of calories keeping them this beautiful I'll have you know."

"Yeah, by givin head."

Kurt gasped. "I don't burn them that way, mister. Not with my shrimp allergies."

"Ooh, burn!" Noah exclaimed.

"Just another excuse Yvette taught me," Kurt giggled. "She told me there are plenty of lousy dicks
out there you don't want to suck, even if you were suffocating and there was oxygen in their balls."

Noah chuckled. "Didn't you say she was raised hella posh?"

"That's what makes it all the more amusing, don't you think?" Kurt grinned, "It's so funny when she
tells me these things so bluntly in her British RP accent without trying to put it delicately, because
there is no way to do that."

"Would you ever want to suck dick?"

Kurt's eyes widened. "Okay, and the cherry is coming off," he said, taking his napkin and removing
the ice cream from his lips, since dried like a thin layered crust and too late to lick off as Noah
chuckled.
"Sorry dude."

"No wonder this flavor is so popular in chapstick," the boy muttered.

"Nah, I like coconut better," Noah replied, grinning still. "Watermelon and mango too. Whenever girls wear it, I'm just like a moth to a flame."

"Well make sure it is chapstick they're wearing," Kurt replied, his napkin scrunched into a ball as he now placed it on his empty plate. "It could have been a stick of glue they were applying for fifteen minutes staring absentmindedly at a wall, and then when you go in to kiss them, they'll be stuck to you, happy all the time."

Noah stared at him. "You just ruined chapstick for me."

"No, I just life hacked all the girls who wish to kiss you," Kurt smirked. "It's more productive this way, and they'll have me to thank."

"Life hack, huh?"

"Yes," Kurt nodded, "and another one for them, put your lips on Noah Puckerman's to keep warm. That way they'll be after you all the faster."

Noah chuckled. "I like that one."

"Of course you would."

"What about you?" Noah asked. "What do you wear on your lips? Chapstick too right?"

Kurt shook his head. "No, I don't like their lip balms. I find them too waxy and sticky, honestly like glue and they make the lips really unpleasant to kiss."

"Tell me about it," Noah agreed.

"And I don't often wear flavored lip balms either," Kurt continued, "because if I'm hungry and I have toffee and peaches right under my nose, I will start biting at my lips and I won't stop until I've eaten up my entire face. So I'll go for balms that will moisturize and leave my lips soft, because I think there is nothing more inviting than a soft pair of lips that feel even softer when you go in for the kiss."

"Well balm or no balm Kurt, you got the prettiest dude lips."

Kurt smiled. "Yay, thank you Noah."

"They look like the red velvet cushions of life. Like, screw pillows, you can take face naps on those babies. Now all those dudes wanting a little sleep will be super happy."

Kurt paused. "You just life hacked them, didn't you."

"Did I?" Noah smirked. "I didn't realize, I'm just so tired from all the walking." He leaned forward on his elbows. "Can I have a little face nap? I'm beat."

"Nice try, life hacker," Kurt said, pushing Noah's approaching lips back as the boy protested.

"Come on dude, I heard kissing is good for you. So how about we both try and stay healthy, huh?"

Kurt laughed. "Do you remember when you tried to kiss me when we were young? You were very
persistent."

"Yeah," Noah chuckled, heartily. "I was sure into some kinky shit. Of course, back then, kinky shit to me was just a little thing called 'kissing' and I'd never even done that before."

"Really?"

Noah nodded, mocking sniffing wailing tears. "Yeah, and the only reason I tried to kiss you so bad was so I wouldn't have to lie to my diary."

"Aw," Kurt laughed.

"Yeah," Noah nodded. "Whenever I'd lie to it, it would eat up the words I'd written and pellet me them like bullets. Think of Harry Potter's Monster Book of Monsters and you got a diary with the same stick up its ass."

"I never kept a diary," Kurt said.

"Me neither, but Sarah does. Writes everything in it."

"Ever read it?"

"Yeah," Noah grinned. "She writes the cutest stuff, like "What's with these people telling me I'm "full of myself"? Of course I'm full of myself, what else is my body supposed to be full of? Bees?" Kurt laughed. "And she's not too good at the spelling thing," Noah continued, fondly. "So if she can't spell a word she plays it off and misspells it really bad so it looks intentional like "we went to the steakhouse resterarent today, the weather was feringhitentient sixty."

"She sounds adorable."

"Yeah. There's actually a guy in her class she's in total fambo with who sits right in front of her in homeroom. He asked her once for a piece of paper and she handed him a marriage certificate she'd drafted up herself for both of them to get hitched under the monkey bars."

Kurt squealed. "Oh my God, she is so cute!"

"It never happened though," Noah said, chuckling at the absurdity. "The dude ran off and she spent all recess chasing him."

"Well, the heart wants what the heart wants," Kur smiled, "and tell her to actually fill it with bees. It's the best thing. If that boy breaks it, then he'll have to deal with the bees." Noah grinned as the fair boy went on to sing, "Sweet dreams are made of bees. Who am I to diss a bee? Travel the world with the seven bees. Everybody's looking for... bees."

"Rockin lyrics, dude," Noah chuckled, "You go take that cover to my dad and he'll sell that shit triple platinum."

Kurt shrugged. "Just trying to help out your little sister is all."

"She and you would get on so good."

"I would love to meet her," Kurt smiled. "Maybe then I can tell her it's perfectly believable to ask this boy she likes, "date me, it's for our class project nobody know about", but before she does, ask if he has sisters, because then he'll have seen the female in her natural state and therefore won't have any unrealistic expectations of her body, when she's older of course."
"Does that mean I'll also be a good marriage prospect for chicks too?" Noah asked as Kurt scoffed.

"You've seen so many a female in their natural states; you needn't even have a sister. In fact, Sarah will probably find Waldo before you will ever find love."

"Hey whoa!" Noah exclaimed, wounded. "Cheap shot, dude!"

Kurt smiled apologetically. "I was referring to 'Puck."

"Puck's dead remember," Noah said, still rather upset. "I killed him. I even chiseled on his tombstone for it to read "finally" on it."

"Really?"

"Yeah. He really wanted to be cremated so his ashes could get mixed into a giant pot of chilli and served to every chick he slept with just so he could tear their asses up one more time but I was like bro, give it a rest. You dead." Kurt laughed. "He also either wanted his dead dick buried in someone's ass or in a museum."

"And to your left you have the world's smallest penis," Kurt joked. "Take a look folks, and feel free to use these magnifying glasses."

"Hey, I'm packin down here," Noah protested as Kurt giggled.

"I'm sure you are Noah, and I'm sure you'll find love someday too. They actually say people's brains aren't fully developed until their twenty five. If you love anything, especially now if you're a teenager, it's just lust. You love surfing? It's just lust. You actually want to have sex with your surf board. You love food? Same thing. Your family and dog? You sick fuck."

"Have you ever been in love?"

"No, but I hope one day to be. I know my love will be like a flickering flame, a candle, forget me and I'll freakin burn your house down."

Noah shook his head. "Nah, your heart's too much like soft serve ice cream for that dude."

"You're right," Kurt sighed, laughing at himself. "I'd try so hard to pull off a calm and dignified façade, I'd only break down and turn into a big bowl of overly grief stricken pudding. Just casually burn some calories as I'd slide down a wall crying."

"That's why you're my Gay Jane remember," Noah smirked, winking his friend's way flirtatiously. "Tarzan's love is the real stuff. Legit and potent. Gets you real mellow high. He'd never forget you."

Kurt frowned. "Are you talking of love as weed right now?"

"I wish," Noah snorted. "I so wish people randomly offered me it as much as middle school health classes made it seem they would, but nah, I'm talkin about love, and orgasms too, 'cause nothing says I love you like multiple orgasms."

"You do know I can't have multiple orgasms, right? I'm not a girl."

"Okay, how about continuous orgasms until you can't breathe?"

"How about no orgasms because Tarzan kept it a G rating for the kids?"

"I dunno," Noah chuckled, sitting back. "I remember there was reference to Tarzan being a
"girlhood fantasy" of Jane's in the movie."

Kurt blinked. "Really? I must have missed that."

"Kinda like you when you were in fambo with me as a kid."

"Okay, crying down the wall it is," Kurt replied, embarrassed. "I could do with the workout."

Noah chuckled. "It's cool dude, I know what crushes are like. Having one on someone is like eating a Dorito you didn't chew properly only to feel it slowly sliding down your throat and slicing up your insides."

"Okay, whatever it is I felt for you, it wasn't as painful as that."

"Then you're lucky. I found it written in Sarah's diary the day her crush ran from her."

"She was really into him, huh?" Kurt muttered, sympathetically as Noah nodded.

"Yeah, and they weren't even her words, they were mine. I'd once told her about a crush I had one time and that's how I put it. That's how it felt for me."

"I'm sorry."

"S'allright," Noah shrugged. "I got over 'em. Just masturbated the pain away. Kept on cumming until the void in my heart was filled."

"Were you in love with them?"

"Nah, it was just lust, right? I wanted to fuck."

"Don't all boys," Kurt snorted.

"Don't you?" Asked Noah as Kurt paused.

"Oh I'm not like other boys, Noah. Actually, I'm nothing like other boys, and that boy you saw get on the school bus isn't like other boys either. It's surprising, really. It's almost as if everybody is different from each other. Holy moly."

"You're right," Noah chuckled. "You're not like other dudes, Kurt. That's why I had to get to know you and why Sarah thinks I should lasso and bring you back home with me to Texas."

Kurt laughed. "She does?"

"Yeah, my dad told her everything about our time in Coronado. About you, how we met, how we were friends, how we were Tarzan and Gay Jane together. He showed her all the pictures and she even thought we'd gotten married when he mentioned the promise ring." Averting his eyes to his hands fiddling, Noah's smile faltered. "And she felt sad when I told her you left. She said to me, "No-no, why do the people we love always leave us?"

"And come back and say hey, how's it going?" Kurt said, guilt at those last words wracking him into speech. "It's me again. I hope your life is well. What's that? You were just starting to move on? Wow, this is awkward… I should go."

Noah grinned. "No but when I told her I'd be seein you again she was real happy about it. Wouldn't stop telling me to not let you go a second time 'cause she totally ships us like the wack fan girls she is."
"She knows we're not a real couple right?"

"Don't kill this for her, dude," Noah warned. "Don't sink the Tarzan and Gay Jane fandom ship. She was jilted at the monkey bars by "Prince Cute Boy in Class"; our love story is all she has. Break it and you'll break her heart and you'll be the one to deal with the bees."

Kurt tried to protest. "But I-

"Shh, you hear that?" Said Noah quietly, a hand to the shell of his ear. "The buzzing? It's the sound of bees comin for you. Also to hang out and fuck the exotic South African bird babes here."

"They fuck birds?"

"Yeah totally, 'cause bee sex is real funny," Noah grinned. "Like male bees go to the Queen, insert their penis in her and ejaculate at such a high speed that their genitals fucking explode and are left in the Queen forever, leaving the male bees to fall to the ground and die."

"And how would they mate with birds?" Kurt asked, still confused. "How would that… oh forget it," he relented, watching Noah laugh. "They fuck birds."

Their parents sitting next to them, their attentions fully engrossed in conversation with Phil at the head of the table about the history of the hardy pioneers and they would not hear the nature of Kurt and Noah's conversation, the two boys left to talk and laugh amongst themselves in the simple modern restaurant with its large windows streaming in the sunshine, it's patio bifolding doors open, with only less than a dozen dining with them eating ravenously their pancakes of Bobotie, Chili Con Carne and Savory Mince, downed with ice cream soda floats with no suspicion as to who these boys were or where they'd come from, not as if they themselves knew consciously of their witnesses with their attentions fixed solely on each other's.

And though the topics would fluctuate, Kurt would continue to feel touched by Sarah's words, the girl rooting after him and her brother together with Noah having been teased at first with it. "Tarzan and Gay Jane! Tarzan and Gay Jane!" But those comments of her being "annoying like that", an irritation like a "fucking balls itch that wouldn't go away", it could not mask how he truly felt. That smile he tried to hide with a lowered head, one of secret satisfaction Kurt could see, as if he'd just got away with something naughty, almost a fond smirk, lopsided and boyish. Noah was pleased. He was. Sarah's teasing was now more chanting appraisal to his ears and he loved it, his little cheerleader, and to this, Kurt could only look on with a smile.

It didn't bother me. I found it all too sweet and cute for it to bother me and it wasn't as if the dynamic of our friendship had altered. We were still the same even when I knew during our return to Ulusaba I was much more aware of Noah's presence, how it had grown in confidence since lunch, angled into me, touching me... My heart beat quickly and I knew it was all doing something to me. I'd had the feeling before with boys. A heat I would feel pulsing a hunger at the pit of my belly, a stiff desire I would run from only to deal with alone in my bed. Now was I bothered, and hot, and I ran away faster and faster than my two legs could possibly carry me, only to escape for now. For that night, I would touch myself, but I would never admit to whom.

~ PLEASE REVIEW ~

(But if you wish to criticize, may it be constructive. I'm not going to learn from my mistakes and improve if you vent.)

Disclaimer: I do not own the rights to the characters from Glee as I don't own the show. I'm not
earning money from this and no copyright or trademark infringement is intended.

~ STAY TUNED FOR MORE BY FOLLOWING/FAVORITING ~
Chapter 9

THE BOY
2009

IX

~ Fambo ~

It was a surprise! Wake up! Risen from slumber by the quick shake of the shoulders at five in the morning and told to get up and quickly with a voice charged with quiet tender excitement. Elizabeth, already dressed and hovering over her son with her hair tied in a disheveled bun was telling him it was time to get ready and for a moment he'd forget what it was he was to get ready for, the room dimly lit with a cotton canvas beach bag by the dresser already heavily stuffed, two coral pink towels rolled up like Swiss rolls beside it with spare clothes all folded at the foot of the bed ready to be put in, and swinging his legs over the edge of the bed Kurt would see all this, now rising as his mother flitted about the room packing like a caged bird.

Outside the sun had not risen in the east, dark, an ungodly hour, but it now thrilled him to be awake at such a time. Awake with his mother at such a time as if they were about to prowl the night like big restless cats unable or unwilling to sleep. He washed his face, made it up, hastily flung his clothes on to the rattling keys in his mother's hand, their bags in her other as she would call out for him to hurry. The Puckermans would be meeting up with them at the main lodge and they could be late, and to Kurt it would be like a movie scene comprehended through the cotton batting of a child's sleep; the escape, the secret rendezvous under the cover of darkness with his marshmallow fat pillow brought into his chest as they trotted into the night.

Down from the Cliff Lodge along the curving mountainous paths, tricky to manage with lights so sparsely lit and you would hear running feet skidding on the ground, pebbles forming little rockslides as both Thomas and Noah would leap downhill, late with such noise they were making, perhaps waking a few of the other guests, catching themselves twice when they lost balance, but quick and nimble as monkeys as they arrived panting with happy smiles at Kurt and Elizabeth startled at their sudden entrance, Kaizer with them, grinning. Both men's hearts were pounding in their chests. Their knees were stiff and Thomas had nearly sprained a wrist whilst running but Noah was alright, now looking over at Kurt smiling amusedly his way.

He looked so small and delicate in the light, like a little child with that large pillow, take it away and his hands would claw for something else to hold, even him. Noah liked this. He slipped his hand around the boy's waist, tight, and with heavy morning voice greeted him, "hey dude." His left pectoral was now another pillow for Kurt to lay his head on and the tan boy chuckled, looking down at this, dressed in a white shirt and surf shorts, a backpack slung over one shoulder with a Dallas Cowboys cap that lowered with his head to sniff with flared-hungry nostrils at Kurt's hair just shy of tickling his chin. Yes, it reminded him of lemon ice and raspberries. Mmm! Made him dizzy from the sweetness as they all set off, Kaizer in front towards the airstrip.

The plane would flash pale and glimmering as they approached. Noah himself would see it looming out the dark like a ghost, a shiver in him that chilled the hairs erect on the nape of his neck he'd lift a hand to feel, a strange feeling that left him perplexed, his bare naked skin that was missing something. Then, a stab of horror. He'd left his necklace in his room on the bedside table! His surfer necklace he couldn't not wear today. Of all days. He loved it. He had to go get it, now dropping his backpack to Kurt's confusion and sprinted off, all the way back to the Cliff Lodge, his body alert.
with thrashing adrenaline, muscles hot, thighs burning and his feet hurting from flip flops toed off as up the hill he ran, climbing and climbing to the top.

It would be there by the bed where he'd taken it off, the boy stumbling through the door panting noisily yet with breath. He did not wear anything to bed, rather slept naked, even the necklace that would prove an irritation would be removed though kept on only when aroused. It made him feel sexy, knowing Kurt liked it, dark coffee and cream beaded with a stainless steel shark tooth pendant hanging at the front, it highlighted his thick neck and Adam's apple, looking great against his caramel colored skin, he slipped it on now with a few leather bracelets on his wrists and quick! Out the door! Outside! Down the hill towards the excitement of the plane, the big white creature flapping its wings for the take-off, large yellow eyes fixed on him.

And through the night, smiling, the wind whipping through him, how young and excited Noah was! Boarding in breathless motion, "Got it," he would say, his fleeting flashing boyish grin so alive as Kurt would smile back with a giggle, and then the sudden jolt! Speeding down the airstrip, the rumbling, the velocity. You could tell it was a living breathing animal entering the sky higher and higher, a smooth take-off with no danger of falling to the ground steaming fire and smoke, and Kurt would not be frightened, not now, instead scrunching his pillow in exhilaration like a roller coaster, looking over at Noah sitting across the aisle from him. How fun a ride it was for them both, ignoring their parents' advice to sleep. Now was the time to be alive.

_We were awake now with brightened eyes, talking to each other in our seats with Noah so happy he had his necklace with him he couldn't stop touching it. Mom and Thomas would tell us to sleep, to take a nap to conserve our energy in our pillows, but we were too looking forward to our day! Our trip down to the Eastern Cape town of Jeffrey's Bay, where our flight would take us to O.R. Tambo International Airport, then from there, a flight down to Port Elizabeth Airport, an hour's car ride from the beach itself. It had been Thomas's idea. He said he'd visited it once or twice before, said it was one of the greatest beaches in the world for surfing and Noah of course knew this. He may not have admitted it, but I could see he was itching to surf again._

The surfers would be the first they'd see on the water, their boards carving in and out on the deep green swelling waves as if writing calligraphy on its surface, continuing along to the long tubing right hand point breaks at the west side of the bay, one of the best in the entire world, Kitchen Windows, Magna tubes, Boneyards, Salad Bowls, Supertubes, Impossibles, Tubes, the Point, Albatross, all sections to the waves from the top of the point where on occasions they'd link to form waves of such incredible heights and lengths, large sized waves, wide breaking waves, swells considered a delicacy, and all measured on the Hawaiian scale, occurring especially consistently between the months of May to September, now June with perfect timing.

The bay was also host to the Billabong Pro ASP (Association of Surfing Professionals) World Tour surfing event at Super Tubes every July, an event sanctioned by a governing body of professional surfers that had been crowning surfing champions since 1976, Taj Burrow, Mick Fanning, and Kelly Slater the most recent winner of last year's tour in the bay Noah had watched online in his room. How every one of them had been amazing! Carving and turning, showing the true tests of what it was to be a surfer, undisputed and unchallenged in their high statuses and now catching sight of the same waves they had ridden, waves that broke on the breath in applause like an appraising edge, it was a heart-warming sight for any young boy surfer.

They had arrived by taxi, a near five hour journey in total from Ulusaba with the time now just past eleven, to the bottom of the beach known as Albatross where the gentler waves lapped, ideal for beginners and those who wished after too long a break to surf again. Thomas had accompanied Noah to a local surf shop to rent out a board and wet suit for the day, whilst Elizabeth and Kurt wondered out on the wide white breeze-cooled beach, the stretch of ribbed hard packed sand and
gust like veils and seaweed like drowning eels near deserted with very few people out in the hot sun, the heat that was proving just as strong as the one on the reserve flashing a gleam of light on their upper eye lines as they came to settle on a spot.

Elizabeth, in a white hat upon hair she’d since let down in waves, was to dress in a beach caftan of sky blue, long sleeved with a flattering V neck, legs full on show, her skin the fairest Kurt had ever seen on a woman and so beautiful as he too removed his clothes down to his swimming briefs he’d worn underneath his shorts, plain white briefs that hugged him well, though not so tight as to mark him or render him uncomfortable at the groin he adjusted privately, and from behind, his buttocks cupped like little breasts aching with milk-to-be-sucked, so soft looking, his thighs toned, the back of his knees, the heels of his feet. He would sit on the towel beside his mother and stroke these features absentmindedly, talking, until the others would return.

When they did, a sleek bamboo surfboard would be tucked under Noah's arm with a black wetsuit held in his hand, flopping like a dead catch he'd just caught further down the beach. At the shop and it had been like he’d returned home, a place of familiarity and welcoming; the boards, for surfing, body boarding, paddle boarding, skim boarding, knee boarding and wake boarding. The suits, boots, hoods, and gloves. The surf trunks, board shorts and rash guards. The wax they'd been given for free, its texture he remembered he'd get all over his hands when he was younger. It had all thrown his body into yearning, and he was now ready to do it all again as both he and Thomas came to join their friends on the beach with similar matching grins.

How fair they were! Mother and son. As light as the wave's white water or the platinum blonde shade of surrounding sand, sat on towels spread, Elizabeth like a seventies poster pin-up twirling her hair and Kurt half-naked, kneeling, turning about on his knees and peering with sapphire jewels at Noah with Noah's own gaze like that of young memory, slithering over him in the course of the shun-shot moment. Oh, those same white trunks he'd near fondled as a child one immortal day on Coronado Beach. With awe and delight, seeing again Kurt's lovely indrawn abdomen, those hips, the same silky supple bare back and frail faire hued shoulders, the tip of his tongue peeking out between his lips like the curious poking out sexual organ of the vagina.

Once again, the eight years he'd lived since Coronado, tapered to a palpitating point, but this beach encounter eclipsed its prototype. The new and improved "Princedom by the Sea". As it was, Kurt had jumped up and Noah, in a panic, would stumble to shield himself and his passion, his mange, behind his board, his "big" board Kurt would say, looking it over, measuring its length with his eyes, "Very nice wood." "Its b-bamboo," Noah stuttered nervously, as Kurt grinned. "Can I touch it?" He asked innocently, and the tan boy would gulp a, "S-sure." He hadn't even waxed it yet. It was alright to touch, stroke and admire as much as Kurt wanted, the board indeed nice, asking excitedly, "Can I ride it, perhaps? Like, sit on it? One leg on each side?"

Was I hearing this? Was Kurt actually saying these things? Sexual connotations were fuckin everywhere, man! Gah! I mean Jesus, no wonder guys wanted him touching their junk, he didn't know what he was saying. And me, I was only human. I had that same red-blooded juice pumpin through me with a damn board the only thing standing between us. Here Kurt was, looking totally bangin, and my dick was brutal hard. I swear one more sexy sex word out of him and I'd cry or bust my trunks. Probably both. So I did what I could only think of, drop my board, grab his hand and run us both towards the sea, sprinting, the high wind tearing through our hair with Kurt struggling to keep up so surprised he was by my sudden burst of speed, my need for the ocean.

The water was cool. Not cold, but cool as into the gentle stroking surf both boys entered, shouting and singing! They splashed the water high with their feet laughing and shrieking like deranged children, Noah's hands always steadying Kurt when he'd lose balance for how clumsy they were, yet how graceful, two beautiful boys in reckless youth, youth in such fun, a delirium of happiness they
could not get enough of each other's company as Noah would swim grinning around Kurt like a
great white shark circling its prey, teasing him with thick fingers stroking his waist, thighs and belly,
and the fair boy would giggle cutely at this, whipping around as if blinded in case Noah did anything
behind him, sneak up and jump on him perhaps, but he never did.

"Noah, stop! You're tickling me," Kurt laughed. "Noah!"

The tan boy stood, smiling. "You're cute when you're tickled, dude."

"To you I'm cute all the time."

"Yeah, but when you're tickled it's like as cute as a baby swell wave or butt floss."

"Butt floss?"

"You know, G Strings. It's like chicks are wearing nothing at all."

"They offer no support," Kurt scoffed. "All it would take is a wave to rip it right off and then you're
naked in the sea."

"Yeah baby," Noah smirked as Kurt rolled his eyes. "What? You never skinny dipped before?"

The boy shook his head. "No. If I've ever gone swimming it's only ever been to swimming pools and
the beach, and usually the water's too cold to wade in with a bathing suit let alone strip naked in it."

"What about now?" Noah asked. "This water warm enough for you?"

"I am not taking off my briefs, Noah."

"Too bad. You're missing out. Skinny dipping feels awesome."

"Then why aren't you doing it?"

Noah grinned. "Would you be cool with it if I did?"

"You can do as you like," Kurt shrugged. "I don't mind. Just as long as you don't start tickling my
legs with your penis."

"Nah, don't worry," Noah chuckled. "I'll be setting up my territory instead, scaring away the fishes.
They be seeing my dick and swimming away out of respect. These be my waters."

"With your twelve inch dong?" Kurt smiled as his friend smirked.

"It's gotta be longer now I'm hard."

Kurt gasped. "You are?"

"Yeah. Water kinda does this to me sometimes. I call it "water wood"."

"It must be so awkward when you go swimming. Is it not?"

Noah shrugged. "When you wear trunks it's easier to hide, and you usually can't see anything
underwater, but if you go divin and I'm wearin speedos, you just found a whole lotta hung treasure,
dude."

Kurt laughed. "You really don't mind having people seeing you with an erection?"
"Well if I'm showering afterwards next to some old fart, sure, but if I climb out the pool with bunnies on the sidelines, I work that hard on."

"Even if there are boys around?"

"Oh I fuckin own dudes 'cause basically my dick is that big-"

"Okay, okay." Kurt exclaimed, hands surrendering. "I'll be sure to leave you two alone. I think I've been intimidated enough in this territory."

"No Kurt, stay," said Noah, swimming closer. "You are part of my territory."

The boy smirked. "Nuh uh baby, I belong to nobody. Under no order, no jurisdiction, and no twelve inch dong."

"You underestimate my dong, dude," Noah grinned. "I can tickle dong you into submission in thirty seconds."

"Not if I swim away."

"I'll swim right on after you. I'm trukin fast."

Kurt raised his brow. "You know, I'm curious as to how good of a swimmer you are. You said you're on the swim team right?"

"Chyeah."

"You want to swim for me? Go on, give me any swimming style you like."

"Sure, okay," Noah grinned, now throwing his body powerfully into the swim as off he went, his big arms stroking in sweeps, side to side, pulling and pushing at the water that propelled his body forward smoothly through the surf and in so little time to have ventured so far, it impressed Kurt, smiling for as quick as a seal, Noah was swimming back, leaning on his chest as his arms broke the water ever so slightly with his head rising for breaths, though a grin for Kurt as he came to stop in front of him.

"You're good," Kurt smiled, eying Noah's wetsuit that encased strong powerhouse muscles, muscles he'd seen work from under. "That was front crawl first then breaststroke second, right? What other styles can you do?"

"I can do 'em all," Noah boasted. "The Trudgen, Butterfly, Backstroke, Sidestroke. I even know all the lifesaving strokes."

"Well then I suppose you're the best guy to have around when out in the water then. My own lifeguard."

"Totally," Noah grinned. "I should get red surf trunks and run slow mo across the beach Baywatch style, show off some chest hair like The Hoff."

Kurt laughed. "You don't have any chest hair."

"My dad does, and if I'm anything like him I'll grow some real soon."

"But didn't he have to wax it all off when he swam? I hear many swimmers remove all their body hair to make them go faster."
Noah nodded. "They do, but he never did. Said he liked his body hair."

"Do you like your own?" Kurt asked.

"Sure, I rock my body hair," Noah grinned, lifting his fuzzy leg out of the water to stroke it. "Ah yes, my winter coat is coming along nicely. See for some swimmers like my dad, they don't need no wax numbing their nerves, and neither do I. I'm as fast as a Land Lord."

"A "Land Lord" is a shark, right?"

"Yep," Noah grinned. "Wouldn't be the bangin nardude I am without my hair, but I have had chicks say they don't like it. They say they don't like the feel of it against their skin."

"Really?"

"Yeah, see I'm a cuddler," Noah shrugged shyly. "I love to cuddle, but if I try cuddling without clothes on they'll scream. They'll fuckin call the cops."

"And what does Kitty think?"

Noah sighed. "She pretty much has the same attitude. We can only have sex in like three positions, it's a total mood killer. That's why the pula kahulas were so much easier to be with. They were all about the hair."

"Well as girls grow their opinions on it will change and they'll come to find it attractive."

"Do you?" Noah asked. "On guys?"

"I don't mind it," Kurt shrugged, "but I have seen a lot of good looking guys with it."

"And?"

Kurt grinned. "And it can be nice. Just as long as it's groomed and trimmed and not enough to suffocate me in a forest of a bear's butt, it can be attractive, but the extent of contact I've had with it is simply combing my fingers through arm hair. I wouldn't know what it's like to have a whole body of it on me."

"Well how about this then?" Noah asked, rubbing his leg against his Kurt's.

"That tickles!" Kurt laughed. "Ah! Its making me goose pimply all over!"

"Goose pimply?"

"Uh huh!"

"Damn Kurt, you so cute!" Noah chuckled, pulling Kurt flush against him.

"That's it," Kurt smiled. "Take your cuddle frustration out on me, Tarzan."

"Tarzan would have body hair, right?"

"Well sure, he's Tarzan. You can't see it in the film because it was so neat the animator couldn't be bothered to draw them all in-oh!" Down below and Noah's erection pressed hotly against his belly. "Big boner alert!"

"Sorry," Noah said, embarrassed with a chuckle as he looked down. "Damn sea wood. You want
some space?" Kurt shook his head, instead jumping up and wrapping his legs around the boy's waist, of course weighing nothing with the water up to their shoulders.

"Nope," he said. "It be sea cuddling time." And Noah would grin, even though his sea wood was now stroking the underside of Kurt's swimming briefs.

"Totally," he chuckled.

In their spirits, they would resume their play, Kurt like a small child in Noah's arms as the tan boy waded them through the water, sturdy as a rock against the surf that would come lapping at them like the tongue of the sea. He would jokingly threaten to drop Kurt in, and Kurt would lightly swipe at his shoulder. Naughty Noah! He would then be lifted on his friend's shoulders, there to sit high as a proud ballerino as he had done in Ulusaba, yet suddenly hit by a tickle attack and he'd squirm atop his broad perch, falling, shouting and catch! Right back in Noah's arms. Naughty, naughty Noah! And lowering the fair boy onto the water's surface with a grin, there the tan boy would float Kurt against him. Breathe. Relax. That's good, dude. Breathe.

As if I was learning to swim in a pool with my face to the sky. He'd lift me up whenever a small wave would come and bring me back down again when it would pass. Up and down, up and down, gently, and he'd sometimes let me go to drift as if I was a model sail boat let loose across a vast pond, floating away wherever the sea would take me. I was in the water's hands until I'd feel his return underneath me, cupping my body and bringing me safely back into his to look at me, my neck, torso and groin, a lingering stare, only to travel right up to my eyes he'd lose himself in until the flash of the camera, a picture my mom had taken of him walking out of the ocean with me in his arms like a hero, and the smile she had on her face! Her wink behind that lens.

It was straight to the surfboard. Noah wanted to surf again. He wanted to feel alive in a way he hadn't in so long. To surf was to feel alive. The board itself, the instrument, as if fashioned from his own rib, was part of his body and Kurt watched as the boy lay it over his outstretched legs, held steady on his strong thighs, still in his drenched tee shirt and trunks like a little boy sharpening a stick with a pocket knife and running the piece of wax down the bamboo. Warm wax in his hand. Melting soft. Bamboo that would start to glisten from this wax, wax heavily coated on as he gestured Kurt over to sit in between his legs and try layering it on himself, guiding his fair hands with his own. That's it, Kurt. Yeah. Make sure you cover it all, just like that.

They were Patrick Swayze and Demi Moore in Ghost. The wax was the clay. Messy. It was getting everywhere. They were using too much of it. Pressing down too hard. Kurt's hands were red sticky hot under Noah's guiding palms, taking them across the vast expanses of the board in patterns over little bumps formed. Writing their names, drawing pictures, noughts and crosses. Kurt's brow was hot. His back was sweating against Noah's chest with temptation to rest his head back on the boy's shoulder for goodness was it a warm day, warm in his ear in breath as his friend would speak to him grinning. Do the circle! Front and back! Crisscross it! Psycho! Oh! The wax was slippery! Near escaping from under their distracted adolescent fingertips it would!

"Haven't done this in ages," Noah murmured.

"I remember when you did it in Coronado," said Kurt. "You dropped it several times so you had to wipe and blow on it to rid it of the sand."

"I did?"

"Yes. You'd whisper "fudge!" or "dagnabit!" or "hella weaksauce, hella lame" to yourself because you knew I was uncomfortable with swears."
"Yeah," Noah said, pausing. "… You'd freak so bad when I'd say one. Like I'd ruined Santa Clause."

"I know-"

"Shh, Noah!" The boy now mimicked. "That's a bad word! Shh! You'll destroy the world! Shh! Add 'it' after Shh and I'll be a bad too. Yay!"

Kurt protested. "I did not say that!"

"No, but I wanted to so you'd quit shushing all over me," Noah chuckled cheekily. "Fuck." Kurt looked back at him. "Fuckbucket. Buttspatula. Dickladel. Assbutter Tittyfuckery. You want me to compare thee to this summer's day? Sure. Hot as balls."

"Oh Noah you're so romantic. Do go on."

Noah grinned. "If you were a fruit, you'd be a "fineapple". If you were my homework, I'd do you. Did you fall from heaven? Because have sex with me."

"Wow, what a set of pickup lines," Kurt laughed.

"I know, right. Chicks really dig it when you say stuff like, "Girl, are you from Brazil? 'Cause you're making me come". Or "Girl, are you a girl? 'Cause you're a girl". or "Girl, did you sit in sugar? 'Cause you got a sweet ass." All the more reason to tape Mistletoe to it just so I have a reason to kiss it."

"Really?"

Noah shook his head, chuckling. "No dude, those are some nitchen lines."

"Hey, I liked them. They were funny," Kurt giggled. "And the fineapple one was cute."

Noah grinned. "I know my audience, although… wait, where are they?"

"What?" Kurt asked, looking round.

"They've got to be here somewhere…"

"What? What are you looking for?"

"Your wings," Noah said. "You've saved me asking you to take your clothes off, but you angels are so damn good at hiding your wings. How do you do it?"

"Comparing me to an angel just to see me naked?" Kurt asked as Noah smirked.

"You saw what I did there?"

"Nice try, but I'm not naked. My back is all you needed to see."

"Sure, but I can see a whole lot more," the boy said, skimming his finger across Kurt's arms, chest, now leaning forward against him to skim across his thighs with a "Zip! Zip! Zip!"

"Ah! The wax!" Kurt laughed, his grip on it tickled loose for it to teeter off the board's edge, but swooped up in Noah's quick hand.

"Got it," he smiled, throwing it up and down.
"Oh you," Kurt laughed, giving Noah a light shove as he turned once more to the board in front, his tan friend peeking his head round his shoulder to also give it a scouring glance.

"I'm thinkin it's lookin pretty good about now, huh?" He said as Kurt nodded, hovering his hand over its surface.

"It is very shiny, and bumpy. That's a good sign, isn't it?"

"Yep. It's gotta have real bump so my ass doesn't totally take gas from those waves. I mean like proper worked."

"You must be so excited for this," Kurt smiled, flipping himself under the board to the other side.

Noah grinned. "I'm pumped, dude. This beach has some hella rad conditions goin on here."

"What are you going to do first?"

"Probably foam to start off with. Ease my way in squid style. Thank God there're not many people out here, that would be embarrassing."

"Noah, no one's here to judge you. It's not like you have Kitty here watching or any haters looking on."

"I have you though," Noah replied. "I don't wanna have you see me get wiped out like a paddlepuss noob."

Kurt smiled. "I saw you fall many times in Coronado Noah, and that's at a time when you were still surfing,"

"Hey, I was nervous," the boy protested. "I turned into a fuckin raisin 'cause you were watching."

Kurt laughed. "You asked me to. You really wanted to show off your moves to me, that you could surf like an "allright dude", and you were great, and you will be again."

"You think so?" Noah grinned as Kurt replied, earnestly.

"I don't want to think any different."

"You know," Noah began, "cute dudes sayin supportive things about me really does make me stronger."

Kurt smiled. "Just imagine how much stronger you'd be if it had been said by a dinosaur or a dragon from an alternate timeline. You're surfer leg muscles would be bulging about now."

"They do bulge, dude," Noah replied, enthusiastically lifting the board off his now flexing calves, "Look at 'em, look at 'em bulge."

"Flex Noah! Flex! Flex!"

Noah popped himself up onto the board and pulled Kurt on with him. "Face your feet across the deck of the board. Knees bent, and push your hips forward with a little more weight on the front leg."

"Like this?" Kurt asked, doing as instructed.

Noah nodded. "Uh huh, now arms and head up with eyes forward. Look down and you'll pull your
weight through your shoulders and fall. It's all about balance. If you can keep yourself stable, you'll be fine."

"If I have you behind going all Titanic on me, I'm sure to be."

Noah smirked. "Feel like you're flyin yet, Gay Jane?"

"Almost Tarzan," Kurt laughed. "You know, I can just imagine this being a move surfing instructors would pull on their students if they wanted to sleep with them. Here, right on the surfboard."

Noah shook his head. "Nah, the wax would stick to their ass. It would be all bumpy."

"Then might I suggest doing it before you wax. Then its smooth sailing from then on."

"Good thinkin," Noah grinned. "I've always wanted to make out on a surfboard. Get my A game mack out on a sweet pair of babe lips."

"How good of a kisser are you?"

"You should see me, dude," Noah smirked as he demonstrated. "I slowly run my fingers through the chick's hair before I firmly pull on it, tilting her head back. Then I gently press my lips against the middle of her neck, work my way up to hers and..." Now easing off Kurt, he grinned. "They say it's the best feeling in the world."

"Or you could have a meat feast pizza?"

Noah blinked. "What?"

"Sliced ham, pepperoni, beef and chicken breast-"

"Oh my God, I just came. You're so hot."

Kurt laughed. "If I don't wish to kiss a boy on a date, we have pizza."

"Wait," Noah frowned, "So You didn't like the sound of my kiss?" Kurt shrugged. "Hey, if you think you can do better dude, prove it. You think you're a better kisser? I ain't lettin you bounce with pizza, come prove it, punk."

And to this challenge, Kurt answered, coming forward and pressing his lips softly to Noah's. The board would not teeter under their feet, though Noah's legs fell instantly weak, his calves trembling as if a precursor to a fall when surfing, the frightening sense of losing balance through each area of the body until the panic overcame you and into the water you'd go. Kurt was kissing him and his body had been stunned silent. He could not move. Sitting a few meters away was his father, and though he'd caught him kissing girls in the past, he'd never once seen him intimate with a boy. Elizabeth too was there, watching, and together their presences, so palpable, could only be rivaled by Kurt's, the fair boy now pulling away with a satisfied smile.

It had been a sweet kiss, closed mouth with no tongue, and lasting only a few seconds. Noah would suspect it was the extent of how far Kurt knew how to kiss, for it hadn't been particularly daring, neither had it felt like it had been set out to prove him wrong with much conviction (Kurt had been smiling throughout). Yet those lips were something else. The boy had beautiful lips, luscious and sweet that he knew how to pout into two thick pillows you wanted to kiss, lips that could turn a rather bland encounter into a full on smooch that left you excited, crazed for more. A thrill akin to riding the surf. Shit, it had been cooleoleol! Kurt had given him such a hella awesome kiss, and he, gaping mouthed dork, had been owned like a fucking boss.
It would act as a distraction! Such a kiss! Beating heart! He would not concentrate. Out of his clothes and into his swimsuit, his board under his arm ready to enter the water, and he'd yearn for another. Just one more? Just another taste? Kurt was running down the beach with him like those two manic children they were and out into the surf he ran, a chill before it was warm. The water was so thin, trickling down his suit, how it could be so strong. It socked at his calves, thighs, waist. He saw those waves further out, the bigger waves and belly on his board he clawed towards them, the water lashing through his fingertips, spitting droplets in his face, dropping him into shallows; lifted again and again dropped, but powerful was Noah.

He would feel the waves, how they were sometimes rough, but harmless. Coming at him in drones as he paddled and woosh! He duck dived before the hit, pointing his head down with strength and pushing the tail under the wave, his momentum thrusting him under before resurfacing. He'd duck dive again for the next wave and the next and the next. The slice and duck, the Eskimo roll, the push-up, the shoot and scoot. Under each wave he'd practice each move until eventually rising like a sea creature from down under, he caught a wave, its white water frothing like whipped cream picking his board up and pushing him forward, an unmistakable feeling! The rush it had within him. His smile Kurt could catch from shore. He was surfing again.

And how quickly it would all come back to him! Yeah! His balance on the board centred so as to not have it pearl or nose dive beneath his belly, then beneath his feet for up! With a swift manoeuvre and he popped up in a crouching stance, stood and ready to angle on a wave. Yes, he had greater body strength now. He could feel it. The power in his arms, his legs, his torso. All were clad in muscle so strong, even in his feet that commanded the board, now staying ahead of the white water. Letting it chase him. A mad chase. Catch me if you can! Following his drop line to the flat trough of the waves and leaning his weight towards its faces to turn, to carve, to set himself loose upon the sea. Woo! He was crazy! He was it! He was an allright dude!

From the edge of the water, it would be a familiar sight. Everyone was there watching. Thomas and Elizabeth standing beside each other with Kurt out in front where the water lapped his toes. He watched with astonished eyes open – glassy blue and unblinking as Noah angled his board to the shoreline and surfed up the beach towards the Point and Supertubes where the big waves broke, and there Kurt followed running after him smiling, his hair windblown trying hard to catch up, but Noah was going so fast! Quick as a sailfish on the water! Sometimes to bail out, diving into the sea, and Kurt would not see him until he'd reappear on his board again, laughing! As if he'd done it just for fun. As if he and the sea were playing with each other.

It was amazing! All afternoon it was like this. The water and I were like to bros playfully wrestling each other with its waves bowling hard, which meant I had plenty of speed, helping me wack the lip all the time, just burying the tail for a roundhouse cutty and boom! The whole thing closed out behind me. Sick! Then out on the Supertube area and I took off on its bombs of a lefthander where it jacked as it hit the inside bank, the lip chucking right out, going square! Full suck dredging turbo barrel! No wonder these waters were voted the best, they were awesome, and for hours I charged these kegs, every single one of these huge avalanches where I never felt beat, never got beat down, just went with it, cruisin and endin on a kick out. Hell yeah!

The boy would motion Kurt out into the sea, over back into the gentler waters of Albatross. Kurt! Come on! Come out into the water, dude! And the fair boy upon hesitating did so. The feeling of the water as its level rose up his legs. Oh, it tingled his skin! He was like a little creature in it all, wading further and further in. In any rougher waves and he would have been like a white doll knocked down and pummelled. If he hadn't known how to swim, he would have drowned within minutes, flailing but Noah would have been there, Noah, now surfing over to him, slowing upon an area of smooth calm water and splash! He leapt into the ocean to swim around Kurt like an overexcited puppy, helping him onto his board and plopping himself behind.
"Hey," Noah grinned as Kurt looked round at him, his friend's head and face wet with cascading droplets. His chest was panting, breathing hard and his arms had come to circle his waist, keeping him secure on the board.

"Hi," Kurt smiled. "Did you have fun?"

"Hella," Noah nodded. "Hella, hella, hella!"

Kurt laughed. "Got enough hellas there? Maybe want a few more exclamation marks?"

"Hella!"

"Thought not."

"Seriously Kurt, the surf here is great. I wanna go check out all the other areas along it."

"Don't you want to have lunch? You've been surfing for three hours straight."

Noah's eyes widened. "Really?"

"Yes. Your two moods, "fuck you" and "what's for dinner" are changing rapidly. Are you alright?"

Noah laughed, tightening his arms around his friend. "I'm swell, dude. I feel just, I feel... whoa. I can't believe I would miss it this much. This has been so good."

"I could tell," Kurt smiled. "You got back into it so quickly, and goodness can you surf fast."

"I love goin fast," Noah grinned. "My dick becomes rock hard to steer my body through the wind currents like a sail and said wind causes my scrotum to tighten close to my body for maximum speed."

"Oh Lord."

Noah chuckled. "What? It took so long for us to get here I could literally feel my heart beating through my butt from sitting in one position for so long, I had to move."

"Is that why it's still erect now?" Kurt asked, looking behind him. "I can feel it."

Noah smirked. "That's 'cause my dick is yo assigned seat, dude."

"Noah!" Kurt exclaimed. "Do you want me to move away from you? Control your manhood."

"Manhood," Noah laughed. "Hey, when you're in school, doesn't "staff member" make you laugh? They're like two words meaning penis and the teachers are always sayin them."

Kurt blinked. "Okay... I won't be referring to any of mine that way anymore."

"Not even to Mr. Savva?" Noah teased.

"Not even to Ms Doosenbury and her sexually suggestive handwriting," Kurt replied.

"Hey, I feel bad about all that," Noah pouted. "She was real short with me from then on and told me to swallow my own spit whenever I'd ask for a drink of water."

Kurt grimaced. "Ew."

"Yeah. Even beat's the time when I asked for a glass of water from Sarah once and she brought me a
cup of ice and said, "Wait". It took two and half fuckin hours to thaw."

"Why? What did you do to upset Sarah?"

"Nothin. My dad just caught her poking holes in his condoms so someone else could do the dishes when it was her turn to. She really hates doin chores like that."

Kurt laughed. "I can tell."

"Seriously, if ever you're feeling lazy, just know that my mom asked her to vacuum her room, so she YouTubed a vacuum sound and laid on her bed."

"Jesus Christ."

"She got that little trick from me."

"Chores aren't so that bad, Noah. Only when you're told to hooover your room but you've got your ear phones in so by the time you've finished you realize it wasn't even on, then it sucks."

"You did that?"

Kurt nodded. "They're noise cancelling earphones that are so good at blocking out sound they even prevent you from listening to your own music, forcing you to bask in the whispers of the forgotten gods until you begin to hear your own brain falling apart as it descends into madness." Noah laughed. "They're a real nuisance too. Sometimes I pull them out my pocket and out comes lip balm, tissues, whales and the whole of Russia. I mean, are you kidding me?!"

"I wanna see your room in Ohio," said Noah. "You told me about it once before and I really wanna know what it looks like."

Kurt smiled. "the rooms in Ulusaba are far more interesting. The beach too. I heard some surfers live on them and catch waves at dawn."

"What? Beach bums? You see 'em all the time in California. They just hang there surfin and posin for photographers who'll use their picture for school textbook front covers because no one encapsulates the core concepts of chemistry more than hobo beach bums."

"Do you think you'll ever try that out sometime? The beach bum life?"

"Yeah, totally," Noah laughed. "Just sell margaritas naked to underage punks. I'll definitely return to California after this though that's for sure. I don't need science promoting it. I already know Biology tells us we're 70% water, Chemistry that we're 60% oxygen and Physics that we're 99.9999% empty space, I get it all, but I guess they never told you you're 100% a cutie, Kurt."

"Well aren't you good with numbers," the boy scoffed.

"Yep," Noah grinned. "Using $y = mx + b$ to measure the slope of your ass is mathematically incorrect. Unless the ass was linear, but that's biologically incorrect. You'd probably wanna use something like $y=ax^2+bx+c$ because the ass is a second degree polynomial curve."

Kurt laughed. "Are you using booty math on my butt right now?"

"Nope. Astromony. I'm great with calculations."

"You're lucky," Kurt said. "If anyone offers me meth in the future I'll just ask them to make me do math instead. It'll screw me up twice as much. I hate math."
Noah smirked. "Too bad, 'cause you've good ass to thigh ratio right there, dude."

"Thank you Noah," Kurt smiled, turning round to the boy and there to lock eyes with him, both looking at each other as Noah lowered his own down to Kurt's lips, those lips that had him licking his own.

"Can I kiss you, Kurt?"

"Why?" The boy asked, amused. "Is your mouth dry? Are your lips sore? Is your tongue so cold you need it warming up."

Noah surged forward and kissed him, hard. For it was hard. Kurt could feel the hunger in it, the need, yearning that softened as his friend eventually pulled away, whispering against his lips, "I think we're even now."

"And what's the verdict?" Kurt blinked.

"That we're both awesome kissers. Though just to make sure…"

"Ah… N-Noah," Kurt sounded as he averted his scrunched face from those insatiable lips on his cheek, jaw and neck, kissing them repeatedly with that same hunger that was now devouring him. He was leaning away, struggling in Noah's strong arms. He was near writhing as with a sudden loss of balance, there was a scream! Falling. Splash! Into the water, as there he flailed, the sea water stinging at his eyes, his face and hair now underwater as with panic he rose to the surface with kicking legs.

"What happened? I kinda lost track," he gasped, droplets weighing down his eyelashes as he searched blindly for the bobbing surfboard in front. Noah already there and wiping roughly at his face with a spritz of water, helped him with an arm shooting out around his waist until he latched on tight, both of them now at the board, slumped and panting.

"Sorry, dude," Noah breathed. "I got a little carried away… I think I need lunch."

"I think you need some Kitty," Kurt scoffed, thankful that he'd managed to keep his head above water when they'd fallen in. The hair by his neck wet with only droplets trickling down the lower half of his face.

"Huh?" Noah frowned, looking over at him.

"With her not here, I suspect the only hot action you're now getting in the bedroom is your laptop burning your thighs." The tan boy averted his eyes. "The girlfriend's not here to sit on your face."

"Dude, she doesn't actually sit on my face. I would suffocate and die loving her booty."

Kurt shook his head. "Not with that jawline, Noah. They're enough to grind this bamboo board up like a panda or Stitch. This actually reminds me of the surfing scene in the film."

"Nah dude, I'm David," Noah corrected, now grinning as he patted the board before him. "The hot surfer who takes his sexual frustration out on the Hawaiian roller-coaster ride 'cause that Nani chick won't catch him a break."

"Why?" Kurt asked, glancing down at Noah's groin. "Do you have sexual frustration of your own you want to take out on the surf?"

The boy shook his head. "No dude. I'm telling you, this is just water wood. It's got nothing to do
with sex. I don't have blue balls. Kitty's plenty hot for me. She sends me sexts all the time telling me she's off Gushers 'cause the only thing she wants burstin in her mouth is me. Oh, and she phone sexes me too, but she can never get her whole phone up her ass so-

"Okay, I was wrong. Sorry."

"Nah, don't worry about it, bro. Just as long as you know that even though my girl isn't here, I'm still kept satisfied. Got 16GB worth of wank bank memory with her up in this head alone."

Yeah, you, Kitty, and your three sex positions. "Alright then. Lunch? I'm starving."

"Yeah… sure, just give me half an hour, okay. I think I'm gonna surf a little more, unless you… I dunno, unless you wanna kiss again?"

"No, I think we've settled all that, don't you Noah?"

The boy nodded. "Right. Yeah…"

"I'll see you later."

"Or you could stay and… um I could teach you how to surf a little. It would be better before you eat than after." Kurt paused. "Come on, dude. You bailed on doin it in Coronado, you can't this time. Come on, let me teach you. Please." With a sigh, the boy relented.

"Alright."

And it was forgotten. Talk of sexual frustration. Talk of Kitty. How had it arisen? Kurt would not ponder it as he'd climb onto the board to learn how to paddle with Noah by his side wading them into shallower waters. "Paddle with purpose", he was saying. "One arm at a time. Bring the arm down through and make sure to finish the stroke at the end". Kurt would feel silly with Noah holding onto the board, anchoring it still. It was as if he were trying to escape from something but couldn't. Like a slow paddler who with every stroke came no nearer to reaching the outside, pushed back relentlessly by waves, he paddled nowhere, staying exactly where Noah wanted him. His fair body, splayed out right in front of the boy like a flailing creature.

It was the curve of his spine that arched like that of a bow. His buttocks that would involuntarily lift with every paddling arm as if presenting, and his legs wrapped around the tail, as if wrapped around a strong pair of hips. A boy's hips. Up and down in motion, it had Noah staring, his words stuttered and interrupted, "Y-yeah, that's it Kurt. Just um... stretch your arm outright, like that, yeah. And just... enter your hand into the water... smoothly." Earnestly, he knew Kurt would never paddle far. His hands were too small. So were his arms. With little power in each stoke he'd only wear himself out like a windup toy lost all charge, but there was such beauty in watching him. His movements so elegant. Noah could have watched his friend for hours.

And I knew he was watching me. There wasn't a great deal he could teach me about surfing as he did. He wanted to stroke my body. To touch it. To lay his hand on my skin as if running it along the coat of a brand new surfboard, he just wanted me. I had felt it in his kiss and through his 'water wood' lies. Yet once again I would not raise the subject as we eventually broke out into chatter, just us talking and laughing together, a cheerier version of Rose on the wooden plank as Jack leant on the side. Noah wanted me with him for as long as he could get and so happy he was! He was so happy! Like me and his surfboard, two loves of his life, together like an open faced sandwich, he could not get enough, and no, as I looked at him smiling, neither could I.
The music was loud and rapturous, blazoned with voices from Justicia's chorus of men heralding with feathered spears and shields they pierced the air with, dancing around the giant gold fire dish in Zulu tribal clothes of cream calf skin aprons and cow tail amashobas to the thumping beat of the djembe, that bass and melody reaching every single ear at the banquet, its food ladled tables of salads, meats and fine wine arranged into a large crescent resembling the head table of an African tribe leader, Noah, the tribe leader himself, slouching casually in a masculine display in the centre seat, his throne, one with the best view as he tore slovenly into a chicken leg, watching and grinning as the heat wave erupted into a scorching fiery blaze.

Whoa! What a show! The theatrics! The spectacle! Everyone around him was applauding. Bravo! Go on! The chorus of men danced for them, no longer by gumboot, but jumping about in a hysterical frenzy. Like animals in heat. A heat wave! They were wild! Something was exciting them. Something they were pointing at approaching, their gaping mouths clasped in shock! Oh they were astonished! Running towards it and jumping onto a three wheeled open carriage, it's structure covered in feathers, birdcages, lanterns, gramophones and animals, all wobbling like scaffolding set to fall as it was pulled around the fire dish by the men, entranced by the passenger inside for Gee! Gee! His anatomy made the mercury rise to ninety-three!

Fuck yeah, it was Kurt! Dressed similarly to the Justicia men in tribal attire with a heavy Trinbagonian carnival influence, he wore a large feather headdress, plumed in pink and sparkling with sequins, a collar neck corset spread over his shoulders like armor and a white leopard print tunic that swished about his thighs. Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow! He started this heat wave! He was the damn heat wave! Launching himself out of the carriage and winking at the audience. Hiya honeys! And asking each one of the men their names. Rocco! Lionel! Colby! Names that didn't sound African. Jago! Skyler! Dewey! They were not their names at all, but those of the boys he had dated. Benjy! Jaydon! Nate! All of them were here now, morphed from the Justicia men.

They loved Kurt. They loved his heat. Listening to his sexy weather report of a front of warm air moving in from Madagascar! Moderately high barometric pressure covering the north east and Deep South with small danger of fruit frost! Hot and humid nights could be expected he was saying, gyrating his hips in time with the beat, hips of a salsa dancer that never lied a sway out of balance. Cha cha cha! The body of a Mambo babe that moved in time with the claps of the boys around him. Yeah! The boys, like panting dogs, crying out of Cape Town, ninety-five! Johannesburg, ninety-seven! Ulusaba, ninety-nine! No. It was hotter than that. Kurt's body was whipping it up into a wildfire, breaking records, breaking sweat. Ulusaba, hundred and five!

Noah looked on, nearly choking on his chicken leg. Kurt was such a skilled dancer, contorting his mammalian body into the accelerating beat of copulation. Pelvis like an air hammer. Moist pink tip of tongue between his lips. Heat wave! Swishing his tunic like the white leopard's pounce into the chase. Oh how Noah loved this. Leaning forward in his seat to watch this fair boy coked to the gills, his white eyeballs amongst smoky made up eyes with sweat gleaming on his neck, streaking the tribal makeup like exposed nerves as he kissed the boys, all of them cartwheeling in joy as they lifted him into the air, looking under his tunic. White briefs exposed like from an updraft of air! Oooh! He would pant. "I started this heat wave", he moaned! Damn!
And towards Noah he was carried, deposited onto the table right in front to strut, stomp and wriggle in his bare feet, to shake his large feather headdress like a massive fan, to wiggle his ass. Can't stop the rhythm. Everyone is insatiable. Like fucking. Rhythm builds, can't stop, for Kurt certainly, certainly, certainly could. Tearing off his tunic – Ohh! The thing tossed away with his collar corset. His torso and legs nude, gleaming in powdery caked oily-white sweat and there to shimmy into a jump like a cat shaking it's behind for the pounce, landing right in Noah's lap. Can-can! And the diners applauded. Bravo! Whistling and shouting. Yes! Wel gedaan! Watching as both boys ravaged each other with kisses, hungry-hungry kisses. The taste of mango.

Immediately, Noah blinked. He was breathing hard in reality, slumped on the couch in his room high in the Cliff Lodge suite, a surfer bracelet he'd been fiddling with absentmindedly torn savagely in two and loose in his rough redindgen palm. Morosely, he looked down at it like a small creature he'd petted too hard. He'd been remembering something. Nothing big. Just... just a dream he'd had. Not one from last night, but the one before when he'd woken sweating to the echoing sounds of the Djembe drums. Those chants of a heat wave, the Justice men turned boys, dates, man friends, had he seen Mr. Savva? With Kurt on that table stripping for him, jumping his bones! Kissing his chicken greased lips! He could still smell fire singeing his nostrils.

He was here now, Kurt, in the bathroom. They'd all returned from their day out to the bay, the time reading eleven fifteen last time he'd checked upon entering with his bag flung over by the bed, Kurt's pillow next to it, for he'd invited the boy to crash with him. A slumber party, seeing as he owed Kurt for the time he'd climbed his balcony in Coronado. Though they'd share the same bed tonight, the king sized canopy with its sheets since changed. Clean cotton sheets white and not sticky wet from semen stains. One, two, three, four. All like puddles. The orgasms in that bed, they had been born from a heat wave, a fair body that had cracked mercury thermometers and sent the bulbs flying in a way only it could. I certainly can! Can-can!

When Kurt came to sit himself next to him, he'd pass off his heightened state with a yawn, for both of them were tired. A full five hour journey back, one they'd slept through. The chef at the reserve had left them supper for their late return in their rooms. Various meats, butterfish and cheesecake. They were grateful, but the day. Oh. It still pumped a thrill in their veins. Enough to regale it to each other all night long. To do it now as Noah looked over at Kurt, opening his mouth to mute. He was distracted. Yes, by a feather headdress. White leopard. The Djembe drums calling on an oncoming wave of heat. Hot. Hotter on Kurt's white skin. It had a glow. For real, it was luminous. On his face, it was lucent, and Noah, he couldn't take it anymore.

"Your skin's always so shiny," he blurted as Kurt paused. "Pardon?"

"Your skin," said Noah, gesturing to his face. "It's all gleamy and shiny, like you've been working out and I know the work out sweats."

Kurt shook his head. "It's not sweat, it's the heat. My T-Zone often gets so oily I'm always afraid the U.S might invade it. Excuse me." He pulled out a tissue from his short pockets and dabbed it all over his face, blotting away oil, and all the while turning his back to Noah whose eyes now widened.

"You wear makeup?" Now catching sight of the peachy papaya-whip orange residue left on the tissue, and reaching over, snatching it out from Kurt's hands for a closer look. "Dude, you totally wear makeup." Kurt made to stutter out a response, a sense of fright coiling itself within him, but was stopped as his friend crawled up close to look over his face, "Ah, I see it. I can totally see-" Kurt brought his face away embarrassed, and snatching his tissue back, folded it in his pocket.

"Yes, I wear makeup," He replied quietly. "I must be the only boy you know of who does, right?"
Noah paused. "Well there's the barber shop chorus dudes at our mall, and a gay guy at my school who got pink eye after some allergic reaction to that mascara stuff."

"I hope for the sake of his sight he got rid of it. Makeup doesn't keep forever."

"Why do you wear it?" Noah asked, leaning forward in hope of catching Kurt's eyes, yet the boy remained silent, wishing not to look at him. "Kurt? Kurt, dude are you alright?"

"Do you mind if we don't go in it," the boy murmured. "My makeup is a delicate topic for me."

"Sure, okay," Noah nodded, leaning back. "Just wanna let you know I'm not judging. I don't have a problem with you wearing it if you think I do. Just as long as what you're putting on your face isn't gonna give you nasty ass rashes and shit, I'm cool with it."

"I just don't like people knowing," Kurt said. "Once they do, I feel like they can no longer see my face, but what's on it, or they just focus on the makeup by their own choosing. I don't know."

Noah wrapped his arm around his friend's waist, his hand now on the boy's hip. "But you got it on so good, dude," he said reassuringly with a grin. "I didn't know you were wearing it till now, it's like you're wearing nothin."

Kurt smiled, flattered. "I guess, the natural look is the hardest to perfect."

"Can I have another look?" Noah asked, resting his chin on the boy's shoulder. "Please? I promise to see your face down to your skull bone if you let me."

Kurt hesitated, but relented. "Okay." He angled himself face full on with Noah, though with eyes shut, for he could not bear to witness the boy's reaction. His makeup, he knew, that did not hold well in the heat, that had to be touched up regularly so that it wouldn't shift or melt down his face. His oil streaking it- Oh, It all disgusted him.

"Dude, why you got your eyes shut? Open them."

Kurt shook his head. "No, that's alright. I prefer them closed."

"Dude, come on. It's alright. It's not like I have a total mank face situation goin on here."

"Yes, but I do-oh!" Kurt gasped at his own revelation, his eyes bursting open and for a second, Noah couldn't draw breath, those blue orbs so dreamy in a mix of panic as they were once again averted.

"Is that why you wear makeup?" Noah asked. "But I see no mank, Kurt."

"That's because I'm wearing makeup," Kurt sighed. "Noah, what I put on my face here is not to enhance my features like eyeliner or blush, but to conceal my flaws. To correct what's imperfect. This is just an illusion," he said, gesturing to his face. "What you see here, this perfect porcelain skin you think I have, is just an illusion, one cast from my physical insecurities because the skin on my face hates me and takes sadistic joy in torturing me with the total bitch that is acne."

"You wanna see acne? Look at mine." Removing his tee, Noah turned his back to Kurt, the upper half raw with acne. Common. Vulgaris. Kurt's breath hitched at the sight. "Total mankback goin here, right?"

"… Noah, I… didn't know." He inspected the blemished skin with concern. "How long have you had this?"
The boy shrugged. "Dunno, two years. It's not as bad as it was. I'm on this Body Regime that's helping. Better stuff than all the other dud junk I've tried."

"And how do you feel about it?"

Noah sighed, scratching his head. "It bums me out, dude. I totally get your face skin insecurities, acne sucks. I mean, I can hide this most of the time under a top or whatever, but it's a real problem swimming or when I'm changing in the locker rooms or even when I'm with a girl, 'cause it's there for everyone to see, and this ain't pretty."

"Is that why you wore your shirt in the sea? The wet suit too?"

"Yeah, I didn't want you seein this and gettin grossed out."

"Why? Have people been in the past?"

"Some," Noah nodded, "and they've not been subtle about it."

"Forget about them, Noah. Your acne isn't so bad."

"Yeah, I've seen pictures of it on people where it's gone all fuckin ape shit on them. Like they have these massive cysts on their faces that pop blood and pus. Real Black Death kinda stuff with these pustule things like huge ass boils on their butts."

"I know, it's terrible."

"And they're always so red like they're mad. As if they're summoning Satan to bring on a thousand years of darkness upon the world like super necromancy acne."

Kurt smiled. "Well then let's just be grateful we have the mild teenage hormonal kind that just doesn't know when to quit. Where it gets better and tricks you into thinking you're clearing up but then laughs, "Ha, just kidding, you're not allowed good skin", and breaks out all over again."

"Oh, it is on with this motherfucker, dude," Noah said. "This mankfest is goin down."

"It looks like it."

"So, this doesn't gross you out?"

"No, of course not Noah. It's just acne. You don't have to feel like you have to hide it from me."

"Neither do you, Kurt."

The boy paused. "Well my own skin without makeup looks okay if I stay a foot away from someone, but if I move in closer things start to get ugly."

Noah grinned, leaning in. "Try me."

For a fleeting minute, he did not believe Kurt would. Opening and closing his mouth with those full lips licked compulsively, he was nervous. The poor thing. His face only ever having been seen makeup free by his parents, his matron and those who shared his dorm room. Everyone else was under his "illusion". One of clear skin. No makeup. For what kind of boy wore it? Foundation, concealer, powder? This emphasis on looks, attractiveness. Who the hell cared what a boy looked like? If they had pimples on their face or body. Who cared? Wearing makeup, it was humiliating. Embarrassing. There was something very female about it. Something males were not to near with disgust looked upon those who did. Metrosexual freaks. Actors. Fags.
Noah himself found it odd, but fascinating. The uses of makeup. Natural makeup. Dewey makeup. Matte makeup. Theatrical makeup. Prosthetic makeup. Pancake makeup. Makeup of all kinds spread on the faces of both men and women in unique styles. Faces like canvases for pieces of art that ignored the haters. Kurt's own was "corrective". A makeup therefore possibly recognized in the medical community as well as amongst professional makeup artists. One Noah supposed had a high enough pigment to cover near to anything. Age spots. Birthmarks. Bruises. Freckles. Dude! Even sick tattoos! Real bad ass camouflage makeup that applied with Kurt's practiced magical fingertips would make easy work of concealing his own acne on his back.

Worked from the inside between his shoulder blades and outward with light strokes. Blended in around the nape of his neck and all outer edges to avoid uneven lines, and there to last up to twelve long hours, smudge resistant with an SPF of thirty for protection against the hot South African sun. Dope. But with a swipe of a moist towelette, it would all vanish. Now across a forehead and cheeks, down an understated little nose and chin. Kurt removed the last traces of his makeup, discarding of the wipe on the table and looking right at Noah with those large blue eyes frightened and open, for he'd been told to keep them open. Not to be raised. Not to hide behind. Not even as Noah neared, closer and closer.

The skin was pale, pasty, markedly so on the outward areas of the face as with a terrible shock. And slightly shiny too. Not oily, but healthy looking. There were one or two active pimples, small with most of the blemishes that of pigmentation scars dotted like little pink ants on the forehead and along the jaw, though all fading from regular exfoliation and application of a topical bleaching agent. There were deep shadows under his eyes, ones that made you want to slide down with a Whee! But at the center of the face there was color! The fetching shades of pink and red. Like that of a sunset. As if the skin was alive and hot to the touch, fresh from a facial steam or blushing from a compliment with upper cheeks rosy, rouged on their own.

It was uneven skin tone Kurt was most sensitive of. The acne and the scars, his under eye circles, none of it was severe. None of it was serious. He was still recognizable, maybe a little more mature looking without makeup, and not a lot of it used. The wipe not caked in the stuff as Noah threw it a glance. The sinks he'd wash his face in afterwards not covered in splotches of it there to clog the drain. Less was more. The "natural look," and here was Kurt au natural, bare and fresh, who blinked as Noah murmured mere centimeters from his face as if to smell it, the face wash, again the scent of ripe citrus. "Whoa dude … that's trippy." "Trippy?" Kurt asked anxiously. "Yeah," replied Noah, "Trippy. Pretty trippy. Pretty pretty. Whoa. Kurt, you're pretty."

The fair boy smiled. He smiled a giggle. A bonus, asking, "Honestly?" And in simple truth, Noah had to nod. Neither of them judged each other for their imperfections. These temporary blemishes they were sure they'd grow out of. It didn't faze them. There was an understanding there and it brought them closer. Of course Noah would be honest with Kurt, going so far as to even tell him he didn't need makeup so pigmented. To go for something lighter. To show some skin. To let it breathe. And of course Kurt in turn would help Noah with his Body Regime, Benzoyl Peroxide and Glycolic Acid after a cleansing shower. His fingers gently gliding over his back like he was eight again on Coronado beach, spreading sunblock on that warm coffee skin.

Kurt would always remember that. The stark contrast in their skin tones. The intimacy he found there to be in it. It was nice. Just them now in comfortable silence to the sounds of a soft strumming guitar on the radio, Noah sat on the end of the bed in only his boxers fiddling with a torn apart bracelet he'd claimed he'd broken by accident, and Kurt kneeling behind him, still dressed as he applied the treatments over largely distributed macules and acne patches, a few comedones and papules, all with thorough care. How the acids had that unmistakable smell of sulphur. Of burning. The chilling sensation it had on the skin as if cold air were being blown onto it in gusts. He knew the feeling and could sympathize, looking on as it was all absorbed.
"You have such a broad back, Noah," Kurt muttered as his friend grinned.

"Yeah, I wail a lot on my delts."

"It's very well-built. Very strong looking."

"Too bad it's totally mank, I'd be able to give you piggy back rides."

Kurt smiled. "Don't worry about it. It doesn't stop you from having a great back, and a great body too, if you don't mind my saying so."

"No, not at all," Noah said. "Bangin nardude here sayin it's totally cool..." Though with a pause, he smirked. "... So, you like my body?"

"Yes," Kurt blushed. "It isn't weird that I said that is it?"

Noah shook his head. "No dude, course not. Coming from a gay guy, that is so much more flattering that if had come from one who wasn't."

"Noah, I don't think many straight guys complement on each other's bodies anyway. It would be pushing the limits of their "bromance". In fact, I'm sure "bromance" is the perfect example of how embarrassingly fragile masculinity is. You know what a female bromance is called? A friendship."

"Yeah, but you know how it is with dudes, Kurt. They never wanna compromise that masculinity. It's all about asserting it and shit. Showin off some machismo."

Kurt laughed dryly. "I swear, all straight boys make friends through their muscles. I'm not even kidding. And just the way they call each other by their last names, or call each other "man", "bro" or "dude"."

"Hey, I do that," Noah protested, turning his head as Kurt smiled.

"I know, you've called me them many a time."

"You don't like it when I do?"

"Honestly, no. It annoys me to no end, and the only reason I don't say anything is because it's part of your surfer charm, and I like that about you."

Noah smiled. "Yeah?"

"Yes. Although I would like it if you'd call me by my first name a little more often than you do."

"Sure," the boy nodded as Kurt continued working the creams on his back.

"But I suppose I should be grateful for things you don't do. Like pull me in for those awful man hugs."

Noah chuckled. "You don't like 'em?"

"They're the worst," Kurt said with a grimace. "All that one arm back pounding. I mean, what is that? That's not hugging. You're just throwing my back out one vertebrae at a time. I am just one delicate little person. You have to be gentle with me. First, dial all that obscene bro-grabbing down a thousand and one notches, actually learn how to hug and then you can near me. God, straight guys. What are we going to do with you all?"
"I hope I'm gentle enough with you when we hug," Noah said, quietly.

"You are Noah," Kurt assured, "for a straight guy. I have this theory that if they were to have their own pride parades they'd all be sponsored by Xbox 360, and that by 2030, straight guys will all be considered an alternative fuel source, so maybe they won't be all useless-"

"Kurt, I'm not straight." The fair boy paused.

"…I know."

Noah blinked. "You do?"

"Given our history, I would have fair reason to suspect, yes."

"Yeah, I guess."

"Do you have an idea of what you may be?"

Noah shrugged. "I dunno. I don't have a label for it. I'm just into whoever my dick gets hard for. Dudes or chicks. I mean, I know that's being bi, but again with the labels."

"Excuse me but bisexuality means you're only allowed to be attracted to two people in your lifetime and we know damn well of your crush on Susie in the third grade so you better use your next one wisely, pal."

Noah laughed, "Totes."

"You could be pansexual. You know, I hear they're known as that due to their lovely habit of using pans to make breakfast in bed as a romantic surprise for their any-gendered and/or agendered significant other." Noah chuckled. "Or if the idea of using labels still bothers you just classify your sexual orientation as garlic bread. I know you like it. Or… okay, yes, you're byesexual, but as in bye, don't touch me."

"That's a good one."

Kurt smiled, finished on the creams. "I agree with you though, Noah. Labels can be restrictive. Not all of them are tailored to us. Sexuality is fluid, as in you are permitted a maximum of one 3.4 oz (100 ml) bottle of sexuality per passenger. All bottles must be carried inside a ziplock bag and placed in a bin for inspection prior to boarding the aircraft."

"They wouldn't know what to make of mine," Noah smirked. "They wouldn't be able to handle it."

"Intriguing. So fluid a sexuality it's undefinable."

"Yeah," Noah nodded, now pulling on his shirt. "With the robot inspectors screaming, "Does not compute! What is he?" as they short circuit and their heads blow off."

"Or it could be a mutant strain of bisexuality so hardcore and badass, it can't be tamed. The creature, Swaggasaurus Sex."

"Whoa Kurt," Noah gaped. "Are you fuckin kidding me? You've just literally tailored the best label for me! Can I take it?"

Kurt smiled. "It's yours."

"Awesome. Swaggasaurus Sex. Where if I call you cute it means I wanna fuck the life outta you.
Let's "cuddle" just means I want to aggressively make out and grab you everywhere, and... oh, if we're dating and you don't let me pretend to play bongo drums on your butt then guess what, we're through.

"There you go," Kurt laughed. "Your own label."

Turned to him, Noah paused. "And you, Kurt. You know you're gay. You couldn't be anything else, right?"

His friend nodded. "That I'm sure of with complete certainty. Not only do I get a confidence boost from Republicans insinuating that my mere existence has the power to destroy a country, but being gay is who I am and I own it." He blushed as Noah stared at him, a fond growing grin on his face. "What?"

"I'm just so happy for you, Kurt. I love that you're so comfortable in your sexuality. It's awesome."

Kurt smiled. "Thanks, Noah."

"You're so confident in it. So self-assured. It's just so..."

"Yes?"

"Sexy."

Kurt blinked. "Sexy?"

"Uh-huh, and if I see it, other's will too. You don't know how much more fun you could be havin with your sexuality if you only went a little further, Kurt. There's no harm in havin sex. There's nothing to be afraid of. In fact, believe it or not, it can feel really fuckin great."

"Yes, I know," Kurt muttered. "I've just been absorbing other people's virginities, making my own grow stronger and stronger in preparation for the final battle."

Noah laughed. "Dude, come on-"

"No, trust me Noah, I do want to someday have sex, because I do love boys. I do. I mean, I don't know how some are hundred percent straight. Like have you seen boys-"

"I see you."

"Wow, you're smooth."

"Yeah?" Noah smirked. "I wanna take you to an art museum and make out with you, but they said not to touch the masterpieces." Kurt smiled. "What? Your net worth is $0.07? Are you sure it's not $0.10, because you're a dime." Another smile. "I've been reading my palm, and it says it belongs on your butt."

Kurt laughed. "Oh Noah. I could just marry you."

"Okie dokie."

"I was kidding."

"I wasn't, let's get hitched and get the hell outta here."

Kurt giggled. "And go where?"
"Someplace where nobody knows our names," Noah grinned, talking Kurt's hands in his. "Just us in wanderlust, travelling the world together or blasting off in a rocket to another galaxy. This planet sucks anyway. Nothing works. Only one of ten volcanoes actually erupt. The ocean is poorly lit. The dryers in public washrooms don't do shit. I'm sick of this place, but not you, Kurt. I'll go anywhere with you."

Kurt sat there, previously giggling, but now not knowing whether Noah was past all joking. Such sincerity in his last words, it made his heart thump! Like a sensation of sick dread that swept over him, he wondered if the boy was going to tell him how he felt. Had thought it coming when he'd revealed he wasn't heterosexual. That he was in fact bisexual. An 'undecided' one. 'Greedy'. So they called them. 'Double dippers' and 'AC/DC''s who were even more 'confused' than homosexuals, but free to Kurt. Noah had freedom in his sexuality. To explore it like the surfer he'd been on every surf at Jeffrey's Bay. Or to explore it as if in wanderlust of the world, Kurt by his side. It had made the boy's heart beat then. Thump! Thump! Thump! It beat now.

Yet with sudden interruption, Noah's phone vibrated on the bed beside them, now shifting the rhythm of Kurt's heart beat like he'd hiccupped, shifting Noah's too. He would pick up his phone and look down at it with frowning hazel eyes as it would continue to ring. "Kitty". His girlfriend. A girl Kurt admittedly didn't know much about, and had at first imagined her as one as sweet as her name. One so pretty, like "Lettie" or "Mimi". Names for the type of girls he pictured Noah a sucker for, with a childhood sweet tooth since evolved from mere candy and Jet Puffed marshmallows to flavored chapstick. Though frosted lip gloss for Kitty. Cherry. Passionberry. Plum. They were flavors for the type of girl she really was. A Jesus loving little Devil.

Indeed she was a bitch. Arrogant and bossy with a face that of a squeaky looking rodent you couldn't trust with ears akin to those of a lizard. A less endearing resemblance to Doris Day. She was a devout Christian with a sole belief in Christian Science. That God healed everyone through Jesus Christ and that medicine was "unnatural." If you had faith, Jesus could "heal" you, and could heal her through her periods that left her gasping and moaning with only a hot-water bottle on her belly, a wet hand towel on her forehead for migraines and nothing for those often searing cramps so very mind numbing to her, ordering the nurse to keep her juice in her sight at all times so as to not to have aspirin sneakily ground up in it without her knowing.

As a cheerleader, she was co-captain on her team. The spirit of competition in her. The look in her green eyes unmistakable. Though of a usurper, bent on claiming head cheerleader for herself. The best cheerleader. The hottest. Already promiscuous despite her religious beliefs, she was a little slut who couldn't get enough teen boy sausage. Having sucked off most in her school. And fucked too, reportedly with no condoms due to her stance on birth of control with the boys instead having come all over her belly like nasty sneezes if they remembered to yank out in time. Noah included, but so good it felt bottoming out, he'd often withdraw too late and Kitty, freaked out and screaming, would test for pregnancy days later. All of them negative.

Now she was on the phone, her presence hanging heavily in the room with them. Her business, phone sex? Dirty talk? Was Noah to be alone to this confidential call with his hand free, his mind there to roam, playful as sordid talk of Biology filled the air. Talk of Kitty herself was rare. Her name was mentioned only if Kurt spoke of the boys he'd dated. And even in passing did it make Noah madly jealous. The rage he'd feel! To smash their faces in! Rip their fucking throats out! It was anger he could not comprehend. Kurt was his friend. Hearing of all these boys playing with him as if he Noah were standing in the corner of the sandbox looking on, it hurt him, just like it hurt Kurt to hear of Kitty. A subtle injury shining in those eyes. He could see it.

Kurt himself had smiled politely as Noah had answered the phone. He'd retreated to the bathroom to give the boy and his girlfriend some privacy, the matter of the call now no longer of interest to him.
Even Noah's apologetic eyes as he'd left, that he hadn't known Kitty was going to call. He hadn't asked for her to do so. She was interrupting his time with Kurt, a perfect moment. She was ruining it. This girl he hadn't spoken to properly since packing for Ulusaba. Her texts unanswered. Several of her calls missed. One or two rolled to voicemail. All on purpose it would seem. For she wasn't missed, and she knew. Had in fact already moved on to the next boy, a football team buddy of Noah's, a guy called "Ricky", who knew when to pull out.

To this, there was the sound of a raised voice. Possibly of distressed emotion. Or perhaps even elation. Kurt could not quite tell from beyond the locked bathroom door. Not wishing to eavesdrop as he went about his evening skincare ritual stripped down to his cute cotton pajama top and underwear. Nothing on his legs. Cool legs that felt the slight chill. For nights here at this time of year were cold compared to the hot dry days. In June and they were in South Africa's winter season. 10°C. Brrr! Chilly. He needed to warm up. To run from the airy bathroom and climb right into bed. Quick as a cat across the floor until with realization that he had indeed done just that, he paused, looking around as he deposited his folded clothes on the floor.

So dark it was with the lights all off, save for the shaded sconces above each end table. The balcony's bifolding doors were shut and locked, the curtains drawn, with no evening breezes allowed in. Yet Kurt still felt cold as he came to find Noah lying in the bed, the comforter up to his waist with his hands behind his head looking at him, a small smile splayed on his lips. Kurt smiled shyly back. He could feel there was something. The remnants of that call with Kitty. The call now over with the phone upside down on the end table. Possible it had been chucked down roughly. And turned off. Glancing at it, Kurt did not inquire. Whatever had transpired in his absence, he ignored, asking only if Noah was alright, the boy nodding, "Sure, dude." Smiling.

Then he climbed in, burying himself deep under the comforter asking in a breathy voice as Noah turned off the lights, "I'm not crowding you, am I?" Noah, who'd positioned himself closer to him upon settling back into the bed, replied, "Nah. You're real small Kurt, you barely take up any room here. Besides, we gotta huddle close for heat, like penguins." At this, Kurt giggled, prompting Noah to lean in closer and grin, "Here, let me warm your feet up for you," shifting his bare feet over to Kurt's and rubbing them with a gentle vigorousness, like stoking hot flames. Rub! Rub! Rub! To fire side warmth. And Kurt doing it for him, rubbing those fair little feet against his bigger tanned ones to a heat. Those soles soft. Those toes interlocked with his.

Christ, this was exiting him. Kurt was pressed right up against his side, speaking of when he was a child, of climbing into bed with his parents to cuddle under the covers and pretend they were lost in a dark cave trying to find their way out, and whoop! Noah had grabbed him and was pulling him under the comforter, deep into a secret cave of their own, one lined with crystals so huge in size they lit the way to an underground city. A long lost empire they were to explore together, crawling blindly in the dark, laughing in hushed tones like manic children, their forms writhing with Kurt jumping under Noah's tickles, but shh! A noise! And Kurt was brought into Noah's muscular arms for protection… Tickle Monster! And Kurt squealed again, laughing.

It was adventure times under the covers! Squirming! Wriggling! Falling off the bed but re-entering with a growl. Roar! Tarzan! And Kurt, submissive as a kitten now Gay Jane as I touched, cuddled and tickled, even kissed his cheeks. His body was always rubbing up against mine. Mmm, yeah! Clinging to me whenever a "predator" was nearby. Even wrapping his legs around my hips. Oh Baby! Squeezing my biceps and nuzzling his face into my chest. Fuck! Other times and he'd claw himself out into the open. Free! Escaped! Only to be pulled back under again, "Nu huh, baby!" And cuddled. Dammnn! The cuddles. All playful and fun, and hot underneath the covers. Sweaty. We both had to take off our tops as we came out panting. Like we'd just done it…

A playful activity of a childlike nature that suggested another, it would seem so. It quickly raised
Noah's arousal to heat. Even after Kurt had fallen asleep, collapsed onto his pillow all giggled out and exhausted, the poor kid, Noah remained awake, his mind roaming, his hand tugging on himself. God, he was horny. He wanted to have sex. He wanted to fuck. And kiss as he'd fuck. Something Kitty had never been into. "What? No, just motorboat me," she'd said. "Come on baby, titty-fuck me." And he had done, his swollen penis between her breasts, cupped in his large tan hands and squeezed until with a sob of anguish he'd come, his semen wetting her as she'd moaned, "Mmm yeah, better than kissing, right baby?" With her, it never had been.

He wanted to cuddle fuck. To hold the other body close to him as they'd have sex. He got off on that and he wanted to do it with Kurt. Yes, Kurt! Kurt who was now no longer sleeping beside him as he glanced at the empty space in the bed, but in the centre of the room brightly lit in purple gels, a spotlight on him dressed in a blue sweater and socks, his smooth legs bare and amongst boys. The boys he'd dated. So many of them! All flitting about him like moths to this flame, this one fair boy whose name was "Kurt". He wasn't supposed to play with boys, he said. Son coeur était a son papa. His "propriétaire". But the boys chased him none the less, climbing over furniture, jumping on the couch. There he goes! They weren't letting him escape. No!

The music was loud with an excited Jazz band, horns of trumpets and trombones in the air. A twinkling grand piano! Even a xylophone for those light steps Kurt took as he swerved himself through the boys. Stepping over them. Crawling in-between their open legs like a child through a tunnel. He was one who while tearing off games of golf made plays at the caddies, "but when I do I don't follow through 'cause my heart belongs to daddy," he sang, winking at Noah since sat up on the bed looking on as the fair boy rove once again amongst the boys, all stood to attention as he marched like a commander through them all. And Clap! A piggyback war as Kurt was thrown into the air and caught. Like an acrobat! Eskimo kissing his hero as he smiled.

Oh yes! All of them wanted "Kurt". Lolita-boy "Kurt". To charm him, to be invited some night to dine on his fine Finnan Haddie. The cold-smoked haddock so good, the butter melting on the tongue. They'd ask for more! And he'd adore it when they would. "But my heart belongs to daddy," he chanted, wagging his finger. "So I simply couldn't be bad." Dancing away, he laughed. He was the tease of the night. He was the warning to all the laddies. Though he knew them all to be swell. The dates they'd gone on together, sweet times where they'd all been so kind to him, so chivalrous for he also adored chivalry. Boys so handsome too, but oh! His heart belonged to daddy! Kurt now beckoning them all closer, "cause my daddy, he treats it so…"

_Bada, bada, badadida!_ The beat quickened. The pace out of control, chaotic. Though choreographed chaos. Every movement slick as boys flew about from every direction. Some swinging down from the rafters like monkeys, some somersaulting onto tables, all moving as Kurt ran about them, eluding them, running to them! _Sugar-dugar do! Sugar-dugar do! Oooh, daddy!_ He jumped into their arms, and was thrown into the next, and the next, and the next!All positions face contorted in pleasure, grabbing at them desperately, in the centre again, as if wanting them to crowd over him, to fumble with his clothes and rip them off, to touch and penetrate him, a thick penis in his mouth and two in his anus. _Dadada, Dadada, Dadada! Yes!_

"But my heart belongs to my daddy!" Kurt screamed, now jumping up with rolling hips, and sending every boy flying back. There to crawl whimpering back like kicked puppies as he removed his sweater and threw it Noah's way, the thing hitting him right in the face. _Bada, bada, Dadada!_ Fuck yes, Noah was his daddy! The proprietor. Papa. He was the one who treated Kurt's heart so damn good! All those other boys could go suck it! All lying on the floor crying and beating at the ground like temper tantrum little kids. Kurt was his! The boy now climbing the bed, crawling towards him and coming to sit on his speared penis, daddy's Big Thing, and riding it as Noah wrapped his large arms around him tight, sucking his nipples, kissing his mouth, _hard._
Damn, he was close. He could feel it. In this room so dark. To this fantasy of his. Of Kurt's firm ass clapsed in his hands, an ass as soft as breasts, bouncing on his dick. **Bounce! Bounce! Bounce!** "Oh, Daddy!" Fuck! He was beginning to buck his hips as he pumped his shaft with a deft and well-practiced hand. His legs kicking off the thick comforter. Too hot! With skin sweaty. His muscles defined in it! **Muscle strong! Yeah!** He looked over at Kurt now sleeping next to him, soundless as the air if not for his own grunts. His moans. His cries for that slim sylphlike body. That skin semen white. He pumped harder and oh fuck, he was gonna bust. He was gonna bust! He was gonna bust! A paroxysm of emotion! He was gonna... oh... a-ah, fuck! "K-kurt, baby."

"Noah? What are you doing?" Noah froze. His heart thumping ever wildly. His hand was still clamped around his length, his other having shot out under the bed to search blindly for his towel, the thing rough and dry with stains from prior use, and about to stem his own orgasm now, one he wished would not rise as Kurt looked on confusedly, yet one too close to the edge as without stimulation, he came, moaning and grunting and breathing hard and with eyes still on the boy beside him, his face thick in perspiration, tan skin flushed. He was seeing stars flitting about his eye line. Enough to give him a headache. He was clutching at the sheets. His toes were curling with legs weak. Though with these legs, he ran. Slipping from the bed and away.

_I lay there, watching as he all but stumbled naked across the room, tripping up on the African rug at the foot of the bed with his semen streaking down his abdominals before he was in the bathroom, the door shut and locked behind him. I lay there, not knowing what to think. Silent. With no words to utter, 'what just happened?' Noah had been masturbating. I'd been woken to movement beside me. To moans. He'd been masturbating to me, looking at me as he'd touched himself. I saw him do it. I saw his penis, rock hard, and his body, naked, hot and aroused in such a way I had never seen before. It made me blush. I was not disgusted, only shocked as I looked over at the empty rumpled space next to me with the minutes counting five, ten, fifteen..."

"Noah?" Kurt murmured, his knocks on the bathroom door quiet and shy. "Noah, are you alright? You've been in there for a long time. Do you want-"

The door now opened as Noah revealed himself. "I'm cool, dude," he said, casually. "I'm good."

"Are you sure?" Kurt was aware the boy was still naked, his belly since wiped clean with his penis now semi erect, gleaming a solitary pearl drop of moisture. He made sure to avert his eyes, never once straying from Noah's as the boy shrugged.

"Yeah, totally."

"Okay," Kurt muttered, watching as his friend returned to the bed, climbing in with not a single word uttered. Just a, "Night dude," before turning over and seemingly ignoring Kurt's, "Goodnight." It hurt, and minutes later, Kurt turned to look his way.

"I know what you were doing, Noah," he whispered. "You don't have to turn your back to me and pretend it didn't happen."

"Go to sleep, Kurt."

"You were masturbating."

"No, I wasn't. I was just... warming my hands."

"Don't lie to me. I saw you-"

Noah huffed. "Alright fine dude, I was jackin off. I jacked off so hard I gave myself a headache, but..."
you know what? I think I might do it again. They say it also helps 'em go away, and thinkin of Kitty does just the right thing for me."

Kurt scoffed. "Right, 'cause she was the one you were thinking of."

"She's my girlfriend, dude, course she was. With her sweet ass and tits, I could-"

"Oh give it a rest, Noah. I know what you could think up with those," Kurt snapped, straightening up. "I wouldn't put it past you to invent some sort of special tissue paper made for cleaning up sperm and other masturbation related messes and naming it the "Excrete Sheet", just the thing for whenever you'd think of that girl and her lady parts."

"People wack off, Kurt. Get used to it."

"I am."

"No, you're not. The look on your face when you caught me says it all."

"It's called surprise, Noah," Kurt hissed. "I didn't think you'd be indecent enough as to do it whilst I was in bed right next to you."

Noah scoffed. "I bet you don't even do it at all."

"Excuse me?"

"Dude, come on, like you don't give off vibes that anything to do with genitals is "dirty" and "impure", just the attitude society has towards chicks who touch themselves and force them to "pretend" they don't do it."

"I resent that accusation! Let me tell you something Noah, there are two types of people out there: those who touch themselves and liars and I believe me, I am not a liar. I happen to masturbate just as often as the next boy. Noah snorted. "I do! In fact, I see it very much like dressing up. I do it for myself and if it turns you on, that's fine, but this is for me and you're not invited."

"What?"

"Second of all, I share a dorm room with seven other boys. semen everywhere. I mean, do you really think I haven't heard my matron complain about the amount of times she's managed to crack their blankets in half? Please, I've even had boys on dates fondle themselves right in front of me so believe me, I am more than fairly acquainted with the act."

"Kurt -"

"And thirdly, I know it may seem like I've been brainwashed by puritanical assholes to believe sex is a sin, but I haven't. Yet neither have I allowed my brain to be reprogrammed by the media to believe sex is the be-all end-all. I am not jealous of your sex life, and neither would I be guilty if I chose to have one of my own. For you see in the end, sex, masturbation, all of it is neither as good or as evil as everyone puts it out to be -"

"Okay Kurt! I get the picture!" Noah roared, slipping from the bed and pacing the floor irritably. "Jesus, I don't even know why we're talking about this! I was wackin off to you alright! There, I said it!" He was breathing hard, watching as Kurt looked him over with a solemn expression. "Guess that makes me no better than the dudes who do it all up in your face, huh?" His friend remained silent. "Look Kurt, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to... if you want I can sleep on the couc -"
"Never lie about masturbating to me again."

"Huh?"

"Never take away this power I'm feeling right now because you have no idea what its doing to me."

"You mean..." Noah swallowed hard. "You mean you liked that I jerked off to you?"

"Noah, I know you find me attractive. I know it drives you crazy whenever I talk of any other boy, but what you have to know is that I feel the exact same way whenever you mention the girls you've been with, the women, Kitty. The first time you mentioned her name, my heart collapsed. I couldn't breathe. I couldn't comprehend how much it hurt, and it was stupid. I hadn't seen you in eight whole years, but there I was, falling ridiculously in love with you and if having you touch yourself to me makes you love me back, if only for fifteen seconds, I shall treasure every moment it endures till the very end."

At these words and there was a sudden terror, a rising panic in Noah's chest that his heart would blow, the pulsating beats bludgeoning his rib cage to cracks with merciless mallet like thumps where there was no thinking. No thoughts to a mind now blank of words that scrounged out only in breaths, "You love me?" And Kurt through the dark nodded meekly as if frightened, his vulnerability tugging at the sheets like a kneading kitten, his cuteness. Baby, as Noah now hurtled towards him in a rush of elation, desperate happiness and need, pouncing on the bed and scooping the boy's lips in his, squelching wet, and wrapping him up in his gentle muscled arms like a boy desirous of love, holding him so tight as they kissed with a passion unrivaled.

"Oh Kurt," He croaked. "Screw fifteen seconds, I've always been in love with you."

"I know, Noah, I know-"

"I love you so much! My little fountain faunlet; the angel who once unfroze me during that game of beach freeze tag, you've always made my heart do stuff when I was with you, Kurt. Cool stuff. I was in major Fambo McJambo over here."

"And you teased me for my maybe crush on you," Kurt said, pulled by the boy in mid cuddle to straddle his sat hips as he swatted his shoulder. "Noah, how could you."

"I was only jokin around that you did until, I don't know, you'd say you did for sure," Noah said, still choked up. "I know you were kinda coy about it, but this is more than I could have ever hoped for. Kurt, this is just... it's just-"

"I know," Kurt breathed. "I didn't even know I was in love. The words just came out and I scared myself because I'd never even thought it, but I knew it to be true. This is love. This is what it feels like, it's beautiful..." Looking down at himself, he gulped, "... and here I am... trembling."

"It's okay baby, I got you," Noah said, tightening his arms around the boy, warm arms into a warm chest. "You should feel my heart. It's trembling an earthquake in this bod. My love for you, driving it off the fuckin Richter scale."

"Yeah?"

"Uh huh. L is for the way you look at me. O is for the only one I see. V is very, very extraordinary. Egg."

Kurt laughed. "I think I can guess what you were trying to spell out. At least you're better than Sugar. She has her admirers confess their love via PayPal."
"Good thing she's not who I want."

"Thank God, because if you wanna be my lover, you gotta get away from my friends because they're more attractive looking and cooler than me and you might choose them instead which I completely understand because I'm ugly."

"Never."

"Well with these under eye circles-"

"No, I like 'em," the boy insisted. "Don't fix 'em, babe. Let the world know you're tired of its shit and ready to kill a man."

"I could never commit murder," Kurt whispered as Noah shrugged.

"Then just kill these friends who you think are better than you. It won't be murder if you kill a friend. It'll be homiecide."

"Homiecide?"

"Homiecide. You won't even get busted for it, 'cause who could ever bust someone like you, Kurt? They'd probably ask to see your license and registration for being that fuckin cute."

Kurt blushed pink. "Noah…"

"I'm not kiddin baby, you're so attractive it drives me crazy."

"Not as crazy as how attractive I find you, Noah."

The boy quirked a brow. "Yeah?"

"You're the sexiest boy I know," Kurt nodded. "Sexier than the sexiest sexy sex."

Noah chuckled. "Whoa, that's a whole lotta sex."

"Surfers tend to have that much appeal." Kurt said, his hands trailing over Noah's arms, his broad shoulders, "But in all honesty I could be in your company for hours, Noah. You're my best friend."

"But we're more than best bruhs now, right babe?" Noah asked. "We share the love, and I want us together for realsies. Like, Tarzan and Gay Jane together, and the promise ring I gave you, it's got magical bonding powers that are comin into effect right now. Swish! Bonded."

Kurt laughed. "Bonded as in bonded in Holy Matrimony?"

"I always said we should get hitched," said Noah, grinning. "We were too young to in Coronado. I mean, it's not like we were in Kentucky, but now, wouldn't it be cool?"

"We're still too young, Noah."

"No, but it's been a couple years. I've grown some ball hair and we're now old enough to knock booties insteada askin who the hell invented sex. Like why would you put your wing wang in the wizard sleeve?" Once again, the fair boy laughed. "Just think of it Kurt. We can travel the world together, adopt some rad kids. Remember Lizard?"

Kurt frowned. "Lizard?"
"Yeah, our daughter, Lizard."

"Oh yeah, Lizard… We're still not calling her that."

"Double dang."

"'Felony' would be a pretty name, if it didn't mean a serious crime."

"You know what would be a crime, letting you go again. Doing that would be like cutting open a wound, and not the bad ass kind."

"Oh Noah."

"Let me be your guy, baby, I love you."

"You've always been my guy, Noah," Kurt smiled. "Ever since Coronado, remember?"

"When we were 'boyfriends'. Sweet times."

"Yes."

"I wish I'd kissed you though," Noah pouted. "All those days there, I never kissed you once."

Kurt smiled. "Don't beat yourself up about it. It's not that you didn't try. You did. It's just that I always thought you were joking around with the things you'd come out with like, "You should plant a tree or some flowers or your lips on mine"? I never thought you genuinely wanted to kiss me."

Noah now raised his eyes to him, hazel warped in dilation. "You are so stupid."

He lurched forward, bringing his lips to Kurt's and kissed his mouth, and immediately like a doll's, Kurt's eyes shut, a sensation like flame passing through his body, chest to groin, whimpering, "Kiss me again, Noah. Kiss me," and placing his outstretched fingers behind the fair boy's tilted head, Noah bunched up his hair, this boy that begged for his kisses, in-between kisses! So many kisses! "… Kiss me, oh…y-yeah," Kurt moaned, "Kiss… My God, you're such a good kisser, baby… uh, no, wait!"

"What?" Noah asked, alarmed. "What's wrong?"

"This," Kurt said, pointing to them both. "This is wrong."

Noah shook his head, leaning in for another desperate kiss. "No, no, this is good. This is very good."

"What about Kitty?" Kurt asked. "Noah, you have a girlfriend."

Noah paused. "Kurt, she cheated on me. It's over."

"Really?"

“That's what that call was all about. She's now fucking some guy on the football team. Probably got her legs wrapped around his neck as we speak."

"Oh God Noah, I'm so sorry."

Noah shrugged, chuckling. "Don't be baby, it's all good. Kitty was always Puck's chica, and dating her now just feels kinda weird. It's for the best."
"How did she know?"

"I've been distant with her lately," Noah said, exhaling a long sigh. "You know, detached. Which in
the dating world just means I've found someone new. Someone exciting."

"And how long had this been going on for?"

"A month. So ever since I planned on seeing you. I'm actually surprised she didn't cheat on me
sooner. That was cool of her."

Kurt frowned. "Were you planning on her cheating on you, Noah? Be honest, were you?"

"Kinda," Noah admitted, shyly, "but only 'cause I was planning on something happening with us.
You're my Gay Jane, Kurt. Super cool and super cute. She's just a crazy evil bitch."

Kurt was flattered. "Super cool? Me?"

"Totally, babe. You're the coolest and I'd have to delete anyone in my life who didn't think so 'cause
I don't need that kind of negativity around me."

"Aw."

"That also goes for dogs wearing hats and saving pizza crusts in my pocket for later, but the point is,
you're the one I want to be with. There's no other fish in the sea for me 'cause the fish I want is the
last remaining wild Madagascar rainbow feathered swordfish and I's gotta have him." Kurt smiled. "I
swear it Kurt, I've been waiting for the stream to bring me this moment my whole life, to bring
me you. I love you."

Kurt's heart swelled happy and giddy as if it's heartbeats were giggles, it's shade of red just the
mounting blush he felt inside, the rush that passed through him to a kiss on Noah's lips; stroking his
Mohawk as they cuddled close, grazing that beautiful jawline rough with stubble. With stubble! He
shaves, Kurt swooned dreamily, tipping them over onto their sides and laying there still entwined as
if stuck, stuck even to their eyelashes and nails they remained close by those tanned arms, kissing
and kissing some more; Noah, who kissed him not only on his lips, but on his cheeks, his forehead,
his temples. All over. It had Kurt thinking never before had he felt more cared for by a boy in all his
life, now snuggling close until with a yawn, sleep overtook.

\[
\text{Wise men say only fools rush in but I can't help falling in love with you} \\
\text{Shall I stay, would it be a sin if I can't help falling in love with you}
\]

~ PLEASE REVIEW ~

(But if you wish to criticize, may it be constructive. I'm not going to learn from my mistakes and
improve if you vent.)

**Author's Note:** I took inspiration from Marilyn Monroe's performances of "Heat Wave" in *There's
No Business Like Show Business* and "My Heart Belongs to Daddy" in *Let's Make Love* for both
Noah's sexual fantasies.

**Disclaimer:** I do not own the rights to the characters from Glee as I don't own the show. I'm not
earning money from this and no copyright or trademark infringement is intended.

~ STAY TUNED FOR MORE BY FOLLOWING/FAVORITING ~
There he was, sprawled in drowsy sleep across the bed as if he'd just been deposited by the sea on a golden shore, this surfer on his back with his limbs spread amongst the comforter that he had kicked off in the night having got too hot yet again and perhaps having nearly kicked his friend beside him, Kurt, who'd slept soundly with little disturbance throughout and now up since ten minutes ago, showered and dressed and shaking his head with an amused smile as he looked down at the boy from the foot of the bed, marking the first time he had ever seen him sleeping, and in the morning too, this big boy so at peace breathing in and out evenly with each one exposed on a bare carven chest, his whole body bare down to his tight grey boxers.

Kurt would admire Noah for hours if he could. His strapping form in rest. The color of his skin that of caffè mocha lightly glistened in perspiration. Even the way he was contorted in post coital sleep. They had kissed a lot before nodding off. Kurt had woken to dry lips he'd alleviated with balm, now all better and ready to kiss again, mwah! All the way up the muscled cords of Noah's neck to his lips for a 'good morning, baby. Time to get up,' and 'baby' not because he was joking around, but because after what had been confessed last night, it could be afforded. The endearing term a novelty on his tongue that could be said with utter surety with the confession itself that much more so as both he and Noah had breathed out the word, love.

It was an intense feeling, one Kurt could easily grow sickeningly queasy over like cookie dough too sweet. It liked to circle his heart that beat harder than usual, almost to a stabbing pain, and skidded around quickly at the pit of his belly with swishing movements like swirling water in an Erlenmeyer flask, there to disturb the butterflies, a swarm of giant Swallowtails who'd tickle his insides to nerves so great he'd mistake the feeling for a panic attack. He certainly hadn't been feeling this before. Now conscious of being in love, he supposed it's effects were now more aware to him and his body, this spell, this state, with thoughts only ever of Noah, how he was, where he was and to be with him for as long as he could. His first boyfriend. Noah.

And nearing Noah now as he rounded the bed his foot brushed up against a towel left strewn on the floor, only a white hand towel but with its off white stains of what he knew the stuff to be covering most of it up in abstract circular patterns, it would be the first he'd ever pull a face of disgust at and there to quickly kick aside as if he'd never noticed it only to catch sight of something else under the bed, something familiar he crouched down on all fours to inspect and pull out and to his pleasant surprise, oh! It was his cashmere blanket from when he was younger, last seen when he'd given it to Noah as a parting gift on his last day at Coronado, folded in his arms and looking just as he remembered it, just as soft too as he felt it. The memories.

He would not register the stir from in the bed as he brought the blanket to his nose, taking a whiff knowing it would no longer smell as it used to, not that he could exactly remember how it did anyway, this beautiful Princess Diana rose tartan blanket his mother had bought in New York back in the late nineties with its shades of blue and peachy pink outlined in black, unfolded and swung around his back as he reveled in its warmth, a moment for him and his past with escaping wonderment as to what Noah had gone and done with it for eight years. Having used it for winters,
always there as a throw blanket at the foot of his bed and folded on the wardrobe's top shelf whenever not in use, there to stay until it had been pulled out for an adventure.

Again a shift from the bed, slight movement. There was a groan, and then another, setting off a body going for the stretch, those legs with wriggling toes, those arms upward, a good morning stretch like a cat, stretching, stretching, how far could he stretch, ooh ooh ooo, and, ahhh. A satisfied sigh as Kurt turned to see Noah now awakened, leaning his neck towards each shoulder as he sighed yet again. A long sigh. That had felt good. A good stretch as he looked down at the fair boy kneeling beside the bed wrapped up in a tartan blanket, his hazel eyes widening from sleep with his head he propped up in his hand, often shifted so it wouldn't slip, there for a lazy smile to splay itself on his lips parting for a morning voice that croaked, "Hey."

It acknowledged the blanket of course. Oh yeah, the blanket. He'd forgotten to show it to Kurt to ask, 'do you remember this? You gave it me remember? … Do you remember me?' He'd brought it along specifically for Kurt with the boy having stumbled upon it himself and with such happiness upon this discovery, as if it had been an extraordinary find. One with emotion in blue eyes Noah could see swirled deeply. With his other hand, he reached out for Kurt. The boy looked at it, his own hand stroking still the cashmere before it was placed in a palm so wide and boy-like that pulled him closer, Kurt now hobbling forward on his knees until his knuckles were brought to Noah's lips, graced with a kiss on the back of his pale hand, his knuckles, his fingers.

He leaned his elbows on the bed, smiling with each kiss that felt to him slow and searching, just as their kisses had been last night. He remembered them clearly. The feel of Noah's lips now once again on his skin, on his hand. Sweet hand kisses. Oh, he loved them. Adored them! Found them to be so old world romantic and electrifying on his senses. Oooh! Yes! And with it he'd tug the blanket from around his shoulders and bundle it in-between them, there for both to look at as if a sleeping baby were wrapped up inside, the look of obsequious fawning on their faces. Noah would chuckle, mumbling something about it being faded slightly from having once left it out in the sunlight for too long, but Kurt shrugged it off with a smile. It didn't matter.

Noah was all he could think of. His hand clasped in Noah's was all he could think of. How they were both entwined at the fingers, their palms folding over each other, tickling and playing like a crazy made up hand shake become too intimate or the mating ritual of two small creatures dancing, two children themselves, Tarzan and Gay Jane comparing hand sizes and always held in each other's. Even fifteen minutes later when they'd meet Thomas in the neighboring suite to head all together down to breakfast, Noah would snatch up Kurt's hand in his before his father, a slight swing in the arm as he'd smile at Kurt happily, Kurt, his totally cute, brutally pretty "boyfriend" saying with such immense pride, "Dos has become Uno, dad. We're together."

It was like the feeling of biting into a sugared pink grapefruit. A surprise it was to hear first thing in the morning. They've finally done it. About time. Thomas stood with hands on his hips smiling as if stepping back to observe something he'd been working on, for such an attractive young couple Noah and Kurt made. Striking and odd too. An attraction of opposites he knew his son liked. Girls with light hair, light eyes. Girls with pale white shot skin. He'd fasten his eyes on these girls, when about, and on the boys too. Oh yes, Thomas had seen. Boys with childlike faces, "cute", and all invariably effeminate, a passivity to them as a pool of water in which Noah might see his reflection, his possessive hazel eyes staring back, but these boys were rare finds.

Kurt, now smiling shyly at Noah's enthusiasm was all his son's gay porn brought to life (He'd come across the word 'twink' a number of times when certain men's magazines crushed up against Playboys had been jutting out beneath the mattress in the boy's bedroom, and from what he understood of the term, there was no one more twinkish than Kurt.) Thomas patted his son on the back as if Noah himself had done good work, grasping onto his shoulder and bringing him into a half
hug. He flashed Kurt a smile and Kurt smiled back, but with his own anticipation of his mother's reaction knawing at him as they all descended the hill to the main lodge, his hand still encased in Noah's, now growing sweaty in the heat, the boy remained quiet, excited.

Elizabeth would pause, what is this? Lips parted upon their arrival. She stood eying the pair from a double take as she'd made to greet them at the lodge entrance, taking in the way they were both standing as if they'd both just walked out of a store's changing rooms in new clothes for her to examine them in, their hands held in each other's, Thomas behind them pointing with a flashing arrow sign of a finger and cheesy smile at the pair. Is this what I think it is? It's finally happened! Such a rush of delight in her as she descended on them in smiles, forcing herself to ask with a restrained tone and slow pace how it had all come about? What happened? What had transpired between them the night before? And to discuss it right into breakfast.

"I'm surprised you didn't fall asleep when you got in, I was exhausted," said Elizabeth. "I might actually have to take a nap before the drive today I'm still tired."

Kurt sighed. "Mom, we were just up talking. We didn't plan on this happening, Noah only invited me to crash with him for the night, that's all."

"So how did it happen?"

"We really got to talkin, Mrs. H," said Noah as Elizabeth turned his way. "Like really talkin. Seriously it got pretty heated up there."

"Oh, really?"

Noah nodded. "Yeah, it was kinda awkward. He caught me playin with my-"

"I said I loved him!" Kurt exclaimed. "I said I was in love with him and... yeah. It was something I hadn't quite realized until now. I love Noah."

Thomas glanced at his son. "And you, Noah? How do you feel for Kurt?"

The boy smiled. "He makes me feel all tingly, not only in my undies but in my love pump."

"Real smooth talker isn't he," Thomas joked as Kurt offered him a wry smile.

"Oh he is, Mr. Puckerman."

"I love him, dad," Noah poured. "I love him more than he loves me."

Kurt frowned. "Hey, I don't think that's very fai-"

"Tough nuts Kurt, I'm your boyfriend now," Noah said. "Whenever you say you love me, I'm always gonna say I love you more 'cause life is a competition and I must win."

Elizabeth laughed, "Well at least he's got that varsity spirit within him even in his relationships. It really shows."

"He does get real competitive sometimes," Thomas nodded. "Don't you, kid."

Noah grinned. "Love is a game dudes, and I wanna score.... and at life too, I wanna win at life."

Thomas smirked. "Yeah, why don't you tell Kurt and Liz some of the life competitions you've been in recently. Competing with your buds in 'cactus dogeball', doing ultimate wedgie jumps from the roof, what else, rubbing Deep Heat on your testicles and seeing how long you could keep a girl in
bed whilst crying out total mood killer lines."

"Like what?" Kurt asked.

Thomas grinned. "I think some of them were, 'What is your credit score?' 'Is your mom okay with this?.."

"Yeah," Noah nodded. "I once saw a bird try to eat a rock', 'Does it turn you on that I enjoy bendy straws?' 'Bendy straws turn me on'."

His father laughed. "How long was it before she ran? Five minutes in?"

"Yeah it was when I said, 'in comes the peepee'," Noah smirked. "She was totally done with me by that point."

"Did you win?" Kurt asked.

"Yeah, and the milk challenge," Noah grinned. "Downed a whole three liter bottle of it without barfing right after eating a whole tub of Devil's Delirium chilli 'cause man that stuff is hot."

"Isn't he cool, mama?" Smiled Kurt. "Don't I have the coolest boyfriend ever?"

Elizabeth smiled. "I don't know Kurt, he sounds like quite the daredevil."

"Yo," Noah waved, saluting.

"You can take him, Kurt," Thomas winked. "He has a weakness for all things cute. Puppy eye him into oblivion and he'll plotz into custard."

"Okay, totes bein serious now guys," Noah declared. "Mrs. H, I love your boy. I love him times a million hella, and I pretty sure I've got him pregnant just from staring at him this whole week so you have to let me be with him because he's carrying my child."

Kurt blinked. "What?"

"Shh sweetie," said Elizabeth, intrigued. "I think he's onto something here."

"Mom, he's saying I have a bun in the oven."

The tan boy smirked. "Yeah, cookin our holy infant so tender and mild."

"Are you quoting Silent Night?"

"Yeah. What did you think that just 'cause I'm Jewish, I can't listen to Christmas carols? 'Cause of that one line, Silent Night is my favorite. It always makes me think of baby Jesus as a chicken wing."

Kurt smiled. "Oh yeah... Oh great, now I'm going to start thinking of him all crisp and delicious too. Noah!"

"Yeah, that manger of his is just a funky barbecue grill a sizzlin."

"Stop it," Kurt warned, giggling. "You'll make him cry."

"Covered in barbecue sauce and chilli peppers and bell peppers and onions and fuck, I miss home food," Noah whined. "We have the best barbecues in Texas, Kurt. Seriously there's this one place, Aunt Kate's BBQ in Elmo that is the best BBQ in the world."
Thomas nodded. "It is crazy good."

"I can take you there to eat sometime if you like," said Noah eagerly.

"Sure," Kurt smiled, "but how about we finish the breakfast on our plates first, mmm?"

"Oh yeah s-sure,"

"I have found them to be very good," said Elizabeth. "The food here is excellent, Kurt, do you want some of my bacon?"

Kurt shook his head. "Oh no thanks, I'm still eating mine."

"It is delicious, isn't it. Too bad your father isn't here, he'd love this."

"You were sealing the deal," Thomas whispered to Noah as the boy frowned.

"Oh yeah right, um, Mrs. H."

"Yes?"

"I promise I'll treat Kurt right and be there for him always. I swear on my swag."

"On your what now?"

"Swag, Liz," Thomas chuckled. "It's slang for the way someone presents themselves. You know, having class but with swagger."

"As in the walk?"

Kurt nodded. "Yes, and not in the arrogant self-important way, but having confidence. Swag. You know when he's swearing on it he's being serious."

"Is he now?"

"Yes," Kurt smiled, now taking Noah's large hand in his. "He swore to me on it the night of the dance at Coronado that we'd have a good time, and we did."

"We ruled that dance floor like the swag swingin kings we were, didn't we," smirked Noah.

"Uh-huh," Kurt smiled, winding his arm around Noah's as the tan boy's grin grew.

"Swag."

"Noah, you don't need to swear to me on anything," Elizabeth assured. "You needn't even ask my permission to date Kurt, or Burt's if he were here. We trust our son to know who he feels safe and secure around and I can see no one else he'd rather be with than with you. I know you'll make him very happy."

"Thanks Mrs. H."

"And you, Mr. Puckerman," said Kurt, turning to the man. "Is this alright with you?"

Thomas grinned. "Kurt, you're a sweet dude. A hell of lot better than most this guy here has been involved with. I think your mom knows of whom I'm talking about."

"She does?"
"Yeah, thanks dad," Noah groaned as Elizabeth smiled sweetly.

"We're just happy for you two."

"Yeah, you don't need my permission either Kurt," grinned Thomas, "but thanks for asking. That was cool of you."

"Yeah, when you're dating a beast this sexy, you don't need permission," Noah smirked as Thomas chuckled.

"Besides Kurt, you'd be doin him a favour. It's about time he got himself into a genuine relationship. The closest he's ever gotten to one is when he was two inches away from his friends making out in front of him once."

His son blinked. "What?"

"I'm kidding, kid," Thomas laughed as Noah now protested irritably.

"I've been in loads of relationships, dad. I fuckin rule at relationships."

"In elementary starting from fourth grade he'd go from one girlfriend to another," Thomas recounted. "They never lasted long. They never do, but mostly 'cause he could never hold on to them."

"Dad."

"You remember, Tayla Forde? You thought she was hugging you real tight 'cause she liked you a lot when in fact she was measuring your body to determine how long it would take her to eat your flesh, a technique she'd learned on the Discovery Channel shared by Boa Constrictors."

"Dad, you're not being cool," Noah hissed.

"Then there was the time in fifth grade when you tried to get Fleur McCoy pregnant by French kissing her and helping her find her "G something" just so you could make breast milk popsicles."

Noah was about to dive his head into his food. "Dad. Seriously."

"But you know kids," Thomas said, shrugging with a sigh. "They never want to count their elementary school sweethearts. Unless Noah you want count Kurt in Coronado."

"Hell yeah I do," said Noah, nodding manically. "He was my first fambo."

Thomas grinned. "Well there you go."

"Hey, what about Kitty?" Noah asked as his father frowned.

"You're not still with her are you?"

"No, but she counts, right?"

"To me she was another girl you were just foolin around with. Just another you'd put the moves on with that sex shark "Puck" act which never has you as far from a relationship as much as when you're being him, kid."

"I'm not doin that anymore, dad."

"To be fair Mr. Puckerman, I've never had a boyfriend either," said Kurt. "Out of all the boys I've
seen, only a number of them wished for a relationship whilst most were more interested in sex. It's just how teen boys are."

Thomas smiled softly. "Well at least from what your mom tells me Kurt they aren't as forward about it as "Puckasaurus" over here is. I hear they take you out on dates like proper gentlemen."

"I can do that," Noah insisted. "It's about bein chivalrous, courteous and swag, swag, swag!"

"Just be yourself, Noah," giggled Elizabeth. "It was you who set up this whole thing just to see Kurt again, it's so romantic."

"Yes, and if you think about it, every day here has been like a date," Kurt voiced brightly. "The best I've ever had."

Elizabeth glanced at her son. "And now he's your boyfriend, just like all those other boys wanted to be."

"What?" Kurt asked. "No they-"

"Kurt, they did. Yvette told me and when I'd chase after them when they'd drop you off at home, I'd ask."

"You asked them that?"

His mother nodded, leaning back in her chair. "They say they all considered you their boyfriend, yes."

"You said you were giving them the quickest routes out of town."

"That too. After you kept on claiming they weren't boyfriends, I wanted to know what they thought. I hope you're not going to mislead Noah here like you did them."

"Of course, not. Noah's my boyfriend, mom. He really is this time."

"This time?" Elizabeth asked. "You're counting Coronado too?"

Kurt nodded. "So I can say I'm back with my childhood sweetheart, yes. I know we were young but "We almost dated" is a weird relationship to have with anyone. Then you have the sequel, "We never got closure", succeeded by the side adaptation, "As I result, I have a weird crush that never died." Perhaps Noah was right. Trying to relive those days through dating wasn't ever going to be the same 'cause none of them were him."

"I said that?" Noah frowned.

"Among other things," Kurt said. "I'll tell you later. Point is, I realise now how... how selfish I've been, using boys like that. I wasn't aware I was. Just as I wasn't aware of my true feelings for Noah. It's all been in my unconscious I guess." He paused, smiling shyly. "And if those boys wish to think I was their boyfriend they can by all means, but I can't, because I never felt as strongly for them as I do for Noah, and that I know for me is what makes a boyfriend."

"Marry him," muttered Thomas as he leaned near to his son. "Marry him or you're an idiot." Noah blinked, watching as his father leaned back in his chair with a frank uplift of his brows, perhaps the small glint of tease in his eyes, it was not clear. He turned to see Elizabeth now speaking to Kurt that had the boy smiling, something Noah hadn't caught. Something about her being proud of her son. And he watched Kurt and his heart throbbed with love and fear. Fear of loss. Loss he couldn't bear.
It was Saturday, and it was the last day of their stay here at Ulusaba. Tomorrow and they'd return home to their respective states, Noah to Texas, Kurt to Ohio, there to live out their remaining eight weeks of summer vacation on opposite sides of the country, a prospect that infuriated him. This inevitable separation. This conclusion to a most awesome cool week. It was the ending he had not wished to gloss his thoughts over from the start and that now had him panicking as if from Sunday night anxiety. He was restlessly shifting in his chair with his appetite lost to the thought of losing Kurt once again. The low success rates of long distance relationships. He'd heard. *Fuck!* Maybe lassoing Kurt home with him was the only thing left he could do.

Of course, such a thought. It was ridiculous. He was low, though gladness rose within knowing how supportive Elizabeth and his father were of him and Kurt together, news they'd probably suspected, perhaps even wagered on to see whether or not they would before the holiday was out, a wager probably even got in by others on the reserve, those who had been watching them, the slip of ten to even fifty rands between palms. With most having bet they would. They'd never doubted them for a second. The boys were so into each other, a boy-boy thing that was hardly a problem for Noah's father despite Kurt's initial worries as to what the man's stance would be, yet something Noah had been there to reassure him of as he'd held him tight.

*Kurt was everything to me by this point. I wanted to spend as much time with him as I possibly could, every hour, a shame in me that I kept on checking the time, the minutes speeding by more quickly as if something were throwing the clockwork into overdrive, forcing the hands on every fucking clock I saw. Eight O'clock. Eight thirty. Nine. I tried to ignore it as we finished breakfast to wonder around the reserve before our last afternoon drive, last, everything here our last. It was all coming to an end and... God, I had to calm down and chill. I had to take it easy. I didn't want Kurt catching on. It would totally bum him out and he was so happy right now and looking down, our hands were laced together. Yeah, that was something to smile about.*

They would enter the Safari Lodge's gift shop, a quaint store with a heavy scent of wood and sensual aroma emanating from the various Africology products on sale, its shelves stacked with African themed busts and figurines carved by those in the nearby towns. There was jewelry, bracelets and beaded necklaces hung on hooks. Clothes of beanies and gloves alongside beige braided shoulder bags, wide brimmed Safari hats and pith helmets. Paintings, amongst arts and crafts. Calendars with each month's image pictures of The Big Five the children from Justicia had drawn and furniture of patterned cushions, rugs and placemats Kurt stroked his fingers along as both of them wandered in with searching eyes, the place strewn with jewels.

And *whoap!* Noah had found a tribal mask, slipping it on with aim of frightening Kurt yet with the eye holes so small and he stumbled, almost knocking over a wooden figure of a God by the window. Kurt had found himself intrigued by a set of well-crafted items on the center table, those of lions, tigers and giraffes, all of them beautiful, the elephant white as if it were carved right out from ivory. Along with a safari hat for his father and a tub of moisturizer, he'd purchase it, turning round to find Noah engaged in a staring contest with the bust of a tribal leader, mimicking the expressions on all of them before picking out a safari hat as well, his a dark shade of seal brown he rammed on his head to pose in comical imitation of their ranger Phil.

A laugh. Kurt would giggle, but would find something odd in the boy's behavior. Noah's character heightened somewhat that could have been due to excitement, happiness in that they were now indeed together, yes, but it felt off. He sensed fear. His boyfriend appeared almost alert when he'd smile, his posture ready as if to jog on the spot. When Kurt had kissed the nape of his neck affectionately, cuddling his back when at the till, Noah had turned around, eyed his smile and kissed him with urgent passion, quick and wild, right up against the counter. Crazy! With Kurt waving rather awkwardly at the stunned cashier as he'd picked up Noah's hat, the boy still planting kisses to the corners of his puckered mouth as they'd stumbled out of the shop.
He'd pull away laughing again. He thought it was so funny! Whatever it was that had gotten into Noah, this panting puppy of a spirit within him he went along with it as they journeyed down to the swimming pool arms around each other. They settled their purchases on the deckchairs and wandered the deck, Noah toeing off his flip flop and kicking the water lightly as Kurt jumped back, laughing, a few droplets soaking his shorts and legs. Though with the sun streaming, they'd disappear quickly. Lifting his head to this sun and he would moan. Mmm. The heat on his flesh. The rays diving in. When he opened his eyes, everything had a blue tint to it. Specs of light littered the insides of his eyelids. It made him dizzy and he liked this dizziness.

He heard footsteps around him, someone circling him. He closed his eyes again, face to the sun. Noah was there, observing him as viewers on the safari would gaze at a rare, gorgeous, primitive species of simian ancestor, possessed of speech yet too relaxed in decadent stillness to glance their way. He tugged on Kurt's hair possessively, pulling his head further back, and now pulling that face to its predominant features, the heavy lidded eyes now open and that sultry gash of a mouth parted almost in a parody of erotic supplication. In this silence, the tan boy stared and swooned. Kurt was so beautiful it felt like his heart couldn't take it. Kurt. Oh how in love he was with him, kissing him now on his lips, feeling a tear trickle down his own cheek…

"Noah," Kurt frowned, catching sight of that stray tear now hastily wiped away with the back of Noah's hand. "What's wrong?"

Noah swallowed thickly, shaking his head. "Nothing."

"You're crying."

"No I'm not, this is just future overpriced college education in my eye."

Kurt observed him most carefully. "Are you alright?"

"Yeah, yeah I'm fine…" Noah assured, wrapping his arms around the boy's waist. "I'm fine."

"Tell me," pleaded Kurt, reaching on tip toes for a kiss. "Please, Noah. What is it?"

"How… how are we gonna make this work?" The boy muttered. "… you and I? When we go home, we're gonna be light years apart. I'm not gonna be able to see you and frankly… frankly Kurt that fuckin kills me. I just got you back in my life and I don't wanna lose you again. I don't wanna say goodbye as I did in Coronado and watch you leave it… I'm not prepared to go through all that shit again, it fuckin sucked the first time."

"Oh Noah," Kurt sighed, pulling him in.

"I just feel like when I get home whilst you're gonna be miles away in the heart of it all, all I'm gonna be doin is wishin the sheets of my bed were the states just so I could fold 'em end over end to have you closer to me."

Kurt's heart swelled. "You are so romantic, do you know that?"

"I'll have to practice my folding," said Noah, a small smile now appearing. "Fold some old people. Just make an origami swan outta my meemaw."

"You can do that? How old is she?"

"In her eighties. I love her. She's one of the most important women in my life, along with my ma and sis."
"Really?"

"Yeah, she's real cool. She thinks all teenagers today look like mahogany cabinets with eyelashes and she's not scared to talk about sex either like most. I mean, what's the deal with grandmas who get so easily offended by the word penis when they have like eleven kids?"

"You say penis around the elderly?"


"Yeah it's really going to trigger cardiac arrest in their delicate hearts."

"My meemaw had one once a few years back. I kept telling everyone to stop praying for her otherwise they were gonna make her stronger and she broke out of the hospital and the cops couldn't get her. She was too powerful."

Kurt giggled. "Was she okay in the end?"

"Yeah, she pulled through," said Noah. "She's good now. Always askin if I have a girlfriend. Always askin if I'm still tugging on my penis like when I was five."

Kurt blinked. "You did that?"

"Well it worked," replied Noah. "You saw how I'm hung, right?"

"I saw how you were tugging on it again over thoughts of me last night."

"...I was jackin off to your personality, babe."

"So you weren't thinking of Kitty?"

"What? No! I told you, I was thinkin of you Kurt, I swear," Noah insisted. "Starting those heat waves by letting your seat wave. Not even chilli hot sauce on the tip of my dick comes close to that. I'm in total awe of your hotness, baby. Lay on a hotdog and let me eat you."

Kurt blew a sigh. "You know, it hurt when you said were thinking of her."

"I'm sorry," said Noah, embracing him. "Look, how about if you come to my bed tonight and I'll fap to you again."

"Romantic."


Pulling away, Kurt frowned. "And how would you have me? Lying next to you again? You know there's a similar sex position called "11". Two people lie in a bed together, fully clothed and chilling because bonding is more important than sex."

"No, I want you to watch me, Kurt. I wanna show you how crazy hot you make me."

"This isn't an excuse for me to see your penis is it?"
Noah smirked. "Hey if I wanted to do that, I'd whip it out, swing it about and walk us both off into the sunset every night. The sunset's here are gorgeous."

"They are," Kurt agreed, "and there you'd be, masturbating."

"Well I guess what I'm trying to say is that I really wanna do sexual stuff with you before we leave. I know you're maybe not ready for… "the do"."

Kurt blinked. "The what?"

"You know," dingle dangle", " Noah began. ""Frick frack". "Fondue". "Woohoo". "Happy Happy Fun Time".-"

"Noah," Kurt laughed. "It's alright to say sex. I'm not one of those elderly prudes, I don't see it as a bad word."

"Really?" Noah smirked. "You don't get a little nervous when you hear fornication? Copulation? Doin it?"

"Okay, maybe a little," Kurt conceded, averting his eyes with a self-conscious shrug. "It doesn't help having heard growing up stories of people's imaginary gay uncles who allegedly had to wear diapers because they had so much anal sex their b-holes wouldn't shrink back, or they'd got flipped inside out and couldn't be fixed. It was so inappropriate. I didn't even know how anal sex worked back then."

Noah burst out laughing, near to keeling over as he cried out in huffs. "Oh my God, that is gold!"

"It's not funny, this is serious."

"Yeah totally," Noah laughed.

"We're talking major psychological damage here," Kurt said. "Not that I ever found the idea of anal arousing in the first place but after having heard that, well, let's just say if I want to spice things up in the bedroom, I won't be shoving a jalapeño up my ass."

"Wait," said Noah, brows raised. "You serious? You're not into dude-diving?"

Kurt bit his lip. "Will this be a problem?"

"No, no, baby you just threw me off is all."

"I know, I'm the gay urban legend," Kurt sighed. "The myth drawn on cave paintings thousands of years ago by Homo sapiens. Stress on the 'homo'."

"Really?"

"Yes. They predicted this fight for equality, 'Legalize Gay' blazoned across the chests of gays with 'No Blacks, no Asians, No Fems' blazoned across their profiles of this mysterious app called Grindr. As well as telling the most tragic of gay love stories; when two boys fell in love but couldn't be together because they both wanted to bottom."

"Tough break."

"I know. You're not disappointed are you?"

Noah shook his head. "Nah, we're just gonna have to see what you are into. Do a little experimentin.
I can't wait to see what turns you on."

"I'm looking at him right now," Kurt smiled, leaning up for a kiss that spread gusts of heat in Noah's groin, a kiss he returned passionately yet with that one fear once again resettled, he pulled away, Kurt observing him now in concern asking, "What? Noah, what is it?"

"But I won't be with you for you to look at will I. It's just like comin across some choice waves but I've got no board to surf them on. I'm not gonna be able to do any of that stuff with you. All that sweet experimenin. I won't be with you."

"Noah-"

"I'm serious Kurt," the boy said, looking at him, "what are we gonna do?"

"Don't think about it, okay Noah," said Kurt, cradling his face. "Just don't. Can you do that for me?"

"But-"

"Please."

It was hard. It was difficult for them both. Kurt didn't have answers, his face in Noah's shoulder as he stared on beyond with worry. Please understand. I just don't know. Noah had buried his own face in his neck, pressing his lips to the skin with small kisses for comfort. Yet with it an erogenous zone for Kurt, his body tingling with fizzing blood that rushed south, the fair boy pulled away, keeping his breaths in check. Now was not the time. He hoped Noah hadn't caught on, but oh, now looking at the sad face of his boyfriend, such sadness was flooding those hazel eyes, eight year old Noah, he could see him! Oh Noah the poor boy. Please understand. We'll sort something out. Kurt had to promise him something. For never had he felt so useless.

In distraction, they'd embark on their safari drive with Phil and Kaizer, and Noah would try his best for Kurt. Smiles. Light off-color humor and snuggles. They were lucky today. The Big Five were out in strides. The African lions in mid hunt, baiting as they constructed a blind from a carcass, concealed and deadly. Saved was the African leopard as it was near gored by the horns of a rampaging Cape buffalo. Too close for comfort! Elizabeth had winced. On the plains and the black rhinoceroses were grazing, eyeing them as they drove by and there! By the woods! The African bush elephant, Kurt's favorite, a 'bachelor' herd Phil would now tell them of male adolescents recently separated from the matriarch in search of others the same age.

They would catch sight of the spotted Hyenas, their long manic giggles unmistakable, and again the yawning hippos, and the zebras, a dazzle of strong stallions with birds of red-breasted sparrow hawks, owls and falcons like concords flying above their heads. And oh, how pretty! The butterflies now descending on them. All of them so beautiful with Kurt's eyes twinkling amidst those rainbow wings that fluttered around him, so attracted they were to his ivory white skin, made him giggle. He loved their attention and he would glance at Noah as the tan boy observed him with a grin, a fair hand held out for to him to take. Taken. Raveling around each other with thick rough fingers stroking the soft underside. A rubbing thumb. Their fingertips kissing.

And for the rest of the day, Ulusaba would haven them. In the late afternoon they'd spend time in the Safari lodge's wine cellar, the storage room overlooking the waterhole with views sweeping down the dry riverbed and surrounding bush. It's walls lined with built in terracotta wine racks storing bottles of Pinotage from Stellenbosch, Hoopenburg Integer Cabernet Sauvignon, many "estate wines" from Paarl and Worcester, and all South African that Thomas and Elizabeth tasted eagerly, nosing and swirling their glasses like French connoisseurs that Noah crudely mimicked behind them. The sniff. The savoring. Oh-hoh-hoh-hoh. Monsieur Escargot. Pompous and pretentious.
as *Pow!* Thomas hit him round the head as Kurt's sides split.

They then proceeded to dinner in the main lodge to a course of briedie, grilled game and rock lobster served with wine they'd selected from the cellar. Noah's head was still pounding from his father's hand and Kurt tried not to laugh, "Poor baby," he'd say, though it was not convincing as he'd turn away to muffle his giggles, the amusement in his eyes glinting from the candles, sexy bedroom eyes he'd shoot Noah sitting opposite from him at the table, as if the aroma of those full-bodied wines had him in a flirtatious and very friendly stupor, cutting into his lamb and *ooh!* A bare foot was caressing his ankles, his shin. Looking up and he'd see Noah winking at him, wanting to play footsie, two bare feet, so warm on his skin, now playing and touching.

Kurt would not stop smiling through it all as off after dinner he and Noah would climb to the bush observatory. With the sun now set, the time nearing eight, they were free to stargaze through the large black telescope, swiveling it this way and that and naming as many constellations as they could, Andromeda, Boötes, Caelum. Some were very strange and unique in shape, perhaps not seen by anyone. These were the ones they'd name themselves, Vodka, Musfasa and a goldfish Noah had once starved as they'd soon ditch the telescope in favor of the ground amongst the lit candle lanterns that lay about on the sand, there for them to look up at the sky and point, there! And over there! See what this one looks like? Dude, that it freaky weird.

Yeah, the night had come and we were baskin in it. *Me and Kurt, all these stars like a blanket, all these candles around us. Now this was romantic. Sweet. It helped me get my mind off tomorrow. Whenever it would just casually wonder there, I'd wander right out 'cause that's what Kurt wanted. I was doin it all for him. He'd agreed to come back to my room even though he had packing to do.*

*Our parents had told us to get an early night sleep. That we shouldn't get to bed too late, but there was still so much I wanted to do before lights out. I had plans for tonight, and kissin Kurt under the stars was one of 'em, kissing him now as we rolled around in the sand, knockin over lanterns, it was amazing. So doped out we were kissin, we didn't take in my bed…*

Wait! Noah would now pull his lips from Kurt's, propped up on his arms over the boy as Kurt would claw for his face to come back down, for that mouth of his to return where it belonged, just another kiss, just another. They were indeed in the Cliff Lodge suite, slumped from barging through the doors and onto the bed for a cushioned landing, taking all of Noah's will to pull away the second time as Kurt whimpered kitten pleas for his love, as if he were withdrawing, *baby, I have to pull out or I'm gonna come. I'm gonna... I'm gonna come.* The risk of getting Kurt pregnant. If only he had a dude uterus. If he did Noah would have knocked him up right there. Then he'd have to come back with him to Texas. Him, Kurt and little baby Noahzilla.

"Wait Kurt, I wanna play something for you."

Kurt frowned. "What do you mean?"

"I wanna jam my guitar for you. You know, play you some tunes."

"Oh yes, your guitar!" Kurt exclaimed. "I almost forgot, but before you do, just one more…" He leaned up and kissed Noah, moaning a deep throated, "mmm," into the boy's mouth that blew the fire within his loins, Noah's lust flickering in flames.

"Fuck it," he said, as he launched himself once more on Kurt's lips.

"Umpth- No- Noah!"

"Oh baby-"
"Noah, your… uh…your guitar!"

Noah shook his head, his hungry mouth puffing on that fair neck. "Screw the guitar, babe. I gotta get you good and pregnant."

"But I've always wanted to hear you play. Please?"

Looking down at that pleading face, Noah finally relented. "Okay," but they'd come back to this as he kissed Kurt once more before heaving himself off, now saying, "I can't believe it's taken me this long to play to you."

"And you were the one in Coronado who was always up for educating me in music," Kurt smiled, watching as Noah brought over his guitar. "Iron Butterfly, Mötley Crüe, Metric. You knew them all."

Noah grinned, perching himself on the bed opposite him. "And all you knew was Disney. Sorry, but I had to be your mando surfer prince and save you from all that crap."

"Save me? You did no such thing, I still listen to Disney. I still sing them too."

"What songs?" Noah asked.

"I've been singing "I Wonder" rather a lot recently," said Kurt. "It's one of my mom's favorites. She likes to listen to it as I brush her hair."

"Cool," Noah grinned, depositing his guitar and throwing himself on the bed. "Can you sing it to me?"

"Hey," Kurt protested, "you were about to play something for me!"

"I know, but I really wanna listen to you sing."

"But you hate Disney."

"Not if you're singin it, baby. You know, after Coronado, I had a Disney marathon."

"You did?"

"Totally. Watched 'em all with my mom and sis."

"And? Which one was your favorite?"

"Tarzan, but it ties with Finding Nemo."

"Really?"

"Yeah. Listen to this," Noah said, now clearing his throat. "Sup. Nemo. Thirteen. Bi. I never wanna see my fucking dad again. He doesn't understand me. So I ran away. I have CFD (Chronic Fin Disorder), depression, anxiety and I cut my fin off once. I love boats. If you have a problem with that you can fucking leave."

Kurt laughed. "You sound like Nemo if he were emo."

"Nemo the emo? Cool," Said Noah, shifting his body into a sexy lounge, asking, "Also, is my voice sexy when I speak like this? Do you like it when it goes all husky?"
"Yes Noah," Kurt replied, deadpan. "It's so husky it could pull a dogsled."

"Ooh yeah, it must be hard keeping your hands off me."

The boy nodded. "It is. You see my hand? I'm reaching down seductively…"

"Yeah."

"… You're guiding it to your zipper…"

"Yeah."

"I unzip your fanny pack by mistake."

Noah frowned. "Wait, what?"

"Ravioli spills out everywhere."

"No, no, no, what are you doin?" The boy whined as Kurt, laughed. "Firstly, it wouldn't be ravioli, it would be garlic bread."

The fair boy nodded. "Of course."

"And secondly, my dick is waiting over here, baby. It's real big, I can let you pet it. Be its friend. My balls too. Come on, they love you, Kurt. They'll never leave you hangin."

"Oh ha, ha," Kurt drolled, sarcastically as Noah laughed.

"Come on babe, you know you love me."

"I know, that's the problem."

"Love's no problem. Its luurve," Noah crooned. "You love me, and you'll always love me, even with my hands around your throat, or especially then."

Kurt raised a brow. "Well I suppose I've always wanted to be choked on Valentine's Day."

"Really?"

"No," Kurt scoffed, "It sounds horrible."

"Okay, alright," Noah nodded, a tapping finger to his chin. "You're not into breath control play. What are you into, let's see…"

Kurt laughed, slapping the boy lightly on the shoulder, "Noah stop."

"How about if I'm real dominant? Order a fucking pizza with me, Kurt! And watch a fucking shitty film with me and play with my fucking hair and wear my fucking tees to bed and fall asleep in my fucking arms, you fucking fuck!" Kurt blinked. "And if you don't," Noah seethed. "I'll… I'll fuckin pay in tears!"

"Noah," Kurt giggled as Noah buried his false sobs into the pillow. "Noah, come on."

"I gotta know, baby," said Noah, now lifting his head and pouting. "I know how to get a girl's panties wet; kiss her roughly, shove her down on the bed, slip off her underwear and slam dunk 'em in the toilet, but you, your body's like a maze of delicate clockwork. I gotta turn all the right gears,
touch you just right so you become that hella hot animal in bed."

"Oh yeah baby, I'm a real animal," Kurt smirked. "More specifically a Koala. I can sleep for twenty two hours a day."

"Me too," Noah grinned. "I love me some naps, but you know what brings better sleep, amazin sex."

Kurt paused. "Have you ever had sex… with a boy, Noah?"

"No. The closest I've ever gotten is when the guy's toilets were super busy this one time at school so I cracked my knuckles, unzipped my pants, scooched over to this bro's urinal and asked him, "you ready for this shit, man?"

"Oh… okay," Kurt muttered. "It's just that you said before you had."

Noah frowned, scratching the back of his head. "I did?"

"When you were drunk. You said you'd done things with boys."

"Like what?"

Kurt paused, clearing his throat. "Intercrural sex."

"You mean thigh fucking?"

"That's what you said you'd done."

Noah nodded knowingly. "Ah yeah."

"Is it true?"

"Nah, but I think it's kinky," said Noah shyly. "Leavin behind what look like hickies, but they're actually dick chafe marks."

"You have a fetish for thighs?"

"Oh yeah, baby. Touch my thigh and my dick will rise like Apollo thirteen."

"But Apollo thirteen exploded."

"That's the goal," said Noah, smirking. "And I don't usually have goals 'cause goals are for soccer, and dude, I'm not soccer, but when it comes to you-"

"You'd like to "score"," said Kurt, his cheeks coloring hot. "You just want to learn how. I know. I get it. I actually wouldn't mind trying intercrural out. It sounds… hot."

"Yeah?" Noah smiled, excited as the boy nodded.

"Yes. I mean, I have tiny little turn ons that are more romantic like when boys lean against walls with one shoulder while they talk, when you catch them turn away smiling at a joke you made, when they linger on a hug for just a second after you let go and when they glance at your lips while you're talking, but sexually, Intercrural intrigues me and knowing you like it makes me want to like it too."

Noah grinned. "You're the best, babe."

"I also want to know how to please you Noah," Kurt continued, running a hand down the boy's hard
chest, "not only because I think there's no greater turn on than knowing you've turned someone else on, but because you're just so damn sexy."

Noah moaned, "Oh baby," climbing on top of Kurt and raining down wet hot kisses on his mouth that now laughed.

"Uh- Noah!"

"Oh don't you know, Kurt? Call me sexy and there is an 89647212% chance I'm gonna bang you. Intercrural style."

"No Noah, come on. You were going to play me something."

Noah chuckled. "You were gonna sing to me about you wondering about stuff and shit." Pulling himself off as Kurt sat back up, the tan boy lay his head in his lap, hazel eyes looking up and grinning, "I'm listenin, angel."

"Oh Noah," Kurt giggled. He found the boy so cute sometimes, running his palm slowly down his Mohawk, leaning down to kiss his lips, "mmm. Those lips. Smirking affectionately.

He wondered, he wondered, he wondered why each little bird had a someone to sing to, sweet things to, a gay little love melody. He wondered, he wondered if his heart kept singing, would his song go winging to someone who'd find him, "And bring back a love song to me," Kurt sang, his voice so naturally placed his singing was an extension of speech, and so warm. Enough to express love from his heart. Enough to drop all the colors and feelings for Noah to his vocal palette and paint with his voice that had the boy in his lap swooning. He could hear the sumptuous orchestration. A cinematic tracking shot of the Hotel Del, now of Ulusaba and into their suite. Romance in Kurt's voice, humming, like falling rose petals. It was so beautiful.

Kurt himself was so beautiful. Amongst such sweetness of a French milk maid and there was genuine love, this song a love song, slipping his lap from under Noah's head and heading out into the room, there to dance to the strings, the choir, in the grace of a ballet dancer, like Helene Stanley, like Briar Rose herself, but of course to Noah far more brilliant, watching as Kurt leapt with the arms of the Attitude, the Arabesque, the Brisé vole, all improvised of course and oh! Noah was behind him, his hands on his waist, grinning, "I know you I walked with you once upon a dream." Lifting Kurt up high! This dream of them walking along a Californian beach, the waves. They'd walked together.

They were dancing together, loving each other at once.

Then, the strumming of the acoustic guitar. Oh my! Kurt descended, air whipping through his hair as his eyes fasted on his boyfriend, nearing him with a guitar that crooned heart-warming notes, those rich vocals singing everything was going to be alright, to take a hand and hold it tight. It had Kurt's face blossoming to a wave of familiarization. It was their song. Noah was singing their song, circling him as if protecting him from all around him. He would be there, "Don't you cry," he sang as Kurt's body was uplifted by the melody, a body so small yet seemed so strong, "My arms will keep you safe and warm." The bond between them couldn't be broken as Kurt danced for Noah, Noah who sang passionately, this ballad he sang for them both.

"You'll Be In My Heart." It was the tune that said it all for them. Kurt was in Noah's heart. From that day he'd left the boy in Coronado, Kurt would forever more be in Noah's heart, watching as the boy's face creased with raw emotion, looking so handsome, so handsome, and looking so in love with him, asking why couldn't they understand the way they felt. "They just don't trust what they can't explain." And even in their difference, deep inside, they weren't that different at all. Noah singing to not listen to them! What did they know? "We need each other to have, to hold." And Kurt so wished to rush into his arms. Had wished to kiss him, hard and fast, a tempest like whir of
emotions that was his dancing. "They'll see in time, I know."

And Kurt saw in those hazel eyes, God they were intense! He saw flashes of assurity that they would show them all together. Even if Noah may not be with him, he had to hold on. "'Cause You'll Be In My Heart!" Sang Noah, now edging closer as those beautiful eyes that now welled, tears. Oh God. Christ, there were tears. "Believe me You'll Be In My Heart!" No! Kurt could dance no more, too overcome with emotion to move. Crying. Choking on these tears. A flood. This serenade, it was killing him. Stop! Stop! Please! "Just look over your shoulder," Noah sang, his emotions, the thought of Kurt leaving. B-baby. No! It was breaking him. Kurt! His fingers trembling on vibrating strings, rough, calloused, but now so weak. "I'll be there, always."

To that final chord and he'd throw the guitar briskly aside to clatter on the wooden floor, not caring if it broke, and Kurt was in his arms, weeping uncontrollably, legs wrapped around his waist, kissing him madly, a wild flutterance of kisses. "Noah!" He was crying, "Noah, baby!" And Noah's heart blew. He held on tight to the manic boy in his arms. Digging in with pain. He was himself hysterical. Throwing him on the bed and rushing to climb on top, kissing him forcibly and bruising their slip sliding lips as Kurt's tongue cowered under his own. The taste. God. The taste of tears. He could not stop crying. Fuck, but he made no move to wipe them away. He would let them fall, trickling fast, kissing Kurt, touching him. Loving him as much as he could.

He didn't want me to leave. "Don't leave me," he was saying between kisses, "Please! Please! Please! Please! I'll do anything, Noah." They were gut wrenching pleas. Enough to scar the soul. Forever sleepless nights. His eyes were nothing but water, glistening so bad he must have been blind, but he clutched at me so fuckin desperately, coiled tense and quivering. Oh Kurt, baby! I'm here! I'm here! I'm not goin anywhere as we writhed rammed up against each other, bodies locked and rocking in pain, my strong arms crushing him enough to squeeze the little life outta him, but kissin hard and kissin and kissin, kissin so hard it would leave welts around our mouths, kisses that muffled my cries, my wails. All I could do was kiss him. Or I'd die.

Glee

At 8:30am the next day, the hour was nearing. In the Rock Lodge Master Suite, mother and son were to finish the remnants of their packing, their suitcases on the bed like living shelled molluscs forced open as in went in clothes had that been laundered and left to dry in the hot air, toiletries, Kurt's gift store purchases and the peanut butter they'd bought in Justicia, that sweet smell that watered the mouth and reminded the fair boy of the children with their scrubby smiling faces and waving hands that had waved to many past visitors, who were used to saying, "goodbye", never to see them again. They were good at it, and Kurt, now stood beside the bed, his hands clenching into his white sweater folded in his arms, knew he never could be.

He'd never had to say goodbye often. To his grandmother, yes, at her funeral as he'd forlornly approached her open casket saying, "Goodbye, nana. I'm so sorry." Oh his poor grandmother, having looked so at peace dressed in a white linen dress, her skin white as snow with her yeasty odour now one of embalming fluid all covered up in perfume the scent of overripe plums. Saying again, "... Goodbye," and his father behind him laying a hand on his shoulder, and Elizabeth who'd fallen to her knees as the coffin had been lowered into the ground, crying out, "I'll never forget you, mommy!" And Kurt had cried at the sight of his mother's distress, rivulets of mascara tears running down her cheeks. "Rest in peace. God will look after you. Goodbye."
Five months later, Tina, Kurt's only friend at elementary school had returned to China upon the end of third grade, news she hadn't wished to tell him. It would break him so, the guilt stabbing at her when it been their teacher who'd announced it to the whole class instead, the look on Kurt's fair face. And she'd feared he'd hate her, yet the following day he'd brought in a strawberry shortcake he'd baked with his mother for her the day she'd left school. Oh Kurt. Yes. Kurt now could remember it, how they'd both eaten into the biscuit together in the playground, how Tina had dropped a spoonful of syrupy strawberries on her flared skirt, whipped cream everywhere as she'd grinned, "T-thank you, Kurt." The boy hugging her. "I'll miss you."

Yet it had been saying goodbye to Noah in that summer of 2001 outside the Hotel Del, the memories of them both grabbing on at all costs, that shook him, and the thought of doing it again, oh it was painful, as if the needle had lost the vein and had to be injected in one in the other arm, it made him queasy, enough to lie down with thoughts now of having awoken in the Cliff Lodge to Noah observing him silently in the bed beside him, drinking in his body, his face. Oh, he'd looked so sad! As if to cry again, and he never cried. Even when his ankle had broken on the football field last year. When he was "Puck". But Noah was a sensitive soul. You had to let the feels out from time to time and he'd engulfed Kurt in his arms, sobbing into his chest.

But all was not lost! Oh, it had been like new life. Over breakfast, and Thomas had grinned at Elizabeth, the woman smiling warmly back as she'd addressed Noah, "Noah, sweetie," her hand on his wrist, "We have some good news," there to let him know that his father had invited Kurt to spend the summer with them in Texas, with plans already set to return to California in July, to surf again! To walk those beaches again! And with Kurt! The table had come close to capsizing as Noah had rocketed out of his chair shouts in fist pumping elation, "HELL YEAH!" Hugging both parents, "thank you, Mrs. H!" "Thanks, dad!" And with Kurt up and smiling, threw the boy into the air and into his arms, spinning them both around in exuberance, hella happy.

They were so glad. So much triumph in them it made them sick as if having eaten too much of that overly sweetened peanut butter, or when Kurt had slumped on the picnic bench with Tina from strawberry shortcake over cram, or when he'd inhaled his grandmother's sour casket scent that was formaldehyde, glycerine, borax, and phenol alcohol, but they were exulted! And with a click, Kurt closed his suitcase shut with a smile, the tips of which wavered with a wince from where Noah had gripped tightly at his sides, the skin red with hand marks. Yet watching as Elizabeth made sure to leave the room exactly as they had found it, not one object out of place as they'd leave, he'd smile at her, bringing her into a hug as he'd said, "thanks, mom."

"Oh sweetie, I love you," said Elizabeth, her hands around him. "You know I'd do anything for you."

Kurt nodded into her shoulder. "I know mom, I know."

"You know I love Noah and you know I want you and him to spend as much time as you can together. I mean… you've been so lucky to see him after all these years, Kurt. You've been so lucky, it's been incredible. I still can't believe it. Just what he's done for you. He really does love you."

"I love him too, mommy," Kurt said. "I really, really do."

"How does it feel?" His mother asked, pulling away. Kurt looked down, pausing with an assessed frown.

"I... It's one of the heaviest things I've ever felt. Like it's a burden, but not in a way that it's a nuisance, at all, but as if my heart's pregnant and softly swelled up with something thick like sap or syrup. I've never felt so warm inside."
Elizabeth smiled, proudly. "Oh Kurt, you're in love."

"It couldn't be anything else could it? I mean, I am saying I have goo in my heart."

"No sweetie, you're in love. It's love goo. Fresh and new and oooh, First love. There's nothing like it."

Kurt sighed. "Yvette told me it was always such sweet despair."

"Despair which I'm sure you were feeling at the thought of having to say goodbye, yet sweet because you were still with him," said Elizabeth, now moving Kurt's suitcase aside as she guided them to sit on the bed. "You are going to see each other again, Kurt. It's not going to be like last time."

"I know," Kurt nodded as Elizabeth smiled, rubbing a comforting hand on his thigh.

"We'll go home, you'll spend time with your father because he hasn't seen a lot of you between you returning from Dalton and coming here, and then the next week you'll be off to see Noah for two months, and although it saddens me that you'll be away from us for that long, seeing as you board and we only get to see you at weekends, I think Noah needs you more. He needs his "Gay Jane" with him this summer."

"Was it Thomas's idea to invite me?"

Elizabeth nodded. "Yes, it was. You know, he's been rooting that you and Noah would become an item."

"He has?"

"Oh yes. He believes you're right for him, even if you two are only sixteen. I have the impression that if he sees his son bringing home any more of these supposed bimbos to use them as his right hand, he'll flip. He wants him to be a cool surfer gentlemen, not this "Puck" which I've assumed is a persona he puts on at school."

"Yes, but it's a past life now, mom," Kurt assured, averting his eyes as he lowered them into his lap. "You heard him, he doesn't want to be that guy anymore."

"But it's so sad, isn't it," Elizabeth said. "The things those struggling with identity must go through in high school. I never thought it would happen to Noah, he always seemed so secure in the way he was."

"Below the surface mom, we'll all raw and exposed." His mother pulled him into a hug.

"Oh sweetie, it's going to be alright."

"I know," Kurt replied, his head resting on his mother's shoulder. "I'm just happy I'm with him, and don't worry, he isn't like that school persona of his at all. He's not going to treat me as if I'm some mindless hook-up."

"As if you were the hook-up type, Kurt," Elizabeth laughed, "I know Noah isn't going to be that way with you. You, the one who's only out for fun on dates. Well, you're dating the right boy. I can see Noah will be a whole lot of fun to date. Very exciting."

"You think so?"
"I do. He looks like he knows how to show the boys and girls a good time."

"I just hope it's not been accented too strongly the fact that most of the boys I've seen have all been perfect gentlemen, that I have to be wined and dined and all that. I mean, I know I may appear preppy, but I'm not snooty, am I?"

"You're aloof when you're on the defense, but snooty, no sweetie. You're too meek and humble to be so."

"Oh okay, good," Kurt smiled, relieved as Elizabeth continued.

"And when the time comes for when you two become intimate, you know what you're comfortable with. Make sure to talk to him and let him know when you're ready."

"Mom, it's okay, I have done. He knows I'm not as of yet, and perhaps in all honesty he's not either. He's sort of embarrassed how little he's explored his attraction to boys but he has me, and it'll be something we can do together, until yes, until the time comes."

"I'm sure Yvette's told you a lot of explicit things about what to do when it does," said Elizabeth, smiling. "You know, she is quite the worldly woman, isn't she."

Kurt nodded. "Yes, we've had interesting age inappropriate conversations. Sometimes she'll hesitate before saying something explicit because she thinks I'm too innocent and pure but she ends up telling me anyway because she doesn't want me to enter the world naïve. Otherwise she thinks it'll take advantage of me and eat me right up."

"I do appreciate what she does for you. She's like your cool aunt, isn't she."

"She is. Not to say you're not cool, mom. At least you've met Noah, I really wonder what Yvette would make of him. I joked that she wouldn't trust him, but I can see her warming to him."

"Everybody warms to Noah sweetie, he's just got a warmth to him. Plus," she said, leaning in. "He's very handsome."

Kurt squealed. "He's so handsome, mommy. He's the handsomest boy I've ever ever ever seen."

"He is certainly a hunk in the making."

"But you don't think he's too good looking for me, do you? I'm not punching above my weight?"

Elizabeth stuttered in disbelief. "Kurt, honey, of course not. You're adorable."

"You'd tell me, wouldn't you?"

"Absolutely, you're adorable. How do you account for all those dashing boys who've asked you out? Men are very visual you know. It's the looks that initially attract them, even young surfer boys to pretty faces by water fountains."

_I remember that day at the Orange Avenue Fountain, Burt with me by that big Eldorado, casting a glance over to Kurt and oh! There was a boy with him, as if he'd caught sight of Kurt walking back to the hotel from the beach. It's that cutie again! Having sneak ed up with a mischievous grin, his heart beating against his ribs like something small and feathered was trapped inside, and hidden behind a bush to watch him until the jump out, until he'd cleared his throat, a "Sup" to keep it cool, to restrain his thrill at seeing again just about the most adorable boy he'd ever seen, my son, Kurt, at the highest level of cuteness that had Noah snuggling his thick fluffy white pillow tightly that night in_
bed, a leg thrown over it with his dreaming face buried in deep.

It could be seen Kurt too was recalling that day, a soft nostalgic smile on his face as off they'd go, picking up their suitcases as he'd follow his mother out of the suite, taking one last look before they were out into the South African air, one hot and filled with song, the liquidy calls of the Gurney's Sugarbird and those harsh and wakeful from the Red-backed Mannikin, walking the ten minutes to the open-air arrival and departure lounge where amongst several fellow guests sipping casually on champagne also on set to leave were the Puckerman's awaiting to wish them farewell with handsome smiles, their own flight not until the following morning as they rose from their seats to embrace them, and to embrace them tightly, for oh, would they be missed!

Kurt had barely deposited his own suitcase to the ground before Noah had engulfed him. Oooph! Big arms around his rib cage with his own perched on those broad shoulders. With a frame as small as his, he was easy to engulf, like a toy pressed into the chest of a distressed child, Noah, his nerves jangling with sorrow for he didn't want Kurt to go. Even though older, he was still that boy at heart that couldn't comprehend the rage of his leaving with only the knowledge that soon, they would be seeing each other again, saving all anguish from cracking at the foundations of his mind. Kurt himself appeared more composed, his heart fluttering, so in love he was with Noah, and leading him aside in privacy, he faced his boyfriend, smiling in reassurance.

"Well, this is it," Kurt breathed as Noah shook his head.

"Doesn't have to be. How about I sneak you up into my room and you stay there until tomorrow, then you can come home with my dad and me."

Kurt sighed, smiling as like an adult might whilst hearing their child. "Noah, I-"

"Seriously, we can watch the animals kill each other from the balcony and get so blood thirsty the only option is to have sex."

"Sex?"

"Yeah," Noah nodded, "you'd be so thirsty for it, even your blood type would be D."

"You're insatiable," Kurt giggled.

"Yeah, baby. I'll grab your ass until I give myself carpal tunnel, or you know, break your ass bones."

"I don't have any bones Noah, I'm full of squishy cuddle cream, like a Twinkie."

"A Twinkie?"

"Yeah, just think of me as an extra cute twink. Limited edition."

"I love it when you talk dirty to me." Kurt laughed, as Noah now pouted, "What? Come on, that turned me on a little bit."

"I know," Kurt said. "I should have known. To be honest, I thought you'd be put off by cream ever since you told me your dad bought you some for Christmas when your testicles stick to your thighs."

Noah shushed him, looking back round at those in the lounge. "Dude, not so loud. It just made it easier to tea bag that's all."

"You mean-"
"Yep. I can now put my balls on your head like a hat without having to do a little Jumba dance to unstick them."

"Oh isn't that just… well, lovely," said Kurt, shifting uncomfortably. "The Justicia dancers will be so happy."

"Totally."

"Besides. I don't think testicles are in this season. Well, not according to Vogue."

"Why not? If sperm comes from testicles, doesn’t that mean ball really is life?"

"Again, not Vogue, no matter how much of a spin you want to put on it."

"Did you get to work on your blog at all this week?"

Kurt shook his head. "No, but it's alright. I have plenty of photos to help me write something up or two. It should make a rather interesting entry. Which reminds me, I have an essay to write."

"Yeah, me too," said Noah. "I have hella homework to do, but of what I've done of it, negative hella."

Kurt cocked his head curiously. "What is it?"

"History. I gotta "discuss" how most cowboys in the U.S. were native, black and Mexican whilst comparing it to Hollywood's totally omnipresent white cowboy dude that were just a studio concoction meant to back up the mythology of white masculinity and shit."

"Ooh, that's a good one."

"Yeah, it's actually not too bad," Noah smiled. "I live in Texas, this'll be pips. Plus my history teacher's pretty chill. He says he likes my two thirty in the morning "sarcastic" writing style and the way I look "vaguely pissed off" in class."

Kurt giggled. "You do?"

"It kinda came with the "Puck" package. All badass and bullshitting through assignments."

"Are you one of those lucky enough to get good grades when you do? Because if you are, I just… can't look at you. Just leave."

"Nah, I'm not," Noah chuckled, "Bullshit actually means bullshit here. I'm lucky if I get a C-."

Kurt sighed. "Noah."

"I know, I know, but I'm not doin that anymore. I'm not. I've just gotta learn to not say "ah, fuck this" on the second day of school after promising myself I'd get gay A's, 'cause I know I can get 'em."

"Gay A's?"

"Yeah, screw straight A's, we gotta stop homophobia now."

Kurt laughed. "You're thinking like a true inhabitant of the Gay Zone."

"Totally," Noah chuckled, smiling, "'Cause seriously, homophobia's just bogus. Who the hell is
afraid of homes?"

Kurt rolled his eyes. "Well so much for that, but "Gay A's". I'm seriously impressed that's your potential. I've never been academic. I've never been able to grasp how to write an essay, no matter how hard I try until I give up and write "do the hokey pokey" a thousand times because life is pointless and entropy is unavoidable and the universe is butt filled with callous and casual destruction."

"Sounds awesome," Noah grinned. "What is it you have to write about?"

Kurt shrugged. "The main themes in *The Catcher of the Rye* as well as a side assignment on the poetic constructs of Shakespeare's sonnets."

"Poems, huh?" Noah perked. "I got one, "I'm hella hot, hella rad, hella dumb, hella sad"."

"Amazing."

"No seriously, in seventh grade we had to write "how to" poems so I wrote "how to get rid of a dead body" and it won the poem contest, but I was also sent to guidance."

"I don't think I'll be able to maintain my B+ average if I go down that route for Mr. Savva, Noah."

"Ah balls, not him. He's totally got the hots for you."

Kurt huffed. "We are not having this discussion again."

"Kurt look, I know bein tight with teachers is fun 'cause hearin 'em talk shit about other teachers has 'em acting like high schoolers, except they all get paid, but sometimes, you can have too much fun."

Kurt laughed dryly. "That's rich coming from you, Mr. 69."

"That's how I know," said Noah. "And for the record, I didn't come on to them all the time. Once I was hard in class and the teacher thought it was my phone and grabbed it. She later asked me to stay behind to suck me off."

Kurt gaped. "God, have your teachers no morals?"

"What? I'm hot," Noah shrugged, smirking, only for it to wither taking in Kurt's unimpressed face. "But I'm not doin that any more either, babe. I'm not hot for teacher, I'm hot for you with my dick game D- and my cuddle game A+."

"Do you mind if we don't talk any more of it," said Kurt, taking a step back. "It's making me uncomfortable."

Noah nodded vehemently. "Y-yeah, of course." He grew anxious upon Kurt's silence. "You're not mad at me, are you? Baby, please don't be mad." And Kurt sighed, as if not knowing what he felt as Noah hugged him. "I'm sorry."

"I really don't like "Puck"."

"I know baby, I know. I've met some pricks in my time but that guy took the fucking cactus."

"Promise me you'll never be him, Noah. Please."

Taking the boy's hands in his, Noah nodded. "I promise you, Kurt. I love you, and if I ever drove you away 'cause of something I'd done, I... you know it would break me." Kurt's breath fluttered as
Noah kissed him, "I love you so much, baby." And kissing him again. "So in love with you." Taking up his lips and moaning tearfully, "So in love Kurt my heart could make the swellest waves in the world it's thumping that hard for you."

"Really?"

"Yeah, I'm shifting tectonic plates here. Rupturing the surface of the Earth, Kurt! I'm tearing the world apart for you! What more do you want?!"

Kurt laughed. "... You."

Noah's body tingled as a few meters away, Elizabeth called for her son, "Kurt, sweetie, it's time to go!"

"Don't go," Noah pleaded. "Seriously I think the plane's gonna crash. The captain looks dodgy. "Hello, this is your pilot speaking... fuck you"."

"Noah don't worry, I'll be back before you know it. Just finish that cowboy essay before I arrive. I want you all to myself."

His boyfriend nodded. "You got it, but you know I'll just end up writing, "so how about my huge ass dick" a thousand times with a riddle at the end goin, "who is super-cute? Kurt. Likes food? Kurt, and the one I wanna marry someday? Kurt.""

The fair boy smiled, now pulling out from his pocket Noah's promise ring. "You already did put on a ring on it, hubby."

That ring, exotic in its design you wished to spin around rapidly like a turning zoetrope with its large ocean swells that would ceaselessly break into barrels and tubes, its white water as bubbly and frothy as champagne carbonation upon the uncorking. Pop! The air gap flash! And it was slid on Kurt's baby finger, raised before Noah's eyes as like a succulent jewel he brought his lips to kiss, a hand kiss that had the hair's on Kurt's arm's erect, a palm kiss to numb those knees, and now cradling it against his tan cheek, the rough graze of unshaved stubble against such soft skin and it was gone, as like an outstretched hand of a drowning boy, Kurt was gone, journeying down the deck with his mother, their suitcases trailing behind like racketing trains.

To watch Kurt leave again, there was nothing that ripped more at Noah's heart. He stood beside his father in reverent silence contemplating the boy, Thomas himself looking on with a warm smile, having wished goodbye to Elizabeth with an extended kiss on the cheek, "It's been awesome seeing you again, Liz. You take care of yourself", a "see you real soon, kiddo," to Kurt as he'd left. For oh yes, he too would miss that pretty face, this boy his son itched to run after with a roaring in his ears, a sick, excited sensation flaming across his chest as Noah walked forwards as like a warrior, shouting, "I'm gonna marry you, Kurt!" And in the long distance, Kurt turned, his face near eclipsed by the sun. "You hear that, baby! I'm gonna marry you someday!"

I was deeply moved. My mom had heard, just as others ahead of us had heard, though I was scarcely aware of any of them as in my answer I smiled wide, mouthing, "I love you" that sweetened a blowing kiss I hoped would reach on the gust of the South African current before it was too late, for our suitcases were taken from us and loaded into the jet with the many guests filing into their seats as they boarded one by one. I wanted to hang back for Noah as they did in the movies, to kiss my boyfriend by the jet's open ladder in a sappy forties film scene before I was whisked away from him in this large white winged creature that shrieked as like an eagle it's feathered wings spread wide, it's yellow eyes to the sky as it lifted into the air, gliding into the sun.
And Noah watched as it took off, shaking sighing "later, baby!" at Kurt's porthole as he chased after him, now on the runway and sprinting like the Justicia kids had done to their car that had departed in puffy whirls of off road dust the shade of burnt sienna, this bird high in the sky with its feathers reflecting the sunlight that was it's true alloy metal covering with not a single cloud in the sky for it to disappear behind. Noah would eye it until he could no more, and already he could not wait! How his heart would beat wild at even the prospect of catching sight of another plane. Kurt on that plane. Flight 56 from Columbus touching down at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport at 4:25pm on June 14th. Oh, he would look forward to that date.

I'd count the days. Fuck it, I'd count the minutes as my dad lay a hand on my shoulder to walk us back to the reserve, the look on his face of reassurance as he told me the arrangements that we'd fix Kurt up in the guest bedroom, that we hoped he'd like mom's Kosher food, and that I'd have to keep Sarah on a leash so excited she'd be around him for this wasn't eight years ago when I didn't know when I'd see Kurt again. I knew I would this time. I knew, and I'd repeat it constantly to rid my fears in my mind I wouldn't, too vivid were the memories of how bummed out I was the last time he left. Kurt, my baby, my angel, who I'd let slip from me as a wee kid, but would not this time. He was in my heart. I'd always love him and I would not lose him again.

To Be Continued...

~ PLEASE REVIEW ~

(But if you wish to criticize, may it be constructive. I'm not going to learn from my mistakes and improve if you vent.)

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~ STAY TUNED FOR MORE BY FOLLOWING/FAVORITING ~
Chapter 11

THE MAN
2017

XI

~ The Orient Express ~

It was a season of great warmth, late summer, late August in the old world whose many inhabitants were thought to move soundless as ghosts, their faces pale as the opalescent sky, and all taking in their misty shadowless air. The air of Western Europe, similar to the North, where it was likely to be winter as spring. Where days seamlessly blended into the next, the sun no more than a faint crescent in the mist sky that was no more. For those days were gone as with this sun piercing through with a vengeance it shone in bright brave colours of gold onto the land, having heated it for two solid months now from the bone piercing cold of early May and getting hotter and hotter, the thermometers shifting, a heat of seventy-seven degrees.

And through the country side of northern France, a noise was heard. A chuffing blowing great gusts of white smoke into the air, forewarning a hurtling monster. This mammoth on wheels, this livery coated garter blue creature with rods spurring in a blur of motion that could not be stopped such was its speed. One fed with shovels upon shovels of coal, right from its tender and into its giant firebox burning bright. For this was a locomotive. LNER Class A3. "The Flying Scotsman". One of the most famous on the planet after having set a world record for reaching one hundred miles per hour in 1934 and only just restored two years prior in Britain, hauling for the first time from London, Paris to Venice, the famed Venice Simplon-Orient Express.

It was a train synonymous with romance, mystery and luxury. A resuscitation of the original 'Orient Express' that had spanned continents, running on a continuous ribbon of metal that at its zenith of popularity had had as passengers kings and crooks, millionaires, and refugees, big game hunters and smugglers, prima donnas and courtesans, tycoons and financiers, diplomats, spies and revolutionaries, all moving secretly in their moments of history on board an express royalty had patronized in the thirties for being the most opulent in train travel, this "King of Trains," this "Train of Kings," such was the splendor of its cars that would have field working peasants gaping as it would speed by. Oh, the magnificence. Those supercilious faces within.

Indeed, the Venice Simplon-Orient Express was a glittering sight to behold with each coach inside surrounded by wooden paneling decorated in stunning marquetry and all covered in ten coats of varnish from restoration that had saved them from dereliction. All from the dark blue twenties sleeper and dining cars, to the bar car. La Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits. And all grand with the cabins themselves in the day still configuring from lounges with banquette sofas, footstools, small tables and washbasin cabinets to cozy bedrooms with upper and lower beds at night. Though nights that were either easy or restless. For with the rocking of the cars a good night's sleep was not guaranteed, a complaint often put forth by passengers.

Already it had been an hour since the train had departed from La Gare de Calais Ville, its one hundred and ninety passengers having boarded the Belmond British Pullman train earlier that morning at London Victoria station, there to travel through the Kentish countryside to the coach that had driven them across the Channel to board the express at Calais, and now to look out its large windows on the scenery whizzing by, past the towns of Bruay-la-Buissiere and Arras, some passengers counting. A number of them reading in the bar car, but in a double cabin, situated in the
middle of the train sat two close friends talking animatedly to one another on their sofa, both lounging, both with their feet up as they conversed in such hushed hysterics.

It was in this year that Kurt Hummel was twenty four years old. Still the ever sweet kid, still decent, with an ingratiating naiveté and wit that not only came across in his character, but in his writing of articles, essays, and pieces, all ranging from cultural and current affairs in the UK, fashion and beauty trends inspired by Italian cinema, reviews on health diet and skincare fresh from Korean labs, to interviews with Christiane Amanpour and Joan Didion, all for Vogue magazine, the bible of style and sophistication where he was now a writer, a position his executive employer and "Fairy Godmother" Isabelle Wright had given him after his three year internship whilst studying journalism at Columbia University from which he'd since graduated in 2015.

In New York and he lived humbly. Working five days a week at the magazine on a salary of eighty dollars an hour that was more than enough to afford him a better place than Bushwick Apartment in Brooklyn he'd been renting for eighteen hundred dollars a month since sophomore year of college, a quaint loft within an old print works building he'd since grown very fond of with enough space to practice dance routines from a studio he'd joined upon first arriving in the city. At that time earning only twelve dollars a day as a part time intern, a measly salary too low to live comfortably on as he'd been forced to look for more work, that as a waiter on Broadway at a restaurant "Spotlight Diner" where he would sing and dance for the customers, and modelling.

For there was no disputing Kurt was beautiful. As beautiful as any girl. His looks now classic as a Belle Epoque socialite, a cheeky sex cartoon atop a shooting champagne cork. Pop! Dom Perignon as sugar sweet as his face he would regularly lend to art classes for portraiture paintings at a gallery in Noho, Manhatten. Oil. Pastel. Acrylic. Watercolor. Ink. Fresco. He'd lend his body in prospect shorts and tight sweaters. Even pose semi-nude for charcoal drawings that had rid those opinions of his supposed "pretension", the "high preservation" of his dignity with his slim exquisite body noted as "inviolable" by those who'd drawn him. As if he was virgin not only in looks, but in his soul that had captured all artists' imaginations. Kurt, their beautiful muse.

They would tell me all kinds of things, that they hated models, that they sometimes wished to tape over their eyes and mouths in such a way that they couldn't speak, but not me. They liked me. Or seemed to. With some asking me to personally model for them in galleries where underfoot there would be dust balls and desiccated husks of insects, posing me in all sort of positions from laying on the floor in mimicry of sleep to upright as a mermaid prow of an imaginary ship. They would ask me to dance for them so as to get the correct dimensions of the body in movement and they would ask me to come back again and again, a job I no longer did for money, but for fun. Waitering at the diner I had also done for fun. Dance and Vogue my honest passions.

On board the Venice Simplon-Orient Express and he was to write a culture piece on the voyage that Vogue had been in talks with since March to feature in a fall issue photoshoot. Mario Testino shooting Céline, Acne Studios, Philip Lim, Nina Ricci, YSL, Chanel, Dior, Mui Mui and Comme des Garcons for a planned Twenties theme, "Murder on the Orient Express", an homage to Agatha Christie's bestselling crime novel Kurt himself had not wished to read before boarding, instead planning his five day stay in Venice, his first ever in Italy, for he had to also document his time in the city to coincide with the Venice Biennale and 74th Venice Film Festival, all to discover "La Serenissima" for the readers of American Vogue back home.

Travelling with him was his friend and roommate Santana Lopez, a hot skinned Latina from rural New Mexico he'd first met when she'd interviewed him after having advertised Bushwick in the local paper wanting "a gay/female roommate". Kurt had been the fourth she'd seen that week after a slew of "weirdos" had left her in a foul mood by the time of their interview for which he'd arrived promptly that day at five, and with a single look upon opening the door and Santana's glumness had
lifted. To see this unusual kid from upstate Ohio, this meringue beauty she believed would fetch a lot of dough out on the streets of the Meatpacking District with an arresting talent in Ballet and as gay as unicorn moon shine dust, Kurt had been a God send.

He would keep himself scrupulously clean washing and bathing as often as was healthy, offering to wash his and Santana's clothes sometimes by hand in the sink if they were short on quarters. They had a wooden floor, therefore no need of a carpet sweeper; though once a week borrowing the landlord's hoover and always returning it without fail. He would clean the stove and oven. There were surfaces in the loft like the windowsills, tables and cabinets that would collect dust, so he dusted them. And eating organic foods of almond butter, soy milk, non-soy dairy-based soy sauce, steel-cut spelt husk, Chef Soy-ar-dee soy-based spaghetti and soy balls, free-range gluten and ultra-vegan invisible cheese compared to Santana's carnivorous palate.

For Santana had quite an appetite. Often returning from rehearsals from whatever theatre in town, she had the stomach of a steak chomping champion. She'd been raised in a dangerous neighborhood that had toughened her well beyond the shady streets of Brooklyn and had the raconteur of a man, for except for her size, body and face, she was a man. She fucked like a man. Took sex when and when she wanted like a man, and all with women, for she was a lesbian. She'd fucked boys in high school when closeted. Many of them. She'd even had a few abortions, yet coming out to her mother who'd all but rejected her with disgust, she'd walked away like slipping out a back door unencumbered without regret and with no backward glance.

She too had waitressed at Spotlight Diner, yet was also an actress on Broadway, having drawn criticism from peers claiming she didn't know "shit" about acting, for she wasn't a NYADA graduate like them. They claimed she rarely read through scripts, knew and cared little of co-stars roles. She memorized her lines by scanning them swiftly on the subway train to rehearsals, for whatever was good for the director was good for her, but damn was she good, a talent to match her mind as quick and cunning as a gambler's, and damn was she gorgeous with her perfect body she had posed in men's magazines, all glamour photography with her firm ass and breasts some speculated had been augmented spilling out of bikinis several sizes too small.

Yet through all the acting, modelling, writing and waitressing, never could Kurt and Santana have guessed it would become so tiring. Exhausting themselves in a city so physically draining, they supported each other, cheering each other up when they needed cheering. After Kurt entered a month long writer's block with no inspiration to yank it out of him. After Santana, going from one audition to the next for weeks with few call backs had been cast in another Broadway production only to wake up one morning with her mind struck blank and could not make that evening's performance or any performance following. After Kurt had heard of his father's heart attack and subsequent hospitalization. They were always there to support one another.

I was with Lady Hummel now on this fancy all expenses trip to Venice and it was sweet. Vogue had given him two tickets for the express and a room for two at the hotel he'd be staying at, the extra place in both he'd originally wanted to give to his Gay Winklevii Twin Blaine so they could have an excuse to have some lame romantic getaway time with each other. Only Wonder Twin hadn't been able to come 'cause of clashes in his work schedule, which of course had bummed Kurt out, but that was why I was here. Lady H having invited me instead, Auntie Tana the straight up bitch here to keep things classy as we sat there in our cabin Kurt thought was very "Some Like it Hot" and in which I was already one step ahead with shots of whisky and bourbon.

"Santana, you know I don't drink," said Kurt, as the woman shrugged.

"It can't be "Some Like It Hot" without Manhattens, Lady Lips. Now come on, have some."
"No thanks. I'll let you grow hair on your own chest."

Santana snorted. "I'd have more chance of growing some than you even if I didn't drink this. Your testosterone levels are piss low."

"Would you have them any other way?"

"No. I needs my Glitter Wifey."

"What if you had ended up living with a heterosexual man? How do you think that would have turned out?"

"I think we all know how that would have turned out, Kurt," said Santana. "I hate most men. They're weak. They're some pathetic shit. If they punch me in the boob it'll still be able to sustain life for a new fuckin' human. My boob can still sustain the human race. If I kick boys hard enough in the nuts, they will never reproduce. Their genetic line is over, bub."

Kurt winced. "I suppose so, yes."

"One well-placed stiletto and they're getting shitty half-assed boners and no babies for life. Who has the power, son? Who owns you? Girls own you. I own you, punk. Sit down."

"I can't believe any boy could have approached you in high school with your blatant misandry vibes."

Santana shrugged. "My milkshake brought them all to the yard."

"The Graveyard more like," Kurt snorted derisively. "You'd have force fed them cyanide milkshakes."

"Yeah, probably," Santana laughed, now perching her bare feet in Kurt's lap. "I mean, okay, they weren't all bad. I had to help a couple lose they're virginities 'cause they were starting to stink up the place, but it was mostly 'cause when I was sucking dick, I had control over them. I had their dick and balls in my mouth and with one giant bite down I could have ended it all."

Kurt winced again. "Eurgh, Santana. I know full well how irritating boys can be, but don't forget I too have male genitalia."

"I know, Pretty Pony. From all those times we'd bathe together during those city water shortages I became fairly acquainted with your cute little uncut penis," Santana replied, smiling. "Your mom really didn't want you circumcised?"

"No. She thought it barbaric, which it is. Its genital mutilation and just the thought of it makes me shudder."

"Well, that was the least of my worries. With all the skinny jeans you wore beforehand, I never once saw a bulge, Kurt. Honestly I thought you were trans."

"Really?" Kurt blinked.

"Well either that or your dick was so big the only way you could fit it in your pants was by tucking it in your butt hole."

"Ew, Santana-"

"Which would have been weird of you to do 'cause you've never been up for having dick stuffed up
Kurt sighed, "Oh Lord. I can't believe I ever tell you these things."

"You were the one who came to me when The Alpha Gay wanted to go fudge packing," Santana sniggered. "You didn't have to do it."

"It was all he was asking to do for three whole months," Kurt said. "I didn't know how to go about it and what with you having done everything under the sun, I thought you'd know a thing or two. I thought you'd be able to help me."

"And you know I did."

"Sure, but it didn't alleviate the pain."

"I told you it would hurt at first. It did for me. Like losing my virginity all over again. Excruciating the first twenty times but you just gotta keep thinking that soon, it's gonna be so fucking good."

"And was it?" Kurt asked, unconvinced.

"Yeah, as long as my butt hole didn't close back up on me after preparation which also included cleaning out with an enema bag and making sure not to eat beets or corn beforehand, it was amazing."

"Even though it was with boys?"

"Well sure. I wasn't out yet but I had to fuck. Even if they were guys. I didn't care about any one of them. I only ever cared about getting off."

"And how much different does it feel having anal with a strap on than it is with a penis?"

"Not that much different, except you've got a chick fucking you and that's hot. Only, most aren't good at thrusting so I fuck them and that's hot too, especially when they look like they're in pain."

Kurt winced. "Santana, that's horrible."

"No seriously, the more they look in pain, the hotter it is."

"Well I have no endurance for that kind of pain. Twenty rounds? Nope."

"Oh come on Miss Priss, you've got the prostrate. "No Homo' God did say when he put the male G-Spot up the anus."

"Oh ha ha," Kurt replied, sarcastically.

"Seriously Kurt, if I were a guy for a day all I'd be doing is getting fucked in the ass and playing with my lumpy Vienna sausage and two hanging eggs."

"No wonder you're not attracted to penises if you see them that way. Even I'm put off."

"Just a matter of guys in the past having told me my pussy was ugly and unworthy of their mouths is all," Santana said, shrugging. "I told them they could go slap their balls up against someone else's asshole."

"But San your body is amazing, how can they have said that?"
"They were douche bags. Hand jobs and blow jobs are called "jobs" because they're tedious and laborious as fuck. Going down on a girl is called "eating out' cause it's a privilege. Not that I ever let it get to me. They were guys. At least girls know their way around a pussy. They say mine tastes like mango."

Closing his eyes, Kurt shook his head. "San too much information."

"Why? What do you taste like, Kurt?"

"I don't know. I've never tasted myself before."

The woman grinned. "You should try it. Helmet Head told me you were so sweet it would make an anorexic start eating again."

"He told you that?" Kurt gaped. "That was supposed to be private."

"Nothing ever is at our place, my friend. You don't want to know what else he's told me about how you are in the sack."

He'd done it in the missionary position, the butterfly position, the hovering butterfly, the quick picker upper, the mountain climber, the face sitter, the elevator, the iron chef, the spoon, spoon facing, the fusion, the flatiron, the face off, the one up, the cat, the ballet dancer, the lazy man, David Copperfield, heir to the throne, gift wrapped, in a whirlwind of kisses, caresses and embraces, of massages, nipple play and fingering, of intercral, intergluteal and frot, of hand jobs, foot jobs, blow jobs, all in freshly made beds, on apartment stairs, in dining room chairs, on warm leather couches, on paper overflowing desks, on linen clothed tables, on rumbling washing machines on cycle, on hovered floors, in ascending lifts.

His lovers had been Chandler Kiehl, a New York University student he'd met in an Upper Manhattan music store "Between the Sheets" in his freshman year at Columbia where they'd dated for a year before breaking up. In sophomore year there had been Cody Talentino, a stripper who'd pursued him relentlessly after Santana had hosted a bachelorette party for a friend at Bushwick, their kissing Kurt admitted had been "sexy kissing" as it had been as if he'd not had any teeth. In senior year, on a cursory visit to NYADA, Kurt had met Adam Crawford, the leader of the academy's glee club, "Adam's Apples", whom he had dated for eleven months before separating. And a few weeks after his college graduation, it had been then he'd met Blaine.

Blaine Anderson, a musical theater actor Kurt had met whilst visiting Santana backstage on a production of Macbeth in which she'd been cast as Lady Macbeth and Blaine as the title role, had been with Kurt for three years now. He was a dashing man, debonair and charming who was like magic to Kurt, a twin self far deeper and more worthy than he himself might ever be. The brother of the famous actor, Cooper Anderson, a vicious egoist who was the "face" of the fastest growing international credit rating website that in fact was a curse on Blaine others wished to believe was a blessing. For Blaine was a mere shadow of "Mr. Hollywood", who'd always been favourised by their parents since birth. Had always had their adulation. Their love.

And it was in Kurt Blaine would seek his comfort. His one true love he'd even named as "Happiness" in his phone's contact list he'd send romantic texts to. Sometimes up to six a day. "I just wanted to let you know, I love you. Have a great day, sweetie." "Kurt, I've not been able to stop thinking of you all day. I'm so lucky to have you." He'd surprise the man at work and take him out for lunch at French bistros and cafes on Park Avenue. Kurt would try and make every one of his shows, even to those he'd only have small roles in. They would set aside time to see each other when their schedules were at their most conflicting and in the bedroom, at their most intimate, they would roam their fingers on each other's bodies like blind men reading Braille.
Indeed, the morning athers and Blaine would disclose the evening activities in exchange for Santana's forgiveness, apologizing to her profusely for the noise, Kurt's noise, for they knew how the fair boy could scream, sometimes scream as he'd never screamed in his life, screaming for his life, always clutching at Blaine as if in a Paroxysmal attack such was the high threshold of pleasure he'd have in orgasm. The results of which Blaine would display for Santana to laugh ruefully over, those three-inch scratches on his back, thighs, even on his buttocks. Mild plum colored bruises on his skin, welts. He'd blush at explaining the marks to his co-stars whilst changing in and out of costumes, and Kurt too would blush, healing them as he'd rub in Arnica.

*I would feel embarrassed for us both. But never shame. They were my marks left at the heat of the moment. At one where he'd touched me and for a second, our universes had connected. That's how sex was for me. It was something I couldn't put into words. Every boy I had shared such intimacy with had always told me how much I looked like I truly enjoyed sex. How infatuatingly in love with it I was. Something they'd appreciate, as if I had been worshiping them like Gods. Inquiring the reason for my fire cracking orgasms. My sensitive uncircumcised genitalia? The two thousand extra nerves from being left "intact"? They asked me how I knew of so many positions. How was it I could allegedly "finish" them with nothing but my eyes. But I would never tell...*

"Santana, I don't want to know what else Blaine has told you," Kurt huffed, shifting her feet in his lap. "I really have to teach him not to crack under that pressuring stare of yours."

Santana batted falsely sentimental eyes. "Sweetie, I only do it 'cause I care." Kurt rolled his own as she sighed. "Ah come on, I do. I do give a fuck. I give lots of fucks. I'm like a prostitute of feelings."

"I thought instead of having feelings, you were dead inside. That everything is still horrible, you just don't care."

"It is a neat pro tip to have on most days," Santana nodded. "It's what makes me the straight up bitch that am I. Admittedly not something I was planning to do with my life, but here we are."

"I like the way you are," Kurt smiled, meticulously laying on coats of polish. "I've never had a bitch for a friend."

Santana grinned. "You want to know who was a real bitch? Cleopatra. She masturbated with bees and made servants jack off so she could put their cum on her face for beauty purposes. True icon."

"Did it work?"

"Well the protein in the semen eased her wrinkles I heard, but I know Miami chicks in porn who thought it responsible for acne they were getting after facials. They thought the high levels of testosterone in man milk were breaking them out, but it was just from a combination of heavy makeup piled over sweat, whilst with the guys the amount of Viagra and steroids they'd pump themselves up with would break them out all over their chests. Gross, huh."

"Oh acne," sighed Kurt. "I remember when I used to have it. Every January 1st from when I was fourteen to twenty one it was New Year, same acne. I'm telling you. Never did I not appreciate anything more than having clear skin when I was a child."

"It just think it's so rude," Santana nodded. "'Hi bitch, I didn't ask you to invade my skin. Thanks though for being a piece of shit."

"And for those who would point it out!"

"I just told them to pack their bags, buy a plane ticket and go to hell."
"Nice."

"But your skin's cleared up significantly since college though. You still have faint hyperpigmentation left from it, sure, but the actual surface of your skin is as smooth as a finely scrubbed peach that's been batched in gourmet cream and honey. It's frightening how smooth that shit is."

"Thank God I'm now in my twenties with its perfect skin tone privileges."

"Along with your lactic acid peels," Santana smirked.

"And your disturbing ancient Egyptian beauty secrets," Kurt retorted.

"I'm telling you, it's true. It worked for Queen C. And I'm starting to think that with that perfect skin of yours, it's either the work of those lame Aēsop skin care products you put on or Blaine's facials."

"Santana!"

"What? I know he does it. It's genius for a gay guy. You can't see your haters 'cause you've got cum in your eyes."

"Oh Lord," Kurt moaned, burying his head in his hands.

"That's another thing I learned from my friends in porn. Never request the guy not cum in your eye 'cause it's a curse. As soon as you do, they'll cum in your eye."

"Santana, please stop saying "cum". We're on the Orient Express."

"What? You don't think people have fucked in these cabins, Twinkle Tush? Kings and their courtesans. Millionaires and their mistresses. Me."

Kurt blinked. "You?"

"It's this girl I saw in the Bar Car earlier," Santana smirked. "I'm sleeping with her tonight, but she doesn't know it yet."

"How do you know she's gay?"

"You should have seen her panties the minute she saw me. Soaking wet."

"Okay, okay, okay," Kurt rushed, placing his fingers to his traguses as Santana sighed happily.

"Yes. She's my princess, and my face will be her throne."

"You're not planning on bringing her back here are you? I'll be sleeping just above you two."

"The night will take us wherever. I can't promise anything."

"Gee, I'm so glad I have you with me on this trip."

The Latina cocked her head. "Aw, the pleasures all mine, Lady Fabulous. Or it will be soon anyway. I need my feet looking pretty for tonight so chop-chop."

"I guess this means you've moved on from Dani then, haven't you," Kurt murmured, his head purposefully low upon the mention of the Latina's ex-girlfriend and lover. "You have, right?"

"Sure," replied Santana, nodding. "I mean, we had some good times but it got more and more
underwhelming the longer we were together so I had to break it off. Plus she never was so good at giving head."

"Santana-"

"And then she had to go and fall in love with me, what the hell."

Kurt gaped. "She did?"

"Yeah. It was such a turn off. You know what. In Latin, instead of saying "I love you", you don't say anything at all 'cause it's a dead language. Nothing. I think that's beautiful. Just shut the fuck up."

"How can you be so opposed to the idea of love?"

"I'm not. It's just that my idea of it is when you find someone worth wearing a seventy dollar bra for. Myself." The fair boy sighed as he resigned painting. "Look Kurt," Santana began, smiling, "Love and I, it's not gonna happen. Not now at least. I'm still playing the field. I still get a kick out of explaining to nurses how I avoid pregnancy, not through condoms or birth control but through homosexuality."

"You say that?"

"Yeah," Santana laughed, recalling fondly the many times it had happened at several clinics. "And they usually don't know what that means until I have to lean in and say, "I fuck girls." And even then I see them struggling."

"Goodness."

"Don't worry, I'm used to it. I get asked all the time from straight guys. "So do you shove your boobs up each other's vaginas or something? How does it work? How do you know when it's over?" The latter's translation: I have never given a woman an orgasm in all my life."

Kurt shook his head. "It is tragic, isn't it."

"I feel like rubbing my own tits together, starting a fire and roasting their balls on it like smores," said Santana. "They don't know anything. One even asked me if a vagina would shrivel up like a snail if you salted it. I mean, what the fuck? If they have to ask how lesbian sex works I pity their girlfriends, because if they don't understand how to have sex with a girl in any way other than repeatedly shoving their dicks in them, they, sir, are having some really bad sex."

"I understand," Kurt nodded. "When I say I don't do anal, the only act cis people seem to think all gay men ever engage in, they ask what it is it I do engage in, only to dismiss it as something that doesn't constitute as sex. Alright, it may not be society's idea of "technical" sex with the lack of penile penetration, but to me I still see outercourse as sex. I still see genital-genital rubbing as sex and I wish people wouldn't be so quick to think I'm trying to "preserve" anything, because I lost my V Card through frot, and that's final."

"Pfft, Kurt if you want to talk of virginity, that shit only matters if you're lighting the black flame candle to summon witches. When people talk of "Blood of a Virgin", what's actually meant is "Virgin Blood", blood that's never before been used in a ritual. Therefore, virginity doesn't really matter for anything."

"I agree. The first time I had sex I didn't even feel I was "losing" something. Moreover, to think more positively, I gained from it."
"And how was it?"

"What? My first time?"

"Yeah, how did it go? Was it good?"

"It was. I was staying in his parent's guest bedroom when at dawn he snuck in to join me, you know, just to talk and make out until things got heated and... it happened."

"So it was by impulse?"

"It wasn't planned, no. We did speak of doing other things, like Intercrural, but like I said, it just happened and I'm so happy it did San, because it was magnificent."

"Nice. And who was this guy? This cherry popper."

"Just someone I was seeing years ago... and with that, I think we're done. What do you think?"

Santana looked at her painted toes, each of them looking as if they had been well pedicured, the polish now drying, with that red just gorgeous! She knew what pair of heels to show them off with. The open strapped pair. Faux leather. Open toe. She'd consult Kurt on it, and would have pressed him for more information on who ever this boy from his past was. This particular subject sweet, gentle porcelina had not delved unto her yet, and one he'd not gone into much detail about either, that now had her curious, but not for long. Her attention was on tonight. Shifted from the way Kurt's eyes seemed to trail, his mind like wispy flossed clouds to her wardrobe that was flung from her suitcase and onto the bed, there to eye, there for her to admire.

Kurt's thoughts indeed wondered. To Santana, his friend, whom he cared for deeply. How it hurt him to see her sleeping around, feeding rumors that would circulate about her, saying she was a "tramp" from the get go. A "cow." She didn't wear underwear. Snorted cocaine. Mainlined Benzedrine and phenobarbital HMC. Had had her stomach pumped. She was a fag hag to him. She'd sucked every cock in her small New Mexico town and had eaten every pussy in their own, and more from out in New York. This lesbian. This dyke. Infected with VD of the most virulent strain. Who'd spend weekends serving women in Atlantic City. Would never leave the suite. Just couldn't get enough squirt juice. Santana Lopez was nothing but a filthy dirty "joke".

He would shudder from these thoughts to those of Blaine that lightened his heart. To thoughts of his boyfriend, whom he so wished was with him on this trip and not in the role of Zach in the Broadway production of A Chorus Line which he had seen opening night just two weeks ago. How Kurt had watched Blaine up on that stage, faint in love with him, in need for him just like Blaine was in need of him knowing how terrified he'd be. Stage fright nerves that had threatened to overwhelm him. But, "You were great, honey. You really were," Kurt had said at the stage door following the curtain's descent. Dining on Chinese takeaway in bed waiting until midnight for the first New York Times review, the first rave review: "Blaine Anderson, A Star."

And then to thoughts that would take Kurt back many years to the summer when he was sixteen. That week in Ulusaba. That plane flight soon after to Texas that had landed him in front of Noah Puckerman. Noah, his first love with whom he had spent those warm days together holding hands with and at night, to clutch at each other in stupors of pleasure in which there had been nothing shared between them but their love. First love. All too well dictated by his high school matron to be such sweet despair, that of two broken hearts which Kurt would refuse to glaze any more thought over. For it had been a long time ago. Eight years, and he'd done his fair share of hurting. Cried his eyes blood shot. He'd moved on. There was nothing more to say.
At 8:30pm, and it was dinner. Two sittings were offered to passengers on the express, the first at seven, the latter now that both Santana and Kurt had chosen due to a rather heavy brunch they'd had back on the Pullman coaches in Britain, consisting of fresh fruit cocktails, smoked salmon with scrambled eggs on crumpets, pan fried mushrooms and a lemon and Poppy Seed cake with whipped cream Santana had all but wolfed down in a ravenous haste, her Brooklyn manners rampant in a dining car the equivalent of a fine restaurant on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, leaving Kurt to shift as fellow diners had glanced in their direction, looks of judgment that would brand this crude Latina "uncivilized". Before looking away to glaring blue eyes.

As it was, Kurt and Santana were undergoing final touch ups. On a moving train and it was difficult to apply makeup. A wonder Kurt had not made a mess applying the polish to Santana's nails earlier as the wings of her eyeliner were drawn and wiped off. To be drawn on once again with as steadier a hand as she could possibly muster until upon a sudden jolt and the symmetry would be lost. They'd managed to change in the cabin together, unlike some others who'd had to wait out in the corridor as their partner would hurriedly ready themselves. And they'd had to clear the mess of clothes and magazines on the floor, glasses of Prosecco given to them earlier on the table alongside Santana's own flanked alcohol she'd stashed in her suitcase.

It was naughty. As if they were teenagers defying their parent's household rules, tidying everything up before their personal steward, David, came to knock on their cabin door announcing dinner was now ready in the Cote d'Azur dining car in which everyone would be dressed to the nines. Men in dinner suits, their necks wound tight in bow ties. Women in evening dresses themed in Twenties pomp. Kurt himself wore a suit of his own, slim fitted with a classic black dinner jacket whilst Santana had opted for a purple silk halter dress with a neck line that plunged down to her navel, a dress that had every eye in the car fixed upon her rear, the remarkable movements of her lower body highlighted further by the yearning eyes of voyeurs. Of men.

The Latina knew what they were thinking. Her sculpted body under such scrutiny it charged her with electricity that swayed her hips provocatively through the many white clothed tables, along the first class dining car that was as gorgeous as her to look at with its Lalique crystal murals of faintly blue opaque glass that displayed classical figures with a matching frieze of smaller panels to the soft velour chairs themselves. To the china, to the silverware. All luxurious, and all still intimidating to them both as they were seated by the window, a table for two laden in mounds of cutlery. Cutlery for bread. Cutlery for dessert. Glasses for water, red and white wine. The service plate. The salad plate. All meant to be worked from the outside in.

They were handed menus of Cod Fillet with Juniper Berry and Fennel Compote for starter, Rack of Lamb roasted with Meaux Mustard for the main course and Black Cherry Clafoutis with Kirsch for dessert in which red wine was ordered for Santana, water for Kurt. He would not ask for much. He felt awkward. In his suit. Perceived by most too young to wear it comfortably like a girl teen strapped in a corset over-tightened to the point of fainting, he disliked black tie. Like his exotic friend. Shifting in her seat constantly, the weight of her large breasts tugging her forward so that she was continually forced to lean back; straining her upper spine considerably. And breasts unsupported. For was she wearing a bra? It sure looked like she wasn't.

In this lap of luxury and we tried to make ourselves as comfortable as best we could. Our fellow passengers appeared in their thirties, forties, fifties and were at ease, or seemed to be. Santana was
glancing at them all discreetly, her eyes like that of a sharpshooter's searching through this intrinsically insignificant crowd for the target range's bulls eye. For this mystery woman she'd seen earlier. My only wish was to return and eat dinner in our cabin. Not that I didn't know how to use the large array of cutlery that was set out before me with the risk of embarrassing myself if I didn't, but in this dining car and I felt like I was on display. As if an aura were hovering above our table, Santana and I. As if the eyes were still on us. The eyes of voyeurs. Of men.

Kurt would now blink out of his heightened state. He watched as Santana ate much of a loaf of crusty French bread she'd smeared with butter, filling herself up on it as she threw fewer and fewer glances about the car, her expression sour. The woman wasn't here. Perhaps she'd eaten earlier or perhaps she was dining in the second restaurant car, the Etoile Du Nord. Either way it was disappointing. But no matter. She would be patient, now glancing at him and frowning, noticing his almost tremulous attention she questioned in concern, "Are you okay?" And Kurt nodded, smiling nervously. For these nerves. It was as if he were a child once more eating alone at recess. That familiar wave of vulnerability. Of social anxiety. It was strange.

"I thought you would be all up for this fancy pretentious crap," Santana said, helping herself to another slice of bread. "Napkin in the lap. Posture upright. Not even buttering the whole piece of bread and taking bites from it."

Kurt smiled. "I can see. Not that I should make you feel pressured to eat like that."

"I saw the looks I got earlier when I didn't," said Santana. "And I saw the looks you were giving them back. Man can you glare Yasser."

"They were being rude, judging you like that."

"Pfft, they can judge all they like. I don't care. With this chest and they're not gonna be looking at the way I eat."

Kurt smiled, taking in her appearance. "You do look good, San."

"That's because I don't "dress to impress" Lady H, I dress to depress. I wanna look so good that people hate themselves."

"As opposed to dressing for yourself but mostly in the chance you run into anyone you hate like all girls?"

"Well, that too," Santana conceded. "I certainly don't dress for guys. Or wear makeup for them. I mean, why do they think girls do? Seriously, do they honestly believe we spend twenty dollars on a blush to make their dicks hard? Calm down."

Kurt sighed. "We live in a patriarchal society, San."

"And so girls can't dress how they want 'cause guys can't control their sexual urges? When dogs can't control theirs, we cut off their balls. I think I'm onto something here."

"San, you're always onto something when it comes to the extermination of men. I just feel sorry for them when it comes to fashion. Ours is so incredibly boring."

Santana nodded. "I know, you've told me."

"I mean, how many more editorial odes to Americana and James Dean can the world handle? How many more photoshoots in diners beside motorcycles? How many more men in thousand dollars suits that aren't hemmed? How long must we suffer?"
"You've found your next piece," Santana grinned

"Oh yeah," Said Kurt, only to pause, his smile faltering. "… but no. No, I couldn't."

"Why not?"

"Vogue does exactly that. I don't want to insult the very magazine I work for. Isabelle wouldn't be happy."

"She loves you, Kurt. Your own employer. The lady's allowed you to attend those boring ass pitch meetings since your internship. She trusts you. Or start pitching new ideas for men's fashion."

"I have some already. I was thinking."

"Or wright a piece on how clothes need to cheapen," Santana suggested. "Hello? I want to buy a new jacket, not another limb."

"Santana."

"Or pitch them that story I thought of. You know the one about panties."

Kurt sighed. "You mean how the week leading up to your period is the worst as it is and I quote, "like playing Russian Roulette but with underwear"? I don't think so."

"Good analogy though, right?" Santana grinned. "A bit macabre bu-"

"Inappropriate," Kurt replied. "So is talking of how you only looked for your first job so that you would stop masturbating over expensive lingerie and start masturbating in it, and how when you had that underwear shortage just last month, you knitted yourself a thong."

Santana shrugged. "People would read it."

"Yes, as a sex column in a weekly newspaper beside ads for penile implants. It's not Vogue."

"Sure it is. Just replace "da clit" with "clitoris" and "bra" with "boob restraint apparatus."

"You didn't mention bras."

"I could talk of lot about them. For example, girls with big tits like me have magical portals in their cleavages. I went out with this girl who pulled out her phone, wallet, and a small note pad from inside. I swear, the mysteries of the Earth are hidden in a girl's bra."

Kurt leaned in, whispering. "Are you even wearing one?"

"No," Santana smirked. "I don't want the strap showing, it's not classy."

"Ah, right."

"Mind you, I do miss saying to people it's my dick."

"That's always funny."

"But here I am, the Queen of England. I must maintain appearances." Now speaking in a posh British accent, she lifted her chin haughtily. "One will always pass the salt and pepper together even if one only asked for one. Ladies will blot their lipstick before taking a drink, and one will eat caviar out of my good friend Twinkle Tush's pristinely clean asshole."
"Excuse me?" Kurt blinked, his face horrified. "Santana, that is not what I taught you."

"That's how her majesty takes her caviar. And you sir would do best obeying your sovereign. Now, head down, ass up."

Kurt buried his head in his hands. "Oh Lord."

"Seriously, eating food out of there would be great. Have everyone crowd around and serve themselves. I once ate M&M's out of a girl's ass and one accidentally got lost inside."

"Great, you've not only ruined M&M's for me but my appetite."

"Come now, it's rude not to eat everything on your plate. I always finish everything on mine to the last drop when I eat out- I mean, eat up," she chuckled, upon Kurt's wide eyes. "Unless you'd like something else? Here, I'll fetch the cute waiter. I know you'll like the chicken with a side of that dick-"

"Don't!"

"Relax," Santana grinned. "I'm only teasing."

Letting out a breath, Kurt returned to his fish. "To think they cook all these dishes in such a small kitchen. They only have around four or five chefs, I think."

"Small kitchen, small portions," Santana said, already finishing her compote. "I mean, seriously, they give you two and half spoonfuls of this stuff. It's not enough. None of this microscopic food is gonna be. I needs something more."

Kurt winced. "Please don't say it San, please don't say-"

"I needs a ripe pussy."

"... And there we go."

Santana huffed, looking about. "Where is she?"

Kurt lifted his head out of his hands. "I don't know, San. I don't even know what she looks like."

"She's a blonde, and she is so my type. You know it, right?"


"Shut up-"

"You've been forever attracted to girls with thighs that could crush men's hopes, dreams, souls, and skulls."

"This one doesn't look like she can. She looks sweet but I like that."

"Well, let's hope she's near."

"Ah, are you there God?" Santana asked, placing her hands together in prayer as she raised her eyes to the ceiling. "It's me hornygirl420."

"San, come on. I'm sure you'll find her. We're on a train, there's only so many places she could be."
"I'm telling you Kurt, if I weren't as horny as I am right now I wouldn't need no chick. I'd be grabbing my own titties, but as I am, if she doesn't appear real soon, I may either have to get a Big Mac someplace or pick up a guy."

"Oh San, don't do that. You'll no longer have homosexuality as your main buffer."

The woman shrugged. "I'll let him finish in back door number two, no biggie."

"San, please, must you? You're going to regret it. At least wait until you've had the lamb. No, until the end of dinner. Wait until then."

"Alright, I'll try," Santana replied, smiling gently. "For you, Porcelain."

It was not the first time she had resorted to men in the past. It was a rare occurrence for sure, but it had happened. Every one of them a "lousy fuck". Every one of them not worth the regret she'd awake with the morning after, alone, for she would not allow them to stay the night. As soon as she was done and they'd be near thrown out like disposable razors she'd cut herself on. Out, before they could ask her for her number, to ask what she was doing that weekend. All out and there I would be with pancakes rubbing her back in the minutes following, listening as she spoke of boys in disgust, in minor appreciation. How she was so used to them, she could play them like well-used toys gathering rust. But she did not feel for a single one. Not a one.

By the end of the main course, however, and Santana remained sexually heightened. Frisky in which Kurt would compare her to a wolf with the need to feed, to feast on anything other than lamb which had failed to fill her hunger. He rapidly suspected the dessert would be just as equally unsuccessful with the Black Cherry ever so sweet on the tongue, though only teasing on Santana's. Like her mystery blonde, who had yet to make an appearance, her presence growing more palpable with every minute she did not walk in through the gangway and into the dining car to match the chest of Santana's. But the search had long been postponed with eyes now fixed through windows on the speeding sight outside, a city of romance, of beauty. Paris.

To Kurt and it appeared so mythical. This capital under a fading blue light, the sunset like lipstick smeared across a pane of glass. He would look and he would take in the buildings that were of such splendid architecture. Haussmann's boulevards. The cobbled streets. He would crane his neck to catch a glimpse of the Eiffel Tower maybe. Perhaps the Arc De Triomphe. Oh, the Notre Dame Cathedral. Most he could not see. Either blocked by shrouds of rail side trees or too far away, but how much he wished to see them. Seeing the people. The mythical Parisians whom he had heard were reticent, coolly polite people. They would not approach you first. You would and his French was only so-so. His tongue foreign to this land. That of this fair American boy.

The train was set to arrive at the Gare de L'Est in five minutes, the time reading 9:12pm. They had made good time. Right on schedule. A four hour journey in total from Calais that had them now approaching the station that would swallow them in its cavernous echo resonating mouth, along a platform lain with the Orient Express red carpet that seemed to stretch as far as a coastline, the ceiling itself high and paned in glass like that an opulent Victorian greenhouse that welcomed the rising smoke of the Flying Scotsman, it's grand entrance commanding the whole station's attention with a whistle. The most powerful of whistles Kurt had ever heard. Like that of a shrieking animal. Like that of a screaming woman, being killed under the wheels.

Immediately, and he would have no more of his Black Cherry Clafoutis. Santana had since finished her own. Along with the accompanying Kirsch. Both their plates were taken away briskly without another word. People out on the platform crowding to see the express as close as they could. Watching as the cobalt-blue uniformed stewards descended the train and manned their positions at the doors like soldiers. Like smiling palace guards welcoming new arrivals with luggage,
and aiding those disembarking, including, much to Santana's sudden horror, her woman. The mystery blonde. There out on the platform beside a steward handling her suitcase. Smiling in a sweet summer dress, her long golden hair down. It was her!

A chase could have been staged. For Santana to launch herself from the table, careful not to trip up on her dress and along the dining car to the nearest exit door through throngs of waiters, stewards, fellow passengers she bouldered by. Out of my way! Just move! Flattening them against the corridor sides like a storming tempest. Under her heels, trampled in an almost frantic comic distress. Coming through! Her dark were eyes fixed on the blonde she was losing track of. The girl was escaping just as out of sight. So far ahead on the platform. Man, could she walk fast! As out! Out onto the red carpet, Santana stepped out on, bursting out of the train door with heaving chest and a moan in her voice as with a few more futile steps, she stopped.

Damn! Her blonde was away. Too far down the platform to pursue any further. That blonde so beautiful. Oh Santana wished she knew her name. To call out to her. "Hot Girl!" "I'm back here, where you... "At least eat my ass before you go! ... " Now sighing, "... Summertime fucking Sadness." It would be fruitless to continue. She turned round, brushing herself down, "Fuck it," under her breath. Her hair she'd tied up in a neat plaited bun for dinner had since loosened and was now let down around her shoulders, tumbling in waves. She looked up at the sound of a voice. A steward was approaching her, asking if everything was alright. She nodded. "Sure," and winking, now casting a final glance down the platform. To the blonde. The blonde gone.

It was back on the train for her. On route to the restaurant car. To Kurt. Whom she knew had been shocked at her sudden flight. Left gaping. How mortifying! All for this blonde. An actual chase! To him, she was ever the maniac. A "nymphomaniac" he should have known would do this. Having even checked out the new passengers along the way, but with not one single lesbian amongst them. Fuck. Of them all only middle aged couples, one young on their honeymoon, and one young man now talking to a steward outside the train door, a handsome hottie dressed in belted bootleg jeans, a navy jacket, and a V neck white tee with what appeared to be a beige beaded necklace around his neck. A surfer perhaps, boarding the Orient Express.

Santana eyed him intensely. The look she was giving him, unmistakable. Like that of a black panther spying through the dark, she was gathering as much information on him as she could just with her eyes. This man, who appeared to be travelling alone. No ring was on his finger with only one suitcase he was insisting he carry to his cabin himself. "No trouble, dude," he said to the steward. An American accent. Texan layered on lightly. "Dude", Surfer slang of Southern California. Her eyes trailed to the suitcase itself. Vintage leather and large. It looked heavy, but it was not heavy to him. He was a strong man. He looked strong. Broad shoulders, hands, and neck. Muscular at the chest beneath that tee a stark contrast to his golden tanned skin. Hmmmm...

He wasn't the kind of guy you'd see hitching a ride on a fancy train. One of those Volkswagen vans or classic surf woodies out on the Californian coast looked more his style, and he must have known it. He was unsure of himself. Looking nervous in that way girls always found sexy and in a way I always found made me want to slap a chicken fillet across a guy's face. And what was with that swagger? It always had me telling guys who had it to either walk faster or buy a fucking belt. Thanks, Homie. But this one looked alright. He seemed friendly enough. Charming the stewards, making them chuckle. He glanced at me, briefly taking me in with a cute lopsided grin before following his steward into the train, me on their heels. I wouldn't lose track of this one.

And she wouldn't. The Latina would remember the sleeping car he was staying in. Third from the train, next to the Bar Car. She would repeat his cabin number in her head. Cabin No.14. A double cabin. Three down from the southern gangway, for which she'd use to reach her own, returning where sitting on her bed was Kurt, his dinner jacket removed, his bowtie too. His shoes were off, put
together neatly by the wall, and he was unbuttoning his shirt slowly, eyeing her with a glare. There was no hostility in his eyes. No real spite. Or so she sensed, but he was not speaking. Silent. Perhaps he was waiting for her to speak as she approached him with an apology. "Blondie's gone", she laughed dryly, sighing as she sat down next to him. "Au revoir."

However, by ten that evening and she was once again on the move. Her movements on speed with the train now rolling at 35mph, and accelerating out of Paris from which they had since left, departed from the Gare de L'Est sixteen minutes ago. In that time and Santana had readied herself under Kurt's watchful gaze. She'd changed from out of her dinner dress and into a low cut beaded camisole, fleshed toned, near sheer with a high-waisted skirt pleated in black silk. Her hair was once again tied up in a bun, kept in place with clouds of hairspray. Swirling black and white earings were in and black mascara was reapplied, thickly, once again a challenge as she struggled to steady her hand, all before Kurt would do it himself, rolling his tired eyes.

He would not join her. Not tonight. Not in the Bar Car. She was off for a drink, and no doubt to further eye the attractive wives of wealthy men to which he was in no mood to watch her do. He was not happy with what had transpired in the dining car but he could not hold a grudge. A boy as sweet as he. As gentle. As cute. Santana would hug him and call him cute. He loved being called it. As cute as his own "butt globes". Santana's words always humorous, but she would not inform him of the young man she'd seen boarding the train earlier in Paris. She knew Kurt wouldn't approve. Not of her intentions anyway. But guaranteed regret and shame be damned, she needed this. A body to lie with her. Any body. One to come to her bed and warm it for her.

And so towards the Bar Car, its wheels spinning along the track. A car that boasted an Art Nouveau-style interior by Gérard Gallet; plush lavender sofas on either side and at the end, the bar, with the baby grand piano just before it, playing Debussy. Most had come for the soft chords, to listen to the rising and fading of those notes. They enjoyed inhabiting music, as well as the sound of conversation but were left flustered by the strides of a Latina gliding past them down the aisle like an oncoming wave built to crash upon the shore with force. Building and building, faster, picking up speed until she broke upon the young man seated alone at the bar with a smirk. One so telling. It was enough to raise the hairs on the back of one's vulnerable neck.

We watched her. Both her and this man who, by the look on his face, had no idea who she was. We did, but it was not in our place to say. No matter how wary we were of her and her wanton air, her body giving off such a sexual flagrancy in the clothes she wore, it was revolting. Not that she cared. "Slut! Whore! Cum-dumpster! Just don't call me fat," she'd laugh, a deep husky laugh right from the gut. For she had quite a crude sense of humour. It was making the man she was sitting with smile as she ordered herself a drink. Dark Liquor. Naturally. She loved Manhattan's and Old Fashioned cocktails. She would order rounds of them, and kept them coming as her attention lay fixed on her new companion. Yes. We were all watching this woman at work.

"You just came runnin out in that dress of yours," the man said, cradling his beer, "and I didn't know what was going on. It kinda looked like you were chasin someone."

"I was," said Santana. "After a hot ass blonde I was planning on hooking up with on this train ride, but now she's gone. Paris has her, the lucky bastards."

"That smokin, huh?"

"I was gonna go down on her until I'd evolve gills, so yeah, that "smokin".""
"You ever been with dudes?"

"Have I," the Latina laughed. "Back in high school they called my pussy "New Era" 'cause it fit every dick head. I fucked my way through four years' worth of teenage boys, closeted and confused, until my first dyke kiss and I knew then what I was, but as I'm a "lipstick lesbian", most others don't. People have always thought me to be straight."

"I kinda though that too," The man replied.

"Yeah, you and all the other women on this train," Santana replied. "They think because I actually wear lipstick I'm gonna steal their men. They don't even fathom I may leave a lipstick mark on their own thighs and whisk them away themselves for a lesbian elopement."

The man laughed. "You'd do that?"

"If they were hot, it would be perfect. We'd run away someplace in Italy and have bastard inseminated children out of wedlock. So romantic."

"What about their men?"

Santana shrugged. "They've looked at me like they wanted to fuck me, sure, but I don't want any of them. I don't care about men. Since high school I've always thought the greatest con about guys is that they're dicks. Thinking girls are machines in which you put in kindness coins until sex falls out. Trying to "convert" me saying "homosexuality is wrong" until I break into their homes, tamper with their PC settings and block them from all lesbian porn."

"Any Pros in there?" The man asked as Santana nodded.

"Sure. Ironically, their dicks. I exercised my power over them just by getting their cocks up in a single minute and there was nothing they could do about it."

The man blinked. "Are you Satan?"

"The name's Santana, actually. It's just empowering growing boners in white boy pants. I could do it to you, you know. Might take longer with the alcohol you've had, but you could always stir your drink with it, huh."

"Yeah, I guess," laughed the man, "But I think you'd be wasting your time on me."

Santana frowned. "Why? Haven't you got one?"

"Sure, I do," the man chuckled. "I just don't get as embarrassed as most other dudes do when they get those awkward stiffies. Believe me, I've had 'em all. Goose eggs, Boner locks, Dick-ups-"

"Surf slang?"

The man frowned. "Huh?"

"You're a surfer, aren't you."

"Totally."

The Latina smiled, sipping at her cocktail. "I knew it."

"Why. Don't you like surfers?"
"Apart from the fact you all look like a bunch of beach hippies on water skateboards, I'm indifferent."

The man shook his head. "Nah, hippies are super into love and peace. Surfing's about freedom of spirit, open-mindedness and love for the ocean. Those are its grassroots."

"And you do it professionally?"

"Totally. I love competing. I do it all over."

Santana smirked. "Man of the world."

"What about you? What do you do?"

"I'm an actress. I do a little glamour modelling too here and there which always has guys telling me I look familiar, telling me we've met before they just don't know where."

The man perked his brow. "And you don't like that?"

"Yeah, I do," Santana nodded. "I clear my throat and ask them if they watch porn. It never renders them more uneasy."

The man laughed, taking a whisk of his drink. "You are Satan."

"I am who I am. And I like to have fun. Do you?"

The man now noted her flirtatious air, the way her eyes flashed from beneath her lashes. He nodded slowly. "Sure."

"Well how do you have it, Surfer Boi? When you're not on that board or sitting around beach fires smoking pot."

The man chuckled, shrugging. "Er… Hiking, Lifting, Spearfishing, and Skydiving. I play guitar, and I've sung at a few Jazz bars and music festivals in L.A. They're sweet gigs but out on the surf is where I'm really at."

"Then what is it you're doing on this train?" Santana asked. "There is no surf in Venice."

The man paused, looking down at his drink. "I er… I'm looking for someone."

The Latina snorted. "Aren't we all. After Blondie went pussy-pussy bye-bye, I thought there'd be no one left of interest here, but then I saw you Surfer Boi, and man are you hot."

Brushing her leg up against his, she lay her hand on the man's knee. The man, glancing down at it, at those red nails, frowned. "I thought you said you were gay."

"I am," Santana replied, smiling as her hand rose further and further up the man's thigh. "I'm very gay. In fact, did you know that the Greek poet Sapphos of Lesbos wrote poems about women who were so gay, he named the God damn sexuality after them? It's a level of queerness I hope to one day achieve, but not tonight." Her hand was now near reaching the man's inner thigh. Close. "You want to come back to my cabin for a nightcap? I don't think what they have here is… really doing it. Mmm?"

"Um… look, Santana," the man began, putting his hand on hers and halting its ascent. "You seem nice and all and you're funny as hell, but you're not who I'm looking for."
"Aren't I?" She forced her hand further up his leg, her prying fingers now massaging his inner thigh, his member to her pleasure, already semi erect. "I think this is what you need, Surfer Boi, and I think it'll be a lot more comfortable for us both to take this someplace more private, don't you?"

"Look, Santana-"

"You don't want to send me back to my cabin all alone now, do you?" Santana pouted. "Can't you see how stunning and hot and willing to put out I am? I'm sure you're search for whoever you're looking for can wait till morning, but this," now cupping the man's groin and squeezing. "... I know this can't."

"San-"

"Look, "dude"," Santana huffed. "I have your dick in the palm of my hand and you are powerless. I can either give you an orgasm or destroy you. Which is it gonna be?"

The man eyed her, the hand of this woman at his groin. Almost an alien feeling to him as he hadn't had sex in months. And he hadn't been in a relationship for longer. Too long by some people's standards. A man as attractive as he. They would say he needed sex. That he had "needs" found easily in a woman. Where it was warm, and wet. Women who'd promised exactly this in their eyes as they'd approached him in clubs and Jazz bars, inviting words on their lips to which he'd politely declined. Or perhaps his needs would be best fulfilled with a man. He'd had many asking him for his number at the gym, most of them muscular jocks who weren't his type. Carbon copies of himself he'd quickly said no to. They weren't who he was looking for.

Yet who was that exactly? Man or woman? What did they look like? What was it they had in-between their legs that was as plain to the mind as a doll's sanded off genitalia? The woman before him would not ask. She did not care. She wanted him. Looking indeed as if she'd either palm his crotch until he'd cum in his pants or tear the thing right off, such an aggressive woman he sensed her to be, and he'd never liked aggressive women. He hated dominant women. Some in the past having pushed him hard into the bed as they'd ridden him. On top. Always on top. Kissing him hard. Slapping his hands away when he'd tried to touch them. No! He was not allowed to make them cum. They would make themselves cum. Naughty boy!

And there was no point fighting off this one. She was a Latina. One of the most dominant women around. Right here in the Bar Car, in public, and he was frightened she'd pull out his cock and start stroking it, laughing at the look of disgust on his face. Where he'd shove at her and manage to shake himself free, but there she'd be panting right next to him. Stroking and pulling at his dick, her warm thigh over his as she'd push her belly and groin against him, moaning she wanted to fuck, she wanted to fuck! The hairs stirring at the back of his neck. This woman single minded in her desire, an impersonal desire chill and pitiless as any force bearing him onwards to his greater horror she'd mount him on the stool, mount his Big Thing and start riding.

He took one last swig of his beer, slapped money on the bar and stood, grabbing Santana's hand from his groin with force and marching them down the moving car, through the gangway to his cabin door. There and he fumbled to unlock it. Cursing at it in his shaken state. Open up you fucking thing. Damn it, open. He was clumsily shoving the key into the lock, missing and missing again, pushing at the door until it swung aside as in he entered, his hand searching the wall with violent slaps for the light switch. He cursed yet again, For fuck's sake, where the hell is it? These hands were useless tonight. His direction, poor. For he wasn't quite drunk, but the alcohol was running through him. Saturated deep into his very tissue, he was at its mercy.

Santana launched herself at him, kissing him wildly. This needed to be done now. She was clutching at him like an animal in heat. An animal still clothed that had no time to remove anything but her
underwear, helping him unfasten his belt with blind hands as he shook off his jacket violently to the floor, seeming in anger. And such authority in his anger. This man who was towering over Santana like an avenging warrior. Bright hazel eyes and butch cut hair. He deftly pushed her against the wall, no matter it was hard wooden paneling, there was a doglike urgency in his need to copulate, and to do it at once, hoisting her leg around his hip and penetrating her so quickly she felt a stab of pain, of hurt. She was feeling it now. The shame, the regret.

She loved women. It was with a woman she wanted to be with, women had the pussy; yes, and now she had dick. One that was in her now, curving slightly up and hitting her G-Spot she enjoyed with guilt. She closed her eyes from the man thrusting forcefully into her, this man standing tall at six foot, his body broader and tighter muscled with her hands clutching at him. Her arms, her leg, her tender thigh she feared would chafe. She feared he'd rip her hair out as he tugged on it. **Pull on my hair like that. Pull on my hair like that!** His hand pressed on her neck, **I like that, I like that, I like that!** And like a warm near hot balloon the sensation, opening up, and up inside her, astonishing her as if it were her first time, the now balloon opened, and opened.

**This is what I loved. Fucking. I loved to fuck and be fucked but this was a mistake. I knew this now. This guy had just been in the wrong place at the wrong time. Caught in the fray, a casualty, collateral damage. He was fucking in a rush. Lack of rhythm in his tipsy state with the cabin moving rapidly that it had him stumbling, pausing in his movements as I screamed, my hand on my clit, "No, no, no don't stop!" And he'd thrust in me again, saying he was "gonna bust" and I ordered him he couldn't. Not yet. "Not yet!" The muscles in me were starting to contract, but I wasn't there yet. God dammit! He had to keep fucking me. He had to keep doing that! "Keep doing that! Keep-" But all too soon and he'd pulled out, the cry on his lips stilling my blood cold.**

"**KURT!**" The man had screamed, his voice having broken in the cry. "... K-Kurt! ... Baby." Santana was quick to push him away confused, semen sticky on her fingers and on her pubis, trickling down her thigh, the work of no condom to which she cursed her own carelessness. At his carelessness. Even if he hadn't trusted himself to roll one on in time. He'd screamed someone else's name whilst still in her. A name she knew. **What the fuck?** And the man, panting, his penis now wilted as like a rotting plant, looked at her, her clothes messed, her face that of disgust, and suddenly he was shouting at her, his eyes loathsome. "Get. Out." His words that spat like droplets of flying venom through gritted teeth. "Get the hell outta here! GET OUT! **NOW!**"

And Santana ran. No longer that bitch in heat; now, only an animal in distress with its tail in-between its legs, pulling up her underwear and running, the door slamming behind her as she fled. She scampered down the hall stumbling and losing her footing, twice falling and twice picking herself up on shaking limbs. Weak limbs. Damn it! She wanted to feel anger. She had fury in her. She hadn't got what she'd wanted. Sex with no finale, and to have a boy tell her to leave. Surfer Boi was the first. He'd stared at her, his face having flushed with anger to the hue of rare-cooked beef. He could have yanked her towards the door with such violence she'd worry her arms would loosen from their sockets and shut it in her face. He could have hurt her.

So afflicted she was, she wanted to cry. She reached her cabin in the adjoining car, there to slump against the wall, breathing hard with such noise all around. The moving of the car on the tracks below. The wheel pistons of the locomotive. The whistle, the steam! She glanced back towards Cabin No.14 she knew was emanating cries of male anger, of sorrow. The sounds of a deranged man banging around from within. Dear Christ she'd had no choice but to run. Except what had happened had been real. Surfer Boi was like any other with thoughts and feelings, but broken hearted and still in love? She hadn't known. The way he'd cried out for "Kurt". And the way unknown to her, Kurt himself, since shot up and fully awake in his bed, now gasped.
(But if you wish to criticize, may it be constructive. I'm not going to learn from my mistakes and improve if you vent.)

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~ STAY TUNED FOR MORE BY FOLLOWING/FAVORITING ~
The following morning and eyes were awoken to sights outside, that of sprawling great valleys carved into the land like upside domes. Hilly fields stretching far and wide where Swiss cattle grazed. In the distance, wooden lodges on high perches. There was a sense of thorough tranquility about it. Docility. The country life to which no harm could come, no outside world attack, protected as they were by these mountains and mountains, all round, ascending into the sky like giants of the earth. Their sides were steep in lush conifers the shade of pistachio, of olive. Their peaks frosted in snow. It was a magnificent sight to wake up to; that of the Swiss Alps, the Alpine range, which seemed to span on for forever, or so tired eyes would believe for a little while.

They'd passed the border in the night. A long night for some. They'd been awake when the train had made a stop to restock on coal and water for the locomotive. Awake for sunrise and awake now for breakfast as stewards knocked on their cabins, a continental breakfast of bread, baguettes, croissants, cheese, fruit, tea, coffee and juice set on trays and placed on the tables by the windows. David, the steward to Kurt and Santana's cabin who'd reverted their beds to the sofa and with an "Enjoy" on his lips, had left them alone. Yet at eight thirty in the morning and Santana wished for more sleep. Often lying in bed until the middle of the day back at home, she had had an awful night's rest, the rhythmic swaying of the train like a hellish rocking crib.

Kurt sat beside her, dressed with a napkin in his lap in which a half-eaten croissant lay. There he ate silently, thinking it was good. It was very good. The tea too. Earl Grey. Not that he drank tea often. Or many caffeinated beverages to awaken him. He himself had slept relatively well. With ear plugs in and he'd managed to mute most of the train's noise, yet the motion of the car had also proven a disruption, his body having turned this way and that. Disruptive thoughts in his head too, a dream he'd had to which he'd awoken in shock, one of Noah Puckerman, and he hadn't dreamt of him for many days now. He'd heard dreaming in general was a sign one wasn't sleeping well. He knew he'd had better, but this one had been disturbing enough.

I'd been walking along the sleeping car hallway alone, lit only by gas lamps in the old fashioned wall holders. I was opening every cabin door, each leading to various rooms of Noah's Dallas home in which I'd stayed in years ago. Reentering the dining room and kitchen where Mrs. Puckerman had cooked and served her kosher food. The study where Thomas had showcased me his swimming medals and trophies. The living room where Sarah and I had danced all day and finally, Noah's bedroom, where on the bed sat Noah himself, his back to me as he'd waxed his surfboard on his lap, crying. Sobbing as his shoulders hunched and shook before launching up as like a wolf on a precipice howling at the moon, screaming, "KURT! " Screaming in heartbreak.

There had been other dreams. All of sudden images appearing imposed upon others, fading and going without memory. One had been of a thousand eyes glaring him into insanity as he'd run into the sea and drowned. Another had been trophies of The ASP World Tour, The Billapong Pipeline Masters, The Bells Beach Surf Classic, all of them awarded to 'Noah Puckerman', yet the name had been scratched away, 'QUEER' written over in hostile red marker. Another had been of Venice Beach as a graveyard of broken surfboards. A massacre in which they'd been snapped jaggedly in
two over the knee. Like snapping the spinal cords of docile sea creatures. All in a fit of rage. And another of a human heart, stabbed mercilessly with a shark tooth pendent.

They were abstract dreams dreamt in confusing succession that melded together, recounting what had happened eight years ago that summer, one in which Noah had remained closeted, struggling to exhibit their relationship in public with no displays of affection made a firm rule. They'd run into Noah's school friends one day at the city mall and right before Kurt's eyes 'Puck' had appeared, further disappointing him as he'd watched in dismay. In California, it had been better. Noah had been more relaxed, yet upon returning to surfing with a wish to one day compete professionally, only to then learn of its strict taboo of homosexuality, a secret that had allegedly destroyed past surfers, their careers and company sponsors, Kurt had walked away.

It had been for the best. From what he'd heard Noah was now indeed competing in surfing events around the world. Those in Mexico, Hawaii, Australia, California, Galapagos, Ecuador. He'd practiced and perfected the sport whilst also having attended the LAMA College for Music Professionals in Pasadena from which he'd since graduated with a degree in music studying guitar performance, and was now happily living in L.A. Living a "cool" life. A "rad" life. One he had informed Kurt of in an email he'd sent him months back. His first in September. His last to date in May where upon he'd wished him a Happy Birthday, 'I wish I was there with you to celebrate. Have an awesome day.' Followed hours later at two in the morning with, 'Shit... I miss yea'.

Noah was long departed from his life. He hadn't heard from him in years before this. No one spoke of him. How many people knew of Noah anyway? Kurt hadn't told them. He hadn't told much to Santana. He hadn't told Blaine he was newly in contact with him. Not that he was keenly responsive to these emails. He'd smile only faintly when reading them. His own replies were short and succinct, sent days later. Sometimes he'd sent nothing at all, afraid to become all too familiar. He'd delved neither his address, nor his phone number and had refused to get involved with the man beyond a tone of mutual friendship. For Kurt had a worthy lover now. A man who appreciated his worth. A true soul mate to whom he too was living very "happily" with.

And I would not willingly sabotage that. Not even to Noah's last words saying that he missed me. That six shots later at an L.A. bar after having wished me Happy Birthday he'd been staring at his hands trying to remember how it had felt to hold me eight years ago. That even until two in the morning, of all the things that could have still been on his mind right then it had been of me. It was always of me, and since September, he too had been on my mind. It had been the reason for these morbid-minded dreams. All ominous that would have me awake in bed for a long time after unmoving, tasting something brackish and cold at the back of my mouth and I wanted no more of it. No more thoughts of him. No matter how much I too missed him. I couldn't.

"Aren't you going to eat?" Kurt asked, looking over at Santana. "It's good."

The Latina was sat with her legs crossed on the sofa, seemingly distant as she glanced at the croissant in his lap. She helped herself to her own and picked at it with her fingers, as if one by one, picking the petals from a flower.

"I heard you come back late last night. How was it?"

Again, Santana remained unresponsive, her face pulled to scrutinize the food in her hand before asking, "Ever fucked a surfer?"

"Good morning, where did that come from?"

"You've been with one before, right?"
"Yes. Many years ago."

"Who was he?"

"Why are you asking me this?"

Santana huffed, now shifting closer. "Just tell me."

"Um…” Kurt began, hesitating. "Well, do you remember when I told you about a boy I met when at a hotel in California and met again in South Africa eight years later?"

Santana frowned. "He was the surfer?"

"Yes, it was his main hobby."

"Oh." The Latina smirked. "So One Day guy is now Surfer guy. What happened?"

Kurt shrugged. "He became predictable."

"How predictable? You weren't just one amongst others he was screwing, were you?"

"No. He wasn't ready for an openly gay relationship, and neither were his surfing dreams. I knew better than to stand in the way of them because the sport was his true calling and I had no place then in that life as his boyfriend."

"So he dumped you?"

Kurt averted his eyes to his croissant, taking a casual bite. "No, I ended it. I knew when it was my time to leave. Only thing was, he didn't want me to. He tried to make me stay. Said he'd quit surfing just so I would which I couldn't at all ask for. He literally winced when he said it. And this long distance relationship of ours, him in Texas, me in Ohio, it wouldn't work. Not at this particular juncture in our lives. It just wasn't time… so I ended it… though it was a mutual decision in the very end."

"Was it?" Santana asked, unconvinced.

"I like to think so," Kurt sighed. "I don't know. He was inexpressibly distraught and San I'm not sure if you've ever seen someone when their heart shatters into a million pieces; that far off stare of defeat with tears dripping from a vacant stare, the slouch inward, as if all their bones have fractured and standing up is impossible. The color drain from their skin as their bottom lip trembles, trying to take in what's happened, or rather, block it out. But the impact from a shattered heart is visible even to the ignorant; the coffee colored bags ringing their eyes, the chapped lips and raw cheeks from crying. I don't know how science can explain the physical pain you feel when your heart shatters, why your legs are reluctant to hold your weight and your hands are icy to the touch. Science can't explain why it feels as if your veins are working against you to choke you from the inside out."

There was a long pause as Kurt sat silent for an eternity, before whispering, "I'm not sure if I believe in afterlife. I'm not sure I need to. I don't think it matters. If hell exists, a shattered heart resides there."

"Surfer Boi's, right?"

"I heard he'd snapped his surfboard in two in a fit of rage, his dad had to buy him a new one."

"You still talking to him?"

"He began emailing me a few months back and we're more vaguely aware of how our lives are now,
but apart from that, I haven't seen him at all since I was sixteen."

Santana cocked her head. "You wanna?"

"Do I want what?"

"Do you wanna see him again?"

Kurt looked over at the window. "It would be nice yes, but I don't think I would be able to trust my feelings in his presence. He was my first love, you know. You never forget your first love."

"Or your first fuck."

"Unfortunately for some."

"Unfortunately for you?"

Kurt smiled. "… No."

"Was it with Surfer guy?"

"… Yes."

"The pieces are coming together," Santana grinned. "Frot with Surfer dude. Why don't I know about this?"

"I've mentioned him before."

"Vaguely. I don't know much about any of the guys you say you saw in high school, Kurt. You've got to divulge the details here. I mean, you know all about my first fuck."

Kurt sighed. "Yes, in a bathroom at a house party when you were thirteen. The guy didn't climax, you questioned whether you'd really had sex and the next day you went and bought a pregnancy test where upon the guy freaked and proposed in a kebab shop. The end."

"Good story," Santana chuckled. "Stupid as hell but good, and I should be able to recite yours too."

"Must you? Can't you recite how I loved his ample warmth and hickerous ocean odor? Or his love pounces and sticky hands."

"Sticky hands?" Santana perked as Kurt grimaced.

"Ew San, not like that. He just loved eating jerk ribs with his fingers is all. You would have liked him actually. He loved his Texas barbeque. Said his saliva was just his taste buds jerking off to the sight of attractive food."

"And to the sight of you too?"

Kurt gasped. "San!"

"He was hot wasn't he?"

"The handsomest boy I've ever seen in my life. He was so hot I would always be there thinking, 'Wow, he can do the thing to me in my privates', every time I saw him, and he did. It's because of him I know what really pleases me in bed and I owe most of what I know about sex to what we did together. What we learned from each other as I was new to it all and he'd only ever slept with girls."
"He wasn't gay?"

"Officially, he was bisexual... Actually, come to think of it, I'd say he was moreover pan. Unofficially, he was 'Swaggasaurus Sex'. A silly name I coined just for him. That and 'Swagger Faggot'. They were the only sexual labels he approved of as he wasn't a fan of labels in general. He'd always say his sexuality was, "I'm not fucking you, so don't worry about it." Then again, I think he'd have taken up any label I came up with. As long as it wasn't "Uncoolbutt McBoring Dick", I think he would have loved it."

"What a love," Santana laughed.

"Well he did love me like a dam breaking, San... and I miss it. I miss everything about him. He'd dance in his chair by flexing his butt muscles. When he'd rub his eyes, it felt so good he called it "eye masturbation". His mom had to drive him to the hospital once because he'd punched a wall to show me how "punk" he was and he couldn't wait till "mister" died out and "ya boy" became the default honorific for men in the English language."

"Congrats, you dated a weirdo."

"I remember clowns and heights didn't scare him as much as clogging a friend's toilet. He'd rest his head on the car window despite the vibrations that caused him mild concussion and whatever he found that actually vibrated you'd best believe he'd put his dick on it when no one was looking- Oh! He also wanted to make a secret handshake that involved us touching our mouths together for three hours."

"You guys actually did that?" Santana grimaced. "God Lady H, cloy even for you."

Kurt shrugged. "That's just how he was, San. He was very affectionate like that. He was patient with me, he was tender with me. It's how I liked it."

"Right."

"In bed and he was a giver. I mean, when we would have sex, he'd always rather have me cum than have me make him cum."

"But you did make him cum, right?"

"Yes, of course. He'd always have me look in his eyes when he did. Even when I "accidently" sat on his dick and he came three times. Oops."

"Wait, so you guys actually-"

"No, I literally just sat on his penis."

"Wha-"

"'Reverse hotdogging', we called it."

Santana snorted. "Nice one, Glitter stick."

"He just had a thing for my butt, okay. Had done since we were kids. Said it was cute. Said I was cute, all the time, that I was "cute", and cute really did it for Noah. Nothing turned him on more-"

"Wait, what did you say his name was?"

"Noah."
"What was his full name?"

"Noah Puckerman," Kurt replied, "Why?" He observed his friend in concern, her dark eyes now wide and unmoving as they stared into the corner. "San, what is it?"

Noah. Puckerman. Noah Puckerman. I repeated the name over and over in my head, rewinding my mind furiously to the point I'd entered the bar car last night searching for Surfer Boi. It had only been by luck that I'd found him there in the same clothes he'd been wearing when boarding the train. Smart casual amongst black tie. He'd looked even more out of place than he had been on the platform and I remember I'd chuckled, approaching him still smiling when I'd ordered my drink and taking the piss out of him for it. But he'd smiled, an alright guy that he was. A good-hearted guy. He asked what my name was. Santana, I'd told him. I asked him for his. "Noah" he'd said, "Noah Puckerman". And shit, if this wasn't all a cluster fuck in my mind right now.

"Okay," she began, "last night in the bar car, I pulled."

Kurt gaped. "You did?"

"Yeah, it was a guy I'd seen boarding the train back in Paris after I lost Blondie. He was there at the bar, I joined him for a few drinks and afterwards, he took me back to his cabin where we fucked. Only thing was, when he came, he cried out your name."

Kurt frowned. "What?"

"He said "Kurt"," Santana reiterated. "Right when he shot his load, he said your name followed by, "Kurt, baby".""

"Who was this man?"

"Okay, don't be mad, but I'm thinking he was Surfer Boi."

Kurt looked at her. "You're thinking what now?"


Kurt shook his head. "He can't be."

"He told me his name was Noah," Santana pressed. "He's a surfer. Lives in L.A but from Dallas. Competes in surf competitions and plays guitar. Ringing any bells yet?"

"This isn't possible," Kurt muttered, now looking down. "What would Noah be doing on the Orient Express?"

"He said he's looking for someone," Santana answered as Kurt frowned, glancing up at her.

"What?"

"He said he's looking for someone. On the express or in Venice, I don't know, but that's what he said."

"Did he say anything else?"

Santana pursed her lips. "Yeah, but I was too busy copping a feel and trying to hook up with him."

"So… you really had sex with him?"
"You know I wouldn't have if I'd known who he was, Kurt," said Santana as Kurt huffed.

"You weren't to sleep with any guy at all, San. You know what happens when you do. I told you. Now you've gone and possibly done my ex-boyfriend I haven't seen in eight years who now according to you is on this very train. God, my heart is beating so damn fast right now, it hurts." Placing a hand over his chest, a shaking hand, Kurt breathed hard, eyes closed. "This is not at all what I consider a light breakfast."

"Kurt, you need to chill okay-"

"Now I know how that friend of yours must have felt in high school when you tried to date her dad."

Santana smiled grimly. "Difference here is I actually feel bad about this. She on the other hand wouldn't shut up about self-respect and let me tell you something, self-respect is respect for myself. I could as well suck three thousand dicks and have one of them be her dad's and still respect myself. So shut the fuck up, Tammy Kims."

Kurt groaned. "Not helping right now."

"Sorry."

"I just… I don't know what to make of any of this. How is… What happened afterwards?"

"You mean after he hollered your name when he came?" Kurt flashed her a scathing look. "He threw me out and screamed at me to leave. I mean, it's not as if he hi-fived me, slapped my ass, told me to hit the showers and said "Good Game". The sex was shit. Like atrophically shit. We were genuinely like two off the wagon sex-addict sociopaths fucking like we didn't love their own mothers, and not in the good way."

"Right."

"He didn't want to have sex with me, Kurt. He was tipsy and I was all like "hickory dickory dock, I wanna touch your cock". I pushed him into it at that bar and I'm sorry."

"Yeah."

"Think now we know he's looking for you. Usually, if a chick calls out their ex-girlfriend's name in bed, I'm all for going to that ex's house and kissing her. See what the pussy about. See what all the fuss is about, but you Kurt, Surfer Boi is still brutally in love and man is that the saddest fucking sentence in the whole world."

"Again, not helping," Kurt groaned as the Latina cocked her head.

"Maybe it's even sadder than when I told you I was once walking on the beach with a hot girl until the LSD wore off and I realized I was just dragging a stolen mannequin around a parking lot."

Kurt huffed. "Santana. This isn't the time. We're in a crisis here."

"What crisis?"

"How awkward do you think it's going to be now? To bump into him after all these years knowing what happened last night."

"Trust me, Lady Fab, running into an ex is nothing. Digging a hole to hide a body only to find another right there already in the ground, well, that's awkward."
Kurt glared at her. "Santana, this isn't funny. I can't go out there now."

"Kurt, relax. He has more reason not to leave his cabin than you do. As for myself, it's a hair flip. I'm gonna go wherever the hell I want and so are you. You have nothing to fear."

"He doesn't know we share the same cabin does he?"

"No."

"Do... do you remember which one is his?"

Santana nodded. "Number fourteen. Over in the next car."

"God, this is all so crazy. My mind is still trying to wrap itself around the fact that he's here... well, allegedly."

"Glitter pants, I'm telling you, it's him."

Kurt paused. "Um... how..."

"What?"

"How... does he look?"

The Latina smirked, "He's hot. Whoa momma, is he hot. Like Brad Pitt circa 2004, but more bohemian."

"Really?"

"Yeah, buff body. Thick meat. He's a real thruster-"

It earned Santana a slap on the shoulder, but it had Kurt smiling. He'd finish his breakfast and sit curled up on the sofa fiddling absentmindedly with his top, staring at his fingers with soft eyes akin to a lamb's, and there to remain quiet amongst his thoughts. Those of Noah, but he would not go and find Noah. He was afraid of seeing him again. He'd never been good at making the first move. Boys had always had that power. The power to control, to hurt. Some could even enter the soul if they were old enough. Had Noah? With those touches, those murmurs of his name. In itself "Kurt" wasn't a magical name. German given as was his surname "Hummel", but in Noah's deep-yearning voice it had been. It had been very magical.

Yet he was now in dangerous territory. To be thinking of Noah with such fondness. To allow these thoughts and feelings to resurface. He was in a relationship. He had a boyfriend and Blaine would become only a little jealous when the attention of men landed on him. Attention at cafes, on Broadway, at Vogue. Attention at the art gallery where the artists admired him from afar, including a French artist from Colmar who'd fallen hard for Kurt upon first laying his eyes on him, and who'd asked him to pose for his entire spring collection. And to see his boyfriend's slim body, beautiful taunting face and suggestive red parted lips in twenty fresco paintings through eyes of another who adored and desired him to that extent. Indeed, it had unnerved Blaine.

I'd never cheated on him. I'd never cheated on any of my past boyfriends. It had honestly never occurred to me to do such a thing. I had respected them. I had been crazy about them. I had loved them. The way they had looked, talked and smelt. And Blaine too. My boyfriend in long sleeved white shirt with cuffs and cuff links or dapper in his bowtie, slacks and Prada loafers. Always looking like a real gentlemen. It drove me crazy. I could never mock him. Especially someone as kind as he. Someone who had been in love with me for years now. It would be the meanest, cruelest
thing to cheat on him. To break his trust. And to think some gained a thrill at the thought of getting caught by their very own partner. To humiliate them. Oh, it repulsed me.

Santana would notice the look on Kurt's face. His sweet face. Little Kurt. There near believing it constituted cheating to think of Noah. His shameful secret. For there were still feelings there. First love feelings that could never be forgotten. Was he still in love with Noah? With his muscular physique, "chillaxed" attitude and wildly different interests, the surfer was not a twin of his as Blaine was. Noah was not the 'fated' "Gay Winklevii twin" who in her eyes had always been more of a brother than a lover to Kurt, a brother twin who could protect him from the world. Or try to. Both were just too similar to one another. She'd always thought it. Twins were never to love each other in that way. They were never to last, but she would not tell Kurt that. Not now.

Glee

By three that afternoon and the sights outside had changed. No longer were they of the Swiss Alps, but of the vast Italian Dolomites. The "pale mountains" that appeared characteristically different from those in Switzerland. Dramatic and bold. Majestic carbonate rock monsters those on the express had become acquainted with, for it had been an hour and a half since they'd crossed the Italian border into Italy. Along the track that seemed to wind its way with swerve like direction through the many mountains with still the ever sprawling fields and conifer woods about. Still the many rustic lodges and chalets for tourists who'd come trekking through, amongst them skiers, hikers, mountain climbers, base jumpers, para and hand gliders.

In his cabin looking out at such expanse and Kurt had felt confined. He'd remained inside for most of the day, leaving only for lunch, and a quick lunch at that in the Etoile du Nord dining car with Santana, managing to all but stomach the Monkfish Osso Bucco with Saffron starter before he was excusing himself to retire to their cabin, too anxious to eat. Upon his return, he'd flit his pen across his note pad and write a list of notes on their voyage thus far, the food, the service, the comfort, but half way down the page and he'd give up, there to curl up once more on the sofa and stare wistfully out the window seemingly with no purpose and no will, his thoughts of Noah now plaguing him so much he could not recall a time when his mind had been freer.

He had not seen him. Of course he had not seen him. The time now nearing four o'clock, an hour later and still no sighting. Not that he'd gone searching. He'd made himself scarce out of nerves, and nerves that had heightened at the sight of his fellow male passengers on board. Middle aged men, bespectacled, stout or overweight. Men with receding hairlines, greying temples and mid-frontal baldness. Men with puppy jowls, intelligent self-loathing eyes and coarse skin. There was a doubt in him that Noah was even onboard, much less looking for him as in his thoughts he imagined the man doing just that. Calling out his name "Kurt!" One by one, knocking on all cabin doors. And then to eventually find him and to see each other again after so long.

But Noah had not come. Instead Santana had returned from lunch where upon her knock on the door had startled him from his thoughts with wildly beating heart, and she did not miss the glimmer of disappointment in his eyes as they'd fallen away, the spark of hope fading like a flame blown out. She knew what it was about. It made her smirk. Yet she did not mention it. Letting him know instead the food served had been as "poncey" as usual and that the train was quickly approaching the next station in Verona which they would be pausing at briefly before continuing on to Venice. Kurt nodded, glancing once again out the window. Already they were nearing the end of their voyage on the Orient Express and it could not have come at a better time.
Arriving at Verona Porta Nuova railway station, the brakes of the Flying Scotsman shrieking and showering golden pellet like sparks onto the track and they came to a stop. The passengers disembarked. They were told they had twenty minutes to do as they wished, to get some fresh air, stretch their legs and explore the surrounding Piazzale 25 Aprile Square before the train would depart once again for Venice. Santana stepped down from the car onto the platform, Kurt following close behind. The weather had been very good all afternoon, with the sun having not dulled since midday, or so it seemed. It was warm outside and in the cool shade under the platform roofs they walked the stretch, promenading, until reaching the rear of the express.

There and Santana pulled out a cigarette from her purse. Chesterfield; the brand most of those in show business apparently smoked, and a lot of them did. Everyone in the entertainment industry smoked. It calmed the nerves. Not that Santana ever displayed signs of anxiousness. It was usually in excitement. In anticipation of something that she’d light up a smoke. And such luminous smoke she exhale with such luxury from her nostrils like curving ivory tusks. Oh, it made her feel alive! Even though she knew Kurt did not appreciate it. This ”nasty habit” of hers he’d tried to stop with Zyban and Chantix medication, nicotine nasal sprays, inhalers, patches, gum and lozenges, all having failed as going cold turkey had never worked out for Santana.

But Kurt did not complain. He stood beside her with his hands clasped in front of him as like a student outside the classroom waiting to be allowed in by the teacher. He did not reprimand her. The smell reminded him of their apartment in New York, a pungent odor of food, coffee grounds, cigarette ashes, scorch and perfume if he didn't crack the windows fully open for air, something Santana did not believe in. For she preferred trapped airless heat. It was the kind she'd inhaled as a child in Santa Fe. And the "smell" was nothing compared to some she'd inhaled growing up either, but living with Kurt and she'd relented to keep their apartment as ventilated as necessary for she suspected without fresh purified air and his little lungs would collapse.

"Do you miss home?" Kurt asked as Santana frowned.

"Already? Kurt, it's been three days."

Kurt nodded. "And they've been fun. I'm looking forward to the rest. It's just I can't help but think of it when you smoke. Olfactory memory and all."

"Olfacto-what?"

"Olfactory memory. You know, odor memory. The smell of your cigarettes just does that."

"That you like to bomb with Febreeze right after. Seriously, that stuff works. I sprayed that shit on my high school essays to cover the bullshit."

"Are you even allowed to smoke out here? Santana, I think it's illegal."

The Latina grinned. "Relax, it's just one smoke. No one's around."

"They've all gone to the square," Kurt muttered. "Do you want to go?"

Santana shrugged. "Wasn't planning on it, but you can if you want. Go on ahead, I'll catch up."

"No, I'd rather we went together."

"Would you rather we went at all?"

Kurt hesitated, now sighing, "… No."
"He might not be there," Santana smirked. "He might be still on board."

"Perhaps, but I doubt it. Noah was never an indoor boy. He was always outgoing. Always adventurous."

"And you were into that? I thought you were more of a Cloudy with a Chance of why the fuck am I outside kind of guy."

"More so, yes, but not all the time. Humans aren't meant to be enclosed by four walls, San. We always want to run free, and Noah did too. I loved going anywhere with him. I really did, as long as it didn't mess up my hair."

"And what did he love about you?" Santana asked as Kurt smiled.

"Well, he loved when I danced in his garden sprinkler, when I'd lick off his milk moustache from his upper lip when he'd do his "Got Milk?" impressions. He loved my feet. He loved to soak and massage my feet. Loved when I'd sit on the front of his bicycle as he'd cycle along Santa Monica and he found it endearing when cashiers would ask me for coins and there I'd be fumbling around in my wallet pulling out wads and wads of cash."

"Yeah, you've got to stop getting intimidated by them," Santana said, now imitating him, "Oh God. Oh, I'm so sorry. All the last wanted was ten more cents at the drugstore for those facial wipes and what do you hand her?"

Kurt shifted, "A fifty. I just don't like holding up queues. I literally feel the impatience of those behind me billowing at the nape of my neck like the smoke from a bull's nostrils."

"And yet when Gay Clark Kent does it, it raises your donger."

"Santana-"

"And it needn't even be him," she said, blowing at his neck as the boy swatted her away.

"San, quit it."

The woman chuckled, returning to her cigarette. "Did Surfer Boi do that to you?"

"Never you mind."

"Oh come on."

"Can't you ask after his surfing-"

"I already know from the way he fucks he must ride the surf with the passion of an Arapaho ghost dancer, I wanna know what you guys did. Did he have any kinks?"

"No."

"I'm not kinkaphobic. My mom's half furry and my dad's part dom, part into feet."

"Well Noah was the same. He liked to be in control and have his toes sucked."

"Anything else?"

"Frotting, hotdogging, thigh fucking."
"Nice."

"But honestly, under his touch, under his lips, I was his. My ideal body weight was always him on top of me. I mean, the sole reason he'd play Twister was to "accidently" fall and somehow find a way to have his way with me, and his hips. His hips were magic, San. He could grind so damn well I'd arch my back, grab the sheets, bite the pillow and gasp into the air orgasms so big he said it made his cum "sparkle"… He also loved when I'd tap on his penis and ask, "Is this thing on?"

Santana smirked. "Mmm, wanky."

"Okay, no more," said Kurt, embarrassed, "I'm not telling you anymore. Besides, you slept with him. You should now."

"Yeah, but you can't compare a literal fuck and run quickie to what you had with him, Kurt. You guys didn't fuck like a pair of feral animals who'd never met each other. No, I sense he's more a make love like the waves make love to the shore kind of guy, right? A passion aggressive Bruce Venture alpha, the 'dumb cocky' kind, unlike myself, the 'flog your ass' kind."

Kurt winced. "San, please, I don't want to hear this."

"And I know you said he was pan and all, and sure he doesn't look all too gay apart from his deep V neck and single little hoop earing that makes him look like a gay pirate, but I got the vibe from him. Dunno what it was, but he defo would have looked the "Swagger Faggot" going down on me, if you know what I mean-"

"Alright stop, San! Enough. Anymore and I'll have to break the fingers you use for bean flicking."

Santana fell silent, watching as he paced away. "… You really got the gay vibe from him?"

"Either that or he'd gone through a major pussy drought," Santana shrugged. "That shit can knock you outta rhythm, and trust me getting back into it on a moving train ain't easy."

"But-"

"Or perhaps it was the booze. That beer he was drinking."

"Intoxication always did arouse him easily," Kurt sighed, seating himself on a nearby bench. "Oh Noah… what are you doing? Why are you…" He looked to Santana. "How did he even find me here?"

"Does it matter?" Santana asked, shrugging. "He just wants to see you."

"Well he's not going to find me in there now is he!" Kurt cried out, now gesturing wildly to the Latina's crotch. "What on earth was running through his mind when he was doing that? I hope for your sake he used a condom. The man is virile as hell. I'm telling you, he had free range with the eggs of so many girls at his high school, he could have whipped up a whole freakin banquet of omelets for a single starving African tribe."

"Huh," Santana gulped, glancing down at her stomach as Kurt continued.

"And now here we are in Italy, and he's yet to find me. He doesn't have much time left and I'll be damned if I do it myself." Santana's eyes flickered past his head. "This is what he came to do, and yes, I guess I have always wondered what season finale it would be like when we would see each other again because he could be so romantic, but one thing you have to know about Noah San is that he's a coward."
"Er… Kurt."

"He was a coward closeting himself in Texas, breaking a promise to me when he once again adopted that stupid "Puck" alter ego in public and he's a coward still, hiding himself away wherever he is," Kurt ranted, oblivious to Santana's line of sight. "In fact, if he has any decency he will have gotten off at this station and left already. I was on this damn train first. It's not fair that he should be allowed to unnerven me like this, even if you do say he still loves me and cries out my name when he cums…"
"Cool. You havin a good time?"

"Um… yes, it's been very enjoyable. Although it's going to take longer for me to accustom myself to sleeping on a train."

"Eh, that's nothing. Tell me you've slept in Youth Hostels you know are gonna give you contagious killer ass rash or in a sandbox for a whole year then you can come back to me."

"You lived in a van?"

"Yeah, when I graduated college. I had to share it with two other broke dudes and a chick who used an empty Cheetos bag for her purse and butter for lipgloss."

"Ew."

"Yep, it was just us four bums crashin on west coast beaches every night with nothing but a pizza box for a dresser and the floor for a closet."

"And yet from a van where the floor was a shelf for everything to riding on the Orient Express, something tells me you'd still rather be bunking in that sandbox than in your two thousand dollar cabin."

"I had some good times in that baby, and don't get me wrong, this train is the damn most beautiful thing I've ever traveled on, but you know me, I'm not one for cumber bands, cheeseless fondue and tea that wasn't boiled Gatorade. I'm legally an adult, sure, but I've still got the mentality of a squid."

"So why travel on the Express?" Kurt asked. "Are you with a special someone-"

"No!" Noah exclaimed, "… no, no, Kurt, no. I'm here on my own."

The fair boy nodded, "Oh."

Noah grinned. "I was in Tahiti a couple days ago competing in the Billabong Pro, you know as part of the ASP World Surfing Tour."

"How did that go?" Kurt asked, watching as Noah's eyes twinkled.

"I won."

"You did?!!"

"I came first!"

Kurt threw himself into the man's arms, crying out with happiness, "Oh Noah, congratulations!"

"Thanks!" Noah replied, hugging the boy just as tightly in return as Kurt laughed.

"Your father must be so proud."

"Hella," Noah chuckled. "He was there watching through to the very last event where I was up against real surfing legends, you know, the 'White Lightening' and Parkinson, total Aussie big guns, but when they both fell in heavy early wipeouts, I snatched the lead."

"Wow."

"Scored high on every wave, and we're talkin choice waves here, Kurt. Fifteen feet choice. Real
"beautiful."

"I'm so happy for you," Kurt replied, pulling away as Noah grinned.

"Thanks. I'm now the new spokesperson for Billabong. They flew me out to Paris soon after to attend a press conference in one of their stores."

"Wow. So what does this all mean for you?"

"A campaign of TV and print ads, which I don't care much for, but I get a say in the designs of the clothes which is cool. It opens up opportunities to design surfboards in the future which I'm super stoked about. Wanted to do that shit for years now."

"Oh, well if it does happen, I could perhaps feature them in Vogue if you're interested," Kurt offered. "It could make for a very interesting piece."

Noah pocketed his hands. "Right, how's Vogue coming along?"

"It's going well actually-"

"Yeah? 'Cause I've read some of your stuff."

Kurt blinked. "You have?"

"Sure," Noah nodded. "It's not bad, Kurt. There are a few too many similes for my taste but they do have a Joseph Mitchell thing going for it, I like it."

"Really?"

"Totally. And there's this spirit in your writing, I'll give you that."

"Well, hopefully I continue the streak. I'm currently writing an article on the Orient Express to accompany a photo shoot in the fall and I will be writing of my time in Venice. It hasn't been featured in the magazine for four years now and they want just another 'what to do' before it sinks."

"Sweet."

"What is it you're going over there for?"

"I…" Noah shifted nervously. "I've never been to Italy. Thought I'd go check out the pizza before I head home."

"And the Express?"

"A sweet ride to the awesome pizza."

Kurt smiled. "I could never afford a trip like this. Luckily, Vogue's paying for everything."

"Surfing comp prize money has me covered," Noah replied. "It's only in the last two or so years I've had a steady income I can live on comfortably and I've never asked a cent from my folks."

"Really?"

"At one point it got so bad I thought I'd have to go back and live with 'em," nodded Noah. "Surfing and music were not making me much at all what with taxes, but it picked up and here I am."
"Here you are," Kurt smiled. "But goodness Noah, I was not expecting to see you here. I mean when I heard you were onboard, I couldn't believe it at first."

The man shifted. "Sure, your friend told you right?"

"Santana," Kurt replied, catching Noah's eyes for a few haze filled seconds. "Yes, she tol-"

"Kurt," Noah suddenly burst out, "I'm so sorry-"

"Noah-"

"You gotta believe me when I say I didn't mean for that to happen-"

"Of course you didn't, Noah-"

"Because I didn't."

"Noah, it's alright."

"I was just feeling so down that night thinkin what the hell I was doin on this train instead of that plane home to L.A., what the hell I was gonna achieve goin to Venice and all for the single object of-"

"… Yes?" Kurt asked anxiously as the man now gazed longingly at him, shamelessly, almost hopelessly. "Noah?"

"Kurt," Noah began, "I've missed you. I've missed you so much, but I always wondered if you did too, if you even cared. For a long time you were Mr. Incommunicado. I figured you’d turned Amish or something and couldn't say hello until Rumspringa, and when I did start emailing you, you handled me like you would some business contact you felt nothing but apathy for."

Kurt lowered his eyes, guiltily. "I'm sorry."

"I mean I know we've moved in orbits distant from one another for years, but Kurt you're tone, jeez, it just made me feel that much further away from you."

"Darn that distance."

"Did you not wanna hear from me?"

"No-"

"Did you worry I was going to find you and screw up your life?"

"Of course not... but that does beg the question of how you did find me. And here of all places."

Noah shuffled. "Your mom was the one to tell me you were in Europe. I had asked her for your New York address, but she said you wouldn't be back for a week or so and I just couldn't wait that long, Kurt, I had to see you and… fuck, it's so good to see you again. You look… whoa, you're beauty game is on point, you look spectacular."

Kurt lowered his eyes once more, seemingly finding the energy to respond in the midst of his whirring emotions. "Thank you… Noah. You look good too."

"But not so good that you can't look me in the eye?" The man asked, tilting his head as Kurt sighed.
"No, Noah, so disturbingly good I have to look away. Right now I feel like a mere mortal in the presence of flesh so fine if I raise by eye line any higher I'll swoon off this platform and right onto the tracks."

Noah smirked. "Not if I catch you first."

"Then I'd just die in your arms from your chivalrous attempt at masculine heroism."

"I'll always be your knight in shining swag, Kurt. Holler and I'll come a runnin."

"… I have missed you, Noah," Kurt smiled as the other man's face softened.

"Yeah?"

"Of course," Kurt replied, walking over to the nearest bench and seating himself down, Noah following suit. "I appreciate the struggle you've been through and I'm sorry I didn't make it clear that I missed you too. It doesn't help to admit it was consciously done but only because when you first said it so… plainly, everything became real so fast. I didn't know what your intentions were and it really unnerved me."

"Kurt, I just missed you," Noah replied. "I missed all the good times we had. There's gotta be around 14,000 of them that made me super happy whenever I'd think of 'em. Like remember once at Coronado I pretended the left side of my body was a T-Rex trying to eat my right side?"

"Yes, that was intense."

"And when you said 'time to run' for lunch once and I drew a watch on my foot. Or when we first met you thought I had an unhealthy John Boehner shade of orange just like every other surfer."

"Yes, I do," Kurt giggled as Noah continued, laying his arm over the back of the bench, his body turned into the boy's.

"Then there's Ulusaba. God, I loved that place. Remember when a kid from Justicia told us chocolate comes from cocoa, which is a tree, making it a plant, making it salad?"

"Oh yes!" Kurt howled. "He also overhead you say sex and then asked you how to do it, remember? And you said-"

"'Put the lime in the coconut and shake it all up,'" Noah recited, now chuckling fondly. "Totally."

"And not to say 'Slam Dunk!, 'Caw Caw!' and 'are you still alive?'"

"He didn't know what the hell I was goin on about, but he will now."

"… I thought of our times in Texas a lot," said Kurt.

Noah smiled. "Yeah?"

"When we turned on your dad's ceiling fan to maximum speed and it flew off and nearly killed us. When you, Sarah and I would all together stand up too fast to have our heads suddenly floating through space and time and when we reenacted our friendship for her."

"I got down on one knee and asked you, 'will you be my bruh?'"

"And you did the same for when we reenacted our relationship."
"Will you be my bae?" Noah recited, his eyes drifting across the station as he nodded with that same endearment on his face, it was hard to miss. There was a short silence before Kurt cocked his head.

"How is Sarah, Noah? How is your family?"

"They're good, yeah. Sarah's sixteen now. She's gonna be entering the 11th Grade in September."

"Is she attending the same high school you did?"

Noah nodded. "Lake Highlands, yeah. Says she wants to teach so she can write down grades that spell out 'ACDC' on report cards."

Kurt smiled. "Really?"

"Got to tell ya, if ever my kid earned grades that spelled that out I'd high five 'em and bedtime would be never."

"Do you have a child?"

Noah laughed. "No, no. I'd be an awful parent. My kid would just want to sleep instead of go to school and I'd probably join them in bed and say, 'I feel ya'."

"I can see it now," Kurt laughed, "'Why weren't you at school today, Lizard? 'My dad feels me.' Police sirens."

Noah chuckled, his face brightening. "Ah, you totally remembered Lizard."

"From the times we'd plan our wedding and kid's gender, sure," Kurt nodded, "You even planned the talks you were going to have with her; to pull up a chair, turn it around, flip it 360° and backflip with a 'stay cool, kiddo'."

Noah laughed. "I take that back, I'd be an awesome parent, and so would my baby."

"Your baby?" Kurt inquired, curiously. "Are you seeing anyone right now?"

"Nah," Noah chuckled. "I haven't been in anything serious since crocs came out, but I've seen my fair share. Racked up quite a number of dating tips along the way actually."

Kurt smiled. "Tell me."

"Okay," Noah began, grinning. "Well at a restaurant, move the chair out for her to sit down on. Pour a glass of water for her. Do everything for her. Chew her food and then regurgitate it into her mouth like birds do."

"Ew, Noah!"

"You get the idea though, right?"

Kurt nodded, smiling. "Yes."

"I also like to hold the door for my dates. Rip it off its hinges and use it as a weapon to fight off other dudes, you know, to establish dominance, and when it comes to casual hook ups, I'm always super polite. I always knock on the chick's pussy before I enter and I always shampoo and condition their hair when they blow me in the shower."

Kurt blinked. "Oh… that's nice. Is it only girls you see?"
"Nah, I knock on dudes' asses before I enter too. I'm still bi, Kurt. Well, pan, really. I'm down with whoever."

"I thought you might be so. Still Swangersaurus Sex? The swaggiest motherfucker who absorbs other's lack of swag and photosynthesizes it into swag we can all breathe and be reinvigorated by?"

"Oh Jesus," Noah said, embarrassed. "I was such a tool when I was sixteen."

"No, "Puck" was a tool. Noah was swag incarnate."

"Yeah, and closeted. Seriously, Swangersaurus Sex has no swag if he's fuckin caged by his own will."

"And now?"

"Now, he's out dating all the bros and babes, campaigning for NOH8, supporting Surfers Against Suicide, attending Ventura County Prides as part of 's team, featured in the documentary 'OUT in the line-up', and dyed my hair pink for three months to combat anti-gay bullying."

Kurt smiled. "Really?"

"Yeah, I totally dominated that shit into submission."

"Oh Noah, I'm so proud of you!"

"And, I made sure to wear this bitchen' number every time I went out to fight for my rainbow rights."

"Oh my goodness!" Kurt exclaimed, now suddenly catching sight of Noah's wristband as the man brought it before him, the same PRIDE wristband Elizabeth had gifted him with sixteen years ago in their Coronado hotel room. "Is that?!"

"Yep," Noah grinned, watching as Kurt inspected it in awe. "PRIDE for the Win, bitches."

Feeling his heart swell, Kurt's blue eyes glistened, almost to water, stinging as they were he feared tears would soon fall. "Noah, you've matured so much. It's... it's incredible."

"I'm not afraid anymore, Kurt," Noah said, taking his hands in his. "It's taken me through being fucking terrified to feeling weak as shit to overcome that fright, but I've always kept in sight of what kind of man I've wanted to be for so long now." His grip tightened. "I never forgave myself for losing you. My own heart killed me for that and it was the least I deserved whilst you deserved so much more. You deserve the world, Kurt, and I'm hella sorry I was too much of a wuss to give it you. I'm sorry."

I returned his gaze, my blue eyes blinking over his hazel ones that shone so desperately, and with so much plea, it was almost as if they already knew I was to cure them of all his aches. For what had been said had been what we'd both needed to hear for eight whole years. Hearing them had sent a blue sea wave to swell under my heart, plucking at the most secret and sensitive chords of my body. Even his grip, his thumbs caressing over the roof of my hands excited me so abominably my toes turned in. I couldn't contain it any longer. I brought him into a hug and held onto him hard, near weeping as I kissed his cheek and how hard he too held on to me, wanting to shift me onto his lap, to sit me higher than him and to breathe on my fair naked neck. His again.

Yet with the train's heartrending and ominous plangent cry, it's mingling power and hysteria making for one desperate scream and they jolted apart, casting wide eyes down the platform to catch sight of their fellow passengers boarding the railway cars. Kurt searched for Santana, realizing she'd been
long gone after mentioning attaining more cigarettes, and together, he and Noah hurried down the platform to the smiling stewards who welcomed them both aboard once again, but from there, were they to part ways? Say good day and return to their own cabins? Self-consciously they stood in the hall, grinning awkwardly at each other as others squeezed past. They didn’t want to say goodbye. There was still so much to say, so much to catch up on.

It was then with Kurt's suggestion for a drink in the bar car that had us moving again, and I was super quick to say yes to that. I wasn’t ready yet to leave his company. My heart seemed everywhere at once when I was. Hell, I couldn’t stop looking at him. The vacuum of my soul sucking in every detail of his bright beauty, carrying himself fluidly in that candy pink sweater and white O’Conner pants as we snatched the last two seats in the car, to his perfect doll face, that tender dreamy childishness, that snub nosed cuteness, that same blurry pinkness of adolescence in him. Damn, he was the loveliest and there I was, wiping my sweating palms on my slacks, licking my dry lips. I was so beyond sprung, but I kept it cool. My lust, my love, I kept it all cool. For now.
Chapter 13

THE MAN
2017

XIII

~ Blaine ~

It was six in the afternoon that with a brief journey through Mestre before the crossing of the Venetian Lagoon, the Orient Express finally arrived at Santa Lucia train station in Venice. Passengers were allowed time to disembark, some choosing to partake in another drink in the bar car, cigars puffing in the mustached mouths of potbellied gentlemen, others caught in old world romanticism, imagining a lone woman awaiting her male lover as he'd catch sight of her through the window to escort her off the railway car, a kiss to the hand. Whilst others were to say goodbye to their stewards, a scene of smiles and mature laughter as out on the platform they descended, the stretch swathed in steam, billowing hot and moist in the sun dusted air.

Kurt and Noah were themselves still in the bar car, having spoken for a near two hours yet how chaste the time had been to them, this wine-sweet conversation. They'd caught up on each other's lives. They'd looked at each other unblinkingly throughout, body language attuned to a set of stealthy movements that were almost flirtatious, sometimes speaking fast, lagging behind their own breathes and catching up with it from states of excitement bordering on insanity for Jesus was their an electrical pulse between them that beat like a drum. The joy it brewed within, and with shins that had touched, the light graze of knuckles. A magic friction so familiar and effortless it was as if they were by themselves fantastically and divinely alone.

For Kurt and he could not hear enough of Noah's West Coast life. The surfing tours, the gigs at Hotel Café, the clubbing in West Hollywood. The story of his property climb from cramped shabby quarters in La Mesa with narrow cots for beds, the mattresses an inch thick, to his current little haven that smelt allegedly of surf wax, ambergris and coconuts. His record player that sounded Bruce Springsteen, Chet Baker, Jeff Buckley and Nirvana as he'd attempt to learn intricate guitar solos online. His dinners, when not at Subway and El Pollo Loco, just heated canned soup with jellied bread, bananas, oranges and water. No soda. No beer. Alongside a regular "beast mode" exercise routine like the shredded endorphin addict he was. All fascinating.

Yet their time was to end. Upon Santana's arrival, approaching their table with a dominant swish of her hips and Kurt was to retract himself, feeling the hairs on the back of Noah's muscular hand bristle with loss. He smiled at the Latina, glancing then at Noah who could not have been looking at him with any more amorous affection, only then to spontaneously inquire where the man was staying. Noah shrugged, scratching his head boyishly. He had not planned that far ahead, afraid to admit Kurt had been the source of his single minded obsession since boarding the Orient. It had been a mission of pursuit, a now halted chase upon this reunion that promised to soon resume as into Venice Kurt would disappear with nowhere for Noah to turn or go.

Kurt watched as a semblance of panic now struck across the man's face, hazel eyes puppy wide and alert, imploring him, please don't go. Kurt, please. The reservations office had booked him and Santana's accommodation at the Belmond Hotel Cipriani, one of Belmond Ltd's Orient-Express Hotels situated not far on the tip of the Giudecca Island. They were to leave soon to catch a water taxi there, a passenger count of two, yet smiling with a hand already around Noah's wrist, Kurt insisted, "Don't worry, you'll come with us. We'll do Venice altogether. It'll be fun." And Noah
beamed, the sweet relief from that momentary soul numbing fright washing over him as he jolted Kurt's hand from his arm and into his, holding it there warmly cradled and snug.

Santana smirked. The blushing look of surprise on Kurt's face was absolutely precious, a look that reminded her of the one her little nephew would pull when he couldn't figure out how she'd got his nose, and damn it was it cute, now observing the little clockwork cogs whirring in Kurt's head thinking had Noah misinterpreted his invitation? Was such familiarity appropriate for those newly reacquainted, for one, unbeknownst to the other, already in a relationship? Blaine had not been mentioned and yet Kurt had not retrieved his hand from Noah's. She promptly shuffled them both out of the car before he could, out onto the bustling excitement of the platform, out into the throng of stewards and passengers, out into the sight of Kurt's very man.

"Blaine, what are you doing here?" Kurt asked as the man's hands wound round his slim waist.

"You'll never believe it, but the Schoenfeld's ceiling collapsed."

"What?"

"Forty minutes into the Sunday matinee and it collapsed, so the show's as of now on hold until we find another theatre."

Kurt gasped. "Oh my goodness! How did that all happen?"

"It rained a lot Saturday night and the plasterwork just fell through."

"Was anyone injured? Are you alright? Why didn't you call me?"

"I was backstage when it happened so I wasn't hurt," Blaine replied, touched at Kurt's frantic concern. "Ninety members of the audience were though. Ambulance sirens everywhere, eight of them you could hear echoing for blocks, but I didn't want you knowing because I know how you worry. Besides, it gives me time off and I thought I'd come surprise you, take you up on this trip I know Santana has replaced me on, hey San."

The Latina perked a well plucked brow. "Right back at ya, other Gay."

"But I paid for another room at the hotel just for us and I flew right over," Blaine continued. "It's been tight, but I wanted to see you when you'd step onto the platform like Audrey Hepburn in *Funny Face*, only you'd be grander because off you'd step out from the Orient Express, I mean, look at it this train, look at the railcars, they're beautiful."

Kurt nodded. "They are."

"Did you have a good time?"

"I did."
Blaine pulled him even further in, mouth grinning. "You'll have to tell me all about it."

"I will."

"I'm sorry, I don't believe we've met," said Blaine, looking at Noah. Kurt was quick to detach himself from the man and let forth a nervous breath.

"Oh right, yes, Blaine this is my childhood friend, Noah Puckerman. Noah, this is my boyfriend, Blaine." The men shook hands.

"How do you do?" Blaine smiled as Noah jerked his head casually.

"Sup. Sorry about your theatre ceiling tryin to kill your play or whatever. That's gotta suck."

"Thank you," Blaine replied, smiling appreciatively. "It was quite a night."

"Blaine's a stage actor," Kurt began. "He's playing the role of Zach in A Chorus Line on Broadway and the Schoenfield is just one of the many theatres in the Manhattan midtown area."

Noah glanced over at Blaine and nodded, "Cool," only to look back at Kurt expectedly. The fair boy shifted, looking to Blaine.

"And it's only by complete coincidence that I've had the pleasure of reuniting with Noah here on this journey. We haven't seen each other in years so it was good to catch up… wasn't it, Noah."

"Totally, though you sure know how to leave the best for last," Noah quipped, ignoring the look of reproach Kurt eyed him with.

"As he has no accommodation in Venice," Kurt continued. "We were going to bring him along with us to the Cipriani, arrange something for him there."

Blaine nodded. "Well there is now a spare bed in the first room." He now turned to Noah. "It has twin beds so as long as you and Santana don't mind sharing, it could work. Would both of you be alright with that?"

"Sure dude, thanks," Noah nodded, slapping a firm hand on the man's shoulder before walking through to the doors and accepting his suitcase from the steward. Blaine wobbled, steadying himself from the forceful pat as he chuckled uneasily.

"You're welcome. Do we know how to get to the hotel?"

"I rang for a water taxi already," said Santana. "It should be here soon to pick us up outside the station."

Blaine nodded. "Right…oh Kurt, sweetie, let me."

"Thank you," Kurt muttered, accepting Blaine's help as he handed over his suitcase, just given to him by the steward. He cast his eyes into the station, watching dolefully as Noah made his way through.

"So, where exactly did you and Noah meet?" Blaine asked as they set off.

"Coronado, California," Kurt replied. "We were both on vacation at the Hotel Del."

Blaine grinned. "Ooh, very Some Like it Hot."
"Yes… yes, he thought me "cute" which I took as pity at the time on my social anxiety."

"How old were you?"

"I was eight."

"Right, right, you were diagnosed when you were six with the beta blockers."

"Beta blockers?" Santana frowned.

Kurt nodded. "They said my resting heart rate was fifteen percent higher than normal so they put me on beta blockers. I no longer take them, but up until a years back I did and it was a real help. It certainly helped anyway when I met Noah. I didn't know what he saw in me, what the curiosity was. He wasn't like any other boy I'd known with his Californian laid back, tie dyed point of view, but he befriended me and we ended up getting along really well."

"I'll say," Santana smirked as Kurt shook his head wistfully.

"It's been good to see him again."

"You haven't seen him since?" Blaine asked.

"Sure he has," said Santana. "When they were sixteen they met up on some fancy safari in South Africa. Surfer Boi over there planned it all, wanted to see Kurtie again because as it turned out, he'd had the hots for our little doll all along."

Blaine blinked. "He did?"

"It was nothing more than a school boy crush-"

"You liked him too," Santana pointed out.

"Wow, you are on fire today," Kurt exclaimed, eyes glaring at Santana as Blaine laughed.

"It's alright, honey. I don't blame you, he's a good looking guy. I can already tell from the outline of his back muscles that God is real."

"So quiche," Santana mocked to the roll of Kurt's eyes.

"Did you say he was a surfer?"

Kurt nodded. "Yes, he competes professionally. In fact he's just come from winning a world tour in the French Philippines."

"Oh, very impressive," Blaine grinned, now nodding his head as Santana smirked mischievously.

"So quiche!"

"In any case," Kurt continued, ignoring the Latina as he slipped his arm through Blaine's. "I'm so happy you're with us. We're in for a real treat with the Biennale this year. The theme is 'Pop Surrealism', Mark Ryden is set to represent America, and I've had a look at the Venice Film Festival's program and circled a few movies that sound good."

"Sounds exciting. Santana, you'll come with us too I presume. Will Noah?"

"I don't know," Kurt muttered. "I don't really know what he's going to do…"
He distanced himself from us. Through collecting the rest of our luggage to waiting an uncomfortable two minutes by the canal for the water taxi, he was removed and reserved, hardly uttering a word. When on board and he sat at the stern of the boat, looking out across the city. My own dialogue with Blaine and Santana would enter shallow lulls, filled with the landscape of Venice as we all partook in its views, this city of water, floating upon its Adriatic kingdom, the most beautiful city built by man with its gothic buildings of dream pink, its lagoon of frosted aqua, the roofs glas mauve and the flowers tulip red, all the same colors of that of my summer wardrobe, "a sucking candy on legs" I recalled Noah once calling me, but that had been a long ago.

Twenty minutes later and they'd arrived on the island of Giudecca, the island itself lying immediately south of the central islands of Venice, whereupon they docked at the hotel's private pier, their water taxi tied fastly to the palina striped mooring poles. The welcoming doorman, Luigi, was there to greet them, his accent laid on thick like over buttered bread, but what a cheerful man! "Benvenuto, everyone!" He said, shaking hands with them all. "Welcome to the Belmond Hotel Cipriani. I trust your voyage was comfortable." They nodded their heads in near unison as Noah remained silent, his averted eyes now hidden behind dark shaded sunglasses. Kurt, with discomfort, kept his own forced on Luigi. "If you will please follow me, I will lead you to the hotel."

The Belmond Hotel Cipriani, five star rated and noted as one of the most expensive in the world, commanded unrivalled views of the lagoon and Doge's Palace. It seemed to have been perched most meticulously within the fairest Venetian garden, a looming ornament, large in stature yet as pretty as a bird bath cherub. Such a staggering beauty, like the villas of Lake Como, the Villa del Balbianello with the sprawling garden itself resembling those of Tremezzo and Picnic Meadow. There were quaint balconies that out wafted linen curtains, exquisite balustrading that overlooked the lagoon, tall hedge plants near supporting the patio awning and there, heated and filled with filtered seawater, the only swimming pool in the whole of central Venice.

Everything appeared so tranquil, so peaceful as they approached reception, signing in under "Anderson" for the recently booked room, "Hummel and guest – Vogue" for the first. The hotel had charged the magazine a significantly discounted price, as had the Orient Express, seemingly for the promise of more than impressive mentions in the fall issue. It was a type of understanding well aware of in the industry, yet one Kurt disliked, long awaiting the day Vogue would capitulate to his demand of an honest opinion, but on this trip and his words were to remain decorous. How unprofessional it would seem if he were to allow what had transpired with Noah, the sudden appearance of his boyfriend and subsequent tension to overrule both sides of his mind.

As it was, they were able to arrange Noah's accommodation in the Junior Suite with Santana, Kurt and Blaine's next door, both of them garden views on the second floor that boasted comfortable sitting areas richly upholstered in stylish Venetian decor, two bathrooms with separate bath and shower as well as their own balconies overlooking the Casanova gardens and vineyard. Upon entrance, mentally mapping every corner of their rooms as they did, they would note the television, iPod dock, mini bar, and to their surprise, the glasses of Bellinni and sparkling Prosecco wine laid out on the various bedroom tables. White peaches, strawberries, and chocolate. It was all amidst an accompanying sprinkle of rose petals they had not at all anticipated.

For both Kurt and Blaine, it was an ideal welcome. For Noah and Santana, it would only accent the uncomfortable situation from which exuded such solemn exasperation, such depression, all neuralgia inducing at the sight of romance's intolerable tenderness from which Noah would scoff at in disgust, plucking a chocolate from the metal stand and biting down into it forcefully and without forgiveness. He'd do the same for a strawberry, juices flying. He'd flick a rose petal off the table with his finger. He'd take a sip of the Bellini before chucking the rest over the balcony, and through it all Santana would watch warily, all up to the grunting of something incomprehensible as the man hastily took his leave, the door slamming behind him.
A short while after and she'd had Kurt in the room, the boy pacing anxiously and with an ashen sense of awfulness. He knew better than to pursue Noah, recalling a harsh temperament that was not often and easily roused, for this aside, Noah was not an aggressive person. By nature he was not a danger to anyone. His heart had always been in the good, but such a slave he was to his emotions. To see Kurt in the arms of another man after having held his sleeping head to his chest when they were sixteen and in love. At this moment and Kurt knew Noah was holding Blaine in the greatest contempt, holding him right in the focus of his incandescent anger. The man was beyond mad! Everything swept away now leaving nothing but dreadful lucidity.

"And here I thought it was only going to be the two of us here," Kurt sighed, seating himself on the bed next to Santana.

"He'll calm down," she assured. "Just wait for him to come to you."

"And say to him what? I'm sorry, but you can't have me, I'm with someone else. I know he wants me back, San."

"I think we all know he wants you back, Kurt. To be honest, I don't even know how you were able to escape from a girth like that anyway."

Kurt rolled his eyes irritably. "San, this isn't the time."

"Seriously, a long distance relationship couldn't have been so bad if his dick was long enough to reach you-"

"Santana."

"If you guys had actually fucked and you'd asked him to go deeper, there'd of been no worries about him being all out of dick-"

"Will you just be quiet!" Kurt snapped. "I'm trying to think."

"The ball's not in your court, Lady Face. I've already told you this. But wait until he stops calling Blaine a "shrimp dick fuck nugget" under his breath, then go."

"Okay, now he's just been immature," Kurt replied, shortly. "Which is another thing. Whenever he'd get angry he wouldn't act his age."

"Act his age?" Santana frowned. "What is the fuck is that, "Act his age"? What do you care how old he is, Kurt. The ocean is old as fuck, but it will still drown your ass with vigour. Surfer Boi is mad."

Kurt huffed angrily. "Yes, but this isn't my fault. I've moved on. I wasn't about to wait for him to change for the rest of my life, I didn't trust him to for a very long time."

"And now that he's here saying he has, do you believe him? Kurt, has he changed?"

"Yes, I believe he-"

"Cause you're the only one here who can tell."

Kurt rolled his eyes. "Well I'm telling you now, he has."

"Then take him back, dumbass! He's perfect now," Santana exclaimed. "Never mind Blaine. You two have had your little Ken on Ken fetish fest, which, by the way, must be like eating unflavoured gelatine, but now that Surfer Boi's finally got his act together, go for it. Man eat him. Man eat him!"
"I'll do no such thing," Kurt retorted as the Latina flung her back onto the bed in exasperation. "I have a good thing going with Blaine and I'd appreciate it if you acknowledged that. We've been together three years, a hell of a lot longer than most gay couples and I respect him more than to casually dispose him for another man, for a previous dalliance that had me, compared to how I'd been with all the other boys I saw back then, at my most insecure."

Santana rolled her eyes. "Uh-huh, how so?"

"I feared he'd tire of me, lose his attraction and eventually see me as I saw myself: Out of my league," Kurt sighed. "I mean, I was told it was always best to find an attractive boy who didn't think they were attractive which would have them think you were out of their league when in fact you were way out of yours, but the truth hurts, and I knew I wasn't as conventionally attractive as Noah. Besides, he knew he was good looking. He'd revel in the swarms of female attention he'd attract wherever he went."

"Really?"

"Granted they were all cougars, but yes. They'd flirt with him in public, stick lewd notes underneath the windshield wipers of his car, hide explicit drawings in his mail, throw catcalls at him when driving by and even ask for his hand in marriage right in front of me. Grown women, San. All of them sexually harassing this sixteen year old, it was disgusting."

"Right."

"And it's not that through all this I worried he would stray. I knew he loved me, adulated me even. He had no intention of replacing me with a set of poor old dry wives, but there was only so much of this perverse competition I could take and I admit my insecurities partook in my decision to end it."

"Did Surfer Boi know about this?" Santana asked as Kurt nodded glumly.

"Yes, I told him it was my problem and that his high animal magnetism shouldn't be put to blame, but he took it badly anyway. He thought he was being punished for being attractive and started resenting the attention he got because of it. Called it a "curse" after he suddenly realized that no girl at his school, despite them all talking of how hot he was in class, had ever approached him because they never thought themselves good enough to do so."

"Huh."

"As "Puck" and this hadn't been so much of a problem as he'd fed off the insecurities of these girls, but as Noah and it only wounded him. He's told me that for the remainder of his high school and college days in California he remained single. No one asked him on a date. No one even neared him on the subject of getting a cup of coffee because people were just too intimidated by his looks and now here he is, handsomer than ever."

"Yes. Here he is."

"With Noah, San... when I was with Noah and my heart, my nerves, my whole body eventually became an anxiety attack inducing mess and to hell with my beta blockers, but with Blaine, and I'm calm. Everything's calm."

"Yeah as calm as a dead fish floating on a tank of stale beer," Santana quipped. "Your relationship with gel head is a fucking bore to watch. You need a guy who'll have you feeling like a dog unleashed in a field wagging its tail so fast its butt shakes, or a diner at a restaurant watching as his fucking food approaches. You need the stomach flip, Kurt. Not a guy who'll leave you to rely on
"Yes, all the time! All too clearly-" 

"No, you don't," The Latina argued loudly. "You're restricting yourself to a love you think you deserve all because you can't come to terms with your looks. Screw conventional, you're cute, Kurt. I mean, have you seen the way Surfer Boi has been looking at you? Not once since Verona did he so much as glance at anyone else on that train and my tight tits are the seven wonders of the fucking world right here. Hell I was the one who set up that whole platform meet up."

"You were?" Kurt asked as Santana scoffed. 

"I had to. It was getting real pathetic by then."

"When was this?"

"At lunch, once you'd ditched me to go hide. Surfer Boi came in to eat and I had him sit with me. He didn't want to at first, but I got his ass at the table when I mentioned you, and that's when I told him everything. How we're roommates vacationing together, that you knew he was onboard, that he and I had fucked."

"San," Kurt urged as Santana continued. 

"Anyway, we got to talking and to help him out, I arranged a way for you two to actually talk to each other. So when the train stopped, I lead you out along the platform away from anyone else, and as you know, he came out to meet you, just like I'd told him to. It was all part of the plan, see."

Kurt sighed, looking away. "I'm sorry you had to do that. It's all so sixth grade of us."

"Yeah, so don't let my efforts be all been in vain."

"What?"

"You heard me," the Latina said. "When Surfer Boi returns, I want this all settled. He's here for no other but you and you know this, Kurt. You know he still loves you and if you turn him away now it'll be the last you'll ever see of him, and you will regret it for the rest of your life. Everybody deserves a second chance. You know you could have it all a damn well better, and even if I have to stuff you on his surfer cock myself, I will, 'cause you need to get fucked by other than your low self-worth right now."

But Noah did not return. He made no appearance at dinner in which they would all converse sedately, the topic of his unknown whereabouts kept quiet and masked with Kurt and Santana's whispers, those like playful children that could not be deciphered as like a microscopic script. The hatching of a plot maybe behind those velour jacketed menus or perhaps just Kurt's supposed amusement at the Latina's sexually crude nonsense, twanging through Blaine in a rising rhythm. It was thrilling for him to watch, and he chuckled at their lack of subtly that now ceased as Kurt came to sit himself next to him with a peck on the cheek. Hello. Eying his thick sideburns, his Prada ascot, catching scent of his 'Le Male' fragrance. The man did not suspect anything at all.

After dinner and Kurt excused himself, hurrying to the reception desk and asking if a certain "Mr. Puckerman" had booked out of his suite, a fear riling within that Noah had checked himself into another hotel. He heaved a sigh of bittersweet relief upon learning it was not so and looked about the glittering foyer, helplessly. He did not know what to do. His mind was obsessed by all sorts of purely ethical doubts and fears. Conjectures of where Noah was. Worrying for his safety. Worrying he'd get
lost on the island. That he'd do something irrational. Kurt searched the hotel high and low for him, his pretty face drawn into a look of such concern it disquieted those who noticed him, but without success until with relief now delicious, the man was found.

There in the pool with only the pale moonlight for company was Noah. He was on his own in the water, swimming laps breast stroke one after the other in a certain solemn pleasure, his movements slick and smooth as a seal, though Kurt could imagine that not more than an hour or two ago it had been front crawl performed furiously, the sound akin to a distracted bather thrashing about, his bellows of anger muffled in the water. The pool itself closed at seven. It was eight now and likely the staff had not wished to disturb the man for with a threatening slit eyed look Kurt could also all too easily imagine had been thrown their way and they had granted Noah the pool for the evening, there for him to swim relentlessly in and without stopping.

_I hid myself behind a tall nearby hedge plant and watched him, silent as death. How he had grown, how his body had matured gloriously with his shoulders broad, the wide frame of his back, the swellings of his tense pectorals and abdominals, the seaside of his muscular thighs, his calves. The man had more muscles than a New England clambake and I gasped as he hauled himself out of the water stark naked with nothing to hide his narrow nates and semi erect penis, and done so shamelessly with various masculine movements, stretching his arms high and revealing dark fuzzy underarms, fuzz on his navel, a tattoo on his left hip. I was biting my lip through it all and I did not know it, the sight of him sufficient to attain a beggar's bliss he was so handsome._

Later that night and Kurt would be sprawled on his bed, Blaine hanging heavily over his surrendered, surreptitiously labored body and sweating in the moonlight, though it's light no longer pale, but a fierce white as if casting an appraiser's cold eye upon his writhing hips frotting against those so fair in dutiful awkwardness. Through the rush, and Kurt would never feel so detached. His ears were deaf to his boyfriend’s panting words of love, the chaste kisses on his under lip unregistered. His mind was in a distraction as thick as the undergrowth of a dark decaying forest with thoughts of a swimming body within shimmering water, a clean cut jaw, vein pulsing arms, a sexy hemp anklet. He could not think of anything else. He _used_ in his mind nothing else.

And suddenly he was moaning, with a monstrous fire rising through his loins and he was crying out, his mouth soon clamped down hard by Blaine's clumsy hand for the walls were thin and sound carried easily, seeping next door into the neighboring suite and penetrating the awakened senses of the two within. Santana clutched her forehead, her wincing eyes shielded shut as with dread she glanced at the man in the adjoining twin bed, saw how he pillow muffled his cries of anger, his hands fisting the sheets and balled to punch through the wall, grab Blaine by the ankle and drag him off the tortured pale body of _his_ boy, _his_ Kurt. Kurt was his, out of reach, lost, and to the Latina's heartbreak she watched as into despair, Noah Puckerman wept.

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_Glee_

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Under that thirsty Italian sun dripping with heat and it was into Venice the following day for the Biennale, catching the early vaporetto along the fondamenta zitelle and crossing the lagoon over to the city, the voyage lasting a whole thirty minutes before they disembarked at the Arsenal and made their way towards the Venice Giadini, the host of the Art Festival. It made up only a mere area of the parkland, the gardens themselves created by Napoleon in the late 18th Century, and housed all thirty permanent national pavilions ranging from those oldest like 'Gran Bretagna', 'Francia' and 'Italia' to those newly added like 'Cine', 'Messico' and the 'United Arab Emirates', all of which now
showcasing work from their country's featured artists.

Kurt was most excited, the musk of which everyone could sense as they entered the Biennale. It was his mission to paint the peculiar scene for Vogue, this 'art fashion' fair filled with eccentrics dotting the city like an infectious disease in artistic fervor, lining everyone up to see the projects and the artists' themselves who had invested all their time in their creations for it was not a platform that allowed for mistakes. Contemporary art adapted to different places and when each country presented, the identity of its nation wasn't shown, but rather the image within, a context of international art. For the division of the Venice exhibition was also linked to the responsibility of the various countries as to the subsidizing and financing of art itself.

Kurt, Blaine, Santana and Noah were to view every single project in the gardens, or as many as they could squeeze in in the amount of time allowed before closure. For Kurt it was interesting to note the limitations if one wished to present, having to divide oneself into a curator, director, producer and an artist, the latter of which only counted for one percent of everything. And Blaine took note of the funny mood of the pavilions, appreciating their national characterizations as it was something quite obsolete, but noticing the way they were trying to outdo one another, the pavilion next door seen as a competitor for the award for Best Pavilion. Ironic, as artists were often always clueless with original projects changing frequently at the very last minute.

Santana would trail behind the two, her mouth working violently on a piece of chewing gum, her arms crossed when viewing projects and always with that same look of synthetic resignation on her face where she'd occasionally roll her eyes or even laugh out loud at what she saw such was the extent of her philistinism. And Noah, whilst it was a surprise he had come to join them in the first place, looked at nothing else but Kurt. Throughout the day and he kept in close proximity to the boy, pushing Blaine's position at Kurt's side to the back with Santana and feigning interest in all projects they saw together. Pop Surrealist inspired projects Kurt said were in fact not "imitating" the movement, but "demonstrating a critical analysis to its approach."

Noah would smile. Oh, what an intellectual his Gay Jane had become. The boy's knowledge on the Biennale well versed from research. His appreciation and respect for the artists evident, even when viewing projects he disliked, Pop Surrealism simply entranced Kurt just by its trochaic trill, stirring him automatically. He was to whom its glee, impishness and sarcasm was dedicated: the ideal viewer, the subject and object of every project Noah himself couldn't get his head around. They were all just so odd and there he ridiculed them mercilessly, grinning that familiar boyish grin Kurt found had not been lost in maturity, but still endearing as he rolled his eyes giggling among the slight Grazing of their shoulders, Noah's innocent touches, his guile.

The man did not care if he aroused suspicion. He showcased no dread of his familiarity becoming too apparent nor created any plausible arrangement so as to veer away those who speculated for he could not bear to see Kurt with that other man, that hobbit boyfriend of his any longer. It made him so uncomfortable, made him so dreadfully unhappy, yet distancing himself from them, to know what they were doing, having heard their strenuous love making the previous night, stirred only an oppressive, hideous feeling that constrained him tightly, as if Blaine was set to reduce Kurt to a mere ghost Noah couldn't connect with no matter how long he'd rack his brain for some quip under the bright wing of which he might dare to near his him. His Gay Jane.

He would remain close right into the next day as they'd all visit the Biennel projects outside the Giadini, those in the Corderie dell'Arsenale, those in the Spazio Punch. They would learn about the emergence of independent centers within the city to the space panic countries who didn't have official pavilions would have when renting for the festival and through it all and Kurt was aware of the man's presence beside him. One that would rarely wonder off to leave him be. For when it did, and Blaine would take his chance to join him, say hey, but not even manage to ask how he was
before Noah would return, each time closer to Kurt as if he were out to attach them together until the materials and patterns of their clothes blended seamlessly.

By the third day, on their visit to the island of Lido for the 74th Venice Film Festival and Blaine was growing tired of Noah's interceptions. Constantly would he find him in Kurt's company, talking to him, laughing with him, seating himself next to the boy at all three movie screenings they attended that day with all three occasions having had his arm slung over the back of Kurt's chair, his body angled into his. Perhaps Blaine had also seen in an alternate vision as if the projector's course of light branched, Noah's hand resting on Kurt's thigh and cupping the inner side with a look of carnal deliberation on his tan face, disturbing Blaine greatly with relief flooding him only when Kurt politely pushed it away, his legs then crossing suspiciously.

But in Kurt, Blaine would trust. In his fair apple-sweet boyfriend, he'd trust him almost celestially not to invite nor return Noah's advances for Kurt loved him. They were the ones in love. Had been for a year now. Kurt, who was of quiet and taciturn disposition, of charm and wit, of blue silks and rosy mirth, it was this refreshingly unusual young man Blaine had first been struck two years ago. Beautiful. And of this beauty feeling a kinship, an attraction that had lasted ten dates, the proposal to go steady, their consummation, the exchange of apartment keys, till this day, for both were harmonious in their relationship, equal like church and state, and both wearing the pants. One leg each, waddling around in unison. "It's beautiful," Kurt said. "In a way."

Now back at their hotel suite that evening and they were attiring themselves for a night at the Casino Di Venezia. Already Kurt was pleased with what he'd written on the Biennial. Having filed it next to his pieces on the Orient Express and Film Festival, he read aloud his latest draft from his position on the bed, stomach down in his fitted suit as Blaine unsuccessfully, and after many failed attempts, tried to fix his bowtie in the opposite wall mirror. The man was not feeling himself tonight. The tremors in his fingers palsied his wrist, his crisp white shirt nothing but a frivolous hindrance. He glanced in fright at Kurt's reflection, and for a split moment, fell at peace at the sight, now adoring his boyfriend from afar as like watching the blooming of a rose.

"As Italy itself does not have a real contemporary museum of art," Kurt began, "The Venice Biennial serves as its world of creative aesthetics. It is looked after like a jewel, challenged from the point of view of an extremely official institution yet also counteracted from those smaller and independent with different funds often with a more political and aggressive behavior, and all seen as good, for the Biennial wouldn't be as dynamic if there weren't the pesky fleas pinching at it here and there."

"Yeah… that sounds good, sweetheart," Blaine muttered as Kurt continued, keenly.

"I go onto say that the Biennale is a beast. It is up to the people of Venice to establish a dialogue with it and put up resistance, to stress the bio political difference from their surroundings for art is alive. It is living criticism and through this space that implicates everything as a public-participation private foundation, they must speak up. Their voices must be heard."

"Yeah… um… that's also good, Kurt."

"Blaine, you seem distracted," Kurt said, frowning. "Are you well? Are you… It looks like you're having problems with your…" He gestured to the man's bowtie, smiling, "Here, come here, I'll do it." Obediently, Blaine neared the bed, Kurt now stood before him. "Is everything alright?" The fair boy asked, smoothing out of the tie before starting. Blaine only sighed, now eying him.

"Can I ask you something?"

"Sure," Kurt nodded as his boyfriend paused.
"And it may come off as a little untoward."

"Alright… but if it's as to why Santana was so keen to shake hands with a celebrity today at the festival, I don't know why, but from that look on her face I don't think it was to do with exchanging tips on hand sanitizing."

Blaine smiled. "No. It's because if she touched their hands she'd die happy knowing that at some point the celebrities have touched their own genitals with said hand."

"Oh San."

"Yeah, thankfully she didn't see anyone, or worse, a celebrity crush."

"I know, right!" Kurt exclaimed, laughing. "Her crushes start with "Who the hell is she?" and almost always turn into, "That's her right nostril, I can tell." I mean, I'd hate to have her as a crusher. She'd sit on my face and grind so hard my nose would break, and the tears on her ass would make her explode. "Blaine winced as Kurt nodded, uneasily. "Either that or suction cups to me and rope them to a ceiling fan, or maybe even crazy glue my mouth to her ass and turn us into a human centipede."

"That's it. I'm taking you out of that Bushwick place," Blaine insisted jokingly as Kurt laughed, finished tying his bowtie. "You're not safe there. Didn't you say she was once so horny she couldn't help picturing you in a Japanese schoolgirl uniform because she found you so adorable?"

Kurt smiled. "That and she wanted to fuck me with a pink sparkly dildo, or maybe it was a childo, I can't recall, definitely not a condom she'd stuff with mashed potato 'cause that's how cheap dildo's are made, or so I'm told."

"Yes, but she shouldn't be telling you such things," Blaine chuckled. "We have to distance you from her if only for a little while."

Kurt whined. "But she's fun, she makes me laugh, and besides she's not all about sex positions. Just the other day she asked if anyone had discovered one for reading that didn't become uncomfortable after five minutes."

"I'm just saying, I'd like more of you and I and less of you and Santana, and Noah even, which is actually what I wanted to ask you about."

"Yes?"

"He seems awfully familiar with you, Kurt," Blaine replied, concern coating his voice. "Inappropriately so given how you and I are together, and perhaps that's the nature of your friendship, perhaps it's how you've always been with each other, I don't know, but I've got to tell you now, it's starting to make me feel uncomfortable." Kurt nodded as his hands fell from Blaine's jacket, his expression grave. "Is there any possibility he may still harbor affection for you? I mean, should I be worried here?"

"No, no, darling, no," Kurt insisted, now seating Blaine down on the bed with him. "Noah and I are mere friends. We're not rekindling anything of that sort, just our friendship. It has been eight years you know and to suddenly see him again with no prior warning, well, you can understand what a pleasant surprise this is for me. We're so dear to each other."

"Right. I heard him call you 'baby' several times today, and 'Gay Jane'. I mean, what is that?"

"Just a childhood nickname."
"And 'baby' too?"

"No, I think you must have misinterpreted that," Kurt replied. "See, you think he was using "baby" as a term of endearment but in reality babies are dumb, loud and obnoxious. He was insulting me and I didn't even realize it. Take that society." Blaine frowned, watching as the fair boy struggled under his gaze. "That and he thinks 'babe' and 'baby' are cliché and outdated and that people should try fun new terms of endearment like 'lieutenant', so if anything, you will have heard him calling me that."

"Sweetheart, all of that aside, does he still like you?"

"I… I think he does, yes," Kurt replied, hesitantly, "but I had a word with him when he returned and I've made it clear his familiarity is inappropriate. It won't be happening anymore."

"Thank you," Blaine said, welcoming Kurt's head on his shoulder. "I mean I understand he's very fond of you but-"

"Don't worry darling, he knows now. He'll keep his distance. It didn't bother him all too much anyway, he thought it all a bit silly really."

"He did?"

"Well, on par with silliness that say the Apple Store doesn't sell apples or that teenagers have unprotected sex but have cases for their iPhones or that you need a license to sell hot dogs but anyone can make a baby." There was a pause.

"… It bothered him, didn't it?"

"…Yes, but he's working on it," Kurt insisted, lifting his head. "Some people are just hard to let go of."

"He was in love with you once wasn't he?" Kurt looked at him, emotion now crossing his fair face.

"… W-we better go."

The lack of an answer was enough of a confirmation. Blaine watched with an impending sense of loss as Kurt rose from the bed and fetched together his things, his keys, his wallet, his jacket, all in silence. He was immediately regretting his question. Since the festival and the expectation, the special point in space and time had been drinks at the Venice Casino followed by a nine o'clock dinner at the exclusive Da Ivo Restaurant, but now and it appeared the skeleton of Kurt's day had sagged and collapsed, an awful sight. Blaine hated being the menace. His sole raison d'être was to keep Kurt happy from kiss to kiss and rarely did they ever row. Major or minor, rarely were they ever cruel to one another. Just the thought wobbled his poor heart to despair.

_We were to all journey by water taxi to the casino, the sky dark as along the canal we weaved and along the way and I would behave decently, accommodating Kurt in whichever way I could just to have him in good humor again, apologizing for my earlier remark, wishing only for us all a pleasant evening. I was clever enough to realize that I had to secure his co-operation in keeping our discussion on Noah secret, that it should not become an issue no matter what grudge he might bear me, no matter what other pleasure he might seek, especially when confiding with Noah himself, such a bond they shared I felt like a third wheel in their presence. Oh, I implore you Kurt, look my way. Kiss me. I'm your boyfriend, I'm speaking English and I love you. Please._

But Kurt, seated beside Santana towards the front of the taxi, remained to himself, quietly conscious of Blaine's frequent glances of concern opposite him, looks of surrender and shy smiles and quietly conscious ever still to Noah's faraway position at the stern of the boat, the man eying him moodily in
his neglected state. Kurt had warned him earlier on his all too "familiar" body language, "I'm with Blaine now," he'd said. "You can't get away with the same things you used to, Noah. We're not sixteen anymore," And had consequently established a background of shared secrecy and guilt. Tension was in the air and Kurt was refusing to look him in the eye as instead the boy cast his gaze over the water as they neared the glittering Cannaregio quarter.

Upon their arrival at the Casino di Venezia and Santana was the first to disembark, jumping from her seat and striding along the boarding pier to pay the ten Euro entrance fee. Too long had she wondered the city almost vagrantly to see all this art, having grown to furiously resent people calling her attention to this or that enchanting detail of the Biennale with Kurt having promised this evening of alcohol and gambling as a compromise, for not only had Santana no eye for art except nudity, but long had he learned to discern the woman after sharing a loft roof with her for quite some time, and in this moment of emotional turmoil and he would gladly accompany to slouch and fall prostate in whatever ornate Italian sofa, chaise longue or stool they had.

The casino itself was situated within the palace of the Ca' Vendramin Calergi, known throughout Venice for its architecturally distinguished Renaissance-style, its splendid façade of classically inspired columns, arches, trefoil windows and French doors. Inside, and opulent paintings, sculptures and Mattia Bortoloni decorated ceilings dazzled the eye for the palace had been the home to many prominent people throughout history including the German composer Richard Wagner to which a museum, the Museo Wagner, had been long established on the upper levels of the palace. Yet Kurt knew better than to point out the Calergi's features shining like fixed stars before them to Santana for as likely as not and she would feign gagging as soon as he'd begin.

They travelled through the various throng filled rooms of the palace in a gold and red velvet haze, careful not to run into the waitresses and their gleaming silver platters, the crystal chandeliers, the enormous bouquets. There were countless table games in a whirring vortex of blackjack, crap, roulette, baccarat, all surrounded by men and sequined women, croupiers and poker dealers at the head distributing cards in a blur to the dancing of poker chips. Of poker plaques. At the bar, cream was shaken for White Russians though dry martinis with three measures of Gordon's, one of vodka, half a measure of Kina Lillet, shaken over ice with a slice of lemon peel was popular and on this night like all nights and everyone was set on the jackpot. To win.

Following after them in hot pursuit was Blaine, Noah a wary distance behind him for in his lucid jealousy and the man was now more alert to the gel headed grease monkey than before, catching scent of his agonizingly anxious state, watching as in his haste he scampered on short legs to catch up with Kurt only to lose him behind people he'd run into, apologizing profusely again and again. In such chaos and Noah eyed the man only with an energy of disgust that distorted his mouth and sharpened the shadows beneath his jaws. He hated Blaine, and he refused to watch him and Kurt together, together in their smug love, together in their backfisch foolery in imitation of some simulacrum of fake ass romance. Fuck, he had to breathe in clean air.

So I pulled back, losing myself in this crowd of gamblers that engulfed me, these elegant glittery folk that had me disappearing amongst them as if behind a pandemonium of smoke, the stench of Toscano cigars everywhere like echoes of the Orient's ash trays. They were all speaking their fancy Italian words I couldn't pick up. Even their shouted words amid so much hilarity I didn't understand though they were far too preoccupied on their table games to cast me a second glance in my innocent era of surveillance. I just wanted Kurt and get outta this place, to grab him by the hand and bounce. I was lost in here. Without Kurt and I was just... Christ, I just wanted him when he was my Kurt and more of my Kurt than ever. He was all I ever wanted. Kurt...

~ Flashback ~
July, 2009. Dallas, Texas. The sun had made its usual round of the Puckerman farmhouse and was now ripening into a late afternoon sunset, its incandescence blotted and smeared against blue. Out on the porch swing sat Noah, sixteen, in only an A shirt and shorts, barefoot. He'd just come from mowing the previously unkempt lawn, a long overdue house chore that had had him lurching and lunging the machine from the front end of the yard all the way to the back, all those ugly dandelions perishing and all to the sight of grass optically twitting in the low light. Yet what a messy job he'd made of it. Uneven lines, every one of them far from parallel and with so many invariable angles. Shoddy work for sure his mother would disapprove of.

Looking upon it all guiltily from his porch perch, he now cursed quietly, "Damn it", blaming himself but granted never before when performing outdoor chores had he had such a pretty distraction in his midst. In their presence and he'd been wary of eructating for which he would happily do when seemingly alone laboring. He'd been considerate enough not to disturb them with the deafening roar of the lawn mower, nearing them only to present a daisy he'd stumbled across and now on the porch swing that gave out clear views of the whole yard, he was able to watch with a smirk of one about to perform a good action the figure about the washing line, that silhouette dancing behind white bed sheets and towels, each descending one by one.

He was dressed in a colorful printed tee and shorts, ankle socks on his feet with an oval wicker basket held in his arms. By now and it was near full of bedding, all dry, though occasionally he'd squeeze other miscellaneous pieces for signs of remaining moisture; the dish cloth from the kitchen, Sarah's embroidered handkerchief and quilt, Mr and Mrs Puckerman's crocheted bathmat and of course, Noah's "wank towel", all of which he neatly popped into the basket along with the pegs from the line before making his way up the trimmed lawn to the house. Noah was quick to avert his previously unflickering gaze as into the sunset air he casually tossed a glossy apple, catching it each time with a plop! Listening to the chirping of the crickets, to the trickling-

Suddenly, with a rapid swipe, and his fruit was intercepted. He looked up with flustered surprise to catch Kurt now standing to the side of the swing, the wicker basket deposited by his feet with the apple cupped and polished in his hollowed pale hand, turned over and over, like the rounded beats of Noah's heart so like snow under thin crimson skin until it was brought to ruby lips and bitten into with a clean crunch. Delicious. Noah remained quiet, watching the boy chew and swallow. There was juice trickling from the side of Kurt's mouth down his chin though it hardly hampered the boy as he neared, stooping low to grab Noah's jaw and force it down, and there to stick the disfigured fruit in his mouth as like a head of a roasted pig, laughing hard.

Such cheek! He plopped himself down next to Noah, brushing his bare leg against his still giggling but with a whoop and Noah had brought them to lay athwart his lap, spitting out a piece of the Eden-red apple he'd bitten into and pulling Kurt in by the nape of his neck for a crushing kiss, the taste delicious. When he pulled away, he lunged his mouth along Kurt's chin, catching that juice trail that tickled the boy with thick suckling laps of his tongue and lips and oh! Kurt was now shifted upon a muscular thigh, a large hand running along his right shin. The boy smiled, looking giddily down at his boyfriend. How affectionate Noah was in his enjoyment. That monkey like nimbleness, that puppy dog enthusiasm, and all brought in closer with those big arms.

"I see what you did to your parent's lawn," Kurt smirked. "Terrific job."

"Hey, whoa," Noah protested, "give me a break, I'm still exhausted from beating all the other sperm. Besides I said I'm good at pool cleaning, not at mowing lawns."
"No, you're rather allegedly good at mimicking surfing on a plank of wood in pools and not mowing lawns. Your mother talks."

"Yeah, well I talk too and let me tell you she breakdanced through her entire pregnancy when she had me."

Kurt blinked. "She did what?"

"Yeah," Noah nodded, "even in the hospital she was gettin in the groove and the nurses were like, "mam, stop break dancing, we're trying to deliver your baby." I can't be blamed for being kooky."

Kurt looked unconvinced. "Uh-huh."

"Plus when I started jackin off by typing "boobies" in the calculator, I used her face cream as lube before I could afford the real stuff so I owe her big time."

"Oh Lord."

"What?" Noah asked, chuckling. "Go down a dry waterslide and you'll understand why it's so important."

"Noah-"

"Try doing the stuff we like doing together without lube and you know what it's so important."

Kurt paused. "Like Slippery Twister? I see you slather the mat with it just so you can fall on top of me on every move, don't think I can't."


"Yeah, you also said that when you tried to break Sarah's leg on her turn so-"

"No, that was payback for her stealing my chocolate box flavors template. Eating them then was like a fuckin game of minesweeper."

"And with that brings the score to 4 for you and 6 for Sarah," said Kurt, shaking his head. "Come on Noah, you used to have game. Where it go?"

Noah perked his brow. "Oh, so you're into dudes who don't play by the rules, huh Kurt? Watch me at dinner tonight and I'll bite into a string cheese stick without peeling it first. Mmm, I can already taste the rebellion."

"Shut up," Kurt smiled. "Eat your apple."

"I will. I haven't eaten one in days and I was starting to feel the doctors closing in."

"What?"

"My barricades weren't going to last much longer. Shit, I haven't finished it," Noah panicked, picking up the discarded apple beside him and munching on it manically, his mouth full as he exclaimed, "Watch out, babe! The doctors are coming! Tell my family I love them!"

Kurt shrugged. "Meh, they remain indifferent."

"Bastards. You?"
"Me? Oh I've already moved on." Mimicking actions, the fair boy continued. "See me just spooning my new boyfriend out of his container… its ice cream."

"Really?" Noah asked as Kurt replied, "Well frozen yogurt rather. Ice cream would conflict with my non-dairy diet."

"Kurt, that's not the most effective way to prevent acne, but sawing your head clean off, now that'll rid you of blemishes once and for all."

"Great idea."

"It's what I tell all the health nuts at school, 'cause giving up Ben & Jerry's for pimples? I'd cry. Seriously I would, though I'd cry with my eyes open so as to check out any super-hot chicks passing by 'cause that's what real men do."

"Why would they pass you?" Kurt asked. "They already approach to say how hot you are. All the Barbies. All the Stacies. Even if they knew we were together and that I had you on lockdown like I was Guantanamo Bae, they'd already be stealing you away from me only to return you and apologize when their moms would find out. As it is I'm just your "friend"."

Noah sighed. "Texas is a suck shack of a state when it comes to gays, baby. It's… it's just not as rad to hold another dude's hand here as it is in Cali."

"Then why am I here?"

"'Cause I want you to be," Noah replied earnestly. "I wanted you to see where I live and… I wanted you. Kurt, I want all of you. I want this to work out. I wish you lived closer, I… I just want to cuddle you until we fall asleep, make you moan until your lungs give out and talk about everything that we could never talk about with anyone else. You're mine, and no chick is stealing me away from you. You be the one I'm marrying. You be the future holding mate of my man seed, and…"

"Yes?" Kurt asked as Noah pursed his lips.

"Having two parents of the same gender would suck 'cause when you'd be in need of one you'd say "dad" but the other would reply and you'd have to say "not you, the OTHER dad", and that's why when we marry and have kids, you can be "dad". I'm gonna be 'Optimus Prime'," The fair boy smiled, watching as Noah came in for a kiss. "And when our kid will ask how we met, we'll say Optimus commented on daddy's text post and it was smooth as fuck."

"And when you're old, you'll probably shout out those text posts the way old men do with war flashbacks," Kurt laughed as Noah grinned.

"Totally. Maybe I'll have Alzheimer's and I'll no idea who you are but every day I'll bring in flowers from our garden and ask you to elope with me and every day you'll say we're already married and the smile on my face will be the most beautiful heartfelt thing you will have ever seen."

Kurt's heart now swelled exponentially. "Oh… Noah, you're so romantic."

"You wanna know what I find romantic and more so intimate?" Noah grinned as Kurt cocked his head.

"What?"

"Your bare face. You've got nothing on. When I licked your chin, it didn't taste of paint."
The boy blushed. "Oh, well apart from concealer, I guess I'm mostly makeup free."

Noah smiled. "I'm so proud of you, baby."

"You're comfortable as to expose your backne around me, I thought it only fair to reciprocate. I didn't want to imply you were shallow by keeping it on all the time."

"I wouldn't want you to," Noah replied. "I just want you as secure in your own skin as you are in your sexuality, and you know how much that turns me on."

"And I wish you didn't live in fear of people's judgment. Haters gon hate, Noah. You can't let them win. You're my Tarzan, my Swaggersaurus Sex. Optimus Prime would march right into Sephora holding my hand to find the sickest shade of guy-shadow: "Monster Truck Gas Fumes", packaged in the form of a bullet and he'd do it with pride."

"Nice," Noah chuckled. "What other shades would there be?"

"Let's see… there would be: 'The Laker's Won!', 'No Crying in Baseball', 'SWAG', WWE Uniform', 'Cinnamon Toast Crunch', 'Jizz Tissue', 'Sweat Stains', 'No Homo', 'Fuck Her Right In The Pussy', 'Mud', 'Guys Being Dudes', 'Smoke Weed Erry Day', 'It Was Just One Time At Camp It Doesn't Count', 'FOOTBALL!', and 'Moms Boobs'."

"Fuckin eh!" Noah laughed.

"Of course I don't mean for you to do that literally, even if it would be nice if boys took a greater interest in makeup as the market would grow and it'd no longer cost $25 for a foundation primer, but I digress. I just want you as proud to be with me as I am to be with you."

"I am baby boy, I am," Noah replied, coming to kiss Kurt's lips. "And tomorrow I'll let everyone know it."

"You will?" Kurt asked as the tan boy smirked his way.

"Hella. Just you watch me."

~ End Flashback ~

Next moment I can remember and he'd been all over me, kissing me with such intensity every shuffle he'd made, every ripple my lap absorbed and it would reveal the correspondence of my gagged, bursting beast. I had a hidden tumor in my pants of unspeakable passion and Je-sus was Kurt a golden load I couldn't get enough of. Seriously, we rocked the porch swing so frantically in our excitement the bolts holding the left hand chain broke from the ceiling sending us both to skid to one side and man was mom pissed when she found out, but I had to laugh 'cause it was hilarious. Those days with Kurt had been awesome. In fact, I could still feel the minute hairs bristle along his shins as my glancing finger tips roamed up and down his ivory legs...

Opening his eyes and Noah, the present hitting him full force with realization encompassing his body as like a ghost returning to its host, looked down to find his hand indeed on a thigh. He'd been massaging it, slowly enveloping it and because of what he assumed to be a woman's very perfunctory underwear, nothing had prevented his muscular thumb from reaching the hot hollow of her groin. He looked about in terror. He was sitting at a table game. He was playing no limit holdem poker with nine other people he'd never seen in his life. The woman in his lap, a gorgeous brunette swathed in a daring neck plunging piece was smirking at him, directing his hand further and further beneath her dress, but it was to his utter repulsion. Lady, you're not Kurt.
Immediately he shoved her off his lap, her cry a sudden shrill note. He stood from his seat, looking wildly about as those around the table eyed him in ripe silence. The croupier was now asking if he was alright. He didn't know. He was confused. Had he drunk something? Why was he here? Why had he crushed out against that woman's left buttock the last throb of the longest ecstasy he'd had in a long time thinking it was Kurt? For in that seat and he had had the honey of a spasm. He remembered now, much to his guilt. All those rippling images of him and Kurt on that porch swing afflicting him with desire. That that night he'd unleashed his venereal appetite on Kurt in his bed. But to look at himself now, debauched and perverted. He was pathetic.

"Signore," the croupier asked him. "Do you wish to leave the game?" Noah looked back round at him, feeling sweat heavy on his forehead. Indeed he had a temptation to abandon his cards before he further embarrassed himself, taking note of them now as they lay haphazardly strewn on the table, the many poker chips too, and the plaques. From what he could see in his daze he'd been playing well, the hollows of his hands that had been misguided to be ivory full of Kurt, full of the feel of his adolescent incurved back, that ivory smooth sliding sensation of his skin through the thin tee that Noah had worked up and down while he'd held him on that swing having in fact danced across this table like the hands of a poker savant, he-

Shit!

Approaching the table, drinks in their hands were Kurt, Santana and Blaine. They had all as of yet to notice him, casting wondering eyes across the room but with great speed did Noah hurriedly return to his seat, regaining his composure as casually as he could. "Continue," he said, nodding to the dealer. The game resumed. Four players, whose turn was now his. Noah paused. The first player had checked and unceremoniously, so had the second, but the third had bet fifty thousand dollars to which Noah had called. In response, the first two had folded, a heads up that the third had then followed with a one hundred thousand dollar bet that Noah had once again called. What the fuck had he been doing? Seriously, what was this?

The third player, an austere looking man with a horsey-handsome face, had since placed a two hundred thousand dollar bet on the table, now leaving it up to Noah to call or fold. Noah himself ruminated over his chips, his brain sonorous and still heavily clouded from that earlier flashback. He was resisting the urge to look back around and seek the room for Kurt, if only to ease the poignant chaos that was welling within him, but he had to pay attention. He had to focus. Come on, he had to- Fuck. With a single fleeting glance ahead of him and there was Kurt on the opposite side of the table, watching him, Santana alongside him, both observing the game with mild curiosity. Noah's heart stopped. It was then with a large shaking hand that he called the bet.

Unfortunately, with a full house to this Signore D'Angelo, deuces full of nines and Noah had no option but to fold. He watched with much grievance as all the chips were pooled under his opponent's wing, all two hundred thousand dollars lost, but he did not wish to retreat. A quick scan around the table at the drained looks in many multicolored eyes spoke of defeat, of bleeding chips, but he was still standing tall. This was a game he could win. He was Tarzan. He was Swaggersaurus Sex, Kurt's Optimus Prime that had eight years prior held his hand to the mall only to back out upon encountering school friends, and he'd pushed Kurt violently away and his own face had morphed into Puck's frightening smirk, distorted and warped set to terrify, to hurt.

I might as well have delivered Kurt a tremendous punching blow, catching him smack on his pale little cheekbone when I did that. Minutes later when my friends and I parted, he was no longer behind the potted plant he'd fallen behind, but gone. Disappeared. He was nowhere to be seen. I was already in remorse, in a poignant sweetness of sobbing atonement as I'd raced around the mall in search of him only to find him in the parking lot crouching by the wheel of my truck with his knees drawn in to his chest. And behind the windshield with our doors slammed shut and my love had groveled for him. I was caught in a fucking hopeless sensual reconciliation kissing his fingers and thin knobbly wrists. I immolated myself, but what I'd done, it had doomed us both.
Locking eyes with Kurt now and determination rose within Noah. His ears were attuning themselves once more to the game. Call. Call. Call. Three players. Bet three hundred thousand. Call. Call. Three players. Check. "Mr. Puckerman." Swiveling his eyes to the table, Noah cleared his head. He took a deep breath, peaking at his cards, odd numbers and nodding. He scanned his chips, neatening them meticulously. Yet with a casting glance down at his plaques, he paused, there to place one in front of him, the bet of five hundred thousand dollars. "Signore D'Angelo, it is up to you," the dealer announced, D'Angelo bringing two thick fingers to his temple as he eyed Noah's plaque with interest, but making no move as in a rapt silence he pondered.

From their position near the table, Santana and Kurt were soon joined by Blaine, the man having been in search of them for the past five minutes. He made to indulge in conversation but with a hush from Santana, "Noah's playing" made a harsh whisper, he turned his head to glimpse Puckerman indeed participating in the game, eyeing his opponent before him with patient assurity. But with no mental emphasis did Noah enjoy Blaine's sudden appearance. He was sickeningly conscious of the man's skeptic gaze, his continued whispered questions Santana would answer in a huff. And standing beside the two at the end, Kurt, his slim fingers knotted to his chest as like his six year old self looking on with concern. Oh how Noah loved him so damn much.

"Raise. One million." Flashing his eyes to the table, Noah, bewildered, took note of D'Angelo’s bet, the two plaques before them indeed raising the sum to one million. His opponent looked upon his decision seemingly with no regret and appeared to revel in the wave of arousal that swept the crowd as every onlooker neared like predators to dying prey. They watched as the first player with an abrupt throw of his cards, folded, sitting back in his chair in a sigh of resignation. They watched as Noah, with unequivocal concentration, re-raised the bet to two million, and with a house raising roar, they watched as D'Angelo went all in, pushing forward all his chips and plaques across the table, totaling the sum of fourteen million, 500,000 dollars. Jesus

The sweat on Noah's brow was so heavy, he felt his pores clogging one by one. This game had grown grotesquely out of his league. He'd played poker only a handful of times at home with his father before this and how he'd deplored it. He'd had no aptitude for the game. "Son, pay attention to the cards on the table, "His father had said, firmly. "In Texas Holdem, you wanna figure out what the best possible hand would be to fit the flop, okay. Make sure you notice flush & straight possibilities and don't play at too high a limit." The game was no limit. The stakes could rise as far as they wished to whirling heights and slow awful fear made to envelop Noah upon every gulp of his laryngeal. Seconds later, it was upon instinct that he called the bet.

Kurt could not watch. Everyone observing the game from their various strategic points, including Blaine and Santana, were peering ever more closely with baited breath. It was the showing of arms that would seal the fate of both these men, this D'Angelo gentlemen who with a reserved smirk placed on the table a full house, aces full of sixes, rapturing chatter from all around that resonated through him, feeding his arrogance, his high ego that reigned supreme, and this young American gentleman Puckerman, bringing forward his cards under the gaze of his opponent, a harsh twinkle in D'Angelo's left iris that with a sudden flash, froze. Five and seven of spades. A straight flush. Four to the eight. A high hand. "Signore Puckerman wins."

The crowd was not to withhold their cries of exulting surprise, their manual applause a sound to Noah's nerves that had only minutes before come near to crashing all around him. In the wake of his triumph, he watched as all of D'Angelo's chips joined his own, one by one, all fourteen million five hundred thousand dollars of it now his as D'Angelo himself rose from his chair and left in haste, Noah, in his immense zest, looking Kurt's way, only to find the boy hurriedly rounding the table to embrace him, hugging him so hard Noah felt his soul burst with love-ache. Kurt had been worried for him, he was saying. So worried. Kissing him on his head. "What was all that, Noah?" Kissing him on his cheek. "You could have lost! You coul-" Kissing him on his lips…
Upon contact and Noah's heart lurched to a stop, rising to the surface of a pool of perfect water and staying there, calm and incandescently afloat. Kurt's lips that had remained faithful to his mental imprint he had cherished for more than eight years, felt the same; soft, pliant and amazing. So ama... mama-zeballs. But as if he'd gone too far, reminding him of the fluid limits and rules of girlish games he'd never understood as long as he'd been kissing girls, and Kurt started back in terror, leaving no time for Noah's lips to soften from their puckered state as the boy bolted, dashing from the room in such an instant it'd been like watching a small impetuous child slipping through the crowd, the tinted light catching his hair, shimmering, and he was gone.

Noah showed no signs on considering any other alternative than to pursue his winged boy. He glanced Blaine and Santana's way, the look on Blaine's face stunted in an expression of shock and hurt, Santana herself standing awkwardly to his side before Noah was off, pelting rapidly through the room, the vision of his sixteen year old self running parallel to him through that crowded Dallas mall, that labyrinthine concrete complex that brought forth a gasp of panic. Past the ladies serenading each other on their gowns. Gentlemen almost knocked over several feet. Taking three steps and runt thee. The foyer. And beyond that, the pier, where Noah seeing with a melody of relief, Kurt, some ten paces away, his back to him waiting for a water taxi.

"Kurt!" Noah shouted. "Kurt, wait up!"

The boy slit his eyes to him. "Noah don't! I can't allow myself to look at you right now!"

Striding along the pier, Noah reached the end, gently taking hold of his arm. "Where are you going?"

"Back to the hotel," Kurt replied, shrugging him off. "I can't deal with anymore of this."

"Any more of what, Kurt? -"

"Of you, Noah! Why did you have to come back into my life?! Why must you always find a way to come back?! Can't you see we can't be trusted?!"

"Hey!" Noah protested. "You kissed me! I was just playing poker!"

"No limit with stakes of fourteen million! How was it you were able to call such a bet?! You don't have that kind of money!"

"Well then it's a damn good thing I won, isn't it!"

Kurt huffed. "It was reckless and irresponsible, that's what it was. I didn't even know you played poker, you hated table games."

"Yeah, well, when you see a dude with the boy who broke your heart, life has the common decency to gift you a fuckin good hand."

"Don't take that tone with me," Kurt snapped. "I broke up with you for our own good."

"Screw that Kurt, I loved you! And you loved me! What we had was real and we were the best! You can tell me to 'keep my distance' all you like, you can even pretend like I don't exist but I still used to make you whimper like a little bitch when you were about to cum every time you warmed my bed. All two hundred and ninety eight times!"

"Noah, be quiet!"

"Seventy four of which you passed out!"
"That is hardly relevant!" Kurt shouted, now shaking his head. "And to say we were 'the best' would be an egregious lie. Your life wasn't ready for me and you know it! All those weeks in Texas and I was suffocating! I was at the brunt of every single one of your objections to showcase any affection in public and all because you rather we'd glamorize sexual repression behind your parents' securely locked front door! I mean, do you realize the affect that had on me?!!"

"Why don't you enlighten me, Kurt!"

"With every rebuttal, you were labeling the love you now say we had so fervently as wrong! By doing all that you justified every homophobic taunt I endured in middle school because you believed it! My own boyfriend! How dysfunctional does that sound to you?!! Your actions Noah, that Puck stunt at the mall, all of it thundered skies high above anything they ever jeered at me, because it came from you. It came from you!"

Noah was silent, his clenched jaw trembling.

"And as for California, well, my faith in you by then had near bled dry," Kurt continued. "Even there your affections were fickle and who was I to stand in your way when the Surfing community was prepared to embrace your return just as long as I was out of the picture? I mean, how convenient. Saying you'd have no career if you were openly bisexual. It only reflected your own closed subconscious views. You and that so called 'open-minded' culture deserved each other more so than you ever did me."

"Kurt-"

"So don't you dare make me out to be the villain here, Noah. You were weak, as weak as those who can't dry swallow pills, eat pizza crusts, handle all black outfits or find Mario Kart's Rainbow Road too difficult. Like them, I was sure natural selection had its sights locked on you and that any children you'd have would wither in the cold winter winds." Noah gulped. "But rationally, I knew we'd just gone too fast too young and now here you are eight years later claiming things have "changed"."

"Things have changed," Noah now pressed. "Kurt, everything I told you on that platform in Verona was true. I don't know how else to prove it you other than wish I could fly you over to L.A. right now and have you see my life for what it is, 'cause things are different. And for the better. I'm so grateful for what I have, what I've accomplished. To date, I'm the first openly male pansexual elite pro surfer on tour and coming out as such made for one of the proudest moments of my whole career."

"Noa-"

"I suffocated too, you know," Noah said. "Lying about who I was from the day I received my very first sponsor. Surfing is not like Vogue, Kurt. Your magazine's not still locked in its old 60s stereotypes. I've had to struggle to reconcile myself with the conformist image because I'm pan for so long now. Living in fear, suffering in silence to keep the industry happy, the sponsors happy until three years ago when I couldn't take any more of the pressure and came out."

He paused, his breaths labored.

"And I could have lost it all," he continued. "Right then and there they could have kicked my ass to the curb but I made sure they knew they'd be losin out on an allright dude someday set to become a fuckin legend if they did, and now look at me. I've set an example to all LGBT surfers that you can be out n' proud and still be successful. I'm changing mainstream surfing for all of them 'cause damn it I don't want them doing what I did and losing the love of their lives just to become more
"marketable".

"Noah-"

"No Kurt, listen!" Noah roared, eyes stinging. "Losin you was... Je-sus," His voice broke as Kurt coming forward, embraced him. "Kurt, I love you. I love you fiercely as fuck. I've never stopped. Nothing since we broke up has filled that hole. No fling, no relationship. Even if I had fallen in love again doesn't mean I was gonna share the same love with them as I had with you 'cause it belongs to you, baby. You're the only one to have ever deep throated my heart and man did you take it deep."

"Oh Noah."

"Every step I have really taken has been to someday bring us together again, and not to shove us both back into a closet, but have us love each other unconditionally. Even if it takes slitting my own throat in hopes that everything I've ever wanted to say comes pouring out, I wanna make that clear. I wanna let you know I'm ready."

"You-"

"Kurt, I've never been readier in my whole life and whether you say yes or no at this point, I don't think I'm gonna catch it, as all I wanna do is shut your mouth with mine 'cause damn are you gorgeo-..."

"Just kiss me already," Kurt begged as Noah with a low moan descended a kiss of sweet wetness and trembling fire, Kurt's lips opening with utmost piety, sipping cutely on the man's mouth that was not salacious until with impatient arms around his waist pulled him further in, it pressed harder. So hard Kurt felt Noah's front teeth. So hard and he shared in the taste of his saliva until he pulled away, smiling cutely, dizzily. "You know, I live for the moments you make me fall in love with you all over again."

"Sounds like a life worth living," Noah breathed. He embraced Kurt once more, there to dive his face into the boy's neck with emotion high about his rough voice. "Oh baby, I love you so much. I just... I just can't sleep without your breathing and I can't breathe each time you leave. Promise me you'll never leave again, Kurt. Please."

Pulling away, the fair boy returned his gaze, coming to cradle Noah's cheek in his hollowed hand. "We can leave together," he smiled. "Come on, let's get out of here."

The water taxi approaching the pier had hardly come to a standstill than Kurt took hold of Noah's hand and led him aboard, handling him in an energetic, matter of fact manner as if he were an insensate gadget unconnected with himself. The boy was anxious to smuggle them both down the canal and into the hermetic seclusion of the Hotel Cipriani before anyone was to stop them, flowing into the man's lap and kissing him so hard and so fast there was sure to be a great endeavor luring him on: the want for Noah. The need for Noah. God, he was allowed his way while Noah himself could still bear it, those blue eyes blinking at the man through batting lashes. Cheeks flushed and aflame! Tonight, in this mad dream world, would be his dissolution.

This love is good, this love is bad, this love is alive back from the dead
These hands had to let it go free and this love came back to me
This love left a permanent mark, this love is glowing in the dark
These hands had to let it go free and this love came back to me...

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~ PLEASE REVIEW ~

(But if you wish to criticize, may it be constructive. I'm not going to learn from my mistakes and improve if you vent.)

**Disclaimer:** I do not own the rights to the characters from Glee as I don't own the show. I'm not earning money from this and no copyright or trademark infringement is intended.

~ STAY TUNED FOR MORE BY FOLLOWING/FAVORITING ~
Chapter 14

THE MAN

2017

XIV

~ Venice ~

The day was a Thursday and its morning proved as bright as the days preceding it. Kurt was to awaken nebulously in a twin bed with nothing on but the sheet draped over his body, there to eye clothes strewn in various attitudes of enchantment across the floor, and sensing a ravenous bulk no less than six inches away turned to see Noah smiling softly over him in a stirless vigil. For the longest time he'd been there, lying in wait through each and every toss within Kurt's abundant flow of sleep. He'd been careful not to touch the boy with fear of bringing him out of his young unconsciousness, always retreating when coming too near but oh how it had been hard. Kurt, his burning life. His desire. The memories of the previous night flashing before him.

My heart had pounded the entire time, expanding with such force it had almost blotted me out. Upon docking and we'd ran hand in hand along the fondamenta zitelle to the hotel, wary to walk when entering and crossing the lobby but dashing off once again in our suits stomping and panting until I'd flung open the room door and Kurt was in my arms, his innocent mouth melting under the ferocious pressure of my dark male jaws. In the next instant, we were nude. In the next, we were on the bed and there had been throbs, dabs of color in our eyes: stinging reds, smears of pink. Fire! There had been sighs, winces. I'd lain Kurt bare to my passion, my "magic". I'd had Kurt, and there to bring us to the euphoria of release. The sweet as fuck immersion. Y-yeah…

They lay quietly, surveying each other. It was clear they'd lost themselves in the pungent but healthy heat which like summer haze hung about their bodies, so like it had been when they'd been younger. To remember the sheer amount of mornings they'd wasted sprawled in bed together in that frenzy of mutual possession which had only been assuaged by imbibing and assimilating every particle of each other's soul and flesh, it brought laughter to Noah's eyes, as with a shifting of his body until Kurt no longer felt the aura of his fuzzy chest like warm breath against his cheek, there was contact, and taking his time out to nuzzle the boy's neck and jaw, put his mouth to Kurt's ear, muttering in a low croaky voice, "Mornin baby," the sexiest sound.

To this and it seemed Kurt had entered a plain of being where nothing mattered, save the infusion of joy that brewed within his body. Noah was descending upon him the gentlest of kisses on his lips until his own full under lip glistened like the skin of a freshly washed fruit. He felt the touch of thick calloused fingers caress his body, each falling down the curve of his spine as down a ski slope of mayo into a chasm from which they would lull happily for an eternity only to rise once again to the roof of his nates, swirling over his tail bone and pausing, a large splayed hand now gripping his hip like an aroused creature, for in such a petrified paroxysm of desire was Noah, he was taking advantage of every blessed quirk in space and time to touch him.

Then, maneuvering cautiously, and the man dove a thigh between Kurt's limbs. The boy exclaimed in delirious embarrassment and surprise as Noah angled it with great precision against his groin and with words spoken in a hot thunderous whisper, "All yours, babe," the man winked. "Go crazy." Kurt's mind, for a while, could not decipher the meaning behind the words, yet gradually the odd sense of lying in this bed where anything carnal was permissible came over him. He looked down at Noah's thigh, large, and hairy and muscular. Often when young had he ground against it as a form of
frottage, and now with a single upward thrust was he reminded of its pleasures, but with his head
gleaning over the whole situation, he could not sustain it.

At once and I hastily untangled myself from the excitement of the bed, sitting up and pawing together
the items of my suit at my feet. What I'd done was wrong. I shouldn't have abandoned Blaine and
Santana at the casino. I shouldn't have lain with Noah before my relationship had had a chance to
end. As it was, it marked my first indiscretion, and I felt my face disfigure by my emotion, an ugly
sight. I tried to rearrange my respiration, but I was finding it increasingly difficult. I had one sock
already on. I was hitching on the other, but with a hand to my arm I turned to the look of confusion
on Noah's face, the hurt, and with a knock to the door, Santana peered into the room, slowly
entering as she eyed with a self-satisfied smirk the aftermath of my shame.

"Wanky," she grinned.

"Santana," Kurt breathed, "Where's Blaine?"

Behind him, Noah frowned, "Kurt-

"He's next door," the Latina answered, "but you're going to have to be quick 'cause he's leaving."

Kurt stopped. "He's leaving?! As in-

"As in, booking out and hopping on a plane back to New York. He knows what you two did last
night, fornicating like a bunch of demonic weasels. He knows why you came back here. I'm so
proud."

"Santana, this is really not a good time to condone this."

"Why not?" Santana frowned. "You finally got stuffed."

Kurt shook his head. "No, I didn't."

"Then what did you…Oh come on, Kurt, get with the program," the Latina sighed. "You can't let
your first time with Blaine dictate all future fuckings. You gotta hop on that dick and try again."

Noah stilled. "Blaine's been inside you?"

"Once," Kurt replied as Santana smirked.

"He said Kurt's asshole was as soft as a bunny's when prolapsed."

"San, shut up!"

Noah frowned. "I thought you weren't into that."

"I'm not!" Kurt exclaimed. "And I'll discuss it all later if I must, but right now I have to get to Blaine.
San, why didn't you tell me he was leaving sooner?!"

"You seemed a little occupied, not getting stuffed!"

"For goodness sake!"

"Fun fact, Kurt," Santana huffed. "Statistically girls are likelier to get pregnant than boys. If Noah
claims your ass as his cumdump, he still can't colonize you if that's what worries you."

"Ew, Santana! I know he very well can't!"
"Then let Surfer Boi here demolish you, Kurt! Get ploughed for the love of God!"

"Are you hearing this?" Said Kurt as Noah shrugged.

"It is something I wanna try with you, baby. I bet you're as tight as the skinny jeans you wear-"

"Noah, this isn't funny! What we did last night was not right! I had a boyfriend and I was unfaithful to him! What does that say about me?! What kind of light does that cast me in now?!"

"Chill Kurt, chill," Noah replied, swiftly coming to kneel behind him with monkeyish nimbleness, rocking him gently from side to side in a soothing embrace him, face to neck.

"I have to see him, Noah," Kurt muttered. "He deserves an explanation. He deserves… I just can’t let it end this way. Not like this."

Noah nodded. "I know, I get it. It's just for a moment there you really scared me. Recoiling the way you did, collecting your clothes like you were either gonna lock yourself up in the bathroom or run back to Blaine, baby you gotta understand how it all looked. How it made me feel."

"I know and I'm sorry," Kurt replied, turning. "I'm not leaving you, I just have to fix this."

"Sure," Noah nodded, releasing his boy. Yet as he watched anxiously as Kurt rose from his seat on the bed, buttoning his shirt with shaking fingers, it was with an instinctive rush, a need coursing through hot blood that pulled at that same shirt, bringing him in for a kiss as his own muscled arms wound tightly around the boy's waist. "I love you, baby," he groaned. "It's all gonna be okay." And pulling away looking slightly dazed, Kurt smiled apologetically, making his way to the door and out of sight.

There was shyness about him, a sudden distaste for the ostentation of the hotel. Upon knocking and entering the adjacent suit and he tried with much will to mask the frenzy of his grief with a trembling ingratiating smile. "Blaine?" He voiced, looking about the room with no sign of the man inside. In his head and he'd been devising some casual pretext to approach the fated conversation discreetly, but with Blaine's suitcase missing and he was rushing out into the hallway, descending the stairs two at a time to the lobby where in a sudden silence he caught sight of the man at the front desk, meekly booking out with his signature to paper as Kurt approached, standing in the foyer in a creased shirt and trousers, only a single sock on his left foot.

"Blaine," Kurt whispered as the man glanced at him, becoming aware of his position. He smiled weakly as he spoke.

"Hey, Kurt."

"You're leaving."

"I think it only time, don't you."

Kurt lowered his head. "I... I'm so sorry."

"Kurt, it's alright," Blaine assured, coming to embrace him. "It's okay. You don't belong with me. I see that now. You belong with him, with Noah." He pulled Kurt back, continuing. "Last night at the casino and I saw the way you were with him when he won that poker game-"

"I made a spectacle of myself," Kurt replied, ashamed.

"No Kurt, you-"
"Blaine, I behaved improperly. Throughout that whole evening and my conduct was improper. I mean, I made plain my feelings for Noah right in front of you and you didn't deserve to see that."

"Maybe not," Blaine shrugged, "but I knew you weren't conscious of what you were doing. From the realization that struck your face seconds after I knew you were remorseful. It's what I managed to hear on the pier that clinched it."

"You overheard that?" Kurt replied, shocked.

Blaine nodded. "Only the last remaining remnants, but what I heard was all I needed to hear. It not only confirmed my fears that Noah is indeed still in love with you but that you yourself return his affections just as strongly. I mean, you do, don't you?"

Kurt nodded weakly. "Yes, Blaine I... I love him. I've always loved him. I don't know what that makes us now, and you can think what you like of me, talk of me what you like, because I deserve it-"

"Shh."

"What I then went and did behind your back was unforgivable."

Blaine chuckled. "Kurt, stop beating yourself up. It's okay. You become such a drama queen sometimes, I swear."

"I'm not a drama queen," Kurt pouted. "I'm a drama khaleesi."

Blaine nodded. "That you are. And your majesty needs to know that I do forgive him."

"You do?"

"Yes. Kurt, what you did wasn't out of spite. I know you weren't out to hurt me or do anything malicious in the slightest. I know you better than that."

"You do, don't you," Kurt smiled meekly as Blaine nodded, cupping the boy's face.

"Yes. It wouldn't be you not to restart a whole song just because you missed your favorite line or envy people who spurt out witty comebacks on the spot when you yourself need at least three days' notice. Or even create a password on all your accounts that contain at least one capital letter, the meaning of life, fourteen of your favorite baby names, the Hamlet plot summary and a hug. It just wouldn't Kurt."

"I suppose," Kurt replied, his smile broadening. "You'll always be the man who when I asked if he wanted the WiFi password on his first visit to Brunswick said "no", because you just wanted to spend time with me."

Blaine grinned. "And I still do. I still want to be in your life, Kurt, but this time, as a friend... then again, who needs friends when you have fast WiFi."

"I'll always need you Blaine."

The man grinned. "All those straight men dressing like randomized Sims. It does look like a two person job."

"I know," Kurt laughed. "Noah himself believes everyone should just wear the same outfit everyday as they do in cartoons and there I am always saying that if I wear the same one twice in one week it's
vintage."

"I hope he makes you happy, Kurt," said Blaine, embracing him. "Happier than I made you."

"Goodbye, Blaine." And then he was gone, nearing the exit as Kurt called. "Blaine!" The man turned. "Were we ever in love?"

Blaine shrugged, grinning. "No, but oh God how we could have been."

And out the doors he disappeared as Kurt looked on, rue ladening his heart. He thought of the two and a half years he and Blaine had been together. Years of beauty, months of tenderness. They were times he'd feared had been squandered forever when he'd awoken that morning. As it was, he was to return to their suite with his mind still caught in these idle dry dreams and there to shower alone and silent under the spray, drunk on the impossible past. Yet to think of the present. Of the future. There was a drop of rare honey in that thought that today could hold in its acorn cup. Venice was waiting for him. There was still a lot left to do and see within this most serene city he had yet to write about, and to see it all with Santana, with Noah.

Noah. The love of his life, he was now sure. The man was Kurt's eternal passion, reflected in his blood. He was the man whose iliac furrows had deepened, the man who he could touch and smell and hear and see, mmm, the man of the strident voice and solid sterling silver ring on his right thumb, a single hoop earring in his right ear with a shark tooth pendant around his neck, and the sticky hot neck, and the surfer vocabulary, "Bitchin", "Boss", "Excellent", "Primo", "Rad", that Noah, his Noah who, upon hearing knocks to the door among sundry sounds emanating from beyond the open windows, would stand from the bed, hitching up his shorts as in entered Kurt simultaneously, dressed simply and understated, just beautiful, all rose and honey.

I grinned his way, grinning like a dork sick in love, but that love a cure, and he offered me a smile in return though it was small and tugged weakly at the corners of his lips. I had him in my arms at once as he mumbled into my shoulder in the end what had happened with Blaine. Telling me it was over. Telling me it had been a gentle amicable affair, but that he craved intimacy, that he wanted to lose his mind in gondolas, church choirs and gelato. Lots and lots of gelato. I dutifully said yes to 'em all, but not before seating him in my lap and creaming every inch of his exposed magnolia-white skin in sunblock as a further distraction, just the thing to have his lips pull softly into the bonniest of smiles, his eyes brighter and bluer than the darling buds of May.

Indeed with Blaine gone and they were together at last. Noah had from the beginning felt inadequate when compared to the man, mocked even. Blaine had seemed to reflect Kurt's personality, or had at least encompassed a certain homogenous and striking variation of it. It had been of the same genre, the same type of humor at its best with affinities to Kurt's tone of brain. He'd had highbrow allusions. He'd seemed well read, versed in logodaedaly and logomancy, and had spoken French to Kurt on more than one occasion. He'd been an amateur of Shakespeare too, educated in fine theatrical literature and had a feminine handwriting, his letters, Noah recalled, having slanted elegantly like Kurt's had done when booking into the hotel days ago.

With it all and it would seem Blaine had been Kurt's most ideal and compatible suitor, a doppelganger relationship paradigm that formed a natural alliance with one's double, "the secret sharer" one linked their sexuality to and to which Noah himself had often witnessed in the gay community upon occasional visits to West Hollywood. These eerie "twincest" couples. These "Boyfriend Twins". Some believed it was the result of those employing their partner as a blank yet mirroring surface on which to project their inflated ego ideals upon, sometimes in dogged obsession. It wasn't something Noah found appealing, having had no wish to affirm his shared identity sexually with any other male too similar looking, for see, he'd only ever loved Kurt.
And Kurt loved him. Kurt, whom all the Dalton gents had made the play for, but whom all had not quenched his search for Noah. Kurt, who'd not seen a single boy for the remainder of his high school career after their summer break-up and who had made sure to adopt a more mature approach to dating when in college, had tried to sort through the portions of heaven and hell that was the strange, awful, maddening world of the courtship ritual, one beastly and beautiful merging at a point to have him realize he could not fall in love with any other man but Noah. How he had failed utterly upon each and every attempt. How silly he now felt. How naïve! As naïve, Noah lovingly thought, as the part of his long glossy brown hair, that silky sheen on his temple.

It was in that moment that began their extensive tour of Venice for the next two days. By putting the geography of the city into motion, Noah did his best to give Kurt what he wanted, to go where he wanted. To go everywhere. To Le Caffe Florian, the oldest cafe-bar on St. Marc's for a latte before anyone was on the square. To Tonolo in Calle San Pantalon, the patisserie a temple to all things sweet with cream, apple or sabayon filled Venetian doughnuts of galami and fritelle typically sold at Carnival time, alongside praline cream choux puffs, meringues and cream meringatas. To Attilio Codognato on San Marco, the jewelers with windows packed with skull rings, moor's head brooches, ivory cameos and marvelously vintage pieces from the 30s and 70s.

Then to Osteria Al Portego on Al Portego, a bacaro wine bar tucked under an arch for various cicchetti wine and mini fresh sandwiches filled with ham, cheese, cured meats and baccala mantecata, a local dried salt cod paste. Then a race to Pronto pesce Pronto on Pescheria, Rialto before midday for the fish bar's crudi Italian sashimis and cicchetti followed by Harry's Bar on Calle Vallaresso not only for the signature peach Bellini, but also for the classic décor of famous frosted glass windows and regulars. Then to Anice Stellato on Cannaragio for the bistro's light crispy fried fish, scampi tagliatelle, fried zucchini flowers, ink squid and polenta, almond cake and amaretti ice cream with a table outside on the Fondamenta della Sensa canal side.

They explored further with following visits to the Hotel Oltre Il Giardino on San Polo, a grand house enclosed by a verdant garden with just twelve rooms overlooking olive trees and magnolia bushes. Then through the tourist circuit of Saint Mark's Basilica, Doge's Palace, Teatro La Fenice and Rialto Bridge. To listen to Vivaldi violin concertos by the Santa Maria della Salute, to retrace James Bond's Casino Royale shoot out steps by the Palazzo Pisani, to shop for local authentic lace in Martinuzzi and eat at Gelati Da Nico on Zattere for the most reputable gelato in Venice, its fabulous views of the Giudecca wasted on Noah as he all but gazed on the effete pale fountain boy beside him dispatching his Gianduiotto hazelnut treat with adorable alacrity.

By the Friday afternoon and all three of them, Kurt, Noah and Santana, had inspected most of Venice. They'd consumed its sights voraciously and had glided the streets like dance floors, or moreover Kurt had, as if he'd been starry-eyed and reverent in a foretaste of heaven, drinking in beauty, food and Noah against secluded plaster fading walls, for how easy homosexual affection in public now came to the man. Noah, who was eager to impress him with the world of rainbow surfers, prepared to fix the relationship discrepancies they'd had as teens with stolen kisses and the holding of hands with pride alone preventing him from giving up on instigating all those stark acts of "Mawkish slosh" Santana would call them. "Mawkish romantic slosh."

However, both Kurt and Noah were to ignore her contempt, her unromantic sneers. Upon boarding a gondola ride along the maze of the city's canals and she slouched opposite them in that bored way she'd cultivated from waiting for auditions and defrosting chickens in the sink, trailing a listless hand in the water as in their own seats the boys snuggled, Kurt tucked closely into Noah's side. With a glance upward and the sky beyond the domed roofs of many a church and limestone palace was now a slow infusion of inutile loveliness, the sun itself low in a platinum haze with a warm peeled-peach tinge pervading the upper edge of two-dimensional dove gray clouds. The late hour was nearing seven and up ahead, the Bridge of Sighs awaited them.
"The legend is that if two lovers kiss beneath it at sunset as the bells of St Mark's Camanile toll, they will be granted eternal love and bliss," Kurt said as Noah glanced his way.

"Really?"

"Or so I hear."

"Tell me you didn't jump on this gondola to do just that," Santana huffed as Noah frowned.

"And what if he did? I wanna do it."

Kurt looked at him. "You do?"

"Hells yeah. We can fulfil a legend. I mean how often can you do that?"

"You did, all the time as a teen when you played Legend of Zelda."

"Nu-huh," Noah replied. "I played horror games where the only light came from the protagonist's light up sneakers."

"And yet Sarah still put that seashell to your ear and told you the ocean said you were a dork."

"Yeah, well, some kids play video games 'cause it makes 'em feel that at least the characters need 'em, and sometimes that's all that matters."

Kurt laughed. "You are so cute. I didn't like it when you'd win a game and one child would say, 'First is the worst, second is the best.' How does that make sense?"

"It doesn't," Noah answered. "That kind of thinking would cost you the star ranking on Mario Kart."

Santana frowned. "What are you, twelve?"

"Yeah, on a scale of one to ten," Noah quipped. "Seriously though, why do they have driver's training? Driving is just like Mario Kart except slower and you can't throw blue shells at people."

"Don't tell me he drives," said Santana.

Kurt smiled. "Hey, I'm just happy he wasn't pausing Call of Duty to talk to me because I would have dumped him for playing shitty games."

"Why? Call of Duty too hetero?" Noah chuckled as Kurt shrugged.

"That and kicking a football once, or fucking a football. I couldn't have you turning straight on me. They walk so slow and cum so fast... or so Santana says."

"It's true," nodded the Latina. "They also hesitate to kiss you after you sucked their cum up, to which I always shoved their clothes back at them and told them to go home because they were being children."

"Well, I don't have that problem, or more so, Kurt here doesn't."

"Kuuurrrrttt," Santana drawled teasingly as the boy blushed. "Is that true?"

"Yes," he replied shyly. "I did say Noah's a giver."

"Always have been," Noah grinned proudly. "I don't give this cutie blowjobs, I give him blow-
"Noah, shhh," Kurt urged, glancing fleetingly at the rear of the gondola as with lips to his ear, Noah whispered hotly.

"Feelin your dick grow in my mouth, draining your sack and leavin you to pour. Swallowing is romance, baby. I get so thirsty for you, you wouldn't believe."

"Noah, please," Kurt whispered as Noah smirked.

"I've wet myself over your body for so long now, that… that slim slab of perfection-

"Noah-

"Shredding your face on my abs. Chokin you with my thighs. I wanna make you feel every thrust Kurt, every bit of your cherry poppin-

"Noah, will you-

"God, I'm already leakin pre!" Noah exclaimed, snatching hold of Kurt's hand and placing it over his crotch. "Quick baby, there's no time, grab my boner!"

Feeling nothing, Kurt laughed. "You ass!"

"You know," Noah chuckled, resting his arm once again around the back of Kurt's seat. "About a year after I graduated college, I was approached to do porn."

Santana perked, smirking. "You were?"

"Yep. I was scouted in Malibu by Sean Cody to do a solo scene."

"Wow." Kurt murmured. "Well now that I think of it you do match their model criteria."

"Right. My stage name was gonna be "Mr. Footlong", and they offered me good money too and as I was skint I was in real need for it, but I couldn't. It was gay porn and nobody knew I was anything less than straight then. Let alone bi or pan."

"Now when you say bi," Santana began, "you mean attraction to bicycles, binoculars, bilinguals and binary coding, right?"

"Ignore he," said Kurt. "Go on."

"Surfing is a male dominated sport, has a lotta "eXtreme" mashismo in it, and when you have all these dudes travelling together hunting for waves, they gotta make sure there's no ambiguity there. To prove they're hetero they gotta prove their skills in the water and if I'd done gay porn, I'd have been shooting myself in the foot. Oh and bye sponsors."

"It's okay Noah, you should always be careful what you post online. Future employers might see it and want to hang out with you because you're so cool. Or likelier yet, prospecting sponsors will have found your solo scene during a quick Google search for your name and will have wished to inform you…"

"Yeah?"

"… that your bod is slammin'. 10/10. You're hired, Puckerman. See you Monday."
Noah chuckled, smiling warmly. "Totally. Would you have watched the scene if I'd said yes to 'em, baby?"

"Well usually I find porn is too much for me. I mean, someone could've eaten those apples, but instead you put them all in your asshole? Who will eat them now? I certainly won't, and dare I say it, pornography without in depth story lines or character development? No thanks. But a solo scene? I don't know. To be honest I'd find it hotter just watching you unbuckle your belt or watch the way your jawline looks when you drink water or chew gum. There's a moment of silence for me there every time."

Noah beamed. "Thanks baby, you're the best. Hey," he said, looking to Santana, "aren't I the luckiest guy in the world."

"Sure," the woman said, "Kurt's beauty, Kurt's grace, Kurt once dropped his phone on his face."

"Thanks San."

"Luckily that was before you had your nose job."

Noah blinked. "You had a nose job?!"

"Well-

"I knew it! I knew there was something different. I've even felt it when we've kissed."

"Really?"

"Yeah, it's somehow easier now."

"Okay well firstly, I had reconstructive surgery done. See, whilst you were being scouted for porn Noah, I was injured in a dance studio calamity."

"What happened?"

Kurt glanced Santana's way, unimpressed. "Auntie Snix here was trying to set up a dance pole with her mouth only for it to fall on my face which I can only recall with great pain to be one of the most excruciating experiences I have ever had in my life."

Santana shifted guiltily. "Who's still your fav bitch though? Trick question, it me! … Right, Kurtie?"

"Fortunately, Blaine's mother set me up with a great surgeon who not only reset my nose but tweaked it cosmetically."

"What did he do?"

"He essentially made an incremental excision of my nasal cartilage to remove all bulbosity and then followed that up with some alterations so that it was all made proportional. It slimmed my nose considerably as Blaine's mother thought it previously resembled a "snout" or a "baked potato"."

"What?"

"Don't worry, she was fond of me but she was always one to point out my flaws. So as a gift, she paid for the whole thing."

"And you were okay with that?"
"I'd always been self-conscious about my nose. I inherited my dad's, and I had at times contemplated getting it done so when the opportunity struck, I went for it. I even had it modelled after my mom's. She has a beautiful nose."

"But that's all you had done, right? Not that that surgeon didn't do a bitchen job, 'cause bruh, dat nose is cute."

"Really?"

"Yeah… too cute actually, ain't no one gonna believe it's real. No cartilage in this world is that exquisite."

"Hey-"

"Just sayin, and I don't want you pushing your body anymore to the limit by pushing the customize button on your face any more."

"Noah, pushing my body to the limit would be, well, not in the 'healthy living' way, but more in the 'how much pasta can I eat before I'm unable to physically move way.'"

"I meant I think you look amaze-balls the way you are. Fuck Blaine's mom, you're perfect in my eyes, baby."

Santana rolled her own. "God, you're one those guys."

"What?"

"Guys who think every girl or gay is an insecure wreck who feels bad about themselves saying, "You're beautiful", "You should all deserve to be called a princess". We're not a fucking charity, Surfer Boi."

Noah blinked. "What just happened?"

"Ignore her," Kurt replied. "She's entering a misandry fit."

"'Boys don't like girls who wear make-up.' "Boys don't like girls who eat too much." "Boys don't like girls who talk too much." Sounds like boys are gay." Kurt and Noah looked at each other. "Then they have the nerve to have specific tastes dating girls only with long legs, only with blue eyes, only with scales, only with little mouths on her forehead that sing a variety of Spanish tunes."

Noah shrugged. "I'll date a girl who has little mouths on her forehead that can sing tunes in any language."

"See," Santana grinned, "These are the kind of dudes we need. Open minded, not confined by languages. I like that. Kurt here was telling me how he'd always felt out of his league dating you and I said-"

"Whoa, wait what? Kurt are you still hung up on that?"

"Well you've always been so "whoa" and I've always been so "oh". Seriously Noah, you have game so strong I find it intimidating."

"And you don't? Kurt, I've been stalking your Tumblr for months. Your selfie game gives me fuckin full on nipple boners."

"It does?"
"Hella. With every update and I'm like 'damn dat little cutie sooo cute it's too bad he's not fucking me'. I'd call him "baby" 'cause bein called so by the right person is heaven and I'd talk about how shooting stars are actually people driving off Rainbow Road until he'd fall asleep in my arms he'd been homesick for this whole time. I'd talk about how the Joker got his scars from trying to put a whole Pringle in his mouth at once, I'd talk about how "Ariana Grande" sounds more like a font on Microsoft Word-"

"Oh yeah," Kurt smiled.

"I'd pitch a Disney movie starring Lana Del Rey where she sings to nature like every other princess but everything around her wilts and dies." The fair boy laughed. "And I'd talk of how when you remove your iPhone case, it feels like you're cradling a newborn-Oh! No! I'd predict the year 2060. iPhone 842 is out and now, the screen touches you."

"Doesn't he come up with the weirdest stuff?" Kurt giggled as Noah kissed his temple.

"Anything for my baby."

"God, you guys are cute," Santana grinned.

Noah nodded. "It's summer lovin."

"Summer lovin, had me a blast," Kurt sang.

"Summer lovin, dick in my ass-"

"San."

To Noah's laughter, the Latina shrugged innocently. "What?"

"Don't."

"Oh come on, what's "Summer lovin" without a little backdoor? It was the one thing missing from Grease."

Kurt sighed. "You're unbelievable."

"Surfer Boi here wants to do it."

"San, Noah and I are reconnecting. We haven't been intimate in years and I don't want to move too fast."

"But-"

"We only had sex for the first time in nearly a decade two days ago. Give us time."

"Uh-huh, how many times have you done it since?"

"That really isn't any of your busin-"

"Four," Noah grinned. "Five by tonight."

Kurt frowned. "What?"

"Oh yeah, forgot to say, tonight I'm fucking you for a few hours babe, so get some rest."
Before he could protest, Noah lay Kurt's head once more on his chest. "San, can you hear us from your room?"

"When have I ever not heard you getting nailed, Kurt."

"I-

"Noah and I could hear you and Blaine when he was here." 

"You could?!"

"Yeah," Noah nodded. "I even timed you guys. Fifty-four seconds. You know what I did last time I overhead a couple fucking for that long, I laughed, and I laughed harder when they banged on the wall 'cause the dude could bang a wall but not his girlfriend."

"So you laughed at us?"

"No he cried," Santana smirked as Noah huffed, eying her resentfully.

"Why?" He asked. "Just... why?"

Kurt frowned. "Noah, is that true? Did you cry?"

"I was upset, okay," Noah mumbled. "I hadn't seen you in years, I had my mind set on gettin you back and what do I find? You in the arms of someone who can't even make love to you right. It was heartbreaking."

"Would it ease you to know it was you I was thinking of?"

"What?"

"I'd just seen you in the pool, and all I said to myself as I watched you was 'pollinate me' 'pollinate me' over and over again. I was the one to bring the sex to that fifty-four second end. It was me-"

In time with their arrival at the Bridge of Sighs, the gondola passing underneath and Noah with an impatient lunge had pressed his mouth to Kurt's, pinning the boy beneath him with such vigor it served to rock their vessel dangerously from one side to the other. "Love you so much, baby," Noah breathed harshly, ignoring the gondolier's protests. "Gonna pollinate you real good tonight." Oh, he was not daring himself to let go. No. It was words of sweet truth those blue azure eyes that showed such effervescent excitement at such an admittance that had Noah ceasing himself not to dare realize that this love was the start of the new ineffable life which, ably assisted by fate, he had willed into being, and had wished to do for so, so, so long now.

And in that very instant of Noah's triumph and Kurt sighed. Noah was his, his, his as much as he was Noah's. In his arms. Oh how he wished he'd comforted those shedding tears of that night, those tears he'd have kissed away faster than they could have welled. I'm yours Noah. I'm yours now. Mark me. And with brisk attention descending to his neck, hickies were suckled upon his flesh, and he would wince and he would squint up at flashes of blinding white limestone, that of the bridge above. So beautiful. Exquisite. The white carved patterns plunging and playing like chestnut leaves in a breeze that had his smile widen, there to bring Noah once more to his lips. Ben fatto, caro mio. The blessing of a legend had just been bestowed upon them.

Glee
A velvet summer night as smooth as chocolate hung over the Hotel Cipriani that evening. Or so it seemed to naked unflinching creatures. Stood on the suite balcony and Noah eyed it in thoughtful deliberation, his expression from afar perhaps that of brooding, a solemn man routing the monster of insomnia, but perhaps indulged in deep fascination, his senses charged from his fingertips as his hands leant on the banister grilling to the sounds of a hotel so quiet. Quieter than those in America, the Hotel Del especially with its clatter of elevator gates and luggage carts he recalled having banged and boomed twenty yards northeast of his head but noise he'd clearly perceived as if it had been inside his very temple lasting well beyond midnight.

The time was eleven fifteen. Kurt, Santana and himself had all dined and since retired to their rooms with Kurt now asleep soundly in their bed. Noah had come out for some night air half dressed in only jeans, a tad more than what he'd wear on his own balcony in L.A. His humble apartment on Abbot Kinney Boulevard overlooking that small patch of palm planted land at the rear to which he'd soak himself occasionally naked in patches of hot seasonal sun. A better place for sure than those he'd had in Burbank and Buena Vista with liver shaped pools stippled with frond, beetle shells and skeins of human sperm. "Rank pits" he'd called them and all eclipsed by the Cipriani, its sprawling hedge tended garden beneath him as green as mint gouache.

With a final fleeting glance over the lagoon, he turned to Kurt dormant in their bed, laying on his side to the left. The boy had had a long set of days, waking at half six every morning for Venice adventures and had recounted between palate-humping yawns the highlights of the very one they'd shared that day, leaning against Noah upon the ascent to their hotel door with a faint smile, eyes dark-lidded and in a state so frail Santana would look at him in sympathy, bidding them good night as Noah's dazed little darling, tottering and swaying through his evening routine, had reduced his speech to dove-dull, long-drawn tones Noah in the end had gently hushed with kisses to his forehead and to there to imprison him on that bed, there in crystal sleep.

No pollination tonight. Another time would do. For now, Noah was content, approaching the bed with the lightly veiled body and bare limbs, and fore glimpsing a band of pale light crossing that top vertebrae. Save for underwear, Kurt was naked. Two pillows had been placed under his dark roused head, one hand underneath with his body holding no white negative image of rudimentary clothe patterned against a tan. How this pleased Noah greatly. Kurt's skin was so pure. That shade of white a concoction of layers of translucent vision stacked on top of each other like the tiers of a cake so very fair it had evolved into what was presented to him now and with a guarded vigil watch would Noah remain to prevent the star sun from spoiling it.

But Noah was not here to come to bed and shed his jeans with a kind of fantastic instantaneousness to place at the very least his muscular knee on the edge of the bed. His velvety little love victim would have to await his presence for a just a tad while longer whilst he himself awaited a call, nervous as he was anticipating it. The time was now eleven twenty-five, the desired time. He sallied forth to the desk and flipped open Kurt's laptop, the eight character password he'd acquired from the boy earlier entered with a scattering of precise finger touches and into motion whirring the machine's various evolutions to conjure Skype upon its screen, the minute ticking to a ring tone sung, the face of Elizabeth Hummel looking right back at him.

"Noah," she said, smiling as he waved coyly, "Hey Mrs. H, how's it goin?" In and out of his heart flowed his rainbow blood. After years since he'd last seen Kurt's mother in Ulusaba, by God was it good to see her again, her appearance seemingly unchanged through the years by the screen's superfluous blur of pixels, still that strawberry blonde lily necked beauty that formed for one memorable moment a most pleasurable antiphony to his desire for Kurt. He'd last spoken to Elizabeth a week ago in Paris, a nostalgic conversation that had stretched over a degree of time informing him
of Kurt's flight to London and Orient ride and Elizabeth's state of understanding being that Noah himself was to return home to Los Angeles. Oh how plans had changed.

"I'm well Noah, I'm very well, thank you," Elizabeth replied. "How are you?"

Noah nodded casually. "I'm alright. I'm cool."

"I'm glad to hear it. I received your text. It surprised me actually seeing as Kurt is the only one I talk to online."

"Really?"

"Well I like to make sure he's looking after himself and eating well. So often will he enter periods of consuming only organic soy based food to "detox" I threaten him with interventions at his apartment. Luckily he has a very watchful roommate to reassure me."

"Totally," Noah chuckled. "What time is it in the states now?"

Elizabeth paused. "Well here in Ohio it's just gone six twenty-five-wait. Aren't you in California, Noah? I thought you'd have returned home by now."

"It's a long story Mrs. H," Noah sighed, grinning. "Once you'd told me Kurt was in Europe, I got myself a ticket on that train as soon as I could. Literally, it rolled into Paris two hours after you told me it would and that's where we met up again."

"You mean, Kurt saw you on the express and-"

"And I was there, yeah."

Elizabeth smiled. "Wow, it must have been quite a shock for him to have seen you."

"Totally, but it wouldn't be the first time," Noah grinned as the woman laughed.

"No, it wouldn't."

"It was great though. We caught up loads and just seein him again was amazin."

"What happened when you arrived in Venice? Did you part ways or did you-"

"Nah, we stuck together, though his boyfriend was there to greet him at the station when we did."

Elizabeth gaped. "Blaine was there?"

"Yeah," Noah nodded, "and it was a total shock Mrs. H. Like one step off the train and bam! Kurt is full of man."

Elizabeth frowned. "He didn't tell you he was seeing someone?"

"Nope, he didn't tell me anything at all," Noah replied. "Nobody did. Not even his crazy roommate. I just assumed he was single and ready to get nervous around anyone he found attractive."

"No, well, Kurt has been in a relationship for three years now, Noah." She paused, eyeing him. "Why, were you planning on something-"

"Well, this is what I wanted to talk to you about Mrs H," Noah began. "I-"
"Who are you talking to?" A voice asked from the other end, that voice Noah quickly recognized as that of Burt Hummel.

"It's Noah, honey," Elizabeth smiled. "Come say hi."

"Noah!"

"Hey, Mr. H," Noah greeted anxiously as Burt shifted comfortably alongside his wife. "Christ son, check you out! Look how much you've grown! Lizzie, look at him! Last I saw you, you were that wee little surfer punk callin Kurt his "Gay Jane"."

"Yeah, I still call him that," Noah chuckled as Burt grinned.

"You guys still talk?"

"From what I understand, they're together right now in Venice," noted Elizabeth.

"Really?" Burt asked, surprised. "How-"

"I'll let you in on everything later. Right now, Noah has something important to say. Go ahead, sweetie."

"Thanks, Mrs. H," Noah breathed, composing himself. "The thing is… right, the thing is, after all these years… I'm still in love with Kurt. I've always loved him and I know damn well he too loves me still."

"Noah, has he given you reason to think that?" Elizabeth asked as Noah nodded.

"Yeah, he told me."

"He told you?"

"I told you!" Exclaimed Burt. "I knew our son wasn't as into that Blaine kid as he was Noah. I just knew it-"

"Yes, okay honey-"

"He's always been head over heels for that boy. He thinks as his parents we're are too old to follow the intricate maneuverings of the young? Pfft, we're not that dense-"

"Yes alright. Noah, what happened once all this had been said? Did Kurt leave Blaine?"

"Actually, Blaine left him," Noah replied as Elizabeth's brow rose.

"He did?"

"Yeah, well see, Blaine caught on to how Kurt felt still for me, and I kinda have to admit I wasn't subtle about how I wanted him back too. Came off a little strong actually, but I-I couldn't help it. Seein Kurt with other dudes has always riled me up proper bad, always, so Blaine decided to end things."

Elizabeth nodded. "I see."

"He flew back to New York on Wednesday."

"I hope he's alright and didn't take it too badly, right?"
"Yeah, it was a pretty chill breakup as far as I know," Noah replied, "but um… but Mrs. H, this isn't actually what I wanted to talk to you about."

"Oh?"

"I just needed to let you in on what's happened here before I could go through with it."

Elizabeth nodded. "Okay, well um, go ahead Noah, we're all ears."

"Thanks…" Noah breathed. "Right um… okay, this is gonna be… ah, I'm just gonna say it… Here I go, I'm sayin it. Burt, Elizabeth, I formerly ask your permission for your son's hand in marriage."

"For our son's what now?" Burt asked as Noah reiterated, his heart thumping dangerously.

"I wanna ask Kurt to marry me."

Elizabeth's eyes had blown wide. "Oh my goodness, Noah. Are you serious?"

"Yeah Mrs. H, I am so super cereal right now, you wouldn't believe."

"We're having a hard time believing as it is, son. Jesus, I didn't know your love for Kurt had reached such a boiling point."

"I-"

"Noah, sweetie, wouldn't you rather wait? If only for a little while? You and Kurt have only just reunited."

"I know but-"

"You are now seeing each other once more, aren't you?"

"Yeah, yeah, we're back on. The past two days have been heaven. Seriously Mrs. H, we've done so much. Today after dinner Kurt hit the sheets so fast he was that wiped out from it all. Look," He shifted the screen towards the bed, Kurt's figure now coming into fuzzy view.

"Oh, yes," Elizabeth smiled. "Oh, our baby boy. The things he does in the name of that darn fashion magazine."

"Don't worry, I'm taking good care of him."

"We know, son. We trust you," Burt replied.

"That's right Mr. H, you can trust me. You can count on me to strive every day to make your son happy. To keep him outta harm's way with all but something as simple as a smile on his face, 'cause that's the masterpiece I wanna see. I don't care for this Venice Biennale shit, I see galaxies in Kurt's eyes. I have galaxies hidden between my own bones and I'll love him until the stars burn out, until my heart's done pumpin I love him that much."

"Noah, that's all well and good, but-"

"I'll care for him, I'll offer him stability, I'll provide for him if times get tight, I got enough funds in the bank, just two days ago I won fourteen million five hundred thousand dollars at the casino and-"

"Fourteen mill-Noah, are you serious?!" Elizabeth exclaimed as Burt stuttered.
"Son, how the hell were you able to do that?!"

"I dunno. I don't know what happened. One moment I was reminiscing of my times with Kurt in Texas and the next I was playin' poker."

"What kind?"

"No limit Texas holdem," Noah replied. "Five communal cards, two in the hole. I'd deposited ten million dollars buy-in that I didn't have but which I took from my dad's company account, the details of which of I knew already and I played that money until I won the contest, but I like I said, I... I don't know what came over me. Gamblin', bein' that hasty with money. That's not what I do. As soon as I won all that I'd taken from my dad I returned it."

"And your winnings?"

"It was all wired to my back account. The entire sum," Noah said. "But point is Mr. H, I don't want you thinkin' I'm usually that irresponsible, 'cause I'm not. The whole thing was a potent as hell lapse in judgment I know, just weak of me with no conscious thought of what I was doin' all because I let my emotions on the situation with Kurt and Blaine at the time take hold of me, but it happened only this once and I promise, I promise, it will never ha-"

"Noah, we aren't the ones you should be saying this to."

"I kno-"

"You have to tell your father."

"I'd be proud."

"Burt-"

"Liz, come on. Fourteen million bucks. Even after taxes he can still afford to give Kurt all he's ever wanted. Even his dream wedding."

"We are not encouraging this."

Burt frowned. "Why not? Noah's winning big. Winning that surf tour, which by the way, congrats kiddo."

"Thanks, Mr. H," Noah nodded as the man continued.

"Winning at the game table, winning back Kurt. Liz, Noah's as high a caliber as any if our son's ever gunna marry anyone he truly loves."

"I'm not objecting to the idea of them marrying," Elizabeth replied. "Noah, please listen to me, I'm not at all saying I don't want you marrying Kurt. Burt and I couldn't be more honored to give the union our blessing when you do, it's just that... well, you're both still so young and marriage is a lifelong commitment. In our eyes you're still the little surfer boy who gave our son that promise ring. I don't think you comprehend how much different it will be giving him one this time. It'll be the real thing."

"I know Mrs. H," Noah nodded. "Believe me I know what I'm asking from Kurt. This is just something I've wanted for so long. Kurt and I, we'd plan our wedding from our main course of lunchables and funfetti cake to how we'd raise the kid to be a true spy kid by having him look like he's listening to music when in fact he just has the volume down low to listen in on everyone's
conversations."

Elizabeth smiled brightly. "You want to have children with Kurt?"

"Someday yeah, Mrs. H. So bad, so bad."

"Well just steal one from a playground, stupid," laughed Burt. "Where do you think kids come from?"

Elizabeth swatted his arm. "Shh, Noah won't know you're joking." Turning back, she smiled. "That's wonderful, sweetie. It's so good to see a young man like yourself know what he wants out of life and who he wants to share it with. To be planning your future like this with Kurt, it shows real ambition and purpose, but be patient. You don't want to grow up too fast. Is Kurt aware of any of this?"

"Nah," Noah answered. "He has no idea."

Elizabeth nodded. "Good, because even though you may be ready to exchange vows Noah, he may not be. You've got to think of him. I can recall when he was just fourteen and he was panicking at the thought of sharing a bed with a boy when he'd be older. Seriously, as he said he needed every blanket to make a burrito only to throw them off dramatically in the middle of the night to lie spread-eagled across the bed. He didn't know how it was going to work."

"Really?" Noah quirked as Elizabeth now laughed.

"Yes. He also feared, along with the deep sea and the southern United States, he'd date a boy who'd open his jars and wine bottles, okay, fine, but who wouldn't stop. Just there, opening bottle after bottle, each one Kurt would not be ready for, each and every one of them going off with the whole house eventually coming to smell like wine and pickles, something he wouldn't be able to live with."


"It is," Elizabeth conceded, "His needs, Noah, may not at the current moment be of a wedding ring on his finger, but that look in your eyes knowing that, I don't know, among the mindless playing of both your hands, the light leg strokes, the back massages and the playing of hair young love has always been about, he feels at home."

"Of course," Burt chuckled. "If it is marriage he wants, I don't think there's any stopping either one of ya. You're lucky you're in one hell of a beautiful city."

"Burt, stop. They're not getting married," Elizabeth snapped, turning back to Noah. "... You weren't planning on getting married there were you, Noah? I mean, that quickly?"

"Mrs. H-"

"Gay marriage isn't even a thing in Italy yet, is it? Last I heard it was the last major Western European country without any legal recognition for same-sex couples."

"It was, until last year," Noah replied. "The European Court ruled the ban a "Human Right's Violation" or something, but don't sweat about any of that Mrs. H, you've given me a lot to think about."

"I haven't discouraged you, have I?"

"Nah, you've just made me look at things from Kurt's perspective is all. I still wanna marry him. In Ulusaba, my dad told me I'd be an idiot if I didn't, so I'm gonna sleep on it. See how I feel about it all
"Good plan," Burt agreed. "Get some rest, son."

"And just be careful of Kurt's burrito blanket explosions during the night," Elizabeth warned. "It's not as bad as he says it is, is it?"

Noah shrugged. "He just shifts a lot and likes to cross his legs over mine."

"And you don't mind that?"

"Nah, it's cute. Sometimes he'll even ditch his pillow for my chest 'cause he says my "man pecs are bigger than boobs" now."

"You are hunky, Noah. Just beware not to nip slip."

"I prefer to call it peek-a-boob, Mrs. H."

Elizabeth laughed. "Goodnight, Noah."

"Night, Mrs. H. Night, Mr. H."

Powering down the laptop and Noah rose from his seat, necessitating a quick trip to the bathroom. Minutes later and he was silently cursing the cascading toilet resounding like a veritable Niagara. This manly, energetic, deep-throated thing gurgling and gushing like a fucking mariachi band threatening to awaken Kurt with its long overflow, a precursor to a reverberating Italian monologue arriving soon after from the corridor immediately beyond the bedroom with no real understanding making itself apparent to Noah, the sounds of extravagant coughing, loud voices brimming with cheer, resonating with inept exclamations but all coming to end in a volley of 'Buona Notte!'. silence descending once more, until the fair body in the bed began to shift.

This was something Noah had dreaded. Poised motionless in the doorway of the now extinguished bathroom, he watched as Kurt sat up from the bed, eyes squinting adorably through the dark asking thickly, "Noah, what are you… what are you doing? Are you not coming to bed?" Noah smiled, now approaching. "I am baby. Don't you worry.-" "Wait, wait," Kurt piped softly. "Could you fetch me a drink of water? Please?" "Sure," Noah nodded, hurrying once more into the bathroom and returning with a near overflowing plastic cup, the contents of which Kurt gratefully downed in gulps of rapid succession before placing the clear container on the night stand and falling back on his pillow, his eyes fluttering closed through the striped shadows.

Removing his jeans, Noah climbed in. With Kurt awake and there was now no need to heave himself into the narrow margin of the bed, stealthily pull at the odds and ends of the sheets and lay still on the brink for little disturbance. The fair boy had turned away, resuming his initial position. His hair was rumpled and glimmers of porcelain flesh where half a haunch and half a shoulder dimly showed and as if launching upon an enchanted voyage Noah neared that lovely maddening glimmer, inhaling Kurt's scent, inhaling the scent of his hair on the pillow, but not coming to hold him, for the boy would merely free himself with a neutral plaintive murmur of a creature demanding its natural rest. Instead, he lay close, eyes to the ceiling, his head resting on his hand.

He dwelled his thoughts on his conversation with the Hummel's. The topic of marriage. In his dimness of thought stirred from such joyous past two days, in his darkness of passion bringing up for detached inspection the idea of making Kurt his, Noah had asked permission for the boy's hand in marriage for the very notion brought a grin to his face like a distant sun. He imagined all the love he'd be able lavish on Kurt in holy matrimony. Live with him under the same roof, hold the boy on
his gentle knee and print a kiss on his soft lips as many times a day, every day, for the rest of their lives. All Noah's troubles would be expelled and he would be a healthy man! But it had been a parent's calm hand that had fallen on his shoulder, bidding him to take his time.

Noah knew of his own veritable haste, scheming with a red sun of desire and decision that had risen higher and higher upon a succession of balconies and libertines. Elizabeth was right, marriage was not child's play. It wasn't to be the case of a mere twenty dollar promise ring he'd slide along Kurt's finger, a jocose simulacrum of a lifelong union as dipped in shallow adolescent love as a tree carved cupid's heart, the block lettered initials, as shallow as a full-page image of a crooner's mug ripped out of a slick magazine and affixed to the wall above a girl's four poster bed. It was the real deal and a tight fisted punch in the air to celebrate the bliss of past and future nights was now on hold. Despite his ever so burning desire, he did not know what to do.

In the tentative approximations of the situation, he glanced at Kurt now fast asleep once more beside him, yet a confusion of perception was metamorphosing the boy into eyespots of moonlight and fluffy flowering bushes. Noah was himself falling asleep and quickly closing the interspace between them to a millimeter, he settled in the warm purlieus of Kurt's glimmer, dreaming of regaining consciousness soon, dreaming he was still lying in wait. Yet the night would not last long. The next morning in the early antemeridian hours, he would feel Kurt's eyes on him. He'd awaken in his handsome profiled sleep to find the boy rolled into his side, warm brown hair falling across his pale face and smiling at him in the room suffused in lilac grey.

And he lay there surveying me until he brought his lips to mine and kissed me, a long delirious kiss descending down my chin to my jawline, puckering over my skin over and over again with a warm hand I felt at once on my abs journeying south in parallel motion to touch me under the sheets. "O-ooh fphwaa..." My breath hitched immediately, and to my embarrassment it brought laughter to Kurt's eyes. I hadn't my boxers on. My mister was bare and spearing upwards with every gentle caress and in my surprise, I couldn't rid my face of its expression of supreme stupidity. Kurt's own I could read. Horny as fuck. He eyed my body as if he wanted turn me inside out and apply voracious lips on my muscle matrix. My heart, my liver, lungs, kidney, my groin...

In the next moment, Kurt had straddled his lap like an equestrian mounting his leather saddle. He'd swiped the telling bottle of lubricant from the bed stand in the swift flow of his ascent and was now squeezing more than a copious amount in his hallowed hand. And Noah lay there, enraptured. It had to be made clear that in the possession and thralldom of a boy like Kurt, this young surfer stood, as it were, beyond happiness. For there was no other bliss on earth comparable to being fondled by him, and Kurt himself too felt no other bliss comparable to fondling Noah, both their lengths frotting in his moist hand until all at once his knees shifted forward aligning Noah's member directly beneath his perineum, his slim body suspended on the brink of the fall.

With this suggestion and Noah froze. He could no longer think straight, such was the nature of Kurt's presumption. Not a trace of modesty did he perceive at this moment in this beautiful fay faced boy whom Santana had utterly and hopelessly depraved, but at the same time, neither did he believe Kurt regarded this as a stark act. He did not think Kurt was trying to prove something. He did not think him afraid, his stance moreover radiantly relaxed and open to him. Yet before he could stop the boy, sitting up as he protested, "w-wait baby, wait. Hold on, I-", Kurt's body had lowered to pierce itself on his manhood, sheathing down one inch, two inches, three. A pause. Five inches, six inches, seven, and... a-and bottomed out. Noah's body shook. "... J-je-sus fuck."

The boy in his lap remained absolutely still in his period of adjustment, lax in cowgirl just as Santana had advised, having pushed out as further in that certain member had entered. With Noah, and he felt intensely full. So full he wanted to move but with the gentle rise and the fall, Noah shuddered. "Baby don't," he warned. "Don't or I'm gonna bust." For drowned so much so in bliss, Noah was as
helpless to it as Adam to the glossy red apple. In Kurt's deep hot sweetness and he was on his way to
the ultimate convulsion, fighting to calm himself to prolong that glow with the nerves of pleasure
now so sensitive even the least bit of pressure was sufficient to set all paradise loose, even the least
hot whisper to his flushed ear, "Daddy". Oh fuck! Oh shit! Oh-

In a single upward buck he couldn't fight to contain, a tempting treasurable thrust! And Noah came
hard within me, his thighs laying akimbo trembling like a veritable tremblement de terre, and his
vascular arms and hands clenched ever tighter around my waist. Behind his lids rolled white and his
sight was the color of lavender, a rosy, gold-dusted vastness of ecstasy, raspberry fresh vistas of it
that had him crying out in unrestrained boyish howls against my nipple, howling and howling again,
quivering soft puppy like yelps as he crushed his cheek against my collar bone, his love liquid, I
could feel, flooding my prismatic entrails. And there we breathed together in sticky closeness of the
morning, Noah's thick sweat tired breaths on my flesh. Noah in paradise.

By that time it had just gone quarter to eight and from the corridor came the cooing voices of Italian
maids already at work. So soon! With one even mildly attempting to open the door to their room.
Immediately afterward Kurt eased himself out of Noah's grip and off his still erect penis urging the
man they both take a much needed soap shower. For they had to get ready. Quick! They had booked
a motorcycle sidecar tour of the nearby Collio region for the day to visit the vineyards at ten and a
glance at the frightfully messy bed with overtones of lubricant and Kurt knew he'd have to devote a
dangerous amount of time arranging it in such a way as to suggest the abandoned nest of two lovely
lovers rather than of their own saturnalia of debauchery.

Rousing Noah from the sheets took time, who through getting dressed after the shower's steaming
thick deluge, through breakfast served on the terrace before crossing the lagoon to the mainland right
onto the iconic vehicle of Italian daydreams, the Vespa an hour later, was still immersed in his own
euphoria and one that appeared not to ebb, though there was a great deal of additional fidgeting,
shuffling and scraping to disguise his embarrassment for his earlier lack of sexual stamina. He and
Kurt had had intercourse for the first time and whether or not the realization of an adolescent fantasy
had surpassed all expectation, it had, but in a sense it had undershot its mark and plunged into a
nightmare. One thrust. One thrust! Damn it!

Noah was wary it was more to do with his own pride than anything else. A look at Kurt and the boy
was his usual cheery self if not for the expressions of pain that flit across his face when in the act of
sitting down, the pain flittering more meaningfully when on their rumbling canary-yellow
motorcycle. Yet such expressions served only to set Noah's nerves a-jangle. He knew Kurt had been
the one to seduce him, that through lust, curiosity and Santana's camaraderie, he'd willingly brought
himself to copulate, but despite his enthusiasm and rush of spontaneity at the time, those
faces, those pained faces. Each one Noah knew was not reproduced for his benefit, hidden
purposefully from his line of sight, but each one ever more discomforting to witness.

Damn it, Kurt! You were stupid! You were careless and you were stupid! It was fuckin ignoble of me
to let you corrupt yourself like that, I know, but even if you were aware of what you were doing and
how to go about doing it, you should have warned me before sitting on my dick! Now you've gone
and hurt yourself! Jesus. You know, I'd have been happy having sex the way we always do. Screw
anal. It was only an idea, even if at the bottom of this dark fucking turmoil I feel the writhing of
desire to be inside you again, so monstrous is my appetite for you baby. You felt so, so good, but
mingled in my pangs of guilt here and I fear an agonizing thought your pain might prevent me from
making love to you that way again. Please Kurt, don't give up on me!

Poor Noah. He was so dreadfully unhappy. Touring the rolling wine-clad hills of Collio, seeing
dozens of family-run wine farms everywhere with tractors more common on the traffic barren roads
than tour buses themselves and he wished only to find a nice country spot on which to park in peace,
take Kurt by the hand through a beautiful innocent vineyard brimming with all the emblems of youth, grapevines and birdsong and among its luxuriant undergrowth with Santana standing as sentinel, fornicate with his baby, and do it with indefatigable persistence. To do it right this time and for longer too. To fuck Kurt until his body broke and his mind escaped him. Then to hold the boy in his arms until Kurt found his way back home. Sweet, sweet home.

But no such stop was made. For the whole afternoon their time was dedicated to zooming along the peaceful pastoral roads of the region, up and over the vine-draped hills, verdant patchworks of vineyards unfolding like quilts where all were open to the public for tastings like Venica & Venica's cantina in Delegana for their whites - pinot bianco, malvasia and pinot grigio. Like Paolo Caccese's cantina in Cormons for their oddities, the fruity müller-thurgau, aromatic traminer and delicious passito and Osteria Cantiniere for lunch of Collio cuisine, one heavy with Slavic and Austro-Hungarian influences; spaghetti and sausages, pork knuckle and sauerkraut, pasta and tender roast veal, all the result of Santana's constant hunt for rich wines and rich food.

Occasionally, much to Noah's gladness, the Latina would stop to eye the map to pick out only the best spots along the Strada del Vino to visit. He and Kurt had long surrendered to her predictions on wine tasting and would sit next to each other in the silence of a mysterious side-road where in the space of a few minutes they would be alone. Noah would pet his baby gently, pet his lovely leggy young thing, an absolute waif of a boy in his arms, a strong-limbed, muscular surfer. Oh, that morning's romp could have been a lot more strenuous. As it was, Kurt did not hurt inside, but felt a mere "stinging" between his apricot buttocks and he kissed his fretting boyfriend on his unshaven cheek before jumping up to Santana's call, back on the Vespa.

They would resume their tastings of late-harvest verduzzos, collio biancos and red marlots and cabernet francs. They were to visit Azienda Agricola Zoff in Borgnano for a ham and cheese tasting of prosciutto crudo smoked in cherry wood and laurel, freshly made ricotta and yoghurt, tangy aged latteria cheese, and caciotta flavored with wild herbs and flowers, and with a final trip to La Subida in Cormons trying deeply flavorful aceto aged in oak barrels made of home grown ribolla gialla grapes they waved "ciao!" to Collio country. Kurt waving even more furiously in compensation for Santana's arms ladled in bottles of riulano and sauvignon, before returning to Venice, the sky dusk mellowed upon their eventual arrival with the time encroaching seven.

That evening, and Noah couldn't have felt more satisfied when once more at the Cipriani; whereupon having reentered the hotel with a flashing smile at Santana who'd already set about plans to dine in her room surrounded by the many platters of local Montasio cheeses and hand-sliced prosciutto she'd bought earlier that day, Noah had wound his masculine arm around Kurt's waist beside him, gently but firmly gripping his fingers onto the boy's hips and had lead his unsuspecting Gay Jane to their room for a quick connection before dinner, Kurt's telling cries Santana overheard through the walls despite the television's sonic reality buzz, bringing about a smirk to her own face as she nodded knowingly through gulps of refosco wine. "Blow-job".

Dinner itself was pleasant enough. It took Kurt quite a time to shift back into normal gear following Noah's sudden onslaught of affection and he tried not to blush too frequently as they made their way to the Cip's Club, a wonderfully glamourous yet informal deck terraced restaurant over the water with unparalleled views of St. Mark's Square. To Noah and the place seemed not as spacious but not as pretentious as the hotel's other restaurants, though it still had its fair share of artworks depicting obscure landscapes, portraits of women in various postures and states of enchantment and all amid a medley of "surrealism" Kurt called it, the term and art itself still a mere fog to Noah as his pet tried to recall what the artists had told him New York.

Right! The occasional modelling. Nice. And the dancing at a dance studio in Brooklyn. It had been too long since Noah had last seen Kurt dance. To observe him from a strategic point while the boy,
like a hypnotic subject of a performer of a mystic rite, produced on nubile like limbs the sophisticated
movements of an angel. Weaving delicate spells in the dreamy performance of his enchantments,
Kurt would look so pretty, and owing perhaps to this constant amorous exercise even when walking,
he'd radiate, despite his childish appearance, a languorous glow that had always thrown bi-curious
boys into fits of concupiscence, even recently the gondolier fellows, hotel pages, vacationists and
maroon morons here at the hotel, tickling Noah's pride.

How fucking lucky he was. His baby so beautiful. Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful. His childhood
sweetheart. Noah had always promised they'd be together. Agreed, in infantile make-believe, they
were to be married, and that idea of marrying Kurt, Noah, the bronzed Herculean groom, Kurt's
warmed up hero embracing his frontier babe still brought him abominable pleasure, still made his
knees like reflections of knees in rippling water and his lips like sand as after dinner, the happy
waiters desperately having hurried to get rid of them to seat their next party, they wondered around
the breathless Casanova garden, moonlit, with Noah's jawbone to Kurt's temple so close they were
in the midst of sweet and light whispers. Gentle, gentle laughter.

"You know," Noah grinned. "If you bump into someone you haven't seen in eight years, every cell
has been replaced and they're someone new entirely. You don't have to say hi."

Kurt frowned. "Really?"

"Yeah, so each time we've reunited, we were talking to a completely new person. How spooky it
that?"

"Noah, I knew it was you every time. You're the only boy I knew who said "swag" and even then
you'd sometimes say it backwards because "gaws" meant "I love you" in a language you'd made
up."

"What? I think that's beautiful," Noah protested, "I gaws you, baby, and you should never ignore
someone who gaws, cares and misses you, 'cause one day, you might wake up from your sleep and
realize you lost the moon while counting the stars."

Kurt smiled. "I never ignored you, Noah."

"No, but twice I've come in search for you. Were you ever going to do the same?"

"Well the ball was in your court this past reunion. Only you knew when you were ready for me."

"Right, but what about the first?"

"Noah, I've always been a wallflower," Kurt replied, "I've always stayed in the background waiting
for someone to fetch me, someone more courageous and stronger than myself to tear me away and
force me into happiness because let me tell you this: loners, no matter what they tell you, don't enjoy
solitude. It's because they have tried to blend into the world before, and people continue to disappoint
them, and when they're so timid that their cause of death was being too shy to call an ambulance, it's
worse."

"Why call it anyway?"

"Hello 911, my sock is falling down inside my shoe or hello 911, I'm being forced into adulthood
and I don't like it, send help. Fast!"

"Totally," Noah chuckled.

"Then there are allergies. Allergies are weird as hell. You snap a human's leg in half and they
recover but if you eat this peanut, you're dead."

"But you don't have any allergies."

"True, but say, every time my lips are chapped or my nose is stuffed I ask myself, "What is it like to live life before this? To be happy?" Of course that doesn't merit a trip to the hospital I know, but sometimes their waiting rooms can be real hookup spots. Last I was in one I saw a cute boy with a leg cast and my first thought was, 'Hey, this one can't run away'."

"Really?" Noah laughed.

"Yeah well you know my favorite color is cute boys and I always believed if one winked at me with both eyes at the same time it meant they found me twice as attractive, but if I'd have a crush on one, I never could tell if it was mutual or if I was merely noticing and exaggerating every single bit of attention I got from them and amplifying it into something it wasn't. Something I did with you a lot in Coronado."

"Yeah?"

"You were so cool Noah, you even wore deodorant."

"Had to," Noah shrugged. "Didn't wanna smell like cabbage farts and sweat butter around the cute wallflower."

"The perks of which I'm still not aware of."

"How about this; you weren't shy like some social vegan avoiding meet. You were just some kid coolin it, scannin the situation, watchin from the cut, makin mental moves constantly."

"Avoiding meet," Kurt laughed. "When times were dire I actually drank water as a way to avoid the asshole kids, because not only would I be hydrated, but I wouldn't have to talk to them whilst I was doing it. And then I'd later have to go pee which meant I avoided them all the more."

"Nice trick."

"Yeah, if I ever have a child, I'll teach it to them."

Noah intrigued, grinned softly. "You er… you want kids?"

"I haven't decided yet," Kurt replied. "Santana's said that if she were to ever have them, she'd buy them batteries and attach a note saying, 'toys not included.' No maternal instinct there, but she says I'm good with children. They can be so adorable. Once one asked me if a Thesaurus was a type of dinosaur, another one I knew used to shout "urethra" instead of "eureka", and I came to hate the saying "kids can be cruel". So can adults, pensioners and toddlers, but they're the ones to get into trouble. Age isn't an excuse to be a dick."

"True dat," Noah nodded.

"But I hate twelve year olds," Kurt said. "They're another race entirely. All twelve year olds I've met are horrible. I mean, how dare they be a year older than eleven. I'm so glad I skipped that age and went straight to thirteen. The bible says Adam and Eve, not Adam and twelve."

"You know, I almost had a kid once."

"What? You did?"
Noah nodded, solemnly. "I knocked a chick up the night of my senior high school prom. I actually got her preggers and everything."

"Really?"

"Yeah," Noah nodded. "To this day and it still messes me up that you can accidentally create a human life but you can't accidentally make a pizza. I mean, it only takes two ingredients to make a baby. Does that not blow your mind? There should be at least flour in there or something."

Kurt paused. "Well, there are eggs. What happened exactly?"

"She wanted to have it," Noah sighed. "I did too, but turned out she only wanted to give it up for adoption. Her folks wanted us to marry when they found out, something neither one of us wanted, but it didn't matter anyway, 'cause she miscarried."

Kurt sighed. "Oh no…"

"Just twelve weeks in," Noah muttered. "We didn't see it comin. Everything was goin so good. She even had that glow."

"She was pregnant, Noah. Not radioactive."

"I wanted a kid so bad. To shout in pride after her and say, "That's my girl! She came from my sperm!""

"It was a girl?"

"Yeah. They found out through a D&C."

Kurt sighed. "I am so sorry, Noah."

"Nah, it was my fault really. Thinkin of you when I'm balls deep in any vagina and no chick is safe."

Kurt blinked. "You were-"

"I was still in love with you, baby," Noah replied. "Like you, I didn't see anyone for two years after we broke up. I didn't go to any sock hop dances. I would have turned down half the fuckin' pep rally because of how I felt if, you know, my jawline hadn't scared people off." He leaned in. "I couldn't get it up for anyone."

"Really?"

"Hey, the wand chooses the wizard."

"And I assume it did that night, didn't it." Noah didn't reply. "Who was she?"

"Quinn Fabray, cheerleader. Smart, beautiful, blonde. I asked her to prom and afterwards, drove her to a cliff overlook where we kissed and did the horizontal tango."

"And you didn't wear a condom? Noah, how could you not wear a-"

"Hey, was I was wearin one when you jumped my bones this morning?" Kurt fell silent. "I mean, what was that about?"

"I know, I'm know. I'm sorry. What I did was so stupid."
"Maybe," Noah said. "But you know me. I love goin in raw. Especially when the oven's preheated."

"Oh Noah," Kurt grimaced.

"There's just no desensitization, and with us it was kiss, kiss-Oh! OK, Look, my dick's inside you. Which admittedly was how it was with Quinn."

"Really?"

"I lasted longer, believe me, but um… I kinda tore her dress strap in the process and screamed your name in her hair when I came."

"Like you did with Santana?" Kurt gaped as Noah nodded. "I'm starting to think this is as much a habit of yours as it is you foregoing condoms."

"What can I say? I's gotta have my wallflower."

"And you certainly came quickly when you did."

"Hey!" Noah protested. "Your ass was tighter than a white woman's grip on her purse whilst walking through a black neighborhood. Noahzilla didn't stand a chance."

"I'm sorry. I feel awful, like I raped you or something."

"Nah, don't be silly. It was hella hot."

"Really?" Kurt asked as Noah nodded.

"I only wish I'd had you as my prom date."

"As do I."

"Just to have been with you again for that one night."

"Dancing and sex on make-out point? How American."

Noah grinned. "And a proposal, probably."

"Really?"

"Yeah, I'd have kneeled on a picnic blanket and said let's spend our nights eating cereal on the floor when there is a perfectly fine table behind us. We'll go to the movies and sit in the back row just to make out like kids falling in love for the first time."

"That's sweet," Kurt smiled as Noah's eyes now flickered excitedly, taking the boy's hands in his, "Kurt, we'll paint the rooms of our house and get more paint on us than the walls. We can hold hands and go to parties we end up ditching to drink wine out of the bottle in the bathtub. Marry me and we'll slow dance in our bedroom with an unmade bed and candles on the nightstand. The boy stared at him in thumping realization, his mouth agape. This was a genuine proposal.

"Noah, are you se-"

"Let me love you forever, baby," Noah grinned, now kneeling down on one knee. "Marry me. It was the offer of a lifetime. It was the Amazing Offer that since its birth as a childhood fantasy had Kurt again and again evoking Noah in a show of feminine imagination. To spare this sexy swaggy
surfer guy those crucial minutes of suspense and tell him trembling and brimming with mastery over fate that yes, Kurt, with a strong and impatient flame would agree to marry him as spontaneously as it had taken to pop the question itself, and to maybe repeat it twice, but this notion perhaps, he could keep up if only he did not realize too realistically the sheer seriousness of the situation for goodness, marriage?! Was… oh my, was this honestly happening for real?

Kurt could feel the stimulants from his rich club dinner already begin to wane, his natural resources too and he was now finding it hard to avert embarrassment his current silence was incurring now that he was being called upon to respond, to answer Noah knelt on the ground looking up at him with such excitement, such love, the flutters of which Kurt could hear in that buff male breast, to say anything, anything at all, until his hesitation was cut short by a disturbance down the path, an awkward man dressed in a somber looking hoodie and jeans now emerging from the foliage as like unmasking himself from a dark dungeon where he'd been waiting for them to come like the executioner he was, the barber, the priest, now approaching them both.

"Degenera. Devianti," he seethed through gritted teeth, Noah rising to his feet immediately as he stood protectively in front of Kurt. "È un abominio che anche insieme sei lasciato solo per sposarsi. Perché voi persone non può essere contenuto vivendo la vita di obbrobrio in un'Unione civile invece di sottoporre la nostra chiesa sacra a tuoi perversioni? È innaturale. Entrambi sono innaturali. Se c'è qualcosa che la gente odia più di freaks, suo froci." Kurt frowned. "Noah, what is he saying-" "Froci!" "Whoa," Noah exclaimed. "Hater Alert on Aisle U. You need to back off, alright dude. Take it easy." But to his horror, that right hand no longer muffling a seeming clutched Chum in that filthy hoodie pocket, a pistol was now brandished, "Zitto e dammi i tuoi soldi!"

"Jesus dude, take it easier than that!" Noah exclaimed in shock. "What the hell's your damage?" "Dammi i tuoi soldi ora!" The man yelled once again, near poking his dark little weapon into Noah's chest as he advanced ever still on them. "Okay, alright." Kurt stuttered, emptying his pocket free of his wallet with shaking hands. "There's no need to make a scene. Here. This is all I have on me-" "Ora tu," The man ordered, snatching the wallet with his attention turning on Noah. "Dammi il tuo portafoglio! Dargli!" Reluctantly, Noah handed over his wallet, but in the commotion, dislodged a ring from within the same pocket, the little treasure hitting the stone pathway with a ridiculously feeble and juvenile sound that only had him in a paralyzing fright.

"Guida rapida?" Their attacker asked, recovering the ring from the ground and inspecting it. "Un anello? Questo si chiama un anello nuziale? Questo pacchiana pezzo di merda non è neanche la pena di rubare." "Give it back," Noah growled as Kurt, peering from around his boyfriend's outstretched arm of defense, recognized the ring as Noah's own promise ring he'd bought alongside Kurt's in Coronado. The engravings and patterns now churning in foreign fingers, toying with Noah's nervous heart. "Oh, è importante per voi, americano?" The attacker now asked with sadistic tease. "Desidera dare al ragazzino?" "Give it back now." To these ever deepening growls, Kurt began, "Noah-" " Una proposta senza un anello. Cosa farà ora voi froci-oh! Merda!"

With comical clumsiness, the ring slipped from the man's fingers and fell once more to the ground, this time hitting the stone louder than before. The attacker, this numbskull of the underworld, this subhuman homophobe and mugger, attempting to retrieve it, lowered his chummy pistol away from harm and set the course for his own attack, Noah, immediately, descending on him with swift vengeance. They fell to wrestling on the lawn, rolling all over in each other's arms like two huge children, the attacker, fussy, busybody and cunning but a mere dummy stuffed with dirty cotton and rags under Noah's ox-stunning fisticuffs who dominated the tussle, quickly and overpowering his opponent to surrender, until the trigger was crushed- **BANG**! …

In the silence that followed, Noah regained his wind. The mugger below him was unconscious, his windpipe near crushed from a pressure much more forceful than had been intended. The ring, from
what could be made out through the dark, had been kicked in the scuffle and lay a few meters away lodged in the dirt, yet with a final glance over to where Kurt had been standing, from where he'd been planted helplessly on the sidelines, and a body lay motionless by the trunk of a tree. And for a second or two, Noah lost contact with reality, the dread that lead had been lodged in his baby's body, that beautiful beautiful beautiful gore was anointing the stone pathway majestically from a wound to the chest, and he was scurrying over, roaring Kurt's name.

But oh! Thank fuck for Jesus, turning his baby in his cradling arms and the boy was alive and unharmed, petrified yes, but peering from between feminine fingers asking if it all was over, having ducked to the ground after the blaze from the pistol's bullet had narrowly missed his cheek and skimmed the bark off the neighboring tree. Noah, with immediate tiger joy, embraced him, relief flooding through like a dancing heady elixir. He'd been so worried! His little Kurtie, almost hit with life almost vanishing like a pink bubble forming on the lips and popping. God, it was a nightmare of wonder as he, now shaking, embraced the boy tighter, kissing his forehead, his cheek, kissing his lips, over and over and hearing a medley of alarmed voices from the hotel, nearing.

I helped Kurt to his feet and recovered my ring from the ground. The whole sad business had taken less than seven minutes as I consulted my watch and our attacker was still unconscious on the lawn, his pistol I'd knocked aside, a short distance away. I couldn't bring myself to check he was still breathing. He was apprehended as soon as security came running, and Kurt and I had our wallets returned just as quickly. Upon returning to our suite, Kurt nursed me, soothing the knock to my temple and naked collar bone. He cared for me perched on my thigh, fingers trembling as if methodically recovering from a mild heart attack and I caught his hand in mine to calm, to console, yet to take note and catch sight of my ring on his finger... "K-Kurt, baby, is this-

"... Yes."

~ PLEASE REVIEW ~

(But if you wish to criticize, may it be constructive. I'm not going to learn from my mistakes and improve if you vent.)

Author's Note: The mugging scene was inspired by The Time Machine (2002) when Dr. Alexander Hartdegen and his girlfriend Emma are themselves mugged.

Disclaimer: I do not own the rights to the characters from Glee as I don't own the show. I'm not earning money from this and no copyright or trademark infringement is intended.

~ STAY TUNED FOR MORE BY FOLLOWING/FAVORITING ~
Chapter 15

THE MAN
2017

XV

~ Bro and Babe ~

The heat was rippling still. It was early afternoon the next day outside at the hotel's Gabbiano bar. Only a few feet away was the pool, the reflection of the sun a dazzling white diamond with innumerable iridescent spikes quivering on the water, the sides filled with fellow vacationers sat on recliners, women with loosened bras turned over on their stomachs feasting their backs to the thirsty star, others extending arms and groping in their bags for magazines, sunglasses or cigarettes, sitting up and lighting them, their mouths smoky with Kurt himself, sat legs tucked beside him on a lonesome cushioned wicker sofa in the rich post meridian shade of the bar's veranda with not even his toes having been dunked in a demure dip within brilliant blue.

He was still perturbed from yesterday evening's events. The mugging that the hotel itself had not been able to explain. This non elaborate decrepitly minded man who'd somehow set foot on the grounds overdone on the alcoholic stimulation business, petulantly snarling at every turn, trudging among the shadows inspecting from a distance this spacious and very ugly hotel. This garden the woods for vacationer's constitutionals, but now the secret lair for an unsteady gunman with a short and quick job before him if he didn't encounter any squealers. Consequently, for some minutes, he'd gone about lucidly insane, a crazily calm hunter concealed until these two men had appeared up ahead, lovers they were, "froci", he'd muttered to his clicking chum.

Seven frenzied minutes later, that clumsy chum he'd given a thorough oil bath to, bandaged with a rag like a maimed limb with another rag to wrap up a handful of spare bullets before setting out on his mission, visions of bungling it having obsessed him, had been left to lie like a discarded dead rat beside its unconscious master, hemorrhages on his neck, subarachnoid and subdural hemorrhages in his cranium, with abrasions and contusions on his right cheek and posterior shoulder, left lower back and left leg, and like a limp corpse, carried by many arresting hands, he'd been removed from the premises to the police station of San Marco for legal captivity. In his wake, two victim's personal statements like two burning red documents, filed hotly against him.

For Kurt, and it did not mark the first he'd submitted, the first, in fact, the result of a wrong turn home with Santana along a Brooklyn street four years ago. Their assailant, a mugger dressed in a tiki shirt and sandals, had not been out for money so much as he'd been out for high fashion and had demanded for Kurt's Nike Air Force 1s, Santana's Mui Mui Lattice Pumps and 3.1 Phillip Lim Edie Bow Bag she'd bought with her second glamor modelling paycheck earned only earlier that week. Then, as if the whole affair hadn't been enough of a sordid routine, an automatic had been brandished between their eyes, the cartridges within, unbeknownst to them and even to their own attacker, in fact stale from a week or two of inactivity with no fresh batch inserted. 

Blessed luck, however, had arisen more complications for the gunmen than a rusty weapon. The encounter had been noticed from around the block by an undercover city patrol car, sirens flashing brutally, preceding the white NYPD that had drawn up quickly alongside the sidewalk to the stunned assailant, his small chummy pistol almost faulty in his uncoordinated defense before his violent ground tackling capture and firm Lattice pump kick to the genitals, the latter, counting as one of Santana's proudest moments of that year. The thought was to now inject a shot of humor into Kurt,
The moment he discovered his ring on my finger that night in our ensuite. His ring! On my finger! On my little pinky finger. My shy smile that consecrated confirmation and Noah's heart blew. I tell you, if his happiness could have talked, it would have filled this genteel hotel with a deafening roar, and his only regret was that he had not made love to me more passionately, but how so I begged to know. Immediately laying me down on our bed and erasing my mind of that evening's unsavory ordeal with the vision of him above me, his weight, his warmth, made all so infuriatingly good I could not beyond control allow myself to take my eyes off him, and all like medication, sex like the pistol's foreskin pulled back, orgasms as sweet as the crushing of the trigger.

"Hey," voiced Santana, suddenly, out of nowhere to Kurt's consciousness, sliding onto the sofa beside him. "How's it going?"

"Good. Everything's going well."

"You sure?"

The boy nodded. "I'm still a little weirded out about what happened last night, but this ring here is doing wonders in distracting me. Thanks."

"Where is Surfer Boi?"

"In the pool," Kurt replied, pointing towards the water. "Has been for a while now."

"Still happy as a quokka?" The Latina smirked as Kurt smiled.

"Still happy as can be."

"Why aren't you in there with him?"

Kurt sighed. "Because I fear, even in a public pool like this one, he'd have his way with me. Seriously, since accepting his proposal, Noah has been insatiable, and forget about the man who pointed a gun at our faces just hours before, there was little of 'Kurt, you seem upset, you wanna talk about it? You wanna cry about it?' Just 'Wanna have sex about it?' Which is what we did, all night long."

"And you didn't want that?"

"No, well, I was still a little fragile on my end."

"Right, from your ass getting torn in two."

"What?" Kurt exclaimed. "No! I meant emotionally from the mugging!"

"Oh."

"But now that you mention it "my end" similarly doesn't wish for any repeat performances of that kind. I mean I tried to get into it. I really did, but it's just not at all to my taste."

"One that's going to take at least nineteen more attempts to acquire. Kurt, don't bail on anal yet. It's all about relaxation and using a butt load of lube."

"How much is a "butt load"?"
Santana shrugged. "I'd say it equates to 108 imperial gallons."

"Wha-"

"But next time, drop hints to the bae that you're ready. Spread some thigh, present your assets."

"Assets?"

"Two ass cheeks. Look just don't go rushing into it, he'll get the message."

"Yes, but you know how I am with hints. I drop them, then I drop a few more, then I trip over them and knock over tables."

Santana grinned. "Trust me, it's easy. It's all about leaning into it. Maybe a few tender butthole kisses first, some buttcrack licks followed by some nice romantic fisting to get you in the mood, and then try."

"Okay," Kurt said, shaking his head. "San, I appreciate you're continuous support on the matter, but I'm in no mood for any of that. From his saving the day last night to my agreeing to marriage, Noah has had such testosterone rushing through him that I'm hoping the swimming here will wear him out because right now, I am wearing a nice dark shade of exhaustion under my eyes. Seriously, this shade is as dark as the inside of Hollister."

"Yeah," Santana conceded, "they're electricity bill must be around one dollar a month."

"I know, right."

"Kurt, relax, I can't see them. Your concealer has it covered. Literally."

"Thank God. You know, I find it unfair how other boys can look good without makeup. They don't have to worry about waking up in the morning looking-"

"Honey, it's only because society hasn't told them they don't look without it," said Santana. "I just don't like it when they say women who wear makeup are lying to them. I don't see why I'm being blamed for a man stupid enough to think I have red and gold eyelids. And speaking of "lying", when men say its eight inches? Please, my winged eyeliner be longer than that dick, bitch. In fact, for this fall's look, I'm thinking winged eyeliner, plum lipstick and a look on my face like I'm fucking your girlfriend and I can't wait for you to find out."

The fair boy laughed. "San, you're terrible!"

"Either that or simple liner with bold lashes, burgundy lipstick, and a gleam in my eyes that let's men know that I'll suck their dick, their money out of their bank accounts, and the souls right out of their bodies. I got inspired from 'Keeping up with the Kardashians'."

"You know, I've forgotten how many of them there are now."

"Well there's Happy Kardashian, Bashful Kardashian, Dopey Kardashian, and Sex Tape Kardashian. Like Kim, I'm gonna highlight the fuck out of my face. In fact, don't invite me to your wedding, 'cause I'll look better than you and it'll be embarrassing for us both."

"Not before I curse you," Kurt replied. "May the wings of your eyeliner be forever uneven."

Santana gaped. "That's the meanest thing you've ever said to me."

"I'll take it back if you do my makeup on the day."
"Done," the Latina beamed. "And if you want, I can contour Surfer Boi's dick to make it bigger on the night as well."

"Please, his dick's longer than a middle schooler's Instagram bio. I have always had plenty enough to work with when it's come to Noah. He's just… all I've ever needed in a man."

"I'll say," Santana smirked as Kurt nodded.

"Besides old golden retrievers, his heart is one of the purest forces of good on this planet. Did you know he once said that if he were ever to become rich it would be to buy his parents what they never had."

"He won fourteen million dollars from taking from them in the first place. If they ever find out, he's dead."

"… He's yet to tell them actually."

"Has he told them about this?" Santana asked, now gesturing to the ring. Kurt shook his head.

"It's to be a surprise."

Santana sighed. "Kurt, have you thought this through? Getting married, it's jus-"

"San, I know at my age I can afford to wait. I still have my whole life ahead of me, but last night and Noah could have lost his for good. What he stupidly went and did could have cost him his own life and never mind the close call I had with that bullet, what if it had gone through him? What if it had killed him? He'd have died there without knowing my answer to a question he's only ever wanted to ask me and I'd be damned if didn't say yes."

"Oh come here, glitter pants," Santana smiled, embracing him with a single arm, his head lolling on her shoulder. "I'm just happy you're alive and safe. What Surfer Boi did was only out of protection. You know how they breed 'em out in the mid-west. I don't care how much of a heart of gold you say your guy has, in Texas, the US of A, if a "low down pole cat" does a man wrong, especially to the ones he loves, you either apologize or they're gonna beat it outta ya."

"Are they the same in New Mexico?" Kurt asked.

"Please, Latinos are worse," Santana scoffed. "They're as aggressive towards muggers as they are towards the idea of a woman not shaving for a month, which is bad news for those girls who measure the length of time they've been single by the length of the hair on their legs."

Kurt blinked. "Really?"

"Yep. They're also very jealous men. I mean, think cute jealous, and then Othello."

"You're like that too though," Kurt grinned. "I mean, never have I ever met anyone as jealous of male patriarchy as you."

"I'm not jealous. All I do is question where male patriarchy gets off thinking boys are better than girls? Getting off saying smart means "ugly" if you're a girl. Creative means "ugly". Accomplishments? You looked "ugly" doing them. Value? Not when you're "ugly". Conventionally pretty? Read a book, you vain empty-headed slut! I mean, we just can't win… except at class presentations. Have you seen the difference in PowerPoint project quality?"

"True."
"Which leads right into beauty or brains? Fuck that, it's not a dichotomy. Let's not act like mascara glues girl's eyes so shut they can't read a word of Dickens or solve a trig problem. Let's talk about how no boy has ever been asked if he'd rather get his Bachelor's or get married; no boy has ever been told that he's too handsome to run for office. So why cover up my tits so you can take me seriously? Beauty or brains? I'll take 'em all, thanks."

"Ladies and Gentlemen of the UN, Santana Lopez."

"Oh, you don't want me to get up on that podium, Kurt. I'd go cra-"

"Tell me, Miss. Lopez," Kurt smirked, "Is male patriarchy backfiring on men sexism against men?"

"What the fuc- hell no!" Santana screamed. "The true American Horror Story here is "Menimism"."

"And what is this "Menimism" you speak of, Miss. Lopez?"

"Menimism, Kurt, is a mockery of feminism and proves we can't request equality without white men making everything about themselves."

"As if a white man with opinions wasn't exhausting enough."

"Exactly. They see feminism as a form of oppression, a threat to their masculinity and as a form of defense conjure up so called "Menimist Problems" like, 'When you accidentally brush by a girl and she refuses to go out with you even though the bro code says she's supposed to.' Fuck your bro code, bitch. Whenever you sleep with lots of girls you're branded a "player", but whenever I do it, I'm a "lesbian".

"Um-"

"In my opinion, if a guy buys a girl drinks and expects sex, she should be allowed to give them back by puking in his lap. If a guy uses a girl for sex period, they should understand that the girl will only go tell everyone how small his dick was, and at the end of the day, if anyone should call any one of these girls "a slut", the recommended response should be to turn around, say, "and yet i still won't fuck you", and to blow them a kiss as you saunter away because that's the closest they're ever gonna get to your magnificence, o Smaug, chiepest and greatest of calamities."

"Thank you Miss Lopez."

"I'm having thoughts of putting in "Jack off? Why not Jill off?! This is why we need feminism!" As my intro, and "Don't you dare tell me to calm down or I'll throw a fucking desk at your face! Suck my ovaries, bitches!" For the conclusion. What do you think?"

"Well-"

"What about a shout out to all the guys I went to high school with for callin me "homie" like they didn't want my pussy? Eat it bitches and don't even think of disrespecting me 'cause "homie", I fed you."

"Speaking of which, did you finish all the ham, cheese and wine from yesterday?"

"Yeah, and then that night I had a dream I spent twenty dollars on a hotdog and I woke up screaming."

"Really?"
"And it wasn't muffled, my favorite kind of scream, but full on screaming and everything. No more cheese for me."

"Is that true though? Cheese and nightmares?"

"Yeah. Once I dreamt I walked out of the movie theater and it was still daytime. Woke up and screamed. I once dreamt of the scariest Halloween disguise: showering with your makeup on. Woke up and screamed. I dreamt of life's plot twist: 2017 isn't real 'cause we all died in 2012. Screamed like fuck, and then in another, a girl walked by who's legs I wished I had and suddenly, there were legs in my hand. People were screaming. Like, what have I done?!!"

"Woke up and screamed?"

"Woke up and I passed out."

Kurt giggled. "And all this from cheese?"

"Uh huh."

"Wow. Well, I didn't hear you last night."

"Well, you wouldn't would you, Asa Akira," Santana replied. "Sequestered in your wedding night rehearsal, there's no out screaming either you or Toni Ribas there. Man can Surfer Boi groan."

"I know."

"At times, it got so deep I felt it in ma clit. Seriously Kurt, the next time he dicks you all the way down, the deeper that voice gets, the deeper he can go in you."

"Is that how it's working now?" Kurt queried to Santana's nod.

"That's how I'm having it work for you, yes."

"Okay, raise your hand if your friend needs to get laid right now."

"My hand is kinda busy…" Santana said, her hand reaching down to her crotch.

"San!" Kurt exclaimed.

"Don't worry about me, little unicorn," the Latina laughed. "As soon as we return to NY, my hand will be on the nearest hottie's ass so hard I'll feel her pulse, but right now, my focus is on you. I have a little something planned."

"San, Noah and I are together now," said Kurt. "There's no need to act as matchmaker anymore."

"Says the boy who once said, "Someone take me out. Either in the date way or the assassination way.""

"Okay, that was-"

""Seriously, anyone would be lucky to date me. I was a pleasure to have in class.""

"San, I think we've-"

""A B C D, why won't cute boys hit on me?""
"Shut up," Kurt laughed. "I was drunk at the time. You got me drunk."

"Yeah, to find out which boy you liked then."

"I didn't even know myself."

"Well that's how you find out, Kurt. 1. Get very drunk. 2 You'll cry about the boy you like."

"And who did I like?" Watching as Santana nodded over to the pool, to Noah, Kurt smiled bashfully. "What can I say? It's him. It's fucking him. I can't describe it anymore, it's him. He's the only one I will ever want. I belong with him. He is my home. I look at him and I can see fifty years from now on the front porch of an old house somewhere and we're together. I need him. He's the only thing that matters. He is my good."

"Oh my God, go to him," Santana chuckled. "Leave me here. I don't care if he does bang you in that pool, put on a lifejacket. Then will you be ready for intercourse, just go to your fiancé already."

"Wait," said Kurt, "I want to know what you're planning."

"You want me to push you in?"

"Okay, I'm going, I'm going. Just take care of the ring," he said, handing it to her. "I can't bring it into the water with me."

"I hope he's gonna buy you a real one," shouted Santana as Kurt retreated. "One the size of a fucking peach pit-"

"He will," Kurt hollered, "but for now, this one's doing just fine!"

And it was. This ring with engravings that flashed waves as brilliant as the water in that pool. Kurt was to shed his clothes by Noah's recliner like luxurious robes down to his white Aronik swimwear, poolside eyes peering at him from behind dummy books and bags of bonbons and Noah, too, watching him with tingling glands as with half his face submerged, eyes on Kurt, he swam predatorily towards the edge, trailing after the boy as Kurt, making his way round to the stairs, descended each and every one until neck high he was himself immersed, gliding through the water into Noah's arms for the embrace. Like Lana Del Rey and Bradley Soileau in Blue Jeans. How smugly would Noah marvel at the creature now wrapped around his body for the kiss.

A pair of sweethearts. The both of them. Kurt as glad as an ad. Surfer Boi smoothly tanned and revising his recent wedding proposal swoon to the moan of church doves, devising his moves in the water, and not even slitting his sun-speared eyes to compare Kurt to whatever poolside beauty could fall under his masculine delection and judgment for as he deepened a kiss he had since initiated and he really was not thinking that any one of them would have even surpassed Kurt's desirability. Even I didn't think so, but I wasn't to stay. Slipping from the bar and away from the boys' gamboling, I set to work on my own operation, the eventual destination for those two fixed at the back of my mind like a glittering golden X. Oh no Kurtie, I am not done yet.

As it was, Kurt and Noah had no plans for the day. Perhaps a spa visit to the hotel's Casanova Wellness Centre for a massage in twin treatment cabins to soothe Noah's body, the two minor grazes he'd sustained from the attack apparently feeble in comparison to past wrestling injuries, but still Kurt was concerned, fearing all this incessant lovemaking might strain the man, all this lovemaking that had spun out of control, never realizing until recently how wafery their wall substance was on the other side of their room until this morning after Noah had loved too loudly, "Oh shit baby, get that dick messy. Yeah like that. Keep those lips tight. Deeper. F-fuck, that's hot." Their neighbor's cough
had filled the pause as clearly as Kurt's would have done.

Oh how embarrassing it had been! To descend to breakfast and encounter their neighbors of the eve, this elderly couple with thin lipped weather beaten faces, eyeing them, having heard every single one of their romps ever since Noah had begun sharing Kurt's bed. The sounds they must have heard. The profanity, able to access that neither one of the men were Atheists before the end. Not that Noah appeared to care. Kurt's orgasms sang like Puccini arias to his ears. Unlike Blaine and he paraded the scratches and marks left behind after particular violent moments in bed in parodies of a Muscle Beach bodybuilder, strutting naked for Kurt to blush over as if Kurt had been waiting for him, as if he'd been starved for him, the "Puckerman dick too bomb."

Yet Kurt remained unamused. What of last night? What of the way Noah had attacked their assailant with near Jovian fireworks that had almost killed him. Kurt had since come to learn the meaning of the word "froci", Italian for "faggots", but such anger it had stirred in Noah, pulsing an extreme electrical disturbance in his core, a crepitating lightning of fury it had been astonishing to witness. Like red ghosts swimming and shivering with hate did such slurs appear through the torrents of homophobia the man had witnessed and experienced firsthand. Like glossy red beasts had they been merciless in their destruction and last night there they'd been, accompanying a swell lil' gun that had been aimed to shatter a moment of tenderness, a heavenly proposal.

Alas, hate had been unable to transcend the simple human fact that whatever spiritual solace it might find in eliminating the lives of two lovers that night, nothing could have prepared it for Noah. The foul wrong it had inflicted on him, the reason for his past sexual repression from its influence over religious and scholastic rigmarole and standardized symbols of the psychoanalytic racket tainting the idea of homosexuality had spurred the attack as he had not only not panicked like "Puck" had done, pushing Kurt aside behind foliage to skirt the hideous danger that used to suffocate him, but he had fought hate's imperious red shadow. One of evil mirth and magic, a zone that had tried to rob him of his ring just as it had robbed him of his love eight years prior.

And like that, in Noah's childish idol and idiotic fancies, there had been a terrific disaster! Earthquake! Spectacular explosion from The Pucker Man! Tarzan! Their assailant, like a crash test dummy, messily but instantly and permanently eradicated with Kurt whimpering into his arms, agreeing to his proposal with explanations, demonstrations, ululations and there brave Noah would play with him disgustingly among the ruins. Truth was, with the attack and Noah had been gifted chance at redemption. Hate, that had taken advantage of his disadvantage, taken advantage when he'd been helpless in moist teen tender love. That had cheated him of happiness, using "Puck" as its own emissary to send Kurt away. He would not be rolled up in despair again.

So he had destroyed hate and Kurt was to be his in Holy Matrimony, set to be bonded under the eyes of a brand new God he had created when he'd been sixteen with the microscopic hope he and his baby would reunite and how he thanked his Lord with piercing cries for the boy in his arms and sparing Kurt the bullet that could have taken him, for if Kurt had died, gripping for life on that lawn, an expression of pain so helpless, "It hurts Noah. It... it...", blood from his mouth like baby spit up before subsiding into an eternity, no mightier specter on Earth could have pulled Noah's heart apart nerve by nerve any more catastrophically. Kurt was the light of his life. The fire of his loins. He was his sin, he was his soul. His entire being. His baby, Kurt.

With all this explained, still holding his wondrous fair in that pool and Noah succeeded in clearing all of Kurt's curiosities. Kurt himself was beginning to understand, freed from his mystification and satisfied. As satisfied as it was to know that with every heartfelt word Noah had just said, the man had wooed him into a haze of utter romance, and perhaps Noah's ape-ear had unconsciously caught the slight change in the rhythm of the boy's respiration and perhaps his seeing eyetooth was aware of the private blaze of arousal no more than three inches from him: joyful blue eyes, flaming cheeks.
And then Kurt was feasting on him with perfect impunity and Noah was slipping off their briefs beneath the water, following the scent of a carnal paradise.

The setting was perfect for a brisk bubbling fuck, the subtle point being that those poolside were near enough to witness our kisses and embraces yet far enough not to distinguish that I was intercrurally nailing the life out of my Gay Jane, as if re-enacting our morning maneuvers in this water rippling manically from my thrusts and re-uttering my morning howl I managed to pass off as a series of hiccupped breaths and grunts, shooting out wedged between those lovely thighs the intensity of my virility. Fuck it felt good bro. Though Kurt wished not to stay long after that. He was too embarrassed and we were chill when climbing out, or as chill as two sex fiends could get until delivering a slap to Kurt's ass, I winked his way, my mouth to his hot lobe, "...your turn."

Indeed not even the following visit to the hotel's spa was to defer Noah's mission, the man waiting impatiently for their masseurs' joint exits before barricading their cabin door and pouncing on his fair softness in a flurry of slick sliding body play, an adolescent scenario he'd held since Ulusaba that served in a manner so splendidly to raise their cabin's roof to the heavens with Kurt's acclaim. They would shower soon after, a voluptuous business under such a steaming downpour and dissolve unconscious atop their readymade suite bed, yet only hazel eyes remained open to ascertain Kurt's sound sleep, his Sleeping Beauty, dormant mouth open as if in amazement at the insane time fate had rigged up for him. Had yet more to rig up for him.

Hours later and Kurt would awaken, sitting up on the bed dressed still in his terry cloth robe and surprised by his new solitude, as sparing a glance to the space beside him and Noah was missing from his side. He looked open-mouthed to the balcony, the light outside considerably dimmer, six o'clock if he were to guess, and in the foreground of this picture, set atop clothes folded neatly on a chair, a curiously clean-looking note he now analyzed immeasurably. It was from Noah, and it was simple, asking him to dress in the aforementioned clothes, a white baroque print T-shirt and skinny jeans, elegant flourish face stickers and gems he had not seen before with a white Phalaenopsis Orchid bouquet on the coffee table for his journey down to the gardens.

The instructions were followed precisely, carried out as instantaneously as a cinematographic scene in which the process of changing is cut to only a select few shots. Kurt had only now to look in the bathroom mirror to find himself in complete ensemble, everything from the liner on his eyelids to the temporary gypsy tattoos on his hands that incurred the radiance of utter adoration, a radiance having something soft and moist about it, the radiance of a groom. For he suspected the reason for it all. A ceremonious occasion he had not foreseen for at least another year by the standard length of an engagement following a proposal not even twenty four hours old, and a proposal followed by an incident others would think only as an "omen of evil."

Observers would believe this all to be doomed as one might anatomize a corpse, who wondered if it had been a proposal at all and not rather a coercive statement of fact. But that was nonsense. Noah had defeated the omen. He'd cast the sly tumescent devil off. The chief thing was that both of us were here and evidently set to be married, to enter the daisy-chain conventions of such a life with regular hours, home-cooked meals, the prophylactic routine of its bedroom activities despite the purely ethical doubts and fears I had. Debarring my friends and immediate family from this with no word of warning. Eloping with Noah who from his note rested so much of his hopes on me I could not conceive it. My Noah, my Tarzan, daring me into this white miracle.

Descending to the gardens and moving about fish like through the hotel as if in a glaucous aquarium and Kurt would repress a shiver if he were to imagine another attack, the horrid reluctance of a homophobic priest or the whole transaction hemmed in by mysterious statutes in the merciless glare of the law. Had the Cipriani been registered as their marriage celebrant? Had they even a marriage license? Kurt was left unaware as beyond the hotel's foyer there came a sudden burst of greenery, the
Antique gardens, and then, without the least warning, he gaped, as from under a rustic wedding arch in a haze of the Venetian sunset, tens of white paper lanterns everywhere, stood Noah, tailor-fresh in a linen shirt and trousers and smiling in such bright delight.

Almost instantaneously and all of Kurt's conjectures and worries, all blocks were removed, leaving only a prospect of delirious and unlimited fancies before him. Entering the garden and he basked in the beams of welcome's smile, Noah, Santana, the Cipriani's chairman and city clerk, donned in a black suit and glasses on his long virtuous nose, an elderly man, though by no means a fool, aware he was to be officiating his first gay marriage, the first at the Cipriani, that both grooms were very young, two American gentlemen reunited only this past week after an eight year separation and marrying in secret following a sordid encounter with an attacker in the gardens just over from theirs. Yes, he knew this wedding was to be a rather interesting affair.

"Dearly bruhloved," he began, commencing the ceremony. "We are swaggered here today to join these two bros in holy matrihomie." Kurt blinked, whispering his fiance's way. "You're kidding, right." But Noah was to smirk, knowing the ceremony would proceed in a similar fashion, the vows, "Noah Puckerman, do you take Kurt Hummel as your lawfully wedded bae?" Santana, the orchid-ornamentalized bridesmaid, adding to the ceremony uniting them both a touch of vivid vermeil; two promise setting diamond rings slid onto fingers that dared to do so more tenderly, followed by the declaration. "I now pronounce you bro and babe. You may smash mouths." And dip kissing Kurt, Noah pressed his lips to his enchantment incarnate.

"Kurt... oh Kurt I take you to be my lawfully wedded lucky-wishbone, my little baby, best-friend, and fellow bandit, whom I solemnly swear to love and to cherish from this day forward, for better, and most especially for worse, to fill your heart full of hella when that's what you need most, to kiss you so damn hard it conjures a tsunami from the deepest of Earth's oceans. Our love will be barefoot, bitchen, baby, brazen like a backside air reverse. Our love will be a macker I'll swell n' bump every morning at dawn. I vow to stand by you, at your side like an acoustic guitar slung across your shoulder and screw till death do us part, I would drag myself through all seven hells to find you and rodeo flip you out like it were nothin' but some B-grade, 60s surfloitation flick...

Beneath the orchid cascading arch to rounds of applause, Kurt was dipped ever lower by his great and insane monster of sensuality, the boy's lips secreting through every pore the lethal food for Noah's delectation, his kisses most indefatigable. ...But I digress. I now commit myself to you the very same way a star might commit to a constellation, your lips the galaxy's edge, your kiss the color of that exact constellation itself falling into place. I am but one small strand of your collective awesomeness, and I promise to you now that it has always been and will always be enough. I'm with you till the end of the line, baby. I want to hold your hand when we're eighty and say, "We made it. We're here." Because you see, for me it's not "I do", for me, it always was.

Glee

Following the ceremony and signing of the register, the late afternoon was full of ripple and stir. The small wedding party of five were but a constellation of fixed friends and acquaintances in the center of the garden, attracting twittering onlookers from the hotel tom peeping from nearby and catching the blinding flash that had the beaming surfer groom, the Latina in purple, and presumably the bared teeth of the Cipriani chairman sliding between the bride like laddie and the enchanted cleric immortalized in so far as the texture and print of the hotel's newsletter and website gallery could be deemed immortal if the whole affair hadn't been conducted in secret, rather storing the photographic
Drinks of foaming champagne were served and dinner followed suite. The wedding cake, a celestial classic tiered wonder with fondant icing and raspberry genoise triumphed dessert as jointly cutting a huge wedge of the sweet confection together, the newlywed grooms fed one another all but expeditiously, smearing their mouths in icing to the taste of summer skies and the blood grape of their love. Indeed, Kurt and Noah could only explain their behavior by the mechanism of this dream vacuum wherein revolved a pair of ecstatic eight year old minds, the minds and brimming hearts of their Colorado youth conquered by the moment giving them magic wisdom, awesomeness, freedom and each other. For they had just gotten married. Just Married!

In fact, the whole event was a testament to Santana's ingenious scheme. Having whizzed around planning the wedding, Noah by her side when not dutifully by Kurt's, she'd assembled this spectacular orchid-white kingdom in a matter of hours whilst also instructing a pill be slipped into Kurt's drink at the spa. A beautiful plump vial of "Vitamin X" full of Beauty Sleep's violet-blue powder she'd used the night on the Orient Express that would put the sweet boy to sleep so thoroughly, neither sound nor touch would rouse him for a minimum of four hours, granting Noah and Santana considerable more time following the tedious obtainment of the necessary Nulla Osta and Atto Notorio civil documentations allowing them permission for the actual wedding.

But the more the two had planned, the more Noah's anxiety had grown. He could not bear to think Kurt might say no or worse, scare the boy to clamor away and cease the engagement. To busy himself, he'd proceeded to San Marco in Venice and had devoted the whole afternoon to buying a wedding ring, one that would bear a striking resemblance to that of his promise ring, only with diamonds, for goodness, what crazy purchases were prompted by the poignant predilections he had for Kurt in beautiful things, the tee from Versace, the jeans from Emporio Armani, even the accessories from a fancy Venetian carnival store in the square for Kurt was his boy and what boy as adorable as he would not like to dress up as the most exquisite groom that ever did live?

The guide I had in these matters was the anthropometric notes I'd taken down after studying Kurt's wardrobe before setting out as there was no doubt, despite his prepubescent aura, he'd grown somewhat in the eight years that had elapsed since we'd separated. I thought I could safely accept the measurements of his linear figure from his hip, thigh, upper arm and calf girths to his neck circumference, stature, weight and waist, all dimensions equating to that of a well-developed albeit petite little angel. Even his finger circumference I took down for the ring that now fit snugly on him was precious, not that I hadn't visualized Kurt with hallucinational lucidity the entire day. Thinking of him and only him through every decision and manic supplier negotiation.

At the end of the day, the humble wedding had hardly made a chink in Noah's 14,500,000 dollar fortune, the expenses of the event having totaled around 5,500 euros with the remainder of Noah's winnings since transferred into a joint bank account both he and Kurt would use to start their life together with, starting with their honeymoon. Santana had suggested a two week holiday along the Italian Riviera from Postiano on the Amalfi Coast to the fishing villages and upmarket resorts of Vernazza, Portofino and Genoa, followed by a grand finale in nearby Monte Carlo before the return. As it was, today was their last day in Venice, the evening having already encroached by the end of dinner, but oh no, the celebratory festivities were far from over.

Outside on the garden's translucent dance floor and together Kurt and Noah were the hommes of the ball, both dancing a frightful lot in semblance to the memory of a Coronado dance they'd attended in their youth, little firecrackers on limbs that with maturity had no less lost their spark, swaying to Eagles, Biggie, Nina Simone, Lee Hazlewood and Nancy Sinatra. Grooving to the current music chart toppers, the radio crackling Hot 100 and Mainstream Top 40. For both of them, nothing, absolutely nothing, could compare to the indescribable itch of rapture produced in them when
watching each other move, and to dance with each other, the teasing delirious feeling it would flush within of teetering on the very brink of unearthly order and splendor.

Goodness! Watching Noah's smooth performance of his duties with immense swagger! His way of flinging off his shirt at the ample start, diving to the ground, shifting all weight forward developing a vital web of balance in his burnished arms and grinding the floor in a simulacrum of sex for no thereafter was acceptable if it did not produce the man as he was then with everything right: the cotton trousers, the tanned feet, the surfer necklace whose shark tooth pendant dangled dangerously above his bare gaspingly muscular torso with that masculinity and those lovely strong bones, and the broad, downward-tapering back, all moving with ease to which his hips were the highest point, a young male stallion bringing the art of make believe intercourse.

Of course, Kurt might have been too naive to know if Noah dared to fetishize the boy as that chaste or if not, drenched with an almost painful convulsion of arousal assimilation, just as Noah had been himself watching Kurt in his routine motions resembling those of a Parisian petit rat. The exquisite clarity of all his movements having its auditory counterpart in the pure sound of his every whirl. The beat when it entered his aura of control becoming more pronounced, its resilience somehow richer, and the instrument of precision he used upon it seemed inordinately prehensile and deliberate at the moment of a single move. His form, indeed, an absolutely perfect imitation of absolutely top-notch dance without utilitarian results, just how Noah liked it.

Yet following his dance Kurt would still to a familiar song, one that had Noah smiling with gleaming teeth at the instrumental introduction playing into the air, his singing voice reaching even to the zenith of the powerful and graceful cosmos he was creating only for the express purpose of falling upon his boy a resounding wave of romance. Their song. "You'll Be in my Heart." Sung so beautifully, so directly, a classical purity of emotional trajectory, and was despite its solo intentions, easy to join in with as Kurt came in for the second verse onwards, both grooms together as under Noah's lead, Kurt was twirled and dipped into a richly colored nether world of memories. The times they'd revolved, danced, strutted and clowned to this song. The good times.

"How did you know I loved that song?" Kurt smirked as he and Noah now swayed to a ballad.

"How could I have known you'd say yes to my proposal and marry me in the space of less than twenty four hours?" Noah grinned. "I took my chances." Kurt laughed heartily. "No seriously, I really took a chance here. I was sweatin my ass off doubting myself, dangerously dehydrated in fear you'd jilt me, when down you came, stepping out of those doors and I saw you standing there all in white and… bruuuh."

"Really?" Kurt smiled.

"Buuuuuh, Kurt, bruuuh were you beautiful. It was like thirst at first sight all over again."

"I am all together as you like, right? I mean, I tried following your note as exactly as I could."

Noah beamed. "You did good, baby. You look as fresh as lettuce. Fresher than a hoe."

"You know, a part of me was surprised you chose to have me in this. You've always mocked conventional dress."

"Nah, I just think it would be cool if everyone wore whatever they wanted whenever without shame is all. Show up to work in plated armor. Show up to a staff meeting in full cosplay. Wear a dress to play tackle football. Wear a bikini at the dinner table. Dress in scuba gear for your wedding ceremony."
"If you'd lain out scuba gear for me to wear for this-"

"I know, I know," Noah chuckled. "I'd know better than to dress someone from Vogue in such a thing for a wedding. Our wedding. I wanted you to slay this ceremony, and I got it all totes right."

"That you did Tarzan."

"So, when can I expect my position at Vogue?"

Kurt blinked. "Vogue?"

"Yeah, why not? I know the correct way to layer clothes and I'm sorry Disney Channel, but that is not the correct way." The fair boy laughed. "And I have an idea for an article: "Don't need permit for these guns" T Shirts. What do you think? It'll be hella rad."

"Really?"

"Yeah," Noah grinned, enthusiastically. "Whenever a dude leans in for a kiss with his bae but instead goes for his own biceps he'll say, "It wasn't me, it was the T-Shirt".""

"Sounds like you would be one of those dudes," Kurt snorted. Noah shook his head.

"Nah, I love punching you in the mouth too much… with my mouth… softly… 'cause I love you."

"Smooth."

"And I can't wait to do adult things with you…"

"Oh yeah, taxes," Kurt moaned flirtatiously. "Mmm, paying the mortgage. Oooh that's hot."

"Totally," Noah laughed. "I was thinkin you could room with me in L.A. until we find a place."

"Move out to California?"

"Yeah, why not."

"It's just… my whole life's in New York."

"Vogue would be able to transfer you to their L.A. offices wouldn't they?"

Kurt paused. "Sure, but I'd be leaving everything else behind. Giving it all up."

"Nah, you'd just be moving on from it is all. I can't do the same 'cause my career's planted in California. It's either there if I choose to stay in America or abroad somewhere. Australia probably."

"So moving would-"

"It would work out for us both, Kurt. Separated on opposite coasts, however, won't. You agree with me, don't you?"

Kurt nodded. "I suppose."

"Trust me baby," Noah assured. "It's going to be a whole lot better this time round."

"Is your place even large enough to accommodate us both?"

"Sure, there should be plenty of room, and the building's real nice too. My neighbor has this dog, this
chocolate Labrador I've trained to respond to Harry Potter spells. All I need do is look at him, say "Avada Kedavra" and he'll roll over and play dead."

"Really?"

"I'm telling ya, it's like the coolest thing I've ever taught him. I also tried teaching him to pee in a certain spot in our yard too by giving him treats, but now he thinks whenever he does pee, he gets a treat."

"So..."

"So now whenever he sees me, he pees."

Kurt laughed hysterically. "Oh you've got to be kidding!"

"Nope," Noah chuckled. "I'm not allowed to see Bongo until my neighbor's undone my mess, which really is too bad 'cause that dog along with maybe a band aid were gonna be my emergency survival kit."

"Of course."

"But at least that's not as bad as my other neighbor. One day, after I was watching porn, she slipped a note under my door saying, "Lower the volume or find yourself a girl". Not quite as bad as when I once received a text from my Mom sayin, "You left your gay porn open on my computer again", but bad none the less."

"Oh Lord."

"Anyway, when I did bring a girl back, my neighbor overheard all this terrible banging coming my bathroom next door and found both me and this chick proper beat up."

"Why what happened?"

"Shower sex," Noah shrugged. "I'd slipped, bust my ass and broke my dick. She'd slipped too, hit her head on the tile and passed out bleeding, and I couldn't even walk 'cause my jimmy had snapped. I thought it was gonna be sexy and we both ended up half dead."

"Oh dear."

"I'd say it was a total lack of chemistry I had with this girl in addition to my shower's only two temperature settings: hypothermia and third degree burns. Certainly nothing like that ever happened with us, did it?"

"No well when we showered together Noah, we only pretended to be fountains."

"Oh yeah," Noah grinned. "Can we do that again?"

Kurt shook his head. "To quote Hamlet Act III Scene III Line 92, "no"."

"Why not? I've had the shower fixed since."

"Oh, well in that case, sure."

Noah chuckled heartily. "Besides, I totally lied about the hypothermia setting. I've never taken a cold shower because when cold meets hot there's a reaction, and with you there to join me, who knows what will happen. Kabloooey!"
"Oh God, we're going to be known as the gay couple who has sex really loud, aren't we."

Noah smirked. "Nah, we're gonna be known as the gay couple with the prime sex life, and by prime I mean 1st base: anal. 2nd base: attending a Lady Gaga concert together and 3rd base: successfully destroying America."

Kurt laughed. "It's all I've ever wanted."

"Was it that way with Blaine?"

"Blaine shall we say pandered to my progressive element, but I prefer your more… muscular brand of sex, Noah."

"Fuck yeah."

"However you and he are so different. With Blaine and he was more of a hopeless romantic. He walked in the graveyards of gothic cathedrals, transcended the confines of elitist and rationalistic structures of discourse and led me in the eternal spiritual quest for the strange and sublime."

"Hey I'm a hopeless romantic too. Just look at our history."

"I know, you're sweet Noah… but are you also conscientious of the social inequalities and corruption in hierarchies of power that plague this world?"

"Totally. Fuck capitalism. Sodomy rules!"

"There's the man I married."

"Phew," Noah sighed happily. "You had me anxious there and you know how anxiety cramps my style. Like, how am I gonna seem chill and fun and be better than your ex if I start trembling, breathing heavily, and developing a look of impending doom in my eyes."

Kurt smiled. "If Iron Man can do it, so can you, hun."

"Hun?" Noah frowned.

"I'm using "hun" not "hon" because you're not my honey, but my fierce warrior."

"Hella."

"You're my rock, my Dwayne… my Johnson."

"And you're the window to my wall, the sweat that drips down my balls."

"Nice," Kurt blinked. "We can start talking about something else now."

"No seriously Kurt, you're as cute as a Dumbo Octopus, as cute as a Japanese Dwarf Flying Squirrel or the squeak my toilet seat makes when I adjust it to masturbation position."

"Oh it just keeps on getting better and better."

"Yep," Noah grinned. "Just there, masturbatin to the thought of a stable job and a recovering economy."

"As if you aren't now so financially secure you needn't glance at a price tag ever again."
"I guess," Noah shrugged. "Hey, how much do you think it would cost to turn Niagara Falls into chocolate milk? Or have rain at a shower temperature?"

Kurt blinked. "Third degree burn" temperature? No."

"Oh! You know how radical it would be to be a pet fish? Just swimmin around and suddenly it starts raining food?"

"I could guess where you're going with this-"

"How about a Flint Lockwood Diatonic Super Mutating Dynamic Food Replicator?"

"I guessed it-"

"Or FLDSMDFR for short, right."

"Uh huh."

"Wouldn't it be awesome? Then people wouldn't need to make the conscious decision to turn money into poop and peeps just hate it when money goes away when they spend it."

"You're not thinking of the female demographic, Noah. Food raining from the sky? People are already shocked when women eat food that falls into their cleavage because oh no, the grape has been tainted by their bosom. Better throw it away-"

"And you know what I say to that!" A female voice sounded. "Fuck no, I'm gonna eat that boobie grape!"

"San," Kurt blinked as the Latina approached them, grinning.

"Hey, Twinkle Tush. Hey Surfer Boi. How's it going?"

"Swell," Noah replied, grinning at his husband. "Damn swell."

"Good. Just wanted to let you know, the music playlist is nearing the end. Is there anything else you want me to put on?"

"Noah?" Kurt said. "What do you want to listen to now?"

Noah smirked. "That sound you make when I go down on you."

"Noah!" Kurt gasped. "San is right there!"

"Don't sweat it, Kurt. That was smooth."

"Even so," the boy grumbled.

"Speaking of which," Santana chuckled. "It is eleven now. Maybe it's time you and Noah retire for the evening."

"Have you still got us on a schedule?"

"Until this marriage is consummated, yes, now head up Surfer Boi, I needs a private chat with Ladylips."

"No Noah, you're staying right here-"
"No," Santana ordered with authority. "Private conversations are private for a reason. Head up."

Parting from Kurt with a heated kiss to his cheek, Noah winked. "I'll see you later, baby."

"He and I weren't finished dancing," Kurt said, turning to his friend.

"You'll share plenty more dances in your marriage Kurt," Santana replied, "Besides, both the photographer and cinematographer ran out of film shooting you two an hour ago. No, now's the time we've all been waiting for."

"San, I hate to break this to you but neither Noah or I are virgins."

"As man and husband you both are. The first sexual position is crucial. Whoever's on top may set the tone for the marriage."

"San, please, will you-"

"And that's gonna be you."

"Me?"

"Yes," Santana nodded. "Tonight Kurt, you're gonna be King Slut. Surfer Boi's dick will be your throne and a king always sits on his throne."

"San, I told you about this. I am not into anal."

"How else then are you to officially consummate? In the eyes of the law penetration is the only act that constitutes and I'm not having you leave that room until Noah's dripping out of you. I'm telling you Kurt, you are gonna have his ten thousand dead babies running down your leg by sunrise tomorrow."

"Ew San, that's gross!"

"Anyway, I left you my enema bag in your bathroom. I doubt you'll need it 'cause let's be honest, I could slide my credit card down your butt crack and not have doo-doo get on it 'cause I swear you keep your ass that minty fresh. Oh and earlier, whilst you were napping, I also had someone come in to bleach your ass."

"What?!" Kurt screamed.

"Yeah, she waxed you too," Santana nodded, eyeing him over. "Although I told her to lay off your pubes. Bald genitals are so last season."

"What the hell is wrong with you?!

"What? I also thought Noah liked a full bush."

"No, this! I can't believe you did this, San! I feel violated!"

"She was a professional from the spa."

"Oh that makes it all the more appropriate!"

"Makes her all the more qualified. Relax, she commended you on your body. Said that if she were ever to have a stomach as flat as yours she'd have to remove all of her organs with a surgery she'd pay for by having her excess body weight magically fall off and turn into cash."
"What?"

"She was a big girl. Luckily, I got her out before she began questioning why is it mosquitoes can't suck out fat instead."

"Look San, I appreciate your motives and everything you've done today, but despite all your attentions to my butt, I'm still not doing anal."

"Kurt, I swear, don't make me regret not having molded a fleshjack after your ass."

"San, listen to me! That time Noah and I did it he... he came after one thrust."

"You made him nut too quick? God Kurt, that ass of yours does have talent."

"That is not the point I'm making," Kurt huffed. "What I'm saying is that I was relieved. Relieved it was all over quickly."

"Really?"

"I'm stressing this as lightly as I can San, it did not feel good."

Santana sighed. "Then do it for me. Believe me Kurt, never have I felt so good without getting pregnant, and you can't tell me you weren't turned on when Surfer Boi fucked the floor."

"... That was sexy."

"So go on," Santana urged, "give it one more shot and if it's still not for you, I'll never talk of it again. I promise."

"Fine," Kurt relented, "I'll do it."

"Yes!"

"But I don't want you eavesdropping."

"No."

"And... yeah. I guess I should be going. I now have a husband to sit on."

"Just remember, the best technique when giving a handjob is to clamp the dick with a professional straightening iron, keep some water close to keep your throat sufficiently lubricated for optimal deep throat techniques and always pee after sex."

"Got it," Kurt nodded.

"Good luck, cutes," Santana cheered happily, "and good work!"

Kurt left the dance floor, out from the tranquil black night and once more into the hotel. Ascending the stairs and he knew people were looking at him, this creature in pure white, fair and pink, flushed and fouled. For in noticing their gazes, and in joint nervousness for his upcoming husbandly duty that evening and he was ridiculously self-conscious, losing countenance completely from a causal and debonair composure he would have liked to have upheld to instead swallowing thickly, putting the back of his hand to his cheek, pulling at the hem of his tee and turning his thin mobile shoulder blades to their gazes in a specious promenade where the fisted key was pulled free from his pocket, the key already in the lock and he was in the room.
That night under the stealth of candlelight and he and Noah made love. For Noah and it was reminiscent of when he'd taken Kurt's virginity. When Kurt, at the age of sixteen, had always firmly resolved to pursue his policy of sparing his own purity until he'd found the right boy. Sparing it with restraint and reverence for himself, even if that "purity" had been slightly damaged through those juvenile schoolboy dates at that accursed boarding school of his. Yet for Noah and the fair boy had remained unavished and untouched, leaving the surfer there to efficiently operate, though, as like an ill equipped surgeon, (despite his heterosexual dabbling) with less erotic experience and knowledge in the matter of homosexual practices than Kurt himself.

Now on their wedding night and the sensualist in Noah had no objection in depraving his prey in the most romantic way possible. He'd been blessed by the city clerk, he was high with arousal. He had permission to shed his cotton and linen finery and thrust himself up to the hilt into his youthful groom, but all in good time. The moralist in him knew to ease Kurt in if they were to ever engage in what he desired that night, even if Kurt had already proved participatory and receptive to it only a day earlier, the work, he knew, of a haggard angel behind the boy's back who had lifted Kurt onto him and off and had left the boy, despite the sweet denials in his voice, in pain and misery, or so imagined and exacerbated exponentially by Noah's own neck-sweating fears.

As it was and after watching Kurt contemplate the romantic night piece of the suite and Noah had started to stroke him, shivering in excitement, following with a skilled man's hand the dip of the boy's spine through the tee, to fondling the flow of his hair, massaging and rumpling his jeans, not daring yet to go under and down, daring, however, to mold the boy's nates until with a shake of his head, Kurt instructed he sit at the head of the bed. Doing so enthusiastically, Noah watched as at the foot, Kurt parted with his clothes as like a neo-burlesque dancer to jazz, stimulating memories of a fantasy Noah had once had of him frolicking in a giant martini glass, squeezing a damp sponge all over his body and smiling sweetly his way as "Kurt: Mr. America".

To soft music and Kurt was now on the bed, walking to stand above Noah, his naked legs on either side of the man's sheet draped lap and there to dance explicitly. Noah himself looked on with a grin. He caressed the boy's legs and brought himself up as he tried to get at Kurt's bed-warm perineum, greedily reaching his hot pale goal with a swipe of his tongue which quite undid his boy. Kurt was beside himself, feeling Noah's ramping lingua working the rest of the anogenital distance to his anus and licking him, eating him, that lingua piercing him—oh! Much tingling the boy's palate, and as the falling of a castle of cards, resulting in his sudden collapse as onto his knees he landed in Noah's lap, there to kisses and hands down his lumbus length.

In his hand and he'd since wrapped his fingers around his husband's arousal. Noah, unlike him, was circumcised and handling such apparel always had Kurt inquisitive after the skinned and raw flesh. The slight bicoloring towards the head. When having first seen it he'd asked as one child to another might say. "Does it hurt? It looks like it hurts horribly." But Noah had protested otherwise, having encouraged him to touch it, to trace the relief map of veins on the side as like rivers travelling up and down and asking him further more to give him a firm squeeze, a light tug on his scrotum, for Kurt had not the faintest idea how to handle the "things" of other boys. How they liked to touch and be touched. He'd been under Noah's commandment entirely.

And Noah, now in extremis, could not have prepared for the impalement so efficiently as he did in that second, undergoing all necessary procedures before driving himself steadily into his wide-eyed loveliness. He was unable to hold back a groan as he dissolved in a puddle of pleasure. His tall manhood was striking an anonymous quarter within Kurt, and the boy was presently wincing and adjusting, hands digging into shoulders, to those ponderous and oddly morose stirrings until with an angled clockwork launch of a calculated upswing of virile revival, his prostate was struck and he was moaning, so much so he could have embraced Noah the way Jane was recommended to receive her Tarzan as the boys now tumbled into a missionary position.
And even further more in this position did the genius of lyrical speech descend upon the man above him. Noah murmured, he moaned, kissing Kurt's face with voluble tenderness and crying out his pleasure in three more maneuvers for their reciprocal positions were becoming rather muddled by then from lying behind Kurt with his lips on a nipplet and the boy's splenius, to arranging Kurt on all fours, the boy imitating rabbit with Noah groping and cupping his hot little slew from behind then frantically scrambling into a boy's sandcastle-molding position. When he grew too loud, Kurt shushed him and when they were facing each other, Kurt shushingly breathed into his mouth, the boy's four limbs frankly around the man when he wasn't screaming himself.

Unlike their last attempt and impatient young passion would not brim like an overflowing bath. Noah had forced his stamina to survive the first few thrusts and into the clearing for he would not utter a bluebird's warning warble and burst at the lip of the orchid. Not again. He wished this to last, to bring about Kurt's ecstasy that made his eyes that of the starry night sky as if filled with vitreous humor. Kurt, who was shaded with a mere touch of coal at the mystery point of his chalk-white body where Noah's hand descended and located what it sought, stoking a fire and leaving its brand on the most vulnerable and tender point of the boy's body until, with the lowering of his mouth and Kurt's sparks flew as clear as dew and as clean as grass sap down his throat.

Seconds later, through his delirium and Kurt would inspect from his flipped position Noah's tanned body, the ant caravan to the oasis of the navel, the decidedly hirsute legs and arms, that pelvis returning once more to its station before thrusting and dealing with him roughly. His insides were being tickled repeatedly. His flesh malaxated like paste. His entrails would be the vial for his husband's own bubble of hot sap set to shoot forwards from his loins, that super voluptuous flame permanently aglow at Noah's subtle sacrum but growing and mounting in ebullition and erupting his passion upon the edge, descending the handsome surfer into voice breaking cries and rasps, pulling out only to clumsily stuff every last fleeing drop of himself back into his fair loveliness.

Almost naively, Kurt welcomed Noah's quivering mouth to his own pale breast buds and embraced the man through his coarse grunts, calling Kurt by his cute pet names "baby" and "babe". He was seeing those splattered colors again, those soaring vistas. His body fell instantly sleepy and soft cuddling beside his boy's with every movement of his droopy and almost woeful until with the revival of arousal minutes later as like some mysterious potion released that distorted his mouth into the acridity of lust's expression, he smirked, coming darkly near to feed on Kurt's open mouth and offering once more unto his young groom his heart, his throat, his muscles, having already grown and positioned between those fair thighs, the scepter of his leaking passion.

Today and they were to depart from their Italian palace on their honeymoon, one that would not be entirely instructive as those led by elusive or misleading bookmarks in the several guidebooks of crazed couples, but a leisurely adventure along the west coast of Italy visiting picturesque villages in hill enclaves overlooking quaint aqua bays, staying in pastel cottages and villas made of stucco in yellow sunshine ideal for sleep, playful arguments, reconciliation and insatiable married love, then up and following the Riviera from the harbors of agriculture to the grand scale cities and promenades shaded in rows and rows of Arecaceae, and continuing further still to cross the French border into the millionaire's colony of striped awnings and flying patriotic flags.
Santana would hand both men the itinerary, disrupting once again their morning embrace so suddenly they had little time to separate as she analyzed them curiously, Kurt's adductores rasped red from penile thrusts as like wood charred from burning, congealed semen on his lumbar from an intergluteal episode, handprints littering his hips and looking down she saw his toes had been sucked raw. Noah had always loved Kurt toes, even if Kurt himself was not so fond. Dancer's feet are the worst they said, and it would take hours of blandishments, pleas and promises to make the boy lend the surfer for a few seconds his pale digits in the seclusion of Noah's Texas room before undertaking anything he might prefer to his boyfriend's poor podophile joy.

Of course, what Santana coveted very badly to find as if in juvenile enthusiasm was for a sign of any penetrative act, if only to confirm the commotion she'd overheard the previous night. Yet with a hasty flourish of hands and she was removed swiftly from the suite. Check out for them all was at twelve. They'd been given their papers and flight tickets for their three o'clock plane from Venice Marco Polo Airport to Naples Airport and they had yet to shower and pack, their breakfast; two huge slices of wedding cake Santana had placed teeteringly on the nearby coffee table, (the vast remains of which had since been foil wrapped for their honeymoon) there for them both to consume before the descent down to reception ablaze with sunshine.

Indeed on this pale but warm Sunday morning, Kurt and Noah were experiencing the queer lightness of dreams following through all these tasks, even if it did render their minds juvenile; sitting jointly like school kids on their suitcases crammed full to burst, throwing a cake fight in the en-suite and smearing the shower separator with icing, both bursting into perfect love songs of wisecracks, and like a thoughtful friend, a passionate husband, a good physician attending to all the wants of his little brunet's body, Noah applied ointments to Kurt's post-coital marks the proud result of the surfer's boyish overexcitement, marks resembling nacres, others resembling large oversize sea-grapes, though all comely to his eye before draping nakedness away.

"We have everything, don't we?" Asked Kurt, trailing his suitcase from the room. Noah grinned by the doorway.

"We have each other."

"That's sweet Noah, but I want to make sure we've left nothing behind."

"Check if you want. I wrote something on the mattress."

Kurt gasped, racing to the bed. "You didn't!"

"Hell yeah I did! Look." Stripping away the sheets, Noah revealed his work written in red marker: 'People fell in love on me.' Kurt smiled, running a hand over the lettering.

"Aww. That is so cute."

"Yeah, I wrote the same thing on the mattress in Ulusaba-"

"Where we actually fell in love?"

"Well, when you did. I can't remember when I did. I just remember holding your hand in Coronado realizing how much it was gonna hurt when I would have to let it go."

Kurt lifted his eyes to him. "And what about your mattress at home? Did you write anything on that one too?"

"I wrote on the one in the guest bedroom, 'Noah took Kurt's virginity on me (18/06/09)'"
"Oh my- You actually wrote the date?"

"Yep," Noah grinned. "And I wrote on my own bed everything we did and when. First kiss, first nipple suckle, first you licked my pits."

"Oh my God-"

"First time you sucked the Dorito dust off my fingers. My secret fetish."

"Okay, stop."

"But the greatest of all, the first time you made me the kinda happy that had me one night layin on my mattress thinkin to myself, "Wow, who even knew this was possible? (24th June 2009)"

"Noah, stop it before I force you to make love to me once more on this very bed."

"You think we have time?" Noah smirked. "Cause I am totally up for it."

"Noah-"

"Just to douse you in green paint and spank you like the disobedient avocado that you are."

"Just move it!" Kurt said, pushing him of the room and locking the door behind them. "Goodness, I can't wait till natural selection takes out you slow walkers."

Noah chuckled. "I don't walk. I swagger."

"Then swagger to the reception then. I have a honeymoon to be on."

"I know right, this is gonna be awesome! My blood's already 4.3% pasta sauce since comin here."

"Rather than 4.3% salsa dip from El Pollo Loco's healthy menu."

"What? That shit is good. Put chicken, black beans, broccoli, corn, peppers and onions with it and you're really livin up the fit life."

"And all that with just water?"

"Blk or Antipodes Water, sure, Waiakea Hawaiian Volcanic Water too or Waiola Coconut Water if you want. Then there's Boxed Water is Better, Blueprint Juice, Pressed Juices, Finn Cold Press, The Pressery, that Clean Body Clear Mind Almond Milk stuff, F.O.G Fresh Organic Good-"

" Seriously," Kurt scoffed, as they approached the elevator, "this is what they're all drinking in L.A.?"

"Along with that Wow Wow Hawaiian Lemonade and Preshafruit crap, yeah," Noah nodded. "Although you gotta be careful. Choking on water is the worst 'cause how do you stop choking? Drink something? Well I've got some bad news for you pal. Seen it all the time happen with the Yoga peeps."

"Really?"

"Yeah, I went to Golden Bridge Yoga on North Highland Avenue a couple times tryin to befriend rich moms-"

"You were what?"
"It was when I was real broke, Kurt," Noah said, pushing for the ground floor. "I couldn't even afford bowls for cereal so I had to makeshift ones out of foil for my fruit loops, and that ain't 'cause I didn't wanna wash dishes when I was hungry as fuck, but I genuinely couldn't."

"Yet you could afford a twenty dollar yoga class."

Noah shrugged. "You gotta spend money to make money, and I needed a sugar mama to buy me new shoes to squat in."

"But you hate squats."

"Yeah, but you gotta do 'em babe. Works over half your body."

"It does."

"The trick is to do light to medium weights, save your knees and back. Three sets of fifteen to twenty."

"And what do you do?" Kurt asked.

"Twenty," Noah replied casually. "For my arms and forearms I do reverse curls overhand grip with my elbows close to the body. Three sets of ten to twelve and then for my shoulders I use military dumbbell presses facing the palms in when I extend making sure not to clank the weights. Three sets of ten to fifteen, but then a big part of exercise is mental."

"You think so?"

"Yeah, it's all in your head. If I have a set of eight I count to four twice. If I have to do twenty, I count to five four times etc. For some reason it's easier for me to process and get through the set."

"Noah, have you ever thought of starting up a fitness Instagram? These tips could be beneficial for people and you could really give them motivation for some "get diced" body goals."

"Really?"

"Yeah, I can really see it happening. Your body is just yummy yum yum."


"Of course you'll have to provide diet tips too and I'm sorry but your "I don't cook" attitude is not going to cut it."

"Hey, I-"

"Which is alright, because I'm hardly any better when it comes to food. I followed the whole organic food movement way too obsessively and I know that would make me perfect for L.A. but its only since coming here and experiencing a whole Eat Pray Love moment-"

"Eat Pray Love?"

"Yeah, congratulations to me on reading the book before it was adapted for film. I won: nothing."

"I read it too, in high school junior year when the gang I tried to create just ended up bein a book club."

"Really?"
"There was no, "Yo, whatever mom, I need to get back to my gang. Thanks for dinner." Instead, I sat in the library bein called "Satan" for hypothesizing if I were a famous author, I'd publish a book with ten different endings which would all go to print with varying degrees of rarity, unknown to my fans, only to revel in their confusion as they would disagree over how the story ended."

"Oh Noah."

"Yeah, and then when they would figure it out, I would 'come clean', telling them I had in fact released eleven alternate endings and there I would watch them panic all over again as they'd all try to find the last ending."

Kurt scoffed, the elevator doors opening. "That is evil."

"They were cool peeps though. All nerds and I came to like how their glasses suggested intelligence instead of broken eyes. Also one girl there always looked at me seductively by lowering her own but then she couldn't see a thing."

"That's cute."

"It was," Noah chuckled, as they wandered into the foyer. "Her name was Lauren, and she defied the movies' ideas of nerdy girls who carry a billion books to be physically weak. Seriously, carrying the Harry Potter series, the Lord of the Rings trilogy and all her textbooks you would think she'd have no trouble lifting and throwing the protagonist football star across the field, which she did."

"Really?"

"After he stole her glasses saying she had "horrible vision"."

Kurt gaped. "Well good on her for throwing him."

"Yeah," said Noah. "I mean, you don't take wheelchairs from the disabled and go, "Wow, you have shitty legs." He was an asshole and one day I got so mad salty with him I said, "That girl you just called "fat"? She sucked so much dick last night. Stomach full of dick. So much cock. That boy you laughed at for wearing glasses? Got sperm in this eye. Lost all his sight. Loves sucking dick. Got so much dick. That girl you laughed at in the wheelchair? She fucked your dad so hard. Left her paralyzed. Vagina broke.""

"Junior year. So when you were at that Ojai boarding school, right?"

"Yeah, so I could work on surfing alongside my studies, and save from some snotty shit loaf Cali kids who didn't know the difference between bein sassy and bein a huge douche canoe, it was excellent."

"Those kids. Were they anything like those we met in Coronado?"

"Kinda. You remember 'em?"

"I remember them being so pretty each time they sneezed I never said "bless you" because they already had their fair share of blessings, yes."

"Aw Kurt, come on," Noah chuckled.

"I mean, it shouldn't be possible for certain things to be as hot as they are when it comes to certain people, like their shoulders, back, jawline, whispering voice or rolling eyes. Especially bad people. Bad people shouldn't be allowed to have clear skin, good hair or green eyes. Like fuck. Fuck you.
Fuck me. Fuck everything and all attractive people."

"That's the plan," Noah winked. "Lucky for me I married an attractive cutie myself and I usually date Pokémon masters."

"I know. Deciding I was attractive was the best thing I ever did. One day I just said to myself, "Fuck this, I'm cute", and I was."

"Totally."

"And it seemed to work a lot better than deciding to be a butterfly, just to fly in everyone's faces and annoy them but unable to get mad at me as I'd be so cute."

"You are pretty cute when you're cute, Kurt."

"And when I'm not?"

"Hot as fuck. I've always aspired to bang you as hard as a car's smashed in rear bumper, but also cook for you and make sure you're emotionally stable."

"Really?"

"That or look like someone who can crush you but still bake cookies in his spare time, yeah. What do you think of this: "Puckerman Cookies – They'll melt in your mouth as you melt in your pants"?"

"Tasty. We can learn to cook them together if you like?"

"Why not? Never mind marriage, you know you're in the next level of your relationship when you're cooking together, and even more so when you show each other your feet."

"Noah," Kurt sighed with a smile. "What is it with you and feet?"

"They just have so many erogenous nerve endings in 'em, that's all," the man shrugged. "And I am all for erogenous nerve endings, saluting you with my "drill team" boner, adding just a little bit of fabulous to your leg-"

"You mean jizzing on my leg-"

"And having someone I'm not embarrassed to love and tell my friends all about, to save their selfies, good and bad to look at when I miss 'em and to lose sleep talking to 'em and telling 'em how much I love 'em."

Kurt frowned. "You save my selfies?"

"Well I like 'em first and me liking a selfie could either mean, "That's a nice picture friend" or "I want to bend you over a table" and they'll never know, but with you Kurt, you never just post selfies, you post masterpieces, and with every single one of 'em I've liked 'em, I've saved 'em, and I've sent 'em all to NASA 'cause you're a star, baby."

"Nasa isn't real, Noah. It's just a group of people who really like the song "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star."

"You're still my star."

"Well," Kurt blushed. "Never underestimate the power of a low quality webcam for a flattering selfie, or the white privilege to be even able to use a webcam in the dark."
"Pfft," Noah snorted, "never mind it bein too dark. My memaw didn't know she could adjust the brightness of the computer screen so she's been browsing the web with her sunglasses on for months."

"Oh but I love sunglasses. Am I looking at that tree? Am I staring at your dick? Who knows?!"

"You stare at my dick?"

"Noah, I don't need to stare to know that when the sun is going down, your "16GB vertical meat pistol" is going up-"

"-All the better to knock you up with baby."

Kurt laughed. "What?"

"By the time we return home, you won't be right or left handed. You'll be "pregnant" hand. Just imagine it. Our newborn baby will fuck with people so hard. They'll ask, "How old are you?" It'll say, "55". They'll get confused. "What?! You don't look 55!" At this point, the baby has the upper hand. It'll smirk and say, "55… minutes." Everyone gets a good laugh. Imagine."

"Or we'll name it "Pregnant", so when it comes to introduce itself saying, "Hi, I'm Pregnant," everyone will stand there mortified."

"Now you're talkin," Noah chuckled. "Though I don't know the first thing about babies. They say milk helps 'em grow… but I once poured three cartons over one when babysitting and all it did was cry."

"Oh Lord."

"Also when it came to their toys, I learned "for external use only" is just a fancy way of saying "don't put this in your ass", and that all age guidelines are conservative anyway."

"Sixteen years after we first talked of raising a family and we really know no better than we did then."

"Well I'm not saying I want a kid now, Kurt," said Noah. "It's not in our plans."

"I was about to say."

"For now, I just want this honeymoon period to last as long as it can, perhaps write on our car's rear window, "Just Married (2 years ago, but still excited!)" And have our home be nothing but our arms holding each other when we're at our worst."

"Oh Noah."

"All I want is you baby, and with 277262 kisses saved up, boy are we gonna share one hell of a life together."

Kurt smiled brightly. "We already are."

Swooping down and Noah gorged on his gaspingly adorable pet, spicy lips, thrushing blood. He was so happy his heart was enmeshed in a fatal power he could not comprehend. Perhaps because it was the first time they were leaving a hotel together without wishing the other goodbye for an eternity, no longer feeling instinctively that hotel exits were the points where their destinies were liable to catch, these recurrent fateful portals chosen by the gods to attract the event of separation to them. Or
perhaps it was marriage itself that now tethered them to each other as like a landscape they would travel across hand firmly in hand with no foreseeable dot of blackness in the blue of their bliss. For that was the word, wasn't it. Bliss. All of this was bliss.

We booked out of the hotel soon after, roused from our embrace to shuffle alongside our luggage into the open air. Santana was set to accompany us to the airport, only to part on a flight home to New York, but oh what trustful hands she was leaving me in. Those of my new hubby, Noah. The man beyond sweet on me, who had to do, wanted to do, and would do everything to give me a sound marriage, a healthy and happy life. I had yet to let my parents know of my elopement, a veritable Proteus I was flitting off on this honeymoon, but I didn't care. With the secret slip of a ring and my angelic line of conduct had been erased. I was Noah's and he mine and no greater adventure did wondrous life ever have for two hearts fatefully entwined more than ours.

To Be Continued...

~ PLEASE REVIEW ~

(But if you wish to criticize, may it be constructive. I'm not going to learn from my mistakes and improve if you vent.)

Authors Note: For Kurt and Noah's wedding, I took influence from that of Anakin Skywalker and Padme Amidala's on Naboo in Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones.

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