Come Here Boy

by Sugakane_01

Summary

What Blaine Anderson wants, Blaine Anderson gets and from the moment he meets Kurt Hummel on the stairs at Dalton Academy he's determined that the beautifully broken boy will be no exception. When lust turns to love and Kurt becomes more than a conquest, Blaine shows just how far the boy who has everything is willing to go for love- the one thing he's never had.

Notes

A/N: Long but necessary introductory Author's Note DON'T SKIP IT. Or do skip it but don't complain later about things covered in here. :)

I actually started this story over the summer before Season 3 premiered so it is set during Season 2. Nothing from Season 3 (characters, events, ect) will be in this story. For the purposes of this story Dalton is a boarding school, Blaine is slightly older than Kurt and certain parts of his backstory have been changed (such as the Sadie Hawkins never happened.) and others made up completely. The story starts from "Never Been Kissed" and
from there spins WILDLY into an AU that mixes with canon events (sometimes remixed, out of order canon events to fit the plot) to spin a tale of power and privilege, romance and revenge, deception and desire, and just how far the man who has everything is willing to go for love.

The idea for this story came from my slight obsession with Dark!Blaine. I adore our canon Blaine to bits and pieces but all of the wonderful fanfics that explore his potential when he's a little less dapper and a whole lot darker made me want to try my hand at crafting my own tale with Blaine as more anti-hero than Prince Charming.

My idea of Dark!Blaine is a little more tame than some others because I like my Dark!Blaine completely devoted to Kurt. In this story that's how Blaine will be. It's important to note that Blaine is not going to be physically or emotionally abusive towards Kurt but there WILL be instances where he will deceive or manipulate him. I know that's not everyone's cup of tea so I feel its important readers know going in that the Klaine in this story will not be all glitter ponies and rainbow unicorns. While the relationship between Kaine WILL be a loving relationship, it is not going to necessarily be a dipiction of a HEALTHY relationship. There are going to be elements of dysfunction to their relationship because of Blaine's somewhat broken moral compass. Blaine is going to lie, he's going to blackmail, he's going to manipulate people and circumstances and he's going to say and do things that our canon Blaine would never say or do. Hence...Dark!Blaine. All that being said...Blaine WON'T be evil incarnate. He's not going to kill or eat or anyone or cross those types of lines. He does absolutely love Kurt He will have good in him and he will display that good with people other than Kurt. He will be two sides of the same coin, light and dark, good and bad and his relationship with Kurt will a catalyst for him to try to be a better person (better, not perfect). So my Dark!Blaine will be more of a grey hat than a black one if that makes any sense.

Again, I understand not everyone likes darker undertones to their Klaine so I realize this story may not be for everyone...I just want it clear from the beginning that while there will be plenty of fluffy, cute Klaine moments and romantic Klaine...it is NOT a story where Klaine has a picture perfect, happy happy, joy joy type relationship. There's some dark and twisty up in here and if that's not your thing then story may not be for you.

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR FINN, RACHEL, AND WILL FANS

The early chapters of the story are not particularly kind to these characters. They are not, in my opinion, bashed but the negative aspects of their personalities are played up more for plot purposes. They are not "evil" or even the antagonists in the story (those roles are played by others) but some of their actions directly and indirectly affect major parts of the plot and play a heavy role in how/why Kurt ends up at Dalton. They ARE NOT the "bad guys" in the fic and they, particularly Finn, get a much more positive charicterization in later chapters. But it is a bit of a wait to get there. Just wanted to give a heads up to let Finchel and Schue fans know its rough the first few chapters.

AND ONE IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT KURT

In this story Kurt is going to be at his lowest point, when the bullying was at its worst and his isolation and loneliness were at its height so some of his actions may not seem to have the fabulosity and confidence we expect from Kurt Elizabeth Hummel or he may not be as savvy as we expect him to be but remember, around this time he was slowly breaking down and that makes it a little easier for Blaine to manipulate him. There is a lot of canon Kurt in here but and some things are decidedly not canon (you'll see) but overall I think he's fairly recognizable. Its also important to note that Kurt is going to be the ying to Blaine's yang and provide a little bit of balance...his light to Blaine's dark so he's going to be sort of the moral compass of the story in a way. It's not my intention to 'Mary Sue' him up but he does have an
element of innocence to him in this fic and since he serves as the tie that binds several of the relationships he is pretty well loved lol.
Chapter 1

Chapter Summary

Kurt and Blaine meet and Blaine takes an interest in the beautiful brunette

Overall Story Warnings: Violence, Language, homophobic and biphobic language, explicit sex, underage drinking and drug use, high risk sexual situations, emotional manipulation, bullying, racial slurs, implications of suicidal thoughts...will add appropriate warnings for individual chapters.

Spoilers: Everything from Season 1, Episode 1 (Audition) up to Season 2, Episode 22 (New York) is fair game and may be mentioned.

Disclaimer: I do not own Glee nor any of its characters. *pouts*

Chapter One: Maybe We're Victims of Fate

Blaine Anderson sauntered down the spiral staircase, his hazel eyes scanning the endless sea of navy blue and red that stretched before him with cool detachment. Though some of his classmates admittedly wore the uniform of Dalton Academy well, Blaine couldn't even summon up a mild interest in any of his peers. A small smile played on his lips as Christophe Van Lucre passed by him, shoulders slumping forward and gaze immediately sliding to the marble floor after a split second of eye contact with Blaine. Christophe's submissive gesture was enough to remind Blaine that he'd already helped himself to any boy at Dalton that seemed remotely worth having and none of them had proven themselves capable of holding his attention.

Blaine sighed and squared his shoulders. He was late for a performance with The Dalton Academy Warblers, the school's glee club, but Blaine couldn't bring himself to care. He was in no hurry to get there and it wasn't as if they could start without him seeing as he was their lead soloist. Blaine stopped and took another cursory look around but again found nothing of any interest to him.

Blaine been banished to Dalton after his escapades at The Canterbury School for Boys had culminated in his being discovered in Headmaster Chandler's office, fucking the headmaster's son Donavan, right on the headmaster's desk. Not even the Anderson name could clean up that little debacle, so Blaine was quickly and quietly transferred to Dalton in the middle of the term. At the time it had seemed for the best since Blaine's reputation had begun to precede him, resulting in several angry and disgruntled exes smearing him to the student body in general and some of his less enlightened classmates embarking on a campaign of harassment centered on his sexuality. When he'd first arrived at Dalton, Blaine had reveled in having a new hunting ground. He'd quickly and aggressively ascended the social ladder and seduced his way through the more desirable of the student body, but now that he'd been there for over a year Dalton had slowly begun to turn from new frontier to gilded cage.
Blaine had cemented his place among Dalton's elite. He was lead soloist for the Warblers, captain of the water polo team, President of the Student Council, active in the Gay Straight Alliance and Diversity Clubs, President of the Peer Advisors, and a standout on both the debate team and in drama club. Blaine was beloved by teachers and idolized by the students. He had his pick of any number of sexual partners, precious little adult supervision and access to copious amounts of cash. Blaine was living a charmed life and he should have been ecstatic.

Instead he was bored.

The continuous loop of manipulation, seduction, indulgence and resentment that made up the soundtrack to his life had become a soul crushing sort of monotony. Blaine was no longer content with warm bodies, shallow popularity, lavish parties and expensive toys. He was tired of simply marking the time until he took full control of the reins at Anderson International. He felt like there had to be something else out there but he had no idea what he was missing or how to go about finding it.

What Blaine did know was that he wouldn't find what he was looking for on the steps of the Great Hall. The only thing to be found by continuing to hold up The Warblers performance was the ire of Wesley Montgomery, and Blaine had no desire to be on the receiving end of his best friend's gavel wielding wrath.

Blaine began making his down the stairs towards the Senior Commons when he found himself once again delayed. This time however, it wasn't a random moment of introspection that held him back, but the soft, barely there touch of a fingertips on his shoulder.

Blaine turned around and for the briefest moment wondered if perhaps he had found what he was looking for on the steps on the Great Hall.

If Kurt Hummel believed in God he would have thought he was being tested. He'd woken up thirty minutes late, forcing him to rush through his morning routine and forego his usual meditation. He'd burned his egg white omelet so he'd had to make due with a banana and a bran muffin for breakfast. The check engine light had come on in his baby halfway on the drive to school and he'd scarcely made it out of the parking lot before being surrounded by the unwashed masses that made up the jock contingent of William McKinley High and summarily thrown into a dumpster. He'd quickly changed into one of his reserve outfits only to be treated to the ice blue frozen hell of a slushie facial.

Kurt had sighed, retreated back into the bathroom and pulled out the backup outfit for his backup outfit.

After he'd effectively missed first period, Kurt walked into Glee…and was once again subjected to backhanded insults about his sexuality when it was announced the all boys choir from Dalton Academy was one of their sectional competitors. Mr. Schue, per his usual modus operandi, did nothing to step in and merely allowed Santana's little barb about gay jokes while Kurt sat in his seat and pretended it didn't bother him that he wasn't even safe when he was supposedly among friends and a girl who was a personal friend of Aslan was targeting him because he had the courage to be open about his sexuality.

His day went from bad to worse when he ran into Dave Karofsky and was locker checked not once, but twice and given an invitation to meet "The Fury", otherwise known as Karofsky's fist. Then, because Kurt clearly hadn't spent enough time in special hell for the day, he was subjected to Mr. Schue lecturing him about his attitude and behavior. It was all Kurt could do to simply call the man out on his willingness to ignore the homophobia displayed on a daily basis in his own classroom, denounce his repetitive lesson plans and admit that the daily harassment was having an effect on him before leaving. He'd wanted to trash every inch of that office and throw a screaming, crying, Erica
Kane worthy kind of fit but he'd restrained himself.

Kurt tried to shake it off, put his mask on, make the best of things and work with the glee guys on their mash up assignment, but he was mocked and then dismissed. Kurt's eyes stung as he recalled Puck basically telling him he was unwanted and of no use to them, suggesting he go poison the hipsters and then taking yet another swipe at his sexuality by suggesting he spy on the Warblers wearing feathers because he'd "fit right in."

Kurt had, in a moment of insanity, fashioned himself a makeshift Dalton uniform and made the nearly two hour trek to Westerville. He'd tried to tell himself he was there strictly for the benefit of New Directions, but he knew that wasn't the only reason he found himself on the picturesque property. He'd simply needed to get away: away from McKinley, away from Lima, away from the blatant displays of hate and the verbal and physical abuse and Dalton, with its zero tolerance bullying policy and gay straight alliance, was Kurt's version of the Promised Land.

Kurt took a deep breath and examined his reflection in his Navigator's rearview mirror. He rooted around in his glove compartment until he found the eye drops he kept there in case of emergencies. In case the drops failed to take care of any residual redness Kurt decided he'd take his Dior shades with him as backup and exited the vehicle.

Walking across the campus Kurt couldn't help but be struck by how different he felt. While he was nervous because he was on a covert mission of sorts, his stomach wasn't tied up in the familiar knots that occurred every time he stepped foot on McKinley school grounds. Kurt found his way into one of the larger buildings and began exploring.

Even though his gleemates dismissal of him stung, Kurt couldn't deny he was excited to have an excuse to check out Dalton. The school had come to his attention awhile back when, in a moment of desperation, he'd researched local boarding schools. The tuition rendered it an almost impossible dream, but Kurt could still appreciate the atmosphere. Dalton's website had not done the school justice. The building was beautiful, the grounds were impeccable and Kurt couldn't help but be awed by the lavish surroundings. He wandered around until he found himself in the middle of a crowd, rushing down a staircase. Something was going on and Kurt needed to find out what that was.

Without thinking he began to reach out towards the boy in front of him. Kurt's fingertips had hardly brushed the young man's blazer when he realized what he'd almost done. He snatched his hand back, praying that the other boy wouldn't be offended by being touched by someone as…flamboyant as Kurt.

"Excuse me, um hi," Kurt said softly.

The young man turned around and Kurt felt his heart leap up into his throat. He was gorgeous. He had thick, dark hair and rich hazel eyes flecked with amber, green and gold. He was a little shorter than Kurt, but he filled out the Dalton uniform quite nicely, the crisp white shirt creating a nice contrast to lightly tanned skin.

The young man in question looked at Kurt expectantly and Kurt found his voice. "Can I…can I ask you a question? I- I'm new here."

Blaine took a quick inventory of the boy in front of him before giving a small smirk. He didn't know why the guy was there, but Blaine knew he had just told him a bald faced lie. The jacket he was wearing was a nice attempt but lacked the red piping and Dalton crest of the standard issue blazer and unless someone had removed the stick from Chancellor Taylor's ass, bondage shorts were not part of the official school uniform.
And were those Dock Martens and knee socks for fuck's sake?

Uniform fail aside, the boy was gorgeous. He was tall and lithe, with elegant hands and an easy grace to him. His hair was an avalanche of expertly coiffed chestnut colored silk. His complexion was clear, pale and creamy. His face was absolute perfection: pink lips that were lush and looked pillow soft, a delicate upturned nose and the most breathtaking beautiful glasz eyes Blaine had ever seen.

Blaine didn't know what this kid's game was, but he was more than willing to play along.

"My name is Blaine," he said, extending his hand. The "new kid" seemed momentarily stunned before cautiously taking Blaine's hand and introducing himself.

"Kurt," the boy said shyly. "Uh, s-so what exactly is going on here?" Kurt asked, dropping Blaine's hand almost immediately.

A smile spread across Blaine's face. Well, that just made it official, he thought to himself. The boy was no Dalton student. Nearly everyone at Dalton knew Blaine by sight or reputation, but absolutely everyone knew why morning classes had been suspended for the day. Blaine had been the recipient of dozens of thanks and a spontaneous standing ovation at breakfast that morning for convincing Wes to and Chancellor Taylor to allow the Warbler's to perform during school hours.

Blaine schooled his face into what he hoped was an appropriately enthusiastic expression. "The Warblers," he replied as if it were both the most obvious and fantastic thing in the world. "Every now and then they throw an impromptu performance in the senior commons. It tends to shut the school down for awhile."

Kurt tried and failed to cover up his surprise. "So, wait, the glee club here is kind of….cool?"

Hell yeah, we are, Blaine thought recalling Jeff's legendary parties and the fact that you had to be more than merely a good singer to get into the Warblers. You had to be elite among a school filled with the elite. Warblers had it all: popularity, money, grades and futures so bright they practically owned stock in Ray Ban. Talent was only the first of many things they took into consideration before extending membership into the group.

"The Warblers are like rock stars," Blaine replied, a hint of cockiness easing its way into his tone.

Kurt's face plainly said he was a non believer.

Blaine decided right then and there, no matter who Kurt was or why he was at Dalton, he was going to convert him.

After all, every rock star needs his groupies.

"Come on," Blaine said grabbing Kurt's hand and tugging him along behind him. He could feel Kurt startle at the contact and frowned. Was the kid a germaphobe or something? As he led Kurt down the empty hallway, Blaine chanced a look at his face. Kurt looked positively enthralled…and he was still holding onto Blaine as they made their way to the Senior Commons.

Kurt was clearly not a germaphobe. He must just not be used to being touched, at least not by relative strangers, Blaine decided.

Blaine opened the doors to the senior commons and led Kurt into the room. He noticed that Kurt's level of discomfort rose when he realized just how much his attire differed from the other boys assembled.
"Ooh, I stick out like a sore thumb," Kurt breathed, taking a step back towards the doorway.

Blaine couldn't have Kurt getting uncomfortable and leaving before the big reveal. He gave him a winning smile.

"Next time just don't forget your jacket, new kid. You'll fit right in." He reached out and smoothed the collar of Kurt's coat, both to have an excuse to touch and to encourage Kurt to stick around.

"Now if you'll excuse me."

Kurt looked at Blaine like he had hung the moon.

This is almost too easy, Blaine thought to himself. He took his place as front man and began performing Teenage Dream, making sure to direct the majority of his performance at Kurt.

He had no idea what brought Kurt into his life, but he wasn't going to let him leave before he got him into his bed.

"Latte?" Blaine asked, sliding the drink across the table to Kurt and then gesturing to the two boys on either side of him, "This is Wes and David."

Kurt found himself sitting across from Blaine and two of his fellow Warblers. He'd abandoned all attempts at the dismal Dalton uniform and changed into his regular attire. If he was going to be driven to the outskirts of town and beaten senseless, he was going to do it in style.

Kurt took the drink and swallowed down his nerves. "It's very civilized for you to invite me for coffee before you beat me up for spying," Kurt quipped, hoping his face didn't show just how terrified he really was that a beatdown was exactly what they had planned.

Blaine nearly choked on his coffee and David's brow furrowed.

"We're not going to beat you up," Wes stated emphatically. Blaine took another sip of coffee and studied Kurt. The kid was trying hard to appear calm and collected, but he was clearly falling apart at the seams.

"You were such a terrible spy, we thought it was sort of endearing," David chimed in, his eyes warm and his voice slightly teasing.

Blaine took a steadying breath. He knew that tone. David's "fluidity" with his sexual orientation had been the subject of many a conversation between the three of them. David didn't often go for guys, but the specific type he went for was one of the many things he and Blaine had in common.

That type was Kurt.

Well, Blaine wasn't in the mood to share. He got first dibs on their "endearing" little spy. If David wanted sloppy seconds he was welcome to them but Blaine was first in line.

As he studied Kurt, Blaine was struck with the idea that there was more going on than simple spying. Blaine wasn't particularly interested in Kurt's personal problems but he did want to find out what they were and if they could be used to his advantage.

Blaine took control of the conversation before Wes began an inquisition or David could pour on the charm. "Which makes us think that spying on us wasn't really the reason you came," he added smoothly.
Blaine was prepared for Kurt to deny he had any other ulterior motive.

The beautiful boy in front of him however was full of surprises and his response had been nothing like Blaine expected.

"Can I ask a question? Are you guys all gay?"

Kurt couldn't believe the words had come out of his mouth. As soon as he'd said them he wanted to take them back. If they weren't going to beat him up before, surely they would now. He'd managed to not only stereotype them but offend them as well.

There was genuine laughter from trio and Kurt wasn't sure whether to wish for a hole in the floor to appear to save him from his mortification or to run for the hills before they gathered their torches and pitchforks.

"Ah, uh no," Blaine answered slowly. "I mean I am, but these two have girlfriends."

David had known Blaine long enough to know when his friend running game. His smile froze and his brow arched ever so slightly. It felt like Blaine was deliberately misleading Kurt, even though what Blaine had said was the technical truth. David didn't identify himself as gay, straight, or bi. The closest fitting label he'd come across was pansexual but he was reluctant to even call himself that. As far as he was concerned labels belonged on clothing, not people. He was just simply David and gender wasn't a primary concern in whom he found himself attracted to.

Plus, he did currently have a girlfriend. Even though he did find Kurt attractive, David wasn't the cheating type, and Blaine had seen the boy first and clearly wasn't keen on competition. David decided not to rock the boat.

"This is not a gay school," he laughed, answering Kurt and following Blaine's lead. "We just have a zero tolerance harassment policy," he elaborated.

"Everybody gets treated the same, no matter what they are," Wes jumped in. "It's pretty simple." Wes hadn't been sure why Blaine had insisted they take the world's worst spy out for coffee but after taking a critical look at him and seeing David instantly take to Kurt, the pieces of the puzzle slid into place. Blaine wanted in the kid's pants and from what Wes could see, the dapper Dalton boy had a relatively good shot of getting exactly what he wanted. Blaine was simply showing off his shiny new toy.

Wes sighed. Kurt Hummel wouldn't know what hit him, but at least he wasn't a Dalton student and Wes wouldn't have to deal with the fallout this time. Christophe was still calling him at three in the morning with Beyoncé's Why Don't You Love Me blasting in the background as he cried over Blaine.

Wes was not about to go through that shit again anytime soon, thank you very much.

Wes watched in fascination as Kurt's glasz eyes were filled with unshed tears in response to his answer. Jesus, how bad can the kid's school be if a no harassment policy can open the floodgates? Wes thought, stunned at the display of emotion. David frowned in understanding and gave Kurt a sincere smile.

Blaine, ever the opportunist, knew an opening when he saw one.

"Could you guys excuse us?"

Wes smirked and David shot Blaine a disapproving look, but they recognized the request as Blaine speak for "leave because you're cockblocking." They said their goodbyes and left Bambi to the
As soon as Wes and David took their leave, Blaine turned a sympathetic smile on Kurt. "I take it you're having trouble at school," he said quietly. It was a safe assumption. And it explained why he'd been shocked that Blaine hadn't been upset or offended when he'd touched him.

Blaine listened as Kurt broke down, pouring out his heart about his troubles with the student body in general and one jock in particular. Blaine saw how close to the edge Kurt was, how lonely, frustrated and needy he was and almost felt guilty for planning to take advantage of his vulnerability.

Almost, but not quite.

So Blaine exaggerated his troubles at Canterbury, carefully leaving out the sordid details and playing up the homophobic harassment he'd been subjected to so that Kurt would think they shared a common bond. When Kurt hung on his every word, Blaine felt like the least he could do was be sincere in his advice, so he tried to encourage Kurt to be strong, to stand up for himself and refuse to be a victim. Then he gave him his number and (in homage to his earlier joke to the Warbler's being rock stars) handed over an autographed picture of himself.

Kurt took both, blushing and laughing.

Blaine expected Kurt to be giving him a call sooner rather than later. He had no idea that call was going to drastically change both of their lives.
Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Blaine, Wes and David talk about Kurt. Kurt is further alienated in Glee and harassed in the halls, Kurt and Blaine bond over Project Runway.

Chapter Notes

A/N: Gordon Gecko is the character Michael Douglas played in the movie 'Wallstreet', a movie that would be one of my Wes' favorites.

CHAPTER WARNINGS: Language, implied suicidal thoughts, heteronormative stereotyping, violence, general snobbery, Project Runway References :)

Disclaimer: I do not own Glee...I do however own the copy of The Weeknd's cover of Dirty Diana that I'm currently listening to. Best Michael Jackson Cover EVER.

Chapter Two: The Root of All Evil

"You are going straight to the second circle of hell, Blaine."

Blaine grinned at his friend from the doorway as he made his way into Wes and David's dorm room. "Coming from someone headed to the fourth, I take that as a compliment," Blaine replied easily flopping onto David's bed.

"Greed is good. Greed is right, greed works. Greed clarifies, cuts through, and captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit," Wes recited.

"Thank you Gordon Gecko," Blaine deadpanned, leaning over and rambling though David's mini fridge for a drink.

"Anything worth doing is worth doing for money," Wes quipped, turning his attention back to his Government homework.

David rolled his eyes at his friends and before turning to Wes. "Wes, I sincerely hope that you are reincarnated as a hippie. I pray that in your next life you are a hemp wearing, tree hugging, capitalism protesting, Michael Moore loving, Green Party supporting, Republican loathing hippie," he said.
Wes narrowed his eyes and gave David a one finger salute in response.

Blaine's laughter quickly turned into a scowl when David turned on him. "And you, Don Juan, I hope you come back as a eunuch."

Blaine paled and Wes roared with laughter.

"Why are you putting a pox on both our houses?" Wes inquired.

David sighed. "I'm not. Not really. It's just that sometimes when the two of you get going the combination of sex and cynicism makes me cranky."

"That's because you don't have enough of either," Blaine replied.

"I'd rather not be cynical and I get enough sex, thank you very much."

"No such thing." Wes and Blaine cried out in unison.

"Why do I even hang out with you people?" David groaned.

"Because you loooove us," Wes teased.

"We're the Three Amigos. You're the peanut butter to our bread and jelly, the sugar to our Kool-Aid and water, the duck, duck to our goose," Blaine said solemnly.

"You need medication," David laughed.

"What are you offering? I hope it's not Viagra," Blaine joked. "Cause I tried that when I was screwing around with Christophe and it really didn't-"

"TMI! TMI!" Wes broke in furiously. "What did we agree upon Blaine?"

"But Wes."

"No, Blaine. That boy is still calling me at all hours of the night crying over you. I get enough intimate details of the two of you from him," Wes said crossly.

Blaine shrugged. "Christophe always was a bit melodramatic. When I suggested we role play he got upset and asked if it was my way of saying I wanted to fuck other people. Then he burst into tears when I informed him I had never stopped fucking other people." Blaine was silent for a beat. "In retrospect I suppose I should have made it clear from the onset that sex isn't dating."

David groaned and Wes shook his head. "I reiterate…the second circle Blaine. The second circle."

"Why are we talking about Christophe anyway?" Blaine said, crawling to the end of David's bed and bouncing up and down a bit. "I came in here to ask what you two thought about Kurt."

"He's…not your usual. I mean, the kid goes to public school. He goes to public school in Lima, for crying out loud." Wes shuddered.

"You are such a snob sometimes Wes," David said reproachfully. "Kurt seems like a nice guy, but Blaine…no," David frowned at his friend.

Blaine glared. "What do you mean no?"

"Blaine, Kurt has 'vulnerable' written on his forehead. Do you really want to be the guy that takes
advantage of that?" David asked.

"Yeah dude, you love and leave that one and it would be like punching a baby or something," Wes put in.

Blaine grimaced at the unpleasant visual of punching an actual baby and then thought about Kurt's glasz eyes and how he'd like to see them darkened with lust.

"Yeah…I'm pretty sure I want to be that guy," Blaine answered David.

"You kinda already are," Wes observed.

"Whose side are you on?" David rounded on Wes.

"I'm Switzerland dude. You made a good point, I acknowledged it. Blaine however, also has a good point," Wes shrugged.

"You can't be neutral on this one Wes. Taking advantage of Kurt would be wrong and you know it," David declared.

"Hey, I'm not the one who wants to get his hands in his skintight jeans," Wes defended. "Besides, I can so be neutral. I didn't get sucked into your ridiculous disagreement about pirates versus ninja's and I won't get sucked into this one."

"It was not ridiculous! Blaine insisting that ninja's could somehow kung fu their way around a cannonball was ridiculous but this."

"Mommy, Daddy, it makes me sad when you fight," Blaine piped up from his spot on David's bed. Both boys glared at him.

"What?" He asked innocently.

"Nothing," Wes grumbled. "So about Kurt, I concede that he is somewhat your type, even if he is you know, poor. So what's your plan?" Wes asked.

"I hardly think he's destitute Wes. The guy was wearing Neil Barrett and drives a Navigator. And as far as my plan goes, I plan to fuck him," Blaine explained.

"Well, there's a brilliant strategy. Napoleon would be proud," Wes deadpanned.

Blaine opened his mouth to retort but David cut him off. "Blaine, you hit and run with that kid and he will make Christophe look like a good break up. I don't know what Kurt's deal is, but he's obviously going through something heavy right now. Do you really wanna add more stress to his life?"

"And that concludes the lecture portion of the evening," Blaine grumped. "I don't plan on stressing him out. Look, this is a win/win. I get to have sex and Kurt gets to gain some experience. He told me he was the only out kid at his school…he's probably never even had a date. I am totally doing him a solid here. It's like a making a contribution to the gay community."

"Sexual favors are not tax deductible and therefore are not charitable contributions," Wes stated.

David shook his head. "Somehow I doubt this is what Chancellor Taylor meant when he encouraged to the student body to get involved in local charities."
"Charity does begin at home," Blaine smiled.

"I reiterate, anything worth doing is worth doing for money," Wes said.

"Wes, sometimes I think you sold your soul to the devil," David snarked.

"The negotiations fell through. Bastard tried to lowball me," Wes stated matter of factly.

As his two friends descended into another round of good natured teasing, Blaine took out his phone and sent a quick text to Kurt.

Kurt was floating on a cloud when he received Blaine's text. The handsome young man had quickly been granted a starring role in Kurt's fantasies. Kurt was bound and determined not to repeat his past mistakes with Blaine so he tried not to read into the other boy's actions.

At least Blaine was gay. After his disastrous crushes on Finn and Sam, Blaine was a move in the right direction if nothing else.

Kurt's good mood quickly vanished once he walked into Glee club. Kurt texted Blaine back while he was supposed to be watching the girls' performance and the two struck up a conversation that lasted until Mr. Schue separated the two groups again. The boys all clustered together, talking animatedly about their mash up and Kurt suddenly realized he didn't even know what songs they were doing.

"Gentlemen, would any of you care to enlighten me as to what musical number we are going to be performing?" He asked stiffly.

There was silence, and Artie and Mike exchanged guilty glances. Finn cleared his throat. "Uh, well, Kurt after you disappeared yesterday we figured you'd talked Mr. Schue into letting you join in with the girls. I mean, I know you're not really a girl, but you know, you act like one a lot and we're doing an AC/DC and Jimi Hendrix mash up and none of that is girly so…" Finn trailed off, looking at Kurt silently begging him not to make a scene.

Kurt simply took his bag off his seat and left. It wasn't a Rachel Berry diva storm out, but he didn't trust himself to speak or do anything other than leave. He was afraid if he opened his mouth he would release the sob that was trapped in his throat and the last thing he wanted was to cry in front of Finn after being verbally castrated.

Kurt furiously blinked back tears as he made his way down the hall. The buzzing in his pocket alerted him to the fact that he had an incoming text from Blaine.

Courage.

Kurt couldn't help but smile at the thought that Blaine was thinking of him and had cared enough to send him some encouragement for the day. Kurt was about to respond when he found himself viciously slammed into the wall of lockers by a laughing Dave Karofsky.

Kurt looked around and saw a few students staring in wide eyed terror, but no one made a move to help him, including Finn who was standing at the end of the hall. Kurt gathered his things, fired off a quick goodbye text to Mercedes and made his way home.

Kurt locked himself in his room, put in his Project Runway-The Complete Sixth Season DVD and tried to relax. When his phone rang Kurt was going to ignore it but when he saw the word "Blaine" lit up on the display Kurt's quickly changed his mind and snatched up the phone.
"B-Blaine? Hi...is...how are...hi," Kurt stammered out in greeting.

Blaine had intended to let Kurt make the first phone call but after his conversation with David and Wes he was feeling a little on edge. The tone of Kurt's voice was completely off and Blaine felt a flood of concern rush through his veins.

"Kurt? Is everything alright?" Blaine asked quietly.

Kurt closed his eyes and tried to steady his breathing. The last thing he wanted was for Blaine to think he was some perpetual damsel in distress. He'd already broken down once in front of the other boy and had no desire for a repeat performance.

"Yes, everything is fine." Kurt replied a little too quickly and far too brightly to be believable. "I was watching old Project Runway reruns and wondering who in the Land of Oz thought it was a good idea to move the show to LA? I don't know why I'm subjecting myself to season six in all its shark jumping glory."

Blaine knew diversion and avoidance when he heard it. Kurt shutting him was simply unacceptable so Blaine decided to push his boundaries and see how far Kurt would let him go. "Anytime you want to tell me what's really bothering you Kurt, I'm ready to listen," Blaine interrupted quietly.

"What, watching so-called designers translate avant garde into Frederick's of Hollywood on steroid's isn't enough to make you weep?" Kurt joked.

"No, but Emilio turning his model into the bastard child of Malibu Barbie and a hot tranny mess during the hardware challenge in Season seven was," Blaine fired back, realizing the direct approach wouldn't bear any fruit.

Kurt nearly dropped the phone. "OH. MY. GOSH. That garment, and I use the term loosely, is one of my top ten Project Runway crimes against fashion," He babbled excitedly.

"I'm hoping you have the hate crime that was Blayne's "Girllicious" ensemble constructed of cupboard linings, jump rope and featuring an open diaper on the model's front on that list as well," Blaine teased.

"Of course I do," Kurt sniffed. "That design gave me nightmares, actual nightmares," he moaned.

Blaine laughed. "I was far too busy being horrified by Stella's fixation on her 'leatha' to be haunted by Blayne's trashtastic design aesthetic."

Kurt giggled. "But Blaine, every woman out there wants to be girlicious."

Blaine laughed. "The guy was a hack. I'm actually ashamed we share the same name. I swear, just when I had lived down the douchebaggery of Blane McDonough in Pretty in Pink, that guy showed up! I went by my middle name for six months because of him."

Kurt stretched out on his bed. "Hey at least people don't spontaneously break into My Favorite Things around you."

Blaine laughed then began to sing, "Raindrops on roses-"

"I will cut you," Kurt declared.

Blaine snickered. "Ok, ok. So who's your favorite Project Runway designer of all time?"
"Whose yours?"

"I asked first," Blaine reminded Kurt.

"Mine is the original keeper of the flame of fierceness-"

"Christian Siriano!" Blaine interrupted excitedly. "He's mine too. I mean, the guy was a total bitch and threw a high school kid under the bus on the runway but his fashion was-"

"Orgasmic," Kurt finished. "His fashion was orgasmic. And he interned for Alexander McQueen who is my fashion idol and that red dress in his winter/fall 2010 line? I want to have babies with it," Kurt declared.

Blaine laughed. "I don't think I've ever been jealous of a dress before. But it's nice to hear you sounding so upbeat. So...you want to tell me what was wrong before?" Blaine asked, hoping he'd relaxed Kurt enough to get him to open up.

Kurt paused. Part of him wanted to push the entire day into the darkest corner of his mind and pretend it didn't happen, but another part of him was desperate for someone to talk to.

"Kurt," Blaine cut in, "you can tell me anything and I promise not to judge you or break your confidence."

Kurt swallowed. "It was just a really bad day. It started in glee and just went downhill from there-"

Blaine half listened to Kurt telling him about some jackass named Ben who was apparently under the impression that Kurt was girl. Blaine idly flipped through his copy of Import Tuner, wondering if it would be worth the fight with Jasper to track down a Mazda RX-7. Kurt's next words however stopped him cold.

"...slammed me into the locker so hard my bruises have bruises but no one even bothered to try to help me or even ask if I was okay and Finn was there and he just watched-"

"Wait, you're like, actually physically injured?" Blaine interrupted. White hot anger flashed through Blaine at the idea of Kurt's pale, creamy skin being turned black and blue.

"Blaine, have you seen me? I'm so pale my nickname was Powder in Jr. High," Kurt scoffed. "And Karofsky is huge and metal lockers don't move even if they see you coming. Of course, I have bruises," Kurt replied. "I always have bruises," he added softly.

Blaine bit his bottom lip. David's words crashed back over him. "I don't know what Kurt's deal is, but he's obviously going through something heavy right now. Do you really wanna add more stress to his life?"

Blaine exhaled. Kurt clearly needed an advocate of some sort and Blaine saw no reason why that couldn't be him. He'd just have to use a little more discretion and tread a bit more carefully with Kurt than he had with Christophe.

He'd definitely have to take more care than he had with Joaquin.

He wouldn't repeat the fiasco that Brian turned into.

He doubted that Kurt would gather everything Blaine had ever left at his house and set fire to it on his front lawn like Spencer had, but Blaine didn't want to chance it.
He would be better with Kurt. David was right, Kurt wasn't hit and run material…but he might make an excellent new friend.

Kurt could be the kind of friend that came with benefits.

It was, as Blaine said earlier, a win/win. Kurt got someone with the ability to make his life a little brighter in his corner and he got to have sex with Kurt.

"Kurt, have you thought about telling your father? From what you've said about him I'm sure he'd step in and-

"I know he would," Kurt interrupted. "My dad would walk through fire for me. But I can't...he's not...he tries Blaine but it's hard for him. And he's sick and it just, I can't put him in the middle. He's my dad and...I would do anything to protect him. You get that, right?"

Blaine didn't, not really, but he knew better than to tell Kurt that. "Have you tried the faculty? Do you have any other relatives? Kurt, you need an adult to intervene on your behalf."

"There isn't anyone!" Kurt exploded. "Half the teachers think I deserve what I get for being gay, even if they won't say it out loud and the other half, like Mr. Schue, are so permissive that they just pretend it's not happening. I don't have any real family other than my dad. I-I'm alone Blaine. I'm alone and its awful and sometimes I think I can't take one more day of this black hole that's become my existence. Sometimes I think it would be easier if I just did myself and everyone around me a favor and-

"And what?" Blaine interrupted, a mix of anger and terror giving his voice a raw edge. "Kurt, there is nothing, NOTHING, wrong with you, with us. If the close minded assholes in Lima don't get that, it's THEIR problem. Just...just don't do anything stupid, okay? I know it sucks. I know it's hard, but you don't give in and you don't let them win. Fuck...have you thought about... why don't you transfer?"

"Where would I go Blaine? This is the only high school in the area and besides, the harassment isn't limited to school hours. I get my gas at an Exxon five miles from my house because the guy at the Texaco that's right down the street said he didn't want business from my kind. In my head, I know I just have to hold on until graduation and then I'm out of here but sometimes that just seems so fucking far away that I don't think I'll make it," Kurt said softly.

"You'll make it Kurt," Blaine declared. "I...I'll make sure of it." Where the fuck did that come from, Blaine wondered.

Kurt gave a strangled laugh. "I-I've never even told half of this stuff to Mercedes." Kurt ran a hand through his hair. "Thank you Blaine. Thanks for being there and for listening and for caring. Not too many people do."

"Kurt, just...don't thank me. I, ah, I'm just doing what I think is right."

"It's more than anyone's done for me in a long time," Kurt quietly confessed.

"Maybe you just haven't been hanging around the right people."

"Was that an offer?" Kurt asked coyly.

"Absolutely. What do you say to a movie on Friday?"

Kurt was floored. He literally vibrated with excitement as he answered a little breathlessly, "I say
"Then I'll see you then. I'll text you the details and call you tomorrow?" Blaine replied.


"Til tomorrow then. Goodnight Kurt."

"Goodnight, Blaine."

Both boys hung up, Kurt feeling better than he had all day and Blaine slightly unsettled that he was becoming far more invested in Kurt than originally intended.
Chapter Three: It's the Disease That We Crave

Blaine knew the moment he was summoned into Chancellor Taylor's office and saw Thad Harwood sitting there that no possible good could come of it.

He was half right.

Reese Taylor was the stereotypical prep school headmaster. He believed in old traditions and even older money. He knew that his student's parents paid a pretty penny for him to ensure that their children were well educated and remained relatively scandal free while in his care.

That was easier said than done, particularly when a substantial part of the student body was comprised of young men suffering from "poor little rich boy syndrome". In his years at Dalton he'd arranged abortions and adoptions, paid off prostitutes, blackmailed district attorneys and bought judges. He'd posted students bail and tracked down run away heirs.

Never had a child tried his considerable patience the way Blaine Anderson did.

Blaine, Reese mused, simply had too much. Blaine had too much freedom. He had access to far too much money and he was anything but restrained in his spending. Blaine had too much ambition; he
had too much anger and resentment for one so young.

And far too much power.

Unlike the rest of his peers, Blaine wasn't stuck waiting in the wings for his grandfather or his father or his older brother or great uncle to hand over the reins to the family business, or slide him into his designated slot in the corporate or political machine. Blaine wasn't merely an Anderson, thanks to his grandfather's passing and the shocking contents of his will, Blaine was the Anderson. He was seventeen and the king of an international empire. He had a tremendous amount of wealth and influence.

And the problem with that was that he knew it.

When it had been revealed that Desmond Anderson had bequeathed the lion share of his estate to his grandson-an estate that included sole ownership and majority stock of his multibillion dollar company- the general assumption had been that Blaine would have his father, Carter Anderson, step in and take the lead in his stead while Blaine rubber stamped Carter's projects and handed over his proxy for board meetings. No one had given any serious thought to the notion that Blaine would do more than merely sit back and cash the checks that came his way.

The general assumption had vastly underestimated Blaine's hatred for his father and his considerable ambition.

Within weeks Blaine had established himself as a force to be reckoned with. He'd somehow managed to maneuver his parents into signing over control of his trust fund and had Carter unceremoniously fired from Anderson International. Rumor had it he'd actually had the man escorted from the building by security. Blaine had swept the company from top to bottom, removing anyone whose allegiance was to his father and placing his godfather, Jasper Devereux, in the position of acting CEO.

Jasper Devereux was a man that could strike fear in the heart of the devil himself, but had an inexplicable soft spot for Blaine. Jasper and Carter had experienced some sort of falling out years ago, but he had never severed ties with his godson. J.D. ran the company with brutal efficiency and his loyalty to Blaine was unyielding. He kept the young man apprised of all business endeavors, oversaw Blaine's trust fund, and acted as the minor's legal guardian.

The combination of Blaine's ambition and J.D's experience had proven to be a lethal one.

If one were on the outside looking in, they might assume that J.D. called the shots and Blaine was the eager pupil learning at the feet of the master. While that may true in some regards, it certainly didn't ring true in all.

Blaine Anderson was nobody's puppet.

Blaine, Reese noted, was the archetypal iron fist in a velvet glove. On the surface the boy was charming, well mannered, and a master at diplomacy. However, if he were threatened or challenged, Blaine was one of the coldest, most ruthless individuals that Reese had ever met. The boy had swept into Dalton and in a manner of months ushered in a completely new social order-with him firmly at the top and his two best friends at his side. His peers had been too distracted by the Trojan Horse his perfect manners and dapper façade created to notice the war machine housed within and by the time a select few-Mr. Harwood chief among them-realized what Blaine was doing it was far too late. Blaine met every opposition to his rule at Dalton with the force and precision of a military strike. Trying to displace young Mr. Anderson was an exercise in futility.
It still didn't stop Mr. Harwood from trying.

Thad was the closest thing Blaine had to rival at Dalton. He was an impressive young man in his own right. Thad was handsome, talented, intelligent, wealthy and popular among students and faculty alike.

He was also perpetually in Blaine's shadow.

The problem, Reese mused, was that Thad on his best day was a pale imitation of Blaine on his worst. Thad was charming, but Blaine was charismatic. Thad was intelligent, but Blaine was brilliant. Thad had ambition but Blaine had drive. When Thad felt slighted he took his petty revenge, seeking to humiliate the offending student.

When Blaine felt slighted his revenge was anything but petty. Thad humiliated; Blaine destroyed.

Reese had been refereeing their power plays for over a year now and they always ended the same way.

He knew before Blaine sat down that he would emerge the victor.

"Chancellor Taylor, Thad. To what do I owe the honor gentleman?" Blaine asked politely as he took his seat.

"Blaine, it has come to my attention that there has been an incident of some kind that has resulted in a change in the dynamic between yourself and Mr. Van Lucre." Reese stated carefully.

Thad smirked and Blaine raised an eyebrow. "Christophe and I were…involved for a short time and we had an amicable parting of ways. I hardly see where that qualifies as an incident," Blaine replied archly.

"Yes, well. As you know, the two of you were selected to represent Dalton at Senator Sterling's Youth Leadership Conference. Mr. Harwood was selected as an alternate and he has raised some concerns that the tension between yourself and Mr. Van Lucre might-

Blaine seethed internally as Chancellor Taylor prattled on. So that's the game Thad was playing. Blaine should have known that Thad wouldn't take losing the group vote to Blaine lying down. "I assure you, there is no tension between Christophe and myself," Blaine cut in smoothly. "I realize how important it is that Dalton put its best face forward at this event and I appreciate Thad's concerns. His pride in this institution is well known and his devotion to maintaining Dalton's standards of excellence are quite inspiring."

"I'm glad you feel that way, Blaine," Thad interrupted, smiling like the cat that ate the canary. "That being the case, I'm sure you'll agree that it would be advisable that I take your place at the conference to avoid any potential embarrassment due to the strain between yourself and Christophe."

Thad didn't exactly hate Blaine. He had grown up with the guy and he knew they were more alike than they were different. He just hated the way Blaine seemed to get everything and he especially hated the way that most of the things Blaine seemed to get were things that, in Thad's opinion, should belong to Thad.

Blaine was a spoiled, self important, self indulgent jackass and Thad was tired of constantly being the beta to Blaine's alpha.

As Thad played his hand, Reese braced for impact.
"I see. I would happy to step aside Thad, if Chancellor Taylor deems it necessary," Blaine answered.

Reese cleared his throat and began to speak. "As you both know it is the duty of every Dalton student to conduct himself in a manner that upholds Dalton's prestigious reputation. Now, Blaine, I understand that young men will have…dalliances but-

"Say no more. You are absolutely right, Chancellor Taylor. Romantic liaisons should never endanger the reputation of this fine institution. I'm sure Thad agrees," Blaine stated emphatically.

"I am in complete agreement, Blaine," Thad replied smugly. The fool is making this entirely too easy, Thad mentally gloated.

"So I suppose it's a fortunate thing that neither Christophe nor I bear any ill will towards one another. It's a shame the same can't be said for Mr. Harwood and Anastasia Carmichael," Blaine said neutrally.

Thad's smile froze and Blaine went in for the kill. He turned to Chancellor Taylor and gave him his most earnest look.

"I must confess I was rather relieved when Christophe was chosen to accompany me once it came to my attention that Ms. Carmichael was going to be the representative from Crawford County Day School. After all, no one wants a repeat of last semester's unpleasantness," Blaine said, leaning back in chair and brushing imaginary lint off of slacks.

Take that you backstabbing, social climbing, rat bastard, Blaine thought to himself.

Reese sighed. The "unpleasantness" had been Thad's then-girlfriend, Anastasia Carmichael surprising Thad in his dorm room only to find him in bed with her then-best friend. Ms. Carmichael had then chased the very naked pair throughout the dorm to the amusement of the camera phone wielding student body.

The video had gone viral in a manner of minutes.

Thad flushed bright red and Blaine continued. "It's also my understanding that Yasmine is going to be representing St. Peter's." He looked directly at Thad. "The two ladies still haven't made peace, you know. I shudder to think of the potential disaster that could occur if all three of you are in the same room together with all that bad blood flowing between you."

Game. Set. Match.

Reese decided it was time to end things and put Mr. Harwood out of his misery.

"Yes, well. Thankfully that won't be a problem. As neither you nor Mr. Van Lucre have raised any objections and I'm sure Mr. Harwood has no desire to reprise his role as an internet sensation, I don't see there being any need to make any changes at this time."

Thad threw Blaine a vicious glare then composed himself. "You're quite right Chancellor Taylor. I was merely-"

"We're all well aware of what you were doing Thad," Blaine said coldly, rising to his feet. "If that's all, I really should be taking my leave now. We have Warblers practice in a few minutes and I'd like to freshen up first."

Reese released a breath he didn't know he'd been holding. Blaine was taking Thad's attempt to usurp his position with uncharacteristic grace.
Blaine paused on his way out. He'd sufficiently embarrassed Thad and asserted himself. He could simply take his win and leave well enough alone.

The problem with him doing that was simply that Blaine didn't believe in leaving your prey wounded. He believed in going for the killshot.

"Although, while I'm here," he said turning back around and addressing Chancellor Taylor. "I wanted ask if you'd given any thought to who you'll be sending to represent Dalton at next month's Future Business Leaders of America district meeting."

Reese cast a sidelong glance at Thad. Mr. Harwood was due. He'd been passed over twice; once in favor of Nick Duval and the last time in favor of Blaine.

"Because if you hadn't made your official recommendation I wanted to suggest that you give some thought to sending David Thompson." Blaine finished

Reese's eyebrows shot up on his forehead and Thad's jaw dropped. "David? David-"Thad began.

"David has a 4.0 and is a model student, active in several of the groups and clubs on campus including the FBLA."

"Be that as it may, Mr. Anderson-"

"Of course the choice is entirely up to you, Chancellor. I just brought it up because I arranged for Jonathan Benson to speak at the event. I ran into him at the club the other day and we ended up chatting quite a bit about Dalton and the subject of David came up. Jonathan is quite anxious to meet him and we all know how he feels about self made men," Blaine continued.

Reese closed his eyes. Jonathan Benson was a self made billionaire and Dalton alumni who had become disillusioned with what he saw as wave after wave of spoiled brats who didn't know what it meant to make an honest day's wage. Reese suspected he was still a bit bitter by how he'd been treated as a student who had attended Dalton on scholarship instead of mommy and daddy's money.

David, unlike the majority of the students at Dalton, hadn't grown up wealthy. David's father had only made his millions in recent years. Richard Thompson was a man with a GED who had turned hard work and a dream into a multi-million dollar cosmetics empire and David had worked for his father since he was old enough to go door to door offering free samples of their products and helping to package and deliver orders.

Jonathan would adore David. Perhaps he'd adore him enough to make a contribution to the school.

Choosing David wasn't fair to Thad however, who by rights should be next in line to attend the dinner.

Reese made his decision. "I think Mr. Thompson would be fine representative. Be sure to let him know to come by my office after your practice to get the details."

Thad turned an unhealthy shade of purple. Reese was genuinely sorry for the lad, but his first priority was the good of the school.

A priority Blaine knew how to exploit all too well.

"I'll make sure he stops by," Blaine replied turning on his heel and leaving, without another word.

"Mr. Harwood, you may see yourself out," Reese dismissed the angry young man still sitting in the
Thad rose stiffly, giving Reese a jerky nod and exited fuming. Thad vowed that he was going to get even with Blaine if it was the last thing he did. He was tired of coming in second, and now third because of Blaine fucking Anderson. Blaine was going down and Thad was going to be the reason why.

Reese took in the young man’s retreating form and exhaled harshly. He then rose and pulled out David Thompson's file so he could update David's biography for Dalton's press kit. He also pulled Blaine's for good measure to ensure he'd left nothing off Blaine's official Dalton bio.

Blaine had successfully warded off Thad's attempt to take his position and in the process stripped Thad of an honor he'd rightfully earned. In the latest battle between the two Blaine had triumphed.

Reese caught sight of Blaine's file and murmured to himself, "Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes."

_I fear the Greeks even if they bear gifts._

Kurt was seething. Mr. Schue had to have been going for irony when he named the club "New Directions". They only went in ONE direction: Finn and Rachel's. Kurt had been shocked when Mr. Schue had announced he was working on the set list for sectionals but hadn't found the perfect song to highlight Finn and Rachel yet.

Did the man not realize there were _ten other members_ in the club? Sure, Finn and Rachel were talented but they _all_ were. Mr. Schue had the worst case of tunnel vision Kurt had ever seen. He was constantly promising that he'd make an effort to respect the ability of every member of the club and create moments for all of them to shine, but he never followed through on it when it counted. Sure, he'd let the rest of them have solos in practice or for a random performance here or there, but in competitions the closest anyone not named Rachel or Finn came to being featured was when Mr. Schue had Mercedes belt out the final note.

It was infuriating. It was stifling. It was never _going to change._

At least Mr. Ryerson had made them _audition_ for parts. Kurt couldn't remember the last time Mr. Schue hadn't just arbitrarily handed the leads to Finn and Rachel.

And Mr. Schue didn't even seem to notice the damage he was doing to the club with his favoritism. Everyone was starting to resent Rachel and Finn. Tina had fled in tears, Mike trailing after her. Puck had glared a hole in Mr. Schue's head and Artie andBrittney had lost interest and spent the entire time making out. Santana and Quinn had done one another's nails and he, Mercedes and Sam had passed the time making plans for the weekend.

Even Brad had given Mr. Schue an incredulous look and rolled his eyes towards the heavens.

Finn and Rachel were so busy huddled with Mr. Schue that the implosion of New Directions that was going on didn't even register.

Kurt was so tired of being looked over that he was seriously considering crawling back to Coach Sylvester and begging to rejoin the Cheerios.

The only bright spot in his day had been texting with Blaine. He couldn't believe how quickly he was coming to rely on the other teen. Blaine always knew just what to say to get a smile or a laugh out of Kurt and Kurt desperately needed something to give him a reason to smile.
Once school let out, Kurt made it home and quickly prepared dinner. He gave his father a quick text to let him know he had a hot dinner waiting on him and not to work too late. Kurt knew he was hovering, but he couldn't help it. Burt Hummel was all Kurt had and the idea of losing him was more than Kurt could bear.

Kurt shook off the unpleasant thoughts and started on his homework. He gave up on his calculus and decided to call Blaine instead.

"Hello?" Blaine answered after a couple of rings.

"Rescue me," Kurt begged.

A smile spread across Blaine's face. It was the first time they'd talked when Kurt hadn't sounded upset. In fact, Kurt sounded slightly breathy, and completely adorable.

It was a nice change.

"What am I rescuing you from?" Blaine asked, shutting his history book and making his way over to his bed.

"You're saving me from the evils of calculus. I want to go back in time and stab Newton," Kurt declared.

"Ah, but that would still leave Leibniz," Blaine replied.

"Curses! Foiled again!"

Blaine laughed. "If it makes you feel any better Caligula is currently making me his bitch."

"From what I understand, he did that to a lot of people," Kurt cracked.

"I suppose he did," Blaine agreed.

"How was your day?" Kurt asked. "You sound a bit…tired, maybe? You don't sound as bright and shiny as you usually do."

Blaine paused. He was surprised Kurt had picked up on his mood. Usually Kurt was so upset when they talked he'd assumed the other boy wasn't paying too much attention to Blaine.

"It was…eventful," Blaine said slowly.

"I take it not all of those events were pleasant?"

Blaine sighed. "No, not at all. Everything worked out in the end though so I suppose that's what's important."

"Tell me about it," Kurt said, moving over to the sofa and stretching out. "I've leaned on you I don't even know how many times. It's my turn to do some heavy lifting."

"Are you calling me fat?" Blaine joked.

"Don't be silly," Kurt laughed. "Now stop deflecting and spill."

Blaine hesitated, but decided it couldn't hurt to let Kurt in on the drama with Thad.

Kurt listened as Blaine recounted his meeting with Chancellor Taylor and Thad. When Blaine
concluded the story Kurt let out a slow breath.

"Wow. That was…very Cesare Borgia of you," Kurt murmured.

"You disapprove?" Blaine asked calmly.

"No…not exactly. Goodness knows I've employed my own form of guerilla tactics when engaging in high school warfare. Of course, I still maintain that however dubious my intention, giving Rachel that makeover was an act of mercy," Kurt replied. "It's just-

"It's just what, Kurt?" Blaine broke in. He couldn't believe Kurt was casting judgment on him, after all of their conversations and all the time that he'd spent being supportive and listening to his problems and encouraging him.

"It's just I hate that you're forced to deal with someone who makes stuff like that necessary. I mean, he came after you, right? This was…social Darwinism for the Dalton set. I mean, after what happened to you at your last school, I can understand you not wanting to let anyone push you around. I just ah, wish that it wasn't necessary, that's all," Kurt explained.

Blaine's irritation evaporated. Kurt wasn't judging him, he was…doing some strange sort of rationalizing. As long as it worked to his advantage Blaine was happy to go with it. "That's uh…thank you."

"Don't thank me. Besides, I was a Cheerio. I watched Coach Sylvester make a nun cry. Nothing you could possibly do would shock me," Kurt replied.

Don't be too sure about that little one, Blaine thought to himself.

"Coach Sylvester...is that the woman who filed a lawsuit to have Sunday changed to Sue's Day?" Blaine asked.

"The same," Kurt confirmed. "She's certifiable. But…she's also the only faculty member that's been remotely helpful so I can't think of her as all bad."

"Isn't she hell bent on destroying your glee club though?" Blaine asked

Kurt snorted. "At this point, there's precious little left for Coach Sylvester to destroy."

Blaine's interest was piqued. Kurt may be a potential…something, but Warblers was a priority and New Directions was competition. Plus, by sending Kurt to spy, they had fired the first shot. Turnabout was fair play.

"Trouble in paradise?" Blaine asked

"More like a bonfire in hell," Kurt moaned. "Everyone is angry and frustrated and Mr. Schue just doesn't care because he's got such a hard on for Finchel that it borders on fetishism."

"You have someone in your glee club named Finchel?"

"No, Finchel…the portmanteau of Finn and Rachel. You know like Brangelina or Bennifer," Kurt explained.

"Ah, I got it. So, Finchel are the stars and the rest of you…"

"Huddle in the shadows and quietly plot their murder," Kurt retorted.
"Now that is a Borgias move," Blaine laughed. "Ever think of just asking your director to be a little fairer in his selection process?"

"Did Alexander McQueen revive the low rise jean?" Kurt scoffed. "Every so often Mr. Schue realizes he has ten other people in New Directions and promises to allow us a chance at the spotlight. Then we sing a song, a couple of the background players get a line or a verse and the next week the Finchel Show is back on the air."

Blaine was quiet. Kurt was clearly feeling undervalued and underappreciated. If the rest of his club was feeling this way, that was a clear weakness the Warblers could exploit.

"I know it's not the same thing, because to the best of my knowledge no one is unhappy with the current state of things, but I pretty much sing lead the majority of the time for the Warblers. I try to make sure though that the other guys know that it isn't just "Blaine and the Pips" and that each and every one of them are essential to our success, but I am the one whose front and center. Being in that position requires a certain amount of diplomacy. Maybe I could talk to your friends Rachel and Finn and-"

"In the name of Grilled Cheesus, don't even think of approaching Finn, or worse, Rachel," Kurt squeaked.

"What is a grilled cheesus?"

"Its…Finn thought he saw the face of God in a grilled cheese sandwich and prayed for boob. It's a long story," Kurt replied, "My point is that you can't talk to Finn or Rachel."

"Why not?" Blaine was genuinely curious why Kurt was so insistent.

"They don't…I haven't…other than Mercedes and Brittany no one knows anything about you. I didn't tell anyone about my fail as a covert agent and if you show up Rachel will dub you the new Jesse St. James and Finn will …well truthfully Finn will do whatever Rachel tells him to do. And Puck will slash the tires on your jag," Kurt explained.

"Jesse St. James? Wasn't he the soloist for Vocal Adrenaline? Why am I the new Jesse St. James and why is a character from a Midsummer's Night Dream slashing my tires?"

"They'll probably throw eggs on you too. And I don't even want to imagine the funkification-"

"The what?".

Kurt sighed. "Blaine, get comfortable. I'm going to tell you a little story about a boy, a girl, and the funk."
Chapter Four: Coffee Republic

"Next time I pay for our coffees," Kurt said as he leaned back in his seat.

"I was raised to be a gentleman," Blaine replied.

"So was I," Kurt returned a little defensively.

Blaine studied Kurt quietly. "You think I'm treating you like a girl, don't you?"

Kurt took a drink of his coffee. "Well...you opened the door for me. You ordered for me. You paid for me and then you pulled out my chair. I would say that you've effectively made me "the girl" in this relation- uh, interaction," Kurt said gently.

"Kurt," Blaine said leaning across the table to take Kurt's hand, "Trust me, I'm well aware that you are not a girl. I was simply trying to...be polite, maybe even impress you. I can't help it, there's something about you that brings out my-"

"Dapper side?" Kurt teased.

"Dapper McDapperpants, that's me."

"McDapperpants...Blaine that's awful even for you," Kurt laughed. "And I get it, I do. You're a gentleman. I guess I'm a little sensitive because of everything that went on with the glee guys and how I'm treated at school. I mean, I know I'm not the most masculine of guys, and sure I claim honorary girl membership but I'm not a girl. I'm just...I'm me. I'm a guy and it feels like I'm..."
"Kurt I get it." Blaine said softly. "I mean, yeah, I'm a little more, I guess stereotypically male than you, but I'm still gay and for some people that translates into me automatically lacking in masculinity. I can't possibly enjoy sports, or video games or be able to defend myself or-"

"Be on the football team or know anything about cars," Kurt broke in. "You'd be amazed how many people assume I don't even know how to change my oil. Never mind the fact that my father owns a freaking garage! I know more about cars than I do about fashion. It's just-"

"It's frustrating," Blaine completed. "Being stereotyped is frustrating. All the more so when certain aspects of who you are seem to live up to the stereotype. Then it feels like you can't win for losing."

"Exactly. If talk about fashion or Broadway, its "well of course he's into fashion and show tunes," Kurt said bitterly.

"But if I kick ass at Call of Duty-"

"Or rebuild a transmission-"

"Then its, "I didn't know gay guys did stuff like that."

"And you have to decide whether to be pissed, hurt, let it slide or turn it into a teaching moment," Kurt said.

"Like I said, it's frustrating," Blaine agreed. He smiled at Kurt. "Next time, you can pay for the coffee."

Kurt beamed. "I'll also pick you up, open all the doors for you and if you play your cards right I may even put my jacket over a mud puddle in the street to protect your shoes."

Blaine laughed. "Really now?"

"Well, if it's your jacket," Kurt amended. "My jackets are all fabulous. That Dalton blazer on the other hand is a polyester abomination."

"It's a polyblend and in all fairness, you've never seen me outside of this uniform. I'm pretty sure my wardrobe would meet with your approval." Blaine teased.

"I guess I'll find out Friday," Kurt grinned.

Before Blaine could respond there was the clearing of a throat and a condescending greeting.

"Well, hello Blaine. This is a nice surprise. Care to introduce us to your…friend?"

Blaine looked up into the unwelcome and unwanted face of a sneering Thad Harwood and mentally cursed. As if being suddenly confronted with Thad's presence wasn't bad enough, he was accompanied by Flint Wilson, a fellow Warbler whose hatred of Blaine made Thad's look subtle.

Son of a bitch, thought Blaine.

"Flint. Thad. It's nice to see you," Blaine greeted them. "Kurt Hummel, this is Flint Wilson and Thad Harwood. They attend Dalton and are in Warblers with me."

Kurt could sense the tension between the three boys and his eyes flicked nervously to Blaine.
"Hello," Kurt murmured softly.

"Blaine, he's precious. Where have you been hiding him?" Thad replied.

"I haven't been," Blaine replied bluntly. "Kurt attends McKinley and he's a member of New Directions, their glee club. He lives in Lima."

"I remember you," Flint said suddenly. "You were on campus when we performed Teenage Dream."

"Yes, I was. That's how I met Blaine," Kurt said.

"And you're in New Directions?" Thad slid his gaze across to Blaine. "Starring in your very own version of The Spy Who Loved Me, hmmm Blaine? I'm sure I speak for David and Wes when I say that the council does not look favorably on this type of disloyalty."

Blaine's eyes flashed and he went to respond but before he could Kurt spoke up.

"I wouldn't be so quick to speak for Wes or David if I were you," Kurt said frostily. "After all, when they joined Blaine and I for coffee they didn't seem at all disapproving," Kurt said in a strong, steady voice.

Thad's jaw dropped and Blaine smirked.

"David used the term "endearing" as a matter of fact. Meeting them was an absolute pleasure," Kurt paused for effect. "Pity I can't say the same about the two of you."

Flint narrowed his eyes at Kurt and Thad sneered at Blaine. "Your kitty has claws, Blaine."

"You have no idea," Kurt responded lowly and then treated Thad to his patented "bitch face".

"Flint, Thad. I believe you gentleman should be taking your leave now," Blaine said with false civility.

"With pleasure," Thad growled. He stalked out of the coffee shop and Flint cast one more calculating stare at Kurt then followed suit.

"Well, they were thoroughly unpleasant," Kurt observed.

"And you were...amazing."

Kurt blushed. "What I lack in bulk I make up for in wit," Kurt replied. "I wasn't going to sit here while they tried to...I don't even know what they were trying to do but it was ugly and I wasn't going to just be quiet while they ganged up on you."

"Thank you." Blaine said. "I'm not used to having people leap into the fray to uh...protect me."

"I know what it's like for people to just stand by silently and do nothing while you're being ripped to pieces and..." Kurt trailed off. "You're my friend Blaine. That means something to me. You mean something to me. I'll always stand up for you." Kurt said.

Blaine was touched, but skeptical. There weren't many people that Blaine mattered to. The heir to Anderson International mattered. The lead singer of the Warblers mattered. The meal ticket mattered. The poster child for prep school perfection mattered. The eligible bachelor mattered.

Blaine? Not so much.
He looked at Kurt. Kurt was honest, brutally so, at times. He had been through so much but hadn't let it make him hard and cynical. There was an innocence to him but he wasn't exactly naïve. He could be an absolute bitch at times, but the gentlest soul at others. He was cracked, but not broken and it all combined to make him one of the most intriguing people Blaine had ever met.

And if that wasn't enough, all he seemed to want from Blaine was the pleasure of his company.

Blaine recognized that Kurt was far more dangerous to him than Thad could ever be. Kurt had said Blaine mattered to him and if Blaine was honest with himself, Kurt was beginning to matter to Blaine as well.

"Hey Duckie, I've got a surprise for you." Wes announced gleefully, as he and David invaded Blaine's room.

"Ugh, really Wes, are we really going back to the Pretty in Pink era of torturing me?" Blaine moaned.

"Blaine, my boy, we never left the Pretty in Pink era of torturing you," David announced, clapping Wes on the shoulder.

"But we come bearing gifts!" Wes chirped. "So quit your bitching and pull up a chair," Wes motioned, making his way over to Blaine's laptop.

"What are you two going on about?" Blaine asked, sitting down next to David.

"We," Wes began.

"Being responsible members of the Warblers council," David interrupted.

"And concerned friends-"

"Took it upon ourselves to do a little research on one, Kurt Hummel," David finished.

"You…you investigated Kurt?" Blaine asked, surprised at the amount of venom in his voice.

"Whoa, down boy," Wes said, putting up his hands in mock surrender. "We didn't, you know, hire a PI or anything. We just googled the McKinley High New Directions, dude. There were like, a bunch of performance videos of them online."

"And the school has this blog site, so…"

"C'mon Blaine, you know you wanna watch," Wes teased.

"Dude, it's things like that make me question your heterosexuality," David cracked.

"Please, I'm the definition of metrosexual," Wes declared. He then broke out into song.

*I'm, too metro for my love*

Too metro for my love

Love's going to leave me…

"For the love of Grilled Cheesus, shut up!" Blaine laughed.
David and Wes blinked at him. "What is a grilled cheeseus?" David asked.

"A holy grilled cheese sandwich," Blaine responded seriously.

"Does it come with sanctified tomato soup?"

"Is it blessed by the right Reverend Velveeta?"

"Shut up, Heckle and Jeckle," Blaine groaned. "It's...Kurt told me about it and...you guys have to have him tell you the story sometime."

"Uh huh...well in the meantime, let's bask in the online glory that is the New Directions," Wes said. "They sent Kurt to spy on us, turnabout is fair play." Wes explained.

"If they were posted online then I doubt there's going to be anything related to sectionals on them," Blaine pointed out.

"Probably not, but at the very least it will let us know a bit more about what New Directions has to offer," Wes said.

"You know if you say New Directions fast enough it sounds like-"

"Thank you, David for pointing that out to everyone." Blaine interrupted.

"I aim to please."

"Anyway," Wes broke in, "What do you want to see first?"

"I don't care, you pick something," Blaine was curious to hear Kurt sing, but didn't want to appear overly eager.

"Oh snap dude they did *Push It*," David laughed.

"And I thought *Teenage Dream* was testing the boundaries of good taste," Wes replied, queuing up the video and pressing play.

Blaine watched the performance with a curious and critical eye. Kurt appeared much younger in the film, and although he didn't seem to have any solo parts he was an amazing dancer and seemed to have a natural gift for showmanship.

And he was wearing a fanny pack.

Blaine was never going to let him live that down.

"What's the next one?"

They made their way through several more videos and Blaine began to get a sense of what Kurt had been complaining about. Seldom was anyone other than a freakishly tall boy and his diminutive female counterpart ever featured as leads.

"What is this? *Kurt Hummel- Single Ladies performance*," Blaine read aloud

"Click it, click it!" David urged.

There was Kurt, in some sort of leotard/leggings ensemble shaking and gyrating and swiveling his hips in ways that had Blaine thinking some seriously undapper thoughts.

"I'm watching the girls. I'm watching the girls. I'm watching the girls," Wes chanted.

"I'm not," David replied with a grin.

Blaine's head whipped around so fast Linda Blair would have been jealous. "What's that supposed to mean?"

Wes and David exchanged a look before David addressed Blaine, "Are you seriously tripping because I'm checking out Kurt's a-"

"I'm not tripping, David," Blaine ground out. "I just don't think Kurt should be ogled like a piece of meat."

"What you mean is you don't want Kurt being ogled unless you're the one doing the ogling," Wes corrected.

"The green eyed monster just made you its bitch Blaine," David remarked.

"This is a momentous occasion," Wes yelped.

"Why?" Blaine asked warily.

"This is the first time David has ever seen you jealous," Wes declared.

"Oh my God, it is!" David chimed in. "You never get jealous."

"I'm not jealous!" Blaine denied hotly. "I'm just...leave it alone guys."

David and Wes smirked and went back to the computer.

They scrolled through a few more videos, and stopped cold when they got to Kurt performing with the cheerleading squad.

"Kurt was a cheerleader?" Wes asked.

"He mentioned it, but I thought he was like, you know, the manager or something," Blaine said in awe.

The boys watched as Kurt and the girl Blaine knew as Mercedes performed a rendition of 4 Minutes. After that they clicked around a bit until they found a copy of the group performing The Funk.

"Kurt is singing the baseline? No fucking way," David said.

"Holy crap, can you imagine what his range is?" Wes asked.

"He said he can hit the high F in Defying Gravity," Blaine supplied.

"No fucking way," David repeated.

"Why don't they use him more?" Wes wondered.

"Why don't they use ANY of them more?" David asked. "We're only halfway through the videos and I still can't get a read on the talents of half the people in the club because they're always in the
background. There are only twelve people, it can't be that hard to rotate leads."

"Even Vocal Adrenaline swapped out who partnered with Jesse. He may have been the featured male lead but they always had a dog fight for the second slot," Wes put in.

"You guys realize this is a bit of the pot calling the kettle black?" Blaine said raising an eyebrow.

"Maybe," Wes conceded, "But at least everyone in Warblers is happy with the status quo."

"And we don't just hand you the solo…you do have to audition like everybody else," David reminded Blaine.

"From what you said, that doesn't seem to be the case in New Directions." Wes said.

"According to Kurt, most everyone there is ready to cancel the Finchel show," Blaine remarked.

"What the hell is a Finchel?" Wes asked.

"Finn and Rachel. The giant and the dwarf that always sing lead," Blaine explained.

"I know you didn't just make a short joke," David cut in.

"Oh fuck you," Blaine replied laughing.

"I KNEW you wanted to get up on this!" David said smugly.

"Gentleman, if you could please focus on the task at hand," Wes interrupted.

"What is the task at hand?" Blaine asked.

"Researching Kurt…and New Directions." Wes reminded him.

"Research? I thought we were giving Blaine jerk off-"

"Finish that sentence and you better sleep with one eye open." Blaine cut in.

David beamed.

"Why don't we check out the blog?"

Blaine couldn't remember the last time he'd been so angry.

When Kurt had told him he was being harassed at school Blaine's mind had filled in the blanks but he hadn't been capable of imagining the living hell Kurt was enduring at McKinley.

He understood why Kurt had been so skeptical that the Warblers were popular at Dalton. Apparently, at McKinley, being a member of New Directions was social leprosy.

The glee kids were the target of everyone from the football team to the cheerleaders. Even the kids at the bottom of the social totem pole took swipes at them and the kid who ran the blog, some guy named Jacob Ben Isreal, chronicled every last slushie toss and insult thrown their way.

Kurt had explained to Blaine about the slushie facials but he had no idea that it was such a normal part of daily life at McKinley.

"Why the hell don't they just get rid of the slushie machine?" David wondered
"Money," Wes replied absently. "Schools make contracts with soda and snack companies to sell their products on school grounds and in concession booths during school events. They split the profits."

"See…right there. Proof that money is the root of all evil," David quipped.

"Don't blame it on my precious, precious money! If these videos are indication the origin of evil can be traced back to red dye no.5," Wes defended.

Blaine tuned out Wes and David as he read story after story of the relentless bullying that made up the culture at McKinley High. Even the cheerleading coach got in on the action. Even though it seemed only a select few, mostly jocks and Cheerios, were granted immunity from the torment, from what Blaine could see, Kurt seemed to get far more than his fair share. It seemed that even among the unpopular glee club, Kurt was singled out for special consideration. For everyone else, the harassment seemed to start and stop with the school bell.

Kurt wasn't that lucky.

"Pee balloons?" David said, the revulsion evident in his tone. "What kind of disgusting motherfucker throws pee balloons at somebody?"

"Apparently, the same type of disgusting motherfucker that throws a kid half his size in a dumpster," Wes noted.

"What if there was like, broken glass in there or something? What if he landed wrong or hit his head or some shit? What is wrong with these kids?" David fumed.

"Can you believe the size of some of these guys throwing him around? Kurt's tall but he's not exactly buff and if those videos are any indication, Kurt was tiny a couple of years ago, man." Wes said.

"They nailed his lawn furniture to his roof?" David asked

"This…this is so far past bullying man. I mean, this is…most of this is illegal," Wes said.

"I don't even want to know what smear the queer was," David seethed.

Blaine kept silent. He kept playing Kurt's words from earlier over in his head. "I know what its like for people to just stand by silently and do nothing while you're being ripped to pieces."

"You're my friend Blaine. That means something to me. You mean something to me."

"I'll always stand up for you."

"Blaine? Yoo hoo, Earth to Blaine. You alright man?" David asked.

"I'm fine." Blaine said quietly.

David and Wes glanced at one another. They could tell finding out the intimate details of Kurt's harassment had angered Blaine, but he was being eerily calm about the whole thing.

David had only known Blaine since he'd begun attending Dalton, Wes on the other hand had grown up with the other boy. He knew Blaine almost better than Blaine knew himself and he knew that Blaine didn't simply get mad.
He got even.

David had been wrong earlier when he said Blaine never got jealous. Blaine rarely displayed jealousy, but when it came to the people and things that were important to him he was prone to it. He was also fiercely possessive and protective once he decided someone mattered to him.

If anyone or anything Blaine held dear was threatened, he hit back like the fist of an angry God.

Wes had no doubt that if Kurt Hummel ever managed to make the short list of people that were important to Blaine, he would stop at nothing to bring Kurt's tormentors to their knees.

"Blaine," Wes said cautiously, "You've been awfully quiet. What are you thinking?"

Blaine remembered the tears in Kurt's eyes that first day he'd taken him to coffee and the fire in them when he'd defended Blaine to Thad and Flint.

"I'm thinking that I've seen enough." He said, closing the lid on the laptop.
Chapter Five: The End of the Rave

Kurt had been so excited. He hadn't had any quality time with Mercedes in far, far too long. The two of them had been moving in different directions as of late; her focused on her new romance with Sam and him spending every spare moment of his time with Blaine. Between new romances, potential romances, school obligations, Mercedes' new job at her father's dental office and Kurt helping his dad out at Hummel Tire and Lube, the two of them hadn't gotten together in what felt like weeks.

Well, technically it had been only two weeks but Kurt was used to hanging out with Mercedes almost daily and the separation had been hard on him, despite having Blaine as a distraction.

Kurt and Mercedes had initially bonded over their mutual loves of music, fashion and desire to get the hell out of Lima. They had eventually become one another's sounding boards and secret keepers, confidants and champions, best friends and biggest supporters. They'd had their share of differences and disagreements but nothing, not Kurt's atheism or Mercedes' tendency to jump to conclusions, could ever divide them for long.

Boyfriends-or in Blaine's case potential boyfriends-were proving to be the apparent exception to that rule.

As he sat next to Sam and Mercedes, listening to them flirt and coo at one another he finally understood what it meant to be the proverbial "third wheel".

Kurt was trying hard not to be resentful. Mercedes was an amazing girl and it had taken her a long time to find Sam. She'd had almost as little dating experience as Kurt; a super secret crush on Matt Rutherford that left her distraught when he moved, a few dates with a jock who turned out to be a jerk and an ill advised and never to be mentioned again blink and you missed it relationship with Noah Puckerman comprised Mercedes Jones' Greatest Romantic Hits.

Her relationship with Sam seemingly came out of nowhere, but it was making her blissfully happy.
Once Kurt had gotten over the shock, he had to admit Sam and Mercedes made a good match. They balanced one another out. Mercedes got Sam to stop obsessing about every carb and calorie and he got her to admit fried was not a food group. When he was too content to allow himself to be shoved into the background, she forced him to seize the limelight and when she was having a diva moment to rival Rachel Berry's he pulled her back from the brink. Sam's sweetness complimented her sass and her savvy compensated for his geekiness. They had similar family values and religious views and they were both extremely loyal and genuinely nice people.

They were genuinely nice people who were currently getting on Kurt's last nerve.

Kurt had been disappointed when he'd shown up to pick up Mercedes for their movie date and Sam had answered the door. The blonde had looked so sheepish and hopeful when he'd asked Kurt if he minded him tagging along that Kurt hadn't had it in him to deny the request.

He was currently wishing he had.

Mercedes hadn't said more than a handful of words to him the entire evening. She and Sam had been permanently attached at the lips and were now snuggling into one another making out instead of watching the movie.

Kurt glanced at the screen and had to admit they weren't missing much.

He dug out his phone and fired off a quick text to Blaine.

-help! I'm bored. I need to be entertained. –K

The answer came back almost instantaneously.

-You must have me confused with Adam Lambert :P What's up? I thought U were w/Cedes 2nite?-B

Kurt sighed and typed out his response.

-Sam came with so they've been making out nonstop. I'm lonely :( -K

Blaine frowned. When Kurt had changed their movie plans from Friday to Saturday in order to hang out with Mercedes, Blaine had been a little annoyed but acquiesced because Kurt had seemed to genuinely miss his best friend. .

Blaine had also been a little relieved. He still hadn't quite come to terms with everything he'd learned about the extent of Kurt's problems and wasn't sure how to deal with his rapidly developing feelings for the other teen. He'd needed the distance to help gain some much needed perspective.

Misgivings aside, hearing that Mercedes brought her boyfriend along and then ignored Kurt the entire evening made Blaine wish he'd put up more of a fight to keep their date. Or at the very least insisted they double.

-Leave. It's still early. Come see me. Meet u halfway? –B

Kurt smiled. He was happy Blaine was willing to ditch whatever Friday night plans he had to spend time with Kurt-at the last minute at that-but he couldn't leave.

-I can't. I drove. –K

Blaine shook his head and scowled.

-So? They can thumb it back home. Or take a cab. Ditch 'em. –B
Kurt frowned. That was rather cold. As annoyed as he was with his friends he couldn't just abandon them to forage for a way home.

Even if part of him kind of wanted to.

-Bad Blaine! That is not dapper Dalton behavior. –K

Blaine laughed and texted back.

-Ur a public school ruffian. U can totally get away w/it. I want 2 C U. –B

Kurt's heart sped up. Blaine wanted to see him. He wanted to see Blaine too, but he couldn't ditch Sam and Mercedes. He steadied himself and replied.

-I kind sir, am a gentleman. You'll have to settle for my texts tonight. –K

Blaine had figured as much. Kurt might be prone to dramatics but he wouldn't abandon his friends to find their own way home. Blaine was just going to have to wait until tomorrow to see Kurt.

But that didn't mean he couldn't get under the countertenor's skin.

-oh yeah, sext me baby ;-) –B

Kurt laughed out loud. Several people turned to glare at him.

"So…the family's faithful dog dying from wounds sustained defending little Susie from a wolf attack tickles your funny bone?" Mercedes whispered to Kurt incredulously.

Kurt gaped. No wonder everyone had given him the hairy eyeball.

"No…I was…Blaine. You and Sam were busy and I got bored so we were texting and he…there's a dog?" Kurt whispered back.

Mercedes gave Kurt a curious glance. "Honey, the name of the movie is Man's Best Friend. Of course there's a dog." She glanced at the screen. "Well, there was a dog. Blaine huh? I should have known he was what was putting that smile on your face. What's your boy texting you that's got you so giggly?"

Kurt turned bright red. No way was he going to show Mercedes that text.

"It was…just a joke." Kurt murmured.

"Mmmm Hmmm. Must have been some joke," Mercedes said clearly not believing him.

-No sext for you! You got me in trouble with your undapper thoughts. –K

Blaine smirked. Kurt had no idea just how undapper his thoughts were.

-Trouble? How? Why? And you love my undapper thoughts. –B

Kurt bit his lip. Mercedes was watching him now, with a huge smile on her face. He knew he was blushing and he was grateful they were in a dark movie theater.

You made me laugh. Unfortunately it was right when the courageous dog in the movie bit the dust. The entire theater thinks I'm Mike Vick. I hope you're happy. –K
Blaine grinned.

-That's what you get for laughing at my smoking hot sexts. –B

Kurt laughed again. Unfortunately it was during the funeral scene for the family dog.

"I'm just gonna...I gotta go to the restroom," Kurt whispered to Mercedes.

"Riiiiight, of course you do," Mercedes said rolling her eyes. "The movie's got about ten minutes left. We'll meet you in the lobby."

Kurt made his way up the aisle, biting his cheek to hold in his laughter. When he got to the men's room he dialed Blaine.

"You are horrible! You are worse than Frankenstein on Broadway!" Kurt laughed into the phone as soon as the other boy picked up.

"How am I horrible when you're the one laughing at Lassie's noble sacrifice?" Blaine teased.

"Shut up and consider yourself warned: I don't know when and I don't know where, but I'm so gonna get you back."

"Bring it on, Hummel."

"Consider it brought. You shouldn't have pushed it, Blaine," Kurt teased.

"Oh Really? I thought you'd want me to push it. I thought you'd want me to p-push it real good."

Kurt cringed.

"Wha-What?" He asked, trying to push back his growing horror.

"You heard me."

"Oh please no. No, no, no, no," Kurt moaned.

"Ah, push it."

"Blaine, I can explain-"

"Ah, push it."

"Blaine-"

"Oooh baby, baby-"

"Oh my gosh, Blaine I was young and I didn't know any better-"

"Get up on this!"

"I TOLD Rachel those videos would come back to haunt us! Blaine, I swear I-"

"This dance ain't for everybody-"

"BLAINE!" Kurt whined.

Blaine laughed. "Relax Kurt. Salt 'n Pepa is classic. I don't hold that against you. "
Kurt exhaled.

"The fanny pack on the other hand is a different story. What in the name of McQueen were you thinking?"

"I wore that under protest!" Kurt yelped. "Mercedes and Rachel made me! I was coerced into terrible, terrible fashion. Fuck my life, there's video of me wearing a fanny pack on the internet? I'm going to die. I'm going to lie down right here in the men's room of the Lima Starplex and just die," Kurt moaned.

Blaine laughed. "Death by fashion. That will be one interesting obit."

"I am going to haunt you. I am going to haunt you so hard. I'm going to be Kurt the fashionable and not so friendly ghost."

"You haunt me and I'll just walk into a department store. You'll get so distracted you'll forget all about me."

Kurt checked his watch and breathed a sigh of relief. The movie had ended five minutes ago.

"As wonderfully mortifying as this has been I have to go. The movie's over," Kurt explained.

Blaine sighed. "Text me when you get home so I know you got there safe?"

"Of course I will," Kurt cleared his throat. "Thanks for keeping me company tonight, Blaine," he added softly.

Blaine felt warmth seep through his chest. "No thanks needed Kurt. I enjoyed talking to you. I always enjoy talking to you. Til later, babe."

Blaine hung up and Kurt stared at his phone.

Babe? Blaine had called him babe. What did that mean? Did that mean anything? Kurt didn't have much time to ponder it because the door to the men's room swung open and Karofsky came strolling in.

"Look what we have here," the jock said, a predatory grin appearing on his face.

Kurt swallowed.

Blaine squeezed his eyes shut and groaned into his pillow.

Babe? What the hell was that?

What the hell was Kurt doing to him?

Blaine didn't chase anyone, yet he'd initiated most of the contact he'd had with Kurt.

Blaine didn't date, yet he was taking Kurt out the next night.

Blaine didn't do pet names, yet he'd just bestowed one on Kurt.

Blaine didn't get attached, yet he found himself becoming increasingly attached to Kurt.

Blaine didn't know how he'd lost control of the situation so quickly. None of his other conquests had
ever affected him like this. There had been boys he'd legitimately cared for in the past, but none of them had made him feel so off balance, unsure, possessive and...happy.

Kurt made Blaine genuinely happy. It was new and he was sure he couldn't trust it but Blaine was going to try to enjoy it, enjoy Kurt, as long as it lasted.

And he was going to do everything in his power to make it last as long as possible.

"Karofsky," Kurt said coolly, firing off an emergency SOS text to Mercedes and then placing his phone in his bag. He began to walk around the jock when an arm shot out and wrapped around his bicep.

"Why are you leaving, Tinkerbell? Wasn't this what you were waiting for? Weren't you hanging out in here waiting on some innocent guy to wander in so you could get a peek at his junk? You trying to get a look at my goods, Hummel?" Karofsky sneered, marching Kurt backwards until he had him crowded against the wall.

Kurt felt anger course through him.

"I assure you Karofsky, even if I was some type of sexual predator trolling the men's room of the Starplex looking for unsuspecting victims, you would be completely safe."

"What's that supposed to mean, Fancy?"

"What that means, Troglodyte," Kurt snapped, "is that I would be celibate for life before I lowered myself to 'trying to get a look at your goods', as you so eloquently put it. What that means is that if you were the last man on earth, you'd still be at the top of my least wanted list! What that means is that if you were the last person on earth, I'd resort to bestiality before I was desperate enough to even give you a second glance! What that means is that-"

"You think you're too good for me? Fuck you fag!" Karofsky spit.

"I know I'm too good for you!" Kurt fired back. "And I wouldn't let you fuck me even if you used somebody else's dick!"

Karofsky turned white, then red and slammed Kurt into the wall, hands closing around Kurt's face. Kurt panicked, brought his knee up hard into Karofsky's groin and then brought his hands up and jammed a finger into Karofsky's eye. The larger boy released his hold on Kurt and Kurt frantically scrambled to the door.

"Ow, ow shit. You fucking fuck! You god damn queer! That shit hurts!" Karofsky roared, stumbling blindly after Kurt for a few steps before dropping to his knees.

The door to the men's room flung open and one of the theater employees stepped inside. "What the hell is going on in here?" He demanded, looking from Kurt to Karofsky.

Kurt didn't stick around to explain. He bolted out the open door and didn't stop running until he was safely inside his Navigator.

Where the hell were Sam and Mercedes? Kurt checked his phone. He'd texted her SOS ten minutes ago. He called her.

Ring.
"Kurt!" Mercedes answered, sounding slightly breathless and more than a little annoyed. "What?" Kurt stared at his phone. "I texted you SOS, 'Cedes! Where the fuck are you two?" Kurt barked.

"Oh hell to the no, I know you didn't just cuss at me!"

"Oh I'm sorry. My manners seem to be a bit lacking at the moment since I was nearly strangled in the men's room by Dave fucking Karofsky!" Kurt fired back.

"Oh my God!" Mercedes screeched. "Sam, Sam stop boy! We have to go! Oh God, Kurt are you ok? What happened? I'm so sorry, Sam and I were…where are you? Are you safe? Do you need to go to the hospital? Should I call your dad? Are you-"

"Meredes!" Kurt snapped. "I'm…fine considering. Just, where are you? I'm in the parking lot locked in my baby."

"Sam and I are still in the theater. We'll be there in like two minutes tops. Just keep the doors locked and until we get there don't you dare hang up," Mercedes instructed.

Kurt could hear Mercedes and Sam making their way out the theater and in no time the duo appeared at the Navigator.

Kurt was shaking so badly it took two tries for him to get the doors unlocked to let them in.

"Kurt, baby boy, are you ok?" Mercedes asked, taking his face into her hands.

Kurt nodded. "I'm ok. I'm ok. I'm ok" He babbled, unsure if he was answering Mercedes or trying to convince himself he was NOT just almost gay bashed in the men's room of the Starplex.

Sam got out and walked around to the driver's side of the vehicle and opened Kurt's door.

"Kurt, dude, I need you to look at me. Can you do that for me? Look at me Kurt." Kurt slowly turned his head and looked in Sam's general direction.

"I know how you are about your ride, but right now, you need to give me your keys and let me drive. I know it's like Captain Kirk handing over control of the Enterprise but you're in no shape to drive, man." Sam cupped a hand around Kurt's jaw and made eye contact with the brunette. "You're spending the night at Mercy's right? Let me drive us there. We'll watch a couple movies, make some snacks, and just chill out for awhile alright? I'll get us there, you just get in the back with Mercy and I'll take care of the rest."

"Let us take care of you, Kurt," Mercedes pleaded.

Kurt nodded and handed his keys over to Sam. He climbed into the backseat and Mercedes quickly joined him as Sam started the car.

By the time they reached the Jones' Kurt had regained enough of his equilibrium to be mildly horrified he'd let someone else drive his baby. The trio made their way down into Mercedes' basement and flopped on the sofa.
"Kurt, I know you probably don't want to talk about it," Mercedes began, "But maybe you should."

"Yeah Kurt. Look, it's cool if you don't want to tell us what happened, but you should tell someone. You could tell your dad or Mr. and Mrs. Jones maybe? Hell, the cops even. Mercy said the guy tried to strangle you. That's like, assault man," Sam said seriously.

Kurt swallowed. "I...it's over. I'm fine. I don't...I can't. My dad's sick, and Morris and Evie would tell him if I told them. I can't call the cops because if I filed a report my dad would be sure to find out and I just can't..." Kurt trailed off.

"Kurt, you have to tell someone-," Mercedes began.

"Mercy, don't," Sam said forcefully.

"What do you mean, don't?"

"This is Kurt's choice. Even if we think, for the record, it's a stupid, stupid, wrong choice, it's still his to make. He's the one who has to live with what the consequences would be, not us," Sam said.

"Thank you Sam," Kurt said quietly.

"Don't thank me," Sam said quickly. "Like I said, it's a stupid, wrong choice."

"Yes it is," Mercedes agreed.

"But it's mine to make," Kurt said quietly.

"It is," Sam sighed. "So I say we make some popcorn, watch Howard the Duck and table this entire discussion."

"I'll go make the popcorn, you guys set up the movie," Mercedes announced, getting up from the sofa and heading toward the stairs.

Kurt looked at Sam and Sam arched an eyebrow.

"I suppose we should discuss giant rainbow elephant in the room," Kurt sighed.

Sam laughed. "Kurt, everything is copasetic man. You and I are as cool as the other side of the pillow. I mean, unless you have a problem with me dating Mercy, or something."

"No!" Kurt said quickly. "You make her happy and...I like seeing her happy. It's just that Mercedes and I are really close and that means I'll be around a lot and-"

"Kurt," Sam held up hand. "Stop. Mercy and I have had this conversation. She explained it to me. You two are like, uh, Buffy and Xander-"

"Will and Grace," Kurt corrected automatically.


"And this is why you ping my gaydar," Kurt quipped.

"Hey, they showed boob on Sex In The City. It was old boob but it was still boob," Sam said seriously.

Kurt blanched. "I don't...I can't even...that is so wrong on so many levels I don't even know where
to begin."

Sam laughed. "The point is, I have no problem hanging with you man. That's kinda why I crashed tonight, to show Mercy, and more importantly you, that I don't have a problem with you. You're a little high maintenance-"

"Pardon me for being fabulous," Kurt sniffed.

"But overall you're a pretty cool guy," Sam continued. "And Mercy adores you. So…you and I are gonna be the Cory and Shawn to her Topanga."

Kurt smiled at Sam. "I can deal with that."

"Good." Sam went back to setting up the movie. "Just so you know, this goes for when we're at school too. If Karofsky gives you any problems you come to me, Kurt. Karofsky, Azimio, hell, even Puck or Finn, I got your back."

Kurt was touched. Sam, sweet, nerdy, popular, straight Sam was willing to have his back, publicly, at school. Kurt swallowed the lump in his throat and nodded.

"Thanks Sam," he said quietly.

As Sam finished getting the movie ready, and Mercedes came down the stairs with popcorn and drinks, Kurt remembered to text Blaine.

-Sorry this took so long. Had some trouble but everything is good now. At Mercedes house w/her and Sam safe and sound. –K

Blaine read Kurt's text and found himself dialing immediately.

"Blaine I-"

"What do you mean you had some trouble?" Blaine demanded.

There was a long silence on the other end of the phone and Blaine heard a door open and close and water begin to run before Kurt finally began speaking.

"Don't freak out," Kurt started.

"Uh huh, see starting out like that implies that there is in fact, something to freak out about and pretty much guarantees whomever you're talking to will in fact, freak out," Blaine interrupted.

"Blaine! It's fine. I'm fine…it all worked out ok in the end."

Blaine closed his eyes and prayed for patience. "What worked out, Kurt?"

"I had…there was an incident with Karofsky, the jock I told you about that's made it his life's work to torment me." Kurt's voice broke slightly over the last words and Blaine felt rage begin to roil in him.

"What kind of incident?" He asked evenly.

"He…I was in the men's room after the movie and he came in and hassled me. It wasn't a big deal," Kurt added quickly.

Blaine knew that if Kurt was saying it wasn't a big deal that the odds were it was a very big deal.
"Kurt," Blaine said harshly, "I want the truth. The unedited, unvarnished, uncensored truth and I want it now."

"Blaine…"


"I…I was in the men's room and K-Karofsky came in and he…” Kurt took a deep, shuddering breath and continued, "He called me Tinkerbell, which I admit is a rather clever play on his usual greeting of fairy, and then made some snide remark about me waiting around the men's room so I could…sneak a look at other men's…genitalia."

Blaine clenched his jaw together so hard his teeth began to ache.

"Then I…I may have implied that if I were doing such a thing he would be perfectly safe because I'd never be desperate enough to perv on him."

Blaine smiled wryly. "I take it that didn't go over well."

Kurt gave a watery laugh. "No, no it didn't. He ah, he called me Fancy, another of his delightful monikers, and I sort of snapped. I don't really remember what all I said but I kind of told him I'd go in for bestiality before I hooked up with him."

Blaine's jaw dropped. Then he shook his head. "Kurt…that was-"

"Not smart, I know," Kurt admitted. "But I was so angry and well…I tend to speak first and regret later when I'm mad. We exchanged some insults and he..ah, he said "Fuck you" to me and I…remember I don't really have the best control of my mouth when angry…so I told him I wouldn't let him fuck me even if he used someone else's dick and he went all pale, then turned beet red and put his hands around my face and neck and I freaked out and kned him in the groin and thumbed him in the eye."

That's my boy, thought Blaine.

"Which only made him really mad and he was coming after me but an employee came in and I just… I just ran Blaine."

"Thank God you weren't hurt," Blaine breathed. "Where the hell were your friends while all this was going on?"

Kurt cleared his throat. "They were, uh, sort of in the theater…making out."

Making out? Kurt's was being assaulted and his friends were too busy playing tonsil hockey to notice?

The more Blaine learned about Lima, McKinley, and New Directions, the more he was convinced he had to get Kurt the hell away from there.

"But it worked out ok. Sam-that's Mercedes' boyfriend-it turns out he's a really great guy."

Blaine's eyes narrowed. "Is he now?"

"Yeah, he doesn't have a problem with me being gay and wants to get to know me better and offered to have my back at school."

Blaine chose his words carefully. "You can certainly use the support," he said neutrally.
"That's what I was thinking too. So see, I'm fine. Everything worked out ok. I'm gonna go finish the movie with Sam and Mercedes. I can't wait to see you tomorrow though. Sweet dreams, Blaine."

"Have fun, Kurt. I can't wait until tomorrow either. Night."

Blaine hung up, thinking about Kurt nearly two hours away in Lima and wondering why he couldn't shake the feeling that he'd rather him in a room across the hall and wondering just how far he'd be willing to go to get him there.

A/N: I realize to some Kurt's actions will seem OCC. But I disagree. For one, its human nature: fight or flight. For another, I don't see him as a perpetual damsel in distress always needing someone else to rescue him. I also see Burt as the kind of father that would have made sure that Kurt knew how to protect himself since Lima IS a hostile environment and, quite frankly, his safety in such a homophobic town would be an issue. In my head Burt's either taught him how to throw a few punches or enrolled him in a self defense class. Kurt's not violent, he'd never START a fight, he'd always try to think his way out of a bad situation first (like he did when Puck was trying to give him a swirlie) but in a situation where he HAD to fight back...I think he would and he could.
Chapter Six: Hits and Misses

Kurt critically examined himself in the mirror for what had to be the millionth time that night. He had spent the entire day preparing for his date with Blaine. He'd promised his hair stylist Angelina his first born and gotten her to agree to squeeze him in for an emergency appointment. Then he'd made his way to Lima's Petite Retreat Day Spa and splurged on himself. One manicure, pedicure, and European facial later, he left feeling positive that he was well on his way to putting his best foot forward.

Upon his arrival home he immediately locked himself in his room and began getting into his preselected outfit. Kurt had chosen carefully, wanting to make sure he was perfectly coordinated from pocket square to patterned sock.

When he finished dressing Kurt took a final look in the mirror and smiled. He couldn't deny he was nervous but if he was confident in anything, it was his fashion sense.

Kurt had outfitted himself in a light tangerine colored single breasted suit jacket that he'd paired with a mocha colored v-neck cashmere sweater and a white pin striped dress shirt. He'd selected a tie with a plaid mocha, tangerine and turquoise pattern and accessorized his purple skinny wool trousers with a slim brown belt. He lightly cuffed the hem of his jeans to display his tartan patterned socks and shiny washed leather lace ups. Kurt adjusted his pocket square, took one final look in the mirror and made his way upstairs.

Burt Hummel was seated in his recliner, watching an episode of Top Gear and waiting to put the fear of both God and Hummel in Kurt's date.

"Dad!" Kurt accused, "You promised you'd be on your best behavior."

Burt grunted. "What?" He asked innocently. "I'm just watching tv waiting to meet your, uh, date."

"Do you often watch tv with your shotgun lying across your lap?" Kurt asked reproachfully.
"It needed cleaning," Burt defended.

"You cleaned it last week."

"Kurt," Burt sighed, "Don't push your luck. I'm letting you go God knows where to do God knows what with some pu-, uh kid, that I don't even know, and this is after I let you cut out early on family dinner night to hang out with Mercedes. Be grateful I'm not sitting out on the front porch, loading the damn thing and waiting on him to pull up."

Kurt gave his father his best bitch face. "You are aware that this is insane? And more than a little insulting seeing as how you're acting as if I'm daddy's little girl and you're defending my virtue."

Burt whipped his head around to face Kurt. "Does your virtue need defending?" He demanded harshly.

"DAD! Oh my…Blaine and I just met. He's taking me to dinner, not the No Tell Motel over on east Belmont."

"How the hell do you know about the motel over on Belmont?" Burt thundered.

Kurt rolled his eyes. "Dad, I work at the garage three days a week. You know how the guys talk around there. I hear a lot of things you probably wish I didn't."

"Like what?" Burt demanded with his eyes narrowed.

"Like you had an Egg McMuffin for breakfast Tuesday instead of the Tofu Scramble I left for you." Kurt said crossing his arms.

Burt flushed. "Yeah well…I better not hear about you and this Wayne going to that motel!"

"Blaine, dad. His name is Blaine."

"His name will be mud if you go anywhere near that hotel."

"This is not happening. I have eaten another one of Puck's pot cupcakes and I'm hallucinating," Kurt moaned.

"YOU ATE POT CUPCAKES?" Burt roared.

"Not on purpose!" Kurt screeched.

"Kurt, I will make you pee in a cup right now if you-"

The doorbell rang before Burt could finish his sentence.

"Dad please, I'll explain about the cupcakes later. I promise I don't need to go on Intervention. Just please, please, please don't embarrass me in front of Blaine," Kurt begged as he went to answer the door.

Kurt opened the door and felt his breath get stolen away.

Blaine had ditched his regular Dalton attire in favor of a dark, navy blue cardigan paired with a butterscotch colored long sleeved dress shirt. He had a funky navy blue and white checkered tie loosely knotted around his neck and his slim white corduroy pants were slung low around his hips.

"You look…your hair," Kurt breathed, transfixed by the softly tousled mass of ebony curls atop
"This is the first time you've seen it not gelled into submission, isn't it?" Blaine asked with a smile. "Do you like it?"

"I love it," Kurt answered quickly. "Not that I don't like your hair the other way too…it's just this…um, come in."

Blaine laughed easily before stepping inside and Kurt closed the door behind him. "Here, these are for you." Blaine said.

Kurt breathed out a nearly silent "oh" as he accepted the flower arrangement. Blaine hadn't gone with traditional roses, opting instead to gift Kurt with yellow cymbidium orchids accented with amaranthus and equisetum in a simple rectangular glass vase.

"Thank you," Kurt murmured.

"You're most welcome. You look magnificent, by the way."

"So do you."

Blaine and Kurt locked eyes and Kurt felt his heart begin to race.

"Kurt? You gonna introduce me to your friend, son?" Burt's voice broke the moment and Kurt tore his gaze away from Blaine.

"Blaine, this is my dad," Kurt introduced. "Dad, this is Blaine."

"It's a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Hummel." Blaine said, shaking Burt's hand. He winced slightly at Burt's tighter than necessary grip but met the elder man's intimidating gaze steadily.

"So you're the kid who thinks he's taking my boy to dinner tonight," Burt said, a bit of a challenge in his tone.

So that's how it's going to be…

"Yes sir. I was hoping to." Blaine replied calmly.

"And just where are you planning on taking him?" Burt demanded, his eyes sliding to the shotgun he'd left lying on the coffee table.

Blaine followed Burt's gaze and his eyes widened slightly but he didn't back down.

"Well Mr. Hummel I –"

"Dad," Kurt broke in, "Stop it. You know the only decent place for dinner around here is Breadstix."

Blaine smirked. "Actually Kurt, I was planning on taking you to The Ashbury-"

"You're taking me to Ashbury Dinner Theater?" Kurt squealed

Blaine smiled. "I know dinner theater is a bit…passé but they're doing Hairspray and you mentioned it was one of your favorite musicals so-,"

"Isn't that place in Bowling Green?" Burt broke in. "I don't know if I'm entirely comfortable with you doing so much driving in one night."
Kurt shot his father a positively murderous look. "Dad, I'm sure we'll be fine."

"Just what kind of car do you drive?" Burt ignored Kurt in favor of questioning Blaine.

_Don't tell him about the jag, don't tell him about the jag_, Kurt mentally chanted.

"Well, my personal vehicle is a 1956 Jaguar XK 140—"

Kurt's heart plummeted. There was no way Burt was going to let Blaine take him anywhere in a sports car.

"But I was concerned that you wouldn't be entirely comfortable with a boy you just met driving off with Kurt in such a …high performance vehicle," Blaine continued.

"Is that so?" Burt questioned.

"Yes sir. Kurt's explained to me that your approval means a great deal to him and I wanted to make certain I had anticipated any potential objections you might have to my plans for our evening so Kurt and I are going to be using the limo tonight. I assure you Roark is an excellent driver and Kurt will be perfectly safe with him behind the wheel."

Kurt's jaw dropped and he turned pleading eyes on his father. "Dad?"

Burt Hummel sighed. He didn't want to ruin the first date Kurt ever had but Blaine was just a little too smooth for Burt's liking. "Call me when you get there and call me when you're leaving," He said gruffly.

"Thank you dad! I promise I will. Come on, Blaine." Kurt grabbed Blaine, ready to drag him out to the car before Burt changed his mind.

"It was nice meeting you Mr. Hummel," Blaine called back as Kurt hustled him out the door.

Blaine noticed the small, fabric case in Kurt's hand and frowned. It resembled a makeup bag of some sort and Blaine was curious as to what Kurt could have in it.

"Plan on putting your face on in the car?" Blaine teased.

Kurt began to answer him but stopped short once they got outside and he saw the snow white Chrysler 300 Stretch limo in the driveway.

"Blaine, I think I've changed my mind," Kurt said quietly.

"What?" Blaine asked worriedly. "You changed your mind?"

"Yes," Kurt nodded emphatically."I'm going to have a passionate affair with the red dress from Christian's winter collection, but this car…this car is the one I'm going to have babies with."

Blaine laughed. "Oh my god, you're a total gearhead."

"Yes, yes I am," Kurt agreed, entering the door that Roark was holding open for him. Blaine climbed in beside him and watched as Kurt took in his surroundings.

"Where have you been all my life?" Kurt wondered aloud, fingering the interior.

Blaine rolled his eyes and shifted to face Kurt. "Should I leave the two of you alone?"
Kurt backhanded Blaine's upper arm. "Shut up. I'm just appreciating the ambiance here."

"In the workplace that kind of appreciation is known as sexual harassment," Blaine smirked.

"You're just jealous that I'm not appreciating you."

Blaine quirked an eyebrow and Kurt flushed fire engine red. "I...what I meant was, um, ah-

"Shh," Blaine murmured taking a hand and gently caressing Kurt's cheek, "I was teasing."

Blaine tilted Kurt's head up and began to close the distance between their lips. His eyes fluttered shut and his lips parted in anticipation.

"Blaine," Kurt said, placing his hands on Blaine's shoulders and pulling back slightly, "I like you. I really do and I...I think I would like kissing you too but I think we should take things a little slower."

Blaine nearly howled in frustration. He wanted to kiss Kurt so badly he ached. He knew Kurt didn't have a lot of experience but surely a kiss wasn't asking for too much.

*It's not as if I'm asking him to blow me for Christ's sake,* Blaine thought crossly.

Kurt bit his lip in apprehension. He hoped he hadn't upset Blaine by putting the brakes but if he ended up kissing Blaine he wanted it to mean something. As much as he liked Blaine, he didn't really know him yet. Kurt had already thrown away his first kiss on a meaningless make out session with Britteney; he wasn't going to make the same mistake with Blaine.

"A-are you upset?" Kurt asked quietly.

Blaine exhaled harshly then gave Kurt a rueful smile. "Kurt, I'd be lying if I said I wasn't disappointed. You're …spectacular and I've wanted to kiss you…and more, since the moment I saw you. But if you're not ready, then it's not right. I can wait. You set the pace here."

Kurt settled in next to Blaine. "I'm not quite sure what to say." He confessed.

Blaine shrugged. "Tell me anything. Ask me anything."

Kurt began to talk. He told Blaine about his love of scarves and his loathing of pork rinds and his plans to go to New York and attend college after graduation.

"...I know Rachel has her heart set on the two of us going to Julliard but more and more lately I'm wondering if that's really where I want to be. I mean, they don't have a musical theatre department and even if they did it's...complicated. I mean, I literally lose my breath when I hear "Defying Gravity" and I'd die to play the Master of Ceremonies in *Cabaret* but with my voice being so...unique my prospects on Broadway are limited. And I really love fashion. I watch Project Runway or pick up Vogue and I can see myself at Parsons and from there I have visions of Paris internships and New York Fashion Week filling my head. I just...I have these two incredible passions and I want them both and I just can't choose and since this isn't the WB and I'm not Felicity I know I have to eventually but I honestly have no clue how to do that."

Kurt grimaced when he noticed that Blaine hadn't said a word. "I'm sorry. I'm rambling," he apologized.
"No, don't apologize," Blaine said, shaking his head. "It was...hearing you planning your future, talking about your passions, trying to find your path it was inspiring."

"Inspiring? I would think at Dalton you're surrounded by guys who've planned all the way to their golden parachutes," Kurt joked.

"Kurt," Blaine said gently, "It's different. You're right, most of my friends know exactly what school they're going to and exactly what industry they're going into. Most of them know where they're going to work and what they're going to be but...very few of them actually got to choose anything."

"I don't quite understand."

"With great privilege comes great responsibility," Blaine quoted scornfully. "Kurt, when the family business is a multi-million or billion dollar corporation, you grow up knowing that you're expected to have a part in it. And if not, you grow up knowing that you have to choose something...suitable like law or politics. Most of the people I grew up could have told you at four what they were going to be when they grew up."

"Oh." Kurt didn't really know what to think. He didn't want to sound judgmental but something about the picture Blaine had just painted sounded incredibly stifling to Kurt.

"So what are you going to be when you grow up?" Kurt asked.

Blaine was momentarily taken aback. He had assumed that Kurt would have looked him up. A simple Google search of Blaine's name would have answered most of Kurt's questions. Blaine was used to dealing with people who knew exactly who Blaine was, exactly what he had and were willing to do any number of things to get a piece of him and his fortune.

"I...I'll be going into the family business." Blaine answered. It wasn't a lie but it wasn't the complete truth either. Just because Kurt seemed sincere and appeared to be in the dark about Blaine's status didn't mean that he was.

Blaine had enough experience with gold diggers to know that the illusion of ignorance was one of the more effective tricks of the trade.

Blaine decided it was time to change the subject. "I've got a question, does your dad usually leave his guns lying around the house or was that strictly for my benefit?"

Kurt groaned. "You remember that conversation we had about me not being a girl? I think I need to have a similar one with my father."

Blaine laughed. "Remind me to be nowhere close to Lima when that conversation happens."

"He wouldn't really shoot you, you know."

Blaine smirked remembering every fantasy he'd had about Kurt and how badly he wanted to make them come true.

"He just might," Blaine said lacing his fingers through Kurt's.

"Blaine-"

"Just don't, ok Kurt?"

Kurt gave Blaine a hopeful smile, "But-"
Blaine pinched the bridge of his nose and sighed heavily. "Please don't try and make this ok. There is nothing that would make this ok."

Dinner had been going fabulously until Kurt had begun to feel a tingling sensation in the back of his throat. He'd made several embarrassing attempts to clear his throat and waved off Blaine's concern in favor of a glass of water.

It wasn't until the coughing fit started that realization dawned on Kurt. There had to have been some sort of peanut product somewhere on his plate. Kurt had the felt panic well up in his as he felt his tongue begin to swell and he began wheezing.


Blaine had taken off like a shot, running out of the restaurant to retrieve the case he'd seen Kurt with earlier.

As concerned diners had crowded around him, Kurt had struggled to pull air into his lungs and ignore the growing circle of concerned strangers forming around him.

After what felt to Kurt like an eternity, Blaine had burst back in and shoved his way through the crowd, Kurt's case in hand.

"I got it, Kurt! Tell me what to do, please, how do I help?" Blaine had babbled.

Kurt had clutched at the case, badly shaking hands pulling open the zipper and withdrawing the Epipen. He'd immediately flipped off the cap and jabbed the pen into the outside of his thigh.

Blaine had turned pale, not knowing what to make of the entire scene.

As it became easier for him to breath, somewhere in the back of his mind Kurt had been humiliated that he'd turned their first date into such a horror story but he was too busy battling residual waves of dizziness and being grateful that the worst was over to concentrate on his embarrassment.

Now they were in a too bright, too cold, too small hospital room waiting for Burt Hummel to come collect his son and probably exact a pound of flesh from Blaine.

"Blaine, this wasn't your fault," Kurt tried again.

"Kurt, I planned every detail of tonight. I should have at least checked to make sure you wouldn't die from eating the food."

"Blaine-"

"Your father is going to kill me."

"No he won't," Kurt said firmly. "How do you think we found out I was allergic to peanuts? My dad took me a baseball game when I was four, brought me a bag of peanuts and ended up spending the seventh inning stretch in the emergency room with me learning about the wonderful world of anaphylaxis." Kurt reached over and grabbed Blaine's hand. "My dad will understand and even if he doesn't, I do."

Blaine stared at Kurt. "I'm sorry. I just wanted this to be amazing for you."

"It was," Kurt insisted. "I…enjoyed most of tonight."
"So did I," Blaine admitted. Medical emergency aside, Blaine had had a surprisingly good time on their date. Kurt was witty and engaging and refreshingly outspoken. Kurt hadn't been afraid to disagree with or challenge Blaine and their conversation had run the gamut from the legalization of gay marriage to arguing over whether Thundercats or Transformers was the greatest cartoon ever made.

"Do you think that maybe we could try this again sometime?" Kurt asked shyly.

Blaine got up and sat next to Kurt on the bed, covering his hand with his. "I would love nothing more."

Blaine and Kurt exchanged a tender look until the moment was shattered by the slightly panicked, incredibly pissed off voice of Burt Hummel demanding to know who he needed to kill.

Kurt rolled his eyes and Blaine turned to face the music.

"Sir? If you'll give me a moment to explain…"

Blaine was going to keep Burt from killing him if was the last thing he did. There was no way he was missing out on his second date with Kurt.

It took the remainder of the weekend, countless lectures and several undignified hissy fits for Burt to agree to let Kurt go to school on Monday. Despite the disaster their dinner turned into Burt had also relented and given Kurt permission to keep dating Blaine. There were restrictions, such as they had to stay close to Lima for the time being and Kurt had to be more careful about double checking his food choices but Kurt wasn't going to complain if it meant he could keep seeing Blaine.

Mr. Schue's voice drew Kurt back into his current reality. "Ok you guys, I've been working really hard on our new set list for sectionals and I think I've come up with something guaranteed to knock everybody's socks off."

Kurt straightened up in his chair and leaned forward. Even though he knew Mr. Schue was going to be handing the leads over to Finn and Rachel, he was curious to see what they would be performing.

"As you guys know, this year's theme is "Soulmates" and with that in mind we're going to be doing a Motown inspired mash up. I believe that with Finn and Rachel singing lead and this set list we're going to be a force to be reckoned with," Mr. Schue continued. "So the songs I selected are Ain't No Mountain High Enough, Endless Love, and You're All I Need."

You could hear a pin drop in the choir room. All duets, all guaranteed to showcase Finn and Rachel and shove the rest of them into the shadows.

An idea formed in Kurt's mind but he was reluctant to voice it. It had rarely gone well when Kurt had spoken up in Glee. Kurt surveyed the unhappy faces of his gleemates and decided to take one for the team.

"Mr. Schue, if I may," Kurt began. "These are amazing song selections and while I have no doubt that Finn and Rachel would do a marvelous job with Endless Love, at this Rachel preened and Mr. Schue beamed, "I think I speak for everyone when I say that you might want to reconsider having them as leads on Ain't No Mountain High Enough and You're All I Need."

Rachel glowered at Kurt and Mr. Schue sighed. "Kurt, I realize you are probably disappointed that you didn't get a solo-," Mr. Schue began.
"Actually Mr. Schue," Kurt cut in, "I wasn't suggesting that I sing the lead." Rachel's jaw dropped in shock and Mr. Schue looked stunned. Kurt shrugged. "I know my strengths and as much as it pains me to admit it, with the exception of few songs, classic Motown isn't really in my wheelhouse. I was actually thinking the set list might work better if Finn and Rachel did *Endless Love* and *Ain't No Mountain High Enough* was a group number."

"I see. And what about *You're All I Need*?" Mr. Schue asked.

Kurt bounced in his seat a bit. "I was thinking of mixing that one up a bit. We could have Puck and Santana sing the first verses of the original and then after the chorus Artie and Mercedes could come in with the Method Man and Mary J Blige remix."

"That would be off the hook, yo!" Artie said.

"Kurt that is brilliant." Quinn praised.

Emboldened by the support Kurt rushed on. "Think about it Mr. Schue! Santana and Puck are a really good compliment to Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell. Mercedes could do Mary J in her sleep and Artie can totally rock the mic and drop a few of Method Man's bars."

"Mr. Schue-" Rachel began.


"As I was saying," Kurt continued, "We could end with *Ain't No Mountain High Enough* as a group number. That way, the rest of us also get a chance to be highlighted and we can show the judges our depth. And I'm sure Brittney and Mike could come up with some killer choreography and."

"Mr. SCHUE HAS ALREADY MADE HIS DECISION!" Rachel screeched. "As the co-captains and most talented members of New Directions, Finn and I whole heartedly support-"

"Of course you and Finn support it," snorted Quinn. "You two are, once again, front and center and the rest of us are treated like red headed stepchildren and pushed off to the side."

"But I'm a blonde. And none of us have red hair," Brittney pointed out. "Is Mr. Schue colorblind?"

"No, he just has selective memory loss. Whenever a competition comes around he forgets about everyone NOT named Rachel or Finn," Santana answered.

"Seriously, Rachel what is your malfunction?" Mercedes asked. "If we follow Kurt's suggestion, you STILL get a solo. Are you so selfish that you need every single one?"

"Honestly, Rachel, you need to get over yourself," Tina remarked.

"Finn!" Rachel cried, "Say something!"

Finn shrugged. "It does seem fair…and that whole Method Man, Mary J, Motown Mix idea is kinda cool."

"Judas." Rachel hissed.

"Ok, ok, enough." Mr. Schue said. "Kurt…you've given me something to think about. I have to admit it didn't occur to me to do a group number or use the Mary J remake and you've certainly gotten your teammates excited. Give me a couple of days to work on the arrangements and we'll try it your way."
New Directions exploded in applause. Kurt found himself the recipient of more than one heartfelt thanks and even Puck gave him a brief, one armed hug.

"Awesome save, bro." Sam said, holding out a fist.

Kurt eyed Sam critically before slowly raising his hand gingerly bumping Sam's fist. Sam laughed and put an arm around Mercedes. "We'll work on that, Hunter." He said with a wink. "Topanga and I are gonna get out of here."

"Boy, why the hell are you calling me Topanga?" Mercedes asked as she and Sam exited the room.

Rachel marched up to Kurt. "I won't soon forgive or forget this treachery," She said, jabbing a finger into Kurt's chest. "Finn, take me home now." Rachel demanded.

Finn sighed and rose out of his seat. As Kurt grabbed his bag and made to follow the duo Rachel stopped and glared at him.

"Where do you think you're going?"

Kurt rolled his eyes. "While I can assure you I have no desire to prolong my exposure to your particular brand of insanity, my car is being serviced and since he doesn't have football practice Finn's giving me a ride home today. You and I will just have to peacefully co-exist for at least fifteen more minutes." Kurt exhaled and adjusted the strap on his messenger bag. "I only hope I've built up the necessary antibodies required for extended close contact with the certifiable."

"Finn, are you just going to stand there while he insults me?" Rachel demanded.

"When did he insult you?" Finn asked, confusion etching lines into his face.

"He insulted me just now, Finn. Didn't you hear him?"

"Yeah but I didn't really-"

"It's ok Finn, next time I'll clap the syllables when I use the big words," Kurt sighed.

"Now he's insulting you!" Rachel yelled. "I'm not getting in the car with him," She said crossing her arms.

"Rachel," Finn whined, "I promised my mom I'd get Kurt home."

Kurt shifted from foot to foot. "For Pete's sake Rachel, don't make this more difficult than it needs to be."


Finn turned to Kurt. "Dude, just let me take her home and I'll come right back and get you ok?"

Kurt's jaw dropped. "Don't call me dude," Kurt snapped then pursed his lips. "Go Finn. Take her home. And while you're there, make sure to get your balls back. I believe they've been bronzed and are currently occupying a prime position on the mantle."

"Rachel does not have my balls!" Finn yelled.

Kurt shrugged. "I call them like I see them."

"Come on Finn, let's go. He's just jealous of my immense talent and that you chose me."
Kurt laughed. "Rachel, you just went to the pet cemetery, resurrected Seabiscuit and then beat him to death. In case you haven't noticed, I've moved on."

Finn was blushing and Rachel was fuming as she stomped away. "Good grief, Finn, just go. I'll wait in the library." Kurt sighed with a dismissive wave of his hand.

"Thanks," Finn said, hurrying to catch up with Rachel.

"Don't take all day!" Kurt yelled after him.

"Twenty minutes tops!" Finn called back.

Kurt had been waiting for Finn for over an hour. He finally gave up and tried to call his father, but found out that Burt had driven out of town to pick up a part for a customer.

Kurt was stuck. Mercedes was at work and he didn't feel like he could call Sam and ask him to come all the way back to the school to pick him up. Britney, Santana and Quinn were at Cheerios practice, Tina and Mike were probably somewhere making out, and Kurt didn't feel right about asking Mr. Abrams to come pick him up. He certainly couldn't call Noah. Puck was probably knocking over a liquor store, running an illegal dice game or doing something equally unsavory.

Kurt cringed as he faced the facts. Kurt Hummel was being forced to take the bus.

"Oh, how the mighty have fallen," Kurt mumbled as he left the library.

One minute he was walking down the hall, the next he was on the ground so suddenly he bit his tongue and the copper tang of blood began filling his mouth.

If anyone is interested this is the picture of what Kurt and Blaine wore on their first date.
Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Kurt finds himself in a dangerous situation and when he calls Blaine for help, David and Wes come along for the ride. Kurt and Blaine's relationship experiences a milestone and Blaine begins to plot.

Chapter Notes

Chapter Warning: Violence, Language, Homophobic Slurs

Chapter Seven: Running Up That Hill

Pain flared up in Kurt's side as he was viciously kicked over and over. He tried to catch his breath, but couldn't seem to suck in enough air. Suddenly he was dragged across the floor before being hauled roughly to his feet and knocked backwards into the lockers. Kurt slid down onto the ground, waves of pain crashing over his body.

"That was for my boy Dave. You almost blinded him, homo. Next time, don't forget your place." Kurt recognized the voice Azimio Adams snarling at him, floating above the heavy thud of retreating footsteps.

Kurt sat on the ground until he could breathe again and then slowly began to move. It didn't feel as if anything had been broken but he was no doubt going to be sore. Azimio was either smarter than Kurt gave him credit for or Kurt had gotten incredibly lucky because it didn't feel like he'd touched Kurt's face at all.

Kurt crawled along the hallway, collecting the books, papers and personal items that had fallen out of his bag. He finally located his phone and dialed.

Blaine was hanging out in his dorm room with David and Wes, glaring at them while they mockingly performed Katy Perry's Peacock when his phone rang.

"Hey guys its Kurt. Turn the music down," Blaine said reaching for the phone.


David wrapped his arms around himself and made kissing noises.

"I swear you guys have the maturity of twelve year olds," Blaine laughed as he picked up.
"Hey Kurt, Blaine wants to see your peacock, cock, cock!" Wes yelled.

"Are you brave enough to let him see your peacock?" David joined in.

"Don't be a chicken boy, stop acting like a beyotch!"

"He's gonna peace out if you don't give him the pay off!"

"Come on Kurtie, let him see what you're hiding underneath!" They both finished before exploding into giggles.

"I am going to kill you two and then burn and salt the bones!" Blaine laughed. "Kurt, are you there?"

"B-blaine? Blaine, I...can you come? I can't...my dad's in Dayton and my car...but I need-"

"KURT!" Blaine yelled, interrupting the hysterical stream of words that were coming out of the countertenor's mouth. "Stop talking. Calm down, and tell me where you are," Blaine ordered as he rushed around the room looking for his car keys.

Wes and David traded concerned looks and turned off the music. Wes nodded at David and they both began pulling on their blazers and gathering their personal effects.

Kurt took a deep breath. Just having Blaine on the other end of the line was calming him down. "I'm at school. Finn...I guess he ditched me and I was going to take the bus home but Azimio, he...I don't really know what happened. One minute I was walking and the next minute I was having the crap kicked out of me."

Blaine went cold, and then felt a tidal wave of anger crash over him.

"How bad?" He asked calmly.

"Not too-"

"Do not even think about lying to me. How bad are you hurt, Kurt?" Blaine snapped.

"What happened?" David demanded.

Blaine waved him off. "Kurt? Kurt answer me or so help me God I'm calling the cops-"

"Blaine, no! It's ok...I'm ok. It wasn't as bad as it could have been. Nothing seems to be broken. I just...I'm scared and I'm stuck here and I don't know who else to call and I don't even know why I called you when you're so far away and-"

"I'm on my way. Get somewhere safe and then don't move. Are there other people around? Anyone you can call to come get you or wait with you? What? Fuck, fuck, I hate being so far away from you. Kurt, do not hang up this phone unless you're calling the cops you understand me?"

"OK. Blaine-"

"Where are you gonna go Kurt? You need to find a safe place to wait."

Kurt thought. Mr. Schue and Ms. Pillsbury were both gone. Figgins might still be there but he might decide to actually act like an educator for once and make him call his father. He didn't want to wander the halls looking like he'd just gotten mugged. He could hide out in the locker rooms but practice would be over before Blaine got there...
Practice. The Cheerios were practicing! "I can wait in Coach Sylvester's office!" He announced. "No one in their right mind would follow me in there." Kurt paused for a moment before continuing, "She may very well kill me if she finds me hiding out in there, in which case you may have to identify my remains."

"Ok, ok, Coach Sylvester's office, I got it." Blaine found his keys and raced out of his room like a bat out of hell. He didn't even notice David and Wes behind him until Wes grabbed him and snatched his keys out his hand.

"David and I are going with you and we're taking my car. You are in no condition to drive," he said pocketing Blaine's keys and steering his friend over to his BMW.

"Kurt, Wes and David are coming with me. We'll be there soon. Just stay with me ok. I need to hear your voice so I know you're alright."

"Thank you," Kurt whispered.

Blaine closed his eyes and clutched the phone so tightly his knuckles turned white.

"Don't thank me. I haven't done anything yet."

"You're coming. I called you and you're coming. That's enough."

Blaine pushed past the lump in throat to respond.

"I'll always come when you call."

"Kurt, Kurt we're pulling up now. Where are you? I don't see you."

"Blaine!" Chill out man. He's right there," David said.

Wes pulled up to the curb and got a good look at Kurt and sent up a prayer that Blaine managed to keep a hold of his temper.

Kurt had obviously made an effort to salvage his disheveled appearance but it had been for naught. There were several buttons missing from his shirt, his pants were ripped at both knees and he looked like he'd been ridden hard and put away wet.

"Son of a bitch," David said under his breath.

Blaine leapt out of the car before Wes had it completely in park.

"Kurt!" He yelled pulling the smaller boy into his arms. "Do you need to go to the hospital? I think you should go to the hospital. You could have internal injuries and we need documentation in case you decide to press charges and-"

"Blaine, I'm fine, I'm fine now that you're here," Kurt said, burrowing his head into Blaine's neck.

Blaine tightened his grip. "I'm here and you're safe," he dropped a small kiss on the top of Kurt's head.

"Uh, guys. Hate to interrupt the moment here, but I think we should be getting Kurt home," Wes said.

David moved into the passenger's seat so that Blaine could sit in the back with Kurt. He glanced in
the rearview mirror and saw Kurt folded into Blaine's lap with Blaine running his fingers through Kurt's hair.

"What are you gonna say to your dad, babe?"


"Kurt, you have to tell him," Blaine said. "Last time it was Karofsky at the movie theater, now it's Azimio at school. You aren't safe, Kurt. You have to let him know-"

"He's sick, Blaine. And...he's happy. He's dating Carol and for the first time since my mom died he's happy. I can't...please let me handle this my way."

Wes glanced back at the duo. He knew his friend. It was in Blaine's nature to take over, to follow his own agenda regardless of what anyone thought about it. He nearly ran over the curb when he saw the small nod Blaine gave Kurt.

"Fine babe, your dad, your call. But Kurt, this can't keep happening."

"I honestly don't think it will," Kurt answered. "They've never actually beat me up before. I think this was just payback for getting the better of Karofsky the other night."

Blaine didn't answer and the quartet made their way into the Hummel household.

Kurt suddenly realized he'd never had a group of boys over before.

"So uh...you guys hungry?"

Wes and David grinned. "We could eat," Wes answered.

Blaine laughed and wrapped his arms around Kurt. "They can always eat."

Kurt rolled his eyes and gave a small laugh before stepping away. "I'm just gonna go change and I'll be right back up and make something. Fair warning, my dad had a heart attack not too long ago so this is pretty much a healthy eating household."

"Kurt...its food," David said.

"And it's free," Wes added.

"So rich and yet so cheap," Blaine joked.

"Frugal. The word you'll looking for is frugal, Blaine."

Kurt laughed and hurried downstairs to change.

"Oh my god, Kurt can I keep you?" David asked later, pushing himself back from the table.

"Sorry David, but I've got dibs," Blaine grinned.

"All the good ones are taken," David moaned.

Wes laughed. "What about Caitlin?" Wes asked referring to David's girlfriend.

"That girl burns water. She made me a hot pocket once that was burned on the outside and raw on the inside," David grimaced.
"Melina is a great cook," Wes bragged.

David rolled his eyes. "Pop tarts and cereal do not a great cook make."

"Whatever man she rocked those Trix and you know it."

"You two are hopeless and I pity the poor unfortunate girls who have found themselves saddled with you," Kurt said.

Wes pretended to wipe away a tear. "You wound me."

"You know if my self esteem weren't so healthy I'd be hurting right now man," David said with fake severity.

Kurt shook his head. "Thank goodness Blaine is normal," Kurt grumbled.


"Shenanigans? You are officially five years old," Blaine groused at David.

Wes checked his watch. "Yeah well, we hate to eat and run…" Wes began

"But it's a school night and we have a bit of a drive ahead of us," David said.

Blaine sighed. "They are right. But we'll stay…if you want us to hang here until your dad comes back."

"No…it's probably best if you guys go before he gets here. The last thing we need is for him to get out his shotgun twice in one week," Kurt replied.

"Shotgun?" Wes repeated before breaking out into a grin and humming *Dueling Banjos*.

David started to laugh. "Did Pa Hummel take you to the woodshed and ask you about your intentions regarding his little boy?"

"Kurt, they're being mean to me," Blaine pouted.

"Leave Blaine alone or I am never feeding either of you again," Kurt threatened.

"We're sorry," David and Wes said in unison.

"We'll be out in the car, dude," Wes said, clapping Blaine on the shoulder. "Take it easy, Kurt."

"I guess I should keep that one company while you two say goodbye," David smirked. He surprised Kurt by giving the smaller boy a quick hug. "I put my number in your phone while you were changing. I want you to call me if you ever find yourself in a situation like this again. Or you just wanna talk, or hang…or you find yourself making more snackage and need someone to taste test."

Kurt's mouth opened and closed twice before he could formulate a response. "I…thank you, David. I will. I just…thanks," Kurt said softly.

"No problem, 007. I'mma get to getting now."

Kurt reached out and grabbed David's arm. "Seriously, you and Wes…you guys don't know how much it means to me that you came today and you hung with me and…just thanks."
David placed his hand over Kurt's and squeezed. "Like I said man, it was no problem."

Blaine watched his friend and his…Kurt with interest. He knew that David was just being his usual good hearted self and he was grateful that he was reaching out to Kurt, but he was also a little bit territorial.

He hadn't forgotten David's flirty smile or his calling Kurt endearing when they'd first met.

Blaine caught David's eye and looked meaningfully at the door. "Shotgun!" he called, hoping David would get the picture and leave.

David shook his head but took the hint and left.

"And then there was one," Kurt said as he turned within the circle of Blaine's arms.

"I still think you should tell someone what happened, what's been happening," Blaine said. "But I respect your right to make your own choices."

"Thank you. You better get going. It's a long drive back to Westerville."

Blaine looked into Kurt's eyes and was overwhelming grateful the brunette hadn't been seriously harmed. He knew that Kurt wanted to take things slowly but at that moment all he could think about was how right the other boy felt in his arms and how much he wanted to keep him there, keep him safe.

"Babe," Blaine said softly, running the pad of his thumb over Kurt's bottom lip. He hadn't planned on trying anything with Kurt, but he found himself unable to resist once they were alone and Kurt was in his arms. He'd been on edge ever since Kurt had called, his imagination torturing him with images of a battered and bruised Kurt filling his mind. Blaine wasn't taking advantage, he simply needed to hold him, to touch him, to kiss him, to reassure himself that Kurt was there, that he was safe and that Blaine hadn't lost him before he had a chance to figure out exactly where Kurt fit into his life.

When he heard Kurt's breath hitch and saw his eyes flit shut Blaine took it as a sign of consent. Blaine slowly fit his mouth over Kurt's and the gentle press of Blaine's lips coaxed a tiny sigh of pleasure out of Kurt. Blaine cupped Kurt's face, nibbling gently on Kurt's bottom lip, before deepening the kiss and mapping Kurt's mouth with his tongue.

It had felt too soon on their date to kiss Blaine, he'd felt like he didn't know the other boy well enough, he wasn't sure enough that kissing him would matter to Blaine, that he mattered to Blaine but after the way the other boy had dropped everything to be by Kurt's side and shown such care and concern Kurt no longer had those doubts. As he felt Blaine's lips slowly close over his Kurt couldn't imagine feeling closer to Blaine than he did in that moment.

It was Kurt's first kiss and it was sweet and hot, gentle and spontaneous. To make it all the more wonderful it was with Blaine: a gorgeous, funny, sweet, caring, intelligent, talented, amazing boy who'd dropped everything to be there when Kurt needed him. While he had always imagined his first kiss happening after a moonlit walk on the beach or a heartfelt serenade, those were fantasies and this, Blaine in his arms strong and sure, kissing him with slowly and sweetly was reality and Kurt didn't think he could have come up with anything more perfect if he'd tried.

Entirely too soon for either of their liking they broke apart, Blaine placing one last kiss on Kurt's forehead. "I'll call you as soon as I get back and we'll talk until you fall asleep," Blaine promised. Kurt nodded happily then walked Blaine to the front door, just as Wes leaned on the horn, causing a
couple of Kurt's neighbors to look curiously out their windows.

"Wesley Montgomery, I know you have to have been raised better than that and even if you weren't, I was! This is NOT Lima Heights Adjacent!" Kurt yelled furiously.

Blaine laughed, gave Kurt one final kiss goodbye and went and got into the passenger's seat of the car. Kurt waited until he saw the taillights of Wes's BMW disappear before he went back inside.

"Blaine, you have been remarkably calm about this whole thing," Wes commented once they got on the open road.

Blaine exhaled and settled back into his seat. "It wouldn't have done Kurt any good for me to be hysterical or bark orders at him. He needed me to be his soft place to fall right now so that's what I was," Blaine replied.

"We should have stuck around and made sure he told his dad," David frowned.

Wes hummed his agreement but Blaine was silent. Now that the immediate danger had passed, Blaine was analyzing the situation and trying to formulate a plan that got him what wanted while making sure Kurt got what he needed. Kurt needed to be safe and Blaine...Blaine just needed Kurt.

While on one hand he would have been relieved to have Kurt confide in Burt because the situation was rapidly becoming too dangerous for the boy to try to continue to handle on his own, he couldn't deny that it suited his purposes for Kurt to continue to confide in and lean on him as a primary source of support. The more isolated Kurt felt, the more important Blaine would become to the counter tenor.

And Blaine planned to become very important to Kurt.

"So what happens now?" David asked

Blaine turned around, fury in his eyes and steel in his voice.

"Now, anyone and everyone who had any part in making Kurt's life a living hell had better pray for mercy from whatever or whomever it is they believe in," Blaine said coldly, "because they sure as hell won't be getting any from me."
Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

Kurt and Santana bonding becomes the catalyst for a showdown in choir room; Finn gets some unwelcome news.

Chapter Notes

Warning: Talks of past assaults, insensitive remarks, homophobic language, strong language

Chapter Eight: The Hole That We Call Our Home

The next morning Kurt dragged his sore, bruised body out of bed determined to be up and ready before his dad in order to avoid suspicion. After a hot shower and selecting his outfit and back up ensembles for the day, Kurt took two ibuprofen tablets, shoved the bottle into his bag and made his way upstairs. He quickly made breakfast, leaving a generous portion for his father, and then climbed into his freshly serviced car and drove to school.

Kurt should have expected that something was up when the usual welcoming committee wasn't assembled at the dumpster lying in wait for some unfortunate member of the student body to be the day's sacrifice. Suspicion came too late to save him however, and he found himself staring down the majority of the hockey team who had been waiting for him in front of his locker. Instead of the beating he feared might occur, Kurt was the recipient of McKinley's version of a 21 gun salute. Slushies flew at him from every direction and he found himself draped from head to toe in a curtain of syrup and ice.

"We thought we'd give you a little something to put out your flame, Fancy," Karofsky sneered before shoving Kurt into his locker and walking off, followed by the rest of the puckheads.

Kurt bit his lip as pain rolled over his battered body. He held his head high and made his way into the girls' locker room to inspect the damage and shower. There was no way the sink in the bathroom was going to be able to handle the mess that had been made of him. Kurt had just stepped into the changing area when the door slammed open behind him and he heard someone let loose a furious sounding stream of Spanish.

"We thought we'd give you a little something to put out your flame, Fancy," Karofsky sneered before shoving Kurt into his locker and walking off, followed by the rest of the puckheads.

Kurt cautiously looked in the mirror to the spot behind him. Santana was standing there, leaning against the door, looking positively murderous.

She crossed her arms and glared at Kurt. "This is the girls' locker room. You may not be man enough for me but unless you got Lorena Bobbitt to remove your bits and pieces, you aren't a girl."

"Oh Satan, you're as sensitive and tactful as ever I see," Kurt responded frostily.
"Whatever," She took in his multi-colored clothing and smirked. "21 Gun salute?"

"Yet another astute observation from you, Santana. Want to talk about how gay I am and go for the hat trick?" Kurt retorted.

Kurt had been expecting the feisty Latina to fire back a nasty reply but to his horror the girl slid to the floor, her face crumpled and she began to cry.

Kurt was stunned. "You…you're …crying?"

"No shit Sherlock," Santana snapped.

"Is this…am I being punk'd?" Kurt wondered aloud.

"Yeah that's it Hummel. I'm sitting here on the filthy fucking floor having some sort of fucking episode and it's all about you," Santana sneered.

Kurt winced. "I'm sorry. I just I've never seen you like this and…if you want to talk-"

"If I want to talk I'll find someone whose balls have dropped and is worthy of having a conversation with," Santana interrupted.

"And the bitch is back ladies and gentleman," Kurt said, turning back around and stalking his way towards the shower.

Once he stepped under the spray Kurt did his best to forget about slushies, Santana and the Shipley & Halmos white cable knit sweater he was sure had died a noble death out in the hallway.

After scrubbing down and removing every last trace of dye and corn syrup from his skin and hair and quickly pulling on his reserve outfit Kurt exited the shower area and was stunned to see that Santana was still there.

The girl was sitting on the bench, her knees pulled up to her chest, head down in a pose that Kurt was all too familiar with. It was a look of utter defeat and Kurt couldn't help but feel that on Santana Lopez of all people, it didn't belong.

"Santana, while I'm relatively sure this will bite me in the ass I'm going to make the offer anyway. You're obviously upset and I'm here, willing to help or just listen or…whatever," Kurt said quietly.

Santana fixed Kurt with a look pure defiance then dropped her head back onto her knees.

"Why does it have to be so hard?" She whispered so quietly that Kurt almost didn't hear her.

Kurt cocked his head to the side. "I'm gonna need a little more to go on than that, Santana. What's hard?" He said gently.

Santana let out a shuddering breath. "This. What's hard is this place and these people, this town, just...this. It's like one giant black hole of suck designed to make sure that nobody can say what they really want to say or be who they really want to be. It's like there are all these rules we're expected to follow and nobody even knows who the fuck made them or why they even exist but people just follow them anyway like god damn sheep. And then there are the lies. No one in this hellhole has the balls to be honest so they lie because it's easy and I'm tired, Kurt. I'm tired of lying and I'm tired of easy but I'm scared of the truth and it's all just so god damn hard."

Kurt recognized some of his own feelings of frustration mirrored in Santana's outburst.
"I don't really know where all this is coming from and I won't pry," Kurt began slowly, "but I think that sometimes easy is overrated. I tried easy. I joined the football team, I dated Brit, I wore flannel and sang Mellencamp and tried easy and every day I died a little inside because I wasn't being me. In the end, easy just wasn't worth it for me.” Kurt ran a gentle hand through Santana's hair before he continued. "I can't…I can't pretend I don't spend a significant portion of every damn day of my life under extreme terror and in a considerable amount of pain. I won't pretend that sometimes it does get to be too much and I curl up in the fetal position and imagine all the ways I just want it to be over. I won't lie and say there aren't days I want to give up but most of the time I feel like it's worth it, the pain, the anger, the fear. Most of the time I think I can do and its worth it because going through it all means that I get to be me. Being Kurt Elizabeth Hummel is worth all the crap I get, and I think whatever has you, Santana Graciella Lopez, the baddest bitch to ever walk these halls, looking and feeling so defeated, just isn't."

Santana gave Kurt a pensive look. "What do you mean, you spend every day of your life in a considerable amount of pain? You mean like, feelings and shit or actual pain?"

Kurt paused. "Have you ever been thrown into a dumpster? Or slammed against a locker? Has anyone ever cold cocked you in the hallway and beat the crap out of you or pushed you into a port-a-potty and knocked it over?" Santana shook her head and Kurt continued, "It hurts Santana. Yes, the isolation and the insults and the ignorance hurts my feelings but the other stuff, it physically hurts Santana. I use so much Icy Hot and Biofreeze that I should own stock in the companies. I go through so many bottles of pain relievers that I think a couple of the clerks at CVS think my father is abusing me or I have weird addiction to OTC painkillers. Pain is a regular part of my day."

"You know that is seriously fucked up, right?"

Kurt shrugged. "It is what it is. Everyone knows what happens to me, no one does anything. I can't…I can't stop it but I can manage it. I can cover the bruises and treat the pain and refuse to let it break me."

"Are you…are you hurt right now?"

Kurt thought about the bruises that littered his side and back. "Today is no different from any other day."

"What happened?"

Kurt sighed. "Short answer? I got left at school yesterday because Finn is whipped and Azimio took the opportunity to prove that he has anger issues." Kurt gave Santana a side eye, "We were talking about you though. Whatever has you so twisted around."

Santana stood. "And now we're not. Thanks for listening Kurt but I'm done bonding or whatever we're doing here."

Kurt recognized the defensive move for what it was and chose to let it go. "Alright. Just, if you want to talk again-"

"I won't."

Kurt nodded. He bent over to retrieve his bag and when he looked back up he was alone.

Kurt walked out of the locker room not realizing that in a few hours time he would find out firsthand that no good deed goes unpunished.
New Directions were in a state of complete chaos.

Mr. Schue had, as promised, come up with an arrangement for sectionals that utilized Kurt's ideas. While most of the group was on board, Rachel was being difficult, even by Rachel Berry standards.

She had stormed into the choir room with duct tape over her mouth in protest and had then refused to sing a note. When Mr. Schue finally gave up and moved onto practicing the You're All I Need mash up she had removed the tape and made such belittling comments that Mercedes had eventually snapped and threatened to cut her. Finn had immediately jumped to Rachel defense, prompting Sam to insert himself in the situation and things had quickly snowballed from there. Mr. Schue had gotten so fed up that he'd walked out, muttering about Sue Sylvester's methods beginning to have their appeal.

"If you don't shut your leprechaun ass up, I am going to drag you out of here by the roots of your poorly styled hair," Mercedes threatened Rachel as soon as Mr. Schue left.

"At least my hair is my own! My sympathies are with the poor horse who sacrificed his tail so that you could pretend to have locks as luxurious as mine," Rachel retorted.

"Oh hell naw, I know you didn't go there. I'm about to beat you like a dirty rug!"

"Sam, do something!" Finn pleaded, stepping in front of Rachel to shield her from Mercedes. "Control your woman."

"Control my woman? What would you have me do Finn? Tell her to go in the kitchen and make me a sandwich?"

"Sounds good to me," Puck cracked.

"That's because you're a jackass," Tina threw at him.

"Hee-haw, baby," Puck smirked.

"Mercedes should give Mr. Ed his tail back," Brittney said solemnly.

"Bridget the Midget, you better hope I don't get my hands on you!" Mercedes said, trying to get around Finn.

"Seriously, Sam, can't you like, stand up to her or something?"

"That's rich coming from you, Frankenteen," Santana snarled.

"What? Why are you mad at me, Santana?"

"Yeah, what did Finn do to you?" Quinn asked.

"It's not what he did to me, it's what he did to Kurt," Santana announced.

All eyes turned to the brunette who had been sitting beside Mike and trying to stay out of the fray.

"What did Finn do to you?" Tina asked Kurt.

Kurt hesitated just one second too long, letting everyone know that Finn had indeed done something before he shook his head. "Finn…Finn didn't do anything."

"Cut the martyr crap, Kurt. Finn," Santana said pointing in the other boys direction, "was supposed
to give Kurt a ride home yesterday and he ditched him because Rachel threw a fit and refused to ride home with Kurt in the car."

"Not cool, yo," Artie said, glaring at Finn.

"He told me to go!" Finn shouted, looking accusingly at Kurt.

"And you told me you would come back!" Kurt shot back.

"Why does it even matter?" Rachel declared haughtily. "Kurt obviously made it home."

"Yeah, no thanks to either of you apparently," Sam said bitterly.

"And not until after Azimio found him alone and kicked the crap out of him!" Santana announced.

It was as if all the air had been sucked out of the room.

"What the hell dude, why didn't you tell me?" Sam said, turning to face Kurt.

"Sam," Kurt began.

"Why would he tell you? Just because you're dating Mercedes doesn't mean you're friends," Finn said to Sam.

"Actually Finn," Kurt tried to interrupt.

"Sam is a damn sight better to Kurt than you are!" Mercedes said. "Boy, why didn't you say anything?" She asked Kurt.

"Cedes, it was no big deal-"

"Oh, it's not a big enough deal for you to tell your "friends" about," Rachel said making airquotes, "But it's a big enough deal that you can run to Santana with it and try to make Finn and I look bad."

"I'm not trying to-"

"How do we even know this alleged assault took place?" Rachel continued.

"Kurt wouldn't lie about something like that," Sam said strongly.

"And how would you know?" Finn said. "You barely know Kurt. Plus, his dad didn't seem like, mad or anything when he came over to take my mom to breakfast and Burt's like, crazy protective of Kurt. If he got all beat up, Burt would totally turn into like, Rambo or something."

Sam and Kurt locked eyes. Sam remembered how wrecked Kurt had been after his confrontation in the bathroom with Karofsky over the weekend and the conversation they'd had at Mercedes'.

"I know him better than you think and I know he wouldn't lie about something like this," Sam repeated.

"Thank you, Sam," Kurt said quietly.

"Your opinion has been duly noted Sam but it doesn't change the fact-"

"That you don't know what the hell you're talking about, as usual," Santana supplied.

"Just because Kurt claims something happened doesn't mean it did. How did he get home if he was
attacked like he claimed? I think this is just Kurt's misguided attempt at revenge on Finn and I. He's always been jealous of my talent and Finn's rejection was an obvious blow to his ego."

"Oh my God, Kurt's been over Finn like, forever," Tina interjected.

"Yeah, Kurt's only got eyes for Blaine now," Mercedes added.

"Who's Blaine?" Mike asked Kurt.

"He's Kurt's dolphin friend," Brittney replied.

Kurt saw the train coming off the track but was powerless to stop it. He'd only mentioned Blaine to Mercedes, Tina and Brittney because he knew they'd be genuinely happy for him and Blaine being a Warbler was going to be a problem for the rest of the club.

"Blaine's a…friend. And he's how I got home yesterday," Kurt answered.

"I don't know anyone named Blaine…is he new?" Quinn asked.

"He's…not a student here," Kurt hedged, praying Mr. Schuester would return.

"Then how'd you meet him?" Puck asked.

Kurt decided to bite the bullet. "In a roundabout way, Noah you are responsible for my meeting Blaine. He's the lead soloist for the Dalton Warblers and we met when you insulted me and then suggested I go spy on them."

Puck startled in his chair and Artie's eyes widened. "You actually went to spy? That's awesome, dude!"

"So you met some random prep school boy and now you're crushing?" Quinn asked.

"It's a bit more than that, Quinn and I think that we should all-"

"It's a lot more than a crush boy, and you know it," Mercedes said.

"Guys, its Kurt's business and he'll tell us what he wants us to know when he wants us to know it," Sam said.

"So there's something to know?" Puck asked.

"My personal life is none of your business Noah," Kurt snapped.

"Is it supposed to be a secret that you and Blaine are dating?" Brittney asked.

"DATING?" Rachel shrieked. "You're dating the lead soloist from our competition?"

"Dude, do the words Jesse St. James mean anything to you?" Puck asked.

"Blaine is nothing like Jesse and I'm not talking about this anymore," Kurt declared.

"Oh my God. Don't you see? This whole flirtation with Kurt and their lead soloist is obviously a plot by the Warblers to insure themselves a victory at Sectionals."

Kurt glared at Rachel. "I am not going to dignify that with a response."

"Jesse St. James!" yelled Puck.
"I bet Blaine was behind this whole scene today, wasn't he Kurt?" Rachel asked.

"No, Rachel. YOU and your crazy were behind this whole scene today," Kurt snapped.

"So he didn't take advantage of your unrequited feelings for Finn and your anger at being left behind yesterday by putting you up to lying about being attacked so the club would turn on Finn and I, thus creating discord within the group at a critical time."

Kurt was furious. He had been prepared for Blaine to be compared to Jesse St. James once the entirety of New Directions found out they were growing closer, but to be accused of exploiting the daily bullying he endured and lying about something that had so completely terrified him was too much.

"Just who the hell do you think you are, Rachel Berry?" Kurt snarled, jumping to his feet and grabbing his messenger bag from his chair. "How dare you accuse Blaine, accuses me of something so foul. How fucking dare you!"

"Kurt, dude." Finn began

"Don't call me dude!" Kurt yelled. "Don't defend her! Don't say a word Finn, because you're just as bad as she is! You're worse in fact. At least Rachel has a backbone! The second you think someone might in some small way dislike the almighty Finn Hudson, you make it your mission in life to show them just why they should think you're the best thing since Coco Chanel introduced jersey to women's wear! You run around here pretending to be a leader, when the truth is you need to be led more than anyone I've ever had the misfortune of meeting!"

"Damn, Hummel don't hold back, tell them how you really feel," Santana smirked.

"There is no need to get so personal Kurt. I am merely pointing out that its highly suspicious that this boy, who happens to be the lead soloist for our main competition, happens to be interested in you—"

"So it wasn't at all suspicious when Jesse St. Lame waltzed through the door declaring that you were worth abandoning his position as leader of a nationally ranked show choir, but it's completely beyond comprehension that Blaine might have enough interest in me to take me to dinner?" Kurt asked, derision dripping from his voice.

"Hey, don't talk to her like that!" Finn yelled.

"Why shouldn't he? It's not like he's lying," Mercedes snapped.

"This is supposed to be a team. You and Mr. Schue, you spew that New Directions is a family crock of bull whenever it suits you but you never back it up! And quite frankly, if I had family that treated me the way some people in here have, we'd be estranged!" Kurt continued.

"Kurt, I understand that," Rachel started.

"You don't understand anything! You just demonstrated your complete lack of understanding by accusing me of lying about being assaulted by one of my biggest tormentors, betraying my friends, and compromising my integrity because I'm such a desperate loser that I'd do anything for a cute boy to look my way!"

"Nobody said that, man! Rachel was just—"

"Being a bitch as usual," Santana supplied.
"It takes one to know one, Satan!" Rachel retorted.

"Yes, Rachel, yes it does," Kurt agreed. "At least Santana doesn't try and pretend she isn't a bitch or doesn't understand how hurtful she's being when she belittles and insults people. You do just as much damage and then hide behind 'constructive criticism' or complete self absorption. Santana knows she can be a bitch. I know I can be a bitch and guess what, Rachel? You can be a bitch too. You are a bitch, Rachel and if I were the type of narcissistic, self involved, self-centered, grasping, and manipulative train wreck of an individual that you just accused me of being, you would be the only person in the room capable of recognizing it since that's exactly what you are!"

"Kurt! Apologize to Rachel this instant!" Mr. Schue broke in from the doorway. "I heard the yelling all the way down the hall. This is unacceptable behavior." He turned to Kurt, "I'm disappointed in you. Attacking Rachel-"

"Oh screw you, Mr. Schue!" Kurt exploded. "You come in here in the middle of what is clearly a heated exchange and automatically assume that I was attacking your precious Rachel. Did it even occur to you to ask what was going on or, here's a radical thought, that she started it?"

"I don't care who started it, you will not speak to me like that!"

"Oh, of course you don't care. You don't care about anything except Finn, Rachel and how to best shove them in the limelight while the rest of us wither in the darkness. I bet Santana could fall off one of the back risers and you wouldn't bat an eyelash as long you had Finn and Rachel front and center making goo goo eyes at one another." Kurt knew he was out of line, that he shouldn't be disrespecting his teacher and that, his annoying Finchel sized blind spot aside Mr. Schuester was really a relatively good person but he was so hurt and angry that he just didn't care.

"That's enough-"

"It's not nearly enough," Kurt said lowly. "You, in your pathetic attempt to live out your Emma Pillsbury inspired fantasy, decided that Finn and Rachel are the chosen ones and the rest of us are dirt beneath their feet-"

"I do not have to justify myself or my decisions to you, Kurt. You-"

"Yes, you do! You sit here, day after day, pretending to be better than Coach Sylvester but the truth is you're worse! At least she's honest about what she is! You claim to care about all of us but the only people whose talent you make any attempt to nurture are the not so dynamic duo up there!"

Kurt turned and pointed at Puck. "Noah walks in here day after day, guitar slung across his back, song writing notebook in his bag, and never once have you shown any interest in his talent. He went to juvie and you barely acknowledged his absence. He has a fantastic voice and he's as stereotypically leading man as they come and yet you never feature him."

Kurt pointed to Mike. "Mike wants to participate more and he's been working hard on his voice, something you should have been helping him with and didn't even offer to do, I might add. But even if he isn't the best singer, Mike is an amazing dancer. He and Brittny have a hand in the choreography of every single routine we do. He has talent, real, legitimate, get the hell out of Lima, level talent but have you ever encouraged it? Have you helped him look into dance scholarships or used any of your contacts to get him lessons or auditions? No, no you haven't."

Kurt gestured towards Mercedes. "Mercedes has told you how much she resents only being trotted out at the end of performances to hit the last note, yet you continue to do it! Tina has been lip synching for the entire week and you haven't even noticed." Kurt motioned to Brittney, Quinn and
Santana. "What's Brittney's range? What genre would best suit Santana's vocal talents? When was the last time Quinn got a solo? Do you even know?"

Kurt pointed at Sam. "You went after Sam simply to have a body to put in the seat while Puck was missing. Sam is talented, but you've never once tried to nurture it. Artie has an extraordinary voice, yet you never put in any extra time with him like you do with Finn. You never help Artie with his vocal arrangements for assignments or ask Sam if he wants help with anything."

Kurt gave Mr. Schue a bitter smile. "Do you remember Matt? He sat here for an entire year being ignored. Could he even sing?" He smiled thinly at the choir director. "I know the answer to that, Mike and Artie do too, do you?"

The silence in the room was deafening. Rachel cleared her throat and began to speak.

"Kurt, Mr. Schue gave you the opportunity to sing the solo for 'Defying Gravity' and you-"

"Mr. Schue didn't give me a damn thing!" Kurt interrupted hotly. "My father had to come up here and raise holy hell for Mr. Schue to even let me audition for the song," Kurt crossed his arms. "And I blew the note on purpose. If Mr. Schue had any understanding of my vocal abilities he would have known I can hit that note in my sleep."

"I knew it!" Mercedes shrieked. "I heard you sing that song nearly every damn day for a year before that Diva Off and you never missed that note before!"

"What the hell? Hummel, why would you do that?" Puck asked.

"My reasons were, and are, personal. The point is, a choir director who was using me to my full vocal potential would have known what I was capable of and would have known that I was fully capable of reaching that note. Mr Schue didn't have a clue. Did you?" Kurt challenged.

Finn looked stunned and Rachel was, for once, mercifully silent. Artie was staring at Kurt with wide eyes and Puck mouthed the words "Since when is Hummel such a fucking BAMF" to Mike who simply shrugged.

"I will not be talked to this way by a student. Kurt you have detention the rest of the week. The rest of you just go on home, we'll pick this up tomorrow," Mr. Schue said, running a hand through his hair.

"You're punishing him for daring to speak the truth?" Santana asked. "You STILL haven't asked what started the fight in the first place, you have no idea what your precious Rachel said to him, but you're gonna punish him anyway?"

"Kurt is a student and I am a teacher and he was out of line-"

"But it was the truth. You're supposed to get in trouble for lying, not telling the truth." Brittney said, confusion written across her face.

"It was an opinion and it was-"

"One we all agree with, Rachel. Well, except you and Finnessa," Puck said.

"Fo schizzle," said Artie offering Puck a fist bump.

"You see!" Rachel yelled. "I was right. Kurt starts sleeping with the enemy and now there is dissention in the ranks-"
"Yeah, I'm just gonna go home now," Sam cut in. "Kurt that was righteous. Thank you for standing up for me. You got your car or you need a ride?"

Kurt gave turned to Sam. "You're welcome Sam. I have my car…thanks Cory."

"No problem Shawn," Sam gave Kurt a wink as he put his arm around Mercedes.

"You two have watched way too much late night ABC Family," Mercedes grumbled.

Sam motioned to Kurt. "Come on. We'll walk you to your car." He gave Finn a dirty look, "Unlike some people, I want to make sure you get home safely."

"Thanks Sam," Kurt said gratefully. He was a little shaky after his outburst and didn't think he'd be able to handle the stress of walking out alone not knowing if Azimio or Karofsky were waiting to attack.

"Sam, we never established that Kurt was, in fact, the victim of an assault-"

"Assault?" Mr. Schue jumped on the word and stared at Kurt. "What is Rachel talking about Kurt? What assault?"

"Don't worry about it Mr. Schue," Kurt said in a voice that was hard and dismissive and just this side of superior. "I just made a new friend yesterday after school...kind of like how I used to make friends every morning before school. You know, when you would pass me and the semi-circle of jocks that had me surrounded by the dumpers every morning. Why don't you ask your dear Finn to tell you all about it," Kurt said before flouncing out of the choir room, Sam and Mercedes at his heels and the rest of the students trickling out behind them.

He may have gotten a week's worth of detention and earned himself a spot on Mr. Schuester's hit list right under Sue Sylvester, but Kurt decided that was a small price to pay to finally get all that off his chest.

Finn slammed into his house in a black mood. After Kurt's outburst in glee, Mr. Schue had asked him what Kurt was talking about and he'd had to confess to the bullying he'd taken part in. When he admitted to actually throwing pee balloons at Kurt, Rachel had given him a look of pure disgust and walked out. Mr. Schue just stared at him and then let him go home.

Finn was upset and confused and he was pretty sure it was Kurt's fault for saying all that stuff and getting everyone mad at Rachel and Mr. Schue and him too, a little at least. Then again, Finn thought maybe it was a lot Rachel and Mr. Schue's fault too. He was almost positive though, that it wasn't his.

It wasn't his fault Mr. Schue kept giving him solos. Sure, he could turn them down, but Finn liked singing. He liked performing and he liked knowing he was good at it. He shouldn't have to give that up to make everyone else feel better.

It also wasn't Finn's fault that Azimio did...whatever he did to Kurt. Finn had totally meant to go back and get Kurt, but Rachel and he had started making out and she'd even let him touch her boobs and he just...forgot.

Finn frowned. Kurt must not have said anything to Burt. If Burt knew, he would have said something to his mom and then Finn would have been grounded for freaking ever. Kurt was either lying like Rachel said, or he'd totally covered Finn's ass.
Neither option made Finn feel better.

Finn walked into the kitchen and found his mom sitting at the table.

"Hey mom. What's for dinner?" Finn asked.

"Honey, sit down."

Finn sat. His mom was smiling, but it was all weird and stretched out so he knew she was nervous about whatever she was going to tell him.

"You…you know that I've been seeing Burt for awhile now, right?"

Finn smiled. "Yeah, he's pretty cool. He's totally teaching me to rebuild an engine. And we're going camping soon and to a Buckeyes game and-"

"I'm glad you like him. He cares for you…and well, honey, Burt and I care for each other a great deal."

"You like, love him or something?" Finn asked, trying to understand why his mom was so nervous if she wasn't going to tell him something bad.

"Yes, honey. I do. He loves me too."

Finn smiled. "Awesome. You deserve to be happy mom."

Carol took a deep breath. "I'm happy to hear you say that, sweetheart. Because Burt and I have agreed to move in together and since his house is bigger, you and I will be moving in there."

Finn's smile froze. He was moving? He was moving into Kurt's house? He was going to be living with Kurt? Finn didn't hate Kurt or anything but he knew Kurt used to crush on him and Rachel kept saying he still was and he knew the guys at school would never let him have a moment's peace if they found out.

"Mom…"

"I know this is out of the blue for you honey and I'm sorry. Burt and I, well we're not as young as we used to be and don't want to waste any time. We're just so grateful you and Kurt are such good friends. If you two didn't get along it would make things so much worse."

"Yeah," Finn repeated hollowly, "it could be worse."
Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

Blaine sets his plans in motion and Finn begins to face some harsh truths

Chapter Notes

Chapter Warnings: Homophobic Language, discussion of past bullying, language, discussion of illegal drug use and minors engaging in sexual activity, illegal drug use (Puck's special cupcakes) Finn logic :)

Chapter Nine: No Excuses, No Apologies, No Regrets

“So then I got home and my dad told me Finn and Carol are moving in! I’ve got detention for the rest of the week, Mr. Schue will probably banish me to the vocal equivalent of Siberia and now I’m going to be living with Finn of all people! I’d rather live with Puck, at least he’s not suffering under the delusion that I want to jump his bones.”

“But didn’t you want to jump Finn’s bones once upon a time?” Blaine asked sharply, more than a little annoyed that Kurt was going to be in such close proximity to his former crush. He tried to push his annoyance aside and instead wondered if Kurt realized just how much over sharing he was doing in regards to New Directions woes. Rachel may have been off the mark by accusing Kurt of making up his attack, but she wasn’t completely wrong about Blaine being capable of using the rival club’s troubles to the Warbler’s advantage.

Blaine had decided he wouldn’t actively pump Kurt for information, but he wouldn’t turn a deaf ear on any useful information that happened to come his way either. He’d felt a little guilty about exploiting his connection to Kurt but finding out about Finn had put him in a foul mood and was rapidly making that guilt diminish by the second.

“Blaine!” Kurt sounded scandalized, “I’ve been over Finn for months, almost a year in fact. It was a stupid, silly crush. And I never, I mean, I thought about kissing him but not …there was no jumping of bones intended,” Kurt whispered furiously.

Blaine forced himself to relax and remember that Finn was, in Kurt’s words, painfully straight. “Will there be jumping of my bones?” he teased.

“I haven’t decided yet but the more you make fun of me the less likely it becomes,” Kurt sniffed.

Blaine hummed lowly then stretched out on his bed and mulled over the information Kurt had just
given him. Finn may not have been interested in Kurt romantically but living together might foster a bond between the two boys and any bonding between Finn and Kurt was counterproductive to Blaine’s own plans. From what Blaine understood even if they resented them, the other members of New Directions took their cues largely from Finn and his girlfriend. If Blaine could keep the relationship between Kurt and the three of them strained it would split loyalties within the club. High school politics being what they were Finn was sure that when push came to shove, in a glee club where at least half the members were cheerleaders or football players, the gay kid would lose out to the quarterback every single time. Finn and Kurt already had an uneasy relationship and Blaine didn’t think it would take too much work on his part to keep things that way. There was already tension between the two of them due to Kurt’s unfortunate crush and now there was added friction due to the troubles in New Directions, troubles that Blaine was not above taking advantage of. “So, you think New Directions will survive the battle royale that went down today?” he asked lightly.

Kurt snorted. “We always do. We backstab and betray each other, fake paternities and speech impediments, and can be completely insensitive to one another’s struggles but when it counts somehow we always pull it together.”

And these are the people you call family

, Blaine internally scoffed. “So, are you going to apologize to Finn, Rachel and Mr. Schue?” Blaine asked innocently.

“I…I suppose I should. I know what I said was mostly true, but it wasn’t exactly fair. Finn, Rachel and Mr. Schue aren’t all bad. I mean, Mr. Schue really does try and he really does care. He’s just terribly oblivious sometimes. And as awful as Rachel can be, she’s also capable of being incredibly selfless and caring and we’re sort of friends now and I may have gone a bit overboard,” Kurt conceded.

“And where does Finn fit into all this?” Blaine asked tightly.

“Finn is…Finn,” Kurt sighed. “Finn genuinely wants to be a good person he just…he has this almost pathological need to be liked that sometimes makes him do the easy thing instead of the right thing. He’s a people pleaser and not the most -let’s call it enlightened among us. He usually means well though and I don’t think he deserved to be ambushed or lumped in with Rachel and Mr. Schue in regards to what goes on in glee. Finn doesn’t usually campaign for solos or go out of his way to steamroll everyone else. Plus, I’d like to clear the air between us before he moves in.”

Blaine frowned. Finn and Kurt rebuilding burned bridges was something that Blaine didn’t need happening for a variety of reasons, not the least among them being that New Directions making nice wasn’t good for the Warblers or for Blaine’s plans for Kurt. And if he were completely honest, the thought that this Rachel person could treat Kurt’s attack as something so casual while treating a show choir competition as if it had been touched by the hand of God left him irrationally angry. “I think you should stick to your guns,” Blaine said strongly.

“What?”

“I don’t think you should apologize. For as long as I’ve known you, you’ve complained about the treatment you’ve received in New Directions. The fact that your group backed you up when you went all Kurtzilla on your teacher and on your co-captains kind of shows they all feel the same way. If you maintain your position maybe things will change but if you apologize you’ll probably go back to the status quo,” Blaine said.

Kurt was quiet. “I get what you’re saying, but it feels wrong not to apologize. I said some really
harsh things that-”

“Was any of it untrue?” Blaine cut in quickly, sensing Kurt’s uncertainty and wanting to capitalize on it.

“What?”

“Was anything you said untrue? If not, you have nothing to apologize for,” Blaine pressed.

“It wasn’t exactly untrue but-”

“No buts, Kurt. You need to stand up for yourself here. Finn, Rachel and Mr. Schue are just a different kind of bully. How many times have they belittled you? Made you doubt yourself? Dismissed and devalued you? Don’t tolerate being mistreated, even if it’s by so-called friends,” Blaine argued hoping he was leaving enough breadcrumbs to lead Kurt down the path he wanted him to take.

Kurt was silent for a few long moments on the other end of the line and Blaine could feel the other boy taking the bait. He felt a momentary pang of guilt, but brushed it aside. The more emotional distance there was between Kurt and his friends, the easier it would be for Blaine to foster Kurt’s growing dependence on him.

“Maybe,” Kurt said softly.

Blaine knew better than to continue to push. He didn’t want Kurt to feel he’d forced his hand; he needed for the brunette to feel like he’d made the decision to maintain the distance between himself and his friends on his own. Blaine had planted the seed and now he had to leave it up to Kurt whether or not to reap the harvest.

“So, what are you up to?” Kurt asked, changing the subject.

“I’m avoiding my physics homework and watching as David invades my room so he can avoid pretending he understands his Latin worksheet.”

“I understand it’s a dead language for a reason,” David grumbled. “Hey Kurt! What it do, player?” David yelled as he walked into Blaine’s room and sat down.

Kurt laughed. “Tell David I said hi.”

“Kurt says stop watching Jay Z videos and remember you’re from the suburbs,” Blaine said instead.

“Blaine!” Kurt yelled. “That’s not what I said!”

“Liar,” David laughed, as he stuck his tongue out at Blaine. “Kurt doesn’t know I grew up in the ‘burbs. For all he knows I’m from the hood, yo.”

“The closest you’ve ever been to the hood is watching 106 And Park,” Blaine teased David before turning his attention back to Kurt. “Its fine babe, he didn’t believe me.”

“You’re still a jerk,” Kurt groused.

“But you like me anyway.”

“Yeah, yeah I do,” Kurt agreed softly.

Blaine felt tingles shoot through his body. “Good,” he said thickly, “I like you too.”
“Kurtie and Blainey, sitting in a tree—”

“Kurt, I’ll call you back after I kill David.”

Kurt laughed and hung up.

“You sir, are an ass,” Blaine said as he hurled a pillow at David.

David dodged easily and flopped back down onto Blaine’s bean bag chair. “So how is he? What’s going on with double o seven?”

Blaine felt a momentary flash of irritation at the affectionate nickname but forced it aside. “Kurt’s good. His glee friends found out he was assaulted and a couple of them are making sure he’s not alone for the time being. He did incite a small riot in rehearsal and ended up cursing out both their male and female lead and their director. He said he got a week of detention and everyone was in an uproar.”

“Explain.”

Blaine quickly recounted the story Kurt had told him for David.

“…Now Kurt’s panicking because he just found out Finn and his mother are moving in with Kurt and his dad. He also feels badly that his letting loose may have hurt some feelings and damaged the cohesiveness of their team so he wants to apologize.”

David nodded. “That would probably be best. Even if everything Kurt said was true, that wasn’t the time or the way to say it. Plus he wouldn’t want bad blood between him and this Finn cat when the guy’s about to move in. What did he say when you told him you agreed with him?”

“I told him no such thing,” Blaine said smoothly.

“What?”

“I told him to stick to his guns and not back down.”

David stared at Blaine. “Why would you do that, man?”

“Because from the picture he’s painted nothing he said was untrue. Plus, any friction in New Directions is good news for The Warblers and the further Kurt is from them the closer he is to me,” Blaine replied.

David’s lips thinned into a harsh line. “Kurt’s confiding in you man. He’s battling it out with his friends defending you, and you’re screwing him over like this? Not cool, Blaine, not cool at all.”

“Don’t sit there and moralize at me,” Blaine snapped. “When Azimio attacked him, Kurt called me. He didn’t call Mercedes or Sam or any of his so-called friends he called me, a guy he just met who lives hours away instead of people he’s known for years that were right around the corner. You know what that tells me? That tells me deep down he knows he can’t depend on them to have his back. Besides all that, I’m the competition; regardless of our personal relationship Kurt should know better than to tell me intimate details about their club. I haven’t told him about Andrew’s vendetta against Wes—”

“To be fair, Wes did actually hit him with the gavel.”

“And it was awesome. Point is, Kurt has no clue half the Warblers think Wes is a gavel wielding
menace, or a significant portion would like to form a posse and string Jeff up by his cock and balls for banging their girlfriends. He doesn’t know that Clinton and Bryce hate one another but make nice for the sake of future business endeavors or that Dominic and Flint have to be kept on separate sides of the room at all times. As much as I like him, he’s the competition and doesn’t need to know about the inner workings of our group. It’s not my fault he doesn’t practice similar discretion,” Blaine huffed.

“Blaine, who do you think you’re talking to? I know the Anderson playbook, chapter and verse and that move right there you just did…classic Blaine’s feeling guilty behavior. When you start defending and explaining things it’s because you know you’re in the wrong. You know you’re taking advantage of Kurt, you know it’s wrong and you feel just a little bit bad about it,” David observed.

“I don’t feel bad about it…exactly,” Blaine said. “I feel badly that Kurt’s surrounded himself with people who are clearly unworthy of him and that he’s stuck in an environment where he’s being stifled creatively. And ok, fine, perhaps it’s a bit unethical to use information he shares with me as a friend to my benefit as his competitor but-”

“Save it, Blaine. Nothing you say is gonna make this ok.”

Blaine sighed and David let the conversation drop.

A knock on the door sounded seconds before it flew open. “Blaine, do you have any idea why Thad’s on the warpath?” Nick Duval asked as he strode in, then proceeded to straddle Blaine’s desk chair and look at his friend expectantly.

“Hello Nicholas,” Blaine said brightly.

“What did you do to Thad?” The handsome brunette asked bluntly, ignoring Blaine’s greeting.

Blaine smirked. “I’m a little offended you assume I did something to Thad instead of the other way around but if you must know he and I had a meeting with Chancellor Taylor. Thad was after my spot at the Leadership Conference. He didn’t get it and as retaliation I may have arranged for David to take his place at the FBLA dinner.”

David’s head snapped up and Blaine smirked. “I was gonna tell you after dinner. You can thank me later,” Blaine told David smugly.

“Thad earned that spot, Blaine. You know he isn’t going to let this go,” Nick sighed heavily, his warm brown eyes filling with concern and disapproval.

“Nick, he fired the first shot and all’s fair in love and Warblers,” Blaine replied.

Nick ran a hand through his short, dark curls. “You and Thad have been going at it like cats and dogs since we were in the sandbox, Blaine. This is officially ridiculous. He’s sitting in the senior commons right now, with Flint, pouring over the student handbook and taking notes. I doubt he’s brushing up on the honor code. He’s gunning for you, Blaine.”

Blaine shrugged. “I memorized that thing the first week I was here, didn’t want a repeat of Canterbury. I know exactly how far I can go and not be in violation of any rules. He’s welcome to waste his time though. After what happened in Taylor’s office and then getting verbally bitch slapped by Kurt, I can’t say I’m surprised to be on his hit list.”

“Kurt? The guy who came and spied on us? You’re still seeing that kid?” Nick asked, genuinely surprised.
“Blainey and Kurtie sittin’ in a tree,” David began.

“I will end you,” Blaine threatened. He turned to Nick and smiled. “Kurt and I are getting on rather well.”

“Like you and Christophe were a few weeks ago?” Nick asked.

“Nuh uh,” David answered. “To quote our esteemed colleague over there, sex isn’t dating. He and Christophe went at it like bunnies and Blaine never even sat with the boy in the dining hall. Kurt has yet to let drop trou and Blaine’s whipping out the limo and taking the kid to dinner theater.”

“Blaine went out on an actual date and he’s not getting any? Oh shit everybody gird your loins, it’s the apocalypse!” Jeff Sterling announced, leaning against the door frame.

“Fuck you, Beiber,” Blaine shot back good naturedly.

The handsome blonde smiled before making his way into the room and sitting on the corner of Blaine’s desk. “You know you would if you could. Don’t hate me cause I’m beautiful.”

“Your modesty never fails to impress,” Nick cracked.

Jeff ignored Nick and addressed Blaine. “And why are you not getting laid? Isn’t that like, the number one rule in the Player’s Handbook: No romance without finance, no finance without fucking?”

“I honestly do not know which one of you is worse,” David said, as he shook his head.

“Come to the dark side David. We have cookies,” Jeff cracked.

“I’m just trying something different with Kurt, that’s all,” Blaine said not wanting to discuss exactly what it was about the brunette that him altering his usual behavior.

“What?” Jeff asked.

“Being a respectful human being, maybe?” Nick interjected. “You might want to try it sometime.”

Jeff sighed. “Dude, for the last time, how was I supposed to know that stripper was your cousin?”

“Christina is a dancer. She’s on Broadway. She’s not a stripper,” Nick snapped.

“She was that night. Dude, she did this thing where she-”

“What the actual fuck is wrong with you?” Nick asked incredulously.

“My therapist thinks I have Histrionic personality disorder,” Jeff answered absently. “I think I’m just really kinda slutty, like to party and occasionally partake of illegal substances, but you know tomato, tamahto.”

“You were not hugged enough as a child,” David said.

“Sterling’s don’t hug unless it’s a photo opportunity,” Jeff replied.

“Are you sure we aren’t related?” Blaine joked.

“Nah, you Anderson’s are titans of industry while we Sterling’s seek to bring back the Kennedy’s and Camelot era,” Jeff said, bitterness creeping around the edges of his tone. He sighed then smiled
“So who’s the guy?”

“His name is Kurt, I enjoy his company and that’s all there is to tell.”

“He goes to public school Jeff. The kid goes to public school in Lima, of all places,” Wes’s voice suddenly rang out from the doorway. “He was the kid in the bondage gear and knee socks staring adoringly at Blaine during Teenage Dream.”

Jeff leered at Blaine. “He was pretty. You must hit that. Hell, give me enough alcohol and I might hit that. Bondage gear is code for like, freak in the sheets.”

“You realize everyone already knows you’re bisexual? You don’t have to get drunk every time you want to fuck a guy. And in Kurt’s case his clothes are code for anything. It’s just fashion,” Blaine said, his tone a little sharper than necessary.

“I like how you assumed I’m topping,” Jeff smirked. “And what do you mean it’s just fashion? False advertising is illegal,” Jeff sniffed.

Blaine shook his head. “Anyway, that’s enough about Kurt-”

“Agreed. Let’s talk about what you gentlemen will be doing this weekend instead.”

“I’m going-,” Nick started.

“To my Like a G6 party,” finished Jeff.

“Like a G6?” Wes questioned.

“Now I’m feeling so fly like a G6,” Jeff sang.

“More like getting so high like a G6,” David grumbled.

“Look Nancy Reagan, I tried just saying no. It wasn’t nearly as much fun as saying yes,” Jeff replied.

David shook his head, knowing it was argument that he wasn’t going to win.

“Count me out, Sterling. Once was enough for me. I’m not going back to jail,” Nick said.

“Don’t be a whiny bitch. It was a holding cell and they didn’t even file any charges,” Jeff scoffed.

“Yeah, because Blaine did whatever voodoo he does and made everything disappear,” Wes pointed out.

“And Blaine’s coming so we’re cool like the other side of the pillow,” Jeff reasoned.

“No,” Nick said resolutely.

Wes, David, Jeff and Blaine looked at each other and grinned. “Peer pressure, peer pressure, peer pressure…,” they chanted.

“If I end up in jail again, I’m going to murder each and every one of you in your sleep,” Nick warned.

“YAY!” Jeff cheered.
“I am going to regret this,” Nick sighed.

“Probably, but we’re teenagers. We’re supposed to do all kinds of things we regret. Fortunately for us our parents have enough cash and clout to get us out of any trouble we may get into.” Jeff pointed out. “Now, do you think you could call your cousin and see if she could come and bring some of her stripper friends?”

Nick launched himself onto Jeff as the rest of the boys tried to break up the scuffle.

After pulling Nick off of Jeff, David checked his watch. “Alright guys, it’s that time. Let’s go see what manner of good eats they have for us tonight.”

“You are always hungry,” Nick remarked, leading the way out of Blaine’s room.

“I’m a growing boy,” David replied, exiting after Nick.

“You’re a bottomless pit,” Jeff cracked following them out.

“I’ll be down in a couple of minutes. I have to make a couple of quick calls. Save me a seat,” Blaine said.

“No problem Blaine,” Wes said, lingering at the door. “All joking aside, I know that Kurt’s someone you’re getting close to and what happened to him upset you. I also know you haven’t let it go and I don’t know what you’re planning but I know you’re planning something. Just be sure it’s not something that you’re going to regret.”

Blaine smiled. “I’ve thought long and hard about what I’m planning to do, Wes and I have no excuses, no apologies and no regrets.”

Wes shook his head. “Yeah, that’s kind of what I was afraid of,” he said softly before closing the door.

Once he was alone, Blaine took his phone, scrolled through his contacts until he found the one he wanted and pressed the call button.

“Mr. Anderson, it’s been a long time. What can I do for you?”

Blaine settled down at his desk and opened his laptop. “Evan, I need your expertise,” Blaine said easily.

“I figured as much, otherwise you wouldn’t be calling,” the other man joked.

Blaine gave a slight laugh. “I suppose that’s true enough. I need you to look into a couple of individuals for me, there may be more names coming but right now just two to start with.”

“Hit me with them. What corporate fat cats dirty laundry do you need me to dig through this time?”

Blaine paused. “This isn’t business, Evan. This is personal. So make sure you bill me and not Anderson International.”

There was a split second of silence then Evan’s voice came through. “You’re the boss, Mr. Anderson. Who am I investigating and why?”

“I need you to look into a couple of individuals by the names of Azimio Adams and Dave Karofsky. They’re either seniors or juniors at William McKinley High School in Lima, Ohio and I want to know everything about them, and their parents. I want every detail of their lives from who they
“Know to whom they owe.”

“Lima huh? Small town.”

“You of all people should know small towns hold big secrets,” Blaine replied. “And I want all of theirs so dig deep, Evan.”

“And why am I investigating a couple of high school kids and their families?”

“Because I told you to and I write your checks,” Blaine snapped. “Don’t question me, Evan just do it.”

“Whatever you say, Mr. Anderson. I’ll get on it tomorrow.”

“You’ll get on it tonight.”

“Yes sir, I’ll get on it tonight.”

“Good. And Evan, time of is of the essence. I’ll double your fee if you get me what I need quickly.”

“Anything in particular I need to be looking for?” Evan asked.

“Anything I can use,” Blaine said simply.

“Gotcha, boss man. I’ll get back to you soon.”

Blaine clicked off before saying goodbye and scrolled through his contacts, seeking and finding another number and placing his second call.

“Blaine, to what do I owe this pleasure?”

“Afternoon Cass, sorry to call this late in the day but I need a favor. I know corporate law is your area of expertise but I was hoping you might be able to look into something for me and if need be recommend someone who specializes in civil litigation,” Blaine replied.

Cass Northrop was one of the top attorneys in the country and having Blaine as a client was the feather in his extremely well heeled cap. He was also close friends with Blaine’s god father and had known Blaine since he was in diapers. “Civil litigation? What’s going on, Blaine?”

“Nothing I want to explain right now,” Blaine said carefully. “I just want some information on a school’s responsibility to provide a safe and secure learning environment for its students, specifically as it refers to harassment and physical assaults.”

“Is something going on at Dalton?” Cass broke in hastily. “Blaine, I’m telling you right now if you’re in trouble attorney client privilege won’t keep me from calling Jasper-”

Blaine smiled. “I don’t imagine it would, which is why I never tell you anything I don’t want him finding out, Cass. But you can relax. Dalton is the bully free utopia it advertises itself to be. The information I need is for a friend of mine going to a public school where he’s subjected to a fair amount of bullying and harassment. He was recently physically assaulted on school property and I’m just…gathering information on what his options are.”

Cass exhaled. “Well, I’ll look into it for you. I have a colleague who specializes in these types of cases. I imagine we have more than your friend’s word or you wouldn’t be calling me.”
Blaine smirked. “What would you say if I told you there is a student run blog that has documented instances of not only Kurt’s harassment, but other students being repeatedly verbally harassed or physically assaulted, in some instances by a member of the staff?”

Cass smiled. “I would say that the strength of your friend’s case just increased tenfold and the words “class action lawsuit” brought a smile to my face before I remembered I wouldn’t be handling the case,” he laughed. “Send me the link to this blog so that we can begin independent documentation and backing up any audio or visual files before the school shuts it down. I’ll look at it myself, figure out exactly what type of potential case he has and we’ll go from there.”

“Thank you, Cass. I appreciate it.

“Not a problem,” Cass was quiet for a moment then spoke. “You’re going through an awful lot of trouble for this friend of yours,” he said quietly.

Blaine sighed. “No lawyer tricks, Cass. I’ll tell you what I want you to know about Kurt when I want you to know it.”

“Fair enough, Blaine. I’ll talk to you soon.”

“Goodbye Cass…and again thanks,” Blaine said hanging up and placing his phone next to him on his desk.

Blaine located Jacob’s blog and emailed Cass the link, as well as information from William McKinley’s school website and shut down his computer before making his way down to dinner, satisfied that his plan was coming together.

“So Hudson, my mom ran into yours at Sheets N Things and according to her, you’re gonna be moving to Fairytopia,” Dave Karofsky sneered cornering Finn in the empty locker room after football practice.

“Shut up, dude. I can’t control where my mom moves us and Mr. Hummel is pretty cool…and there’s nothing wrong with Kurt so just shut up,” Finn said slamming his locker shut.

“Whatsoever. I should have known you joining homo explosion was a clue.” Karofsky got a look of pure anger and something else that Finn couldn’t identify on his face before he continued. “Hummel finally managed to turn you, huh? I bet you just bend him over and pound into that ass of his—”

“Shut up!” Finn screamed, pushing Karofsky back into the lockers.

“You’re gonna meet The Fury, Hudson!” Karofsky threatened.

“The Fury’s gonna get your ass kicked if you don’t clear out of here,” Puck’s voice suddenly sounded out.

Finn turned to see Sam, Mike, Artie and Puck behind him. They were all glaring at Karofsky menacingly.

“Whatsoever, Hummel loving homos,” Karofsky spat as he beat a hasty retreat.

“Thanks guys.”

“Don’t mention it,” Puck waved off Finn’s thanks. “So here’s what’s up; we’re going to my place
for some Call of Duty, and Nana’s special cupcakes. You in?” Puck asked.

“Yes,” Finn breathed.

A half hour later the boys were all sprawled at Puck’s place, eating his nana’s “special” cupcakes and a variety of snack foods while trying to keep from sniping one another as they played the game.

“Living with Kurt is gonna like, suck dude,” Finn declared suddenly.

“Why?” Artie asked, leaning his head to the side and examining Finn closely. “Kurt makes delicious waffles, yo.”

“Seriously man, you need to like, chill. Kurt’s pretty cool. I know he like, bitched you out the other day but you kinda had it coming,” Sam said, licking the frosting off another cupcake.

“You guys don’t get it. He likes me,” Finn said, enunciating slowly, as if he were speaking to small children.

“Uh, no. He liked you,” Sam corrected. “Like he liked me. Unless you’ve changed your name to Blaine and turned into a curly haired prep school boy from Westerville, he doesn’t like you now.”

Finn blinked. “What if he, you know, creeps on me?”

Artie laughed. “You’re scared of Kurt?”

“You would be too!” Finn insisted.

“Dude, I spent the night at Mercy’s and he was there. He didn’t like, molest me in my sleep or anything,” Sam said, picking up another cupcake. “And we had to share the pullout because Mercy kicked me out of bed with her for having wandering hands.”

“Rejected,” Mike laughed from the floor.

“Shut up,” Sam grumbled, throwing a pillow at the other jock.

“Don’t feel bad man,” Puck said to Sam. “Mercedes is keeping her thighs locked up tighter than Fort Knox. I didn’t even get any boob when we dated.”

Sam rolled his eyes. “I heard all about the one week you and Mercedes dated, Puck,” he said.

“Yeah dude, I put in a whole week and got nothin’. Rachel at least let me-”

“Okay, okay,” Finn yelled. “We don’t want to hear anymore.” Sam nodded his agreement.

“I want to hear more,” Mike grinned. “What did Rachel let you do?”

“Oh so we’re sharing?” Finn asked, narrowing his eyes. “Yeah, yeah good let’s share. Hey Artie, how long did you date Tina?”

“Never mind Puck,” Mike mumbled.

“That’s what I thought,” Finn muttered.

“You guys are harshing my mellow,” Artie announced. “And we are getting off track. We’re
supposed to be helping Finn realize he’s being ridiculous.”

“I’m not,” Finn insisted. “It’s just that Kurt.”

“Man up, Finn. It’s Hummel not Mr. Ryerson. He’s not gonna like, try to have surprise butt sex
with you,” Puck said snatching the cupcake away from Sam.

“I bet you wouldn’t be…that what you are, if you were moving in with him,” Finn grumbled.

“Hell, I’d be psyched,” Puck stated. Artie nodded.

“What?”

“Dude, have seen Kurt’s car?” Mike asked from where he was lying on the floor staring up at the
ceiling. “Navigators aren’t cheap and Kurt’s is tricked out like whoa.”

“I don’t know who half the designers are that he names, but those clothes he wears are like serious
coin,” Sam noted.

“Kurt’s place is laced,” Artie said. “Why do you think I always go over there to study despite them
not having a ramp?”

“Living there, you’ll probably get stuff man,” Puck said.

“Nice stuff,” Artie added.

“But.”

“Besides man, if anyone should be scared it should be Kurt,” Sam pointed out.

“What? Why would Kurt be scared of me?” Finn demanded.

“For the same reason he’s still a little nervous around me,” Puck spoke up. “Dumpster tosses,
swirlies-,”

“Pee balloons,” Artie added.

“Prank calls, locker checks, freshmen year’s paintball “Smear the Queer” extravaganza,” Mike listed.

Sam squinted at Finn. “You kinda suck dude.”

“No I don’t! I didn’t even do anything half the time, I was just there. It just the guys being stupid, it
didn’t mean anything,” Finn said.

“It meant something to me when Puck locked me in the port-a potty,” Artie said.

“Fuck, Wheels. I said I was sorry,” Puck whined.

“I know but just because I accepted your apology doesn’t mean I forgot what you did. Pass the
cupcakes. And none of you have ever bothered to really apologize to Kurt and he still gets shit,
primarily from the people you hang with so, yeah. If anyone should be afraid Finn, it’s him,” Artie
said.

Finn felt his gut twist. He had always thought of Kurt’s bullies as “them” never really
acknowledging that he was a part of the group that had made Kurt’s life so miserable since Finn had,
for the most, just stood around on the sidelines passively.
“My throat is killing me,” Puck said suddenly.

“There’s a dirty joke in there somewhere,” Sam murmured.

“I’m a sex shark. There’s always a dirty joke.”

Finn let the laughter of his friends wrap around him and resolutely put thoughts of his unpleasant past and uncertain future with Kurt out of his mind.
Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

The Warblers and New Directions both enjoy Friday night parties with vastly different results.

Chapter Notes

I wanted to thank each and every one of you for taking the time to read my story. Your support and interest means a great deal to me. It may seem like it but this chapter isn't filler but not much happens on the Klaine front...it's sort of a compare/contrast with the Warblers and new Directions so you guys get a clearer picture of the two worlds that Blaine and Kurt come from and get a better understanding of just what awaits Kurt when he steps into Blaine's world and what type of adjustments Blaine would have to make to be at home in Kurt's.

Warnings: Underage drinking, minors in sexual situations, sexual contact between a minor (above the age of consent) and an adult, illicit drug use and alluded to m/m/f ménage à trois containing a minor character.

Chapter 10: Last Friday Night Was Like A G6

I, here comes the 2 to the 3 to the 4,

Everybody drunk out on the dance floor...

"Dude, this song is almost as old as we are!" David yelled over the music.

"It's an oldie but goodie, my man!" Jeff yelled back, as he momentarily disengaged from one of the girls he was making out with. "Plus, it's got its own built in drinking game."
As if on cue the next lyrics came pouring out the massive sound system and everyone grabbed their shot glasses.

*Now everybody in the club gettin' tipsy...*

*Now everybody in the club gettin' tipsy...*

As the chorus sounded out, everyone tipped their heads back and slammed down their shots.

Jeff Sterling parties were the perfect way to unwind after a long, grueling week of Dalton academics. They were also legendary for being modern day dens of iniquity. Despite almost everyone in attendance being underage, the liquor flowed freely, sex was in the air (and on the floor, and against the walls, and on the table tops...) and the only rules were leave your keys with the guy at the door and what happens at Sterling’s, stays at Sterling’s.

"Jeff," Blaine said seriously as he slammed his glass down on the counter and leaned toward his friend, "I thinks I's enebricated," he frowned and tried again. "No, I's intoxiated," Blaine announced proudly.

Nick, Wes and David burst out into amused laughter and Jeff smiled. "What you are dude, is drunk. Say it with me Blaine...drunk."

"T'snot drunk. I's jus not ssosober." Blaine slurred.

"You have the sexiest eyes," The redhead on Jeff’s side said to Blaine, sliding over close to him and palming his crotch.

"And you hassa *vagina,*" Blaine returned, squinting. "Ew."

"Excuse me?" The girl said, removing her hand.

"I'm homosectual," Blaine said a little too loudly as he reached for the vodka.

"He's gay and hasn't had enough liquor to get heteroflexible yet, give him a few more shots and maybe he'll give you a shot," Jeff explained before sucking tequila from the hollow of one of the girl's necks and taking a tab of ecstasy from the tongue of the other.

"'M notta fan of vagina," Blaine slurred solemnly.

"I'm a fan of getting off by any means necessary," Jeff said before taking another drink.

"I'm a fan of vagina," Nick said, as he snagged the vodka from Blaine and poured himself another shot.

The girl huffed and crawled over Blaine to straddle Nick. They instantly started a heated make out session.

When the redhead's top hit the table, David smacked his friend on the back of head. "Take it upstairs before you traumatize Blaine."

"That sounds like an excellent idea," Nick said as he led the girl away from the table and up the stairs.

"Hey, hey, David," Wes called, throwing a lime at him to get David's attention.

"What dude?"
"Why is all the rum gone?" Wes asked, holding up the empty bottle of Pyrat Cask and doing a terrible impersonation of Captain Jack Sparrow.

"The rum is gone," David began with exaggerated patience, "because we drank it all."

"I only had tree, fo, mebbe tree dranks," Blaine complained.

"And on that note buddy you are down for the night," David declared. He got up, and walked over to help Blaine up from his seat.

"But I wanna party! I wanna, David, David, I wanna party," Blaine whined.

David rolled his eyes. "Trust me, you've partied."

To say Blaine had partied was an understatement. It was currently four in the morning and since his arrival at the party Blaine had made the rounds, saying hello and speaking to a variety of people and then hit the dance floor hard. He'd also managed to play several games of beer pong, Suck and Blow, and Pass the Glowstick while drinking steadily the whole time.

"Come on, Party Monster. Up to bed you go."

"Jeffy, David's makin' me go ta bed. I dunna wanna!" Blaine wailed.

"David, let him be," Wes mumbled from underneath the girl he was making out with.

"Wes, you have a girlfriend, get your tongue back in your own mouth. And he's had enough," David said, as he pushed Blaine forward.

"I dunna wanna!" Blaine whined.

"You are a sloppy drunk, you know that Blaine?" David complained as he half carried, half dragged Blaine up the stairs and into one of the guest rooms. David dropped Blaine down onto the bed and retreated into the bathroom in search of a glass of water and some pain killers.

"Drink this, take these, and sleep it off, Superfreak," David ordered.

"I'm Rick James, bitch!" Blaine slurred. He downed the pills and the water, and then fell back onto the bed.

"Hey, hey Davey? I loves you man. Like somush, man."

David sighed and rolled Blaine on his side, took off his shoes and covered him up with a blanket. "God knows why but I love you too, Blaine. I'll be back to check on you in a bit, ok man?"

"I wanna party," Blaine mumbled in response.

"You did, Blaine, you did. I'll check on you later," David replied before turning on the bathroom light so the room wasn't pitch black and then leaving, making sure to close the door behind him.

Blaine curled himself into a small ball and drifted off.

The next morning it looked as if the hung over, half dressed, bleary eyed party goers were the survivors of a bomb blast. There were bottles, trash, clothing and half eaten food littering every available surface. Nick was hustling people out the door and David was going around with a garbage bag trying to clean up the worst of the mess so the staff didn't have to.
After about an hour the boys had managed to restore some semblance of order and went to wake their friends. Nick found Jeff in the boathouse, naked as a jaybird, with a raven haired beauty who was clearly not a teenager and a boy who could have passed for Zac Efron's twin. He grimaced, woke Jeff's companions and sent them on their way before waking his friend.

"Jeff. Jeff. Get up, dude. It's almost two o'clock." Jeff merely grunted and turned over. Nick sighed and flipped over the chaise lounge that Jeff was sleeping on, startling the blonde awake.

"It's two in the afternoon. David and I have done most of the post party work for you but now it's time for you to get up. Find your clothes and meet us in the kitchen," Nick said, leaving a hung-over and irritated Jeff on the boathouse floor.

David walked into the bedroom he'd dumped Blaine and Wes in the night before and found the two drunkenly spooning. He chuckled and took a quick picture on his iphone before waking them.

"Dumb and Dumber, rise and shine!" he yelled, leaning over the pair.

Wes leaped up and fell over the side of the bed while Blaine merely burrowed deeper under the covers.

"You ass," Wes said, rubbing his back. "Where are my clothes? Anderson! Did you steal my virtue and my clothes?" Wes demanded.

Blaine poked his head out from under the blanket and gave Wes the evil eye. "Does your ass hurt, Wes?"

"Only from where I fell."

"Then we didn't fuck and your virtue is intact. I have no idea where your last season's generic ensemble is either," Blaine snapped.

"Jeez, it was joke! I forgot what a bitch you are when you're hung over," Wes huffed.

"Guys, don't make me force you to hug it out," David threatened.

"Fuck. You. Sideways." Blaine mumbled from under the blankets.

"Let's join hands and sing Kumbaya," David continued undeterred.

"David, what did I do to you? Why are you torturing me?" Blaine groaned.

"You deserve whatever torture I see fit to put you through. I almost threw my back out carrying your drunken ass upstairs last night. Now get up, and get downstairs. We're leaving soon," David replied.

"David-"

"Your pants are in the dryer Wes. You fell into the punch bowl last night so I stripped you, threw your crap in the laundry and dumped you in here with Blaine. I figured he'd keep you from getting your hetero swerve on and you'd effectively block any random cock that might stumble in here."

Blaine struggled to sit up and pushed a handful of messy curls out of his face. "That is…why does that make some sort of sense?"

"If it does its only because I was tipsy when I thought it up and you're either still drunk or extremely hung over. I'm sure once we're both sober as judges it will seem like the worst idea ever," David replied.
"My uncle Lawrence is a judge. He's a total alcoholic," Nick said stopping in the doorway. "He once puked all over a witness after a liquid lunch."

"Can we, just ugh, don't talk about that stuff, please." Wes pleaded.

"Yeah, I thought you boys might be in rough shape this morning," Nick announced, carrying two glasses of a dubious looking substance. "Brought you guys two glasses of Nana Duval's patented hangover cure."

"I feel so bad I'm willing to try anything," Blaine declared as he grabbed a glass.

"Same here pass mine over," Wes agreed.

"No sipping," Nick directed. "You gotta down in all in one go."

Both boys downed the concoction then began sputtering and gagging.

"Jesus Christ, Nick! What the hell was wrong with your Nana dude?" Wes demanded.

"This is…oh my god the taste!" Blaine moaned, as he rushed into the bathroom and began furiously brushing his teeth with the spare toothbrush.

"You guys fall for that every single time," Nick cackled as he doubled over with laughter.

David joined in, snickering as Wes gargled with mouthwash and Blaine glared at them. "Seriously, how many times has he got you guys with "Nana Duval's" hangover cure?" David asked.

"Shut up. I never remember until after I put it in my mouth," Wes grumbled.

"There's a dirty joke in there somewhere," Blaine mumbled.

"Well, since the guys are up now I'll go ask Goldilocks if he's ready to go," Nick said, clapping David on the shoulder and leaving.

An hour later found Wes, Blaine and Jeff passed out in the backseat as Nick and David drove them all back to Dalton, giving thanks they'd made it through the party with nothing worse than hangovers to show for it.

After his outburst in glee the rest of the week had crawled by, cloaked in awkwardness and uncertainty. Neither Finn nor Rachel had spoken more than a handful of words to him, Mr. Schuester had vacillated between disappointment and concern, and the tension in glee rehearsals had gotten so bad that even Mike had been snapping at people. If that wasn't bad enough detention had been a nightmare, filled with the worst McKinley had to offer, all of whom took every opportunity to torture Kurt for an extra hour a day. Thankfully one of his friends always stuck around to make sure Kurt wasn't alone after he got out, usually it was Sam and Mercedes, but Friday Santana, Quinn and Brittany had come and escorted him from detention to Cheerios practice where Kurt sat and waited on the girls to finish before they all left for the day. Kurt had been grateful for the protection of his friends but was constantly worried that someone would end up getting hurt because of him.

Kurt had hoped he'd be able to put the week behind him and hang out with Blaine but the older boy had disappeared. The boys had barely spoken all week due to conflicting schedules and life in general getting in the way and so Kurt hadn't been able to get in touch with Blaine to make weekend plans. While he'd been disappointed, Kurt had decided to take the time alone to think about what he wanted to do about the drama with New Directions.
Kurt couldn't help but feel that, despite Blaine's protests to the contrary, an apology was in order. Even if though he believed his feelings were valid, he regretted expressing them the way he had and he really regretted the resulting fallout. There had been clear battle lines drawn in the choir room. Finn and Rachel were a unit, with Rachel taking the point position. Quinn, Brittany and Santana had formed a triad, refusing to work with Rachel and completely freezing out Finn. Sam and Mercedes had plastered themselves to Kurt's side, making it clear that their loyalties were with the countertenor. Puck was loyal to Finn but refused to take part in any choir room drama, often drifting into the group with Artie, Tina and Mike who were merely trying to stay out of the fray. Mr. Schuester was helpless to do anything other than watch as New Directions circled the drain. Kurt couldn't help but feel responsible for the whole thing and he wondered if an apology would get everyone back on track.

Kurt figured the first step he could take to repair the damage was to be nice to Finn. Kurt had spoken to his father and gotten him to agree that Kurt and Finn sharing Kurt's basement room would not be ideal. Kurt knew that Finn was still uncomfortable around him and was honest enough to admit that some of his past actions had played a part in that. Looking back, he realized his crush on Finn was largely a product of his own isolation and loneliness coupled with Finn's general attractiveness and him being a basically nice person. He also realized that Finn was safe; he was never going to like Kurt back but unlike Puck or one of the other boys at school Finn also wouldn't assault or attack Kurt for having feelings for him. Now that he'd gotten some distance and gained some perspective Kurt could see the events of last year a lot clearer and accept the part he played in the hurt feelings and lingering awkwardness that had resulted.

As much as he wished he could take things back, he didn't and he couldn't regret introducing Burt and Carol. While there was a part of Kurt that selfishly feared that his father loving Carol meant that he'd stopped loving his mom, it was only a small part. Kurt wanted his father to be happy, but more importantly he wanted his father to be loved and he didn't want him to be alone. It was no secret that Kurt was leaving Lima as soon as possible after he graduated and the idea of his father being completely alone broke Kurt's heart. He was grateful that his dad had found another great love in Finn's mom. Carol was a good woman. She was kind and loving; she understood and cared for his father and she accepted Kurt. Kurt felt like as far as potential step mother's go, both he and his father could do no better than Carol Hudson.

Behind the acceptance though, just beneath the growing fondness he had for the woman who'd captured his father's heart was Kurt's shame at his reasons for introducing them. He cringed when he imagined what would happen if he ever had to admit he only hooked their parents up in order to spend more time with Finn. Kurt thought that was his lowest point. It hadn't been the subtle suggestions to Finn that girls weren't worth the trouble they caused the quarterback or taking advantage of Rachel and giving her a makeover that eventually ended in her feelings being hurt, but the act of manipulating his own father, using Burt's loneliness and the Chris shaped hole in Carol's heart to further his agenda with Finn that had been Kurt's official rock bottom. Kurt hoped that the love the two adults had found in some small way atoned for that mistake. Kurt would never regret making the introductions, but he'd always regret his motivation for doing so.

Kurt hoped he and Finn could be friends. He'd resolved to do his part, but no more than that. He didn't want a repeat of last year and unfortunately Finn was under the impression that Kurt still had romantic feelings for him. Kurt hoped that living together, with Kurt being in no way inappropriate towards him, would help Finn see that anything romantic Kurt felt for him had long since passed.

Kurt sighed and turned his attention to Rachel. The worst thing about Rachel was that she and Kurt had far more in common than he cared to admit. He often wondered if they were as different as he and Tina or he and Mercedes if they would manage to get along. Kurt hated to acknowledge it, but the things he disliked the most about Rachel were the things he disliked the most about himself. The selfishness, the desire for the spotlight, the casual dismissal of other people's feelings, the ego…those
were all Kurt's worst traits and they were all on display everyday he walked into the choir room and saw Rachel.

If that's all there were to the petite diva, Kurt would have simply written her off. But Rachel shared more with Kurt than just his worst traits—she also shared his best. She was passionate. She was dedicated. Rachel understood Kurt in a way that not even Mercedes did. She had a soft heart under a tough shell. Rachel endured her own brand of bullying and like Kurt, refused to let it change her or break her. She could be caring and considerate, and she was one of the strongest people Kurt had ever met. Despite himself, he admired Rachel. If forced to be totally honest, when he didn't want to rip out her vocal chords and strangle her with them, Kurt even liked her.

The fact that he did like Rachel was what had made her accusations hurt so much. He had thought if anyone could understand why Kurt would never lie about being attacked by Azimio, it would have been Rachel. Rachel had been his advocate long before she had ever been his frenemy. She was the one person he had always thought would always be on his side when it came to the homophobic bullying he endured. He understood that it was often impossible for her to see past her own ambitions but Kurt had just felt betrayed when Rachel had suggested he was lying.

Mr. Schue was a bit more complex. Kurt genuinely liked Mr. Schue, but sometimes he had a hard time respecting him. Time after time, Mr. Schue gave them inspirational speeches about what a character building experience being bullied was and encouraged them to sing about it their feelings instead of stepping up as their teacher and being their advocate and trying to stop it. Day after day, Mr. Schue let it slide when Kurt was singled out for ridicule and his sexuality was mocked. Performance after performance, Mr. Schue allowed his favoritism to blind him to the talents of the club as a whole. Time after time, Mr. Schue promised to change and it never seemed to take hold.

Mr. Schue had the best of intentions; he just had absolutely no follow through.

Kurt knew, regardless of his personal feelings, he'd been out of line. Shortcomings and failings aside, Mr. Schue tried and that was more than most of the faculty at McKinley did. And Kurt had to concede that Mr. Schue did care. He truly wanted them to discover the power of music and create a family that was a safe haven for them within the slushie soaked walls of McKinley.

Kurt groaned. Apologizing when he was so conflicted wouldn't be easy. He wondered if maybe Blaine was right and he should stick to his guns but that just didn't feel right to Kurt. He knew that if he didn't apologize things would fester and New Directions as a whole would suffer for it but he also couldn't help feeling if he did apologize he would lose any ground that he had gained.

Kurt decided he'd give his brain a rest and try Blaine again. He took out his phone and dialed, hoping that Blaine picked up this time.

Blaine answered right before the call went to voicemail.

"Blaine! I'm so happy you picked up, I've been calling you-"

"Jesus Kurt, please don't yell," Blaine mumbled.

Kurt frowned. Blaine sounded terrible. "Are you...are you sick?" He asked in a quieter voice.

"You could say that," Blaine replied. "A friend of mine had a party last night and I didn't really pace myself well."

"Oh," Kurt said. He remembered his April Rhodes inspired flirtation with alcohol and grimaced. "I've been there. Are you drinking plenty of fluids? Have you eaten? Blaine, have you-"
Blaine gave a small smile. Kurt's concern was touching. "Kurt, this isn't my first hangover. I'm fine. I just need to sleep it off."

Kurt bit his lip. "Oh. I guess I should let you go then."

"Yeah but, call me tomorrow. I missed you this weekend and I want to try to squeeze in something, even if it's just a Sunday afternoon coffee date."

Kurt felt his heart hammer in his chest. "I missed you too. Why don't you call me when you wake up and we'll see what we can work out?"

"Sounds like a plan. Til tomorrow, Kurt."

"Til tomorrow, Blaine."

Once the line went dead, Kurt decided he wasn't going to spend Saturday night moisturizing alone. He quickly picked up his phone and dialed Mercedes.

"Cedes!" He said as soon as she picked up, "grab your gear, and get over here. Super Saturday Sleepover is in effect," Kurt announced.

Mercedes paused for just a minute. "Kurt, I was gonna go to the movies with Sam and Artie."

Kurt bit his lip. His father had never objected to his hosting impromptu sleepovers before but they had all involved girls. Kurt crossed his fingers and hoped he wasn't making a mistake. "Bring Sam, and go by and grab Artie too. I'll call Tina and invite her…and Mike."

"Ooh, we're doing the New Directions Edition of the Super Saturday Sleepover," Mercedes teased.

Kurt bit his lip. He hadn't really planned on inviting the others. He knew Sam would be fine with spending the night and Mike and Artie would at least be polite if they turned the invitation down but other than Brittany he couldn't imagine having the others over for a social occasion. He'd never hung out with Quinn or Santana outside of school and the last time Puck had been at his house the delinquent had been nailing his lawn furniture to his roof. Kurt wasn't sure he wanted to face the potential rejection of the Cheerios or Puck's no doubt homophobic remarks but on the other hand he had to admit having everyone in one place where they weren't at each other's throats might be a good thing. "Absolutely, so you make sure you three get over here and I'll call Quinn, Santana and Brittany."

"What about Puck, Finn and Rachel?" Mercedes asked.

Kurt paused. His good will extended only so far. "Rachel has never come to one of my sleepovers; I doubt she'd want to start now. Finn isn't exactly comfortable around me so I doubt spending the night in my room is something he'd want to do. And as far as Puck goes, 'Cedes he'd never voluntarily spend time with the school fairy."

Kurt heard shuffling on the phone, harsh whispers going back and forth and then suddenly Sam was on the line.

"Kurt, I couldn't help but overhear and I'm totally on board man, but I think you should at least make the effort to ask Finn, Rachel and Puck. You don't want to make it look like you excluded them," Sam said.

Kurt was quiet. Sam had a point; purposely excluding Finn, Puck and Rachel wouldn't do much to rebuild bridges but at the same time Finn and Rachel's presence might set some of the others off.
Kurt also acknowledged to himself that he was reluctant to ask them because they were three most likely to reject his invitation and rebuff would sting. Kurt took a deep breath and nodded, then felt foolish when he realized Sam couldn't see him. "Ok," he said quietly. "It's not like they'll come anyway. I don't know how to get in touch with Puck though."

"I'll call him," Sam said. "If he's in, we'll pick him up when we swing by and grab Artie."

"Make sure to tell him my dad's home and there's no booze," Kurt warned. Kurt figured if the fact that he was the gay kid wasn't enough to keep Puck away, parental supervision and no liquor certainly would be.

Sam laughed. "I'll make sure he knows."

Kurt and Sam hung up and Kurt quickly put in a call to Tina. She and Mike agreed to come and stop by and pick up some snacks. Kurt called Brittany, betting she would be with Santana and maybe Quinn as well. They were all together at Brittany's and despite some complaining on Santana's part, all three girls agreed to attend.

Kurt figured before he called Finn or Rachel he should warn his father. Burt visibly paled at the mention of boys but once Kurt explained it was just the glee club kids, Burt relaxed.

Kurt went into the kitchen and grabbed some popcorn and drinks before making his way back down to his room. He ordered a few pizzas and filled up the two air mattresses he had. Once that was done he realized he couldn't put off calling Rachel any longer and bit the bullet.

"Kurt," Rachel answered shortly.

"Rachel," Kurt replied. "I realize this is short notice but I was wondering if you had any plans for the evening."

"I'm with Finn. We're watching movies," Rachel announced.

"Well...actually, um this applies to Finn as well," Kurt started. "I'm throwing a bit of a spontaneous sleep over and everyone else in New Directions is coming so I thought I'd call and invite-"

"Oh Kurt," Rachel cut in suddenly. "Your transparent attempt to manipulate a way to spend time with Finn is both sad and misguided. I know that unrequited love is painful-"

"Rachel-"

"But you simply must move on and stop doing this to yourself. Finn-"

"Rachel-"

"-And I think that you'll agree that continuing to chase after-"

"RACHEL!" Kurt yelled.

"There's no need to yell, Kurt," Rachel sniffed, finally putting an end to her rant.

"I am honestly starting to wonder why you are so fixated on the idea that I still have feelings for Finn," Kurt sighed. "The sleepover isn't a plot to get Finn alone. I invited Mercedes but she'd made plans with Sam and Artie so I told her to bring Sam and they said they'd grab Artie on the way. Then we decided to call Tina and you know she and Mike are attached at the lip so those two were in, Sam called Puck—who I doubt is coming, and I called Quinn, Santana and Britt who all agreed to
come and since it seems like most of the glee club was coming it seemed only right to invite you and Finn," Kurt explained.

"Oh," Rachel said thoughtfully. "This could be a wonderful team building exercise. We could do trust falls. Wait one moment while I talk it over with Finn."

Kurt sighed as he heard Rachel furiously whispering to Finn. They talked back and forth for so long that Kurt was about to hang up when he heard Finn's voice loud and clear say, "...I can't sleep in his room..." But Kurt couldn't make out the rest of Finn's sentence.

Eventually Rachel returned to the line.

"While the invitation is greatly appreciated, Finn and I are going to continue with our planned activities for the evening," Rachel replied, sounding to Kurt's ears less than happy about it.

Kurt willed himself not to let his feelings be hurt. "Ok...have fun." He replied before hanging up.

Kurt didn't get a chance to brood for long before his doorbell rang. He raced upstairs and was greeted by the sight of Sam, Mercedes, and Artie grinning widely and carrying overnight bags.

Puck was with them.

"Sup," Puck said simply.

Kurt stared back dumbfounded.

"What?" Puck asked when he noticed Kurt was staring at him. "Puckasaurus doesn't miss a party, even if it's a lame, no liquor having Hummel party. Besides Sam promised there'd be food. So you gonna let us in or what?"

"Oh, uh, yeah." Kurt said, stepping back to allow them entry. "I ordered some pizza...it should be here soon. You and Sam help Artie down the stairs, 'Cedes will show where you to go. I'll just ah, grab some stuff from the kitchen."

Kurt gathered more snacks and was on his way out of the kitchen when the doorbell rang again. "Dad, can you get that?" Kurt yelled.

Burt grunted and opened the door. After exchanging greetings, Quinn, Santana and Brittany entered the house.

"Hey ladies!" Kurt greeted warmly. "Sam, Mercedes, Artie and Puck are already downstairs."

"Puck came?" Santana asked.

"Yeah, he said Puckasaurus never misses a party," Kurt replied.

"He does know your dad will shoot him if he tries to unleash Puckzilla, right?" Quinn asked.

Kurt smiled. "No, no he doesn't. And I'm not saying a word."

The quartet dissolved into giggles and made their way to Kurt's room. Sam and Artie were already going through Kurt's movie collection, Puck was exploring Kurt's video games and Mercedes had already changed into her PJ's.

"Hey losers," Santana said, sauntering into the room and sitting down next to Puck on Kurt's bed.
"Hello Satan," Artie replied, smiling as Brittany crossed the room to sit on his lap. Quinn sat down next to Mercedes and Kurt distributed snacks.

A few minutes went by and they argued about what movie to watch before settling on watching all four *Child's Play* movies. Mike and Tina showed up just before the pizza did and everyone took turns going into Kurt's bathroom to change. Midway through the first movie, Santana hit Kurt on the knee.

"Where are Frankenteen and his bride?"

"Yeah, where is Finn?" Puck asked

"They ah, they already plans. This was kind of last minute," Kurt explained.

Sam frowned and Kurt could have sworn he heard Puck mutter "dumbass" under his breath.

"Whatever. More pizza for the rest of us," Santana said as she reached for another slice.

Over the next few hours they made their way through three of the movies, with Sam and Puck giving running commentary and making everything seem so much funnier than it should.

"Hey Puck?"

"Yeah, Sam?"

"My name's Chucky."

"And I'll be your friend til the end."

"Oh my God," said Mercedes. "He's found a brain twin."

"Hidey ho!" Screamed Mike and Artie in unison.

"Have mercy on us all, it's contagious," Kurt moaned.

After *Child's Play* wrapped they started on the *Evil Dead* movies. Artie and Puck waxed poetic about the awesomeness of Bruce Campbell until Quinn loudly disagreed and a fight broke out about whether or not *Bubba Hotep* was a thing of cinematic genius. Sam recited word for word the evil incantations in the film which freaked out Mercedes and caused her to threaten to douse him with oil that had been blessed by her reverend. The ruckus only stopped when Brittany turned to Santana and asked in a small voice, "Did the tree just touch her special lady parts?"

"Um…" Santana stuttered.

There was silence for a beat and then Kurt cleared his throat. "You know, there's an Evil Dead musical. If we make it to Nationals maybe we can talk Schue into letting us go."

"Is the tree going to be there?" Brittany asked.

"No boo, the tree won't be there."

Brittany smiled and turned her attention back to picking out all the yellow M&M's in the candy bowl. Mike and Tina began making out in the corer, prompting Puck to holler out "Get some, Asian Persuasion!" which caused Tina to push Mike off of her and onto the floor. Everyone laughed and Mike turned six shades of red while Puck smirked.
"It ain't no fun if the homies can't have none," Artie cracked.

"Artie, you are a white boy from the 'burbs. Let it go," Mercedes sighed.

Artie smiled and shrugged. "Haters gone hate."

Mercedes threw a pillow at Artie, who threw one back and before anyone could blink there was a full on pillow fight taking place.

A few hours later, just as Kurt was about to pass out, Puck leaned up from his spot on the bed behind Santana and squeezed Kurt's thigh.

"Hey Hummel?"

"Yes Puck?" Kurt replied, sleepily.

"Finn and Rachel should have come. For a party with no booze, no sex and parental supervision… this didn't completely suck."

"Thanks Puck. Now go to sleep."

"I got an armful of Latina hotness. I'm not going to sleep."

"I swear to grilled cheesus I will cut off Puckzilla if he makes an appearance tonight," Kurt threatened lazily.

"Cockblock," Puck volleyed back.

"Man whore."

"If you two don't shut up and go to sleep I will rip out your vocal chords with my bare hands," Quinn griped.

"Sorry, Quinn." Kurt said, snuggling into the blonde.

Kurt fell asleep surrounded by empty pizza boxes, his friends and a feeling of complete contentment that not even skipping his nightly moisturizing routine could shake.
Chapter Eleven: All Apologies

Blaine had woken up Sunday morning looking forward to meeting Kurt for coffee but all his good feelings about the date went out the window the moment he'd gone into the dining hall for breakfast.

He had just taken a seat when Thad and Flint joined the Warblers at their table, giving Blaine twin looks of loathing.

"Tell me Blaine, are the rumors true?" Thad asked without preamble.

"What rumors?" Blaine asked, taking a sip of his coffee.

"That you're off the market," Thad said, faking concern. "According to several people who were there during Jeff's party you were not your usual 'friendly' self. Those in the know seem to think your latest companion has somehow managed to tame the wild beast."

"Dominic said you didn't even try to hook up," Flint scoffed. "You barely know this kid and he's got your balls in a vice."

Something wrong and uncomfortable twisted in Blaine's gut. Even though he knew he was being baited he couldn't stop the irritation that rolled through him at the implication that Kurt, and not he, was in control. He'd known his behavior at Jeff's party was far below his normal level of indulgence, but he'd allowed himself to believe it was because he was simply disinterested in any of the potential conquests that were there. Having Thad of all people force Blaine to admit to himself that it had been the thought of Kurt that had held him back was an unwelcome and unwanted dose of reality.

"Really Thad? Repeating idle gossip? How Perez Hilton of you," Blaine sneered, determined not to let the other boys see how affected he was by their revelations.

"It's true though isn't it? The little boy in the bondage shorts has you all tied up, literally and
figuratively doesn't he?" Flint asked, something cold and unreadable flashing across his face.

Blaine finished his coffee. He smirked at Flint before getting up from the table. "Jealousy doesn't look good on you, Flint. It doesn't fit you nearly as well as your usual cloak of inadequacy."

"Defensive much, Anderson?"

"No Thad, just finished keeping company with those who are beneath me," Blaine said before smiling at the other boy. "By the way, speaking of Jeff's party, how did Natalie enjoy it?" he asked, referring to Thad's younger sister.

Thad's face clouded over and he scowled up at Blaine. "My sister was at a friend's sleepover, not Sterling's unsavory gathering."

Blaine arched an eyebrow and shook his head. "Nooo," he said drawing out the word, "I guess you haven't heard, I can't say I'm surprised. I hate to be bearer of bad news," Blaine began in a tone that was in complete opposition to his words, "But Natalie was most definitely at Jeff's party. I wasn't sure it was her at first, bent over the pool table and taking it up the ass from Kiefer Sinclair but that video Kiefer posted on his Facebook wall cleared up my confusion. I guess she didn't want you to be the only internet sensation in the family."

Blaine had walked away before either boy could respond. He'd spent the rest of the day holed up in his room, avoiding Kurt's phone calls and thinking.

Everything about his situation with Kurt was new to Blaine. Blaine seduced; he didn't pursue. Seduction was easy; it was all surface level emotions, glossy grand gestures and base instincts. Pursuit was something else altogether. Pursuit was investing time and attention to going after someone who might end up rejecting you. Pursuit, even shallow ones, required a certain level of emotional involvement that Blaine had always shied away from before Kurt.

It shouldn't have come as the shock that it did when Blaine realized he'd already emotionally invested in Kurt far more than he ever intended to. When he'd seen the boy on the staircase his only goal had been to get Kurt into his bed, which Blaine still fully intended to do but more and more the goal was less about getting Kurt into his bed and more about keeping Kurt in his life.

Blaine forced himself to acknowledge that he hadn't hooked up with anyone at Jeff's party despite the numerous offers he'd received was because he knew it would make things more difficult with Kurt. While it was true they weren't official yet, Blaine knew that Kurt wasn't nearly as casual about sex as he was and he didn't want to do anything that would ruin his chances with the gorgeous countertenor.

The cold, hard truth was that despite Blaine's experience and manipulations, Kurt held a certain amount of power in their relationship and that was something that Blaine simply hadn't prepared himself to deal with. Blaine knew he could influence Kurt's behavior and he reveled in that awareness, but being forced to acknowledge that Kurt also held influence over him? Well that was just uncomfortable. It was uncomfortable, unfamiliar and unwanted. Kurt being emotionally vulnerable to Blaine was fine; Blaine being emotionally vulnerable to Kurt was, as far as Blaine was concerned, a disaster of epic proportions and not at all part of the plan.

Which is why when he heard his phone ringing and saw that it was Kurt calling, he let it go to voicemail despite their tentative plans for a coffee date. Blaine needed distance and time to decide if he was willing to get in any deeper with Kurt or if it would be best to cut his losses.

Kurt Hummel was far more dangerous to Blaine than Thad had ever been and Blaine needed to
decide just how willing he was to continue to play with fire.

Nine hours, four phone calls, three texts and two Facebook inquiries later, Kurt had stopped trying to contact him. One hour of silence was all it took for Blaine to reach the conclusion that he was just going to have to chance getting burned. Walking away wasn't an option.

Blaine also realized he had a made a tactical error by talking with Jeff on his Facebook wall during the same time he was avoiding Kurt's calls and messages. Kurt wasn't stupid; he'd know that Blaine had intentionally ignored him. Blaine groaned when he realized that Kurt was nothing if not a master of self preservation. Blaine knew that if Kurt decided he needed to protect himself from Blaine, the brunette would retreat so far back behind his emotional walls that Blaine would never be able to reach him.

Compounding Blaine's feelings of regret were the messages he'd read on Kurt's Facebook wall about a sleep over he'd apparently hosted for the members of New Directions. Blaine it appeared had unwittingly chosen the worst possible time to pull away from Kurt. It seemed he had put space between them at a time when Kurt was apparently bridging the gap between himself and his friends. The last thing Blaine wanted was for Kurt to strengthen his bond with New Directions anymore than he already had, especially if the ties that bound him to Blaine were fraying.

Blaine knew he had made a huge mistake where Kurt was concerned and he knew he had to move quickly on damage control. He contemplated sending Kurt flowers or some sort of gift but dismissed the ideas as quickly as they'd come. Kurt, Blaine mused, was a romantic at heart. It would take more than a cliché bouquet of roses or something shiny in a velvet box to make up for Blaine's misstep. Kurt wouldn't want something so impersonal or common and the boy deserved something that showed him special Blaine found him to be and conveyed Blaine's true remorse at his actions.

And if his apology served to bring Kurt closer to him well…then that was just a bonus.

Blaine smiled as a plan began to take shape. Kurt wanted romance and drama and Blaine wanted to make up any lost ground. Blaine would make sure they both got what they wanted.

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**Bang. Bang. Bang.** The sound of Wes's gavel reverberated off the walls of the practice room.

"This emergency meeting is called to order. Junior member Blaine Anderson, the floor is yours," Wes announced.

"Esteemed council, I'll be brief," Blaine started, making eye contact with each member of the group as he spoke, "Simply put, I made a mistake with someone who I'm coming to care a good deal for. Now, while I could simply tell them my feelings, I have another form of expression I'd like to use and I could use a little back up. This is why I'm asking to enlist the Warblers' help in serenading this individual…off campus."

The Warblers erupted. Members struggled to be heard over one another as the shock of such an out of the ordinary request washed over the group.

"I know what I'm asking is slightly…unusual," Blaine acknowledged as he struggled to be heard over the nervous chatter of his fellow Warblers.

Wes furiously banged his gavel. "The Warblers haven't performed in an informal setting since 1927 when the Spirit of St. Louis overshot the tarmac and plowed through seven Warblers during an impromptu rendition of *Welcome to Ohio, Lucky Lindy,*" Wes said, looking stunned.
"Why would we even consider doing what you're asking?" David asked, staring at Blaine, the unspoken please tell me you didn't mess up with Kurt written on his face.

"I firmly believe our reticence to perform in public nearly cost us a trip to regional's. We're becoming privileged porcelain birds," Blaine insisted, sending David a slightly pleading look of his own.

David gave Blaine a "bitch please" look of Kurt Hummel proportions and the Warblers exploded in denials and demands for an explanation.

"You mock us, sir," Thad accused, glaring daggers at Blaine while Wes banged his gavel and pointed it at all assembled as if were a high powered rifle.

"I will have order!" Wes snapped as he gestured with his gavel and dared anyone to oppose him.

"Gentlemen, if I may," Blaine began. "With respect, my point is that the Warblers are so concerned with image and tradition that sometimes I feel that we miss out on opportunities to step outside our comfort zones. Performing in front of a potentially hostile crowd will keep us loose and give us confidence."

"And where would this performance take place?" Wes asked

"Well Wesley," Blaine said with a slick grin, "That's where things get a bit tricky."

Kurt and Blaine hadn't met for coffee on Sunday. In fact, Kurt hadn't heard from the handsome Warbler at all since their brief conversation on Saturday. Kurt had called, texted, and in a moment of desperation he would take to the grave with him, even left messages on Blaine's Facebook wall. He'd been logged in, and having a conversation with some guy named Jeff so Kurt knew he'd gotten them…and ignored them. Kurt had noted with a twinge of jealousy that Jeff was, if possible, even blonder than Sam and extremely handsome. Kurt had turned the computer off and spent the day in a funk, only venturing up from the basement for food. By the time Monday rolled around Kurt was in a state of complete depression and harboring a slightly irrational dislike of blonde hair.

Kurt somehow managed to miracle his way through his morning classes and all the way to his lunch period without incident. He found Mercedes and Sam sitting at the gleeks usual table and slid into his regular seat next to Mercedes. He was mildly surprised when Finn and Rachel joined them but that was nothing compared his absolute shock at Puck claiming the seat next to him.

"Sup Kurt."

Everyone at the table stopped and stared at Puck.

"What?"

"You…are you aware that you just called me by my name?" Kurt asked.

"So?" Puck asked around a mouthful of his lunch before grimacing and pushing his tray away from him. "We've been going to school together since like, elementary. I know your name."

"Yeah but…dude," Finn said.

"What?" Puck demanded again.

"Nothing. Finn didn't mean anything by…just never mind. So uh, how was the rest of your weekend?" Kurt asked.
"Lame. Went home, went to sleep. Got up, ate, did a little gaming, slept again, got up and came to school. Yours?"

"Pretty much the same as yours, actually."

Finn was looking at the pair with a curious expression on his face, and Mercedes was regarding Puck with suspicion. Rachel took advantage of the silence to address Kurt.

"I hope there are no hard feelings concerning Finn and I choosing not to attend your last minute gathering this weekend."

Kurt opened his mouth to speak but was cut off by Sam. "You and Finn should have come. It was pretty stellar."

"Yeah dude, you missed out," Puck said, looking at Finn.

Finn's head snapped up. "You went?"

Puck nodded.

"I thought, I thought it was a sleepover though," Finn said.

"It was," Mike said. "Sam's right though. It was pretty stellar."

"Yeah, Kurt had the trifecta going: cheesy 80's horror movies, tons of free food, and hot babes," Artie said, nuzzling Brittany.

"So all of you went?" Rachel asked, looking pointedly at Finn.

"Yes Rachel, save Finn and yourself everyone attended," Kurt answered for the group.

Rachel harrumphed and crossed her arms after glaring at Finn again. Finn turned a rosy pink and started to speak when suddenly there was a strange humming sound. The sound seemed to magnify and then there was a sudden swarm of boys in uniforms coming from every nook and cranny harmonizing. Kurt's breath caught in his throat as he recognized Wes and David and realized what was happening.

It's the Warblers. The Warblers are here and they're singing. They're singing and they're coming my way. They're coming my way and-

Blaine.

Kurt's brain short circuited as he made eye contact with Blaine. Blaine winked at Kurt and began singing.

Well you've done done me and you bet I felt it

I tried to be chill but you're so hot that I melted

I fell right through the cracks

and now I'm trying to get back
Before the cool done run out

I'll be giving it my bestest

Nothing's going to stop me but divine intervention

I reckon its again my turn to win some or learn some
I won't hesitate no more, no more

It cannot wait, I'm yours

"Kurt!" Mercedes squeaked. "Is that him?"

Kurt nodded.

"Is that your dolphin, Kurtie?" Brittany asked?

"Wait? Those are the Garglers?" Puck asked

"Oh my God, they've invaded. This is Vocal Adrenaline 2.0, they're trying to psych us out and-," Rachel ranted

"Shut up, Stubbles. If you ruin this for Kurt I will falcon punch you in the throat," Santana hissed.

"And I'll help her," Quinn promised.

Kurt tuned out the drama going on around him and focused on Blaine, making his way towards him, serenading him, in public, unafraid and unashamed.

Well open up your mind and see like me

Open up your plans and damn you're free

Look into your heart and you'll find love love love love

Listen to the music of the moment people dance and sing, we're just one big family

It's our God-forsaken right to be loved loved loved loved loved
So I won't hesitate no more, no more
It cannot wait I'm sure
There's no need to complicate

Our time is short

This is our fate, I'm yours

"Gotta hand it to your boy Kurt this is player," Artie said.
"It's a trap," Rachel whispered. "He's Jesse with more sophistication and hair gel."
"Shut up, man hands," Santana snapped.
Blaine danced over to Kurt and hopped up on the table.
Do you want to, come on, scootch over closer dear

And I will nibble your ear
I've been spending way too long checking my tongue in the mirror

And bending over backwards just to try to see it clearer

But my breath fogged up the glass

And so I drew a new face and I laughed

I guess what I'll be saying is there ain't no better reason
To rid yourself of vanities and just go with the seasons
It's what we aim to do

Our name is our virtue

Kurt couldn't move and everyone at the table stopped fighting. Blaine hopped off the table and came around behind Kurt, pulling him up and into his arms. Blaine kissed Kurt on the forehead and Kurt stopped breathing.
But I won't hesitate no more, no more
It cannot wait, I'm yours

Well open up your mind and see like me

Open up your plans and damn you're free

Look into your heart and you'll find that the sky is yours

so please don't, please don't, please don't.

There's no need to complicate

'cause our time is short

This oh, this oh, this is our fate, I'm yours

As the song faded out Blaine drew Kurt into a bone crushing embrace. "I'm so sorry I didn't get in touch with you yesterday. I had some things to work out in my head but I swear it wasn't anything you did. I just, I just needed some time," He whispered in Kurt's ear.

"I was worried. I thought…I thought I did something wrong," Kurt whispered back.

"Kurt-

"You can't do this again," Kurt cut him off. "If you need space or time or whatever, say so. Don't disappear. Don't ignore me. You can't do that. I won't deal with that from you Blaine, not again."

"Not again," Blaine agreed.

Kurt drew back and realized that all of the Warblers and the members of New Directions were staring at them.

"So uh, this is Blaine," Kurt said weakly

"Nice to finally meet you, dude. Kurt says you're pretty cool," Sam said, rising and extending his hand.

"Kurt speaks highly of you as well," Blaine responded, shaking Sam's hand. "These are my friends. This is Wes, and that's David, the hyper active blond in the corner over there is Jeff and the guy with the dark hair trying to strangle Jeff with his tie is Nick…"

Blaine introduced each of the Warblers and Kurt introduced the New Directions members. When he got to Rachel he steeled himself for the inevitable confrontation.

"Speaking as the female lead and most dedicated member of New Directions, I feel the need to point out that this thinly veiled attempt at intimidation will not work. Nor will your nefarious plot to have your lead soloist seduce Kurt-"
"Excuse me?" David gawked, shocked at what he was hearing.

"Rachel-" Kurt started to speak but Wes spoke over him.

"Is that so? Well Ms. Berry, as lead council member for the Dalton Academy Warblers let me assure you that unlike William McKinley High School, Dalton holds its students to the highest standards in academic achievement and personal conduct," Wes stated, eyes blazing, his voice cutting like a knife.

"An action such as the one you have just accused us of would be a violation of the Dalton Honor Code and violations of that code result in an immediate suspension from school and expulsion from extracurricular activities. Seeing as how we met Kurt when your group sent him over to Dalton to spy on us, I think if accusations of nefarious plots and questionable moral character are going to be made, they should be coming from us. Wouldn't you agree?"

Rachel turned crimson. "Yes, well. I wasn't, I didn't-"

"You weren't what? Aware of the actions being taken by a club you claim to be the leader of? You weren't aware that underhanded and dishonest tactics were being employed by members of New Directions in an effort to better your chances against us?" David cut in.

"If that's the case Ms. Berry, perhaps you should step down as co-captain as your leadership skills clearly leave something to be desired," Blaine stated quietly.

Rachel closed her mouth and sat back in her seat.

"Damn, you shut up Berry. Can we keep you?" Santana said to Blaine, Wes and David.

"You can, but only if Kurt's willing to share," Blaine quipped.

"This one's mine, get your own Warbler, Santana," Kurt joked.

"I for one would love to have my very own Warbler," Quinn said as she fluttered her eyelashes at Thad.

"You're well on your way to acquiring one," Thad replied, slipping into the seat next to Quinn.

"Are you all dolphins?" Brittany asked Trent, who had sat next to her.

"No, I'm a human. I guess I'm also a bird too since I'm a Warbler. But I'm mostly a human," Trent replied seriously. "But I'm not a dolphin. It's a good thing too, because I don't like fish. If I were a dolphin I'd be hungry all the time."

"Do you like cheese?" Brittany asked him.

"Oh yes, I love cheese," Trent nodded.

"You should come on Fondue for Two and tell my audience all about being a human bird."

"How can I have fondue for two if there's only one of me?" Trent asked.

"Oh my God, there are two of them," Nick said, dropping into a seat beside Puck.

"Sup?"

"Not much. You gonna eat that?" Nick asked, eyeing Puck's plate.
"No I'm not. Partly because my throat is sore but mostly because I want to live. If you want it though feel free to help yourself, Gargler." Puck replied.

"It's Warbler and thanks Mr. T," Nick quipped. "So this is mystery meat. HA! I laugh in the face of danger," Nick said before taking a bite.

"You ate that? Gargler dude, you are badass," Puck responded.

Jeff sat next to Sam and Santana snickered. "Oh my God, it's blonde and blonder."

"Who's blonde and who's blonder?" David asked, sitting next to Santana.

"Pick one, it's not like there's a difference," Santana shrugged.

"If you look directly at the combined brightness of their hair, I think you'll be blinded," David said.

"Wanna see if the carpet matches the drapes?" Jeff asked Santana, winking at her.

"You. Me. The 'Stix and we'll see," Santana replied.

"You're on," Jeff replied, and then turned to Sam, "What's The 'Stix?" He whispered.

"Breadstix. It's a restaurant and pretty much the only decent place around here to eat. As long as you don't eat the breadsticks," Sam answered.

"If the breadsticks suck why is the place named after them?" Jeff muttered.

"One of the mysteries of the universe man," Sam answered.

"Your performance was quite good," Rachel said to Blaine giving him a small smile.

"It's an olive branch, Blaine. Take it quickly before she yanks it back," Kurt whispered.

"Thank you," Blaine said sincerely. "Your performance of Don't Rain on My Parade at last year's sectionals was inspired."

Rachel sat up a bit straighter and sent Blaine a smile. Finn narrowed his eyes and put his arm around Rachel. Blaine noticed the move and raised an eyebrow before laying his hand over Kurt's. Flint, sitting unnoticed next to Thad, drew his lips into a thin line and glared at the couple's linked hands and Finn scowled.

Blaine had planned on ignoring Finn completely but being in such close proximity to one of the people he held responsible for Kurt's assault, Blaine's desire for some measure of revenge proved too great a temptation. "So Finn," Blaine drawled. "Kurt's told me a bit about you. I have to say meeting you face to face, you aren't exactly what I expected. I'm actually a little disappointed."

"Disappointed how?" Finn asked.

Blaine shrugged. "I expected more. Kurt insists on maintaining a friendship with you despite the fact that you've nothing to deserve it, so I assumed that meant there was something exceptional about you, but after meeting you face to face, I can see now that I was wrong."

Kurt gasped and Finn gaped as the table went quiet.

"Blaine-," Kurt began but Blaine cut him off.
"It's just I expected someone worthy of Kurt's time and attention. I suppose your looks are passable, if a bit generic for my tastes but I just don't see what makes you so special that Kurt's willing to forgive you for the unforgivable. From where I'm sitting Finn, you're just a latent homophobe with a completely justified inferiority complex and woefully inadequate leadership qualities. I guess I'm just disappointed that at the end of the day you're terrifyingly average."

Finn's face turned red and Kurt's jaw dropped. "You can't call me average!" Finn yelled.

Blaine smirked and nodded. "My apologies Finn, I wasn't aware you were suffering from delusions of adequacy."

"Blaine," Kurt said softly, squeezing his hand. "Stop."

Blaine exhaled sharply and nodded, then pressed a quick kiss to Kurt's temple. "Sorry babe," he whispered.

Flint's mouth drew into a tight line and Finn glared at the couple as the others slowly began to drift back into their conversations.

Twenty minutes later Blaine looked at his watch and sighed. "I hate to cut this short, but we do need to get back to campus. I just wanted to let you know I was thinking of you and I'm sorry about my disappearing act," Blaine said.

"It's ok. Our lunch period is almost over anyway," Kurt said.

"I'll call you tonight. Maybe we can do something midweek. Make up coffee date?"

Kurt smiled but shook his head. "I can't promise anything. We have a crazy rehearsal schedule right now. Why don't we play it by ear?"

Blaine was disappointed but also found he enjoyed the fact that Kurt wouldn't drop everything to be at Blaine's beck and call. Kurt was proving to be just enough of a challenge that Blaine's interest was in no danger of waning.

Kurt was, once again, proving himself to be a departure from Blaine's usual.

"I understand. Why don't you give me a call if you get some free time? If not, how about the movies on Saturday?"

"That sounds perfect."

"Ok guys," Blaine announced," I'm afraid it's time for us to get going."

As the teens said their goodbye's to one another Kurt couldn't help but notice that Jeff and Santana, as well as Quinn and Thad exchanged numbers and Puck, Nick and Artie were talking animatedly.

"Blaine," Kurt said lowly. "I really like you, and I'm going to talk to Quinn about Thad because she deserves so much better, but I need you to know if the blonde wonder over there hurts Santana, I will hunt him down, pull his spine out through his throat and use it to strangle him. Are we clear?"

Blaine smiled. It was the second time he'd seen Kurt's protective side and he really loved seeing the strength beneath the vulnerability. "Thad's an ass. Tell the blonde she can do better. Jeff's a good guy…but he's not relationship material. If the brunette just wants to hook up he's her man. If she's about feelings and whatever Jeff's not that guy," he said honestly.
Kurt was quiet. "Santana's not usually one for feelings, although I suspect there's one notable exception. Regardless, if Jeff's as...laissez faire as you say, those two might be compatible," Kurt mused. "But the warning still stands."

"It's been duly noted," Blaine said, giving Kurt a quick kiss goodbye.

As the Warblers started to get ready to leave Kurt was surrounded by the girls.

"Kurt, that was the most romantic thing I've ever seen," Tina gushed.

"Who knew that you getting some man love would land me a date with a rich prep school hottie," Santana smirked.

"You did not tell me he was so cute," Mercedes squealed.

"'Cedes, I've had his picture in my locker since I met him," Kurt replied.

"Boy, you change locker decorations like girls change panties. I stopped paying attention last year," Mercedes scoffed.

Everyone laughed. Rachel left a scowling Finn long enough to sidle up to Kurt and link her arm through his. "While he was unforgivably rude to Finn, I acknowledge that he has valid reasons to be less than impressed with how the both of us have treated you recently," she said quietly. "I realize I may have been a bit hasty in my judgments and stated my initial opposition to your romantic liaison with a tad too much zeal, but...I'm happy for you Kurt. Blaine seems like a perfect gentleman and he's a reasonably talented singer as well. Of course, he doesn't have my stage presence-"

"Thank you Rachel," Kurt said, as he pulled her into a brief hug cutting her off. "I know that wasn't easy for you and that you sincerely mean that, so thank you."

As the New Directions walked the Warblers back to their vehicles, Blaine holding his hand and the happy hum of conversation flying around him, Kurt couldn't help but feel that perhaps things had turned a corner.

_A/N: You expected Somewhere Only We Know, didn't you? *Cartman voice* whateva, I do what I want :D

Serious though, the song in the fic is "I'm Yours" by Jason Mraz and the inspiration for the Warblers to perform it is based on the version the AMAZING, acapella group Straight No Chaser has of the song (they do a mash up of it with Somewhere Over The Rainbow) There's vids of them on Youtube performing it if you're curious to hear it._
Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

The Warblers speculate about Kurt and Blaine, Blaine and Wes have a heart to heart and Kurt and Finn have another confrontation

Chapter Notes

A/N: Sorry guys for not having the update up yesterday. I wasn't feeling well at all. To make up for it you get two chapter today :) I do want to thank you guys, as always for such a positive response to this fic. I appreciate it so much because I know my characterization of Blaine isn't everyone's cup of tea and I was super worried that people wouldn't like Undapper Blaine but you all seem to like it when our white knight plays a little dirty :) 

Warnings: Language, references to sex

Disclaimer: I do not own Glee. If I did my newest obsession (SebKlaine) would be SO ON. Is it weird that I ship Kurbastian and SebKlaine but not Seblaine? It's just Seblaine...me no gusta. Sebklaine and Kurbastian...all day, every day. Seblaine...NO ship for you. LOL.

Chapter Twelve: Two Steps Forward, Two Steps Back

"So that looked like it went well," David whispered to Nick as they drove home.

"It did seem like Blaine's latest conquest appreciated it," Nick remarked dryly.

David shot Nick a sidelong glance. "Technically, Kurt isn't a conquest yet."

"Come on, David. It's Blaine. Look at how he acted at Jeff's party. Every time I passed through the den he was playing Suck and Blow or Spin the Bottle, or something," Nick scoffed.

"Exactly man, look at how he acted at the party. Dude, when was the last time Blaine just played party games? He was way off his usual routine at that party," David argued.

"Yeah Nick. Maybe he cut loose a little," Jeff conceded from the backseat, "But he didn't hook up..."
with anyone that night. I know for a fact Alexander McCullough was throwing it at him and Blaine shut him down."

Nick raised an eyebrow. "He turned Alex down? He never turns Alex down."

"He did though. Blaine didn't even let him blow him," Jeff reported.

"I gotta admit Blaine keeping it PG-13 is pretty tame," Nick mused.

"Yeah, Blaine's definitely a triple xxx kind of guy," Jeff said. "Plus he's never used us for one of his stunts. It's usually pour on the charm, open up the wallet and they open up their-".

"Thank you, Jeff!" David cut in loudly. "We get it."

"What are you getting all uptight about? Aren't you all homoflexible and what not?" Jeff asked.

"Homo…Jeff, you should seriously thank God that you're pretty," David sighed.

"What? What did I say? You aren't completely straight, but you aren't completely gay or totally bi either. Hence, homoflexible," Jeff explained.

"How is the son of a politician so politically incorrect?" Nick wondered.

"It's a talent. I have a gift." Jeff explained.'

David laughed. "Yes you do Jeff, yes you do."

"So you think Blaine is serious about this Kurt kid?" Nick asked.

"For Kurt's sake I hope so," David said. "He's a good guy and he's going through some stuff. The last thing he needs is a broken heart on top of all the other crap."

"I am going on record right now. If you screw this kid over I had nothing to do with it and I want nothing to do with it," Wes said to Blaine as they drove back towards Westerville.

"Well, thank you for your overwhelming support," Blaine responded dryly.

"I mean it Blaine," Wes snapped. "I'm not fielding any three a.m. phone calls or decoding any mysterious Facebook statuses. I'm not handholding another of your distraught cast offs through their post break up breakdowns. I'm still cleaning up the mess you made with Christophe. I am officially retiring as your cleanup crew. I never should have let you talk me into dragging the Warblers into all this. Did you see what was going on? Jeff's already making plans to hook up with that brunette, Nick and that delinquent with the mohawk are talking about organizing a Gears of War Midnight Madness tournament with the guys from New Directions and some of the Warblers and Thad was macking on the hot blonde. And that Berry girl…I wanted to strangle her." Wes thought for a moment. "While the koala bear sweater was vaguely frightening, the shortness of her skirt did sort of make up for it."

Blaine cocked an eyebrow at Wes. "You've performed admirably in your duties as maintenance man, Wesley. Feel free to retire; I don't anticipate needing your services when it comes to Kurt. I'll get you a gold watch and everything," Blaine said dryly.


"That's a twenty thousand dollar watch Wesley."
"I've earned it," Wes repeated.

"You are a materialistic bastard, Wes. Just for that all your future birthday and Christmas presents will be contributions made in your name to local charities."

Wes nearly ran over the curb. "Oh fuck you," he snapped.

Blaine smiled. "In fact, I think I may sponsor some of those Feed the Children kids in your name."

"Blaine," Wes whined. "You know how I feel about charity."

Blaine laughed. "If you hate charity so much why are you thinking about banging Rachel Berry? It doesn't get much more charitable than that."

"I didn't say I wanted to bang her," Wes huffed. "But she's got good legs and a nice ass. I could work with that, personality aside."

"Unless you're secretly a giant killer, you might want to put Rachel on the Look, Lust but Do Not Touch list."

"Finn's not that tall," Wes protested. "Besides, I've been taking Tai Chi since I was three."

"Oh, well in that case wax on, Daniel-san. From the knees down he's all yours buddy."

"Again I say fuck you," Wes laughed. "Just let me remind you that Andre the Giant is practically related to Kurt and from the way he was glaring at you after your unleashing the verbal beast I don't think he'd mind going all WWE on you if you if things sour between you two."

"Finn and Kurt aren't particularly close," Blaine pointed out. "Kurt had a crush on him for awhile and though I don't have all the embarrassing details, I gather it got uncomfortable for everyone involved, even more so now that their parents are planning on Brady Bunching it."

"And that doesn't bother you?" Wes asked.

"What?"

"That Kurt had a crush on tall, dark and disapproving?"

"Not particularly, no." Blaine said slowly. "I have a feeling that it was just that-a crush. You know, kind of like you and your obsession with An-Li Kweag in eighth grade."

"Hey!" Wes protested, "I was going to marry that girl."

"And yet the second Callie Marques transferred in, you were all An-Li who?"

Wes frowned. "Callie possessed certain qualities that An-Li lacked-"

"You mean Callie had a huge rack and made out with you if you did her history homework for her whereas An-Li had barely developed and wouldn't let you get past hand holding."

"An-Li was clearly a starter girlfriend. Like a first house or a first wife," Wes said with conviction.

"Way to keep it classy, Wes."

"And fuck you for a third time. But come on Blaine, in all, where can this thing between you and Kurt even go?"
"What do you mean?"

"You're Blaine Anderson and he's the son of a mechanic. I don't know Kurt very well but he doesn't strike me as the type of guy that, you know, flings. And you know as well as I do that someone like Kurt can't be anything else for someone like you."

"Someone like Kurt?" Blaine asked quietly.

Wes sighed. "I know you think I'm a snob and maybe I am but I'm just being honest here, Blaine. I like him. Kurt seems like an okay guy. You want to fuck him? Fine, hit it like a vending machine with a stuck bag of chips, but anything more than casual and it gets complicated. Do you really want to subject Kurt to sitting at a table full of Thad's, all making passive aggressive remarks about his father being a "small business man" and his "blue collar" upbringing? Do you think he'd be comfortable at the club knowing everyone's gossiping about him, which you know will happen if you start seeing him in more public places than the Lima Bean? People are already talking, Blaine and after this public display of... affection or intent or whatever this was, it's only going to get the gossip machine going full throttle. Does Kurt even know who you are? Do you honestly think your father will approve-"

"My father and his approval are none of my concern," Blaine interrupted coldly. "Kurt and I aren't picking out china patterns, Wes. There's no reason to sound the alarm just yet."

Wes noticed that Blaine had completely avoided answering his questions. "So you haven't told him about being a mini mogul yet?"

"He knows I have money Wes," Blaine snapped. "To his credit he's never asked. He assumes its family money and he's not wrong."

"So you're deliberately misleading him, again?"

"What would you have me do, Wes? Take him on the company tour? Let him sit in on a board meeting? Gift him with some fucking stock?"

"Look, I get it. Kurt's the first person I've met in forever who didn't get the glint of recognition in their eye when I introduced myself. He treated David and I like regular guys. I understand that as much as it sucks for me to have to wonder about people's motivations for being decent to me, it's ten times harder for you. I get the keys to the kingdom someday, but you're lord of the manor right now. And given your parents situation... I get the appeal of someone like Kurt. Kurt likes Blaine, just Blaine. You can relax and just be with him and not have to worry that he's suddenly going to "remember" his father's got a wonderful business opportunity or drop a million hints about why your families would merge perfectly together. I understand where you're coming from man but the reality of the situation is that, as much as you enjoy Kurt treating you like you're a regular guy, you aren't. You're Blaine Anderson and anyone who gets involved with you on more than a casual level needs to know what that means."

"If we reach a point where he needs to know, I'll tell him," Blaine stated.

"If his friends get close to your friends, you might not get the chance," Wes pointed out.

Blaine's face blanked out and Wes knew that meant the conversation was over. Wes sighed and gave Blaine one last look. "Just tread carefully, Blaine. There are other people getting involved. If this blows up, there's potential for some collateral damage and I'm hanging up my broom and dust pan."

Blaine shifted uncomfortably in his seat before he leaned over and turned the radio up. "I appreciate
the advice Wesley," he said settling back into his seat and closing his eyes.

Kurt walked into glee practice floating on a cloud. Blaine's surprise serenade had put Kurt in an incredible mood and he'd finished his school day in a state of bliss that not even a pop quiz in physics or a particularly hard locker check from Karofsky could penetrate.

He took his usual seat and settled in. Soon enough, Mercedes and Sam strolled in, followed by the Cheerios trio, with Artie, Tina and Mike at their heels, Rachel and Finn trailed behind them. Kurt had been explaining to Sam why he should expand his wardrobe past his usual stock of hoodies, t-shirts and jeans when suddenly Finn was there, looming over him.

"Yes?" Kurt asked, looking up at Finn.

"I think that Blaine guy is playing you," Finn said without preamble.

"Excuse me?" Kurt said, shocked at the bluntness and that the accusation was coming from Finn of all people.

"He's totally a shorter Jesse St. James," Finn declared.

"Boy, what the hell is your major malfunction?" Mercedes snapped. "Blaine's been nothing but good to Kurt."

"He had his club drive over an hour to sing to Kurt, knowing they were going into hostile territory. That's pretty major," Tina said

"Jesse St. James changed schools-"

"He also joined our glee club. I don't see any fine prep school boys in here, do you?" Santana asked sarcastically.

"Finn…despite the fact that you two got off to an unpleasant start, I can only assume you're raising these doubts about Blaine out of concern and I appreciate it-"

"Of course I'm concerned! We lost last year because of Jesse St. Stupid playing with Rachel's head and this year here you are doing the same thing!"

"It's completely different!" Kurt yelled. "Jesse sought out Rachel, he planned every step of the way to use her, to hurt her and destroy us. Blaine's done none of that. We met because I was the one spying on him-"

"Yeah, and you don't find it funny that none of those guys seem to care about that?" Finn asked.

"Finn does have a point," Rachel said quietly. "And I couldn't help but notice that today several of Blaine's friends forged connections with members of our group."

"That's what I'm saying," Finn nodded. "That one guy was totally trying to get with Quinn, Puck and that one kid kept talking about hooking up on the PS3 for game tournaments and that blonde guy asked out Santana and Brittney invited that guy she was talking to on Fondue for Two. It's like an invasion."

"Trent's a human bird," Brittney said absently.

"No one is invading anything," Quinn said rolling her eyes. "Thad and I didn't even discuss the competition or our respective clubs. Some of us have lives that don't revolve around show choir," she
added, looking pointedly at Rachel.

"Be that as it may," Rachel said primly, "perhaps an appropriate compromise would be to table our new associations until after sectionals and then-"

"No." Kurt said firmly. "I like Blaine, he likes me, and I'm going to see him as often as I like, when I like, and I don't really care who has a problem with it."

"Thad is taking me to dinner Saturday night and I plan on having a fabulous time," Quinn added. Santana shrugged. "Blondie's cute and it's a free meal. I'm not about to settle for a Lima loser when I can upgrade."

"Dude, where's your loyalty?" Finn asked, as he narrowed his eyes at Kurt. "See, we're already fighting about them? How can you not see what's going on?" Finn yelled in frustration.

"The only thing I see, Finn Hudson is you being completely unreasonable and unsupportive!" Kurt yelled back.

"Kurt, Finn isn't being unsupportive, he's simply being-"

"He's being a giant sized cockblock," Santana said.

"Finn's being cautious," Rachel finished undaunted.

"Finn's being an ass," Quinn snapped.

"Agreed," Mercedes said, crossing her arms.

"Dude, the only person making a big deal out of this is you," Sam said to Finn. "There wouldn't be any fighting right now if you hadn't tried to tell Quinn, Kurt and Santana who they can and can't date."

"No offense String Bean, but Puck, Mike, Tina and I have already made plans to beat the pants off some Warblers this weekend on the PS3," Artie said.

"You see, Finn. No one else has a problem with this. As long as we don't talk about glee there's no conflict of interest." Kurt said.

"I don't care! It's a bad idea and we're gonna end up just like we were last year all because you're so lonely you hook up with the first guy that pays any attention to you!" Finn yelled.

Kurt sucked in a breath and narrowed his eyes at Finn. "My loneliness has led me to make some highly regrettable decisions," he said curtly. "The lowlight of which was convincing myself that I had feelings for you, based on nothing more than the fact that you didn't bully me as much as the rest of your friends. Blaine is a completely different situation and I don't have to justify him or us to you, and I won't. You don't have to like it Finn Hudson, but you damn well better learn to live with it."

"Look Kurt-"

"No, you look. You don't call the shots in my personal life and you don't call the shots in glee, contrary to what you seem to think. Go find someone else to be your bitch Finn, I'm not interested in the position."

"Kurt! That was uncalled for," Rachel said, seemingly scandalized.
"Oh shut up, Berry. It was plenty called for," Santana said.

"Only someone with as little class as you would think so," Rachel retorted.

"Me cago en tu puta madre," Santana spat, getting up from her seat. "Vete a coger por las guaretas!"

"Santana!" Mr. Schue yelled from the door. He had gone white as a ghost and dropped the handful of sheet music he’d brought into the room. "That's enough!"

Everyone turned to the teacher and started talking at once. Sam and Mike were holding Santana back from Rachel, who was simultaneously denying any responsibility for the drama playing out in the choir room and attempting to assign blame to anyone but herself and everyone else was taking sides and shouting to be heard over the fray.

"Quiet!" Mr. Schue yelled. "First, Santana, that language is...just don't say anything like that again. Not in class, not outside of class, just...don't," he finished weakly.

"Secondly, we are supposed to be a team. We have a competition coming up in a few weeks and you're attacking each other like a pack of wild dogs. We need to get back in the spirit of team work. Now, to that end we're going to be doing duets."

The students grumbled and began moving into groups of two when Mr. Schue banged loudly on top of the piano. "No. I want you to work with someone other than your usual partner."

"But Mr. Schue, Finn and I-"

"You and Finn will find other partners to work with, as will Tina and Mike, Brittney and Santana and Sam and Mercedes, and no that doesn't mean I want to see Kurt and Mercedes perform together either. We're a unit guys, we need to all be able to function with one another in any configuration."

Kurt bit his lip. Mike and Brittney had paired up, as had Artie and Santana and Quinn and Mercedes. He was about to open his mouth to ask Tina to duet with him when he felt a heavy hand on his shoulder.

"You owe me a song," Sam said with a smile. "What you say we do this thing?"

Kurt shot Sam a grateful smile while Tina snagged Finn. Rachel looked around and then marched up to Mr. Schue. "I am going to be forced to work with Puck-"

"Puck won't be here," Mr. Schue cut her off. "He got sent home after lunch. His mother just contacted the office and apparently he has got a bad case of tonsillitis. So it looks like you're going to be on your own." Mr. Schue began writing down the pairings and Rachel stomped back to her seat. "How am I supposed to do a duet alone?" She moaned.

"Kurt managed to do it," Mercedes said rolling her eyes as she spoke.

"And he was amazing," Quinn added smiling at Kurt.

"Look at it as an opportunity to be creative-like Kurt did," Mr. Schue said.

Rachel elbowed Finn who turned to Tina. "Rachel could take my-"

"To quote Mercedes, hell to the no." Tina said crossing her arms and pursing her lips.

Finn looked at Rachel, defeated and she got up and stormed out, Finn following behind.
"Oh yeah Mr. Schue, we're just one big, happy family," Tina quipped.

"We ought to change our name from New Directions to Dysfunctions Junction," Artie muttered.

A/N: I do not speak Spanish (which means I probably shouldn't try to write in Spanish lol) and totally apologize if I butchered Santana's rant but according to Google Translate (and my cousin Mahlia who may or may not be messing with me lol) Santana's insults to Rachel were:

Me cago en tu puta madre = I shit on your whore mother

Vete a coger por las guaretas = go take it up the ass
Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

Finn finds out change isn't always good. Kurt steps up while Finn falls back.

Chapter Thirteen: Come On Fallen Star

After what had to the most uncomfortable weekend he'd ever spent, between moving into Kurt's house, his mom and Burt being overly nice and listening to Rachel's complaints about not having a duet partner Finn walked into school anxious for a little normalcy. That was hope was quickly doused when he heard his name being yelled before he even entered the building.

"Hey Hudson, tell me the rumors aren't true man," Azimio said as he approached Finn at the entrance to the school.

"What rumors?" Finn asked, wrinkling his nose in confusion.

"That you up and moved into Fairytopia this weekend."

Finn felt cold dread travel down his spine and come around to pool sick and low in his stomach. "I… my, uh…my mom is dating his dad and-"

"Oh shit, so it's true? Damn Hudson, you realize what this means right?" Azimio said, leaning towards Finn with a predatory smile on his face.

"What?" Finn asked, the cold, sick feeling in his stomach curling into a hard lump, making him nervous and nauseous all at once.

"It means that your stock has dropped," Azimio said as he pulled back his arm preparing to throw his cherry red slushie all over Finn.

Finn closed his eyes waiting for the avalanche of ice to hit. It never did and when he cracked an eye open he was surprised to find he was staring at the inside of an umbrella.

"Hummel, you're a dead man," Azimio promised as he stalked off.

"And thus begins another award winning week at William McKinley High," Kurt quipped shaking off his umbrella and turning to Finn. "I'm sorry," he said softly. "I know that you aren't used to...this and I can't help but feel a little responsible."

Finn exhaled. He had almost been slushed. Finn had never been slushed. Hell, Finn used to be the one throwing the slushies. It wasn't fair. He hadn't done anything. He hadn't changed; he was still the same guy he was on Friday. It wasn't his fault that Kurt's dad and his mom fell in old people love and wanted to shack up.

He looked at Kurt. As much as he wanted someone to blame, Finn knew it wasn't Kurt's fault. Kurt had gone out of his way over the weekend to make Finn feel at home. He'd invited the guys from
Glee to come over and help Finn set up his room, and then allowed them to have an impromptu pizza party down in his basement room. Finn had to admit Kurt's gaming and home theater systems were sick and he was surprisingly...not girly. Sure he wasn't a jock and he'd never be mistaken for straight, but it hadn't been like hanging out with a girl. Kurt had played games and talked about sports (he wasn't a football fan but was surprisingly well versed in baseball) and had even dressed down a little. Finn had had a good time despite himself and the next day Kurt had made the most awesome breakfast Finn had ever had and only given him a bitch glare one time (which totally hadn't been Finn's fault, how was he supposed to know which towels were "for decorative purposes only", sheesh) and had even helped him write his American History paper.

Hanging out with Kurt over the weekend had reminded Finn of how much he'd legitimately enjoyed Kurt's company before he'd realized Kurt had a crush on him and things got weird. But Kurt hadn't given Finn any of those looks this past weekend. The only time Kurt had looked like that was when Blaine had called and he'd left to meet the other boy at the movies. Stupid Blaine, with his stupid blazer and his stupid hair gel making Kurt make stupid faces.

"It's not your fault, Kurt. Azimio's always been an ass," Finn shrugged. "You totally saved me so, thanks."

"You're welcome. I've had more experience than you do in anticipating the Monday morning Mckinley High greeting. I planned accordingly," Kurt said.

Finn frowned. He thought back to Kurt's mornings, specifically his Mondays. He remembered the dumpster tosses, the slushie facials, the name calling, and the threats. He remembered every time he participated or just watched and Finn wondered if that sick, cold feeling he'd had in his stomach when Azimio confronted him was what Kurt felt like every day.

As he followed Kurt into the building, Finn felt cold and sick all over again, but for a completely different reason.

Finn had hoped Azimio's interrupted slushie facial would be the worst thing that happened to him that day. He had been wrong.

Practice had been a nightmare. He'd been left wide open a number of times and taken some brutal hits. When he'd gotten to the locker room he found that his locker had been broken into and his clothes thrown in a urinal.

"Guys what the fuck!" Finn exploded.

"It's simple, Hudson," Karofsky stepped up. "You got your third strike. Strike one: joining homo explosion. Strike two: getting rid of the head Cheerio and taking up with that dwarf from homo explosion. Strike three: moving into Fairytopia and hanging out with Hummel."

Azimio stepped up beside Karofsky. "You're still our QB so we can't like, pound on you or anything. But something's gotta give, Hudson. You either quit Glee, cut Berry loose or shake Hummel."

Finn felt that nervous, nauseous feeling return. "You want me to quit glee or break up with Rachel?" He asked hollowly.

"Or get some distance from Hummel," Karofsky added.

"How can do that when we live in the same house!"

"Don't mean you have to hang with him at school. You two walked into school together this
morning and were all buddy buddy at lunch today," Karofsky growled.

Finn closed his eyes. He liked glee club. He liked singing, he liked dancing and he liked performing even if it wasn't the coolest thing. He also liked Rachel. She was smart and funny and didn't treat him like she was only with him because he was the quarterback or popular. He had a feeling that even if he started getting slushied and thrown in the dumpster and lost his letterman jacket Rachel would still like him and he'd never had that feeling about another girl.

Kurt. Finn liked Kurt too and now that he was pretty sure that Kurt didn't like him like that, he wasn't as freaked out by him.

But Finn also liked football. He liked being the quarterback and he liked leading the team and he liked being popular. He knew that Kurt was helping Sam out, tutoring him and that Kurt was crazy smart. Finn knew if the guys let him get hurt Sam could come in and take his place again. He knew that Kurt would help Sam keep his grades up too so that Finn might not ever get his place back.

Finn didn't want to give up football, Rachel, glee club or Kurt but if something had to go, Finn knew it had to be Kurt.

Besides, he could still hang out with him at home. He just had to keep it under wraps at school. Kurt was a smart guy, he'd understand that Finn was just doing what he had to do.

Finn didn't think that sick feeling would be going away anytime soon.

Kurt had no idea what had happened. Finn had gone from tentatively resurrecting their friendship to completely freezing him out overnight. Kurt hadn't expected things to be easy, but he didn't think they'd be this hard either.

Finn had come home from football practice on Monday a completely different person. He'd ignored Kurt at dinner and then shut himself up in his room for the remainder of the evening.

Finn had been like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde for the rest of the week. He'd virtually ignored Kurt at school, even going so far as to walk right past him being thrown in the dumpster by Azimio and Karofsky and then doing a complete one eighty and actively seeking out his company when they were at the Hudmel house.

Kurt was confused, resentful and more than a little angry and it was starting to bleed over into their home life and into New Directions.

Glee had turned into a nightmarish combination of tension and stress. Rachel had been campaigning rather loudly to get someone-anyone-to switch partners so that she didn't have to perform alone. Finn had gone, one by one, to everyone in the group and tried to lobby on her behalf but no one was willing to give up their partner. Finn had barely escaped with his life when he'd tried to suggest that Quinn or Mercedes work with Rachel. He'd known better than to approach Santana, but when he'd tried to convince Artie he was thoroughly turned down. Both Brittany and Mike refused and when he'd tried to switch with Rachel himself, Tina had gone to Mr. Schue and threatened to quit if he made her perform with Rachel.

Kurt had known it was only going to be a matter of time before Finn made it to Sam or himself but he hadn't expected Finn to try to guilt him into giving up his duet with Sam again.

"Kurt, I know you and Sam have gotten tight since he's dating Mercedes now but you can't do your duet with him."
Kurt counted to ten and then raised one perfectly arched brow at his former crush. "Is that right, Finn Hudson? And pray tell me, why exactly you've decided I can't perform with Sam this time?"

Finn shuffled uncomfortably. "Kurt, the team-"

"Oh fuck you and the football team!" Kurt exploded. "You want to let those Neanderthals dictate your personal life and control the decisions you make, you go right ahead. They don't control me, they don't get a say in what I do or who I do it with and to hell with you if you think they should."

Finn held up his hands in mock surrender. "Whoa, whoa dude. I'm not saying it's right, I'm just saying-"

"You're just saying the same thing you said last time. That I'm a predator who can't take no for an answer and I should stay away from straight boys because I make them uncomfortable and ruin their reputations. Well, again I say, fuck you Finn Hudson. I didn't prey on you, I liked you. And yeah, I pushed but no harder than anyone else who's crushed on you."

The words and the pain were pouring out and Kurt couldn't stop either of them. "What about Rachel and her pseudo stalking while you were dating Quinn? What about Molly Preston freshmen year? Remember when she made freaking banners begging you to go out with her? Or Alison Perkins when she had Toscana's deliver you lunch every day for a month, or Torrie Hamilton when she had the freaking singing telegram sent to homeroom? Torrie had a guy in sparkly pants and body glitter sing "Bedroom Boom" to you and you didn't bat an eye. Shana Sleaton showed up to third period in her mom's rat fur coat and stripper heels, then flashed you but I made you uncomfortable? Seriously Finn, fuck you."

"Oh fuck you, Kurt! I'm not gay and you have no idea what it's like to have someone with like, the wrong parts, trying to mack on you," Finn fired back.

"Actually I do," Kurt snapped. "Remember when Mercedes busted out my car windows? It was because she liked me and I rejected her and it hurt her feelings. So yeah, I know what it's like. I also know what it's like to man the fuck up and tell them thanks but no thanks, something you never did. You never once said to back off. You never once said you were uncomfortable. The closest you ever came was telling me you were straight, weeks before I ever even came out, and then proceeded to call me every time you needed help, hang out with me, lean on me, compliment me and get close to me even though at that point you obviously knew I had feelings for you. You never once told me I was stepping over a line with you and then you pulled the predatory gay card and it just wasn't fair Finn."

"You totally targeted me!"


"No, but that's different."

"No, it isn't. Finn, I liked you. Period. I wasn't trying to suck your soul dry or make you the star of your own personal Lifetime movie. I just liked you." Kurt's voice broke a bit on the end but he pushed past the lump in his throat and continued. "That's all. I just liked you."

"I didn't want you to. I didn't ask you to and I didn't…it wasn't cool man," Finn said, frustrated and angry.

"Well, thankfully for both of us my liking you is no longer an issue. Now get out of my room," Kurt snapped.
"I didn't want to hang out in here with you anyway!" Finn yelled, stomping back up the stairs.

Kurt threw himself down on his bed and stared up at the ceiling. He hated that Finn had the power to hurt his feelings and he hated that he'd let himself reveal how deeply Finn's words had affected him.

"Hey kiddo, you alright down here?" Burt Hummel's voice broke the stillness in the room.

"I'm fine dad," Kurt answered slowly.

"You don't sound fine and you don't look fine either," Burt pointed out gruffly, descending the basement steps to sit on the edge of Kurt's bed.

"Please, I don't want to talk about it," Kurt said, turning over and curling up into a ball.

Burt frowned down at his son and felt his heartstrings clench. He'd overheard enough of Finn and Kurt's argument to know that his son was hurting and he bore some inadvertent responsibility in that pain.

"Kurt...I heard you two. Now, I'm not gonna lecture you on the language," Burt gave a disapproving quirk of his lips, "but I heard something about uh, the "predatory gay" card being thrown out and I think we need to talk about that."

"What's to talk about? I got the message loud and clear: stay away from straight boys or you'll ruin their reputation or try to recruit them into the lifestyle of the love that dare not speak its name," Kurt said tiredly. "Really, I get it dad. I got it the first time you told me, I don't need the recap."

Burt stared at Kurt in shock. "Son, what in the world are you talking about? I have never and I would never tell you anything like that."

Kurt rolled over and looked at his father. "Dad, remember what you said when I told you about Finn telling me to give up my duet with Sam? You said-"

"I know what I said; I think the problem here is what you heard," Burt stated.

"Dad, can we not? Please?" Kurt said brokenly.

"Sorry kiddo. I think maybe we should have done this awhile ago, if what I heard earlier is any indication."

"Dad-"

"Kurt." Burt's tone left no room for negotiation. "Look, when this thing came about the first time, I had just gotten out of the hospital. I was...off balance and I think that what I said, what I meant and what you heard all got jumbled up somehow."

"Dad, I really don't see how that could be the case. I explained to you what was happening and you said that I was pushing Sam into performing with me because I liked him and to get used to going it alone until I met a guy wearing a feather boa and vomiting rainbows," Kurt sighed.

"Uh huh, and you took that to mean what?" Burt asked, ignoring his son's sarcasm.

"I took to mean exactly what it meant," Kurt snapped. "That I'm gay, Sam was straight and it's my responsibility to stay away from the straight guys because they'll be bullied for associating with me, being friends with them is off limits if I find them attractive and to get used to being alone until I graduate and get out of this hellhole or get really lucky and met another openly gay guy like myself."
Kurt smiled a little as he said the last line, thinking of Blaine and how lucky he had gotten to meet him.

Burt reached out and pulled Kurt tight against him. "Ok kid, we need to get a few things ironed out here. First things first, don't you dare take the responsibility for someone else's actions. Those kids that bully you and would then turn around and bully a guy for being friends with you, they are the ones who own their actions, not you. Their closed mindedness and hate, Kurt that's not your fault. It's not your fault that they feel that way, it's not your fault that they think that way and it's not your fault that they act on it. You understand me? You are not and never will be, responsible for them. Don't you dare carry their baggage for them. You got enough of your own. Own your crap and no one else's. You got me kid?"

"I got you, dad," Kurt said softly.

"Second, I never meant for you to think you can't have friends, Kurt. Gay, straight, bi or ah you know transgendered," Burt blushed but rushed to continue, "Attracted to them or not, if you treat each other with respect and enjoy each other's company that's all that matters to me. I was just…I just wanted to make sure you were being honest with yourself. I wanted to you to question your motivations because kid, at that time you were all over the place emotionally. You were soul crushingly lonely, you were worried about me, there was friction with you and your glee club friends and things weren't back to normal around here," Burt stated.

"I wanted you to be sure that you weren't heading towards heartbreak, Kurt. I wanted you to be sure about why you picked Sam and what you wanted from him, whether that was friendship, or something more. That's all it was, Kurt." Burt paused to look Kurt in the eyes. "When I said to get used to going at it alone, I was just trying to look out for you. Look, you may the only uh, out and proud, kid around here but I'll eat my hat if you're the only gay kid in Lima. I've always been afraid that you're gonna end up with someone who hides themselves and wants to hide you. I know being out isn't easy and I don't mean to sound judgmental, but damn it Kurt, you're my baby. I don't want you to have to lie or sneak around or be anybody's dirty little secret. So yeah, I want whoever you end up with to be out, maybe not uh, wearing feather boas and vomiting rainbows but at least comfortable enough with who they are to be honest about it."

Kurt looked up at his father. "So you didn't think I was some sort of creepy sexual deviant?"

"No. Kurt, not once, not ever did I think that about you. I could never think that about you," Burt said.

"Finn does," Kurt whispered.

"Well, Finn a good kid but he's not the sharpest knife in the drawer now is he?"

"Dad!" Kurt laughed.

Burt shrugged. "Anyway, you just keep your head up kid. And if I ever say something that hurts you like this…you tell me, Kurt. I'm your father. You're supposed to come to me with the important stuff, got it?"

"Got it dad."

"And son, give Finn some time. His priorities may be a bit mixed up right now, but I think you know as well as I do, he's a good person. Try not to have too many hard feelings, ok."

"Dad-"
"Remember son, none of this is easy for him. He's dealing with all the changes you are, plus having to give up his childhood home. I'm not saying to let him walk all over you, just to try to be tolerant if he makes some mistakes over the next few weeks."

"I'll try, dad," Kurt promised.

Burt figured he had better quit while he was ahead. He nodded at Kurt and made his way back up the stairs.

Friday's glee club practice was a disaster of epic proportions.

It had taken almost half an hour for Mr. Schue to get everyone settled and working. Kurt kept texting Blaine and comparing notes with Quinn and Santana, who were texting and sexting respectively, with Thad and Jeff. Brittney kept asking him if he could get any of the other bird boys to come on Fondue for Two and Sam and Mercedes were battling it out with Tina and Mike to see who could stay attached at the lips the longest.

Once Mr. Schue finally wrangled everyone into settling down with their assigned partners the chaos began anew. Rachel decided the best way for her to contribute was by critiquing everyone else's duets. Quinn had ultimately snapped when Rachel accused her of being flat on a note and had gone after the raven haired girl with Sam's guitar. Kurt and Mercedes had managed to talk Quinn down while Finn comforted Rachel, Sam rescued his guitar and Mr. Schue dismissed them all forty five minutes early mumbling about needing a drink and a vasectomy.

Kurt purposely waited for Finn, hoping to get a chance to talk to the taller teen before they got home and went their separate ways.

"Hey Finn, can I have a minute?" Kurt asked, once he saw his sort of step brother exit the choir room.

Finn took a quick look around and, seeing that the hall was empty, nodded. "Sure, what's on your mind?"

Kurt squared his shoulders. "It occurs to me that I may have been a bit harsh with you earlier this week."

"Yeah, you were sort of a bitch," Finn agreed.

"And you've been a jackass," Kurt fired back. "Finn," Kurt said tiredly, "I'm trying to apologize. If you want that apology, don't help anymore."

Finn nodded.

"Good. As I was saying, I may have been a bit harsh. I had been holding onto to a lot of hurt feelings for awhile and they kind of bubbled over," Kurt explained. "That isn't to say you were blameless or I didn't mean what I said, because you aren't and I did, but still I shouldn't have shouted at you."

"Ok," Finn said warily.

"And because my father has always told me actions speak louder than words, I wanted to get you something to show that I'm willing to try and I'm not holding anything against you."

"You got me a present? Sweet."
Kurt rolled his eyes. "Yes Finn, I got you a present. Now, I admit I had to rely on Sam's guidance but I think you'll appreciate it," Kurt said, pulling a package artfully ensconced in red and white wrapping paper from his bag.

Finn took the box and gingerly lifted the top. He peered inside and smiled when he saw an Ohio State throwback football jersey. "Oh cool. Thanks Kurt." Finn said sincerely.

"Finn," Kurt said laughing, "look at the jersey." Finn peered closer and he could see several autographed littering the jersey. "OH MY GOD, IT'S SIGNED BY THE WHOLE TEAM!" Finn yelled. He grabbed Kurt and pulled him into a tight embrace.

"Uh, well, not the whole team but most of them. I made sure it had the quarterback's signature though since that's your position. I was going to get a football, but Sam said-"

"Oh no, bro this is perfect." Finn said, beaming. "You didn't have to do this but man, I'm glad you did."

Kurt shook his head. "I swear you are five years old sometimes. I'm glad you like your present, Finn."

"Of course I like it. This is like, the best gift ever."

"Well, I'm pretty sure Carol giving you the gift of life gets that particular title but I'll humbly accept second," Kurt teased.

Finn and Kurt made their way down the hall and out the building. Finn looked around and noticed Karofsky glaring at him from the sidewalk. He quickly dropped out of step with Kurt.

"I ah, I forgot something in my locker," he lied.

"Oh. Did you want me to wait for you-"

"NO. No, you just go on home. I drove today anyway so...yeah. I'll see you at home though ok. We'll hit your PS3 and hang, ok?" Finn added, as he tried to push down the guilt he was feeling for pushing Kurt away after he'd done such an amazing thing for him.

Kurt was blissfully unaware of both Karofsky's presence and Finn's inner turmoil. "Sounds good to me. I'll see you at home then."

Kurt crossed the parking lot and got into his Navigator while Finn stood on the steps and watched him drive away. He locked eyes with Karofsky and noticed the angry red blush creeping across the other teen's face and neck. Finn tightened his grip on the jersey Kurt had given him and hurried to his car.

_A/N:_ I know you guys want some Klaine and I promise it's coming...but these chapters are important in setting up key parts of the plot. Just bear with me. And don't hate Finn too much. Remember I said Finn's going to go through some changes in this story...this is all part of that. There's no instant red shower curtain redemption in this fic...Finn's not going to "grand gesture" his way to maturity. It's going to be a (hopefully somewhat realistic) process for him to have some growth.
Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

Blaine's dreams reveal his innermost desire and a meeting with his godfather brings him crashing down to reality

Chapter Notes

So sorry for the delay in updating and I hope everyone had a happy Valentine's Day—or rocked it out for Single Awareness Day :P

Warning: Sexual Content, Language

Chapter Fourteen: Sweet Dreams and Inevitable Realities

Blaine took a moment to admire the view as he walked into his dorm room and saw Kurt standing in front of their window, looking out over the grounds. He kicked off his shoes and draped his blazer over his desk chair. Blaine smirked for a moment before he yanked off his Dalton tie, dropping it unceremoniously on the floor. He had his shirt three fourths of way unbuttoned by the time he reached his prey.

"See anything interesting?" Blaine asked, as he walked up behind him and pressed himself along Kurt's back.

"Not really, just admiring the view," Kurt teased as he shot Blaine an appraising glance before turning back to the window and leaning back into Blaine's arms.

"So am I," Blaine whispered, and tightened his embrace. "I missed you," Blaine murmured as he kissed along the back of Kurt's neck, his voice roughened with desire.

"Did you now?" Kurt questioned, dipping his head forward to expose more of his neck to Blaine's lips.

"Mmm hmm," Blaine chuckled. He slid a hand up Kurt's chest and began popping the buttons on his dress shirt. "I could tell you how much, but I really would rather show you."

Kurt shivered against him and his ass pushed back into Blaine's groin, just a barely there touch but enough to convey his approval. "Well, I am somewhat of a kinaesthetic learner."

"Really? I'm all about tactile learning myself," Blaine growled, as he finished unbuttoning Kurt's shirt and slipped it off his shoulders. "Fuck, you're amazing," he groaned.

"You're not so bad yourself." Kurt returned. "Blaine, are you planning on taking me against the window? Because if that's the case you should know there's a hell of a game of ultimate Frisbee
going down on the front lawn and I'm pretty sure we'd scar Trent for life if he happened to look up."

"While exhibitionism has its merits," Blaine said, undoing Kurt's belt and the button on his slacks, "I'm inclined to keep you to myself."

Kurt whimpered but allowed Blaine to lead him over to their bed and push him down onto the mattress. Blaine let his hands glide up Kurt's legs and then pulled his pants and boxers off with one smooth motion.

"Have I told you lately what a good investment this Create a King converter kit was?" Kurt mumbled absently, as he fumbled with Blaine's belt. "Although I live in constant fear of the day my father pays us a "surprise" visit and finds out our two beds have become one."

Blaine dipped his head and captured Kurt's mouth. "For his sake and ours, Burt had better always call first," he breathed against Kurt's mouth when he finally released him. He gathered Kurt's hands in his and stretched him back over the mattress, reveling in feel of his body draped over Kurt's.

"I want your hands on the headboard. No touching yourself," he ordered softly.

Kurt arched a perfectly shaped brow but wrapped his hands around the headboard and shifted his legs apart. "Your wish is my command."

"You don't know how much I want you," Blaine breathed, as he leaned down and sucked at Kurt's collar bone. "I want to touch you, taste you, push inside you and make you come apart under me, for me, because of me. I've been thinking about this and you, all damn day."

Kurt moaned and writhed on the bed. "Blaine."

Blaine shimmied out of his own pants and boxers, but didn't bother to remove his shirt. He rubbed his erection against Kurt's and groaned at the friction. "I'm so glad it's Friday, because I'm going to fuck you all night long."

"Oh," Kurt breathed. "I don't know what I did to deserve this but I hope to continue doing it."

"You were you," Blaine replied and rolled his hips against Kurt. "You were you and you're so damn sexy." He leaned in and let his breath caress the shell of Kurt's ear. "And you're all mine."

Kurt let out a shaky breath. Blaine laughed, low and dirty and smirked when he saw Kurt start to move. Kurt's fingers started to uncurl from around the headboard but he quickly grasped it again when Blaine nipped a little sharply at his ear.

"I'm yours," Kurt whispered, his voice desperate and wrecked, hips bucking up against Blaine's.

Blaine nibbled his way down Kurt's neck and then bit and licked at his shoulder. "Don't ever forget it."

"Remind me," Kurt whispered and his eyes fluttered closed, as he rolled his hips again.

Blaine's teeth teased Kurt's nipple and at the same time he reached up and carded a hand through Kurt's hair. He gave a deliberate tug and Kurt's eyes flew open. "Not until you can be still," he said teasingly.

Kurt mock glared at Blaine, his eyes glazed over with lust and mischief. "You are a vicious cock tease Blaine Anderson and I'm never putting out for you again."
"You are a hungry little cock slut and you'd jump me before the week end was over," Blaine teased sliding his hands up Kurt's thighs and over his hips.

"Blaine," Kurt whined, "Please."

"I haven't had you since last night," Blaine whispered hotly, reaching over into the nightstand to retrieve the lube. "I'm enjoying you, now hush." He dragged his teeth over the bruise he'd sucked into Kurt's collarbone then licked a stripe up Kurt's inner thigh.

"Blaine," Kurt moaned.

Blaine flipped the cap on the lube and slicked himself up. He poured a generous amount of the liquid onto his fingers and massaged slow, teasing circles against Kurt's entrance before sliding a finger inside, gently working Kurt open.

Kurt moaned and shifted his hips ever so slightly when Blaine slid in a second finger. "Fuck," Kurt moaned, strung out and needy, enjoying the stretch of Blaine's fingers. Blaine added a third finger then began to scissor Kurt open, his movement becoming rougher and more demanding. Kurt bucked back against Blaine's hand.

"You like that, don't you baby? You like fucking yourself on my fingers? Does it feel good? You want more?" Blaine whispered his breath harsh and hot against Kurt's ear.

"Yes, please, yes." Kurt groaned. "Fuck me, please Blaine, fuck me now."

"Since you asked so nicely, I think I will." Blaine growled, pushing the tip of his cock against Kurt's hole then sliding home in one smooth stroke. He didn't give Kurt time to adjust before he pushed his hips forward; one hand curling around Kurt's thigh and raising it so it came over his hip. He gripped Kurt's hair with his other hand and bent his head back.

"You wanted me to fuck you," he stated, thrusting wildly into Kurt's body, "Is this what you wanted?" Blaine stared down at Kurt, his hazel eyes glittering with need and possession. "So tight, so hot, all mine."

"Yours, Blaine, just yours," Kurt gasped. Kurt's moans increased in volume until they morphed into a steady, high pitched beep.

The pulsating beep, beep, beep of his alarm wrenched Blaine from his dream. Blaine jerked awake, eyes wide and a little wild, staring at his ceiling. His heart hammered in his chest and his sheets were sticking to him. He felt lazy and languid, satisfied and stated, as if he'd just had sex. He felt as if he'd just had Kurt and it took a few moments for Blaine to get his breathing and his thoughts under control.

Blaine grimaced at the slickness cooling in his boxers. He sighed and dragged himself out of bed. He didn't have time to dwell on his dream; he was expected to be at his godfather's house for lunch in a few hours. He went into his bathroom and started the shower, thanking any and all available deities that he had a private en suite. After stripping the bed and throwing the sheets into the hamper he glanced at his clock and realized he needed to get a move on. He shuffled into the shower, trying to get his mind off thoughts of ravishing Kurt and get his head together for his meeting with Jasper.

No matter how many times he'd done it, pulling his car into the driveway at Devonwood always had the immediate effect of settling Blaine. Jasper's home was a classic Greek-revival style antebellum mansion surrounded by rolling green hills, walls of American Holly and bordered by its own private woods. It was a perfect reflection of the man himself: elegant and imposing, impressive yet inviting.
Blaine had always felt a sense of peace whenever he was at Devonwood, and as handed his keys to Antoine so that his jag could be parked in the garage he felt himself letting down his defenses and relaxing into the sensation of being home.

As he stepped into the entrance he took in the familiar high ceilings, curving oak staircase, shimmering crystal chandelier and smiled. His eyes immediately sought out the flower arrangement on the entrance hall table and noted it been changed to include Alstroemeria's, Gladiolus's and Larkspur's. Blaine sighed. Blaine had learned early on that his godfather's fascination with floriography could be used to his advantage. Forewarned after all, was forearmed. When the usual Dahlia's were missing from the hall table, Blaine knew whatever flowers that replaced them were indicative of his godfather's mood.

"Well my boy, what have you figured out?" Jasper Devereux's rich, sonorous baritone boomed out, the barest hint of his Romanian accent coloring the words.


"And the Larkspur?" Jasper asked, placing a hand on Blaine's shoulder.

Blaine tensed slightly and closed his eyes. "I'm guessing their implied meaning isn't levity or lightness," he said tightly.

"You would guess correctly," Jasper said. "They also symbolize fickleness and haughtiness."

Blaine gave his godfather a smile. "I suppose I should be grateful for the Larkspurs. Rumor has it you had a rather large bouquet of Lobelia, Tansies, Teasal's and Snapdragons delivered to Carter when he retired."

"You find my message inappropriate?"

"I think that depends on what you intended to say. Arrogance, neglect, hatred and deception is a lot to say with flowers though," Blaine replied.

"I doubt Carter understood the symbolism."

"No, I don't believe he did. However, I'm sure it wasn't lost on my mother," Blaine replied lightly. "Which is probably for the best since I suspect the bouquet was meant for her."

Jasper let out a booming laugh. "The older you get the harder it becomes to get anything by you."

Blaine chuckled, "Someone has been tutoring me on the fine arts of floriography and subtle insults since I was in pre-school."

"Yes, well. A young man of your standing should be able to come up with wittier insults than poopyhead and buttface," Jasper teased.

"I was four," Blaine defended. "And Thad is still a buttfaced poopyhead."

Jasper shook his head, "Your rivalry with Thaddeus becomes less amusing the older the two of you get. At this rate you boys will be side by side in your rockers battling for supremacy over the retirement home."

"Please," Blaine scoffed, "I'm going to live out my golden years surrounded by adoring friends and
family while Thad will have been such a rat bastard he'll be stuck wearing orange dayglow and picking up cans by the side of the highway. I have no doubt he'll have orchestrated his first Ponzi scheme by the time the time we graduate."

Jasper clapped Blaine on the shoulder. "Come dear boy, we have much to discuss."

Jasper and Blaine had lunch. They discussed Anderson International and Jasper went over the most pressing business with Blaine and informed him of a couple of overseas acquisitions he wanted to make. Blaine agreed with him on trying to buy out a sustainable textile manufacturer based in Oslo, but vetoed buying a substantial amount of stock in an information technology company. They went several rounds, but eventually compromised on making a much smaller stock purchase than Jasper had originally wanted.

"So my boy, have you figured out the Larkspurs?" Jasper asked during dessert.

Blaine gave his godfather a sheepish look. "Well, you had lunch with Bertrand Van Lucre this week so I can only assume they have something to do with my ending things with Christophe."

"Blaine," Jasper sighed, "You cannot continue down this path. Your bedroom might as well have a revolving door installed! I don't know what troubles me more: the fact that you cycle through these young men so quickly or that I never hear of them until the relationship is already over."

"I assure you, Unchi you haven't missed anyone special."

"That is just it! Blaine, you are special and you are sharing your time, your energy and yourself with these boys that mean so little to you! Has no one captured your attention?"

Blaine thought of Kurt and his lips involuntarily curled into a hint of a smile. Jasper's eyes narrowed and he leaned back in his seat. "So there is someone?"

Blaine toyed with his napkin. Blaine didn't think he could explain his feelings for Kurt to his godfather since he hardly understood them himself. "There's someone that I…I might be coming to care for," he answered carefully.

"And does he care for you?" Jasper asked kindly.

Blaine thought about the way Kurt defended him, smiled at him, his soft kisses and the way they spent hours texting and talking about nothing.

"He does," Blaine answered. "Kurt, that's his name Kurt Hummel, has been very good to me. David and Nick seem to think he could be good for me as well, provided I don't mess it up."

"Ah, I notice the conspicuous absence of Wesley in that sentence," Jasper stated.

"Wes," Blaine sighed, "is cautiously pessimistic."

Jasper frowned. Wes was one of Blaine's oldest friends and despite the boy's penchant for materialism, Jasper knew he only had Blaine's best interests at heart.

"Wesley doesn't approve of this Kurt?"

"It's not Kurt he disapproves of," Blaine snapped, "It's the fact that Kurt's father is a mechanic and not a CEO."

"So this young man is not…as privileged as you are?"
"Few people are," Blaine pointed out.

"But yet Wes is concerned?" Jasper pushed.

"Wes is always concerned. In this particular case he is concerned," Blaine ground out, "because Kurt isn't exactly aware of my circumstances. He's never asked and I've never volunteered the information. Wes feels that Kurt won't fit into this lifestyle. He doesn't think Kurt is suitable for anything other than a short term, casual affair and he's worried that there's been too much overlap in our lives already. He's afraid that when it ends a lot of other people are going to be hurt right along with Kurt and me."

Jasper was quiet for several long moments before he spoke again. "Do Wesley's concerns have merit?"

"I like Kurt and he likes me, tax brackets and other people be damned," Blaine answered defiantly. "I see," Jasper said.

"No, I don't think you do," Blaine fired back. "Kurt knows that I have money but it doesn't matter to him. He's the first guy I've spent time with who doesn't ask for anything. No hints about daddy's newest business opportunity or invitations to the club that just happen to coincide with events being covered by the society pages. When he graduates he wants to be on Broadway or become a designer, or the male version Anna Wintour depending on the day you talk to him, but he has dreams that have nothing to do with cotillions and social climbing or how he could contribute XYZ to Anderson International. I'm not Blaine Anderson when I'm with Kurt, I'm just Blaine."

Jasper reached across the table and grabbed Blaine's hand. "This boy seems to have made quite the impression on you."

Blaine shrugged. "I can honestly say that I've never been as invested in anyone as I am in Kurt, but given my track record I suppose that's not saying much. We're just getting to know each other and he's got some issues that he's working through."

Jasper's eyes narrowed. "What kind of issues?" He demanded curtly.

Blaine rolled his eyes, "Relax. Not those types of issues. As far as I know Kurt's not on the road to rehab. His issues are the result of other people's ignorance. He's having a hard time at his school. He's from Lima and it's not the most progressive place. Kurt's the only out kid at his school and he suffers because of it. It's bad and he's trying so hard to stay strong but I can see him break a little more every day. He's in actual physical danger, he's verbally and physically assaulted on an almost daily basis and no one does anything to help," Blaine spat bitterly.

Jasper's jaw tightened. "This boy's family does not intervene on his behalf?"

"His mother is dead and his father," Blaine paused, "his father isn't well. He had a heart attack a few months ago. Kurt told me he was in a coma for few days and they weren't sure if he'd pull through. He's still recovering and Kurt doesn't want to add to his stress."

"Quite the martyr your young man is."

"He's not," Blaine denied, "he isn't suffering in silence. His father doesn't know all the details but he's aware Kurt has had a hard time. Burt notwithstanding though, the extent of Kurt's struggles isn't a secret. Kurt's made complaints, other students have complained on his behalf, there's even a student blog that details the harassment but nothing's done. And he's not a shrinking violet. Kurt may not be able to strike back physically, at least not under most circumstances, but he doesn't just sit there and
Jasper took a sip of his wine and regarded Blaine. This young man, whoever he was, had captured his godson's attention, and Jasper suspected, had a rather good chance of capturing his heart as well. He made a mental note to have his private investigator look into Kurt. Jasper put down his wine glass and slowly nodded at Blaine. "You will bring him to dinner next week."

It wasn't a request.

Blaine set his jaw. "Unchi, Kurt and I are just getting to know each other and-

"Have you met his family?"

Blaine grit his teeth. "Yes, I had to meet his father before I could take him out on our first date and I've met his stepbrother and several of his friends."

"Your friends have met him?"

"Wes and David spoke to him the day we met and Nick and Jeff met him this week," Blaine admitted.

"Then he shall come to dinner and meet me as well." Jasper rose from the table, signifying the discussion was over. "Now, come. I want to show you the new Constantin Lecca I got this week. It's beautiful. I was thinking of hanging it in the East hall, the light there really is the best. As we walk you can tell me what else you've been up to. Have you made a decision about the polo team yet?"

Blaine dutifully rose to follow his godfather and wondered if Kurt was ready to meet Jasper Devereux or be formally introduced to Blaine Anderson.

A/N: yes I do have a bit of an obsession at the moment with Romania lol. Unchi means "Uncle" but I'm sure most of you figured that out for yourselves :P
Chapter 15

Chapter Summary

Blaine's friends help him see the light while Flint's darkness is revealed.

Chapter Notes

Warning: Sexual content, language, descriptions of violence, internalized homophobia

Disclaimer: I do not own Glee. If I did Kurt, Blaine and Sebastian would be doing it up Big Love Style and I'd get to see three very pretty boys doing very dirty things. I mean, uh um...I don't own Glee.

Chapter Fifteen: Explanations and Rationalizations

"Blaine's back! He can settle this for us," Wes cried as Blaine let himself into his room that evening. "Blaine, tell Nick my pick up line is better than his."

"No, Blaine, tell Wes I am the king of pick lines and he can't hope to compete," Nick interjected.

"Actually, Blaine tell them both to shut the hell up and so David and I can hear the game," Jeff moaned from his spot on Blaine's bed.

"Please," David begged, agreeing with Jeff.

"Breaking and entering is a crime," Blaine informed his friends as he dropped his jacket on his desk. "And any pick up lines are cheesy and the refuge of the uncharismatic and truly desperate."

"Yeah, but mine is so cheesy it's awesome," Wes announced.

"By awesome he means it's a guaranteed slap in the face and knee in the balls," Nick said. "Where as mine is cheesy enough to be considered cute, flirty and is therefore effective."

Blaine rolled his eyes and collapsed onto his bed next to Jeff. "I'm sure I'll regret this, but Wes, what's your line?"

"Ok, but keep in mind, it's all in the delivery." Wes cleared his throat, walked over to Blaine and put a hand on his thigh. "You have great legs," he murmured. "What time do they open?"

Blaine's jaw dropped. "This is why you can't keep a girlfriend. Wes, please tell me you have never actually said that to a woman."

"What's wrong with it?" Wes demanded. "It's funny. Women like men who can make them laugh."

"Oh she'll laugh all right," Blaine agreed, "she'll laugh as you writhe on the floor from the pain of having your balls ripped off. I swear to God Wes you need special classes."
Nick, Jeff and David began laughing and Wes scowled. "It's better than Nick's."

"I hope not," Blaine laughed. "C'mon Duval, hit me with your best shot."

Nick stood up and came over to Blaine. "I know it's rude to stare and I apologize," he said with a shy smile, "it's just that you look so much like my next girlfriend I can't help myself."

"Take me I'm yours!" Blaine yelled, launching himself at Nick and pretending to hump his leg.

"I hate you both," Wes pouted.

"Hey now," Blaine said coming over and patting Wes on the shoulder. "If I was like, drunk and it were super dark and I was really desperate, your line would have totally worked on me."

"Fuck. You. Sideways."

Blaine made a small humming noise and leered at Wes. "Can you please? I normally top but it's been awhile and you're just so manly with the way you hold that gavel I-oomph-" The pillow Wes had thrown hit Blaine square in the face. "I take it then you've rescinded the offer."

"Speaking of us getting laid," Jeff broke in, "you and Kurt should double with me and Santana. I can safely say boys, I've met the future ex-Mrs. Sterling."

"Jeff, there have been about seven future ex-Mrs. Sterling's this year alone. Thanks for the offer, but I don't think watching our friends suck each other's faces off is my or Kurt's idea of a good time," Blaine said.

"Oh. My. God," Nick said slowly, "you just totally copped to dating someone."

"Oh shit, beware the locusts and plagues of pestilence!" Jeff crowed.

"Laugh it up gentleman," Blaine snapped, pushing Jeff off his bed. "If you think that's funny, you'll love this: Jasper wants to meet Kurt."

There was suddenly dead silence in the room.

David rose and went to the door. He yanked it open and looked both ways down the hall. Jeff went to the closet and began poking around, while Wes checked under the beds and Nick explored the bathroom.

"What the hell are you guys-"

"Ashton?" Nick called.

"Nah, this has Tracy written all over it," David insisted.

"So which is it Blaine," Wes demanded. "Are we being punk'd or are we on Scare Tactics?"

"Or are we all having one huge shared delusion?" Jeff questioned.

"Because there's no way you are seriously bringing someone home to meet the parents," Nick finished.

Blaine sighed. "First, I don't know why I'm friends with you people," he began, "second Ashton Kutcher is so done with Punk'd. Third, Jasper is not one of my parents –thank God and fourth, if I was going to get you on Scare Tactics I'd totally exploit your collective irrational fear of the zombie
apocalypse."

"That's cold dude," David said.

"I'm hurt. I trusted you with my zombie fears and you'd use them for cheap, reality TV entertainment," Nick sniffed.

"Anyway," Blaine said loudly, "I'm not sure how to explain to Kurt why he's meeting my godfather and not my parents."

Jeff shrugged. "Just tell him your parents are out of the country. It's technically not a lie."

"Yeah, look there's no reason to drop all your baggage on his front step if you don't know where things are going with you two. I'm not saying to lie to the guy, I'm just saying tell him what you feel comfortable with him knowing at this point," Nick agreed.

"You've already met his dad and his friends so it's not like Kurt will think it's weird or anything that your family wants to meet him. If anything, I think a guy like Kurt will appreciate what that means," David mused.

"That's exactly the problem," Blaine exhaled. "Kurt, at his core, is an old fashioned kind of guy. He didn't really have a choice when it came to me meeting his dad. Burt wouldn't have let me take Kurt so far as the mailbox without a proper introduction. He didn't have a choice when it came to me meeting his friends either; I pretty much ambushed him at school. But me taking him to Devonwood, sitting him down for a formal dinner with Jasper, it's big. And I don't know if it's a step I want to take."

"Bullshit," Nick fake sneezed. "I've known you forever, Blaine. No one, not even JD can make you do something you really don't want to do. I know you never even mention anyone you're seeing to JD, yet you evidently saw fit to bring up Kurt."

David nodded, "You're taking Kurt to meet your godfather because on some level, you want them to meet. The why and what that means you need to figure out for yourself, but don't sit here and act like you have no choice and you're doing this under protest."

"Or try to sell us the wolf ticket that you met Burt because you had to," added Jeff. "You don't play meet the parents, Blaine. I remember when you were screwing Keenan Miller and when he 'accidently forgot' to tell you his parents were coming to visit they caught you two making out on his bed. You walked out without your pants AND without introducing yourself. You would have found a way to see Kurt without dealing with his father if you had really wanted to."

"You like the kid. You want JD to like him. It really is that simple," Nick shrugged.

Blaine shook his head at his friends. "It's nowhere near that simple."

"It's only as complicated as you insist on making it," Wes replied. "Despite my excellent advice to the contrary, you are, brace yourself, dating Kurt. When you date someone, this sort of thing is what you do, Blaine."

"I don't-"

"Dude, I threw the party of the century and you didn't hook up with anyone," Jeff said. "You're thisclose to being in a relationship," he smirked.

"For fucks sake Jeff, don't point that out to him!" Nick groaned. He turned and looked at Blaine.
"Don't freak out and fuck this up, dude."

Blaine stared, slaw jawed at his friends. "I'm not in a, ok, look maybe I'm dating Kurt like, normal dating, but we're not in a relationship. I don't...I can't...we aren't..." He trailed off helplessly.

"Relax Blaine," Wes rolled his eyes, "you're not planning a June wedding or anything. We're just saying what you and Kurt have going is the closest thing to a relationship we've seen you in."

Blaine blinked. He couldn't dispute the truth of what his friends were saying. "I care about him but-

"Then let that be enough for now," David cut him off. "Don't freak yourself out over analyzing it. You like him, he likes you, build from there. This is the first real connection I've seen you make since I met you man. Don't psych yourself out."

"He doesn't know me," Blaine confessed quietly. "He doesn't know about my inheritance, my business, my parents or my fucked up family tree. He has no idea who I am."

Jeff propped himself up on his elbows and looked at Blaine. "You're wrong," he said quietly. "Kurt is probably one of the very few people in your life who knows who you are. He doesn't hold you up the expectations and obligations your family name brings. He's not afraid to make fun of you when you geek out about something or have eargasms when you listen to those pretentious indie rock bands you like. Kurt's getting to know you, not your bio, not the person you're expected to be or the person people say you are, just you."

Blaine looked at his friend. Jeff was probably the only person in the room who truly understood what it meant to Blaine to have someone care for him and him alone. As the son of a US Senator, Jeff had encountered his fair share of people who saw him as the easiest way to get to his father. He'd learned the hard way that for far too many people he was Senator Sterling's son first and Jeff second. Blaine often felt like the reason he and Jeff became such fast friends was because they were two sides of the same coin.

"I don't want to lose that," Blaine confessed. "He's never, not once, asked about my family or our business or how much money I have. He doesn't care and I don't want him to start."

"If he's the person you think he is, then he won't." Wes announced.

"Just chillax man," Nick advised, "Kurt's gonna be freaking out enough for the both of you."

Blaine frowned at that. He didn't like the idea of anything upsetting Kurt. "At least he won't have to worry about Jasper shooting him."

"What?" Jeff asked, confused.

David laughed. "Kurt's dad is apparently like, one of the Sons of Anarchy or something. When Blaine went to pick Kurt up for their first date, Pa Hummel had his shotgun out in plain sight."

Nick laughed. "No fucking way. He is aware that Kurt isn't a girl, right?"

"Gender doesn't play a role in parental lunacy," Nick replied, "When Jennifer and I started dating my mom plucked out one of her hairs and put it in a plastic bag so she could have it drug tested."

"Your mom is like, Charlie Sheen levels of crazy, you know that right?" Jeff asked. "And this is coming from a guy who has to have mandatory background checks done on his friends."

"Yeah man, even Jeff didn't make me whizz in a cup," David said.
"I still say the Secret Service totally hacked my Facebook," Wes grumbled.

"I don't get Secret Service details, Wes," Jeff sighed.

"Then who were those guys who shadowed you for the first six months you were here?" Wes asked.

"Thing One and Thing Two were private security," Jeff explained. "Unless I have spectacularly bad karma and my dad runs for President or gets elected Speaker of the House or something like that, there's no Secret Service detail in my future."

"You don't want to be the First Kid?" David asked.

Jeff gave a bitter laugh. "The only thing vaguely appealing about that is envisioning the epic party I would throw. I'd totally bang some strippers, do some blow in the Oval Office and then post it to my Facebook wall."

"Why do feel like you aren't even kidding?" Nick asked. "Like you would actually have hookers and blow in the White House. Sometimes I think all this stuff you do is part of some plot you've cooked up to kill your parents. Like, if you freak them out badly enough they'll just stroke the hell out and drop dead."

"Hey," Jeff defended himself, "Somebody's gotta one up Clinton and it's not easy to top a Presidential blow job. Besides, I'm not trying to kill my parents. I have recently, with the help of my new therapist -who is banging by the way-discovered that I indulge in such inappropriate behavior as a means of bringing the family into a crisis state which in turn will force a closer connection."

There was silence and then Wes cleared his throat. "I think I speak for everyone here when I say: Family bonding, you're doing it wrong." Wes deadpanned.

"I didn't know that when you said you wanted to get revenge on Blaine, you really meant you wanted to sit in your room and mope like a little bitch," Flint said, throwing the video game controller he was holding to the ground.

Thad sighed. "I'm not moping, I'm planning. I realize someone with your impulse control issues may not be familiar with the concept but bringing Blaine down isn't going to be easy and is going to require more than a fist to the face," He paused and eyed Flint with obvious disdain, "Or a baseball bat to the femur."

Flint gave Thad a malicious smile. "It was to his kneecaps actually and it got my point across."

"If that point was that you are certifiably insane, yes it got your point across," Thad stated dryly.

Flint got up and stalked across the room. "Don't call me crazy," he said lowly, "I'm not crazy."

"Fine, you're not crazy." Thad replied flippantly, "cause it's totally sane to beat people with baseball bats, slash car tires and-"

"You have a point?" Flint cut in hotly.

"Nope," Thad replied, as he grabbed his phone off of his dresser and scrolled through his contacts, "But you might want to find a circle to sit in and talk about your feelings. I've known you since we were ten-you may not be crazy but you're sure as hell not normal and you never have been."

"Fuck you, Thad."
"You can't and _that_ my boy, is part of your problem," Thad replied.

"What the hell do you mean by that?" Flint demanded.

"I mean," Thad drawled, "that I've wanted to ask you if Prince Caspian is really as dreamy as he seems."

"Really Thad, you're throwing Narnia references at me now?" Flint said with a forced laugh. "That's just sad. I'm not gay."

"That's what Ricky Martin said in 2000, now twelve years later and he's puking rainbows and riding unicorns," Thad retorted.

"Shut up, Thad," Flint growled.

"It took me awhile to figure it out, why _you_ hate Blaine," Thad said steadily. "It's obvious why I dislike him, I've disliked him since we were two and the little bastard made me eat dirt. Since then he's made it his mission in life to screw me over and take things that should be mine. You though, you don't have a reason to hate him; he barely acknowledges your existence."

"So I can't dislike the guy simply because he's an arrogant, self serving, attention whore and a disgusting sexual deviant?" Flint snapped.

"You can," Thad conceded, "But you _don't_. You dislike the guy because he likes cock and unlike you can admit without losing everything. You dislike the guy because he gets to suck and fuck cute little twinks like Kurt with nary a second thought while you're forced to play it straight."

"That's a filthy fucking lie!" Flint roared.

"I saw you," Thad said quietly. "I saw you checking Kurt out when we ran into him and Blaine at the Lima Bean and then I saw you again, eye fucking the little twat when we were at McKinley."

"Thad-"

"I don't care where you put your dick, Flint. I don't care that you apparently missed the day in kindergarten when they explained that you can't just hit people because they make you angry and I don't care that you lack the mental acumen to add two and two and come up with four. What I care about is that none of your issues become an issue for me. I am going to deal with Blaine in my own time, in my own way and bring him to his knees. Now, I know that's an exciting visual for you but I'm going to need you to restrain yourself or it's never going to happen," Thad stated calmly.

Flint burned with rage. He longed to reach out and grab Thad by the throat and squeeze. His hands itched and he flexed his palms.

"Careful Flint, my daddy has more money than your daddy. I'm not some unfortunate son of the help. You put your hands on me and you'll end up in a sharing a cell with some large man named Bubba," Thad laughed and began composing a text message to Quinn, "although you'd probably like that. Run along now, Flint. I'm busy and you're boring me."

Flint turned on his heel and left the room, slamming the door behind him. He leaned against it and tried to get himself under control. He ached to go back in the room and beat Thad black and blue but he knew that he couldn't. Thad was right; he couldn't attack him outright. Thad's family was more influential than his and if he attacked him he wouldn't end up with a slap on the wrist this time.

Besides, he needed Thad to deal with Blaine. Flint's lips curled in a sneer as visions of Blaine swirled
in his head. Flint hated Blaine even more than Thad did, but not for the same reasons. Flint didn't hate Blaine because of who he was. Flint hated Blaine because of what he was and what he represented. He hated how Blaine Anderson walked around flaunting his abnormality as if he had nothing to be ashamed of. He hated how open Blaine was with his sexuality and his sexual conquests. He hated how easy everything was for Blaine and he hated how Blaine didn't deserve or appreciate it.

Most of all, he hated that he could still feel Blaine's hands ghosting across his body and the twin rivers of guilt and shame that poured through him every time he remembered the embarrassment of a morning after that occurred following their one night of shared passion.

"Blaine," Flint began hesitantly, "Last night was amazing and this morning was spectacular but I... I'm not gay. I'm not saying we can't you know, again—or that I don't want to see you anymore, because we can and I do. I just think it's best if we don't tell anyone we're seeing each other."

"Seeing each other?" Blaine repeated blankly. "Flint, you suck one hell of a cock and ride like a rodeo pro but I don't date. When and if I do decide to date it won't be a self hating closet case. If you're looking for a boyfriend, secret or otherwise you're looking in the wrong place. Don't worry, I have no interest in outing you-I don't care whether you're front and center at a pride parade, living in a glass closet or taking up residence in Narnia. I was horny, I wanted to fuck, and you let me. We're done here."

Watching Blaine walk away from him, leaving him a sweaty, semen covered mess had been the single most humiliating experience in Flint's life. He'd wanted to extract revenge, but he knew that if he went after Blaine himself everyone would want to know why and that was a secret that simply could not get out.

Thad and his ridiculous vendetta had offered him a way to get the vengeance he sought without putting himself on the line. Thad however, was taking far too long for Flint's liking and Blaine was becoming more insufferable by the day.

Flint was consumed by resentment as he remembered being forced to accompany Blaine to McKinley to serenade his latest conquest. It had been degrading to stand there and harmonize with the other Warblers while he watched the boy who had flat out rejected him so publicly pursue another. Flint had seethed inwardly at being forced to help Blaine seduce Kurt Hummel.

Kurt Hummel. Flint had to admit he saw the appeal. He was gorgeous, all pale skin and pink lips, looking like innocence personified. His personality however was anything but that of a wilting flower if his display at the Lima Bean was any indication. Seeing him with his friends at McKinley had revealed yet another side to the boy and Flint found that his initial jealousy and dislike quickly fading into something resembling fascination. It unnerved him to be drawn to another boy, the last thing he wanted a repeat of the fiasco that had happened with Blaine and Kurt was just so obviously gay, but there was something intriguing about Kurt's mix of vulnerability and strength that, much to Flint's chagrin, drew him in.

Plus he was Blaine's and the idea of taking something, anything from Blaine had its appeal.

Flint pushed himself off Thad's door and began to make his way down the hall, thoughts of Blaine slowly being replaced by thoughts of Kurt. Thad may be content to sit around on his hands but Flint was a man of action and he needed Blaine to begin suffering sooner, rather than later and Kurt Hummel was the key to making that happen.

A/N: I know, I know, I know...you want Klaine. It's coming, I promise :) In the meantime...how
many of you were surprised by Flint? Did anyone see that coming? Yes? No? I know...as if Kurt didn't have enough to worry about with Dave, now he's on Flint's radar...and between you and me- *whispers* Flint's the one I'd be worried about.
Chapter 16

Chapter Summary

Kurt spends some quality time with his girls, Rachel is a hot topic and he and Quinn strike a deal. Meanwhile Puck enlightens Finn and Kurt and Blaine (finally) prepare to spend some time together.

Chapter Notes

Chapter Warnings: Language, representation of homophobic attitudes and prejudices, offensive language, Puck and Finn logic.

Sorry for the delay in updating. It's been a CRAZY month.

Chapter Sixteen: Without You I'm Nothing

"Kurt, are you ever gonna put some color up on these white walls?" Mercedes asked, as she perched on the edge of Kurt's couch.

"First, the walls aren't white. They are Dior Grey and secondly, that is a color." Kurt replied from his spot in his hanging chair.

"Uh huh, whatever. These are some white walls, White Boy," Mercedes sniffed.

"We can't all use Technicolor explosion as a color palette," Kurt responded playfully.

Tina and Brittney laughed but quickly quieted when Mercedes glared at them. "My room is fabulous and so is the color palette! I like bright colors and patterns. They give a room personality."

"They certainly do and your room has several," Kurt quipped.

"Shut up," Mercedes grumbled as she threw a pillow at Kurt.

"Ok ladies, what it's on the agenda for this afternoon?" Kurt asked as he dodged the pillow.

"I say we all come up with a plan to kill Rachel and hide the body," Santana announced, as she stomped down the stairs.

"I second that," Quinn griped from behind her.

Kurt was momentarily stunned by the arrival of the two Cheerios. "Uh, hi?"

"Brittney invited us," Santana explained sitting next to the blond.

Quinn sat next to Mercedes and shrugged. "Santana invited me and I needed someplace where Rachel was guaranteed not to be. If she "accidentally" runs into me and happens to mention how we
should do our duet together one more time I am not going to be responsible for what I do."

"She asked you?" Tina blurted out, the shock evident in her voice.

"Man Hands has officially hit rock bottom," Santana sneered.

Quinn shot Santana a withering look. "She doesn't want to perform alone, which quite frankly makes no sense because she's always craving the spotlight."

"I feel compelled to point out that if avoiding Rachel was priority one my house probably isn't the safe haven it used to be now that Finn is living here," Kurt lamented.

"There's a chance she may show up here," Quinn acknowledged. "But it's a guarantee she's going to come by my place. She called me this morning to let me know she somehow made one too many batch of 'yummy vegan brownies' and would be bringing me by a few."

"Same here!" Everyone shouted in unison.

"She's bribing us with brownies, vegan brownies at that!" Mercedes groaned.

"They are pretty yummy," Kurt said absently.

"She doesn't even care who performs with her as long as she doesn't perform alone," Tina said. "You'd think she'd relish the chance to have all the attention on her and her alone."

"It's not that she wants to perform with any of us," Kurt explained, "It's just that she doesn't want for us to not want to perform with her. Crazypants as that may sound, I understand. Being unwanted isn't a pleasant feeling."

"Being picked last sucks whether it's Glee or P.E," Mercedes agreed.

"Don't suck and you don't get picked last," Santana shrugged. "I don't care that Berry's in a glass case of emotion. If she tries to steal my partner one more time I'm going to show her how we do it in Lima Heights Adjacent."

Kurt rolled his eyes. "Santana, your father is a plastic surgeon. You live two blocks away from Quinn's old house. Stop talking like you live in the projects."

"Hey, those two blocks put me adjacent to the projects."

"Whatever," Kurt laughed. "Rachel will burn herself out," he stopped and thought. "If she doesn't, I have duct tape and shovel."

The group descended into giggles and eventually turned on some music. "Ooh, I love PCD," squealed Mercedes. "Even if Nicole is a total swagger jacker."

"That's not exactly fair," Kurt said. "Nicole's spent her fair share of time in the background when she was in Eden's Crush. She paid her dues and she earned her spotlight."

"Like a certain male diva I know?" Quinn teased.

Kurt nodded. "Goodness knows I've swayed in the background long enough to have taken up permanent residence there."

"Well at least you're in good company. We're all swaying right alongside you," Santana remarked.
"Enough about glee club already. I want you to tell me about Blaine," Tina said.

"Yeah, how's it going with your sugar daddy?" Santana smirked.

"Blaine is not my sugar daddy!" Kurt squeaked.

"He should be. Remember Auntie Snix's dating rule number three Kurt: no romance without finance. And that boy," Santana smirked, "has plenty of finance."

"I'm not a gold digger Santana," Kurt said flatly. "I don't like Blaine because he has money, I like him because he's... Blaine. Even if he didn't come from money I'd still like him. He's smart and he's talented and he-"

"Yeah yeah, he cries and a puppy dies. I get it. Just remember, Prep School doesn't get into those designer jeans until he breaks some major bread," Santana interrupted.

Kurt rolled his eyes. "Santana, Blaine's in high school, just like us. He's not rich, his parents are. And whatever money they have has nothing to do with me and Blaine. I like him, not his wallet."

"No one's calling you a gold digger, baby boy. We're just saying he ain't no scrub and that's a good thing," Mercedes soothed.

"Look Kurt," Quinn said, tossing her hair. "You're not dating a Lima Loser. Make Blaine woo you because he can certainly afford to," Quinn shifted and gave a small smile. "You're worth it so make him treat you like you are. That's what I'm doing with Thad. Last night he took me to a lovely restaurant for dinner. We ate on the balcony and had the chef's tasting menu. I've never had such a romantic, elegant, date. That's what you deserve too."

Kurt bit his lip and looked at Quinn. "So you and Thad are getting along ok?"

Quinn nodded. "He's wonderful. He's cultured and sophisticated and so intelligent. After Finn I have to say it's nice to date someone who has more mature tastes."

"He's treating you well?" Kurt asked anxiously. He still didn't trust Thad and didn't want Quinn to end up hurt.

"So far so good," Quinn confirmed. She smoothed down her skirt and sighed. "I know you're worried, Kurt. Thad explained to me about his rivalry with Blaine and that he let his dislike of Blaine influence the way he treated you when you two first met, which he regrets by the way. He's truly sorry you got caught in the crossfire and hopes you give him a chance to make up your own mind about him and not base your opinion of him on Blaine's dislike and a bad first impression."

Kurt wanted to tell Quinn it wasn't Blaine's dislike of Thad but his own that had him worried for her but he could see that she genuinely liked him and as long as Quinn was happy then Kurt was going to try to be happy for her.

Even if that meant letting her be happy with a jackass.

"Just be careful. I admit Thad and Blaine's dislike for each other bothers me but all that matters is he treats you well," Kurt said.

"I feel the same way about you and Blaine," Quinn admitted.

"Why don't you both just agree to keep your eyes open and watch out for each other?" Tina asked.
"Yeah," Mercedes agreed, "Neither of you know either of those boys too well but you know each other. You may not be able to trust Thad and Blaine completely but you can trust each other."

Kurt held a hand to Quinn. "I promise to tell you if I hear about or see Thad doing anything shady," he said solemnly.

Quinn took Kurt's hand in hers. "I promise to do the same when it comes to Blaine."

"This shit right here is too Lifetime Movie of the Week for me," Santana announced. "I'm out. You guys coming?"

Quinn and Britney rose to follow Santana out. The girls said their goodbyes as they made their way up the stairs.

"Well now that the unholy trinity is gone what are we gonna do?" Mercedes asked.

Tina and Kurt exchanged a look. "Man candy marathon!" They both announced at the same time.

"I'm so down with that," Mercedes smirked. "For our first round we have the Battle of the Bloodsuckers. What will it be, True Blood or Vampire Diaries?"

"True Blood!" Tina and Kurt yelled.

"But…Ian Somerhalder," Mercedes whined.

"I see your Ian and raise you an Alexander Skarsgard, one very fine Allan Hyde and one smoking Joe Manganiello," Kurt countered.

"I accept your terms," Mercedes joked.

"I'll go grab some snacks, you ladies feel free to start without me."

Kurt made his way upstairs while Tina and Mercedes wrestled for control of the remote.

"So dude, are you still scared Kurt's gonna sneak into your room and sprinkle you with fairy dust?"

Puck asked as he spread out Finn's bed, watching Transformers.

Finn glared at Puck. "S'not funny. And since when do you call him Kurt?"

Puck shrugged. "You spoon a guy and things change."

Finn's eyes bugged out of his head. "You spooned Kurt? When? How? Why would you-"

"Don't stroke out, Finnocence! It was at his sleepover. Sam and Mercedes took one air mattress, Tina and Mike took the other and Britt and Artie claimed the pull out sofa. San, Quinn and I ended up in Kurt's bed and well…what I can say, the Puckasaurus is a cuddler," Puck said nonchalantly.

"Dude! You slept in his bed?" Finn whispered.

"It was either his bed or the floor. And Santana and Quinn were in the bed. Besides, the kids got like, magic sheets and the best mattress ever. I've been in a lot of beds and Kurt's definitely takes the top spot."

"You slept right beside him? Dude-"
"Grow a pair already, Hudson," Puck snapped. "You and I have slept in the same bed. You've crashed in the same bed as Mike before too. You shower and change every day in front of a locker room full of guys."

"None of them are gay. And none of them went all Fatal Attraction on me either," Finn interrupted.

Puck raised an eyebrow. "Come on man, Kurt's crush on you was minor league compared to some of the shit girls have done to get your attention and you know it. Sure it was uncomfortable but dude, by the time you caught on you had sent the kid so many mixed signals even I thought he had a shot. And seriously, let me get this straight," Puck said using airquotes, "You really think Kurt's the only gay guy in the entire school?"

Finn stared at Puck for a beat. "Uh…yeah."

Puck smiled and shook his head. "And this is why we call you Finnocence. Dude, Kurt may be the only gay guy at our school with the balls to actually come out of the closet, but trust me he's not the only there who likes dick."

Finn's mouth opened and closed several times before he was capable of making a sound. "W-who else?"

Puck shook his head. "You know, this time last year I would have gladly rocked your tiny little world but I guess I'm growing as a person or whatever the shit my counselor said cause I'm not gonna out anybody," Puck shook his head at Finn, "Your gaydar is like, nonexistent if you don't even have any suspicions though."

"Who am I supposed to suspect? Kurt's the only guy whose all Project Fashion and Broadway musical and manicures and-"

Puck stared at Finn. "Dude, Zachary Quinto is gay. Neil Patrick Harris is gay and Esera Tuaolo is gay. Are those dudes like, carbon copies of each other?" Finn shook his head and Puck continued, "Gay guys are just like straight guys Finn, no one is all the same. Seriously man, if you're gonna be living here you might want to educate yourself before you say some ignorant or homophobic shit in front of Kurt, Burt, or worse man your mom. Google is your friend, Hudson."

"Why do you know all this stuff?" Finn asked Puck. "Are you…uh…you said there were guys in the closet and—"

"This would be an example of ignorant shit you don't want to say," Puck sighed. "No, Finn I don't like dick. But Kurt's grown on me and…I just didn't get the gay thing," Puck confessed. "I mean tits and ass man…that shit rocks. Cock and balls, not so much. I didn't get why Kurt would pick a dude over a fine ass female but I figured being gay is a pretty big part of who Kurt is and if I wanted to understand him, I needed to understand it so I googled some shit, called some hotline numbers and learned some stuff. It helped, like a lot. Granted some of it went way over my head like being bi-gendered or heteronormativity but I got enough of it to know that Kurt's sexuality isn't like, a choice. Just like I don't think about the fact that I wanna bang Jessica Alba, I just do, he doesn't think about wanting to bang…whatever guy gets his motor running," Puck replied.

At Finn's dubious look Puck sighed and continued. "Dude seriously, he didn't like, decide he was gonna be gay. He just is. And it's not contagious. He's not gonna spread the gay or any of that crap you hear Azimio spouting in the locker room. He can't make us gay anymore than we can make him straight. Being gay is just one part of who Kurt is, just like being Jewish is just one part of who I am. It's an important part, but that's not like, all there is, you know? Kurt's more than the part of him that likes cock, just like Becky's more than just the girl with Down's or Mercedes is more than just the
black chick. You wouldn't define Artie by his wheels, don't define Kurt by his sexuality," Puck finished up, turning back to the movie. "Besides man, have you seen the way girls are around Kurt? Chicks love him man. Him being gay is good for us, man, more chicks for the rest of us."

*It's so easy for Puck to be all Team Gay, Finn thought bitterly. He didn't have Kurt crushing on him or have Azimio and Karofsky on his back, or the other guys on the team looking up to him. No one's giving him a hard time for living with Kurt or being friends with Kurt, I bet if they were he'd have just as hard a time as I do, Finn thought sourly.*

"Wow Noah, I was impressed right up until the end there. That was surprisingly deep," Kurt's voice broke in from his doorway interrupting Finn's thoughts. "I ah, wasn't spying. We needed snacks so I came to get some and heard my name and…I'm just a bit surprised. But pleasantly so."

Both Finn and Puck turned their heads to look at him. "The Puckster has hidden depths," Puck replied with a smirk.

"Evidently so," Kurt agreed softly making his way into the kitchen.

"But don't go spreading it around or I'll throw your ass back in the dumpster with the quickness. I gotta protect what's left of my rep you know," Puck yelled after him.

"And there's the brute I know and loathe," Kurt hollered back as he grabbed chips and soda from the kitchen.

"C'mon Little Spoon you know you love me."

"We agreed that never happened," Kurt said stalking back to across the room with his snacks in hand.

Puck laughed. "We did no such thing. You woke up, freaked out about my morning wood, pushed Quinn out of bed and ran into the bathroom while we all laughed our asses off."

"I do not recall such an incident and even if I did it would be very poor manners to bring it up, Noah."

"Damn Kurt, if you ever want to take the stick out of your ass I know what could replace it," Puck leered.

Kurt turned scarlet and fled down into the basement.

Puck laughed and then turned to face Finn. "Relax, dude. I get that you and Kurt have like, complicated history or whatever but the kid isn't half bad once you give him a chance." Puck raised an eyebrow at Finn then continued, "I seem to recall you telling me the same thing awhile back."

Finn just nodded and turned the movie up. He knew that Kurt was, under all that drama and ice, a really good guy. The problem was Karofsky, Azimio, the rest of the guys on the team and most of the guys in the school didn't know it and weren't willing to find out.

Finn figured that Puck didn't quite understand and Finn couldn't really blame him. Even though joining Glee and being sort of friends with the gleeks damaged Puck's reputation, he was still *Puck*. He had still slept with every hot Cheerio (and even the not so hot ones) and every lonely (and not so lonely) housewife in Lima. He was still in his super bad fight club and he was still the guy who went to juvie and lived to tell about it. Karofsky and Azimio couldn't touch Puck's rep and they knew it.

Finn was a different story. Finn was the guy who got cheated on by Quinn Fabray and thought a hot
tub got her pregnant. He was the guy who got replaced as QB and only got his spot back because Sam's grades slipped. Finn was the loser who joined "homo explosion" and then went from MVP to bench warmer when Jesse St. James showed up.

Finn had no clue who or what he'd be if he wasn't Finn Hudson, popular jock. Finn saw the way Kurt tensed, just for a second, when anyone brushed too closely to him in the hallway. He'd seen the way Rachel froze, for just an instant, whenever she caught sight of someone in the hall with a slushie. He'd watched Artie wheel himself into the first available classroom with a teacher in it at the sight of the hockey team. He'd seen Mercedes rip "loser" signs off her locker, pretending that her feelings didn't hurt.

Finn, as far as he'd fallen, was still popular. He still got to sit at the jock table. He was still coveted by Cheerios and respected by his teammates. Sure, he'd gotten a few jeers and jabs but he was still Finn Hudson and he'd do whatever he needed to protect that even if it meant keeping his distance, at least in public, from Kurt. Finn's reputation was all he had and he'd spent his entire life building it up. He didn't know who he'd be without his status and his popularity and as ashamed as he was to admit it, the fact was he was too afraid to find out.

Kurt was watching Godric and Eric say their goodbye's, discreetly trying to wipe away his tears when Teenage Dream began blaring from his cell phone.

Tina and Mercedes broke into twin grins but before either girl could grab his phone Kurt snatched it from the bedside dresser. "If you two say one word I will cut out your tongues," Kurt hissed before pressing the button to say hello.

"Hi Blaine," Tina and Mercedes yelled out in unison before collapsing into giggles.

You are dead, Kurt mouthed before taking a deep breath and saying hello himself.

"Hey," Kurt said softly.

"Hey babe," Blaine returned easily. "How's your weekend been so far?"

Kurt hummed, a happy warmth spreading through him at Blaine's term of endearment. " Mostly quiet. Tina, Mercedes and I are hanging out. I'm pretty sure though I'm going to be plotting their murders by the end of this phone call," Kurt said scowling at his two friends who were making kissy faces at him.

Blaine laughed and the rich sound sent a tingle down Kurt's spine. "Ah, there's my little Borgia. The idea of you plotting and scheming warms my heart."

Kurt snorted. "It's your Machiavellian influences," Kurt sniffed. "I'm a normally a pacifist."

"Good to know," Blaine responded saucily. "I like the idea of having the ability to influence you. I plan to use my evil influence to lead you into all kinds of temptation," he said lowering the pitch of his voice just a bit.

Kurt blushed at the implication in Blaine's tone. He felt his face heating up saw Tina and Mercedes casting amused glances his way and decided to change the subject before he embarrassed himself.

"So how was your lunch with your godfather," he asked, hoping Blaine wouldn't question the abrupt change in the direction of the conversation.

There was enough of a pause that Kurt worried he had made a misstep before Blaine answered. "It
was good," he said slowly.

Kurt could feel Blaine's hesitancy and panicked. Things were decidedly awkward and things between he and Blaine had never been awkward. Kurt was at a loss as to how to fix it because he was at a loss as to what was causing the conversation between them to be stilted and uncomfortable. "That's-that's nice," Kurt said but his uncertainty made the end of the statement rise up, turning it into a bit of a question.

"Kurt," Blaine sighed heavily. "I'm sorry. I know this feels weird and it's my fault. I-I had a good time with Jasper but something came up and um, shit." Blaine suddenly cursed.

Kurt's eyebrows rose. In all their interactions Blaine had never been anything but charming and in complete control. For him to be floundering, nervous even, was new.

"Blaine," Kurt broke in gently. "You know you can tell me anything. Or not tell me. Just...relax. I can feel how tense you are through the phone."

Kurt heard Blaine exhale slowly a few times as if he were gearing himself up to say something important. Kurt immediately flashed to the worst case scenario and braced himself for Blaine telling him that he didn't want to see him anymore.

He's going to break up with me before we were ever even officially together, Kurt thought bitterly.

"I honestly don't have any idea how to do this," Blaine said softly. "I've never done this before and-"

"Just say what you need to say," Kurt whispered, struggling to keep his voice even so that Tina and Mercedes didn't pick up on his distress.

"I ah...my uh...." Kurt heard Blaine take a deep, shuddering breath and prepared for his heart to be broken into tiny little pieces. "I told my godfather about you," Blaine said softly. "He's...he's important to me Kurt. I know we haven't talked much about my family but um, Jasper is pretty much the most important person in my life and he...he'd like to meet you."

Kurt felt as if his world had slid off of its axis. He had been preparing himself for Blaine's goodbye, steeling himself for yet another rejection so it took a moment for Blaine's words to fully sink in.

"Oh my God, Blaine!" Kurt exclaimed, causing Tina and Mercedes to look over at him curiously. He waved his hands and directed their attention back to the TV before lowering his voice and whispering into his phone, "I thought you were about to tell me you didn't want to see me anymore."

"Why the hell did you think that?" Blaine said his voice tinged with shock and a little hint of exasperation.

"Because you were being all quiet and weird," Kurt said, mentally rolling his eyes. "Honestly, Blaine you were acting like you were about to tell me seriously bad news."

"So you're okay with this?" Blaine asked. "Meeting Jasper, I mean."

Kurt felt his nerves jolt at the thought of what it might mean that Blaine's godfather wanted to meet him but didn't want to repeat his earlier mistake of jumping to conclusions. "I...are you okay with this?" He asked anxiously, suddenly realizing that Blaine had said his godfather wanted to meet Kurt, but not that he wanted Kurt to meet his godfather.

Blaine laughed a bit unsteadily. "I wasn't at first," he said quietly.
Kurt bit his lip and sucked in a shaky breath. "Oh," he said quietly. "That's…that's ok. I ah, I don't have to-"

"No Kurt, babe that's not what I meant," Blaine burst in quickly. "I am totally fucking this up, aren't I? I'm sorry babe. I want you meet Jasper, if I didn't I would have never brought it up."

Kurt furrowed his brows. "Then why are you being so spastic?"

"Because I've never done this kind of thing before Kurt," Blaine answered his voice a bit harsh. "My family life is complicated and I've never actually brought anyone home before. And before I do there are things you need to know, things I was hoping I'd have a little more time before you found out about them, about my family and about me."

Kurt pulled his knees up under his chin. "Bad things?"

"Some are and the rest depend entirely on how you take them," Blaine responded quietly.

"Oh," Kurt said, confused and intrigued. "Unless you're going to tell me you're in the witness protection program or something, I doubt there's anything you could tell me that would change how I feel about you," he said honestly.

"Oh yeah," Blaine asked, his voice taking on his usual cocky and confident tone. "How do you feel about me, babe?"

Kurt smiled despite the questions swirling around in his brain. "Wouldn't you like to know," he teased.

"I would actually," Blaine replied. "But not now. I know you're hanging out with your girls but can you ditch them and let me take you out? I really need to explain some things to you and its best done in person."

Kurt didn't even hesitate. Blaine was obviously having a hard time getting into things over the phone and he was hoping being able to see one another would calm both of them down. His eyes slid to Tina and Mercedes and he felt a small pang of guilt.

Kurt never thought he'd be the type to ditch his friends for a boy but…it wasn't just any boy. It was Blaine. Plus he knew Tina and Mercedes were genuinely happy for him. He was pretty sure they wouldn't be upset.

And if they were…well, he'd cross that bridge when he got to it.

"Of course," he agreed. "Just let me tell Tina and 'Cedes. Then I need to get dressed. Thank goodness you're so far away."

Blaine chuckled. "I'm actually about forty-five minutes away. I've been on my way to yours since you picked up."

Kurt sprang up in the bed and nearly fell over the edge, causing Mercedes to jump up quickly and reach out to steady him. "Thanks 'Cedes," Kurt said absently before glaring at his cell phone. "You're on your way? Blaine, you can't just show up unannounced! I'm not even dressed!"

"I just announced it and you have forty-three minutes and counting," Blaine interrupted.

"You are in so much trouble when you get here," Kurt grumbled as he stalked over to his closet.
"Gonna spank me?" Blaine asked suggestively.

"Maybe," Kurt purred back. "Goodness knows you deserve it."

"Kinky. I like it."

Kurt pulled down a pair of black and grey plaid skinny jeans, his black rag and bone kobra sweater, a white button up and his red tie before exiting the closet. "You would," he teased. "Now I need to get ready. And you better prepare yourself to take me someplace nice because you sir, are in the doghouse."


"Bye Blaine," Kurt said softly before hanging up.

When he exited the closet he was surprised to see Tina and Mercedes had turned off the television and were gathering up their bags and purses.

"Guys, I'm so sorry-"

"Kurt, it's fine," Tina cut him off interrupting his apology. "I've cut out on you guys plenty to hang out with Mike. I understand."

"Yeah," Mercedes chimed in. "I know since Sam and I got together I haven't exactly been around like I used to be. We're happy for you, Kurt. We're not gonna give you a hard time for wanting to spend time with your boy."

Kurt smiled at his friends and dropped his clothing on his bed before he walked them up the stairs. "Thanks guys. I promise I'll make it up to you."

"No need," Tina said as she kissed his cheek. "I'll see you Monday."

"I'll talk you tonight and get all the dirty details," Mercedes said playfully, hugging Kurt tightly.


"You and Sam have lost ya'lls minds. You know that, right." Mercedes snarked, rolling her eyes as she and Tina made her way to her car.

"Wandering down this road that we call life, Is what we're doin'! It's good to know I have friends that will always, stand by me! When this by meets world-" Kurt began singing loudly causing Mercedes to shake with laughter and Tina to give him a puzzled look they climbed into her car. "Lost. Yo. Damn. Mind!" Mercedes yelled back through her window before driving off.

Kurt giggled to himself before turning to go back into the house. He squared his shoulders and made his way to Finn's room and knocking on the door frame.

"I'm sorry to disturb you," Kurt began carefully, "but Blaine's coming to pick me up and I just wanted to ask if you could keep an ear out for the doorbell since I have to go get ready."

"Aww look Finn, our baby boy is all grown up and going to have a nooner," Puck teased, barely taking his eyes off the screen where Megan Fox was.

"Noah, must you be so crass? Never mind, I've known you since we were in second grade and the poem you recited to class was a literary masterpiece that went I'm so cool, when I sleep I don't drool and I'm so smart, I know beans make you fart," Kurt remembered, grimacing while Finn and Puck
chuckled and exchanged hi fives. "You two are cavemen and I give up any and all attempts at trying to teach you to be civilized. I am going to spend some time with my…um, Blaine. Just let him in, let me know when he gets here and please don't embarrass me okay?"

Finn grunted his assent and Kurt gave the boys a quick thank you before rushing downstairs to get ready. He only had thirty-eight minutes to make himself presentable.

A/N 2: Just as a head's up guys I have a Tumblr. You should totes follow me *gigglesnort* In all seriousness though, sometimes I post snippets of upcoming stories, other writing, and my anon is on so if you have questions or comments or anything you want to know but are too shy to say here can ask me there. The Suga Shack@Tumblr.com
Chapter 17

Chapter Summary

Finn acknowledges some ugly truths and then has it out with Blaine, Puck tries to warn Kurt, Blaine and Puck have a silent showdown and Kurt learns some of what Blaine's been hiding.

Chapter Notes

Sorry this took so long to get out but this is a really critical part of the story and I wanted to get it just right and my dog died last week so I've been super sad and my girls have been super sad and so writing kind of took a backseat. I'm still not completely satisfied with it but the more I tried to edit and "fix" things the more jumbled they became so I just kind of did the best I could, let it go and hope that you guys enjoy it. Blaine's a little more vulnerable in this chapter but I thought it fit and hopefully it won't seem too OOC for him. Title taken from the Placebo song "Every Me and Every You...it's the song played at the very beginning of the movie Cruel Intentions and it is awesome. You might notice I have used a ton of Placebo lyrics as titles for chapters...it's b/c they are pretty much my soundtrack for writing this story.

Chapter Warnings: Finn logic (that is a legit warning, people lol), representations of homophobia, language, mentions of drug use, underage drinking and promiscuity, language, mention of OC character death of a child and unbeta'd as usual so mistakes all belong to me.

Chapter Seventeen: Every Me and Every You

Finn's entire body tensed when the doorbell rang. He knew that Kurt had asked him to be nice but he didn't like Blaine. He thought that Kurt could do better and didn't think that Blaine was the type of guy that Kurt should date. It wasn't all about Kurt though and Finn was honest enough to admit part of his dislike of the other teen were for purely selfish reasons. He didn't like how most of his friends had essentially sided with Kurt and Blaine when Finn had suggested Kurt stop seeing the Warbler until after their competition. He didn't like how easily Blaine had seen through him or how cruel he'd been about exposing his insecurities and he didn't like that Blaine seemed to think Finn was stupid or beneath him or something.

In the back of his mind Finn also knew he didn't like Blaine because of what he represented: the possibility of Kurt and sex. Puck had been wrong when he'd accused Finn of being afraid of Kurt. Finn was uncomfortable, not afraid. He knew that Kurt wouldn't force anything on him and that even if he tried Finn was big enough to defend himself. He'd thrown Kurt into the dumpster enough times to know just the kind of size and weight advantage he had over his soon to be stepbrother.

The way Finn saw things Blaine brought two very real problems with him. The first was that he
increased the physical danger Kurt was in. Finn knew that guys like Azimio and Karofsky would see Kurt having a boyfriend as him "shoving his gay in their face". Finn knew they'd take personal offense and while Blaine was safely in Westerville and at his super expensive private school, Kurt would be the one being tortured and taking the risk of being jumped every time he walked out his front door. Finn didn't want to see Kurt get hurt.

The other problem was a bit harder to admit to. Kurt being gay had always been sort an abstract concept for Finn. Finn had known, even before he came out that Kurt was gay but as long as Kurt wasn't fixated on him he could sort of ignore it. Finn didn't really have to give too much thought to what Kurt being gay actually meant because at McKinley Kurt didn't have anybody to be gay with. Even if Puck was right and there were other gay guys there, Kurt was the only one who was out so he didn't have anyone to kiss or hold hands with or do…things with. Finn had sort of assumed that's how things would stay. He'd figured Kurt wouldn't have anyone to do things with until he went away to college and then it wouldn't matter. Finn had been counting on living Kurt being made easier by the knowledge that he wouldn't have to step out of his comfort zone and think about Kurt being with a guy actually doing things. Blaine's existence had pretty ruined that for him and Finn didn't know what to do with the idea that Kurt might be just as sexual and just as...guy like...as Puck or Mike.

It was weird, it was uncomfortable and Finn wasn't sure how to handle the new reality that was Kurt with a sort of boyfriend.

The bell rang again and Puck kicked his leg. "Get the door, Hudson. You leave his boy toy waiting on the porch and Kurt'll have kittens. I'll come with. I wanna get a better look at the dude anyway."

Finn started to ask why but instead just nodded and made his way downstairs. He really, really didn't want to open the door to Blaine and all the things that he brought with him but it appeared he had no choice.

Blaine tried to calm his nerves as he waited for Kurt to let him in. Blaine knew that their conversation would be a defining moment in his relationship with Kurt. He was going to open the door to his world and hope that Kurt cared for him enough to walk through it. The fact that, for the first time since they'd met, Kurt held all the power had Blaine more than a little off his game. He wasn't sure how he'd handle it if Kurt decided to cut him out of his life.

He heard the lock turning and schooled his features into one of his most charming smiles. The second the door opened and he found himself on the receiving end of a glare from Finn Hudson the smile quickly morphed into a glare of his own.

"Kurt's in his room. You can wait in here," Finn greeted him sullenly, as he reluctantly stepped back but not enough to actually allow Blaine entry into the house without having to squeeze by him.

Finn's unnecessarily hostile greeting snapped the tenuous control Blaine had been holding on his emotions.

"Color me impressed, you Jolly Green Jackass. I didn't know you were capable of walking upright and speaking in complete at the same time. Kurt must be rubbing off on you," Blaine smirked then continued, "Oops, I forgot. He's over you and that isn't a possibility anymore. Kurt has no interest in rubbing off on you at all. Is that why you have your extra large panties in a bunch?"

Finn turned beet red. "You…you…I could just…fuck you dude!" Finn sputtered.

Blaine laughed and shook his head. "Sorry Finn. Thanks for the offer buddy but you're just not my type."
Finn blanched when he realized how he'd phrased his earlier insult. "I didn't mean it like that. I don't want to fuck you. I'm not gay."

"Don't worry Finn," Blaine said easily, "I don't want you to fuck me either. But, between you and me, I think you might want to just a little. I mean, why else would be all up in my personal space right now, hmm?"

Finn's eyes bugged as he realized how he'd crowded Blaine back between the now closed door and his taller frame and tripped over his own feet in his haste to back away.

Blaine stepped over Finn on his way to sofa, laughing just loudly enough to ensure that the quarterback heard him.

"You're an asshole," Finn snapped as he picked himself up from the floor. "Kurt deserves better than you."

"Kurt deserves better you," Blaine fired back. "Do yourself a favor, Finn and walk away. You're quickly working your way onto my shit list and trust me when I tell you that's a place you don't want to be."

"You don't scare me," Finn replied standing his ground. "You're just a spoiled little rich boy who thinks everyone should bow down to you. If Kurt knew how you really were he wouldn't like you. I'm…I'm gonna tell Burt and he-"

"You won't tell Burt anything," Blaine said evenly. "Because if you did then he might find out about all the times you stood by and watched his only child get thrown into a dumpster. Or how you threw balloons filled with urine at Kurt. Or how you and your buddies trespassed onto his property and nailed his lawn furniture to his roof. And your mom, I'm pretty sure you wouldn't want your mom to find out about how you stand by and do nothing while Kurt's thrown into lockers and hit in the face with frozen drinks, now would you Finn?"

Finn ducked his head in shame as Blaine listed his offenses, both past and present, against Kurt. His shoulders slumped forward as he realized that if the whole truth came out neither Burt nor his mom would take his side. "You really are an asshole," he muttered.

"Maybe so," Blaine conceded, "But you're no angel. You may not be afraid of me Finn, but you should be. I'm not Kurt. I have neither the desire nor the motivation to cover your ass. Cross me again and I'll make you wish you'd never met me."

"I already do," Finn said angrily, turning around and noticing that Puck was no longer in the room. "Kurt's in the basement. Go get him yourself," he sneered as he turned and made his way dejectedly back up the stairs.

Puck let his gaze wander over Blaine a few times and none of what he saw made him feel any better about Kurt getting closer to the guy. When Blaine had invaded McKinley with his brethren in blue blazers, Puck hadn't paid him much attention, he'd too busy chatting with Nick and being pleased that Kurt had found someone to bring him some measure of happiness. Now that he was taking a closer look, Puck was unsettled by what he saw.

Puck had never been one for cliché's but as he stood in the background staring down Blaine and listening to him hand Finn his ass, the phrase "it takes one to know one" echoed through in his ears. Puck knew the kind of guy he used to be and he was pretty sure that was the kind of guy Blaine was. A little more polished and little more privileged but a player, a user and a schemer all the same.
Blaine was reading from the same script, he was just doing it with a different cast.

As Blaine and Finn continued to argue, Puck silently stole from the room and went down the basement steps in search of Kurt.

Puck knew that he and Kurt didn't have the best history but because of all the ugly in the past he felt that he owed it to the guy to try and save him from a little hurt in the present. Blaine Anderson may have looked like a Disney prince, but the way he had just threatened Finn without breaking a sweat had Puck willing to bet a month of Sunday visits with Beth that the other boy was more beast than beauty.

Even as he opened the door to Kurt's room intent on trying to warn Kurt off he knew it wouldn't do any good. He briefly wondered if this was how every parent of every girl he'd ever dated had felt when they'd found out their daughter was going out with "that Puckerman boy". He felt dual waves of protectiveness and helplessness surge through him and he struggled to find the words that would save his boy from becoming one of Blaine's hit and run victims.

"Oh Noah, I didn't hear you come down. Is Blaine here?"

As Kurt looked up at him, small smile on his lips and eyes shining with excitement Puck decided to just rip the bandage off and go with the unvarnished truth.

"That dude just wants in your pants, yo."

As Kurt's face transformed into a picture of shock and anger, Puck realized that perhaps the unvarnished truth hadn't been the way to go.

He tried again. "Look Little Spoon, that guy is no good. If you heard the stuff he was just saying to Finn-"

"No, Noah," Kurt's voice was as cold as ice and as sharp as a blade as it sliced through Puck's protests. "You don't get to ruin this for me. Finn has been antagonizing Blaine since they met so I'm sure whatever he said to him was justified. As for your remark about Blaine trying to get into my pants—maybe that's exactly where I want him. Did you ever think about that?"

Puck's mouth dropped open and Kurt glared at him.

"I am a teenage boy, Noah," Kurt went on. "I have...hormones and urges just like every other teenage boy. I assure you if Blaine gets into my pants it's going to be because I want him to. Nothing is going to happen that I don't want to happen, got it?"

Puck cleared his throat then he chuckled a bit. "Get some then, Little Spoon. Just be careful with that dude. The Puckasaurus is a human bullshit meter and that guy has me going off like an alarm clock."

Kurt rose from his vanity and gathered his things. "I'm going to give you the benefit of the doubt and assume you were looking out for me. I can't really blame you because I'd have done the same thing for Artie or Mercedes but you of all people should know that I'm capable of taking care of myself."

Puck winced at the tactful reminder of how he used to bully Kurt and how the other boy had taken everything Puck had thrown at him. "Kurt, I know that. But that dude is not the guy you think he is. He's got a whole Jekyll and Hyde thing going man and I don't want to see you end up hurt if he schiz's out on you the way he just did with Finn."

Kurt sighed as he put on his jacket and then stopped in front of Puck. "I appreciate the concern but Blaine has been nothing but good to me. His conflict with Finn is their issue to work out but I won't
let it mess up what we have. I like Blaine, I enjoy spending time with him and I plan to continue to do so."

Puck nodded. He had known that he wasn't going to be able to convince Kurt to stop seeing the guy but he'd had to try. "I don't like it, but I can respect it. I'm saying it now though Little Spoon, if he does anything to you, I'm gonna kick his hobbit ass back to the shire."

Kurt rolled his eyes as he started up the stairs. "First of all, Blaine isn't that short. Or hairy. Second of all, what is it with you Glocks giving me nicknames? Mike's called me Xiao qi jiao since my stint on the football team last year, Sam calls me Shawn and now you insist on calling me Little Spoon."

At Puck's blank look Kurt smiled and explained. "Xiao qi jiao means "little kicker in Mandarin. Apparently Mike's mother kept asking him when he was going to have the 'little kicker' over so she could meet me like she'd met the rest of you guys on the team and the name stuck. Sam and I have a running Boy Meets World joke going and you...well, only you know why you insist on calling me Little Spoon and referencing that which we agreed never happened but I suppose it's an upgrade from Hummel so I'll take it."

The boys reached the top of the stairs and walked into the living room. Puck saw the way Blaine's eyes swept over Kurt's form and he tried and failed to resist the urge to make a little trouble.

He reached out, grabbed Kurt around the waist, pulled him backwards and brought him into close contact with his body. "Come on now. You know you like it, Little Spoon."

Kurt laughed and rolled his eyes. "Honestly Noah, you're terrible. And I already admitted that Little Spoon is growing on me. But don't say it in front of my dad. The last thing I want to do is give him the mental picture of us in bed cuddling."

Blaine's eyebrows shot up to his hairline at the improbable sight of Puck flirting with Kurt. "Little Spoon? Cuddling? Something tells me there's a story there," he said as he kept his voice deceptively light.

Puck wasn't fooled. He saw that Blaine was angry and while part of him wanted to push the other boy into losing his cool he didn't want to do it at Kurt's expense. He decided he'd just give a little nudge and see how Blaine reacted. His decision made, Puck gave Blaine the fakest smile he could muster before he answered.

"Kurt has an awesome bed and killer cuddling skills. He's like a human spider monkey, he just kinda gloms onto you, snuggles in and doesn't let go," Puck said easily.

Blaine bit back the retort on his lips and merely nodded. He had a feeling that Puck hadn't taken too kindly to the earlier scene with Finn and was attempting to get him to lose his temper in front of Kurt. Blaine got off of the sofa and walked over to Kurt and Puck. He crowded in close to Kurt and lowered his lips until they ghosted over the shell of Kurt's ear.

"If I'm a good boy do I get to experience your killer cuddling skills firsthand?"

Kurt blushed and ducked his head.

Blaine smiled in triumph.

Puck scowled when he noticed that a blush had risen up on Kurt's neck and Blaine's expression was more satisfied than the cat that'd gotten the cream. He met Blaine's gaze and realized that the other boy knew exactly what type of game Puck had tried to play. They glared at one another over Kurt's head until Puck reluctantly took a step back and let Blaine draw Kurt into his arms.
"Well, Little Spoon I'm gonna go up to Finn's room and kill some zombies or something," Puck said as he maneuvered around the couple. He glared at Blaine one more time before he left the two boys alone.

Kurt had meant to ask Blaine about exchanging words with Finn but the moment he was in Blaine's arms all other thoughts flew out of his head. "Missed you," Kurt mumbled into Blaine's neck.

"Missed you more," Blaine replied, as he ran his hands over Kurt's back and sides as if he were trying to physically wipe away Puck's touch.

"Show me?" Kurt asked shyly, as he pulled back and peeked at Blaine through his lashes.

"Gladly," Blaine whispered before he leaned forward and pressed their foreheads together. He reached out and curled his hand around the back of Kurt's head and pulled him forward into a kiss. It started out a chaste press of their lips but then deepened and became darker and more demanding. Blaine tangled his hands into Kurt's hair and gave an experimental tug. Kurt's fingers flexed on Blaine's bicep and he moaned into Blaine's mouth. Every line of tension drained out of Kurt's body and he melted into Blaine's touch.

Just as Blaine was seriously considering moving them over to the couch and pushing things past kissing, the sound of a throat clearing sounded behind them.

"Blaine, pleasure to see you again, son."

Blaine froze and Kurt's eyes snapped open. For a moment both boys looked like two toddlers who'd gotten caught with their hands in the cookie jar. Blaine recovered first, pasting a weak smile on his face as he turned to greet Burt.

"Mr. Hummel, it is indeed a pleasure to see you again."

"Uh huh," Burt said, as he crossed his arms and dropped into his recliner. "What brings you by Blaine?"

Kurt looked his father in the eye. "Aren't you supposed to be at the shop? And obviously he came to see me, dad. Blaine made plans for us."

"I live here, Kurt. I don't have to clear it with you if I want to come home early," Burt said evenly before turning back to Blaine. "Plans huh? What's on tap for today, kid? Besides defiling my baby boy in my living room, I mean?"

"Oh my God, dad seriously?" Kurt yelped.

Blaine was a little off kilter. Even though Burt Hummel wasn't the first angry father to catch Blaine in a compromising position with their son, he was by far the most dangerous. Blaine was thoroughly convinced that Burt wouldn't hesitate to take him out back and shoot him if suspected Blaine wasn't treating Kurt with the respect he felt his son deserved.

"Well sir, I was planning on taking Kurt to lunch. We haven't had much time together over the past few day and I...I missed him so much I guess I just lost control of my head for a bit."

"Did you now? Funny, from where I was standing it was your hands that were out of control and-"

"Okay," Kurt cut in loudly. "We're leaving now. Dad, I'll see you later. I'll call if I'm going to miss dinner. Puck and Finn are upstairs and Carol should be home from her hair appointment soon. Don't even think of calling the pizza place over on 84th, I've already had our address put on their "Do Not
"I'm the parent here," Burt grumbled as he made his way into the kitchen.

"Sorry about that," Kurt apologized as they made their way down the driveway. "He's still getting used to me... dating. He'll settle down soon enough. He really is just a big, cuddly teddy bear, I promise," Kurt said as he slid into the passenger seat of Blaine's car.

"Rabid, man eating grizzly bear is more like it," Blaine mumbled under his breath as he climbed into the driver's seat.

"So where to?" Kurt asked brightly.

Blaine grinned. "Breadstix is pretty much our only option unless you want to drive to Westerville and find someplace decent."

Kurt shook his head. "I've only got a few hours to spend with you and I don't want us to be trapped on the highway for half of them. But you said you wanted to talk and Breadstix won't exactly be private." A thoughtful look crossed his face and then Kurt smiled. "Wait right here. Give me two minutes."

Before Blaine could utter a word Kurt bolted from the car, ran back up the driveway and into the house. Blaine sat in curious silence for less than a minute when Kurt re-emerged carrying a blanket and a picnic basket.

"Whatever you wanted to talk about sounded important and... if we go to Breadstix there's a high probability of us running into someone I know. I just... I feel like I haven't seen you in forever and I know that's silly but I really want to be alone with you."

Blaine smiled at Kurt's bashful admission. "I'd like to be alone with you too. So, picnic in the park?"

Kurt pressed a quick kiss to Blaine's mouth. "Picnic yes. Park no. I ah, I have this place that's sort of special and kind of private and I think it would be perfect for us to have a picnic in and um, talk. If you want."

"I want," Blaine confirmed, as he started the car.

"Go to the grocery store. I have the picnic basket but we need paper plates and stuff. I'll call our order in to Breadstix so we can pick it up when we get finished. I pretty much only get the lasagna but if you want something else-"

"No lasagna's good. Order some dessert too. Do they have Tiramisu?" Blaine asked as he checked his car's GPS for the closest grocery store.

"No," Kurt replied pulling a face. "They have lady fingers drowned in coffee and then tortured by an inedible combination of mascarpone, cocoa, cheap liquor and egg yolks."

"Okay," Blaine said dragging out the word. "That's a no on dessert then."

"Not dessert, just the Tiramisu," Kurt corrected. "They actually make really good profiteroles. They use homemade vanilla ice cream and it's to die for."

"I'll take your word for it," Blaine chuckled as he pulled into the grocery store parking lot.
Twenty minutes later the pair had their supplies and their lunch and were making their way through a winding trail in the woods. "Kurt," Blaine said slowly after they had walked for a few minutes. "I've seen way too many slasher films that start out like this so if you're trying to lure me to my death I'm gonna have to ask you to reconsider."

Kurt laughed and smacked Blaine on the shoulder. "You're perfectly safe and we're almost there. See, right up ahead, that tree is where we're heading."

Blaine's face broke into a huge smile as he saw the tree house fort that Kurt had pointed to. "Oh no fucking way. You have an actual tree house in the woods?"

"Yeah," Kurt replied quietly. "My best friend Mason and I built it the summer before seventh grade. It's kind of been my hiding place ever since. You're the first person I've brought here. I'll climb up and lower the goodie box and you can put the food in it and then climb up after."

"The goodie box?"

Kurt laughed. "Mason was a pack rat and he just horded books and games and just…stuff. His mom would make him clean out his room and his closet every few months and he needed someplace to store his stuff so we decided to use the tree house. The only problem was we didn't have a way to get his gear from on the ground to up in the tree. We made this huge box in his dad's woodshop that we could pack with his "goodies", and set up a pulley system so we would be able to lower it down and pull it back up."

"Smart kids."

"Necessity is the mother of invention," Kurt quipped then turned and quickly climbed up the rope ladder into the tree house. "Goodie box coming down," he called out a moment later and began lowering a wooden crate down to Blaine.

Blaine smiled and packed their picnic basket and blanket into the crate before he sent it back up to Kurt and climbed up the rope ladder himself.

"So, I don't think I've ever heard you mention Mason and I know I haven't met him."

Kurt's posture went rigid for just a moment and then relaxed. "He died. Before our freshmen year in high school. Their house um, it caught on fire in the middle of the night and he and his dad didn't make it out."

"Kurt," Blaine said softly, as he reached toward the other boy.

"It was a long time ago," Kurt said evading Blaine's touch and kneeling down onto the blanket. Blaine watched in silence for a moment and decided to give Kurt a few moments to pull himself out of the obviously painful memory. He drifted over to the edges of the room and began looking around.

"Kurt," he exclaimed suddenly. "This stuff is awesome. You have a cassette player. You have an actual cassette player with actual cassettes. And old school G.I. Joe's. Holy shit, it's He-Man!" Blaine cried, rushing over to the makeshift bookcase and running his hands over the action figures.

Kurt laughed, relieved that Blaine hadn't pushed him to open up. "There are also Power Rangers, Pokémon cards, a few virtual pets, Beanie babies, one really creepy looking Furby, more pogs than I know what to do with, several Treasure Trolls and a host of other assorted throwbacks to my childhood. If you sit down and eat all your lunch like a good boy, I'll let you play with them.
afterwards ok?"

Blaine placed the Mighty Max set that he'd been examining back on the case and made his way over to Kurt. "I'd rather play with you," he said cheekily, as he dropped onto the blanket beside Kurt.

"Then maybe you should be a bad boy," Kurt replied coyly before handing Blaine his plate. "But later. Right now we're going to eat and you're going to tell me whatever it is that had you tied up in knots when we talked earlier."

Blaine swallowed. He'd almost forgotten why he'd come out to Lima to see Kurt in the first place. "After dessert," he said decisively.

Kurt agreed and they dug into their meal with gusto, catching up on what had been going on in each other's lives. As he finished off his last profiterole Kurt looked at Blaine expectantly. "Now, spill it Mr. Anderson. No more stalling. What's going on with you?"

Blaine was silent for a moment then looked in the eye. "I haven't lied to you," he began slowly, "but I haven't been entirely truthful either."

Kurt's eyebrow arched but thankfully he remained quiet.

"I didn't really explain why you were meeting my godfather and not my parents. The thing is Kurt I don't have a very good relationship with them," Blaine said quietly. "I see them maybe three times a year and trust me when I tell you that are three times too many. My mother is...I have no use for that woman and my father and I literally can't be in the same room together for more than a few minutes without fighting."

Kurt blinked. Hearing Blaine talk about his parents with such vitriol was surprising but nothing Kurt hadn't heard from his own friends. He'd heard Puck and Quinn both swear that if their father's burst into flames they wouldn't spit on the fire to put them out. He knew that Artie absolutely hated his grandmother and that Brittany was being raised by her father and step mother because her mother had been abusive.

Kurt knew that he'd practically won the parental lottery, first being blessed with his parents and then somehow having the good fortune to have Carol as a maternal figure in his life as well.

Whatever his issues with his parents were, Kurt wasn't going to hold them against Blaine. He was aware that not everyone was as fortunate as he had been.

"So...you and your dad are like oil and water, huh?" Kurt asked hesitantly.

"More like powder keg and a match," Blaine replied bitterly. "It's an Anderson family trait, fathers and sons who hate each other. My grandfather and father hated each other right up until the day that Desmond—that was my grandfather—died." Blaine laughed harshly. "In fact, I'm pretty sure if it's possible my dad hates him even more now than he did when he was alive."

Kurt sucked in a shocked breath. "But he's dead," Kurt said slowly. "It's not like he can do anything to earn hatred from beyond the grave."

Blaine laughed again, and to Kurt's ears it sounded empty and hollow. "Never underestimate the lengths a man will go to for vengeance, babe." Blaine cocked his head to the side and examined Kurt for a moment before continuing.

"Hummel Tire and Lube, it's a family business, right?"
Kurt was startled by the change in subject but nodded. "My grandfather started it. Dad says he never wanted anything to do with it until he met my mom. He said he suddenly understood why grandpa had always told him that when he met the right woman he'd want to be respectable and responsible. When grandpa passed Dad got half the business and my uncle Mark—he lives in Columbus—got the other half."

"We have a family business too," Blaine said slowly. "My great, great grandfather started it. The set up has changed over the years as it's grown but leadership has basically passed from father to son ever since it was started."

"Is that...is that why you and your dad don't get along? Because you want something different?"

"Not exactly," Blaine sighed. "It's more that we both want the same thing."

"I don't understand."

"Our family business is a little more than tires and lube," Blaine remarked. "Ever heard of Anderson International?"

Kurt's brow wrinkled. "Should I have?"

"I'd like to think so," Blaine chuckled. "That's our family business. It's a pretty big deal. We're an international conglomerate. That means we produce and sell unrelated goods and services. We're multinational and-"

"Blaine," Kurt interrupted. "No offense but you sound like the teacher from the Charlie Brown cartoons. All I hear right now is wonk wonk wonk."

Blaine grinned. "Right. Well, anyway, like I said, Anderson International is a pretty big deal. Like a multi-billion dollar big deal."

"Billion with a B?" Kurt blurted out.

"That's the only way to spell it," Blaine replied.

"I...wow. That's um...wow," Kurt stuttered out.

"Hold that thought. It gets more wow," Blaine teased, relaxing as he realized that Kurt didn't seem to be relating to him any differently. "It's always been profitable but it was my grandfather that really grew the company to what it is today. He took an immense amount of pride in the legacy he was leaving and he wanted my father to have absolutely nothing to do with it."

"But...you said leadership of the business passed from father to son."

"Traditionally yes, but my grandfather was never a man who bound himself to tradition when it didn't suit him. And leaving my father at the helm of Anderson International didn't suit him."

"But you said he died," Kurt said, confusion evident on his face. "Did he...did he like, sell your family business to spite your father?"

Blaine shook his head. "No, nothing quite as dramatic as that. He cut my father out of his will and left all his shares in the company, as well as ownership of the family estate to me."

Kurt's eyes widened. "But you're...Blaine you're seventeen. Your dad would still be in charge, at least until you were old enough to take over," Kurt pointed out.
Blaine took a deep breath. He knew they had reached the critical part of the story. Kurt would either accept or reject him after hearing just how ruthless Blaine was capable of being.


"Did…did he steal it from you or something?" Kurt asked, his mind filled with images of corporate backstabbing and betrayals fueled by years of secretly watching daytime soap operas.

"No," Blaine said calmly, "I stole it from him."

"You…you did what?"

"I stole it from him," Blaine repeated. "Well, that's not entirely true. What I actually did was take what was rightfully mine a little earlier than anyone anticipated."

"Blaine," Kurt said sharply. "What does that even mean?"

Blaine looked Kurt in the eye. "First, I blackmailed my father into naming my godfather my legal guardian and the guardian of my trust. Then I fired my father and kicked my parents out of the house."

Kurt had frozen in shock. "You blackmailed…I don't…why would you…you threw your own parents out of their home?"

"No," Blaine said lowly. "I threw my father out of my company and then threw him and my mother out of my house."

"Blaine…why?"

"Did you miss the beginning of the story when I said I hated my father?" Blaine snapped.

"A lot of people say they hate their parents Blaine but they don't literally throw them out of their lives!" Kurt snapped back.

"Well then those people really don't hate their parents," Blaine replied coldly.

Kurt and Blaine regarded each other silently for a few moments. Puck's earlier warning echoed back at Kurt, and he furrowed his brow as he thought.

Over the time they'd spent together Blaine had shown Kurt small glimpses of his vengeful side. The story about Thad and his headmaster, the rage in his voice when he'd learned about Karofsky's assault on Kurt at the movie theater, the way he'd neutralized Rachel when he'd surprised Kurt at McKinley. Even today with Finn, Puck had claimed that Blaine had gone from Dr. Jekyll to Mr. Hyde.

But…Blaine had also been sweet and supportive. Even when Kurt knew that Blaine didn't agree with his decisions he'd allowed Kurt to explain his reasoning and respected his decisions.

As he stared into Blaine's hazel eyed gaze Kurt realized he couldn't do anything less in return.

"I want…I want to understand, Blaine. Because right now I don't and I refuse to believe you would do something so drastic without a good reason. So, help me understand. What did they do to make you hate them so much?" Kurt asked softly.

Blaine closed his eyes and cursed the gentleness of Kurt's tone. He'd been prepared for judgment, recrimination and even rejection. The opportunity to explain and be understood was almost too
"They never wanted me," Blaine said. "My mother needed a meal ticket and my father needed an heir. They never wanted me and they never let me forget it. My father never spent any time with me unless it was to criticize me. When I was younger I wanted so badly for him to notice me but he never did. As I got older I tried everything to get his attention. I excelled academically. I became a star athlete. My manners were impeccable. I never got in any trouble. I stood out among my peers and he never once said "Good job son." He was still indifferent to me. Then, when I was fifteen, I came out and he just cut me off," Blaine recalled, his voice vibrating with repressed emotion.

"He had the maid deliver a note telling me that until I came to my senses about my unfortunate lifestyle choice, he wouldn't speak to me. And he kept his word. My own father lived in the same house and didn't say a word to me for almost a year. If I walked into a room, he walked out of it. If I tried to follow him, he'd literally shut a door in my face and lock it. The only time he ever treated me with any kind of decency was when we needed to put on a show and play happy family for the people in his social circle. Eventually I just stopped trying to impress him. I um, I acted out a lot. I was...pretty promiscuous and really reckless. Drinking, drugs, parties, the whole nine yards. He still didn't care and at that point neither did I."

"Oh Blaine," Kurt breathed. "That's terrible. No wonder you hate him. I think I hate him too. No parent should treat their child like that. You know you didn't deserve it, right?"

Blaine nodded. "I finally wised up when I took one too many pills at a party and thought I gonna die. I didn't actually OD, it was just a really bad trip. Wes literally slapped some sense into me the next day and that was the end of my more obviously self destructive behavior. I'm not perfect but I'm not quite that far out of control anymore and I've long since made peace with the fact that my father is just an unmitigated bastard and nothing I do or don't do is going to change that."

"And your mother?"

"Just as bad," Blaine replied. "She never once stood up for me or tried to comfort me. She only had me to trap my father into staying married to her and once I was born she couldn't be bothered to actually be a mother to me. She had better things to do. Like the gardener. And her tennis coach. My piano teacher. You know, things like that."

"Blaine," Kurt said quietly, reaching out and taking his hand. "I'm so sorry baby."

Blaine squeezed Kurt's fingers and continued. "Did you know I'm like, half Pinoy? My mother is from Manila. My parents met when my father went there on vacation. He went over for a week of sun and fun with his best friend and came home with a wife."

Kurt smiled. "I didn't know and that story sounds romantic. Have you ever been?"

Blaine snorted. "It wasn't romantic. It was sleazy and pretty much what you'd expect from my parents. My mother was working in some seedy bar and my father was engaged to a girl he'd been dating for four years when they met. My dad, being the stand up guy he is, didn't even bother to break off the engagement before he sent out word about the wedding. Story goes the fiancé was so humiliated she fled to Europe and never came back. And no, I've never been. I want to, though. Someday."

"I'm sorry," Kurt said.

"So am I. So, now you know why you'll be meeting Jasper and not my parents. I bet me being in the Witness Protection Program is looking pretty damn good right about now, huh?" Blaine joked.
Kurt took a deep breath and chose his words deliberately. "I'm just fine with who you are," he said softly.

"Are you?" Blaine asked gently. "Because I'm not so sure you understand quite yet. Who I am is the guy the helm of a multinational, multi-billion dollar company. The world that I live in is nothing like what you're used to. The rules are different. The people are different. The expectations, the obligations, the responsibilities, all of it is different and if we keep seeing each other you are going to be put under a microscope and put to the test. That little scene with Thad and Flint in the Lima Bean? Imagine going through a million more like it in one evening and having to get up the next morning and do it all again. Every piece of your life is going to be subjected to scrutiny-and it won't just your life. Your father's maybe even your friends will be put under a spotlight as well. In fact, I can almost guarantee that Jasper's had a background check run on you and your dad."

"What?" Kurt exclaimed. "Why?"

"Again, I'm the head of a multinational, multi-billion dollar company."

"Is that why he wants to meet me? To make sure I'm not some...some gold digger?" Kurt spat.

"That's probably part of it," Blaine admitted. "But I'm sure most of it is that you're the first guy I ever talked about while we were still dating and he's curious."

"How could I dig for gold that I didn't know was there?" Kurt fumed. "I mean, ok yeah, I saw your car and knew you went to Dalton, and there was the limo and stuff so I knew you came from money but I thought your parents were rich and you...I don't know got an allowance or something."

"An allowance, huh? What like twenty bucks a week and a full tank of gas?"

"Don't make fun," Kurt pouted. "How was I supposed to know you were a real life Richie Rich?"

Blaine arched an eyebrow. "There's this thing, it's called Google--"

"I told you not to make fun. Why would I Google you? I figured I'd learn all I needed to by stalking your Facebook page like a normal person."

"You Facebook stalked me?"

"No," Kurt huffed. "Mercedes did it for me," he mumbled. "And nowhere on your page does it say a word about your family business or the fact that you're apparently the man in charge."

"That's because anyone who'd look me up on Facebook already knows," Blaine shrugged.

"Obviously not," Kurt argued. "I had no clue."

"And now you do," Blaine said quietly. "What are you gonna do about it?"

Kurt dragged Blaine to his feet. "I'm gonna kiss you. Then I'm gonna let you play with my action figures."

"Dear God please let that be a euphemism," Blaine joked as he let Kurt pull him into his arms.

"You wish," Kurt replied saucily before covering Blaine's mouth with his own.

A/N: There you go. I know I kept promising Klaine so I hope it was worth the wait. And for those of you who caught the "sneak peek" I put up on my Tumblr, that Karofsky/Kurt scene is still a couple
of chapters away but it's coming...soon. Also...I know Mason might have been a bit of a stretch for some of you but that whole story is there for a reason as well as the treehouse and they'll both come back into play so trust me and go with me on that okay?
Chapter 18

Chapter Summary

Rachel reaches a turning point, Finn continues to struggle, and Kurt gives him something to think about.

Chapter Notes

A/N: Oh man, guys! I'm sorry this update has been SOOOO long in coming. Long story short: I got switched to overnights at my job, which has cut drastically into my writing time. I'm doing the very best I can and I hope you guys can just bear with me and have patience. I can't promise a schedule anymore I will do my level best not to let it go quite this long again.

Plus...I had to get over the finale. I just...I think I was at Hulk Smash levels of rage for a good week and a half. The first forty-five minutes were amazing and the last fifteen were utter crap. As a Kurt-stan, it's bar none, the worst episode of Glee ever for me. And that's saying something cause my boy got thrown in the trash in the pilot lol.

Disclaimer: I do not own Glee or any of it's characters

Warnings: Homophobic language, violence, minor PTSD reaction, Language

Chapter Eighteen: Begin As We Mean To Go On

Finn hated Mondays. He hated having to get up early and the effort it took to try and shake off the fun and freedom of the weekend. He hated having to immerse himself once again in the gilded cage that was persona at McKinley. This particular Monday had already gotten off to a bad start. Finn had woken up late, burned his tongue on his breakfast, spilled coffee on his last clean pair of jeans and then gotten a look that could only be described as murderous from Karofsky when the other boy had seen him climbing out of Kurt's Navigator in the school parking lot.

And now, as if his day hadn't been bad enough, Rachel was demanding Finn use his influence to get one of their friends to partner with her in their glee assignment.

"Rachel, I really don't understand what you want me to do here. I can't make anyone be your partner and I've already asked," Finn said tiredly.

"I know that Finn," Rachel said with exaggerated patience. "It's just...they like you," she said a wisp
of vulnerability in her tone. "If I ask it'll seem like I'm being a diva. If you ask, they'll just think you're being a good boyfriend. Try again, please?"

"Rach-

"I know they all think it shouldn't bother me," she rushed on. "And I get that, I do. I admit I've been a little over zealous in the past when it comes to my desire for the spotlight and I've hurt some-okay, all of their feelings by being so determined but...I don't want to be this person that no one likes," her voice hitched a little and she took a shaky breath. She looked up at Finn with wet eyes and his heart ached at the sight of her obvious distress. "The Glee club, we're the outcasts Finn. We're the misfits, the bottom of the high school barrel. If I can't make friends and be accepted there, then I can't make friends and be accepted anywhere. If I'm an outcast among outcasts, what does that say about me?"

"Rach," Finn said softly as he carded a hand through her hair. "You're not an outcast. You're beautiful and smart and you have a really good heart. You just kinda get a little intense and it sometimes makes you forget to be the awesome person you really are."

"I know," Rachel said miserably. "I'm trying, Finn. I just want them to give me a chance to prove it. I just want a chance, Finn."

Finn tugged Rachel into a hug and closed his eyes. He wished that the others could see the side of Rachel that he got to see. He wished they all knew that she was sometimes painfully insecure and really cared about what people thought of her and just wanted to have friends. He knew that she didn't always go about things the right way but none of them did, not really. He kept messing up and getting second and even third chances, so maybe it was fair that Rachel did too. "I'll see what I can do," he said kissing her on top of the head.

"Not just no, but hell to the no," Mercedes said slamming her locker shut and stomping off.

"No Finn. Mr. Schue said he wanted us all to learn to work together and you and I have never performed together. I'm not giving up my place and I'm not giving up my partner. I told you no before and I meant it. Rachel just needs to suck it up and deal," Tina fumed before turning her back on Finn and opening her physics book.

"I'm working with Mike. Maybe Rachel can be my partner next time," Brittany said before linking pinkies with Santana.

"Don't even bother, Snack Shack. I'd rather have a threesome with Cripples McGhee and Jewfro," Santana sneered as she and Brittany flounced away.

"No can do, bro. Like I said last time, Santana's already threatened to make my penis go from fully functional to non-existent if I try to leave her high and dry," Artie shrugged before he rolled off.

"Brittany and I already put a ton of work into our duet, man. It wouldn't be fair for me to duck out on her now," Mike apologized on his way into the cafeteria.

"You 're not seriously asking me this again," Quinn deadpanned. "I already made a commitment to Mercedes and even if I hadn't, there's no way I'd sign on to be Rachel Berry's backup singer. I play that role more than enough as it is," she said before leaving Finn standing outside the girls' bathroom.

"You were just at my house this weekend! You aren't even sick anymore, Puck!" Finn yelled into his phone.

"Only 'cause my ma worked all weekend and didn't know I was out. Look dude, I got a get out
school free card and I'm using it," Puck replied. "Tell my hot Jewish princess I'm sorry but I'm not going to be back until my ma pushes me out the door kicking and screaming," Puck announced before disconnecting.

Finn groaned. The only people left were the two people he really, really hadn't wanted to approach.

He knew that Kurt and Sam both still had hard feelings about the first duet they were supposed to do and the way Finn had interjected himself into their business. The pair had grown a lot closer since then and Finn was sure neither of them would take too kindly to him trying to interfere yet again. He swallowed hard and tried to shake off the feeling of having failed the girl he loved more than anything. Finn hated disappointing people. He tried so hard to please everyone and hated it when he came up short. He looked down the hall and saw Rachel give him an enthusiastic wave and closed his eyes. As much as he knew he probably owed it to the two boys to let them be, he couldn't bring himself to let Rachel down. He was going to have to man up and ask Kurt or Sam to once again give up their duet partner.

A loud crash at the other end of the hallway got Finn's attention and he whipped his head around and was met with the sight of Kurt sprawled on the ground and Karofsky walking away from him. His feet instantly started moving in Kurt's direction but he stopped short when he saw the challenging look Azimio aimed at him. Finn knew if he went and helped Kurt up, by the time football practice came he'd be on the team's blacklist. Karofsky and Azimio would make sure of it. It felt awful to not to help Kurt out, especially in light of how close they were getting but Finn didn't see how he could both be a good friend to Kurt and save face with the team. Kurt looked up and made eye contact with Finn and the pain and sorrow in his eyes had Finn torn between doing what was expected of him and what he knew was right.

Before he had a chance to make up his mind, Mercedes and Sam appeared and helped Kurt off of the floor. Before they escorted Kurt down the hallway to his next class Sam gave Finn a look of utter disgust which succeeded in making Finn feel lower than dirt. He took in the way Kurt walked, slow and stiff like Finn did when he was trying to shake off a particularly vicious hit, and the sight made Finn feel angry, guilty, and sad all at once. Finn was so upset that even the feel of Rachel's arms coming around him, the smell of her hair and the soft press of her lips against his didn't make him feel any better.

Kurt's day had gone from amazing to awful in about five seconds flat. He hadn't even seen Karofsky coming; hadn't had time to brace for impact or prepare himself mentally for whatever physical, verbal or emotional attack the other boy had planned to launch. When he'd collided with his locker and then tripped over his own feet on the way down, Kurt had been stunned. The pain of hitting the hard tile floor and the embarrassment of everyone looking at him - some with scorn, some with pity and some, like Finn, with guilt - made it more difficult than usual to slip on his mask of indifference and blink away the hot tears of anger and anguish that always threatened to spill over after particularly cruel taunts or nasty assaults.

He flinched when he felt Sam's hand on his shoulder. He was unprepared for the touch and mentally he still felt as if he were vulnerable and unsafe. Before he recognized Mercedes' shoes and Sam's soft, reassuring voice asking if he were okay, Kurt had started to scoot across the floor, anxious to get away from the newly perceived threat.

"Whoa, hey dude, it's cool, it's me and Mercy," Sam said backing up a bit and giving Kurt a little space.

"Yeah Kurt, it's just us. No one's gonna hurt you, okay?" Mercedes said her voice full of quiet fury and concern.
Kurt forced himself to breathe slowly, let the tension drain out of his body and calm his fight or flight response. "Sorry guys," he whispered. "I just…I'm used to being knocked down. Not so used to being picked up after," he attempted to joke.

"You shouldn't be," Sam growled out. "No one should be used to being attacked at school on a daily basis. This isn't right, Kurt. I know I said it was your choice and I stand by that but you really, really ought to consider telling your dad what's really going on. This is getting worse and sooner or later someone's going to go too far and you're going to end up with a lot more than bumps and bruises."

Kurt shook his head. "It's been like this since middle school, Sam. Yeah, Karofsky and Azimio have stepped it up this year but none of this is anything new. I told you why I can't tell my dad. I just have to make it through the next couple of years and then I can leave the land that time forgot and the Neanderthals who dwell here in my rearview."

"It's still not right," Sam mumbled.

"It is what it is," Kurt said wincing as he tried to stand up.

Mercedes narrowed her eyes in anger but held her tongue as she collected Kurt's things from the hall floor. Sam's face was drawn and tight and he glared at the onlookers until they all turned away. He supported Kurt as he got to his feet and then Sam briefly made eye contact with Finn. Sam knew he didn't do a very good job of hiding his disappointment in his team captain. It burned Sam up that Finn could just stand there and watch while Kurt got brutalized by a guy twice his size. Kurt and Finn were practically family and in Sam's world family came first. Sam knew that Finn wasn't a bad person, but the older teen was entirely too concerned with popularity and folded too easily to peer pressure for Sam to really respect him as the leader he was supposed to be. Part of Sam wondered how much of Finn's reluctance to help Kurt was him protecting his popularity and how much of it was due to Finn's issues with Kurt's sexual orientation.

Looking around at the faces of his classmates and teammates, so many of them wearing expressions that seemed to say that Kurt deserved to be targeted because he was gay, enraged Sam. He couldn't help but wonder if he'd grown up in Lima if he'd exhibit the same type of casual homophobia that so many of his peers seemed to. Given the values his parents and grandparents had instilled in him, he doubted it.

Sam knew that his grandparents had marched with Dr. King and despite some of their southern, conservative views his parents had always taught him that judging people on the content of their character didn't just mean objecting to racism. It meant whether a person were a Christian, Muslim or Atheist, man or woman, able bodied or living with a disability, gay, straight, or anywhere on the spectrum that he was to judge them based on the type of person that they were. That fundamental principle had been drilled into him and it was because of those teachings that he saw past Artie's chair to truly righteous dude he was inside, why Sam never let the fact that he was Christian and Puck was Jewish keep them from being friends, why he didn't see color or size, only breathtaking beauty when he looked at Mercedes and didn't find it funny when the other guys on the team asked Mike if he was related to Jackie Chan or Jet Li. As far as Sam was concerned, Kurt was a really cool guy and the fact that he was attracted to other men didn't change that. Sam liked Kurt for who he was and he was pretty sure that his own sense of personal integrity was strong enough that even if he had grown up in Lima, he and Kurt still would have ended up friends.

As he and Mercedes walked Kurt to his next class Sam vowed to do what he could to stand up for his friend and his principles regardless of what it cost him.

Kurt had thought the incident with Karofsky would be the worst part of his day. He'd been wrong.
He found himself cornered by Finn on his way to his fifth period study hall and though he'd anticipated an apology for not stepping up and helping him out earlier, what he got was absolutely rage inducing sense of déjà vu.

"So let me get this straight," Kurt said in a slow, measured tone. "You want me to back out of my duet with Sam—a duet that means a lot to both of us and our friendship—so that Rachel doesn't have to sing alone?"

Finn winced. "I know it sounds bad," he began, "and I asked like, everyone else first because I know after last time there were gonna be like, hard feelings but—"

"I can't imagine why," Kurt cut in scathingly. "This isn't going to work this time, Finn. I'm not ditching Sam. It's not fair to him or to me. He's my friend and he doesn't care what those knuckle dragging buffoons you call teammates think about it and I'm not going to repay his bravery and loyalty by abandoning him again."

"I'm not, jeez dude it's not like that!" Finn said, waving his hands. "It's Rachel, Kurt. She's like, super hurt. I know she's a little hard to take sometimes but she's not a bad person and she just wants a chance to prove that. She just wants a chance to have real friends."

"Finn, in order for her to have friends she has to be a friend," Kurt said softly. "I agree that she's not all bad but Rachel has, more often than not, marginalized everyone else in order to pursue her own agenda. She's left her tire tracks down the back of every member of New Directions—including you—in her quest to be the next Barbra Streisand and it's made people wary and resentful."

"I don't know what marginalized means but I get that she's made people feel bad," Finn said intently. "But she just wants a chance. How can she prove she's changed if no one gives her the chance to? You weren't always nice, you know and you're just as competitive and diva-ish as Rachel," Finn pointed out.

"I know well Rachel and my similarities," Kurt huffed. "It's the reason I'm not quite as hard on her as the rest of the club. And I know I'm not always a ball of sunshine and kittens. None of that changes the fact that I owe Sam this duet and I'm not going back on my word again."

As Kurt turned to walk away Finn grabbed him by his arm and turned him around. At the wild, frightened look in Kurt's eyes Finn raised his hands and took a step back. "Kurt, dude, I'm sorry—"

"Don't grab me," Kurt said, his voice slightly higher pitched and a tad shaky.

"I just needed to you stay and listen. I wasn't- I wouldn't hurt you, dude," Finn said, upset that Kurt could ever actually be afraid of him.

"You have hurt me, Finn," Kurt said bluntly. "You've stood by and watched while your friends have thrown me in dumpsters, you've pelted me with urine filled balloons and as recently as this morning stood by and did nothing while I was knocked the ground and injured so excuse me if my reaction to you grabbing me is to protect myself."

"Puck did all that stuff too," Finn pointed out. "He's the one who started the dumpster tosses and nailed your lawn furniture to your roof. Did you know he's the one who started the prank calls to your house and Burt's shop? How come you're scared of me and not Puck?"

"I'm not scared of you Finn," Kurt corrected. "I had an ingrained response to someone bigger than me, whose taken part in hurting me, grabbing me. I would have reacted the same way to Noah and I'm not afraid of him either. But if you must know, I'm more comfortable around Noah because he's
more comfortable around me. You're still...coming to terms with things. I respect that but you need to understand that means things with you and I won't be like they are with me and Noah, or Sam or even Mike or Artie."

Finn chewed on his lip. "I'm trying," he said, because it was true. Finn was trying. He was confused a lot of the time and stuck between all the things he'd been taught to believe and all the new truths becoming friends with Kurt and getting to know Rachel's dads had revealed to him. More and more Finn was starting to wonder why he had to choose between being a good person and being popular and if he was, in fact, making the wrong choice.

"I know," Kurt said, not unkindly. "I know you're trying. I am too. It's hard for me not to get angry when you don't help me out when stuff like this morning happens or not let my feelings be hurt when you hesitate before giving me a hug," Kurt confessed. "But I know this isn't easy for you and I...I respect that you're willing to try. I truly believe at the core of who you are there is a good person."

Finn gave Kurt a sad smile. "The same's true for Rachel too," he said.

"Finn," Kurt said warningly.

"No, really Kurt," Finn pushed on. "Rachel's got a good core too; it's just really hard for her sometimes to remember to show it."

"Finn-"

"She said the Glee club was the bottom of the high school barrel. She said if she couldn't make friends in glee then she couldn't make friends anywhere. She's lonely, Kurt. I know you know what that feels like. I remember you know," Finn said softly. "After Mason died, I remember how sad and alone you were. Right up until this year."

"I lost my best friend, Finn," Kurt said sharply. "Mason was my only friend and when he died I lost the only person my age that didn't treat me like I was something they scraped off the bottom of their shoe."

"But you're not alone anymore," Finn said gently. "Rachel has me and her dads but that's it. No one comes over to her house or invites her to hang out. She's lonely all the time, Kurt. And she's been targeted, not as bad as you, but pretty bad. She gets the slushie facials and mean phone calls and people shoving nasty notes in her locker. She just wants a chance, Kurt," Finn pleaded.

Kurt knew that Finn was playing on his emotions but he also knew that Finn was telling the absolute truth. If there was anyone else in Lima that was as tortured and outcast as Kurt, it was Rachel. She dealt with much of the same homophobia Kurt because Leroy and Hiram Berry were not Lima's idea of the nuclear family. She was slushied in the hall, mocked by jocks, harassed by Cheerios, subjected to relentless cyber bullying on her YouTube and Facebook pages and generally treated like trash by the majority of the student body.

He also knew that Rachel wasn't completely lacking in redeeming qualities. When she took off the blinders and looked at the world around her, Rachel could be incredibly kind and even selfless. Rachel was, in a lot of ways, the ying to Kurt's yang. She was the only person who truly understood his drive and ambition to be a star and she was the only person who truly understood that for him the hostility and danger didn't begin and end with the school bell. Rachel was a diva and she was selfish and self-absorbed but she wasn't evil. For all her faults Rachel was also relentlessly optimistic and willing to see the best in everyone. She believed in second and even third chances. She was, much to Kurt's chagrin, a lot like him.
"This isn't fair, Finn."

Finn's shoulders slumped. "I know. I know you probably think I kind of suck right now dude, but I think you get it, yeah? If you don't do this duet with Sam, you'll still be friends. Hell, you've got the entire glee club. Even Santana likes you…I think. Rachel doesn't have that. This could be her chance to start making friends, real friends. If anyone understands what that would mean to her, I know it's you."

"God dammit Finn," Kurt swore under his breath. "I'll talk to Sam. Make sure he's okay with this. If he's not then all bets are off, understand?"

"Thanks Kurt," Finn said, surprising the brunette by wrapping him up in a hug. "I appreciate it so much and I know Rachel will too."

"Don't thank me yet," Kurt laughed. "Sam still has to agree."

"Sam's cool," Finn said. "I'm sure once you explain it to him he'll be okay with it."

"To quote Mercy, hell to the no," Sam said, crossing his arms and leaning back in his chair.

"Sam, I know I owe you a duet and this isn't me backing out like last time-"

"Really?" Sam whispered trying to avoid attracting attention from the Liberian. "Cause it feels that way to me."

"It's not," Kurt whispered furiously. "I would be proud to perform with you-"

"Then why aren't you?"

"Because Finn, as improbable as this may sound, made an impressive argument on her behalf. I know Rachel, Sam. I've been Rachel. There are as many people who hate me because of my personality as there are those who hate me because of my sexuality," Kurt said.

"Then those people are stupid," Sam said.

"Sam," Kurt sighed. "You've never been on my bad side so you don't know. I've made it my mission to be able to fight back with my words. I can-and have-cut people into ribbons with them. I'm judgmental. I'm spoiled. I'm competitive and when the occasion calls for it, I'm manipulative. I can be petty and insulting and amazingly self centered. I am Rachel Berry, or at least who Rachel could be if she found a crazy group of people willing to give her a chance."

"I know I'm pretty new, but from what I've seen Rachel's had plenty of chances and pretty much blown them all," Sam countered.

"Give her one more," Kurt pleaded. "Sam, Finn told me Rachel said she felt like if she couldn't make friends in Glee then she'd never make friends anywhere. I think she has a point. New Directions is the Island of Misfit Toys. It's the one place in this whole school where mathletes and jocks, Cheerios and band geeks, former bullies and Broadway dreamers can all hang out together and no one cares what clique you belong to or what your social status is. If Rachel can't find a place with us, she won't find one anywhere."

"But it's her own fault she's a misfit among the misfits," Sam said.

"But it doesn't have to stay that way. One chance, that's all I'm asking you for here. Just give her this
one shot. If you can't do it for her, please do it for me," Kurt pleaded.

"Oh dude you suck," Sam said throwing down his pencil and throwing in the towel. "I would've kept saying no to Finn. I would've even said no to Rachel but I can't say no to you. Not because I agree with you," he added quickly, "but because I can see how important this is to you. I won't pretend to understand but if it's this important to you, then ok."

"Thanks Sam," Kurt said giving him a smile.

"Nuh uh," Sam said shaking his head. "That's not how bro's do it." He held his fist out and Kurt laughed briefly before bumping it with his own. "You're my bro, man. If helping Rachel out is important to you, then it's important to me."

"Thanks again for understanding Sam," Kurt said.

"Don't thank me yet," Sam said, looking over Kurt's shoulder. "You're the one who's gonna be explaining it to Mercedes."

Kurt turned around and waved weakly at Mercedes as she approached their table. "This is gonna suck," he said under his breath.

"Like a Hoover," Sam agreed cheerily as Mercedes slid into the seat next to him.

Rachel walked into glee club feeling uncharacteristically nervous. Finn had told her that he'd been able to convince Kurt to give up his partnership with Sam and while most of her was thrilled, there was also a tiny little voice underneath the euphoria reminding her that Kurt had already been forced to perform alone once and him having to do so again wasn't exactly fair.

As she and Finn rounded the corner they heard loud, angry voices coming from behind the door. She knew that entire group would be angry, assume that she had threatened some sort of a diva storm out or employed another type of emotional blackmail to get her way. She knew that they wouldn't understand but she couldn't really blame them. She hadn't given any of them the opportunity to get to know the girl behind the diva. They didn't know that she wanted friends—real friends—as desperately as she wanted to be a star, maybe even more. They didn't know that she kept joining club after club, activity after activity in an attempt to find someplace where she belonged. They didn't know that she ached for a bff to have sleep overs with and a group of friends to hang out with at the mall or meet at Breadstix after football games. Rachel knew that her parents loved her and she knew that she had Finn but that wasn't enough to kill the loneliness or soothe the hurt.

Rachel was aware that a large part of her predicament was of her own making. She couldn't seem to get out of her own way. She got tunnel vision a lot of the time and often didn't realize when she was being hurtful until it was too late. She always tried to make amends but it was usually awkward and consisted of her stumbling through an apology and handing out a plate of 'I'm sorry' cookies. Rachel knew she'd burned a lot of bridges with the members of New Directions but she was hopeful that they'd give her a chance to rebuild them.

She wasn't entirely surprised that the only person who'd been willing to go out on a limb for her was Kurt. As much as she considered him a rival, Rachel had also always felt a certain kinship to Kurt. She'd seen her own loneliness and longing for friendship and understanding reflected in his eyes. They'd both had to endure homophobia and hate seeping into their homes through anonymous cowards on the other end of the phone or vicious slurs carved into the paint of their cars. Kurt had been the first person to ever be given a slushie facial; Rachel had been the second. She'd escaped dumpster tosses but the notes that sometimes showed up in her locker had made her feel as if she
were in the trash right alongside Kurt. They'd both been savagely cyber bullied and Rachel often changed clothes in the handicapped stall of the girl's bathroom before gym to avoid the relentless body shaming that several of the girls in her class subjected her to.

Kurt also shared her determination to be a star and rise above their current circumstances. Rachel suspected that for Kurt, as it was for her, a part of that determination was due to an intense desire to shove her tormentors face in her success. Rachel suspected that if they could ever move past their respective insecurities and push through their rivalry, there was a very distinct possibility that Kurt could become the best friend she'd always wanted. They both had that same motivation, drive, and fire to prove that they deserved better and were worth more than the abuse and mockery of their peers and they both had been burned and burned others with that fire.

When they'd all started Glee she and Kurt were two lonely peas in their individual pods. They were both vying for stardom and both determined to beg, borrow, lie, cheat and steal to get what they wanted. Somehow over time Kurt had managed to find his place in their makeshift family and temper his fire just enough so that it didn't burn those he chose to let get close to him. Rachel had only managed to do that with Finn. She hadn't found the confidence or the security to let down her walls with anyone else.

"...she's one of us," Kurt's voice came through loud and clear. "There's not a person in here that hasn't screwed over someone else in this room. We're supposed to be a family. Family sticks by you, even when you're a pain in the ass, especially if you're trying to do better. Finn said she wants to do better, the least we can do is let her try."

Rachel allowed herself to take a little bit of comfort in Kurt's words. He was willing to give her a chance and he was willing to fight for everyone else to do the same. She squared her shoulders, made a mental note to make him a plate of "thank you" cookies, gripped Finn's hand and walked through the door.

Instantly the conversation stopped and several sets of angry, hostile eyes turned to her. "My fellow Glee clubbers," Rachel began. She looked around and saw Quinn rolling her eyes, Tina's face tighten into a mask of angry disapproval, Mercedes glaring daggers at her, Artie not even bothering to hide his derision and Santana smirking as if she already knew Rachel was about to blow it.

"I owe you all an apology," Rachel said started over softly. "I know I'm not the easiest person to get along with. I know I haven't always been a friend. I know there have been times where I've treated you like you didn't matter or your dreams weren't as important as my own. I'm truly sorry for that. I know I have a lot to make up for but I don't want to go another day being your diva instead of your friend."

There was absolute silence in the room for a few moments and then Sam got up from his chair and walked up to Rachel.

"I believe in giving second chances," he said. "But people have to make the most of them when they get them. So if you mean it, I know a way you can prove it."

"Anything," Rachel said. "You can have complete creative control, Sam. You can pick the song and the arrangement and I won't argue with you a bit."

"I'm not going to be your partner," Sam interrupted.

Rachel felt as if a bucket of cold water had been poured on her. "W-what?"

"I'm not going to be your partner," Sam repeated. "Kurt is. It's not fair for him to perform alone again
and he's the one who's going to the mat for you. He's also someone you've personally victimized. You want to make amends? Start with Kurt."

Rachel saw that Kurt looked as shocked as she felt and just as she was about to question Sam's unexpected curveball—after all she couldn't imagine Kurt being too happy at the prospect of working with her—she took a closer look at Kurt's face and realized he was stealing himself for her rejection. It was so heartbreakingly familiar that she let out a soft "oh" at the sight. She knew that face. She'd made that face every time she'd been left out of group activities, chosen last for teams or had a lab partner object to having to work with her. She was determined to never put that look on Kurt's face again. It was in that moment that Rachel realized exactly what she needed to do to prove to not only her would be friends, but also to herself that she knew how to be a friend and put other's first.

"I would be honored to sing with Kurt," Rachel said. "But that would leave you without a partner and that wouldn't be very fair, would it?" Rachel took a deep breath before she continued. "If I'm going to ask you guys to give me a chance to prove I can change then I have to start changing. So Sam, Kurt, your generosity is greatly appreciated, incredibly moving and duly noted but I—I won't be stealing anyone's partner. I ended up alone for this assignment and that's how I'll do it. You gave up your duet before; you shouldn't have to do it again."

"Wait what?" Finn asked, confused. "You said—"

"So we went through eight episodes of The Young and The Clueless for things to end up right back where they started?" Santana scoffed.

"No," Kurt said giving Rachel a smile. "We're so much better than where we started."

"I hope so," Rachel said, sniffling a bit.

"I know so," Sam said giving Rachel a grateful smile.

"Kurt," Rachel said walking over to him. "I'm going to hug you now."

"I'm surprisingly okay with that," Kurt responded standing up and opening his arms.

As Rachel wrapped her arms around Kurt and she felt him tentatively return her embrace she looked around to see all the members of New Directions looking on with approval. As Kurt let her go, Mercedes stepped forward and gave her a hug, followed by Sam, and then Tina. As her glee mates all embraced her one by one, Rachel realized for the first time that they hadn't been pushing her out; they'd just been waiting for her to stop being a diva long enough to let them in.

"So…um…are we cool, dude?" Finn asked Kurt as they rummaged around the kitchen looking for an after school snack.

"No reason why we wouldn't be," Kurt replied grabbing some left over's and putting them into the microwave.

"I just…I know it wasn't fair of me to ask you to give up your duet with Sam and I kinda…feel bad about how I got you to agree," Finn confessed.

"You're right," Kurt said as he removed two plates from the cabinet. "It wasn't fair. But you're a teenage boy who was trying to help the girl he loves. And as blatant as the emotional manipulation was, you weren't entirely inaccurate. Rachel deserved a second chance and when given one she came through in ways that I didn't even think she could. So, all's well that ends well."
"I still feel kinda bad for asking. And for not helping you out this morning with Karofsky. I don't know what his problem is. He's always given you crap but lately he's like a man possessed," Finn remarked, getting drinks from the refrigerator and placing them onto the table. "He's like one of those creepy stalkers in those crappy Lifetime movies Rachel always makes me watch."

"Hey, don't knock the cinematic brilliance of Mother May I Sleep with Danger or My Stepson, My Lover," Kurt snorted.

"It's not funny," Finn whined. "Those movies always make me feel like I should apologize for being a dude."

"Oh my God, Finn," Kurt laughed as he dished the food onto the plates. "They aren't that bad."

"Uh, yeah they are. My balls go into hiding whenever she makes me sit through those flicks."

"Charming visual," Kurt deadpanned.

Kurt handed Finn his plate and both boys sat at the table quietly for a moment before Finn spoke again. "It was kind of brave of Rachel to do the right thing, huh?"

Kurt hummed his agreement. "You were right. Despite her many shortcomings there's a really good person somewhere inside Rachel that just wants a chance to get out."

"I'm gonna take that as a compliment," Finn replied.

"As you wish."

Finn thought as he chewed his food. He knew Kurt had wanted to perform with Sam. He knew that it was important to the other boy and that he'd been looking forward to it, but Kurt had put all that aside to do what he believed was right.

He knew Sam didn't really like singing by himself. He preferred group numbers or duets but Sam had been willing to bite the bullet and perform alone in order to give Rachel a chance to truly earn a way back into the club's good graces and keep Kurt from being the odd man out yet again.

And then there was Rachel. Finn knew Rachel probably better than anyone. He knew how scared she'd been to go into the choir room and how afraid she'd been that performing alone meant she was unwanted and unwelcome, but she'd gone in anyway and done the right thing, even though it hadn't been the easy thing.

All around him people were growing and changing. Puck used to be one of the biggest bullies and homophobes he knew and now he was protecting the Gleeks and cuddling with Kurt. Rachel was making a real effort to be less selfish and put others first. Kurt's Ice King persona was slowly but surely melting away. Finn felt like going along with the crowd, letting his decisions be made for him by people he didn't necessarily agree with, respect or even like was keeping him trapped. He wasn't growing. He wasn't being his own person and becoming the man he was supposed to be, the man he wanted to be.

"Kurt," he said hesitantly. "I ah, I have to tell you something."

"Okay," Kurt said slowly. "I'm all ears."

"I'm sorry," Finn blurted out. "I've been an awful friend and a worse almost brother."

"Wha-"
"Azimio and Karofsky. They uh, they said they'd make school a living hell for me if I hung out with you or helped you out or I don't know, breathed the same air as you. I let them push me around and push you around and that's not cool. I don't...I'm not...I don't want to be that guy."

Kurt was quiet for several moments as he worked through his emotions. He was shocked, angry and confused by the entire thing. He didn't understand why Karofsky or Azimio would care so much about his relationship with Finn that they'd threaten the other boy in order to create a rift between them. He also didn't understand why Finn would go along with such a thing. It did explain why Finn had run hot and cold with him; somewhat comfortable and friendly at home and standoffish and dismissive at school.

"I want to be really mad at you," Kurt said finally. "Part of me is. You pretty much sold me out because someone threatened your popularity."

"I'm sor-"

"I'm not done," Kurt said. "Like I said, part of me is extremely pissed. But the rest of me gets it. I'm not blind, Finn. I've seen what those two have done to you since you joined Glee club. I may be their favorite target, but I'm not their only target. You might be able to defend yourself against one of them, but both of them? It would be like something out of an episode of Oz," Kurt said.

"I'm not afraid of them," Finn denied instantly.

"Then you're stupid," Kurt snapped. "Finn, you take this to the grave, understand?" At Finn's nod Kurt continued. "Karofsky attacked me in the men's room at the movie theater the same week Azimio jumped me at school. They are vicious, violent bullies who don't have a brain cell between them. If you aren't scared, you should be."

"Karofsky did what?" Finn asked, shocked and angry. "Fuck man, why didn't you say anything?"

"Because it wouldn't have done any good," Kurt replied. "No one saw anything. An attendant came in at the very end and all they saw was him crumpled over in pain. It would have been my word against his and all it would have done is make dad worry and get me forbidden to leave the house ever again. Besides," he said with a sly grin, "I totally kicked his ass."

"No way," Finn blurted out before he could think better of it.

"Uh, yes way," Kurt countered. "Finn, you've met my father. Do you honestly think he'd let his openly gay son wander around this backwater town without being able to defend himself?"

Finn's face scrunched up in concentration. Burt did seem like the type of dad to take his son out in the backyard and teach him how to throw a punch. Even if that son was a guy like Kurt, who would rather use his wit than his fists.

"No," Finn admitted.

"I've taken a self defense class every year since I was thirteen, I've been at the gun range so often I'm a better shot than dad and, illegal as it may be, there's mace and a stun gun in the glove compartment of the Navigator-both of which I've been trained to use," Kurt said bluntly.

"What? Dude why don't you fight back then?"

"Because I'm not an idiot," Kurt sighed. "Finn, when have any of my bullies ever gone after me one on one? They travel in packs. When Karofsky cornered me in the men's room, yeah I fought him off because I had to. But when there's four, five, six guys...the rules change. Besides, most of the time
they goal is to humiliate, not harm. A slushie won't kill me. Inciting six pea brained homophobes to distribute a beating because 'the fag fought back' just might."

"Jesus," Finn whispered. "I never even thought...Kurt...," Finn trailed off helplessly.

"Of course you didn't," Kurt said. "Why would you? Even at their worst guys like Noah, you, even meatheads like Strando and Rashad have no intention of causing permanent damage. But guys like Karofsky, Azimio...Finn their hate runs deep. And I have to be careful. I found out the hard way that getting them angry, pushing their buttons? It's dangerous."

"What do you mean?"

"Finn, do you know why Azimio jumped me?"

"Because he's a dick."

"Well yes," Kurt agreed, "but there was more to it than that. He was angry because I got the better of Karofsky at the movies. To guys like them, getting embarrassed or beat up by a gay guy...it's an insult Finn. It means that they have something to prove. They have to put me in my place and if I end up with black eyes, broken bones or worse they don't care because as far as they're concerned I deserve it for being gay."

Finn felt something cold and slick settle in his stomach and the food in his mouth suddenly tasted like ash. "That's...that's sick. It makes me sick. Like I think I legit just lost my appetite."

"Must be serious then," Kurt teased, trying to lighten the mood. "Look Finn, guys like Karofsky and Azimio are, unfortunately for me, a fact of my life. I've learned how to keep myself as safe as possible. I won't lie; its better now that I have people helping to watch my back and yeah I'd love it if you became one of those people but I'm not gonna push you. You need to do whatever you can live with," Kurt said as he rose from the table and dropped his dished into the sink. "I'm gonna go call Blaine and then start on my homework. It's your turn to clean up," he tossed over his shoulder as he made his way down to his room."

Finn sat the table trying to absorb all the things that Kurt had told him. The more he thought, the more he realized that he was rapidly coming to a crossroads. Sooner, rather than later he'd have to make a choice between doing what he was told and doing what he believed in.

He just wished he had enough confidence in himself to be sure that when that time came the choice he'd make would be the right one.

A/N 2: I have complicated Rachel feels and I hope that came through lol. I think she can be absolutely horrible and then turn on a dime and be amazing. I said from day one early chapters would explore her negative aspects and then later things would get more balanced. Part of that was plot purposes and part of that was because I wanted to get into both sides of her personality and also explore a bit of why Hummelberry is such an interesting (and conflicting) dynamic to me. I often can't decide if I want Kurt far, far away from her or if they're the cutest bff's ever.
Blaine's morning had been nothing short of stellar. Anderson International's stock was up, the dining hall served Belgium waffles, Mr. Pettigrew didn't show up for World Economics so he'd had a free period, Wes had let him know that the council was going to okay his suggestions for their next performance and Kurt had sent him an adorably flirty text message. Blaine was sure that things couldn't have gone any better if he'd scripted them and then his entire day got shot straight to hell with one voicemail.

~Your mother and I are coming into town next week. We expect you to make time to have dinner with us.~

After that Blaine felt as if a black cloud hung over him. He was surly, short tempered and irritable. The specter of his parent's impending visit drained all the color from his world and painted it angry black.

"Seriously Blaine, who the fuck pissed in your Corn Flakes?" Jeff demanded when Blaine yelled at a freshman for walking too slowly in front of him.

Blaine gave Jeff a dark look and before he answered. "No one, as you so eloquently put it, pissed in my Corn Flakes. I just got a message from my sperm donor that he and the gold digging incubator are going to be in town next week and want to spend an evening pretending the three of us don't hate one another."

Jeff whistled sympathetically. "Ah, the parental units. Doesn't it warm your heart when they stop being completely self absorbed just long enough to completely fuck you over?"

Blaine shook his head. "I don't have the energy for them or their drama right now," he said angrily. "I'm stressed enough and already have dinner plans this weekend."
"All weekend?" Jeff asked with a raised eyebrow.

"Maybe not all weekend," Blaine admitted. "Jasper and I have a business dinner with Hardison Sinclair on Friday and then Saturday I'm taking Kurt home so the two of them can meet."

"And Sunday?"

"Fine so Sunday's open," Blaine said sullenly. "But I'll either be celebrating how well things went between Kurt and Jasper or things will have gone so badly between the two of them that I'll be extremely disappointed and such a complete and utter bitch that no one in their right mind will want to be around."

"So you meet the parents on Sunday," Jeff said brightly. "You'll either be in such a good mood they won't be able to bring you down or you'll be in such a bad mood they'll think twice about forcing you to play happy family the next time they're in town."

Blaine sighed. "I don't want to," he whined.

"Yeah well, I don't want to go sit in a circle and share my feelings with a bunch of narcissistic attention whores but we all gotta do things we don't want to," Jeff replied.

"You're a narcissistic attention whore," Blaine pointed out.

"Yeah but that doesn't mean I want to sit and listen to ten other people bitch and whine about how hard it is to be one," Jeff shrugged. "And it's not like I haven't tried to care. I've slept with like three fourths of the group and I gotta tell you, great sex aside, they still just really suck as people man."

"You slept with—what is wrong with you?" Blaine asked the blonde. "Even I wouldn't troll for ass at group therapy."

"Yo, don't knock it til you tried it. Sex with crazy people is like, super awesome."

"Your parents need to get their money back. Therapy is not doing you any favors. You're as offensive, promiscuous and self destructive as ever," Blaine said seriously.

"Whoa whoa whoa, pump your brakes home slice," Jeff said coming to a stop outside of Blaine's dorm room and waiting for the other boy to unlock the door.

"First of all, when you grow up in a political family there's a freedom in being offensive that you can't even begin to appreciate or understand," Jeff said as he draped his blazer across the back of a chair and plopped down onto Blaine's bed. "Second of all, insinuating that my promiscuity is something I need to change or be embarrassed about is slut shaming, which is wrong and coming from you, King of the Fuck and Chuck, it's also hypocritical and third, I'm working on my self-destructive tendencies but I have poor impulse control and issues with emotional self regulation so it's a bit of a work in process."

"I take it back," Blaine said as he took up the spot on the bed next to Jeff and stripped off his Dalton tie. "You are getting your money's worth out of therapy. That was the biggest load of psycho babble I've ever heard."

Jeff gave Blaine a mischievous look before he spoke again. "I'm actively listening and I hear what you're saying. I'm sorry that you feel that way but I feel put down and hurt when oomphf."

Jeff didn't get to complete his sentence before Blaine straddled him and began playfully trying to gag him with his Dalton tie.
"I guess the rumors are true. You really are one kinky son of a bitch, Anderson. Why am I not surprised you are, in fact, a complete deviant." Thad's voice floated in from the doorway.

Blaine sighed and rolled off of Jeff. "I'm not the one who can list 'starred in an internet porn' video as a family trait," Blaine snapped back. "Go way, Thad. I'm busy now. I'll ignore your existence some other time."

Thad scowled. "Fuck you Anderson-"

"Not even in someone else's wet dream, Harwood."

"Did you come in here for a reason Thad?" Jeff asked hoping to stop the argument before it had a chance to truly get started.

"Indeed I did," Thad beamed. "I just wanted to give Blaine a heads up. Earlier I was corned by Tanner Kensington. You remember Tanner don't you, Blaine? Blonde hair, green eyes, sophomore twink?" Anywhoo, he wanted to know if the rumors were true and you actually made the Warblers travel to Deliverence to serenade your latest conquest," Thad smirked. "Tanner was just so insistent that it was beneath the Warblers to help you with your latest random that I accidently let it slip that you're quite serious about Kurt and pretty much off the market. He was understandably upset considering you stopped seeing him because you said relationships just weren't your thing. He stormed off mumbling something about someone needing to warn Kurt just what kind of guy his boyfriend really was. I'm relatively sure by now Kurt's Facebook is getting an awful lot of traffic and you know what they say about scorned lovers. Who knows what kind of tales Tanner is filling the poor boy's head with?"

Jeff's eyes widened in alarm and he glanced at Blaine, fully prepared to restrain his friend if necessary and was shocked to see that Blaine looked perfectly serene.

"Thank you for the warning Thad," Blaine said as he rose from the bed, made his way over to his desk and got on his laptop.

"It might be a bit too late to head Tanner off at the pass," Thad said in a smug voice as he watched Blaine furiously tap away at his keyboard. "I ran into him before lunch and it just slipped my mind until a few minutes ago. I hope your damage control skills are up to snuff because if Tanner's told your pet poor kid how quickly your passion cools after a game or two of mattress tag you'll be lucky if he ever speaks to you again. Quinn told me how inexperienced Kurt is. Poor thing probably completely overreacted."

"Your concern is touching," Blaine remarked, smiling broadly and leaning back in his chair. "But it's completely unwarranted. First, Kurt's Facebook is private. Second, he knows I have a past and he doesn't judge me for it. And third, Tanner and I had a small chat earlier. He realized being petty and vindictive would accomplish nothing and agreed to leave the past in the past."

Blaine's statement was a stripped down, whitewashed version of the truth. After his conversation with Thad, Tanner had tracked down Blaine and confronted him, making the mistake of informing Blaine that he planned to tell Kurt how Blaine had talked Tanner into sleeping with him while Blaine was supposed to be dating Christophe Van Lucre and then dumped both boys via text a few days later.

Blaine had responded by asking Tanner if he thought interfering in his relationship with Kurt was worth his recently reconciled parents divorcing over. Tanner had been confused until Blaine explained that it would be terrible shame if Mrs. Kensington discovered that her husband was not only still seeing his mistress but also a regular client of several high priced escorts.
"You're lying. My father would never...how would you even know that?"

Blaine laughed cynically. "Your father most certainly would. And he has. And how I know is irrelevant. The fact is I know and more importantly, I can prove it. You have a choice to make here Tanner. You either walk away with your family intact or attempt to exact some sort of petty revenge and let your family pay the price for your transgression."

"I fucking hate you," Tanner spat.

"I'm not all that fond of you either," Blaine replied easily. "But I trust that we have a deal? I stay out of your father's affairs and you stay out of mine?"

Tanner was beside himself with anger but he knew that Blaine had him over a barrel. His mother had barely survived the humiliation of finding out about his father's affair and he knew that she wouldn't be able to stand the sneers and whispers that would come if it became public knowledge that he was actually paying for prostitutes. He wasn't stupid; he knew his father was far from the only man in their social group to cheat on his wife or sleep with escorts, but the unwritten rule was to keep skeletons in the closet under lock and key. Secrets were acceptable; scandals were not.

"Yes, we have a deal," Tanner grit out through clenched teeth. "I can't believe I ever let you touch me."

"I can't believe I ever bothered," Blaine said coldly. "You're an overly dramatic pain in the ass and a lousy lay. Piece of advice Tanner: don't cross me again. The next time it won't end so well," Blaine warned before he turned and walked away from the furious blonde.

Thad's smile slipped the tiniest bit and furrowed his brow. "If you and Tanner came to terms why the mad dash to your laptop?" he asked bringing Blaine back to the present.

"Oh that?" Blaine said, feigning innocence. "All your talk about Kurt's Facebook wall reminded me that I needed to accept Quinn's friend request."

"Well," Thad began, "Quinn is free to friend whomever she wants. Although I did think she had more discerning tastes."

"Apparently I'm popular among hot blondes. Jeff, Tanner, Quinn," Blaine paused deliberately before looking at Thad and grinning, "Leah."

Thad flushed and then narrowed his eyes at Blaine. "Since when do you talk to Leah?"

Leah Aldridge was blonde, beautiful, blue blooded and the queen bee of their peer group's social hive. When she said jump, every debutante in a fifty mile radius asked "how high"? One word from Leah turned outcasts into insiders and sent insiders into exile. Thad had been trying to charm his way into Leah's good graces-and her bed-for the last six months. It had been no easy undertaking. Even though Thad possessed all the proper qualifications and acceptable family ties, Leah was a girl who knew her worth and refused to mortgage her future trophy wife status by sullying her pristine reputation. Preserving her aura of propriety had been one reason she had never been anything more than cool and cordial towards Blaine and why Thad, after his widely known troubles with his ex, had been forced to jump through flaming hoops in order to woo her. Thad had risen to the challenge however and pulled out all the stops, finally managing to get Leah to agree to be his date for an upcoming charity ball.

If Leah got close to Blaine or worse yet found out about Quinn, all of Thad's hard work would be for naught.
Blaine shrugged. "Anderson International is underwriting the charity ball for Children's Hospital this year. Leah's head of some volunteer group that's raising funds for the event. We ran into one another at the club a few weeks ago, got to talking about things and well...a friendship was born."

"So you and Leah are friends?"

"Mmm hmm," Blaine replied nonchalantly. "And now, apparently so are Quinn and I."

Blaine let the threat hang in the air, unspoken but fully understood. Blaine held the power to destroy Thad's chances with both girls. One word to Quinn about Leah and the girl would never speak to Thad again and all the time he'd spent wooing the beauty would go to waste. Worse than that, one word to Leah and Thad's entire social standing would be at risk. His reputation had barely recovered from the incident with Anastasia and Yasmin, he couldn't afford to have Leah put him on her blacklist.

"Blaine-"

"I'm going to tell you the same thing I told Tanner and I'm only going to tell you once," Blaine said coldly as he rose from his seat and walked over to where Thad still stood in the doorway. "Don't cross me again," he warned lowly before he stepped back and slammed the door in Thad's face.

Slow clapping filled the room and Blaine turned around to face a slightly disapproving Jeff. "Impressive. Although the two of you get less and less entertaining every time you pull this crap. Why don't you two just whip out your dicks and a ruler and get it over with? Seriously Blaine, this whole thing with Thad has got to stop. At this point I don't know if you two need to fight or fuck to get all the animosity out of your systems."

Blaine grimaced and then shook his head. "Thad's straight. If he wasn't we probably would have hate sex years ago and we'd still be exactly where we are, with me having to constantly remind him that he is and always will be inferior."

"Yeah yeah," Jeff said rolling his eyes. "You do know all he's gonna do is go think up another way to come after you."

"If Thad wants to waste his time coming up with new and better ways to fail I can't stop him," Blaine said. "But I meant what I said. The next time he comes after me, it'll be the last."

"He's not just coming after you anymore though," Jeff said quietly. "He's also coming after Kurt-indirectly but still. It's pretty obvious he sees Kurt as a weakness of yours he can exploit. And you know Thad-he's not going to give up. If he has to go through Kurt to get to you, he will."

Blaine's easy countenance evaporated and his facial expression took on a look of pure malice. "That would be a monumental mistake on Thad's part," Blaine said with deceptive calm. "One I'd take great pleasure in making sure he lived to regret. I would break him and everyone he cared about. I would destroy his present, and obliterate his future. I would wreck him so completely his grandchildren would still be suffering the consequences. I would -"

"Whoa dude, dial it down a notch. Just pointing out the obvious, not trying to send you the ragey place," Jeff said waving his hands.

"I don't have a ragey place," Blaine denied immediately.

"Uh yeah you do," Jeff argued. "And it's mucho scary when you unleash that beast, bro," Jeff cocked his head to the side. "You know, if we really were bro's, my parents would totes have you in anger management."
"That would be a giant waste of everyone's time and their money since I'm hardly ever angry Jeff," Blaine protested.

"No, you hardly ever express anger. Instead of venting like a normal person you choke on it until you can't take it anymore, then you explode and the aftermath is like freaking Chernobyl," Jeff countered. "Most of the time you're the definition of calm, cool and collected but when your buttons get pushed...your temper is dangerous, man. Mostly because no one ever even knows when you're pissed until it's too late and then it's really too late."

Blaine sighed. "I won't argue that when I do show my temper I can get a little carried away, but like you said most of the time I'm calm, cool and collected."

"Only because most of the time when you get mad you start channeling Machiavelli and are too plotting on whoever pissed you off to actually be angry like a normal person," Jeff retorted. "All I'm saying is, you might want to watch it when it comes to Kurt. Thad's already figured out he's a way to get to you. If he knew how just how unglued you get about the guy, there's no telling what he'd do."

"I'll keep that in mind," Blaine said annoyed that Jeff was right and irritated that he didn't know what to do about it. "I don't want to talk about Thad anymore. I need a distraction. By some miracle I have no homework today and Resident Evil is calling my name. You in?"

Jeff knew Blaine well enough to recognize a dismissal when he heard it. "Always man. Let's kick some zombie ass."

"Fuck Blaine Anderson," Thad thundered, as he stormed into Flint's dorm room and slammed the door. "Fuck his smug face and his superior attitude and fucking blackmail. Fuck him. Fuck him right in the ass with no prep, no lube and a sandpaper rubber," Thad ranted.

Flint put his pencil down and squinted at Thad. "I take it things with Tanner didn't quite go as planned."

Thad furiously tore off his blazer and threw it on Flint's bed. "No Flint," Thad growled, "Things with Tanner didn't go as planned. Somehow Blaine managed to talk him into playing nice and letting bygones be bygones. And then, if that weren't bad enough, Blaine's managed to become friendly with both Quinn and Leah."

Flint winced sympathetically. "I'm sorry, man."

Thad sneered at the other boy. "You certainly are. I don't know why I keep you around. You're absolutely useless," he snarled.

Flint's eyes flickered to his Lacrosse shaft in the corner of the room and he had a brief fantasy of beating Thad with it until he was bruised and bloodied, humiliated, broken and properly remorseful for the disrespectful way he spoke to him. He closed his eyes, let the fantasy play out and then shook it away. He couldn't afford to give in to his impulses. He had to keep his eye on the prime objective, which was getting revenge on Blaine.

Flint had hoped he'd be able to use Thad as a means to achieve that end but more and more the boy was proving himself incompetent. If they were going to make any headway, he was going to have to subtly take the reins. Thad was simply taking too long and failing too often for Flint's liking. He knew he couldn't outright take charge; Thad was arrogant and prideful and he'd balk immediately. But Flint was losing his patience and Thad missing the obvious hole in Blaine's blackmail plot annoyed him to no end. Flint knew if he pointed it out to the other teen, Thad's pride wouldn't allow
him to admit he'd been had but he suspected that a subtly placed trail of breadcrumbs might get the train back on the tracks.

"Thad?" Flint asked after a few moments.

"What?"

"I need you to explain something to me," Flint said carefully.

"What Flint? How two and two make four?" Thad asked nastily.

Flint forced down his anger and shook his head. "No, I don't understand how Blaine is going to keep Kurt from getting mad at him. He and Quinn are friends right? Won't Kurt be mad that Blaine didn't tell him about you and Leah?"

Thad opened his mouth to reply and then snapped it shut. It had never occurred to him that Blaine would have to find a way to appease Kurt if he were to out Thad to Quinn.

"He would be putting himself in a perilous position with his pet poor kid wouldn't he," Thad mused out loud.

"I guess so," Flint replied trying to keep the impatience out of his voice. "Kurt was kind of protective of Blaine that day in the coffee shop. He's probably like that with all of his friends."

Thad's smile fell. "Except that Blaine isn't just Kurt's friend," he sighed. "He's either fucking the kid six ways from Sunday by now or he's got his wrapped around his little finger. Even if Kurt did get upset, Blaine would find a way out of it. He always does," he added bitterly.

Flint's chest tightened uncomfortably and his hands curled into fists at the thought of Blaine and Kurt having sex. He was simultaneously bombarded by guilty memories of his night with Blaine and his unwanted attraction towards Kurt.

Kurt Hummel was rapidly becoming a problem for Flint, one he had no idea how to solve. Kurt had slowly taken over his subconscious, pushing Blaine aside until it was long limbed, pale beauty that starred in Flint's illicit, explicit fantasies. More and more when he was lying alone in his bed, pajama bottoms and boxer briefs pushed halfway down his thighs and his cock in his hand all he found himself thinking of Kurt soft, pink lips wrapped around his shaft, sucking him down like that's what he was born to do. When he came, spilling slick, wet heat onto his stomach and sheets most of the time it was to images of Kurt with his mile long legs wrapped around his waist, nails in his back, moaning like a whore and begging for it as Flint pounded into him deeperharderfaster.

Other times the fantasies were darker, more depraved and decidedly less consensual but Flint didn't like to dwell on those. There are places his mind has gone that scare even him. Flint wasn't stupid; he knew what people thought of him. That he was dangerous. That he was unbalanced and violent. That he was a mental case and the only reason he wasn't locked up was because of his family's money. Flint knew that none of that was exactly untrue, but it still bothered him to know that people thought he was sick, that he was crazy.

Flint refused to think of himself as crazy. Sure he let his anger get the better of him and fine he may have hurt a couple of people but they were just his housekeeper Inez' son and a valet at a club. It's not like he attacked anyone who really mattered. He'd never gone after one of his peers no matter how sorely he'd been tempted. Crazy people, Flint reasoned, weren't selectively crazy. They couldn't pick and choose when to have episode they just...did. Flint was in control. As he long as he had control, he wasn't crazy no matter what kind of medication his doctor tried to shove down his throat or
rumors his peers started behind his back.

Flint's biggest fear however was that he was, in fact, sick. Intellectually he understood that sexuality wasn't an illness. That being gay, being straight, being neither, being both—none of it made a person sick. But emotionally all he could think was that his fantasies, his wants, his desires are wrong. That he was wrong. That he was twisted and perverse, warped and distorted. Flint wasn't like Sterling. He couldn't hook up with a guy one week and a girl the next as if it didn't matter. Flint wasn't like Blaine. He couldn't flaunt his sexuality, piling up sexual partners like so many notches on a bedpost as if it were no big deal. Flint was certainly nothing like Kurt. So obviously gay and parading around his abnormality as if were something to be proud of.

Flint felt as if he'd been violated, infected somehow with unwanted desires and his dalliance with Blaine and fascination with Kurt was his punishment. It sent him into a downward spiral of disgrace and depression whenever he was forced to acknowledge that he had a plethora of fantasies that he could never turn into realities without losing everything. Blaine had taught him that. Blaine had taught him that even if no one ever found out Flint would know and he'd choke on the shame until it turned into an anger that all but consumed him.

So no, Flint wasn't crazy. And technically he didn't have an illness but he was frightened that he was a little bit sick. He was pretty sure though, that it was Blaine who had made that way and it was Kurt who was keeping him that way. There was something about the two of them made Flint powerless. He'd never obsessed over Sterling or Van Lucre; never had nightly fantasies of Tanner or gave more than an idle, easily repressed, thought to any of the other openly gay boys he'd come across or attractive males he went to school with. But Blaine had gotten under his skin, burrowed and dug his way deep inside and it had taken the cruel loss of Flint's virginity for him to be able to get him out. He still thought about Blaine, but it wasn't with the same all consuming fire he'd once had. No, his focus had shifted and Flint had decided that if he could just get his revenge on Blaine he'd be able to close that chapter. He'd be able to shove there encounter to the darkest corner of his mind and never think of it again. That once he didn't feel used and humiliated, once he'd gotten even, he could move on and let Blaine Anderson become a distant memory.

Kurt however, was a horse of a different color. As much as he wished that his interest in Kurt was fleeting and would diminish over time, the opposite was proving to be true. As the days went by he became more and more fixated on the brunette. The last time Flint had felt that way it had been Blaine and that had ended in disaster.

Disaster or not, it had ended, Flint realized with a start. He hated Blaine now. Indulging in his fantasy and having Blaine rebuff him had killed every bit of the want and longing Flint used to feel for him. Perhaps things with Kurt would work the same way. Maybe if he had the other boy, just once, he'd be able to get it out of his system.

Flint was relatively sure that Kurt wasn't as promiscuous as Blaine, probably hated him and wouldn't voluntarily end up in his bed. Flint also knew that he couldn't take the boy by force—it was stupid and risky, would leave too much evidence and if Kurt told he'd lose absolutely everything.

A plan rolled around on the edges of his consciousness and began to take shape. Flint realized that if he were patient, had a little luck on his side and played his cards right, he could kill two birds with one stone.

"Flint!" Thad yelled, throwing a pillow and capturing Flint's attention. "Have you heard a word I've said?"

Flint bit back his sarcastic reply and did his best to look contrite. "Sorry Thad. You know I get distracted easily."
Thad made a sound of disgust. "I know five year olds with ADHD who have better attention spans than you."

As Thad droned on about Leah, Quinn, Warblers and the latest incarnation of his plan to bring down Blaine, Flint nodded politely, pretended to listen, and mentally worked out the details of his own plan.

A/N2: I'm pretty sure you guys have figured out by now that while this story has it's share of shady characters, Flint is the one to watch. I'm trying super hard not to make him come off as cartoonish but to quote Hank Hill "that boy ain't right" and that will become more and more apparent as the story goes on.

And, at the risk of spoiling the story, to set some of you at ease, I'll say right now there is a reason there's not a noncon or dubcon warning. There won't be noncon or dubcon occurring in the story...but it WILL come up in the story. When we reach that point there will be a warning so people know what to expect and anyone who wants/needs further clarification don't hesitate to send me a PM or message me on my Tumblr. I don't want ANYONE triggered. I'd rather spoil a story than cause any of you guys emotional discomfort.
Chapter Twenty: Sit Back and Watch the Bed Burn

Kurt hadn't even made it halfway to his room when he heard his father's voice calling him back up the stairs. When Kurt walked into the living room Burt was waiting for him and all it took was one look at the older man for Kurt to realize something major was going on. His father was rocking back and forth on the balls of his feet, eyes bright and happy, wearing a smile a mile wide with his arms around an equally ecstatic looking Carole.

Finn nervously looked back and forth between the couple. "Wh-what's going on? Is this one of those interventions?"

"If it is it's for the both of us," Kurt said slowly. "And I don't need one. I swear, since the unfortunate incident with Ms. Pillsbury's shoes I have been decidedly clean and sober."

A confused look crossed Carole's face and Burt shook his head quickly. "No, no, no," he said laughing. "Ok c'mon tell 'em," he said turning to Carole.

"No, no, no, you," Carole said merrily.
"Nuh uh-" Burt laughed.

"C'mon please-"

"We said in the car you-"

"You!"

"You!"

"C'mon please you!"

Burt laughed. "Alright, so you know how I visit Carole on her lunch break every Monday? Well, today instead of eating in the cafeteria or going to China Buffet I drove her to the school and we snuck into that classroom where Kurt introduced us –very romantic of me, I might add-and I uh-"

"He proposed!" Carole interrupted gleefully, "He proposed!"

"You stole the punch line," Burt laughed before placing a quick kiss on Carole's lips.

Finn stood stock still in shock as Kurt's eyes widened and his mouth fell open.

"Wait so this…just…happened," Finn asked in a daze.

"Oh Dad," Kurt sighed, grabbing Carole's hand to get a look at her ring.

"Yeah well, we wanted you two to be the first to know," Carole said smiling at the boys.

"Yeah, after the kids in that homeroom," Burt added with a grin.

Kurt clapped his hands with excitement.

"C'mon family hug," Burt said, holding out his arms and drawing Finn and Carole closer to him.

Kurt enthusiastically threw himself into the embrace, snuggling close to Carole. Burt, Carole and Kurt were so happy that they failed to notice Finn's somewhat apathetic response to the news.

"I'm just so excited and nervous," Carole confessed.

"Oh no no don't be," Kurt said, clasping Carole's hands in his. "This is just what I needed. I will take care of it from here. I have a trunk full of wedding magazines hidden under my bed. I'm thinking of a russet and cognac theme-those are colors Finn, fall wedding colors-"

"Don't get too extravagant Kurt," Burt warned. "We're gonna take whatever savings we have and we're spending it on the honeymoon." At Carole's surprised expression Burt dropped a small bombshell on his bride to be. "That's right," he said smugly, "we're going to Waikiki! We're going to that hotel where they put up the guest stars on Lost."

Carole's mouth opened in a soundless squeal of joy but the happy expression slid off of her face when she got a close look at her son. "Finn? You haven't said anything?"

"I ah uh…I guess I'm just kind of stunned," Finn said quietly.

"Don't worry," Burt said, patting Finn on the back. "I'm already looking for a bigger house. New family, new start."
"C'mon honey," Carole pleaded, "be happy for me."

Finn looked at his mother, her eyes shining with unshed tears and he didn't have it in him to rain on her parade. She had been through so much, loved and lost and been hurt so badly and come through it all with a quiet grace and gentle spirit that he admired more than he'd ever be able to say. Finn was a little confused and concerned about how sudden the marriage was and if he was ready for a new step father and what it would mean to be brothers with Kurt but he wasn't going to ruin her moment; he wasn't going to be the reason her tears were from anything other than joy.

"I am mom," he said softly.

"Alright," Burt said joyfully. "Now listen," he said pointing to Kurt. "As the wedding planner I want you to take care of one thing. I don't care about the food or the booze at this party but I want one heck of a band. I've been eating right and I've been exercising and I want to boogie with Carole."

Kurt and Carole laughed as Burt did a couple of impromptu dance moves. "It's already taken care of dad," Kurt said with a laugh. "I'm gonna hire the New Directions as your band. It won't cost you a cent. They're cheap, they're available. Long story short-you're having a Glee wedding."

As he took in the happy smiles on the faces of the three people around him Finn decided to lose himself in the warm feeling of being embraced by his new family and worry about everyone and everything else later.

Later came far too soon for Finn's liking. The next day at school he had a run in with Sam in the weight room and realized that the blonde hadn't given up on his quest to get back his position as quarterback. Even though Finn wanted to grow and change, he didn't want to lose what little influence he had among his peers and he knew that getting removed from his position as quarterback so soon after people finding out Kurt was going to be his brother wouldn't bode well for him.

Finn needed to do something that would put the spotlight on him and show that he could come through in a pinch and shine under pressure. He needed to be the focus of something, make sure people were talking about him because of his accomplishments, and instead of gossiping behind his back about how he was losing his touch. The wedding would be the perfect opportunity for him show what he was made of since all the Glee kids and quite a few members of the football, basketball and hockey teams would be in attendance.

Or it would have been if Kurt's plans for the wedding gave him the opportunity.

He saw his soon to be step brother at his locker between classes and cornered him. "So I've been going over this itinerary and I don't really get it," Finn began. He figured his best chance at getting Kurt to make him a bigger piece of the puzzle was to ease into it slowly. "Are you sure we should release doves indoors? Won't that get kind of…messy?"

Kurt gave Finn an exasperated look. "That's why we feed them glitter Finn," he explained.

"Oh," Finn said with a small chuckle, pretending to understand how feeding the doves glitter was going to make anything better. "Well, I've been thinking about it and I really wanna do something special for the wedding. I wanna take this opportunity to sort of remind everyone that I'm, you know, a leader," he said with a slightly guilty expression on his face.

Kurt caught was he thought might be guilt flicker across Finn's face for a nanosecond but dismissed it in favor of his excitement over the upcoming wedding ceremony and the fact that Finn had voluntarily sought him out during school hours and was speaking to him in full view of the entire
"Incredibly creepy," Finn said as he walked around to stand on Kurt's other side.

"And deliver your speech to the newlyweds—which I will write although you are free to suggest overall themes," Kurt continued on without missing a beat. "You and Carole will have a lovely mother and son dance in front of everyone."

Finn panicked. "Uh that's a terrible idea. Everybody knows I'm the worst dancer."

"Finn trust me on this," Kurt begged. "I've been planning weddings since I was two. My power rangers got married and divorced in so many combinations they were like Fleetwood Mac."

Finn leaned against the lockers and thought for a moment. Everyone knew he couldn't dance and the idea had potential disaster written all over it. But then again, because everyone knew Finn couldn't dance if he pulled it off they'd all be pretty damn impressed. "I guess if I could pull it off it would make me seem like a cool stud," he said, warming up to the idea.

"Totally," Kurt stage whispered.

"Thanks," Finn smiled beatifically at Kurt and grasped his shoulder in a show of affection. "It's a plan," he said giving the shorter boy an affectionate squeeze and one more grateful grin before walking away leaving Kurt with a delighted smile dancing across his lips.

Karofsky knew that it was irrational for him to be so angry about Kurt and Finn becoming step brothers. He knew that Kurt wasn't his and that his anger and jealousy was getting out of hand and getting harder and harder to cover up and explain away. Azimio had all but told him that they'd have to back off of Hudson after the wedding because "fairy or not, Hummel's gonna be his family and you're stuck with family even when they suck. We don't punish Lewis because his dad is a racist dick, we can't punish Hudson because his step bro likes to take it up the ass," Azimio had explained as they'd walked out of first period.

Karofsky knew that he couldn't really keep Finn and Kurt apart. He didn't care how close they were outside of school where he didn't have to see it but he didn't want to have to bear witness to Kurt laughing and smiling with the other boy. It had tortured him last year, watching Kurt trail behind Finn like a lost little puppy and Finn pretend not to notice him unless he needed or wanted something from Kurt. Karofsky had wanted to pummel Finn for being the one Kurt had feelings for and he'd wanted to pummel Kurt for not realizing that he was crushing on a boy that could never want him back and ignoring one who did. He wanted to punish both of them and then he wanted to punish himself for having such twisted thoughts in the first place.

Coming around the corner and seeing the two of them standing close together, Finn with his hand on Kurt's shoulder and the two of them smiling at one another made something inside Dave snap. He watched as Finn walked away and Kurt turned to rummage around inside his locker. Dave silently crept up behind Kurt and when the other boy turned around he made sure he was standing right in his personal space.

He felt a wave of sadness wash over him when Kurt looked at him with a mixture of disdain and terror and immediately took a step backward. The sadness was quickly replaced by anger that Kurt would let Finn get so close while going out of his way to avoid him and keep him at arm's length. Karofsky matched Kurt step for step, until they were nearly chest to chest.
"I don't want you near me," Kurt declared his voice wavering slightly as he continued to try to back away.

The words were like thousands of tiny knives stabbing Karofsky right in the heart. He'd always known that Kurt hated him; he hadn't given the other boy any reason not to, but to be so close to the object of his affection and see nothing but fear and revulsion in the beautiful multi-hued eyes he dreamed about at night and be told, point blank, that he was unwanted and unwelcome filled him with a pain and sorrow the bigger boy hadn't known existed.

It also filled him with an overwhelming desire to make Kurt suffer, to make the other boy hurt the way he was hurting.

Karofsky roughly jabbed a finger into Kurt's chest and continued to advance on him. He leaned forward until their faces were inches apart and allowed a ghost of a smile to curl his lips before he dragged his finger down Kurt's chest and snatched the wedding cake topper out of his hands. "Can I have this," he asked holding the topper in the air, finally putting some distance between the two of them. Karofsky felt a small thrill of victory as he took in Kurt's trembling lips and heard the small, hitching breaths the other boy took. He took a deep breath, memorizing the smell of Kurt's cologne and pretending that Kurt's breath was coming in shallow, rapid breaths out of desire rather than fear before he smiled at Kurt once again. "Thanks," Karofsky said mocking Finn's goodbye before he left Kurt leaning shakily against the lockers.

As Karofsky made his way to his next class he slid the cake topper into the pocket of his letterman jacket and hated himself just a little bit more than he had when he'd woken up that morning.

Kurt felt as if he were on the verge of losing control like he had that night at the movie theater. Karofsky had come out of nowhere and Kurt had been caught off guard and thrown off kilter by the other boy's sudden appearance. Kurt could still feel Karofsky's breath lighting over his face and he swore he could feel the phantom touch of the other boy on his skin, despite his layers.

As he sagged against the lockers behind him Kurt clutched his books to his chest. His legs shook and threatened to give out beneath him. He dragged breath after breath of stale air into his chest but he still felt dizzy and nauseated. Cold sweat trickled down his back and his face slowly went from being flushed to deathly pale. The noise of the hustle and bustle of the students around him receded to a dull buzzing and he felt as if he were going to throw up, pass out and fall to pieces all at the same time.

"-urt," Kurt looked up to see Mr. Schuester standing in front of him. "Are you okay?"

Kurt opened his mouth to say yes. He intended to tell Mr. Schuester that he was fine and to thank him for asking but the words got stuck in his throat and all he could see was Karofsky looming over him and all he could feel was the terror of never knowing where or when the next assault would take place.

"…" Kurt tried to say no, that he wasn't okay, hadn't been okay for a long time and would never be okay as long the students and faculty continued to look the other way when he was under attack but nothing came out. All he could manage to do was shake his head. Mr. Schue put a comforting hand on his shoulder, allowing the gentle to touch to ground him and nodded. "Let's…let's go the principal," he said softly. "Come on," he said, gently steering Kurt down the hall towards Sue's office, keeping his hand on Kurt's shoulder and making sure to stay between Kurt and the prying eyes of the rest of the student body.
"Did he physically hurt you?" Principal Figgins asked.

Kurt wanted to scream yes. He wanted to strip off his jacket and shirt and show them every bump and bruise that marred his skin but he knew that Figgins was only asking about what had happened earlier in the hall and as much as he wanted to, Kurt couldn't bring himself to lie.

"No," he said reluctantly.

"You said he shoved you into the lockers before," Mr. Schue interrupted.

"William, I cannot expel a student for shoving," Principal Figgins sighed. "He will deny he shoved him on purpose and it will be Kurt's word against his and with no proof nothing can be done."

"He didn't shove me this time. He just terrified me," Kurt admitted.

"Mr. Hummel, I can't suspend a student because they are scary. If I could Tina Cohen-Chang and her vampire ways would be most unwelcome. Unfortunately that is the way of high school; some students are scary and others are mean," he shrugged.

"That's it?" Will burst in. "That's your advice? That's all you have to say?"

"William, I am not native to this country or Ohio. I cannot tell you how many students think it's funny to say "thank you, come again," as I walk by or how many times I was called Apu as a joke when I first immigrated," Principal Figgins sighed. "I know very well how cruel people can be. Is it difficult? Yes. Did it make me stronger? You bet it did."

"It's the fear that's the worst," Kurt said softly. "I never know when it's coming, I can't concentrate, and I don't feel like I'm part of this school at all. I feel like I'm in a horror movie where this creature follows me around terrifying me and there's nothing that I can do about it," Kurt said his voice rising sharply. "I mean, you don't know what's going on in this kid's head. You don't know what he's capable of," he finished desperately.

Will rose from his seat and fixed Kurt with an intense look. He knew that Kurt was holding something back and from the sounds of things it had to be something big. Will knew that he could be oblivious but there was no missing the shake in Kurt's voice, the sheen of unshed tears in his eyes or the pure helplessness written across his face. He couldn't help but feel as if he'd failed Kurt and wonder just how many more of his students were going through the same thing, suffering in silence convinced they had no one who would intervene or advocate for them. Looking at Kurt and seeing the usually vibrant, confident boy folded in on himself and breaking down bit by bit before his eyes made Will flush with shame and vow to start doing what he could to be a part of the solution instead of a passive part of the problem. He decided he'd start by trying to help Kurt.

"What does that mean?" He asked Kurt silently willing the boy to talk to him, to open up, to not let it be too late. For the space of one heartbeat it looked as Kurt would confide in them-in him-but then he shook his head and Will's heart fell to his knees. "N-nothing. M-maybe I'm overreacting."

Will was convinced Kurt was lying. He knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that Karofsky had said or done something that went beyond the normal bullying. He felt guilty once more and wondered if he'd made himself a little more available, paid a little more attention and been a little more diligent in making his classroom and his choir room safe places for his students if Kurt would have trusted him enough to have confided in him. There was a part of him that wondered if Kurt were keeping silent out of fear that Karofsky would hurt him or fear that even if he spoke up, no one would help him. Will hated that he suspected the answer was a little bit of both.
"Mr. Hummel," Principal Figgins said leaning across his desk. "If Mr. Karofsky harms you in any way come to me and I will personally make sure that the situation is handled. But until that happens, and I am legitimately sorry to say this, there is legally nothing I or the school board can do."

Will shook his head and stood up. "Come Kurt, we're gonna be late for rehearsal."

Kurt blinked back his tears and gathered up his belongings. He hadn't anticipated anything to come from meeting with Figgins but the man's unexpected understanding and Mr. Schue's sudden willingness to help gave Kurt a little bit of hope that things might be turning around in his favor.

"Ladies, the Kurt/Karofsky bullying situation is getting way out of control," Rachel announced to the assembled female members of New Directions. "Kurt's miserable. He's losing weight and not in a good way and he's barely fighting for solo's anymore."

"We've all been teased," Tina said, "but something about what Karofsky's doing is so much worse."

"We're all lucky enough to have boyfriends on the football team," Rachel continued on, "I say we band together and demand that they confront Karofsky."

"Okay," Mercedes said shaking her head. "I think you've personally just set the feminist movement back fifty years."

"Look I'm not saying they should hit him," Rachel said. "I'm just saying they should confront him and there's strength in numbers. Kurt helped me when he didn't have to," she admitted. "None of you would have given me a chance if he hadn't asked you to. I owe him and I know you all care about him. I do too and if something bad happens to Kurt and we didn't do anything to stop it we would never be able to live with ourselves."

The girls looked around at each other and nodded. "Ok, well, we're all in agreement and this meeting is adjourned. Ladies, go forth and find your respective muscle."

"What do you mean you won't help?" Rachel asked hurrying after Finn.

"Rach, Karofsky plays right guard. I piss him off and I get more sacked more times than Jay Cutler which means we lose. If we lose, Beiste is gonna put Sam back in as QB."

"Are you telling me a stupid football game is more important to you than helping out somebody that's about to be your family?" Rachel demanded.

"Look, Kurt and I have already talked about what I can do for him and he told me to do what could live with. I really think that I can help him more from the inside. Kurt's gonna understand and he's gonna be fine. I want to help him; I will help him, just not like this."

"I have never been so disappointed in you before," Rachel said sadly before she walked away.

Finn stared after her sadly before shaking his head and heading in the opposite direction.

"Dude was a wild animal," Mike declared.

"Manimal," Artie chimed in.

"I am so turned on by you right now," Brittany said, running her fingers through Artie's hair.
"How does it look," Sam asked Mercedes as she held an icepack to his eye.

"It's kind of hot actually," she answered with a small laugh.

"Where were you, Finn?" Santana sneered.

"I was still out on the field," Finn replied lamely. "But yeah, I totally would have given him a beat down if I'd been there though."

"This shouldn't have gone down without you Finn," Mercedes said, glaring at the teen. "You should have been leading the charge."

"Lay off Finn, guys. It's not his problem. It's none of your problem," Kurt interrupted. "I appreciate it, so much, and thank you for what you did, especially Sam, but I don't want anyone to get hurt."

"You're my friend. I got your back," Sam replied.

"Seriously, you were the epitome of a leader," Mike said to Sam.

"What is going on," Will asked walking into the choir room and stopping short at the sight of Sam's black eye. "What happened to Sam?"

"He stood up to Karofsky," Mercedes said.

"All the guys did," Tina said giving Mike's a hand a squeeze. "Well, not Finn."

"Is everyone okay?" Will asked. "Do we need to go see Principal Figgins?"

"Nah," Sam replied. "I gave as good as I got. I say we call it even. Hopefully Karofsky gets the message."

Will caught sight of Kurt slumped over in the corner and walked over to him. "You okay?" Will's heart broke a little when Kurt gave him a nod that they both knew was fake.

"Ok. Let's take our places. We have a duets competition to get underway and a wedding to rehearse for. So let's go. Artie, Santana care to start us off?"

"Fo schizzle," Artie said rolling to front of the room followed Santana.

"So we're gonna be singing The Sweet Escape by Gwen Stefani and Akon," Santana said. "And you all should prepare to lose, because me and Professor X are about to rock this thing."

After Artie and Santana's performance Quinn and Mercedes performed Glamorous by Fergie, followed by Mike and Brittany's take on Groove is in the Heart. Tina and Finn did a lovely rendition of Don't Go Breaking My Heart and then Rachel made everyone laugh and roll their eyes when she performed Fabulous from the High School Musical soundtrack, changing a few of the lyrics and turning her performance into a spoof of her own diva tendencies.

Then all too soon it was Kurt and Sam's turn.

"We ah, we thought about this a lot before we finally settled on a song-"

"Kurt vetoed the theme song from Boy Meets World," Sam interrupted with a grin as he got a guitar out of the corner and set up on a stool in the middle of the room.

"Pity that may be," Kurt said drily. "I think this song does a pretty good job of highlighting both our
talents and voices and um…showing that we understood the assignment. And in light of today's events," Kurt said, glancing at Sam and biting his lip, "It means even more to me to be performing this song with Sam who's honestly more like a brother to me than a friend."

"Right back at you, man," Sam said.

"Are you two gonna perform or bore us to death with your homoerotic subtext?" Santana interrupted.

Kurt rolled his eyes. "Anyway, we're going to be performing Count on Me by Bruno Mars." Kurt took a deep breath and signaled to Sam to start playing and he began to sing.

*If you ever find yourself stuck in the middle of the sea,*
*I'll sail the world to find you*
*If you ever find yourself lost in the dark and you can't see,*
*I'll be the light to guide you*

*Find out what we're made of*
*When we are called to help our friends in need*

*You can count on me like 1 2 3*
*I'll be there*
*And I know when I need it I can count on you like 4 3 2*
*And you'll be there*
*Cause that's what friends are supposed to do, oh yeah*

*Wooooh, Wooooh*
*yeah yeah*

Sam took the lyrics for the next verse, smiling briefly at Kurt before he began.

*If you toss and you turn and you just can't fall asleep*
*I'll sing a song*
*beside you*
*And if you ever forget how much you really mean to me*
*Everyday I will*
*remind you*

*Ohh*
*Find out what we're made of*
*When we are called to help our friends in need*

*You can count on me like 1 2 3*
*I'll be there*
*And I know when I need it I can count on you like 4 3 2*
*You'll be there*
*Cause that's what friends are supposed to do, oh yeah*

*Wooooh, Wooooh*
*Yeah Yeah*

Kurt placed his hand on Sam's shoulder and both boys sang the next part of the song together, Kurt's high melodic voice blending flawlessly with Sam's deeper, rich tone.

*You'll always have my shoulder when you cry*
I'll never let go
Never say goodbye

You can count on me like 1 2 3
I'll be there
And I know when I need it I can count on you like 4 3 2
You'll be there
Cause that's what friends are supposed to do, oh yeah

Woohoo, Woohoo
you can count on me cause' I can count on you

As the last note died out applause filled the room. "Guys that was great," Will said enthusiastically. "Great message, great performance. You should be really proud."

"Thanks Mr. Schue," Kurt smiled. "It was a lot of fun finally getting to sing to Sam."

"Anytime," Sam said as he walked over to put the guitar back in the corner.

"So not to interrupt the love fest," Santana said rolling her eyes. "But who won the competition?"

"Girl, were you in the room with the rest of us?" Mercedes asked. "Kurt and Sam just ran away with this mother."

"No doubt," Artie said nodding. "You can't fight a good bromance."

"You guys sounded amazing," Tina said.

"Yeah it...it was nice," Finn mumbled.

"It was a truly inspiring performance about the power of friendship and the-," Rachel began.

"No one asked you Yenta," Santana snapped. "I guess the Blonde and the Beautiful up there did okay."

"I guess its official then," Mr. Schue asked? "Kurt and Sam are our winners. You gentlemen just won yourselves a free dinner at Breadstix."

"I can hardly contain my joy," Kurt said wryly.

Mr. Schue handed over the vouchers and then gave a sheepish grin. "You guys have to use them this week though. I've held onto them for a little too long and they'll be expiring soon."

"Of course they are," Kurt murmured.

"You hold to them. I'll totally lose mine," Sam said handing his voucher over to Kurt. "Would you mind if we go tonight?" Sam asked. "I have work the rest of the week, a family reunion on Sunday and a date with Mercy on Saturday."

"Tonight's good for me," Kurt said. "I have wedding stuff the rest of the week and a pretty important date with Blaine Saturday myself. I just have to let my dad know I'll be going out tonight."

"Aww, Kurt and Sam's first date," Santana cooed.

"Oh snap, somebody better tell Puck that Sam's stealing his cuddle buddy!" Artie laughed.
"Look Mercedes, your boyfriend got a boyfriend-and he's prettier than you," Santana cackled.

"You're just jealous cause I got myself two fine pieces of man candy-one for each arm-and you," Mercedes said, glaring at Santana, "can't even get one."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"What do you think it means?"

"I think it means my fist is about to meet your face."

"Oh, it ain't nothing between us but space and opportunity, baby."

"That's enough," Mr. Schue said sharply, surprising everyone. "Santana, that was inappropriate and I don't want any more remarks like that made in here. Mercedes, same. No bullying inside this room, are we understood?"

Both girls grumbled their assent and New Directions fell back into familiar chaos, Kurt gave a cheery look around the room and decided that, all drama aside, there was nowhere else he'd rather be.

Kurt was just putting the finishing touches on his hair when his cell rang. The theme song to Boy Meets World started to play and Sam's name flashed across the display.

"Hey," he said grabbing it up before it could ring again. "I'm just about ready, I swear," Kurt laughed.

"Aw dude," Sam said regretfully. "I can't make it. My mom got called into work and my dad's sick so I'm on babysitting duty."

Kurt was disappointed. He'd been looking forward to getting to spend some one on one time with Sam to thank him for standing up for him and quiz him about what, if anything, he had planned for Mercedes' upcoming birthday.

"I understand," Kurt sighed. "Maybe next weekend we can hang?"


"I'm not sure that I'm a bro kind of guy," Kurt said hesitantly.

"You're totally a bro," Sam assured him. "And I'm really sorry."

"It's okay Sam," Kurt comforted him. "You take care of Stevie and Stacy and I'll...figure something out."

"Don't let those vouchers go to waste man," Sam ordered. "Call Mercy or Tina, check with Artie, ask Finn, hell call Blaine if you have to but dude, the bro code says free food must be claimed."

"I'm enjoying this bro business less and less the more rules you throw at me," Kurt teased. "But yeah, I'll find someone to go with. Don't worry about it. See you in school tomorrow, Sam."

"See ya."

Kurt hung up only feeling a little dejected. He briefly thought about calling Blaine but decided it was impractical to ask his...Blaine to make such a long drive to only get to hang out for a couple of hours before Kurt's curfew kicked in and Blaine had to drive all the way back to Westerville. He wished,
and not for the first time, that they lived closer to one another.

Tina and Mercedes were both out of the running, as he knew they were both had plans for the evening.

He supposed he could ask Finn. They did have things they needed to go over for the wedding and he'd never seen the other boy turn down food.

Kurt found the lanky teen in the kitchen, staring at the contents of the freezer.

"Do I even want to know what you're doing?" Kurt asked warily.

"Mom's late and I'm tired of cereal and sandwiches," Finn whined. "I'm looking for like, a hot pocket or something."

This was going to an easier sell than Kurt had originally anticipated. "I might be able to offer you something slightly-and I do mean slightly-better than a hot pocket," Kurt said smugly. "Sam had to cancel and I have a free dinner at Breadstix with your name on it if you want it, soon to be brother of mine."

"Alright!" Finn yelled slamming the freezer shut. "I'm going to Breadstix. I'm gonna eat free," he sang as he grabbed his jacket off of a kitchen chair.

"You're not gonna change?"

"What for?" Finn asked. "I'm still clean, dude."

'I cannot believe I had a crush on you," Kurt said to himself and then smiled. "Alright then, to Breadstix we go."

"Heigh ho, heigh ho, it's to the 'Stix we go," Finn sang on his way out the door.

"I will put you out on the side of the road," Kurt threatened locking the door behind them.

"We wait wait wait wait wait wait wait to go to the Stix the whole day though," Finn went on unperturbed by Kurt's threat.

"I won't even pull over first. I'm going to shove you out into the street-" Kurt mumbled unlocking his car and getting into the driver's seat.

"To eat eat eat eat eat eat eat eat at the Stix is what we like to do," Finn sang climbing into the passenger's seat of Kurt's Navigator and buckling up.

"Finn, I swear to God."

"It ain't no trick, you get full real quick-"

"You are bastardizing Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, do you realize that?" Kurt grumbled as he drove.

"But don't eat eat-"

"This song is ruined for me now," Kurt moaned.

"Too much cause ya might get sick," Finn finished happily.
"Are you done?"

"Maybe," Finn said mischievously, drawing out the word. "Maybe not."

"Finn,"

"Be our guest, be our guest, cause our breadsticks are the best-"

"You are five years old," Kurt said laughing.

"Nuh uh," Finn replied. "Five and a half," he said sticking his tongue out at Kurt.

"Whatever, we're here. You're not gonna need a booster seat or anything are you?" Kurt asked teasingly.

"No, but I might need a bib because I'm gonna eat like, my weight in breadsticks," Finn joked back.

"Finn, the breadsticks here are disgusting," Kurt announced as they parked and made their way into the restaurant.

"They're a required taste," Finn countered holding the door open for Kurt.

"The word is acquired, Finn and no they're really not," Kurt said turning to the hostess and presenting her with their vouchers.

"This way, gentleman," the pretty redhead said politely leading them to a booth.

An hour later Finn had tried and failed to eat his weight in breadsticks and they were both nursing generous slices of cheesecake and going over wedding preparations. Finn had convinced Kurt to nix the doves and Kurt had convinced Finn that *Pour Some Sugar On Me* would not be an appropriate song for his mother/son dance with Carole.

They were playfully arguing over whether to have New Directions perform *Marry You* or *Chapel of Love* as they danced down the aisle, Finn dramatically singing the lyrics to the latter when Kurt felt a heavy hand land on his shoulder.

"Look at what we have here Dave," Tony Lewis, one of the linebackers on the team. "Hudson's on a date with his boyfriend."

"Kurt's not my boyfriend," Finn denied instantly.

"Oh you two haven't made it official then?" Lewis sneered.

"Why don't you two go slither back under the rock from whence you came?" Kurt asked his voice dripping with disdain.

"Why don't you shut up before you meet The Fury?" Karofsky shot back.

"Leave him alone, Karofsky!" Finn growled, jumping to his feet. "The other guys told you and now I'm telling you: Back off Kurt."

"Oh look Dave, he's standing up for the little woman," Lewis laughed. "What's with all you glee freaks taking up for Tinker Bell, huh? Oh I get it," he said suddenly snapping his fingers and leering at Kurt. "It's because he has such a pretty mouth, isn't it?"

Lewis didn't know it but his words unintentionally pushed Karofsky right over the edge. The jock
had already been livid when he'd seen Kurt and Finn having dinner together, laughing and joking, singing back and forth to each other. Kurt had looked so happy, smiling at Finn and leaning across the table every so often to casually touch the other boy's arm. It had hurt, because Karofsky knew that Kurt would never look at him with affection, never playfully smack him on the forearm or let him steal a forkful of his dessert like he had with Finn. It had also made him angry because Lewis was right. It did kind of look like a date and that was something that Karofsky just couldn't handle.

"Look Gore," Kurt said glaring at Lewis, "why don't you and Kutchek go find the rest of your barbarian tribe and leave those of us who have mastered the art of personal hygiene in peace?"

"I don't know what a Kutchek is," Karofsky said as he stopped glowering at Finn and looked at Kurt, "But I'd rather be one of those than a fag like you and your date."

"We're not on a date!" Finn yelled shoving Karofsky so that he fell back into the table behind him.

"Sure you're not," Karofsky retorted as he righted himself and pushed Finn back. "And you weren't just singing songs to him, grinning all dopey at him, flirting with him and eating off his plate. It's a date and you're both sick little freaks."

Kurt quickly gathered up their things, put a tip for their waitress on the table and grabbed his keys. He pushed past Lewis so he could get out of the booth and went to stand beside Finn. "Leave Finn alone," he said angrily. "Finn, come on. You don't have to defend or explain yourself to these two, okay? We're leaving."

"Oh ho," Lewis cackled. "Looks like Hummel's calling the shots. Maybe I got it wrong. Maybe it's Hudson that's the girl."

"We're both guys, you jackass," Finn fired back without thinking.

"Finn," Kurt said, pulling on the quarterback's sleeve, urgently trying to get him to leave with him before he said something else the pair of bullies could use against him. "Let's just go."

"Better do what your man says Hudson," Lewis mocked.

"Finn," Kurt said, pulling on the quarterback's sleeve, urgently trying to get him to leave with him before he said something else the pair of bullies could use against him. "Let's just go.

"Fuck you," Finn snarled.

"Oh, so you two take turns then," Karofsky jeered. "Which do you like better Hudson? Pitching or catch-"

Karofsky didn't get a chance to finish his sentence. Finn's fist connected with Karofsky's face, knocking him to the ground and making everyone in the restaurant stop and stare in shock.

"Shut up," Finn screamed. "That's disgusting. You're disgusting!"

"Finn we're leaving now," Kurt said, ignoring the tiny flare of hurt Finn's words caused him and grabbing onto the quarterback's arm and trying to drag him out of Breadsticks before management made it over to where the four teens were fighting.

"Ooh your boyfriend's mad now," Lewis jeered. "He gonna take you home and punish you?"

"Yeah Hudson, go on home and get your homo on," Karofsky taunted, "no one here wants to see you two cocksuckers gaying up the place."

"I'm not gay!" Finn cried his face red with fury.
"Finn, stop. Just come on," Kurt said, grabbing Finn's hand and once again trying to lead him out of Breadstix.

"Aww look, they're holding hands now," Lewis crowed.

Finn looked down at their clasped limbs and snatched his hand away as if he'd been burned. "Get off of me," he barked at Kurt, taking a step away from the countertenor and glaring at him accusingly, as if the entire situation were somehow Kurt's fault.

Kurt felt hurt and betrayal flood through him at Finn's reaction. "Fine, Finn. Feel free to stay here with Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dumbass, but I'm leaving."

"Ruh Roh Shaggy, looks like a lover's quarrel," Lewis cracked.

"We're not lovers," Finn bellowed indignantly, drawing even more attention to their group.

"Shut up and come on, Finn!" Kurt snapped embarrassed by the scene that was taking place.

"Don't tell me to shut up," Finn roared turning on Kurt. "I didn't do anything!"

"Neither did I, Finn," Kurt said coldly. "You have every right to be angry right now but not to take it out on me."

"Yeah Hudson, you better apologize or you won't be going to the chapel anytime soon," Karofsky sniped.

"I said shut up-"

"Yeah, the chapel of loooove," Lewis added

"It's just a song!"

"Finn, you don't owe them an explanation and this isn't helping. Come on-"

"Oh no, Finn. This is helping. I finally understand just how big of a loser you really are. Any other songs you like to sing to your little Kurtie pie?"

"Finn's not a loser! Unlike you he has more than a future of asking people 'do you want fries with that' to look forward to," Kurt sneered at Lewis.

"Defend yo man, girl!" Lewis replied smugly.

"I'm not a girl but you say that as if being a woman is something to be ashamed of. No wonder the last time you had a date people still believed the world was flat."

As a couple of girls at the table behind them started to laugh Lewis lost his composure. "I do too have a woman! Keep talking queer and I'll knock your teeth down your throat!" He growled.

"Gay bashing is so very manly."

"Is there a problem here?"

"Yes! These two assholes-"

"The pillow biter and his boyfriend-"
"My brother and I were just leaving-"

"Don't you mean your lover?"

"You gentlemen are all going to have to leave-"

"I told you I wasn't gay!"

"Come on out of the closet, Hudson."

"Kiss my ass, Karofsky!"

"I'll pass but I bet a flamer like you would like that."

"I'm going to call the police if you all don't clear out of here and-"

"I'm not gay! I'm not a queer or a cocksucker or a homo. I'm straight! Kurt's the one who's a fag, not me!" Finn yelled his chest heaving, his face red and his eyes blazing with anger, shame, fear and disgust.

Kurt felt as if he'd been thrown off the summit of a mountain and hit the rocks below when he realized what Finn had said and why he had said it.

Finn, Kurt recognized, was angry, but not because Lewis and Karofsky were being hateful and homophobic, but because they were being hateful and homophobic towards Finn. It wasn't the principle that had him upset, it was the practice.

Finn was ashamed but not because he was causing a scene or because up until a few minutes ago he would have counted Lewis among his friends. No, Kurt noted bitterly, Finn was ashamed that he'd been caught out in public, on what looked like it could be a date, with the resident fag.

Finn was afraid, but not that they'd end up being banned from Breadstix or that the altercation would turn into an all out brawl. No, Finn was afraid that word would get around and rumors would spread about him and about the two of them.

Finn was disgusted, but not at the two jocks' behavior. He was disgusted that anyone would think he was gay. He was disgusted that Kurt was gay. He was disgusted that anyone would associate him with Kurt and homosexuality.

The boy that he shared a home with was ashamed of him. The boy his father thought of as a second son was afraid of people thinking he was anything like Kurt. The boy that he'd had a crush on, thought of a friend and wanted as a brother was disgusted by him.

Kurt felt as if he couldn't breathe. Finn; sweet, well meaning, harmless Finn had called him a fag. He had screamed it in a crowded restaurant without hesitation or reservation and he had meant it. It wasn't a joke or an accident and he didn't say it like it had been the first time.

Kurt wanted to rage. He wanted to scream and shout. He wanted take his fists and pound them into all three of the football players faces until they were as bruised and broken as he felt in that moment. He wanted to pass out and throw up and break down. He wanted to use his words to eviscerate them, to be cutting and caustic and make them feel as degraded and devalued as their offensive obscenities had made him feel.

In the end he elected not to do any of those things. He simply turned on his heel and walked out of Breadsticks with his head held high leaving Finn to sputter his empty apologies to his back.
It was too much, Kurt thought as he turned the key in the ignition and peeled out of the parking lot ignoring the protesting squeals of his tires. After the roller coaster of the day he'd had, the frustration, hurt and betrayal he was currently feeling was just too much. He just wanted to go home, curl up in front of his mother's dresser and feel safe.

Kurt slammed on his brakes, oblivious to the honking and colorfully worded reprisal of the driver who had been behind when he realized he couldn't go home. Kurt's sudden recognition that there wasn't going to be a safe place for him anymore left him terrified and on the edge of hysteria. His home wasn't safe anymore. Finn lived there. Finn and his fear and his judgment and his homophobia were squatting in his sanctuary, infesting the only refuge Kurt had from the hostilities he faced on a daily basis. Burt and Carole were getting married and Finn, along with all the ugly that he had inside him was going to be a part Kurt's life, a part of his family.

Kurt was on autopilot as he restarted his car and drove on and on for miles before exhaustion took over and he maneuvered the Navigator into the first available parking lot and leaned his head on the steering wheel. He choked on a sob as he realized that one of his worst nightmares had come true. He was living with a homophobe. Kurt had never really of Finn as homophobic. Uneducated, uncomfortable, and a little fearful of what he didn't understand, yes but never had Kurt thought of him as hateful or malevolent, not even when he was actively bullying him. Now he knew better. Now he knew that no matter how many steps forward he thought they took or much changing and growing he thought Finn had done, he would always be one argument away from a slur or maybe even a slap. He wasn't safe. Finn wasn't safe and his home wasn't safe.

Kurt didn't know where to go or what to do. He couldn't go home because eventually Finn would be there. He also couldn't go home because Burt would take one look at his face and know that something bad had happened and Kurt could not tell his father. He knew, beyond a shadow of any doubt, that Burt would put Kurt's happiness above his own. He knew his father would call off the engagement, perhaps even break off the entire relationship if Kurt told him about the things Finn had said and done but Kurt didn't want that. He truly adored Carole and she made his father happier than Kurt had seen him in years. He couldn't be reason Burt and Carole lost their second chances at living happily ever after. He couldn't be reason his father was left mourning another lost love.

Blaine was too far away and he couldn't go to any of the kids in glee. He knew that he could go to Sam, Mercedes or Tina and they would instantly take his side but that Rachel, Noah and probably Quinn would back Finn out of love and loyalty. Santana, Artie, Brittany and Mike would be stuck in the middle. No one would be able to be objective and his issues with Finn would become fodder for the latest group drama. He didn't want to drag their friends into the middle and he didn't want to be the reason the group splintered apart again when they were finally beginning to come together.

Besides, he was sure they'd probably find out soon enough. There had been enough witnesses that Kurt fully expected for there to be a play by play complete with not so clever commentary popping up in the next few hours on Jacob's blog.

Kurt squeezed his eyes shut at the painful reminder that his humiliation was going to be made public whether he said a word or not. Part of Kurt wanted to pull out of the parking lot, start driving and never stop until Lima and all the hate and hurt was far, far behind him.

Kurt's fingers twitched on his keys but before he could turn them his phone rang and Blaine's ringtone sounded out.

He didn't even allow the first few seconds of the melody to play before he answered.

"Hey babe, I know you said you'd call and it's still kinda early but I've had a long day and I'm about to crash-"
"B-Blaine?" Kurt choked out as his tears fell in earnest and what little composure he had left completely abandoned him at the sound of the other boy's voice. "I need…I c-can't…F-F-Finn," he babbled incoherently, trying in vain to get a grip on himself and his emotions.

"Kurt! Kurt, breathe baby, its okay. I need you to calm and stop crying so you can tell me what happened. Did someone hurt you? Are you okay?"

"No," Kurt sobbed, too emotionally overloaded to do anything but be honest. "I'm n-not okay. I'm never okay. Don't you know I'm a c-cocksucking fag? That's not okay, Blaine."

"Who the hell-, Kurt where are you? Are you at home? I'm getting my keys now and-"

"No," Kurt screamed. "I'm not at home. I can't go home! Finn's at home. Finn a-and all a-and I-I"

"Jesus, okay babe calm down for me, please," Blaine begged. "I didn't mean to upset you. You're not at home; you don't want to go home, that's okay. That's fine. I'll come get you, okay. Just, just tell me where you are."

Kurt peered out of his windshield. "I-I...I don't know. I don't know where I am. I just started driving and pulled over and I'm not sure and I don't know-"

"Hey, hey babe it's okay. You're in your car. Check the GPS. Tell me what it says and I'll come get you."

"Please hurry," Kurt asked, his breath hitching painfully. "It says uh I'm on Lincoln Boulevard."

"I promise I'll be there as soon as I can, okay? I need you to listen babe, Jeff is gonna come with me so he can drive your car back for us, okay?"

"Back to Dalton?" Kurt asked quietly. "Is that allowed?"

"We're not going to Dalton, I'm gonna take you back to my house. It's gonna be past curfew by the time I get to you and-"

"I'm sorry," Kurt whispered. "You d-don't have to come. I'll be fine. I'm always fine in the end. It's okay. I can...I'll be fine. Please don't get in trouble-"

"Kurt," Blaine said sharply. "We won't get in trouble. Just let me help you. Now, what do you see around you? Landmarks, businesses, anything?"

"I...I think I'm somewhere in Russell's Point," Kurt said. "I'm in front of a Subway."

"Is it open?"

"Um, yeah. Til eleven, according to the sign."

"Okay, babe listen to me. Go inside and wait for us. Stay on the phone with me though, okay?"

"Okay," Kurt said as he slipped out of the SUV and locked the door. The merry sound that the bell hung above the door made when he entered seemed to mock him as he took a seat. Kurt thought that he'd be forced to order something but his misery must have been so apparent that the other patrons mercifully left him in peace.

"-rt? Babe? Talk to me! Kurt!"

"I'm here," he said dully.
"You don't have to tell me what happened but I need to know if you're hurt."

"Not physically," Kurt whispered.

"Babe, just stay there and hold on. I'm coming for you."

Blaine's navigation system had estimated it would take a little over an hour for him to reach Kurt. Between the fact that he was in a high performance sports car and Jeff drove like he was racing the devil himself, they managed to make it to Russell's point in a little over forty minutes.

"We're pulling up now, babe. I'll be inside in a minute okay. It's safe to hang up now," Blaine said, waiting for Kurt to disconnect before he hung up himself. He had stayed on the line with Kurt the entire drive, resisting the urge to demand that Kurt tell him who had hurt him and how they had done it. He'd been terrified, a million nightmare scenarios playing out in his head, each more horrific than the one before it. Blaine's arms ached with the need to hold Kurt and make sure that the other boy was safe. Blaine didn't even wait for Jeff to the cut the engine before he leapt from the car and barreled into the Subway. He frantically looked around the small dining room until he caught sight of Kurt in a back corner booth, curled into himself as if he were doing his best to be invisible.

"Kurt," Blaine exhaled gratefully as he came to a graceless stop in front of the brunette and hauled him to his feet, wrapping his arms Kurt's impassive frame.

Kurt weakly returned the embrace, choosing instead to burrow his head into the space between Blaine's neck and shoulder and cry quietly.

Jeff entered and made eye contact with Blaine. When Blaine shook his head slightly Jeff nodded and went to the counter to order a sandwich and give the two some privacy.

Blaine pulled away from Kurt and cupped his face in his hands, forcing him to make eye contact. Kurt's eyes were swollen and red rimmed, his skin was far paler than Blaine had ever seen it and he'd bitten his lip so much it was chapped and bleeding. Minus ripped and torn clothing, Kurt's appearance reminded Blaine of how he'd looked after Azimio had attacked him. He wanted to force Kurt to tell him who'd hurt him, drive down to Lima and unleash his wrath but it was obvious that was the last thing Kurt needed at the moment so Blaine forced himself to hold onto his tongue and his temper.

"It's okay now," he soothed. "Babe, I need your keys. Jeff's gonna drive the Navigator remember?" Kurt nodded and placed his keys into Blaine's outstretched hand without protest. Silently Blaine handed them over to Jeff who had suddenly materialized beside the two boys.

"I'll take really good care of it, Kurt. I promise," the blonde said kindly before squeezing Kurt on the shoulder and once again leaving the two boys alone as he went and started Kurt's car.

"Come on, babe. Let's get you out of here now, huh?"

Kurt nodded and followed Blaine to his car, silently climbing into the passenger's seat and pulling on his seat belt.

Blaine got into driver's seat and started the car, heading back towards Westerville. He checked his rearview to make sure that Jeff was behind them and then gave Kurt what he hoped was a reassuring smile.

Blaine had no idea what had happened or who had done it but he did know that when he found out there would be hell to pay.
Kurt had fallen asleep on the drive back to Westerville and Blaine hadn't had the heart to wake him. He had opted to take Kurt to Devonwood since it was closer than his own home and it would give him a chance to speak with Jasper in the morning about his parents' upcoming visit.

He and Jeff parked the cars in the garage themselves and then Blaine sent Jeff off with Antoine to be settled into a guest room before he shook Kurt awake. "Hey, wake up sleepyhead. We're at my home."

Kurt blinked the sleep out of his eyes and looked around the garage, which was more like the showroom floor of a custom car dealership than a typical garage. "This is your house?" He asked.

Blaine chuckled. "This is a garage, babe and no, not my house. We're at Devonwood, its Jasper's house but it's more like home to me than other place-including my own."

"Should I be here? Won't he get upset? It's a school night. What if he thinks I'm a terrible influence on you and I make a bad impression before we've even met and-"

"Calm down, hush babe," Blaine quieted Kurt. "It's fine. Trust me it's not the first time I've taken an impromptu vacation in the middle of the school week. I promise it'll be fine. Besides, I doubt that anyone will worry that you're the bad influence."

Blaine led Kurt inside, pretending to ignore Kurt's startled intake of breath at the opulence surrounding them. He tried to look at things from Kurt's point of view and remind himself that not everyone grew up in an environment where marble floors and Schonbek chandeliers were commonplace. He quickly hustled Kurt up to his bedroom, not wanting the boy to get overwhelmed and begin to worry again.

Kurt halted just over the threshold and stared at the bed.

"I know what you're thinking and you're right. A California King is a bit obnoxious for just one person but I needed a bed big enough for me and my ego," Blaine joked.

Kurt smiled weakly. "So where do you sleep then?"

"There's the sarcasm I know and love," Blaine remarked. Kurt continued to stand just inside the doorway, his arms wrapped around himself as if he were trying to keep from going to pieces and the sight both angered and worried Blaine.

Blaine wanted nothing more than to take Kurt in his arms and comfort him but he remembered how Kurt had responded to his attempt at consoling him back in the tree house so he instead of pulling the other boy into his arms he went to his bureau and pulled out a pair of pajama bottoms, a clean pair of boxer briefs and a t-shirt.

"Here," he said holding out the clothing to Kurt. "Go shower; it'll relax you and give you a chance to have a little time to get your head together before we talk."

Kurt didn't respond verbally, he simply nodded as he accepted the small bundle.

Blaine moved past Kurt and went into the bathroom. He turned on the shower, allowing the steam to begin filling the room before he hit a button and turned on some music. "There you go," he said. "The towels are linen closet there," Blaine said gesturing to the door, "The red robe is for company, there's a new toothbrush in the top drawer and you stay in here as long as you need to. But when you get out, we're gonna talk, okay?"
Blaine wasn't sure what he'd expected but it wasn't to suddenly have an armful of Kurt Hummel. He recovered quickly and brought both arms around the brunette to hold him tightly as Kurt leaned down slightly so he could bury his head in the crook of Blaine's shoulder. "Thank you," he whispered, "Thank you for caring. Thank you for coming. Thank you for being safe."

Blaine barely held himself together when he heard those words. Kurt being so raw and vulnerable was bringing up emotions in him that he had no idea what to do with. "Don't thank me," Blaine whispered thickly, "You don't ever have to thank me." He held Kurt for a few moments more before the other boy broke the embrace.

"I'm gonna get in the shower now," Kurt said, his voice strained and tight as if he were fighting back tears.

"Okay," Blaine said, squeezing Kurt's hand softly before exiting the bathroom.

Almost as soon as the door closed, Blaine heard Kurt let go. Harsh, unrestrained sobs sounded from inside the bathroom and it took everything in Blaine not to go charge back into the room and try to quiet Kurt's cries but his instincts told him that Kurt needed to breakdown about whatever had happened to him that night and he needed to do so in private.

After what felt like hours Kurt emerged from the bathroom, a halo of steam behind him, dressed in Blaine's pajamas and looking far too innocent and vulnerable for his own good. Blaine had long since changed into his bedclothes and was sitting Indian style, waiting for Kurt.

Blaine had decided he'd let Kurt broach the subject of sleeping arrangements. He knew it was terrible timing and didn't say much for his character but he was absolutely not going to pass up the opportunity to have Kurt in his bed even if there was precious little chance of anything happening.

"I...I sleep on the left side," Kurt said quietly, shuffling forward until he was at the foot of the bed.

"Then I guess it's a good thing I sleep on the right," Blaine replied, getting up and turning down the sheets.

Kurt silently climbed into bed while Blaine turned off the lights. When he felt the mattress dip under Blaine's weight and then settle he eased across the middle until he was in the other boy's personal space, Blaine acting as the 'big spoon'.

"Kurt-"

"It was Finn."

Blaine's hold on Kurt tightened minutely but he showed no other reaction so Kurt continued. "He... our parents are getting married and I thought...I thought things were better now," Kurt tried to explain.

"There was this duets competition in Glee; winner gets a free meal at Breadstix. Sam and I won but he couldn't make the dinner so I uh...I invited Finn. We've been... it's been better with us lately. Good even."

"So um, we went to Breadstix. And it was fun. A lot of fun and I thought...I thought 'this is what it's going to be like to have a brother'. And then um...K-Karlofsky and Lewis-he's another barbarian in a letterman's jacket-saw us and started picking on F-Finn, calling him gay and saying we were on a d-date."

Kurt took a deep, shuddering breath and then began speaking again. "We uh...we all got into it.
Karofsky and Finn were shoving each other and Finn actually hit him. People were staring and I tried to get Finn to leave but he was so angry and the manager came over and those two slack jawed yokels just wouldn't stop goading Finn and he kept getting angrier and angrier and he got mad at me so I got mad at him and then they really started in on him, calling him the girl in the our relationship and-

Kurt's normal poise and eloquence had completely abandoned him. He was rambling, starting and stopping sentences and not completing his thoughts. Blaine took one of his hands and gently stroked over Kurt's chest and stomach in a rhythmic, soothing motion and was alarmed when he felt how fast the other boy's heart was racing and the tremors that wracked his body. Blaine was convinced that Kurt was on the verge of losing it completely, perhaps even having a panic attack of some sort and he wasn't sure if he would be able to handle the outpouring of emotion from the younger boy when it came.

"So the manager asked us all to leave but Karofsky and Lewis just wouldn't shut up and Karofsky told Finn to…come out of the closet and called him a flamer and Finn…Finn…he…he…F-Finn…"

Kurt stopped talking and Blaine noticed the trembling had gotten worse and his breathing more labored.

"Hey, hey," he said, worry making his voice sharp. "Breathe with me, babe. In and out, just like that, there you go," he commanded softly as he directed Kurt to breathe with him in tandem. "There you go, babe. It's okay. You're with me and you're safe," he repeated over and over while he ran his fingers through Kurt's hair.

After a few minutes that felt like forever Kurt managed to calm himself and began speaking again. "They wouldn't leave him alone," Kurt whispered. "They wouldn't leave him alone and he just…Finn said he wasn't a queer or a c-cocksucker. He said he wa-wasn't a homo."

"Oh babe, Finn's an idiot but I'm sure-

"He said I was a fag, not him. He called me a fag."

It was as if a switch had been flipped and Blaine went from wanting to comfort Kurt and giving Finn the benefit of the doubt to seeing red and planning the jock's demise.

"Everyone was s-staring at us, at me. He was s-so angry. He screamed it, Blaine. He c-called me a fag like it was no big deal. And he was so disgusted that anyone would call him gay. He was ashamed. I disgust him. He h-hates me," Kurt said screwing his eyes shut and trying to block out the image of Finn's angry face.

"He's going to be my b-brother. I have to live with him and he h-hates who I am. I'm not…my home…it's not safe anymore," Kurt said. As his voice broke on the word home, he finally gave in and let the tears fall, turning around and burying his head in Blaine's chest, his fingers tangled into Blaine's shirt as he unleashed gut wrenching sobs that made Blaine physically ache for him.

"Your dad-

"He's happy with Carole. My mom died e-eight years ago and he'd been on exactly three dates before Carole. He d-deserves to be happy. So does Carole. I can't…it'll ruin everything. I can't…but I don't know how…how do you live with that kind of hate? My home…I was safe at home. It was my only other safe place. My h-home. I-I can't…Blaine I can't…"

"It's okay, babe. I promise its okay," Blaine soothed as Kurt continued to cry. Blaine found himself inundated with protective instincts that he hadn't known he possessed as he rubbed Kurt's back,
placed gentle kisses on his forehead and plotted to bring Finn, Karofsky and anyone else who'd ever hurt Kurt to their knees as the other boy cried himself to sleep.

Finn had thought that calling his mom, explaining to her he'd gotten into a fight, been kicked out Breadstix and Kurt had abandoned him there would be the hardest thing he'd ever have to do. He'd been wrong.

Explaining why Kurt had left him there was a million times harder.

"I do not understand you," Carole said her face tight with anger and her eyes filled with disapproval. "I may not be a perfect parent Finn but I taught you better than that."

Burt hadn't said a word to him. From the minute the story had tumbled out over Finn's lips Burt had been on the phone calling Kurt's cell leaving voicemail after voicemail, trying in vain to get in touch with his son.

"Mom, Karofsky and Lewis kept-"

"I don't care, Finn!" Carole cut in sharply. "There is no excuse, none, for what you said about Kurt and even less than that for what you said to him. I did not raise you to be hateful and I did not raise you to be ignorant. I don't care what those other boys say or do, I care what you say. I care what you do. And right now I don't think I've ever been so disappointed in you."

Having Rachel's words from earlier parroted back at him by his very own mother made them hit home in a way that Finn was unprepared for. Tears suddenly filled his eyes and the gravity of what he'd done slammed into him.

"I'm sorry," he whispered.

"That doesn't really help anything right now," Burt said clearly trying to keep his temper.

"But I am sorry," Finn said. "I didn't mean-"

"I know what you meant," Burt snapped. "You think I didn't use that word when I was your age? Some kid gets clocked in practice we tell him to stop being such a fag-shake it off. We meant it exactly the way you meant it. That being gay is wrong, that it's some kind of punishable offense. Kurt isn't as smart as he thinks he is. I see him leave for school in one outfit and come home in another. I don't know everything, but I know that my kid gets dragged down forty miles of bad road every damn day in this town. I know there are guys who make it their mission to make his life a living hell and I thought you were different."

"I-"

"I thought that being in Glee club and being raised by your mom meant that you were some...new generation of dude who saw things differently, who just kind of came into the world knowing what it's taken me years of struggling to figure out. I guess I was wrong."

"You weren't wrong," Finn insisted. "I'm not like Karofsky or those guys. I wouldn't hurt Kurt like they do-"

"Oh honey, you did hurt him," Carole said softly. "You hurt him worse than they ever could. Kurt trusts you—or at least he did. He considered you a friend—a brother and you humiliated him and what's worse you let him know in no uncertain terms that you neither accept nor respect him."
"I do respect him," Finn said. "I don't understand the whole liking dudes thing," he confessed. "But I respect him. Kurt's a good person. Yeah we butt heads on some stuff and I don't get him all the time but I don't hate him."

"No, you just hate one of the biggest parts of who he is," Burt interrupted.

"But I don't," Finn denied. "I'm not...I'm not a hateful person. I'm not," he said tears spilling down his cheeks.

Carole came and put her arms around Finn and he sank into the embrace. "I'm sorry. I swear I'm sorry. I don't hate Kurt. I don't hate anyone," Finn mumbled into her shoulder.

Burt softened a little at the sight. "I love you kid. I do, and I love your mom, but this...has to be fixed or we can't...Kurt comes first for me, just like you come first for your mom. Every time he steps out of that door that kid has to fight a war against hate and intolerance. I'm not gonna let the enemy into his home. I won't do that to him. He can't...I won't do that to him. If we can't fix this then...", he let the sentence trail off.

"Please," Finn said softly. "Give me a chance to fix it. I'll fix it."

"Finn honey, this is going to take more than good intentions and an apology," Carole said.

"But that's a start! And it has to count for something that I'm sorry, like legit sorry not fake sorry. I don't understand Kurt being gay and I'm...kinda scared of what it means and just...uncomfortable," Finn said, acknowledging it out loud to his parents for the first time, "but I'm willing to try. I have been trying. I'm willing to try to understand. That's gotta count for something," he said honestly.

"Finn, you have to understand that there is nothing wrong with who Kurt is and you have to-"

"Carole, honey he won't get there overnight or because we tell him to," Burt interrupted gently. "I was a jackass for a lot of years. It took being Kurt's dad for me to pull my head out my ass. If he's serious about trying-"

"I am," Finn insisted.

"Then it's gonna take time. Time and patience and education," Burt finished up.

"Puck," Finn said suddenly. "Puck used to be like me and then he called some numbers. Said he talked to some people that explained some stuff to him. I could...I could find out who he called and get those numbers from him."

Carole nodded. "That would be a good start. There's a PFLAG chapter in Columbus. You and I are going to the next meeting," she said, her tone making it clear it was not up for discussion or debate.

"What's PFLAG?" Finn asked.

"It stands for parents, families and friends of lesbians and gays," Carole explained. "It's an organization that promotes the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends. They provide a place that people of different orientations, as well as those that love them can get support, learn coping skills; get education, and find advocates to help with the cause of ending discrimination. I think it'll do you some good to attend some meetings and get educated and it'll help me to find out how to best support Kurt."

"Kurt and I will come too," Burt said, surprising Finn and Carole. "You may be the one struggling kiddo but we're a family and if you're serious about making changes then we'll go at this like a
family. Besides, I'm not perfect. Maybe those meetings will help me out too and God knows Kurt is aching to relate to some kids like him. I'm actually embarrassed I didn't think of us going to PFLAG years ago. But you're gonna apologize to Kurt and you are never, and I mean never, to say anything like that to or about him again. I'm serious Finn, that's a deal breaker. You throw hate at him again-

"I won't," Finn promised and he meant it. He knew what he'd said to Kurt was wrong. He knew when he heard guys talking about how nasty it was to have sex with another guy or how they didn't want to "catch the gay" from Kurt that it was mean but somehow he'd never thought of it as hate. Finn was not a hateful person. He had a temper. He could be thoughtless and he could be mean but he wasn't heartless. Finn lacked the willful maliciousness and ability to enjoy inflicting damage on other people that it took to be hateful. Even when he was participating in bullying Kurt, he never enjoyed it. There was always a palpable sense of wrongness to the actions that made Finn feel dirty, guilty and as if he had somehow failed at something big.

Tonight had put that feeling into perspective for him. Every time he laughed at a derogatory joke or pretended not to see when Kurt was shoved or slushied, every time he had stood idly by while Kurt was thrown in the dumpster or helped the guys pull a prank on him, he had failed. He had failed Kurt, he had failed his mom and he had failed himself.

All the thinking that he'd been doing over the past couple of weeks came into focus and Finn realized that he could no longer play both sides of the fence. He couldn't continue to take half measures and sweep things under the rug. Kurt had told him to do what he could live with and Finn realized that he couldn't live with being someone that would hurt his friend, his brother, for no good reason. He couldn't live with being the person that had put the look of betrayal on Burt's face or made his mother cry. He couldn't live with being the person that wrecked his family and he couldn't live with being the type of person that got lumped in with the Lewis' of the world.

He thought back on how helpless and humiliated he'd felt at Breadstix and realized that Kurt probably felt like that-and worse-every single day, multiple times a day. The fact that he'd played a part in causing that kind of distress caused a fresh wave of tears to well up in his eyes and his stomach to twist painfully. Finn still wasn't sure who he wanted to be or how he was going to get there, but he knew he didn't want to be the person he'd been.

"He's not answering," Burt said, his voice quivering just the tiniest bit. "I've left that boy dozens of messages. Kurt always gets back to me and he's not…"

"I'm sure he's fine," Carole attempted to reassure him. "But I think it's time we start checking with his friends."

Burt nodded then grimaced. "I only know Tina and Mercedes' numbers."

"I'll call everyone," Finn said straightening up. "I…I made this mess. I gotta clean it up."

Burt nodded once and then left the room, leaving Finn standing alone in the living room with Carole.

"This is a good start Finn," she said nodding and giving him a tight smile. "But it's just a start. And it's the bare minimum of what you're going to have to do. But I'm proud of you for being willing to do it."

"Thanks mom," Finn whispered.

"You're still grounded. And I will figure out the rest of your punishment when I'm not so angry and disappointed and upset," Carole continued. "But I know one thing we need to get straight right now: I don't want those boys you argued with tonight in this house. I don't care that they're on the team
with you. They are not welcome. And not just them. No one on that team is welcome in our home if they are homophobic. Burt was right. That kind of poison has no place here. Do you understand me?"

Finn nodded.

"Okay. Do you need me to stay with you while you call your friends?"

Finn shook his head. "I…I think I need to do this alone."

Carole gave him a kiss on the forehead. "Okay honey. I'm going to go check on Burt. Call me if you need me."

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**Wow, you keep finding new and special ways to fail, don't you Soft Serve? I haven't heard from Prancy Smurf but if I do, I'll call Burt. You can kiss my dial tone.**

That was mean, Finn. Kurt is my favorite ex-boyfriend and you're not even in my top ten favorite make out partners so if you two can't be friends anymore you need to know I'm on his side. Lord Tubbington and I are very disappointed in you.

That's all kinds of foul, yo. I can't believe you went out like that. I haven't heard from Kurt but you better watch your toes tomorrow. My wheels and I are gonna be looking for you.

You did what? Oh you just wait until I see you. You think I told Artie off? You haven't seen anything yet.

He's not here, Finn. And I don't know that I'd tell you if he were.

Damn Finnocence. When you fuck up you go for the gold. Look, even if you are dumbass you're still my bro so if you need a place to hide for awhile château de Puckerman is available. If I hear from him I'll call you. If Burt goes after you, there's no shame in running. I've found that most old dudes can only chase you a block or two before they get winded.

Is that what you think of my father's? That they're…I can't even say those words, Finn. I can't believe you would say those words. I love you but I don't like you very much right now and I would appreciate it if you didn't call me. I need time to…goodbye Finn.

You betta stay out of my sight because whenever I see you, I'mma cut you. I don't care if it's ten minutes or ten years from now, I'mma cut you and I'mma cut you deep.

I can't believe you. I honestly can't believe you. You…don't talk to me. I don't even…just don't talk to me. Kurt's my best friend and you, as of now, you're nothing to me. And you better pray he's okay because if he's not, what went down between me and Karofsky in the locker room is nothing compared to what I'm gonna do you. Kurt liked you. He thought you were a good guy, so did I. But you're not. You know what, you're worse than Karofsky and the rest of those guys because they never pretended to be any better than they are.

Finn had spent the better part of an hour making phone calls and being chewed out by every member of New Directions. He was sure most of his friends hated him and to top it off he had no idea where he stood with Rachel. He had one person left to call and he didn't anticipate things going any better with Quinn than they had with anyone else.

"Quinn," he said as soon she picked up. "It's Finn. Listen, is Kurt there? If he is we really need him to come home or at least call, but really to come."
"Finn," Quinn said sharply. "You're rambling. What's wrong?"

Finn took a deep breath. "I…Kurt and I got into it with Karofsky and Lewis at Breadstix-

"Oh my God, Finn! Are you okay? Why are you looking for Kurt? Did they…did they drag him off somewhere?"

Finn blinked. "No, no it wasn't that kind of fight. Well, a little but not too bad. We just…See Sam cancelled on Kurt because he had to babysit and so Kurt took me to Breadstix in Sam's place so we could go over stuff for the wedding and have some bro time, you know?"

"Charming," Quinn said wryly.

"Anyway," Finn continued, "Lewis and Karofsky came over to our table and started giving us crap about being on a date and which one of us was the girl and…I just…I got mad and it was embarrassing because everyone was looking at us and I…"

"Oh Finn," Quinn said softly. "Please tell me you stood up to them."

Finn squeezed the phone. "I…did at first," he said. "But they just wouldn't stop. And Kurt kept trying to make me leave and I was just so mad and I…I didn't mean to hurt him, Quinn. I swear I didn't."

"You hurt Kurt?"

"I…I said some really nasty things and he…he took off and no one's seen him. Burt's called him like a million times and he won't answer and it's bad, Quinn. Burt's worried and sad and pissed and my mom is all quiet and disappointed in me. Rachel might dump me and Puck's the only person in Glee who doesn't want my ass on a platter-"

"Your head Finn," Quinn interrupted. "Your head on a platter."

"Whatever body part doesn't matter, point is they all want it. They'll probably be a lynch mob waiting for me when I get to school tomorrow."

"What," Quinn hesitated. "What exactly did you do?"

"I fought with Karofsky. We pushed each other and he just…he was so mad. I don't know what his problem is. It's like he's on some kind of personal mission when it comes to Kurt. Like one of those missiles that lock onto its target and just keep going after it until it blows it up. But um…we just…we argued. Kurt did too, for a little while. Then Karofsky told me to come out of the closet and called me a flamer and I saw people giving me these looks, like I was…dirty or something. It made me mad and made me feel…ashamed."

"So people looked at you like you and your friends look at Kurt and what, Finn? You couldn't take it? Kurt takes it every day."

"I know that!" Finn exploded. "I just…I got angry. I wasn't thinking. I just wanted them stop talking and calling me names and for people to stop looking at me like I'd personally offended them by just like, being in the same room breathing their air and I…I said some stuff."

"Stuff like what?"

"I said…I said I wasn't a queer and some…other stuff. I called Kurt a fag."
"Oh Finn," Quinn said sadly. "Why would you say something so ugly and hurtful?"

"I told you! I was mad and embarrassed and I just...I wasn't thinking. I swear I wasn't trying to hurt him. I just wanted everything to stop. I just wanted the teasing and the dirty looks and the feeling bad to stop."

"I'm sure Kurt feels that way all the time," Quinn said bitterly. "Finn, I know you. You never mean to hurt anyone and yet you keep finding spectacular ways to cause people pain."

"I know you want to tell me how much I suck right now-"

"No, I don't," Quinn cut him off quickly. "It won't do any good. I know what's it's like to make such a horrific mistake that you don't even recognize yourself as the person who did such a terrible thing. I'm not gonna judge you, Finn because I can't. That's not my place. I do want to help though, if I can."

Finn blinked. Ever since she had gotten pregnant, lied to everyone and given Beth up for adoption, Quinn had been different. Sometimes she was like the popular Regina George-esque cheerleader she'd always been, sometimes she seemed really sad and lost and other times she was like a new, improved, sweeter version of herself. Finn never knew what to expect from her anymore.

"Th-Thanks. But I don't know what any of us can do. I called everyone and no one's heard from him."

Quinn was quiet for a moment. "Finn," she said slowly, "has anyone called Blaine?"

Finn smacked himself on the forehead. "No! I... don't have the dude's number though. I don't think anyone does except Kurt."

Quinn was quiet for a few moments. "Thad might. Give me a minute."

Finn held onto the line, praying that Thad could come through and that Blaine would either be with Kurt or know where he was.

After several minutes Quinn came back on the line. "I got Blaine's number. It's 614-555-7624. Finn...if I were you I'd let Burt be the one to call."

Finn swallowed, knowing Quinn was right. Neither Kurt nor Blaine would be too receptive to him and Burt needed to talk to his son and make sure he was alright.

Burt, Finn realized with a pang, was probably the only person who could convince Kurt that it was safe for him to come home.

"Thanks Quinn. I really owe you one," Finn said.

"No you don't Finn," Quinn said softly. "Like I said, I know you. You're better than who you were tonight, who you've been for the last few weeks, I know you are."

"You're the only one who thinks that," Finn said sadly. "Everyone else thinks I'm awful."

"What you did and what you've been doing is awful," Quinn said bluntly. "But you're not. I know what it's like for people to judge you based on the worst thing you've ever done. All you can do is hold your head high and prove them wrong. And yes, you have a lot to make up for but I believe you can do it. I'll help you anyway I can, but I won't lie to you. You did a horrible thing and no one is going to forgive or forget just because you're sorry and you want them to."
"You're gonna have a lot to make up for, especially with Kurt," Quinn continued. "You are going to have to earn back everyone's trust and respect one bit at a time. It won't be easy and you'll want to give up but if you really mean it when you say you're sorry, you'll stick it out and do what it takes to prove that you deserve a second chance."

"Thank you," Finn said again. "I…you deserve it. Your second chance. You totally deserve it."

"I fought for it. You fight for yours."

"I will. I am. I…I hate this," Finn confessed. "I hate that I can't be like Sam or Puck and just not care that Kurt's gay. I don't hate him for it, I just…it doesn't make sense to me. Like boobs and girls are awesome and I don't understand how Kurt can be a guy and not want to…it just doesn't make sense and I hate feeling like a bad person for being uncomfortable and not understanding and I hate that I'm uncomfortable in the first place."

"Then do something about it," Quinn replied. "Finn, the fact that you want to change; that you want to understand puts you miles ahead of creeps like Lewis. You know you're wrong and admitting that and wanting to change it is half the battle."

"My mom…well the whole family…is going to a PFLAG meeting," Finn admitted. "And Puck gave me some hotline numbers to call and websites to look up."

"What's PFLAG?"

Finn explained as best he could. "That's a really good start Finn," Quinn said encouragingly when he had finished.

"Burt…he kind of…I don't think they'll get married. If I can't…if I don't change me and my mom are gonna lose the best thing that's happened to us in a long time."

"Then you have one more reason to fight," Quinn pointed out.

"What if…what if I'm just broken?"

"You're not broken," Quinn said. "You're just…uninformed and isolated. Kurt's the only out gay kid in Lima. The only other person you know that has gay relatives is Rachel and something tells me you wouldn't be very comfortable telling her certain things."

"Yeah," Finn said softly. "Some of the stuff…it would hurt her feelings or make her think I think bad stuff about her dads."

"Do you?" Quinn asked.

"Not really," Finn said. "Like I said…mostly I just don't understand."

"Maybe PFLAG is exactly what you need," Quinn said. "You'll get to talk to other people who have family members who are gay or lesbian and you'll get to ask questions and speak freely. Maybe you'll meet other people who struggled like you are and you can ask how they found the road to acceptance. Maybe you'll find understanding and your uncomfortable feelings will change once that happens."

"Maybe," Finn said. "I mean, it would be nice to get my questions answered. I feel too weird trying to talk to Kurt or Burt and there's no way I'm asking either of Rachel's dads some of the questions I have. And…it would be cool to meet other siblings who maybe can tell me how they handled their bro or sis being bullied. I think," Finn said slowly, "I think this PFLAG place might be good for me
and good for our family. I mean, the only other gay kid Kurt knows is Blaine and he's a total jerk that's just trying to get in his pants.

"And you just went dangerously off course," Quinn interrupted. "Regardless of how you feel about Blaine, whatever happens with the two of them is their business and Kurt's decision. If it helps any, you should know Kurt isn't throwing himself at Blaine. He's going slow."

"Good," Finn breathed. "And not because of the gay thing, but because Blaine is a total ass."

"Takes one to know one," Quinn joked. "Okay, now give that number to Burt and let him see if Kurt's with Blaine. And Finn? I'm here for you if you need me."

"Thanks Quinn," Finn said softly before hanging up.

"Burt!" he yelled.

"Did you find him?" Burt asked anxiously as he ran into the room.

"No," Finn admitted. "I ah…I told everyone what I did. They would have heard about it anyway and…it needed to come from me. And Quinn got me Blaine's phone number so you can call him and-"

"Give me the number," Burt said already reaching for the phone and holding his hand out to Finn.

Burt dialed as quickly as he could with shaking fingers. The phone only rang twice before Blaine picked it up.

"Hel-"

"Blaine," Burt cut him off. "This is Burt Hummel. Kurt…have you heard from my boy?"

"Fuck," Blaine swore. "I mean, I'm so sorry Mr. Hummel. It didn't even occur to me to call you. I called Kurt earlier and he when he answered he was incredibly upset. It concerned me so I had a friend come with me so he could drive Kurt's Navigator back-trust me when I say Kurt was in no condition to be behind the wheel- and picked him up and brought him back to my house-"

Burt felt as if his knees were going to give out. "He's with you? He's safe?"

"Yes sir. Yes he's with me and he's safe. I promise you I would never let anything happen to him. He's asleep…he…I know he would have called you if he'd been thinking clearly. It's just…tonight's been rough on him."

"Why didn't you bring him home?" Burt asked sharply.

"He didn't want to go home," Blaine said bluntly. "He didn't think he'd be safe there. Mr. Hummel, I don't know how much you know, if anything, about what happened tonight but when we talked on the phone Kurt was crying so hard and such a mess that he couldn't even make a coherent sentence. I legitimately thought he'd been attacked, that's how bad he sounded. And after I got him here he almost had a panic attack telling me what happened. After seeing him like that I wasn't going to force him to go home if he didn't want to."

Burt dragged a hand over his face. "This is his home," Burt said lowly. "He's always safe here."

"With all due respect sir, Kurt disagreed."

The words hit Burt like a physical blow. His son hadn't wanted to come home. He hadn't felt safe.
"He…I know what Finn said to him," Burt said slowly.

"Then you know why he didn't feel safe coming home," Blaine said.

"Yeah kid, I get it. But he needs to know he is safe here. We…we got some family stuff to work out."

"I understand that. And I'd never stand in the way of that. But sir, Kurt cried himself to sleep," Blaine said strongly. "He was exhausted and he's finally getting some rest. I promise you I'll bring him home tomorrow but just, please let him stay here so can get some rest tonight."

Burt was torn. He wanted Kurt home. He wanted to take him in his arms and take away his pain. He wanted to promise him that home always had been and always would be a safe place. He wanted to see for himself that his baby boy was in one piece.

And he wanted him far away from Blaine and Blaine's bed.

Burt wasn't a fool. He wasn't deluding himself into thinking Kurt was tucked away in a guest room. From the quiet, controlled way he was speaking, Blaine was probably lying right next to Kurt. Images of exactly how Blaine might "comfort" Kurt played through Burt's head and made him flinch. He was barely ready for Kurt to be dating; Kurt sharing a bed and possibly his body with a boy both of them hardly knew was almost more than Burt could take.

But he also knew that they all might need the night to decompress and process the events of the night. Burt understood that Kurt needed to be where he felt safe and right now, as much as that pained Burt to admit, Kurt felt safe with Blaine.

"Kurt has permission to sleep-just sleep-at your house," Burt said as he rallied all his restraint and self control to say the hardest words he'd ever said where his son was concerned. "When he's ready, you bring him home tomorrow, understand me? I-I'll call him out absent to McKinley tomorrow."

There was a pronounced pause on the other side of the line as if Blaine had expected to have to work harder to convince Burt. "Trust me sir, all we're going to do is sleep."

"Son, admitting you're in bed with my kid isn't exactly conducive to me not driving to Westerville and dragging him home," Burt said tiredly. "Just…respect him. He's upset. He's in no state to make any kind of major decisions. Do not push him, do not pressure him, do not take advantage of him or they will never find your body. We clear?"

"As crystal."

"Alright then," Burt said before he changed his mind. "And Blaine? Thank you for taking care of him."

There was another small silence before Blaine answered softly, "You don't have to thank me. I wouldn't want anyone else taking care of him tonight and I know Kurt wouldn't have wanted anyone else to see him like that."

Burt's eyebrows shot up and scrubbed his hand over his face. The absolute certainty and poorly concealed possession in Blaine's voice and slight challenge in Blaine's statement had him almost changing his mind about allowing Kurt to stay. As far as Burt was concerned the two teens hadn't been seeing each other long enough for any of the things Blaine's statement implied to be happening. They weren't, to Burt's knowledge, even officially boyfriends. All of this was moving too quickly for Burt's liking and he resolved to broach the subject with Kurt.
"Just stop talking past the close, kid," Burt said quietly. "You tell Kurt to call me when he wakes up."

"Yes sir."

"Night Blaine," Burt said and damn wasn't that awkward.

"Goodnight sir," Blaine said before hanging up the phone with a gentle click.

"You did good," Carole said softly coming and putting her arms around him. "Finn's asleep. Thank you for giving him a second chance. I know that was hard for you."

"I love that boy," Burt said, kissing Carole's hands. "I've been where he is. But I won't have him chasing Kurt out of his home."

"I understand."

"But if we're gonna do this family thing we gotta hang on through sunshine and rain," Burt continued. "I gotta believe we'll all come out the other side okay."

"I think so too. We raised good boys. They'll be fine and so will we. I think we made the right choices tonight."

"Then why is everything in me screaming to get in my car and go get my kid?" Burt groaned.

"Because he's your baby," Carole replied. "But he's not a baby, honey and Kurt's a smart kid. He isn't going to do anything he's uncomfortable with and you have to trust him to know his limits."

"I don't know if I trust Blaine to respect those limits."

"For tonight honey you're going to have to."

"Jesus, I'm not ready for any of this."

"Ready or not, honey Kurt's dating. There are going to be boys and fights and heartbreaks and the whole nine yards. It's also more likely than not that some point there will be sex. We'll have to cross those bridges when we get to them and you're going to have to accept that your baby isn't a baby anymore. Now you need to stop working yourself up and come to bed. It's been a long night and we're all exhausted."

Burt checked the locks, turned off the lights and followed his fiancé into their bedroom hoping that a good night's sleep would help put the heartache and horror of the day behind them.

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A/N 2: So I'm guessing you have all gathered your torches and pitchforks lol. I just want you to keep in mind a couple of things. First, I'm not "bashing" Finn just because I don't particularly care for him in canon (strangely though, I tend to love fanon Finn) It's a personal pet peeve of mine when authors use their fics specifically to bash a character or pairing they don't like. I find it off putting so I try not to do it. But to me there's a difference between "bashing" and highlighting the negative ACTUAL CANON elements of a character (to me it veers into bashing when you twist the character so much they bear no resemblance to the canon character and might as well be an OC) . I said from the very beginning that for the first few chapters Finn, Will and Rachel would have the more negative aspects of their personalities played up for plot purposes. I also said those characters weren't the villains of the story and that in later chapters more positive representations of them would begin appearing. I think for Will and Rachel you've seen them have their revelations and turn a bit of a corner. While
they won't be "perfect" the more positive parts of who they are will begin shining through.

Finn isn't as simple because in canon Finn had certain attitudes/beliefs that I wanted to delve into. I said from the onset that there would be certain elements from canon in the story and two of them were going to be (what I see as) Finn's latent homophobia and a version of the basement incident. I also said that Finn was going to go on a journey in this story and that there wasn't going to be an instant, red shower curtain style redemption for him. Finn is at a crossroads. He's young and he knows what he wants to be (a good guy, a leader, a strong enough person to do the right thing) but no idea how to get there. The fact that he wants to change and accepts that he needs to change isn't enough. He has no idea how and that's gonna take effort, education and time. He may not be one of my favorites but I don't think Finn is an inherently bad person. I just think that he's a character that does bad things and never really suffers any consequences for them. You can't "grand gesture" your way to character development or "grand gesture" away things that have caused other people pain. So no, Finn isn't going to get to perform a solo or play hero and all be forgiven in this story, but he's also not the devil incarnate. Change is difficult and for a kid even more so. I will say, for those of you that want to kill him, give Finn some time and the benefit of the doubt. I'm trying to write him in a way that makes him flawed but not irredeemable, hopefully I'm succeeding at that.

Karofsky is in much the same boat as Finn. I make no secret of the fact that I'm not a Dave fan but he's not the villain in this story and I'm trying not to let my personal bias bleed through. Much like with Finn I'm trying to give him layers and write him with a bit of sympathy and humanity. Dave isn't as heavily featured as Finn although he does play a pivotal part in the story. I hope that for people who are fans of his it isn't too uncomfortable to read his portrayal in this fic. He's NOT going to go all "crazy, psycho, killer stalker Dave". IMO he isn't going to be significantly worse than he was in canon.

Finally, I know these last three weren't very Klaine heavy but they were necessary. Klaine will be much more prominently featured in the rest of the story, starting with the next chapter...where Kurt and Jasper finally meet. And not under the best of circumstance...dun dun dun.

Also...remember this story IS semi-dark Blaine. Yes, that is a hint about some of what's to come :)


Blaine woke up slowly, reluctant to be dragged away from the best night's sleep he'd had in years. He slowly blinked himself awake, not quite registering in his semi-conscious state that his legs were tangled with someone else's, his arm had slipped around his companion's body, he was holding onto a slim waist and exhaling slow, even breaths against the soft, warm skin of his bed partner's neck.

Blaine sighed and began to fully rouse himself from his slumber, stretching languidly as best he could and making a small noise of dissatisfaction when he realized he didn't have as much space as he was accustomed to having. The realization that he had not only somehow lost his mind and brought someone to Devonwood but also let them to spend the night slammed into him and his adrenaline spiked as panic set in.

Blaine had rules for his hook ups and the first one was that he *never* brought anyone to Devonwood. He would, on rare occasions, take one of his lovers to his own house for a weekend of debauchery but Devonwood was his *home* and Blaine only allowed those closest to him to step over the threshold. Random hook ups and casual relationships did not make the qualifying cut.

He warily blinked his eyes open and exhaled in relief when he found himself staring at familiar chestnut locks and the events of the previous evening came rushing back to him in vivid detail. He remembered the overwhelming fear and panic he'd felt when rushing to get to Kurt, how painful it had been to witness Kurt's quiet devastation, and most of all his awkward conversation with Burt when the older man had given his permission for Kurt to spend the night.
Blaine swallowed and shook his head a bit to clear it, careful not to jostle Kurt awake. He tried to ignore the bloom of affection that spread across his chest as Kurt snuffled and shifted in his sleep, snuggling closer into Blaine with a contented sigh but it proved impossible. As Blaine listened to Kurt's breathing and watched him sleep he did his best to come to terms with the fact that Kurt was in his home, in his bed and under his skin.

After a few more moments of holding Kurt in his arms Blaine realized something else.

He was hard.

Waking up to with a little morning glory wasn't anything out of the ordinary for Blaine. He was, after all a healthy teen age boy. Waking up hard while someone else was sharing his bed was a little less common but again, nothing unheard of.

Waking up hard next to a bed partner that he'd yet to do more than kiss?

That was a completely new experience for Blaine.

Blaine knew that the gentlemanly thing to do-the right thing to do-was to heed Burt's warning from last night and not push. If he were the person that Kurt believed him to be, the person he sometimes thought he could be for Kurt, because of Kurt, he'd untangle himself from the beguiling boy next to him, go into the bathroom and take matters into his own hands.

In a manner of speaking.

But Blaine wasn't that person—at least not yet. He could accept that Kurt's influence had brought some changes to him—made him a little kinder, a little gentler, a little less likely to take advantage, somehow transformed him into the type of person that a guy like Burt Hummel trusted—however reluctantly—to watch after his son the night before.

But Rome wasn't built in a day and while a better man might be able to resist temptation, Blaine Anderson had every intention of yielding to it. After all, technically he'd held up his end of the bargain. He had kept his word to Burt and hadn't taken advantage of Kurt at any point during their evening together. He had come running when Kurt had needed him, opened up his home to him when Kurt had been too shattered to return to his own, held him in his arms and listened while Kurt unburdened himself of his troubles. He'd been good, so very, very good.

Surely he deserved a little bit of a reward for a job well done. He had to earned a little something, right?

It wasn't like he'd be preying on Kurt while he was defenseless or pushing him into anything he was too emotionally compromised to consent to, Blaine rationalized. He'd had a good night's sleep and well…

Kurt was a teenage boy too and a quick peek under the covers confirmed that Blaine wasn't the only one greeting the morning with an enthusiastic hello.

He wasn't going to pressure Kurt, not exactly; he was just going to let him know he had the option. And if Kurt, soft from sleep and vulnerable from the emotional upheaval of the previous night took him up on it…

Well, Blaine couldn't really be held responsible for that, could he?

A tiny fragment of guilt niggled around at the edges of his conscience but Blaine quickly tamped it down and began gently running one of his hands through Kurt's hair, tangling his fingers in the
glossy strands and letting them slip through, luxuriating in the feel silky smooth feel of Kurt's product free tresses.

After a few moments Kurt's eyes began to flutter and he cuddled down further into Blaine's touch before his body went rigid and his eyes snapped open. "Wha-

"Shh, hey baby its okay," Blaine soothed, smoothing his hand down Kurt's back and over his shoulders. "It's me, it's Blaine. You came home with me last night remember? You're safe, you're fine, I promise."

Blaine could see the moment the confusion cleared for Kurt and the events of the night before were resurrected in the younger boy's memory. "Oh God, my dad-," Kurt began, sitting up in a panic.

"I talked to Burt last night after you passed out. He knows where you are, he's fine with it. He's calling you out absent today and he said you can go home whenever you're ready," Blaine replied smoothly, sitting up himself.

"My father is fine with me spending the night at your house, in your b-bed?" Kurt asked, tripping a little over the word bed.

"He wasn't exactly happy about it," Blaine admitted. "But he understood," Blaine got a flash of inspiration and went with it. "He trusted me to take care of you. I did, didn't I? I took care of you?" He asked Kurt, letting his eyes go wide and hoping for all he worth that he looked earnest.

"You did," Kurt whispered, his hand tentatively crawling across the covers and settling next to Blaine's. "You were...you were amazing, Blaine and...I don't know what I would have done last night if you hadn't been there."

"You would have been fine baby because you are one of the strongest people I've ever known," Blaine replied honestly. "You would have pulled yourself together and gone home, dealt with whatever family drama there was to deal with and walked into that school this morning in a fabulous outfit, not a hair out of place and your head held high because that's who you are."

Kurt shook his head. "That's who I was," he said softly. "Santana says the jocks call me the Ice Queen behind my back," he confessed. "She said that it's because they can't crack me...and because I'm well...a queen," Kurt whispered the last word.

"Kurt-"

"It's hard," Kurt continued. "Being the Ice Queen, it's hard. I'm pretending all the time. Walking into that school, knowing I'm going to be pushed and shoved and taunted and never, ever letting them see me break. Not letting them see how humiliated I am and quietly changing my clothes when they throw me in the dumpster or dump their lunch trays on me or decide to baptize me with a slushie. It's hard acting like I don't hear the whispers or see the dirty looks when I walk down the halls. It's hard trying to make sure I beat my dad to the phone when it rings so he doesn't have to hear the awful, hateful things on the other end of the line. It's hard Blaine, and it gets harder every day."

Blaine put his arm around Kurt's shoulders and drew him to him. "You don't have to pretend with me, Kurt," he said, placing a gentle kiss on the boy's temple. "You can be angry or hurt or bitchy," he said gently bumping their shoulders together, "just don't pretend with me. I get enough of that from almost everyone else in my life," he said a bit startled at his unexpected moment of honesty. "I don't want it from you."

Kurt nodded. "This is a pretend free zone. Fair warning though, I can get my bitch on with the best
of them."

Blaine grinned. "Of this I'm aware. I don't think Thad and Flint have quite recovered from your little show of badassery in the Lima Bean."

Kurt smiled a little and settled down into Blaine's embrace. "Those miscreants had it coming," he sniffed. "Those two are walking proof that money can't buy class."

Blaine smothered a laugh and moved in closer, shifting so he could brush his leg against Kurt's. "As entertaining as this conversation has become, I don't really want to spend the morning talking about Thad and Flint. There are much better ways to fill our time, don't you think baby?"

Blaine felt Kurt tense and internally winced. He didn't want to push Kurt into anything but they were moving at a glacial pace and he knew that sooner or later Jeff would come knocking, seeking company and begging to be entertained.

"Blaine, I don't think-"

"Do you know how beautiful you are when you sleep," Blaine interrupted gently, moving so he was propped up on one elbow and facing Kurt. "I watched you last night-"

"How very Edward Cullen of you," Kurt sniped saucily.

"Hush, you're not a teenage girl and I'm not hundreds of years old so the creep factor totally doesn't exist," Blaine defended himself and took advantage of the new position to place one of his legs over Kurt's. "You have the most adorable little pout and your snore-"

"I do not snore, Blaine Anderson. I might, might, on rare occasions release an elegant sniff-"

"Nope, you snore," Blaine repeated playfully tweaking Kurt's nose. "And it's adorable."

"I do not snore, Blaine Anderson. You take that back right now," Kurt demanded.

"Nope, this is a pretend free zone remember? You get the truth and nothing but," or at least as much of the truth as is necessary Blaine internally corrected, "And you, Kurt Hummel, snore."

"Take it back or suffer the consequences," Kurt ordered, a mischievous smile appearing on his face.

"Nuh uh," Blaine replied succinctly. "Not taking it back, Hummel. Now, what are you gonna do about it?"

Kurt's eyes glinted dangerously and he began tracing a small circle on Blaine's hip with his fingertips. "You know," he began conversationally, "Your friends like me."

"Oh yeah?" Blaine asked, wondering what Kurt was up to.

"They tell me things," Kurt continued, adding just a tiny bit of pressure to his touch. Recognition dawned in Blaine just before Kurt pounced and began tickling him.

"No fair, no fair, this is totally cheating," Blaine wheezed as he twisted, trying to get out from other the brunette. "Who told you? It was Jeff wasn't it? Damn it, this is why we don't tell him anything," Blaine whined.

"Oh I'll never tell," Kurt sing sioned as he tickled Blaine mercilessly. "Unlike your friends I can keep a secret."
"No, no, no, no," Blaine half laughed, half begged as he attempted to bat away Kurt's hands. "You don't snore. You don't snore, I take it back, I take it-Kurt-back," he gasped, laughing and wriggling under Kurt's ministrations.

Kurt sat up and preened. "Let that be a lesson to you about besmirching my reputation Blaine Anderson."

Kurt yelped, going sharp on the end of Blaine's name as he was suddenly swept from his position and pinned underneath Blaine. Blaine's smile was downright predatory as he took in the sight of Kurt's flushed, happy face and the feel of his lithe body laid out on the bed beneath him.

"My turn," he growled, dragging a hand down Kurt's side and across the small strip of skin that had become exposed by Kurt's shirt riding up. He looked down at Kurt and grinned, taking his fingertips and lightly dragging them back over Kurt's stomach.

"That, that doesn't tickle," Kurt said breathlessly, staring up at Blaine with wide, blue eyes.

_Jesus fucking Christ that look should be illegal_, Blaine thought to himself as he smiled back down at Kurt. "No, no I don't suppose it does," Blaine said, repeating the movement and rucking up a tiny bit more of Kurt's shirt as he bent down.

Blaine didn't kiss Kurt, not at first. At first there was just the smallest brush of contact against Kurt's ear, followed almost immediately by a gentle scrape of teeth on his earlobe. Kurt gasped and tipped his head back to give Blaine better access and Blaine smirked against Kurt's skin before pressing small, delicate kisses along Kurt's jawline and up to the corner of Kurt's mouth. He flicked his tongue out, licking lightly over Kurt's full bottom lip before nipping on it gently with his teeth and then using his tongue to soothe away the sting.

"Is this okay?" Blaine asked quietly, surprising himself. Even though it had been his plan to get them into this position, now that they were there it was important to Blaine that Kurt wanted the physicality just as badly as Blaine did.

Kurt nodded and Blaine pulled away slightly, eliciting an unhappy groan from the brunette.

"I need to hear you say it," Blaine admitted, his fingers playing with the edge of Kurt's t-shirt.

"I want you to kiss me, Blaine." Kurt whispered. "You can t-touch me, if if you want."

Blaine caught the stutter in Kurt's admission and the corner of his heart that Kurt had claimed expanded just a bit. Even now, in Blaine's home, wearing Blaine's clothes, in Blaine's bed, Kurt was still afraid he'd be rejected.

"The things that I want," Blaine murmured as he left a trail of butterfly kisses along Kurt's neck. "You have no idea, baby. _None_, what I want to do you. The things I think about…the way that I want you," he whispered as he slipped his hands under Kurt's t-shirt and pushed the fabric up a few more inches.

"I-I think about doing things to you too," Kurt whispered, placing his hands on Blaine's shoulders and letting his fingers dart underneath the material. "I think about what you look like underneath your clothes and what it would feel like to…be with you, you know, like that."

Kurt's innocently worded confession affected Blaine in a way that was more primal than the filthiest dirty talk from any of his more experienced lovers ever had. Arousal flared in Blaine, sudden and vicious, and he had to close his eyes briefly to fight off the urge to simply take.
"You can't just say things like that," Blaine groaned, his finger tips tracing the outline of Kurt's belly button. "I'm trying to be good here."

"Who asked you to?" Kurt demanded.

"I don't want to pressure you into doing something you aren't ready for," Blaine confided, freaking out a bit internally at the fact that the words weren't a carefully crafted line of seduction but were instead the absolute truth. At some point, Blaine's priorities had shifted from taking care of his own physical needs to making sure he met Kurt's emotional ones.

Kurt gave a quiet chuckle and shook his head. "Oh honey, it's cute that you think you could," he said smartly. "But not even teenage billionaire and bow tie enthusiast Blaine Anderson could push me into doing anything I didn't want to do. You aren't taking advantage Blaine." Kurt dropped the playful edge and his voice turned serious. "If you'd done this last night…then you would have been taking advantage. But I'm…better today. And I know what I want and more importantly what I don't and this, right now, is okay. If we get to a point where it's not, I'll let you know."

Blaine smiled. "I just bet you will," he said, shifting his weight and slipping one of his legs in between Kurt's. "I guess I shouldn't underestimate you."

"It's been the downfall of many," Kurt agreed.

Instead of continuing their banter, Blaine opted to move in for a kiss. He brought their lips together gently at first, not demanding anything until he felt Kurt's lips parting underneath his. Once he was sure that Kurt was fully on board he increased the pressure, coaxing Kurt into going further, giving more, taking more. He sucked Kurt's bottom lip in-between his teeth, nipping gently before releasing it, and licking his way into Kurt's mouth, savoring the taste and feel of him.

Neither boy concerned themselves with the worry of morning breath as their tongues met, sliding, swirling, slipping over, under and around one another as they teased and tasted, the need and passion growing between them.

Their kiss was a perfect mingling of the two of them; Blaine was guided by passion and experience while Kurt was driven eagerness and heat. They traded kisses back and forth, feeding the fire between them until their lips were bruised, their cheeks were flushed and they were aching with the need to go just a little further than they ever had before.

Blaine wanted more. He wanted to feel Kurt's skin. He wanted to hear Kurt moan, gasp, and whimper. He wanted to hear Kurt cry out his name, call out for him, because of him. He wanted to have Kurt naked, wanton and wanting, writhing, moaning and coming undone under his touch. He wanted Kurt under him, stretched around him and begging him for more.

Kurt took the lead, shoving his hands underneath Blaine's shirt and pushing the tank up and off. He drank in the sight of Blaine's skin, a little darker than his own and hot under his touch. Blaine's chest wasn't completely hairless but Kurt found himself enjoying the sight and feel of the slight smattering of the smooth dark hair he found there. Kurt let his hands and eyes wander over Blaine's arms and chest, and let his fingers walk along Blaine's happy trail, intrigued by what looked like a swirl of ink peeking out under the waistband of Blaine's pajamas, before dragging them along Blaine's abs and circling around to trace the dips and valleys of his back and shoulders.

"Oh my God," Kurt breathed, closing his eyes.

Blaine smiled and tugged on the bottom of Kurt's t-shirt. "Can I?"
Kurt nodded and Blaine lifted Kurt up slightly so that he could remove his shirt. Blaine felt Kurt tense once his chest was completely bared to Blaine's view so he bent down and pressed a reverent kiss to his collarbone.

"You're beautiful," Blaine whispered, hungry eyes roaming over Kurt, devouring the sight of Kurt's soft, milky skin flushed a delicate pink and pulled taut over the whipcord lean muscle underneath. Blaine granted his hands permission to explore, letting them drift over Kurt's abs and tease his belly button before traveling over his chest and brushing over his nipples.

That move garnered a full body shudder from Kurt as well as a bitten off moan. "Sensitive," Blaine murmured, filing away that bit of knowledge before turning his attention to Kurt's neck, licking, sucking and biting until Kurt dug his fingers into Blaine's shoulders and Blaine was satisfied he'd left a mark and then he took Kurt's mouth again, lacing his kiss with all the things he didn't know how to say and promises he wasn't sure he was ready to make.

"You're so sexy," Blaine sighed, breaking the kiss and breathing into the spot between Kurt's neck and shoulder. "So sexy and all mine."

"Only if you're mine too," Kurt mumbled. Kurt let his hands find their way to the small of Blaine's back and tugged Blaine tighter against him. He rocked up experimentally, bringing their erections into contact and Blaine moaned.

"Christ," Blaine bit out through clenched teeth.

"The name's Kurt," Kurt replied, his voice strained and pitched differently than Blaine's used to hearing it.

"You would be a natural fucking tease," Blaine groaned as Kurt bucked his hips forward again, creating a delicious friction that had Blaine moving back against him seeking more contact.

"S-shut up," Kurt grunted, chasing the pleasurable feeling of Blaine hard, heavy and hot against him.

"Make me," Blaine panted, grinding his hips down and causing Kurt to moan loudly. Before Kurt had the chance to say anything Blaine rotated his hips, and the two boys were lost to passion, too caught up with one another and the drag of their bodies against each other to continue with their banter.

Or hear the opening of Blaine's bedroom door.

"I suppose you'll be requiring that revolving door after all," Jasper said disapprovingly from the doorway.

Kurt froze underneath him and Blaine cursed and rolled off of Kurt who promptly pulled the sheet up to his neck and plastered himself to Blaine's back.

"My mother could be a hard woman but that was needlessly crass," Jasper remarked dryly.

"Unchi," Blaine growled. "Manners usually dictate that one knock at a closed door."

Jasper arched an eyebrow and leaned back against the doorway. "Is that so, băiatul meu? Manners would also dictate that you don't entertain your," he swept a dismissive gaze over Kurt, "company here."

Blaine felt Kurt stiffen and he felt his temper rise. He knew that technically Jasper did have the right to object to Blaine having guests over at Devonwood but after everything that Kurt had been through
Blaine wasn't about to let his godfather add to Kurt's troubles. "Don't," he warned Jasper lowly. "Don't you dare talk about Kurt that way."

A flicker of surprise flashed across Jasper's face and he took in the two boys on the bed with new eyes.

"This is your young man?"

Blaine defiantly met Jasper's gaze. "Yes, this is Kurt. He had some…trouble last night and I brought him here so that he could be in a safe place while he got himself together." Blaine explained, simultaneously willing godfather to remember their prior conversation about Kurt's struggles and daring him to make another snide remark.

"I see," Jasper replied, his voice taking on a softer tone. "Jeffrey left a little while ago, something about a circle he had to go waste an hour of his life sitting in. I'm never entirely sure what that child is talking about but he took your car."

Blaine groaned. "You let Jeff drive my car?"

Kurt's finger jabbed Blaine in the ribs. "Is there something wrong with Jeff's driving? Because last night you let him behind the wheel of my baby."

Blaine sighed. "It was perfectly safe for Jeff to drive your car," he retorted. "You drive a Navigator. I drive a Jag and Jeff has…impulse control issues."

"Well that sounds encouraging," Kurt drawled.

"Gentlemen," Jasper interrupted before Blaine could reply. "You'll both be joining me for breakfast this morning." It was not an invitation and both boys recognized it for the order that it was. "I'll be waiting in the dining room. Do try to be prompt."

As soon as the door closed Blaine closed his eyes and cursed again. They flew open when he felt Kurt trembling behind him. "Kurt, look please don't be upset. Jasper-"

The reassurance died on his lips as he realized that Kurt's shaking limbs were the result of him holding in his laughter and not because he'd been emotionally traumatized.

"Kurt?" Blaine questioned quietly.

"Hush, I'm in the middle of a nervous breakdown. It's rude to interrupt."

Okay then. Perhaps Kurt had been emotionally traumatized.

"Your godfather…he saw us…he saw me…oh God I'm never going to be able to get make out with you again. Every time I try I'll be reminded that the first time your godfather ever saw me he thought I was some, I don't know, rent boy that you'd dragged back here to defile his estate and oh my God tell me you don't have rent boys that you drag back-

Blaine cut him off with a kiss. "I can honestly say I've never made use of a rent boy," Blaine said seriously. "Now stop freaking out. There isn't anything wrong with what we were doing and I for one hope to do it again-preferably sometime soon and without the added mortification of being walked in on by a man who used to change my diapers."

"He hates me," Kurt whispered sadly. "You said he was protective. If he didn't think I was a gold digging tramp before, he certainly does now."
"He doesn't hate you," Blaine said taking Kurt into his arms and kissing him on the forehead. "He may be a little cautious right now but that's just parental instinct. He's tough but he's fair and even if, by some miracle, you don't manage to wrap him around your delicate little finger it won't change anything between us."

"Because I have you wrapped around my delicate little finger," Kurt asked softly.

"Yes," Blaine readily agreed, kissing Kurt again. "And because I'm teenage billionaire and bow tie enthusiast Blaine Anderson and I make my own decisions. And I'm rather fond you, Kurt Hummel."

"I'm rather fond of you too," Kurt sighed, relaxing against Blaine and stealing another kiss.

"Now that we've gotten that out of the way, Jasper's waiting on us to meet him in the dining room and I'm pretty sure after that I'm gonna have to take you home or run the risk of getting up close and personal with your father's shot gun," Blaine explained.

Kurt bit his lip and nodded and Blaine felt a wave of protectiveness wash over him. "Kurt?"

"I know that my dad wants me home and I know that I can't hide out here forever," Kurt began. "I just really don't know that I'm ready to deal with Finn and everything that happened last night."

"Do you want me to be there with you?" Blaine asked gently.

Kurt nodded. "I know it's a lot to ask after everything you've already done for me-"

"I don't mind," Blaine replied honestly. "In fact, I'm glad you invited me along. I would have sat here worrying about you otherwise. Now, come on, my godfather really hates to be kept waiting."

The moment Blaine descended the staircase and saw a bouquet of yellow carnations adorning the dining room table he wanted to turn right around and hustle Kurt back up the stairs.

Instead he grasped Kurt's hand firmly in his and led them over to the table and helped Kurt take his chair.

"My apologies for the delay, Unchi," Blaine murmured, as dropped into his seat.

"The delay is the least of my concerns," Jasper returned calmly, before he turned his piercing gaze on Kurt. "So, you are the young man that has so completely bewitched my godson that he is no longer interested in pursuing any of the more appropriate options that Dalton has to offer."

Blaine's jaw dropped and he stared at his uncle in open shock but Kurt lifted his chin and met Jasper's gaze head on.

"I suppose I am," he said lightly. "Though from what I understand appropriate is the last word I would use to describe the company Blaine's been keeping at Dalton."

"If this morning's behavior was any indication you're hardly in a position to throw stones, Mr. Hummel."

"If your four ex-wives are anything to go by neither are you," Kurt sniped back.

Blaine hid a smile behind his coffee cup and squeezed Kurt's knee beneath the table.

"Someone's done their homework, I see." Jasper remarked.
"Fair is fair," Kurt replied, briefly looking away to give the maid a sunny smile as she placed a perfectly prepared omelette in front of him. "After all, you looked into my background, didn't you Mr. Devereux?"

"Indeed I did," Jasper readily admitted. "You, your father, your dead mother and your soon to be step mother," he listed as he took a bite of his breakfast.

"Which was a waste of your time because neither Kurt nor his family has anything to hide," Blaine cut in.

Kurt took a sip of his juice and spread his napkin across his lap before he replied. "Blaine, it's okay," he said finally. "Your godfather already knows that. Don't you Mr. Devereux?"

"You sound awfully sure of yourself Mr. Hummel."

"I am."

"And why is that?" Jasper asked.

"For one thing, I know I don't have any skeletons rattling around in my closet," Kurt answered. "For another, if you had, by some soap opera like twist of fate discovered some deep, dark secret of my father's or Carole's or even my mother's, you would have approached me by now. The fact that you didn't means that despite your digging, you didn't find any dirt."

Blaine didn't even attempt to hide his smile. He had been worried that Jasper would steamroll over Kurt and that he'd be forced to step in and play peacemaker but Kurt was holding his own and if Blaine knew his godfather as well as he thought he did, he was pretty sure that Kurt was earning Jasper's respect.

He hadn't known until just that moment how important it was to him that Jasper and Kurt got along. The most he had allowed himself to want from any of their interactions was the same polite detachment that he himself had treated Jasper's ex-wives to. The idea that Jasper might do more than tolerate Kurt's presence in his life made Blaine almost inexplicably happy.

He wondered briefly Kurt had felt the same way when he'd brought Blaine home to meet Burt.

Blaine was pulled out of his musings by Kurt's voice. "I know what you're thinking, Mr. Devereux."

"I somehow doubt that, Mr. Hummel."

"You're thinking that I don't fit into Blaine's life," Kurt continued. "That I stand out like a thrift store jacket in a Fifth Avenue store window."

"I assure you, Mr. Hummel I was thinking no such thing."

"I may not have been born with one of these in my mouth," Kurt said, gesturing with the silver spoon in his hand, "But that doesn't mean that I'm not a good person or that I'm not good enough for Blaine. You don't have to worry. Should I ever end up attending a country club function or a Dalton formal, I promise to chew with my mouth closed and use the correct fork. Now someone from my background may not be what the one percent deems appropriate for Blaine, but I care about him. And he cares about me so you can be as condescending or insulting as you like, it's nothing I haven't dealt with before. But I'll tell you this: You can't chase me off. The only person who can make me leave is Blaine."

"And that's the absolute last thing that I want," Blaine put in, reaching out and taking Kurt's hand.
"So, now that we all understand each other-

"Not quite, my boy. The two of you have had your say but I have yet to have mine."

"You don't get a say-" Blaine began.

"Let him talk, Blaine," Kurt said. "There's nothing he can say that will change anything."

"Don't be so sure of that," Jasper said quietly. "I can see now that unlike my godson I underestimated you, Mr. Hummel."

"You wouldn't be the first," Kurt sighed.

"No, I don't imagine that I would be," Jasper murmured. "Blaine seems to have been able to see something in you that I have to admit that I missed at first. Although in my defense my first glimpse of you was hardly conducive to forming a favorable opinion. But Blaine, you see he has this talent for being able to look at something—a company, a stock, real estate—and see its true value. I suspect that talent extends to people as well."

"I..I'm not sure I follow," Kurt replied.

"I realize that running background checks and deliberately attempting to intimidate a teenage boy might seem a bit over the top to you, but everything I do, I do for Blaine. I only want the best for him."

"So do I," Kurt said quietly.

"Then you'll understand my need to warn you, just this once, what will happen if you hurt him."

"Jasper-" Blaine cried out, his eyes flashing angrily.

"Blaine it's fine," Kurt murmured. "Go on, Mr. Devereux I'm listening." Blaine gripped Kurt's hand tight and held his breath as Jasper began speaking.

"I don't know if you're such a remarkable young man that Blaine is willing to let his guard down and open his heart to you or if you're doing circus in his bed and he's being led astray by his baser instincts. I suppose time will tell the tale on that. What I do know is that I've seen him torn apart before by people who claimed to care for him and I will not sit idly by and let it happen again. So you hear me, and you hear me good: if you hurt him, I will make your life a living hell the likes of which you cannot even begin to imagine."

Kurt nodded once. "That would be a rather effective threat if I had any intention of hurting Blaine. But since I don't…will you please pass the cream?"

Jasper was silent for a beat before he gifted Kurt with a genuine smile. "Of course," he said politely, passing the creamer over to Kurt. As Kurt measured a small amount into his coffee, Jasper motioned Antoine over.

"You can replace the carnations now," Jasper said quietly. Antoine nodded and left the room, returning a few moments later with bouquet of pink lilacs and heather.

As the centerpieces were swapped out Jasper caught Blaine's eye, allowed his gaze to flicker briefly onto Kurt and nodded once.

"So Kurt," Jasper said, breaking the silence. "I understand you're a member of your school's glee
club. Do you enjoy performing as much as Blaine does?"

Kurt straightened in his seat and gave Jasper a luminous smile. "I love it," he said enthusiastically. "Of course, I'd have to pry a solo from Rachel Berry's cold, dead hands but lack of the spotlight aside, I'm never happier than when I'm singing. Even though Mr. Schue-that's our director-can be woefully unimaginative when it comes to song selection and seems to be almost unhealthily fixated on reliving the glory days of yesteryear he's a vast improvement over Sandy Reyerson and against all odds seems to be holding his own against Coach Sylvester which is impressive. To be frank, we're all a little shocked she hasn't actually tried to kill him yet."

"That's Coach Sue Sylvester, correct?"

Kurt blinked. "You know her?"

"Only by reputation, thank goodness," Jasper said with a small shudder. "She's rather..." Jasper trailed off helplessly.

Kurt arched an eyebrow. "I think the word you're searching for is insane," Kurt stage whispered.

As Jasper and Kurt shared a laugh, Blaine fingered one of the lilacs on the table and let himself enjoy the moment.

"Kurt? Baby, we've been sitting in the driveway for twenty minutes," Blaine said, leaning over the console and rubbing a soothing circle into Kurt's shoulder. It seemed as if Kurt had used up every bit of his confidence when he'd faced down Jasper at breakfast and he was regressing to the broken shell of a boy he'd been when Blaine had found him the night before. "They know we're here. Your stepmother keeps looking out the window and I'm pretty sure your father is ready to come out here and climb into the SUV with us if you don't get in there."

"I just need a little more time," Kurt said, his voice breaking as if he were on the edge of full blown panic.

"Baby you got this," Blaine said encouragingly. "Look, worse comes to worse, I'll get you out of there and take you back to mine but you gotta go in there."

Kurt nodded jerkily, trying to get his breathing under control. "Right, right. This is so wrong," he said leaning his head against the steering wheel. "I have never in my life been afraid to walk through my own front door and now? I can't imagine anything more terrifying than what's waiting for me on the other side."

"What's waiting for you on the other side is a father that loves you and a woman who wants to help him care for you and-"

"And Finn," Kurt cut Blaine off bitterly. "Finn and all the things he hates about me are waiting for me on the other side of that door."

"That's your home," Blaine told him. "That's your family. Don't let Finn chase you out of it."

"I'm not," Kurt denied quickly. "I'm just...enjoying the interior of my baby."

Blaine sighed. "Okay, that's it. Remove your ass from the heated leather seats and go talk to your father."

Kurt raised his head and glared at Blaine. "Interesting approach but I'll take hell no for 300, Alex."
"Kurt."

"Blaine."

"Kurt."

"Blaine."

"Kurt."

"Blaine. I can do this all day," Kurt warned before dropping his head back onto the steering wheel and closing his eyes.

"No you can't," Blaine drawled.

"You wanna bet?"

"I'm pretty sure I'd win that one."

"Oh yeah? And why is that?"

"Because your dad's almost to the car," Blaine said smugly.

Kurt's head snapped up at the same time Burt knocked on the driver's side door.

"Dad," Kurt said letting the window down.

"Listen buddy, I'm not gonna pretend that I know how you feel right now," Burt said cutting Kurt off. "But this thing isn't gonna get any better with us in there and you out here. It's time for you to come inside so we can talk about this like a family. Blaine-"

"I want Blaine with me," Kurt interrupted his father, gripping tightly onto Blaine's hand.

"I kinda figured that when I saw him in the car son," Burt sighed. "Blaine, thank you for taking care of him last night."

"It was my pleasure, sir."

Blaine replied and then winced as he realized that Burt's eye had been drawn to the hickey Blaine had left on Kurt that morning.

"I'll just bet it was," Burt replied darkly. "I thought I told you not to take advantage of him."

"Dad, he didn't" Kurt said immediately. "You have no right or reason to be angry at Blaine. Nothing happened last night and this," Kurt gestured to the hickey, "happened with my full consent and participation."

Burt exhaled harshly and closed his eyes briefly before opening them and nodding. "Alright kid, one thing at a time. We'll talk about that," he said pointing to the side of Kurt's neck, "later. And I do mean we, Blaine. Right now let's get in there and sit down with Finn and Carole and work this thing out, huh?"

Kurt nodded and he and Blaine both opened their doors and slipped from the car. Kurt waited for Blaine to come around the car and grab his hand before he followed his father up the walk and into the house.

"Hi honey," Carole said, coming over to embrace Kurt as soon as he walked through the door. "I'm glad you're home," she said kissing the top of his head and giving him a squeeze.
"Hey Carole," Kurt greeted her, unable to tear his eyes away from the sofa where Finn sat.

"Hey Kurt," Finn said awkwardly, getting up from his seat and crossing the room. "I'm really sorry and I'm glad you're alright and I'm glad you're home, dude." He said, stepping towards Kurt and opening his arms.

"Nuh uh," Kurt said immediately taking a step back and holding up a finger. "Don't touch me," he said, leaning back against Blaine who immediately drew Kurt into his side and glared at Finn.

"Y-yeah, okay. I won't, I just...sorry," Finn mumbled, regret and misery etched into his face as he shuffled back across the room and sat back down.

"Okay, ah," Burt said clearing his throat. "How about we all take a seat and start talking this thing out."

Kurt dropped onto the loveseat, pulling Blaine down beside him and Burt went and took the seat on the sofa, as close as he could possibly get to Kurt, placing Finn in between the two adults.

"Kurt-" Burt began.

"I'm so sorry," Finn burst out. "I know what I did was wrong, like really wrong and it hurt you, I hurt you and I hate that. I hate that I hurt you. I hate that I put that look on your face. I hate that you didn't come home last night and I hate that-"

"You hate that I'm gay!" Kurt shouted, cutting Finn off. "Why don't you just say what you really mean, Finn? You sure didn't have a problem last night letting everyone know how you felt about me. What'd you call me again, Finn? Oh yeah, a queer, cocksucking, fa-"

"Hey now!" Burt thundered. "That's enough of that. Kurt, you have every right to be upset-"

"Oh well now that I have your permission dad," Kurt snarked.

"Watch it, now," Burt warned him, putting a hand up. "We're gonna talk this out. But nobody's gonna yell, and nobody's gonna scream and nobody," he stressed, looking at both Kurt and Finn, "is gonna use those words in this house. Are we clear?"

Kurt nodded and Burt continued. "Now, seems like the first thing we gotta do is make some apologies-"

"Fine. I'll go first. I apologize for liking cock," Kurt spat out.

"Kurt!"

"Baby, that's not helping."

"Dude, come on."

"That's enough, Kurt," Burt said tiredly. "Son, I know that you're hurt and you're angry and I don't blame you but being like this isn't gonna help us get this thing solved."

"Maybe I don't want to get this thing solved," Kurt yelled. "Maybe I don't want to have to make Finn feel better about being a homophobic dick. And maybe I don't want to make you feel less guilty for not moving us away to someplace where I could grow up without being tortured for just existing every day of my life. Maybe I'm tired of always trying to make it easy on everyone else when no one ever tries to make it any easier for me!"
The look of pain on his father's face had Kurt instantly regretting his outburst. "Dad-

"Don't," Burt said, running a shaking hand over his head. "Don't apologize. You uh, you been holding that in for awhile, huh kid?"

"I know you did your best-"

"Doesn't seem like my best has been quite up to snuff though," Burt noted.

"No, dad it is. You, you're amazing. You're the best dad I could have ever hoped for, I didn't mean it-"

"Yeah you did, buddy and it's okay," Burt cut his son off. "I've made mistakes. I didn't know just how many until this whole thing blew up but that's no excuse. I need to apologize to you for my part in this and I need for you to be honest with me about what you need and how you feel and what you've been going through because son, all I want to do is make this better for you."

Kurt felt a tear slip down his cheek but before he could bring his hand up, Blaine was wiping it away with the pad of his thumb. Kurt gave him a watery smile and then met his father's gaze.

"I just need some peace," Kurt said brokenly. "I need to be able to go to school without being thrown into dumpsters or shoved into lockers or unable to use the bathroom because the boys restroom isn't safe and unless I'm with one of my girls I get dirty looks when I go into the ladies room. I need to go a week without getting bruises on top of my bruises. I need to not panic every time the phone rings or be afraid every time I'm out by myself and a group of people notice me. I need one place where it's okay for me to be me and I used to have that and now it's gone and I don't know what to do."

"Oh Kurt honey, you still have that," Carole said gently. "Your home will always be a safe place for you."

"Is Finn moving out?" Kurt asked bitterly.

"No," Burt said quietly.

"Then this isn't such a safe place for me now is it?"

"Yes it is, Kurt," Finn interrupted. "Last night was awful man. And it wasn't just because I hurt you and made you feel so bad you didn't come home. I don't like the person I was last night. I don't like that side of myself," Finn confessed. "I got some stuff I gotta work on and some of it's about you and some of it's not. Like, I know my temper is kind of a joke to people. 'Ooh Hudson's angry, hide the chairs' but I don't like that person. I don't like the guy that was throwing punches in Breadstix last night and I don't like the guy that goes along with the crowd even when it makes him feel like crap and I really don't like the guy who makes you feel like it's not okay for you to be who you are. That guy sucks."

"He really does," Kurt agreed.

"I don't wanna be that guy," Finn said, sliding forward so Kurt could see him better. "I don't wanna be the guy that thinks taking a stand means holding your jacket while my teammates throw you in the dumpster. I don't want to be the guy that gets so angry that his fists start flying and his mouth starts moving before his brain can tell him to stop. I don't want to be the guy who has a problem with you being gay," Finn finished.

"Then don't be," Kurt said.
"I need help," Finn admitted. "Like, I know there are all these things that I don't like about who I've been and I want to change them but I don't know how."

"You don't have to do it alone honey," Carole said, covering Finn's hand with hers. "That's what family is for. We're here to help you, both of you," she said looking at Kurt, "but you two have got to let us in."

"So what are we going to do?" Kurt asked. "I mean, all these good intentions are great but…"

"Well for one thing we're all going to start going to PFLAG meetings," Carole answered. "It'll be good for Finn, your father and I to learn how to be better allies to you and it'll give you a chance to get some support and maybe not feel so alienated."

"That sounds…like a really good idea," Kurt said.

"They have meetings on the fourth Sunday of every month so first one we'll be able to go to is next Sunday," Burt said. He looked at Blaine. "You're welcome to join us, Blaine if you want."

Blaine squeezed Kurt's hand. "Thank you Mr. Hummel. I appreciate being included."

"You're important to Kurt," Burt admitted. "You took care of him last night and you're sitting here with him now. That counts for a lot, kiddo. Plus, I figure there's no such thing as having too much support."

Blaine nodded and Kurt turned to Finn. "You're actually okay with this? Going to PFLAG? You know it won't just be allies? LGBTQ means lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning," Kurt said. "Are you really going to be comfortable and able to keep from freaking out if there people there who are different from what you're used to?"

"I know I don't have the right to ask but have a little faith in me, dude. I was on the computer earlier and I looked up some stuff…I know that's not much but I really am trying. The site I was on said the first step to combating ignorance is education…so I'm getting educated. I know I have a lot to work on and make up for," Finn said. "And I know it won't be easy and I know that you don't trust me right now and you might even hate me a little bit but I promise Kurt, I'm gonna make this up to you."

Kurt gave Finn a tiny smile. "I'm glad that you're educating yourself-and it means a lot to me that you're willing to try, Finn. But I won't lie to you. I don't know how long it's going to take us to be okay again," Kurt said slowly. "I don't know if you'll ever be able to get me to trust you again but I'm willing to give you the opportunity to try," Kurt said.

Finn nodded. "I kinda feel like that's more than I deserve so, thanks."

"Finn, you aren't entirely terrible okay," Kurt sighed. "Yeah what you did hurt. And I'm not over it and I probably won't be for a long time, if ever, but the guy that was screaming those things in Breadstix isn't the sum total of who you are. You're also the guy that rode over with me in the Navigator singing that ridiculous song and had dinner with me and helped me plan our parents wedding. You're more than just your mistakes, Finn."

"Thanks for saying that, dude."

"It's the truth," Kurt shrugged. "I've made my fair share of mistakes-some of them with you. I'd hate for someone to judge me by the worst thing I ever did so…you're trying. I'm trying. We're all trying. It's all we can do."

"Yeah, I guess so. I really wanna get past the trying and get to the doing though," Finn said.
"You and me both," Kurt agreed. "But I don't think there's a short cut here. It's not Glee. We can't sing a song and make this all better. It's just gonna take time and work and probably a lot of more talking and possibly more yelling and I might even set all of your puffy vests on fire before it's all over."

Finn paled and unconsciously pulled on his vest. "Dude."

Kurt shrugged. "They are an abomination and I'd be doing you a favor."

"How about we put giving Finn an extreme makeover on the backburner for now? There's something else Carole and I want to talk about with you," Burt said.

"What's left?" Kurt asked, leaning his head onto Blaine's shoulder.

"Finn told us about some of what you go through at school," Carole said. "Honey, I know that you probably thought you were doing what was best but you can't keep those kinds of things to yourself."

"Carole's right," Burt said. "I know that my heart attack spooked you real bad and you're trying real hard to make things as easy as possible for me but Kurt, I'm the parent here. It's my job to take care of you not the other way around. I told you before that your job is to be yourself and my job is to love you, no matter what. That hasn't changed. That will never change. But the other part of my job is to keep you safe and I haven't been doing that."

"I haven't exactly made that easy for you to do," Kurt admitted. "And I didn't keep it to myself. There are people who know. I told Blaine and he's been great."

"Well, I'm glad that Blaine's been there for you but I would have liked the chance to be there for you too." Burt said evenly. "I get that you were trying to handle things on your own, trying to protect me, trying to be strong but son, you're being abused and I can't let that go on. Now, I know you aren't a baby anymore but you're still a kid and sometimes you gotta let the adults in your life handle things. I got a little more sway than you do so tomorrow we're gonna go to that school and I'm gonna give 'em hell and make sure that nobody lays another finger on you while you're inside of that building."

"Dad, Mr. Schue and I already tried complaining. Principal Figgins said his hands are tied. There's nothing anybody can do. Even the guys in New Directions tried sticking up for me and all that accomplished was Sam getting a black eye and Artie getting knocked out of his chair."

"Did you know about this?" Carole asked Finn

Finn nodded.

"Finn," Carole began.

"It's not Finn's fault," Kurt said, stopping her. "He gets his fair share too."

"Finn does?" Carole asked, her eyes widening in shock. "You didn't say you were being bullied too."

Finn bit his lip and nodded. "Everybody in Glee kinda gets the suck end of the stick. Except Quinn, Santana and Brittany and that's because no one but Coach Sylvester messes with her Cheerios. For the rest of us though going to school is like…it's like going to war, mom."

"And war is hell," Kurt deadpanned.
"Where are the teachers when all this is going on?"

"Hiding most likely," Kurt said.

"Well I'm going with Burt up to that school," Carole declared. "This is ridiculous. I will not have my boys being subjected to harassment and assault while they're supposed to be safe at school. You said that all the kids in Glee are bullied?"

Finn and Kurt nodded. "It's not just us Glee kids who get bullied, but yeah. We're kind of wearing permanent Kick Me signs," Finn explained.

"Well, then Burt and I won't be going alone," Carole announced. "I'm going to get the phone and call of your friends parents and let them know what's been happening to their children and I'm sure that once they realize that school has turned a blind eye to their children being relentlessly bullied they'll be more than happy to join Burt and I in giving Figgins a piece of our minds."

"I wish you luck," Kurt said. "It would be nice for the school day not to consist of slushies and locker slams but I won't expect any miracles."

"You just wait and see," Carole replied.

Kurt smiled and snuggled into Blaine. Burt narrowed his eyes. "Well, now that we got that done. Finn, you're excused. I need to talk to Kurt and Blaine here about a couple of things."

Finn nodded and got up from the sofa. On his way past Kurt he paused for a moment and reached tentatively and gave Kurt's shoulder a soft squeeze. Before Finn could remove his hand Kurt reached up and squeezed it back.

"So what did you want to talk to us about dad?"

"Oh a lot of things son," Burt said sitting back and crossing his arms. "But I think that hickey on your neck would be a good place to start."

"Dad there's nothing to talk about. What Blaine and I do in our private time is our business."

"You're too young to be having private time."

"I think I'll go get started on those phone calls," Carole said, fighting back a smile.

"No Carole, please don't leave us with him."

"Hey honey before you get started on those calls could you bring me those pamphlets in my desk drawer?"

"Oh my God, dad no come on, not the pamphlets!"

"Pamphlets?" Blaine mouthed to Kurt.

Kurt groaned and buried his head in his hands.

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A/N 2: So what did we think of the Kurt/Jasper meeting and the Hudmel family meeting. I know you're probably thinking Blaine was super quiet during that. That's because our Blainers was doing what he does best-plotting. The next chapter is a big one-it's my take on Never Been Kissed.

And in case you're wondering yellow carnations symbolize "disappointment" and pink lilacs mean
"acceptance" and the heather symbolizes "good luck."

Just as an FYI: Even if takes me until I'm old and gray I will finish this story. It will not be abandoned. To keep informed on updates or delays you can always follow me on my Tumblr here or on my post limit Tumblr here.
Chapter 22

Chapter Summary

Disappointment, anger and frustration lead to a volatile situation that no one saw coming and forces Blaine to put a plan in motion that could either get him exactly what he wants or cost him everything.

Chapter Notes

A/N ~ I am humbled and blown away by the response to the last chapter. You guys rock and I am awed by how many of you were still waiting on this to update and still faithful readers. This story means a great deal to me personally and it means so much to me that so many of you have taken my vision and my story into your hearts as well. So thank you and I only hope that I continue to put out a story that stays true to my vision and that you guys enjoy.

Chapter Warnings: This chapter is my take on some of the events in NBK so it will contain non consensual sexual contact (the kiss between Kurt and Dave) and as well as general references to consent issues and the effects non-consensual forced physical contact can have on a victim. There are also references to PTSD and physical reactions to emotional trauma (panic attacks and flashbacks) as well as fat shaming, the discussion of internalized homophobia, discussion of conversion camps and homophobic ideas and attitudes, victim blaming, manipulation, blackmail, certain dramatic license for plot purposes (suspend some belief for me pls), brief mention of sexual harassment, and canon typical physical violence.

Chapter Twenty-Two: Sympathy for the Devil

Blaine spent most of the morning in his dorm room going over the events of the previous two days and figuring out what his next move would be.

Blaine had kept quiet and remained in the background during the majority of his time at the Hudmel home. On the surface it seemed he kept quiet out of respect for the family but in reality Blaine's silence had been for his own benefit. One of the first lessons Jasper had ever taught him was that it was far easier to make observations as a spectator than it was to do as a participant. Blaine had learned early on the value in keeping his mouth closed and his ears open.

As he'd listened to everyone lay out their concerns and air a bit of their dirty laundry Blaine had been forced to concede that Burt and Carole, despite some of their missteps, had Kurt's best interests at heart. Their reaction to getting a few, but thankfully not all, of the details regarding the bullying their sons endured at school confirmed Blaine's initial impression of their good intentions but he'd been wholly unimpressed with how they planned to confront the issue.

At first glance it seemed like a good idea but Blaine doubted gathering a group of largely uninformed
and apparently uninvolved parents would merit out the kind of results they were hoping for.

For one thing Kurt and Finn had inadvertently weakened their own parents' position. Blaine had noticed that the boys had left out important details-such as the existence of Jacob Ben Israel's blog or the fact that Kurt had actually been physically assaulted by both Karofsky and Azimio. Whether it was due to misguided protective instincts such as in Kurt's case or a desire to save face such as in Finn's, Blaine suspected that all of Kurt's friends would opt for a similar method of blending confession with discretion when confronted by their parents. He doubted that any of the adults, Burt and Carole included, would be given a complete picture of what was actually happening to their children and since knowledge is power, their lack of it would automatically put them at a disadvantage and allow Figgins to downplay the severity of the situation since they'd all be none the wiser.

The second, and far higher hurdle in Blaine's estimation, was that fighting the system was never quick and seldom easy. Blaine suspected that neither Burt nor Carole had ever played the type of politics required to bring about substantial changes in school policies. Talking to a teacher one on one and coming with a plan of action about your specific child was one thing; attempting to institute a change that would impact every single member of the student body-some in initially negative ways-was quite another.

During the course of the conversation Blaine got the distinct impression that Burt and Carole imagined they could storm the castle with their group of angry villagers, hand over their list of demands and negotiate the terms of Figgins' symbolic surrender. Blaine knew from his experience at Anderson International that changing the culture of an institution-any institution-required a combination of time, influence and most important of all-leverage. In order for the kind of changes in policies and procedures that would need to take place for Kurt and his friends to enjoy harassment free school days, their parents would have to play the long game and Figgins would merely be the first of many obstacles that would need to be overcome. Given that Figgins only had so many disciplinary options available to him that couldn't be overturned if a student appealed to the school board, Blaine was relatively sure that any solution the man would have to offer would be akin to putting a band aid on a bullet wound.

And all of this was just fine by Blaine.

It wasn't that Blaine didn't want Kurt to have a safe learning environment; it was simply that he wanted Dalton to be the school providing it.

The way that Blaine saw it Kurt attending Dalton was best for everyone. Kurt would no longer be in physical danger so Burt would no longer have to worry about his son's safety and in turn Kurt would worry less about his father's stress levels. Kurt's absence would benefit Finn because for most bullies out of sight was out of mind. Without Kurt's presence as a visual reminder the second hand harassment Finn got over Kurt's sexuality would most likely decrease dramatically, resulting in a much happier Finn and thus a much happier Carole.

As for Kurt, Dalton would be better for him for a variety of reasons. Kurt's future would be more secure because a Dalton education was an impressive feather to have in one's cap when it came time to apply to colleges. Dalton had influential and active alumni at almost every major university in the country as well as some in the UK and Europe. Kurt's social life wouldn't suffer as a result of a transfer. While he might miss his friends at first, Kurt had already forged bonds with David, Wes, and Jeff and he was sure that the rest of his friends would take to Kurt just as quickly, plus Kurt's peer group would be upgraded from future fast food workers and latchkey kids to the sons of some of the most powerful men not just in Ohio, but in the country and that could only bode well for future endeavors. And there was always the weekend if Kurt absolutely had to maintain contact with his
friends from New Directions. As far as future endeavors went, Kurt could nurture his interests in both fashion and performance as Dalton had both top rated drama and art departments.

There was also the fact that Kurt at Dalton was far better for their relationship than Kurt at McKinley. They would finally have time, proximity and privacy- three things that were sorely lacking at the moment and desperately needed for the two of them to move in the direction that Blaine wanted them to go.

And last but not least, it would be better for Kurt if he were as far from the fall out as possible when Blaine released the hounds.

Blaine had begun sowing the seeds of revenge when he had instructed Evan to dig up any information Blaine could use against Kurt's bullies and hired Cass to look into whether or not the school district could face legal repercussions for failing to take any measures to put a stop to the bullying. Evan had uncovered many a dirty little secret that gave Blaine a tremendous amount power over several of Kurt's tormentors. In some cases Blaine could destroy their futures, in others he could tear apart their families and for others he had the ability to even take away their freedom if he chose to make certain information public knowledge. Azimio, Lewis, Karofsky and several of the bullies were firmly in his crosshairs and he couldn't wait until it was time to start taking headshots.

As far as the school went, Cass had concluded that actually winning a lawsuit wasn't a guarantee but they certainly had the grounds to file one. Thanks to Jacob's blog and McKinley's very own school sponsored newspaper there was written, photographic and videotaped proof that a culture of verbal, physical and emotional intimidation was allowed to run rampant on campus and that the offending students had very little, if any, fear of being disciplined or punished for their actions.

The fact that the lawsuit wasn't a slam dunk wasn't an issue. Blaine hadn't really been concerned with whether or not a lawsuit was winnable, only that it was viable. Truth be told, Blaine had no intention of encouraging Kurt to file suit; in fact he had no intention of Kurt ever finding out that he'd even looked into the possibility of filing a suit. Going to court meant dealing with the school board and their attorneys and neither the school board or the taxpayers had the power to give Blaine what he wanted. No, the only one who could do that was Principal Figgins.

While it was true that in the grand scheme of things Figgins was the low man on the totem pole he was the one that Blaine needed to deal with for his plan to work. As the Principal, Figgins was the school's first line of defense against angry parents, disgruntled faculty and anything that might damage the school's reputation or negatively impact its bottom line. He was also the scapegoat and sacrificial lamb should the school receive any bad publicity or be found to be failing in any way. It was precisely because of this that Blaine was betting that Figgins would do just about anything to keep the contents of Jacob's blog from becoming Plaintiff's exhibit A or the feature story on the ten o'clock news. Figgins had to balance his sense of self preservation with his obligation to protect the school's reputation and that was a weakness that Blaine intended to exploit for all it was worth.

He was betting it worth enough to get Kurt out of McKinley and into Dalton.

Being allowed to sit in on the Hudmel family meeting had not only given Blaine the opportunity to know firsthand what Burt did and more importantly didn't know about Kurt's school life, but it had also given Blaine a unique opportunity to bond-sort of-with the elder Hummel afterwards.

"You cannot be serious," Kurt moaned as Burt placed a stack of pamphlets down on the coffee table in front of the two boys.

"I'm as serious as my heart attack. Now, these are some pamphlets I picked up at the free clinic. I was planning on having this talk with you one on one and thought it might help the process along
because this is something we need to discuss," Burt responded.

Kurt shook his head rapidly. "Oh no it's not."

"Safer Sex Can Be Fun," Blaine read aloud. "Um, Mr. Hummel I don't really think I need to be here for this so-"

"Look, I know I'm not your father but judging by that hickey on the side of Kurt's neck and that bite mark on your collarbone, I kind of think you do," Burt snapped.

Kurt blushed and Blaine fiddled with the collar of his shirt. "Dad, we really do not have to do this."

"Oh yes we do," Burt disagreed. "You told me to educate myself and-

Kurt stuck his fingers in his ears and began singing loudly and shaking his head. Blaine shifted uncomfortably on the sofa, torn between the urge to laugh and the instinct to do the same.

"Hey no," Burt said leaning over and gently removing Kurt's fingers from his ears. "You think this is easy for me? It's not, believe me. I want to do this even less than you do."

"I really don't think that's possible," Blaine muttered.

"Look this is gonna suck for all three of us," Burt announced. "But we're all gonna get through it and we'll all be better men because of it."

"My s-sex life is none of your business," Kurt said boldly. "Not that I have a s-sex life," he added quickly. "But if I did it wouldn't be any of your business."

"That's where you're wrong," Burt said. "I mean, you're right in that your body is your own and you get to choose who you share it with and I don't get to say anything about that-as long as you're both able to give consent and nobody's being taken advantage of. But it is my job as your father to make sure that you have all the information you need to keep yourself safe physically and emotionally if you're gonna be..." Burt faltered for a moment but pushed on, "If you're gonna be having sex.

"Okay," Kurt said, nodding rapidly. "This was a good talk. Thanks for the pamphlets," he said as he rose to his feet and pulled Blaine up with him.

"Sit down," Burt said, pointing to the sofa.

Both boys' shoulders slumped forward and they took their seats again.

"First of all," Burt began, looking from Kurt to Blaine, "Most of the uh, mechanics of what you're gonna be doing is covered in the pamphlets-"

"Mr. Hummel, I really don't need this talk," Blaine interrupted.

"Is that your way of telling me you're not a virgin?" Burt asked.

"Is that a problem?" Blaine fired back, defensive. "Am I unworthy now? Used goods, and all. You want to know how many people I've been with, maybe you want a list?"

"What I want is for you shove the attitude and dial it down a few notches," Burt said. "I don't know what you think I'm gonna say here Blaine but virginity, or the lack there of, doesn't determine your worth." At Blaine's surprised look, Burt continued. "Whether you've slept with one person or one hundred the only thing that I care about is that you kept yourself safe."
"I don't have unprotected sex," Blaine mumbled.

"I didn't just mean physically," Burt answered. "Kurt-

"Total virgin," Kurt blurted out. "Thanks for the pamphlets, I think I'm gonna just go read this-

"You're not going anywhere son," Burt sighed.

"Dad, Blaine and I aren't having sex and we're not planning on having sex anytime soon," Kurt stated.

"That's up to you and Blaine," Burt grit out, clearly not happy with the possibility. "But listen, both of you. I realize you may think I came into the world a fully formed adult but the truth is I was your age once. I know what it's like to be a teenage boy and be in a new relationship with somebody that you really like and I know how easy it is for emotions and hormones to get the better of you and end up doing things that you didn't plan on doing and maybe weren't ready for."

"Things like sex," Kurt said.

"Yeah," Burt nodded. "Things like sex. For most guys sex is just, it's this thing we always wanna do. Its fun, it feels great, but we're not really thinking too much about how it makes us feel on the inside or, you know, how the other person feels about it," he said looking briefly at Blaine.

"And women are different?" Kurt asked.

"Only because they're taught that sex is supposed to be about something more than the physical. See, girls get told that they're supposed to wait, that it's supposed to be special, that they're supposed to hold out for someone who loves them, respects them, and makes them feel valued. They get taught that sex and love should be one in the same and that creates a whole different set of problems but the point is guys don't get that. We get taught that it's okay to do it as often as we can, with whoever will let us and that there's something wrong with us if we don't want it or we're not ready. Girls get taught they should say no and guys get taught they should say yes and the truth is it's more complicated than that," Burt explained.

"What do you mean?" Kurt asked.

"When you're intimate with somebody in that way you're exposing yourself," Burt revealed. "You're never gonna be more vulnerable and that scares the hell out of a lot of guys. Believe me, I can't tell you how many buddies I've got who have gotten in way too deep with a girl who said she was cool just hooking up, when she really wasn't."

Blaine winced because yeah, been there.

"But that's not gonna happen to me Dad," Kurt said softly.

"No," Burt agreed. "It's gonna be worse. Because it's two guys, now most of the time you got two people who think that sex is just sex. It's gonna be easier to come by and once you start doing this stuff you're not gonna wanna stop. You gotta know, both of you, that sex means something. It's doing something, to you, to your heart, to your self-esteem. Even though it feels like you're just having fun."

"What if you are just having fun?" Kurt asked, surprising both Blaine and Burt.

"I'd rather you didn't," Burt said bluntly. "But if you're choosing to have sex for purely physical reasons then be sure that everyone's on the same page. Sex feels good and there's no shame in wanting it but if that's all you want then be upfront about that. Be honorable about that. Be a man
about that. Don't manipulate someone else into it or take advantage of someone's feelings for you to get it. And if someone tells you all they want is sex, believe them. Don't sleep with them hoping they'll change their mind or believing that you can make them fall for you. Don't put yourself in a position to be hurt or to hurt somebody. Be honest with yourself and be honest with others."

"I can do that," Kurt said.

"You okay over there? You still with us, Blaine?" Burt asked.

"I um, I didn't expect...I thought this was gonna be you bringing out your shot gun and telling me to keep my filthy paws off your baby boy," Blaine admitted.

"Yeah well, if it was up to me Kurt wouldn't have sex until he was thirty," Burt confessed. "But it's not up to me. And even though I don't feel like either one of you should be... it's not my choice to make."

"So if I choose to have sex with Blaine-"

"You'll be putting me in an early grave," Burt quipped.

"Dad!"

Burt laughed. "Look kid, I can't...I can't give you the all clear here because I'm your father and part of me is having a real hard time admitting that you're even old enough for this conversation. What I can do is respect you enough to trust your judgment. From what I can see, Blaine's a good kid. You could do a hell of a lot worse than him. And if, at some point in the far distant future, you feel like you're ready I want you to be able to do... everything. But when you're ready, I want you to use it as a way to connect to the person that you're with. I don't want you, either of you, to throw yourselves around like you don't matter. 'Cause you matter, both of you matter and I don't want either of you to lose sight of that."

Blaine felt unexpected warmth spread through his body at the sincerity in the older man's voice. For the first time since they'd met he felt like he and Burt had actually connected.

Burt cleared his throat. "Unless you boys have anything you wanna talk about that's pretty much it."

"I think...I think we're good," Blaine answered.

"We're good," Kurt confirmed. "Thanks Dad."

"You're welcome," Burt said, as he stood up. He motioned to Kurt and the boy rolled his eyes but stood up and gave his father a hug. They broke apart after a few moments. "I'm gonna go see if Carole needs any help with those calls," Burt said.

"Okay Dad."

Burt nodded and started to walk out of the living room. On his way past Blaine he stopped and gave the other boy an affectionate squeeze on his shoulder. "Thank you for being there for Kurt and taking care of him when I couldn't. I ah, I look forward to getting to know you."

"You don't have to thank me," Blaine answered. "I look forward to getting to know you too."

Burt nodded and then left the room.

"Twenty years from now when my therapist asks me where my issues with intimacy began I'm going
to tell him it was the day my father sat my boyfriend and I down, talked to us about gay sex and gave us illustrated pamphlets," Kurt declared, sinking into the seat next to Blaine.

"Don't leave out the packets of lube and the day glo green condoms," Blaine joked.

"Oh my God," Kurt moaned as he buried his head in Blaine's shoulder and laughed.

A knock on his door took Blaine out of the memory. "Open up and let me in," Jeff hollered.

"Keep your pants on," Blaine yelled back as he got up from his desk.

"Keep my pants on? Why don't you ask me to spin straw into gold while you're at it," Jeff complained.

"You are truly terrible," Blaine announced as he swung open the door. "What do you want hooker?"

"Rude," Jeff replied, shoving Blaine aside and barreling his way in. "You ditched all your morning classes. I wanted to make sure you hadn't OD'd or something," Jeff said.

"Nope still alive and kicking," Blaine replied, flopping down next to Jeff on the bed. "Just had a lot on my mind."

"And by a lot you mean Kurt?"

"Yeah, mostly."

"Look at you, having emotions like a real boy," Jeff joked.

"Shut up," Blaine groused. "I miss him."

"Then let's go," Jeff said hopping up.

"Go where?"

"Lima," Jeff said rolling his eyes.

"In case you haven't noticed it's a school day," Blaine said dryly.

"You've already skipped your morning classes and you aren't in uniform so you weren't planning on going today anyway. If we stop for lunch by the time we get there Kurt will be getting out," Jeff reasoned.

"Okay," Blaine said slowly. "I know why I would go to Lima, but why would you?"

"I'm bored," Jeff replied. "It's either tag along with you or see if the Lockhart twins wanna make another movie."

"You realize the fact that you're all under eighteen doesn't make it any less illegal and that someday one of your sex tapes is gonna end up all over TMZ," Blaine cautioned his friend.

"Then maybe Kim Kardashian and Paris Hilton will teach me the secret handshake," Jeff grinned.

"Shut up and sit quietly while I grab a shower and change."

"And then?"

"And then," Blaine said patiently, "If you've managed not create any chaos we'll hop in the jag and
head down to Lima. But we're not stopping for lunch; I want to see if I can get Kurt to skip his last class for me."

"You're a horrible influence on that boy," Jeff said mockingly. "Luckily I think those are the best kind. So, old buddy old pal my bff bro 5eva...can I drive?"

Blaine gave Jeff a look that could have melted the flesh from his bones. "Do you want to lose testicles left and right?"

Jeff gave Blaine a dazzling smile. "I call shotgun."

The next morning everyone in the Hudmel home was slightly on edge. There had been so many witnesses to his meltdown in Breadstix that Finn knew the story had spread and the second he walked through the doors Jacob Ben Israel would be on him like polyester on a leisure suit and that everyone would be watching to see how he'd react. He also knew if the phone conversations they'd had were any indication, he was going to be facing the collective wrath of the members of New Directions.

In addition to all of that, he was worried about what the outcome of the parents meeting with Principal Figgins would be and whether or not it would have a positive effect on the bullying everyone endured or just make everything worse. Puck had once told him that high school operated by street gang rules, the most important one being "snitches get stitches." While Finn wasn't prepared to go quite that far, he did concede that there was an unspoken agreement among the student body to leave their parents out of the loop whenever possible that went a little beyond the normal teenage code of silence. Kids got tossed in dumpsters, pelted with slushies, tagged with 'kick me' signs, shoved into lockers and rolled in the port-a-potty's and everyone, including most of the faculty, just accepted it as the natural order of things at William McKinley High School. With very few exceptions no one really bothered to complain because that's just the way things were and complainers only got a bigger bullseye placed on their backs.

Even he and Kurt hadn't entirely come clean with their parents and he doubted anyone else had either. After comparing notes with both Kurt and Puck the night before he knew that none of his friends had said a word about Jacob's blog and they'd all left out some of the more embarrassing things that had been done to them.

None of them were so naïve that they didn't understand that the blog could back up everything they were saying but they would all rather protect their parents-and themselves-from seeing the worst of what they'd gone through-or in some cases put people through-in pixel perfect 1080 HD. Part of Finn knew that withholding information was defeating the whole purpose of complaining but the idea of his mom or Burt being able to go online and see him being trapped up against a locker helpless to stop Karofsky and Azimio from ripping his letterman jacket in half or watching him try to scrub his face clean after he'd been held down and drawn on by the duo just filled him with an overwhelming sense of shame that he just couldn't deal with on top of everything else and he suspected that everyone pretty much felt the same. He knew Quinn still hadn't opened up to her mother about just how viciously her peers had turned on her during her pregnancy. He knew that Puck's mom was aware that he used to bully other kids but knowing it and seeing it were two different things and Finn understood that Puck didn't want to give her any more reasons to be disappointed in him. He knew that Rachel had told her dads that Jacob had a crush but not that he basically sexually harassed her and had a segment of his blog titled "Berry's Booty" that he dedicated to nothing but pictures of her from behind. And he knew that despite Burt's insistence that he was the parent and his job to be the protector, Kurt would do anything to keep from worrying his father-including keeping him in the dark about just how bad things for him really were. He knew Kurt
hadn't told Burt about being attacked at school by Azimio and had purposely left out a lot of the
details about what he'd been through and continued to go through.

A gentle knocking on his door frame startled him out of his thoughts. "Carole sent me to get you,"
Kurt explained standing in Finn's doorway looking as cool and collected as ever but the slight shake
in his voice betraying his nerves. "She made-"

"Pancakes," Finn interrupted with a smile. "It's her good luck breakfast. Whenever something major
is happening that might not go well, like a test or a big game she makes pancakes."

Kurt smiled. "It could go well," he said.

"Yeah, it could," Finn agreed half heartedly.

"But it probably won't," Kurt sighed.

"Not even a little bit," Finn nodded.

"Finn," Kurt said stepping into the room. "You and I have a lot of work ahead of us before we're
anywhere close to okay but today is going to be hard on both of us. There's gonna be a lot of gossip
and a lot of anger and maybe even retaliation depending on just how badly things go. It would be
nice if we were able to at least have each other's back."

"Yeah it would," Finn agreed. "That would be really awesome."

Kurt gave Finn a tight smile. "Well, then I guess we should go eat what could metaphorically
speaking be our last meal."

"C'mon man it'll be rough but nobody's gonna murder us," Finn laughed, slipping a flannel shirt on
over his graphic tee.

"It must be nice to be able to be so sure," Kurt murmured as he turned to leave.

"Hey," Finn said reaching out to grab Kurt's shoulder to stop him. "Dude. Seriously? Is that
something you seriously worry about?"

Kurt gave Finn an unreadable look. "Our pancakes are getting cold," he said sidestepping Finn's
question. "Come on, I need to make sure dad doesn't drown his in butter and syrup."

Finn quietly followed Kurt down the stairs, hoping that the day wouldn't go as badly as he thought it
would and afraid that it might, in fact, be worse.

"They've been in there an awfully long time," Tina said, leaning her head on Mike's shoulder and
peering through the window into Figgins' office where the parents of the members of New
Directions, Mr. Schuester, Coach Sylvester and Ms. Pillsbury were all engaged in what looked like
to be a heated discussion.

When they'd arrived at school, instead of going to class Finn and Kurt had followed Burt and Carole
into the office to await the arrival of the rest of the parents. Once everyone had arrived there had
been a few moments of controlled chaos where every single parent threatened to withdraw their child
if they didn't get a meeting with Figgins that very moment. Ms. Pillsbury was called in to try to keep
everyone on an even emotional keel, Mr. Schuester's presence was demanded because every child in
question was a member of his glee club and Sue bullied her way in when she realized that she was
facing not only the loss of her head Cheerio, but her second and third in command as well.
The students had been left outside, their parents refusing to allow them to be sent to class until some type of resolution had been reached. It had been two hours so far and the meeting didn't seem to be winding down in the slightest.

"They have been going at it all morning and they don't look like they're leaving anytime soon," Mercedes noted.

"I hope not," Puck smirked. "I'm kinda hoping this lasts long enough to keep me out of chem class. I've already missed homeroom and history; I say we go for the hat trick."

"Noah," Rachel admonished sharply. "This isn't about getting out of class. Our parents have banded together to confront Principal Figgins and demand that he provide us with a safe and harassment free environment and I for one-"

"Could not be any more annoying," Santana interrupted with an eye roll.

"Hush Chandler Bing," Mercedes told Santana. "For once Rachel's right. This is serious. My dad was supremely pissed when he got off the phone with Burt last night."

"My mom was so mad she said some words that I didn't even think she knew," Mike winced. "I've never seen her so angry."

"I had to talk my dad out of transferring me," Artie added. "He's usually the first one to tell me how my chair can only limit me if I let it but when he found out what was going on, he went into protective overdrive."

"Can't blame the dude," Puck shrugged. "I know firsthand how rough some of the guys get with you."

"That's 'cause you used to be the ringleader," Santana mumbled.

"If that ain't the pot calling the kettle black," Mercedes sniffed.

"Excuse me?"

"You heard me."

"You know what-"

"Mercedes is right," Quinn interrupted. "Our parents are all in there demanding that Figgins do something about the bullying but the fact is that not too long ago Puck, Finn, Santana and I were some of the worst offenders."

"But you guys changed," Tina argued.

"Some more than others," Rachel added primly, glaring at Santana.

"I'm a work in progress," Santana said, folding her arms over her chest.

"Same here," Finn said.

"Oh nuh uh Poppin Fresh, don't agree with me. You're still on my list," Santana snapped.

"Mine too," Tina added.

"So much same," Sam agreed.
"Never left mine," Mercedes mumbled.

"I don't have a list," Brittany shared.

"Neither do they," Kurt sighed. "I was hoping that we could do this later, in the choir room but now's as good a time as any I suppose."

"Nope," Mercedes cut him off holding up her hand. "I know you, Kurt. You're about to tell us to back off of Finn and I'm sorry but after what he did to you I just can't."

"Yeah," Sam chimed in. "What he did was majorly uncool and I'm sorry man but I'm just not okay with it."

Kurt gave his friends a small smile. "I'm not asking you guys to be okay with it. But Finn and I talked things out with our parents and we're gonna try to work through things like a family. I appreciate the support-more than you know-but it would be easier on me if you guys backed off and let us work this out ourselves."

"Unbelievable," Santana huffed. "Do you have an invisible Teflon suit?" She asked Finn.

"Um, no," Finn responded with a confused look on his face.

"You must," Santana sneered. "It's the only possible explanation for all of the crap you pull to just keep sliding right off of you."

"Seriously Kurt you can't expect us to just let it go," Tina said.

"Actually he can," Rachel said quietly. "This happened to Kurt. He gets to decide how to deal with it and if he wants us to back off then-

"Of course you're all for everybody backing off your boyfriend," Mercedes huffed.

"It's not about me," Rachel said earning several sideways glances. "Well it's not," she insisted. "It's about Kurt."

"But Finn hurt him," Brittany argued.

"Finn's not the only one," Quinn pointed out. "A lot of us have hurt Kurt."

"I haven't," Sam said defiantly.

"Not like that," Mercedes denied as she shook her head.

"Maybe not," Quinn conceded, "But I seem to remember someone throwing a rock through the windshield of his car last year."

"And I seem to remember you orchestrating that entire episode," Mercedes fired back.

Quinn flushed. "Yeah, we did," she said, indicating herself, Brittany and Santana. "And it was wrong and it was hurtful, not just to Kurt but to you too."

"I was awful to him-to most of you," Puck spoke up. "I'm the one who started the dumpster tosses, the Monday Morning Swirlie and the slushie facials."

"You really were a special kind of vile," Tina muttered.
"And I'm sorry for it, for all of it. I know I don't say that much but it's true. You guys gave me, Quinn, and Santana a second chance,"

"Don't put me in this," Santana interrupted. "I know that I-"

"Have aimed your share of offensive, homophobic insults at Kurt too," Rachel finished. "Because you have. You take every available opportunity to make his sexuality something he should be ashamed of. Just because you can't deal with the fact that you're-"

"Shut up Berry," Santana hissed. "Look, I say some foul stuff, okay? You guys should know by now that's just how I am and half the stuff I say isn't meant to be taken seriously. I don't think there's anything wrong with Kurt being gay." Santana turned and looked at the brunette. "I don't have a problem with you being gay," she repeated.

"Then stop saying hurtful things about it," Kurt said quietly. "You were mocking me before I even came out, Santana-not that you were the only one- but you were and continue to be one of the worst offenders."

"You really don't have any room to judge Finn," Artie added. "You're just as bad if not worse. The stuff you say about Kurt being gay, about me being in my chair, fat shaming people...you living large up in your glass house and if you keep throwing those stones you gone be homeless, girl."

"Thanks Artie," Finn began.

"Hold 'em up," Artie said as he shook his head. "That wasn't me defending you. That was me calling a spade a spade. Finn, you're an okay guy a lot of the time. Most of the time really. But I can't count of the number of times the football team would slushie me or shove me around or give me crap about my chair and you'd be right there. Even if you didn't say anything to me you didn't say anything to them either. That makes you just as guilty, yo."

"C'mon Wheels-,

"And I'm sorry Puck but you can't ask us to compare you and Finn either. Yeah, a lot of the time you were right there, egging everybody on, making it ten times worse than it had to be," Artie admitted. "But you know the difference between you two? You own your crap. You've apologized, not just in word but in deed. You've picked us, every single time there's been a choice to make between us and football or us and popularity, you've picked us. Finn talks the talk but he never walks the walk. Every single time he picks the easy road and we're not easy so we end up in the dust."

"I'm sorry," Finn said.

"You've said that," Artie told him. "But then you keep doing the same things."

"This isn't just about what you did to Kurt," Tina added. "It's about the fact that we can't trust you to have our backs. Every single one of these guys stood up for Kurt and you, the guy who's supposed to be our leader, were nowhere to be found."

"I know and I regret that," Finn said. "I regret a lot of the choices I've made and I know that I need to do better."

"Then do better," Sam said. "Look man, I don't know you as well as the others do but I'm gonna be blunt: I don't like a lot of what I've seen. It's like you're two different people sometimes and I never know which one I'm gonna get. Kurt's my best friend and if I have to pick between you two I'm picking him all day, every day. I don't have to question his loyalty but I find myself constantly wondering about yours."
"Finn's loyal," Puck broke in. "You're new Sam so you missed the clusterfuck last year was but when Finn has your back man he has your back, even when you mess up so badly that he shouldn't."

"I can only go off of what I've seen," Sam shrugged.

Kurt smiled gently at Sam. "Thanks Sam," he said softly. "You're my best friend too."

"Excuse me," Mercedes and Tina yelped in unison.


Finn leaned forward. "Look guys, I know that I have a lot of work to do to earn back not just Kurt's trust but yours too and I'm willing to do it. I just need a chance."

"You guys gave me a chance when it would have made more sense to form an angry mob and beat me with sticks," Puck added. "Give Finn the same shot."

"I don't want to do this feelings crap," Santana grumbled, "But it's not about second chances or whatever. We've all screwed each other over at some point. From Kurt giving Rachel her hooker Barbie makeover to me climbing over Quinn's still warm corpse to claim head cheerleader to Girl Chang letting Mike sample her pupu platter while she was still rolling with Wheels, we've all done each other dirty at least once. But me taking shots at Berry's enormous beak in the choir room is different from Finn breaking Kurt so badly that he's afraid to go home. That's a whole 'nother level of not okay right there."

"I'm not any more okay with what happened than you are," Mike spoke up, causing everyone to look at him. "But it happened to Kurt. And if he's the one asking us to back off then we should back off. We say all the time that New Directions is a family but guys, Kurt and Finn are gonna be family for real. And this is between them to work out and we shouldn't do anything to make that harder."

"Finn fell down," Quinn said softly. "Are we really gonna kick him while he's lying on the ground."

"Yes," Mercedes mumbled.

"No," Sam smiled, gently nudging his girlfriend with his shoulder. "But we aren't going to just say no harm, no foul either."

"I don't expect you to," Finn replied. "I know I have a lot of stuff to make up for. I have a lot of changes I need to make and I just need for my friends not to hate me while I'm doing it."

"I'm not asking you guys to pretend nothing happened," Kurt added. "Clearly some of you have your own issues with Finn. I'm just asking you guys not to shun him, to give him a chance to prove himself. If you can," he said looking at Puck, Quinn and Rachel, "give him your support and if you can't," he said glancing at the other members of the New Directions, "just give him a chance to try and do better."

"I can do that," Tina sighed. "I won't pretend nothing happened and I won't pretend we're okay but I won't demand a pound of flesh either."

"You're on probation," Mercedes told Finn. "If Kurt so much as sneezes and you don't say 'bless you' I'm gonna be on you like white on rice."

"And she won't be alone," Sam added.

"Fair enough," Finn nodded.
"You already know where I stand," Mike stated. "We've been friends since we were seven and I know what an amazing person you can be. I'm gonna choose to believe that you're gonna be that person all the time now, even when it's hard and even when it costs you. Don't disappoint me again, man."

"I'm gonna do my best."

"You've done your best," Mike told him. "Now you need to do better."

"You know I got your back bro," Puck said. "From the sandbox to the cemetery, it's you and me."

"I don't have anything to forgive you for," Brittany said. "But don't make my friends sad again," she looked at Finn and gave him a small smile. "Don't make yourself sad again either."

"You have a rough road ahead of you," Quinn told Finn softly. "I'm not gonna bail but don't expect me to carry you either. I meant what I said. You want this second chance, you prove you deserve it and you fight for it."

"I'm not gonna make things harder on you than they need to be," Artie started, "But I'm rolling out the red carpet either. You want my trust back? You earn it."

"I'm gonna work really hard to earn your trust back," Finn promised.

"I'm gonna hold you to that."

"What you said was narrow minded, hateful and hurtful," Rachel stated. "And there is a part of me that keeps imagining one of my dads' in Kurt's place and that part of me is really angry and disappointed and wants to write you off," she said tearfully.

"Rach please-"

"And then there's the other part of me," Rachel continued. "That loves you so much it feels like my soul opens up when you smile. And that part of me is convinced that you can come back from this. It won't be easy for either one of us but I think if we try really hard we can make it through this together."

Rachel slowly slid her hand off her lap and into the space between their seats. Her fingers brushed over Finn's cautiously and then loosely entwined with them. When Finn met her eyes she gave him a small smile and tightened her grip.

"Santana, it's your turn," Brittany said.

"To do what?"

"To tell Finn how you feel."

"I don't remember agreeing to sit in the circle of feelings and share," Santana sniped.

"Don't," Brittany said softly. "Don't act like you don't care when you do. This is important."

Santana and Brittany shared a long look and then the brunette sighed heavily. "Look Man Boobs McGee, I don't care that Kurt has decided to impersonate Gandhi and encourage us all to be forgiving and hand out redemption like Halloween candy-"

"Santana," Brittany said sharply.
Santana rolled her eyes and took a deep breath. "I'm a bitch, okay? But I don't pretend that I'm not. You guys know that I'm gonna insult you and you know that I'm gonna enjoy it. But it's not like before," Santana blinked back the sudden wetness in her eyes, "Things are different now. Yeah, I'm still awful to you a solid ninety percent of the time but the thing is now that I know you all, I wouldn't let anyone else treat you like that. I wouldn't just stand silently by while someone else gave you guys crap. Last year, yeah but not now. And I get how messed up that sounds but it is what it is. You're losers but you're my losers."

"Gee thanks," Mercedes said drily.

"Shut it Tots I'm not done yet," Santana snapped. She leaned forward and pinned Finn with a cold, steely-eyed glare. "You hurt my losers again and I will make it my mission to end you. I will leave no stone unturned. From vengeful Cheerios and angry jocks to disenfranchised band geeks and Jacob Ben Israel, I will pull from the cream of the crop and scrape from the bottom of the barrel gather an army, whip them into a Finn Hudson feeding frenzy and send them after you. Hurt my losers again and not even Britts will be able to save your sorry ass, got it?"

"Got it," Finn nodded.

"Well that was sufficiently terrifying," Kurt said.

"I try," Santana sniffed inspecting her nails.

"Guys," Tina said, looking towards the door. "Burt's coming out."

"And he does not look happy," added Mike.

"Dad?"

"You kids can come in now. Your parents and I have talked to Principal Figgins and he knows where we stand. He has some things he needs to say to you all."

Finn and Kurt hung near the back of the group and shuffled in quietly behind their friends.

"Why do I have a feeling this didn't go so well," Finn whispered.

"Because it didn't," Kurt whispered back. "I know my dad and if things had gone the way we wanted them to he would be all smiles right now instead of looking like-"

"He's five seconds away from whipping out his flame thrower and burning the entire place to the ground?" Finn finished for him.

"With Figgins inside," Kurt confirmed as he stepped inside and Burt closed the door behind him.

"Children," Principal Figgins began, "your parents have brought it to my attention that you all feel you have been-"

"My daughter doesn't feel like she's been harassed," Evie Jones cut in sharply. "She has been harassed."

"And Tina didn't imagine being shoved into a locker by a boy twice her size," Karen Chang added furiously.

"Of course not," Figgins said placating. "I merely meant that your parents have explained that your experience here at William McKinley High School is not altogether positive-,"
"I got one kid who gets thrown into dumpsters on a regular basis and another who's getting frozen drinks thrown in his face in the middle of the hallway," Burt interrupted. "You bet your ass they're not having an altogether positive experience."

"Sam got a black eye defending his friend because neither you or your incompetent staff saw fit to rein in the lettermen jacket wearing terrorists you call student athletes around here," Dwight Evans thundered. "What the hell is there to be positive about?"

"I understand that are issues," Figgins tried again. "And you have all made your positions crystal clear-,

"Did we?" Carole asked bitterly. "Because the way you started off your apology to our children makes me wonder if you need things explained to you again. Perhaps with smaller words and brightly colored illustrations."

"The more you talk the more I'm convinced that you didn't hear a word we said and the better looking Brittany's transfer papers get," Marilyn Pierce snapped.

"I assure you my comprehension is impeachable," Figgins stated, earning an incredulous look from all. "I truly understand and sympathize with what the children have been going through."

"Do you?" Mike Chang Sr. demanded. "Because I meant what I said. I will pull Michael out of here so fast your head will spin. If I can't trust that he's at the very least being kept safe, then I can't trust that he's getting anything he needs-including a quality education."

"We'll all pull our kids out of here," Leroy Berry threatened.

"You think this is a game," Maribel Lopez hissed. "You don't wanna play with me when it comes to my kid. I married a doctor but I grew up in the hood and I'm not so bougie that I've forgotten how handle my business."

"Don't make me take off my earrings," Evie Jones added.

"Quinn has been put through enough. Now, Misery is one of my favorite movies and I will hobble you if I have to," Judy Fabray added.

"Ladies, while I understand your frustration I think we should explore options that allow us to um, 'handle our business' while leaving Principal Figgins unhobbled and our earrings on our ears," Emma piped up.

Principal Figgins cleared his throat. "Thank you Emma. As I was saying, I realize that things have not been satisfactory and it is my sincere desire to provide every student here at William McKinley High School a safe and happy learning environment."

"And that means what exactly," Kurt asked. "Because I remember being in here with Mr. Schue not too long ago and you telling me how your hands were tied."

"To some extent they still are," Principal Figgins conceded. "But at the next school board meeting your parents will bring their concerns before the board and then-"

"That's a week away," Rachel interrupted.

"What are we supposed to do in the meantime?" Mercedes demanded.

"And in the meantime," Principal Figgins continued, "Mr. Schuester, Ms. Pillsbury and…Coach
Sylvester have agreed to reach out to members of the staff and encourage them to take a more active role in maintaining order and security in the classrooms and hallways."

"I'm gonna do my best to be out there in the hall between every class change," Will promised. "If I see or hear anything, I'll intervene. I'm sure I can get Coach Bieste and some of the other staff members to do the same."

"I'm going to be out there too," Emma added. "And my door is always open to any of you if you need to talk or if you just need a safe place to be during the school day. You can come to me, all of you, and I will do everything in my power to help you."

Sue pushed herself off the wall. "I normally make it a habit not to concern myself with my student's well being because it's a colossal waste of my time," she began. "Unfortunately for me in this situation I have no choice. Earth, Wind and Fire over there are threatening to remove my Cheerios so your collective failure at clawing your way far enough up the social ladder so that your peers don't find pleasure in your pain has now become my problem-"

"Sue, that's victim blaming," Emma interrupted quietly.

"No Barbara Gordon, that's what my good friend Al Gore and I like to call an inconvenient truth," Sue corrected. "Since your inadequacy is now my problem, I'm going to take care of it. Each of you will be given a taser and a baton by the end of the school day. I expect to see you all in the gym bright and early at four in the morning for training-,"

"Sue we aren't going to arm them," Will objected.

"Fine William, if you're just going shoot down my ideas there's no reason for me to be here," Sue sniffed and stalked towards the door. "But know this: If I lose Q, Lady Ta-Ta and Tweedle Dumb because you chose to MLK when we should have Malcolm X'd, I will destroy you and all the tiny little woodland creatures who nest in your ridiculous hair," she announced as she swept from the room.

"Okay," Emma said brightly, "Now that it's a little calmer-"

"You mean now that everyone left in here is mentally stable," Tina muttered.

"We can finish explaining to you kids what's going to happen," Emma continued.

"Nothing's going to happen," Kurt shook his head. "With all due respect Ms. Pillsbury we already know we can go to you. The reason we don't is because we know you can't really do anything. And Mr. Schuester, you've already been out in the halls a lot more lately and nothing's changed."

"We may be kids but we're not stupid," Artie said. "You're stalling," he accused Figgins. "You tell our parents you can't do anything but you'll bring it up to the school board at the next meeting, hoping that in a few days they won't be so angry and in the meantime the teachers that already do what they can to help us keep on doing what they're doing and the rest of you keep pretending that you don't see corn syrup all over the floors in the hallway or hear bodies being thrown into lockers between classes."

"I assure you that we take bullying very seriously. Any student seen participating in the physical or verbal harassment of a classmate shall be dealt with most severely," Principal Figgins insisted.

Puck laughed. "Most severely?" he scoffed. "I've been in this office so many times my name should be on the door. And most of those times were for bullying and you know what you did to me? Nothing, nada, zip, zilch, zero. Maybe a detention every once in awhile and that was after you were
kind enough to let me know which kid ratted me out so I could go back and get revenge."

"Oh Noah," Dana Puckerman sighed.

"Ma, it's the truth," Puck shrugged. "I'm not bullying anybody now but this time last year I would have had almost all of these guys running for cover and I wouldn't have cared if I'd gotten caught because I knew nothing would happen to me."

"Doesn't sound like much has changed," Sam said.

"That's because it hasn't," Santana told him. "This is all lip service. You'll all be wearing the frozen ice and Eau du Humiliation by the end of the day per the usual."

"Dad, Carole thanks for trying," Kurt said as he adjusted his messenger bag over his shoulder.

"Hey buddy, we're not done here," Burt said.

"Actually Burt, I think we kinda are," Finn said. "We're not gonna get any real help, at least not today. Maybe next week you guys can get the school board to do something but for now it's just business as usual."

"No it's not," Will protested. "I promise you guys that things will get better."

"You shouldn't make promises that you can't keep," Brittany said quietly.

"It's lunch time," Quinn sighed. "Can we go?"

"Quinnie-"

"Don't worry mom," Quinn said then smiled thinly at Principal Figgins. "I'm in my Cheerios uniform. Nobody is going to slushie me. Funny how that works."

"Coach makes us wear our uniforms every day. Is that why I've never been slushied?" Brittany asked.

"Yes," Mercedes and Tina answered.

"Guys," Mr. Schuester said helplessly.

"It's alright Mr. Schue," Rachel said. "We know you care and we know you're trying."

"You kids are talking like this is over," Burt said.

"It is for today, Dad," Kurt said. "We heard what Principal Figgins had to say loud and clear and I think we're all just kind of ready to go to lunch now."

"We will be at that school board meeting," Mike Chang Sr. promised.

"I know you will Dad," Mike said softly. "It's just that meeting isn't until next week so for now I'm just gonna go to lunch."

"Tina-"

"Mom it's okay," Tina said, leaning into Mike. "We're not giving up we're just accepting that nothing more is gonna happen here today."
"Sam honey-"

"Mom its fine," Sam said.

"No it isn't, son," Dwight said. "But I promise you that it will be."

Sam nodded and he and Mercedes laced their fingers together.

"Why don’t you guys head on out," Mr. Schuester sighed. "Your parents and I will stay here and iron out some of the finer details."

The students filed out silently, resignation written across every one of their faces and their shoulders slumped in defeat.

"Our kids deserve better," Burt said, turning to Principal Figgins. "And I'm not going anywhere until you convince me that they're gonna get it."

"That goes for all of us," Hiram Berry announced, coming to stand beside Burt. "So Principal Figgins, one more time from the top. Our children have subjected to organized, prolonged, systematic harassment and…"

Dave's day had started out badly and gotten progressively worse. He'd overslept and been forced to catch a ride to school with his mother, a situation he usually tried to avoid at all costs.

It wasn't that Dave didn't love his mother. She was his mother; of course he loved her. It was just that even though she didn't know she was doing it, she had a habit of reminding him of everything about him that was broken and wrong, ferreting out his insecurities and poking at them with a stick.

They'd been sitting at a red light, listening to morning radio when talk had turned to a student from Columbus whose mother had led the charge to allow her daughter to attend a school dance with her girlfriend.

"Disgraceful," Marjorie Karofsky sneered.

"I don't know," Dave said hesitantly. "I think it's kinda awesome that her mom was willing to fight for her like that. I mean, you'd fight for me, right?"

"Not if you were doing something as immoral as choosing to live as a homosexual," Marjorie answered. "I'd pray for your soul and try to find you some help, maybe send you to one of those conversion camps to help you rid yourself of the sickness but I certainly wouldn't encourage you flaunting that you were an abomination in the eyes of our Lord."

Dave felt as every one of his mother's words cut into him as if she wielding a knife and carving away the flesh from his bones. "But you'd still love me, right?"

"Of course," Marjorie said promptly. "I just wouldn't be able to be a part of your life until you realized the horrible mistake you were making and got back on the path of righteousness."

"You'd…you'd disown me?" Dave asked.

"David, I wouldn't have a choice. I could not, in good conscience, support you indulging in that type of lifestyle. It would be detrimental to your salvation and my own."

"What if…what if I chose to live with someone outside of marriage? Or got a girl pregnant and had a baby out of wedlock? Those are sins too. Why-"
"David, those are different," his mother sighed. "Yes those are things are sins and I'd be disappointed and pray for your soul but they are not unnatural acts of deviant sexual behavior. Do you understand what I'm saying honey?"

"Yeah mom," Dave said pushed through the lump in his throat to answer. "I understand."

"Good. Now I ran into Susan Lattimore at the craft store yesterday and she told me that her Jaime isn't dating that Ellis boy anymore. She's a very pretty girl, don't you think David?"

Dave swallowed harshly. "Um, yeah, Jamie's pretty," he agreed.

"And she's a cheerleader too, right son?"

Dave felt trapped and wanted nothing more than to pull up to the front door of the school so he could escape. "Jaime is a Cheerio," Dave confirmed.

"You should ask her out," Marjorie continued.

"Mom-

"Honey, I know that at your age girls can be intimidating but you've got to put yourself out there. Some boys just have to try a little harder than others is all."

"Thanks mom," Dave said bitterly.

"Hush David, you know what I meant," Marjorie chided. "Now I told Susan to tell Jamie that you had something to talk to her about."

Dave felt as if he'd been dropped off a cliff. "You did what?"

"I know you probably think it's embarrassing," Marjorie rolled her eyes, "But Jamie is a good Christian girl and you could do a whole lot worse. I know you're a bit of a late bloomer David but a boy your age should be dating. Now I'm not saying you have to marry the girl but I do expect you to at least ask her to dinner and a movie."

"Sure mom," Dave said tightly as they pulled up to the school. He hurried to free himself from his seat belt so he could exit the vehicle.

"David," Marjorie said, placing a hand on his arm. "I only want the best for you. Good luck with Jamie and you have a good day. Love you honey."

"Love you too mom," Dave said dully, climbing out of the car.

He hadn't even taken two steps when Jaime appeared in front of him. "Listen Dave," the pretty brunette began without preamble. "My mom is as transparent as glass so I know she's trying to set me up with you. Let me save you some trouble: You are not my type. I like my guys with a little less rage, a whole lot less body fat and enough game that they don't need mommy to troll the aisles of Hobby Lobby to find them a date. So thanks but no thanks. You should aim a little lower. I hear Lauren Zizes is single." Jaime flounced away, her ponytail bouncing behind her before Dave could even formulate a reply.

Jamie's rejection, cruel and absolute, coupled with his mother's unknowing condemnation filled Dave with a combination of shame and rage that had him physically shaking and on the verge of tears.

"Dave Karofsky," Jacob Ben Israel materialized out of nowhere, thrusting his microphone into
Dave's face. "Rumor has it that Finn Hudson and Kurt Hummel returned to school this morning, with both their parents in tow. Could this have anything to do with the Battle at Breadstix that took place between you and hey, hey, hey, *put me down*!" Jacob squeaked.

Normally, Dave could ignore Jacob but the reminder of what had happened at Breadstix, along with the mention of Burt Hummel had Dave hoisting the boy up over his shoulder in a fireman's carry and heading towards the dumpster. He didn't think twice about throwing Jacob in, before punching the side and walking away.

It wasn't fair. Kurt's father didn't care that he was gay. He loved and accepted him anyway, even though that meant they both got crap for it. And if that wasn't enough, he was apparently getting a stepmother who was prepared to do the same. He didn't have to worry about being kicked out or disowned or forced to ask out a girl he didn't even like to save face.

Then there were Kurt's friends. They didn't care either. Every single of them knew that Kurt was gay, even the guys, and they were still his friends. So much so they were willing to literally fight his battles for him. Dave was sure that if Az ever found out about him that their friendship would be over. Az wouldn't be the only one. None of Dave's friends would stand by him. The only guys on the team that apparently didn't care about whether or not a guy liked other guys were Evans, Hudson, Puckerman, Chang and Abrams and each and every single one of them hated him.

Kurt probably didn't have to worry about his future either. All Dave had ever wanted, ever since he was little, was to play pro football. And according to all the recruiters he had a decent shot at it. But that would all go up in smoke if the truth came out. There was exactly one pro football player Dave knew of that was gay and he hadn't come out until after he'd already retired. Kurt didn't have to worry about any of that. He was probably gonna be some fashion designer or Broadway star and they're all a bunch of homo's anyway so nobody would even care about Kurt.

The bitterest pill to swallow was that Kurt had apparently found someone. In the middle of bumfuck, nowhere Ohio he'd managed to find himself a boyfriend. And not just any boyfriend, a guy with enough money to go to that fancy prep school and cared enough about him to serenade him in front of everyone.

It wasn't right. Kurt got everything. Kurt got to be out. Kurt got to have family that wouldn't send him to some camp to get fixed or banish him from their lives. Kurt got to have friends that wouldn't turn on him. Kurt got to have a chance at his dream career. Kurt even got to have a fucking boyfriend. Kurt got everything and the only thing that Dave got was to live a lie. It wasn't fair and all it did was make Dave's inside's twist up so much that he didn't know if what he felt towards Kurt was anger, envy, desire or some strange combination of all three.

All he knew for sure was that he was too close to edge and it would be best for everybody that he and Hummel not cross paths today.

"So that got us a big ball of nothing," Mercedes complained, poking at her lunch.

"Not nothing," Quinn argued. "At the very least Figgins knows he's being watched now and Coach Sylvester is on our side, sort of."

"Yeah no offense to Coach Cray Cray but nothing's going to change until at least next week," Tina pointed out.

"That may actually work in our favor," Mike said slowly.
"How do you figure?" Santana asked.

"Look, around you," Mike said. "We're not the only ones who get bullied. The more people that show up at that meeting and complain-"

"The more likely there will be change," Rachel finished. "Mike that's brilliant. If we start reaching out now-"

"No not we," Kurt cut her off quickly. "They're not going to listen to students. Our parents have to take the lead on this."

"But how they are supposed to know whose being bullied?" Sam asked.

"We tell them," Finn said. "We keep our eyes open, see who else is getting made miserable and then let our parents call their parents."

"Oh my God," Santana said slowly. "You guys just came up with a plan that doesn't reek of inevitable failure."

Artie bit his lip. "You guys think it'll work?"

"It's better than sitting around waiting and doing nothing," Rachel insisted.

"Yeah, I mean, it can't hurt," Finn added.

"Unless the bullies find out what we're up to," Brittany said.

"It won't matter," Puck said. "Once parents get involved the rules change. I know these guys, okay. I used to be these guys. Once it starts spreading among the parents that McKinley has a bullying problem, no kid is going to want to admit to their parental units that they're the reason why. They'll back off out of sheer self preservation."

"Or just get sneakier," Kurt sighed. "Still though, I think the risk/reward ratio balances out in our favor."

"Still though we should be careful," Artie cautioned. "Keep things on the down low as much as possible."

"Agreed," Kurt said. "After all, no enterprise is more likely to succeed than one concealed from the enemy until it is ripe for execution."

"What's that you said?" Mercedes asked.

"You don't recognize it?" Kurt asked Mercedes.

"He said that you're more likely to win if your opponent never sees you coming," Brittany remarked before Mercedes could answer.

Everyone looked at her. "How did-," Mike began.

"Coach Sylvester," Quinn cut him off. "She makes every Cheerio read The Art of War and The Prince."

"Its part of the war games," Brittany added.

"It was required reading when we joined," Kurt said to Mercedes.
"Boy I didn't read those books. I was going to be Cheerio, not becoming a soldier," Mercedes said.

"Cheerios are soldiers," Kurt, Santana, Brittany and Quinn responded in unison.

"Well that wasn't creepy at all," Puck said.

"Not cool, yo. Ya'll can't be going all Children of the Corn up in this piece," Artie said.

"Shut up," Kurt said, throwing a grape at Artie. "Old habits die hard, is all." Before he could say anything else, Kurt's phone buzzed.

-I miss you-

Kurt smiled and fired off a reply.

-I miss you more-

"From the goofy grin on your face that can only be Blaine," Mercedes said.

"It is," Kurt confirmed before turning his attention back to his phone.

-Somehow I doubt that-

-Oh ye of little faith-

"How are things between the two of you?" Tina asked

"They're good," Kurt said. "Really good."

-Said the atheist to the lapsed Catholic-

-Look who's got jokes-

"You tapping that yet?" Santana asked

"Santana!" Kurt cried.

"Or are you getting tapped," she continued undeterred.

"None of your business," Kurt huffed as his phone buzzed again.

-I've got a lot more than jokes for u baby-

-Is that right-

"Fine, don't dish," Santana said.

-Yep. Got a surprise for u-

-What is it-

-Ask me nicely-

-Pls Blaine-

-Nicer than that-
Kurt laughed happily and the bell rang, causing everyone in the group to groan. "C'mon ya'll time to get back on the grind," Artie said.

"I don't know about you guys but I'm going to the nurse to take a nap," Puck replied. "You're going to take a nap? Dude, you were out of class all morning," Finn sputtered. "Yeah but I just ate," Puck explained.

"And Jesse St. James called me lazy," Mercedes grumbled as they all made their way to their respective classes.

Kurt's phone rang just as he walked out of the cafeteria. "Unlike you I am a responsible student on my way to class," Kurt said in lieu of a greeting. "You're right," Blaine drawled. "I'm being a bad, bad boy and deserve to be punished."

"Blaine," Kurt hissed, scandalized. "I'm at school."

Blaine laughed. "Fine, but you owe me a lifetime of letting me embarrass you for not bolting as soon as the first packet of lube hit the coffee table."

"Don't remind me," Kurt moaned. "We agreed it's like fight club and-"

"We don't talk about fight club," Blaine finished. "So how did things go with Figgins this morning?"

"About as well as could be expected," Kurt sighed. "Our parents are going to talk to the school board next week."

"And in the meantime?"

"We endure as best we can," Kurt shrugged.

"I'm sorry things didn't go your way," Blaine said.
"It's might not be all bad," Kurt admitted. "I mean, we're going to try to get more parents to join in the complaint. We figured there's strength in numbers."

"That's a good plan," Blaine said quietly.

"We think so," Kurt said. "It's just the time between now and then that's going to be difficult."

"And how things with Finn?"

"Awkward," Kurt sighed. "But I guess given all the alternatives awkward isn't so bad. Class is about to start. I'll see you when you get here." Kurt said as he slid into his seat.

"Take care, talk to you soon," Blaine said as he hung up.

Kurt's phone buzzed in his pocket and he smiled as a text from Blaine came through.

-Had to feed Jeff. ETA 90 Mins-B

One minute Kurt was smiling at the prospect of getting to see Blaine before the weekend and the next his phone was on the floor and he was bouncing off of a locker.

He wasn't sure what possessed him to take off down the hall after Karofsky. Maybe it was Blaine's words echoing in his head about refusing to be a victim and having courage or maybe was remembering the look of utter frustration and defeat on his father's face after the parents meeting with Figgins or maybe Kurt was just sick and tired of being sick and tired, but this time instead of just pretending nothing had happened Kurt decided that he wasn't going to let one more incident of abuse go without letting the bully know exactly what he thought of him.

"I am talking to you," Kurt yelled bursting through the locker room door.

"Girl's locker room is next door," Dave replied automatically, hoping the barb would be enough to send Kurt on his way. When he sensed that Kurt hadn't moved Dave felt the hairs rise on the back of his neck, and he swallowed hard, cursing that today of all days was the day Kurt decided to force the issue.

After the morning he'd had and the things his mom had said Dave could not deal with Kurt, not on top of everything else. Dave's control was too shaky, and for the first time he was actually worried about what could happen if Kurt kept pushing him. He needed Kurt to leave him alone, to just stop yelling and go away because he couldn't deal with the kid bringing to life all the anger and pain that Dave had tried to smother and to keep buried down deep where it couldn't hurt him. His hands shook as he pulled his shoes out of his locker and he refused to even turn around to look at Kurt because Dave knew the minute he saw him the tenuous hold he had on his self control would snap.

"What is your problem?" Kurt demanded, walking right up to Dave and putting himself in his path.

"Excuse me," Dave asked, silently willing the other boy to drop it and just go away because the last time he had been alone with Kurt had ended in a disaster that had threatened to give all of his secrets away.

"What are you so scared of," Kurt asked, unaware of Dave's internal struggle and challenging the bigger boy to answer him, refusing to back down or cower before his biggest tormentor.

"Besides you sneaking in here to peak at my junk," Dave snarled, turning quickly away from Kurt and continuing to empty his locker, hoping that if he ignored the other boy he would go away.
"Oh yeah," Kurt scoffed, "It's every straight guy's nightmare that all gays are secretly out to molest or hurt you. Well guess what ham hock, I've said it before and I'll say it again: You're not my type."

Dave felt the same anger and hurt wash over him that had assaulted him back in the men's room at the Cineplex when Kurt had insisted he'd have sex with an animal before he ever considered Dave. Dave looked at Kurt and his lip curled back in a sneer, remembering all the times Kurt had followed Hudson around like a lovesick puppy and how Kurt had been all snuggled up with the curly haired leader of that group of prep school kids from the other day. "That right," he questioned, pushing into Kurt's personal space.

"Yeah," Kurt confirmed returning Dave's dirty look with one of his own. "I don't dig on chubby boys who sweat too much and are going to be bald by the time they're thirty," he sneered.

The barb found its mark and Dave felt resentment and humiliation at being rejected so completely by the one person who should have understood what he was going through and he raised his fist menacingly and took a step towards the smaller boy. "Do not push me, Hummel," he growled through clenched teeth.

Kurt glanced down at Dave's fist and then back up, looking Dave square in the eyes. "You gonna hit me?" He taunted the jock. "Go ahead," Kurt dared him.

"Don't push me," Dave snapped, slamming his locker shut and trying desperately to rein himself in. *Stop letting him get in your head man. Keep it together, don't lose it. C'mon Dave, can't let him know, don't let him see, for the love of all that's holy Hummel, go the fuck away,* he chanted silently in his head.

"Hit me 'cause it's not gonna change who I am," Kurt declared. "You can't punch the gay out of me anymore than I can punch the ignoramus out of you!"

"Get out of my face!" Dave screamed, feeling raw and exposed, stripped of all his control and unable to contain himself any longer.

Kurt didn't flee. Instead he fixed Dave with a look of pure revulsion and shook his head slightly. "You are nothing but a scared little boy who can't handle how extraordinarily ordinary you are," Kurt yelled.

It was one rejection too many. The look of loathing on Kurt's face, coupled with the singer's assessment that there was nothing about Dave that he found desirable or attractive, the confirmation that there was no place for him, that he was unwanted and unwelcome even to those that he should have been accepted by broke Dave's restraint. Dave was tired of being reminded of how disgusting and distasteful he was to those to around him. His own mother didn't want him, Jaime didn't want him, Azimio was close to dropping him and now Kurt…Kurt had made it clear he would never want him.

Dave couldn't take it anymore. He had been forced to swallow down his anger and pain at his mom's words. He had no choice but to smile and nod when Jamie had turned him down. He had to stand there and take it when Az had laid into him about the fight at Breadstix and he was done. He was done being dismissed and disregarded. Hummel didn't get to do that to him. Not when everything that was happening to Dave was all his fault. It was all on Hummel. Dave had been fine until he'd noticed the kid last year. Hummel and his beautiful blue eyes and smooth skin and tight pants that made Dave's thoughts go to uncomfortable places. Hummel didn't get to do that to him and then just tell Dave he wasn't good enough. Hummel didn't get to just walk away, not this time, not until he knew what he'd done to Dave, what he'd turned Dave into and how he'd made Dave feel about him.
Before he could think clearly he was grabbing Kurt and kissing him.

Kurt wasn't religious but everyone knew the story of David and Goliath, the epic tale of the underdog emerging victorious from battle in the face of impossible odds. It's a good story and Kurt had to admit that he'd hoped for a similar outcome when he'd confronted Dave.

The only problem with that was that unlike David, Kurt was no giant killer and outside of Disney movies and fairy tales the underdog usually loses.

Badly.

Kurt's dreams of following Dave into the belly of the beast and emerging victorious—or with enough broken bones to force someone to do something—quickly turned into a nightmare of epic proportions when Dave grabbed Kurt's face and kissed him.

It was nothing like when Blaine kissed him.

It wasn't even like when Brittany had kissed him.

It was angry.

It was rough.

It was hard.

It was painful.

*It was terrifying.*

Kurt stood frozen. The only thing that snapped him back to reality was Karofsky leaning in to steal another kiss. Kurt pushed the jock away, but still couldn't find it in him to make a sound.

"Why couldn't you just go when I told you to?" Dave screeched, pounding on the locker in front of him. "This is your fault, Hummel. You just...you wouldn't...I told you...you made me."

"This isn't my fault," Kurt denied hoarsely as he shook his head. "I didn't make you do anything. *You kissed me.*"

"That's not...you better not tell anybody," Dave bit out through clenched teeth, looming over Kurt and leaning into his personal space.

"If I do," Kurt whispered.

"I'm gonna kill you," Dave growled, shoving Kurt back into the wall of lockers before grabbing his things off of the bench and all but running out of the locker room.

Kurt slid to the floor, afraid to move, terrified that if he even breathed too loudly Karofsky would come back and make good on his threat. Eventually he pulled himself up, wincing at the bright sparks of pain that shot down his right side and cautiously made his way out into the hall.

To Kurt's surprise the halls were empty and a quick glance at the wall clock revealed that school was almost over and Kurt had somehow lost over an hour's worth of time. He caught sight of himself in the reflective glass of the trophy case and gasped. His eyes were red rimmed, his face was pale and his cheeks were streaked with tears. He didn't remember when he'd started crying or when he'd stopped. He couldn't remember much of anything, except for the crushing weight of Karofsky's
hands clamped down hard on the sides of his face holding him still and the bruising pressure of Karofsky's lips as the bigger boy smashed his mouth against Kurt's.

Kurt got lost in the memory and when he felt someone's arms slip around his waist and begin to pull him backwards the only thing he could think of was that Karofsky had come back to make good on his threat.

"Get off me, get off, get off, get off," Kurt chanted, whirling around and blindly throwing punches.

Blaine's head rocked back when one of Kurt's wild jabs connected. "Ow, Jesus Kurt! What the fuck?!" Blaine yelled, as he ducked another blow. Blaine quickly slipped around behind Kurt and wrapped his arms around him, pinning Kurt's arms down by his side.

"No, no, no, no stop, please I won't tell, I won't tell, let me go," Kurt whimpered.

"Jesus," Jeff whispered.

Blaine knew he had to get Kurt out of the middle of the hallway before someone saw them. He took a quick look around and spied a girl's bathroom. "Jeff," he barked. "I'm gonna take Kurt in there, stand by the door and don't let anyone in."

Jeff nodded and he helped Blaine herd Kurt into the bathroom and before stepping back out to stand guard.

"Kurt," Blaine said, settling them on the floor with Kurt pulled into his lap. "It's me, it's Blaine. You're safe, I promise you're safe and nobody's gonna hurt you."

Kurt cried quietly for a few minutes before the tears subsided and he finally raised his head to look at the other boy. "Blaine?" he questioned shakily.

Kurt reached out and gently traced the shadow of a bruise on Blaine's chin. "I'm sorry."

"I've had worse," Blaine said brushing a small kiss on Kurt's forehead. "You feel up to telling me what happened out there?"

"I think it's fairly obvious I had a complete and total meltdown," Kurt said bitterly. "At this rate I'm going to have my very own padded cell by Christmas."

"You're not crazy," Blaine said immediately. "But you were pretty out of it when I got here and I'd like to know why."

Kurt stiffened instantly and shook his head. "I can't, please no, just forget it, okay? It's fine. I'm fine. I'm sorry I hit you and I'm sorry that-"

"Baby," Blaine broke in gently. "Stop. You're obviously not fine. Talk to me, let me help."

"You can't. Nobody can. My dad was here just this morning and then…nobody can help."

"Let me try," Blaine begged. "At least trust me enough to tell me what's going on."

Kurt was quiet for a long moment and then he nodded. "Karofsky," he whispered.
At the mere mention of the other boy's name Blaine felt a spark of anger but held himself in check. "He hurt you again?"

Kurt nodded. "He...I was walking down the hall and he came out of nowhere and he just...he shoved me into a locker," Kurt began slowly. "And I was just...it made me so angry," Kurt explained. "My dad, Carol, Morris and Evie and just...all of our parents took the morning off of work and came down here to demand that Figgins stop the bullying and basically got told they wasted their time and they needed to take it up with the school board at the next meeting."

Blaine smirked just a bit at the news that things with Figgins had gone pretty much as he'd suspected they would but any pleasure he may have gotten at that turn of events was quickly overshadowed by the misery in Kurt's voice.

"I'm sorry you were disappointed baby," he said, tightening his hold on Kurt.

"I was just tired of making it easy for him," Kurt said. "I mean, we're always told when we're little that bullies are cowards and if you stand up to them most of the time they'll back down. And I kept thinking about how you told me I could refuse to be a victim and I couldn't get how disappointed my dad looked out of my head and I was just tired, so after he pushed me instead of brushing it off like normal I followed him."

"He hit you?" Blaine demanded harshly, remember the last time Kurt had ended up in a room alone with Karofsky.

"I wish he had," Kurt said, squeezing his eyes shut. "I thought he was going to at first. I mean, I practically dared him to."

"So what happened?"

"He," Kurt's throat closed up and he began to tremble in Blaine's arms.

"Hey," Blaine said, immediately pulling Kurt even tighter against him. "Kurt if he hurt you-

"He kissed me," Kurt blurted out. "He grabbed my face and held me still and just...kissed me."

Blaine stilled. Of all the things he had expected Kurt to tell him Karofsky had done, that had never even been on his radar. "He kissed you?"

"It was awful," Kurt shuddered. "I didn't know he...I didn't want him to," Kurt insisted.

"I know baby, I know," Blaine soothed.

"He said I made him," Kurt admitted, the words tumbling out now that the damn had burst. "He said it was my fault for not leaving when he told me to and that I made him and that I better not tell anyone or he'd-." Kurt stopped suddenly.

"He'd what?" Blaine growled.

"It's not important," Kurt deflected.

"The hell it's not," Blaine snapped. "You were in the middle of some kind of panic attack when I got here, Kurt. I want to know what that asshole did to you that got you to that point."

"Blaine, I can't."

"Trust me," Blaine begged. "You trusted me enough to tell me what you were going through the first
day we met. You trusted me enough to tell me about Mason and share your treehouse with me. You trusted me enough to let me hold you all night when you too scared to go home. You trusted me enough to let me sit in on a family meeting and you trust me enough to let me touch you in ways that no one else ever has. Trust me now."

Kurt took a deep breath. "Telling you this," Kurt said softly, "Is literally trusting you with my life, Blaine."

"Okay."

"He said if I told anyone he'd kissed me that he would…he said he'd k-kill me," Kurt confessed shakily.

White hot rage washed over Blaine and left everything covered in an angry red haze.

"He threatened to kill you," Blaine asked lowly.

Kurt nodded.

"Get up," Blaine ground out tersely.

"Blaine?" Kurt questioned.

"Get. Up." Blaine repeated angrily.

Kurt scrambled up and Blaine quickly followed him. He took Kurt's hand and practically dragged him out of the bathroom.

"Whoa," Jeff said as soon as Blaine opened the door and he got a look at his friend's face. "Who released the Kraken?"

"Now is not the time," Blaine said tightly.

"Blaine?"

"I'm not angry with you baby," Blaine quickly assured Kurt. "But I want you to go out to the car with Jeff. As soon as I'm done we'll take you home, tuck you into bed and put this whole day behind us, okay?"

Kurt's eyes widened in fear and he dug his fingers into Blaine's arm. "Done with what? Please tell me aren't going to try to fight Karofsky," he begged.

"As much as I want to rip his head right off his body, I swear to you that I'm not going to try to fight Karofsky," Blaine promised Kurt.

"Then what are you going to do?"

"Whatever's necessary to make sure that you're safe," Blaine answered. "Now go with Jeff, I shouldn't be long."

Kurt was too tired to argue so he simply nodded and allowed Jeff to lead him down the hallway.

As soon as Kurt disappeared down the hall, Blaine forced his anger aside and followed the signs until he found the front office.

"Can I help you?" The school secretary asked pleasantly.
"You certainly can," Blaine said, giving her his most charming smile. "My name's Blaine Anderson and I really need to talk to Principal Figgins about making a possible donation to the school," he lied.

"A donation?" She repeated, sitting up a bit straighter and smiling back at Blaine. "Why don't you take a seat and I'll let Principal Figgins know that you're out here."

"Thank you," Blaine said, but he didn't sit. He doubted that he'd even have time to get comfortable before Figgins would be calling him into his office and he was right. The secretary wasn't even gone a full minute before the door was opened and Blaine was being waved inside.

"Mr. Anderson, Donna tells me you wish to speak to me about a possible donation to the school?" Figgins said with smile.

"Yeah, that was a lie," Blaine said bluntly, settling back into his seat. "I'm actually here to tell you what you're going to do in order to keep your job and keep this school from being named in a class action lawsuit."

"Pardon me?"

"My apologies, I'll try to speak slower and use smaller words."

"Who do you think you are?"

"I'm Blaine Anderson, and let me save you the Google search," Blaine answered, his smile sharp and almost feral in nature. "Currently I'm the CEO and majority stock holder of Anderson International. Due to our factories, manufacturing plants, call centers, research facilities and various other enterprises we are the sixth largest employer in the state of Ohio. Last month I had dinner with Governor Stevens and Senator Sterling's son Jeffrey is one of my very best friends. I have a team of very expensive, morally deficient and incredibly effective attorney's at my disposal and Nancy Grace is number six on my speed dial. Tell me, do you think she'd prefer to run the story about how William McKinley allowed bullying and harassment to become so commonplace that students actually line up in the mornings to get thrown into the dumpsters before or after Kurt and his friends file their lawsuit?"

"Kurt who? Now wait just a moment-"

"I can see it now," Blaine continued, steepling his fingers and leaning forward. "Nancy in all her self-righteous glory, nostrils flaring, angry eyes fully engaged voice steadily rising in volume as she details for the entire country how students at McKinley are subjected to routine physical assaults and emotional battery, sometimes in full view of the faculty-;"

"You are worse than Tina Cohen-Chang and her vampire coven," Figgins cried, holding up his hands. "I'm not even gonna pretend that made any sense," Blaine said slowly. "But can you imagine the outcry from the LGBTQ community when it comes out that you ignored repeated acts of violence and harassment aimed at your only openly gay student—even dismissed the attempts of one of his teachers to advocate on his behalf?" Blaine continued

"Now listen here young man there is no need to unleash Nancy Grace!"

"You're right," Blaine agreed. "It would result in nothing but negative consequences for you, the school, even the city. There's absolutely no need for any of that to happen…which is why you're going to give me exactly what it is I want."
"Oh my God, this is a shakedown. I will not negotiate with terrorists!" Figgins squawked.

"Again I apologize," Blaine smirked. "I somehow gave you the impression that this was a negotiation. It's not. The projected aim of negotiation is compromise, Principal Figgins and as I have absolutely no intention of compromising with you, well...I'd just be negotiating in bad faith and that would just sully my good name. I can't have that so let me clear things up for you: This is blackmail, pure and simple. You do what I say, exactly as I say, or all of William McKinley's dirty laundry makes headline news and every single one of those angry parents that was in your office this morning gets a phone call from the law offices of Wilhelm and Crane offering them a piece of the class action lawsuit pie. How long do you think it would take word to get around? Start with the parents of the Glee club, spread to the parents of the band kids, hey, got any mathletes? Their parents might want in on this too," Blaine said with a grin.

"What do you want?" Figgins asked.

"I want for Kurt to be able to come to school without being abused and receiving death threats," Blaine said viciously. "But since that ship has already sailed, right now I'll settle for expulsion of David Karofsky."

"I can't just expel a student with no proof of wrongdoing," Figgins argued.

"I'm sure you can find a way," Blaine said. "And for a little motivation, if I may," Blaine said, taking Figgins' laptop and tapping in the address to Jacob's blog.

As a video compilation of several students being shoved into lockers by various members of the football and hockey teams set to the tune of "Bodies" by Drowning Pool began to play Principal Figgins groaned and put his head in his hands.

"Dave Karofsky appears on this blog committing eighty seven separate acts of bullying against his fellow students," Blaine said, his voice cold enough to lower the temperature in the room. "He's on video doing everything from tossing them in dumpsters to throwing frozen drinks in their faces to shoving them into lockers. Forty six of those incidents involve Kurt. Today was forty seven. He doesn't get to make it to forty eight."

"And what guarantee do I have that you will back off if I expel Mr. Karofsky?"

Blaine shrugged. "Absolutely none," he said smugly. "But what you do have is a guarantee of what will happen if you don't."

"You don't realize what you're asking. is one of the most important members of our school's football team. We have an excellent chance of getting to the Championship this year and without his contribution the Titans may not make it," Figgins explained to Blaine.

"Not my problem," Blaine replied. "How long do you think you'll hold on to your job once that video makes the national news and the lawsuits come rolling in?" Blaine asked

Figgins sighed. "You win," he said finally. "Mr. Karofsky will be expelled first thing tomorrow."

"There are twenty minutes left in the school day. No time like the present."

Principal Figgins glared at Blaine as he pressed the button on his intercom. "David Karofsky report to the Principal's office please. David Karofsky, you are needed in the Principal's office post haste."

Figgins ran a hand tiredly down his face and Blaine stood up. "Now see that wasn't so hard, was it?"
"About Mr. Ben Israel's blog-

"Oh no need to worry about that," Blaine said with a dismissive wave of his hand. "Should Jewfro suddenly see the light and decide to stop exploiting the pain and humiliation of his peers, turn over a shiny new leaf and delete his blog my attorneys have already backed up and catalogued every entry."

"You are the son of the devil," Figgins hissed.

Blaine smiled, a predator's smile all teeth and deadly intent without a hint of warmth. "She likes to be called Mom," Blaine replied. "Pleasure doing business with you, Principal Figgins," Blaine tossed over his shoulder as he left, passing Karofsky on his way out.

"Do you think we should go back in there? I think we should go back in there," Kurt said nervously.

"Chillax," Jeff said changing the presets on the radio. "Look, if there's one thing Blaine's good at its crisis management. I can't tell you how many times he's pulled my ass out of the fire."

"But if he confronts Karofsky he could end up hurt!"

Jeff laughed and then stopped when he caught sight of Kurt's face. "Oh shit, you're serious. No, look Kurt, Blaine can take care of himself. Trust me on that. He's had plenty of practice."

"How?"

"Totally against the rules for me to tell you," Jeff said with an apologetic wince, "But I swear Blaine can handle himself."

"What does that even mean?"

"It means you should stop worrying about Blaine and try to relax," Jeff ordered. "You were kind of a wreck back there."

Kurt cringed. "I'm sorry."

"Hey no, you don't have anything to be sorry about" Jeff hurried to reassure Kurt, "I've been there. I'm just glad that you're okay. You are okay, right?"

Kurt nodded then shook his head. "I don't know," he answered honestly.

"Do you wanna talk about-"

"No," Kurt cut Jeff off quickly. "I don't."

"Okay," Jeff soothed. "We don't have to talk about it. How about I tell you one of Blaine's most embarrassing deep, dark secrets?"

"Make it a good one."

"He's terrified of squirrels," Jeff chirped gleefully.

"Squirrels?"

"Squirrels," Jeff confirmed.

"Small, furry, bushy tailed adorable squirrels?"
"Make him scream like a horror movie bitch," Jeff cackled.

"Why?"

"All he'll say is he had a bad experience."

"How do you have a bad experience with a squirrel?" Kurt laughed.

"Ask your boyfriend," Jeff replied.

Kurt sobered quickly. "I don't...we haven't exactly...I'm not sure Blaine's my boyfriend."

Jeff gave Kurt a dubious look. "He's your boyfriend," the blonde declared. "You two may not be Facebook official, but Blaine's in this. He's in this deeper than I've ever seen him be with anyone else."

Kurt felt a burst of pride and warmth flood through him followed quickly by a bout of nerves. "I've never had a boyfriend."

"First time for everything," Jeff winked.

Before Kurt could answer Blaine opened the door and slid into the driver's seat.

"Jesus man," Jeff yelped. "I swear I'm gonna put a bell on you."

"I'm going to chop off your fingers if you touch my radio again," Blaine threatened, switching back the presets. "Are you okay baby?"

"Kind of hungry because someone wouldn't let me finish my lunch, but other than that I'm good snookums," Jeff smiled.

"Wasn't talking to you," Blaine said dryly.

"I'm fine," Kurt answered. "What were you-"

"I'll tell you once I get you to your house, okay?" Blaine assured Kurt as he started the car and pulled away from the curb.

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"So Figgins agreed to expel Karofsky just like that?" Kurt asked skeptically.

"Figgins can be a reasonable man when properly motivated," Blaine shrugged.

"I'm sorry but nothing about this makes sense," Kurt argued. "Our parents were in there with him for hours this morning and all they got was a bunch of excuses and a suggestion to take it up with the school board."

"Maybe that's why he finally stepped up," Jeff said as he exchanged a quick look with Blaine. "It's just politics. Everybody talks about the problem but nobody ever actually does anything until they know they're being watched. He knows he's being watched now."

"He just took your word for it, just like that?"

"I can be very convincing," Blaine answered.

"That's one way of putting it," Jeff mumbled.
Blaine shot Jeff a dark look and then gave Kurt a sunny smile. "The point is David Karofsky isn't going to be a problem for you anymore."

"Thank you," Kurt replied. "I don't know how you did it and I don't even care. Just…really Blaine, thank you."

"I keep telling you that you don't have to thank me."

"Yeah, because that's what boyfriends do, isn't Blaine?" Jeff broke in, nudging Blaine not so subtly with his shoulder.

Blaine glared at Jeff and then rubbed the back of his neck, suddenly feeling out of his depth. "I ah… I guess it is, what boyfriends do…if they're boyfriends?" He said uncertainty turning his statement into a question.

Kurt's cheeks blazed and he stared at a spot on the floor. "I um, I suppose if people were boyfriends that's what they'd do."

"Oh my God," Jeff moaned. "Having a real life OTP should not be this hard. Look you," he said pointing to Blaine. "Do you want to be Kurt's boyfriend?"

Blaine was torn between smothering Jeff with a pillow and wishing the ground would swallow him whole. It wasn't a secret that he had feelings for Kurt and it wasn't a secret that things between them were intensifying but neither of them had pushed to put a label on things. He started to snap at the meddlesome Warbler but one look at Kurt's pinched and worried face completely overrode his anger.

Kurt had shifted so that he was no longer pressed against Blaine. The countertenor had drawn his knees up to his chest, wrapped his arms protectively around them and had his head bowed.

He's afraid I'm going to say no, Blaine realized.

With any other boy in any other situation it wouldn't even have been a question. Blaine would have said no and been out the door so fast there he would have left scorch marks on the carpet.

Commitment was something that Blaine had never wanted and he'd taken great pains to never let any of his entanglements progress to the point where things like labels such as boyfriend or behavior such as monogamy could be reasonably expected from him.

But this wasn't any other boy, this was Kurt. Kurt with his quick wit, soft smiles and intoxicating blend of strength and fragility who had so completely captivated Blaine that running for the door was the last thing Blaine wanted to do.

He ducked his head down so that he could look Kurt in his eyes. "I've never been anyone's boyfriend before," he confessed quietly. "I may not be very good at it, but I'd be honored if you gave me the opportunity to try."

The smile that broke out over Kurt's face was enough to erase any lingering doubts Blaine had that a relationship with Kurt, complete with labels and expectations, was exactly what he wanted.

"I've never been anyone's boyfriend either so for once we're on even ground," Kurt said, uncoiling his body and scooting closer to Blaine on the couch. He reached out and tangled their fingers together. "I look forward to learning with you, Blaine Warbler."

"Yay my OTP is canon. Now kiss," Jeff demanded, clapping his hands together.

"You are a moment ruiner. I'm going to have Nick put Net Nanny on your computer and block
"Hey man, I'm just trying to captain my ship," Jeff smiled unperturbed by the threat.

Kurt shook his head. "You two are insane."

"And now you're stuck with me," Blaine sighed happily, pulling Kurt towards him.

Just then the front door crashed open and Finn barreled through it, followed by Burt.

"Kurt! Dude what happened to you? Tina said you were in Trig and then you just disappeared. You weren't in Glee and I waited by the Nav after school and you never showed. I thought something bad had happened to you," Finn cried.

Kurt scrambled up off the couch and took a step forward. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to leave you stranded, Finn. I-"

"Finn called the shop in a panic," Burt picked up the story, advancing on Kurt until he was standing in front of him. "I go to the school and find your SUV in the parking lot and you nowhere to be found and then Mohawk-"

"Puck," Finn corrected.

"Says he saw you cutting out early with these two!" Burt thundered. "What the hell were you thinking? Skipping out early, leaving your car, stranding Finn? You are in so much trouble that they haven't invented the word to describe the amount of trouble you're in and hey, hey whoa Kurt!"

Burt's anger switched to concern when he noticed that Kurt was trembling, almost violently, and the look in his eyes was wild, as if he were a trapped animal who had been backed into a corner. "Kurt?" He questioned in a much softer voice, as he reached towards his son.

"Don't touch me!" Kurt screamed, stepping back and tripping over his own feet. He stumbled backwards, and only missed cracking his head on the coffee table because Blaine caught him.

Blaine's arms tightened around him and Kurt struggled to break free. "No, no, no, let me go, get off, let me go!" He screamed.

Blaine half carried, half dragged Kurt the few steps over to the sofa and sat him down before letting him go and backing up. Kurt instantly curled up into a protective ball and began sobbing.

"What the hell is going on here?" Burt demanded as he moved towards Kurt.

"Mr. Hummel, don't." Blaine ordered stepping in front of Burt and cutting off his access to Kurt.

"Why is he…what happened?" Finn asked softly.

"Jeff, stay with him. Don't touch him, don't yell, don't-"

"Blaine," Jeff cut his friend off, "You really gonna tell me how to handle PTSD?"

Blaine swore quietly. "I didn't-"

"Its cool man," Jeff waved him off. "We'll be fine. You go explain things to Kurt's peeps. We'll be good here."

Burt followed Blaine into the kitchen, keeping Kurt in his line of sight and Finn trailing behind them.
"What happened to my boy?" Burt demanded. "And how are you involved in it?"

Blaine decided the best way to break the news to Burt and get the reaction he wanted was to give Burt every dirty detail while seeming reluctant to do so.

"I missed Kurt," he told Burt honestly. "Jeff—that's Jeff in the living room—he kind of talked me into ditching afternoon classes and bringing him with me to see Kurt."

"You have to know nothing about that is okay with me," Burt interrupted.

Blaine nodded. "I know it was irresponsible but," he ducked his head hoping he was pulling off the shy, abashed look he was going for. "I missed him," he said again softly.

"Okay," Burt said, as he dragged a hand over his face. "We'll talk about how irresponsible that was of you later. So you cut out of school to see Kurt. Then what happened?"

"Jeff and I got to McKinley and Kurt was just…standing in the middle of one of the hallways, staring at his reflection. He was…" Blaine's voice trailed off and he looked up at Burt, letting every bit of the anger and fear he'd felt when he'd first seen Kurt show on his face. "He was a wreck. He was pale, he'd been crying, he completely lost it when I touched him."

"Like just now?" Finn asked.

"Worse," Blaine bit out, still not entirely over his anger at the bigger boy. "He was worse. I took him into a bathroom and he told me…Mr. Hummel, I don't know if I should…Kurt tries really hard not to worry you and he'll be really upset with me if—"

"I told Kurt and now I'm telling you, I'm the parent here. It's my job to protect Kurt, not the other way around. Now you tell me what happened and don't even think about leaving anything out," Burt barked.

Blaine bit the inside of his cheek to keep his smile at bay. "David Karofsky went after Kurt again. He…he shoved Kurt into a locker—"

"I told Kurt and now I'm telling you, I'm the parent here. It's my job to protect Kurt, not the other way around. Now you tell me what happened and don't even think about leaving anything out," Burt barked.

Blaine bit the inside of his cheek to keep his smile at bay. "David Karofsky went after Kurt again. He…he shoved Kurt into a locker—"

"He does that all the time and Kurt's never reacted like this," Finn interrupted.

"Or maybe Kurt's just never let you see him react like this," Blaine fired back.

"So this is because Kurt got hurt again?" Burt asked stopping the argument before it could start.

"Yes, but not because of the locker shove," Blaine said. "Kurt felt really bad that your meeting with the principal didn't go as well as you'd hoped and he was just…I think he was just tired of being a target. So he, um, he followed Karofsky and confronted him."

Burt felt the blood in his veins turn to ice as all the worse case scenarios played in his head.

"They fought?" Finn asked.

"Not this time," Blaine said in a calculated move. He was knew that Kurt hadn't told his father about the fight at the movie theater and he knew that dropping that extra nugget of information would put today's incident in the worst possible light.

"This time?" Burt jumped on the phrase just as Blaine had hoped he would.

"Yes sir," Blaine said, ducking his head again. "A little while ago Kurt was out with friends, um, Sam and Mercedes and Karofsky attacked him in the bathroom at the Cineplex. But Kurt totally
"kicked ass," Blaine added quickly.

"Karofsky jumped him too?" Finn wondered.

"What do you mean, too?" Burt whirled around and faced Finn.

_Thanks for the assist Finn_, Blaine smiled internally.

"Um," Finn said, staring down at his feet. "I sort of...kind of...got caught up with Rachel and left Kurt at school once and uh...um, Azimio Adams, you know from the football team? He kinda jumped Kurt in the hall."

"And when the hell was this?"

"Little while ago?" Finn croaked.

"And not one of you saw fit to tell me?"

"Kurt doesn't like to worry you-"

"I figured if Kurt was keeping quiet for a reason-"

"He trusted me and I couldn't break his confidence-"

"Everybody's been trying real hard to make sure he's not left alone since-"

"I'm sorry," Finn and Blaine said in unison.

"Sorry isn't quite gonna cut the mustard here boys," Burt stated. "We'll be having a nice, long talk about secrets you keep and secrets you tell in a little bit, right now I want to know what happened today."

"They were in the locker room alone and they had words," Blaine said vaguely.

"Cut the crap kid," Burt ordered. "Stop pussyfootin' around and tell me what that animal did to my son."

"He kissed him," Blaine blurted out. "Kurt said he held his head so he couldn't move and just...kissed him."

"Whoa," Finn breathed.

Burt felt sick. He had always assumed that because Kurt was a boy there were certain things he just wouldn't have to worry about as much as he would have if Kurt had been a girl. Even when Kurt came out, Burt had been more concerned with Kurt being pressured to go further than he was ready for or taken advantage of by someone older or with more experience than he had been with any sort of sexual contact being forced on Kurt without his consent.

Apparently he had worried about the former too much and about the latter not enough.

"Is that all he did?" Burt forced out past the lump in his throat. He hated that he was actually praying the only thing that had happened to his son was a forced kiss.

"Physically yes," Blaine nodded. "But after...after he kissed him Karofsky freaked out. I guess he's struggling with some stuff but he really, really freaked out."
"Karofsky's gay? That doesn't even make any sense! He's always giving Kurt crap for being gay! He goes out of his way to make Kurt miserable. He's always pushing him, or insulting him and in Breadstix he just seemed so mad when he thought Kurt and I were on a date and oh-" Finn said, his eyes widening in comprehension.

"Yeah oh," Blaine rolled his eyes at Finn. "Sometimes the biggest homophobes are just…so deep in the closet they can't deal."

"What else did he do to my boy?" Burt interrupted.

"He threatened to kill Kurt if he told anyone about the kiss," Blaine announced.

Burt's reaction couldn't have been better if Blaine had scripted it himself. His face went white and then turned red and his hands clenched into fists. "I'm gonna kill that little bastard," Burt growled as he turned to stride out of the kitchen.

Blaine quickly positioned himself in front of Burt and placed a gentle hand on the man's forearm. Kurt's father ending up with a murder charge was not part of Blaine's plan. "Mr. Hummel please," he begged. "Kurt needs you to be here for him more than you need to go snap Karofsky's neck."

"He threatened to kill him," Burt hissed. "How am I supposed to let my kid walk back into that school knowing that thug could be waiting for him around any corner?"

*I'm so glad you feel that way,* Blaine thought. "He won't be," Blaine rushed to reassure Burt. "I took care of it. He was expelled."

"*You* took care of it," Burt repeated. "How?"

Blaine took a deep breath. "I'm an Anderson," he said softly. "There's a certain amount of…privilege that comes along with that. I don't like to…I hate trading on my name," he lied, "But sometimes it's a necessary evil. Kurt needs to be safe and that won't happen as long as Karofsky's around."

Burt dropped into a nearby chair, the fight suddenly drained out of him. "I don't care what you did," he shook his head. "I should but I don't. I just care that my boy is safe."

"He means a lot to me," Blaine admitted. "I'd do anything I had to keep him safe."

"So…what do we do now?" Finn asked.

"Keep quiet," Blaine advised. "Kurt's not…he's not in a good place. He needs time to process and time to figure out what he wants to do about what happened to him. I think it's a good idea to give it to him."

"I think it's a good idea to call the cops," Burt muttered.

"That might be a mistake," Blaine cautioned, determined not to let the situation get out of his control. "Kurt's feeling pretty wrecked right now. He could barely tell me what happened. I don't know if he's capable of making a statement or handling the type of scrutiny that pursuing your legal options could bring. Plus…there were no witnesses. It's Kurt's word against Karofsky's and in this town…"

Blaine didn't say it but the implication that in Lima nobody was going to take the gay kid's word over the football player's was understood.

"He'd just turn it around on Kurt and say Kurt kissed him and-"
"Everybody would believe him," Finn admitted. "The guys are always saying stuff about Kurt being out to spread the gay. Nobody even suspects that Karofsky…they'd blame Kurt."

_Bless you Finn. You keep this up and you might just get yourself off my list_, Blaine thought.

"I find out the kid making Kurt's life a living hell has upped the ante and I'm supposed to just let it go?" Burt fumed.

"No," Blaine said soothingly. "No one's saying to let it go, we're just saying to hold off on doing anything major until Kurt's in a better place. Karofsky's out of McKinley so that's one less thing to worry about. Maybe for right now we just focus on making sure Kurt's okay."

"We huh," Burt questioned. "You think you get a say?"

"I know that I don't," Blaine acknowledged, "I just want what's best for Kurt. And I know that you're the one who gets to decide that, I just…I just want him to be okay."

Burt nodded. "I believe that," he said. "And thank you for taking care of him. You seem to be making a habit of that."

"It's not one I plan on breaking anytime soon," Blaine stated.

"So…what are we gonna do about Karofsky?" Finn asked.

"When he's a little less shaky we're gonna sit down with Kurt and talk this out but for right now…for right now making sure that he's okay is gonna be the top priority. Everything else can wait," Burt decided.

"So Karofsky just gets away with it? We should just tell-"

"No Finn," Kurt's voice came from the doorway. "I don't believe in outing. We don't know why Karofsky's struggling so much and we don't know what the consequences might be for him if he comes out. No one deserves to be forced to come out before they're ready, not even someone as hateful as Karofsky."

"You okay son?"

"No," Kurt said truthfully. "I keep feeling like I'm right back in that locker room with his hands on my face and I just…I'm not okay."

"You don't have to be," Blaine said quickly, moving to Kurt's side. "No one expects you to be."

"Blaine's right," Finn added. "Stuff's been rough for you man. You've taken a lot of hard hits lately and it's okay if you can't just walk 'em off anymore."

"Thank you Finn," Kurt whispered.

"I know I should have told you what was going on," Kurt addressed his father.

"Yeah, you should have," Burt agreed. "And when Carole gets home we're gonna talk about why you didn't and where we go from here."

Blaine knew an opening when he saw one so he grabbed the opportunity to take his leave. "I hate leaving you but it sounds like some heavy duty family stuff is about to go down, plus Jeff and I gotta get on the road so we can make it back before anyone notices we're gone."
Kurt nodded. "I'll see you guys out."

"Bye Mr. Hummel, Finn." Blaine said his goodbye's as Jeff waved awkwardly and Kurt walked them out to Blaine's car.

"I'm sorry your visit was such a bust," Kurt said.

"Hey none of that," Blaine shushed him. "I value any time I get to spend with you. Besides," he knocked his hip into Kurt's, "I got myself a boyfriend today. I'd say that makes for a pretty successful visit."

Kurt grinned back. "There is that."

"Can I kiss my boyfriend?" Blaine whispered running his thumb over Kurt's cheekbone.

Kurt swallowed hard and nodded. Part of him was afraid that kissing Blaine would trigger another panic reaction but another part of him was determined not to let what had happened with Karofsky touch any part of his relationship with Blaine.

The feather light brush of Blaine's lips against Kurt's was as far removed from the bruising kiss Karofsky had forced on him as one could get but Kurt still felt a flare of momentary panic bubble up inside of him. Before Kurt could fall into the abyss, Blaine stepped back, not pushing Kurt any further than he was capable of going. It wasn't their best kiss, but Kurt thought it was probably their most important.

"Thank you," he murmured.

"Thank you," Blaine returned. "I know that wasn't easy for you."

"You're not Karofsky."

"No I'm not," Blaine agreed. "So remember that you can always tell me no."

Kurt gave Blaine a small peck on the cheek. "I knew that," he said softly. "I think I needed to hear it."

"I'll always do my best to give you what you need," Blaine promised.

"Get out of here you big sap," Kurt laughed as he stepped back. "Text me when you get in so I know you made it back safe."

"As you wish," Blaine grinned, sliding into the driver's seat. "Bye baby," he said starting the car.

"Bye," Kurt said waving to the duo as Blaine started driving. He waited until he saw the taillights disappear down the block before he turned and went back inside.

"So," Jeff drawled. "Back to Dalton we go?"

"Not quite yet," Blaine answered. "I have to make a stop first."

"Uh oh," Jeff groaned. "That's your plotting face. What are you up to now?"

"Plausible deniability Jeffrey," Blaine answered as he plugged an address into his GPS. "You'll want it for this one."

Jeff nodded. "Fine then. But if I'm gonna be stuck in the car while you do your Machiavelli
impersonation, I get to control the radio."

Blaine sighed. "I swear to Christ if you turn on Radio Disney-"

"And I was like baby, baby baby oh-"

"The side of the road, Jeff. The side of the road."

"And I was like baby, baby, baby no-"

"I hate you and everything you stand for."

"Thought you'd always be mine,"

"I was very, very bad in a former life," Blaine muttered as he pulled up outside a nondescript ranch style house.

"You're very, very bad in this life," Jeff returned. "And where are we?"

"Plausible-"

"Deniability. Got it," Jeff nodded, settling down into his seat.

Blaine stepped out of the car, walked up to the front door and rang the bell.

Dave's day had gone from bad to worse. He knew he should have just left Hummel alone. He'd been too keyed up and emotional from the disaster of a conversation he'd had with his mother and Jamie's rejection to be able to keep himself in check and he'd let himself get too caught up in the moment and now he was completely f**ked because of it.

He kept replaying the moment that he'd kissed Kurt over and over and he couldn't get the horrified expression that had been on Kurt's face when he'd pushed him away out of his head. He wanted to curl into a ball and cry when he recalled how broken Kurt had sounded and the look of utter terror on the boy's face when Dave had threatened to kill him. It made him sick to think that Kurt had believed him, that the other boy thought that Dave was capable of actually killing him. Dave wasn't. He knew he wasn't. Yeah, he may have crossed the line with Kurt and taken things way too far but Dave didn't have it in him to actually make good on a threat like that and it bothered him that there was someone out there who thought that he was so dangerous and out of control that he could.

Dave had thought the worst part of his day was going to be leaving Kurt in the locker room with that shattered look on his face but he'd been wrong. Having Figgins kick him out of school had been worse. He was off the team and out of school and he'd have to tell his parents that he'd been expelled for bullying. Dave had no idea what he was going to do. He'd been all but guaranteed a football scholarship to Ohio State after graduation and now his entire future was in jeopardy all because he couldn't deal and he couldn't keep his hands off Kurt Hummel.

Dave had always known that he was pushing his luck with behavior around Kurt and sooner or later his fixation on the other boy would come back to haunt him. He'd always assumed that disaster would strike in the form of Azimio realizing how often he talked about the other boy, or Lewis catching him staring or Strando figuring out that the only reason he would shove Kurt or suggest tossing him in the dumpster was so he'd have an excuse to touch him. He'd never dreamed that he'd be the one to send his own world spinning off of its axis.

Dave groaned and banged his head against his headboard, wishing he could just erase the entire day.
from existence but he knew it was futile hope. No matter how much he wished he could take it back or get a do over he knew that wasn't going to happen. He had finally crossed the line into the land of no return and now someone else knew his secret. To make matters worse it was the one person who would be completely justified in taking revenge on Dave and the only hope he had of keeping Kurt quiet was if Kurt believed he could actually be a murderer.

Dave stared at the clock. His mother was at her book club and his father was still at work but they'd both be home within the next couple of hours and Dave had no idea how he was going to explain his expulsion to either of them without the truth of what he'd been doing to Kurt and why coming out.

The door bell jarred him out of his thoughts. He made his way down the stairs, fully intending to tell whichever one of the guys it was that he didn't feel up to hanging out and then go back brooding but when he opened the door all of those plans evaporated.

"What the fuck do you want?"

"What nice manners you have. Your parents must be so proud," Blaine mocked.

"Get out of here before I-"

"Kill me? Or maybe you wanna kiss me too?" Blaine taunted venom and derision dripping from his words in equal measure.

"I-w-who-I don't know what you're talking about. Now get off my property you perv," Dave stammered.

"Your property?" Blaine questioned, rocking slightly on the balls of his feet. "Funny you bring that up. This isn't actually your property."

"Fine, my parents, whatever just get out of here."

"Wrong again," Blaine smiled. "It's not exactly your parents property either…at least not for much longer."

"What?" Dave asked confused.

"Home ownership 101: Most people who purchase a home can't pay for it in full at the time of the closing so they take out a mortgage which is a loan to finance the purchase of the house. With me so far?"

"What the fuck does this-"

"The home is collateral for the loan, which FYI is a legal contract that states the home owner will with interests and other various costs over a standard time period of fifteen to thirty years," Blaine continued. "Now here's where things get interesting. If the homeowner fails to pay the debt, the lender has the right to take back the property and sell it to cover the amount owed, it's a nifty little process known as foreclosure."

"Why are you telling me this?"

"Guess whose daddy fell behind on his payments and is currently a hop, skip and jump away from eating all his meals at the midnight mission?"

Dave felt as if he were going to pass out. "We're losing our home?"
"That's what happens when daddy gambles away the house payment four months in a row," Blaine shrugged.

Dave felt tears burn in the back of his eyes. He knew that his dad had a gambling addiction but it had been years since Paul Karofsky's last relapse and Dave thought his dad had his problem under control. Finding out from Blaine of all people that not only had his father relapsed, but they were going to lose their home because of it was a crushing blow.

"Come to gloat?" He asked dully.

"Just a little bit yeah," Blaine grinned. "But mainly I came to give you an opportunity to save yourself and your family."

"Me save…how?"

"Wow, you just keep living up to the stereotype don't you?" Blaine mused. "Dumb jock," he clarified at Dave's bewildered look. "Body big, brain little."

"Fuck you," Dave swore.

"Yeah not my type," Blaine declined. "I prefer my guys to look little less like the before picture of a Jenny Craig client. But hey, don't let that get you down. There are a lot of chubby chasers out there in the world who would love nothing more than to jiggle your belly roll. But if feeders make you a little uncomfy I'm sure you can find someone willing to put a bag over your head and hit it from the back."

Dave raised his fist and took a step towards Blaine but the younger boy didn't even flinch.

"Did you not meet your gay bashing quota for the day?"

"I don't…I didn't…I didn't gay bash," Dave said, dropping his fist and stepping back quickly.

"Except for the part where you did," Blaine growled. "Now I understand you're having some trouble accepting the fact that you like cock."

"I don't-"

"And I get it," Blaine continued undeterred. "I have a little experience dealing psychologically unbalanced closet cases and given your particular situation I can't really blame you for wanting to hang out with the White Witch and eat Turkish delight."

"I'm not a closet case-," Dave whispered furiously, looking around to make sure none of his neighbors were listening.

"Let's face it, you start singing I'm Coming Out and your world goes to hell in a hand basket before you even make it to the chorus. Your dad might be able to deal but your mom?" Blaine whistled lowly. "I don't think she'd take it too well, do you?"

Dave blanched when he remembered his mom's earlier contention that she would disown him before she accepted that her son was a homosexual.

"And then there's OSU and your dreams of playing in the NFL," Blaine continued. "Hey question: how many openly gay professional football players are there?"

Dave squeezed his eyes shut, willing the tears that were threatening to go away. He didn't want to
give Blaine the satisfaction of crying in front of him.

"The answer is none," Blaine supplied happily. "In fact the only pro baller that's ever come out of the closet didn't do it until he retired. Wonder why that is?"

"You damn well know why," Dave grit out.

"Indeed I do," Blaine chuckled. "And so do you. So let's recap where we are, shall we? Your family's about to be out on their ass and you're one ugly truth away from a lifetime of mental and emotional scars caused by the well meaning folks at the conversion camp of your mother's choice. That's assuming daddy doesn't gamble away your entrance fee. Plus we haven't even talked about how your friends and teammates are going to react to knowing you're as gay as a rainbow colored unicorn. But you might be spared the brunt of their reaction since you've been expelled, but oh wait… no school means no football and no football means no scholarship, and since you're as dumb as a box of rocks, no scholarship means no college. Wow Dave, you are thoroughly and completely fucked."

"Tell me something I don't know," Dave hissed.

"Okay," Blaine answered. "How about this: I can make it all go away."

Dave stared at Blaine in shock. "Why would you help me?"

"I'm not helping you," Blaine glowered. "This isn't about you. This is about Kurt and giving him the life he deserves."

"How does-"

"Kurt needs to be as far away from McKinley and this backwater town as possible. I can't take him to New York or Los Angeles, but I can damn sure get him to Westerville and into Dalton."

"How does helping me get Kurt into Dalton?"

"C'mon Dave, think," Blaine jeered. "You threatened to kill him. Do you think Kurt's gonna wanna walk the halls knowing that you can pop out at any moment? You think his dad—who knows what you did by the way—is gonna let Kurt stay at a school that refuses to protect him when he has Dalton and their shiny zero tolerance policy against bullying as a viable alternative?"

"But I got expelled," Dave argued.

"Funny thing about expulsion," Blaine began. "You have the right to appeal. It's your word against Kurt's and thanks to Figgins being a complete and total fail as an administrator, none of your prior bad acts against Kurt or any of the other kids that you torture is on your official record. Tell your parents it was a case of boys being boys and Kurt overreacted. They'll appeal, due to the circumstances the board will overturn Figgins' decision, and you'll be back in school in a week tops."

"So I go back to McKinley and what? Kurt runs to away to Dalton and everybody's happy?"

"It's not quite that simple," Blaine explained. "Kurt's a lot of things but a coward isn't one of them. No, you're going to back to McKinley and you're going to make sure that every single one of your friends knows it was the Glee club's fault that you got expelled. You guys are going to make them miserable and you're going to make Kurt feel so unsafe and so afraid that he's not gonna wanna fight the transfer to Dalton."

"You want me to keep hurting him? That doesn't make any sense!"
"No," Blaine said lowly. "You touch him ever again and I will destroy you and everything you hold dear," Blaine promised.

"Then how am I supposed to-"

"Find a way," Blaine cut Dave off. "You do this, you get back in school, you get back on the team, you get your shot at OSU and your friends and your family remains in the dark about your little secret."

"And if I don't?"

"Then all your skeletons come sashaying out of the closet."

Dave felt a tear slip down his face and angrily wiped it away. He couldn't believe that he was being blackmailed by Kurt's boyfriend into bullying Kurt out of McKinley. He didn't really know Kurt that well but he was reasonably sure the other boy was a good enough person that if Dave had just been able to talk to him he could have convinced Kurt to keep his secret.

He was also pretty sure that Blaine would blow his life apart just for shits and giggles. Dave bowed his head and nodded his assent.

"And just in case you need a little more motivation," Blaine added quietly, "You do what I tell you to and keep your mouth shut and I'll make sure your family doesn't end up sleeping in a van down by the river."

Dave's head snapped up. "You'll give my dad money?"

"You really are a special kind of stupid," Blaine sighed. "No, I will not give your father money. The Karofsky family will be the beneficiaries of an anonymous good Samaritan who will submit enough funds directly to the bank to bring your house payment current."

"So I do this, you keep my secret and we don't lose our house?"

"You keep your mouth shut, do what I say and we all get what we want."

"Fine," Dave grunted. " Fucking fine, you win."

"I always do," Blaine said as he turned to leave.

"You don't deserve him," Dave flung at Blaine's back.

Blaine turned around and marched back up the driveway. "No I don't," he admitted, poking Dave hard in the chest. "But neither do you. And of the two of us, I'm the one he wants, I'm the one he picked and I'm the one he's with. He'll never want you. He'll never choose you. He'll never be with you and you have no one to blame for that but yourself."

Blaine walked away without another word, getting into his car and driving off. David walked back inside his house and closed the door. He made it back up the stairs and into his bedroom before curling up into a ball and finally letting the tears fall.

A/N~ *Peeks out from behind wall of body guards* Put down your torches and pitchforks. You were warned. I told you way back in that super long A/N at the beginning that Blaine was gonna do some things that you would not approve of and that not even Kurt would be exempt from his manipulations and that there would be some dark and twisty coming up. I kept telling you guys that
Dark!Blaine was coming. Now, I know you're probably upset that he's basically turned the jocks loose on Kurt and the Gleeks, especially after witnessing first hand how close Kurt is to completely breaking down but...keep in mind that Blaine doesn't really care about New Directions and his goal right now is getting Kurt out of McKinley and into Dalton-by any means necessary. Is he wrong? Absolutely. Are things going to go the way he planned?

You'll find out next chapter *runs from angry mob of readers*

As for the switch from Karofsky to Dave, that's intentional. My intent for this chapter was make my Dave a little more human, give him layers and perhaps give you guys some understanding and insight into why he's been acting out the way he has and in doing so take him from just being "Karofsky" the guy terrorizing Kurt and into being Dave, a kid who starts looking a whole lot less like pure evil once you get a glimpse at why he's making so many poor choices (not that that excuses him AT ALL he is still responsible for his actions and he is still wrong as wrong can be). It's my sincere hope to give everyone in the story-even the "villains" some humanity, some depth and color them with some shades of grey.

And finally...*incoming personal information* I realize some of you may feel Kurt's reaction is extreme or unrealistic. Before you make a criticism just please know that I'm basing a lot of his reactions off of myself in terms of my experience with PTSD and panic attacks and my own journey as a survivor of sexual assault. If anyone has any concerns or issues with how I'm portraying things, please keep in mind that there's no such thing as a "right" way to react to being violated, that everyone is different and I'm borrowing heavily from my own history for this part. If you'd like to discuss this aspect of the story, I'm more than willing to do so, I just ask that you please PM me so the conversation can remain private :)

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!