In the World of Silence

by misqueue

Summary

Kurt and Blaine overcome their inhibitions together: an evolution of intimacy and self set over episodes 3x05 "The First Time" - 3x14 "On My Way", with spoilers through the end of season 3. (Written for a prompt on the Glee Kink Meme. Kinks are mild.)

Notes

For this prompt on the Glee Kink Meme.

Title from the lyrics of Tears for Fears "Break It Down Again"
By the time they've made it up to Blaine's bedroom, Kurt is ready for everything. They made good time on the hour's drive from Lima, though it seemed among the longest hours of Kurt's life. But they are here now, and it's here and it's now in a way that had, for so long, been a destination remote and unreachable. The years of lonely yearning, which had morphed into the recent months of stolen moments together and daydreams of more, all the past aches and hopes and fears, are dissolving into the real present; and it's so incredibly good to be here and now with Blaine.

Kurt's lips are buzzing from the fierceness of Blaine's mouth. His whole body is humming hot from the way Blaine has been pulling at his clothes as they fondled and fumbled their way from the front door to the stairs, up the stairs (with a delay at the wide landing where Kurt lost his coat, scarf, and waistcoat to an affectionate murmur of "Layers, Kurt.") and down the hall with Blaine slipping impatient fingertips under the hem of his shirt or up the cuff of his sleeve or down his collar, fumbling for whatever bare skin he could reach as their kisses became ever more demanding.

Now they're through Blaine's door, and that door is shut behind them, even though they are alone in the house (Kurt is grateful for Blaine's parents' frequent business trips). They do an awkward shuffling dance toward the bed. Blaine hits it first, his knees buckling as he sits with a soft "oof". Kurt's knees collide with the mattress between Blaine's, but Kurt steadies himself against Blaine's shoulders and keeps himself standing despite the tremors in his legs. It's enough of an interruption, they both pause. Cocooned in the warm masculine nostalgia of Blaine's bedroom, the frantic urgency that had propelled them up the stairs melts away.

As he catches his breath, Kurt finds he is holding too tightly to Blaine, perhaps, but it's all that's keeping him upright. It's like his muscles are half melted from the fever that's taking hold of him. It's not just from the kissing and the increasingly bold groping, but the knowledge (and simultaneous enigma) of what is imminent. Kurt thinks of a hundred different things to say but none of them makes it to his mouth. Instead he just breathes and watches Blaine do the same. He wonders if he looks as desperate as Blaine does, panting for breath with his gorgeously screwed up hair and wonderfully flushed face. Kurt probably looks a disaster; his pale skin gets so blotchy when he blushes.

Then Blaine's hands are at the waistband of Kurt's jeans. His fingertips skate along the top edge of Kurt's belt and come together to rest at the buckle. Blaine looks up at him with dark, dark eyes and asks him with his beautiful kiss-bruised mouth, "May I?"

"Yes," Kurt manages, swallowing hard with a dry throat. The way Blaine is looking at him, it's so hungry. When Kurt's imagined this moment in his fantasies, it's been kisses and tender caresses, soft lighting and romantic music—and he would have made some quip about visas having been granted. He's thought so much about the love; he's avoided thinking about the lust. Not that he doesn't feel it—of course he does—but it often seems inappropriate to think about Blaine too much that way. It's as if he were taking liberties. Even though Kurt knows—he does know—it's not wrong at all, it's hard to shake the vestiges of shame clinging in the back of his consciousness about having those desires. But sexy thoughts are at least part of the point of having a boyfriend, and certainly the knowledge that Blaine entertains sexy thoughts about Kurt—that knowledge is arousing in its own right. Nevertheless, Kurt has shied away from dwelling in his more tawdry fantasies, which hasn't, he supposes, prepared him all that well for this particular moment.

For there's no kissing, no candles, and no music. There's just Blaine, looking utterly shameless in his state of erotic disarray, his hands poised to undo Kurt's belt, under the steady illumination of his
bedroom ceiling light; and the only sounds breaking the silence are those of breath and motion, and the quiet thunder of blood in Kurt's ears.

Kurt had been so sure when he'd said, "No, I want to go to your house," and he is still sure, but his desire is a mass of incoherent wanting. He thought he knew what to expect, how he would respond, but with Blaine's fingers carefully tugging the tongue of his belt off the prong and sliding it free of the buckle, Kurt feels paralyzed by potential.

"Blaine," he says, because it's the only word he can bring to his lips. He loosens his grip and smooths his palms over Blaine's shoulders. He tries to fill the simple utterance of his boyfriend's name with all the strange awe and possibility and terrible desire—and love, always love—he's feeling, all the words for which are locked up where he can't quite reach them.

"I'm right here," Blaine says in a low voice that sends a curl of heat right to Kurt's groin. As does Blaine's smile as he moves one hand up to gather the edge of Kurt's shirt to push it up, baring Kurt's stomach, while, with his other hand, he thumbs the button of Kurt's jeans through its buttonhole. He does this with a confidence that makes Kurt wonder just how many times Blaine has enacted this moment in his own imagination, because, yeah, that's hot. Then Blaine leans forward and presses his smile to Kurt's skin.

Kurt wonders if it is possible to go mad with the sensation: Blaine's lips are warm and soft and ticklish on his belly, just above where Blaine's hand is tugging his zipper down, and the movement and light pressure of that near his—(Kurt's brain rebels for one moment more before acknowledging the truth of the situation)—his cock is making him shudder and pant, and the air is catching in his throat, and he's starting to make these helpless little rasping moans in his throat every time he exhales.

Kurt glances away for a moment and catches his reflection in the mirror above Blaine's bureau. He sees his dumb doppelganger, so flushed and flustered, rumpled and unzipped, set behind the immaculate Blackglama-esque portrait of him Blaine has framed and on display. Then he sees Blaine; the movement of his head as he kisses Kurt's skin, the way his hands are undoing and seeking. Kurt nearly chokes on his next breath. It's hotter than any porn he's ever tried to watch: it's them. The realization brings a shocking clarity, and he tears his gaze away from the mirror just as Blaine reaches into his open fly.

Suddenly his desire is no longer an amorphous unknowable thing: it's condensed and specific and right under Blaine's hand. The very pulse of his blood strains toward the heat of Blaine's palm, and his flesh trembles beneath the caress of Blaine's lips. Kurt knows what he wants; the want is so sharp and explicit in his mind, the words crowd up against the root of his tongue: *Suck my cock, Blaine, please.*

But he doesn't say it—can't say it, really—because it's too much to say for so many reasons. The thought is heady enough. Saying it? Kurt thinks his brain might combust.

When there's a warm, wet slip of Blaine's tongue low on his belly, tracing a swift arc below his navel, Kurt stares at the flash of Blaine's tongue against skin. Blaine's never done that before, but then Blaine has also never had his hand tucked in the fly of Kurt's pants pressing hot and firm over his erection. Kurt can't stop himself from groaning when Blaine rubs up the length of him with the heel of his hand and then curls his fingers over the waistband of Kurt's underwear to start tugging them down.

Air hits the head of his cock as Blaine peels away that last modesty protecting layer. Abruptly afraid to witness his own debauching, Kurt looks anywhere else: at the blinds, at the shirt sleeve hanging out the top of Blaine's laundry hamper, at the glossy black lenses of Blaine's vintage cameras staring blindly down. Inevitably he ends up catching another glimpse of himself in the mirror, and he can't
not stare at Blaine's lips leaving his skin as Blaine rocks back far enough to look as he frees Kurt's erection. It's borderline obscene, seeing his cock right there in front of Blaine with Blaine's attention fixed so intently upon it. It's also hot in a way that feels like a cannonball to the gut.

Kurt's burning up. Even taking deep, deliberate breaths he feels stifled. He keeps his eyes open and—to hell with modesty—he pulls his t-shirt off and tosses it aside. His nipples tingle and contract as Blaine wraps his fingers loosely, maddeningly around his shaft and looks up Kurt's torso, his eyes roaming freely. Kurt watches it all happen to his half-naked twin in the mirror, but feels it immediately in his own body; feels, too, the ethereal tug of Blaine's gaze and forces himself to turn his eyes back to meet Blaine's. There's a sudden puff of breath across his cock as Blaine releases a breath he must have been holding. "Are you all right?" Blaine asks.

Kurt nods mutely. It's insane how much he wants right now, just wants, all of it and so much and Blaine is so deliriously close to—"Your mouth," Kurt blurts out, because he has to say something, but his internal filter isn't working so well right now. "Blaine. Your mouth."

"Yeah, Kurt," Blaine says softly, sounding just as dazed as Kurt feels. "I want to... I will." And then he does. Blaine bends his neck, and his lips are a yielding press against the tip of Kurt's cock, and then Blaine is sliding off the edge of the bed to his knees, forcing Kurt to trip back a step. Kurt digs his fingers into Blaine's shoulders as Blaine parts his lips and presses forward, his mouth all liquid heat and suction and—

"Oh my god," Kurt says. In his brief, vague fantasies of receiving fellatio from Blaine for the first time, he'd always imagined Blaine would be a little shy, maybe a little tentative at first, but this is neither. Blaine is enthusiastically taking as much of Kurt into his mouth as he can, sucking and licking and (Oh!) sliding as he bobs his head. Kurt's hands move as if of their own volition to Blaine's head. He means to cradle gently, but Blaine's sucking a little harder, moving a little faster, and Kurt ends up just shoving his fingers into Blaine's disheveled curls, cracking through the remnants of stiff gel as his hands clench and fist and pull at Blaine's hair in a nonsensical sort of rhythm. Judging by the way Blaine moans when Kurt accidentally yanks too hard (the vibration of which has Kurt making a sound that sounds embarrassingly like "Ugh!" although there's nothing ugh-worthy about any of this) Blaine really doesn't mind. But Kurt's not sure he can remain standing much longer. His knees are trembling with the threat of giving out altogether, and his hips are trying to wrest motor control from his brain with some kind of imperative to thrust and rut and grind and fu—

"Wait, Blaine..." Kurt grits out between ragged breaths. "Stop a minute. I can't... Oh, god, I can't."

Blaine slows and stops, pulling off Kurt gently enough, though the absence of heat and touch is abrupt and unwelcome. The gaze he turns up to meet Kurt's is so naked, the way he's looking up at Kurt with desire and entreaty and other more complex unnameable things; Kurt can't process it. "Too much?" Blaine asks.

"Yes," Kurt says, except that's not it, not at all. "I mean, no, that was—you are—amazing, but maybe we could lie down on your bed before I end up collapsing on you?" Kurt gives a wobbly smile and smooths Blaine's curls back, carefully finger-combing through the snarls he's created. 

"And, um, lose more clothes?"

"Sure," Blaine says, and Kurt offers him his hand.

It doesn't take long for Kurt to shed the remainder of his clothing and to get Blaine down to his black cotton boxer-briefs. But before Kurt can strip off Blaine's underwear, Blaine is pressing Kurt back into the pile of pillows at the head of his bed with an exhortation to "relax" and a "you're so sexy" (Kurt doesn't roll his eyes), and then Blaine is laying sweltering kisses down Kurt's chest until he's
back at Kurt's groin picking up right where he left off, swiftly sucking Kurt's cock into his mouth with a deep moan of such utter satisfaction, Kurt thinks he might pass out. He tangles one hand in Blaine's hair, careful not to pull or push this time; he just holds on as the waves of bliss wash over him, and he tries to keep his hips still. "Blaine," he murmurs. He makes himself look without anxiety muddling his enjoyment, and the sight of Blaine doing *that* to him prickles heat all over Kurt's skin. "That feels—my god. Incredible."

And then Blaine does something especially clever with his tongue, and Kurt arches off the bed before he realizes what he's doing. "Oh, fuck," Kurt says. His internal censor must have keeled over in exhaustion, for there's no impulse check to prevent him from saying it again more loudly, "Fuck." It feels so good to let it out. He lets his hips roll up like they want to, to meet the next downward stroke of Blaine's amazing, hot, perfect mouth; and Blaine fucking takes it. Kurt does it again, thrusts up as Blaine bears down on him, all sweet suction and slide and— "Fuck, Blaine."

Blaine goes still, before gently releasing Kurt. Kurt opens his eyes to see Blaine wiping across his lips with the back of his knuckles.

"Why—" Kurt starts, because *why* did Blaine stop? And then it hits him. His mouth—and body—were running away with him. Kurt is mortified. "Oh..." His internal censor revives enough to swat aside the careless 'crap' that threatens to follow. "Blaine, I—"

"Do you want to?" Blaine cuts him off, the words coming out in a rush. He sits up, straddling Kurt's knees, and reaches to rub the thumb of one hand over the ridge of Kurt's hipbone. With his other hand, Blaine takes Kurt's cock in a firm grip and runs that thumb up the underside to rest just under the head, rubbing maddening slow circles with the pad of his thumb.

"Wait, what?" Kurt asks, seeking hints in Blaine's serious face, which is not at all perturbed, just expectant, and he's asking— Is he asking that?

"Fuck. Kurt, do you want to?"

And, god, he is asking that, and that word, coming from Blaine's polite prep-school mouth, it's doing something to Kurt's brain. "Oh. That."

"Yeah, *that*." Blaine smiles a smile Kurt is pretty sure he hasn't seen before. It's sort of naughty. "I have condoms and stuff." Blaine tilts his head; it's almost coy. "You can fuck me. If you want to."

"Oh, I hadn't actually thought about it. I mean, I have, of course I have..." Kurt has his own stash of essential supplies in his bag, after all. "...but I didn't assume we wou—"

"I have. Thought about it."

Kurt swallows.

"I think about it a lot, Kurt. I think about you, and your dick. And if you wanted to, I would love it if you would fuck me. But only if you want to, and only if you're totally comfortable with it." Blaine delivers all this with his 'I'm such a good, responsible young man' air, which is a surreal juxtaposition, especially when he starts sliding his hand to go with the crazy patterns he's scribing with his thumb, and if he doesn't stop soon, the question will be moot: a question Kurt needs to answer.

"I, um, can you stop doing that with your hand? It's making it hard to think."

Blaine laughs. "Sorry, I just." He shrugs and lets go. "I really like this." He shuffles forward on his knees until he's over Kurt's hips, and he lowers himself until the heavy warmth of his balls, cradled in
the soft cotton of his boxer-briefs, nestles against Kurt's cock. Oh, that's nice, but, yeah.

"That's not actually helping," Kurt says through clenched teeth, but it doesn't dissuade him from bringing his hands to Blaine's thighs and sliding up the hard muscles until he meets Blaine's torso and his fingertips are tucked under the legs of Blaine's boxer-briefs. He stops there and doesn't take hold of Blaine like he wants to, doesn't push his hands farther or grab his hips and tug, or reach up for the waistband of his underwear, he just lets his hands rest while he tries to think. Which is hard because a mostly naked (and gorgeous) Blaine straddling a completely naked Kurt with their junk pressing together is a titanic distraction.

"No?" says Blaine and starts rocking his hips a little, dragging that intimate contact along Kurt's length. He leans forward until his breath is against Kurt's lips, but not quite touching. "Weren't you the one who said he wanted to get dirty?"

"Blaine," Kurt pleads, his brain scrambling for thoughts beyond 'that feels awesome, do that forever' and 'my boyfriend is absurdly hot'. He's pretty sure that wasn't exactly what he said. "I wanted to know if you ever did."

"I already told you I did. And I do."

Kurt tries to close the distance between them to kiss Blaine, because kissing is easy and familiar, but Blaine pulls back just out of reach and puts a hand on Kurt's chest to keep him from following. "So I wondered if you want to, Kurt."

"Ugh," Kurt says, and half means it this time. "Why are you teasing me?"

"I'm not," he says. "I'm offering."

But he is, and what he's offering? This isn't like passing around a plate of canapés. There's something else, coiling even hotter than before, deep in Kurt's belly, something about the way Blaine is teasing, the way he's playing with Kurt's self-control while maintaining his own. It makes Kurt want to break through all that gel in Blaine's hair again with his hands; break through the hard candy coating of Blaine's own sense of decorum and self-control and leave him a writhing, pleasure-drunk mess. And, it occurs to Kurt, maybe that's exactly what Blaine wants from him. Despite his careful use of language, Blaine's not simply offering something because he thinks Kurt may enjoy it, as if he were simply being a good sex host. He's asking Kurt to fuck him because he wants Kurt to fuck him. No matter how assured Blaine seems, Kurt knows him too well, has seen his moments of insecurity. Kurt knows Blaine has his own inhibitions, and when Kurt thinks of it that way? He understands it, and he knows what Blaine needs from him. Courage.

"Okay," Kurt says.

"Just okay?" Blaine quirks an eyebrow.

"Yes, Blaine." Kurt moves then, quickly, sitting up to grab Blaine around the waist and roll them both until Blaine is on his back laughing his surprise, and Kurt is between his legs. Kurt summons up all his confidence to speak without hesitating over either the sentiment or the words: "I'm going to fuck you."

As the words leave his mouth, something bright twists up inside Kurt. There's an electric frisson like a circuit completing. It's powerful, like the words are settling his intention, hot and strong, into his bones: he's going to fuck this gorgeous boy. Kurt sucks in a deep breath to steady himself.

Blaine's response is immediate. His expression sobered with a whispered, "Okay, then."

body seems to somehow melt beneath Kurt.

It's all the invitation Kurt needs to press his hips down against Blaine's, to feel all the heat and hardness of their arousal trapped between them. Actually having his dick pressed alongside Blaine's like this, with so little left between them, sparks another jolt of electricity. His daydreams are faded sepia toned memories compared to the visceral, technicolor immediacy of this. He swallows Blaine's moan with an open-mouthed kiss and reaches with the arm he's not leaning on to maneuver Blaine's leg up and bend it up, snug against his waist. Blaine mirrors the movement with his other leg, canting his pelvis up, and Kurt has to straighten his arm to let Blaine move below him until they're fitted together in a way Kurt knows resembles some of the porn he never finished watching. He's got his hand cupped behind one of Blaine's thighs and his naked cock is pressed against Blaine's underwear clad ass. And, oh, wow, Kurt likes this. He grinds his hips experimentally, and lowers his mouth back to Blaine's, sucks hard on Blaine's bottom lip, as his cock skids—there's too much friction to slide—against Blaine's ass in a vague suggestion of fucking.

Blaine is so pliant, wrapping around Kurt like they were made for this, rolling his own hips as much as he can in counterpoint to Kurt's feigned thrusts. Kurt kisses his way up from Blaine's lips to his sweat-damp temple. "Is this what you want?"

"Kurt," Blaine murmurs hotly against Kurt's throat, and he is literally getting so hot. The temperature of Blaine's body has reached inferno levels, and Kurt is starting to sweat in a way he usually avoids, but, screw that, this is awesome. "Yeah, Kurt. God, yes."

"You feel amazing like this," Kurt says, because for all the words he couldn't quite find before, they seem to be finding him now. The speaking, saying things out loud, makes everything that's happening crystallize in his mind; it makes it real and not like a sex dream run amok. He knows he won't be waking up from this tangled in sticky sheets. "You're so hot."

"Yeah, Kurt, it's good," Blaine says, gripping behind Kurt's neck to keep him close.

The unfortunate reality is that it's far too tempting to just keep rutting against Blaine's ass until he comes (because, it really is the most incredible thing, being close like this), but that's not going to get Blaine off, and it's not what Blaine asked for, and it's possible to be even closer. So he says it, to make sure Blaine knows, "I really want to fuck you, Blaine."

"Then do it."

"I will," Kurt says before carefully disentangling himself from Blaine and sitting back on his heels between Blaine's legs. "But I need a minute."

But before Kurt can reach for Blaine's underwear, Blaine's already shimmying out of them, throwing one leg over to strip them down his legs and off. And then he's settling back on the bed, hooking his leg back around Kurt, his heel pressing into the small of Kurt's back, and Kurt has an unimpeded view of Blaine's cock, which is thick and dark and beautiful, and Kurt wants to hold it in his hand so badly, to feel the heat and weight and hardness of it. "Whatever you want, Kurt," Blaine says. "You can do whatever you want to me."

Kurt's brain translates this as 'ravish me, please'. He's pretty sure Blaine has some specific ideas about what he does want Kurt to do to him, ideas he can't quite find the voice for, and that's kind of
overwhelming, the level of trust Blaine's demonstrating. Kurt really doesn't want to screw this up, for, while he knows Blaine is more knowledgeable about and comfortable with sex than Kurt generally is, what Blaine isn't comfortable with is having and expressing his own needs and desires (at least while sober). From the past week Kurt knows how wrong that all can go, and how fast.

So rather than trying to guess what unspoken things Blaine wants, which seems frightening and impossible and far too much responsibility, he decides to listen to Blaine's words and considers what he wants himself; how he wants to do this, because he thinks if Blaine is trusting him with this, then he can trust himself at least that much. "I'm going to put on some music, okay?"

As he moves off the bed, Blaine lifts himself up to his elbows. "I made a playlist for us. My iPod should be plugged in to the stereo."

"You did? For this?"

"Yeah, I figured we'd be doing this eventually, you know, and after—" Blaine glances away with a sigh and runs one hand over his hair. "Well, I wanted to be sure I was prepared. So it's got some Sting for you, Roxy Music for me, and other stuff, too, for both of us. It's all sexy and romantic."

"Blaine," Kurt says fondly, smiling as he scrolls through the playlist titles until he sees the one that has to be it. "'Lilac Fields for Kurt.' Really?"

"That's the one."

"You're a dork," Kurt says as he presses play and moves back toward the bed and Blaine. "But I love it," he says as the opening notes of "Fields of Gold" fill the room.

"I love you," says Blaine, and he opens his arms for Kurt.

"I love you, too," Kurt says and puts all of his concentration into kissing Blaine. He remains braced on straight arms hovering over Blaine so nothing will distract him from the contact of their mouths. Everything he's learned about kissing—all the techniques of lips, breath, tongue, and teeth he's developed through months of kissing Blaine; and even a few things Brittany showed him—he uses until he's feeling too starved of oxygen and he lets his lips drift down Blaine's throat to catch his breath. Beneath his lips, Blaine's pulse is a rapid, but even, flutter. Blaine chants his name softly and digs his short nails into Kurt's back.

All the things he's wanted and feared to want; the things he's desired but never let himself fully articulate, even within the privacy of his own mind, it's all possible right now, because of Blaine, because of them. The voices that have told him he can't feel, can't do, can't be are drowned out; silenced. Kurt shuts his eyes and presses his face into Blaine's shoulder and feels the rush of simple truth. In this moment, everything is beautiful and right.

So he lets himself experience his lust, stops pushing it around and aside, stops trying to deflect it or deconstruct it. The desire to touch Blaine wells up so sharp inside him, rapture yaws in his mind and inflames his gut. He can feel it tight and hot in balls, a heavy imperative in his cock. His whole body trembles with it, his whole being is shaken by it, and Kurt doesn't question or challenge the desire, he surrenders to it.

Kurt touches Blaine. He soaks up the sensation through his palms and fingertips as he maps all the contours of Blaine's torso. With his hands, Kurt catalogs where Blaine's skin is smooth and soft and where there's a smattering of coarse hair, where his muscles are hard and where they're yielding. He notes the places that make Blaine shudder or suck in a sudden breath or break out in goose bumps. The way Blaine's nipples pebble tempts Kurt to lower his head to press his lips to them, each in turn,
to flick his tongue until Blaine whimpers and buries his hands in Kurt's hair. Blaine's wordless pleas send Kurt kissing down Blaine's sternum while he brings his hand to Blaine's cock, to finally, finally grasp its solid weight, to cradle this precious piece of Blaine in his hand, to savor the mounting tension of Blaine's body: how his body arches against the bed, how his breath comes faster as Kurt moves his hand, how his moans come so high and needy.

He lifts his head to look up at Blaine's face, to see how his touch is manifesting there. What Kurt finds steals his breath and pricks the backs of his eyes with unexpected tears. If he'd thought Blaine's expression naked and loose before, it was closed off and remote compared to this. For all the care Blaine takes to be composed and controlled, it's all in disarray. There's no artifice left, nothing but Blaine, vulnerable, adoring, and—Kurt can't help but acknowledge with some pride—really fucking turned on. And Kurt understands, in a way he hadn't before, what his Dad meant when he said that sex, the intimacy of it, does something to you, to your heart. He can feel it happening and knows it is changing him.

It's terrifying and awesome and absolutely fantastic. Kurt holds Blaine's lust darkened gaze with a smile while tightening and speeding his grip on Blaine's cock until Blaine's eye's close, his hand closes tight around Kurt's wrist, and he's gritting out a harsh, "Too close." Blaine opens his eyes, and Kurt sees so many unspoken things there, too many to decipher, but of one thing he's sure.

"Okay," Kurt says, slows and loosens his hand. Much of the tension leaves Blaine's body: he takes a deep breath and licks his lips but he doesn't open his eyes. Kurt lowers his mouth to Blaine's chest again, circling a nipple with the pointed tip of his tongue before, with his lips still brushing against tender skin and his pulse hammering in his throat, saying, "Turn over, please."

And then Blaine is tugging Kurt up to look into his eyes, and he says so softly and so seriously, carefully even, "You don't have to say please."

Because he doesn't—or hasn't, historically—spent a lot of time thinking about these things, it takes Kurt a moment to comprehend what Blaine is telling him by way of this obliquely polite declaration. "Oh," Kurt says. It takes him another moment to apply the knowledge to his own intentions, and when he does that, the dark undertow of his lust surges up inside him like some kind of ecstatic nausea. Even as he permits himself to experience it, Kurt has been trying so hard to keep it tempered, only indulging those flares that escape his restraint, because it's incompatible with so much of the kind of person he tries to be; but it's been there this whole time, clawing at his dignity like the ragged edged shadow to his brighter, tidier desires. It's the chaos to his control; the coarse to his careful; the profane to his polite.

Sex is going to take them both apart, and a wave of blank terror crests cold up Kurt's spine at that realization. It only lasts half a heartbeat, but it's long enough that Blaine's hand is suddenly there, warm against his cheek and Blaine is searching his face, concerned. But fear, Kurt learned long ago, is not a cue to turn away. Rather, it is the thing you turn to face with your head held high. You embrace it, and if you're steadfast, it's conquered. And, even better, he's not alone with this. They're doing this together.

"Kurt, you don—" Blaine starts, but Kurt silences him by pressing his fingers against Blaine's lips. He looks directly into Blaine's eyes and steels himself, though his heart is beating like rabbit's.

"I said, turn over," Kurt says, and the words crack louder and sharper than Kurt intends.

But it may be they came out just right, for Blaine's eyes widen, his pupils dilate, and his chest heaves. And then he complies.

Kurt shifts sideways to give Blaine room to roll over and settle prone with his arms wrapped snugly
around a pillow sham. It shows off Blaine's biceps and shoulders and makes his lower back dip deliciously to accentuate the perfect round swell of his buttocks. The strength and suggestiveness of his posture is a thrilling contrast with the unexpected vulnerability of hugging his pillow. "Beautiful," Kurt says. "You're beautiful."

Blaine smiles at the compliment. "The stuff we need, it's in the top drawer," he says, nodding toward his nightstand.

Kurt leans over, pulls the drawer out, and turns his attention to its contents. There's a bottle of lube (a brand Kurt doesn't recall seeing at any of the local drug stores, so Blaine must really have planned ahead), a brand new box of ultra sensitive condoms, and a travel pack of hand wipes. "You're quite the boyscout," Kurt says. Behind him, Blaine chuckles.

The wipes Kurt sets next to the box of tissues on Blaine's nightstand, and the lube he sets on the bed. He's proud of himself for the lack of shaking his hands do. He needs the dexterity to unwrap the cellophane from the condom box, which is refusing to tear in any helpful direction. Words and phrases from his gay sex ed pamphlets scuttle about his forebrain, urging 'be patient', and 'listen to your partner', and 'too much lube is almost enough'. (The last is accompanied by a winking smiley face in the margin. Yes, really.) The box nearly ends up torn to pieces by the time Kurt's got the cellophane off.

The winning combination of nerves and impatient frustration at modern packaging isn't doing much for Kurt's level of arousal, so when he pulls out the instruction sheet to get at the condoms he has a horrified moment of staring at it and wondering if he's supposed to be reading it first, but he's sure he gets the idea of a condom—his pamphlets covered them—so he drops it, tears one of the foil squares off, and turns back to Blaine, and, oh. Holy Teapot.

The cap of the lube is off and rolling to bump against Kurt's thigh as he moves, and Blaine. Blaine has tucked his pillow beneath his hips and is propped up on one elbow with his other hand reaching back between his buttocks, moving, and Kurt has to close his eyes for a moment against the mental assault of that image: his boyfriend, so sleek and tawny and gut-tinglingly, gloriously indecent, preparing himself to be fucked. By Kurt. Kurt thinks, if sex is dirty, then he wants to get fucking filthy.

He finds enough of his voice to say, "Blaine, honey." and he stretches over to turn Blaine's face toward him for a kiss, slow and soft, just lips, until Blaine lets out a gasp and Kurt can't help but slip the tip of his tongue along his bottom lip and then deeper. His hand skims down Blaine's arm to rest on the back of the hand Blaine is using to stretch himself. Kurt feels it, the way the tendons, muscles, and bones of his hand are shifting and striving to work away the resistance. Kurt pulls back from the kiss, tips his head forward until their foreheads are touching. "That's so hot, Blaine. You're so fucking hot." And he almost asks if he can look, please, before amending it to a firmer, "Let me see." Kurt kneels up on the bed, and moves to straddle one of Blaine's thighs. Kurt slides his hand from Blaine's hand to his ass, puts both hands on Blaine to open him up to Kurt's view. "Show me how you're getting ready for me, Blaine."

Under Kurt's gaze, Blaine tucks a third finger against the two he's already using and groans at the thicker intrusion. "Feels good already?" Kurt asks, flicking his gaze up to Blaine's face. Blaine nods wordlessly, panting through parted lips and meeting Kurt's gaze with heavily lidded eyes. "You've done this before, haven't you?" Kurt presses.

Blaine licks his lips and whispers, "Yes."

"Tell me, Blaine," Kurt says, "do you think of me when you do that?"
"Kurt, yes."

The emphatic, raw pleasure abrading Blaine's utterance makes Kurt regret that this isn't something he's done for himself. He's thought about it, made a few aborted attempts while showering, but he's never let himself go there, not completely. There was always the specter of shame, of being the guy the others feared, the horrible version of himself he once glimpsed in the panicky funhouse mirror of Finn's eyes: a person he never actually was, could never actually be. But it was enough to stay his hand, for him to promise himself, not that, not now, maybe someday when... When?

Kurt shakes himself from the maudlin introspection, because Blaine's unabashed display is shattering those brittle old insecurities into dust. This, right now, is nothing but good: head spinning, nerve wracking, balls aching good.

"You think about me fucking you." Kurt says, before he loses his verbal momentum, because every time he speaks, Blaine gets little more lost in his passion, his hand is moving faster, he's biting his lip, and he's grinding his hips down. It's so wanton. "You fuck yourself with your fingers and pretend it's my cock."

"Kurt," Blaine says. It comes out broken, almost sobbing, "Please."

"Yes, Blaine. I will." Kurt reaches for the condom wrapper and tears it open. He makes sure it's up the right way and he's pinched the air from the end of it before rolling it with trembling fingers down his cock. Then he reaches for the lube where's it's resting near Blaine's hip. He squirts what he hopes is far too much on his hand and smooths the cold, slippery stuff over his cock. And now his hand is really messy, and the pamphlet didn't mention that literally dirty detail. He doesn't want to wipe it off on Blaine's bedding—or Blaine, so Kurt twists away and reaches for a tissue. The whole box tumbles over onto the bed, and that's okay, because Blaine might want one too. Kurt wipes the worst of the lube off his hand, and takes a deep breath, and then another. Right. He's ready as he'll ever be; and Blaine is beyond ready, following Kurt's movements with his hungry gaze, panting and damn near squirming.

Kurt coaxes Blaine's hand out of his body and away so he can position himself over Blaine's thighs, guiding the head of his cock between Blaine's buttocks to rest against Blaine's tight—still so very tight—hole. The logistics appear impossible, but his mental checklist is complete. He nudges his hips forward, trying to gauge just how hard he's going to have to push, and it's going to be harder than he's hoped. "Tell me if it hurts. It's not supposed to hurt," Kurt says, remembering the exhortations to communicate with and listen to his partner. And also to take it slow. He can do this. Slow and careful.

Kurt sucks in a breath and pushes, and Blaine's body yields deliciously, just enough for the head of his cock to slip in. And it's so fucking tight, like choking tight, and Kurt swears he can feel it in his throat, but it's also— "Oh my fucking god." —glorious. He pushes a little more and probably only slides another centimeter, but the close friction is crazy, and Kurt has to remind himself to start breathing again.

Blaine groans and shudders and his body spasms, squeezing Kurt like a vise. Kurt steadfastly holds still, panting, sweating, and waiting for Blaine to relax again. He wishes he could see Blaine's face, but even a glance over his shoulder toward the mirror is fruitless at this angle. He looks back to Blaine and sees what he can glean from the tension in his neck and shoulders and the heave of his deep breaths, which honestly isn't much. Pleasure and pain can look so similar. "Blaine?"

Blaine turns his head enough for Kurt to see profile. His eyes are closed, his color high. "It... fuck... it doesn't hurt."
The tension slowly melts from Blaine, and he sinks down into his pillows. Kurt lowers himself from straight arms to his elbows, and lets gravity and momentum draw him deeper yet, but he's still got some way to go. His weight is partially on Blaine now. Kurt presses a kiss to Blaine's shoulder and relishes the hard warmth of Blaine's body, the cooler, softer press of his buttocks beneath his hips.

"God, Kurt, you feel huge," Blaine gasps.

And, hell, if that's not flattering, but he doesn't want to be too much for Blaine. "Is it—?" Kurt stops himself, rephrases. "You can take it, baby." Baby? Where did that come from?

"Yeah, Kurt," Blaine says, and shifts beneath Kurt, trying to push back for more, "keep talking."

"Okay, yeah, I'll try," Kurt says, his mind scrambling because the simplicity of his cock enveloped in slick heat is kind of dominating any more coherent or eloquent mental processes. "You feel so good, Blaine. So tight, so hot." Kurt winces; that sounds a little glib, a little cheap and common. He needs to do better. "We're almost there, baby. I'm going to give you the rest, okay? And you're going to take all of it. All of me."

"Kurt," Blaine pleads and then moans long and low as Kurt drives in until he can't, and they're as close as they can be.

Slow, Kurt reminds himself, because the imperative locked in the base of his spine is urging the opposite of that, and, Christ, he feels like his brain is sweating.

"Kurt," Blaine whimpers, tries to move, but Kurt's weight is on him, and maybe this isn't the best position, but the pamphlet had recommended it, and Kurt likes feeling this connected, not just where he's inside, but how he's pressed to Blaine's back.

"Shh," Kurt murmurs against Blaine's neck, and he kisses his nape before dragging the tip of his tongue over to Blaine's ear. "Just let me do this," Kurt says. "I'll make it good." And, okay, that last wasn't his best work and it's possibly a bit optimistic; Kurt's not convinced he'll last long once he starts moving, which he does, because his willpower is down to fumes.

He starts slow and shallow, a rocking that's meant to be gentle, but it's doing decidedly ungentle things to him, and yeah, Kurt realizes, he's never going to want to stop doing this. Never. He closes his hands over Blaine's shoulders for leverage and huffs a breath behind Blaine's ear before finding more words for Blaine. "How— You've been wanting this for so long, haven't you?" Kurt lengthens his strokes, goes a little harder, which has Blaine making these amazing little staccato grunts, which is like some kind of feedback loop for Kurt. He tightens his grip on Blaine's shoulders and speeds up.

"You've wanted my cock in your ass for months," Kurt says, and it's not poetry, but Blaine is responding to it, and to being, finally, fucked. And Kurt cannot deny, there's something about unleashing these words, dragging all his hidden desires into the light to hear them, share them, and make them real. An orgasm is already winding up in Kurt's gut, so he slows, goes back to grinding into Blaine, swiveling his hips to mix it up, and Blaine is moaning and writhing beneath him. "You love this," Kurt says, and repeats a twist that made Blaine swear. "I want you to come for me. Can you?"

"I think... Almost," Blaine pants, increasingly restless.

"Tell me what you need."

"Just, more. Of that."

"Okay," Kurt says, and raises himself back up on his arms, to give himself more room to move, to
rediscover that angle that has Blaine swearing at him. It's not dissimilar from dancing, the way he controls and twists each snap of his hips. He gives himself a few careful rehearsal runs, makes sure Blaine is really feeling it, before he gradually adds speed and force.

"That's it," Blaine mumbles, his head drops, back bows, and he fists his hands in the bedding. "Don't stop," he says.

"I won't," Kurt says, and he just goes for it, fucking into Blaine harder and harder with each quick thrust, all while trying to maintain a form to make Beyonce proud.

"Come on, Blaine, come for me," he urges. His triceps are starting to tremble, and, while Kurt wants this to last, the longer they go, the harder it is to hold himself back, to maintain any finesse. His fucking is devolving into frantic, rough shoves, and heat and pleasure is screwing tight in his balls, but he doesn't stop. The pitch of Blaine's cries and the tension of his body tells Kurt he's getting close. So when Blaine's orgasm seizes him, and Kurt can feel it shaking him apart, it doesn't take much longer for him to succumb to his own.

After the spasms and tremors have passed, everything feels viscous: time, air, existence. Kurt remembers to hold the condom at the base as he pulls out, and Blaine shivers through an aftershock as Kurt slips free. He feels weirdly clumsy and blank, reaching for the tissues and wipes. He gets the condom off and in the trash, cleans himself up, and then cleans up Blaine, with a shared lazy smile.

As Blaine rolls to his side and tugs his pillow away, he wrinkles his nose and says, "Well, my pillow's definitely been defiled." Kurt laughs and passes him the wipes.

"I'll get it in the laundry for you. Once I'm sure my legs will actually work."

"No rush," Blaine says. He wipes off his stomach and tosses the used wipe away. "Come here." He pats the bed in front of him.

Kurt crawls over and lies down to face Blaine, sharing a soft gaze and a smile, and Blaine scoots a little closer until their legs are tangled together and Blaine has laid his palm over Kurt's heart.

There's something he should say here, Kurt's sure, but even 'I love you' seems too small for what they've shared. Which is, Kurt realizes, the point of it all, to be more than the words. But the words, yeah. He said some stuff. With his head mostly clear of lust fog, Kurt wonders. There is one more thing to say though, and it's easy.

"Blaine," Kurt says, "thank you."

Blaine scribes abstract patterns over Kurt's sternum. "Thank you. It was incredible. You were incredible. Everything was incredible."

"Everything?" Kurt echoes, because, yes, it was amazing, but he's sure with practice, he can be better.

"Yep," Blaine answers with a grin.

"Okay," Kurt says, "I just. Some of the things I said. To you. I hope I didn't sound too much like bad porn."

Blaine laughs. "You didn't." Then Blaine smirks. "Not bad porn anyway."

Kurt pokes him in the waist, and Blaine mock pouts. Kurt grins. "Just wait 'til you see where I'm getting my porn star tattoo." Then more seriously he continues, "It just." He puts his hand over
Blaine's and slides his fingers between Blaine's. "Saying some of those things. It felt a little, I don't
know, like I was objectifying you—or us—or something."

Blaine shrugs and squeezes Kurt's hand. "Exactly what part of any of what we just did do you think
I didn't love?"

"I—"

"The right answer, Kurt, is none of it." Blaine rolls closer toward Kurt and reaches with his other
hand to cup Kurt's jaw. "It was amazing and hot and we did it together. And..." Blaine quirks his
eyebrows in a manner Kurt thinks is meant to be lascivious, but it's mostly just adorkable. "I want to
do it all again, with you, as soon as you're ready."

"Well, in that case," Kurt makes his best gas pains face, Blaine laughs, and Kurt tips the rest of the
way forward to kiss Blaine's laughter away.
The trill of Kurt's phone alarm wakes him at eight the next morning, hauling him up from deep and dreamless slumber. He's fumbling for the phone before he's even got his eyes open. "Shut up," he mutters to it and cracks open one bleary eye to stab his phone to silence.

Then both eyes snap open as the memory of last night slams into his consciousness. "Oh," Kurt whispers to himself and flushes hot right down to his toes. Then his phone bleeps politely to announce a new text message.

From Blaine: "Good morning, lover."

Kurt stares at the screen, and a wide grin spreads across his face. He taps out a reply.

To Blaine: "So it wasn't just a good dream then?"

The different tensions and unfamiliar aches of his muscles as he stretches beneath the sheets tell Kurt it definitely was not a dream.

From Blaine: "If it were a dream, you'd still be here."

Kurt drags himself up to sit, arranging his pillows so he can lean comfortably back against his headboard, and tries to ignore his morning erection.

To Blaine: "I wish I were still there, believe me."

From Blaine: ":) Did you sleep well?"

To Blaine: "Yes. How are you feeling this morning?"

From Blaine: "Honestly? More sore than I expected, but otherwise I'm feeling great!"

To Blaine: "Is it bad? I can be more gentle next time."

From Blaine: "No, it's a good sore. Reminds me you were there. No need to go easy on me next time. I can't wait for next time. In fact, you saying 'next time' is my favorite thing this morning."

To Blaine: "Oh, god, I can imagine the face you're making. You're okay though?"

From Blaine: "I'm fantastic. It's just a little ache, like a sore muscle."

To Blaine: "It is a muscle."

From Blaine: "Maybe you can help me stretch it out later? Stretching is meant to help, right? :)"

To Blaine: "I really can't have this conversation right now. 1. I haven't had any coffee. 2. Artie wants us there at 10:30 to get ready for the matinee. 3. Your winking smiley is entirely unnecessary to entice me into future stretching activities."

From Blaine: "Ha. But, yeah, you're right, I need to hit the road soon anyway. Can I park at your place & ride with you to school?"

To Blaine: "Of course. I'll see you in an hour?"
From Blaine: "More like 1.5. I haven't eaten yet and I'm starving."

To Blaine: "Okay, see you then, lover."

From Blaine: "Think of me while you wank in the shower. <3"

To Blaine: "Go eat your breakfast, Blaine."

From Blaine: ":D"

#

Today, Kurt has to wear his tightest pair of underwear since every time he so much as thinks about Blaine things get awkward. Seeing Blaine is even worse. Kurt knows he's blushing and ridiculous every time he looks at Blaine's mouth or hands and remembers where they've been, how they've touched and kissed and so many wonderful things. He's sure, from the way Santana is studying him in the dressing room mirrors, that she knows. It's like she's watching the movie adaptation of his thoughts in a bubble above his head. He bets she's even figured out what position they used, and who came first.

And he swears, if he looks at Blaine's ass again, he's going to need to excuse himself to the boys' room, and he doesn't like to go in there for several good reasons, but the girls' room is not an option for several other even better reasons. It really doesn't help that Blaine keeps texting him from where he's sitting next to Rachel.

From Blaine: "Your mouth looks sexy today."

To Blaine: "It's the same mouth I have every day."

And a few minutes later.

From Blaine: "I really loved the way you pulled my hair when I was blowing you."

To Blaine: "Are you drunk? You can't text me things like that when Santana is sitting near me. (Still, good to know.)"

From Blaine: "Fine. Rachel is telling me about how she and Finn made love last night. I was trying to think about something else."

To Blaine: "Okay, I did not need to know that ever, but thank you for the bucket of cold water."

From Blaine: "Happy to share the joy."

Kurt sets his phone down to adjust his police hat, and a slow dread creeps up his spine. He grabs his phone and quickly taps out a text.

To Blaine: "Wait, you didn't tell her about us, did you? Because I cannot deal with that."

From Blaine: "Now who's drunk? Of course not, I'm a gentleman."

To Blaine: "I think Santana knows, but I didn't tell her."
From Blaine: "That would be expected. She has sex-related telepathic superpowers. If you're worried, tell her about Rachel."

To Blaine: "Rachel and I may be opponents, but I am not that cruel. Neither are you."

"Hummel, stop sexting your boyfriend," Santana says dismissively and without eye contact. "I need help with my hair." Kurt relaxes. She's not going to give him a hard time, at least not today.

Performing helps. He can watch his friends perform, focus on his own performance, and get lost in the story and music. It gets him through the afternoon. It doesn't even bother him too much when Blaine whispers in his ear between acts, "I'm completely jealous of your nightstick."

His Dad and Carole come to the evening performance, and afterward they take him and Blaine and Finn and Rachel out for a celebratory and belated Family Friday dinner to Breadstix. Which is fine. Family is important, and it's amazing to have a full table, even if he's still not exactly on speaking terms with Rachel. It's great to hear about how the campaign is going for his Dad, and it's disappointing to hear how Finn struck out with the football recruiter, but all Kurt really, honestly cares about? When he'll next be alone with Blaine. Blaine's Mom is due back later tonight, making Blaine's place not viable for the weekend. Kurt washes a semi-stale mouthful of breadstick down with a sip of Shirley Temple and has an idea. It's a long shot, but something good may come of it.

"Dad?" he interrupts while Rachel is boasting about her victory with Artie over Maria's costume selections (never mind that Artie concocted the entire wardrobe controversy to distract Rachel from some of Artie's script changes. Kurt lent his support to the plot, since 'Kurt said this would be unexpected' did lend credibility).

"Yes, Kurt," says his Dad.

"I was wondering, since we have another matinee tomorrow, if maybe Blaine could stay the night? To save him a drive back and forth?" Kurt considers embellishing his logic with a comment on the price of gas, but that would possibly be overselling, and his face already feels hot. He's also never asked for this before, since the one time Blaine did stay overnight was kind of a disaster. It hasn't been a conversation he's wanted to revisit with his Dad; it's been easier to just find what time they could. Tonight, though, it's not enough to wait for the next unscheduled opportunity.

Anyway, they're in public, so his Dad can't get too disagreeable. Kurt makes himself wait without fidgeting with the napkin in his lap.

Blaine smiles politely and neutrally, and Kurt envies him his easy composure. He's positive he's just given everything away, especially with the way his Dad is looking at him and Carole is looking at his Dad. At least Rachel and Finn are only looking at each other, and Kurt imagines they're feeling the same frustrated pull for privacy, which he doesn't want to think about too much—or care about that much because he's still mad at Rachel—but he certainly empathizes.

"Blaine," his Dad says, "You're welcome to stay overnight if your folks are okay with it, but you'll sleep in the guestroom."

"Yes, sir. Thank you. I'll just ask..." Blaine reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out his phone to type a text. He shoots Kurt a quick, tight smile and sideways glance. He gets a reply so quickly, Kurt doubts his mother even took the time to read all of what Blaine typed. "It's fine with my Mom," Blaine says.
"All right, you need to stop at the drugstore for a toothbrush or anything?"

"No, sir. I packed one so I could brush my teeth after lunch." Then Blaine turns to Kurt and Kurt doesn't miss that Blaine's cheeks are going ruddy. "But I may need to borrow some pajamas, Kurt."

"Of course," Kurt says, and he concentrates on folding a piece of Romaine lettuce as neatly as possible.

Finn drives Rachel home after dinner, which takes an hour now apparently. At home, Kurt helps Carole put fresh sheets on the guest bed since it hasn't been used since the summer. Blaine has joined his Dad in watching the eleven o'clock news.

"Kurt, Sweetie," Carole starts as she shakes the folds from a plaid wool blanket.

Kurt looks up from folding a tight hospital corner at the foot of the bed. "Yes?"

"You've been able to spend a lot of time alone with Blaine since Burt's been campaigning." She passes Kurt one blanket edge and they drape it over the bed.

"Yes," Kurt answers cautiously, smoothing the blanket and tucking it in on his side.

Carole nods and strips off a pillowcase. "I'm glad, Kurt. He's a lovely boy and I see how happy he makes you, and you him."

"Thank you?"

Carole straightens and turns her attention to Kurt. "Look, I don't want to assume anything, but I remember being young and in love and how precious that time alone was. And how frustrating it can be when you can't get any, especially once a relationship has blossomed." The look she's giving him makes it clear what she means.

"Blossomed, Carole?" Kurt asks, and receives a pillow to the face in response.

"I'm trying to be delicate," Carole says, laughing.

"You messed up my hair," Kurt says, feigning horror, but mostly trying to buy some time. He reaches for a clean case to tug onto the pillow. He's not sure how Carole guessed his relationship with Blaine changed recently. It's got to be the blushing. He's not usually so prone to it; years of practice being humiliated kind of dulls the impulse, he supposes, but there's nothing dull about his feelings for Blaine.

"Kurt," she says, "Seriously, I want you to know you've got an ally. Your Dad, I love him, and we both love you so much, but he's a bit overwhelmed by the thought of his little boy blossoming, and you know he's overprotective of you. I'm just saying, you're an adult in a serious relationship. I'll help get him out of the house more, even when we're not doing campaign events."

"Carole." Kurt smiles around the sudden lump in his throat. "Thank you."

"Anytime, kiddo." Carole reaches over and smooths his hair. "You're being safe, right?"
Kurt is sure his blush reaches his hairline. "Yes, of course we are." And, oh, god, he totally just told her beyond any doubt. "You're not going to tell my Dad?"

"It's not my place to, Kurt. You'll have to tell him yourself when you're ready."

Kurt wonders if Carole knows about Finn and Rachel, but supposes if she does, it's not something she's unprepared for after the whole Quinn pregnancy adventure. Kurt nods and arranges the decorative shams at the head of the bed.

#

They all watch Letterman together. Finn sprawls in his father's old chair flipping through the new *Sports Illustrated*, and Kurt sits by Blaine on the loveseat. His Dad and Carole share the sofa. Kurt keeps a few inches between Blaine and himself and holds Blaine's hand in the space between them. He's so aware of his Dad looking over at them, but he doesn't want to think about what his Dad may have guessed or what he may be thinking. He's grateful to Carole for respecting their privacy—for caring. But the gratitude doesn't ease a lingering sense of embarrassment. Plus, it's hard work to channel innocence; Kurt feels stiff and awkward even after he convinces himself there's no reason to; he hasn't done anything wrong.

Eventually Carole yawns and suggests it's bedtime. His Dad stands and turns to him and Blaine. "You boys, I want your doors to stay open tonight."

"Yes, Dad."

"Yes, Mr. Hummel."

"What about me, Burt?" Finn asks.

"Do whatever you want, Finn."

"Oh," Finn says, "cool." He heads for the staircase and disappears.

"I'll be checking in on you, Kurt. Don't disappoint me," his Dad says.

"Of course not, Dad." Kurt stands. "Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to find some pajamas for Blaine."

"Good night, boys," says Carole.

In Kurt's bedroom, Blaine takes him by the upper arm and leans in close to whisper, "Was your Dad serious about checking in on you?"

"Yes," Kurt answers as he opens a drawer. There's too much activity in the hall to lean over into Blaine for more than a brief, soft kiss on the lips. Even so, the contact shoots straight to his groin, and Blaine makes a soft pleading whimper when Kurt pulls back to say, "Very serious."

Blaine sits on the edge of Kurt's bed looking bewildered.

Kurt offers him a neatly folded set of navy blue pajamas with white piping and shuts the drawer.
"Maybe this wasn't my best idea," Kurt admits, keeping his voice low. "I just..." He glances toward his open door and leans back against his dresser rather than joining Blaine on the bed. "I missed you so much today, and I couldn't stand the thought of saying goodbye tonight without some time for us."

"I know," Blaine says shoving a hand through his hair and shaking out some curls. "God, I couldn't stop thinking about," his voice drops to a whisper, "everything, you know? I thought I was going to explode." Blaine falls back to his elbows. He looks completely ravishable, and Kurt does not fail to notice the bulge behind Blaine's zipper.

Kurt smiles, shifts his hips restlessly, though there's no comfortable way to endure his millionth unsatisfied erection of the day. "You didn't look it. I thought it was just me who was verging on spontaneous self-immolation."

"You were blushing a lot today, Kurt. There were a few moments I worried for you." Blaine smiles.

"Ugh." Kurt says with a chuckle and an eyeroll, and then more seriously adds, "Carole knows."

"What?" Blaine sits up from his backward slump. "Did you tell her?"

"Not really, I think my blushing did the job for me." Kurt grimaces, and nods down at his crotch. "You'd think there wouldn't be enough blood left for my face."

Blaine misses the gesture; he seems preoccupied with the notion of parental knowledge. "What about your Dad?"

"No idea, but Carole said she won't tell him, that's up to me."

"That's good?"

"Yes, and I think she's willing to provide us with a bit of covert cover,"

"Seriously?"

"She has the advantage of having known neither of us as toddlers," Kurt says, "And she finds you charming."

Blaine laughs. "I do have that effect on the ladies, you know."

Kurt raises an eyebrow and pushes his hips forward just enough to draw Blaine's attention this time, "And what about the effect you're having on this boy?"

"I wish I could help you out with that," Blaine says earnestly, staring at Kurt's groin and moistening his lips. "I wish we could help each other," he says, and his gaze goes back up to meet Kurt's. It's dark and hungry and a little desperate; and Kurt can't stand it.

"After my Dad checks in on me, I'll text you."

"Are you sure?"

"No, but I don't care right now," Kurt says. "I can't stop thinking about everything either, and by everything, I mostly mean your ass."

"Right," Blaine says, and he stands up. "The sooner we get to bed, the sooner, you know."

"Yes. Good night, Blaine," Kurt steps forward and cups Blaine's face between his palms. He kisses
softly, easing his tongue between Blaine's lips and deepening the kiss with the promise of more. By
the time he pulls back, they're both breathing heavily.

"Good night, Kurt."

Kurt goes to the bathroom to wash his face and brush his teeth and then back to his room to tone and
moisturize and change. He gets a few novels from his bookcase and sets them on the bottom shelf of
his nightstand. The memory of troublesome cellophane prompts him to preemptively open the box of
condoms in his nightstand drawer. He tucks two under his pillow (just in case) along with the
lubricant, he makes sure his tissues are within reach and his phone is charging, and then he climbs
under the covers and opens his book.

It's only the anticipation of sex that keeps him from drifting off. It's been a long day after not much
sleep the night before. Nearly an hour passes before Kurt hears a soft, familiar knock on his door.
"Yes, Dad?"

His Dad pushes his door open a little further, but doesn't come in. "Hey, Kurt."

Kurt looks up from the page he's read six times and smiles. "Hi."

"I haven't seen you much this week. You're doing okay?"

"Yes, Dad, I'm fine."

"Things going good with Blaine?"

"Things are wonderful with Blaine."

His Dad nods as if that were the answer he wanted, and maybe it was, at least a little bit. "You were
great in the play. You both were."

"Thank you."

"Okay, then," his Dad says and hovers uncomfortably until Kurt feels the urge to blurt it all out, but
Kurt doesn't say anything. It's the absolute wrong time for that conversation. "Good night, buddy, get
some sleep," his Dad says at last, "I love you."

"I love you, too. Good night, Dad."

Kurt wades through a backwash of guilt after his Dad leaves, since it seems like his Dad at least
suspects something, but Kurt isn't sure what he was supposed to say just then. He waits fifteen more
minutes before picking up his phone and texting Blaine.

To Blaine: "You're having trouble sleeping and you want to borrow a book."

A few seconds later he gets a reply.

From Blaine: "I do. I really really do."

Soon enough Blaine is sidling through his half-open door and pushing it to the jamb behind him.
He's wide-eyed and breathless and adorable in Kurt's slightly too-big pajamas. "Hi," he says.

"Go ahead and close it," Kurt says, "Softly, and out of habit."
Blaine nods, and Kurt hopes the click of the latch isn't loud enough to make it down the hall. "Should I lock it?" Blaine asks.

"No," Kurt says. A locked door won't be able to talk himself out of. A door accidentally closed, followed by accidentally getting carried away making out while loaning a book? That he can sell.

Blaine lets out a heavy breath; Kurt smiles widely, and then Blaine is on his bed, crawling up and over him as Kurt tosses his covers aside. Blaine leans in and whispers, "Kurt..." before he closes the distance between them with a crushing kiss.

Blaine soon eases up on the lip bruising pressure, but he doesn't relent or relinquish any of the kiss to Kurt, tugging Kurt's bottom lip with his teeth and flicking the tip of his tongue against the trapped flesh. Kurt shudders at the sharp flash of pleasure that sends down his spine and shoves his hands up the back of Blaine's (actually his, and that's hot in a way Kurt can't explain) pajama top. Kurt splays his fingers apart to relish as much of the heat and motion of Blaine's body as he can. And then Blaine's releasing the grip of his teeth and dragging the tip of his tongue lightly just under Kurt's top lip, and that's ticklish and tantalizing and soon has Kurt wrestling control of the kiss and pushing his tongue deep into Blaine's mouth. He slides his hands down to haul Blaine against him, their legs dovetailing easily, and sucks a breath from Blaine's lungs as his cock presses near Blaine's. Then Kurt rolls his hips up hard. He does it again. And again.

It's just he and Blaine, the friction between them, and the swirling heat of pleasure beckoning him to more and harder. Kurt is moaning into Blaine's mouth and pushing the waistband of the pajama bottoms down to the tops of Blaine's thighs so he can dig his fingers into the hard muscles of Blaine's bare ass to feel them flex as Blaine drives down against him to meet every arch and upthrust of Kurt's hips. It's mindless and frantic and not at all what Kurt had intended when he texted Blaine, but as much as he doesn't want to come in his pajama pants (because that gets gross fast, and a midnight trip to the laundry would be suspicious) he's struggling to temper himself. His brain is burning up with the memory of being inside Blaine, and he doesn't know how to get there from here sensibly or safely, and then there's the small, calm voice in the back of his head telling him to slow down, stop, this is getting out of hand: they're going to be caught—especially if Kurt doesn't find a way to control his increasingly high-pitched moaning.

He turns his head, ripping their mouths apart and desperately sucking in a deep breath of cool air. "Blaine," Kurt says as he loosens his hold on Blaine's backside and rubs to soothe, hoping he hasn't left bruises. "We need to," he says between uneven breaths; his voice is alien and reedy to his own ears. "...stop for a minute."

"Yeah, okay," Blaine says and pushes himself up and back to kneel up over Kurt's thigh until the only contact between them is Kurt's hands on Blaine's skin. In the front, Blaine's waistband has slid down to expose most of his dick. Kurt stares at it as he kneads Blaine's ass and tries to come up with a plan that will be discreet, satisfying, and not too messy. Mostly he's caught imagining sitting up and leaning forward to kiss Blaine there, to open his mouth and lick over—

"My eyes are up here," Blaine says.

When Kurt looks up Blaine is smiling down at him. "The logistics of our tryst are troublesome," Kurt says, and he wonders how Blaine feels about swallowing. Kurt's not completely sure how he feels about swallowing yet, but blowjobs are most likely the best plan.

Blaine laughs. "Should I be offended that you're still able to use words like 'logistics'? I'm trying to reduce you to 'ugh'."

"What about you? You're still using complete sentences." Kurt grins and trails the fingers of one
hand up to the small of Blaine's back, then he reverses direction and drags his middle finger down until his fingertip is pressing at Blaine's tailbone, nestled between Blaine's buttocks near the top of his cleft.

"Keep doing that and I'll be talking like a caveman in no time," Blaine says, tipping forward onto his arms to encourage Kurt to draw his finger lower, edging down into hotter, closer, sweat dampened skin until the tip of his finger just meets the crinkled edge of Blaine's hole. The muscle twitches, and Kurt pauses. His heart is pummeling the inside of his ribcage and his lungs are going like bellows. Above him, Blaine's eyelids are heavy over dark eyes, and his mouth is lax with anticipation. Kurt's stretching up for a kiss and stretching his other arm under his pillow for the lube when...

There's a knock at his door.

Kurt snatches his hands back to himself, and Blaine rolls away, hauling up his pajamas. The door doesn't open.

"Kurt?" comes Carole's voice. (Kurt silently thanks the Flying Spaghetti Monster.)

"Yes?" Kurt manages without sounding too much like he's been sucking helium. Blaine is sitting at the edge of the bed, near the foot, crossing his legs and mostly failing to look nonchalant.

"May I open your door?"

Kurt leans over and grabs the top two books he had earlier stacked near his bedside, sits up against his pillows, and hauls his covers back over his lap. "Sure, come in."

The door opens slowly, and Kurt passes the books to Blaine with an encouraging smile.

Carole peeks around the door before stepping around it into the room. "Hello, Blaine," she says with a smile.

"Hello, Mrs. Hu—"

"Carole, please."

"Carole," Blaine smiles and looks down at the books in his hands.

"Blaine was having trouble sleeping," Kurt explains. "He wanted to borrow a book."

"Of course," Carole says, though Kurt's not convinced she's buying the story. "I'm sorry, Blaine," she continues, "but you need to go back to your own room. Kurt, you need to leave your door open. I barely convinced your father to let me do the check-in after he thought he heard your door close."

"Yes, ma'am," Blaine says, but he doesn't stand up immediately; instead he shifts uncomfortably and shoots Kurt a pleading look.

"Can we have a moment first, please?" Kurt asks.

Carole rolls her eyes and actually smirks at them. "Yes," she says, "But just a minute." She moves as if to leave, pauses, and turns back, speaking more softly. "If it helps, boys, I've arranged for Burt and I to go out tomorrow afternoon. There's a Robert De Niro double feature at the cinema. Maybe you two can have your book club then?"

"Thank you," Kurt says. "You're the best, Carole."

She nods. "Get some sleep, you have an early start tomorrow."
Carole leaves, Blaine and Kurt share a relieved sigh, and then Blaine says, "I'm sorry, I guess I should—" he gestures toward the door.

"Yeah, I'm sorry too," Kurt says. "I'll see you in the morning?"

"Yeah," Blaine says, and then he stands and leaves, taking the books with him.

Kurt lies awake for some time longer refusing to masturbate. Waiting until tomorrow afternoon will be worth it. In the meantime, as his arousal fades to something bearable, Kurt knows he doesn't want to waste any of their time alone tomorrow, so he tries to come up with a plan more sophisticated than getting naked and getting off.

#

The house is quiet Sunday afternoon when Kurt gets home after the matinee performance, Blaine in tow.

"How much time do we have?" Blaine asks as he shrugs off his coat.

"Carole said they'd be going to dinner after the movies and she'd text when they left the restaurant in case we needed anything from the store. So I'd guess we have until eight at least?" Kurt hangs Blaine's coat next to his in the hall closet.

"Where's Finn?"

"He disappeared with Rachel after the show."

"Okay," Blaine rubs his hands down his thighs. "So it's just us then?"

"It's just us," Kurt says with a smile and stretches his hand out for Blaine to take as he leads him into the house. "Do you want anything to eat or drink?"

"I am pretty thirsty," Blaine says. He's fidgeting with the bottom hem of his cardigan with his free hand. Kurt can't fathom why Blaine would be suddenly nervous; he himself is feeling weirdly calm.

"I know we want to make the most of this, but we should probably eat something too. I don't want you passing out on me from low blood sugar." Kurt grins as he tugs Blaine toward the kitchen. "I also wanted to talk a little first. While we still have our clothes on."

"Talk?" Blaine asks.

"Nothing ominous," Kurt reassures as he gestures Blaine to take one of the tall stools by the island. He grabs two glasses and plunks them down in front of Blaine. "Are you all right? You seem nervous today."

"I am. A little bit."

Kurt reaches into the fridge for the carafe of water without turning away from Blaine. "Do you know why?"

Blaine shrugs. "I think everything just started to sink in, after having a little time to think about it."
Kurt nods as he pours the water. "That's why I wanted to talk before we went upstairs."

"Okay," Blaine says and sips his water. "So what did you want to talk about?"

Kurt goes back to the fridge to get a bag of baby spinach, some beets he roasted the other night, a container of cannellini beans, and a fresh cylinder of chèvre. "Well," Kurt says, depositing his ingredients on the counter. "Everything happened pretty spontaneously Friday night, and last night, it was starting to veer a little out of control. For me anyway."

"Is that bad?" Blaine asks. "Just letting things happen?"

"It's not bad," Kurt says, and he's not completely sure of his next words, but they seem like the best fit so he says them. "But it is a lot of performance pressure." He pulls some mint from the glass by the sink and plucks the leaves from the stems. "For me, anyway."

"I don't understand," Blaine says slowly, turning his glass between his hands.

Kurt takes a deep breath as he stacks the mint leaves up on the chopping board, careful to line them up neatly, but he hesitates once he's picked up the knife. "I know that there are things you expect from me. Or want from me anyway. Sexually, you're more adventurous, I guess, than I am—or I've been anyway. But, I'm not wholly comfortable guessing at it, what you want. What if I guess wrong or just don't have a clue?"

Blaine doesn't respond immediately, so Kurt turns back to the mint, cutting it into a neat, fine chiffonade.

"Everything you did Friday was perfect, Kurt. And as far as I'm concerned, anything you want to—"

"That's it though." Kurt sets the knife aside and gets two large salad plates from the cupboard. "What if I want something you don't want? Or, what if you want something I'm not doing?"

"Kurt, I really don't understand—"

"Okay, maybe I'm being too oblique. When you told me I didn't have to say 'please', what did you mean by that? I mean, I have some ideas, but I want you to explain it to me so I'm sure."

Blaine blinks at him for a few moments while Kurt arranges the spinach on the plates. "I meant that..." Blaine presses his lips together and frowns. Kurt cuts the beets into short wedges and scatters them over the spinach leaves, washes the magenta from his hands, and waits. He wants to reach out and touch Blaine to comfort, but he doesn't want that touch to confuse or distract.

"Blaine, I know it's hard to talk about this stuff, but can you try, please? For me?"

Blaine nods. "It's hard to say things. Like that." He takes a deep breath. "I think what I want is for you to— Oh, this sounds bad."

"Whatever it is, it's okay, Blaine. It's me and you, right?"

"Just..." Blaine gestures uselessly and turns his gaze up to Kurt's. "...push me. And—" Blaine grimaces.

"Okay," Kurt nods encouragement but his heart is fluttering madly. It's mostly what he suspected, but hearing it from Blaine's mouth. He can't tell if he's terrified or turned on. "And?"

"And sometimes, maybe..." Blaine closes his eyes and his voice goes a little softer. "...use me."
"Blaine..." Kurt's really not sure what to say to that.

Blaine's eyes come open wide, "Not all the time or, shit, I don't know, Kurt." He's distressed enough Kurt doesn't hesitate or quash the impulse this time. He rounds the island, wraps his arms around Blaine, and gently kisses the tension from his lips.

"Hey," he whispers against Blaine's cheek, "It's all right, baby."

"I like that," Blaine blurs.

"When I call you 'baby'?

"Yeah. It makes me feel safe."

"What else?"

"I told you I liked it when you pulled my hair. I liked it last night when you were holding onto me so hard it left bruises. I loved waking up sore yesterday." Blaine's breathing is rapid and shallow.

"When you get out of control and, and a little rough? It's really hot to see you like that and to know I'm the reason."

Kurt smiles and pulls back to make eye contact without it being blurry. "I like that too," he admits. "A lot. It's kind of scary, but I like it. Letting go, with you."

"And," Blaine says, confidence returning to his voice. He reaches for Kurt and tucks his thumbs through Kurt's belt-loops, tugging a little as he continues, "I really like it when you talk to me, tell me what you want me to do or what you like while we're doing stuff."

"Yeah, I can do that, Blaine." Kurt takes one step back and squeezes Blaine's shoulders. He's tempted to skip the food and just take Blaine upstairs, but they need some fuel. And there's still one more thing.

"Is that enough?" Blaine asks. "Did I tell you enough?"

Kurt nods and runs his hands down to Blaine's elbows. "Yes, but there's something else I need to ask you," he says. He'd prepared this in his head last night, just in case, and he thinks he needs to ask. "If I tell you to do something you don't want to do, or if I do something that you don't like, will you be able to say no?"

Blaine frowns and purses his lips. "It's hard to imagine you doing or wanting something I won't."

Which is close enough to saying 'no' without actually saying it that it confirms Kurt's concern. Kurt can't imagine it either, but Blaine, so eager to please, barely contains the word 'no' in his vocabulary. Unless he's been pushed to some personal limit, Blaine is reluctant to set boundaries. So of course, there's that to consider: Blaine did say he wanted to be pushed.

So Kurt forge ahead with his other hypothetical, "Or what if I do something you really love, but maybe you don't think you should, or maybe it's too-much-but-not-enough, or—I don't know—but you do say 'no'. Do you want me to push you, or do you want me to stop?"

"Kurt?" Blaine's flushing red up his neck and across his cheeks. "I just don't think..."

"I think we should have a safeword, Blaine. To be clear."

Blaine's staring at him. "But we're not— Do you really think we need something like that?"
Kurt sighs, "Probably not? But, the point is, I don't know. Last night, I was doing a lot of thinking. It
doesn't mean we'll ever use it, but having one seems wise to me. I'd feel better, anyway, having a
net."

Blaine shrugs Kurt's hands from his elbows and catches Kurt's hands in his. He squeezes. "If it
would make you more comfortable, Kurt, then absolutely, of course."

"Okay, you come up with something unmistakable," Kurt says, "and I'll finish making lunch."

Kurt makes sandwiches to go with the salad, and Blaine chooses "pinochle" because when he was
little he thought it was something people said when they had had enough, like 'saying uncle'.

#

Upstairs, after lunch, Kurt ushers Blaine into his bedroom and then, with the rush of rebellion
satisfied, closes and locks the door. The weight of their conversation in the kitchen is still there, so
instead of falling into each others arms like sex-starved teenagers, they stand facing each other, hands
linked in the space between them. It feels grown-up somehow, like they've been doing this longer
than they have, even though everything is so bright and new. Kurt doesn't understand it, how
something can be awkward and intimate, familiar and novel all at once, but that's okay.

Blaine seems relaxed enough, and he is meeting Kurt's gaze and returning his smile. But he's quiet.
Waiting for Kurt, perhaps. Kurt spent enough time thinking about this last night that he has some
specific things he wants to try, beats he wants to hit. Kurt takes a deep breath and tugs Blaine
forward so he can lean in and kiss him on the temple. "I'm going to undress you," Kurt says as he
nuzzles into Blaine's hair near his ear. His curls are wonderfully loose and only softly styled after his
post-show shower at school. "Can you stand still for me?"

Blaine shivers and nods mutely.

"Okay, good, that's good," Kurt says and steps back to move behind Blaine. He rubs over Blaine's
upper back and shoulders, down his arms, and back up; smooths his hands over Blaine's chest and
up to his collar to tug his bow-tie loose. Beneath his hands, Blaine is anything but relaxed; he's
practically vibrating, and Kurt is increasingly having trouble finding his own breath. He's already too
hot and tight in his pants, and they've barely started. He strips away the tie and unbuttons the top two
buttons of Blaine's shirt. He presses an open mouthed kiss to the back of Blaine's neck near his
hairline, licks a line around to the side, tastes salty sweat and bitter product and, beneath that, just
Blaine. Blaine's breathing is shallow and there's a ragged edge to his breath picking up in the base of
his throat.

Kurt knows he needs to say something, but lust has the root of his tongue feeling like clay. After the
waiting and frustration of yesterday, waking up with the promise of today, all the anticipation and
planning (more like fantasizing, really) has drawn out such an acute tension of desire that pushing
forward into it has an almost dreamlike quality. It's like he's moving in slow motion, like even if he
wanted to go faster, he physically cannot.

Instead of speaking, Kurt moves one hand up to Blaine's head, threading his fingers into his hair and
tugging to coax his head back against Kurt's shoulder. His other hand, he slips into Blaine's open
collar, his fingertips pressing along Blaine's collar bones, dipping into the hollow between them, and
then slipping up the side of his neck, following the flutter of his pulse, going from smooth skin to the
scuff of almost-stubble, up under the tenderness of Blaine's throat, over the hard curve of his jaw,
and finally resting against the lush softness of his bottom lip. Blaine's breath puffs warm over Kurt's fingertips as Kurt traces the shape of Blaine's mouth.

"Kurt," Blaine murmurs against Kurt's fingertips, and then his tongue comes out, warm and wet, to slip across the pads of Kurt's index and middle fingers, and before Kurt has thought about what he's doing, he's pressing those fingers into Blaine's mouth and Blaine is closing his lips around them and sucking softly, and Kurt has to close his eyes when Blaine moans, because it's the same sound he made with Kurt's cock in his mouth and the ghost of that is happening to his fingers. The sensation sparks straight down his spine, and now Kurt's panting against Blaine's neck and tugging his head to the side so he can nose aside his collar and kiss the curve where neck meets shoulder. Blaine sucks harder, his tongue nimble and slick as it curls around and between Kurt's fingers. Kurt mouths at whatever skin he can reach, licking and sucking and even biting a little before slipping his fingers free of Blaine's mouth and drawing a saliva slick line from Blaine's mouth, over his chin, down his throat, and then skipping over his shirt to get to the buttons of his cardigan.

Kurt eases his mouth over Blaine's skin and kisses up the side of his neck while loosening and releasing his hand in Blaine's hair. He needs both hands for the buttons or it's going to take far too long. Arousal doesn't do his manual dexterity any favors. "Jesus, Blaine," he mumbles, kissing his way up to Blaine's earlobe, "the way you make me feel."

Blaine replies with a hoarse chuckle; his voice is a pleasant buzz beneath Kurt's lips as he sing-songs, "I really turn you on?"

Kurt muffles a sudden laugh against the back of Blaine's neck. "Yes, but I wasn't actually meaning to plagiarize Michael Jackson." The interjection of humor allows Kurt to spare more focus for his hands. He carefully undoes Blaine's cardigan and untucks his shirt.

"I forgive you for being accidentally derivative," Blaine says.

"That's very generous of you," Kurt says as his fingers work their way up the button placket of Blaine's shirt. He's beginning to appreciate Blaine's affectionate frustration with his layers, and Blaine's not even wearing an undershirt, something for which Kurt is immensely grateful as the last button comes free and Kurt looks down over Blaine's shoulder to admire the physique exposed. He tugs the edges of shirt and cardigan apart to reveal more.

He's no stranger to Blaine's torso—they've had plenty of shirtless make-out sessions, especially over the summer—but it's always a thrill when he gets his first look (of any given session) at what Blaine keeps so primly covered up. He's got a body like an underwear model. But because Blaine isn't vain, at least not in the way Kurt understands his own vanity, and because Blaine doesn't ever flaunt it, it's even sexier to Kurt. It speaks of self-care and diligence and something private that was once only Blaine's but now he shares, most exclusively, with Kurt. "I love that you take such good care of yourself," Kurt says.

"Yeah?" Blaine says and Kurt can hear the warmth of his smile.

"Definitely," Kurt says and lets his hands roam across Blaine's bare chest, enjoying the hard swell of his pecs and brushing over his nipples until it makes Blaine shiver and gasp and twist his head back to find Kurt's cheek with his lips. Kurt turns into the kiss, though at this angle their mouths can't quite fit together so it's messy and there's too much air and tongue and not enough lips, but the lack of perfection is really working for him, so Kurt doesn't relinquish the kiss as he skims his hands down Blaine's belly and unfastens his trousers. Belt, button, and fly come undone, and Kurt is reaching in to fold his hand over Blaine's erection to stroke him through his underwear.

When Blaine starts rocking up against his hand and groaning into the kiss, Kurt realizes his plan is
coming apart. At this rate they'll still be standing here when Carole texts, and while he doesn't want to rush, he wants so much more than this. Kurt reluctantly drags his hand away and breaks the kiss. Blaine makes a small noise of complaint.

Kurt shushes him softly, "I know," Kurt says as he pulls Blaine's cardigan and shirt down his shoulders and off. "But I'm going to make it so much better, baby. I'm going to get you out of these clothes and onto my bed, and then..." Kurt has to pause to take a breath, steady himself before he says the rest. "I'm going to suck your dick until you come in my mouth."

Blaine sucks in a deep breath and releases it with a full body shudder as Kurt crouches down behind him to pull his trousers and underwear down. He freezes for a moment when he sees the bruises. They're small and faint, but clearly, as he catalogs them, from his own fingers. He presses a quick kiss to the closest one as he coaxes Blaine to lift one foot, then the other, and pulls off his socks. "Okay," Kurt says as he stands, "just a sec." He goes to the bed, tosses the decorative pillows over to the floor on the other side and pulls back the covers. Turning back to Blaine, who is so beautifully nude and hard and flushing all across his chest and thighs, Kurt gestures toward the bed, "Come sit down."

Blaine holds his gaze as he moves to the bed. "What about you?" he asks as he sits. He gestures down Kurt's body. "You're still dressed."

"I am," Kurt acknowledges. Somehow in his fantasy of this afternoon, he'd become magically naked at some point between undressing Blaine and getting him onto the bed. "I'll just..." he says and bends down to unlace his boots. He's so aware of Blaine's gaze resting heavily on him as he straightens, pulls off his sweater, and unbuttons his shirt. The pressure to perform wells up inside him, to make this erotic somehow. But in this context—his bedroom, about to get sexy with his boyfriend—he's not sure he could pull anything off sincerely while feeling so self-conscious. Once he's shimmied out of his jeans and shucked off his briefs, he straightens to see Blaine holding out a hand to him and smiling. "You're sexy, Kurt," Blaine says. "The way you move, no matter what you're doing. It's art."

"That's..." Kurt smiles until his cheeks nearly ache. Blaine thinks the way he moves is art, and that's one of the nicest compliments he's received. "Thank you," he says.

"Join me?" Blaine asks cocking his head and running his gaze deliberately from Kurt's face to his cock.

"I will," Kurt says, "but, um... there's something else I thought we could try today."

Blaine's eyebrows go up and his gaze jumps back up to Kurt's face. "Oh?"

Kurt goes to his dresser and tugs out one of the small center drawers. Inside are his summer scarves from this past year. He selects one of the soft knit ones that has some give in the weave. It has a lavender and green butterfly motif on a rustic cream background of unbleached cotton. It's one of his favorites. He drapes it across both hands as he turns to Blaine so Blaine can see it. He fills his lungs, steadies himself, and says, "As much as I loved—and I mean loved—you getting yourself ready for me Friday, today I wanted to do that for you myself. So..." Kurt trails off, unsure in the moment of how to say what he needs to say. He knows he had something rehearsed in his mind, but the words have broken away from him and got lost somewhere in the no man's land beyond the tip of his tongue.

"You want to tie me up?" Blaine asks quietly.

"Just your wrists," Kurt says, and he has to stop himself asking 'if that's okay with you' because they
had that conversation already, but he can't stop himself saying please this time. "Please kneel up on the bed and turn around. With your hands behind you."

Blaine doesn't nod or offer any verbal acknowledgment; he does turn upon the bed slowly, brings his knees under himself, and crosses his wrists at the small of his back.

Kurt can't move immediately; there's a stillness and silence in the room that makes this all seem unreal and impossible—nothing like the ease of Kurt's fantasy last night—and Kurt has to make himself move, knows he has to go to Blaine and talk to him and touch him. So he does. A few short steps take him to the bed, and he's draped the scarf over his shoulder, and he's chasing his gaze with his hands, admiring the breadth of Blaine's shoulders, the muscles across his back, his slim waist, and the strong lines of his arms held behind him like an offering. "You're amazing, Blaine," Kurt whispers as he brushes his fingers down the tender skin of Blaine's inner arms and wrists, across his palms, and then he curls his fingertips against Blaine's. Kurt hears the ghost of himself saying in this very room nearly a year ago: "...the touch of fingertips is as sexy as it gets." He wasn't wrong. Blaine remains still and silent, and Kurt's not sure how to interpret that, but he trusts Blaine and Blaine trusts him, so he pushes ahead.

"Okay," he says, "I'm going to tie your wrists now, so I need you to tell me if it's too tight or uncomfortable." Blaine straightens his back and relaxes his arms. Kurt arranges Blaine's wrists, undoing their cross and bending his elbows so his wrists can rest parallel to each other and perpendicular to Blaine's spine. The scarf he centers around Blaine's wrists and winds each end snugly, but not tightly, around until he's got about a third of it left. He twists it, loops it around once more, and then ties it off in a loose bow. He can get a finger under the scarf easily, so he judges it to be not too tight.

The sight of his familiar, favorite summer scarf binding his boyfriend's hands is a thrill much like seeing Blaine in his pajamas last night, only it hits him hotter, lower, and much harder. The thrill is tempered by Blaine's continued stillness. Apprehension twists in Kurt's stomach as he climbs on the bed and moves around to kneel before Blaine.

The first thing he notices is that Blaine's eyes are closed, his lashes matted damp and dark against his skin. Kurt immediately looks for any other sign of distress; he can't see tear tracks, and Blaine's breathing is deep and even. He spies the angry red bruise at the bottom side of Blaine's neck, and his mouth falls open at the sight of it, for he put it there. It was accidental, but, wow. His gaze travels lower, taking in all the lines of Blaine's body as they're displayed by his current posture: shoulders back, back arched just a little, knees splayed as if to draw Kurt's attention, unerringly, to his erection, proud and flushed, with precome glistening and beading at the head, so much it's dripping in viscid gleaming strands, staining the sheets below.

Kurt hauls his attention back up, trying to reconcile the wet eyelashes with such evident acute arousal. Surfeit of emotion, perhaps, but which? He reaches out to touch the bruise he left with careful fingertips, feels the heat of the slight injury, swallows, and prompts softly, "Blaine?"

When they open, Blaine's eyes are glassy and bright, and his lips part as if to speak, but nothing comes out except a rush of air. Kurt lays a hand along Blaine's jaw. He desperately wants to ask 'are you okay’, but he isn't sure if that would be right. Still, he needs to know if Blaine can speak, or if he's struggling or lost or—Kurt doesn't know and is alarmed by just how much he doesn't know. Maybe this was too much too soon, and Blaine can't tell him. He considers untying Blaine and starting over, differently. He needs more information.

"Is... is this?" Kurt takes another, deeper breath. "Is this the kind of thing you want?"

Blaine's throat works soundlessly; he nods.
"Tell me what you need, baby," Kurt says, stroking over Blaine's cheek with his thumb.

It comes out scratchy and a little broken when Blaine finally finds his voice, "Please, Kurt, just." Blaine clears his throat and says more clearly, "Kiss me."

That's all Kurt needs to crumble away his trepidation. He leans in without hesitation and with a harsh sweep of desire searing through his belly. Blaine's lips are desperately hot and pliant as he meets Kurt with an eager, open mouth. His lips move with an untempered hunger that drags Kurt deeper into the kiss. It's insatiable as Blaine reaches farther into Kurt's mouth, fierce and demanding everything. Kurt pours all he can into the kiss, cupping Blaine's face between his hands, closing his eyes, and succumbing to the heat licking up his spine.

He shuffles closer until his cock brushes along Blaine's, until they're both skidding up against each others' bellies and Kurt releases Blaine's face so he can bring one hand to the small of Blaine's back to brace him, while he reaches between them with his other, fumbling to align them in his hand and then rocking his hips so his cock drags against Blaine's. Which is amazing and nothing he'd planned for, but he thinks a detour from his plan may be prudent. He wants to last longer when he fucks Blaine today, and maybe if he comes now, he will.

Easing from the kiss with a soft parting press of his closed lips to Blaine's, Kurt starts talking, holding Blaine's gaze, close and blurry. "I bet I could get off like this," Kurt says, "Just rubbing against you."

Blaine whimpers and tries to rut against Kurt, but he's got barely any room to move with Kurt holding him so firmly in place; and without his hands, he can't grip anywhere for leverage. "God, you really are at my mercy, aren't you?" Kurt says, but he neither expects not receives a verbal response; gets instead, Blaine tipping his head back with a groan as Kurt grinds against him harder. "You're aching for it."

Leaning in to whisper in Blaine's ear, Kurt says, "But you are going to wait." He traces the edge of Blaine's ear with parted lips and jerks his hips faster against Blaine until Blaine is shaking with each jolt. "Try not to come," Kurt says, and then he lets himself go, mouthing at Blaine's neck while Blaine's groans vibrate beneath his lips, tugging him closer and closer, and—god, this is going to be messy—thrusting up into his hand against Blaine until he's choking on Blaine's name and shuddering and spilling over hot and slippery and, "Christ," Kurt says as the last of his climax trembles through him.

It takes moment to drag himself back to Blaine, and he looks down to evaluate the mess. It never seemed like that much volume in a tissue, but it's all over his hand and cock, splattered low on Blaine's belly and coating his cock, dripping down to his balls, down to the bed. Blaine is twisting uselessly against him, seeking friction, panting hard. "Kurt, fuck, please."

With his own come as lubricant, Kurt pumps his hand over Blaine's cock a few times, and then releases him to the sound of a frustrated whine. "Soon," he says, "I promise." Careful not to drip anything more onto the sheets, Kurt scoops up as much of the mess on his already soiled hand as he can, holding it gingerly as he twists and leans to reach for a tissue, but Blaine interrupts.

"Let me," he says, and he shuffles forward on his knees, skating them out farther to keep his balance as he tilts forward to find Kurt's messy hand with his mouth. He raises his gaze to hold Kurt's as his tongue swipes wide across Kurt's palm, and then he's shamelessly licking and sucking and moaning around Kurt's fingers.

And Kurt stares and stares and wonders why, instead of feeling disgusted, he's feeling a fresh spark of arousal, sharp and strong, catching in his gut. "Filthy," he whispers to Blaine, who grins—fucking grins—around his fingers, and he adds, "and totally fucking hot."
When Blaine finishes cleaning up Kurt's hand and sits back up on his heels, Kurt leans in for a lingering lazy kiss. The taste of himself in Blaine's mouth isn't unappealing at all. He withdraws gently from the kiss and says, "Your turn." Then he falls supine, back against his pillows, and beckons to Blaine. "Up here," he says.

Kurt reaches for Blaine—who is, between arousal and lack of hands, uncharacteristically clumsy—and helps him balance until he's straddling Kurt's chest and his erection is swaying just inches in front of Kurt's face. Kurt holds Blaine by the hips and bites his bottom lip. Friday night, Blaine made this look easy, but now that reciprocating is imminent, Kurt is doubting his ability to apply, in reality, the cocksucking prowess of his imagination dwelling self. He looks up at Blaine. Finds him gazing back down, steady, placid, and expectant. The black of his pupils has swallowed up the amber of his irises, and his lips are a relaxed almost smile.

From having been in a similar state Friday, Kurt knows well the anticipation Blaine must be suffering, how the stark edge of it focuses everything into a singular, dizzy craving. He won't disappoint Blaine, or spin his patience out too finely. He tips his head forward and slips his tongue around the head of Blaine's cock. He can taste himself on Blaine; his own semen on Blaine here is more than simply not unappealing. It's hot and intimate and glorious. With a soft groan, Kurt licks the traces of his orgasm from Blaine's skin, intermittently catching the taste of Blaine upon his tongue, too, when he swipes his tongue over the tip. He tastes them together, and he loves it.

"Kurt..." Blaine whispers, rocking his hips forward, eager.

Hearing his name, Kurt is done with just tasting. With a deep exhale, he opens his mouth and tugs Blaine forward as he presses forward to take more: thickness and weight and texture and scent. It's forcing his tongue down and his jaw wide, and he's careful of his teeth. His breath comes back in harsh through his nose, and Kurt closes his eyes to savor all of it. He's aware of Blaine responding, hears him murmuring his name and encouragement. Hears him swearing to a god neither of them believe in. Beneath his hands, Kurt feels the tension trembling in Blaine's hips as he holds himself in check.

Kurt works out a shallow sliding rhythm of his mouth that has Blaine giving up eloquence in favor of incoherency. Then Kurt reaches blindly under his pillow for the lube. His cadence falters as he lets go of Blaine to unsnap the cap and squirt a dollop of cool gel onto his fingertips. He grabs Blaine's ass with one hand, more roughly than intended, but he's finding multitasking more challenging than usual. His own dick is increasingly unhelpful regarding his patience and facility. So he's not a sex god. He has to pull his mouth off Blaine to take a lungful of air and concentrate on what he's doing with his hands. He says a quick, "Sorry," to Blaine, who makes an undecipherable noise and tips forward to lean his forehead against Kurt's padded headboard.

Kurt takes his slick fingers between Blaine's buttocks, holding Blaine steady with his other hand. He slides down until he finds where Blaine will open for him. Blaine shudders above him, and whispers, "Kurt..."

"You're so tight," Kurt says to Blaine as he slips his middle finger in a slow revolution around Blaine's rim before pressing against the center with the pad of his finger. Kurt strokes and rubs until he feels the tension ebbing and, as Blaine's body begins to yield, he nudges his fingertip into the constricting heat, just up to his first knuckle. It shouldn't feel so shocking, Kurt thinks, to have his finger inside Blaine given that he's already had his dick in Blaine's ass. But this is something else, even if it's not exactly more. It's about being trusted to touch like this, with more deliberation and less instinct. Kurt works his finger in a little farther. The feel of Blaine here, such a tight fit and so hot, it makes Kurt's cock pulse in sympathy with his finger. "You're going to have to relax for me, honey, if you want my cock in here," he says.
The words have barely left his lips when he feels the muscle spasm and then abruptly dilate, and Blaine bears down upon his finger, taking it deeper into slick sultry velvet, and Blaine's responding to him, gritting out a ragged, "Open me up, Kurt, fuck, just do it."

"Yeah, okay," Kurt mumbles, his heart pounding up into his throat. He drags his finger out, pushes back in. Fascination with how Blaine's body is surrendering to his touch wars with simpler desires, and desire wins easily. He bends his neck to take the head of Blaine's cock back between his lips, licks and sucks as he works his finger in long, even strokes.

"Jesus," Blaine gasps, rolling his hips in a shallow circle between Kurt's mouth and hand.

Kurt is pretty sure he's reached his limit for sex related motor coordination. There's nowhere near enough blood in his brain for this. He bobs his head in an increasingly uneven cadence and messily twists a second finger into Blaine, and soon Blaine is saying his name like a warning. Kurt speeds up all of what he's doing, and then Blaine is tensing, his hips are stuttering forward, pushing deeper into Kurt's mouth and nudging dangerously close to his soft palate. Then Kurt's mouth is flooding with salty-bitter semen and Blaine's ass is clenching hard around Kurt's fingers. Blaine is swearing and grunting and, at the last, crying out long and low.

Kurt swallows—and swallows again because it's a lot more than he expected—and then he pulls back to let Blaine's cock slide from his mouth. And, wow, he just sucked his boyfriend off, and Blaine came in his mouth, and Kurt swallowed it. Which was very much the plan, but Kurt is still astonished. He keeps his fingers buried inside Blaine, slowing their movement to a gentler pace. It takes Kurt a moment to calm his breath and work around the slight discomfort in his throat. Above him Blaine is gasping for oxygen and leaning heavily against the headboard; it doesn't look comfortable. Kurt shifts his other hand to support some of Blaine's weight.

"Hey," Kurt says to get his attention. Blaine's eyes crack open. "I'm not done with you yet," Kurt says with a smile. He's intended to ask Blaine to ride him, but he's not sure Blaine has it in him after that orgasm. "You're going to come again," Kurt tells him, "We both are."

Blaine answers with a weak but encouraging smile and rocks back lazily against Kurt's hand. "How do you want me?" he asks.

That gives Kurt the confidence to say it: "Ride me." He drags his slick fingers out and forward along Blaine's perineum until his fingertips nudge up behind Blaine's balls and away.

Blaine scoots back until he's over Kurt's thighs. He shrugs his shoulders to indicate his bound arms. "Like this?"

"Like that," Kurt affirms, and he reaches for a tissue to clean his hand, and then retrieves one of the condoms from under the pillow and the lube. "I have the utmost confidence in your dexterity." He scoops up against the pillows as he unrolls the condom and slicks himself up. He settles a hand on Blaine's flank and guides him up as, with his other hand, he holds his cock ready for Blaine. "At your convenience," he says, and, though there's nothing dull about his desire, he's glad to have blunted the keen edge of desperation, to be doing this more calmly and with more control, at least for now. He knows that's all going to change soon.

Kurt helps Blaine position himself and bends his legs up behind Blaine for leverage. "I was thinking about this last night, after you left my room," he says.

"Were you?" Blaine asks as he starts to sink down.

As Blaine unfurls around him, it's so mind-bendingly voluptuous, the pleasure dense and heavier.
than gravity alone can make it. Kurt feels like he's going to swallow his tongue. As he arches into it, his head falls back into the soft cradle of his pillows, and his eyes roll beneath his suddenly fluttering eyelids. "Blaine," he moans. "Holy fuck, Blaine."

"Did you get yourself off imagining me like this?" Blaine asks, his breath quick between his words. He takes Kurt in slow increments, lifting up a little before each downward push, swiveling his hips before pulling up.

Kurt can see Blaine's cock stirring from its partially softened state. He tightens his hands around Blaine's waist in lieu of hauling Blaine down against him. "No," he answers. "I was saving it for the real thing."

"And?" Blaine prompts.

"You're so much hotter. Fantasy Blaine didn't doing that amazing thing with his hips..."

Blaine adds an extra flourish on his next go 'round.

"Oh, my god, don't stop," Kurt babbles, "Your ass is amazing."

Breathlessly, Blaine chuckles, cinching down some more and swaying above Kurt, and the changing pressure alternating with marvelous bursts of friction are stirring up the embers of Kurt's passion, burning away the frayed tethers of sanity. When Blaine is close to bottoming out, Kurt doesn't wait for another lift, shift, and push from Blaine. He yanks Blaine down and shoves up hard. The shock of it arcs up Kurt's spine and bursts out his throat, an emphatic (and so eloquent), "Uh!"

Blaine's cries out, sharp and loud. His shoulders snap back as Kurt hauls his hips forward. The way the muscles of his abdomen ripple and contract to keep him upright makes Kurt do it again. He holds tight to Blaine's hips, urging him up, only to jerk him back down to meet another fierce upstroke. Blaine bends like a ragdoll, but recovers like a dancer. "Gorgeous," Kurt breathes. " Fucking, gorgeous, Blaine." He does it again. "God, you're so—"

"Kurt, I don't think I— Fuck."

Kurt feels Blaine trying to twist out of his grip, so he holds on tighter, his fingernails digging into muscle and bone, and his next thrust comes faster and harder than the last.

"Fuck, I can't—" Blaine pleads, arching and flexing and sweating with exertion.

It's almost enough to make him stop. Kurt closes his eyes and recalls the honesty of Blaine's 'push me' and 'use me.' Kurt opens his eyes and finds Blaine's glassy, naked gaze. He doesn't stop, but he does ease up a little, goes to slower, shallower rolls of his hips while Blaine centers himself. "Yes, you can, baby," Kurt says. "And you will." He picks up pace again, bucking up harder, lengthening his strokes again. "This is what you want." Kurt slides one hand up to press behind Blaine's ribcage and splays his fingers, providing support, "So just take it, Blaine."

Blaine nods wordlessly, tosses the sweat from his hair, and gives himself over to the guidance of Kurt's hands.

It's not long before Kurt's perspiring as much as Blaine, his lungs laboring, his throat dry, and his muscles trembling with trying to help support Blaine and maintain the brutal intensity he's set, all while staying off the orgasm coalescing in his balls. He also realizes, from the way Blaine's moans are coloring with frustration, that he needs a third hand to touch Blaine's cock.

"Okay," Kurt says, considering options. "Okay, easy, Blaine. I just need a minute," he says, quiets
his hips and stops, and loosens his hold on Blaine. Blaine lifts his head, rolls his shoulders, and relaxes, settling his weight down on Kurt.

He could untie Blaine, which would be fine, but not really the point of this. His intention was to take care of Blaine. Or they could change position. "We're going to move," Kurt says. "You're going to come in my hand while I fuck you." Kurt manages a weak grin, "But I've run out of hands for you like this."

"Okay," Blaine manages dazedly, and Kurt offers his hands for Blaine to lean into as he lifts himself off Kurt.

The loss of the sublime clasp of Blaine's body is most unwelcome, so Kurt is quick to get his legs under himself. He pulls his pillows down to lay them front of Blaine and hopes the image in his head will pan out.

"Bend over," he says, guiding Blaine to lower his chest and shoulders to the pillows. It's so flagrantly sexual, Blaine with his ass up in the air, his arms caught behind his back, gleaming with sweat, lust drunk and breathless. Kurt takes a moment to commit the visual to memory. "God, what a picture," Kurt says, "You look pornographic."

Blaine turns his face toward Kurt and mumbles, "Thought you didn't like porn." He arches his back, pushing his ass up higher.

"I like you," Kurt says. He's still not sure how feels about watching other people having sex, but this, with Blaine, is so far beyond good and hot, it's damn near majestic. He moves behind Blaine and lines himself up. His stomach clenches as he sees how wet and soft Blaine is for him. It's not like pushing in the first time, into thick choking tension. It's still tight and hot and wonderful, but it's an easy slide home.

Blaine groans in relief, and Kurt lets out the breath he'd been holding as the promise of so much more pleasure wraps back around him. He rocks long and slow, reacquainting himself with the slow burn of being inside Blaine. "I love your ass," Kurt says, dragging out his thrusts to make Blaine shudder and groan. "I love how you take me. It feels so good, Blaine."

"Kurt," Blaine says, low and needy, "Don't..." He gasps. "Don't hold back."

"So hungry for it," Kurt says, pulls out even slower than before, nearly all the way, and he holds for a few heartbeats, flexing his fingers around Blaine's hips. "Who'd even guess?" He closes his eyes. Kurt knows what he's going to do, and just has to do it.

Kurt opens his eyes and slams back in savagely, hard as he can.

Blaine pitches forward with a yelp.

"Polite and proper Blaine Anderson..." Kurt grits out. He draws back slowly again, giving Blaine a chance to brace himself as best he can. When Kurt shoves back in the next time, he doesn't relent; he fucks into Blaine without any intention of gentleness or technique, pounds him like a jackhammer.

And Blaine is sobbing his name, his voice wretched and clinging to it like it's the only word Blaine can remember; and his hands are clenching uselessly in their bonds, grasping at air. Kurt moves one hand from Blaine's hip to to tangle his fingers together with Blaine's, gives Blaine something to hold onto. "I'm right here," he says and squeezes tight.

He bends and reaches with his other hand to find Blaine's cock, the tip slippery with precome, which he uses to slick the motion of his hand as he wraps around. It's hard to sync up his hand and hips,
and he's fast unraveling into his own delirium, but he wants to get Blaine off first. His hips fall out of rhythm as he strokes Blaine, quick and even. "Come on, baby," he urges, "give it up for me."

When Blaine comes, spilling hot into his hand and quaking like his very bones are shattering, his moan is so loud and pained-sounding Kurt is grateful the neighbors don't spend much time at home on the weekends. Kurt fucks him through it until Blaine's cries have quieted and he's bonelessly swaying with Kurt's thrusts. The nexus of pleasure in Kurt's gut is drawing into itself, volatile and threatening. With his last fragment of will, Kurt tugs one of the loose ends of the bow, and works the scarf loose enough for Blaine to pull his hands free one at a time. Blaine's upper arms tremble as he places his hands flat on the mattress and pushes himself up to all fours. That slight change in angle is all it takes for Kurt to lose it, coming in wrenching waves and choking on his own breath.

Once he's done, feeling hollowed out and overfull all at once, Kurt gingerly pulls out and falls back to his heels, and then over to his side, reaching a hand out to wrap loosely around Blaine's ankle. He does nothing but breathe for several heartbeats. At last, he finds his voice and his tongue and remembers how to form words. "Oh my god," Kurt says. "You..."

Blaine slumps to a prone sprawl, but turns his head to look down at Kurt, who feels so far away. "No, you," Blaine says with a wobbly grin.

Kurt wheezes a chuckle. "I don't think I'm ever going to be able to move again."

"God, can you believe we have to go to school tomorrow?" Blaine says unhappily. "I just want to live in your bed from now on."

And wow, yeah, the thought of going through all that mundane... mundanity. Classrooms and hallways and the cafeteria. He'll have to get dressed. Shower. Move. Act like a normal person instead of a sex zombie. "Maybe Artie can wheel me between classes. Or Finn can piggyback me. Or someone can just toss me in a wheelbarrow and push me wherever I'm supposed to be."

Blaine laughs into the mattress. "So long as I don't have to do it."

Kurt rolls to his back and carefully tugs the condom off his dick. There's something cold and damp under his right shoulder. "I have to change my sheets," he says to the ceiling.

"Can we have a nap first?" Blaine asks. "'Cause I really don't think I can get up."

When Kurt looks back to Blaine, Blaine's smile is so sweet and sated, it erases any questions Kurt may have regarding Blaine's enjoyment. The unwelcome distance between them gives Kurt enough energy to hoist himself up the bed to lie next to Blaine. He flops down and throws an arm over Blaine's back and doesn't really care that his pillows are all either on the floor or under Blaine or that they both must reek of sex and are in desperate need of showers. "Good plan," he says before a jaw cracking yawn can swallow his words. "I'll order pizza for dinner."
Kurt's phone buzzes quietly in his pocket, but he doesn't reach for it immediately. It's most likely Blaine letting him know he's got home safely.

"So what do you think?" his Dad asks from the head of the dining table where he's got notepads and newspapers strewn in front of him.

Kurt chews on the inside of his cheek and skims over the final paragraph on his laptop screen one more time. "It's really good. I like it," he says. "It needs a little—" He gestures vaguely as he looks for the most tactful word choice. "Polish, but the structure is good. It's heartfelt—your strength—covers the issues, and hits the right notes."

His Dad relaxes, his shoulders slumping a little in relief. He's been working on his new stump speech the past few nights alone since Kurt's been doing the play. Tonight is the first time they've been able to sit down and look over it together. With the election less than two weeks away, it's all coming down to this final sprint. Poll numbers are looking promising, but it's hardly theirs to lose.

"I'll go through it again before I go to bed," Kurt says as he pokes 'home' on his keyboard. "And do some more extensive edits for you tomorrow." Kurt pulls his phone out and checks his messages.

From Blaine: "Back home & missing you already. I don't know what to do with myself. Homework? Do I even remember how? Call me later?"

Kurt smiles at his phone, and he's glad he's at least got his Dad's campaign to occupy his brain. This is the first evening of no West Side Story and the first afternoon Kurt hasn't hung out with Blaine after school for weeks. He's feeling a little empty even with the campaign to organize. But he does have homework to catch up on, too. And his own campaign, which he is absolutely not thinking about right now.

"That'd be great, Kurt, thank you," his Dad says.

"Sure, Dad. I'm sorry I haven't been able to help you that much this week," Kurt says, then, "Excuse me a sec." He types a reply to Blaine.

To Blaine: "I miss you too. I'll call after dinner. We're kinda busy right now with campaign stuff."

"Don't worry about it. Your plate's been full too," his Dad says.

"Speaking of plates," Kurt says as he spies Finn coming over to the table with a platter full of hot panini sandwiches and a stack of plates and napkins. The scent of hot bread and fresh basil makes his stomach grumble. "Is that dinner?"

"Yep. Mom's bringing the drinks," Finn says distributing the plates as Kurt closes his laptop and sets it on the floor to lean against the leg of his chair. His Dad pushes the newspapers, notebooks, and pens toward one of the spots only guests use. "How's it going?" Finn asks.

"The speech is looking good, so next on the agenda is social media," Kurt says, reaching for a sandwich. "Dad needs to use Twitter more. He hasn't tweeted in nearly a week."

His Dad rolls his eyes and opens his mouth, but Kurt silences his now common protest regarding the difficulties of updating from his phone with a sharp look and a warning, "Dad."
Finn sits down next to Kurt and says, "He's right, Burt. Everything happens on Twitter first. Or at least that's where you hear about it first, which, according to Kurt, in politics is the same thing as happening."

Kurt smiles at Finn as he realizes Finn hasn't been tuning him out as much as Kurt thought he'd been. "Twitter lets you be agile," Kurt says. "And responsive."

"And," Carole says as she exits the kitchen with a stack of glasses tucked under her elbow, a pitcher of decaf iced green tea in one hand, and a pitcher of orange juice in the other. "It helps you appeal to the youth vote."

His Dad chuckles.

"See, someone's been listening, Dad. Just not you." Kurt beams up at Carole as she pours him a glass of juice.

"Fine, Kurt. I'll do better updating the Twitter thing."

"Just remember to text me first, if I'm not there, so I can edit for you." He pokes a finger toward his Dad. "And no text speak, it's vulgar."

It's a working dinner, hashing out little details, assigning jobs, and refining to do lists for the next twelve days. Finn will be covering the mail, phones, and the tire shop (essentially the campaign office). Carole is organizing and coordinating volunteers; Kurt will be drafting press releases, reviewing communications, and scheduling interviews with local media outlets; and Mr. Schuester will be doing what he has been doing: looking important while accompanying his Dad to events and engagements, wrangling people and venues, and overseeing the shooting of the new campaign ad. Kurt sends him a text to confirm.

Dessert is the non-fat vegan carrot cake Kurt made this morning. The icing turned out well. He'll ask Finn to relay his thanks to Rachel for the recipe. Which reminds him (though he tries not to be reminded) he does have his own speech to write for Monday. Kurt can feel the energy boost from helping his Dad begin to ebb. Brittany is so far ahead of him in the polls now, he has no idea how to regain the ground he's lost. He can't fathom it: he has style and substance. At least he's polling ahead of Rick "the Stick".

Still, he thinks about all the empty space on his NYADA application. Kurt crumples his napkin and tosses it onto his plate. "May I be excused, please?" he asks.

"Sure, honey," Carole says.

His phone vibrates tersely in his pocket as he gathers up the dirty dishes and heads for the kitchen. He sets the dishes on the counter and pulls out his phone. It's another text.

From Blaine: "Math homework is tedious. But good news. My parents just told me they're out tomorrow to a benefit dinner in Cincinnati overnight. Do you want to come over? Stay the night?"

The unexpected proposition makes Kurt bite his lip to stop the happy squeak welling up in his throat. He reads the text twice and feels the zing right down to his toes. It's followed immediately by a plummeting hopelessness. His Dad will never go for it, not if Blaine's parents are out. He'll want to talk to Blaine's parents to confirm supervision if Kurt doesn't tell him, and Kurt can't understand it because he's never done anything to justify his Dad's paranoia.

To Blaine: "Of course I want to, but I don't know if I can. I'll have to ask."
"Hey," Finn says, coming into the kitchen with the rest of the plates. "Mom told me to help you with the dishes."

Kurt tucks his phone away. "Wash or dry?" he asks Finn.

"Dry," Finn says, as he always does. Kurt retrieves his gloves from under the sink and runs the water until it's hot while Finn puts everything dishwasher safe in the dishwasher.

There aren't many dishes: glasses, the panini pan and press, chopping board, and knives. Kurt glances to the dining room and sees no one. He can hear the television, so it'll be safe for him to have a discreet conversation with Finn.

"So Blaine told me about you and Rachel," Kurt says. No sense being coy about it.

"What?" Finn sets the glass he's drying back on the counter.

"Rachel told Blaine, Blaine told me. You two have become intimate."

"Wow, I didn't think she'd tell anyone. I mean, not like that or so soon," Finn says, and then his eyes narrow. "Wait, she told Blaine?"

Kurt sighs. He's not wholly sure what's been driving Finn's persistent hostility toward Blaine, but it's not something he wants to get into. He has to live with Finn. "He was her Tony, Finn, and it's Rachel. You know she was going to tell someone as soon as she had someone sitting still long enough to listen."

"Well, yeah, but, dude, that stuff is private." Finn's turning red, and Kurt knows there's definitely more to it with Finn and Blaine.

"I know," Kurt says, "and I promise you, I am not gossiping or working up to blackmail threats. I won't tell anyone."

"Then what's this about?"

Kurt glances over his shoulder again, just in case. "Blaine and I— Let's just say, we've been enjoying our time alone together too."

"Oh," Finn says and studies Kurt like he should be able to see it somehow. "Really?" Then he grins and slaps Kurt on the back. "Good for you, dude, that's awesome!"

"Yes, Finn, which isn't important except that I understand both of us would like to have more private time with our partners and we, unfortunately, live with my Dad and his curfews and open door policies and general overprotective parenting."

"Yeah, that's true enough. Do you need me to cover for you and Blaine or something?"

"No, it's not that," Kurt says, and he doesn't mention that Carole already kind of is, because Finn doesn't need to know that. "I don't want to have to lie or sneak around, even though sometimes, with my Dad, I know it's easier to beg forgiveness." Kurt pauses and dunks the chopping board in the sink. "I wanted to give you a heads up that I'll be having a conversation with my Dad tonight that may become heated or awkward, and it may affect how easily you and Rachel are able to get time alone together too."
"You're going to tell him?"

"Yes. Just about me and Blaine," Kurt says. "Unless it goes abominably, I'll do my best to negotiate any new rules to be as accommodating as possible."

"Dude, you're a braver man than me."

"I'm optimistic," Kurt says lightly, even though he is still convincing himself.

"Well, good luck," Finn says, gives him a lopsided smile, and squeezes his shoulder.

After they've finished with the dishes, Finn wishes him good luck once more and heads upstairs to play Halo. Kurt goes to the family room where his Dad is alone watching television.

"Dad?" Kurt asks from the archway.

"Yeah, buddy?"

"Am I interrupting?"

"Nah, what's up?"

"Blaine has invited me to sleep over tomorrow night."

"Oh." His Dad straightens in his chair and mutes the television. He takes a breath before replying with a question, "So how would that go?"

"I imagine, being Friday..." Kurt smiles as he twists his fingers together and rocks forward onto his toes. "We'll make cookies and popcorn, watch some DVD's, stay up past our bedtimes—"

"Braid each others hair and talk about boys? Come on, Kurt, you know that's not what I'm asking. What would the sleeping arrangements be?"

It was worth a try. Kurt squares his shoulders and soberes. "Well, if you must know, I would be sleeping in Blaine's bed. With Blaine."

"I see. And are Blaine's parents going to be home?"

It takes more will than Kurt expects not to break eye-contact. "No, they're overnight in Cincinnati."

"And that's why you want to go."

Kurt glances down as he nods. "It's part of the reason, yes."

His Dad sighs. "Kurt, you know my rules about parents being there and you sleeping in the same bed with a boy who—"

"Might be gay, yes, I remember. But, Dad, whatever it is you think those rules are keeping me safe from? They're not. Blaine and I, we..." He can't get the words out in any sensible ordering: are in love, are serious, are mature enough, are having sex, need more privacy, know what we're doing.

"You're sleeping together now? Well, maybe not sleeping. But you're not making cookies, either, I'm guessing."
"Yes, Dad," Kurt says, and he forces out the next words to be clear, his voice a little hazy and high
"We're having sex."

Something in his Dad's face changes, it's a strange combination of sadness and tenderness, loss and
pride all at once. "Well, okay," he says, sounding uncertain.

"Is that an 'okay, I can sleep over at Blaine's tomorrow night' okay?"

"No, Kurt. I need a minute. Can you sit down, please?"

Kurt moves into the room and sits on the edge of one of the armchairs, back straight, hands on his
knees to keep himself from fidgeting. He keeps his face relaxed and calm, though his pulse is rapid in
his throat.

"So, how long's this been going on?"

Kurt keeps his voice light, like it's no big deal. "About a week."

His Dad is nodding, "You guys were doing this while we were canvasing last week? Having sleep
overs?" His Dad purses his lips. "I trusted you, Kurt."

"I haven't done anything wrong," Kurt says, willing his spine to be titanium. "Yes, we spent a lot of
time together, but every night, I came home and I slept in my own bed. Alone."

"Kurt—"

"Kurt!"

"Sorry."

"Now, don't go putting words in my mouth. I just hoped you would've talked to me first."

"Yeah, because that wouldn't have been awkward at all," Kurt says.

"Hey, don't be like that. You know how much I like Blaine." His Dad huffs a deep sigh. "Hell, I've
been hoping it would be him for you."

"Oh."

"Yeah, oh."

"So... You're not mad?"

His Dad grimaces. "No, I'm not mad. I just didn't think it would happen so soon. And I thought
you'd maybe talk to me first. Mostly, I don't like that you took advantage of me and Carole being
away most of the week."

"We've been dating since last Spring."
"It wasn't because you guys were away. Everything just happened when it happened. I'm sorry if I disappointed you."

"Hey, no, Kurt. You surprised me more than anything. Yeah, I wish you'd gone about things differently, but I'm not disappointed that you and Blaine, you know."

"Okay," Kurt says and presses his palms together between his knees. The silence stretches out uncomfortably, but it doesn't feel like his Dad is done. "So, may I please sleep over with Blaine tomorrow night?"

"Not this Friday."

"Why not?"

"Because you kept it a secret. I knew something was up Saturday, but I couldn't figure it out. Were you guys sneaking around while we slept? When you knew I wouldn't approve?"

"No! Dad. I mean, we ended up kissing when Blaine borrowed a book, but we didn—"

"Because Carole checked in on you."

"There wasn't a good time to tell you then, but I'm telling you now."

"Okay, then I'll tell you what. You can go to Blaine's tomorrow after dinner, but I want you home by eleven, like always. Or," his Dad says, and he's using his 'there'll be no arguments, young man' tone. "Blaine can come over here and sleep over."

"In the guest room?" Kurt asks. Wonderful.

"He can stay in your room with you, if you want to. Same rules as when your girlfriends stay, Kurt, keep the noise down."

"Oh. Okay," Kurt says, blinking too rapidly in a bizarre combination of relief, astonishment, and embarrassment. He finds the fortitude to smile as he stands up. "Thank you. I'll, uh, talk to Blaine and let you know what we're doing."

Kurt turns to leave the family room.

"One more thing, buddy."

"Yes?"

"Whatever you guys are doing, you're being safe and respecting each other, right?"

"Yes, of course we are."

"And you're enjoying yourselves? It's, you know, good for you both?"

Kurt turns back, can feel the rush of blood burning up his face. "Dad. Oh my god, I'm not talking about this with you."

"Okay, okay, I know, I'm not being nosy, just looking out for my boys."

"Right."
"If you ever do need to talk about this stuff, you know you can talk to me, right? I might not have all the answers for your particular situation, but I'm here for you, Kurt."

Kurt thinks he's more likely to talk to Puck about the sex he's having, but he can still, in theory, appreciate his Dad's offer. "Thanks, Dad."

"Good, okay then."

"May I go?" Kurt asks.

"Yeah, I know you've got homework."

"Good night, Dad."

"Good night, Kurt. Thanks for the help with the speech today."

"Sure, no problem."

Kurt goes upstairs to his room and closes the door. He flops down on the bed and breathes while staring at the ceiling fixture. It went better than he expected, yet he still feels wound up and half in a daze, like he's still anticipating the conversation. He should call Blaine. Kurt picks up his phone and dials.

"Hi, Kurt," Blaine answers.

"I have good news and bad news," Kurt says.

"Me too."

"Oh, you first."

"My parents are still going to Cincinnati on Friday, that's the good news. But I got the date wrong. It's next Friday, not tomorrow. I guess I was too excited to listen to everything my Mom said. But she said you can come over tomorrow night if you want. We just won't have the place to ourselves."

"Okay. Well, my news was that I can come over, but I'm not allowed to stay the night. Or, the alternative was for you stay over here." Kurt takes a breath. "And you're allowed to sleep in my room with me."

"Really? Did you tell your Dad?"

"Yes. I kind of had to."

"He wasn't mad?"

"Sort of, not really. He wasn't happy that I hadn't talked to him before we slept together and was worried we were being sneaky about it and breaking his rules while he was gone."

"So I can sleep in your room with you?"

"Yes, apparently, now you can."

"That's... cool, but, I don't know, kind of weird."
"I know."

"Knowing your parents know? I mean, they'll think we're messing around even if we're not."

"Yeah," says Kurt sympathetically, though he's not sure the weirdness would be enough to keep his hands to himself if Blaine is in his bed with him. "So next Friday, huh?"

"Yeah. I'm sorry about that," Blaine says, "Do you still want to come over tomorrow, or do you want me to go over there?"

"Well," Kurt says, "I know it's not ideal, but if you came over here, we would get to wake up together and have a lazy Saturday morning. You can help me write my speech for the debate next week, and, in gratitude, I'll make you my special low fat orange and vanilla pancakes."

"Mmm. I do love your pancakes," Blaine says, "But I'm not convinced your Dad won't try to hurt me for defiling his little boy."

"I think on balance I've been doing more of the defiling. You've been more of a defilee."

Blaine laughs. "You may have a point. You were very creative last weekend," Blaine says, "I'll have to step up my game."

"Something to look forward to," Kurt says, grinning into the phone. "But I, unfortunately, have homework to do and my Dad's speech to go through again before bed."

"Call me when you're in bed? I may need some verbal guidance for an extra rigorous skin sloughing session."

Kurt laughs, and ignores the twitch of interest from his dick; his brain still needs that blood. "All right. Talk to you later."

#

It's not as awkward as Kurt feared having Blaine over for dinner Friday. At least not with his Dad and Carole. Mostly they talk about the camp possibilities for the Hall and Oates mash-up (mustaches are a must). Finn scowls a lot, mostly at Blaine, who simply smiles back at Finn like they're best friends; but it doesn't reach his eyes. Kurt wonders if the humor is offending some serious Finn-like sensibility about the 80's duo. Kurt explains how satire can be both affectionate and respectful, and Finn seems mostly mollified. Still, Kurt imagines he can hear Blaine's teeth grinding behind his smile and silently hopes whatever the hell is going on with Finn resolves itself before Blaine's smile gives out.

Kurt does end up making cookies after dinner. He decides to indulge and uses the chocolate chip cookie recipe from his maternal grandmother's handwritten book. It uses whole eggs, butter, and both brown and white sugar. Blaine helps, creaming the sugar into the butter with a ferocity that produces astoundingly light and tender cookies. Kurt lets his Dad have two cookies, washed down with chilled soymilk, and quietly thanks him again for letting Blaine stay tonight.

Finn takes a plate of cookies to Rachel's with Kurt's reminder that they aren't vegan so he should take some carrot cake too. Finn promises his Dad he'll be home by eleven.
His Dad suggests a movie, and they end up watching *Gladiator*, because it's one everyone likes. With Finn gone, there's no lingering tension—nothing Kurt's feeling anyway. His Dad and Carole are being very normal; the only change in their behavior seems to be an increase in smiles directed at both him and Blaine. It's unexpected, but reassuring (which is probably why they're doing it). So on the loveseat with Blaine, Kurt feels comfortable enough to pull Blaine back against him into a loose embrace, though it takes about thirty minutes into the film for Blaine to relax completely against him. Carole makes popcorn at their impromptu bathroom break intermission. They sit through the end credits while his Dad and Carole head to bed, and then it's just Kurt and Blaine in the dimmed lights of the family room watching the DVD screensaver jaunt about the television screen.

Blaine rolls over in Kurt's arms and scoots up for a kiss. Kurt is feeling so perfectly relaxed, he returns the kiss lazily to better savor the warm creep of his arousal. Nothing feels desperate, just comfortable and good. He lets himself wallow in the wonderful ache of anticipation, holding Blaine close and twining their legs together. His heart stays steady until Blaine begins to rock against him, and then he's muffling a moan against Blaine's neck, and Blaine is asking him, "Do you want to go up to your room now?"

And Kurt is answering with a whispered, "Yes."

It's silent and dark upstairs, and Kurt is relieved, glad they waited a little longer before coming upstairs. They get ready for bed quietly, sharing the bathroom for teeth brushing and face washing, making eye contact in the mirror without talking. It's nice: companionable and domestic. Kurt has a flash of the future, sharing a bathroom with Blaine in some tidy, tiny New York apartment. Happy, free. He gives Blaine a wet, pepperminty kiss, and leads him to his bedroom by the hand. He closes the door, and anxiety flutters in his stomach as he turns to Blaine.

"My Dad's only rule is that we keep the noise down," Kurt says softly.

Blaine nods and looks a little tense.

Kurt strokes down his arm. "We don't have to do anything. We can just sleep."

"No, Kurt, I want to," Blaine says. "Just maybe not everything, because I'm not sure we can be all that quiet. At least," he says with a grin and an eyebrow quirk, "I'm pretty sure I can't be anything but loud when you fuck me."

"Dirty little freak,'" Kurt says with a wink.

"That I am," Blaine says with a little bow, and then, without further preamble, he starts undressing.

Kurt is still unlacing his boots by the time Blaine is naked and stretched out on his bed on his side, lean and strong with his dick perfectly hard and ready, his head propped up on his hand watching Kurt remove his clothes to either put them in his hamper or hang them neatly in his closet. "Did you have anything particular in mind tonight?" Kurt asks to break the silence. He still feels awkward with Blaine just watching him disrobe.

"I hadn't got much further than being naked together and touching you," Blaine says. Kurt looks over his shoulder at Blaine, sees his gaze dark and brazen tracking over Kurt's body and movements. It's still disconcerting, but Kurt doesn't speed up or try to hide from Blaine's appreciation. It's just modesty, he thinks. He's become so accustomed to portraying himself as anything but a sexual being, it's hard to process the state change now.
"I hope that's not what passes for upping your game," Kurt says.

"Well, I have some ideas," Blaine says, "but I'm not going to spoil them by telling you."

When Kurt removes his briefs, he's caught admiring how unabashedly Blaine stares at his erection, like it's the first time he's laid eyes on it. When Blaine’s tongue comes out to moisten his lips, it jolts hard in Kurt's gut. He doesn't lift his gaze from Blaine's lips, full, moist, and parted. "I have some ideas, too," he says and moves to the bed.

He kneels up and shuffles over to Blaine until Blaine reaches a hand around the back of Kurt's thigh and Kurt cups the back of Blaine's neck. Blaine's gaze lifts from Kurt's erection up to his face and holds steady, wide and wanting. "Tell me," Blaine says softly.

The words thunder in Kurt's ears, the ones he couldn't say almost exactly one week ago in this moment. But today he can. Kurt turns the hand at Blaine's neck to slide up the back of Blaine's scalp and thread his fingers into his hair. Blaine's gaze lifts from Kurt's erection up to his face and holds steady, wide and wanting. "Tell me," Blaine says softly.

Blaine scoots up and leans forward. Kurt cradles his jaw and feels him open up for his cock, the skin and muscle and bone shifting under his hand as Blaine takes him into his mouth in a single delirious slide. Blaine's tongue works along his flesh, a steady pulse of liquid heat and suction. Kurt lets himself stare down at Blaine, sees his lips stretched taut, his lashes a graceful dark sweep against his flushed cheeks. Kurt's dizzy, trying to inhale, but his lungs are full, and he has to breathe out before he can breathe in again, but he can't exhale, because then he'll moan, and, god, he's supposed to keep it down. He has to move the hand cupping Blaine's face to grip with white knuckles the top of his headboard. His chest aches; he's suffocating on pleasure, and Blaine's not letting up, his grip on the back of Kurt's thigh tightens and he's moving his head, sliding slickness and heat and...

Kurt has to let it out or pass out; so he utters a miserable little sound, quietly as he can manage; then gulps a ragged lungful, deepens and steadies his next breath the way he breathes when he's singing. That helps.

Kurt relaxes into it. It's the only way he's going to get through this without waking the house up. He closes his eyes, twists his fingers tighter into Blaine's curls, and tips his head back. His hips fall into a shallow rhythm with Blaine, and Blaine is not rushing, not driving him headlong into an orgasm. He's just going steady and even, holding Kurt on an amazing plateau of bliss.

And Kurt whispers to Blaine, how good it is, how sweet Blaine's mouth is, how he loves being inside Blaine, how nothing he imagined sex would be like compares to the reality of it. It's so much better and more beautiful than he expected. Blaine picks up the pace and Kurt opens his eyes. His thighs tense and the muscles of his belly hollow out to keep up. The tension feeds upon itself, pleasure quickening in Kurt's veins. He looks back down at Blaine, whispers to tell him how pretty he looks with a cock in his mouth and lets his gaze skate along the rest of Blaine, how he's sprawled upon the bed, all golden tan upon the stark white of Kurt's sheets. But Kurt realizes, beautiful as the arrangement may be, Blaine can't be comfortable, taking most of his weight on one crimped wrist joint. Between Blaine's legs, one bent beneath him, the other stretched out loosely, Blaine's cock is untouched, glistening at the tip, and Kurt wants to touch. He wants to lick the glint off it.

"Blaine," he says, a little louder than the various filthy endearments he's been murmuring so quietly. Blaine's eyes flick up to meet his, but Blaine doesn't pause. Rather he redoubles his efforts. Kurt hisses and fists tightly in Blaine's hair. "Wait," Kurt says and pulls him off his cock more roughly than he intended. There's an obscene 'Pop!' and an even more obscene flash of Blaine before he composes himself: his eyes deep and seeking, fluttering closed in surprise, his mouth open, lips
gleaming and swollen, his tongue resting upon his bottom teeth, and Kurt's spit-slick cockhead hovering just above. The desire surges up within Kurt out of the void of his ignorance, vivid and crazed: He wants to come on Blaine's face, over his open mouth, see it smeared and splattered across his lips, dripping down his chin, puddling on his tongue...

Kurt sucks a deep breath and blinks the image back from his forebrain. "Blaine," he says more gently. "Let's lie down so we can do it together, um, like a sixty-nine?"


"Okay," Kurt says with a shaky smile, and he lowers himself to the bed. He takes a moment to kiss Blaine, deep and slow, before falling toward the foot of the bed, while Blaine lies toward the head. Kurt scoots down, until they are on their sides, top to tail, facing each other. Kurt feels simultaneously exposed and transgressive, like, despite the other things they've done, this is pushing at some internal boundary he hasn't bothered to mark. He looks down his body to Blaine and can't think of anything at all to say. So he lifts his gaze back up and wraps a hand around Blaine's cock. Then he rolls forward to lick across the head of it, licks again, curling his tongue and flicking just under the flared crown.

"Kurt," Blaine says in a rush of breath, "that's..." Kurt feels Blaine's hand warm along his thigh, then folding around his cock, and then Blaine's tongue is quick and clever, mirroring what Kurt's is doing to him. When Kurt feels a groan rumbling up from his chest, he muffles himself by sucking Blaine into his mouth as deep as he can comfortably manage. Blaine's answering moan hums around him, and Kurt's eyes roll back in his head. It's hard to concentrate, and he's not practiced enough at sucking cock to not need to concentrate. It's a little awkward, upside down. He can't lick where he knows is most sensitive, and he's even more aware of his teeth. It's still fantastic, the feel of Blaine so thick and solid in his mouth, the scent and taste of him. But Kurt knows he lacks the skill for much more than gamely sucking and bobbing his head.

And since that's how Blaine is reciprocating, Kurt knows there's no reason for complaint. His cock is wrapped in the slick, rhythmic pull of Blaine's mouth, and he's tumbling deeper into the single-minded fog of lust. Everything else is melting away, and his existence is centered in his hand and mouth on Blaine, Blaine's hand and mouth on him: breathing, sucking, sliding, striving.

But then Blaine is taking him even deeper and moving his hand from the base of Kurt's cock to grab his ass. And then, before Kurt can process it, Blaine is moving, nearly choking on Blaine's cock as the sudden movement jostles him forward. He has to pull back, coughing and gasping. Blaine lets Kurt's cock slip free, to quietly ask, "Are you okay?"

Kurt gets his diaphragm back under control and answers, just as quietly,"Yes, you just surprised me."

"Okay," Blaine says and rubs his hands up the backs of Kurt's thighs until they're resting on his buttocks. He nudges down Kurt's cock with his nose, brushes his lips across the base near Kurt's balls, and asks, "Comfortable enough?" Blaine kneads his ass as his lips move to Kurt's balls, mouthing at them so gently.

Kurt closes his eyes and whispers, "Yes." He's feeling weirdly untethered in the moment, with Blaine taking more initiative while Kurt's confidence diminishes. He hadn't planned for this, hadn't thought about it in advance. And, he realizes with a hot rush of blood to his face, Blaine's never touched his bare ass like this, with so much intention. Kurt feels so vulnerable and turned on, it aches through him, searing, fierce, and primal. He licks a wide, wet stripe down Blaine's cock, swirls his
tongue over Blaine's balls and then kisses his way back up to the tip of his cock and takes him back in his mouth.

Recovering his prior rhythm is a challenge, for Blaine's mouth is opening beneath him, and he's licking and taking Kurt's balls carefully into his mouth, holding them in sweltering slight suction, his tongue moving softly around them. Kurt falters, can only find enough sanity to breathe harshly through his nose and suckle weakly at Blaine. His weight comes down onto his elbows as his thighs quiver with the effort of keeping his hips held above Blaine.

Kurt cracks his eyes open and stares at his bedroom door, which is closed, but all he can think about is how it's unlocked; and it's such a flimsy barrier between his normal, careful life at home and this naked, amazing thing he's doing with Blaine.

And then Kurt stops thinking altogether.

Blaine is pulling and pushing at him all at once; his hands are tugging the cheeks of Kurt's ass apart; his mouth is releasing Kurt's balls, and he's licking up behind them, along tender, secret flesh: light, ticklish, tentative slips of his tongue. The fiery heat that surges up through Kurt is so overwhelming, he just can't. His brain is a furnace of incoherent turbulence. Blaine's cock slips free of his mouth, and he pants raggedly against Blaine's skin, whimpering wordless pleas for something... Anything.

When Blaine's tongue reaches his hole, soothing over the sensitive muscle with soft, slow licks, it's deliriously dirty, and, god, maybe Kurt shouldn't, but he does, so much: he wants it. Blaine's lips press a kiss to him right there, opening against him, his tongue circling and pressing with gentle insistence. And Blaine is holding him open with one hand, finding his cock with the other and stroking Kurt, complement to the work of his tongue.

The sensation is dragging at his brain like a receding wave, hauling him down into some unfamiliar place to drown him. Kurt doesn't want to resist it, wants to let it take him down. Wants it to last forever, but he knows he hasn't even got a fragment of forever in him. His rough breathing is getting louder and a terrible rasp is infecting every exhale, so Kurt rallies just enough will to find Blaine's cock again, sucking it in, filling his mouth to quiet his moans and anchor himself to the shore. He holds Blaine, pumping his fist as he sucks; it's a blind fumble since every other bit of his awareness is focused on Blaine's mouth, Blaine's hand.

He doesn't even realize he's close. Blaine points his tongue and pushes. As Blaine breaches him, Kurt's orgasm blasts through him like a blitzkrieg. He comes with Blaine's cock in his mouth and Blaine's tongue in his ass. The intensity of it terrifies him even as he loses his grip and is swept away.

There's no time to recover or steady himself, for Blaine releases his hold on Kurt's cock and ass and immediately shoves both hands down into Kurt's hair. His fingers sliding over his scalp and digging in as Blaine bucks up against him, begging for his release desperately against Kurt's thigh. Kurt puts everything he's got left into it, and he moans his own relief as the hot pulse of Blaine's climax spills over his tongue.

It feels like his bones have been replaced with overcooked noodles and his muscles with pudding when Kurt lifts himself to roll off Blaine. He's still too hot and out of breath. And overwhelmed. He presses his face into his bedding and lies there, eyes pinched shut and panting, waiting for gravity to reassert itself. He hears the rustle of Blaine moving next to him, hears the rip of Blaine pulling tissues from the box, feels the mattress dip and bow. He still can't bring himself to move or open his eyes. Eventually, Blaine's hand rests on the back of his calf and Blaine's voice comes, concerned, "Kurt? Are you all right?"

Kurt makes a noise against the duvet, but about all it conveys is that he's not completely dead.
"Did I... break you?" Blaine laughs a little, but he sounds worried.

Kurt opens his eyes and turns his head far enough to say clearly, "No." But that's about all of his vocabulary he can access.

Blaine moves to lie down next to him, his face resting on the bed turned toward Kurt, close enough to be blurry. He strokes Kurt's back with one hand. "Hey," he says. "What's going on? Talk to me, please?"

"Blaine," Kurt manages, and he gets his hands flat on the bed either side of his chest and pushes up to all fours and then back to his knees. He's a little woozy, like there's still not enough blood in his brain.

Blaine sits up beside him, both hands touching him, soothing caresses on his arms to take his hands. "Was that—? Was it bad?"

"No," Kurt says quickly. "No, it wasn't bad, it was just a lot." He forces a weak smile. "I wasn't expecting it. It was a lot."

"Too much?" Blaine asks.

Kurt lets out a breath. "Honestly?" he says, and meets Blaine's concerned gaze. "Yes."

"I'm sorry," Blaine says, "I should have asked first. I shouldn't have assumed—"

"No, it's okay," Kurt says. He gestures vaguely. "I just... I think I still have some issues to work through."

"Issues?"

"About." Kurt bites his lips and twists his fingers together in his lap. "Being penetrated? God, it sounds dumb."

"No, no, hey," Blaine puts his arm around Kurt's shoulders and pulls him close as he leans back against the headboard, Kurt half sprawled against his chest. "No, that's fine, Kurt. I just didn't know."

"I. Yeah," Kurt says to his hands. He should have talked to Blaine about this, told him. Then lifting his head back up to look he asks, "Do you want to fuck me, Blaine?"

Blaine doesn't reply immediately. "I don't know how to answer that."

"Try honestly?"

"Then, yes, I do, because I want to share everything with you. But I definitely don't want to if you've got reservations. So, no, not until you're ready, and you want me to."

"And what if I'm never ready?" Kurt twists his neck so he can look up and see Blaine's face.

Blaine glances away and takes a breath. He looks back down at Kurt and smiles; it's sincere: it reaches his eyes. "Then that's totally fine, too."

"Thank you," Kurt says, and snuggles against Blaine. It's wonderful knowing that neither of them is going to have to get up and leave; they can just be together. "What you did to me," Kurt starts after a few minutes of silence. "Is that something you want me to do for you?"

"You mean rimming?" Blaine asks.
"Yeah," Kurt says, the naming of it curdling something hot in his head. "Rimming."

"It's something I've thought about. But," Blaine says with a fond smile. "As always, Kurt. We're not going to do anything you're not completely comfortable with. And from now on? You're setting the pace. I promise I'll hatch no more secret plans to up my game, okay?"

Kurt laughs. "Okay. And I promise to tell you things so you don't have to worry about tripping over my stupid issues." He caresses Blaine's chest, idly circling his nipples with his fingertips. "For what it's worth, it felt really good, so it is something I want to do for you. Just maybe not straight away."

Blaine strokes his hair and doesn't say anything, and it's fine.

The front door shuts, rattling the walls. Kurt looks at his clock. It's just past eleven, and he's so glad he didn't just spend the last hour driving back from Westerville. He tilts his head up to kiss Blaine's jaw. "I'm so glad you're here."

Blaine tightens his arms around Kurt. "Me too."
Part IIIB: Disconnection - Chapter 4

Coach Sylvester's latest campaign ad, with its crazed baboons and Monty Python-esque animations, airs Sunday night during the news. Kurt finds it ridiculous and starts to laugh, until he looks to his Dad for his reaction and sees anger.

"What the hell was that?" his Dad yells at the room. Kurt flinches; Finn stares at the television, stunned and unblinking.

"Dad," he says calmly, "It's absurd. No one's going to believe that. Coach Sylvester's just getting desperate. She's polling behind you, and Salazar is gaining ground on her."

"Kurt, she's making me look like an idiot."

"She's making herself look like an idiot."

"No, you don't get it, Kurt. You think everybody is sophisticated like you, but they're not. They see something like this? Even if they don't believe it, it affects them. All they'll remember when they see my name is that crap." His Dad's face is flushing with anger.

"Dad, calm down," Kurt says, because what's worrying him is not the ad but the way his Dad is reacting. The ad is like the emotional version of the gut buster Coach Sylvester served his Dad, except his Dad doesn't see it that way, isn't laughing it off the way he usually laughs off Coach Sylvester's bizarre hostility.

Instead he's turning an alarming shade of red. "Well, what am I supposed to do, Kurt? How am I supposed to respond to that?"

Kurt takes a breath. "I think you're best to ignore it. You're better than this. Responding to it as if it's serious only gives her credibility when she has none."

"Yeah, that worked real good for John Kerry."

"You could release your medical records?" Finn suggests. "Didn't that guy McCain do that?"

"No," Kurt shakes his head, doesn't bother pointing out McCain lost, too. "Dad's health doesn't need to be part of the debate. We don't want to go there." Kurt is sure he definitely doesn't want to go there. "It's a distraction, and that's what Coach Sylvester wants—to remind everyone the other guy had a heart attack."

"I can't do nothing," his Dad says, fists clenched on his knees. "There's no way I'm doing nothing."

Kurt sighs. "I'll talk to her tomorrow, Dad. See if I can get her to pull the ad." He must have some goodwill left with Coach Sylvester, but what it will be worth, Kurt can't guess.

#

It turns out it's not worth much. Monday pretty much sucks. The monumentally stupid and pointless dodgeball game after Glee practice only makes it worse. Kurt comes home late with a red, stinging face and an anger he channels into chopping onions into as perfect and fine a dice as he can. Blaine
is staying for dinner and keeps him company in the kitchen, retrieving things Kurt needs as he needs them, but his primary goal seems to be to make Kurt smile.

"I couldn't have told you the difference between a citrus zester and a ginger grater three weeks ago," Blaine says, tucking the citrus zester neatly into Kurt's outstretched palm. "I'm a pretty good Kitchen Nurse."

Kurt doesn't smile, but he is getting closer. "The title you're looking for is Commis Chef." He zests a lemon into a custard cup.

"I prefer Kitchen Nurse," Blaine says, "since that makes you a Food Surgeon, and I always wanted to date a doctor."

The side of Kurt's mouth twitches. "Chef de Cuisine," he says.

"Gesundheit," Blaine says.

It's stupid, and it doesn't make any sense. But Kurt laughs, even though his cheek still hurts, his Dad is still mad, and he can't believe he's starting to think about pulling a John Kennedy.

After dinner, lying on his bed with his shirt rucked up under his arms and Blaine licking a curlicue on his solar plexus, Kurt is still preoccupied. "I'm not ruthless enough," he says.

It's possible he needed some sort of segue. Blaine lifts his head and says, "What?"

"To win. I can't do it."

"Oh, wow. I must have really been doing that wrong," Blaine says, but his smile is tentatively amused.

"Blaine," Kurt says. "You're wonderful and sexy, I'm just..." Kurt waves his hands in a manner he hopes conveys his emotional discomfort.

"You're flailing?"

Kurt snorts a sudden laugh, because, literally and figuratively, that's pretty much it. "Yes. I'm flailing."

"Okay," Blaine says as he scoots up, smoothing Kurt's shirt down. "Do you want to talk? Would that help? Or would you rather I just took your pants off?"

"Because blowjobs make everything better?" Kurt asks smiling up at Blaine.

"Because blowjobs make everything better," Blaine confirms. "At least it's my current working hypothesis, but I need to collect more experimental data."

Kurt raises an eyebrow. "There are a lot of variables to control for."

"I know," Blaine says, bending forward to kiss Kurt on the end of his nose. "I'm going to need a lot of data. And a spreadsheet."

"We can definitely do your science project in a bit. " Kurt says with a grin, leaning up and tilting his head to steal a quick kiss as Blaine straightens. He reaches for Blaine's hand and gives it a squeeze. "But I actually do want to talk."
Blaine squeezes back, and his smile fades as he nods. "You're worried about the moral cost of success."

"I knew you were listening," Kurt says, scooting up against the pillows. Blaine settles next to him. "Coach Sylvester told me the only way to win is to fight dirty. I'm scared she's right."

"Are you thinking about your Dad's campaign or yours?"

"Both. More mine than his. I know he's talking to Mr. Schuester about running an attack ad himself, but I really don't want him to go negative." Kurt sighs. "For me. I just can't see how to get through this without having to compromise myself in some way, and I need this on my application."

Blaine nods, but lets Kurt continue.

"It seems like the people who play dirty get the rewards and the success. When we just work hard and do our best, it's a crapshoot, and the other guy's dice are loaded."

"I don't think that's always true, Kurt."

"No?"

"Nope," Blaine says. "Look, sometimes the bad guys do win, sometimes people do horrible things to get ahead, but their motivations are already wrong right from the start, so anything they achieve using those means isn't really a success, even if it looks like it."

"So," Kurt says, "you don't think you can use less than pure means to achieve your goals? No matter how good the goal or how desperate the need to win is?"

"I don't know. Not really, I guess. I think if you want to be good, you have to do good. And if you want to do good, you have to be good."

"Tautological," Kurt says. "The world would stop working if no one ever compromised themselves."

"Compromise isn't the problem. It's that whatever it is, if it's got corruption at its core, then that's got to come out sometime and ruin things. It can't lead to anything truly good," Blaine says. "Look, Kurt, you saved the musical by doing everything right, and the reason you're running for class president isn't just to pad your application or to get the approval of your class. You've actually got a real platform, things you want to change for the better for everyone."

"All right, that may be true," Kurt says, and realizes Blaine may have a higher opinion of Kurt's motives than Kurt does. "But, at this point, I still don't see what I can do to save my campaign. Brittany's telling people they used my face for the new My Little Ponies. No one cares that it's irrelevant nonsense. They just think it's funny. Funny gets votes."

Blaine shrugs. "I don't think there are any easy answers. If it were easy to change the world, everyone would do it." Blaine pats Kurt's thigh. "Do more good, speak more truth."

"Maybe. But as important as good nutrition is, I'm not sure aspiring to be western Ohio's teen version of Jamie Oliver is really inspiring anyone, no matter how beneficently motivated and truth-speaking I am."

"Well," Blaine says, and, with a tentative smile, he turns toward Kurt, reaches up, and gently touches Kurt cheek where it still stings. "What if you talked about this?"
By Wednesday afternoon, Kurt is convinced within a small margin of error that Blaine's blowjob hypothesis is correct. At least, he's feeling nothing but bliss, lying on his bed, his ass on the edge and his legs hanging over the side with Blaine kneeling between them, kissing and stroking his thighs as the last glimmers of Kurt's orgasm fade, leaving him lax and heavy-limbed. It's been a good day overall. His rewritten speech about bullying was the best at the 'debate', and with Rachel's friendship renewed and unequivocal support given, he's going to start climbing in the polls.

"Hey," he stretches his hand down until his fingertips just brush the top of Blaine's head. "You're too far away. Come up here."

Blaine climbs up next to him until he's fully on the bed, his hips level with Kurt's head. Kurt turns to his side, and he can see how hard Blaine is in his trousers and how much their tight dark denim doesn't leave to his imagination. "So how can I make your day better, sir?" he says, looking up at Blaine through his eyelashes and dragging two fingers along the pronounced ridge of Blaine's erection.

Blaine laughs. "Cheesy," he says.

"I was aiming for coy," Kurt says archly.

"You missed," Blaine says, "by, like, a mile."

"Don't make me use my sexy face," Kurt says, swapping his fingers for his whole hand and rubbing harder.

"Ooh, okay, so long as you use something," Blaine says, growing breathless.

Usually Blaine has got his own trousers off long before it's an issue, so Kurt is finding it pleasantly novel amidst his thirteen days of sexual experience, to be undoing Blaine's belt and fly himself.

Kurt teases with his tongue as he gets Blaine's pants and underwear down his thighs, licking light, ticklish flicks around and into Blaine's navel, over the head of his cock, across the tender skin where his leg joins his body. Blaine twists and gasps in breathless laughter. As he moves down Blaine's legs to strip the garments the rest of the way off, along with Blaine's socks, Kurt gives Blaine enough respite to catch his breath. With a clunk, Blaine's phone falls from his trouser pocket. Kurt picks it up and slides it across the bed toward Blaine. Then, smiling up at Blaine, he positions himself on his elbows between Blaine's legs. "Can you pass me the lube?" he asks.

Blaine reaches under the pillow and hands it down to Kurt. It gives Kurt a flash of Blaine pressing the citrus zester into his hand Monday. A strange overlay of familiar, comfortable togetherness. Kurt sets the lube within easy reach and settles his weight down into his shoulders. He wants to take his time today. Throughout the week, they've been doing this: slowing down, paying more attention, learning the subtleties of how they each respond. Kurt is beginning to feel like he's getting pretty good at fellatio, or at least better at sucking Blaine's dick. His gag reflex is persistent, but so is he. And anyway, he's thinking about rimming today, trying to decide if he's ready to do that for Blaine.

So instead of starting at the tip of Blaine's cock as has been his habit, he starts at its base with his mouth, soft closed-mouth kisses. He wraps one hand loosely around Blaine's shaft, but doesn't slide it up to the head, just holds on. Moves his other hand between Blaine's legs to brush his thumb over Blaine's balls. Listening to Blaine's breathing and taking note of the tension in his belly and thighs,
Kurt opens his mouth and adds his tongue to the mix of hands and lips. Eases down until he's sliding his thumb to the side, rubbing the hard line of tendon between Blaine's groin and thigh, and curling his tongue over the heavy shape of Blaine's balls. He inhales deeply, the heady sex-scent of Blaine.

There's an obnoxious electronic chirp, and Blaine swears. "Just a... text," he says. "Sorry."

Kurt doesn't look up. He's too focused on opening wider and maneuvering Blaine's balls into his mouth, because it felt really good when Blaine did it to him.

"Kurt," Blaine murmurs. Then there's the wonderful slide of Blaine's fingers across his scalp as Blaine pushes one hand into Kurt's hair to hold him gently in place. "Please, don't stop."

Kurt hums in response; his mouth is full. He fumbles one handed for the lube to bring it closer, loosening the cap, with the other he pushes at Blaine's thigh, coaxing it up off the bed; still deciding between finger-fucking Blaine while he blows him or rimming him while he jerks him off, or maybe he could start with one and move to the other.

Blaine's phone chirps again.

"Let me just... in case," Blaine says, and Kurt glances up to see Blaine reaching for his phone. Kurt watches him but doesn't stop. He eases his mouth off, moves one hand back to Blaine's balls, lifting them gently and extending his tongue to curl up behind them. Blaine's hand twitches in his hair, and Blaine lets out a thick, stuttering sigh. Encouraged, Kurt pushes Blaine's thigh back farther and bends his head lower to better lick up behind his balls. Blaine groans and whispers his name. Kurt looks up again, and this time he sees Blaine is actually trying to type a text one-handed.

Kurt lifts his head. "Something important?" he asks.

"No, just trying to send a quick 'No, we're busy tonight'," Blaine says, grimacing as he fumbles with his phone one-handed. His other hand drifts to the back of Kurt's neck. "You don't have to stop."

"I'll wait until I've got your full attention," Kurt says dryly, and scoots up a little. "What was the question?" he asks, curious.

Blaine says, "Sebastian wanting to know if we wanted to do Drag Queen Wednesday again."

"What?" Kurt asks, feeling the warmth of his returning arousal chill. "You're texting him now? While I'm...?"

Blaine makes a face Kurt cannot in any way decipher.

"And, wait, why are you texting with him at all?"

Blaine says, "I'm not, really. He texts me sometimes. I answer. It's polite."

"Polite?" Kurt asks. And his day had been going so well. "Since when does Sebastian deserve polite?"

"Kurt, he's a Warbler," Blaine says reasonably, robotically. "I can't pretend he doesn't exist."

Blaine in robot mode is nothing Kurt wants while they're in bed together. "If you're worried about your manners, texting him while I've got my face between your legs? That's not polite at all. To me."

"Oh," Blaine says, turning red. "I didn't. I guess—"
"Really? It didn't occur to you?"

Blaine's voice is softer, smaller. "No! Kurt, it wasn't that." Blaine sits up, retreating from proximity with Kurt. He runs a hand over his hair and makes that undecipherable face again. "It was kind of turning me on. Texting him while you were..."

Kurt feels his eyes widening. "Blaine. What?"

"Telling him no while you were busy down there, it just, it was good, okay?"

"Oh, all right. You want to call him to tell him no while I suck your dick, then?" Kurt can't keep the drip of sarcasm from his tone. He regrets his words almost as soon as he says them, but Blaine doesn't flinch from them.

But he does break eye contact. "Kurt."

"You know I don't like him."

"Yeah, you hardly make that a secret."

"And how do you feel about him, Blaine?"

"Mostly, I don't."

"Apparently you feel something."

Blaine shrugs. "It's... flattering that he likes me, I guess."

"It's creepy, Blaine. The way he is is creepy."

"I'll grant it's inappropriate," Blaine says. "But I don't think he means it that way. He probably thinks he's funny and charming."

"It's not," Kurt says, "Or are you actually charmed?"

"Kurt."

"Wait. You like him liking you."

"It. It's not that. Not entirely, anyway. I don't know."

Kurt cocks his head and crawls up closer to Blaine. "Do you like him wanting you but not being able to have you?"

"Um?" Blaine shifts up against the pillows even farther, fidgeting with a fold in the sheets.

"Because..." Kurt takes a breath and wonders if what he's going to say counts as pushing. It feels like pushing to him, fills him up with that same strange and primal pull as seeing Blaine's hands tied with Kurt's own scarf. "You're mine?"

Blaine's pupils balloon, crowding out the dark gold of his irises, and his breath hitches hard enough it comes out like a hiccup.

"Oh, okay," Kurt says, "I see." He's reeling with this new knowledge of Blaine, and what it may mean. He searches Blaine's face, which, despite the arousal, is also registering nervousness. They haven't been doing this very much this week, this thing Kurt's not sure how to name, where Blaine
wants—almost needs—Kurt to push him, and Kurt has to figure out how. It still scares him as much as it rouses some sleepy, neglected desire within him. Kurt's also not sure he can do this when they're not truly alone. His closed door gives them time and privacy, but it's not absolute. Kurt has to feel more secure than he presently does to be able to act freely with Blaine.

"Okay, baby," Kurt says, more softly, gently. "It's okay." Now isn't a good time to push, but he can at least provide comfort and satisfaction. He crawls up and rests his hands on Blaine's thighs, rubbing to soothe, then lowering his head to nuzzle and kiss the tender skin just above the crease of his thigh joint, up higher to his belly until the silken heat of Blaine erection brushes his cheek.

"Kurt, please," Blaine pleads, sinking both hands into Kurt's hair and tugging. "Come up here with me."

So Kurt doesn't take Blaine into his mouth, instead he keeps going, unbuttoning Blaine's shirt from the bottom and kissing his way up, over the trembling muscles of Blaine's belly, the unyielding hardness of his breastbone behind which Blaine's heart beats a forceful tattoo. At Blaine's neck Kurt pauses to suck at a spot just below the line of Blaine's collar: a promise for later, a reminder. Then he wraps one hand around Blaine's shaft, swiping back and forth over Blaine's cockhead with his thumb as he sucks to draw blood to the surface of Blaine's skin, feels the heat of it blossom beneath his tongue. He doesn't stop until Blaine gasps and flinches away from his mouth.

"Kurt," Blaine says in a scarce, broken whisper.

Kurt lifts his lips and tightens his fist. The bruise on Blaine's neck is much larger and darker than Kurt intended. He licks over the angry spot to soothe and drags his hand up Blaine's length. There's too much friction, and Blaine groans, almost too loudly. "Shh," Kurt hushes him, and then, "Friday," he murmurs against Blaine's neck, loosens his fist enough to slide back down to the root of Blaine's cock. Blaine arches into it. "Friday," Kurt repeats, "I'm coming over, and we'll have so much more time for this."

"You can..." Blaine swallows. "You can stay the night?"

Kurt lifts his head so he can make eye contact. "Yes, my Dad said it would be okay, so long as we promise to stay in and not drink any alcohol."

Blaine gives Kurt a slack smile. "That shouldn't be..." Blaine arches into another slow stroke of Kurt's hand with a ragged gasp. "...too much trouble."

Kurt lets go of Blaine long enough to squeeze a dollop of lube into his palm. He wraps his hand back around Blaine, slick and cool. He says, "Right now, I just want you to come for me."

"Kiss me," Blaine says, and Kurt does. He kisses while he strokes Blaine's cock, until Blaine's moaning through his orgasm into Kurt's mouth, and Kurt is swallowing down the sound.

#

Kurt and Blaine plan to meet at The Lima Bean after school on Thursday. Blaine is heading home for dinner: his mother has been complaining she barely sees him anymore, since he's been spending so much time at Kurt's. Kurt wasn't invited, and that's fine. He can appreciate Blaine's family wanting some quality time.
Kurt arrives first, finding their usual table near the window and pulling out his phone to check in on his Twitter timeline. He goes straight to his list for the special election and scrolls through the day's tweets. Salazar's new ad hasn't run yet, for which Kurt is grateful, though he doubts Coach Sylvester will have any more luck getting him to hold it than he had asking Coach Sylvester to pull her ad. She only doubled down with the even nuttier Married to a Donkey ad.

If it weren't what it is—an election for Congress affecting people's lives in serious ways—it would be funny. It's not funny. And Kurt wonders—not for the first time, and he's sure not for the last—how adults seeking power can be so irresponsible. They don't deserve it. At least his Dad decided against running an attack ad, but Kurt is disappointed that it took Salazar's escalation to show his Dad just how wrong this kind of mud slinging is.

Kurt hasn't had a chance to talk to Santana; he's not even sure she would welcome anything he has to say. They're not really friends; allies sometimes, but not friends. Still, Kurt only hesitates a moment more before going to his contacts. He scrolls until he finds Santana Lopez and composes a text.

To Santana: "If you need to talk, I'm here. You can call me or text me anytime. I'll keep my phone on."

He taps 'send' just as a shadow falls across his table. "I'm so sorry you didn't make it to Scandals last night. It would have been such a treat to see you in your Sunday best," Sebastian says.

Kurt pockets his phone, schools his expression to haughty neutrality, and looks up. "Sebastian, what an unexpected pleasure. I'm sure you're just leaving. Don't let me keep you."

"Where's Blaine?"

"Why? Are you still having trouble finding your way around Dalton?"

The bell on the door jangles, drawing both of their attentions. And there's Blaine, his smile for Kurt twisting as he spots Sebastian.

"Hey, Sexy," Sebastian says to Blaine.

"Really?" Kurt mutters under his breath, but neither Blaine nor Sebastian hear him. They're looking at each other; Sebastian eagerly, Blaine warily. Kurt resists the urge to sigh.

"Hi, Sebastian," Blaine says.

"So, I was hoping to catch up with you," Sebastian says. "In the flesh."

He makes it sound so dirty. Kurt rolls his eyes at the table. Blaine sidles behind Kurt's chair, his hand brushing over Kurt's shoulders, to take the seat opposite the side of the table where Sebastian is standing.

"What did you want?" Blaine asks lightly, as if it's not obvious. He's looking at Kurt more than he's looking at Sebastian. Kurt rests his hand on Blaine's forearm and smiles at him. He has no idea what this is, but Sebastian seems oblivious to the tension, smiling his crocodile smile and pulling out the chair opposite Blaine to sit, uninvited.

They make awkward small talk about inane Warbler related things. Sebastian flirts, Blaine stammers and blushes, and Kurt grinds his teeth. He should go get the coffee, but he does not want to leave Blaine alone with this guy. Kurt still doesn't really know what to make of Blaine's feelings about Sebastian. But he knows what to make of his own. Sebastian is bad news, no matter how well Blaine may wish to think of him. The Dalton blazer isn't blinding Kurt to the danger. It worries Kurt, how
naive Blaine's being, almost willfully so. But Kurt, watching how differently Blaine responds to
Sebastian in person versus in a text, can see there's a big difference between the idea of Sebastian
and the reality of him for Blaine. Kurt also knows he doesn't want any of the reality of Sebastian near
their relationship.

"So, hey," Sebastian says, "how about a movie tomorrow night? Thirteen just opened."

"I don't think so, Sebastian," Blaine says.

"You can bring your princess, if you want. Unless you think it would upset her delicate sensibilities."

"What?" Blaine says, but without emphasis, like he's honestly bewildered.

Kurt speaks up. "No, I'm afraid we have other plans already, Sebastian. I promised Blaine a very
thorough makeover tomorrow night."

"Well, you guys do know how to have fun," Sebastian says, looking only at Blaine, as if Kurt's not
even there. "Maybe some other time?"

"Sure," Blaine says, nodding absently and not quite meeting Sebastian's gaze.

Sebastian, mercifully, makes an excuse about Lacrosse practice and leaves.

"What the hell was that?" Kurt asks.

Blaine shakes his head. "He's just like that. He doesn't mean anything by it."

"He's calling you 'Sexy' now," Kurt says.

"He's just trying to make friends and fit in."

"The only place he wants to fit in is you, Blaine."

"Kurt, god, don't be crass. Or jealous."

"Jealous?" Kurt shakes his head and reaches to take Blaine's hand. "Blaine, honey, I am not jealous."

"Then what is it?"

"I don't trust him not to hurt you."

"Come on, he's a Dalton man, and a Warbler."

"I know how much that means to you, Blaine, but it may not mean that much to him. You're too
quick to see the best in people sometimes."

"Maybe you're too quick to see the worst."

Kurt purses his lips. "I just don't want to ever be having to tell you 'I told you so' about him, Blaine.
Just, be careful."

"Be careful?" Blaine asks, incredulous. "So, okay, he likes me, Kurt. What's wrong with that? Does
it seem so unreasonable or dangerous for someone to like me?"

"No, god, no. You're amazing. Everyone should love you." And that's when Kurt gets it, Sebastian's
appeal to Blaine: he likes Blaine and Blaine hasn't had to do anything for it.
Blaine gives him a lopsided smile. "Don't worry about him. He's just another Warbler. Like us."

Kurt nods and returns the smile, something sharp and unpleasant twisting in his chest as some things turn into focus. "Okay," Kurt says, but it's provisional. He thinks about what Blaine said about bad motivations and bad actions tainting even good goals. Surely loving Blaine is a good goal (if Sebastian is even capable of the emotion), but Sebastian isn't driven by anything pure, and Kurt realizes he has to let Blaine discover this for himself; he only hopes that knowledge doesn't come at too high a cost. But for now, letting Sebastian come between them in any way is giving that creep too much power, power Kurt will not allow him. "Let's get some coffee," Kurt says.

Friday night finds Blaine face down on his bed with Kurt straddling his thighs, pinning Blaine's wrists either side of him to the bed with his hands, and slowly licking the white spatters of his own semen from the dip of Blaine's lower back. Beneath Kurt, Blaine is hot, sweating, and squirming. Blaine's bedroom door is wide open and his stereo is cranked up, playing something electronic and slow, full of a heavy bass beat Kurt can feel in his balls even after his first orgasm of the evening. Kurt doesn't know the music, but he fully approves of Blaine's selection. It seems to have erased his refractory period, his cock is still hard, still craving. Or maybe it's just Blaine, so lost to his pleasure and vulnerable. He's resisting nothing, taking everything, and that's got Kurt feeling loose and uninhibited himself, like he's been drinking, except he's sober. It's just Blaine and sex and the music that's got him feeling so bold.

The lights are dimmed to just the bedside lamps, and Kurt is enjoying the play of the soft gold light over Blaine's body, the way he's gleaming with perspiration, highlighting and shading every sensuous movement.

"Kurt," Blaine mumbles, grinding down into his bedding. "Jesus."

Kurt's tongue has reached the top of the cleft of Blaine's ass. He pauses, panting, and releases Blaine's wrists. He's going to need both hands for this. And while he really doesn't want to lose the momentum he's been building up with Blaine, who hasn't come yet tonight, there's something very specific Kurt wants to do before they go any further. But it means getting up off the bed. One day, Kurt tells himself, he'll be able to plan their sexual encounters well enough that he's not caught in the middle of the event unprepared or out sequence. He presses a slow kiss to the base of Blaine's spine. "There's just one thing I need to do, baby, then I'm all yours."

Blaine whimpering his name and stills the movement of his hips.

Kurt presses one hand to Blaine's back as he swings his leg over, slides from the bed, and stands. "Don't move."

He planned this out in his head, and he thinks it will work. The mirror over Blaine's bureau can be moved so it's directly parallel to and opposite the bedside. He can shift Blaine's hamper and lean the mirror against the wall. If he turns it on its end, they'll be able to see themselves.

The mirror is heavier than expected, certainly awkward, and Kurt feels decidedly idiotic moving furniture in the buff. This is what comes from not planning ahead well enough. He got carried away too soon, pressing Blaine face first onto his bed and rutting mindlessly against Blaine's ass as soon as they'd got their clothes off.
"What on Earth are you doing?" Blaine asks, head turned toward Kurt.

Kurt gets the mirror where he wants it, determines it's not at risk of falling, and turns back to Blaine. "You're going to watch me fuck you," Kurt says and steps aside so Blaine can see his own reflection. "How's the angle? Can you see yourself okay?"

"Um, yeah, most of me," Blaine says.

"Excellent," Kurt says and gets back on the bed. At least he's already got the condoms and lube within easy reach. He folds one hand over Blaine's ass, his thumb brushing into his cleft, and tucks a knee between Blaine's. "Spread your legs for me, honey," he says. A glance toward the mirror verifies that, yes, Blaine can see them, at least enough of them for Kurt's purposes: faces to mid thighs. He smiles at Blaine's reflection.

Blaine parts his legs enough for Kurt to get both of his between, kneeling, but it's not what Kurt has in mind. "Farther, Blaine, as far as you can," he says, pressing against Blaine's thigh with his other hand, until Blaine is spread wide for him, and the sight of Blaine, so receptive, is kindling a hot flame of desire low in Kurt's belly. "Good boy," he says. "That's perfect."

"Kurt," Blaine pleads. "Whatever you're going to do—"

"Shh," Kurt says. "Relax and let me."

Blaine nods wordlessly, and Kurt moves, lets his knees skate out as he lowers himself to his elbows, hands upon Blaine's ass. He gently spreads Blaine's ass cheeks and lets his gaze travel down Blaine's cleft, lingering at the tight ring of his anus, before continuing down to the fullness of his balls. He blows a light stream of air, the same path as his gaze took, and sees how Blaine twitches, tighter and then more relaxed. Kurt resists swallowing, lets his saliva build up a little. He knows this is something Blaine wants, knows firsthand how incredible it's going to feel for Blaine, but he's still nervous. There's something about putting his mouth there: it's animalistic and primitive, but for all that baseness, Kurt can't think of anything more humanely intimate.

"I love you," he says, and it strikes Kurt as maybe a ridiculous thing to say when he's about to put his mouth on his boyfriend's ass, but it's true and this thing they're doing? That's what it's about. He angles his face slightly toward the mirror and seeks Blaine's reflection. Blaine is looking back at him, unblinking, eyes dark, lips parted, his head pillowed upon his folded arms.

Blaine swallows and rubs his lips together. "I love you t—"

Kurt turns back and leans forward, licking broadly from Blaine's balls all the way up to his tailbone.

"—oooh," Blaine finishes.

Kurt drags the tip of his tongue back down until he finds Blaine's entrance, tense and tender. He relaxes his tongue, spreads it wide and soft, presses closer to add his lips until he's kissing Blaine right there, licking around curiously, and then pressing into the resistance a little, slowly working Blaine loose and looser.

"Kurt, god... Kurt, oh," Blaine whispers, his utterance nearly lost in the music.

The bass guides him. He moves with it, tempered and easy, pointing his tongue enough to push more firmly against Blaine's center, delving more deeply with each heavy throb of the bass. If his mouth weren't so busy, Kurt would tell Blaine to keep his eyes open, keep looking. But he himself doesn't need to look. Kurt is hyper aware of how Blaine's body is yielding itself up for him, can feel how
much Blaine is craving this in the way he clings around Kurt's tongue, even as he surrenders to more and deeper and—now—harder pulses as Kurt transitions from kissing to fucking into Blaine with his tongue.

He wishes he could talk, to tell Blaine how amazing this is, but he's sure Blaine is feeling it too. So Kurt closes his eyes and relaxes into it, alternating between tender kisses and tongue-fucking until his tongue starts to ache with fatigue and Blaine has become impatient, pressing back and begging for more.

Kurt pulls back sluggishly, so saturated with taste and scent and sensation, he feels dizzy. "Blaine," he says when he finds his voice. He doesn't get much response, just a low whimper muffled against the bedding. Kurt understands it. He presses his lips to the soft flesh of Blaine's buttocks, pets Blaine's thighs and flanks to soothe Blaine's restlessness. He sits up, slides his hands down Blaine's legs, coaxing him to bring them closer together, mindful of any stiffness the prolonged unnatural position may have caused Blaine. He steps his own knees to the side toward the center of the bed. "Baby, I'm going to fuck you now," Kurt says. "Can you roll back toward me, to your side, to face the mirror?"

While Blaine rearranges himself, moving like he's just woken up from a dream, Kurt unrolls a condom onto his cock. Then he spoons up behind Blaine, presses a kiss to his shoulder, and pushes his hand under Blaine's topmost leg. "Up," he says, tugging behind Blaine's knee until Blaine lifts and bends his leg, giving Kurt the space he wants. "Hold that there," he says, and Blaine does, holding his leg with his own hand. And then Kurt looks farther ahead, to the mirror, sees Blaine—sees them.

"Look, Blaine," he says. "Look at yourself." He meets Blaine's heavy gaze in the reflection and lets his attention travel down to Blaine's cock, which he's barely touched today. As much as he wants to feel its velvet weight in his hand, Kurt wonders if it's possible to make Blaine come without touching it. "You're so ready for it," Kurt says. "You loved my tongue in your ass."

"I did," Blaine whispers, his arousal is painted across his skin in sweat and flushed skin, his cock so dark and slick at the tip, his hair in damp coils sticking to his forehead and temples.

"You're going to watch yourself while I fuck you," Kurt says. "Don't close your eyes. I want you to look and know that it's me and you. I want you to see how much you love my cock inside you."

"Okay," Blaine nods, his gaze hazy in that way Kurt is beginning to understand comes when Blaine's getting lost in sensation. It's gratifying that Blaine trusts enough to let himself go like this. This is why Kurt knows he never has reason to feel jealous.

"Okay," Kurt says, and reaches for the lube. He smears it messily around Blaine's hole, pushing some inside with his fingers, but he doesn't linger; then he smooths plenty over his cock and moves to align himself with Blaine. He's not going to be able to move all that well, but he wants to at least start out this way, so Blaine can see as much as possible.

He grips Blaine's shoulder with the arm he's leaning on, and hooks his elbow under Blaine's knee to free Blaine's arm. He hikes Blaine's leg up higher making Blaine gasp. "Ready?" Kurt asks, planting one foot upon the bed for leverage.

Blaine nods and braces himself against the mattress with his freed arm.

Kurt pushes in, one slow, steady drive inside Blaine, into dazzling close heat. It's something Kurt is sure he'll never get used to. Being inside Blaine is always going to make him feeling like he's flipping himself inside out. Blaine groans, and Kurt sees in the mirror Blaine's eyelids fluttering
"Open your eyes, baby," he says, and draws his hips back with agonizing sloth, loving the way Blaine's body grips him so tightly, the friction as he drags it out, and then reverses, pushing back through the resistance until he's swallowed up to his root in plush, searing bliss. He watches Blaine watch them beneath heavy eyelids, the way his gaze flicks across the surface of the mirror, meeting Kurt's gaze over his shoulder, lingering down between his legs where he can glimpse some of the movement of Kurt's cock into and out of him; Blaine can see how it ripples through his whole body, making his cock sway and his muscles flex each time he pushes back to meet Kurt's next instroke. "Such a spectacle," Kurt says. "God, look at you."

He changes the angle he's holding Blaine's leg, pulls it back to better expose Blaine to the mirror, to his own view. Blaine grunts and winces, but he makes no protest, instead relaxes into Kurt's hold. "You're going to feel this tomorrow," Kurt says. "I'll make sure of it."

"Kurt," Blaine mumbles, "Come on."

"And what, Blaine?" Kurt asks, keeping each stroke long and slow.

Blaine moans and tosses his head, but he doesn't look away.

"Tell me," Kurt says.

"You know," Blaine says.

"Maybe," Kurt says, his stomach clenching with his own building ache to go harder and faster. But he maintains control. "I want to hear you say it."

"Fine," Blaine grits out. "Fuck me. Jesus, just fuck me, Kurt."

That's enough that a fresh hot flash sparks deep in Kurt's gut; the next thrust he shoves in harder despite himself. "Isn't that what I'm doing?" he asks breathlessly. "Fucking you, Blaine?"

"Yes, but," Blaine says. He struggles to keep his eyes open as Kurt pushes in a little faster this time, too. "You know what I mean."

"Pretend I don't," Kurt says slowing once more, fucking into Blaine long and lazy, as if he isn't also growing desperate for it. He's not going to be able to maintain this façade of control much longer. He's burning up, his own want coiling into need. Still, he wants to drag this out for Blaine. Kurt bites down hard on his lip to stifle a groan, trapping it in his chest. When it passes, he says, "Tell me what you need, baby."

"You," Blaine says, and his eyes drift shut; Kurt doesn't interrupt him though. "Inside me, Kurt. Your cock. All of it, and hard. Harder. Filling me up, making me—" Blaine sighs, soft and open. "Making me..."

"Making you what?" This time Kurt's question is completely honest. He doesn't know how Blaine will finish that sentence.

Blaine opens his eyes, finds Kurt's in the mirror. "Yours."

"Mine," Kurt echoes, half dazed. It's something he's still grappling with. He's fine with thinking of Blaine as 'my best friend' or 'my boyfriend' or 'my lover' or even (as it becomes increasingly true) 'my partner', but 'mine' alone sounds so _complete_ and uncompromising. But has he not felt the reciprocal of this? Minutes ago he declared himself 'all yours' to Blaine, and, as flippant and cliché as the phrase
is, he meant it. Are they each other's? Do they belong?

"Mine," Kurt says more firmly, still testing the word with his brain and his tongue. He releases Blaine's leg and rolls him forward onto his belly, lets all of his weight rest upon Blaine, but doesn't move his hips, just holds Blaine, stretched open, full and pinned beneath him. "Are you?" he asks against the back of Blaine's neck.

"Yes, Kurt," Blaine says.

And of course they are, when it's like this? When they're stripped down to bare and basic desires together, and it feels like everything beautiful in existence is right here, between them? Of course they belong to each other. Maybe it's not the same outside these moments, but when it's here and now like this? "I'm yours, too, you know," Kurt says behind Blaine's ear, punctuating it with a soft kiss.

"Yeah," Blaine sighs, and he turns his head, blindly seeking Kurt's lips.

Kurt meets Blaine's kiss, and it's messy and uncoordinated with plenty of tongue and hot breath carrying Blaine's desperate whimpers. Kurt grinds his cock into Blaine's ass, not quite fucking, but a swivel and hard press, emphasizing his presence and their connection. Kurt tangles the fingers of one hand into Blaine's sweat damp curls, tugs at Blaine's shoulder with his other hand, and tries to fit their mouths together more perfectly. Tries to bring them as close as he possibly can in this moment. But it's not enough, and Blaine is squirming helplessly beneath his weight and sighing soft pleas into Kurt's mouth.

"Blaine," Kurt says, relenting at the sweetness of Blaine's entreaty. "Can you... get up?" It's tricky to get Blaine up onto his hands and knees without slipping free, but Kurt keeps close, making it more awkward that it needs to be, until Blaine is on all fours and Kurt is behind him admiring the broad, strong lines of Blaine's back tapering down to his slim waist and hips, culminating in his perfect ass, and rocking short, deep thrusts into him.


Kurt puts his hands on Blaine's buttocks, presses them apart so he can better see how Blaine is stretched open around him, can see his cock pistoning in and out. He adds more force and speed, but keeps his strokes short and tight.

The way Blaine hisses out a "Yes, fuck, yes," tells Kurt enough. It's good.

"Wish you could see this," Kurt says, quickening the sharp snap of his hips, "The way you take me. It's so perfect."

"Kurt." Blaine shudders, drops his head, and pushes back against Kurt's hips, meeting him stroke for stroke. The extra force of it scorches through Kurt.

"Want you to see more," Kurt says. He holds Blaine tightly by the hips to guide him, gets him to turn with him, toward the mirror, then he slides one hand up to Blaine's shoulder, brings the other around his waist. He tugs. "Sit up," he says, and sits back on his heels as Blaine straightens, arching against Kurt and settling his weight back into Kurt's lap.

"I don't know if this will work," Kurt confesses as he leans back a little for balance and firms his hold on Blaine, one hand splayed low upon his belly; the other he moves under Blaine's arm, stretching across his chest, laying his hand over Blaine's heart. He can only roll his hips shallowly.

"Worth a try," Blaine says, placing his hands over Kurt's and starting to move with him, lifting up so
Kurt can lengthen his thrusts. But it's not quite.

"Wait," Kurt says, and lets go of Blaine's chest, drops one arm back to brace himself so he can lean back farther to gain more leverage. His other hand slips to Blaine's hip. He holds on tightly. "Okay?"

"Okay," Blaine says holding himself up on trembling thighs, and Kurt tilts his head so he can see past Blaine to the mirror. Catches his own eyes before letting his gaze rove across Blaine, so unselfconsciously displayed and framed in the mirror, like erotic art.

"You can touch yourself," Kurt says, "if you need to."

Kurt can't push in quite as deep, but the angle seems right. As soon as Kurt starts moving again, arching his hips up hard, Blaine is swearing. Blaine can just reach his headboard, so he extends one arm out, grabbing on to help keep his balance, with his other hand, he holds onto his cock, making a tight fist around his cockhead, stroking short and fast. "Don't stop, Kurt."

Kurt doesn't. He let's go, fucking up into Blaine with all he's got while Blaine meets every fierce shove with the strength and grace Kurt never tires of. And it's demanding and sweaty and his muscles are burning with the effort, but it's also magnificent. Blaine lasts longer than Kurt expects him to, and that is glorious, drawing this part out. They're definitely getting better at this. Kurt wants to be able to fuck Blaine for hours someday, but for now he's happy with anything lasting longer than handful of minutes. And it lasts, so that when Blaine starts to falter, slipping into his climax, Kurt is only too ready to follow along, letting the clench of Blaine's ass wring his orgasm from him. It's the closest they've got to coming together.

Kurt's elbow gives out and he falls back, arched awkwardly, his quads pulled taut and sharp. He's going to be feeling this one tomorrow too, just as much as Blaine. Blaine carefully pulls off him, and falls down beside him. "Oof," he says, rubbing at his stomach, carelessly smearing his come across his belly.

"Yeah," Kurt agrees, rolling a little toward Blaine so he can straighten his legs. They're half numb and achey. When the bloodflow starts to return, they prickle and burn. "Fucking ow."

"Totally worth it," Blaine says between deep breaths, reaching a heavy hand to cup Kurt's cheek. He rolls over and kisses him softly, just lips, relaxed and easy.

Kurt chuckles when Blaine eases from his mouth, trailing gentle kisses along Kurt's jaw toward his earlobe. "I was planning on going for a second round, but I'm not sure that's realistic," Kurt says.

Blaine shrugs, dragging his lips down Kurt's neck. "We have all night," he says.

And it's true, they do.
Part IVA: Distractions - Chapter 5

Hummel Tires and Lube has never been so busy. Or fancy. Patriotic banners and swag hang along every wall and window, and every bulb is burning. The bay doors are all open to the chilly November night, and the revelry has spilled out with the light onto the driveway, parking lot, and sidewalk. Rented patio heaters keep the worst of the Ohio autumn night at bay, but the champagne is flowing so freely, Kurt doubts anyone is feeling the cold. Local press mixes with the guests, but the main event, his Dad's victory speech, is over, so they're just trolling for tidbits now. Kurt gave a brief interview to a local newspaper. He can barely remember what he said.

Kurt knows he should be happy right now. But he isn't, and he's at risk of failing to pretend otherwise, his smile curdling more and more each time he shakes another hand and hears another name he'll never remember. He's aware of his Dad's hand intermittently on his shoulder, shaking gently every time he tells someone, with unabashed pride: "This is my son, Kurt. He ran the campaign," and, "I couldn't have done it without him," and, "My son's a genius. I owe this all to him," and, "I'm so proud of him."

But he keeps smiling, looking to his Dad with humble and genuine gratitude while mouthing platitudes to the multitude of strangers crowding around to congratulate the man they hope can do things for them in Washington. It feels like it's happening to someone else not him. He feels hollowed out and transparent, like his own defeat today sapped something vital from him. He wants to be happy for his Dad—and he's sure he is somewhere, he just can't find that place—and he is proud, so proud. It's just. He doesn't know what it is. He feels like Sarah at the masquerade ball in Labyrinth: disoriented, unreal, lost in the commotion, surrounded by strangers. Trapped.

Blaine is nearby, or at least he was. He had been talking with Carole and the mayor just moments before, but Kurt doesn't see him now. Finn is somewhere else in the crowd. Kurt spies Mr. Schuester and Miss Pillsbury in a cluster of people he doesn't know. He shakes the hand of an elderly woman with crooked pink lipstick. She leans into him and says loudly, but with a strange air of scandal and confidentiality, "You're a very brave young man." Kurt thanks her and doesn't catch her name. He rubs his palm absently against his thigh as he smiles at his Dad. That's easier anyway, smiling at his Dad. He means that smile.

The crowd is so loud, raucous laughter and cheering and too loud conversation swirling around in such cacophony, Kurt is beginning to feel dizzy. He looks for Blaine, but the navy of his peacoat is hard to spot, and, realistically, Blaine is unlikely to be towering over anyone in the crowd.

Then there's a deliberate, light touch on the back of his elbow: familiar. Kurt spins, and there's Blaine, all soft eyes and smile; the kind meant only for him. It soothes the knot in Kurt's stomach immediately, and his own forced smile widens into sincerity and relief. "There you are," he says. "I was looking for you."

"Here," Blaine says and pushes a paper plate and napkin toward Kurt. "I thought you might be hungry." On the small plate, Blaine has mounded up crudites with a drizzle of ranch dressing, two deviled eggs, various crackers with cheese, and a trio of vol-au-vents stuffed with mock chicken salad. The caterers tried; it's not a bad effort, just uninspired. Kurt wishes he'd been able to organize it himself. At least, judging by the orange color of the yolks, the eggs are free-range.

"I am," Kurt says. "Thank you." He tries to fill his smile with his appreciation, wishes he could lean in and kiss Blaine on the cheek like he wants to. He sees the same desire in Blaine's eyes, as his gaze flicks to Kurt's mouth and then back up with an apologetic grimace. "Enjoying yourself?" Kurt asks Blaine.
"Well, I met the mayor," Blaine says.

"I saw that," Kurt says, picking a carrot stick from the pile of raw vegetables and letting the excess dressing drip off the end of it onto a piece of cauliflower. "How was he?"

Blaine lowers his voice. "Honestly? He's kind of a douchebag."

"That's my understanding," Kurt says, nodding.

"How about you? You're looking a little wan," Blaine says.

Kurt ducks his head. "Yeah. This is not actually my favorite day."

"Yeah," Blaine says. He touches Kurt's elbow again. "Do you want to get some air? I mean, can you leave?"

Kurt nods, "Sure, I think so. Somewhere a little quieter may help."

Kurt excuses himself with his Dad and follows Blaine out of the crowd toward the street. They turn left at the sidewalk and walk slowly, side by side, while Kurt picks at his plate. There's not really anywhere to go in the area. It's zoned light industrial for the most part, so they walk down cracked cement sidewalks marbled with brown straggly weeds, past darkened warehouses and showrooms and empty parking lots. The bite of the cold air has Kurt wishing he'd worn a hat. Neither of them speaks until the noise of the party has faded to a murmur.

"I haven't mailed it yet," Kurt confesses. He meant to drop his NYADA application in the box on his way home after school, but he couldn't. It needs to be in the post before four PM tomorrow. He just choked.

Blaine's hand presses against his back, between his shoulder blades. "Do you want me to mail it for you? I can if you like."

Kurt shakes his head. "No. I'll do it. I guess I hoped maybe I'd wake up tomorrow and things would be different. Or, I don't know."

"It's okay," Blaine says, rubbing Kurt's back lightly.

Tears prick the backs of Kurt's eyes. "It's really not."

"It will be," Blaine says. "Look, worst case is you take a year off, go to D.C. with your Dad and help him out while you apply to other schools. You could even get into the theater scene there. Get more experience."

Kurt kicks a broken piece of cement toward the gutter and blinks back the burn of threatening tears. He keeps his voice steady. "Where would that leave us?"

Blaine shrugs casually, but, when Kurt glances to him, he sees the streetlights catch on the shine in Blaine's eyes. "Next year was always going to be us apart, Kurt," Blaine says gently.

Kurt can't hold in the tears any longer; he pinches his eyes shut and chokes on a sob.

"Oh, hey," Blaine's hand is firm around his arm, and his other hand is sliding up under Kurt's hands, righting the paper plate as it droops in Kurt's grip. "Hey, let's sit down. If I can find a spot."

"It's not that I don't want to leave. I do. So much." Kurt sniffs, letting Blaine steer him toward a low concrete wall in front of a lighting warehouse. "I just, I don't want to leave you behind."
Blaine doesn't reply to that, instead he shrugs off his coat and lays it on the wall for Kurt to sit on.

Kurt laughs at the gesture despite himself. "So gallant."

Blaine smiles. "Never let it be said that I don't know how to take care of my princess."

Kurt snorts laughter through his tears until it turns into giggles. Blaine takes his plate from him and sets it next to them on the wall, and then he wraps an arm around Kurt.

The street is quiet, so Kurt leans into Blaine. "If I end up having to take a year off, maybe I should stay here? So we can still be together. Then we can go to New York next year, both of us."

"No, Kurt. If you have a way out of this town, you should take it as soon as you can," Blaine says. "And I'll be fine. I know it's going to be hard, but we can get through it. I figure if I can go most of my life without you, a school year of simply less of you shouldn't be so bad. Especially when we have so much to look forward to. It'll be like a long run up to Christmas, right?"

Kurt sniffs, and wipes at his tears with his sleeve. "I guess." It's hard to argue with Blaine when he's being so calm and reasonable and sweet.

"And there's phone calls and texting and Skype and Twitter. It's not like we won't be able to spend time together. We'll just have to be creative and make virtual dates."

Kurt smiles. "You make out like it could actually be fun."

"It could be sometimes. Think of the options. We could watch movies together on Netflix, or, if you're feeling adventurous, go hang out in one of those online roleplaying games. Artie could hook us up with something really cool, I bet."

"Are you suggesting a virtual three-way date with Artie that involves hacking up goblins and orcs?"

"What? That doesn't sound awesome to you?"

Kurt muffles his laughter against Blaine's shoulder. "Actually," he says. "It does sound kind of awesome."

"So, you know, we may not physically be together, but we won't be apart."

Kurt nods and sniffs, digging into his pockets for his handkerchief. He blows his nose while Blaine stands up.

"Shall we head back?" Blaine asks. "Or do you want me to get my car and come get you, take you home?"

"I don't really want to go back," Kurt says, "but my Dad—"

"He'll understand. He has plenty of people to keep him company. He's a grown-up and a Congressman. I think he can manage without you for a few hours."

Kurt hesitates.

Blaine extends his hand. "Come on, we can watch an old musical and make out on the couch."

Kurt smiles and takes Blaine's hand. "My Fair Lady?"

Blaine grins and pulls Kurt to his feet. "My favorite."
They're standing, hands joined, sharing a smile when a car comes by. Kurt lets go of Blaine and steps back, but not soon enough. There's an offensive shout and a thrown plastic bottle that bounces harmlessly past them. The words, they're nothing they haven't both heard before, but yeah, they're harder to ignore.

Blaine's jaw clenches and he looks at his shoes. When he looks back up, his face is hard, but his eyes are tired and sad. "You should walk back with me to my car," he says and picks up his coat, shaking the dust from it.

The look on Blaine's face has Kurt swallowing the smart quip on his tongue about lack of originality in homophobic slurs, because he's heard that one dozens of times. Instead Kurt forces his shoulders straight, and says, "We've got to get out of this town, Blaine. Both of us. No matter what."

#

Kurt wakes disoriented and too hot. The clock on the DVD player reads ten past midnight, the television is off, and he's lying on top of Blaine on the sofa in the family room. His mouth is cottony and stale and—ugh—he realizes he's been drooling. "Blaine?" he mumbles, trying (and failing) to get his arms under himself. He only succeeds in wedging his hand down behind the sofa cushions and winces at the feel of the tiny crumbs or grit or whatever linty stuff lives back there getting under his fingernails.

"Right here," Blaine says, sounding alert. He runs his hand from Kurt's neck down to the small of his back.

"Ugh," Kurt says, trying again to move. "How long was I out?"

"Since 'The Rain in Spain', pretty much."

"That long?"

"You needed it," Blaine says, smiling.

"I'm sorry I drooled on you." Kurt half rolls to get his feet onto the floor and stands up with sleep shaky legs. He scrubs at the crusty dried spit on his cheek with the heel of his hand.

Blaine stretches and sits up, brushing his palm down the front of his sweater. "It's fine. You were so peaceful, I couldn't bear to wake you."

The front door lock rattles, followed shortly by the sound of it opening and Burt, Carole, and Finn's voices. Kurt frowns, regretting having not made the most of being here with Blaine alone. He was just so tired. Still is. Kurt looks at the clock again. "Aren't you way past your weeknight curfew?"

"I texted my Mom, said I'd be late. She understood."

"Hi, boys," says Carole, poking her head into the room. "I saw your car in the drive, Blaine. Are you staying the night?"

"Oh, no, I was just keeping Kurt company until you guys got home. I'll be on my way soon." Blaine stands up.
"You're welcome to stay. It's awfully late for you to be driving all that way on a weeknight."

"Oh, well, if Kurt doesn't mind loaning me something to wear in the morning?" Blaine gives Kurt a hopeful, querying look.

"Not a problem," Kurt says, already mentally scanning his wardrobe for things that will both fit and suit Blaine.

"I'll need to tell my Mom," Blaine says, retrieving his bag from the floor and pulling out his phone.

Upstairs in his bedroom, Kurt is still groggy from his impromptu nap, pointing Blaine toward his dresser to select his own loaner pajamas, hauling on his own mechanically, and slumping down in front of his dressing table to fumble zombie-like through his evening skin care routine. It's different somehow, having Blaine stay on a weeknight. A glance back shows Blaine settling beneath the covers, smiling fondly at Kurt. It's comfortable. But Kurt tries to avoid thinking about his seven AM alarm, wonders if he can get away with sleeping in a little bit tomorrow. With an extra body to use the shower, if anything he needs to set it earlier. Maybe they should just skip school altogether tomorrow. He's sure he can still fake a tummy ache to fool his Dad.

He shuffles to the bed where Blaine holds up the covers in invitation. Kurt crawls in and snuggles close, covering a jaw-cracking yawn with the back of his hand. He's still feeling discordant and strange, sad and skittish, but Blaine's hand on his waist is an anchor: soothing as it rubs, coming off the edge of his pajama top and skidding up bare skin to Kurt's ribs. Humming in contentment, Kurt lets his heavy eyelids slip down as Blaine leans closer to press his lips to Kurt's.

It starts out chaste enough—a good night kiss—but it doesn't remain that way for long. Blaine's mouth is so hot, his lips firm and soft all at once, his tongue a quick tempting slip along the seam of Kurt's mouth. And then Blaine is rolling Kurt onto his back and following, bringing one hand up to cup Kurt's jaw, gently running his thumb down Kurt's chin to coax him open.

And Kurt opens his mouth, letting Blaine sink deeper into the kiss to suck the breath from his lungs in a thick rush while his tongue slides along Kurt's. When Blaine returns his breath, and Kurt feels it flooding into his chest and reinflating his lungs, it's a strange sensation, unexpectedly intimate. Kurt hums into Blaine's mouth and wraps his arms around his shoulders, holding him close and letting Blaine breathe for the both of them. He doesn't open his eyes, not even when he starts feeling light-headed. He's feeling so loose and languid, and Blaine is so warm and soothing.

Still, it doesn't stop the heat from rousing in Kurt's veins, when Blaine's hand meanders from his ribs, across his chest, and his fingertips graze Kurt's nipples with intention. Kurt gasps and cracks open his eyes. Blaine eases up from Kurt's mouth to take a deep breath of his own and turn his attention to the work of his hands. He unbuttons Kurt's pajama top, dragging a ticklish caress down Kurt's torso to his waistband before reversing and going back up. His eyes are heavy with quiet desire when he meets Kurt's blurry gaze. Kurt can't speak, just swallows and nods permission. But Blaine doesn't slide his hand beneath the waistband of Kurt's bottoms as he expects, instead he keeps to the long strokes across Kurt's chest and belly, growing firmer and slower, and only breaking the rhythmic pattern to slide the edges of his button placket farther apart, exposing more bare skin to his attention.

"Is this okay?" Blaine asks quietly. "I know it's late and you're tired."

Kurt nods again and clears his throat to rasp out a soft, "Yes."

Blaine smiles and lowers his head, kissing softly down Kurt's neck to his collarbone, sucking along
the ridge of it, and Kurt is kneading Blaine's shoulders in encouragement and—

There's a knock at Kurt's door.

Kurt sighs as Blaine rolls back away from him, leaving him cold and bare.

"Who is it?" Kurt asks, though he's sure it's not his Dad or Carole, unless the house is burning down. Since the fire alarm is not going off, it must be Finn.

"It's me," comes Finn's voice. "Are you still awake?"

Kurt forces his eyes wide open (and, oh, that takes effort) and looks at Blaine, who shrugs and arranges himself casually against the pillow next to Kurt.

"Yes. It's open," Kurt says, scooting up and pulling his pajama top closed. He doesn't bother with the buttons.

Finn opens the door, comes in, and closes it behind him. He doesn't say anything straight away, just looks from Blaine to Kurt uncomfortably.

"Yes, Finn, what do you want?" Kurt asks. It comes out sounding more hostile than he means, but he's ready to be finished with today, and things were getting so good right before Finn knocked.

"I know today was rough for you, Kurt. I worried when you disappeared from the party. I just wanted to make sure you were okay."

Even though the fraternal concern is touching, it's not necessary. "I'm fine, Finn," Kurt says, "Blaine's been with me."

Finn glances at Blaine, then at Kurt's unbuttoned pajamas, and grimaces. "Yeah, okay."

Kurt really wants Finn to go because he can tell this is going to get awkward, but he doesn't want to be too discouraging. Maybe he can distract Finn from whatever has him on the verge of glowering at Blaine. So Kurt asks, to reorient Finn's attention, "What about Rachel? Is she all right?"

"Oh," Finn blinks as if he hadn't even been thinking about her. "Yeah, I think she's okay. Sad and stuff, but her Dads took her out tonight, to some sing along something and ice cream."

"Maybe you should go send her a text," Kurt suggests.

"Yeah, I'm sorry to bother you guys. Good night."

"Good night, Finn," Blaine says with a little wave and a smile Finn doesn't return.

Kurt sighs, and, once the door has closed behind Finn, he slumps back into his pillows, "Could his timing have been worse?"

Blaine is silent for a moment before answering with a firm, "Yes. Definitely."

Kurt huffs a short laugh. "You're right. But I would have told him to go away. I should have just told him to go away anyway."

"Hey, this is the downside of having a brother," Blaine says. "At least he cares about you, Kurt. That's a precious thing."

"Yeah, I know," Kurt says. He lets his eyelids droop and feels his fatigue yaw fresh in his skull, a
heavy darkness tugging at the back of his brain. "Just liked what you were doing."

"Then it's good I remember where I was," Blaine says with a goofy eyebrow waggle. He moves over Kurt again, his hands warm as he spreads Kurt's pajama top open, once more exposing Kurt's skin to the cool air. Then he lowers his hot mouth to the base of Kurt's neck, licking into the hollow between his collarbones, and there's nothing goofy about that.

"Mmmm," Kurt mumbles, "that's nice." He wraps his arms loosely around Blaine, sliding his hands down to his waist and squirming to get a little farther beneath Blaine's body.

"Yeah?" Blaine asks.

"Yeah," Kurt sighs.

"Then," Blaine asks, lifting up and Shrugging Kurt's arms from around him. "Do you mind if I...?" He takes Kurt's wrists in his hands, lifts and pushes Kurt's arms to fold them loosely upon his pillow over his head. "I mean, is this okay?" His eyes are wide, his pupils contracted in apprehension as he holds Kurt's wrists together gently, a grip Kurt could easily break. "Can you keep your arms up here while I take care of you?"

Kurt's heart thuds a heavy beat, seems to stop, and then resumes, even and quick. He nods. "Yes."

Blaine smiles, his gaze softening. "Okay," he says. "Just relax. You can close your eyes if you want to."

"What about you?" Kurt asks as Blaine starts unbuttoning his own top.

"What about me?" Blaine asks, flicking the open plackets of his pajamas back, baring his chest to Kurt's appreciative view.

"I'm not going to be much use to you," Kurt says, letting his gaze rove lazily over Blaine's exposed torso. "Especially after." His eyes dart back up to Blaine's. "What do you want me to do for you? To get you off?"

With a chuckle and a small shake of his head, Blaine answers, "Nothing, Kurt. I just want to make you feel good." He cocks his head. "I'll take care of myself if I need to." And Kurt feels a sharp thrill at that thought. "Unless that would be weird for you?"

"No, not at all," Kurt whispers, finding it difficult to source enough breath for any volume. He lifts one arm to comb his fingers through Blaine's hair, soft now that Blaine has brushed it loose for bed. Then he lets his arm fall back to where Blaine set it. "So I just lie here?"

"That's the idea," Blaine says, skimming his fingertips across Kurt's chest, scribing a figure eight between and around his nipples until Kurt sucks a sharp breath and feels his skin pimple. Then Blaine leans back in and kisses Kurt with his hot mouth and pliant lips, and Kurt lets his eyelids slip shut.

It's nice—more than nice, but there's certainly an element of pleasant and soothing and nice to this—to close his eyes, relax, and let himself be taken care of. It feels, perhaps, a little overly self-indulgent, a little hedonistic. But he's just so comfortable, and he's so tired, and Blaine is so present and tender. It's what he needs after this hellishly awful day, and so maybe it's okay to accept it from Blaine, the tenderness and care.

He lets Blaine kiss him however he wants, which is deep and slow with more of the strange, shared breathing that makes Kurt feel like he's slipping down into some kind of heady dreamland. Kurt
surrenders to it, trusts Blaine to breathe for him. When he starts to feel the burn of oxygen debt stuffy in his chest, Blaine is already easing up, letting him have little sips of fresh air from the small spaces between their mouths. And then Blaine's mouth is drifting, soft and gentle, from his lips to his jaw, then up along his cheekbone to his temple, forehead, brow, the other cheekbone, back to his jaw, down his throat, this time not lingering at his collarbone, but moving further down, pressing kisses everywhere and licking lazy spirals around his nipples. Kurt breathes and shivers and lets out another quiet hum of contentment.

Blaine's hands join his mouth upon Kurt's skin, tracing the arcs of each rib, scattering ticklish fingertips over his belly, and then they're at his waistband, skimming just beneath it, working the elastic lower. As close as Kurt is to drifting off into that murky place between wakefulness and sleep, it doesn't stop his hips from rolling up toward Blaine's touch, doesn't stop the gusty sigh that morphs into a low, rumbling moan as Blaine tugs his pajama bottoms down to his thighs, freeing his erection and baring his hips. And then Kurt senses movement, and then nothing. Blaine's hands and mouth are gone.

He opens his eyes a sliver to see Blaine sitting up, ducking his shoulders, one at a time, free of his pajamas. There's something about that, just that movement, that directs yet more blood in a hot, pleasurable rush to Kurt's groin, though he's been hard since Blaine kissed him the first time.

Blaine catches his eyes and grins at him. Kurt smiles back. A grin would take more energy and concentration than he's got. He's too much swathed in the quiet thrum of his sleepy arousal. He didn't know it could feel like this, so easy, but no less potent or wonderful for the lack of urgency.

And then Blaine's hands are back on him, at his hips, his thumbs running in symmetry over the curved jut of his hipbones, and Blaine is lowering his head to press his lips to the base of Kurt's cock, and Kurt's eyes slide shut again just as his mouth falls open. His fingers twitch with the impulse to move, to tangle themselves up in Blaine's hair, but Kurt has enough of his consciousness remaining, he quashes the urge and lets them remain, still and relaxed, upon his pillow.

Blaine's mouth is just as temperate and tender on his cock as it's been everywhere else, slowly working along his length, up to the crown, before Blaine closes his lips around and slides down with barely any suction and a quiet tongue. Kurt's breath stutters out; there's nothing temperate about the sharp blade of heat slicing through his belly. But without muscle tension and movement of his own, there's a fidelity to his pleasure as it builds, an exotic and vivid new sense of how his body can respond to Blaine's touch. It's the first time Kurt thinks about it, really imagines it; and it's just a brief flashbulb from his unguarded subconscious, but it's real within his mind: Blaine inside him, Blaine fucking him.

It's getting harder to stay lax beneath Blaine's hands and mouth, the languid haze is evaporating, and Kurt can't help the tension now growing in his belly and thighs, or the quickening of his breath, or his breathless, needy whimpers. Blaine retreats from him again, leaving him too hot in his own skin, damp with perspiration, and aching.

"Blaine," he complains, opening his eyes and squinting at the light.

And Blaine's hand is at his cheek, and Blaine is leaning in close, but not close enough to kiss. "Shh, I'm here," he says in a low, sex-drenched voice, smooth as dark chocolate ganache.

And Kurt gets it. "Oh, god," he mumbles, and, "Please. Do something."

Blaine bends nearer and kisses him softly, and then Kurt is watching him as he pushes his pajamas down his thighs to mirror Kurt's and then slides his hand under the pillows to find the lube. Blaine squirts a generous amount of slippery gel into his palm, spreads it between his hands to warm it, and
then reaches for himself with one hand, Kurt with the other. Once their cocks are good and slick, Blaine wipes the rest off on his belly.

With dark eyes and a slow smile, Blaine crawls over Kurt, hovering above him for one long moment of anticipation, in which Kurt can do nothing but stare up at Blaine slack-mouthed. Then Blaine lowers himself down, covering Kurt with his body, bringing their bare skin together, and crowding their erections alongside one another, snug between their bellies in soft, slippery heat. "Okay?" he asks.

"God, yes," Kurt says. His arms ache to move around Blaine's shoulders, but he's not sure that's what Blaine wants, so he leaves them, tense and twitching, above his head. Just as well, since, as Blaine lowers his head to nuzzle into that sensitive spot just under Kurt's jaw near his ear, he slides his hands up Kurt's ribs to his arms and closes his hands around Kurt's biceps. Kurt can't keep his eyes open, or his mouth closed as he pants for more oxygen. Then Blaine starts to move, rolling his hips down hard with a sharp little kink up at the end of the motion.

"Oh, fuck," escapes Kurt's mouth, and his eyes are rolling behind his eyelids. The heat and slick friction is maddening, as Blaine rocks and slides against him. He can feel Blaine's cock, right there, moving next to his, so hard and heavy. And Blaine's mouth is sucking hot at his neck; Blaine's hands flexing tightly around his arms.

Kurt doesn't last long, and he wishes—oh, he wishes—he could have. He's coming with a shocked gasp before he's truly conscious of it. It surges up within him so organically, like he's spilling out everywhere, all around him, not just from his cock. It's amazing, but it's over far too quickly.

As he winces with the hypersensitivity that follows, Blaine lifts himself, kneeling up over Kurt and bringing one hand to his own cock. Kurt opens his eyes and is snared by Blaine's fogged gaze. Blaine strips his fist along his length quickly, with no pretense of performance or interest in drawing it out. Kurt watches, stares, gluts his vision on it, tries to memorize everything about it before Blaine comes. When he does, hot stripes of semen paint Kurt's belly, mixing with Kurt's own.

"Jesus," Blaine says, when he's done, shaking through aftershocks above Kurt. "Kurt," he warns, his gaze sliding down to Kurt's belly to evaluate the aftermath. "Don't move."

But Kurt has to move, for as Blaine leans for the tissues, the mattress bows and tilts Kurt, and all that mess is on the move, sliding toward his waist, about to spill all over the bed. Kurt tries to dam the flow with his hands, and starts laughing. "Oh my god," he says, too loudly, "that's a lot of spunk, Blaine."

Blaine grins and tries to hush him, but Blaine's own answering laughter is making it impossible for him to make a proper shh sound. Kurt can't cover his mouth to smother his laughter, and his chest aches with the effort to reduce the volume. He ends up squeaking.

"Shut up," Blaine manages, affectionately, between chuckles, tearing fistfuls of tissues and dropping them on Kurt's belly. "Do you really want your parents seeing you like this?"

Kurt shakes his head. His eyes are watering with mirth, and there's slippery stuff oozing between his fingers. He's not even sure why it's so damned funny, but it feels good, another necessary release from the day he's had.

They get the worst of it wiped up and in the trash, but Blaine decides they need warm water and soap before he's happy letting Kurt fall asleep. Blaine tugs his pajamas back on and creeps from the room down the hall to the bathroom. Kurt waits with a sheet pulled over himself, pinching it up in a tent above his soiled tummy. He doesn't want to have to change his sheets tonight.
Fortunately, Blaine is not disturbed on his outing, and he returns after a few minutes with a warm, soapy washcloth. Although the gaiety has woken Kurt up, he can feel his fatigue still lurking close enough behind his eyes. As Blaine gently cleans his hands, stomach, chest, and groin, Kurt feels his body quieting back toward sleepiness.

"All done," Blaine says, getting up to put the washcloth in Kurt's hamper. He turns back and crawls onto the bed, reaching to button up Kurt's top and then help him tug his bottoms back up. "How do you feel?" he asks, smoothing down the front of Kurt's pajamas.

"Mm, better," Kurt says. He lifts his hand to Blaine's hair, coils a lock around his forefinger before slipping free and carding through Blaine's curls, dragging his nails across Blaine's scalp and making Blaine's eyelids flutter. "Thank you."

"Ready to sleep?" Blaine asks, twisting to lie down alongside Kurt, an arm draped over his waist.

"Completely," Kurt says, and turns away from Blaine to reach for his lamp. He switches it off, and Blaine spoons up behind him.

In the morning, Carole cooks them scrambled eggs on toast, and, by the time they get themselves to school, they've missed homeroom and first period. Blaine looks fantastic in Kurt's red jeans and black sweater.
Kurt is beginning to suspect Puck has been spiking his Shirley Temples, and he's on his fourth. At first, he thought the difference in taste was that Rachel's Dads had proper Rose's grenadine and Schweppes soda, that his Shirley Temple was of a classier caliber than those served at Breadstix. But he thinks now that it's the vodka. His hands feel heavy and not entirely like they're attached to him, and when he turns his head, the room seems to lag before it catches up. He's lost track of the conversation that's happening around him, feels like he's doing the mental equivalent of dog-paddling just to keep track of who's talking, so he can look at them and act like he's still successfully processing language.

He's sitting on the sofa between Tina and Mike. More and more, he's feeling like an extension of the couch, like the border between him and cushion is dissolving. It's weird. On a pillow on the floor, between him and Tina, sits Mercedes, leaning her head against his thigh. They're all very happy, even Mike is uncommonly talkative. He and Tina keep reaching across Kurt to touch each other, brushing against Kurt in the process. Kurt can't remember exactly how he ended up between them. Someone must have put him here, because he wouldn't voluntarily have compromised his own personal space this much. It's not that bad though, not really.

On the little stage, Blaine and Santana are singing that old Kenny Rogers and Dolly Parton duet, "Islands in the Stream". They're really hamming up the sentimentally, and the laughter in the room is loud. Kurt finds himself laughing too as they take their bows. Blaine looks sober still, so Kurt is confident Puck hasn't slipped anything into the bottled water Blaine is drinking, which is good, because they promised each other they wouldn't drink. Which is also bad, because Kurt suspects he is, at least, tipsy. Kurt sighs and tries to think of ways to wreak vengeance upon Puck, who is talking quietly with Quinn by the bar. But Kurt isn't sure he can come up with anything that will be worse than what Puck is already doing to himself with that hairdo.

In the quiet after the music, Kurt realizes Tina is saying his name. He tears his gaze away from Blaine's backside as he bends to select another song. "Yes?" he says to Tina.

"Oh my god, Kurt, are you drunk?" She takes his hand, the one holding his glass, and draws it close enough to bend over it and sniff.

"I think Puck—" he says, but is cut off as the opening piano of "Waterloo" rip-ripples through the room.

"Oh my god! Abba!" Mercedes shrieks and jumps to her feet fast enough it makes Kurt dizzy. She races up to the stage to share Santana's microphone.

"Oh my god!" Kurt yells, because it is apparently the thing to do.

"...so drunk, Kurt, are you okay?" Tina is looking at him still, grinning.

"I'm fine," he insists, trying to compose his face to what he remembers sober feels like. He's definitely not drunk. He knows what drunk feels like. It feels like sad movies and vomiting on Miss Pillsbury's shoes.

But then Mike is grabbing his arm and saying something like, "Man, we got to get you moving."

Then Tina has his other arm, and he's being dragged to his feet and toward the dance floor. His head sort of rolls on his shoulders and he looks at Blaine, who is pointing at him and making his most
devastatingly charismatic show-face as he sings, "Promise to love you forever more."

Kurt feels all fluttery and wobbly; Blaine winks at him. Kurt stumbles, still staring at his boyfriend. Tina catches him, as he mouths to Blaine, "I'm so sorry."

Why Mike thinks moving is the solution to intoxication is beyond Kurt, but he's at least grateful for Tina and Mike's support, since the dance floor seems to be tilting away from each step. "Oh, boy," he says as he teeters into Brittany, who is dancing with Artie and Sugar. She recovers like a gazelle, catches his eye, and pumps her fist in what has to be the universal sign for 'Rock On!' And then Tina is pulling at his hands, getting him to face her, grinning, and sliding her hands up to his elbows. And from behind, a pair of hands comes to rest lightly on his hips, stabilizing him and guiding him into a rhythm. That's Mike. Which, okay, that has happened before, but only in the context of Booty Camp. And—oh—is he having some kind of drunk dancing threesome with Mike and Tina?

He panics a little, looking for Blaine again, who is still emoting nothing but sex appeal and singing, "I tried to hold you back, but you were stronger." There's no help there, but, wow, his boyfriend is sexy.

"Come on, Kurt," Tina sing-songs at him, "Show us what you can do!"

Kurt turns his attention back to Tina, who is pulling and pushing at his arms, trying to get him to move his shoulders. Mike is pressing his left hip forward in a suggestion of a step. And Kurt decides he isn't so drunk that he can't still dance. Between Mike and Tina, he finds his balance and his rhythm. They spent so much time together in rehearsal, especially for "ABC", it's fun and any lingering discomfort is fading into the joy of music and motion. Muscle memory rouses, helps counteract his chemically induced clumsiness.

Soon he's grinning at Tina and matching her moves easily. His confidence is returning. Or, it had been, until Tina decides (unwisely) to spin him. She grabs his hand, lifts it, Mike pushes a little, and he's twirling, which makes the whole room yaw sickeningly, and then he's stumbling forward into Mike with all the grace of a drunk giraffe.

He ends up with his face mashed against Mike's chest, and Mike's hands on his shoulders as Mike says, "Whoopsie." Tina's laughter bubbles up behind him. Kurt wonders if Tina and Mike are so close they've become telepathic and these dancing shenanigans are part of some evil plot to embarrass him in front of Blaine, not to mention the rest of New Directions. So he thinks of the best revenge he can for the situation.

He straightens up, meets Mike's amused gaze, and shimmies. Fiercely.

Mike laughs, which kind of makes him sparkle, and then he gives Kurt a silly-stern, challenging look. He shimmies right back at Kurt, adding a dip of his knees in the middle—and a wink. And it is on.

In the years to come, Kurt decides it will be remembered as The Great Shimmy Off of 2012, though there is no clear winner. Kurt hears Sugar screaming his name, and Tina urging on Mike. Artie is yelling general encouragement, and Brittany is shimmying right alongside them. Even Finn, Rory, and Sam are getting into it from the sidelines, where they've been hanging out by the piano.

But then the music fades, as it must, and it's over. Breathing heavily, Kurt steps back from Mike. He sees Brittany whispering into Tina's ear, and then dragging her off to the stereo. Blaine is tucking his microphone back into the stand and jogging down off the stage, flushed and sweaty, toward Kurt.

Kurt rakes his hands through his sweat-damp hair, heedless of the mayhem he's causing his 'do. He's
not so far gone that he doesn't resist the impulse to grab Blaine and kiss him senseless. He morphs it into grabbing Blaine's hand. "You were so hot up there, Blaine," he says earnestly, squeezing. It's important Blaine knows this.

Blaine smiles at him, lips parted around his heavy breathing. His gaze is amused and has the weight and intensity to it that Kurt associates with Blaine's intimate affection. "You're a little drunk, aren't you?" He squeezes back.

"I'm so— ack!" Kurt is grabbed around the waist from behind and dragged away from Blaine just as he the music starts again with a very familiar see-sawing hook. His hand slips from Blaine's, though he keeps reaching back. Blaine is laughing at him. Which is unfair.

"All the Single Ladies..."

"Oh my god," he yelps. How the heck did he end up the center of attention? Where's Rachel?

"All the Single Ladies..."

"Dance with us, Kuuurt," Brittany pleads, hauling him up the edge of the stage.

"All the Single Ladies..."

He lets the music calm him as he gets on the stage flanked by Brittany and Tina. This song is like an old friend. He looks at Blaine, who appears both surprised and expectant. He doesn't look at anyone else, instead he closes his eyes and centers himself in the song. His body knows this dance. His body loves it. And though it's been over a year since he's done it, the memory is stirring up fresh in his blood, catching hold in the muscles of his thighs, hips, and arms. When he opens his eyes and starts moving, it's effortless.

Time has passed though, and Kurt is a much better dancer, knows how to move in ways he didn't before. He also knows how to fuck. So instead of the shallow swivel and tilt of his hips he once did, he locks his gaze with Blaine's and rolls his pelvis deeply, grinding out the moves, making them shameless and obscene, and filling them with filthy promises as he mouths along with Beyonce, nodding and flicking his hair. There is a small voice in the back of his head reminding him that he wouldn't be caught dead doing it this way sober.

That voice is easy to ignore: the way Blaine is outright gawking at him makes all the rest disappear. He's barely aware of the catcalls and whoops and exclamations of surprise. There's just Blaine, flushed, wide-eyed, and stunned; and that is all the encouragement Kurt needs to put all his effort into erasing whatever vestiges of the sexless baby penguin version of himself may yet reside in Blaine's mind.

The music stops, and he takes a deep bow, staggering forward a little despite himself. His head is swimming, his body thrumming hot. He needs a shower. He needs—

Blaine's hands are on his shoulders, steadying him as he straightens, Kurt leans into him as he trips off the stage. He's aware of his back being slapped. Tina's "Damn, Kurt!" and Brittany's "Unicorn pow-ower!".

But the exultation doesn't last long, soon Rachel is bounding up to the stage telling everyone to hush. "I believe it's well past time for a Rachel Berry solo," she announces into the microphone. "And since you weren't blessed with my performance at Sectionals this year, well. This one's for you, Finn," she says, and launches into Berlin's "Take My Breath Away."

"Kurt," Blaine says, his gaze traveling hungrily over Kurt's face, lingering at his mouth, but he
doesn't lean in for a kiss. Instead he offers his hand and asks, his voice low and rough, "Would you dance with me?"

It's a slow song, so Kurt hesitates, taking a step back. His dancing up there was probably more than enough for one night. He's almost afraid to look to see how the other boys are looking at him, just hopes they're turning their attention to dance partners. He sees Sam tentatively approaching Mercedes (wonders why Shane isn't there), Puck with Quinn in his arms, Mike spinning slowly with Tina, Rory being rejected by Sugar, who dances with herself.

Then there's a gentle shove between his shoulder blades and Santana says, "Kurt, your pretty boy is gagging for it. Put him out of his misery." and Kurt tumbles into Blaine's waiting embrace.

"Um, okay," Kurt says, reeling a little, and feeling again the alcohol in his blood, in his brain. He pushes back a little from Blaine, but keeps hold of him.

"I've got you," Blaine says, sliding his hands down the back of Kurt's sweaty shirt and tucking his thumbs into Kurt's waistband.

"I'm sorry," Kurt mumbles, folds his arms around Blaine's shoulders, and lets Blaine support much of his weight. Slow dancing doesn't require much more than leaning, swaying, and shuffling.

"For what?"

"Drinking. I didn't mean to, but Puck—"

Blaine says, "It's okay."

"Ugh. I hope I didn't humiliate myself too badly up there."

"Oh, no. You didn't. Not at all," Blaine reassures and tugs, pulling Kurt's pelvis flush against his own. Suddenly, the hard line of Blaine's erect cock is right there pressing against him, and they are not alone. Kurt feels a giddy rush of lust discordantly braided together with anxiety. Then Blaine is leaning into him, even closer, his breath ticklish near Kurt's ear. "That was so fucking hot, Kurt. You were so uninhibited, it was gorgeous."

And Kurt whispers back with a little groan, "I want to kiss you so so badly."

"Then kiss me."

"But—" Kissing is not something they do in front of other people. Ever. It's an unspoken rule. They just don't do it.

"They're our friends, Kurt. We're celebrating. Kiss me," Blaine murmurs, low and seductive.

So Kurt steels his nerve, ignores the pounding of his heart, and he does. He kisses Blaine just as Rachel sings, "If only for today, I am unafraid".

No one even notices.

The worst thing about being drunk, Kurt decides, is not being able to sober up when you're tired of
being drunk. He's still whirly and vague, and the floor still seems like it's tilting, trying to foil his ability to walk. How he danced earlier is a mystery. And he's sleepy, but every time he tried to nap in Blaine's car, he couldn't, because when he closed his eyes, he felt like he was being tipped upside down.

Fortunately, Blaine has him, an arm wrapped around his waist, leading him along the breezeway from the garage to the servants' entrance. Kurt would just call it the back door or the side door or something, but on Blaine's house, it's the servants' entrance. Kurt find this ridiculous, but Blaine assures him, this is the most discreet way into his house with a tipsy boyfriend who is laughing too loudly at nothing. The other plus is that Kurt had already asked permission to stay at Blaine's tonight. Blaine's parents are home, but the Hummel-Hudson house has been feeling a bit crowded since Sam moved in and Rachel has been hanging around more. It makes it harder for Kurt and Blaine to get uninterrupted time alone in Kurt's bedroom. Someone always seems to knock and spoil the mood. So they're at Blaine's tonight, trying to be quiet so word of Kurt's inebriation doesn't get back to Burt and Carole.

Blaine gets him upstairs and seated on Blaine's bed, with several exhortations to be quiet and wait and he'll be right back. Then Blaine leaves him alone. Kurt toes off his shoes and crawls up Blaine's bed until he reaches the pillows. He grabs one, and slumps into it, face first. He closes his eyes and inhales the mingled scents of Blaine's hair products and cologne, but he can still feel himself endlessly tipping over and over and over. His grip on the pillow tightens but it doesn't help. He opens his eyes with a gasp and rolls over onto his back, stares at the ceiling light, but has to close one eye so he's not seeing double. He feels awful, but at least he's not nauseated.

Shortly, Blaine returns with a carafe of water, a glass, and a bottle of aspirin. "The aspirin's for the morning," Blaine says, "But you should drink the water now."

Kurt nods weakly, scooting up against the pillows as Blaine pours him a glass. He hands it to Kurt, and Kurt takes it gratefully. His whole mouth was starting to taste dry and sour. He drains the glass and lets Blaine take it from him to refill it. "Paybacks are hell, huh?" he says.

That makes Blaine smile. "Nah," he says. "I don't mind." He settles on the bed next to Kurt and passes him his refill.

Kurt sips from the second glass and sets it aside so he can flop back into the pillows. "Ugh, Blaine, when does it wear off?"

"Depends," Blaine says. "You should have eaten more of Rachel's food."

"Maybe,\" Kurt says. "If I'd known there was vodka in my drink." Kurt sighs.

"Are you hungry?"

Kurt shrugs. "I can't tell."

"Okay, well, let me know if you want anything. I can make you food. It can help."

They sit in silence for a while, Kurt contemplating the inside of his brain case, Blaine just quiet.

They were both so hot and bothered at the party, Kurt can't fathom how much cooler everything is right now between them. It's got to be the booze messing him up as he processes it. Maybe it means he'll be back to himself soon. "Do you want to make out?" he asks Blaine.

Blaine is shaking his head before Kurt's even finished speaking. "No, not when you're like this.\"
"I'm sorry," Kurt says. "It's Friday. Friday is like, the day we fuck, and I screwed it up."

"No, Kurt, it's fine. And not your fault. Just remind me to collect a paper bag full of the neighbor's dog's poop and leave it burning on Puck's doorstep. I can't believe we've been cock-blocked by Puckzilla."

Kurt laughs. "I'm sure he thought he was helping you get laid tonight. I don't think he thinks I put out."

"I think you put that notion to rest tonight."

"Oooh, yeah." Kurt smiles and straightens his arms stretching toward the ceiling, looking at his hands as he twists and turns them, framing the patterns in the plasterwork between his thumbs and forefingers. "'Single Ladies' is so much fun. Did I tell you about the time I taught the football team?"

"Yes," Blaine says, "but it's a good story, you can tell it again if you want."

Kurt blows a raspberry at the ceiling and drops his arms. "No, I don't want to be that guy."

"Kurt, you could never be *that* guy. You're constitutionally incapable."

Then something occurs to Kurt. "Hmmph," he says.

"What?" Blaine asks.

"I guess I don't really put out, do I?"

That earns him a rare, "Huh?"

"I mean, I don't let you fuck me. And that's what guys mean when they say 'put out' isn't it?"

"I think it just means making oneself sexually accessible, Kurt, to whatever. Don't worry about it," Blaine says. "Anyway, to say you haven't 'let me' implies I've been trying, and I haven't been, so it's not an issue."

Kurt feels there must be something significant about the number of words Blaine just used to essentially say, 'It's okay.'

"But you want to," Kurt says, "And I'm not accessible."

"Kurt," Blaine says carefully. "We talked about this already. It's all fine. I'm perfectly happy with what we do together."

"I've started thinking about it," Kurt admits. He may as well take advantage of the boldness imparted by his current blood chemistry, before it wears off.

"Thinking about...?" Blaine blinks at him.

"You fucking me. I mean, thinking about it like I'm actually trying to imagine it, instead of just acknowledging it as something physically possible."

"Oh," Blaine says, shifting up against the pillows and drawing his knees up so he can fold his arms and lean upon them. Kurt feels Blaine's gaze on him, so he turns his head to meet and hold it, reaches out to run his fingertips up Blaine's thigh, following along the outside seam of his pants. Blaine doesn't smile, says, "Kurt, you're not sober."
"I know, but I'm not so drunk we can't talk."

"This seems like the sort of conversation we should have when you're sober."

Kurt shakes his head. "No, because I probably couldn't talk about this while I'm sober."

"So are you saying you want to? You want me to fuck you?"

"No, no," Kurt says, "I'm not. I'm just saying I started thinking about it, and thinking about it? It's not as awful as it used to be."

"Awful?" Blaine asks, bewildered. "Why was it awful? I mean, you clearly don't have a problem with me, you know, liking it or—"

"No, Blaine, it's not awful like that, just." Kurt sighs. It's hard to find the right words. "I got really messed up in my own head, I think. When I first started thinking about sex."

"You mean fantasizing?"

"Yes," Kurt says. "Which is why, I think, I starting focusing on romance instead of stuff."

"By stuff you mean...?"

"Sex, the penetrative sort. Particularly me being on the receiving end of it."

"Okay," Blaine says slowly, "But I think I'm missing out on the why. Did something happen? More than just the usual trauma of puberty?"

Kurt rolls to his side, and Blaine reaches a hand out to take one of his. "Yes, but," Kurt starts. "Nothing that I wouldn't imagine other gay kids go through sometimes. I don't know."

"Do you want to talk about it? You don't have to."

"I know, and yeah, I think maybe I do. Or at least I should."

"Okay," Blaine says. He scoots down and stretches out beside Kurt, turning to face him and keeping his grip on his hand. "I'm listening. Kurt, I'm here for you."

Kurt takes a deep breath and releases it slowly. He's still not sure how to organize the feelings into words, let alone construct a narrative out of it. But he starts where he thinks is right. "You know I had a crush on Finn, right. Like a huge crush. I thought I was in love with him."

Blaine nods. "Yes, I knew about that," and when Kurt doesn't say anything more right away, he continues. "Honestly, I was a little intimidated by him at first, because of that. But then I got to know him better, and know you, and—"

"He wouldn't have been a good boyfriend for me."

Blaine smiles. "Maybe not so much."

"Yeah," Kurt says, with a self-deprecating grimace. "Well, he was supposed to be my friend. Back then when I was in love with him? I thought he was my friend."

"He is your friend, isn't he?"

"Oh, of course, he is now, but things got pretty bad between us for a while."
"What happened?"

Kurt sighs. "It's a long story. You don't need to know all of it."

"Okay, tell me the important parts."

"Okay," Kurt says and closes his eyes, letting himself experience the tilt while he tries to put it all together. He starts talking, navigating the feelings with his words, trying to find his way through to the other side. "So, the thing with Finn is he was nice to me. Or, at least he was less mean, at the start."

Sometimes he looked at me like he actually saw me and not just the school's resident queer kid." Kurt makes a face, but he doesn't open his eyes, afraid that whatever he may see in Blaine's eyes will make him want to stop talking and just reach for Blaine for wordless comfort. "He seemed like he cared. Like I was a real person to him. He was the only one of them who did."

"Them?" Blaine prompts gently when Kurt falls into a pause.

"The boys, the jocks. The ones who would either not talk to me or sit near me or even look at me, and the ones who looked at me far too much, who tossed me in the dumpster every morning, haunted my steps, shoved me into lockers, called me names. Basically every boy at McKinley."

"But Finn was different." Blaine runs his thumb over Kurt's knuckles, a gentle, grounding touch.

"Yes," Kurt says. Tears needle his eyes as the immediacy of the old emotion floods back to him. The little kindnesses that meant so much to him, that were like bright stepping stones through the nightmare morass of his schooldays. "He was. I wanted so much to have a friend who was a boy. I mean, at that point, I just wanted a friend, but having a boy as a friend was something extra precious to me."

"So I'd take anything I could get that wasn't outright hostility or neglect. Even if it was just Finn chastising Puck after a locker check or holding my bag and my jacket while the others tossed me."

"Oh, Kurt..." Blaine says, and he sounds so sad, Kurt has to open his eyes. His vision is blurry with unshed tears, but he finds Blaine's eyes, gentle and sympathetic.

"Did they ever do that to you, Blaine, at your old school?"

"Throw me in the dumpster? No. I'd get teased, for being small and a little nerdy, but mostly I kept my head down. It was only bad after I came out and had the audacity to be out. Before that, no one really knew. But after. I've told you about after."

Kurt squeezes Blaine's hand. Sees moisture brightening Blaine's eyes, too. "Everyone knew about me. Before I even told anyone. They all knew. They all assumed. I was Mister Cellophane. It was practically my theme song. I was either not even there, or I was just a thing—a horrible idea to punish—not a person."

"I'm sorry," Blaine says.

"Doesn't matter anymore," Kurt mumbles. "But back then, I thought Finn was different. Even though he knew, like everyone else knew, he liked me anyway. Even after I came out. And he was so handsome, and he'd talk to me, and he'd smile at me. God, he'd smile. Like really smile. Sometimes it even felt like..." Kurt trails off in a useless gust of breath. He remembers how it felt, the ache of it, the yearning, the terrible desperation of false hope, the kind that makes you lie to yourself.
"Like what, Kurt?"

"Like he might like me too, you know, the same way. That it was possible. Even though I knew he had the thing with Quinn, and Rachel, sort of. I knew he was straight, I did. But it was enough to keep the hope alive a little, even though I knew it was hopeless."

"I- I've had crushes on straight guys before," Blaine says tentatively. "It isn't easy. I bet it would suck even more if he were a close friend."

"It wasn't all bad," Kurt said. "It was, at first anyway, wonderful. We'd hang out, help each other with difficult stuff, confide things. We could talk about my Mom and his Dad and understand each other. It was like having a friend, a boy friend, not a boyfriend, but a boy friend, and that—just that —was, for me, amazing."

"That sounds like friendship to me," Blaine says. "What went wrong?"

Kurt sighs. "After we moved in together. The first time, before our parents got married. We had to share a room."

"Ah, and that didn't work out?"

"No. I— It really didn't. I thought it was going to be fun. I even redecorated the room for us both. Finn didn't like it and... freaked out. He said some things, like mean things, to me. About me.

"He used the f-word, and I don't mean fuck. My Dad came downstairs when he heard the yelling. Overheard what Finn said and made him leave, even though he and Carole had barely been there a week." Kurt feels tears hot in his eyes, his heart fluttering like a scared, caged bird; like it all just happened yesterday.

"And that was when I realized, I wasn't a person to him either. I had trusted him, I thought I loved him, and after everything, all I was to him was some kind of awful, awful bogeyman."

"Kurt," Blaine says gently. "Oh."

"That moment, with him yelling at me, scared of me? Disgusted by me and the way I felt for him?" A hot anger sweeps up under his skin to merge with the sadness and old fear. It pushes the words out of his mouth faster than he can think them. "Disgusted by who I was, when I had thought he was one of my closest friends? When all I did was love him, Blaine? In that moment, I've never felt so wrong, just altogether wrong.

"I hadn't done anything to him. All I'd done was feel and hope and daydream and try to be his friend. I don't know. Maybe I looked at him too much, and I flirted sometimes with him—more at him, I guess—but, hell, that's not really anything is it? People look at each other. Boys flirt with girls, and girls flirt with boys. All the time. But it was unacceptable for me, apparently. It was especially terrible for me to have those kind of thoughts and feelings. So I tried— I stopped."

Blaine doesn't say anything immediately, as Kurt catches his breath. Blaine looks down at their joined hands, flexes his fingers and interlaces them with Kurt's. He holds on tightly, and asks softly, "You mean, you stopped fantasizing?"

"About sex, yeah," Kurt says. "Because I felt like I was violating whoever I fantasized about, because he couldn't consent to it.

"And that really scared me because I didn't want to end up like Mr. Ryerson, some kind of predatory pervert. So I stopped thinking about it."
"Kurt, they're fantasies. You're allowed to have those thoughts, those feelings."

"I know that, Blaine. I do. Intellectually, anyway."

"You're especially allowed to think of me that way," Blaine says with a cautious smile.

Kurt returns the smile weakly and exhales heavily. "So that's why. When I start to think about being fucked, even if it's you, it reminds me of how I used to, sometimes, think about. Oh, god, it hurts to even say it out loud."

"You had fantasies about Finn."

Kurt glances away. "Yes," he says.

"So, it was something you wanted."

"Yes," Kurt says, "I used to imagine what it would be like if he—" Kurt breaks off with a deep and sudden inhalation. He can't exhale straight away, the emotions and memories are stuck in his chest with his air. How he used to lie in bed in his basement bedroom, staring wide-eyed into the dark, so young and already half-afraid of his feelings and the way his body was changing. Unable to stop himself from wondering and imagining. And how those normal little ordinary fears morphed so quickly—when Finn threw all of back into his face, as if it were some kind of violent act for Kurt to just feel—into things so alien, monstrous, and ugly. Things he never intended them to be. Things he never wanted.

He swallows and shuts his eyes. Eventually Kurt loosens his lungs and continues, "It's all polluted with that... shame. And how betrayed I felt, too, I guess. So I don't really imagine it or think about it too much anymore, because it brings those feelings back and I don't want to feel that way even for a second with you."

"I don't ever want you to feel that way with me either. Kurt."

"I don't, and I'm not, Blaine, I'm not ashamed of anything we do. I love what we do together. All of it. I think it's perfect and beautiful and good and right and hot and I love you."

"I love you, too," Blaine says, and then adds, "And for what it's worth, I kind of want to punch Finn the next time I see him."

Kurt gives Blaine a wry smile.

"I hope you know now you're not wrong, Kurt. You never have been. There's nothing to feel ashamed about. What's shameful are the people who think they have some right to police your private thoughts and feelings and then abuse you for them."

"I do know."

"And one day, I hope. I hope, but I don't expect, you'll let me show you how amazing you make me feel, because I love it, so much, when you fuck me."

"Don't hold your breath," Kurt says dryly. It would be nice if it were this easy, if confessing the secret and the pain would magically make it go away. It has eased, though, that's for certain. Kurt finds it strange how powerful the speaking of words can be. When he talks to Blaine during sex, it makes everything more real. But talking about his shame just now, it makes it all less. Maybe that's how you tell if a feeling is true or not. Speak it and see whether it is empowered, or whether it diminishes.
"I won't," Blaine says, "It's okay." Then he tugs on Kurt's hand, trying to pull him into an embrace.

Kurt resists the pull as he realizes just how much in need of a shower he is, and how much he wants to brush his teeth. "No," he says, "I'm gross. I need a shower before I can cuddle." He looks Blaine over. "And so do you."

"You must be sobering up," Blaine says with a grin.

Kurt closes his eyes, doesn't feel the unsettling tip. He opens his eyes and rolls his head, nothing spins or lags. "I think I am."

"Good," Blaine says, "then you can join me in the shower and I won't feel like I'm taking advantage of you."

Kurt smiles. "All right, then," he says, and it is okay.
Part IVC: Distractions - Chapter 7

Kurt leans back against the closed and locked French doors of Blaine’s parents' master suite. He’s still furious, more than he can easily recall ever being. His hands are clenched behind him, trapped between the small of his back and the hard wood of the door. He doesn’t trust himself not to break something in this room, so oversized and ostentatious: the dainty antique bedside lamp that Blaine has switched on, the pale porcelain woman with the parasol on the mahogany dresser, the ornately framed mirror (it’s more frame than mirror, to the point of pointlessness, and while Kurt appreciates art for art's sake; he finds this level of dysfunction pretentious and the quantity of gold leaf garish). He wills his breaths to slow, counts them, times each inhale and exhale until he feels his heart begin to slow and his hands relax.

Blaine seems calm, but Kurt can sense Blaine's agitation like a vibration under his own skin. Blaine's been smiling all evening, but it's been too bright and forced, Kurt is glad to see it gone as Blaine turns to face him. What's replaced it isn't exactly better; but at least it's more honest: the distress seething in Blaine's eyes.

He doesn't ask Blaine if he's okay; Kurt knows he's not. And he doesn't need to ask what's wrong; that's been abundantly clear this evening, though Kurt expects he's only glimpsed the surface of it. He doesn't even need to ask why they're in this room. They started out trying to escape the overly mannered and carelessly cruel small talk downstairs, but then, once they'd got to Blaine's room, Blaine gave him this look and led him down the hall. Kurt has a condom in his pocket. Blaine has the lube. It's a grotesque trespass, being in here like this. It's wrong and inappropriate and motivated by little more than Blaine's anger and hurt. And that's exactly why they're here.

It's palpable between them, Blaine's desperation, even as Blaine is silent in the face of it. Kurt thinks he knows what Blaine wants, and what he, himself, needs to do; but Kurt also knows he needs to be careful. His own anger may have a role here, but only because of the passion that inspires it. Blaine doesn't need to feel worse, doesn't need to suffer more guilt on Kurt's behalf. Kurt's ambivalence aches in his bones—protective outrage and anger tearing him one way, simple affection and sympathy in the other. But for Blaine he will reconcile it to help him with one small act of rebellion. The one thing in this room he knows he will not break is Blaine.

Kurt tips his head back against the door and pushes his hips forward. Blaine is watching him, studying him. Waiting for him. Kurt is almost ready to go to him: to step away from the door, across the glossy polished hardwood, to the dense complexity of the room's cream, blue, and gold rugs (they appear authentically Chinese), and into the room. Bringing his hands to the front of his jacket, Kurt swallows the bitter taste of anger down to a place where he can ignore it, and undoes the buttons with steady hands. Lets himself look at Blaine until he sees only him, fills up the hole the anger has left with adoration. Knows he needs to fill up Blaine too, with good things. He thinks he understands, and he hopes it's enough. There's his love, anyway—imperfect (he's not so foolish as to believe his love can be everything Blaine needs, even if he wishes it were that easy) but unconditional—and he hopes that's enough, too.

"On the bed, Blaine, please," he says. "Hands and knees."

This evening had started out with such promise. When Blaine had given Kurt the invitation a week ago, he'd been smiling so widely. And when Kurt opened the card to see that he, his Dad, and Carole were invited to the Andersons' annual Christmas party (which was apparently A Thing), Kurt is pretty sure what he felt was joy. At last, Blaine's parents were ready to consider him something
more than Blaine's strange, intrusive friend, the boy who spent far too much time with their son, but of whom they would not disapprove vocally (since that would be an acknowledgment). They were always friendly, treating him politely enough, but superficially. Almost carelessly. As if their eyes slipping away when Blaine held his hand in front of them rendered it unreal. As if Kurt sleeping over was no different from Blaine's childhood sleepovers with his friends.

So Kurt is hopeful that this means they have made some progress. If Blaine's parents want to meet his parents, that's got to mean something.

It's only a few minutes after they arrive at Blaine's house for the party that Kurt finds out what it does mean. In the wide foyer, beneath the glittering light of the chandelier, swathed in the murmur of party guests and the jangle of Christmas carols, Blaine's father is enthusiastically shaking his Dad's hand, and Blaine's mother is fawning over Carole to take her coat. "Congressman," he says. "Congratulations on your victory," and she is gushing, "It's so wonderful to finally meet you, Carole! Thank you so much for coming to our humble little party."

Blaine's mother at least says hello to Kurt, but Kurt is pretty sure Blaine's father doesn't even make eye-contact with him. And then Blaine is there, sparkling smile, perfectly combed hair, looking immaculate in a sharply tailored navy suit over a festive Fair Isle vest. He gives the mistletoe dangling from the bottom of the chandelier a glance, and then he takes Kurt by the elbow to quickly steer him away from the shameless display of obsequiousness that's happening in the foyer. "I'm so sorry," he says, "I swear I didn't know it was going to be like this."

He guides Kurt through the press of guests, not pausing to speak to or make eye-contact with any of them. Then he's backing through the swinging door of the kitchen, into a different kind of bustle. He tells the catering team that they need more plates of hors d'oeuvre circulating, and then he's taking Kurt's hand and tugging him through another swinging door into the back hall. They stop near the laundry room. But before Kurt has a chance to respond to anything at all, Blaine is crowding him up against the wall and saying, "God, Kurt, you look amazing." He then presses up against Kurt with a wonderfully sweet and lingering kiss. Blaine breaks it slowly. Their lips cling for a moment, reluctant to be parted, and Blaine whispers against Kurt's lips, warm and ticklish, "Mistletoe."

Then Blaine leans back, cocking his head to look up at Kurt's face and asking, "How are you taller?"

"Oh," Kurt says, stepping to the side, away from the wall and into the light, and turning his heel so Blaine can see his new ankle boots. "New boots," Kurt says.

"Are they velvet?" Blaine says, crouching down to get a better look—to touch.

"Yes, aren't they fantastic? They've got a bit of a heel. Just an inch and a half, but it makes a difference." He loves the extra length it gives the line of his leg.

"Yeah, wow," Blaine says. Kurt can feel the muted pressure of Blaine's fingers over his feet and ankles as Blaine rubs his fingertips indulgently across the dark green velvet. It's weirdly erotic, and certainly unsettling. "They're great, Kurt. I love them." Blaine stands back up, his eyes bright and his cheeks tinged with a faint, ruddy blush.

"I got them especially for tonight. Well, the entire outfit, actually." He steps back and spins slowly to show off the slim three-piece aubergine purple suit he's paired with a richly textured sateen shirt in royal blue and finished with a green and gold paisley ascot. He unbuttons the jacket to show Blaine the brilliant scarlet satin lining and gives another twirl. That was his favorite part of it, the lining.

"Green boots and red lining," he says. "For Christmas."

"Subtle," Blaine says approvingly, his gaze sweeping up and down Kurt. "It's fabulous. You look
"Oh?" Kurt arches an eyebrow and reaches for Blaine's jaw just as Blaine's palm slides warm around his waist. He's leaning in to kiss Blaine when the door behind them swings open, and Blaine's mother is there. His hand drops to his side, and he rocks back, away from Blaine, who, more slowly, retrieves his own hand and tucks it into a trouser pocket. "Hello, Mrs. Anderson," Kurt says. He quickly buttons again the top two buttons of his suit jacket and hopes the sudden heat in his face isn't as vivid as it feels.

She looks past Kurt to Blaine. "Blaine, darling, I don't want you hiding back here all evening with the caterers. Go out and mingle. You never know who you'll meet, networking is important." Then she smiles broadly at Kurt. "Come, Kurt, I'll introduce you to some of our guests."

And that is that. Soon Blaine's mother is guiding Kurt between clusters of guests, her long-nailed grip firm on his arm, introducing him as, "The new congressman's son, Kurt, who goes to school with our son, Blaine." So he’s been demoted from friend to schoolmate while simultaneously upgraded into a valuable commodity due to his Dad's new political status. If it were anywhere other than his boyfriend's parents' home and party, with his father's good name in play, Kurt wouldn't bother holding his tongue.

As it is, the best he can do is force his own smile and shake hands. At least those hands that are offered. There are a few refusals, along with occasional whispers between people who think Kurt can't possibly overhear: "The congressman's gay son...", "Could it be more obvious?", "How flamboyant!", "What is he wearing?", "Is little Blaine friends with this boy?" And that's not including the various back-handed compliments and condescending observations about the value of public schools, good working class families, and the virtue of blue collar work. His annoyance is thorough. He hopes his Dad is holding up okay.

So when Blaine cuts in between Kurt and whoever he's to be introduced to next, offering him a glass of eggnog. Kurt is relieved, though no less annoyed. Blaine manages—through some miracle of speech Kurt doesn't follow—to excuse them both with his mother. Soon he’s leading Kurt upstairs, taking the route through the kitchen again, and up the back servants' stairs (Kurt is beginning to appreciate these features), apologizing to Kurt every other step until they reach Blaine's bedroom and Kurt has to kiss him to make him stop saying he's sorry.

It's Blaine's apologies that tip Kurt over from irritation into outright anger. None of it at Blaine, but at the situation: how his parents have exploited Blaine's relationship with him. Any disappointment of Kurt's has got to be dwarfed by whatever awful realization Blaine has had forced upon him tonight. And yet, he was still smiling, still being the good son downstairs. And now he is apologizing to Kurt when Blaine is the one to whom is owed an apology. But not from Kurt. His parents should be fucking groveling.

Kurt channels his anger into kissing Blaine with as much urgency and passion as he can, trying to breathe and bleed into Blaine some understanding of how much Blaine doesn't need to be feeling guilt of all things, and how much Kurt loves him and is here with him right now. And then Blaine pulls back, all hints of a smile gone, and looks at Kurt, dark and serious.

Blaine gets what they need from his nightstand, takes Kurt by the hand, and silently leads him down to the far end of the long hall, to the French doors Kurt has never seen the other side of.

The bed is enormous and decadent with piles of ornately embroidered and beaded pillows, a baroque carved headboard that reaches nearly up to the ceiling, and an elaborate *boutis* quilted bronze...
bedspread in what looks like raw silk (it probably is, and Kurt can't think about that too much, because if he thinks too much about what it may take to clean semen from silk, he'll balk). Blaine is taking his suit jacket off, draping it over the stool in front of a spindly Victorian dressing table. He doesn't look back at Kurt, keeps his eyes lowered. Kurt admires the thick, dark sweep of his lashes, the blush creeping up Blaine's neck past his starched white collar, the way his lips are parted around breaths quick and shallow.

When Blaine reaches for the hem of his vest, Kurt says, "Stop." Pushing off from his shoulders, he takes a step away from the door. "Just get on the bed, honey," he says gently. "I'll do the rest."

It helps, talking. Kurt can feel how he may create a new version of reality just for them as he speaks to Blaine. Make things more certain and sure. Establish and mold intention and desire. It's powerful, and he is hyper-aware of the weight of it tonight, the responsibility.

With sure steps and long strides, Kurt moves in an arc behind Blaine as Blaine crawls onto the bed, his knees at the edge, spine stiff, elbows locked. Kurt stops when he is still too far away to touch and out of Blaine's easy line of sight. There are few reflective surfaces in here aside from the ridiculous mirror and dressing table (whose mirror is small and discolored with age) both of which are behind Kurt. It's disorienting and oddly cloistered not to be able to see more and from different angles, not even peripherally. Kurt decides his bedroom will always have mirrors, but for now, he's using what he can: Blaine not seeing, but being seen. Transmuting Blaine's tension from anxiety to anticipation.

"That's perfect, Blaine," he says and sees Blaine's spine sag, just a little, but it's enough to encourage Kurt.

"Kurt..." Blaine starts, as if he's about to explain something, but no words follow.

"Shh," Kurt hushes, "There's nothing you need to tell me right now, baby." He slips off his jacket, drapes it over the stool with Blaine's. "I know why we're here." He then undoes his cuffs, deftly twisting his cufflinks free and pocketing them before rolling up his sleeves to mid forearm. "It hurts to be invisible to the people who love you," Kurt says as he unbucks his belt and moves closer, angling his steps to the side so he can get a better read on how Blaine is responding to his words.

Kurt speaks, in part, to better shape his own understanding, but also to give voice to the things Blaine leaves unspoken. And because Blaine lets him, trusts him with it, he wants to get it right. "You wish they knew. You wish they would look at you and see. Be proud and happy for you." Like his own family is, Kurt thinks. He imagines how hard it would be if they avoided seeing the truth of his relationship with Blaine. If they pretended it was less than it is. It makes his heart hurt.

Blaine nods his head and lowers himself to his elbows, pressing his forehead against the bed. His spine slumps between his shoulder blades as he lets his weight sink. Letting go.

"You wish we could flaunt what we have." Kurt is close enough to touch now, but he doesn't. He unfastens his fly, the vipp of the zipper coming down loud and suggestive. Kurt ignores the trepidation trembling in his chest, just concentrates on Blaine.

Blaine mumbles a soft, "Yes."

"Me too," Kurt says just as softly. Then he reaches with one hand, folding his palm over the firm curve of Blaine's ass, sliding his caress over the vague prickle of the wool gabardine fabric down Blaine's thigh with reverence, communicating his desire. "I see you, Blaine," Kurt says. He hopes this is right and what Blaine wants.

He strokes and pets Blaine over his clothes, his backside and thighs, his back and shoulders, until
Blaine has relaxed enough to be rocking with each pass of Kurt's hands and breathing more deeply. Then Kurt reaches around Blaine's waist to his belt and fly and brings his hips close enough Blaine can feel Kurt's erection brush against him as Kurt unuckles, unbuttons, and unzips him.

Blaine immediately presses back against Kurt, as if that contact has flipped a switch. He grinds back, the harsh contact abrupt and demanding. Kurt has to bite his lip hard enough he tastes blood to keep himself focused, keep his hands steady. He reaches into Blaine's open fly and curls his fingers best he can around the solid shape of Blaine's shaft. His moan echoes Blaine's at that touch, the heat and weight of Blaine's dick in his hand thrills him every time. Kurt jerks him roughly within the thin cotton of his underwear. The friction has to burn, but Blaine responds to it with enthusiasm, rocking forward into Kurt's grip, swearing under his breath, and begging Kurt, "Please, Kurt, please. Don't tease. Not now."

"Okay," Kurt says, "I won't, just..." Now Kurt's hands are shaking as he lets go of Blaine and steps back, his cock throbbing fiercely with the lingering buzz of the lost friction. He takes the condom from his pocket and tosses it to the bed before he pushes his own trousers and briefs down far enough to bare his ass and free his cock. The cool air does nothing to ease urgency of his arousal. Then he reaches for Blaine, sliding down just his pants, to his bent knees, and then pushing the hems of both his shirt and vest up to his ribs. Kurt admires the graceful dip of Blaine's spine, the way the antique lamp lights his skin. There's so much contrasting texture, all the fabrics and fibers of Blaine's clothing and the sumptuous bedding against the stark smoothness of his skin where it's revealed. Kurt wants to touch everything, feel it under his hands and against his own bare skin, but he restrains himself. This isn't a time for that. No foreplay beyond what is essential.

That doesn't mean he has to rush. With a deep breath and much more care, Kurt tucks his fingertips beneath the waistband of Blaine's briefs and eases the elastic down slowly, only gradually revealing to his gaze the high, round curve of Blaine's ass, neatly divided by the tempting line of his cleft. He lets out the breath he's been holding and releases the sharp grip of his teeth on his bottom lip.

"Blaine," he says. "God, you're so..." He flattens his hands over Blaine's buttocks, spreading his fingers to cover as much as he can, and then gently, gently, pressing them apart so he can see in between, see where Blaine's going to take him—wants to take him. "...perfect," he finishes in a thick gust of breath. He steps close again, to lay the length of his cock there, pressing his bare shaft against Blaine's tightly clenched hole, rolling his hips to make it skid a little, hissing a breath at the feel of it—tempting—the way it looks—pornographic—and, most of all, how he's thinking—wondering—what it would be like without the latex barrier, to push inside with nothing at all left between them. But he is content to wonder. Now is not a time for that either, and it would need to be preceded by a conversation, which they are not having right now.

It doesn't stop Kurt from a small indulgence, though. He moves one hand to take hold of his cock so he can drag the head down from Blaine's tailbone, slippery with precome, to rub slickly over Blaine's anus, making it glisten and twitch and begin to relax. And that feels... "Oh." Kurt sighs and stares, tries to remember how to breathe.

Until, without warning, Blaine presses back. And there's just enough of that little lubrication, enough force behind Blaine's motion, that Kurt feels Blaine starting to stretch open for him, feels himself start to breach Blaine's body. It can't work like this, he knows; as seductive as this little kiss between their bodies is, it can go all go so, so wrong. Being rough with Blaine is not the same as hurting him. He staggers back a step, away. Interrupts. "Wait," he says. "Blaine, wait. I wasn't... We're not ready."

"Kurt," is all Blaine says. The 'hurry up' is left unsaid.

So Kurt reaches for the condom, gets it on himself, and then grabs the lube from where Blaine left it
near the lamp. He nearly trips over his trouser cuffs, but gets back behind Blaine without mishap. Much as Kurt enjoys taking time, maybe this isn't something to draw out. It's unlikely, but not impossible, that someone will be looking for them soon. Still, he hates feeling careless. He likes everything to be just right, precise and mindful. And since it's been a few weeks since they did find the time and opportunity to fuck he wants this to be worth the waiting.

"Patience, baby," he says. "I'll get you there." There are levels of care he will not sacrifice for speed, however. So while he doesn't hesitate to press a well lubed finger into Blaine, he doesn't let himself savor the feel of it or how Blaine is responding to it. Doesn't drag his fingers in and out slowly to arouse more pleasure, or curl them down against that spot that makes Blaine profane. He does take enough time getting Blaine good and slick and ready for him. Then there is more lube, always more lube, and soon he's pressing his cockhead against Blaine and pushing in as hard and fast as he dares. It takes a few rocks in and out before he's fully sheathed. Blaine is hot and clamping snug around him, gasping out his pleasure so exquisitely he's nearly gagging on the air; his hands fisting so tightly in the fine silk bedspread, Kurt's sure he can hear Blaine's knuckles creak. His own grip on Blaine's hips is making his fingers ache.

This time Kurt doesn't give Blaine any extra time to adjust to him; he doesn't start with slow, easy strokes. He just starts fucking. Not too hard, but not at all gently either, trying to keep Blaine right on the blade between too much and just right. And it is—god—nearly too much for Kurt already. He's sweating in his shirt, and seductive heat simmers his blood, beckoning him to fuck into Blaine with harder, slapping staccato strokes. Perspiration gleams on Blaine's lower back as his spine flexes with each quick jolt of their bodies. They're going to reek of it by the time they're done. Maybe that's what Blaine wants. To simply pull up his pants after, straighten his tie, and head back downstairs with his bright smile, smelling of sweat and sex and another boy.

"You know," Kurt says between breaths. "They could walk in any moment now and see their darling little boy taking it up the ass and loving it." It's not true; he locked the door, but he suspects it may be part of the idea Blaine is pursuing, part of the fantasy. Is this a fantasy?

Blaine groans, shoves back against Kurt hard. The impact spikes up Kurt's spine, and he answers by snapping his hips forward brutally, making Blaine cry out.

"You do love it," Kurt says, "Maybe you even want to get caught." He snatches Blaine's hips back to meet another fierce thrust. "They couldn't look away and pretend they didn't see. They wouldn't have a choice."

"Kurt, fuck..." Blaine pleads against the bedspread, sinking his fingers into his own hair, clutching his head, as if trying to hold on to sanity.

"Louder, baby. Maybe they'll hear you." Impossible. They can barely hear the muted thump of the music downstairs, and nothing else. Nothing over the sharp smack of Kurt's hips against Blaine's ass, the rasp of their breathing, and Blaine's pleasure-stricken moans.

"Kurt, I need—" Blaine arches his spine, shoving back, mindlessly seeking that little bit more than he's getting.

"No," Kurt says. He knows what Blaine needs: his hand on his cock, but Kurt wants to try to make Blaine come without it. He doesn't know if he can, but he'll at least try. Kurt pushes Blaine a little farther onto the bed and brings one foot up to the mattress, heedless of the danger his boot heel poses to the fancy bedspread. It changes the angle he's driving in to what Kurt remembers from the first time they did this, when it seemed he lucked out (although Blaine did have his pillow to rut against). "Just fucking take it, Blaine," Kurt growls.
"I am, damn it," Blaine gasps, followed by a muddled stream of profanity to shame a sailor. Kurt's certain he hears his name in there somewhere; it may have been in the vicinity of 'bastard'.

"You want to come all over their fancy bed, don't you?" Kurt says, shoving in hard enough to rattle his teeth.

"Yes."

"Then come, Blaine. Whenever you're ready," Kurt grits out, adding a little extra swivel to his strokes, grinding (he hopes) where Blaine needs it most; he's not going to be able to take much more of this himself.

"I can't," Blaine complains, breathless, agonized.

"Try, baby," Kurt says, although he is not confident Blaine will manage; he's getting too close too fast himself, and he's not entirely sure if Blaine actually wants to come on his parents' bedspread, or if he just likes the idea of it. Kurt also doesn't want to drag this out too much longer. There's the start of a chill of apprehension trickling up his spine. They've been gone too long. So he decides to err on the side of prudence, and doesn't do anything more to help Blaine along, just lets himself go. He flexes his grip on Blaine's hips, hammers in short and quick until... Until he comes with a shuddering whimper.

"I'm sorry," he says as he pulls out carefully, mindful of his shirt-tails, and rubbing down Blaine's thighs to soothe. "Let me finish you off," he says. "Turn over."

Blaine obeys wordlessly, and Kurt leans over him, quickly pressing back into Blaine with two fingers. Kurt tips to one knee beside him on the bed, his other leg braced against the floor, trying to keep himself from slipping off the edge of the mattress. He bends over and sinks his mouth down over Blaine's cock, takes as much as he can (which is more than it used to be). "Kurt," Blaine gasps, scrabbling at Kurt's shoulders and trying futilely to arch up against Kurt, but his legs are too tangled up in his trousers to manage much more than squirming beneath Kurt's attention. Kurt doesn't dally or toy with Blaine, just bobs his head while pumping his fingers inside, curling them against Blaine's prostate to swiftly bring Blaine's orgasm shattering through him. He swallows the initial hot pulses of semen, but draws back for the lingering drips to catch them on the fingertips of his other hand, while he holds the fingers inside Blaine still against the last tremors of his climax.

He looks up at Blaine as he gently eases his fingers free, finds him looking a bit of a disaster, flushed, dazed, and tousled, with swollen, bitten red lips. Gorgeous. Kurt wishes badly that they were in his bed right now, so they could linger; but he doesn't tell Blaine that. Instead he says, "One day, I'm going to figure out how to make you come just by fucking you."

Blaine answers with a smile formed around an amused gust of breath, not quite a laugh. He seems content enough, his expression lazy and genuine as he reaches down for his underwear and trousers. He doesn't say anything, though Kurt expects him to say something. But Blaine is quiet, just looking at Kurt with hazy, sated affection.

Kurt holds up his come smeared hand to draw Blaine's attention to it. Blaine watches as Kurt drags his soiled fingers lightly across the bedspread, leaving three small wet streaks upon the fine bronze silk. "There," Kurt says and can't help adding "Protein stains are a bitch to get out of silk."

Blaine starts laughing, wriggling to hike his trousers back up.

Kurt grins. "If they ask, tell them it was eggnog."
Blaine laughs even harder, losing his grip on his fly.

Then Kurt is faced with the immediate problem of what to do with the condom still clinging to his dick.

Blaine points toward a door on the other side of the bedhead. "Bathroom," he says.

"Are you sure?" Kurt asks. It's strange enough having just used Blaine's parent's bed for sex, using their bathroom to clean up is an even more blatant transgression.

"Yeah," Blaine says. "Just don't use the blue towels. They're decorative only."

Kurt nods and goes to clean up. He's quick and efficient and doesn't let his gaze wander beyond his own immediate needs. It's hard not to notice, though, that the master bathroom is bigger than his kitchen at home, and full of gleaming brass and polished marble. The luxury is slathered on so thick, it's not classic; it's excessive.

He wraps the condom in several layers of tissue and tucks it down the side of the bin, ensuring when the trash is emptied, it won't be noticed. Then he chuckles at himself. The likelihood that Mr. or Mrs. Anderson takes out their own trash is miniscule. They have servants' entrances; they have staff. He washes his hands, and straightens his clothes. His hair is untouched, but his lip is swollen where he bit it too hard. He runs his tongue over it and tastes iron, but it doesn't sting.

He returns to Blaine who is making the best of the old mirror at the dressing table to smooth his hair into order. He's back in his suit jacket looking dapper as ever, and his color has returned to normal. There's little sign of what they've just done, and Kurt wishes for a moment he'd thought to lay a hickey above Blaine's collar, or had gripped his hips a little harder to bruise, or had smeared some spunk across the seat of his trousers. Anything to leave a mark, a reminder, upon Blaine himself. But maybe it's better to leave it this way. A fantasy only, an imaginary and covert rebellion. Kurt's not sure he would even notice the mark on the bedspread if he didn't already know it was there.

Kurt reaches for his jacket, slips it on. "Are you all right?" he asks Blaine now, because he's no longer sure, and he wants to be. Needs to know if this was correct. None of his own intuition is helping. The longer they linger in this bedroom, the more uncomfortable Kurt becomes, the more it feels like the walls and decor are closing in on him. The more alien it all is.

"Yes, of course," Blaine says, a hint of his plastic smile bending his lips.

"Blaine," Kurt says, because while he may be an intruder here, he deserves more than that.

Blaine sighs, his gaze drops and so does the smile. "Kurt, can we please not talk about this right now?"

"Okay," Kurt says, "Just. Can you tell me one thing?"

"Okay," Blaine says, but the tone of it is strained, provisional.

"Was it what you wanted?" Kurt asks.

Blaine steps in close, takes Kurt's face between his hands. "Yes," he says, and he kisses Kurt firmly on the lips as if to punctuate it. Then he takes Kurt's hand and leads him back out of the room. Kurt hopes he won't see it again.
Kurt has brought his overnight bag; it's still in the car. The original plan had been for him to stay after the party and sleep at Blaine's. But the entire tone of the evening has had Kurt wanting to be anywhere else, and he wants to take Blaine with him. He asks Blaine first, then they head back downstairs and Kurt finds his Dad to see if Blaine can come home with them (the answer is a sympathetic, "Of course he can, Kurt").

They're putting up the Christmas tree over the weekend, so it'll be nice to get an early start and have Blaine join them. Kurt noticed the Andersons' towering tree was nothing but a perfectly styled and soulless caricature, everything too uniform and coordinated, not a memento or trace of sentimentality in sight. The Hummel-Hudson tree, on the other hand, while certainly well-styled itself, is a collection of memories and handmade trinkets precious to the family, new and old. The Andersons' tree is like the stock photo in the picture frame before you buy it. The Hudson-Hummels' is the family portrait. Kurt considers asking Blaine to make something for it this year.

His Dad is looking a little harried and asks Kurt how soon they can go without causing offense. "As soon as Blaine gets a bag ready," he says.

The ride back to Lima is quiet. No one really wants to talk about the party or Blaine's parents. His Dad does say to Blaine, briefly, "Your folks sure know how to host a party!" Blaine says, "Thank you," and then the car lapses into silence, but Kurt doesn't find it uncomfortable. They ride with just the purr of the engine for a time, Kurt holding Blaine's hand loosely in the seat between them, sharing his gaze between peering up at the stars, so bright in the rural night sky; and looking at Blaine who is relaxed and letting his eyes drift shut for long intervals.

Eventually, Carole turns on the radio and finds the holiday station. Kurt squeezes Blaine's hand when "Baby it's Cold Outside" comes on, and he starts singing along, softly at first, just for Blaine. Then, Blaine smiles and joins him adding volume and harmony. Kurt grins and sings louder, until Carole and his Dad join in too. They all cheer and applaud each other when the song finishes, and they take turns with the songs that follow. Blaine sings with him on "Winter Wonderland", and Kurt is grateful for the privacy of the dark backseat. He's heart skips a beat when Blaine sings, "In the meadow we will build a snowman," and Kurt follows with, "And pretend that he is Parson Brown." It feels, for a moment, like a promise. "Silver Bells" is next, and Carole sings it with his Dad. Kurt holds Blaine's gaze with a smile and strokes the back of his hand with his thumb.

In the car with his parents, they're warm and happy, and Kurt is looking forward to tomorrow. He imagines how it will go. Carole will make French toast while his Dad and Finn go get a tree, and Kurt (with Blaine's help) retrieves the boxes of decorations from the attic. Rachel will come at some point after brunch, bringing elaborately iced snowflake cookies and a winter themed playlist on her iPod. They'll make wassail on the stove to fill the house with the scent of cinnamon and spice. They'll untangle the lights and unwrap the ornaments and load the tree with colorful glint and glimmer. They'll smile and sing and laugh and enjoy each other. And even though it will be just the second celebration of the Winter Solstice for the Hudson-Hummels as a family, and only the first where they will be joined by Blaine and Rachel, it will feel old and familiar, like tradition.

Maybe it will snow and he'll invite Blaine to stay the night again, and Blaine will say yes. They'll light a fire and turn out all the lights but for the Christmas tree. After everyone else has gone to bed, Kurt will make them hot chocolate with real whipped cream on top. They'll sit on the floor together, near the tree with the fire warming their backs, admiring the twinkling lights. Kurt will point out his favorite ornaments and tell Blaine their stories. They'll drink their hot chocolate and end up lying on the rug by the fire, listening to Rachel's playlist and talking about the future: the home they will have,
the parties they will host, the friends they will keep.

It's a good fantasy, and Kurt can't wait to share it with Blaine.

#

The last day of school before Christmas break, Blaine stops Kurt in the hall and hands him a small jewelry box. What's inside is not expensive or glamorous, it's handmade and humble. It's made of fragile things, stronger for being woven together. It's a promise and a dream.
Part VA: Devotion - Chapter 8

The first weekend after Christmas is always devoted to taking down the decorations. The second weekend after Christmas, Kurt spends doing winter wardrobe maintenance. Mostly this consists of painstakingly hand-washing woolens, taking his coats to be dry cleaned, sorting his bureau and closet, doing minor repairs, and ironing whatever needs it. It helps stave off the post solstice doldrums, of realizing spring is still weeks and weeks away. He plans new outfits, scours the internet for good deals on late season items, and rearranges his wardrobe which always, by this time of the year and despite his best efforts, has fallen into some chaos. By this time of the year, Kurt has also fallen into some small amount of chaos, himself. Time doesn’t stop the sharp pangs of grief resurfacing during the holidays. But by Monday he’ll feel orderly and human again, ready to face the cold, bleak days to come.

This year it's less lonely. Blaine is with him as he goes through his routine, and that helps so much, because he would have been alone otherwise. His Dad and Carole are in D.C. over the weekend, looking at apartments. Finn and Sam have been out all afternoon but are due back any time. It's the first time in a long time Kurt's been alone with Blaine for a decent stretch of time and they haven't been having sex of some variety. At least, they haven't yet. Kurt made sure Blaine knew he had a lot to get done and distractions—no matter how theoretically welcome—were unhelpful. Thus far they've been good at keeping their hands to themselves so Kurt can check things off his list.

It's been nice, too, spending time like they once did. Hanging out, talking, just being friends. Not that they had stopped being friends at any point, but they've been so enthralled by the wonderful world of sexual activity, it's been a while since they spent time alone together not getting each other off. They've had time to talk, so in some of those moments when Kurt's missed his mother, he's told Blaine instead of telling no one. Nothing too much, just matter-of-fact things. He hasn't cried today, and it's good. Kurt doesn't drown in the pain any more; he just acknowledges it. Doesn't fall down the hole into his memories, just knows they're still there. It's easier to stay anchored to the present with Blaine here, immediate and affectionate. It's harder to stay on task though.

Kurt's resolve is definitely slipping now that's it's late Sunday afternoon, they are still alone, and he doesn't know when their next good opportunity will be. They haven't had a long span of quiet, uninterrupted time for each other since Blaine's parents went to Cincinnati. Exchanging hasty blowjobs and handjobs in his bedroom after dinner most nights is fine and satisfying, but it's not the same as having the time and comfort and space for more, for slower and more thorough. Valentine's Day is next month. Kurt is considering surprising Blaine with a nice hotel room for the night. He'll forgo the McQueen shirt he's had his eye on and spend the money on them.

But that's still over a month away, and though Kurt has been determined to behave like a mature, responsible human being and not a sex obsessed adolescent today, the way Blaine's hands have worked up under the back hem of his waistcoat and the way his thumbs are digging into the small of his back either side of his spine threatens that determination. It's like there's a direct neural route between Blaine's hands and his groin, and Kurt is beginning to feel flushed. He's sure Blaine isn't trying to seduce him; he's just responding to Kurt's earlier complaint of a muscle twinge after he'd been bent over the ironing board for an hour. Now he's bent over the laundry sink. He redoubles his concentration on the Ralph Lauren sweater from which he's carefully squeezing water, mindful not to twist or stretch the wet wool.

"Now I know why you smell so good in the winter," Blaine says, and his breath puffs warm against the back of Kurt's neck.
"Do I smell bad in other seasons?" Kurt teases lightly, and he bites down on his lip to quash the groan that threatens when Blaine's thumbs slide down to his waistband and pause there, rubbing little circles of warmth into his muscles, dipping just a little bit lower, behind the ridge of his belt. Maybe Blaine is trying to seduce him. Even if he's not, Kurt is grateful for the distraction. Memories of his mother instructing him how to do this, to squeeze not wring, to be careful not to agitate the knit, are close to the surface. But Blaine is closer, so Kurt lets himself be ambivalent, wanting Blaine but trying to resist the want so he doesn't mangle his sweater. It's easier than thinking about other things.

"No, but there's a particular scent to you in the winter, and it's this, isn't it?" Blaine slides one hand around his waist to gesture toward the bottle of organic wool wash Kurt's been using. Then he flattens his palm across Kurt's belly and lifts his hand from Kurt's back to smooth his waistcoat back down, tripping up the laces at the back of it, giving them a little tug, before sliding around to join his other hand, holding Kurt in a loose embrace.

"Mmm," Kurt confirms, trying to pretend he's not preternaturally aware of Blaine's hands and their effect on him. Surely he can go a day without molesting Blaine. "Lanolin conditions the wool, and the lavender repels moths," he says.

"Feel better?" Blaine asks, leaning in and propping his chin on Kurt's shoulder. He's warm near Kurt's back, but not pressing so close that Kurt can be sure Blaine's in a state similar to him.

"Yes, thank you," Kurt says as he rolls the sweater gently so he'll be able to lift it from the sink without it stretching. Hears the ghost of his mother's voice reverberating with his own as he asks Blaine, "Can you pass me a couple of those towels, please?" Sweetheart, his mother called him.

Blaine lets go of him, and Kurt takes a deep head-clearing breath and smiles at Blaine over his shoulder as he hands him the two large bath towels. Blaine grins and presses a quick kiss to Kurt's cheek. "Good," he says, and then purses his lips. "Hey, do you want to take a break? Coffee and a snack?"

Kurt nods. "Sure, I am past ready to be done with this," he says, laying out one towel atop the washing machine. He lifts the rolled up sweater out of the sink and lays it upon the towel, unrolling it down the length of it. "There'll still be some cookies Carole made in the tin in the pantry." He folds up the excess length of towel over the base of the sweater and places the other towel on top. Then he rolls them together, pressing evenly to extract more water. "I'll be finished soon." Once he's satisfied he's got the sweater blotted out as best he can, he takes it to the drying rack to lay it flat upon a fresh towel with the other woolens he's washed today. It should be dry by tomorrow afternoon.

His hands are pruney and cold, so he washes them under warm water and squirts a dollop of hand-cream from the dispenser by the sink. His hands absorb it only reluctantly. He doesn't like wearing gloves for this though; he likes to be able to feel the wool.

When he gets to the kitchen, the coffee pot is chugging away and Blaine is arranging Carole's lemon thyme shortbread on a plate for them to share. It's Kurt's favorite plate, old porcelain with delicately hand painted purple clover. It's crazed in the center, the gold trim around the edge is worn, and there's a large chip out of the foot ring. It belonged to his mother's grandmother, and Kurt smiles that Blaine remembered the plate and Kurt's fondness for it.

Blaine looks up, returning his smile. "So what's next after this?" The late afternoon sun is orange glancing across Blaine's face. It makes his eyes glow amber. Kurt really wants to touch Blaine, and he's beginning to wonder why he feels like he's not supposed to today. Perhaps it's the melancholy.

Kurt pulls out a stool at the island and sits. "Just my closet," Kurt says, "and maybe a couple drawers."
"Will that take long, do you think?" Blaine asks over his shoulder as he goes to the cupboard for mugs. Kurt likes to see Blaine so comfortable in his kitchen. It's been easy to let him, too. Blaine's respectful of the space, he remembers where things are, what they're for, how to take care of them. Kurt barely managed to save his non-stick sauté pan from the dishwasher when Sam helped clean up dinner the other night.

"Do you need to leave soon?" Kurt asks. He's hoped Blaine would stay for dinner, even though it'll probably be delivery or take-out tonight.

"No," Blaine says, pouring coffee into the mugs, leaving room for milk in Kurt's. "I just wondered if we'd have a little time to mess around, too." He glances up as he reaches for the sugar bowl, puts half a teaspoon into Kurt's mug. "Maybe?"

The breath Kurt's been holding comes out in rush. "After dinner?" he suggests. "Finn and Sam will be back, but Finn's got his X-box plugged into the big screen while Dad's gone, so they'll be doing that, I imagine."

Blaine smiles and nods and passes Kurt his coffee.

"I'm sorry it's been so long," Kurt says, wrapping his cold hands around the warmth of his mug, "since we've been able to take our time together."

"It's okay," Blaine says. "It's that time of year. Things will settle down."

"Yeah," Kurt says with another sigh, taking a cookie from the plate, but he's not sure if things will settle down. He doesn't want to talk about how he's worried they're running out of time, because there's still plenty of time, but now that he's writing '2012' in the date, everything feels so much closer, cluttered, and uncertain. His NYADA rejection will be coming soon, and then he'll be forced to make new plans. And he doesn't want to talk about how it still makes his stomach twist up—and not in a wholly good way—when he thinks about the last time he was inside Blaine, in his parents' bedroom. Not because he didn't love being with Blaine or being there for Blaine, but because the whole tone of that night is discordant. It makes it harder to think about leaving Blaine behind. And Kurt also doesn't want to talk about how washing sweaters sometimes makes him feel left behind himself, because it triggers such vivid memories of his mother, and the feel of the wet wool in his bare hands makes him remember her voice. Which is precious, but it reminds him how hard it is to be left behind even when you have people who love you nearby. It reminds him that things don't always settle down. Sometimes they just end.

His head is too crowded, despite this weekend being the weekend for clearing it. It works nearly every other year, but unsettled things are intruding; things are changing. He just wants to run away with Blaine somewhere sunny and warm with a big bed, a well stocked shower, and room service. And nothing else to do but each other. A hotel room for Valentine's Day is the best he'll be able to arrange. But it feels like forever away.

"Kurt?" Blaine asks.

Blinking, Kurt looks up from his hand; he'd fallen into a trance staring at his half-eaten piece of shortbread.

"Are you okay?"

"I'm— Yeah, sorry." He forces a smile. "Just tired and stuff."

"It's okay," Blaine says. "And we don't have to—"
"No, I want to Blaine, god. I miss you."

"I haven't gone anywhere. I'm right here, Kurt."

"I know, I mean, not like that. Just you and me, together, just us without other stuff, other things getting tangled up with us."

Blaine's eyebrows come together in sympathetic concern. "We're still us," he says. "There's just been a lot of distractions lately. Between now and Regionals, it should be quieter."

"Yeah, I hope so," Kurt says, and puts the rest of his cookie in his mouth.

Upstairs there are fewer memories of things lost. It's in this room that he's come to know Blaine. So Kurt is feeling lighter and brighter as he pushes hangers along the rail in his closet seeking things that are out of place, hung too carelessly, or are good options to sell or give away to make room for new pieces. Blaine is on his bed patiently tidying and folding the contents of Kurt's accessories' drawers. Kurt pulls out a couple jackets, three pairs of trousers and several shirts he thinks he can resell. He finds another shirt that needs a button, so he sets that aside for repairs. Then he starts moving misplaced items, organizing by season, color, and type.

"Kurt?" Blaine asks. His tone of voice is strange, thin: inquisitive and cautious.

Kurt turns, still holding a sage green linen blazer that belongs with his Summer items but had ventured in with Autumn's jackets. When he sees what Blaine has got in his hands, he freezes, his hands clenching tight on the shoulders of the jacket. He forgot that was in his drawer still, didn't realize Blaine would find it. A cold sort of nausea swirls in his stomach, trickles out along his limbs, an abrupt wash of insecurity twisted up with something akin to humiliation. It's Kurt's black brocade corset with the antique gold stitching and laces. Kurt hasn't been able to bring himself to get rid of it; for all that it no longer fits him (thank you, growth spurt), he can't sell it on or give it away, and it was too expensive to trash. "Yes?"

"Is this a—?"

"It's a corset, Blaine," Kurt says, his voice brittle and defensive. "And before you ask, it is a mens' corset."

"No, that wasn't what I—" Blaine swallows hard, shifts his weight and tilts his head, looking up at Kurt through his long dark lashes. His expression is in no way horrified or mocking, rather Blaine looks intrigued and maybe even a little bit aroused. "Do you wear this, Kurt?" Blaine pets the brocade, his touch tender. "When do you wear this?"

"Oh," Kurt says, noting the red blossoming across Blaine's cheeks. "I don't wear it now, it doesn't fit right any more." But my sophomore year, I wore it a few times. As an accessory."

"So you wore this to school?" Blaine sounds incredulous, but there's a note of admiration there, too.

"Yes. Not often, though. It wasn't exactly one of my more popular looks, but I did get a lot of attention for it," Kurt says, doesn't need to explain more than that, the kind of attention he got.

"And it doesn't fit you now?" Blaine has turned it over in his lap and is playing with the long laces, tracing their zigzag with his fingertips. Kurt recalls Blaine's fingers upon the laces of his waistcoat and wonders.
"Not well, why? Do you like it?"

"I... Yeah, I do."

Kurt cocks his head and evaluates Blaine. He's slender, slimmer than Kurt was. Kurt knows a corset is not an item to share, but he never really wore it enough for it to have adapted to his body shape. "It may fit you," Kurt says.

"Oh!" Blaine's fingers flutter from the shimmery brocade to his denim clad thighs, but one of his thumbs can't resist running down a line of the steel boning. "Do you think so?"

"I know it's not exactly Brooks Brothers," Kurt says, which makes Blaine look up with a short laugh. "But if you want to try it on, I can help lace you up."

"What would I wear it with?" Blaine asks with genuine wonder.

"Oh, I still have the shirt I got to go with it. You'll love this," Kurt says, turning back to his closet. He hangs the linen jacket before he goes digging back into the far end of the rail where he keeps the things he no longer wears but hangs on to just in case. "It's so theatrical."

The shirt is a cobweb fine, pearl gray silk poet's shirt with billowy sleeves and a wide, open neck. Kurt kept it for potential costuming value. "Ta da," he says, flourishing the garment on its hanger to Blaine, whose eyes widen.

"Seriously, Kurt, you wore that? To school?" He holds up the corset "With this?"

"I did. Twice."

Blaine laughs, but it's affectionate and not at Kurt's expense. "You're... incredible. I would love to have seen that."

"So..." Kurt holds the shirt by the shoulders and does a little shimmy with it. "You want to try it on?"

Blaine looks at him, his smile quirking into some strange blend of embarrassment and anticipation. "Only so long as you don't expect me to wear it outside this room."

"No, of course not," Kurt assures him. "This shirt really isn't your style. In fact, aside from being provocative, this shirt wasn't even my style. I don't know what I was thinking. This shirt shouldn't exist outside the International Male catalog. Which itself no longer exists, so..."

"Okay," Blaine says, chuckling softly as he stands up. He pulls his sweater off over his head. Then he unbuttons his shirt and shrugs it off, reaching out to Kurt for the poet's shirt.

"You'll need to take off your undershirt, too," Kurt says, ignoring the rush of warmth Blaine's increasing level of shirtlessness provokes. The twitch of interest from his dick.

The undershirt comes off and Kurt can appreciate better Blaine's state. His blush is spreading down his neck to his chest and his nipples are pebbled hard. Kurt chews his lip and watches Blaine slip the filmy gray shirt over his head. The wide collar exposes and displays his neck and collarbones beautifully, and the material is thin enough, Kurt can clearly see the shape of Blaine's pecs and the points of his nipples beneath the silk. The sleeves drape Blaine's deltoids and biceps, alternating between clinging and floating away as Blaine moves.

"It's really comfortable," Blaine says, looking up at Kurt as he smooths the shirt over his torso, and it leaves nothing obscured where it comes into contact with his skin. It's erotic and exotic, and Kurt is
glad he is Blaine's only audience, because the sight of Blaine in his dandy shirt is making half the blood from his brain lurch straight down to flood his cock.

"It's really soft," Blaine says when Kurt finds no words to respond.

"It's silk," Kurt says, pointlessly.

"Yeah," Blaine says, looking down at himself. "So, the other thing?"

"Oh, uh, right," Kurt says, and reaches to the bed to collect the corset. The brocade is cool and softly slick with the vague relief of pattern beneath the pads of his fingers; the steel boning is cold and stiff. He anticipates how it will soon be wrapped about Blaine, fitting snug around his ribs and belly, warming with his body heat. Kurt clears his throat and explains, "You need to step into it, so your shoes and stuff need to come off." Kurt starts pulling the laces loose enough for Blaine.

"Ah, so I should, um..." Blaine toes off his shoes and goes to work on his belt and fly, and Kurt is, in the quiet corner of his mind where he's not growing light headed, intrigued by how this situation has got them both blushing and stammering like sheltered virgins.

Then Blaine is standing there in nothing but his briefs and the flowy shirt, which is long enough it's not obvious Blaine is still in his underwear. Kurt tightens his grip on the corset, lets pass the urge to push Blaine down onto his bed to kiss him and touch him until he's needy and begging. Kurt hands Blaine the corset and steps back, clasping his hands in front of himself, trying to hide his physical response and not stare too much at Blaine's slim, lean legs or his sleekly muscled chest, or his flushed, bright eyed face, or... Really there's no part of Blaine that's safe to look at. But they're just playing dress up, Kurt reminds himself. He can wait until after dinner. "The laces are the back of it," he says, though that's probably not hard for Blaine to guess.

Blaine bends to step into the oval of the corset and Kurt looks back at his closet, wonders if he has something he could dress up in too, so Blaine won't feel alone in his fancy dress. He has some burgundy crushed velvet pants in there he hasn't found the opportunity to wear yet. If he put them with his sequined vest? No, that would be too much texture. Maybe a simple white shirt and the right scarf would—

"Kurt? Can you, um, help me out?" Blaine asks. He's trying to tuck the tails of the shirt into the corset, but it's uncooperatively slippery and bunching up. He needs an extra pair of hands to smooth it into more even gathers.

"Here," Kurt says, stepping over to assist. "Just hold it up, I'll straighten the shirt." Kurt reaches for the bottom hem, tugging it down evenly.

"Okay, but—"

Kurt's wrist brushes against the very hard and very prominent evidence of Blaine's arousal. Oh. He's not surprised, given how much Blaine has been blushing, but it's still an unexpectedly pleasant rush—and a relief. He's not the only one caught up in the eroticism of the situation.

"Yeah, that."

"Ah," Kurt says, taking more care not to accidentally bump against Blaine's erection, trying to concentrate on arranging the shirt neatly so it won't be wadded up and chafing. He knows if he looks up, his lips will be very close to Blaine's and the temptation will be too terrible to resist.

"Sorry," Blaine says. "I don't know why—"
"It's okay," Kurt says. "Me too."

Blaine lets out a gust of breath that ruffles Kurt's hair and says, "So this is getting both of us hot and bothered?"

"Uh huh," Kurt says, and he has the shirt arranged well enough, so he adds, "Turn around and I'll lace you up."

Blaine turns obediently, and Kurt focuses on the laces, starting at the top and working his way down, tugging them until they're just barely snug. Then he works up from the bottom. Does it again, careful not to pull too tightly. "It shouldn't be too tight or hurt," Kurt says. "It should be like a firm hug, not like you're being squashed."

"Okay," Blaine says. "I think... I mean, it's good. I'm not—"

Kurt gives two final, sharper tugs where the laces meet and ties them off in a neat bow.

"Oh!"

"Still okay?"

When Blaine replies, his voice has that strange thinness too it again, a hazy sort of breathlessness. "Yes, Kurt," he says.

Kurt runs a fingertip down the laces, admiring the accentuated curve of Blaine's lower back, the steep dip of it before the curve reverses into the luscious arc of his ass, temptingly shrouded by the bottom of the shirt. Then Kurt lets his vision expand, to take in the whole spectacle. And Blaine is certainly a spectacle. Kurt sucks in a sharp breath.

He knows Blaine is slim, but in this, he looks like Kurt could completely enfold his waist in the span of his hands. It draws contrast to the breadth of Blaine's upper back and shoulders, and the perfect swell of his high, round rear, the fine lines of muscle in his thighs. There's also something so unforgiving about the corset, so contained and caged. Kurt remembers how it felt to wear it, like it was holding him together, physically and otherwise.

"Do you like it?" he asks, rushing the words out with too little breath. "The way it feels?" Kurt places his thumbs, tip to tip at the center of the laces, at the narrowest part of Blaine's waist. Then he stretches his hands, folds them deliberately around to see if his fingertips will touch in the front. It's not that close, but it's close enough that Kurt notices the difference, it spurs a bright flash of possibility.

"Yes," Blaine says. "It's so... controlled."

"You like that," Kurt says. "Like with your ties and tight shirts, tight pants. Your hair." And, Kurt leaves unspoken, when he tied Blaine up with his scarf.

"Yeah," Blaine exhaled. His inhale is sharp and aborted, and Kurt hears it catching in his lungs as his diaphragm refuses to expand fully. He loosens his grip around Blaine's waist, strokes along the boning to soothe, feels how it's heating up to Blaine's body temperature, which is also on the rise.

"You need to breathe with just the top of your lungs," Kurt explains. "It's counterintuitive to us as singers, but deep breaths are hard."

"Okay," Blaine says. "So no physical exertion then?"
"Well," Kurt says, bringing his hands up off the top edge of the corset to slide over the frictionless gossamer of the silk, around Blaine's chest, finding his nipples still peaked. "Some people use them during sex," he says. "For, like, mild breath control."

"They do?" Blaine asks, breath hitching again, but this time because Kurt is pinching his nipples, twisting them between his thumbs and forefingers.

Kurt answers with a speculative hum, slides his palms from Blaine's chest back to the corset, splaying his hands over the flat front of it, tempted to keep going lower, to find Blaine with his hands, hard and wanting. "If it's something you'd like to try, we can do that." It is a kind of bondage, Kurt considers, like tying Blaine's wrists. It's like binding Blaine's very lungs, which is a strange thrill.

"Kurt," Blaine says. "You...? Is that why you got this for yourself?"

"Oh, god, no. Blaine, I didn't know the first thing about that sort of thing then. I just thought it was avant garde and beautiful." Kurt lets his fingertips kink up along the bottom edge of the corset. He swears he can feel the heat of Blaine's arousal near his knuckles.

"So you never jerked off while wearing it?"

"No," Kurt says. "Are you kidding? And risk getting semen on a three-hundred dollar fashion whim?" It never even occurred to him at the time, but he thinks he might like to jerk Blaine off in it. His hands twitch, resisting the urge to slide lower.

"I probably would have," Blaine admits.

"I can believe that," Kurt says, trying very hard not to dwell on the mental image of it. Then he moves his hands away from temptation to give Blaine a little push toward the open door of the closet where the full length mirror is angled away from them. "Let's go take a look at you."

"Oh my god," Blaine says when he sees himself. He runs a hand across his tummy, skipping over the boning, along to appreciate the cinched incurve of his waist. "I look like some kind of slutty gay pirate." He breathes out a soft laugh. "I need my fencing foil."

Kurt snorts in amusement, but Blaine isn't wrong. He does look like he could swash some serious and sexy buckle in this, "I have eyeliner," Kurt says, "but no appropriate hats. A bandana maybe?"

Blaine grins and twists to meet Kurt's gaze over his shoulder. And with that smile, Kurt can't resist it one moment longer. He leans in and kisses Blaine. It's not tender or chaste, but deep and succulent, as he takes Blaine by the shoulders to turn him so they are facing, and then Kurt presses him back against the unforgiving surface of the mirror and crowds up against him until they are pressed together, mouths to hips, and Kurt feels Blaine so hard against him, himself so hard against Blaine. The closet door creaks on its hinges. Blaine growls into the kiss, taking Kurt by the hips and yanking him closer yet.

Their teeth clack and Kurt shudders as he eases his mouth from Blaine's before either of them chips a tooth. "Jesus, Blaine," Kurt gasps.

Even more breathless, Blaine regards Kurt from beneath heavy eyelids and whispers, "Do we really have to wait until after dinner?"

"Fuck, no," Kurt says, bending his head to press his mouth to the wondrous smooth line of Blaine's exposed neck, dragging his lips along until he reaches the edge of the shirt's collar, near the bump of his shoulder. Kurt inhales the scent of Blaine, wondering at how the faint aroma of coffee still clings
to him, a warm, bitter note overlaying the brighter citrus, spice, and cedar characteristics of his cologne. It's so classically masculine, it makes Kurt's head swim. For then there's the diaphanous shirt, somewhat absurd and florid but no less masculine, really, though it's a different kind of masculinity and such a contrast to Blaine's usual preppy primness. Kurt draws his hands down across the silk to trace the shape of Blaine's chest, finds his nipples, and mouths down the slippery fabric to the nearest, sealing his mouth over its small rigid shape and exhaling a hot breath that makes Blaine squirm and swear and cling to Kurt's shoulders with stiff fingers.

Kurt wants to devour Blaine; the lust rearing up within him is ravenous and so deeply rooted, Kurt can't fathom the strength of it right now. It's roasting his brain and flooding his veins with such a terrible ache to consume and possess and take and taste and... Kurt groans as his hands slip down and close tightly around Blaine's waist, so easily encompassed. He licks roughly over Blaine's nipple, the silk dragging dry against the flat of his tongue. It's the sweetest music, Blaine's answering raspies, tight with breathlessness. When Blaine says his name it comes out a plaintive whine, carried upon a spare, thin tendril of air.

Beneath his lips, Blaine's chest heaves, and Kurt bites down, his teeth catching fabric and flesh together, pinching Blaine's nipple severely. Blaine lets out a startled whimper. Kurt tugs at his nipple, scraping over the sensitive flesh until it slips free and he's got nothing but the silk left between his teeth and clinging to his lips. He opens his mouth to release the material, leaves his mouth open against Blaine's chest, panting against the damp silk, hot and dizzy.

"Kurt... Fuck.... Kurt, you..." Blaine babbles between desperate breaths; needy and shallow. His fingers spasm, clenching and releasing a chaotic rhythm upon Kurt's shoulders.

Kurt's lips move against Blaine's body; he can feel the beats of Blaine's heart drumming beneath them. "I don't know what I'm doing right now," he confesses, squeezes Blaine's waist. He's afraid to lift his head or look up. "I don't want to hurt you."

He waits for Blaine to recover enough air to reply. Blaine's hands loosen their grip and move to his hair, sliding fingertips firmly across his scalp, a soothing massage for Kurt's poor overwrought brain.

"What is it you want to do to me?" Blaine asks softly.

It's not something Kurt has the words for, at least not the right ones. He doesn't literally want to consume his boyfriend, but he does want to saturate himself with Blaine, wrap himself up and hold on, lose himself until the only thing that exists in his consciousness is Blaine, until Blaine has seeped into his very cells and all there is left is them, even if it's only for a few precious moments.

It's far too much to desire, an impossible thing. Kurt tries to translate this into something that is possible. "I want to fuck you with my mouth, taste you and smell you and make you—feel you—come."

Blaine's fingertips, mirroring each other, tracing around the tender edges of Kurt's ears. "That... Kurt, that's not something that will hurt me," Blaine says gently.

"I just, I want you so much right now," Kurt tries to explain. Can't articulate why it scares him. How he wants to cling forever to transitory things.

"Do you want to move to your bed?" Blaine asks.

Kurt turns his head to evaluate that option. His cheek presses against Blaine's firm chest, the sodden silk sticking. The bed is in disarray, covered in scarves and belts and empty drawers. "No," Kurt says. "Here is good." Then he slides down to his knees.
Kurt doesn't waste any time hauling Blaine's briefs down and off. Then he's wrapping one hand around the thick veined column of Blaine's hard cock and licking the slick beads of salty precome from the crown. The intimate scent of Blaine here fills his nostrils. It smells like private moments and sex, sweaty naked laughter on his bed, and quiet tender moments in Blaine's bed, and joy and lust and freedom and together. The opposite of loneliness.

Kurt inhales deeply as he opens and presses forward with easy suction. He draws Blaine into his mouth and into his lungs. He wills his throat to unlock, to relax so he can take more, but he can't quite. Blaine's cock is huge and unyielding against his soft palate. Kurt flinches back, but he doesn't —thankfully— gag. He groans in frustration, feels sweat breaking out all over. Blaine's thumb rubs across his forehead and brows, pressing away the lines of his frown.

"Feels so good, Kurt, so good. You're so good at that," Blaine murmurs, his other hand coming down to cradle Kurt's stretched open jaw; his fingertips wipe away the saliva leaking from the corner of Kurt's mouth. "So good, Kurt, you don't have to—"

Kurt tries again, pushing forward with a little more speed and force. He just goes for it, seeing if he can push through the resistance and reflex and come out the other side a more expert cocksucker. This time he does gag.

He jerks back, pulling off Blaine to sit back on his heels, coughing and struggling to catch his breath, trying not to retch. "S—sorry," he stutters and gasps. He keeps hold of Blaine's cock with his hand at least, squeezes and strokes it as he recover his equilibrium.

"Don't," Blaine says with a sharp hitch of his breath. "God, don't... apologize."

"I just—" Kurt breaks off with another coughing spasm. He lets go of Blaine, covers his mouth, and looks up helplessly. This is not at all what he had intended.

"Hey," Blaine says, stroking his hair, "Hey, are you okay, sweetheart?"

Kurt's eyes widen and he hauls himself together enough to ask, "What?"

"Are you okay?"

"Yes, but not that. What did you call me?"

"Sweetheart?" Blaine makes a face that's the lopsided lovechild of a smile and a grimace. "Too saccharine?" Blaine asks.

Kurt shakes his head, "No, not at all." It should be weird, shouldn't it? But it's not. It fills him with a warm affection; tethers him, tamps down some of the insane desperation that had been overtaking him. "I really like it." He smiles up at Blaine, comforted in some difficult to quantify way. He takes a long, clear breath and his throat doesn't cramp in protest. He looks back at Blaine's cock before him, the tail of the shirt draped over it like it's on display. His gaze skates up Blaine's torso, the spectacular lines of his torso bound up in the corset, the way Blaine's skin almost glows in contrast to the cool gray of the shirt. Kurt moves his hands to Blaine's knees, squeezes and then slides up Blaine's thighs until his thumbs are tucked up in the crease of his groin, knuckles brushing against the heavy heat of Blaine's balls. Kurt still wants everything. His mouth waters with it.

"Turn around," Kurt says, loosening his grip so Blaine can obey.

Kurt pushes the back of the shirt up to expose Blaine's ass to his view, tucking its edge up beneath the corset to hold it there. Then he fills his palms with the firm, cool flesh of Blaine's buttocks,
squeezes as Blaine presses back into his grasp, bending at the waist and folding one arm upon the mirror and resting his forehead against it.

It makes Kurt's heart tremble, how easily Blaine offers up himself like this when Kurt hasn't reciprocated himself. His stomach clenches as he imagines their positions reversed, him leaning against the unrelenting chill of the mirror, patiently waiting for Blaine's mouth on his ass, waiting for Blaine's tongue to slip inside him, to push and pulse until Kurt's mad with need and shamelessly begging for more. Why can't he, when he wants so much to lose himself in Blaine? What's holding him back still? Pride?

It doesn't matter, not right now, not when it's Blaine patiently waiting for him, and Kurt wants so much to make it good for Blaine. Can't wait to hear him pleading, hot, and wanton.

So he brushes with his thumbs either side of Blaine's cleft, drags down to the softest most tender inner base of his cheeks where they come together between his legs, behind his balls, framing his perineum; where it's not yet quite his thighs. He strokes lightly to arouse goosebumps, gets a lovely gasp in response, then presses into the flesh, kneading as he lifts and spreads, opening Blaine up for his gaze, for his mouth.

He bends his head and tastes, long and lazily; breathes Blaine in, strong and elemental, sex and sweat and boy and his. Kurt's eyes slip shut and he sighs into the kisses he's giving Blaine. He licks lightly, tiny flickers of the tip of his tongue all around and along; he chases texture and traces the trembling of the tender muscle, but he doesn't try to press into it, not yet.

Then there's a light, ticklish ruffling of Kurt's hair and he glances up best he can, realizes it's Blaine's hand, fingertips raking through his hair without quite meeting his scalp. Feels pin prick pulls as Blaine traps strands between his fingers and tugs, whispering, "Kurt."

Kurt shuts his eyes again and hums, presses closer, closing his lips around Blaine's opening and suckling softly, heedless of the obscene wet slurps escaping his mouth. He hears the wheeze of Blaine's breath, how it cuts off as if it's hitting a wall, the forceful, sharp exhale and the next shuddering attempt at gathering air.

"God, Kurt, that feels—"

Kurt pulls back. "Don't speak," he says. "Just breathe, baby."

"'kay," Blaine murmurs, and his short nails skate against the back of Kurt's skull, urging him back into place.

He returns to Blaine with long wide sweeps of his tongue, slicking all along between his buttocks, from his balls to his tailbone. Licking and licking and licking until Kurt's lips and chin are glazed with spit, the only taste left on Blaine's skin is his own saliva, and Blaine is whining and squirming back against his face, seeking more. It's what Kurt had been waiting for. His grip tightens on Blaine's ass, squeezing and spreading and holding Blaine steady. His tongue finds Blaine's hole, points and swirls around his rim, then presses into the center, slick and swift and shallow, before sliding back to the edge and making another revolution. Then dipping back in, and out again, circling, repeating, gradually screwing his tongue deeper into Blaine's ass.

Blaine shudders, moans, and begs for it with broken sobs and eager rolls of his hips back against Kurt's mouth, fucking himself open on Kurt's tongue. Kurt holds on and surrenders to Blaine's rhythm, thrusting now with less finesse, pushing in as far as he can, wriggling against the tight muscle, loving the way it clenches and releases, how greedy Blaine is for this.
Blaine's breathing is desperately heavy, rapid, and strained. The laces of the corset are creaking. Kurt withdraws with care, giving Blaine a soft kiss before he speaks. "Touch yourself for me, please, Blaine. I want you to come."

With one last drag of his fingers, Blaine's hand leaves Kurt's hair, goes to wrap around his cock. Blaine starts stroking himself off, and Kurt leans back in, kissing, licking, sucking, and fucking with his tongue. Gluts his senses on Blaine, the heat and sweat and spit and scent of it all. It's just them right now, nothing but them. Kurt groans into Blaine's flesh, filling Blaine with the vibrations, working him mercilessly, and Blaine drives back against him, hips faltering between his hand and Kurt's mouth. He comes bearing down on Kurt's face, spasming around his tongue. And Kurt rides it out until he realizes Blaine is slipping, barely catching himself against the mirror. Kurt scrambles up, offering his arms for support and Blaine slumps, boneless, red faced, and gulping for air like a drowning man.

"I've got you," Kurt says, wraps one arm around Blaine's waist while, with his other hand, he pulls the bow free at the back of the corset, swiftly yanking the laces loose so Blaine can better fill his lungs. "I've got you. Just breathe, baby, it's okay." Kurt gently guides Blaine down to the floor to lean against Kurt's chest, sprawled between his outstretched legs.

"Okay?" Kurt asks, petting Blaine's hair, stroking his neck, rubbing his back. There's semen dripping down his wardrobe mirror, sliding down the glass toward the floor. Kurt doesn't care; he'll deal with it later. "Blaine, honey?" he prompts.

"That was..." Blaine pants. "...amazing."

Kurt hums and smiles down at Blaine, who twists enough in Kurt's arms to look up, his answering smile lazy and content. "I'm glad," Kurt says. "You're so gorgeous, so good, Blaine." He picks at the laces of the corset, pulling them looser. "Let's get you out of this," he suggests.

Then the front door slams and there's a loud, "Hey, Kurt?" Sam and Finn are back. Of course they are.

"Shit," Kurt mutters, letting go of Blaine. His door is ajar, but even if it were closed, Sam is not good about waiting to be invited in after he knocks. He tends to just come in. "Sorry," Kurt says to Blaine and scoots back so he can get clamber to his feet. Kurt bolts for the door as footsteps thunder up the stairs. He slams it shut just as he hears Sam come down the hall.

"Don't come in here," Kurt yells, his fingers slipping against the smooth brass lock as he tries to twist it the wrong direction.

There's a thump on the door as Kurt hastily corrects the work of his trembling fingers and successfully locks the knob.

"Kurt?" Sam says.

"Yes, Sam?" Kurt keeps one hand flat against the door in an irrational distrust of the lock facing down Sam's enthusiasm. The last thing they need is Sam or Finn walking in on them, especially like this, when Blaine is... Kurt turns back to check on Blaine, concerned.

But he finds Blaine, despite the complete debauched mess he's in, covering his mouth to stifle laughter. Kurt raises an eyebrow.

"Hey, so we were wondering what you were planning for dinner? Artie's bringing Gears of War 3 over tonight. And we were gonna do the four man thing, but Mike can't make it and Puck's not
answering his phone."

Blaine has stopped laughing and is shimmying out of the corset, sending a raised eyebrow of his own back at Kurt. "What?" Kurt mouths at him. And to Sam he says, "I wasn't planning on cooking." Kurt says. "Do you guys want pizza, subs, or Chinese?"

"Can we get KFC?" Sam asks.

"No, Sam, no KFC," Kurt says, watching Blaine carefully as his boyfriend crawls across the floor toward him, a glint of mischief in his eyes. "I don't care that you lived in Kentucky."

"I can order extra coleslaw," Sam wheedles. "And corn."

Blaine kneels up when he gets to Kurt, reaches for Kurt's belt.

"We're a fast food franchise free home," Kurt reminds Sam as his eyes widen at Blaine. He shakes his head, but Blaine just grins and tugs Kurt's belt and fly open. "Oh, god," Kurt whispers. "What are you—?"

"Whatever," Sam says, "Pizza is fine. So how about being our fourth man, Kurt?"

And Kurt is sort of forgetting the question since Blaine has now got his hand firm around Kurt's cock and is bringing it out of his open zipper. Blaine's tongue peeks out from between his lips as he stares at Kurt's erection hungrily.

"What?" Kurt asks Sam, he leans back against the door, reaching down to rest a hand upon Blaine's head, to gently hold him back, because he needs to answer a question and he can't think with Blaine looking at him like that.

"We need four guys for Gears of War. Finn said you're pretty good."

"Oh," Kurt says as Sam's video game dilemma registers. But Kurt's hand isn't enough to stay Blaine, who leans forward and opens his mouth, and Kurt finds himself taken into blissful sweltering suction. "Ooh," he says, looking down at Blaine, the flutter of his eyelashes, the hollowing of his cheeks. "Blaine..." he says, clears his throat. "Blaine's here," he says more clearly, alarm vying with pleasure. He should probably tell Blaine to stop; that would be the sensible thing. Kurt doesn't want to be caught, but, oh, god. There's something coiling so hot in his balls right now, Kurt can't bring himself to interrupt Blaine, who is so fucking beautiful on his knees, taking Kurt's cock.

"Oh," Sam says, then speaks more loudly, "Hey, Blaine, how's it going?"

But Blaine doesn't pull back to answer Sam. Instead he sinks farther onto Kurt's dick, humming as he takes Kurt deeper, until Kurt feels his cockhead nudge back into the hot constriction of Blaine's throat. "Ah," Kurt says, proud of himself for keeping his voice relatively controlled. "He's, ah, he's doing well. Really well. Can't really talk right now, though. Sorry, Sam."

"Oh, well, he can play with us tonight, too. We can swap whenever someone dies, keep up a rotation."

Kurt instinctively starts to rock his hips, but Blaine quickly pins him against the door, so all Kurt can do is take it when Blaine starts sliding his mouth. This has to be some sort of karmic retribution for when he talked to Sam in the shower.

"Okay," Kurt says, Rallying enough breath and clarity to produce speech. "Okay, that's good, whatever you want to do."
"Cool," says Sam with a parting thump to the door. "See you downstairs."

Kurt closes his eyes and sighs with relief. The world is still trying to intrude, and maybe it's selfish of him to want to keep that door closed as long as possible, to want to stay here with Blaine. But there's something else, something that's good in a different way, about being invited out and included. Not every change is a loss. And when he leaves the room, Blaine will be following him downstairs.

That is Kurt's last coherent thought, for Blaine is demanding his whole attention, and Kurt is happy to give it to him.
Unfortunately, things don't settle down.

Kurt finds himself in one of the places he dreads most: the emergency room of Lima Memorial. He's typing a one-handed text to Carole, who is on shift in the hospital somewhere. His Dad is in Washington. Against his side, Blaine is tightly tucked, cringing and gasping in pain while waiting for the painkillers the triage nurse gave him to kick in. His hair is wet around his face and starting to curl, and he's got a towel around his shoulders. The first thing the nurse did was take him back to an eyewash station; then she took his vitals. But they're waiting now to see a doctor.

Everything in this place is too familiar, nauseatingly so. Kurt ignores the bleeps and bustle, the other people grumbling and coughing, the swirling patterns of the gold and teal industrial carpet, the stains on the thin chair cushions. He knows them all well enough. Instead, he concentrates on the damp, sweaty heat of Blaine pressed against him and the agility of his thumb upon the glossy screen of his iPhone.

Sitting on Kurt's other side is Santana. She's doing her best to fill out the clipboard of forms the receptionist gave Blaine upon arrival. Something she said about her father being Dr. Lopez ("Yes, that Dr. Lopez, Betty, the one who heads up Internal Medicine here in Scrubsland") had the nurse paging the on-call ophthalmologist right away. Blaine is able to answer her as she reads out various questions on the form. She asks him, "Are you currently menstruating?" but none of them quite manages to laugh.

It's been a surreal blur of anxiety interspersed with numbness tonight. Santana volunteered to drive them here from the parking garage. Her car, she said, was faster, safer, and more comfortable than Finn's truck, and Kurt was in no fit shape to drive. Plus, Blaine needed someone to hang on to him. The car ride was a nightmare with Kurt having to fight a groaning and writhing Blaine to keep his hands away from his face. They did manage to wash the worst of the Slushie from Blaine's eyes with some bottled water before they left, but it wasn't far into the ride that Kurt realized they probably should have called an ambulance. There was something worse than red dye and high fructose corn syrup in that Slushie.

Blaine lets out a whimper and tightens the grip he's got on Kurt's arm. "Shh, baby, it's going to be okay," Kurt murmurs; he hears the thickness of unshed tears in his voice, the crack of fear. He has no idea if this is true, if anything is going to be okay. He remembers being here more than once with his parents when his mother was sick. She would stroke his hair and hold him and tell him it was going to be okay, and he believed her right up until she wasn't. And he remembers arriving here with Miss Pillsbury and Mr. Schuester when his Dad was sick, their telling him it would be okay, but feeling in his marrow that it wouldn't be. It was, eventually, of course, but Kurt no longer trusts his sense of these things. Kurt doesn't know what to feel right now. He is at least confident Blaine won't die, but that doesn't mean this is going to be okay.

Kurt peripherally sees Santana looking at him, but he can't quite face the sympathy in her eyes. It's so uncharacteristic; it only adds to the surrealism. It'd be easier, possibly more comforting, if she simply mocked him for using a cloying pet name. And then Kurt remembers he needs to contact Blaine's parents. The nurse said something about it when they came in, and Kurt said he would. Blaine is a minor, and Kurt and Santana are nobodies.

"Blaine, honey," Kurt interrupts Santana reading out something about a family history of heart disease. "I need to borrow your phone to call your Mom."
Blaine nods and lets go of Kurt to dig in his back pocket, hands Kurt his phone.

The call rings several times and then goes to voicemail. Kurt didn't rehearse a message so he speaks slowly at first before finding his focus. He keeps it brief, but tries to include enough information not to worry her unduly. Then he follows the call with a text message that includes his own cell number. Then his phone buzzes with a text alert. Carole, saying she'll be down as soon as she can, followed by Finn asking if Kurt needs anything. There's also an earlier text from Rachel, one from Mike, and another two from Mercedes. He hasn't answered them. Still needs to text his Dad. Kurt fumbles with his phone, to start replying, when another text arrives (from Artie) at the same time as Blaine's phone rings. Kurt stifles the sudden urge to throw both devices across the room.

Santana takes his phone from his hand. She doesn't tell him it's okay, as if it were true, even though it's unknowable at this point. Instead she says, "I'll answer some of these for you."

Kurt gives her a grateful smile and answers Blaine's phone. "Hello, Mrs. Anderson," he says. He repeats everything he already included in the text and voice messages. Explains they're waiting for a bed now, an ophthalmologist is on his way, Blaine's doing okay, and no, there isn't a doctor for her to talk to yet, they've only been seen by the triage nurse. Then he holds the phone to Blaine's ear so he can tell his mother essentially the same things. Kurt is surprised by how steady and strong Blaine's voice is when he speaks to his mother, insisting he's fine. It almost sounds like nothing is wrong at all.

Carole arrives shortly after the call ends, giving them all hugs and fussing over Blaine in particular: looking critically at his face, stroking his damp hair, telling him they'll fix him up good as new, and finally kissing him on the forehead "to make it better". Then she turns her concerned attention toward Kurt, asking him if he's okay (and he has to be, so he says, "Yes"). Carole thanks Santana for her help and her friendship to her boys, for being there for them both. Asks if there's anything any of them they need. But before Kurt can think of a response, for surely there's something, Blaine's name is called.

There's a flurry of gathering their bags and the forms, Santana asking if Kurt wants her to stay (Kurt thanking her profusely, but no, she can go), and Carole making sure Kurt is permitted to go back with Blaine when Blaine begs him to. Then Carole kisses his cheek, squeezes his hand, and says she'll text when she's off shift in the morning, in case Kurt is still at the hospital and needs a ride home then. Otherwise, he should ask Finn to pick him up. She's not far away if he or Blaine needs her.

Then Kurt is guiding Blaine to follow another nurse through a wide door, back to a curtained bay where they'll meet with a doctor and find out whether Blaine will be okay. When Blaine's mother arrives, Blaine has dozed off on the wide stretcher, and Kurt envies him his repose. The sound of heart monitors in adjacent bays is making his stomach twist and his brain itch. Kurt sits next to Blaine, his backside numb from the unforgiving seat of the turquoise plastic chair he's been sitting in for the past hour. In one hand he has his phone in a tight grip, clinging to it with the last text his Dad sent on the screen as if he's holding his Dad's hand; in his other hand, more gently held, Blaine's is limp but warm. Kurt lifts his head from where he's been leaning it on the edge of the mattress as Mrs. Anderson steps through the curtain, pulling it closed behind her.

"Oh," she says and rushes to Blaine's other side with a rustle of clothing and a swirl of honeysuckle perfume. Kurt's presence barely registers, she's so focused on Blaine, and Kurt gets it, that tunnel vision when someone you love is harmed or in danger. He knows it well, has been in that place himself most of tonight.

Mrs. Anderson pushes loose hair behind her ears (and Kurt has never seen her without her hair
perfectly, immaculately done), and then with tentative fingers smooths down Blaine's arm to lay her hand over his. He doesn't rouse. He still looks pretty bad, even cleaned up and with the patch over his right eye, his face is blotched an angry red with some swelling around both eyes. No one looks healthy in a hospital gown; Kurt's sure the color is scientifically selected for that purpose.

"They gave him a tranquilizer," Kurt ventures softly, "and something stronger for the pain. He's got a procedure scheduled in the morning to evaluate the damage to his eyes. He's got mild chemical burns and damage to the cornea of his right eye. They want to admit him overnight."

Mrs. Anderson turns her attention to Kurt, something unexpectedly unyielding in her eyes. "Thank you for waiting with him, Kurt," she says stiffly. "You may go now."

That wasn't the reception Kurt expected. "I told him I'd be here when he woke up," he tries to explain.

"I'm here now," Mrs. Anderson says. "Please leave. You've done enough."

Kurt gently releases Blaine's hand, stunned. It's almost accusatory, her tone, as if he is somehow responsible for this. "Mrs. Anderson—"

"Nurse," she says loudly, and then to Kurt, "I'd really like you to go, Kurt. This is a family crisis."

And at that Kurt feels the fight drain out of him like water through a sieve. He has fewer than no rights here. Mrs. Anderson could have him hauled out of the hospital by security, and the way she's looking at him, she may even relish it. "Okay," he says mildly, though it in no way is. He's exhausted, and he can't face this clusterfuck right now, too: yet another of the endless iterations of scrabbling for scraps of acceptance and recognition. He's so sick of constantly having to justify himself. "But please tell him it wasn't my choice to leave, and I'll see him soon."

Mrs. Anderson gives him an inscrutable look and says nothing. Maybe not all his fight is gone. Kurt has to bite his tongue to not say several different things he knows he would regret. He hands Mrs. Anderson Blaine's phone, collects his bag and the plastic bag containing Blaine's Slushie drenched clothing. He'll launder them himself. It's something he can do, at least. With one last look at Blaine, he sends an unspoken 'I love you'.

He thanks the nurses on his way out and texts Finn, asking him if he can come pick him up. He texts Blaine messages of affection and support as well as an explanation for his absence while he waits for Finn, and he hopes Mrs. Anderson doesn't know the passcode for Blaine's phone. He suspects she'd delete them.

#

The next day, Kurt wakes angry. He's angry, primarily, at Sebastian. That's obvious. He's also furious at the other Warblers, the ones he thought of as friends. Realizes the oft spoken 'once a Warbler, always a Warbler' does not apply to him, for whom the Slushie was intended. He's angry at them for not staying behind to make sure Blaine was okay, because regardless of what they may think of Kurt, surely Blaine still matters to them. But they ran like frightened rabbits as soon as Blaine was down. He's mad at Blaine's mother for so many things. Of course he is. And Blaine's father for simply not being there, because he can't imagine his own Dad ever not being there for him in some capacity. He hurts on Blaine's behalf for the relationship he never had enough of to understand what he's lost.

And finally there's a last special, selfish anger toward the universe at large, because bad things keep happening to the people Kurt cares about. It makes him wonder when Finn or Carole will turn up in
the hospital. If he believed in God, he'd wonder if he was being punished with their pain—or, worse, if they were being punished for loving him.

He doesn't dwell there, for that way lies madness. Instead he gets up and goes through his morning as he always does, except when it's time to leave for school, he doesn't. Carole's still at work, his Dad is far away, and Finn doesn't protest when Kurt tells him he's not going to school today. He sits on the edge of his bed and texts Blaine. When there's no reply after a few minutes, he calls. It goes directly to voicemail, so Blaine's phone must be off. He leaves a message anyway, and wallows in the cliché of feeling sick with worry. There's little he can do. He doesn't even know if Blaine will still be in the hospital. If he'd be allowed to see him.

Practicing his knife skills is what Kurt needs this morning. He'll figure out what to do this afternoon, but for now, he needs a clear head. So slicing a pepper into a perfect brunoise is the goal. They've got plenty of red peppers in the refrigerator; he'd planned this as a weekend activity. Blaine was going to be there though, sitting at the island, talking, laughing, distracting...

In the kitchen, Kurt sharpens his favorite Santoku. He thinks the thinner blade will ultimately be more advantageous for the extra fine dice than the heavier curved blade of his German chef's knife. He gets out the large maple cutting board, lines some aluminum cookie sheets with wax paper, and finds an unopened box of freezer bags in the pantry. He'll freeze his efforts, and that'll get them through several sauces and stews in the months to come.

Kurt turns his hand, mind, and knife to the careful meditation of turning each irregularly shaped pepper into a flawlessly even, tiny dice.

He's on his fifth pepper, has two trays in the freezer, and has lost track of the time when he hears the front door: Carole back from her night shift at the hospital. His dice isn't yet small enough or even enough, but he feels he's making progress. He sets the knife down. "Hey, Carole," he calls out. "I'm in the kitchen."

She comes in through the dining room looking weary and rumpled. He's rarely home when she gets back from night shift. He should have made extra coffee. Or maybe she prefers to go straight to bed. "Can I get you anything?" he asks.

"You're not at school." she says, setting her bag on the seat of one of the stools.

Kurt shakes his head. "Coffee?"

"No, thanks, Kurt. When did you get back?"

"Late last night," he says, and tries to swallow down the ache in his throat. He picks up the knife and starts on pepper number six. "Blaine was sedated when his mother arrived. They were going to keep him overnight, do some sort of diagnostic procedure this morning."

Carole looks around the kitchen, evaluating the bowl of diced peppers and nodding. She goes to the sink and washes her hands, then heads to the drawer by the phone and takes out a Sharpie, sets it by the box of freezer bags. "So have you heard anything this morning?"

Kurt shakes his head, and the next cut of the knife blade is off. He ends up with a long thin wrong wedge of pepper instead of the requisite neat julienne. He stares at it as tears fill his eyes.

"Kurt, sweetie, what's happened?" Carole asks, coming around the island to hold the wrist of his knife hand with one of hers, while gently coaxing the blade free of his grip and setting it aside.

Kurt tips his head back and stares up at the ceiling, blinking. "His mother made me leave," Kurt says.
"And his phone is off. I don't know what's happening. But she made it clear, I'm not welcome."

"Oh," Carole says. "Oh." And she pulls him into her arms, cupping the back of his head and holding him against her shoulder. She smells antiseptic, like the hospital still, and Kurt worries the sticky pepper juice on his hands will stain her clothing. But she's still in scrubs, which have likely seen worse things than bell pepper, so he carefully lets himself relax into her hold, curls his fingers against her back. "Oh, Kurt," she says, "I'm sorry." She rubs his back, and he lets himself start to cry.

"Let it out, sweetie," she says, and so he does, because he's got to a point where he can't not. It pours out in deep sobs of frustration and helplessness, anger and fear. He can't control it, and he ends up muffling himself against her shoulder like an injured child. It's undignified and gross and he can't remember the last time he cried like this in front of another person. Except that he can: with his father after his mother died. His father had been crying too, and that was when Kurt understood he had to be strong for his Dad. His Dad needed him to be okay.

Carole doesn't let go, if anything she holds him more tightly, rocking him gently as she strokes his back and hair, murmuring comfort and sympathy.

Eventually he runs out of tears and energy and emotion. He loosens his hold on her and steps back, embarrassment warring with relief. The blunt edge of a headache nudges insistently behind his eyeballs. He looks at his feet, and Carole brushes his hair from where it's sticking to his forehead, tidying it back into its proper style. "Thank you," he says, reaching for one of her hands and squeezing briefly. "Thank you."

"Anytime," Carole says, and Kurt hears the smile and the affection in her voice. It gives him hope that things can be okay. He wipes his eyes dry on his shoulders.

"So what are you up to here?" Carole asks. "Are there any in the freezer yet?"

"Two sheets," Kurt says, sniffing as he turns away to open the freezer and check on them. The diced peppers should be frozen enough to bag. He takes the sheets from the freezer, lays them at the end of the island. "I was going to do one sheet per bag."

Carole nods, "All right, I'll do that part. You keep cutting." She rips open the top of the box of freezer bags. "And I'll take you up on that offer of coffee," she says.

After the last of the bags are labeled, filled, and in the freezer, Kurt sits at the dining table with Carole while she eats a sandwich. Then, she'll be off to bed. He sets his phone down with a heavy sigh.

"What are you going to do?" she asks him.

Kurt shrugs and stares at his glass of water. "I'm not family, so the hospital won't tell me anything more than he's been discharged. There's no answer at the house. They're probably screening my calls."

Carole doesn't offer advice. She just listens.

"I can't not see him," Kurt says. "He won't know why I'm not there, and I don't know what he'll think or what she'll tell him."

Kurt is quiet for a while, and it occurs to Kurt that maybe she's just as clueless as he is in this situation. It's not like there's a handbook for this stuff. He wonders if Miss Pillsbury has a pamphlet: 'So your boyfriend's parents are idiots?'"
"Would you like me to go with you?" Carole asks.

Of course, the Andersons would be unlikely to turn away the new Congressman's wife, but Kurt doesn't want to abuse that knowledge. Anyway, it's his problem. "Thank you, but no. I think I need to do this on my own." He looks up at Carole and smiles. "You need to get some sleep, anyway."

"Okay, but anything I can do to help, sweetie, you let me know, okay?"

"Maybe write a guide to better parenting?" Kurt says, "So I can give a copy to his Mom."

Carole gives him a wry smile. "I wouldn't even know where to start."

"No..." Kurt says, "If I'm going, I should go while I still feel brave."

"You'll do fine," Carole says. "They'll realize what a caring, wonderful young man you are eventually, and how much you love their son. It's impossible not to see those things in you, Kurt. Blaine is blessed to have you, not just as his boyfriend, but as his friend."

"Thanks, Carole," Kurt says, feeling his face heat at the praise. It helps, though. He feels his courage bolstered by Carole's confidence. He's thought about talking it over with his Dad, but he knows it would only anger his Dad and have him canceling meetings to be on the next flight back.

He can do this; he just wishes there weren't an hour's drive ahead of him in which to stew. "Wish me luck," he says and stands.

#

On the way, Kurt listens to the playlist he uses whenever he needs a self-esteem boost. Many of the songs he associates with Blaine, their friendship and the strength it gave him even long before they became boyfriends. It helps, reminds him what Blaine means to him, and what he means to Blaine. By the time Kurt has pulled into the broad arc of the Andersons' semi-circular driveway he's transformed his fear and anger into a fierce and righteous protectiveness. Blaine needs his courage.

Kurt retrieves the bag with Blaine's clean, pressed, and folded clothes, and steps out onto the faux cobblestones. He stands up straight, shoulders back, head held high and walks up the path to the front door, his boot heels briskly clipping the cement. He doesn't permit himself pause to reconsider, just presses the doorbell.

It's several heartbeats before Kurt hears footsteps, the swift click of a woman's shoes. Mrs. Anderson opens the door looking exhausted, impatient, and impeccably dressed. "Kurt," she says flatly. "What do you want?"

An abrupt, and wholly inappropriate, swell of hilarity threatens, because it was just the other day Sam was explaining to him and Finn that Klingon has no word for 'hello', instead they greet each other with the demand: 'what do you want?'

Kurt turns his incongruous amusement into a bright smile that he hopes appears in no way mocking. "I washed Blaine's clothes from yesterday," Kurt says and lifts the bag he's holding. "And I would very much like to see him. How's he doing?"

"He's resting," she says, and reaches for the bag.

It's tempting to snatch it back out of reach, but that would be petty. Kurt lets her take it from him. "May I please see him?" he asks. Best behavior. He can do this. He can be charming and polite and win over this woman.
"I'm afraid not. He's tired and needs his rest," she says. "Thank you, Kurt. Goodbye." She starts to close the door.

"Wait!" Kurt says, putting up a hand to stop the swing of the door shut. "Please, just for a moment? I've been so worried. I won't wake him. I just want to see him."

"I don't think that's a good idea. Please just leave," Mrs. Anderson says, and Kurt really doesn't want it to go this way, but he doesn't step back.

"I love him," Kurt blurts out. It wasn't part of the plan, but what has he got to lose? "I love your son," he repeats, more emphatically and with pride.

Mrs. Anderson eases up on the door and sighs. "So do I." But she doesn't invite him in.

"Please, I need to see him. I miss him, and he'll be missing me, too."

She stares at him for what seems like an hour, but something in her gaze eventually softens. "All right," she says, "but please keep it brief. The drugs he's on make him groggy."

She opens the door wide to let Kurt in. "I knew something like this would happen again if he went back to public school. Boys like you just can't—"

"That isn't what happened," Kurt says quickly, adds a hasty, "ma'am." He doesn't want to hear the rest of what she was going to say about boys like him. "It was a boy from Dalton, a Warbler," Kurt explains.

Mrs. Anderson looks at him in surprise, and Kurt guesses Blaine hasn't been coherent enough to explain what happened. She's been thinking this was like Sadie Hawkins. No wonder she's been wary of him, what he is in Blaine's life. Kurt just wishes it could have been something else that finally got her to acknowledge his relationship with her son. This is not how he wanted it to be.

In the wake of her silence, Kurt continues, "And he was a boy like us, the Slushie he threw was meant for me."

When she finally speaks, it is simply to ask, "Why?"

Kurt frowns. Trying to explain Sebastian to Blaine's mother is a daunting prospect. "Jealousy, maybe," Kurt says. "He likes Blaine too, but not in a very, um, wholesome way. He's not a very nice boy."

Mrs. Anderson is blinking at Kurt like it's the first time she's seen him. He takes off his coat, and she indicates the coat rack near the door. "In that case, we'll be contacting the headmaster at Dalton," she says. "This is unacceptable behavior. You know this boy's name?"

"Yes, ma'am. He's Sebastian Smythe," Kurt says. "He's new at Dalton this year. Blaine had..." Kurt sighs. "...tried to be his friend, but I knew he was bad news. I didn't think he'd pull anything like this, though. I'm sorry. It should be me hurt, not Blaine. He just, saw what was happening and put himself in the line of fire," Kurt aims a more sincere smile at Mrs. Anderson. "I'm sure you know, he's always so gallant, your son."

"He cares about you that much?" she asks.

"We care about each other," Kurt replies.

She takes a deep breath, holds it, and lets it out slowly, her gaze on Kurt still appraising. She hasn't
indicated he can go upstairs yet, so Kurt tries not to fidget as they stand awkwardly in the foyer.

"Carole wanted to come with me," Kurt says. She did offer, and he wants Mrs. Anderson to know this about his family. "My family, they love Blaine, too. They've been worried."

Mrs. Anderson nods once and then turns toward the wide stairs. "Let's go up," she says.

Kurt follows a few steps behind her.

"Your mother and father are divorced?" she asks.

Kurt hesitates in surprise, wonders how much she truly doesn't know about him. "No," he says, "my mother died when I was eight."

"Oh," she says. "That must have been very hard for you and your father." They get to the top of the stairs and Mrs. Anderson turns toward Blaine's room.

"Yes, ma'am, it was," Kurt says, because what else is there to say? The way Blaine's mother talks, he can't read her tone of voice very well, can't tell when she's sincere or when she's being mannered. He wonders if she even knows the difference. "But we did okay," he says, "and Carole is wonderful."

"I found her delightful at the Christmas party. I'm glad your father and stepmother attended." Mrs. Anderson stops outside Blaine's closed door, lowers her voice and smiles at Kurt. "When Blaine is better perhaps we can all have dinner together sometime."

Kurt has no idea what to make of that or her smile. "That would be nice," he says, and he can't even tell if he means it.

Mrs. Anderson knocks lightly on Blaine's door before opening it slowly. "Blaine?" she says. "Kurt is here to see you." She turns back to Kurt. "You may go in for a few minutes. I'll be right here."

"Thank you," Kurt says and steps past her to enter Blaine's room. It's dark; the blinds are drawn and no lights are on. There's just enough dim daylight filtering through that Kurt can make out the lump in the bed that must be Blaine. "Hi, Blaine," he says, has to stop himself from saying 'honey'.

"Kurt?" comes from the darkness.

Kurt's aware Blaine's mother is still behind him, hovering in the open doorway. "Yeah."

Kurt reaches to take one of Blaine's hands in both of his. He drags it near, and, as his eyes adjust to the gloom, he sees Blaine shifting to sit up against the pillows. "Hi," he says.

"Where were you?" Blaine asks, and Kurt can hear the drug induced slur in his voice, "When I woke up you were gone."

"I'm sorry. I'm here now, b— Blaine." Kurt reaches to take one of Blaine's hands in both of his.

"How are you feeling?"

"Oh my god, so weird," Blaine says, suddenly too loud. "Why's it so dark?"

"Do you want me to turn on a lamp?"

"Please."

Kurt lets go with one hand and leans to the bedside lamp, flicking it on.

"Ow," Blaine says, squinting his visible eye. He looks a lot better. The swelling has gone down, and
most of the red has faded. "God, Kurt, when I woke up I was afraid I'd only dreamed you."
Kurt smiles even though tears threaten. "They gave you something pretty strong last night."
"Yeah," Blaine says and reaches with his free hand to rub his eye, runs into the patch and drops his hand. "It feels weird," he says.
Kurt glances back to the door, asks Mrs. Anderson, "What's the prognosis? Will it heal on its own?"
"We've scheduled a surgery with a specialist in Columbus," she says. "But there's a waiting list, so it's not for another two weeks. They think they can save his eye, but the injury is deep."
Blaine makes a sad moue. "I don't want to lose my eye."
"No, I wouldn't either," Kurt says around the sudden wad of guilt stuffing up his throat. It should have been him, damn it. The heat of the anger that follows swiftly burns through the guilt though. This is not Kurt's doing.
Blaine must read some of it in his face, asks, "Are you going to tell me you told me so?"
"No, Blaine, god, no. This isn't your fault," he squeezes Blaine's hand. "We're..." He glances back at Blaine's mother. "We're going to make sure Dalton knows what he did."
"Okay," Blaine says as he nods. Then he rolls his head on his shoulders and smiles goofily at Kurt. "You look so pretty today, Kurt. I'd be sad if I couldn't look at you." He pulls on Kurt's hand. "Come here."
"I—" Kurt hesitates, resists the pull. "Your mom's here, too, Blaine." Even if she weren't, he's not sure whatever Blaine wants is a good idea. He doesn't have much time anyway.
"Don't care," Blaine says. "Just want a hug."
"Okay," Kurt says, for a hug he can manage. He doesn't look back at Blaine's mother this time, fearing a look of disapproval. Instead he just moves the short distance from the chair to the bed and helps Blaine sit forward to lean into him, wrapping his arms around him gingerly, careful not to jostle him.
Blaine has no such concerns for himself. He holds Kurt fiercely tight and says, "I missed you so much, Kurt. I'm so glad you're real."
"Shh. I'm right here," Kurt says. "I'll try to visit you every day, I promise, okay?"
"Okay," Blaine says, then, "Oh, I'm really dizzy."
"All right," Kurt says, leaning forward to lower Blaine back against his pillows. "Lie back down. It's okay."
"This sucks," Blaine says. "I'm bored and tired of sleeping."
Kurt sits back up, resting one hand lightly upon Blaine's arm. "Do you want me to put on some music for you?" Hopes Mrs. Anderson won't ask him to go just yet.
Blaine purses his lips in thought. "Could you sing to me?"
"Um, I think so. What would you like me to sing?"
"Anything. Maybe 'Blackbird'?"

Kurt sees movement from Mrs. Anderson out the corner of his eye. He sighs. He's overstayed his welcome. When he looks back, his throat is already forming a plea to stay, just a little longer, long enough to sing Blaine one song; but she's gone, the door pulled closed.

"All right," Kurt says, refusing to question her absence, taking it as whatever opportunity he can make it. He turns back to Blaine and smiles. Taking his hand, Kurt hums a few scales to warm up. Blaine settles back into his pillows, closes his eyes and listens as Kurt begins to sing.

Kurt wants so much for this all to be okay. He pours all of his hope for it into the song as he sings, "Take these sunken eyes and learn to see."
Part VC: Devotion - Chapter 10

After school Wednesday, Kurt drives directly from Glee practice to visit Blaine. In his messenger bag he has a get well card signed by all of New Directions and a plush toy parrot from Brittany. Kurt had intended to make cookies for Blaine, but ran out of time today. His time management is fraying; Kurt knows it. Doesn't know what to do about it though. The New Year hasn't settled within him at all well and it's nearly February. This year was meant to be amazing, but it's not off to a good start. The highlight of his school day has been getting a text from Blaine over lunch asking if he's still coming today. Of course he is, he promised. It's good that Blaine has his phone back and is using it. Kurt's been sending him sweet texts between classes and getting replies to a few of them.

Mrs. Anderson answers the door with a tense but sincere looking smile, like she's still as unsure of him as he is of her. It's tentative, Kurt supposes, whatever acceptance he may have with her as Blaine's boyfriend. As for Mr. Anderson? Kurt hasn't seen him since the accident. He doesn't know if Blaine's father is on travel or working long hours. Either way, he's rarely around.

"Hello, Kurt. Come in," she says. Her makeup is not enough to hide the dark circles under her eyes.

"Hi, thank you," Kurt replies, both hands tight on the strap of his bag as he enters. "How's Blaine today?"

"He's tolerating the pain medication better, but he had a rough patch overnight between doses," she says, and her smile fades.

"Oh," Kurt says, Blaine hadn't mentioned anything about that in his texts today. "Is he up for a visit?"

Her smile returns, a little easier. "Yes, he's been looking forward to seeing you all day, so you'd best go up."

"Thank you," Kurt says again and loosens his grip on his bag as he pivots toward the stairs.

"I'll bring up some snacks," Mrs. Anderson says. "Please see if you can get him to eat. All he's had today was half a bowl of soup."

"I will, I promise," Kurt says and climbs the stairs.

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The blinds are up in Blaine's bedroom, letting in the thin winter sun. Blaine is awake and watching television. Sitting up against his headboard, upon his made bed, with a red and black plaid throw over his legs, he looks alert. Blaine's chin is freshly shaved, his hair neatly styled and combed. His pajamas don't look slept in; Kurt can see the crisp, tell tale creases of an iron down the sleeves.

Kurt raps lightly on the door jamb to draw Blaine's attention. "Hi," he says from the doorway.

Blaine sees him and smiles brightly. "Kurt!" Kurt is used to the adoring looks Blaine sometimes gives him, but this is more than usual. It's almost ridiculous; a caricature of Blaine's usual affection.

Kurt can't contain his soft laugh and his own smile broadens in response. "Feeling better today?"

"Now that you're here," Blaine says, reaching a hand toward Kurt; his smile is so radiant it makes his best show-face look glum.
Kurt comes in and takes Blaine's hand, squeezing before leaning down to press a kiss to the back of Blaine's fingers. He looks up at Blaine from beneath his eyelashes. "You're looking better today," Kurt says. The redness on Blaine's face is completely gone and his visible eye is nearly clear of bloodshot.

"My mom helped me," Blaine says. "I was feeling decidedly unkempt."

"Well, you're handsome and dapper as ever," Kurt says, giving Blaine's hand a parting squeeze. He straightens and turns to get the armchair, dragging it the short distance to Blaine's bedside. Kurt angles it so he can see the television as well. It's mid commercial break. "What are you watching?"

"Top Chef marathon," Blaine says, reaching for the remote and thumbing down the volume.

"I approve," Kurt says, and flips open the flap of his bag.

"I thought you would," Blaine says. He sets the remote down and reaches for Kurt. Kurt takes his hand again and Blaine squeezes hard, like he's afraid Kurt will float away if he doesn't hold on to him. "I'm learning stuff." Blaine's head lolls against the pillow and he gives Kurt another hopelessly affectionate smile.

Even though Kurt knows it's partly due to the pain medication, he can't not grin back at Blaine or feel a warm swell of his own devotion when Blaine looks at him like that, so adorably smitten. There's a jagged underbelly to Kurt's sentiment though. One he does not wish to indulge. Chemically induced or not, Blaine seems happy right now, so Kurt will smile back at him and not dwell on the reasons for it. And Kurt won't look at the photo of the Warblers on the wall behind Blaine's desk and wonder why there are no cards or flowers from any of them. "Speaking of learning," Kurt says. "I brought your homework and handouts from your teachers. Mike gave me copies of his Chemistry notes for you."

Blaine wrinkles his nose in distaste. "Thanks, I guess," he says. "I don't feel up to much studying though. My brain's kinda fuzzy."

"I know," Kurt says. "I can help you with it. I've taken most of the same classes. And Mike said he could come by on the weekend to help you study too, if you need it."

"That's nice," Blaine says, brightening again.

"Yeah," Kurt says. "I need my hand back for a sec. I have something else for you."

"Kay," Blaine says and lets go.

Kurt reaches into his bag. He gets out the folder full of schoolwork first and sets it on the nightstand. "That's your homework," he says, and goes back to his bag to find the card and parrot. "This is for you from everyone," he says of the card as he hands it to Blaine. "The parrot is from Brittany," he says, tucking it against Blaine's side as he opens the envelope. Blaine looks down at the parrot and smiles. "She said every pirate needs one," Kurt says.

"True," Blaine says and opens the card.

"Can you see well enough to read it?"

Blaine nods. "Yeah, my vision is a lot better today."

Kurt watches as Blaine reads the messages everyone wrote in the card, watches his smile grow, his
eye begin to shine with emotion. Kurt quietly sets his bag aside.

"Aw," Blaine says, "that's so sweet of them."

"Everyone misses you," Kurt says. He takes the card from Blaine and sets it upright on the night table where Blaine can see it. "I miss you," he says, leaning forward to wrap both hands around Blaine's. Wishes he could get on the bed with Blaine and wrap him up in his arms. Isn't sure that's a good idea though. Blaine, despite the smiling and the freshly pressed pajamas, appears terribly fragile.

"I miss you, too," Blaine says, blinking rapidly, a tremor in his smile.

Mrs. Anderson knocks on the door and comes in with a tray. "Hello, boys," she says with her default well-mannered smile. Her gaze drops to Blaine and Kurt's joined hands, but Kurt doesn't relinquish his hold on Blaine. Mrs. Anderson sets the tray at the foot of the bed.

On it are two glasses of what looks like apple juice, a plate of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and two brownies. It's the kind of after school snack Kurt hasn't eaten since he was in Middle School. The same may be true of Blaine. Kurt wonders if it's been that long since Mrs. Anderson made an afternoon snack for her son, or if she is trying to tempt Blaine's stomach with nostalgic comfort foods.

"Thanks, Mom," Blaine says.

"Please try to eat something, dear," she says. "You too, Kurt."

"I will, thank you, Mrs. Anderson," Kurt says, smiling his gratitude.

"Oh, Kurt?" she asks, turning back from the door as she's leaving. "How long were you planning to stay this afternoon?"

Kurt loosens his hold on Blaine's hand and hopes this isn't going to become a regular point of conflict. "I need to be home for dinner, so I'll be gone by five-thirty." That's less than an hour from now. Kurt wants to stay as long as he can.

Mrs. Anderson nods. "That's fine. Would you mind staying with Blaine while I go to the store to pick up a few things? It won't take long."

"Oh," Kurt says, surprised, "Sure, I'd be happy to."

"Thank you," she says, sounding genuinely grateful. "I'll make sure to be back before you need to leave."

And then she's gone. Kurt stares at the door, but peripherally he sees Blaine is looking at him. "She does like you," Blaine says. "I know it can be hard to tell with her, but she likes you."

"You think so?" Kurt asks. He lets go of Blaine so he can set his bag down beside the chair and get up to drag the tray within in Blaine's reach. He sets the drinks on Blaine's nightstand.

"She made you sandwiches," Blaine explains. "And brownies."

"I thought those were for you."

"I don't have much appetite," Blaine says. "They're mostly for you, Kurt. She doesn't really cook, but she made those brownies herself because she knew you were coming this afternoon. If it were
just me it would have been reheated soup and Oreos."

"I promised I'd try to get you to eat," Kurt says, oddly uncomfortable with the notion of Mrs. Anderson cooking for him. It's a kind gesture, but more than he expects. Perhaps it's also an apology. Anderson family politics seem too oblique for a simple 'I'm sorry'.

"I'll drink the juice," Blaine says, "But I'm not sure about the rest."

"Will you at least try?" Kurt asks, picking up a quarter of a sandwich and offering it to Blaine. "I did promise."

Blaine looks at the sandwich, and then he looks at Kurt. He sighs and smiles. "Anything for you," he says and takes it.

"Good boy," Kurt says and doesn't miss Blaine's blush at the praise.

Kurt watches Blaine eat and grabs a sandwich quarter for himself. He forgot how good it is, the salty, sticky peanut butter with the sweet, runny jam. It's good quality jam, too. Raspberry. He smiles as Blaine pops the last bit of crust in his mouth and Kurt reaches for another quarter. "Can you do two?" he asks.

"Give me a minute," Blaine says and reaches for a glass of juice.

"Okay," Kurt says, and eats it himself. There's plenty on the plate for them both.

He does get Blaine to eat another quarter and two bites of brownie. Blaine confesses to feeling better for it but says eating is weird right now. He's not feeling at all hungry, so it's a very mechanical and unappealing process.

After Kurt has eaten what Blaine hasn't, Blaine's phone alarm starts dinging.

Blaine fumbles for it on his nightstand, his reach off. The phone skids to the edge of the surface and Kurt leans forward to catch it as it tips off. Blaine makes a face. "Depth perception."

"It's okay," Kurt says as he taps the alarm to silence; he reads the alert text. "Eyedrops?"

"Yeah, to prevent infection. Will you help me with them, please?"

"Um, yeah, of course," Kurt says. Upon the nightstand, Kurt spies a small, plastic dropper bottle with the prescription label on it, stands and picks it up. "These?"

"Yes," Blaine says. He scoots down against his pillows and tilts his head back, reaching to lift the eye patch back to his forehead. "Just in my right eye."

Kurt swallows and hesitates. It's not that he's squeamish—well, okay, he is a little bit squeamish—but that it's Blaine. "Okay," Kurt says, and moves closer to lean over Blaine as he unscrews the cap.

The whole eye is red and angry looking with a large ragged patch of milky blur over Blaine's iris, covering his pupil completely. Kurt sucks in a breath and takes a long, slow blink. It looks so much worse than he expected, like one of those videos they showed in health class about the dangers of sleeping with contact lenses in. "Um," Kurt says, ignoring the way his stomach is trying to twist itself inside out. "How many drops?"

"Two or three," Blaine says.

"Right," Kurt says and reaches to hold the tip of the bottle over Blaine's injured eyeball. The first
drop misses as Blaine blinks reflexively. It catches in Blaine's eyelashes and dribbles uselessly away. "Oops?"

"You need to, like, hold it open a little," Blaine says. "Sorry. I can't keep it open well enough on my own."

"I don't want to hurt you," Kurt says, chewing on his lip. His other hand coming to hover just above Blaine's upturned face, holding his arm awkwardly so he doesn't drag his sleeve across Blaine's mouth.

"You won't," Blaine says with a smile. "Trust me, I'm not feeling much of anything right now."

"Okay," Kurt says, taking another fortifying deep breath. He rests his thumb just below Blaine's eye and his index finger lightly upon Blaine's upper eyelid. He gently spreads his thumb and forefinger, tugging Blaine's eye wide open. It looks awful. Kurt winces sympathetically.

"I trust you," Blaine says, and Kurt feels the quiver of his eye trying to close.

This time the drops land where they're meant to. But Kurt squeezes the bottle too hard and thinks he ends up putting in too many drops. He lets go and Blaine blinks furiously, sending the excess to the corners of his eye to run down like tears. Kurt grabs a tissue and dabs at the moisture. "Thank you," Blaine says.

"That was more than three," Kurt says.

"I don't think it matters that much," Blaine says, "So long as I get enough in there."

Kurt screws the cap back on the bottle as Blaine pulls his eye patch back down and rearranges himself against his pillows. Blaine is studying Kurt's face as Kurt sits back down.

"So it looks pretty bad, huh?" Blaine asks.

Kurt blinks and tries to relax his posture. 'Pretty bad' is a gross understatement, and while Kurt had been feeling reasonably confident that the surgery would be successful and Blaine would be all right, now he's not sure at all. Can the doctors fix that much damage? "I wouldn't know," Kurt says weakly. "I'm not a doctor."

"I know it looks bad," Blaine says. "My Mom gave me her hand mirror this morning when I asked if I could see it."

"Can you see?" Kurt asks, "With that eye at all?"

Blaine shrugs. "Just light and dark, everything else is a blur."

Kurt nods, presses his hands between his knees. That Blaine could end up blind in that eye, or losing it altogether? It's so much more real now. It's hard to breathe.

"Are you okay?" Blaine asks.

Kurt finds enough breath to say, "Shouldn't I be the one asking you that?"

Blaine shrugs again. "You look like you're quietly freaking out over there."

"A little," Kurt says, his voice going thin and high. "Are you scared?"

"Yes," Blaine says softly.
"Me too," Kurt says.

What Kurt doesn't say is how the nausea and fear in his stomach is roiling into fury. He thinks of Sebastian and his cruel, mocking face. He thinks of the other Warblers and their cowardice. What they've done like it was just a funny prank. It's wrong; it's so wrong.

"Kurt," Blaine says, "You're turning red."

"I'm sorry. I'm just..." Kurt clenches his teeth and closes his eyes, makes himself count to something.

"Hey, it's okay," Blaine says. "It's going to be okay. My parents found the best eye surgeon in the state."

Kurt wants to scream at him that it's not okay. Nothing about this is okay. It's all fucked up and horrible and those bastards are going to get away with it. But he can't unleash all that on Blaine, who's smiling so sweetly, looking hopeful, and trying to comfort Kurt. So instead Kurt forces the tension from his body, smiles, and reaches for Blaine's hand. "I know, honey. You're going to be fine."

~*~

In the end, there's no revenge. There's not even justice. There's just what is actually possible, which is turning the other cheek (Jesus may not be the son of some non-existent deity, but Kurt hopes he maybe got some stuff right on the ethics front) and trying to demonstrate a better way to the boys who should have already known it. In the midst of his anger, Kurt remembered Blaine's hand on his burning cheek, remembered him saying, 'To do good you have to be good.' Kurt won't become the thing he opposes. He did keep a copy of Santana's tape though, just in case.

So Kurt sits on the edge of the stage and watches the Warblers file out of the April Rhodes Civic Pavilion. Sebastian left first, and Kurt still wanted to punch him in the face. Never mind. New Directions has gone too, but the warmth of Artie's hand on Kurt's arm, the scent of Mercedes perfume, the sincerity of Trent's apology linger. Kurt stares at the rows of empty seats. He should feel lighter, but he doesn't. He's not proud of himself or satisfied no matter how he can intellectually praise his decisions.

He hears the squeak of an athletic shoe on the stage, the tap of footsteps. Then there's a pair of long, slim legs in his peripheral vision. Santana. Kurt looks up but doesn't bother forcing a smile.

"Hey, Sam," she says. Kurt frowns at her as she drops to sit next him. "How's Frodo doing anyway?"

That drags a reluctant smile from Kurt. "Is Sebastian Gollum?"

"Nah," she says. "He's more like the big creepy spider, and we shoved a bright light in the bitch's face."

Kurt drops his chin to his chest and chuckles. "You're not mad?"

"I didn't say that," Santana says sharply. "I still don't get you, Hummel. Why'd you give him the tape?"

"I made a copy," Kurt says.

"Smart boy," Santana says, then she nudges his shoulder with her own. "So did I."
Kurt turns to look at her, finds her smiling at him. She's pretty when she smiles like that, but Kurt's not foolish enough to tell her. "Thank you for your help," he says. "Even if we don't use the tape, I'm glad we have it. Glad everyone knows."

"Well, you know me, I'm always happy to help make the world a safer place for my favorite fairy princess."

It's true. Despite the mockery, Santana has had his back often enough. "You don't have to do that all the time, you know," he says even though the epithet doesn't really sting.

"What? The nickname?" she asks. "How else will you know I care?" Her smile is soft.

"You must really love Finn," Kurt says flatly.

Santana laughs long and loud. Kurt grins, and they fall into a not uncomfortable silence for a while.

When Santana doesn't get up to leave, Kurt is bold enough to venture with a question. He may be overstepping, but it feels right to ask, after all Santana has done to help. "So how are things with you? With your family?"

Santana shrugs. "You know. My folks are cool, but my abuela... Not so much."

"I'm sorry," Kurt says.

Santana shakes her head, but there's little ferocity in her words when she says, "Fuck that shit. I won't pretend anymore, not even for her. It hurts too much."

"Yeah," Kurt says. "It does."

Santana looks at him, delicate eyebrows arched skeptically. "Aside from your brief affair with Britt, did you ever?"

"Did I ever what?"

"Pretend?"

Kurt thinks about it. Answers, "Yes." Then adds, "I still do sometimes."

"What do you mean? You're the gayest of the gay, Hummel."

Kurt takes a breath. It's not something he's terribly comfortable articulating as such, but Santana respects directness more than dissembling. Telling her isn't risky, and Kurt has a moment of strange revelation, that he trusts Santana. With this. So he speaks softly but clearly, "I pretend not to be scared, not to care how other people look at me, or what they say about me. I pretend not to care when no one sits next to me, or won't shake my hand at a party."

Kurt takes a moment, turns to face Santana as he finishes. "I don't pretend I'm straight, I pretend I'm untouchable."

Santana considers him, her expression a mix of determination and empathy. "Yeah, okay," she says softly. "I think I have an idea of what that's like."

Kurt gives her tight smile. They both end up looking at their laps for what feels like several long minutes.

Eventually Santana breaks the silence. "So are we friends now, or what, Kurt?"
For his part, the answer is 'yes'. "I'd like it if we were," he says.

"All right," Santana says, rolling her eyes and speaking facetiously. "Just don't tell anyone, it'll ruin my rep."

Friendship with Santana may be unsettling and occasionally painful, but Kurt expects that's better than the alternatives. It's with a strange lightness and an even more peculiar sense of accidental accomplishment Kurt smiles back at her, offers his hand, and says, "Deal."

~*~

Saturday evening, Kurt has dozed off sitting against the headboard on Blaine's bed, *Rolling Stone* open in his lap. He wakes to Blaine's hand gently shaking his shoulder and Mrs. Anderson saying his name.

"Hmuh?" he says, blinking to clear his vision.

"Kurt? Would you care to stay for dinner?" she's asking him from Blaine's open doorway.

Blaine is smiling at him. The light behind the blinds has dimmed to darkness, and the warm glow of Blaine's bedside lamp casts the room in gentle half-light. It feels late, as if hours have passed. The air seems heavy and quiet, like it's close to midnight. Kurt finds his phone where it's wedged itself beneath his thigh, checks the time. Just past six-thirty. So he wasn't asleep that long. Must have needed it. "Um," he says, unlocking his phone. If he's not going to be home by seven, he's meant to call or text.

"Please say yes," Blaine says. "You can help me get downstairs."

"I've set the table for three, so it's no trouble at all," Mrs. Anderson says. "Marcel has made enough, especially with Blaine's appetite as it is."

"Okay," Kurt says. He remembers Blaine mentioning Marcel; he cooks for the Andersons a few times a week, but Kurt's never been invited to stay before. "Thank you. I'll let my Dad know."

"It will be on the table at seven sharp," Mrs. Anderson says crisply. "Perhaps you can help Blaine get dressed for it, Kurt?"

"Oh," Kurt says, the implication of her words settling uncomfortably; suggesting he, basically, manhandle Blaine from his pajamas (under which Kurt knows Blaine does not wear underwear) into other clothing. "Um, okay?" The warm prickle of blood flares across his cheeks. He carefully wipes at the corners of his eyes with fingertips, clearing away damp remnants of sleep, hiding his blush until Mrs. Anderson has left. He sends a text to his Dad, letting him know he's staying here for dinner and will be home by eleven.

Once Kurt is confident Mrs. Anderson is out of earshot, he turns to Blaine, who's arranged himself cross-legged next to Kurt, leaning forward, his elbows on his knees. "Did your mother just give me permission to see you naked?" Kurt asks.

Blaine chuckles. "I think she's assuming you already have."

"Oh," Kurt says, with a fresh wave of embarrassment. Sure, he's slept over in Blaine's bedroom, but that was when Blaine's parents behaved like it wasn't anything more than a friendship between him and Blaine. Kurt supposes they never really believed that; it was always pretense, as if pretending could change reality. And apparently Mrs. Anderson now assumes—however correctly—that they have been naked together. It was easier before. But now when Mrs. Anderson looks at him, he
knows she knows what he does with her son, and that's rather mortifying. Particularly since she's simultaneously so casual and inscrutable about it. His own father at least had feelings about the whole thing, feelings he expressed directly and candidly. Kurt knows exactly how his Dad feels about Blaine, about them and their relationship. His Dad's approval and support is obvious and sincere. But Mrs. Anderson?

Kurt covers his face with his hands and breathes slowly. He can't read her. Sometimes she seems kind and accepting, other times clearly hostile. Most of the time she's blankly superficial. Everything feels fraught, like there's some weird interplay between manners and expectation, sincerity and appearance, and of course, some bizarre passive aggression Kurt doesn't understand very well. And he's just woken up, which doesn't help things feel like less of a muddle. "So is that bad?" he asks Blaine.

"Is what bad?"

"That she knows we..." Kurt drops his hands to his lap. "...see each other naked?"

Blaine rolls forward onto hands and knees and crawls toward Kurt. "It's fine," Blaine says. He shifts his weight back and takes Kurt's hands. His one-eyed gaze tracks between Kurt's eyes. "You're not the only one of my friends who's seen me naked, anyway—boys' school, locker rooms. I'm just really happy she likes you."

"That's not what I meant," Kurt says. He's more concerned about her possible, ironically expressed disapproval of his assumed naked activities with Blaine. Her tone of voice wasn't exactly warm. It seemed like maybe she was calling him out. "I'm your boyfriend. Our mutual nakedness is hardly platonic."

"I think we need to stop talking about us being naked together, Kurt." Blaine grins and tips forward to kiss him on the lips. Kurt leans into it, expects a quick, soft kiss like the others they have shared this week, but Blaine lingers and his hand comes up warm and gentle to cup Kurt's jaw.

It's been long enough, Kurt nearly swoons as sudden desire stabs him low in the belly. It makes it easy for Kurt to set aside his anxiety over Blaine's mother; easy, too, to forget Blaine is injured, the door is open, and he's meant to help Blaine get ready for dinner and downstairs. It feels like he hasn't kissed—or been kissed by—Blaine properly for months, though it hasn't even been a week. Against Kurt's mouth, Blaine alternates between gentle grasps and tugs at his bottom lip and light, ticklish suction against the center of his top lip.

"God, I've missed your mouth," Blaine murmurs between the increasingly unchaste movements of his lips with Kurt's.

That prompts Kurt to grin against Blaine's mouth. "That sounds a little dirty."

Blaine slips his tongue along the closed, curved seam of Kurt's mouth and away, and then whispers, "It was meant to." Then Blaine presses back in with fervor, his tongue hot and insistent, seeking entrance, which Kurt happily gives him.
Kurt groans into the kiss, opens wide to let Blaine take his mouth as deeply as he wants, lets Blaine move over him and press him back until his head collides with the headboard and Blaine is straddling his lap. Kurt is swiftly growing hard, and that reality—as Blaine lowers himself against Kurt, the weight of him coming down upon Kurt's groin—makes Kurt turn his head, sliding his mouth away from Blaine's to speak, "Wait, Blaine, stop, we can't..."

But Blaine takes Kurt's movement as invitation to drag his lips down the side of Kurt's neck, pausing to suck at the tender skin just above his collar. The stiff dome of the eyepatch bumps against Kurt's jawline as Blaine tilts his head to begin working back up, making his way toward Kurt's ear.

"Hey, stop," Kurt says with a soft chuckle. He stifles a full body shiver and twists his fingers into Blaine's hair to tug. "I have to get you dressed."

Blaine's lips still and he huffs a sigh through his nose against Kurt's neck before he pulls back smiling sheepishly. "Sorry," he says. "I got carried away. You smell so good, Kurt. And you taste good, and feel good, and you kept saying 'naked'—"

Kurt interrupts with a laugh as he smooths Blaine's hair back into order. "Okay, okay, thank you, but, really, Blaine, this is not a good time."

"I know," he says with a pout, and the pout is so childlike and uncharacteristic, Kurt has to glance away. He's not sure it's right, doing this together now anyway. Even if they were alone.

He turns back to Blaine and gives his shoulder a gentle push. "Come on. Get up and help me put together an outfit for you."

~

Downstairs, Kurt leads Blaine by the hand toward the dining room. Getting down the stairs was even trickier than getting Blaine into proper pants. Blaine's unsteady on his feet and can't estimate the depth of each step well. He's doing better now on level ground, navigating the foyer and hall without too much difficulty.

"This feels good," Blaine says as Kurt pushes the dining room door open.

"Hmm?" Kurt says, holding the door for Blaine.

"Being dressed and out of bed. Moving."

"You'll be dancing again in no time," Kurt says, smiles as he follows Blaine through the door.

Blaine gives his hand a parting squeeze. "I hope so."

"Just in time," Mrs. Anderson says from where she stands at the head of the dark, polished table. Her slender hands are wrapped around the high, curved back of her chair. "Kurt, you're on my right."

Perhaps accepting the dinner invitation was a mistake. This feels like he's walking into a very formal audition or an interview. The sense he's about to be judged roosts heavily upon Kurt. So he puts on his show face, smiles brightly, and says "Thank you". He pulls Blaine's chair out for him, makes sure he's seated comfortably to his mother's left (she sits as he's getting Blaine settled, so Kurt doesn't have to try to remember if he should be pulling out her chair for her too) before rounding the table and seating himself.

"Blaine, dear, you look very nice," Mrs. Anderson says.
As if on cue, the door from the kitchen opens and a tidy looking man of indeterminate age in a chef's jacket (presumably Marcel) enters with a large tray balanced expertly upon one hand. He smiles and says good evening. There are polite, brief introductions as he sets a bowl of soup before each of them. "Soupe aux champignons," he says.

"Yay, my favorite!" Blaine says as he shakes the folds from his napkin and drops it in his lap.

This information Kurt files away for the future, and then he leans forward to inhale the rich, woody aroma and admire the velvety texture. His blender at home could never achieve it. The motor would burn out first. Immediately, Kurt is glad he stayed. "Merci," Kurt says, a little shy of trying out his French pronunciation on someone with an actual French accent (but he nails the 'r').

Marcel smiles and replies with "Bon appetit."

The place settings are very formal, the silverware is actually silver, the napkins linen, the glasses crystal, and the china fine (an elegant, modern take on a classic chinoiserie pattern in soft green with warm red accents; Kurt thinks he recognizes it from Vogue a few years back as a pattern the First Lady picked for the White House). Kurt picks up the soup spoon and dips away from himself.

The soup is the best thing Kurt's ever eaten, he's pretty sure. Either that or he's really hungry. It's like the essential ideal of a mushroom distilled into a soup, with lots of cream and butter and—god, it's so rich. This is why Kurt has yet to try cooking anything from his copy of Mastering the Art of French Cooking (a Christmas gift from Carole). One spoonful of something like this soup would have his Dad back in hospital.

Kurt looks up when Mrs. Anderson offers him the basket of bread rolls. They're fragrant and still warm from the oven. Kurt takes one. "Thank you," he says. "This soup is delicious."

"Isn't it?" Blaine says enthusiastically, smiling at Kurt. "It's amazing. My favorite thing Marcel makes."

"I know, dear," Mrs. Anderson says. It sounds mildly patronizing. She eats as if bored. No wonder Blaine is happy to share this.

"You've been holding out on me, Blaine," Kurt teases mildly, tearing a piece of bread to dunk in his soup and hoping he's not being completely gauche. He's at least using the right spoon for his soup and the right knife for the butter.

"Oh, no, Kurt. You're just as good a cook."

Kurt snorts. He'd like to be one day, but he's only just got to the point where he's aware of how much he doesn't know. "No, I'm not."

"I bet you could make this if you had the recipe."

"Maybe?" Kurt says. "Do you think Marcel would share it?" Kurt is already wondering how he could retain the flavor and texture while stripping out the salt, fat, and cholesterol.

"Pepper?" Mrs. Anderson asks, reaching for the polished wooden mill upon the table and offering it to Kurt.

"Oh, uh, please." he gives Blaine an apologetic look across the table, and Mrs. Anderson grinds a scatter of coarse pepper over his soup.

"So, Kurt, Blaine tells me you've been invited to audition for a prestigious New York school?"
"Yes, ma'am," Kurt replies. "The New York Academy for the Dramatic Arts, NYADA." The news is still sinking in; it's not something Kurt has fully integrated into his reality yet. "I just got my letter Thursday." He hopes it's a signal that the year is turning around.

"Congratulations," she says. "I hope it goes well for you."

"Now I just need to decide on an audition song."

"You were thinking something iconic and Broadway," Blaine says.

"Yes," Kurt agrees. "Most likely. I'm considering an encore performance of "Defying Gravity" or maybe something that speaks more to a male lead, something from Phantom of the Opera?"

"Mmm," Mrs. Anderson says. "My husband and I enjoyed Phantom when we saw it."

"You'd kill it on 'Music of the Night'," Blaine says.

"You really think so?" Kurt asks. It's a bit outside his wheelhouse, but he has the range and—if his experience with West Side Story is anything to go on—he's not sure he'll get far if he sings a girl's song. Though he still maintains the essential gender neutrality of the themes in "Defying Gravity" so that remains on the list.

"Absolutely," Blaine says, and the pride in his eyes is so bright, Kurt shares his smile until Mrs. Anderson speaks again.

"And what are the living arrangements like in New York for students? Expensive?" Mrs. Anderson asks. And that's when Blaine manages to spoon soup down the front of his shirt.

"Damn it," Blaine says under his breath.

Which prompts a warning, "Blaine, language," from his mother, followed by, "What a mess, dear, and your good shirt, too." Mrs. Anderson scoots her chair back, stands, and heads to the kitchen. "I'll get some paper towels."

Blaine's head is bowed as he stares down at the spill, tugging the fabric of the shirt away from his skin.

"Hey," Kurt says, getting up and going to Blaine. "You need a straw?"

Blaine huffs a short laugh, glancing at Kurt. "She hates it when I spill things."

"It's okay. It's just soup." He pulls the chair next to Blaine over and sits, taking Blaine's napkin from his lap to carefully dab up the worst of it. "I'm sure you can imagine, with my Dad, I've had a lot of practice getting grease stains out of nearly every surface imaginable."

"I'm so clumsy," Blaine says, disproportionately miserable. While Kurt can well appreciate the horror of a fatty soup spill on a Brooks Brothers shirt, it's not the end of the world. If he can get motor oil out of his Dad's dress slacks, he can get mushroom soup out of Blaine's shirt.

"You're operating under a handicap here, honey. We just need to get it to the laundry. Your mom must have some Shout or something."

"Can I finish my soup first? While it's hot?"

Kurt sets Blaine's napkin aside, reaches across the table for his own, which is unused. "Sure, let me help you." He tucks the corner of the napkin into Blaine's collar as Mrs. Anderson returns with a
stack of paper towels in her hand. She hesitates a moment before passing them to Kurt. "Thanks," he says, and puts them under the napkin, pressing against the damp spot to absorb more of the mess. "Just leave these here while you finish, okay?" Kurt says, smoothing the napkin over Blaine's chest.

Blaine touches where the napkin is folded into his collar. "I feel like a toddler," he says.

"Do you want me to feed you, too?" Kurt asks, only half joking. He squeezes Blaine's forearm gently. He can feel Mrs. Anderson's gaze upon him.

With a roll of his eyes, Blaine answers, "God, no. I'm just a little woozy and off. I can still feed myself."

"Okay," Kurt says, resists the urge to kiss Blaine's cheek. "Finish your soup, and then I'll get you a fresh shirt and we can put this in the wash."

"Thank you, Kurt," Blaine says, his voice cracking a little.

"Of course," Kurt says, and gets up, goes back to his seat. Mrs. Anderson is still looking him. Blaine is concentrating on his dinner.

The rest of the meal is uneventful (barring the laundry visit and shirt change) and delicious. Blaine doesn't finish the main course (which means Kurt gets an extra helping of Marcel's melt-in-your-mouth roast beef, haricot verts amandine, and potatoes au gratin), but he does eat his dessert. "There's always room for ice cream," Blaine says.

After they've finished and Marcel has gone, Kurt insists on doing the remaining dishes. "I do them every night at home. Honestly, I find it relaxing," he tells Mrs. Anderson when she protests. Blaine excuses himself to the music room. He says he feels like messing around on the piano; it might help him feel more human.

While Kurt hand washes the dishes, Mrs. Anderson dries. They don't really talk much; Kurt reckons they exhausted all possible topics of small talk over dinner. It's not uncomfortable, but it's not exactly comfortable either. Kurt feels Mrs. Anderson still studying him, the silence between them increasingly pregnant with something Kurt does not wish to guess at. So he concentrates on washing the dishes, being very careful with the fine things. The china is the one from the White House Kurt sees as he rinses the suds from the bottom of a side plate: Wedgwood Oberon. The glasses are Waterford.

He indulges a little daydream of having such fine things of his own, with Blaine. He imagines them at thirty, coming home to their own home, established enough in their careers to be truly making it theirs. There will be a simple platinum band on his finger, something with fine detail but nothing garish, a milgrain edge perhaps, a single diamond set discreetly into the band...

That's when Mrs. Anderson speaks, bringing Kurt out of his reverie. "You're a very careful boy, aren't you?"

Kurt's mind goes blank. The only response he summons is a polite, "Excuse me?"


"Oh," Kurt says. "I suppose?" Kurt flicks his gaze from the bowl he's washing to see what he can find in her expression.

"You're very careful with Blaine," she says, her gaze oddly intent.

"I... Well, I try to be."
"He is— Or, he can be fragile sometimes," she says, glancing away, back to the knife she's polishing dry. "But he doesn't let people see that. Not even me, but I'm his mother, so of course I know, but not because he lets me."

Kurt doesn't know what to say. He rinses the bowl he just washed, sets it in the drying rack with the others.

"But he lets you."

Kurt is growing uncomfortable. "Ma'am," he says, "I'm sorry, but I don't understand what you're trying to tell me."

Mrs. Anderson's lips flatten into a thin, thoughtful line, and she pushes loose hair behind her ears, gathering herself. "I've worried," she says carefully, enunciating very clearly as if she's afraid Kurt won't understand her, "for a long time. That Blaine would be taken advantage of by someone—some man—who wouldn't understand."

There's something in the way she says 'man' that lets Kurt know he's exempt from that particular designation, but not in the way he typically is. He doesn't get the sense Mrs. Anderson fails to see him as male, just that he's not one of them: a boy like Sebastian, perhaps; the kind of man most mothers fear their daughters running afoul of.

"Someone who wouldn't know to be careful with him," she continues. "He puts on a brave face, so charming and confident, like he can change the world with his smile." Mrs. Anderson smiles sadly. "Sometimes, I think he truly believes he can. But some people might mistake that for..." She trails off with a frown, seemingly uncertain of her next words.

"I think I understand," Kurt offers softly.

Mrs. Anderson smiles the small smile that Kurt thinks is the one she means. "I think you do, too."

Kurt returns the smile.

~

Once the dishes are done and Mrs. Anderson has left him in the kitchen, Kurt hangs the dishtowel neatly on the rail, leaves the gloves to dry on the edge of the sink, and goes to the music room.

He knocks lightly before entering. Blaine doesn't look up from the piano or say anything, just keeps playing. Kurt sits on the bench beside him, watches Blaine's hands move nimbly upon the keys, listens to him play. It's not terribly focused, just a little melody Blaine is improvising. The sound of it is melancholy, the tempo slow. It repeats and varies as Blaine works through it. Kurt picks out the patterns and begins to hum a harmony. When Blaine glances at him with an encouraging smile, Kurt brings his hands to the keyboard too, plays counterpoint until Blaine seems satisfied, trails off, and his hands fall to his lap. He sighs, his smile gone.

"You all right?" Kurt asks.

Blaine shrugs. "I'm fine, just feeling a little sorry for myself. It's stupid."

"After the week you've had, I think you're entitled to indulge a little self-pity, Blaine."

Blaine shakes his head with a short, humorless laugh. "I just hate this. Being drugged and wobbly, waiting for the surgery, being stuck at home, missing you..."
"Yeah, me too," Kurt says, wraps an arm around Blaine to pull him against him. "It's less than a week 'til your surgery. Then we'll get back to normal." Kurt swallows the catch in his throat and makes himself believe it.

"I hope so."

"We'll do something extra special when you're better, to celebrate."

"Okay," Blaine says, turning his face into Kurt's neck and relaxing into Kurt's embrace.

Kurt holds him and rubs his back and shoulders. After a few minutes of that, Blaine smothered a yawn against Kurt.

"Ready for another exciting round of going to bed?" Kurt asks.

Blaine laughs. "I wish it were going to be exciting. But the stuff they've given me to help me sleep is really strong."

"Spring break is coming up," Kurt says. "We can have plenty of exciting in bed time then to make up for this dry spell."

Blaine lifts his head, smiles. "You think?"

Kurt nods. "Depending on other peoples' schedules, we may even manage some excitement in places other than the bed." Kurt's been scoping out possibilities around the house. Thinks bending Blaine over the back of the sofa could be fun. Or maybe a quick blowjob in the kitchen, or sex on the stairs... The last, Kurt suspects, may be better in fantasy than reality. Kurt considers the piano before them; Blaine's house has even more possibilities. "If you're feeling adventurous, that is."

"With you? Always." Blaine drops his forehead against Kurt's shoulder and chuckles. "Thank you, Kurt."

Kurt smiles and presses a kiss to Blaine's hair. He doesn't need to ask for what. "I'll help you get back to your room and ready for bed before I leave, okay?"

~

After Blaine is settled, warm and snug beneath the covers, drowsy with the pills he's taken, Kurt gives him a kiss good night, gathers his things and heads downstairs. He finds Mrs. Anderson in the family room, working on a crossword puzzle with a real estate show going on the television. He thanks her for dinner; she walks him to the front door and hands him his coat.

As Kurt sets his bag down to slip on his coat, Mrs. Anderson says, "I wanted to ask a favor of you, Kurt."

"Yes?" Kurt drapes his scarf around his neck, doesn't bother knotting it.

"I have an early meeting in Cleveland Thursday morning. I've got the home health nurse coming to spend the day with Blaine, but, since the meeting is early, I would prefer to drive up Wednesday night. Mr. Anderson isn't back until Friday. Would it be possible for you stay the night here Wednesday, keep an eye on Blaine, make sure he takes his medication, eats, and doesn't fall down the stairs?"

Kurt's eyes widen. "I'd be happy to," he says, a little high and airy. "But I'll need to ask my father."
"Of course." She smiles. "I'll make sure a guest room is made up for you if it's too awkward to share with Blaine while he's injured."

"Oh," Kurt says, a blush warming his cheeks, but he doesn't glance away. "Sure, thank you."

"Drive safely," she says and opens the door for him, "And let me know if you'll be available."

"I will," he says, his mind already going to work on what he'll cook and what activities may make Wednesday night more fun for Blaine.

"And Kurt," she calls out as he makes his way down the path.

"Yes?" he turns back.

"Thank you."

~*~

Monday, Mr. Schuester tells the class they'll be singing in Spanish this week. Then they meet Mr. Martinez.

~*~

Kurt was alone in the choir room after Glee practice. The papers in his satchel were in dreadful disorder, and he wasn't to leave the room until they were all sorted out. Mr. Schuester had made that clear. But where was he to start? His French handouts were in his Physics folder. History notes were mixed in with sheet music for Glee. His English folder had changed color from blue to green. How was he supposed to fix that? It was terrible.

Blaine would surely be waiting for him, but every time Kurt opened another folder to check its contents, he would find yet another thing out of place, and why were his recipes for Home Ec written in Spanish? Bad enough that the soups were mixed up with the desserts. He'd have to rewrite them completely, except he didn't really know Spanish. Kurt swore under his breath and pulled out a purple folder that was labeled '3D Art!' in silver glitter ink. But he wasn't even taking an art class this semester. Inside it were Calculus problems written in crayon on yellow graph paper.

Just then he heard footsteps coming into the room. Kurt looked up to see Mr. Martinez walking in. Walking was one word for it anyway. It was some sexy hybrid of a saunter and a strut. Filled with duende no doubt. Mr. Martinez was looking directly at him. Oh, he was speaking to him, too. "Hi, Kurt," Mr. Martinez said.

Kurt dropped a recipe for Croque-Monsieur on the floor. It slid under the chair with a soft click-whoosh. He didn't need that one anyway. How hard was a grilled ham and cheese sandwich? "Hello, Mr. Martinez," Kurt replied.

Mr. Martinez smiled at him widely. His teeth literally sparkled. Literally. Kurt didn't use that word casually or erroneously; he knew what it meant. "Please, call me David," Mr. Martinez's glittering mouth said.

Kurt stared at the way the light bounced off his white teeth and said, "All right, David."

"That's better," David said and leaned back against the piano. His black pants wrapped tight around his muscular thighs, slung low around his trim abdomen and nimble hips. "Now what is it you needed my help with, Kurt?"
"Oh, I, uh, I've written all my recipes in Spanish accidentally, and I need help translating them back to English so I can leave," Kurt explained.

"That's not what you need help with," David said.

"It's not?" Kurt said, and he could feel the heat creeping up his neck.

"No," David said, smiling even wider. His teeth were so very white and even. And his arms, as he crossed them over his broad, well-defined chest, were so wonderfully sculpted. His black t-shirt was at its limit to contain all that man. "That's not what you need my help with. Come over here, Kurt."

"Okay," Kurt said. He dropped his bag, and all the colorful mixed up papers and folders scattered across the risers.

"I watched you dance today, Kurt," David said. "I think you need a private lesson. You're far too tight. You need help loosening up."

"Okay," Kurt said. It was true. His dancing didn't have much _duende_. Even Mike hadn't been able to help him with that. He stood up and made his way over to David, who held out a hand, palm up, for Kurt to take.

"I saw the way you looked at me, Kurt. I can help you," David said.

Kurt laid his hand upon David's. It was warm and soft and strong as it wrapped around his. "Yes, I'd like that," Kurt said, looking into David's beautiful brown eyes.

David pulled on his hand, spinning Kurt expertly and drawing him in until Kurt's back was pressed up against David's front and David's arm crossed his chest, holding Kurt fast against him. His other hand came down to Kurt's belly, laying flat just above his belt buckle. "Like this, Kurt," David said. Music started, and they began to move.

They danced like that for a while, and Kurt felt like he was floating, they glided across the floor so smoothly. He felt his body responding to every cue of David's (which mostly came from his hips). Kurt felt warm and loose and easy in his movements. Except for the hollow querying ache growing deep inside him. He tried to ignore that.

"This won't do at all," David said, and they stopped moving. "Over here," he said and nudged Kurt gently toward the piano. "Lean over it. I have an idea of what may help you."

"Oh please god yes," Kurt whispered.

As David's hand reached around him for his fly, undoing it swiftly and reaching for Kurt's cock. A rampant surge of ecstasy flooded Kurt. Abruptly, he was so close to coming. He moaned and rubbed himself shamelessly into David's firm grip. The pleasure didn't fade when David let go, but clung to him, suspending him right on the verge of climax. Then his pants were down around his knees and David was speaking to him, but Kurt couldn't make out the words; he was overcome with being so very close. Just one more touch, just... a little something more.

The touch came not on his cock but between his buttocks, hot, thick, and blunt, pressing against him, and somehow starting to slide inside him without any trace of discomfort, more easily than it should. Kurt knew it didn't work like this. But he felt glory in every nerve ending, cracking him open, invading; and his orgasm coiled up like a snake ready to—

Kurt wakes up drenched in sweat: hard, aching, and so close to orgasm he can feel it in his _hair_. He
tosses his covers back and shimmies out of his pajama bottoms. Rucks up his top and wraps one
hand around his cock, squeezing at first to soothe, cupping his balls with his other hand and rolling
them gently along his fingers. It does nothing to ease the ghost of dream sensation elsewhere. He can
still feel it, an insistent, throbbing want for something now absent. But it was never really there. It's
not the fist time Kurt has had a dream where he's been fucked, but it is the first time he's woken up
still feeling it. "Okay," Kurt whispers into the darkness, to no one but himself.

He doesn't think about it. He won't. He just reaches under the pillow and grabs the lube.

His hands only shake a little bit as he squirts a dollop of cool gel onto his fingertips instead of into his
palm. There's a moment of hesitation, deciding whether to stay on his back, roll over, kneel up...
Kurt decides on rolling over, but he gets his knees beneath himself and leans on one bent arm, his
closed eyes pressed into the bend of his elbow. His heart flutters like a scared, small bird, like it's
trying to make an escape from his chest through his throat. But he's not thinking about this, not
really. He's not questioning it. He's just doing this. For himself.

And he's definitely not thinking about Mr. Martinez when he brings his hand back to touch himself
between his buttocks. Mr. Martinez who, crazy sex dream aside, looked back today when Kurt
looked at him; and he smiled.

The gel is cold against his hot skin, but Kurt's fingers are warm. And clumsy. He misses, touching
himself too high, like he doesn't even know his own body. His lungs feel stuffy, and Kurt realizes
he's holding his breath. He tries to imagine Blaine's voice, imagines Blaine reminding him to breathe.
Kurt exhales, inhales, slides his fingertips down until they're nestled right where he feels the phantom
ache of nothing.
It's Tuesday night and Blaine is gone, with his mother, to Columbus. He had an appointment with the specialist late this afternoon, and Kurt has yet to hear much more than a text from Mrs. Anderson saying it was taking longer than scheduled. While Kurt loves the sleepovers with his two best girls, and he's grateful to be spending tonight with friends to distract him from missing Blaine (he and Blaine will have plenty of time together tomorrow night, anyway), he has learned to dread the moment when the stack of *Cosmopolitan* magazines comes out of the bottom drawer of Rachel's dresser and Rachel and Mercedes start giggling and speculating over the sex tips and articles. He brings his own reading to get through this particular trial, and they usually leave him alone.

Of course, it's been a while since they last had a sleepover, and some things have changed, most significantly that Rachel is no longer a virgin, and neither is he. Their knowledge of the latter, Kurt can feel every time Rachel and Mercedes both look to him for reactions to each tip or to their resulting commentary, but he pretends he doesn't notice the pregnant pauses in their conversation. He doesn't know precisely how they know he and Blaine are sleeping together now—he's been deliberately vague on the topic—but he expects neither Finn nor Sam has kept it to himself.

Regardless, no matter how ridiculous the tip sounds, or how long they look at him for a response, Kurt keeps his face carefully bland. He makes the most of trying to read the *GQ* in his lap and plan for the new Spring trends. Kurt fortifies himself with the knowledge that he'll at least get to see Taylor Lautner with his shirt off tonight. But eventually, the expectant looks aren't enough, and Rachel speaks up.

"Is that true, Kurt?" she asks.

Kurt looks up from the article he's reading, pretends he hasn't heard what they've just been discussing (an article titled "His Best Kept Secret, Ladies: The Male G-Spot!"). "Is what true?"

"That a guy can have an orgasm just from stimulating his, um, prostate?"

Kurt keeps his expression neutral and replies coolly, "You're asking me this because...?"

"You're a guy."

"Yes, I'm aware, thank you for noticing, Rachel."

Mercedes tuts and says, "Come on, Kurt, we know you and Blaine are getting busy."

"Oh, you do, do you?"

"Yeah, Kurt, it's so obvious, with the way you two look at each other now. I swear, sometimes it's like the rest of us don't even exist." She smiles, but it turns a little sad. "I really wish I had that with someone."

"You don't with Shane?" Kurt asks, seizing the opportunity to change the direction of this conversation. "Or Sam?"

"Ugh," Mercedes says, and covers her face with her hands. Kurt reaches out to pat her shoulder. "I don't know," she says and falls to her back on the bed, her head landing upon the open magazine in Kurt's lap. He smiles down at her and pets her hair until she takes her hands away from her face and returns his smile.
"You're avoiding the question, Kurt," Rachel says, tapping the facing page of her *Cosmopolitan*.

"Yes, I am," he says and sighs. He can't go back to reading, Mercedes' head is in the way.

"Well?" Mercedes asks from his lap. "Spill."

They're both looking at him, expecting some great sex related wisdom from a male perspective. Kurt tries to think of a way to answer that doesn't betray the particulars of his relationship with Blaine. "Fine," he says, "My understanding is that, yes, some guys can."

"Your understanding?" Rachel asks. "Some guys? You're no better than the magazine, Kurt."

"Kurt, honey, we want details."

"You're not getting them. What happens between me and Blaine stays between us. It's not fair to him to tell you the details of it."

Rachel rolls her eyes. "Whatever," she says, "I just want a simple yes or no. Forget about Blaine. Can you, you know—" Rachel drops her voice to a whisper. "—come that way?"

Kurt's eyes widen. "Can I...? Oh my god, Rachel, you are not asking me that."

Mercedes laughs. "Kurt, you're blushing."

Rachel nods in satisfaction. "I'm going to take that as a 'yes'."

Kurt tips his head back against the pillows and blinks up at the ceiling. "No, that is not a 'yes'. Stop assuming—"

"So it's a 'no', then." Rachel narrows her eyes, staring at him intently. Mercedes is still laughing, and Kurt sees the quiver of a smile at the corner of Rachel's mouth, and he realizes, this is the downside of being able to pull off such deadpan sarcasm. Your friends can't tell when you actually want them to shut up.

"It's an 'I'm not telling you', and please stop asking me about this. I appreciate that you're interested—Actually, no, I don't appreciate it. But while we're sharing, Rachel, for god's sake, don't try the thing with the doughnut. Blowjobs don't require gimmicks to be amazing, especially not with food. The only tips you really need for sucking dick? Are, one, to actually *do* it and, two, don't use your teeth. And no, you won't ruin your voice. Trust me."

Mercedes sits up. The girls are both silent, their expressions mildly stunned as they look at each other and then at Kurt. "What?" Kurt asks, folding his arms over his chest. "You thought I wasn't listening?"

Rachel starts giggling.

Mercedes says super seriously, like it's another sign of the end times, "Kurt just said 'dick'."

"Really?" Kurt demands, but feels a smile tugging at his lips. "That's what you got?"

Rachel falls to her side on the bed. "Kurt said 'sucking dick'."

"Oh, for fuck's sake."

"Oh, we have a 'fuck', too!" Rachel says, delighted.
Mercedes, chuckling, shakes her head at him. "Boy, you've got a dirty mouth."

Rachel leans over and pokes his leg, playfully sing-songing, "I bet Blaine loves your dirty mouth."

Kurt gives up and gives in to the laughter too. And then it's time to go downstairs and make snacks for the movie. Midway through the film, Rachel drops her bombshell: she and Finn are getting married. Kurt wishes they were still talking about blowjobs. He knows exactly what he would say if Blaine proposed; he's already answered that question. That doesn't mean he isn't still mad at Finn or thinks this is right for him and Rachel.

~*~

Kurt has never cooked in the Andersons' kitchen before. He's arrived a little late (the lines in the supermarket were ferocious) but he's here now, unpacking the groceries to the counter and looking about to evaluate the facilities (overwhelmingly excellent for the most part, with top of the line appliances—the stove is a Gaggenau, which leaves Kurt feeling bizarrely starstruck). Meanwhile, Mrs. Anderson is moving about in a half-frantic flurry, making sure Kurt has all the phone numbers he may need and has the information about and the schedule for the various pills and eyedrops Blaine requires. The stack of papers on the end of the polished granite counter, which includes all the drug brochures, notes, and business cards, is growing. Kurt reassures her that they'll be fine, and yes, he'll call the nurse if there's any sign of a new side effect or complication. Blaine is seated at the kitchen table, on the other side of the raised bartop counter. His Pre-Calc homework is strewn about him, and Blaine watches Kurt and his mother with a half smile on his face. Kurt looks over at him and rolls his eyes. Blaine grins back and returns his attention to his open textbook.

Blaine is wearing his old Dalton sweatpants and hoodie over a heather gray t-shirt, and his hair is coming free into curls on the side he tends to lean upon his hand when he's reading at a desk. Kurt takes a moment to admire Blaine, casual, relaxed, and at home. A yearning for next year surges up suddenly in his chest, like heartache or homesickness, for when Blaine graduates, comes to New York, and they find a way to be at home together. He wants so much to make a home for Blaine. Kurt exhales a shallow breath and returns to unpacking his groceries, setting the tomatoes by the sink next to the green beans.

"All right, Kurt," Mrs. Anderson is saying to him. "If there's anything else you need, call and leave a message, or text me. I'll get back to you as soon as I can."

"Yes, ma'am, I will," Kurt says, turning to face her so she knows he's heard everything she's said.

She touches Kurt's shoulder and says, "Thank you." And then she goes to the table to smooth Blaine's hair and kiss his forehead. "Be good, dear," she says.

"I'll be fine, Mom," he says. "Good luck with the meeting, drive safely."

"I'll text when I get to the hotel," she says, heading for the door to the back hall that leads to the garage. Kurt waves and smiles, and she's gone.

Blaine rubs at the lipstick smudge his mother left on his forehead, and Kurt folds up the shopping bag he's just emptied, sets it aside. The quiet between them is novel, for though they have been alone together before here physically, it's never been here in quite the same way. Mrs. Anderson has so many new expectations of Kurt, and her anxiety over Blaine's wellbeing is a new responsibility to shoulder. But Kurt is sure they will be fine. He looks over at Blaine, finds him looking back, and he laughs softly. "I feel like a babysitter."

Blaine chuckles. "I'm sorry I require babysitting."
"It's okay," Kurt says, coming out of the kitchen to go to the table where Blaine's seated. Blaine turns in his chair to face Kurt, and Kurt rests his hands on Blaine's shoulders, smiles down at him. "You'd do the same for me."

"I would," Blaine agrees, resting his hands low on Kurt's hips. "Except for the cooking. You'd be stuck with canned soup and toast if I were cooking."

Kurt tilts his head. "Top Chef isn't inspiring you?"

"Sadly, my skills lag behind my inspiration."

"I'll help you get up to speed. After all, you'll have to take your turn cooking when we're living together next year. I doubt we'll be able to afford eating out often in New York." The plans to room with Rachel next year are fraying. If she does marry Finn, then Kurt doubts they'll want him around as their third wheel for long, best friend and brother or not. But if that means he and Blaine will end up on their own together, too, then that'll be okay. More than.

"Next year," Blaine murmurs. He slides his hands up and takes hold of Kurt's waist, tugging him closer so he can lean forward and press his cheek against Kurt's torso, fitting his cheekbone into the yielding spot just below Kurt's sternum. "That doesn't sound as far away as it actually is."

Of course, there's still the big gap in the middle where they'll be apart, but it's easy to elide that time in his mind and focus on when they will be together again. "We'll be there before you know it," Kurt says, rubbing along Blaine's shoulders and enjoying the press of Blaine against him as he nuzzles into Kurt's sweater with a sigh and slides his arms around Kurt to hold him close, making Kurt rock forward onto his toes to keep his balance.

They stay like that for a while, Blaine holding tightly to Kurt, Kurt stroking and petting Blaine's shoulders, thinking about their future together. Eventually Blaine's hold loosens, and Kurt draws back. "I really need to get dinner started," he says, "unless you want to be eating at midnight."

"What are you making?" Blaine asks, releasing Kurt and sitting back in his chair.

"Soup and toast," Kurt says.

"Oh." Blaine gives him a sheepish smile.

"Minestrone, from scratch, to be precise," Kurt explains. "I soaked the cannelini beans overnight at home and made the broth myself. I'm still trying to develop a good, dark vegetable broth to substitute for beef, this is my latest attempt and I think it's turned out well. Marcel's mushroom soup recipe inspired me to use dried porcini mushrooms, so I think you'll enjoy it. And I've been saving the rind of a good imported Parmesan just for this—"

"So it's not just soup, it's Soup. Special Fancy Kurt Soup," Blaine says, mouths something unintelligible under his breath and adds, "Which makes for a terrible acronym, so I'll need to think of a better designation."

Kurt gives Blaine a lopsided grin and cups his jaw, brushing across Blaine's cheek with his thumb. "Do you need anything before I get started? A drink refill? Homework help?"

Blaine shakes his head, turning in Kurt's loose hold to kiss the pad of his thumb. "I'm getting through it okay," he says.

"All right," Kurt says, and reluctantly steps back and away, to return to the kitchen to begin topping and tailing the green beans.
The soup is a success; Blaine eats an entire large bowl of it and manages a parfait of macerated dried fruits and vanilla Greek yogurt for dessert. At the end of the meal, Blaine leans back in his chair, rubs his tummy as says, "Oh, wow. I'm actually full."

Kurt's not above preening a little as he takes their plates from the kitchen table to the sink. "Once again my secret ingredient proves irresistible," he says over his shoulder.

"You have a secret ingredient?" Blaine asks.

"Mmhmm," Kurt says as he rinses the soup bowls.

"It's not like Puck's secret ingredient, I trust," Blaine says.

"No, Blaine, I did not season the soup with marijuana."

Blaine appears mostly steady on his feet as he stands, but he reaches for the bar top for support anyway, as he rounds it to come into the kitchen. "Then what's yours?" he asks Kurt, coming up to hug him from behind.

"Careful," Kurt says, lifting his elbows so Blaine doesn't accidentally jostle his grip on the bread plate.

"Well?" Blaine asks, hooking his chin over Kurt's shoulder.

"It wouldn't be much of a secret if I told you, would it?"

"But you teased me with your gloating. How am I supposed to not wonder now?"

"My gloating?"

"That was definitely gloating."

Kurt huffs a short laugh, rinses off his hands, and turns in Blaine's embrace, finds him smiling softly, his gaze hooded and easy. Kurt relaxes his lips as Blaine leans in to kiss him. It's slow and shallow, a familiar press and slide of their lips, but it steals Kurt's breath nevertheless. Blaine pulls back enough to speak. "The dishes can wait, let's go goof off," he says, tugging at Kurt's waist.

"I don't know." Kurt says. He wants—oh, how he wants—but there's a sharp ambivalence between the desires of his body and the responsible voice in his head, reminding him that Blaine's judgment may still be drug impaired (though he's been lucid enough so far this evening), and Kurt's not sure how the physiology of an orgasm would affect Blaine while he's still injured and medicated. Maybe he should read the brochures Mrs. Anderson left. "I'm not sure it's a good idea to shirk my duties here to make out with my charge."

"You realize you're not actually my babysitter, right?" Blaine says. "And anyway, we don't have to make out make out. Things aren't exactly fully functional for me right now, but I wouldn't be averse to some kisses and cuddles." Blaine cocks his head and bats his eyelashes. "I just miss being close to you."

"Me too," Kurt says, and he wonders. "But by things not functioning, you mean...?"

"The painkillers have some, uh, sexual side effects if you're on them a while," Blaine explains. "They're temporary, but, I've been taking them long enough that it's starting to affect stuff." Blaine
shrugs, a tinge of color rising on his cheeks.

"So you can't...?"

"I can't get an erection," Blaine says. "At least not a full one. I only got half way there yesterday trying to jerk off."

Kurt supposes Blaine has read the literature if he knows this is a side-effect. Clearly there's no prohibition about trying to have an orgasm, but whether it's actually possible? "No orgams either, then?" Kurt asks.

Blaine looks down, clearly embarrassed, Kurt squeezes his hand. "I don't know. I got bored and sleepy and ended up stopping," Blaine says.

"Well, that's depressing," Kurt says.

"But, like I said. It's temporary. I'll be fine once they're out of my system."

"It's okay," Kurt says. "We can definitely snuggle. Want me to light the fire in the family room? Or would you rather go upstairs?"

"I am so sick of my bedroom. Can we hang out in the family room?"

"Of course," Kurt says. "I'll get you settled, finish up in here, and then we can goof off a bit, okay?"

"Okay," Blaine agrees.

~

Later, with the dishes done, Blaine freshly medicated and eyedropped, and the gas fire a cozy blaze, Kurt is lying back on the wide micro-suede sofa in the family room with Blaine draped over him, stretched out between his legs. Blaine's hands are in his hair massaging his scalp and Blaine's tongue is making a slow, thorough circuit of his mouth. Kurt's buzzing with arousal, growing too hot in his clothes. He's perfectly hard and pressed up tight and wonderful against Blaine's thigh, but Kurt can tell, Blaine's not hard at all, not even partially. But it's not stopping Blaine from rocking down against Kurt.

The rhythmic, easy shift of Blaine's weight against him is making Kurt flush fresh and tingle all over. It doesn't seem fair, for him to be feeling so warm and blissful, the building of his desire so heady and good after so long without, if Blaine is not with him. He thinks about Blaine's cock, soft in his pants, neglected. Blaine's been clear headed enough to do Math homework, so Kurt decides it's okay to ask. He slips his mouth to the side, asks Blaine, "Hey, can I try something, baby?"

"Something?" Blaine asks before dragging his open mouth along Kurt's jaw to his earlobe.

Kurt shudders as Blaine's clever tongue flicks up behind his ear. "I want to blow you," Kurt says.

Blaine lifts his head. "Kurt, I'm not sure that'll be terribly successful."

"I know, but I want to try—to make you feel good, too."

With a grimace, Blaine glances away. "It's just, Kurt. It's kind of embarrassing."

"Blaine," Kurt soothes, petting down the backs of Blaine's upper arms, over the hard tension of his triceps. "I was at The Gap Attack, too. Remember?"
Blaine laughs and looks down. "Fair point," he says.

"So may I suck your cock?" Kurt asks, bringing one hand to nudge up under Blaine's chin with his fingertips, to bring his head up so their eyes can meet. He gives Blaine his brightest smile. "Pretty please?"

"That's really not a question I want to say no to," Blaine says, a grin tugging at the corners of his mouth.

"Then don't." Kurt tips Blaine's chin up farther, leans up to suck an open mouthed kiss to his throat.

"All right, all right," Blaine says breathlessly, relenting with a full body shiver. "Just. Please don't be disappointed if nothing much happens, okay?"

Kurt says, "I promise, I won't be."

He gets Blaine seated, leaning back into the pillows with his ass near the edge of the sofa, his feet on the floor with Kurt kneeling between his legs. "Are you comfortable enough?" Kurt asks, running his palms up Blaine's thighs to where they meet his torso. Blaine looks so good like this, relaxed into the soft steel blue of the upholstery—it's still one of his best colours, brings out the warmth of his skin and his eyes, the dark gloss of his freshly tousled hair, the well kissed stain of his lips.

"I guess," Blaine says. He still looks uncertain, and Kurt wants to make it so much better, wants to soothe Blaine's nerves, make him feel amazing.

"You still want to know what my secret ingredient is?" he asks.

"Yes," Kurt says. He brings his hands to Blaine's waistband, unties the cord, and tugs the waistband down. Blaine lifts his hips so Kurt can slide both the sweatpants and Blaine's briefs down his legs, and off, along with his socks. Kurt doesn't let his gaze linger between Blaine's legs to look at Blaine's cock, soft and (relative to what Kurt's used to) small, curved gently against his balls. Instead he looks up at Blaine's face and says earnestly, with the lilt of song in his voice, "'I could show you in a word, if I wanted to'." It's a line from Roxy Music's "To Turn You On"; it's among the Bryan Ferry songs Blaine put on their sex playlist. It's corny, maybe, quoting lyrics at Blaine as if it's love poetry (and maybe it is, but Kurt doesn't think of himself as that sort of romantic; he's not much of a poet, prefers action to fanciful words), but Kurt respects how Blaine is exposing himself to Kurt. So Kurt will do his best to honor that.

"Kurt?" Blaine asks, and the tension of his gaze softens.

"Love," Kurt says simply. "It's love."

"Kurt," Blaine says again, smiling fondly and reaching a hand down.

Kurt takes it and squeezes. "Let me show you, honey."

Blaine nods, and Kurt doesn't let go of his hand as he kneels up and leans forward, using his free hand to cup over Blaine's balls and cock loosely, to feel their warmth. "Okay?" he asks Blaine.

"Yes," Blaine whispers.

Blood pulses beneath Kurt's fingers, which is definitely more than nothing, so Kurt is emboldened to press more firmly and shift his hand in a slow, gentle circle. Erections have never been elusive for
him before, not Blaine's, not his own, so he's really not sure how to do this, but he feels another hot pulse beneath his hand, feels a tentative swelling of Blaine's cock, and though it's feeble, Kurt is encouraged. He hears Blaine take a shaky breath.

"Does it feel good?" Kurt asks.

"Yeah. It's not exactly like it's supposed to be, but it feels good."

Kurt smiles up at Blaine before he lowers his head, shifting his hand lower to cradle Blaine's balls while he brushes his parted, lips up the curved length of Blaine's cock to the shy head. It stirs beneath that scant contact, and Blaine's fingers tighten around Kurt's. Kurt tries licking, his tongue broad and lax, gentle.

"Mmm," Blaine says; it's a noncommittal sort of sound, but Kurt feels some of the tension leave Blaine's body as he slumps back into the cushions behind him. Around Kurt's fingers his grip loosens, and Kurt is able to pull his hand free so he can stroke up Blaine's thigh, turning his hand in to press Blaine's leg aside, allowing Kurt space to slip his thumb behind Blaine's balls to stroke the velveteen soft skin there, and back farther where Blaine is so smooth and sensitive.

It's not what Kurt is used to, Blaine's response. He's not opening his legs eagerly to invite Kurt's attention in the manner a touch like this would usually inspire. But that's all right. Kurt's got no particular goal in mind but Blaine's feeling good. As it is, he's licked enough blood back into Blaine's cock, that its thickened and lengthened sufficiently for Kurt to wrap one hand around it and lift it up to take the head into his mouth. From beneath his eyelashes, he looks up at Blaine as he sucks softly. And Blaine looks back at him, his expression loose, open, and a little amazed.

And, god, Kurt loves this: the simplicity of Blaine's cock in his mouth, even imperfect and quiet. Nothing's desperate. It's comforting somehow, just being close like this would usually inspire. But that's all right. Kurt's got no particular goal in mind but Blaine's feeling good. As it is, he's licked enough blood back into Blaine's cock, that its thickened and lengthened sufficiently for Kurt to wrap one hand around it and lift it up to take the head into his mouth. From beneath his eyelashes, he looks up at Blaine as he sucks softly. And Blaine looks back at him, his expression loose, open, and a little amazed.

"That's, uh," Blaine says, drawing Kurt back from the trance he's slipping into, "as good as it's going to get, Kurt."

Kurt's eyes flutter open, and Kurt blinks to clear away the blur in his vision. He lets Blaine's cock slide from his lips, gives it a parting kiss. Smiles. "It's fine, Blaine," Kurt says. "Just try to relax, okay? And let me take care of you."

Back into his mouth Kurt takes Blaine, deeper this time, nearly as deep as Kurt can, and he realizes that with Blaine only half-hard he's taken nearly all of his cock without risking gagging. And that is twisting hot in Kurt's gut, being able to do this at all, even if it's maybe cheating since Blaine's cock isn't fully present. He sighs a breath out through his nose, and then takes a deep one in, sucks a long pull over Blaine's length, feels his pulse throb hard against his tongue, takes him all the way, hears Blaine gasp a short, surprised, "Ah!"

And then his hands are in Kurt's hair, tugging gently, and Blaine is saying, "Kurt, you really don't have to keep doing this," and, "I don't think I can come."

But Kurt can feel how Blaine is slowly coming to life within his mouth, thinks he can draw more pleasure out of Blaine even if it doesn't result in an orgasm, so he pushes forward, sucks more, slides back a little, moans around Blaine's cock, feeling and tasting and loving it.
"Please, Kurt," Blaine says. "Can you stop for a minute?"

Kurt pulls off, replaces his mouth with his hand, squeezing firmly. "I really don't mind," Kurt says. "I like being able to do this for you."

"No, Kurt. I know, it's just, I don't think I can, and it's frustrating."

"You don't have to, honey, there's no pressure, I'm not disappointed," Kurt says, opening his hand and licking right up the length cradled in his hand, curling against Blaine's cockhead and off to speak, "I just want you to feel good."

"Kurt," Blaine says in a tone Kurt doesn't recognize, it's tender, but... And then Blaine says, more softly. Quietly. "Pinochle."

Kurt stops. He releases Blaine, removes his hands from Blaine's genitals to the relative neutrality of Blaine's thighs. "All right," Kurt says, sitting back on his heels. They talked about this—god—months ago. And this is the reason for that word, for Kurt to be able to push Blaine, and for Blaine to still have a way to let him know when it's too much or too far. Kurt always imagined they'd be doing something more than what they're doing right now. Something kinkier or edgier or dirtier. He didn't think it would be like this. And now that it is like this, Kurt isn't sure if he's meant to apologize or what. He decides an unnecessary apology is preferable to none. "I'm sorry, Blaine," he says and adds, "Thank you for telling me." He's afraid to look up straight away, to see how Blaine is looking at him.

"No," Blaine says, puts his hands over Kurt's and sits up. "Please don't apologize. You didn't do anything wrong, I just." Blaine sighs heavily, and now Kurt looks up at him.

"Just what?" Kurt asks, hating how thin his voice sounds.

"Come up here with me," Blaine says tangling his fingers with Kurt's and tugging.

Kurt crawls up onto the couch beside Blaine, brings Blaine's sweatpants up to drape over his lap so Blaine won't feel so naked. "What is it?" Kurt presses, lifting his arm up for Blaine to nestle into his side.

"I feel so useless, Kurt, and when you're doing that to me? I want to love it, I want to go crazy with how much I love it. I want to get lost in it and lost in you and feel so hot and desperate for it, that all I can do is take it until I can't do anything but come for you." Blaine pauses, looks up at Kurt as if uncertain. "Does that make sense?"

Kurt hadn't thought of it that way, had thought it was about Blaine feeling too much needless performance pressure, but when it's about your own expectations of yourself, yeah. Kurt can relate. "Yes. I think so."

"It does?"

"Yeah. I mean, I want you to feel good, Blaine. That's pretty much the whole point. I was afraid you weren't letting yourself enjoy it because you were worried about disappointing me. I didn't want you to feel bad at all, about anything, because how I feel for you isn't defined by how hard your cock gets.

"But I get it," Kurt says, "When you're not feeling the way you want to within yourself? That's different, and it's okay." He takes Blaine's hand and squeezes. "I want you to know, though, that I really loved doing that for you."
"I know," Blaine says. "But when I'm like this and things aren't working? I don't know. It's not the same." Blaine curls his fingers around Kurt's.

"Still," Kurt says. "I wanted tonight to be good for you."

"Hey, don't talk like it's over. I have—" Blaine glances at the clock on the DVD player. "—another two hours before it's time for the sleeping pills. So stop looking worried and kiss me, Kurt."

Kurt does. He pushes Blaine back into the corner of the sofa, covers Blaine with himself, lets his weight press Blaine deeper into the cushions. Blaine sighs into his mouth, reaches down to untuck the back of Kurt's shirt, and slides his hands, warm and broad, up Kurt's back.

As they kiss, soft and deep and full of lush breaths, Kurt traces Blaine's face with featherlight fingertips. Traces Blaine's jaw and cheek, the thin elastic band of the eyepatch to where it disappears into Blaine's hair, then back over the patch itself to Blaine's eyebrows, where he rubs against the tension he finds there. But then he leaves off caressing, just holds Blaine's face between his splayed hands as he reaches even deeper into the kiss. Blaine is so open for him, arching his neck and pressing up into the kisses with tiny, hungry whimpers; needy and yielding, warm and succulent; it's such a generous offering.

It's so much like it was earlier in their relationship, when the most erotic thing they did were these deep, long kisses. At the time Kurt didn't fully appreciate it, how much kissing like this was preparation for sex, not just a pale proxy for it. It was a way to practice for the shocking vulnerability of sharing yourself even more profoundly. And it's with that realization that Kurt is curling his tongue alongside Blaine's as he curls his spine down, pressing his erection against Blaine's hip to temper the building ache of it. But its not soothing the way it used to seem, before they started having sex, when lingering in a state of frustrated erotic agony was its own reward. It just makes Kurt want more, and he shouldn't right now.

With a groan he drags his mouth away from Blaine's, kisses down his neck, scoots lower, and shifts his hips until his cock is in the gap between Blaine's thighs where there's less pressure, less friction, and Kurt can, maybe, cool off a little, reorient himself. Blaine's hands flex against his shoulders, his fingertips dig in, and Kurt feels the bite of his short nails.

"Kurt?" Blaine asks, scratchy and faint, with scarce voice.

"Hmm?" Kurt raises his head so he can see Blaine's face.

Blaine asks, a little shyly, "Is there anything I can do to help you get off?"

Kurt shakes his head. "No, I'm good like this," he says, because he can be and he will be. "I'll take care of myself later."

"Later, huh?" Blaine, says, and Kurt sees the shift in Blaine's eye, sees how his pupil expands as Blaine's demeanor transitions from shy to seductive. "Why not now? Maybe? You could let me watch you."

"Blaine?" Kurt draws back, looks at Blaine, intrigued. "Is that something you want? To watch me?"

Blaine gives a one shouldered shrug. "It's something I've been thinking about a lot this week, since we haven't been doing stuff together. I like to try to imagine what you're doing on your own, for yourself." Blaine's blush darkens, and he glances away, his voice softer. "It's what I've been thinking about when I masturbate."

Huh. That's hot, Blaine thinking about Kurt jerking off while Blaine does himself. "So it's like a
fantasy?" Kurt asks.

"It is a fantasy, yeah."

In the abstract, Kurt's known Blaine fantasizes about him, but they haven't really talked about it before, not explicitly. Kurt is surprised by the intensity of his curiosity, to know the details of how Blaine fantasizes about him. "So how does it go? If you don't mind me asking." Kurt shifts to his side next to Blaine, gives him space to gather himself. Doesn't want him feeling crowded or pressured.

"I don't mind," Blaine says, but he presses his lips together nervously for a moment before he speaks again, looking off into the room, not at Kurt. "The way I like to imagine it, at least the way I find most...helpful to my purposes is, basically—" Blaine flicks his gaze back to Kurt's and holds it. "I'm watching you, and you don't know I'm there. So you think you're alone. You're not performing for me or caring about me, you're just taking your time with yourself, for yourself. Just to feel good."

"Oh," Kurt says, because that's really hot. Kurt imagines it, Blaine watching him while he lets himself go. Blaine enjoying it, not being dismayed, but getting off on it.

"I know it sounds creepy, but I don't mean it like that. I'd just really like to know how you touch yourself when you're alone."

"It's not creepy," Kurt says. "It's. Blaine. It's hot. But I, um—" Kurt realizes that for all the sex they've had, he's never actually touched himself in front of Blaine, not like that, not for his own pleasure. But he's seen Blaine jerk himself off. He loves watching Blaine get off by his own hand. It's fair that Blaine would want to see him that way, too. "So would you like me to touch myself for you now? While you watch me?"

Blaine takes a breath. "If you were okay with it, I'd really like to watch you." Blaine smiles hesitantly. "It might even help me out with my problem," Blaine says, and Kurt sees how Blaine's blush is spreading to his ears, his neck. He doubts that it's all embarrassment; there's arousal mixed in there, too. Maybe it would help Blaine.

"Do you want me to do it here, lying next to you?" Kurt gestures at them. "Or do you want to, like, act out your fantasy? Hide behind the door and have me pretend I don't know you're there, or something?" Kurt chews on his lip, uncertain he can act like he does alone while knowing he has Blaine as an audience.

Blaine looks around the room thoughtfully. "We don't have to act it out like that, but I have an idea," Blaine says. "If you wanted to lie on a blanket in front of the fire, I can turn this lamp off and stay here, where you can't see me very well, but I'll be able to see you in the firelight."

Kurt imagines it. The lighting would be flattering to his skin, and he'd be warm enough. And Blaine wouldn't be so close that he would feel too self-conscious, but he'd still know Blaine was there. "That could work," Kurt says.

"And I was thinking, maybe you could wear headphones and listen to music while you're doing it, and close your eyes to make you feel more uninhibited?" Blaine shrugs. "At least when I fantasize about you. Sometimes that's how I imagine you. You're lost in the music and your touch and kind of oblivious to everything else."

Blaine really has been thinking about this, Kurt realizes with a sudden warm flush. And with headphones, the music would be like an auditory curtain, Kurt thinks. Something to be shrouded in while not actually being hidden at all from Blaine's view. It makes sense, and Kurt thinks he would
feel less inhibited that way. "We can do it that way."

"You don't have to," Blaine says. "It's kind of a weird thing to ask for."

"It's not weird," Kurt says. "I like to listen to music when I jerk off sometimes, so I'll do it."

Kurt stands before the fire and removes his sweater, shirt and undershirt, folds them neatly and sets them on one of the armchairs near the fire. Then, the skin of his back prickling with the awareness of Blaine's scrutiny, he attends to the music situation. The stereo in the room is Blaine's father's. It's large and older, all matte black and curved edged components stacked six high—predating the advent of .mp3's—and it has so many buttons. It's not that complex to work out though, and soon Kurt has it hooked up to his iPod and set to play through both the surround speakers (so Blaine gets the benefit of the soundtrack, too) and the headphones. Kurt scrolls through his playlists for the one Blaine put together for their first time, the one Kurt thinks of as their sex playlist. He sets the iPod to shuffle, finds the song he wants to start with, dons the bulky DJ headphones plugged into the stereo, and presses 'play'.

He doesn't look back at Blaine or do anything to acknowledge his presence as the throbbing hook of Roxy Music's "Slave to Love" pumps into his ears. It's one of Blaine's favorites and something Kurt has listened to when he's wanted to think about Blaine while he masturbates, so it seems like a good place to start. Kurt just stands for a few moments, eyes closed, the fire hot before him, Blaine patient behind him, listening, centering himself in the idea of Blaine's fantasy.

When the singing starts, Ferry's otherworldly voice twisting up so much complex erotic longing so effortlessly, Kurt rolls his shoulders back and reaches for his belt.

"...I'll be waiting, at the usual place, where the tired and weary go, when there's no escape..."

He tries to shake the sense of being watched, tries to undo his pants and slide them down and off without fanfare—it's not like he hasn't taken his pants off in front of Blaine before—but he finds himself doing it slowly, dragging it out, pacing himself with the music. Feels it catch in his blood, making him bold enough to linger over undressing. He brushes his palms over his thighs, his hips, and his belly before taking the waistband of his briefs and bending as he pulls them down and steps out of them. He kicks them aside and turns to the side, offering Blaine his profile as he looks down at himself and brings a hand to his cock. His fingers are so pale against the flushed column of it, which isn't something he usually notices, but he's noticing it now, wondering if the contrast is sexy to Blaine.

"...We're the restless hearted, not the chained and bound..."

He hesitates then, for he doesn't typically jerk off while standing, unless he's in the shower. So this is wrong, but he doesn't want to be awkward and unsexy. He needs to stop thinking, is what he needs to do. Kurt lets go of his erection and lowers himself to his knees, splays them wide apart and closes his eyes. Perhaps if he just tries to reenact a previous time he's jerked off, he can make it seem more natural. But the last time he got himself off was after his sex dream about Mr. Martinez. And though the memory of it is seared into his brain, he's not sure he wants to replicate it in exact detail. He's not going to finger fuck himself in front of Blaine, not like he had that night, clumsy and shaking with his desperate desire and fumbling with his own body, trying to figure out how to make himself feel it the way he's dreamed of or the way the boys in the porn seem to. Or the way Blaine does, the way that makes Blaine beg for it.

"...Though your world is changing, I will stay the same..."
He had figured it out, and it had been revelatory. He had come ferociously hard with two fingers in his ass while his other hand had barely closed around his cock. The memory of it has Kurt's breath coming fast and shallow, perspiration diffusing across his skin. It may not be something to perform here and now for Blaine, but he can be inspired by it.

Kurt bows his head and doesn't open his eyes, takes his cock in hand, gives it a slow squeezing stroke up to the head, catches the precome on his index finger, drags it back under the head and rubs the slickness into his skin just there, where it's so fantastically good. His exhalation stuttered out, and he sits back on his heels reaching blindly with his other hand for where he set the lube nearby.

He has to let go of his cock again and open his eyes to get the lid off and squeeze some out onto his fingertips. He smears some across the palm of the hand he wraps back around his erection, starts with smooth, slow strokes, from balls to crown, pinching a little over the tip in a way that makes his thigh muscles tremble. His other hand, with the slick fingertips, he takes behind himself, slides down from just below his tailbone to his hole, finds himself, as expected, too tense to push in, but that's fine. He has to take a deep breath to steady himself. Pinches his eyes shut for a moment, then relaxes them.

"...The storm is breaking, or so it seems. We're too young to reason, too grown up to dream..."

Kurt stops thinking. He rubs his slick fingertips against the tension of his anus, strips his hand faster along his cock, feels the disparate sensations fuse so sweetly in his balls to draw them up tight against his body. He's dimly aware of his mouth falling open, of the vibrations coming up from his throat, though he cannot hear the sounds he's making over the pulse of the music in his ears. His knees skid farther apart as his back arches, his head tips back, and his pelvis rolls.

"...I can see your smile..."

Beneath his fingertips, Kurt is loosening, softening; his middle finger catches, pressing into the center as the muscle gives. Kurt doesn't stop himself, doesn't want to deny himself that little bit more touch; he lets his fingertip sink into the close heat, and the friction of it is bliss. But he doesn't press deeper, just rocks against that small touch as he shoves up into his tight fist, fucking it as if it were Blaine's ass, rough and unrelenting. Jerking his hand down his length to meet each thrust of his hips, rocking back onto his fingertip (and it's such a slight thing to be inciting so much feeling), his orgasm closes in on him swift and inescapable. It rushes him, dizzying and hot and—Ah!—perfect. Kurt bows back as he comes, and then succumbs to a barely controlled fall, ends up with his spine arched over his heels, his shoulders meeting the floor, his thighs stretched taut.

"...Slave to love..."

When Kurt comes back to himself, opens his eyes and slides the headphones off with a clatter, he doesn't immediately look back to find Blaine. He feels flayed open, raw, and so very alive, his whole body buzzing with it. He unfolds his legs with a wince and the flops down, boneless, to soak in the afterglow for several long heartbeats. He runs his fingers through the slippery mess on his belly as the burn fades from his muscles. When he rolls his head to the side, from this angle, upon the floor, Kurt can just make out Blaine's head and shoulders over the top of the coffee table. It's too dark to read much of his expression, but the energy in the room is all good. Kurt smiles and blinks slowly, stretching, catlike. Sated and pleased with himself. It's a rush like being on stage. He's almost manic, feeling invincible and strong and sexy and potent. "Hi," he says.


"Blaine?"

"I, uh. I actually. I came too."
"Really?" Kurt remembers how to work his legs, manages to sit up. "That's good, right?"

"Yes, it's good, and it was because of you. I didn't think I could, but god, that was sexy, Kurt. I couldn't not." Blaine flicks the lamp back on, and Kurt sees him still flushed and rumpled, his t-shirt rucked up under his arms, come shining wet on his stomach.

Kurt reaches for the tissue box on the coffee table, wipes himself off before he drips on anything. "So you liked it?" He tosses the box toward Blaine, who misses catching it, but it lands nearby.

"Yes, oh my god. That was the most erotic thing I've ever seen." Blaine cleans off his belly, and bends down to find his underwear.

"Your very own live porn, huh?" Kurt teases with a smile, gathering up the blanket to fold it loosely.

"Did you like doing it?" Blaine asks, pulling on his briefs and then his sweatpants.

Kurt stands on wobbly legs and considers his clothes, but he's feeling too good in his own skin to want to cover up just yet. "Yeah, once I got into it. It was like being on stage."

"So you were performing, it wasn't like it is when you're alone."

"Blaine, I'm me; it's always at least a little bit performance."

Blaine laughs.

"I tried to be inspired by an actual session." Kurt says. He sets the blanket aside on one of the armchairs, and, nude, moves toward Blaine on the sofa. "I mixed it up a bit, added a few embellishments, but it wasn't anything I wouldn't have done for myself at some point."

"Oh, so you... Oh, Kurt. That's hot."

"I'm glad you liked it." Kurt kneels up on the sofa with Blaine and straddles his hips. Lets Blaine look at him.

Blaine rests his hands low upon Kurt's waist. "Can I ask you something?"

"Sure," Kurt says, finger combing Blaine's hair neatly around the band of the eyepatch.

"You were—" Blaine lets out his excess breath in a faint, nervous laugh. Tries again. "You were fingering yourself."

"A little bit," Kurt says. "But that's not a question."

"I know. I know. It's just, I know how you feel about that. Do you do that for yourself often?"

Kurt shakes his head. "No. That was only the second time I've done it."

Blaine's eye widens. "When was the first time?"

"Monday night," Kurt says. He settles his weight back onto Blaine's thighs, and Blaine's hands skid up his ribs, making Kurt break out in goose bumps. He shivers.

"Like two days ago Monday?" Blaine asks, sliding his palms around to Kurt's chest, grazing over his nipples.

Kurt arches into the touch. "Yes."
"And you liked it?" Blaine skirts circles around Kurt's areolae with his thumbs, pressing into his pecs, not quite touching where Kurt is most sensitive.

Kurt nods, biting his lip. His cock gives a twitch of interest. Kurt tries to ignore it.

"So Monday, when you were doing that, what were you thinking about? I mean, why did you decide to try that? From here, you looked pretty inspired."

Kurt looks at Blaine for a long time and considers how to answer. Blaine's hands on him stop, and Kurt recovers some breath and mental acuity.

"You don't have to tell me if you don't want to, Kurt."

"I told you about the night school Spanish teacher, right?" Kurt says seriously; he covers Blaine's hands with his own, pushes them down his hips, holds them there.

"The sexy one?"

"Yes, the sexy one."

"You were thinking about him?" Blaine asks, punctuating the question with a gentle tug. The question is neutral; there's no judgment in Blaine's tone, merely curiosity.

"Sort of," Kurt says. "I had a particularly vivid dream about him. I woke up really close to coming, and I could still feel it."

"So in your dream he was...?"

"He was fucking me," Kurt says, and it's oddly easy to say. There's no backwash of shame or humiliation as he says it.

"Oh. And you liked it?"

Kurt rolls his eyes. "What do you think?"

"I think I might be jealous," Blaine says, but it's affectionate and teasing.

"You can't hold me accountable for my subconscious," Kurt says.

"So were you thinking about him fucking you when you fingered yourself the first time?"

Kurt shakes his head. "I was thinking about you. I imagined you were there talking to me, talking me through it, so I wasn't scared. I was thinking about you, Blaine."

"Oh," Blaine says, a warm, pleased smile spreading his lips wide, then he sits forward and leans up into Kurt and kisses him, open mouthed and pulling Kurt down deep, demanding and surrendering at the same time. When he breaks the kiss, he tips his forehead against Kurt's temple and says in a low voice. "If you ever want me to touch you like that, please tell me, Kurt, and I will. Happily."

"I know," Kurt says. "And I promise I will. Ask you. If I can ever actually get there." He's not sure why, but there's still a difference in his mind between touching himself like that and having it done to him. Control maybe.

Blaine shakes his head with a smile. "There's no there to get, Kurt. There's just here, wherever we already are." Blaine leans back against the back of the sofa, pulling Kurt with him to rest against his chest.
"Blaine, that's obvious."

"No, what I mean, Kurt, is that, to me, sex isn't a destination, it's a process. It's whatever we choose to share with each other in any given moment. You shouldn't feel like you're on a schedule, or ticking off a list, rounding bases or whatever, like there's a logical, linear progression that leads to some goal, and then you've 'got there'. There's no rules for how we choose to love each other."

"And you say you're bad at romance," Kurt says dryly. "You're a regular guru."

Blaine laughs and strokes Kurt's hair. "I'm really not. This is all new to me too, you know."

"Yeah, but you've watched more porn, therefore I bow to your relative expertise."

"Because porn is the benchmark of all good romance?" Blaine says and laughs harder, Kurt joins him. It's ridiculous.

After a while the laughter fades and Kurt shifts up to kiss Blaine, sweet and lingering. He eases back with smile. "So, do you have any other fantasies you want to tell me about? For later?" Kurt asks.

"There are a few I could share. They're not all realistic or practical," Blaine says. "How about you?"

"Mmm, if we're sharing, then yes. I've had a few ideas, things I'd like to try with you."

"Let's do them all," Blaine says.

Kurt laughs. "You don't even know what they are!"

"Then tell me, Kurt. Tell me your fantasies."

"Okay," Kurt says, and he does tell Blaine. At least some of them. And Blaine tells him some of his, and they forget Blaine's sleeping pills because they're too caught up sharing their private desires with hushed voices, pink cheeks, and shy glances. They talk with quiet laughter, gentle smiles, and tender touches. It's new and freshly intimate, like they're carefully constructing their own hidden world of secret desires and daydreams, populating it with its own characters and stories, creating an erotic landscape esoteric and precious. It's not until Blaine's phone alarm goes off to 'wake' him for his midnight dose of painkillers that either of them realizes the time.

~*~

Kurt finds himself alone Friday afternoon. He lies on his bed in a bizarre state of bewilderment. It's been so long since he's been on his own, he's forgotten how to do it. Which is almost funny, since growing up an only child, he's been accustomed to a lot of alone time, thrived on it, craved it. He can't remember the last time he was alone like this, in an empty house with no one waiting for him or needing him or interrupting him. Tears prickle up behind his eyes, and it's strange, because he doesn't feel sad at all. He's just tired, sort of wrung out, and weirdly, amorphously relieved.

It feels good, he realizes. Kurt sighs, relaxes, and closes his eyes.

He doesn't even have Blaine to call or visit. Blaine is still in Columbus with his parents for his surgery, and Kurt won't know how that's gone until this evening. He misses Blaine, and he decides that's not a bad thing, to miss Blaine like this, because it is a measure of how he feels for Blaine. He doesn't let himself worry in the absence of information. Kurt just lets himself experience, uncritically, the pang of missing something beloved that will be returned to him soon enough.

So Kurt contemplates what he would most like to do with himself, now that he is alone with nothing
in particular he's supposed to be doing, no obligations or expectations to meet.

Nap. He thinks he'd most like to nap.

That desire, Kurt rejects. He gets so little time like this; he doesn't want to waste it by being unconscious. Cooking, sewing, studying, Kurt all rejects on the grounds of being entirely too constructive. There's a book on his bedside table he hasn't picked up in weeks. He considers it, reaches down, brushes the light coating of dust from the cover and finds his place. As he reads, the text feels stale and remote, and he can't recall precisely what had been going on with the plot or the characters, so he sets it aside. He doesn't feel like starting over. Kurt sighs. Maybe he needs a new project, except he really doesn't. It's too easy to overcommit himself when he starts feeling restless. He needs to be carving himself space to prepare for the NYADA audition.

That thought leads Kurt to memories of New York. He rolls over and gets to his feet, grabs his scrapbook of the Nationals trip and flops back down on his bed. He pulls out the map tucked into the front cover and sets it beside him as he flips through the photographs, ticket stubs, receipts, business cards, and brochures. Rachel has decorated the page of mementos of the Gershwin theater with a flurry of her trademark gold stars. Kurt brushes over them with his fingertips and remembers all the wonderful things they shared that trip. And he remembers how the city smelled: of asphalt, concrete, and automobiles. Dirtier than Kurt had expected, but in a good way. The dirt made it real, brought solidity to his dream. He wants to go so badly, but he has to get there first.

Which means he needs to find the perfect audition song. He's narrowed it down to "Music of the Night" or "Defying Gravity", but he's worried he's missing something, the perfect song for him that he doesn't even know exists yet. He drags his laptop over, closes the scrapbook and pushes it aside.

Surfing Youtube leads him through several videos of songs he tries to imagine himself performing. There are so many he loves, but so many he shouldn't sing because they'll either send the NYADA auditor into hysterics if he tries to pass for a desirable romantic lead, or they'll utterly fail to portray him as leading man material altogether. There aren't many songs for unicorns. He pauses, considering an opera piece from Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*. The lead is for an *haute-contre*, but, even though he thinks he could, theoretically, sing it, his voice is really not developed enough for full on opera. A piece from *Phantom* will be pushing him hard enough in that direction, and Kurt knows he's going to have a lot of practice ahead of him to do Michael Crawford's performance justice. He gives Orpheus a pass.

He clicks on the video of Hugh Jackman at the Tony awards performing "Not the Boy Next Door". He's seen it before. Watched it too many times, really, but he loves it, the confidence and exuberance of it (and Hugh does look amazing in those gold pants). Kurt envies him the performance, the raw and unabashed sexuality of it. He wishes he could pull that off: sexy and confident. But the only time he feels sexy in a way anyone else can see it or appreciate it, is when he's with Blaine, and Blaine's not going to be the one judging him. He's not going to make them laugh at him again.

With a sigh, Kurt clicks back to "Music of the Night". Sexy may still be out of his reach, but he can be the tortured, misunderstood artist. He can play the monster.

Kurt closes his laptop, pushes it aside, and lies back down. Thinking about his audition shouldn't be so depressing. So he's not going to do that. He's going to think about something good. Valentine's Day.

Blaine's sure to be better by then, so Kurt won't need to cancel the hotel reservation he's made. Since their conversation Wednesday night, Kurt's been thinking more and more about what he wants to do with Blaine when he finally gets him alone again and in good health. They haven't fucked since before Christmas, and Kurt has missed it. Of all the variations on sex with Blaine he's enjoyed,
there's something fundamental about fucking. Kurt doesn't want to try to deconstruct it too much; he just really loves fucking Blaine. Finds himself missing it more and more as he anticipates making use of the fantasies Blaine has confessed to him: Blaine wants to be tied up again. Wants to be teased and talked to and toyed with and made to wait. Loves to be surprised. Wants to be fucked right through one orgasm and into another (Kurt's not confident he has the stamina for that), and the fairy tale Blaine finds most erotic is *Cupid and Psyche*. Blaine said he never could shake the image of Psyche, rejected by so many but beloved above all—but unbeknownst to her—by Cupid, lying so alone, isolated in nearly every way she could be, in the dark, high bedroom of the mountaintop palace, waiting for her mysterious, anonymous husband to come make love to her.

*Sleeping Beauty* was Kurt's pick for most erotic fairy tale, not only because he's wondered if it took more than a kiss to wake her; but also because Kurt finds the story relevant to the ways in which a person can become so overwhelmed by their life they may as well be asleep. It takes a brave and persistent sort of love to come to their rescue, to fight off the dragons and thorny vines to wake them up and save them from shambling through life with a fearful, deadened heart.

"And that's erotic to you?" Blaine had asked him.

"Yes," Kurt answered. "Because you were that person for me," he said.

Blaine had smiled and kissed him and said, "Then we saved each other, Kurt." There'd been more kissing after that.

Blaine had also endorsed Kurt's fantasies. Said Kurt coming on his face would be hot (Kurt solemnly promised not to get any in his eyes), and if Kurt wanted to try fucking him without a condom, they could do that. Wasn't now the time for that? When they'd only been with each other?

And that, the idea of there being other people than each other, had led to the revelation of even more private fantasies. Blaine had told Kurt, with his voice breaking over the words, so vulnerable, that he liked the idea of a threesome. He couldn't imagine it in reality, though. Didn't know what kind of friendship they would require with any hypothetical third person, because he wouldn't want to do it with some random hookup, and they'd all have to want it.

Kurt had held him close and told him it was okay, and, while Kurt—torrid fantasies of Mr. Martinez aside—couldn't conceive of actually wanting to be intimate with someone other than Blaine, he would stay open to the possibility of sharing what they had with the right friend. Then, after a pause, Blaine had teasingly asked Kurt, "What about Taylor Lautner?" Kurt had scoffed, but Blaine had pressed him, asked if, given the opportunity in reality, Kurt would have sex with him. Kurt avoided answering by asking Blaine how he would feel about that. It would be fine, Blaine said, so long as he got to watch. At which point Kurt stammered and blushed and had to look away, before reminding Blaine that the likelihood of Kurt ever finding himself in such a situation was less than his winning the lottery without a ticket.

Kurt laughs softly to himself as he breaks free of the memory. A low growl comes from his stomach. He has a lot of ideas for Valentine's Day, but first he needs a snack.
Kurt doesn't really know what to do with a sad straight boy. But he finds himself at home Thursday afternoon with a heartbroken Sam who seems to require comfort and companionship, and Kurt is the only one home to provide it. His fingers itch with the urge to text Mercedes, demand why she had to break up with Sam the day before Valentine's Day, because that's just cruel. He doesn't though, because he knows this hasn't been easy for her. Is aware she's disappointed herself for hurting Shane and for hurting Sam. It wouldn't have improved the situation to have strung either of them along through the holiday, but Kurt has been quietly rooting for Sam, thought she would have chosen him. If it had been his decision to make, he would have picked Sam, but it was never his place to offer her that advice.

So he finds himself in the kitchen with Sam who sits at the island while Kurt makes him tea. Tea, Kurt's sure, is a universal medium of comfort, and cinnamon nutmeg tea with dark brown sugar and a splash of whole milk, is supreme among them for such comforting purposes. He makes one for himself, too. Figures he can use a little comfort of his own. He hasn't seen Blaine all week, and while the cards and gifts and gorilla-grams are sweet (he's set up a little shrine of them on his dresser to moon over), he misses him terribly—and worries. There have been complications. Kurt doesn't understand the finer points of the medical jargon, but he understands that Blaine has had to travel to Virginia for a second opinion and a second surgery. He was meant to be home yesterday, but snowstorms close airports, and Kurt hasn't heard anything more today. He hasn't canceled the hotel for tomorrow night yet.

Kurt slides one steaming mug across the island toward Sam. "Are you hungry at all?" Kurt asks. "I could make you a sandwich. Or cookies...?" Sam never eats cookies, but Kurt offers anyway. Desperate times call for desperate measures, or something like that.

"No, thanks," Sam says, curling his fingers around the mug handle and smiling gratefully at Kurt.

That leaves Kurt awkwardly idle and uncertain. He stands opposite Sam and contemplates his own mug of tea. Wonders what he would want Sam to say to him if their positions were somehow reversed. It's hard to imagine it. "I'm sorry," he says at last.

"Did you know?" Sam asks him. "That she was going to do this?"

Kurt raises his eyebrows. "No."

"But you guys talk, hang out..."

"She kept it to herself," Kurt says, and it stings a little. Once, she would have told him, asked his advice. But they don't really hang out or talk as much as they used to. Kurt's not been privy to most of what's been going on with Mercedes since... He's not sure he can pinpoint it, but it's been a while. She was especially remote after she started dating Shane, almost like she was making a point of not needing her old friends, since, shortly after Shane, she left New Directions. And though she's been back for a while now, it's been slow getting back to normal with her.

Sam nods, presses his lips together.

"I really thought she'd choose you," Kurt offers. "I never understood what the appeal of Shane was to her."

"He wasn't anything like you," Sam says. "That was part of it, anyway."
Kurt blinks. "What?" Kurt asks, because that doesn't make any sense. If that were her criterion, she'd have been better off dating Rick "the Stick".

"You don't think it's been hard for her, trying to find someone to measure up to the standard you set?"

Kurt feels abruptly light-headed. "I have no idea what you're talking about," he says. "We were never..." Nothing more comes out after that. Kurt is flummoxed.

"But she was."

"She was...?"

"It's hard for a girl to get over her first love. Every guy after that gets compared to him."

Kurt stares at Sam. Wonders if he's speaking Na'vi. "How do you even know this?"

"Because I've spent a lot of time with her. Talking."

"She loves you," Kurt says, insists, because it's not possible that she ever felt like that about him. "Whether she chose you today or not, she loves you, Sam. You heard the song."

"Yeah, but she loved you first," Sam says.

Kurt casts his mind back over the time since he's known Mercedes. Surely she would have said something to him. He would have known. But he remembers her proudly insisting she was fine on her own, didn't need a man. She was so fiercely independent, which was why Shane didn't make much sense.

But then Kurt also remembers her jealously over his friendship with Blaine. And all the songs about unrequited or painful love. Oh. Oh.

"Oh," he says.

"You didn't know?" Sam asks him, and Kurt realizes that Sam may have accidentally betrayed a confidence. This isn't something Kurt is meant to know. He can't bring himself to chastise Sam, though. Not today.

"I had no idea. I mean, why would she? I'm not exactly boyfriend material for her." Kurt feels terrible in some strange unspecific way, like he just got transported to an alternate dimension via some subspace anomaly Sam would be able to explain to him. "She shouldn't have—" he wants to say 'wasted', but that's too harsh; love isn't a waste. "—felt that way about me."

"That's not how it works, dude," Sam says. "It's not about how we should feel."

Kurt looks down, stares at the grain of the butcher block. "No, I guess not." It's not like Finn's being straight made Kurt like him less. If only it were that easy. He fervently hopes that, in his ignorance, he never hurt Mercedes for her feelings. "I'm sorry," Kurt says, but this time he's not exactly sure what he's apologizing for, just that he feels obliged to, and that he is, non-specifically, sorry.

Sam shrugs. "It's fine."

Kurt gives him a wary look. "Aren't I meant to be trying to console you? Not doing—" Kurt gestures between them. "—whatever this is."

Sam smiles, not altogether happily. He says, "I'll be fine. It hurts, yeah, but I figure, we're still
friends, right? If I keep being her friend, let her know I'm there for her, to support her, always, she'll come around."

"I think," Kurt says slowly, cautious of offering any romantic advice of his own. "Friendship is both a good place to start and a good place to end up."

"Yeah," Sam says, and he doesn't look all that sad anymore. Kurt supposes he has contributed to cheering Sam up in some manner, just none that would have occurred to him on his own. But he has another idea, one to distract, because he doesn't want to dwell on either missing Blaine or Mercedes past unrequited feelings for him, and Sam never says no to science fiction.

"So, do you want to pick up where we left off with that Star Trek marathon?" Kurt asks.

~*~

He's not proud of himself, but Kurt thinks he might throw up. The glass door of Breadstix swings closed behind the broad shoulders of David Karofsky, and Kurt's not a bit relieved, but he does his best to rally. He turns a sharp glare to the troglodyte named Nick, who's still got an obnoxious fucking leer on his face and is now directing it at Kurt. Karma's a bitch, but no one deserves this guy, and anger is a good antidote for nausea. The guy opens his mouth to say something to Kurt, and Kurt sees by the mocking glint in his eye exactly what that's going to be. Kurt doesn't give him a chance; he cuts him off: "I see they breed the morons extra large on your side of town," Kurt snaps, and turns on his heel to return to his table.

His pulse is hammering in his ears, and his palms are clammy as he sits, but he lets none of it show. He pulls out his phone, and his hands are shaking so badly, he can't disguise it, so he just sets it down on the table and stares at it. There are no new text notifications. Kurt slides his glass near enough he can take a sip through the straw. He hears a footstep. He's mustering his most fierce retorts when his waitress steps into view and asks if he'd like anything else. Her smile is kind. He relaxes, returns her smile feebly, and asks for a decaf coffee. And a slice of New York cheesecake.

While he waits, he tries not to think, tries not to feel. But he can't stop himself from looking at his last text from Blaine.

From Blaine: "I don't know if I'll make it tonight, but I'll try my best. I love you, always. Happy Valentine's Day."

Right. So Blaine didn't make it. And none of those cards or trinkets were from Blaine. And oh, god, that had been Karosfky at school during lunch when Kurt had been preening over the wonder of true love, puffed up with the sure adoration and attention of his boyfriend. The gorilla was David, and it was a lie. While Kurt's been swooning over his former bully, Blaine's been in doctors' offices and laser surgery theaters, not plotting cute little ways to add romance to Kurt's week.

Kurt feels nauseated again. He fumbles with his phone to carefully tap out a reply to Blaine.

To Blaine: "Valentine's Day sucks without you. I miss you. I love you."

He doesn't get a reply, but he can't quite bring himself to call the hotel to cancel. He's such a sucker for false hope.

~*~

The way Kurt wants Blaine right now, Kurt knows, normally unnerves him. It's the sort of desire he still has a tendency to shy away from within himself. Not tonight. Not tonight when it's such a bone deep relief to even see Blaine, who is so devastatingly handsome and charming and wholly back to
himself as he works the room singing "Love Shack". Blaine, performing, flirts with everyone, but it's only when his gaze finds Kurt that it truly simmers.

And Kurt wants him; god, how he wants him; shamelessly, animalistically, and repeatedly. They sing together, and Blaine's all over him, pressing against him, touching him, smiling and stealing kisses. When they dance together, it's a little dirty, but Kurt doesn't care; Blaine is diamond hard against the suggestive swivel of his hips. "I got us a hotel room," Kurt whispers in Blaine's ear.

Blaine's hands squeeze him low, where they're holding him in the gap between waistcoat and waistband, where they've been working his shirt free in small increments, seeking the arch of the side seam, seeking bare skin. "Then why are we still here?" Blaine asks, his breath hot against Kurt's cheek.

~

Things between them cool, as they must, when they get to the Lima Holiday Inn and Kurt checks in while Blaine waits discreetly by the elevators. It's back to bland politeness, but Kurt's signature on the payment authorization is distinctly wobbly.

~

As they come into the small sitting room of the suite, Kurt sees immediately there's champagne on ice on the coffee table: someone's oversight. He didn't use his fake ID. Kurt eyes it warily as he holds the door open for Blaine. But they don't tarry there. Instead they move straight through the room, down the short hall, past the bathroom door, and into the bedroom.

The first thing Kurt notices (aside from the modern dark brown, cream, and raspberry decor of the room) is the enormous hourglass shaped jacuzzi tub in the corner of the bedroom, white porcelain set into shiny espresso tiles, the sight of which spurs a flutter of anticipation. But Kurt's not sure if the placement is tasteless or romantic. Who puts a bathtub in the bedroom? As Kurt follows Blaine into the room, he watches Blaine to gauge his reaction.

When they get close enough, Kurt sees the tub is half full and steaming, with red and pink rose petals scattered across the surface of the water. In fact, the whole room smells of roses. The covers are already neatly folded back on the bed with small, red heart-shaped boxes upon the pillows. The room is giving them permission—no, inviting them—to get naked together.

Blaine turns to face him. "Kurt," he says in a way that seems to mean simultaneously 'you're adorable' and 'you shouldn't have' and 'I love it' and 'what's all this about?'.

"It's one of their honeymoon suites," Kurt says. "I wasn't expecting the jacuzzi to be in the bedroom. Is it weird? It's weird isn't it."

Blaine cocks his head and looks at it. "I don't know. Maybe it's practical? You can just kind of roll out of bed and into the tub."

Kurt laughs.

"Wait. You got us a honeymoon suite, Kurt?"

"It's Valentines Day," Kurt says. "I really wanted us to have some privacy and comfort. Especially after... everything."

"Yeah," Blaine says, smiling gently in understanding. That smile fades quickly to be replaced by something more desperate. "Oh my god, come here," Blaine says. He drops his overnight bag and
opens his arms.

Kurt sets down his suitcase and goes to Blaine. "I've missed you," Kurt says before their lips meet.

For all the urgency of his desire and for all the plans he's made for tonight, Kurt finds it so easy to just fall into kissing Blaine. They're half on the bed, and Blaine's hat has tipped off and rolled... somewhere. Kurt has untucked Blaine's shirt and is running his hands up the smooth hot skin over Blaine's ribs, sucking down every whimper and soft moan Blaine makes as if they're his only source of sustenance. Blaine is here, with him. Whole and happy and immediately here. It's like a Valentine's Day miracle.

And Blaine's hands are between them, jerking at Kurt's belt and fly, too clumsy with desperation to accomplish much, and Blaine is breaking away from the kiss to pant out words, "God, Kurt, please," and, "I want you so bad," and, "You have to fuck me."

"I want to," Kurt murmurs back against Blaine's jaw. It would be so easy; it's so tempting, to just roll Blaine over and take him, take everything he's offering: fast, sweet, and hard. "I will," Kurt promises. They've waited this long; he's going to do this right. "But you're going to have to wait, baby."

"Wait?" Blaine asks as if he's never heard the word before, doesn't get the concept.

"I have plans," Kurt says, rolling off Blaine to sit up beside him. He smooths down Blaine's shirt, moves his hand lower to rest over the hard line of Blaine's cock. Then, Kurt has a moment of doubt, needs to make sure. "So long as you're okay with that. You're okay now, right? You're not drugged up or in pain? I mean, you look okay—" Kurt squeezes, makes Blaine's eyelids shiver. "You feel okay."

"I'm perfect," Blaine says. "Let's do whatever you've planned. I love your plans."

Kurt laughs softly. "Okay," he says. "Can you get undressed while I get set up?"

Blaine nods and sits up. Kurt stands. Blaine makes quick work of his bowtie, jacket, vest, and shirt while Kurt goes to his suitcase.

"Mmhmm," Blaine says, shucking off his pants and underwear. "I'm convinced there's a secret door to it in your basement. Behind the old bookcase."

"Huh," Kurt says. "I didn't realize you were on to me." He gets out his iPod and the portable speakers he's borrowed from Finn, the box of three dozen vanilla scented tealight candles, matches, and a royal blue satin sleep mask; condoms, lube, bath oil (happy with the coincidence of it being rose scented to match the room), and a bottle of water. His hand hovers over the next item. "You know what that means?" he asks Blaine, closing his hand around the twin hanks of soft cotton rope. He lifts them up so Blaine can see.

He watches Blaine's face, notes how his eyes widen and darken. "Oh."

"You're going to have to beg for my mercy," Kurt says.

"Oh," Blaine repeats, scoots back on the bed, his legs splaying apart in invitation. Kurt's gaze is drawn, like a magnet, to Blaine's erection, rearing up flushed and proud, gleaming at the tip. He's
rushed by the desire to toss aside the rope in his hand, crawl up between Blaine's open thighs, and sink his mouth down over Blaine's beautiful cock.

But not yet. "I'm going to tie your hands together, and then to the headboard," Kurt explains. "And then I'm going to blindfold you."

"And then?" Blaine asks, breathless.

"You'll have to wait."

"Wait," Blaine says, now savoring the word, seemingly sort of awestruck by the notion. His chest heaves with a deep breath.

"Exactly," Kurt says.

Kurt kneels up on the bed in front of Blaine, has Blaine sit up and hold his hands out before him. Kurt brings Blaine's forearms parallel and wraps the rope snug around them. As he works, Kurt is aware of Blaine watching him, but his hands are steady. Now and then he pauses to check that the rope is snug, not tight. Glances at Blaine's face for any sign of discomfort, but finds only anticipation.

"All right?" he asks Blaine.

"Yes, Kurt," Blaine says. The flush of arousal across his chest is spreading across his shoulders, and Kurt can see how it's now coloring Blaine's inner thighs, too. It makes his heart beat faster, that he can do this to Blaine. For Blaine.

"If you need to release yourself," Kurt says. "You can pull here with your teeth." He indicates one of the tails of the knot. It's important Blaine knows this for tonight.

Blaine nods, swallows. Kurt strokes his hair and smiles at him. "Can you snap your fingers for me, honey?" Kurt asks. Blaine frowns a little in confusion, but he snaps the fingers of one hand. It's loud enough, Kurt thinks. "If you want me to stop, and you can't speak, I want you to snap, okay?"

Blaine sucks in a sharp breath, and then nods more slowly as he lets it out with a soft, "Okay."

"One more thing," Kurt says. "Do you want to be on your back or on your on your belly?"

Blaine glances around the room as if he can find some hint as to the right answer; then he settles his gaze back on Kurt. "On my back?"

"All right," Kurt says, and helps Blaine shift to the center of the bed and turn. He coaxes Blaine's arms above his head, admires the way the posture pulls his ribs up and makes his belly hollow. He leaves Blaine enough slack to keep his elbows comfortably bent either side of his head, doesn't try to stretch them out. He may need enough slack to turn Blaine over. With the second piece of rope, Kurt loops it through the rope he's already tied; then fits it securely about the widest plank in the bedhead. He tugs at it; it's solid. Shouldn't break even if Blaine has to pull himself up the bed.

"Amazing," Kurt says, letting his gaze roam down the length of Blaine's body, secured and stretched out for his indulgence. He runs a hand down Blaine's side, feels the way his skin shifts over bone and muscle, hears the sharp intake of Blaine's breath. Loves how turned on Blaine is already. He kneels up, reaches down to take one of Blaine's ankles in his grip, and lifts Blaine's leg up, bending it at the knee. Blaine watches Kurt quietly with a strange serenity. Lets Kurt move him so easily. Kurt pushes Blaine's knee up to his chest, sees how far he can push it, and Blaine is so supple, his body so willing. Blaine's lips part, like he's about to speak in entreaty. Kurt lets go and gets up off the bed.
"Kurt...?" Blaine says.

"Be patient, baby," Kurt says, and goes to get the things he's unpacked to the dresser. He brings the condoms, lube, and water bottle to the nightstand, the candles he distributes about the room, taking his time, lighting them as he places them. He concentrates on what he's doing, doesn't really look at Blaine, though he's so very aware of him. Feels Blaine watching him, tracking every movement as Kurt goes about the room. He sets some candles on each nightstand, the dresser, and the last few on the corner of the bathtub. Then, one by one, he switches off the lamps in the room.

The illumination is soft and warm, flickery and romantic, and exactly as Kurt has hoped it would be. Kurt's wanted to make love in the candlelight since he's been aware of the concept of sex. Admittedly, when he imagined this sort of thing as a younger, more innocent boy, there were no ropes involved, and he was the one being pressed back into the pillows by his lover. But Kurt thinks this way is equally, maybe even more, romantic. He turns his focus fully back to Blaine; Blaine whose skin, draped in candlelight, shimmers amber, and his dark eyes glitter, reflecting a myriad tiny points of light. Kurt smiles. "How are you doing, Blaine?" he asks. It's been a long, nearly ten minutes since either of them has spoken. But Kurt knows how Blaine responds to his voice, and he needs to withhold that, for now anyway. Blaine is going to wait.

Blaine clears his throat and moistens his lips before replying, "I'm fine," he says. He sounds a touch uncertain, as if he's not sure what answer he's meant to give. Smiles slightly. "A little curious."

"Comfortable enough?" Kurt asks. He goes to the bed, leans over to grasp Blaine's fingers. They're not cold and curl around Kurt's.

"Yes, Kurt," Blaine says looking up at Kurt's face, seeking with his gaze.

Kurt doesn't give him anything. Instead asks, "Thirsty?"

"No, Kurt."

"Anything you need?" Kurt asks.

Blaine smiles. "Just you."

"I'm yours," Kurt says, bends down and kisses Blaine lightly, just a bare graze of lips. And then he's moving away again, to set up the music. It's not quite their usual. He wanted something new, something instrumental and sexy that wouldn't draw attention to itself, just fade into the background, but something that later would recall tonight. So he found, after searching through iTunes, a collection of Spring themed trance music. It's sensual, scattered with birdsong, and underlaid with bass that throbs like a heartbeat. It's not dissimilar from some of the stuff Blaine has played for them during sex at his house, so Kurt thinks Blaine will like it, too. Finn's speakers are good; the music fills the room.

Then there's just one detail left to set up: the blindfold. It's the element Kurt is most unsure of, but is also most necessary to the fantasy he's hoping to evoke.

He takes the sleep mask over to the bed, crawls up next to Blaine and shows it to him. "I'd like to put this on you," Kurt says. "But I know you've only just got your eyesight back, so if you don't want to, we can skip this part."


"Okay," Kurt says. "Close your eyes, please, Blaine."
Blaine shuts his eyes, still smiling. Kurt bends down to place a soft kiss against each of Blaine's closed eyes. He feels the tender quiver of his eyelids beneath his lips, exhales across Blaine's face as he moves to take Blaine's mouth in a brief, sweet kiss. Blaine lifts his head to chase after Kurt's retreating mouth, and Kurt takes the opportunity to slide the mask over Blaine's face, pulling the wide band behind his head, and then gently lowering Blaine's head back to the pillow to rest between his upstretched arms.

Then, looking down at Blaine, his hand still cradling the back of Blaine's head with Blaine blindly smiling up at Kurt like some kind of Buddha, Kurt is overcome by all of it: what's he's just done and what he's about to do; how Blaine is so easy and comfortable and trusting of Kurt. It's unfathomable suddenly. How is Kurt here, like this, with anyone, let alone this boy who is so much more than Kurt ever imagined for himself. "God, I love you," he whispers, flexing his fingers against Blaine's scalp, "so much."

Blaine turns his head toward Kurt. "I love you, too."

And now the nerves hit him, like a jolt of caffeine. This next part, Kurt's wary of. It could go so right—as as he hopes—or it could fail miserably. He doesn't know how to tip it toward right without spoiling it. But he's got to try. "Blaine?" Kurt says.

"Hmm?"

"Whatever happens tonight," Kurt says, "I need you to trust me."

"Kurt? What are you—?"

"I need to know. Do you trust me, Blaine?"

Blaine doesn't hesitate to answer simply, like it's the most self-evident thing, "I do."

"You're safe with me, I promise."

"I know," Blaine says, but there's the slightest wrinkle of a frown in his brow. Kurt drags his thumb over it smoothing it out, and then carefully pulls his other hand out from under Blaine's head.

"Just one more thing, then we'll be ready," Kurt says. "Thank you for being so patient with me."

He gets off the bed, rubs his palms down his thighs and pauses, staring at the candles, then his open suitcase, then the abstract art print on the wall. Kurt goes to the suitcase, makes enough noise rummaging through it that Blaine should be able to hear it. "Hmm," Kurt says, as if to himself. "I must've... Shoot." It feels like his acting has never been worse. "Blaine, honey?" Kurt says.

"Yes?"

"I've left what we need in the car. I'm really sorry. I need to run out for a sec to get it."

"Kurt?"

"I'll be quick," Kurt says, as he moves swiftly out of the bedroom toward the sitting room and the door.

"Kurt, wait..."

"Just. Hold tight, Blaine," Kurt calls over his shoulder and he opens the door. He holds it open for a couple seconds, but he doesn't go through it. Then he lets go, lets the weight of it close it on its own
with a loud click-bang. He feels awful even pretending to be so careless and irresponsible. He'd never actually leave Blaine alone like this, but he needs Blaine to wait. Needs him to wonder.

Kurt turns back around, and he starts to undress as quietly as he can, setting his clothes neatly aside on the loveseat. He doesn't hear anything but the music from the bedroom, hopes it's masking the rustle of fabric. And Kurt waits, too. He stands there naked and starting to shiver, feeling ever so slightly ridiculous, feeling like he's about to vibrate out of his own skin. He counts his breaths, gets to one hundred eighty and decides to venture back to the bedroom. His bare feet are silent on the hotel's plush carpet.

Blaine has rolled to his side, and he lies, with his knees tucked up, facing the door of the bedroom. Kurt has a wild, irrational sense that Blaine can see through the blindfold, can see right through Kurt's charade. But nothing in his face that Kurt can see changes as Kurt enters the room, holding his breath. Kurt creeps around to the far side of the bed, lets out his breath, and reaches up to the drapes. The slow drag of the curtain hooks on the rail is loud enough, abrupt enough, Kurt startles just as much as Blaine does. Kurt pulls the curtain closed again. They may be on the top floor, but that doesn't mean he wants to be standing in front of the window nude.

"Hello?" Blaine says, using his legs to roll himself to his back. "Kurt?" He's frowning.

Kurt doesn't say anything, but he moves to the bed. Knows Blaine can feel the dip of the mattress as he kneels up on it. It's been less than ten minutes since he pretended to leave. It feels so much longer.

"Kurt?" Blaine says more softly, but his limbs have gone stiff; he's nervous. Kurt desperately doesn't want that to turn into fear. Is ready to slide the sleep mask up and give up the game if he needs to. He crawls near, leans down low over Blaine without touching, but close enough Blaine can, he hopes, feel his body heat and smell his cologne. Close enough Blaine can know.

He lowers his head so his mouth is close to Blaine's ear. Despite the cushion of air separating them, Kurt can nearly feel the hum of Blaine's nerves tickling his lips. With a voiceless whisper so as not to betray his identity too explicitly with his voice, Kurt says quietly but clearly: "My beautiful Psyche."

Blaine's tension eases somewhat at that; he makes a soft sound of comprehension, something between an 'oh' and an 'ah', but he's still trembling when Kurt's lips press against his neck, in the hollow below his ear, behind his jaw. Kurt follows the kiss with a gentle nuzzle, dragging the tip of his nose down Blaine's throat, inhaling the warm scent of him. He lets out the breath through parted lips, soft over Blaine's skin. It's so hard not to speak, so Kurt finds other uses for his mouth. He kisses into the hollow between Blaine's collarbones, kisses up Blaine's pulse as he moves the rest of himself over Blaine, straddles his thighs. And Blaine moans, wantonly. Arches his neck up to meet Kurt's mouth. Arousal burns through Kurt's belly; his cock is flooding heavy with blood beneath him, hovering above Blaine's equally thick erection. He's about to lower himself against Blaine, to press them together when Blaine speaks.

"You're my husband," Blaine says; the words a surprising buzz beneath Kurt's lips.

Kurt pauses, lifts his head to look at Blaine, finds him beautifully flushed and expectant, his mouth relaxed and open, framing quick breaths. The candlelight is a dancing glimmer over the blue satin covering his eyes. Kurt aches to reply with something: "Yes," or "I want to be", or "One day," or "I will be," but he can't. His chest feels tight, weird and good, almost like he's suffocating, but there's no oxygen debt; he's still breathing. He bites his lip and brings a hand up to Blaine's cheek. Tries to use touch instead.

Then, releasing the grip of his teeth, his lowers his lips to Blaine's, offers him his mouth, his tongue, his breath. He keeps the kisses shallow, but intimate, holding back just enough while giving just
enough, to make Blaine want more. But every time Blaine stretches up for more, Kurt draws back, gives him a little bit less, until Blaine is straining up, whimpering in frustration, and Kurt's lips are just out of reach. Kurt sits up and back, resting his weight upon Blaine's thighs and pinning the restless shift of his hips. He watches Blaine, tensing against his bonds, the muscles of his arms rippling uselessly. Feels Blaine squirming beneath him, trying to get some friction where he wants it. Kurt forms his hands into fists, to keep himself safe from temptation (Blaine's cock is right there), and rests them upon his thighs. And he waits.

Without seeing Blaine's eyes—without being seen—it's easier to wait, easier to tease. But that doesn't mean Kurt doesn't want. He does. So many things it's overwhelming. There's so much he could do with Blaine right now, and Blaine will take it, whatever Kurt chooses to give him. And Blaine will give whatever Kurt chooses to take.

There's a moment when Kurt, looking down at Blaine's cock, thinks about it. He imagines shifting up, getting the lube, stretching himself out, and giving Blaine his ass, riding him while he's caught helpless beneath Kurt. But it's not how Kurt wants the first time Blaine fucks him to go. He wants Blaine completely there with him, and he with Blaine, open-eyed and unfettered.

That's when Kurt realizes it: he wants Blaine to fuck him. Maybe not today, but soon. His heart hammers up in his throat as the truth of it sinks into his consciousness. A hot chill chases across his skin, leaving him goosebumped and trembling. Soon, he's going to ask Blaine to fuck him.

But until then, there's this: here and now with Blaine finally relaxing again beneath Kurt, whispering so sweetly, "Please..." His mouth falls slack, his lips so plush, his tongue so pink and inviting. Kurt knows exactly what he's going to do. He rises up to his knees and shuffles up until he's straddling Blaine's chest, his knees snug against Blaine's ribs, his cock swaying so close to the temptation of Blaine's mouth. Kurt holds the headboard with one hand, his erection with the other, as he angles his hips down and forward, guiding his cock. Blaine lifts his head to meet it.

Kurt has intended to tease, to drag his head around Blaine's lips, slicking them with his precome, to just dip in to give Blaine a taste, to drive them both crazy with it, but Blaine's lips are closing around his cockhead, snug and hot, and there's the wet flicker of Blaine's tongue, even hotter. Kurt doesn't have quite the willpower in reality that he does in his fantasies. With a groan, he presses into the delicious suction, let's Blaine suck him down as far as he can take it, as much as Kurt can give him.

Kurt lets go of his cock, moving his hand to tangle his fingers up tight in Blaine's hair, making a fist and holding his head up as Kurt rolls his hips down to meet each eager slide of Blaine's mouth. Rapt, Kurt stares down—panting, open mouthed—at Blaine's enthusiasm, at the gorgeous obscenity of his spit-shiny cock pushing through Blaine's stretched lips. This is what Blaine meant, Kurt thinks, when he'd whispered those words months ago: "use me...". So Kurt does.

He fucks Blaine's mouth, not rough, deep, or fast, but steadily; and it's such an acute pleasure, it makes Kurt ache everywhere. Kurt listens for the snap of Blaine's fingers, but all Blaine does is moan and hum and drool around him, like no matter how much Kurt gives him, it's not enough. Kurt feels his orgasm building in every piece of him. And when he's so close its inevitable, he pulls out, lets go of Blaine's hair and hooks his thumb in Blaine's mouth, over the sharp ridge of his bottom teeth to hold him open as Kurt brings his hand on the headboard down to finish himself off.

Kurt comes with a choked off gasp (he's so glad of the practice he's had in his room with Blaine, of coming quietly), and Blaine groans. His semen shoots across Blaine's mouth, his tongue and lips, his chin, cheeks, and even a little on the backs of his arms. Some makes it onto his neck, but none, Kurt is pleased to see, is staining the blue satin of the mask.

Around Kurt's thumb, Blaine closes his lips, sucking as Kurt slides it out. Kurt is dizzy, looking
down at his mess, gleaming and oozing pale upon Blaine's golden skin. He watches Blaine swallow thickly. Watches his tongue come out to lick clean his swollen lips. Stretching his tongue farther, shamelessly reaching for as much as he can. So Kurt helps. He sweeps up what Blaine can't reach with his fingertips, offers them to Blaine, who sucks them clean with pleased little hums and sighs. And, god, it's so... Kurt doesn't know a word for what it is, but he likes it—no, loves it. Loves this quiet moment in his afterglow, carefully wiping his come from Blaine's skin and feeding it to Blaine, pushing his fingers into Blaine's mouth, sliding against the velvet wet pulse of his tongue, feeling the vibration of Blaine's pleasure, knowing he's the cause of it.

When they're done, and Kurt has kissed away any last remnants of his spunk, Kurt reaches for the water bottle, uncaps it, and offers it to Blaine, who takes the water almost as eagerly as he took Kurt's cock. Kurt supports his head while he drinks his fill. "Thank you," Blaine says when he's had enough. And then he asks, "Are you going to fuck me now?"

In silent answer, Kurt strokes his face, his hair, and then slowly kisses his way down Blaine's body. Despite the needy arching of Blaine's hips, Kurt tries to avoid his cock. It brushes Kurt's cheek, hot and smooth, and though Kurt wishes to linger, he moves away, and Blaine makes a sad noise of complaint. Kurt sits up, pressing his knees, one at a time, between Blaine's thighs, to prompt him to spread his legs. Then he gets his hands beneath Blaine's thighs, lifts and spreads them, rolling Blaine's lower back up off the bed and scooting forward, leaning and reaching to grab a couple pillows to tuck beneath Blaine. With Blaine's spine curled up, Kurt holds him open and looks, just lets himself look while Blaine squirms in frustrated anticipation. Looks at the quiver of Blaine's hole, dusky and tight. The same color as his nipples and his cock, a little darker than his lips. And, Kurt knows even better than he did the last time they did this, it's so very sensitive. Kurt is going to make him beg.

The music is swelling and building into some sort of bacchanal frenzy, and Kurt's heart races to keep pace. His hand is steady, though, when he touches Blaine, stroking the pad of his thumb along Blaine's perineum, nudging up behind his balls and back down, stopping and reversing the caress just before he reaches the different texture of Blaine's rim. With each pass, Kurt presses more firmly. He watches the glisten of sweat break across Blaine's flushed skin. Watches the needy creasing of Blaine's brow, the way his mouth falls open around each ragged edged moan, the way his cock jounces with each heartbeat. There's so much precome; it's nearly a steady drip of bright strands catching the candlelight, dampening the trail of hair beneath Blaine's navel. Kurt reaches for the lube, leaning and stretching out one arm while holding Blaine open and steady with one hand. His cock presses up against the back of Blaine's thigh and Kurt can't not roll his hips against the contact.

"Please," Blaine says.

Then Kurt is back on his heels, squeezing a dollop of cool gel out to fall upon Blaine's overheated skin. Blaine flinches, and Kurt watches it slide down toward his hole; he catches it on his fingertips lest it slide too far. Already Blaine's relaxing for him as Kurt spreads the slippery stuff around, circling his rim, pressing without penetrating. Blaine curls himself up more, spreads his legs wider, begging wordlessly with his body. His legs shudder as Kurt cocks his finger and finally does push in slowly, giving Blaine just the tip of his middle finger. And then out. And again, dipping in and out, in and out, pressing just millimeters deeper each time. Kurt knows how this feels now, understands how to draw it out.

"Oh, god, so good," Blaine grits out, tries to push against Kurt's hand to take him deeper. But Kurt holds him still, now moving his fingertip in a slow revolution, circling and pressing outward around Blaine's rim from the inside. Kurt's cock throbs a dull aching tattoo between his legs, and he pushes in deep with one smooth glide, pushes his finger into the sweltering grip of Blaine's ass as far as he reach. Blaine moans and tosses his head back. "Fuck!"
It sounds like a command, and Kurt is so ready to fuck him. Beyond ready. Blaine's so needful, his body so greedy for it, and Kurt's cock feels like it's going to burst if doesn't do something with it soon. He gulps a thick lungful of air and redoubles his concentration. He's going to get Blaine off without touching his cock. He presses against Blaine's perineum with his thumb as he finds the smooth bump of his prostate with his finger. He curls his finger up against it and strokes with a steady, focused pressure Kurt doubts he could replicate with his cock.

A stream of nonsensical and sacrilegious profanity pours from from Blaine's lips; his body snaps and curls tight into Kurt's hold. Desperate. Kurt wants to speak so badly, wants to tell Blaine how amazing this is, how gorgeous he is, how perfect, but Blaine's doing enough talking for both of them. Begging for more, for harder for faster for anything, god, just something.

"Jesus, fuck. Fuck me. Fuck me."

And Kurt can tell Blaine's close even though he has never seen Blaine quite like this, falling so far so fast.

"Want to come with you inside me, please. Oh, please, fuck me, Kurt."

Hearing his name is what does it. Kurt can't deny either of them any longer. He looks at the condoms, all the way over on the night table, a million miles away from where he is. His heart stutters as he rejects them. He pulls his hand free and grabs for the lube. Slicks himself up hurriedly, with too clumsy hands. Feels like there's a clock ticking down that he has to beat, has to get inside Blaine while he's still so close to his climax. So Kurt just lines himself up and pushes in with such deep relief his vision goes black at the edges. Blaine's moan is tortured, plaintive. And fuck he's tight. Kurt hasn't stretched him out as he normally does, and Blaine's body grips him brutally. As Kurt presses deeper it's like his nerve endings have multiplied, like he's raw and porous and Blaine is bleeding into him. Everything is hotter, closer, slicker; more visceral and primal. Infinitely more devastating.

Kurt tips forward, lets gravity draw him in, bends down to kiss Blaine, kisses him deeply, as deep as Blaine's taking him. He grinds and screws his cock deeper into Blaine's ass, and Blaine sucks his tongue like he's fellating it, whimpering hoarsely in the back of his throat. Kurt buries his hands into Blaine's hair, fists tight, pulling his head back and surging up to follow with his open mouth, letting Blaine suck messily at his lips and tongue. Pressing even deeper into Blaine as Kurt fits them together; Blaine's knees are nearly at his armpits..

He needs to see Blaine's face. Kurt rips his mouth from the kiss and Blaine's head lolls against the pillow, only stopped by the stretch of his arm. His mouth is lax with pleasure, wide open, his tongue sliding restlessly over his bottom teeth as if begging for something to suck. Kurt rocks his hips and Blaine shudders—everywhere. He gasps and groans, shivering and shaking uncontrollably, and Kurthesitates, brings his hands from Blaine's hair to pull his thighs up snug against his sides, and he wraps his arms around to hold Blaine tight. It's like his embrace is all that's keeping Blaine from flying apart: he's so strung out, about to shatter.

The plan was to fuck Blaine and then leave him 'alone', well fucked and wrung out. Then Kurt would return to find Blaine freshly debauched, would remove the blindfold and untie him and they would go for a leisurely round two. But Kurt has to see him, and he has to be seen now. Has to.

Gently he pushes the sleep mask up and off. Blaine's eyelids flutter and come open only sluggishly. His eyes are glassy: wet and unfocused. A little lost. "Blaine," Kurt says softly, to recall him. Wonderingly, he touches a tear that's escaped to wend its way across Blaine's temple to get lost in his hair.
Blaine's gaze sharpens and finds his. "Kurt," Blaine says, blinks, and then he whispers, "Move."

Kurt can do nothing but obey. He curls his spine, pushing in deep as he can, presses until his muscles tremble with the effort. Then he drags back out slowly, his eyes falling closed at the searing brilliance of it. "Oh, god," he says, the words coming out a desperate moan. "You feel so..."

Then he opens his eyes, looks into Blaine's and says with so much breath it's like a sigh, "Come for me." He thrusts back in with a sharp tuck of his tailbone, reaching as far as he can. It only takes a few strokes and Blaine is arching impossibly against him and crying out loud and ragged, pulsing tight around Kurt's cock, coming and coming wet and hot between them. Kurt kisses him while he's still quaking and sobbing through it. Kisses across his open trembling lips, kisses his tear streaked cheeks, his chin, his nose...

When Blaine's orgasm has passed, Kurt is afraid to move again immediately. His own need for release is like a hot, tight screw, winding tighter and tighter, slowly splitting him open until he must come apart. But not yet, not yet.

"Blaine?" he asks.

And Blaine turns his head and looks up at Kurt, he rolls beneath him, bucking up and making Kurt jerk inside him. "Don't stop," Blaine says.

"You're okay?" Kurt asks with little voice to spare,

"Yes," Blaine says fiercely; then more softly repeats, "Yes."

So Kurt keeps going, fucks him slow and deep, holding them together. Tries to tamp down the urgency of his own need to let Blaine's arousal return. And Blaine talks to him. "Missed you so much, sweetheart," he breathes out thickly, with his eyes closed, relaxing into the steady drumbeat of Kurt's movements. Then, when the tension begins to return to his body, he pants out with wide open and wild eyes, "Don't stop, Kurt. God, don't stop. Don't ever stop fucking me." And when Kurt feels Blaine's cock stirring back to life, Kurt shifts to reach between them, strokes Blaine back to fullness.

And Kurt remembers he can speak again. There's no role to betray any longer. So he unlocks his voice and talks back, praising Blaine, telling him how good he feels, how gorgeous he is, how good and patient and amazing he's been, how much Kurt adores him, how glad he is they're together like this tonight. Tells him how he wants to fuck him forever. Kisses Blaine, breathes his breath, and kisses him more until Kurt's struggling to temper anything, and they are both sweating and gasping, aching and overwrought.

Kurt pulls back to sit on his heels and straightens, hauling Blaine bodily onto his cock. Blaine swears and winces, his arms pulling too tight in the ropes, and Kurt quickly tries to give him some slack by rising up to his knees, pushing Blaine back toward the bedhead while lifting him up until his spine is a steep drape from Kurt's grip where they are joined, down to his shoulders upon the bed, and he's got room to relax his arms again.

Kurt's biceps tense and bulge, and he feels so fucking virile like this, supporting all of Blaine's lower body in his arms. He gathers Blaine up and fucks into him hard, with deep, rolling strokes, thrusts that make Blaine's whole body judder with the force of them. "Can you come again?" Kurt asks. "Like this?"

Blaine shakes his head. "It's good, but... don't think... not quite," he says. "Turn me over..."

Kurt pulls out, quickly helps Blaine roll over and get his knees under him, thighs splayed wide, his
ass high, wet and soft and welcoming. Kurt grabs the lube, squeezes out more. They've been going at this long enough, things are starting to go from slick to sticky.

He pushes back in quick and rough, and Blaine gasps, "Jesus, Kurt." But as Kurt picks up his stroke again, hammering in short and sharp, Blaine swears again, his head hanging low between his arms, forehead pressed to the mattress, "Fuck, yes... oh my god... like that. More."

Kurt digs his fingers into Blaine's hips, knows he's bruising, and lets go; he just fucking pounds Blaine's ass. Hard and harder, fast and mindless. He just takes: takes Blaine, takes his ass, takes everything. Ends up shoving Blaine down into the mattress, one hand pressed down flat against Blaine's lower back, holding him while Kurt fucks him, reducing his speech to a random arrangement of 'oh' and 'fuck' and 'Kurt' until Blaine eventually runs out of coherency and can do nothing but muffle his too loud moans into the pillow until he comes again, not as hard or as long as the first time, but unmistakeably, shoulders shaking as he sobbs into the bedding.

And Kurt, finally, lets himself surrender, too.

He's a dead weight upon Blaine's back, his cock still buried inside Blaine's ass, sated but stubbornly hard. Sticky with sweat, Kurt winces as he pushes himself up, feeling the way their skin comes apart so reluctantly. His cock slips out, wet, and Kurt looks down, remembering the lack of condom. He shuffles back and looks, sees a trail of his come over Blaine's tender anus. He's left some of himself in there. Gingerly he rests his hands on Blaine's ass, parting his cheeks so Kurt can look more, see the evidence of what they've done.

Blaine stirs with a grunt, turns his head to the side, but his voice is still muffled. "Kurt? Are you staring at my ass?" he mumbles, sounding mildly amused, uncharacteristically lazy, but mostly drowsy.

"Mmm," Kurt confirms, struggles to find the words to explain. "It's just kind of amazing," he says lamely. "That I was in there."

"You like to look, huh?" Blaine says, opening his legs wider for Kurt's scrutiny. So unselfconscious.

"Yeah," Kurt says. "I do." He really can't see much of Blaine's face like this. Thinks he really needs to untie Blaine about now. But. "Do you mind?"

Blaine shakes his head. "No. I like it."

"My looking?"

"Yeah."

"How about if I...?" Kurt runs a light fingertip over the white smear of his come, careful of Blaine's swollen entrance. The exhausted muscle tries to clench, but it's weak. Blaine flinches. "Sore?" Kurt asks.


Kurt slips his fingertip around Blaine's rim, asks him, "What's it like?"

"What's what like?"

"Being fucked here." He presses more firmly into Blaine's center to punctuate.
"Ah... It's. Mmm. So good, Kurt. When you're inside me, and I'm stretched so wide open around you, and I'm so full of you that it's all I can feel. Like that's all there is, all that matters, you moving inside me. It's incredible."

Kurt stills the motion of his finger, feels more than a little awestruck. "Thank you," is all he can think to say.

"What for?"

"For letting me be the one to make you feel like that."

Blaine hums, pleased; Kurt hears the smile in it. He shifts up, leans to undo the ropes. Once free, he takes Blaine's arms and rubs warmth back into them. "Okay?" he asks as Blaine flexes his fingers and takes his arms back to himself, turning over and propping himself up, carefully arranging himself around the wet spot on the sheets. Kurt sits back, close enough to rest his hand upon Blaine's, but not too close. He's too sweat sticky and gross for cuddles.

"Yes," Blaine says. His gaze finds Kurt, and he turns his palm up, closes his fingers around Kurt's. "That was amazing, Kurt. You're amazing."

"It was good, then? You liked it?"

"Good? God, Kurt, that was like the best sex we've had. I loved it."

"I literally could not have done it without you," Kurt says with a soft laugh. Blaine chuckles. "So, Cupid, huh?"

"Happy Valentine's Day," Kurt says. "It seemed appropriate."

"Appropriate?" Blaine laughs.

"What's so funny?"

"You," Blaine says. "You do all this for me and then you call it 'appropriate'."

Kurt grins back. "Well. It's the least I could do after all you've been through."

Blaine shakes his head in amusement. "You've been doing so much for me, Kurt. This was more than..."

"More than what?"

Blaine shrugs, tilts his head as he looks at Kurt. "I got you something, too," he says. "It's not much compared to all this, but I got you something when I was in Virginia."

The candles are jumping and guttering, no longer providing much light, so Kurt leans over to flick on a lamp while Blaine gets off the bed and goes to his overnight bag. Blaine pulls out a box covered in burgundy paper with a silvery lace pattern on it. It has a satin silver bow and an embossed gift tag. It looks professionally gift wrapped.

He gets back on the bed and hands the box to Kurt. "I hope you like it," he says, sits back and watches as Kurt carefully deconstructs the crisp wrapping. He tries not to tear the paper. It's a blue velvet hinged box, too large to be a ring. Too large for cufflinks, too. Kurt glances up at Blaine, then back down and he opens it. Nestled into white satin is a silver pocket watch. It's got a patina of age and use; it must be vintage or antique: old. He takes it out to get a better look. The cover is unusual,
it's a spidery rosette design backed by clear glass (the glass looks new), revealing some of the watch face in the gaps. Within the rosette pattern is a ring of tiny repeating hearts. "It's lovely," Kurt says.

"Turn it over," Blaine says.

Kurt does. The back is engraved, not with words, but with a pair of finely detailed butterflies. They look like they're about to embrace.

"I wanted you to have something you could carry with you, have it with you every day when you're in New York," Blaine says. "Something you'd look at from time to time and think of me. This was beautiful and complex and it looks maybe a little bit delicate to someone if they don't look at it closely enough, but its refined and strong, it's not fragile. It reminded me of you."

Kurt blinks, touched. "Thank you," he says. "It's beautiful." He looks up from the watch and smiles. "I love it. I love you." He sets it aside and leans over, stepping his hands toward Blaine.

"Happy Valentine's Day," Blaine says and tips forward to meet Kurt's lips halfway.

The bathtub is convenient, although they do take turns in the bathroom cleaning up while it fills, so they won't end up stewing in their own mess. Kurt pours some of the rose scented oil into the water since they're not planning on using the jets. Fragrant, the water steams up around them; they face each other, each tucked into one curved end of the tub, their legs tangling together in the middle. Kurt slips down into the water until it's up to his chin, and he closes his eyes. He's drowsy, pleasantly so, but he doesn't want to sleep. The hot water has him feeling floaty and diaphanous, like he's growing incorporeal. But the ball of Blaine's foot is gliding up and down his thigh, anchoring Kurt in his body.

He feels like he should say something, but his mind is fuzzy and he's feeling so loose and weirdly feeble. Kurt tips his head back and drifts.

Blaine speaks first, drawing Kurt back a little. "Did you like it, Kurt?" Blaine asks. "Bare?"

Kurt opens his eyes; it feels like someone's attached weights to his eyelids and his eyes feel a little gritty as he blinks them wider. "Yes," he says. "It was different, I didn't know if it would be. You?"

Blaine nods. "Yeah. It felt good like that." Then he lowers his gaze. "But we don't have to do it like that all the time. The aftermath was a little..." Blaine makes an embarrassed face.

Kurt reaches down and folds his hand over Blaine's foot, stroking his arch with his thumb. "Did I tell you my Dad got to meet Rick Santorum?" Kurt says.

Blaine's eyes go wide and he looks at Kurt, stunned for a just a second before his whole face sort of crumples and he cracks up, laughing helplessly and covering his face. "Oh my god, Kurt, are you serious?"

Kurt grins. "Actually, no, but I bet it would be a good story if he did."

"You know it would be." Blaine drops his hands away from his face, calming as he smiles at Kurt.

Kurt smiles back, and they're quiet for a time, Blaine just staring at Kurt like he can't quite believe they're here. Kurt knows that feeling well.

Then, "You," Blaine says, fondly
"Me?"

"Yes. Come here."

Kurt musters enough vigor to shift up and splash over to Blaine, slumping down into his arms and pressing his nose against the hot wet skin of Blaine's neck. He smells like roses. "If you want me to fuck you again, I'm going to need some food first," Kurt says.

"Mmm, not yet," Blaine says, his hand slipping wonderfully down Kurt's spine. "Just kiss me, Kurt."

Kurt shifts, his knees settling either side of Blaine's, and slides up Blaine's torso to find Blaine's mouth with his own. Blaine hums into the first easy kiss, and they kiss comfortably for a while. Lazy and soft. But slowly, inevitably, it begins to turn hot. Blaine's hands drift down Kurt's back, skimming over the curve of his ass to cup the backs of his thighs, pulling Kurt against him.

The water is an ethereal caress, but Blaine's hands on him are solid and insistent, tugging Kurt into a rhythm against him. As is Blaine's cock, unyielding and digging into his soft belly, and Kurt is equally hard, sliding up snug beside him. Kurt holds Blaine's face between his hands, swallows his shuddering breathless moans. And Blaine's hands are slipping up again as they grind together, taking hold of Kurt's ass, squeezing and kneading, each tug spreading him apart, exposing him more to the heated eddies of the water, and it's not enough. There's an ache building; it's still new to Kurt, but he recognizes it. He withdraws from Blaine's mouth to ask in a low murmur, "Do you want to touch me —?" He drops one hand behind him, lays it close to where he wants it, feels Blaine's fingertips dip into his cleft. Kurt shivers. "—here?"

Blaine blinks, his steam damp lashes look so long and lush framing his hot gaze. "Are you asking me to?" he asks, just as softly, doesn't move his hand.

"Yes," Kurt says.

Blaine studies his face. "You really want this?"

"I do."

"Oh, Kurt," Blaine breathes out, and Kurt leans back in to take his mouth. He releases Blaine's hand. Blaine's touch is gentle, circling and rubbing without penetrating, while they rock together. It's creating such an amazing buzz for Kurt. He muffles his hums and whimpers in Blaine's mouth, until kissing becomes something too complex to sustain and they end up doing little more than just panting, open mouthed, against each others lips, breathing in the same space. "Feels so good, Blaine," Kurt manages.

"You're so hot," Blaine replies, pressing more firmly as he makes a slow circuit around Kurt's rim.

"Can you... ooh... Push it in. Just a little?" Kurt's having a hard time keeping his eyes open. He gives up, lets them close.

"Yes," Blaine says, and he does. His fingertip pushes, and it aches just a little bit, but Kurt's relaxed and the suspension of oil in the water is just enough for Blaine's touch to edge inside, and Kurt feels a chill scatter over him everywhere even though he's so, so hot.

"Oh, god," Kurt says. Everything is sweltering and thick; hot and foggy. Kurt is dazed, burning up. And though Blaine's giving him an inch maybe, it's like Blaine is touching him everywhere.

"You feel so good, Kurt," Blaine says. "God, I love you like this."
"I love what you're doing," Kurt says, feels how his forehead is creasing, how his face is contorting with it. Knows he's going to come soon. Rolls his hips against Blaine, feels the hard skid of Blaine's cock against him and how the flesh of Blaine's belly alternates between yielding and tense as Blaine moves with him. And Blaine is working his finger in deeper, now dragging it out, just so he can push it back in, and...

"Oh my," Kurt says as he comes.

Blaine strokes Kurt's damp hair back from his face with one hand, while holding the other immobile, still inside Kurt, as Kurt comes down, little tremors still wracking his nerves. "Mmm, you're so pretty when you come," Blaine murmurs.

When Kurt opens his eyes he finds Blaine smiling softly, looking up at him. His eyes are bright, welling up with emotion. "Blaine," Kurt says, "Are you...?"

Blaine blinks back the wetness. "Thank you, Kurt," he says, withdrawing his finger carefully, and rubbing up to the small of Kurt's back. Then he pulls Kurt against him, into a loose hug. "I hope you know, you're so precious to me."

Soon after, they exit the tub on shaky legs, opting for a cool shower to clean off and cool down. Kurt finds two fluffy terry robes in the closet and they pull them on gratefully. The plush fabric feels so good against Kurt's too sensitive skin. Then Kurt dials room service: they're both ravenous, and though tired, neither of them wants to waste a moment sleeping. Kurt orders a carafe of coffee, tuna sandwiches with shoestring fries on the side, a large fruit platter with yoghurt, ice water, orange juice, and chocolate cake. "Do you think that'll be enough?" he asks Blaine.

"I hope so. I can't remember the last time I was this hungry."

Despite their intentions, they do doze off, Kurt's head pillowed on Blaine's shoulder, as they wait for the food. Kurt wakes at the knock on the door.

While they're eating, Blaine asks Kurt who the secret admirer turned out to be. Kurt is quiet, trying to piece together the right words, trying to keep the sick feeling at bay. He's quiet too long.

Blaine asks, worriedly, "Was it someone I know?"

Kurt says, "Yes."

Blaine cocks his head. "You don't look happy about it."

Kurt shakes his head, has trouble swallowing a piece of pineapple.

"One of the guys from Glee?" Blaine asks.

"No, god no," Kurt says, and he makes himself say the name: "David Karofsky."

"Oh, Kurt," Blaine looks bewildered. "God, that's..."

"Yeah."

"I'm so sorry."

Kurt shakes his head. "All the times you told me it wasn't you, I thought you were just being..."
"It should have been me, Kurt. I'm so sorry. I just..." Blaine makes a helpless gesture. "I didn't think you liked all those cheap holiday gimmicks."

"No, I don't, not really," Kurt shakes his head, "Unless I think it's from you, apparently. I should have known. How could I have seen you in a hulking great gorilla suit?"

Blaine shrugs sympathetically. "Maybe you saw what you wanted to see?"

Kurt nods. "I saw you. I wanted you." Kurt says, "But I don't really want to talk about it any more right now, Blaine. Tonight is about us. Here, together. Us."

"Us," Blaine agrees, and Kurt sees the heat flare in Blaine's gaze. He can't ignore it.

He sets aside his plate and goes to Blaine, presses him with kisses back into the bedding before rolling him onto his belly. Blaine goes over without complaint, loose-limbed and easy beneath Kurt's hands. Kurt straddles his waist and and works the back of the robe down to bare the base of Blaine's neck and the top of his spine. He kisses over his nape, gently bites down his vertebrae, makes Blaine hum and squirm. "Speaking of us," Kurt says, reaching a hand back to cup Blaine's backside. "How's your ass?"

"Still a little tender," Blaine says, "but good."

Kurt grins. "If it's already good, I bet I can kiss it even better."

"Mmm. Please do," Blaine replies.

end Part V
The morning after, waking up feels like being born. Kurt has to force himself up through the deep dark weight of sleep to stir against the decadently soft mattress and the warm drape of the sheets. The curtains are thick, and the light peeking through the thin slit where they don't quite meet is too bright and jars. Kurt squints and reaches blindly across the wide king-sized mattress to find Blaine. The bed is so big, they could plant a flag and claim it as a new country. As he reaches and scootches upon his belly, there's a comfortable ache in his muscles. Kurt smiles as his hand meets the smooth warmth of Blaine's shoulder. "There you are," Kurt says, fitting his fingers to the shape of it and squeezing.

"Mmph," Blaine replies, and his hand comes, warm and heavy, to lie upon Kurt's.

Kurt lifts up to his elbows, drags himself toward Blaine. A morning kiss is his intention, but his body is leaden and clumsy with sleep and fatigue, and his eyes haven't adjusted to the stark slash of light in the dark. It ends up less a kiss than an artless mashing of his lips against Blaine's face. The muscles of Blaine's cheek bunch beneath Kurt's lips as Blaine smiles.

"Mmph," Kurt says in emphatic agreement against Blaine's skin.

"G'morning," Blaine says. He turns his head, finds Kurt's lips with his own, and his his bottom lip nudges soft beneath Kurt's.

The kiss is sluggish and tinged with stale morning breath, but it doesn't stop Kurt from opening his mouth against Blaine's for a slow, wet taste of him. He slides his hand down to Blaine's supple belly, taking the sheet with it. Blaine sucks in a deep breath and Kurt feels his pulse answer, heavy between his legs. He chuckles into the kiss, incredulous that his body can still want more after last night. He's tender and sore, and he doesn't think he'll be able to withstand much friction on his cock, so with a reluctant grunt, he breaks the kiss, pushes up, and crawls over Blaine to get off the bed.

"What's funny?" Blaine asks, his hands grasping at Kurt as Kurt gets his feet steady beneath him.

"My dick," Kurt replies.

"Hmm. Funny's not the word I'd use for it," Blaine says, his fingertips lazily trailing down the curve of Kurt's backside and off as Kurt moves out of reach toward the window.

Kurt shivers in the dry air conditioning as he reaches for the curtains. Sunlight floods in; the heat of it welcome. In a moment of immodesty (Who's really going to be looking up into this window anyway?) Kurt closes his eyes and lets his skin absorb it. He needs to order some coffee and breakfast. His stomach is already making an inquisitive growl, and his head is muzzy and tired. Before they went to sleep last night, Kurt should have filled out the breakfast card and hung it on the doorknob. Or, he supposes, they could get dressed and go to the buffet downstairs, but Kurt doesn't think he can bring himself to leave the room yet, let alone put on clothes. He touches himself just below his sternum, rubs his fingers against his bare skin, feels the traces of dried semen rough beneath his touch. Doesn't know if it's his or Blaine's. He kind of loves it, though he knows his skin won't.

"Nice view." Blaine says from behind him.

Kurt turns with a smile, and he opens his eyes.

The clean morning sun paints Blaine in high contrast. His tawny skin is luminous as Blaine stretches; his sleep-mussed, curling hair and morning stubble are dark; and his thick lashes frame the washed
out golden glow of his eyes. The white sheet, low on Blaine's waist, is a translucent tent over his morning erection; Kurt can see the shape of it, like a shadow, through the fine cotton. With an arm bent up above his head, the other draped across his belly, and one leg cocked to the side; Blaine looks the epitome of invitation. "It is," Kurt agrees, and inspiration seizes him. "Don't move."

He retrieves his phone from the wide dresser and goes back to face Blaine. He taps through to his camera app; Blaine doesn't move or protest, or even offer a wider smile. However, his gaze does meet the camera, somehow leonine the way it's lit by the sun and contains such patient intensity. Kurt feels a rush of warmth that has nothing to do with the sunbeams hitting his back. Kurt takes the photo: he never wants to forget this.

Kurt lowers his phone, looks at Blaine, and can't breathe. His insides are twisting up giddy, and he feels the prickle of blood across his cheeks and chest. He glances down at his phone, sees the photo. There, vitrified in bright pixels behind the glossy display, is Blaine, relaxed, sensual, and desiring: so exposed and naked beyond flesh. Kurt has taken photos before, of Blaine, but nothing like this. This is something new and different: private. Seeing a moment of their intimacy frozen, transported into bits and bytes? Kurt lets out a shuddering breath. Blaine still hasn't moved or said anything, like he's still heeding Kurt's request.

"Um," Kurt says and looks back up at Blaine. "May I take more?" he asks. "Just for me—or for us. I won't leave them on my phone. I'll—"

"Go ahead," Blaine says, his voice soft as the sheets on the bed. "Do you want me to pose? Or do anything...?"

Kurt shakes his head. "No, it's just you and the light. You're beautiful. I want to remember."

"Okay," Blaine says, and he remains lax and motionless against the bedding, gazing at Kurt through the camera lens, so warm and open.

Kurt steps closer, takes more photos. Zooms in and frames Blaine's face and shoulders. Goes lower, frames his torso, and lower again to the tempting drape of the sheet over his hips, his cock, the splay of his legs. A cloud shifts the sunlight into pale and silver, resolves the images into something cooler and blunted. Kurt keeps taking photos. Isn't sure how many he's done. But when his knees meet the edge of the mattress, he tosses the phone aside onto the bed and reaches for the sheet to slide it down farther, so he can see, without the mediation of the lens or the tease of the sheet, Blaine's cock.

Kurt gets up on the bed, one knee between Blaine's thighs, the other just on the edge of the mattress. He knows he's staring; he swallows hard, hungering for a taste, for the scent and texture and weight of Blaine's cock in his mouth. It's far from the first time he's seen, or touched, or tasted Blaine's cock, so why is his hand trembling when he reaches down to wrap his hand loosely around its silken heat? Maybe it will always startle him a little bit sometimes: that not only can he want this, but also he can have it.

"Kurt?" Blaine asks.

"I really want to blow you," Kurt says quietly. He doesn't lift his gaze from his hand around Blaine. He squeezes and slides his hand, feels the steel pulse beneath the velvet skin.

"Yes. Kurt, that's— Yes." Blaine makes a shallow roll of his hips up into Kurt's grasp. "Whatever you want."

Kurt lets go of Blaine and shifts, settling down between Blaine's legs and taking his weight upon his elbows. He strokes Blaine's thighs lightly, the fine hair tickling his fingertips. On the inside of
Blaine's left thigh he spies the vivid bruise he sucked there last night starting to change from red to purple. Fainter, smaller bruises are scattered across Blaine's hips. Kurt lifts up and leans in to nuzzle at Blaine's balls, inhaling the heady scent of Blaine here and parting his lips to pass a gust of breath across their soft weight. His fingers trace abstract patterns up Blaine's thighs, and one of Blaine's hands comes down to pet his hair. Kurt turns his head and presses his smile against the top of Blaine's thigh, flicks his gaze up to find Blaine's. Blaine's gaze is steady: hot and hooded. Kurt loves Blaine looking at him like that; he turns his head to show Blaine his smile, rubs his cheek against the tension in Blaine's muscles. "When we're living together, we'll be able to do this every morning," he says.

Blaine huffs a soft laugh.

"Well, maybe not every morning," Kurt says. "But a lot of them." He takes Blaine's cock back in one hand, lifts it and presses his lips against the tip, catches the slick smear of precome on his top lip. He doesn't break eye-contact with Blaine as his tongue comes out to follow his lips, a broad swipe over Blaine's cockhead, finishing with a flourish against his own top lip.

Blaine's hand tightens in his hair, pulling. His eyelashes flutter. "I could get used to this," Blaine says.

"I want you to," Kurt says, and licks again, using the pointed tip of his tongue to trace around the flared crown, flicking up into the sensitive notch on the underside, and making Blaine's eyes pinch shut as he bites down on a soft groan. But Kurt doesn't want to tease, so he tips forward, opens wide, and sucks Blaine's cock between his lips, curling his tongue around as he slides down. This, too, always startles Kurt, how huge Blaine feels in his mouth. He always feels bigger than Kurt's memory. It's always so much to take, to stretch his jaw open so far, feel the heavy pressure against his tongue. And then he's sunk down far enough that he hears Blaine panting and murmuring praise. He feels Blaine's cock nudging up against his soft palate, and he's breaking out in a sweat himself, struggling to take steady breaths through his nose. He refuses to gag this time. Kurt closes his eyes and stills for a moment. He concentrates on breathing, slow and steady, in and out. He sucks gently and tries to isolate the muscles he needs to relax.

Blaine is stroking his hair with careful fingers and saying his name as Kurt comes to understand how to open his throat. Gingerly he presses down. There's a a twinge, so he stops. It fades as he breathes through it. He sinks farther, just a little at a time, feels how his throat is stretching open for Blaine, how Blaine is sliding in, deeper and deeper, until Kurt is sliding his hand down to flatten it against Blaine's pubic bone, bracketing the root of Blaine's cock with his thumb and forefinger until Kurt's nose meets the back of his hand and he stops. Amazed and afraid to do anything to break his concentration, he worries that if he moves, he'll throw off the delicate truce he's made with his gag reflex. He's so grateful Blaine is keeping still.

"Oh my god, Kurt," Blaine mumbles, his other hand coming down to Kurt's hair, splaying both hands across Kurt's scalp. "Oh my god."

Kurt hums acknowledgment and tries to swallow the saliva that's flooding his mouth. It's weird and thick swallowing around Blaine, and it does nothing for the too much spit in his mouth; gravity is working against him. It's leaking out from the corners of his mouth. It feels obscene—he does—and that's... It's kind of fantastic. He swallows again, groans. Loves it. He fucking loves it.

"Oooh, fuck," Blaine says, and Kurt can feel the tension mounting in Blaine's body, realizes at least one of them is going to need to move soon. "Ah, Kurt, can you—?"

So Kurt moves, lifting up, feeling the drag of Blaine's cock raw and deep in his throat. He doesn't pull up far before he pushes back down. Blaine's hands clench in his hair, provide just a hint of
impulse down. Not enough to force, but enough to encourage. When Kurt bottoms out, Blaine tugs up—a suggestion—and Kurt complies, lets Blaine guide him into a shallow, even rhythm.

"That's good, sweetheart. So good," Blaine says.

And that last letting go into Blaine's hands is the last permission Kurt needs to grant himself. He's simply here, where he is, where they are, doing this thing and loving the doing of it. That's all there is; his mind and body are wholly focused here and right now: his mind is clear. No anxiety simmers in the background; there are no questions of motive or implication.

"Your mouth... your fucking mouth," Blaine says. "So fucking sweet, Kurt."

Blaine brings him down faster, pulls him up a little farther, rocks up to meet the next downward pull. It's simple. Kurt moans his approval and meets Blaine's movements with growing confidence. The hand not at the base of Blaine's cock he shifts, skidding his elbow along so he can reach up to the bottom of Blaine's ribs, skimming light fingertips along the bottom arch of them, and then tripping up farther and reaching to glance across a nipple.

And then Blaine's voice breaks into incoherency, and his hips are stuttering out of tempo. Kurt sucks hard, presses Blaine's hips down, and drags his mouth up tight and slow as Blaine comes.

Kurt doesn't swallow. He seals his lips as he pulls off Blaine's cock, slides his tongue around his mouth, through the thick, salty mess.

"Kurt," Blaine says, his hands are catching Kurt behind his deltoids, pulling him up urgently. Kurt goes up, winces as the wet tip of his too sensitive cock grazes Blaine's belly. Blaine's leaning up to kiss him, open-mouthed, and Kurt lowers himself into the kiss; Blaine's semen runs down his tongue as Kurt shares it with Blaine. Blaine makes a surprised noise in the back of his throat, and then fists one hand into Kurt's hair, pulling him deeper into the kiss, pressing up into Kurt's mouth, and greedily swiping his tongue across Kurt's.

When Blaine releases Kurt from the kiss, to collapse back into his pillows, he's breathless and wide-eyed, his lips glossy with spit and some of his own spunk. "That was..." he manages.

"Appropriate?" Kurt teases. It's barely audible: his voice is full of static. He clears his throat.

"For some values of propriety, maybe, but not any of the common ones," Blaine says, laughing softly. "That was incredible." With one hand, he plays idly with Kurt's hair, gently rearranging it with his fingers. The other hand, Blaine slides down between them, reaching for Kurt's erection.

Kurt hisses a sharp breath as Blaine wraps his fingers around his dick too roughly given Kurt's present tenderness. It's not exactly bad though; Blaine's touch is enough to rouse a fresh surge of heat beneath Kurt's skin. Discomfort vies with desire. "Ah, wait a sec, Blaine," he says lifting his hips and pulling free of Blaine's grasp. He sits back on his heels.

"Kurt?" Blaine rubs his thigh.

"I'm a little sore," Kurt says. "I want to, Blaine. I really do, but—"

Blaine looks between Kurt's face and his cock thoughtfully. Then Blaine says, "Let's scoot up." Beckons Kurt to shuffle up his body. They both move until Blaine's shifted up against the pillows a little, leaning back against the headboard, and Kurt is straddling his hips.

"Blaine?"
"I have an idea," Blaine says, reaches for the lube on the nightstand. "Hold out your hand," he says. "Whichever one you prefer to jerk off with."

Kurt extends his left hand, palm up, and Blaine squirts a generous dollop of lube into his palm. "You can do this part," Blaine says, guiding Kurt's hand to his cock. "You know how much you can take."

Kurt gingerly folds his fingers around his shaft. The cool gel is soothing and there's plenty of it; it's a lot better like this. He keeps his grip loose, his touch light. "Okay," Kurt says, making smooth, slow strokes to adjust to the contact. Blaine squeezes out more gel onto the fingertips of one hand. Kurt's not sure what he has planned. "What are you—?"

"Is your ass sore?" Blaine asks.

"No, not at all, but..." Kurt doesn't know what words his brain thought were going to follow the 'but'.

"Do you trust me, Kurt?"

Of course he does. "Yes."

"I'm just. I'm going to give you a little bit more than last night? Not that much more, just a little, okay?"

"Okay," Kurt says, his voice going thin and high. It makes him sound nervous, but he's not nervous, not really.

"It'll be good, Kurt. I promise." Blaine has his dry hand on Kurt's ass, splaying across one cheek, the inside wrist of Blaine's other hand skims across his flank.

Kurt nods.

"Tell me if you want me to stop, all right?" He shivers as Blaine's pinky brushes the top of his cleft, lightly skating down between his buttocks. Blaine is looking up at him, holding his gaze, and Kurt cannot look away.

Kurt's heart is pounding, like it's trying to chip its way out through his breastbone—maybe he is a little nervous. Kurt makes himself breathe, and he nods again. Doesn't trust his voice. The hand not on his cock he's unsure what to do with. He reaches for the headboard and just holds on.

Warm and wet, Blaine's fingertips slip down into his cleft, three coming to rest across his anus: one nestled ever so slightly against the center, the other two just above and below. Kurt holds his dick in a still hand; he wants to feel what Blaine's doing to him without distracting himself. Blaine continues to gaze up at him, like he needs permission. Kurt nods again, makes himself say it, "Go ahead."

Blaine moves his hand, but he doesn't press in or push against like Kurt expects, instead he kind of rocks his hand, running his fingertips up and down, each one slipping over his entrance in a repeating succession: one, two, three, two one, two... It's a teasing ripple of sensation; Kurt's hand spasms, tightening around his dick. He bites his lip as he moans and tilts his ass back into Blaine's touch.

"Good?" Blaine asks.

"Yeah." Kurt tips his head back, closes his eyes.

"Tell me," Blaine says. "Tell me what you want, Kurt."
"More," Kurt says, which is awfully unspecific, so he forces more words out through lips that feel clumsy and numb and not at all like they're made for speaking. "Inside, touch me inside," he says.

The tip of Blaine's middle finger stops and presses in, but not enough to breach, just so Kurt can feel the pressure of it, feel the way his body can yield—the way it will. Blaine rubs at the tension, nudging in a little with minute movements, and the slight pressure gives way to that other feeling Kurt is coming to know, the bare sort of friction—unmistakable—of intrusion. And like before, it's not much—just Blaine's fingertip—but it dominates all of Kurt's awareness. The fingers not pressing inside are moving too, massaging the edge of his rim. Kurt is wholly focused there, like every cell in his body has reoriented itself, tuned into this singular small touch of Blaine's fingertips.

Kurt lifts his head, doesn't open his eyes, and lets his head fall forward, bowing his neck, remembering to breathe. "Oh...god," he says. Last night in the tub, things were less acute, muzzier, blended and smeared with so much heat and touch and emotion; the memory of it is like a dream this morning. But this is—This is something else: bright and stark in the morning sun, in Kurt's freshly awake but unguarded state, with too much lingering fatigue to resist much of anything or to think too much.

And then Blaine jiggles his fingertip, little crazy quick flicks, and Kurt's body snaps taut, his eyes come open as his spine arches. He swears, and his grip strips forward, coming off his cock, and he catches himself against Blaine's chest with one splayed and slippery hand. It's only his hand on the headboard that keeps him upright.

Blaine sighs an astonished sort of sound. "Sorry, wow," he says. "You're really sensitive."

Kurt catches his breath and regains his balance. He looks at Blaine looking back at him. Blaine's finger edges in deeper; Kurt shudders, pants through slack lips, and stares down into Blaine's eyes. He has a sudden, irrational urge to hide, but he can't, not when they're like this. Blaine's gaze is piercing him and pinning him just as surely as his touch. And Blaine presses farther, smoothly, gloriously in and in and in, and Kurt doesn't know when it's going to stop until it does, and it feels like a lot more than last night. His heartbeat hastens, his breaths come faster and shallow, and there's a terrible wave of heat cresting within his skull, like it's trying to scour out his consciousness. "I—"

Kurt says. Then he closes his eyes. "Wait."

"Okay. Are you okay?" Blaine asks.

"I don't know," Kurt whispers.

"Do you want me to stop?"

"I don't know."

"Is it too much?"

"I don't know," Kurt feels a hot burn of tears gathering behind his closed eyelids. He doesn't open them.

"Kurt," Blaine says softly, sounding uncertain now himself. "Does it feel good?"

This one, Kurt can answer unequivocally and emphatically: "Yes."

"Are you?" Blaine pauses. "Are you scared?"

Kurt hesitates a moment with that one. He doesn't think he's scared; it's not fear. Not exactly. He doesn't want to confuse Blaine or damage his confidence. "No," he says. Even if it were fear, that's
not a reason to give up or back down from something he does actually want.

"Can you look at me, please?" Blaine asks.

Kurt opens his eyes. Blaine's gaze is unshuttered: anxious, and achingly vulnerable: as vulnerable as Kurt feels. Kurt chokes on a sob that doesn't quite make it up from his chest. He feels like his heart is about to crack open. He blinks back the gritty heat of his tears, and Blaine reaches up with his free hand to touch Kurt's cheek. "Blaine," is all Kurt can say. He wants to reach down and touch Blaine's face, too, but the tremors in the elbow of the arm that's taking his weight against the headboard tell Kurt he still needs that support. His messy hand on Blaine's chest he slides up and over until he finds Blaine's heartbeat. He curls his fingers.

"What's going on?"

"It feels so good, Blaine, but I..."

Blaine's eyes narrow as he studies Kurt. When he speaks next it's gentle and sure. "This is okay, Kurt."

"I know," Kurt says, because he does know.

"You don't. Or at least not the way you should."

Kurt blinks at him.

"You're allowed to feel good, Kurt. You're allowed to have this. With me. And I want you to—so much, god. You have no idea, how much I want to do this for you."

And whether he wants to let it or not, Kurt imagines he can feel his heart cracking open. He takes a deep shaky breath, feels how steady and strong Blaine's heart is beneath his hand, sees the certainty in Blaine's gaze and the affection. There's no reproach; just love. "All right," Kurt says, and repeats more softly, "All right."

Blaine smiles. His hand drops from Kurt's face to his shoulder, caresses down to Kurt's heart. "I think this might work better if I'm behind you," he says.

Kurt nods. "Okay."

"Okay, so I'm just going to..." Blaine slowly withdraws his finger, and it seems to Kurt that his body wants to cling to Blaine's touch, the way the muscles spasm and clamp down. It feels empty once he's gone.

"You can stay like you are, unless you want to move," Blaine says. "But I need to get up." He pats Kurt's thigh, and they rearrange themselves so that Kurt is still kneeling, bent forward, and bracing himself against the headboard and Blaine is kneeling behind him, his hands stroking lightly down Kurt's back, coming to wrap around the sides of his waist and squeezing. "Okay?"

Kurt grins despite himself. Blaine's fussing is endearing. "Yes, Blaine, I'm fine."

"Can you put your hand back on your cock?" Blaine asks.

"I need more lube," Kurt says. Blaine hands it to him, and Kurt squeezes some into his sticky palm. Then he closes his fingers back around his cock. He's cooled down a little, not enough to lose his erection, but enough that he moves his hand straight away, strokes a little heat back into his balls.
He slows his hand when Blaine's hands return to him, Blaine's palm flat over one buttock, holding him open, and then the tips of two fingers, slick and cool are prodding against his hole.

Trepidation rushes up Kurt's spine. He does trust Blaine, but this feels like maybe they've fallen out of sync. Maybe Kurt implied something he didn't mean to before. So he has to ask. "Are you going to fuck me?"

Blaine sounds surprised when he answers quickly, "No." And then, after a pause. "Are you asking me to?"

Kurt shakes his head, says, "No." Doesn't think he could bear that right now, thinks it would break something else inside him. Something that maybe needs to be broken, but he can't do that right now. This is enough.

"Just try to relax."

Kurt tries, but Blaine is edging into him with two fingers, and Kurt feels the wonderful ache of that extra stretch. Blaine works his way in slowly, with short thrusts, gradually reaching deeper, and Kurt feels how his body is giving up resisting, how Blaine's able to move more and more easily into him and against him. And then Blaine's twisting his hand and curling his fingers down inside Kurt and grazing over what must be his prostate, and Kurt makes a loud noise that sounds like he's in pain even though it's the opposite of that.

"There?" Blaine asks. He squeezes Kurt's hip with his other hand as if to steady them both.

Kurt can only nod and push back onto Blaine's hand as his knees skate out wider.

That seems to be enough confirmation for Blaine, that's he's found what he's looking for. He drags his fingers over it, firm and slow and electric. Kurt feels the twinge of pleasure all the way up his cock, all the way up his spine, catching in his throat and making him gasp for air. He hasn't been able to get anything like an angle this good on himself. Kurt forces his eyes to stay open, looks down his body at his immobile hand holding onto his dick. It feels unnecessary, like a distraction, so Kurt lets go of it, wipes the lube off on his belly and reaches up to the headboard, holds on with both hands.

Now he can feel only what Blaine is doing to him. His head drops between his arms, and he pants, open mouthed, heedless of the noises he's making, gasps and groans and higher pitched, needy whines. He sees his cock, flushed and slick at the tip, bobbing with the effort of Kurt's breathing and with the way Blaine is starting to thrust more firmly into Kurt, pressing right there, and the friction of the slide is igniting a slow burn under Kurt's skin, setting a fire in every cell. And Kurt is feeling so fucking much. His cock is just there, untouched and dripping, but aching and fiercely hard: every time Blaine's touch presses and drags just so, it's like there's a live wire running up the length of it, and Blaine's fingertips are sending little pulses of electricity along it. But it's not just his cock, it's everywhere, like Blaine's rewiring his nerves, flicking a million tiny switches on, and Kurt's breaking out in a hot shivery sweat all over and saying, too loudly, "Oh... holy..."

"Are you going to come?" Blaine asks, sounding amazed.

"Yes," Kurt says. He pinches his eyes shut; he's sweating everywhere, and though he hardly believes it himself, he feels it, knows it's inevitable, his orgasm is starting a molten hot crawl up his spine, so slow and sweet but with the momentum of a freight train. "Just don't stop."

"No, Kurt," Blaine says. "I won't."

"Fuck me," Kurt says, "With your hand. The way you would if it were your cock."
"Yes, Kurt," Blaine says, breathless.

Blaine moves the hand on Kurt's hip up to his shoulder, tugs Kurt back and pushes him down until Kurt has to let go with one hand to plant it upon the mattress. His other arm, still clenching tight to the headboard is stretched up; Kurt feels the pull of it in his muscles all the way down his waist. "Like this?" Kurt asks. He flexes his spine, pressing back onto the movement of Blaine's fingers, taking them as deep as he can.

"Just like that," Blaine answers, pumping his fingers into Kurt, making longer, firmer strokes.
"Perfect."

Kurt licks his dry lips. "Make me come, Blaine," he says.

"Yes, Kurt. I will."

Blaine's hand on his shoulder tightens, his short nails digging in, and his other hand speeds up, the heel of it audibly smacking against Kurt's ass. Kurt closes his eyes and imagines it's Blaine's cock. He knows it'll be radically different—Blaine's cock is big; thick and heavy; and it won't be agile like Blaine's fingers are, targeting their stroke right where it's perfectly incendiary. But Kurt pretends anyway, imagines each fantastic jolt of Blaine's hand into him is driven by Blaine's hips. Imagines the quick, strong thrusts shaking him apart are going to make Blaine come too.

But as his orgasm gathers, Kurt's imaginings devolve into nothing but a quiet marveling at his body, how it feels to be open like this for Blaine: how the push and pull and slap and jerk and breath and heartbeat is all coming together. Soon he's whispering Blaine's name urgently, with what little air he can scavenge from the needy drag of his lungs; and his orgasm is cresting over him, licking up his nerves, flaring bright and implacable, until Kurt can do nothing but succumb to it.

Kurt lets go of the headboard and collapses to his elbows. One ends up in a wide wet splatter of his own semen, and Kurt has a moment of being so glad this isn't his bed. The amount of bodily fluids he and Blaine have spilled and smeared over it is truly prodigious, but Kurt's not going to feel guilty about that. He's not going to feel guilty about any of it; he's done with guilt.

Blaine's fingers slip out of him, and Kurt feels empty again, but not abandoned. He's warm and good. He smiles and hums as Blaine's arms come around him and Blaine's lips press against his spine. He feels the curve of Blaine's arms. Then he hears Blaine's stomach emit a loud, querulous growl of hunger. They both laugh.

"I'll order us some breakfast," Kurt says and pushes himself up to all fours. "After I wash my hands," he adds.

~

There's enough time before the food arrives that they both get through the shower. Getting dressed is a horribly unjust imposition, and Kurt resents the bright red numbers on the digital clock, counting down the last couple of hours until they'll have to check out. Blaine stands beside him in the bathroom, combing his hair back against his skull. It looks so severe and strange after these past hours of dishevelment. Kurt works product into his damp hair and reaches for his brush and hairdryer.

~

Breakfast is a lot of food: a generous basket of pastries (fruit danishes and croissants and buttery
raisin brioche), another fruit platter with Greek yogurt, mountains of scrambled eggs, toast, hash browns, turkey sausage, grilled tomatoes, an extra large carafe of coffee, and orange juice. They eat all of it.

Kurt tosses his napkin onto his plate and asks Blaine, "So where do you want to go for lunch?"

~

Once they're packed and the room is tidy (Kurt strips the bed himself, to save housekeeping the trauma, though he's sure they've seen far worse), they still have twenty-three minutes left before they must leave, and Kurt doesn't want to leave one second sooner than that. Their bags are by the door, and Kurt is sprawled on the loveseat with Blaine lying upon him, head tucked into the shallow dip of Kurt's shoulder. Kurt strokes the fine, short hair at the nape of Blaine's neck. "Thank you," he says, and that's all he needs to say.
Kurt hums to himself as he eyeballs the two *Comme des Garçons* shirts laid out on his bed. In his hands is his McQueen skull coin scarf. The plain white shirt would provide the best backdrop for it, or he could pair the striped shirt with the contrasting cuffs with his black and white gingham tie, go for more pattern. But there's already a lot of texture in the vintage blazer he intends to wear—it's the one he wore the day he met Blaine, and Kurt's feeling more than a little sentimental this morning. But with the heavy white topstitching against the dense black wool, he doesn't want to overdo it.

He kind of wants to wear the gingham tie with the blazer: it's the tie he wore the first time he and Blaine exchanged 'I love you's'. But perhaps he's being too self-indulgent. He reconsiders the gingham tie with the white shirt. It seems too plain. Or maybe he needs to add some color, except Kurt doesn't feel like much color today. He's too saturated in nearly every other way, his stomach in strange knots of anticipation and his mind distracted and slipping with indecision. He should be able to choose a shirt and tie without difficulty, even on a Monday. But every time he closes his eyes or takes too deep a breath, there's the images painted behind his eyelids and the keen-edged sense memory fluttering in his chest of the weekend, of being with Blaine. It's like it was in the beginning of their romance, when Kurt's focus was bent so single-mindedly on the recollection of past kisses and touches and the anticipation of future ones. There's a lot more to anticipate now.

Today is Blaine's first day back at school since the assault. Kurt did see Blaine yesterday morning for brunch and to help Blaine finish a History essay. That was all ostensibly ordinary and in public, but Kurt's been feeling anything but ordinary since Friday night—and Saturday morning. It feels like eons since he's seen Blaine, though it's been less than a day. This morning is a strange echo of his mornings getting ready to drive to Dalton last year; Kurt feels like someone has put his heart in a cocktail shaker, like he's waiting, with giddy schoolboy infatuation, for the day's first glimpse of his crush.

Kurt lets out a breath and contemplates which boots to wear. At least he's got his pants on; that's one decision made. He lets the even patter of rain on the roof soothe him. It's unseasonably warm today along with the rain; perhaps Spring is coming early. The sky is darkening though, diminishing the morning light to gloom. Kurt turns on another lamp and decides on his tall black Dr. Martens: a safe and classic default.

Downstairs the doorbell rings; Blaine is early. Kurt hears Finn answer the door with a cheerful, "Hey, dude."

Blaine replies, "Hi, Finn." Then he asks, "Is Kurt upstairs?"

Finn makes an affirmative noise, possibly around a mouthful of toast.

Blaine's footsteps are even and light upon the stairs. When they approach his door Kurt calls out, "It's open." Blaine nudges the door with his shoulder and enters carrying two Starbucks coffees. Predictably, Kurt's heart stoops and his stomach flips. "Hi," Kurt says, all breathy, high-pitched, and ridiculous.

Blaine uses his elbow to push the door closed. "Hey," Blaine says; his smile is warm, his cheeks pink, and his eyes too wide and bright as they take in Kurt's state of half dress. There's rain glittering in his hair and beading on the plastic lids of the coffee. "I brought coffee," he says in a rush, a little—adorably—breathless.

"I can see that," Kurt says, smiling and indulging his desire to look at Blaine. Today Blaine wears
cuffed, dark wash jeans with a navy blue gingham shirt (Kurt lets this make his tie and shirt decision for him: he vetoes his gingham tie) with a red and blue repp tie (it's almost a cousin to the Dalton tie, but the red stripes are wider, there's a thin line of gold asymmetrically dividing the blue, and the silk is woven with the appropriate texture), and a navy cabled cricket sweater with red and white edging. Kurt suspects he's always going to have a certain visceral response to Blaine in combinations of red and navy. "You're early," he says, finding a bit more volume and control for his voice. "You look nice."

Blaine carefully sets their coffees down on Kurt's bookshelf, and lets his bag slip from his shoulder to the floor. There's heat in his gaze when he looks back up at Kurt. "So do you."

Kurt rolls his eyes and feels the answering heat of a blush across his cheeks. "I'm not finished yet." He turns to the bed to pick up the white shirt, but he's intercepted by Blaine's arms coming around him from behind.

"Wait," Blaine says urgently against the back of his neck.

Kurt waits and doesn't resist Blaine's embrace, but he does wonder. Mornings are usually just about getting ready and getting to school. This isn't what they do with their school day mornings. "Blaine, I know you're early, but I don't think we have time for—"

"Just let me hold you for a minute, please," Blaine says and his tone is hard to read.

"Okay," Kurt says, and he relaxes as Blaine's arms tighten around him and Blaine exhales warm soft breath against Kurt's neck.

"You smell really good," Blaine murmurs.

Kurt smiles, folds his arms over Blaine's, and squeezes. "Is this why you came early?" he asks.

There's a long pause before Blaine answers "Actually, no." He presses closer, and Kurt feels it against his backside, how hard Blaine is. "But now that I'm here— Can you turn around?"

Kurt turns in Blaine's arms and meets his kiss with a smile. He's careful not to muss up Blaine's hair, and Blaine takes similar care with Kurt, just lightly stroking the back and side of Kurt's neck with one hand while...

"Oh..." Kurt says, pulling back from Blaine's mouth when Blaine's other hand yanks his belt undone. "Blaine?"

"We have enough time for this," Blaine whispers, and then he drops to his knees.

There are worse reasons to be late for homeroom on a Monday.

~*~

It's third period when Kurt gets the first phone call from Karofsky, which makes Kurt's heart clench uncomfortably. It's easy to ignore while in class, but he doesn't return the call at lunch. Instead he deletes the voice-mail without listening to it and turns off his phone. He holds Blaine's hand under the table and thinks about the weekend as they eat their lunch with Tina, Mike, and Artie.

After Glee practice, Kurt slumps with rubbery legs and a sore ankle by Blaine's locker waiting for Blaine. Mr. Schue is pushing them hard for Regionals this weekend, and New Directions has a taste for blood going up against The Warblers. Blaine is working especially hard to make up for his weeks of absence; he's hung back with Mike to polish a couple moves. But it's not long before Kurt spots
them coming around the corner, Blaine flushed with exertion, still smiling. Mike looks pleased too. Kurt can't wait to get Blaine home so they can pick up where they left off this morning. He gives them a wave and pushes himself up to stand straight.

"See you guys tomorrow," Mike says and carries on. Blaine unlocks his locker while his smile fades. He sends Kurt an abruptly nervous look.

"Hey, what's up?" Kurt asks, turning to face Blaine and leaning in closer, against the locker beside him.

"I need to talk to you about something, Kurt." He's not smiling.

Kurt frowns. He can't imagine what's wrong; it's been a pretty good day. "Sounds serious," Kurt says lightly, but he reaches out and rests a hand on Blaine's arm.

"Yeah," Blaine says.

"Um, okay. Tell me?"

Blaine sighs, his gaze flicking away from Kurt and off to the side. "I can't stay for dinner."

"That's not a big deal," Kurt says; he takes his hand back to shift his bag strap upon his shoulder. "I wasn't planning anything fancy tonight, you know how Mondays go."

"No," Blaine says, dropping his chin to his chest. "I mean at all. I can't stay anymore. At least not on school nights."

Kurt's fingers freeze on his bag strap. "What?" Weeknights at home together are their time; it's a a routine Kurt missed while Blaine was injured. It's a routine he's been eager to return to: Blaine helping him with dinner—unless Carole was cooking, in which case they'd watch the news with his Dad—then there'd be dinner, doing the dishes, hanging out a bit with Finn and Sam or his parents until they'd go upstairs "to do homework" and make out until Blaine had to leave at eight-thirty.

Blaine lifts his head, and when he looks at Kurt, it's resigned. "I have to be home by six. I have a new curfew."

Kurt blinks. "Why?" he asks slowly.

"My Dad," Blaine says. "He thinks I'm...veering out of control or something. Getting myself into dangerous situations."

"And having dinner at my house is dangerous?" Kurt says, attempts a smile though he doesn't feel it. Blaine doesn't smile. "He means the—"

"I know what he means," Kurt says softly, smile vanishing.

"He says I see you all day at school anyway, so I need to be home for dinner," Blaine explains reasonably, like he's trying to make his Dad's case.

Kurt's frown returns as a scowl. "But we don't see each other all day at school, Blaine. We've only got one class together. Other than that it's just lunch and Glee—"

"I know, Kurt. But I can't do anything about it."

"Did you try?" Kurt demands, and it comes out more harshly than he means it to.
Blaine's gaze snaps up with a quick flash of anger. "Of course I did. Even my Mom..." Blaine's posture stiffens, and he continues more calmly, "Believe it or not, this is the compromise. I can still stay for dinner on Fridays and Saturdays."

Kurt closes his eyes, doesn't ask if Blaine will still be able to sleep over; he doesn't want to know the answer just yet. "Okay, fine," he says. "What about me going over there on a weeknight. Is that allowed?"

"I— I guess, but it's... probably not a good idea. At least not for now."

"Blaine," Kurt says. He opens his eyes to see Blaine hugging himself like he's trying to disappear.

"I know this sucks. But my Dad," Blaine says. "He just needs some more time..."

"Three years hasn't been enough?"

"Kurt," Blaine says, his gaze distressed; his voice breaks. "I can't change him."

"Hey," Kurt says. He steps forward and wraps his arms around Blaine. Doesn't know what to say. He just doesn't know what Blaine's father is like, doesn't understand it at all. So he says that. "I don't get your Dad."

Blaine returns the hug. "I know, and I'm glad you don't. But, hey, he still travels a lot," Blaine says, though his optimism sounds forced. "So there's that anyway. And my Mom still likes you."

"Yeah," Kurt says. "We're going to need a schedule, huh?" Kurt tries again at levity. This time it works.
Blaine laughs briefly, sniffs, and squeezes Kurt until it hurts. "Yeah, probably."

"Are you okay?" Kurt asks with the little breath Blaine hasn't squeezed from him.

"I'm— It's nothing new," Blaine says, releasing Kurt. "I'm fine."

Kurt tries to smile more widely. "You'll still call me after dinner?" he asks.

Blaine nods. "Of course."

~

It's weird, Blaine dropping him off at the end of his driveway without even getting out of the car, but Blaine seems anxious to get home. Kurt stands at the edge of the street and watches, the light rain making his hair droop, until Blaine's car has turned the corner and disappeared from view. Then he goes inside.

~*~

Kurt's phone rings at eight PM sharp. "Hi," Kurt says, trying his best to sound upbeat, like nothing's wrong.

"Hey," Blaine replies.

"So, how's your evening been?" Kurt lies down on his bed, his head toward the foot of it, his feet propped up against his headboard.

"Fine, I guess. Kurt, I'm sorry."
"No, it's... well, it's not fine, but it's... it is what it is," Kurt says.

There's a long silence. It feels awkward. "Blaine?" Kurt prompts.

"Yes?"

"Are you okay?"

Kurt hears a sigh. "I just wish I were there."

"Me too."

Blaine doesn't say anything then. It seems they just listen to each other breathe for a time. The longer it goes on the more Kurt doesn't know what to say. He feels an inappropriate giggle threatening.

"Oh my god, Blaine," Kurt says finally. He starts to laugh, so he can let it out before it turns into a more humiliating a sound.

"What?" Blaine does not sound amused; he sounds tired.

"Is this what it's going to be like in the Autumn when I call you from New York?"

"Kurt, no—" Kurt hears Blaine sigh again. "I'm just— Maybe I should let you go."

"No, no," Kurt protests quickly. "Please, stay with me. I just... I wish I could do something to help."

"There's noth—"

Kurt's phone bleeps at him; he has another call. But he's lost Blaine before he can even see who it is: "You should answer that," Blaine says. "I'm not good company. I'll see you tomorrow, Kurt."

"Blaine—" Kurt says, but the line is already dead. The incoming call is David Karofsky. Kurt stabs the ignore button and tosses his phone at his pillows. "Fuck." he says to no one.

He glares at what remains of his Calculus homework. He can finish it in homeroom in the morning. He thinks about calling his Dad, but at this hour, he'll still be working—networking anyway, at a local bar. Carole is still at work, and Kurt has little interest in discussing any of this with Rachel or Mercedes. In fact, he doesn't really want to talk about it at all. Kurt gets off his bed and heads for his door. In the hallway he can hear the muffled sound of automatic gunfire coming from Finn's room, along with a loud whoop and a "Dude! Get him!" from Sam followed by Finn shouting, "Sam, your other left!" Kurt hesitates only a moment before heading down the hall and knocking on Finn's door.

He's welcomed with a "Hey, Kurt," and then Sam tosses him his game controller. "Your turn. This map's killing me."

~*~

Tuesday morning Kurt meets Blaine at school. Apparently it's easier this way, and Kurt's not inclined to argue the point this morning with Blaine. So when Rachel asks Kurt if he'd like to get a coffee and look at Bridal magazines with her after Glee, Kurt says yes. He does invite Blaine to join them too. The Lima Bean is, after all, on the way to Blaine's home. Blaine declines, insists he needs to take what time he does have to get himself back in shape for the weekend competition. He's probably right, so Kurt smiles and squeezes his hand and says he'll call him tonight. He doesn't tell Blaine that David Karofsky has called him twice more today—or at all. Kurt doesn't tell anyone.

Kurt makes cheese enchiladas for dinner to make the most of his Dad not actually being there.
They're really good, but he burns his fingertips rolling the hot tortillas. It's demoralizing that despite his efforts and injury, Finn and Sam scarf them down like takeouts. Kurt's missing Blaine and missing his Dad and missing Carole and starting to resent every little sound his phone makes. He's feeling like the worst stepbrother in the universe for not telling Finn about Sebastian's blackmail threat (that one is for Rachel to broach, and she wants to sleep on it). And not telling Blaine about either Karofsky or Sebastian has him feeling like the worst boyfriend in the universe.

Instead he babbles to Blaine about the New York apartments he's been looking at online and wondering how he'll afford one. And maybe, you know, he should stay in the dorm his first year—it looks like NYADA has decent dorms—to save money so he and Blaine can get a place together the following year. He'll probably end up with a terrible roommate though, someone who snores and leaves dirty laundry lying around and borrows his clothes. But Rachel and Finn, if they're married (still a terrible and tragic idea), will want a place of their own without Kurt. And Kurt is getting sick of the sound of his own voice and frustrated that even daydreams of the future aren't perking Blaine up from his funk.

"So what do you think I should sing for my audition?" Kurt asks him. Maybe a direct question will elicit more than quiet murmurs of agreement.

"I thought you'd already decided it was going to be 'The Music of the Night' or 'Defying Gravity'," Blaine says.

"Well, yeah," Kurt says, "But I want to keep an open mind. The perfect song might still be out there, waiting for me to find it."

Kurt can almost hear Blaine shrug.

So he says, just to be provocative, "What about 'Not the Boy Next Door'?"

"From The Boy From Oz?" Blaine asks. He sounds intrigued. It's progress.

"Yes," Kurt confirms. "The one Hugh Jackman—"

"I know the one, Kurt. Wow, yeah, you could totally pull that off," Blaine says with easy confidence in his voice; there's no trace of incredulity.

Kurt blinks. "I was kidding," Kurt says.

"Why? It's perfect for you."

Kurt closes his mouth.

"You don't think so?" Blaine asks.

"Don't you think it would be a little too—?"

"It would be amazing, Kurt," Blaine says. "Not to mention hot."

"Hot. Seriously?" Kurt asks.

"Yes."

"Me in those pants? Dancing like... that?"

"Like I said, hot."
"But—"

"I saw you do 'Single Ladies' at Rachel's party, Kurt. You can't pretend like you don't know how to portray sex appeal anymore."

"Well, of course you think that. You're biased, Blaine."

"I may be, but that doesn't make me wrong."

"Huh," Kurt says.

"You should think about it, Kurt," Blaine says.

Kurt adds it to his list. Tentatively.

~*~

The song Blaine sings for Kurt Wednesday is beautiful. His voice is stunning and raw—the best it's ever been, Kurt thinks. He blinks back a few tears. But it's not inspirational, not in the way Kurt understands the word. Cathartic maybe.

"What do you think?" Blaine asks earnestly and with that approval seeking look Kurt is learning to both love and hate.

"Incredible," Kurt says honestly. He stands and approaches Blaine, steps into the light so Blaine can see how moved Kurt has been. "That inspires you, Blaine?" Kurt wonders what it inspires. It makes him want to cry.

"I—" Blaine rubs the back of his neck and tilts his head, uncertain. "You don't think it's right?"

"It's," Kurt starts gently. "I think it's beautiful, but it's sort of... sad, don't you think?"

"Inspiration can be sad," Blaine says.

Kurt isn't sure he understands.

"Melancholy, you know, the song's about hope and patience when things aren't going so well."

"Okay," Kurt says. "Melancholy is inspiring?"

"Um, yeah, like... Okay, I know you like Keats' poetry," Blaine explains. "That's melancholy and inspirational, right? When you realize that all of this," Blaine gestures around himself. "It's all transitory, it makes it more precious. Makes you appreciate what you've got right in front of you." He smiles at Kurt and reaches out a hand, which Kurt takes. Lets Blaine pull him in closer.

"Look," Blaine says. "I know I've been kind of moody this week," he says.

"Kind of?" Kurt says with a wry grin.

Blaine laughs softly, bows his head for a moment before he looks back up at Kurt, vulnerable. "It's just—so many things, Kurt. Dalton didn't do anything, because of who Sebastian's father is. And my father doesn't want to press charges—"

"I didn't think you wanted to either?" Kurt says.

"No, I don't, not really," Blaine says, "I don't want the Warblers to be banned from competition or
anything. But I wanted him to at least want to, you know? I wanted to have to talk him down from it, but it's all politics to him, and as far as I'm concerned..." Blaine trails off, bitterness twisting his mouth.

"What?"

"He acts like it's my fault, like he's blaming me for what happened. It's like he thinks I brought it on myself."

"What about your Mom?" Kurt asks. Surely she's an ally in this. Surely she's explained to Mr. Anderson what happened.

Blaine just shrugs. "Anyway," Blaine says, "I don't want to dwell on that stuff, the things I can't change. I want to work hard and win this thing on Saturday."

"Me too," Kurt says, and steals a glance at Blaine's watch. "You know, we have time to do something, if you want. Get a coffee? I'll buy you one of the gingerbread men. Did you know they've started icing them with bowties? I think they miss you."

"Ugh," Blaine says. "I cannot handle The Lima Bean just yet. If I even see Sebastian there."

"Okay," Kurt says, "That's fine." He thinks about what Blaine has said about his song and poetry and melancholy and inspiration. He has an idea. "I know where we can go."

~*~

It's sunny and clear outside, and though the sun is low in the winter sky, the day feels freshly washed and bright after the rain. Kurt pulls out his sunglasses. "You can ride with me," he says to Blaine as they cross the parking lot. "It's not far."

It's a six minute drive to the cemetery where his mother is buried. The silence in the car grows denser somehow as Kurt pulls in to park. "I usually visit in March," Kurt says. "I bring daffodils."

From the passenger seat, Blaine is looking at him with so much sympathy, Kurt's worried Blaine might cry.

"It's okay," Kurt reassures. "This isn't..." He tries to find the right words. It isn't not sad, but it's not an open wound either. It hurts—god, it will never not hurt—but it's part of him now. Familiar. He knows this particular pain well enough; it doesn't cripple him. Not if he's careful with it, anyway, and he knows how to be careful. "I just wanted to bring you here, after what you said about transitory things and valuing what we have," Kurt says. "It made me realize I never have brought you here."

"Okay," Blaine says, and they get out of the car.

Kurt offers Blaine his hand and they walk, hand in hand, between the lines of tombstones, over the damp winter-brown grass, until they get to Kurt's mother's headstone. Kurt looks at the ground, notes the tiny bright green spikes of new growth peeking between the dead blades of last Summer.

They stand quietly for a time. Blaine keeps his grip firm on Kurt's hand. Kurt pushes his sunglasses up into his hair, and squints at Blaine. "She would have liked you a lot," Kurt says. "I'm certain of it."

Blaine smiles back, squeezes Kurt's hand. "So are you introducing me to her now, or...?"

"Well, I figured it was well past time I introduced her to the boy who took my virtue," Kurt says.
facetiously. Then more seriously, he says, "No, not really. I mean, you know I don't believe in that stuff, souls or an afterlife. I don't think she's looking down on us and seeing you or hearing me or anything."

"Then what do you do here?"

Kurt shrugs. "I remember her. I remember my Dad with her, and I try to be grateful for the good memories. Grateful she chose my Dad, and grateful he chose her. Sometimes I try to imagine her, what she would say to me if she were still alive. It's comforting sometimes to pretend I can talk to her, even though I know it's just a fantasy."

Blaine nods. "So what was she like?"

The memories aren't that hard to summon, standing here. "She laughed a lot—we did—all three of us. There was a lot of laughter when I was young. She was playful. She liked music, and she sang. Not professionally or like we do, just around the house, you know? And she had a garden every spring. She'd always plant peas. I remember the peas most of all because she'd let me eat them straight out of the pods still hanging on the plants. My Dad complained he never got any.

"She bought me my first tea set, and she taught me how to make little cakes and *petit fours* out of Play-Doh and clay. She made the best waffles and pancakes and French toast..." Kurt trails off with a smile. "My Dad always tells me I'm a lot like her."

"So she was beautiful," Blaine says, and it's a cheesy line, but Blaine says it with such sincerity and brightness in his eyes, Kurt can't be anything but warmed by it.

"She was," Kurt says. "Remind me to get out the photo albums Friday. You're still coming over Friday, right?"

"Yes," Blaine says, "and I will."

~*~

It's in French class Thursday that Kurt hears the news about David Karofsky. Both Mr. Schuester and Miss Pillsbury come. They look at him first as they stand in the door, and Kurt's heart quails; he goes cold to his toes. But they don't beckon him to come with them, instead they speak quietly to his teacher, and then they come in. Miss Pillsbury tells the class what's happened, explains she'll be in her office all day, and she'll be staying after school if anyone needs to talk. Or they can make an appointment. She says a lot of other things too, but Kurt doesn't hear them. His numb fingers blindly reach into his jacket pocket for his phone; his fingertips are clumsy on the slick glass front of it. He stares at the faux wood grain of his desk and doesn't blink until he hears Mr. Schuester saying his name. "Kurt? Do you need a minute?"

Kurt looks up, realizes everyone is now staring at him. Of course they are. "No, Mr. Schue," Kurt makes himself say with a confidence he in no way feels. "I'm fine." He reaches for his pencil, turns to the next page in his text book and makes his gaze track over the excerpt from *Les Miserables*.

~

Blaine is waiting at Kurt's locker between classes looking like the most beautiful thing in the whole of existence to Kurt right then. He doesn't check his urge to touch Blaine, just reaches for him and hugs him tightly. "Are you okay?" Blaine asks him.

"Mmm," is all Kurt can manage. He can't talk, can't tell Blaine. He's so ashamed. He pinches his eyes shut and holds on to Blaine. He knows Blaine will forgive him if he tells him, but he's not sure
he deserves that.

Blaine would have answered David's calls. Would've texted David the courage to face the bullies. Would have known that David was in danger. Would have been there for him, because Blaine is a thoughtful, kind, and compassionate person. Kurt should have known. It was so obvious at Breadstix that night, that Nick was going to be a problem. So maybe Kurt did know, and he chose to ignore it, chose to ignore the phone calls because he—

He what? He couldn't stand the thought of David's crush on him, of accidentally leading him on, of making him think Kurt could possibly like him? But hadn't Kurt said "friends" to David?

Kurt sniffs back his tears and lets go of Blaine. "Thank you," he whispers.

"Sure," Blaine says tenderly with a tremor in his smile. He reaches up to smooth the shoulder seam of Kurt's shirt. "Do you want to go to the hospital after school?"

Kurt shakes his head. He's not ready for that. "Not yet," he says.

Blaine walks Kurt to his next class, his hand gentle at Kurt's elbow. "Blaine," Kurt says as they prepare to part at the classroom door.

"Yes?"

"You're a really good person. I hope you know that."

"Kurt?"

The bell rings.

"I'll see you later, okay?" Kurt says and heads inside.

~

The guilt and shame is a terrible ache in his heart for the rest of the day, and Kurt doesn't know what to do with it until he sees Joe in the courtyard hugging Santana. He approaches Joe cautiously after Santana has gone. Asks him if he can go to their emergency God Squad meeting this afternoon since Mr. Schue has canceled Glee practice. One thing Kurt knows about Christians is that they understand guilt and sin. Joe says, "Of course," and pats him on the shoulder. It may be the first time they've talked.

~

He's sitting on the desk in the Spanish room staring at his shoes as Quinn, who is still angry at him, tells him again that Karofsky—and only Karofsky—is responsible for what he did. That Kurt—of all people—is feeling guilt proves how selfish and cruel a thing suicide is. There's a reason it's a mortal sin. Kurt wants to tell her again that it's not that black and white, not that simple. People aren't islands. She's never been that alone, felt that completely despised. She's never had everyone turn their back on her and tell her she's better off dead. Kurt's never even been that abandoned, but he's had enough of a glimpse...

Mercedes is saying more softly and gently, "She's right, Kurt. It's not your fault. Despair isn't something you could have saved him from."

But he knows she's wrong, because he knows how Blaine saved him. All he had to do was answer the damned phone, invite David to have coffee. If people don't try to save each other when they can't
save themselves, then who does? She'd probably say God, but Kurt knows that's just a comforting lie. And that conversation isn't why he's here.

Then there's the sound of footsteps. Kurt looks up to see Blaine with Santana and Brittany in the open doorway. "Kurt?" Blaine says.

Kurt wipes his cheek with the cuff of his shirt. "Yes?"

"I... I got a call from Sebastian," Blaine says. "He says he wants to talk. About a truce, and... about doing something for Karofsky. I—" Blaine glances at Santana. She's wearing her most fierce skeptical bitch face. "I don't want to go alone," Blaine says.

Blaine answered Sebastian's call; Kurt will go with him. "Count me in," he says.

~*~

When Kurt gets home from The Lima Bean, his Dad's car is in the driveway. The familiar sight of it brings the weight of the day down upon Kurt. All the things he's been trying to keep aloft to get through it, they fall upon him like stones. His feet are heavy as he trudges upstairs.

"Dad?" Kurt asks from the doorway. He tries to make his voice sound normal, but it comes out sort of watery and weak. His Dad will know something is wrong immediately, but Kurt wanted to be able to tell him with words, not with his inability to control his own voice. He's a singer, for goodness sake. His Dad looks up from the open suitcase on the bed. He's only just home, Kurt realizes, and unpacking from his latest trip to and from D.C. But he's been back long enough to have changed out of his suit. The constant back and forth is still settling into routine for the household. Kurt has to look at the calendar on the fridge to remember when his Dad is going, when he's coming home. It's Thursday; his Dad is home until Sunday afternoon, and then he won't be back again until the following Saturday morning.

"Hey..." his Dad says, and drops the carefully rolled up tie in his hand. It unspools as it falls onto the bed, draping like a dog's tongue over a pile of t-shirts. It's the silver-blue pin dot tie Kurt gave him the day after the election. A power tie for the twenty-first century, Kurt had called it.

Kurt tries to blink and sniff back his tears. He's not quite crying, but there's only a fragile, tissue thin piece of will keeping him from it. "Hi."

"What is it, Kurt?"

Kurt puts a hand on the doorjamb, tries to dig his fingernails into the slick enamel paint on the trim, but it doesn't give way. "Um," Kurt says. "You remember that boy? David Karofsky?"

A flash of paternal protection hardens his Dad's eyes and his voice. "What's happened? What's he done? Has he hurt you? Or Blaine?"

"No, Dad. He's—" Kurt swallows, but his throat still feels too tight for air. "He's in hospital. He tried to—" Kurt breaks off with a sob, sways against the door frame as his knees go numb. His temple hits the hard edge of the wood trim, and Kurt closes his eyes.

Then his Dad's hands are on his shoulders; his Dad's voice is close and suddenly soft, cracking with worry. "Kurt, buddy—"

"He tried to kill himself," Kurt whispers. The tears are welling up in his eyes now, making his vision swim and his eyelashes tangle and clump as he tries to open his eyes. It feels like there's a steel box around his heart, and it's far too small. His chest hurts. He can barely expand his lungs for enough
air. His breaths are jagged, useless spasms.

"Hey, hey, hey..." his Dad is murmuring, carefully wrapping a strong arm around Kurt's shoulders and supporting him as he leads him away from the door. Kurt opens his eyes enough to make sure he doesn't stumble. "Sit down," his Dad says gently, and they sit on the padded bench at the end of the bed. He rubs Kurt's back. "Breathe, kiddo," he says.

Kurt hiccups out a "can't," and then he starts to cry. He cries like he hasn't cried with his Dad in nearly ten years.

"Oh, buddy, hey," his Dad says, bewildered, but his arms come around Kurt and pull him against his chest. He rocks Kurt, shushes him, tells him it's okay, it's okay, it's okay. There's no way his Dad knows, no way he understands what's happened, but he's holding onto Kurt exactly as if he does.

There's less of his Dad and more of Kurt than there was the last time his Dad held him like this. It's still familiar though. Kurt clings to that solid comfort, curls his fingers into the feather soft flannel of his Dad's shirt until it feels like his fingerbones will snap. It's the smell of him—English Leather and motor oil—and the arms that could once hold all of Kurt, the hands that haven't wiped away his tears for years now but always did so gently. And there's the slightly out of cadence heartbeat beneath his cheek that Kurt desperately hopes never ever falters again. And Kurt cries.
Sometimes Kurt is convinced Rachel Berry is out to ruin his life. Friday afternoon after Glee practice and Mr. Schue's sharing circle, Kurt just wants to take Blaine home, take him up to his room, put on some relaxing music, strip down to their underwear, and cuddle until they fall asleep. At some later point, there might be food and a movie and some of the sex they've been missing, but right now Kurt just wants Blaine close, and he wants to be unconscious. He and Blaine are walking down the wide empty hall, hand in hand, toward the parking lot exit when Kurt hears the tap tap tap of Rachel's Mary Janes as she jogs up behind them.

"Kurt, wait!" she calls out. "I need your help."

Blaine turns to face her first, releasing Kurt's hand. Kurt sighs and turns more slowly. "Yes?" he asks.

Rachel takes a breath and holds it for a moment, her gaze darting between them. Then she speaks in a dramatic stage whisper, "So Finn and I are getting married tomorrow after we win Regionals."

There's some outrage or incredulity Kurt expects he should be feeling, but he's not got it in him today to summon up much of anything beyond wanting to go home. Her announcement isn't even all that surprising, really. The crazy has become consistent enough, he half expects it. He looks at her and waits for her to continue, but she's staring at him as if bracing herself for his disapproval. In his peripheral vision, he sees Blaine has turned to look at him, too. They both expect him to say something

"Okay, so you've moved up the date of the Finchel marriage trainwreck extravaganza," he says so she won't be disappointed, but his heart's not in it.

Rachel smiles. "Yes. I mean, it's not a trainwreck—of course it's not—we just didn't want to wait any longer because— Well, you know, Kurt, how short life can be, we never know when something might..." Rachel trails off blinking furiously. She rallies to continue, "Anyway. I need you to make a wedding cake for us. I printed out the recipe I want you to use. It's vegan." She presents him with a small stack of printed pages fastened with a hot pink heart-shaped paperclip; there's a neatly folded twenty dollar bill tucked on top. "That's to cover the cost of ingredients," she says.

"Rachel..." Kurt says.

"Please, Kurt? I know it's last minute, but I couldn't get any of the local bakeries to do it, and you already know how to bake vegan cakes. My Dads and I will be too busy making finger sandwiches and other stuff tonight." She gives him a wide-eyed pleading gaze; one he can't really resist, unless he's very angry. Right now he's only very tired. "You're the only person I trust with this. I need you," she says softly.

"I'll help," Blaine says, nudging Kurt's shoulder with his own. "Come on, it'll be fun."

"Fun," Kurt says skeptically. He takes the recipe and the money from her hand. "Fine, but you'll owe me."

"Of course," Rachel nods. "Anything. If you guys ever get married, I'll be your wedding planning slave."

Beside him, Blaine chuckles softly, but Kurt replies seriously. "I will hold you to that, you know."
Rachel laughs brightly and throws her arms around Kurt's shoulders. He staggers back in surprise. There's usually some warning first, but he returns the hug.

"Thank you, Kurt. This means so much to me," she says and squeezes him tightly. "You know what else? Tomorrow I'm getting a brother."

Kurt smiles despite himself, glances at Blaine with a roll of his eyes. "Okay, sister, I need to breathe," he says to Rachel.

She lets go and steps back. "I forgot to mention, I want both of you in the bridal party," she says, and then she turns to Blaine. "And thank you, too, Blaine." She leans forward to kiss him on the cheek, then turns with a swirl of her skirt and heads swiftly back down the hall. "Call me if you have any problems, Kurt!" is the last thing she says.

~*~

They have to go to all three supermarkets in the area to get the ingredients needed for the vegan raspberry-lemon wedding cake Rachel wants. Kurt makes sure they also have everything they need for a back up carrot cake if the recipe fails. They'll have to make do with frozen raspberries for the raspberry puree. Fortunately the florist has organically grown roses she promises will be safe for use with food. Kurt doesn't think they'll have time for decorations fancier than some artfully arranged rose petals. He hopes Carole and his Dad won't mind if they reuse the cake topper from their wedding cake. Perhaps it'll count as something borrowed.

When he and Blaine finally get home with the groceries and flowers, Finn, his Dad, and Carole are gone. They're having dinner and helping with wedding prep at Chez Berry tonight. Kurt doesn't know if it's some kind of family bonding thing or one last intervention attempt by the grown ups. Either way, Kurt is now grateful he's been tasked with nothing more fraught than making the cake. Sam is still home, and he helps get the bags from the car into the kitchen and unpacked as Kurt assembles the tools and ingredients they're going to need. He's going to make three layers, which is going to require lot of raspberry puree, lemon frosting, and sugar-glazed rose petals.

Blaine is already getting the food processor and the fine chinoise out for the raspberries. They talked strategy in the car: Blaine will do the raspberries and the flowers. Kurt will make the cakes and the frosting. Sam is hovering in the kitchen, a little tense and uncertain. Kurt pauses in the open door of the pantry, the canister of cake flour in his hands and looks at him. "Yes, Sam?"

"What can I do to help?" Sam asks. He picks up one of the packs of tofu (they're for the frosting) from the counter and frowns at it.

Nothing, is the first word that comes to Kurt's mind, but doesn't say it. Tries to think of something more diplomatic. Sam is sincere, but he's got little intuition about the kitchen and food preparation. Maybe he can send Sam out for takeouts. They'll all still need dinner.

"You can help me with the roses," Blaine says, drawing both Kurt's and Sam's attention. "I'll show you what we need to do, Sam. It's not hard, but they're going to take a while. You can get started while I make the puree."

"Cool," Sam says and moves over to where Blaine's getting set up near the sink.

Kurt gives Blaine a grateful smile and turns back to the pantry for the sugar.

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Once the last cake is in the oven, the rose petals are drying on sheets of wax paper, and both the
frosting and the puree are ready for the cooling cakes, Kurt sends Blaine and Sam out to get Chinese food. He puts some brown rice on to cook (none of the local restaurants serve it), loads the dishwasher, and sets some coffee to brew.

~

They eat their dinner in front of the television, watching repeats of *Friends*. For dessert, Kurt makes up little samples of the cake from the pieces he's trimmed off to make three graduated tiers. Sam is unsure of the frosting, but tries it anyway after Kurt tells him to just think of it as having extra protein. The delicate flavor of the tofu is lost in the lemon, sugar, and vanilla anyway; and Kurt gets approval from both Sam and Blaine, which is fantastic, because Kurt really doesn't want to start making a carrot cake right now. He hides his yawn behind the edge of his coffee cup and forces himself to stand. "If you guys wouldn't mind doing the rest of the dishes, I'll finish icing the cake," he says.

The cake, in the finish, turns out amazingly. Kurt even impresses himself.

~*~

His Dad and Carole and Finn make it home at some point. They 'ooh' and 'aah' appropriately over the cake. Kurt makes sure to tell them it was a group effort. Carole ruffles Sam's hair and hugs Blaine; and Finn seems genuinely touched by the effort. His Dad says to Blaine, "Good to see you again, kid," and squeezes his shoulder. Then it's well past time for bed. Kurt thinks he's going to be relying mostly on muscle memory to get through the performances tomorrow. He hopes it will be enough. For the first time, he's glad he doesn't have a competition solo.

By the time they've got up to his bedroom, Kurt is failing to control his yawning. And then it's making Blaine yawn ridiculously too as he unzips his bag to get his toiletry kit and pajamas. Kurt starts to giggle around his next yawn before falling face first against his pillows to stifle it.

It was an unwise move; now that he's down, he's not sure he's getting back up. And of course he's wearing the tall Docs today. It takes a Herculean effort to roll over and look up at Blaine with a smile of entreaty. "Can you help me with my boots?" he asks and another yawn takes him on the "please?" morphing it into some kind of marine mammal sound. "Sorry," he says against the back of his hand. Blaine just smiles at him and abandons his overnight bag to come over to the bed, leaning one knee up on the mattress as he reaches to fold a hand over the nearest of Kurt's ankles, which are dangling off the edge of the bed. "I forgot to tell you that you look really great today," Blaine says softly. He runs his hand up the side of the boot and Kurt enjoys the pressure of Blaine's touch muted by the leather barrier. Kurt doesn't understand why it's erotic, but even with his fatigue, he feels it. He can't be bothered doing much about it though.

"I look great every day," Kurt says.

"Well, there are degrees of great," Blaine says. He brings his other hand to Kurt's leather wrapped calf, slides it up to join his other hand at the top of the laces. He tugs the bow free, and pulls the top of the laces slack. "I like these striped pants," he says.

"Mmm, thank you," Kurt says, letting his eyelids close and enjoying the gentle tug as Blaine works his way down the criss-cross of laces, occasionally starting over again at the top when he runs out of slack.

"McQueen?" Blaine asks.
"You have a good eye, Blaine Anderson."

Blaine hums agreement, but doesn't say anything else. The first boot comes off. Kurt sighs in relief, rotates his ankle, and wriggles his sock clad toes. Blaine goes to work on the other boot.

Eventually the silence between them crosses from comfortable into too much, and Kurt realizes Blaine has been subdued all day. "You've been kind of quiet tonight. Are you all right?" he asks.

"Shouldn't I be asking you that?"

And that's when Kurt also realizes he hasn't thought about David once since Rachel tasked him with her wedding cake. He's been so focused on it, he stopped tracking why he's so exhausted. But, he suspects, Blaine hasn't been so lucky. "I'm... okay," Kurt says, and the easy, comfortable fatigue of his body gives way to the darker sink of mental and emotional fatigue. It feels like someone dialed up the gravity. He feels a twinge of tears behind his eyelids, but just a twinge. Still, it's enough to make his breath shake as he inhales to speak. "I'm going to visit David tomorrow, before the wedding," Kurt says. He opens his eyes as Blaine pulls his other boot off.

"Do you want me to go with you?" Blaine asks. He stands with Kurt's boots and takes them over to Kurt's closet.

Kurt scavenges enough impetus to sit up and unknot his scarf. "You can," he says, "If you want to."

Blaine nods and holds out a hand for Kurt's scarf.

"Hamper?" he asks as Kurt passes it to him.

"Mirror," Kurt says; silk never goes in the hamper.

Blaine drapes the scarf over the edge of the dresser mirror with the other scarves awaiting hand washing. "I doubt he'll want to see me, but I'll go with you and wait in the lobby or whatever." Blaine turns back with a thin not-quite-smile tightening his lips. "I want to be there for you," he says, and the 'not him' lies implicit in Blaine's tone. Kurt didn't expect that.

"I'm sure he'd—" Kurt starts to protest, because David needs, if not friendship, then at least camaraderie. But then he thinks about it more, remembers how David has responded to Blaine in the past and considers how he must feel about Blaine now. Blaine is most likely correct. "Yeah, okay." He gets up so he can finish undressing. "I'll definitely feel better with you there."

They continue getting ready for bed mostly in silence after that: Kurt preoccupied with planning for the hospital visit, the competition in the morning, the wedding; and Blaine with whatever sub or super set of that is on his mind. Fatigue drags insistently at Kurt's limbs, and he wishes he could banish it, just for a little while, so he could make the most of being with Blaine tonight. It's been a month since Blaine has slept over, but he can't recall enough energy or desire right now. Being close is enough; it's all he needs. Anything more would be luxury, so Kurt doesn't fight it. As soon as he's got the covers pulled up and Blaine has tugged him close enough to pillow Kurt's head with his shoulder, Kurt is covering another jaw-cracking yawn with his hand and growing woozy with sleepiness. Blaine presses a kiss to his forehead, and Kurt lets sleep take him.

"~

It doesn't last. Kurt wakes abruptly, terrified. Dread clings like cobwebs. He's cold, his heart gallops, and he's reaching for his lamp. He looks up for the pasty gray light of the high basement window and doesn't find it. The neighbor's security light must have blown. And then his hand, instead of meeting the hard edge of his night table or the cold metal of his lamp, meets a mound of bedding. It's warm.

Kurt stops breathing as reality flips and spins itself over and around and about like a gyroscope, and
the comprehension of where he is and when he is belts into him like he's been unplugged from The Matrix. He's upstairs in the new house in a new bed with his boyfriend. It's his senior year. No one has died, not recently anyway. Someone is in hospital but it's not his Dad or Carole or Blaine or Finn or Rachel or Mercedes... or any of the other people commonly on that mental list of people he fears terrible things happening to. And he's pretty sure he doesn't know kung fu.

Kurt exhales slowly, counts to three, inhales, counts to three, exhales again until his heartbeat has steadied and slowed and he no longer feels quite so much like his brain is jammed in his skull backwards. The nightmare—it must have been one—is vague, the vision of it faded to spectral shadows in the back of his mind, sinking back into the obscurity of his subconscious. He feels himself forgetting the dream even as he tries to remember it. All that remains is a deeply embedded sense of something lost. It's enough that the strangling sensation in his chest lingers, like there's been a monstrous fist squeezing his heart.

More carefully, Kurt reaches for Blaine. He doesn't wish to wake him, just needs the reassurance of his presence. To stifle the urge to say Blaine's name, Kurt presses his lips together firmly. It's too dark to make out much of anything, but Kurt senses Blaine is facing him, lying on his side. His hand alights upon Blaine's shoulder. Softly, slowly, Blaine's pajamas crumple beneath the weight of Kurt's hand, and Kurt holds his breath. Blaine doesn't stir. Kurt relaxes his lips and his lungs, releases a shallow breath. He moves closer to Blaine, drapes his arm over and bends his elbow up so he can lay his fingers against the back of Blaine's head. He moves gingerly, quietly, as he leans in near to feel the warmth of Blaine's breath mingling with his own. Close enough to catch Blaine's scent. Close enough to brush his lips across Blaine's jaw and to feel the scuff of the day's hair growth rasp against his tender lips. And at last, close enough to seek the pillowy softness of Blaine's lips to soothe the resulting harsh buzz of his own. His nose glances against Blaine's, and in the still dark quiet of the night it seems such a strange, intimate contact.

It's not really a kiss Kurt gives Blaine, more the ghost of one. Kurt holds his lips still against Blaine's, touching, not pressing. Sharing little sips of his sleep deepened breaths. Kurt closes his eyes and slides a leg forward until Blaine's knee presses against his thigh. He dares to move his fingers against Blaine's scalp, burying his fingertips in the smooth strands of his hair as if holding him close, but he's not applying any force.

He's too alert to drift back into sleep; the adrenaline has done its job well. So Kurt holds Blaine, tries to memorize this, every point of contact, every shift of breath or faint flutter of a heartbeat. He loses track of the passage of time.

Then Blaine stirs in his arms, his lips flex, and his fingertips venture warm against Kurt's chest. He speaks against Kurt's lips, drowsy and soft, "Kurt?"

Speaking isn't quite enough to break the spell. "Did I wake you?" Kurt murmurs.

With a slight shake of his head, Blaine replies, "No."

"I had a nightmare," Kurt says. He twists his fingers into Blaine's hair.

Blaine presses closer, fitting their bodies together in a way that makes Kurt's heart trip over its next beat. "Do you want to talk about it?"

"No," Kurt says. It feels like the same 'no' he said on the stage months ago while looking into Blaine's shining eyes, so certain. "I want you to kiss me," he says. He wants that certainty now; the physical proof of it.

Maybe Blaine wants to feel it too, for he surges up to kiss Kurt with an eager, hot mouth. Kurt tips
forward, uses his weight and momentum to roll Blaine onto his back, covers him with his body and sinks down into Blaine's mouth and his embrace. He's got one hand still tangled up in Blaine's hair trapped between Blaine's head and the pillow. His other hand is at Blaine's jaw, his thumb skimming down Blaine's throat, following his pulse. Blaine holds him close, one hand splayed across his back over his ribs, the other riding high on the back of his thigh. Kurt doesn't break the kiss to speak, to make a suggestion or ask permission; he surrenders to the impulse of Blaine's hands upon him, rocks down against Blaine, feels his cock swelling near Blaine's, feels the rush of the passion enveloping them.

He grinds down as Blaine arches up. There's little finesse; Kurt feels like he's made of nothing more complex than flesh, heat, and need. The thin material of their pajamas between them is a harsh, dry friction, but when Kurt starts to pull away to remedy the situation (he forgot to put the lube back under his pillow), Blaine just tightens his hold on Kurt and says, "No, stay with me... like this. Just like... Ooh." And then Blaine is hot and tense and straining up against him as he comes. Feeling Blaine pulse and shudder beneath him is almost enough to tip Kurt into his own climax, but he doesn't quite—at least not until Blaine shoves his hands beneath Kurt's waistband to dig his fingertips into his bare ass, and Blaine bucks up hard against him one last time and growls in his ear, "Come on... come for me, Kurt."

It's over so quickly. And Kurt is panting and sweat sticky and—he tucks his face against Blaine's neck to smother his groan—they both just came in their pajamas and that requires more than a tissue.

~*~

Once they've cleaned up and changed, Kurt takes their soiled clothing down to the laundry. Blaine comes downstairs with him and fills the kettle for tea since they're both sufficiently awake now, they won't be getting back to sleep soon. In the kitchen, Kurt's reaching up to the cupboard to retrieve a pair of mugs and Blaine's pressing up behind him, his hands slipping ticklish up Kurt's exposed tummy. When Kurt drops back to his heels, mugs in hand, Blaine kisses the back of his neck and finger-walks his hands up over Kurt's ribs to his chest. Kurt's just setting the mugs down and taking a breath to say something suitably flirty and encouraging, when he hears Finn's voice behind them.

"Hey, guys..."

Blaine's thumb slips away from Kurt's nipple but he doesn't let go of Kurt or step back. "Hey, Finn," Blaine says. Kurt turns his head to smile a greeting.

In the archway, Finn fidgets, but doesn't drop his gaze. "Um, am I interrupting?"

"It's fine, come in," Kurt says, and Blaine loosens his embrace as Kurt reaches back up for a third mug. "Can't sleep?"

Finn moves into the kitchen, dragging the fingers of one hand through his sleep tousled hair. He slumps down onto one of the stools at the island and leans on his elbows. "No," he says. "I heard you guys up, thought maybe you couldn't either."

"I'll heat some milk," Kurt says.

"Cool, thanks," Finn says. Blaine sits opposite Finn while Kurt goes to the fridge.

"So what are you guys doing up, anyway?" Finn asks. "It's like two in the morning. Is that the washing machine?"

"Yeah," Blaine says, "We had some, uh, unexpected laundry to do."
Kurt bites his lips together as he unhooks a small saucepan from the pot rack. He refuses to titter like a scandalized child. But then Finn laughs, and Kurt nearly drops the bottle of milk. "I'm glad somebody's getting some tonight," Finn says.

And for some reason that makes Kurt bold—and careless. "Mostly it was our pajamas that got it," he says.

Blaine's soft, "Oh my god, Kurt," does sound scandalized, and Kurt turns to see him covering his face and laughing. Finn is staring at Blaine with a crooked grin on his face.

"I'm sorry," Kurt says, "That was inappropriate... and crass, and I—"

"It's cool, dude," Finn says, "It's two AM." As if that excuses all lapses in decorum. "Anyway," Finn continues, "It's not like I haven't had to do the midnight laundry run myself." He pauses for a beat and Kurt sees his smile kink into something more mischievous. "I bet it's way more fun with a friend."

Kurt ducks his head and goes to the spice drawer, finds the whole nutmeg, cinnamon, and the bottle of vanilla. "Are we really having this conversation?" Kurt asks.

"Hey, Blaine started it," Finn says.

"I did not," Blaine says, feigning outrage, but mostly sounding like he's trying not to laugh.

To which Kurt responds dryly, "I'm pretty sure you did, Blaine."

Blaine's smiling when he says, "No, I'm pretty sure you did, Kurt, given how you woke me up."

"You said I didn't wake you!" Kurt points his whisk at Blaine to add emphasis.

Finn says, "I tried to wake Rachel like that once. She elbowed me in the ribs pretty hard."

And then they're all laughing, and it feels necessary and good. Kurt grates some nutmeg into the milk, adds a few drops of vanilla and cinnamon. He stirs the milk with the whisk as it slowly warms over a low heat. It hits him them, in a way it didn't when Rachel told him—in a way it didn't strike him while he was making the wedding cake. It's a stark, cold realization, and he doesn't bother to censor himself before he says, "Jesus, I can't believe you're getting married today, Finn."

"Yeah," Finn says, "I think that's why I can't sleep."

Blaine sips his tea quietly.

"Cold feet?" Kurt asks.

"No," Finn protests. "I'm just nervous, you know?"

The milk is starting to steam so Kurt takes it off the heat and pours it into two mugs. "It's okay if you're having second thoughts, Finn," he says. He adds a little sugar to Finn's mug and stirs it. "Hell, you probably should be having second thoughts. You don't have to get married tomorrow if—"

"Kurt, why can't you just support this?" There's irritation in Finn's tone.

Kurt passes him his warm milk and leans back against the counter to fix Finn with a serious gaze. "Of course I support you, and I support Rachel. I love you both, but this rush to marry? It's hard to
"Should I go?" Blaine asks; his shoulders are tense.

Kurt sighs. "No, honey. I'm sorry," he says just as Finn offers his own reassurance to Blaine.

"Look," Finn says, "if you two were getting married tomorrow? I'd totally be happy for you."

"Like that's even legal in this state," Kurt mutters.

"You know what I mean," Finn says.

"I will be there tomorrow, Finn."

Finn nods, mostly mollified.

Blaine says, "So will I," but he's not really smiling.

So Kurt adds, "And I'll be doing my best to catch the bouquet." He seeks Blaine's gaze, smiles, and holds it until Blaine smiles back. Then he returns his gaze to Finn. "I just want you to promise me, Finn, that you're not giving up on yourself."

"I'm not. I promise," Finn says, and they lapse into a tense silence for a time. Finn rotates his mug between his hands and keeps taking in short breaths like he's got something to say, it's just not coming out. Finally he sighs and closes his eyes and says softly, "For what it's worth, I don't want you guys giving up either. Not on each other and not on yourselves. I know... There's been a lot of hard stuff lately and this week. I want you to know, both of you, that I'm here for you if you ever need me, okay? I love you guys."

"Hey," Blaine says and reaches across the island to rest a hand over Finn's. "We love you, too."

Kurt looks at both of them, the two boys he loves most, holding hands and looking at each other with rare unguarded affection. It's an odd but perfect moment, Kurt thinks: possibly the sort that can only occur under emotional duress and at two-thirty in the morning, so Kurt appreciates it all the more. He sips his warm, spiced milk and enjoys it.

~*~

Blaine drives them to the hospital after the morning competition. They make just one detour, to buy flowers. Blaine pays for them.

Once they've parked, Kurt can't move immediately. The flowers sit in the footwell braced between his feet. He looks out the car window, up at the many storied building. Thinks about how behind nearly every window is pain. He doesn't want to be here. The buoy of their Regional's victory has sunk. Maybe it was a mistake to sandwich this between the competition and Finn and Rachel's wedding.

There's a silence between them for a time; Blaine's touch draws Kurt's attention. Blaine is looking down at Kurt's hand and lightly stroking the tender skin between Kurt's knuckles with his fingertips. When he starts to speak it's with hesitation. "Kurt," he says. "It's really good of you to be visiting Karofsky, but I... I hope it's not because you're feeling guilty for rebuffing his advances."

Kurt's eyes widen. "I..." But nothing more comes out. That's not really it, but it's not that far off.
"It wasn't fair for him to even ask you," Blaine says. "And what he did? It's not because you didn't want to go out with him. I mean, what did he expect?"

"Blaine," Kurt says, even though Blaine isn't wrong. So he thinks maybe he should try to explain, confess his sin. "That isn't all that happened."

Blaine's gaze comes up from Kurt's hand, concerned. "What do you mean?"

"That night when he asked me out? At Breadstix. There was a guy there from his school who saw David with me, and... figured it out. He said some stuff to David, made it clear he knew." Kurt closes his eyes for a moment, opens them and finds Blaine still meeting his gaze; Kurt forces himself not to look away. "Blaine, I knew it meant trouble for David. You should have seen the guy. But I just—" Kurt shrugs. "And then when David started calling me on Monday. I didn't answer, and I deleted his voicemails without even listening to them. I didn't want to know. But he kept calling me."

"Kurt..."

"I know, Blaine. I know I fucked up. I was selfish and scared and I didn't want to be involved. So I'm not blameless. I told him we could be friends, but I didn't mean it. When he took off the mask that night? All I wanted was to run away. I'm a coward, and I'm selfish."

"That isn't what I was going to say."

"You would have answered his calls. You would have helped him."

Blaine is looking at Kurt with a strange intensity. He speaks quietly and carefully. "I don't know that I would have done anything differently from what you did."

"But you—?"

"Come on, Kurt, he terrorized you. You think if one of those jocks who beat the crap out of me decided to creep on me over Valentine's Day, make me believe he was you, and then ask me out in full knowledge that I already had a boyfriend, that I'd feel anything but horrified by it? You think I'd want to answer that guy's calls?"

"But you answered Sebastian's call."

"Not at first," Blaine says, "And when I finally did, it was only because Trent called and asked me to pick up his call, explained to me that Sebastian wanted to apologize." He sighs. "But even then, the situation is different. Sebastian may be an awful person and he should definitely be in juvie, but he didn't..." Blaine trails off with a shake of his head.

"So you wouldn't have answered David's call?"

Blaine shrugs. "I honestly don't know. But look, Kurt. Karofsky was horrible to you, for a long time. I remember what he put you through. I was there. And I remember how willing he was to wipe the floor with both of us.

"That he's gay and struggling with that? That's certainly worthy of our sympathy, but it doesn't excuse his cruelty to you. As a human being he deserves compassion and, god knows he needs friendship and support now, but don't, Kurt, not even for a second, believe any of his pain or struggle puts you under some kind of obligation to be his personal savior or that any of it is your fault. You don't owe him anything."

"But if I'd just picked up the phone, Blaine, he wouldn't have felt so isolated and trapped and without
hope, he wouldn't have—" Kurt cuts himself off with a hiccup.

"You can't know that. Not really," Blaine says. "You want to know whose fault this is?"

"David's?" Kurt asks sourly. He doesn't need to hear it again, especially not from Blaine.

But Blaine surprises him and says, "No. The people who harassed him, the people who watched it happen and said nothing, the friends who turned away from him. And what about his parents? The teachers at his school?" There's a ferocity and anger building in Blaine's voice that Kurt has never heard before. "Those things people say to us? I wish everyone would stop pretending like it's just words, like it doesn't matter, like we're just meant to rise above it somehow. 'Sticks and stones and' blah fucking blah blah. It's bullshit. You know it as well as I do. The words can do just as much damage as the fists. It's just the injuries aren't visible until you try to kill yourself." Blaine looks away, says to the window, "And sometimes not even then."

Kurt blinks at Blaine, stunned into silence. He's never asked Blaine if he's ever... It's a thought Kurt cannot bring himself to finish.

Blaine calms and turns back to Kurt with a sympathetic and sheepish grimace. He speaks so gently the words ache between them: "More people than you had to abandon him for it to get to this point, Kurt."

Kurt moistens his lips and clears his throat, but the words come out a little weak anyway: "It doesn't matter if I was the first person or the last person. I could have answered my phone."

"You could have, yes," Blaine says quietly. "But you didn't, and you had reasons of your own. Good ones. Maybe that doesn't make it okay, I don't know. But I do know that none of this is your fault. None of it, Kurt." Blaine's gaze is wide and earnest, brightening with unshed tears.

The guilt relents at the desperate tenderness in Blaine's voice and in his eyes. Enough that Kurt nods, and—damn it—he's tearing up now, too. He dabs his eyes with the tissue Blaine hands him.

Blaine squeezes Kurt's shoulder. "David can probably use your friendship more than your guilt right now. Let him forgive you, okay? Then maybe you can forgive yourself."

"Okay," Kurt says and steels himself to get out of the car.
Quinn doesn't arrive in time, and Finn and Rachel miss their timeslot to be married. In the doorway of the meeting room where the bridal party is gathered, Carole is standing with Rachel, who is crying while trying not to, and Finn, who is trying to comfort her and looking bewildered by the entire situation, as if it only just now occurred to him how insane this all has been. Blaine is still sitting too straight in the red leather desk chair, staring off into space. From his perch on the desk, Kurt swings his leg forward to nudge Blaine's chair with his toes, drawing Blaine's attention, along with a tentative smile. Dreadful as the wedding shenanigans have been, Kurt can't complain about Blaine in a dinner suit.

"So what are we supposed to do now?" Tina whispers.

"All dressed up and nowhere to go," Santana drawls loudly enough to receive a sharp glare from Rachel.

"We could go to the comic book shop," Brittany says. "I used to go with Artie, but I haven't been in a while."

Anywhere but here sounds like a good idea to Kurt. He sees his Dad in the hall talking with the Messieurs Berry. They're largely failing at hiding their relief. "Is it far, Brittany?"

"Just a block or two," she says.

"Blaine?"

With a nod, Blaine runs his hands down his thighs and stands. "Yeah, I could use some fresh air," he says.

"Shouldn't we all be waiting for Quinn?" Mercedes asks.

"We're not going far," Kurt says. "Text us if something happens."

Sam, Artie, and Puck join their small venture, and the six of them amble down Main Street toward the square. The few trees lining the street are bare, but Kurt can see the reddish buds that will become the new growth with warmer weather and longer days. The sun is sliding low and bloated orange as late afternoon heads into early evening; there's little direct sunlight between the long shadows cast by the closely spaced buildings. Winter's chill lingers on. Artie gives his suit jacket to Brittany, and she walks beside him while they talk about what they hope to find at the shop. Kurt's glad they're still friends. Sam and Puck are engaged in an animated discussion about some Star Wars graphic novel compilation.

"You know, I've never been to downtown Lima," Blaine says, looking about at the terribly banal architecture on their walk from the genuinely lovely Allen County Courthouse. The courthouse itself is worth a look; it's made of soft hued sandstone in a sort of French Second Empire style. Kurt's always liked the corner towers with the steep mansard roofs. It looks extravagant and ambitious—wholly out of place—perhaps magical, as if going inside could transport one somewhere more exotic and civilized. But it's in poor company, towering over the cookie cutter banks, shabby retail spaces, and drably functional government buildings nearby. There aren't many structures over three stories; an historic hotel a few blocks down is one other. No other pedestrians are on the sidewalks, though parked cars line the streets. As they approach the town square, there are more signs of life in the lit
windows and the occasional neon sign. The store fronts grow older, prettier, and better maintained.

It's been a while since Kurt's been here. His Dad used to bring him downtown on his birthday. It was livelier then, and they'd go to the little local art gallery, browse a few boutiques, and have burgers and milkshakes for dinner at the old Kewpee diner. He wonders if the burgers are as good as he remembers. "It's quaint, I guess," Kurt says. It's the most generous word he can summon. The majority of the streets and store fronts haven't changed much since he was small. It's like the town stalled some indeterminate amount of time before he was born with 'newer' buildings scattered about the older town center being a decidedly non-eclectic mix of tired brutalism. There are some signs of genuine modernity, but they seem out of place, haphazard. The town lacks a consistent vision.

They don't make it to the comic shop.

It's Puck who gets the first call (from Quinn's mother, Kurt will later discover). Kurt watches Puck go ashen faced and still as a stone, and he feels the sick weight of dreadful apprehension sink cold in his belly. Then his phone rings. It's Rachel, and she's hysterical.

Kurt sits on the cracked tile edge of the empty fountain in the square and tries to get her calm enough that he can understand what she's telling him. Blaine's hand is on his shoulder when Rachel finally gets it out clearly: Quinn's been in a car crash. A bad one.

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It's a grotesque parallel to Beth's birth as the members of New Directions crowd into the hospital lobby in their wedding finery, anxious, seeking news, and offering impossible comfort to Quinn's mother. Quinn is in surgery, her condition critical.

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They all end up at the Berrys' except Puck, who stays at the hospital. The place is set up for the reception with all the food including the cake (from which Kurt has the wherewithal to discreetly remove the topper to his pocket). It feels more like a funeral than a wedding reception, though it's neither of those things. Everyone is so quiet and tearful. Rachel's Dads are gracious, if subdued, hosts. No one eats much, and the cake remains untouched. Rachel gets a call from Puck to let them know Quinn is out of surgery and has been admitted to ICU. She's in a coma, critical but stable. They'll know more in the morning.

Everyone seems to take the update as a cue to go home. Finn stays.

~*~

Kurt remains composed until he's shut safely in his bedroom with Blaine. The click of his door latch is like opening a valve that looses all the vitality from his limbs, and Kurt finds gravity pushing him to his knees. He clings to Blaine's legs and presses his hot face against Blaine's hip, trying to breathe. The last conversation he had with Quinn was unfriendly. They've never been friends, not really, at least not in any conventional sense. Their worlds are different enough, they're like aliens to one another. But Quinn is part of his odd little family; she's on his mental list of people to whom he fears terrible things happening.

It's not guilt this time, despite their last conversation. It's more like some kind of sadistic, cosmic kick to the gut. The injustice of Quinn in hospital fighting for her life—a life she's already fought for (and with that thought, maybe, Kurt realizes they aren't quite as different as they both like to insist), and it's just... He's angry. But there's no one toward whom to direct his anger and nothing to blame. It's just chaos and pain and all those inevitable disasters of existence. The abyss looms close, and his
anger gives way to a sudden yawn of loneliness. Kurt doesn't want to go there, to that mental place where bright things—happiness and love and hope—all feel like a fraud: life's great swindle. Fortunately he's been there before, and he knows the way back. That path's well trodden, and anyway, he's not alone.

He tightens his hold on Blaine who is standing very still—probably frozen in uncertainty, for Kurt is behaving so bizarrely. The absurd melodrama of his falling to his knees in pent up anguish is not lost on Kurt, but there's simply no strength in him. Blaine soon brings one hand to finger comb through Kurt's hair; with the other he strokes Kurt's exposed cheek. His fingers are cool against Kurt's face. "Sweetheart?" he says, and then his hands are going to Kurt's wrists and gently loosening Kurt's hold on him.

Blaine kneels with Kurt, and he reaches for his boutonniere, carefully unpinning the white spray of flowers from Kurt's lapel. He smiles shallowly, doesn't say anything as he reaches up to set the rose on the bookcase. Then he unbuttons Kurt's suit jacket, pushes it down his shoulders and off. He has to get up then, to pick up the jacket, shake the folds from it and lay it upon the bed. Kurt brings his fingers to his tie, but his joints feel rubbery and his muscles weak; he makes slow work of unknotting it.

Blaine offers him both of his hands. "Can you get up?" he asks, "And come sit on the bed?"

Kurt nods and places his hands in Blaine's, manages to stand and stumble to his bed with Blaine's support. Blaine takes over undoing his tie and then unbuttons his shirt. Kurt realizes he's never actually let Blaine undress him, not completely. He lets himself remain limp but cooperative, lets Blaine remove his shirt and undershirt, his shoes and socks. Then it's his belt and his trousers coming undone, and maybe Kurt should feel like there's something sexual going on here, with Blaine's hands on him like this, but his body isn't responding that way.

"Lift up for me?" Blaine prompts, and Kurt lies back and lifts his hips. Blaine pulls down the pants and Kurt's underwear, and then Kurt is lying naked upon his bed, heavy limbed and despondent. His emotions have flattened into apathy for the moment as he watches Blaine hang the suit up neatly, hook the belt on the back of his closet door, and put the rest of his things in the laundry hamper.

"Were you and Quinn close?" Blaine asks him softly. He takes off his own suit jacket, hangs it on the back of Kurt's desk chair, and then he returns to Kurt, sits down beside him on the bed and takes Kurt's hand.

Kurt shakes his head. "Not exactly, but we've seen each other through a lot, have been there for each other in that quiet, from a distance sort of way."

"She seems... hard to be close to." Kurt says, and as he thinks about it, how fiercely guarded Quinn's always been, a wave of sadness, pity, and empathy wells up in his chest. Kurt takes a few deep, quick breaths to clear it out. It's a half faded echo of longing tangled up with fearful self-imposed isolation. Kurt squeezes Blaine's hand and is grateful to his bones for Blaine, for everything he is in Kurt's life and for everything Kurt believes they will yet be for each other. He sends a wish—a hope, not a prayer—out to the universe, for Quinn to be all right and for her to one day have someone like Blaine, whether a friend or a lover, just someone like that.

Blaine nods and leans over to reach under Kurt's pillow for his pajamas, but Kurt stops him. He rolls, half sits up, and wraps his arms around Blaine's waist. "Can we just..." Kurt trails off, as Blaine comes back into his arms, turning to face Kurt and moving close until Kurt's bare skin is pressed up against the faint prickle of Blaine's suit pants and the stiff cotton of his dress shirt and Blaine's face is
tucked against Kurt's neck, his breath soft and warm.

They stay like that for a while, silent and still but for the clenching of Kurt's fingers into Blaine's shirt and the repeating light stroke of Blaine's hand up and down Kurt's naked spine. "I'm so glad I know you," Kurt murmurs.

"Me too," Blaine says and gathers Kurt up more tightly in his arms, rolling them so Kurt is half sprawled on top of him. Their legs are still hanging over the edge of the bed, and Kurt, despite Blaine's hold of him, is beginning to chill.

"We should get under the covers," Kurt says.

"Okay," Blaine says, and extricates himself from their embrace. Kurt sits woozily, wriggles his fingers through his hair to work out the hold of his hair spray. He really should go brush his teeth and wash his face first. Leaving the room though...

He won't give in to that lethargy. Kurt makes himself get up and he gets his dressing gown. "I'm just going to brush my teeth," he says. "But I was wondering if we could, um, sleep nude together tonight?" He's not embarrassed to ask for this, it's just that the only times they have slept together naked have been after sex when they've known they'd be waking up alone. But they aren't alone in the house tonight, and if someone comes in? It seems such a trivial concern, considering.

Blaine blinks at him, "Of course we can."

"I don't... I don't want sex or anything tonight," Kurt explains. "I just really want to feel you. With me."

"Yeah, sure," Blaine says, and they finish getting ready for bed, so they can slip beneath the covers, bare to the sheets and bare to each other. Kurt leaves his bedside lamp on. He doesn't think he can sleep yet. His eyelids won't stay closed.

Kurt lies on his side with Blaine spooned up snug, smooth, and warm behind him. It's only natural that Blaine is semi-hard, his cock pressing against Kurt's ass, just nudging high between Kurt's buttocks. Kurt flexes his spine, presses back a little against Blaine, feels the twitch of Blaine's dick against him. A tentative coil of heat tries to knot in his belly, but it doesn't hold. But something within Kurt eases at feel of it. It's... exceedingly intimate. Usually when they lie like this it's after, and everything is loose and blunted. But while Kurt is feeling drained, he's not in anything like the comfortable carelessness of the afterglow.

"Sorry," Blaine says. "Is this okay?" He shifts his hips back just a little.

Kurt nods. "Yes, it's fine."

"I know you said you didn't want to—"

"I know. I don't, not really. But it feels nice. You feel really good... like this." And it is so good, to feel Blaine pressed against him just so, skin to skin. He can imagine the barrier between them dissolving, imagine his heart syncing up to Blaine's pulse where he feels it throb against his back and even lower. Blaine is here, alive and vibrant and _here_ with him. Kurt reaches back to urge Blaine's hips back against him, closer.

"Mmm, it does. You feel really good, too, Kurt." Blaine finds Kurt's hand and tangles their fingers together as he drapes his arm over Kurt's waist. He rests his chin near the top of Kurt's shoulder blade.
"Do you want me to... do anything to help you out there?"

"No," Blaine says. "I'm good. My dick and I are content to just hold you." There's a pause. "So long as you're good too."

That makes Kurt laugh softly, unexpectedly. "Yes, Blaine. I'm good. We're all good over here."

"All right," Blaine says, tightening the arm he's got draped over Kurt's waist and flattening his hand over Kurt's pressing Kurt's palm against his belly. "But if that changes, you'll let me know, right?"

"You'll be the first, I promise."

Blaine nuzzles against the side of his neck, exhales a quiet chuckle to raise goosebumps.

With that glib promise, Kurt realizes there are things he needs to tell Blaine, things Blaine should be the first to know: like the little secret decision Kurt's made, that he's been turning over in his mind in idle moments. He really shouldn't wait any longer to tell Blaine. So he'll tell him now, while they're together, while they maybe need something to look forward to that's more immediate than escaping Lima alive and intact. "You should know," he starts. "I've been thinking about it a lot, Blaine."
And then Kurt realizes that, for all the times he's considered the doing of the thing, he hasn't rehearsed this part: actually asking Blaine for it.

"Hmm, what's that?"

"About..." Kurt huffs out a less than patient breath. It's just words. He's certainly said filthier things to Blaine in the heat of the moment, and they've talked about this before. There's a distinct implication in the way they're lying together that makes any pretense of coyness nonsensical. So he makes himself say it plainly: "About you fucking me."

"Oh, okay..." Blaine says neutrally.

"And I've made a decision," Kurt says, "That if you want to, I'd like it if, the next time we're alone together and have the time, if you would..." He takes a breath, lets it out. He takes another and says it, "...fuck me."

Blaine's response is immediate and unmistakable: palpable where Blaine's cock is secure between Kurt's buttocks, and Blaine exhales a hot, shaky breath across Kurt's shoulder. "Oh," he says; his fingers curl between Kurt's, digging into the softness of Kurt's relaxed belly, holding Kurt firmly against him. "Kurt... Yes, I would... I would love that. I mean, if you're sure."

Kurt wonders in a flash then, what it would be like if Blaine simply pushed him over and did it right now, with Kurt muffling himself against his pillow, while the house sleeps around them. It's a tempting thought, but he doesn't want the first time he's with Blaine that way to be something so hushed or anxious, and certainly not on a night when his emotions have been through the shredder and the memory would forever be tainted with sadness. "I am sure," he says, tightening his fingers between Blaine's. "I'm tired of waiting. I don't want to wait anymore, to be close to you like that, to find out what it's like."

Blaine loosens the grasp of his hand, strokes along Kurt's fingers, and kisses his shoulder. "What is it you've been waiting for?" he murmurs.

"To..." It sticks in Kurt's throat. It's not something he likes to admit, not even to himself. "To stop being afraid, I guess," he whispers.

Blaine doesn't respond immediately. Then he says, his lips grazing Kurt's skin, "I hope you know,
"I know, and it's not that. I'm not afraid of the mechanics of it or anything. It's not that. I just." Kurt pauses. The fear is less clear now than it's ever been. It's evolved into something diffuse and abstract. He's no longer ashamed of wanting it, even the memory of that shame feels like it belongs to someone else. But there's still some sort of trepidation, something holding him back. Maybe he wants it too much and is still afraid he can't have it, or that it's just an illusion, or nothing he'll be allowed to keep. Or maybe he's just so used to the fear, he's running on emotional momentum and there's not actually any there there.

Or maybe it's the old self-defense, of don't let them too close, they'll only turn away if they get a good look. But that's nothing to fear with Blaine. So Kurt is not confident he can articulate it well enough. But he tries his best. "I want to be able to give you so much, Blaine. I do. But, I think, sometimes that's what frightens me."

"But you already do," Blaine says softly. "You give me so much, Kurt, more than I..." Blaine leaves that thought unfinished again.

"No," Kurt says. "I still feel like—no, I know—I'm holding back. I'm not giving you all of me. But I want to."

"And that scares you?"

"I think so?"

"Why?"

"I guess, maybe..." Kurt closes his eyes, tries to understand it, the way his heart trembles when he imagines it. He wants it so much, it steals his breath, but? Then what? "Because I worry that once I give you everything of myself, I won't have anything left to offer. And what if it's not enough?" Kurt thinks that may be closer to the truth, but he still wonders if he's just groping the edges of it to describe its shape.

"That's. Kurt, that's not how it works," Blaine says. "You're never going to be insufficient to me. You can't be, because you're you. I can't imagine how—"

"But if I give you everything, what's left?"

Blaine doesn't reply for several heartbeats, and when he does, his voice is clear and serious. "Kurt. What's left is still everything you are."

"Everything?"

"Yes," Blaine says. "We're still talking about sex here, right? I mean, not just sex, but that's what this is about?"

"Mm, I think so," Kurt says. It's the pivot point anyway. Or the metaphor. Or the physical manifestation of the emotion, or... It's something.

"Okay, so, do you think you've had all of me just because you've... what? Fucked me? Do you think that I've got nothing left to give you?" Blaine asks. There's something urgent in his voice, like he's desperate for Kurt to understand something here. "Do you really think you've given me less than I've given you? That we're out of balance or something?"

Kurt considers it; there are too many questions for a simple answer. "No, but I don't know. I haven't
really thought about it that way, not exactly." And he hasn't, because a lot of the time he tries so hard
not to think about it, at least not in these sort of base terms. It's not like he believes there's some weird
magic to having a cock in his ass, like his 'everything' is located somewhere in his rectum, and Blaine
just has to tag it with it his dick to get it. It's ridiculous. Of course Kurt doesn't think that. So he adds.
"No, I don't think that at all, at least not in those terms. Not about the physical part of it anyway.

"But also yes," Kurt continues, "because I have been scared, Blaine. And to me it still feels like a big
step. I have held things back from you. You probably have given me more of you than I've given
you of me," Kurt says and frowns because it all came out jumbled like a tongue twister. He hopes he
said what he meant to say.

"I don't believe that," Blaine says.

"No?"

"Look at me, Kurt."

Kurt rolls over and Blaine takes both his hands in his own, looks directly into Kurt's eyes as he
speaks with such earnestness and gravity, Kurt can't look away.

"What we are, Kurt, within ourselves and for each other, is infinite, and infinity is indivisible, right?"

Kurt nods; he doesn't have to believe in an immortal soul to accept that premise.

"There's no finite sum of you or me we can give each other and then we're done. It's continuous
because... Well, you can't step in the same river twice." Blaine pauses with a flash of a grin that Kurt
returns. Blaine continues, "Sex is a way, one way, for us to connect in a moment. Even if we give
each other everything we can in that moment, or if what we give each other is different at different
times, or even if it feels like less or more at another time?

"It's not everything we are for all time. I mean, it's important, yes, of course it is; and it matters, but
it's not like you lose anything to me by doing it; that something is given and then it's gone. You're
giving of yourself, sure, but you're not giving anything away, you're not losing something. That's not
how it works."

Kurt blinks; his eyes are dry, but he feels like he wants to cry, and he can't articulate why.

Blaine smiles gently, speaks even more softly. "The way you make love to me, Kurt," Blaine says,
with a glance down at their joined hands. "You're such a generous lover, I thought you knew that."

It's the first time either of them have said that two word phrase out loud. Kurt takes a breath and asks,
"The way I...? Is that what we do, Blaine? Do we make love?"

"I think so."

"Even when I say dirty things to you and make you beg?"

"Especially then," Blaine says, grinning, open-eyed and unabashed.

Kurt smiles. "Yeah. I think so, too."

"Okay, so, can we agree that I'm not going to hurt you or find you inadequate or somehow use up all
your sex mojo?" Blaine teases.

Kurt nods and laughs. "Yes, we can agree to that."
But then Blaine sober to continue. He tightens his hold on Kurt's hands as he speaks, "I know this is a big deal to you. And honestly, Kurt, as much as I can say to you that it's not necessarily more than the other things we do together, there is something about it. When you're inside me like that."

Blaine lowers his gaze and licks his lips before lifting his gaze back to Kurt's and holding steady as he continues, "When your cock is so deep in my ass and you're fucking me so hard I can't remember my own name? It's, Kurt, it is so intimate, and it's intense, and it requires trust and faith and, I believe, love as well. So I do get it, that you might be skittish to be vulnerable like that with me—both to me and within yourself. But, Kurt, I promise you, if you want to do this with me, I will take care of you. All of you, not just your body."

At that Kurt does feel tears spring sharp behind his eyes, and he takes a feeble breath. He's been crying so much this week, he guesses he's just that raw with everything that's happened. "Blaine, that's how I know I'm sure," he says. "I'm sure of you."

Blaine's eyes shine and he smiles. "I'm so glad, Kurt." He frees one hand and lays it warm upon Kurt's cheek, running his thumb over Kurt's bottom lip. Kurt's eyelashes flutter at the tender touch, and his heart speeds at Blaine's next words, that come so low and heavy with intention, "I will make it so good for you." Then Blaine bends his face near to replace his thumb with his mouth, sealing his promise with a kiss, and Kurt surrenders himself to it.

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The next week is a bit of a blur. Between Rachel and Puck, they stay informed of Quinn's status. Her condition continues to improve, and the doctors think she'll wake up soon. She'll be spending more time in the hospital though. There are internal injuries to heal and broken bones and whispers of damage to her spine. They take turns visiting the hospital in the afternoons after Glee. Mrs. Fabray doesn't want anyone but family going into ICU to see Quinn, but she is grateful for the flowers and cards, the cups of coffee and magazines they bring. Kurt and Blaine make cookies and fill a thermos with minestrone for her the afternoon they visit.

On other afternoons, Kurt tries to keep busy. He starts practicing in earnest for his NYADA audition, staying after Glee in the afternoons to use the auditorium or choir room. Blaine is his audience for the first run through each day, but then Blaine heads to the gym for what he calls quality time with the heavy bag. They say goodbye in the parking lot with a squeeze of their hands and a "I'll text when I get home and talk to you after dinner." Kurt hopes fervently, more and more, that Mr. Anderson will have a business trip soon, a long one. When Kurt gets home, he cooks and does homework, and for each day that passes without catastrophe, he's grateful. But he still can't shake the impatient irritation nagging in the back of his brain that, now he's decided he's ready for his boyfriend to fuck him, the universe owes them an opportunity.

At some point Kurt looks at the calendar and realizes the anniversary of his and Blaine's first kiss is approaching, and it's on a Saturday. Not this coming weekend, but the following. He texts Blaine asking him of the likelihood his house will be free. Blaine isn't sure, but Kurt hears Finn talking about heading down to Kentucky with Rory and Sam that weekend to help Sam's parents with some sort of home renovation and repair job. He encourages them to take this much needed break from Lima. And then the week swallows him up again. Most of his teachers are laying on projects, assignments, and tests in advance of Easter break, so the homework is starting to pile up.

And then it's Friday already, but Blaine can't stay the night because his father is taking him out early Saturday morning to spend the day playing golf. Kurt says it's fine and it's wonderful that Blaine's Dad is taking an interest in spending time with his son. Kurt's pretty sure Blaine doesn't believe that it's anything other than the semi-annual half-assed attempt to straighten him out, but Kurt doesn't say
anything discouraging and neither does Blaine. So Saturday morning, in the absence of Blaine, Kurt steps out into the backyard to see what needs to be done for the Spring.

He doesn't have much of a green thumb, but given that Carole used to have her yard spray painted, coordinating the spring garden chores falls to Kurt while his Dad's away. There's not much to do. The yard is nearly all lawn patched with swaths of clover and wild strawberries. There are mature trees and a few shrubs, and in the front yard are some daffodils and irises, but Kurt doesn't think they require much intervention. The woodpile alongside the house needs to be tidied up, and the roses along the back of the house pruned. The honeysuckle draping the back fence might need some attention. Then there's the old derelict greenhouse with which they've done nothing since moving in. Kurt changes into one of his Dad's old work shirts and ventures into it, wary of the broken glass on the ground and the precariousness of some of the panes above him. There's still a scraggly and tenacious raspberry vine living at one end of it. It must get just enough rain through the holes in the roof, and it looks like there may be a few volunteer cherry tomato plants struggling among the weeds. Or they're potatoes or nightshade. Kurt isn't sure he can tell them apart.

He makes a half-hearted attempt at pulling some of the things he's certain are weeds, but the ground is too dry and hard and the weeds young and tender; they break off at the roots. He'll need to get a watering can or something, drag the hose in here, to soften the ground.

Maybe he can get some kind of gardening guide or do some research online, call a glazier to repair the broken panes, clear the place out and put it to its intended use. Once school finishes, he still has the summer before heading to New York. It would be a nice summer project to have some garden fresh vegetables with which to cook. He can plant the things he has trouble finding at the supermarket: various peppers, sweet Japanese eggplant, and heirloom tomatoes come to mind. And fresh herbs. Unfortunately, he hasn't the faintest notion of where to start, so he calls Mercedes. She helps her Mom with her garden, so she'll have some ideas. It may be a good way to rekindle their friendship.

Sunday, Mercedes comes over and they spend the afternoon at the dining table on his laptop scrolling through heritage seed catalogs and planning a small starter garden for Kurt. It's good Mercedes is there to reign him in. Kurt is dazzled by the variety of plants available. She keeps having to explain to him that it's easy to over commit, the garden will take his time every day, and if he plants that many summer squash plants he'll end up inundated with more fruit than he can possibly eat, store, or give away. They scope out a sunny corner of the yard Mercedes thinks will be a good spot for a raised bed. Kurt asks about no till methods. Mercedes rolls her eyes at him, explains how those kind of beds need to be set up at least a year in advance of planting. She also thinks Kurt will be better off buying young plants from the local nursery instead of growing directly from seed for his first attempt at a garden.

Mercedes stays for dinner—Kurt makes a lentil shepherd's pie and a side salad of spinach, orange, and walnuts. He finishes the meal with a low fat vegan chocolate-cherry mousse for desert. They make a tentative date for the following Sunday to actually start setting up the garden. It's not going to be as grand as what he's imagined in his head, but it will be something. He's going to plant peas at least.

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Onions are sizzling, fragrant and savory, in olive oil on Monday evening when Carole comes into the kitchen to talk to Kurt. He's just begun throwing together a quick marinara sauce in which to cook some mushroom 'meatballs' he's pulled out of the freezer. "I need your help, Kurt," she says.

"Yes?" Kurt replies.
"I'm trying to talk your father into staying in D.C. this weekend so I can fly out and meet him there, and we can go for a drive down to Williamsburg, spend the weekend meandering about looking at historical sites and antique shops and enjoying the warmer weather before schools get out for Spring Break. He's been working so hard since he got elected, and God knows, I always need a holiday." Carole goes to the fridge to pour herself a glass of iced tea. She leans against the counter, outside Kurt's work area and sips her tea.

"I'm sensing a 'but'," Kurt says, glancing up from one last pass of his knife over the garlic he's mincing. "He's not interested?"

"He is," Carole says, "But he thinks he needs to be home with you, given everything that's been going on lately. With Finn and Sam going to Kentucky, he worries about you being alone. We both do."

"Oh," Kurt says, scraping up the garlic into a little mound so he can slide it onto the knife blade for transport to the fry pan. He wasn't expecting this sort of directness, but he appreciates that Carole doesn't pussyfoot about the issue. "I'm doing okay, Carole." Kurt swallows hard and keeps his features placid. He's horribly aware of what 'okay' means in this conversation. Carole was around the last time he wasn't okay. She held his hand through the terrible time when his father couldn't. And she later gave up her own honeymoon to keep him safe, to make sure he could be okay again. "He knows I'm okay, doesn't he?" Kurt asks.

"I don't think he does know, honey," Carole says. "And I want to be sure that you are, Kurt. I don't know what's been going on with you and Blaine, but I do know we haven't been seeing him as much, which means you haven't been seeing him as much. So I want to ask you, is everything okay?"

Kurt adds a generous pinch of dried chili flakes to the onions and garlic and sautes them together while he gathers words. If they are the right words, he's uncertain, but he tries to explain. "I promise I'm fine, and Blaine and I are fine," Kurt says. "But I think Blaine and his father are... not."

Carole sighs, but it's not exasperated, not exactly. "Are you having problems with his parents again?"

With a shrug Kurt replies, "I don't know. Blaine hasn't wanted me to come over for some time because his Dad is... I don't know what's going on with his Dad really, but it's like Blaine's been passive-aggressively grounded or something. It's probably partly because of me, but not me, just that I'm his son's boyfriend." Kurt tips the chopped tomatoes into the pan, stirs them until they start bubbling. He adds the herbs with a dash of salt and a generous grind of pepper, stirs again, and turns the heat down. "I think Blaine's father wants a straight son, and I think he thinks there's something he can do to make it so. And one of those things he thinks he can do is to make it harder for Blaine and I to spend much quality time together." He looks up from the pan and turns to Carole.

She's frowning. "So really I should be asking you if Blaine is okay."

"I think he is," Kurt says. "I mean, I know this is hard on him, and he's frustrated, and I'm frustrated, and this weekend is actually our anniversary, but his father is probably going to drag him off to play golf again, or find some other tedious manly WASPish thing to do... I don't know, fox hunting or sailing or someth—" Kurt stops when he realizes how much the volume of his voice has risen. He rakes a hand through his hair, regrets it immediately since his fingers are sticky with garlic juice, and tries to calm down. "Sorry," he mutters and goes to the sink to wash his hands.

"It's okay," Carole says carefully, coming forward and setting her glass down on the island. "So go ahead and invite Blaine to stay the weekend, Kurt, and I will... talk to your Dad about inviting the Andersons on a special VIP tour of Washington D.C."
"Seriously?"

Carole shrugs. "Sure, why not? I've got to start acting like a Congressman's wife at some point, and they did invite us to their Christmas party after all."

"They're not even in our district, you know."

"I'm pretty sure they can still donate," she says, "And your father has to start buttering up the rich folks for his eventual Senate run."

"Oh my god," Kurt says, and he starts laughing. "That is both brilliant and ridiculous."

She beams at him. "Best stepmom ever, huh?"

"If you can pull this off? I'll buy you a t-shirt and a mug declaring it to be so," Kurt says, and when Carole opens her arms for a hug, he goes to her.

"You better," she says, giving him a quick squeeze and then releasing him. "And Kurt," she says as he goes back to the stove to poke at his sauce.

"Yes?"

"I hope you know that if Blaine ever needs a place to go, he's always welcome here. Anytime, no matter what. I mean it. Your Dad or I will pick him up if he needs a ride."

Kurt smiles. "I know, Carole."

"Make sure he does, too, sweetie, okay?"

"I will," Kurt promises, though he suspects Blaine already does.
The Lima Bean doesn't feel like the haven it once did. On the surface nothing has changed. It looks the same as always: the same chairs, tables, counters, menu board, and logo merchandise. It smells the same, the bitter warmth of fresh coffee and the sweet yeasty scent of baking pastries. The murmur of conversation, the hiss of the espresso machine, the clank of metal are all familiar sounds, homelike even. The angle of the sun through the broad windows on a March afternoon is as it was last year, carving steep sloped shadows across the tabletops and floors. But it's not quite the safe space it has been, where he and Blaine became friends, where Kurt confessed his affection and Blaine showed him his fearful heart, where they had their first fight. Where they first said, "I love you".

A glance around shows no Sebastian Smythe present. There are a few Dalton blazers, but they belong to no one Kurt recognizes. Kurt tightens one hand on his bag strap and takes a breath. He spots David Karofsky sitting by the window, staring out at the parking lot with his hands wrapped around the base of a tall cup. Beside Kurt, Blaine is tense. Kurt's other hand is on Blaine's back, rubbing between his shoulder blades. "Are you sure I should be here too?" Blaine asks him quietly.

"Yes," Kurt says. They've talked about this, why Kurt wants Blaine with him this afternoon, meeting David for the first time since he's got out of hospital. Partly it's selfishness on Kurt's part. Blaine's presence keeps him steady within himself. And Kurt wants to make sure David understands that he is, absolutely, with Blaine. Not to gloat or provoke jealousy, just so that it is clear enough to forestall any future misunderstandings. He thinks it may also be good, if David can accept Blaine, to see that it's possible to find love, even in Ohio. Kurt remembers when love for himself, this sort of love, seemed like something he could never attain. Like he'd been cursed with a desire that was little more than a longing to torture his heart.

"I'll go order the coffee," Blaine says.

"Okay," Kurt says, giving Blaine's back a parting pat and then heading over to David's table. David glances up as Kurt approaches, and Kurt gives him a little wave and a tight smile. "Hey," Kurt says. He doesn't pull out a chair immediately. Isn't sure where to sit. If he sits next to David, that seems too intimate, possibly even too threatening to David. But if he sits opposite then Blaine will be sitting next to David.

"Hi," David says, straightening up and leaning back in his chair, pulling his cup toward him, as if making room for Kurt. Kurt suspects his presence may still take up too much space in David's world, particularly in public. Sitting down shouldn't be so fraught. Kurt ends up dragging the chair opposite David closer the the window as he pulls it out to seat himself. The chair beside David, he pulls toward himself as he sits, ostensibly to put his bag on it, reserving it for Blaine. Now Kurt worries this may seem adversarial, the both of them facing David, but Kurt doesn't want anyone to feel crowded.

"So, how are you?" Kurt asks. His voice has gone thin with nerves. He smiles through them, tries to be reassuring. Despite the trite opener, Kurt knows it's an overladen question; he doesn't miss how David flinches. "You don't have to be fine," Kurt adds. "I meant it when I said some days are going to suck."

That makes David smile. "I'm... okay, I guess."

Kurt keeps smiling. "Okay is good. I'm often grateful for okay," he says.

David glances away, lowers his voice. "Look, Kurt," he says. "I know it's probably what you want
to talk to me about, but can we not talk about the, you know, the gay stuff today? It's all anyone
wants to talk to me about right now, and I just—"

"Okay," Kurt says. "Of course." He understands. "You're not a box."

David gives him a quizzical look, and it makes Kurt wonder what it is David sees when he looks at
Kurt now. Does he still see Fancy sprinkling his fairy dust, threatening David's careful attempts at
'normal'. Or does he just see someone brave? Or someone to envy or something pretty or...? Kurt
doesn't want to think about it too much. He can't think about it if he wants to give this friendship a
chance. Kurt shakes his head and says, "Never mind. We can talk about anything you want."

"Hey," Blaine says; he sets Kurt's mocha down in front of him along with a plate upon which is one
of the large bowtie wearing gingerbread men. 'Kurt' is scrawled over the side in of his cup in the
afternoon barista's familiar handwriting. Kurt smiles up at Blaine and moves his bag so Blaine can
sit. "Thank you, honey," he says.

"I thought we could share," Blaine says to Kurt, and then to David he says, "It's good to see you,
David."

"Hi... Blaine," David says, looking at Blaine warily as Blaine sits down, scooting his chair a few
inches closer to Kurt. It's the first time Kurt has heard David say Blaine's name.

Kurt sips his coffee, which is borderline too hot; David looks at his hands, and Blaine breaks a leg
off the gingerbread man.

"So," David says eventually. "I heard you guys won your choir thing."

"Yes," Kurt says, "We'll be heading to Chicago for Nationals." It's becoming less surreal to say it out
loud. "I think we have a good chance at it this year."

"Congratulations," David says.

"Thanks," Blaine says.

They fall into silence again.

"How's the college hunt going?" Kurt asks. Perhaps encouraging David to thoughts of the future
again will make this easier.

"Okay. I've applied mostly in state, so I'll probably end up at OSU."

Kurt nods.

"What about you guys?" David asks.

"Oh, I'm not graduating this year," Blaine says. "Next year. I'll be looking at schools in New York."

"I got an audition with NYADA," Kurt says. "It's my dream school. Their musical theater program is
the best in the country." Kurt reaches for the cookie. He can't bear to behead the little guy, so he
takes his other leg. "I cannot wait to get to New York."

"Cool," David says, and he takes a long pull from his coffee.

Blaine glances at Kurt, and Kurt reaches for his leg under the table, gives it a squeeze.

"So, um," Kurt says, and can't think of what else to say. Has the awful suspicion that most of what
he typically talks about with his friends would seem like 'gay stuff' to David. Fortunately, he was smart enough to bring Blaine.

"I'm really looking forward to watching the Buckeyes this coming season. I think they'll do well with the new coach," Blaine says.

"Yeah," David says, perking up. "With Meyer, they've got a shot at the top ten again."

Blaine replies with something about football Kurt doesn't follow, but Kurt is smiling when he reaches into his pocket for his phone to check his text messages.

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Blaine leaves Glee rehearsal early on Wednesday when his phone rings, and he doesn't come back. Kurt expects to find him in the auditorium when Kurt goes to practice "Music of The Night", but Blaine is not there. On the empty stage, Kurt sets up his portable stereo and runs through the song to an empty audience. By the time he's holding the final note, Blaine still hasn't shown. Concerned, Kurt gets his phone from his bag and sends a text to query Blaine's whereabouts, but he doesn't get a reply.

Concern turns to worry knotting in his chest. It's not wholly rational, Kurt knows. He doesn't want to assume something dire. Blaine must still be on the phone, somewhere. He wouldn't have left without saying goodbye. Kurt leaves the auditorium and wanders the halls, listening for Blaine's voice, peeking into open classrooms, the darkened library, the cafeteria. He ends up back in the choir room. Nothing.

A look outside shows Blaine's car is still in the parking lot. There's one place left to look, and, as Kurt thinks about it with a wrinkle of his nose. Really, it's the first place he should have checked.

Kurt goes to the boys' gym, and there he finds Blaine.

He hears him before he sees him: the staccato thump thump of Blaine's fists against the heavy bag. It's not a place Kurt likes to intrude. Blaine's boxing is something separate from Kurt. Something personal and private Kurt doesn't really understand. It unnerves him: the intensity, the barely restrained violence of it. Not to mention, it looks uncomfortable.

Kurt knocks on the concrete wall to announce his arrival, but the sound doesn't carry. "Hi," he calls out as he comes in.

"Hi," Blaine says, the word clipped short by his breathlessness. The pounding of his fists speeds, the bag shuddering with the rapid fire rhythm. It's strange to Kurt that Blaine looks so small like this, dwarfed by the bag, stripped down to sweat, skin, and his undershirt. The ferocious punches he throws at the bag—as if he's truly got a vendetta against the thing—reverberate through his body. Kurt can see how each impact ripples up into Blaine's arms into his shoulders, how his torso and legs tighten and sway to absorb each shock. All Kurt can see is the oxymoronic fragility of human strength. That Blaine, wonderful amazing infinite Blaine, is somehow bound in nothing more formidable than muscle and bone, in a body that looks like it could shatter if he punched just a little harder.

And he's going at it hard, harder than Kurt has seen him. His hair's come loose, hanging in sweaty ringlets about his face, perspiration streaks his arms and soaks his shirt down to his belly. His gaze is concentrated and clear: all hawk sharp and cold focus on the landing of each blow. But Kurt thinks he understands movement, and Blaine's form—though Kurt would never claim expertise when it comes to punching things—seems off, a little out of kilter, like Blaine is using too much speed and
too much force to control it as well as maybe he should. Something's wrong. Perhaps something with
the phone call.

"I missed you in the auditorium," Kurt says, he comes in and sits on a weight bench, knees together,
bag in his lap.

"Yeah," Blaine says, doesn't look at Kurt, doesn't even glance. Just keeps hammering away at the
dumb bag. Kurt wonders who it is today Blaine may be imagining.

"What's going on?" he asks.
Blaine hesitates, lands one softer punch, then his face hardens and he slams one last, hardest punch
before settling his weight back into his heels and dropping his head, one fist still braced against the
bag, the other hanging limp at his side. His chest heaves, and Blaine speaks around his heavy
breaths. "My parents aren't going to D.C., and I can't come over this weekend."

"What?" Kurt sits up even straighter. "I mean, why?"
Bitterly, Blaine says, "Plans have already been made for me."

"What plans?"

"Thad and his father are flying—which is to say Thad's father is doing the flying, he has his own
plane—they're flying up to Princeton to look at apartments or dorms or something. We've been
invited to join them. My Dad accepted the invitation. He thinks I need inspiration to get started
working on my college applications for next year. Thinks I should start reconnecting with my friends
at Dalton.

"Hell, he even thinks I should reconsider returning to Dalton for my senior year. As if I could
even..." Blaine trails off, turns back to the bag and throws himself into a flurry of furious beats.

"Blaine," Kurt says. He sets his satchel aside and stands up, take a few tentative steps toward Blaine,
who doesn't relent in his attack on the bag, doesn't register Kurt coming closer. It looks like too much
to Kurt. He doesn't know, can't know, really; but he thinks he sees more than emotional pain
registering in the tension of Blaine's jaw. "Blaine," he says more loudly, "Please, can you... stop for a
minute?"

He reaches out, lays his fingertips lightly upon Blaine's bare shoulder. His skin is hot and slick, like it
gets when they have sex, but Kurt is finding nothing erotic here. He's alarmed. Blaine's next punch
vibrates viciously beneath Kurt's fingers. "Honey, please," he says.

Blaine makes some vague noise of assent and stops, tipping forward toward the bag, resting his
forehead against it, eyes closed. He slumps, wraps his arms around its barely yielding girth. "I'm
sorry," he mumbles. "I know how much this weekend means to you." Then more softly, with his
voice sounding thicker and exhausted: defeated. "It means a lot to me."

"I'm sorry too," Kurt says, sliding the rest of his hand onto Blaine's skin, squeezing. He fumbles for
words to comfort or explain or encourage, but all he comes up with is, "It's okay, Blaine."

"It's not okay," Blaine says, and his voice drops to a whisper. Kurt barely makes out the words when
Blaine continues, "God, Kurt, sometimes I think I hate him. I fucking hate him."

Awkwardly, Kurt asks, "What can I do? Is there anything?"

Blaine shakes his head against the heavy bag, doesn't open his eyes. "There's nothing. He just, he
doesn't listen, he never listens to me. I feel like I'm just a... a prop in his life. The wrong one."

Then Blaine takes a deep breath, opens his eyes, and straightens. He turns and looks at Kurt, his eyes weary, his shoulders rounded. "I really am sorry, Kurt. I wanted so much to spend the weekend together."

"Me too," Kurt says, and he forces himself to smile. "Maybe next weekend?"

Blaine nods. "Yeah, he's definitely traveling next week, so next weekend may actually be possible. I'll double check the dates and let you know so you can update our schedule."

Kurt takes Blaine by the arm and leads him over the bench. He feels the tremors of fatigue in the muscles beneath his loose grip. They sit, and Kurt reaches for Blaine's nearest hand, gently starts unwrapping it. Blaine winces as his hand comes free, gingerly uncurls his fingers into Kurt's grasp. Kurt rubs Blaine's palm with his thumb, working his way with mild pressure up toward and along each finger. "Can you come over Friday at least?" he asks quietly.

Blaine shakes his head. "No. My parents are having a dinner party and I am expected to attend."

"That sucks," Kurt says, reaches for Blaine's other hand.

"Yeah."

"Come here," Kurt says. He pulls Blaine against him, heedless of the sweat and smell getting on his clothes. They'll wash, but Blaine... Blaine comes easily to him, limp and exhausted as Kurt frees his other hand. "It's going to be okay," he says with a confidence he's not certain he feels. They just have to endure a little more, always a little more, but there's an end in sight. It has to give way to their future. "This time next year," Kurt says, "you'll be graduating soon, and I'll be waiting for you in New York, probably busy with last minute decorating to make sure everything'll be perfect for you." Kurt smiles as he imagines it. "I'll come back to Ohio to watch you graduate, and then we'll leave this place together, and I'll take you home with me. To our home."

Blaine is quiet for a long time. "A year is a long time, Kurt. To wait."

With a shrug Kurt replies, "It's not so long when you've been waiting as long as we have. And anyway, for you, I'd wait forever."

Blaine chuckles against Kurt's shoulder.

Kurt rolls his eyes. "I know, it's cheesy and sentimental," he says with a soft answering laugh. "But it's true, Blaine. We'll get through this."

"I hope so," Blaine says, pulling away from Kurt to stand. "Will you sing for me this afternoon after I shower?"

Kurt smiles and says, "Of course."

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Even though his weekend plans have fallen to ruin, Kurt doesn't want Carole to cancel her plans with his Dad, and he doesn't want either of them to be worrying about him while they're gone. He calls Mercedes when he gets home Wednesday, asks if she'd like to make the gardening project a Saturday thing instead and stay the night. He'll invite Rachel, too. They can work on the garden all morning and afternoon, and then make pizza and marathon the last season's Project Runway. She says yes. So does Rachel (though only to the evening's activities). Kurt is confident he can keep
himself distracted with the garden and his best girls. Mercedes wants to visit Quinn Sunday after she goes to church, anyway. Quinn's been moved out of ICU to the rehab floor.

Thursday, Kurt blows off his audition practice and takes Blaine with him to the cemetery to lay a bunch of daffodils with his mother. Then they go for ice cream to celebrate the warming days. After, they go their separate ways with a "See you Monday," and a "Have a safe trip," and a "Good luck with the garden." It does, for a moment, give Kurt pause to consider just how hard next year will be apart. This weekend is going to be difficult without Blaine, and the past few weeks have been dismal for his absence in the evenings. But Kurt reminds himself of what Blaine told him back in November. Being geographically apart doesn't mean they can't spend time together in other ways. He sends Blaine a text suggesting they try Skyping tonight instead of just a phone call. They can watch a movie together. It'll be like practicing for next year. Once Blaine's home, he replies with a brief, "sure," and Kurt suggests eight thirty.

There's no family dinner Friday. Carole is in D.C. with his Dad, Finn is out with Rachel, Blaine is with his parents and their friends, and Sam has gone over to Artie's for an evening of playing some (Kurt has learned the right acronym for it) MMORPG. Kurt sits alone at the dining table with some reheated leftovers, his computer, a pencil, and graph paper. He plans the beds for tomorrow, makes a list of what they'll need to get at the nursery, then he goes to the kitchen and makes soup for tomorrow's lunch. While he cooks, he replies to Blaine's occasional texts complaining of boredom.

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Kurt picks Mercedes up at eight the next morning, which is far too early to be up and out on a Saturday, but they want to get started as soon as possible. Blaine's seven AM text to say he was on his way to the local airstrip had already woken Kurt, anyway. He hopes Thad's father is a good pilot. Kurt dons his oldest pair of jeans, a t-shirt, one of his Dad's flannel shirts, and an old fleece hoodie Finn was tossing out. He hopes it'll pass for Saturday morning I'm-planting-a-garden-today chic.

The morning is crisp and dewy, and Kurt is pleased to see hellebores, crocuses, and snow drops blooming down the side path to the backyard as he and Mercedes ferry supplies from the car to the backyard. The buds on the ornamental plum in the front yard are burgeoning; a few brave blossoms have already unfurled near the sheltered crooks of the branches

Mercedes' Mom has given him enough of her spare concrete blocks for two three-by-six raised beds. They've bought a lot of vegetable plants: spinach, arugula, peas, haricots verts, radishes, and carrots. Mercedes says they all grow well together and it's a good mix for the early spring. They can swap in tomatoes and basil, peppers and eggplant as it warms up. They also get some strawberries on a whim, and Mercedes insists on buying him marigolds and lavender to help keep pests away. She also gets him a floppy, wide-brimmed sun hat and some colorful daisy-print gloves to match. She calls them a garden warming gift. The gloves and hat really complete his ensemble, Kurt jokes. He poses with a sack of mulch for Mercedes to take a photograph with her phone. He asks her to send it to both Blaine and his Dad.

Then they set to the hard part. Kurt borrows his Dad's tape measure so they can mark out the beds with string, and Mercedes shows him how to cut the lawn off with a spade before they start digging the first bed. It takes longer than it had in Kurt's imaginings of the day, and it's not long before he's stripping off layers of clothing—first the hoody, then the flannel shirt—and sweating with exertion even in the cool morning air. There's no breeze, and the direct sun is warm. His arms, back, and shoulders burn comfortably with the movement. It feels good, like he's working out the kinks of schooldays and study.

Mercedes works faster than he does, being more practiced, and Kurt is distracted every time his
shovel hits something that clinks. Usually it's a stone, but he starts to find small shards of pottery. Some old blue and white floral patterned thing, as far as he can tell. Each piece he bends to collect and wipe away the dirt from the glazed surface. Once he has six, he puts them aside together, thinks maybe he'll find enough to work out what it was that someone broke here before the grass grew over it.

"I found one, Kurt," Mercedes says and tosses a piece toward him.

Kurt catches it in both hands and makes a little "Oo!" of excitement.

"It's like amateur archaeology hour with you," she teases.

"You never know," Kurt says with a grin. "Maybe we've made a find of significance, and we'll end up on The Discovery Channel." He wipes away the soil and finds a different pattern. Not entirely different; it's clear it's from the same plate or bowl (he's leaning toward serving bowl given the curve of one of the shards), but instead of flowers it's the crested head of a bird. He puts it with the other pieces, and keeps digging.

They fall into an easy rhythm and find more bits of the blue and white bowl (including part of a flame feathered wing and a long peacock-ish tail) and Kurt's mind wanders. Not far, but back to his conversation with Sam. It has been, intermittently, on his mind, that Mercedes harbored more than a simple, short-lived crush on him. The morning with Mercedes has felt easy, so he thinks he might be able to ask her something, something he's always wondered, but has never quite been brave enough to ask her.

"Hey," he starts, pausing in the digging to rest his back. He straightens his shovel and leans against the handle. Waits for Mercedes to look up at him. "Can I ask you something?"

She, too, pauses in her work. "Yeah?"

"It's sort of personal, but I'd really appreciate an honest answer."

Mercedes frowsns at him warily. "Well, you can ask," she says.

"Back when," Kurt starts, purses his lips for a moment to gather the words properly. "Back when you thought we were dating our sophomore year—"

Mercedes groans. "Kurt, oh my God, why are you bringing this up? It's so emb—"

"No, no, that's not it. It's fine. I just, I wanted to know if you had actually thought I was straight. Back then."

She looks at him, wariness transformed to curiosity.

"I mean, everyone thinks it's so obvious that I'm not, but you...?"

She's quiet for a few heartbeats, thoughtful. "Honestly, Kurt? At first I thought maybe you were gay, because that's what everyone said about you. But then as we spent time together, I just wasn't sure. So I figured it really wasn't my place to assume that just because you dressed well and whatever, that you weren't straight." Mercedes shrugs. "And you seemed to genuinely like me."

"I did like you. I do. Just..."

Mercedes smiles. "I know." She pokes at a large dirt clod with the end of her shovel, breaking it apart. "I think I really liked that you liked me. You were one of the first boys who did, who liked me
as a person, you know?"

Kurt nods. Yeah, that he understands.

"You were so sweet to me, Kurt, and we had so much fun together. And you were a perfect gentleman. You never once tried to 'accidentally' grope my boobs."

Kurt smiles wider at that. "The thought never even occurred to me."

"You were pretty cute, too," Mercedes says.

"Cute," Kurt repeats skeptically. It sounds so bland and innocuous, the way she says it, like he's a fluffy bunny, still stuck with all the sex appeal of a baby penguin.

"Yeah, sure, you were a total cutie," she says, gives him a measuring look. "You still are, boo."

Kurt makes a face, says sarcastically, "Of course I've always aspired to cuteness."

"Hey," she says, flipping up another dirt clod with the end of her shovel and flinging it at his leg. "That was supposed to be a compliment."

Kurt grimaces and shakes his head.

"I didn't mean it like... however you're taking it. What's the problem, Kurt?"

"It's... probably a sore spot for you too."

"What is?"

"Okay, well, remember the auditions for West Side Story?"

"Do I ever." Mercedes makes a displeased face of her own. "But I'm over it."

"I'm not," Kurt says. Realizes he hasn't really talked about this with anyone other than the brief talk with his Dad.

"You auditioned for Tony, right?" she asks.

"Yeah, well, I overheard the casting conversation after my audition." Kurt stops for a moment, decides to confess his part in it. "And really, it's my own fault for eavesdropping, because you're never going to hear anything good, but..." He sighs.

"What did they say, Kurt?"

"Basically, I'm too delicate, and I lack sex appeal. I could never be a credible romantic lead. There was something about my toothpick arms and a failure to excite lady parts."

Kurt sees Mercedes' gaze go to his arms as bared by the t-shirt he's wearing, the sleeves are snug. Then she looks back at his face, "Seriously?"

"Yes."

"Well, they are blind, Kurt. And ignorant."

"You think?"

"Boy, I don't think, I know. Have you even looked at your fine self in a mirror lately?"
"I would, but..." Kurt gestures at his current state of dress. Mercedes bends to pick up another dirt clod, gives an exasperated sigh, and belts him with it in the side of his neck. It stings but doesn't do any damage. It breaks apart, and the dirt rains down the neck of his shirt. "Hey," he says. He strips off his gloves and bends to grab a choice clod of his own. He hits her in the shoulder with it, and she starts laughing.

The next lump of dirt hits him square in the chest, and then he's trying to find cover behind the stack of blocks, while Mercedes pels him with more dirt. He's laughing too, and it's remarkably, wonderfully easy to laugh and behave so ridiculously. He ventures out to make a grab for some more clumps of dirt with which to arm himself, takes a hit to his backside, but then is back in cover and aiming a good throw at Mercedes' thigh. His next throw she intercepts with her shovel.

Eventually they're both filthy, breathless, and giggling; and Mercedes is calling for a cease fire. Kurt accedes and ventures carefully inside the house to get them a snack of hot green tea and cookies. They sit on the back patio and survey their work. Kurt pulls his layers back on as he cools down.

"Do you know how awesome my Maria opposite your Tony would have been?" Mercedes asks.

"Too awesome for this town," Kurt says, and they clink mugs.

"Rachel and Blaine were really fantastic though."

"Yeah," Kurt says with fondness warming his smile. "They were."

They nibble their cookies and sip their tea in silence for a time. It's comfortable, and Kurt realizes how much he's missed her. "You were my first real friend, you know," he says.

"You were mine, too," Mercedes replies.

Kurt turns to look at her, sees her smiling softly at him, the affection in her eyes. He hopes she sees the same in his. "I'm sorry if I haven't always been as good a friend as you deserve," Kurt says. It's an apology that is long overdue he suspects. He's still not sure exactly when they started to come apart, but it may have been when Blaine became his closest friend and he stopped prioritizing Mercedes. It had happened so fast.

But despite the necessity Kurt feels about it, Mercedes seems surprised by his apology. "What do you mean?" she asks.

Kurt steadies himself. "Back when I first started hanging out with Blaine. I wasn't... all that sweet to you. I blew off our dates, and I took you for granted. And I'm sorry for that. If I hurt you."

"Kurt." She pauses. "You don't need to apologize for that. Not anymore."

Kurt shrugs and looks into his mug. "Maybe not, but I wanted to."

She accepts it with a nod. "Well, thank you," she says. "I won't lie, Kurt. It was hard at the time. But you were right about some things, and anyway, you and Blaine? You're the real deal. I hope you know that."

He glances over at her, surprised. "You really think so?"

"I do. I see how you are together, and it makes me believe I can find that kind of love with someone someday. That it exists and I'm not foolish to want it or be willing to wait for it."

"That, actually. It means a lot to me for you to say that," he says. "And I don't think you're foolish at
"I'm so happy for you, Kurt. For both of you."

He smiles again, but it doesn't quite take hold the way he wants it. He feel it flicker with nervousness. "We were supposed to be spending today together, Blaine and I. It's, ah... Today is one year since Blaine kissed me for the first time." It's the first time he's told anyone (apart from Carole) about today, that they're marking it. In fact he's never told anyone about their first kiss.

"Kurt, it's your anniversary!" She beams at him. "Congratulations."

Kurt can't help it, he grins widely and unselfconsciously.

"The first of many, I'm sure." she says.

"I... I really hope so," Kurt says. It comes out like a whispered confession, but the words are light on his tongue and bright in his heart; and he knows Blaine feels the same way.

"I'm sorry you couldn't spend the day with him," she says.

"Yeah, but it's okay," Kurt says, because it will be okay, and he remembers then, a lifetime ago, being so terrified, coming out to Mercedes, crying because he was so scared. And he remembers her accepting it as if it were nothing more than his confessing to her that he preferred vanilla over strawberry ice cream. More than that, it was the first time he'd said it to anyone: "I'm gay." Mercedes didn't flinch, she just went right on loving him, being his friend, being amazing. If she'd been anyone other than the person she is? He doesn't know how long it would have taken for him to find his courage again. Kurt sets his glass down and reaches out for Mercedes' hand. She reaches back. He gives a squeeze and says, "I'm really glad to be spending it with you."

"I'm really glad you called me," she says.

He lets go of her hand, thinks of something else on which having Mercedes opinion may be helpful. "Can I ask you something else?" he asks. "Less personal this time."

"Shoot," she says.

"You know I'm working on my audition piece for NYADA."

"Yep."

"I'm planning on singing "Music of the Night"."

"A good choice to show off your voice," Mercedes says, nodding.

"Yes, but, what do you think of 'Not the Boy Next Door'?"

Mercedes blinks at him as a slow smile bends her lips. "The Peter Allen one?"

"Yes," Kurt says, and hopes she's not about to laugh at him. He couldn't bear it.

Her eyes go wide. "Oh. My God. Kurt, ask me how many times I've watched Hugh's Tony performance?" She's grinning now. "Actually don't ask me, because that is an embarrassingly high number, which is to say, yes, you should definitely do it."

Kurt finds himself grinning back. "Blaine thinks I should consider it too. But I haven't decided. I'm still concentrating on Phantom. I think it's more accessible. The Boy From Oz is kind of..."
provocative."

"Just like one Kurt Hummel," Mercedes says.

Kurt chuckles, and he wonders if he really should start practicing it too.

"Well," Mercedes says. "If you change your mind and you need some backup, count me in."

"I will," he promises.

"And, Kurt, I don't think I ever told you congratulations on getting the audition to NYADA. I'm proud of you, and I really hope you get in."

"Thanks," Kurt says. "What about you? Any plans yet?"

Mercedes smile crooks into a grimace, and she sighs. "I don't know. My parents really want me to go to college—and I do want to go to college—but they want me to go study something practical, like business or law or medicine, which is bor-ing. At least to me."

"Well, what do you want to do most? Assuming a perfect world."

"Me? I want to sing, Kurt. I mean really sing. I want to fill big spaces with my voice, sing in stadiums and theaters and concert halls. I want to sing to open the World Series or the Superbowl, and I want to sing for the president. I want to sing the song from the blockbuster romantic movie that gets played on the radio so much people get sick of it, and then I want to perform it live at the Oscars right before I win one..." She trails off with a wry smile directed at her tea.

"That's a good dream," Kurt says. "It's actually really easy to see you doing all of that."

Mercedes shakes her head. "No, it's too big. I don't even know where to start."

"Well, I don't know that either, but it isn't too big, Mercedes. It's just... this town is too small. Once you get out there, you'll see. There'll be enough room for your dream."

"Yeah, me and a million other girls. I don't know, Kurt. It's sweet of you to say, though."

"I believe in your dream," he says.

She smiles and sets down her mug. "That's good, but that garden's not going to plant itself." And they get back to work.

They get the concrete blocks arranged in a neat rectangle around the bed, and then they start putting the dirt back in, mixing it up with peat moss and compost and a little extra top soil.

Kurt's carefully brushing the soil from the surface of another shard of the blue and white plate he found while mixing up the dirt, when Mercedes says his name softly but urgently. He looks up at her, where she's kneeling across the bed from him with the pallet of spinach plants, trowel in hand. She smiles at him and nods her head in a gesture for him to look back over his shoulder. He twists and turns his head slowly, wondering if there's a rare bird to startle or some other timid thing.

It's not a bird or any sort of wild creature. It's Blaine, coming through the gate at the side of the house. He's dressed up in a suit with a large bouquet of flowers cradled in the bend of his elbow.

Kurt wonders at what point he fell asleep.
Part VIF: Dedition - Chapter 18

Blaine's attention is turned to the latch of the gate, and Kurt suppresses a moment of panic, of wanting to dart inside to quickly shower and change before Blaine gets a good look at him like this: kneeling in the grass in dirt caked clothing, in the big floppy garden hat. He's lost his gloves, and his hands are filthy. He's filthy. There's the itch of dirt down his back and beneath his waistband from the earlier dirt clod exchange. A red-breasted robin chirps cheerfully in the aspen tree by the fence.

The bouquet of flowers Blaine holds is shades of purple and white with long sprigs of yellow blossoms amidst fronds of delicate green fern. It looks like forsythia—that's the yellow—white camellias, and... oh. Lilacs. Blaine wears the same trim navy suit he wore at Christmas. Today he wears it with a maroon sateen waistcoat and no tie. The collar and top buttons of his white shirt are undone, his throat exposed, and it's such an unusual manner for Blaine to wear his shirt, he may as well be shirtless for all that it speaks to Kurt of intimacy and invitation. Kurt swallows hard. "Oh," he says as Blaine looks up and their eyes meet.

"Hi," Blaine says.

Kurt manages to summon an answering, "Hi." In his peripheral vision, he sees Mercedes stand and walk over, but Kurt feels glued to the earth watching Blaine approach. He slides his thumb along the sharp edge of the porcelain shard in his hand. It's sharp enough to hurt without cutting in. He sets it on the edge of one of the concrete blocks bordering the garden bed.

"Hey, Blaine," Mercedes says. "You're looking handsome."

"Thank you." Blaine smiles at Mercedes, and there's a ruddy blush tinging his cheeks. He runs his free hand self-consciously over his hair. It's only lightly styled: his weekend hair, his party hair.

Kurt gets one foot beneath himself and stands. Mercedes offers him a steadying hand. He takes it gratefully. "I thought you were flying to Princeton with your Dad today," he says to Blaine.

"Yeah," Blaine says with a lopsided sort of grin. "I kind of... ditched him at the airfield." Blaine says it lightly enough, but Kurt wonders what it may have cost Blaine with his father. He doesn't know if he should press for more information, because the most important thing is that Blaine is here. And close enough now that Kurt can smell the flowers, the coveted heavy-sweet scent of the lilacs.

"These are for you," Blaine says, his gaze flicking up suddenly shy as he offers Kurt the large bouquet.

"I'm a mess," Kurt says, reluctant to take the beautiful things from Blaine lest he shed dirt on them. "They're lovely, but I—" He wipes his hands off on the seat of his jeans, but that only makes the situation worse for he's got dirt there too. "You brought me lilacs," he says scrubbing his hands against the front of his shirt.

"Yeah, I... thought you'd like them." Blaine is looking directly into his eyes now, and Kurt feels the flush burning its way up his neck and across his cheeks. He knows what this means. He remembers Blaine's promise.

Kurt bites his lip and glances down at his hands; he tries to use the stiff corner of the button placket to scrape the worst of the dirt from his fingernails. It only packs it in harder. "I do," he says. He looks back up, "They're beautiful."

"I'm sorry," Blaine says, turning his attention to Mercedes. "I guess I should have called first, but I
"You wanted to surprise your man," Mercedes says. "He's been miserable all day, you know. Pining."

"I haven't!" Kurt protests because he really hasn't been. He knows she's teasing, but he's gone so fluttery and unbalanced inside, he can't summon any wittier reply.

Blaine laughs softly, affectionately.

"Pining," she repeats, firmly.

Kurt rolls his eyes and gives up on cleaning his hands.

"So what did you guys have planned for tonight?" Blaine asks, and he doesn't give the slightest hint that Mercedes' presence may be surplus to his intentions. "I didn't bring any clothes for gardening," he says, "but I brought dinner."

"Rachel's coming over too, later," Kurt says. "We were going to marathon some Project Runway, make pizza, and—"

"Guys," Mercedes says. "You're sweet, but I will make myself scarce. I know today is a special day for you two."

"You can stay," Kurt protests. "We had plans. The four of us can—"

Mercedes sighs and cuts him off with a look. "Kurt, baby, look at your boy. He's here to romance you, not hang out with us while we make fun of ugly dresses."

But Kurt doesn't look at Blaine, not more than a glance. Instead, he looks down at his oversized shirt, grungy slumping jeans, and battered old sneakers. "I need to shower," Kurt says, because, god, he really does. He thinks he can feel dirt in his underwear. There's definitely dirt in his socks irritating his ankles.

"Do what you need to do, Kurt. I'll tidy up out here and call Rachel to pick me up," Mercedes says.

"The plants—?"

"Will be fine in the greenhouse for another day or two. Just make sure they don't dry out."

Kurt nods and looks back at Blaine, who is still smiling, albeit somewhat nervously. "Okay," Kurt says. "We should go in." He turns back to Mercedes, squeezes her hand. "Thank you."

After Kurt has shaken and brushed as much dirt from himself as he can, he and Blaine go in through the back door into the laundry. He holds the door open for Blaine and follows him in. "For the love of that gorgeously tailored suit, please don't touch me. You would not believe the places I have topsoil. You're looking far too glamorous for me to want to risk messing you up."

Blaine says. "I'm sorry, I really should have called before I came over."

Kurt looks up at him from where he's bent, unlacing his old sneakers, sees how Blaine's smile has lost its confidence. "No, I'm really glad you didn't," Kurt says. "A good surprise makes for a nice change."
"Yeah, I guess." Blaine says. "I did promise you surprises."

That promise Kurt remembers well too, and Blaine keeps his promises. "That's twice this year so far," Kurt says biting into the bottom curve of his smile.

"So far," Blaine says softly with a cock of his head and a contemplative look. He steps a little closer as Kurt straightens and slips off his shoes. They're still not touching, and Blaine's not close enough to risk crushing the flowers between them, but Kurt thinks he can feel the heat between them anyway, and a pull. His skin already aches for Blaine's touch. "So were you actually pining for me?" Blaine asks.

"I may have been, a little bit. On the inside." He goes to the laundry sink, grabs the soap and the nailbrush and sets to scrubbing the dirt from his hands. "It was all very restrained."

"I missed you, too," Blaine says, leaning against the dryer and watching Kurt, his gaze going sort of sultry and keen.

Kurt dips his head to hide his smile. "Blaine, You cannot look at me like that when I look like this."

"You look fine to me," Blaine says and keeps right on looking at Kurt, brazen.

And while Kurt can certainly think of bigger turn offs than being covered in garden dirt and dried sweat, right now it's at the top of his list. Which is irksome because Blaine is pretty devastatingly sexy in that suit, and his gaze is so heavy with expectation upon Kurt. So Kurt changes the subject. "Um. Is it okay, that you're here?"

Blaine shrugs. "It'll have to be," he says, and that's enough that he glances away, smile fading.

It rouses Kurt's curiosity enough that he decides he will ask. Or at least ask if he can ask: "May I ask what happened?"

Blaine presses his lips together and nods slowly. "My Mom didn't really want me to go. She gets nervous about those small planes. So when I hugged her goodbye and said to her that I really didn't want to go either, she said, 'Then don't,' like it was the simplest thing."

Blaine takes a deep breath, and the rest comes out quickly with his exhalation. "So I turned around and told my Dad I wasn't going with him. Thad and his father were there so he didn't get mad. Then I left with my Mom, and now..." Blaine gestures. "Here I am."

Kurt rinses his hands and reaches for the hand towel. "And was it?"

"Was it what?"

"The simplest thing?"

"I— No, it wasn't. Telling him 'no' was definitely not easy."

Kurt reaches a clean hand to touch Blaine's arm. "I'm proud of you."

Blaine's smile returns, wide and unfettered. "It probably sounds weird, but so am I," he says, and then he bows his head with a soft sigh. "I just... I really wanted to see you today, Kurt. We don't have to do anything, you know, like we talked about. I just want to spend the rest of the day together, even if all we do is cuddle on the sofa and heckle infomercials."

"Ugh, Blaine. We are not that couple yet. I'm not spending our first anniversary watching
"Okay," Blaine says, "I'm just saying, I have no particular intentions." He offers Kurt the flowers again.

"Really?" Kurt says, and he reaches for the bouquet. "So these and the nice suit...?"

"Well," Blaine says and glances away.

"That's what I thought," Kurt teases. "Let me get these in a vase and get showered. I need to have some lunch. Have you eaten yet?"

"No," Blaine says. "I can make something while you shower."

"There's soup in the fridge. It just needs reheating."

Blaine nods. "I'll just go out the front and get my stuff from the car."

"Sure," Kurt says, and once Blaine has left the laundry room, he starts to breathe again.

He sets the flowers down beside the sink and retrieves the wide green recycled glass vase from the corner cupboard, sets it on the lid of the washing machine. Gets the utility scissors from the drawer in front of him to cut the twine holding the bouquet together and starts trimming the bottoms of the long stems.

Mercedes opens the back door then. "Hey," she says. "I'm done out here. Do you need help with anything else before I go?"

Kurt shakes his head, but gestures for Mercedes to come in. "They're beautiful, aren't they?" he says, lightly brushing the densely packed head of one of the darker lilac clusters with a fingertip. It prompts a fresh waft of their dense fragrance.

"Lilacs, huh?" Mercedes says as she enters. Kurt remembers showing Mercedes his bucket list their sophomore year. Back then it was Zac Efron, but it was still in a summer field beneath a lilac tree. He's surprised she remembers.

"Mmhm," Kurt says, smiles.

"Then I really should be going," Mercedes says with a grin. "Because I'm pretty sure I know what that means."

Kurt laughs, a little self-consciously. "You don't have to rush off. Did you want to stay for lunch?" he asks. "You can."

"No, I'm fine. But give me a call sometime tomorrow afternoon, okay?"

"Okay."

"And most importantly, Kurt," she says, "have fun."

He's laughing as she lets herself out the backdoor. He waves as she passes the window, and then he turns back to the flowers, arranging them in the vase and adding some water. He sets them aside and takes off his hat, hanging it on the row of coat-hooks near the door. Though it's a lost cause, he runs his hands through his hair so it's at least not sweat-plastered to his skull.

Kurt hears Blaine come back inside, so he picks up the vase of flowers and heads into the kitchen.
His stomach tangles anew in anticipation as Blaine comes in with a foil covered rectangular casserole dish, atop which is balanced a glass salad bowl and a loaf of fresh, crusty Italian bread.

"Hi," Kurt says, a little breathless. They're alone now.

"Hi," Blaine replies with soft smile and soft gaze. He sets the bread, salad, and casserole down softly on the island.

"You cooked?" Kurt asks. He's not sure what he'd been expecting exactly when Blaine said he'd brought dinner, but it wasn't Blaine having cooked. Which means he went home from the airfield this morning and cooked.

"Yeah, well, Mom did most of it. I asked her if she would help me. It's a lasagne. It's one of, I think, three things she can cook well? I just chopped the vegetables, stirred the sauce, and grated the cheese. Nothing much, really..."

"Blaine, that's cooking, you cooked for me," Kurt says.

"Oh, I guess?"

"It's really, I don't know, sweet." He tightens his hands around the glass vase, ducks his nose into the blossoms for a moment and smiles. Honestly, he feels a little spoiled.

"Sweet?" Blaine echoes with a quirk in his smile. "It's pure self-interest, I assure you. I didn't want you to have to cook tonight." A smooth note of seduction colors his voice as he says, "I'm hoping to have you otherwise occupied."

Kurt meets his gaze as Blaine's words set a deep heat quivering within him. He says in a low voice of his own, "Mmm, like I said, sweet."

Blaine's eyes blaze with all the promise of the day. He says, "You... ah, you really need to go shower, Kurt, so I can kiss you and... stuff."

"I— Okay," Kurt says, but it's hard to move away from Blaine, from the magnet pull of him. But once showered, Kurt can stop resisting it. So he goes.

"Put on something fabulous," Blaine suggests with a wink. He's totally flirting.

Kurt laughs as he leaves the kitchen; he's got some idea of what he'll wear.

~*~

The shower is bliss. Once Kurt gets his work clothes off, he's even dirtier than he expected, so he takes his time making sure every bit of grit and grime is scrubbed away down the drain. Then, pink-skinned, and light-headed from the heat of the water, he moisturizes his abused skin, makes sure to select a product (the cocoa butter one he uses in the summer) that both smells good and won't taste soapy or bitter no matter where Blaine wants to kiss him. It leaves him feeling sleek and polished all over. His anticipation has his own hands feeling seductive upon his skin as he works in the body cream, but he doesn't indulge beyond necessity. He's been waiting this long, another little while will only sweeten things. He's discovered that the wanting of it—the desire that vibrates his nerves like a violin string—it's a large part of the enjoyment now that he is no longer doomed to remain unsatisfied.

Surprisingly, he's not all that anxious. Maybe the gardening worked all the tension from his body without his realizing it. Maybe it just means that he truly is ready.
In his bedroom, Kurt sits at his vanity in his dressing gown, looking at the vase of flowers and cooling off enough to dress. The fragrance of the lilacs has filled his room.

He closes his eyes for a moment and imagines it: couched upon a soft blanket (cashmere, because it's his fantasy after all; he needn't worry about price or pulls or stains...) pillowed by the deep grass on a warm early summer day, the breath-soft whisper of the breeze through the heart-shaped leaves, the redolent lilac blooms bowing and trembling overhead. Dappled in sun and shade, he and his lover lie, side by side. They've been sharing kisses and chaste, tender touches for hours, and are paused now, finding silent agreement in one another's gaze for more. The lines of this fantasy Kurt has left lightly sketched for so long, he's never filled in the details of more; it was just having relations.

His lover—with the dark hair, strong arms, and soft lips—in the fantasy now is Blaine: always Blaine, only Blaine. So as he imagines it now, it's Blaine pressing him back into the grass and kissing him long and deep and slow as he closes his eyes and inhales the sweet scent of the lilacs. It's Blaine's hands unfastening his clothes and turning him over, stroking down between his thighs; and Blaine's mouth hot as it slides deliriously down his spine, to give him a lingering, most intimate kiss.

With a soft huffed breath and flash of heat, Kurt comes back to himself. It still feels like something of a trespass in that particular fantasy. As if the explicit and the carnal jar with its safe, romantic timbre—with its long history in his mental landscape. But there's something about corrupting it, something tantalizing. It beckons his desire, to merge one of his oldest fantasies with his newest reality: for that version of himself to be so lured and seduced, and at the last, stripped bare, wide-eyed and ravished. He's glad Blaine brought the lilacs.

Kurt does his hair, uses less product than he would were he going out, but figures Blaine will appreciate being able to bury his fingers into a softer style. Then he goes to his bureau, selects a pair of gray low-rise no-show briefs (his most discreet), and slips them on under his dressing gown and has to take a moment to adjust his erection. It's tempting to leave it at that, to go downstairs in just his dressing gown and underwear, but it's hardly fabulous, and possibly, marginally sleazy. They're having lunch first, like mature people.

Texture is his goal, clothes to invite Blaine's touch. He remembers Blaine's hands on his velvet ankle boots, on the supple leather of his Docs, on the laces of his waistcoat and those same boots, on the brocade of his corset, fisting into a quilted silk bedspread, gliding across semen soaked skin, and trailing down his sweaty, oiled spine. Kurt pushes clothes along the rail in his closet until he finds the burgundy crushed velvet pants for which he's never yet found an occasion.

They're tight, as tight as anything he owns, but the material has lot of give, so they're nearly comfortable as his dance pants. They leave significantly less room for modesty, however. It's almost obscene given his present state. He selects his black Thomas Engel Hart ankle boots, not just because they work with the narrow silhouette, but also because they'll be easy to remove. On the shirt, he remains undecided. Ends up grabbing something basic, a slim asymmetrical white-on-white dress shirt with a thin vertical stripe woven into it. He fidgets with the French cuffs, wonders if it he can leave them open. Decides he'll end up getting them in his soup if he does, so he grabs a plain pair of polished rose quartz cufflinks to fasten them. He leaves the shirt untucked, the collar unbuttoned, and he doesn't bother with an undershirt.

He winds his silver chain knit scarf loosely around his shoulders and considers himself ready for anything.

~

Downstairs, the air is aromatic with tarragon, which means Blaine found the chicken and barley soup in the fridge. The savory smell of it makes Kurt realize just how hungry he is after all that digging.
He's glad he thought to make the soup last night to give him and Mercedes enough energy to get through the rest of the gardening today. It will be nourishing enough to sustain whatever strenuous, sexy activities he and Blaine will enjoy this afternoon. But despite his hunger for food, that thought makes Kurt's heart race, so that when he finds Blaine in the kitchen, leaning casually over the counter reading something on his phone, Kurt is back to feeling too hot and flustered. His hands occupy themselves with uselessly smoothing his shirt tails.

Blaine looks up as Kurt comes into the kitchen. Kurt sees how Blaine's eyes widen as he sets his phone aside and straightens, how his chest rises with a deep and sudden inhalation.

"Kurt," Blaine says, and comes to him.

Kurt has just enough time to smile before Blaine is upon him, repeating Kurt's name in a murmur against his lips and then kissing him breathlessly, his warm hands cupping Kurt's face between them, and his body pressing Kurt back against the counter. Then Blaine is drawing back far enough to speak, his hands slipping down to Kurt's shoulders. He tips his forehead against Kurt's temple. "God, I was so nervous the first time I did that."

Kurt sighs a soft laugh. "So was I."

"It was amazing," Blaine says. "Kissing you for the first time."

Kurt turns into Blaine's face, rubbing his nose against Blaine's cheekbone. "It was," he says, like he's telling a precious secret.

And then Blaine's parted lips graze along Kurt's jaw to exhale a ticklish breath near his ear, and Blaine whispers. "I'm going to suck your dick now, Kurt."

The words, and the tone in which they are spoken, make Kurt's stomach clench, and the sudden plummet of blood from his brain has Kurt fearing he will actually swoon. It's early afternoon and the kitchen window has neither blinds nor curtains. He looks over at the bare window with a strand of something that's not quite panic threading around his heart. "Here?" Kurt asks.

"Right here," Blaine confirms, and he slides down to his knees, dragging against Kurt's body on the descent.

The friction has Kurt biting his lip hard and knocking his head back against the top cupboards with a barely stifled groan. "O-okay."

And Blaine's hands are on him, bold and sure, mapping the shape of his arousal beneath the velvet, dragging across the soft pile of the fabric to find where he's most sensitive and rubbing until Kurt lets out a shuddering gasp and his knees tremble. "You are so fucking hot," Blaine says, and his hands go to Kurt's fly; Blaine pulls the zipper down with the soft vipp. And then practicality intrudes, for Blaine is confounded by the top fastening of Kurt's pants.

"The buttons," Kurt pants out, moving his fingers blindly down to take over from Blaine's fumbling, "are on the inside tab."

His pants come undone beneath their combined efforts and Kurt moves his hands away so Blaine can... do what he's doing. "Oh... god," Kurt says, for what Blaine is doing is pressing his open mouth against Kurt's cock, still shrouded in the thin modal barrier of his briefs. Unadorned lust yanks at the base of Kurt's spine, and Kurt twists the fingers of one hand into Blaine's hair, gives a tug of encouragement. Braces himself against the counter with his other. Blaine's breath is hot and his lips nimble as he mouths along the ridge of Kurt's cock. "Your mouth..." Kurt says. "God, I love it."
When Kurt opens his eyes and looks down at Blaine, he finds Blaine looking right back up at him, his eyes bright and brimming with desire and devotion and things Kurt still has not learned to categorize or describe. Then, with a flutter, Blaine's eyelids close and he presses a kiss to Kurt's belly, just under his navel, followed by a broad sweep of his tongue. He works Kurt's underwear down to bare Kurt's erection, but leaves the wide band across the base of Kurt's shaft, his thumbs curling into the elastic to tug it far enough away from Kurt's skin for Blaine to have space to wrap his lips, soft and tight and (God, is he ever going to get used to this?) so fucking good, around Kurt's cock. Using his forearms, Blaine levers Kurt's thighs back against the cupboards so Kurt is pinned and caught.

For a fleeting moment, Kurt wonders what the neighbors over the back fence may see if they were to look this way. Wonders if they are looking this way. Likely it would be nothing of consequence—the angle and lighting provide privacy enough—but Kurt still feels exposed and on display, like anyone could see him like this, standing in his kitchen having his cock sucked by this gorgeous, hungry boy.

For Blaine is not teasing. Rather, he seems to be single-mindedly bent on making Kurt come as swiftly as possible. It's fast and wet and hot, but it is also, paradoxically, nowhere near what Kurt has been craving. Kurt wants Blaine's mouth on him everywhere, his throat, his chest, his belly, his thighs, his balls... but it's just on his cock, and not even all of it, maybe half his length. Which is enough to be irresistible, enough that Kurt can't breathe around his own heartbeat for the wanting of more, enough that he's itching to grab Blaine's hair in both hands and just shove all of his cock down Blaine's throat.

But he can't, not with the way he's held by Blaine's hands and arms and hampered by his own clothing. So he keeps inhaling, hasty little gulps of air, until his lungs verge on bursting, and then he's holding his breath and going dizzy as his orgasm twists tight, impossibly fast because he wants it so much he can't back off from the crazy careering drive into it, even as it still feels like he needs something more than this, but this is sufficient, and—god—Blaine wants it too. He's sucking and licking and humming around Kurt's cock like he's been starving for it. He pulls Kurt's waistband lower, hard enough that Kurt briefly fears for the integrity of it, until Blaine presses forward, taking the rest of Kurt's length in a maddening slide, and Kurt can't think of anything. He can only feel: the snug pulsing wet heat of Blaine's mouth around him and the way it's dragging at the ecstasy simmering molten in his belly and constricting in his balls.

As Kurt comes—hard—the air punches from his lungs in a full-throated bestial sort of sound, something between a scream and a groan, shockingly loud and unrestrained. He's never made a sound like that in his life. It's followed by a softer, amazed, "Oh my god," which comes out as little more than a quavering moan as Kurt curls over Blaine jerking and twitching weakly through the aftershocks.

Gingerly he relaxes the clench of his fingers in Blaine's hair and lets Blaine pull off him. "That was... unexpected," Kurt says once he has enough breath in his lungs to produce words again.

Blaine gently tucks him back in his briefs and does up his trousers. Then he tilts his face up, smiling at Kurt with reddened lips and adoring eyes. He swallows and clears his throat before speaking. "You seemed on edge," he says, his voice rough in that way it gets after he's had Kurt's cock in his throat.

Kurt shifts his weight carefully to make sure his legs will support him. "And so you thought...?"

"Blow jobs make everything better," Blaine says, "I have the data."

Kurt laughs as he rearranges Blaine's curls with clumsy feeling fingers. There's something about
Blaine, so neatly pressed and tailored, on his knees, the gleam of spit lingering on his swollen lips. Kurt passes the pad of his thumb over the glisten and asks, "Do you want me to? I mean, are you —?"

Blaine replies, a little sheepishly, "I'm good. I, uh, took the edge off while you were in the shower."

"Oh," Kurt says, oddly and slightly saddened at the thought of missing Blaine's orgasm, but it's also kind of hot, that Blaine needed to. He offers Blaine a hand, pulls him up to his feet.

"I thought lunch would be easier if we were both more relaxed," Blaine says; he bends to brush the knees of his trousers off, straightens, and asks, "Are you hungry?"

"Yes," Kurt says.

~

Kurt sets the dining table while Blaine ladles the soup into bowls, finishes them with a drizzle of cream as per Kurt's instructions, and cuts a few thick slices from the bread he brought. Moments like these—a quick glance across the kitchen to catch Blaine's smile while Kurt retrieves a pair of soup spoons and butter knives from the cutlery drawer—fill Kurt with such warmth and longing for the future. But he's grateful to be feeling more relaxed overall. The exertion of the morning, the hot shower, the unexpected fellatio, all have him feeling loose and languid. And more composed now, too. He's still stealing glances at the vee of Blaine's exposed throat and looking forward to putting his mouth there, but the urgency has tapered off into something comfortable. There's no doubt that he will be kissing Blaine soon, or that they'll have the time and privacy to do so many things together today. Kurt enjoys the thrum of patient anticipation and sits down with Blaine in the dining room.

Over lunch they talk about the things they don't talk about on the phone. Kurt tells Blaine of the garden, all his intentions for it, both the practical and the more fanciful. He tells him the details of it, the different plants he's putting in, what he's learned about them—both from the internet and from Mercedes—the recipes he's considering. And he's learning about companion planting, which is really helpful because he wants to keep everything organic. So he might buy some ladybugs—did Blaine know you can buy them? Other bugs, too. But the worst thing by far, so far, about gardening is worrying about cutting up earthworms with his shovel. He knows they regenerate; it just seems an awful thing to do, and...

Kurt realizes he's speaking too fast, has gotten caught up in the momentum of his own enthusiasm for the project, and has started to babble. Blaine is just silently looking at him with something like mild amusement curving his lips. Kurt trails off with a hastily spoken, "Sorry. I was getting a little carried away."

Blaine shakes his head, smiles wider. "No, you weren't. I like how passionate you get about things."

"Oh?"

"Yeah, I mean, it's nice to see because..." Blaine tilts his head as if evaluating the thought he's having, as if it's something that's only just occurred to him. "You... you hold it back a lot. Sometimes."

"Oh." It's true enough, but hearing it from Blaine is different. To hear it out loud in a voice not his own, to know Blaine has seen this about him, and that Blaine looks carefully enough to understand it. It's what drew Kurt to Blaine in the first place, but it still feels unsettling, like a secret being shared.

"When you told me that you've held things back. From me. I thought about it a lot. It made me
realize that it's something about you I, actually, really love, because you're like this beautiful precise piece of order and grace in a chaotic, clumsy world."

Kurt's not sure what to say to that. He thinks about himself covered in garden dirt and the way Blaine looked at him then. And just now, when he was starting to ramble. Kurt sets his soup spoon aside and tears off a chunk of bread to dunk in his soup.

"Is that weird?" Blaine asks, worried, and Kurt realizes he's been quiet for too long.

"Oh, no, that's not it," Kurt says, looking back up from his soup to Blaine. "I'm sorry, I was just... I didn't know what to say. You just said you like it when I get carried away but then you said—"

"That's why, Kurt, why I like it when you're passionate or out of control or, like, *messy* and unselfconscious. It's because the rest of the time you're not, and no one else gets to see you the way you let me see you, at least not completely. You're so careful with yourself, so it means a lot to me that you *are* comfortable enough to, i don't know, forget yourself sometimes, when we're together. I really like that. It's *hot.*"

"Yeah?" Kurt says, warming a little. It does make sense. He feels the same way about Blaine, about being to able to see him, being allowed to see Blaine vulnerable, being the one to strip him down. "I guess... it's easy with you because you were the first person who wasn't afraid to really look at me. With you— Even when I haven't feel safe within myself, with you I've always felt safe. Always."

"Always?" Blaine asks softly, like it's not obvious to him, but it really should be. Except it's not, so Kurt will try to explain it. It's the right day for it anyway, for remembering.

"Yes," Kurt says. "Okay, so you remember when we first met?"

"I'll never forget that day." Blaine murmurs. He idly stirs his soup and waits for Kurt to gather his thoughts and turn them into words.

"Well," Kurt says, "You know how it had been for me, at school and with the boys and... all that."

"I do," Blaine says.

"So, that day, on the stairs, when you turned around and looked at me, I mean, the *way* you looked at me. It—" Kurt has to stop to breathe, the memory alone is still enough to steal away his breath. "I thought you were beautiful," Blaine says, and the look he's giving Kurt...

It makes Kurt blink and glance down, blushing and incredulous. It's new information to him. He's never asked Blaine when he first found Kurt attractive, and there's something about that time that makes it hard to reconcile. But Kurt is undeniably pleased to hear it; his pleasure warms his cheeks. He won't press Blaine now, though, to tell him Blaine's version of events so early in their friendship. He's telling his own. Kurt looks up from his soup. "It was like you truly saw me. Just with that first glimpse, you looked at me and you looked right at *me.*"

"I saw someone I wanted to know."

"When you didn't look away...?" Kurt pauses to swallow around the tightness in his throat. "So when you took my *hand,* I decided I had to be dreaming. You were like a dream to me." Kurt stops, smiles, because this really is like a punchline. "And then, of course you sang—"

"'Teenage Dream'." Blaine laughs.
"Yes, and so I was convinced it was all something I was imagining. Like I'd gone mad or I'd hit my head and was in some kind of coma dream. It couldn't be real. You were too good to be real.

"But I didn't wake up from it, and then you invited me to coffee the next day. And that part, having coffee with you, that was almost more like a dream because..."

"You told me about Karofsky," Blaine says gently, the compassion in his eyes as vivid now as it was then.

It makes Kurt remember his own tears; they're thick in his voice when he says, "Yeah. And you got it, you cared. I saw that you saw me, that you were listening to me and you understood."

"Kurt." Blaine sets his spoon down and reaches across the table, offering his hand palm up.

Kurt takes it. "I decided if you were a dream, I didn't want to wake up. Except that there were still the nightmare parts, too. I didn't want them. But then I transferred, and you were there for me even more and the terror started to recede, so it was going to be—maybe—okay." Kurt strokes Blaine's hand with his thumb. "You were so steady and amazing, no matter how scared or awkward I was. I could talk to you in a way I'd never been able to talk to anyone."

"It meant so much to me, Kurt, that I could be there for you."

"I know," Kurt says, because he thinks he does understand, how much it mattered that Blaine could be a support for him in a way no one had been for Blaine. Sometimes it's hard for him to think about it too much, though: that Blaine had to go through so much without Kurt. "And even though I had that terrible schoolboy crush on you, it was so much more than that. You were also my friend in a way I didn't even know was possible.

"But I don't think it was until you made an idiot of yourself on Valentine's Day, and I told you I thought it was me you liked— It wasn't until then that I realized I had made it all up in my head, that I was too caught up in the fantasy of it. Too enchanted by the idea of you."

"So when you told me that you didn't actually know what you were doing, and you didn't want to mess things up with me because you really cared about me... That's when I knew you couldn't possibly be a dream, you were just you. You couldn't be anything but you, and that's when, I think, I started to truly fall in love with you, when I knew for sure that I wasn't asleep, and I was no longer blinded by my romantic fantasy of you. It was because I could finally really see you, too."

For a long while after Kurt finishes speaking, Blaine is quiet, gazing at their joined hands, rubbing his own thumb across Kurt's knuckles in counterpoint to Kurt's caress. When he does speak, it's achingly soft: "I wanted, so much, to be what you needed, Kurt."

The emotion in Blaine's voice is difficult for Kurt to read. There's almost something sad there, but Kurt doesn't understand it; Blaine has never disappointed him, not in any way that still matters. "Blaine, honey, you were," Kurt says. "And you are. God, you are, in so many ways."

There's another long silence. Blaine sets aside his napkin and lifts his gaze. It's certain and clear and filled with an intensity Kurt doesn't easily recognize. "And what do you need from me today, Kurt?"

It makes Kurt's heart beat faster, like the draw of Blaine's gaze is summoning up something new within him, something urgent. He drops his soup spoon with a clatter and pushes his chair back. "I need you to come upstairs with me."

"Right now?" Blaine asks.
"Yes," Kurt says. "Leave the dishes."
"Are you nervous?" Kurt asks, his lips just barely grazing Blaine's. They've paused on the landing, and Kurt has Blaine flattened against the wall, panting so sweetly against his mouth and making lovely low noises in the back of his throat as Kurt presses his thigh between Blaine's legs, inviting him to grind against him. It's only just occurred to Kurt—and he feels like an idiot for having not really considered this sooner—that what he's asked of Blaine, Blaine hasn't done before either. They're both in an uncharted realm of sorts, and Kurt wonders if Blaine may need him to lead. He's uncertain whether—despite Blaine's promises—they're in danger of butting up against the boundaries of Blaine's initiative.

"I am... a little," Blaine whispers, and then he bites back a moan as Kurt drags his mouth to Blaine's jaw, his teeth scraping along the hard line of it toward his ear, and then he's licking into the hollow behind Blaine's jaw, below his ear. Kurt sucks hard at the tender skin there, tasting salty sweat and the sour-bitter trace of Blaine's cologne, intent on leaving a mark. "A-are you?" Blaine asks. His head lolls to the side, inviting Kurt's attention.

Kurt had intended to take Blaine straight to his bed, but then he'd made the mistake of looking back at Blaine as they climbed the stairs, saw something that looked like hesitation in Blaine's expression, and knew he needed to kiss him right away. Kurt releases the suction on Blaine's neck, inhales deeply the scent of him as he nuzzles against the damp bruise he's just made, and loosens the grip of his hands on Blaine's upper arms. He slides down Blaine's arms until he reaches Blaine's hands where they grip Kurt's waist. He curls his fingers beneath Blaine's palms and says, "Not any more."

"You're... not?"

"I've been thinking about this so much, Blaine," Kurt says, dragging the tip of his nose down along Blaine's pulse to nudge at his open collar and exhale across his skin. "How much I want to feel you inside me." It's amazing to say out loud. Kurt coaxes Blaine's hands lower and then guides them back up, under his shirt to his bare skin, as he measures out open-mouthed kisses along Blaine's collarbones. "I think I've wanted it forever, to feel this way," Kurt says between kisses, because he does feel, with Blaine, safe in the moment, wanting this. "I'm not scared at all, and I want you so badly."

"Kurt..." Blaine's fingers flex, digging into the sides of Kurt's waist as his thumbs stroke without rhythm over Kurt's belly, pressing into the yielding muscle either side of his navel. It makes Kurt shiver, the warmth of Blaine's hands on his skin, the pressure of his touch. In some ways it already feels like Blaine's touch is inside him. "I want you, too," Blaine says; his breath stirs Kurt's hair.

"Have you been thinking about it, baby?" Kurt slides his hands from atop Blaine's and finds the buttons of Blaine's waistcoat, starts to maneuver, one by one, the small plastic buttons free while he continues to talk to Blaine. "I bet you have thought about it..." he says, bringing his lips back up to Blaine's ear to whisper as low and smooth as he can, "...stuffing my ass so full of your thick cock."

"Jesus," Blaine says with a groan and a lurch of his hips against Kurt. His hands skid up over Kurt's ribs. His fingertips glance over Kurt's nipples, a teasing shock of pleasure. Oh, and that...

"How do you imagine it, Blaine?" Kurt asks more roughly, with an urgent twist of his hips and a push of his thigh up against Blaine's groin. And Blaine is so fucking hard against him. "How do you want me?" Kurt asks as he moves against Blaine's body, crowding against him, and there's barely enough space for Kurt's hands on Blaine's buttons, but Kurt manages. "You can have me any way you want."
"Kurt... I want, wait..." Blaine trails off as Kurt forces him even more securely back against the wall. "Ooh god..."

"Do you want me to ride you?" Kurt whispers into Blaine's ear. The waistcoat comes undone and Kurt starts on the buttons of Blaine's shirt, taking time to caress the satin warmth of Blaine's skin as it's revealed to his touch, feeling the shape of Blaine's torso beneath his hands. Blaine's belly is tense, quivering. Kurt scrapes his short nails through the soft hair below Blaine's belly button. "Do you want to watch me take it? Do you want to watch me fuck myself open on your dick?" Kurt really hopes he's not promising more than he can deliver; the words are easy. Maybe easier than they should be.

"Kurt, wait a minute... wait, please." Blaine says, his hands pressing against Kurt, trying to make more space between them. "Slow down. I need... I need a minute..."

"Okay," Kurt says and eases back from Blaine, drops his thigh, and lets his hands move down to work the front of Blaine's shirt free from his waistband. He looks at Blaine, finds his eyes closed, lips parted, and brow furrowed. "Are you okay?"

Blaine's eyes come open with a flutter, he looks at Kurt dazedly. "Yeah," he says with too little breath behind it for any volume. Blaine licks his lips. "I'm great, I just. I really don't want to rush this. We have plenty of time, and, I mean—" He relaxes the press of his hands. "How do you want it to go?"

"How do I...?" Kurt blinks. It's not a question he was expecting, not exactly. It's not like he doesn't remember what Blaine promised him, he just wants it to be good—so good—for Blaine, too. After all, Blaine's pleasure is his pleasure. "I want to do it... however you want to."

"No, Kurt," Blaine pauses a moment to breathe. "For yourself, not just for me."

The easy words fall away. Kurt inhales, and his fingers go quiet upon Blaine's clothes. The language is hard to summon, even harder to say. What he wants, what part of him has always wanted: the romance and the grace. Is it childish? He thinks maybe not. It was only minutes ago they were talking, and though it wasn't about this exactly, it was near enough to it. For Kurt, it seems like his whole life there's been an ache, a craving, deep and hard, rooted in Kurt's chest. It's not the desire itself, but it forms a shell around it. A yearning, to give in to his secret longings. As he grew older, it became the fantasy: to yield, simply and completely, to the affection of his lover. He wants to give up to Blaine his body, his heart, his fragile being; to lay himself at his mercy and care.

Blaine brought the lilacs; he made the promises. Blaine knows him, sees him; and Kurt thinks, therefore, Blaine already knows the answer to his question. He just needs to know that Kurt trusts his knowledge, trusts both his observation and his perception. Kurt looks up and meets Blaine's patient gaze. "Tell me how you'll make love to me."

With an encouraging smile, Blaine tips his head back against the wall and studies Kurt. His fingers trail down to Kurt's waistband, he tucks his fingers in the front and finds the buttons. He speaks softly. "I'll take my time with you. I want to find out everything you like, and how you like it." Blaine undoes the buttons but leaves the zipper up. His hands turn and spread over Kurt's hips, gentle; his palms make slow circles over the velvet. "I want to take care of you, Kurt. Will you let me do that?"

Kurt bites his bottom lip as he returns Blaine's smile. He releases the grip of his teeth and says, "Yes."
Blaine leads Kurt the rest of the way to his room, and Kurt follows, admiring the breadth of Blaine's shoulders, the drape and pull of his suit jacket, and trying to quell the sudden giddy insanity in his chest that's threatening to bubble up in—what seems to Kurt like—completely random laughter.

Once inside Kurt's bedroom, they leave the door open. The scent of the lilacs is strong, suspended in the air syrupy sweet, and potent to Kurt like some sort of aphrodisical drug. Blaine sees the way Kurt is grinning as he takes him to the bed and guides him down, to lie back across the bed, parallel to the headboard. He drags a pillow sham down for Kurt and grins back. "What's funny?" Blaine asks.

Kurt shakes his head, plumping the pillow behind his head with one arm and leaving that arm bent up behind his head, feeling very much like he's offering himself to Blaine. And he is. "Nothing," he says, "I'm just..." Kurt considers the emotion, has a flashbulb memory of doodling big hearts and names in his notebook with a red pen. The feeling is fizzy and bright, and it makes him want to laugh for no reason. "...really happy," he says.

"Me too," Blaine says.

The softness of his mattress beckons to the pleasant lethargy creeping into his muscles from the morning's work; Kurt is content to relinquish himself to it. The Thomas Engel Hart boots come off easily, and Blaine sets them aside before removing his own shoes and slipping off his suit jacket. He tosses the jacket carelessly at Kurt's vanity chair. Then his attention is back on Kurt and he's moving onto the bed, crawling over Kurt, the shimmer of his ardor unmistakeable in his gaze. His open shirt and waistcoat hang down and drag a vague caress upon Kurt's skin. "I'm so glad to be here with you today," Blaine says, and lowers himself down, heavy and warm and wonderfully real, to kiss Kurt with an exquisite and unexpected delicacy.

Kurt sighs into Blaine mouth as Blaine gradually coaxes his lips apart, and Kurt's eyelids slip shut. It's like that night after the election, except Kurt isn't fogged with sleepiness. Though there is some fatigue in his limbs, his mind feels clear as glass; he is wholly in his body and awake. There's no hesitation in his heart as he surrenders to Blaine's kiss, to whatever Blaine wishes to do with him. Blaine fits their lips together only loosely, so instead of a deep suffocating push-pull of air between them, there's lightness and space; agile lips and playful, lazy tongue. Ticklish, Blaine's tongue-tip traces the shape of Kurt's wide open smile, making Kurt chuckle quietly, pleased. He loves that even after a year and countless kisses, they're still finding new ways to kiss.

With an amused huff of breath, Blaine draws back to ask, "You like that?"

"Yes," Kurt says, cracking his eyelids open to meet Blaine's gaze and see his grin. He brings an idle hand up to Blaine's hair, coils a short curl around his fingertip. "I like you." He slips his finger free and drops his arm behind his head to mirror the other.

"I like you, too," Blaine says, strokes Kurt's cheek, and gives a deliberate deep roll of his pelvis down against Kurt.

Kurt's breath shudders out "Oh..." and his eyelids shiver, threatening to close. And then Blaine is settling even more of his weight, his lips finding Kurt's pulse, as Kurt opens his legs to welcome Blaine between them. Blaine's fingers tangle in Kurt's hair to pull his head back into the yielding cradle of the pillow and make a taut arch of his throat. Above him Blaine is so solid and present. It's not like they haven't lain together like this before, with Blaine heavy upon him, but for whatever reason, today Blaine feels like more, more encompassing of all Kurt's senses, and Kurt feels held and pressed and—oddly, delightfully—secure.

It's difficult to keep his mouth closed with the way Blaine is holding him, so he lets it fall open around the soft, choked off moans he makes while Blaine slowly swivels his hips and sucks hot
kisses up and down Kurt's throat, as if he has no other goal in mind but this. But Kurt can feel the heat intensify between them, inexorable, as they grind together, and his throat dries until his moans have become faint and feeble gasps. His breath is hastening, his blood quickening, and the grip of Blaine's hands in his hair is tightening. Against Kurt's neck, Blaine muffles the occasional helpless little grunt.

It's easy to give in to the twitch of his fingers, to bring them down to Blaine's back, to untuck the back of his shirt to slide his hands over silken hot skin and dig his fingertips into the dip of Blaine's lower spine, holding him fast as Kurt drowns in the heat and weight and slow burn of this embrace. Blaine lunges up, one fierce drag against Kurt, to take Kurt's mouth in a deep kiss that hauls all the breath from Kurt's lungs, leaving Kurt reeling when Blaine shifts up and pulls away, panting, his lips rubbed red and gleaming.

The look he gives Kurt, heavily lidded, dark and desperate, reminds Kurt so much of their old make out sessions, when they'd get to this point, and one of them would pull away first, apologize, and say he needed a moment to cool off. But Blaine doesn't say that. Instead he says, "Too much clothing."

Kurt closes his mouth, swallows to bring moisture back to his throat; he's still hoarse when he replies, "For the record, I want you to note that I am wearing just one layer of clothing today. You on the other hand..."

"Noted," Blaine says with a shaky smile, and pushes back to his heels, and then he scoots off the bed. He doffs the waistcoat and shirt, tossing them toward his crumpled suit jacket, and Kurt doesn't even wince. He's too caught in the display of Blaine's bare torso, the flex of his arms, and the efficient movements of his hands now pulling open his belt and fly. Kurt sits up and unloops his scarf from his shoulders as he watches Blaine's trousers come off with his socks, revealing his sleekly muscled thighs, his well-turned calves. Kurt's gaze trails back up to Blaine's tight maroon briefs, to the prominent shape of him within them, to the damp spot in the cotton straining over the end of his cock.

Kurt brings his fingers the buttons of his shirt but is stopped by Blaine's urgent, "Wait." He comes back to the bed in just his underwear. "Let me, please," he says, bumping Kurt's hands away with his own to take over the unbuttoning.

With a simple, "all right," Kurt plants his hands behind him and leans back as Blaine works his way to the bottom of the shirt. And then Blaine is sweeping the two halves of his shirt apart, baring Kurt's torso to his eager gaze. Kurt's breath comes shallow and fast through parted lips, and he tries not to fidget as Blaine pauses and simply looks at him. A silence settles over them, gravid and grave.

Upon Kurt's skin, Blaine lays one hand, below his breastbone. He passes that touch in an arc he follows with his eyes, over Kurt's chest, the swell of his pec, a warm drag over his nipple and up to his shoulder, pushing the edge of his shirt away and down to Kurt's deltoid, baring the hard curve of his shoulder. The susurrus of skin across skin seems loud and portentous.

Blaine exhales heavily (Kurt realizes then, Blaine has been holding his breath) and his eyes find Kurt's. His hand tightens around Kurt's upper arm, and he leans in to press his mouth to Kurt's; his tongue slips into the space between Kurt's lips. Kurt yields to it, lets Blaine work his mouth open, little by little. The muted wet sounds of their mouths seems an intimate clamor, smoothed and soothed by Blaine's long, low hum into Kurt's mouth. The hum feeds into Kurt's flesh, charging his nerves and stirring the deep heated throb in his belly, the heavy demand building between his legs. Kurt shifts his hips, seeking some friction for his cock, but there's just the insubstantial pressure of his underwear and trousers.

Blaine withdraws as if reluctant, his lashes lowered and dark against the sanguine stain of his cheeks.
His lips work for a moment soundlessly, then he raises his gaze and asks softly, "Do you want me to put some music on?"

So he doesn't disturb the strange stillness, Kurt replies in a scarce half-whisper, "No, I think... I like being able to just... hear us."

Blaine lets go of Kurt's arm, brings that hand to brush a wayward curling lock of hair from Kurt's forehead. "If I do anything you don't like or don't want, you'll tell me?"

"Yes."

Okay, Blaine says and lowers his mouth to Kurt's exposed shoulder. With soft kisses, he backtracks along the route his hand took before. At Kurt's nipple, he lingers, first nuzzling, then kissing, then suckling insistently, noisily until Kurt arches up against him and cries out, his voice harsh and plaintive. Kurt's elbows tremble and give way and Blaine presses him to his back, his lips never faltering upon Kurt's skin. Instead he sucks harder, bites, brings a hand to Kurt's other nipple, pinches and tugs and twists.

Kurt knew his nipples were sensitive, but this is more than the usual brief caresses and kisses. Blaine's concentrated attention is sending a crackle of sensation, forking like electricity beneath his skin. And Kurt is panting and groaning and making inarticulate fragments of sound, tangling the fingers of one hand in Blaine's hair to hold him close, because—oh—it feels amazing. His other hand clings to his duvet. Restlessly he shifts his hips, bucking up to seek some contact with Blaine, who hovers too far above him for the effort to result in anything but air. "Blaine," Kurt says.

"Mm?" Blaine queries against Kurt's skin; his tongue laves over Kurt's tender bitten nipple to soothe. His thumb circles the other with deep bone-tingling pressure. Kurt shudders and tries to make his brain find the words.

But his brain is disinterested in language. Kurt grunts and lets go of the bedding, grabs Blaine's hand at his chest and draws it down to his groin. He summons up a "please" as he shamelessly presses Blaine's palm against the hard line of his cock.

Blaine lifts his head and asks, "Do you need to come again before I fuck you?" And Blaine sounds so calm about it, conversational, like he's asking Kurt if he wants sugar in his coffee.

Kurt replies with a very eloquent and emphatic, "Uh." He slumps down against the bed, limp; closes his eyes; and makes himself relax, breathe, think.

"Are you all right?" Blaine asks, shifting to lie close beside Kurt, his hand moving up to the tab of Kurt's zipper; he draws it down slowly. He doesn't sound at all concerned.

"You're going to fuck me," are the words Kurt's brain decides to provide him. He'd intended to say 'yes', to both questions.

"Yeah," Blaine says. His hand is wonderfully warm, sliding into Kurt's fly over his underwear to cover his erection. "If that's still what you want."

"It is," Kurt says. He opens his eyes. "And yes, I'm fine, and yes, I'd like to come before you do. Fuck me, that is."

Blaine rubs down the length of Kurt's cock with the heel of his hand, curls his fingers under Kurt's balls, nudging up a little behind them. "Okay."

"Feels so good, Blaine," Kurt mumbles and spreads his legs to invite Blaine to keep doing what he's
doing, but it makes the fabric of the crotch of his pants pull too tight and has the opposite effect.

Blaine withdraws his hand. "Lets get you naked first," he says.

But Blaine doesn't move to take Kurt's pants off. Instead, he kneels up and takes Kurt's nearest arm to unfasten Kurt's cufflink. Kurt watches him, watches as Blaine works it free, feels the ticklish caress as Blaine's fingers curl around his wrist and lift Kurt's hand up to his lips. He kisses across Kurt's knuckles, and then turns Kurt's hand over to press a longer kiss to Kurt's palm. He glances at Kurt, and slides his lips to the tender inside of Kurt's wrist, pushing the sleeve up as he goes, trailing lazy, maddening kisses up Kurt's inner arm. The graze of his lips over such sensitive skin and the flicker of heat in his gaze leaves Kurt wide-eyed and panting.

Before they started having sex, this is what they would do sometimes, if they had time for a long make-out session: map out the unexpectedly erogenous zones 'north of the equator'. It's so much more erotic now. Then, it was hot with the novelty of their young romance and the rush of exploration. But it was its own thing, its own goal. Now it's foreplay: it's promises for and memories of even more intimate kisses; it's intention and desire and permission; and by the time Blaine is licking and sucking an open-mouthed kiss into the crook of his elbow, Kurt thinks he's going to lose his mind. The dull heat in his balls is heavy and tight, and his cock aches for contact. But Kurt doesn't reach for himself with his free hand. He does think about reaching for Blaine, but that doesn't seem like playing fair somehow. "You're teasing me," he says, breathless.

Blaine releases Kurt's arm and smiles. "No, I'm taking my time with you," he says.

"Teasing," Kurt insists.

"Well," Blaine says, reaches for Kurt's other arm to undo the cuff. "I'll admit, I have wondered what it would take to make you beg."

"I said 'please' before," Kurt says.

Blaine chuckles, looks down to attend to his fingers working the cufflink free. "So polite, Kurt."

"Do you want me to beg?" Kurt asks, genuinely curious.

The cufflink comes free; Blaine sets it aside with its mate, shrugs with one shoulder. "Not necessarily," he says, tracing a secret script down Kurt's inner arm with his fingertips. It feels good. "I just want to make sure you're really fucking turned on."

"I am," Kurt says.


Kurt laughs.

"So, you know," Blaine says, an amused glint in his eyes. "You can beg if you want to." He lets go of Kurt's hand.

At that Kurt does reach for Blaine, for the thigh nearest him. He slides a caress up from Blaine's knee to his groin, then across to the front of his briefs, a deliberate tease over the outline of his cock. "And if I do, will you be merciful?"

"Mm," Blaine says, his hips rocking into Kurt's touch. "That depends on your definition of mercy."

"I see," Kurt says.
Then Blaine shifts and swings one leg over Kurt to straddle his hips. He takes Kurt's wrists in his hands and lifts them up over Kurt's head as he leans down over Kurt until their faces are only inches apart and Kurt is pinioned by both Blaine's weight and the strength of his grip. Blaine's eyes search his face, come to rest in his gaze. "I don't think you do," he says, a smile tugging the corner of his mouth. Kurt doesn't even know what that's supposed to mean.

Kurt grins up at him. "Do your worst," he says.

"I'm going to take your pants off now," Blaine says, and straightens without kissing Kurt.

"Thank god." Kurt leaves his arms where Blaine left them. He can slip out of his shirt easily enough later. Or not at all, if that's how it goes.

Blaine runs his hands up Kurt's thighs slowly, pressing into the velvet. "I like these pants, too," he says. And then he starts to pull the waistband down. Kurt lifts his hips.

But the pants are clingy and don't want to come off easily. Blaine has to peel them down Kurt's legs, turning them inside out as he works them down to Kurt's knees. Then Blaine pauses, his hands moving thoughtfully from the fabric of the pants back up to Kurt's bare thighs, sliding his hands around to cup behind them. "Lift up?"

Kurt does, thinking Blaine has come to some insight regarding getting the pants off, but it's not that at all.

Against the back of Kurt's thighs, Blaine turns his hands and presses his thumbs into Kurt's hamstrings, massaging his way along the thick muscles up to Kurt's knees. "What are you—?" Kurt starts, but cuts himself off when Blaine ducks his head down and kisses Kurt, low on the back of his thigh, just a few inches above the leg band of his underwear. "Oh," Kurt says. "Okay."

He doesn't get a reply, not a verbal one anyway. With one arm, Blaine maneuvers Kurt's calves to drape over his shoulder. His other hand slides down to join his mouth. Kurt can't see what Blaine is doing to him, but he can—oh, he can—feel it. Blaine's tongue is a hot, slick tease tracing along the edge of his underwear, from the middle of where the material is stretched across the taut cheek of his ass, inward and around to...

"Fuck," Kurt says as the tip of Blaine's tongue presses into his flesh, digs just under the edge of the fabric as Blaine makes his way between Kurt's legs, his forehead pressed hot to Kurt's thighs. But, hampered by his pants around his knees, Kurt can't spread his legs far, so Blaine can't quite reach his balls. He's so close, but not quite there. The slip of tongue on the tender inner base of his buttock is enough. Blaine fingers chase the cooling trail of his tongue, curl into the band and pull it away and down, letting Blaine kiss and lick at tender places Kurt has never been kissed.

Blaine licks lightly, rhythmically, reaching for but not meeting where Kurt's desire burns most fiercely. Which just makes him want it more. Blaine's tongue skims farther back, a flash of wet heat so near the rim of his anus, but not quite. The muscle twitches; Kurt feels his pulse there, too. His desire resolves into a more specific hunger.

"Oh god," Kurt moans and it comes out so ragged and reedy, he doesn't even recognize his own voice. He tangles his hands in his own hair and closes his eyes. "Blaine..." He lifts his legs back, pulling his knees up to his chest, has to release the grip of one hand to hold them up with his arm, tries to encourage Blaine to do more. Blaine shifts, says nothing. His thumbs run up under Kurt's underwear between his legs, along his perineum, brushing up behind his balls, kneading at the inside crease of Kurt's thighs. "Blaine..." Kurt whispers miserably. He's so fucking hot, he's incandescent; it's baking his brain. He can't think. Can't speak. Can't do anything but ache and want and utter an
endless stream of needy little sighs and whimpers.

And then Blaine thumbs are reversing, coming back to his buttocks, spreading them apart beneath Kurt briefs, making the fabric contract and pull snug into his cleft, and just *that*, the thin modal coming into contact with his skin where he's so desperate to feel any sort of touch. Kurt's hips shift restlessly, seeking. "Please," Kurt breathes out. His chest heaves, his heart pounds, he's going slippery with sweat and crazy with the agony of too much want and not enough satisfaction.

It would be easy to just tell Blaine what to do, what he wants: to demand it. Kurt knows that Blaine would do anything if Kurt asked him for it directly. But that's not what they're doing right now. Now is about Kurt letting go. So Kurt doesn't ask or tell or demand. He relaxes the useless tension in his muscles, takes a deep breath, and decides to accept what he's being given. Which is a level of arousal he didn't know was possible. For all that he's seen Blaine desperate for it, begging and pleading, he didn't know it was quite like *this*. "Blaine," Kurt says more gently with a heavy exhale.

This time, Blaine answers him. "Kurt," he says. He lets go of Kurt's backside, reaches for his legs to straighten them and get Kurt's pants the rest of the way off. "Tell me what you need, sweetheart."

Kurt lies there, letting his acute arousal diffuse through his body, lambent and warm. It's no less demanding, but it's more comfortable somehow, to surrender to it rather than strain against it. It's not how the things in his life usually work. He's so used to fighting for it—whatever it may be. But he doesn't have to fight for this. This is freely given: a gift.

So what does he need? There are many things he could name. Blaine's mouth on him, on his cock or his balls or rimming him, Blaine's fingers around him or inside him. Blaine's body pressed naked against him. Blaine's cock inside him—or his inside Blaine. He could ask for any of these things—or for all of them, but Kurt realizes he doesn't *need* them. Wants, them, yes, so much. But it doesn't matter if Blaine fucks him now or if he never does. It's good. He's good. All he needs is Blaine, however Blaine wishes to share himself.

Kurt opens his eyes. Reaches down to Blaine just as Blaine tosses Kurt's pants to the floor behind him and he comes back up Kurt's body. Blaine takes his hand, interlaces their fingers, and Kurt says, "Just you."

"I'm yours," Blaine says, and it's like déjà vu, an echo of their night together in the hotel.

But Kurt goes off script. He reaches up to cup Blaine's face with his free hand. "Show me," he says, and Blaine lowers his head to kiss him.

Pressed together, fingers entwined, they kiss for a long time, deep and slow.

Wonderful as it is, it's not enough for either of them. Eventually Blaine withdraws from a long, last kiss and wordlessly moves away to get the lube and condoms from the nightstand. He strips off his underwear, pulls Kurt's down his legs and off, and comes back onto the bed with him, naked and flushed, and so gorgeous and sexy. Between Blaine's legs, his cock is proud and magnificent. It's everything Kurt wants. When Blaine pushes at his thighs, Kurt's opens his legs wide as he can, bending his knees.

Between Kurt's spread legs Blaine kneels and squeezes some lube into his palm. The teasing is over, Kurt hopes. Blaine wraps his hand snug around the root of Kurt's cock and gives a long, wonderful pull up. Kurt doesn't hold back; his moan is loud, relieved and grateful. Then Blaine's hand comes down with just the right, tight pressure down the shaft, his thumb firm all the way down the underside, then coming back up and loosening over the crown with a clever swipe of his thumb against the frenulum and a pinch and little slick circle right over the very tip. And then reversing back
down again. It's not fast, but it is quickly shaping up to be the best handjob Kurt's ever received, by either of their hands. It's more than enough to get Kurt off—and soon. He bites his lip and pushes up into the even stroke of Blaine's fist. Stares at the slide of his slick, flushed length passing through Blaine's fingers. It's hot. So hot. But he does want something more than this.

"Would you...oh, that's good... kiss me somewhere, please, Blaine?" Kurt asks.

Blaine looks up from the work of his hand upon Kurt's cock. "Where?" he asks.

"Would you, please—" and Kurt breaks off, his tongue and lips fumbling the next word. Despite his recent epiphany, saying it is still not a simple thing. He says it anyway. "Rim me."

Blaine trails the fingers of his other hand down over Kurt's balls, curls them up behind and then straightens and rubs down, edging back farther and Kurt's trying to spread his legs wider and lifting his hips even higher up off the bed, fucking up into Blaine's hand while urging Blaine's touch just a little farther back. When Blaine reaches his anus he pauses, and Kurt ceases the rocking of his hips. Blaine's other hand stills too, squeezing around the base of his cock. The pad of Blaine's finger presses flat against the tense, closed ring of muscle, firmly enough to incite the little aching pressure Kurt's been craving. "You want me to kiss you here?" Blaine asks.


Blaine smiles and gives Kurt's cock one last stroke before he lowers his head and uses his hands to urge Kurt's legs up and back. Messily, he sucks at Kurt's balls, but doesn't linger. Kurt curls his spine up so Blaine can lick back farther, his hands moving to hold Kurt's buttocks apart, tongue flickering down and deliriously down and its tip is just reaching Kurt's rim, and Kurt is groaning and reaching down for a fistful of Blaine's hair because that little hot slip of tongue is an enormous, thrilling, incredible thing. But then Blaine is pulling away and letting go of Kurt and saying, "Can you turn over for me, please, Kurt?"

Kurt nods, says, "Yes," and, with Blaine's hands guiding him, he rolls over—sits up long enough for Blaine to drag his shirt down his shoulders and off—and then drops forward to his hands and knees. Blaine's hands slide up his bare thighs, pass over his ass, and pause there upon his buttocks, pressing them gently apart, exposing him to Blaine's view and intentions. Kurt doesn't know why, but he does feel more exposed this way than he did lying on his back.

"Are you comfortable like this?" Blaine asks.

Kurt lifts his head, looks across to the scarf-draped mirror above his dresser. The angle is imperfect: he can only see a slice of himself, pale-limbed and naked, in such a sexually suggestive and receptive pose. His blush paints his shoulders and back blotchy shades of red nearly everywhere he can see; his eyes slip past meeting his own gaze, for his attention is drawn behind himself, to what he can see of Blaine (just the edge of him, up to mid chest), kneeling naked behind him, his tawny skin glowing warm with arousal. They look pornographic. He feels like a voyeur.

He likes it. A lot. "Yes," Kurt says to answer Blaine's question. "I'm comfortable. It feels really... sexy like this."

"It is really sexy," Blaine says. "I like it too."

He slides his hands up over Kurt's backside, up to his waist, kneading a gentle massage, and leaning down to kiss his way from the dip of Kurt's lower back up his spine, one vertebra at a time. Lingering at each as his hands inscribe abstractions across Kurt's skin. Kurt drops his head and pants, open-mouthed, for enough air to clear his head.

It's not just heat Blaine wakes within him, not just a dark smoldering arousal from the depths of his
body. It's light, too. Kurt's skin feels too tight with it, he's brimming up, effulgent within this opaque unbroken membrane of himself. And Kurt imagines tiny invisible hairline fissures chase the paths of Blaine's lips and fingers, and the blinding light of a star is about to shine out from under his skin everywhere Blaine is cracking him open.

Then Blaine reaches his upper back and lifts his mouth from Kurt's skin. He presses a hand between Kurt's shoulder blades, urging him down to his elbows and chest, keeping his ass high as Kurt's thighs splay out. "Perfect," Blaine says, and his hands run back down to Kurt's buttocks, squeezing and spreading and holding him open. "Kurt—" Blaine says urgently, as if starting a sentence. But he cuts himself off, leaving whatever it was going to be unsaid.

"Kiss me," Kurt whispers; he leans his head on his forearms, turned to the side so he can breathe; He closes his eyes.

And Blaine's mouth is on him, a dizzying hot drizzle of sensation down Kurt's cleft to his hole to kiss him with plush lips and an eager tongue, to take a lingering long taste of him.

"Oh... god..." Kurt says, it comes out so broken and needy. His skull feels suddenly too small, his lungs too full, his skin too thin, and tears spring sharp behind his eyes. He can't contain the wretched sounding sobs escaping his mouth. "Blaine... uh..."

For Blaine is not at all tentative. There's no gradual easing Kurt into the act. His mouth is fucking voracious, plying Kurt loose; his fingers dig into Kurt's flesh and his tongue presses and glides, flutters and circles. Kurt turns his face into his pillow, tries to muffle the tormented sounding groans dredged up from the deepest parts of him.

It should be impossible to feel this much. Surely his body should shatter. But it doesn't; he doesn't. Kurt takes it, all of it, and he lets it take him down. He could live and die within this sensation. And maybe he does. His awareness melts into a timeless, deranged blur.

When Blaine's tongue pierces him, Kurt shudders down to his bones and nearly comes right then, but it's not quite enough. He's suspended in euphoric agony, right on the verge as Blaine works him over with his tongue. When Blaine, mercifully, gives Kurt one lube-slick hand, makes a loose fist over Kurt's cockhead and frees his mouth long enough to tell Kurt, "Fuck my hand," Kurt comes embarrassingly quickly.

Kurt collapses, falling from Blaine's hold, gasping. His head is full of static; his body buzzes with so much sensation, he feels like he's about to dissolve or sublimate or lose his physical coherency in some other improbable manner. Kurt closes his eyes and waits for the room to stop wheeling about him.

Blaine is there, near him, beside him, hard against Kurt's hip and patient, touching him, talking to him softly, stroking his hair and down his back and over the curve of his ass, telling him he's amazing and sexy and really, so very sensitive, and wow, is that ever hot, Kurt, Jesus. And Blaine loved doing that for him so much, he's wanted to for so long, and he loves Kurt so much, and he really wants to fuck him soon, because Kurt's ass is kind of amazing and Kurt is amazing and he's going to make it so, so good for Kurt and...

Kurt feels like he should say something, but he can't dredge up anything like words to his lips. He settles for opening his eyes to smile at Blaine and look into his soft gaze. He reaches to brush trembling, wondering fingertips over Blaine's chest, shoulders, neck, and face. Somehow, Blaine seems to understand, just talks and touches and waits for Kurt to come all the way back to him.

Eventually the fallout haze of his orgasm recedes, and, due to the erotic magic of Blaine's caresses,
Kurt is hard again (Or still? Kurt lost track), trapped between his belly and the bed. And already wanting more. "Blaine," he says.

"Do you need anything? Water?" Blaine asks him.

Kurt shakes his head. He says, "No," then he says, "I love you, too." He rolls back to his side and pulls Blaine in to kiss, soft and shallow, just lips and breath. Blaine hums and presses his mouth more firmly to Kurt's. Smiling against Blaine's lips, Kurt slides a hand down to Blaine's hip and reaches for his cock, curls his fingers around and holds it. The feel of it in his hand, the heavy weight, the solid girth of it, it's what will soon be filling him up. With a loose fist, he strokes Blaine's cock to make Blaine's hum rumble deeper into his chest. When Blaine pulls back from the kiss, his hooded gaze searches Kurt's, and Kurt says, "You can fuck me now, honey."

"Okay," Blaine says, and rolls away to reach for the lube.

Kurt can't help it. "Just okay?" he teases.

Blaine laughs, comes back, half-sitting and propped on one arm. "How do you want to—?"

"Like this," Kurt says, and rolls back to his belly. The wet spot beneath him is negligible; Blaine must have caught most of his semen in his hand.

"I mean, do you want me to prep you, or did you want to?"

"You can," Kurt says. "I want you to."

"All right," Blaine says, kneeling up and shuffling down to kneel between Kurt's legs. "You should still be fairly relaxed after..." he says, half to himself it seems. Kurt just hums affirmatively and parts his thighs.

Blaine holds him with his dry hand, brings two fingers to Kurt's hole, gently probing and circling without penetrating. Kurt lets out a breath, and folds his arms to pillow his head. In the mirror, he watches Blaine, how intent he is on what he's doing, how serious.

"Yeah, you feel pretty good," Blaine says and pushes with a fingertip against the center where Kurt can open for him.

It gives with little resistance, and Kurt bites down on his pleasured sigh; the slide in is so fantastic. "It feels amazing, Blaine," he says. He's getting goosebumps already; his eyelids shiver closed. "Can't believe it took me so long..."

"Hey," Blaine says gently. Pushing deeper, pulling out, then back in, working up an easy cadence to get lost in. And Kurt would let himself get lost in it, if this were all they were doing.

"I really love it," Kurt confesses. "What you're doing, and... what you did, with your mouth. That was, ah... just really good." It's a hot thrill to say the words, knowing what they mean. Knowing Blaine knows.

"Yeah," Blaine says, and Kurt can hear his smile, doesn't need to open his eyes. "I could tell."

"I hope you love it, too."

"Of course I do, Kurt. God, I love everything you do with my ass." Blaine eases his finger out, then dips in with two. The extra stretch is electric, flowing swift through Kurt's body, prickling over his skin.
"Mmm, no," Kurt mumbles. "I mean," he says, rapidly growing breathless and hot, "I hope... you love... fucking me."

"Oh, yeah," Blaine says. "Don't think you should worry about that." Blaine twists his hand, screwing his fingers in deeper with each thrust.

Kurt swears. "Blaine... god."

"Okay?"

"I'm ready. Just... fuck. I'm ready."

"Okay," Blaine is saying as he eases his fingers from the grip of Kurt's ass, "okay." Kurt is aware Blaine is grabbing for the condoms and the lube again, putting a condom on, slicking himself up, and then he's pushing his fingers back into into Kurt, abrupt, wet with more lube, and the stretch is so good, a preview.

Everywhere, Kurt's aching and acute and alive. Kurt pushes back as Blaine pushes in. His nerves are singing: Kurt makes an inarticulate noise.

"Are you sure?" Blaine asks. "I can keep doing this until—"

"Yes," Kurt says, "Do it, please."

"Okay," Blaine says and his hand comes free, leaving Kurt bereft, clenching around nothing.
"Okay," Blaine says again, starting to sound nervous—and also really turned on and maybe a little impatient. Kurt can relate; he remembers. Then Blaine's hands are on Kurt's hips, one slipping as he pulls at Kurt, urging him up. "Kurt, can you... come up and back for me?"

Confused, Kurt tries to coordinate his limbs to obey the impulse of Blaine's hands, tries to get his knees stable beneath him. "What?"

"Here," Blaine says, moves his hands. With one hand on Kurt's shoulder and a strong arm around Kurt's chest, he pulls Kurt upright until his lips mash against the top of Kurt's spine, and his lubed and latexed cock bumps slippery at Kurt's tailbone. He's kneeling behind Kurt. "Like this. Can you? Just at first? So you can control how much how fast?"

"Oh," Kurt says, lifts himself up a little more, skates his knees out, and reaches back to find Blaine, to guide his cockhead down to where Kurt wants him. "Okay," he says, poised on the brink of it, "Are you ready?"

"Yes, Kurt."

Kurt closes his eyes, takes a deep breath, holds it, and pushes back and down. And just like that, his body opens, an impossible stretch of him around Blaine's unyielding flesh.

Blaine makes a strange, stunned sound and says Kurt's name. Upon Kurt, his hands are both gentle and firm, as if Kurt is some precious fragile thing—like a small bird or a delicate ornament—that Blaine must at once hold tight to keep safe, but not so tight as to break. Blaine's fingers flex like they're begging. And Kurt lets himself sink in small increments, lets gravity take him down slowly, slowly, slowly as his body surrenders, and he gives Blaine unfathomably more.

Though he knows better, and Blaine has prepared him well, Kurt finds that he expects it to hurt; but there's no pain at all. But it is intense, a bright splitting open of his fundament that's lancing up his spine with each small movement. "Blaine," Kurt whispers to name the sensation filling him up.
Filling him up where he didn't even know he'd been so empty.

"Right here," Blaine says breathlessly against his neck. "I'm with you."

"You are." Kurt covers Blaine's hands with his own, tips his head to the side and back to invite Blaine's mouth.

"Just... you can move whenever." Blaine presses his lips behind Kurt's ear, then his cheek, then the corner of his parted lips. "Whenever you're ready, okay?"

"Yeah," Kurt says against Blaine's mouth, twists farther to glance his tongue against Blaine's. Retrieves it to say, "Okay."

"Sweetheart," Blaine says, his mouth sliding from Kurt's to trail damp kisses down Kurt's neck, along toward Kurt's shoulder. "Kurt, god, you feel so good, all around me. So hot."

"It is... so good."

But moving doesn't seem possible. The aching wide stretch of him around Blaine, the heavy pressure of Blaine's cock embedded so profoundly in his bowels, has him feeling fastened, locked immobile. Like if he moves he will actually break open. But he wants to move, because he wants to feel more of this. His thighs tremble as he tries lifting himself up, feels the thick slide so, so deep and good and everywhere, from the cascade of friction in his ass to the tingle across his scalp. Blaine moans against his shoulder, infusing his muscles and bones with the vibration of it.

Kurt asks, "Is this... oh. Is this how it feels... for you?" A violent shiver wracks his whole body as he comes back down, his knees buckle (which is okay, since he's kneeling already), and his body clamps around Blaine's cock; Blaine gasps, open-mouthed against him. Then he bites down, a sharp pinch of teeth. Kurt shivers, and he doesn't move again immediately, just holds himself still, closes his eyes and feels.

"Kurt... god," Blaine mumbles. Against his back, Blaine's heartbeat drums hard, filling in the quiet spaces between his own. Inside him that same throb is muted, but no less distinct. "I don't know," Blaine says sluggishly, as if drunk, and he kisses Kurt's skin, soothing over the careless bite. He asks, "What does it feel like to you?"

Thinks, takes inventory of himself. "Full, but like... it's too much and not enough at the same time."

"Yeah," Blaine says, then, "It's... like that for me, too."

He tries again, lifting up, dragging another moan from Blaine and a whimper from himself. But his knees buckle again on the way down, leaving him craving more of the tempting friction, but bizarrely weak and uncoordinated and unsure how to attain it. His body doesn't understand this dance yet. "Blaine," he says. "I'm not sure how... I need you to..."

"Okay," Blaine says. His hands move to Kurt's shoulders, pushing him forward as Blaine rises up behind him. Kurt gasps, the shifting pressure of Blaine's cock feels like its tugging at his sacrum, bodily lifting him, forcing his ass up as he falls forward to his hands.

Upon his back, Blaine's hands slide from his shoulders to splay across his ribcage, his fingers pressing close. Holding still for one long second. "All right?"

"Uh huh," Kurt says, and his heart seems to be stopped, trembling right on the verge of its next beat, waiting. Waiting for Blaine to move.
"All right," Blaine repeats, sure. And then Blaine starts to fuck him: a long pull out that drags a brutal pleasure from Kurt's nerve endings, makes his hands clench, his spine bow, and his mouth fall open around a helpless moan. "Oh," Blaine sighs. "Oh." And then he's going back in, a slow driving push that Kurt nearly gags on as the force of it rocks him forward. His elbows buckle; his heart sprints.

As Blaine finds a moderate enough starting rhythm, the rush of blood thunders in Kurt's ears, whiting out his greater awareness, collapsing his existence down to this singularity: the irresistible ebb and flow of Blaine moving inside him. He knows Blaine is talking to him, breathless words of praise and love, and other less articulate things, sounds that aren't words at all. Blaine's arms are coming strong around his waist; Blaine is warm and kinetic, sweating, slipping against his back, kissing across his skin, making it hum; and Blaine's cock is fucking him steady as a metronome. Hypnotic.

With each successive thick slide of Blaine's flesh within him, the strength melts out of Kurt. Heat pools and swells within him. His spine droops into the hold of Blaine's arms, and Kurt feels his legs giving out, splaying and skating wide. He's sinking as his body loosens, yielding so completely, he's so open, so full, so taken. "Blaine," he mumbles.

"More?" Blaine is asking him, his breath humid on Kurt's skin, his hips falter minutely from their steady beat. Speeding and strengthening to underline the question. Offering. And yeah, that's what Kurt wants: more.

Kurt lifts his head and blinks, his gaze bleary. Blaine is braced on one arm, the other still holds Kurt firmly around his middle, pulling him up into every thrust Blaine makes. "Yeah," Kurt say, finding some reserve of vitality to push back from his elbows and flex his spine, meeting Blaine's next stroke with some force of his own. "Fuck me," he says.

"You're so fucking hot," Blaine says, "like this." He increases his pace again, adding a sharper snap of his hips.

"Oooh," Kurt moans, the shock of the extra force and speed is a delicious surge.

Blaine swears, then asks with some urgency, "Can you come?"

"Feels so good," Kurt says, though it's not an answer. He's not sure. Part of him doesn't care. This is so good: Blaine, so heavy and vital inside him. He could stay like this forever.

"Kurt," Blaine pants; his arm around Kurt tightens. "I don't, um. I can't last. Not like this. You're too... Jesus. I'm going to... come. Soon."

"S'okay," Kurt mumbles. "You should."

"Want you with me."

"Mmm, yeah," Kurt says. "I'll try," he says.

"Touch your cock," Blaine says.

Kurt shifts, freeing one arm and reaching back to find his cock, blood heavy between his legs but nearly forgotten. Kurt closes his hand around it, and "Oh," he says. Remembers how this works. He pumps his fist over the shaft, over the head, feels the red hot ribbons of sensation binding the friction and pressure in his ass together with the pull of his hand on his cock. It's enough. He's definitely going to...

"Oh," Blaine echoes; his thrusts falter out of rhythm, going shallow but fierce. His arm strains around Kurt's waist, holding him snug against Blaine's hard stuttering hips. "Oh, Kurt," he whispers.
Kurt feels Blaine come, like a heavy pulse deep inside. Or maybe it's just his own climax starting to crest.

~

After, Blaine doesn't withdraw immediately; he drapes, heavy and boneless, over Kurt's back. They lie together and breathe for some span of time Kurt doesn't measure.

Blaine stirs first, lifting up and bending to place light kisses upon Kurt's temple, his hair, his blood hot cheek, his pliant parted lips. Kurt hums and stretches and opens his eyes. "Hmm, hi," he says.

"Hi," Blaine replies, soft smile. He moves away then, slipping out of Kurt, leaving Kurt oddly desolate and chilled, but too wrung out to do anything about it. The remnants of their lovemaking still glimmer within him. Blaine kisses his back, says, "I'll be right back."

Kurt drifts, untethered and easy.

Then Blaine is back with a warm, damp cloth, wiping gently over Kurt's backside and thighs, carefully cleaning up the lube and sweat, mindful of his tender, swollen anus. Then patting him dry with a fluffy towel and asking Kurt, "Sweetheart, turn over for me?"

Kurt rolls away from the wet mess beneath him, is glad—perhaps for the first time—that his cover is a (relatively) cheap, machine washable polyester blend and not some finer thing.

"How do you feel?" Blaine asks him, scrubbing lightly at the semen upon Kurt's belly.

"Mmm," Kurt says, smiles.

Blaine grins, drops the cloth and gets the dry towel, rubbing over Kurt's still sensitive skin, a quiet marvelling in his gaze. "Yeah, me too."

~*~

Downstairs, Kurt preheats the oven for Blaine's lasagne. They're both hungry, and the afternoon passed into early evening so quickly while they were lost in their shared bliss. Kurt goes to the kitchen sink and looks out the window, at the neat, new garden bed. It's hard to believe that was his morning. The pale sky is clouding over, bringing an early dusk. Kurt wonders if it will rain overnight.

The lid of the washing machine slams down, and he hears Blaine turn the dial, the rush of water. The lunch dishes are still on the dining room table. Kurt's not particularly bothered by it just yet.

There's no restraining his smile as Blaine comes back into the kitchen and Kurt turns to face him. "Thanks," Kurt says.

"You're welcome," Blaine says, moving into Kurt's space to pull him into an embrace. Kurt rests his head on Blaine's shoulder, rubs his back. Kurt expected to feel different after. And he supposes maybe he does (he can feel it in his body, at least, not exactly sore, but there), but not in the way he expected. He feels, mostly, just calm, pleasantly wrung out, and easy in his skin. He doesn't know if it will last, or if it's just happy brain chemicals and a drawn out afterglow.

It doesn't matter. He squeezes Blaine and loosens his hold, letting Blaine step back. He looks down as Blaine joins their hands. They've haven't talked much since they came downstairs. Kurt, honestly, doesn't even know what to say. There's things like "I love you" and "Thank you" and those sort of sentiments, but they are not more true now than they were before. Perhaps they are simply more
deeply felt, more tender.

Kurt raises his gaze to meet Blaine's. "Happy anniversary, Blaine," he says.

"Happy anniversary, Kurt," Blaine replies.

There's the unmistakable splat of a fat drop of rain against the window behind him. And another.

At any other time, Kurt would, perhaps, let his mind go to a fantasy of the future together. Imagine he and Blaine in their own home, in their own kitchen. The increasing tempo of the rain upon their roof, their washing machine chugging along in the backdrop, their dishes neglected upon the table. But he doesn't.

This moment, their immediate present, is perfect. There's no dreamed of future with which he would replace it. He knows, from the past year, that there will still be days that are hard, times that are ugly. They are still ahead, lurking unknown. But there will also be good days and beautiful moments. Moments like this one. And all of them—the good and the bad, triumph or trial—he hopes to share with Blaine.

The oven light goes out with a click, and they move apart, Blaine to the fridge to get the lasagne, Kurt to the dining room to clear the table. "Do you want to watch a movie after dinner?" he asks. He'll light the fire to chase away the chill of the Spring evening and the dolorous atmosphere of the rain. They can snuggle on the sofa with a blanket and mugs of hot tea. And after, they can go back to bed together. Kurt will make pancakes in the morning.

Blaine says, "Sure."

It'll be perfect.

*there's an epilogue in Chapter 20*
The view from the Metro station at the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport impresses; swathes of trees decked in spring green spread around the white marble of the city's buildings. Kurt can spot the Capitol and the spire of the Washington Monument, but The National Cathedral dominates. Along the wide gray river, Kurt sees what he's sure is The Kennedy Center. He yawns, still a little groggy from his nap on the plane, and turns to make a remark to Blaine about the view. But, taking in the sight beside him, Kurt is caught. Blaine stands, squinting in the sunlight and admiring the vista. With the sun brightening his eyes to gold and his gaze eager and amazed, Blaine is stunning.

It was stepping out of the airport with their luggage that brought the full realization to Kurt, a realization that's somehow just as momentous as coming to Washington D.C. for the first time: this is the first time he and Blaine have been outside Ohio together. Even though it's only for a few days over Easter Break, it means this is possible. They got on a plane together in Ohio, and now they are here in Not Ohio—in a major world city—together. It's like they've hit FFWD on their lives and been momentarily transported to a future where things like their being together somewhere Not Ohio is an inevitability. Sure, it's not New York, but it's somewhere, the Shining City on the Hill upon which the eyes of the world rest. Or something like that. There's a brownish haze of humidity and smog blanketing the white buildings that makes the city less than shine.

Earlier in the week, his Dad had surprised them with the airplane tickets, said he really wanted to do this for them both while he could. Blaine's parents agreed, largely, Kurt suspects, due to his father asking them himself. And also because Blaine promised he would take the opportunity to go to Georgetown, pick up information, and look at the campus.

"Okay," Kurt says, finally dragging his attention away from admiring his boyfriend's face. He pulls his phone from his pocket and unlocks it with his thumb to double-check the email from his Dad with directions and instructions. "We need to take the blue line to Capitol South."

The metro train from the airport is busy, and he and Blaine end up in the center of the car, suitcases corralled between their legs, hanging on to the bar above their heads. While the train is above ground Kurt catches glimpses out the window. Closer, much of the city's edges (though this side of the river is technically Virginia) are surprisingly—disappointingly—shabby, neglected. And then they are underground. Conversation isn't viable over the clatter and wail of the train, so Blaine just nudges him with his elbow as they pass through stations with signage bearing such notable names as Pentagon, Foggy Bottom, and Smithsonian. At the less intriguingly named Federal Center SW, Kurt leans in so Blaine can hear him. "The next one's us."

Off the train, they take a moment on the platform to orient themselves and take in the station itself. It's nothing like the functional tiled right-angles of the the New York subway. The station curves high above them in a vaulted arch of honeycombed concrete. Lit from below, it's theatrical, like some kind of strange tubular auditorium. Or, Kurt thinks, Sam would describe it as looking like the inside an alien space ship. There's a sense of it being the past's vision of the future, so clean and graceful. The careening roar and billowing gust of an approaching train shakes Kurt from his consideration. Blaine nods his head toward one of the signs. "This way?" Blaine asks, and Kurt leads their way back to the surface.
On the street, after the soft-lit underground glow of the Metro, the sun glares twice as bright. The air is crisp and pleasantly on the cooler side of warm. Overhead the sky is a limpid grayish blue; beneath their feet, the sidewalk is chalky red brick laid in a herringbone pattern. The buildings along the street are wide and uniformly variations of white. Trees and hedges and beds of flowers abound, lending a freshness to the air Kurt doesn't expect to find in a city. They walk north, their suitcase wheels chattering across the bricks behind them. Kurt holds his phone, map displayed, glancing up only to verify they turn where they need to; he thinks they're pretty much there, they just need to turn up the next street, cross the road. Kurt quickens his pace, but then, Blaine is grabbing his arm, pulling him to a stop and saying, "Kurt, wait. Look."

He looks up and follows Blaine's gaze up the street where, visible between the trees, is the tall white dome of the Capitol. It's so immediately, simultaneously familiar and novel, there's something both fundamentally strange and awesome about being in its physical presence, like it's only meant to exist in photographs and movies; it can't be an actual place that exists. He felt the same way in Times Square and Central Park. "Oh," Kurt says. "Look where we are."

"Yeah," Blaine says. "Your Dad works there."

"Which means, this..." Kurt gestures to the enormous neoclassical building taking up the entire block before them. "...is the Longworth House Office Building." His phone agrees. Up the street, its broad white columned portico looms, unabashedly evoking democracy and imposing its conviction. The building is like a granite and marble manifestation of Enlightenment ideals. "My Dad's office is in there."

"Wow," says Blaine, looking up at it.

"My Dad's a U.S. Congressman," Kurt says, as if saying it will make this all feel more real, before it was words and theoretical knowledge; now its physical evidence is right in front of him. They cross the street at the intersection.

The Longworth Building feels smaller on the inside, a warren of marble floored corridors and recessed paneled doors with brass hardware. It's quiet though. Presumably most of its denizens are off for Easter. They find his Dad's office without much difficulty.

He's there in his office suite with two slightly frantic staffers to whom his Dad introduces them, "My son, Kurt, and his boyfriend, Blaine Anderson." There's Sonia (Comms), who barely looks older than Kurt but appears the consummate professional in her tailored gray suit with her black hair swept up in a neat French knot. She's prompting his Dad through a speech. And Scott (Scheduling), a twenty-something guy with an expensive looking, perfectly knotted paisley tie that doesn't go at all with his rumpled linen blazer and chinos. He's on the phone with the airline, finalizing the last minute plans for the evening flight back to Ohio. Originally, the weekend was meant to be them with his Dad, but then, this morning, his Dad was invited to an Easter charity event for the pediatric cancer ward at Lima Memorial, and that wasn't an invitation his Dad wished to decline. He's heading back to Lima late tonight.

Which means Kurt and Blaine will be on their own over the weekend, and that is—as much as Kurt was looking forward to spending time with his father—kind of thrilling.

"We'll be done here soon," Sonia reassures them with a smile. Kurt and Blaine try to keep out of the way.
Once the travel arrangements and other last minutes details are resolved, Sonia has said she'll be picking his Dad up at nine thirty to go to the airport, and Scott has made seven PM dinner reservations for Kurt, his Dad, and Blaine at Central Michel Richard. His Dad calls for a car to drive them the short distance to the apartment he's renting on Capitol Hill. It's behind the Supreme Court, with, his Dad tells them, a pretty good view of the Court. Kurt is still finding it all mildly surreal, and Blaine has been smiling so much, Kurt expects he'll end up with muscle cramps in his cheeks.

The apartment—a unit in a boxy, Federalist style building called The Horngate—is just one bedroom. But it's more spacious than Kurt expected, though it is not objectively large. It's certainly larger than anything he'll be able to afford in New York next year, even if he's sharing the rent. His Dad packs a suitcase while Kurt explores the small space and Blaine flicks through the Washington Post on the coffee table.

It's a furnished rental, with pretty polished oak floors, off white walls, and fairly bland modern decor in neutral grays and browns. There're large sliding doors (with tacky plastic vertical blinds) at the end of the living room that open out to a small balcony (with a view across to the back of the Supreme Court), and there's a vented gas fire on the shared interior wall. The kitchen has full sized stainless steel appliances, but little counter space or storage (and what's there predates the appliances by at least a decade). All that's in the fridge is a solitary light beer, half a loaf of Wonder bread, strawberry jam, margarine, and a canister of coffee. Kurt considers whether he needs to have another talk with his Dad about what constitutes a healthy breakfast, but today doesn't seem like the right day for that.

The bathroom is tiny with a just small fiberglass shower stall—no bathtub. Disappointing, but at least the bedroom is big enough for a queen-sized bed, which his Dad tells him he and Blaine are welcome to share so long as they make sure to leave it with clean sheets. Kurt rolls his eyes and says, "Good grief, of course, Dad."

Once his Dad is packed, he suggests they have time to walk to the end of the Mall before dinner. So that's what they do. There aren't many opportunities for long walks in Lima due to inclement weather, lack of sidewalks, and a general absence of viable destinations within walking distance. It's oddly liberating to be able to step out the front door of the apartment and require only oneself for transportation. It's what it will be like in New York. Lots of walking and the subway. It feels a lot like freedom.

As they walk, Kurt uses his phone to identify the various museums lining the wide grassy expanse of the Mall. They buy ice cream from one of the food carts on the Mall and pause outside the Smithsonian Castle while they eat them. They watch people—young and old alike—riding the colorful antique carousel nearby. "We'll come back and ride it tomorrow," Kurt says with a grin and a bump of his hip against Blaine's.

"I really want to," Blaine says, grinning back, a smudge of ice cream in the bow of his top lip.

"If we don't go to the Air and Space Museum, Sam will never speak to us again," Kurt says. He thinks they could spend all of their time this weekend just on the Mall, going to the museums, monuments, and memorials, and they wouldn't even see a quarter of it.

"Can we go to the International Spy Museum?" Blaine asks.

Kurt's eyes widen. "There's an International Spy Museum? Seriously?"

Then his Dad says, "I've got tickets to the White House Easter Egg Roll on Sunday if you kids want to go to that."

can tolerate some chaos in order to see The White House.

They resume their walk, unhurried. They pass over the mound upon which rises the spire of the Washington Monument and down the other side to wander beneath the shade of the ancient elm trees lining the reflecting pool. They easily make it all the way to the Lincoln Memorial (but they don't loop around to see Jefferson or Roosevelt).

Standing small in the presence of the enormous, grave statue of Lincoln, Kurt can't help but be awed. Sometimes he forgets—it's so easy to forget in small-minded Lima—that there are ideals in this nation that, while imperfectly realized at various points in history, are still its driving aspirations. It makes him feel hope. For all that Lima is considered part of the country's so-called Heartland, Kurt's never felt the pulse of the United States there the way he's feeling it standing here. He looks to his father, and feels so much pride. Then he looks to Blaine and sees the same awe and hope that he is himself experiencing. He reaches out and takes Blaine's hand loosely. They share a smile. Here, in Lincoln's shadow, it should be safe enough for them to indulge a moment.

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Their walk back takes them to Central Michel Richard in plenty of time to meet their reservation. They have have drinks in the bar while they wait for their table, and it's terribly grown up. Kurt finds it peculiar, being in this stylish, modern restaurant of blonde wood, polished stone, and sheer drapery, that his father knows people. He's chatting to the maitre d' like he's an old friend. Kurt is impressed.

Once they're seated and perusing the menu, Kurt ends up discreetly Googling things on his phone under the table. He's not about to admit that he doesn't know what lardons or boquerones are (bits of julienned or cubed pork fat and marinated white anchovies, respectively); he doesn't want to appear ignorant to the waiter. Unfamiliar French culinary terms are the least of it, however.

"They have a lobster burger," Kurt says.

His Dad notes his raised eyebrows. "It's like Frenchified American food here, so I figured it's perfect for you and me, kid."

"It's thirty dollars." Kurt's not sure how he feels about that.

"Yeah, I haven't tried that one. The lemon chicken schnitzel is real good. I get that a lot, and the chicken is free range. But you kids order whatever you want, we're celebrating."

It's so weird to hear his Dad talking about food like this. Kurt's been trying for years to cultivate more culinary sophistication with his Dad, but it takes being in a city on his own to actually do it. "What are we celebrating, Dad?"

"The three of us, being here together like this." His Dad looks from Kurt to Blaine, and Kurt can see in the way his Dad swallows that he's about to go on with something serious, possibly emotional. Kurt glances at Blaine, who is smiling and sitting straight and proper as he unfolds his napkin and drops it to his lap. Very gentlemanly. "So, Blaine," his Dad continues.

"Yes, sir?"

"Okay, first of all, kiddo, I want you to call me Burt, no more of this Mr. Hummel and sir stuff, all right? You've been with Kurt long enough, we can drop the formalities."

"Oh, um, okay," Blaine says, endearingly bashful and pleased in the face of the invitation.
"And that's why we're celebrating," his Dad continues. "Cause, for a long time, it was just me and Kurt, and it wasn't always easy for us. It hasn't always been easy for Kurt to make friends, let alone find someone special. I didn't know if he—"

Kurt lowers his gaze to fidget with his cutlery. "Dad, please—"

"Yeah, yeah, let me finish. So, it means a lot to me to see Kurt with someone like you, Blaine. Someone—a boyfriend—who gets him and cares about him and—"

"Yes, Dad, thank you," Kurt interrupts, because—wow—this is getting sentimental fast.

"Fine, I guess I'm embarrassing Kurt. I just want to say that I like you, Blaine. You're a good kid, and I can tell how much you love my son. I've got to tell you, it means a lot to me that you do. And I know he loves you too. I like how Kurt looks at you, and I like how you look at him. You're good to each other." His Dad stops with an inhale, like there's something else he wants to say but he doesn't; he closes his mouth and just smiles at the two of them. It's only a little bit awkward.

"Thank you, Burt," Blaine says. "I'm glad you think so."

"You guys should know, too—and I'm not saying this because I'm pushing for you two to, you know, do anything stupid like your stepbrother. You're both way too young—and probably way too smart. But I want you both to know that there's some talk the president may start putting his weight behind repealing DOMA, at least rhetorically. He's maybe going to start talking about full marriage equality at the federal level. They figure with DADT repealed, there may be some momentum to get this done too."

"Oh," Kurt says, blinks.

"I told the Democratic leadership they could count on me. If they need a standard bearer or whatever, I'm happy to be their man, even if it costs me a re-election. Because I see you two, how you care for each other, and I know that a world where you're not free to love each other and make a commitment like any straight couple can, whether that's to each other one day, or to other people. That's a world I want to try to change."

"That's... Dad, really great," Kurt says blinking back the sting and blur of sudden tears, and Blaine murmurs words of approval too. It seems like too big a thing to contemplate, really, but here they are in the city where it can happen, talking to a man—his father—who has some actual power in the game. And it's also like his Dad is giving them his blessing for the future. Part of him, the practical part who wants always to keep his Dad safe and happy—wants to warn his Dad off doing something that may hamper his chances at re-election (courage in politics isn't always smart), but the rest of him? On this issue? "I'm so proud of you," he says softly around the tension in his throat. "I hope the leadership gives you that chance. If anyone can make a difference, it'd be you, Dad."

His Dad nods, his smile tender. "Because of you," he says, clearly meaning them both. "Now, you should also know that I've been told we shouldn't get our hopes up. It could end up being more talk than action from The White House. Things could die in committee or stay held up indefinitely. But, you know, the conversation has to change before the laws do, so it's still a good thing if the President is going to start talking about it."

"Yeah, that's..." Kurt trails off as Blaine's hand finds his under the table, giving a squeeze. Kurt looks to Blaine and sees their future dreams laid out right there in his open, loving gaze. Kurt's breath catches, his cheeks warm, and he's suddenly teetering off balance. They're in public, his Dad is looking at them, and Kurt has no idea what to say or do or—
Their waitress arrives. Kurt lets out a breath, gives Blaine's hand a parting squeeze, and picks up his menu again to remind himself what he wants to order.

They start with the cheese gougères for the table and salads. Kurt orders the steak au poivre, Blaine the chicken "Julia", and his Dad the salmon and eggplant. They share various side dishes. Gradually, Blaine relaxes over the food. Kurt doesn't fully understand why Blaine is still sometimes nervous around his Dad, but he is. And so, seeing Blaine's grip on his utensils loosen, his forearms come down from their nervous hover to rest upon the edge of the table, and his smile come less self-consciously? Seeing Blaine saying something just to make his Dad laugh, and seeing his Dad gently, but affectionately, teasing Blaine as if he's still trying to learn Blaine's tolerances and boundaries? The food is delicious, but it's not the only reason it's one of the best meals Kurt has ever had.

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After dinner, they return to the apartment so his Dad can get his suitcase. Sonia soon arrives with the car for the airport. His Dad asks her, "Did you get them?" and she hands his Dad a fat envelope, which his Dad then passes to Kurt with a, "Happy Easter." Inside are not just the tickets to the Easter Egg Roll but tickets to The Shakespeare Theater for Saturday night, along with dinner reservations for the nearby Spanish restaurant, Jaleo. Kurt's heard of it; it's famous for its tapas or something. But neither he nor Blaine have much time for much more than enthusiastic thank you's. There's a flurry of quick hugs, and then his father's concerned requests for promises to behave and be safe and have fun. And then the door is swinging closed behind Sonia and his Dad. They're abruptly alone, and Kurt is more than a little disoriented.

Kurt presses his palm against the painted wood and closes his eyes. Blaine isn't far behind him. Kurt opens his eyes, takes a breath and drops his hand down to slide the chain across, down further to flip the deadbolt and twist the lock on the knob. They're alone. The weekend that had started out with the promise of them being them relegated to the fold-out sofa bed and no real privacy has become something quite different.

Being alone like this with Blaine—like absolutely alone, without wondering who might overhear a moan or a creak or a rustle or a laugh—every time, it hits him like a wave of something unreal, like a fantasy somehow managed to escape his brain and manifest itself around him, like he's just walked into a holodeck or has fallen asleep into a particularly vivid dream.

In this place, this apartment in this city, it's an even starker contrast, an even deeper rising heat when Blaine's hand comes, so real and warm and heavy, to rest upon his shoulder to prompt Kurt to turn. Kurt turns easily and steps back until he's flush against the door as Blaine presses in to kiss him with his hot, eager mouth.

Blaine is pulsing hard against his hip already, and Kurt's body answers with its own heavy throb of blood to his groin. "I've been thinking about kissing you all day," Blaine murmurs against his lips.

Kurt replies with a hum and a slow, deep sweep of his tongue into Blaine's mouth, and one of Blaine's hands is pulling his shirt free of his waistband, and Kurt is sliding a hand up the back of Blaine's neck. And then Blaine's phone is ringing from his jacket pocket.

"Ugh," Kurt says, tipping his head back against the door with a thunk as Blaine pulls away.

Blaine pulls out his phone and makes a face. "Shit. I forgot to text my Mom," he says before taking the call. Kurt remembers he was meant to remind Blaine to call her once they'd landed. So this is likely not going to be a quick call. "Hi, Mom," Blaine says, followed shortly by an, "I'm sorry, I—" and a "Yes, I know, but I—" and a "I'm fine, Mom, I just—"
In between it all, Blaine mouths an "I'm sorry" to Kurt, and Kurt smiles, shrugs, and jerks his thumb toward the bathroom. He'll feel better—more sexy anyway—if he washes the day's worth of travel and exertion from his skin. It'll give Blaine privacy, too. Kurt never enjoys hearing Blaine's half of the conversations with his parents anyway; there are too many apologies. It's so awkward, and Kurt is never sure of the right thing to say if Blaine is irritated or sad afterward.

Since the shower stall is very small and the water pressure mediocre, Kurt keeps his shower quick; his erection fades on its own. Blaine is still on the phone when he's done, so he takes the time to blow dry his hair. He hangs his towel up before he realizes his dressing gown is still in his suitcase, which is still sitting near the front door. There's no need for modesty, so Kurt heads out of the bathroom nude, venturing quietly into the living area. Blaine is in the kitchen leaning on the counter carrying on the conversation in interrupted half-sentences. He glances up as he sees movement, interrupting himself this time. His mouth falls open ever so slightly, and his eyes widen. Kurt grins and takes a moment to pose ridiculously, pursed lips and a hand on one canted hip, before heading for his suitcase.

"Mom," Blaine says. "I really need to go. It's late and—" Blaine nods and stares at Kurt, adding an absent, "Yes, I will. You too. Good night." And then he sets his phone down and goes to where Kurt is pulling out his thin cotton dressing gown from his suitcase. "You're naked," Blaine says, his fingertips trailing across the span of Kurt's lower back as Kurt zips his case back up.

"You noticed," Kurt says and wonders if perhaps nudity is the key to cheering Blaine up after one of his parental phone calls. He stands up and reaches for Blaine with his empty hand, takes the hand in which Blaine had gripped his phone so tightly to rub over his palm with his thumb. "You should go shower, and then you'll be naked too," Kurt suggests.

Blaine nods. "Yeah," he says, his gaze dragging up and down Kurt's body with an intensity that has the blood pumping straight back down to thicken Kurt's cock. Kurt lets Blaine watch it happen, lets him see how much he can affect Kurt with just a look.

"I'll go... do that," Blaine says at last, and he grabs his toiletries and goes.

"I'll wait," Kurt says. Kurt pulls on the light robe and gets their suitcases into the bedroom. There's not much furniture, the bed, flanked by two night tables, and a tall bureau. No mirrors, which is weird, but Kurt can deal. He unpacks his clothes to the bottom two drawers and the mostly empty closet, and gets their supplies set up on the night stand: condoms, lube, wipes, tissues... The water is still running, so Kurt pulls the sheets down, slips off his robe, and lies down to wait for Blaine.

While he has hoped for some opportunities for sex over the weekend, Kurt hasn't really planned anything specific in his mind. Up until an hour before their flight, it didn't look like they'd get a chance for anything more than a quick, quiet, under the covers fumble while his Dad slept. But now they have the apartment to themselves, a proper bed, and time. Kurt tries to catalog his present state of arousal and desire, to determine what he wants tonight. Considers what Blaine may like, wonders if there's an opportunity here for something special. But he's sleepy and warm and comfortable. He stifles a yawn against the back of his hand and rolls to his side. The travel and sun and all the city walking have left him with a pleasant buzz of fatigue, and his mind has been presented with a lot of new stimuli today. About as far as he gets with his planning is that he would very much like to be naked and have orgasms with Blaine, and then he drifts off into a semi-conscious doze.

A touch rouses him: Blaine's hand, warm, sliding up his thigh. "Kurt?" Blaine asks quietly, his voice coming from behind, near Kurt's ear. "Are you asleep?"

"Mmm... not really," Kurt mumbles, blinking his eyes open and clear. He's fallen forward a bit, his
leg bent and canted up to keep him from being flat on his belly. "Was just relaxing while I waited for you."

"I'm here," Blaine says, and Kurt feels the mattress dip and Blaine's warmth draw near, before the hot, satin-smooth press of his body aligns itself behind Kurt. Blaine's hard, his cock bumps against Kurt's flank while his lips press a slow, lazy kiss to the angle of Kurt's jaw.

"You feel so good," Kurt says and turns his head so he can find Blaine's lips. It's a poor fit, twisting back for a kiss over his shoulder, but Blaine scoots up and leans over him to deepen the reach of their tongues. Firm, Blaine's hand comes up Kurt's thigh to his ass, to squeeze a handful. Blaine withdraws from the kiss, leaving Kurt dizzy. His hand relaxes, petting over the swell of Kurt's backside.

"What do you want to do tonight, Kurt?" Blaine asks.

"Mmm... anything," Kurt replies, and it's such a wonderful thing to say it and mean it. No matter what Blaine does to him right now, he's not anxious with the anticipation of it, just filled with the warm easy thrum of (slightly sleepy) desire. "Just so long as it doesn't require too much energy," Kurt adds.

Blaine huffs a silent laugh against his shoulder. "Okay," he says. "You relax, I'll do stuff, okay?"

"I think you should do me," Kurt says, half into his pillow and grinning as Blaine starts kneading his ass again and presses another kiss to his skin, lower this time, upon the back of his ribs. Blaine's shower damp curls are pleasantly cool and ticklish upon his sleep warmed skin. Kurt shivers. That earns another soft laugh from Blaine. "So demanding," he says, shifting and trailing his lips farther down, angling toward Kurt's spine, and down into the small of his back. "I'll make it good for you."

"I know you will," Kurt says, with a hot thrill at the direction Blaine's mouth is taking.

Blaine takes his time. He presses Kurt's buttocks apart and nuzzles between them lazily, nudging into Kurt's cleft with his nose and exhaling humid breaths for a time, only gradually progressing to pressing soft, indulgent kisses and and scattering shallow slips of tongue wherever he can reach. Blaine hasn't shaved after his shower, and his day's worth of hair growth is a sensitizing scuff against Kurt's tender skin. Kurt sighs and twists languidly against the sheets, lets his body soak up the sensation, lets the burn catch and flare. "Mm, baby, that feels so... god..." Kurt trails off lazily and opens his thighs wider for Blaine. "Love your mouth."

When Blaine's tongue finally comes to press flat and lax over Kurt's anus, Blaine hums, low and long, and begins, not quite licking, but rubbing his tongue firm and fluid over Kurt's hole and squeezing Kurt's buttocks in tempo with it.

That's when Kurt wakes up completely.

"Oh... Blaine," he moans out, tilting his hips, pressing back against Blaine's face for more. He can feel the way he clenches beneath Blaine's tongue, involuntary twitches and shivers and— "Ooh," Kurt sighs when Blaine slides his tongue up farther, enough that, when he points and curls the tip of it, it catches as he presses, digging into Kurt's sensitive center, and it's so fucking good, it's like the best thing ever, and Kurt craves the delirious push and slide of Blaine's tongue working its way into his body. But it's little more than a slick tease, for Blaine is pulling away then, his breath hot and heavy across Kurt's bare skin.
"Do you want to come like this, Kurt?" Blaine asks.

"Please... god yes," Kurt says, for in this moment, there's nothing he wants more. He shoves a hand beneath his lopsided sprawl to find his cock, needful and bereft of touch. He wraps his fingers around it, crooking his index finger over the tip to drag the slickness down. "Want to come with your tongue on me," he says, squirms shamelessly back into Blaine's hold and amends, "in me... fucking me."

"Yeah, okay," Blaine murmurs, and then his mouth is back on Kurt, his tongue an insistent slip and slither, slowly working Kurt open, and Kurt's not gritting his teeth against it, but opening his mouth around every harsh moan and sigh, letting whatever nonsense pleasure sounds there are come out, while Blaine, in small increments, pushes in and in and in, and...

"Oh, god..." Kurt mutters, his whole body rocked by Blaine's attention; Kurt's cheek is hot shifting against his pillow, his fingers curled tight around his dick and stiff into the sheets—sheets that are no longer cool, but instead reflect all the sweltering heat of his arousal right back up at him. "So good, Blaine... god, you're so good at that. So good at me."

Since this is not the first (or second) time Blaine has done this for Kurt, Kurt knows what to expect from his body. He's able—just barely—to relax into the sensation enough that he can ease himself through the intensity of Blaine's tongue boring into him without coming immediately. But he can't stave it off for as long as he wants. He turns his face to muffle his tangled, increasingly loud moans into his pillow, feels his lust, raw, intensifying, searing beneath his skin. Kurt pinches and rubs over the head of his cock just enough to draw it all together.

And Blaine works him faster, stabbing into him over and over—tirelessly—quick and slick and even. And then, as Kurt gets so close his orgasm is coming upon him unavoidably, Blaine changes to slower, deeper, and hungrier licks, pressing and reaching, with his clever twisting tongue, to scour out every last bit of pleasure from Kurt's overwrought nerves while Blaine holds him fast and helpless against his mouth. Kurt's thighs start to shake, and all the heat and ache and want is building up impossibly; Kurt has no choice but to crumble.

He catches his semen in his hand. That's Kurt's last act of volition before he collapses into a graceless numb-brained heap.

The fierce grip of Blaine's hands on his buttocks loosens, but Blaine does not release Kurt or relent entirely. His mouth is still upon Kurt, shallow, soothing licks and soft, closed mouth kisses as Kurt settles back into his bones, heavy, lax, and spent. Then Blaine is dragging his tongue tip up from Kurt's hole to his tailbone, which, immediately post-orgasm, is insanely ticklish; it makes Kurt's muscles jump, Kurt swear, and Blaine chuckle. "You all right?" Blaine asks, folding his arms across Kurt's lower back and resting his chin upon Kurt's tailbone.

Kurt groans and works his tongue through his dry mouth, remembering how to speak. He feels tipped off his axis in the best possible way, like Blaine's unmade and remade him with this one act of startling euphoria. He smiles but doesn't open his eyes. "I'll never be all right again," Kurt mumbles. "I'm so far beyond all right right now..." Kurt trails off as nothing particularly witty comes to mind to follow. He trusts Blaine understands.

"You enjoyed that, then?" Blaine asks; he shifts, his hands sliding a caress to Kurt's waist as he kisses up the line of Kurt's spine toward the nape of Kurt's neck. His chest drags across Kurt's buttocks, then his yielding belly, and then his cock is there, heavy and hot nestling high between his cheeks.

"Mm, so much," Kurt says, tipping his ass up against Blaine's cock. "I loved it. Are you going to
fuck me now?" Kurt asks, and then adds, more softly so Blaine knows, "You can. If you want to."

"Hmm," Blaine hums into his hair thoughtfully, rocks his hips down to meet Kurt's movement. Then answers, "Not exactly."

"Not exactly...?"

"Are you still hard?" Blaine asks; then he kisses behind Kurt's ear.

"Pretty much, yeah," Kurt says, for though he's well sated for now, he knows it won't take much to be ready to go again.

"Roll over?" Blaine asks.

With a grunt and some extra effort, Kurt does, careful of his soiled hand. He's not positive there's a change of sheets here. Next time, he'll bring a towel in.

Blaine is smiling beautifully, slightly scruffy and flushed as he takes Kurt's hand and cleans it off with tissues and a moist towelette. "Don't get me wrong, I love your ass," Blaine says, carefully scrubbing between Kurt's fingers as he glances at Kurt with barely tempered desire. "But right now, I really want your cock in mine."

"Okay," Kurt says, feeling a tentative curl of heat catch anew. "What do you need me to do?"

"Nothing," Blaine says with a flirtatious wink that is both ridiculous and promising. "Just lie back and enjoy the show." He releases Kurt's hand.

"Oh, I see..." Kurt says, smiling up at Blaine and reaching to loosely caress up his arms and shoulders as Blaine leans away and reaches for the lube and a condom.

"You will," Blaine says. "I know how you like to look... to see." And with that he turns his back on Kurt, throwing a leg over to straddle Kurt's waist, facing the foot of the bed. "Okay?" he asks over his shoulder.

"Oh," Kurt sighs in greater understanding of what Blaine plans. "Yes," he says, scooting up a little against his pillows and bringing his hands to Blaine, holding on and digging his thumbs into the dimples either side of the base of Blaine's spine, just above his perfectly round, luscious, amazing ass. "This is so okay, Blaine."

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Saturday morning, Kurt doesn't let himself linger in bed with Blaine the way he would like. There's too much to do, and he wants to get to the Eastern Market early. His Dad has told him about it, and Kurt is excited to see it for himself. Into his iPhone, he taps out a list of viable Easter brunches he could make in their under-equipped kitchen while Blaine showers. Learning to cook in a small apartment kitchen is a skill he's going to need. There is, at least, a decent nonstick skillet he thinks will be suitable for crepes or pancakes (he's brought his mother's recipes). Or French toast, if he can find some good bread. Maybe a baguette or a sourdough.

The market doesn't disappoint. The sprawling building that hosts it is yet another historic Federalist
structure, well maintained and charming in an East coast colonial way Kurt thinks he's beginning to understand. Everything here is a reminder of that history and its attending aspirations: colonization, revolution, foundation. He can feel it all steeped into the red bricks, the white columns and pediments.

Beneath the clear Spring morning are technicolored mounds of fresh vegetables and fruit, stalls of boutique preserves and sauces, local cheeses, breads, and more. The quality and variety of the food makes Kurt dizzy with possibilities. And then there are the tables strewn with local arts and crafts—so many lovely things: hand-knitted sweaters he could pet all day, felt hats in amazing jewel toned colors, glass beaded jewelry Carole would adore. He nearly, nearly buys himself a scarf. There's a woman selling sheer, hand painted floral scarves that would be perfect for summer; each is unique. He holds one with bright red poppies in his hands for too long. He doesn't have the pocket money for it though, not if he's going to buy food, so he sets it back down reluctantly.

He tries to keep focused on his Easter brunch goal, especially after Blaine reminds him that everything they buy, they'll have to carry back to the apartment. They get fruit, strawberries, blueberries, early white peaches, nectarines, and apricots. He goes easy on the citrus—it's heavy—but he can't resist a plump pink grapefruit or a few shiny Meyer lemons. He buys bread and pastries, too—too much. They eat the flakey custard danishes straight away with the best coffee he's ever had. Then there's a dozen free-range eggs, organic cream and mascarpone, and other soft cheeses with unfamiliar names the vendors tell him will go with the fruit, and finally a blood orange marmalade he can't pass by once Blaine tells him how much he loves marmalade.

With Kurt's wallet denuded of funds and the laden bags at their feet, Kurt and Blaine lean against the wall outside and sip their coffee. Blaine brushes bits of pastry from Kurt's cheek and smiles at him. "This is a fantastic morning," Kurt says. "Spending all your money on more food than we can comfortably eat in one day?"

"No... just—" Kurt gestures vaguely around them and between them. "Living like this, with you. Being somewhere."

Blaine bends down, sets his coffee at his feet to rummage in the paper sacks of their purchases. He pulls out a tissue wrapped parcel and hands it to Kurt. "Here," he says. "A souvenir of the day."

"Blaine," Kurt says fondly. He takes the package and unwraps it. It's the scarf with the poppies. "Oh! Thank you. When did you even—?"

"You were really into that cheese selection, it wasn't hard to sneak away," Blaine says. "You like it?"

"I love it, you know I do," Kurt says, and then adds with quirk of his smile and a quieter voice. "I'll thank you properly when we get home."

Blaine laughs. "In fact..." Kurt unknots the tie he's wearing and folds it neatly into his pocket, then he opens the collar of his shirt and ties the scarf about his neck. He lifts his chin. "How does it look?"

"Lovely," Blaine says, running his fingertips down the ends of the scarf that drape Kurt's chest. ~

They return to the apartment long enough to drop off and put away their purchases, and Kurt takes
the time to press Blaine against the kitchen counter and kiss him until they're both breathless and growing indecent. "Thank you," he says. "Now, let's go to the Smithsonian."

Blaine groans and follows him out the door.

~

The museums are vast. They start at Air and Space, gawking up at rockets and famous airplanes and space capsules. By lunchtime, they're still there. They eat in the museum's café, which isn't all that nice, really, but it has a decent view. The cashier is charmed enough by Blaine that she forgets to charge them for their drinks. After lunch, Blaine has to drag Kurt out of the gift shop with reminders that he can shop online if he really wants to. It's a rush to get through the rest of the museum, but they want to hit more than one. Kurt tries to snap lots of photos of Blaine looking at interesting things. His favorite is Blaine walking through Skylab with the afternoon light behind him, hands in his pockets.

"We're not going to have time to go to the Spy museum today are we?" Blaine asks him, squinting at the angle of the sun as they head back outside.

"It's not on the Mall is it?"

"No."

"Probably not? Unless it's open tomorrow."

Blaine shrugs. "So, dinosaurs next?"

"Carousel first," Kurt says.

It's so much fun; they both end up with terrible giggles, and all of Kurt's photos are blurry. Blaine calls them artistic. Then they go look at the dinosaurs.

Too soon it's time to head back and get ready for dinner and the play. Kurt's rarely been so ambivalent. He wishes they could stay the whole week. He really wanted to head out to the textile museum, too, but that's not possible today either.

~

After the show—a rousing production of "Taming of the Shrew" that leaves Kurt elated and envious all at once—they break free of the swarming crowd exiting the theater and leisurely walk to the Metro stop. It's begun to drizzle, not enough to be oppressive, just enough to fuzz out the lights of the city into an Impressionistic blur and make the sidewalks glitter. Blaine appears to be looking at his feet rather than the street. Kurt bumps Blaine's shoulder with his own to draw his attention back from wherever it's strayed. "Hey," Kurt says.

Blaine blinks at him, and his automatic smile lags just a fraction of a second. "Hi," Blaine says.

"Enjoy the play?" Kurt asks.

"It was amazing." Blaine smiles with more vigor. "And so funny! I swear, that play wasn't nearly as funny in Mr. Kroger's English class."

"I know! I haven't laughed that hard since..." Kurt grins. "I can't even remember."

"Yeah," Blaine says. The twinkle of his smile lights up his eyes in that magical way Kurt loves, that
still catches him somewhere sharp in his chest every time, still makes his cheeks warm. It makes Kurt reach for Blaine's hand on impulse. Grabs and squeezes and tugs. Blaine squeezes back.

"You know, when we're in New York, we'll have so many more evenings like this," Kurt says; he tips his face up to the smeared lights and the fine prickle of the drizzle as he imagines it: the brighter lights of Broadway, Blaine's hand in his, Blaine's smile and laughter, looking forward to all their amazing tomorrows together in the city of their dreams. He refuses to think about going back to Lima on Monday. For tonight, they can pretend.

Blaine lets go of his hand. "Yeah," he says, more softly, trailing off with a gust of breath. Wistful, Kurt thinks.

Kurt looks back at Blaine, gives him another shoulder nudge. "I can't wait," he says.

"I know," Blaine says, and if Kurt didn't know better, he might think Blaine sounded sad.

~*~

Back at the apartment, Kurt closes the door on the city, on their crystal daydream of an evening out. And though he's sad to step away from all the vibrant experiences of the city, from the wonder of having access to all this culture and sophistication and art, he's glad to return here too. The now familiar snick of the door latch, the slide of the chain, the solid thunk of the deadbolt— with he and Blaine, and only he and Blaine, on this side of the door, together in their own (even if temporary) space—he wonders if this kind of thing will ever feel routine, even when they're living together. Or if it will always be a relief and a thrill, a little wing-like flutter glancing the base of his heart. It's a haven; it's home: it's Blaine.

Kurt turns. Near the kitchen Blaine stands, one hand curled around the edge of the peninsula counter. His posture is too careful to be nonchalant. His eyes upon Kurt are dark and restless; his mouth tense. Blaine must feel it too, the way the pressure changes when the door is closed. Beneath Kurt's scrutiny, Blaine lifts a hand to unknot his bowtie; then he unbuttons his collar, and Kurt goes to him. Kurt kisses him, and Blaine yields to the kiss: deep, sweet, and hungry.

So hungry, it swiftly rouses an answering heat in Kurt's blood. He growls into Blaine's soft open mouth, presses in with ardor. His fingers dig into Blaine's shoulders, and Blaine begins to sway into Kurt's embrace. But then Blaine catches himself, and he's suddenly pulling back. He breaks the kiss, breaks Kurt's hold on him—but his gaze doesn't break from Kurt's.

With a glimmer of a smile, Blaine steps away, backwards into the low light of the living area, until he's standing upon the thick rug. There, dusted in the wan glow of the street through the open blinds, he lowers himself to his knees. Blaine reaches a hand out, palm up, and Kurt moves to meet him, curious and alert. He takes Blaine's hand—expects Blaine will go straight for his fly, but he doesn't. His smile has faded, and the desire in his eyes is less simple.

Kurt doesn't ask, 'Are we doing this right now?' and he doesn't say, 'I didn't plan anything.' Instead he asks, "What do you need, baby?"

"I need to feel you, Kurt," Blaine answers. "All right," Kurt says. There's an edge to Blaine, something desperate rising up from the dark well of his gaze. It's not entirely familiar, but Kurt thinks he recognizes it nevertheless. Kurt brings his other hand to Blaine's head, tangles his fingers tightly into Blaine's hair, and tugs his head back, a little roughly. Blaine winces and gasps, his eyelids flutter and his mouth comes open. His gaze drops from Kurt's face to the front of his trousers. Blaine seeks Kurt's response, and then—once found—Kurt
sees how Blaine wants it.

"You want to suck my cock." Kurt says.

"Yes, Kurt," Blaine says. "Tell me."

Kurt brings Blaine's hand to the front of his jeans, lays it flat over his erection so Blaine can feel it. Blaine curls his fingers around its thick shape, his breathing hastens. "Tell me, Kurt," he repeats, licks his lips. "Please?"

It's so tempting to give in, but there's that edge; now it's chiseling Blaine's voice: Kurt wonders if he can sharpen it. He'll try. "No," Kurt says, though he's not sure what he's doing exactly, improvising.

Blaine's eyes widen and flick up to Kurt's in something akin to disbelief.

"Not that," Kurt says. "Not yet. All right?"

"Yes, Kurt."

"Undress yourself, please," Kurt says, and Blaine shifts his weight as if to stand. "But don't stand up," Kurt adds, and he lets go of Blaine.

Kurt doesn't watch Blaine while he undresses, but Kurt can see in his peripheral vision that it's accomplished somewhat awkwardly, accompanied by a few soft, self-conscious chuckles. It makes Kurt smile. But instead of looking at Blaine, Kurt attends to getting what they need from the bedroom, finding a blanket (something easily laundered), and trying to orient his galloping mind. He hasn't planned anything, has only a general idea of Blaine's desire, which seems like something more specific tonight. Kurt trawls through the memory of the evening for hints. Dinner was amazing; the food incredible (and Kurt finally has a benchmark for good paella), the conversation light as they talked about the day, Kurt wondering how the Smithsonian will compare to the museums in New York, the Met, MoMA, the Guggenheim... How he'll wait to see them on the weekends when Blaine visits. Blaine smiled and nodded, looking at him with his shining eyes, and he took Kurt's hand across the table and squeezed tight.

Kurt shakes out the folds in the blanket and drapes it over the sofa, then he turns back to check on Blaine, who is just pulling his briefs off and setting them aside on his loosely folded pile of clothes. He's completely bare now, his musculature cast in fallow chiaroscuro by the pale glow of the streetlamps. Blaine sits back on his heels, his hands lax on his thighs: a picture of patience but for the rapid rise and fall of his chest, the dark jut of his cock, and his bright eyes trained upon Kurt. It arrests all Kurt's thought, his breath, his heart.

"Blaine," Kurt says, barely audible. "Come here."

It's like a dream how slowly Blaine moves, tipping forward to his hands and knees. He watches Kurt, stares at him in a way that makes Kurt's lungs seize and his heart tremble. He's caught, so helplessly caught by this boy. Blaine crawls toward him, and Kurt cannot look away from the strength in the rise and fall of his shoulders, the sinuous flex of his spine, the way he crosses the black vertical bands of shadow from the blinds, how the bars of light and shadow seem to drag against the movement of his body. The way Blaine looks, it's... potent, infused with erotic suggestion. Kurt clenches his fingers into fists to forestall any trembling that would betray his lack of composure.

"Blaine," he says. He means it to sound firm, but it comes out whisper fine and tender.

When Blaine reaches him, he stays on his hands and knees, presses his face against the side of Kurt's
leg just above his knee. Through the denim, the heat of Blaine's cheek is vivid. Kurt's rigid with apprehension as he looks down at Blaine, so beautifully nude, kneeling in supplication, silently asking for... Everything or anything, Kurt isn't sure which.

"Help me with my boots," Kurt says.

The pressure of Blaine's hands on one ankle, his thumbs running up the laces of Kurt's white Docs, is almost worshipful. Then Blaine lowers his head and presses his lips to the toe of Kurt's boot, and suddenly it unequivocally is. There's reverence in the way Blaine slowly kisses over the front of the boot while his fingers press a muted caress through the leather, and all of Kurt's blood is pounding it's way to his cock, except for the blood racing across his skin, burning up his cheeks and chest and... "Oh," he says, and he stares.

Then Blaine raises his head a few inches, but he doesn't look up. His voice is rough and low when he asks, "I-is this turning you on, Kurt?"

It takes a few attempts at gathering air for Kurt to answer. "Yes," he says quietly, imparting a strange secret. "I don't know why, but yes."

"You don't have to know why," Blaine says, and then he lowers his head again and licks across the polished white leather. Licks.

Kurt sways on his feet and tries to find some handhold, but the arm of the sofa is out of reach; he can only dig his fingertips into his own thighs. Hot as this is, he can't help but think of the dust and drizzle that will have collected on his boots throughout the day. It's been city walking, but still. He wants to kiss Blaine later and not have him taste like a city street. "That's enough," he says, never minding that his boots are still laced tightly. "Sit up, please."

Blaine does, sitting up and back on his knees, his head bowed with his lashes lowered, his cheeks flushed, and his chest rising and falling with deep breaths.

"Look at me," Kurt says, and he reaches a hand to cup Blaine's jaw, tilts his head up. Blaine's chin comes up before his gaze, but he does meet Kurt's eyes. His lips are pressed thin with nerves. "Baby," Kurt says gently and with a smile. "Did you think licking my boots would get you what you want?"

Blaine smiles around a short gust of laughter. He shakes his head. "No—I don't know. I just wanted to..."

Kurt lets his smile fade. "I asked you to help me with them."

"I— of course. I'm sorry. Please, let me..." Blaine starts to lean forward to reach for the laces.

Kurt pulls him up short, tightening his grip beneath Blaine's chin, pushing him back. "No," he says, watching Blaine's face carefully. Blaine's eyes widen, his mouth comes open releasing a soft grunt.

The inspiration comes from nowhere Kurt wishes to examine too closely just now: he raises one foot to place the toe of his boot against Blaine's breastbone. He gives the slightest push and Blaine goes back, supple and easy, falling back to catch himself with his hands, braced upon trembling elbows, and the sole of Kurt's boot is flat against the center of his chest. Kurt takes care not to put much weight on that leg. He holds himself very still and looks down at Blaine, who stares back up at Kurt, his gaze fathomless. Kurt's not certain he understands precisely what Blaine wants from him in this moment. While he knows—and thinks he understands this well enough—that Blaine wishes to be pushed at times, and he likes it when Kurt is rough, this is not exactly that. It feels like something
else, this edge to Blaine. It seems fragile in some difficult to quantify way.

But fragile things Kurt gets. He knows how to be careful. And there's one thing he's sure of. Kurt leans forward as far as he dares, balancing carefully so as not to shift his weight forward, and he ventures to repeat Blaine's earlier question to him, "Is this turning you on, honey?"

"Yes, Kurt," Blaine replies immediately.

"You'll let me do whatever I want with you right now, won't you?"

"Yes, Kurt. Whatever you want."

"Anything I want."

"Yes, Kurt," Blaine says, his voice tapers to a whisper. "Anything."

"And what do you want, baby? Tell me."

"Whatever you think I deserve, Kurt."

It's a peculiar, vaguely unsettling, turn of phrase, and Kurt knows he has a choice to make. He can push Blaine down more forcefully with his boot, or he can relent. He wonders which Blaine wants; he searches Blaine's face for any sign, as if he gazes fixedly enough, seeks the right angle of light, he'll be able to discern an answer. It's fruitless. He looks down at Blaine naked and stretched taut beneath him; he looks at his boot, coarse upon Blaine's smooth skin. Sees the formless entreaty in Blaine's gaze, a brief flicker of trepidation within the space of two rapid blinks, but underlying those is the terrifying trust.

And that's it, really. Kurt remembers the first time, how he gave in to that trust: to follow his own desire, not to try to guess at what secrets Blaine may harbor. It's Kurt's desire Blaine trusts, so Kurt chooses that. He lifts his foot from Blaine's chest and wordlessly goes to his knees. He guides Blaine to lie back and straighten his legs, and then Kurt straddles his hips.

"What you deserve?" Kurt murmurs before he leans down, takes Blaine's face between his hands, and kisses him.

When Blaine moans in the back of his throat, arches up, and reaches for Kurt's shoulders to pull him down, Kurt pulls away. His hands don't tremble at all as they go to his throat to unwind the scarf Blaine bought for him this morning. Even in the gloom, the saturated red of the poppies is a bright splash of color against the white. "Give me your hands," he says.

Blaine nods and offers Kurt his hands. Kurt winds the scarf around Blaine's wrists without speaking. He can hear his own breath coming faster, is aware of the heat coming like waves from Blaine's bare body. Once he's satisfied with the knot, Kurt pushes Blaine's hands back, above his head. "Keep them there," he says. He pauses for a heartbeat, holding Blaine's gaze before he adds, "If you want me to let you come tonight."

"Kurt—?"

"Hush," Kurt says. He sits back and settles his weight down until he feels the rigid line of Blaine's cock between his legs, trapped beneath the heavy seam of his jeans. With a grunt, Blaine arches up against the rough contact, Kurt hushes him again, pets him until he settles, tells Blaine, "Relax."

With Blaine naked and breathless, bound on the floor like this, pinned by Kurt's fully clothed weight, it feels so serious, this thing they do together sometimes. And maybe it is serious (Kurt definitely
wants to ask Blaine about what happened—or didn't happen—with his boots), but it's also meant to be joyful. So Kurt smiles at Blaine. Smiles as he brings a hand to his belt to unfasten it, smiles as he unbuttons his jeans, and smiles as he eases the zipper down over the straining shape of his erection.

Blaine's eyes follow the movement of his hand, and Kurt takes his time opening his pants, unsnapping the band of his underwear, and drawing his cock out from his fly. There's a tremor in the muscles of Blaine's neck as Blaine holds his head up to see, and Kurt realizes he should have got Blaine a cushion. But it feels too late for that, so Kurt pulls his phone from his breast pocket, sets it aside, and then slides his jacket from his shoulders. He folds it and rolls it into a neat bolster. It'll be too creased to wear again without a trip to the dry cleaners, but that's a small sacrifice, really. He leans forward to cup one hand behind Blaine's neck, supporting while he tucks the makeshift pillow behind Blaine's head.

"Comfortable?" Kurt asks, stroking over Blaine's cheekbone with his thumb.

Blaine's lips come apart; his gaze held within Kurt's is rapt, but he doesn't speak; he only nods.

"Good," Kurt says, trailing his fingertips from Blaine's face down his neck, across his throat, his pulse, over the bob of his larynx as Blaine swallows, his collar bones, his chest until his fingertips are denting the muscle right over Blaine's heart and Kurt can feel its steady, loving beat. "You're so good, Blaine. So pretty."

Still, Blaine doesn't speak, just stares at Kurt as if he can absorb something of him with the intensity of his gaze. It's such an easy place to lose himself, Kurt thinks. With Blaine, it's always been so easy to fall. A pleasant shiver ripples up Kurt's spine, and he brings his hands to the buttons of his shirt. He works his way down, unhurried, opens his shirt to bare more of himself to the steady heat of Blaine's eyes. One last glance up at Blaine's wrists shows Blaine's arms still relaxed within the snare of Kurt's scarf.

Then Kurt leans over Blaine, braces himself on one straight arm. His other hand, Kurt wraps around his dick. "Watch me, baby," Kurt says. In the quiet space between their bodies, his words fall muffled, like a secret.

So that Blaine may see, Kurt straightens again, presses his weight down against Blaine's cock as he drags his fist, loose and slow, up his own. Kurt keeps his gaze fixed upon Blaine's face, while Blaine—if his attention is wholly upon Kurt's hand on his dick.

"Loved the little show you put on for me last night," Kurt says, his breath stutters as he tightens his grip and sees how that change resisters in Blaine's face: the shudder of his eyelids, the flash of his tongue across his bottom lip. Of course, Kurt had been able to touch last night, had been able to dig his fingers into the flesh of Blaine's ass, had run his thumbs around the stretch of Blaine's body about his cock; had been able to slide his palms over the sweat-slicked flex of the muscles in Blaine's thighs as he fucked himself so shamelessly on Kurt's cock.

The memory of it has Kurt's hand speeding up, has him arching into the grasp of his fingers remembering the sweltering hold of Blaine's ass. "God, Blaine," Kurt says; it comes out so low and ragged, like Kurt's speaking with someone else's voice. "You were so hot."

Blaine's chest heaves with deep, rapid breaths. His eyes burn, and he groans and struggles beneath Kurt's weight, trying to buck up for some relief. Kurt doesn't let him.

"You want my cock, honey?"

"Yes."
"You can have a taste," Kurt says. He swipes his thumb over the tip of his cock, collecting the wet gleam of pre-come. Brings his thumb to Blaine's mouth, smears it over his plush bottom lip, lets his touch linger, dragging across Blaine's hot cheek as Blaine's eyelashes flutter and he sucks his lip into his mouth with a pleased moan. "Good boy," Kurt says, and returns his hand to himself.

"Kurt..."

"Hmm?" Kurt bites down on his own lip as he picks up his pace again, with less finesse, less performance, and more intention to just get himself off. He lets his eyelids drift down to hood his gaze.

"Please, let me—" Blaine's arms tense and his hands flex, but he leaves them above his head.

"Not yet," Kurt says, can't help the way his hips are starting to rock against Blaine's trapped cock. He's close, so close. He tells Blaine, "Going to... Ah! Come on you."

Blaine tosses his head back as he swears. "Fuck, oh... fuck."

Kurt gluts his vision upon the gleaming, vulnerable arch of Blaine's throat. His free hand drifts from where it rests on his thigh up his torso to find a nipple; he pinches it as he gives his cock a last barrage of fast, hard strokes to finish himself off.

His semen splatters white across Blaine's torso, all the way up to his collarbones.

Then, dizzy, Kurt's falling forward, leaning down, pressing his open, gasping mouth to Blaine's throat, feeling the hammer of Blaine's pulse beneath his lips, sucking at the sweat salty skin, inhaling Blaine; the heady mix of his cologne, sweat, and semen fills his nostrils. Blaine cries out softly, almost pained, as Kurt's weight shifts off him, as his cock comes free again.

"Please, Kurt, please..." Blaine mumbles and begs, writhing and hot beneath Kurt. "Please."

"Okay," Kurt says as he catches his breath. "It's okay, baby."

He pushes up, drags two fingers through the mess on Blaine's tummy, scooping up as much as he can. He pushes them between Blaine's parted lips. Blaine takes his fingers greedily, sucking hard, moaning; the luxurious slide of his tongue is enough that Kurt loses what little breath he's regained. He slicks up his other hand with his spunk, brings it down to Blaine's cock.

He intends to give a few teasing strokes before going down on Blaine; he wants to draw this out longer, but as soon as his fingers curl around Blaine's shaft, Blaine jerks hard and comes even harder. Just like that. Barely touched.

"Wow," Kurt says.

"Mmph," Blaine replies.

Blaine's a mess, his skin soaked with both their semen. Kurt cleans him up best he can without having to leave him alone to get a washcloth. Then Kurt unties Blaine's hands and kisses him, and Blaine sighs and tangles his fingers into Kurt's hair. They lie on the floor like that until the cool begins to creep into their flesh, and Blaine starts to shiver. So Kurt helps him up, wraps him in the blanket from the sofa, and takes him to bed. He undresses and spoons up close behind Blaine, smoothing his hands over Blaine's body to rub out his chill. Once they're both warm again, Kurt gets up to freshen up in the bathroom. He brings a warm washcloth back to Blaine. After that he makes
hot tea (decaf Earl Grey with honey and milk), and they sit up in bed to drink it with a plate of Oreos shared between them. Blaine's quiet and content in a way he wasn't before; the edge is blunted. But Kurt's still wondering about a few things.

"May I ask you something?" Kurt opens. He knows Blaine doesn't always like to talk about this stuff, but he can't leave this question unanswered, a little Blaine mystery to try to solve.

"Sure," Blaine says over the rim of his mug.

"Earlier," Kurt says. "With the, uh, boots...?"

A flash of a smile, self-conscious. "Your boots are sexy."

"Yeah, okay, but not... that. Um." Kurt chews his lip.

"What is it?"

Kurt makes himself say it. "There was a moment, and I couldn't tell. Did you want me to, like step on you, push you down?"

Blaine is quiet, nibbling around the perimeter of a naked Oreo half.

"It's okay if you did," Kurt says, but it comes out a little faint.

"Is that something you wanted to do, Kurt? To do that... to me?"

Kurt shakes his head; he had the thought, the impulse, but it wasn't a personal desire for that, to hurt or humiliate; it was more like a willingness to embrace a role for Blaine if it would turn Blaine on. That's the rush for Kurt: turning Blaine on. But he's not sure he can explain the difference well. "I don't know, not really, I don't think," Kurt says but he doesn't want Blaine to think he's denying Blaine something he may genuinely want. Kurt's read things. So he quickly adds. "I mean, not for myself. But if you wanted me to? If it's something you might enjoy, I could—I would—for you."

Blaine nods and presses his lips together for a moment before he replies. "I think, what I enjoyed was..." He tilts his head, glancing down at the plate of cookies resting upon the rumbled duvet. "I liked that you could have, but you didn't. I would've let you, but you didn't want to, and I liked that. Does that make sense?"

"I—I'm not sure, Blaine."

"Okay, think about it this way," Blaine says, and when he raises his gaze back up to Kurt's, there's something more certain there. An easy confidence that makes Kurt feel like he did that day on the stairs. Blaine sets his cookie down on the edge of the plate and reaches out to take Kurt's hand. "I really love being at your mercy," Blaine says, his voice low and sexy smooth, and all the implications of his words glimmer dark in his eyes.

"Oh, I—O-okay," Kurt says, a flush of heat rapidly rising up his neck.

Blaine rubs his thumb across Kurt's knuckles. "You love it, too, don't you? When I'm on my knees for you, waiting for you. Or tied up and helpless, but so willing..."

"I do," Kurt whispers, and he manages to set his tea aside before Blaine leans in and kisses him, hard.

"Now, just tell me what I have to do so you'll let me suck your cock..." Blaine murmurs into the
Kurt laughs and falls back into the pillows; he pulls Blaine down with him.

~*~

The next morning, Kurt wakes to the weight of Blaine's hand on his waist and the caress of his breath against his neck. It's dark, dark enough it doesn't feel much like morning, but there's enough dull gray filtering through the blinds, the sun must be up. The drizzle from last night has turned to a steady, heavy rain. Above them, upon the roof, it's a muted bass thrum. He glances at the clock and yawns into his pillow. It's too early for the alarm to have gone off. Kurt's ready to snuggle back into Blaine's warmth for another hour of sleep when Blaine speaks quietly but clearly, his breath stirring the fine hairs at Kurt's nape. "How many different ways do you think I can make you come?"

"Whuh...?" His brain's not nearly awake enough for this. Or for counting. His body though... It doesn't take much to flip that switch: Blaine's hand sliding over his chest, finding a nipple, the feel of Blaine—hard—pressing against his ass, the ticklish caress of Blaine's parted lips tracing the edge of his ear. The possibilities blur together. He guesses, "Five?"

"I count at least seven," Blaine says.

"Seven..." Kurt says with his exhale. Blaine's hand is smoothing down his pajamas to his belly. "You've been awake for a while, huh?"

"Mmhm. Pick a number for me?" Blaine says, skimming his palm over Kurt's growing erection.

"Uh... three?"

"Good choice. I really like three." And then Blaine is moving with purpose, rising up behind Kurt so he can lean down over him.

"Now?" Kurt asks. The tug of more sleep still holds some appeal, but it's disintegrating quickly enough under the press of Blaine's lips to Kurt's throat, his hand tugging at Kurt's hip.

"Uh huh," Blaine says, hot breath against his skin. "We have time."

"Okay," Kurt says and lets Blaine tip him to his back.

"I love it when you're like this." Blaine unbuttons Kurt's pajamas.

Kurt snorts a soft laugh. "Sleepy?"

"Mm. A little," Blaine says thoughtfully. smiling. He sweeps his palm down Kurt's breastbone to his belly, follows the motion with his gaze, contemplative. "But it's more that you're so relaxed and, like... loose" Blaine curls his fingers over Kurt's waistband. "It's hot."

"So you're saying you like it when I'm easy?" Kurt asks, smiling and nudging up with his hips.

Blaine chuckles and looks up. "Yeah, I guess. I mean, when it's for me."

"It's only ever for you."

"I know," Blaine says, and brings his other hand to Kurt's pajama bottoms. Kurt arches his backside off the bed so Blaine can strip them off, and then Kurt is lying naked in the cool pewter gloom of the rainy morning, breathless and warm beneath Blaine's attention. His cock lies heavy and hard against his belly.
"So what's three?" Kurt asks, clenching one hand into the thick woven texture of the duvet cover. As if he could possibly anchor himself.

"Three is..." Blaine coaxes Kurt's legs apart so he can kneel between them. He reaches back to his side of the bed for his pillow. "Lift up?" he prompts, and Kurt lifts his hips again so Blaine can tuck the pillow beneath him. "Three is fingering you to orgasm."

"Ah," Kurt says, watching Blaine reach for the lube on the nightstand.

"I mean, so long as— Is that... all right?"

"No, Blaine it's a terrible idea," Kurt says. "The worst."

Blaine laughs and slips a hand under Kurt's thigh to get him to raise his leg up, rests Kurt's calf upon his shoulder, strokes his shin. "I'll take that as a yes, then," he says.

Kurt can only nod as he hisses in a gasp between his teeth. On the hot skin behind Kurt's balls, Blaine's fingers are a cool wet shock. It makes his heart thump hard in his chest and heat scatter across his skin, but Kurt accepts it, his body responding this way. To let Blaine touch him like this now, it's so easy. Although it's still marginally less easy to say, "That feels really good," in a hushed whisper when Blaine's fingers slide lower to rub over and around his anus. Kurt says it anyway.

"You want me to blow you while I—?" Blaine presses a fingertip in, not far, just enough to start massaging away the tension from the inside.

"No. Just... ah... want to feel this," Kurt says. This is still a new enough sensation, he wants to concentrate on it, catalog it, find every little variation to savor before expanding it into other things. "It's so good."

"Touch of the fingertips, huh?" Blaine says; it's affectionate.

"Yes," Kurt says, rolling up into Blaine's touch as Blaine reaches farther into him. "Yes."

Blaine works his body patiently, thoroughly, with an ineluctable, perfect rhythm; and Kurt shivers and sighs, loses himself in the electric haze Blaine creates within him.

When Kurt gets close to his climax and he's tensing and crying out softly, Blaine leans over Kurt, kisses him deeply to swallow his whimpers, and then draws back to whisper to him: "So gorgeous," and "So hot," and "Come when you want, Kurt. Whenever you want," until Kurt does. He comes in a heaving surge, like a river in a rainstorm, overflowing and then... gently, gently, receding back into his own skin.

Blaine leaves his hand inside, but sits back, looks down at Kurt as if surveying his work. His fingers still move, slowly as if to soothe, but there's nothing soothing about it. The relief of Kurt's climax dwindles swiftly into fresh involuntary twitches; he trembles around Blaine's unrelenting touch. Then Blaine is saying his name urgently and starting to slide his hand out, but only far enough to tuck a third finger against the two he's been using, and he pushes back in.

Kurt gasps and arches at the sudden stretch, and his nerves blaze with too soon, too much. His eyes snap wide open. "Christ, Blaine... what're you...? Oh..."

"Please, Kurt," Blaine says, tipping forward and nuzzling against his cheek, mouthing at his jaw, down his neck. "Please, may I— Let me fuck you. Now, like this. I want you... want to be in you, want to come in you... so bad. Kurt, please."
"Okay," Kurt says; he doesn't want to deny Blaine this. He licks his dry lips, tries to swallow some moisture down his dry throat. "You can, just—"

Blaine shifts his weight, and his free hand comes to pet through Kurt's sweat damp and sleep mussed hair. "I'll take it slow, okay?"

"Yeah..."

When Blaine's fingers slide free of his ass, Kurt tries to collect himself. At least his body is feeling so opened up and sated that it's not difficult to relax again. The ghost of Blaine's touch still flickers inside, feeble but warm. Blaine tissues his hand clean and pulls his pajama top off brusquely, doesn't bother unbuttoning it, just tears it off over his head and throws it across the bed. Kurt sees how his hands tremble as he strips off his pajama pants. Blaine's cock comes free, dark and heavy, and always such a welcome sight to Kurt, even though, right now, with Kurt still sensitive in the aftermath, it's rather intimidating to contemplate. "Slow, right?" Kurt says.

He gets a nervous flash of a smile in response. "Yeah." And then Blaine tosses Kurt the tissues and reaches for a condom.

"Skip it, please," Kurt says, half-heartedly wiping at the spunk on his stomach. The thought of the latex dragging against him while his nerves are still frayed holds little appeal.

"Right," Blaine says, and he's so breathless and keen, he's nearly shaking with desperation as he turns back toward Kurt. Kurt discards the soiled tissue and lifts his legs to wrap them high around Blaine's waist. It's a contrast Kurt relishes: being calm within himself while Blaine is so needful. It won't last long.

"Here," Kurt says, tightening the grip of his thighs around Blaine's torso to bring him nearer, until the satin heat of Blaine's shaft brushes Kurt's balls, and Blaine is staring down at Kurt's face with such complex longing it stops Kurt's breath. Between his legs Blaine is so warm and solid and close. The implications of this intimacy—how they're about to fit themselves together—ignites anticipation fresh and hot within Kurt. "Let me..." Kurt says, reaching for the lube where it's half buried in the sheets.

Blaine leans over him on straight arms as Kurt slicks up his hand and reaches for Blaine's cock. The heat between their bodies is palpable. His own dick begins to stir, and Blaine eagerly pushes into the slippery grasp of Kurt's fingers. "Kurt," Blaine says, lowering his head.

"You feel so good," Kurt says, tipping his chin and straining up so he can meet Blaine's mouth with his own. He tightens his grip as he spreads the lube over Blaine's length, loves how hard and thick Blaine is in his hand, the smooth heat of him, how it's all going to feel pushing inside him soon, the breach and stretch and fill and everything. Kurt slips his tongue between Blaine's lips with a growl, tangles his free hand into Blaine's hair, holds him close, and works his hand faster along Blaine's cock, tugging him up until Kurt's knuckles brush along his own returning erection.

"Careful." Blaine breaks the kiss with a shudder and a gasp. He pulls back. "I don't want to come yet."

"Mmm, sorry," Kurt says, lets go of Blaine to move his wet hand to himself.

"Are you good?" Blaine asks; he sits back on his heels; his hands are warm upon Kurt's thighs. "I mean, are you ready?"

"Yeah," Kurt says. "Go ahead."

Blaine nods and presses Kurt's legs apart, slides his hands to the backs of Kurt's thighs, presses them
farther, making Kurt's spine curl. With Kurt on his back, and Blaine kneeling between his legs, holding them apart, holding Kurt open for him—to his gaze and his cock—it's enough to make sweat break across Kurt's skin, enough for his breath to come faster, for the heat to flare even deeper—more hungrily—in his belly. And there's something so deliberate about the way Blaine is holding him, something about the way his gaze is so keen upon the exposure and splay of Kurt's body even as Blaine hesitates... Kurt lets go of his cock, raises both arms above his head to lay them, lax, upon his pillow. "Whatever you want, baby," Kurt says. "Take it. Take me."

"You're amazing," Blaine says, and then he lets go of one leg to position his cock. And then Blaine's cockhead is nudging Kurt, blunt and insistent, seeking entrance. He moves his hand back to Kurt's leg, wraps his fingers tight around Kurt's ankle, and, with a steady push, Blaine cleaves him open.

Kurt's mouth falls open around a soundless sharp exhale. He forgot this. But how could he forget? He thought he remembered, but he didn't. He didn't remember just how hot and huge and impossible this feels, Blaine pushing his cock inside him. It's visceral, undeniable. How could he, in the space of a few weeks forget the magnitude of this fine feeling? Blaine, inside him, consuming and consumed.

"Kurt?" Blaine pulls back a fraction, pushes back in a little farther. Swears under his breath.

"...huh?"

"Open... Jesus. Open your eyes."

Kurt's not sure when he closed them. He opens, blinks up at Blaine, who's like some stunning sex god kneeling between Kurt's legs. Cast steel in the dim gray light, Blaine is all sleep tousled and sweat glazed, gloriously nude and glassy eyed; his torso flexes beautifully with each movement that takes him incrementally deeper into Kurt. And Kurt can't speak for the way the root of his tongue feels bizarrely tangled up with the forceful thud of his heart and the fullness edging inside him.

"Are you okay?" Blaine asks.

Kurt licks his lips, forces some words out. He thinks they're the right ones. "Yeah... fuck. You feel... it feels so..." Kurt tries to move, to twist up or bear down onto Blaine's cock, to take him in faster, but Blaine's grip shackles his legs, and all Kurt can do is relent and accept.

"Yeah," Blaine says. "Me too." He rocks his hips, slides deeper. With each roll in, he plies Kurt wider, looser, more open. He bows his head and looks down, and Kurt knows Blaine is watching it, the way his cock is moving in and out of Kurt's body; watching the same way Kurt likes to watch when he's the one doing the fucking.

With a steadying breath and a stretch of his arm, Kurt reaches out for the lamp, can barely get to the switch, but he manages to flick it on, floods the cool gray of the room with warm gold. "Better?"

"Yeah," Blaine says, glances up at Kurt's face. Drags his gaze back down Kurt's body slowly until it's resting once more where Kurt cannot see, where they're joined. "God, you look so good like this."

And before Kurt can reply, "So do you," Blaine is dragging his cock out and out and all the way out. The abrupt emptiness makes Kurt swear, his body cramps around the nothing. "Blaine," Kurt complains.

"Wait," Blaine says, and he thrusts back in, all the way in: one long, fat, spine-splitting shove.

"Fuck... fuck," Kurt says, and it feels like his eyes are going to roll all the way back into his skull. "Fuck."
"Good?" Blaine asks.

"Oh my god yes."

"'Kay," Blaine says, and that's how he fucks Kurt: long discrete thrusts that drag out slow and then slide back in quick. There's a tiny pause when Blaine is as deep as he can be, just the smallest moment of stillness, before the pull back out that then reverses so smoothly to thrust back in hard.

Blaine fucks him like a machine, like his cock is some kind of steam era piston; his cadence is so perfect, so inexorable.

It takes Kurt beyond words. That's something Kurt loves about this, how dominating it is of all his faculties. He has no choice but to give in, let go.

But Blaine, he doesn't let go; he's so controlled, so brilliant, and it feels amazing. Kurt can see how he's struggling to hold back, can tell in the uneven breaths, the flex of his fingers, the shudder of Blaine's shoulders. It takes what seems like minutes for Kurt to summon the clarity for speech. He reaches a hand down to Blaine and whispers: "You can be... Ah! You can... be greedy, Blaine," Kurt says, and Blaine reaches back, takes Kurt's hand in his. "I'm yours," Kurt says.

"Want to last for you."

"I know, but you..." Kurt says, hoarse with lack of breath, 'I can take more... you can..."

But Blaine doesn't. Instead he slows and stops. Lets go of Kurt's legs and leans over Kurt, takes his face between his hands. "Stay with me today," Blaine says urgently. With his thumb he rubs Kurt's bottom lip free of the reflexive grasp of his teeth.

With the momentum of pleasure still pulling bright and tight at his insides, it's hard to process Blaine's words let alone formulate a response. Kurt relaxes his spine, takes a deep breath around the sensation overwhelming his awareness: of Blaine, rooted so deeply in his body. "Blaine," He mumbles, winces as it seems his whole body flutters and throbs and aches in the stillness. Of course they're together. "I'm—"

"I mean, let's stay in bed today, together, all day. Just you and me, naked, and we can... do this." Blaine starts up again, slow and shallow, his easy motion flowing together into wonderful ripples of wonderful.

They had plans. "What about, the... uh... the, um, Easter... thing?"

"It's raining, and I don't... I don't care about that. Right now, I don't care about it at all. I care about being with you, and I... Kurt, I just, I want to stay in and make love to you all day."

As much as Kurt would like to visit The White House, he's not sure he wants to say no to that. But his mouth feels useless, clumsy and Novocained, when he tries to reply. All that escapes is a wretched groan that was meant to, maybe, be Blaine's name.

"Even when we're... like this, Kurt? God, I want you so bad. I just... want you, and I don't want it to end."

"Yeah," Kurt manages. He rolls his head against the pillow, tries to suck in enough air, but the steady pulse of Blaine's hips is making it so hard to think. "Okay," he mumbles. "Just... keep fucking me, please."

"As long as you'll let me," Blaine says. He straightens again, takes hold of Kurt's hips, lifting Kurt to meet his cock as he drags back slowly and then drives back in fiercely, fracturing Kurt's nerves into
splinters of hot pleasure.

"Unh..." is the only response Kurt manages, for Blaine is fucking him faster, smart snaps measured out with Blaine's gift for perfect, unbroken rhythm—and all Kurt can comprehend is Blaine moving inside him, the deliciously jarring, rolling heat and pressure and friction of it, how tremendous Blaine feels, as if he's taking up every empty space within Kurt, how it feels like he's reaching right up to Kurt's heart, into his throat, invading his lungs to force out every incoherent breath and sound until Kurt is full, overfull, and it's all Blaine. And it feels like it can never be enough, not ever, like he's always going to be aching for more, for closer, for more. It's never enough. And then it is.

Kurt comes, sobbing and twisting and delirious.

He hears Blaine swear, "Jesus, Kurt. Fuck... Jesus. You..."

Feels Blaine's hands tighten on him. Blinks open bleary eyes to see Blaine above him, flushed and glossy with perspiration, with exertion, dazed and amazed. "Beautiful," Kurt mumbles, screws his pelvis up into Blaine's next heavy thrust inside him. It's too much, but he still wants it. God, he does. This feeling of being cracked so wide open while crammed so utterly full at the same time. It's insane.

"You are," Blaine says. "So fucking gorgeous when you come."

"You too," Kurt says, panting, sweating freely. He's got enough lucidity back, he gets his elbows under to brace himself so he can flex and grind his ass against Blaine with each incoming jerk of Blaine's hips, "Come on, Blaine, you can... too."

"Don't want to," Blaine grits out. His brow creases with concentration; he gasps for air like he's drowning.

But there's an unwanted twinge of an ache growing within Kurt that's not the pleasant sort; it's dull and raw. "I... don't think... I can't take that much more, Blaine. Are you close?" Kurt asks, then, with less volume and more air, he pleads, "Please, baby, come for me."

"Yeah... yes, Kurt," Blaine says, and Kurt watches him let go, feels it. Blaine comes like a wave, irresistible and resolute.

Blaine pulls out immediately, leaving Kurt's body shuddering in feeble protest at the sudden absence. His strained thigh muscles burn when Blaine releases him. Kurt winces as he straightens his knees and flexes his feet to relieve the threat of cramp. Beside Kurt, Blaine succumbs to a weary sprawl.

As Kurt relaxes, heavy lassitude floods his muscles. Everything feels weirdly dense and loose, from his toes to his scalp, like there's not a muscle fiber anywhere that could bring itself to contract even if Kurt wanted to move. Which he doesn't. Blaine caresses his belly and ribs, heedless of the slippery mess of Kurt's orgasm, just smearing it around and into Kurt's skin. And Kurt's ass feels wet and well-used. It makes him feel sort of sloppy, but in a good way. He should get up, go clean himself up, but... not yet. He just wants to bask in it for a bit. And sleep.

"So was that... good?" Blaine asks, breath soft against Kurt's shoulder.

Kurt lungs spasm, attempting a laugh. They're only partially successful.

"You're okay?"
"Yeah," Kurt pushes out with his next exhale. His eyelids feel like lead. "Oh my god, Blaine."

"You'll stay in with me today then?"

Being interrogated when his brain is only firing on half an exhausted neuron is not really working for Kurt. He does his best. "I'm sure as hell not going anywhere anytime soon," Kurt says. "I can't even move."

Blaine chuckles, and then he's nuzzling Kurt's bicep and dipping a ticklish fingertip into Kurt's navel. Even that isn't enough to rouse a physical response. "Think I'm gonna go back to sleep," Kurt mumbles, lets gravity roll his head to the side so he's facing Blaine, but he can't open his eyes. He yawns, gracelessly. "Just for a bit."

"Go ahead, sweetheart," Blaine says, snuggles a little closer, and presses a kiss to Kurt's chin. As they fall into silence, the rain drums louder above them. The close warmth of Blaine and the steady drone of the weather lull Kurt back down into unconsciousness.

~

The second time he wakes, Kurt has no sense of how long he's slept. The clock tells him it's been two hours, but outside is no brighter, the rain still pounds patient and steady upon the roof. Blaine is gone from the bed, but Kurt smells coffee and hears the soft beat of music coming down the short hall. His body still feels too heavy, too sated and reluctant, but he gets up anyway, dragging on his robe before shuffling on weary legs to the bathroom to take care of necessities.

A quick shower helps him feel more human, though he still feels like he's lagging a bit, not quite connected to reality. It's comfortable, anyway, and at least as much a product of the atmosphere as it is the recent physical exertion. He heads to the living area where Blaine meets him—showered and groomed and neatly dressed in a casual t-shirt and cardigan—with a big mug of coffee in one hand and a bowl of batter in the crook of his arm. "Hungry?" he asks. "I used your Mom's recipes, I hope that's okay. I know you had plans, but I wanted to surprise you."

"It's a wonderful surprise, Blaine," Kurt replies. He smiles, seeing how Blaine has already set the small dining table with silverware and a half grapefruit in a bowl at each setting. Clustered in the center of the table are plates of cut fruit, cheese, and pastries; a bottle of maple syrup, a dish of whipped cream, and a pitcher of orange juice. Kurt swallows through the sudden constriction in his throat, blinks. "Thank you," he says, and gratefully he accepts the mug of coffee from Blaine along with a soft, chaste kiss on the lips. "Everything looks great."

"I'm glad!" Blaine says, smiling more broadly now. "I was going to do the crepes with lemon and sugar—that's what you wanted, right?"

"Yeah, that sounds good," Kurt says.

Blaine heads back to the kitchen, with an overly chipper, "Great!"

There's a loud clatter behind Kurt. It's takes a lot of willpower not to look, but Kurt doesn't. Instead, he reaches for the sugar bowl to sprinkle some on his grapefruit. But he can't stop himself himself from saying, "Let me know if you need help."

Brunch turns out well once Blaine gets the temperature of the pan right, and Kurt doesn't mind eating a few too-dark crepes without complaint. The blueberry pancakes fare better, and Kurt eats too many of them. No one has made him these pancakes but himself since his mother died. He praises Blaine repeatedly and enthusiastically—possibly too much, but his gratitude is immense and hard to express.
After, they abandon the mess in the kitchen, and Blaine lights the gas fire. Kurt brings the pillows, duvet, and blanket from the bedroom to make a cozy spot on the floor in front of it. They’re too full to do much but lie there together, listening to music and the rain while sharing lazy kisses and idle caresses. Kurt slides a hand beneath Blaine's shirt to pet his soft, lax belly, and he wonders if they're missing much. It's possible the Easter Egg Roll's been canceled. He convinces himself that's likely, and he smiles without reservation when Blaine tips his chin up for a slow deepening kiss.

"How do you feel?" Blaine asks him once their lips part.

"Warm," Kurt says, and then he's growing warmer as Blaine pushes his t-shirt up and presses his mouth to Kurt's sternum.

"I love you," Blaine says. "So much, Kurt." And then he's undoing Kurt's jeans.

"Love you, too," Kurt answers, helps Blaine along by arching up and pushing his pants down his hips.

It keeps raining through the afternoon, and Kurt loses track of how many orgasms he's had or how many Blaine has had. They're not even aiming for them any more, just sharing touches and kissing and finding new places and techniques to make each other feel good. It's comfortable and familiar even as it's a wholly different sort of day for them, so unhurried and indolent. Eventually, Blaine rolls Kurt to his belly and gives him a massage, blissfully working all the kinks from Kurt's legs and shoulders until Kurt feels like an overcooked noodle and is in danger of falling asleep—which he really doesn't want to do—so they move to the sofa and end up watching some emotionally manipulative melodrama on the Hallmark channel. They snack on more fruit and cheese and bread, drink more coffee and tea and juice, and the day drips by in a lovely haze, gradually turning imperceptibly into dusk.

By evening, the rain has eased to silence, and Kurt finds, in its absence, lying on the couch with Blaine wrapped around him from behind, he's peculiarly alert and growing restless. "Hey," he asks, nudging his shoulder back against Blaine's chest. "The rain's stopped. You want to go for a walk?"

He feels Blaine's shrug; it accompanies a determinedly non-committal noise.

"I could use some air," Kurt says. "I thought it'd be nice to walk to The White House, just to get a closer look, you know?"

"I guess," Blaine says, but his arms tighten around Kurt. "I'm pretty comfy though."

"Come on, Blaine. We probably won't have a chance tomorrow before we have to leave, and you still have to go to Georgetown."

Blaine groans. "Don't remind me."

"You promised your parents," Kurt does remind him, not because he thinks Blaine needs to go to Georgetown, but because he has some idea of the repercussions to Blaine should he not return home with some brochures to prove he went.

A heavy sigh. "I know."

"Okay, so," Kurt pulls out of Blaine's embrace and sits up. "Get up. Let's go look at the White
House now, so you can go to Georgetown tomorrow."

"You really want to go, huh?"

"Yes."

So they get dressed, and they go.

~

The White House is beautiful all lit up at night, dramatic and gleaming and remarkably still, which seems weird given everything that happens in the building. It's also smaller than Kurt expected. He grips the iron fence and stares at it, tries to imagine what's going on within its silent walls. "We should've gone this morning," he says. "They probably still did something. We might've met the President."

Beside him, Blaine is quiet for a few moments. Then he says, "I'm sorry."

"What?" Kurt turns to look at him. "No, Blaine. No, that's not..." He takes Blaine's hands in his own. "I loved this morning with you, okay? It was amazing."

Blaine's gaze slips from his. "Okay."

"It's just, I was thinking. What if this was our only chance? My Dad might not be re-elected. Even if he is, Obama might not be. Who knows what things will be like next April? Can you imagine if it's President Romney? God, Blaine, neither of us will want to go see him."

But Blaine doesn't laugh. "Next April," Blaine says slowly. "You'll be in New York."

Kurt rolls his eyes. "Yeah, but we'll still be doing stuff together on weekends and holidays."

"Right," Blaine says and summons up a smile. Kurt's glad to see it.

"Come on, let's take a photo together."

~

They walk for a while after that, meandering about, snapping photos, getting lost (but not really). It's late when they return to the apartment. Kurt makes French toast as a late supper, and they finish off the rest of the fruit with it. Blaine's a little quiet, has been most of the evening. Tired probably; Kurt knows he is himself feeling an increasingly deep fatigue. So when they go to bed, they just sleep. Kurt pulls Blaine into his arms, tucks his face against Blaine's neck, and promises himself he'll always remember this.

~*~

Monday morning is kind of wretched. Kurt suspects he has some kind of sex hangover—he wonders if that's even a thing. He probably ate too much sugar yesterday, too. While he cleans the apartment and packs, he drinks a lot of water. It helps. Blaine heads to Georgetown on his own while Kurt works.

He gets back just in time for them to leave for the airport. With a resigned sigh, Kurt stands in the corridor outside the apartment and locks the door; he squeezes Blaine's hand one last time before letting go to pick up his suitcase, and then they leave.
Shortly after take-off, Kurt can't stop himself from falling asleep. He doesn't wake until after they've landed, with Blaine gently shaking his shoulder to rouse him. He speaks softly, "We're back, Kurt."

Kurt blinks and looks out the airplane window to see Ohio. It's an indigestible lump in his belly. But then he turns back to look at Blaine, who is smiling at him and waiting for him. And Blaine's smile, it makes everything easier.

the end

Chapter End Notes

Happy New Year! I couldn't avoid a little melancholy at the end given where we know these boys are headed in canon. Please forgive me. I hope it's still been sexy and fun despite that, and I truly hope you've enjoyed reading this story as much as I've enjoyed writing it for you. <3 Thank you for reading!

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