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**darling, you should know that i adore you**

by msleviss

**Summary**

Eliott is a semi-famous YouTube creator and Lucas is a fan. They meet at uni.

**Notes**

Title is from Unspoken by Aaron Smith which has nothing to do with this story but I love it a lot.

Enjoy!
Mardi 9:20

It’s only the second day of the new semester and Lucas is ready to give it all up to go live in Siberia and hibernate in some cabin in the middle of nowhere. His alarm didn’t wake him up, he had to shower with icy water (note to self: call landlord), leave the house with wet hair, then he almost missed his bus and didn’t even have time to have breakfast.

So Lucas had to cancel his morning coffee with his friend Chloé across campus to go to his first lecture. He’s not even a coffee person but he desperately wishes he could have some now. Lucas usually would laugh in anyone’s face who dare tell him he should get up even a second before he absolutely needs to and if this was any other week of the semester they might not have cancelled. But he has learned the hard way that he’d rather die than be late to any seminar’s first session:

Last semester Basile was kicked out of a seminar for showing up five minutes too late in the first week. The professor turned out to be a general douche, so maybe he just didn’t like Basile’s face and decided to take out all his pent up anger on him. But it was truly a sight to behold. Basile looked like a scared little puppy, sneaking backwards out of the room with his tail tucked in. After the session, he tried to talk to the lecturer again and apologize, but was immediately rejected without hesitation. When Lucas tried to jump to his friend’s help, it looked like the lecturer was a second away from kicking Lucas out, too, so he retreated. And then suffered through the whole semester on an inhumane workload while Basile sent him pictures of himself lounging around in bed because he got to sleep in.

And that is the story of how Lucas had to spend his first semester without Basile, who, even if he tends to annoy Lucas and their friends to no end, is still one of Lucas’ best friends and also – conveniently – one of the few friends he has in the biology department.

Lucas walks as slowly as he possibly can, willing time to go by quicker. The previous lecture won’t end until 9:30.

He enters the unfamiliar building and looks around. From the outside it's an old building but the inside must have been recently renovated. He's never been to this part of the university, the science buildings being across campus. He finds the right lecture hall and sits down on the floor next to the door, hearing dull noises from the lecture that is currently taking place there. He looks at his watch. 9:25. He really should have bought himself a coffee. He yawns loudly, not bothering to cover up with his hand.

Lucas looks at his cell phone and texts Basile.

Lucas: Already there, do NOT be late

Basile texts back seconds later.

Basile: I would never!!!!

Lucas sighs contentedly, stretching his legs out in front of him. As part of their studies he and Basile have to take a few seminars and lectures that don’t have anything to do with biology. So they chose media theory which seemed like a good idea at the time. Arthur, who studies French literature, told them that there are no additional requirements in that course.
He scrolls through Instagram for a while. There’s nothing new, or at least nothing interesting, a motivational quote from Daphné, a sunrise from Arthur, various posts by famous actors and musicians he follows, a few memes. Nothing exciting.

Lucas is on the verge of putting his phone away to pass the time by staring holes in the air when he receives a new push notification.

**srodulv - journée 1**

Lucas sits up. A broad grin spreads on his face without his permission.

Srodulv is the stage name of Eliott Demaury, lowkey one of the most beautiful men Lucas has ever seen. Yann, Basile and Arthur like to make fun of Lucas for being obsessed with a YouTuber of all things and Lucas absolutely resents that. *Eliott is an artist, guys!*, he has yelled on more than one occasion.

So maybe Lucas has a (small!) healthy crush on him.

He enthusiastically taps on the notification. He quickly gets his headphones out of his backpack.

The video begins with a time lapse, the main building of the University of Paris can be seen in the foreground, a tall old building with white marble columns in front of the steps that lead to the entrance. The camera is set up in the middle of the square, which, at first, is deserted, but slowly the sky gets brighter and more and more people appear, walk past the camera, walk into the building or stop and talk to each other in front of it. Eliott talks about the beginning of the semester in a short voiceover. Then the time lapse ends and the next clip is of a radiant Eliott walking down the street. It’s still dark. Eliott happily talks about his classes (without going into too much detail, he never does.) One of Eliott’s best friends, whom Lucas has seen in the videos before, is next to him.

“Sofiane and I are determined to upload more videos this semester. As you may know, Sofiane is my slave and always likes to drag all my equipment—“

Sofiane calls out a “Heey!” and slaps Eliott’s shoulder and Eliott just laughs.

“So we thought that you could just join us for the first week. We actually have all of the same courses this semester!”

“Woopwoop!!”, Sofiane shouts and Eliott laughs again. His eyes get all scrunchy, his gums visible.

“Hopefully we'll be able to post a video every day either in the evening or the next morning. So! Seven videos this week! I hope you are ready! We are definitely not!”

Then the clip breaks off and in quick succession Eliott has cut together moments that are supposed to sum up his day: A short clip from a seminar, Eliott and Sofiane drinking coffee, Sofiane filming Eliott eating his lunch, obnoxiously asking him if he can take a photo with him, other students waving enthusiastically at Eliott’s camera because they recognize him, Eliott standing at a bus stop, another time lapse from a Parisian street right at the bus stop (Eliott must have waited a long time), a tired Eliott on his way home, and finally a clip of Eliott drawing a raccoon stretching and yawning. He draws a speech bubble. The raccoon says, “Thanks for watching! See you tomorrow!” Then a big heart. His vlogs always end like this, a new small cartoon every time. Lucas is fascinated by how fast he turns a blank piece of paper into artwork. The credits roll, then the video ends.
Lucas first realizes that he is staring stupidly at his cell phone, smiling way more intensely than is probably socially acceptable, when the door suddenly opens beside him. People start leaving the lecture hall.

Lucas looks back at his phone, likes the video and quickly writes a comment:

**lucament:** That looks like a good first day! I'm looking forward to the videos :)

Nice, short, to the point, no fangirling. He is *not* like all the girls who probably only watched these videos because Eliott and his friends are hot, ok? At least Lucas convinces himself of that. Also he wants to appear calm and collected in case Eliott reads his comments – which Lucas knows he most likely does because Eliott isn’t famous enough to have his comment section be overrun by spam and trolls, thankfully. Eliott has almost 100,000 subscribers on YouTube, even more followers on Instagram. Eliott’s Instagram is varied: Selfies, little previews for his videos, but mainly, he made his following through those little cartoons, short relatable every day adventures of an adorable raccoon and its friends. Lucas feels understood.

Lucas has known for some time that Eliott goes to the same university as he does, but he has rarely recognized the buildings Eliott sometimes shows in his videos, because Eliott never seems to be in the science buildings and Lucas doesn’t have much to do with the media faculties. Now that he thinks about it, Lucas isn’t even sure what Eliott studies.

“Lucaaaaaas!” Lucas finally looks up from his phone and sees Basile running towards him. “You see? I’m not too late!” Basile raises both arms in the air and holds them towards Lucas. “High ten!”

Lucas rolls his eyes and indulges him. Basile cheers loudly and hugs Lucas briefly, only to push him straight towards the door.

“So I was just in the métro and I saw this woman. And she was like *insanely* hot. She was wearing like this black business suit and, like, heels that were, I swear, at least twenty centimeters. And obviously I didn’t do anything, but I swear, that woman was *looking at me*. We totally had a thing, it was *insane*. If i wasn't spoken for... *dude*. And then I almost missed my stop, right, and I was like *fuck*, no, I can’t do that to Lucas, so I ran and got stuck in-between the closing doors and, I swear, I’m going to have the *most* badass bruises on my shoulders tomorrow …”

Basile enthusiastically tells Lucas about his morning commute, and the professor, who is still standing in the front talking to a couple of students, gives him a dirty look. Basile ignores him and joyfully hops up the stairs and without hesitation heads to the last row and sits down. Lucas doesn’t like sitting in the last row. People who sit all the way in the back are almost as bad as people who insist on sitting in the first row. Lucas is a solid “I’m sitting in one of the middle-rows, a little to the side”-kind of man. Not directly in the field of vision of the lecturer and not so far in the back that he seems disinterested. But it’s the first session, it’s probably going to be very busy anyway and he does not want to argue with Basile about the optimal seating plan (at least not *again*).

While Basile is talking about heroically running to uni as fast as he could while being attacked by rabid pigeons, the last students leave and after a while the lecture hall slowly fills up again. Lucas “uh-huh”s whenever needed, but only half-listens to Basile’s ramblings.

They have to get up several times and let people into their row: the price of insisting on sitting at the side close to the stairs. Basile blames it on his weak bladder but Lucas knows it’s just so he can leave quicker when the lecture is over.

Just before ten o’clock – the hall is now full of people, there are only a few seats left – the professor finally comes into the room and it suddenly becomes completely quiet. Basile stops
talking abruptly in the middle of his sentence.

Lucas gives him a puzzled look, Basile returns it.

“Please don’t tell me we’ve found another asshole who doesn’t allow people to talk”, Basile whispers, leaning back in his chair.

The professor introduces himself. Lucas checks his watch, 9:58. Professor Mathieu. Media theorist. Focuses on oral cultures before the invention of the printing press.

“I thought this’d be about, like, the discovery of television and we’d just watch a bunch of movies.” Basile’s voice is low and filled with dismay as he sees the lecture program. “We’re not even talking about the 20th century until the last session??”

Lucas rolls his eyes, but he admits, he would very much love to get up and run out of the room right away. "Maybe we should have read the course description,” he sighs, resigned.

At that moment Lucas’ cell phone buzzes, lying on the slightly slanted table in front of him. At first he just wants to turn the phone around, give the professor a chance despite the disappointing agenda, and listen as he talks about mnemonic patterns. But then he glances at the notification and sees that it comes from the YouTube app. Eliott answered him.

srodulv: Merci!

Lucas has to pull himself together, not to make an ungodly sound. Basile would tease him until the end of time. He screenshots the notification, unlocks his phone and taps on the YouTube app to immediately like the comment (and maybe so the notification doesn’t disappear from the notification center, do not dare judge him).

“Are you okay?” Basile squints at Lucas display and he quickly turns the phone over.

“Hmm? Yes, yes”, he mumbles to himself and looks forward again.

Professor Mathieu is talking about the academic essay that all those who want to attend the lecture must write. A session log of any session the students connects with that needs to be connected to a relevant text that is not part of the course reading list. With footnotes. Five pages. Lucas feels like running out of the hall again, and it’s not difficult to see that a lot of the students feel the same way. Basile groans the loudest.

“I’m going to murder Arthur”, he whispers under his breath.

Just then the door of the hall opens and someone hesitantly enters the room. He is tall, skinny, wearing a brown bomber jacket, dark jeans, a giant backpack. His hair is brown, messy and looks chaotic in a way that must be intentional. Something Lucas can’t say about his own hair. But most importantly, it’s Eliott.

Lucas can’t take his eyes off him, watches as Eliott closes the door behind him as quietly as possible, gives the professor, who completely ignores him, an apologetic look and then scans the hall for a vacant seat. Lucas looks away quickly when Eliott seems to be looking in his direction. Although Eliott, of course, doesn’t know who Lucas is and probably wouldn’t even recognize anyone in the sea of faces if he wanted to. Finally, Eliott finds a seat a few rows in front of Lucas, slightly in the middle. The professor finally does give him an annoyed look as some students have to get up to let Eliott through. Eliott lowers his head, sits down quickly. Lucas can only see the back of his head, but over the next ten minutes he watches as Eliott slowly takes off his scarf, then his jacket and finally takes a notebook out of his bag to make as little noise as possible.
Basile is already playing a game on his phone, ignoring the lecture, completely resigned, and ignorant of Lucas’ predicament.

Because every chance that Lucas had to focus on the lecture is now completely lost. Lucas stares at the brown haired head not far in front of him, sees that Eliott takes notes every now and then, sees that Eliott actually listens.

The lecture feels about ten hours long and Lucas is almost grateful, soaking up every second that he can stare at Eliott.

**Mardi 11:30**

When the lecture is over, everyone starts to clear their things off the small tables and the first students leave the hall, Lucas is almost sad. Basile has long jumped up and is on his way down the stairs. Lucas is glared at by the students next to him because he’s obstructing their way to freedom. Quickly Lucas jumps up, grabs his backpack and goes to stand next to the wall. Eliott is gone, the row he was sitting in almost empty. Lucas looks around. Basile is standing at the bottom of the stairs, waving his hand to him, and Lucas gives him a subtle wave, grateful that he can pretend like he was looking for Basile.

“That was the biggest waste of time”, Basile says, "I can not study biology and be forced to read texts about people who can’t talk! What does that have to do with anything?”

Lucas grunts in acknowledgment.

Lucas and Basile leave the hall. Lucas automatically turns right to get back to the main entrance – and stops dead in his tracks.

There, just a few meters away, stands Eliott. He has a small camera in his hand and holds it in Lucas’ direction. The moment Lucas’ legs finally allow him to continue walking, Eliott looks up from his display and their eyes meet.

Lucas tries to hide the panic that instantly heats him up. He walks on, risking a quick glimpse at Basile, but he stands off to the side and is busy staring at his cell phone, talking to Daphné if his face is any indication. Lucas’ eyes swing back towards Eliott. Should he say something? Smile? Tell Eliott he likes his videos? He opens his mouth, but nothing comes out.

It feels like hours, but only a few seconds pass. Finally, Lucas can make the muscles in his face contort into something that hopefully resembles a small smile.

At the same moment Eliott opens his mouth. “I’m sorry, I didn’t film you, not you in particular, just the …” He wildly gestures towards the door. “I can delete it immediately if you want.”

Lucas is confused, not in his wildest dreams would he have thought that Eliott was filming him specifically. Why would he? “No, no, ’s all good”, he laughs. Is he talking too loudly? Lucas blushes, looks towards Basile again. “I didn’t think you were…”, Lucas says. “Nice to meet you, I have to…” Lucas gestures vaguely in Basile’s direction.

Eliott grins broadly, his eyes are slimming, dimples forming on his cheeks, teeth so white Lucas might be blind now. Lucas desperately hopes his thoughts aren’t reflected on his face.

Before Eliott can say anything else, Lucas sets in motion and flees. He speed walks past Basile who doesn’t notice him and only stops when he reaches fresh air.
His thoughts are racing, he’s warm and cold at the same time. This is definitely not how Lucas had pictured his first meeting with Eliott.

Eliott had started posting videos at irregular intervals four years ago, when Lucas was 16. In the beginning they were short, sometimes just minute-long videos – aesthetic images of forests, sunrises, tourists at the Eiffel Tower, illuminated buildings at night, set to the tune of atmospheric-melancholic music. The recordings had filled Lucas with love for his hometown, had made him feel less alone – how could he feel so lonely, so alone in a big city where he has lived his whole life when he is surrounded by so much beauty?

Over the years, Eliott's short, randomly edited videos changed. They turned into full-blown short films, the video quality got better, so did the cinematography and the plots, and after a while Eliott himself appeared more often. While he was never seen at the beginning, and he always left the acting to other people for his shorts, his monthly vlogs are now (and Lucas would never ever confess this to anyone) the highlight of each month. They appeared, mostly, out of nowhere. Sometimes there was a vlog on the first of the months, sometimes on the last, sometimes randomly in the middle of the night on a Thursday. And these vlogs are never very personal, more of an update on Eliott's projects:

Eliott talks about the struggles of editing his new short film, how he's doubting his vision. (Lucas wants to hug him so badly when he looks unhappy, which he does more often than not in these kinds of videos, when he's not surrounded by his friends, when he's not sticking to a script.)

Sometimes the vlogs incorporate excerpts from his lectures. Eliott always turns the camera on himself and makes a face to show off his boredom. (Of course, Lucas did not screenshot those moments to be able to look at them anytime, and they do not always put a big smile on his face, absolutely not.)

Sometimes the vlogs include funny little skits that aren’t worth their own videos. (Eliott is funny. Lucas thinks it should be forbidden by law to look this good and be funny.)

And of course, Eliott’s videos are full of other people, Eliott's friends: Eliott and his friends on the way to college, Eliott and his friends in a café, Eliott and his friends in a club, Eliott and his friends smoking possibly illegal substances.

Lucas needs to calm down.

So, when Basile still hasn’t come out after a few minutes, Lucas picks up his phone and texts him.

**Lucas:** Where are you? Next class starts soon, omw across campus

Basile doesn’t answer right away, so Lucas sets off alone. Out of sheer habit, he gets his headphones out of his backpack, turns on some music, and he almost immediately feels calm.

He has almost arrived at the science building when he gets a text from Basile.

**Basile:** I was waiting for you, did you just leave without me??

**Basile:** But look who I just met! Told him my friend Lucas would FREAK OUT if he met him hahaha

Basile attached a picture and Lucas stops dead in his tracks. It's a selfie. Basile looks into the camera, eyes wide open, mouth twisted into an O, as if in surprise. In one hand he’s holding the phone to take the picture, the other points at the man next to him. Lucas looks at Eliott’s smiling
face and Lucas hates it.

He would like to strangle Basile.
Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

Thank you for the comments and kudos on the first chapter, hope you enjoy this one, too! :)  
Also feel free to follow me on tumblr if you want.

Mardi 17:34

Lucas puts his notebook back into his backpack and stands up, the professor having dismissed the class for the day. Lucas is excited to go home, ready to finish the day off strong: Maybe play some Mario Kart with Yann and go to bed as soon as possible.

“If I ever have to hear the phrase ‘mnemonic pattern’ ever again, I swear, I’m going to launch myself into the sun.” Basile is still talking about the media theory lecture. Even many hours and two new courses later, he has barely stopped complaining about the syllabus since they met up again after lunch right before their third and final course of the day.

Lucas grunts in acknowledgment. His thoughts have been preoccupied all day.

“But you think we could just drop that course? We can always do the extracurricular module next semester”, Basile says.

“No! I mean, it fits into our schedule perfectly and who knows how that’d work out next semester?”

Basile groans. “I swear, this is just because your one-true-love is in that course.”

Lucas balks indignantly. “No! I’m serious, it’s currently our only option and it sucks, I know, but… I don’t know. I don’t want to hate myself next semester.” He sighs.

Basile gives him a meaningful look and bursts out laughing. There’s no use lying to Basile, they’ve known each other for too long.

“… And maybe I’d be really excited if I could see him again next week, sure.”

Basile cheers as he leaves the course room, Lucas right behind him.

“I fucking knew it!”

“But he’s not my one true love, stop staying shit like that.”

Basile just laughs. “I literally can’t wait to tell the others about this. Lucas finally met his obsession! And I did too for that matter! Did you tell Chloé earlier?”

Lucas blushes. “No, of course not. She’d just tell Alexia and Daphné and then everyone will end up knowing.”

Basile glimpses back at Lucas, then looks down at his shoes.
Lucas’ eyes widen. “Don’t tell me~”

Basile is a terrible liar but he’s even worse at masking a guilty conscience. He sighs and grimaces. “I might have told Daphné about it at lunch”, he admits. “But that was just because I told her about the thing with the woman this morning, right, and she was a little mad, so I had to distract her! And she was so excited for you. And jealous, honestly. I’m sure she’s not going to tell anyone.”

Lucas barks out a laugh and Basile smiles timidly. They both know that that’s highly unlikely. He slaps Basile lightly on the shoulder and that’s the end of that conversation. They keep walking.

Lucas looks at his watch. “I’ll probably be late for my bus, but I should hurry up.”

Basile agrees, checks his phone, and his eyes widen. “Fuck, I have to run. I was supposed to pick her up from class at half past.”

“Don’t get seduced by any women on your way there.”

Basile holds up his hands and goes in for a high five, but Lucas evades him. Basile makes a rude hand gesture, waves, and leaves the building first. Lucas slowly follows him, but loses sight of him quickly when he cuts through the masses of students to get to a different building.

Lucas, though, joins the masses of students running to the nearest train station, métro or bus stop. He takes his time, doesn’t want to join the others in a race to the first bus. He wants to go home, but he’s not desperate. Especially since Yann has a big date night with his girlfriend that he’s been planning all day. He remembers that his Mario Kart plans will definitely be thwarted by this and silently mourns them.

His stomach reminds him that he should probably also have something to eat. A quick lunch with Chloé to make up for their missed breakfast hadn’t really sated him.

Lucas can see the bus stop in the distance, the bus just arrived. A few people overtake him, run and get on the bus. If Lucas just sped up a tiny bit, he might still make it. But he slows down. He refuses. When he arrives at the bus stop, the bus still hasn’t left, it’s packed and a sharp tone indicates that the doors can’t close. The bus is packed with people breathing down each other’s necks. The mood inside is noticeably tense. After what feels like an eternity and some indistinct yelling, the last door closes and the bus leaves.

At the same time someone runs up next to Lucas, out of breath.

“Putain”, the person curses softly and takes a few deep breaths.

Lucas glimpses at the guy and looks away instantly. It’s Eliott. He’s not sure if life hates or loves him, randomly seeing Eliott not once but twice in one day. Lucas pretends not to have noticed him, longingly stares at the bus that is stopped at a traffic light in the distance, and sits down on one of the metal seats that are bolted to the bus stop.

He looks at his phone to distract himself and finds a few missed calls from Yann and two new text messages.

Yann: Can you buy some popcorn on your way home?

Yann: Pleasepleaseplease

Lucas: What’s up with you and popcorn?
Yann: I have a CRAVING. And they’re Chloé’s favorites.

Yann: Pleeease, I will love you forever

Lucas: Sure

Lucas: But I’ll hold you to that

Yann: How was lunch btw?

Lucas: She literally did not stop talking about you the entire time if that’s what you want to hear

Yann sends back a bunch of different heart emojis and Lucas rolls his eyes internally. Yann is whipped for that girl.

He would’ve taken the métro to save time if he’d known he has to go to the supermarket. The bus is only practical for Lucas, because it’s (at least when it’s not the first week of the semester) rarely overcrowded. Lucas briefly thinks about whether he should get up and walk to the next station. That might be faster than waiting for the bus for another ten minutes. But there is one slight problem: Eliott, who has now taken a seat on one of the seats of the bus stop, leaving two empty seats between him and Lucas.

Lucas keeps pretending to stare at his phone, trying to watch Eliott out of the corner of his eye. He wonders if he should text Basile, ask him what the hell he should do. But maybe he shouldn’t take life advice from Basile of all people. Even though he does have a girlfriend and Lucas hasn’t talked to anyone he has a crush on in months. Hasn’t really had a crush at all since Léo.

Eliott leans forward, resting his elbows on his thighs and lighting a cigarette. He takes a deep drag, closes his eyes and holds his breath. For a second… two seconds… five seconds… Then he slowly exhales again. Lucas watches the billowing smoke coming out of his mouth and nose. It’s slow, methodical, as if it’s something to celebrate. Not counting the weed Lucas occasionally smokes with his friends for fun, he’s not a smoker and doesn’t really get the appeal of regular cigarettes. He sees Eliott taking another drag, and okay. Maybe he gets it, just a little bit.

Suddenly Eliott’s gaze meets Lucas’.

“Want to take a picture?” It takes a moment for Eliott’s voice to get through to Lucas, who is completely lost in thought.

Lucas’ eyes grow big and he realizes that he was caught staring. He blushes, barks out a short laugh, and violently shakes his head. “No… no, why would I?”

“Okay…” Eliott turns his head down again, not answering and takes another drag of his cigarette.

Lucas is still looking at him. Last chance, he thinks to himself. Today is the first day they see each other, Eliott has noticed him, has talked to him twice now. Three times if you count the answer to his comment (which you can’t, really, since Eliott wouldn’t know that that was Lucas). And Lucas has possibly just insulted him. Did Eliott assume Lucas is a fan? But what if Lucas pretends not to know him, only to approach him in a week, a month, a year to tell him he’s been a fan of his for four years? Eliott will think he’s crazy. Or maybe he already does.

Last chance, come on, you can do it.
“Uhm…”, he begins. Great start.

Eliott turns his head back to Lucas, raising an eyebrow waiting for him to continue. He takes another drag from his cigarette, the last one. While still looking at Lucas, he exhales the smoke again, more forcefully this time and it almost reaches Lucas. The grey smoke visible in the dark night, only lit by the street lamps above them. Eliott throws the stub to the ground and crushes it with his foot.

“That’s littering.”

Eliott’s eyebrows almost pull up to his hairline. “Seriously?”, he asks.

Lucas raises his eyebrows, challenging him. A grin spreads on his face, going for teasing. He looks down to the ground, where Eliott’s cigarette has joined dozens of others.

“I think what I do with my cigarettes is my own business”, Eliott continues.

“Oh”, Lucas says dumbly. Maybe now he’s insulted Eliott. He wants to punch himself. His face feels hot and an unpleasant laugh escapes him. “I’m sorry. It’s not my business what you do with your cigarettes.” He feels so awkward he wants to melt into a puddle and be gone.

Eliott looks at him for a moment. Then it’s like a mask lifts and a small smile brightens up his pinched mouth. He laughs softly. Looks down at the cigarettes again, his own now indistinguishable from all the others. “You’re not wrong, it is littering. My fault. I will try to improve.”

Lucas isn’t sure if Eliott’s making fun of him. He lets out a noncommittal grunt.

Suddenly Eliott jumps up from his seat. He bends down and starts picking up several cigarette butts from the ground. With his hands. Lucas watches in disbelief. When Eliott has a small pile of old cigarettes on his open palm, he stands up and circles the bus stop several times. His eyes search the immediate surroundings. He frowns. “I think Paris has gotten rid of all garbage cans on public roads.” He sits down again, staring at the cigarettes in his hand.

Lucas tries to suppress a laugh, holding his hands briefly against his cheeks to see if he’s as hot on the outside as he feels inside.

“The thought counts”, he says.

Eliott looks over at Lucas again and gives him a big smile. A gust of wind sweeps away a few of the cigarette butts in Eliott’s hand. He frowns again. Then he turns his hand over and lets the rest fall to the ground again. “Now I feel bad. As if I had smoked all of them myself”, he says resignedly and looks at Lucas.

Lucas laughs softly. “If I had known that my statement would make you try to save the environment with a few cigarette butts, I wouldn’t have said anything.”

Eliott grins again, wiggles his eyebrows at him.

They look at each other for a moment, blue eyes into blue.

“My friend Manon would be very proud -”

Lucas is interrupted by the arriving bus which makes them both jump a little. There are only a few other students at the bus stop – Lucas ignores the fact that they probably listened in on their
conversation – and they get on the bus first. Lucas and Eliott stand up and Eliott makes an “after you”-gesture.

Lucas enters the bus, which is fortunately still relatively empty. Then, within a few seconds, a bunch of questions go through his head: Is the conversation over? Did he miss his last chance? Should he sit down so that Eliott can sit next to him? Should he stop and give Eliott the chance to decide for himself? What if Eliott just keeps going and ignores him? What if they sit or stand next to each and have nothing to say? What if he did insult him?

Lucas probably would’ve stood there for hours unable to decide but Eliott, thankfully, makes the decision for him. He squeezes past Lucas and casually puts a hand on his shoulder. “Come”, Eliott says and leads Lucas to the back of the bus, where he sits down. Lucas sits next to him, the sides of their arms touching due to the small seats. Lucas tries not to think about Eliott's wide shoulders.

The bus starts to drive and Lucas looks straight ahead.

“Where are you going?”, Eliott asks after a brief moment of silence.

Lucas blanks for a second. “Uh… grocery shopping.” He’s not sure how much information Eliott is looking for.

“Fascinating”, he replies.

There’s another moment of silence and Lucas is desperate to stop it. “My roommate and his girlfriend have a thing for popcorn.”

Eliott smiles. “You must be a great roommate then”, he says raising his eyebrows. “Buying your roommate things on a Tuesday evening… My roommate would never.”

Lucas thinks this might be the lamest conversation he’s ever had. He also thinks that he just found out that Eliott has a roommate. In general, Lucas is starting to realize that he has no idea what Eliott is like in real life. He might have known that Eliott and he go to the same university and that Eliott likes movies and loves his friends. But he didn’t know Eliott has a roommate, didn’t know he was a regular smoker, that he seems to be easily irritable. It’s weird, because it changes the idealized version of Eliott that he had in his head. It also makes him more real.

He’s suddenly glad that he’s sitting next to Eliott and not opposite him. He wouldn’t want to look Eliott in the eye while pretending that he’s never seen him before. At the same time, how weird is it that two strangers just randomly start talking to each other? Why is Eliott of all people talking to him?

They fall silent again, the bus continues. At every major turn, at each pothole, the contact between their arms becomes a little firmer. Lucas’ left side feels hot, Eliott radiates heat. After what feels like an eternity, in reality only a few minutes, they are about to arrive at Lucas’ stop. He turns his head to Eliott and almost jumps off his seat in surprise. He had expected Eliott to be looking outside, out into the dark Parisian evening. But when Lucas turns to face him, Eliott’s face is only centimeters away from his own. Eliott's eyes flicker from Lucas’ eyes first up to his hairline, then down towards Lucas’ lips. Lucas takes a deep breath.

The bus slows down and Lucas jumps up. Eliott's eyes widen, startled.

“This is me”, he says, gesturing toward the bus door.

Eliott nods once. For a moment, Lucas thinks Eliott is about to say something but he doesn’t.
“I’m Lucas”, Lucas finally says. The bus comes to a halt.

Eliott’s face lights up. “Eliott”, he replies. “I’m Eliott.”

“Okay”, Lucas answers, just so he doesn’t say I know, which is what he’s thinking. “See you next week? At the lecture, I mean.”

Eliott is still smiling, eyebrows raised, and he nods again.

Then Lucas has to turn around quickly and just barely manages to get outside. The doors of the bus close behind him. He walks a few meters, then stops and looks after the bus until it has disappeared around a corner. His brain is on high alert and he takes a few breaths. He has no idea what to take from that conversation, what to think of Eliott. Can’t even begin to imagine what Eliott thinks of him. He shakes his head, turns around and heads for the supermarket.

**Mardi 18:50**

Lucas struggles to walk up the stairs to the fourth floor. A year ago, when Yann and Lucas decided to move in together, the apartment had sounded like a dream: relatively cheap for Parisian standards, in a central area not far from the university and their friends. Only over time did they discover that the fourth floor without a lift is sometimes less than inconvenient. Lucas shudders thinking about the move-in day when he, Yann, Arthur and Basile carried all the furniture upstairs. Lucas and Yann joke that the only reason they never want to move out of this apartment is because there’s no way they’ll ever carry that couch downstairs. On top of that, the heating and the hot water have a mind of their own, their Wi-Fi is terrible and their neighbors extremely loud.

Lucas finally makes it up the final flight of stairs carrying his backpack and a shopping bag that is full of things he didn’t actually need. When he walked into the supermarket he figured he couldn’t just buy popcorn.

He hammers his fist against the door. He can hear faint music from inside, Yann is definitely home. Nothing happens. He groans, sets the shopping bag on the floor, takes off his backpack and starts searching for his keys. After a few moments he finds them and unlocks the door. Lucas enters the apartment. He immediately throws his backpack on the ground, pushes the shopping bag inside with his feet and closes the door. Then he takes off his shoes, then his jacket. He throws the jacket haphazardly on top of the other jackets on the dresser, hangs his keys on a nail by the door and leaves the shoes where they are.

Then he stands there, no sight of his roommate and best friend. There’s an indistinct smell of food coming from the kitchen. Yann must still be preparing for his date night.

The apartment basically consists of one long hallway. To the left there is a door to the kitchen and living room area and a door to a tiny broom closet, to the right there are two doors to his and Yann’s rooms respectively and there’s a bathroom at the end of the hallway.

“Hello?”

There’s no answer at first, then there’s a small commotion to the left, some clatter, then Yann sticks his head out of the doorway and smiles brightly. “Lucaaaas”, he says, excited. “You made it! Did you bring my popcorn? I made dinner!”

Lucas kicks the big grocery bag. “Here”, he says.
Yann is thrilled and finally comes out of the kitchen and grabs the bag. He slaps a hand on Lucas’ shoulder as a thank-you and disappears into the kitchen again.

Lucas sighs, goes to the bathroom, pees and washes the dirt of the day off his hands. Then he goes to his room, throws his backpack on the bed and throws himself next to it.

He stares at the ceiling for a while.

“Lucas?”

“Mmh?”, Lucas answers. Then he reluctantly gets up and heads for the kitchen.

The kitchen, which is rarely cleaned up, is a much bigger mess than usual. Cutting boards, bowls and knives are everywhere. Opened plastic packaging lies on the counter tops, some on the floor. The sink is full of dishes. Lucas looks around, Yann is out of sight, but something is cooking on the stove. Lucas lifts the lid and looks inside. Broccoli. Lucas can’t remember Yann ever cooking broccoli. Next to it is a pan, something meaty burning. On the floor next to the stove is the grocery bag, Lucas unpacks it and puts everything in its place.

“Yann? Your food is about to burn.” The sizzling of the pan has started to sound a little menacing.

“Wait, wait, I’m coming!” Yann's voice comes out of his room. Seconds later he comes back to the kitchen, shirtless and with two shirts in his hands. He holds them both up, one dark blue, the other light grey.

“Which one?”, he asks.

Lucas silently points at the grey shirt without putting much thought into it.

Yann immediately drops the other shirt and puts on the grey one. Then he pushes Lucas aside to get to the stove. He looks at the broccoli, curses softly, and takes the pot off the stove. Then he devotes himself to the pan, saving the meat.

Lucas watches for a while. It looks like a mess. “When is Chloé coming?”

Yann glimpses at the clock, then looks at him with wide eyes. Then he gets the pan off the stove and carries the meat into a waiting bowl. A piece falls to the ground and he curses again. When he’s done, he turns back to Lucas. “Any second”, he says.

Lucas groans. “You gotta let me have some of that though.”

“Today’s our anniversary.”

Lucas sighs. “I’m aware.”

“She could come any moment.”

Lucas nods. “You said. I’m gone.” He takes a plate, steals a piece of meat from the bowl, some broccoli and douses everything in ketchup. Yann is about to protest, but Lucas holds out his fork. “That’s my payment for the popcorn!” He laughs. “Have fun. I’ll be in my room listening to very loud music and won’t disturb, don’t worry.”

The doorbell rings. Yann’s eyes grow big again, he frantically looks at the chaotic kitchen and takes a few deep breaths. Then he looks at Lucas and pushes him out of the kitchen. “You’re the best. And now leave! And next time you better not be here at all!”
Lucas laughs and closes the door behind him. He sets the plate down on his bedside table and turns on some music. The last thing he needs right now is to hear Yann trying to seduce Chloé with his cooking skills. Which, he fears, will probably work despite the meal being slightly subpar.

Lucas groans and throws himself back on the bed. Chloé and Yann, who both study music, met in a seminar on music theory last semester. Since then, Chloé has been a regular in their apartment. Lucas usually doesn’t mind, although it does occasionally force him to stay in his room when the others occupy the living room and kitchen area. It rarely bothers Lucas because he likes Chloé a lot. Today though, he could have really used his best friend. He has a hard time talking to people, even his closest friends, about his problems, his thoughts, a remnant from his teenage years, when he repressed most of his feelings and buried them inside. But Yann is his best friend. Yann is good at forcing Lucas to talk when he can tell that Lucas needs to. Lucas just wishes that Yann wasn’t too busy to notice. He pushes away the thoughts that immediately want to go back to the bus stop and the subsequent bus ride. Then he takes the plate and eats. He regrets not having taken more, puts the plate away and takes his laptop instead. He tries to watch something on Netflix, but he can’t concentrate at all.

Finally, he gives in and takes his phone, opens up Instagram, and almost instantly clicks on Eliott’s profile. He hasn’t posted anything new in a few days, save for a story in the morning informing his followers of the new video.

Lucas feels funny. He thinks of the man he met briefly today. Thinks of how he’d smoked, how he’d looked at Lucas uncomprehendingly, how he’d jumped up and picked up cigarettes with his hands. Who does that? Eliott’s YouTube and Instagram accounts portray him as artsy, as passionate, maybe even a bit of a snob. As funny, but sophisticated. Lucas never would have pictured him as awkward. Or as someone he wouldn’t get along with.

He thinks back to this morning after the lecture when Eliott had asked him if he should erase the video he was taking when Lucas left the lecture hall. Was that pure politeness? Were people sometimes unfriendly to him when he was filming? Did Lucas send signals that he was unaware of?

Lucas is sure that Eliott recognized him as the guy from this morning, even though they hadn’t really talked about it again. Lucas just can’t explain why Eliott spoke to him at all.

“Want to take a picture?”, Lucas whispers to himself contemptuously. Had he been staring at Eliott so much? Was Eliott uncomfortable? Lucas wished he could tell Yann about everything. Yann isn’t exactly great at giving good advice but he’s become a great listener over the years. Lucas sighs. Maybe he really should text Basile. Find out more about his meeting with Eliott in the morning. Lucas never asked about it and Basile didn’t mention it, perhaps aware that Lucas would be embarrassed.

Lucas sighs, picks up his laptop again and tries to distract himself with Narcos for the rest of the evening.

**Mercredi 0:23**

Lucas is woken up by his phone. A loud notification tone. He opens his eyes slowly, blinded by the light in his room. His laptop has slipped halfway from his chest, Netflix still open. He must have fallen asleep watching Narcos. Lucas looks at his phone.

srodulg - journée 2
He makes a strangled noise and lets his phone fall to the mattress. He gets up, stretches, cracking something in his shoulder blades. He opens the door of his room as quietly as possible and puts his head out into the hall and looks around. No sign of Yann and Chloé. Lucas sneaks toward the bathroom, sees light coming from under Yann’s door. He can hear muffled music and soft voices. He quickly disappears into the bathroom and hurries to get back to his room.

Finally, in his pajamas, Lucas turns off the light in his room and gets back into bed, wrapping himself up in his blanket. Then he grabs his phone again and taps on the notification. He doesn’t know what he’s expecting, but he’s never felt so… weird before watching one of Eliott’s videos.

The video isn’t a typical vlog this time. Instead there’s a sheet of paper lying on a table. Then Eliott’s hand comes into view. He’s holding a pen and he starts to draw. The video speeds up and a raccoon quickly appears on the paper. It’s waving at the camera. In a speech bubble it says: “Hello everyone!” Then the sheet of paper is taken off the table revealing a blank one underneath. Eliott starts drawing again and this time it’s the raccoon running after a bus in the morning. And so it goes on, Eliott draws his day and ends it on the raccoon as it waves at the camera again. This time it winks and says: “Love Tuesdays! See you tomorrow!” Then a heart.

The video ends and Lucas stares at the end screen for a moment. He thinks about commenting, but decides against it, not really sure why. Eliott didn’t mention the lecture this morning, the bus stop or the bus ride back. Lucas is annoyed with himself for even thinking that. For even believing for a moment that this could actually happen.

Lucas clicks on Eliott’s profile. He scrolls through the videos and finds one video in particular. It was uploaded about two years ago and it’s one of the first vlog-style videos Eliott ever uploaded. Lucas likes to remember one clip in particular: Eliott is holding the camera, it’s very shaky. He is aiming it at a woman, short brown hair, beautiful. She laughs and runs away from the camera, Eliott runs after her, everything goes blurry for a moment and then Eliott catches her, wrapping his arms around her. Then he points the camera at the both of them and the woman presses a kiss on his cheek. Almost immediately they are tackled by two men who Lucas only recognizes because they’ve been in Eliott’s videos almost since the beginning. The video ends with a lot of screaming and Eliott's laughter. Lucas has probably watched it hundreds of times.

But now, Lucas feels weird about it. It’s like he did something wrong without really knowing what it is. He puts his phone to the side and on silent, charges it, and wraps himself back into his blanket, pushing away all thoughts of raccoons and handsome men. Maybe his crush went a bit out of hand. Maybe he should spend less time online and focus on university and his friends. Maybe their encounters today were just the universe’s way of telling Lucas to stop living inside his head so much.
Chapter 3

Mercredi 06:45

The ungodly shrill sound of his alarm rips Lucas from his sleep. He clumsily looks for his phone in
the dark. He finds it and turns off the sound, the bright display blinding him momentarily. He
closes his eyes quickly, drops his head back onto his pillow. He stays there for a few seconds,
wistfully remembering being unconscious a few seconds ago.

Finally, he pulls himself up and turns on his bedside lamp to let his eyes slowly and gently adjust to
light.

He stares at the ceiling.

Unfortunately, part of being awake is remembering things you wish you could forget. He thinks
back to his meeting with Eliott the previous day. He thinks about his little late night existential
crisis. He would love to become one with the mattress and never get up.

He looks at the clock. 6:53. He sighs and forces himself to throw the blanket off his body and gets
up. He shivers and lays a hand on the radiator. It’s cold. He curses silently, turns it up all the way
but nothing happens. Note to self: call landlord.

Lucas leaves the room and starts his morning routine, quick and efficient. He takes a shower,
makes himself a cup of coffee, gets dressed, stares at his cell phone for a few minutes. He
pointedly ignores Eliott’s Instagram post of a raccoon holding up a sign that says “Good morning!”
A sunrise behind it.

He texts Basile.

Lucas: WAKE

Lucas: UP

Lucas: I will kill you if you're not there

He doesn’t get an answer and hopes it’s not a bad sign.

Lucas is putting on his shoes when Yann’s door opens and Chloé comes out into the hallway.
She’s wearing nothing but an oversized green T-shirt, definitely Yann’s.

“Oh, hey Lucas”, she says, a little embarrassed.

“Hey”, Lucas says and grins. “Did you have a good evening?”

Chloé nods. “And a good night.” She winks at him.

Yann comes out behind her. He puts his arms around her, kisses her on the side of the neck. He
takes no notice of Lucas.

Lucas watches awkwardly. Then he takes his key off of the nail, jingling them loudly. Yann looks
up.

“You’re leaving already?”
“Yeah, 8 am class.”

“God speed.” Yann laughs and then devotes himself back to Chloé, whispering in her ear. Chloe giggles and pushes him backwards into the room. The door slams shut.

Lucas stares at the closed door for another moment. Then he shakes his head free of thoughts running through his mind, takes his backpack and leaves, slamming the door a little harder than necessary.

He can’t stop himself from thinking, although he wishes he could. It’s not that he’s not happy for Yann and Chloé. Yann has been his best friend since elementary school. And he likes Chloé, whom Yann met in his first semester. She’s funny, clever and just wild enough to tolerate Yann’s slightly excessive marijuana habit. Lucas suspects that she’s secretly just as big a pothead as Yann. Not that that’s become a problem, Lucas trusts that they know their limits. And Lucas’ crush on Yann hasn’t been around for a long time. He dealt with it in his junior year, then had a boyfriend, Eric, for a while and came out to his friends with his help. After a bit of an awkward phase where people had to get used to it, everything was fine between them. Lucas knows that Yann still feels guilty because he didn’t respond well when Lucas told him he was gay. But that was only because Lucas had already been with Eric for two months at the time and Yann didn’t understand why Lucas didn’t tell him earlier, whereas Yann always told him everything.

What has stayed with Lucas though, even after four years of having gotten rid of his crush, is his jealousy. He has a hard time sharing Yann with anyone. But Chloé has been especially difficult. It’s weird because Lucas had never been this jealous of Emma with whom Yann had had an on again off again relationship since high school. Which had only ended when he met Chloé.

So maybe Lucas is a bit jealous.

After Eric, who he had been with for about half a year, he had an even shorter relationship, Léo. They had met at the café Lucas worked at for six months before he started university.

Yann was always very happy for him. Lucas remembers all the times Yann suggested going to a gay bar because he suspected that Lucas was lonely. Lucas feels bad when he thinks about what a good friend Yann is to him, has always been.

He decides he will talk to Yann tonight. Just spend some time with him again, hopefully play some Mario Kart. He texts him.

**Lucas:** I'm feeling like a kebab, wanna eat one tonight? My treat

Lucas looks up from his cell phone at the same moment the bus pulls up. He has no memory of walking to the bus stop, too lost in thought. He automatically gets on the bus, sits down. He’s still staring at the text he just sent to Yann when Basile texts him.

**Basile:** Fuuuuuuuck

Lucas sighs. Looks at the clock. 7:40. Basile lives even closer to the university than Lucas. If he jumps out of bed and doesn’t have to take a shower, he could still make it.

Lucas runs his fingers through his still slightly wet hair. If he had the energy to get up earlier, he might have done something with it.

He stares out of the window, almost at his final stop now. From the corner of his eye he sees someone and he startles, looks up and sees a tall man with brown, shaggy hair. He doesn’t know
him but he’s overcome by déja vu and he realizes that he’s sitting in the same seat Eliott sat in yesterday.

The bus stops and Lucas leaves with all the students who have also been forced to go to uni at this ungodly hour.

He gets another message.

**Yann:** Sorry, Chloé and I have dinner with her parents. Wish me luck!

Lucas sighs and surrenders to his fate. It's going to be a sad day. (A sad week.)

**Vendredi 13:41**

“… And then I ran and I had, like, half a minute left. It was wild, Lucas was so mad at me!” Basile laughs, recounting his close call from Wednesday.

Basile and Lucas have met up with Arthur for lunch. Basile is talking about his favorite topic (besides Daphné): how much he hates his field of study. “You know, I really thought studying biology would be more interesting. Like, I wanted to stare into microscopes and look at small things! And you know, save the planet and stuff.” Basile huffs indignantly when Lucas and Arthur laugh at him.

“Can’t wait for you and your microscope to save the planet.” Arthur laughs and shoves a giant bite of lasagna into his mouth.

“Well I definitely have more of a shot at it than you. I’m sure you’ll cure cancer with your Shakespeare knowledge.”

“I’m studying *French* literature, dude, I’m not doing Shakespeare. Also, art saves lives, too!” Arthur passionately waves his fork through the air. “Maybe not, like, cancer patients, but… Lucas, back me up here!”

Lucas startles and looks up from his lunch. “I wasn’t listening.”

“Tell Arthur that he’s not going to save the world with *books*!”

“Tell Basile that *he’s* not going to save the world *at all*!”

Lucas sighs. “Neither of you will save the world.”

Arthur and Basile protest loudly and continue bickering. Lucas turns his attention back to his meal. He eyes Basile’s lasagna, regretting his own choice. He wishes the cafeteria was better and he suddenly gets a craving for kebab. Maybe he’ll get one later, maybe he should try asking Yann again.

Suddenly it gets quiet. Lucas looks up, wondering for a second if his friends both just had a heart attack. They didn’t, but they do look shocked, staring at something behind Lucas. Lucas makes a move to turn around.

“Don’t move!” Arthur is basically yelling.

“Sshhhhh, shut up.” Basile is starting to giggle. He looks like a child that’s about to walk into a toy
store for the first time. “Lucas, please don’t freak out -“

So, of course, Lucas immediately starts to freak out.

“- but there is someone behind you that I would like you to meet.”

“What?”, Lucas asks dumbly.

Arthur is shaking Basile’s arm. “You did not, you did not, you did not! How the fuck did you do this?” Arthur looks so excited, is eyes huge and shining.

Basile gets up, looking worryingly proud of himself and waves at someone. He walks past Lucas, who is still staring straight ahead, scared of what the hell Basile is up to.

Only a few seconds later, Basile comes back, followed by three people. Lucas finally does look up. It’s Eliott and two of his friends. Sofiane and Idriss, his brain supplies the names. Lucas blushes just at the thought. Is it weird that he knows the names of Eliott’s friends?

“Lucas…”, Basile says with a wide grin, “meet Eliott Demaury.” He points at Eliott. “Eliott… meet my best friend and your biggest fan… Lucas.” He points at Lucas whose face has basically turned into a tomato.

Eliott looks at Lucas, his eyebrows shoot up to the sky, then he smiles. Lucas barely meets his eyes but he feels like that smile is hiding a million secrets.

“Hi Lucas”, Eliott says. “Nice to meet you.” He’s friendly, doesn’t give anything away. He’s a complete mystery to Lucas.

Or maybe he’s already forgotten you, a voice in Lucas’ head pipes up. Lucas shuts it up.

“Hi”, he forces himself to say. He looks back down at his salad which keeps looking less and less appealing as time goes on. He looks up again and Eliott is still looking at him.

“Lucas has been watching your videos for years. He is so excited to meet you, I think he’s just a little shocked right now.”

Lucas is sure Basile is just trying to help, but he would still like to kill him.

“That’s so nice!”, Eliott says, still smiling, looking from Basile to Lucas and back.

Lucas makes a strangled noise in his throat. “Yeah, they’re fine”, he says lamely. He takes a breath. “No yeah, I do really like them.”

“Thank you!” Eliott is positively beaming. “Is there something specific you like?”

Lucas is so hunched in on himself he’s surprised he hasn’t disappeared yet. “I like the… landscapes.” He wants to punch himself.

Loud laughter erupts at the table. Lucas looks up and sees Arthur giving him a look. It looks like pity and now Lucas doesn’t want to punch himself anymore, he wants to punch his so-called friends.

“Eliott, are you done bolstering your ego?”, one of Eliott’s friends asks and laughs. Idriss, Lucas’ brain supplies.

Eliott looks at his friends who slap him on the shoulder and go to leave. Eliott looks back at Lucas.
Their eyes meet again for a moment, both waiting for the other to say something else. Eliott’s smile falters a little.

“Well, it’s always nice to meet a fan”, Eliott says.

“Yeah.” Lucas doesn’t know what to say.

Eliott gives him a wave and then follows his friends to the other side of the cafeteria.

Lucas stares at Eliott’s back. As soon as he’s out of sight, he lets out a breath he didn’t know he was holding and lets his head drop onto the table. He stays like that.

There’s a hand on his back a moment later. “Hey…” It’s Arthur, voice gentle. “It wasn’t that bad.”

Lucas keeps his head where it is and groans. “I am the biggest idiot in the entire world.”

“You really are”, Arthur says, lost in thought.

Basile punches him in the shoulder. “Don’t say that! Our boy just met the love of his life, he’s allowed to act stupid!”

Arthur cackles for a moment but stops when he sees no one is joining him. He looks at Lucas who has lifted his head and looks like he’s about to despair.

Lucas stares at where Eliott rounded a corner and left. Then he looks at his friends. Then he groans. “I am the biggest idiot in the entire world”, he says again. “I think I’m gonna leave.”

He moves to get up. Basile looks at him with big eyes and stops him.

“Wait, Lucas…” He scratches his head, face guilty. “You’re not actually mad, right? I just saw him across the room and I talked to him on Tuesday and I told him about you and he said he’d love to meet you sometime, so I figured this would be the perfect time… I’m sorry if this was… I don’t know… weird.”

“It was fucking awkward, that’s what it was”, Lucas says. His voice sounds too harsh and he feels bad immediately. He forces himself to give Basile a smile. He could never be mad at him when he looks so sheepish. “All good, thank you. Under different circumstances this could’ve been the best day of my life.” He waves at Arthur, gives Basile another small smile and then turns around to leave.

Vendredi 14:30

Lucas feels like he’s aged twenty years in the last week. He’s back at the bus stop, three seminars and the most awkward lunch of his life later. The bus is extremely full again (it’s still the first week of the semester after all) and he stares out the window, trying not to fall into the girl in front of him every move.

Half an hour later, he drags himself up to the fourth floor. He throws everything on the floor, including shoes and his jacket and heads straight to his room and throws himself on his bed. It’s officially the weekend now. Which is great but he has absolutely no plans and the thought of him being all alone with his thoughts for two days is less than appealing. But his desire to hang out with Basile is also at an all-time low.
As if Basile could read his mind, Lucas’ phone pings with a message to his, Basile’s, Yann’s and Arthur’s group chat.

**Basile:** Guuuyyyssssssss

**Basile:** Lulu just had a very awkward ~encounter that he’d probably like to forget, anyone up for a party tomorrow??

**Yann:** Encounter? Wtf happened?

**Lucas:** NOTHING

**Basile:** Lucas met the love of his life!

**Yann:** ?????

**Lucas:** Baz, I’m going to fucking kill you

**Basile:** lmao, ok, my mouth is shut

**Basile:** But what about the party?? A friend of Daphné’s is having a big house party

**Arthur:** 100% !!!

**Yann:** Sure, can I bring Chloé

**Basile:** hell yeaah

**Basile:** I’ll text you the details tomorrow

**Basile:** Lucas?

**Lucas:** I’ll think about it

**Yann:** Don’t think I won’t grill you about this ~encounter when I get home!!

Lucas throws his phone back onto the bed and groans. He puts his phone on silent, ignores the new messages in the group chat and leaves it where it is. He goes to the kitchen and makes himself some pasta.

When he’s done, he sits down on the couch, turns on the TV and loses himself in some mindless television.

A few hours later, Lucas has a mouthful of popcorn when he hears the door open and close. Moments later, Yann walks into the living room. Their eyes meet and Yann jumps onto the couch right next to him. He takes some popcorn out of Lucas’ bowl and shoves it into his mouth. They both sit and stare at the TV for a while.

“So…”, Yann begins. “I talked to Basile. Looks like I missed a lot this week, huh?”

Lucas looks away from the TV but doesn’t quite meet Yann’s eyes. He looks past his face, at the wall behind him. “I guess.”

“Wanna talk about it?”
“Not really.”

Yann sighs. He rubs his hand over his face twice, takes another mouthful of popcorn. “So you met Eliott, huh?”

“Yeah.”

“Was it everything you dreamed of?” Yann laughs.

“Not really.” Lucas doesn’t laugh. He crosses his arms, turns back toward the TV.

“Why aren’t you excited that you met him?”

“I don’t want to talk about it.”

“Lucas…”

“I don’t want to talk about it, Yann. What is so difficult to understand about that?”

Yann sighs again and holds up his hands in surrender. “Okay, okay… But if you ever need to talk, you know I’m right here okay?”

Lucas deflates a little and sighs. *You’re not though*, he wants to say, but doesn’t. It’s not Yann’s fault that Lucas is needy and jealous. And he’s mad at himself because Yann is initiating the conversation Lucas has wanted to have since Tuesday and now he’s closing himself off. “Yeah. Sorry. I’m not mad. It’s just been a weird week.”

“Alright.” Yann nods once and slaps Lucas on the shoulder. Then he stands up and walks to the kitchen where he left a plastic bag on the counter when he arrived. “Because I figured we could need some bro time, just the two of us.” Yann beams and takes something out of the bag. “I brought kebabs!”

Lucas turns around and looks at his best friend. Yann is positively glowing with hope. Lucas smiles timidly. “Can we play some Mario Kart, too?”

Yann’s smile gets even brighter, if possible. “Hell yeah!” He unpacks the food and brings it over to the couch.

Lucas sends a message to the group chat.

**Lucas:** I’ll be there tomorrow, I need to get drunk

**Basile:** Helll yeaaaaahhhh

Lucas and Yann eat, drink some beer and play Mario Kart into the early hours of the night. They don’t talk much but Lucas is grateful. This is exactly what he needed right now. Later that night he goes to bed with a smile on his face, not even bothering to check if Eliott has uploaded his video yet.

**Samedi 19:42**

Everyone is already way on their way to being drunk. Lucas, Arthur, Basile and Daphné, and Chloé and Yann met up an hour earlier to pre-party at Lucas and Yann’s place. Now, they’re on a train. Lucas sits next to Arthur, they’re watching the two couples make out right in front of them.
“Do you also feel super left out?” Arthur glimpses at Lucas.

“They’re disgusting, is what they are”, Lucas says. He crosses his arms and mopes. He might have had a little bit too much to drink.

Arthus balks out a laugh that makes Basile and Daphné jump out of their embrace. “Lucas, you just need to relax a little. Forget your troubles!” Basile laughs and puts his arms around Daphné, hugs her tightly. “Or maybe you just need some more beer. And dick! We should find Lucas a man for the night!”

Daphné whoops in agreement. “There will be tons of guys at the party, I’m sure somebody will be gay, too! We’ll find you somebody.” She points at Lucas, not letting go of Basile. “We’re going to have. So. Much. Fun!” She emphasizes every word with a kiss. Basile looks like he just won a price.

Lucas rolls his eyes. Arthur suddenly jumps up beside him. They’ve arrived at their stop. Lucas takes Chloé’s hand, Arthur Yann’s and together they rip the couple, that’s been attached at the lips basically the whole evening, apart and drag them out of the métro. They both protest but go easily.

The party is at a big house that apparently belongs to the parents of someone from Daphné’s semester. Although Daphné has already admitted that she doesn’t actually know the person hosting the party all that well. Apparently the party was advertised online. But it doesn’t matter because when they arrive it turns out there’s no way the host knows all the people there. It’s overcrowded, people milling about on the lawn, some lying down, some dancing, some sitting and talking. Inside, all the furniture has been pushed to the side and there’s a huge dance party going on. There are lights set up in different corners of the room, someone is running around with a camera, taking pictures of the crowd. Or filming them. Lucas side eyes the camera guy.

The music is deafening. It’s absolutely perfect for what Lucas has wanted out of this party. So he fights his way to where he thinks the kitchen should be, losing his friends in the process. The kitchen is a little quieter and Lucas opens the fridge. Its contents is 100% alcohol and he takes a few beers. He turns around and heads back to the living room, eyes roaming the room, looking for his friends. He sees a few tall, handsome men, sees Eliott’s gorgeous face in all of them. He desperately needs to get drunk. He spots Arthur near the TV, also seemingly looking for him. Lucas waves and makes his way to him. He opens one of his beer bottles and almost exes it. When he gets to Arthur, Arthur welcomes him happily and they stand there and share the beers. Chloé and Yann come over at some point, holding up a few joints, altruistically giving them away to a few people in the room. Lucas takes a few drags and passes his on.

Lucas loves watching people lose themselves at parties. Everyone seems to be just drunk or high enough to have let go of all their inhibitions, dancing and flaying around freely. Lucas wants to join them.


Samedi 23:06

A few minutes, an hour or days later, Lucas has no idea, the party is ended abruptly by the police at the door. Lucas sees Daphné and Basile hurrying upstairs. Most of the guests discreetly make their way through the back door. He sees Yann and Chloé, a few checked out looking guys in tow. Arthur winks at him. “I should probably help Yann hide the weed”, he says and follows Yann outside.
Lucas nods to himself, looks around. He feels extremely drunk, a little unsteady on his feet. Wishes he could’ve kept dancing, doesn’t really want to leave. He thinks about following Arthur and Yann for a moment, but decides to go follow Basile instead, to make sure that no poor unfortunate souls are left in any rooms to be surprised by the police. He takes the long way to the stairs, in an attempt to not be seen by anyone. He takes a look at the front door, the police officers talking to a girl. The guy with the camera is there, too.

He walks up the stairs. The house isn’t very fancy, but it’s big with lots of small rooms on the three floors. Lucas sticks his head into different rooms, sees some things he won’t be able to unsee, and tells everyone the party is over. Two half naked couples shove their way past Lucas, when he sees Basile come down the stairs toward him.

“You’d think we’re in the middle of a drug bust with how scared people got.”

Basile eyes him. “Dude, there was some heavy shit going on upstairs.”

“Really?” Lucas’ eyes grow big.

“Yeah, it was insane. I think I saw needles and shit. Daphné ran outside, I think she got freaked out.”

“Oh fuck, that’s actually really serious. I thought everyone was just hiding their weed, Yann immediately yeeted out the door when he saw the police.” He laughs. “Yeeted”, he says to himself, giggling. Basile barks out a laugh.

Lucas feels dizzy and he takes Basile, who sways a little on the spot, by the arm and they hold onto each other for a moment, just breathing.

“I think I’m gonna be sick”, Basile says, suddenly looking uncomfortable. Lucas tightens his hold on his arm and they head downstairs. At the same time, they almost get run over by two guys running up the stairs.

“Whooooooaah”, they go, both drunk. “Poliiiiiiice.”

Lucas immediately recognizes them as Sofiane and Idriss, Eliott’s friends. His eyes grow bigger. Honestly? They don’t show up a lot in the videos, but, look, Lucas is only human and they’re both very attractive, so he might be a little starstruck at seeing them again without warning. And he’s drunk, so he has no idea what’s going on anyway.

“Heeeyyy!” Idriss exclaims and points at Lucas, then at Basile, then at Lucas again. “You are the guy!”

“The guy?”, Lucas asks.

“Yeah, the guy!”

Basile side eyes them both. “Maybe we should all leave.”

Sofiane slaps Idriss on the shoulder. “Duuuuude, I can’t wait to tell Eliott”, he laughs.

They hear a commotion downstairs. There’s some yelling, but it doesn’t sound like police. Instead Idriss and Sofiane look at each other, giggle, and change directions and run downstairs again. Lucas can hear some more yelling, something shatters on the ground. Basile moves to follow them
but Lucas stops him.

“Maybe we should wait this out”, he whispers, unsure whether the situation is serious or not. His drunk mind makes every noise downstairs seem threatening.

Basile nods, sways a little. “I really think I’m gonna be sick, oh god.” Together they sit down on the stairs, listening to intelligible conversations. There’s another noise, like someone is being choked. Lucas’ and Basile’s eyes get impossibly bigger, they look at each other.

“Let’s leave”, Basile whispers. “I don’t want to be here anymore.”

Lucas hesitates.

“Let’s just run”, Basile says, “like, really fast.”

They stand up, Lucas almost topples down the stairs, Basile catching him. They sway for a moment. The world is spinning, Lucas closes his eyes and waits until he doesn’t feel as lightheaded anymore.

There’s another noise downstairs. Then laughter.

Lucas and Basile share another look. Basile holds up one finger. “On three”, he mouths.

Lucas nods.

And they run. Down the stairs, past people in the living room, through the back door. They jump over the fence at the edge of the garden and they’re on the street. They get slower and finally they come to a halt, maybe a hundred meters from the house.

Basile falls to his knees and finally vomits. Lucas follows him a second later. They empty out their stomachs for a while, then Lucas gets up, walks a few meters and sits down again, waiting for Basile to finish. He looks at his phone. Yann has sent him several text messages over the course of the last hour.

**Yann:** Where are you? We have more weed

**Yann:** Yo, you ok? We ran outside when we heard of the cops, is Basile with you?

**Yann:** Hey, Daphné heard from one of her friends that the police wasn’t real?? Maybe strippers idk

**Yann:** We couldn’t find you anywhere, Chloé and I are gonna go home. Let me know you’re ok!!

**Yann:** If you find Basile pls make him call Daphné, she’s really worried!!

Lucas’ vision is blurry but he texts back.

**Lucas:** With basile, we both got sick but ok

He looks up, shakes his head and goes to Basile to help him up and get him home. After that, he drags himself home, too, drinks a full liter of water and falls onto his bed. He falls asleep within seconds.
Lucas wakes up because of the sun shining straight onto his face. It’s bright and his head hurts, his mouth tastes like death. He lies there for a while, closing his eyes and takes a few deep breaths.

He gets up, wants to get himself some water, but ends up running into the bathroom, slamming the door shut and vomits again. He feels dizzy and sick. He slumps down next to the toilet and just sits there, waiting to feel a bit better.

There’s a knock on the door. Yann opens it a little and looks inside. His face is full of pity when he sees Lucas, small and pathetic, on the floor.

Without saying a word, he gives him a glass of water and helps him stand up. Lucas slowly brushes his teeth, careful not to start gagging again. He takes a shower, then goes to the kitchen, where Yann has prepared him an extra greasy breakfast.

Lucas eats it all, slowly and starts feeling human again. “You are literally the best friend I could ever ask for”, he says and smiles at Yann.

Yann raises his eyebrows and smiles smugly. “Obviously.”

Yann goes to the couch and starts playing some video game. Lucas sits and watches for a while, not really feeling well enough to actually do anything himself. He looks at his phone.

Basile: Hey, thank you for getting me home yesterday

Basile: But I’ll never drink alcohol ever again

Basile: That’s a lie obviously

The last text is from only a few minutes ago:

Basile: Did you watch Eliott’s video omg???? Daphné just showed me

Lucas raises his eyebrows and yes, there’s the notification he got yesterday.

srodulv – journée 6

He never watched it because he still felt weird about everything that has to do with Eliott, although his strong feelings from earlier in the week have subsided a little bit. He clicks on the notification and watches the video.

“Hi everyone.” The first shot is of Eliott sitting at his desk with his usual backdrop of blackness: You can’t see anything of his room. “So today’s video is kind of just a preamble to tomorrow’s. Because I made something! It took a while, so I’m not entirely sure I’ll be able to finish it tomorrow because we still have to shoot and I haven’t edited everything we shot so far. So… day seven might be late. Anyway, but you’ll have something to look forward to, I guess.” He winks and smiles. Whenever Lucas sees that smile, he wants to melt and he remembers why he was a fan of Eliott’s in the first place. “But what I wanted to do for this video, is to thank everyone who’s helped me with the videos this week. I know I make fun of them occasionally, but they’re truly my best friends in the world. Anyway…” He looks straight into the camera. “And there’s actually something else. For this short film, we need extras. So if you happen to be in Paris tonight. As in tonight tonight, when the video is uploaded, you could be in my next short film!” There are some firework special effects. Eliott is grinning, gives the camera a thumbs up.
He gives a few more details, a time and the name of a métro station. “One of my friends will come pick you up and bring you to the location. I hope some of you will come!”

The screen cuts to the end screen. This time the raccoon is standing in front of a house. It’s talking to a few other animals inviting them into the house: a fox, a giraffe, a rabbit, a hedgehog, and more. Then the video ends. He gets another text.

**Basile:** Did you know they were filming?? I actually saw Eliott upstairs but I didn’t mention it because I thought it might upset you

Lucas doesn’t know what to say. He wonders, for a moment, if he actually did see Eliott yesterday before he got drunk. He shakes his head.

**Basile:** I just hope the drugs were part of the filming thing?? Because seriously, needles EVERYWHERE dude

**Lucas:** I don’t know man

**Basile:** We should talk to him on Tuesday! At the lecture!

**Lucas:** Sure man

Lucas yawns, stretches. “I’m gonna go back to bed”, he says to Yann who nods and slaps him on the back in sympathy.

When he lies on his bed, his head still hurting, thoughts everywhere, he wonders if this last week actually happened or if he fell into an alternate reality where he’s the type of person to keep running into his crush, only to either embarrass himself in front of him, or to find out things he didn’t want to know beforehand.

He’s a little apprehensive about everything that has happened. Eliott just seems off to him. He’s never what Lucas expects. He seems intense, mysterious, a little full of himself maybe. But at the same time, he was so easy to talk to on the bus ride. And the image of him walking around the bus stop with cigarettes in his hand will remain imprinted on his memory forever. Eliott was funny. Lucas doesn’t know how to feel about all of that. But he’s intrigued, he has to admit to himself. He wants to see him again. He wishes he could start over. He wishes he could’ve said something more interesting – or anything at all – when he saw Eliott for the first time outside the lecture hall.

He sighs, closes his eyes. He’ll ignore everything for now, focus on getting rid of this hangover and start off into the second week of his semester strong.
Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

It’s the second week of the semester and Lucas is a gay disaster (what else is new). Enjoy my excessive use of italics and feel free to let me know what you think if you want!

Mardi 9:53

Lucas’ right leg is bouncing up and down. He’s been in constant movement since he woke up, never able to stay still for more than a few seconds at a time. He didn’t notice at first, too wrapped up in his thoughts, but now that he’s sitting in the lecture hall, it’s become obvious.

Lucas still isn’t the kind of person to be sitting in the last row (or so he tells himself), but he wants to be nice to Basile (who is, once again, running late). And it’ll be a lot easier for Basile to find Lucas when he comes in. And mainly: Basile has been very supportive since the party on Saturday. He’s been sending Lucas tons of conversation starters and dating tips, and in any other situation, it might have been annoying, but Lucas appreciates the thought. Because maybe and just maybe he’s also sitting in the last row because he wants to have a good view of everyone coming in. Namely of Eliott coming in.

Because Lucas is determined. He will talk to Eliott today. He will have a conversation with him. He will say more than a word or a sentence at a time. He will find out what Eliott’s deal is. If Eliott is actually interested in talking to him.

Lucas basically hasn’t stopped thinking since Sunday, even though he’d promised himself he’d just shut up his thoughts for now. But that was impossible to do. So he’s been thinking. About the way Eliott has now initiated a conversation between them three times: Right after the lecture last Tuesday, at the bus stop, and he kept the conversation going during lunch on Friday even though there was absolutely no reason to. And, granted, the last one is a little far-fetched. But Eliott’s friends mentioned Eliott on Saturday, looked at Lucas like they were hiding something. Lucas is sure Eliott and his friends must have talked about him at some point. And why would Eliott do that? Lucas can only think of two options: Either he’s making fun of Lucas for being such a big fan. Or he, for some reason Lucas can’t fathom, he wants to talk to Lucas. Maybe he just wants Lucas to tell him how great he is, stroke his ego a little. Lucas still isn’t convinced Eliott isn’t actually a huge dick. But maybe Eliott thinks that Lucas thinks that Eliott is a huge dick because he’s barely spoken to him. Or Eliott thinks that Lucas thinks that Eliott thinks that Lucas thinks that Eliott thinks that Lucas thinks he’s a huge dick. And Lucas can’t have that. Anything is possible at this point. Also all this thinking is making his head hurt.

The third option, that Lucas isn’t counting, is of course that Lucas is overthinking everything and has made it all up in his head. That Eliott has not thought about him at all, that the comments Sofiane and Idriss made meant nothing, and Lucas is delusional. He’s chosen to ignore this option completely.

So, still, Lucas is determined to find out which one it is. So he can stop getting his hopes up and so he can have some closure. So he can go back to his normal life. Because when Eliott uploaded his
last video of the week really late on Sunday, Lucas almost didn’t want to watch it. He feared that what happened on Saturday wasn’t actually for Eliott’s video. He lowkey couldn’t stop thinking about the comment Basile had made about Eliott and needles. Not that Lucas thought Eliott might be a drug addict… but… well, he doesn’t know Eliott at all, does he? So how the hell should he know?

But he ended up watching the video. It was a short film about a group of friends going to a party, there were drugs involved, the police got there. It was a whole thing. It was short but it looked beautiful. And to Lucas, it captured that feeling that you get when you're at a party and you're just drunk enough not to care about what other people think of you, and you just dance. And it touched Lucas, it made him feel things. And he remembered why he was such a big fan of Eliott’s in the first place. His creativity, his ability to make Lucas emotional through a few frames, some good music. The way he tells stories that Lucas can understand and relate to. The way he doesn’t shy away from tackling difficult subjects. Lucas still remembers crying for hours after watching Eliott’s film about his bipolar disorder two years ago. It had hit a little too close to home and it had made Lucas think about his mother, it had literally made him go visit his mother for the first time in a few months. It had made Lucas feel. He’s admired Eliott for so long because Eliott’s art is so painfully and beautifully relatable to him.

Lucas’ train of thought is suddenly interrupted when Basile comes running up the stairs, plopping down next to Lucas.

“I can’t believe I made it. I ran, Lucas, I ran.”

“I’m so proud of you.”

Basile side eyes Lucas for a moment. Then he looks around the room. Eyes jumping from person to person in the lecture hall. It’s a lot emptier than it was last week. “So… have you seen him yet?”

Lucas sighs.

Basile chuckles quietly. “Come on, I know you’ve been thinking about seeing him again.”

Lucas sighs again. “It’s all I’ve been thinking about.”

This time Basile doesn’t laugh. He gives Lucas a look. And it hurts a little because it’s almost a look of pity. And Lucas really, really doesn’t want to be pitied by Basile of all people.

“Dude, you know I love you, but never look at me like that again.”

“I’m not doing anything!” Basile holds his hands up in defeat.

Lucas glimpses at his watch. 10:04. The professor is late.

At that moment the door opens and he comes in. Lucas sighs and keeps staring at the door, willing Eliott to open it.

He doesn’t have to wait long. The professor has barely made it to the front of the room when the door opens again. Eliott walks in, eyes darting around the room, He looks at the floor, the professor, up to the students sitting in the lecture hall.

Lucas automatically slumps down in his seat, as if to hide himself. Basile slaps him on the shoulder. “Dude, there he is.”

Lucas’ insides twist uncomfortably. He shakes his head. “I’ve changed my mind.”
“Dude.” Basile laughs fondly. And before Lucas can do anything about it, Basile waves his hands around wildly.

“Basile”, Lucas hisses. “I’m going to murder you.”

Basile suddenly stops when the professor starts speaking. Lucas dares to look up, Eliott isn’t at the front of the hall anymore. He looks around, trying to spot him on the stairs on the right or left side, but he’s not there.

“Where did he go?”, Lucas whispers.

Basile elbows him and points subtly. “There.”

Lucas finds the brunet head of hair almost immediately. Eliott has sat down a few rows in front of them, taking off his jacket. He’s sitting exactly where he sat last week.

Lucas groans silently. This is going to be a repeat of last week.

And it is, but it also isn’t. Lucas can’t take his eyes off of Eliott. And Basile, this time much more in tune to what’s happening, keeps laughing at him. Lucas punches his arm every now and then when Basile’s laughter gets a bit louder.

“Shut up”, he complains.

“Dude, you are pining hard”, Basile giggles. “Like, good for you, man. I’m just so happy that finally I’m not the one who’s pathetically in love.”

Lucas crosses his arms, slumps in his seat a little.

“Okay, that was mean, I’m sorry, you’re not pathetic, you’re –“

Lucas interrupts him. “The thing is though, that I am.” He’s annoyed, he’s allowed to whine a little, he thinks.

Basile barks out a laugh and immediately slaps his hand on his mouth. It was loud. A few people in front of them turn around to see what happened, their facial expressions ranging from absolute boredom to mild interest.

Basile is shaking his head at them, mouthing “sorry”, when Eliott turns around, too.

Lucas’ eyes meet his almost immediately. Eliott’s eyes widen a little. He glimpses at Basile, then his eyes go back to Lucas. He raises his eyebrows.

Lucas doesn’t know what to do, so he just closes his eyes for a moment and shakes his head subtly, as if to say, “nothing happened, all good, everything is absolutely normal and I am not freaking out at all.” He hopes Eliott can read minds.

Eliott’s face splits into a small smile, he gives him a small wave, and mouths “hi”.

Lucas’ right hand makes an aborted move to wave back, but Eliott has already turned back around.

He lets out a breath he didn’t know he was holding. He forces himself to look away from the back of Eliott’s head and looks at Basile. Who is looking at him with wide eyes.

“Dude.”
“Shut up”, Lucas says. But this time, he’s smiling.

Mardi 11:31

“Dude, I’m going to murder you if you don’t stop him from leaving.”

“I know, I know.”

The professor is finishing up his last sentence, dismissing the class to freedom. Basile has already jumped up and is on his way down the stairs, waving at Lucas to follow him. He has to stop though, when there’s a hold up. There’s too many people in front of him. Lucas goes to follow Basile, careful not to accidentally push anyone down the stairs when he passes them.

Basile keeps turning his head, trying to keep an eye on their surroundings. He’s hectically trying to find Eliott who both he and Lucas lost sight of when everyone jumped up to leave.

They finally make it out of the lecture hall. “I swear, where the fuck did all of those people come from? It was basically empty!”, Basile complains.

Lucas stops short when he looks up at Basile and his eyes land on someone standing a few meters behind him next to the open door. It’s Eliott. And he’s looking at Lucas, a small smile on his lips.

Eliott smiles, raises his eyebrows. “Hi?”, he answers.

Say something, Lucas, say something, please say something, oh God please say something. You’ve literally practiced this a million times.

“Uhm”, Lucas says. Great start. “I was at the party on Saturday… Where you, uh, filmed your short film? It was really cool. The party, that is. The film, too, of course!” He scratches his head. This is not going as well as he wanted it to.

He looks up at Eliott and is momentarily blinded by his smile.

“Thank you!”, he says. “I didn’t know you watched my videos!” He winks and Lucas wants to die. Lucas laughs shyly. “Yeah… it’s not like it was made abundantly clear to you on Friday.”

Eliott lets out a delighted laugh. “Yeah… Friday was fun”, he says. His eyes sort of glaze over for a moment. Then he looks back at Lucas. “You should have said hi on Saturday then! I was super busy, I feel like I didn’t see anyone that night, but I would’ve loved to have talked to you.”

Lucas laughs. “I was there with a bunch of friends actually. None of us knew that you were filming
that night. We were just… I don’t know, partying? And then the police came and everyone ran away. So we figured that was the end of it. We only really found out on Sunday. Through a friend.”

Eliott frowns. “That actually kind of explains a lot. There were definitely a lot more people there than we thought would come. Didn’t you see the invitation?”

Lucas shakes his head. “No?”

Eliott brings his hand up to his mouth absentmindedly, then stops himself, puts it back down. He’s bouncing a little, not really able to stand still. It makes Lucas a little anxious. Eliott’s nervous energy is contagious.

“We had, like, this casting call for extras that we spread around university. We had flyers and everything”, Eliott says, smiling again. “And the video I posted? I don’t know, we were scared no one would come. Maybe your friend only cared about the party part.”

Lucas laughs, doubting that that was Daphné’s intent. “Yeah… probably.”

There’s another silence. Lucas desperately doesn’t want it to get awkward, but it might be too late for that.

“So…”, Eliott starts, raking his fingers through his messy hair.

Lucas stares for a second, thinking about how much he’s always wanted to touch that hair. About how purposefully messy it is. He stops those thoughts immediately. If Eliott notices his short inner conflict, he doesn’t say anything about it.

“… Are you a literature student?”, Eliott continues.

Lucas looks at him questioningly.

“You know…” Eliott vaguely gestures to the now closed door of the lecture hall.

Lucas turns around, too, just for a second. The hallway is empty, not sign of Basile.

“Oh”, he says dumbly. “Media theory. Yeah, no.” He stops for a moment and then laughs. “Not at all.”

Now it’s Eliott’s turn to look at him questioningly.

“I’m a biology student, actually. This whole… media bullshit really isn’t for me.”

Eliott raises his eyebrows and Lucas winces. “Sorry”, he adds. “It’s the theory part that’s not for me, I didn’t mean to…” He doesn’t know what he did mean to say.

Eliott barks out a laugh, putting a hand on his chest. “You wound me, Lucas.”

Lucas can’t stop the bright smile from breaking out. The fact that Eliott remembers his name makes him want to melt. He wants him to never say anything but his name ever again.

They smile at each other for a moment longer.

“Hey, do you want to –”, Eliott starts at the same time that Lucas says, “Well, I should –“

They both stop talking and laugh awkwardly. Eliott gestures for him to continue and Lucas feels like the future of this fragile friendship rests on his shoulders. He glances at his watch and winces.
“Uhm… I actually have a class I need to get to”, he says and hates himself. He hopes Eliott can tell that he doesn’t actually want this conversation to end.

“Yeah, okay”, Eliott says, running his fingers through his hair again.

“Okay”, Lucas says. “Uhm… It was nice to see you again.” He goes to turn around but doesn’t. Stuck in a halfway turn. Eliott is looking at him intensely and Lucas doesn’t want to be the first one to let go of this moment.

It’s like Eliott can see right through him, blue eyes piercing through his own, looking straight into his heart and soul.

That thought wakes him up from his stupor. Don’t be so dramatic, he tells himself. He smiles at Eliott again. Eliott’s eyes dart to the floor, then back to Lucas and he smiles. And that makes Lucas gather all his courage to say, “Are you taking the bus again tonight? Maybe we’ll see each other then?”

Eliott smiles. “Yeah, maybe.” He looks at the floor again, then back to Lucas. He sighs, lifts his arm up and lets his hand fall on Lucas’ shoulder. All Lucas can do is stop himself from openly gasping at the contact.

“See you around, Lucas”, Eliott says.

And with that he takes his hand off of Lucas, passes him and when Lucas turns around, he’s already round the next corner, out of sight.

Lucas takes a deep breath. He looks at his watch again. He’ll definitely be late to his next class.

Mardi 19:20

“I can’t believe he didn’t come! What an idiot!”

“It’s not likely he’s forced to come, it’s a fucking bus ride.”

“But you said yourself that you invited him! And he didn’t say no!”

Lucas sighs. “Yeah, I don’t know. Maybe that was just a throwaway comment, it didn’t really mean anything. It’s not like we specifically planned anything.”

“Still, what a dick move not to show up.”

“He’s not obligated to do anything, Yann! Maybe he’s a dick and doesn’t care about school or dumb fans or anything.” Lucas is reaching at this point.

“You know, Basile said that Eliott was super nice when he met him a week ago and then Eliott was really nice on Friday apparently?” Yann laughs. “Honestly, I can’t believe that I’m the only one in this friend group who hasn’t met Eliott yet.”

Lucas groans. “He wasn’t that nice, honestly.” He crosses his arms.

Yann gives him a look.

“Well, he was very nice today”, Lucas amends. Lucas just told Yann all about his meeting with Eliott at the bus stop last week, a detail he neglected to mention before. And Yann, having
abandoned the game he was playing a while ago, was now absolutely convinced that Eliott had some kind of ulterior motive. (The ulterior motive being that Eliott is madly in love with Lucas.)

Yann takes his phone and pulls up the photo Basile sent into the group chat recently: The picture he and Eliott took on Tuesday that he’d sent Lucas. “Look at this guy, man. Is that the smile of a dick?”

Lucas glimpses at Eliott’s smiling face. His chest feels tight. He looks away and says nothing.

“Look, okay, you can’t expect anything from Eliott, true. Maybe he’s a dick. What I don’t want you to do is make him into some kind of devil. You like him, right.”

Lucas nods tightly. “Yeah”, he whispers.

“So fuck all that other stuff. Fuck him being mysterious. Fuck the fact that he filmed a party without everyone knowing about it – which I still think is fucking weird by the way. Fuck all of that. He’s not supposed to be a full person in your mind. He’s, like, this person you’ve been idealizing for years. And you’re allowed to do that to some extent. You’re allowed to look up to him and like him for what he puts out into the world. All of that doesn’t mean you have to know him personally or like him even. You just need to know that he has good values. So if he’s a dick, then at least he’s not a dick dick. He’s just, you know, a bit weird.”

Lucas looks at his friend questioningly. “That was weird.”

“What?”

“You, being nice about my crush. You always make fun of me. And I’m not sure if I think Eliott is a dick or you do or neither of us.”

Yann sighs. “Dude, I love you. I want you to be happy. Whatever that means for you. Eliott or no Eliott. If you like him, I will like him. If you decide to hate him, I’ll hate him, too.”

“Yeah.” Lucas blinks a few times. He is not going to cry.

“Oh, dude.” Yann gives him a sympathizing look and wraps his arms around Lucas.

Lucas takes a deep breath and rests his head on Yann’s chest, hugging him lightly. “It just sucks. It was so weird when we talked that first time. Then on the bus it was weird but felt… I don’t know… natural. Or maybe I’m just making that up in hindsight, I don’t know. And then it was over immediately and then it was just weird again.” He takes a deep breath, he shudders and pulls himself together. He lets go of Yann and puts some distance between them again. “Thank you. Today… I don’t know. I thought we both tried so hard not to make it weird again. We were having, like, a real conversation. And then I fucked it up by saying I had to go.” He groans again. “And then he fucked it up by just leaving. Again.” He lets his head fall back on the couch.

Yann smiles, patting his shoulder reassuringly. “I’m always here for you, okay? Weird stuff or not. Maybe you both fucked up.”

Lucas laughs wetly. He stands up. “Okay, I need to do something other than think about this mess now.” He stands there for a moment, doesn’t know what to do. He sits back down, absentmindedly unlocking his phone and opening Instagram.

Yann laughs at him. He turns back to the TV. “Let’s just play some Fifa.”

Lucas agrees distractedly, still staring at his phone. Eliott has posted something to his stories. He
clicks on the little icon. The first one is a selfie of Eliott winking at the camera. The caption says “Going through all my footage from last week, prepare for some bts stuff!” The next few stories are short clips from Eliott’s days that didn’t make it into the final vlogs. Lucas smiles at the silly little clips. There’s a short video from the party on Saturday, of the crowd dancing, going wild, music drowning out the cheers. Lucas turns down the volume. Yann leans towards him, looking at the screen in interest.

“Is that from Saturday?” he asks.

“Looks like it.”

He taps the screen to go back and watch the clip again. There’s a time, 22:22.

“I’m definitely in that crowd somewhere”, Lucas muses.

Yann chuckles, elbows him lightly. “Maybe you saw Eliott and didn’t even know it.”

“Oh God, I hope not. I was so drunk.”

Yann laughs, loudly this time. “Maybe he didn’t show up today because he was disturbed by your insane dancing!”

“Hey!” Lucas huffs indignantly. “I’m a great dancer. And he did show up this morning.”

The stories end. Lucas swipes down, goes back to his timeline, refreshes it. There’s a new post by Eliott. It’s a video. Lucas’ breath catches. It’s a video of the door of the lecture hall. The one Lucas was in just today. And last week. It’s a short video, a few people come out of the door, not taking any notice of the camera, and Lucas wonders when exactly this was taken.

Then he looks at the caption.

**srodluv**: See you next week?

Lucas forgets to breathe for a minute. He just stares at his phone. Yann is still leaning into him, looking at the display, too. He looks at Lucas, a confused smile on his face.

“What is it?”, he asks.

“This is the door of the lecture hall”, Lucas says. He laughs shortly.

Yann’s eyebrows shoot up. A wide smile appears on his face. “So… what you’re telling me…” He looks at Lucas meaningfully. He repeats, “…what you’re telling me… is that Eliott just talked to you? Publicly? On his Instagram?”

Lucas barks out a loud laugh at Yann’s imitation.

“Dude! Come on, man.”
Lucas shakes his head, laughter tapering off. His phones buzzes in his hand several times. Basile in the group chat.

**Basile:** Dude!!!!!! Lucas!!!!!!!!! Look at Instagram!!!!!!!!!

**Basile:** I TOLD YOU

**Lucas:** What the fuck, shut up

**Arthur:** What’s on Instagram

**Basile:** Eliott fucking made a post about Lucas!

**Arthur:** What?! That’s great!

**Arthur:** Or is it? How are we feeling about it, Lucas?

**Yann:** He just threw his phone away and left the living room. I don’t think he wants to talk about it

**Basile:** DUDE! I swear, Lucas needs to message Eliott

**Yann:** That’s what I said!

**Basile:** Yann, steal his phone and like the post. Or even better, comment on it!!

**Yann:** I can’t just do that

**Basile:** Dude, come on. He’ll thank us later, I swear

**Yann:** I don’t know, I’ll try talking him into it

**Basile:** Let me know if you need help, because I’m NOT afraid to come over and steal his phone!

**Arthur:** Yeah same!

**Yann:** I’ll keep you posted

There’s a knock on Lucas’ door and a second later it opens and Yann comes into his room. Lucas is lying on his bed, staring at the ceiling like he’s done so many times before. He sighs and looks at Yann.

Yann sits down on the bed and hands Lucas his phone. “Dude, just like the post or, like, send him a DM.”

Lucas doesn’t take the phone, just looks at Yann. “No.”

“Why not? He might see it.”

Lucas groans. “Yann, do you know how many times I’ve commented on one of Eliott’s posts? Do you know how many times I’ve reacted to his stories?”

Yann smiles at him blankly.
Lucas hides his face in his pillow. “Many, many times.”

Yann gives him a smile. “Do you think he saw that?”

“I have no idea! He’s never answered me on Instagram, but he has on YouTube and my name is, like almost the same on both.” He looks back at Yann, rubs his hands over his face, closing his eyes tightly.

“Come on. Do it for me.”

Lucas opens his eyes, sighs. He looks at Yann, now, who gives him his best puppy dog eyes. He reaches for his phone, unlocks it, and likes Eliott’s Instagram post. Without thinking too hard, he comments on it.

**lucallement:** You missed a fun bus ride

Then he throws his phone back on the bed and slaps his hand on his mouth. He throws himself back on the bed, one arm over his eyes. “Oh my God. I can’t believe I just did that, that’s so fucking embarrassing.”

Yann hectically reaches for the phone, looks at the comment Lucas just posted. He smiles. “This is great!”

Lucas looks at him disbelievingly. “Should I have said something else? Maybe add a period? Or an exclamation point? Or a smiley.”

“A smiley? Fuck no! You missed a fun bus ride, bam. That’s it, no feelings. It’s perfect!”

Lucas smiles timidly. He sighs for the millionth time that day. “You’re honestly the best friend I’ve ever had. Thank you.”

Yann laughs and pats Lucas’ arm. “I should hope so! Come on, Fifa time.”

Lucas closes his eyes one more time, then nods to himself and smiles. “Yeah, let’s do that.”

Yann reaches out a hand and pulls him up off the bed when Lucas takes it. Together they go back to the living room, passing the kitchen.

“You know what? I’m gonna need some popcorn though”, Yann says, looking excited.

Lucas laughs. He sits down on the couch and sets up the game while Yann rummages around in the kitchen. He laughs when Yann tries to pour popcorn into a large bowl and half of the popcorn lands on the floor. Yann curses softly and gives him the finger.

Lucas gets up again and gets his phone out of his room, meaning to make fun of Yann in the group chat. When he looks at his phone, it is overflowing with notifications. Most are from the group chat, Arthur and Basile still making fun of Lucas while also cheering him on. But there’s one that makes Lucas stop short on his way to the kitchen. He audibly *gasp*.

**srodulv started following you**

“Yann?!”

His voice must sound a little panicked because Yann is at his side in seconds, looking at him with wide eyes. Lucas silently shows him his phone. Yann makes a noise in the back of his throat and
beams at Lucas.

“What did I tell you?” Yann is delighted. “I told you, man! He likes you!”

Lucas’ phone buzzes in his hand. Another Instagram notification.

srodulv: Sorry for not being there earlier. If you’re interested, I’d love to take the bus with you at some point this week?

Lucas’ eyes must be comically large. Yann stands behind him, trying to get a glimpse of Lucas’ phone. When he does he starts giggling again. He hugs Lucas tightly from behind. “Dude, I’m so fucking happy for you.”

Lucas just shakes his head. “This is insane”, he says without feeling. He’s feeling everything and nothing at the same time. “I’m gonna go to my room now”, he says. “Freak out in private.”

“Hey!”, Yann says. “I want to be part of this blossoming relationship!”

Lucas gives him a look and Yann doesn’t follow but gives him another encouraging smile. He feels incredibly lucky to have a friend like him. He (and Basile and Arthur, too) might love making fun of him, but at least he knows that they always have his best interests at heart.

Lucas sits down on his bed. He taps on the Instagram notification. A part of him expects nothing to happen, expects Instagram to have glitched, and Eliott never sent him that message. But he’s sent straight to his and Eliott’s chat. Lucas stares at Eliott’s message for a moment. Then he scrolls up and looks at all the messages he’s sent Eliott over the years. Most of them are just emojis. A lot of laughing emojis, a few shocked emojis, a few heart emojis. The stories he’d reacted to are all gone but Lucas is sure that most of the heart emojis were reactions to selfies. His last message to Eliott is a few weeks old. He lets himself fall onto his bed, lies on his stomach and groans into his pillow. Then he pushes the pillow down, sets the phone on the bed, stares at it for a moment and thinks about what to answer.

In the end, he goes with his instinct. If he wanted to overthink this, he would’ve stayed with Yann.

lucallement: Sorry, who’s this?

Eliott likes his answer almost immediately but it takes a while for him to answer.

srodulv: Oh, just this weird YouTube person that you’ve been following for four years.

Lucas turns the phone around, hides his face in his hands. He’s screaming on the inside. On top of all the old messages, he forgot that Eliott can see how long he’s been following him.

srodulv: But it’s chill, turns out I would’ve been a fan of yours, too, if I’d known you four years ago

Lucas stares at the message. And keeps staring at it.

srodulv: Was that too blunt? Sorry, I just spent the last weeks searching for your Instagram and I was excited to finally find it.

srodulv: Sorry if that’s weird

This time, Lucas is quick to answer.
lucallement: No, it’s fine! I just didn’t know what to say

lucallement: To be honest, I just didn’t really expect you to even be thinking about me

srodulv: I was definitely thinking about you. And how I completely embarrassed myself in front of you

lucallement: You didn’t embarrass yourself!

srodulv: Well, good, because I was kind of hoping you’d forget about me if that meant you didn’t remember that

lucallement: Remember what? How you’re that weird guy who picked up a bunch of cigarette stubs last week with his bare hands to save the environment? Even if I didn’t already know who you were, that would’ve left an impression

Eliott sends back a few laughing emojis.

srodulv: I’m always thinking about you

lucallement: Now that’s something a stalker might say. Maybe you DID already know my Instagram?

srodulv: Haha, I swear I didn’t, no

lucallement: I’d love to ride the bus with you again by the way

srodulv: :)

lucallement: But maybe we can have lunch sometime this week? Might be easier to talk to each other then

Lucas congratulates himself on his bold move. Eliott, once again, answers immediately.

srodulv: Yes! Let’s do that!

Lucas can’t believe how much easier it is to talk to Eliott via text. They can skip straight past the awkward glances from this morning and go into an easy conversation.

They text back and forth a while longer and figure out that their lunch breaks don’t really match up, so they decide on meeting on Friday, same time as last week.

srodulv: Perfect! I’m excited :)

lucallement: Me too :)

Lucas takes a deep breath and exits out of Instagram. He gets a notification that Eliott liked his DM and smiles to himself. He turns around, lies on his back and stares at the ceiling, holding his phone to his chest.

After a moment he unlocks it again and sends a message to the boys’ group chat.

Lucas: I’m meeting Eliott on Friday

And it takes maybe two seconds for all the boys to simultaneously lose their minds with
excitement. Lucas smiles and buries his face in his pillow again.
Chapter 5

Mercredi 17:02

[Lucas’ story: A selfie, half his face obscured by a hat and a giant scarf. Caption: It’s cold. I’m never going outside ever again.]

[Instagram Direct Messages:]

srodulv: I like that scarf!

lucallement: Thank you! It’s very cozy :)

Mercredi 20:30

srodulv: Can I admit something?

lucallement: Always

srodulv: I’m nervous about meeting you

lucallement: We’ve already met

lucallement: Several times

srodulv: Yeah, but that was never really planned

lucallement: Oh, well there’s no reason for you to be. It’s just me

srodulv: Yeah. Just trying to be honest

srodulv: Let’s just imagine we’re meeting for the first time

lucallement: Sure

lucallement: And Eliott? I’m nervous, too, you’re not alone

Jeudi 06:46

[Eliott’s story: A short video of a park, Eliott is filming and turning in a circle to show his surroundings. The wind is howling, there are leaves everywhere. The video ends with Idriss jumping in front of the camera and Eliott’s laughter.]

lucallement: It’s way too early to be this awake

srodulv: Some of us like to suffer for their art! ;)

Lucas spends most of the day trying to figure out what to answer to that and ends up dropping it.
**Jeudi 21:02**

lucallement: I’m excited about tomorrow. Are we meeting at the café or do you want to walk over together from uni?

srodulv: We can meet at uni! Where’s your last class? I’ll come pick you up

lucallement: In lab 4

srodulv: … I have no idea where that is

lucallement: Haha, it’s one of the last science buildings, a bit off campus

lucallement: We can just meet at the café if that’s easier?

srodulv: Oh, yeah, ok

lucallement: So tomorrow at 2?

srodulv: Tomorrow at 2 :)

**Vendredi 13:45**

Maybe Lucas wouldn’t be this pathetically nervous if his so-called friends hadn’t insisted on escorting him to the café he and Eliott decided to meet at. At first they wanted to go to the university cafeteria again, where they met last week, but then Lucas mentioned his friends possibly being there and Eliott quickly agreed to go meet somewhere else.

So now Lucas is standing in front of the café and his friends are here *anyway*. And he’s nervous, his hands are sweaty, his face feels hot. He hopes he’s not as blotchy as he feels.

“Oh, thank you for getting me here safe and sound”, Lucas says. “You may go now.”

“I have to meet Eliott!”, Yann protests. He’s become really upset over not having met Eliott yet and it went from being kind of adorable to being really annoying. “You can’t expect me to vacate our apartment for you guys without knowing who will be fucking my best friend in *my own home*!”

And maybe his friends’ excitement about Lucas’ date (which he is decidedly definitely not calling a date out loud) has turned a little inappropriate.

“Oh my God!”, Lucas yells, scandalized. “What the fuck.”

“Yann”, Basile says with wide eyes, staring at his friend. “Do you think Lucas will score tonight??” He looks at Lucas. “Hell yeah! High five!” He holds up his hands, but Lucas pointedly looks away.

“I’m going to murder you. Both of you.” He takes a deep breath. “Fuck, I’m nervous.”

Arthur puts a hand on Lucas’ shoulder and tries to meet Lucas’ eyes. When Lucas avoids him, Arthur puts his hands on Lucas’ cheeks and forces his face closer, looking him in the eyes intently. “You are going to do fine”, he says. “You will sweep this guy off his feet. Kiss him senseless. And
even if you don’t, just have a nice conversation, a good time. Okay?”

Lucas nods timidly. Bless Arthur for being the only (somewhat) sane one. And fuck Yann for putting the image of doing that with Eliott in his head right before he’s meeting him.

“Okay.” Arthur lets go of him and pats his shoulder.

Lucas glimpses at his watch. He’s still too early. He looks at his friends, all three of which apparently just as nervous as Lucas feels. Everyone is kind of bouncing around. He desperately wants them to leave, so he can be nervous in peace for a few minutes.

Arthur suddenly slaps him on the back.

“Ow! What- ?” Lucas lifts his head and looks around. He jumps a little when his eyes meet Eliott’s. He’s still a few meters away, walking up to them. He’s wearing a black leather jacket, black jeans, black and white sneakers with white socks, and a large black and white scarf. He looks like he came straight from a fashion shoot. Lucas swallows thickly. He can do this.

“I’m going to murder all of you for real if you’re not gone in two seconds”, he whispers to his friends, without taking his eyes off of Eliott.

Arthur, Basile and Yann snicker. They all pat his back once.

Yann waves at Eliott who has finally reached them, eyes darting around a little unsure. “Hi!”, he says to Eliott. “It’s a pleasure to meet you. Yann, best friend.” He points at Lucas and then shakes Eliott’s hand. “You better be fucking nice to him or I’ll come back and murder you.” Then he lets out a loud laugh, takes Arthur and Basile by the arm and pulls them away past Eliott.

Eliott gives Lucas a confused smile. Lucas facepalms when he sees his friends wave from behind Eliott, giving him thumbs up and dancing around wildly. They’ve just rounded the corner when Eliott turns around.

“Sorry”, Lucas says quickly. “My friends… they’re a little overenthusiastic sometimes. And violent, apparently.”

Eliott turns back around, smiles at Lucas. “I can relate to that. I could barely stop mine from coming with me.” He wiggles his eyebrows.

“Oh”, Lucas says dumbly, but smiling. “So they’re pretty overbearing, too, huh?”

“Yeah”, Eliott says fondly.

“I saw two of your friends last Saturday, actually”, Lucas says, having prepared several easy topics to make sure the conversation wouldn’t suddenly dry up. “Idriss and Sofiane, right?”, he adds questioningy as if he didn’t know for sure that that’s their names.

“Oh yeah”, Eliott laughs. “They told me about that. But they actually couldn’t really remember much because they got so drunk that night. Can you believe that, drinking on the job?” He smiles and turns towards the café. “Not that I’m paying them… Do you want to go inside?”

Lucas smiles. “Yeah.”

Eliott opens the door and lets Lucas in first. He blushes, feeling warm all over. Which also might have something to do with the café being really warm in contrast with the cold air outside, or so he tells himself. He walks straight to the counter.
“What can I get you?”, the barista asks.

Lucas looks back at Eliott.

“Just a chamomile tea please”, Eliott says to the barista, smiling at her brightly.

The barista nods and winks at him, ignoring Lucas completely.

Lucas feels a small twinge in his chest. “A cappuccino for me”, he says to the barista, smiling at her a little too brightly. She gives him a weird look. Maybe Lucas is overcompensating. Can you be jealous if you’re not even sure you’re anything close to friends? He pulls his shoulders back, lifts his head a bit more, stands up as straight as he possibly can. He’s confident, god damn it. This isn’t his first date. Or hangout with a random acquaintance, at least. They never called this a date, so maybe it isn’t. Lucas tries not to drown in semantics.

*Let’s just see what happens*, he’s said approximately a million times in the last three days.

Before Eliott can get out his wallet, Lucas jumps in and pays for both drinks. Eliott smiles at him, looking way too happy about this.

He gets his hopes up a little. *Maybe it is a date.*

They stand a bit to the side, waiting for their drinks. They look at each other, but can’t hold eye contact. They look back down to the floor and giggle awkwardly. Lucas has never been happier.

“I’m gonna go grab us a table in the back, okay?”, Eliott says finally, smiling.

Lucas looks up again, nods once. That was a lie. He has *now* never been happier.

He looks at Eliott’s back while he goes to the back of the café in search of an empty table. He finds one quickly in the back corner, the café not being too busy at the moment. He looks back at Lucas, points at the table and gives him a thumbs up. Then he sits down and takes off his jacket and scarf. Underneath he’s wearing a dark green sweater. It fits him perfectly. And just like that, Lucas is nervous again. And maybe thinking about Yann’s comment, about what it would be like to take that sweater off of Eliott. What seeing his body in real life would be like.

He shakes his head, trying to get rid of those thoughts. He’s *prepared* for this like it’s a fucking biology exam. He’s thought of topics they could talk about, jokes he could tell, questions he could ask. All of which lowkey get thrown out the window when he looks at Eliott’s profile for too long.

He’s sitting now, looking at his phone, typing something. Lucas wants to go and ask who he’s texting, but that would definitely be weird.

“Our tea and coffee.” The barista disturbs Lucas’ thoughts. He smiles at her, feeling bad for having gotten irrationally angry at her.

He takes the two cups and brings them over to Eliott. It feels unreal to walk up to him so casually, knowing that he’s actually here to talk to him. That he’s sitting there waiting for *him.*

Eliott looks up from his phone when Lucas arrives. He puts it back into his pocket and puts his hands around the hot cup. “Thank you.” He leans down and takes a deep breath.

“Not a coffee person?”, Lucas asks, smiling.

Eliott looks up. “Just makes me jittery.”
“Same actually”, Lucas says quietly and takes a sip of coffee.

“But?” Eliott raises his eyebrows.

“I’m addicted.” Lucas shrugs nonchalantly and Eliott barks out a laugh. He sort of hunches in on himself while doing so, making himself smaller than he actually is. Lucas finds it adorable.

They both look at each other over the top of their drinks. Lucas takes another sip, the hot coffee burning his lips and the inside of his mouth. Eliott’s eyes are intense, it turns out that it’s difficult to look at them for too long. At the same time it’s difficult to look away. He’s stuck in a place somewhere in-between: Looking at Eliott, but also looking through him, while he’s trying to think of something to say.

“So what do you study?”, Lucas finally asks.

Eliott raises his eyebrows again. “I’m a film student. I focus on directing.”

“Oh”, Lucas says. “I didn’t know that. Makes sense.” How the hell did he not know that? He’d always assumed that Eliott did… something vaguely media related and he’s seen the names of courses Eliott has done, but he never stopped to wonder what exactly he does.

Eliott smiles. “And you do biology? Do you want to be a doctor or…”?

Lucas laughs a little. “No, I’m not doing medicine. I’m actually studying molecular biology. Which in theory should be a lot of lab work, like looking at things under a microscope and so on. Which is really cool.” Lucas winces. “So far it’s mostly been really boring lectures though.”

“Oh, I’m sorry. You don’t like it?”

“No, it’s fine. It’s just not entirely what I expected. It should get better next semester though.” He shrugs. He’s made his peace with it.

“And how does a lecture on media theory fit in?”

“Well, there’s this module where we’re supposed to take some classes that don’t have anything to do with our field of study. So Basile and I decided to get that over with this semester, so we don’t have to do it next semester when the better courses start. We’re also taking introductory German.”

Eliott raises his eyebrows again. “Oh really? Ist dein Deutsch sehr gut?” He cackles at Lucas’ confused expression.

“I’ve literally had two sessions so far!”, he defends himself.

Eliott laughs again. “So…” The laughter tapers off. “Basile… that’s your friend who’s in the lecture, too, right? Brown, curly hair?”

Lucas nods. “Yeah, that’s the one. He can be a bit… intense.” He winces again. “Honestly… I’m not entirely sure what he told you on that first Tuesday. Or maybe you don’t remember, that would be even better…”

“Oh, I remember”, Eliott says meaningfully and laughs. “He was very sweet. A bit forward maybe, I didn’t expect him to tell me that you have like a whole altar set up at home. I mean, you really don’t have to worship me, but –”

“What?!”, Lucas interrupts him, incredulous. “I don’t – ” He stops when Eliott starts laughing,
hunching over again.

“I’m just kidding! But your face was great.” He sovers up again, a little chuckle slipping out every now and then. “Unless…?” He raises his eyebrows expectantly.

“I don’t have a fucking altar!”, Lucas protests. “I’m a perfectly average appreciator of your work.” He looks at his coffee, self-conscious.

Honestly, he’s a little panicked. The last thing he wants is for Eliott to see him as some crazy fan. He doesn’t want to be Eliott’s charity case. He doesn’t want to be the random guy Eliott went out with once because he thought Lucas would get a kick out of it.

He wants to be an equal. In friendship or in whatever this might be.

Eliott looks at him intently. Lucas wishes he could read his thoughts. Sometimes Eliott seems to be a ray of sunshine and an open book, only to go back to being unreadably mysterious again the next minute.

“No, but seriously”, Eliott says, letting the tension dissipate with a nonchalant smile. “Your friend was very nice. We took a picture. I actually took a whole video and meant to put it in a vlog, but then I didn’t.”

Now it’s Lucas’ turn to raise his eyebrows. “No? Why not?”

“You’d know if you saw it”, Eliott answers and smiles.

“Okay…” Lucas doesn’t know if he should keep asking.

“It doesn’t matter anyway.” Eliott shakes his head, ending this part of the conversation.

Lucas nods, eyes darting around. He takes another sip of his coffee, which is almost a little too cold now.

He should ask. He knows he should. But looking at Eliott’s face, his eyes, the way his gums are visible when he smiles. It’s all throwing him off. Lucas used to have game, damn it. He used to have no problem talking to girls. It used to work pretty well with guys, too. The problem seems to be that he has no problems picking up people when he doesn’t care. The more Lucas likes someone, the harder it gets to talk to them.

And Lucas really does like Eliott a whole lot.

“Uhm…”, he begins. “I did want to ask you something.”


Lucas takes a deep breath. “Was that… that post you… uh, posted on Tuesday. Was that actually about me or did I just make that up in my head?” Not exactly what he planned to ask, but also interesting.

Eliott smiles at him again, gums visible and all. “Yeah”, he says. “That was about you.”

Lucas nods, not looking at Eliott. He’s staring at Eliott’s tea now, barely drunk, not steaming anymore. After a beat he meets his eyes again. “Why?”

Eliott raises his eyebrows again. “Why what?”
“Why did you post that?”

He chuckles. “Well… as I texted you… I was looking for your Instagram handle and I figured, or really my friends did, maybe you’d get the hint. And you did.”

“Oh.” It makes sense but it’s still the last thing Lucas expected. “But why?”

Eliott looks at him, confused. “Why what?”

“Why did you want to find my Instagram?”

“Well, I wanted to talk to you.”

Lucas doesn’t answer. He feels like he could spend hours asking Eliott questions that start with “why” without ever getting an answer he’s satisfied with.

“I didn’t really know how to find you easily, I didn’t even know your last name or Basile’s name, so I had nothing to go off of.”

“Well, you knew I followed you.”

“I kind of have a lot of followers, Lucas”, Eliott says, not unkindly.

That makes Lucas laugh again. “That’s true.”

There’s another lull in the conversation then. Lucas still isn’t happy with Eliott’s answer. He’s still not sure why Eliott would post something about Lucas of all people. He doesn’t know him.

“So what is your last name?”, Eliott asks finally.

“Lalllement”, Lucas answers, raising his eyebrows, a smile playing around his lips. “As in Lucallement? Lucas der Deutscher?”

“Oh”, Eliott says dumbly. “Yeah, that makes sense actually.”

Lucas laughs freely, then. “Well feel free to stalk me now.”

“Oh, I will. Anything specific I should be on the lookout for?”

“No, I don’t think so. I don’t have any embarrassing films on the internet that I made when I like 17.” He laughs. “Vladimir Putin and Captain America, really Eliott?” Lucas looks at him challengingly.

Eliott’s eyes widen and he looks shocked, just for a moment. Then a wide grin appears on his face and he leans back in his chair. “You are a stalker! Oh my God! I didn’t think anyone other than my teacher ever watched that video.” He lets out a laugh, clearly delighted by this news.

Lucas smiles easily. Eliott’s reaction made him feel warm and cozy all over. His company feels like it was always supposed to be that way. Maybe this is the happiest he’s ever been.

“That was kind of the first video of yours I ever saw. I think I just typed Captain America into the YouTube search bar and sort of went a little too deep into the search results.” He looks at Eliott who’s laughing even harder now, and sort of falls a little bit in love. “But it was so relatable to little 16 year old me! It was, like, Captain America, who I was in love with and it was a gay love story, which I wanted to see more of!”
“Even if the love story involved Putin?” He’s still giggling a little, beaming at Lucas.

“I wasn’t picky”, he shrugs. “I took all the representation I could get.”

Eliott smiles. “Yeah, I get that.” His laughter has slowed down a little. He looks at the table for a moment. “You know, that actually really does mean a lot to me. That that stupid video I made for school could actually mean something to you.”

Lucas smiles. “Yeah?” He looks Eliott straight in the eyes. “I was actually kind of worried about that to be honest… That you’d find it weird, you know, that I’ve known you for so long, or kind of feel like I know you. Like, I don’t know anything about you, really. But you know, that I’ve known of you for so long.” He stops, takes a breath, closes his eyes, Eliott’s gaze getting too intense again. “Sorry, I’m not making sense.”

“No, no, no!”, Eliott says immediately. He reaches out his hand and puts it on Lucas’, which is resting next to his coffee cup. He squeezes once and lets it rest there.

Lucas wants to turn his hand around, link their fingers. But he’s afraid to move, doesn’t want the touch to end, so he keeps his hand as still as possible. He looks at it, marveling at how good their hands look together.

“I mean… I guess I get it”, Eliott continues. “But genuinely, it’s flattering.” He squeezes Lucas’ hand again. Then he lets got, wrapping both hands around his cup of tea again.

Lucas’ hand tingles where Eliott touched it. He keeps looking at it, missing his warmth already. Then he looks up again. Meets those intense eyes again, piercing him, asking him to reveal all his secrets. Not that Lucas has secrets. He’s gone as openly and unapologetically into this conversation as he possibly could. Eliott smiles again and Lucas lets himself really look at him for a moment. He notices how his teeth aren’t as white as they seem on camera. He notices the dark circles under Eliott’s eyes, notices how his nose is a little crooked, how his sweater is a little frayed at the edges. All of which to say: He notices that Eliott is a real human being, notices that he’s not come here straight from a fashion shoot. Notices how devastatingly beautiful he is because and despite of all of that.

He has to break their eye contact.

“Tell me something about yourself that I don’t know”, Eliott says. When Lucas glimpses at him again, he sees that he hasn’t averted his eyes.

Lucas thinks for a while. It’s silent for a moment, but it finally doesn’t feel awkward.

“I live with my best friend Yann?”, he says finally. “I don’t know if that’s interesting though.”

“I didn’t say it had to be interesting”, Eliott smiles. “And I knew that already.”

“Oh.” Lucas meets his eyes again. Right, the bus conversation. “In that case I can tell you tons of things.”

Eliott raises his eyebrows, nods once and makes a gesture as if to say “go on”.

Lucas laughs, shaking his head. But Eliott keeps looking at him expectantly and he realizes that he’s serious. “Oh. Well… uhm… I’m 20. I’m in my second semester, studying biology, as you know… Uhm… I was actually going to start last winter semester, but there were some problems… You know, family stuff, so I had to take care of that and I worked at a café for a while. And then started uni during the summer semester. My friend Basile started at the same time, he had to wait a
semester because he wasn’t accepted at first. Which is so dumb, he’s actually really smart! He just… well, he never had good grades in school, but… you know, that doesn’t necessarily say much.” He stops, not sure what else to say.

Eliott smiles. “Were you good in school?”

Lucas blushes. “Uh, yeah.”

“I knew it!” Eliott is delighted. “I can just imagine you as this eager student, all fascinated by biology, but with a deep hatred of French class!”

“I didn’t hate French class!”, Lucas laughs. “I just… well, I just wasn’t very good at it.”

“Oh yeah, because it’s all media bullshit, right?”, Eliott teases.

Lucas pretends to gasp and puts a hand on his heart. “You wound me, Eliott. Don’t use my own words against me!”

Eliott’s eyes go soft. “I don’t think you’ve ever said my name before.” His voice is quiet, almost like he’s speaking to himself.

The air around them gets thicker, suddenly. Lucas looks at Eliott, but this time he’s not looking back. Why does he say things like that? Making Lucas think there’s something more going on here, making him actually think this is a date. He should ask. He really should. But he also knows that he won’t. Because he’s having an amazing time and he’s not ready to let go of it. Not ready to be thrown back into reality. So he laughs to dissipate the tension and Eliott finally meets his eyes again. There’s something behind them again, something Lucas can’t place.

“I also really like playing Fifa”, Lucas says to break the silence.

Eliott laughs in surprise. “Oh, I’ve suffered through many evenings where that was all my friends wanted to do.” His smile is teasing. “I really thought you were different, Lucas.”

Lucas raises his hands in surrender. “Sorry to disappoint.” He laughs again. “Now you.”

“Now me what?”

“Tell me something about you that I don’t know.”

“Oh.” Eliott thinks for a minute. His eyebrows rise again. “How do I know you don’t already know everything about me?”

Lucas barks out a laugh. “I’m sure I don’t, trust me.”

“Tell me.”

Lucas gives him a questioning look.

“Tell me what you know about me.”

Lucas blushes. He breaks eye contact, scratches his head for a second.

“Don’t get embarrassed now!” Eliott laughs at him.

“I’m starting to think that you’re getting a kick out of this”, Lucas complains, but he’s laughing too.

Lucas takes a deep breath, puts his hand on the back of his neck and hunches in on himself a little. Then he looks up at Eliott, meets his expectant gaze. “Okay, but please don’t make fun of me.” He suddenly gets very self-conscious. “I don’t want you to think… I don’t know… I’m not some stalker, okay?”

Eliott furrows his brows a little, still looking at him expectantly. “Okay?”

“Okay… uhm…” Lucas takes another deep breath, sits up straight. “Well, your name is Eliott Demaury.”

Eliott nods solemnly. “Very good, only a stalker would know that, definitely.”

Lucas straight up giggles. Like a little school girl. He blushes a deeper shade of red, He probably resembles a tomato. “Shut up. Uhm…” He laughs again. “You’re 21, you’re a film student. Uhm… You’re a director. You have friends.”

Eliott’s eyebrows are basically in his hairline. “What an observation”, he deadpans.

Lucas laughs. “Uhm… You’re very good at directing? You’re a great writer. I feel like… uhm… the short films you make… They’re always so…” Lucas has trouble finding the right words. “They’re layered. They have meaning, they’re impactful. Polaris really helped me when I came out, actually.”

Eliott’s eyes widen at that.

“You have an Instagram account”, Lucas adds, running out of things to list.

“You know”, Eliott says, his eyes twinkling with delight. “When you were like, oh Eliott, please don’t think I’m a stalker –”

“I do not sound like that!”

Eliott starts laughing. “– I sort of expected you to tell me, like, where I live. What my parents’ names are. To list every person I’ve ever slept with. To know that I got arrested for public indecency when I was 18. To have thousands of pictures of me walking down the street on your phone.”

“Uhm… Well, I know you’re bisexual? You’re bipolar.” He meets Eliott’s eyes but breaks eye contact after a second.

“Mhm…”, Eliott just says, eyebrows raised, not convinced. “Still not a stalker. I literally made whole videos about that for the public to see.”

“I’m sure you’ve slept with your girlfriend Lucille”, Lucas says, almost petulantly, crossing his arms.

Eliott barks out a laugh. “That I have. But that relationship was all over Instagram, I would’ve been worried if you didn’t know about it.”

Lucas nods slowly. He suddenly wishes he hadn’t brought her up. Having kind of blocked her from his memory completely, so far.

“We broke up though”, Eliott suddenly says. “Like, a long time ago. We’re good friends though.”
Lucas’ eyes dart around the room then, looking anywhere but at Eliott, not wanting to give away what he’s feeling. He “mhm”s noncommittally. (Joy. It’s joy, that he’s feeling.)

He changes the subject quickly. “But… Public indecency? Should I be afraid?” He wiggles his eyebrows and smiles, a little unsure.

Eliott’s face suddenly gets serious. His hand flies up to his mouth, he worries his lower lip between his teeth. “Oh… uh… yeah, no.” He sighs. “That kind of had something to do with the bipolar thing.”

“Oh”, Lucas says dumbly. “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to…” He doesn’t know what he did mean to say.

Eliott raises his hands, face agitated. “No, no, no! All good, I brought it up, no, yeah…” He laughs, self-conscious. “Sorry… I don’t talk about this often.” He looks Lucas in the eyes again, sincere. “I… uh, I kind of made that short film and put all that stuff about my bipolar disorder out there… and then people knew. And, like, never brought it up because… you know, it’s kind of uncomfortable to talk about? And I was okay with that, it was kind of great actually. Because people knew, you know? I wasn’t hiding it. It’s, like, common knowledge, so I now I generally don’t have to have this weird different kind of coming out with every person I meet, uh… anymore. And if I had an episode, people were understanding. It’s, yeah. Sorry.” Eliott snuffles. “I just realized I should still talk about it occasionally.”

Lucas’ eyes are big and full of feeling. His throat feels tight, seeing this man open up to him so freely. He nods, but doesn’t say anything, doesn’t trust his voice at the moment.

“Sorry”, Eliott says again. “You’re not my therapist, that was weird to unload all of that on you. Sorry.”

Lucas smiles timidly. “I guess everything’s weird with us, huh?”

There’s a beat of silence again where they smile at each other. It’s comfortable.

Eliott takes a breath. “You did get some things wrong by the way”, he says, smiling again.

“Oh, really?” Lucas raises his eyebrows.

“Yeah. I’m 22. And I’m pansexual, not bi. Not that bi isn’t also a great label but…” Eliott shrugs, obviously not knowing where he was going to go with that.

Lucas laughs. “Okay…” He meets Eliott’s eyes. “Well, I’m very gay.”

Eliott barks out a surprised laugh. “Very gay, huh?”

Lucas nods solemnly. “Yeah. Like, I’m like physically repulsed by women, truly. My friends start talking about boobs and I get herpes, seriously.”

Eliott’s whole body is shaking with laughter. “Good to know”, he wheezes. “Boobs are pretty great though.”

Lucas looks at him with wide, scared eyes. He slaps his hands over his mouth. “I can already feel it coming, Eliott!”

It’s like Eliott can’t contain himself. Loud bouts of laughter escape him and Lucas joins in after a few seconds, giving up his act.
After a while their laughter tapers off. And then Lucas finally notices their surroundings again. The café was mostly empty when they arrived, but he looks around now and all the tables he can see are taken. There’s a steady babble of voices, the noise level high, but not too overpowering. He can hear some cheesy pop song about blossoming love quietly playing in the background. He glimpses at the people sitting in their immediate vicinity. No one’s taking notice of them. No one’s watching. Everyone is in their own little world, drinking and eating, and talking.

Lucas’ gaze wanders back to Eliott who’s looking at him intently. One side of his mouth twitches a little, the beginning of a smile forming.

Eliott clears his throat. “I did have another question”, he says casually.

Lucas nods. “Yeah?”

“Mhm… You talked about your friend Yann, who introduced himself earlier, and… uh, I knew Basile already. The other guy? He was there on Friday, too, right? That’s…?” The question hangs between them for a moment.

“Oh!”, Lucas says in surprise. “That’s Arthur.”

Eliott nods as if that explains everything. “Okay. Does he study biology, too?”

Lucas shakes his head. “No, he’s doing French literature actually.” Why the fuck are they talking about Arthur of all people?

Eliott’s eyes widen. “You? You are with a literature student? Now that’s something I definitely didn’t expect!” He laughs but it doesn’t quite reach his eyes.

“No… uh.” Lucas shrugs. “We’ve been friends since high school, so.” He shrugs again.

The eyebrows shoot up again. “Oh! Okay.”

Lucas gives him a confused look. Then he lets it go, chalks it up to another thing about Eliott he can’t explain. He’s still tempted to ask Eliott why. Why do you care about Arthur? Why are you sitting here with me? Why are you asking me all these questions? Why do you seem so genuinely interested? Why did you post that post? Lucas is afraid to answer all of those questions. Because there’s still the option that Eliott likes Lucas, that he cares, for whatever reason Lucas still can’t fathom, about him. Or, of course, he’s still just humoring him, being nice for the sake of being nice.

At least Lucas can finally answer the question whether Eliott is a jerk or not: He’s definitely not. He’s nice and kind and funny. Passionate and interested. He’s also apparently not at all thirsty, he thinks and glances at Eliott’s still mostly untouched – and completely cold – cup of tea.

Eliott follows Lucas’ gaze and his mouth forms an O when his eyes fall onto the cold drink. He picks up the cup and has a sip. He grimaces and puts the cup down again. “Oops.” He shrugs.

Lucas laughs, looking down at his half-drunk cold cup of coffee. “Time flies when you’re having fun.” He wiggles his eyebrows.

Eliott laughs. He turns around a little, rummages through a few pockets and finally finds his phone, unlocks it. He glances at Lucas quickly, mouths “sorry”, and starts typing, a small smile playing around his lips.

Lucas looks at his watch. It’s almost 3pm.
“Sorry”, Eliott says again and puts his phone away. He looks at Lucas, a little unsure. “I have to go”, he says finally and looks unhappy about it. “Sofiane, my friend… well, you met him. He actually has a date tonight and I kind of promised him to come to his rescue if he needs help. And, well…” Eliott unlocks his phone again and shows Lucas his and Sofiane’s chat. He scrolls up a little, showing dozens of messages Sofiane has sent him in the last hour. “He’s freaking out a little.”

“I get that”, Lucas says, a little reluctantly. He doesn’t want this to stop. “When Yann had his first date with his girlfriend, he didn’t stop talking about it for days.”

“Yeah, guess that’s what first dates do to you, huh?” Eliott raises his eyebrows, smiles.

Lucas meets his eyes and blushes. *Is he…?* He thinks about all the freaked out messages he’s annoyed the group chat with in the last few days. “Yeah…”, he agrees, trying not to let his thought process show on his face.

There’s something in Eliott’s expression that he can’t place. The display of his phone lights up again and he glimpses at it. He sighs, then looks up at Lucas apologetically. “I can’t believe Sofiane is doing this to me.” He sighs again, then he moves to get up. “We might never see each other again because there’s a very real possibility that I murder him tonight and I get sent to jail for life.”

Lucas looks at him for a moment, not sure what to say. The he quickly follows suit, standing up. He takes his and Eliott’s cups and puts them away. Then he turns to put on his jacket, grabs his backpack and follows Eliott, jacket and scarf back on, outside.

When they leave the café, they sort of move in one direction, walking very slowly, neither sure where they’re going. Finally, Eliott stops and puts a hand on Lucas’ arm. He looks deep into his eyes. “I had a lot of fun”, he says. “Thank you for hanging out with me.”

Lucas raises his eyebrows. “Thank you for hanging out with me?” He laughs. “It wasn’t exactly a chore.”

Eliott’s smile is bright and happy, lighting up his whole face. “There’s still so much I want to talk about”, he admits.

“Yeah?”

“Yeah. Uh…” Eliott does that thing again where he taps his fingers against his chin several times, ghosting them over his lips. “Do you maybe want to exchange numbers? You know, so we don’t have to rely on Instagram to talk.”

“Yeah!”, Lucas says, possibly a little too enthusiastically. He reaches for his phone and gives it to Eliott. He saves his number and then calls himself so he has Lucas’. Then he gives him the phone back.

“Thanks”, Lucas says. “I had a great time.” He smiles, doesn’t know how to end this.

Eliott smiles back. “Yeah.”

They look at each other for a long moment.

“Okay, well –”, Lucas says at the same time that Eliott says, “So, do you –”

They laugh awkwardly and Lucas gestures him to finish.
Eliott shakes his head and looks at the floor. “No… uh, nothing.” He looks up again, their eyes meet.

Something in Lucas’ eyes must give Eliott some kind of encouragement because the next thing he knows is that Eliott has stepped forward and wrapped his arms around Lucas’ neck, hugging him. Lucas just… stands there for a moment but then his arms spring into action. He wraps them around Eliott’s waist and holds him.

It’s a long hug. Way longer than your average friendly hug. He shakily breathes in, his chin resting on Eliott’s shoulder now. Eliott smells like smoke, is his first thought. It’s not a bad smell necessarily, but it’s sort of unexpected. But right, Eliott smokes, that’s something he already knew.

Finally, they let go a little, almost at the same time. They put a bit of space between them, but keep their hands where they are.

Lucas thinks he’s getting lost in Eliott’s eyes.

“Hey”, Eliott finally says.

“Hey”, Lucas whispers.

They giggle. Then they break eye contact. Eliott looks down, removes one hand from Lucas’ neck. He grabs his phone from his pocket. Lucas glimpses at what he’s doing and sees that he’s opening his camera.

“Oh”, he says dumbly.

“Wanna take a picture?”, Eliott asks, smiling brightly.

“Let’s”, Lucas just breathes.

Eliott lets go of Lucas’ neck completely, only to step closer again, wrapping one arm around Lucas’ waist now, so that Lucas is now fully tucked into Eliott’s side, his own arms still wrapped around Eliott’s body. Eliott holds out the hand with his phone and they smile at the camera.

Then they each suddenly take a step back, now a comically large gap between them. They smile at each other.

“So”, Eliott begins. “See you around, Lucas.” He raises one hand, the beginning of a small wave, then seems to think better of it and lets it fall to his side again.

“Bye”, Lucas says and Eliott smiles at him once more, turns around and after a few seconds he’s gone.

Lucas keeps staring at the corner where Eliott disappeared. He takes a few deep breaths. Then a girl coming out of the café stumbles into him which rips Lucas from his stupor. “Sorry”, he mumbles, even though he’s not sure what for. The girl gives him a weird look and Lucas doesn’t understand why until he realizes that he’s grinning from ear to ear. He can still feel Eliott’s arms on the back of his neck and back, the phantom touch burning itself into his skin.

His phone buzzes in his pocket. It’s Eliott who sent him the photo they just took. Lucas looks at his own smiling face and doesn’t think he’s ever looked happier.
Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

This chapter probably cost me about ten years of my life, but I hope you enjoy! Let me know what you think, your comments encourage me so much ♥

Vendredi 15:13

Lucas: Thanks for the photo. I had a really great time! Text me if you want to hang out again :) 

Vendredi 15:36

Lucas shakes himself from his stupor. He takes off his backpack, searches for his headphones and breathes a sigh of relief when he finally finds them. He grabs the closest part of them he can find – one of the earbuds – and pulls. His wallet and his biology book almost fall out and he curses under his breath, struggling. He stands up again and looks at his phone for the hundredth time. Eliott hasn’t answered him yet.

So maybe he hasn’t really moved much in the last twenty minutes. After Eliott left, he stared after him for a while and just stood there. Finally, he started walking, but he only ever made it a few steps before he took out his phone to check if he’d gotten a message. Even though he turned on the sound and his phone buzzes.

He needs to be stopped. So he opens Spotify, puts on his Beatles playlist, struggles with his headphones some more and finally starts walking in earnest. He hoped the music would drown out his thoughts, but it doesn’t work. There’s an endless loop of You shouldn’t have sent that text, you shouldn’t have sent that text, you shouldn’t have sent that text, you shouldn’t have sent that text, you shouldn’t have sent that text, you shouldn’t have sent that text — in his brain.

It’s exhausting.

To think that an hour ago he was the happiest and most careless man in the world, is wild.

But that’s the thing. When he was with Eliott, he was able to overcome his awkwardness. They talked, they laughed, it was so nice with him. They got along so well. And now he’s catching up on all the overthinking that he didn’t do during their date. *Which might not even have been a date!*, Lucas corrects himself immediately.

Eliott hasn’t answered him. This is literally the longest Eliott has taken to answer one of his texts since they started texting. And it’s unnerving. It’s scary. It’s annihilating most of the confidence Lucas built up during their maybe-date-but-probably-not-a-date. At the same time, it’s literally not even been an hour since he sent that text, so maybe he should just chill out.

Or maybe he shouldn’t have added that smiley.

Suddenly his phone pings and buzzes at the same time. The music gets quieter and the notification
sound is *loud*. He winces and grabs his phone as quickly as he can. His heart speeds up a little. He sees the messages and lets out an annoyed huff.

**Yann:** How’s the date???? (Don’t answer that, don’t look at your phone while you’re on a date, it’s rude)

**Yann:** Anyway, Chloé is coming over later, I will be forever grateful if we can have a couple hours on our own, just from like 7 to 9 or something??? Let me know when you can

**Yann:** Maybe you can go hang out at his place if it’s going well!

**Yann:** (I’m wiggling my eyebrows which you can’t see) (But it looks great) (This is the enthusiasm of a man who’s getting LAID tonight!!)

Lucas exits out of the chat and sighs. He’s arrived at the bus stop, but now he’s not sure if he should go home. He doesn’t know if Yann is there. If he is, he’s going to want to know *everything* about the date – mainly, why the hell Lucas is *already* back. And Lucas isn’t exactly thrilled about the date (not a date!) being over himself. The last thing he wants to do right now is dissect every single word he said to Eliott today. Even though that’s obviously all Lucas has been doing since Eliott sent him the photo. He doesn’t want Yann to encourage him and tell him he’s sure everything is fine. That Eliott’s probably just busy with Sofiane. That he’ll text him back soon. That this was, in fact, a date.

Lucas is perfectly capable of telling himself all of that. And it might sound more convincing if Yann said it. But Lucas just… well, he just doesn’t want to talk to Yann right now. Doesn’t want to explain himself. Wants to stop overthinking.

So instead, he starts thinking about where the hell he could spend the rest of his day if he can’t go home until later tonight. He thinks about texting his friend Imane who he was paired up with on a group assignment last semester and who’s been his sporadic study buddy. But then he figures that she probably has better things to do with her Friday afternoon than hang out with her weird project partner she doesn’t even know all that well. And it might be a bit weird for him to want to start studying in the second week of the semester.

He thinks about visiting his mother, but she would probably pick up on his restless energy and he really does *not* want to explain this whole situation to her right now.

He thinks about texting one of the other people he met in his classes last semester. But he doesn’t really feel like reconnecting with anyone.

He thinks about texting Arthur, but he, like Yann, would ask too many questions.

So there’s only really one person he can text.

**Lucas:** Are you busy? Wanna hang out?

He texts back almost immediately.

**Basile:** Aren’t you with Eliott anymore??????

**Lucas:** Let’s not talk about it right now

**Basile:** Ok????
**Basile:** Daphné and I are going to one of her friends’ birthday party tonight but you can def come over for a bit if you want

**Lucas:** On my way

Lucas is grateful for Basile being able to not ask questions when he sees they’re not wanted. Yann would look at Lucas with big concerned eyes until Lucas breaks down and tells him everything. Basile will be happy to move on to a different subject, or so he hopes. Which of course doesn’t mean that he isn’t bursting with questions. And that he won’t make fun of Lucas.

He makes for Basile’s apartment. It’s a tiny shoe box, but it’s super close to uni and it’s literally right next to a supermarket. Lucas walks inside and, on a whim, buys a bottle of vodka and some crackers. During check out he refuses to meet the cashier’s eyes. He throws both into his backpack and he walks outside as quickly as he can.

Basile buzzes him in almost immediately. Lucas takes two steps at a time and when he arrives on the second floor, the door to the apartment is already open.

“Hey”, he says when he’s inside, closing the door behind him.

“Hey”, Basile answers. Basile is lounging on his bed, laptop open, loud music blaring.

Lucas makes an aborted move to wave, but thinks better of it. He takes off his shoes and his jacket and lets his backpack drop to the floor. It clunks when it hits the floor and Lucas swears, having already half-forgotten the vodka bottle. Without hesitation he takes it out and throws himself on the bed next to his friend, literally hugging the cold bottle to his chest.

Basile looks at him with wide eyes. There are a million questions in them.

Finally, he turns off the music and asks, “Is this a good vodka situation or a bad vodka situation?”

He barks out a laugh. “I don’t know, honestly. Jury’s still out.”

Basile raises an eyebrow.

Lucas opens the bottle, raises a hand to stop Basile from talking. “No questions, *please.*”

Basile closes his mouth again and shrugs.

Lucas takes a swig of vodka and grimaces at the strong taste. He offers the bottle to Basile.

“I can’t get drunk before Daphné gets here!”, Basile complains, but takes the bottle from Lucas and has a swig as well. He gives it back to Lucas who puts the lid back on and lets it fall onto the mattress. Then he lies down on his back and stares at the ceiling.

“Let me just lie here and think about nothing for a while”, he says.

Basile shrugs, turns the music back on and Lucas couldn’t be more thankful. He closes his eyes.

**Vendredi 19:30**

“And then he *hugged* me, his *arms* were around my *neck!* It was *wild. Wild.*”

“Sounds like it.”
“And then he was like, *haha, you know what we should do? Let’s take a fucking picture and I will smile like an angel, so when I send it to you, you will have a fucking existential crisis and just stand there, in front of the fucking café for thirty fucking minutes!”*

“You did?”

“Yeah! I’m sure people inside thought I was insane!” Lucas takes another swig of the vodka and frowns when he spills some of it on his sweater. He grunts and heaves himself off of the bed with the intention of heading for the bathroom. He feels lightheaded almost immediately, swaying on the spot.

“Whoa whoawhoooa!”, Basile exclaims, jumping up from the bed, steadying his friend.

Lucas huffs and sits back down. The world slowly stops spinning and he gives Basile his best puppy dog eyes until he rolls his eyes and gets up. Lucas cheers, but his face drops immediately when he comes back with a bottle of water.

“Drink”, he says with so much authority that Lucas cowers and obediently takes the bottle and takes a huge gulp of water. After that, he sighs and takes a sip, then another, then another. It makes him feel less dizzy almost immediately, but the buzz stays the same.

He shoves his hand into his pockets, clumsily trying to find his phone. He ends up realizing that he’s sitting on it. He pats it a little and apologizes to it. He unlocks it with his thumb and then opens up his and Eliott’s chat to show Basile the photo.

“Look!”

Basile looks. “You’ve shown that to me like twenty times in the last hour, Lucas.”

“Uuggghhhhh.” He’s on his back again and accusingly stares at the chat, still no new message from Eliott.

In that moment the doorbell rings. Lucas drops the phone on his face in surprise.

Basile hops up off the bed, an excited “Daphné!” under his breath. He opens the door and sure enough, it doesn’t take long until he has an armful of Daphné.

From his position in the corner of the apartment, Lucas watches them hug in greeting and kiss. Daphné says something he can’t make out and Basile giggles. Then he very unsubtly gestures towards the inside of the apartment. Daphné looks up and her eyes immediately fall on Lucas’ pathetic form lying on the bed. Her eyes grow big, they’re full of pity. She lets go of Basile’s arm and runs over to the bed to sit next to Lucas.

“Are you okay?”, she asks.

“I’m fine.”

She sighs. “Do you want to talk about it? Did it not go well?”

Lucas groans. “It was fine, I don’t want to talk about it.”

Daphné looks worried. Her eyes flit from Lucas’s face to the bottle of vodka next to him, over to her boyfriend. She takes a deep breath. “You know what?”, she says, filling her voice with as much excitement as possible. “You’re coming with us. I’m sure my friend won’t mind one more person and I don’t want you to get drunk all on your own.”
Lucas sighs. “No, I don’t –”

“This is not negotiable, Lucas!”, she interjects forcefully.

They have a short staring contest, but Lucas quickly realizes that he has no chance against Daphné’s stubbornness. And it’s not like he actually doesn’t want to go. What he actually wants to do is go home and lie in bed staring at the ceiling. But since that isn’t an option, getting drunk at a party with Daphné and Basile must do. He’s already halfway there.

“Okay.”

Daphné squeals. “Yes! Great.” She jumps up, turns around and looks at Basile who’s still standing by the door. She looks him up and down approvingly. “You look amazing, baby”, she says.

Basile preens under the compliment. “Thank you”, he smiles. Then he looks down at his sweater. “You got this for me.”

“And that’s why you look so great!” Daphné laughs and presses a kiss to his lips. Then he turns back around to Lucas. “Now, up up up! Come on, we have to go!”

Lucas forces himself to stand up. He’s thankful for not feeling lightheaded. He looks up and frowns when he sees Daphné’s disapproving face.

“You need new clothes”, she decides. She walks to Basile’s closet and rummages through it. She finally pulls out a simple black t-shirt. “This should be fine”, she says and throws it at Lucas.

He takes off his sweater and puts on the shirt without fighting her. She’s right. There are stains on his sweater from when he spilt the vodka and it smells like alcohol, too.

Finally, Lucas and Basile put on their shoes and jackets, Lucas quickly runs back to the bed and grabs the bottle of vodka, and the three of them walk outside.

Lucas is very clearly the third wheel here, he thinks while he walks a little bit behind the couple. He stares at their linked hands, how Basile’s whole body is basically turned towards her, how he looks at her constantly. They whisper to each other and every once in a while one of them will giggle loudly. It would be adorable if Lucas wasn’t so insanely jealous. He can’t stop the thoughts from coming. He thinks about Eliott’s arms around his neck earlier. How he smelt like smoke, how it took them ages to let go of each other. He thinks about the warmth Eliott radiated. He thinks about how much they laughed in that café, he thinks about Eliott not drinking his tea at all. He thinks about all the eye contact, how much Eliott looked at him.

He wants to scream. He takes his phone out of his pocket and checks if he has any new messages. Yann sent him a few and Lucas remembers that he never answered him. So he quickly tells him to have fun with Chloé, not mentioning the (maybe?-)date at all. Then he jogs a little to catch up with Daphné and Basile.

“Where are we going by the way?”, he asks.

“It’s my friend Imane’s birthday”, Daphné answers.

“Actually, you should know her”, Basile says, suddenly excited. “She studies biology, too, but she’s a semester ahead of us, I think.”

“Oh”, Lucas just says dumbly. He’s suddenly extremely grateful that he didn’t text her earlier to ask her to hang out with him to study. He definitely dodged a bullet there. How is he supposed to
know it’s her birthday? They’re not *that* close. “Yeah, we were in a group project last semester. She’s cool.”

Daphné laughs delightedly. “Isn’t it so weird how everything is kind of coming together?” She looks at Basile with a fond look in her eyes. “Like, our friend groups just keep merging, huh? Imane and I went to school together, you guys went to school together. And now we’re suddenly all here together hanging out??”

Basile “awww”s and puts his arms around her waist while they keep walking.

Lucas chuckles, unsure of what to say, trailing a bit behind them once again.

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**Vendredi 20:14**

The party hasn’t really started yet. Daphné, Basile and Lucas walk through the open door and are welcomed by an empty hallway that leads to a big living room. Some of the furniture has been pushed aside, several bar tables on one side, a small DJ set up on the other. A huge “Happy Birthday Imane!”-sign was hung on the wall above it. There’s quiet music playing in the background.

Three girls are huddled up in the corner of the room around a table. Lucas can’t quite make out what they’re talking about.

Daphné walks up to them, finally making them take notice of the new guests. One of the three girls, Lucas recognizes her as Imane, squeals when she sees Daphné. They hug tightly and Daphné wishes her a happy birthday. Then she moves on to the other two girls. Basile is next, gives Imane a hug, too, and immediately asks where the beer is. Imane rolls her eyes and gestures towards the kitchen. Then she looks up and spots Lucas.

“Lucas!” She smiles widely. “I didn’t know you were coming!”

Lucas laughs softly, a bit awkward. He shrugs. “I didn’t know I was coming until like thirty minutes ago.”

Imane opens her arms widely and Lucas gratefully takes the invitation and envelops her in a hug. “Happy birthday, Imane.”

“You’ve better brought me a present. I can’t have you show up to my party and just steal all my alcohol.” She raises her eyebrows and looks at him challengingly.

Lucas looks at the bottle of vodka that he still has in his hands and moves to offer it to her. Then he winces. “Sorry.” Imane doesn’t drink.

Imane’s eyebrows first rise even higher, seeing Lucas’ awkward realization. Then she barks out a delighted laugh. “Idiot. I’m happy you’re here, go get yourself a drink. My brother and his friends are out getting more snacks, they’ll be back soon.”

Lucas nods. Imane pats his shoulders, then she turns around to go back to whatever she was doing at that table.

“Hi.” It’s Emma. She and the third girl walk up to Lucas now.

He looks at her with wide eyes. He hasn’t seen her since Yann and she broke up. He isn’t sure what
exactly the best friend code would say about this. He’s always liked Emma but they were never that close, they don’t really know each other.

“I’m Alexia!”, the other girl happily says before Lucas can get himself to react to suddenly seeing his best friend’s ex-girlfriend again.

He smiles at her, then at Emma. “Hey.” He waves at them. *Lame*, he yells at himself.

Alexia laughs delightedly. She takes a step closer to him and gives him a short hug, “It’s nice to meet you.”

“You too.” He smiles, he likes her immediately.

Emma pats him on the shoulder. He smiles at her and they silently agree to just be chill and have fun. Or at least that’s what Lucas is trying to communicate.

Then Emma is gone, Alexia moves to help Imane put up some balloons. Suddenly, the music is turned up, Lucas turns around and sees Emma at the DJ set up, next to a tall man. Lucas doesn’t know him, but the way they look at each other, he suspects that Emma is over Yann already. He laughs at himself, realizes that *he* is the one making things awkward. Emma seems to be happy to let it go, so he will too. He walks to the kitchen and joins Basile, who has taken to rearranging the beers in the fridge to make room for more drinks. Lucas helps him and Imane smiles at them when she walks in to get her phone which was lying on the table. She looks at it and huffs, annoyed.

“I swear, my brother is the most incompetent idiot I’ve ever met.”


“I asked him to go get some chips and stuff and some soda, and now he and his friends have been gone for like two hours!” She sighs. “Honestly, I didn’t even want a birthday party, but my *brother* of all people convinced me and promised to put up all the decorations and now I’m just…” She gestures vaguely to the living room where Alexia and Daphné are struggling with some paper streamers.

Lucas doesn’t know what to say, especially since he wasn’t even really invited to this party that Imane apparently didn’t even want to have.

Basile, though, doesn’t hesitate to tell her how great the party will be and how excited he is. He encourages her and Lucas leaves him to it. He walks back to the living room and starts helping the girls decorate.

**Vendredi 20:50**

Lucas has already lost track of time, he’s standing next to Alex, who’s introduced himself as Emma’s new boyfriend, talking about music when the front door opens again and a group of loud and boisterous boys walk in.

He spots him immediately. It’s Eliott.

Lucas’ eyes widen impossibly and he goes still. Alex is still talking to him, but he’s unresponsive.

Lucas watches as Eliott, arms full with a huge crinkling shopping bag full of chips, laughs at something Idriss says. Lucas does a double take when he recognizes Idriss. Then he looks at the
third guy and recognizes Sofiane and he wants to melt into a puddle and die.

“Is Idriss Imane’s brother?”, he suddenly says out loud. He’s interrupted Alex in the middle of a sentence.

Alex looks at him in surprise, a confused smile on his face. “Yes?”, he says as if that should be obvious.

Lucas flushes a bright red. “Oh my god.” He’s not sure if the universe loves or hates him. He’s thankful that he’s standing a bit to the side, Eliott hasn’t spotted him yet. He does walk right past Lucas when he walks into the living room though. But he makes a beeline for the kitchen and quickly out of sight. Lucas briefly wonders if he should just walk out the door and leave right now. He was never invited anyway. Eliott apparently ditched him for this party, he probably doesn’t even want to see Lucas. Will probably think it’s really weird that Lucas is suddenly here. Won’t believe that Lucas didn’t know that their friend group is apparently much more interconnected than they knew.

Suddenly there’s a commotion in the kitchen. Loud voices yelling something. They sound happy, excited. A loud “whoop”. Then everyone starts singing happy birthday. The boys come out of the kitchen, Sofiane holding a big birthday cake with lit up candles. Lucas sees Eliott, a big smile on his face, his phone in hand, filming everything that’s happening. He quickly looks away. Imane has her hand on her mouth, her eyes wide in surprise. She’s laughing and looks around happily. Alex and Lucas join them, all thoughts Lucas had about running away now impossible.

His eyes suddenly meet Idriss’s, who is already looking at him. He gives him a quick confused look and a smile, but continues singing and happily reverts his attention back to his sister. When they finish singing, he gives her a big bear hug and they don’t let go for a long while.

“I hate you so much!”, Imane laughs. Then everyone takes turns hugging her and she blows out the candles.

Sofiane’s grin is the brightest when he sets down the cake on the table and hugs Imane happily.

Lucas looks at them, a grin on his face, when Basile suddenly shows up by his side. He gives Lucas a beer and he accepts it gratefully.

“I don’t mean to alarm you”, Basile whispers to him, “but Eliott is here. And he’s been staring at you for like the past five minutes.”

Lucas is grateful for the light having been dimmed because his face must be bright red. “What do I do?”, he asks, petrified.

Basile raises his eyebrows. “Dude, what the fuck happened between you two today?”

Lucas shakes his head. “I don’t know, nothing.” He shrugs. “We had fun, then he left.”

“So then what’s the problem?”

Lucas shrugs again.


Lucas finally looks around the room. His eyes find Eliott’s quickly. A part of him expects Eliott to
look away immediately, but his piercing eyes stay on his. Eliott is leaning against the wall, on the opposite side of the room. He’s alone, a glass in his hand.

They maintain eye contact for a few more moments. Then Lucas takes a deep breath, gives Basile a meaningful look. “Okay”, he says more to himself than to Basile and he walks over to Eliott.

“Hey.”

“Hey.” Eliott’s eyebrows are up to his hairline again. There’s a small smile on his lips.

“Long time no see.”

“Yeah.” The smile grows.

“Uhh… I came with Daphné and Basile because I couldn’t go home… uhm… long story. I didn’t know you’d be here.” Lucas lets out an awkward laugh.

“Yeah, Basile told me.”

Lucas raises his eyebrows. “You talked to Basile?”

“I basically ran him over in the kitchen, yeah.” Eliott laughs. “It’s nice to see you again. I was sad that I had to leave so early.” His gaze becomes intense again. Lucas does his best not to break eye contact.

“Yeah, me too.” He looks down quickly, then back up. “So… is this the date that Sofiane had tonight?”

Eliott laughs and finally breaks eye contact. He runs his fingers through his hair a couple times, then scratches his cheek. “Yeah… uh.” He looks around, then takes a step closer to Lucas. He can smell him now. Lucas can’t believe he’s missed the smell of smoke, but he might actually be a bit addicted now. “Okay, so don’t tell anyone, okay? But… uh… we’re sort of setting up Sofiane and Imane tonight. Imane didn’t want to have a party, but Idriss convinced her. We just spent the last few hours convincing Sofiane that this is a good idea. Made a cake, he’s gonna dance for her later and then we’ll lock them up in a room until they kiss.” Eliott shrugs. “That last part was a joke”, he adds, but wiggles his eyebrows.

Lucas laughs. “That’s… impressive.”

Eliott scratches his cheek again and smiles at him. A minute passes before he starts speaking. “The answer is yes by the way.”

Lucas’ confused face makes Eliott laugh.

“Your text. You asked if I want to hang out again. The answer is yes, definitely. Sorry I didn’t answer immediately. Didn’t want to seem too eager.” He looks at the floor for a moment. “Too late for that now, I guess.” He chuckles.

A wide smile appears on Lucas’ face. Is this really happening? He tries to control himself, but he’s getting his hopes up. He throws caution to the wind. “Too eager, huh?”

“Shut up.”

“Why didn’t you want to be too eager, huh, Eliott?”

Eliott scratches his head and laughs. “No, my friends were… I just mean -“
“You mean what?” Lucas tilts his head, looks at him with a teasing grin and laughs loudly. This is happening, this is happening, this is happening, this is happening, the voice in his brain keeps repeating, screaming.

“I really like you! I’d like to hang out with you more. That’s all.” Eliott’s cheeks turn red. Lucas has never seen that before and it does things to him.

Eliott’s honesty always throws Lucas. He was fully ready to continue teasing him, but the world stops for a moment at Eliott’s words. “Oh, yeah?”, he breathes.

“Yeah.”

The air around them gets thicker. Lucas’ breathing speeds up a little, he flushes under Eliott’s gaze. “I like you, too”, he whispers.

Suddenly, Eliott’s face is right in front of him. Lucas stops breathing. His eyes dart from Eliott’s eyes down to his mouth and up again. There are tons of other people in the room, the music is loud, everyone is dancing, but to Lucas there’s only Eliott. His world narrows down to those intense blue eyes and to his lips. Eliott licks them and Lucas’ eyes are transfixed by the tongue peeking out. They get closer and closer…

“Can I kiss you?”, Eliott whispers, so quietly that Lucas can barely hear him.

He doesn’t answer, just closes that last little gap and presses his lips to Eliott’s. The kiss isn’t long and it isn’t much more than a close-mouthed little peck, but Eliott’s lips are soft and Lucas is in heaven.

They part and look at each other, mouths not more than a few centimeters away from each other. Their eyes are locked, Eliott’s gaze intense, but Lucas can’t look away, never ever wants to look away, wants to drown in them. He wants to kiss him again. And again. And a million times more. It’s all he can think about.

“I’ve wanted to do that for months”, Eliott whispers.

Lucas’ holds his breath for a moment. “Me too”, Lucas answers, all the air escaping his lungs at the confession. “Years even.” He doesn’t think about how Eliott hasn’t even known him for more than a few weeks.

Eliott chuckles. “Do you want to get out of here?”, he asks. Then his eyes widen, he suddenly takes a step back, putting some more distance between them. “Just for a walk! To hang out, you know. Just go somewhere our friends can’t spy on us.”

Lucas smiles brightly. “Oh.” Lucas suddenly remembers where they are. His eyes dart around the room. He sees Imane and Sofiane standing in the kitchen talking. There’s Alexia and Daphné dancing wildly with a few other guests Lucas didn’t even notice come in. Alex and Emma are dancing slash grinding on each other, making out wildly. And then there’s Basile and Idriss and Lucas blushes again, because they’re looking right at him, with shit eating grins on their faces. Basile literally gives him a thumbs up and Idriss cackles loudly. “Yeah, let’s go.” Lucas looks away from them and meets Eliott’s eyes again who is also looking in Basile and Idriss’s direction. He seems to be having a silent conversation with Idriss, which Lucas can’t make out. But he doesn’t really care anyway.

What he does care about is being alone with Eliott. Possibly kissing him again. Which is apparently a thing he can do now.
“Yeah okay”, Eliott then breathes, diverting his attention back to Lucas. Eliott takes Lucas’ hand in his and pulls him towards the hallway. Lucas goes willingly, staring at their hands, mesmerized. He never wants to let go. Eliott’s hand is warm and soft. The warmth spreads from where they’re touching up his arm and settles in Lucas’ heart. He feels full and warm and happy.

They do have to let go when they have to put on their jackets. Finally, they close the front door behind them.

The moment they reach the fresh cold air outside, Eliott takes Lucas’ hand again and stops him from walking. They look at each other again, then Eliott basically jumps him.

Their lips meet again, this time in a heated open-mouthed kiss. Lucas can’t think about anything but Eliott’s lips, Eliott’s wet tongue, his hands on Lucas’ neck and cheek. He dares to lick into Eliott’s mouth and he lets out a small noise Lucas wants to treasure forever. They keep kissing, only stopping to come up for air and to dive right back in.

Their lips part with a smack and Eliott leans his forehead against Lucas’. His eyes are closed and Lucas watches as the smile on Eliott’s face gets bigger and bigger. Lucas pecks his lips once more. Then he puts his arms around Eliott’s waist and hugs him. Eliott’s hands immediately fly up to Lucas’s neck again and he returns the hug. It’s basically the same hug they shared just a few hours earlier.

Lucas can feel the giggle sneak up on him and he lets it out and Eliott joins him. Soon enough, they’re full on laughing, still holding each other. Lucas buries his face in Eliott’s shoulder, smiles into it, breathes him in.

The cold air finally reminds them that they’re still outside though. Even the heat Eliott radiates can’t keep Lucas from shivering.

“Where do we want to go?”, Eliott asks, his hands moving to Lucas’ arms, rubbing them, trying to warm him up.

“I don’t know…”

They look at each other. The question hangs between them, unasked. Do they want to go to one of their places?

“My roommate is home”, Lucas finally says.

Eliott raises his eyebrows and smiles. “My roommate isn’t.”

Lucas laughs quietly. “Okay.”

“Ohay?”

Lucas takes a mental picture of Eliott’s beautiful happy smile. “Okay.”

Eliott laughs, he looks down, his eyes scrunching up, basically disappearing because of his wide smile. He takes Lucas’ hand again and he leads him to the next bus stop.

The next bus is in ten minutes, so they sit down on the metal seats at the bus stop. Lucas starts shivering in earnest now.
“When the fuck did it get so cold?”, he complains.

Eliott chuckles. “Is there anything I can do to heat you up?”

Lucas blushes immediately. He looks down at his lap, hoping to cover it up. He just shakes his head. He doubts he hid his reaction successfully though, when Eliott starts laughing loudly.

“Come here.”

Lucas looks up. Eliott has stood up and is extending his arms to Lucas. Lucas meets him, puts his arms around Eliott’s waist and they hug again.

“I don’t know if this will work”, Lucas whispers, still cold, but happy.

“Sorry, I’m doing this for purely selfish reasons anyway”, Eliott says, so quietly Lucas can barely hear it.

He hums happily, deciding to just go with it. Trying to accept that yes, this is his life now. And if it’s all over tomorrow, at least he will have the memory of Eliott kissing him, of Eliott saying things like that to him, of Eliott being… Eliott. Beautiful, amazing, talented, kind, funny Eliott.

The bus arrives and they jump apart in surprise. They get on the bus and sit down.

It’s silent. They sit there, their sides barely touching. Lucas wants to turn his head and look at Eliott, so he does. Eliott is also looking at him, a wide smile still on his face. Lucas smiles back, shyly.

They don’t say anything, happy in comfortable silence.

The bus ride is short. They get off the bus and Eliott leads Lucas to his building, they walk inside, take the elevator up to the fifth floor.

Lucas recognizes the elevator, weirdly enough. It’s the elevator that Eliott has taken many, many selfies in. Has taken many Instagram stories in here. Lucas looks at himself in the mirror, eyes darting over to Eliott several times who meets them and smiles.

Lucas is flushed, his eyes are wide. He looks like he’s been caught in a storm, hair wild, sticking up in weird places.

Then there are arms around his neck again and lips on his. Eliott kisses him, softly but with intent. It literally takes Lucas’ breath away.

The elevator stops and Eliott pulls away. He’s out of the elevator in seconds and Lucas looks after him, a bit stunned. Then he quickly moves to follow.

They walk into the apartment. Lucas doesn’t have time to look around because Eliott is all over him again. His hands brush over his arms, down his back, pressing down on the small of his back. His lips are hot and insistent. Lucas meets him with the same enthusiasm, allowing his hands to travel all over Eliott’s arms and back.

At some point they manage to take off their shoes and jacket. Eliott stops for a moment, then leads Lucas to the living room.

“Do you want to drink something? Eat?”, he asks.

Lucas just shakes his head and kisses him again. They fall onto the couch.
They keep making out for what feels like hours. They sit next to each other, but Lucas is basically on top of him, his torso pressed onto Eliott’s while they’re kissing. His pants are tight, but he’s careful to ignore that particular issue for now.

Finally, they have to stop. Lucas’ lips tingle, are probably bright red and he smiles at Eliott who isn’t doing much better. He doesn’t know what to say, so he just wraps his arms around Eliott’s stomach, puts his head on Eliott’s chest.

Eliott’s arms wrap around Lucas’ back, hands sliding up and down on top of his shirt.

They stay like that, Lucas closes his eyes and smiles.

**Samedi 06:52**

**Lucas:** YANN

**Lucas:** I just woke up on Eliott’s couch with Eliott LITERALLY ON TOP OF ME

**Lucas:** He is so cute, he’s still sleeping, I don’t know what to do, I’m just staring at him

**Lucas:** I’m fine, I’m fine

**Lucas:** You know, just an update in case you thought I died last night

**Lucas:** Hope you had fun with Chloé
Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

Please note that I added something to the tags! Hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Samedi 07:30

Lucas is in agony. More specifically, his bladder is. He’s lying on the couch in Eliott’s living room, head on the armrest, uncomfortably contorted, Eliott half on top of him. Eliott’s head rests on Lucas’ chest, his hair tickling his chin every once in a while. Their legs are entangled, pinning Lucas to the couch. And he really, really, really needs to pee.

He sighs and tries to move Eliott’s head a little. But there’s nowhere for it to move to. Lucas has two options: waking him up or throwing him off the couch – which would result in him waking up and also a possible head injury. So he’d rather go with option one.

“Eliott?” he whispers.

No answer.

He lifts his hand and runs his fingers through Eliott’s messy and slightly greasy hair. “Eliott?” He rubs his shoulder, smooths his hand down his back and up again. “Hey, I need to get up…”

Still no answer.

Lucas sighs. He really needs to pee. So he starts lifting up his upper body, thankful for working out semi-regularly as he’s lifting up Eliott’s dead weight. Eliott starts moving a little in his sleep. His head starts sliding down Lucas’ chest. Lucas wraps his arms around Eliott’s torso before he can slide off the couch. He grips him tightly and tries to detangle their legs. In the process he accidentally kicks one of Eliott’s shins and he flinches. His body tenses for a moment, then his eyes open. Eliott lifts up his head, but he can’t go far, his body bent uncomfortably because Lucas is still half-sitting up.

“What are you doing?” Eliott mumbles and shifts a little to his left, so he’s still in Lucas’ arms but not quite as bent at the hip.

“I really have to go”, Lucas says quickly and finally lets go of Eliott. Then he gets up, this time not carefully. He runs out the living room and suddenly realizes he doesn’t even know where the bathroom is. He looks around. He has four options. He chooses the one by the front door and gets lucky. The door slams shut and he finally pees, sighing in relief.

When he’s done he washes his hands and looks around for a moment. The bathroom is small, old-fashioned grey tiles on the walls and floor. The shower is tiny. His head starts to hurt a little and his mouth tastes terrible. He’s thankful he seems to have evaded a full blown hangover. But he should probably ask Eliott for a spare toothbrush.

He leaves the bathroom and almost literally runs into Eliott who is… just standing there, kind of staring at nothing. He flinches when Lucas opens the door, looks up and looks at him with wide
eyes.

“Oh”, he says.

Lucas gives him a confused smile. He points to the bathroom door behind him, still half open.

“Oh”, Eliott says again. “I thought you left.”


Eliott laughs softly, shaking his head.

“I mean, unless you want me to…”, he teases.

“No!”

Lucas laughs. He gives Eliott a smile and takes a step closer. “I just had to pee really…” He takes another step closer. “…Really…” Another step, he’s standing right in front of him now. “Really badly…” He tilts his head to the side, lips centimeters away from Eliott’s.

“Are you seducing me through pee?”

Lucas barks out a laugh.

Eliott shudders jokingly and smiles widely. He leans in. The kiss more teeth than anything else, both of them smiling too much.

“I would never just leave”, Lucas finally says, having composed himself a little. He looks Eliott straight in the eyes. Gives him another peck on the lips. “Not my style.”

“Good”, Eliott breathes. He takes Lucas’ hand. “So… should we go back to the couch? I got woken up rather rudely…”

“Yeah.”

Eliott leads him back to the living room. “Wait a moment.” He disappears and Lucas sits down on the couch, finally looking around the room. It’s small. There’s a small table in front of him, a TV opposite the couch, a bookcase underneath it. On the right, next to a window, there’s a bookshelf that’s half books and half vinyls. On a cupboard next to the TV Lucas sees a record player and wonders if Eliott actually listens to vinyls. Would suit him. The walls are decorated with many different kinds of things. There are photographs of landscapes, some framed paintings, some cartoons that Lucas immediately recognizes as Eliott’s and on most available surfaces there’s a picture of Eliott or Idriss in different situations with different people. The whole apartment seems like a huge walk down memory lane. Lucas realizes that Idriss is probably Eliott’s roommate – another thing he didn’t know yet.

At that moment Eliott comes back. He has a blanket and a pillow in his arms. He throws both at Lucas.

“Hey!”

Eliott cackles and heavily sits down next to Lucas.

Lucas turns around and puts the pillow on the armrest next to him, leans on it a bit, facing the window. Suddenly he feels how sore his neck is. He rolls his head and stretches, yawning. Then he tries to situate the blanket in a way that it covers both him and Eliott, but it doesn’t quite work with
Lucas half-lying down and Eliott still sitting on the middle of the couch, watching him struggle.

Finally, Eliott gives in, laughs and moves a bit closer to Lucas. He tries to squeeze himself in-between Lucas and the back of the couch, but that makes Lucas almost fall off it. It’s just too small. So he nudges one of Lucas’ legs off the couch, so there’s enough space to squeeze between Lucas’ hip and the backrest, and puts the rest of his weight on Lucas stomach and chest, lying half on top of him again, almost in the same way they woke up.

“You’re heavy”, Lucas huffs into Eliott’s hair that’s tickling his chin again.

Eliott lifts his head back up. “I can –“

“No, no! It’s fine!” He lifts his arms and wraps them around Eliott’s shoulders, pulling him even closer. He closes his eyes.

“I didn’t plan this correctly”, Eliott says quietly after a moment. Lucas can feel his warm breath through his t-shirt.

“What?”

Eliott huffs. “I was going to kiss you, but now I can’t even reach you without you falling off of this thing.”

Lucas giggles. “I thought we were going back to sleep.”

“Me? Going back to sleep? While I’m literally lying on you? Highly unlikely.”

“What?! You were sleeping before!”

Eliott laughs into the t-shirt. He kisses Lucas’ chest, then puts his cheek on top of Lucas’ heart. It makes Lucas very aware of his own breathing which in turn makes his heart beat faster which makes his breathing speed up which makes his heart beat faster which…

He takes a deep calming breath. This isn’t the first time a boy has been on top of him. But it’s the first time that it’s Eliott. It’s just so… nice. More than nice. Lucas never wants this to end. Wants to stay right here, in this position for all eternity. But he also wants to kiss him. He wants to touch him. And not even necessarily in a sexual way (although, yes, that definitely, too), he just wants to hug him, wants to hold his hand, wants to touch every single mole on his arms and back, wants to kiss them. Wants to find all the tattoos that he’s seen hints of, wants to explore them, find out their meanings. He wants to talk to Eliott. Find out what his favorite music is, if he listens to it on vinyl. He wants to know everything. He wants everything. At the same time and so much. It’s a little bit scary. And exciting. And he isn’t sure if Eliott feels the same way. Too afraid to ask him, too afraid he’s making everything up in his head.

“I can hear you thinking from here”, Eliott whispers.

Lucas is startled out of his thoughts. “I’m not thinking.”

“Aawwww!” Eliott lifts his head up again, moves to sit up a little, but Lucas pushes him back down, hugging him a bit tighter, his hands moving up and down Eliott’s back. He’s starting to feel hot with the blanket and a warm body on top of him, but he doesn’t care. “You sounded so grumpy! That’s so cute!”

“What? I’m not grumpy!” Lucas stops his hand movements, resting one hand in Eliott’s hair, the other on one shoulder blade.
Eliott laughs so hard he snorts which makes Lucas laugh so hard that Eliott has to lift his head because Lucas’ chest is moving too much.

Eliott moves up the couch a little bit and Lucas puts some weight on his left leg on the ground, so Eliott has more room. It’s not exactly comfortable but at least his neck is protected by the pillow and he can look at Eliott now.

He’s still just as beautiful as always. There’s a red spot on the left side of his face where it was smushed into Lucas. His eyes are small, still not quite awake. His hair is even messier than usual, parts of it sticking up, parts of it a bit matted and unkempt. It’s in stark contrast to Eliott’s usual extremely effortless but carefully put together look.

“What are you thinking about?”, Eliott finally asks.

Lucas blushes. He’s been openly staring at Eliott’s face for a while now. “You’re beautiful”, he finally shrugs, deciding on telling the truth.

Eliott’s cheeks turn a little pink and Lucas watches, fascinated. Then Eliott comes closer and they kiss. It’s slow but intense, the slide of their lips soft and wet and Lucas is melting into a puddle.

Eliott kisses his lower lip and then moves down a little, kissing his chin, down to his neck. Lucas inhales sharply, the wet heat of Eliott’s mouth sending sparks through his whole body. Eliott starts sucking on the area where Lucas’ jaw meets his neck, his hands smoothing up and down Lucas’ sides and finally sneaking their way under his shirt. Lucas flinches a little at the cold hands on his warm stomach. Then he giggles when Eliott ghosts up one hand over his right side. It’s probably supposed to be sensual, but Lucas is ticklish. Eliott lifts his head a little, his lips ghosting over Lucas’ neck now.

“Am I funny to you?”, he asks, his voice darker than usual.

“Yes”, Lucas answers.

That makes Eliott lift up his head completely, looking Lucas in the eye. He looks so offended that it makes Lucas literally shriek in laughter.

Eliott sits up completely and folds his arms. It makes Lucas laugh even harder. He sits up and embraces Eliott, his arms tight around his torso. He buries his face in the crook of his neck, gives him a peck. Then he kisses his cheeks, his nose, his forehead and, finally, his lips.

“I’m sorry”, he breathes into Eliott’s mouth, still giggling a little. “You are extremely hot and I was enjoying myself very much.”

“Extremely hot, huh?”, Eliott says with raised eyebrows, smiling.

“Mhm…”

Eliott starts laughing, giving up his pouty act. He kisses Lucas again.

That’s when there’s a commotion behind Lucas, a door being thrown open, loud footsteps.

“I am walking inside!” Idriss pops his head into the living room, smiling brightly when he sees Lucas and Eliott, sitting entangled on the couch. “You’re dressed! I’m so proud.” He frowns. “Or disappointed? I don’t know, whatever you prefer.”
Eliott groans. “Idriss, *out.*” He kisses the top of Lucas’ head as if to say sorry. “*Please.*”

Idriss just cackles. “Dude, I live here, too!” With that he finally walks in completely, goes to the bookshelf and looks at it, putting his hand on his chin as if deep in thought.

“*Idriss.*”

“I’m just looking for… I don’t know where it could be… Maybe… Uh, no…” Idriss makes a show out of scanning every single shelf for whatever he’s looking for. When he doesn’t find it, he moves on to the rest of the room. Finally, he’s standing right in front of the couch. “Are you, by chance, sitting on my phone?”

Eliott makes an undefinable noise. “*Idriss, what the fuck.*”

Idriss starts laughing again, taking delight in Eliott’s discomfort. Then he looks at Lucas, who’s just sitting, watching, not having moved and – honestly? – kind of enjoying the show. “We’ve met. Hi Lucas, I’m Idriss. Sorry for interrupting, but this guy has been insufferable for a long time and he desperately needed to get laid. So thank you.”

Eliott throws a pillow at him.

“And I’m gone! Thank you for nothing, I will go find my phone elsewhere.” Idriss walks out the door, closes it behind him. After a moment, there’s a loud shriek of fake surprise. “I found it, you guys! It was on my bedside table, sorry for interrupting!”

Eliott groans, burying his face in Lucas’ hair. “I’m so sorry, he’s the worst.”

Lucas giggles. “I don’t know… I’m kind of glad that your friends seem to be just as bad as mine.”

Eliott leans back a little, so he can look Lucas in the eyes. “Bad? My friends are literal devils. Idriss and Sofiane once literally came on a date with me because they were worried I would screw it up.”

Lucas raises his eyebrows. “And your date…?”

Eliott laughs. “Well… I’m pretty sure she noticed the two tall guys hiding behind plants and sitting in the same café as us, glancing at us every two seconds.” He stops for a second. “Fuck. I can’t believe I’m sitting here, with *you,* talking about a date that wasn’t… well, with *you.*” He shakes his head, winces. “Sorry.”

Lucas shakes his head in return. “No, no… it’s fine. I mean… you know, I once went on a date with this guy. Or, I mean, I wanted it to be a date, but I wasn’t sure, you know? I’d liked him for a really long time, couldn’t believe my luck, really. And we had a great time and the whole time I was wondering if he just enjoyed my company in a platonic way or… Well, then he left all of a sudden and then I met him at a party the same day. And then we kissed each other senseless and I woke up in his apartment and, well… I’m still not sure if that was a date, you know.”

“Would you like it to have been one?”, Eliott asks, eyebrows raised.

“Yeah.”

“Then I’m sure the guy thought the same.” Eliott winks at him. “He would be an idiot if he didn’t want it to be one.”

Lucas stops a moment to take this in. “Okay”, he whispers and leans in to kiss him, but Eliott moves his head, so he ends up kissing Eliott’s ear.
“You know…”, Eliott continues. “I can’t fucking believe you didn’t think it was a date? What should I have done to make it even more obvious that I’m completely gone for you?”

Lucas blushes. He feels the giggle sneak up on him. He’s not sure if he’ll ever get used to Eliott saying stuff like that to him. Maybe he doesn’t want to get used to it. “Yell Lucas, I’m interested in you romantically at me? And then kiss me?”, he says sheepishly.


Lucas smiles into the kiss, his face probably as red as a tomato. “Me too”, he whispers into Eliott’s mouth.

Eliott smiles so hard, they have to stop kissing and this time Lucas moves on to the rest of his face and starts kissing down his neck.

“Idriss?”, Eliott suddenly yells, startling Lucas so much that he almost jumps back. He giggles.

“Yeah?”, comes Idriss’ voice from somewhere in the apartment.

“I have a boyfriend now!”

Idriss lets out a lot “whoop!” and cheers.

Eliott cackles.

“Boyfriend, huh?”

Eliott looks at Lucas, grinning widely. He nods.

Lucas rolls his eyes. “I guess… I mean… if I have to.” He shrugs, but his flushed cheeks and bright eyes give him away.

They kiss and kiss and kiss and Lucas never wants it to stop.

The blanket has dropped to the floor, they’re sitting side-by-side, Lucas leaning on Eliott. He slides his lips against Eliott’s, lightly bites his lower lip, takes a deep breath and then moves his left leg over Eliott, effectively sitting on his thighs. He continues kissing him and a moan escapes Eliott’s throat.

“C’mere”, he whispers. He smooths his hand up and down Lucas’ back beneath his t-shirt, then grips hard and pulls him even closer, making Lucas sit on his lap completely.

Lucas can feel Eliott hard against him. He moans into Eliott’s mouth and starts lightly grinding against him.

“Fuck”, Eliott breathes. Then he stills. “Fuck, wait, no.”

Lucas pulls back, flushed and confused.

“We’re on my fucking couch”, Eliott breathes. “Wanna take this to the bedroom?”

“Yeah”, Lucas answers, too impatient to make fun of him for the cheesy line. He stands up, realizes how uncomfortable he’s in his pants – and not just because of his arousal, he’s still in his clothes from yesterday and he’s dying to take off his tight jeans. He groans. “I feel so gross.”
Eliott’s eyes are wide, still looking at Lucas from his position, slumped on the couch. “You are the most beautiful man I’ve ever seen in my life.”

“I also haven’t showered in two days”, Lucas deadpans.

Eliott barks out a laugh. “I don’t fucking care.” He jumps up, pecks Lucas on the lips and then takes his hand and pulls him towards his room.

**Samedi 11:21**

“You know, I wanted to ask something else”, Lucas says, his cheek lying on Eliott’s shoulder, speaking into his neck, unwilling to lift his head and break skin contact.

They’ve been lying like that for a long time now, only having taken a break to take showers and brush their teeth. Finally clean and happy and satiated they’ve started talking. About pretty much everything. About vinyls and music, their favorite films, uni…

“Mhm?”, Eliott hums in answer, eyes closed.

“When did you take that video that you posted that Tuesday evening? The one I commented on.”

Eliott tries to move his head and Lucas has to move down Eliott’s body a little to make that possible. His head is now resting on his chest and he can look up and meet Eliott’s eyes.

“On that first Tuesday”, Eliott answers. “I cut it off literally a second before you show up.” He smiles at the memory.

“Oh, yeah?” Lucas grins, lifts his head finally, and pecks Eliott on the mouth.

“Yeah”, Eliott breathes into Lucas’ mouth.

“So… you said something else… About knowing me for months? What was that about?”

“Oh.” Eliott blushes.


“Well… okay, so I didn’t know who you were, okay? I just… I don’t know, I saw you at the cafeteria once. Last semester. You were with your friends, uh, Arthur and Basile, I think. You were just sitting there, you were telling this story and laughing really hard. I heard you talk and I don’t remember what you said, but it made me laugh.” He shrugs. “And then Arthur, like, doubled over in laughter and hugged you.” He stops for a moment to think. “I thought you two were dating, you know.”


Eliott laughs, his whole body shaking, shaking Lucas with him. “You know”, Eliott begins, sobering a little, but his voice tapers off. He kisses the closest patch of skin he can reach, Lucas’ temple, and nuzzles a bit further into Lucas’ neck.

“I know what?”, Lucas asks quietly, smiling contently.

“I was jealous, you know. That day I saw you and the others at the cafeteria. You were talking and you and Arthur looked… I don’t know… close.” He huffs out a small laugh.
Lucas startles a little, trying to look Eliott in the eyes, even though it’s impossible if he refuses to lift his head up. “You were jealous of Arthur?”

“Yeah… And then, when we had our first date in that café, he hugged you when I arrived.”

Lucas starts laughing for real now.

“Don’t laugh at me! What was I supposed to think?” Eliott lightly slaps Lucas on the back, then pets it soothingly. “So there was never anything between you two?”

“Oh my God”, Lucas just says. “No! I honestly can’t believe I ever thought you were mysterious. You’re, like, the lamest person I know!”

“Hey!”

Lucas laughs again.

Eliott contorts his body a little, until he can kiss the top of Lucas’ head without disturbing his comfortable position.

“I’m just kidding”, he says quietly. “You’re literally the best and most amazing person I know.”

Eliott hums contently. “I should hope so”, he murmurs. “I’m your boyfriend after all.”

Lucas literally squeals. He finally does lift his head up and smothers Eliott’s face with kisses.

It makes Eliott giggle and his giggles quickly escalate into hysterical laughter, until he has to push Lucas off of him to take a few deep breaths and try to regain control of his body.

Lucas looks at him, slumped on the bed, face blotchy from laughter, sex, and his shower, his head propped up by a pillow, naked. He tries to take a mental photograph – unsure of how that works – to commit this image to memory as best as he can. It will last him a lifetime.

Then there’s a knock on the door. Lucas acts fast and grabs the blanket, pushed down at their feet, and pulls it over both of them. And he shouldn’t have been a second too late because Idriss happily opens the door, sticks his head in. Lucas doubts that he expected them to be covered up to the neck with a blanket and staring at him with wide eyes, because his smile drops a little.

“Oh.” He hesitates, moves to close the door again, but doesn’t. “I was not expecting that. Hope you’re decent.”

Eliott looks at him as if he’s lost his mind. “Clearly not, Idriss.”

“Oh. Yeah, right. Anyway, Eliott, we were supposed to go meet with the Beta productions people…?”

Eliott closes his eyes and sighs. “Fuck.”

Idriss winces. “Sorry… I just don’t think we should cancel.” Then he smiles again. “But you know what? Sofiane texted. He slept on Imane’s couch tonight! I mean… not like you two, my sister is a decent human being, but you know.” He shrugs and cackles at Eliott’s indignant expression. “Anyway, get ready.” And with that, he closes the door again.

Lucas giggles. “He gives me whiplash. He goes from earnest to being an idiot in 0.1 seconds.”

“I know. It’s the bane of my existence.” Eliott groans. “Oh fuck. I can’t fucking believe I have to
get up now. You know, I wasn’t lying when I said I could literally stay in this bed with you for all eternity.” He looks at Lucas and he looks crestfallen, Lucas “aww”s at him. Eliott folds his arms and Lucas cackles, then he hugs him again, finally letting go of the blanket he was holding to cover them up. “We have a meeting with this production company, they are interested in sponsoring one of my short films… It’d be a great opportunity to get some free equipment.” Eliott sighs.

Lucas just nods solemnly as if he knows exactly what Eliott is talking about. Then he places kisses all over Eliott’s face. Then he smacks a final one on his lips, groans loudly and forces himself to get out of bed. He turns on the spot, looking for his clothes. He finds them one by one, bends down to pick them up and starts getting dressed.

When he’s done he looks to Eliott, still in bed, sitting up, blanket bunching up around his waist. One of his hands is resting on his crotch.

“Eliott.”

Eliott blushes intensely. His hand flies up and he shifts a little.

“Fuck, I’m going to kill you.” Instead, Lucas gets back on the bed and kisses him. He sits on his lap, sneaks his hand under the blanket but Eliott stops him.

“Wait, no. Fuck. I really do have to go. Fuck, I hate this so much.” He sighs and looks up at Lucas.

Lucas just laughs at him. He gets off the bed and folds his arms, looking at Eliott. “Come on. I gave you a show, now it’s your turn.”

Eliott laughs, lowers his head. “I hate you so much.” But he does get up and finds his clothes pretty quickly after that. They exchange a few more kisses and finally make their way out of Eliott’s room.

Saying goodbye to Eliott at this moment might actually be the most difficult thing Lucas has ever done. He puts on his shoes and jacket in the hallway. Eliott is standing beside him, watching with a sad look on his face. When Lucas is done, Eliott is in his space immediately, wrapping his arms around his neck and kissing him. They keep kissing until Idriss, standing in the doorway to his own room, clears his throat.

“I’ll text you, we’ll hang out tomorrow if you want?”

Lucas nods, smiling. “Bye.” He doesn’t trust his voice, so he doesn’t say anything else. He kisses Eliott one more time.

“Bye”, Eliott whispers.

Lucas leaves, forces himself not to look back and enters the elevator. He looks at himself in the mirror, his eyes still wide, his cheeks flushed, and his hair even wilder than last night. He feels like he just woke up from a fever dream. He grabs his phone from his backpack, takes a picture of himself in the mirror and posts it as an Instagram story, adding a red heart next to his face.

When he’s outside walking to the bus stop, he gets a notification.

srodulv: ♥♥♥

Lucas smiles widely. He clicks on Eliott’s account and sees a new post. It’s a black and white video of everyone singing happy birthday to Imane. Lucas sees himself when Eliott zooms in a little. In the video he’s smiling, looking happy. He can’t believe that this is a Lucas that existed
before he knew how Eliott’s lips taste, what he looks like naked. A Lucas unsure of Eliott’s feelings for him.

Lucas is so happy he could burst. He gets on the bus and finally goes home.

Chapter End Notes

I'm not really sure how long this fic will end up being since (as you might have noticed lmao) this doesn't really have much of a plot and I don't really plan on getting super angsty with this. We'll see, I definitely have plans for at least two more!
Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

I had a hard time with this chapter, but then Eliott posted on Instagram today and suddenly I had a million ideas. Everybody say, "thank you, Eliott!"
Hope you enjoy! And happy christmas if you celebrate it!

Samedi 12:39

[Boys’ group chat]

Yann: Guys, it happened. Lucas came home and he’s disgustingly happy. Literally hasn’t stopped smiling for a second

Basile: He JUST came home?????

Basile: Lucas, did you ACTUALLY go home with him last night???? Daphné and I were wondering but didn’t dare make assumptions

Lucas: Sure you didn’t

Arthur: Wait go home with who?

Yann: You have three guesses

Arthur: Wait Eliott? So the date went well?

Lucas: Yup

Arthur: Holy shit!!! I’m so happy for you man!

Basile: Daphné and I are screaming!!!!!! Can’t believe

Lucas: Shut up

Yann: Don’t listen to him, he’s in heaven

Basile: Tell me everything!!!!

Arthur: Not /everything/

Arthur: But most of it, yes please

Basile: We saw you kissing at the party and then you left, did you go to his place?

Arthur: Wait you saw them kissing, what party and why wasn’t I invited?

Basile: Daphné’s friend Imane’s birthday party, doesn’t matter
**Basile:** LUCAS! Talk!

**Arthur:** I feel left out

**Lucas:** I don’t know

**Lucas:** We kissed, it was great. Then we did go to his place and just sort of fell asleep on the couch? And then we woke up and kissed some more. Then we talked a bunch and now we’re boyfriends apparently

**Basile:** BOYFRIENDS

**Basile:** Fuck I’m so happy for you

**Basile:** I can’t wait to see him on Tuesday, so I can find out his side of the story, I’m sure it’ll be a bit more interesting

**Lucas:** Hey!

**Arthur:** I’m so happy for you Lucas!

Lucas looks up from his phone when Yann knocks on his door and, without waiting, walks in.

“Hey”, he says and sits down next to Lucas on the bed.

“Hey.”

“I’m really happy for you.” Yann leans against him, as much of a hug as is possible with Lucas half-propped up on his pillow and half lying on the bed with his laptop on his stomach.

“Thank you.” Lucas smiles. “I am too.”

“Wanna tell me more?” Yann raises his eyebrows, sits back up and looks at Lucas expectantly.

Lucas shrugs. “What do you want to know?”

“What happened, exactly?”

“Did you see my texts? We were at the party and we kissed.” He shrugs again.

“Yeah, yeah. But that’s, like, the gist of it. But did you talk? Did he tell you he likes you?”

Lucas blushes. “Yeah. He… uh, we talked a lot. He told me he saw me in the cafeteria once? Apparently he knew who I was when we met the first time.”

Yann’s eyes widen. “No way!”

“It’s so weird because it happened so quickly all of a sudden, like, I’ve really liked him for a long time and then he became this real person and then we talked and it was great and then we kissed and now? I guess I just don’t know how to continue this, part of me is afraid that he’ll get sick of me tomorrow.” Lucas shrugs. He grabs his phone to check if he has any new messages. But besides Arthur and Basile dissecting the possibility of Daphné wanting a tour on the Seine for her birthday, there’s nothing. “I guess I’m just waiting for him to text me. Or…” He sighs. “What might be even
worse… I’m waiting for him not to text me.”

“Like ghost you?”

“Yeah! What if he saw me last night, I was a bit drunk and I was willing, you know. He took me home and maybe that’s all he wanted?”

“Wait! Did you two have sex!!” Yann leans forward, his face mere centimeters from Lucas’, eyes wide open.

Lucas blushes. “Yeah.”

Yann leans back, lifts up his hand and Lucas gives in quickly, meeting him in a high five. “I can’t believe you didn’t lead with that!”, Yann laughs. “Dude, I’m so fucking proud of you.”

“Shut up!”

“No! You got to sleep with your celebrity crush! That’s, like, ultimate bucket list goals! That’s like me sleeping with Halle Berry, circa 2004. You know, when she played Catwoman? Damn…”

“You go back in time and sleep with Halle Berry, sure… I’ll tell Chloé when I see her again.”

“Fuck off.” Yann grabs his phone and enthusiastically starts tapping.

Lucas watches him, suspecting that something’s up. “What are you doing?”

“Just telling Arthur and Basile all about your sexual escapades.”

“What?!”

“I’m kidding! Oh my god.” Yann cackles. “I just followed Eliott on Instagram. See? Now he can be my new best friend.”

“Sure.” Lucas doesn’t want to admit it, but he really wants Yann to like Eliott.

“Okay”, Yann begins. He puts his phone away and his face gets a bit more serious. “But really. The way you were talking before… That didn’t sound like him just wanting you around for a night of beautiful, hot gay sex.”

“I hate you so much, oh my god.” Lucas shakes his head, but he thinks for a moment. “I don’t know. I mean… we didn’t actually have sex until this morning. Like, we talked before and last night we just fell asleep on the couch.”

“Wait, you didn’t even have sex last night? Dude, that’s the opposite of a one night stand. I will rip out all my hair if Eliott isn’t into you. And I really don’t want to do that.”

Lucas just shakes his head. “I don’t know. Maybe I should text him. He responded to my Insta story earlier and I didn’t really know what to say.”

Yann’s eyes widen. “The one in the elevator? And you haven’t answered him?”

“He sent me three hearts! What am I supposed to answer!”

“He sent you three fucking hearts? Are you fucking kidding me?”

Lucas is a bit taken aback by Yann’s sudden change in tone. He almost sounds angry.
“I can’t believe you!” Yann shakes his head.

“What?”

“I can’t fucking believe you! You have the balls to tell me that you’re unsure if Eliott is serious about you, make me think you had a one night stand. And then it turns out you guys just literally slept on a couch and then had sex the next morning after talking for fucking eight hours!”

“That’s not –“

“Doesn’t matter! And you make me think he hasn’t texted you and then it turns out he did! And he sent you hearts! And you’re fucking in love with him and you still don’t know what to text back? Are you kidding me, Lucas? Are you? Oh my god! And I thought Basile was bad when he was losing his mind about Daphné!”

Lucas puts his laptop to the side and sits up. He scratches the back of his neck and thinks for a moment. Yann might be right. In fact, Lucas knows that Yann is probably right. Is definitely right. But… well, Lucas doesn’t have the best track record with relationships and this particular one? It’s just too good to be true. “I think I’m just very self-conscious and, unless Eliott screams I’m interested in you romantically at me every ten minutes, I’ll just keep second guessing everything?” He shrugs.

Yann sighs.

Lucas suddenly lets out a laugh. He thinks back to their date yesterday. “He literally did that, you know? He looked at me once and told me he was interested in me romantically.”

Yann sighs again. “Jesus Christ. You are helpless. I’m leaving. Come talk to me when you’ve texted him back.” And with that Yann pats Lucas on the shoulder, gets up and leaves the room.

Lucas falls back onto his bed, puts his laptop back on his chest and thinks about what to do. The memory of Eliott saying that to him… it does things to him. He wants him to say it many more times, never ever stop. He might be a little bit in love.

Samedi 16:20

[srodulv Instagram story: Eliott and Idriss walking down the street talking over each other, excited. “We have something new to show you very soon!”, Eliott promises the camera before the video ends.]

Lucas: So the meeting went well?

Eliott: I think so! They were interested in sponsoring a video, so that’s really great. I might get a free camera lens out of it

Lucas: That’s great!

Eliott: We’re gonna go for an early dinner and celebrate now, sorry, I wish I could talk more but we kind of have a no phone policy

Eliott: Miss you
Lucas: No worries, have fun! Say hi to Idriss from me

Lucas: Miss you too ♥

Eliott: ♥

Samedi 23:46

Eliott: Lying in bed thinking about this morning

Lucas: Jokes on you, I haven’t stopped thinking about this morning all day

Eliott: ♥

Eliott: Idriss and my other so-called friends gave me so much shit for yesterday. But they really want to meet you, wanna hang out with them next Friday?

Lucas: As long as you’re there I’ll go anywhere with you

Eliott: That is so fucking cheesy and I love it so much

Lucas: Good

Lucas: I wish you were here, our heating still doesn’t work even though Yann called the landlord three times this week

Lucas: You’re so warm and cuddly

Eliott: Aww, I’m sorry :( 

Eliott: I don’t think anyone has ever called me cuddly before

Lucas: First time for everything

Eliott: Wish you could come over right now but I’m basically already asleep. Do you want to hang out tomorrow? Idriss is gone for most of the day

Eliott: We can also go somewhere if you want! Have a second date. Where both of us actually know it’s a date. If you want

Eliott: But I also really just want to kiss you some more

Lucas: Yes please, let’s meet at yours. I feel like I haven’t kissed you in years. What time?

Eliott: He should be gone by 11? So whenever you want really

Lucas: I’ll be there at 11 then

Eliott: Can’t wait ♥♥♥ good night

Lucas: Good night ♥♥♥
Mardi 7:47

Eliott: Miss you, see you soon ♥

Lucas is yawning and hasn’t been able to get out of bed yet, but as soon as he sees the text Eliott just sent him, he’s wide awake and smiling. A moment later there’s another text. Eliott has sent him a picture. Lucas opens the notification and he stops breathing for a moment. The picture shows his boyfriend, still in bed, his head on his pillow, one arm on his forehead, looking into the camera with half-open eyes. The picture cuts off just under his chest, his tattoo and hints of his abs visible, and he is so unfair. He stares at the jawline, his messy hair, his eyes, his everything. He feels himself stirring in his pants but he does not have time for this.

Lucas: You are so fucking hot

Eliott: ;)

Lucas opens Instagram and sees that Eliott has posted a story. He clicks on it and is welcomed by almost the same picture. In this one, Eliott’s arm covers his eyes though and his tattoo isn’t visible, it cuts off just above Eliott’s chest. He’s added a sleeping emoji right next to his face. Lucas sends him a bunch of hearts via DM. Eliott likes them moments later. It’s sort of mindblowing to Lucas that he can do this now without feeling weird about it. And it’s mindblowing to him that he has a different version of this picture of his phone now that’s… slightly more explicit. He can’t believe Eliott wants him to send him hearts. That Eliott wants him, period. But he does, that much has become abundantly clear to Lucas on Sunday. He thinks he should probably get used to it soon. He doesn’t want this to stop any time soon after all.

He glances at the time and sighs. He needs to get up, shower and have some breakfast.

Mardi 9:31

Lucas hasn’t seen Eliott in over 24 hours and they haven’t texted in, like, at least an hour and it’s killing him. Ever since he saw the picture, he’s been dying to kiss him, touch him, just be close to him.

It’s the third week of the semester and Lucas can’t believe how much has changed in such a short time. He’s sitting on the floor in front of the lecture hall again, just like that first time, waiting for class to end and people to leave.

So maybe he was a little bit too enthusiastic about seeing Eliott again and got here a tiny bit too early. This is the first time that he’s actually excited for this lecture from hell. Not that he has any idea what the topic of today’s class is or what they talked about last week, he is 100% planning on, just like the last two weeks, staring at Eliott the entire time. Except that this time, Eliott will be staring back. Lucas truly can’t believe his luck.

He is listening to music and is startled when the door to the lecture hall suddenly opens. Students start spilling out, talking loudly and walking past Lucas without so much as glancing at him.

Lucas slowly stands up and waits for the students to leave and then stays there for a few more
minutes until the professor has left as well. Then he pops his head into the door and glances at the lecture hall. It’s empty, so he walks up the stairs and sits down on his and Basile’s usual seats in the back. He looks at his phone again and thinks about texting Eliott that he’s arrived. But Eliott knows they’re meeting here, he’s definitely already on his way here, since his place is a bit further away from uni than Lucas’. So texting him now won’t make him appear quicker. He sighs and settles for opening Instagram and scrolling aimlessly.

“Hi.”

A voice startles Lucas so much he almost drops his phone. He looks up and looks into beautiful smiling blue eyes. “Oh my God”, he says out of reflex and laughs.

“Just me.”

Eliott’s smile is so wide and happy it basically physically pains Lucas to look at. He does so anyway. Blue eyes staring into blue. It feels like coming home, it feels like peace, it feels like happiness. Lucas stops himself before he starts thinking thoughts like Ah yes, I think I could spend the rest of my life with you.

Eliott beams at him some more, he sits down, then his face comes closer and he gives Lucas a short kiss. “Missed you”, he whispers into Lucas’ mouth.

“You too.” His voice is almost inaudible, but he’s sure Eliott got the gist because he dives right back in and they start kissing in earnest.

Eliott is sitting halfway between his and Lucas’ seat, his entire body turned in Lucas’ direction. His left hand travels up and down Lucas’ right arm and his other hand is on his neck, his thumb rubbing slow circles into his skin. Lucas feels hot, every touch, every slide of their lips sends sparks through his whole body. He never wants to stop.

Suddenly, someone clears their throat right next to them. Lucas and Eliott jump apart in shock, still in their seats. They look up and see Basile standing right behind Eliott, hands on his hip. He’s smirking at them like it’s the best day of his life. “Hi guys.”

“Hi.” Lucas barely recognizes his own voice, high-pitched and caught off guard. He feels himself flushing bright red. His eyes dart between Eliott, Basile and the rest of the lecture hall, now starting to fill up, but no one is paying attention to them.

Basile bursts out laughing and lets himself fall onto the seat next to Eliott. “Dude, your face!” He points at Lucas. Then he looks at Eliott and elbows him happily. “Dude, it’s so nice to meet you again. This time we can actually be friends!”


Basile immediately starts talking about his morning, about yesterday, about uni, about Daphné and whatever else he can think of. Meanwhile, Lucas puts his head on Eliott’s shoulder and groans. But he listens, laughs at the appropriate times and enjoys being this close to Eliott again. This continues until the professor starts the lecture. Lucas lifts up his head and takes Eliott’s hand instead, so they’re still touching. Lucas glances around and notices that their row is completely empty and there’s only a few people scattered in the two or three rows in front of them. Lucas is already blushing but he feels himself heat up even more, for a different reason now than before. Eliott’s eyes dart over to him and Lucas can see the happy smile trying to take over his face, but Eliott succeeds in schooling it into a more neutral and bored expression that’s more appropriate for the beginning of a lecture. Lucas can’t help himself and pecks him on the cheek. Eliott loses his
battle immediately, a wide grin breaking out on his face. It makes Lucas giggle.

“Oh my god, you guys are disgusting”, is all Basile says as he wishes he hadn’t sat next to the two of them, which makes Lucas giggle even more. He leans against Eliott again, hiding his face in his sweater.

Then the three of them try to pay attention to the lecture. Lucas and Basile didn’t really care the last two weeks and they definitely don’t now, but Eliott is looking at the professor attentively. He finally leans down to get his notebook out of his bag. Then he kisses the top of Lucas’ head once more before moving in a way that forces Lucas to take his head off his shoulder. Eliott leans forward a bit and starts taking notes. Lucas and Basile share a look over Eliott’s back. Basile raises his eyebrows and Lucas just shakes his head. Then they both burst out into laughter at the same time. They try to keep it quiet, but the few people that dared to sit closer in front of them still turn around and give them a mildly interested look.

Eliott looks up at them quizzically. Lucas just shakes his head. He slumps down in his seat a little and watches as Eliott takes notes. It’s honestly adorable. And a little annoying. And Lucas feels bad, but really? He only wants Eliott to pay attention to him right now and not a stupid lecture. And he’s aware he’s ignoring the fact that they’re literally in a lecture right now that he should probably listen to as well. Instead, he puts his hand high up on Eliott’s thigh, just because he wants to and he’s pretty sure he can. Eliott doesn’t react. So Lucas sighs inaudibly and tries to pay attention to the lecture, keeping his hand where it is, his thumb rubbing circles into Eliott’s jeans every once in a while.

After maybe thirty minutes, Eliott finally stops taking notes and leans back a bit. He crosses his legs, squishing Lucas’ hand in-between his thighs. It doesn’t hurt, but it definitely makes Lucas glance at his boyfriend, smirking. Eliott is staring intently at him. His eyes are dark. He comes closer, face centimeters away from Lucas’. “You are killing me”, he whispers.

Lucas just answers with a self-satisfied grin.

“Fuck me”, Eliott groans quietly. “You are so fucking cute.”

“Cute?”, Lucas mocks. “Cute?”

“The cutest thing in the entire world.” Eliott comes closer, rubs their noses together for a moment, then suddenly leans right back. “I just remembered where we are.” He blushes.

Lucas does too, he glances at Basile, who’s busy with his phone. There’s a 50/50 chance in him either complaining about how gross they’re being in the boys’ group chat or him playing candy crush without even having noticed them. When he looks up after a few moments, it’s clear that the answer is the former. Basile looks straight into Lucas’ eyes and just shakes his head, as if disappointed.

“I honestly can’t believe you wouldn’t pay attention to this party of a lecture, you guys”, he whispers.

“It’s actually pretty interesting!”, Eliott interjects.

Lucas and Basile just give him a look and shake their heads.

Eliott giggles. Then he rummages in his bag for a bit and comes back up, phone in hand. “We have to document this momentous occasion. The first time we’re all in a lecture together, not at all listening.”
Lucas doesn’t say, *that might be new for you*, but he definitely thinks it. As does Basile if his face is any indication.

Eliott holds his phone at the height of the table in front of them, opens the camera app. He takes a sneaky picture of the lecture hall, then turns the camera around. Basile and Lucas lean into him a little bit. They all make an annoyed face and Eliott takes a few pictures. Then he goes through them and giggles. Lucas watches as Eliott zooms in on Lucas’ face in one of them. One eyebrow arched high, eyes looking up and his mouth open in an O.

“You are so fucking cute”, Eliott repeats quietly.

Lucas giggles and Basile groans.

“Do you guys mind if I post this to Instagram?”, Eliott asks.

They both shake their heads, so Eliott opens Instagram and adds an eye-roll emoji under their faces, tags both of them and adds the photo to his story.

The whole thing gives Lucas a rush that he did *not* expect at all. He grins and takes out his own phone, opening Instagram and looks at the story. He sends a quick reaction of a heart eye smiley and a few seconds later Eliott giggles next to him. Their eyes meet and Lucas blushes. When he looks back down at his phone he sees that Eliott answered him.

*srodulv*: I may or may not have a boner right now

Lucas literally chokes on nothing, coughing to cover it up. He looks at Eliott with wide eyes and Eliott doubles over in laughter.

“Your face, oh my god.”

“Guys, people are really starting to notice now”, Basile whispers, a little twitchy. And it takes a lot for Basile to stop someone from talking in class.

Eliott tries to compose himself, a few giggles still escaping him. He glances at Lucas next to him, who is bright red, and starts laughing again.

Lucas cannot *believe* him. He smiles to himself, leans back in his chair and tries to pay attention to the lecture again.

**Mardi 17:29**

Lucas is back in the media buildings. He just spent his lunch break with Chloé, filling her in on everything that happened this past weekend. She already knew most of it from Yann, but she was still absolutely *delighted* to hear it from Lucas himself. Lucas doesn’t know how many times people have told him they’re *happy for him* in the last couple of days, but it’s been a lot of times. Not that he’s complaining. He’s pretty happy for himself, too after all. After lunch his afternoon class got cancelled and he spent some time in the library, actually doing some of his reading for this week’s seminars. He’s pretty proud of himself.

He’s walking through a hallway he’s never been in. Unsurprisingly it doesn’t really look different from the hallways he’s used to from the science buildings. He finally finds the right room and leans against the wall, waiting for class to end and for Eliott to come out.
He’s thankful for his professor having cancelled his own four o’clock class, enabling him to fulfill a long-time fantasy: picking up his boyfriend from class. Which might sound like the most boring fantasy in the world but to Lucas, it’s as romantic as it can get. He smiles to himself. He glimpses at his phone. There’s a slew of Instagram notifications. He’s been getting a bunch at a time all day now, ever since Eliott posted that photo of the two of them and Basile. No one’s messaged him so far, but he’s got a bunch of new followers and a few people liked almost all of his posts. He’s not sure how he feels about it, but he’s decided to ignore it for now. Mostly it feels new and exciting, like everything in the last couple of days.

The door opens and Lucas looks up, excited. Eliott is one of the first people to leave the room and a huge smile appears on his face when his eyes fall on Lucas. He’s next to him in seconds, pecks him on the lips once, and then takes his hand. “Hey.” His voice is quiet and gentle. Lucas beams in response.

They walk outside. They’re headed for the bus stop to go to Lucas’ place. Eliott starts talking about his last seminar, something about American counterculture in film, and Lucas is sure that it’s all very interesting and he’s listening intently, but he’s also busy staring at their intertwined hands, their legs, Lucas having to walk a bit faster than usual to keep up with Eliott’s longer legs, Eliott’s face, excited and happily sharing his passions. Sharing them with him. Because they’re boyfriends now and that’s what boyfriends do.

“… and we… Lucas? Are you even listening to me?”

Lucas winces. “Counterculture! Born to be wild. Sex, drugs and rock n roll and all that, right?”

Eliott looks at him dubiously, but laughs and is about to say something else when they’re stopped by a girl timidly waving at them.

“Hi”, she says.

“Hi”, Lucas answers, confused.

“Uh…” The girl, probably a student, maybe around Lucas’ age, maybe younger, he has no idea how to tell, looks nervous. Her eyes dart between Eliott and Lucas, but finally land on Eliott and stay there. “Uh, you’re… uh, you’re srodulv, right? Uh, Eliott I mean.”

Eliott lets go of Lucas’ hand to hold it out to the girl. “Yes, hi, nice to meet you.” They shake hands and he smiles at her.

“Uhm… I’m a big fan of your videos. I was actually at the party the other week as an extra, it was so fun! Uh, yeah but I didn’t get to talk to you then and I just saw you now, which is really exciting, so I figured I’d tell you now. Uh, yeah.”

“That’s so nice of you! Thank you, it genuinely means so much.” Eliott is smiling, he’s bouncing a little, a tick Lucas has learned means that he’s nervous. “I mean, it’s part of why I do it, you know? I mean I would also do it if no one was watching, but knowing that people care… well, that makes it even better, you know?”

“Yeah.”

“What’s your name?”

“Uh, Clémentine.”

“Ohh, that’s a lovely name!”
“Thank you so much.” She giggles.

Lucas is pretty sure he can see literal hearts in the girl’s eyes. The way she’s looking at his boyfriend should probably make him feel a bit protective, or possessive, but it gives him so much joy. Or maybe it’s not necessarily her saying all these things to Eliott what gives him joy. It’s watching Eliott react to her words. It’s priceless. His eyes are shining, he’s laughing and he looks so surprised and happy. It makes Lucas happy.

Then Eliott is suddenly looking at him, a question in his eyes. Lucas widens his eyes, having tuned out of their conversation, lost in thought. Then he looks at the phone in the girl’s hand and he quickly gets what’s expected of him. Eliott stands next to the girl, puts an arm around her shoulder and they smile at the camera. Lucas takes a few pictures, then looks at them to make sure they’re good and gives the phone back to the girl.

She smiles at him in thanks, then immediately turns her attention back to Eliott. He gives her a hug and the girl must be in heaven because she looks dazed when she says “thank you”, waves at Eliott one last time and then leaves.

It’s silent for a moment. Then their eyes meet, Eliott’s smile is timid and Lucas arches an eyebrow.

“So you’re famous, huh?”, Lucas finally says and starts cackling immediately when Eliott’s eyes grow big. “This happen to you a lot?”

Eliott coughs to suppress his laughter. He folds his arms. “I… – uh… no!” He starts laughing. He scratches his cheek, ghosts his fingers over his mouth, another nervous tick that Lucas has gotten to know now. “It happens once in a while…”

“Once in a while?”

“Like… Once a week? I don’t know. It happened a lot during the first week because, you know, film students. People recognized me in classes, but…” He shrugs.


Eliott is full on giggling now. “You’re unbelievable”, he whispers and pecks Lucas once more before he moves to keep walking, pulling Lucas along with him.

“No but that was so sweet”, Lucas says, finally a bit more serious. “You know, when I saw you two weeks ago after the lecture, I totally wanted to come up to you and tell you basically the same thing. But then I got scared and ran away. That girl was so brave, man. Would I have been just one of many people coming to talk to you that week?”

Eliott lets out a loud laugh. “You know, I was wondering why you suddenly ran away like that.”

“Got scared.” He shrugs. “You were too hot in person.”

“Oh my god.” It’s like Eliott can’t stop himself. He stops walking, lets go of Lucas’ hand and frames Lucas’ face with his hands. “You are the most beautiful man I’ve ever seen”, he says, looking Lucas dead in the eyes.

Lucas doesn’t know what to say, so he closes the small gap between their faces and kisses him.

“And, you know, I desperately wanted you to come talk to me. I was pretty disappointed when you left. Then Basile came and he told me about this friend of his that’s a big fan of mine. I hoped that
it was you because I’d seen you around but…” He shrugs.

“Unbelievable.” Lucas giggles.

“Basile and I actually took a whole video together. For you, saying like, ‘hey Lucas, come talk to Eliott, pleeeeeease!’”

“No, you did not!” Lucas laughs.

“We totally did! I’ll show it to you later. I should have it on my phone.”

Lucas giggles, pecks him on the lips again and takes his hand. A few minutes later, they finally reach their destination.

“You know, I don’t think it’s ever taken me this long to get to the bus stop.”

“Guess you’ve never walked to a bus stop with me as your boyfriend.” Eliott winks.

“Guess I haven’t.” Lucas giggles again. They stand a little to the side, several other people also waiting for the next bus, and Eliott puts his arms around Lucas. Lucas leans his head into Eliott’s neck and shoulder, kisses his collarbone – or really, Eliott’s scarf – and sighs happily.

There’s a click and the sound of Eliott breathing in deeply. Lucas doesn’t want to leave his very comfortable position, but when the smell of smoke hits his nose, he looks up. Eliott has taken one of his hands and has somehow lit a cigarette. He’s holding it to his mouth, taking a deep drag, sighing happily while tightening his other hand on Lucas’ back. Suddenly he looks down and meets Lucas’ eyes. He takes another drag, wiggles his eyebrows and breathes out, the smoke hitting Lucas’ face.

Lucas makes a noise he’s not proud of and takes a step back, out of the embrace. “Eliott!”

Eliott starts laughing. “No, no, please come back!” He makes his best puppy dog eyes at Lucas and Lucas is whipped, okay? So he walks right back into Eliott’s arms.

“Don’t do that”, he pouts. “I’m trying really hard not to start smoking regularly.”

“Sorry, baby”, Eliott whispers into his ear and takes another drag of his cigarette, this time turning his head and blowing it away from Lucas. “Unfortunately, I’m addicted.”

“Mhm…” Lucas looks up at him, narrows his eyes. “Maybe I can help you get rid of this addiction, baby.”

Eliott giggles at the pet name, exhilarated. “Unfortunately, this is an addiction that’s good for me. It calms me down when I’m nervous or feel like I’m slipping, you know. Which I’m not right now, by the way. This is a I’m-happy-cigarette.”

“It’ll also kill you at some point. And you smell like smoke.” But Lucas gives in quickly. He won’t tell Eliott how to live his life. “Which I like”, he admits, rolling his eyes.

Eliott laughs at him and kisses the top of his head and then laughs even more at Lucas’ scandalized expression.

They’re interrupted when the bus arrives. Eliott throws his cigarette on the ground, puts it out with his foot. Lucas gives him a look and Eliott winces. He mouths “sorry”, but he’s laughing, so Lucas isn’t sure if he’s taking him seriously. He just rolls his eyes. He’s not in the business of making all
of Eliott’s bad habits go away.

They quickly get on the bus. Lucas narrows his eyes at the person sitting on their seat (not that they sat there together more than once) and then leans against Eliott, who’s holding on to a pole. Every once in a while, a small giggle escapes him. He just can’t believe how happy he is. That he can do this. Talk to Eliott, laugh with Eliott, tease Eliott, kiss Eliott, hug him. He tightens his hands on Eliott’s jacket when the bus goes around a corner and giggles when that makes Eliott grab him around the back and tighten his other hand around the pole.

“You’re beautiful when you laugh”, he whispers into Lucas’ ear.

Lucas thinks his face might split open soon, he’s smiling so hard.

They don’t speak for the rest of the bus ride.

“You know, I was supposed to get off the bus much earlier that first time”, Eliott says when they get off the bus.

“Oh yeah?”

“Yeah. Guess I just wanted to talk to you but I couldn’t really think of anything to say.”

Lucas giggles. He opens the front door and they start walking up the stairs. Once they’re all the way on the fourth floor, he pushes Eliott against a wall and kisses him. “Haven’t done that in a while”, he whispers into Eliott’s mouth.

“Yeah”, he just breathes in answer.

Then Lucas unlocks the door and they walk in. They take off their shoes and jackets, throw them in the general direction of the other jackets. Then Eliott is right back in Lucas’ personal space again, his hands low on Lucas’ back. He leans in for a deep kiss.

They’re interrupted pretty quickly by Yann clearing his throat. He just came out of the kitchen/living room area. “Hey guys.” He raises his eyebrows.

“Hi.” Lucas looks at him disdainfully. How dare he interrupt them?

Eliott though, probably wanting to make another good impression on his boyfriend’s best friend and roommate, lets go of Lucas and walks up to Yann, shaking his hand. It’s a bit awkward and Yann’s fake-disapproving face melts into a delighted laugh. “Dude”, he says and then pulls Eliott in for a hug.

Eliott laughs happily.

“Alright”, Lucas suddenly pipes up. Eliott turns around to him, lifting his eyebrows in surprise. Yann just looks at him expectantly. “Eliott, you’ve met Yann. Happy you’re getting along. Now let’s go.” He walks up to Eliott, pulls on his elbow and basically pushes him into his room. Eliott makes an aborted move to wave at Yann, but Yann just cackles and turns around to go back into the living room.

Inside of Lucas’ room, Lucas is on Eliott in seconds, kissing him deeply, moaning. “I’ve wanted to do this all day.”

Eliott just kisses him back and takes a step forward, forcing Lucas to take a step back. They keep going until the back of Lucas’ knees hit the bed. Eliott pushes him on it and Lucas goes willingly.
Lucas thinks he completely loses his mind at the sight of Eliott leaning down and crawling on top of him on the bed. A lap full of Eliott is what dreams are made of.

“You are so fucking hot”, Eliott whispers into his ear.

Lucas has to take a deep breath to calm himself down. Yes, this is his reality now.
Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

This picks up right after chapter 8 but after that there are a bunch of time jumps, so please note the time stamps!
The next chapter will be the last one but for now, I hope you enjoy this one and please let me know what you think!

Mercredi 05:21

Lucas wakes up slowly, and then all at once. He’s hot, the blanket sticking to him, his arm, thrown over Eliott’s chest, glued to the warm body. Their legs are entangled, everything feels a bit too sticky to be comfortable. Lucas slowly blinks his eyes open, his cheek stuck to some part of Eliott. He inhales deeply. Eliott smells warm, sticky, like he hasn’t showered in a while, like smoke. Lucas lifts his head a little and notices his face was stuck in Eliott’s armpit. It makes him wrinkle his nose for a moment but he smiles anyway. It feels kind of wrong, forbidden. But it also feels so intimate and familiar that he can’t get himself to feel anything but love. (Not that he’s in love with Eliott of course. Except that maybe he is, just a little bit.)

But he’s overheating quickly, Eliott is a furnace and Lucas isn’t used to being warm in his freezing bedroom. So he sits up a little, extricating himself. His arm makes an interesting noise when he unsticks it from Eliott’s chest and he has to slowly pull his other arm, almost numb, from under Eliott’s body. The fact that he didn’t wake up because of his arm alone is a miracle. He shakes it a little, trying to get some feeling back into it.

The blanket falls off Lucas’ shoulder and he immediately shivers. It is cold. Eliott stirs a little when Lucas has managed to detangle their legs as well. He pauses for a moment, but Eliott doesn’t wake up. Lucas reaches for his phone, still in the back pocket of his pants, carelessly thrown on the ground. He is blinded by the glare for a moment. He shields his eyes with his hand until they get used to the light. Then he looks at his phone again and freezes for a wholly different reason: His lock screen is filled with notifications. Way more than usual. They’re usually organized by app, but his phone starts glitching when he taps on the Instagram notifications, trying to open them.

He unlocks his phone then and opens Instagram. The little heart on the bottom says 99+ and Lucas’ eyes widen. He has a lot of new likes, a lot of new followers and a lot of direct messages. He clicks on his own profile first. He doesn’t know exactly how many followers he had yesterday, but it wasn’t more than a couple of hundred, mostly acquaintances, some friends, but also many bots he never bothered to remove unless they commented weird things on his posts. Now his follower count is at 4,826. He refreshes and he’s at 4,903. Lucas swallows thickly. He looks at the like-notifications. He doesn’t recognize any of the names, but a few of them catch his eye: eliottsdemaury, eliott.fan.00, eyelashdemaury and so on. At least this explains it, he thinks. Lucas is almost thankful because everything becomes clear pretty quickly: Someone must’ve put two and two together and Eliott’s diehard fans found out about him.

And don’t get him wrong: Lucas is very aware of Eliott having a lot of fans, he was one himself. Is one himself. The thing is just that he was never the kind of fan that made a whole new Instagram page for him, he never posted about Eliott on social media ever. The only way to know that Lucas
is a fan, too, is to actually know him, be his friend. In other words: Unless you’re Yann, Arthur or Basile, you wouldn’t know.

Or…

Well, Imane and Daphné definitely know, too. Emma as well. And his ex-boyfriends. But the point is that to someone who only knows him through his Instagram profile, he’s just a random college student, hanging out with friends, sometimes posting selfies or funny memes. There’s nothing about his profile that should be interesting for people who don’t know him. It definitely doesn’t scream Eliott’s boyfriend.

Still, Lucas has a few interesting new comments on his latest Instagram post. The post is already two weeks old, Lucas going through phases of either posting a lot at once (and then deleting like half his posts) or not posting anything (except maybe stories) for weeks at a time.

eliott.demaury omg he’s so hot

srodolf.dem @eliott.demaury idk is he

eyelashdemaur sygsdsdhjd omg IS THIS REALLY ELIOTT’S NEW BOYFRIEND im freaking out omgomgomg

Lucas keeps scrolling through the comments, hundreds of them. It’s mostly the same people over and over again, having full-blown conversations, some of them not even about Lucas or Eliott). Some people are arguing. He starts reading a few of them, but quickly decides that these people probably didn’t expect him to actually read this. Probably wouldn’t want him to read this. imhimAt least very few of the comments are actually directed at him personally.

The app crashes and he has to reload it. He almost doesn’t dare, but the next thing he does is open his DMs. There’s a few dozen new ones. He scrolls through them. They’re pretty tame. A few people trying to start a conversation, a few people just bluntly asking him how he knows Eliott, and there’s a DM from one of his former work colleagues commenting on how they got messages about Lucas because Lucas posted a photo of the two of them hugging a year ago. Lucas ignores all of them for the time being.

That’s when he sees that Eliott posted a story that he hasn’t seen yet. He clicks on the little icon at the top of his display. The first story is the one from yesterday morning, Eliott, Lucas and Basile looking at the camera, annoyed at their lecture. Both Lucas and Basile are tagged. The next story is a selfie, Eliott’s eyes each covered with a single red heart. Lucas catches himself pausing the story and looking at it for a while longer than necessary. He can’t stop himself from thinking about Eliott thinking about him, putting literal heart eyes on top of his own eyes. At least that’s what he assumes this photo means. The last story is a picture of hands, intertwined, resting on Eliott’s thigh. Eliott tagged Lucas again, a red heart next to the tag. Lucas thinks the photo is probably from the bus ride to Eliott’s place yesterday. So this is the story that made everyone come to the conclusion that Lucas and Eliott are dating. Well, they’re not wrong, he thinks.

Lucas is a bit overwhelmed. He glimpses at the time, can’t believe it’s barely 5:30. He closes his eyes for a moment and, without his permission, a smile breaks out on his face. Eliott has gone Instagram official with him. And granted, he probably should’ve asked Lucas first. But he also kind of did, didn’t he? At least he asked before he posted the story with Lucas and Basile, so maybe he took Lucas’ positive reaction to mean that he didn’t care. Which is true, Lucas doesn’t mind. It’s just so quick. And so much. But it also makes him incredibly happy. Because it’s further proof that this is real, he’s not making it up and his head, Eliott wants him.
So he taps the option that lets him repost Eliott’s story to his own story before he can overthink it. He doesn’t add anything to it, just posts it and then exits Instagram.

Lucas lies back on the bed, staring into the darkness for a moment. Then his phone, resting on his chest, lights up. He looks at the lock screen and his eyes widen when he notices that new Instagram notifications have started flooding him. He quickly unlocks his phone again and looks for the notification settings and changes them, so he doesn’t receive notifications for every single like, comment or DM anymore. Then he puts his phone on the bedside table, screen down, so he isn’t tempted to look at it again if it lights up.

He still feels hot, for a totally different reason now though. At least he’s less sticky now. Eliott still hasn’t moved, eyes closed, lying on his back, face relaxed and as beautiful as ever. Lucas moves to lie on his side, puts his arm over Eliott’s naked chest again. He situates his face near his shoulder instead of into his armpit this time, cuddles close, and then closes his eyes, takes a deep breath, smiles and falls asleep again.

**Mercredi 07:38**

Lucas is out of breath, but at least he’s on the bus. He’s been panting for a solid minute now and he thinks he should probably start working out a bit more regularly again if running to catch a bus is really this exhausting for him.

Lucas’ phone woke him up again at 7 for his regular Wednesday morning wake up call. But since he had Eliott in his bed, everything took a little longer than usual. He tried not to wake him up as he left and showered, had a quick breakfast.

When Lucas was done, dressed and almost ready to go, and came back into his bedroom, Eliott was awake and looked at him with big eyes.

“I thought you had left”, he whispered and his voice betrayed the smirk on his face. It made Lucas go weak in the knees. Which is the reason why Lucas had to run to catch his bus.

“I’m about to”, he whispered. “Make yourself at home. I have to go to class.” They kissed for a good ten minutes until Lucas finally got himself to leave Eliott’s arms.

Lucas sighs at the memory and stares out of the window. It’s raining, traffic is terrible, his hair is still a little bit wet and a mess, and he’ll probably be late for his class at 8. He should text Basile. He unlocks his phone and looks at his notifications for the first time since he turned them off for Instagram. There are a bunch from his texting app.

**Basile:** Yo, I have so many new followers because of that photo Eliott posted

**Basile:** Daphné is asking if he can post a picture of her sometime? She’s trying to get new followers so she can get some sponsorships

Lucas snorts and quickly puts his hand in front of his face and looks around, hoping no one noticed. As always, people are way too preoccupied to notice anything but themselves, so he’s safe.

**Lucas:** Ask him yourself

**Lucas:** I’ll probably be a couple minutes late. Save me a seat?
Basile: Sure

Lucas ends up getting to class at exactly 8 o’clock. He’s panting really hard when he plops down next to Basile. He just gives him a look.

“You okay?”

Lucas nods, trying to catch his breath.

Basile laughs and Lucas gives him the finger. At the same time their professor enters the room which makes it impossible for them to have any kind of conversation.

Mercredi 9:38

After the seminar, Lucas and Basile leave the room and head for their next class.

Lucas yawns. “I’m so fucking tired.”

Basile raises his eyebrows. “I heard you were with Eliott last night?”

Lucas side eyes him. “Yann?”

“Yeah.”

He laughs. “Of course.”

They walk outside and Lucas glimpses at his phone. There are a few messages that were sent over the last hour.

Eliott: Fell asleep again and woke up without you. Miss you already :(

Eliott: Ran into Yann in the kitchen, I might have been a little awkward

Eliott: Hope your class was good, going to uni now. Do you want to have lunch together?

There’s a huge smile on Lucas’ face and Basile elbows him. “You’re so whipped for that dude, man.”

“Yeah”, Lucas just says.

Basile smiles at him and the conversation ends there.

Lucas does meet up with Eliott for lunch and they spend most of it just looking and smiling at each other over their food.

Mercredi 18:58

When Lucas gets home that night he’s greeted by Yann, smiling at him brightly. He groans and goes to disappear into his bedroom. Yann stops him.
“Dude, dude.” He puts an arm on Lucas’ shoulder. He looks him into the eyes for a moment, then hugs him. “Dude.”

Lucas chuckles nervously. “What?”

Yann lets go and gives him a meaningful look. “I had an interesting conversation with your boyfriend and his intentions with you this morning. He –“

“Yann! What the fuck!”

“No, wait hear me out. Don’t worry, I won’t reveal all his deep dark secrets that he shared with me. Just…” Yann giggles. “I’m really happy for you. Eliott seems like a really great guy. And he’s really, really into you. I can tell, believe me.”

Lucas blushes. “Okay? That’s nice.” Lucas doesn’t say it, but he appreciates this. He wants Yann and Eliott to get along. “What are we having for dinner?”, he asks, changing the subject.

“Oh, I’m actually about to leave, I’m going out with Chloé.”

Lucas just nods and walks into the kitchen, looking for food. There’s not much.

Yann leaves within the next ten minutes and Lucas is back on his phone. He texts Eliott, asking if he wants to come over. Eliott does and he brings over take out.

Lucas decides to put all thoughts about Instagram followers out of his mind, to be dealt with later. Much later, if it’s up to him.

Lucas and Eliott eat their take out, watch a movie together and talk and laugh all evening. They end up falling into bed together and don’t leave it again until well into Thursday.

**Vendredi/Samedi**

*[Eliott’s Instagram stories:]*

Friday evening, a party, everyone’s dancing, lights are flashing, people cheering.

Eliott, Basile and Yann smoking together outside, blowing smoke rings.

A selfie, Eliott, a cigarette in his mouth, smoldering into the camera.

Eliott and Lucas smoking together, Eliott kisses him on the cheek. The video cuts off right before Lucas has time to react.

Very early on Saturday, a shot of Paris at night.

Saturday, noon, Eliott, in bed, dark rings under his eyes, a “sick” emoji next to his face. Lucas is tagged.]

**Samedi 00:25**

Lucas is drunk. He’s holding onto Eliott’s neck for dear life, dancing, grinding into him, loudly singing along to the music. His eyes meet Yann’s from across the room, who’s doing the same with
Mercredi 06:40

When Lucas wakes up in Eliott’s arms on the second Wednesday in a row, it’s to kisses. He keeps his eyes closed or a while longer, his boyfriend pressing short little kisses to his cheeks, his nose, his forehead, his eyes, his lips, his chin. To every single part of his face.

He involuntarily lets out a “mhm…” and the kisses stop all of a sudden. At that, he blinks his eyes open and is greeted by two gorgeous blue eyes. Even though they look a little grey in the morning light that’s dimly coming through the window behind Eliott.

“Hey”, Eliott whispers, his face so close that Lucas can feel as well as hear his voice. “I thought you’d never wake up.” His smile could power an entire city.

“I might’ve been awake for a while”, Lucas murmurs and leans forward, capturing Eliott in a slow deep kiss.

“Mhm…”

“I like this”, Lucas says when he leans back a little.

“Me too.”

“We smell terrible though”, Lucas says, voice still dreamy and quiet.

Eliott barks out a sudden loud laugh. Then he wrinkles his nose and clams his mouth shut, as if he just realized that he probably has pretty bad morning breath.

Lucas giggles. “It’s okay. I just don’t think we ever made it to the bathroom to brush our teeth last night.”

Eliott’s eyes widen at that. Lucas is definitely right.

They share a smile and then giggle again. Lucas presses a close mouthed kiss to Eliott’s lips and then leans his head on Eliott’s chest, sneaking his hands under Eliott’s body, hugging him close. They stay like that for a while, until an alarm starts ringing.

Lucas’ head pops up quickly. He sits up and grabs his phone. “It’s seven, fuck. This is just like last week. I have class in an hour.” He moves to get out of bed, but he’s stopped by two arms grabbing him around the stomach, pulling him back into bed.

Eliott kisses the back of his neck. “You can’t go”, he whispers into it. “I forbid it.”

Lucas sighs and enjoys the kisses for a few more minutes. But when the kisses start wandering from his neck down his back and Eliott’s hands land on his naked butt, he has to make a choice. And, unfortunately, he makes the responsible one. “I really have to go”, he says and turns his head, extricates himself from Eliott’s hands and actually does sit up completely this time. He immediately starts looking for his socks, not looking back at Eliott, knowing that one look at his naked boyfriend will make him change his mind.

Eliott whines, but doesn’t touch him again.
Only when Lucas is fully dressed, he dares to turn around and face him again. And he’s glad he waited because the sight in front of him is truly one for the ages. Eliott is lying down, head on his pillow, bare chest visible, blanket bunched up around his hip. One hand is lying innocently at his side on the bed, as if he tried to reach out to Lucas and then just let it fall down. The other hand, though, is hidden under the blanket. It isn’t moving but it’s still very clear what the intention is. Lucas’ eyes are fixated on Eliott’s wrist. Eliott sighs and then his wrist moves a little. The movement is subtle and slow, palming himself lazily.

Lucas makes a noise at the back of his throat. His eyes jump up to Eliott’s face again. Eliott’s eyes are hooded, looking at Lucas. He moves his other hand to the back of his head. It makes his abs stand out even more, makes his chest look a little wider and Lucas whines. “Are you fucking serious?”, he whispers, but there’s no bite behind it.

Eliott lets out a small moan and a grin spreads on his face. “You’re naked”, is all he says as if that explains everything.

It’s not that Lucas doesn’t want to – oh god, he really, really wants to stay – but he grabs his phone, glances at the time – ignores the notifications for now – and groans. It’s 7:19. “Fuck. I hate my life.” He looks back at Eliott who has taken his hand off himself, now sitting up a little, probably having realized that Lucas joining him won’t be an option for now. “Fuck”, he repeats. He looks down at himself. “I need to shower, fuck. I feel so gross.”

Eliott gestures for him to go.

When Lucas comes out of the bathroom less than five minutes later he feels somewhat clean. He almost literally runs into Eliott in the kitchen who hands him a coffee in a to-go mug. Lucas could kiss him, he’s so grateful, so he does. “Thank you, thank you. You’re the best.”

Eliott smiles at him. “Anything for you”, he just says.

Lucas smiles fondly, lets himself look at Eliott, now just in underwear, for a moment longer, trying to take a mental picture. The bulge in Eliott’s pants is still pretty pronounced and his eyes stick to it for a while.

Eliott comes closer, stops right in front of him. He takes Lucas’ hand and puts it on his bulge. “This is all for you”, he whispers.

Lucas groans. “Fuck. I hate you so much.” Then he moves his hand, Eliott’s hand dropping his easily. Lucas moves into the hallway and puts on his shoes and his jacket. And then, with one last look at his half naked boyfriend, he leaves and hates himself, just a little bit.

He checks his phone when he’s at the bus stop. It’s 7:29. He’ll be a little late, but it should be fine. He texts Basile to let him know. Which is when he gets a couple of texts from Eliott.

Eliott: Sorry if I came on a little strong just now

Eliott: Miss you already

Eliott: I’m about to come and all I can think about is your eyes when you saw me touch myself, that was the hottest thing I’ve ever seen

Eliott: Sorry if this is too much, just tell me

Lucas gets on the bus, a smile now probably permanently stuck to his face. He’s blushing and his
pants feel a bit too tight, but god, he is the luckiest and happiest man in the world.

**Lucas:** You’re not too much. I hate myself for leaving, wish I could’ve stayed

**Lucas:** You looked so beautiful, lying on that bed, all naked, all for me. Wish I had taken a picture

**Lucas:** Although that might’ve been awkward, I already feel like the guy next to me is trying to spy on what I’m texting

It takes a minute for Eliott to respond.

**Eliott:** Oh, then I probably shouldn’t text you a photo of the end result of what I did

He sends a photo anyway. It’s a bit blurry and not too explicit. But Lucas can clearly tell that that’s Eliott’s stomach and the white strands can only really be one thing.

Lucas’ face is bright red, he feels hot. He presses his phone to his chest, now really afraid that someone might look at his screen. He waits until he’s off the bus to text him back.

**Lucas:** OH MY GOD ELIOTT

**Lucas:** You are killing me oh my god

**Lucas:** You know, when we started dating, I did not expect us to go from awkward conversations to sexting in just a few weeks

**Lucas:** (I love it though)

Eliott sends him back a bunch of hearts.

Lucas ends up being ten minutes late to his seminar. Basile gives him a look. Lucas just silently shakes his head at him and tries to hide his dopey smile.

**Mardi 10:35**

“I can’t believe it’s been five weeks since we met for the first time”, Eliott says as he, Lucas and Basile leave the lecture hall. “I feel like I’ve known you for five minutes and twenty years.”

“At the same time?” Lucas raises his eyebrows.

“Yeah.”

“Is that a compliment?”

“Yes! Of course!” Eliott laughs and presses a kiss to his boyfriend’s cheek.

“You know, this also means we’ve been dating for a month now”, Lucas says. “Well, not really. But almost.”

Eliott’s eyes shine bright, his cheeks tint pink. He kisses the top of Lucas’ head and wraps his arm around his waist happily.

They’re outside now. Basile is waiting for Lucas a bit off to the side. Eliott and Lucas stop and look at each other. They kiss once, twice, three times.
“Guuuyyys”, Basile groans. “You’ll see each other in literally two hours, come on.”

Lucas just grins, kisses his boyfriend one more time. Eliott grins back. And then, out of nowhere, he says: “I love you, Lucas.”

Lucas’ eyes grow huge. He doesn’t react at all for a moment. Then he looks around, at Basile, waiting exasperated. Lucas doesn’t know what he’s waiting for when he looks around. Maybe he’s waiting for a camera crew to run up to them and scream “PRANKED!!” at him. But when that doesn’t happen, he meets Eliott’s eyes again which are still trained on him. They’re open, wide, hopeful, trusting.

“I love you, too”, he whispers and smiles.

Eliott literally squeals and crashes their lips together. It’s a messy kiss, more teeth and smiles than anything else.

“You have terrible timing”, Lucas whispers. “I have to go.”

Eliott just giggles. He hugs Lucas one more time and then turns to leave, turning around to look back at Lucas a few times, smiling and waving when Lucas meets his eyes every time.

When he’s out of sight, Lucas finally turns to Basile. Basile raises his eyebrows, but Lucas just smiles and walks towards the science buildings.

**Vendredi 19:15**

Lucas is sitting on Eliott’s bed, looking through Eliott’s sketch-pad. There’s tons of cartoons, the kind Eliott puts at the end of his videos or posts on Instagram. There’s a few sketches of nature, some of streets in Paris, a few sculptures that Eliott likes to go to museums to sketch. Every time Lucas turns the page, there’s another beautiful artwork. Every single one of them makes him smile. Makes him feel so proud to call this amazing talented human being his boyfriend.

Meanwhile, Eliott is sitting at his desk, leaning over his laptop, alternating between writing things and staring at the screen, focused. He’s uploading a new video. They were supposed to go out for dinner and Eliott was supposed to be done already, but there was an issue with the upload, so he had to redo it. So Lucas is waiting. He doesn’t mind, necessarily. He loves looking at Eliott’s art and he’s excited for people to see Eliott’s newest short film. What’s also really exciting is that Lucas has already seen it, he’d like to brag about having gotten a world exclusive, including live director’s commentary, but he stops himself. His friends would’ve rolled their eyes so hard, they might’ve stuck that way.

Eliott groans. “Why is this not working?”, he mutters to himself.

Lucas looks up, hums, but lets Eliott keep working.

It takes another thirty minutes for Eliott to finally cheer in triumph. “Done!” He turns around to look at Lucas who’s looking at his phone. A moment later, Lucas grins and holds up his phone, showing Eliott the YouTube notification he just got. Eliott grins, gets up and basically jumps Lucas, kissing his face and hugging him tightly. “My biggest fan”, he teases and kisses Lucas’ neck.

Lucas giggles. Then he taps the notification and watches the video.
“You’ve already seen it!”, Eliott complains. “Come on, let’s go…” He kisses Lucas’ neck again.

“No, no, wait…” Lucas keeps watching, smiling at the cute little story Eliott came up with. It’s just a short three minute film and when Lucas gets to the end of it, the little cartoon appears as the endscreen. It’s a raccoon and a hedgehog, lying in a bed, smiling. A little hard drawn between the two. Then the video ends.

“That’s you”, Eliott whispers, looking at Lucas’ phone over his shoulder.

Lucas giggles. “I should hope so. Wouldn’t want you to be in bed with any other hedgehogs.” He laughs, turns around and kisses Eliott deeply. “It’s adorable.”

**Vendredi 20:21**

It’s later than expected when they get to the restaurant. Their reservation has expired, so they have to wait at the bar for a new table to become available. They don’t mind though, exchanging happy grins, nursing a beer and a coke respectively while they wait.

When they finally get a table and have ordered their dinner, Eliott takes out his phone. He points the camera at Lucas who smiles happily and takes a picture. Then he stares at it for a while, smiling into his phone and then looks up at Lucas, raises his eyebrows as if he’s waiting for something.

Lucas looks at him questioningly and then takes out his own phone. He looks at his screen and raises his eyebrows when he sees that he has a notification.

*srodulv posted a photo*

(Yes, sue him, he still gets notifications for all of Eliott’s posts.)

He opens it and his eyes grow wide. Eliott posted the photo he just took, the lighting is dark, Lucas’ face mostly illuminated by the candle in front of him. His smile is wide, the photo radiates pure happiness. And even Lucas, who doesn’t always love pictures of himself, has to admit that he looks good. He looks happy. And then he notices the caption.

*srodulv* Sens de la vie.

*Meaning of life.*

Lucas swallows thickly and his eyes meet Eliott’s again. “I love you”, he just says.

“I love you, too.” Eliott grins, delighted.

Then the food arrives. They keep stealing glances at each other, talking about everything they can think of: uni, their friends, Eliott’s new short film, their parents, Christmas, the new Star Wars movie that’s about to come out…

After they finish their dinner, Lucas goes to the bathroom. When he returns, he finds Eliott looking at his phone again. He sits down and Eliott looks at Lucas, a contemplative look on his face.

“Lucas…”, he starts.

“Yeah?” Lucas grins.
“I’ve… uh… I’ve noticed that you don’t really use your Instagram anymore. Or at least in the last few days…”, he says.

Lucas is caught off guard, not really expecting Eliott to have noticed. He shrugs. “I don’t know, I go through phases.”

“So it isn’t…” Eliott takes a breath, ghosts his hand over his lips. “It’s not because of me? Or because of… you know, fans?”

“Oh.” Eliott looks at his empty plate and takes a sip of his beer. “Yeah, maybe a little bit”, he admits, finally. “It’s definitely not you though!”

Eliott looks down, unsure of what to say.

“Why are you asking?”

“Uh… I was reading through the comments of the photos I posted today. And, well, the post about the video I uploaded like two hours ago is being completely ignored over the one of you.” He chuckles and shrugs. “They like you. Maybe a bit too much.” He shrugs again and meets Lucas’ eyes. “I don’t want this to make you uncomfortable though. So if you prefer, I can delete it.”

“No!”, Lucas says, maybe a bit too fast. He laughs at himself. “No, I… I like it?” It comes out like a question. “I don’t know, it’s difficult to explain. When you posted about me that first time, I… uh, I gained a lot of followers and it was kind of… daunting, I guess? And really cool, too. I mean, every time I post something, I actually get likes now? And granted, the comments are mostly variations of ‘where’s Eliott??’, but…” He chuckles. “I get it, I guess.” He shrugs. “I do like you quite a lot, too. And, let’s be real, you’re really not that famous.”

That makes Eliott giggle. After a moment, he soberes up a little. “Have people come up to you? Like, in real life?”, Eliott asks.

Lucas shakes his head. “No. But, you know… people have, like, been really impressed when I showed them a picture of my boyfriend, but that’s just your good looks, I think.”

Eliott barks out a laugh. He leans forward a bit and takes Lucas’ hand in his. “I love you”, he says because it’s the only thing he can think about.

Lucas grabs his phone with his other hand, then, and takes a picture of their hands. He posts it to Instagram before he can overthink it, tags Eliott and captions it with a single red heart. Then he shows it to Eliott.


Lucas grins, puts his phone away again and covers their hands with his free hand. He leans down and kisses them.

They keep looking at each other, happy and in love, not a care in the world.
Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much to every single person who’s left kudos and especially to everyone who’s taken the time to comment, it truly made me want to continue writing❤️
I’m sander-driesen over on tumblr in case you’re interested. Also I’m happy that I’ve finished this just in time before we get our canon boys back, very scared/excited for what season five will bring!
Hope you enjoy this last chapter, let me know what you think!

Christmas

Lucas is nervous. Really nervous. The kind of nervous that makes him feel sick to his stomach, makes him wish he’d never left his apartment. And it’s all because of Eliott and because Lucas is completely incapable of saying no to him. Not that he wants to.

“What are you doing on Christmas?”, Eliott asked one day when they were sitting in his kitchen, eating pasta that Lucas had just prepared. (Eliott isn’t allowed to go near a stove anymore since that one time he almost gave Lucas food poisoning.)

“I don’t know”, Lucas answered. “Probably visit my mother on the 25th.”

“And the 24th?”

Lucas shrugged.

Eliott’s face went on a little emotional journey but he ended up smiling. “Do you maybe want to come meet my parents? On the 24th? We have a tradition of eating too much and giving each other presents we promised we wouldn’t buy.”

Lucas said yes almost immediately.

He then spent the next week agonizing over what to get Eliott’s parents for Christmas. Thankfully, Eliott ended up saving him, handing him a bottle of wine he was sure his parents would be excited about. And since Lucas assumed Eliott knew his parents better than he did (obviously) he took the bottle of wine and tried not to freak himself out too much about it. (He fails.)

So now Lucas is standing in front of Eliott’s parents’ apartment, bottle of wine in hand, wondering if he should’ve wrapped it.

He kind of assumed that Eliott would arrive with him, he feels awkward and kind of alone, standing here in this strange hallway all on his own. He wishes he had Eliott’s comforting presence next to him.

He rings the doorbell. It doesn’t take long, thankfully, and it’s Eliott who opens the door, grinning from ear to ear. He immediately steps into Lucas’ personal space, hugs him and pecks him on the cheek. “I’m so happy you’re here”, he whispers.
Lucas smiles back. Eliott makes him feel like he belongs immediately, calms his nerves considerably.

Then Lucas hears loud voices from somewhere in the apartment. Eliott’s parents suddenly show up right behind their son. They look at Lucas and smile. Lucas sees the family resemblance immediately. He would never say this out loud, but it’s very clear where Eliott got his good looks from. If Lucas didn’t love him so much, he might be angry about him hogging all the good genes in the world.

“It’s so nice to meet you, Lucas”, Eliott’s mom says, ripping Lucas from his thoughts.

He blushes a little. Her smile is friendly and kind, almost exactly like Eliott’s. “Thank you Madame Demaury.”

“Oh, call me Marie, honey.”

“Oh”, Lucas just says. He swallows, turns to Eliott’s father who also introduces himself. His eyes look exactly like Eliott’s. Lucas likes him immediately. He smiles, takes a deep breath. They’re nice, he can do this. He glimpses at Eliott whose eyes dart between his parents and Lucas, grinning. He looks very happy. And if Eliott is happy, Lucas is happy. Simple as that.

They have dinner and it’s nice and simple and fun. Eliott’s parents thank Lucas profusely for the bottle of wine and, even though Lucas is pretty sure they’re exaggerating their excitement for his sake, he appreciates it.

After dinner Lucas and Eliott disappear into Eliott’s childhood bedroom. It’s weird, seeing the room of a younger Eliott. The walls are full of outdated music and film posters, a bunch of gaps here and there of posters Eliott took with him to his own apartment, but there’s some artwork that’s so unmistakably Eliott’s that it makes Lucas smile. Lucas makes fun of him for his teenage taste in music, then makes fun of him for his current taste in music, and it’s fun and exciting.

When they lie in bed, cuddling, Eliott’s head on Lucas’ chest, Lucas realizes this is the first time he’s ever been in bed with a boy while there are parents around. It’s such a teenage experience to go through and he gets teary-eyed. It makes him think about all the things he missed out on, not having had a stable family to rely on when he was a teenager.

He tells Eliott about it, who hugs and kisses him and it gets progressively more heated, until Lucas puts a stop to it. “Your parents are here!”, Lucas says, scandalized.

Eliott giggles and they fall asleep, hugging tightly.

Lucas feels like he’s gained a new family in the Demaurys, on top of his real one, as broken as it is, on top of his friend group, as beautiful as that one is. Lucas thinks this will be the best Christmas he’s ever had.

**New Year’s Eve**

[Eliott’s Instagram stories:

Sofiane walking down the street, looking at the camera smiling.

Video of Idriss and Sofiane holding up two beers, cheering and chugging them, in the background Lucas and Daphné laugh at them.]
Selfie, Eliott looking into the camera, cigarette in his mouth, grinning.

Selfie, Eliott still with a cigarette in his mouth, but next to him is Lucas, looking at him sternly. The caption reads: *He loves it (secretly)*

Video of fireworks

Selfie of Daphné. The caption reads *FOLLOW ME @daph.pink*

Lucas’ Instagram stories:

Video of Yann and Basile running down the street, Lucas is teasingly yelling at them. Then he joins them and cackles, chasing them with a stick he finds on the ground.

Photo of Yann and Basile on their backs on the floor, pretending to be passed out. Lucas stands next to them, one foot on Yann’s back. He’s holding the stick, posing triumphantly. *Got em*, the caption reads.

Lucas and Daphné laughing and trying to say something, they’re unintelligible, slurring their words.

Video of Lucas and Eliott yelling at the camera, cheering, dancing.

Video of fireworks

**Last week of the semester**

Lucas has been trying to study for about three hours, sitting at his desk in his room. He’s reading and reading, the sentences blurring together, he keeps forgetting what he just read. He sighs. There’s a cup of coffee next to him, he takes a swig and grimaces when he realizes that it’s cold. He sighs again.

“Want more coffee?”, Eliott asks, looking at him with pity.

“No.” Lucas looks up quickly, sees Eliott lying on Lucas’ bed, looking at his phone. His arm is stretched out and he’s angling the phone in a way that makes Lucas think he’s taking a selfie. It sort of makes Lucas want to laugh. How is he this relaxed? He literally also has an exam tomorrow. “Are you taking pictures of yourself?”, he asks.

Eliott looks up at that and blushes. He turns his phone around and shows Lucas the selfie he just took. “Good?”

Lucas raises his eyebrows. “Sure. For what?”

Eliott looks at him questioningly. “For… I don’t know, just in general?” He shrugs. “Instagram.”

Lucas shrugs. He focusses back on the task at hand, rereads his notes, tries to understand what he was trying to say. Curses himself for having terrible handwriting. He shuffles around the papers, finds some notes that Basile gave him, but he can’t read his handwriting either. He groans. “Fuck”, he whispers under his breath.

“Everything okay?”, Eliott asks from the bed.
“No”, Lucas grunts.

Eliott sighs, not answering.

Lucas thinks he might have to call Imane later and try to get her to come study with him. There might be no other way because it’ll be impossible for just him to get all of this studying done in three days.

“Hey, is it okay if I post a pic of your back? Someone’s asking about you.”

That makes Lucas look up, finally. “No.” He looks at Eliott, incredulously. “Who’s asking about me?”

“Oh, eli_elu from Instagram”, Eliott answers, glancing at his phone. He laughs. “I’m doing a Q&A.”

“Mh”, Lucas just grunts and looks back at his desk, strewn with books and paper.

Lucas is a good student. Usually, at least. He never had trouble getting good grades in high school, only studying what he absolutely had to. But this changed when he got to university. Everyone around him was suddenly interested in the subject he was interested in, which was great at first. And everyone suffered together, he’s had multiple breakdowns over exams with Basile. But there’s just more pressure. Usually self-inflicted. He feels fucking terrible. He groans, doesn’t know what to do.

Suddenly there’s a hand on his back. “Hey”, Eliott says quietly. His hand rubs up and down Lucas’ back. Then his hands move up to his shoulder, starting to massage Lucas’ hardened tendons.

Lucas sighs in relief. He realizes he’s been stuck in this position for hours now, having barely moved.

Eliott digs his thumb into one particular muscle under Lucas’ shoulder blade and Lucas flinches. He winces so hard he moves away from Eliott, standing up. “That hurt”, he says, harsher than possibly necessary.

“Sorry, sorry”, Eliott immediately says, holding his hands up.

“Just go back to your phone”, Lucas says, sighing. “Some of us have better things to do than spend their whole day on Instagram. I need to concentrate.”

Eliott is silent for a moment. Then: “Don’t you want to take a break?” He looks at him wide-eyed and Lucas usually can’t resist those big sad eyes. Eliott’s hands go back to Lucas’ shoulders and he leans down, pressing a kiss to Lucas’ cheek. “Come on, you don’t mean that. You’re stressed.”

Lucas sighs. He lets himself get pulled away from his desk. They lie down on the bed together.

Eliott’s lips go right back to Lucas’ cheek, kissing all over his face, ending on his lips.

Lucas responds, sighing happily into the kiss. But when Eliott starts going further, lips kissing his neck, his hands grabbing at Lucas’ lower back and ass, Lucas shakes his head.

“No, no, no.”

Eliott pauses and looks up, but doesn’t take his hands away. “Huh?”

“I can’t, I have to study.” Lucas groans, upset at himself for letting himself get distracted, upset at
Eliott for distracting him.

“Come on, you can take a little break”, Eliott whispers into the skin of his neck. He places another kiss on Lucas’ pulse point.

“No!” Lucas’ voice sounds harsh and it makes himself flinch. He sits up, putting some distance between himself and Eliott.

Eliott looks at him with big eyes.

Lucas gets off the bed and goes back to his desk. He pointedly ignores Eliott, still on the bed, unmoving like a statue. He tries to go back to reading, but his concentration is even more fucked now than it was before. Lucas lets his head drop onto the desk with a thud. He’s going to fail. He’s going to get kicked out of uni, he’s going to have to go back to working at that café, he’ll constantly run into his ex-boyfriend and then Eliott will break up with him and he’ll die alone and sad in a small ten square meter apartment at the edge of Paris because that’s all he’ll be able to afford. And then –

He’s spiraling.

He jumps up, suddenly, and leaves the room. He goes into the kitchen and makes himself a cup of tea. He rummages through the cabinets, trying to find something to eat and groans in frustration when there’s nothing he feels like eating.

“Do you want me to get anything?” Eliott’s voice is quiet, careful.

Lucas looks up, sees Eliott standing in the doorway, looking at him with big sad eyes. “Chips?”, Lucas says, feeling lost.

Eliott nods.

“And maybe a frozen pizza. Or two.” Lucas scratches the back of his neck, thinks about inviting Imane over so they can study together. And Basile. And every single person from his year. “Make that a couple.”

Eliott cocks his head at him but nods again. “Anything”, he says and smiles lightly. “I’ll be back soon.” He turns to leave but then stops and looks at Lucas again. “If you want me to? I can go shopping and then leave, if you’d prefer?”

Lucas sighs, feeling like a terrible boyfriend. “No, you can stay if you want.” He walks over to Eliott, putting a hand on his forearm. “I’m sorry I’m being difficult, I just…” He shrugs. “I need to pass my exams.”

Eliott nods and carefully presses a kiss to his cheek. He smiles and then turns to leave.

Lucas sighs when the door closes shut. He walks to the couch in the living room, lies down. He can close his eyes for a few minutes, relax, just until Eliott comes back.

He wakes up a few hours later, Eliott sitting next to him, carding his fingers through his hair.

A day later, Lucas, Basile and Imane meet up at uni to study together after their exam of the day. It makes Lucas feel so much better about everything, the studying much quicker and more effective than whatever he was doing last night.

When he gets home that night, he calls Eliott and they talk, Lucas telling him all about his fears of
failing uni, feeling vulnerable, but a little more hopeful than the day before. Eliott listens and coos at him, telling him he loves him over and over again.

After a few days, Lucas is freaking out again. His last exam is tomorrow, a Friday. He is terrified of it, been studying for it since the beginning of January. He feels terrible, doesn’t know what to do.

He lets his head fall to the table, knocks it against it a couple of times. Groans again. He looks at his phone, opening Instagram. Eliott’s bright smile is the first thing he sees. It makes him smile for a moment. It’s a video that he posted thirty minutes ago, a collaboration with a jeans company that he’s also going to make a vlog for in a few weeks. Eliott is smiling at the camera, kind of half-dancing to a cheesy pop song, modeling his clothes. The edits are fun, the video sped up. Like everything Eliott posts on his Instagram feed, it’s artsy, pretty. He takes care of it, thinks about it. Lucas smiles and likes the video. Then he gets a message from Eliott himself.

Eliott: Wanna go for dinner later?

Lucas: Can’t, have to study

Eliott: :(  ♡

Lucas sighs, sets his phone down again and tries to get back to reading and hammering all the information into his brain. He already knows it’s a lost cause. Anything he doesn’t know now, he won’t be able to remember.

A while later Yann comes back home. “Lucas?” he yells into the dark apartment.

Lucas sighs, annoyed. He’s literally sitting at the fucking kitchen table, Yann just needs to walk a few meters to see him sitting here. He needs to focus. He doesn’t answer.

Yann comes into the kitchen and stops short when he sees Lucas sitting there. The dimmed kitchen light the only thing illuminating the dark room. “Hey”, he says, a bit cautious. “Didn’t know you were home. You okay?”

Lucas doesn’t answer. Why do people keep asking him that this week? It’s the fucking last week of the semester, of course he’s not okay. He just keeps staring at the words in front of him, unable to actually recognize any of them.

“Studying?” Yann chuckles and heads for the kitchen, rummages through the cabinets. He takes out a pan, puts it on the stove and turns it on.

After a while whatever Yann is cooking starts sizzling in the pan.

“Can’t you fucking do that somewhere else?”, Lucas finally snaps. He turns around and glares at him.

Yann looks at him with wide eyes. “You mean cook? Where else am I supposed to be doing this?”

“Whatever.” Lucas jumps out of his seat. He gathers all of his things and leaves the kitchen. He walks straight into his room, slamming the door behind him. He sits down on his bed, fuming. How is he supposed to study if people keep interrupting him? If he can’t focus? He shivers. It’s fucking cold. He groans, annoyed.
There’s a knock on his door and Yann opens it.

“Leave me alone.”

“Lucas?”

“No.”

“Hey.”

“It’s so fucking cold, how the fuck is it still cold, wasn’t the heating supposed to be fixed fucking months ago?”

“It was, it’s warm in here?”

“Fuck off.”

“Lucas? What the fuck is up?”

“Nothing.”

“Did something happen with Eliott?”

“No.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes. Eliott is fine. In fact, he’s fucking perfect. With his perfect fucking face and hair and Instagram profile. His perfect fucking videos and his perfect fucking uni workload.”

Yann doesn’t answer, just looks at him for a moment and then comes and sits down next to Lucas on the bed.

Lucas sighs and suddenly feels really bad. He knows it’s dumb to get worked up over this.

He spends the rest of the night wallowing in self-pity. He ignores the supportive text messages Eliott sends him and doesn’t say thank you when Yann brings him some of the dinner he just cooked.

The next day, Lucas and Basile meet up at uni half an hour before the exam is supposed to start.

“I feel so fucking sick”, Basile says. He’s white as a sheet.

“I’m going to fucking die”, Lucas agrees.

They sit down in front of the room and stare into the middle distance, neither of them knowing what to say.

After a while a couple of other people arrive. Lucas shares a small smile with Imane who looks remarkably not-tired. Lucas envies her confidence. Everyone looks anxious, once in a while someone asks a question and everyone scrambles to try to answer it. Having a small existential crisis if they don’t know the answer because what if that’s part of the exam??

The professor arrives soon after and Lucas looks at his phone one last time before he turns it off.

Eliott: I love you very much, I wish you all the best on your exam ❤❤❤ You’ll do great!
Eliott: And even if you don’t, I’m gonna take you out for lunch later and shower you with so many kisses and compliments that you can’t help but feel a little better ❤❤❤❤❤

Eliott: Love you

Lucas allows himself to smile. He sends Eliott a heart and turns his phone off. He needs to concentrate.

After the exam Lucas is spent. He shares a tired smile with Basile as they leave the room. Basile immediately starts talking about all the things he isn’t sure about and all the things he thinks he did right. Lucas just shakes his head at every question, doesn’t want to talk about it.

“Let’s just forget it ever happened”, he says.

Basile stops short when they leave the building. Lucas almost runs into him. He looks up and his eyes widen when he sees Daphné, Eliott, Yann and Arthur standing there in a half circle, smiling at the two of them. Lucas walks straight into Eliott’s arms. Eliott presses a kiss to the top of his head.

“How did it go?”, he whispers into his hair.

Lucas just grunts and shakes his head. “Okay, I guess. I never want to talk about biology ever again.”

Eliott laughs. “Good, because I wouldn’t be able to hold a conversation about it for more than a minute.”

That makes Lucas smile again. He presses an innocent kiss to Eliott’s mouth. “Thank you for being amazing”, he whispers. “Sorry for being a terrible boyfriend.” Then he takes a step back and hugs Yann instead. “Sorry for being a terrible roommate the last weeks”, he says.

Yann lets out a delighted laugh. “You can make it up to me by paying for my lunch.”

Lucas smiles at that and looks around at his friends. He nods.

They go have lunch together and Lucas finally feels like he can breathe again.

Semester break

Now that the semester is over, Lucas finally feels free. He still feels bad about treating Eliott and Yann like that and they keep telling him that it’s fine.

Lucas doesn’t think he’s ever been with anyone who accepts him for and understands him as what he really is. It makes him so happy and he feels so loved, he wants to shout it from the rooftops. And so he does. Most conversations he has with his friends, usually at some point contain the phrase “You know, Eliott recently…” and his friends have mostly graduated to just rolling their eyes and letting him talk. Since Yann lives with him and Basile shared every class with him, they could never avoid it. Arthur, though, teases Lucas mercilessly, not yet aware that Lucas does this every single time since he doesn’t see him as often as the others.

Eliott and Lucas are still pretty open about their relationship on Instagram, too. They sometimes post about each other, but they’ve never spelled it out in so many words. Although Eliott’s following definitely knows what’s going on. There are only so many hearts you can comment on each other’s posts and lovey-dovey selfies you can post on your stories, until people will stop
assuming that it’s platonic. Although Lucas is pretty impressed by the people who really still think Lucas is just a friend. And also annoyed by them. Because he doesn’t want people to think Eliott is single. But he also doesn’t want to parade his relationship around on the internet (he thinks as he posts a shirtless picture of Eliott from a photoshoot he recently did on his story and captions it with the eggplant emoji.)

Eliott’s Instagram though, is still mostly his CV. And even though his videos’ subject matter can be pretty personal, they’re never about him directly. Even his vlogs are always focused on his work.

Eliott hasn’t made a real vlog on his YouTube channel since he made seven in a row at the beginning of the semester. He’s categorically said no because that experience was apparently less than fun.

But it’s time again. And Lucas is joining him this time.

Eliott and Lucas are walking down the street and Eliott takes out the camera.

“You ready for this?”, he asks Lucas and winks.

Lucas laughs and nods, taking Eliott’s free hand in his and cuddling up to his side while they keep walking.

Eliott turns on the camera and points it at himself. “Welcome!”, he says. Then he frowns. “No, I don’t like that. Hi! It’s Eliott. I’m here with my boyfriend, Lucas.” He quickly points the camera at Lucas who waves at the camera. Then he points it back at himself. “And we’re doing something very exciting today and you have the privilege of joining us!”

Lucas and Eliott then proceed to go clothes shopping. Eliott explains to the camera that this video was sponsored by a clothing brand and he looks really excited about it.

When he’s done, Lucas raises his eyebrows at him. “Don’t you think you’re overdoing it a little?”

Eliott knits his eyebrows. “Why? I am excited!”

Lucas laughs and shakes his head. “It’s your video”, he says and enters the store.

The clerk is already waiting for them. She’s very excited about meeting Eliott and Lucas smiles at her. Then they go and look at a mountain of clothes that’s been prepared for Eliott. Lucas films Eliott as he goes through them, commenting on them for the camera. Then he goes to the changing room and starts modelling a bunch of clothes for the camera.

Lucas does some choice-word commentary on Eliott getting changed in the changing room, putting the camera inside, filming a half-naked Eliott who looks up with wide eyes.

It ends up making Eliott laugh so hard he almost starts crying. “This is not going into the vlog”, Eliott says into the camera and wipes at his eyes, a tear almost escaping them.

Lucas just laughs at him.

In the evening, Lucas sits on Eliott’s bed and plays a video game while Eliott sits at his desk and edits the vlog they just filmed. After Eliott groans in exasperation for the fifth time, Lucas finally looks up and gives in. He pauses his game. “What’s up?”

Eliott looks up, as if he didn’t realize Lucas was still there. “Nothing.”
Lucas just gives him a look.

Eliott groans again. “This is unusable!”, he says, finally.

Lucas looks at him questioningly.

Eliott sighs. “Lucas, I love you, but you really don’t know how to hold a camera. Some of the footage at the store looks like shit, it’s super shaky. And the good shots are full of you talking about how beautiful my neck is! I can’t use that.” He pauses for a moment. “We are very cute though.”

Lucas barks out a laugh. “Hey! I did my best!” He shrugs and winces. “So maybe I was a bit more interested in looking at you in real life than through the camera. Sorry.”

Eliott shakes his head and laughs. “I’ll figure something out. Cut out your voice and, like, make a montage out of it or something.” He keeps mumbling, but it becomes unintelligible and Lucas assumes he’s dismissed, so he unpases his game.

After a while, Eliott pipes up again. “Lucas, would you come over here for a moment?”

Lucas looks up, pauses the game again and walks over to where Eliott is sitting.

Eliott points at the screen. “Look.” He starts the video. The beginning is just them walking down the street, the camera always pointed at Eliott, except when he introduces Lucas as his boyfriend. Eliott was right, they are adorable. They arrive at the store and Eliott asks Lucas if he’s excited.

Eliott really did turn the majority of the vlog into a montage. Some piano music accompanies images of Eliott showing the camera different shirts and pants and jackets. He really did cut out all of Lucas’ commentary, which Lucas is admittedly a little happy-sad about.

“I love it”, Lucas says when the video ends and presses a kiss to Eliott’s cheek.

Eliott smiles at that. “Good.”

An hour later, it’s nearing midnight now, the video is uploaded and Eliott joins Lucas in bed.

“Finallyyyyy”, Lucas breathes and clings to Eliott like a koala, putting his arms and legs around him.

Eliott giggles and kisses him.

“I’m really happy”, Lucas whispers into the kiss.

Eliott pulls back a little to be able to look at him better. “Me too”, he says and smiles softly. “I love you so much.”

Lucas smiles and buries his face into Eliott’s neck, his hair tickling his Eliott’s face. “I love you too.”

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