Once In A Lifetime

by MrsCriss2012

Summary

Third instalment of Wake Me Up Inside/ All For You verse (You will need to read those first.) Kurt and Blaine journey through marriage and fatherhood together with the support and love of each other, their family and their friends.
"That's it," Kurt sighs happily, falling onto the couch. "That's the last box."

"Apart from the ones in the garage," Blaine says, flopping down beside him. "Still. We're in. Happy?"

Kurt lets his hand play idly with his husband's curls as Blaine settles his head onto his thigh, smiling down softly. "Ridiculously so," he says, yawning loudly. "And very tired."

"We can still have sex though, right? You promised me."

Laughing, Kurt leans down and kisses his lips, rubbing their noses together sweetly. "Yes we can still have sex. You know, for a man of forty, you have a remarkably high sex drive."

"Because I have a remarkably hot, young husband," Blaine says smugly. "And anyway, I'm thirty nine."

"Oh yes, how silly of me. Your birthday is a whole week away."

They chuckle together, then fall quiet as they watch their daughter playing happily on the floor, chewing hard on a plastic giraffe teething toy. She becomes aware of them watching and looks up, dropping the toy with a gummy smile as a line of drool trails down her chin. She laughs at the goofy face Blaine pulls, then promptly falls backward which makes her laugh even harder.

"I'm gonna miss her in our room tonight," Blaine muses.

"I know, but we said six months, and six months it is. She's growing up."

"She really is."

As if knowing how gentle she needs to be, Libby stays lying on the floor, rolling to her stomach and stretching her hands out, waiting. Sure enough, Martin goes, his little pink nose sniffing over her fingers before he runs his soft fur over her face, and unable to hold back any longer, Libby squeals again, letting a long line of drool trail onto the floor.

"She must be getting teeth," Blaine muses. "I know you disagree, but she must be."

"I didn't disagree," Kurt says as they continue to watch the cat and baby interaction. "I just said the book mentioned that as well as drooling a lot, teething babies are grumpy and restless, and we should expect fractiousness and night waking. She's not doing any of those things, just drooling everywhere. A lot."

"Libby," Blaine coos, making her look up and smile. Grabbing the muslin cloth which is now a necessity to have on hand whenever Libby is awake, Blaine rolls to the floor and wipes her mouth tenderly before tickling her sides and making her squirm. "Who's a cutie, huh? Is it you? Is it? Or is it papa?"

"Both," Kurt says, lying on the floor next to him and kissing his cheek. "And you too. Oh, and you," he laughs as Martin winds around his face. "A whole family of cuties. Now come on. We need to get this little lady in the tub."
Libby settles in her new room easily, cuddling up in Kurt's embrace in the large rocking chair for her milk while a cd of Blaine's piano music plays. He puts her down awake, as the book suggests, bracing himself for the crying but there is none; and when he drags Blaine away from preparing dinner and they both go to check on her, she is fast asleep.

"She's so smart," Blaine whispers as they stare down at her, besotted. "She's not worried about being in a strange room because she knows this is her new home. Bless her."

"I know. I love how smart she is," Kurt smiles. "And how pretty. Like, you see all these other babies and you kinda feel sorry for their parents, because we got her and no one else did."

"Except Olivia."

"Aw, Olivia is gorgeous," Kurt says, sighing as he thinks of Wes and Kathy's tiny daughter. "I just adore her. Anyway, we should leave our darling to sleep."

"Yes we should, cause I want dinner and sex."

"Blaine, you are so romantic," Kurt quips as he follows him down the stairs. "After nearly nine years together I can't believe I'm lucky enough to hear such endearing and thoughtful words from you. You know, many guys would kill to hear such delicate sweet nothings and...umpff."

He is cut off abruptly by Blaine's mouth on his, and he finds himself pinned against the wall of the hallway as he crowds in close, his hands framing Kurt's face and changing the angle of the kiss for his tongue to delve into his mouth, before he surprises Kurt once more by breaking the kiss and hugging him tight.

"I love you," he murmurs into the collar of his shirt as Kurt sighs happily and lets himself be held. "You are, without doubt, the most perfect man I will ever encounter, and I thank my lucky stars each and every day that you turned up to an acoustic night nine years ago. You were a shy, innocent blushing fifteen year old who held so much more knowledge, wisdom and maturity than anyone I had ever met.... And you chose to share your life with me. I don't know why you did, but I'm just eternally grateful that you did, and that you love me as I love you. Now. Gimme my dinner and sex," he says, and Kurt laughs loudly before kissing him once more.

"Okay," he grins against his lips. "Okay. Dinner and sex it is. And Blaine?" he calls after him as they trail down the hallway. "Thank you. I love you too, my old man."

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"Am I old?"

"You wanna have this discussion now?" Kurt asks, looking up from where his head rests right next to Blaine's cock. "I was kinda in the middle of something."

"I know. And I looked down...and I just....ugh. My body just looks old and tired and then there's you. Perfectly smooth, and tight, and just....wonderful."

"Blaine." Kurt moves up until they're face to face, and he cradles his face tenderly in his hands. "You're hot. Stupidly hot. So hot that I feel completely smug when I see people looking at you, because I get to take this to bed and no one else."

"People don't look at me," he scoffs.

"Oh they do," Kurt tells him sincerely. "I sit in the audience for your concerts, remember? I hear
them talking. When you're up there, playing the piano? And you're in the throes of something really intense?.... The way your head moves, you drip sweat and slowly those curls break free... I'm telling you, it's not only me who swoons."

"You swoon?" Blaine asks, secretly thrilled.

"I do," Kurt grins. "And you know I don't just love you for your looks, but it does help," he says with a wicked grin. "And this," he says, taking Blaine's hand and moving it to his ass. "Your hands. They're all....manly." He gives into his giddiness and giggles when Blaine squeezes. "Your body is that of a man...and what a man you are."

Satisfied, Blaine rolls on top of him and kisses him fiercely, and they make love until the small hours, teasing each other over and over and taking turns to move inside the other until finally Kurt fills Blaine, shuddering his release and collapsing wearily into his arms.

"Wow."

"That was intense," Kurt says, lazily swiping at Blaine's stomach with tissues. "You okay?"

"I am now I've had my food and my sex," Blaine laughs. "Jesus Christ it's nearly three in the morning."

"I mean that little wobble you had. About your body?"

"Oh that, yeah. Just ignore me. Turning forty and all that."

"Okay." Kurt turns out the light and waits for Blaine to rest his head on his chest, which he does readily. "As long as you know I'll always love you."

It feels as though they've only been sleeping a moment, and indeed only an hour has passed when they are startled awake with a yell coming through the baby monitor.

"Huh? Libby?" Kurt sits up quickly, looking for the baby before remembering she's across the hall in her own room now.

"I'll go, don't worry," Blaine says, pulling a robe over his naked body. "Come here, little lady," he coos picking her up and kissing her cheeks which are red and warm. "Shh, shh. Daddy's here. It's okay, it's okay."

Libby grabs his finger, gnawing hard on his knuckle as Blaine carries her back across the hall. "I think it's her teeth. She's biting on anything she can reach and she's running a fever."

"A fever?" Kurt asks in alarm. "Oh my god, our baby has a fever?"

"It's okay, it's mild,"

"Should we take her to the ER?"

"Kurt," Blaine says gently. "It's okay. She's a little feverish because she's cutting teeth. That's all. Here. Take her a moment and I'll go get the Tylenol."

After a dose of infant Tylenol, a bottle of milk and plenty of cuddles from her daddy, Libby settles to sleep as Kurt watches on anxiously, smoothing over her soft blond hair and kissing her rosy cheeks.

"I'll go settle her," Blaine says as he makes to stand, but Kurt lays a restraining hand on his arm.
"Keep her in here tonight."

"Kurt, c'mon. We said six months, and you were insistent on that earlier. She's okay, and I'm not dragging that huge crib into here."

"Let her sleep in here then," he tries. "Between us."

"No! You know that's not safe, and we'll both panic about rolling on top of her. No," he says, firmer this time. "She's going back in her own room."

He sighs heavily when he returns to find the lights out and Kurt with the covers pulled up over his head, and he slides into bed behind him, kissing his bare shoulder. "I'm sorry if I was harsh. I didn't mean to be."

"You weren't," Kurt says sadly. "I just overreacted, that's all. I don't like it when she's not right. I panic."

"But she is right," Blaine says kindly, wrapping one arm about his waist and drawing him back against him. "She's teething."

"You know you said sometimes you feel really old?" Kurt asks. "Well sometimes I feel really young."

"Oh Kurt. You don't have to feel like that," Blaine sighs with another kiss to his shoulder. "You are an amazing papa. Don't doubt yourself."

"But you seem to know so much," Kurt says, turning in his arms so they're face to face in the darkness. "If you hadn't been here tonight, if you'd been in Chicago or wherever, I'd have driven her straight to ER because I'd be fearful she had contracted some kind of fatal disease."

"No you wouldn't," Blaine says calmly. "In your heart, you know that's not the case. Trust your instincts. You know there's nothing wrong with her, not really. Yes, her gums hurt but that's all. You would know if there was something really wrong. And as for me knowing stuff... All that time you spend in the kitchen, making vividly colored veggie purees for Libby to throw at the walls? I'm digesting every baby book known to man because I'm so scared of messing up. We all doubt ourselves as parents, Kurt, and Cooper takes great pleasure in telling me that never goes away. But as long as we have each other, we'll be okay."

Kurt smiles then, relaxing into Blaine's hold, letting his fingers play with his chest hair and readily accepting the gentle kiss to his forehead. "As long as I've got you, I'm always gonna be okay," he whispers. "And you know what? It makes no difference to me whether you're forty or four hundred, because for me, your age never comes into it. You're just my husband."

"Just your husband?" Blaine teases, though actually he feels buoyed with confidence at Kurt's words. "That's all I am? Just your husband?"

Kurt laughs, lifting his face to find Blaine's lips with his own. "Yeah. Just my husband. That's all. Nothing important."

"Pretty useless," Blaine grins, then tugs the back of his hair until his throat is exposed for him to scrape his teeth along the skin. "Good for nothing."

"Blaaaaine," Kurt whines at the feeling of one hand trailing round to his ass. "It's gone four in the morning and we've had an hour of sleep."
"I know." He stops kissing along Kurt's collarbone and pulls back. "You're right. I'm sorry."

But Kurt's hands are firm on the back of his head, pushing him back to where he was. "I didn't say stop."

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By the time Blaine's birthday arrives, they're exhausted. Libby's phase of night waking has continued, and though she settles easily after a little cuddle and reassurance, it's become apparent that once awake in the small hours, the only way either Kurt or Blaine can really get back to sleep again is by making love then curling up together sated and content. Only by then it's four or five in the morning and with Libby waking again at six thirty, not a lot of sleep is happening in the Hummel-Anderson household.

"Happy Birthday," Kurt grumbles when Libby's wailing fills the room.

"Mmmmpff."

"As a sign of my undying love and devotion to you, I will go fetch our daughter and change her diaper. If you're really lucky, I might stagger downstairs and get coffee too."

"I feel honored," comes Blaine's scratchy, sleep-filled voice before he pulls the pillow over his head and is snoring once more.

He wakes again when tiny hands paw at his chin, and he pushes the pillow off his face but keeps his eyes closed, smiling. "Hello, darling."

Libby squeals her delight, bashing him with her toy giraffe which is covered in drool and he opens one eye reluctantly. "Is that a happy birthday?" he asks, to which she grins and squeaks. "I'll take that as a yes. C'mere tiger," he growls, pulling her close, snapping her onesie open and finding that soft little tummy he loves so much, showering it with kisses and raspberries, making Libby scream and giggle helplessly while Kurt watches on adoringly.

"My god you two are adorable together," Kurt says quietly, snapping pictures on his phone and wondering if anything could be more perfect. His handsome husband, wild curls tumbling onto his forehead, with a thick shadow of dark stubble over his jaw, resting his chin on their daughter's tummy and pulling faces to make her laugh. And laugh she does, all big blue eyes and blond hair, which is starting to curl- inadvertently making her look like she really is the biological product of both of them.

And then Kurt feels wet on his cheeks, and realizes he is crying. Not for any other reason than his love of his perfect family.

Blaine looks up, noticing, and holds his hand out to Kurt. "Hey. You okay, gorgeous boy? What is it?"

"Nothing," Kurt smiles through his tears, climbing on the bed to lie alongside him, kissing Libby's hand. "Nothing at all really, I'm just overwhelmed with the beauty of the pair of you, and with how much I love you both."

"You'll start me off," Blaine warns, needing no invitation for his eyes to spring a leak. "I'm feeling emotional enough today as it is. And tired."

"No, okay," he says, pulling himself up onto his elbows. "Let's get dressed and have breakfast. I'm sure this little lady's porridge eating skills will distract us all." He stands with Libby in his arms,
bouncing her on his hip as she giggles and tries to eat his fingers. "Won't they, huh?" He asks, and she gurgles a response as Kurt walks across the hallway to her room. "Yes. Yes they will. Daddy's gonna get porridge in his hair once again," he coos. Left alone, Blaine falls back onto the bed, burying his face in the pillow that Libby has just vacated, and softly begins to cry.

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"You look half dead," Santana comments as she strides into their living room later that afternoon.

"Oh my god!" Blaine cries happily, rushing over to hug her tight. "It's you! I thought you weren't coming!"

"Yeah well, you decided to run off to the suburbs to play happy families, so I didn't really have any choice but hire a car and come visit, did I? I couldn't not see you on your fortieth. Where's baby?"

"With Kurt. Didn't you see her when he let you in?"

"He didn't let me in," Santana says in confusion. "I have a key."

"What?! How?"

"I just do," she shrugs. "Anyway. Where is she?"

"Kurt!" Blaine hollers, and he appears a moment later, Libby in his arms.

"Oh god. How did you get in?"

"She has a key," Blaine says pointedly, and Santana is smug.

"I have a key." Striding over to Kurt, she chucks Libby under the chin. "Hey little lady. How are you? You look even more beautiful than you did a week ago, if that's possible," she smiles. "Rooming with Ms. Lopez for nine months must agree with you."

Kurt hands Libby to her happily, and falls onto the couch where Blaine is quick to curl up in his arms, head resting on his chest.

"Seriously. You two look exhausted. What's up?"

"She's teething," Kurt explains. "And it's keeping her up at night. And also, during the day she has now decided that she simply cannot be without us at any point in time."

"Go take a nap, I'll watch her for you."

"Nah, she'll scream as soon as we leave the room," Kurt yawns.

"No she won't. It's not like she doesn't know who I am. Go. Now."

"But..."

"Blaine, you have two hours before everyone arrives for your birthday dinner. I'd make the most of those two hours if I was you, and get some sleep. Not sex. Sleep."

"I can't do sex anyway," Blaine grouchies as he pulls himself up from the couch. "Kurt broke me."

"I did not!" he laughs, following his husband across the room.
"Whatever, you two are repulsive and I did not need to know that. Now go. We need girl time."

"I didn't break you," Kurt says again as they head upstairs. "I just get a little over exuberant sometimes, that's all."

"You broke me," Blaine repeats, entering their room where he falls face first on the bed. "There's a pain in my ass that won't go away."

"Stop begging me for it then," Kurt chuckles, pulling him into his arms. "Anyway. Let's sleep."

"Or..."

"Nope."

"How about...."

"Be quiet."

"But we could..."

"Do you wanna see forty one?"

And if the soft snores already escaping Blaine's mouth are anything to go by, he does.

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"Hey," Kurt croaks when he arrives in the kitchen a little over an hour later. Santana looks up from the book she's reading, smiling.

"Good nap?"

"Yeah. Thank you. I'm gonna leave Blaine a while longer. Where's Libby?"

"Napping too."

"Ugh. Why?" he groans. "She won't sleep tonight now."

"Yes she will," Santana replies calmly. "We're all going out to dinner, and she'll have thirteen doting aunts, uncles and grandparents all wanting to keep her entertained. She'll wind up exhausted."

"I guess," Kurt murmurs, wondering why Santana- the one without a maternal bone in her body- has more logic than he and Blaine put together. "So you're staying?"

"Yes, but not here. With Rachel and Finn. Thought I might check out job opportunities in Columbus while I'm here."

"Really?" Kurt brightens. "You're thinking of moving closer?"

"I don't see I have much choice. You abandoned me and left me on my own."

"We did not!" Kurt laughs. "You have Lacy."

"Uh....yeah. Well..."

"Oh no." Kurt's voice is full of concern as he reaches for her hand and she withdraws it quickly, looking out to the yard.
"Do you guys have a gardener? The place looks really tidy, and I can't imagine either of you two doing it."

"Yes we do, but that's not the point. Santana, are you and Lacy...."

"Is he hot?"

"What? Who?"

"The gardener."

"He's about fifty five."

"Age is no barrier to you, Kurt. We all know that."

"Santana...."

"Stop. Okay?" she implores, and Kurt notices she looks almost close to tears. "I said too much and I just don't want to get into it right now. I'd rather focus on Blaine and his birthday."

"Well he doesn't," Kurt says with a half laugh, trying to cover up his concern for her. "I think he'd rather pretend he doesn't have a birthday at all."

"Yeah, but he's bound to be like that, isn't he?"

"I don't know," Kurt admits. "I mean, I get that he's not feeling great about getting older, but I went and had Libby's hands and feet cast, framed them and then I gave him cufflinks with her thumbprints on. He liked them, but he just kinda smiled his thanks and then moved on."

"But it's his first birthday without his mom," she reminds him gently. "It's not going to be easy."

"Oh....... Shit," Kurt groans, holding his head in his hands.

"Way to go," Santana smirks. "All the husband awards to you."

"Oh fuck off," Kurt snaps, pushing back from the table.

"Where are you going?"

"Where do you think I'm going? To try and make amends."

Blaine lies sleeping face down, and Kurt smiles, watching the way his back rises and falls and admiring his strong arms folded under his head. Draping himself over Blaine's back, he whispers into his ear, making him smile his way into waking slowly, lifting his chest for Kurt's hands to slide under and hold him tight.

"I'm sorry," Kurt murmurs.

"Hmm? Cuddles. Cuddles are good."

"No, I'm sorry for not remembering today was your first birthday without your mom."

"Oh."

Blaine stiffens and wriggles his way out of Kurt's hold, turning to sit against the pillows and gesturing for Kurt to cuddle up against him once more.
"Listen. In the last week, we've moved house, had more sex than we've managed in the last three years and dealt with a teething baby with separation anxiety- all on an average of three hours sleep per night. I can't even remember my own damn name, Kurt, much less anything else. Don't worry about it, really."

"But I should have remembered," he laments. "I feel bad. That's why you'd been crying this morning, isn't it?"

"How did you know I'd been crying?"

"I know you," he says simply. "I knew you welled up the second Libby and I left the room, I just thought it was because I'd gotten a little misty eyed watching the two of you together."

"It kinda was, actually," Blaine admits. "Cause I thought of the pictures you were taking, of all the photos we have of Libby and I just...I just wish I could even show my mom a picture," he says sadly, blinking back tears once more. "It's not so much that it's my birthday. More that I'm just having a day where I'm really missing her, and with everyone meeting for dinner tonight, it kind of highlights her absence. I don't know...I guess I'm down about that, down about turning forty, worried about the stack of music I need to get practicing...everything, really."

"Okay, so here's what we're gonna do," Kurt says confidently. "From now until when this teething nightmare ends, we're gonna take it in turns to get up without disturbing the other. I'll do tonight."

"Yeah, but when I get up, I'll come back to bed and you're all warm and snuggly and...well...it turns me on."

"Blaine, I don't care if you lie next to me and jerk off, but just don't wake me while you're doing it," he says with a sassy smile. "We'll take it in turns, that way at least one of us has had a good night's sleep. The turning forty thing I can't really do much about, except to say that when we first met, you were thirty one, and that's how I always think of you," he grins. "We can be completely lazy tomorrow and you can take some time to practise the piano, maybe Libby and I can go visit your dad for a couple of hours, give you some space. And as for tonight... Well, all our family and friends are meeting for dinner, because they love you and want to celebrate with you. Yes, your mom's absence will be noticeable, but also, there's one very important addition who you just know won't let herself go unnoticed," he says tenderly, letting his fingers stroke along Blaine's jaw as they both think of their daughter and smile. "And it doesn't have to be a raucous, loud celebration. We can just have a quiet dinner with everyone then come back here and ignore Sebastian's pleas for us to give Libby to Carole so we can join him at Scandals. And maybe, in a month, two months, three years- I don't know- maybe then you'll feel like celebrating a bit more. In which case, all you gotta do is let me know. Okay? Okay, Kurt. Yes, Kurt. Thank you Kurt."

Blaine laughs, cupping Kurt's cheek to kiss him slowly, lazily, letting his tongue run briefly into his mouth before pulling back to kiss the tip of his nose. "Yes, Kurt. Thank you, Kurt. And my god you're beautiful, Kurt."

"I love you, Blaine."

"I love you too," he smiles. "And you know what? It's the Guild of Stage and Screen Awards in a month. I think, maybe, I might feel more like celebrating then?"

"Sounds perfect," Kurt says happily. "We'll be in Chicago, Santana has Libby, we can go to the after-show party, get hideously drunk and dance the night away, should you so desire. Or we can just leave early and go back to the apartment for tons of champagne fueled sex."
"We haven't had drunk sex in forever," Blaine muses. "I'm already looking forward to it."

"Good," Kurt laughs. "Now, I'm guessing we better go downstairs. I think Libby's awake and no doubt Santana is filling her head with all kinds of inappropriate stories."

"You know she isn't," Blaine says as he rolls off the bed and tugs Kurt to his feet. "Despite everything, she's damn good with her."

"She is," Kurt agrees. "And oh, you need to talk with her sometime. I don't think things are good with Lacy."

"Really? Okay," Blaine says with concern. "I will do. And thank you, Kurt, for making everything better."

"I don't know if I did," he says, stopping at the top of the stairs. "Not really."

"You did," Blaine tells him firmly, holding him close. "You always do. It's like you said earlier. With you by my side, everything is always gonna be okay."

Kurt smiles, closing his eyes as he kisses him sweetly, arms snaking around his neck before a yell comes from downstairs.

"Kurt! Blaine! Get down here. Your daughter just bit me!"
"I wish this drought would end," Kurt sighs, gazing out the window as Blaine drives along the highway.

"What are you talking about?" Blaine laughs. "It rained yesterday."

"I was talking about the sex," Kurt says, turning away from the window and glaring at his husband. "We haven't done it at all since you turned forty a month ago."

Blaine laughs louder, glancing over his shoulder to make sure Libby is sleeping before he takes Kurt's hand in his and rests it on his thigh. "We will. Tonight."

"We'd better do."

"I'm sorry."

"It's not you who needs to apologize," Kurt tells him. "It's her," he says, jerking his head in Libby's direction. "If she could talk. And Riccardo, for giving you all that work. And the entire cast of Sunset Boulevard, for needing costumes."

"You're funny," Blaine says, still laughing to himself. "And I love how whenever we go on a drive of any distance, you always turn the conversation around to sex. It's like it takes you the first hundred miles to work up enough courage to talk about it."

"It's taken me the first hundred miles to talk myself out of blowing you right here and now. It's only because I don't want to mentally scar our child for life if she wakes up, otherwise I'd have my lips around you, sucking you dry."

"Oh my god," Blaine moans. "Can we...I dunno...can we find a restroom or something?"

"And do what?" Kurt laughs. "Leave the baby in the car while we get each other off?"

"Dammit. Being a dad sucks."

"No it doesn't," Kurt smiles. "Being a dad means no one gets to suck anything. Ever."

"Okay, distract me," Blaine begs, "before I do something I regret. Tell me our plans for the weekend."

"Well, apart from lots of very loud sex- and won't the neighbors be pleased to have us back again- We have the awards tonight, then tomorrow I figured could be a lazy Sunday morning nursing the hangovers, until Libby comes back and we meet Riccardo and Lucia for lunch. Monday I'm in the office all day so you're on your own with our darling, I'm afraid."

"Monday she's with Gill," Blaine corrects. "I have rehearsal ten till four, then Riccardo wants to go through next year's schedule. So it's gonna be late by the time we get back to Ohio."

"We could stay an extra night?" Kurt suggests. "There's nothing stopping us."

"There's not," Blaine realizes, a smile forming on his face. "Oh my god. I love this lifestyle."

"I say we make the most of having no constraints," Kurt agrees. "Before long, Libby will be in Kindergarten and then everything will change."
"She's seven months old."

"Yeah, and where have those seven months gone, huh?"

Blaine opens his mouth to respond but then pauses, thinks on it, and thinks again. "Wow. Good point."

"Exactly. Anyway. One thing you do need to make time for, either today or at some other point, is to talk to Santana about her and Lacy."

"Nope. Not gonna happen."

"What? Why not?"

"Because I tried on my birthday, and I've asked twice since. Each time she says she doesn't want to talk about it, and then when I called the other day she ripped me a new one before I'd even said hello."

"Something is up, that's why. Lacy isn't even gonna be there this weekend, and she used to love seeing Libby. She hasn't been around properly in months- since before we went to Europe in the summer, actually. Oh! You don't think Libby is the problem, do you?"

"What do you mean?"

"Like.... Santana having her for us. You don't think that's what's wrong?"

"I doubt it," Blaine says with a shake of his head. "She was really supportive. And it's not like Santana had a baby with us. She just housed her for a while, that's all."

"Even so, stuff like that is life changing," Kurt reasons. "It could well be that after the event she felt differently. Of course.... We will never know if you don't talk with her."

"Ugh." Blaine sighs. "Why does it have to be me?"

"Because you're her best friend, and much more approachable than me."

"That's not true. I always talk with you, and so does Rachel."

"You're my husband and no one else will tolerate Rachel's outbursts," Kurt corrects. "Talk with her, Blaine. Even if it's just to let her know you're there when she's ready to open up."

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They are happy to be back in their apartment, and Libby squeals and claps as if she knows she's somewhere special. They take their time to settle back in, and Blaine is happy to note that the housekeeper he employed is doing her job well as the whole place is pristine, ready and waiting for them to be there again, right down to the clean sheets in Libby's crib and the well stocked fridge. He's just contemplating filling the tub for them all to climb in, when Kurt appears and orders him to take their darling to Santana, and talk to her while he's at it; and based on the promise of unlimited amounts of sex that night, he goes.

"Don't even bother speaking. Just drop the baby and go," Santana snaps as soon as she opens the door.

"Wow. That's frosty, even for you. Don't I even get a hug?"
"No. You do though," she says, her whole face softening as she takes Libby from Blaine's arms. He watches as she kisses into her hair, inhaling her baby scent and hugging her tightly to her chest. "Ooh you're so lovely," she coos.

"She takes after me."

Santana looks at him, stony faced. "Funny."

"Are you okay?"

"Where do the curls come from?" she asks, ignoring Blaine completely as she sits on the couch with the little girl. "It can't be Kurt, his hair is the only straight thing about him. The egg must've had curls."

"Donor," he corrects. "And not that I noticed from the picture," Blaine shrugs. "We picked her because she had the same coloring as Kurt, but he was blond as a baby, and Burt says Elizabeth had blond curly hair as a child which gave way to light brown waves, so it could be a throwback."

"Either way, you have one beautiful kid."

"Yup," Blaine says smugly.

"Any more?"

"I don't think so," he says, smoothing Libby's hair and chucking her under the chin. "Not for us. Every so often Kurt tells me he'd like a dark haired boy but..."

"But he might not be referring to having another baby with you," she grins.

"Oh haha. Quit being sassy and tell me what's going on with you," he tries, and is rewarded with a baby being dumped back in his lap as she stalks into the kitchen.

"Stay out of it."

"No. I won't," he says forcefully, making her stop in her tracks.

"You've learned a lot from me," she says, one eyebrow raised. "I'm almost impressed."

"Something's going on. Are you moving back, for one? And if so, why? With Lacy or without?"

"Jeez Blaine, give it a rest." She stops, her back to him as she puts her hands on the counter and breathes deeply.

"She doesn't live here anymore, does she?" Blaine asks after a long pause.

Santana shakes her head. "No, she doesn't. She left last week."

"It's over?"

"Yes."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

Santana shrugs, still with her back turned and when she speaks, Blaine can tell she's trying hard to keep from crying. "You're rather busy with your own life, in case you hadn't noticed," she says quietly. "Besides, I knew if I told you, you'd be here like a shot, and I didn't want that. I needed to
be alone."

"Do you want to talk about it? Tell me what happened?"

"No." Releasing a shaking breath, she turns to face him and offers a trembling smile. "No I don't. Thank you. If it's okay with you, I'd like you to go so we can get our girls weekend started."

"Santana.... I love you. I hope you know that. And I hope that when you want to talk, you'll come to me."

She nods tightly, hugging her arms about herself and stiffening when Blaine kisses her cheek. "I'll be back tomorrow at noon." She nods again, taking Libby and kissing her cheek, closing her eyes as two tears escape.

"Can I ask..." Blaine says, holding onto Libby's hand. "Is it us? Libby? Is that why she's gone?"

"No," she breathes. "No, it's not. My refusal to have a child of my own was partly to do with it, but that wasn't the reason I asked her to leave. Libby never came into it at all."

Blaine gives a nod. "Okay. Well...you know where I am. And you," he says, turning his attentions to his daughter who beams at him happily. "You be good, you hear me? Be a good girl, miss me lots and I'll see you tomorrow for big cuddles with my daddy's girl." he kisses both her cheeks and blows a raspberry into her neck, making her giggle. "Call me," he tells Santana as he backs away reluctantly. "Let me know how much milk she drinks."

"No. Leave," Santana says with a smile.

"And if she likes her dinner."

"Go!"

"And send me a picture of her when she wakes up in the morning, cause she's all pink and fluffy."

"Get out. Libby's embarrassed by your antics," Santana says, laughing now. "She's ashamed to admit you're her daddy, and she likes Kurt better."

"Ouch," Blaine grins, blowing them kisses from the stairwell. "I love you both!"

* 

"So what do you think happened?" Kurt asks that night as they dress.

"I don't know. Maybe Lacy wanted a baby and she didn't? But she said that wasn't why she asked her to leave."

"And she asked Lacy to go, not the other way around?"

"That's what she said. Anyway. She'll talk when she's ready, I guess. She was happy to be with Libby, and it's probably taken her mind off things for a while. How do I look?"

"Umpff," Kurt manages as he stares at Blaine in his dark purple suit, handmade by himself. "Delectable."

"Thank you," he grins, handing Kurt his lilac bow tie to tie for him. "I wonder how many times you've done this for me?" he muses as they look at each other's reflections.
"Too many and not enough," Kurt smiles, kissing his freshly shaven cheek. "You look divine. Smell divine too."

"I love this material," Blaine says happily, twisting this way and that. "In some lights the purple seems really bright, then it looks black, or navy.... Good choice."

"I knew you'd look good in it. Okay. Let me get pants on."

He's back seconds later, in a light gray suit with bottle green shirt and tie. "Ahem," he says shyly, and Blaine turns, eyes going wide.

"Oh Kuuurt," he says softly, advancing with a smile on his face. "Oh my god. Kurt, you....you..."

"I don't know if I made it a bit tight," he says nervously, tugging on his jacket. "I'm not sure. The pants seem...."


"Really?" his whole face lights up at the compliment and he relaxes, trusting the shining light of love in Blaine's eyes. "Thank you."

"Marriage and fatherhood agree with you," Blaine says quietly, giving a soft kiss behind his ear. "And I know I've said this before, but I'm so proud of you. Always. So incredibly proud."

"I hope we win," Kurt says, chewing nervously on his bottom lip. "I know everyone says it's just an honor to be nominated, but really, I hope we win."

"I hope so too, but please, don't be too upset if you don't. You know you're getting best costume designers for Wind in the Willows anyway. Winning best design would be the icing on the cake, sure, but you've got stiff competition from set designers, lighting technicians, all sorts. And no costume designer has ever won it before. It's a prestigious award, and you and Anna have only been working together for eighteen months. You'll be nominated again, I'm sure."

"I know," he says with a light shrug. "In all honesty, I'll probably be a little pissed, but it's nothing some champagne won't cure."

"You're like a different guy altogether from when you were acting," Blaine says, in awe of his young husband as he gazes at him, mesmerized. "You're so focused, and grounded, yet at the same time you reach for the stars. You're...an inspiration, I think. And Libby will look up to you as she grows. The perfect role model."

"Oh stop," he scoffs, though they both know how thrilled he is with Blaine's words. "You know, she's got a pretty awesome daddy too." He steps closer, wrapping his arms around Blaine's neck and pressing his lips to his temple. "When's your next recital? I miss seeing you play."

"Uh.... Dunno."

"Well that's helpful," Kurt says, pulling back to arch an eyebrow at him. "You okay?"

"No," he admits honestly. "You're all.....sexy. It makes me forget things. I'm old, remember? My brain can't keep up at the best of times, and I lose it completely when you crowd in on me like that."

"Sorry," Kurt laughs, stepping backward to sit on the bed. "When's your next recital?"
"Christmas, but I will play anything for you anytime you want me to, now get back over here," he says, laughing as he tugs Kurt to his feet. "Mmm, you look so good."

"Blaine," Kurt warns as he feels strong hands moving steadily to cup his ass. "The car will be here soon."

"One kiss."

Kurt gives a quick, perfunctory kiss on the cheek. "There."

"Noooo," Blaine whines, trailing Kurt reluctantly into the hallway. "Not fair."

"Very fair," he says firmly, bending down to lace his shoes. When he looks up, however, he changes his mind immediately when he sees his husband, shyly holding out a single purple rose to him.

"Just to say I love you."

"For me?"

"For you."

Beaming, he takes the rose from Blaine's outstretched hand and moves closer, sliding one hand around his waist. "I love you too," he whispers. "Very, very much."

And this time Blaine gets his kiss. Soft, slow and loving, filled with passion and intensity yet tender and sweet at the same time. When they pull apart it is with swollen red lips and pupils blown black with exhilaration and longing.

"It just keeps getting better, doesn't it?" Kurt marvels aloud. "You and I?"

"It really does. Moments like this, alone. Getting dressed up for a night out....they're few and far between now, and I find myself cherishing our time together more than I ever did. And Libby doesn't detract, she just adds. So much more."

"I miss her," Kurt admits. "I love being alone with you, but I miss her."

"Same," Blaine says with a smile. "You don't even need to explain, because I already know."

The intercom buzzer makes them both jump in surprise, and Blaine quickly lets the driver know they'll be right down. "Okay. Ready?"

"Not quite," Kurt says, chewing his lip. "Do you think it'd be okay to wear this in my buttonhole?" he asks nervously. "I don't want to destroy your gift, but it'd make me feel good... I mean, you'll be by my side anyway, but if we have to make a speech...."

"Go ahead," Blaine says with a smile. "There's two dozen more in the kitchen anyway."

"No way!" Kurt runs down the hall to fetch scissors, squealing when he sees the rest of the flowers in large vases. "I love it!"

"Good, cause somehow we've got to get them back to Ohio. I'm not leaving them here to please an empty apartment."

"Do I look like I'm going to a wedding?" Kurt asks, returning with the flower neatly placed.
"No. You look sophisticated and manly, and like you match with me," Blaine says happily. "Now come on. There's champagne waiting."

*

Five hours later and Kurt and Blaine sit at a table with Anna and Marcus, all drunk on adrenaline more than anything, and sheer exuberance.

"I knew we could do it!" Anna repeats for what seems like the millionth time as she slings her arm about Kurt's shoulders. "Best designers! That means y'all can suck it!" she calls to a nearby table of techies as she waves her award about proudly.

"That means you need to hold your head up high and act with a little poise and dignity," her husband says, lowering the award and giving an apologetic smile to the affronted group. "I think enough champagne, for now."

"Party!" she cries happily, dragging the poor man toward the dance floor.

"Best designers," a pink cheeked Kurt beams at Blaine. "That means not just costume," he says with a nod. "We already got that. We know we're the best at costume. But now we're the best at everything. Everything ever."

"You sure are," Blaine grins broadly and leans over to kiss him soundly on the mouth. "Bestest man in the entire world."

"Did you send my picture to Libby?"

"Six times, apparently," Blaine nods. "I didn't know. The phone was all fuzzy so I just kept hitting send. Santana got mad. She said Libby's sleeping anyway. But why is she sleeping, Kurt? Why? She doesn't sleep for us."

"Because she likes to rebel in our awesomeness," Kurt says solemnly.

"Revel?"

"Yes. That. She misses us when she sleeps. She used to sleep," he says, as if suddenly remembering. "She used to sleep always. OMG!" he cries. "I was too smug on Facebook. That's why. I'm being punished."

"Or she's just getting a mouthful of teeth," Blaine muses, looking down at the small bite mark still lingering on his wrist.

"Blaine?"

"Hmm?"

"You're sex."

"Sexy?"

"Nope." Grinning, Kurt pushes his chair back from the table and sits in Blaine's lap instead, winding his fingers into his curls. "Sex. You are sex. When I look at you, all I want is you. Sex with you," he clarifies.

"Kuuuurrt," he whines, looking around furtively when Kurt loosens his bow tie and undoes the top button of his shirt, but no one seems to be paying them any attention, and the lights are down low
for the dancing anyway, leaving their table in shadow. "You make me horny. I'm drunk and horny and it's all your fault."

"Dance with me."

"Yeah, okay," Blaine grins, letting himself be led to the dance floor where Kurt wraps himself seductively around him. "I'm not too old to dance?"

"Are you kidding?" Rolling his body against him, Kurt drops low, looking up at him and driving him wild. "Anna and Marcus are dancing. Everyone is."

"You're not dancing." Blaine growls, grabbing Kurt's hips in an effort to stop him grinding against him. "You're performing, and turning me on."

"Mmm." Kurt grins slyly, letting his fingers graze over the outline of Blaine's cock. "That's a good thing, no?"

"You know it is, but I can't hold off much longer. We might have to make an early exit. Don't forget, I've had to watch you climb the stairs to accept your award twice tonight, and those pants are exceptionally tight."

"You said they weren't!"

"I didn't. I said they were perfect."

"Oh." Kurt's eyes go wide, then he smiles at the feel of Blaine nuzzling into his neck, swaying them together to the music. "Oh."

"Plus, when you stand up on that stage, all pink cheeked and excitable, you look like you do when you've just had an orgasm," he says, voice low and dirty in Kurt's ear.

"I do not!"

"You do. And it makes me want to give you one, right here, right now."

"Stop teasing me."

"I'm only playing the same game as you," Blaine says with a self-satisfied smirk.

"Fun, isn't it?"

"Yes. And thrilling. Knowing I've turned you on, in public, and that you want me."

"Oh, I always want you." Turning, he grabs two champagne flutes from a passing waiter, handing one to Blaine and raising his glass to him. "To dirty talk."

"Dirty talk," Blaine echoes before downing his drink and dragging Kurt back to the dance floor, but he resists.

"Bathroom," he calls. "And not with you," he adds when Blaine's face lights up. "I need to pee."

So Blaine takes the opportunity to annoy Santana with another text, though he really can't see the screen clearly at all in his drunken haze, and he's pretty sure he's just renamed his daughter Lily. Pulling on his glasses, he squints this way and that, but the words are still swimming, so he pockets his phone and waits for Kurt to return; which he does, eyes going wide as he approaches.
"Glasses," is all he can manage before Blaine finds himself pulled into a bruising kiss from a very needy Kurt, who makes sure to grind hard against him under the guise of dancing. "I love your glasses. And I requested this song," he gasps between kisses. "Talk dirty to me, Blaine. Talk dirty."

"Huh?"

"This song," he repeats, and it falls into place at last.

"Jason Derulo. See? I'm still down with the kids."

But Kurt is oblivious, and all Blaine can really do is stand open mouthed as his husband dances around him singing. "Talk dirty to me, talk dirty to me," and Blaine wonders when he regressed to an adolescent again, popping a raging boner in public and quite unable to do anything about it.

"Kurt," he groans, fumbling to catch hold of him by his waist. He drags him into a kiss, which is all tongue and teeth and hands tugging on hair and fistling shirts, and he makes sure to rub his erection against Kurt's thigh, who grins smugly before turning around to grind his ass against him.

"Talk dirty to me, talk dirty to me," Kurt sings again, looking down and noticing Blaine's hand splayed protectively over his chest. He leans back, resting his head onto Blaine's shoulder. "Chest to chest, tongue on neck, international oral sex...."

"Right, that's it."

Firm hands grip Kurt's hips and drive him from the room, making him giggle helplessly as they stumble along. "Ooh! Mah husband is taking me home for some lovin!"

"Not home. In here."

Kurt doesn't even have time to gasp his protest before he's shoved into a janitor's closet and Blaine lets the door slam shut. "What....?" Kurt starts, but in the pitch black he hears the tell-tale sound of a belt buckle being unfastened, and the next thing he's being pushed to his knees.

"Oh god, Kurt, please. I'll give you more when we get home, but please."

"Yes...oh fuck..." Kurt murmurs, tugging Blaine's briefs down and nuzzling his face into his crotch. "Yes."

Blaine groans his pleasure as Kurt's mouth engulfs his achingly hard cock, and his hands immediately tangle into his hair. "Kurt...oh Jesus Christ...I love you," he moans. "Shit that feels so good. Yes.... Just like that...oh..."

Kurt breaks off with a gasp, looking up in the dark. "Could you at least try to be quiet? Anyone can walk past and hear us."

"Sorry," Blaine pants, directing Kurt's mouth back where it's needed, "I'm just exceptionally turned on right now."

But still, he goes quiet, managing to stifle his moans into a balled fist while Kurt blows him with practised ease. Their eight years of sexual activity together has only served to make them better lovers. Blaine knows this, and revels in the fact that they know one another so well yet still derive the greatest pleasure from being together like this. It never gets old, never tired, and never unwanted for either. In the dark he reaches out and fumbles around blindly, eventually finding a shelf to grip onto and drive his hips back and forth as Kurt's tongue swirls around him, coaxing him closer and closer to the edge. He taps Kurt's head as a warning, feeling it's only fair considering
they can't see one another, and spills hard into his throat, gasping for air as his whole body shudders.

And then Kurt is pulled roughly to his feet and into a searing kiss, Blaine's tongue taking over his mouth to lick the taste of him away, making them both groan. "Fuck it. Get me off in here," Kurt whimpers as quietly as he can, falling back against the wall with a thump when Blaine bites into the sensitive flesh of his neck. "I was gonna wait til we get home but..."

"But you wanna feel my mouth around you," Blaine whispers hotly, as he fumbles with Kurt's pants. "And I wanna taste you."

Sober, Kurt might have been embarrassed about how quickly he comes, but he's not, so he doesn't even think to care. He's just grateful for the feel of Blaine around him, his one hand tracing up the inside of his thigh to cup his balls, fingers trailing back to his entrance as he teases with his tongue before taking him deep in his throat. And it is then that Kurt comes, desperate with the need for release, his hands tugging Blaine's hair this way and that before he falls weakly back against the wall once more as Blaine tucks him neatly back into his underwear and pants then stands, kissing him tenderly.

"I love you, gorgeous boy," he whispers, and Kurt knows he's grinning that blissed out post-coital grin he has, the one that only he ever gets to see.

"I love you too. What's say we continue this party at home?"

"Definitely," Blaine murmurs, lips marking a trail down his neck. "Hmmm. I wanna pin you down and fuck the life out of you."

"Fine by me," Kurt says brightly, making him laugh. "Okay. We're coming out the closet." He pulls open the door and they emerge, blinking into the stark artificial lighting of the wide hotel hallway. "I'd better go say goodbye to Anna," Kurt realizes. "Ooh, and my award is still sitting on the table. Wait here." He gives him a long, lingering kiss and is gone, leaving Blaine to wander into the foyer to sit in a chair with a huge grin plastered on his face.

He notices another man watching him, pretending to text on his phone but actually raking his eyes over him. He's a similar age, Blaine guesses. He looks smart, in his classic black tux and with his dark hair neatly gelled, spiked a little in front, but it's the way he seems to be studying him that has Blaine's grin turning to a firm stare back as he looks him in the eye and utters a short, sharp "What?"

"I know who you are," the man says with a weird, benign smile which has Blaine shrugging like a petulant teenager.

"So?"

"You're the leader of the Chicago Symphony."

"Yup."

"You're into public sex then, are you?" the stranger smirks.

Blaine frowns, then glances into the mirror across from him and hastily tries to smooth his wild hair and rumpled clothes. "I'm into sex with my husband," he corrects as he stands. "If you'll excuse me."

"Woo-hoo!" Kurt calls loudly as he sways his way toward Blaine, arms held aloft. "I have my
award, and I have champagne," he says proudly holding up two bottles. "Let's go."

"We have champagne at home," Blaine laughs, but he can't resist wrapping an arm around Kurt's waist, drawing him in for a passionate kiss which he hopes the stranger sees.

"I know. But it's more fun to steal it when it's free. Oh, and Anna says she's calling you Lestat from now on. Apparently I have hickeys everywhere." But he's not upset, he's proud, straightening his suit jacket and grinning broadly as they step outside to wait for their car. "And my hair looks like I've electrocuted myself."

"You don't have hickeys everywhere," Blaine says, wrapping his arms about him from behind and hooking his chin over his shoulder. "Not yet, anyhow."

Kurt laughs, letting his head fall back onto Blaine's shoulder and closing his eyes. "I cannot wait."
Chapter 3

"I'm dead. I'm dying. I have died," Kurt groans the next morning as he slowly wakes. He is lying on his front, sprawled upside down on the bed, and when he opens his eyes the first thing he sees is an empty champagne bottle.

"Good morning, beautiful," Blaine smiles, striding naked into the room and carrying a tray which he sets on the nightstand. "God you're wonderful." He kisses Kurt's bare ass before kneeling on the bed to massage his shoulders. "Are you feeling okay?"

"No," Kurt admits. "I feel horrendous. Ugh. Help me to sit up."

He does so, eyeing Kurt warily as he sways and clutches at his head before heaving and dashing to the bathroom. A patient and caring Blaine follows, kneeling next to him at the toilet bowl and running a soothing hand up and down his spine while he vomits until there's nothing left. "Better?" he asks, handing him tissues and helping him to his feet.

"A little."

"C'mere." Kurt lets himself be held, his naked and exhausted body curling against Blaine's chest as he walks them back to the bed, settling Kurt in and fluffing the pillows before handing him a large glass of water and some painkillers. "I'm sorry you feel bad, but I want you to know I had the best time with you last night."

"Me too." Kurt manages a wobbly smile. "Oh my god. We sucked each other off in a closet."

"Yeah we did," Blaine laughs. "And I forgot to tell you, I got recognized. When you went to say goodbye to Anna."

"Really?"

"Yeah. Some douche said 'I know who you are' and asked if I was into public sex."

"Oh my god, was he perving on us?"

"I don't think so, I think I just looked wrecked and he kinda guessed."

"Do you think you'll be in trouble?"

"I doubt it," Blaine shrugs. "I don't even know who the guy was, for a start. And if Riccardo found out he would think it's hilarious anyway. He thinks everything is funny."

"Still," Kurt says, worried. "You have a reputation to maintain and all that."

"Kurt. You and I haven't had a night like that in years. We had heaps of fun and busted that sex drought into oblivion. You feel crap right now, but I know neither of us regret it, and we will be laughing about this for months to come. Please, don't worry about the comments of some random stranger."

"No. No, okay," he says, smiling his thanks as Blaine hands him a piece of toast. "My ass hurts," he suddenly realizes.

"You begged me for no lube. Repeatedly. I made you as wet as I could but...."
"Ooh, it's been a long time since we've done it like that."

"Cause there's so much to do, that's why," Blaine chuckles, kissing into his hair. "A million and one different things. We haven't used toys in forever either. And I can't even remember the last time you tied me up."

"Okay. Stop," Kurt laughs. "Cause I'm hungover to shit and there's no way I can manage anything today without barfing on you."

"Nice."

"When is Libby back?"

"An hour or so."

"Can we sleep a bit more?" Kurt asks desperately. "I could really use another hour."

Blaine smiles tenderly, taking his glass and brushing toast crumbs from the duvet. "Of course we can. Here, let me hold you."

*

"My baby girl!" Blaine cries happily when Santana carries Libby into the apartment. "Oh my baby girl!" Taking her, and dropping a quick kiss of greeting to Santana's cheek, he bounces a laughing Libby on his hip as he showers kisses over her cheeks. "Daddy missed you. Yes he did. Daddy really missed his darling. Have you been good? Huh?"

"She's been perfect," Santana tells him, unable to resist smiling at the way Libby's tiny hands pull his cheeks as he blows raspberries at her. Setting her bag down, she flops on the couch. "Where's Kurt?"

"Still sleeping. We got smashed last night. He's not feeling great."

"He never does. Still. You had fun?"

"Loads."

"Your texts were hilarious. And just for the record, your daughter is called Libby. Not Lily, Lizzy, Liffy or anything inbetween."

"I'm ashamed."

"You shouldn't be," she laughs. "You knew a night like this was on the cards, which is why you arranged for Libby to sleep at my place. Just cause you're parents doesn't mean you can't go out and have fun. The word 'father' doesn't define you. You're more than just that."

"A friend, perhaps?"

Santana rolls her eyes and sits a little more upright on the couch. "You know you are."

"You know," Blaine starts nonchalantly, setting Libby on the floor with some toys before sitting next to her on the couch. "Sometimes, when Kurt is upset, he cuddles with me for a while until he's feeling ready to talk."

"Fuck off."
"I was just offering."

"And I already told you, no."

"How many times have you picked me up, huh? I just want to help you."

"Blaine, I appreciate your concern, I really do. But I also want you to remember that when you and Kurt had that rough patch, you didn't want to talk about it then either. This is between me and Lacy, no one else."

"So you want her back then?"

"I didn't say that," she says, becoming exasperated. "But...I just....some stuff happened. And I don't want to tell you because I'm ashamed and embarrassed, and I don't want you to think less of me because of it, okay?"

"I wouldn't," Blaine says in surprise. "I could never judge you like that."

"Well anyway, it doesn't matter, cause it's not an issue right now." Standing, she straightens her dress and blows a kiss to Libby. "See you soon, little lady. Tell Kurt I hope his hangover rages for at least three days," she says with a tight smile. "Speak soon."

"Wait!" Blaine calls after her. "That's it? You're going?"

"You have a lunch date, and I want to be alone. I'll call you in a few days."

"Um...okay, I guess," Blaine says reluctantly. "Thanks for having Libby."

"Welcome."

And she is gone, leaving Blaine with an uncomfortable nagging feeling of despair that he just can't shift.

It's no different by Thanksgiving, and he is hurt beyond belief when Santana refuses their invitation to dinner, but goes to Finn and Rachel's instead. She even goes so far as to call in and visit Wes, Kathy and Olivia, and stops by Mike's house too, but doesn't visit the Hummel-Anderson's at all.

"What a bitch," Kurt fumes on the Saturday night. They are joined by Wes, Kathy and Sebastian, while Libby and Livvy- as she is fast becoming known- sleep top to toe in the crib upstairs. He drains his glass of wine and reaches for the bottle, but Blaine beats him to it, pouring him half a glass before setting it pointedly out of his reach.

"It might not have been intentional?" Kathy offers. "Maybe she figured you guys would be busy. You've both been working so hard recently."

"I don't think she's being a bitch," Blaine says evenly, kicking Sebastian's shin as he snorts. "I think she's hurting and doesn't know how to let her barriers down. Maybe I'll write her," he muses. "That might be easier for her to take in."

"I'll talk with her," Kurt says firmly, crossing his arms. "Bitches only respond to their own."


"No?"

"No, you're not a bitch so stop referring to yourself as one, and no you're not talking to Santana. It
needs to be me."

Kurt turns, arching one eyebrow. "Oh?" he asks, his time ice cold. "And why does it need to be you, huh? Aren't we all her friend?"

"Ooh, shouldn't have told your hub he's not a bitch," Sebastian smirks. "He prides himself on that."

"Yes, you're all her friends, but you know I'm closer to her and you're closer to Rachel. That's just how it's always been," Blaine says with a frown, ignoring Sebastian's not-so-helpful remark.

"Be that as it may, there's no reason to think she might not want to talk to me about it."

"No..." Blaine says with a shrug. "But it's more likely to be me."

"Oh for goodness sake," an exasperated Wes cries before Kurt can retaliate. "Boys! Just stop it. Now, are we playing cards or what?"

"Strip poker?" Sebastian asks hopefully.


"Rock and roll," Seb mutters, but starts dealing the cards nonetheless.

The rest of the evening passes in relative calm, though if they're all honest there's an underlying tension between Kurt and Blaine which seems liable to erupt once they're left alone. But it doesn't, not at first. Kurt goes to rearrange Libby after Livvy has departed, spending a while gazing down at her and stroking a finger over her rosy cheeks. When he goes into the bedroom he can hear the shower running, and when Blaine emerges he walks past without a word, closing the door and taking a shower himself, only to then find Blaine has disappeared. He finds him in the music room, of course, playing the piano with his eyes closed, and Kurt knows it's the starting piece for the symphony's holiday concert, and the one he's been struggling with the most.

He watches from the doorway, unsure if Blaine is aware of his presence, and jumping suddenly when Blaine slams his hands down on the keys and yells "Fuck!"

"Jesus, Blaine! What was that for?"

"Went wrong," he mutters, marking something on the music with his pencil and underlining it hard. "Can't do anything right, it seems."

Kurt sighs loudly and leaves him to play, returning a few moments later and setting a mug of hot chocolate down wordlessly on the piano.

"Coaster."

"Happy?" Kurt huffs, setting the mug back down on the coaster.

"Not really," Blaine says as he continues to play.

"You do know that for me, this isn't about which one of us is closer to Santana, and actually about the fact that you're hurting and I feel powerless to stop it?"

Blaine stops playing in surprise, opening his eyes as he turns on the bench to face him. "No. I didn't know that," he says, ducking his head apologetically. "Now I feel stupid."

"You don't need to," Kurt says softly, straddling the bench to mirror his pose. "I just want for you
to understand, that's all. I hate being angry at one of my best friends because she's upsetting you. I hate that she is obviously going through a lot right now, and thinking that by avoiding us she can avoid acknowledging her feelings. But most of all, I hate that I can't make you feel better. Because I love you the most. I'm your husband and I'm the one who should be able to make it all okay again, and I can't."

Blaine reaches out, letting his hand cup Kurt's cheek gently. "I only have to look to you to feel better," he smiles. "I was thinking about you this morning, when I was running. Thinking how deeply in love with you I am. Thinking back to how wonderful it was when we first fell, but how much better it is now. I'm sorry for being petty, thinking you were trying to take Santana away from me, when really, I know we both love her the same. But I want you to do one thing for me."

"Oh?"

"Please, stop referring to yourself as a bitch. It really upsets me, because you're not that at all. You're the kindest hearted person I know, and the world's best husband and papa. The king of snark and sass, maybe," he says, smiling when Kurt ducks his head and laughs softly. "But you are not, never have been and never will be, a bitch."

"I think Joe would disagree with you."

"He wouldn't, he's dating our niece. He'll agree with anything I tell him," Blaine smiles. "And actually, he might tease you but you know full well he doesn't think that."

"Sebastian?"

"Loves you, and you know it. I seem to remember him flying to the east coast to keep you company on tour when you and I were fighting."

"The lady whose parking spot I stole at Wal-Mart?"

"She smiled at us when we were putting Libby in the cart."

"Ken and Gill's kids? Grace and Patrick?"

"They...they... Y'know what? Not everyone's gonna love you," Blaine says, making Kurt laugh again. "But I do, and that's all that matters. And you should too."

"Okay," Kurt says, cheeks flushing pink with pleasure.

"Yes? Okay?"

Kurt nods, laughing loudly "Yes!"

"Good. Now come here." Blaine holds his arms out and Kurt shuffles along the bench and onto his lap, fingers curling into the open V of Blaine's shirt as he ducks his head onto his shoulder.

"I love you so much," he murmurs, happy to be held.

"You too," Blaine says sweetly, dropping a kiss into his hair.

Kurt studies the now closed piano lid as Blaine runs his strong hands over his back. "Remember when we defiled your piano?"

"Which time? This piano has seen a lot of action."
"The first time," Kurt says smiling.

"Hmm.... As I recall, you set your naked ass down there," he says, patting the sleek black top, "and I gave you your first ever blowjob."

"Uuuuhhhhhhh."

"Excuse me?" Blaine teases, eyes crinkling as he laughs. "What was that?"

"That was...that was...a...noise?" Kurt tries, unable to hold his own laughter back.

"You're like that toy Libby has, if you push the buttons it makes all different sounds."

"Am not!"

"Oh?" Blaine buries his face into Kurt's neck, sucking a hickey low down on his collarbone, mindful of the costume pitch he has to make in a few days.

"Mmmm."

"See?"

"That's not fair!" Kurt protests. "You know what that spot does to me."

"I do. I know what this does too," Blaine says, voice low with desire as he unbuttons Kurt's shirt and flicks his tongue over his nipples.

"Oh god."

"And this." Running a hand over the steadily hardening bulge in his jeans, Blaine smiles against his chest when Kurt throws his head back and groans, before sucking another mark on his chest, making him squirm and tangle his fingers in his hair.

"Blaine!"

"In a minute, I'll take your jeans off and you'll quack."

"Funny," Kurt pants, but he stands eagerly. "Care to test it?"

Blaine tugs his jeans down without a word, palming him through his boxer briefs and looking up.

"Quack," Kurt deadpans, and Blaine smiles before hooking his thumbs in the waistband of his briefs and lowering them. Once he's completely naked, Blaine lifts him easily, setting him up on top of the piano with a wicked gleam in his eye.

"Let's see if it's as good as it was eight years ago," he whispers before taking him full in his mouth.

"Nearly nine bu...Oh Jesus Christ," Kurt moans, leaning back on his elbows to watch his husband at work. Mouth full, Blaine is as devoted to Kurt's pleasure as he ever was, only now the difference is that he knows how to bring him to orgasm a hundred different ways and more. But still he teases, loving the feel of his own pleasure building in time with Kurt's, and revelling in the unholy noises Kurt makes as his orgasm comes closer and closer until he thrusts up hard into Blaine's mouth, grunting and moaning happily as Blaine swallows.

"See? You are just like that toy," Blaine says happily, resting his head on Kurt's thigh and looking up. "I wonder what it takes to make you say woof?"
"You think you're so funny," Kurt smirks, leaning down to kiss his lips. "But I'll bet I can make you purr."

"Smooth."

"You know it." Kurt hops deftly from the piano leaving Blaine to marvel at his naked elegance then whimper softly when he reaches into his pants, dragging his fingers agonizingly slowly over his cock.

"Oh....mmmm."

"Close enough," Kurt smiles, and then they're kissing, hard and dirty while Kurt's hand flies over Blaine at an unrelenting pace. Kurt knows, from their years together, that kissing is still the thing that turns Blaine on the most and so he keeps doing it, even as he pushes his pants and briefs to his ankles.

Any noises Blaine wanted to make are smothered by Kurt's lips— not that he cares— and his hands grip his husband's waist tightly as he comes, panting hard into Kurt's mouth before pulling back to nip lightly at his lower lip. "My little nymph."

"I don't know what you mean," Kurt says lightly, gathering his clothes and skipping from the room, tapping Blaine's ass as he passes. "And by the way," he says, stopping in the hallway. "It's better than it was nine years ago."

*

"Good morning Blaine!" an over exuberant Wes calls down the phone.

"What do you want?"

"Why does my greeting mean I want something?"

"Because I know you. Now ask."

"I was wondering if you could watch Liv for me on Friday."

"I can't, Wes. We go to Chicago tomorrow until Saturday, you know that."

"Do I? Oh right. I thought it was just Kurt going to give his pitch."

"He is, I'm just keeping him company, that's all."

"I see." Wes sighs heavily. "No worries. I'll just have to tell Kathy she can't go."

"Go where?" Blaine asks, momentarily distracted by Libby waving at him from her high chair. "Hey little lady! You waving there? Huh?"

"Blaine." Wes snaps. "Focus."

"Sorry."

"Kathy has a conference to attend, but I'm working."

"Why don't you ask Carole?"

"She's working too," Wes sighs. "And Rachel and Finn, Sebastian, even Nick and Jeff. Ah well."
"Wes."
"I guess she can miss out. It won't be good for her promotion prospects but..."

"Wes."
"She can always try again next year."

"Wesley!"
"Yes, Blaine?"

"Why don't you just tell me the truth?"

"That is the truth," he protests. "Kathy has a conference about...I dunno...numbers, I guess. On Friday."

"And Kurt has asked you to get me to sit Liv so I can't go to Chicago, leaving the way clear for him to talk to Santana."

"Uh...."

"Exactly."

"Blaine...I really do need someone to sit Liv, but also, I think this is something Kurt really wants to do for you. Kind of his way of protecting you, maybe?"

"From Santana?"

"From getting hurt," Wes tells him. "He doesn't want you pushing the issue with Santana and losing a friendship that means so much, and he doesn't want her to continue treating you this way. Please don't be mad at him," he adds quietly.

"I'm not mad, I guess," Blaine says reluctantly. "I mean, I wish he would be honest with me but..."

"But if he was, would you let him go? Or would you become petulant and demand that you follow him everywhere, ensuring there's no chance of him and Santana being left alone?"

"I hate you."

"I know," Wes smiles. "I hate you more. I'll drop Livvy at eight on Friday."

*

"I'm sorry you can't come," Kurt says again as he closes the trunk of the car. "But at least it's only two nights."

"You'll be fine," Blaine says, reaching out to rub a hand over his shoulder. "It's me who won't be. Two babies. For an entire day."

"Aw but who can resist them, eh?" Kurt smiles, holding his arms out for Libby. "Especially this one. You be a good girl for daddy, okay?"

"Da!"

"What?" Kurt and Blaine cry together, looking at each other with wide, excited eyes.
"What did you say, darling?" Kurt says. "Did you say daddy? Did you?"

"Da!" the little girl says again, clapping her hands when they gasp again. "Dadadadada."

"Daddy! Oh my god, Blaine, she said daddy!" Shifting Libby higher on his hip, he reaches out to pull Blaine close, who is now staring at their daughter in awe, as if he's never heard anyone say the word before.

"She said daddy," he whispers, eyes brimming with tears of joy. "She actually said daddy! Oh Kurt....Don't go without us," he says suddenly, looking up earnestly. "You don't have to do this, you know."

"I kinda do," Kurt says with a small shrug. "Anna can't do the pitch on her own. We're a partnership."

"I didn't mean the costume," Blaine says, wrapping his arm around Kurt and Libby together. "I meant Santana. You don't need to talk with her for me."

"You...you know about that?" Kurt says, stunned. "Blaine, I...."

"You got my best friend to lie to me," he says, sounding choked. "I wish you had just been honest and told me what you wanted to do."

"I didn't get him to lie," Kurt counters, stepping out of his hold. "And you saw it as the perfect way out," Blaine says, a hint of anger and a lot of hurt showing in his voice. "I don't know what upset me the most. That you have obviously been discussing me with Wes behind my back, or that you don't think I'm capable of talking with Santana. But actually, the thing that hurts above anything is that you weren't honest with me. And then, waited for me to come to you and say I couldn't join you on the trip. You were so nonchalant about it, Kurt, acting like it was me who was cancelling on you, not the other way around....and you knew. You knew all along because it was your idea."

"I'm so sorry," he whispers, horrified when he hears his actions surmised like that. "I didn't think of it like that, and I obviously went the wrong way about it, but I just can't stand seeing you upset like this."

"It's okay," Blaine shrugs. "I know why you want to, but you don't have to. Please. Let us come with you. She's changing so much, Kurt- our little girl. She's growing up."

"Libby has nothing to do with this," Kurt says as kindly as he can. "I love you, Blaine. So much. And I can't sit by and do nothing anymore, because this has gone from being a mild problem to being something that's hurting you and making you unsettled. I'm sorry I've messed up by not being honest with you, but I thought I'd be saving you more pain. I know if this is not resolved it will become a huge issue, and I know what it would do to you if Santana cut herself off from us entirely. I just need to try, okay?"

Blaine ducks his head and nods, understanding yet disappointed.

"I promise you I will be back on Saturday in time for dinner."

"We'll miss you."

"And I you, but I'll call you like...all the time," he says, lifting Blaine's chin with his finger. "I'm sorry I wasn't honest with you."
Blaine nods meekly, upset.

"Will you be okay?"

"Yeah," he says quietly, taking Libby back and holding her close. "I'll go check on dad this morning, then we're going swimming, aren't we, Lib?"

"Aw, I wish I could come."

"You could?" Blaine tries again. "You could drive up tonight?" But Kurt is already shaking his head, pulling open the car door before kissing their daughter once more.

"Love you, Libby. And you," he says, cupping Blaine's cheek and kissing his forehead tenderly. "I love you, old man. I feel like we're fighting yet not fighting, and I'm sorry if I've upset you...No," he says, shaking his head in an effort to rid himself of the tears he can feel threatening. "Not if. I know I have, and I'm really sorry."

"It's okay," Blaine sighs, shifting Libby to hold Kurt close, burying his face in his neck and breathing deeply. "I love you too, gorgeous boy. Now go be my valiant knight and savior."

"Blaine, I...."

"Go on," he urges gently. "Otherwise you'll hit the traffic. Call me when you get there."

And Kurt drives away, looking back in his rear view mirror to see Blaine's shoulders shaking as he buries his face in their daughter's hair. "Oh Blaine," he sighs, wishing he could make him understand. "How I love you."
"Hey dad!" Blaine calls as cheerfully as he can muster.

"In the living room," comes the response, and Blaine sets Libby down to crawl her way down the hallway while he takes off his shoes and jacket. He smiles to himself when he hears Mike's exclamation of pleasure, and knowing she is safe, takes a moment to check for any texts from Kurt—but there's nothing.

"You're getting so big," Mike is cooing at his granddaughter, who pulls herself up to stand, her little hands resting on his knee as she grins at him. "You'll be running around before I know it. Yes you will," he laughs when she shakes her head. "And I won't be able to catch you."

"Dada."

"Oh! You've learned a word, have you? You know how to say daddy?"

"Dada."

"That's right. Daddy. Smart girl," Mike chuckles, looking up as Blaine walks into the room. "Oh. It's you. I thought Kurt was coming today."

"He's gone to Chicago, dad, you know that," Blaine says, bending down to kiss the top of his head. "I get confused."

"No you don't," Blaine laughs. "You get hopeful that it's Kurt's day to drop by, cause he's the only one who lets you have three cookies with your coffee."

"Four actually, and sometimes he brings me cake," Mike says smugly. "Unlike you or Kathy. Wes sometimes brings me candy, but he wasn't happy when I tried to feed some to Olivia."

Blaine stops in his tracks. "She's three months old."

"But she likes to suck on a pacifier," Mike reasons. "No difference between that and a cough candy."

"I'm ignoring you," Blaine calls over his shoulder as he heads into the kitchen. "And I'm going to make your coffee instead. Did you call the doctor?"

"Yes."

"And?"

"And I can go next week, though he did warn that other than a hip replacement, there's not a lot they can do for the pain."

"You think you wanna go for that?"

"Actually, I think I do. Blaine, your daughter is about to pull a vase on top of herself," he calls, and Blaine comes running back to move it out of reach.

"Sorry. She's everywhere."
"Not a problem," Mike reassures. "But this is why I want it done. I feel so useless. It's bad enough being old, without adding immobile to the list. It just doesn't suit me to struggle around like this, and the pain gets me down. Your mom would have me in there already if she was still here."

"True," Blaine laughs. "I agree, I think you should get it done. And you know, we'll all be around to help you recover."

"I know. And I am grateful, you know, that one of you calls in every day, and that you take me to the senior center, or to get groceries. It means a lot."

"It's just that you prefer Kurt," Blaine teases, setting his coffee down on a small table next to him.

"Always," Mike grins, then watches his son as he hands Libby half a breadstick, smiling when she manages a "ta." Blaine settles back on the couch with his own coffee, staring out the window deep in thought and oblivious to Libby crawling around until Mike sets his mug down and clears his throat. "What's wrong?"

Blaine rouses himself, refocusing on the room. "Huh?"

"You're upset about something. What?"

"Oh... It's nothing," Blaine says, trying to brush it off. "Kathy said she'll restock your freezer at the weekend."

"Very good. But that's not what's upset you," Mike says gently. "Are you and Kurt fighting?"

"Yes," he sighs heavily, rubbing a hand over his scratchy beard of the last few days. "No. I don't know. Not really. We don't really 'fight' about anything anymore. We're kinda past that stage. It's more... I don't know. We're upset with one another? I guess that's the best way to describe it."

"Can I ask what about?"

"Ugh. How long have you got?"

"Blaine." Mike looks at him, stony faced, though there's that telltale twinkle in his eye. "I'm eighty one, retired, and barely able to move right now. I have all the time the good lord has left for me."

Blaine laughs, and takes his time to tell his dad everything, going right back to the weekend of his birthday and everything that's happened with Santana since, and explains Kurt's way of helping. "And I know he's still mad about Thanksgiving," he says, draining the rest of his coffee. "Because she didn't tell us she wasn't coming. She didn't respond to my message at all. The last time I spoke with her was when she returned Libby that day in Chicago, and that was nearly two months ago. It was only when Rachel casually mentioned that Santana was going to them that I realized for sure that she was ignoring us. And I get Kurt's annoyed, I really do. But I wish he hadn't lied to me in order to get time alone with her. Why didn't he just say 'I'm pissed off and I'm gonna confront her about it'?"

"Because he knows you wouldn't let him, that's why," Mike says with a soft smile. "With regard to Santana, do you know why she's being like this?"

"No," he says with a shrug. "I keep thinking the reason her and Lacy split must be to do with her carrying Libby for us, cause she just won't talk to me about it- but then she told me that wasn't the reason. I don't know. I have a hard enough time understanding women, let alone ones who are only twenty five and as fiery as she is."
"You do understand her, Blaine."

"No I don't!" he cries. "When she was sixteen years old, she was sitting in my kitchen for hours on end pouring her heart out about her and Brittany, her family, her fears and aspirations for the future...all of it. She's my best girl and she knows that, but her refusal to even speak to me, to let me know she's okay, stings like a bitch."

"But being sixteen and having a broken heart is very different to being twenty five and dealing with your live in partner moving out, while the only family you do have decide to move back to Ohio. Her and Brittany were doomed from the start. It was always one sided, and you told her that many times. She also knew it for herself, which is why she managed to walk away and still keep going. I don't think it's that she doesn't want to talk with you, I think it's that she wants to pretend like this isn't happening, and the only way she can do that is by shutting out the people she knows will force her to face up to reality."

"But she told me it was her who ended things," Blaine says in confusion.

"It was you who ended things with Luke too, all those years ago," Mike points out. "But you were cut up about it for months, even more so when it ended so tragically."

"True," Blaine murmurs, and they sit in contemplative silence for a while, watching Libby as she crawls over to Mike and holds her arms out to be lifted into his lap.

"As for Kurt," he says, grunting in effort as he hoists her up. "Has it ever occurred to you that he still hasn't forgiven himself for hurting you so badly that you almost left him, and so now he's desperate to avoid you being upset in any way possible? When your mom passed away he was wonderful, such a support to all of us, but especially you. He was so protective, Blaine. So eager to be right by your side whenever he could, holding you, reassuring you. And little things, like opening all the letters and cards you received first, then handing them onto you. Always answering the phone first.... If you ask me- which you didn't but I'm telling you what I think anyway- I think he did all that to prevent you seeing or hearing anything which might distress you more. Same with this. No one knows what's gone on, but I think he wants to get in there first to save you anymore heartache."

Blaine looks up, horrified, his voice small. "You don't think he's forgiven himself?"

"No, I don't," Mike answers honestly. "Don't get me wrong, I don't think he sits in long drawn out silences, contemplating and agonizing over it for hours- he's not you."

"Thanks."

"But I think he rushes to protect you whenever he can, not just because he loves you but because he can't bear to see you hurt like that again."

"Do you think he knows I forgive him? I mean, that was two and a half years ago."

"I think deep down he knows you forgive him, but I don't think he allows himself to accept your forgiveness."

"Oh my god." Blaine brings a hand up to cover his mouth, shaking his head in disbelief. "Oh my god, I'm an idiot. A blind idiot."

"No you're not," Mike chuckles, setting Libby back on the floor and heaving himself from his chair. He walks slowly to the couch, leaning heavily on his walker, and sits down next to Blaine, putting an arm around his shoulders. "Listen to me, my son. You're not blind. A little bit of an idiot,
maybe, but then, you are mine. Don't go away from here thinking you've done wrong, or there's problems in your marriage, because you haven't, and there's not. I just want you to try and understand why Kurt has done this, why he lied to you about it. He maybe didn't go about it the right way, but I know he always has your best interests at heart. And as for Santana- she will come around, Blaine. She loves you three too much to lose you completely. You just need to give her time."

Blaine nods meekly, staring down at his hands folded in his lap before looking back at his dad with tears in his eyes. "I wish I was small like Libby," he confesses shyly. "She gets all the hugs."

"Oh," Mike laughs, tugging him closer and wrapping his arms around him. "You're never too old for hugs with your dad."

"I'm forty," Blaine mutters against his shirt, but he makes himself small, curling up against him and letting his arms hug him tight.

"A spring chicken. And do you know, you still play with the buttons on my shirt like you used to do when you were tiny? Libby does that too, I've noticed."

Blaine stops fiddling and looks up, a small smile on his face. "I'm supposed to be looking after you in your old age, not the other way around."

"Oh, you never stop being a parent, Blaine," Mike smiles. "Just don't sit on my lap cause you'll break my legs. Oh. Looks like someone's a little jealous," he says as Libby tries her best to climb up onto the couch.

"C'mere baby girl," Blaine smiles, hauling her up and setting her on Mike's lap before putting an arm about them both. "Come join the Anderson love in."

"Dada!"

"That's right," Blaine chuckles. "Man, I don't think I'm ever gonna get tired of that."

"You will when it's attached to 'can I have....?' Or 'can you buy me...?" Mike says knowledgeably.

"Dad?"

"Hmm?"

"Thank you, for the chat."

Mike smiles, ruffling his hair and laughing when Blaine huffs his annoyance. "Anytime, my boy. Anytime."

* 

Kurt sighs heavily and knocks again on Santana's door. "It's me!" he calls. "Stop pretending like you aren't home and let me in!"

"Go away!"

"Gosh, you're always so friendly and welcoming," Kurt says, resting his forehead against the door. "C'mon, let me in.... Please," he adds as an afterthought.

"No."
"Let me the fuck in, bitch!" he yells, finally having had enough of spending the last fifteen minutes patiently coaxing. "You're ruining my husband and you and I need words."

"I'm ruining your husband?" Santana calls, clearly now stood right the other side of the door. "Seriously, Kurt? That's all the fucks you give?"

"Right now, yes," he snaps. "Because I'm the one living with him, loving him, and watching him become more and more hurt by you continuing to ignore us. I don't really give a shit what's gone on," he says, kicking the door. "I care that you pick up the phone and call him, just to let him know you're alive."

"He knows I'm alive, you jerk," she screeches. "And if, by any chance he didn't, I'm sure you can let him know."

"Just tell me what you've got against him, and I'll go. I'll leave you alone, if that's what you want."

"I haven't got anything against him," she says desperately, and Kurt becomes suddenly aware that she's crying. "I love him, and you, and god knows I love that gorgeous daughter of yours, but I just can't be around you right now."

"But why?" he pleads. "Just tell me why."

"Because you'll hate me, that's why," she sobs, as Kurt's insides do a funny twist at the sound of her anguish. "And I don't want that. I don't ever want for you to hate me."

"We wouldn't ever hate you, Santana," Kurt says softly.

She gives a small, tearful laugh. "That's what Blaine said too. You're like clones of each other."

"Because it's true," Kurt says over the lump in his throat. "How could we ever hate you, when you were the one who carried our daughter, who brought her into this world? You gave us the biggest, most selfless gift anyone could ever give, and you did it out of the goodness of your heart, not for any gain at all. You just did it because you love us. And why do you think I'm here? Why do you think Blaine is checking his phone every ten minutes, and dialling and redialling your number? Why do you think he keeps drifting off into that weird dreamlike state he has, the one where his eyes mist over with tears and he thinks no one has noticed? Why do you think he looks and feels so incredibly sad? Huh? Because we love you right back, that's why."

The door is pulled open suddenly, and Kurt is unprepared. He stumbles, grasping the door handle before looking up and gasping loudly.

"Oh holy fucking shit," he whispers, hands flying up to cover his mouth. "Oh sweetie."

Santana steps backward, hugging herself tight, looking down at the floor and shaking her head as Kurt's tears start to flow. "Don't," she says through tears of her own. "Please don't. And don't touch me," she says quickly as he reaches for her. "Don't touch me cause...cause if you do I might break. And I can't," she chokes around a sob. "I just...can't...break."

"Look at me," Kurt commands, softly closing the door, and she looks up again. A bruise spreads over her cheekbone, varying shades of purple and red, and the right side of her lips are swollen and raw. She blinks, more tears escaping, but keeps the eye contact, watching as Kurt swallows and bites his lip, color draining from his already pale face. "You...this...uh... Lacy?"

A small nod of confirmation is enough for Kurt to throw his head back in despair and begin pacing. "When? I mean, I thought you had split? Is this why? I mean, is this why you split? Or is this
"Both," Santana says quietly. "I asked her to leave because she hit me. I mean, no one puts up with that, right? And I thought...I thought I was strong," she says, holding her own fragile self. "I thought I was... Until she showed up apologizing, saying she knew how wrong it was. And I let her in, saying I was prepared to talk. I shouldn't have done. I just should have remained strong. But it's hard, you know? When someone you used to love is crying in front of you, begging for your forgiveness. And I was tempted," she nods. "I was tempted to say it's all okay, and we could carry on like before, only then I realized." She pauses, grabbing a tissue to dab at her eyes. "I realized I didn't love her, because she had hurt me so bad. She took my trust and my love and screwed it right up and threw it back in my face. She just wasn't the same girl, and neither was I. I'm too fragile, too wary, to scared to be able to trust her again. And this," she says, gesturing to her face, "is apparently what happens when you ask her to leave again."

"We have to go to the police," Kurt says decisively, but Santana is quick to cut him off.

"No. Absolutely not. No way. I just want done, okay? This is why I didn't want anyone knowing."

"She'll do it again!" Kurt cries despairingly. "She will come back here time and again when she's lonely or drunk or depressed and this will happen over and over. No. I'm sorry, we need to tell someone about this."

"No!" Santana yells loudly. "Listen to me, Kurt. I am NOT going to the cops about this. I don't want to, you can't make me and so help me god, if you try to, then I will walk away from you for good."

"But..."

"But I seem to remember you, aged sixteen, having the living crap beaten out of you by Karofsky. Everyone was telling you to go to the cops then and you refused, so what's different here? You told me then that you didn't want to report it because you didn't want to keep living it. Well guess what? Neither do I."

"But she's hurt you," Kurt says, starting to cry again. "She's hurt you and I don't ever want anyone to hurt you."

"Everyone does," Santana shrugs. "Except you and Blaine."

"Blaine! Oh my god," Kurt moans. "What the hell is Blaine going to do when he finds out?"

"Don't tell him," Santana tries, but she knows that's out of the question from the glare he gives her. "Look. Just...tell him I'll be in contact soon. After Christmas, maybe."

"Uh-uh. You're spending Christmas with us. It's Libby's first one. You need to be there."

"Why?"

"Because you're as much a part of our family as Cooper or Finn, that's why. And you know, not everyone hurts you. Think how many people you have who love and support you. Not just us, but all our family, plus Wes, Kathy, Sebastian...Ohio!" he says suddenly. "That's what you're doing. You're coming back to Ohio with me."

"No," she says, tense and on guard once more. "No way. Berry will hit the roof, your dad will polish his shotgun and Mike will end up ruining his other hip too."
"Oh shut up," he snaps back. "People will be angry, yes, because you've been hurt. But not at you. Most of all, people will want to help you heal....Rachel included," he says, smiling when she scoffs. "Please, I'm begging you. If you won't go to the police then come back to the apartment with me now, then back to Westerville on Saturday. Stay with us until new year. Please."

She eyes him warily. "Can I think on it?"

"Yes you can, but you can think on it in my apartment, not here. I don't want you here alone. Ours has a concierge, so even if she guesses where you are, she won't get in."

"Well we can't all afford a concierge," she snaps.

"Oh be quiet, I'm trying to help. Get your purse and follow me."

* 

She is quiet that evening, but Kurt is silently persistent, encouraging her to take a long bath while he cooks dinner and generally looking after her as best he can. He sends a text to Blaine, apologizing for not calling at Libby's bedtime, and asking him to explain to her that papa is busy, but he doesn't elaborate for now, and receives no response. When Santana emerges, dressed in a pair of Kurt's pajamas that she's clearly gone and helped herself to, Kurt nods and shows her to Libby's room.

"Sorry about the crib," he says, "but the bed is comfortable. Just yell if you need anything."

"I need to sleep," she grumbles, climbing under the covers.

"Right, okay. Yeah. Well....I'll leave you to it."

"And I need to come back to Ohio with you," she adds in a small voice, making him stop in the doorway and turn back. "If that's okay?"

"Of course it is," he nods. "Sleep well."

He sits on the couch in contemplative silence, trying to figure out where the hell to go from here, and he knows that ultimately, he needs to talk with Blaine...but not now. Not like this, over the phone. He needs to be face to face, to feel him in his arms, to know the reassuring presence of his touch. So for now, feeling weary to the very depths of his bones, he settles for a text.

Santana will be coming home with me, and staying until New Years. I hope that's okay. I know what's happened, but I don't want to start trying to explain over the phone when I'm still feeling bad about deceiving you anyway. Just.... I love you, old man. And I really wish you were here right now. xxxx

It's more than okay for her to stay, and I will wait (not so) patiently for an explanation. Please don't feel bad, Kurt. We will talk more when you're home, but I want you to know that you've done nothing wrong in my eyes, so forgive yourself, please. I love you too. xxxx ps- Libby says xxxx
Chapter 5

Kurt pulls into the driveway and cuts the engine, anxious to get inside and hold his little girl and husband, but also mindful of an extremely fragile Santana sitting on his right. She has been virtually silent for the entire drive, in fact she's not really said anything much for the last thirty six hours. Since going to bed on Thursday night, Kurt has spent his entire time hovering around her, eventually settling on the floor of the guest room, coaxing her back to sleep after her fourth time of waking. She had snapped at him in the morning of course, claiming she didn't need a babysitter, but she followed him to work that day, and waited with Anna's husband while she and Kurt delivered a successful pitch to land the costume contract for Miss Saigon.

Kurt had tentatively suggested driving back to Westerville that night, then berated himself for his selfishness, knowing that it was just so he could be in Blaine's arms once more even if it would be nearing two in the morning before they arrived, but Santana had declared herself too tired to face Blaine that night, and begrudgingly, Kurt agreed before settling on the floor once more. This time Santana had offered a small, tearful smile of gratitude though, and Kurt knew he was in the right place.

And so now here they were, having left Chicago after breakfast, both staring at the house as if fearful of what it may hold. For Kurt, joy and happiness of course- in the form of Libby- but also fear and trepidation. He knows he and Blaine still need to talk about what he did, and that's after they deal with Santana's situation. For Santana, it's pure fright. She's scared. Scared that her best friend in the entire world will somehow think she brought this on herself. Scared that he might not want her near Libby, looking as she does, and couldn't she just do with holding that little darling right now? And above all, scared of admitting her feelings, because she knows that Blaine will try and draw it all out of her. So putting her guard rails firmly in place, she reaches for the door handle.

"Come on then," she bites at Kurt. "No use sitting here all day."

Rolling his eyes, he steps from the car and hauls her suitcases from the trunk. "You want me to go in first?"

"Why? You think it's gonna make this any better?"

"Oh for...." Kurt sighs. "No, I was just trying to be kind, that's all."

"Well don't," she barks, striding up the path. "It doesn't suit you."

"Likewise," he grumbles, and just to be antagonistic, he pushes past her and unlocks the door. Dumping her cases in the large hallway, he turns to say something but she is already heading toward the empty living room.

"I'll be in here," she declares, slamming the door.

Kurt sighs, but brightens when he hears the sound of his husband bustling around in the kitchen, singing 'Take me out to the ballgame,' interspersed with laughter that he assumes is the result of Libby dancing.

"We're home!" he calls, then braces himself as the sound of clattering footsteps come down the hall.

"Hey!" Blaine cries happily as he appears with Libby, who screams her delight and holds her arms out. "Oh thank god you're home," he says, breathless as he closes the gap between them and kisses
him deeply, until Libby prises their faces apart.

"Baba!"

"Ba..." Kurt starts, then remembers Blaine's lips are within reach and kisses him again. "Did she..."

"We're working on it," Blaine says shyly. "But the book says P is one of the last sounds to come so..."

"Beautiful darling," Kurt says happily, taking her in his arms and cradling her close to his chest. "Oh my little girl. I missed you so much. Yes I did," he smiles, blowing a raspberry into her neck and making her squeal. "Papa missed you, and you learned my name."

"I missed you, Kurt," Blaine says simply, and the guilt has Kurt staring at the floor and blinking rapidly as he gives a small nod. "It's all wrong when we're not together," he says softly, then finds his chin being lifted gently for a sweet kiss to be pressed to his lips. Closing his eyes, he lets Blaine trail along his jaw and down to his neck before he hugs him tight and whispers in his ear.

"Later, okay?....I mean....talking," he says with an embarrassed laugh. "I didn't mean...."

"It's okay, Blaine," Kurt smiles. "And yes. There's a lot more to get through first."

"Oh yeah," Blaine suddenly remembers. "Where's..."

"In there," he says, nodding toward the closed living room door. "Um.... Look.... This....this is going to be hard for you," Kurt says honestly, still not used himself to looking at Santana's black eye without feeling sick. "But I think you need to go in there and find out for yourself."

Blaine frowns in confusion. "O-Kay? Uh..."

"Just...go careful. She's really emotional, and comes across as even more angry than usual. I'll be in the kitchen with Lib," he says, kissing his cheek. "And remember I love you."

Blaine pushes open the door warily, finding Santana sitting on the couch, her knees drawn up to her chest and hair over her face. "Hi."

She nods curtly but doesn't look at him, and he closes the door behind him before stepping further into the room. "So uh....Kurt managed to get you to come stay for a while?"

Santana shrugs. "I'm here, aren't I?"

"You are," he says. "And I'm glad. I don't like it when we're fighting."

"We're not fighting."

"Well I don't know what else to call it," he admits. "I can't shake off the feeling that we're the reason you and Lacy split, and now you're avoiding me because of it."

"You're not the reason, I told you that two freakin months ago."

"I know, but I think it was just to get me off your back. So...."

Santana stands, turning to face him and trying not to break down when Blaine's eyes go wide and he gasps just as Kurt did two days previous. "So now you know."

"But....but..." he splutters, unable to stop staring, horrified at the still swollen cheek and eye. "But
"you're my best girl," he says weakly as his eyes fill with tears. "How could anyone do this to you?"

"Well she did," Santana says with a shrug. "She just did."

"Lacy did this? Has she done it before?"

"Just before your birthday," she says quietly. "We were fighting and she slapped me. Not like this. But still hard. Hard enough to leave a ringing in my ear that didn't disappear for a good few days. So that was it. We went through a few weeks of awkwardness before I asked her to leave. Only then, when I wasn't open to reconciliation and I told her I didn't love the person she had become, she did this."

"Santana," he says, starting toward her, but she pulls away.

"Don't. I told Kurt, and I'm telling you. Don't touch me, please. I am just about clinging on, Blaine. If you touch me I think I'll fall, and I don't know if I'll ever get back up again. So please, just...stay away."

He nods, hurt but trying to understand and sits down heavily on the couch. She sits beside him, curled in in herself once more and letting her long hair fall down over her face.

"What did the police say?"

"I haven't been, and I won't be going. Don't start at me," she flares, eyes turning dark when Blaine tries to interrupt. "This is it for me. I won't be having her back, I really won't. I don't need her... I don't need anyone really."

"Bullshit. You need love and support, and you know you do, or else you wouldn't be here. Kurt has excellent skills in getting his own way all the time, but you've been impervious to them for as long as I've known you. There's no way you'd come here with him unless you felt this was the right place for you to be. And you know what?" he says forcefully. "I love you and I respect you, but I am going to touch you. I'm gonna hold you because I know you, and I know from looking at you just how scared and frightened you are, and I know you don't want to admit that."

"Don't Blaine," she warns, but he ignores her, sliding up the couch to tuck her hair behind her ear.

"Let it go, Santana. You're with us now. No need for any pretences or barriers. Just...be."

She pulls in a shaky breath, looking into his eyes for the first time. "I can't," she says, voice small. "I can't."

"You can," Blaine urges gently, putting an arm about her shoulders. "Because you're where you're meant to be."

He pulls her tight to his chest when she sobs, rocking her gently back and forth as she cries endlessly for all she has lost, all she has learned and all she has hurt. Blaine doesn't know how much time passes, but he knows that when her flow of tears eventually subside to occasional sobs, he looks up to realize the early December gloom is taking over the living room, and he clicks the lighting remote before handing her a tissue.

"You two are gross," she sniffls, blowing her nose and handing the tissue back.

"Ew. How?"

"You have boxes of tissues everywhere."
"They're for Libby, actually," he snarks back, but he smiles slightly and kisses her forehead. "I'm so sorry you have to go through this," he says sincerely. "But I'm so glad you're here, and I don't want you to go back."

"I have to at some point, Blaine."

"No you don't, not if you don't want to. We can work something out. You do need to see someone though, file a complaint at least, in case she does something like that again."

"Am I not good enough?" she asks suddenly, her voice small. "Is that it? Am I just not good enough to deserve love and respect?"

"No, Santana that's..."

"Like with Britt," she carries on, staring out across the darkened front yard. "I gave her everything... Well, as much as my selfish sixteen year old self could, anyway. I tried and I tried for two years or more but ultimately, she wasn't committed to it like I was. And now, with Lacy...I thought this was it. Oh, I know we didn't have the deep, profound love that you and Kurt seem to share- we can't all get that lucky. But I did think we'd stay together. And now I just feel like there's no hope for me, that no one is ever going to want me."

"I'm sure that's not the case," Blaine reassures. "You're twenty five, Santana, hardly left on the shelf. You know, Kurt found his husband in his very first boyfriend, but that's so rare."

"Is it though? Really? Rachel and Finn, Tina and Mike, Nick and Jeff- and god knows you and Wes weren't exactly setting the world alight before you found your significant others."

Blaine shrugs. "Wes had a very serious girlfriend in college, and was left heartbroken," he says, taking her hand in his. "I wasn't exactly chaste and pure. Kathy was divorced and Seb...well, Seb is..."

"A whore," she finishes for him, but she smiles and Blaine knows she doesn't mean it unkindly. "Can we...Can we just forget about it, for today? I really wanna see Libby, and just spend some time with you guys."

"Of course," Blaine nods, standing and pulling her to her feet. "But just so you know, I'll be nagging you to talk in the days ahead, okay? I've learned the hard way, and too many times, that not talking about things only makes it worse."

"I know, I know," she sighs. "Just give it a rest already, grandad."

"Okay. Sorry." Ducking his head meekly, he heads toward the door, but she calls out and stops him, flying into his arms and taking him completely by surprise.

"Thank you for everything," she whispers shyly. "Thank you for letting Kurt come rescue me, thank you for letting me stay here, and thank you for loving me."

"Well you might not agree with me," he says, hugging her tight. "But it's our absolute pleasure."

Pulling back to look at him, wiping her eyes, Santana offers a trembling smile. "You're my best boy, you know that?"

"Oh please," he scoffs. "I've always known."

*
When they emerge from the living room it is to find Kurt setting dinner on the table, while an over excited Libby bangs her highchair tray and sings loudly. Santana crouches next to her, kissing her tiny hands and cheeks then settles back in a chair, swiping at her eyes again.

“Best decision I ever made, housing you,” she says, mainly to the baby, but Kurt and Blaine overhear.

“Would you do it again?” Kurt asks, tugging Libby’s high chair closer to feed her.

“Hmm. I know I said I wouldn’t, but I would, if you guys really wanted me to. But not for me, or anyone else for that matter.”

“I think about it,” Kurt admits, “But then I dismiss the idea. Blaine and Libby complete me, really. I don’t feel the need for more.”

“Me either,” Blaine smiles. “Can I ask though, was your pregnancy the cause of the tension?”

“No, I told you that,” Santana frowns. “Things were fine then. It was after, really. Lacy started making noises about having a baby, and I just didn't want that.”

“Not ever?” Kurt asks.

“Nope. I just do not want a child of my own, whether she carried it or me, I’d still be a mother, and I don't want to be one,” she says, becoming more animated as she speaks. “I don’t get why that’s so hard for people to understand, like somehow not wanting to be a parent is unnatural. And you know? I love kids, I do. Especially Lib. I love being around them, I love watching them grow, I love their cute little chubby cheeks and hands...but I like to hand them back. I don’t feel any maternal urges. And she did,” she shrugs. “And if I’m honest, I think the fact that I carried Libby confused the issue even more. Like, why was I prepared to carry a baby and give it away, but not carry one for us?...But I never saw it that way. Actually, I talked with Rachel about it when I was pregnant,” she continues, ignoring the look of surprise on both mens faces. “She gets it, oddly enough, even though she wants kids in the future. She said the reason she never offered to be your surrogate was because the hardest part would be giving the baby away, because she knew she would feel like it was hers. But for me, it was the other way around. The hardest thing I would have to do would be to keep a baby that I didn't want. It was easy to hand Libby over to you. Don’t get me wrong, I became attached to her, and I definitely love her more because I housed her- but that was it to me. I housed her because you two couldn’t. Nothing more. She is your baby. Hell, I don’t even think of her as having come from an unknown egg donor, I think of her as coming from both of you. I didn’t mind being pregnant. It wasn’t great, when I looked and felt like a goddamn whale, but it wasn’t so bad, and I’m certainly glad I did it,” she says, smiling tenderly at Libby. “But that’s where it ends for me.”

“Well,” Blaine says after a pause. “I think it’s better this happened now than later, when maybe you were both getting to your late thirties and time was running out, say. I’m glad you were honest.”

“I’m always honest,” she smiles.

“Oh we know,” Kurt says brightly. “But I agree with Blaine. For once, I approve of your subtle as a sledgehammer approach to life.”

“Why thank you,” she says sweetly, making them both laugh. “I’ll be okay, you know,” she adds firmly. “I’m not saying I’m not hurting, or scared, but I know I’ll get there in the end.”
“You totally will,” Blaine smiles.

“You’re the strongest person I know,” Kurt tells her reaching for her hand. “And to me, admitting how you really feel only makes you stronger.”

“Good. Right. Well,” Santana says stiffly, clearly having had enough of the sincerity for the time being. “Let’s finish dinner, shall we? Here, Kurt, I’ll feed Libby for a bit.”

* 

Although it is only ten thirty when Kurt closes the bedroom door, he sags tiredly against it and rubs his hands over his face. “What a day,” he moans, voice muffled. “What a week, really. Ugh.”

He opens his eyes to find Blaine standing there, bare chested and just wearing pajama pants, looking almost as vulnerable and nervous as he did the first night Kurt ever stayed there. “Hey,” he says softly, feeling suddenly emotional once more.

Blaine scuffs a bare toe over the wood floor, rubbing the back of his neck before looking up shyly. “Hey.”

Kurt offers a small smile and steps closer, taking both his husband’s hands in his. “Tell me what you want,” he whispers, closing his eyes and resting their foreheads together. “Just tell me.”

“Hold me,” Blaine says quietly, sadly. “Please, just... hold me.”

“Oh, I can always do that,” he says with a soft chuckle, wrapping him tightly in his arms and breathing deeply. “Oh my god you’re perfect.”

Blaine doesn’t answer at first, too absorbed in being nuzzled in tight against Kurt, but eventually he surfaces, tugging Kurt’s button up and undershirt over his head together before settling back into his embrace, his head resting on his shoulder and one hand coming up to play with his hair. “I’m not,” he murmurs. “I’m so flawed they wouldn’t even take me at goodwill.”

“Perfect for me, then,” Kurt says, rubbing their cheeks together and leaning down to kiss his neck. “Am I? I hope so,” Blaine says fearfully. “I want to be.”

“Oh, hey...no...” Kurt says, pulling back in concern and leading Blaine to sit on the bed. “You are,” he says firmly, sitting close and taking his hands. “Oh please don’t think that, Blaine. I love you so much. You know that, right?”

“Yes,” he nods. “Yes, I do know that. I just...” He trails off, looking down at their joined hands and shaking his head. “You know what? It doesn’t matter.”

“Oh it does,” Kurt flares. “Don’t you dare do this. We promised we would talk when I got back, and I was expecting anger, but all I’m getting is sadness and paranoia. So talk. Tell me why you’re feeling this way.”

“Well someone has enough anger for both of us,” he teases lightly. “I don’t know, Kurt,” he sighs. “I’m sad because of Santana, obviously, but I’m glad she’s here with us now.”

“Yeah...About that,” Kurt says awkwardly. “Uh...Her being here....it’s not a uh...a permanent thing, is it?”

“Oh my god no!” Blaine cries, horrified.
“Thank fuck for that,” Kurt laughs, relieved.

“No. I mean, I love her to pieces, but we are our own family of three. I count her as my wider family, sure, but I’m not interested in taking on a roomie- I already have two fantastic ones as it is.”

“Okay, good, good,” Kurt smiles. “I was just checking. Phew. I feel the same. Good. Okay. You may now continue.”

“I’m sad because of how things were left,” Blaine says, playing with the soft flannel of his pajamas. “I talked with my dad,” he admits. “And he suggested something to me, which I think might be very accurate.”

“Oh?”

“He said that maybe you haven’t forgiven yourself for all that happened, when we nearly broke up. And this is why,” he rushes on before Kurt can respond. “This is why I’m sad and not angry. Because if that is indeed the case, then I understand why you wanted to try and protect me from any more hurt, but I’m sad that you feel the need to do that; because I forgave you the second you walked into that reception. I said it then, and I’ll say it now. I forgive you for all of it, Kurt. Every word, every look, every tear. I forgive, and I have forgotten. I’ve never raised it other than to point out how far we have come and I never will. I love you, and I didn’t need you to try and hide the reason you wanted to go to Chicago alone, and you didn’t need to try and protect me as a way of proving how sorry you are for something that happened three years ago; because I already know. Your love is all the protection I need. These arms,” he says, tugging on his hands. “These arms, holding me, are what I dream of all day long when we’re apart. I love Libby so much, but this, now, when we cuddle up in bed together and my head rests on your chest, it’s the best thing in the entire world.”

Kurt is silent, bowing his head as tears drip onto his hands where he grips Blaine's tightly. Sighing heavily, Blaine shuffles forward, letting Kurt's head bow onto his shoulder as he caresses the back of his neck gently.

"Please forgive yourself, Kurt. Please. If it still mattered in any way at all, I wouldn't be here right now. Don't let it rule us."

"You're...you're always so magnanimous," Kurt sniffs. "So gracious and understanding. It hurts me to know you don't think of yourself as perfect for me, because you are. You are, and that's why I try so hard to look after you, to protect you from hurt or pain. Losing your mom was terrible for all of us, but for me it was even more unbearable because I could see you torn to shreds and there was nothing I could do to stop it."

"But you did, Kurt, don't you see?" Blaine says desperately. "You picked me up and put me back together again piece by piece. Your patience and understanding and above all, the love you showed me during that time was everything I needed."

"Yeah, and then I went and forgot all about her on your birthday."

"So? We've been through this. We were both overwhelmed with so many things. Please, Kurt. I need you to know that I'm not mad at you for any of this, and you need to stop being mad at yourself. It's the same as this thinking you're a bitch thing. It needs to go. Because if you want me to believe that I'm perfect for you, then you must also believe that you're perfect for me."

Kurt opens his mouth to respond but is met with Blaine's lips on his, soft, warm and needing. He sighs into the kiss, letting himself be laid down across the bed, the heavy, secure and comforting
weight of his husband draped half over him as Blaine props himself on one elbow, his other hand smoothing gently over Kurt's stomach, curling around his waist. They keep kissing, on and on, until Kurt's fingers are tangled in Blaine's hair, rubbing gently and massaging away all his fears and frustrations and both are relaxed and pliant in one another's arms.

"Gosh," Blaine grins. "Yeah...wow," he says, with that breathy laugh he has which still makes Kurt's insides do a funny flip.

"We're perfect for each other," Kurt says with a blissful grin, his eyes shining with sincerity. "You're perfect for me and I'm perfect for you. There."

"That's rather wonderful to hear," Blaine smiles down at him. "So...."

"So I'm gonna let it all go," Kurt confirms. "Or try to, anyway. You're right, you know. You do forgive me, I see that now. I forgave you for the whole New York fiasco, and you had to trust in me that I genuinely had forgiven you, so I'm gonna trust in you. Because I do. I trust you one hundred percent. I trust you enough that I married you, that I had a baby with you, so....yeah. I believe you when you tell me it's all forgotten. And I'm sorry for getting Wes to coax you into sitting Olivia, I went about it all the wrong way."

Blaine wrinkles his nose before leaning down to kiss Kurt's forehead. "You did. But guess what?"

"You forgive me?"

"Exactly," he nods, and they both laugh. "This marriage, us, Libby, this is once in a lifetime, Kurt. We'll never get this again. Let's make the most of it."

"Starting with making out some more?" Kurt asks hopefully.

"Obviously."
Kurt wakes slowly, smiling at the feel of Blaine's fingers trailing along the waistband of his pajama pants. He stretches slightly before pulling him closer, shifting his arm out from under him to rest about his shoulders.

"Sunday," Blaine whispers with a featherlight kiss to his neck.

"Fine day, Sunday," Kurt says sleepily.

"No post on Sundays."

"What time is it?" Kurt asks, still with his eyes closed and smiling at their practiced routine.

"Dunno. Hold on." Blaine leaves his side and rolls over to check his phone. "Holy hell, it's gone eight."

"Libby," Kurt says, shooting up. "Is she okay?"

Blaine pulls open the door in a panic, but the room across the hall is empty, door wide, shades pulled up and crib neatly made. "Libby?" he calls down the stairs, and Santana replies.

"Honestly, are you expecting her to answer? She's with me. I heard her singing through the wall and decided to let you two sleep. We're going to meet Rachel for breakfast."

"Who is?"

"Me and Libby. I have all we need. See you later!" The front door slams and Blaine trails back into the bedroom.

"I don't know whether to be sad or elated."

"Well I for one am grateful for getting a lazy morning in bed with my husband," Kurt smiles, crawling across the bed toward him then falling down disappointed when Blaine strides past him to the bathroom. "Where are you going?"

"Where do you think I'm going?" Blaine laughs, closing the door. He opens it again when he's done, a toothbrush wedged firmly in his mouth and a playful smile on his face.

"Why are you brushing your teeth?"

"Oo ake ou wi oo."

"Excuse me?" Kurt laughs, hopping from the bed and following him into the bathroom.

Blaine spits. "To make out with you," he says through a mouthful of foam. "Just wanna be polite. Here," he says, handing Kurt his own brush who takes it and picks up the toothpaste.

"Do you remember when we first did this?" he asks. "In this very room?"

"I do," Blaine nods before rinsing his mouth. "You were so shy, you made me turn my back so you could spit," he says, laughing when Kurt spits loudly into the sink and turns to him with a ring of white foam around his lips.
"Uh....that kinda fell by the wayside a little bit," he says, embarrassed.

He finishes up and rinses out, stepping back to stand sideways on to Blaine, wrapping his arms about his neck and kissing his cheek before admiring their reflection in the mirror. "Hmm. I love you."

"Do you want me to shave?" Blaine asks, running a hand over his stubble.

"That depends on where that face is going, doesn't it?" Kurt smirks. "What you're really asking is are you gonna get to rim me, and the answer is; not right now."

"Why?" Blaine whines.

Moving to stand behind him, Kurt hooks his chin over Blaine's shoulder, staring into his eyes in the mirror. "Because I'm not shy anymore," he whispers, arms wrapped tightly around Blaine's waist. "Which is a good thing, I think- even if I do spit in front of you, because if I was still shy, I wouldn't do this," he purrs, reaching into Blaine's pajamas to cup him lightly, grinning smugly when Blaine moans and closes his eyes, head dropping back onto Kurt's shoulder. "Open your eyes."

"Not in front of the mirror again," Blaine whines. "Please. You know what it does to me."

"I do," Kurt confirms, pushing both their pajamas to their ankles as he continues to stroke Blaine to hardness. "Which is why we're staying right here. I seem to remember you screaming very loudly last time as you came."

"Oh fuck."

"And spilling so hard over the counter that I had to clean it up....with my tongue," he adds, breathing hotly into a now completely useless Blaine's ear.

"Again," he whimpers. "I want that again."

"Do you? Hmm." Reaching past him, Kurt opens a draw and retrieves a bottle of lube, tugging Blaine away from the mirror until he's against the wall, one foot on the closed toilet lid. "You're so damn hot," he murmurs before finding Blaine's lips, pulling him in for a deep, passionate kiss which has them both groaning, and Blaine's fingers dig sharply into Kurt's shoulder when he feels a slick thumb tracing over his entrance.

"Yes, oh my god, yes," Blaine cries, breaking away to place sloppy kisses haphazardly over Kurt's face and neck. He takes Kurt's thumb eagerly, begging for more almost instantly even though both know he isn't ready. "I love it when you take me like this, Kurt," Blaine babbles, revelling in the feeling of Kurt's thumb moving inside him, sending sparks of pleasure shooting through his body. "I love it, I do. I need you to take me."

"I know you do, baby," Kurt soothes, slipping his finger inside. "I know you do and I will, I promise. Just be patient."

He captures his lips once more, whimpering when Blaine's hand wraps around his cock and begins teasing, making him ache with a longing for more. They fall silent, apart from the heavy, ragged breathing coming from both and the sound of their lips meeting over and over. Eventually, Kurt pulls back, kissing Blaine firmly on the mouth once more before placing his hands on the counter and lining up behind him. "Eyes open," he says softly once more, before pushing swiftly inside, making Blaine gasp and cry out.
"Take me, Kurt. Please..... So good," he moans, but Kurt stays still until he has eye contact, digging his fingers into Blaine's hips to make him look up, and then he begins to move. Slowly at first, running a soothing hand between Blaine's shoulder blades as they stare at each other, gradually picking up pace to make them both sigh happily. "Kurt....you're so sexy," Blaine groans, trying hard to keep eye contact. "Watching you fuck me like this."

"You like it, don't you, Blaine? You like it when I fuck you from behind and you get to watch."

"Yes I do," he whimpers. "I really do...oh!" he cries when Kurt's hips slam hard against him. "Yes! Just like that, Kurt. Oh god!"

Kurt grits his teeth, teetering so close to the edge but trying to hold off for Blaine to come with him. "Touch yourself," he commands, and Blaine does, coming instantly and Kurt follows, shuddering hard, trying to keep his eyes open to watch Blaine gasping hotly, mouth open and absolute ecstasy on his face, a series of stuttered and broken 'oh's' falling from his lips before he staggers weakly and Kurt has to clutch him to keep him upright. "I've got you," he says, still coming down from his own high. "Jesus Christ." He feels himself twitch uselessly once more before he withdraws carefully, taking the proffered wet wipe from Blaine and turning his back to clean up. He tosses the wipe in the trash before taking another one and wiping it tenderly over Blaine's face and giving him a chaste kiss on the lips. "Love you," he whispers. "I'll wait for you in bed."

Blaine finishes up and joins him happily, spooning himself around him; now sleepy once more. "You get me every time," he whispers.

"I know," Kurt says smugly, taking Blaine's hand, lacing their fingers together and holding them over his still rapidly beating heart.

"So I was thinking..." Blaine starts.

"Dangerous."

"Haha. Seriously, I was thinking you might like to go get a Christmas tree today."

"Oh! Oh! Really? A real one? Can we?" Kurt cries excitedly, spinning around in Blaine's embrace and clapping his hands together excitedly.

"Yes," he laughs. "As big as you want."

"I love big!"

Blaine laughs loudly, unable to resist winking at his husband. "I know you do. So...as soon as Santana and Libby are back we can head out if you like."

"Yes! Yes! I do like! I like a lot," Kurt grins, before kissing him soundly on the mouth. "Ohh, and I love you."

"That's good," Blaine smiles as he closes his eyes. "Cause I love you. Now let's rest before the girls return."

But as it turns out, Kurt is far too excited to rest, and decides to leave Blaine to sleep while he showers and dresses before making breakfast and returning to his husband's side. "You know," he says around a mouthful of waffle, "It's Libby's first Christmas."

"Oh really?" Blaine teases. "I hadn't noticed."
"Yeah. And we should go to town. On the decorations, I mean. Like all out. Stuff on the lawn, the roof..."

"Oh god."

"Unless you don't want to, of course. With your mom...."

"Kurt, really, that's fine. If you wanna do that then we can hit the Christmas warehouse right after we've gotten the tree."

"Really?" he squeals. "We can? Oh! Yay!"

Blaine cocks his head, eyes sparkling with mischief. "Are you sure there's only fifteen years between us?"

"Oh haha, mister sassy pants," Kurt says, stealing the last bite of waffle from his plate before the door slams. "I keep forgetting she has a key."

"We're coming up! Clothe yourselves!" Santana calls before clattering up the stairs. "Hey," she says, not bothering to knock. "So, we had fun."

"Hey sweetie," Kurt coos, taking Libby who eagerly tries to kiss his face. "Did you have fun with your aunts? Did you?"

"You know she did, I just told you that. I think the crazies in the diner thought she was mine and Rachel's- a product of what could only be considered the most catastrophic relationship in the history of the world....if such a relationship had ever existed. Anyway. I'm gonna go change, cause clearly somebody missed the memo that said never smear mashed banana on your favorite Aunt's favorite blouse, and then I'm gonna go visit your dad, Blaine."

"Hold up," Blaine calls, as he stops playing with Libby's toes to look up at her. "We were going to hunt down a Christmas tree, if you wanted to come with?"

"Hunt down?"

"Yeah, you know....one of those cut your own places out toward the highway."

Santana laughs, hands on hips. "Oh god. The idea of you two ever being able to cut down a tree is hilarious. You may as well give the axe to Libby. Much as I'd love to witness that; 'hunting down' your tree for Libby's first Christmas should be a family venture, so I'm good, thank you."

"Are you sure?" Kurt asks, handing Libby to Blaine so he can climb off the bed. "I don't want you to feel...."

"I don't feel anything," she shrugs. "You weren't expecting to have me here, and you would have been doing this stuff just the three of you anyway. So I'll go visit Mike. He likes it when I fuss over him."

"You'll need a key," Blaine informs her. "It takes him six weeks to walk to the door."

"Oh I have a key," she says offhandedly.

Kurt stares at her, baffled. "Um....right. Well....we're going to the Christmas warehouse after we've done the tree, why don't you use my car and meet us there with Mike? You can help us pick some decorations for the front of the house."
"Ugh. You're not gonna make it look like the Vegas strip, are you? This is a respectable neighborhood."

"Kurt is talking about decorating the roof," Blaine says, more to Libby than anyone.

Santana eyes them both coolly. "You should be ashamed. You know, you two are solely responsible for the gay stereotype of rainbows and glitter."

"And immensely proud of that," Kurt says with a sassy smile. "Besides, our neighbors have been very welcoming and tolerant. Most of them know Blaine from before, anyway."

"They won't be when a twenty foot Santa appears on the front lawn. Call me when you've got the tree."

"Oh, hey, you'll need my car keys," Kurt calls. "Unless...."

"Of course I have a key," she says brightly. "What did you expect?"

"Unbelievable," Kurt mutters as he closes the bedroom door. "She is completely unbelievable."

"You know, if they're meeting us at the warehouse you might like to call your dad and see if they want to join us," Blaine says as he bounces Libby up and down on his knees.

"Really? Why would they want to drive all that way just to watch us buy a ton of Christmas lights?"

"They can stay for dinner," Blaine offers. ".....And maybe your dad could uh...help....you....with the roof decorating thingy?"

"Blaine Hummel-Anderson!" Kurt exclaims. "My dad is nearly sixty! Are you suggesting sending him up a stepladder in place of you?"

"Um....yes?" he offers weakly.

"You're incredible," Kurt laughs. "But you know he'll do it anyway. Okay, I'll call him."

*

And that is how it ends up with Burt, Carole, Rachel, Finn, Santana, Mike, Kurt and Blaine all standing on the front lawn in the near dark, with Libby in her stroller, discussing the merits putting the giant snowman in front of the chimney, or whether the reindeer would suit better.

"I am appalled," Santana tells Blaine as she links her arm through his. "If anyone asks where I'm living, please lie and say I'm homeless."

"Be quiet," he laughs. "Look how happy Kurt is."

"I know," she says, looking on as Kurt pulls goofy faces at Libby and plays peekaboo from behind an illuminated Santa. "He's clearly lost the plot, being married to you. He used to be so classy."

"I'm ignoring you," he says with a friendly nudge. "How are you, anyway?"

"Good," she nods. "I mean, honestly? There's gonna be days where I don't want to get dressed, and I just want to sit around and mope all day; but today isn't one of those days, so I'm gonna make the most of it."
"You should," Blaine nods. "It's good to see you smiling again."

"It's kinda hard not to, when you're among friends," she says, watching as Finn takes his niece from the stroller and lifts her onto his shoulders as Rachel squawks about her being too high.

"So...you think you could move back permanently? Rachel knows all the dance schools in Columbus, I'm sure you could find a teaching post or something."

"Hmm," she says, nodding slowly. "I think I'd like to. It's whether financially, I can make that work. It's just me now. Just me to pay rent and utilities and you know, I don't even own a car. Maybe I'll start saving," she says with a bright smile. "Come summer I could have enough."

"Summer is too far away," Blaine says with a frown. "I don't like to think of you..."

"Blaine!" Burt calls loudly. "Stop chatting and get over here to hold this step ladder!"

"Sorry!" He calls, turning to Santana with a smile. "Just...leave your living arrangements to me."

On Christmas Eve, when Kurt and Blaine bundle her into the car and drive to Columbus, neither will say where they're going, or what they're going out for. Both are evasive and both are impervious to her growlings and mutterings, while Libby just thinks she's hilarious. Eventually, Kurt cuts the engine and Blaine turns around to look at her.

"Okay. So...this is a Christmas gift from us to you."

"What is?" she asks, peering out the window. "I don't even know where we are."

"Well...we're in Valley view," Kurt says.

"I can't see a valley and I can't see a view," she says sullenly.

"Out the car. C'mon," Blaine says sharply. "Now. This is about a ten minute drive from Finn and Rachel, and you know it took a half hour from our place."

"What are you getting at, Blaine?" Santana asks as she lets herself get led along the road.

"Kurt and I bought two apartments this year," he says, stopping to take her hand. "Our apartment in Chicago and this one, here." He gestures up, to a smart apartment building and points to the largest set of windows on the second floor. "And we want you to live in it."

Santana stares, dumbfounded. "But....but....I can't. I...."

"You don't have to pay us rent until you're earning enough, and even then I'm not going to make a penny profit out of you, I swear. You've given us enough, Santana, and we want to return the favor."

"You bastard," she sniffs, hitting his arm with her purse. "You've made me cry in the street."

"Do you want to go inside?" Kurt asks gently, and she nods.

"Yes please. And let me carry the baby so I can hide my face in her hair."

"Just so you know, I still want you to stay with us over the holidays," Blaine says as they head to the elevator. "And if you like it, and want to live here, we'll move your stuff in the New Year."

"I don't have any furniture," she says quietly. "I mean, my other place was furnished and...."
"Here it is," Kurt sings, unlocking door 2B. "And yes, I do have a key." Throwing open the door, he gestures for Santana to go inside and as she does, one hand covers her mouth in surprise.

"Oh my god. You...."

"Furnished it? Yes," Blaine says, putting an arm about her shoulders, surprised when she lets him. "Kurt did it. See? He's still classy," he smiles. "Also, the kitchen is full of brand new appliances which are Christmas gifts from Wes, Kathy, Burt, Carole and my dad. Oh, and if you hate the bedroom decor that's because Rachel did all that."

She wanders around slowly, setting Libby on the floor. The apartment is a decent sized two bedroom one bath place, bright and light and perfect for her. Walking around in stunned disbelief, she eventually sits heavily on the couch and promptly bursts into tears. "I can't," she cries. "I can't take this. It's too much and I just... I just can't take it."

"You can," Kurt says gently, sitting down and taking her hands in his. "I told you already. You gave us the greatest gift anyone could ever give. Now shut up and say thank you."

She laughs through her tears, hugging him tight. "Thank you," she whispers, quite unable to stop crying. "Just....thank you."

"Actually, there's one more thing," Blaine says, pulling her to her feet. "Come outside."

He leads her down the stairs and Kurt follows with Libby until they're standing on the street looking at a smart black Volvo. "So my dad has no use for his car anymore," Blaine says shyly. "And he was looking to sell so... So I bought it for you," he says, handing her the keys. "I know it might be a little...middle aged, I guess. But it'll...y'know....get you to our place so you can sit Libby," he teases.

"You bought me an old man's car," she says quietly. "You bought me an old man's car and I love it!" she squeals. "Blaine! Kurt! I don't believe you! Either of you. This is....this is the best Christmas ever and...and I love you all," she says, kissing Libby's cheek and trying to hug them all at once. "Tell anyone this and I'll kill you, but you really are the best gays...I mean, guys- I could ever wish for."

"Ha! Thank you, and we won't breathe a word," Blaine laughs. "C'mon, let's go get lunch."

"Actually, if it's okay with you....I'm gonna stay here...in my brand new apartment!"

"Oh, okay well...we'll come back for you..." Kurt starts, but Santana cuts him off.

"You don't need to. I have a car!" she wails happily. "And you know what? I'm gonna come back tonight in time for dinner, and we'll get take out, my treat. I am just...well. You guys have actually rendered me speechless. And you know, I would have loved you forever anyway."

"We know," Blaine smiles, kissing her cheek. "But we also know we very selfishly like having you near to us again... Except we go to Chicago in two days."

"You're back for New Year though, right? I'm sure the insane Italian said you were having a party."

"Riccardo and yes," Kurt smiles. "we are. Well. More of a select gathering than a party."

"A party. Excellent. Okay well....I'll see you later!" she trills, and skips off inside doing a twirl of happiness that makes them both laugh.
"Ah. That felt good," Kurt smiles, putting an arm about his husband and their daughter.

"It did. I'm glad she's accepted."

"I think she knows where she belongs."

"So... Lunch, then we'd better get ready for Santa!" Blaine says, hoisting Libby high in the air and making her giggle.

"Already?" Kurt laughs.

"Yup! Santa Claus is comin' to town!" Blaine sings, twirling Kurt under his arm and making Libby laugh loudly. "Yes he is, my darling," Blaine smiles at her. "Have you been a good girl? You have? Oh well then, Santa's gonna leave you lots of presents then. C'mon Kurt, sing with me."

They walk down the street together, hand in hand and singing loudly before a voice comes booming from an upstairs window. "Hey! Quit with that! You're embarrassing the poor girl," Santana yells, but she can't help but laugh at the ridiculously happy couple.
"I think she'll walk soon," Sebastian comments on Christmas Day as Libby stands between his legs, her hands gripping his pointer fingers tightly.

"She's nine months old," Rachel reminds him without looking up from her intense game of scrabble with Santana and Mike.

"Doesn't matter, Kurt walked when he was ten months," Burt tells her as Kurt himself looks smug.

"When did I walk, mom?" Finn asks, and Carole smiles and pats his arm.

"Fourteen months, honey. And that was only because I moved your cookies to the other side of the room."

"Anyway Seb, you only want her to walk so she can wear those ridiculous converse you bought her," Santana comments.

"I like the converse actually," Blaine muses aloud, thinking of the cute pink hi-tops with diamanté detail. "They're kinda cute....and blingy."

Santana looks up from the board to grin broadly. "I take it back then Seb; it was worth getting them just to hear Blaine say the word 'blingy.' Maybe in a minute he'll give us his best Kanye impression."

She dodges the wrapped chocolate Blaine aims at her head but Mike catches it, eating it slowly and thoughtfully. "Cooper?" he calls, sighing when he realizes his eldest son is napping. "Cooper!"

"Huh? What? Where?"

"You," Mike says, rolling his eyes. "Was it you or Blaine who walked before a year?"

"How am I supposed to know that?" Cooper laughs. "Blaine?"

"Not a clue," he shrugs, a little preoccupied with trying to encourage Libby towards him.

"Hmm," Mike says with a sigh. "Sara would've known," he tells Rachel quietly, and she smiles sympathetically and covers his hand with her own. "It's probably written down somewhere," he carries on, unaware of Kurt listening in from where he is perched on the arm of the couch. "In their baby books. But I don't know where they are. I wish she was here."

"I know you do," Kurt says, getting up and going over to the table. "And you're right, she would know exactly when they walked. But I'll bet someone else does too," he says, putting an arm about his shoulders.

"Who?"

"Maddie," he calls, as his young niece walks into the living room trailed by Joe.

"Yeah?"

"Who walked first? Your dad or uncle Blaine?"

"Well technically it was dad," she says, swallowing her mouthful of cake. "But he was sixteen
months. Uncle Blaine walked a week before his first birthday."

"See?" Kurt says to Mike. "She reminds me so much of Sara."

"How do you know that?" Joe laughs incredulously.

Maddie shrugs and sits down next to her brother, Taylor. "Grandma told me sometime. Dad was really lazy, Uncle Blaine was always busy and...hey! Look at Libby!"

Everyone in the room turns to where Libby now stands unassisted, an anxious Sebastian holding his arms out ready as Blaine kneels on the floor and pats his legs. "C'mon, Lib," he encourages gently. "Come to daddy."

"My god, he sounds like he's calling the cat," Santana says dryly. "Oh and look, here he is."

Kurt dashes past her to Blaine's side as everyone fumbles for their phone or camera and Martin walks into the foray, completely unaware. Libby grins broadly at her daddies, and looks for all the world as if she's about to take a step, but her attention is caught by the cat and she falls onto her diaper padded bottom and crawls quickly to him, oblivious to everyone's dismay.

"Ahhh," she coos, burying her face on his fur, and Burt laughs and snaps a photo.

"Nevermind, guys. I'm sure it won't be long."

"She better not walk when you're in Chicago," Sebastian moans. "If I miss it I'll be so annoyed."

"For someone who doesn't like kids, you're remarkably eager about this one," Joe laughs, holding his arms out to her. Libby goes willingly, knowing that Joe will tickle her and make her laugh, and she is not disappointed.

"She's different," Sebastian shrugs. "She's all....cute, and stuff. Like...stupidly cute. And always smiling."

"She's not always smiling," Kurt corrects. "She can yell, believe me. Especially at three in the morning when she's cutting teeth."

"Well personally, I hope she does walk when you're in Chicago," Maddie tells Kurt and Blaine. "Because then we get to see it before anyone else."

"When she walks," Blaine calls above the noise. "I promise to upload a video. You'll all moan and tease me that it's precious firstborn syndrome like you always do, but I guarantee each and every one of you will watch."


"Oh you've done it now," Kurt mutters.

"I miss Wes," Blaine moans. "I wish he were here. Kathy and Livvy too, but Wes. Yeah."

"Oh lord," Cooper says, rolling his eyes. "He's gone for a few days and Blaine turns into an inconsolable wreck."

"I'm not a wreck," he says, poking his tongue out. "I just miss him, is all. I've gotten used to seeing them most days again, and when he gets back we'll already be in Chicago, so I won't see him until New Years."
"At this rate it's not me you'll be kissing when the ball drops," Kurt teases, laughing when Blaine gives him a playful shove. "He does have parents, Blaine, and family. He was here for thanksgiving."

"I know that," he shrugs. "But I just...."

"Miss him, yeah, we know," Santana calls. "Change the record."

"Okay, I will," he says brightly. "And I'll say thank you to all of you for making Libby's first Christmas so perfect. She loves you all, and I know that if she could say more than two words, she would have asked for all of you to be here today, even if you do eat vast quantities of food and drink copious amounts of wine. So thank you. Especially you," he says, his voice turning soft and quiet as he turns to Kurt, eyes shining.

"Me? What did I do?"

"Made the best cherry pie," Blaine says offhandedly, making Kurt laugh. "And became a parent with me. I can never thank you enough for our daughter."

"You don't need to thank me, cause it's my pleasure," Kurt grins, leaning across to cup his cheek and kiss his lips lovingly.

"I love you," Blaine whispers as the noise of family and friends continues around them.

"You too. Always. And you," he laughs as Libby arrives and crawls into his lap. "Yes. We love you soooo much, little lady. Really. We do."

"Baba."

"What? What, huh?" he asks, bouncing her up and down. "You love us too? You only love us because we feed you, and change your diaper," he teases, lifting her dress to nuzzle his face into her tummy and make her squirm. "Shallow and fickle, that's what you are."

"Baba!" she shrieks, helpless with giggles. "Baba!"

"I love watching you two together," Blaine says as Kurt looks up and grins. "It's like...the best part of being a daddy with you."

"Dada!"

"That's right, my darling," he coos, sliding up closer to Kurt to wrap his arms around them both. "Daddy."

"Cat!"

"Oh, and a new word!" Blaine laughs. "How wonderful," he remarks dryly. "I'm on a par with the cat. Great."

*

Blaine and Kurt fall into bed in the early hours, exhausted after a long day entertaining all their friends and family, then clearing up after they'd all gone home. Blaine immediately snuggles right into Kurt's side, his head resting on Kurt's bare chest and arm circling his waist. "Did you have a good day?" he asks, sleepy already.

"I really did," Kurt nods in the dark. "Everyone was happy, everyone was together..."
"Except Wes."

"Stop it."

"Sorry."

"You two are hilarious. When I spoke with Kathy earlier she said Wes was pining for you."

"His fault."

"Not his fault!" Kurt laughs. "He went to visit his parents. Just be thankful they didn't decide to fly to England and visit Kathy's mom and dad."

"True," he agrees, and they fall silent, Kurt's eyes slipping closed as his mind recalls images of the day.

"What you smiling about?" Blaine asks.

"Huh? How do you know I'm smiling? It's dark and you're not even looking at my face anyway," he says, squeezing his shoulders.

"I just know."

"I was thinking about Libby opening all those gifts."

"Oh Kurt. Did you see her little face? When she realized that if she took the paper off there was something underneath?"

Kurt shifts in the dark excitedly until he's curled on his side almost nose to nose with his husband. "I did," he grins. "And she just didn't know what to do with herself."

"The way she clapped each one was so cute."

"She is so cute. She charms everyone, even Seb."

"Do you really think she'll walk soon?" Blaine asks, biting his lip. "I mean, I didn't say anything earlier, but she is advanced for her age. But whenever I bring that up, people say I'm bragging, so I keep quiet."

"I think we're allowed to brag," Kurt declares. "Because she is smart. But maybe it's better that we just brag to each other. As for the walking, I don't know. She's certainly strong on her feet. We'll just have to wait and see, I guess."

"Can you believe she's almost a year old?"

"Sixty nine days," Kurt informs him. "Will we have a party?"

"Too damn right." Blaine yawns then, covering his mouth with his hand. "Sorry. I'm..."

"Tired. I am too," Kurt reassures him. "And we have to drive to Chicago tomorrow. We should sleep."

"Don't wanna go," Blaine mumbles, moving back onto Kurt's chest again.

"Yeah you do. You love performing. Plus there's the reception too. They're always fun."
"You used to hate them."

"I know. But I don't anymore. And I always like watching you play."


"Night, old man."

* 

They travel to Chicago the next day, where Blaine rehearses with the symphony orchestra for two days straight while Kurt takes Libby into the Farris-Anderson offices with him and attempts to get some work done. The costume ladies all adore her, so he does manage to get some time alone with Anna to discuss designs for the upcoming production of Seven Brides while she is fussed over, and then Anna takes him completely by surprise with a proposition for him.

"Marcus and I want to travel," she announces, handing him a mug of coffee. "Before we're too old to appreciate it," she adds. "We were thinking of going to Europe later in the summer for a couple of months."

"Oh. Okay. Well...I don't have a problem with that," he smiles. "The summer is usually quiet for us anyway. More design than making, if anything. And I can do that from home."

"That's what I was hoping you'd say," she says. "And of course, if Blaine is touring I'd be happy for you to accompany him as always, and I know you like to take a vacation. But the thing is, I've already been approached."

"For Grease again, I know that. Don't worry, it'll be simple."

"For that yes, but also for something else. Something bigger and better and more important than anything we've ever done. The Joffrey Ballet."

"What?" Kurt splutters, choking on his coffee. "Are you serious?"

"Yes," she laughs. "I know. I was just as surprised as you were. But they said they've seen such elegance in our designs that they really want us to design for their production of the Nutcracker, which will premiere here next Christmas, and then tour across the country, finishing in New York."

"Oh my god this is incredible!" Kurt cries, delighted. "This is huge! This is... Blaine! Oh my god I can't wait to tell Blaine!"

"Here's the thing," she says, gently guiding him back onto his stool. "In order to do both- and if we take it, we do need to do Grease as well- the contracts are signed. In order to do both, the Nutcracker designs would need to be started as soon as we finish Seven Brides.... And I wondered if you would like to do the ballet by yourself, if I do Grease."

"Me?"

"You. And they would be listed as Kurt Anderson designs only. I want you to take credit for this, Kurt. I know you can do it, I have faith in you, it's just whether you think you can handle the workload on your own. You would need to split your time between here and Ohio from May through December- even more than you do already."

Kurt nods slowly, chewing on his lip thoughtfully. "I need to talk with Blaine."
"Of course you do, I wouldn't expect you to make the decision on your own. I guess it's effectively asking him to be house husband, and whether he's okay with that."

"Yeah. I guess," he says slowly. "Um...thank you, though," he says, looking up and smiling brightly. "Thank you for the offer. I'll let you know as soon as I can."

* 

"You have to take this," Blaine urges as soon as he's told. "There's no way you can turn an offer like that down." He carries on loading plates into the dishwasher as Kurt walks across the kitchen toward him.

"I know, but...."

"But nothing, Kurt. Listen to me. You are twenty five. Your career is still in its infancy. This will blow it all out the water for you, and take you sky high. You deserve that more than anyone I know."

"But..."

"Anna isn't going to be working with you forever, Kurt. She has three grandchildren now, and Marcus is already retired. At some point she will want to give it up, and you know that's why she took you on in the first place. She wants you to do this so she can see for herself how you handle running the company."

"But what about you?" Kurt cries desperately. "What will you do?"

"Just what I do now," Blaine shrugs. "I'll continue to play piano for the symphony, and I'll stay at home and look after Libby while you work."

"Your writing?"

"Can wait. Kurt, you won't get this opportunity again. The ballet won't ask twice. This will propel you on to even bigger and better things."

"But your career...." Kurt says as he wipes down the kitchen table. "I mean...."

"I'm gonna level with you here," Blaine says, letting Libby out of her high chair and setting her on the floor with some toys. "When I was twenty five, I dreamed of being a famous songwriter and musician. I got the musician part, and I'm more than happy with that. I've had three years as concertmaster and I couldn't have asked for more. I'm incredibly lucky to have been appointed as first ever full time piano for them, and I don't want to give that up. But the commercial writing? Let's be honest here. We moved nearly four months ago, and I said I'd pick it back up. Have I? No. I've been too preoccupied...that's what I tell everyone. But if I'm honest, I don't really want to do it anymore. My heart is in the classical world, not the contemporary, catchy poppy jingle one."

"Is there such a world as that?"

"There is now," he smiles. "My point is, Kurt. I've had my time. I'm not past it yet, but I've had my career. I remember, years ago, talking with you. We were sitting on your bed at your parents house, and you said you were worried about having kids so young, and I told you then that I'd stay at home with the baby on my hip and it wouldn't bother me one bit. It still doesn't."

"I don't feel like I'm being fair to you though," he sniffs as his worried tears begin to fall. "I don't feel like it's right for me to have a kid and then dump her just so I can be selfish."
"Kurt! I can't believe you're saying that!" Blaine admonishes. "If we do this, you will be the main earner in our household. You'll be providing for me and Lib in the way that I've provided for you over the years. It's not 'dumping the kid' if you're leaving her at home with me. And you'll still have so much time with her, Kurt."

"What if you have a concert though? Or a tour?"

"Then we cross that bridge when we come to it," Blaine says firmly. "It's only seven months of this workload, Kurt. Libby either comes here with both of us, and Maddie and Joe sit her like they are tonight, or she stays with family. God knows there's enough willing relatives and friends. Even Sebastian would look after her if I asked. Please, Kurt. Take this."

"I don't know..." Kurt starts.

"I'm gonna be personally affronted if you don't," he teases. "I'll take it as a sign that you don't trust me to care for our daughter."

"Oh please."

"I will. I'll just assume that you think I'm a crap dad, and that Libby isn't safe with me."

"Blaine!" Kurt laughs, swatting him with a dish towel. "Apart from me, naturally, there is no one in the world I would trust more with our daughter....who is now walking across the room!" he shrieks, hurtling into the living room and leaping gracefully over the back of the couch.

Blaine follows, not quite so elegant and graceful, and he curses loudly as he hits his knee on a small table, but he falls onto the floor next to Kurt who is hastily filming with shaky hands as Libby takes one tentative, wobbling step and then another, her arms held out toward Blaine who encourages her as calmly as he can.

"That's it, baby," he calls. "That's it, you can do it! Good girl, Libby Darling. Good girl!"

"Your voice has gone as high as Mickey Mouse," Kurt laughs. "But look at her! Look at our baby!"

"Three, four!" Blaine cries as Libby gives up and sits down heavily. "Four steps! Libby, you are amazing!" Picking her up, he swoops her high above his head, making airplane noises as he zooms around the room with her. "Flying into Papa!" he calls as Kurt lies flat on the floor. "Papa, do you receive, over?"

"Received loud and clear, over," Kurt replies in his best walkie talkie voice.

"Libby Darling, prepare for landing," Blaine informs her as he swoops her down low, dropping her the final few centimeters onto Kurt's chest.

"Landed safely," Kurt announces, his voice muffled by Libby's laughing mouth as she tries to kiss at his lips.

"Thank you for flying with daddy airlines," Blaine grins, lying on top of them both, balancing his weight carefully. "Please come again soon." Leaning down, he kisses between them, a mixture of both their lips which makes Libby squeal delightfully. "Take it," he says, fixing his eyes on Kurt's. "Please. Let us love you and support you."

Kurt stares back, blinks and smiles. "Yeah," he breathes. "Yeah. I'm gonna do it. For me, but most importantly, for both of you. I'd do anything for you."
Kurt sits in the audience of the Chicago Symphony hall, waiting. An expectant hush falls, then there is polite applause as Riccardo arrives, and he gives a flamboyant bow before stepping onto his box ready to conduct. Turning to the audience, he holds his right hand out and the applause intensifies as Blaine walks onto the stage. Giving a polite and formal bow, which Kurt knows means he is actually nervous yet excited, he sits down at the piano and flexes his fingers, looks to Riccardo and then brings his hands down into the opening chord.

Kurt becomes engrossed, as does the entire hall of well dressed spectators as Blaine plays flawlessly. As the concerto progresses, Kurt smiles to himself at the sight of Blaine's undoing. His hair is the first to go, curling up from the nape of his neck as it breaks free from the gel, then over his ears and finally his forehead, leaving him with a tumble of wild dark curls, which Kurt knows holds ever more flecks of gray, which he adores. The glasses slip repeatedly, until he gives up altogether and slams them onto the piano lid during a small string interlude, and the tux jacket follows, flung to the floor in almost a temper, but Kurt knows it is actually all out passion for the world in which he is immersed.

And then suddenly it is the intermission, the lights coming up and making everyone blink in surprise as thunderous applause dies away and Kurt stands, stretching out the kink in his back, and heads to the bathroom. He smiles politely at the dark haired man watching him in the mirror as he washes his hands, and sidesteps him to reach the dryer. The man keeps watching, making Kurt feel uncomfortable to be under such close scrutiny in a public bathroom, and he mentally thanks his lucky stars that he found Blaine when he was still so young, and didn't have to endure this kind of attention from strangers.

He loses sight of him in the bar, and finds Ken's wife Gill instead, talking to her happily about their respective Christmases, and showing her many pictures of Libby. When he returns to the auditorium, he realizes the stranger is sitting in the front row, slightly along and affording Kurt a better view of him. There's no denying that he's devastatingly handsome; tall and broad, with dark eyes and jet black hair which is neatly styled. Kurt reckons he's probably mid-thirties, and when he turns to talk to the lady sitting next to him, he shows off a flawless smile, which makes Kurt smile in turn as he thinks of Blaine's grin which makes his stomach swoop. It's only as the lights are going down again that he stops to wonder why the man is front and center. The most prestigious seats are usually reserved for dignitaries and special guests, and spouses usually fill the row behind, as Kurt is now. But his attention returns to Blaine when he comes on stage and the stranger forgotten. He is neatly put together once more, though Kurt knows that as this section is intense, he will end up more disheveled than usual, and he's not disappointed.

By the time the curtain falls, Kurt is breathless. Blaine receives a standing ovation, now down to his shirtsleeves and dripping with sweat as he bows meekly and squints until he sees his husband cheering loudly and his whole face breaks into a huge grin. Kurt hurries backstage, pushing past waiting press and fans until he finds the security guard who nods and lets him in with a line of other spouses. It's the bit he always hates, after the show when he has to sit and wait for Blaine to finish showering and changing. It's not the people- he's been involved with the classical music world and this orchestra for long enough now and he can always find someone he knows. It's the waiting to feel Blaine in his arms once more. Their separation suddenly becomes unbearable as he waits to congratulate him each time, each minute feels like an hour until suddenly he appears, immaculate once more in a navy suit and politely greeting people as he swiftly crosses the room to his patient husband.
"Hey," he breathes, equally as happy to see Kurt.

"Hey beautiful," Kurt whispers, knowing that for now, with only members and spouses present, he can be as affectionate as he likes. He winds his arms around Blaine's neck, kissing him slowly, almost reverently. "You were wonderful," he says, sighing happily into his hair. "Mesmerizing."

"Thank you," Blaine smiles. "I'm glad you liked it."

"I adore watching you play," Kurt says quietly, playing with the knot of his red tie. "You are exceptionally talented."

Blaine smiles bashfully, ducking his head onto Kurt's shoulder. "Thank you."

"And watching you up there, sweating and pouring every ounce of emotion into that piano.... It turns me on."

"What?" Blaine laughs quietly. "Really?"

"Really," Kurt says with a small laugh. "Not in an 'I want to rip your clothes off and get down and dirty right here' kind of way...."

Blaine glances around the busy room. "Good!"

"More of an 'undress you slowly and spend hours making love to you' kind of way."

"Oh my god."

"Are you blushing?" Kurt asks as Blaine nods, head down. "That's the cutest thing."

"Hmm." Blaine looks up, grinning widely.

"What? You have to know it gets me going by now."

"Yeah," he says, slowly. "I guess we do always go home and....yeah. But it's still nice to hear," he says, quite unable to shift his grin as he tugs at Kurt's suit jacket. "I do have to go to this reception though, you know that?"

"I know," Kurt says easily. "But that's the best bit. I can wait, cause I have the rest of my days to make love to you."

Blaine laughs, sliding an arm around Kurt's waist and kissing his cheek. "I like the sound of that."

*I*

"I wonder if we'll still have sex when we're old?" Blaine asks as they walk hand in hand along the street to the hotel where the reception is being held.

"I think so," Kurt muses. "I hope so, anyway."

"Probably not as much as we do now."

"No....but then we don't do it as much now as we used to, anyway."

"True. Does that disappoint you?"

"Actually it doesn't," Kurt realizes in surprise. "I guess I never really thought about it too much."

When we first started out it was all new and we couldn't get enough, then we were living together and could do it whenever and wherever we wanted and now... Well now there's Libby, and work, and grown up, adult life...and I wouldn't trade any of that. We may not have wild, frantic sex as often as we did, but I'm much more emotionally connected to you than I ever was. And it's not like we never do it."

"I think we still probably get much more than most people."

"Of course we do," Kurt says smugly. "Have you seen us? These bodies need to be naked...and together."

"Ha! You, maybe. But...."

"Blaine, shut up and take the compliment. You know we look good together," Kurt smiles, nudging him with his shoulder.

"I...well...yes. Yes, I do know that," he says, stopping Kurt on the hotel steps to kiss his lips. "Now let's get this over with. I'm waiting for the hours of lovemaking you promised," he says with a wink.

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Once through the door they go their separate ways, falling into a now well practiced routine. Riccardo is waiting, taking Blaine's arm and steering him toward waiting press and dignitaries, while Kurt seeks out two glasses of champagne, pressing one into Blaine's hand before blending quietly into the background with the rest of the family and friends.

He used to hate it, and indeed he's still not overly happy that he won't get a second alone with his husband until they finally get to leave at probably gone midnight, but the difference is that now he understands. He knows Blaine has to do this, it's part of his job, and the main thing that seems to separate the Chicago Symphony from other large orchestras is their accessibility and willingness to grant interviews and pictures, which in turn brings in ticket sales. He knows for certain that though Blaine might seem to be enjoying the attention, smiling, laughing and saying all the right things in all the right places, he would much rather be at home, lying on the couch in his sweats, head in Kurt's lap as they watch the tv together and he plays idly with his curls.

And Kurt no longer needs the physical reassurance of Blaine by his side as he did when he was younger. It's enough to know that he's over there, surrounded by the mayor and his wife, a tribune journalist and Riccardo, and thinking of his husband as much as Kurt thinks of him now.

"Blaine! I want you to meet someone!" Riccardo cries effusively.

"Don't you always?"

"Ha! Yes!" he laughs. "Here. Blaine, meet Edward Roberts, Edward meet my spectacular gay Blaine." He stands back proudly, a protective arm across Blaine's back as he smiles politely and shakes the man's hand. Edward shakes Blaine's hand firmly, smiling back and...Blaine thinks he might have seen a wink, but then he might also have imagined it, he supposes.

"Nice to meet you properly, Blaine," Edward says, voice low.

"Uh...I'm sorry? I don't think we've met before, have we?" Blaine asks in confusion.

"Guild of stage and screen awards," Edward remarks, a small smile playing at the corner of his mouth. "We met at the after party....in the hotel reception," he adds when Blaine still seems blank.
"In the....oh!" Blaine's eyes go wide as he remembers.

"Edward is the new conductor of the New York philharmonic," Riccardo explains, oblivious to the sudden tension. "He is here to visit us and see how much better we are!" he booms, laughing loudly at his own joke. "Ha! You two talk. I go see Ms. Goldsmith. Talk! Talk!"


"So."

"You played incredibly."

Blaine studies him coolly, vaguely remembering his face from before. Good looking, yes, but there's an arrogance and air of self-importance about him that Blaine doesn't care for at all. He remembers those dark eyes studying him that night, as he had slumped in an armchair in a drunken, post-orgasm haze waiting for Kurt. He felt then as he feels now, like a piece of meat being salivated over by a hungry dog. But he knows who he is now, and much as he'd like to spin on his heel and leave, he can't. "Thank you," he says stiffly, his voice and pose as formal as can be.

"Funny. At the start of the evening you looked so put together that I wasn't sure it was the same Blaine Anderson, yet by the end of the first act, you looked exactly as you did when we met."

"We didn't meet," Blaine says through gritted teeth. "You leered at me, much like you're doing now. And it's Hummel-Anderson, thank you very much."

"Oh!" Edward laughs, showing off a dazzling grin which Blaine longs to smack from his face. "Feisty. I like it." Taking two more glasses of champagne from a passing waiter, he hands one to Blaine and watches as he downs it. "You like a drink, I see," he remarks, then takes a step closer. "I didn't leer at you, Blaine. You stumbled into the reception, tie loose and shirt untucked, hair sticking up in a hundred different directions. It was kinda obvious what you'd been up to. And I can't help it if that's my favorite look on a guy, can I?"

"It's not your look to appreciate," Blaine snarls.


"He's always here," Blaine snaps.

"Shame."

"He's over there," Blaine says, choosing to ignore Edward's comment. "Talking with Riccardo's son."

Edward looks to where Kurt leans against the bar, watching as he laughs at something Jules says then suddenly, as if he seems to sense that he's being watched, he looks across to Blaine and offers a small wave.

"I noticed him earlier," Edward remarks, which makes Blaine smirk with more than a hint of pride.

"Yeah, I'll bet you did."

"How are we? How are we?" Riccardo says brightly as he puts an arm around them both. "Blaine, you like, yes?"

"No."
"Oh. Uh...." Riccardo falters, not quite sure how to take this sudden turn of events, and he offers a placating smile to Edward before trying again. "Edward say he like how you play, Blaine. He like to conduct you sometime."

"Absolutely not."

"Uh.... Excuse us," he says to Edward as he steers Blaine quickly across the room to a corner. "What the hell, Blaine? This is...this is not you. This is not spectacular," he blusters. "It's...no. It's no good you don't like him."

"I'm sorry, Riccardo, but the guy's an ass," Blaine says quietly.

"I'm sorry Blaine, but I no care," Riccardo shrugs. "He seems nice to me. Maybe you get off on the wrong hand."

"Foot," Blaine corrects.

"Whatever. That may be, I don't know. But I need you to be nice to him, Blaine. I won't be with the symphony forever, and when I go, I need to leave my baby in good hands. Like you with Liberty."

"Libby," he corrects again, though he knows Riccardo is well aware of her name and just likes to tease. "And what do you mean you won't be around forever? You're not sick or something, are you?"

"No," Riccardo reassures. "But I been here six years. Long time, Blaine. And Jules, he all grown up. Lucia and I want our time again. I think in next couple years I go home to Italy."

"What? But...you...no," Blaine splutters. "You can't do that! You really think that would be the guy to fill your boots?"

"Edward is good man, Blaine. You need to give him a chance. He may well be working with us on our summer program, and I don't want you left out because you rude and not spectacular. Now go. Try again. And be nice."

"But I..." he starts, then sees the hard, determined flash in Riccardo's eyes and sighs. "Yeah...okay. Just...gimme five."

He steps from the room into the hallway, leaning against the wall and hiding his face in his hands as he waits. Sure enough, in seconds Kurt is there, his well known touch coming softly to Blaine's hands as he takes them from his face and holds them tightly.

"You okay? Or is that a dumb question?"

"You know in those cartoons," Blaine starts, with his eyes still screwed shut. "When the character is like...at the top of a cliff, or something, and he's scrambling around trying not to fall as the stones give way and clatter into the canyon beneath him?" he rambles.

"Uh.....yes?"

"I feel like that," he sighs, shaking his head. "Like everything is giving way beneath me and I'm powerless to stop it."

"Well....I'm still here," Kurt offers with a small shrug, and Blaine's eyes fly open.

"Yeah," he says, smiling and reaching out to tug him closer. "Yeah you are."
Kurt hugs him tightly, feeling the way Blaine sags against him in relief and kisses just above the collar of his shirt. "I love you," Blaine murmurs against his jacket, not wanting to ever move from his embrace.

"I love you too. You ready to go home?"

"I can't," he sighs. "I have to go in and be polite to people. I think I pushed Riccardo too far."

"That guy you were talking with.... Who is he?"


"Oh."

"You know at the awards, when I told you someone had asked if I was into public sex? That was him."

"Really?" Kurt seems surprised. "Huh. Yeah. I guess I can see why you think that then. I saw him during the recital. Intermission, actually. He was staring at me in the bathroom."

"He said he'd noticed you."

"Oh dear."

"No...I ignored it. It's fine. But Riccardo seems to think the symphony's future lies in his hands and that he's a good guy, so now I've been reprimanded and ordered to be nice."

"Riccardo's leaving?"

"Couple of years he says," Blaine nods. "To be honest, if he did go, I'd probably go too. I don't wanna stay and work with a jerk."

"Blaine," Kurt says, in the tone of voice which tells Blaine that Kurt thinks he's bordering on being ridiculous. "You spoke with him for all of two minutes. He might have come across as a jerk, but how do you think you appeared to him, huh?"

Blaine opens his mouth to retaliate, thinks better of it, pauses then tries again. "I hate it when you have a point," he grumbles.

"Go on," he urges. "Go play nice for a while and then we can escape."

"Ugh." Pushing off from the wall, he trails reluctantly after Kurt back into the room and drops a quick kiss to his cheek. "Thank you," he whispers, before Kurt blends back into the crowd once more, and Blaine takes a deep breath and walks over to where Edward and Riccardo stand talking.

"Excuse me," he says with as genuine a smile as he can muster, and Riccardo nods, pats him on the back and walks away on the pretense of finding food. "I uh...I think we got off to a bad start," Blaine offers to Edward. "I was rude, and I apologize."

Edward smiles warmly. "Accepted. And you know...I don't think I fared much better myself, so I apologize too."

"Accepted." Blaine smiles back, and feels a tiny bit better.

"In that case, can I get a do over?" Edward asks with a laugh, and he offers his hand. "Edward
Roberts, conductor of the New York Philharmonic."

"Blaine Hummel-Anderson, concert pianist and master of the Chicago Symphony," he says, shaking Edward's hand and laughing in spite of himself. "Nice to meet you."

"Likewise. And seriously, why did you hyphenate? Not an accusation," Edward adds quickly. "Just a genuine question. Doesn't your husband use Anderson for his fashion designs?"

"Costume designs, but yes," Blaine says with a nod. "His decision. But we wanted our married name to be a joining of both our names."

"He's doing very well, I understand."

"Exceptionally well," Blaine grins, eyes flicking over Edward's shoulder to see Kurt engaged in conversation with two other orchestra husbands. "I'm very proud."

"So you're house husband then, or what?"

"I'm not just that," Blaine counters, surprised at how much that phrase bothers him. "I still work, as you saw tonight."

"I hear you don't live in the city anymore."

"You hear a lot, don't you?" Blaine asks with a tight smile.

"I read," Edward shrugs. "You grant a lot of interviews, Blaine Anderson."

"Hummel-Anderson, and it's encouraged," he argues back, trying to remain polite. "Riccardo wants the orchestra and it's members to be accessible to the public."

"Good idea," Edward nods. "I have my first interview with Classical World next month," he admits. "I'm nervous as hell."

"Oh I'm sure your smooth charm will win them over."

"I'm not that bad," Edward laughs. "Give a guy a chance, Blaine."

"Sorry."

"Don't worry about it. So...suburban life. How is it?"

"Good," he smiles, thinking of their perfect house with it's neatly manicured lawn. "Yeah. We're not actually in Illinois," he clarifies. "We moved to Ohio."

"Ohio? Wow. Quite the commute."

"We try and organize it so we can be here together," Blaine explains. "We don't like too much time apart."

"Well no. I guess there's not much point in getting married if you're never going to see each other. So. Why Ohio?"

"Lots of reasons. We're both from there, our closest friends are there, and our parents. I lost my mom a year ago, and my dad isn't in great health... He lives five minutes down the road, so I can keep an eye on him. Plus we felt like Westerville- where we live- was a better place to raise our daughter."
"Yes, I heard about the baby too," Edward smiles. "Congratulations. Did you adopt?"

"Surrogate," he explains, handing Edward his phone to show a picture of Libby.

"She's precious. Don't you find it hard, at your age? I know you've just hit the big four-oh."

"You know like...so much about me," Blaine says with a nervous laugh, and he isn't sure whether to be flattered or afraid. "I turned forty, yes. But it doesn't affect my ability to be a parent."

"Oh no, I didn't mean that at all," Edward says hurriedly. "Sorry. I just meant that as I get older I find myself having less patience and tolerance for things, that's all, and I guess you have to be very understanding to be a dad."

"You're not as old as me."

"Six years off."

"And I take it you don't want kids?"

"I'm too selfish," Edward admits. "And it never really appealed to me. You probably think I'm a monster."

"Not at all. I wouldn't judge you for that," Blaine reassures, and finds himself happy that Edward looks pleased. "It's everyone's individual decision."

"I guess I never met a guy I could see myself wanting that with."

"I didn't either, until I met Kurt."

"You met here? Or in Ohio?"

"Ohio. I moved back, had been there for a year and wham. Suddenly, one day Kurt walked into my life. Never looked back."

"So where were you before?"

"Uh...New York," Blaine says, feeling that hateful tightening in his stomach.

"Ah yes. I meant to ask..... Is it true you won't perform there?"

"Um...I don't...no. Not if I can help it. I uh...." Blaine pauses, wishing he could stop feeling so panicked and overwhelmed, and wondering briefly why he cares so much about telling Edward this. "I don't really do New York."

"Shame. I'd love for you to give a recital with my orchestra," he smiles, genuine, open and honest and Blaine finds himself shrugging and staring at the floor.

"Not gonna happen."

"I have an apartment on the upper east side, I'd welcome you any time?"

"Just me?"

Edward looks down, a small smile playing on his lips before he looks back up again. "You, and whoever you'd care to bring, Blaine."
"Thanks, but like I said, I don't really do New York."

"Can I ask why?"

"It's just...not the place for me," he sighs.

"I thought I read you'd studied at NYU?"

"I did, and I loved it. I lived in the city for a while and it was great, then I had some really bad stuff happen and ever since then I've felt uncomfortable there."

"So you never go?"

"I go there," he says evenly. "I've worked there and been there to visit friends, and watch Kurt perform. But...I'm happier not being there."

"Ah," Edward shrugs. "Well, if you ever need anyone to hold your hand..."

"I'll be sure to ask Kurt," Blaine says with a tight smile, making Edward laugh loudly.

"Okay. You got me. Goodnight, Blaine. It was a pleasure meeting you."

"You too, Edward. See you again."

"Oh I hope so, Blaine Anderson. I really hope so."

"Hummel-Anderson," he calls weakly after him, but he is gone and Blaine is seized immediately by Riccardo who pumps his hand enthusiastically.

"Spectacular. Good boy. You make me happy again, Blaine."

"Good."

"And he no bad, huh? He nice guy."

"He's okay," Blaine shrugs. "I guess."

"Good, good. So now you can go home with boy husband if you choose."

"Yes please," Blaine says gratefully. "I'll see you on New Year."

He finds Kurt quickly and they leave, stepping out into the cold night air to wait for their car to arrive. Kurt's arms encircle him, strong and sure and he is grateful for the touch. Reaching up, his hand slides around the back of Kurt's neck as his lips seek out his husband's own and they kiss deeply, Blaine's hands framing his face lovingly. "God, I needed that," he whispers before kissing Kurt again.

"I know you did. And you know...."

But they are interrupted by footsteps behind them and both turn to see Edward walking from the hotel in a dark overcoat, collar turned up against the biting wind. He nods politely, an enigmatic smile playing on his lips as he passes. "Goodnight, lovebirds," he calls, before hailing cab and jumping inside.

"Ugh."
"Come on," Kurt laughs as the driver pulls up. "Let's get you home."
"Is Blaine okay?" Joe asks when they return and the bedroom door slams shut.

"Yeah," Kurt sighs, settling in an armchair. "He's just....stressed, I guess. Tonight was difficult for him."

"That's unusual," Maddie comments, "He's normally perfect."

"Oh he was," Kurt says hastily. "He played probably the best I've ever seen. But the reception was tough on him. He had to do the usual polite conversation with important people thing, and it's taken it's toll on him, that's all. Anyway, how was Libby?"

"Good as gold," Maddie says happily. "She enjoyed splashing all the bath water at Joe, and he had to change his shirt. Then she went to sleep around seven thirty."

"Thank you," Kurt says, then glances nervously toward the bedroom door, and Joe takes the hint.

"We'd better go," he says, tugging Maddie to her feet. "I'm flying to LA tomorrow."

"That's right, of course you are," Kurt says, horrified that he's forgotten. "Three weeks?"

"Yeah. Then back for two and then I'm in Mexico on location for a month."

"Okay, well...I'll call you. And Maddie, you know where we are if you need anything."

"Sure."

They say their goodnights and Kurt goes down the hall to check on Libby, putting her back under the covers and kissing her forehead then sighing heavily as he pushes open the door to their own room.

Blaine lies face down on top of the covers, in just a pair of black briefs. Ordinarily, the sight would have had Kurt grinning and hastily undressing, but tonight he finds himself filled with sadness and he wordlessly goes to the bathroom before emerging in just his underwear and turning the lights off, leaving just a small lamp on the nightstand. "So," he says, rummaging in a drawer. "Joe goes to LA tomorrow."

"Oh shit. I forgot. I'll call in the morning."

"Don't worry." Blaine feels the dip of the mattress as Kurt joins him on the bed but he doesn't look around, just breathes deeply when Kurt sits astride him and places a kiss to the top of his spine. "I think we need to get rid of this stress."

"I'm sorry," Blaine murmurs, voice muffled in the pillows. "I don't know why I let myself get so worked up."

"Is it Riccardo?"

"A little, I guess. I mean, he's one of my closest friends, and I do understand that he's not gonna want to be in Chicago all his days when his entire family is based in Italy....but on a purely selfish level, I don't want him to go."

"Apparently Jules has a lover in France."
"Jules, his son, Jules?"

"Yes."

"Huh. So I guess they're all gonna end up back in Europe."

"I think so, yes. Though I don't think Riccardo and Lucia are entirely happy about it."

"Why?"

"Said lover is in his mid fifties."

Blaine laughs. "Wow. I thought our gap was big. What's Jules...twenty two?"

"Yup."

"Hang on," Blaine says, opening his eyes and craning his neck to look up at Kurt. "He? Jules' lover is a guy?"

"Yeah. And yes, I always assumed he was straight too. But I guess the continuous string of girlfriends over the last five years was perhaps a cover up to how he was really feeling. Or maybe he's bi? I don't know. And I don't think it's the gender that worries his parents."

"Oh wow."

"Hmm. Anyway. De-stress time." Kurt picks up the massage oil he found in the drawer and drizzles it into his palm before rubbing his hands up and over Blaine's shoulder blades, squeezing and kneading gently as Blaine groans deeply.

"Oh god that's good."

"So...was it just Riccardo's possible retirement in two years which is worrying you, or someone else too?"

"I don't need to tell you the answer to that," Blaine says as Kurt continues to massage his shoulders. "Cause you know me well enough by now."

"Was he as big a jerk as you first thought?"

"No. But I think that's what's stressing me out. I couldn't make out what he was really like. One minute it felt like he hated me, or was laughing at me, the next it felt like he was trying to be a friend, and he seemed nice. But..."

"Did you feel like he was hitting on you?"

"I kinda did, yeah," he admits, embarrassed. "Which sounds so silly, because why would he be?"

"Uh...I don't know, because you're hot, maybe?" Kurt asks, rolling his eyes.

"Am not."

"Are too. I hit on you all the time."

"I know you do," Blaine laughs. "But only because you're stuck with me."

"Oh behave," Kurt says, digging a finger in his ribs. "I'm not stuck with you, I'm here because I
"You jealous?"

"Hmm." Kurt thinks aloud as his hands slide down Blaine's back then he lets his thumbs push back up either side of his spine. "No. I mean, I don't really have cause to be. He can hit on you all he wants, I know where your heart lies. I'm...annoyed, I guess, that he thinks it's okay to do that, and I certainly don't like that you were made to feel uncomfortable, but I'm not jealous, no. Why? Did you want me to be?" he teases, smiling against Blaine's skin as he leans down to kiss his shoulder.

"No," Blaine says with a small laugh. "I like what you said- that you know where my heart lies. That beats petulance and jealousy any day."

“Maybe I’ll send him a video of this massage,” Kurt says airily. “Just to show him what he’s missing out on.”

“You will not,” Blaine laughs. “I have to work with the guy at some point in the future, and I’d rather he never catches sight of me in just my underwear, thank you.”

“No, I wouldn’t do that,” Kurt tells him. “Because then that would make him very jealous, and that wouldn’t do at all. Besides, I don’t share my candy.”

“Ha!”

“It worked though, see? You’re more relaxed now we’ve talked things through,” he notes as he moves to kneel between Blaine’s legs and massage the lower half of his back.

“True. And this massage is damn good. You missed your calling in life.”

“I think we spent long enough searching for my calling,” Kurt reminds him. “And I’m also not quite sure that when we attended baby massage classes with our newborn, they intended for us to use the techniques we learned on each other as a form of foreplay.”

Blaine snorts into the pillow. “Those classes did prove very useful, though.”

“We massaged Libby once, then got the giggles because we found her ticklish spots and she laughed for the first time.”

“But we also learned that the hideously expensive oil is safe to use for lube,” Blaine says smugly. “...And that is no longer my back that you’re massaging,” he says in surprise when Kurt’s hands travel into his briefs to massage over his ass.

“I know that.”

The atmosphere changes, becoming thick and heavy with sudden desire as Kurt removes both their underwear and settles back between Blaine’s legs, pouring more oil over him to massage over the tops of his thighs, thumbs pushing firmly over the strong muscles and up over his backside. He doesn’t stop there, but lets his hands smooth up the length of Blaine’s back as his body follows, rolling against him until he's lying over him, kissing the back of his neck before moving around to
kiss at his collarbone and then he straightens up, returning his hands to Blaine’s shoulders and working slowly back down until he’s kneading Blaine’s ass cheeks, who groans softly and pushes himself up slightly for Kurt’s fingers to run over his perineum before cupping his balls lightly.

The massage continues, and Blaine lies with his eyes shut, so deeply relaxed and also turned on that he is happy to let Kurt take him over completely. Kurt himself carries on for as long as he can, until he’s so hard and desperate from teasing his husband that he can’t hold off any longer, and he presses his body against him again, sliding his aching cock between Blaine’s cheeks and sighing contentedly.

“Oh my god,” Blaine whimpers. “Kurt.”

“Shh,” he whispers, with a kiss to his shoulder blade. As needy as he is, he makes himself pull back and settle between his legs once more, running his thumb over Blaine’s already slick entrance and slipping it inside. A small “umpff” of pleasure comes from Blaine’s lips which makes Kurt smile, and he strokes his thumb gently in and out, never rushing, until he can easily slide another finger in alongside. His other hand smooths over Blaine’s back gently, and he lowers his face to kiss along his spine until Blaine is open wide under his touch, and lying carefully on top of him, Kurt presses inside.

The taller of the two, Kurt covers Blaine perfectly, his feet curled around Blaine’s toes; and with one hand tucked under against Blaine’s chest and the other laced tightly with the fingers of his husband’s right hand, Kurt brings his mouth close to Blaine’s ear. “I love you,” he whispers, undulating slowly inside him.

Blaine twists his head, capturing Kurt’s lips as best he can. “You too,” he whispers back, lifting his hips slightly for better leverage. The massage oil means Kurt slides easily but again he keeps his movements slow and steady, both enjoying the way they move together and wanting to prolong the pleasure for as long as they can. All Blaine can hear is Kurt’s breathing directly in his ear, ragged and shallow with the occasional gasp of pleasure. He shifts slightly, and then Kurt is grazing over his prostate and pressing his forehead to Blaine’s temple, both now damp with sweat. He presses his chest harder into Blaine’s back so he can drive himself deeper, picking up pace slightly and leaving Blaine stuttering soft whimpers and moans against Kurt’s lips. They come together and almost silently, rocking gently until they’re still once more, though Kurt stays buried deep inside, not ready to move.

“I came on the bed,” Blaine murmurs.

“I know.”

“But I’m not stressed anymore.”

“I know that too,” Kurt says with a quiet laugh. “I love you, Blaine. I’m sorry you didn’t have the best evening.”

“It got better.”

“I’m glad.”

“Sleepy now.”

“Mmm. Same,” Kurt murmurs as he closes his eyes and nuzzles into Blaine’s neck. “We should clean up.”

“We should.”
“Kurt?"

“Hmm?"

“I’m really squashed.”

Kurt’s eyes fly open. “Oh my god!” he cries. “I’ve just been sleeping on top of you all night! Am I still...”

“No. I don’t think so, anyway. I think you just kinda...fell out. You’re still nestled,” he adds with a smile. “I can feel it.”

“We didn’t clean up.”

“No. We fell asleep. And I’m still squashed.”

“Right. Of course. Sorry.”

Kurt rolls away carefully, his body red and hot from having been glued so tightly to Blaine all night long and Blaine turns onto his side, grinning broadly as he tucks his hands under his chin. "Last night turned out to be totally amazing."

"It did," Kurt agrees. "Y’know....um....."

"Huh?"

"C'mere," he says, turning Blaine around and spooning his own body tight behind him.

"What are you getting at?" Blaine asks, confused.

"You're still open."

"Kurt," Blaine moans, but it's somewhere between a groan and an all out whimper of pleasure as Kurt slowly begins to stroke him to full hardness. "I'm also still filled with your come," he says bluntly, but Kurt just grins, biting into Blaine's shoulder.

"I know."

"And mine is caked over my stomach."

"Fuck....that.....that's so hot," Kurt breathes, hurriedly coating himself in lube.

"Oh my god," Blaine laughs, in utter disbelief, then moans in the most filthy manner when Kurt pushes into him swiftly, not even giving him time to adjust before driving his hips back and forth. "Jesus Christ, Kurt!"

"Mmm," is the only response, as Kurt tugs his earlobe with his teeth and continues to thrust hard. "Fuck...Blaine...." he trails off, holding his husband tightly and breathing hard. It doesn't take long for either of them, and when Kurt swings his leg over Blaine's hip to push himself deeper, Blaine comes hard over Kurt's hand, then brings it to his lips to lick clean, sending Kurt wild. "Oh shit...yes," Kurt moans as Blaine sucks at his fingers. "Oh Blaine....hot...so...hot," he cries as he comes hard. "Hot," he whispers weakly once more, resting his head against the back of Blaine's neck.
"You're filth, mister husband," Blaine says with a laugh. "Total filth."

"I just...."

"You don't need to explain, or apologize, or anything," Blaine reassures him. "It was fucking amazing."

"Ha! Your mouth is filth," Kurt teases. "Ugh. So now we really do need to clean up before Libby wakes, cause we are not fit to greet our daughter like this."

By the time they are finished in the shower, Libby is singing loudly, happy to entertain her stuffed animals and wait for someone to appear. "She's gonna be musical," Blaine notes as they pull on underwear and head down the hall. "I know everyone rolls their eyes at us, but I'm telling you, she'll be a damn fine singer, just like her papa."

"I don't sing anymore."

"You do with me," Blaine says proudly. "We sing all the time."

"That's cause I love singing with you," Kurt smiles, kissing his lips briefly before pushing open the door.

Libby stands at the crib bars, bouncing happily when she spies her daddies, and promptly falls down when she tries to hold her arms out. "Baba, Dada!" She laughs happily as Kurt scoops her up.

"Good morning little lady," he sing songs, kissing her rosy cheeks. "And how are you more beautiful than yesterday, huh?" Blaine joins in, kissing under her chin and making her giggle.

"She knows the difference in our names," Blaine says happily as the little girl reaches for his cheeks.

"Of course she does, cause she's one smart cookie. Here, Libby sandwich," he says, reaching his arms out to tug Blaine so his chest presses against her back.

"Ouch! She's kicking where she really shouldn't be kicking," Blaine wheezes as Libby gets over excited at being held between her two dads.

"Okay, okay, calm down," Kurt laughs at her, trying to hold her flailing legs still. "Remember when we first held her against our chests like this?"

"Yeah." Blaine smiles, hooking his chin over Libby's shoulder and looking up at Kurt lovingly. "She was tiny. And we didn't know what to do with her."

"Still don't, really," Kurt shrugs. "But I think we're muddling through okay."

"We are." Blaine gives a soft smile which Kurt returns, reaching one hand out to caress gently over his cheek. "What?"

"I love looking at you," Kurt says tenderly. "You're so beautiful."

"Oh, I..."

"Be quiet," he teases before Blaine can protest. "You're beautiful. Both of you," he says, turning his attention to Libby too. "My little family."

Blaine leans forward, kissing his lips lovingly and laughing against him when Libby smooshes her
"Yeah, yeah. Okay," he sighs dramatically, taking her and throwing her high in the air. "We noticed you."

"Breakfast," Kurt announces, and Blaine and Libby follow down the hall.

"So, what did you want to do today?" he asks as he fastens Libby in her high chair and Kurt starts rummaging in the fridge. "It looks cold out, but we could wrap up warm and take a walk? Or stay in and practise walking?"

"Both of those sound good," Kurt starts, "but I do have to go into the office. Maybe you could come with? Then we could take a walk and get hot chocolate down by the lake."

"Perfect," Blaine smiles. "Perfect day with my perfect man and my perfect little lady," he coos, kissing the top of Libby's head.

* 

Blaine loves visiting the offices of Farris-Anderson. Not only does he feel incredibly proud to see Kurt's designs being made, and to watch his husband, head bowed over sketches as he alters minute details with Anna, but he also gets to show Libby off to everyone in the sewing room, and sit back and watch as they coo and fuss over her and generally declare her to be the best baby in the whole world. Which of course, she is.

His phone rings in his pocket and he glances across to see Libby sitting happily with Marcy, so he steps outside to take the call.

"Blaine!" Riccardo booms.

"Yes?"

"You still here? Not here. There. Where you are."

"In Chicago?" he laughs. "Yes. We're still here."

"Good! Coffee at the Lakehouse, yes? I need to ask you something. I see you in fifteen minutes. Bring Liberace."

"Libby!" he cries, but Riccardo hangs up, laughing.

He knocks on the door to Kurt's office and explains, but Kurt informs him he can't leave right now. "Take Lib and I'll meet you there as soon as I'm done?"

"Sure," Blaine nods, knowing that this is the way things are going to be from now on. "Love you."

"I love you too, Blaine!" Anna calls, laughing when he sticks his tongue out.

By the time he arrives at the Lakehouse, he is not looking his best. Flustered, after a huge battle of wills with his tiny daughter over sitting in the stroller versus being carried- which she won in the end- and red cheeked from the cold, he bursts through the door ten minutes late with Libby tucked under one arm and searches around for Riccardo.

"Blaine! Over here!"

And everything in him plummets when he whirls around to see Edward sitting at a table near the window, with a beaming Riccardo beckoning him over.
"Oh no," he groans, pressing his lips into Libby's hair. "No, no, no, no, no."

"Hi," he says as brightly as he can, immediately handing Libby to Riccardo who starts to coo and fuss. "Edward. Nice to see you again."

"You too, Blaine. I know Riccardo is thankful you could make this little crisis meeting."

"Crisis?"

"I have baby," Riccardo declares triumphantly, shoving her coat and hat into Blaine's hands. "There no crisis now."

"Crisis?" Blaine asks again, feeling worried. "What crisis?"

"Where's Kurt?"

"Seriously Riccardo, what crisis?"

"Sit down, I tell you. Coffee!" he booms at a startled waitress, and Blaine smiles meekly and adds a "please."

"Oh baby, you so pretty," he grins as he bounces Libby on his knee. "Edward. You meet Liberty."

"Libby," Blaine groans, but he's unable to resist shoving Riccardo's shoulder and smiling.

"Lilly," Riccardo teases back.

"She's very cute, Blaine," Edward acknowledges, chucking Libby under the chin.

"Thank you. Now please, somebody. Crisis?"

"Riccardo told me he likes you so much because you're always so pragmatic and level headed," Edward smiles. "The ying to his yang. I can see that."

"Please..."

"Okay," Edward laughs, holding his hands up. "Well, it's Riccardo's crisis not mine, so I'll let him divulge."

"You see..." Riccardo starts, then looks around the coffee house. "Where is Kurt?"

"Working. But that's irrelevant."

"You just called your husband irrelevant?" Edward asks in surprise. "Wow."

"I did not! I just meant that him being absent didn't matter to this discussion, that's all."


"Jules?" Blaine asks. "Yeah, Kurt did mention something."

"He's gone insane, Blaine. I do not know how to say it any other way. He insane."

"And this is your crisis?"

"Yes! And I ask you, and Edward, and I hoped Kurt would be here too, because I need advice for what to do."
"Well everyone calls you the insane Italian," Blaine teases. "So it's not hard to see where he's got it from."

"Blaine, he...he...he want to run off to Paris with this lover of his."

"I heard that."

"He twenty two, Blaine. He graduated with first class honors in linguistics. My boy...he's so bright, so smart....and now he want to throw it all away."

Blaine watches, shocked, as for the first time he sees Riccardo truly upset. He has dark circles under his eyes, which are red rimmed, and he looks tired and drawn. "Okay," Blaine sighs. "Kurt tells me this lover is in his fifties, yes?"

"He fifty eight, Blaine. Fifty eight. He has a grandson. I am only forty six. I mean....this cannot be good, no?"

"Is it...um...can I ask?" Edward says quietly. "Is it his first gay relationship?"

"For both of them," Riccardo tells them. "This is what I do not understand. Jules, maybe. Maybe he be questioning. But this man...he has been married three times, to women. He has six children and now a grandson. And suddenly he takes a young male lover."

"Well....I don’t know, because I haven’t met him so I can’t comment...but it could be that he’s always been gay, he’s just never felt he could come out? Or he’s bi?" Edward offers, hoping to placate him.

“No, he is an artist. He’s all....bo....bo...Blaine? How you say?"

“Bohemian?”

“Yes! That. He’s all that. He has lovers, he tells Jules. He has lovers, not relationships. He cannot be tied down. And apparently his wives know this about him. My wife? She say no. She’s so sad, Blaine. She just cries always for our boy. And you know, I have no problem if Jules is gay, or bi, or pan or anything under the rainbow...but I do not believe this is good for him. Not good at all."

“Is he still married?” Blaine asks, “this lover of his?”

“Yes! His wife lives in Marseilles. He has no intention of leaving her. He live in Paris, and go home maybe four times a year. This is my problem!” he cries desperately. “He wants my son as a plaything, kept in some apartment in Paris as his muse...and I...no. Just no,” he trails off despondently. “Not my boy.”

“Well....he’s twenty two,” Edward says warily. “I don’t think you can necessarily demand that he doesn’t go.”

“No, but Riccardo is his dad,” Blaine points out. “Neither can he sit back and watch him ruin his life.”

“I know that,” Edward says evenly. “I don’t think he should. I think you should take some time,” he tells Riccardo. “Talk with him calmly...well, as calmly as you can, and explain your concerns.”

“I’ve tried,” Riccardo moans. “Blaine, do you think Kurt would talk with him? I know they always get along well.”
“Ask him,” Blaine says, smiling. “He’s just arrived.”

Kurt is happy to see Riccardo, and surprised to see Edward, but introductions are made and he smiles politely and shakes his hand before kissing his husband’s cheek and settling next to him. Blaine busies himself helping Libby with her juice while Riccardo fills Kurt in, and then watches as his husband thinks it over.

“I could talk with him,” Kurt offers, laughing when Riccardo kisses his hand. “Let’s be honest here, we all know this is going to end badly.”

“Not necessarily,” Edward interjects to a withering glare from Blaine. “Hear me out. It could be, just could be, that this is it for both of them. I’ll admit it doesn’t sound likely,” he says, cutting off Riccardo before he can object. “And it sounds like Jules is more committed to this than...what’s his name?”

“Francois.”

“Francois. But,” he carries on. “If you start barraging him with advice, saying he should walk away, or break it off...you’re only going to send him right into his arms.”

“Good point,” Kurt nods. “So maybe that’s not the approach. Maybe I talk with him and suggest Francois comes out here to visit?”

“What?” Riccardo screeches, and Edward laughs and stands.

“You guys talk it over. I’ll take Libby to see the ducks, if you’d like, Blaine?”

“Um, well...”

“That’d be great, Edward, thank you,” Kurt smiles, and before Blaine can add another word, he takes Libby from Riccardo’s lap, pulls her coat on and fastens her in the stroller before returning to the table once more. “Okay, Riccardo. Don’t yell at me, just hear me out. I know what I’m talking about here, okay?”

Blaine doesn’t listen to another word, too anxious as Edward disappears out the door with his most treasured possession. He twists this way and that, watching as Edward walks around the lake, stopping every now and then to crouch down and point out the ducks. Once they round the corner out of sight, he breaks. “I’m gonna go check on them,” he smiles tightly. “You two carry on.”

He finds it slightly easier to breath once he’s outside, and walks quickly to the other side of the lake to where Edward stands with Libby in his arms. “She should have her hat on,” he snaps.

“Oh, I’m sorry. I didn’t know. She kept taking it off and throwing it so...”

“She always does that,” Blaine informs him, pulling the pink bunny hat over her ears. “But she has to wear it. I don’t want her catching cold. She’s also warmer in the stroller, under the foot muff.”

“Right,” Edward says stiffly. “Sorry.”

Blaine takes her and manhandles her back into the stroller, much to Libby's annoyance. She screams and arches her back, making it harder and harder for Blaine to fasten the straps, but he persists, embarrassed by the noise she is making and the knowledge that Edward is just standing there, watching. "Done," he huffs eventually, straightening up. "She's tired," he adds brusquely, and walks off, Edward hurrying along in his wake.
"Blaine? I'm sorry if I did wrong," he says tentatively. "It's just when you arrived you were carrying her so..."

"I thought you didn't like kids?" Blaine asks suddenly. "So why now?"

"I didn't say I didn't like them," Edward says evenly. "I'm an uncle. My sister has four. I love kids, I just don't want my own. Libby is a very cute little girl," he says with a smile. "You're very lucky."

"Libby is demanding," he admits, shaking his head. Stopping, he turns to face him, but Libby starts wailing again and he shrugs ruefully. "See?"

"That's just a battle all parents have with their kids," Edward says as Blaine sets off walking again. "Their will against yours.....Blaine, what's wrong?"

"Nothing," he says airily, picking up pace.

"Hey...hold up," Edward calls as he runs after him. "Is this me, again? Did I do something?"

"Yes! You...ugh," Blaine sighs, stopping the stroller again. "Oh." Peering inside, he notices Libby is quiet, her eyelids drooping as she hugs her orange teddy close.

"Why don't you sit down a moment?"

He falls onto the bench with a sigh, and continues pushing the stroller back and forth with one hand as Libby falls asleep. "To be honest, you didn't do anything," he finally admits as they both stare out at the lake. "I was gonna moan and say you took Libby out here without my permission, but Kurt was grateful so...."

"I wasn't trying to upset you, if that's what you're thinking," Edward says without turning his head. "I know you don't like me...."

"It's not that."

"Well...anyway.... I was just trying to be helpful. I barely know Riccardo. You and Kurt are his friends. I was meeting him anyway, before I fly home, and he asked if you could come too, then told me about his son. I tried to offer advice, but it's you two who really know what to say."

"I thought you were quite good, actually," Blaine admits with a small smile. "And really, I'm not mad at you. This is all just...stirring up a lot of emotions for me, I guess."

Edward doesn't say anything. He wants to know, of course, but he also doesn't want to push this seemingly fragile truce they've just formed, so he stays silent and Blaine continues to rock the stroller gently, even though Libby is now reclined and sleeping soundly, until he speaks again.

"Now I'm a parent, it makes me realize how scared Kurt's dad must've been when I showed up asking to date him."

"How old was Kurt?"

"Sixteen."

"And you?"

"Thirty one."

"Really?" Edward exclaims in surprise. "Wow. I figured there was a few years between you, but I was thinking like...I don't know...seven, eight?"
"Nope," Blaine says with a tight smile. "He's a baby."

"Well what you call him in your private life is no concern of mine," Edward quips, and Blaine laughs in spite of himself.

"Twenty five," he clarifies. "There's fifteen years between us."

"And his dad was reluctant?"

"Yeah...but he let me. That's what I don't get. I mean, when we first met Kurt was fifteen. I flatly refused to date him because that was just all sorts of wrong. We were friends for eight months before I asked his dad's permission. And he said yes. I don't get that at all. Cause now, hearing Riccardo talking about Jules, I try to think what I'd be like....and there is absolutely no way in hell I'd let Libby date a guy fifteen years older than her. I mean...Kurt was a child, Edward. He was a little kid, still, and he was going out on dates with me and...."

"And what?" Edward asks as Blaine trails off, stricken. "And you made out? Moved steadily through your relationship and waited until you were both ready for more? I might not know you very well, Blaine, but I'm guessing you didn't lie him down on the back seat and have your way with him on your first date."

"No! Goodness, I'd never have done that, no. We waited."

"So....what's the issue here? His dad must've seen- must still see- what we all see."

"What's that?"

"The way you love him. I mean, I've not seen much of you two together but... The way you love him.... It's completely, isn't it?"

Blaine looks down, blinking back tears of...what? Gratefulness, to this almost stranger whom he loathed but now seems to be proving his worth as a friend? Guilt, for taking Kurt's dating life away from him so young? Or sheer, overwhelming love for his young husband and life partner? He doesn't know. But he forces a trembling smile and looks up. "Yeah," he breathes. "I love him completely."

"And not many people find that, you know. Even in marriages that last....it's not always soulmates."

"No," Blaine realises. "I guess not."

"Did you always know?"

"Yes. I mean, I say we were friends but...I could never have stayed just that. There was too much of a pull to be able to ever watch him with someone else."

"What if he had, though? What if he'd dated his way through high school or college?"

"I would have had to walk away," Blaine shrugs. "Though it would have broken my heart. But you know? He loves me the same, and he always has, so it's never been an issue."

"And don't you think his dad saw that? If Libby came to you and introduced some guy or girl, and you could see how hopelessly in love they are, even if it perhaps wasn't what you had in mind....don't you think you'd want to see her happy?"

"Huh. Well. I guess," Blaine says slowly. "Though the situation with Jules is very different."
"Not that different," Edward argues. "Big age difference, not the type his parents could see him ending up with."

"I don't know, Edward. There's a lot of baggage."

"But you have baggage, Blaine. Most people do when they reach middle age."

"Oh god, please don't call me middle aged," he groans.

"But this guy is fifty eight," Edward points out. "Okay, three marriages is a lot...but what if Jules is his person, as Kurt is yours? What if you met Kurt now, and he was only sixteen. You have a kid, a mortgage, a high flying career....what then?"

"I'd walk away," Blaine says immediately. "I wouldn't want to ruin his life like that."

"Really? You think you could? Or would that pull be too strong?"

"I would," he says firmly. "I'd walk away. Especially if he was only sixteen."

"Twenty two then, Jules' age?"

"I'd..." Blaine pauses, hesitating over declaring he would walk away because in all honesty...would he? Or would he need to know? To be able to say he tried, if nothing else? Could he honestly ever walk away from Kurt, no matter what the circumstances, no matter how they met? Or would they, as they have done in this lifetime, always gravitate toward one another, because they are soulmates who keep finding each other over and over. "I'd love him," he says quietly. "I'd love him for all eternity no matter if he wanted me or not."

"Exactly. I'm not saying that what Jules has here is the same...if you want my honest opinion, I didn't think it is, but I'm just playing devil's advocate really, because I don't want what has the potential to be this young man's first great love, to be ruined at the hands of other people."

"But the guy is still married, though," Blaine remembers. "That's what I don't get. Call me old fashioned, but I've always been a one man kinda guy."

"Have you? Before Kurt? There must've been others."

"There were others," he starts, flustered.

"How many?"

"Enough to know that as soon as I laid eyes on Kurt I didn't ever want to be with anyone else again."

"Really?"

"Really," and this time Blaine is sure, definite. "If he finished things tomorrow, if something terrible happened... No. I will never sleep with anyone else again, my whole life through. I made a vow to honor him with my body and I'll always do just that."

"You take marriage very seriously, don't you?"

"What the hell?" Blaine cries. "Of course I do! How else are you supposed to take it? You ask another person to spend the rest of their life with you. And it was even bigger for Kurt and I because he was only nineteen when we got engaged, and he proposed to me first."
"Wow."

"Exactly. He got down on one knee and declared that he wanted to love me for all the rest of his
days so yes, I take that very seriously indeed."

"I envy you."

They fall silent once more, looking out over the water and squinting in the bright winter sunshine.
"I was wrong about you," Blaine admits after a while. "I'm really sorry."

"I told you, don't worry about it," Edward says magnanimously. "I'd like to be your friend though,
Blaine, if you'd let me."

"I thought you were hitting on me yesterday."

"I was," Edward admits. "But I can see it's not going to get me anywhere, and it was kind of
a...superficial hitting on, maybe?" he laughs shyly. "I didn't know the first thing about you, other
than what I'd read. I knew you were married," he confesses, "but I didn't know Kurt was a decent
guy, and I didn't know you'd found your soulmate, otherwise I'd never have even tried. So I'm sorry
too."

"So...friends?" Blaine offers hopefully, and Edward shakes his hand.

"Friends."
Three months later.

Blaine wanders down the hall to the back of the house with Libby wobbling alongside, grasping onto his finger. Pushing open the door to Kurt's office, he smiles to see him drawing, tongue sticking out the corner of his mouth in that cute way he has, as he frowns, erases something and tries again. He nods to let Blaine know he's seen him, but carries on sketching for the moment and Blaine is happy to lounge in the doorway and wait, watching Libby crawling around after the cat until eventually Kurt looks up from his drawing board and smiles.

"Hey, it's my two favorites."

"Hey," Blaine smiles as Libby toddles over to be lifted onto Kurt's lap. "Can I ask you something?"

"Sure."

"You can say no if you want."

"O-Kay?" Kurt says, pushing back from his desk as Blaine steps further into the room.

"Do you think...maybe...I could invite Edward to the party?"

"If you want to," Kurt shrugs. "I don't see why not."

"It wouldn't bother you?"

"Why would it bother me? You're friends with the guy, he seems nice. He likes Libby. Ask him."

"Is it a bit weird? To ask him to fly here for a kids first birthday party?"

"It's Libby," Kurt says matter-of-factly. "People are coming from all over- Joe's flying up from Mexico."

"True."

"Besides," he says, covering Libby's ears. "We all know it's not really her party. She has what? Five kids from baby music coming? And Livvy. It'll be once she's in bed that the party will really start."

"Even so...I don't know."

"Do you think it's weird, Blaine? If you do, then why are you asking?"

"I just wonder if he'll think it's strange, that's all. But there will be a lot of people he knows, and he's a nice guy."

"He seems it," Kurt says. "I haven't spoken with him since that day in Chicago, but he seemed pleasant enough. Is this work related, or friendship related?"

"Bit of both," Blaine admits. "I've not spoken with him since then either, but we've exchanged emails a few times, and we're friends on Facebook."

"Like that makes a difference, you never go on there," Kurt laughs. "I tag you in all these family
pictures, and it makes me look like a crazy because you never comment."

"I know," Blaine smiles. "I will, one day. You'll be wondering who this person is liking all your pictures from five years ago. Anyway. I just thought it'd be nice, really, given that a lot of people from the symphony are coming, to ask him too. Riccardo is thinking of organizing a joint concert in New York this summer."

"And you'd be up for that?"

"Nope."

"Then why are you asking?" Kurt laughs.

"I told you, I thought I'd be polite. No way in hell I'm playing in New York. He could maybe stay here?"

"Well everyone else will end up doing that anyway," Kurt says as he sets Libby on the floor. "It doesn't bother me, Blaine. If you want to ask then go ahead and ask. I like the guy. He apologized for hitting on you so as far as I'm concerned that's over and forgotten. Now come here and kiss me because it's been at least an hour."

"Hmm," Blaine grins as he walks slowly over to Kurt and slides one hand to the back of his neck. "Hey, do you remember when I visited you in New York? We had sex against the wall."

"We also didn't have a nearly one year old or a cat," Kurt reminds him as Martin winds between their legs. "But yes, I do remember that very clearly," he says before Blaine's lips are on his and he sighs happily.

Blaine pulls back before it gets too far, knowing that the second Kurt's tongue is in his mouth he will feel compelled to pin him against the wall and indulge in a hot make out session. "We're gonna rush to Target for party supplies before baby music time if that's okay?" he asks, voice already taking on that sultry edge it has when he's aroused.

"Of course. Man, life sucks sometimes."

"It really does," Blaine agrees. "Oh, the things I could do..."

"Go," Kurt laughs, shoving him lightly in the chest. "Leave. Go to Target and forget all about me, sitting here...alone..."

"Come with?" Blaine offers, but Kurt is already shaking his head.

"I can't," he moans. "You know that."

"But you've never been to music time with us," he pouts.

"I know, but it's been non stop since New Year," Kurt points out. "We knew it would be. And I'm trying to find a balance," he carries on. "If I come with you now then that's nearly three hours lost, by the time we've done Target, music and then called in to see your dad. And then that's three hours away from you guys tonight, meaning no bath time, stories and cuddles for Libby, and no time alone with you."

"Okay, I was just asking," Blaine says defensively, stuffing his hands in his pockets. "I didn't mean for you to get so worked up."
"Sorry," Kurt says sheepishly, sliding his arms through Blaine's and bowing his head onto his shoulder. "It's just...I wish I could come, that's all."

"I know," Blaine says lightly, kissing his cheek. "But you're right, we'll get you tonight. So get back to it," he jokes, tapping his backside. "And we'll see you later."

* 

"Our baby is one!" Kurt cries happily, four days later. "Our baby is one!"

Blaine sits, digging the heels of his palms into his eyes as he tries to wake up properly. "One," he croaks. "Ha! We've had her a whole year. Wow. One."

"Let's go get her," Kurt says excitedly, bounding from the bed, then he stops. "Oh. Good morning, by the way," he grins, crawling over the bed to kiss Blaine's lips. "Now let's go get her."

Libby is clueless, of course, but nevertheless she enjoys tearing pretty colored paper off elaborate and expensive gifts from her daddies, who have really gone to town for their daughters first birthday. What was once Blaine's recording studio is now transformed into a large and bright playroom, and Libby heads straight for her brand new toy kitchen where she starts stuffing a random assortment of toys into the oven.

"And here, Lib," Kurt calls. "There's also a tool bench, cause daddy and I don't want to be those parents who only buy really girly stuff...though if you don't want to play with it, that's more than fine by me."

"Hey!" Blaine objects. "Don't you want her to learn to fix cars, like you?"

"Hmm. I guess," Kurt shrugs. "But only if she doesn't break a nail."

"Kurt!" Blaine laughs, tossing a ball of wrapping paper at him. "Ignore your papa, Libby," he jokes, though the little girl is far too busy now trying to fit herself in the oven to listen. "Hey, was that the door?"

"Santana, probably," Kurt notes. "Either that or someone's broken in."

"I love how alarmed you are by this," Blaine laughs as Kurt starts assembling a toy train set. "But no, it's Santana, I can hear her footsteps."

Sure enough the playroom door is thrown open and Santana stands there, grinning broadly. "Libby is one!"

"I know!" Kurt squeals, jumping to his feet and hugging her hello. "It's her birthday," he calls, as Blaine shakes his head and falls back on the floor. "We're gonna party like it's her birthday."


"Bear," Libby says pointing to the oven.

"Did you get this? Did you get this smart kitchen? Do your daddies think you're in the fifties?"

"She got a tool bench too," Blaine adds quickly.

"Bear," Libby says again.
"Bear? Did you cook bear? Huh? Oh you did," Santana says, opening the oven door and taking the orange bear out. "How nice. You love bear, don't you?"

"Bear, ahhh," Libby coos, rubbing her face against it.

"That's because I got it for you when you were growing inside me," she tells the little girl. "So it's naturally your favorite."

"Oh behave," Blaine laughs. "I'm gonna make coffee," he announces. "I'm assuming you're now here for the rest of the day?"

"Yes. Where else would I be?"

"Wes and Kathy will be here soon, and Burt and Carole are picking dad up about eleven."

"Gifts now, or later?" Santana asks. "Now that I actually have a job, I might have just spent my entire first paycheck on a certain little one year old."

"Now, if you want."

"Okay, well I'll wait for you to make coffee."

When the doorbell rings, Blaine strides down the hallway, assuming it will be Wes, and he pulls open the door with a big grin on his face....only to find Lacy standing there.

"Fuck off," he snarls, his good mood evaporating instantly. "I mean it. Get the fuck away from my house now."

"Do you know where I can find Santana?" she asks, biting her lip nervously.

"Yes I do, and no I'm not telling you. Now leave."

"Please, Blaine. I need to speak with her. I need...."

"You need nothing," he hisses vehemently, getting right up in her face and forcing her to take a step backwards. "You hit and you hurt my best friend, and you show up here wanting to see her? No. Fucking. Way. Now go, and don't ever turn up here again, or I will call the police and tell them everything."

"Blaine, please, I...."

"I am THIS close to hitting you," he yells, shoving her out onto the driveway as he loses all composure. "Hitting you like you hit her, only I don't know if I'd be able to stop."

"Hey, hey, hey!" Kurt's alarmed shout makes Blaine turn to find him running outside in just his socks, wedging himself between them. "What the hell is going on?"

"She wants to see Santana."

"Oh hell no," Kurt snaps immediately. "Just leave."

"Do you know where she is?"

"I'm here," Santana calls from the doorway where she stands with Libby on her hip. "Please go, Lacy. I meant what I said three months ago. It's over between us. I can't forget what happened."
"Tana, please..."

"You heard her, now go!" Blaine roars, oblivious as Libby starts to cry and Kurt cowers back. "Get away, just go! Leave now before I make you leave! Get the fuck away from me, my husband and our daughter and most importantly, Santana, or I'll...I'll..."

"You'll what?" Lacy yells back, having been forced back to her car by Blaine's yelling, angry face in hers. "You know, you've always been the cause of every tension in our relationship, you know that? You and him," she says, gesturing to Kurt. "Because of you, and your selfish demands for a child, she wouldn't have one with me. Because of you, and 'oh Blaine's turning forty, I have to be there,'" Lacy mimics bitterly, "We couldn't talk things through the first time. Yes I made a mistake, I lost my temper and I shouldn't have, but you...always you...sticking in where you're not wanted or welcome. Tana is an adult, which you might not have noticed, but she's capable of deciding for herself if she wants to see me, it's not your decision."

"It damn well is my decision when you show up on my property!" Blaine screams, then menacingly pins his arms either side of her, trapping her against the car and when he speaks, his voice is low and seething with anger. "Get the fuck away from my family or I swear to god I will seriously hurt you."

"Whoa! Easy now, Blaine." Wes comes running toward them at the same time Kurt arrives from behind, pulling Blaine away and manhandling him back to the house. A sobbing Libby is thrust into Kathy's arms and Santana makes her way to the car.

"You heard him," she says quietly. "Just go."

"I heard him threaten me, yeah," Lacy snaps bitterly. "What a lovely guy."

"He is a lovely guy, you know that," Santana says with a shake of her head. "He's also fiercely protective, and I don't think he will ever be over seeing me with a black eye."

"I'm sorry, Tana," Lacy cries desperately. "How many times?"

"Not enough," she shrugs. "There will never be enough times that you can apologize, Lacy, because I'm not prepared to hear it. You know, it's Libby's first birthday today." she says tearfully. "I don't want a baby of my own, but as her aunt I have a responsibility to her, especially as she's growing up with two guys. I need, as does Rachel and Kathy, to be a role model to her. To show her how to be strong and independent yet loving and kind. I need to show her that it's okay for a woman to stand up for herself, and I need to show her that she should never settle for second best. How can I do that, if I've settled for you? For someone who can turn around and claim to love me one minute, then hurt me the next?"

"So it's over because of the baby? Always, that family."

"My family," Santana states firmly. "They are my family. And it's over not just for them, but for me. Because I'm stronger than this, and I deserve better. Please, Lacy, don't contact me again. And certainly don't contact Blaine if you know what's good for you, I've never seen him so angry."

"Whatever," Lacy snaps, pulling open her car door. "You've lost the best thing you could have had, you realize that?"

"On the contrary," Santana says with a small smile as she steps away. "I think right here and now, surrounded by people who love and care about me, is the best thing I've ever had, and I'm never throwing it away."
She makes her way back into the house to find all hell broken loose in the living room between Kurt, Blaine and Wes, and she sneaks down the hall to the playroom instead to find Kathy with the babies.

"Oh my god, are you okay?" Kathy asks, rushing to her side and hugging her tight.

"Yeah, I'm good. I think. Actually..." She trails off, sinking into a bean bag chair. "I'm not great. I'm quite shaken up...but it sounds like I'm faring better than Blaine, anyhow."

"Oh Kurt and Wes are giving him hell," Kathy confirms. "Stay in here with us girls and bake tools instead."

"I'm not sure that was what Blaine and Kurt intended when they got the tool bench," Santana says as she watches Olivia chewing on a plastic screwdriver and Libby piling everything else into the oven.

"No, but they're too busy yelling at each other to notice."

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"But you made Libby scream, Blaine!" Kurt yells. "She was frightened of you!"

"And I'm sorry," he cries in despair. "Christ, Kurt, don't you think I feel bad enough about it? But I was angry."

"Oh I noticed," he fumes, standing defensively with his arms folded and staring down at Blaine, who sits on the couch. "You might have thought you were quiet, but Wes was halfway down the street and he heard you threatening to seriously hurt her, as we all did."

"She's lucky I didn't threaten to kill her," he admits. "I stopped myself just in time."

"Jesus Christ, Blaine! You're...you're...you're a complete idiot!" Kurt screeches.

"Okay, Kurt, I get why you're mad," Wes starts, "but I really think we need to calm down here. It's Libby's birthday and we have just over an hour until her party. She's already been upset," he says, with a glare at Blaine. "And I don't want her day to be spoiled. She won't remember it, but you both will. Now, Blaine, I think you should go to your room."

"Excuse me?" Blaine stands, completely take aback. "What did you just say?"

"I said go to your room," he repeats. "Let Kurt calm down a bit and then we can all be friends again, okay?"

"He'll be lucky," Kurt snaps bitterly, falling into the spot on the couch Blaine has just vacated, as his husband storms from the room.

*

"Can I come in?"

Blaine looks up from where he's lying on the bed to see his father-in-law, Burt, poking his head around the bedroom door. "You will anyway."

"Yup. So, I hear you're banished?"

Blaine nods, sitting back against the headboard as Burt sits on the end of the bed and looks at him.
"You should come down. Your dad's waiting to tell you off, and he can't manage the stairs."

"I made Libby cry," Blaine says quietly, pulling his knees up to his chest.

"So I hear."

"She was frightened of me."

"She wasn't frightened of you," Burt says evenly. "She was scared for the situation, and alarmed at hearing you shout, that's all."

"Still, I yelled. I lost my temper and I threatened someone while my one year old daughter looked on. What kind of dad does that make me?"

"You didn't yell at her, though," Burt points out. "And really, it's not like she's gonna remember this. Put it down to a lesson learned, Blaine. We all make mistakes."

"Kurt was really mad."

"Kurt was in shock," Burt corrects. "But he's not mad. In fact, I'd say he secretly quite liked it, seeing you get so protective like that."

"I'd like to say I'd never have actually hit her but...."

"You wouldn't," Burt chuckles. "When all this first happened, your dad and I had a long discussion about hunting Lacy down."

"You...and my dad?"

"Yeah. All bravado, of course, though she would have had me yelling and screaming too if I'd arrived a half hour earlier. We're all angry at her for what she did, but you wouldn't have hit her, because you know that makes you just as much of a monster as she is."

"Do you think Santana will have her back?"

"No," Burt says firmly. "I don't. Some people stay with abusive partners, some keep going back and forth and others, like Santana, are strong. I mean, she's not strong, she's crumbling inside and what's happened today will be a major setback for her, but she knows she can't stay with her. She's one of the lucky ones, in a way."

"I surprised myself with my anger."

"You didn't surprise me," Burt shrugs. "I could sit here and list all your family and friends and I know you'd defend every single one of them in the same way, because that's you. You care about people you love, Blaine. That's nothing to be ashamed of. I'm the same."

"Yeah, about that," Blaine says, suddenly remembering. "I have a question for you. Now that I'm a dad, I have this overwhelming need to protect Libby from everything. Like, I never want her hurt. I don't want her to fall and scrape her knee, I don't want her to be called on in class and not know the answer, and above everything, I never want another person to hurt her, or break her heart. So why did you ever let me date Kurt? I came to you in the hospital and asked and you said yes...when he was sixteen years old. He was so young, and naive, so completely inexperienced at...life, really. And I just want to know...why?"

"Because I knew you'd never break his heart," Burt says simply. "I won't pretend it didn't bother
me, because it did. A lot. I used to pace, endlessly when he was out with you. Either that or channel hop so much that Finn and Carole would both yell at me. And when you asked if he could sleep over, it made me feel sick with worry. But as a parent, you have to trust your kid, Blaine. I had to trust that Kurt would keep in mind all I had said to him and of course, I had to trust you. But I did. I do. I've always known you have his best interests at heart because I've always been able to see how much you love him. The first time I ever met you, in the garage when you had a flat, I was alarmed, sure, and I couldn't get your age out of my head. But when you'd left, that wasn't what stayed with me. It was the looks you two had shared, the way your face had brightened when you spoke about him.

Libby is tiny right now, and reliant on you for everything. But as she gets older, I think you'll be surprised. I think you'll want her to spread her wings, however much it pains you, and however often you need to be there to pick up the pieces, because you'll want her to explore and learn for herself. And if one day she brings someone home, and she looks at them like you and Kurt look at each other, then you'll know, and you'll want her to be happy no matter what."

"You're a good dad, Burt," an emotional Blaine tells him as he slides up the bed to hug him.

"I know. And so are you. Please don't beat yourself up over this, just focus on today and making a huge fuss of Libby. Now come on, let's go find your husband."

*

A humble and contrite Blaine finds Kurt and Libby in the dining room setting out plates of food, ably assisted by Kathy, who makes herself scarce the moment Blaine appears, and closes the door softly behind her.

"I need to apologize to Libby," Blaine says, his voice small.

"Right." Kurt hoists her higher on his hip. "Well, here she is."

"I'm sorry, baby girl," Blaine says, smoothing a hand over her hair. "I yelled, and I frightened you, and I'm sorry. I really do promise not to do it again. You see, sometimes people try to hurt people that I love, and that makes daddy mad. But I didn't mean to scare you, and I can't promise I won't get mad ever again, or that I won't defend my friends and family, but I can promise that I'll never make you frightened. I love you, Libby Darling." He kisses into her hair, surprised when Kurt hands her over so he can clutch her tight to his chest. Libby laughs, giving tiny wet kisses as Blaine swipes at his tears.

"I think she forgives you," Kurt says softly.

"And you?"

"Of course I do," Kurt tells him with a small smile.

"You're not mad?"

"No. I mean, it wasn't the best situation, and in all honestly you frightened me too, but I get why you did it."

"She just..."

"I know, Blaine. I've seen you lose your temper like that twice before. Once in that bar when you hit Adam, and once in the school parking lot when you floored Karofsky because he called us fags. You love passionately, Blaine, and you defend with equally as much vehemence."
"Is Santana okay?"

"She will be. Wes is with her now, and Carole."

"I am sorry, Kurt. I'm sorry for losing my temper like that."

"Really don't worry," Kurt says, stepping close to wind his arms around his neck. "Honestly, when you get angry...as long as it's not directed at me...it's really hot."

"Behave," Blaine says with a blush, but he's laughing as he looks down shyly.

"It is," Kurt protests. Taking Libby, he opens the dining room door and sets her down in the hallway. "Baby on the loose!" he yells, and Burt calls back. "Coming!"

"Better." Kurt closes the door again and sidles up to Blaine, wrapping his arms around him once more. "Angry Blaine is hot," he repeats. "And you know what you said about the wall, in New York?"

"Kurt," Blaine warns, but Kurt's breath comes hot in his ear and he can't help but whimper.

"I can't stop thinking about it," he whispers. "All the time."

"You always do this," Blaine groans as his eyes close in pleasure.

"Do what?"

"Turn me on when I really shouldn't be turned on."

"Sorry."

"Don't be," Blaine grins, and then he's kissing him, deep hard and rough, hands framing his face as he directs the kiss and Kurt moans happily at the feel of his tongue. "I love you."

"I love you too...oh!" he smiles at the sound of the doorbell. "It's party time!"
Chapter 11

Blaine mans the door as Kurt mingle, and steadily their house fills with guests. It’s a varied mixture of family and friends old and new, and Kurt has a hard time keeping track of everyone, but guesses that the ones with small children must be the parents from Libby’s music group.

“Come in, welcome,” Blaine says as Ken and Gill arrive. “Food in the dining room, drinks in the kitchen, babies in the playroom so I’d steer clear, and most symphony members seem to have gathered in the conservatory. Oh, and thank you for coming.”

“We wouldn’t have missed it,” Gill smiles as she kisses his cheek. “Now I must go and find that gorgeous daughter of yours and give her our gift.”

“Hi,” Blaine says brightly as two more moms arrive with their offspring. “Glad you could make it.”

A bewildered Mike appears, shuffling warily, still not used to the mobility his hip replacement has afforded him. “Who are all these people, Blaine?” he asks as he looks at the two small toddlers. “Where did all these babies come from?”

“Oh, dad, this is Marcia and her son, Max, and Ellen and her son Jamie. We all go to baby music together, and Ellen also comes to swim lessons with me.”

“Pleased to meet you,” Ellen smiles.

“But Blaine can swim.”

“I know I can,” Blaine laughs. “It’s Libby and Jamie who have the swim lessons, Ellen and I just sit in the water and chat.”

“Lovely to meet you,” Marcia interrupts. “Blaine, this all looks wonderful.”

“Oh, well, it was Kurt who did it all really, but I did bake the cake.”

“Hey, Blaine! Sebastian missed his calling as a children's entertainer. You have to come see,” Kurt calls enthusiastically as he hurries down the hall. “Come.”

“Okay. Um, Kurt, meet Ellen and Marcia, and their kids. This is Max, and this is Jamie.”

“Hi,” Kurt waves, still slightly wary of meeting new people, but Ellen smiles warmly.

“Oh so you’re Kurt,” she says as she shakes his hand. “Lovely to meet you. I’ve heard so much about you.”

“Oh,” he beams brightly. “Well...all good, I hope.”

“Nothing but praise,” she assures him.

“I’ll show you to the playroom,” Blaine offers. “That’s where the actual kids bit of the party is happening, and where apparently one of my friends is keeping everyone entertained.”

“So is Kurt the party planner?” Marcia asks sweetly as she follows Blaine down the hall.

“Um, no.” He stops, turning to her with a wary smile. “Kurt is my husband.”
“Oh!” Marcia reddens immediately, and the hand that isn’t holding Max flies up to cover her mouth. “Oh I’m so sorry. I had no idea. I mean, I’d seen a ring but I just assumed...and I shouldn’t have. I do apologize.”

“No, it’s fine,” Blaine says, equally as embarrassed. "I guess I always used to introduce myself and feel the need to add on that I was also gay, but...I don’t know. Since I’ve been with Kurt for so long I don’t really bother. I just assume most people will know...I should have said something.”

“No, not at all,” Marcia says. “Gosh, you shouldn’t have to introduce yourself as that. I don’t introduce myself as Marcia, Max’s mom and a heterosexual,” she says, laughing nervously. “I just...Well, truth be told I’ve never met anyone who’s gay. Or at least, I don’t think I have.”

“Well at least announcing myself as gay avoids situations like this,” Blaine smiles. “But let’s just move on.”

“My brother is gay,” Ellen tells them. “But then he also works as a drag queen in Reno, so it’s kind of noticeable, I guess.”

“And you and Kurt are married?” Marcia asks.

“Yep,” Blaine nods proudly. “Nearly four years. Been together nine years.”

“Wow. And can I ask,” she starts, unsure. “Is Libby...is she adopted, or...”

“Um no, we used a donor and a surrogate.”

“She looks just like Kurt,” Ellen says.

“She does,” Blaine grins. “Now you’ve seen him, you’ll probably notice it more and more in her mannerisms and stuff. Santana, who’s around somewhere, was her surrogate. Or she housed her, as she prefers to say. I’ll introduce you later.”

He shows them into the playroom laughing at Sebastian who sits with Libby in his lap and a line of babies behind, singing ‘wheels on the bus.’ “That one’s gay too,” he whispers to Marcia. “Be thankful.”

“Blaine, I didn’t offend you, did I?” she asks nervously. “I asked too many questions, maybe.”

“No, really. I’d rather you asked than just shunned me, or even worse, tried to pretend that it was completely fabulous to have a gay friend. I can’t stand that.”

“Spectacular gay Blaine!” Riccardo booms as he rushes into the room.

“Well...some exceptions, I guess,” Blaine says meekly. “Excuse me.”

“Limmy is one!”


“I can only apologize,” Lucia, Riccardo’s wife laughs as she hugs Blaine hello. “He’s been wholly overexcited for the entire drive. Takes his mind off Jules, anyway.”

“Yes, how is that?” Blaine asks.
“Francois arrives on May first for an entire month,” Lucia says with a shrug. “I don’t know what to say, except he’ll either return to France as Riccardo’s new best friend or in a body bag.”

“Oh god, let’s hope it’s the former,” he laughs, patting her shoulder. “Oh.” Looking past her, he sees Edward standing nervously in the doorway, as if unsure where to go, but he visibly relaxes when he catches sight of Blaine.

“Hi,” he smiles. “Kurt directed me this way so...”

“Yeah. Hi. Good to see you again.” Blaine smiles warmly and shakes his hand. “Glad you could make it.”

“Oh, well, thanks for inviting me. I was surprised. But it was a nice surprise,” he adds quickly.

“While Riccardo is distracted I’ll show you to the guest room,” Blaine says, leading him back down the hall and up the stairs where it’s much quieter. “And I apologize, but you’re right next door to Libby,” he says with a rueful smile. “She does sleep all night, but she will wake early and likes to sing loudly until Kurt or I come and get her.”

“No worries,” Edward smiles, throwing his bag onto the bed.

“My brother and sister-in-law are the other side to you, and my niece and her boyfriend— who is also Kurt’s best friend— are across the hall. A whole load of randoms will probably stay, Nicky and Jeff, Sebastian...they’ll get too drunk later to drive home. Santana likes to think she lives here anyway even though I bought her an apartment and Rachel and Finn will most likely sleep over too. That’s Kurt’s brother and wife. So...”

“So I have no idea who all those people are,” Edward laughs. “But thank you for warning me.”

“Yeah, it’s a lot to take in, I guess. Come downstairs and I’ll introduce you.”

Even once all the guests have arrived, the relentless pace that Kurt and Blaine have set for themselves doesn’t let up, as they try and talk to everyone, refill drinks and still find time to fuss over their daughter. Eventually, several hours later, Kurt finds himself suddenly dragged backwards from the kitchen counter, soda bottle still in hand, into the downstairs bathroom where the door is locked and he’s pinned against it.

“I miss you,” Blaine says simply, and then his mouth is on his, hot and wanting as the soda bottle is dropped to the floor and Kurt kisses back desperately.

“This is a wall...or door, anyway,” he gasps, as Blaine tilts his head back to kiss down his neck.

“Naughty boy.”

“Well at least kiss me again, then,” Kurt begs, and Blaine happily obliges.

“Oh c’mon,” Joe moans from outside the door. “I need to pee, and this is a kids birthday party.”

Kurt pulls open the door, red cheeked and hair standing on end. “I like you better in Mexico.”

“At least I can get in the bathroom in Mexico,” Joe replies as he pushes past Blaine.

“We were just...reconnecting,” Blaine offers, but Joe shakes his head.

“Save it, sunshine. You’re both gross.”
He slams the door shut and Kurt and Blaine dissolve into laughter, making their way down the hall, fingers intertwined. “Cake time?”

“Sure,” Kurt nods. “As soon as Joe is done.”

Everyone crams into the music room, and Riccardo pushes Blaine unceremoniously from the piano bench, demanding that he play while Blaine settles down on the floor next to Libby and waits for Kurt to enter, carrying the cake very carefully with one candle burning brightly. Under the glare of several flashbulbs and phones recording every second, a rousing rendition of happy birthday is sung as Libby claps her hands excitedly and looks between Kurt and Blaine in the hopes of one of them being able to explain what the hell is going on. All she does know, is that there's singing. And lots of smiling faces. And her papa and her daddy are wiping their eyes and grinning at her in that weird way they have, and then papa makes her laugh by pulling a face at her and everyone rushes to take another picture.

"Blow your candle out, baby girl," Blaine encourages gently, and between the three of them, and a lot of drool, they manage to extinguish the flame and everyone claps and cheers.

"They are so in love," Marcia sighs, watching as Kurt puts an arm about Blaine's shoulders and kisses his temple.

"They're always like that," a voice next to her says, and she turns.

"Really? How long have you known them?"

"Oh, well I'm their sister-in-law, Rachel," the girl says with a smile. "And I've been friends with Kurt since we were small. I married his brother. But those two...yeah. They're always...I don't know...Santana? What are Blaine and Kurt always like?"

"They're always having sex," she says bluntly before walking off.

"Drawn to one another," Wes offers helpfully. "Like, where one is, the other will be also. Not because they feel the need to keep tabs on each other, more because they just want to be by each other's sides as much as they can."

"Well I think it's adorable," Marcia declares.

"If you're into that sort of thing."

"Be quiet, Sebastian," Rachel snaps.

"Hey!" Seb objects. "That wasn't me!"

"Oh." Rachel redbens when she sees Sebastian is stood the other side to her, and turns to find Edward smiling benignly.

"It was me, I'm sorry if I offended you."

"No, no, I just....well....no. It's fine," she says, trying not to let her awkwardness show.

"I just meant some people are really into the whole commitment thing, and others aren't," Edward clarifies, and Sebastian raises his glass.

"Amen to that!"

"I disagree," Wes says. "I think everyone would be into commitment, if they met the right one."
Some people never do, but that doesn't mean they wouldn't be just like those two given half the chance."

"True," Sebastian shrugs. "I've often said how much I envy them both. But there's nothing wrong with a quick mindless hook up in the meantime."

"Okay well, this conversation just became a whole lot of awkward for me," Marcia laughs, raising her hands. "So I'm just gonna...go...yeah."

"Oh well done, fool," Wes snaps at Sebastian.

"What? It's true. C'mon, Wesley," he teases. "Don't you ever want to..."

"No I do not," Wes flares, his cheeks red. "And because I know you, I know you're only trying to get a rise out of me. Well it's working, so please stop. And shut up."

"Blaine said a weird thing to me," Edward says nonchalantly. "He said that even if Kurt wasn't around anymore, he'd never hook up with anyone else."

"Nah, he wouldn't," Sebastian nods. "There's only one for him."

"Marriages end, you know, for one reason or another."

"Not theirs," Wes and Sebastian chorus together.

* 

"Okay," Blaine says quietly, closing the door to Libby's bedroom and tiptoeing over to where Kurt sits in the rocker, feeding her a bottle. "Everyone except the usual crowd have gone, and your dad and Carole have said they'll make sure dad gets in okay. Shift over."

"Sit on my lap," Kurt tells him, and after a little rearranging they're rocking back and forth happily, Kurt's arms wrapped around Blaine's waist, his chin hooked over his shoulder as he gazes down at Libby adoringly where she rests in Blaine's arms, watching them with wide eyes as she feeds. "Today was manic, and loud, but wonderful."

"Agreed," Blaine sighs, settling back into his embrace. "I love you both so much."

"And we love you.... You're crying, aren't you?"

"Yeah," he admits, huffing a small laugh. "But only because I'm so happy." Leaning down, he kisses the top of Libby's head before turning to capture Kurt's lips in a lingering yet chaste kiss. "Sing with me," he whispers. "She's nearly asleep, look."

Sure enough, Libby's eyes are drooping, the bottle slipping slowly from her little mouth as she starts to drift off and Kurt and Blaine sing her off for sweet dreams.

"The stars are out, the moon is up. It's time to go to bed. I'm so glad you have a place to lay your little head. Have a deep and peaceful sleep. Dream away the hours. When you wake the sun will come,
to smile upon the flowers.
Go to sleep my little friend,
beneath the evening star.
You will always have a friend,
no matter where your are."

Blaine carefully lifts her into the crib, kissing her forehead before settling back in the rocker with Kurt. "Aren't we going downstairs?"

"Hmm, in a bit," Blaine murmurs, cupping Kurt's face and nuzzling against his cheek. "Let's just..."

"Make out a little bit?"

"Well, I was going to say cuddle, but I'm good for anything that involves kissing you," Blaine smiles.

They kiss slowly and gently, teasing one another with their tongues and teeth, tugging on each other's lips and sharing soft smiles when they kiss on and on, until Kurt sighs and kisses Blaine's forehead. "Maybe we could have an early night? We're kind of renowned for sneaking off at our own parties."

"I know, but...ugh. We really should go down. Edward doesn't know anyone and..."

"Of course," Kurt nods. "Sure."

"Later, okay? I'll um...I don't know...I'll hold you up against the wall, lie you down on the bed, bend you over the vanity....whatever you want," he says, kissing the tip of Kurt's nose.

"Hmm, well there's a lot to think about there," Kurt says, adopting a thinking pose. "I'll let you know after a few glasses of wine."

"Sounds good to me," Blaine smiles, standing and offering his hand. "C'mon, gorgeous boy."

*

The evening is relaxed, and mainly involves lounging around and talking as wine is drunk and bread, cheese and leftover cake is eaten. Blaine lies the length of the couch, with Kurt nestled happily between his legs, back resting against his chest. His hands wander, as they always do after a couple of glasses of wine, and he traces gentle patterns over Kurt's arms, but then, his hands seem to be massaging over Blaine's thighs anyway as he chats with Rachel and Finn, so Blaine closes his eyes and relaxes some more.

He's vaguely aware of the conversations in the room; Cooper, Wes, Joe and Maddie seem to be in some kind of discussion about the latest film Joe has signed up for, and Cooper's wife, Clare and Kathy talk babies. He can also hear Sebastian, Nick and Jeff laughing as they discuss a movie they watched last week, but he can't hear Edward at all. Opening one eye lazily, he scans the room, opening both eyes when he sees him sitting on the floor by the couch, looking up at him. "Oh," he smiles as warmly as he can. "Um... What?"

"Huh?" Edward asks, confused.

"You're watching me."

"Oh, no, I wasn't," Edward reassures, a faint blush staining his cheeks. "Sorry. I was just looking about the room really, and my eyes fell upon you two just as you opened yours."
"Oh," Blaine says, feeling suddenly silly. "Sorry."

"No worries," Edward shrugs. "You know, I've never seen you this relaxed."

"Ha! This is Kurt and I most evenings, to be honest. Just lying on the couch together, watching tv. Occasionally we play board games, or sing together, but not as much as we did."

"Why's that?"

"Too tired," Blaine says with a small, regretful laugh. "He works so hard all day, and I rush around after Libby. By the time she's in bed we just collapse."

"You're painting the most exciting picture of married life," Edward laughs.

"It is exciting," Kurt suddenly says, twisting so he's lying on his front, still between Blaine's legs and looking down at Edward. "Every morning that I wake up it still thrills me to know he's my husband."

"Aw," Blaine smiles happily, leaning down to kiss the tip of his nose. "I love you."

"I know you do," Kurt smiles back, and Edward is forgotten when Kurt slides up so he's on top of Blaine and kisses him deeply.

"Oh give it a rest, you two," Cooper calls, throwing a cushion at the pair, but Blaine just catches it and holds it in front of their faces.

"Everyone here is all loved up," Sebastian groans, "and those two are the worst of the lot."

Edward turns so his back is to the couch, shaking his head. "This is quite the education for my lonely, single life," he laughs, and then the kissing couple are left in peace when Joe starts regaling them all with tales of his time at college, and Maddie hides her face in her hands. "Seriously, when Kurt and I were in London, I used to come home in the morning after a night out with some girl and there he was, lying on his bed reading yet another letter from Blaine."

"You went to London?" Edward asks in surprise. "Or rather, Kurt went to London without Blaine?"

"He did," Joe nods. "For six weeks. And Blaine wrote him like...a ton of letters, for all different occasions. It's possibly the most romantic thing I've ever seen. So he read letters while I worked my way around the city."

"Joseph, please be quiet," Maddie urges. "One day I want my daddy to say yes when you ask permission to marry me."

"Who says that's gonna happen?" Joe teases.

"I do," Cooper says firmly, making everyone laugh.

"Take me to bed," Kurt gasps quietly behind the pillow before kissing Blaine once more.

"I will," Blaine murmurs against his lips. "Just as soon as you stop kissing me so this raging hard on can go down."

"I love that you get so turned on by kissing," he giggles, then gives a yelp of surprise when a smack comes to the back of his leg.

"I heard that!" Rachel screeches indignantly. "Please leave the room."
Buzzing from the wine, Kurt and Blaine dissolve into laughter and tear from the room and up the stairs, with Blaine pressed tight to Kurt's back.

"Yeah, goodnight then," Santana says, rolling her eyes.

"They always do this," Finn tells Edward. "But that's okay, because as soon as they disappear we drink the contents of their very expensive liquor cabinet."

* 

"Wall," Kurt pants as soon as they're locked in their room. "I still want it against the wall."

Blaine laughs mischievously as he fumbles with the buttons on Kurt's shirt. "Made a decision, did you?"

"Yes. Hard and rough and against the wall."

"But you need to be worshipped."

"You can still worship me this way," Kurt says, shoving his pants and underwear to the floor. "And after this I promise we can make love slowly and sweetly for as long as you like."

"Fuck." And Blaine moves in, kissing Kurt hard, tugging his bottom lip between his teeth, biting, sucking and licking his way down Kurt's neck and somehow still managing to remove his own clothes.

"Blaine! F-feels good," Kurt moans as his tongue dances across his abs and down his treasure lines. "Oh...fuck." His head thumps back against the wall when Blaine takes his erection deep in his throat, and he moans, whimpering and tugs on his hair as Blaine hollows his cheeks and sucks a little harder, swirling his tongue over the head in just the way he knows Kurt likes. He sucks Kurt until he's right on the very edge, then pulls back and stands, kissing him once more. "You tease," Kurt moans. "I was right there."

"I know." Grabbing the lube from the nightstand, he squeezes some into both their palms and nudges Kurt's legs apart with his knee. "But I want you to come with my cock in your ass."

"Oh Jesus. Your dirty talk kills me."

"You love it," Blaine says smugly, running his fingers over Kurt's entrance. "Just like you love my cock."

"Yeah I do," Kurt smiles, running his slick palm over Blaine's length. He moans when his leg is tugged up until it's around his husband's waist, his fingers slipping easily inside and silence falls as they pleasure one another until Blaine stills Kurt's hand.

"Okay. Here goes. Now...it's been a while, so just..."

"Blaine?"

"Yeah?"

"Fuck me."

Kurt laughs loudly when Blaine growls, wraps Kurt's legs around his waist and lines himself up at his entrance, slowly letting the weight of his husband slide down until he's buried deep inside and both are moaning happily. "Now I've just gotta remember how to move," Blaine gasps. "You've
"I'll get you for that later," Kurt chuckles before kissing Blaine deeply, slow, sensuous and soft, and somehow they start to move together. It's a lot of exertion for both, and it's not long before they're both sweating and breathing hard, but the pleasure is indescribable, especially for Kurt, who bites hard into Blaine's shoulder to keep from screaming so loud the whole house can hear. He prolongs it for as long as he can, but when Blaine kisses him and gasps loudly into his mouth, he loses it, coming with his cock trapped between their stomachs. Blaine lets go too, having held off to wait for Kurt, and his release is much needed, pressing their foreheads together as they moan and shudder for the longest time. "Yes...you....fuck...just....yeah..." Blaine pants, unaware of his rambling as Kurt's whole body convulses around him. "Fuck," he whispers, rocking slowly. "Oh fuck just...fuck...yes." Kissing Kurt wherever he can reach, he smiles blissfully against his skin. "Oh. Legs." Suddenly cold and shivering, Blaine's legs start to shake almost uncontrollably and he sets Kurt down as gently as he can before sinking to the floor.

"Oh my god," Kurt whispers, exhausted as he falls down beside him. "Just....oh my god."

"I might never move again."

"I love you," Kurt smiles, falling haphazardly across him and kissing at his chest.

Blaine lets one hand come up to play with Kurt's hair as he grins up at the ceiling and wonders if it's acceptable to sleep on the floor. "You too. Jeez. I can't believe I held you up against the wall."

"You did very well."

"Thanks." They laugh softly then fall silent as they rest a while until the hardwood starts to feel uncomfortable under Blaine's back and he shifts. "We should shower," he says regretfully. "I'm not sure I can stand but..."

"Then we'll sit."

So that's what they do, sitting cross legged opposite one another as the spray falls over them and Blaine slides forward, slotting his legs over Kurt's and they share sweet, lazy kisses under the water until Kurt declares they're clean enough. Falling into bed, they're asleep instantly, not surfacing again until morning when they hear Libby singing from across the hall.

"I'll go," Blaine groans, heaving himself from the bed and pulling pajama pants on. "Ugh. Everything hurts."

"I'll bet your ass doesn't," Kurt mumbles from where he's lying on his front. "Mine is on fire."

"Really?"

"You were buried very deep," he says, cracking one eye open and smiling. "Not that I'm complaining."

Laughing, Blaine goes across the hall but is startled by the opening of the door next to Libby's room as Edward emerges in just a pair of boxer shorts. "Oh!"

"Oh...um....hi," Edward says in surprise.

"I just....um...Libby," Blaine says, pointing lamely to the door and then rubbing the back of his neck awkwardly.
"Right. Yeah. She uh...she woke me, actually."

"Sorry."

"No, it's good. I'll just....yeah," he mutters, gesturing toward the bathroom. "And then I'll probably sleep some more so..."

"Right."

"Well...."

"Yeah."

Blaine darts into the nursery, fetches Libby- kissing her and hugging her tight- gathers her orange bear and a clean diaper before sticking his head into the hall to check the coast is clear, then running back to his room again. "Phew."

"Good morning, little lady," Kurt grins as Libby immediately climbs onto his back and nuzzles into his hair. "How's my girl, huh?"

"She's good. I need to change her diaper though," Blaine says as he fetches wet wipes.

"Why didn't you do that in her room?"

"I uh....I ran into Edward," Blaine says as offhandedly as he can muster. Lying Libby on the bed, he unfastens her sleep suit and onesie.

"So?"

"So it was all kinds of excruciating and awkward. I was like this," he says, gesturing to himself, "and he was just in boxer shorts. I just....ugh. It was awful."

"Um, Blaine? You go to a gym," Kurt reminds him gently, "where guys wander around in the changing rooms with nothing on at all. You take Lib swimming with Ellen and Jamie...she sees you bare chested. And when we go on vacation you never wear a shirt."

"I know but it's different. I don't know. It's like...like...I felt like he...."

"Was checking you out?"

"Yeah," he mutters, embarrassed. He busies himself cleaning Libby and swapping the diapers over, blowing a raspberry on her tummy and making her giggle before he dresses her again. "We exchanged a few words, that was it but the whole time I felt like he was just gawping at me. And last night, too," he says, in full flow now he's admitted it. "He was just staring at us. Like...like he was trying to imagine himself in your place or something. I feel bad saying it, because I think he's a nice guy but I just don't like the way he makes me feel, that's all."

"Well..." Kurt scans the tv channels, finding something for Libby to watch before sitting her between them. "He admitted he was trying to hit on you so..."

"Yeah, but I think that was just him hoping to get laid with no strings attached," Blaine tells him.

"Well anyway, if he makes you feel awkward you don't have to invite him to stay again. I agree with you, he's a nice guy. But maybe he likes you a little more than he should."

"Why?" Blaine moans. "Why me?"
"Because you're all sorts of wonderful, that's why," Kurt says with a smile. "Who can blame him?"

"You know where my heart lies though, right?"

"Of course I do!" Kurt cries, leaning over Libby's head and kissing Blaine soundly on the mouth. "Oh honey, you never have to justify your intentions to me. Really. If Edward makes you feel uncomfortable then just...I don't know, carry on being friendly to him, work with him when necessary but don't invite him to stay at your house, that's all."

"Yeah, you're right."

"I'm always right," Kurt grins. "He's a good guy, Blaine. Just a little misguided, that's all. I wonder if he has many friends? We don't really know much about him at all."

"I think I'm happy to leave it that way," Blaine says, heading to the bathroom.

"So what are our plans for today?" Kurt calls, changing the subject.

"Don't know. I have no idea who ended up staying last night, or what time Edward has his flight."

"Okay. Well...if we do get time, do you want to take a walk later? Just the three of us?"

"Yeah, I'd love that," Blaine says, sticking his head around the door, his jaw covered in shaving foam. "We could go to that new playground. They have an awesome slide."

"For Libby, or for you?"

"Haha."

*

Blaine showers and dresses while Kurt sees to Libby, then takes her down to the kitchen for breakfast leaving Kurt to sleep some more. He cooks a mountain of food, expecting the arrival of several hungover house guests, and Sebastian is the first to arrive.

"Good morning, beautiful girl" he chirps, kissing the top of Libby's head as he passes. "Morning, Blaine."

"Hey. I didn't think you stayed. You weren't in the living room...oh!" he cries, suddenly realizing. "Oh, you...gross!"

"What?"

"You slept with him, didn't you?"

"Edward? Yup."

"How did that happen?"

"Well he was on all fours and..."

"No!" Blaine cries. "I mean...you know what? Nevermind. You're disgusting."

"Oh please," Sebastian says, rolling his eyes as he sets his coffee cup down. "Like we couldn't hear your headboard banging."
"You couldn't," Blaine shrugs. "We did it against the wall."

"Blaine!" Sebastian cries, dissolving into laughter. "Oh man. You old dog. Ha!"

Blaine shrugs smugly, flipping the eggs in the pan, the tension between the friends forgotten.

"Well anyway, I'd better get going. I'll see you Thursday?"

"You're not running out on him, are you?" Blaine asks.

"Yep."

"What, you're just not gonna say goodbye or anything?"

"Nope."

"So I just get left to deal with it?"

"Would you rather I sit here and wait for him to arrive, and then you have to deal with the awkwardness of two strangers who fucked the night away attempting to make conversation over breakfast?"

"Please don't curse in front of Libby," Blaine snaps. "She's talking now, and picking up on everything we say."

"Oh my god, sorry," Sebastian says, rushing to kiss her tiny hand. "Really, Blaine, I'm sorry. That was out of line. Oh man."

"Hey, it's okay," Blaine reassures.

"It's not."

"Don't beat yourself up over it. Just...go. Before he arrives."

"Okay. Sorry, Libby."

"Bas!" Libby chirps.


*

He feeds Nick and Jeff, and Maddie and Joe who then set off to visit Mike before returning to Chicago. After that, he carries on cooking, having received warning from Finn that he would be calling in to pick Cooper up for the game, and Libby sits in her high chair watching him and banging her toys on the tray.

"Hi," Edward says, and Blaine turns around from the stove.

"Morning," he smiles politely.

"Someone's been busy," Edward remarks as he looks at the array of food.

"Help yourself, before mine and Kurt's brothers eat the lot," he says, breaking off a piece of waffle and handing it to Libby.
"Ta."

"Welcome," he smiles, kissing her cheek.

"Are you mad at me?"

Blaine straightens up, looking at Edward who sits at the table with his eggs and toast. "No. Why would I be mad?"

"I slept with one of your friends."

"You're both single, consenting adults," Blaine shrugs. "It's not my business anyway but no, I don't mind."

"Did you and he ever...."

"Nooo," Blaine says, handing Libby some more waffle. "No. Not at all. We kissed twice."

"Are you the one that got away?"

"Ha! No," Blaine laughs. "Seb would probably tell you I was, but he has a tendency to be melodramatic. He crushed on me in high school, that was about it. He constantly offered to sleep with me, like he'd be doing me this great favor, but he quit with that when I met Kurt. That's how I knew he was truly my friend," he adds pointedly. "He likes to tease, but I know he'd never overstep the mark."

"I see. Well...I'm sorry, anyway," Edward says, turning the conversation back around. "I shouldn't have gone with one of your friends, and in your own house too."

"Like I said," Blaine reiterates, frowning slightly. "It really doesn't bother me. You can do what you want."

"I expect we were only doing what you were doing anyway, right?" Edward tries.

"Oh I doubt it," Blaine says smugly. "It couldn't have been anywhere near as good."

They're interrupted by the loud slam of the front door, and the arrival of Finn, who still seems like a giant to Blaine, no matter how long he's known him. "Hey man. Cooper ready?"

"I have no idea," Blaine says, grateful for the intrusion. "I'll go fetch him."

When he returns with Cooper in tow, it is to find all the toast and pancakes gone and Finn wiping away maple syrup. "Good breakfast," he says, patting Blaine on the back. "Oh, by the way, I'm taking Edward to the airport. He's gone up to grab his bag."

"You are? Excellent. So that just leaves Clare and Santana."

"Clare's going on back to Indy," Cooper tells him.

"Yeah, and Santana and Rachel have plans for eleven, so you guys are on your own," Finn says.

"We are? Oh yes!" Blaine says happily, hugging Finn tight. "Thank you so much, man."

"I don't know what I did, but you're welcome," Finn laughs.

Blaine says a happy goodbye to Edward, promising to keep in touch and closing the door he leans
against it in happy relief. "Kurt?" he bellows up the stairs. "Get dressed! We're taking a walk."
Chapter 12

July.

"You're not gonna believe this!" Blaine screeches indignantly down the phone to Kurt.

"Honey, can it wait?"

"What? I called you. You didn't have to pick up. I talk to your answer machine most days."

"You...yeah," Kurt sighs, "you're right. Shit. I'm sorry. Tell me."

"Don't worry about it," Blaine says sullenly. "I'll call you later."

"No, no, don't do that. Tell me."

"No. You're coming home tomorrow. It can wait."

"But you were upset," Kurt says, now upset himself. "It matters."

"Really. It's fine. Uh...tell me how you're getting on."

"Okay, I guess. Maybe not as quick as I'd like. I have a meeting on Monday at nine with the Joffrey's creative director. He's not happy with some stuff."

"Monday? So you're only coming home for one night?"

"I'm sorry, Blaine," Kurt sighs regretfully. "But we knew it was going to be this way. I'll leave late Sunday evening though, so I can put Libby to bed before I go."

"She misses you," Blaine says softly.

"I see her as much as I can."

"I know," Blaine sighs. "But she's used to seeing you every day, not just on weekends. And I miss you," he adds tearfully. "I miss just...you, being here. Talking with you about funny little things Libby says, or just discussing what we're having for dinner. I miss us."

"But you can still tell me all that over the phone."

"I know," Blaine agrees. "But it's not the same. It's been like this for two months now, and I can feel some of the old tensions creeping back in."

"Like what?"

"Like you getting snappy at me when I call. Like me not wanting to tell you stuff because I don't want to rock the boat."

"Tell me stuff then."

"Okay...well...I don't think you should have to alter any of the costumes. You've worked so hard on them. Who is this guy to come along and demand you change stuff?"

"Blaine," Kurt moans. "It doesn't work like that. You're very sweet to be so protective of my work but ultimately the creative director knows how he wants the costumes to move on stage. And if it's
not perfect, for such a big production as this, then he's gonna want them changed."

"If they don't move right it's the dancers fault, not yours."

"It's not, Blaine," Kurt says, exasperated. "It's...ugh. Look, I know what I'm talking about here, okay? I don't walk in and start telling you how to play the piano, but you listen to Riccardo when he does. Just... Don't get involved where it doesn't concern you."

"See! There you go again!" Blaine cries. "Yelling at me."

"I'm not yelling, I'm trying to explain."

"And it does concern me when it's taking you away from us again. The original deal was that you would leave Chicago on Friday morning and return for lunchtime on Monday. You've managed that once. You work late every Friday so you drive home Saturday, by which time half the day is gone, and you leave again Monday morning. I'm sorry, Kurt, but it's not enough. It's just... Libby and I are selfish," he says, his tone softening. "We like to have you with us all the time."

"I know you do," Kurt says, smiling tearfully. "And you know I'd rather be with you than anywhere else in the whole world."

"Yeah, I know."

"Six weeks to vacation."

"Yeah."

"Blaine?"

"Hmm?"

"Tell me why you called?"

He hesitates, thinks about it, then sighs. "Nah. You've got enough to deal with. We can talk about it tomorrow. I thought we could take Libby to that water park on Sunday? We went with Wes and Livvy yesterday. The girls loved it."

"Sure," Kurt smiles, feeling a pang of regret that he couldn't be there to see his daughter's face for her first time at a water park. "Sounds good."

"Okay well...I'll see you tomorrow?"

"Yeah. Love you, old man."

"You too, gorgeous boy."

* 

Blaine is deeply asleep when he suddenly feels the mattress dip behind him, a strong pair of arms coming up under his to hold him close. "What the hell?" he rasps, eyes flying open as he twists about in the black. "Kurt?"

"Shh," he soothes, stroking Blaine's hair before kissing his lips lightly. "I'm here. Go back to sleep."

"Not a chance. You...it's you? You came home?"
"I did," Kurt nods. "I needed to hold you, and you needed to be held."

"You came back," Blaine whispers happily, kissing him tenderly. "What time is it?"

"Two thirty."

"Kurt..."

"But that's okay," he adds quickly. "Because I'll be here, with you, when I wake up and...is that Libby?"

"Uh, yeah," Blaine says with a guilty smile. "She shares my bed when you're not here."

"Oh baby girl," Kurt says, leaning over Blaine to kiss her forehead. "Beautiful."

"Yeah, but I don't know what to do with her now. She's in the way," he grumbles.

"She's not," Kurt chuckles, turning Blaine so his back is against his chest once more and he can spoon himself tight around him. "Because what you're hoping for is not going to happen right now."

"We've got tomorrow night too, I guess."

"Actually...I don't have to be back in Chicago until Tuesday."

"Really?" Blaine squeaks, trying to stay quiet for Libby. "So you're here until Monday? For real?"

"Tuesday morning, actually," Kurt grins, unable to resist kissing the back of Blaine's neck and trailing a line around to his jaw. "I moved my meeting with that director to Tuesday at four."

"Kurt, you didn't need to do that. Just because I was moaning at you..."

"No. You know what? Nothing gets in the way of you two, nothing. This is all I ever dreamed of. Being married to you, having a little girl to dote on...and I don't want that to be ruined. I'll work the damn checkout at Wal-Mart if I have to, as long as it means I still get to be with you."

"You would not work the checkout," Blaine laughs.

"Well...no. I wouldn't. I don't need you that badly," Kurt teases. "I love my family," he says, snuggling tight against Blaine and reaching out to bring Libby closer. "Now sleep, before this little one is bouncing all over us, and in the morning you can tell me the thing that made you call me earlier."

"Sure. And Kurt?"

"Hmm?"

"Thank you."

*  

Libby is elated when she wakes, screeching and clapping and generally ensuring there's no possible way either of her daddies can sleep, so with some reluctance they wake, bringing her between them where they shower her with kisses and cuddles and Blaine proudly shows Kurt all he's been teaching her.
"Lib, where are Papa's eyes?"

"Yeyes," she responds, poking Kurt in the left eye.

"Nose?"

"Nos."

"Not up the nose, Libby!" Kurt laughs.

"Ears?"

"Ear."

"Good girl...and who knows where papa's mouth is?"

"Yum yum," Libby cries, kissing Kurt's lips.

"That's right," Blaine says, leaning down and kissing Kurt tantalizingly slowly. "Yum yum."

"You're a smart cookie, Libby Darling," Kurt tells her, sitting her on his stomach. "And you," he says, turning his attentions to Blaine. "You're wonderful with her."

Blaine shrugs, embarrassed by the praise. "We have a lot of time to talk."

"You look so happy," Kurt remarks, watching the way his eyes shine as he looks down at him, propped on one elbow.

"You're here. We're all together," Blaine says simply. "That's enough for me."

"I know we have the parents for dinner tonight," Kurt starts as he plays with Libby's toes. "But other than that, let's not see anyone, all weekend. Let's just be us three."


*

"So...talk," Kurt commands as they push a sleeping Libby through the park in her stroller.

"Okay well...you know I did that spring recital?"

"Yes."

"And then I agreed to do one in October, and the holiday concert, yes? I mean, that was the deal."

"Yes."

"So Riccardo calls yesterday. Somehow, Edward Roberts," he says with gritted teeth, "has managed to get him to agree to some joint dates on the summer tour."

"The Symphony and the New York Philharmonic?"

"Yes. Ten days. And he wants me to play."

"Piano?"

"And violin," Blaine cries unhappily. "They want me to be concertmaster for it."
"Doesn't Edward have his own concertmaster?"

"He's got his own damn orchestra," Blaine huffs. "He doesn't need a pianist, or another violinist, or a concertmaster at all."

"And Riccardo said yes?"

"Well he hasn't said yes yet, but he's made it pretty damn clear that he expects me to do this. Edward told him the tickets will fly out if I'm playing."

"Oh wow."

"I feel like...like some sort of commodity," Blaine says, the upset clear in his voice. "Like I only matter for the dollars."

"Blaine...the thing is, Riccardo is a much loved friend to both of us, I get that. But he's incredibly ruthless. You've seen him in action and worked with him long enough to know that, and I think Edward has him over a barrel."

"Why do you say that?"

"Well... Look at it this way. He calls Riccardo, suggests the concerts. He really has no choice but to say yes, does he? Edward is all over the classical music press because he's the youngest ever conductor. If Riccardo refuses, he can just go to another orchestra, and they get all the publicity instead. So that's the first thing. Then he demands you play, citing extra ticket sales and press attention as the reason. If Riccardo says no, Edward will just use his own pianist and concert master, and the attention and credit goes to him. If Riccardo says yes, the crowds come to see you play...because they do, there's no denying that, and the Symphony are seen as letting Edward and the philharmonic join with them, not the other way around, and Riccardo gets a whole load of press attention for his orchestra. Edward has just essentially given him the leadership on a plate. He's not going to turn it down for the sake of your summer plans, Blaine."

"I don't get it," Blaine frowns as they join the line at the ice cream truck. "If he gives all that to Riccardo, what does he get out of it?"

"He gets....well he gets you," Kurt sighs.

"That's...no. That's not...no," Blaine says, shaking his head. "No. I mean, we've exchanged like...five emails since Libby's party, and they've all been work related. I can show you," he says, pulling out his phone, but Kurt stills his wrist.

"You don't need to show me, Blaine. I trust you implicitly. That's good, if he's backed off a bit. But I do think there's an ulterior motive here."

They get their ice creams and find a bench in the shade where they park the stroller and sit side by side, with Blaine's arm protectively around Kurt's shoulders. "So what am I going to do?"

"It's ten days?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"East Coast, so it's not a huge upheaval, I guess."
"Do you have to do New York?"

"No. Riccardo was firm on that. Which is a bit of a bummer for Edward, I guess, seeing as it's their home city."

"Well if he's allowing that to go ahead that's even more proof he's just doing this to spend time with you."

"I really don't think he is."

"I do. But it makes no difference, anyway," Kurt smiles. "It's not going to affect us. If you go, what happens with Libby? I really can't take any more time off. Two weeks for vacation is pushing it."

"No, I wouldn't expect you to. Riccardo offered to pay for Santana to come in the capacity of Libby's nanny, but I'm reluctant. She's settling in so well in her job."

"Did you ever think Santana would become a children's dance instructor?"

"Not in a million years," Blaine says with a laugh. "But anyway. Other than that, Lucia and Gill have offered to manage her between them when I'm needed in rehearsal or for performances. My only other option is to leave her with your dad and Carole, but I think I'd miss her too much."

"I'll fly to you when I can."

"No you won't." Taking Kurt's hand in his, he pushes both their sunglasses to the top of their heads so he can look his husband in the eye. "Listen. You're really busy. And that's fine. When I get back, it'll be vacation time. Two weeks of just us and the Hawaiian sun."

"Which is infinitely better than all the other suns," Kurt teases.

"You know it."

"I'll miss you."

"And we'll miss you. So much. But we can do this, because we have something amazing to look forward to."

"After vacation I'm gonna have to go back to just coming home for weekends," Kurt says sadly.

"I know."

"I'm gonna start flying though. I'll drive up on Tuesday and then leave the car in Chicago. That way I can at least get home on a Friday night, and fly back early Monday morning. I mean, when Libby comes it makes more sense to drive because of the luggage, but when it's just me and a small bag I can walk on and walk off."

"Why didn't we think of that before?"

"I have no idea," Kurt laughs.

"We could come back with you on Tuesday."

"You could," Kurt shrugs. "I'd like that. But don't feel you have to keep doing it. We both agreed that now Libby is getting older it's important she keeps in a routine so she knows what to expect."

"Well the routine is gonna go out the window if she's touring with me and then we're taking her on
vacation."

"I know. But after that, when we're back to normal. It sucks just seeing you on weekends, but I'd rather she was happy and content."

"She is, I think," Blaine says, smiling as he looks into the stroller. "She loves having you home though. We both do."

"She's in her own bed tonight though, yes?"

"Too damn right," Blaine laughs.

*

And so, four weeks later, Blaine finds himself sitting despondently in a Boston hotel room as a restless Libby explores by opening every drawer and cupboard she can find. They had flown from Chicago yesterday, after bidding a tearful farewell to Kurt. The last month had been busy, but busier times are still to come, they both know, and actually Kurt and Blaine have both made the effort to make the time they do have together to be quiet, uninterrupted days with their daughter, watching as she explores the world around her.

But now, after four days of practice during which Libby has been cared for by Maddie and Joe, Blaine finds himself bereft, and missing Kurt like never before, even though it's only been twenty four hours.

"C'mon," he sighs, scooping Libby up into his arms. "Let's take a walk."

"Go?" the little girl asks, holding out her hands and shrugging her shoulders.

"Yes, let's go."

"Papa?"

"Not right now," he says sadly, kissing into her soft hair. "Ten more days, Lib, that's all."

They make quite the pair as the elevator doors open and they emerge, Blaine in a navy shirt and beige shorts and Libby the picture of cuteness in her pink dress and white sunhat. She holds tight to her daddy's hand as they cross the foyer then hear a familiar voice.

"Hey, Blaine!"

He stops, his shoulders sagging slightly as he turns and fixes a smile in place. "Hey, Edward. How are you?"

"I'm good," he says cheerily. They shake hands and Edward somehow pulls Blaine into a hug, made all the more awkward by his refusal to let go of Libby's hand. "Uh...how are you?"

"Miserable," he answers honestly. "I'll be back later. Libby and I are taking a walk."

"Sounds fun, I'll join you."

"No, really, there's no need."

"Honestly, I don't mind," Edward smiles. "It'll give you a chance to offload."

"I don't need to offload," Blaine snaps, exiting the hotel and carrying Libby across the street.
"Every time we meet, you're mad at me for something," Edward says as he hurries after. "I don't get it. You invite me to your daughter's party, I assumed that meant we were friends, then I only receive terse replies to any emails I send and now this. I apologized to you for sleeping with that guy."

"Sebastian?" Blaine laughs, shaking his head. "Edward, I told you, that's fine. It was never an issue. I just...I just really miss my husband," he says morosely, and to his horror he feels tears starting to prickle at his eyes.

"Here." Edward hands Blaine a tissue, and takes Libby from his arms, guiding him down the street to a park where he sets Libby down to walk. "I'm sorry."

"Yeah. Well....you should be. I wouldn't even be here if it wasn't for you."

"What?"

"This tour. I was supposed to be in Ohio with Libby for the summer. Kurt's been working in Chicago during the week, flying home Friday until Monday and it's been working really well. Then you go and demand my presence on tour and everything's fucked up."

"Um...Blaine?" Edward says gently. "I wasn't the one who suggested you come on tour with us, that was Riccardo."

Blaine stops, stunned, and turns to him, squinting in the sun. "What?"

"I pushed for the joint tour," he continues, watching Libby as she stops to inspect some stones. "but I knew your summer plans because you told me back in March. Riccardo said he'd only do it if you were top billing. I tried to talk him out of it but...he knows how much you're worth."

"Really?" Blaine asks, puzzled. He frowns as he lifts Libby onto the low wall she's trying to climb on and holds her hand for her to walk along it. "I...Riccardo? Really?"

"I'm surprised you're shocked," Edward says calmly. "I'd have thought you'd know what he's like after working with him for so long."

"Oh I do," Blaine nods. "But he told me it was you who wanted me there and...yeah. Wow. I'm shocked he'd lie to me like that."

"Maybe he got confused."

"You don't get confused over something like that," Blaine says tersely.

"Are you going to say anything to him?"

"Do you think I should?"

"Probably not. I mean, it's your call," Edward shrugs. "But it's not going to make for the best atmosphere. And you're kinda relying on his wife for childcare so..."

"Yeah, I guess," he mumbles, clearly unhappy, and together they walk on.

"So...things are going well for Kurt?" Edward tries in an effort to lift the mood.

"Yeah," Blaine smiles. "He's busy, but the ballet are happy with his designs and...Libby, not in your mouth, sweetie. We don't eat grass. Good girl. And...what was I saying?"
"About Kurt," Edward laughs as Blaine squats down to remove handfuls of grass and soil from his daughter's tiny fist.

"Oh yeah. Yeah. He's doing well. It's not long, really. We have vacation, then it's like all hell will let loose until November. They open December first."

"It's going to New York, isn't it?"

Blaine nods. "In January."

"So I might see you in the city?"

"Not me. I'll go to the premiere in Chicago. You might see Kurt, though."

"Ah, okay. Well, I'll try and get tickets. I like the ballet anyway, seeing Kurt's designs in action will just be a bonus."

"Dada?"

"Yes, Libby?" The two men turn their attention to Libby, crouching down on the grass as she looks up at them.

"Sis?"

"What's this?" Blaine asks, and she nods. "That's a daisy. Can you say daisy?"

"Dais."

"Good girl!"

Edward laughs, shaking his head. "Very cute."

"She's not said that before," Blaine remarks, turning to beam at him before kneeling down next to Libby. "You can pick them, look."

She takes the flower Blaine holds out to her, sniffing it as she sees her daddy do when Kurt brings flowers for him every Friday. "Mmm." Picking more, she stands and toddles to show Edward.

"Very pretty," he smiles, kneeling down next to her. "Are they for me?"

"Papa."

"Oh."

Blaine hides his smug laughter, gathering a few more daisies and handing them to Libby. "Well, they might be a little past their best when we see him, but I'm sure he'll appreciate the gesture. You gonna pick some more?"

She wanders off, though Blaine can easily watch her on the wide expanse of grass, and he and Edward settle side by side in companionable silence. "Can I ask, why do you do it?"

"Huh?" Blaine says, distracted slightly by Libby as a small dog runs up to investigate her then runs off. "Do what?"

"You and Kurt. Why do you put yourselves through this?"
“It’s our jobs, Edward. It’s not our choice to make.”

“But you don’t have to,” he reiterates. “I mean, you make enough money.”

“But if we didn’t do these jobs we’d still have to work,” Blaine says with a frown. “Yes we do well, but we would still need to earn an income. We’re not rich enough to retire for the rest of our days. Besides, it’s not just about the money,” he carries on. “We worked hard to get where we are, and we’re lucky enough to have jobs that we love. We’re more than just our marriage, or Libby. We need to find satisfaction elsewhere too. I love to make music, it’s a huge part of my life and Kurt loves to design costumes, it fulfills something in him that we couldn’t. You don’t stop existing when you fall in love. Without our work we wouldn’t be as happy as we are. It sucks that we’re apart, it sucks that Kurt is having to be away from us in the week, but he’s chasing one of his greatest dreams, and there’s nothing I want more than for him to be happy.”

Edward nods slowly, looking across the park. “Okay. Yeah, I get that. She’s growing up, isn’t she?” he says, nodding toward Libby wandering about with fistfuls of daisies.

“Yes,” Blaine grins. “She’s amazing. I could spend hours watching her. She’s so fascinated by the world around her. This time last year she was just content to sit in the stroller as the world passed her by and now she wants to explore absolutely everything.”

“I’m glad you could come, Blaine,” Edward says honestly. “I know it might not have been your choice, but try and make the most of it, at least.”

Blaine sighs, standing and brushing grass from his shorts. “Yeah, I will.”

“And from a purely selfish point of view, I’m grateful for the company.”

Blaine doesn’t know how to answer so he says nothing, calling across to Libby who comes running to stuff the flowers into Blaine’s pockets. “Dais. Papa.”

“Daisies for papa, that’s right,” he smiles, taking her hand. “C’mon, let’s walk a little more then we’ll go back and take a swim before dinner.”

He doesn’t object when Edward takes her other hand and they walk along with the little girl between them. He doesn’t feel great about it, but then again he knows he is stupidly possessive of his daughter, and Edward has been kind and not at all creepy so far, so he lets it go.

“Feeling better?”

“Yeah, I am actually,” Blaine smiles. “Thanks. I know I was snappy earlier, but thank you for talking with me.”

“Any time.”

Libby sings as they walk along, a random tune which gets progressively louder until it draws the attention of a group of ladies, all dressed in their bowls clothes and they stop walking to admire her.

“What a gorgeous little girl,” one says, smiling down at her before looking up at Blaine. “You must be very proud.”

“Thank you, I am,” he smiles back.

“She’s enjoying herself.”
“She certainly is,” Edward remarks politely.

“Are you having a nice walk with your daddies?” another lady asks Libby, who lets go of Edward’s hand and hides behind Blaine’s leg.

“Dada.”

“Thats not...he’s not...” Blaine splutters, picking up Libby and holding her protectively against his chest.

“Have a nice day!” the woman calls with a wave as they depart and Edward waves back.

“Thanks, you too.”

“What the hell?” Blaine hisses angrily, his face burning with shame. “Why didn’t you say anything?”

“What?” Edward laughs.

“They think we’re...that you’re her...” But he can’t even bring himself to say the words, so he shakes his head before walking on. “You didn’t do anything to correct them.”

“What am I supposed to do, Blaine?” Edward cries, running to catch him. “Do you want me to go back to them and explain? Because I will, if it’ll make you feel better.”

Blaine pauses, wanting to say yes but also knowing how foolish and petty that would sound. “Doesn’t matter,” he says petulantly. “They’ve gone now.”

“Exactly. Who cares if they made a mistake? They’re a bunch of random strangers whom you will probably never see again. And if, by some miracle you do, feel free to set them straight.”

“Alright,” Blaine sighs, trying to let it go. “Sorry.”

“You need to relax,” Edward says knowledgeably. “Come to my room tonight after dinner and we can have a few beers.”

“No!” Blaine says firmly. “Uh...I can't. I have Libby.”

“You have one of those listening devices, don’t you? And you’re only three doors down. C’mon,” he coaxes, nudging his shoulder. “It’ll be fun.”

“No. Really. Absolutely not.”

“It’ll give you a chance to get to know some of the philharmonic guys? And you can bring Riccardo and whoever else you want.”

“Oh.” Blaine realizes, feeling suddenly very foolish indeed. “Other people will be there too. I didn’t know. I see. Um...yes, then. Thank you, I’d love to.”

“Blaine, just relax,” Edward laughs, putting an arm about his shoulders. “I’m not gonna eat you.”

Hey,” a sleepy Kurt murmurs as he answers his phone. “It’s late.”

“I know, sorry.”
“I tried calling you earlier but you didn’t answer.”

“Sorry,” Blaine says sheepishly. “I was in Edward’s room.”

“You were what?” And suddenly Kurt is awake, sitting upright in bed and blinking in disbelief.

“He had a kind of party, gathering type thing in his room, so I went along.”

“Oh,” Kurt says, laughing with relief. “I see.”

“It wasn’t just me,” Blaine says. “Trust me, I would’ve run for the hills.”

“Okay. Yeah, sorry. I’m just being dumb.”


“Good, but missing you like crazy already, and Libby too. I cried,” he admits, “after I talked with her earlier. She was trying to tell me so much about the daisies and I couldn’t understand her. I just kept saying yes.”

“But we always do that,” Blaine reasons. “She babbles endlessly and usually only three or four words make any sense.”

“I know, but it’s easier when I can see her face.”

“So skype us tomorrow then,” Blaine tells him. “We have rehearsals all morning but a free afternoon.”

“I’m working,” Kurt starts, then shakes his head. “What the hell? I’m my own boss. Of course I’ll skype you.”

“Good,” Blaine smiles, flipping out the small lamp and settling under the covers.

“So did you have a good day?”

“Actually, I did, eventually,” he says, deciding not to tell Kurt about the tour being Riccardo’s decision. “I was miserable, but Edward and I took Libby for a walk and had a good chat. He kinda cheered me up.”

“That’s nice,” Kurt says genuinely.

“The highlight for me was Libby showing him the flowers she’d picked. He thought they were for him, but she corrected him.”

“Blaine!”

“What? It was funny. We took a swim before dinner.”

“Just the two of you?”

“Uh...no. Edward came too.”

“Oh,” Kurt says in surprise. “So you’ve gotten over your fear of him seeing you bare chested?”

“I guess,” Blaine shrugs. “I was probably being dumb that morning. I mean, he’d spent the night with Sebastian, he was hardly thinking about me.”
“No, I suppose not.”

“I miss you,” Blaine murmurs, suddenly sounding much closer, and Kurt smiles and holds the phone that little bit tighter.

“I miss you too. Hey, do you remember what we used to do when we were apart for a long time?”

“I am not getting off over the phone.”

“Oh how times have changed,” Kurt laughs. “I used to be the shy, reluctant one.”

“I have our eighteen month old daughter in bed beside me!”

“Go in the bathroom.”

“She might hear.”

“Please, Blaine.”

“Kurt,” he warns, “Stop it with that tone of voice.”

“It’s my special one I reserve for you,” he teases.

“I know it is, but I’m telling you, it’s not going to work. It is physically impossible for me to get turned on with her in the vicinity. I’ll go in the bathroom and get you off, if you want?”

“Nah,” Kurt pouts. “It’s no fun if it’s not together.”

“What time are you in the office tomorrow?”

“Probably not until ten. I want to finish some stuff off here first.”

“Call me at nine fifteen,” Blaine tells him. “Lucia is having Libby from nine, I can run back up here before we go to rehearsal.”

“Oh my god, we’re scheduling phone sex?” Kurt asks in disbelief.

“You’d better believe it.”


“Not now, remember?”

“I could go in the bathroom?”

“Goodnight, Blaine,” Kurt laughs. “Sweet dreams, and I’ll see you at nine fifteen.”

“You most certainly will,” Blaine smiles. “Love you endlessly.”

“You too, old man.”
“When we get back, do you think you could take a day to visit some schools with me?”

Kurt lies on his back, the Hawaiian sun warming his skin as he closes his eyes and relaxes. “Huh?”

“Schools. We need to start looking around.”

“Blaine, honey, we’re on vacation.”

“I know, but I’m getting worried she won’t have a place.”

“She’s not even two.”

“But all the good schools will be full.”

“Hang on,” Kurt takes off his sunglasses and sits, looking over to where Blaine sits with Libby between his legs, making sandcastles. “Do you mean private school?”

“Well what else would I mean?”

“Uh...public school?”

“Why would I want her to go to public school?” Blaine asks wrinkling his nose.

“Because I went to public school, and it’s perfectly acceptable.”

“I didn’t,” Blaine shrugs. “Cooper didn’t, and neither did Taylor and Maddie.”

“But they’re not our children.”

“Well whatever, we earn nearly five hundred thousand a year between us. What’s the point in sitting on all that money when it could be used to buy Libby a good education?”

“Because I don’t want her spoiled, that's why.”

“Kurt, darling, I don’t want her to go to school at all. Ever. I don’t want teachers to be too strict with her, I don’t want kids to be unkind to her because she has two dads and I certainly don’t want any boys to even so much as look at her...but needs must.”

“Oooh!” Kurt says excitedly. “We could home school.”

“The idea has merit, except that you definitely don’t have the patience and I don’t have the discipline...plus, I would like her to have friends and learn to socialize with people.”

“Can I think on it?” Kurt asks, biting his bottom lip. “I’ll take a day, like you suggested, and we can visit a mixture of private and state, maybe?”

“Sure,” Blaine agrees, leaning across to kiss his lips. “I’m sorry if it came as a surprise. I assumed it was a given, and I shouldn’t have.”

“Well I assumed too, from the other angle, so let's go visit schools and see what suits us best, okay?”

“Yes.”
"You're doing that all wrong," he comments, regarding the sandcastle cooly.

"I am not," Blaine huffs. "Lib wanted it to look like the castle in Tangled."

"Is that what it's supposed to be?" Kurt teases, flopping down on his front as he starts shaping the sand with his hands. "And Libby asked for this design all by herself, did she? Did you, Lib?"

"Yep!"

"Well...I might have suggested it," Blaine shrugs, a small smile playing on his lips. "But she nodded and said yep, didn't you?"

"Yep!" Libby says again, and picking up a plastic shovel, Kurt laughs.

"You just wanted to see if you could do it, Blaine. I'm not silly."

"Damn it. Foiled again."

He laughs and falls back on the sand, where Kurt is quick to kiss his tummy, just starting to soften with age but which to Kurt makes him all the more endearing. "I love you."

"Hmm," Blaine grins with his eyes closed. "Funny, isn't it? I never tire of that. Each time it makes my insides do a funny little flip."

"I've missed you," Kurt says softly, paying the other beachgoers no mind as he drapes himself over Blaine and brushes hair from his forehead. "This one too," he laughs as Libby starts tugging on his arm. "But you. Always you."

"Kurt...I've...hold on," Blaine laughs apologetically as Libby tries to tug them both apart. "What is it, huh?"

"Wim."

"You want to swim?"

"Yep!"

Kurt laughs, standing and swooping her into his arms. "Swimming sounds fun."

Blaine holds her water wings out to him and Kurt raises one eyebrow. "In the sea? Don't you think she should stay in the shallow bit?"

"Nah, it's really calm," Blaine says as he pulls the wings on Libby anyway. "She's really confident in the deep water. Trust me."

"Confident is one thing, safe is another."

"Honestly, Kurt. She's really coming on in our lessons." Blaine smiles, kisses Kurt's lips and takes his hand as they head to the sea.

It takes Kurt a while, but he is impressed with how well Libby can do, and how happy she is splashing around in the warm, calm sea with Blaine and Kurt standing arm in arm ready to assist her if needed. "She's really good!"

"Told you," Blaine smiles. "So now I get the chance to finish my sentence. I've missed you too. But it's been bearable."
"Oh thanks!"

"No," he laughs, helping Libby to swim in a wide circle. "What I mean is, it's been bearable because I know this is worth so much to you. Those summers where you toured were hell for me, seeing and hearing you so unhappy. But this..." he trails off, shaking his head as a small smile plays on his lips. Pushing Libby gently across into Kurt's arms, he moves behind them, wrapping his arms around Kurt's waist and kissing his shoulder. "You know, Edward asked me why we do this to ourselves. I told him this is your dream come true, and I want that more than anything. And that's what makes the weekly separations bearable. It hasn't always been easy, and when we get back it's going to be harder still, I know that. But seeing your designs, up there on the stage? Knowing that you've done all of this by yourself? Yeah. It'll be worth everything."

Kurt smiles softly, kissing his daughters damp hair before turning in Blaine's embrace and kissing him deeply. "I love you," he murmurs, closing his eyes in happiness as Libby squirms between them.

"I love you too."

"And I'm happy to hear you say that. I'm glad we can admit that it's not been easy. Sometimes I wonder if I should have done more from home."

"No," Blaine says kindly. "I mean, some productions you can do nearly all of it from home and that's great. But you need to be there for this one, and you need to have peace and quiet at home so you can concentrate. This way, the weekends are ours exclusively."

"I'm glad you think that, cause I've tried to keep them that way."

"You've done really well," Blaine nods. "A little hiccup near the start, maybe, but we've loved knowing we get you to ourselves from Friday through Monday."

"I hope you like the costumes," Kurt says nervously. Holding Libby's hands, he glides onto his back, pulling her along and making her laugh.

"Papa wim!"

"Yes, papa can swim," Kurt laughs. "It has been known. Anyway," he continues, helping her to float on her back as he glances at Blaine. "I know your approval technically shouldn't matter, that I should care more about what the press says, or the industry but...everything I do is for you. And I want you to like them, to feel proud of me. I couldn't actually care less about anyone else."

"I am incredibly proud of you already, and all I've seen of this production is a whole lot of netting," Blaine laughs. He watches as Kurt tenderly leans down and kisses Libby's forehead then floats alongside her, their heads resting together, identical profiles looking up at the cloudless sky. "I think we should take Libby to the opening night."

"Really?" Kurt sinks under in surprise then stands, pushing his hair out of his eyes and wiping his face with his hand. "Really? You do? Cause I wanted to," he says excitedly. "I was gonna ask, but then I figured you might think it was too late a night for her and..."

"She'll love it," Blaine smiles, picking her up and kissing her cheek. "Won't you? And one late night isn't going to hurt. Imagine it, Kurt, her, sitting between us, watching the ballet..."

"Oh I have," Kurt laughs, hugging the both of them. "Believe me. I can make her a dress! And I'll get to show the both of you off."
"We probably won't be able to lock ourselves in a closet though."

"I think, on this one occasion, I'm prepared to forgo that," Kurt grins. "Thank you, Blaine."

"This is gonna be the biggest night of your career. It's only right she should be there with us..... But I was thinking New York could be just the two of us."

"What? Oh...no..." Kurt says, looking down at the water and shaking his head. "No. You don't have to...I wasn't going to...."

"Well that's tough, because I've already asked your dad and Carole, and they're happy to have her for the weekend."

"It's not until January!"

"I know."

"We don't have to go. I mean, opening night in Chicago is more than enough for me, and..."

"Kurt." Fixing him with a knowing look that only a husband can give, Blaine reaches out to brush a stray strand of hair from Kurt's forehead, who ducks his head shyly.

"You got me. I do really wanna go."

"I know you do. And I also know that you're never going to ask, which is why I've arranged it already. I still owe you a weekend away for our anniversary anyway, so you can look on this as either a delayed fourth anniversary trip, or an early fifth. Your choice."

"But you hate New York."

"I don't hate it," he says with a shrug. "I just don't feel comfortable there unless I'm with you. You always wanted to be on Broadway, Kurt. Now you will be. It may not be in quite the way you planned, but I think you'll agree it's infinitely more satisfying for you to see your costumes up there on stage than working so hard for no recognition."

"Completely," he nods. "I love designing. It's what I was born to do, and I don't know why I ever bothered with performing."

"Because you're exceptionally talented at that too....it's just that you really are gifted at costume design."

"But New York..."

"Yes. New York. We will be there. Together. And anyway," Blaine says nonchalantly as he saunters from the sea with Libby on his hip. "I'm not going just for you."

"Oh?"

"Nope. I need to visit the shop at the sex museum again. We ran out of penis pasta ages ago."

"Ha! Okay then, whatever you say," Kurt chuckles, wrapping Libby in a big fluffy towel. "So if we're doing anniversary gifts, you can expect mine tonight."

"I'm always a little wary of your gifts when we're on vacation," Blaine teases, settling on the sunlounger and holding his arms open for Kurt and Libby to cuddle in. "Ever since the bag of toys."
"Toys?" Libby asks excitedly. "Toys?"

"Not those kind of toys," Kurt tells her, swatting Blaine's arm. "You're safe," he tells him. "Just an evening together, that's all."

"Sounds good."

Kurt settles into his embrace then, head resting on his chest as Blaine's chin sits in his damp hair, and his arms pull Libby close. "Blaine?"

"Hmm?"

"You're my very best friend, you know that?"

A soft kiss comes, bringing fleetingly to mind the very first moment a sixteen year old Kurt ever felt Blaine's lips pressed gently into his hair as they lay curled together on his bed. "I know," Blaine says quietly. "Because I feel the same about you. I love you."

"You too."

"Papa?" Libby's small voice comes, tired yet content as she plays with the hairs on Blaine's arms.

"Yes, Lib?"

"Uv you."

"Oh, sweetie," Kurt says, kissing her cheek as his eyes fill with tears. "I love you too. So much."

"Yep," she says smugly. "Dada?"

Blaine clears his throat, though his voice wobbles with emotion anyway. "Yes, Libby?"

"Uv you."

"I love you too, darling. I love you and papa more than anyone else in the whole wide world."

Libby nods sagely. "Yep."

*

Blaine smiles at Kurt as he steps out onto the sand, still warm from the days sun, and slides the door quietly shut behind him. “She’s asleep,” he says as he sits down at the small table for two. “She was so tired.”

“I know, but she’ll fight to the bitter end. I wonder where she gets her stubbornness from?”

Kurt shrugs as innocently as he can, handing Blaine a glass of white wine. “Beats me.”

Blaine laughs quietly, pulling out a chair for Kurt to sit next to him, and putting an arm about his shoulders, they sit contentedly side by side and stare out at the beach and the sea gently lapping at the shore. “Well this is nice,” Blaine sighs happily. “This is what I’ve missed most of all.”

“Hawaii?”

“Time with you, you fool,” Blaine jokes affectionately. “Time like this, to sit and do absolutely nothing.”
“So tell me about your tour,” Kurt says, resting his head on his husband’s shoulder. “I still haven’t really had time to catch up with you about it. It went well?”

“It did, yeah.”

“You sound surprised.”

“Yeah. I guess I had built it up in my mind to be this big thing but actually, I really quite enjoyed it. Libby and I were a bit solitary at first, but we got more into it.”

“You seemed to spend a lot of time with Edward.”

“We saw...hang on,” Blaine says, shrugging Kurt off his shoulder and sitting upright. “Is that an accusation?”

“No!” Kurt cries, setting his glass on the table and turning to look at him. “What are you talking about? I’m happy you had company. I do know you, Blaine,” he reminds him. “I’m well aware you’d never cheat on me. I was just surprised that you seemed to be with him so much and not with Riccardo, that’s all.”

“Oh.” Blaine feels suddenly foolish, ducking his head and nodding. “Sorry. I don’t know why I reacted that way.”

“It’s okay,” Kurt says kindly, picking up his glass once more and kissing Blaine’s cheek. “Have you fallen out with him?”

“Riccardo? Not really. But...well...Edward told me it was Riccardo who suggested I do the tour, but Riccardo says it was Edward. I don’t get why Riccardo would lie to me like that.”

Kurt is silent a while, letting Blaine’s words hang in the air and sink in a little. “Do you think he did lie? Really? Or...”

“Oh my god.”

“Exactly.”

“What do I do, Kurt?” Blaine asks, a note of panic creeping into his voice. “What do I do?”

“Call Riccardo when we get back,” Kurt tells him. “Talk with him.”

“But Edward? Why would he try and make out like it was Riccardo’s idea?”

“Because he knew you’d be mad at him,” Kurt says, rubbing one hand soothingly over Blaine’s bare chest. “He probably reasoned that you wouldn’t then confront Riccardo on it.”

“That guy is so...weird.”

“That guy is in love with you.”

“What?” Kurt is shoved to one side again as Blaine sits up, red faced and shaking his head vehemently. “No. No way. Absolutely not.”

“I think he is, Blaine,” Kurt says calmly.

“But that’s not fair!”
“I know you don't want to face it but...”

“Not me, you!” Blaine cries. “It’s unfair to you!”

“But you belong with me,” Kurt says, smiling at him tenderly. “Don’t you see that? It doesn’t thrill me that he’s in love with you, but it doesn’t worry me, because I’m your husband. We’ve been together ten years, married for four and we have a beautiful daughter. Edward Roberts is not going to come between us. What’s unfair about that?”

“I guess I just don’t want you upset,” Blaine mutters, kissing along Kurt’s collar bone before nuzzling under his chin. “And now I feel terrible, because I did spend quite a bit of time with him, and I thought we were getting along really well as friends.”

“Yeah, you’ve never been the brightest when it comes to that sort of stuff,” Kurt muses, laughing when Blaine digs him in the ribs. “It doesn’t matter, does it? The tour is done, your next appearance is the holiday concert, and he’s not involved in that. So that’s at least four months where you don’t need to contact him at all.”

“Good.”

“You’re so cute,” Kurt laughs.

“I’m nearly forty one.”

“Still cute,” he shrugs. “Your adorable little pout makes me smile.”

“Shut it.”

“Make me.”

“I will, in a minute,” Blaine warns.

“Go on then. Stop sulking and shut me up with your mouth on mine.”

He is rewarded instantly, and he opens his mouth wide under the touch of Blaine’s lips on his, moaning softly at the feel of their first real kiss since Blaine departed for the orchestra tour. "Oh you've done it now," Blaine murmurs, his lips never moving from Kurt's as he teases him. "I'm gonna be quite unable to keep kissing you."

"Fine by me," Kurt says blissfully. "Oh!" He yelps then laughs when Blaine climbs into his lap and straddles him, hands framing his face and tilting him up to kiss him again, tenderly.

"I love you," he gets out between kisses. "I love you, I love you, I love you."

"People," Kurt chuckles, but he doesn't stop Blaine at all, only arches his neck so he can be kissed along his jaw.

"So? I'm making out with my husband," he smiles down at him, before drawing him close and kissing him again, and for a long time they are silent, completely absorbed in the feel of their lips and tongues together. The deep kiss breaks occasionally, for Blaine totrail kisses over Kurt's eyelids, cheeks and down to his neck, or for Kurt to sigh happily and kiss the sensitive spot right under Blaine's jaw, but then they're pulled back to one another's lips, connected by some kind of invisible force which has them gasping softly as their mouths meet again and again. "Hmmm," Blaine smiles, his eyes closed in the darkness. His hands are locked at the base of Kurt's neck, who clutches him tightly, chasing more kisses when Blaine pulls back to look down at him. "There's
something deeply romantic about kissing you like this, and knowing it won't lead to more."


"Libby's in our room."

"I know, but it's been two weeks already. I can't wait two more," Kurt protests. "You've gotta at least give me a quick handjob or something."

"Masturbate in the shower and think of me," Blaine whispers, tugging his earlobe between his teeth.

His hot breath tickles at Kurt's skin, causing him to let out some kind of incomprehensible noise and arch up in search of Blaine's lips again.

"Come take a bath with me then," Blaine suggests, and Kurt grins happily when Blaine stands and he can visibly see the effect their kissing has had on him.

Once in the water, however, with Kurt leaning back against Blaine's chest, both find themselves content to just relax. Their hands smooth over the bodies they've missed so much, tracing contours, seeking out sensitive and ticklish spots, and soft, sweet kisses are dropped wherever they can reach, but in the end Kurt sighs, dropping his head onto Blaine's shoulder and closing his eyes.

"I know I was kinda begging for it earlier but..."

"Too tired."

"Yeah."

"Enjoying this too much."

"Same." Kurt sighs again, his hands coming to rest over Blaine's where they're folded on his stomach. "I really could fall asleep in here."

"In that case we'll get out," Blaine laughs. "C'mon."

Kurt leaves the bath reluctantly, but lying in the enormous bed, with Blaine propped on one elbow and trailing his fingers over his naked skin, he lets his eyes slip closed. "Will you kiss me again? I feel like I can't get enough of your lips."

Blaine smiles softly, bringing his lips close to Kurt's once more. "Anything for you, Kurt. I will kiss you forever and I'll love you for always."
"I agree with Kurt," Wes states as he and Blaine walk along the golf course to the next tee. "This guy's in love with you, and the best thing you can do is stay far away. Nothing wrong with being polite and friendly when you meet on the circuit, as you're bound to at some point and there's no sense in causing a commotion when he hasn't actually done anything wrong, but other than light conversations, stay away."

"Yeah, but..."

"But what, Blaine? But you feel like you owe him more? You owe your husband peace of mind."

"Hey! That's not fair!" Blaine protests, watching as Wes sets his ball on the tee and lines himself up to putt. "Kurt knows, and I've been honest about nearly everything."

"Whoa! Nearly everything?" Wes shrieks, taking a skewed swing when Blaine blushes. "Dammit. Okay." Turning to face him, he pulls his gloves off and swats his arm with them. "Spill."

"Hold up." Blaine takes his aim and then they walk on together, Wes waiting patiently for Blaine to come clean. "Edward is...well...emailing me constantly. Like...fifty six emails from him during our two week vacation."

"What?!"

"Yeah. And no, I haven't told Kurt, because he's snowed under. He was in the office an hour after we landed, Wes. And since then, when we do see him on weekends we're too busy enjoying being together with Libby for me to want to spoil it."

"She sleeps, Blaine. You got a child that sleeps. I didn't. Don't tell me you both sit in silence all evening."

"No, but we're busy."

"Doing what?"

"What do you think?"

"Oh my god, I really wish my daughter would sleep," Wes laments. "I envy you. Christ. Kathy and I are experts in the art of unfinished conversation."

"We are too, but for different reasons, I think," Blaine says with a playful nudge.

"All that sex," Wes says longingly.

"Twice, Wes. Twice a week. He's home for two nights."

"Yeah I know," he says, putting an arm about his best friends shoulders. "I do know. It's tough on you both. But you should tell him this, in case it gets worse. Let's face it, Kurt is perfectly okay with you about this. He's not jealous or angry, and it's not like he doesn't trust you. There's no reason why you can't tell him, other than yet again, you seem to think he's still sixteen and can't handle an adult problem in your marriage."

"Not true! And it's not a problem in our marriage, anyway."
"It will be if you don't tell him. Where the hell is my ball?"

"Bunker."

"Damn. Anyway, are you still getting emails?"

"Yeah. Everyday. Seven or eight times a day. Random stuff, like you'd text to someone. Things like 'hey, how's it going,' or 'I was in the music shop today and heard Vivaldi playing. It made me think of the first night I ever saw you playing the violin.'"

"That is not random," Wes says with a pointed look. "And you know it. If Kurt text you something like that, it'd be cute. Coming from this guy? It just sounds creepy."

"He doesn't text though, that's what I don't get. He has my number, yet he just emails me."

"My guess is he doesn't want Kurt to know he's in contact with you. Do you reply?"

"Sometimes," Blaine admits. "The thing is, as a friend, I really like him."

"You have enough friends, Blaine. In all walks of life. School friends, work friends, parent friends, couple friends. Just let it go. Ignore him."

"I guess..."

"No." Wes is firm as he kicks Blaine's shin then stalks into the bunker. "Stop trying to be nice and just freeze him out. All the years I've known you, before Kurt, you were always ending up dating guys you really didn't want to date because you didn't know how to tell them no. What was his name? Kevin. Yes! Kevin was the biggest moron I'd ever known, yet you dated him for two months because you felt sorry for him, and then you found him screwing his dentist."

"Yeah, but..."

"Brent," Wes carries on. "He wore sweatpants to a dinner date. You were horrified, yet three weeks later you were still dating him and he repaid you by running off with his personal trainer!"

"But I'm not interested in Edward!"

"I know you're not, but the fact remains that being nice is only encouraging him. Now stop it before I tell Kurt."


"Good."

"Hey, Wes?"

"What?" he huffs, still angry as he sets his ball on the green.

"Want me to have Livvy to sleep over tomorrow so you can get laid?"

"Ohmygod yes," Wes says, his whole face lighting up. "Not even laid, Blaine, just so I can sleep, uninterrupted. All. Night. Long."

"Sure," Blaine laughs. "I'll come by around three. I'll ask Santana to sleepover too. Now both girls are walking it's much harder to manage two."
"Agreed. I actually found Liv using Libby as a footstool the other day, trying to reach the cookie jar on the counter."

"They're bad news together."

"Yep," Wes grins, "but something tells me those two will never be parted; a bit like you and I."

"Have you decided if you're going to have more?"

"Nah. We have Libby. You know, Kathy's thirty eight now, and it's a higher risk of complications...plus I don't think either of us could really handle another non-sleeper. I mean, Olivia is fifteen months old and she has never slept the entire night through. I can't do that again. I mean it though, having Libby in our lives too kinda makes us complete..... And you're crying. Jesus, Blaine! We're in the middle of the golf course!"

"Well don't make me emotional then!"

"Okay, this'll distract you. Santana went on a date with Brittany when you were on vacation, and she's seen her twice more since."

"What the hell?!"

*

Exactly one month before opening night, Kurt trudges wearily into his apartment building, leaning back against the wall of the elevator with a heavy sigh as it travels upward. He has had the worst possible day, starting with yelling at Blaine over the phone for calling at seven thirty instead of seven, then he refused to speak to Libby as he was running late and vowed to make it up to her later over Skype. He didn't, of course. Having spent the entire day fitting the sugar plum fairies, he was more than a little vexed when the director demanded more alterations to each one of the seventeen costumes, then inspected the soldiers tunics and asked that more gold braid be added. So back to the offices of Farris-Anderson he had gone, working painstakingly by hand alongside some of his most talented sewers and promising them triple overtime as they unpicked and restitched, and by the time he had finally closed up, it was nearing nine thirty and he had forgotten all about his husband and daughter.

"Fuck," he mumbles as he slides the key in the lock and thinks of the grovelling phone call he knows he's going to have to make. He slams the door closed behind him and kicks off his shoes, surprised to find he had left the lights on this morning, and then staring in utter confusion when a black and white cat comes wandering into the hallway and winds itself around his legs. "Martin?"

"Hey"

"Jesus Christ!" Kurt jumps a mile at the sound of Blaine's voice but then his face breaks out into an enormous grin at the sight of his husband lounging in the living room doorway, arms folded and smiling softly. "What are you doing here? Is Libby here?"

"She's in bed," Blaine says, taking a step closer, but before he can utter another word Kurt is down the hall, stumbling into her room to kneel at the side of her little bed.

"Oh my precious girl," he murmurs, burying his face in her hair. "Papas baby." He kisses her rosy cheek softly, taking a while to smooth her hair from her forehead and watch her face as she dreams, then with some reluctance he stands, kissing her again, and turns to see Blaine watching him. "I didn't call."
"Just as well, we were driving," Blaine whispers. "Well, I was driving. Libby was singing and Martin was mewling. He doesn't enjoy the cat box."

"Why are you here?"

Blaine shrugs, hands in his pockets, the small night light casting him in shadows. "You needed to be held."

"I do."

"Then come here and let me hold you."

Kurt flies into his arms, and promptly bursts into tears as Blaine holds him tightly and soothes over and over, his hands running over his back before he pulls back, framing Kurt's face and kissing the tear tracks on his cheeks. "Shh," he says softly. "It's okay. I'm here now."

"I've had a really bad day," he says pitifully. "And I feel really lost and alone. Or I did, anyway. And now you're here. You're all here, just for me."

"We love you, Kurt," Blaine says simply. "C'mon. There's wine and there's pizza and there's cheesecake and there's me." He tugs him from Libby's room back to the living room, guiding him to the couch before handing him a glass of red which he sips gratefully.

"Ugh," he moans, letting his head fall back. "Just....ugh."

"You wanna eat?"

"You wanna feed me?"

"As it's you, I guess," Blaine smiles. "You know, you timed your homecoming to perfection. Based on our phone calls I figured you usually get home at nine thirty, and you did."

"Why did you bring Martin?" Kurt asks before taking a large bite of the pizza slice Blaine holds up to his lips.

"Well, I figured it was a bit much to ask Santana or Wes to feed him for a whole month. Plus I thought he'd get lonely, all on his own."

Kurt blinks, swallows, and stares. "A month? You're..."

"Moving here until opening night," Blaine clarifies. "Then we can all go back to Ohio for the holidays."

"But you..."

"I figured this way, you could even work weekends if you need to, and the pressure of having to fly home just to see us would be off, because you can see us every day."

"You're really here for a whole month?"

"Yep."

"Really, really?" he asks again through a mouthful of food.

Blaine laughs, kissing away a small blob of pizza sauce from the corner of his mouth. "Yes."
"You'd do all that just for me?"

"I'd do anything for you," Blaine says, eyes shining as he feeds Kurt the remainder of the slice.

Both are silent as they chew, and Blaine watches as Kurt seems to be nodding to himself, building up to say something. He takes another sip of wine and sets his glass on the coffee table, turning to face Blaine on the couch. "You mean that? Anything?"

"Of course."

"Stop emailing Edward."

A heavy silence falls, during which Kurt keeps his eyes locked on Blaine, who looks startled and indignant. "What?" he eventually says with a half laugh. "I don't know if you're aware, Kurt, but he's changed his job. He's organizing our entire spring program."

"Fine, then respond to work related emails only, and CC Riccardo into everything you send. You say you'll do anything for me Blaine, and I'm asking you to stop being friends with this guy."

"Have you been talking to Wes?"

"No," Kurt says slowly, "I've been talking to Sebastian."

"What does he know?"

"Apparently when he went to fix your dad's television, you were tapping away on your phone and told him it was nothing important. Libby climbed on the kitchen counter and while you went to rescue her he looked at your phone."

"What?" Blaine fumes. "I'll kill him."

"Sebastian says he's bad news, and doesn't trust him. If he's saying that, then I most certainly don't."

"It really wasn't anything important though," Blaine says.

"No, you were responding to some question about the Avengers, and whether Tom Hiddleston is hot, apparently."

"Exactly. Just banter."

"But that's not his banter to have!" Kurt cries. "You don't get it, do you? You're leading him on. He seriously thinks he has some kind of chance with you."

"He does not! Kurt, I know you think he's in love with me or whatever, but I'm telling you you're wrong. He hasn't insinuated or said anything since way back when we first met...and that was nearly a year ago. We're friends, that's it. You've read this situation all wrong."

"And I'm telling you I haven't," Kurt snaps. "The more you engage with him, the more you divulge about yourself, or us, the more he has to use against me. He knows I hate the Avengers, and he knows I don't find Tom Hiddleston attractive and you do. I was there when you were on messenger with him, and you told me you'd said that. So now suddenly he's asking you about that, knowing we don't have it in common. You've already got work in common, plus you're the lonely house husband all week. He knows how to get to you, Blaine. He's not dumb. He tried outright hitting on you and it didn't work, now he's seducing you with friendship and you're allowing yourself to be
"Blinded by the attention. You said you'd do anything and I'm telling you, these emails need to stop. Now."

"Strong words," Blaine notes, suddenly realizing how much Kurt is hurting. "Jealous Kurt."

"Jealous? No. Possessive? Yes. You are married to me, Blaine. I don't mind sharing you with Wes, or Santana, I don't even mind sharing you with my dad, but I do mind sharing you with Edward because his intentions toward you are not honorable. He wants to be in a relationship with you, Blaine. And I know you think it's important to be nice, and you don't like offending people, but it's also important to pay attention to how your husband is feeling about this."

"It's really upsetting you, isn't it?"

Kurt looks down, nodding, as for the second time that night, his tears fall. "Sebastian said there were loads," he says quietly. "He counted twenty four emails in three days, and you'd replied to nearly all of them. That's all he had time to see before you came back in the room but really, Blaine? You can't get on Facebook to comment on my pictures, you forget to reply to texts I send, and you berate me for calling an hour after I said I would, but you can reply to twenty four emails and more? That's not friendship, that's stalking."

"I should've told you," Blaine says, stricken. "Wes warned me."

"I'm not mad you didn't tell me, but I'm mad you keep engaging with him."

"I don't know what else to do though!" he cries, clutching Kurt's hands. "It's been this way since the tour. I don't reply? I get twenty more asking what he's done to upset me. I reply? He does anything he can to keep the conversation going. I want to be his friend, Kurt. He's a nice guy. He just doesn't seem to know how a friendship is supposed to operate, that's all."

"No, Blaine," Kurt says firmly. "He's trying to steal another man's husband. Friendship doesn't come into it at all. I see why you like him, he puts on a front of all round nice guy because he knows how he was originally, when you first met, didn't cut it. But he is that guy, Blaine. He is the total douche who makes you feel uncomfortable, who sleeps with your friends as a way of getting to you, who teases you about your married name in the hope you'll admit embarrassment. You cannot be his friend, end of story."

"This is what's been wrong, isn't it?" Blaine asks, though he knows the answer. "The past few weeks, when things have been strained, when you've yelled at me and I've thought it was all to do with work...it's been this, hasn't it?"

Kurt swipes at his eyes, looking up. "Yes."

"Oh Kurt," Blaine sighs, "why didn't you say something?"

"Because I didn't want to upset you!" he sobes. "I didn't want to tell you over the phone, and for us to fight over it, and I didn't want to ruin one of our weekends together because they're so precious and..."

"And that's exactly why I didn't tell you about the emails," Blaine says. "Seems like we're both fearful of hurting one another- which is good, but not if it comes at the cost of not communicating and making our own selves miserable."

"No."

"Okay. I'll stop," Blaine nods firmly. "That's it. I promise. I will show you every email I get from
him, and I'll show you any work related reply I need to make, and I'll copy Riccardo in but other than that, I won't reply to him at all."

"You make me sound like a monster," Kurt says sadly, looking down at his hands.

"Kurt?" Blaine reaches out, lifting his chin gently with his finger. "If someone had been that way with you, I'd have killed them by now."

"Well that's true," he says, smiling through his tears.

"And I'm here now."

"It's not that I don't trust you."

"I know that," Blaine tells him sincerely. "Otherwise we wouldn't have lasted. But being apart makes these little things seem so much bigger, and then we don't mention them so they don't intrude on our family time. But what I mean is, now I'm here we can have these conversations, because I'm here every day. We're together now until at least after new year."

"I like the sound of that."

"I'll be here when you wake up, I'll be here when you come home from work, I'll be here to kiss you goodnight, to hold you all night long."

"Oh please!" Kurt scoffs. "You will not! I hold you and you know it," he laughs.

"Okay, well...I'll be here for you to hold all night long."

"Better."

"You can have as many cuddles and kisses from me as you want."

"And we can make love as often as I like?"

"No, because that would be traumatic for both Libby and Martin, as we would always be 'in flagrante'."

"What?"

"Doing it," Blaine laughs. "We'd always be doing it."

"Ah. Yes."

"But we can make love as often as is humanly possible, when both parties are not too tired, and when certain small people are fast asleep. Starting with right now."

Kurt laughs, eagerly accepting the loving and drawn out kiss Blaine offers, and he sighs happily as Blaine gently lowers him to lie down on the couch. "I was hoping you'd say that."
“Blaine? Honey?” Kurt kneels on the floor of their New York hotel room, looking up anxiously to where Blaine sits white faced on the edge of the bed in just his briefs and undershirt, eyes screwed shut and head bowed. “It’s okay, you know. You don’t have to come. I’ll go now, just check backstage that all is okay and then I’ll come straight back here and we can fly home.”

“What?” Blaine looks up, momentarily confused as he struggles to focus on Kurt’s face but when he does, he reaches out a cold and clammy hand to cup his cheek lightly. “No,” he frowns. “No, I’ll be fine. It’s okay. It was dumb.”

“Panic attacks aren’t dumb,” Kurt says sincerely, running his hands soothingly over his knees.

“This one was. It’s fine. Really. I didn’t realize you were going to the theatre early, that’s all. But it’s okay. I’ll get dressed and meet you there for seven.”

“I really should show my face,” Kurt says anxiously. “Just to check everything over. I know they have sewers on hand for emergencies but even so...I want to make a good impression.”

“I know you do, and you should,” Blaine tells him, offering a trembling smile. “Honestly, Kurt. Just go. I’ll meet you there.”

“But you...”

“Used to travel around New York all the time on my own,” he says, to himself more than anything as he gulps and nods. “Yes. No need to worry. And we’re not going home. I’ve been waiting for this weekend for so long.”

“I don’t know...” Kurt frets, but then his cell phone starts to ring and he offers an apologetic smile to Blaine before answering.

Falling onto his back, Blaine wills the bile to disappear from his throat. He needs to brush his teeth again- he can still taste the vomit from earlier when Kurt announced he’d have to make his own way to the theatre. He doesn’t want to. What he wants to do is crawl under the covers and stay there until Kurt comes back triumphant and tells him all about it. But he could never let his husband down like that, and he knows Kurt is already feeling bad enough for the panic attack, even though it wasn’t his fault.

“I kinda have to...” Kurt says suddenly, looking down at him.


“You’ve said it’s fine about a hundred times now.”

“I know. Because it is.”

Kurt smiles, sitting next to him on the bed and kissing his cheek. “Want me to make you feel better before I go?”

“Um...” Blaine blushes. “Certain parts of me aren’t working right now- even though I’m finally alone in a hotel room with you.”

Kurt laughs softly, pressing his forehead to Blaine’s temple. “Okay.”
“It’s not okay.”

“It is,” he insists. “Being alone with you for a whole weekend is exciting for so many reasons, not just sexual.”


“You are stupidly old,” Kurt points out with a teasing grin before he turns serious. “Blaine, you are and always will be, my sweetheart. Young, old or anywhere in between – which is where we both are right now. I’m so sorry I didn’t forewarn you about having to travel alone. I should have done.”

“No, you shouldn’t have to give a forty one year old man advance notice of him having to take a cab alone,” Blaine sighs. “I’m really sorry, Kurt.”

“Well, neither of us are going to win here,” Kurt says with a small laugh. “So let’s just agree to meet at seven and enjoy our evening together, okay?”

“Okay,” Blaine says with a small smile. “I’m so proud of you.”

“Not as proud as I will be of you for taking that cab for me,” Kurt says, kissing him lovingly. “I’ll see you later.”

Blaine stays motionless on the edge of the bed until his phone rings, and he picks it up and answers without even looking at the screen. “Kurt called you.”

“Of course,” Wes says matter-of-factly. “You can do this, Blaine.”

“I know I can, I just don’t want to.”

“Come on now, you knew this weekend was coming up, it was even your idea. So get your head in the right place. Think positive. You just need to get the cab and Kurt will be waiting for you. At the moment you’re focusing on having to get the cab and being alone, but you need to look past that. Think of everything else that’s waiting for you after the journey. This is the biggest night of your husband’s career. Think of how his face is gonna light up when you step onto the sidewalk in your tux. Think of what it will feel like sitting next to him, holding his hand. Think of...well...whatever it is you two are going to get up to after the show. And the rest of the weekend, Blaine. You have two more days of just the two of you. Think of that.”

“Yeah. Yeah. I can do this,” Blaine repeats. “Yeah.”

“Remember opening night, in Chicago? What did you feel like then?”

“So happy,” Blaine grins, thinking back to when he and Kurt had walked proudly into the theatre with Libby between them, holding their hands. “That night was perfect.”

“And tonight can be too. Remember all those times you get swamped after a show, with offers of work and solo deals? Kurt looks on so proudly, because everyone else is seeing what he always sees, which is how amazingly talented you are. Tonight, you get to do that for him.”

“I do. Oh my god, I do!”

“There ya go,” Wes laughs. “And knowing you as I do, I know for a fact that you’re never going to miss an opportunity to see Kurt’s dreams being realized. Now get your ass in the shower and get dressed. And when you’re done, send me a picture.”
“What? Why?” Blaine laughs, already standing and heading toward the bathroom.

“Because we’re at Burt and Carole’s for dinner, and when you can prove to me you’ve gotten dressed and are actually going to go, then I’ll let you talk to your daughter.”

*

Kurt knows from the look a passing lady gives him that his squeak was audible, but he really doesn’t care as he pushes past her and runs down the steps of the theatre to where Blaine stands nervously. “You came!” Kurt shrieks, hurling himself into his arms.

“Of course I did!” Blaine laughs, but Kurt feels how hard he clutches him, how his whole body sags in relief, and he knows how truly terrifying it was for him to travel across town.

“You got a cab okay?”

“Yes,” he says proudly. “And guess what? I talked with Libby before I left, and she tells me she’s sleeping in papa’s bed,” he smiles. “She was so excited.”

“Aw. Part of me wishes we’d bought her but then...”

“But then we haven’t had a weekend together since....since.... Oh my god we’ve not been away from her longer than one night ever.”

“Nope.”

“Wow.”

“Yeah.” Kurt says softly. “She’s stayed over with Wes, and Santana, and she’s stayed with my dad twice. But that’s it. No whole weekends together.”

“Okay,” Blaine says decisively. “That’s it. Starting right now, we make the most of every second, and we visit FAO Schwarz tomorrow to buy her a load of gifts.”

“Sounds good to me,” Kurt grins, happy that Blaine seems brighter and more relaxed, even though he still looks pale. “C’mon, let’s go get a drink before the show starts.”

“Well, well, well.” Blaine and Kurt turn away from the bar simultaneously, drinks in hand, to face Edward who smiles warmly, even though there’s an unmistakable hardness in his eyes when he looks at Kurt. "Blaine Anderson in New York. It really must be a special occasion."

"Edward," Kurt says stiffly, offering his hand, but Blaine steps in front of him, seething.

"What the hell are you doing here?"

Edward shrugs, his voice light and airy. "I told you I’d get tickets."

"Not to opening night," he hisses.

"Well someone needed to be here to support Kurt," Edward says, still with that bizarre smile fixed in place. "And you told me you weren't coming, so..."

"Really?" Kurt asks in surprise. "When did he say that?"

"Kurt, I never..."
"Ooh, I can't remember," Edward says casually. "Not very long ago. We were discussing the show and Blaine said he'd go to see it in Chicago but not here."

"Really?" Kurt purses his lips and nods thoughtfully before taking a sip of his drink. "Couldn't have been all that recent," he says, straightening up to stare Edward down. "Blaine and I have been together every day since November second and I know," he carries on, "that he's not spoken with you at all. In fact, the only contact he's made with you has been to confirm his availability for the spring program. So if this discussion did take place then it must've been quite a while ago, and I'm guessing Blaine changed his mind." He gives Edward a dazzling smile, who looks rather deflated and annoyed, before turning to his husband. "Honey, Anna and Marcus have just arrived. I'm gonna go say hi, I'll be back in a moment."

"Oh. Um...okay," Blaine nods, still in awe of his sass as he kisses Kurt's cheek then turns to face Edward. "What the hell?"

"Did you change your mind? Or was your presence demanded?"

"What? I changed my mind!" Blaine flares, his voice low as he steps closer to avoid being overheard.

"Really? Because when we spoke you seemed pretty certain."

"Actually, it was that discussion which decided me," Blaine says smugly. "So really, I should be thanking you. Kurt and I didn't manage to get away for our anniversary back in May, so this weekend is my belated gift to him. I planned the whole thing."

"Wow. A romantic weekend away in the city that Blaine never sleeps in."

"Why are you doing this?" he hisses.

"Doing what?"

"Being an asshole!"

"Oh gee. I don't know, Blaine. Maybe it's because I've been frozen out by you since November with no reason whatsoever...although Kurt's now made it pretty clear that was his doing."

"It was not. Look, Edward," Blaine sighs. "The fact is this. I really enjoyed our tour. I thought we were getting on really well as friends, and I told Kurt as much. But then I found out you lied to me, first of all, then you bombarded me with emails which were hardly appropriate."

"What are you talking about?"

"Riccardo didn't request me on tour," Blaine says firmly. "I asked him again. Again he told me it was you."

"Because he's hardly going to admit to it, is he? What do you think he's going to say, Blaine? 'oh yes, sorry, it was me who forced you to uproot Libby for two weeks and stay away from your husband when I know how much you hate being apart, just so I could sell more tickets.' Really, just think about it. I didn't lie to you, Blaine."

"I think you did." Blaine is firm, even as Edward tries to interrupt. "I think you lied, and you know it's his word against yours. But the thing is, Riccardo is so much more than just my boss. He's one of my closest friends. I would trust him with not only my life, but Kurt and Libby's too. And if there's one thing you should know about me, Edward, it's that I would do anything to keep my
"You think I'm a threat to them?" Edward asks.

Blaine pauses, taken aback that he seems almost pleased at the insinuation. "No," he says with a tight smile. "I think you want to be. But the thing is, that's never going to happen. Nothing will come between Kurt and I because we're too strong, too deeply in love to even notice anyone else hovering around, trying to get in on what we have. I've tried to be a friend to you but it's clear you want more, and that will never happen in a million years. You keep changing your game, using every trick in the book to get me to notice you. Well I have noticed, and I'm telling you no thanks. I have, quite simply, the best husband in the entire world. And I'd better go find him," he smiles, clapping Edward hard on the shoulder. "See you around."

He saunters through the crowd to where Kurt stands talking with Anna and Marcus. He looks anxious as they depart though and he's left alone, and Blaine knows he's worrying about him talking with Edward, so he wraps his arms about him from behind and kisses his cheek. "Hey babe."

"Did you just call me babe?" Kurt shrieks, whirling about to face him.

"Sure did."

"Oh my god you are ridiculous!" Kurt laughs, his eyes crinkling as his arms wrap around Blaine's neck.

"Got you laughing though," he says softly into his ear before kissing his cheek again. "I took care of it, don't you worry."

"Really?"

"Really. Now show me to my seat, hot stuff."

"You're truly terrible. A total embarrassment."

"I know," Blaine says proudly. "But you wouldn't have it any other way."

The performance is spectacular, just as it was in Chicago, although maybe it's the electric atmosphere of Broadway, maybe it's that the dancers have been doing this for a month now and are comfortable in their roles, or maybe it's because there's no squirming toddler to occupy, just Kurt holding his hand tightly, but Blaine thinks it's better than he remembers, and joins loudly with the standing ovation at the end. They are fortunate enough not to see Edward again, and Blaine realizes how little he cares whether he went home or stayed for the show, far too preoccupied with escorting his husband to the after party and smiling politely as he's introduced to guest after guest, though he can't remember a single name.

"I am so proud of your husband," Anna tells him as she joins him at a table. Kurt stands in the middle of a group of men, all hanging on every word he's saying as he gestures with his hands, and nods his head in agreement when someone comments.

"Oh me too."

"I had noticed," she teases.

"Who are those men?"
"Two of them are from Roundabout theatre company, one from Lincoln Center theatre and two from Second Stage."

"Oh."

"New York theatre companies," Anna explains. "After our boy and his talent."

"Really?"

"Yes, he's becoming quite sought after," she sighs. "Nearly every phone call he gets is trying to secure his services. I could fill his diary for the next three years if he wanted."

"And what do you want?"

"I want him to own this moment, just as he is doing so beautifully," she says smiling proudly as she watches Kurt in action. "I knew when I very first saw his showcase that he was special. He deserves this. The costume world is his for the taking, if he wants it."

"I think he prefers to be by your side," Blaine says, putting an arm about her shoulders as she dabs delicately at her eyes. "I know he's enjoyed this project, but he likes being with you best of all."

"I won't be around forever," Anna says sadly. "My eyes aren't as good, my fingers not as nimble...and what will Kurt do then? Unfortunately, I have to let him fly."

"I think you'll find he'll fly right back into the nest."

"If that's the case, and that is truly what he wants to do, then great. The company will be his when I retire."

"Oh I don't...."

"Oh hush," she says affectionately. "My own children are settled with families and careers of their own. Kurt is just like my third baby, and Libby is like my granddaughter. I've dreamed of handing it down through the generations, and if that's to Kurt, then so be it."

Kurt arrives then, his eyes shining with excitement, cheeks flushed with happiness. "Are you okay?" he asks Blaine, searching his face for any kind of worry or upset. "I'm so sorry. I keep getting waylaid and I...Well, I haven't forgotten about you. I just..."

"Kurt," Blaine says gently. "It's okay. Really. Go mingle, have fun, soak it all up because you deserve every second."

"But..."

"Anna and I are fine."

"Yes, go and leave us," Anna says lightly. "When you're not around people think Blaine is my boytoy. You're spoiling the illusion."

Kurt laughs, and kisses both their cheeks before he departs once more, almost skipping with excitement. Blaine talks with Anna some more, and Marcus, her husband until they depart, and then he sits alone. He contemplates more champagne, but then remembers the hustle and bustle of New York waiting for him outside and decides to keep a clear head, not wanting to lose the tight control he has on his emotions right now. Kurt is engaged in deep conversation with two women when Blaine’s phone buzzes, and he feels suddenly sick when he reads the message.
You looked beautiful tonight.

Fuck off and leave me alone, is what he immediately texts back, but it’s followed seconds later with

I love it when you wear a tux. I can't stop thinking of you.

and he tears from the room quickly, out into the corridor where there’s relative peace and quiet.

“Blaine?” Sebastian answers in surprise. “It’s really late.”

“It’s midnight.”

“Exactly.”

“You’re so old.”

“I’m the same age as you! Anyway, why are you calling?”

“I have a major problem.”

He tells Sebastian everything that has happened that evening, and his friend listens intently before sighing loudly. “Why me? Why didn’t you call Wes?”

“Because Wes needs all the sleep he can get. What do I do, Seb?”

“Well the one thing you absolutely do not do, is reply to his texts.”

“Oh.”

“You’re a moron. Listen, Blaine. I know how guys like him work, because fifteen, twenty years ago I was exactly the same. He won’t read a reply from you- however angry it is- and worry he’s upset you. He’ll see it as an invitation to continue. Kurt tells me this guy is in love with you but he’s not. He’s obsessed with you. There’s a difference. He wants to anger you, to get a rise out of you because he’s hoping you'll storm over to his apartment to yell at him, at which point the sexual tension will explode and you’ll pin him against the wall in a bruising kiss.”

“What? NO!”

“Calm down. I know it’s not going to happen, but he’s trying any which way he can to get in between you and Kurt. He’s used your job, he’s used your daughter, he’s used Riccardo, me…”

“You don’t sound upset about that.”

“I’m not,” Sebastian shrugs down the line. “It is what it is. Though if I’d known beforehand I wouldn’t have gone there. Now here’s what you’re going to do. Turn your phone off…”

“I can’t. Libby.”

“Oh yeah. I forget some people have commitments. Okay. Well...any more texts from him, delete them right away. Don’t read them. If you get any more over the weekend I’d consider changing your number. I know it’s a pain in the ass, but his attention is a bigger annoyance. Now go enjoy your weekend with your handsome husband.”

“Thanks,” Blaine smiles. “He looks really good tonight.”
“I’ll bet he does.”

“Sebastian,” Blaine warns.

“Oh really? You think I would?”

“No, I don’t. But you see, why is that? Why can you and I joke about the hotness of my husband and I don’t have to worry that you’ll try and steal him, yet Edward says stuff like that about me and I feel violated?”

“Because I grew up, for a start,” Sebastian points out. “And though for a lot of years I had no morals at all, I hope you know that I would never, ever have tried to take Kurt from you.”

“I do. I do know that.”

“Good. Because I love you and Kurt equally. Though I love Libby more.”

“Everyone does.”

“She’s prettier. Now go. Find your man.”

“I will. Thanks, Seb.”

“Anytime.”

He slips quietly back into the room, happy to note that Kurt is still talking and doesn’t seem to have noticed his absence. Checking his phone again, he sees one text from Edward that starts with ‘Please, Blaine, call me...’ but he does exactly what Sebastian suggested and deletes it without reading the rest and walks over to the bar.

"Hey beautiful," Kurt says happily, bounding up alongside him. "Are you getting another drink?"

"I don't have to," Blaine says, suddenly rather desperate to be in Kurt's arms behind closed doors. "If you're ready to go."

"I'm ready," he nods. "Thank you, for being so patient."

"Kurt, don't thank me. You've had to do the same for me. And really, it's no chore when you're this happy. You're mesmerising."

"Blaine, I feel like...like...I don't know. I don't know what I feel like," he babbles excitedly as they exit the party and head outside to find a cab. "They loved the costumes. I mean, the whole production is outstanding, but to have people seek me out to come congratulate me, it's...it's... Oh my god, are you okay?"

"Huh? Yeah, yeah, I'm fine," Blaine says, gripping his hand tightly. "Really. Let's just...cab," he says, hailing one to a stop and holding the door open for Kurt. "Keep talking to me. I'm happy to listen and it's a good distraction."

"Well...there's this guy called Jacques, he's producing Cabaret and wants to meet with me. I mean I met him tonight, but he wants to meet me again. And I met two ladies who work for paramount. They want me to go to LA to meet with them."

"Wow! Kurt, that's incredible. You gonna do it?"

"I don't know. Cabaret possibly, because that's not until September. But there were other offers of
work too. I need to sit down and talk with you and Anna. I know the first thing I'm going to do though."

"Oh? What's that?"

"I'm talking a month off, starting today. January fourth to February fifth I am unavailable. This is my time with my husband and my daughter, and I'm not sacrificing it for anyone. If they want me to design their costumes that badly, they'll wait, end of story."

"You don't have to do that," Blaine says, though his whole face lights up in the darkness at the very thought.

"I do. It's my way of thanking you and Libby for all your love and support over the last eight months. I couldn't have done it without you, Blaine. So now you're stuck with me."

Blaine laughs, completely elated. "Good."

"Wal-mart, swimming lessons, music group, trips to the playground, Jungle Gym...I'm gonna be there for all of it. And you and me will be together every night, and I promise you I won't ask you to model another tutu for a very long time."

"Thank you," Blaine grins, leaning over to kiss him softly. "I know I keep saying this, but I am so incredibly proud of you. You deserve good things, mister Hummel-Anderson, and I'm glad they're coming your way."

"Meh," Kurt shrugs, fishing his wallet from his pocket as the driver pulls to a stop. "It's all good, but the best thing of all is you."

"You're just saying that."

"Yes," Kurt says, rolling his eyes affectionately as they step from the cab. "Of course. Come on, I'll race you to our room."
Blaine is tackled back onto the bed the second the door is closed, but he falls willingly, tugging Kurt on top of him and eagerly accepting his kisses. "I love you," Kurt grins, pulling back to rub their noses together. "And don't go getting all panicked about what you think I might be expecting here, because really, I was just desperate to hold you again. I don't care if it stays this way."

"I don't wanna sleep in my tux."

"Well duh, goofball," Kurt says affectionately.

"But I would like some more kisses."

Kurt's teasing quickly becomes heated, spurred on by Blaine who reaches around to grab at his ass and pull him down to grind against him, and Kurt decides to say nothing, and see where this make out session takes them. Blaine is eager, desperate, even, rolling them over so his weight is on top of Kurt and he kisses along his jaw, stopping to loosen his bow tie and the first few buttons of his shirt before kissing into the hollow of his throat. "Kurt," he murmurs. "Oh god....Kurt." And he kisses him again, so hard and possessive that Kurt starts to feel uncomfortable, pushing at his shoulders until Blaine releases his hold and stares down at him, eyes wild.

"What is with you?"

"Nothing, I..." Blaine starts, then shakes his head and sighs. "Edward text me."

"What?" Kurt is out from under him in an instant, sitting upright and righting his clothes. "When?"

"At the party. Here." Blaine offers his phone to Kurt who seizes it, reading the messages before throwing it onto the bed in anger.

"Great."

"One more too, asking me to call him, but I deleted it."

"But you replied to the first one."

"I was angry."

"One thing, Blaine!" Kurt cries, getting up and starting to pace. "I asked you to do one thing for me, which was not to contact him. I know you couldn't help him being there tonight but why do you feel the need to reply to him?"

"I told him where to get off, it was hardly a full blown conversation!"

"So now he's made you angry and you're taking it out on my mouth?"


"You don't get to use me to forget, Blaine! That's not how we work."

"I wasn't! I...."

"Forget it," Kurt snaps. "I'm taking a shower."
"I'm sorry." The softest of kisses is dropped onto Kurt's shoulder when Blaine steps into the large walk in shower and wraps his arms around him from behind. Kurt doesn't reply, but he does rest his hands over Blaine's forearms, stepping forward a little so they're both under the hot spray. "I didn't know what to do. He made me so angry. And I wanted to tell you, but I also didn't want to spoil the evening, because he had already tried to ruin it and he didn't succeed. And tonight belongs to you. This weekend is ours and no one else's. And all I kept thinking was not here, not now. Not in New York when I'm trying so hard to hold it all together. You make me feel safe, Kurt. You might be fifteen years younger but you're also my protector. And all I've been waiting for is for that door to close and to be in your arms again. I went about things the wrong way, and I'm sorry."

"I'm sorry too," Kurt says quietly, letting his head fall back onto Blaine's shoulder as he closes his eyes. "Whatever happens, I will not let that man come between us. Ever. I know you were just trying to get him off your back, and that's okay. I'd just rather you didn't reply in future."

"I won't. I'm changing my number as soon as we get back to Ohio."

"Okay."

Kurt turns to capture his lips, feeling as though he could kiss this man forever and it would still never be enough. Bending his knees slightly, he leans back against Blaine's chest, letting the water wash over his face before kissing him again.

"You're smaller than me," Blaine comments.

"I'm stooping."

"Stay stooped," Blaine smiles. "I like it." He cuddles Kurt tight, hooking his chin over his shoulder and sighing contentedly. "My little Kurtie."

"I will actually kill you."

Blaine chuckles, kissing the side of his neck. "No you won't."

"No I won't," Kurt agrees. "I'll send you to Edward instead."

"Not funny."

"Tis a little bit funny."

"Just be quiet and let me take care of you."

"What does that entail?" Kurt asks flirtatiously, but Blaine doesn't answer, just reaches past him for some of the shower gel he used earlier, squeezing it into his palm before rubbing it onto Kurt's chest. "I actually can't stay like this, my knees are killing."

Blaine laughs, letting Kurt stand upright, though their height difference isn't so great that he can't still rest his chin on his shoulder, which he does, and tugs his earlobe between his teeth. "Better?"

"A little."

"How about now?"

Blaine's hands move lower, tracing gentle patterns over the tops of Kurt's thighs and into the creases where his legs meet his pelvis.
"Getting there."

"Hmm. Now?"

"B-better," Kurt gasps when Blaine takes his cock in his hand, smoothing the slippery soap over his length as he slowly strokes him to hardness. “Ohh...yes,” he sighs.

Blaine washes Kurt with his left hand, smoothing the soap up and over his chest, then down his back, teasing over his ass before kneading it gently, while his right hand keeps up a steady rhythm over his cock. It’s easy now, Blaine seems to know Kurt’s pleasure even better than his own. He knows exactly where to touch, how hard or how soft. He knows that if he flicks his wrist in just the right way, Kurt will moan and bite his lip. He knows all of this, and yet still takes pleasure in making Kurt come undone, as if every time was their first time, as if he’s only just being allowed to touch this body, to worship his husband and to bring him to orgasm, which he does. Kurt leans forward, resting his forehead on the cool tiles as he shoots over Blaine’s hand and breathes hard. The water cascades over his back, and Blaine bows under the spray to kiss at his shoulders, draping himself over him before hugging him tight then letting him stand upright again.

Kurt turns in his embrace, arms wrapping around Blaine’s waist as he searches into his eyes for some kind of clue as to what he should do. And he knows. Nothing. He knows that for now, all Blaine wants and needs is to be held, and this he does, cradling him close and dropping featherlight kisses over his cheeks, eyelids and finally lips where he lingers, teasing him until he feels Blaine smile, his lips curving slowly upwards until Kurt pretends to bite him as he does with Libby, which in turn makes Blaine laugh.


He finds his usual spot, head resting on Kurt’s chest and arms wrapped around his waist as Kurt trails his fingers over his forearm and they listen to the noise of the city below. “He would have liked Libby,” Blaine says suddenly into the darkness.

“Luke?”

“Yeah.” Blaine sighs, curling tighter into Kurt’s side. “I think about him a lot when I’m here. And I just know he would have really liked her.”

“He would,” Kurt nods. “All you’ve told me about him, from before he got into the drugs...yeah. He sounds like he was a really nice guy.”

“He was. I mean, even if all of that had never happened, we wouldn’t have lasted. I was meant to be with you, for one thing. But also, we had a really great friendship but no real spark or chemistry...unless we were drunk. And it’s weird, y’know? I suppose I think of it as the biggest relationship I had, apart from you, but actually, it really wasn’t. I never did any of this, for example.” he says, squeezing around Kurt’s middle and kissing his chest. “Never laid like this and cuddled. We talked a lot, but it was over coffee or while walking through the park.....Come to think of it, I never did this with anyone.”

“And you never will.”

“Nope.”

“You’re wearing your big shit eating cat-who-got-the-cream grin right now, aren’t you?” Kurt asks, laughing. “I can feel your face stretching against my chest.”

“Yep.”
They laugh together softly and Kurt ruffles his hair affectionately before Blaine sighs once again and closes his eyes. “I think we could have been really good friends,” he says sadly. “Rather like Sebastian and I. If he hadn’t...”

“Yeah.”

“I miss him.”

“I know you do. And that’s okay. Chances are, wherever he is now, he misses you. It’s always hard to lose a friend, and it’s even harder in circumstances such as those.”

“I wish we’d reconciled.”

“I know, but you know what? You did what you had to do to protect yourself. And at that point in his life, Luke didn’t want help. You can’t force people to face up to their addictions, Blaine. They can only overcome them when they recognize that the problem exists in the first place.”

“I know. I know you’re right but...”

“But it doesn’t make it any easier. I get it. But yes, if things had been different I’m sure he would have been a good friend to both of us and of course he would have liked Libby, that goes without saying.”

“I love you, Kurt Hummel-Anderson.” Blaine shifts up, resting on one elbow and smiling down at him softly. “Thank you for letting me talk about it.”

“Blaine it’s...I don’t know...it’s my privilege, really, to listen. Because just as no one else gets to cuddle you, no one else gets to hear you talk like this. It’s why we’re husbands.”

Blaine nods, accidentally letting a tear splash onto Kurt’s cheek, who smiles and wipes it away. “You’re crying and yet the grin is back.”

“Yup,” Blaine beams, leaning down to offer a lingering kiss. “I’d make you my husband all over again, if I could.”

“I’ll settle for knowing that we’ve been a couple for nearly ten years, and it’s even better than ever.”

“My little Kurtie.”

“Stop it,” he warns, smacking the top of Blaine’s arm, “Or you’re sleeping on the couch.”

* 

“He was there!”

Kurt sits upright suddenly, struggling to remember where he is and why his bed is against the other wall and then he realizes. This is New York, it’s two thirty in the morning and this is Blaine having a nightmare. He tosses and thrashes about, twisting this way and that in the sheets. His eyes are screwed shut and a sheen of sweat glistens on his forehead as he moans and mumbles something incomprehensible.

“Blaine, sweetheart. Come on,” Kurt whispers, hoping to coax him into waking.

But Blaine is deeply asleep, panic and fear seizing him in his dreams as he screams loudly and tears at his hair. “No! No, don’t touch him. Don’t you touch him!”
“Blaine!” Kurt is sharper, more forceful as he turns on the bedside lamp and shakes him roughly.

“Get away! You can’t,” Blaine moans. “You can’t take him. You can’t....NO!” he yells loudly, his hand reaching out desperately. “NO! Not my Kurt not my Kurt and my Libby no no no...”

“Blaine! Blaine, come on,” Kurt says urgently. “It’s okay. Sweetie, it’s okay. Come on Blaine, wake up for me.”

“Give me my baby!” he screams, and Kurt realizes to his horror that tears are streaming down both their faces. “My baby!” Blaine sobs, clutching at the sheets in terror. “My Kurt my baby...”

Unable to stand anymore, Kurt does the only thing he can think to do. He hits. Hard. The blow to the side of his face, and subsequent slaps over his chest and shoulders has Blaine stirring, sitting up and trying to focus in the gloom though he’s not really awake.

“Kurt?”

“Yes,” he sobs with relief. “Oh Blaine, I...”

“He has Libby. He watched Luke die and now he has Libby.”

“No one has Libby, she’s with dad. Blaine, it’s okay. It’s just a dream. You’re safe, you’re safe here with me.”

“Edward has Libby.”

“No he doesn’t,” Kurt says firmly, but Blaine shakes his head and starts to cry like a child.

“He’s stolen my baby.”

“He...” Kurt starts, then thinks back to all the times he’s spoken with Wes about how to deal with the nightmares which only seem to occur in the city. “Keep talking to him, Kurt. It’s real to him. Don’t tell him he’s being silly. Calm his fears. Eventually his body will wake his brain and then he’ll cry. And when he does, hold him. That’s all you can do. Hold him and tell him he is loved.”

“Okay,” Kurt tries, reaching for Blaine’s hand, but he balls it into a fist and hides it in his lap.

“Okay. Do you want to tell me what happened?”

“Luke hanged himself and broke his neck,” he says bluntly. “He hanged himself and then the blood came. Edward watched him do it and now he’s covered in the blood but he didn’t wash it off and he’s stolen my Kurt and my Libby.”

“Do you think we can get them back?”

“Yes,” Blaine says warily, and Kurt is struck by how childlike his voice sounds. “But we will have to fight. Have to fight the blood.”

“Well that’s okay.” Kurt says as lightly as he can muster. “It’s only red stuff. Think of it as strawberry jelly. Or ketchup. Which do you prefer?”

“Libby likes jelly.”

“She does. Jelly it is.”

“It comes from Luke’s eyes when he hangs.”
“Well isn't that just lovely?” Kurt says, feeling sick at the thought. Blaine sits stock still, staring before he closes his eyes again and lies back down, falling into a peaceful sleep once more. He wakes an hour later, when Kurt is still sitting next to him, propped up against the pillows and watching his face as he dreams, and he gasps loudly as his eyes fly open, as if surfacing from underwater.

“Kurt!”

“I’m here. Shh, shh,” he soothes as Blaine clutches him tightly. “It’s okay, it’s okay.”

“I dreamed,” he sobs. “I dreamed about Luke...he was....and Edward watched....Libby...”

“It’s okay. We’re all okay. Libby is safe, Luke is at peace and I’m here, with you. Okay? I’m not going anywhere, I promise. Shh, shh.”

“Never,” Blaine wails as he cries harder. “Don’t ever leave me. I couldn't live without you and Libby. I couldn’t.”

“It’s okay, you don’t have to. We’re here with you forever, Blaine. Forever and for always, remember?”

Blaine takes a great, heaving, shaky breath and nods, trying to pull himself together. “Yes,” he mumbles, then looks into Kurt’s eyes. “I miss my mom.”

“I know you do,” Kurt sighs. “Oh honey.”

Blaine falls into his embrace and Kurt lets him cry for as long as he needs, dropping soft kisses into his hair and soothing him over and over until his sobs subside to occasional hiccuping sniffles and Kurt gently lifts his chin to look into his eyes again. “I love you.”

“I’m so sorry,” Blaine whispers, his voice full of shame.

“It’s okay,” Kurt says sincerely. “I mean it, Blaine. Don’t feel bad about this because it’s just your brain being a dick while you’re asleep.”

Blaine laughs, as Kurt hopes he would, and ducks his head shyly onto his husband’s shoulder. “Still, I’m sorry.”

“Gimme a kiss then, to make it all better.”

Kurt’s breath hitches when Blaine’s hands come up to frame his face and he looks, really looks into those amber eyes which he first noticed so long ago. He knows every nuance now, every subtle aspect of what they hold but still he finds them as striking as ever, and he keeps staring, even when Blaine's long dark lashes flutter and closed and he inches his face closer, and only then does Kurt let his own eyes fall shut as Blaine gives the softest, most loving of kisses to his lips. “Thank you for looking after me,” he whispers, and it’s enough to make Kurt close that gap between them once more, breathing in sharply through his nose as he slides his fingers into the curls at the back of Blaine’s head and lowers him gently onto the pillows.

"My jaw hurts," Blaine suddenly realizes.

"Oh. Um....I hit you."

"Intentionally?"
"Well yes, but only to try and get you to wake up."

Blaine pushes up onto his elbows as Kurt sits back and looks down at the sheets. "Was I yelling?"

"You really frightened me," he admits quietly. "And I only hit you because I was worried what you'd do to yourself if you didn't wake up. And you started having a conversation with me but you weren't awake."

"What was I saying?"

"Not nice things. And I'm not going to tell you, because if I do, I worry the nightmare will come back. So I'm gonna kiss you instead."

"Hang on," Blaine stops Kurt before he can advance. "Was I mad at you? Because I'm not, you know."

"No, no," Kurt reassures. "If anything, you proved once again how much you love me."

"I do, I really do," Blaine says, smiling softly, and this time he allows Kurt to guide him back down onto the bed again, and eagerly accepts his weight on top of him. They kiss for the longest time, slowly and lovingly and revelling in being together like this. It feels almost forbidden, to be awake with the lights on at three thirty and making out leisurely, especially since there's no screaming baby to contend with and no worry about having to be awake in three hours. So they take their time and slowly Kurt feels Blaine start to relax, as the lingering panic ebbs away and is replaced by the comfort and reassurance that Kurt's mouth on his brings. His hands rub firmly over Kurt's back, over his shoulders and down to his biceps as their kissing intensifies, and they grind together lightly through their pajama pants. Moving lower, Kurt trails kisses along Blaine's collarbone, down his chest, pausing to tease his nipples with his tongue, making Blaine whimper softly before he follows the line of dark hair down below his belly button, tugging his pajama pants down to his ankles. He thinks about stopping, about asking Blaine if this is okay, or if it's too much, but he knows the answer already. He doesn't need it confirmed but the way Blaine's hips thrust upward at the feel of Kurt's tongue trailing along his length lets him know what is wanted, and he sinks his mouth down around him slowly.

Blaine is silent, which is unusual for him, but his hands tangle into Kurt's hair, massaging his scalp as he takes his time, sucking, licking and kissing for so long that he's surprised Blaine manages to hold off, but a soft tap to the side of his head eventually comes, and Kurt pulls back to reach the lube resting on the nightstand. He pauses momentarily, but a small nod from Blaine makes him smile and relax, settling between Blaine's knees and kissing each one tenderly. "Are you...?"

"Should be." Blaine tries to think, screwing up his nose thoughtfully. "It's only been a few days."

"I'll go slow," Kurt smiles, and presses himself to Blaine's entrance before leaning down to kiss him tenderly. "Just say, if..."

"I will."

If it hurts? If it's too much? If you don't want to do this? Whatever Kurt did mean doesn't matter when Blaine feels himself slowly stretch to allow Kurt to enter him. His mind goes to that place it always does, where everything is Kurt and everything else ceases to exist. All that matters right now is Kurt, pushing slowly inside, his mouth parted in pleasure, pupils blown wide and his arms trembling until he stills, and drops down onto his elbows. "I love you," they chorus in unison, then laugh softly before Kurt begins to move.
The eyes which had first attracted each other all those years ago stay locked and focused on one another throughout, and sweet, soft smiles are shared as Blaine’s legs wrap tightly around Kurt’s waist to draw him even closer, their lips coming together in an unhurried kiss which matches Kurt’s pace. Blaine moans and lets his eyes slip closed as Kurt pushes into him again and again, their senses overwhelmed and filled with the one they love the most until Blaine can’t stand it anymore and he reaches up to caress Kurt’s cheek gently.

“Kurt...”

“I know,” he whispers with a small nod, leaning into Blaine’s soft touch and angling himself over onto his right elbow slightly so he can push deeper. Blaine reaches down between them, running a hand over himself, his breathing ragged with want. “Let go for me, Blaine,” Kurt murmurs, lips pressed to his temple. “I’ve got you. I’ve always got you.”

He comes with a shout which is immediately muffled by Kurt’s mouth on his, hot and gasping as he fills Blaine repeatedly before collapsing hard on top of him, panting for breath. They’re still and silent in the dawn, until eventually Kurt pulls out and rolls onto his back, wiping Blaine’s stomach haphazardly with tissues and pulling him into his arms.

“Jesus Christ, it’s six in the morning!” Blaine says in surprise.

“We’ve been making love all night long.”

“Oh my god we are a song lyric,” Blaine says, and they both dissolve into laughter.

“Let’s get some more sleep, then go out for brunch, yeah?” Kurt says sleepily, and Blaine yawns his agreement.

“Thank you, again, for looking after me.”

“I told you, you don’t need to thank me.”

“You won’t ever leave me, will you?”


“The dream won’t come back, will it?”

“I don’t know, Blaine,” Kurt answers honestly. “But if it does, I’ll take care of you.”

“Thank you,” he says, closing his eyes at last. He lets silence fill the room and then; “I expect Libby is awake by now.”

“Blaine?”

“Hmm?”

“Would you sleep better if we called her first?”

“Yes, I think I would,” Blaine admits in a rush. “Is that okay?”

“Of course.” Kurt sits tiredly, reaching for his phone and kissing Blaine’s cheek while he waits for the call to connect. “Anything for you.”
Two months later.

Blaine walks into Burt Hummel's garage, setting the coffee and donuts down on the workbench as he has done every Friday afternoon for years. He hears a faint rumbling from underneath a Lincoln and waits. Sure enough, a voice calls out. "I'm not talking to you."

"No, I didn't think you would be. And Libby is with Kathy and Livvy before you ask, so you haven't even got her to distract you."

"I'm not coming out then."

"You think I'm being selfish? An idiot? You do know Kurt told me I should go, right?"

"I know that," Burt calls. "And I think you're both idiots. You're off to Europe for a month, then when you return he's off to New York."

"Not exactly. He's not going to New York until September. I'm going to Europe in May. We'll have three months together in between."

"Do you really think you can do it? Be apart from not only Kurt, but Libby too? For a whole month?" He pushes out from under the car, wiping his hands on a rag before coming over to hug his son-in-law hello, despite his claim that he's not talking to him.

"Well...I don't know," Blaine admits. "But it's not really feasible for Kurt and Libby to trail me around for all that time. It seemed kinder to Lib to let her have this time with Kurt- especially since she won't have him for a month in September either."

"What made you decide to do it?"

"I'm headlining."

"Woo."

"Yeah, thanks for that," Blaine says dryly. "This is huge for me. Edward isn't going, and it just seemed as though it was meant to be, that's all. Playing the piano night after night...it's all I could wish for. Plus, I think it'll be my swan song."

"Oh really?" Burt asks, raising one eyebrow. "Kurt know that?"

"No, because he'll try and talk me out of it. But think about it, Burt. Libby turns two on Sunday. She needs a stable home life. It's no good for her to have parents coming and going, and for her to be in Chicago one week, Ohio the next. Kurt is hot stuff."

"Steady."

"In demand," he clarifies. "He could be booked for the next ten years if he wanted. We're comfortable enough that Libby's college fund is healthy, and she has a good deposit for a house when she's ready."

"She's two."

"Exactly. There only needs to be one of us working, and that needs to be Kurt."
"Why?"

"Because he's younger. I've had my shot, and it's been fun. He can't give up work now until Lib goes to college, because when she's gone he'll be left with nothing but memories of a dream which was enjoyable for a time, and a husband of nearly sixty who will be retiring from his lifelong ambition and annoying him intensely. Kurt deserves more."

"So you're retiring now, at forty one?"

"I guess."

"You and Kurt always do this," Burt protests, picking up a wrench and returning to the Lincoln. "Why do you live your lives according to work and schedules? It's not important. You need to sit down and work out a life plan. Together. Do you really think you're being fair to yourself? Retiring now when you could have another twenty years as a musician at least? Why does it always have to be one of you sacrificing something for the other? Why not compromise?"

"Kurt doesn't like compromise."

"Well it's about time you both learned how to do it. You've been together so long, enough with the grand gestures already. Yes it's noble and inspiring, and it comes from a good place for both of you but really, you have Libby and yourselves. You need to find a balance which will make you all happy. This tour will be great for you, but it'll make Kurt miserable and Libby sad. And as for September, when he goes to New York to do camouflage..."

"Cabaret."

"Whatever. It's gonna be a disaster."

"Don't say that!"

"Not the show! You and him!"

"We managed okay for Nutcracker."

"That was one weekend, and it depends what you mean by okay," Burt grumbles, fishing around under the hood.

"Has Kurt told you stuff?" Blaine asks, feeling alarmed.

"He told me that guy was there, yes. It's why you changed your number, isn't it? He was harassing you?"

"Yeah." Blaine flushes as he looks at the floor, more relieved that Kurt hasn't divulged details of the two restless nights they spent in the city, where only consistent reassurance and lovemaking could keep Blaine from being seized by night terrors.

"Blaine...this show that Kurt is doing...it's only the start. What are you going to do if he takes another? And another after that? You said yourself how in demand he is right now."

"If Kurt decides that's what he wants to do well...then...I'll support him," Blaine shrugs.

"But..." Burt shuts the hood, coming across to sit opposite him on a stool. "Okay. Supposing Kathy said she wanted to move back to England, and Wes really didn't want to. Would you tell him to suck it up and move anyway?"
"No, of course not! I'd tell him he had to talk to her about his feelings."

"Exactly. You and Kurt are in love and that's great, but you don't need to always sacrifice stuff for one another, you need to talk about what you both want and set about achieving it. Together. That company will be his by the end of this year. Do you have any idea what he wants to do with it? Or where he wants to work?"

"Um..."

"And do you really, honestly want to finish work completely, at forty one, so that the can be gallivanting about New York while you and Libby mooch around in Ohio?"

"I...."

"Talk, boy. Talk."

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"Hey," Kurt says without looking up from his drawing board. "Have fun?"

"Your dad isn't speaking to me."

"And yet you still managed to waste three hours there," he remarks with a smile. "Daddy!"

"By the way, Libby's back."

Blaine turns to see Libby charging down the hallway pushing her shopping cart loaded with an assortment of toys as she tears into Kurt's office and skids to a halt. "Hey Lib," he laughs, scooping her up and kissing her cheek. "Did you have fun with Kathy and Liv?"

"Ducks!"

"You went to see the ducks, huh? And did you feed them the bread this time, or did you eat it?"

"Eat! Yummy."

"Thought as much," he smiles, setting her down and ruffling her hair. "Go play, I just want to talk to papa a minute then I'll come find you."

"No," she pouts, hands on hips. "Daddy come. Now."

"Not now sweetie, I'm just talking with papa."

"Now, daddy, now!"

"Libby," Blaine warns firmly. "No. I am talking with papa and when I'm done I'll come play with you. Now please wait your turn."

"Now!" she protests, louder this time.

"Libby, daddy just told you," Kurt says, looking over the top of his drawing board. "In a moment."

"NO!" she screams loudly, pushing her cart over. "Daddy come, papa come now, now, now!" Hurling herself to the ground in protest, she screams and kicks her little feet, tears cascading down
her angry red face at not getting her own way.

"Here we go again," Blaine sighs, and picking up the stiff and unyielding toddler he carries her from the room to the bottom of the staircase. "Okay. Time out, little lady. Stay here until you're calm."

"No!"

"Yes. You will do as I say, Libby," Blaine tells her, crouching down to try and look into her eyes. "You want to live in a happy house? That means not getting your own way all the time. Now you stay here until I come get you."

"Go 'way, daddy! Go 'way." Folding her arms, bottom lip trembling, Libby sits down hard on the bottom step to pout and satisfied that she seems at least willing to stay put, Blaine returns to the office.

"When does she turn three?"

"One year and two days," Kurt remarks, now busy drawing again. "At the moment she has about four tantrums a day, so multiply that by three hundred and sixty seven and... we're doomed."

"She just has to understand that she can't get her own way all the time."

"Hmm, it's a hard lesson to learn."

"Some of us still haven't,"

Kurt looks up sharply. "What's that supposed to mean?"

"Nothing," Blaine says lightly, a twinkle playing in his eye. "Nothing at all."

Kurt pokes his tongue out at him before picking up his pencil once more. "I don't hear you complaining when I demand my own way," he says casually. "You usually roll over and beg me for it."

"I like dominance in a man, what can I say?" Blaine grins, sidling up behind him and kissing his neck.

"Anyway, what did you want to talk to me about?"

Blaine opens his mouth to respond but is interrupted by a loud crash followed by an even louder scream which has them charging from the office and into the hallway where Libby lies at the bottom of the stairs, obviously having fallen and knocked the vase from the table onto the floor, where Martin hovers, anxiously meowing.

"Libby! Libby! Oh my god!" Kurt shrieks as Blaine scoops the sobbing child into his arms. "Is she okay? She's okay, yes?"

But instead of the usual calm reassurance, Blaine looks up, his face ashen. "Emergency room," he choke out, and Kurt stifeles a sob when he sees blood on Blaine's fingers. "She's hit her head. Shh, shh, baby," he coos over her loud sobs. "Shhh my darling, daddy's here, papa's here."

"Okay, okay uh..."

"Try not to panic, Kurt," Blaine says, his own voice trembling with fear as he stands, cradling Libby close. "Grab the diaper bag from the closet and the car keys, that's all we need."
"Yes. Yes," Kurt mumbles, trying to calm his breathing as he grabs the bag plus his phone and wallet. "I don't know if I can drive," he admits, tears pricking his eyes as Libby continues to cry loudly.

"I can drive," Blaine says with a nod, grabbing the keys. "But you'll have to sit with Libby. Don't let her go to sleep, okay? And hold that muslin over the back of her head as best you can. Put pressure on it but not too much, you don't want to hurt her."

He hands her over, and Libby clutches at Kurt's shirt. "Papa. Ouchy papa," she moans, sniffling into his neck.

"I know, baby girl. Let's go get you sorted, okay?"

Blaine drives to the hospital quickly and silently, trying to concentrate on the road and not on the fearful pounding of his heart and sick feeling in his stomach. He abandons the car rather than parks it, and ushers Kurt and Libby into the ER.

"Our baby," Blaine explains to the nurse behind the desk. "She needs help. She fell..."

"Okay," the woman nods, looking at her computer screen. "Child's full name?"

"Libby Darling Hummel-Anderson."

"Really?"

"Yes, really," he snaps through gritted teeth.

"Date of birth and address please."

Blaine gives both, looking fearfully at Libby where she lies in Kurt's arms looking between them both with wide eyes. "She's bleeding. She hit her head and she's still bleeding...."

"Okay sir, we will get her seen right away. I take it you're dad?"

"Yes."

"Follow me." They make to trail her down the corridor but she stops, looking at Kurt. "Oh I'm sorry sir, we just need the child and dad."

"I'm dad too."

"Really?"

"Again, yes really," Blaine growls.

"You can't both be dad. That's impossible."

Blaine pauses, ready to launch into a tirade detailing every last example of how it's possible to have more than one mom, dad or anything in between, but a subtle shake of Kurt's head tells him no, and he breathes deeply instead. "My husband and I wish for our daughter to be seen by a doctor," he says, feigning calm. "Please show us the way."

"Well done," Kurt whispers as they are shown into a room and the nurse departs, scowling all the while.

"Doctor Rogers," a loud voice booms as a jolly looking paediatrician strides into the room, shaking
both their hands. "And this must be little Libby. Aren't you a darling, eh?" he asks, before looking down at the sheet with her name and laughing loudly. "Oh, I see she really is. Fabulous. Okay. Let's take a look here." Kurt moves the compress and the doctor parts her hair, soothing her when she whimpers and moans. "Yes, yes, it hurts, I know. But I'll make you better, I promise. So, what happened here?"

"She fell down a step and bashed into the hall table," Kurt explains. "A vase broke. I don't know if it's that which cut her or..."

"Just one step?"

"No," Blaine says suddenly, causing Kurt's head to turn sharply. "I think she fell down the stairs."

"You think?" Doctor Rogers asks, shining a light into Libby's eyes.

"I wasn't... I wasn't there," Blaine explains, the shame evident in his voice. "She was having a tantrum and I put her on the bottom step for time out. I walked away but....but I didn't close the gate. I think she was probably half way up the stairs when she slipped and fell."

"What?" Kurt asks, his voice ice cold.

"It happens," Doctor Rogers shrugs. "We're only human. Mistakes are made. It does look as though she's taken quite a tumble, but she's going to be just fine."

"That nurse, the one who showed us in?" Blaine asks.

"Yes?"

"I don't want her anywhere near our daughter."

"She's a good nurse, Mr. Hummel-Anderson, I can assure you."

"I don't care. For as long as we're here, she's not allowed to play any part in my child's care, do you understand?"

Doctor Rogers straightens up, takes one look at the determination on Blaine's face and nods. "Of course."

"And another thing. Money is no object here. I want every scan, every test, every X-Ray possible to make sure she's okay."

"Absolutely."

"If we're discharged from here and there are any repercussions whatsoever, I will sue the ass of this hospital, you understand? I will only have the very best care for our little girl."

"I can assure you, sir, that is exactly what she will receive."

"Good. And....don't cut her hair unless absolutely necessary. It took a long time to grow."

"We won't need to do that. Head wounds always look a lot worse than they actually are. We can actually glue this..."

"Glue? She's not an arts and craft project!" Blaine shrieks indignantly.

"Blaine, honey, I think I saw a coffee machine down the hall. Why don't you go fetch us both one?"
"No thanks, I'm staying here."

"Let me rephrase," Kurt says sweetly. "Go get me a coffee. Now."

He goes, which surprises Kurt who was expecting more of a fight. "Sorry about him," he says apologetically to the doctor.

"He's an overprotective parent. We all are. I'm one myself and my sons are twenty eight and thirty. Believe me, I've seen far worse than your husband."

"Good," Kurt laughs.

"Papa? Ouchy."

"I know, baby," he soothes, kissing the top of her head.

"Okay, let's get gluing while dad's down the hall," the doctor says brightly. "It'll only take a second. You'll need to keep the area clean and dry for a week, but after that you can wash her hair as normal. So I'll just glue it like so..." he says, squeezing the cut together and pressing lightly as the glue quickly solidifies. "And we're done. I'll get a full X-Ray done and if that all comes back clear you're good to go, unless dad wants us to keep her in for observation."

"I'll talk to him."

"Good stuff," the doctor smiles. "I'll go set up the X-Ray and come back."

Blaine returns, standing in the doorway clutching two small plastic cups of coffee. Kurt looks up and smiles "You wanna hold her for a bit? I think she needs her daddy cuddles."

But he shakes his head sadly and sits in the corner of the room. "She doesn't. If it wasn't for me she wouldn't be in this mess so..."

"Actually, it was me, if anything. I went upstairs to get my notebook while Libby was out with Kathy. I didn't close the gate after me when I came back down, so it had been open for hours. She could have gone up there at any point, Blaine. Don't blame yourself for it. Don't blame me either," he says with a laugh, "but don't blame yourself. I was mad at first, I'll admit it, but then I realized what the doctor said was true, we're only human and we all make mistakes...and then I realized it was me who had made the mistake anyway. Here." He settles Libby into Blaine's arms, and she yawns and settles against his chest, looking up at him with a small smile.

"Love my daddy," she murmurs.

"Love my Libby."

"Love my papa."

"Love my Libby," Kurt says, crouching by the side of her and kissing her cheek. "And I love my husband," he adds, hugging Blaine as best he can. "Even if he is like a big overprotective bear."

"I need to take care of you both," he shrugs. "I'm not sorry for that."

"You shouldn't be," Kurt smiles. "Anyway. Lib is glued."

"What?"

"She's glued. And don't go getting all high and mighty about her needing stitches because I've
heard Carole talking about this glue stuff before. It works really well and you wouldn't want to put Libby through the pain of having stitches in her head, would you?"

"Well no, I guess...but...."

"And after X-Rays we can go, if they're clear."

"No." Blaine says firmly. "She needs to be kept in."

"I thought you'd say that. But really, it's her birthday weekend, Blaine. Why don't we take her home and make sure Carole can be on standby? We can just bring her right on back if we're worried, anyway."

"I don't know..."

"Martin will be worried," Kurt coaxes. "He was upset to see Libby crying, and then we just rushed out of the house without even clearing up the vase."

Blaine huffs loudly, kisses his daughter and looks at Kurt. "Okay. For Martin's sake we'll go home."

"For Martin," Kurt smiles. "Now, do you want to talk to me about whatever it is you were trying to talk to me about earlier?"

"Nah." Blaine shakes his head, holding an arm out for Kurt to squeeze in the chair next to him and cuddle close. "It can wait."

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And wait it does, right up until the moment Blaine is standing in departures at Chicago airport, crying freely as he prepares to say goodbye to his husband and daughter for an entire month. "I don't want to be without you," he sobs pitifully. "I want you to come. I don't want to be apart from you."

"Blaine, my darling," Kurt says sadly. "Why didn't you say? I can't now...I have so many meetings scheduled and so much work..."

"I know, I know," he says, sniffing and trying to hide his face in Kurt's shirt.

"Daddy cry?"

"No, no, I'm okay," he says, wiping his eyes and offering Libby a watery smile. "I'm okay. Now listen, you be a good girl for papa, you hear? Laugh lots, have a whole heap of fun together and I'll call you every day, I promise. I'll bring you back so many gifts I'll need an extra suitcase. I love you. Both of you. And I'll miss you...but we'll count the days down together and I'll be back soon." He kisses them both in turn and backs away slowly, offering a small wave before turning and running all the way to the gate where he falls into Riccardo's arms and cries helplessly until somewhere over the Atlantic Ocean when he finally falls asleep.

"Daddy gone?" Libby asks, holding her hands out and shrugging her shoulders.

"Yes. Daddy gone," Kurt nods, holding her tight and kissing into her hair. "Just me and you now. And I just...Libby...hold on. I just need to sit...." And falling weakly into a chair he buries his face in his hands and sobs hard, paying the stares of passing strangers no heed as Libby sits on his lap and twiddles his hair around her finger, kissing his wet cheeks.
"Love my papa."

"I love you too baby girl. Ugh. Okay." Wiping his eyes, he stands, offering his hand to his little darling and together they walk out into the bright sunshine. "One month. We can do this."
"So Libby met Brittany today."

Blaine grimaces at the iPad screen, making Kurt laugh loudly. "Really?"

"I know you don't like her..."

"No it's not that," Blaine interrupts. "I like her. I think she's really sweet. But I just don't think she loves Santana the way Santana deserves to be loved."

"Well I think she can be the judge of that, don't you?"

"No, I don't think she can," Blaine grins. "I think she should let me personally vet every girlfriend application she receives."

"Of course," Kurt laughs. "Well anyway. They seem to be taking things slow, just enjoying a few dates here and there. We went for lunch with them and Libby really liked her."

"Yeah, for now," Blaine grumbles. "But pretty soon she'll be outsmarting her at every turn."

"Blaine!" Kurt admonishes. "I am changing the subject. How was your day? It's one in the morning there, right?"

"Yeah," Blaine says, stretching and yawning at the thought. "It was okay. Rehearsed this morning. Got to explore Hamburg this afternoon. I say that...it was more like a group of us found a bar and tested different German beers."

"Okay well, glad I'm not there then."

"I wish you were," Blaine sighs. "I'd gladly forgo an afternoon drinking beer to walk along the banks of the Rhine with you and Libby."

"I know you would. But we're getting there."

"Slowly."

"Nineteen days. And anyway, right now?" he says, reaching out almost as if he could touch Blaine's face through the screen, "Libby is in bed, and I'm here."

"I know that," Blaine frowns in confusion. "I've just sang her to sleep."

"I'm trying to seduce you into a bit of cyber naughtiness here."

"Oh. I see. I did not get that."

"I noticed." They laugh together, which makes Blaine both happy and sad. Happy that they're not sitting thousands of miles apart and crying miserably, but sad that he can't be there to feel the way Kurt laughs. To have his hand resting on his stomach and to feel the way the muscles harden as he doubles up. To see the laughter lines- just starting to show on his beautiful face- crinkle near his eyes. And to hear him, although he can, obviously, and he can see his face, it's the closeness, the intimacy, the little hitches of breath and subtle way that little muscle near his eye twitches when he's so relaxed and open that he misses, that make him fiercely long to hold him in his arms.
Kurt has stopped laughing now, and is reaching out towards the screen again, a soft smile on his face. "Soon," is all he says, as if able to read Blaine's mind, who nods sadly before forcing a bright smile on his face.

"Take your clothes off then."

"Ha! Why, mister Blaine," Kurt cries in his best southern belle impression. "You have such a way with words!"

A frantic hammering on Blaine's door comes, making them both startle as Blaine sits up, alarmed. "What the....."

"Blaine! Please be awake Blaine, please be awake!"

"It's Riccardo," he tells Kurt. "I'd better go. I'll call you."


Blaine pulls open the door and Riccardo stumbles into the room, clutching at Blaine's t-shirt as he sobs. His hair- normally unkempt anyway- is wild, his eyes wide and fearful. "My boy!" he cries desperately. "My boy, Blaine! Oh, my boy!"

"Hey? What?" Blaine kicks the door shut and guides Riccardo to the bed where he sits heavily and cries, biting into his fist and moaning. "Please Riccardo, speak to me," Blaine says worriedly, "I've never seen you like this. Jules? Is it Jules?"

"My boy," he confirms. "I knew it, Blaine. I knew Francois would break him."

"Oh god."

"He's moved on to some eighteen year old girl he met online and my boy....my boy...he tried to kill himself, Blaine."

Blaine reels backward, clutching the edge of the bed as he struggles to breathe and Riccardo carries on. "He in hospital in Paris. Lucia flying up from Italy. He take pills and drink, Blaine. So many pills so many drinks and he wanted to die. He wanted to die because that bastard broke his heart and I must go."

"Yeah, yeah, of course you must. Yes. Go." Blaine says, his mind whirring as he struggles to comprehend.

"I'm sorry Blaine but Edward...he coming to take over and..."

"No, it's fine, really," Blaine nods. "Don't worry about any of that. Of course you need to go and be with your son."

"You be okay? With Edward?"

"Of course."

"I sorry. I am sorry I tell you about Jules because of the boy you had in New York and I know..."

"Riccardo, listen. That was years ago. This is right here and now. Go to Jules, don't worry about me, or anything to do with the orchestra or the tour, or anything, okay? Just be with your family."

"Will you tell Kurt?"
“Of course,” Blaine says, clutching his friend's hand. “And please, call us if you need anything. I mean... I don’t know... If you can, I’d get him back to the US. If-if he wants to come stay with us, or anything... just let us know.”

“Thank you,” Riccardo says quietly, then wipes at his eyes. “My english, it no work when I am sad. But there is a lot for me to say to you about how I love you and Kurt.”

“Well, we love you too.”

“I go. Let you sleep. My flight is in a few hours so...”

“So I’ll stay with you,” Blaine says, deciding he can call Kurt later. “No one wants to be alone at a time like this.”

Riccardo departs in the early hours of the dawn, with neither man having slept all night. Word comes from New York that Edward is on his way, and the concerts will all go ahead as scheduled, with Edward conducting instead of Riccardo. Blaine hugs his friend tight before he gets into the cab and departs with a sad wave, leaving Blaine to trail despondently back to his room and call his husband.

“Blaine? Is everything okay? I’ve been so worried...”

Blaine sighs, not even attempting to stop the tears from falling as he longs to be at home, in his own bed, wrapped safely in Kurt’s arms. “Oh Kurt,” he cries. “I don’t even know where to begin.”

* *

Blaine is on his third whiskey when Edward Roberts arrives in the hotel bar. Surviving on two hours sleep, and suffering the effects of attempting to lead an entire symphony orchestra in a rehearsal which no one wanted to be at, Blaine is in need of sustenance, sleep and a long reassuring talk with his husband- in that order.

He’s chosen whiskey.

“Hey,” Edward says quietly, wincing when Blaine mumbles his reply without even turning from the bar to face him. “I’m sorry to be seeing you in these circumstances.”

“It is what it is.”

Blaine’s voice is flat, emotionless as he stares straight ahead. Edward sits on the stool next to him and signals to the waiter. “Another?” he asks Blaine, who nods curtly.

“Thanks.”

“Have you heard any more?”

“Riccardo and Lucia are at the hospital. Jules is still unconscious. They say he’ll be in for a while while they assess the damage to his liver and other organs. His brain is okay. I don’t think they have any plans beyond waiting for him to wake.”

“I see.”

“He’s twenty three.”

“Yeah. I’ve been going over and over it in my head,” Edward sighs, playing with his drink. “It’s been just over a year since we met for coffee and Riccardo was asking us all what he should do.”
“He did what was right,” Blaine shrugs. “He tried to get to know the guy even though he didn’t approve, and he let Jules be. It’s just so sad it’s all turned out this way.”

“Do you think he meant to go through with it?”

Blaine thinks a while, draining the rest of his glass and grimacing at the taste. "Only Jules knows that. Maybe, in time, he'll let his parents know what he was thinking, but it's not for us to discover. I mean, does anyone intend to? Or does everyone? I hear people say suicide attempts are a cry for attention, or even just a way of experimentation, but are they? I must say, I always kinda thought that his way....pills, drink...even cutting, was the coward's way. See what happens. Give yourself a chance to be saved. If you blow your brains out, or jump in front of a train then that's it. Game over. But I don't know. I'm not inside anyone's head when they do it. Who are we to judge how they really feel at the time? I could desperately want to end it all, but I still wouldn't jump off a tall building, I'd be too frightened."

He can feel Edward's eyes on him, trying to reconcile this drunken, emotional Blaine, unkempt and unshaven, with the polite, well mannered and respectable man he had last seen in New York, but Blaine doesn't care, and signals to the waiter for another drink. "I had a boyfriend," he suddenly announces as Edward listens. "Before Kurt..... Luke. We lived in New York. We were young, trying to make it as musicians after college. It didn't work out between us. He fell into drugs and I didn't really want to be a part of that." He downs the liquor and coughs hard. "Fuck. Anyway. Me being the sap that I am, decided to try and make amends. So I went to see him."

"And?"

"He had hanged himself."

"Shit."

"Yeah." Blaine laughs, bitter and remorseful. "Shit is right. I was a day too late."

"Is that why you hate the city?"

"Pretty much," he nods.

"You blame yourself?"

"I did. For a long time. It's taken...fifteen years," he realizes suddenly. "Fifteen years for me to fully understand it wasn't my fault. When someone leaves a note saying 'tell Blaine not to blame himself' what's the first thing you think Blaine would do? Yeah." He laughs bitterly, signaling to the waiter again. "Jus' gimme the whole bottle."

"Uh, sir," he says, glancing nervously to Edward. "I really think...."

"I have money and I have time, my friend," Blaine announces loudly. "You don't wanna serve me? Fine. I'll find a bar that will, right after I've talked with your supervisor."

"I um..."

"Just give the man his drink," Edward says quiet yet firm as he stares him down. "And two glasses."

The waiter nods and sets the bottle and glasses on the counter, knowing that to piss these men off could cost the entire hotel a lot of money and himself his job. Blaine staggers across to one of the arm chairs, falling into it and squinting to see Edward sitting opposite, pouring him a large glass
full of whiskey. "Cheers," he says, handing it to him.

"What's to drink to?" Blaine rambles. "Not a lot worth toasting."

"You said you don't blame yourself anymore. How come?"

"Wes saved my life," he tells Edward. "After Luke died I was...not good. I have no doubt that if it wasn't for him I wouldn't be here. I wouldn't have been brave enough to kill myself. I'm far too weak. No. I would've just slowly drank myself to death. Wes saved my life, and Kurt made it."

"How do you mean?"

"He made it worth living. I was existing until I met him. I live for Kurt and Libby. And he's the one who made me finally realize I wasn't to blame. It's been a long, slow process, but the last time we were in New York...when you were being a jackass....Kurt and I...."

"Had a fight because of me?"

"No," Blaine frowns in confusion, then grins. "On the con...con...con...the opposite. You granted me a lot of sex and one of the best weekends I've ever had. We spent our entire time either making love or talking. Like, really talking. About you, about how we love each other, but mostly about Luke. I'm pathetic, you see," he says, more than a hint of bitterness in his voice as he takes another gulp of liquor. "I have this dream...nightmare....night terror, actually. Like you read about in the toddler books except I'm nearly forty two and still get them. It's like the most terrifying dream, but to other people you seem awake. You can talk, interact with them, but you're trapped. Trapped in your own nightmare and you can't get out. And for me, it's always the same and it only ever comes in New York. Luke hangs there, in the doorway of his apartment, swinging. And blood pours from everywhere. His eyes, his nose, from between his fingers, even. And I'm trying," he says, swiping angrily at his hot burning tears. "I'm trying to save him, to cut him down but I can't. I can't get to him. I don't know why, but I can't move. I can see my hands as I reach out, but when I scream it's all silent. My hands are dripping blood, his blood but I can't get to him. I can't help him."

Edward sits, stunned into silence and staring as Blaine wipes at his eyes and draws a shaking breath. “And now, with this...Jules...I’m so scared,” he admits. “So scared the dream will find me. Thousands of miles away from New York and finally feeling like all my demons are laid to rest, it will find me and take me under again.”

“Jesus Christ, Blaine.”

“Kurt can stop it,” he says sadly. “Kurt knows me, and he’s the only one who really knows how to make it all better. But he’s not here. And when he’s not here, this, my friend” he declares, raising his glass, “is the only alternative. Drink enough and the dreams can't take you.”

Edward watches Blaine as he drinks then slumps back in the chair, eyelids drooping. He has a clear choice before him right this very moment. He could take Blaine’s phone and call Kurt. He could explain the situation, and how desperately this broken and frightened man needs his husband. He could sit with Blaine as Kurt talks to him, calms his fears and then he could help him to bed to sleep it off, encouraging him to talk to Kurt again when he’s sober.

Or he could try and fill that gap himself.

“C’mon,” he says, taking Blaine’s glass and setting it on the small table. “Let’s get you upstairs.”
“Finn Hudson, don’t you dare drop my daughter!” Kurt shrieks as Finn tears past him with Libby riding on his shoulders.

“Same goes for you, Sebastian!” Wes calls from next to him.

“I won’t drop her,” Sebastian calls back. “Olivia is the Dark Knight Princess, don’t you know? Defender of the galaxy.”

“Oh yeah?” Finn teases as Libby squeals excitedly. “Well she’s no match for Pirate Fairy up here. Charge!”

They take off around the backyard again, the summer sun just starting to set behind the trees and painting everything in a warm, golden glow.

“Honestly. He’s supposed to be grilling,” Rachel says, rolling her eyes. “How come the vegan and the vegetarian end up cooking all the meat?”

“Because the vegan and the vegetarian aren’t about to race around with two toddlers on their shoulders,” Kathy points out, handing Rachel a plateful of burgers.

“So. How are you and Blaine?” Santana sips her wine and watches as that ridiculously dopey smile appears fleetingly on Kurt’s face then disappears to be replaced with a frown.

“I was gonna say good...but since this stuff with Jules...I haven’t heard a thing.”

“Since?”

“Since late last night. Dawn, his time. He called me to let me know what had happened, and he was really upset. I did what I could but ugh, distance sucks.”

“He’s not gonna take this well,” Wes says quietly.

Santana looks between the two men in confusion. “Why?”

“Because of Luke.”

“Oh crap. I forgot.”

“Yeah,” Kurt sighs. “Thing is, when we were in New York last, it didn’t go well in a lot of respects. But we talked for a long time about it all. It had been so long since he’d had to face it, and he’d buried it all down deep. But Edward was being a jerk, and I think in a strange way, that helped him to realize what a good guy Luke actually was. We walked around a lot of their old haunts, even had coffee in the place he was when that mutual friend asked him to go visit him. I felt like we’d made real progress as a couple over it all. But this will be a huge setback for him. A lot of memories will resurface, and I’m not there to help him at all. I’m scared he’s gonna shut himself off.”

“But before all this, it was going okay? Being apart?” Wes persists.

“Yeah,” and Kurt allows himself to smile again. “I mean, we miss him so much. But actually, Lib and I are having a ton of fun together, and he facetimes us every night right after Libby’s bath so he can read her a story and sing her to sleep. Then he and I talk a while and it’s...nice. Not perfect, because perfect would be having him sitting here with us right now. But it’s nice, seeing his face every day and knowing he’ll call at six thirty on the dot.”
“Well it’s six forty already,” Santana says, looking at her watch. “So...”

“Exactly.”

“There’s not a lot you can do,” Wes says sadly. “Except wait. It’s nearly one in the morning there, right? He’s probably asleep, he didn’t sleep last night, remember?”

“I know.” Kurt shrugs, trying to play down the sick feeling of dread he has inside. “I just wish I was there to comfort him instead of Edward.”

“What?!” The shriek is in unison, from everyone, and even Finn and Sebastian stop running around to listen.

“Are you actually kidding me right now?” Sebastian asks, setting Olivia on her feet to run around with Libby. “I thought he wasn’t going?”

“He didn’t,” Kurt sighs as everyone sits down at the table. “He had to fly out when Riccardo left.”

“Why?” Finn asks, angry on his brother’s behalf. “Do they not have conductors in Europe?”

“It is what it is,” Kurt shrugs, though in reality he feels very close to tears and can’t bring himself to look at Wes or Santana for fear of breaking down completely. “I guess we just have to be grateful he could fly out on such short notice.”

“You are far too nice,” Wes snaps, cutting Kurt off before he can even respond. “You are. Listen to yourself. This guy has been after your husband for the past eighteen months. He’s not going to see this as helping out Riccardo during a time of personal tragedy. No. You can bet your bottom dollar that when that phone call came his first thought was Blaine.”

“No, he works as some kind of coordinator for orchestras in the US or something...” Kurt says lamely. “And he hopes to take over from Riccardo when he leaves.”

“Of course he does!” Sebastian says, rolling his eyes. “Jeez, Kurt, listen to yourself. Yeah, he wants the Chicago Symphony, because that gives him Blaine by default. I agree with Wesley here. He’s a prick. He would have jumped at the chance to be the hero of the hour, flying out to Europe on short notice to conduct the rest of the tour...when in reality all it really means for him is three weeks with Blaine, and you thousands of miles away stuck at home with the baby. I’m sorry, Kurt, I’m not gonna sugar coat it for you. Edward wants Blaine, and he’s gonna do his damndest to get him. Mark my words, he’s gonna try it on.”

Kurt sits in silence. He’s aware of Santana’s hand covering his, and her whispering frantically to Sebastian about how he’s said too much. Rachel shrieks about the burgers and rushes back to the grill with Finn, while Kathy goes to rescue Libby and Livvy from the flower beds. But all the while, Kurt is silent. Because he knows his friends are right. He knows what’s coming, and he knows he has to trust Blaine with all his heart to not fall prey to Edward’s charms. The trouble is, with Blaine at his lowest and most vulnerable, probably in desperate need of love and reassurance, Kurt doesn’t know if he can really trust him at all.

As if on cue, his phone vibrates on the wooden table, and he seizes it triumphantly. “One new message from Blaine,” he says happily, relief washing over him. But when he opens it, his gut twists unpleasantly and he bites on his fist to keep from crying out.

“Kurt?”

He hands the phone silently to Wes, who stares in horror. It’s a photo, of Blaine sprawled on a
hotel bed in just his underwear. Clearly passed out, with a half empty bottle of whiskey and two glasses visible on the nightstand behind him, and a short simple message underneath.

Blaine had too much to drink so I put him to bed. Don’t worry, I’ll take good care of him.
“Wes?” Kurt’s voice is small, scared as his friend sighs heavily down the phone.

“Hold on. I’m coming over. We can take the girls to Jungle Gym.”

Sebastian tags along, never one to miss the opportunity to crawl through plastic tubes and spend an hour getting mauled by his two favorite girls, and it gives Wes and Kurt some much needed talking time as they settle at a small table, coffees in hand.

“He’d have made a good dad,” Kurt notes as they watch Libby bouncing on Sebastian’s stomach while Olivia tugs at his hair.

“Nah. He’s too selfish. Wonderful with our girls though, and they adore him. Anyway. You.”

“Me.”

“And him.”

“Them.”

“Oh come on, Kurt. Don’t be like that.”

“How am I supposed to be?” he cries desperately. “I haven’t heard from him for four days other than hideous photos of him passed out in his underwear which Edward seems intent on sending, just to rub it all in. Four days, Wes- which is exactly when Edward arrived. I’ve sent him angry texts, sad texts, loving texts. I’ve filled his voicemail with my crying. He’s seemingly immune to Libby’s cute little messages and then today, I wake up to this.”

“This why you called?” Wes asks, taking Kurt’s phone.

“Yeah. Take a look.”

“Holy shit. Facebook?”

“Exactly.”

Pictures of Blaine appear, looking tired, but happy and certainly drunk. Edward is either in, or has clearly taken, every one. Twenty four in all, and it is quite obvious they were out drinking alone, with no other orchestra members. But not only has Edward tagged Blaine in the pictures, but after years of Kurt teasing him about his inactivity on the site, it seems Blaine has suddenly remembered his own password. He’s liked and commented on every photo, and changed his profile picture- which had been him and Kurt on the day of Kurt’s high school graduation for the last eight years- to a selfie of him with Edward.

“You have to go to him.”

“I can’t,” Kurt whispers, bowing his head as tears fall and he prays no other parents present notice. “If I do, then what does that say to Blaine, huh? I don’t trust you, so I’ve flown five thousand miles to make sure you don’t sleep with someone else?”

“That’s not what you’re saying.”

“It’s what he’ll think, though. And Edward,” he spits, grimacing at the sound of his name, “wins. I
won’t succeed in keeping them apart, Wes. I’ll only drive him further into his arms.”

“Right.” Wes picks up his own phone, angrily firing off a text, and is surprised when the reply is almost instant.

What the actual FUCK do you think you are playing at? Sort yourself out or Burt and I will find you.

Burt? Really? Chill out, Wes. It’s been a rough few days and Ed and I are having a bit of fun, that’s all.

Have you forgotten you have a husband? and a daughter? You haven’t spoken to them in four days, Blaine.

I know, I’m sorry. Tell Kurt I’ll try and call later if I’m not too busy.

“That’s not him,” Wes says, frowning as he hands the phone to Kurt. “I don’t know what’s going on, but I’m telling you, Blaine isn’t sending those texts. You need to get out there, Kurt. I don’t care what work you have, I don’t care what message you think it sends to Blaine and I certainly don’t care what that sadistic bastard thinks. Find a flight to wherever he is, and go.”

“Munich. They traveled to Munich yesterday, then it’s onto Milan. I have the itinerary pinned up at home. But I can’t just pack up and go, Wes,” he implores. “Libby....”

“You can, and you will,” Wes tells him firmly. “Take Libby with you, there’s no reason you can’t. Ken and Gill are out there, they’ll help. She can stay with us if you’d rather, but I really think Blaine needs to see what he’s missing here. Go, Kurt. Fight for him.”

*

Blaine sits up, clutching his head gingerly before staggering to the toilet where he is violently sick. He rests his head against the cool tiled wall for a while before pulling himself to his feet where he rinses his mouth and brushes his teeth. Turning on the shower, he pulls his jeans off, wondering how he again woke up shirtless, then throws a towel about himself when a knock at the door comes.

“Ugh. Fucking...fuck,” he curses, pulling open the bathroom door. “Jesus Christ!” he yells, coming face to face with Edward standing in his room. “How did you get in?”

“I used the spare key card,” he says, waving it in his hand. “You were....not good, last night. So I thought I’d better keep a spare in case I needed to get in. Nice,” he says, eyeing Blaine’s chest and the small towel appreciatively.

“Fuck off. What time is it?”

“Nearly nine. Bus leaves in half hour. Rehearsals this morning, recital this afternoon, evening free. You need to shower and shave.”

“I know, that’s what I was about to do,” Blaine snaps angrily. “I wish I could find my phone and iPad. And also, I had a picture of Kurt and Libby on that night stand. It’s gone.”

“You’ve been drunk for five days straight,” Edward reminds him. “Who knows what’s lost where?”

“Well not tonight. No more. I’m a wreck, Edward. I allowed myself one night of drowning my
sorrows. Well I had that, You’ve been forcing me into drinking with you ever since, and I’m saying enough is enough. I’m gonna shower quickly, then I’m gonna go ask Ken to let me use his phone so I can call Kurt, since you won’t let me use yours.”

“It’s expensive,” Edward protests weakly, but Blaine shoots him a glare.

“It’s never gonna happen,” he warns.

“No one would ever have to know.”

“You’re a fucking prick,” Blaine growls. “I’m going to shower. Be gone when I get out.”

*

Blaine storms from the stage, flinging the towel into the corner of the dressing room before kicking over the chair that dares stand in his way, and a couple of flute players cower back before scurrying from the room as Blaine roars his displeasure.

“Okay. Calm down,” Ken urges, pushing past the crowd of concerned members who are gathered just inside the large room. “No one noticed.”

“I’ll fucking kill him!”

“No you won’t. Come on, Blaine. Let’s just get back to the hotel and then you can...”

“Don’t tell me what to do!” Blaine snarls, his temper flaring. “Don’t act like you’re supposed to be my friend, Ken. If you were then you’d let me use your fucking phone to call my husband.”

Ken eyes him warily. “What are you talking about?” he asks, his brow furrowed. “You can use my phone. I didn’t know you needed one.”

“I lost mine,” Blaine frowns. “Edward said...”

“Okay everyone!” Edward appears in the room, clapping his hands together and smiling brightly, though he steadfastly avoids Blaine’s eye. “The bus is outside already, so we can head back to the hotel for cocktails in the ballroom.”

“You.” Blaine doesn’t yell or scream but advances menacingly slowly, making Edward gulp. “Where is my phone?”

“What?” Edward blusters, but has the decency to turn a brilliant scarlet as Blaine all but pins him to the wall.

“Ken says he had no idea I needed to use a phone, yet you told me you’d asked him and he said no. You fuck about with me on stage, changing the tempo all the time, you keep getting me drunk and now this. Give me my phone, my iPad and my picture too, while you’re at it.”

“Okay.” Edward sighs heavily, ushering everyone from the room and closing the door so they’re alone. “Yes, I have your phone. But I only have it because of all the messages from Kurt.”

“What? What messages? I need to see,” he cries desperately. “Don’t you understand, Edward? I need him. I’ve wasted days in some kind of stupor, when all the while I could have just spoken with my husband. And now you tell me there are messages?”

“You wouldn’t want to read them,” Edward says sadly. “They’re so angry. Oh, Blaine. I wasn’t going to tell you, because I know you’re fragile enough already, but it seems Kurt really doesn’t
care about that. He blames you for all this.”

“What? Blames me for what?”

“He’s good friends with Jules. He blames you for encouraging Riccardo to accept Francois into their lives, and now Francois has turned and Jules tried to end it all.”

“But I didn’t!” he protests. “I didn't! I...”

“Blaine... You know I like you. A lot. I’ve been respectful all the while because you’re a married man but now...when I can see Kurt treating you like this.... Just give us a chance, Blaine. Please.”


“He doesn't want you, Blaine.”

“But I want him. And I’ll fight to keep him,” Blaine says firmly. “I need to get back to the hotel, figure this out. And I need to read those messages.”

“Oh, I’m not sure if I have them...Um...let’s just...” Opening the door, he gestures for Blaine to go ahead, smiling smugly to himself.

The bus ride back to the hotel is brief. Ken tries anxiously to get to Blaine, but he’s pinned in against the window by Edward, who rather oddly in Ken’s opinion, keeps one hand firmly gripping Blaine’s thigh for the duration of the journey. As for Blaine, he looks so tired and sad as he gazes despondently out the window that Ken is very nearly moved to tears. He wonders why he hasn’t noticed, then realizes that since the arrival of Edward, Blaine’s time has been entirely monopolized by the young conductor, and he and Gill haven’t really had a chance to speak with him at all. He scrolls through his phone for Riccardo’s number, and knowing that Jules is now awake and stable, texts him to ask as innocently as he can if he has any plans to return to the tour. The reply is quick, and he smiles broadly when he reads it and hears Riccardo’s booming Italian accent coming through.

Kenny! My boy sit up and eat soup. He go to Italy with Lucia in few days where I will find them for last few days of tour. I will meet you and the spectacular tomorrow in Munich. Tell him I miss him. I keep send him the text but he no reply. Love you all.

“Good news everyone!” Ken calls down the bus. “Riccardo’s son is doing much better, and he will arrive here tomorrow to continue the tour.”

Everyone cheers, though it’s Blaine’s reaction Ken watches for. But the triumphant smile he was hoping for doesn’t come, just a small twitch of his lips as he continues to stare out the window while Edward tries to work out what the hell he’s going to do.

Blaine’s head is down when he steps from the bus, so he doesn’t see Edward coming to an abrupt halt, meaning he walks smack into the back of him. “Hey!”


“Kurt? Libby?”

“Daddy!”

Blaine’s jaw nearly hits the floor to see his husband and their precious daughter standing outside
the hotel waiting for him, and he runs. “Oh my god!” he yells, scooping Libby into his arms before crushing Kurt to his side as well. “My babies! Oh my god!”

Kurt hugs back fiercely, cradling his husband’s face in his hands as he kisses his lips, cheeks, nose and eyes. “We came,” he whispers. “We came for you.”

“It’s my daddy!” Libby says happily, laughing as she is showered with kisses. “We go on plane to find daddy!”

“You did! Oh my baby girl you did! Kurt...Kurt...I’ve needed you,” he sighs happily. “Oh my Kurt....”

“Don’t,” Kurt says stiffly, pulling back from the long kiss he knows Blaine is seeking. “We need to talk.”

“Yes we do,” Blaine nods. “I need to explain why I haven’t called or texted, for a start.”

“What are you...?” Kurt starts, then shakes his head. “Don’t worry. Just...come inside. Libby is going with Gill and Ken for dinner.”

“What? She’s only just got here! Kurt, I want to see my baby.”

“Yeah? Do you also want to save your marriage? Meet me upstairs, Blaine. Five minutes.” He kisses the top of Libby’s head, leaving her in Blaine’s arms before he marches right up to Edward’s face, much to the excitement of the entire Symphony orchestra looking on. “I expect Blaine’s phone to be returned within the next half hour. Give it to Ken and he can pass it along,” he says, his voice low. “Never underestimate me, Edward. I will always fight for him and I will always win.”

“Go on, my darling,” Gill says to Blaine kindly as she takes Libby from his arms. “You two need to talk. You can have time with Libby later. We’ll look after her until you’re done.”

But an hour later and the talking has broken down into screaming and yelling as for what feels like the thousandth time, Blaine protests his innocence. “I didn’t do anything wrong though!” he cries as Kurt paces angrily around the room. “No, I shouldn’t have got drunk like that, but he had no right to take pictures and send them to you! I would have called you the very next day, except he convinced me my phone and my iPad were lost.”

“So you ask to use someone else’s! His, even! My god, Blaine! Do you really think it’s that hard to find a phone and make one quick call to let me know you’re okay? I’ve been going out of my mind while you’ve been gallivanting around Europe doing shots with some guy who’s only after you for one thing! Have you ANY idea how hurt I am? How stupid I feel to see old friends of yours writing you on facebook, asking how come you’re not with ‘the teenager’ anymore?”

“Kurt, I’m sorry! I don’t know how he did that. I mean, my password is Kurt Hummel, it’s probably not that hard to guess. But you have to believe me, I did not comment on those pictures.”

“I believe you, but it doesn’t make it any better, don’t you see that? Because I knew how much you needed me, but you weren’t strong enough to seek me out. You could have said no, Blaine. At any point. You had one night of heavy drinking, I can forgive it even though I’m not thrilled about it. But the second, the third and the fourth? No. You say he made you, but really? You could have walked away at any time. It’s not like he held a gun to your head.”

“I’m sorry,” Blaine pleads. “I’m so sorry.”
“Did you kiss him?”

“What?” Blaine’s voice is low, stunned as all the air seems to be sucked from the room and Kurt sinks wearily onto the small couch. “You honestly think I would ever....”

“No. I don’t know. No.” Kurt shakes his head. “No.” His voice is firmer this time, more certain as he moves to kneel between Blaine’s legs. “No I don’t think you would, but I think he would try, and I think you’re broken down enough, and unwitting enough that you’d get yourself caught up in it all and not know how to get out of it.”

“Kurt...I’d punch him in the fucking face,” he cries, and now it’s his turn to be angry as he stands up and runs his hand through his hair. “Why did you come here, exactly? Tell me why you came.”

“To fight for you,” Kurt cries. “Not because I don’t trust you, but because I don’t trust him. And because of distance, and because of all that’s happened with Jules, and how badly it’s affecting you, I don’t trust us to survive another two weeks apart.”

“You think...what? You think I’d end up cheating on you?”

“No. Never.”

“What, then? Cause I gotta say, from where I’m standing it’s looking a whole lot like jealous, possessive husband flies out to keep an eye on his husband.”

“I knew it would,” Kurt sighs. “But really, that’s not the case at all. I just know you need me. You told me that yourself.”

“You don’t trust me.”

“You’re behaving like an idiot, Blaine!” Kurt yells. “You’re slowly slipping into this depressive state where you just drink all the time, and I won’t let you do that. Meanwhile, Edward is magically always ‘there’ for you, acting like he has your best interests at heart when all he really wants to do is get in your pants. So okay, it looks like I don’t trust you but you know what, Blaine? I really don’t care. Because if there’s one thing I am, it’s stubborn. I will not let anyone come between us so I will stay by your side for the rest of this tour whether you like it or not, and all the stupid hiding your phone, convincing you I’m blaming you for stuff...all that shit can stop. Right now.”

“I have to work with him.”

“So?”

“So I’m gonna be frightened to say more than two words to him with you looking on, knowing you don’t trust me not to try and suck his face.”

“Oh shut the fuck up, Blaine! Don’t try and give me that. I’ve told you my reasons for coming. I have four shirtless pictures of you in the last four days, passed out on a bed where he’s obviously undressed you. Who knows what else he’s tried? Why are you always defending him? Don’t you realize how creepy this is? Or maybe you just like all the attention, huh? Is that it? You like knowing two guys are fighting over you? Because if that is the case, he’s welcome to you.”

Kurt storms from the room, and Blaine takes a moment to run his hands over his face as he tries to figure out what to do, but the solution is simple. Go after him. He runs down to the foyer, looking this way and that before heading outside.
"Trouble in paradise?" Edward sits on a bench in the grounds, squinting up at Blaine who is framed by the evening sunshine.

"Fuck you, Edward. You know, you’ve done enough. I can’t tell you anymore that this isn't going to happen, because you just don’t listen. But Kurt and I, we’re stronger and better than you. So I’m not asking anymore, I’m telling you to leave me, and my family alone. I won’t ask again, you’ll just feel my fist connecting with your jaw.” Satisfied, he turns to walk across the neatly manicured lawn but stops when Edward calls out to him again.

"You met when he was only fifteen."

"Yes,” Blaine agrees slowly, “but it's not how it seems."

"Oh I think it's exactly how it seems," Edward says lightly. "I see it happen all the time. Older guy picks up some innocent, naive starlet for a bit of a boost, ends up falling deeply in love only for said starlet to drop him when they become bored."

"That's not ever going to happen," Blaine says firmly. "Not with us."

"You're his safety net," Edward sneers. "That's all. I know your history, Blaine. I know how jealous he was of your success, so much so that you nearly split after just a year of marriage. And now look. You're on the wane. You don't work as much as you did, too busy playing at being a house husband while your young plaything rises up the ranks. His star shines brighter than yours now, Blaine, and it's only going to dazzle more with this move to Broadway. He doesn't need you anymore, he doesn't want you like he did, and however much you try to kid yourself that it's not going to happen, it's only a matter of time before he ditches you and moves on. It’s just you, Blaine. You’re holding him back. Clinging to him in a desperate attempt to feel loved and needed, when you could have that all along with me."

"Okay. I'm leaving. You're talking bullshit and I'm not prepared to listen anymore. I have tried to be a friend to you, and I have tried to remain polite and professional, but not anymore. I'll work with you if I have to, but that's it. No more drinks, or dinners, no more socializing at all. Any events you attend, I won't be there, and if that costs me my job then so be it. Nothing comes between my husband and I, nothing. I love him endlessly, I always will, and he feels the same for me. I'm sorry you'll never find that, but that's really not my problem. Now excuse me, I need to go find Kurt."

"One night," Edward calls after him, making Blaine stop and turn around.

"Excuse me?"

"One night. That's all I'm asking, Blaine. Give me one night, and if, come morning, you want to go back to him, then I won't tell a soul. But I know that if you give me tonight to prove my worth to you, you'll know he can never satisfy you again."

"Are you out of your mind?" Blaine seethes, rushing to close the gap between them to prevent people from hearing. "That's what you think this is about? Really? Sex?"

"No...but I..."

"But you what? You think after ten years I might like to try something different? You think I need a fuck buddy while on tour? Let me tell you something, Edward," he spits, jabbing him in the chest. "Everything else aside, mine and Kurt's sex life is fucking amazing, and distance has never been a problem for us. I look at him and my heart lurches. I want him all the time. Literally, all the
time. And I am the only one who gets to have him, just as he is the only one who gets to have me..... Forever. And you wanna know why I want him so much? Aside from the fact that he's beautiful? Because I love him. Because he loves me. Because we connect on a level that is far deeper and more meaningful than just being physical with one another. Because when we make love and that's what we do, we don't fuck or have sex when we make love it's our hearts and minds that connect too, and that makes me want him and only him for all eternity. I pity you if you think I would honestly ever throw away any of that for one night with someone who I don't even find attractive, and I wonder if you ever bothered getting to know me, because if you did, you'd know I'm not like that at all.

"I know that you have no confidence left in yourself," Edward calls. "I know that a husband should make his other half feel loved and admired, like he's the only thing in the world, and I know that while I do that for you, your actual husband doesn't give a shit."

Blaine hits his limit, and seeing red, his fist connects solidly with Edward’s jaw and he falls to the floor. “Fuck you! My husband has just packed himself and our daughter up and flown across the world because he knew I needed him. You thought that by preventing me from contacting him you’d cause a rift between us? Well guess what. Kurt knows me better. Wes saved my life, Kurt made it, remember? No one knows me like he does, no one ever will. I told you, I’m not asking anymore, I’m telling. Stay away."

He strides across the grounds, not looking back to where Edward meekly picks himself up off the floor and rubs at his jaw before hurrying back inside, but instead he keeps walking, letting his feet carry him to where Kurt sits under a large oak tree, resting against its trunk.

“Hey.” Blaine sits down quietly next to him, drawing his knees up to his chest and looking out across the lawn to the kitchens, where the sounds of dinner being prepared float across to them on the breeze. “So...I'm sorry. You were right. I was behaving like an idiot. And it’s not okay. And your being here doesn't mean you don’t trust me, it means you love me more than life itself. I think I was maybe struggling to remember that."

"You were flattered, weren't you?" Kurt asks as silent tears roll down his cheeks. “You enjoyed it? All the attention?"

Blaine opens his mouth to protest but then thinks a moment. "Yes I did like it," he says after a while."And maybe I led him on. But I was never tempted, and I really hope you know that."

"I do. But I'm still hurt. You understand that, don't you? It's not as easy as saying it's all okay because inside I'm panicking, wondering what it is that I don't give you to make you want that kind of attention."

“It’s not that though,” Blaine implores. “You give me everything and so much more. It’s because I’m weak and stupid, and when I’m drunk and depressed I’m worse. I look at you, Kurt and...and you’re in your prime. You’ve always been beautiful but my god, you’ve grown into such a man. Me? I'm just...here. Ageing. Standing by as you soar. Edward....Edward will never be anything. I don't want him, I never have and I never will. But he's been chipping away for a while now, trying to eat into this happy, confident relationship we have...and I think I've let him. I'm sorry, Kurt, really. I never meant to be blinded by his flattery and praise. And I would have been okay, but he found me the night Riccardo had left. I was already sinking to the bottom of a bottle of whiskey, and I would have probably spilled all my secrets to any random stranger...but it was him."

"You see? I knew that's where you would head. I knew you'd be scared the nightmare would come and you'd try and blackout before that happened. I knew that because I love you, you giant, idiotic fool." he smiles tenderly, cupping his cheek gently. "I love you. I should have come immediately."
"No, I should have called you. You didn't need to come. I mean, I'm glad that you did, but you didn't need to. I really was intending on calling you the next day."

"I know you were. And...ugh." Kurt rubs his eyes with his fists and leans back against the trunk of the tree. "You know, I look at us, at our marriage and... Well...maybe, because of our age difference, there is an element of you looking after me. The father figure without all the icky weirdness that could entail," he says, breaking off with a small laugh. "Maybe it is always you with the grand gestures, and maybe I'm more reliant on you than you are on me. But it works, for us. Maybe not for others, and maybe others see it as me using you...but we work, you and I- and Libby of course. We really do work."

"We do," Blaine nods. "But I have to say, I haven't a clue what you're talking about. Don't belittle yourself. You do that a lot and I hate it. You have given me more support, more comfort, guidance and reassurance than anyone ever has. I rely on you for my peace of mind. I need you in my life because you love me and you're always right by my side. Do I look after you? Yes. And I'm proud that you allow me to do that. But you also look after me. As for grand gestures? Who proposed first? Who plucked up the courage to ask me to their junior prom? Who asked me to have a baby with them? Who drove six hours home in the middle of the night just to hold me? And that's just a few. You're right about one thing though... We do work. We're a team, you and I. We've been dancing this dance for ten long years now, and though we know the steps, every now and then there's the occasional dip or twist just to keep us on our toes. I'll never let you go, Kurt. When you proposed to me, it was the happiest day of my entire life, and there's been so many more since. I love you, my gorgeous boy."

Kurt closes his eyes, letting his head drop onto Blaine's shoulder where he kisses automatically into his hair. "People think our nicknames are weird."

"So? It's not their nickname, so why are they concerned? Do you still like it?"

"Yes," Kurt smiles. "If anyone else called me gorgeous boy I'd punch them."

"I punched Edward," Blaine tells him, a little proudly.

"I thought you might. I could tell the second I saw you getting off the bus you were about at your limit."

"Yeah, well. He didn't just cross the line, he hurdled right over it and then some."

"Do you like it when I call you old man?"

"I love being your old man. It makes me incredibly proud."

"He'll never win."

"No one will. Except us."

"This argument is silly, isn't it?" Kurt asks, turning so he's sitting opposite and slotting his legs over Blaine's.

"It is rather. You're here. You came to rescue your damsel in distress."

"Oh, I think you'd have rescued yourself soon enough," Kurt smiles. "But at least this way we get a bit of time in Italy together."

Blaine leans over, resting their foreheads together as he closes his eyes and smiles happily. "Know
"What I'm gonna do now?"

"No, Blaine, what are you going to do now?"

"I'm gonna walk back in that hotel, hand in hand with my husband. We're going to find our daughter and lock ourselves in our room for the night. But first of all, I'm gonna kiss you."

"Finally."

Blaine chuckles, sliding one hand into Kurt's soft hair as the other curves gently around his waist and he brings his lips to Kurt's mouth, which parts slowly as they kiss, and everything is peaceful once more.
Chapter 20

Blaine knocks timidly on the door to Ken and Gill's room and waits, bouncing a little impatiently on his feet. "Oh hey," he says brightly when Gill answers. "I've come to claim my girl."

"Hmm. Red eyes and nose yet beamingly happy," she notes with a smile. "That's the sign of a good heart to heart and lots of make up kisses too, if the size of your lips is anything to go by."

"Yeah," Blaine blushes and rubs the back of his neck, looking down at the floor before looking back up. "Is Libby..."

"She's asleep. Come."

Libby lies tucked up in the spare bed, looking tiny against all the enormous fluffy pillows. Blaine settles on the bed next to her, kissing her forehead and playing with her hair.

"She had her dinner, and I gave her a bath," Gill tells him. "Kurt gave me her pajamas earlier, so I put them on her and then suddenly she was fast asleep in Ken's arms."

"I give good cuddles," he shrugs from the armchair.

"Thank you," Blaine says sincerely. "Kurt and I really needed to talk things through, and it helps to know she's cared for and happy. But it's all good now."

"I hope you punched Edward in the process."

"Kenneth!" Gill admonishes. "Don't advocate violence."

"I did, actually," Blaine says with a grin.

"Well done," Gill and Ken chorus together before they all laugh.

"Okay. I'd better..."

"You can leave her there," Ken offers. "She's sound asleep. If there's a problem we know where to find you, but if not I'll bring her to your room tomorrow before breakfast."

"Oh. That's really kind but..."

"But you haven't seen her, I know," Gill says with a kind hand on his arm. "But in all honesty, she's only going to sleep, and you're only going to sit there watching her sleep. Why not go back to your room and spend the evening with Kurt?"

"I could...I guess," Blaine shrugs. "If you're sure?"

"We're sure," Ken tells him. "Go."

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"So we're alone?"

"Yeah."

"All night?"
"Looks like it."

"Oh." Kurt sits on the edge of the bed, nodding slowly and feeling ridiculously nervous, for reasons he really can't fathom.

"Yeah. I know."

"You do?" Kurt whirls his head around to where Blaine still stands, hands in his pockets and watching him.

"Of course," he shrugs lightly, heading over to the mini bar to fetch them both a bottle of water. "It's unexpected, and because we're not alone often we feel a pressure to...perform, I guess."

"And I don't think I'm there just yet."

"You don't have to be," Blaine smiles, handing him his drink before sitting on the bed next to him. "We can do whatever you want. Watch tv, go down to the pool, log onto Facebook and take down all those pictures..."

"Oh I've already done that, don't you worry."

"What?" Blaine laughs. "When?"

"The second you went to Ken's room. Your profile picture is now the three of us on Libby's birthday. No need to thank me."

"See? Grand gestures," Blaine teases. "You do it all the time." He seizes Kurt's face and kisses him soundly on the mouth, but to his surprise and pleasure, Kurt fists the front of his shirt to draw him close, and what started out as a lighthearted kiss suddenly turns into Kurt's tongue finding it's way into Blaine's mouth and his teeth nipping lightly at his bottom lip. "Wow," Blaine breathes as they part. "Was not expecting that."

"Take a bath with me?"

"Wasn't expecting that either, but we'll go with it," he shrugs, jumping up and heading into the bathroom. "But this tub isn't all that big."

"Size doesn't matter, it's what you do with it that counts."

"Yeah, keep telling yourself that, Kurt," Blaine calls back, cackling wildly when a shoe comes flying through the bathroom doorway.

They don't speak much in the tub, content for Kurt to sit between Blaine's legs, his head resting onto his shoulder. Blaine wraps his arms around Kurt's waist and sighs contentedly, kissing his neck before closing his eyes and relaxing.

"Remember when we were still body shy around each other?" Kurt muses, his voice soft and heavy with sleep.

"Yeah. Seems so long ago."

"And now here we are. You know, I never take a bath unless it's with you."

"I'd noticed."

"Behave." Kurt smiles up at the ceiling as Blaine kisses his neck again then begins massaging his
thighs under the water.

"You must be so tired."

"Hmmm. I can't remember when I slept. The time is all funny."

"Come on. Let's get you out."

It's hard to explain why or how the bath made everything better, but all Kurt really knows is that when he catches sight of them both in the bedroom mirror, bare chested with identical towels around their waists, he knows he needs to be in his husbands arms.

"Blaine?"

"Hmm?"

"C'mere."

"Oh," he smiles as he steps toward Kurt who instantly wraps his arms beguilingly around his neck. "Seductive Kurt."

Kurt grins, tugging him into a lingering kiss which makes Blaine's toes curl in pleasure. "Make love to me," Kurt murmurs, pressing a kiss to his forehead.

Confusion and worry clouds Blaine's face as he frowns and closes his eyes momentarily. "I don't know if I can," he admits in a whisper.

"I think you can," Kurt whispers back, nuzzling sweetly against his cheek. "I think you just need to relax a little more. Let me take care of you."

Blaine lets himself be guided backward to the bed where Kurt straddles his lap first, pulling the towels from their hips before kissing Blaine lovingly and laying him down against the pillows. And like this, with no pressure, just Kurt kissing every inch of his body and making him tremble, Blaine's desire is awakened. Needy and wanting, his hands grip Kurt's ass tightly, making his intentions clear and Kurt is happy to stop teasing Blaine's nipples with his tongue, pressing the lube into his hand before burying his face into his neck, his teeth scraping over the flesh as Blaine works him open.

Kurt moans happily, biting his lip as he sinks down around Blaine's cock, his hands resting lightly on his husbands chest. "What?" he asks, noticing Blaine clearly trying not to laugh.

"It's just...whenever we do it like this, I have an overwhelming desire to look up at you and say," he laughs, putting on a deep, gruff voice "I'm gonna rock your world."

"Please don't."

"I'm gonna rock your world."

"It was all going so well."

They laugh loudly, Kurt tumbling forward to kiss all over Blaine's face. "God I love you," he sighs happily, and his smile changes to an open mouthed gasp of pleasure when Blaine thrusts upward suddenly. "Yes."

That one simple word is enough for Blaine, who lets his hands find their place on Kurt's hips, thumbs settling into the grooves and fingers splaying behind as he drives upward over and over. It's
fast, but still loving and tender as Kurt rests his forehead against Blaine's temple, their laboured breathing coming together as he cradles his husband tenderly, fingers sliding through his curls.

"Kurt..." Blaine moans, screwing his eyes shut tight. "Kurt...you're...you're everything."

Kurt doesn't respond, just kisses that sensitive spot right behind his ear which he knows drives Blaine wild, then sits up, resting his hands back on Blaine's chest as he arches his neck and cries out. "Fuck that's good! Oh god, Blaine...."

"Let me see you," he pants desperately, drawing his knees up so he can drive even deeper.

Kurt obliges, always knowing how crazy it makes Blaine to watch him giving himself pleasure, and he's rewarded with a groan from deep in Blaine's throat when he starts to stroke his cock. "Oh fuck. Yes, Kurt, yes. Oh god. Oh fuck. Yes...yes...just...Kurt..."

Blaine comes the second he feels Kurt spill onto his stomach, pushing himself as deep as he can as he pulses over and over, until spent he crashes back onto the pillows and Kurt falls on top of him.

"Huh."

"What?" Kurt asks, a blissed out smile forming on his lips as they rest against Blaine's throat.

"Wasn't expecting that."

"Which part?"

"Any of it."

"I think we needed that."

"And now I think we need to sleep."

"Agreed." Kurt rolls off him carefully, making Blaine laugh as he scurries across to the bathroom and closes the door. He rolls his eyes when he returns, tossing a damp flannel over to him. "Honestly. You couldn't even grab some tissues?"

"I was just wondering if I'm capable of round two."

Kurt stops half way through rummaging in his suitcase for pajama pants, and raises an eyebrow at him. "Really?"

"Yeah, and no. I'm not, is the answer. I wasn't even sure I'd be capable of round one. There's no way in hell I'll manage two. Ugh. I used to."

"We used to, all the time," Kurt corrects, flinging a pair of boxer shorts at him before climbing into bed alongside him. "Then we had a baby."

"And I got old."

"Nah, you still could, if we weren't so emotionally drained right now. But....sex is rather amazingly fantastic...but a little less sex means a lot more cuddles and truthfully? You and I both know this is the best bit of all." He holds his arm out and Blaine goes willingly, kissing his lips before resting his head on his chest and wrapping his arm around his waist.

"It really is."
Blaine is up with the first rays of sunshine and a small, quiet knock on the bedroom door. He pulls it wide open, not caring that he's just in a pair of boxers and scoops a squealing Libby into his arms, showering her with kisses and squeezing her tight.

"It's my daddy!" she laughs over and over, as if quite unable to believe that she's really here, in his arms.

"It sure is," Blaine beams, pressing their noses together. "Run inside and climb into bed. We can have cuddles. But try not to wake papa!"

She bounds into the room, and Blaine hears a small "oof" from Kurt as Libby bounces on top of him, followed by his gruff, sleepy voice telling her good morning, and asking- as he always does- how she's more beautiful today than she was yesterday. Blaine turns back to Ken with an enormous grin and shakes his hand. "Thank you so much," he says enthusiastically. "I can't tell you how..."

"No need to tell me, it's written all over your face," Ken laughs. "Glad to be of service so you could...get serviced."

"Oh, very funny."

"And here," he says, handing over Blaine's phone and iPad. "These miraculously appeared outside my room. They even knocked on the door all by themselves. Riccardo will be here in an hour, by the way. Want me to have your breakfast sent up?"

"Yes please. Oh it's good to have these back," Blaine says happily.

"Make sure you check through them thoroughly. And Blaine?"

"Yes?"

"Keep talking, okay? It's wonderful that you've put all this to rest, but Edward is still here, you're gonna run into him at some point, and also...this might not be my place to say...but you really need to work out what the future holds for both of you, and now seems like a good time to do it."

"I know," Blaine nods. "I'd actually worked all this out before the tour started but you're right, I do need to talk to Kurt."

"And perform tonight."

"I can't," he says sadly. "She's in our room."

"On stage, you fool!" Ken says, slapping him on the back and laughing loudly. "We have a concert!"

*Kurt, honey?" Blaine says gently an hour later.

"Hmm?" Kurt doesn't move from where he's lying on his front, but he does crack one eye open to find the room filled with bright sunshine and his husband beaming down at him. Somewhere in the room he can hear Libby talking to Bear, her bright orange teddy, about the big airplane they had been on.

"I'm going to see Riccardo. I'll take Lib."
"He's back?"

"Yes. And so is my phone, which he's been texting with step by step updates. I've left your breakfast on the tray."

"You sure you're okay to take Libby?"

"Of course. I have to talk through some stuff with him anyway. Libby will help soften the blow."

It's only after the door has closed that Kurt wakes fully and wonders what in the world Blaine means.

*

"Gay Blaine!" Riccardo hugs him warmly before stealing Libby from his arms and throwing her high in the air. "And pretty lady!"

"Rick!" Libby shrieks.

"Riccardo," he corrects. "Not Rick, or Ricky. I not common. I'm Italian."

"Rick."

"I can dislike people, you know," he says with a frown. "Anyway, Liberty,"

"Libby," Blaine says automatically.

"Liberty," he carries on regardless as he leads them both into his room. "I have gifts. Not too exciting because I didn't know you be here until Ken told me, so they all from airport but here." He hands her a large bag which she happily rummages through, proclaiming utter delight as she unpacks soft toys, books, clothes, coloring pencils and notepads.

"You're insane," Blaine says, rolling his eyes.

"I know," Riccardo says proudly as he sits on the couch.

"So how's Jules?"

"He be dis-dis"

"Discharged?"

"Yes. That. Today. And he fly to Milan with Lucia where we will meet with them. After that he comes back to Chicago with us. He is...not okay. I mean, okay here," he says, gesturing to his body. "Except liver damage. But here," he says, tapping his head. "I do not know. He has not said too much. I think maybe he will, alone with his mama in Italy. Or in counseling when we get back to Chicago."

"Returning to Chicago, was that his idea, or yours?"

"His," Riccardo nods. "I must say I was surprised. He say he want to get a job."

"Well he does have a degree in linguistics."
"Pah," Riccardo scoffs. "That all boring now, apparently. He want to be artist."

"And what do you think?"

"I think I just glad my boy is alive, Blaine. I could not care less."

"Good. I think the same," Blaine smiles. "I'm so happy he's okay. And I'm really sorry I couldn't contact you. You see, I lost my phone, and..."

"You did not lose your phone," Riccardo snaps, smacking him about the back of the head. "Don't lie to me. I might be insane but I am not an idiot. Ken told me. And I owe you an apology."

"No, no, you don't," Blaine says hastily. "This was never your fault."

Riccardo shrugs. "I left."

"Yes, but you could hardly have left without anyone stepping in as replacement, could you? Edward was a logical choice and that's fine. Neither Kurt nor I blame you for this at all."

"Well...anyway. Tell me. Why did you come to see me? Just to ask about Jules? To ask me to adopt Liberase?"

"Um... How about no?" Blaine grins. "And it's Libby."

"Damn. I tried. Ah well. Tell me."

"Well...I came to ask about Jules, first and foremost. But there is another reason."

Riccardo bows his head, suddenly overcome as he fiddles with his cufflinks. "I think I know what it is."

"I have to, Riccardo," Blaine says quietly. "I just can't do this anymore."

"Because of him?"

"Not just him. I'd already figured this would be my final tour, and I'd maybe do the holiday concert as my final performance, but he's just speeded up the process I guess."

"This breaks my heart," Riccardo says honestly. "You are the greatest musician I have ever had the pleasure to work with, Blaine."

"You'll be gone soon anyway," Blaine tries, "and there's definitely no way I could ever work under Edward."

"No. I not going now," he says, hard and determined. "I do not want him to get his dirty hands on my orchestra. Plus, if Jules gets a job then Lucia and I will stay in Chicago until he is properly settled."

"Okay. Well...I don't know what to say."

"Neither do I," Riccardo says quietly. "I don't think I can change your mind."

"I'm tired," Blaine says honestly. "I'm tired of one or other of us being buried deep in work all the time. I'm tired of juggling Libby, my friends, and compromising my time with Kurt. It's not what we're about, Riccardo."
"I thought you were about the music," he says sadly. "Don't forget who you are too, Blaine."

"I'm not, and I am about the music. I love it, it rules my soul, you know that. And I'll probably go back to writing, I guess. But I just can't commit to being a permanent member of this orchestra anymore. I'm so sorry."

"This isn't the end of us though? No? I know where you live."

"Never the end of us," Blaine smiles, his eyes filled with tears. "You and your family mean so much to us."

"Blaine, I am Italian, I say what is on my heart. I love you deeply. You and Kurt and Libby. You are wonderful people and you have made my job a great one. It has been a real privilege to work with you and I will miss you terribly. But you will always be my friend. Always. And Blaine?"

"Yes?"

"You do know I get her name wrong to tease with you, yes? I do know she is actually called Libby."

"Yes," Blaine laughs, letting his tears fall from his eyes as he hugs his friend tight. "Yes I do know that."

"Ah. My spectacular gay Blaine. How I love you."

*

"Are we okay?" Blaine asks Kurt fearfully. They are walking hand in hand across a small park opposite the hotel, toward where the bus waits to take the musicians to the concert hall for that evenings performance.

"Yes." Kurt nods firmly, squeezing his fingers. "Or we will be, I should say. Don't worry."

"I do though. I made some pretty big mistakes, and the more I think on it the worse I feel."

"Well you shouldn't, okay? I forgive you, I told you already."

"I can't help but feel there's this weird atmosphere between us though," Blaine says, lowering his voice as Libby skips alongside. "Last night was...well...I thought we'd reconnected but..."

"Don't keep things from me then," Kurt says, turning to him and taking his sunglasses off. His eyes glisten with tears as he reaches out to let his fingers graze over Blaine's cheek. "What husband gives notice on his job but doesn't say anything?"

"Kurt...it wasn't..."

"I talked with Riccardo when you took Libby swimming this morning. Blaine...why didn't you talk with me about this? He tells me you'd already decided even before this stuff with Edward...so...why?"

"Because I knew you'd try and talk me out of it, that's why."

"Too right I will! You don't want to quit, be honest with yourself. I can't understand why you'd even entertain the idea."

"Because of us," Blaine says desperately. "Because I owe you and Libby better than me coming..."
and going all the time. Because even though I scaled back my commitments, it's still a huge undertaking and because now, I can't. I really cannot bear to be in the same room as that man, knowing he wants me and you're at home waiting and worrying."

"I wouldn't..."

"You would. Don't deny it, Kurt, you would. I know you don't think I'd sleep with him, but equally, there's a trust issue here between us. It's my own doing and I'm not even going to try and deny it, because the fact is, I should have been stronger. I let him cloud my vision, and wherever I am, if he's there too you'll be worrying it will happen again. And I can't live with that. You deserve better. So that's it for me. It's been fun, but from now on my place is by your side. Starting with a month in New York in September."

"What?" Kurt's eyebrows nearly reach his hairline in surprise, and he's grateful they're nearing the hotel so Libby can safely run on to Riccardo, who waits by the bus with open arms. "No, Blaine. Absolutely not. No way."

"Why?"

"Why?" he shrieks, losing his cool at Blaine's calmness. "Because you'll be dead by the end of it, that's why! Jesus Christ Blaine, I know you love me but putting yourself through that kind of mental torture is sheer madness. No. I won't even hear of it. If you want to see more of me then fine, I'll cram it all into three days a week in New York and fly home every Wednesday night without fail."

"You will not."

"I will."

"You will not!" And this time it's Blaine's turn for anger as he steps closer to Kurt and lowers his voice, speaking in a tone which Kurt knows means he's not to disagree. "You are my husband. You are a father with me to Libby and we owe it to her if not each other to be together and to be happy. I've already found us an apartment to rent overlooking Central Park because I know that even if I can't manage anything else, I can at least take Libby to the park every day. But I'm hoping to overcome this, Kurt. I want us to be able to meet you at the theater and take you out for lunch. I want us to take Libby to Coney Island and get corn dogs. I want us to show her the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building...all of it. And night time? I'll be in your arms. You'll keep me safe. Please Kurt, let me do this, please."

"I do trust you, Blaine. You don't have to come with me just so I won't worry."

"I know. But it's not about that. It's about us being a family."

"No pressure then," Kurt jokes lightly. "I can't stop the nightmares, you know that, right? I can hold you, talk with you, kiss you until you feel better but I can't guarantee you that it won't come."

"I know that. I'm not expecting anything, I'm just hoping, that's all."

"Okay," he says, nodding somewhat reluctantly though inside he feels ecstatic that Blaine would still do something so noble and brave just to be close to him. "Yeah...I'll let you tag along."

"Ha! I love you!" He seizes Kurt's face and kisses him firm on the mouth, knowing full well how thrilled Kurt really is, and he smiles when he thinks about how in a moment, when the bus has departed, he'll run up to the hotel room and do the kicky feet dance on the bed. "I have to go."
"Sure. Call me before you go on?"

"Always," Blaine says, then grimaces when he thinks of the past few days. "Well..almost always."

"Okay. Go. Libby and I love you." They arrive at the bus and Kurt takes Libby into his arms, letting her kiss her daddy goodbye before Riccardo booms for Blaine to get on the bus.

"Hey Kurt?"

"Yeah?"

"While I'm gone, think about where you see us in three years time, okay?"

"What? What do you..."

"Bus, Blaine! Or you no longer my spectacular gay friend!"

"Alright, alright, I'm coming!" Blaine laughs as he jumps on board. "Think about it, yeah? Love you."

It is late when they return to the hotel after the concert, and all Blaine really wants to do is crawl under the covers with Kurt, but when he arrives in his room it is to find Riccardo sitting there, side by side with Kurt, waiting.

"How did you get up here so quick?"

"I am insane," Riccardo says proudly, as if that explains everything.

"I know. And what is this?"

"This is an intervention," Kurt says quietly, so as not to wake Libby who sleeps in her bed in the corner of the room. "Riccardo has something to say, and you need to listen."

"Blaine...when you break my heart this morning..."

"Oh please."


"Yes," Blaine says with a pointed look between the pair. "I know."

"Eh," Riccardo shrugs. "You did not ask me to keep it secret. Anyway. Kurt think, and I think, you do not really want to go, in here," he says, holding his hand over his heart. "Your head is ruling your heart and that does not make for happy living."

"I see," Kurt interrupts, "and Riccardo can see, that on some level, you really are genuinely tired of the traveling and the commitment. But this is your dream, and we both fail to see why you should quit when you still love it so much."

"So this is my proposal," Riccardo carries on. "Which I have cleared with no one, because if they don't like it then I shall flounce out also. So. Three concerts a year, featuring you on piano. No more, no less. All in Chicago. Spring, Summer, and one grand extravaganza over the holidays. You will be required in Chicago for the week of the runs only. You can practice separate to us and we can join it up on the day. I will hire rehearsal pianists who will be happy to play, hoping one day I'll put them on the stage. I probably never will. Eh. So. What you say, Blaine?"
"Riccardo that is...that is an incredible offer but I can't take it."

"You can," he protests. "Kurt said you can."

"He would," Blaine says, smiling indulgently at him. "And like I said, it's a wonderful offer. I won't pretend like this is easy for me. I'm resigning with a very heavy heart. But the fact remains that I simply can't be in the same vicinity as Edward for the sake of my marriage. Because however much you pretend it's fine, Kurt," he says, turning his gaze back to him. "It's really not. All afternoon and evening I've been steadfastly staring at the floor. I don't want to speak to him, I don't want to look at him, but also, I'm scared to look up in case I accidentally do make eye contact and then someone tells you and it's blown out of all proportion. And that's not me saying you'd go nuts over the smallest thing, that's me realizing how this situation is never going to be okay unless I'm removed from it. Do I want to stop playing? No. But I need to. There's a huge difference."

"Of course," Riccardo says before Kurt can respond. "It doesn't have to be you who is removed."

"It does," Blaine says sadly. "I can't..."

"Blaine, would you stay if I told Edward to go? If I go right now and order him to leave and never have any more to do with us?"

"You can't do that. You can't just fire him and..."

"I can do pretty much whatever I want," Riccardo grins. "He has no contract here. With us, I mean. As an orchestra we opt into membership with the symphony council, which he is president of. But we can withdraw that and boom. He is gone."

"Yeah, and boom, your orchestra loses their backing and publicity."

"So? I have Blaine Hummel-Anderson on my posters. People will always come. Please, Blaine. The idea has only just occasion to me..."

"Occurred?" Kurt offers.

"Whatever. But I'm going to do it anyway. It will make me happier for sure. And it will make me even happier more so if you take my offer."

"Just so we're clear?" Kurt chimes in, "If you don't take it, I'm gonna kick you in the balls."

"Ha!" Riccardo booms, making Libby snuffle in surprise. "And you don't want boy husband to kick you in the babymakers."

"Um...no, we don't..."

"Gay sex doesn't make babies!" Riccardo laughs, finding the whole situation hilarious. "Look, just say yes and then I can call my wife and son, yes?"

"Yes," Blaine grins, shaking his head in disbelief as Kurt and Riccardo both kiss his cheeks.

"Ah! Spectacular gay Blaine! You will sign contract in morning. I'm not letting you out of this one. Goodnight, my gay lovers!"

"No, we're not your...." Blaine calls out weakly, but he's out the door before he can finish his sentence. "You," he sighs, turning to Kurt and tugging him closer by his belt loops. "Are a minx."

"I know," he smiles. "But I know it was your dream to marry me, and for us to have a baby
together, but it was also your dream to play with the Symphony. You can have it all, Blaine."

"Thank you," he says sincerely, kissing the tip of his nose. "I love you."

"I love you too. So...you asked me something earlier..."

"I did."

"You asked where I see us in three years...and I think that now, I kind of have an answer."

"Oh?"

"Yeah. I see us still very happy, with Libby about to start a cute little public kindergarten..."

"Still up for debate, but continue."

"I see us both working from home, waving Libby off on the bus each morning..."

"She's not going on a bus!"

"That kick to the balls can still be administered," Kurt says pointedly. "And I see that occasionally one or other of us has to fly up to Chicago for a few days, but mostly...yeah, that'll be us. Home together, settled and happy."

"That's your dream?"

"That is absolutely my dream," Kurt smiles, letting his arms drape over Blaine's shoulders. "That and loads of sex."

"Reckon we could hide in the bathroom and be super quiet?" Blaine asks, a cheeky gleam in his eye.

"Yeah?" Kurt asks in surprise. "You up for that?"

"Oh I'm up," Blaine chuckles, immediately attaching his lips to Kurt's neck as he backs them toward the bathroom. "I'm definitely up. And by the way? Your dream matches with mine."
Chapter 21

Three years later.

Libby Darling Hummel-Anderson is five, and she knows a LOT. She knows how to write her own name, for one. All twenty six letters of it, and the funny little line in the middle. She knows her ABC, and she can count all the way up to twenty in English and Italian, which Rick taught her when they were in Chicago over the summer. He's called Riccardo really, but he calls her any name which starts with an L, so in return she calls him Rick and they laugh.

She knows that she is in love with the shinny red shoes daddy bought her, and she knows that when papa moaned they cost too much money, she pouted and daddy kissed papas neck, just behind his ear, and then papa was smiling and the shoes were paid for, and as Libby skipped proudly from the store with her brand new shoes in a bag, papa had whispered to daddy something about later, which made them both laugh and daddy squeeze papa tight. They do that a lot, her daddies. Cuddle. And laugh. And Libby laughs with them, even though she doesn't always know what they're laughing at, but somehow, that often makes them laugh harder. Still, she knows a lot. Like now, for example, she knows that she prefers daddy to brush her hair, but he cannot do pigtails or plaits to save his life, so papa does her hair on important days like today, so she looks neat and tidy. And papa pulls and tugs, with bobby pins sticking out from between his lips as he huffs frustratedly.

"Keep still!"

"I am!" Libby protests. "You're hurting me!"

"I am not!"

"Are too! Daddy! Papa's being mean."

"Oh don't you dare try and play us off against each other, young lady," Kurt grumbles as he slides another grip into place. "Daddy and I are a team, you should know that by now, aren't we, Blaine?"

"Huh?" Blaine looks up from behind the newspaper, lowering his glasses to the end of his nose. "What's that?"

"Never mind," Kurt sighs, shaking his head. "Just be sure to take Lib to the hairdresser on Saturday to get a bob cut."

"No!" Libby shrieks, making her papa laugh loudly then kiss her cheek, assuring her he was joking.

Kurt Hummel-Anderson is twenty nine years old, and though Libby would protest he doesn't know as much as she does, he's still fairly certain about quite a few things. He's certain there is no child more beautiful than Libby, for example. Her hair is a dark blond now, and falls in soft waves almost to her shoulders, when Kurt isn't wrestling it into a hair band, that is. Her eyes are big and a bright, clear blue. She always looks inquisitive, and Blaine often comments that she looks like a little woodland nymph, almost elfin like with her cute little upturned nose and rosebud mouth. He also says she looks just like Kurt, as most people do, and Kurt always adds that while she might look like him, her personality is all things Blaine.

Kurt is also certain that Blaine still loves him as much, if not more than ever. Two years ago, Anna Farris retired to look after her husband who had been diagnosed with prostate cancer. Thankfully, the cancer treatment had been successful and they were now touring the world, and Anderson
costume designs had been handed over to Kurt. Anna had withdrawn her name, wishing to remain as a silent partner and Kurt had started the rather daunting task of being in charge of his own large and in demand company, taking them to the top of their game. He was now overseeing offices in Chicago and New York, though he tries to remain in Ohio as much as possible, and he nearly always ties his Chicago visits in with Blaine's orchestra work. But Blaine, his marvelous, magnificent and magnanimous Blaine, had stood by his side throughout, caring for both him and Libby with a patience and devotion that was admired by many a mom at their toddler groups or music lessons.

Another thing Kurt is certain of is this; ordinarily, if Blaine had emerged from behind the newspaper having clearly not been listening- or even if he'd read the newspaper at the breakfast table all at- Kurt would have had something to say. Happy they may be, but they still bicker just as any married couple does. But not today. Today Kurt knows exactly why Blaine is acting as he is, and exactly what he is feeling, because Kurt feels the same.

"All done," Kurt announces triumphantly, and Libby hops down from the stool.

"Very pretty," Blaine smiles. "Okay." Glancing up at the clock, he swallows nervously before folding the paper neatly. "Better go find your shoes."

Blaine Hummel-Anderson is forty four, and while Kurt and Libby would tease and insist he knows absolutely nothing at all, secretly he prides himself on knowing more than anyone. He knows that he is the luckiest man alive, to have such a wonderful husband and daughter. He knows that Libby brings him more joy than he ever thought a child could. She sings beautifully, and will spend hours sitting by Blaine's side on the piano bench while he plays, her little voice lifting along with the notes and making the most beautiful sound. She's funny, this little daughter of his. Very good at getting her own way- just like Kurt- and she also takes great pride in her appearance, which Blaine's dad insists is because she has two gay dads. Kurt says Libby is just like Blaine, and he can see that, he supposes. She can be very stubborn- though again, they both carry that trait, but also she likes to protect, and worries about those she loves. She always wants things to be happy and peaceful, and she works incredibly hard to be the best at her game. She has an enormous sense of fun, and adores imaginary play along with any kind of outdoor sport, but her heart lies in music, just as it has always been for Blaine.

Blaine also knows that the last three years have seen them all become settled and content in their lives. He knows some would say boring, especially compared to how they used to live, but that doesn't bother him so much. Kurt is the main breadwinner, and though he has managers of his New York and Chicago offices, he still flies to one or other location two or three times a month, just to check in. But they're fleeting visits, one or two nights and then he's back in Blaine's arms where he belongs, and working from the studio at the back of the house, which he is fast outgrowing. So they have their routine; Blaine has Libby all morning while Kurt works, then they lunch together before swapping over so Blaine can either practice or write for the afternoon. Dinner, then bath and bed for Libby before the husbands snuggle up on the couch together or sneak off into the tub. Weekends are spent with family and friends, and once a month Libby sleeps over at Santana's for Kurt and Blaine to have their date night. Yes. It's a happy, contented routine for Blaine, and he feels that comfort all through his life.

He knows that he can travel to New York now, and has done several times. Since they spent a month there when Kurt did Cabaret, Blaine's ghosts have finally been laid to rest. He can't say he enjoys the loud hustle and bustle after so long living quietly in Westerville, but the nightmare has finally gone, and he can happily board the occasional plane with Kurt and Libby to spend a weekend there when a show Kurt's been working on opens.
He knows that the name Edward Roberts is never uttered, but he also knows that thanks to Riccardo, Edward Roberts is working in London as the conductor of the BBC concert orchestra, and won't be returning to the US any time soon. He knows that Kurt worked hard to forgive him, but their love pulled them through as it has before, and he randomly arrived home one evening after checking on his dad to find the entire living room lit with candles, soft music playing and Kurt holding his arms open. And when he had gone, fallen into his embrace and they started slowly dancing together, Kurt had whispered "I forgive you, I trust you and I love you," and everything had finally settled into place.

Blaine also knows that Kurt and Libby keep him young, though really, if he's entirely honest, his age is still the thing that bothers him the most. Sometimes, when they're both chasing Libby across the park, Blaine has to stop and he hates that. He hates that here he is, in his mid forties while his husband hasn't even hit thirty. So he tries his best. He's up running most mornings except weekends, and he goes to the gym regularly. Still, there's no mistaking that his hair is now clearly silver at the sides, he has visible laughter lines and his stomach muscles are not what they were. But with Kurt, all his troubles and insecurities seem to melt away. He doesn't think there will ever come a time when they don't want each other, when that spark of desire isn't waiting, ready to be ignited into a full, burning flame. That's what he loves most about his family. The ease of their affection. Constant hugs and kisses are shared, and he's proud that Libby is growing up finding it perfectly natural to not only have same sex parents, but to see loving, tender kisses and cuddles as a way of expressing their emotions for one another.

He knows also, that today he's going to need all the kisses and cuddles Kurt has to offer. He knows that today everything will change, and he knows he has only had three hours sleep because of it. He knows that Libby now stands by the front door, patiently waiting as he pulls his shoes on and gives Kurt a short, sharp nod to let him know he's ready, and he knows he could cry the second those bright red shoes step outside, because today is the day that Libby starts Kindergarten.

"Come on," Kurt says softly, kissing into his hair. "I know, okay? I do know. But Libby is waiting, look."

Sure enough, she stands, bouncing impatiently at the end of the drive, squinting in the sunshine as she looks at her dad's silhouetted in the doorway. "Do I just walk from here?" she asks in confusion, and that seems to propel Blaine out the house and right to her side.

"No, no, honey. We walk you to the bus stop, remember? And then one or both of us will be right there each day to meet you when you come home."

"Can't you drive me?"

"I wanted to," he murmurs, picking her up. "But..."

"You need to do this, Lib," Kurt says kindly, kissing the back of her hand. "All the kids get the bus, sweetie. Livvy will already be on it, waiting. And when you get to school, Jamie will be there, and he will have come on a different bus. It'll be fun, okay? Riding the bus was the best part of school for me," Kurt smiles, purposefully omitting the horrific bus rides he endured as a teenager.

"Did you like the bus, daddy?" Libby asks, wrapping her arms around his neck.

"I didn't go on the bus, baby girl. I went to a different type of school, but papa and I think you'll love Emerson. Remember when we went to look around? It was a really happy place."

"And they don't mind me having two daddies?"
"No..." Blaine starts slowly. "But there's more to it than that. It's a great school, okay? A really great school. Plus Livvy will be with you, and you wanted to be together."

"Cause she's my bestest friend."

"Of course," Kurt says cheerfully. "Now let's get walking."

That's what had decided them in the end. Torn between Oak Ridge prep, or Emerson Elementary, they had partially decided on Emerson when Oak Ridge bluntly told them it would be highly likely Libby would be a target of ridicule for having same sex parents, yet seemed reluctant to outline exactly how they would prevent that. Emerson, on the other hand, outright admitted they had never had a child with two dads, or two moms either for that matter, but were open to Blaine and Kurt's suggestions as to how best to deal with the situation, and also put forward a proposal that would see all year groups taught about diversity of family dynamics. They faced stiff opposition from other parents about the proposed teachings, but the school were adamant and eventually the program was rolled out ready for the new academic year. When Wes called and said they had chosen Emerson for Oliva, Blaine and Kurt's minds were made up, and despite it being a public school, and Libby having to travel on a bus, Blaine was confident they had made the right decision.

"She'll be fine," Kurt says, squeezing Blaine's fingers as Libby skips along in front of them.

"I know," Blaine nods. "It's just..."

"She's growing up."

"Yeah. And we've never left her. I mean, she's never done daycare, or preschool and now..."

"And now we get three hours to ourselves every morning," Kurt smiles.

"We're supposed to be working," Blaine laughs.

"Oh I'm sure we can allow ourselves one morning of indiscretion," Kurt says with a wink.

"Hmm, c'mere," Blaine growls, grabbing Kurt and kissing along his neck. "I'll race you home."

"We have to actually see our daughter on the bus first," Kurt says, giggling like a school child himself.

"Papa? What do I do if I need the bathroom at school?" Libby asks suddenly, then she turns back to see why there's no response and rolls her eyes when she sees Kurt capture Blaine's lips in a deep kiss. "Papa!" she tries again. "Put him down!"

"Hmm? What? Oh, sorry Lib," Kurt grins, letting go of Blaine and scooping her into his arms. "Daddy just has very kissable lips."

"I know," the little girl says solemnly. "And his beardy scratchy bit tickles when he kisses your neck, doesn't it? I know cause it makes me giggle too."

"I shaved this morning!" Blaine protests, rubbing over his jaw.

"You're still a prickly hedgehog," Libby grins over Kurt's shoulder. "And before I go to bed papa is too, and I have to be kissed goodnight by two prickly hedgehogs. Ew!"

"Right!" Blaine laughs, and dives in, kissing and blowing raspberries into her neck until she's a squirming, giggling mess and they're suddenly at the bus stop.
"Hello," a little girl says, tugging on Libby's shoe, and Kurt sets her gently on her feet. "I'm Melody," the girl carries on, twirling her red hair around her finger.

"Melody like you sing?" Libby asks, all wide eyed wonderment as the other girl nods. "Wow. I want your name. Papa, I want her name."

"Well your name is pretty special, sweetie," Kurt says gently, "why don't you tell Melody?"

"Libby Darling Hummel-Anderson," she says proudly. "After my two grandmas which are died, but one grandma is still alive and she's called grandma."

"Um," Kurt frowns as Blaine snorts. "That's not..."

"Hi." Kurt looks up to find a woman who is clearly Melody's mom, offering her hand. "I'm Stephanie, and I see you've met Melody. Is it your daughter's first day too?"

"Uh yes," Kurt smiles, shaking her hand politely. "I'm Kurt Hummel-Anderson, this is my husband Blaine, and this is our daughter, Libby."

Stephanie's eyes go wide immediately when she realizes, and she gasps softly. "Oh so you're the ones."

"Excuse me?" Kurt asks, a hard edge creeping into his voice. "What?"

"Oh my goodness that sounded so wrong," she gushes, gasping again as her cheeks turn pink. "I didn't mean...I'm really sorry. It's just... We did hear there was a gay couple starting their child at the school. Probably a first for the whole of Ohio," she says, laughing softly. "Um...I didn't mean it how it sounded."

"No, that's okay," Blaine says kindly, coming to the rescue. They're used to this by now. Most places they go, simply no one else is gay. Which is still weird to them, and Kurt and Blaine like to joke that it's because they're hoarding all the gays in Ohio in their own little corner. So far, they've not faced any outright prejudice, though Blaine is positive that the ballet class he tried to enrol Libby for wasn't really full. The principal had seemed quite keen at first until Kurt arrived and Blaine introduced her to his husband, then suddenly no classes had any vacancies. But that aside, most parents they've encountered have made the effort to get to know them and Libby, and if they haven't felt comfortable they've simply backed away. That's Blaine and Kurt's biggest fear now, that the school parents won't be as accepting or tolerant, and that they, or worse, their precious daughter, might face some kind of backlash and abuse.

"We know it's not the usual around here," Kurt adds and Stephanie shakes her head.

"No it's not, but you know what? That really shouldn't make any difference. Your daughter looks adorable," she smiles, looking over to where Libby and Melody stand talking. "You're quite a famous musician, aren't you?" she asks Blaine who blushes enormously and needs Kurt to come to his rescue.

"Yes he is," Kurt says proudly.

"Thought so. You worked with my sister, Kate, a few years back. She used to play clarinet with the New York Philharmonic. You did some joint concerts together, didn't you? Have I got that right?"

"Yes," Blaine says, smiling uncomfortably at the memory of touring with Edward. "I'm concert pianist for the Chicago Symphony."
"That's the one. The crazy Italian man."

"Yes, that's definitely the one," Blaine says, laughing as all thoughts of Edward are forgotten and replaced with his very dear friend.

"Well it's lovely to meet you both," Stephanie smiles. "I hope Libby enjoys her day."

"Thanks, Melody too," Kurt smiles, squeezing Blaine's fingers in excitement at their first parent meeting having gone so well.

"Bus," is all Blaine says morosely as the bright yellow bus rounds the corner and pulls up to the kerb.

"Okay. Hold it together until she's gone," Kurt whispers as Libby comes running up to them.

"Is this my bus? Papa? You didn't tell me about the bathroom. What happens if I need to pee?"

"This is your bus," Kurt confirms, crouching down to her level. "And if you need to pee, you just raise your hand and ask Miss Hunter if you can go, okay? That's all. If you ask nicely, remember to say please, then she will show you where the bathroom is."

"Okay," Libby nods. "And you won't forget to pick me up?"

"No one could ever forget you, baby girl" Blaine says, crouching down alongside Kurt and playing with one of her bouncy pigtails. "Now have lots of fun, okay? And we'll be waiting here for you when you get back."

"Kisses," Kurt announces, kissing her little lips and hugging her tight before Blaine does the same. "We love you, Libby Darling."

"I love you too," the little girl smiles, bounding up the steps where she takes one look at the crowded bus, stops and turns around. "Daddy?" she asks in a small voice, her bottom lip starting to tremble. "I don't think I wanna go."

"Oh baby girl. You do, you do," Blaine says, taking her little body in his arms and holding her tight. "Look, I can see Livvy," he says with forced brightness, as Wes and Kathy's daughter pokes her head over the top of a seat and waves frantically, her black hair and dark eyes seeming to shine with excitement.

"It's Libby!" she proudly tells the entire bus. "And my Blaine! My Blaine, are you coming too?"

"No sweetie," Blaine smiles, now fully on the bus and ushering Libby down the aisle. "But I can give you a quick cuddle if you'd like?"

"Sir?" the driver calls. "I have to go, which means you need to step off the bus."

"Sorry," Blaine calls, quickly squeezing the two girls together and kissing the tops of their heads. "Have fun girls. Love you both."

"Love you daddy!"

"Love you too my Blaine!" Livvy calls, then spies Kurt standing on the sidewalk. "Oh! My Kurt!"

"See him later Liv!" Blaine calls, laughing as he hops from the bus and it drives away, leaving Kurt and Blaine standing hand in hand on the sidewalk, still waving long after it's gone out of sight.
"What is with these people?" Kurt asks as the other parents drift away. "They just seem relieved to get some time on their own."

"Who knows?" Blaine shrugs, wiping away a few stray tears. "Maybe they have work, or maybe it's their second or third kid?" They start to walk home in silence, Blaine feeling very proud of how he's held it together when Kurt tugs gently on his hand. "Yeah?" he asks, but one look at his husband gives him his answer. "Oh Kurt." He folds his husband into his warm embrace and lets him cry, and Kurt fists the back of his shirt as he lets go and really bawls, not caring who hears or sees him.

"It's okay, my gorgeous boy. It's okay. She'll be back before we know it. We'll go home and have coffee, then by the time we've got naked and had our wicked way it'll be time to pick her up again."

Kurt laughs through his tears, accepting the tissue Blaine hands him gratefully and blowing his nose. "She looked so small. And then I saw Livvy, and I didn't get to hug her and..."

"Sweetheart, I know. But really, right now, those two will be talking ten to the dozen about something completely inane, and they'll have such a wonderful time together."

"I knew you two would be like this." Santana pulls over to the kerb, her window down and Blaine sees a sniffling Wes and Kathy in the back. "Get in. I'm taking you losers for coffee."

"We have plans." Blaine protests, but Santana just rolls her eyes.

"You have three hours, Blaine. You shouldn't need that long at your age. Now get in."

"I saw Livvy," Blaine sniffs, sliding in the backseat next to Wes.

"Was she okay?" he asks anxiously. "It's like, three stops until she gets to you. I was worried she wouldn't be able to save Libby a spot..."

"No, it's good. They were sitting together."

"I told you," Kathy says brightly. "That's my girl. No doubt she yelled at anyone who dared try to sit next to her."

"Hey, Kurt, you okay?" Santana asks, glancing over to where Kurt rests his head against the window, silent tears making their way slowly down his cheeks.

"No," he answers morosely. "She's too small to be starting kindergarten. She must be. It feels like it was five minutes since we held her in our arms."

Blaine reaches forward, his hand coming to rest on Kurt's shoulder, where he takes it and holds on tight.

* 

"Good morning class!" Miss Hunter calls brightly to the group of children gathered on the floor in front of her. "And welcome to Kindergarten. So, I thought it would be nice if we all took turns introducing ourselves and talking a little bit about where we live, what we like to do in our free time, that sort of thing. I'll begin." She smiles happily as twenty two children started up at her in awe and she continues. "I'm Miss Hunter, and I'm twenty seven years old. I live in downtown Columbus with my sister, Jenny and my cat, Moses. I like reading, painting and cooking, and my favorite food is...cupcakes! Okay, who wants to go next?"
Libby and Oliva sit side by side, holding hands and listening as tentatively a small boy named Tyson stands and takes his turn. They sit through a few more before Olivia- always the more confident of the pair, raises her hand and gets called to the front.

"My name is Olivia and I'm five," she starts. "But everyone calls me Livvy or Liv, so I match with Libby," she says proudly, gesturing to the little girl sitting quietly on the carpet. "She's my best friend and our dad's are best friends too. I live in Westerville, three blocks away from Libby and my Blaine and my Kurt. My daddy teaches math and my mommy sits in front of a computer tapping numbers on it. Um...I like to feed ducks with Libby, I like it when my mommy makes cupcakes with us and I like it when me and my daddy go to the grocery store because then I can choose whatever cereal I want. The end."

"Well thank you, Olivia," Miss Hunter says with a laugh. "Libby? Would you like to take your turn?"

Libby nods, feeling a little worried to stand in front of the whole class, and really wishing her daddy and papa were there to hold her hand. But she tiptoes to the front, and Miss Hunter- fast becoming a firm favorite in Libby's affections- smiles encouragingly and she takes a deep breath.

"My name is Libby Darling Hummel-Anderson," she says, smiling and feeling proud.

"No it's not!" one girl calls. "It's too long."

"It is," Libby insists, and she can hear an uptight Livvy turning around to snap at the child.

"Okay class!" Miss Hunter claps her hands together, "I can assure you, that is Libby's name, and I happen to think it rather beautiful. Now, let her carry on. No interruptions please, if you have any questions they can wait for the end."

"Um.." Libby says, her confidence dented by the girl. "Well. I live with my daddy and my papa in Westerville," she says, buoyed again by the very thought. "And our cat, Martin. My daddy plays piano for Rick in Chicago, and my papa makes costumes and they're the best costumes in the world. He makes mine and Livvy's Halloween outfits every year and we always look the best, and he makes us clothes too. I like to sing when my daddy plays piano at home, my favourite book is The Lonely Fire Truck, and I like playing baseball in the yard. Livvy is my best friend and Wes and Kathy look after me sometimes and we always spend holidays together. Oh. I have a massive family!" she continues brightly, on a roll now. "There's grandma and grandpa, grandad, Uncle Finn and Aunt Rachel, Aunt Santana, Sebastian, Brittany, Joe and Maddie, Uncle Cooper and Aunt Clare, Nick, Jeff, Taylor..."

"Okay sweetie," Miss Hunter says brightly. "That's wonderful."

"And my most favorite things in the whole wide world are kisses from my daddy and my papa," she finishes, smiling happily. "There."

"Miss Hunter?" a boy calls.

"Yes Jacob?"

"Does Libby live with her daddy more or her papa? Because I live with my daddy two days and my mom and pop for the rest."

"Oh. Um.."

"I live with both of them all the time," Libby says, frowning slightly. "We all live in the same
"So where does your mommy live?" the boy asks, confused.

"I don't have a mommy," Libby shrugs. "I have a daddy and a papa."

"Everyone has a mommy," another girl chimes in. "You're lying."

"She is not!" Livvy erupts angrily. "She has two daddies!"

"Class!" Miss Hunter calls desperately, but Libby steps up again and calls loudly.

"I have two daddies and no mommy. My daddies love each other like a mommy and a daddy love each other," she says, recalling what Blaine and Kurt have told her so many times. "They married each other, and they have the same bedroom just like any parents do, and I grewed in Aunt Santana's tummy and she gave me to my daddies."

"So she's your mommy?" the same girl asks. "I told you she was lying."

"Class!" Miss Hunter is firm, rising to her feet and waiting until there is calm. "Thank you. Now, I would ask you all to listen to me please." She sits in her chair again and pulls Libby onto her lap, sensing the little girl is shaken and needs all the support she can get. "Libby is not a liar, thank you, Emily. I want you all to listen very carefully to what I'm going to say here, because this is important. Everyone on this carpet will have a different type of family. Most of you will live with a mommy and a daddy, and that's great. Some will have brothers and sisters, some won't. Some will have grandparents, but some won't. Some people have pets, but some people don't, and that's also fine. Now. Some children here will have a mom and dad who don't live in the same house. Some, like Jacob, will live with their daddy on weekends, say, and their mommy and pop during the week. Some children, like Libby, have two daddies who live in the same house, or two mommies. And that is also a family, just as anyone else has.

Just as some of you like the color pink, and some like the color red, so different people love different types of people too. Some girls love boys, but some girls love girls. Some boys love girls, but some boys love other boys. Some people love both boys and girls. Whoever you choose to love, and maybe even marry, it doesn't matter. You can love whoever you want. Libby's daddies love each other, and Libby, very much. I know this, because I've met them, and I can see how happy they are. Santana, who Libby mentioned, let Libby grow inside her tummy, because a baby has to grow in a woman. But Santana is not Libby's mom. Libby has two daddies, and that's it. She is a very lucky girl to have such a wonderful, loving family, what ever it's shape, and I don't ever want to hear anyone telling her otherwise, is that clear?"

A chorus of mumbled "yes Miss Hunter," comes, and the teacher ushers Libby gently back into place, and mentally braces herself for the string of parent complaints she knows she will receive tomorrow.

Libby settles back next to Livvy, who takes her hand, and she is pleasantly surprised when Melody from the bus stop leans over and takes her other hand too. Jamie- whom she's known since babyhood from their music and swimming lessons, ushers closer and surrounded by friends, Libby relaxes a little even as her bottom lip trembles. "I don't think I like Kindergarten very much," she whispers to Livvy, who nods.

"That girl? The one who called you a liar? I'm gonna find her at recess and kick her in the shins."
"You okay?" Blaine asks as they walk back through the front door.

"Better than I was," Kurt says as he kicks off his shoes and hangs his jacket. "But I won't feel complete until twelve twenty."

Blaine hums his agreement, following his husband down the hall to the kitchen where he wraps arms around his waist. "It feels eerily quiet without her."

"Think it's too early to go wait at the bus stop?"

"Well it's not yet eleven, so..."

"Ugh." Kurt sighs and heads for the fridge as he always does when upset, emerging with two pieces of cold chicken which he bites into simultaneously.

"I love you," Blaine says, leaning back against the counter and smiling indulgently.

"Luff oo too," Kurt says, then swallows and smiles, brighter this time. "I'm so glad I have you to freak out with over this."

"Same."

"Sooo...we have like, an hour and twenty minutes?"

"We do," Blaine nods, unable to suppress a grin.

"Oh crap," Kurt says, thumping his forehead in frustration. "I just remembered I have a conference call at eleven."

"Kurt! Seriously?"

"Seriously. Come on, I'll let you listen in."

Blaine trails him dejectedly through the kitchen and back down the hall into his cluttered office. Now he's based much more at home, various fabrics and dressmakers dummies have found their way in here, along with two drawing stations, a large desk with a huge computer screen and two enormous bookcases.

"You know what we should do?" Blaine muses as he looks out the sliding doors to the yard.

"What?"

"We should buy that plot of land out back, then extend the house right out and build you your own office block."

"Hmm, yeah," Kurt smiles as he logs onto his computer and flicks distractedly through a pile of papers. "That sounds good."

"I'm serious. Think about it. Libby could have her room knocked into the guest room, then we could move into the extension. It would give us four guest rooms, and we could have a whole suite of rooms if we wanted."
"Blaine, honey? Go ahead. Just let me know when it needs decorating."

"Sure?" he asks, his whole face lighting up. "You wanna look into it?"

"No, my darling, I want you to look into it and tell me the outcome. Okay. I'm dialling."

"Is this a video one?" Blaine asks, moving out the way of the camera.

"Nope. Just audio, you're good. You can sit in my lap if you want."

Blaine chuckles but doesn't do so, wandering around the room instead, taking in the many pictures on the walls. Hundreds of Libby, of course, and themselves. But also the rabble they like to call their family. A beautiful portrait of Rachel and Finn holding Libby between them, taken last year on vacation in the Florida Keys, which makes Blaine wonder if they'll start a family of their own anytime soon. Lots of Joe, who Blaine knows Kurt misses intensely and never sees enough. He had proposed to Maddie on valentine's day, and the wedding was booked for next May- with Kurt being best man of course. And then photos of Burt, Carole, and his own dear parents. His mom and dad, taken on their golden wedding, four years before she died, and another of his dad with Santana and a tiny newborn Libby cradled in his arms. He worries about his dad. The doctor had told Blaine and Cooper that he had early signs of dementia, which all but broke their hearts, but so far it doesn't seem too noticeable and he's able to stay at home with twice daily visits from family or friends to check on his welfare and make sure he's eaten.

The best picture of all though, the one he still loves the most, is the one which hangs above Kurt's chair where he now sits, deep in discussion on his phone. Taken by their dear friend Jonathan in Hawaii, when Kurt was just seventeen and he thirty two, he clings to Kurt's back, laughing and squinting into the sun as Kurt smiles up at him. It sums up their relationship perfectly, Blaine thinks, smiling to himself at the thought, then looking down to where Kurt sighs exasperatedly.

"...yes, but I'm not saying that," he says, rolling his eyes at Blaine. "I'm saying if they want it all done by the twenty seventh then they'll have to send the munchkin costumes out to be sewn. They can still use our patterns, sure, but they can't expect our team to manage it all."

Blaine walks over to him and places a silent kiss to his forehead which has Kurt closing his eyes and tilting his head up for more, so Blaine steps between his legs, lifting his chin gently and kissing the tip of his nose.

"But that's not for her to decide!" Kurt cries, running a hand through his hair in frustration. "They can demand all they want, but at the end of the day it's...no...no...go on, I'm listening," he sighs, and he can't help but smile when Blaine presses his lips to his own silently, making Kurt fist his shirt and pull him forwards as he does anything but listen, choosing to kiss his husband fervently instead, their tongues meeting as Kurt struggles to stifle a moan.

"Huh? What? Oh, yes," Kurt mumbles, hurrying to fumble for the papers on his desk and blushing even though no one can see him. "I'll just..." But Blaine is unstoppable, trailing kisses down his neck before sinking to his knees. "Oh god no," Kurt moans, then "no, not you," he snaps, "it's the uh...the...cat," he gasps when Blaine reaches into his underwear and grasps his half hard cock. "Stop it," Kurt gets out through gritted teeth, but Blaine only looks up and grins, letting his tongue snake out from between his lips and lightly circle the very tip of Kurt's dick, who closes his eyes and lets his head fall back with a thump.

"Um...I'm sorry, Julie. What? What did you say? I missed most of that," he groans as Blaine continues. "I just..." He smacks the back of Blaine's head sharply. "Stop it," he hisses angrily, and knowing when enough is enough, Blaine stops, tucking Kurt back in, sitting back on his heels and
mouthing a sorry to him.

And that alone; that sweet, contrite look on his face, and the way Blaine stops the second he can tell Kurt doesn't want this, suddenly makes Kurt want it even more. He beckons with his finger for Blaine to go to him and he does, receiving another silent kiss before he feels Kurt's hand in his hair, pushing him lower.

Kurt nearly laughs at the comical way in which Blaine's face lights up and his eyes go wide, but he manages to contain it, and bites hard into his fist when Blaine takes him eagerly in his mouth. "No!" he squeaks, making Blaine stop and look up sharply, but Kurt shakes his head. "Not you. Yes to you...uh...cat. Yes. No to you, John. Listen. I...oh Jesus...I have someone in mind and I...ah...what? No, no, I'm fine. Really, really good," he says, his free hand tangling into Blaine's hair and pulling hard. "It's just the cat...he's uh...nevermind. Like I said, I have someone in mind, I just need to approach them. Now, Tracy, tell me about next week's meeting. What's the agenda?"

And that is as coherent as Kurt manages to be before he drops the phone onto his desk and lets Tracy tell an empty phone line exactly what needs to be discussed on Kurt's next visit to New York. "Fuck, yes," Kurt whispers, as quietly as possible as he rests both his hands on the back of Blaine's head and pushes him lower. "Take me....ohmygod I'm gonna....fuck...." And he comes hard, hitting the back of Blaine's throat who swallows eagerly around him before kissing the tops of his thighs and tucking him neatly back into his underwear.

"Phone?" Blaine asks in confusion, and a dazed Kurt takes a second to remember what he's supposed to be doing.

"Huh? Oh shit, yeah!" Picking up the phone hurriedly, he slots back into the conversation and prays no one heard him come in his husband's mouth as Blaine slips quietly from the room and back to the kitchen to make coffee.

"You," Kurt shouts ten minutes later when he comes bursting into the kitchen. Blaine sits at the table, calmly finishing reading the newspaper from earlier and drinking his coffee.

"Me?" he asks innocently, looking up.

"Yes, you," Kurt snaps, pouring himself a coffee. "You can put your glasses and your face away too. Look at the wall or something, or else I'll be kneeling on that table and begging you to eat my ass."

Blaine splutters, and coffee sprays everywhere. Having a small child in the house means they rarely get to be so blunt around one another nowadays, and even in the privacy of their bedroom late at night they're always aware somewhere in the back of their minds that she could wake and hear them, so it comes as a complete surprise to Blaine, but a very welcome one, and he thinks he could get used to Libby being in Kindergarten five mornings a week.

"Oh my god, Kurt! Holy shit, man! What are you waiting for?"

"Meh," Kurt shrugs, "table's got all wet now."

"Floor then?"

"Blaine! I am better than a floor."

"You are not," Blaine snorts, getting up from the table and pinning him against the kitchen cabinets. "We had sex on the bathroom floor last week."
"Because lazy bones was too tired to move to the bed after the tub," Kurt teases with a bop to his nose.

"The pace I was going was anything but lazy," Blaine protests, and Kurt laughs and kisses him full on the mouth, giving himself over completely to the moment. His arms wrap around Blaine's shoulders and play with the soft curls at the nape of his neck before moving lower, untucking his shirt and moving up and under, smoothing over his chest, rubbing his nipples between his thumb and forefinger and making Blaine groan into his mouth. "I could kiss these lips forever," he whispers against them before going back in for more, his hands framing Kurt's face as he tilts him this way and that. But it's soon not enough, and Blaine rolls his body against Kurt's, letting him feel his hardness and making his intentions clear. "Can I mark you?"

"Hmm. A little," Kurt agrees, pulling his shirt over his head, too impatient for buttons. It's rare, nowadays, for either one to allow the other to cover them in the dark red hickeys they always used to have. Work, mainly, dictates that it's hardly appropriate for two married men of their age to behave in such a way, and they're also very conscious of Libby asking awkward questions; but it's still a thing they love to do to each other, and Blaine attaches his lips to Kurt's neck, sucking, biting and aggravating the flesh where he knows it will just peek above the collar of his shirt, giving Blaine a thrill each time Kurt turns his head.

"Please," Blaine whimpers, finishing his work and admiring it proudly. "I'm begging you. I promise faithfully to clean every inch of this kitchen if you just..."

"Mmm, I like it when you beg," Kurt smiles, kissing his lips lightly. Then in one swift movement, he shoves his jeans and underwear to his ankles and turns around, leaning on the counter and pushing his ass backwards into Blaine's crotch.

"Oh yes, yes, yes, yes," Blaine babbles, thumping down onto his knees.

"Keep the glasses on."

"Of course."

It's certainly Kurt's 'thing,' to be rimmed by Blaine while he's wearing glasses, and Blaine did once admit to sometimes...or a lot of times...wearing the glasses on purpose, just because he knows what it does to his young husband. And today is no exception, as Blaine spreads Kurt's cheeks and runs his tongue over him. Kurt growls his pleasure as he feels the rims of Blaine's glasses digging into his soft flesh, and his tongue slowly working him open.

"Oh...fucking...yes!" Kurt cries, thumping the counter with his fist. "Eat me, Blaine just...." he trails off, unable to voice his pleasure as he feels himself growing harder and harder, and Blaine pushes his tongue deeper, making Kurt slick with his spit. His glasses dig uncomfortably into his face but he really doesn't care when Kurt moans and writhes on his tongue like this until he's begging for Blaine to take him hard.

He stands quickly, groaning happily when he unbuttons his fly and his cock is released at last. Licking his palm, Blaine runs a hand over himself before lining up behind Kurt and pushing inside swiftly. He takes him hard and fast, just as Kurt keeps screaming for, gripping his hips tightly and pounding into him mercilessly. "Kurt," he moans brokenly as his hips snap back and forth. "So hot...Kurt..."

Kurt fumbles desperately for his cock, stroking it erratically and Blaine drives even deeper, crying out loudly as his orgasm rushes upon him and he spills hard. "Fuck," he moans weakly, "just...fuck...Kurt."
"Blaine..."

He knows what's being asked, and falls to his knees again, his tongue sliding easily into Kurt's entrance, open and glistening with his come.

"That's it Blaine, yeah....oh god that's so good I just...." His breathing becomes ragged as Blaine suddenly pulls back and spins Kurt around.

"Come on my face."

"Jesus," Kurt pants, "You're filthy today." But secretly he finds it as hot as Blaine does, and he shoots hard all over Blaine's face, who simply kneels in front of him, mouth slightly parted as Kurt's come trails slowly down his glasses, cheeks and lips. "I love you so much," Kurt says, falling to his knees and kissing and lapping over Blaine's face. "Oh my god we're so debauched."

"Please," Blaine scoffs, pulling him tight into his arms and kissing his cheek. "We've been together thirteen years. I think we're allowed to be a little risqué."

Kurt can't help but giggle into the crook of Blaine's neck, a thing which Blaine finds entirely cute, and also intriguing. How is it that Kurt can go from domineering manager of a company, to a moaning whore begging for his husband to tongue fuck him then eat his own come, to this cute little bundle of loveliness laughing into his skin and cuddling him tightly? Blaine has no idea. He just knows he loves every single facet of this man, and he makes him happy every single day.

"Blaine?"

"Huh?"

"I said can you help me stand?"

"Sure," Blaine laughs lightly, standing and pulling his pants back up before offering his hands to Kurt, who grasps them tightly, stands and promptly falls into Blaine's arms.

"Whoa! Head rush."

"You okay?" Blaine asks with concern, holding him tight by his shoulders.

"Yeah I just...it's been a long time since...well, since I've come twice, and that hard," he says, and Blaine can't help but kiss his adorably flushed cheeks.

"You look so delicious like this," he grins. "Your hair is everywhere, and you're all pink and glowing, I just....I think post-coital you is my favorite you. But seriously, are you okay?"

"I will be. I'm just...oh crap!" he cries as his eyes flick over Blaine's shoulder to the clock on the oven. "It's twelve ten! Run!"

Clothes are hastily replaced, shoes located and pulled on as Blaine grabs the keys and pulls open the front door. "Here," Kurt says, running out from the kitchen with some Oreos and juice boxes. "Eat, drink."

"While I'm running to the bus stop?"

"Think about where your face has been, Blaine. You wanna kiss your daughter with that mouth?"

"Good point."
He uses the downstairs bathroom, quickly splashing water on his face before gulping down the juice Kurt hands him as they run down the hill, skidding to the bus stop where the other parents are already gathered.

"Hello," Blaine says politely to Stephanie, who raise an eyebrow. It doesn't take a genius, she thinks to herself. Kurt's hair was immaculate this morning and now it's standing every which way. Their clothes are definitely rumpled, Blaine's lips are certainly swollen as he chews gum and she's pretty sure she can see the top of a hickey poking out over the collar of Kurt's shirt.

"Way to go to bust the stereotype," she whispers to Blaine, who turns the most brilliant shade of scarlet and hastily tucks his shirt into his pants.

"It's uh...we just..."

"I'm just messing with you," she says with a laugh. "Just...maybe...take a bit of time to at least do your hair before you leave the house."

"Right, sure," Blaine nods. "We'll do that next time. Wait. What? I mean..."

"Here's the bus," Kurt says brightly, saving Blaine from any further embarrassment, though Stephanie looks to be enjoying herself immensely.

"Papa!" Libby jumps the last three steps of the bus, right into Kurt's open arms who squeezes her tight, inhaling her scent and kissing into her hair.

"My baby girl!"

"My Kurt!" Olivia bellows down the bus, "Do I get off here?"

"No Liv, sweetie!" Kurt calls back. "Stay on. Daddy's waiting a couple of stops down, okay?"


"Hey, Libby Darling," Blaine says brightly, taking her from Kurt to kiss her cheeks. "Did you have fun? Huh?"

Libby shrugs, letting her daddy set her on her feet and taking his hand. "It was okay."

"Just okay?" Kurt asks, joining her on the other side as they slowly start to walk home. "You were so excited this morning."

But Libby is quiet, refusing to be drawn, and Blaine and Kurt exchange worried glances over the top of her head as they walk along.

"So uh...did Livvy like Kindergarten?" Blaine asks, but again all they get is a quiet shrug and "I think so." So they all walk home in a silence which is filled with parental concern.

"Is it lunchtime?" Libby asks the second they're back through the door, and Blaine smiles.

"Sure, I'll go fix you a sandwich. What would you like? Cheese?"

"Can I have PB and J?"

He opens his mouth to protest and try and convince her to have something different, but Kurt gives a subtle shake of his head and Blaine nods instead. "Sure, baby girl. You wanna eat outside?"
"If you like," Libby says despondently, roaming through the house until she's in the yard.

"Okay, this is terrible," Kurt says in exasperation, watching Blaine as he thoroughly scrubs the kitchen counter and cupboards. "Something happened."

"I know. But what?"

"What if they were mean?" Kurt wonders aloud. "Blaine, do you think they were mean to our baby? Or worse, what if Miss Hunter was mean? What if she reprimanded her for something that wasn't her fault?"

"Well I guess we're not gonna know unless we ask. Go talk to her while I fix lunch."

Stepping outside, Kurt finds Libby on the porch swing, which always makes him smile because it was the first place he and Blaine admitted their love for each other. A different swing now, but still in the same spot at both their insistence. Kurt sits down next to Libby, who immediately scrambles into his lap, and she smiles gratefully when he hands bear to her, the bright orange teddy Santana gifted to her before she was born. He's always been her comfort toy, but they'd worked hard over the last few months to convince her to leave him on her bed in the mornings in preparation for starting school. Even so, Kurt can sense that right now, comfort is what she needs.

"Love you," Kurt whispers, rubbing their noses together.

"Love you too."

"But you're a sad little lady today, and I don't like it when you're sad. Do you want to tell me why?"

Libby thinks she does. She would like nothing better than to tell papa and daddy everything, but papa is biting his lip like he always does when he's worried, and then daddy arrives, setting three sandwiches down on the table before joining them on the swing, and she thinks if she tells them everything right now, she might cry, which in turn would make her daddy cry too. So she shakes her head softly, and burrows as tightly into papa's arms as she can, looking up to her daddy with wide eyes.

"Can you feed me my sandwich?"

"Lib," he says, in that tone of voice which sounds a little bit disapproving, the type of voice that daddy is really good at using on papa when he spends too much money. "You're a big girl now."

"I'm not," Libby pouts. "I'm your baby girl. You always say I'm your baby girl."

"You..." Blaine starts, then sighs. "Just this once." He collects the plates, setting Kurt's on the other side of him before settling with his and Libby's plates in his lap, breaking off small pieces of the bread and holding them up to Libby's mouth.

"You made me PB and J too?" Kurt asks in surprise. "Awesome."

"I figured you'd already burned off a few calories," Blaine says with a wink.

"So, Libby," Kurt starts, hoping the food will help her to open up. "What's Miss Hunter like? Is she nice?"

"She's wonderful," Libby says brightly. "She's really kind, and funny, and she has a cat too! His name is Moses. I like her a lot."
"That's good," Blaine smiles in relief.

"Yes. And she told Emily off for calling me a liar."


"I didn't papa. She just made a mistake, that's all, and Miss Hunter telled her off for it."

"I should hope so too," Kurt grumbles.

"So what did you do today, huh?" Blaine asks with forced brightness, hoping she'll continue talking. "Did they have a water tray? That was always my favorite. Oh, and you know? When Uncle Cooper went to kindergarten, all those years ago, he mixed the sand in with the water and had to sit in time out."

The thought makes Libby giggle, hiding her mouth behind her hands as her eyes light up and Blaine and Kurt smile adoringly. "Uncle Cooper is silly," she says, scrunching up her nose. "I didn't do that. I did play with the sand, but not the water today. Miss Hunter says we can do that another day. I painted a picture of me, and I putted daddy, Santana and Livvy and Wes and Kathy and papa on it too. I was going to put Uncle Finn and Aunt Rachel, then grandpa, but Miss Hunter said it was only supposed to be our little family, like me and my daddies, so I stopped. But I squeezed Martin in down the bottom."

"That sounds like a really good picture," Blaine smiles, leaning over to kiss her forehead. "So did everyone paint their families?"

Libby pauses, looking down at her bear before she gives a small nod. "Yes daddy."

Blaine looks across at Kurt, unsure as to what he's said or done to suddenly upset her again, but Kurt just shrugs, completely confused. "Uh...did you get to sit with Liv?" he asks, and Libby nods again.

"Yes. And Melody from the bus stop."

"That's good."

"Melody from the bus stop likes my pigtails, papa. And her favorite color is red, so tomorrow I want to wear my red pants. Melody from the bus stop wants some red pants too."

"You do know she's not actually called Melody from the bus stop, right?" Kurt asks, and she looks sharply between the two with wide eyes.

"Oh."

Blaine can't help but laugh, ruffling her hair as he stands and gathers the plates. "I'm gonna go visit grandad, Lib. Wanna come with?"

"No thank you daddy," the little girl answers, much to her dad's surprise. "I'm gonna stay home with papa if that's okay?"

"Well papa has to work," Kurt says, stretching out beneath her. "Not a lot was achieved this morning."

"What's that mean?" Libby asks with a frown.
"It means the cat was misbehaving," Blaine says, dodging a kick from Kurt. "Come on, Libby," he coaxes. "Come with me. You always make grandad smile. Then we can come back here and I'll play piano for you before dinner, yeah?"

"Will you play whatever I want?"

"Whatever you want, I promise."

The little girl sighs, sliding from the swing onto the decking before standing and nodding reluctantly, figuring it's best to keep her daddy happy. "Okay."

* 

Things are no different by dinner time, which passes in relative silence apart from Libby moaning yet again that she doesn't like fish, but as it's the only glimpse of normality they get from her, both Kurt and Blaine let it slide. "I wanted sloppy Joe's," she whines, pushing her salmon around the plate. "And no vegetables."

"We can't have sloppy Joe's all the time," Blaine says, staying as calm as possible. "It's not healthy. And daddy is really old. He needs to stay healthy to keep up with you and papa."

"Pulled pork, then. We could've had pulled pork. Or mac and cheese."

"Libby, I think that's enough now, sweetie," Kurt says, his voice firm but kind. "It's too late to have a different dinner now, so eat up and it'll be something different tomorrow."

"Mac and cheese?"

"We'll see," Kurt smiles.

"That means no!" Libby whines, pushing her plate angrily across the table. "It always means no."

"It means eat your dinner, young lady, or at least some of it, or you won't be getting any dessert."

Libby looks between them both, deciding which one to try and get around, before she realizes she's not going to get anywhere with either of them. She sulks a while, but Blaine and Kurt carry on eating and eventually she slides her plate back onto her mat without a word, and eats everything except the salmon.

"I really don't like fish," she tells Kurt as he clears her plate.

"Uh-huh. Whatever you say."

"I don't."

"Good, good," he says smiling brightly. "Anyway, you can have dessert."

"Ice cream?"

He opens his mouth to say no, but then his eyes flick to Blaine, who responds silently and Kurt heads to the freezer as Libby claps her hands excitedly and he knows they've made the right decision. It's why he loves Blaine so much, he supposes as he gathers three dishes. These little silent conversations they have with their eyes, instinctively knowing what it is the other one is saying. He loves being a parent, sure, but he loves it even more because he gets to do it with Blaine. They're different but the same. Two minds, two hearts, two people who come together as a team to love and provide for their daughter. Libby knows exactly how to wheedle new clothes and
toys out of Blaine, but when Kurt steps in and puts his foot down, Blaine doesn't mind one bit.
Kurt is happy to give in to pretty much any demand Libby makes in public, fearing the inquisitive
stares of strangers, but when Blaine steps in and refuses to budge, Kurt finds himself relieved.
There's never any need to argue over whose turn it is to empty the dishwasher, or take out the trash,
because it's all equally shared without any fuss or bother. Bath time for Libby is also shared, along
with story time. Sometimes they do it together, sometimes Kurt takes charge and other times, like
tonight, Blaine does it so Kurt can get on with some work. And it's this he does now, taking his
bowl into his office with him while down the hall he can hear the faint noise of his two favorite
people singing as they clear the dishes.

Blaine calls down the stairs to him once Libby is bathed and tucked up in bed, and he smiles to
himself at the sight of Blaine sitting in her little white bed, with its cute pink covers, reading The
Lonely Fire Truck for what must be at least the five hundredth time. "You ready, little lady?"

"We're all done," Blaine smiles, climbing out of the bed and kissing Libby tenderly. "Goodnight,
baby girl. Sleep tight. Love you for always."

"Love you for always," Libby says with a sad little smile. Blaine passes Kurt in the doorway,
unable to resist sliding his hands around his waist and kissing his cheek.

"See if she'll talk to you," he whispers. "I'm gonna go take a shower."

"Yeah, you need to," Kurt grins, smacking his butt as he passes and making him laugh. "So...") he
says, walking slowly to the bed where he sits on the edge. "Are you okay? Because you still seem
sad to me, and it's not nice to go to sleep when you're feeling sad."

"I'm still sad," she confirms, then looks up at him. "Papa? Do I have to go to school tomorrow?"

"Libby Darling, you know this. You go to school every day now, except for the weekends,
remember?"

"I remember, it's just...I don't think I want to go anymore, if that's okay with you."

"No, it's really not okay," Kurt says, trying not to smile. "School is from now, right up until you're
eighteen, sweetie. And it will be a huge part of your life."

"Did you like school?"

Kurt thinks. He doesn't want to lie, but equally, he doesn't want to put Libby off entirely, so he
answers as diplomatically as he can. "Sometimes I didn't. But sometimes we did really fun stuff,
and I loved it. You know what made it all better though? Whenever anything happened to make
me feel sad inside, I would go home and tell your grandpa, or my mommy, all about it. And that
always made me feel better inside, but also it helped for them to know what was making me sad,
because then they knew how to make things better. And I think," he says with a little bop on her
nose, "that it would be much better for you to tell us what's making you sad."

Libby looks at her hands, twiddling her thumbs nervously. "I don't want to make you and daddy
sad."

"Libby Darling," he sighs, putting his arm about her shoulders. "You are so much like your daddy.
Here," he says, burrowing under her covers and snuggling her tight against his chest. "Let me
explain. Daddy and I...we might feel a little sad, sure, but we're gonna feel a whole lot more sad
watching you get upset and not knowing how to help you. And you know, I'm pretty sure that
whatever it is, daddy and I could make it all better."
"Really?"

"Really," Kurt smiles, kissing her forehead. "Because you're lucky enough to have two daddies in your corner, baby girl, and we'll always keep you safe."

"I think I'm tired now papa," Libby says as she twiddles his hair around her finger.

"Oh. Well...if you're sure," Kurt says, getting out of the bed and tucking her in tight. "But you know where we are if you want to talk to us, okay? Either one of us or both, it doesn't matter."

"Thank you papa," she smiles and accepts her bedtime kisses happily, letting her little arms tighten around his neck. "I love you for always."

"Love you for always too, Libby. Sleep tight."
Blaine steps from the shower and dries quickly, wrapping a towel around his waist before striding through to the bedroom, surprised to find his daughter sitting cross legged in the middle of the bed, dressed in her Tinkerbell pajamas and clutching her bear tightly.

"Hey Lib, what are you doing up?" he asks in surprise. She fixes her big blue eyes on his and says quietly "I couldn't sleep."

"Hmm, well, I'm guessing you haven't really tried, since I left your room all of ten minutes ago," he says, keeping his eyes on her as he walks to the closet. Ordinarily he would send her right back to bed, but he senses she's needing and wanting to say something so he doesn't, and pulls on a pair of shorts instead and waits.

"Daddy?" she asks in a small, sad voice, "Why didn't you tell me I'm the only one?"

"Huh?" he says in confusion. "The only one what?"

"The only one who has two daddies and no mommy."

"Oh my baby girl." Blaine climbs onto the bed and pulls her into his arms, kissing into her hair which is still damp and smelling of baby shampoo as he runs his hands over her back and tries to think desperately of what to say. "You're not," he murmurs. "You're not the only one, Lib, far from it."

"I am at my school," she says, blinking back tears. "I asked Miss Hunter and she didn't want to tell me, but when I cried she said yes I was."

"Well...I mean, you are in your school, yes, and I'd imagine the only one in Westerville. But...but...well...that doesn't mean there's anything wrong with that, sweetie. It just means you have two daddies like some people have one mom and one dad, or some people have just a dad...you know, papa only had grandpa growing up, and Uncle Finn only had Grandma. Aunt Rachel!" he says brightly, wondering why he didn't think of her sooner. "Aunt Rachel has two dads!"

"I know that," she says with a soft smile. "I like them, they're funny. Hiram always pretends to steal my nose."

"I know he does. And you know, when Rachel was growing up, she really was the only one, all around. We could um...we could maybe visit her tomorrow, if you'd like? When she's finished work? You two could talk."

"I like seeing Aunt Rachel," Libby starts slowly, unable to really express her thoughts. "But I don't want to be the different one in my school, daddy. I told everyone in my class who lived in my house and Emily said I was a liar for not having a mommy, she telled me Santana must be my mommy but she's not, is she?"

"No, my darling, she's not. What does Santana always tell you?"

"She housed me."

"She did," Blaine smiles, tugging her into his lap. "And when you're bigger, papa and I will explain exactly how all that happened. But know this, Libby. You are loved. You are so loved, my darling
"I did a bad thing," Libby says suddenly, bursting into tears.

"Oh sweetie," he soothes. "It's okay. Whatever it was, it's okay, I'm sure you didn't mean to."

"But I did!" she protests as she continues to sob. "I did mean to. When we were...when we had to do painting I was...I was scared of everyone laughing at me again. I didn't want Emily to say about my two daddies." She pauses, rubbing at her eyes with her tiny fists. "When it was recess, another boy telled me that his mom said you and papa were wrong. And I don't want to be wrong, daddy. So I..." she takes a deep, trembling breath before she hides as close to Blaine's bare chest as she can. "I painted me, and you, and Santana," she says quietly. "I didn't paint papa."

Blaine holds her as she cries and kisses into her hair over and over, wishing he could call downstairs for Kurt to come help him with this, but he knows that wouldn't be fair to Libby, now she's finally plucked up the courage to say something, so he soothes her until the tears subside, then gently lifts her face to look at him. "Listen to me, baby girl. What you did was...maybe not the smartest thing, but I think you know that already, don't you? You know it would make papa sad to hear that, but I also know that it made you very sad to do it, and you would never have left him or me out unless you were feeling very uncomfortable."

"I putted him on though," she says weakly. "When Miss Hunter asked where he was. I putted everyone on like I telled you I did."

"I know, and that's fine. You know what? I think we should forget all about that painting for now. Don't be ashamed of who you are, Libby, or where you come from. Your papa and I are so incredibly proud of you, and what a wonderful little lady you're growing into. I wish, I really do wish, that I could sit here with you and tell you that having two dads doesn't matter. But unfortunately, to some people, it does. Some people get very upset when they see that a man loves another man, or that a woman loves another woman, like Santana and Brittany. But they don't see what we get to see. They don't get to be you, or me, and to know how much and how wonderfully papa loves us. We should feel sorry for them, if anything, because they'll never have papa's love and we are the lucky ones, because we do. I promise you, Libby Darling, that we will always love you and be the best daddies we can possibly be. And you might not have a mommy, but I'll bet you a million bucks you've got the best family in the whole school."

She giggles through her tears, and relief floods through Blaine to see her smiling again. "Better than Livvy?"

"Well, you and Livvy have the best families then," he smiles. "A million bucks."

"I don't got a million bucks, daddy!" she squeals.

"Oh Lib," he sighs in mock defeat. "You're no fun."

"Oh!" Her eyes go wide as she suddenly remembers, "Daddy? I know what you telled me one time. We are the richest people in the whole wide world, because we have each other."

"That's right!" he says, grinning broadly as he recalls that moment in the park, which must have been over a year ago. "It's true, you know. Martin is a very rich cat."

She giggles again, burying in against his neck before she yawns. "Daddy? Will papa be mad at me?"

"No, sweetie. Papa will understand completely."
"Will you tell him? Tonight, I mean, while I'm sleeping. Then in the morning he will already know and he will cuddle me."

"Yes, if that's what you want, I can do that for you. Would you like to sleep now?"

"Yes please."

He carries her down the hall and tucks her back into bed, kneeling by her bed to kiss her cheeks and hold her little hand. "Now don't you worry, okay? I promise you that no one is mad, and we love you dearly."

"Papa said you can make things better," she says with a little smile. "I think I quite like having daddies like you."

"That's just as well, because you're stuck with us," he grins, rubbing their noses together. "Now sleep well, baby girl. Love you for always."

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"Wow."

"I know."

Kurt sits on the couch, his elbows resting on his knees as he rubs his hands over his face and blinks back tears. "I uh...I don't know what to say," he whispers into the silence, and he's grateful for the firm hand Blaine rubs over his back. "I knew we would face this, but I didn't think it'd be on her very first day."

"Same. And it sucks she was made to feel this way. But Kurt? You do know that she didn't leave you out because it was you, right? It could've been me, too. I mean, I'm guessing she just painted me first and then panicked a little..."

"Yeah," Kurt sighs heavily. "Yeah, I know that. I do," he says, nodding to himself. "I just...it still hurts, you know? I mean, I'm not mad at her or anything, I'm far too concerned with the situation for any of that, but... Yeah. It hurts."

"She loves you."

"Oh, I know," he says, smiling at the thought. "It's fine, really, I'll get over it.... But you do know that at some point I'll throw that at you in an argument, yes?"

"Of course," Blaine shrugs, a small smile playing on his lips. "You wouldn't be you otherwise."

Kurt gives a soft smile before falling into Blaine's arms, who pulls them both back until they're snuggled in the corner of the couch. "So... What do we do?"

"I don't know." Kurt answers honestly. "I really do not know. I mean, we could move back to Chicago, give her a better chance to meet other kids with gay parents but..."

"But isn't she better here, among her family and friends?"

"Exactly. I think this is gonna keep happening, on and off, for her whole life. It does to Rachel. And for Libby, I think it would be far kinder to let her grow up surrounded by a loving family than with just us. And that's all it'll be in Chicago, if you think about it. Maddie and Joe will move back to LA after the wedding, Riccardo and Lucia won't stay too much longer now Jules is back on his
feet, so yeah, it'd pretty much be just us.... And the biggest pull for staying here has to be Olivia. I mean, she doesn't know any different, just as Libby doesn't. She's grown up with us, and you know, we actually have quite a few gay friends too, it's just they don't have kids."

"I agree, I don't think we should move unless it really gets bad. But I do think we have to act on this now, before it gets out of hand. The principal said we had to speak up if we had any problems. I think I'll drive her tomorrow, then we can go in."

"Actually, I don't think you should," Kurt says, one hand placed firmly on his chest to stop him rising up in indignation. "Hear me out, feisty pants. The bus seemed to be the bit Lib liked best. We're gonna have tears in the morning, I think."

"I'll try not to."

"Not you, her," Kurt laughs. "I think she will get upset, but if the bus arrives and Liv is waiting for her, and Melody from the bus stop will be there to admire her red pants, I think we stand a much better chance of getting her there than if we drive her and then have to unpeel her from our legs."

"Hmm, okay. But I'm still calling, first thing."

"Oh, do," Kurt nods. "And make an appointment for the afternoon, maybe. That way we can go back without Libby. Wes is taking another personal day tomorrow, I'm sure he'll watch her."

"I hate this," Blaine sighs. "I hate that our baby was made to feel this way, and it hate that people still think this is a big deal."

"I know, I do too. But it is what it is, I suppose. It is getting better, though. It might not always feel like it, but slowly things are changing for us. I mean, we couldn't even marry in Illinois yet we would be able to now. Slowly but surely it's becoming more acceptable to be gay...but I think being gay and a parent is the last and biggest taboo."

"Why though? We don't beat our kid, we don't get drunk and forget to provide for her. We work hard, we don't rely on welfare, and we love her endlessly. I kiss and cuddle the life out of that little girl every damn day because I'm so appreciative of having her in my life. A life I happen to share with another man....and a very hot one at that."

Kurt laughs, kissing his cheek. "I wonder if straight people have as much sex as we do?"

"I know Wes doesn't."

"I do not want to think about his sex life," Kurt says, swatting his chest.

"I expect there are gay people who have very little sex and straight people who have loads...but none of them get to have sex with you, so no, I didn't think anyone has a much sex as we do."

"Well don't go getting your hopes up tonight, mister. Don't go getting anything up."

"Hey, can you pass me my glasses?"

"No," Kurt says, hitting his chest again. "Get out."

"Go on."

"No!"

"They're still stained, they need cleaning," Blaine tries.
"Then you should have cleaned them properly."

"I did!" he protests. "Your sperm is very persistent."

"Don't use that word! You know I hate it."

"Sperm."

"Blaine...."

"Sperm."

"You've got it coming," Kurt warns.

"Like how? What will you do if I don't stop saying sperm, Kurt?"

"I'll have to shut you up."

"Sperm. Spunk. Jizz. Sp...." But he doesn't get any further. Kurt's lips are suddenly on his, hot warm, pliant and moving in just the right way as Blaine pulls him on top of him and they kiss for the longest time, until Kurt pulls away, pink cheeked and breathless. Blaine smiles, unable to resist kissing those glowing cheeks. "Please?" he tries.

"I thought you couldn't manage twice in a day now? How do you expect me to manage three?"

"I can't resist you," Blaine murmurs, kissing under his jaw. "Want you all the time."

Kurt laughs, but it turns into a squeak when Blaine tickles him and he ends up giggling- entirely aware of how childish he sounds but not caring one bit. "Upstairs now, you goon," he says, rolling from the couch to the floor where he stands and grabs Blaine's hand. "Let's get naked."

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Libby's second day goes better than the first. She wakes up and immediately starts to worry, but then papa comes into her room with a big bright smile and he hugs her tight. He knows, he tells her, but it's all okay, and guess what? Daddy and papa love her for always. Daddy makes blueberry pancakes for breakfast, and papa makes her hair all pretty and she gets to wear her red pants...meaning she sort of forgets all about going to school until she's at the bus stop and Melody is admiring her pants and how well they match her shoes.

Miss Hunter makes a point of asking if she is okay, and Libby nods while Olivia answers for her, and then they all sit down in a circle and Miss Hunter asks if anyone has any news. Libby stays quiet, but Jamie very proudly tells the entire class that his uncle is coming to visit this weekend, and he lives in Reno and dresses like a woman. Miss Hunter laughs loudly and says she loves this class, which makes Libby and Livvy beam proudly at one another- they'd like to think they have a hand in that.

The rest of the morning is spent doing letters, and Livvy and Libby proudly show off all they have learned; then suddenly it's home time and Libby doesn't know where that morning has gone. Daddy is at the bus stop, taking with Melody's mom, and he looks happy. She jumps into his arms, Liv asks again if she gets off here, and Blaine tells her to stay on, and then they race each other up the hill home. Libby is seated in Kurt's lap in the office when Blaine eventually arrives and she squeals and laughs loudly when daddy tickles her and grumbles that she's too fast. She's taken to Wes after lunch, and being here is such a regular occurrence that she doesn't even think to question where her dad's might be going, she's just happy she gets more time to play with her best friend.
"She seems happier," Blaine comments as they drive away.

"She does. I'm glad, but equally I know we still have to raise it."

"Oh I agree. Did you manage to finish your work this morning? I stayed away, did you notice?"

"Yes I noticed," Kurt smiles as he drives. "And while yesterday was a whole lot of fun, I did appreciate being able to get stuff done today. But no, I'm still not done. To be honest, I don't know when I'll ever be done."

"It's that bad?"


"Wow. You gonna take it?"

"I don't know. I want to, but I need a stronger team. I have these people in Chicago and these people in New York, and the left doesn't know or even care what the right is doing. They seem to think that they're two separate entities and they're not. They can't be. Ugh. Sometimes I wish I could just sit with my pencil and sketchbook all day. I'm not a businessman, Blaine. I'm just me. I want to be a designer, not an entrepreneur."

"But this is what you employ managers for, isn't it? To run that side of things?"

"Yes," he starts tentatively, "but...I don't know, it's hard to explain. I feel like there needs to be another tier. One to pull it all together cohesively, and right now, that's me. And you know, there's so much more I want to do, creatively."

"Really?" Blaine twists in his seat to look at him, loving watching him so animated about his work. "Like what?"

"Like...okay, this will sound far fetched, probably, but I'd love to design a children's range. Not just regular clothes, but children's clothes with a fairy tale twist. Dorothy gave me the idea, with her blue plaid dress. Why not make a kids version that's for everyday wear? And like a whole host of stuff too. Peter Pan, Cinderella...all those fairy stories lend themselves to making a kids collection. Ugh. I'd love to do it, but I just don't have time."

"Well you could always...I don't know...weekends, maybe? Take a bit of time to yourself?"

"I don't want to though," Kurt says firmly. "I love our weekends. They belong to us and our family and friends. I don't want to shut myself away working on a hobby. Nope. It'll just have to stay as a dream until I'm retired and so out of touch with fashion that no one will want to buy my designs anyway."

"Don't talk like that," Blaine frowns. "It makes me sad."

"Oh, no, I didn't mean to," Kurt says, reaching for his hand as he pulls into the school parking lot. "Not at all. I'm incredibly happy with my lot, please don't think otherwise."

"Sure?"

"I'm sure. Now let's go get this sorted."
Miss Hunter greets them warmly, and though they feel vaguely silly sitting on two tiny brightly colored plastic chairs, with their knees almost reaching their ears, they still feel more comfortable having opted to meet with just Miss Hunter in the classroom rather than the principal and the entire school board. "I had a feeling you'd be in," she says, looking a little nervous. "I can only apologize for yesterday. It spiralled out of control, and I just want you to know that I did try and explain to the kids..."

"We don't blame you for this," Blaine says kindly, "Please don't worry. But the fact is, Libby came home upset, and it took her until bedtime to admit why. She was made to feel like having same sex parents was wrong- so much so that she was afraid to paint us both in her family portrait for fear of the repercussions. Now I know that's not your fault, and Libby told us how kind you were to her yesterday, and she certainly seems to have had a better day today. But our overwhelming concern here is that at just aged five, other kids are clearly being told that what we're doing is wrong, and they're freely telling that to our daughter and making her upset."

Miss Hunter nods, listening intently before looking at Kurt for his input. "What he said," he adds quietly. "I have been bullied all my life, Miss Hunter, before I knew that I was gay, or even what that word meant. I was picked on for my voice, for liking the things I liked, and when I got older, for the sex I was attracted to. I was still being bullied when I first met Blaine, and he can testify that it was physical as well as mental torment I went through. I can't watch Libby go through the same, I really can't, especially when she's only involved by default. I mean, she didn't ask to be born to us. She is...wonderfully ordinary in every single way except for having gay parents. All I wanted, my entire life, was to fit in. We've fought hard to give that to Libby and now if I'm honest, I'm scared it's all going to be taken away from her due to circumstances beyond our control."

"Okay. Firstly, please call me Jess. Secondly, I'm going to level with you guys here." She takes a deep breath and looks them both in the eye, deciding they will be able to handle the brutal honesty she's about to give. "Libby will be targeted for all the time you remain in Ohio, and it will get worse as she gets older. You think this is bad? Wait until she dates a guy with homophobic parents, or gets bad grades in math when she's fifteen because her teacher hates gay people. Wait until she suddenly doesn't make the cheerleading squad, or marching band because they know she's the one with two dads. Teenage girls particularly, are mercenaries when it comes to that sort of stuff. They move in packs, singling out the weakest member and picking them off just for fun. She may not suffer the physical torment you did, Kurt, but she will almost certainly have to learn to deal with mental abuse from narrow minded individuals who are too ignorant to learn how to accept anyone different to them. I know this, because my sister came out as a lesbian when she was fourteen years old, and as we're twins, I went through high school not only watching her being bullied, but suffering through it myself."

"Your sister is a lesbian?" Blaine asks. "Because I have this friend who..."

"Not now, Blaine," Kurt says patting his leg. "And Santana shouldn't be inflicted upon anyone we don't know."

"Yes she is," Jessica Hunter nods. "We grew up here. Well, Cleveland, actually. We went to different colleges but then we both kinda...gravitated back, I guess. She's a high school guidance counsellor now. And she's so good at what she does, because she's lived it. I don't want to scare you guys, but honestly, this is mild compared with what's to come."

"Do you...uh...do you think we should move?" Blaine asks warily. "I mean, if you had your time over and you knew what you were both going to go through, would you rather grow up somewhere more accepting? Like Chicago or San Fran?"
"San Fran?" Kurt shrieks. "Who said anything about moving to San Francisco?"

"I didn't say...I didn't mean it..."

"Excuse me!" Jess calls, and they both turn back from their whispered disagreement looking contrite. "To answer your question, Blaine, no I don't. And for what it's worth, I don't think you two should move either. Here's my reasons. We grew up surrounded by friends. For Jenny and I, by the time she came out, we had a close network of people we knew we could trust. High school was hell in a lot of ways, but also a lot of fun. The ones who mattered accepted Jen for who she was...or is...and supported us as a family. They're the ones who are still in our lives, who we still meet for dinner even if it is only once every six months. You guys have a really fantastic network of family and friends who love and care for all three of you, and that network exists right here. But the biggest reason you should stay is also the smallest, and that's Olivia. She is her fiercest ally. Her friendship with your daughter, indeed the friendship of both your families means everything to Libby. Those girls idolize each other, and they've got each other's backs. They're just as close as any siblings I've ever taught, in fact they remind me a lot of me and Jen growing up. To tear Libby away from that would be cruel, if you want my honest opinion. However much she stood to gain from living in a more tolerant society, she would surely lose twice as much being taken away from her best friend. She doesn't have a sibling, Olivia is the next best thing."

"Do you think we should have another baby?" Blaine asks, worried. "Oh my god Kurt, we need to have another baby."

"I didn't say that," Jess tells him evenly. "I think you do whatever is right for your family, and that means keeping Libby among those who love her for who she is. And I'm totally not getting involved in baby discussions," she laughs, holding her hands up. "I guess I just really want you to know that I'm in your corner here. I talked with the whole class about family groups yesterday, and as a result had three parent complaints made against me this morning. But I also know that the school is also on your side, and mine, and those complaints were dealt with but there will be no record of them on my file. I'm sorry if I was a bit brutal too, but I need you to understand what Libby might potentially have to face in her life. Not all the time, certainly, and who knows? By the time she reaches high school things might have changed... But while she's in my class, even while she's in this school, I promise you I will look out for her and try to keep her safe. She is a wonderful little girl, and you should be so proud."

"Oh, well, we are," Kurt says, a wide grin on his face. "We have albums on our phones, five pictures a month of her every month since birth. Wanna see?"

"Um...maybe another time," she says tactfully, "Since that's quite a lot of pictures. But please, I know this is hard for both of you, but try not to worry. Carry on just as you always have done. Live your life according to your instincts of what is right and what is wrong, and ignore what everyone else thinks. The only ones that matter here are you two and Libby."

"Thank you, Jess," Blaine says, filled with gratitude as he shakes the young woman's hand. "You've really opened our eyes to a lot of things, and given us a lot to think about, but above everything, it's so reassuring to know Libby has someone like you on her side."

"Here," she says, scribbling on a post it. "This goes completely against school policy, and could potentially get me in a lot of trouble, so don't broadcast it, but this is my cell number. Any worries or problems like this again, that come outside of school hours, just call. I won't mind, and if it helps put your mind at ease then I'm happy to talk with you."

"Thanks," Blaine says again. "You know, your sister? My friend is technically seeing someone but..."
"Blaine, honey, enough now," Kurt reminds him, taking his arm and steering him toward the door. "Let's go."

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"Hey," Wes smiles as he pulls open the door. "They're out back on the trampoline. Kurt not with you?"

"No," Blaine says as he follows Wes through the house. "He's gone home to work. He knows that 'just swinging by to collect Libby' will turn into an hour talking."

"Good point. Beer?"

"One," Blaine nods. "Thanks."

"So how did it go?"

"Good. Better than good." They step onto the porch and he waves to the girls as they bounce, shrieking and laughing together happily. "Have you been good girls?"

"We're always good girls, my Blaine!"

"Keep telling yourself that Liv!" Blaine calls back, laughing.

"Daddy? Can Livvy sleepover on Friday?"

"Sure baby girl," he smiles, sitting down next to Wes on the porch steps who pats his back gratefully.

"I should thank you. You are solely responsible for the maintenance of my sex life these last five years."

"Ha! You're welcome."

"So. Tell me."

"Well, she made it very clear that she's on our side, and that she won't tolerate bullying in her class. She also told us that it's gonna get worse as Libby gets older, and that we need to be prepared for that. It was tough to hear, but it think we needed to. It's helped both of us feel more realistic about the situation, and what to do."

"And what do you think that is?"

"Well, we don't want to move."

"Oh thank god."

"Miss Hunter pointed out that while Lib might benefit from living in a more accepting community, splitting her up from Liv would be the cruelest thing we could do. She called her her fiercest ally."

"Oh she's fierce alright. I don't get it, you know? I mean, I know we got lucky with Dalton, but to think that Libby might have to endure bullying through high school because her parents are gay...it's absurd."

"I think we will look at sending her private," Blaine admits. "I know Kurt always said no, but we were talking on the drive home, and he brought it up. Find a small, accepting school like Dalton
"was, where she can grow up without fearing what's lurking around every corner."

"I don't know if we could afford that," Wes says quietly.

"No, but we could, for both of them."

"I couldn't let you pay for my daughters education."

"You wouldn't. You'd be letting me pay for my daughters peace of mind, and finally, eventually, paying you back for all those times you made rent when I couldn't, all those times you bought me food and put gas in the car, and all those times you stuck by me just as Olivia will always do for Libby."

"Well...let's just see how they go, huh? They might get lucky and find a really great group of friends."

"Like I did."

"Yeah." Wes looks out across the yard to where the girls now sit under the trampoline with a tea set between them and he sighs heavily. "I find it strange and very disturbing that kids of five are being told this is wrong. I mean, haven't we moved on at all?"

"We have, in so many ways, but there's still a long way to go."

"You know, Kathy and I always said we would be honest with Olivia. Whenever she asked, we would answer truthfully. But she never has. She simply accepts that we're her parents and you and Kurt are Libby's. She's never questioned the fact that you're two men, or that Finn and Rachel live together but so do Nick and Jeff. She's just never mentioned any of it, because I don't think she sees it. And she's a smart kid, you know? So if she doesn't notice, chances are the other kids don't either, which means this is all coming from their parents."

"Exactly. Which is really disheartening, I guess. But there's not a lot we can do except love our kids as we do and raise them as we think is right."

"You know I've always got you, right? I'd fight for you all the rest of my life if I had to."

"I'd kinda realized that Wes, yes," Blaine says, nudging him with his shoulder. "And in case you didn't know, I'm eternally grateful."

*  

Blaine emerges from the shower to find Kurt curled up in bed, reading. He pulls on some shorts and climbs in behind him, spooning his body around him and placing a soft kiss to his bare shoulder, making Kurt smile and place his book on the nightstand.

"Well this is nice," he comments as Blaine snuggles in tight.

"Hmm? What's nice?"

"You. Spooning. We don't do that often."

"We always spoon on the weekends."

"Yeah," Kurt laughs, "when Libby is in here too, and I have to lie there pretending I really can't feel you pressed into my butt. It's nice, cuddling like this. You're usually clamped to my chest like a limpet."
"Do you want me to stop clamping myself to your chest?" Blaine threatens.

"Don't you dare." He reaches across to turn out the light before tugging Blaine's arms tighter around his chest, playing with their wedding rings where their fingers lock over his heart.

"Feeling better?" Blaine asks softly.

"Actually, I really am. Jess was totally honest, and while I didn't necessarily like hearing all that stuff, it did make me realise that maybe we've been a little naive so far. Let's face it, we've been incredibly lucky to find such wonderful friends. I still remember when I first met Joe, and he just said he'd never had a gay friend and that was it. It's never been a big deal or anything... But for some people it really is. I didn't know, talking with Jess kinda made me feel better prepared for the future, I guess, and not so fearful of the present."

"Yeah, I agree," Blaine says, kissing the back of his neck. "I think we've been in a sort of bubble for the last few years and this is it now, this is the real world for all of us. We've never really faced any prejudice together over being gay, other than your bullying at school. In fact, the only problem people have seemed to have been over our age gap more than anything. It's not right or excusable, but I guess it's only natural for people to be scared of the unknown."

"Funny to think a few years back white people were scared to sit next to black people, and regarded them as second class citizens...and yet now...yeah. Hopefully one day all the taboos of anyone being different will have gone."

"Let's hope so. Anyway...onto happier things..."

"Oh not tonight, Blaine. I'm too tired."

"I wasn't suggesting that!" Blaine laughs. "Jeez, I'm still exhausted from yesterday. Tap me up next week."

"Ha!"

"Anyway, it's your thirtieth soon."

"Don't remind me."

"Well I'm celebrating long and hard," Blaine says, smiling against his skin. "You're nearly the age I was when we met. Anyway...I'd really like to do something special for you, and I need to ask you about it."

"My birthday is like...ten weeks away."

"I know, but I need to ask this now, so I can make all the necessary arrangements. I was wondering, now Libby is older...."

Kurt sighs, closing his eyes. "No more babies, Blaine."

"No, no, I know that. Just hear me out, mister impatient. I was wondering if you would let me take you on vacation?...As in, just us."

Kurt spins suddenly in his arms, his eyes wide as he comes to rest almost nose to nose with his husband. "You serious?"

"Well...yeah. I thought I could ask your dad and Carole to come stay here for the week and..."
"Yes!" Kurt squeaks. "Oh my god, Blaine, yes!"

"Really? You want to?"

"Of course I do," Kurt says, somehow bouncing up and down sideways on the bed. "Wow. Yes! I mean, I'll miss her, sure, but a week with just us? Like, me, and you, and no one else? Hell yes please!"

"Okay," Blaine laughs, pulling him close and kissing into his neck. "Okay, that's just...yeah...that's made my day. I'll call your dad tomorrow. Oh, but where we go is a surprise, okay? We'll go right after your birthday."

Kurt kisses him sweetly before turning back and encouraging Blaine to spoon around him again. "You're the best husband in the world, you know that?"

"Hmm? Of course I know."

"And when you grin against my shoulder like that it's the cutest thing. Goodnight, old man."

"Night, gorgeous boy."

They're still and quiet for a while until Kurt huffs frustratedly. "Blaine?"

"Can't sleep? Nope, me neither."

"Oh thank god." He rolls onto his back and holds out his arm, and Blaine snuggles in tight, resting his head on his chest.

"Perfect."

"It really is," Kurt laughs, kissing into his hair. "Goodnight again."

"Night," Blaine mumbles, and they're both asleep within minutes.
Things settle down after a few weeks. Libby is happy with her small group of friends, and with Olivia right by her side, naturally. She learns to enjoy kindergarten, but she rarely mentions her family situation other than to those she knows she can trust, and she quickly learns who those people are. It bothers her occasionally, but then she remembers that no one else has a daddy or papa as wonderful as hers and she smiles brightly and continues. Her entire life is pretty much made when her big cousin Maddie asks her to be bridesmaid at her wedding, though it's not until May, and as they're only just in September that's like an eternity to wait. But she does get to fly to Chicago for the weekend with her dad's, and while Blaine is visiting the orchestra, her papa takes her and Maddie shopping for material so he can make all the outfits.

Daddy's birthday comes next, and Miss Hunter helps her to make a card in secret which she proudly hands over. Libby doesn't know if it's the enormous '45 TODAY' or the gold glitter which falls all over the bedspread which makes daddy cry, but she panics until he reassures her he's really crying for how beautiful it is, and did she really write it all by herself? She answers with a very proud yes, and daddy cries again. Libby decides daddy is weird, and quietly asks papa later if he should see a doctor about his leaky eyes.

The day of daddy's birthday is strange for a lot of reasons. Firstly, she still has to go to school, which she doesn't understand at all, because aren't birthdays supposed to be a special day? Secondly, Santana meets her at the bus stop and not one of her dad's, and thirdly Santana tells her they're going to visit grandad, but they drive to the hospital instead.

"Grandad doesn't live here," she says, frowning in confusion. "We don't need the car to go to his house, we can walk."

"Oh crap," Santana moans, then claps a hand over her mouth, her eyes going wide as Libby giggles. "I did not just say that. Don't tell daddy. Okay. Um...grandad is here, sweetie, in the hospital."

"Oh. Is he sick?"

"Kind of. He fell over this morning, so he's staying in the hospital for a little while until he's better."

"Has he got a band aid on?"

"He's got a massive band aid around his head, like this," Santana says, gesturing in a ring around her forehead. "Come on, let's go laugh at him, he'll be waiting to see your smile."

But Libby finds it hard to smile when she sees her grandad sitting up in the bed. His white hair sticks up all funny from the bandage, and there's a needle in his hand with a tube attached, which is pumping some stuff into his arm. He smiles and holds his arms out, but when she starts to run to him daddy tells her she must be careful. His hug is all wobbly, and when Libby sits on the bed next to him she notices his skin is almost see through. She's happy when grandma and grandpa arrive; she knows she can tell grandma about the see through skin because she's a nurse and she can make it better. But when grandma takes her to the bathroom and Libby informs her that grandad's skin is going see through, Carole crouches down and takes both her hands.

"Libby? Grandad is...well, he's very old, darling. When people get old their skin gets thinner, that's all."
"Yours isn't."

"Not yet," Carole laughs, hugging her tight. "Grandpa and I aren't quite as old as grandad. But that's all it is, okay? You mustn't worry. He's still the same grandad."

"He's not," Libby says shaking her head. "He's not the same. Sometimes I tell him things and then he forgets. Like I telled him I had a new Snow White top, but when I weared it to his house, he asked if it was new."

"Yes, well...grandad...as I said, he's getting old, sweetie. And his brain doesn't work quite as well as it did. But he still knows lots of stuff, and one thing he definitely knows is how much he loves you, as we all do, okay?"

Libby nods, satisfied, and takes Carole's hand once more and they walk back down the corridor together. They find her dads and her uncle Cooper and aunt Clare standing outside the door to his room, and Libby runs to them happily.

"Uncle Cooper, guess what?" she cries.

"What, squirt?" he asks, picking her up and kissing her cheek.

"Santana picked me up from the bus today."

"That's fun, huh? Maybe I will one day, would you like that?"

"Yes!" Libby squeals excitedly, clapping her hands.

"Okay, well I'll talk to daddy about it. Now you run back inside while the grown ups talk. Grandad is waiting for you."

She heads back in the room with Carole, and Blaine sighs heavily and leans back against the wall.

"So."

"So Blaine, let's level here," Cooper tells him. "He needs to go in a home."

"Ugh."

"Blaine, you two call in twice a day. Santana takes him to the senior center three times a week, Rachel does all his washing, Kathy cooks his meals and Wes and Sebastian keep his house up together...and still he fell. Even if Clare and I were to sell and move to Westerville we still couldn't provide the level of care he needs. I think we need to be realistic here."

"I know, I know," Blaine groans, rubbing his face wearily. "But I just... I don't want to let mom down," he whispers, shaking his head sadly. "If she were still here she'd be bustling around after him..."

"But she would be living with him twenty four seven," Clare says gently.

"He could live with us?" Blaine tries.

"If that's the route you wanted to take we would support you," Clare says warily. "And of course we would absolutely move here. But I think you have to consider Libby here. To be totally blunt, his dementia is getting worse, and it's only going to become more upsetting for her to be around that all the time."

"I agree," Cooper interjects. "Far better for him to be properly cared for in a retirement home. You
can visit as often as you like, and as he deteriorates you can both make the decision whether to take Libby regularly or not."

"Don't talk about him like that," Blaine snaps. "He might have dementia but he's not dead and buried. Why would I stop him from seeing Libby?"

"No one suggested that," Kurt says calmly. "Honey, if you want him to live with us then that's fine, but I am going to tell you right now that it will be very tough on all of us. You can forget us going on vacation, we wouldn't be able to leave all his personal care to dad or Santana. Going out for dinner on a whim, all of us heading to Chicago for a weekend...it'll all have to stop. That makes me sound incredibly selfish, I realize, but I also know your dad would hate to be a burden to us, and I think everyone will be happier if he's in a home...including him."

"I just feel so unkind. Like I'm abandoning him."

"I know, Blaine, I know." Kurt folds him into his arms as he cries, but he feels the soft nod against his shoulder, and flicks his gaze to Cooper as confirmation, who sighs as he rubs his brothers back with one hand and holds his wife with the other.

"We'll find the best place, okay?" Cooper says as encouragingly as he can. "And you know, you can still visit twice a day, still take him out... This isn't the end, and you mustn't look at it as that. Look on it as another chapter in his very long and varied life."

Blaine doesn't answer, just burrows deeper into Kurt's collar and takes his brother's hand, squeezing it tightly.

"C'mon," Clare says with a firm, guiding hand on both their backs. "Dry your eyes for now, he'll be wondering where we've got to."

"Finally!" Mike says when they all enter the room. "I need one of you boys to take me home."

"Your dad's getting a little anxious," Carole whispers with a soft hand on Blaine's arm. "Just go steady."

"Uh...dad, you can't go home," Blaine says, sitting on the bed and taking his hand as Cooper hovers anxiously near his shoulder. "You need to stay in for a few days just so the doctors can keep an eye on you, okay? When they say you're strong enough we'll start talking about um...leaving the hospital."

"No, no," Mike says, shaking his head and pulling back the covers. "Sara will be waiting, she doesn't know where I am."

There's a sharp intake of breath from Blaine, and he feels his brother's hand clamp down on him tightly. Opposite, Kurt exchanges worried glances with Clare and Carole while Burt holds Libby on his lap and Santana tries to distract her with games on her phone. "No dad," Blaine starts, but Carole gives a small shake of her head and he clears his throat and tries again. "Um...try not to worry," he says, his voice shaking with tears. "Everything's being taken care of."

Mike scans the room, a frown on his face before his eyes settle on his son-in-law. "Kurt? Can you tell Sara I'm in the hospital? She'll be worried."

"Sure," he smiles, patting his hand. "I'm right on it."

"So you know who Kurt is?" Cooper asks, which makes Mike roll his eyes at him.
"Of course I do. I might be old, but I'm not stupid."

"Do you know who all these people are?"

"Yes," Mike says slowly. "Why? Don't you? Do you want me to name them?"

"Actually, yes," Cooper nods.

Mike sighs, wriggles about a bit and folds his arms. "Fine. There's Burt, Carole, Santana. Blaine, you, Kurt, Clare and of course, my darling little Libby," he smiles as Burt lets her run to him.

"That's great," Cooper smiles. "And do you know where you live?"

"Cooper, are you quite well?" Mike asks with concern. "You know where I live, you've been there enough times. I live on Somerton Drive. You must remember that? I moved not long after your mom passed."

"Okay. I'm..." Cooper holds his hands up in mock defeat. "Yeah, I'm dumb. Sorry, dad. Um..." Turning to Carole he whispers "Help?" as she shrugs.

"You just have to go with it," she whispers back. "His mind is scrambled right now, and he's had a blow to the head, don't forget."

"Grandad?" Libby asks sweetly. "Guess what? When I gived daddy his birthday card he cried because it was so pretty."

"That's nice darling," he smiles. "When was that?"

"This morning," she nods. "Because it's his birthday."

Mike looks perplexed for a moment, then looks up to find a whole sea of faces watching him with concern. Turning, he grasps Blaine's hands. "It's your birthday?" he asks in a horrified whisper. "Today?"

"Um...yes."

"Hey, Libby, come with me," Burt urges. "I'm sure I saw a vending machine down the hall." Carole and Burt quickly depart and Santana stands and collects her purse before walking over to Mike and kissing his forehead.

"I'm gonna take Libby back to yours," she whispers to Kurt. "I have a key."

"I'd be worried if you didn't," he says, but he kisses the back of her hand gratefully.

"I didn't know it was your birthday," Mike says in a small voice as he grips Blaine's hand tightly. "I didn't know..." he trails off, shaking his head as his eyes swim with tears and he stares at the bed sheets. "What's happening to me?" he whispers. "What's happening, Blaine? I'm frightened."

"Oh god," Blaine moans, bowing his head briefly before looking his dad square in the eye. "Dad... Um..."

"I have Alzheimer's, don't I?"

"You're showing signs of dementia," Blaine says as kindly as he possibly can. "But you also hit your head when you fell today, so you might be a little confused after that."
"I fell?"

"You did," Blaine nods.

"Oh." The room is filled with a sad silence as Kurt looks over to his husband, and Clare looks at hers, both wanting to take their loved ones in their arms but knowing they have to be strong for the moment, to play it off as a trivial matter, when in reality both Blaine and Cooper look as if their world is crumbling. "I'm sorry I forgot your birthday," Mike says after a while. "I didn't mean to."

"I know," Blaine nods.

Cooper sits next to his brother on the bed and places his hand on top of theirs. "Hey dad? When you're better we'll let you take us all out for dinner to celebrate, okay?"

"Yes," Mike agrees and actually manages a smile. "I'd like that." But then he sighs heavily, and reaches his other hand out to let his frail fingers graze over their cheeks in turn. "Oh my boys," he sighs. "I don't want to forget you. I'm scared I won't remember who you are, but if that happens you must know that I don't mean it, okay? I will always keep you in my heart. I don't want to forget."

Both brothers nod, not trusting their voices to speak, but Kurt breaks the silence in his own inimitable style with "I dunno, you might be quite grateful," which has everyone, including Mike, laughing.

"Ah Kurt. You've always been my favorite," he grins as he reaches across for his hand. "And Clare," he says, smiling up at her. "The daughter I never had... And the only one of my children who's not a little bit gay."

"Excuse me?" Cooper cries. "I'm married with two children."

"Meh. Still a little bit gay," Mike teases, and settles back against the pillows as the debate between the four of them rages across him.

He knows, of course. He's no fool. He knows this situation will get worse, and he feels torn because of it. When Sara first passed he thought he might prefer to go too, but the last five years have brought with them huge amounts of joy, and though there's still a huge hole in his life without his wife by his side, he's generally enjoyed his lot. But now...he's not so sure he wants to stick around to become the drooling man in the corner who can't even remember he has two sons, much less a son and daughter in-law and grandchildren. 'Please don't let me be a burden,' he prays silently to a god he's not entirely sure he believes in. 'Whatever happens from now on, please don't let me be a burden.'

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"He's gonna go soon, isn't he?" Blaine asks later that night. Libby is tucked up in bed after what she deems to be a very exciting evening eating pizza with everyone, and what Kurt and Blaine deem to be one of the most emotionally exhausting days they've had for a long time. They had retired to their room as soon as their family had left, and Blaine now sits cross legged on the bed as Kurt moves around the room, packing a small case for his overnight trip to New York which he is leaving for in the morning.

"Not necessarily," he offers. "The fall wasn't that bad, no broken bones or anything. He's still quite sprightly for a man of his age."

"He's tired," Blaine says simply. "He doesn't want to live like this, not now he knows what's
"Blaine, listen to me," Kurt says, kneeling on the bed and taking his hands. "If you really feel this way, then please, have him to live here with us. I don't mind."

"No, no, that's not..."

"I probably sounded a little reluctant at the hospital, and I didn't mean to."

"No, really, I thought you and Clare spoke a lot of sense. It's just hard, you know? I don't know which is better, having someone snatched away from you like mom was, or watching the life slowly ebb away from someone like dad."

"Well neither is preferable, but I really don't think you should write him off just yet. I don't think he's going to be here in five years time, necessarily, but neither do I think he's going to be gone within a week. Just...try really hard to enjoy the time we do have with him. Look how much he enjoyed seeing Libby today, and he'll be thrilled tomorrow when Maddie and Taylor go to visit. My suggestion is that we focus now on finding him the best retirement home we can, and then we annoy him constantly by visiting every day. And stop worrying," he says, smooshing Blaine's face in his hands. "He's still more than capable of a good joke, as we all saw earlier."

"You're right. You're always right."

"I know," Kurt shrugs, kissing the tip of his nose. "Now, are you sure it's okay for me to go tomorrow? Or would you rather I stay here? I can postpone, you know. It's easy enough."

"No, no, you go. Honestly. I'll go to the hospital when Libby's at school, but I'll leave him to have the afternoon with Maddie and Tay. I think we'll all go out for dinner in the evening."

"Okay. Well, I'll be home Friday at three, and hopefully things will be stable enough for us to have date night. Now. It's your birthday...."

"Yeah?"

"And I haven't given you your gift yet."

"You gave me new running shoes this morning. And you made me another suit," Blaine points out. "Do you realize nearly my entire closet is Kurt Anderson originals now?"

"That's the idea," he grins. "Anyway, buying any kind of running shoes is a hideous ordeal, let alone bright yellow ones. They don't count as your present, and neither does the suit. I had something else in mind if you wanted to?"

Blaine falls back on the bed in sheer delight. "You're gonna rim me?"

"I usually do, on your birthday."

"Thank you Jesus."

"You should be thanking me, not him," Kurt laughs as he straddles his thighs. "Now strip."

* 

Kurt flies to New York early the next morning where he spends the day meeting with his team and checking on the progress of the Wizard of Oz costumes. He's introduced to Peter Schubert- owner of a large number of Broadway theatres and someone Kurt has wanted to work with for a number
of years—over dinner that night and they seem to get along well, prompting him to call Blaine the second he's back in the hotel and flail loudly. A few more meetings the next day and then he's back in his husband's arms where he belongs, and along with Cooper and Clare they set about finding the right place for Mike's future care.

They settle on Elmhurst for a number of reasons. Firstly, they specialize in Alzheimer's care. Secondly, the grounds are beautiful and residents are actively encouraged to help tend the garden if they can, and Mike—allowed out from hospital to visit—likes that idea. Thirdly, they encourage family participation in all aspects of care and when Blaine runs through the enormous list of who would be visiting and involved in looking after his dad, they warmly welcome his thoughts, and finally, and perhaps the most important of all, they get Mike's sense of humor.

It's a sad day when they move him into his new apartment. Blaine and Cooper can see how much the two week stay in hospital has aged him, and how vulnerable and frail he now appears. Mike for his part, seems oddly accepting of his fate, though he does get confused and think he's moving in with Finn and Rachel, however many times Finn tells him he's just helping to carry his furniture. In the end it is Santana who ushers everyone away, knowing that Blaine would linger late into the evening if she let him, but she also knows he needs to go home and cry in his husband's arms for a while, so along with Rachel, she takes Libby to the diner for burgers and milkshakes, and when she drops her home Blaine is red eyed but happier, and he bathes Libby, reads The Lonely Fire Truck and turns out her light.

"I like grandad's new house," Libby tells him as he kneels by her little white bed. "It's like a little house inside a big house, isn't it?"

"Yes it is," Blaine smiles. "I think he'll be happy there."

"And you, daddy? Will you be happy with him there?"

"Well," Blaine sighs, kissing her forehead. "I'm sad he's not around the corner any more. But this new place is on Cooper road, which is kinda funny," he smiles as Libby giggles. "I'm happy grandad is somewhere that can look after him properly, Libby, that's all I want really, is for him to be taken care of. We don't want him falling and hurting himself again, do we?"

"No. And he's a little bit sick, isn't he? Not sick with a cold, sick, but still sick, am I right?"

"Yes, sweetie. You're right."

"He's really old, isn't he?"

"He is," Blaine says, smoothing back her hair from her forehead. "But he's still grandad."

"And he's not as old as you, is he? No one can be as old as forty five."

"Yeah thanks for that," Blaine chuckles, kissing her cheeks. "Goodnight, little lady, sleep tight."

"You're a dinosaur," Kurt whispers as he steps out onto the landing.

"Yeah, completely."

"C'mere." He falls into Blaine's arms willingly, sighing as his head rests in the crook of his neck. "You're a very hot dinosaur," Kurt mumbles against his temple. "You know that?"

"I feel about a hundred and twenty today."
"It's been a long day. Bed? Tub? Tell me what you want to do."

"Actually, I really want to go play for a while, if that's okay? I've kind of been writing this thing and...well..."

"And you need to go write some more. That's fine, I understand," Kurt says, kissing him tenderly. "I'll watch some tv."

"Are you sure? I..."

"Blaine, it's fine," Kurt smiles. "I'll give you an hour then I'll come and molest you while you play."

"Ha! Okay. I'll hold you to it."

And an hour later he arrives, true to his word, leaning over him to unbutton his shirt and run his hands teasingly down his chest, nipping at his neck as Blaine throws his head back and continues to play. He drops a few notes when Kurt's head appears between his legs, unbuttoning his fly before reaching into his underwear to grasp him and tease him until he stops playing completely, lifting his hips for Kurt to tug his pants to his ankles and groaning when he feels his husband's lips around him.

"Oh fuck, Kurt...you always know just what I need."

Kurt looks up through his lashes, and Blaine thrusts deeper into his mouth, staring at the magnificent way in which Kurt sucks him, his pale hands standing out in stark contrast to Blaine's darker thighs, his face now buried deep in his crotch as he takes him deep and swallows around him.

"Daddy?"

A little voice calling out in the hallway has them both scrambling to their feet, Kurt cursing under his breath as he hits his head on the corner of the piano.

"Uh, yes, baby girl?" Blaine calls as he fastens his pants, his voice high pitched and wavering.

"Where are you?"

"In the music room," he calls back, smacking Kurt's arm as he dissolves into uncontrollable laughter.

"I need to pee."

"Oh for the love of..." Blaine starts, but smiles sweetly when she appears on the doorway clutching her bear. "Couldn't you take yourself? You usually do, and the bathroom is right across the hall."

"There's a spider in the tub, that's why I didn't call for papa."

"Hey!" Kurt objects. "Papa can deal with spiders."

Libby laughs, her little hands covering her mouth. "No you can't," she giggles. "You can only kiss daddy all the time," she says dramatically, hands on hips. "He's supposed to be practicing his music, you know."

"Yeah, Kurt, I'm supposed to be practicing my music," Blaine says, rolling his eyes at Libby as Kurt snorts. "Honestly. Go on up, darling, I'll follow in two seconds."
She skips off happily and he turns to grab Kurt by the waist and they laugh, pressing their foreheads together. "Get naked and wait for me in bed," Blaine whispers. "And we're locking that door."

"Oh Blaine," Kurt says, wiping away tears of laughter. "I really cannot wait for our vacation."
"Scotland?" Kurt shrieks excitedly.

"Yes." Blaine grins, pulling him into his arms and tugging his earlobe between his teeth. "And we are now officially on vacation, even though we're still standing in the airport, and I'm gonna kiss you every damn chance I get."

"I've always wanted to go to Scotland," Kurt carries on, entirely oblivious. "Where are we staying? Is the hotel near Edinburgh? Because they have pandas at their zoo. I've never seen pandas, Blaine. I wanna see the pandas!"

"We're not staying in a hotel," Blaine breathes into his ear. "We're staying in a cozy little cottage on the banks of Loch Lomond, with open fires and a fully stocked wine cellar, where we can get really, really loud and no one can hear us."

"Okay, but is it near the pandas?"

Blaine laughs, letting his head drop forward onto Kurt's shoulder in defeat. "It's about two hours from the pandas, I think, so yes, we can visit."

"Ooh, yay!"

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Their flight is long, but totally worth it when they land on a crisp and bright fall morning, and Blaine sets about hiring a car to drive them to the cottage. They bicker as all old married couples do over directions and the ability of Blaine to actually drive stick and on the wrong side of the road, but eventually they navigate their way to cottage successfully, and moody, tired and grouchy Kurt disappitates to leave behind happy, sparkly eyed and wondrous Kurt, who stands out the back of the cottage in complete awe while Blaine unloads their suitcases before following him outside.

"Well?"

"It's beautiful," Kurt breathes, holding his arms out wide. The loch stretches in front of them, calm and clear, and the mountains behind. It is cold enough that they can see their breath on the late October air but it's perfect. Completely serene, totally quiet and entirely relaxing, they stand side by side just appreciating the idyllic scenery for a while until Kurt's fingers find Blaine's and squeeze tightly. "Thank you," he says sincerely. "This is the most amazing gift."

"Anything for you," Blaine smiles. "I'm glad you like it. So...what D'you wanna do? I mean, we need to go pick up some food somewhere, and call Libby before she goes to school, but other than that, the day is entirely ours."

"I don't think we've had one of those for a very long time," Kurt smiles, turning to kiss his cheek. "Let's go get the food, then take a walk."

By the time they return from grocery shopping, laden down with all the spicy, indulgent and luxurious food that Libby doesn't like, including plenty of salmon, Kurt realizes she will be awake and getting ready for school so they call quickly, both lighting up when they put her on speaker and her little voice comes through.

"Papa? Guess what? Grandma lets me stay up until eleven thirty."
"Oh does she?" Kurt laughs. "I see."

"Um...more like seven fifteen!" Carole calls out.

"It was eleven thirty," Libby says firmly. "And also, I know what I want to be for Halloween."

"Well do tell, little lady," Kurt says, "and I'll get to work right away when we return."

"A lesbian."

"Excuse me? A what?" Kurt asks, not daring to look at Blaine who is beside himself with laughter.

"A lesbian. I went to the store with grandpa, and Sebastian was there. I heard him and grandpa talking about Santana and then Bas said lesbians are the funniest thing, and I like to make Bas laugh, so I wanna be a lesbian."

"Um..." Is as much as Kurt manages before he is seized with a huge fit of laughter which he can hear echoed by Burt and Carole back in Ohio. Blaine is still useless, doubled up in the corner of the couch with tears rolling down his cheeks, and laughing still harder when Libby speaks again.

"Papa? Daddy? What's funny? Are you even still there?"

"We're here," Blaine squeaks, still trying to breathe. "Um...sweetie, you can't...uh... Being a lesbian isn't a fancy dress option."

"Santana is one."

"Yes, and I'm gay too, baby girl, the same as papa, Nick, Jeff, Sebastian, Brittany and Aunt Rachel's daddies. It's all the same, honey. It just means we like the same sex rather than the opposite one...like the guys like guys and the girls like girls. Lesbian is just a word for a girl who likes other girls."

"Oh. So I'm a lesbian?"

"It's probably a little too early to tell yet, my darling," Blaine smiles. "You'll know more when you're bigger. It's different to liking girls as friends. I like girls as friends too, but I wouldn't want to kiss them like I kiss papa."

"Oh!" Libby cries, as everything slots into place. "So you're gay because you like to make papa go all smiley and pink in the face, and Santana is a lesbian because she kisses Brittany."

"That's it exactly," Blaine agrees, proud of his little girl.

"So what does that make Wes and Kathy?"

"Boring," Kurt calls out, yelping when Blaine kicks him.

"We call them straight," Blaine says sensibly.

On the other end of the line, Libby scrunches up her nose as she thinks. "That really does sound boring."

"Okay, well...I think I'll let grandpa handle that side of things," Blaine grins. "And I'll let you get ready for school."

"So there's no lesbian costume?"
"No, baby."

"Oh." She sounds disappointed for a moment, and she's quiet, obviously thinking. "Papa?"

"Yes, Libby?"

"Can I be a mermaid instead?"

*

"Oh my god Blaine, this is beautiful!" Kurt cries. "The view is amazing, you have to come see!"

"I'm good," Blaine laughs. "Just be thankful you managed to get me up the hill to begin with."

"It's a mountain," Kurt argues as he looks down at the valley spread out below them.

"No, Kurt, that's a mountain," Blaine says, pointing across to where a huge mountain rises, its peak disappearing into the clouds. "This is a hill. A big, steep hill, with viscous rock surfaces," he says, rubbing his bruised shins. "But a hill nonetheless."

"It's wonderful, isn't it?"

"Yeah," Blaine smiles, settling down to sit on a large rock. "It is."

"We should go back down."

"What? Why? It's taken us nearly two hours to climb the damn thing, I'm not turning around and going right back down! Let's just sit here for a while. You can appreciate the view and I'll appreciate you."

Kurt smiles, settling down next to him and accepting the bottle of water Blaine offers. "It's weird isn't it? Having all this time?"

"A nice weird, I hope."

"Definitely." He leans back as Blaine puts an arm about his shoulders. "I mean, it's not like we've been needing it, but now we have it, it makes me realize how precious it is. Time, I mean. Just you and me."

"You're happy though, right? Like, with us? Our life?"

"Extraordinarily so," Kurt says, reaching for his hand and locking their fingers together. "When I first met you, all I ever dared hope for in my life was to experience love just once. I used to dream, as any kid does, of having this happy home life, with a handsome husband and adorable child...but I never actually thought I'd get it."

"Oh please," Blaine scoffs.

"Don't do yourself down," Kurt says kindly, kissing his fingertips. "You swept me off my feet and gave me all I've ever dreamed of."

"Did you think that you'd have been married nine years when you were only thirty?"

"Nope. Wanna hear something?"

"Sure."
"I remember, the first time you told me you loved me. That night, when we had...um..."

"Grinded? Oh fuck Kurt, don't make me horny at the top of a mountain," Blaine whines.

"It's a hill," Kurt teases. "And this isn't about the grinding anyway, as nice as that was. I wonder if we could still get each other off like that?" he thinks aloud while Blaine groans and adjusts himself.

"I'm right here if you wanna try."

"Ha! No. Well...maybe, but not on the top of a mountain...hill...thing. Anyway. That night, when you went to take a shower, I lay in your bed, heart still beating wildly after my first ever orgasm from somebody else...and it was you."

"Huh?"

"I could only think of you. Not like 'oh my god someone else just got me off,' but 'oh my god Blaine just got me off.' And I just knew that I'd never want anyone else to do that to me. Only you, forever."

"Good job I stuck around then."

"It is rather," Kurt chuckles, looking up from the comfort of Blaine's shoulder to seek out his lips, kissing him gently. "How I love you."

"I love you too. And now we have a daughter who wants to dress as a lesbian on Halloween."

They both laugh, their foreheads pressed together as they look into one another's eyes and think of their little girl. "She's amazing, isn't she?" Kurt whispers, his laughter subsiding.

"She really is."

It is nearing dark by the time they make it back to the cottage, and Kurt falls wearily through the front door and collapses into an armchair. "Fifty miles," he groans. "My legs feel like lead."

"Try eight miles," Blaine laughs, swatting him on the head with his gloves as he passes. "It was fun. And hey, I get to be all British and ask if you want a cup of tea?"

"Yes please. You're very sprightly," Kurt notices, watching him bound around the small kitchen. "How?"

"I know I'm gonna get laid tonight," he grins.

"Not a chance."

"What?" Blaine cries desperately. "No fair! I've brought you on vacation and everything!"

"Yeah, and now my muscles hurt."

"Go take a bath then. I'll get the fire going and fix dinner."

"I don't go in the tub without you," Kurt pouts. "I don't like it."

"Okay...I'll come up when I've sorted the fire."

That seems to do it for Kurt, who suddenly bounds up the stairs two at a time, knowing full well
Blaine will happily massage his aching legs in the water. Which he does, of course - and tries for more - but Kurt bats him away playfully, telling him food takes precedence over sex, and once they're dressed in lounge pants and soft sweaters, he leads him back down the stairs. "So let's not even bother cooking," Blaine says cheerfully. "Let's just get all the food we have and set it out on the rug, like a picnic."

"Even the steaks?"

"I'm not even going to dignify that with an answer," Blaine remarks, watching as Kurt flops into an armchair. "Oh. I'll do it then."

"Thanks."

Blaine laughs to himself and gets busy in the kitchen, and pretty soon they're sitting on the large rug in front of the fireplace, toasting each other with wine and eyeing all the food laid out in front of them.

"It doesn't feel like a picnic, we haven't got our teddy bears," Kurt smiles, thinking of all the picnics they've shared in the yard with Libby.

"Kurt and Blaine bears are keeping our bed warm back home."

"Good. Oh!" Kurt's eyes light up as Blaine hands a small dish out to him. "Olives!"

"Not just any olives," Blaine says happily, popping one into Kurt's mouth.

"Garlic stuffed! Oh my god Blaine, I love you!"

"And we can eat as many as we like without Libby shrieking about us eating gross slimy green eyeballs, or moaning that our breath stinks."

"Hmm. I think I could get used to this. There's prosciutto too."

"We always have that."

"I know," Kurt says as he piles it on his plate. "But usually Lib eats the lot."

They're silent as they eat, not really needing to keep conversation flowing in a silence as happy and relaxed as this one. They still watch each other as they eat though, and Kurt particularly seems to be playing it coy, casting shy, flirtatious glances across at his husband who eventually pauses with a piece of bread halfway to his mouth. "What?"

"Nothing," Kurt smiles, looking down at the food on his plate before looking back up again, in a manner which he knows has been making Blaine swoon for the last fourteen years.

"Are you flirting with me?"

"A little, maybe," he teases. "Is that a problem?"

"Only for my pants." Blaine grins broadly, looking down to try and hide his delight. "You know, having a husband who's thirty is incredibly hot."

"Really?" Kurt lies down on his stomach, pushing his plate to one side and picking up his wine glass. "How so?"

"Because you're hot," Blaine says simply, lying down to mirror his pose so they're face to face.
"You're all manly and...hot. Yeah. I mean, I've always thought you beautiful but when we first met you were still a boy in so many ways. Your face has become leaner, cheekbones more prominent, jaw more pronounced..."

"I've lost weight, you mean."

"No, no, it's not just that. Your body...you've become broader across your shoulders, your waist is more trim...you're a man, that's all. And an exceptionally hot one at that."

"And now who's flirting, huh?" Kurt teases, keeping his eyes firmly fixed on Blaine as he sips his wine.

"Hmm."

"So tell me..." Kurt says playfully, still watching Blaine over the rim of his glass. "If we met for the first time tonight, in a random bar in Scotland, what would you say to me?"

"Have you been to Edinburgh zoo? This crazy guy I know tells me they have pandas."

"Oh haha," Kurt says dryly. "Come on now, play the game."

"Okay," Blaine thinks for a while. "Well, I probably wouldn't say anything. I'd just sit at the other end of the bar, watching you and hoping you'd notice me and come over. Then I'd leave, full of regret and remorse before returning again the following week and hoping you'd be there. Rather like how it actually happened, I guess."

"Except you spoke to me."

"I did," Blaine nods. "But I wouldn't now."

"Why?" Kurt asks, genuinely curious.

"You're too confident. That's not...I don't mean too confident but you're too confident to be the type of guy I would approach," Blaine clarifies. "I spoke to you that first night in the Lima Bean because...well...your eyes, actually. They drew me in, made me want to hear you, to see the way your lips moved as you formed words. But also, you were vulnerable, open and on display. You're not now. And that's not a bad thing, it's just that with age has come the ability to...to...know how to present yourself, if you will. And if we were strangers, and you were single, you'd know how to hold yourself with that quiet, calm assurance you have...an almost aloofness that to me, would make you seem unattainable."

"Oh." Kurt is quiet, thinking Blaine's response over before he gives a soft smile- to himself more than anything. "I think I like that," he says after a while. "Because maybe that means I'd chase you."

"Maybe it does," Blaine says evenly. His expression is almost unreadable, but the way he says the words, with a flirtatious hint of lust has Kurt's insides doing cartwheels as he actually blushes and clears his throat.

"So...what if we met in a club?" he asks, sitting up and crossing his legs under him. "Scandals, say. And we were both a little tipsy. Not drunk, but enough to be emboldened. What then?"

"Ah. Well..." Blaine smiles, getting to his feet and finding his phone. "I still wouldn't approach you. Not at first, anyhow. But I'd watch you all night. And of course," he says, standing over Kurt and looking down at him in a way Kurt finds deeply thrilling. "The game has changed now.
Because now we're both adults. And it's okay to want."

"I...it's...uh...yeah," Kurt breathes, reeling for a second when he realizes exactly the feelings Blaine can still elicit in him.

"So you'd be there, dancing. Turning me on, making me want you more and more. And then, just as you were about to leave, I'd stop you and ask for just one dance. Just one," he whispers, holding out his hand.

Kurt takes it, letting Blaine pull him to his feet and into his arms. He sets the phone on the mantle above the fireplace and Kurt laughs quietly, letting his head drop onto Blaine's shoulder briefly.

"When I was your man? Really, Blaine? Is there something you're trying to tell me?"

"No," he chuckles. "It's just this is the only Bruno Mars song I have on my phone, and in my head our first dance is always to Bruno Mars."

"So."

"So," Blaine continues. "I'd dance with you. Holding you, breathing you in," he whispers as he draws Kurt close, his strong hands spreading firmly over his back as they sway together. "Wanting to kiss you, wanting to feel your body pressed against mine."

"Yes," Kurt whimpers, arching his neck for Blaine to scrape his teeth over the sensitive flesh.

"I'd want to mark you. To see the marks I made standing out against your skin, letting everyone know that from that night on, you were mine."

"Blaine." The utterance of his name from Kurt's lips comes out as a strangled moan as he presses himself tighter against him, letting their cocks meet through their thin lounge pants, both of them groaning when they feel how desperately they want each other.

"I'd want to touch you, Kurt," Blaine carries on. "I'd want to undress you slowly, like this," he whispers, pulling his soft sweater gently over his head before removing his own. But he places his hands on Kurt's back again, little fingers just skimming the waistband of his pants, under which Blaine knows neither is wearing underwear. "I'd want to kiss every inch of you, to make you tremble and cry out and then, when you were shaking and begging for more, I'd want to push inside you. To feel you surrounding me as I pleasured you. To watch your face as I pressed deeper and harder, to feel you clench around me as you came with my name on your lips, and..."

"I'd let you," Kurt says softly, his eyes blown to black as he locks on Blaine's hungry gaze. "I'd let you do it all, take it all. Only you. Forever."

Their kiss is fierce, desperate and wanting as Blaine's hands frame Kurt's face, his tongue immediately finding it's way into Kurt's mouth as he whimpers in Blaine's embrace. He gives himself to his husband completely, and Blaine takes control, guiding them both down to their knees and moving his hands to grip Kurt's ass, all the while never breaking their kiss. Kurt's fingers tangle into his curls, tugging hard before the kiss breaks with a gasp from both, and Kurt eagerly throws his head back for Blaine to suck a dark hickey just above his collar bone. He looks up again, deep into Kurt's eyes and he seems to find whatever it is he's looking for because offering the softest of smiles, he pauses to rub their noses together gently before kissing him again, carefully lowering him onto the rug where he settles his weight on top of him.

True to his word, he kisses every inch of Kurt's flawless skin. Because he can, because he wants to and because he's never felt more in love with this man than he does at this moment. He starts with
his lips, teasing with his tongue and nipping with his teeth then giving gentle featherlight kisses to his nose, cheeks, eyelids, forehead and chin. A lingering kiss to the hollow of his throat makes Kurt's breath catch, and he gives a tiny moan when Blaine lets his tongue linger there before kissing across his shoulder and down one arm, kissing each fingertip then doing the same on the other side. Beneath him, Kurt sighs deeply, his own hands running through his beloved curls as Blaine's hands smooth firmly over his chest and his mouth follows. He pauses over each nipple, teasing with his tongue, looking up to see Kurt staring down, breathing heavily and smiling when Blaine winks.

By the time he reaches the waistband of Kurt's lounge pants, Blaine is struggling to contain himself, a part of him just wanting to pin Kurt down and take him, but he resists, kissing his way over his stomach, firm and muscled, before lowering the pants slowly and sucking another mark onto his hipbone. He trails soft kisses over his thighs, knees and ankles, but doesn't go near his toes, having suffered one too many kicks to the face when he's tried to kiss Kurt's sensitive feet over the years. He teases though, pausing with his tongue halfway out, but a warning glare from Kurt then has them both smiling, before Blaine cuts off any laughter by suddenly dropping a kiss to the head of Kurt's cock.

"Oh my..." Kurt gasps as Blaine swirls his tongue around him. "You..." Biting his lip, he stifles a long drawn out moan when Blaine takes him deep in his throat. He can feel his thighs trembling, heat pooling low in his belly and he wants to cry out, to beg Blaine to give him what he's craving, but he trusts his husband, giving himself over to Blaine who sucks him a while before pulling off, coming up to kiss his mouth again, and Kurt doesn't even know when or where he found lube, but suddenly a slick finger is pressing against his entrance and he draws his knees up, letting his legs drop to the side and moaning in quiet relief when Blaine's thumb presses inside. He feels Blaine moving to wriggle out of his pants, and then he's lying down by his side, kissing him again, his eyes shining.

"Here," Blaine whispers, turning Kurt to draw him back against him. Kurt automatically lets his leg hook over his husband's thigh, clutching his hand tightly and holding it over his heart as Blaine slowly pushes inside him. They still, with Blaine dropping a kiss to Kurt's shoulder and they both take the moment to appreciate being together like this, as one. The fire crackles and blazes before them and Blaine starts to move, pressing his forehead to the back of Kurt’s neck as he drives steadily back and forth. The arm he’s lying on reaches up, lacing his fingers with Kurt’s who holds him tightly, the only sounds in the room being their laboured breathing and the fire. The feeling of Kurt all around him overwhelms Blaine. He doesn't focus on anything else. The curve of his neck down to his shoulder, the feel of his back muscles moving against Blaine’s chest, the way his cock rests hard and heavy in his hand as Blaine strokes him closer and closer to the edge until Kurt whispers his name quietly and comes, gasping and moaning and finally reaching around to hold Blaine’s hips as he spills deeply inside him.

Still not a word is spoken for a long time afterwards either. Blaine’s hand finds its way back to rest over Kurt’s heart once more and he withdraws slowly, leaning over to place a soft kiss to the corner of his mouth before settling down behind him and holding him tight.

“Blaine?”

“Hmm?”

“My foot is in the olives.”

Blaine laughs softly, looking down to find Kurt’s toes inside the little dish and olives scattered over the floor. “I’ll buy some more tomorrow.”
“Blaine?”

“You’re lying on the bread?”

“In all the hundreds of times we’ve made love, that has to be the most connected to you that I’ve ever felt.”

He turns then, Kurt, coming to rest almost nose to nose with his husband who gazes at him adoringly before kissing him with so much love and devotion, Kurt feels as if he may cry. “I love you, Kurt Hummel-Anderson,” he whispers. “And I am never letting you go.”

*

“And there were pandas!” Kurt tells Libby excitedly. “Did you know I’ve never seen pandas? I’ve never seen pandas, Lib! Well, now I have. And daddy agrees that you need to see them too, so we thought that next summer we could take you there.”

“Oh!” Libby cries excitedly. “Yay!”

“So you had fun then?” Burt asks, and from his lofty vantage point of the arm of the couch, Kurt smirks at his husband over the top of their daughter’s head.

“Oh yeah,” he says as Blaine blushes hard, thinking of various points in the vacation, like being handcuffed to the bed as Kurt rode him, getting hideously drunk together and getting naked in the hot tub, or being like little kids again and rolling down the big grassy hill together before heading back to the cottage and being very, very adult. “We had fun.”

“Good, I’m glad,” Burt smiles. “As for us....well, we liked seeing this little one every day so much that we’ve decided to retire and move to Westerville.”


“We were hoping you’d say that,” Carole laughs as Blaine hugs her tight. “And you know, we’ll be able to help with your dad too,” she adds, unable to resist stroking his cheek as if her were five and not, in fact, forty five.

“How is he?” Blaine asks, then sighs when the phone rings down the hall.

“It’s okay,” Kurt says, standing. “I’ll go.”

“He’s more forgetful,” Carole says sadly. “But happier, if that makes any sense. He loves seeing Libby, and he certainly still knows who she is, though he seemed surprised that you were married, but that came back to him when we showed him pictures of you and Kurt. He’s also convinced Cooper is a little bit gay.”

“He’s always been convinced Cooper is a little bit gay,” Blaine laughs. “Hey Lib, wanna go visit grandad later?”

“Sure,” she shrugs. “And can we go get me some candy after?”

“It’s Halloween next week, you’ll get a ton of candy,” he laughs. “But if you’re lucky we can go to McDonalds for dinner- because papa and I are feeling far too tired to cook.”

“Hmm. I wonder why?” Burt mumbles, but Blaine is saved from answering by the arrival of Kurt, who looks thoroughly confused.
“Kurt? You okay?” Blaine asks as he sits heavily in the armchair.

“Uh...that was Peter Shubert. The uh...the theatre owner I met in New York?”

“Yeah,” Blaine nods. “I remember. Does he want you for a show?”

“Kind of.”

“Well what does that mean?” Burt huffs. “He either does or he doesn’t.”

“He wants to meet me in New York on Wednesday,” he says quietly. “To interview me.”

“You shouldn't need to interview,” Blaine says indignantly. “You’re the best in the business.”

“That’s what he said,” Kurt continues. “Which is why he’s asking me to interview with a view to working with him exclusively. And by that I mean Kurt Anderson would design for shows that played in his theatres only. He wants to buy me out.”

“He wants...”Blaine starts, then stops as his blood runs cold. “He doesn't want you to move to New York though, right? I mean...”

“Yes, Blaine, that’s exactly what he wants me to do.”
"You're not going to take it though, right?" Burt booms loudly as Kurt sits, stunned. "I mean, you can't move to New York, you just can't. Can you?"

"No...no..." Kurt whispers as he stares into the distance. "That's not...no. No. It's not possible and I wouldn't... No."

"Would you want to sell your company though?" Carole asks with concern as she realizes he is obviously giving very serious thought to something.

"Um... I don't know," he admits, looking up to find all three adults staring at him. "If-if there was some way for me to stay here and still....I don't know. Maybe. We need to talk about it," he says, looking at Blaine imploringly, but his husband keeps his face entirely neutral.

"Okay, honey," Carole says, patting his hand. "Well, we're going to leave you alone to do just that."

"What?" Burt asks, annoyed when Carole ushers him to his feet. "I wanna know the outcome."

"I'm sure you will in due course," she says, rolling her eyes. "Come along."

"Um...thank you," Blaine says, getting to his feet and hugging them both. "Thank you for looking after Libby. Lib, sweetie, what do you say?"

"Thank you grandma and grandpa," she says dutifully. "I had fun. I can't wait til you live near so I can see you all the time."

"Me too, Libby," Burt smiles, swinging her up high and kissing her cheeks. "Gosh, you know, you look so much like your papa."

"I know, grandpa, you tell me everyday."

There's a resounding silence when they've gone and Blaine closes the door behind them. Libby charges down the hall to her playroom to look over her many gifts from her daddies, and Kurt still sits in the armchair, staring into space as he chews his lip thoughtfully. Blaine watches him from the doorway before heading over to him and crouching down, resting his chin on the arm of the chair. "Hey."

"Hey."

It is only then that Blaine notices Kurt is crying, silent tears that seem to escape against Kurt's will everytime he blinks, though he does nothing to move them, just letting them fall slowly and steadily.

"Kurt, darling? Why are you crying?"

"Because...I...oh, I don't know," he sighs. "Jet lag, probably."

"You wish you could say yes, don't you?"

Turning to look at Blaine, he lets his fingers graze his cheek, smiling at him before he leans down and kisses his lips gently. "I love you," he whispers. "I had the best time with you last week and now it's back to this. To work, and pressures and making decisions and...and I don't want to."
"So let's not, for now. Let's spend time with Libby, and once she's in bed tonight we can talk a bit more. It gives time for the idea to linger in your head, and you might have a clearer idea about how to proceed."

"Thank you," he whispers.

"Papa?" Libby arrives, decked out in pearls, a feather boa and tiara. "I was thinking... Can I be a panda for Halloween?"

"Sure you can, baby girl," he smiles, holding out his arms for her to climb onto his lap. "You can be whatever you want to be."

"But not a lesbian," she says with a frown.

"Oh dear. Um...no, if you want to be a lesbian, sweetie, you go ahead. It's just that there isn't a specific costume I can make for that."

"Can I be a lesbian panda?"

"If you like, Libby, yes," Kurt says, feeling better as he laughs.

"Hey Lib, you wanna go see grandad?" Blaine asks.

"Can I wear my jewels?"

"If you must."

"I must," she says decisively. "I'll go find my shoes."

"Come on then," Blaine says, standing and offering Kurt his hand. "I promised Libby we could go to McDonald's for dinner."

"Ugh," Kurt grumbles. "I hate McDonalds."

"No you don't," Blaine laughs, wrapping his arms around him from behind and walking him toward the door. "You always say you do, and then we'll get there and you'll order a Big Mac and fries and eat the lot."

"I know," Kurt sighs. "But I like to keep up the pretence."

*

The day is a struggle. Too many expectations maybe, on their behalfs at being reunited with Libby, plus the stress of Kurt's phone call and an upsetting visit with Blaine's dad means that gradually things descend into chaos ending with a naked and uncompromising Libby lying flat on her back in the kitchen refusing to get in the bath.

"No, no, no!" she screams. "I'm not going in and you can't make me!"

"Yes, I Can," Blaine huffs out through gritted teeth as he tries once again to pick up the writhing mass of limbs.

"I'm not having a bath and I'm not going to bed!"

"Libby, why are you being like this?" Kurt pleads. "I thought you'd be happy we were home. I thought you'd be a good girl."
"I am a good girl!" she yells.

"That's debatable," Blaine mutters angrily as he manages to haul her over his shoulder. "And while we're on the subject, don't ask me to take you to McDonalds again for a very long time."

"I hate McDonalds!"

"Yes, well, you would, wouldn't you?" Kurt says dryly as he follows them up the stairs to the bathroom. "I'd say it's a pretty safe bet that McDonald's hates you too."

"Mean papa!" she shouts, her tiny fists trying to hit at him while Blaine struggles to hold onto her.

"Libby I am really reaching my limit right now." Blaine snaps. He gets her in the bathroom only to discover she now won't let go, clinging onto him so tight that Kurt has to prise her fingers from his shoulders while Blaine attempts to unlock her legs. "I don't want to yell at you, young lady but I'm about to if you don't get in that damn tub!"

With one mighty heave he manages to wrestle her into the water, where she jumps up and down, screaming and splashing water everywhere. "It's cold! It's cold! It's..."

"It is NOT COLD!"

Blaine stares at Kurt in surprise, never having heard him yell at Libby before, and having fully expected it to be him who lost his temper first, not Kurt. "It is not cold," Kurt repeats again, quieter this time as Libby stops screaming and looks at him with wide eyes. "It might be a little cooler than usual, because you've spent the last ten minutes rolling around in the kitchen for no reason at all, but it is not cold. Now please, just let daddy wash your hair and then you can get out and go to bed."

"I don't wanna go to bed," she pouts.

"I really don't care," Kurt tells her, handing Blaine the shampoo. "What you want became irrelevant when you started yelling and kicking."

"You yelled too."

"You know what, Libby?" Blaine tries as he attempts to wet her hair. "If I'd spoken to your grandad the way you speak to papa when I was five? He'd have spanked me and sent me to my room."

"If you spank me I won't never love you again, daddy, not ever."

"I won't spank you," he says evenly. "And grandad never had to spank me either. Wanna know why? Because I was a good boy, that's why. Now stop this silly fuss, please, so we can finish this bath and forget all about it. I don't want you to go to bed feeling sad, and I don't think you want that either, do you?"

"No, daddy."

"Good. Well, when you're ready, you can apologize to me and papa."

"Won't never be ready."

"Well that's very sad," Kurt tells her, passing Blaine the conditioner, grateful that Libby is at least allowing her hair to be washed now. "Because if you don't say sorry then we can't move on. And that means no trick or treating at the weekend, no trips to Chicago to see Riccardo, no family
vacations.... Oh dear," he sighs dramatically, feeling sure an apology will come, but it doesn't. Libby sticks her tongue out at him instead, and though they both reprimand her, there's really not a lot they can do when they both know Kurt does it to Blaine all the time just to make Libby laugh.

"Right, we're done here," Blaine announces, standing up. "Grab a towel, Lib."

But Libby doesn't just grab one towel; she grabs the whole stack of towels that are piled on the shelf, dumping them, and all the bottles she can find, in the bath water then stands with her hands on her hips and glares at them both. "I did not want to have a bath."

"You..." Blaine starts, but Kurt swoops in and plucks her from the water and carries her - still dripping wet - down the hall to her room, setting her firmly on her feet. Silently, he leaves the room, returning with the one solitary dry towel, which he puts around her shoulders.

"I am incredibly angry at the way you are acting right now," he says firmly. "You can stay in here and think about your behavior while daddy and I clean up. I am extremely disappointed that you've chosen to behave this way, Libby. I don't know why you're being like this, but I do know you haven't been behaving this way for grandma and grandpa because they told me you were really good. Now I'm coming back in five minutes and I will expect an apology. If you're still not prepared to say sorry, then I mean it, there will be no trick or treating and I will not change my mind."

"Jesus fucking Christ save me from the devil child," he whispers to Blaine when he returns from the bathroom. "I mean seriously, what the hell?"

"I know," he shrugs, surveying the wreck of the room and the bathtub filled with soaking wet blue and white towels. "I just....yeah. I don't know what the hell's gotten into her."

"I have never seen her like this. The way she yelled at that McDonald's employee because she didn't like her happy meal toy? I've never been more embarrassed."

"And then she dumped her milkshake over the table."

"I know," Kurt sighs, kneeling down next to him as they start to wring water from towels. "I thought it was an accident at first, then she shook the cup to make sure it was empty and I realized she had done it on purpose."

"Do you think it was dad?" Blaine asks fearfully. "I mean..."

"No," Kurt shakes his head, pausing to rub one hand over Blaine's back. "Carole is right, it's not great for us to see him like this, but he's really happy. Libby too. He still knows who she is, he's always pleased to see her, and he plays games with her. What's not to like? It's only upsetting for us, to see him so forgetful. But for him, in many ways, this is better than it was in the beginning, because now he really doesn't know what's happening to him."

"He looked blank when I mentioned Chicago, did you notice? We lived there for years. How can he not remember?"

"He just can't, my darling, that's all," Kurt soothes, kissing his forehead. "I know it's hard."

"I'm frightened I'll end up the same," Blaine admits. "And you'll be stuck with this drooling old man who thinks it's the nineties and you haven't even been born yet."

"Blaine, I will always be right by your side and I will always care for you no matter what, okay? You can put all those fears to rest because I promise you, I will never stop loving you, and I'll take
care of you no matter what the future holds."

"I love you." He lets his head drop onto Kurt's shoulder, who holds him tight and kisses into his hair.

"I love you too," he whispers. "Now let's go get miss grumpy pants into bed."

Both are expecting to find Libby still standing in her towel, but when they enter her room she is sitting up in bed, dressed in her pajamas and trying to brush her own hair. She looks very contrite as Blaine switches on her night light and gathers her towel, while Kurt takes the brush from her without a word and finishes her hair.

"I'm very sorry," Libby eventually offers in a small voice. "I didn't mean to be naughty."

"Thank you," Blaine says, kneeling by her bed to take her hand. "And I would appreciate it if you never behaved like that again. You will be helping me to clean the bathroom tomorrow, okay?"

She nods, her bottom lip trembling before she bursts into tears and Kurt scoops her into his arms, kissing into her hair. Blaine joins them on the bed, putting his arms around them both. "Shh, shh, please, Lib. Don't worry any more. You've said sorry."

"I don't know why I be naughty," she wails. "I don't know!"

"Oh honey, we all do things we don't mean," Kurt soothes. "And sometimes there's just no reason at all. I think maybe we all just wanted today to be perfect, and then when it wasn't it all got a little out of control. But it doesn't matter now, okay? Tomorrow is another day. Maybe once school is done we could play some baseball in the yard? Have a little sing-a-long?"

"Yes please," she sniffles. "Daddy? Will you read me the lonely fire truck?"

"Again?" Blaine asks, smiling when she nods emphatically. "Sure, baby girl. Say goodnight to papa."

*

"She's asleep already," Blaine announces when he finds Kurt sitting at the kitchen table. "Maybe that was part of the problem, that she was tired." He walks past him and ruffles his hair before heading to the wine rack where he grabs a bottle and sets about opening it. "She was all snuggled in tight while I was reading, I looked down and there she was, eyes closed and fast asleep. Cutie. Well....cute now. But ugh. Really. I love her to bits," he continues, setting a glass of red in front of Kurt before pouring his own. "But tonight was hard work. Really hard work. Plus it'd be like...one in the morning in Scotland right now. We're probably still stuck on their time and... You want to take that job, don't you?"

"Huh?"

"The job," Blaine repeats, pulling out a chair to sit opposite Kurt, who temples his hands under his chin and looks down at his wine. "You want us to move to New York."

"No, no. I don't want us to move to New York," Kurt says firmly. "That's the problem."

"Talk to me."

He is still and quiet for a moment but he looks up eventually, the anguish evident in his eyes. "Yes I want to take the job, no I don't want us to move to New York."
"Okay..." Blaine says slowly. "Tell me why you want to take the job."

"There's no point," Kurt says, shaking his head. "Because..."

"Tell me why you want to take it."

"It's what I've been dreaming of for a long time, if I'm honest with myself," he says quietly as he swirls the wine in his glass. "The chance to be a designer, and only a designer. I'm not a businessman, Blaine. That was never what I set out to achieve. I adored working under Anna, and gradually she handed me more and more responsibility until it became my company. I'm eternally grateful, and I'm proud of how far we've come...but it was never my intention to be some kind of...of...costume mogul, I guess," he says with a soft laugh. "All I want to do is sit with my sketchbook and pencil, draw the designs someone asks for and hand them over. That's it, job done. I don't want to have to negotiate contracts, supervise manufacture...hell...I'm even approving vacation time and running a healthcare scheme. I'm a costume designer, that's all, and now someone is offering me a huge sum of cash to do just that for the rest of my days, if I wish. So that's why I want the job."

"Isn't there any way you can do that from here though? I mean..."

"No. I called them back earlier."

"I thought that was what you were doing!"

"Yeah, I'm sorry I didn't say. It wasn't that I didn't want to tell you, I just didn't get time, what with Libby and..."

"Kurt," Blaine says, looking into his eyes and covering his hand with his own. "It's okay. What did they say?"

"That the job is New York based and they wouldn't look at alternatives."

"But the ball is in your court though, surely? I mean, they asked you to interview. They said you're the best."

"They did," Kurt says slowly. "But they also made it very clear that they're looking at alternatives too. I'm not the only one they've asked to meet with. The fact is, people will bite their hand off to get a shot at this. Shuberts own so many theatres- not just on Broadway but elsewhere too. It's an amazing opportunity."

"So... Tell me why you don't want to move to New York...and don't look at me like that," he adds, when Kurt looks at him knowingly.

"Oh come on."

"I want you to tell me."

"You know why," Kurt cries.

"I've lived there before," Blaine points out.

"Don't, Blaine," Kurt snaps. "Just don't."

"I would do anything for you."

"I said enough! It's not just you," he sighs. "...though that's the overwhelming part, I guess. But this
is our home. Our family is here. Your dad. We couldn't leave him, Blaine, that would never be fair. My parents are moving here to be near us and Finn... It's not... Look," he sighs. "We discussed moving back to Chicago and decided against it. Why? Because we both felt it would be better to keep Libby among the people who know us best. You two are my life, Blaine. I'm simply not going to move somewhere that you're not comfortable living, and uprooting Libby from all she's ever known, just so I can be a selfish son of a bitch!"

"I want you to be happy."

"I am," he smiles, though his eyes tell a different story. "I am so happy, being with you."

"I know that. But other stuff is important too, you know."

"It is," Kurt agrees. "But your happiness, and Libby's, are my biggest priorities. You could never be happy there."

"I could, if I could see this was what you really wanted. I told you, I'd..."

"Do anything for me, I know," he says, raising Blaine's hand to his mouth and kissing each of his fingers in turn. "And I still remember the day you walked into that bar and told me your car was loaded with stuff and you were moving to be with me. But just as you were fighting for me, so I was fighting for you. We reached a compromise that suited us both, because we're a team, you and I. Neither one of us lost, both of us gave and both of us gained. You still moved to be with me while I went through college, and I moved colleges so we could both be comfortable with where we lived."

"And now, it's time for us to do that all over again," Blaine says softly. "You need to do this, Kurt, and I will be right by your side for all of it."

"You can't live in New York."

"Jersey, then," Blaine offers. "We buy a house outside of the city."

"You'd be losing everything and gaining nothing."

"I'd be gaining a husband who is happy in his work. We'd be starting a new adventure, a new chapter in our lives. Let's be realistic here. My dad...as much as it pains me to admit it...he's...well, he's not going to be here forever, is he? I don't want you to be sitting here in two years regretting that we didn't do this, Kurt. You're thirty. These are the best years of your life for everything. Career, home life....sex life," he teases with a wink. "We will always have each other, and Libby, and we will always have our family and friends too, no matter where we live. But you won't always have this opportunity, Kurt. This is here and now, and it won't come around again. If you decide this is right for you, then team Hummel-Anderson has got your back, okay? Me and Libby are your greatest fans, and we will always cheer you on."

"You're serious, aren't you?" Kurt whispers as it all falls into place. "You would really do this for me. And you wouldn't resent me for it."

"I could never resent you for anything," Blaine says in surprise. "And yes, I am very serious."

"I don't know..."

"Meet with them, at least," Blaine urges gently. "Because if you don't, you will always wonder what if? If they offer you the job, then you can always turn it down if you decide it's not for you."
"You really don't mind? I mean, this could potentially be huge for us."

"I really do not mind," Blaine tells him sincerely. "I love you and I support you, Kurt, no matter what."

*

"Have you heard from Kurt?" Wes asks, settling back on Blaine's couch with a beer in his hand.

"Only that he's there. I think he has a lot to go over before his interview tomorrow, so I doubt he'll be calling."

"Blaine... Can I ask..."

"You will anyway."

"Do you really think this is right for you? Honestly?"

Blaine sighs, picking at the label on his own beer as he thinks. "If Kurt decides it is then yeah, I do."

"It's what you want?"

"Yes," he says firmly. "Kurt and I... We like to push ourselves, to explore new things. He's thirty, Wes. Why shouldn't he have this opportunity? Just because he has a husband and kid he has to stay tied to Westerville all his days?"

"No, that's not what I'm saying," Wes counters. "It's just..."

"Family? I know, and I can't pretend like that part wouldn't be a killer. But....I don't know. He's weary, Wes. He's thirty years old and I look at him sometimes and I see the weight of the world on his shoulders. It shouldn't be that way, not when he's doing a job he loves. Only, he doesn't get to do that part of the job as much anymore, and if he's honest, sometimes his designs are rushed because if it, and you know how he hates not having done his best."

"I get that, and I agree he should take some time to evaluate his career. But New York..."

"I've done it before," Blaine points out in annoyance. "And I know I had my issues, but it's okay now. You know we often go for a weekend and..."

"And the last time you told me that Manhattan still seizes you with fear!" Wes cries. "You said you would never feel comfortable taking the subway on your own with Libby."

"So I'll have to learn, won't I?" he snaps.

"And what about me?" Wes shouts desperately. "What about me? What about Livvy? How am I supposed to cope with losing you, much less her? Have you any idea how much we would miss you?"

"Yeah I do," Blaine says quietly. "Only I can't let myself think of that. Because if I do, it'll destroy me."

His phone alerts him to a new text and he picks it up, keeping his expression unreadable as he scans the message from Kurt.

I love you, Blaine. Thank you for supporting me in this. I think...if they offer me the job...I think
I'll say yes.

He sighs, setting the phone back down on the coffee table before forcing a bright smile on his face. "Tell me, are you going to the school open house next week?"

*

Blaine doesn't really know how to while away the hours the next day. He knows Kurt's interview was at ten, so after walking Libby to the bus stop he goes for a long run then comes home and does his chores. He thinks about calling Santana, but really, he'd rather be alone, figuring he can't listen to yet another friend getting upset about the possibility of their departure. A quick visit to his dad, who is sleepy today and not really in the mood for talking, and then it's back to meet Libby again.

By two he's anxious. Could Kurt really be in a four hour interview? Maybe, he supposes, given that it's such an important job. So he takes Libby swimming, but when they're out of the pool there's still no missed call, no text...nothing at all.

"Is papa okay?" Libby asks as they walk to the car.

"Oh honey, I'm sure he is," Blaine smiles. "You know he's always busy in New York. I'll bet he came right out of one meeting and went into another. He'll probably call at bedtime."

But he doesn't, All Blaine's calls go to voicemail, and his texts go unanswered. He contemplates calling Burt, but figures that not a lot will be achieved other than making Burt worry, so once Libby is settled in bed, he heads down the hall to the music room.

He surprises himself with how much and how passionately he plays. Every ounce of fear, frustration and worry flows through his fingers, manifesting itself in a piece of music that he records instantly, not wanting to stop and write the notes down because he knows that otherwise it will be gone forever. He cries too, and then smiles as he hears his moms voice telling him he'll feel better after a little cry. Perhaps that's where he gets his leaky eyes from, as Libby calls them.

It is ridiculously late by the time he remembers to go to bed, and he doesn't even think about his phone until he finds it on the hall table, with seven missed calls from Kurt and one new voicemail. He thumps his forehead in frustration as he realizes it's almost two in the morning and he can't call him back now, and listens to the message instead.

"Blaine? It's uh...it's me. Well, you know that already. I'm sad I missed you but hopefully you'll get this message. I'm sorry I didn't call. I um...I needed some time. I still do. I'm um...I'm in Chicago. I'll be home tomorrow in time for dinner but please...um... I don't know how to say this without sounding unkind but please don't contact me. I just... I just really need to think some stuff through right now and I don't...I can't... I love you, okay? Libby too, if you can pass that along. But I just...I'm rambling, aren't I? I just need some time to think, that's all. It's not... You know what? Nevermind. I'm safe, I'm in Chicago and I'll be home tomorrow. Love you, old man. Bye."
Chapter 27

Kurt closes the front door quietly behind him, not at all surprised to find Blaine standing in the hallway, anxiously waiting.

"Hey."

"Hey," Blaine says, wanting to rush to embrace him but not knowing what the outcome would be.

"Why is it so quiet?"

"Apparently Sebastian owes his two favorite ladies a dinner date," Blaine says with a small smile. "Either that or he was just showing some tact and decorum for once, and knew we needed to talk. But whatever the reason I'm grateful."

"Right."

"You look tired," Blaine says softly.

"Yeah. I uh...I didn't sleep much at all, really. Too much running through my mind. And then, just as I was drifting off I remembered that time you came home from Nashville to find me kneeling on the floor with a dildo in my ass, and then I couldn't stop laughing."

"Oh my god!"

The tension broken, they both laugh as Blaine closes the gap between them to hold his husband in his arms. It's only been forty eight hours, but it still feels like far too long as Kurt fists the back of his sweater and buries his face in his neck, breathing deeply. "I needed this."

"They offered you the job, didn't they?" Blaine asks over his shoulder, and Kurt immediately lets go, taking a step backward and staring at the floor.

"Yeah," he says quietly. "They offered it to me on the spot."

"I see."

"And I turned them down on the spot too."

"What?" Blaine looks up sharply. "What did you say? I thought you...but...Chicago? I thought..."

"You would have done it," Kurt says, looking into Blaine's eyes and taking his hands in his. "You would have moved there, you wouldn't have ever resented me, and I know you would have thrown yourself wholeheartedly into the next chapter of our lives together. But you would never have been truly happy," he says with a soft, serene smile. "Because I wouldn't have been happy. We belong here, Blaine. I love our life. I love our house, the friends we have, the amazing family we're blessed with... I love that I can meet Finn for lunch, or go to the mall with Kathy and Santana. I love that my dad will be so close by. New York isn't for us. Ohio is our home, and I wouldn't want to give that up for anything. I was sitting there, while they were talking to me and I realized. I don't want to get a phone call to say your dad has passed away, and we haven't seen him for three weeks. I don't want to rely on Skype dates to see how much Livvy has grown- not to mention the pain I'd feel at separating Libby from her...or you from Wes, for that matter. Hell, I don't even want Sebastian to buy a new car without me being able to approve the color first. This ramshackle assortment of people whom we love so dearly....they help shape us, the type of family we are and
the marriage we have. And above everything, these last few years we have finally found stability and happiness...I don't want to risk any of that for some job. No career is ever worth more to me than you are."

"But you still won't be happy with your work though," Blaine says, baffled.

"No...which is why I went to Chicago."

"I don't understand."

"I met with Jules today."

"Riccardo's son, Jules?"

"Do you know another?"

"No..." Blaine starts. "I don't think so."

"I've decided to appoint him as manager of the whole business."

"What?"

"Think about it, Blaine. I need someone with creativity, flair and determination. He needs a purpose, a direction. Since Francois happened he's doing so much better, but he's still missing that...that...thing that drives him. He's flitted about from one job to another, never really knowing how to utilise his skills. But I know. He's young, he's single and he doesn't want to be tied to a nine to five. Perfect. He won't mind being in New York one week, Chicago the next. The guy is fluent in seven languages, he's already talking about expanding us to England, Italy and France. He's so much like Riccardo. He dreams big, he acts fast and he can be ruthless yet also fair. Remember me telling you that there needed to be another tier? Well Jules is it. I pay him handsomely to run my business for me, meanwhile I sit at home in Ohio and draw, Blaine. That's it," he says, his whole face lighting up with joy. "I just draw. I'll liaise with Jules on which productions to take, of course, and I'll attend the initial meetings with directors, but that's it. After that, I'll just send the drawings across to him, and he will delegate accordingly. And here's the thing," he carries on, gripping Blaine's hands tighter as his excitement grows. "I don't need to ask you your thoughts on this, and I've gone ahead and done it already, because..."

"It's perfect," Blaine says, grinning broadly. "Completely perfect."

"And I knew you'd think that!" Kurt laughs. "That's what decided me. Sitting in that interview, I realized I had analyzed every last detail with you. We'd discussed the pros and cons, the ins and outs, and though I knew I had your support and backing, I still felt this unease about the whole thing. So when they made their offer, it was surprisingly easy to say no. I didn't even listen to the higher price they tried to offer, I just knew it wasn't right. I walked out of there and got a cab right to the airport. Something was pulling me to Chicago, and I swear, as we took off from the runway Jules' face suddenly came to mind. I spent all last night drafting up ideas, thinking it all through in my head, but the whole time I knew I didn't even need to run this by you, because it was so right. And when I called him this morning he answered with "oh hey, Kurt, I was just thinking about you." I'm telling you, Blaine, this was meant to be."

"It is, I agree," Blaine says, tugging him toward the hall table where he hands him a large envelope. "Because this came in the mail this morning. The land out back is officially ours, and we can start building whenever we want. You can have your own little office block, if you want," he says sweetly. "A design room, a sewing room...a bedroom."
"Oh? And why would I want a bedroom?" he asks flirtatiously.

"Just in case you get visitors," Blaine teases back. "Seriously, we can extend the house and I can get my recording studio back, you get your offices and Libby gets a huge bedroom and a brand new playroom. And above all else, I get to see you happy."

"You get to see me happy every single day," Kurt says, wrapping his arms around his neck. "And just before I kiss the life out of you, I just want to say sorry, firstly, for not coming home. I shouldn't have done that, probably. It wasn't fair. But thank you, for your understanding and patience, and also your willingness to do such a huge thing for me. It means everything. You mean everything, and I really hope you know that."

"I do," Blaine whispers, sliding his hands into Kurt's soft hair before claiming his lips in a deep kiss. "I love you so much, Kurt."

"I love you too." He presses their foreheads together briefly before they kiss again, not so chastely this time as he enjoys making Blaine moan. "Do you think it's too late to throw a kick ass Halloween party on Saturday?"

"To celebrate us not moving to New York?"

"Exactly."

"Sounds good to me. Libby will love it."

Excited, Kurt kisses him again, with such force this time that Blaine actually stumbles backward before Kurt breaks the kiss with a gasp. "What time is Sebastian bringing Libby home?"

"Six."

"Half an hour," Kurt muses, looking at his watch and yelping when Blaine grabs his hand and tugs him toward the stairs.

"Let's go."

* 

"Well I know what our Halloween costumes will be," Kurt grumbles twenty five minutes later as he dresses in front of the mirror.

"Oh?"

"Vampire and victim," he says, twisting his neck this way and that, but whichever way he looks at it, his neck is a mass of livid red marks that aren't going to fade anytime soon. "Seriously, Blaine, what the hell?"

"Can't help it," he says smugly, pausing to kiss over his neck as he passes. "You're irresistible, and your neck does things to me."

"You're forty five. I'd expect a little more restraint by now."

"Hold up," Blaine says, stopping with the balled up sheets in his arms. "Are you mad?"

"A little, yeah," Kurt admits. "It's embarrassing, to be sporting hickeys at my age, and after we've been married so long."
"So push me away at the time then," Blaine huffs, dumping the sheets in the hamper and rummaging in the closet for more. "Don't let me do it and then complain after the event."

"I can't say anything at the time because it feels so good," Kurt whines. "You cloud my vision."

"Oh, so it's okay for you to get carried away in the moment, but when you're lying there underneath me, moaning and throwing your head back, tugging my hair in pleasure as I suck on your neck...I'm supposed to exercise restraint?"

"Touché."

"Exactly," Blaine says smugly, tucking the clean sheets in. "You have no comeback."

"But..."

"But nothing, husband. Now come help me with this. Anyway, at least it's the weather to wear scarves."

He is pushed face first onto the bed, where Kurt is quick to fall on top of him, kissing over his cheek, down behind his ear to his neck. "Do you want me to?" he whispers. "So we match?"

"Yes."

Although interrupted by the doorbell, Kurt's work is still impressive and Blaine admires his mark like a badge of honor while Kurt bounds down the stairs two at a time to greet his baby. "Libby!"

"My papa!" she squeals, leaping into his arms as Sebastian follows inside and ruffles Kurt's already dishevelled hair.

"My, my," he remarks dryly as Blaine comes down the stairs to greet them. "Whatever the outcome of Kurt's meeting was, clearly you're both happy with the result. What's all this?" He asks, bringing attention to Kurt's neck, making him squirm.

"I did it," Blaine says happily. "We're going as vampire and victim for Halloween," he rushes on when he sees Libby staring. "Papa needed to look like he'd been bitten."

"Oh please. That is not why you...ouch!" Sebastian yelps. "Don't kick me!"

"Stop talking then."

"I like the makeup daddy did," Libby tells Kurt sincerely. "Why did you do makeup on daddy too?"

"Oh...um...just practicing," Kurt blushes. "So, did you have fun with Bas?"

"We did," Sebastian answers. "And we have a question to ask you."

"Oh?"

"Can you make Sebastian a panda costume too? So we can be three gay pandas?" Libby asks him.

"Yes," Kurt smiles, "because he will look ridiculous and I can't resist an opportunity like that."

"Where did the assumption that all pandas are gay come from?" Blaine asks.

"Oh please. Have you seen a panda? Totally gay." Sebastian tells him.
"I have, actually," Kurt lights up.

"We know, Kurt, you've told us at least ten times and you've only been home four days." Sebastian laughs when Kurt looks crestfallen. "Anyway. What's the decision?"

"Well... We're not moving," Blaine tells him when Libby skips down the hall out of earshot. "My extremely smart and talented husband wowed the panel, as I knew he would, but he decided not to take the job."

"Seriously?" Sebastian's whole face lights up, "You're not moving? You're staying?"

"We're staying," Kurt smiles.

"Oh thank god!" he cries. "I don't know what I would have done if...I mean...y'know...if you'd moved away before I got my wicked way with Kurt," he teases, but Blaine looks at him knowingly.

"Yeah. Of course that's it," he smiles, hugging him tight. "Thank you for taking Libby."

"Anytime," Sebastian says into his shoulder, and when he pulls back from the hug he is decidedly misty eyed. "You and Wes are hilarious, by the way. When I took Livvy home, he had obviously just gotten dressed too, and Kathy was nowhere to be seen."

"You have to take these opportunities," Kurt shrugs. "Seriously, thank you. We really needed to talk. And I promise I'll have your costume ready and waiting on Saturday."

"Awesome."

*

Ellen Foster doesn't know what to expect from a Halloween party at the Hummel-Anderson's. She's known them since Libby and her son, Jamie, were tiny babies, and she's attended every one of the little girls birthday parties, but she's never known them to throw a Halloween party before. Still, she's dressed in her best Wonder Woman costume- because isn't that what all single moms are? And her small son trips alongside her, proudly dressed in his Uncle's feather boa and sequined tank top which serves as a dress on him, telling almost anyone who will listen that he's come dressed as a drag queen. Ellen figures a party full of what must surely be the entire gay contingent of Ohio is probably a good place for Jamie to comfortably explore his love of cross dressing which he seems to have inherited from his uncle. She greets Melody from the bus stop, dressed as a spider- and her mom Stephanie and dad Bob at the bottom of the hill and they walk up to the house together.

"There seems to be a large number of pandas on the front lawn," Bob remarks as they near the house. "Is there something we don't know about?"

"I don't think so," Stephanie frowns. "I'm sure Blaine didn't say anything. Oh! Look at this little panda!" she cries as Libby comes to a stop in front of them. "Hey sweetie! Don't you look the cutest! Any reason for all the pandas?"

"There's seven of us," Libby grins, looking up and wrinkling her little black nose. "My papa made the costumes. Me and Livvy, Sebastian, Nicky, Jeff, Santana and Brittany. All pandas are gay," she adds confidently.

"Really? Are you sure?" Ellen asks.

"I'm sure," Libby smiles. "Except my daddies aren't pandas because they already had their costumes and papa has been wearing his makeup for days."
Okay," Stephanie smiles, as Melody and Jamie go to play with their friends. "Well, we're gonna go inside and see these costumes then."

"Sure!" Libby nods, "But don't forget the trick or treating in a minute!"

"That is not makeup!" Ellen screeches when she sees Kurt.

Stephanie laughs uproariously at the way both men blush- even under their pale makeup. "No it is not!" she cries, high fiving her friend. "This is," she says, pointing to the line of fake blood dripping from Blaine's mouth. "And this," she gestures to the 'puncture wound' on Kurt's neck. "But as far as I know, a vampire only bites once, Blaine. Not multiple times all over the poor soul's neck."

"And who knows where else?" Ellen teases.

"You can never be too sure with these two," Stephanie grins.

"You know what?" Blaine says, giving in and laughing with them. "All Kurt and I wanted was to make friends with some parents in Libby's class. I'm seriously regretting it."

"Be careful what you wish for, sunshine," Stephanie grins. "This is my husband, Bob," she suddenly remembers as he shakes Kurt and Blaine's hands warmly.

"Nice to meet you," he smiles. "Is there a reason for the huge amount of gay pandas?"

"Nope," Kurt laughs. "Just a little joke that spiralled out of control, and a lesson to my friends to never leave their costume choices to last minute and then come begging. Anyway, make yourselves at home. If you see Uncle Fester wandering about that's my dad. Gomez and Morticia are Blaine's brother and wife and Pugsley and Wednesday are our niece and nephew. The gay pandas are all gay, Wes and Kathy are Peter Pan and Wendy and..."

"I'm Alice in Wonderland!" Miss Hunter cries behind them. She is surrounded by adoring children, all in complete awe at seeing their teacher outside of the classroom, and in a pretty costume, and Libby and Livvy grip her hands tightly.

"Miss Hunter says she will come trick or treating with us," Libby says happily. "So we don't need any daddies," she says smugly. "Or mommies."

"You look really pretty," Blaine smiles. "Did you bring your sister? Because..."

"Blaine," she snaps. "I am not setting my sister up with your surrogate just because you don't approve of her girlfriend choice. Honestly," she says, rolling her eyes. "But yes, she's here. She's talking to Winnie The Pooh and Piglet."

"That's my brother and wife," Kurt tells her. "And please ignore Blaine. He's...well..."

"Nice hickeys," she says, suddenly noticing. "Was that just so you could play dress up, or did the dress up happen because of the hickeys?"

"Oh for the love of... Blaine," Kurt snaps. "Never again, do you hear me? Never again."

"Eh, whatever," he shrugs, knowing full well Kurt will be begging soon enough. "Jamie, my man, you look awesome," he says, spotting the little boy proudly smoothing his hands over his sequinned dress. "Did you borrow this from your uncle?"

"Yep," he grins. "He's coming to visit next weekend, and he's promised to teach me how to be Tina
"Hey, you should come to dinner," Kurt tells Ellen. "I'm dying to meet this drag queen brother."

"He's so embarrassing," she moans. "Not because he's a drag queen, just because he's my brother. But yes, we can come to dinner, thank you. And if you happen to know any single men..." she tries, but Blaine shakes his head.

"All gay," he says regretfully.

"Gay Blaine!" a voice suddenly booms down the hallway, making everyone turn in surprise to see Riccardo, dressed as Scooby Doo, charging into the kitchen followed by his wife Lucia as Daphne and Jules as Scrappy.

"That's Blaine's boss," Kurt whispers conspiratorially. "A complete madman. Oh, and my protégée," he says, finding Jules and hugging him tight. They're followed by Ken and Gill as Einstein and Marie Antoinette respectively, and Kurt sets about fixing drinks while Riccardo steers Blaine out onto the back porch.

"Ah Blaine, how I miss you. You enjoy the Wales, yes? Jules tell me you see pandas."

"Scotland, and yes, we did," Blaine laughs as they sit on the porch swing.

"So I need to say three things. Or maybe four. I lose count. One thing, thank you to your Kurt for giving my boy a lifeline."

"Oh, I don't know..."

"He did," he says firmly. "Jules was starting to slip under again, I was worrying. But now...he is like my old son. I will find Kurt and kiss him for it."

"Oh. Right. Well. I'll warn him."

"Thing two," he carries on. "I need to tell you I have word that Edward is moving to LA to work for the Philharmonic there. Not that I think you will come across him, but I know Joseph and your niece will be living there."

"Yeah," Blaine nods slowly, his insides twisting unpleasantly when he thinks of him. "But no, you're right, I doubt our paths will cross again."

"If they do, you run," Riccardo orders, righting his Scooby doo headpiece in indignation. "Also, three thing. I stay in Chicago three more years."

"Really? Seriously?" Blaine cries. "That's wonderful!"

"You stay too, that's an order," he teases. "Yes. Three more years then it is retirement for me. But I need to see Jules happy. Properly happy, and then we can retire to Tuscany."

"Of course I'll stay," Blaine agrees happily. "And then I'll retire too. I'm not gonna stay without you. And was there a fourth thing?"

"Yes," he nods. "I am trick or treating master. You tell Liberace I am leading them all to get their candy."

"Well you'll have to fight Miss Hunter for that privilege," Blaine laughs as he stands. "Come on, I'll see what I can do."
Another couple of hours and the party is in full swing. Sebastian and Riccardo are more than happy barricaded in the playroom-come-fort with all the children, and the rest of the adults are all enjoying an evening of good food, drink and company. Everyone seems to get along well, and Blaine finds himself leaning back against the counter watching his friends all talking and laughing and wondering what he did in life to get it this good. He becomes suddenly aware of Kurt, standing in the doorway watching him and silently beckoning with his eyes, and he prides himself on being able to slip from the room unnoticed.

"In here," Kurt whispers, trying to hide his slightly tipsy laughter as he pulls open the door to the music room and drags Blaine inside.

"Everyone be careful when entering a room," Finn calls to the guests in the kitchen and out on the back porch. "Kurt and Blaine are in one of 'em, and I'm not sure which. And don't go and hunt them out, Santana!"

"Damnit!"

Blaine is pinned against the wall in the darkness, Kurt's mouth finding his immediately, hot and demanding. He groans as he feels his legs being pushed apart by Kurt's knee, and grabs his husband by the hips to pull him closer. He is far from amused when the door is opened and starts to say something, but Kurt's hand on his mouth warns him to stay silent as a couple stumble into the room, lips locked and hands already roaming. Silently, Kurt and Blaine slip out unseen, back into the hallway where Blaine thumps the back of his head against the wall in frustration. "Damn Joe," he grumbles. "Can't he and Maddie use the guest room? They're sleeping in there tonight anyway. Come to think of it, does he even have to kiss her at all?"

"I think you'll find Joe and Maddie are in the guest room, and have been for at least the last hour," Kurt laughs, wrapping his arms around Blaine's neck and kissing his forehead. "You really are blind without your glasses, aren't you?"

"Huh?"

"That was two guys."

"Nick and Jeff?"

"More like Jules....and Taylor."

"As in, our nephew, Taylor?"

"Yes."

"Oh." Blaine is still, thinking while Kurt watches him warily, knowing he never takes kindly to any thought of his niece and nephew being adults, which of course, at twenty five, they are. "I didn't know he was gay."

"Neither did I. He's certainly never come out as such, but maybe he didn't feel he needed to?"

"Hmm. Well, that'd be cool. I wonder what Jules' intentions are? Kurt? Do you know?"

"Honey, they met an hour ago. I'd say it's pretty clear what both their intentions are."

"In there?" Blaine cries. "Not on my piano!"

"Okay. Let's just...leave them be, and return to the party."
"I should tell Cooper," Blaine muses. "I wonder where he is..."

"No, no, you really shouldn't," Kurt says, steering him back toward the living room where he knows Wes and Kathy will keep an eye on him. "We've never known Taylor to have any kind of relationship with anyone, so whatever he does do he obviously chooses to keep it very private. And you need to respect that. They would both be mortified if they knew we'd seen them."

"What if he breaks his heart?"

"Okay, enough," Kurt says firmly. "Go sit in there and I'll bring you a glass of wine...as long as you promise not to get all maudlin on me."

"I won't," Blaine smiles, kissing his lips. "Actually, before you dragged me away, I was kinda thinking how wonderful it is to have such a great group of friends around us. From all walks of life."

"Agreed," Kurt says, unable to resist snaking his arms around his waist and letting his hands wander down to skim over his butt. "I'm so glad I didn't take that job. We know where we belong."

"Do you think Jules is looking for a relationship? Or a one time thing? Cause I don't want Taylor hurt."

"Seriously, enough," Kurt laughs. "Go keep Peter Pan company while I go fetch wine and check on the lesbian panda."

*

The next morning, when Libby rouses a reluctant Blaine and demands breakfast, he is surprised to find Taylor sitting at the kitchen table already, tapping out a haphazard rhythm with his fingers. "Good morning," he says brightly, trying to pretend like nothing is amiss. "You're up early, it's barely seven."

"Couldn't sleep," he mumbles as Libby climbs onto his lap.

"Oh? Was the guest room um..."

"It was fine," he says, turning his attention to the mug of coffee Blaine sets in front of him. Always the more quiet of the two, Taylor had become quieter still as he grew older, while Maddie became more outgoing and vivacious. Taylor was always content to watch from the sidelines, and worked happily as a freelance photographer in Michigan while Maddie was a bubbly kindergarten teacher in Chicago—soon to be moving to LA after her wedding to Joe. "Uncle Blaine, can I talk to you a second?" he suddenly blurts, making Blaine look up in surprise.

"Sure. Uh...here, Lib," he says, handing her a plastic plate piled with toast. "Take this up to papa, okay? Tell him I'm talking with Tay but I'll bring him coffee when we're done."

"I can eat in the bed?"

"Yes," Blaine laughs, ruffling her hair. "And tell papa not to freak, I'll change the sheets later."

She skips away happily, and Blaine pulls out a chair on the other side of the table. "So."

"So I uh...I was wondering...well...I have something to ask you," Taylor says nervously.

"Shoot."
"I was wondering if I could use your Chicago apartment next weekend? If you weren't there, that is."

"Sure you can," Blaine says, trying to hide a smile. "Any reason? You usually stay with Joe and Maddie if you're visiting them."

"Actually, I kinda don't want them to know I'm doing this, if you wouldn't mind keeping it quiet. I mean, I don't mind Uncle Kurt knowing but..."

"Okay," Blaine shrugs.

"Not my dad. Don't say anything to my dad either. Please."

"If that's what you want," Blaine says with a nod. "You're twenty five, and though I still find that hard to believe, you're entitled to do what you want."

"Thanks. It's um..."

"Do you want to tell me?" Blaine cuts him off. "Because you don't have to. I trust you enough to let you use the apartment anyway."

"I do want to tell someone," he nods. "It's just... I want to ask someone out on a date. And that someone lives in Chicago. And I'm not... I'm not sure how comfortable I feel going out in public, just yet so..." he releases a huge, trembling breath. "I think I might be gay," he suddenly says. "And I'm not... I'm not... overly sure how I feel about that. But I met someone last night and he's... I really... So... I wondered if I could use your apartment to cook him dinner. Not for anything else," he adds hastily. "I promise I won't ask him to stay the night or anything I just..."

"Taylor..."

"Because I'm really not sure. I mean, I've never been sure," he rambles. "I just kinda figured I hadn't met the right girl yet. You know, through high school and all that. Then halfway through college there was this guy on the football team with me and... well... I figured it was just a crush, you know? And I wasn't okay with that but I was okay. I mean..."

"Taylor..."

"And then I asked a girl out, even though I didn't really feel any attraction to her. She seemed nice enough though, and I thought maybe that side would come. But it didn't. We only went out twice, and I did kiss her but... and then... well then last night I um... this sounds really bad an' all, because it was in your music room, but I met this guy and he's funny and smart and really, ridiculously good looking and the next thing I know we're making out and it's..."

"Taylor!"

"Hot," he finishes quietly before breaking down into tears.

"Oh Taylor," he sighs, coming around the table to hold him in his arms. "It's okay. Really. It's okay. Whatever this is, just go with it. Let your heart rule your head for once. You know that if any family will accept your sexuality it's gonna be ours, don't you? No one would ever judge you."

"I know," he sniffs. "I know. I just keep thinking... I mean, I've never known you as anything but gay."

"That's because I've never been anything other than gay," he says kindly. "Some people always
know, some don't, and some know but choose to deny it. That's just the way it is."

"Is that me? Have I always denied it?"

"Well I can't answer that," Blaine tells him honestly. "But you're quite clearly not denying it now. Maybe you've always known deep down but just not gotten around to acknowledging those feelings because you've never really met anyone worth it. But now you have."

"Jules," he tells Blaine. "It's Riccardo's son, Jules."

"Right." Blaine rubs his back as he cries a little more, deciding that he will never divulge that he already knew. "Well, you don't need me to tell you all that's happened there, because you already know. But suffice to say he didn't realise his sexuality until he met that French bastard."

"He's um...he's bisexual."

"Oh. Okay. See? I didn't even know that. People's sexuality doesn't matter, Taylor. What matters is when you meet someone you're attracted to and you want to do something about it."

"He's really..." he trails off, letting a smile come over his face. "Yeah."

"So see where this takes you," Blaine encourages. "Don't put a label on yourself, there's really no need to ever do that unless you're one hundred percent sure. I mean, I've always been gay, so has Kurt. But Brittany...she doesn't label herself, yet she's been dating Santana on and off for fifteen years. She just flits about."

"Yeah, and you hate her for it."

"No I don't," he argues back. "I hate that Santana is always more invested than she is, but I certainly don't hate her. I actually really like her, and I'm happy to have her in our group of friends."

"Can I ask you....when you came out...what did grandma and grandad say?"

"Well..." Blaine thinks back, remembering the conversation like it was yesterday. "I came out to Wes first, then your dad. Both were totally amazing, and I got really upset. Not because I was ashamed, necessarily, just because it's a hard thing to admit, I think, that you're different. And there's no way around it, being gay is different. We live in a society where the majority of people are straight. People demand, and society expects, labels. For me, it was relatively easy I guess, because there was a label that stuck. But that isn't always the case. Anyway. We were all sitting down to dinner, and I remember, dad passed me the potatoes and I just said 'thanks, and by the way, I'm gay.' Your grandma said 'that's nice, darling,' then asked if I wanted peas. Grandad went a little pale, but nodded. And then we carried on eating dinner for a while." He pauses, laughing in disbelief as he recalls the way his mom had then carried on a conversation about her bridge club. "Eventually I just started to cry- cause that's what I do- and dad asked why I was upset. I told them I was scared, and then the rest of dinner was abandoned and we all talked about it for a really long time. I know I got lucky, because I've heard some real horror stories. But your grandad told me outright that they didn't really understand because they didn't know anyone gay, but that they'd never stop loving me."

"What do you think my dad will say?"

"I think he'll give you one of those enormous bone crushing hugs that he gives, and tell you the only thing that matters is your happiness."

"I don't think I feel ready yet," Taylor admits. "I think I need time to work out what this actually is
before I broadcast it."

"And I'm sure Cooper will understand that."

"But if I do...would you...would you be there?"

"Of course. You know what? Here." Jumping up, Blaine rummages in a kitchen drawer before handing Taylor a key. "Just...keep it. Use the apartment as often as you like. If Kurt or I need to visit then we can text you and let you know."

"Oh no, I couldn't..."

"You could," Blaine says, closing his fingers around the key. "And Taylor...this might not be my place to ask, but...last night...was kissing where it stayed?"

"Oh yes," he says, quickly, blushing scarlet. "I'm not ready for...not yet."

"Okay. Well. That's probably a good thing," he smiles. "I know you're an adult and..."

"I know but I've never done...anything."

"No. Well...don't go rushing into it, is all I'm saying. God knows it felt like I had to wait for an eternity for Kurt, but I can promise you it was completely worth it. Just...when you...decide... Um... If you need any advice, or help..." He breaks off, embarrassed, "Not practical help but...you know, if you just want someone to talk to..."

"Thank you," Taylor says gratefully.


"You're pretty awesome. You know that? Libby's a lucky lady."

"Oh well. When it comes to her dating I'll probably bury my head in the sand and send her to Santana," he admits. "But I'm glad you could talk to me, and if I was any help whatsoever, then I'm pleased."

"Daddy!"

"And here endeth the lesson," Blaine laughs. "Yes, Libby?" he calls back.

"Papa's still got his makeup all over his neck!"
"See, papa? See my picture?"

"I see, Libby Darling." Kurt laughs as he hoists her onto his hip. "And what a pretty classroom you have."

The school open house had been a huge success. Miss Hunter was proud of the beautiful displays the children had made, and she had enjoyed seeing them proudly leading their parents around the classroom as they pointed out this and that. Wes and Kathy, and Kurt and Blaine had arrived toward the end of the evening, and she greeted them politely, not letting on that the girls were easily her favourite pupils, but she's pretty sure they already know that. She watches as Kurt moves around the class admiring the displays with Blaine at his side, but it's a quiet, withdrawn Blaine today, and feeling she knows him well enough by now, she reaches out to tap him on the shoulder as he passes.

"Are you okay?" she asks with concern. "You seem quiet."

"Yeah," he says, then sighs and shakes his head. "Actually, no. My dad isn't good. He has flu."

"I'm sorry to hear that," Jess Hunter says sincerely. "Is there anything I can do?"

"Not really," he shrugs. "He's in hospital on a drip to keep his fluids up. But he's more confused than ever. He didn't know who I was when I went in today. We've decided that it's best if Libby doesn't see him like this. She knows he's sick though, so if she says anything just...I don't know. Don't tell her he'll get better," he says sadly. "Because I'm not sure that he will."

"Of course," she nods. "And don't worry, I'll keep an eye on her."

"Thanks."

"You."

Blaine doesn't turn at the sound of the random man's voice, because he never for one minute assumes the short, sharp bark is directed at him. But then it comes again. "I said, you." And he turns to see a short, square set man pointing at him.

"Um...yes?"

"You make me sick," the man declares loudly. "You and your faggot ways disgust me, and what you're doing to that kid is just evil."

"O-Kay, Libby Darling, with me," Kathy calls brightly, swooping to the other side of the classroom to take her from Kurt who has stopped dead, his blood running cold. "Come along, Olivia," she calls over her shoulder. "Now."

"Mr. Jackson, please," Jess says firmly. "This is neither..."

"Excuse me?" Blaine says, his voice cold as he steps in front of the teacher. "What kid?"

"That girl. Making her live with two fags."

"I assume you mean my daughter?"
"She's not your daughter," the man sneers. "Anyone can see she doesn't belong to you."

"I can assure you she most certainly does." Blaine keeps his voice calm though he's shaking inside as he takes a step closer to the man. "Libby is my child, sir. Mine and my husbands."

"The bible says only a man and a woman can procreate," the man declares loudly. "So which does that make you?"

"It makes no difference how Libby came to be," Blaine says evenly. "I'm her father."

"Really? And what makes you her father, huh?"

"Ooh, I don't know," Blaine says lightly. "Maybe it's because I watched her being born. Maybe it's because I held her and fell in love with her when she was a second old. Maybe it's because I care for her when she's sick, I changed her diapers, I potty trained her, I bathe her, feed her, love and care for her every single day. I read her stories, I take her to the park, maybe it's all of those things and a whole lot more. How long have you got?"

Kurt is suddenly at his side, taking his hand and gripping his fingers in such a subtle yet strong show of solidarity it's all Blaine can do not to cry right there and then, but he settles for squeezing back, bolstered still further by Wes standing just over his other shoulder.

"I don't want my son in a class like this," the man spits. "You'll be turning him gay."

"Then that's your problem," Jess tells him, stepping between the men. "Caleb is a lovely child, and he mixes well with all the pupils in the class, Mr.Jackson. You could possibly do to take a lesson from him. I'd also ask you to leave now, and I'd thank you to apologize to the Hummel-Anderson's in your own time."

Kurt and Blaine can see how she is shaking, but she stands firm, staring the man down until he spins on his heel and leaves, and Blaine promptly runs after him. "Oh no," Wes mutters, and with one glance at Kurt they're tearing out of the classroom and along the hallway, out onto the school parking lot expecting to see the inevitable angry Blaine punching someone to the ground.

But Blaine is calm. Walking quickly but purposefully toward the man who is striding angrily toward his car where his wife and child wait for him, Blaine calls out suddenly, making Steve Jackson stop in his tracks and turn around.

"Come to dinner!"

"Excuse me?" his voice is low, filled with threat and danger as he takes a menacing step towards Blaine, who stands firm.

"Come to dinner," he repeats calmly. "You say I'm disgusting, that my husband and I shouldn't be parents, we seem to offend you for some reason....so I'm inviting you and your family to have dinner with us, so you can see there's nothing to fear."

"I don't fear you," he sneers. "I'm repulsed by you."

"Because you're scared," Blaine says in that quiet, certain way he has which has Wes and Kurt standing side by side behind him, completely bewildered. "But I don't know why you're scared. If you come to my home you'll see I'm just like you. We're a completely normal family, sir. We sit around the table and share food, our daughter balks at the mere suggestion of a vegetable and would live on mac and cheese if she could. The cat tries to get our attention whenever we eat chicken, and Libby moans because we only allow her to drink water at mealtimes. We have a nice
home. It's tastefully decorated- to be fair, that probably is because we're gay," he shrugs. "There are ornaments on the shelves, pictures on the walls. We have a porch swing, a sand box and a trampoline in the yard. We bicker and fight as any married couple does, and we laugh and joke with one another with the ease of two people who have stayed together through thick and thin. So I'm inviting you to come to dinner and see that we're just as normal as everyone else."

"You like it up the ass," Mr. Jackson sneers. "How is that normal?"

"Well...yes I do," Blaine says nonchalantly. "But I don't really sees how that affects you, with all due respect. I have a lot of friends, Mr. Jackson. Gay, straight, bi and anything in between. I don't ask what they get up to in their sex lives and they don't quiz me on mine. I wasn't aware that was a normal part of friendship. Maybe I've been doing it wrong all these years."

Clearly flustered by Blaine's calm exterior, Steve Jackson flares red as he steps closer still. "Shut the hell up, you prick, before I make you."

"I'd like to see you try," Blaine grins. "Hit me in front of your kid then explain why, huh? Does that make you a man? I'm a man too, just the same as you. I can hit back, and I have done. But I won't now, not today. You know why? Because I wouldn't want your son to witness any violence, and I think that makes me more of a man than you'll ever be."

"You're not a man!"

"Aren't I? I drink beer, Mr. Jackson. Very manly. Whiskey too, sometimes. I love football. Yeah. All man. And Kurt...did you know he can fix cars? Huh? Yep. He gets greasy and sweaty under the hood of some truck and looks damn hot while he's doing it. If you ever need a good mechanic, he's your guy. But maybe that'd creep you out. Because of course, if a gay guy offered to fix your car, he must be hitting on you, right? Just like when I'm at the gym, and I talk to my buddies while we shower. Obviously I'm trying to make a pass, is that right? Despite getting to go home to the most impossibly beautiful man I've ever seen, I must still feel the need to catch a peek at some guy's junk, just because I'm gay. I know how mindless, arrogant and ignorant morons like you work," Blaine says quietly, squaring up to the man. "But let me tell you something else. I also know that I am a damn good husband and father, and I know that Kurt is without doubt the greatest man I have ever met."

"I'd welcome your punch any time, no doubt you hit like a girl, but it'd probably turn you on. Now fuck off, faggot, and stick to your own."

"And why should he?" Wes is by his side in an instant. "Why should Blaine have to 'stick to his own'? Can you explain? Is this the nazi regime in the nineteen thirties? Or have we moved on? You know something? You make me sick. Blaine is my best friend. We've shared beds, seen each other in various states of undress and we even roomed together at school when we were randy hormonal teenage boys. He's never once looked at me, and without being rude, sir, I've a feeling he'd go for me long before he went for you," Wes grins. "I'm quite baffled as to why you're the one visiting the school today. You should be a pupil. Quite clearly you still need an education. I pity your son, and I hope and pray he grows up to be a better man than his father."

"My son will grow up to know the difference between right and wrong according to the bible."

"Really?" Wes asks, wrinkling his nose. "You wanna go there? Because the bible says shrimp is an abomination, and that we mustn't wear man made fibers. It also advocates the use of concubines and commends slavery, but I'd really rather not sell my daughter for three camels and a goat."

"All the same, you shirt lifters," the man growls."An answer for everything."
"Oh I think you misunderstand," Wes says happily. "I'm not gay. I'm just a friend to the gays. Rather like Doctor Dolittle, but with homosexuals instead of animals."

"You," Mr. Jackson says again, deciding to ignore Wes in favor of Blaine. "You'd better hope I never run into you again. If you heed my advice you'll take your alleged kid and get the fuck out of this school...even this goddamn town."

"Is that supposed to be a threat, sir?" Blaine asks calmly. "Because I can assure you, we're not going anywhere."

And then Kurt is by his side and taking his hand firmly, he stands sideways on to Blaine, closes his eyes and places a soft kiss to his temple, letting his lips linger slightly longer than normal. It is this intimate, romantic and touchingly profound gesture of love that oddly enough, makes Steve Jackson yell loudly, before storming to his car and driving away in a cloud of dust.

"Could I please have a ride home?" Wes says into the silence that follows. "Kathy seems to have gone without me."

"Doctor Dolittle to homosexuals?" Kurt asks with mock disdain as they walk toward the car. "Really Wes? That was the best you could come up with?"

"I was proud of that!" Wes laughs. "Jesus. What a jerk. I've met some ignorant assholes in my time but he has to be the worst of the lot."

"Kurt?"

Blaine's voice behind them, trembling and uncertain makes them stop their banter and turn around where they see Blaine standing a few paces back, biting his lip nervously. "Are you...are you mad at me?"

"Mad at you?" Kurt asks as he walks towards him. "No, Blaine. More like...prouder of you than I could ever imagine," he smiles, reaching out his hand to brush their fingers together. "You...you were so calm, so assured. And I just stood there."

"You kissed me," Blaine says, his eyes swimming with tears when he thinks of the gesture. "You held my hand and you kissed me without giving a damn for the consequences."

"And I'm gonna kiss you now," he smiles as behind him Wes politely looks the other way. "Because I really am so tremendously proud of you." Sliding one hand to the back of his neck, he draws Blaine closer, letting their lips brush together softly before he presses firmly, just opening his mouth a fraction under Blaine's lips, enough to run his tongue momentarily into Blaine's mouth before pulling back. "I love you, Blaine, and I loved the way you fought for us."

"I didn't. Not really," he shrugs. "I should've hit him."

"No you shouldn't."

"I should. He insulted you."

"Blaine, the most beautiful thing about all of that was your calmness. The way you tore his argument apart so completely with your words. That's why I'm so proud of you. It sucks, when I think about it, about what he said and the way he targeted you but you...you just defended us so completely."

"He was just so....mean," he finishes lamely.
"I know," Kurt says softly, wrapping his arms around him.

Wes arrives at their sides, wrapping his arms around them both. "I am, of course, immensely proud," he smiles. "And for future reference Blaine, I think you've found the perfect way to tell Libby how to handle any bullies that might come her way. I know you're upset, but hold it together for now. Let's go find your daughter. I assume she's with Kathy."

"If she isn't, we're in a whole world of trouble," Kurt tells him as he unlocks the car.

Blaine is practically silent the entire evening. They arrive back at Kathy and Wes' house and decide to stay for dinner. Libby and Livvy are completely clueless as to what unfolded at the school, thinking they left quickly so Kathy could make cupcakes with them while the daddies finished up talking with Miss Hunter, and they are thrilled when Kathy tells them they can have a cupcake each after dinner, and sends them to Livvy's bedroom to eat them so the adults can talk. Wes fills her in on all that happened and she shakes her head in disbelief.

"What a fucking jerk," she fumes. "Who the fuck does he think he is? To speak to you like that?"

"Woah," Kurt laughs. "In all the years I've known you I don't think I've ever heard you curse like that."

"Yeah, well," she mumbles, two high spots of color appearing on her cheeks. "It's...you know, he knows nothing about you guys. Nothing. Blaine's dad is really sick, and he's under a lot of pressure," she says, gesturing to him as he sits holding his head in his hands. "People don't think about stuff like that when they're just blindly yelling at someone because they don't approve of their lifestyle. Everyone's fighting their own personal battle, and people shouldn't be so quick to judge."

"I hate this," Blaine mumbles as he replays the scene over and over in his head. "I hate this small town bigotry. We should just move back to Chicago and have done with it."

"Oh hey now, no," Kathy says firmly, tugging on his wrists until he sits straight and looks at her. "Don't you dare do this. You and Kurt have just decided that you're not moving to New York, and you decided against Chicago way back in August. You will not run away from this, Blaine Hummel-Anderson, because I won't let you. Saturday night you were telling me how happy you are living here, telling me your plans for the building work, planning our summer vacation together. You have friends here, Blaine. And not just us, or Santana, but new friends too. Friends that you two have made with Libby, and who love the three of you just as you are. You stand your ground on this. You can't let the bullies win, Blaine. No doubt you told Kurt the same when he was younger, yes? Be proud of who you are, because one day your daughter will turn to you for guidance and advice and do you really want to tell her you ran away at the first sign of trouble? That you were ashamed of the love you and Kurt share? Don't be an idiot."

Kurt sits at the other end of the table, resting his chin on his hand. "What she said."

"Same," Wes agrees.

"You've spent too much time with Santana," Blaine grumbles, but he does smile and give her a hug.

"I'm right though, aren't I?"

"Yeah, you're right," he sighs. "Anyway. I guess we better get Libby home to bed. We'll see you for brunch tomorrow."
Despite Kathy's pep talk, and a call from Jess Hunter to remind them that she's on their side, Blaine is still quiet and withdrawn, and Kurt isn't at all surprised when he declares he's going to the hospital to sit with his dad for a bit once Libby is asleep. He returns a little over an hour later, with red rimmed eyes, and heads straight to the music room where he is happy for Kurt to sit on the piano bench and listen as he plays the most hauntingly sad melody on the violin.

And Kurt waits. He knows that at some point Blaine will want to talk, and eventually, after the violin playing, a shower, attempting to read and finally a medicinal glass of wine, he rolls over in bed and turns to Kurt in the lamplight.

"My dad is dying."

"What?"

"My dad is dying, and all that idiot can care about is calling me repulsive for daring to be gay."

"Blaine...I...did the hospital say that?"

"They didn't have to," Blaine says, his bottom lip trembling as he tries to hold it all in. "I knew tonight, as soon as I walked into his room. He's ready. That doesn't make it any easier on me, but in a weird way I'm kinda glad for him. He wouldn't want to just exist, with no quality of life. He's nearly ninety. His body and his mind are both tired now, and I just want him to be at peace."

"Oh honey. Did you call Cooper? Do you think you should sit with him tonight or...?"

"No, no it's not...imminent, I guess," he says sadly. "It's...I don't know. I don't know how to describe it really. Just that I know, that's all. He'll hang in there a while longer, but I know he's going."

"Okay, well...I trust your judgement," Kurt tells him, reaching for his hand. "And whatever you want to do is fine by me, okay? If you want to go to the hospital any time, you just say."

"Thank you."

"As for that guy... I kinda don't want to talk about it but I know we should. It's just...it brings back unpleasant memories as well as making me worry for the future, and what their kid is gonna be like to Libby."

"She said in the car earlier that he's nice."

"Yeah," Kurt says slowly. "For now. But he's living with that. How long is he gonna stay nice to the kid with gay parents?"

"She'll be okay," Blaine suddenly says in a burst of confidence. "Kathy is right. We made the decision to stay, and we're definitely not going to run away from this. A week ago our house was filled to the brim with a huge mix of family and friends. Everyone got on, no one had a problem with anyone else, and everyone was here because we invited them and they wanted to spend Halloween with us. Libby has all that support and love in her life, and us on top of it all. Whatever she might have to deal with in the future, she'll have an entire army on her side."

"I didn't do anything though," Kurt says in a small voice. "I was just completely frozen by fear and I swear, in that moment I wasn't thirty year old Kurt looking at some moron in his forties. I was fifteen year old Kurt getting taunted by Karofsky and all those jocks. You were so heroic, and Wes was so witty and cocky and I was just....stood there."
"Kurt." Blaine says sternly. "Don't you ever let me hear you talk that way. I told you. You held my hand and you kissed me. Have you any idea how terrified I was? I was shaking inside. What you call heroic, I call acting on instinct and trying desperately not to throw a punch and then run in the opposite direction. And firstly in the classroom, there was that quiet show of solidarity from you, when you just took my hand, letting me know you were with me, and then in the parking lot. That kiss...that's the bravest thing you could have done. You didn't grab my face and shove your tongue down my throat in some teenage act of defiance. You showed him how much I am loved and that you're not ashamed. It just... I don't think you have any idea how much it meant to me but I'm telling you, it was everything."

Kurt shifts so he's half over Blaine, who scoots down to lie on his back as Kurt kisses him with all the love and devotion he can, pulling back with a soft smile. "Thank you," he whispers. "You know you were spectacular though, right? I mean, I was truly stunned."

"Aw well..." Blaine says, blushing a little. "Yeah, now I think back on it, I'm pretty pleased with how it all went down."

"You okay?"

"Yeah," he nods. "I mean, I'm pissed off he chose today of all days to do this, with my dad and all, but then he didn't know that, I guess. And maybe I'm not as concerned because I'm more concerned about dad. I also think this will come back to haunt us. I'm sure he will complain to the school but again, I'm not too concerned. There were plenty of witnesses in the classroom and I didn't hit him so...I'm more worried about Jess, really. I don't want her to end up in trouble. But the principal seems to have her back."

"Can I ask a question?"

"Sure."

"What would you have done if you'd asked him for dinner and he said yes?"

Blaine shrugs, and that sparkle of mischief appears in his eye. "Given him Wes' address."

"Ha!" Kurt kisses him again, his favourite kind of kiss, when they're trying so hard not to just give in and laugh that the kiss doesn't really work and ends up being teeth pressed together as they grin. "He was right about one thing though," Blaine says, tugging Kurt further onto his chest. "Oh?"

"I do like taking it up the ass."

"Blaine!" Kurt shrieks, laughing loudly. "You're disgusting."

"That's what he said too."

"Okay, stop," a still laughing Kurt says with a kiss to his cheek. "Seeing as you were so wonderful tonight, I might be willing to give you what you want."

Kurt secretly...or not so secretly really, enjoys the power he has over Blaine in moments such as these. He loves the way the anticipation of what's to come can make Blaine nearly fall apart there and then. He loves to tease him, taking his time to kiss over all his sensitive spots, always making sure to leave a hickey somewhere on his chest or thigh because he knows it will drive Blaine wild over the next few days when he showers. He's caught him jerking off before, and he freely
admitted it was because he looked down and saw the mark Kurt had made the night before.

He loves that despite not needing to be carefully stretched each time now, Blaine still loves the feel of Kurt's fingers inside of him. He keeps meaning to see if Blaine could come from that alone, but then his own cock aches and strains for relief so much that he forgets all about that, just like he does right now as he sits up naked against the headboard, stroking himself slowly. "Come sit in my lap," he commands, and Blaine scrambles to straddle him, tilting his head to kiss him desperately. "Turn around," Kurt adds, and Blaine happily turns, resting his hands on Kurt's knees as he's guided slowly backward and then Kurt is there, filling him up, making him complete and sighing happily as he holds Blaine around his waist and kisses his shoulder. "I love you so much, Blaine."

"I love you too, Kurt," Blaine whispers, letting his head fall back to rest on his shoulder.

"You'll always be my everything, you know that?"


Blaine is knocked forward with the force of Kurt's thrusts, and he rests his hands on the sheet between them and pushes back as hard as he can, meeting Kurt over and over again until they're sweating and panting hard from the exertion, and then Kurt pulls him upright, for Blaine's hands to rest behind them as Kurt takes him hard and deep, making his husband cry out desperately. "Fuck! This is so good, Kurt. So...damn...good..."

"I love your ass," Kurt pants, laughing. "I love fucking you."

"I need to come," Blaine whimpers. "Please Kurt..."

"Not yet," he commands. "I'm not ready."

"But..."

"Lemme see you," Kurt says, sliding down so he's flat on his back. "Work yourself on my cock, Blaine. Let me see you."

Never needing an excuse, Blaine puts on a show, rising and falling slowly making sure Kurt gets to see him taking every inch and moaning loudly as he does so. "That's good," he groans. "So good."

"Touch yourself."

"I can't," Blaine tells him. "I'll come right away."

"Ride me hard, Blaine, and touch yourself. I'll say when I'm ready for you to come."

He obliges, though he feels like every nerve in his body is on fire with desperation as he rides Kurt as hard and fast as he can, and he's pretty sure he will explode when he takes his cock in his hand and starts to stroke it quickly. He's so tightly wound and coiled, like a spring ready to snap at any second and then suddenly Kurt sits up again, propping himself on one elbow as his other arm winds around Blaine's waist, his fingers closing over his fist as they work him together. "Come," Kurt whispers.

"Fuck! Kurt!" Blaine gasps loudly as he comes all over their hands and he feels Kurt filling him, pulsing and driving deep before he falls back limply on the bed and Blaine rests his hands on Kurt's knees again, trying to catch his breath. "That...was...I'm done," he pants, lazily rolling off Kurt and into his side. "I'm done. You're cruel to me."
"Oh please," Kurt laughs, holding his arm out for Blaine to cuddle in. "I'm not cruel. You know you love it."

"Might do."

"You do." He kisses him firmly, admiring and loving the glow that spreads over Blaine after sex, and he snuggles down so they're almost nose to nose. "We should clean up."

"We should."

"Here." Kurt wipes at Blaine lazily with some tissues before he cleans his own hand. "That'll do."

"Thanks."

"You look so beautiful," Kurt whispers.

"So do you."

"Sleep?"

"Yeah."

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They're woken by two phones ringing. Blaine's cell and the house phone, which Kurt answers, pulling on a robe as he knows Libby will be emerging from her room any second, and he steps into the hallway to let Blaine answer his cell in peace. "Hello?"

"Kurt? It's Jess Hunter."

"Oh. Hey. It's early, isn't it?"

"It's almost nine," she says. "I'm sorry for the early morning call on a Saturday."

"No I'm just wondering why Libby isn't...oh," he says, smiling when he opens her door. Libby looks up. Fully dressed, in her best party dress and surrounded by an assortment of bears and dolls, she smiles sweetly.

"Tea, papa?"

"In a second, baby girl," he laughs. "I'm just on the phone. Sorry," he says to Jess as he steps back out into the hall.

"Not at all. So it's not as early as you thought."

"No."

"Well anyway, I offered to call you on behalf of Principal Jones. Caleb Jackson's parents have requested a meeting on Monday morning, and the principal would like you both to attend. But he asked me to stress that there's nothing to worry about, it's just a formality more than anything. You're not in any trouble."

"Oh," Kurt says in surprise. "Well that's...um... Yes. Of course we'll attend," he says, stiff and formal. "What time?"

"Kurt, it's me," Jess says kindly. "It's okay to tell me this stinks, cause it really does. But we're on
"your side here, please remember that."

"What time?" he reiterates, still cold.

"Ten."

"We'll be there, Miss Hunter, thank you."

"Oh don't you dare 'Miss Hunter' me," she snaps. "We're way past that. I caught you two making out in the bathroom last weekend, Kurt. Now quit being all weird and tell me what you really think."

"It's fucking shit."

"That's better," she laughs. "It is, I know. But Bob Jones is a good guy," she says kindly. "He has strong morals and he will stand by you on this, I know it."

"Yeah I'm just...I'm more worried about Blaine, to be honest," he admits. "His dad...it's not looking good. And now all this."

"Well I'll let you go be with him. But please reassure him about this meeting, Kurt. He doesn't need anything else to worry about."

"I will do."

He hangs up and thinks of Libby, patiently waiting for him to attend her tea party, but something pulls him back to the bedroom, and he finds Blaine sitting on the edge of the bed, his face ashen. "Oh god. Oh Blaine..."

"No," Blaine whispers as Kurt kneels anxiously between his legs. "Not yet. But that was the hospital. They want Cooper and I to go in and discuss end of life care."
Blaine goes alone, and is absent the entire morning. Kurt cancels their usual brunch with Wes and Kathy, opting to stay at home and immerse himself in Libby's fantasy world, giving her his undivided attention for a good few hours of tea parties, doctors, schools and house role play. Finally, at just after noon, the front door slams and they both run into the hallway to find Blaine and Cooper standing there, looking weary and sad.

"Uncle Cooper!" Libby cries happily, launching herself at him. "You come visited me!"

"I sure did," he says, forcing a smile. "What're you up to?"

"Papa and me were having a tea party, but he's gonna kiss daddy now."

"Oh is he?" Cooper laughs, turning around to find Blaine wrapped in Kurt's embrace. "So he is. Come on, Libby, I could really use some tea while your daddies talk."

"Libby!" Blaine calls as she starts tugging her uncle toward the playroom. "I'm sorry, baby girl, I didn't mean to ignore you. I'll catch up with you in a minute."

"Not a minute, daddy," she says, rolling her eyes. "Tea parties need at least three hours."

Kurt laughs softly, kissing Blaine's cheek. "Don't worry about her," he whispers. "She's as happy as can be. Now come through to the kitchen so we can talk properly."

"Sandwich?" Kurt asks as Blaine sits at the table.

"Please. But nothing too heavy. I don't really feel like eating too much."

"So what's happening?"

"Well.... The flu has turned into a pneumonia, and he's not gonna get better," Blaine says quietly. "So they asked us whether we wanted a do not resuscitate order put into place."

"And?"

"And we said yes," he whispers, swiping at his tears.

"Oh Blaine, my darling," Kurt says, coming over to hold him in his arms. "I'm so sorry."

"It really sucks," he says into Kurt's shoulder. "To have to sit there and watch your big brother crying and know that there won't be any parental guidance this time. They...mom and dad, I mean... They've guided us, steered us and helped us all through our lives and now we're sitting in some doctors office having to make this decision alone as if he's some kind of...of animal. And I don't want to say yes. It sounds so callous and cruel. 'If my dad stops breathing please don't bother trying to bring him back to life.' But then.... I look at him and.... Oh god, this sounds so awful but I feel as if it would be unfair to keep him alive."

"That's not awful," Kurt says kindly. "I agree it's a horrible decision to make, but I do also believe that every life has a natural end point, and I think it's probable that for your dad, this is it. Would you agree?"

"Yeah," he sighs heavily, rubbing his hands over his face. "I would. That's what Cooper said too. But...I don't know. I'm forty five and I still don't feel ready to be an orphan. Is that dumb?"
"Not at all," Kurt says as he shifts to sit in his lap and play with his hair. "But you're never going to be ready, are you? Cooper's fifty four and I doubt he wants to be without parents either. But to be blunt, he can't be kept alive forever. It's life, Blaine. We're born, we live, we die. And as tough and as harsh as that may sound, you just have to think of all he's given to you over the last forty five years and be so grateful you got him as your dad. Cause I'm telling you, when he's gone? You will have a lifetime of happy memories to treasure, and there's not many who can say the same."

"I know. I do know this it's just..."

"Your dad."

"Yeah. So now we have a decision to make," Blaine says heavily. "Do we take Libby to see him one last time or not?"

"Oh. Well...that's for you to decide," Kurt says, trying to gauge his thoughts from his eyes.

"No it's not," Blaine tells him with a small smile. "It needs to be a joint decision. I'm not saying either way and then have you silently disagreeing with me."

"Okay," Kurt nods. "So tell me what you think."

"No...you tell me what you think."

"That's not fair!" Kurt cries with a small laugh.

"Well someone's gotta go first."

"Okay, tell me how he is. I mean, I haven't seen him since Thursday. Is he worse? I mean, how much has he gone downhill in forty eight hours? Will Libby be upset? If she visits, do we tell her this is the last time? I don't know, Blaine," he says, visibly becoming upset. "I don't know because I'm finding this hard enough as it is. I don't want him to die," he says, stifling a sob.

"Shh, shh, it's okay," Blaine soothes as he holds him tight. "Let's just...talk this through, I guess. Yeah?"

Kurt sniffles and gives a small nod, really wishing he could hide upstairs in bed and pretend like none of this was happening, but knowing how much Blaine needs him to be strong.

"Dad is...peaceful, actually," Blaine says quietly. "He's sleeping a lot. He doesn't sound too good when he tries to cough up the stuff on his chest because...well...because he hasn't got the strength to cough hard but...yeah. Most of the time he's sleeping. Yes, he's gone downhill since Thursday. Last night he stirred a little bit and though he seemed pleased to see me, he couldn't really talk. I think he was trying to ask if you were with me but I couldn't really make it out. He didn't wake at all when we were there this morning. As for Libby.... We've always been honest with her about stuff and I don't think this should be any different. We have to tread carefully, obviously, but I think we need to prepare her for that fact that he's not going to get better."

"I think we should let her decide then," Kurt says.

"What?"

"She's a smart cookie, Blaine. She's been him nearly every day since she was six months old, and honestly? I think we owe it to her to let her decide. I agree with you, we have to be honest, but we also have to go careful. I don't want her to be frightened of death or of losing him, but I think she needs to understand that it is going to happen, and that she can either go visit him one more time or
choose to remember him how he was when she saw him last. Which was...what? Wednesday?"

"Tuesday," Blaine corrects. "He went into hospital Wednesday."

"So we talk with her, and maybe give her a few days to think about it."

"She can't, Kurt," Blaine says sadly as he shakes his head. "If she wants to see him it needs to be now, this weekend."

"That soon?"

"A few days, I think. At best."

"Okay," Kurt says with a heavy heart. "Well. There are others too, of course. The twins? Wes. Wes will be... Distraught."

"Yeah. I'll call him. Finn and Rachel, Sebastian, Santana...the list goes on. The twins are coming here right now. I think they'll stay here until.... Copper and Clare too, if that's okay?"

"Of course," Kurt says pressing a soft kiss to his forehead. "Why don't you call my dad while I fix lunch? He can call everyone else for you."

"But I'll get really upset."

"Don't be afraid to cry for him, Blaine. It's all very well to say 'he's elderly, he's had a good life,' but it doesn't make this any less painful. It's okay to be sad."

"Have you ever known me not to cry?" he says with a wry smile. "I'm not ashamed to cry, I just don't want to let go completely, because I'm not sure I'll get it back, and I'm aware I have a little girl down the hall who needs me to be strong for her."

"And that little girl has a daddy who she loves more than anything," Kurt smiles. "And it's okay to let her see you like this, because it teaches her that grief is normal."

"So we'll talk with her after lunch?"

"I guess so."

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Libby knows something is wrong. Not a little bit wrong, like when daddy backed the car into that truck and tried to figure out if papa would notice the smashed tail light, or when Aunt Santana had forgotten her in that clothing store in the mall, and she had stood very still and waited until she came running back, but really wrong.

It started this morning, when daddy ran out of the house without shaving or eating breakfast or anything. Then he returned with Uncle Cooper, which was very exciting because he was happy to play tea parties with her. But when they were playing she noticed he looked sad, and when she asked him what was wrong he looked at her and said "There's some stuff going on right now, squirt, that's making me sad, that's all. I'm sure daddy will explain." But he didn't explain, and neither did papa. In fact, no one really talked at all during lunch until the doorbell sounded in the hall, and daddy opened it to find Sebastian standing there with Santana, and both of them had definitely been crying. Not long after, Wes and Kathy had arrived with Livvy, and now thoroughly confused, Libby had left her daddy really crying hard while Wes cuddled him in the hall, and had dragged her best friend into the playroom.
"I think I did something," she whispers urgently to Livvy.

"No, I think I did," Livvy says, clutching her hands. "Cause my daddy keeps crying. Mommy cried a little bit too, and when I asked what is wrong she just said 'not now, Olivia,' in that voice she has, and then daddy said we had to come see my Blaine."

"Yeah, because I've done something wrong."

"No, I have, cause as soon as we got here, daddy started crying all over again."

"What if we both have? What if Miss Hunter is mad at us and she telled our dads?"

The girls stare at each other with wide eyes, jumping in surprise when the door opens and Santana comes in. "Hey girls, how are you?"

"I think we did something wrong," Libby confides. "Cause we made all the grown ups cry. And you!" she says, noticing how upset Santana looks. "You've been crying too."

"Oh sweetie, yes I have," she admits. "But neither one of you have done anything wrong, okay? And it's really important that you know that. It's just...something really sad is happening."

"That's what Uncle Cooper said," Libby frowns. "But what sad thing is it?"

"I think your daddy wants to tell you that," Santana says kindly, "He sent me to find you and ask you to go to the music room."

"Can I go too?" Livvy asks.

"Not this time, Liv. You come with me. Mommy wants to talk to you and then I'm taking you out for a milkshake."

"Ooh!" Libby cries, her eyes lighting up. "I don't wanna see daddy. I want to get milkshake."

"Another time," Santana smiles. "I promise. Run to daddy now, and remember I love you mountains, okay?"

"Okay!" Libby smiles, kissing her lips before skipping from the room, happy that she's not in trouble and that she's promised a milkshake soon.

"Daddy!" she cries happily when she sees Blaine sitting at the piano. "Are we singing? And guess what? Santana says she will take me for milkshake soon. She promised and everything."

"Hey Lib. Uh...no, we're not singing today," he says softly. "Papa and I need to talk to you like a big girl, and I need you to listen and try to understand, okay?"

"Yes daddy."

"And also," he says as he hoists her up into his lap. "I need you to know that both me and papa might cry, a lot when we're talking with you, but that's okay. It's okay to cry, and it's okay for you to cry too if you want."

"You always cry, daddy," Libby says indulgently. "You have leaky eyes."

"Yes I do," Blaine smiles as Kurt slips into the room and sits beside them. "So listen. We're sad because grandad is in the hospital again, only this time he's really sick."
"Like when papa had that taco and kept throwing up?"

"Not sick like that," Blaine explains patiently. "Sick like...he's old, baby girl, and he's tired."

"He should sleep more then."

"He is sleeping," Kurt says as he smoothes her hair. "He's sleeping a lot right now, and...well...he's um...he's not going to get better, Libby."

Libby stops and stares for a moment, her big blue eyes blinking hard as she looks between both her daddies who look back at her sadly. "Not never?" she asks in a little voice, and Blaine shakes his head.

"No."

"Will he die?"

"Yes," Blaine says, exhaling a shaky breath before silent tears start to fall. "Yes, sweetheart, he's going to die very soon."

"And I won't have a grandad no more?"

"He will always be your grandad," Kurt tells her kindly. "It's just that he won't be here anymore. He'll be happy with your other grandma, the one that died just before you were born. Daddy's mommy."

"In heaven?"

"Um... If that's...um..." Blaine starts, not really sure whether now is the time to share his agnostic views.

"Yes," Kurt says firmly. "He will be in heaven and he'll be looking down on you, watching over you and keeping you safe as you grow."

And Blaine sighs in relief and gratitude as Kurt puts his arm about him and kisses his cheek. "You're doing great," he whispers as Blaine sags against him. "Ask her."

"So...Lib...um... I need to ask you something," Blaine says slowly. "And it's really important for you to know that there is no right or wrong answer to this, no one will be mad at you for whatever you decide."

"Like when we watch America's Got Talent and you tell me it's my choice if I like all the dancing dogs?"

"Exactly like that," Blaine says, laughing through his tears. "Honey, do you want to go to the hospital to visit grandad one more time?"

"Before he dies?"

"Yes," Blaine says softly. "It's your choice. You might just want to keep the memories you have of him in your heart, or you might want to come sit with me a while and hold his hand. He doesn't look sick, Lib, not like papa looked when he'd eaten that taco, but he is sleeping a lot, and there's a good chance he wouldn't wake up and talk with you while we were there. Um...what else? He looks...small, I guess. But you're small, so that probably won't mean a lot. He's still grandad," he says, smiling and tenderly kissing her forehead. "But he's not going to be sitting up in bed trying to
"Oh." She nods slowly and bites her lip, mirroring Kurt's pose. "I don't have to go?"

"Of course not, sweetie," Blaine says, holding her tight in his arms. "I'm gonna go there later, and I can give him any message you might have, or take in a picture if you want to make one, but you don't have to visit."

"I don't think I want to go one more time, thank you daddy," she says, looking between him and Kurt anxiously. "If that's okay?"

"That's fine, Libby, we told you," Kurt smiles.

"I think I want to go lots more times, not just one," she carries on as her bottom lip wobbles and she starts to cry. "Because I don't want grandad to die."

Blaine sits stunned, not really sure what to say or how to explain, and all he can really do is pull her tight to his chest as he cries hard. "Oh Libby...oh god...."

"I got this, come on." Kurt takes her from him firmly, cradling her small form in one arm as he puts the other arm around Blaine's shoulders and comforts him as best he can. "Libby, sweetheart..."

"I'm sorry for making daddy cry," she says as she rubs at her eyes.

"No, no you didn't," Blaine sniffs. "Ah crap, this was all going so well."

"And now you've gone and said crap," Kurt admonishes.

"So did you, papa," Libby points out, giggling through her tears. "Grandpa would tell you off."

"He would, but he's not here," Kurt smiles. "Okay. Let's try this again here. Libby, you didn't make daddy cry. He's crying for his daddy, because he doesn't want him to die either. But he is a very sick man, sweetie, and he can't get better. Daddy asked if you wanted to visit one more time because...well...because there's not going to be many more days left for grandad to be here with us, that's all. So there won't be lots of times. I'm sorry, but there won't be. And that makes me, and daddy and everyone else incredibly sad. But for grandad, it's probably the best thing. You wouldn't want to see him being so sick for a long time, would you? And you know he keeps forgetting, well, it would only get worse until eventually he couldn't remember your name, and that would hurt, Libby Darling. Grandad wouldn't want that and neither would you. So it's tough, but I'm afraid the only choice is to see grandad one more time or to keep your memories as they are."

"Will he still be here tomorrow?"

"I expect so," Blaine says, wiping at his eyes.

"Can I go then?"

"Yes, if that's what you want," Kurt nods.

"Can I wear the pink and white dress you made me? Even though it's a summer one? Cause grandad said I looked like the prettiest flower in the whole garden when I weared it one time."

"Yes, of course you can."

"Then that's what I'll do," she says decisively, her tears forgotten for now. "Can I go for milkshake with Santana and Livvy now?"
"I think they've already gone, honey, because Wes and Kathy have gone to the hospital. But Aunt Rachel was in the kitchen, do you want to see if she will take you?"

"Yay!" Libby cries, jumping down from Kurt's lap and running to the door. She stops with her hand paused on the handle though, turning around and running back to Kurt and Blaine, kissing each one on the lips and hugging Blaine extra tight. "You won't die, will you?"

"Not until I'm very old," Blaine tells her. "And that is not now, before you say anything."

Her little giggle bubbles up and out as she covers her mouth with her hands. "That's good. I love you, daddy, and you, papa."

"We love you too, Libby," Kurt smiles. "You make us very proud."

*

Kurt slips quietly into the hospital room where Wes and Kathy sit either side of Mike's bedside, holding his hands and waiting in the silence. Wes looks up, surprised to find almost two hours have passed since they arrived, and that Kurt is here to take over.

"Where's Blaine?" he asks quietly.

"Down the hall with Cooper," Kurt whispers back. "Talking with the doctor. Has there been any change?"

"None," Wes says sadly. "He's been this way since we got here. And now I know I have to go but..."

"You can stay, if you want."

"No, it's...we need to collect Liv, and we'll take Libby for a while so Santana can visit with Rachel and Finn. Sebastian said he'll come tonight."

"Okay."

"Do you want us to take Libby overnight?" Kathy asks him quietly.

"No, thanks. Blaine and Cooper will stay here tonight, and to be perfectly honest, I need Libby in my bed. I need to hold her."

"I understand," Kathy nods. Standing, she kisses Mike’s cheek and whispers a tearful goodbye to the man she has cared for over so many years. She flees the room before a loud sob can escape, leaving Wes and Kurt together.

"Funny," Wes says, though there’s nothing amusing at all. “I have parents. Good ones, too. But Mike and Sara...they’ve been like parents to me in so many ways. I couldn’t love this man more if he was my own dad.”

"Same," Kurt says, unable to keep his own tears from falling. “Just...yeah. One of life’s good guys.”

"I have to go, Mike," Wes whispers, kissing the back of his hand. “I’ll leave you with Kurt, we all know he’s your favorite,” he says with a small laugh. “Goodnight.”

He hugs Kurt fiercely then leaves to find his wife, and Kurt sits in the chair he’s vacated, taking Mike’s hand in his.
“I don’t know what to say to you,” Kurt admits. “It’s so strange without you attempting to crack jokes at Coopers expense,” he smiles. “But I guess I just want to say this. Blaine’s coming in a minute, and Cooper. They’re gonna stay here, right by your side, for as long as you need them, okay? And I don’t know how much you can hear, or how much you understand but I want to let you know that you don’t have to worry. I promise you faithfully that I will always look after Blaine for as long as I’m living. I’ll always love him, and keep him safe. Libby too, of course, and I know Clare promises the same for Cooper. Thank you for trusting me with your son,” he says, his voice cracking as he bows his head. “You are the most wonderful father-in-law I could ever have wished for. My favorite, in fact,” he says with a wry smile. “And I hope I haven’t let you down.”

The softest squeeze of fingertips is felt and Kurt looks up, squeezing back before he kisses the hand that holds his and lets his tears fall.
“Hello grandad! It’s very quiet in here. And dark. Why’s it so dark?” Libby asks animatedly when she skips into the hospital room the next day. "Oh! Hello daddy!” she says when she spies Blaine curled on the small cot in the corner of the room. "And Uncle Cooper. Was there a sleepover? Did I miss a sleepover?"

"You wouldn't have wanted to be here, Lib," Blaine says, his voice scratchy from lack of sleep. "It was a rough night."

"Oh. Can you open the shades so grandad can see my dress?"

"Libby, sweetie, come here,” Clare whispers from where she sits with Kurt at the bedside. "Come see grandad, honey." Lifting the little girl into her lap, she gently encourages her to take in the sight of Mike, now sleeping peacefully though obviously very close to the end. "I don't think grandad will wake to see your dress," she says as kindly as she can. "But we all think you look so pretty, and what a nice surprise it is for your daddy and Uncle Cooper, huh? You know, Maddie and Joe will be coming by later, and Taylor. I'm sure they'll like it too."

"Papa did my hair too," Libby says distractedly as she lets her little fingers trail over the veins in Mike's hand where it rests on his chest. "And I didn't cry, not once."

"What a good girl," Clare says, kissing into her hair. "I know grandad will be pleased to hear that."

"He can hear me?"

"Yes I think he can," she nods. "And I'm sure he'd like to hear all about your week at school."

"Oh. Well. On Monday, grandad, when I got on the bus, there was a new boy on there. He's in my class but he's six already. He's called Brad. He sits near Melody from the bus stop but not next to her, because she sits next to Sophia. I sit next to Livvy, of course, and Jamie sits on my other side. Miss Hunter said..."

And she's off, keeping up a continuous monologue as she sits on Clare's lap and tells him every last detail of her week at school. Blaine and Kurt look on, fascinated as she chatters happily, really not seeing or caring how sick he is, this is her grandad and that's all that matters. “Rough night?” Kurt asks quietly, and Blaine nods.

“Yeah. He uh...he couldn’t cough and um..he got quite distressed. We got quite distressed, I should say. He’s been asleep for the last few hours. The doctors gave him something...I don’t know. Something to help him sleep.”

“He seems peaceful now.”

“Yeah,” Blaine looks on, smiling softly at Libby who continues with her animated chatter. “Funny to hear her talking about school as if nothing was amiss. Weirder still to think that only on Friday that idiot was threatening me in the parking lot. Being here....it’s kind of a bubble. Everything else ceases to exist while we wait for him to...to...”

“I forgot to call Jess,” Kurt says, cutting him off. “To postpone the meeting tomorrow. I’ll do that.”

“No, don’t,” Blaine says, reaching out to stop him from getting out of his chair. “We can still go.”
“Blaine...”

“Libby is our daughter, Kurt. Nothing is more important to me than her happiness. I need to go to this meeting to make sure she will be safe at school.”

“I know, honey, but..”

“Please?”

Kurt opens his mouth to object again but then looks into Blaine’s eyes. He’s begging. Begging for something, anything to take his mind off sitting and waiting for his dad to pass, and he nods instead. “Sure. We can still go. You’re right, it’s important.”

“Thank you,” Blaine whispers, sinking into Kurt’s embrace.

“.....And then Martin jumped up onto the table, which you know he’s not supposed to do,” Libby carries on blithely, “but Aunt Rachel letted him anyway and started petting him. And she said I couldn’t tell papa because he’d have a fit, but it was okay to tell daddy because he’s a softie..... And that’s all I really have to say about that,” she concludes, looking to Clare and then back to Mike. “Grandad?” she asks, her voice gone suddenly small. “I wish you’d wake up and see my dress. I know you’ve seen it before but...I just really wish you’d wake up,” she says quietly. “I’m a bit sad, actually...... A lot sad.”

“Libby, honey? Are you okay? Do you want to step outside?” Cooper asks, smoothing over her hair.

“No,” she says firmly, shaking her head. “I want to sit there,” she tells him, pointing to the bed. “And I want to cuddle him.”

The four adults look between them, all silently agreeing, and Cooper lifts her onto the bed, carefully arranging Mike’s arm to rest about her shoulders as she curls in against him. “Better,” she murmurs, closing her eyes.

It takes a long time for anyone to realize she’s fallen asleep, in fact it is only once Maddie and Taylor arrive with Joe, and he notices how deeply she’s breathing that they notice she’s been napping next to her beloved grandad for an hour. “I wanna take a picture,” Blaine says with a sad smile. “But is that morbid?”

“No,” Kurt says, urging him to his feet. “Take it. You don’t have to show her until she’s older if you think it will upset her.”

“Okay,” Blaine says, snapping the photo and admiring it on his phone. “I think it might be time to wake her up and take her home.”

“I agree,” Kurt nods.

“Yes. We’ll all go with Kurt,” Clare says, her eyes filling with tears at the thought. “Leave you and Cooper alone with him.”

“Oh god,” Maddie moans, hiding into Joe’s shirt while Taylor looks on in silence. “This is it, isn’t it? I have to say goodbye to him.”

“Yes you do, honey,” her mom says, taking her hand. “We all do.”

“Libby, sweetie?” Kurt gently rouses her and she sits, rubbing at her eyes.
“Is it breakfast?”

“No, darling, it’s after lunchtime. You took a nap with grandad.”

“I did,” she says, noticing where she is, and instantly pleased. “Can it be breakfast time though?”

“It can be whatever you want it to be,” Kurt says, trying to pick her up but she subtly fists the sheet and slides closer to Mike. “I’m going to take you home now,” he smiles. “And maybe if you ask nicely, Maddie will make you some of her pancakes.”

“We’re all going?”

“Yes. Well, daddy and Uncle Cooper are staying, but everyone else is going.”

“And we’re not never coming to see grandad again?”

“Well, we just don’t know, darling,” Kurt says, choking around his words.

“Libby?”

The voice is so soft at first, that it’s only Libby that hears it. She turns suddenly and sure enough, Mike is smiling at her. “Libby?” he asks again, and this time a multitude of adults crowd around the bed, peering at him.

“All of you,” Mike whispers, his voice dry and parched.

“Dad,” Blaine says, smiling even though he has tears rolling down his face. “Do you want anything? Some water?”

Mike gives a small shake of his head, smiling again when Libby holds his hand. “Like...dress,” he croaks, and she beams with pride and smoothes it proudly. “Garden...pretty flower.”

“Yes!” she cries happily. “I am the prettiest flower in the whole garden. I know! I telled daddy and papa you said that.”

He falls back against the pillows, satisfied. “You're all here,” he says again. “Love you all.”

“We love you too, grandad,” Taylor says quietly as his sister clings tightly to him.

“Yeah, and we’re so glad you woke up to see Libby’s dress. She’s been banging on about it since she got here,” Cooper teases.

But Mike isn’t listening. Looking past Libby, he smiles as brightly as he can, his eyes firmly focused on the back wall. “Sara.”

As clearly and concisely as if he were fit and well, he says it again. “Sara.”

The room is so silent you could hear a pin drop, as Kurt holds his husband and rests his other hand on Libby’s leg, Cooper holds his wife and Joe puts his arms around both the twins. It falls to Libby to break the silence in her own inimitable style as she looks between the wall and Mike and back again. “My other grandma is here!” she says brightly.

“You can see her?” Kurt whispers in awe.

“Nope. Don’t be silly, papa. But she’s here. Grandad said so.”
“She can see you, Libby,” Mike says, still smiling at the wall. “She watches you, and she loves
you, Libby Darling.”

“Well that’s good,” Libby booms. “Because I am wearing my pretty dress and everything.
And...Grandad?” she asks, panic seizing her. “Grandad? Where did you go?”

“Is he...?” Kurt starts, but Blaine shakes his head as Mike continues to breathe, but it’s different
than before, slower, deeper and seemingly more laboured as he slips into a deep coma.

“I think...” Blaine whispers, and Kurt nods without needing to be told.

“Lib, sweetie? It’s time to go, my baby girl.”

“I know.”

Blaine looks to Kurt, surprised as he was expecting more of a fuss. “Goodbye, grandad,” she says
simply, crawling over him to hug him tight and kiss his cheeks. “I love you for always. I’m glad
you liked my dress,”

“Okay,” Blaine says, carrying her out into the hall and letting the others say their goodbyes. “I’ve
always been proud of you, darling girl,” he smiles. “But today you made me so happy. I know I
look sad but really, my heart is bursting with happiness now.”

“That’s nice daddy,” Libby smiles, rubbing their noses together as she kisses his lips. “I’m glad
grandad waked up, even for a little bit.”

“Me too,” Blaine agrees.

“No,” Blaine sighs, knowing how close the end is. “Not anymore. But it sounds like my momma
has come to collect him,” he says, smiling again. “She was always doing that. He was always
getting left places.”

“Like when me and papa left Target without you and you had to call us?”

“Just like that,” Blaine laughs. “Just like that.”

Kurt emerges from the room, stifling a sob into Blaine’s shirt as he cries hard. Blaine holds him
tight, kissing into his hair over and over while Libby fiddles with his collar, crooning over and over
“pretty papa, I love you,” until he has no choice but to look up and smile, taking her from Blaine so
he can kiss her cheeks.

“You’re the best, Libby Darling, you know that?” he smiles. “The absolute best.”

“Libby was just reminding me of when you deliberately left me in Target,” Blaine smiles.

“I did not do it deliberately!” Kurt cries with a laugh as Libby giggles. “I just happened to forget
you were with us, that’s all. Perhaps if you’d stayed with us instead of wandering off...”

“You couldn’t never lose me, papa,” Libby teases. “Cause I’m too pretty.”

“Too loud,” Blaine corrects before making them both laugh by kissing into their necks. “I’m not
sure when I’ll be home,” he tells Kurt as he turns serious.

“I know,” he nods. “And that’s fine. We’ve said our goodbyes and now it’s time for you and
Cooper to say yours.” He kisses him gently on the lips, lingering for as long as he dares in a busy corridor. “I love you so much, Blaine, remember that. Call if you need me, okay?”

“I will. Thank you, Kurt. I don’t think I could do this without you.”

He smiles tearfully, kissing his lips again. “It’s what best friends are for.”

*

The time passes slowly. Reluctant to leave Mike alone, Cooper and Blaine take it in turns to leave for fresh air, or to call loved ones before returning to the room and sitting either side of his bed once more. The clock ticks slowly towards midnight, then one, then two and still the brothers sit tight. They talk occasionally, idle chatter about Libby, or Maddie’s wedding plans, but mostly they’re still, watching and waiting.

“Remember when you got stuck in that toy car?” Blaine asks suddenly. “I must’ve been six or seven, maybe? So you were like...sixteen, and you wanted to prove you could still fit. I can still hear dad yelling at you.”

“Yeah,” Cooper smiles. “I thought I was gonna have to wear it to school. In the end he had to dismantle it around me.”

“What about that time you tried to make me sled down the basement steps?”

“Oh man, I was in so much trouble for that!”

“Yeah,” Blaine laughs. “And when that girl left her bra in your bed and you tried to blame it on me.”

“No one knew you were gay!”

“I was eight!” Blaine cries, laughing hard. “Why would a girl leave her bra in my bed?”

“Yeah...well...” Cooper flounders. “At least I didn’t fuck my boyfriend so loud in the pool house that my mom had to ask me to keep it down!”

“Oh my god! Don’t remind me please. I was so mortified I didn’t go near him for the rest of the visit.”

“That’s bullshit,” Cooper laughs. “You two were always locked in there. Dad walked in on you the day before your wedding, remember?”

“How can I forget?”

“Retreat, Burt, retreat! The boys are having sex in the pool house!”

They laugh long and loud and it feels good, both wiping away tears that come partly from the joy of remembering and partly from the pain that new memories will be no more. In the silence that follows they both take Mike’s hands, and Cooper raises it to his cheek, sighing sadly. “Oh dad. We’re gonna miss you so much. But I hope we do you proud.”

“I’m so glad I got you as my dad,” Blaine whispers. “If I had my time over again I wouldn’t do any of this differently, you know. You not only embraced me for who I was but also Kurt, and you never made me feel ashamed of myself. I’m so happy that I got the chance to say goodbye to you,” he says, leaning over and kissing his cheek. “You’ll always be our daddy, our hero, and we will
love you and miss you terribly, but it’s time for you to be with mom now.”

*K*

Kurt stirs at the feel of a hand on his, and opens his eyes to find Blaine crouching by the side of the bed, his eyes shining in the darkness. “Oh, hey,” he whispers. “What time is it?”

“Four,” he whispers back. “He died about an hour ago.”

“Oh my darling Blaine,” Kurt sighs, untangling himself from Libby and holding him tight. “Blaine...oh Blaine...”

“I feel....surprisingly at peace,” he says, pulling back slightly and nodding. “It was...I don’t know. Nice, I think. Cooper and I were reminiscing, laughing, then we kind of said all we wanted to say and....I don’t know...not very long after that he just...slipped away. He looked so peaceful Kurt, so serene.”

“Good,” Kurt says, nuzzling close to his cheek. “I mean, not good but...good you had this precious time with him, I guess. How’s Cooper?”

“He’s okay. He’s telling Clare but letting the others sleep. He’ll tell them in the morning.”

“So...what now?”

“I think I’d just really like to get into bed with you both and have you hold me, if that’s okay?”

“That’s more than okay,” Kurt nods. “Here. Let me help you.”

He undresses Blaine carefully, as if afraid he might break, and helps him into a pair of old worn sweats. “Can you leave this?” Kurt asks, gesturing to his bare chest. “I kind of need the comfort of your bare skin against mine,” he says, pulling his own t-shirt over his head.

“Yes,” Blaine agrees, and with Kurt in the middle, Blaine settles with his head on his chest, and one arm stretched across to keep Libby close. “I can’t cry,” he whispers against Kurt’s skin. “For the first time in my life, I can’t cry.”

“That’s nothing to be ashamed of,” Kurt reassures with a soft kiss to his forehead.

“But what if it happens later? What if I’m just randomly washing the car, or collecting the mail and I suddenly start crying? What then?”

“Then you find me, and I hold you, and I kiss all your troubles away,” Kurt says decisively. “Because I love you for all eternity.”

*K*

Blaine is surprised to find Taylor sitting at the kitchen table in the morning when he walks in, but he makes him a mug of coffee and slides it across to him wordlessly. They sit in silence for a while, and it's only when the clock in the hall chimes seven that Blaine looks up. "So..."

"I know," Taylor says morosely, "If that's what you were worrying about."

"Ah. I wasn't sure. And I didn't know if I should tell you."
"I heard you come home. Why are you up so early?"

"Gotta get Libby ready for school," Blaine says brightly. "Plus Kurt and I have a meeting with the principal so..."

"You're still gonna go to that?"

"You know about that?" Blaine asks in surprise.

"Kurt and Joe are best friends," Taylor offers by way of explanation. "And why is Libby going to school? Her grandad just died."

"I know...though she doesn't know yet. But I figured it's best to keep things normal for her, you know?"

"No, I don't know," Taylor snaps. "I think that's dumb. She should be home with us. I'd watch her if you're still insisting on going to that meeting."

"Thanks, but she's going to school," Blaine says with an air of finality. "Anyway, why are you up so early?"

"Well it's kinda hard to sleep when you hear news like that at four am."

"True," Blaine nods. "But it was hardly unexpected."

"I know that, and we all knew he was going downhill, I guess. But it just seemed as though a mild flu changed so quickly and just took him over completely."

"Yeah. He did uh...he did succumb fast, I guess. But he just wasn't strong enough to fight it. You know, he's had pneumonia before, and two strokes, plus there was the effect the dementia was having on him..."

"I can't help thinking he died without knowing who I really am," Taylor suddenly blurts.

Blaine sighs, knowing that's the reason behind the deep upset and he reaches across for his hand. "And who do you think you are, Taylor?"

"Gay," he says, looking Blaine square in the eye. "I'm gay."

"You've been seeing Jules?"

"Yes, and it's...yeah," he says, smiling. "It's going really well. And it's like...I miss him, when he's not around. I wish he was here right now to hold me, and I wish I'd had the balls to say to grandad 'see that one over there? The insane Italian's son? He's my boyfriend.'"

"Ah, so it's that serious then."

"Yes," Taylor says as he fiddles with his empty mug. "And now grandad has died without knowing me at all."

"I disagree," Blaine says evenly. "He died without knowing you're gay, yes. But being gay is not who you are, Taylor. Grandad knew you were an accomplished photographer, a bit of a geek, a football nut and a really brilliant brother and cousin. He also knew you had to be the world's best grandson, because you were his only one," he teases lightly. "You're not Taylor Anderson, gay. You're Taylor Anderson, all round good guy, son, brother, boyfriend and nephew with appalling taste in clothing who just happens to be gay."
"Hey! What's wrong with my clothes?"

"I've never once seen you in a bow tie."

"Exactly!"

They both laugh, and Blaine pulls him to his feet and into a hug which he receives gratefully. "I'm sorry Jules isn't here to hold you," Blaine says over his shoulder. "You'll just have to make do with crappy old Uncle Blaine for now, but if you ever want to bring Jules here, you know he'll be more than welcome, yes? You just might need to tell Kurt first, before he dies of shock."

"Kurt doesn't know?"

"Not unless you've said anything."

"No but I thought you....huh. Thanks," he says with a small smile.

"Anytime."

"Good morning daddy," Libby sings as she skips into the kitchen, her whole face lighting up when she sees Taylor. "And Taylor!" she squeaks, climbing into his lap and wrapping her arms about his neck. "I like having all these people staying in our house, daddy. Can we keep them?"

"Nope," Blaine smiles, standing to put their mugs in the dishwasher before pouring Libby’s cereal. "Cause as much as I love them, your uncle would drive me insane."

"Can I go see Maddie and Joe?" she asks excitedly. "Please?"

"Not right now, sweetie."

"I promise to knock this time," she says as Taylor hides his laugh.

"No, it’s not that. I need to talk with you," Blaine says kindly, setting her breakfast down and smiling as a rumpled Kurt enters the kitchen. "We both need to talk with you."


Taylor accepts his kiss to the cheek, knowing resistance is futile before pushing back from the table and standing. "I’m gonna leave you guys to it," he says, ruffling Libby’s hair. "Thanks for the chat, Uncle Blaine."

"Chat?" Kurt asks as soon as he’s out of earshot, but Blaine shakes his head.

"Not now. We need to..."

"Right."

Kurt pulls up a chair on the other side of Libby, watching her as she eats her cereal noisily, her lips smacking together as she lets out the occasional hum of satisfaction before gulping her orange juice. "So...Libby."

The little girl stops, setting her glass neatly back in place as she looks between the two of them. "Grandad died, didn’t he?" she asks Blaine, who nods, biting his bottom lip.

"He did," Kurt says quietly. "Early this morning when everyone was still sleeping. Well...except
daddy and Uncle Cooper because they were sitting with him.”

“But it’s okay,” Blaine says, forcing a smile. “I mean, it’s sad but Grandad...he was happy, Lib. Yesterday, when he woke up and saw us all there, he was so happy. You know that, right?”

“He liked my dress.”

“He really did,” Kurt smiles.

“So he does live in heaven now, with daddy’s momma?”

“Yes.”

“And I won’t see him not no more ever?”

“No,” Blaine says softly, smoothing a hand over her back. “You won’t see him again. But you’ll still have all those happy memories in here,” he says, resting his hand over her heart. “To keep you warm.”

She sits, deep in thought as Kurt and Blaine look on anxiously and she chews her lip- a die hard Hummel-Anderson trait that they all share. Eventually, she takes a deep, trembling breath and settles back in her chair. “My heart hurts,” she says sadly.

“Oh baby girl, mine too,” Kurt says sadly as he lifts her into his lap. “And it’s okay to hurt. Really. You know, you don’t have to go to school today,” he says, ignoring Blaine as he looks up sharply. “You can stay here with us, we can curl up and watch a movie or...”

“Does Livvy know that grandad died?”

“She will do by now, yes,” Blaine answers.

“And is she going to school?”

“I haven’t heard any different.”

“Will you tell Melody from the bus stop and Jamie?”

“Yes,” Blaine nods. “Well, their moms, anyway.”

“Then I’ll go to school,” she says decisively, climbing from Kurt’s lap. “They’ll look after my hurting heart.”

“Libby, honey, are you sure?” Kurt asks anxiously. “I mean... you might get upset...”

“No, papa,” Libby corrects. “I don’t want to be upset right now cause...” she trails off, unsure of how to vocalise her feelings and eventually all she can come up with is a line she once heard on an old tv show she watched with Santana. “I might drown in my tears, and I don't want to,” she announces, before spinning on her heel and marching back upstairs.

“The face might be mine but the heart and the head is all yours,” Kurt mutters as he gathers her bowl and glass.

“Hey! Is that...are you like...throwing shade at how I deal with stuff?” Blaine asks in surprise.

“No...well...yes. It’s just...I don’t know. It’s all this carrying on as normal. Her going to school, your determination to attend this dumb meeting...at some point one or both of you will hit a wall of
grief so damn hard you won’t get over it.”

“Kurt...I told you, dad died peacefully, and I could see how ready he was to go. Yes I’m sad but right now I’m just appreciating the fact that he didn’t drop dead before I had a chance to say goodbye!” He storms from the kitchen, leaving Kurt to dwell on his words and not another word is spoken until they arrive for their meeting with the principal.

* 

“Okay, class, settle down!” Miss Hunter calls over the noisy chatter. “I have to attend a meeting this morning, so Mrs.Elliott will be watching you, and I want you to be really good children and make me proud.”

“Miss Hunter?”

“Yes Libby?”

“I have some news.”

“Oh, okay, well...you can share it with the class,” the teacher smiles as the little girl stands up proudly.

“My grandad died.”

“Oh. Um..” Miss Hunter scrambles to think of an appropriate thing to say, but the class are on it.

“My fish died last week!”

“I had a nana that died.”

“Was your grandad old?”

“Did he crash his car? A man my mom knew crashed his car and died.”

“Okay!” Jess calls loudly. “Let’s just...Libby, sweetheart, I’m sorry your grandad passed away. I know he was very sick.”

“Yes,” she nods. “And I went to see him in the hospital and he waked up and said he liked my pretty dress and then he died.”

“He...hold up,” Miss Hunter says with concern. “He died when you were there?”

“No. He died this morning, when I was still sleeping.”

“He...Oh my,” the teacher whispers. “Libby, I’m so sorry. Your dads, are they...?”

“Papa is all sad and wants to watch a movie with me, and me and daddy don’t want to drown in our tears, no thank you so I have come to school and daddy is making papa come visit with Principal Jones. And that’s all I have to say about that.” Finished, she sits back down in her seat and reaches for her crayon, effectively closing herself off to anymore discussion, and Miss Hunter sits stunned for a moment until Mrs.Elliott arrives and tells her it’s time to go.

* 

"Blaine," Jess says, rushing to him. "I'm so sorry to hear..."
"It's fine," Blaine says, smiling tightly. "Fine."

"Blaine is refusing to acknowledge his feelings on the matter," Kurt informs her.

"I am not," he hisses as the office door opens and the principal emerges. "I told you I was sad, it's just right now this takes precedence. Hi!" He greets Principal Jones warmly, who shakes both their hands and leads them into his office.

"And what about you?" Jess whispers to Kurt as they walk through the door.

"Me?"

"Are you acknowledging your feelings, or are you just trying to be strong for everyone else?"

"Thanks for coming," Principal Jones says as he shows them into three chairs. "I know it's not an easy time for you, what with your father being sick."

"Actually, he passed away this morning," Blaine informs him.

"Oh, I am sorry," Bob Jones offers. "You could have cancelled. You still can. We can postpone..."

"No, it's fine," Blaine says as Kurt rolls his eyes. "Libby's schooling is very important to us, and I don't want Mr. Jackson accusing me of crying off over something trivial."

"Ah. Well.... About that..."

"He's made a complaint? He wants Libby out?" Blaine says angrily.

"No." Bob Jones is calm and placating as he talks, putting them both at their ease. "Mr. and Mrs. Jackson have chosen to withdraw their son from the school with immediate effect. I spoke with them earlier and my reluctance to listen to their narrow minded and homophobic views was somewhat of a deciding factor, I fear."

"Caleb is gone?" Jess Hunter says sadly. "He was such a lovely boy to teach."

"He was," the principal agrees. "His brother too. He moved to middle school last year."

"So they moved the kid because of us?" Kurt asks. "Because you have gay parents in the school?"

"Mr. Hummel-Anderson,"

"Kurt."

"Kurt, then. Let me level with you here. Yes, the Jackson's have removed their son because of what they deem to be our unacceptable support of same sex parents. But I'd rather call it humanity. I don't know anyone gay, I've never encountered a same sex couple much less a pair that are parents, but it doesn't really make any difference. Libby is a bright, happy young girl and a pleasure to have in our school. It wouldn't make any difference what pairing her parents are, we would still want her in our community. I guess I just want to reassure you that whatever happens, Libby will always be safe here, and we will do our best to see that she is happy."

"Thank you," Blaine says. "I know what happened on Friday was..."

"Totally not your fault," Bob reassures. "If you'd hit him, or threatened him in some way then it would be a different scenario altogether, but from what I can gather, you were calm and behaved perfectly reasonably. You haven't given us any cause to be concerned about your conduct."
"Still, I'm sorry," Blaine says, feeling every bit of his forty five years as he rubs a hand over his face. "I'm sorry we seem to bring so much trouble..."

"You shouldn't apologize for living your life," Jess tells him. "Listen to what Bob is telling you, Blaine. We're on your side here. We want to see Libby happy just the same as you do, and no one wants you to face discrimination just because you happen to be gay."

"I guess I'm just..." he starts, then suddenly gets hit with such a wave of emotion that he feels unable to go on.

"I think what Blaine is trying to say is that we're still struggling to get to grips with all this," Kurt says, finding his hand and holding it tight. "On the one hand we have an amazing network of family and friends, and we exist happily in this little bubble we've created for ourselves. On the other, there's this world that just...hates us, and when you add a child into that, it's quite a scary thing. It's kinda hard to believe there's people out there who are willing to show us kindness and not judge us based on our sexuality when we've been facing this hostility on and off our whole lives through."

"Well believe it," Bob says kindly. "There are decent people in the world, Kurt. That's what you two are, and certainly Miss Hunter here, and what I strive to be myself."

"Thank you," Blaine whispers, staring at the floor. "I think...I think I need to go home now. I haven't really slept in like...forever."

"Of course." The principal stands as a worried Kurt exchanges glances with Jess and helps Blaine to his feet. "Once again, I'm sorry for your loss. If there's anything we can do..."

Out in the parking lot, Blaine takes huge lungfuls of air until he can feel himself calming. Kurt reaches out worriedly, but Blaine hugs his arms around himself, determined not to fall apart there and then. "I'm fine," he snaps, and again their drive is filled with silence.

"I need to go out," he announces when Kurt pulls into the driveway. "To sort some things. Funeral, and whatever. Can you meet Libby later?"

"Sure," Kurt says, not daring to look at him. "Blaine..."

"Not now," he says, unbuckling his seatbelt as fast as he can. "Please not now."

Kurt follows him into the house, grateful for it's emptiness as he takes the stairs two at a time to where Blaine sits on the edge of the bed. "This is dumb!" he cries. "You're hurting, I'm hurting and neither of us is prepared to break. Cry for him, Blaine, it's okay! Cause god knows I want to cry for him too." And with that he is gone, hiding his face in his hands as he sobs and Blaine rushes to him, pulling him tight to his chest as his own tears come. They both comfort each other for the longest time. At some point one of them guides the other to the bed, though neither remembers who, and they end up lying down, still in their coats and shoes until the tears subside and they're left red eyed yet smiling at each other.

"Better?" Kurt asks, his throat hoarse.

"Much. Yeah..... So.... We're dumb."

"Completely," Kurt agrees, leaning in to kiss him slowly. "I love you, Blaine. It'll be okay, you know? I mean, right now it hurts like hell for all of us, but we'll get there. Your dad was one of the greatest men I've ever met, and to be honest, he could have been a hundred and fifty and I still wouldn't have been ready to say goodbye. I know we were prepared, and I'm grateful he died..."
peacefully and all of that but...but I think it's okay to say it sucks."

"I didn't want him to die," Blaine whispers as a few more tears fall silently. "I mean, he's my dad. I think it's just sinking in how much I'm gonna miss him. I've seen him twice a day for the last five years, give or take. I don't know how I'm gonna fill this time."

"Hmm. Write some music for him," Kurt suggests. "Take your emotions out on the piano."

"I could," Blaine says, brightening at the thought. "Yeah."

"And me," Kurt adds. Scooting closer and kissing the tip of his nose, he trails his fingers gently along his jaw and looks at him with a coy smile. "You could take your emotions out on me, if you wanted."

"That would involve lots of kissing."

"I love kissing you."

"Even when I have snot?" he asks, using Libby's phrase that they both reprimand her for.

"Even then," Kurt smiles, sliding a hand around the back of his neck to draw him close. "Forever."
In the days that follow, the whole family pull together. Libby cries on and off, mostly right before bedtime when she suddenly remembers all that has happened. There's no shortage of loving hugs from everyone, but most of all Blaine and Kurt, who are happy to sit with her until she falls asleep, or let her into their bed when she arrives at one in the morning. But for the most part, during the day she is happy. Busy at school, excited by the continual presence of her uncle, aunt and cousins, and enjoying the fact that due to her parents being busy with funeral arrangements, she gets playdates with Jamie and Melody as well as Livvy.

The funeral itself is...well...about as good as a funeral can get. Determined to do Mike proud, Cooper and Blaine insist it is a celebration of their dad's life rather than a mournful occasion, and the church is packed with all those wishing to come and say a final farewell. Libby sits in the front row, between Burt and Carole as Mike is carried in on the shoulders of men whom he has known since they were boys. His own dear sons, of course, and Kurt. But also Wes, Sebastian and Finn, all mourning the loss of a man who was such a strong presence in their lives. Blaine is unsure if he will manage it, lined up alongside Wes and with Kurt stood behind him, the painful dig of the wooden coffin on his shoulder, but then, in the heavy silence of the church, he sees Libby turn in Burt's arms as the congregation stands. She gives a shy little wave, and he hears her whisper to Burt "I can see daddy and papa!" And he knows this will all be okay.

“My dad was....awesome,” Blaine says with a soft smile as he addresses the church. “Coming from a generation where sexuality was never mentioned or discussed, he learned things for himself just so I wouldn’t feel alienated. He talked to me about the dangers of AIDS, so that I would be safe. He took time to explain to me exactly why relationships matter, and he taught me to respect myself. I hope that one day I’ll be brave enough to be as open and honest with my daughter, because now, being a parent myself, I understand how hard that must have been for him to do.

Nothing phased dad. When Cooper wrote off his car, when mom set the kitchen on fire frying sausages, when I fell on hard times in New York and needed rescuing....he was always there. Calm, sure and steadfast and our safe haven in the storm.

I can still remember when he met Kurt for the first time. For those of you who don’t know, my husband is fifteen years my junior, and we had only been dating a few months before I knew I wanted to introduce him. Kurt was sixteen at the time, and in my infinite wisdom, I decided not to tell my parents of this trivial matter,” he says with a smile as Kurt blushes and laughs. “We were all sitting outside, Kurt’s parents too, and my mom asked Kurt if he was in college. And to this very day I still remember it all so clearly. Kurt answered with ‘no, I’m still in high school. I’m a sophomore.’ and there was this moment where my mom’s eyes went wide, and my dad choked on his drink, and then as always, he came to the rescue, asking Kurt how he likes school, and making us all laugh with a funny story of how much he hated school himself and couldn’t wait to leave. And that was it. No judgement, no repercussions and it was never spoken of again. Kurt was Kurt, that was that and he was loved and accepted into our family without hesitation. And that’s what made my dad awesome. Mom too.

I feel as if I should be sad today. And I am, I guess. It hurts, to know that he is gone but in all honesty, when a man as wonderful as he was has left you with so many amazing memories to treasure, and taught you so much for the future, I find it hard to do anything other than smile and raise glass to the most fantastic father I could have wished for.”
Libby wanders through the house which is filled to the brim with people, most of whom she doesn’t really know, and the ones she does know are all busy. Daddy and papa have been talking with people non stop. Riccardo is talking with his son and Taylor, and when Libby tried to interrupt he kissed her hand and said he just needed a moment. Even Livvy is distracted, in the arms of a big tall man with white hair who speaks funny and has a wife who says she’s Kathy’s sister. Eventually she finds an armchair in the corner of the living room and she sits, listening to the noise of everyone around her and deciding that she doesn’t like funerals at all.

“Hey, room for me?”

Wes looks down at her, holding out a juice box and she nods, letting him lift her out of the chair and onto his lap where he settles with an arm about her shoulders.

“Is daddy sad?” she asks after drinking her juice a while. “He said he wasn’t, but then he cried.”

“He’s feeling bittersweet, I guess,” Wes says.

“What’s that mean?”

“Sad and happy at the same time.”

“Oh. I feel like that a lot too.”

“A lot of people do, I think, when someone dies. I know I miss your grandad a lot, because he was like a dad to me, too. But when I think of him, I don’t think of him being sick in hospital, I think of all the funny things he used to so, like telling your papa he always liked him the best, just to wind your daddy up, and that makes me laugh.”

“Who are all these people?” she asks, wrinkling her nose as an elderly lady walks by and pats her on the head.

“Well, sweetie, they’re all people who knew and loved your grandad in one way or another.”

“Even her?” Libby asks, pointing at a girl collecting glasses.

“Well no, not her, she’s one of the catering team.”

“And him?”

“Again, a caterer. All the ones in black skirts or pants and white shirts are in the catering team.”

Libby looks around, turning back to Wes with a frown. “Everyone’s in black and white. Even you.”

“Okay,” Wes laughs. “Strike that. All those with name badges. The rest are here to say goodbye to your grandad.”

“Who’s that man what’s stolen Livvy?”

“Ha! That’s her uncle Jonathan and aunt Teresa- she’s Kathy’s sister. They’ve flown all the way from England.”

“Why?”

“Well...they knew your daddy and papa even before I knew Kathy. They met in Hawaii.”

“Really?”
“Yep. You know that picture your papa has in his office? The beach one? Jonathan took it. That’s what he does. He took their wedding pictures too.”

“That’s what Taylor does.”

“Yes.”

“I think I’ve meted them before.”

“You have,” Wes nods. “A few times. But I think you were a little girl when you saw them last, not all grown up like you are now.”

“I’m six soon.”

“I know you are,” Wes smiles, kissing her cheek and snuggling her close. “And I can still remember holding you for the very first time. Precious baby.”

Libby giggles, reaching up to run her fingers over his face. “If I didn’t have my daddies, I’d let you be my daddy.”

“That’s nice to hear,” Wes smiles. “I know I’m very happy to have you in my life. And I know I’m even more happy that you and Livvy are best friends.”

“The bestest,” she says, nodding firmly. “Thank you for giving us matching names.”

“Oh. Well...we didn’t really think about that at the time, but you’re welcome.”

“Wes?”

“Yes, Libby?”

“My daddy will be okay, won’t he?”

“Your daddy has you and papa so I’d say yes. He will absolutely be okay.”

Cooper finds Blaine in the kitchen, locked in polite conversation with two ladies from the senior center Mike used to attend, who are offering their ever so well meaning but nevertheless extremely annoying advice on letting Libby have more female influence in her life. He looks on as Blaine tries yet again to explain that between Kathy, Carole, Rachel and Santana they’re pretty much covered but they’re having none of it, recommending a live in female au pair as an alternative.

“Ladies,” Santana says, barraging her way across the kitchen and taking the conversation entirely out of Blaine’s hands. “I’m the one who housed Libby for nine months, and as I am generally amazing, I’d like to think that means her and I share a special bond. She doesn’t need any more females in her life, thank you. She gets all she needs from me, Kathy, her grandma and her deranged aunt. Well meaning as you are, please stop. You’re embarrassing yourselves.”

She ushers the stunned women away, foisting them onto Nick and Jeff instead who look less than thrilled, and Blaine laughs as he leans back against the fridge. “Jesus. I thought they’d never go.”

“Well you can always rely on Santana to repel people.”

“Stop it,” Blaine laughs, swatting him on the arm. “Have you seen Kurt?”
“Outside.”

“Outside? It’s freezing.”

“With Taylor,” Cooper says before taking a swig of his beer. “And the insane Italian’s son.”

“Oh. Right.” Blaine tries to keep his face neutral and distracts by grabbing a glass of wine from a passing waiter, but he knows his brother is watching him, waiting.

“Any idea why he’s here? The boy, I mean.”

“Um, well...he’s not a boy,” Blaine corrects. “He’s twenty seven.”

“A boy.”

“Whatever. And he’s Kurt’s business partner, you know? He um...he probably came to support Kurt. And his parents were coming anyway. I mean, Riccardo met dad quite a few times so...”

“I’m not questioning him being here, I’m questioning the son. And he’s been wherever my son has been all day long.”

“Is that a problem?” Blaine asks in surprise.

“It’s...no!” Cooper says, tugging on the knot of his tie. “It’s not a problem. It’s just...strange, that’s all. I wasn’t aware a friendship existed there.”

“Well it does.”

“Has Taylor spoken to you?” Cooper asks, watching him closely.

“If he has I’m not about to tell you.”

“Is there more to this friendship? Cause I’ve never known Taylor to have anyone special in his life, boy or girl. It’d be kinda cool to see him happy with someone.”

“Why don’t you talk to him?” Blaine suggests. “Rather than plaguing me with questions. Go find him, or I’ll set Santana on you.”

Despite the busy day, and the house still holding a few lingering guests, Kurt and Blaine take time out together to put Libby to bed, brushing aside the well meaning offers from family and knowing they at least owe her this much in return for her impeccable behaviour and sensitivity. They crowd into her little white bed, all three of them with Libby in the middle, and Blaine recites rather than reads The Lonely Fire Truck before kissing her on the nose.

“You made me proud today.”

“You keep saying that,” she giggles.

“Because you keep making me proud,” he says with a smile. “I’m always happy when I can show you and papa off, and I’m glad a lot of people came who hadn’t met you before, because they look at you and they say ‘oh she’s beautiful,’ and I say yeah, I know. She looks like her papa.”

“Oh stop it, you old flirt,” Kurt laughs as Blaine bats his eyelashes. “Daddy is right though, Lib. You make us really proud. In fact, think of a reward for being such a good girl. Anything you like.”
“Anything?” she asks, her whole face lighting up.

“Anything.”

“Be veeeery careful, Kurt,” Blaine warns. “She’s quite savvy.”

“Oh hush,” he says, gazing at her indulgently as she thinks. “You wait. It’ll be a new dress, or shoes,” he laughs. “Maybe Santana and Rachel are teaching her too much.”

“Disneyworld,” she says decisively.

Kurt stares. “Excuse me, what?”

“My reward for being a good girl. I wanna go to Disneyworld.”

“Oh. Um...Libby Darling I was thinking of um...something a little less...grandiose, shall we say?”

“I don’t know what that means.”

“Not quite so elaborate.”

“Huh?”

“No.” Kurt says finally. “I didn’t mean something as big as a trip to Disneyworld.”

“Oh.” She looks slightly saddened but smiles anyway as she thinks of an alternative. “Could we go to the new Waffle House?”

“Perfect,” Kurt grins. “How about breakfast there tomorrow?”

“Don’t I have school? No school today I know, for the funeral, but tomorrow is a normal day, right?”

“Well papa and I were talking, and we thought that you might like to take a day just with us tomorrow,” Blaine says gently, laughing when she claps her hands. “And it will just be back to the three of us. I know you’ll miss everyone, but it’ll be nice to be our little family again, won’t it?”

“Yes,” Libby nods emphatically. “Because I love you and papa most of all.”

It is gone midnight by the time the house is clean and they’re left alone. Burt and Carole are the last to depart, saying a quiet goodbye to Kurt in the hallway before he climbs the stairs to find Blaine sitting up in bed, staring at the opposite wall.

“What’re you thinking about?” Kurt asks as he strips down to his underpants and joins him under the covers, too tired for anything else.

“Disneyworld. For the holidays.”

“You serious?”

“Yeah,” Blaine says, smiling as his thoughts take form. “All of us. Wes’ family, your dad and Carole, Rachel and Finn, Cooper...everyone. We could rent a couple of villas between us.”

“Well Libby would love it,” Kurt muses aloud. “Though there is no way I’m having Santana and Rachel in the same villa. They’ll have to be separated. But yeah....why not?”
"Really?"

Kurt laughs, pulling Blaine closer so he can hug him. "Yeah. She asked so sweetly, and when I said no she just accepted it with no fuss. She deserves this. We can look into it tomorrow evening when Libby's gone to bed."

"Thank you," Blaine says, kissing his cheek. "I'm not entirely sure I can face the holidays here."

"I'm not entirely sure I can face them with Mickey Mouse, but we'll go with it," Kurt teases. "Can we ask Joe and Maddie?"

"Of course."

"And how about Taylor and Jules?"

"Ah." Blaine settles back against the headboard. "Yeah. I don't see why not."

"I was so pleased he told everyone," Kurt smiles, taking his husband's hand. "And I'm so glad he's had you to talk to."

"Cooper was funny."

"Oh shut up!" Kurt laughs. "You'd have cried too, if it was Libby."

"I cried anyway," Blaine shrugs. "I was the third person to hold those twins, and now they're all grown up, getting married and coming out..."

"Taylor was so worried, but really, what was Cooper ever going to do except hug him?"

"I think Taylor had just built it up in his head to be bigger than it actually was. I did the same, when I came out."

"Yeah," Kurt says as he thinks back. "I know I did too. All these gay people. Libby will end up having to come out as straight. Hey," he says, turning to Blaine with wide eyes as something occurs to him. "Jules for the holidays, that means..."

"Riccardo? Yeah," Blaine laughs. "We should ask him. It'll be fun. We have the concert on the thirtieth anyway, so we could all fly back to Chicago for that."

"Libby really would think all her Christmases had come at once," Kurt laughs. "But I call dibs on not sharing a villa with him for a week. His exuberance will be barely contained."

"Ha! Yeah he's um...he's...well, he's wonderful," Blaine says fondly. "But loud."

"To say the least."

A small moment of silence falls, but they're happy, smiling together at the thought of a holiday filled with their closest family and friends. Settled side by side, Kurt takes Blaine's hand and plays with his fingers. "It went well today, I thought," Kurt says softly, looking up to gauge his reaction.

"Yeah. It did. I feel like...I don't know, actually. I don't know how I feel at all. I really don't. Happy and sad."

"That's okay," Kurt shrugs. "Nobody's asking you to pinpoint your emotions."

"Mmm. Let me in," he says suddenly, scooting over to sit between Kurt's legs, his back resting
against his chest. "You wanna watch a movie?"

"We can do," Kurt agrees, picking up the remote. "Which?"

"Something old school," Blaine says as Kurt scans Netflix. "Yeah, that."

"When Harry Met Sally?"

"Yeah."

The movie plays and they watch in companionable silence, with Kurt's hands tracing idle patterns on Blaine's chest for a long time before coming up to massage his shoulders gently, making Blaine murmur happily.

"You gonna fall asleep on me?" Kurt asks. "We're only twenty minutes in. That's some kind of record, even for you."

"I'm hardly ready for sleep, am I?"

"Well I don't know. Head back, eyes closed, you've given up watching and next thing is you'll be snoring."

"Okay, firstly, I don't snore."

"You do."

"I don't. And secondly, I've got a raging hard on. That's why I said I'm not ready for sleep."

"Oh. Oh!" Kurt says again as he reaches a hand down under the cover. "I didn't realize. I couldn't see."

"Thanks."

"It's dark!" Kurt protests, laughing. "It's still as big as it always is."

"You're so mature," Blaine quips, gasping when Kurt reaches inside his pajama pants and takes ahold of him, stroking slowly. "And oh my god that feels good."

"Really?" Kurt turns the TV off, plunging them into darkness before he reaches over and flips a small side lamp. "I haven't initiated anything because I wasn't sure if..."

"I'm never sure," Blaine says, almost shy as he rests his head back on Kurt's shoulder and looks up at him. "When I'm going through a tough time you know me, it becomes the furthest thing from my mind, but that doesn't mean you're not wanted."

"I know that," Kurt says, leaning down to kiss his lips as he continues to run his hand slowly over him. "I always know that. I just like to wait for you to be ready, that's all, instead of making you feel bad if you say no."

"I wasn't planning on anything tonight," Blaine admits, stilling Kurt's hand when he starts to withdraw. "But you playing with my chest like that was insanely hot."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah. I guess it relaxed me and turned me on at the same time, and now if you don't get me off, I'll cry."
"Ever the romantic," Kurt says, laughing softly, but he resumes his actions anyway, kissing along Blaine's neck as he does so. "You're beautiful," he murmurs against the taste of his skin. "So beautiful."

Blaine whimpers as Kurt strokes him, twisting his wrist in the way he knows makes Blaine unravel fast. "Kurt...want you..."

"You do?"

"Yes. Want you inside me."

"No arguments here," Kurt chuckles as he reaches across to the nightstand drawer. He's almost sad to lose the warmth of Blaine's back against his chest, but then suddenly he's naked and spread on all fours in front of him, and he kind of forgets about being sad, and despite it not being either Blaine's birthday or a holiday, he's unable to resist kissing slowly down his spine until his face is buried into his heat, tongue running down his crack before circling his entrance and making Blaine cry out.

"Fuck! Kurt...yes....you....just....yes."

"I love you so much," comes Kurt's muffled voice. He can't get enough, kissing and licking and letting his tongue open Blaine up slowly, his hands meanwhile smoothing over the soft skin of his ass, down to where it meets the coarse dark hair at the top of his thighs and back up again. "You're mine," he whispers, before kissing gently over each ass cheek, pausing to suck a hickey on one. "All mine."

"Always."

Something about taking Blaine this way always makes Kurt feel an almost animalistic protectiveness over his husband, the way he's so vulnerable before him, head bowed onto the mattress, the rest of him raised up, trusting Kurt to complete him. So he does, gripping Blaine's hips tightly and firmly as he enters and stills for a second before draping himself over Blaine's back, keeping him close, keeping him safe. He moves slowly, not needing or wanting to rush for this to be over and just enjoying the feel of Blaine's body under his, the way his breath comes ragged and hard and the way his hand clutches Kurt's tightly and draws it to his mouth, where he can kiss each finger, murmuring his love to Kurt as Kurt moves inside him, trying to be closer, closer still.

Eventually Kurt straightens up, one hand moving back to Blaine's hip once more, the other moving around to his cock again, which Kurt can feel is wet already, waiting for release. So he drives harder, deeper, keeping the same rhythm with his wrist until it's all over, and Kurt is pulsing hard inside Blaine, who clenches around him as he comes over Kurt's hand. The weight of Kurt pressing himself over Blaine's back has them both falling onto the bed, though Kurt stays melded to Blaine as if they were one, not wanting to let him go. "I think I could hold you forever," he whispers with a kiss to his shoulder. Blaine doesn't respond, only pulls him tighter against him as they bask in the happy afterglow their lovemaking brings.

"I think we should sell our child," Blaine says eventually.

"What? Why?"

"Because before, when we didn't have her? We could just stay like this until we fell asleep. Now we have to get up and clean, and put pajamas on and everything and...ugh."
Kurt laughs, uncurling himself reluctantly from the warmth of Blaine's body. "I'm not sure that's an acceptable enough reason to sell her. But yes, we should clean up. We can still sleep naked though, I'm not embarrassed to let her see us like this."

"I am," Blaine grumbles as he trails Kurt to the bathroom. "Waking up next to you is hard, in more ways than one."

But he falls back into bed anyway, with nothing on, and curls up on Kurt's chest with a loving kiss goodnight. "You know one of the things I love about you?" he mumbles, his voice heavy with sleep.

"I have a big dick."

"Well...yes," Blaine says with a laugh. "But what I was going to say is no matter how down I feel, no matter how badly things are going, you always make me feel beautiful."

"Because you are," Kurt says matter of factly, kissing into his hair.

"I don't know about that. But you always make me feel like the most special person on earth, and that means more than you'll ever know."

"Oh, I think I have a fair idea," Kurt muses, "seeing as you've been making me feel that way since I was fifteen."

"Fourteen years ago, we met."

"We did," Kurt says, smiling as he thinks back. "And when you sang Teenage Dream that night, and looked right at me, it was like there wasn't anyone else in that room."

"There wasn't, for me. There still isn't. It's all you, Kurt. You and Libby. Thank you for helping me through all this, for loving me."

"Blaine..." he says, tilting his chin up to graze their lips together. "It is my absolute pleasure."
Chapter 32

Time moves on, and with it come many changes to people's lives, most of which are thankfully welcome. The holidays, spent in Florida, are a huge success with much love and laughter all round and a healthy dose of Disney World fun. Kurt and Blaine find themselves exhausted from Libby and Riccardo's enormous over excitement, but plans are already put in place for a return visit next Christmas. Taylor proudly holds his boyfriend's hand, and Blaine is happy to watch their relationship blossom, and feels nostalgic as he thinks back to him and Kurt all those years ago.

The building work on their home begins shortly after the New Year, at the same time as Carole and Burt move into a nice three bedroom house ten minutes away from Kurt and Blaine, meaning that for the first two weeks they have three houseguests while the framework to their extension is put in place. The disruption is all worth it though, as in the end they are the proud owners of a six bed, five bath house and Kurt is happily installed in his office suite at the end of the yard.

Libby turns six at the beginning of March, and two things happen. The first is that Kurt and Blaine hold an enormous party and invite the whole class, plus all their own family and friends. A year ago they wouldn't have felt confident enough to do this, but since the incident with Steve Jackson, they have realized there is much more support for them than they knew. Not all parents attend, of course, and some clearly come to gawp at how the gays live, and to sit and gossip in the corner about who might be gay and who isn't, but for the first time, neither Kurt or Blaine actually care, too busy watching their daughter have the time of her life with all her little friends. The second happens later that night, when all the guests have departed apart from Burt, Carole, Rachel and Finn, and Libby is tucked up in bed.

Blaine pours wine automatically, and hands Burt a beer without being asked, but when he offers a glass to Rachel, she declines. "Uh...actually, Blaine...all of you...um...."

"Oh my god," Kurt says, covering his mouth with his hand as his eyes fill with tears.

"Yes. We're pregnant," she smiles, beaming up at Finn. "Due mid September. You guys are the first we've told and..." but she's cut off by a barrage of over emotional men as Burt almost crushes her tiny frame in his arms and Blaine and Kurt smother her with kisses. Finn finds himself completely unable to escape his mom's clutches, and when he does finally break free, it is only for him to be swamped by his over exuberant brother, dad and brother-in-law as Carole coos over Rachel and pats her still completely flat stomach.

Rachel being Rachel, she seems to sail through pregnancy, and by the time the month of May rolls around she is sporting a rounded tummy which Libby finds endlessly fascinating and talks to almost continuously. "I have to finish kindergarten and become a first grader," she tells the bump one afternoon. She is sitting on Santana's couch next to Rachel for her much anticipated girls weekend, where Rachel has promised she can help pick the stroller for the baby as well as some clothes. "I don't wanna finish kindergarten," she sighs as Rachel plays with her hair. "I have a new teacher for first grade too. Mrs. Pascoe. She's really nice. Not as nice as Miss Hunter though. I wish I could stay in her class forever."

"You know," Rachel says, smiling down at her. "I never wanted to leave kindergarten either. But if I hadn't moved on, I'd look pretty silly sitting in a class with you by my side, wouldn't I?"

Libby giggles and nods as Rachel carries on. "So the baby needs you to move on too, sweetie, so one day there will be a place for him or her in kindergarten too."
"Him," Santana calls. "You'll have a boy."

"And you know that, how?"

"I just do," she shrugs, picking up her bag and keys. "Okay. Let's go."

"You will," Libby nods. "The baby will be a boy. I know it will."

"I'll start taking bets," Rachel says with a laugh. "Anyway, Libby, are you excited for our shopping trip?"

"Yes," she says, hopping from the couch and taking Rachel's hand. "And our sleepover. Daddy and papa are having a sleepover for Joe, too."

"Yes, we know," Santana says rolling her eyes. "It's called the most boring bachelor party in the world, and the house will be full of guys, which is why you're staying here with me. Now come on, let's go choose baby clothes."

*

"I still don't understand," Blaine says to Kurt as he fills the fridge with beer. "I mean, it's his bachelor party and all he wants to do is come here and eat pizza with the guys. It's Joe. I'd have thought we'd find ourselves in Vegas or somewhere, playing blackjack and surrounded by female strippers. I'd even looked into eyeball bleaching and everything."

"Well," Kurt says, laughing at his goofy husband. "You know, his management and PR firm offered to host some extravagant party in LA for him, with burlesque dancers and some top DJ, but the guest list was going to be all celebrities, and they wouldn't even let him invite me. That's just not Joe, is it? So he declined, and then they made it clear that if he had some wild weekend they would tip off the paps, and I don't think he wanted to be trailed around everywhere. So that's how come he's here."

"Doesn't he have any other friends though? I mean, he's even invited your dad. I don't mean to be rude but..."

"I know," Kurt say lightly. "And to be honest, no, I don't think he does. He gets on okay with people he works with on films but I don't think he keeps in touch. He just doesn't subscribe to that celebrity lifestyle, the fake Hollywood persona. I think that's why he's always so in demand, actually. He rarely goes to events other than his own premieres, doesn't grant many interviews, won't talk about his private life. It makes people want more."

"Fair enough. But aren't there any guys in his family? I feel bad, like this is just us two inviting our friends around."

"Well he hates his step dad," Kurt muses. "Two of his sisters have boyfriends but one is in New York and one in Oregon so no, not really. He spends the holidays with us anyway. He knows all the same people we do, and they're all invited to the wedding."

"Still. Pizza and beer? What did Maddie do for hers?"

"Pottery painting."

"Wild," Blaine says with an eye roll. "We got really drunk and had sex in a public bathroom."

"We gave each other a handjob," Kurt corrects. "And you stripped for me."
"See? That's out there. People say we're boring, but we're so not."

"Honey, nowadays one of us is usually asleep on the couch by nine. We are hardly outlandish in our behavior."

"Is that...are you not happy?" Blaine asks with concern, but Kurt is quick to reassure, winding his arms around his neck and kissing his lips.

"I am completely happy. Please don't think otherwise. So we're not as wild as we used to be, so what? We have a gorgeous daughter, a wonderful house, great jobs. It's still happiness, just in a different form, that's all."

"Okay. Well...we're child free tonight," Blaine grins.

"We're child free right now," Kurt points out.

"I know, but we need to shower, and get dressed, and they'll all be here in under an hour."

"Suck me off in the shower," Kurt whispers, his teeth grazing along Blaine's jaw.

"Kuuuurt. We can't. We'll run out of time and..."

"Let me come in your mouth, Blaine. Let me feel you swallowing around me."

"Fuck it. Get upstairs."

* 

Despite not being dressed when everyone arrives, Kurt still manages to fulfill his best man duties, giving Joe a bachelor party which he is completely happy with, as he drunkenly tells anyone who will listen. They eat pizza and play poker and drink beer until Burt staggers off happily to the guest room at a little after eleven, declaring it's all too much fun, and Blaine heads out into the kitchen in search of tequila.

"Uncle Blaine?"

"Yeah? Ow!" He turns quickly, his head still inside the cupboard and he yells when he hits it on the corner. "Fuck."

"Are you drunk?" Taylor asks.

"A little. Not too bad. Just old. I know we have tequila somewhere, I just can't remember where."

"It's not likely to be down there, is it?" Taylor says as he sits on the counter. "Libby would have found that out and you'd have had a drunken child. You will have put it up high."

"Good point," Blaine nods. "So I won't be able to reach. Kurt and I only usually drink wine. All this beer is gonna have me in the bathroom all night long," he mumbles, to himself more than anything as he seeks out the step stool.

"Here." Taylor kneels on the kitchen counter, having located the tequila in the back of one of the cupboards and hands it to him. "Do you have shot glasses?"

"Yep. We do. I just have to remember where. Oh my god, Kurt is right. We're totally boring now."

"You've been married like...forever," Taylor teases. "And you have a child. You're not supposed to
be doing body shots off each other on a random Tuesday evening."

"Body shots," Blaine grins. "That's an idea. There's enough gays amongst us. And Wes is usually game."

"Does it hurt?" Taylor asks suddenly, his cheeks flaming red.

"Body shots?" Blaine asks distractedly as he locates the glasses and sets about grabbing limes and cutting them up. "No. You just..."

"Not..."

"Oh!" It suddenly dawns on Blaine who looks up at his nephew, who looks back down from his vantage point on the counter and blinks like a rabbit in the headlights. Blaine closes the kitchen door, for which Taylor is eternally grateful, and beckons for him to sit at the table with him.

"The short answer is a little, at first, but after that, no. But I'm sensing you might like the long answer. Am I right?"

"Yes please."

"Um. Okay. Well...right. This conversation might be excruciating for both of us. You ready for that?"

"Yeah. That's why I waited until we're both a little drunk," Taylor admits shyly.

"Good. Yes. Right. So...you and Jules. Have you...um...how far have you got?"

"You can't ask me that!" Taylor cries, completely mortified, adding with a blush, "Hands."

"And yet you answered anyway."

"I feel like we should have done more."

"You go at your own pace," Blaine smiles, secretly relieved that his little nephew- as he still sees him- is taking things steady. "It's your relationship and no one else's. You know, Kurt and I didn't sleep together for months."

"Yeah, but I'm not dating a child."

"I will flounce out and never speak to you again," Blaine warns as Taylor laughs.

"Okay, I'm sorry. That was low. But...okay. We've been together six months, but we don't actually see each other that much, what with his job and my job, and living in different cities, it's difficult to get just one random date night together. So it's usually an entire weekend together, every other week or so. And to be honest, that suits us for now. Neither of us want to rush anything. But we have like two nights together in the same bed. The first is usually just like...lots of making out, which I worry he finds boring. Then the second...we kind of get so far but then I just get completely terrified. I want to go for more though, that's the thing. I really want to just....let him take me."

"Woah! Okay. Hold up there buddy. So the first thing, the making out? Never think that's boring. You know, Kurt and I still say it's our favorite form of physical affection. And we have a lot of sex."

"Gross."
"Thank you," Blaine says with a smile. "Seriously, I could spend the rest of my life kissing him. It's so...intimate. So special, and I just love the feel of being in his arms, or holding him close to me, and his mouth on mine. It's magical, Taylor. You must feel that when you kiss Jules?"

"Yeah, I do," he grins. "I really do."

"And he will feel the same," Blaine reassures him. "Trust me. He wouldn't be lying in bed with you making out for hours if he didn't want to, so please don't worry. So...we've established that mouths are good, yes?"

"Yes."

"So if you feel you're ready for more, my advice would be to let your mouth explore, if you get my meaning?"

"I um...yes. I understand that," Taylor says, blushing furiously. "I um...I just have this fear because well...he's...been there, done all that and I...haven't."

"No, but I know for a fact that he's a darn sight more comfortable being with you. I'm sure you know the mechanics. Just...take it slow and no teeth," Blaine says, grinning widely and showing his to emphasise his point. "Don't do more than you feel ready for really, and that applies to all of it. Whenever you want to stop, just say. Jules is a good guy. He'll respect that, and he'll respect you a lot more for just being honest."

"Okay. Yeah," Taylor nods, taking it all in and feeling happier. "And when we do come to...."

"Lube," Blaine says, blushing himself. "And time. You need to be relaxed, otherwise it will hurt. But it shouldn't. You should um...oh Jesus. You should take your time to...ahem...let him...with his fingers and...oh fuck. I'm horrible at this. Horrible. What am I gonna do when it's Libby?" he asks, stricken.

"You're not horrible at it," Taylor says quietly. "You're like, the only person I can talk to this way. Please. Tell me, cause I just don't want to seem like an idiot. And you know, when you watch stuff on the internet it's all...."

"Oh for god's sake don't learn from the internet," Blaine says, appalled. "That is not...no. That doesn't teach you how to make love with someone," he says honestly. "It teaches you mechanics, sure, though if you're watching porn I have to tell you it's incredibly unrealistic. But it doesn't teach you how it feels to...to...to let someone touch you intimately like that. It can't tell you how great it feels to have someone you care about so much wanting to do that to you. How amazing it is to trust someone enough to.... That's what it comes down to," he says with a dopey smile. "I um...okay. Here's the thing. I'm gonna tell you some stuff here, and please, disassociate me from being your uncle for a moment."

"Oh my god, what are you...?"

"Nothing too graphic," Blaine laughs. "Just that for me, my experience was very different to yours, but for Kurt, it was the same as you. You must know that I'm his first and last."

"Yes, well...if you weren't his first I'd be worried. Or his last, come to that. You wear that shit like a badge of honor, don't you?" Taylor asks, laughing. "Look at you."

"Yeah, I like it," Blaine says, grinning broadly. "And if I'd known I was going to meet him, I'd have waited for sure. But of course, I didn't. So I had my first time, and I was on top. I liked it, I liked the guy and it was....sweet, I guess. Then I had a few boyfriends, and a couple of one night stands. I
topped for both of those. I couldn't.... I've never been one of those who can see sex as just sex. Kurt isn't either, and I know you're not, so you'll know where I'm coming from. I feel very vulnerable being on the bottom. You're exposed, literally, and kind of at the mercy of the other guy. I only bottomed a handful of times before I met Kurt."

"Did you...can I ask...do you two like...have roles?"

"Nope. We switch. I maybe top slightly more, but it's only ever so slight. We just go with what feels right at the time."

"Because so far Jules has only ever topped," Taylor admits. "With that French guy."

"So the old man liked being taken by a young..."

"Shut up."

"Right. Sorry. Well, it's really up to you for your first time."

"What did you and Kurt do?"

"I was on top. It's just...for us I think Kurt felt like he wanted me to be a bit more in control."

"What was it like?"

"Ask him," Blaine says as the kitchen door opens and Kurt walks in.

"Ask me what?"

"What was your first time like?" Taylor blurts.

"Oh. Heh. Magical, scary, weird and completely perfect, all rolled into one," Kurt says, draping his arms around Blaine's shoulders from behind and kissing the top of his head.

"Scary? Why scary?" Taylor asks in alarm.

"Don't dwell on that word," Kurt says. "I told you, it was completely perfect. We had kind of made a date, before hand, but that didn't work out for various reasons, and then one night it just kind of felt right. And it was better that way, more natural. Magical, because it was me and him, the man who was made for me, so how could it be anything but? Scary, because although we had done stuff, we hadn't gone anywhere near that...ahem...area before, and I was nervous about it. I had done stuff to myself before, but obviously this was letting someone else and however much I trusted and loved Blaine, there's still that element of 'please don't hurt me' but he didn't," Kurt says, falling into the chair next to Blaine and smiling. "He was so sweet and patient and considerate. I say weird because well....to be totally honest it's a bizarre feeling the first few times. You feel very full," he says as Blaine tries to hide his embarrassment. "It doesn't hurt, but it's uncomfortable at first. And then he moves, and that's...that's like a mixture of 'what the fuck is this?' And 'holy shit that feels good, do it again.' And completely perfect because then I look up, into his eyes and it's Blaine. My perfect boyfriend and my one true love and there's no where else I'd rather be."

"Aww," Blaine says proudly, leaning across to kiss his lips. "I love you."

"If I remember correctly, the second time we did it, I was riding you."

"And that's enough," Blaine laughs as Taylor covers his ears. "Someone's had too much beer."

"I have," Kurt agrees. "Which is why I've come in search of wine."
"You don't need wine, Blaine's found tequila," Taylor grins, handing him the bottle. "And I believe body shots are the order of the day."

An hour later and everyone is reeling, even Taylor finds it in himself to take a body shot from his boyfriend and kiss him heatedly after, while Cooper buries his face in Sebastian's shoulder and tries to pretend he hasn't seen.

"Okay, last one!" Kurt calls. "Before Joe passes out."

"Sss funny," Joe drawls. "It's like, I'm straight....an I've spent my bachelor party taking body shots off a load of guys."

"Who's doing the last one?" Kurt asks him. "I don't recommend it's you."

"You, then. Off Blaine. Give us a live sex show."

"I don't know about that," Kurt laughs, but then the sight of Blaine lying on the floor, shirt open and a line of salt on his stomach, with lime between his teeth, and Kurt is there, taking the shot quickly before falling on top of him and...as Sebastian puts it "eating Blaine's face."

"Take me to bed and do whatever you want," Blaine giggles drunkenly against Kurt's lips, but it's met with drunken protests of "too loud!" From everyone present, and embarrassed, they curl in the corner of the couch together as they all catch their breath.

“This is gonna be the most boring wedding in the history of weddings,” Joe says matter-of-factly.

“Why’s that?” Nick asks with a frown. “It’s yours, I’m pretty sure you’re not supposed to say that.”

“Everyone knows each other.”

“Well that’s your fault for not inviting any damn celebrities,” Jeff moans. “I was really looking forward to my picture being in Hello magazine.”

“Not happening, my friend,” Joe smiles. “This wedding is about Maddie and me, and no one else. We wanted it to be kept small, and by the time we’d invited both families, and all our mutual friends we realized we had quite the list. So that’s it,” he sighs. “No random yet hilarious wedding hookups to be gossiped about the next day.”

“I’ll find someone,” Sebastian smiles smugly. “DJ, waiter...someone.”

“Disgusting,” Joe says rolling his eyes as he falls back against a pile of cushions. “You’re too old to be having sex.”

A loud “Hey!” of disapproval comes from everyone assembled, except Taylor, Jules and Finn who laugh.

“You do realize you’re including Blaine by saying that, right?” Finn asks. “And he and Kurt are always at it like rabbits.”

Blaine looks down, rubbing the back of his neck, smiling softly and trying not to laugh, but saying nothing as Kurt smacks the top of his brothers arm.

“Actually,” Sebastian says, a wicked gleam in his eye. “We don’t know if they do have loads of sex, not anymore. We used to either hear them, or hear about it all the time. Now they’re all boring and married and....I dunno...missionary, probably.”
“Hmm,” Joe muses, joining in with the teasing as Kurt hides his face in his husband’s shoulder. “You’re right. Though I’m pretty sure I heard them on New Years. We had the room next door and I’m positive...positive...certain I heard Kurt screaming for Blaine to take him harder.”

“Son-in-law to be, that’s my little brother you’re talking about,” Cooper reminds him. “Please don’t.”

“Everyone has sex on New Years,” Jeff points out.

“That’s true,” Finn adds. “I know we did, because it’s the night the baby was conceived. Oh,” he raises his eyebrows in shock, “I’ve just realized how little we really do have sex, as I can actually pinpoint the night our child was conceived.”

“New Years was five months ago,” Joe reminds them all. “I’d say they’ve had sex a few more times since. Blaine? Kurt? Care to comment?”

“Not really,” Blaine says, blushing but laughing as he speaks. “We’ll just sit here while you talk about us.”

“And I’ll just sit here being thankful it’s their sex life you’re discussing and not mine,” Wes adds with a grin.

“Okay,” Sebastian says happily. “Let’s try and work this out. You’ve been together...what?”

“Thirteen years,” they both chime.

“Hmm, and we know you were always very rampant,” Joe continues. “But things must’ve slowed up a bit with the arrival of Libby, and she’s now six so...I’d say...twice a month.”

“Very good,” Blaine nods, his lips twitching into a smile.

“Yes!” Joe cries triumphantly, high fiving Sebastian next to him. “Get in. Joe knows all there is to know about married life.”

“If you’d said five times a week you’d be more accurate,” Blaine carries on. “But you had a good guess.”

“What?” Wes cries loudly, whirling about to face him as Cooper’s jaw falls open. “Five times a week?”

“What can I say?” he laughs, shrugging his shoulders smugly. “There’s a lot of Kurt that needs to be explored.”

“Blaine.” Kurt warns, but his husband, very drunk by now, slings an arm about his shoulders and pulls him close.

“There is! I’m telling you, if you guys had to lie next to a body as hot as this every night, you’d want it too.”

“He has a point,” Sebastian grins, wincing when Kurt and Blaine both reach across to smack him upside the head.

“It’s not a question of not wanting it,” Cooper huffs indignantly. “It’s a question of never having the time, or being too tired when you do.”

“Exactly what he just said,” Wes says, feeling put out.
“You just gotta be a little creative,” Blaine smiles. “Plus, gay sex is a million times better than straight sex, so it’s only natural to want to do it as often as possible.”

“Oh like you’d know!” Joe laughs.

“Blaine,” Kurt says as his husband opens his mouth. “I’m warning you.”

“Two dicks to be sucked for a start,” Blaine grins as Kurt immediately stands and tugs him from the couch. “Always the choice of who’s gonna top and who’s gonna...”

“Goodnight!” Kurt calls loudly, putting his hand over Blaine’s mouth and dragging him from the room. “Apologies for my husband!”

“Take me harder, Blaine!” Joe calls after them in a high pitched voice. “Ooh Blaine! You’re so big and manly. Oooh!”

“I am big!” Blaine calls back as Kurt shoves him up the stairs.

“Enough. You’re crazy,” Kurt tells him, but he’s laughing as he tugs him into the bedroom by his still open shirt, pinning him against the wall and enticing him into a sloppy kiss. “Ah shit. We’re really drunk, Blaine. Really, really drunk.”

“I know,” Blaine grins, watching as Kurt wobbles unsteadily on his feet. “You wanna sleep?”

“Nah, I wanna suck you.”

“You did that earlier.”

“Sixty nine with me then.”

In his over excited effort to get on the bed, Blaine stumbles, face planting the hardwood floor with an almighty crash where he stays, moaning pitifully and clutching at his face while Kurt hovers over him; anxious yet trying not to collapse into raucous laughter at the same time.

“Ow,” Blaine whimpers. “Just...ow. A lot.”

“You guys okay?” Wes calls from the bottom of the stairs and Kurt, entirely oblivious to the fact that he’s only in his underpants, arrives at the top to answer. “Jesus Kurt, put some clothes on!”

“Is he naked?” Sebastian calls eagerly.

“No he’s not,” Wes snaps, giving him a warning glare which tells him to stay put.

“I was about to sixty nine with my husband and he fell on the floor,” Kurt states loudly. “Now I think he’s broken his nose.”

“Oh fuck. Let me take a look,” Wes sighs. “Get up, you idiot,” he says when he sees Blaine spread on the floor. “You haven’t broken your nose. You’re just horrendously drunk, that’s all. Kurt, get him to bed.”

“Yes. That’s what I was trying to do,” he nods sagely. “Get him to bed to suck him off.”

“I want him to fuck me,” Blaine murmurs into the floor. “Kurt, I’ll just stay here and you can do what you want.”

To sleep. You are both gonna pay for this in the morning, I’m telling you.”

Wes is not wrong.

Blaine is first to wake, with the most blinding headache he can ever remember. He staggers to the bathroom where he finds pills, swallowing them quickly with a huge glass of water before he stumbles down the stairs in search of coffee. “Ouch, ouch, ouch,” he moans to himself.

“Morning.”

“Jesus fuck!” he cries when Taylor speaks. “Ouch. Every time. Every time you stay I find you sitting at my table in the morning. Not that I’m complaining, cause I really love talking with you but... ow. I might be little more than useless today.”

“What the hell happened to your face?”

“Huh?”

“You’ve got a black eye.”

“Have I? How? Oh shit. That’ll be what’s hurting then. Oh god. Kurt will kill me. Oh shit. I’m in so much trouble,” he mutters as he pours coffee.

“Guess we all know who wears the pants in that relationship,” Taylor teases.

“Totally. Is it bad? Will Libby notice?”

“Yes,” he laughs, looking at the puffy swelling over Blaine’s cheek bone and the purple bruising under his eye. “It’s not horrific, I guess, but you must have taken quite a knock. The bridge of your nose looks swollen too.”

“Yeah, it is,” Blaine notes, feeling it gingerly. “Oh yeah! I fell on the floor when Kurt offered to...nevermind,” he says, blushing.

“We all know what Kurt offered,” Taylor laughs. “He yelled it very loudly down the stairs.”

“We didn’t get to it, needless to say.”


“I did. We did...stuff,” he grins bashfully. “And it was good stuff.”


“Are you mad at me?”

“No,” he says, handing him his drink. “Really, no. Just a little pissed that I wasted a child free night getting so completely drunk that we couldn’t do anything, and now I feel like shit.”

“What time is Libby due back?”

“Not until five, but Kurt with a hangover is...no. Don’t go there. Actually, I should go back up.
He’s probably throwing up into the toilet.”

“Nice.”

“Yeah. But it was....okay? Yes? You don’t need to talk about anything?”

“It was perfect,” Taylor grins. “We didn’t um...you know...all the way...”

“No, right. Well. good. You know, you’d both had a bit to drink so...”

“Yeah. But yeah...it was perfect.”

“Good. Perfect sense. Right. Wish me luck with the most overly dramatic husband of all time.”

“Blaaaaaaaine!” Kurt wails desperately as soon as he hears the bedroom door opening. “Get in the bathroom. I’m dying in here!”

“Hey baby,” Blaine croons, automatically kneeling next to him and holding back his hair as he throws up violently. “It’s okay, it’s okay. You’ll feel better soon. I have painkillers and I have water and coffee, and I have cuddles.”

“Need....” Kurt gasps before throwing up some more. “all of that stuff.”

“I know you do,” Blaine whispers. “Are you done?”

“Yeah.”

Ignoring the own slicing pain across his forehead, Blaine stands and flushes the toilet, helping a wobbly Kurt up and into his arms before sitting him on the closed toilet lid and wiping his face tenderly with a facecloth. He gulps the water Blaine gives him, and sits patiently as Blaine wipes his mouth before handing him his toothbrush.

“Why do you do this? I’m disgusting,” Kurt mutters. “In all our time together I think I’ve seen you throw up maybe four times. Me? Whenever I have more than two drinks. Or dodgy tacos.”

“If I minded I’d stay away,” Blaine smiles as Kurt brushes. “So you’re not very good at handling alcohol. Who cares? I’m always here to look after you. Now let’s get back into bed until we feel like eating. The rest of them can fend for themselves.”

He helps Kurt carefully back into bed, smoothing his hair back from his forehead and kissing his lips tenderly. “I love you, gorgeous boy.”

“Love you too,” Kurt murmurs with a dopey smile as his eyes begin to close, then fly open again, wider than saucers. “What the fuck happened to your face?”
In the months that follow, Kurt detects a subtle shift in Blaine’s behavior. It’s barely even tangible at first. They head to Chicago to celebrate Joe and Maddie’s wedding, but Blaine refuses to have any more than one glass of champagne, citing the reason as not wanting to get sloppy in front of Libby, which Kurt can understand completely seeing as there’s still the faint traces of bruising left over his cheek and nose. Still, he would have thought Blaine would join in the dancing a little, rather than sitting on the sidelines until Libby drags him over to where Kurt and Santana dance together. He does, of course, slow dance with Kurt though, smiling softly and murmuring declarations of love into his ear, and that night they make love so sweetly that Kurt actually finds himself wiping away a tear.

And then it’s back to normal domesticity once more, with Blaine as house husband while Kurt works in his office, and flies to New York with Jules to secure more contracts. Libby is on summer break now, and Blaine loves having her around. Their days are filled with trips to the park, museums and as many music concerts as they can fit in, with home time being dominated by Blaine trying to teach her the piano, which she’s not so keen on, and coach her in singing, which she loves more than anything.

“Hey,” Kurt says brightly one afternoon as he bounces through the patio doors. “So, Jules is magnificent.”

“Yeah,” Blaine says from where he’s unpacking groceries. “So Taylor tells me everytime he calls. Magnificent and proficient in a lot of things, as I understand it.”

“That’s your nephew’s sex life you’re referring to,” Kurt chides as he gulps a glass of water.

“Hey! Do you mind? Libby is about.”

“She’s outside in the sandbox,” Kurt says, rolling his eyes. “She’s hardly going to hear. Anyway. Jules. He’s done what he said he would, and it looks as though we’re going to be designing for Cats in the West End.”

“They’re dragging that up again? Hasn’t that been done to death?”

“Doesn’t matter, as long as audiences will keep paying,” Kurt tells him as he sidles over to where Blaine stands with his head in the fridge. “Sooo, Jules has a meeting set for the end of next week to meet with the director and set designers in London. I told him to take Taylor with him and make a week of it.”

“Good idea,” Blaine agrees, his voice muffled as he rearranges stuff. “All he’ll do otherwise is mope around.”

“And I was wondering if we might go too? I could do to go to the meeting,” Kurt carries on as Blaine straightens up and turns to face him. “And a week in London sounds fun, doesn’t it? We could meet Jonathan and Teresa.”

“A week in London sounds hot as hell in the middle of July,” Blaine grousches.

“Oh come on,” Kurt says, playfully pouting. “We could stay at the Dorchester? Get a suite? That way Libby has her own room and you and I can be naughty,” he tries, winding his arms about his waist, but Blaine is having none of it.
“It’s not fair on Libby,” he says, removing Kurt’s hands and walking back over to the bags. “To make her fly all that way and suffer with the jetlag.”

“She used to fly anywhere and everywhere with us when she was small,” Kurt says, wounded.

“If you need to go to the meeting then go,” Blaine says kindly, pausing to kiss his lips as he passes. “I don’t mind.”

“And play third wheel to Taylor and Jules? No thanks. I’ll join in via skype. I don’t see why you won’t go.”

“Because if we go there for a week, then when we get back it will be time for Hawaii, then after that it’s straight into first grade for Lib, and I think we need to be a little realistic here, that’s all. It’s not you, you realize that, right?” Blaine asks, suddenly stopping in his tracks. “I mean, I’d love to drop it all and fly there with you but...”

“Libby would love it,” he tries again, weakly this time.

“Well she’s not going to go, so that’s that,” Blaine says, and really, he should know by now not to speak to Kurt like that, because then suddenly Kurt is by the back door.

“Libby? Can you come here for a minute? I need to ask you something.”

“Oh don’t you dare,” Blaine says, staring at him.

“Watch me.”

“Yes, papa?”

“Hey Libby Darling, so...I have some work to do with Jules, in London, and I was wondering...”

“Kurt...”

“If you and daddy would like to fly out with me for a few days? We could see the Queen, if she’s home of course.”

“Yes!” Libby shrieks, leaping into his arms. “I wanna go! I do, I do, I do! Oh thank you papa, thank you! Daddy! Papa’s gonna take us to London.”

“You jerk,” Blaine snarls, slamming the orange juice onto the counter and storming from the room.

"What did I do?" Libby asks in a small voice. "Is daddy mad at me?"

"No sweetie," Kurt replies, kissing the top of her head. "He's not mad at anyone he uh....he just remembered something he had to do, that's all."

"But he called me that name he called the man who cut him up the other day." 

"No, no, he was calling himself that I'm sure," Kurt says through a forced, overly bright smile as he ushers her back out into the yard. "Hey, can you do something for me?"

Libby nods, her pigtails swinging up and down as she smiles brightly, completely happy once more.

"Can you build the biggest and best sandcastle, one that's fit for a princess? I just need to go see if daddy's remembered the...the...thing, and then I'll be right out to help you finish it off, okay?"
"Okay!" Libby says, beaming up at him before setting to work.

He finds Blaine in the music room, which is exactly where he knew he would be, but he didn't expect to find him sitting on the floor in the corner, nowhere near the piano or any instrument at all. Head bowed, knees drawn up to his chest, he looks up briefly when Kurt enters the room, a look of complete pain and anguish on his face before he looks back down again.

"So...I'm sorry," Kurt says, kneeling next to him and placing a tentative hand on his forearm. "That was low, and I shouldn't have done it. I just really wanted you to come to London with me."

"You used her against me," Blaine says, with so much sadness in his voice that Kurt is almost moved to tears. "I said no, and you knew that by asking her like that my hands would be tied. You should be ashamed. Sorry and ashamed. That's not just low, Kurt. That's downright disgusting."

"Oh well I'm sorry," Kurt flares, getting to his feet and throwing his hands despairingly in the air. "I'm so sorry that I wanted you two to come to London with me. I'm really, really sorry that I was looking forward to showing Libby the sights, and taking her to Franco's coffee bar if it's still there. How dumb of me to think you'd be proud to walk back in there holding my hand and to hear me say 'hey, remember the boy with the love from Blaine post-its? Well here he is, as my husband and here's our daughter.' Yeah, ridiculous."

"No! No, that's not ridiculous, that's...that's...wonderful," Blaine says, rushing to Kurt's side. "I love that you would want to do that."

"So why won't you come?"

"Well we're coming now, aren't we? Clearly we can't go back on what you've said to Libby- which of course, you knew."

"Oh come on, Blaine! There's no reason why you can't. It's not like you do anything all day."

"What?" Blaine asks, stunned. "What did you just say to me?"

"Okay. I'm...I'm throwing cheap shots because I'm angry. I'm sorry, I'm gonna..."

"I don't do anything? Who does all the laundry, Kurt? Who keeps the house clean? Who does the grocery shopping, takes Libby to her dental appointments, picks her up from the bus each day? Who has been keeping her entertained every day for the last seven weeks, so that you can work, huh? Who suffers through endless play dates and mindless chatter? Who does all of that and still smiles and loves you with all his heart because he wants you and only you?"

"I said I was sorry!" Kurt yells. "Jesus fucking Christ Blaine, how many times?"

"As many times as you want, it's still never gonna be enough!" Blaine yells back. "Honest to god Kurt, what did you think? That I'd laugh this off? I said no. I don't want to drag Libby across the other side of the world for a week right before school gets back!"

"But we're going to Hawaii! We don't get home until two days before school starts! How is that any different?"

"Oh...let me see," Blaine says, pacing angrily. "A small time difference, ten days of complete relaxation, not the hustle and bustle of a big noisy city..."

"You're being a jerk," Kurt snaps. "And us yelling at each other isn't going to help. I'm gonna go build a sandcastle with Libby, and we can talk about this later."
Blaine sits on the piano bench for the longest time, but no music is in him today. In the end he stands and looks forlornly out of the window across the yard to where Kurt and Libby play happily in the sandbox, sharing smiles and laughter that he desperately wants to be a part of. He's not sure when and how the despair and sadness came upon him, why he finds himself feeling just...weary of life sometimes, but he knows he wants more than anything to change that. And he also knows that standing alone in here isn't going to fix that.

Kurt looks up to see Blaine walking across the lawn, but he looks back down again, asking Libby some inane question about which Princess has the best room in the castle, and he pretends to listen while she chatters on. Blaine sinks down onto the grass next to him, and Kurt can feel him watching, waiting for him to turn his head. Deciding there's really no point in making him sweat, Kurt turns, opens his mouth to say something but is immediately prevented by Blaine's mouth on his, hot, sensual and very, very welcome. So welcome in fact, that he doesn't even care when he's pushed back onto the sand, opting to wind his arms around Blaine's neck instead, tangling his fingers in his hair.

"Um...excuse me," Libby booms. "You're lying in the moat. Daddy! Let him...ugh. Forget it. I'll just work around you," she huffs, rolling her eyes at her ridiculous daddies.

"I'm sorry," Blaine whispers, pulling back to kiss the tip of Kurt's nose.

"I'm sorry too," Kurt smiles up at him before pulling him down into another kiss.

"Is anyone sorry to me? And my moat?" Libby asks as sardonically as a six year old can. "Always kissing, you two," she says, using one of Santana's lines. "Always."

"I always say horrible things to you," Kurt says regretfully. "I don't know why. I just get angry and..."

"And I always talk to you like you're a child," Blaine sighs. "We both have flaws, Kurt. But I guess it's some consolation that I spent a long time trying to think of when we last had an argument, and I can't remember. I can remember when we last did other stuff though," he adds with a wink.

"Six o'clock this morning."

Blaine looks down at their bodies pressed together, and the way all his weight rests on his elbows either side of Kurt's shoulder. "It was pretty similar to this, actually," he grins.

"Except there wasn't a small child digging a moat around my head."

"Can you just move?!" Libby yells, losing all patience when they kiss again. "Honestly. I'm calling Santana."

"Okay, okay, we're moving," Kurt laughs, pushing Blaine gently upright.

"Hey Lib, are you excited for London?" Blaine asks, smiling at Kurt as she leaps into his arms.

"Yes!" she cries happily. "I want to see where the queen lives!"

* 

And London is fun. Hard work, and Kurt gets mildly irritated that Libby gets tired in the city so they can't do all they had planned, but overall, they have a good time. Blaine certainly seems more
at home in Hawaii though, where he lies lazily by the pool or on the beach and takes great pleasure
in being able to nap in the afternoon. Kurt teases him about it, joking that he's getting old, and
missing the flash of deep hurt in Blaine's eyes, but it's replaced by love and laughter when he lets
Kurt tug him into the sea where they spend a great deal of time making Libby scream in delight
when they throw her in the air and splash her with water.

Back home it's right back to school for Libby, and this year it's her who finds it harder, not wanting
to go for a full day and forgo her afternoons with Blaine; but despite the tears all round for much of
her first week, she soon settles in and adores her new teacher, Mrs. Pascoe. She seems to blossom,
being a first grader, and Jess Hunter, now a firm family friend, comments on how much she seems
to have matured during the summer as she proudly sings for her, something she would never have
dreamed of doing before.

"It's because I'm going to be a big cousin," she tells Jess proudly one Sunday afternoon when she's
at the house for dinner. "My Aunt Rachel is having a baby."

"I can see that," she says, watching as Rachel struggles to get up from the couch.

"I'm pretty sure you can see that from space," Kurt comments, which earns him a smack from her
as she waddles past the bathroom.

"She's as big as a house," Libby says, ignorant of Rachel's glare. "It'll be out soon."

"One more week," Rachel snaps. "And if we could just lay off the fat jokes, I'd be eternally
grateful."

"You shouldn't talk to Rachel like that, Libby," Blaine admonishes. "I think she looks beautiful,"
he says, beaming at her and kissing her cheek.

"Blaine has a pregnant woman fetish," Kurt tells Jess. "He was all over Santana when she was
pregnant too."

"She was carrying our child!" Blaine protests. "And Rachel is carrying my niece or nephew! I can
fawn if I want to."

"She's still fat," Libby says once the bathroom door is closed.

"Libby!"

"S'what papa says," Libby giggles.

"Do you have to?" Blaine snaps. "She's young and impressionable."

"Who?" Kurt smiles. "Rachel?"

"Oh...grow up," Blaine mutters, storming to the kitchen where he is hotly followed by Kurt.

"Sorry, sorry. That was...I'm..."

"You want another baby, don't you?"

"No, I don't. I can't explain it's just like...I don't want another but I don't want anyone else to have
one either, if that makes sense."

"You're bizarre," Blaine laughs, folding him in his arms. "But I love you. Sorry I snapped."
"Nah, you're right. I shouldn't say that stuff in front of Libby. I just...it's all about the baby this, the baby that. My dad and Carole are obsessed, I swear."

"And they were when it was us," Blaine reminds him. "It doesn't make them love us or Libby any less."

"No...I know," he sighs, letting himself appreciate the warmth Blaine's arms bring. "And you? Are you okay? Sometimes you seem a little off recently."

"I'm okay," Blaine nods against his cheek. "Just...I don't know. I feel old sometimes, I guess."

"Ah. That old chestnut."

"Old?"

"Sorry. Bad choice of words. You're perfect to me, you know that?"

"I'm not dull?" Blaine asks fearfully.

"You're perfect."

"I feel like...I'm the boring dad and you're the fun one. I'm the one who reprimands her for feeding the cat under the table and you're the one who gives her a wink. I'm the one who tells her it's not nice to joke about Rach, and you're the one who teaches her those jokes to begin with."

"I know, I'm sorry. I really do feel bad about that. But please, don't do yourself down. I still love you as much as I always did. More than ever, in fact. You are without doubt, the most wonderful man in the entire world, and you have a cute tush."

Blaine laughs, bowing his head onto Kurt's shoulder before looking up again and allowing himself to be kissed. "Love you," Kurt whispers, and Blaine returns the sentiment with another kiss, the moment is forgotten and Blaine feels better until two weeks later, when Kurt returns from a shopping trip in Columbus to find Blaine quietly simmering in the kitchen.

"You need to talk to your daughter."

"Excuse me?" Kurt laughs, setting his bag on the kitchen table and kissing his husband on the cheek as he heads to the fridge. "Last time I looked she very much belonged to both of us."

"Well this was your doing, so you need to speak with her."

Kurt pauses, bottle of water raised and eyes him curiously. "Would you care to elaborate?"

"Show and tell today. The theme was talents."

"Ah, yes," Kurt smiles as he sits down at the table. "Did she sing?"

"Oh she sang, yes."

"Was she good?"

"According to Mrs. Pascoe, she has a beautiful voice."

"Well that's nothing we didn't already know," Kurt says, grinning smugly and leaning back in his chair.
Blaine turns from the counter, stony faced to glare at Kurt. "She sang 'I'm just a girl who can't say no' in front of the entire school."

Kurt chokes hard on a mouthful of water, eyes streaming as he coughs and stamps his feet before dissolving into fits of laughter, but Blaine stands still.

"It is not funny."

"It's hilarious! Oh my god! She did that?"

"Yes, thanks to you, she did."

"Thanks to me?"

"You taught it to her. This is all your fault."

"Ha!" Kurt wipes at his eyes. "Oh Libby Darling," he sighs. "You're beyond words."

"Beyond help."

"Hang on," Kurt says, standing and walking toward him. "Are you...are you actually mad about this?"

"Yes I'm mad!" Blaine cries. "I'm fucking livid! Do you have any idea how humiliating it is, to be called up to discuss your daughter's inappropriate song choice? It's hard enough being the only gay parents in probably the entire school district. I know people are watching, waiting for us to slip up so they'll have something to bitch about. I'm trying my damn best to raise her correctly, and then you go and pull a stunt like that which makes us look like a couple of washed up drag queens aiming to shock through the use of our six year old daughter!"

"Excuse me, what? You think I'm to blame here? You think I did something wrong?"

"You taught her the fucking song! Ugh! Kurt!" Tearing at his hair in frustration, Blaine screws his eyes shut and tries to calm himself but to no avail. "I just feel like...like sometimes you don't take this parenting thing seriously."

Kurt lets out a low whistle. "Wow." Shaking his head in disbelief, he folds his arms across his chest defensively and gears up for a fight. "You know what, Blaine? I taught her a song from Oklahoma, which is funny and light. She sounded cute singing it and putting on the accent. Maybe I should have told her it was for performing at home only, I don't know, but it's not like I exposed her to hardcore rap music, or let her watch an R rated movie. You were embarrassed? Fine. I'm sorry if I was the cause of that. But don't you dare say I don't take fatherhood seriously. You and Libby are my life. I give my everything to both of you, to love and care and provide for you, and I can't quite believe that you're standing there accusing me of not taking my role seriously."

"It's not your fault," Blaine says, holding his arms out to his wounded husband, but it is a futile gesture and they fall back limply to his side. "You were so young..."

"Oh don't bring age into this, Blaine," Kurt snaps. "Our age difference ceased to matter a long time ago. I'm thirty years old. Nowhere near a teenager."

"I didn't say that, I just meant that you were young to become a father. I..."

"Maybe it does matter, but the other way around. Have you thought of that?" Kurt says, voice cracking with hurt. "Maybe it matters now because somewhere along the line you've become
eighty six instead of forty six. Maybe it matters because you've stopped wanting to have any kind
of fun, and because you've lost the ability to find humor in any situation anymore."

"That's not true!" Blaine cries indignantly. "We have fun!"

"No we don't," Kurt counters. "Libby and I have fun flying her kite while you sit on a bench and
watch. We play baseball in the backyard while you're in here under the pretense of preparing a
snack for the team. And as for you and I together? Our date nights are dinner out, home by eleven."

"I thought you liked having dinner together?" Blaine asks in a small voice, and now it's his turn to
be wounded.

"I did, I do." Kurt's tone softens as he steps forward and takes both his hands in his. "But do you
remember everything we used to do? Getting drunk and misbehaving in alleyways? Getting each
other off in a public bathroom on our stag night? Attempting to play strip poker in Austria?"

"We still have sex."

"We do," Kurt agrees. "We do, and it's still wonderful and amazing and I am continually astounded
with how attentive and unselfish a lover you are. You blow my mind, and I really hope you know
that. But this isn't about the sex, Blaine. This is about letting loose and having fun together."

"You want to get drunk?"

"Not necessarily. We used to have tons of fun just having board game tournaments, or playing the
piano and singing silly songs after dinner. But now even that has been taken away from me. It's
become all about training Libby and her voice. That's why I taught her that song, Blaine. Not
because I wanted to shock, or because I was aiming to upset you, but because I wanted to have a
little fun. No more, no less. I would never set out to deliberately cause trouble."

"I'm sorry," Blaine says simply, and this time Kurt falls into his arms with a long sigh. "I know you
didn't mean it, I was just embarrassed I guess. And I always feel like I have to fight for her, for us.
Living here....I don't regret it at all, being near all our family. But...but I know we're not accepted,"
he says sadly. "I know most people keep their kids away from Lib because she's the one with the
gay dads. There's no denying that the only play dates she has are with Livvy, Melody or Jamie- and
that poor kid is totally alienated because he likes cross dressing."

"Blaine, sweetheart, does it matter?" Kurt asks, kissing his forehead tenderly. "Libby has plenty of
friends in her class, who haven't yet learned the ignorance of their parents. And really, Livvy,
Melody and Jamie are the only kids she ever wants to spend time with outside of class anyway.
Melody and Jamie's parents are good people, and obviously Livvy and Libby are as good as sisters.
That's all she needs. We have friends and family who love and support all three of us. We don't
need approval of narrow minded individuals to be happy, we just need each other..... Where is she,
anyway?"

"One guess."

"One guess? Then she'll be with Livvy and Kathy, probably making cakes."

"You would be correct."

"Blaine, can I ask...you didn't get mad at her, did you? Because of the song?"

"No, of course not! I would never do that. Mrs Pascoe was quick to reassure me that Libby didn't
know anything was amiss. The principal had asked her to talk with Lib but she decided to raise it
with me instead. She understood that Libby didn't comprehend the meaning of the lyrics in any way."

"Good. I'd hate for her to be upset, or think she did wrong when it was all my fault."

"Kurt, it wasn't your fault," Blaine sighs, squeezing him tight. "I'm sorry for saying it was. Hell, I taught her baby got back when she was two, she could just have easily used that. And I'm also sorry for saying you don't take parenting seriously, because I know how much she means to you."

Running a soothing hand over Blaine's back, Kurt kisses his cheek. "I know you're sorry. I'm sorry for saying you're no fun."

"I'm not," he tells him honestly. "I'm not sorry you said it, because I'm not any fun. You're right. I try to be grown up and responsible because I feel the weight of that number pressing down on me. If I'm honest, it was Joe's bachelor party that was the turning point. I felt so ashamed, walking around with a black eye because I'd gotten so wasted."

“But that was funny,” Kurt protests.

“If I was twenty five maybe, but I’m twenty years past that. And I couldn’t stop worrying about what people thought of me.”

“Blaine, it was a once in a blue moon thing. If you were doing it all the time that’s one thing, but you’re not. We had a whole load of fun that night, and one bad thing happened. It doesn’t make you a bad person. There are still lessons to be learned, you know, even at your age. Next time I ask you to sixty nine, just lie on the floor immediately. Don’t attempt to make it to the bed.”

Blaine can’t help but laugh, dropping his head onto Kurt’s shoulder. “You’re right,” he sighs. “why does my age matter? I feel twenty five on the inside. And I want to throw myself into my time with you and Libby with reckless abandon. I want to build blanket forts and have pillow fights and not give a damn about who's going to clear up the mess after. I want to run through the mud at the park and not bring Libby home because I've forgotten wellies. I want to...I just don't seem able to. It’s like...since dad went, I feel as if I should step up. Be more responsible, but I really don’t need to, do I?”

“No you don’t,” Kurt says, kissing his cheek and nuzzling in close. “Because the person you are, the person Libby and I want to see again, is just completely perfect for us. We don’t need you to be any different.”

“I just...I don’t ever want to let Libby down,” Blaine says sadly “or disappoint her by being boring.”

"You are an amazing father," Kurt tells him firmly. "You are sweet, attentive and so incredibly loving. Don't beat yourself up for finding it hard to let go. I don't have anywhere near the patience you do. I can't watch the same episode of Care Bears six times a day, and if I have to read that lonely Fire Truck book one more time... Blaine, this is what parenting is about. A learning curve for all three of us. I'll help you let go, if that's what you want- and you can help me learn to be more tolerant but I am telling you, what we have...it works. You’re here trying to be staid and serious because you feel as if your age should dictate how you act... and I’m here trying to be over exuberant and fun in an attempt to hide my growing upset that in a few short weeks I will turn thirty one. And really, what does it matter? At the center of everything is just three people who love each other deeply and want to be happy. Who gives a damn how we act?"

“Well, we do, clearly.”
Kurt laughs, shaking his head. “Yeah, okay, but we shouldn’t is what I’m saying. I love you, you know. Endlessly.”

"I know you do," Blaine replies, kissing him deeply. "And I love you too, my gorgeous boy."

Kurt presses their foreheads together, smiling softly. "Are we good?"

"We're always good, you and I. But next date night is my choice, okay?"

"Okay," Kurt grins. "So... how long until Libby returns?"

Blaine shrugs and grins wickedly. "I don't know," he says, sauntering toward the hallway. "An hour, maybe."

"Are you thinking what I'm thinking?"

Blaine stops in the doorway, one hand on his hip as he turns and pouts in the most ridiculous manner. "I'm thinking that I'm just a girl who can't say no," he sings before laughing wildly and taking off with Kurt hot on his heels, who catches him in the hallway and pins him to the wall. "Here?" Blaine squeaks in surprise.

"Right here."

“But...”

“Let go,” Kurt whispers, and something inside of Blaine seems to snap, making him pull Kurt into a bruising and desperate kiss as he fumbles to undress him quickly.

“How has it been this long?” Blaine gasps as Kurt flings his bow tie to the floor and hastily unbuttons his shirt.

“Last night, Blaine,” Kurt murmurs, kissing into the hollow of his throat before pushing his shirt roughly to the floor.

“I know but...oh... how has it been so long since I looked at you?” Blaine asks, pausing Kurt before he can remove their pants. “Kurt, you're so beautiful.”

Kurt steps forward, kissing Blaine tenderly and running his hands into his hair. "Turn around," he says quietly, and Blaine spins in his embrace, catching sight of their bare chested reflections in the hallway mirror. "We're beautiful together," Kurt tells him, his eyes shining as he kisses from Blaine's shoulder up to his neck. He unbucks Blaine's belt and slowly unbuttons his fly, letting his pants fall to the floor and pool around his ankles, as keeping his eyes trained on his in the mirror, Kurt strokes him to full hardness over his briefs, sucking a mark onto his shoulder blade when Blaine throws his head back and closes his eyes in pleasure.

"Oh Kurt... just take me."

"No," he smiles. "I want you to take me."

"What? But I..."

"Come on, Blaine," Kurt urges, stepping out of his own jeans and briefs. He leans on the small hall table which is directly below the mirror, pushing his ass back slightly and shaking it to make Blaine laugh. "You know you want to."

Blaine growls, knowing full well that Kurt will laugh loudly, and he fumbles in the hall closet for
his bag, finding the small packet of lube he keeps in there. "Right, husband. You're mine," he teases, swiftly lowering his underwear and stepping closer.

"With pleasure."

The moment softens, turns from light hearted joking into something much more tender and sweet as Blaine pulls Kurt up, into his arms where they take the longest time to kiss each other's troubles away, until they're both so helplessly aroused that the atmosphere changes again, to all out want as Blaine spins Kurt around and rests his hands on the table once more. He pauses, the head of his cock pressed right to Kurt's entrance, waiting until he has eye contact, and then he pushes inside slowly. He doesn't bend Kurt over, just nudges his legs apart and keeps him as close as he can, bringing one knee up to rest on the table as he grips Kurt's hips. "Kurt..."

"Yes," he moans. "Bite me, Blaine. Mark me."

Needing no more invitation, he scrapes his teeth over the soft skin of Kurt's shoulder before sucking there, aggravating the flesh until a livid red mark stands out, driving him wild with lust as he pushes hard and fast, his hips snapping back and forth, the sound of bare skin slapping together echoing off the polished wooden floors.

"If they come home right now we're screwed," Kurt pants, smiling into the mirror when Blaine gives a stuttered laugh into his shoulder.

"Can't. Stop. Now," he groans. "Perfect Kurt is.....perfect," he says, pressing his sweaty brow against the back of Kurt's neck. He angles his hips up slightly, and Kurt emits some kind of noise between a choked off scream and a whimper, hissing in relief when Blaine takes his cock in hand and begins to stroke in time with his thrusts.

"Blaine, I can't I'm..."

"Look at me," Blaine begs, and the second their eyes lock on one another they both come, gasping hotly, Blaine's breath sounding harsh in Kurt's ear as he mutters a string of expletives while he slowly comes down from his high, their bodies rocking together.

"I love you, Kurt. Thank you for knowing me, for helping me feel okay again."

"I love you too. You..." Kurt pants, wincing slightly when Blaine pulls out. "You are just...sublime."

"Heh," Blaine chuckles softly, pulling him close. "We um...are we better? All talked out?"

"I think so, don't you? Tell me how you feel."

"Like..." Blaine breaks off, a huge, genuine and open smile lighting up his face. "Like it's all going to be okay."
Chapter 34

"Very considerate of Rachel to go into labor in the middle of the day, I have to say," Kurt muses as Blaine paces the hospital waiting room restlessly.

"About the only considerate thing she's ever done," Santana remarks dryly.

Blaine rolls his eyes. "You're always so mean to her."

"I am not!" she protests. "I love Rachel like she was my sister. And she knows it."

"Lucky Rachel," Blaine mumbles, giving a passing wink to Libby where she plays at a table full of Legos.

"Will she be much longer?" Burt asks Carole, who shakes her head in disbelief.

"How am I supposed to know that, dear? She came in at nine, and it's now nearly four. She could be done already, or it could be another twelve hours."

"Twelve hours?!" Burt cries. "I'm supposed to sit here for twelve hours?"

"At least it'll give time for Hiram and Leroy's flight to get in," Blaine remarks.

"Oh it'd be just like Berry's baby to take its time getting here," Santana grumbles. "Not like you, Lib. You were out like a shot."

"Out of where?" Libby asks with wide eyes.

"Um..."

"Boy!" The welcome bellow of Finn has them all scrambling to their feet as he comes skidding around the corner, his face alight with utter joy. "A little boy! We have a baby boy! I'm a daddy!" He lands a huge kiss on Kurt's lips before taking off back down the corridor again, calling over his shoulder that he'll let them know as soon as they can come in.

It seems to Libby as if they have to wait an eternity, and Carole says something about stitches which makes her dads pull a face, but she doesn’t really understand because all she really wants to do is see the baby. Eventually Finn is back though, picking her up and she likes being in his arms because he’s so tall, and he carries her into the room where her Aunt Rachel sits in bed, cradling a baby that is even more beautiful than her own baby Annabell.

“Hey, Libby. Come meet your new cousin,” Rachel says, beaming happily as everyone else crowds into the room. “This is Jacob Christopher Hudson, and we’re gonna need you to take real good care of him for us, okay?”

“He’s small,” Libby says as Finn sets her on the bed. She reaches across and touches his tiny hand. “But cute. Yep. I like him.”

“That’s good,” Finn laughs. “Do you want to hold him?”

“Yes please,” she nods.

Blaine, naturally, cries at the sight of Libby with Jacob in her arms, while Kurt takes pictures on his phone before the baby is passed to Carole and Burt. By the time it is their turn, Blaine has his
tears under control somewhat, but they start afresh when he gazes down at the tiny baby in his arms. “Hello,” he whispers. “You’re my new nephew. Please don’t grow as tall as your dad.”

“Aw honey, this takes me back,” Kurt coos, looking over his shoulder. “All those hours we spent just looking at Libby and marveling that she belonged to us.”

“Would you do it again?”

“That part, yes,” Kurt says with a smile. “The diapers, the teething, the weaning, the crying for no reason whatsoever...no.”

“Same,” Blaine laughs. “Besides, Libby? She’s perfect.”

“She is. I’m going to the bathroom,” Kurt says with a kiss to his cheek and one for the baby too. “I’ll be right back.”

The second the door is closed, Blaine turns in his chair to face Rachel. “Listen, I know you’ve only just given birth, but there’s something I need your help with.”

“Oh Blaine, I can’t run scales with you now,” she sighs.


“I’m back!” Kurt calls brightly.

“How quick were you?”

“They’re closed for cleaning and I couldn’t be bothered to walk further down the hall,” he explains. “What you all talking about?”

“Uh....”

“Blaine wanted me to run scales with him,” Rachel declares, making Kurt roll his eyes.

“Blaine! She’s just given birth! Why would you ask such a thing?”

*

Two weeks later.

Blaine: Are we all here?

Wes: I think so.

Finn: I’m here.

Santana: Same.

Sebastian: Here.

Nick: Jeff’s in the bathroom.

Jeff: Here now. Where’s...

Rachel: HERE! I AM HERE. YOU MAY NOW BEGIN.

Jeff: I was going to say Joe.
Rachel: JOE! JOE? WHERE ARE YOU?

Sebastian: Well he’s hardly going to respond, is he?

Rachel: HE MIGHT.

Sebastian: Who invited her?

Finn: Sorry. Couldn’t help it. She saw me logging on.

Blaine: Well anyway....

Joe: Hi, sorry I’m late, Blaine. I was having sex with your niece.

Blaine: JOSEPH. I’m warning you.

Joe: I was, though.

Blaine: So help me...

Wes: Anyway! I think that’s all of us, yes?

Blaine: Actually...

Riccardo: HERE I AM GAY BLAINE! HERE I AM! LOOK AT ME ONLINE TALKING LOOK!

Rachel: OMG HE IS ME!

Sebastian: No. Please, no. I can’t take this.

Riccardo: RACHEL MY DARLING GIRL! MANY CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR BOY! JACOBEAN AND LIBERACE! WHAT FUNNY NAMES YOU FAMILY GIVE YOUR BABIES!

Sebastian: Blaine, please tell us what we’re all here for so then I can run away.

Blaine: Okay. Yes. Sorry. So. Next week marks the fifteenth anniversary of when Kurt and I first met.

Rachel: I WAS THERE! REMEMBER? I WAS THE ONE WHO MADE HIM GO!

Blaine: Yes, thank you. So. I’m trying to organize a thing...a surprise for him, because well...this year has been quite tough for me and Kurt has really helped me through all that, so...

Santana: He’s your husband. It’s his job.

Wes: It’s not his job. He does it because he wants to.

Blaine: Anyway...Santana. The anniversary falls on our date night. I know you usually sit Libby, but could she sleep at yours that night?

Santana: Wanky

Sebastian: Only if you promise to film everything.

Riccardo: BLAINE GIVE THE BOY SEX TO HIS HUSBAND AS GIFT!
Finn: Most epic line I’ve ever seen.

Blaine: No, it’s not...

Rachel: WHY DO YOU WANT US ALL ONLINE JUST TO SAY YOU’RE HAVING SEX?

Joe: I was just having sex

Blaine: JOSEPH!

Wes: For the love of all things gay, can we just accept that Kurt and Blaine always have sex, regardless of the occasion, and actually listen to what he has to say?

Jeff: Sorry, I was asleep.

Nick: Actually, we were making out.

Riccardo: EVERYONE IS GAY AND NOTHING HURTS

Finn: Speak for yourself.

Sebastian: How come Santana gets Libby for a sleepover? Isn’t it my turn?

Rachel: I WOULD HAVE HER BUT JACOB WAKES UP IN THE NIGHT, WOULD YOU BELIEVE? AND HE LIKE...DEMANDS TO BE FED.


Blaine: Could we just...

Riccardo: WHO HAVE LIBBY FOR SLEEPOVER? I WANT HER!

Joe: That's not fair!

Blaine: You live in LA!

Joe: Well why am I here then? Trapped in possibly the most insane conversation I have ever had?

Blaine: BECAUSE IT IS THE FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF WHEN KURT AND I FIRST MET AND I WANT TO ORGANIZE A SURPRISE!

Rachel: No need to shout.

Riccardo: Blaine if you are rude we will not help.

Blaine: JFC

Riccardo: I do not understand.

Blaine: Just listen, please, all of you. Fifteen years ago, I first set eyes with the man who would go on to become my husband, and the greatest love of my life. He is my everything, and I need this date night to be perfect, which is why I need your help.

*  

Kurt looks up from his work to find Blaine standing in the office doorway, looking suitably sheepish and biting his lip.
"What'd you do?" Kurt asks with a smile. "You look as guilty as a puppy sitting next to a pile of..."

"I have to cancel tonight," Blaine says, looking forlorn.

"What? No! It's our date night! And it's your choice too."

"I know," Blaine sighs. "And I'm so sorry. But Riccardo wants to skype so we can go through the spring program together."

"Well can't you do that tomorrow? Why does it have to be tonight?"

"Because he's only free tonight," Blaine explains patiently. "He's away all weekend and he has a meeting with the panel on Monday to put his ideas across."

"Blaine!" Kurt whines. "I was really looking forward to that."

"I know you were. We can do it next week instead?"

"I guess," he says, sighing heavily.

"I'm really sorry, Kurt," Blaine says, feeling a flush of shame as he comes over to kiss the top of his head. "I'll make it up to you."

An hour later and Kurt is still finding it hard to concentrate, torn between his unreasonable anger toward Blaine and his job, and his overwhelming upset at having his date night cancelled. He's grateful for the ringing of his cell, even if it is Rachel who is probably calling to tell him Jacob burped and it was cute, and he rolls his eyes fondly as he answers.

"Unless he's walking, I'm not interested."

"He's three weeks old," Rachel reminds him, the joke passing her by. "Anyway, I was calling to ask you something."

"Oh?"

"I was wondering if you wanted to go out tonight and get coffee?"

"What? Why? You can just come here if you want. Bring Jacob with you."

"No," Rachel says as patiently as she can. "I want to go out."

"If this is so you can practice breastfeeding discreetly in public, my answer is a resounding no."

"Aren't you cheerful today?" Rachel snarks. "And anyway, Jacob won't be with us. Finn needs to practice giving him a bottle so I used my breast pump and...."

"Lalalala! Thank you Rachel. TMI and all that."

"So can we go out?"

"Ugh. I guess so," Kurt sighs. "It's not like I have any other plans, since my date bailed on me."

"Ah. So that's why you're cranky."

"Yeah? So? I can be cranky if I want to."

"Of course you can," Rachel placates. "I'll pick you up at six thirty."
"Six thirty? That's stupidly early."

"Yeah I know. See you later," she trills, and the line goes dead.

And Kurt is indeed cranky all day, brusquely informing Blaine he is going out with Rachel tonight and purposely not revealing that it's only to get coffee. But Blaine seems oblivious to his mood, smiling brightly and telling him he thinks it's really fantastic they're going to have some time alone since things have been so busy with the birth of Jacob.

"So I won't be here when you leave," he tells Kurt as he serves up an early dinner. "I have to run to the store."


"Will you be home late?"

"Possibly, who knows?"

"Okay, well...have fun."

So Blaine and Libby say their goodbyes and head off, before Rachel pulls up across the driveway and hollers up to the house. "KURT? KURT? I'M HERE!"

"I know you're here," he hisses, diving into the car. "The whole damn street can hear that you've arrived. Jesus."

"So I thought we could go to the Lima Bean," Rachel prattles as she drives away. "You know, for old time's sake."

"Seriously, Rachel? You wanna drive all that way just to get coffee? There's a new place downtown we could try instead."

"I know, and we will sometime, so I can practice my breastfeeding in public. But for now, we're going to the Lima Bean, and you're going to try and smile."

"Lima Bean," Kurt mutters, staring out the window. "Why do we have to go to the Lima Bean? It wasn't that great when we were in High School. I can't imagine it's changed."

"I thought it'd be fun," Rachel says brightly. "They have an acoustic night on."

"Oh why, God, why?" Kurt moans despairingly. "Watching some middle aged guy attempting to play the guitar and sing a recognizable tune? No thank you."

"Well you didn't do too badly out of it last time, as I recall," Rachel snaps, her patience wearing thin. "In fact, I seem to remember you sitting in the front every Friday night for three whole years."

"Well that was different, wasn't it?" Kurt bites. "He was worth it."

"Still is, I hope."

"Yeah," Kurt says, then sighs heavily. "I'm sorry. I'm still upset he bailed on me to skype with Riccardo. I'm taking it out on you and that's not fair."

"Don't worry about it," Rachel says, reaching across to squeeze his hand. "Let's just have fun tonight, yes?"

He's still grumbling and grousing when they arrive, though it's under his breath as he recognizes when Rachel has reached her limit. He stops short at the door though, his hand paused mid way to the handle. "It's closed."

"It's not closed," Rachel says distractedly as she fires off a quick text.

"It. Is. Closed," Kurt forces out through gritted teeth. "This sign here is a dead giveaway. Look," he says, gesturing to the door. "Closed. All this fucking way and..."

"It's not closed," Rachel says again, pushing the door open. She pauses, looking back over her shoulder at Kurt before she steps inside. "Fifteen years ago today," she says with a smile.

"Let's go all the way tonight,
No regrets, just love.
We can dance until we die,
You and I, will be young forever
Cause you make me feel like I'm living a
Teenage Dream, the way you turn me on
I can't sleep
Let's runaway and don't ever look back,
Don't ever look back."

"Oh my god," Kurt whispers, one hand fluttering shakily up to cover his mouth. Blaine sits at the piano, eyes fixed on him and smiling as he sings. Stunned, Kurt allows himself to be led down the shop, and it's only really then that he notices the entire place filled with friends and family, including Libby standing on a chair and holding her arms out to him.

"My baby girl," he cries as Blaine carries on singing. He squeezes her tight, kissing into her hair before he sits down heavily next to Burt, with Wes on his other side. "I'm gonna cry," he says, still in complete shock. "Oh my god. It's always him but now it's me. I'm gonna cry."

"Imma get your heart racing in my skintight jeans, I'll be your teenage dream tonight."

And the tears are gone when Blaine, knowing how overcome he is, stands and wiggles his butt, making him laugh and Libby giggle against his cheek. "Daddy is a fool," he says to Libby who nods sagely.

The song finishes and everyone bursts into applause, making Blaine grin in such an impossibly shy yet pleased way that it makes Kurt's heart lurch in pleasure. He taps the microphone twice, even though he knows it's working, and let's out a short laugh, his eyes sparking when he looks at Kurt.

"I got you, didn't I?"

"You did," Kurt says quietly, but though Blaine may not hear, he knows what he's said.

"So, thank you all for coming. Um...fifteen years ago to the day, some annoying, short dark haired girl dragged a shy insecure fifteen year old boy out to get coffee to celebrate getting her driver's license. And everything changed. That girl is still annoying," Blaine says with a laugh as Rachel bellows her disapproval. "But she's also my sister-in-law and mother to my newest nephew. And the fifteen year old boy is no longer shy, no longer insecure. He's my husband, and the man who has held my heart for exactly fifteen years. He's given me countless hours of laughter, friendship and love, not to mention the greatest gift of all, Libby. So Kurt, I'm never gonna be able to recreate
that night exactly, but I just want to take this opportunity to serenade you, if you will, with some of the songs that have come to mean so much to us."

And with that, he starts to play once more, Snow Patrol this time, If I lay Here, which Kurt remembers all too well. "This is the night we first kissed," he tells his dad, resting his head on his shoulder briefly. "I sang for him after, and he lifted me down from the stage and kissed me."

"You gettin a little nostalgic there, buddy?"

"Fifteen years, dad. Where did all that time go? Half my life. Blaine has been here for half of my life."

"Yeah. You've been through a lot together, that's for sure," Burt says, putting an arm about his shoulders. "You're a lucky guy, you know. Not everyone meets the one, and not everyone meets them at fifteen."

"Did you know?"

"Oh son, I always knew," Burt laughs.

Taylor drains the rest of his coffee, setting his cup down on the small table and turning his attentions back to his Uncle, who is deep into the song now, his voice hitting each note with that distinctive scratchy, raw yet perfect quality it has. He sits in silence, happy for Blaine's voice to wash over him for a while.

"He's really good," Jules comments as he watches from by his side.

"Yeah, he is."

"They're good together, him and Kurt," Jules carries on as nonchalantly as he can. "I like how when Kurt talks to me and Blaine is mentioned, his whole face lights up. It's cute, even though he's thirty, it's like they're still in the flushes of new love, y'know?"

"Totally. I like this song. It's from way back when they very first started dating, Blaine said. When he wanted to tell Kurt those three words but was worried about scaring him off."

"He knew when they first started dating?"

"He knew before that probably," Taylor shrugs. "You should make him tell you the story sometime."

"Why didn't he tell him?"

"It's not easy, is it, to lay your heart on the line like that? I'm petrified."

"He...hang on...you're petrified?" Jules asks in alarm "What of?"

"Nothing," Taylor mumbles, turning scarlet. "I said he was petrified."

The song changes, and Blaine is on his guitar this time for James Blunt's Beautiful. Jules looks around the room, full of content, happy people watching Blaine perform. His own mom and dad stand talking with Cooper and Clare, and next to them Joe stands with his arms around Maddie, hands protectively over her stomach and Jules wonders if there's an announcement imminent. He looks back to Taylor, still with a blush staining his cheeks and the tips of his ears glowing, and wishes he could calm his heart own which seems to be beating so hard inside his chest.
"Move in with me," he says softly, and Taylor's head whips round, his eyes huge as he blinks.

"Excuse me?"

"I love you, Taylor Anderson, and I want you to move to Chicago to live with me."

"I uh...I..."

"Taylor?" They are interrupted by Libby, hands on hips as she stares up at him. "Are you sleeping at my house? You and Jules?"

"Oh, um, no Libby, not tonight," he says, not daring to look across to Jules. "Neither are you."

"Oh, that's right. I'm sleeping at Santana's. I forget. Why am I sleeping there?"

"Just so your daddies can have some alone time," he says, lifting her onto his lap.

"I miss you," she says matter of factly. "I like it when you stay with us."

"When are you next in Chicago, Lib?"

"I don't know. When Rick needs my daddy," she says, turning to look at Jules. "That's your daddy."

"Yes. I had noticed," he smiles.

"Well when you're next in Chicago, maybe Jules and I could sit you, would you like that?"

"Yes!" she beams, then frowns. "But you don't live there. You live in Michigan."

"Not anymore," Taylor says, casting a shy glance at his boyfriend. "I'm moving to Chicago to live with Jules."

"Oh yay!" an entirely oblivious Libby says, clapping her hands. "Fun. Ooh, I can have a sleepover in your apartment," she grins. "I'mma tell Rick." She runs off, and Taylor turns, leaning over to place a gentle kiss to the corner of Jules' mouth.

"I love you too."

Blaine plays a couple more, back at the piano this time until he picks up his guitar once more and sits on a lower chair than normal, talking to the whole room but addressing Kurt more than anyone. "So, I've said a thousand times or more that your eyes were the first thing I noticed about you, and it's true. They still make me jolt every time you look at me, and I feel as if I could lose myself in them. I also said earlier how Libby was the greatest gift well...she's perfect. I know everyone here will agree with me, but for me, she's even more special because I always wanted a baby that looked just like you, Kurt. And um...Libby and I would like to sing a little song for you. World premiere, ladies and gentleman," he teases as Wes lifts her onto the stage. "Libby and daddy performing in public for the first time. Okay sweetie, you ready?"

Libby nods, suddenly feeling very, very nervous, and Blaine sits her on his lap, putting the guitar across them both and making a barrier between her and the rest of the room. She feels instantly better and looks up at him, smiling. "Now I'm ready."

"Good girl."

"And now you're gonna cry," Wes tells Kurt as Blaine sets up strumming a slow tune before he and Libby start to sing together, her little voice coming high and clear above his deeper tones and
sounding completely perfect to Kurt, who does nothing to stop his endless stream of tears as he smiles.

"I may not be every mother's dream for her little girl
And my face may not grace the mind of everyone in the world
But that's alright as long as I can have one wish I pray
When people look inside my life, I want to hear them say

She's got her father's eyes, her father's eyes
Eyes that find the good in things, when good is not around
Eyes that find the source of help, when help just can't be found
Eyes full of compassion, seeing every pain
Knowin' what you're going through and feeling it the same

Just like my father's eyes, my father's eyes, my father's eyes
Just like my father's eyes

And on that day when we will pay for all the deeds we have done
Good and bad they'll all be had to see by everyone
And when you're called to stand and tell just what you saw in me
More than anything I know, I want your words to be

She had her father's eyes, her father's eyes
Eyes that find the good in things, when good is not around
Eyes that find the source of help, when help just can't be found
Eyes full of compassion, seeing every pain
Knowin' what you're going through and feeling it the same

Just like my father's eyes, my father's eyes, my father's eyes
Just like my father's eyes, my father's eyes, my father's eyes
Just like my father's eyes, my father's eyes

"I hate him," Wes mutters as he swipes at his eyes.

"Damn you," Santana says, turning to stifle her tears into Sebastian's shoulder but Kurt...Kurt just sits, overwhelmed and not able to give any kind of reaction at all as everyone around him generally cries and says how beautiful the pair of them sound together. Blaine grins shyly, ushering Libby forward to take a bow which she does with a flourish, relieved that she's done the hard part and can relax once more. She flies to Finn, knowing his gigantic frame will make her feel safe as she snuggles up against him and he hugs her tight.

"You were perfect," he says into her hair. "Gosh, I am one lucky guy to have a niece like you."

She giggles, looking up at him and tracing her fingers over his cheek. "My papa hasn't said anything."

"I don't think he knows how," Finn says, looking over to where Kurt still sits, stunned. "I'm sure he'll surface soon enough."

And he does, when Blaine announces a short break and hops from the stage to crouch between his legs and take his hands in his. "You okay?"

"I...you..." Kurt starts, but the best he can come up with is "You're so getting laid tonight."

Blaine laughs loudly, wrapping his arms around him and kissing his cheek. "My plan worked."
"Where is Libby?"

"With Finn."

"I'm just gonna..."

"Sure," Blaine nods. "I need to set up for the next part anyway."

"There's more?"

"Of course," Blaine smiles, kissing his cheek once more before bounding back up onto the small stage.

Kurt finds his daughter and holds her tight, squeezing and squeezing until she squeals that she can't breathe and he relaxes his hold slightly, keeping her in his arms. "You have the prettiest voice in the entire world," he murmurs, his eyes closed as he nuzzles into her neck.

"What about daddy?"

"Hmm, well, daddy too."

"We practiced forever," Libby tells him dramatically. "Every day after school for...forever."

"It was worth it," Kurt says with a tearful smile. "Thank you for singing it for me. I loved it."

"You're welcome, papa," she smiles. "Happy not really your anniversary."

Kurt laughs, kissing the tip of her nose. "What?"

"Daddy told me it's not your anniversary of being married, but it's another one. A really special one."

"He's right," Kurt nods, "It's very special, and you just made it even more so. I love you, Libby Darling."

"I love you too, papa darling," she grins.

"Okay, uh...everyone?" Blaine calls. He waits for quiet, sitting on his stool once more and picking up his guitar. "Firstly, Libby, you were sensational," he grins, as everyone erupts into loud applause and Libby bounces excitedly on Kurt's lap. "And secondly, I just wanted, before we go on, to thank Kurt, publicly. This past year has been really tough, on all of us, but I wouldn't have gotten through any of it if it wasn't for you," he says, directly to Kurt who mouths 'I love you' back at him.

"You've shown me yet again just why I love you as much as I do, and why I'm so lucky to have found you. So I've written something, and I hope you like it," he grins, before remembering something else. "Oh, and another world first- or a rare sighting anyway. Riccardo is going to accompany me on piano. He doesn't play often, just shouts orders and waves his baton at everyone else, so feel honored. And um...this is for you, my once in a lifetime love."

Kurt settles back, with Libby in his arms, and listens intently as Blaine and Riccardo start to play. They don't even need to look at each other, so in tune with each other after years of working together, so Blaine closes his eyes and loses himself in the moment.

"I can see it in your eyes
And feel it in your touch
I know that you're scared
But you've never been this loved

It's a long shot, baby,
I know it's true.
But if anyone can make it,
I'm bettin' on me and you.

Just keep on moving into me,
I know you're gonna see
The best is yet to come

And don't fear it now,
We're going all the way.
That sun is shining on a brand new day.
It's a long way down
And it's a leap of faith
But we're never giving up
Cuz i know we've got a once in a lifetime love

Everybody's looking
For what we've found
Some wait their whole life
And it never comes around.

So don't hold back now.
Just let go of all you've ever known
You can put your hand in mine.

And don't fear it now,
We're going all the way.
That sun is shining on a brand new day.
It's a long way down
And it's a leap of faith
But we're never giving up
Cuz i know we've got a once in a lifetime love

I close my eyes and I see you standing right there
Sayin 'I do' and they're throwing the rice in our hair.
Well the first one's born
A little girl comes along,
And she's got your smile.
I've been looking back on the life we had
I'm still by your side.

So don't fear it now,
We're going all the way.
That sun is shining on a brand new day.
It's a long way down
And it's a leap of faith
But I'm never givin up
Cause I know we've got a once in a lifetime love.”

Blaine can’t help but jump down at the end of the song and kiss Kurt soundly on the lips as Libby
squeals between them, pulling back breathless and grinning broadly. “You liked it then?”

“I loved it. But I already told you of my plans for tonight. You didn’t need to go all OTT about it,” Kurt teases, because really, what else can he do? If he even tries to voice his feelings he will crumple and cry for hours over possibly the most romantic gesture he’s ever known, so he sticks with the lighthearted joking, knowing that Blaine understands. “Can we...uh...go?”

“In a moment,” Blaine says, lifting Libby into his arms. “I want you to sing with me first.”

“Oh no, Blaine, I really....”

“Please?”

“Blaine I...”

“Sing with him!” Riccardo booms from the stage. “I will play. You must sing because I have practiced and you are gay.”

“What’s my being gay got to do with it?” Kurt laughs incredulously as he lets himself be led onto the stage.

“Absolutely nothing,” Riccardo says offhandedly, snatching Libby to sit on his knee. “Now sing.”

Kurt doesn’t need to ask what, because he knows. He also knows that this song will always be theirs, that he always sings the boy part and Blaine the girl’s, and he finds himself relaxing as he sings publicly for the first time in several years.

"You tell all the boys "No"
Makes you feel good, yeah.
I know you're out of my league
But that won't scare me away, oh, no

You've carried on so long,
You couldn't stop if you tried it.
You've built your wall so high
That no one could climb it,
But I'm gonna try.

Would you let me see beneath your beautiful?
Would you let me see beneath your perfect?
Take it off now, boy, take it off now, boy
I wanna see inside
Would you let me see beneath your beautiful tonight?"

Kurt opens his eyes to find Blaine beaming at him before he takes his turn.

"You let all the boys go
Makes you feel good, don't it?
Behind your Broadway show
I heard a boy say, "Please, don't hurt me"

You've carried on so long
You couldn't stop if you tried it.
You've built your wall so high
That no one could climb it.
But I'm gonna try

Would you let me see beneath your beautiful?
Would you let me see beneath your perfect?
Take it off now, boy, take it off now, boy
I wanna see inside
Would you let me see beneath your beautiful tonight, oh, tonight?

And then they're together, hand in hand and smiling confidently at one another as they sing.

"I'm gonna climb on top your ivory tower
I'll hold your hand and then we'll jump right out
We'll be falling, falling but that's OK
'Cause I'll be right here
I just wanna know

Would you let me see beneath your beautiful?
Would you let me see beneath your perfect?
Take it off now, boy, take it off now, boy
'Cause I wanna see inside
Would you let me see beneath your beautiful tonight, oh, tonight?
See beneath your beautiful, oh, tonight.
We ain't perfect, we ain't perfect, no.
Would you let me see beneath your beautiful tonight"

Their goodbyes are not as quick as they were the last time they sang this song together at the Lima Bean. Too many people to thank for coming, and Blaine is pinned in the corner by a completely over excited Taylor who gushes uncontrollably about his move, while Jules bounces on the balls of his feet telling Kurt the same. The school moms, along with several teachers who have been dragged along by Jess Hunter, all want to hear the whole story of how they met and started dating, and then of course there is Libby.

“Will you have fun with Santana?” Blaine asks as he holds her in his arms.

“I always do,” she says happily. “What are you and papa going to be doing?”

“Playing scabble,” Kurt answers automatically, wondering how many times he’s had to use that line.

“Boring,” Libby says, rolling her eyes. “You two are always playing scabble or kissing.”

“I know,” Blaine sighs dramatically. “Being a grown up is so dull.”

“Well, try to have fun,” Libby says sympathetically. “Papa, maybe you can tickle daddy to make him laugh.”

“Maybe I can,” Kurt says, trying hard not to laugh. “We’ll pick you up tomorrow at ten, okay?”

“Okay papa!”

Outside, in the cold and wet evening, Blaine leans against the car, tugging Kurt close by the lapels
of his jacket. “Now we can go home,” he whispers before claiming his lips in a searing kiss.

“Or you could just have your way with me on the back seat?” Kurt tries, making Blaine laugh.

“Yeah. That’d go over really well. Try explaining that to Libby.”

“Travel scrabble?” Kurt offers, and laughing, he climbs into the passenger seat for Blaine to drive him home.

“So...I feel bad,” Kurt says once they’re on the road. “I didn’t remember.”

“You didn’t have to,” Blaine answers with a shrug. “I did. But we don’t usually celebrate it, or acknowledge it. Actually, it came to me a few months back as I was wandering around Whole Foods one day, that it was nearly fifteen years, and I just felt like I wanted to mark it.”

“I knew it was fifteen, I just didn’t really think about it, I guess. I should have gotten you something.”

“No you shouldn’t. You know, it’s our tenth wedding anniversary in May. You can lavish gifts on me then.”

“Ha! Okay,” Kurt laughs. “It’s a deal.”

“Besides, I really felt like I wanted to do something for you, to thank you for all you’ve done for me in the year since dad has been gone. And I did say that next date night was my choice,”

“You can choose again,” Kurt laughs.

“You needn’t think you’re getting that everytime.”

“Oh? What then?”

“Burger and sex, if you’re lucky.”

“I’ll hold you to it.”

Blaine pulls into the driveway an hour later, looking up at the house in the darkness. “Do you remember the first night I brought you back here?”

“Yeah,” Kurt says quietly, a soft smile forming on his face. “I remember you having a mini freakout at the bottom of the stairs when you asked me to stay.”

“I desperately hoped you’d say yes, and I also worried I was pushing you too far. I just really needed to kiss you again. Much like I do now actually.”


“Thousands of millions,” Blaine says, coining Libby’s phrase. “And still not enough.”

They head inside, not needing conversation as Blaine locks up for the night and they head up the stairs where Blaine takes Kurt in his arms and kisses him tenderly, slowly and with every ounce of love in his heart before he undresses him, pausing to kiss over every bit of skin as it becomes exposed. Both naked, Blaine lowers Kurt carefully onto the bed, his eyes blazing with happiness. There is no rushing; every kiss, every touch, every movement is slow and gentle until Blaine is buried deep inside Kurt, their chests pressed together, fingers intertwined. “I love you so much, gorgeous boy.”
“You too, old man. Thank you for being the best half of my life.”
Libby Darling Hummel-Anderson is eleven, and therefore she knows everything. She knows math, though she really can’t see any point in it. She knows how to read, obviously, and write. She knows that Mrs. Fitzpatrick, her teacher, doesn’t approve of her having two dads, but she tolerates it because she wants to keep her job. Libby also knows that she’s out of there soon enough anyway, on her way to Heritage Middle School, and as long as she’s with her friends, she really couldn’t care less.

Libby knows people laugh at her and her friends too, but they have each other so what does it matter? She knows Livvy almost got suspended for biting Dwayne Marx’s ear when he called Libby a name which her dads said was disgusting, and she knows Melody’s mom actually yelled in the face of Bella’s mom when she said Jamie was a boy and shouldn’t wear pink.

But what does Bella’s mom know anyway? Certainly not as much as Libby does. She knows that Jamie sometimes dresses like a girl, sometimes like a boy, and sometimes as a mixture of both. It doesn’t make any difference though. He’s still Jamie. And Libby knows he wants to be a boy, not a girl, because she asked him once and he told her. Truth be told, she was a little disappointed. She thinks Jamie would have made a nice girl.

So Libby knows she has the best friends anyone could wish for. She also has the best baby cousins. Jacob isn’t really a baby now though. He’s four and a half, and looks just like Aunt Rachel, with his dark hair and dark eyes, but he’s also very tall for his age. Then there’s Eloise, Joe and Maddie’s little girl, who technically isn’t really her cousin but she calls her that anyway. She’s nearly four, and quite simply as cute as a button, with her blonde hair and green eyes. They also have Jayden, who is two, and now he’s stopped biting everyone, is really quite sweet. And finally, there’s the other baby. The one that’s coming from somewhere to live with Jules and Taylor, but Libby doesn’t know where it’s coming from, or when. She only hears lots of talk about ‘the agency’ and how it could take a year or more. Taylor and daddy are always sitting at the kitchen table together when they visit, and she heard Taylor saying something about Russia, to which daddy said he thought they should stick to the US. Libby is glad. She doesn’t want Taylor and Jules going to live in Russia.

The one thing that really hits home with Libby being surrounded by all these babies though, is how and why they all came into existence. She knows you need a man and a woman, which is why she had to grow in Santana. But despite knowing almost everything, the one thing she doesn’t know, is how babies are made.

Kurt Hummel-Anderson is thirty five, and Libby rolls her eyes at him frequently and tells him he doesn’t know what he’s talking about, but he actually knows quite a bit. He knows that he loves his job. He gets to sketch costumes or kids clothing ideas all day everyday. He also knows that he loves having Jules and now Taylor on board as creative directors, as without them he wouldn’t be able to take such a backseat. He knows things will change, if they finally manage to adopt as they’re hoping to, but then he also thinks that it might be a good time to sell the costume design side anyway, and scale it down to just the children’s clothing.

Kurt knows that Blaine continues to make him happier than ever. When he was younger, not being able to recall too much about his own parents marriage, he thought happily married was just a myth. He figured that when you’d been married a long time you just became friends rather than lovers, and thanks to Santana’s horror stories when he was a teenager, he fully expected a case of lesbian bed death later on in life. But it’s not happened. Kurt and Blaine are still wildly,
irrevocably, wholeheartedly in love. And they still have a lock on their bedroom door because of it.

Kurt knows that Blaine makes him laugh every single day, that he always enjoys spending time with him, and that he can never get enough of this amazing man. And he also knows that Libby completes them both. Now eleven, and nearly finishing elementary school, she is bubbly, smart, kind and headstrong- with both Kurt and Blaine agreeing she still gets her personality from Blaine. Kurt also knows that she is growing up fast. He sees it in her little flashes of temper, when she doesn’t think before she speaks and he has to remind her to check herself. He notices it in the way she dresses, the pretty, girly, floaty dresses are slowly but surely being replaced with skinny jeans and t-shirts with slogans on that Kurt doesn’t even try to understand. He had found himself unreasonably hurt when she had bought a friend home after softball practice, and Kurt had overheard her telling the girl that her papa designs clothes for little kids. It doesn’t seem too long ago that she was wearing his designs proudly. But the girl had never come again, and he thinks it was possibly because Blaine forgot himself and kissed him full on the mouth in the middle of dinner.

Kurt also knows that Libby doesn’t have it easy because of them, and he is eternally grateful to the feisty but loving Olivia, who is fiercely loyal and protective, and who, along with Melody and Jamie, love Libby for who she is, and not one of those four could care less what other people’s opinions are of them.

The thing Kurt knows most of all, is that they are happy.

Blaine Hummel-Anderson is fifty. He knows nothing according to Kurt and Libby, but he does in fact, know everything; or he’d like to think he does, anyway. He knows that since retiring from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra two years ago, he takes great pleasure in writing music once again. With no pressure to earn a living he can take his time to make each piece perfect, and when he puts it online it’s just an added bonus if someone contacts him about it. He writes frequently for Libby, who loves to sing; and he loves to record her, convinced that one day she will be a star.

He knows that music is the bond that holds him and Libby so close. He doesn’t mind admitting that as she gets older he finds it difficult to connect to her sometimes, and he gets confused by the seemingly endless changes in her likes and dislikes. He was positive she liked One Direction, but when he’d presented her with a t-shirt he could tell from her smile that she wasn’t thrilled, and she later on admitted that she had hated them for the last month at least. He knows she is changing, and while he loves and adores the young lady she is fast becoming, he also feels a pang of sadness when he thinks back to the little girl with blonde pigtails who always wanted to be carried. She does still hold his hand when they’re out though, which according to Stephanie- Melody’s mom- is something he should be eternally grateful for, and he is. She also, much to his complete and utter delight, still calls him daddy, and is beyond proud of both him and Kurt. He likes that. He doesn’t think he would ever be able to take it if she was ashamed of them both. In fact, she tells anyone who will listen that her dads are totally in love, and always kissing- which is quite possibly why she only has three other friends. But he’s given up stressing over that, figuring that he will only be bothered when she is bothered.

Blaine also knows that Kurt is his rock. His beginning, middle and end and the one who makes him happier than any other. He is still so deeply in love with Kurt that he still calls him his gorgeous boy even though he is now nearly the age Blaine was when they got married. As much as he loves Libby- and he really does- he also cherishes their time alone, particularly the times when Kurt comes wandering into the house in the middle of the day with one thing and one thing only on his mind. The amount of times they’ve had to hurry to get dressed as Libby walks up the drive doesn’t even bear thinking about, and though they always try to be discreet, she caught them in the shower only last week, and Kurt came up with the random and completely bizarre excuse that he was
helping Blaine get a splinter out of his foot, hence why he was kneeling on the floor. Surprisingly, she bought it and after apologizing for not knocking, went on her way once more. But Blaine’s not sure how much longer they'll be able to get away with it. Looking up at the clock now from where he sits in Kurt’s swivel office chair, he groans and throws his head back.

“Hurry up. It’s nearly three thirty.”

“Excuse me?” Kurt looks at him pointedly, wiping the corner of his mouth. “It’s not me who needs to hurry up.”

"I'm sure I'm supposed to have the opposite problem when I'm older. Premature and all that."

But Kurt doesn't reply, changing his angle so Blaine's cock hits the back of his throat repeatedly, making him fist his hair and thrust upwards. "Oh god," he moans. "That's good...yes..." Kurt keeps going for a while, until Blaine tugs him up and into a kiss. He stands, lifting Kurt easily and setting him on the clear, second desk they keep on the premise of Kurt needing more work space, but the amount of times they've ended up making love on it's surface tells another story. He's inside Kurt within minutes, his ankles resting on Blaine's shoulders as he stands and drives deeper and deeper each time, until Kurt is arching back off the table to come with a shout and Blaine grips his thighs tightly as he finishes. "Time?" he pants, his eyes closed and head resting against Kurt's calf, who squints and tries to read the clock upside down.

"Three twenty. Time for a quick cuddle."

"Hmm," Blaine smiles blissfully, scooting onto the table to burrow into Kurt's embrace. "You know, working from home was the best idea you ever had."

"I know," Kurt says, kissing into his damp hair. "I'm smart like that. You stink, by the way. You should run inside and take a shower."

"Don't wanna."

"So don't blame me when Libby won't go near you."

"Okay, okay," Blaine sighs reluctantly, standing and pulling his pants on. "Oh, and why aren't you wearing your glasses?"

"Because I don't like them," Kurt pouts as he dresses. "They make me feel old. But you were wearing yours, and that's all that matters."

"You know I only put them on to come in here, right?"

"Of course," Kurt grins, kissing his lips. "Now run."

"Okay. But you need to wear them, Kurt. You need your eyesight to be good for your job. Right, I'm gone. I love you, see you later!"

"Hey baby girl," Blaine calls cheerfully as he saunters down the stairs ten minutes later as nonchalantly as possible and kisses her cheek. "Did you have a good day?"

"Yeah, it was okay," Libby replies, following him to the kitchen where she dumps her bag on the counter and he sighs before moving it to the back of a chair. "What's for dinner?"

"Steak, I think," Blaine mutters, opening the fridge to take a look. "Oh, or maybe veal. Papa's cooking."
"Daddy?"

"Hmm?"

"How are babies made?"

Blaine stops short, turning around and smacking his elbow on the fridge door for good measure. He swallows repeatedly and blinks like a rabbit in the headlights before trying to collect himself. "Uhm...I....erm...."

"Don't you know?"

"No...I mean...yes. Yes, I know. I just uh....you know...it um, it...huh." Stopping short, and knowing he is blushing profusely, he takes a few deep breaths before offering a weak smile. "You know, you might like to talk to someone else about this. Grandma, maybe. Or Santana?"

"But I asked you."

"Oh crap."

"Don't say crap, daddy," Libby admonishes.

"F...yeah. You're right. Sorry. You did. You did ask me. And I'll tell you. I just...do you mind if I get papa in here for this?"

"Why?" Libby asks curiously. "Is it that bad?"

"No, no, it's not...that. It's just... I could use the moral support, to be quite honest."

"Oh," Libby frowns, puzzled. "Okay."

"Good. I'll just....yeah...and you...why don't you fix us all a drink? My mouth seems unusually dry. There's some lemonade in the fridge." Flinging open the back door, he lets the warm air wash over his face a second before bellowing across the yard. "Kurt! KURT!"

The office door flies open and Kurt stumbles outside, glasses pushed to the top of his head. "Jesus! What?!

"Help me," Blaine mouths, and Kurt squints at him, not understanding.

"What?"

"Help me," he mouths again.

"Shelby?" Kurt frowns. "I don't know anyone called Shelby."

Blaine shakes his head and mouths again, "Help me."

"Cookie?"

"No!" Blaine cries, throwing up his hands in exasperation. "Since when has help me looked like cookie?"

"Well I don't know, do I?" Kurt laughs, walking across the yard. "What is it, anyway?"

"Libby," Blaine whispers now he's close enough, then jerks his head toward the kitchen window.
"In there."

"What'd she do?"

"Nothing. She wants to know how babies are made."

"She...oh." Kurt's eyes go wide as he immediately steps backward. "You know, I'm just..."

"No," Blaine hisses, grabbing his wrist and dragging him to the doorway. "Don't you dare leave me to it, Kurt."

"But..."

"We can do this," Blaine says firmly, trying desperately to convince himself. "We always said we wouldn't shy away from this stuff with her, and we won't. She's growing up, Kurt, and she's asked a perfectly reasonable question."

"Okay. Yes," Kurt agrees. "Blaine, I don't want her to grow up."

"I know," he whispers, pulling him into his arms. "But believe me, she's gonna make us so proud."

"I don't doubt that," Kurt says with a smile. "But it's just all happening so fast. And what the hell are we gonna say?"

"We just tell it like it is, I guess."

"We neither of us know how it is," Kurt points out, which makes Blaine laugh. "We should've bought a book."

"A book! Yes! How did we not think of that before? Dammit. Okay. We'll talk with her now and then tomorrow we'll take her to the bookstore after school and get a book to reinforce all we said. Yes? Yes."

"Yes," Kurt says, drawing himself up to his full height.

"Are you two kissing out there?" Libby calls.

"No, we're...on our way," Blaine answers brightly, looking at Kurt who smiles tightly.

"Here goes nothing."

"Papa, is it steak or veal for dinner?" Libby asks as soon as they're in the kitchen.

"Good afternoon to you too," he laughs, kissing her cheek. "Veal."

"What? No fair!"

"Not listening," he says with a bright smile as Blaine sits next to him. "We have more important things to talk about, I hear?"

"Yes," Libby agrees. "Because I don't get how babies come about. I mean, I know you need a man and a woman, right? That's why Santana had to carry me. But I don't get how the baby gets in there."

"Magic."
"Kurt!" Blaine admonishes. "Yes, Libby, you need a man and a woman, technically. But you were made in a very different way, and I'll explain that after I've explained the conventional method, okay?"

"Okay."

"So. For the purposes of this discussion, let's forget all things gay. I know, I know," he laughs as Kurt and Libby share a shocked glance. "But we need to for now. So. I think before we get onto baby making we need to start with the changes that are gonna happen as you get older. Um... Because... You, uh.... Pretty soon you're going to start something called puberty, and that's when you'll really grow up and turn into a young woman as opposed to a little girl," Blaine rushes out on one breath.

"I'll get boobs?" Libby asks excitedly.

"You'll...uh...you'll grow breasts, yes. And you'll need to start wearing a bra. You'll also notice other changes. Your hormones, that's the chemicals inside of you, will change about a lot, meaning they could make you very emotional for no reason, or angry, or you might feel like you want to be alone one minute, then feel very lonely the next. And that's okay. It kinda sucks because sometimes you don't know whether you're coming or going, but just go with it."

"Yeah," Kurt agrees. "And try to tell us how you're feeling," he says kindly. "It's okay to come to us and say I feel really sad today and I don't know why. We understand."

"So your hormones will also make other changes happen. The balance of your skin might change, leading you to get breakouts of acne...."

"What?" Libby asks in horror. "Like Duncan down the street? No way."

"We're not all as unlucky as Duncan," Kurt says, hoping to reassure. "Daddy and I got through okay."

"Good, because I am not leaving the house if I look like him."

"Libby...." Blaine starts, then shrugs his shoulders. "Well to be fair, I wouldn't either. Anyway. Other changes will happen too. You'll start to grow hair under your arms, which most women shave or wax...and their legs too."

"Why?"

"I don't know why, actually," Blaine muses. "Makes them feel good, I think, to be all smooth. Santana always makes me feel her legs when she's just had them waxed. Um but also...."

"No," Kurt interrupts. "She doesn't make you feel that too? Tell me she doesn't."

"No! God, man. What do you take me for?"

"What are you talking about?" Libby asks in confusion.

"Hair," Blaine says, blushing when he thinks of what's coming. "As well as the hair under your arms you'll grow hair uh....there," he says, giving a vague downward gesture. "Like...down there."

"You have got to be kidding me?"

"No," Kurt says, taking her hand. "But it's okay. Guys grow hair there too. You don't grow to love
it, necessarily, and keeping it neat can be a pain in more ways than one, but you learn to accept it's
there, and part of you. It's not like you spend your whole time looking at it or something. It's
just....there."

"Oh my god," Libby moans, holding her head in her hands. "I don't want to be all hairy."

"Oh honey, you won't be," Kurt smiles. "You'll be totally beautiful just like you are now. And you
know, you came from me, and I can still get away going two days without shaving. If you came
from daddy you'd be a real hairy beast."

"Hey!" Blaine objects as Kurt and Libby laugh, but the atmosphere lightens somewhat and Blaine
feels like he can go onto the more difficult stuff. "So you see, there will be a lot of changes to your
body. But there will also be other stuff too. You'll start to notice guys or girls in a way you didn't
before. You'll be attracted to certain people and find yourself wanting to be close to
them...like...kissing them and stuff..... And you may smirk, young lady, but I'm telling you, it's
true. But the biggest change a girl goes through is um....starting your periods, as in menstruation,
not school lessons."

"Huh?"

"Um...." Blaine takes a deep breath, glancing at Kurt who smiles encouragingly for him to go on.
"Well....a woman is born with a whole load of eggs inside her, ready to make babies when she's
older. When you hit puberty, each month one of those eggs is released from inside and it travels
down to your um....womb?" he asks Kurt, who tries to remember.

"Uterus, I think. Womb is for actual babies."

"Okay, uterus, which has gotten thicker than normal for the egg to attach itself. And if at that point,
it gets fertilised by a man's sperm, a baby will come about."

"By a what?" Libby asks.

"Sperm."

"Ew! That word is gross!"

"She does take after me!" Kurt cries, clearly delighted as Blaine rolls his eyes.

"Listen up, Lib, cause this part is really important. I'll get onto what sperm is, and how it gets there,
in a moment. But for now, let's assume that egg isn't fertilised, so your body doesn't need it
anymore. So it has to come out of your body, and it does that during a time known as a period,
which is basically when the egg comes out along with some blood and that thickened uterus lining
which your body doesn't want. And all of that will take about five to seven days to happen."

Libby sits, stunned, staring at Blaine before she looks to Kurt and then back to Blaine once more.
"Excuse me?"

"It's um...."

"I'm going to bleed for five days?"

"Every month," Blaine says softly. "Yes."

"But what if I decide I don't want babies ever?"
"It's going to happen anyway, my darling, I'm sorry."

"Bleed from where?"

"Oh. Um....your...vagina," Blaine gets out, trying not to wince or blush.

"What? This is a joke, right?"

"No joke, Libby," Kurt says quietly. "Every woman you know, from Santana to Kathy to Grandma goes through it. This happens every month from...I don't know...around thirteen or so, right up until you're in your fifties."

"But...I mean...I can't go to school though, right? If I'm bleeding out of there."

"You'll still go to school," Blaine says evenly.

"But how?"

"There's um...items you can buy to collect all the blood. Pads that you have to wear in your panties which you change every few hours. Other things too, but to be perfectly honest Libby, you'll be better off talking to Santana or Kathy about that. Papa and I...we're just telling you the things our dads told us when we were around your age. But we've never had sisters, or been in relationships with girls so I really don't.... I see those things in the store when we're grocery shopping, but I don't know what they all do really, but you know, maybe Kathy will talk to you and Liv together about it, and help you decide what you want to use."

"Does it hurt?" Libby asks fearfully.

"According to what I was told, no," Kurt tells her. "But talk to any woman and you'll hear a different story. You'll get cramps. And just before your period starts you'll feel all those emotions daddy was telling you about. I remember, one glorious summer I spent living with Aunt Rachel and Santana, there was this delightful time when they were both on their periods together. There was a lot of screaming, yelling and tears, then they both curled up in their beds with hot water bottles."

"Yeah, thanks for that papa," Libby says, "That makes me feel a whole lot better."

"Sweetie, it sounds like a horrible thing but trust me, you will get used to it," Kurt says, pulling her into his arms. "It's all just part of becoming an adult."

"But however adult you become, you'll always be my baby girl," Blaine adds, kissing the back of her hand to make her smile.

"Thank you daddy."

"And we'll go to the bookstore tomorrow, okay? We can choose some books that go over everything. Plus, like I said, you can always talk to Kathy about anything. Santana and Rachel too, you know? They're all here for you."

"I know," Libby nods. "And I will talk to Kathy about the period thingy. But...I don't know. I prefer talking to you two."

"Well that's good," Blaine says, sighing with relief. "It's none too easy, trying to parent a little girl and talk about this sort of stuff."

"Actually," Kurt says, letting go of Libby to slide his arms around Blaine's neck and kiss his cheek.
"I think you've done remarkably well so far."

"You have," Libby agrees, "but I still think it's unfair that girls have to go through all this stuff while boys don't have anything to deal with."

"Oh don't you be so sure," Kurt laughs. "It's hard for boys growing up too."

"Yeah, I mean our voices break for a start," Blaine says, laughing at the look on his daughter's face. "You spend months feeling scared to open your mouth, not knowing if you're going to squeak or rumble, or if suddenly mid sentence you'll go from soprano to baritone and back again. Even when my voice had broken, and was much deeper, I still didn't trust it for months."

"So it used to be higher?"

"Yeah. Listen to Jamie next time he talks. He sounds just like you, but pretty soon he won't. He'll sound like me."

"Did your voice not break, papa?"

"Thanks for that, Lib," Kurt says, sticking his tongue out. "Yes it broke, it just didn't fall too far, that's all."

"His beauty cushioned the fall," Blaine grins.

"I was late to puberty," Kurt tells her. "In fact, I was still not all the way there when I met daddy. I remember him commenting one time that my physical form had changed during our time together. Guys grow much broader across their chests and stuff. Start looking like men as opposed to boys."

"Jamie's gonna hate that."

"He might," Blaine shrugs, "But it will be up to you three girls to look out for him, okay? You'll all be going through the same stuff together, but he doesn't have any guy friends, or even a dad to reassure him. His uncle is great, but he's in Reno, so he's gonna need all the support he can get."

"Oh, so I'm supposed to feel sorry for him with his wobbly voice and big shoulders while I'm busy bleeding?" Libby snarks.

"Guys have other problems too," Blaine explains to her. "With emotions and stuff. And also um...inappropriate arousal, shall we say?"

"No we shall not say, because I don't have a clue what you're talking about."

"Okay. Well......." He stops, at a dead loss for how to explain this one to her, and Kurt steps in.

"Libby, daddy told you how you'll start noticing guys or girls in a different way pretty soon. Well, guys get the same, only it becomes very apparent on their bodies. Now you've seen daddy and me without clothes enough times to know what a male body looks like, yes?"

"Yes," she starts, "but when I walked in last week I didn't know daddy wasn't dressed."

"No, I know, and that's not a problem. Daddy and I don't believe there's any point in being shy around each other. We're all family. But I'm just talking about the male body here. So you know that guys have...."

"So yes, guys have one of those," Kurt continues with a blush. "And most of the time it looks just like you will have seen. But when a guy gets aroused...like...starts feeling or thinking about nice things- pretty girls or guys and kissing and whatnot- his..."

"Penis," Blaine offers again.

"Yes. That. It becomes very hard. And it sticks up. Like this," he says, raising his finger. "And it becomes very noticeable in the front of a guy's pants."

"Ew. So guys just shouldn't think about things like that then," Libby decides.

"Well, that's the worst thing about puberty if you're a boy. You have no control over it. And you can get..."

"Erections," Blaine provides.

"E-e-erections," Kurt manages, "at any time. Even when you're sitting in math, and your mind wanders to thinking about that sweet old Chevy your dad has in his garage, the next thing is wham, your pants are tight and you can guarantee that's when your teacher calls on you to come to the front of the class."

"Oh my god, Kurt, I'm so sorry," Blaine says, horrified. "That must have been mortifying."

"That was you?" Libby shrieks. "Please, no!"

"Yes that was me," he admits, turning bright red.

"It happens over the most random things," Blaine tells her. "One time, this guy I knew would always get hard when he saw his friends mom, even though he was gay and wasn't attracted to her at all, there it would be."

Kurt reaches over and pats his hand, trying to hide his laugh. "Aw honey."

"Wasn't me!" Blaine lies, cheeks flaming. "Someone from school."

"Well I'd like to know who," Kurt smiles, "since you're still friends with all of them."

"Be quiet."

Kurt laughs, ruffling Blaine's hair who smiles in defeat.

"So why does that happen then?" Libby asks. "The getting erections thingy?"

"Well, because a guy needs to be hard to make a baby with a woman," Blaine explains.

"What? Why?"

"Listen up, and I'll tell you."

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There is a lot of stammering and embarrassment on all sides, but Blaine and Kurt get it all out there eventually. They are fairly thorough, explaining that it should come as part of a loving relationship and that it's something to be cherished, and in the end Libby is left blinking and wide eyed, staring at Kurt.
"So did you have to do that?"

"Oh god, no!"

"Erm...no," Blaine says with a smirk.

"What are you smirking at?" Kurt asks.

"Nothing, just trying to imagine you....doing...that."

"Oh what, you think I couldn't?"

"I know you couldn't."

"Oh yeah? Says who?"

"Says your genetic makeup which makes you attracted to guys and not girls," Blaine laughs.

"It's surely pretty much the same," Kurt muses, "if you close your eyes and get on with it, that is."

"So how was I made then?" Libby asks, snapping them both back to reality. "And you say guys and girls do this for pleasure too, right? Not just baby making? So what do you two do?"

"Oh fuck," Blaine moans, holding his head in his hands. "And don't tell me off for cursing."

"Libby, sweetheart, it's late," Kurt says, looking up at the clock, "So for now, I'm happy to explain how you were made, but we can save talking about what guys do together and what girls do together for another day, okay? We both need some time to prepare for that."

"And then can we have takeout for dinner instead of veal?" Libby asks hopefully.

"And copious amounts of wine?" Blaine begs.

"Yes to all of that," Kurt laughs. "I'd say we've all earned it."

*

"I am emotionally drained," Blaine sighs as he climbs into bed and turns out the light.

Kurt reaches for him in the dark, pulling him flush to his side and Blaine kisses his lips before settling his head onto his chest. "Same. But I think we did okay, you know? I was proud of us. And the barrier is broken now. She knows what's what, and I'm really feeling quite hopeful that she'll come to us with any questions. God knows she asked enough tonight."

"I think the fact that you had to tell her you ejaculated into a pot was hilarious," Blaine grins.

"Well I didn't," Kurt grumbles. "But still. She knows now. And you know what? I realized something as I was explaining the surrogate with her. I never think of it. I mean, I think of Santana being pregnant with her, obviously, because we see her all the time. But I never think of her as technically being the product of me and a woman. I just think of her as absolutely ours."

"Really?" Blaine lifts his head, smiling in the dark. "Cause I do too, but I wondered if it was different for you, since you are biologically her dad."

"Nope," Kurt grins, pulling Blaine closer for another kiss, "She's ours. Our baby girl who's growing up fast."
Chapter 36

And Libby does grow up fast. Starting middle school definitely brings about a change in her worldly attitude. She is suddenly much more conscious of how she looks and what she's wearing, and it is to very mixed feelings that Kurt listens to her asking him to make her dresses once more, nice, pretty short ones.

"She wants it all tight in the bodice," he moans to Blaine. "She's not even twelve yet!"

"No, but she will be in a month," Blaine points out. "And she wants to look pretty for her party. That's okay."

"And the hemline is ridiculous," Kurt grumbles as he cuts material.

"So tell her no then."

"I did! This is a compromise on both parts. I'm telling you, if there are any boys at this party that she keeps looking at I'm gonna have words."

"No you're not," Blaine laughs. "She's turning twelve, not twenty one. It'll all be perfectly innocent. She's growing up, but she's still a little girl."

But she's not, not really. Blaine notices one day when he goes into her room without knocking. Just out from the shower, Libby stands in just a small pair of shorts, turning around in shock. "Daddy!"

"Oh my gosh, baby girl I'm so sorry," he gushes, backing out with his head down. "Really. I didn't...I'm really sorry. I promise to always knock in future, oh gosh. I'm sorry. So sorry." Turning on his heel he flees down the stairs as quickly as he can, taking refuge in the den and wishing fervently that Kurt was here and not in New York with Jules on business. He's still sitting in the same position ten minutes later when Libby appears, biting her lip and tugging on her still damp hair.

"Daddy?"

"Libby, I'm really sorry."

"Daddy, it's okay," she says, scuffing her foot on the rug. "I don't mind. It's not like you've not seen me with no clothes on before."

"No, it's just...you're all..." Gesturing uselessly up and down with his hand, he shakes his head. "I should have knocked. I just wanted to know if you wanted to watch a movie tonight, that's all."

"I'd like that."

"But um...since what happened uh....happened....I um.... I think we should maybe talk a little."

"Why?"

"Uh...because I think you need to start wearing a bra, maybe. Or something like that. One of those um...training bras or something."

"I want boobs to put in one though."

"I know you do, but you're um...changing, aren't you? They're...they're starting to grow."
"Oh."

"So... I don't know," Blaine says, finding himself close to tears for some inexplicable reason. "Would you like to take a shopping trip with Santana? I know she's your favorite shopping buddy. Or Aunt Rachel?"

"When's papa home?"

"Friday night."

"So could we go on the weekend? The three of us? Will it wait until then?"

"Oh darling, of course it will wait, but I don't want you to feel like you have to go with us. I can give Santana my credit card. She's very good with that."

"I know," Libby laughs. "But... I don't know, it's like... I love her, and there's stuff I can talk to her about that I'd never tell you and papa. But stuff like this... I just feel more comfortable with you. Cause you know me best of all."

"Oh. Well..." he ducks his head, trying to hide his grin of pleasure. "Yeah. If you're sure. I'd like that. Maybe we can get lunch at that Japanese place."

"Cool," Libby grins. "So... movie?"

"Movie," Blaine grins, holding out his arm for her to snuggle up. "Definitely."

*

“So I talked with Kathy, and she tells me this place is the best place to get nice underwear which is also comfortable,” Blaine tells Libby as they walk through the mall toward the lingerie store.

“Really? Cause Santana told me...” Libby starts, but Kurt is quick to cut her off.

“No, no. No, no. We won’t be buying the same underwear as Santana, sweetie. Not until you’re way older and capable of buying it for yourself.”

“Why?”

“Because,” Blaine replies.

“So will Liv be getting a bra soon?” Libby asks, clinging tight to Blaine’s hand. “Cause Melody has one already, I’m getting mine today but Liv doesn’t.”

“Well you know,” Kurt answers. “Liv is half Asian, so it’s likely she will be um... not as um... big as you will be.”

“Big?” Libby asks in horror, stopping dead. “I’ll be big?”

“Not huge,” Blaine says quickly. “Don’t panic. You’ll be perfect, we keep telling you that.”

“If I end up with massive boobs, papa, imma never speak to you again.” Libby huffs as they carry on walking.

“Blame daddy,” comes Kurt’s automatic response, and he laughs as Blaine shoves at him.

“You know, Lib, you don’t always have to hold my hand if you don’t want,” Blaine says as they
walk along.

Libby frowns. “Huh? It’s how we always walk though. You and papa hold hands and then I hold onto either one of you. Don’t you like it?”

“Yes, yes I do,” Blaine smiles. “I really do. I just don’t want you to feel like it’s something you have to do, that’s all. I don’t want you to be embarrassed to be with me.”

“I could never be embarrassed of you or papa,” Libby says cheerfully. “You’re both awesome.”

Once in the store Kurt and Blaine stand awkwardly, hands stuffed into pockets as Libby wanders around touching all the pretty bras and examining the way they fasten. Kurt realizes she’s probably never seen a bra up close before. Despite spending a lot of time with various females, Kurt can’t imagine any of them have ever given her a bra to look at, so chances are she’s only ever seen them on tv or maybe in Santana’s laundry hamper, which doesn’t bear thinking about.

“Excuse me, can I help you?” and assistant asks, and Kurt whirls around, his hand immediately groping about to find Blaine and pull him close.

“Oh...yeah. Our daughter...over there...she uh...she needs a bra,” he says, whispering the last word despite being in a shop which only sells lingerie. “And we don’t really know where to begin with that.”

“Okay,” the assistant smiles. “Well I’m Emily, and I can help you pick out a few, and we can measure your daughter to see what size she needs.”

“She uh...the smallest one, probably,” Blaine whispers, feeling as if he too must be discreet. “She’s not...I mean she’s just...y’know.”

“Sure,” Emily smiles. “Come with me.”

Twenty minutes later and Libby has virtually the entire rack of training bras in her arms ready to try on, and she swallows nervously and looks at Emily. “My dads. Could they come in with me? I mean not in, in, but like in there,” she says, gesturing to the small love seat inside the dressing area.

“I don’t see why not,” Emily says, smiling kindly at the adorable family. “It’s pretty quiet. I’ll wait here to make sure no one else can come in. Just call if you need anything.”

So Blaine and Kurt sit side by side, squeezed together on the tiny couch while they wait for Libby to try her first bra. Blaine taps an impatient rhythm on his knee while Kurt huffs and puffs. “Tell me,” he whispers to Blaine. “Have you ever felt more awkward in your life?”

“Not really,” he admits. “But this is important to her, so I couldn’t say no, as much as I wanted to.”

“Oh I agree,” Kurt whispers back. “And actually, when you told me she wanted us to go with her, my heart kinda soared.”

“Same,” Blaine smiles, taking his hand and sliding their fingers together. “This is another one of those big steps, isn’t it?”

“It is.”

“I mean, I’ll buy her whatever she wants...”

“You always do.”
“I know,” Blaine grins. “But yeah. It’s just...a big thing. Another step toward her being a woman. Anyway, how was New York?”

“Same as ever. Good outcomes, and we have a potential buyer for the costume side of the business. Ironically, it’s the woman who was offered the job at Shubert’s after I turned it down all those years back.”

“Really? So you’re gonna push ahead with it?”

“I think so,” Kurt nods. “I haven’t even had time to tell you but...Lib?” A huff draws his attention to the changing room, and the curtain moves about a lot before another gigantic sigh is heard. “Libby? Are you okay?”

Libby’s voice comes small, and wobbling with tears. “No,” she admits. “I can’t do it.”

“What do you...what can’t you do, sweetie?” Blaine asks, rising to his feet. “Do you want me to get the assistant?”

“No, cause she’ll see me and I...”

“Honey? Do you want to leave it?” Kurt suggests. “We could do this another day if it’s upsetting you?”

“I just...I can’t get it on right,” she says, and Kurt and Blaine share a pained look as they realize she is crying. “I can’t do it up properly cause I can’t see the clasp at the back, and the straps are all tight over my shoulders. I don’t know what to do.”

“Um...well...okay,” Kurt says brightly. “Here’s a plan. Let’s leave it for now, we can go get lunch and call Rachel, or Santana. Maybe they could meet us here and come in there with you, huh? They could help you, and we’ll still be right here with you too. How does that sound?”

“Rachel can’t, she’s in Columbus for that rally at Uncle Finn’s school,” Libby moans. “And Santana teaches all day Saturdays.”

“Okay.” Blaine takes a deep breath. “Do you want us to come in there and help you? Would that be better? It’s your decision.”

“Yes please, daddy,” Libby whispers, and falls into his arms the second he slips behind the curtain. “It’s okay,” he whispers, to reassure all of them as he holds her tight. “While all this stuff is happening to you just...forget we’re guys, okay? We’re your dad’s, and we love you and want to help you. Now, let’s see if we can’t figure this out together.”

“You know,” Kurt says brightly, handing her a pretty pink bra with yellow daisies. “When I was first starting out in costume, I had to fit women all the time. I know how this stuff works. And you wanna know a trick I learned? Here.” Handing her the bra, he picks up another one himself to demonstrate. “Put it on backwards at first, around your middle, like this. That way, you can see to fix the clasp, then spin it around.”

Libby swipes at her eyes then looks down, carrying out his instructions and feeling pleased when she fastens the bra correctly.

“Good. Now loosen the straps like this, then slide them on your shoulders and pull the bra into place. Daddy can tighten them for you, and they’ll stay in place, but if they ever do slip or need changing, you can ask us to do that anytime. It’s simple to do on someone else, but not so easy on
“Uh...Kurt?” Blaine looks up from the thin straps, worried. “I don’t know how to do these little slidey thingies.”

“Here.” Kurt confidently shows him, though both their hands are shaking almost uncontrollably but Blaine gets there in the end, straightening them up before smiling at Libby in the mirror.

“There you go, your first bra.”

“Heh.” Libby grins, pleased with the results as she twists this way and that. “I like it. Thank you for helping me.”

“You’re welcome,” Kurt grins. “Now if I adjust the straps on this one ready, do you want to try putting it on yourself this time? We’ll step outside and you can show us when you’re ready.”

“Okay.”

They step out from behind the curtain, and Blaine rubs a hand over his face as he slumps back in the loveseat with Kurt next to him. “Oh my god this is harder than I ever thought it would be,” he whispers as Kurt nods. “It’s ridiculous. She’s our child, we’ve bathed her- bathed with her, even, seen her naked thousands of times but suddenly it’s like...I feel awkward seeing her like that, just like I felt the other day. It’s awful. I don’t want to feel that way around her.”

“I don’t think we should,” Kurt tells him, holding his hand tightly. “I’m not saying we should start having naked house parties, but I think it’s really important that we teach her not to be ashamed of her body, and I don’t think we should be ashamed of ours either. We all need to respect each other’s privacy a bit more, sure, and obviously she’s been showering herself for a while now so it’s not like she needs us like she did. But...she does need us for stuff like this. And while she’s happy to have our help, I think we should be happy to give it.”

“I’ve done it!” Libby emerges triumphant in a blue and white bra as she tugs on her denim skirt. “You know, like this, it looks like a bikini top.”

“It does,” Kurt agrees. “I like it.”

“It has matching panties,” Libby says shyly. “I saw them on the rack. Can I get them?”

“Of course,” Blaine says, hoping and praying they’re appropriate. “Every lady needs matching underwear, right?”

Libby ends up with no less than eight new underwear sets, plus three plain bras in white, black and gray as Kurt insists she will find them useful. All three are happy and relaxed when they step from the dressing room, but Libby’s face furrows into a frown when a girl from school stands there with her mom, waiting to go in.

“All done?” Emily asks brightly.

“We are,” Kurt smiles, handing her back the unwanted bras. “Thank you for your help.”

“Oh, well I didn’t really do anything,” Emily smiles, turning to Libby. “You’re a very lucky girl to have such wonderful dads,” she says, patting her shoulder. “I don’t know many dads who would come shopping for bras with their daughter, much less help her try them on. Have a nice day, you guys!”
“Lib, isn’t that girl from your school?” Blaine asks as they walk past the line.

“Yeah.”

“Aren’t you gonna say hello?”

“No.”

Blaine drops it, knowing that Libby doesn’t really speak to a lot of other schoolkids, preferring to stick with her three closest friends, and anyway, her mood seems much brighter during lunch.

“So,” Kurt says, patting the table excitedly. “I can tell you the news now. When we were just about to leave New York, Jules got a phone call, and it looks like pretty soon they could be getting a new baby!”

“Oh my god!” Blaine cries. “That’s amazing!”

“I know! So Jules didn’t leave New York after all, because the baby is in a children's home in the Bronx, and Taylor got on the next flight out. They’re visiting him today.”

“Him? Another boy?” Libby asks, rolling her eyes.

“Yes! He’s called Benji and he’s just turned one.”

“Cute!” Blaine cries. “I’ll call Taylor later and see how they got on. Aw,” he grins, his whole face lighting up. “I’m so happy for them. It’s been such a struggle to adopt. At one point Taylor thought they were going to end up having to try Russia or somewhere.”

“Oh that’s what it was about!” Libby cries, the conversation from a year ago flooding back. “I heard him saying that to you ages ago, and I was panicking for months, thinking they might be moving all the way to Russia!”

“No!” Blaine laughs. “Oh Lib darling, why didn’t you just ask?”

“I don’t know,” she says, laughing at her own silliness. “I guess I figured it was secret or something. Talking of which...”

“I don’t like the sound of this,” Kurt says, his sushi halfway to his mouth.

“You remember when you told me all about the babies, and growing up and stuff?”

“Uh-oh,” Kurt says, knowing full well what’s coming.

“Yes,” Blaine says, resting his chin on his hand and smiling at her adoringly.

“You also said you’d tell me what you two do, but you never did. So what do you do, when your kissing leads to more?”

“Oh crap.”

“Don’t say crap, daddy.”

“I’m sorry, sweetie. I just really, really don’t want to tell you. I mean, I will. We will,” he adds with a pointed look at Kurt who is studying the ceiling intently. “But maybe not in the middle of sushi.”

“Tonight?”
“Tonight,” Blaine agrees. “That will give me time to mentally prepare.”

*

"And that's about it," Blaine says quietly, finishing up one of the most excruciatingly embarrassing conversations he's ever had. "Any uh...any questions?"

"No," Libby whispers, her eyes wide. "I'm gonna go to bed. Night!" And she runs for the stairs, taking them two at a time and slamming the door shut.

"What did I do?" he asks Kurt, who shrugs, getting up from the kitchen table to pour wine.

"God knows. But she did not take that well at all, not when you think of how well she dealt with the conventional sex talk."

"Did I explain it wrong?"

"No," Kurt says, pausing to think. "Actually, you did very well. Who'd have ever thought you'd end up being so good at this, huh? You've been Taylor's confidant and now we're both Libby's too. You're really quite marvellous." Handing him his glass, Kurt slides onto his lap, trying to draw Blaine in for a kiss but he's too preoccupied.

"I upset her, somehow. I'm gonna go up and see if she's okay."

"Sure. Want me to come?"

"No...I...I think it had better just be me, if that's okay?"

"Of course it is," Kurt says, jumping up. "I'll go queue Grey's for us to watch when you're done."

"Libby?" Blaine knocks quietly on her door, pressing his forehead against the cool wood. "Can I come in?"

"I guess so," comes the muffled reply, and he enters to find her curled up under her duvet, clutching her old orange bear tightly.

"Sweetheart, did I upset you?"

"No daddy."

"Cause you took off out that room pretty damn quick. I was just wondering if I said something wrong?"

"No, you didn't say anything wrong," Libby starts, rolling onto her back in frustration and staring at the ceiling. "It's just...I don't know... I wanted to know, and now I really wish I'd never asked. I mean, you and papa are always kissing, and that's cute. But now I'm gonna be looking at you two wondering if that's what...you know...if you're gonna be doing that later and I...you know, sometimes I laugh when you smack papas butt, but now... I don't know. The thought of you two...doing...that."

"It grosses you out?" Blaine asks, sitting on the edge of her bed.

"Yeah," she admits, turning her head to look at him. "I'm sorry daddy."

"Don't be," he laughs. "I can remember feeling physically sick when I realized what my parents were doing. It's okay, Lib, you'll get over it. It's just something you don't think of, your mind won't
let you cause it's a gross thing. I get it."

"You do?"

"Really, I do. But you asked, and now you know, just as all your friends know what their parents get up to. It's a bit of a shock, I guess, cause you don't see papa and I like that. But we see each other very differently to the way you do. That's how come we fell in love, it's a physical thing as well as an emotional thing. And....if it makes you feel any better, we do always lock the bedroom door when we're..."

"It doesn't."

"No. Right. Well. Okay."

"I feel like I want to cry."

"Oh baby girl, that's okay. Remember I told you about those pesky hormones? They make you feel all kinds of things. All you need to think about here is that papa and I are very much in love, and we like to express our love for each other in a lot of different ways, not just that. I know we're always kissing, but that's mainly just because we really like kissing each other. It doesn't mean it's going to be leading to more later. Just...cry if you want to cry, have your moment over it all and then move on, okay?"

"Okay," she agrees. "Daddy?"

"Yes baby?"

"Can you ask papa to come up here to kiss me goodnight?"

"Sure," he says, standing and leaning down to kiss her forehead. "Goodnight, Libby. I hope you sleep well."

*

When Libby steps onto the bus on Monday morning she is quiet, withdrawn and still in complete shock from the revelation of exactly how her parents have sex, but on the plus side, she is wearing matching underwear.

"You okay?" Liv asks as she sits heavily down next to her.

"No."

"What's up?"

"My dads," she whispers as Melody crowds in close. "I asked them what they do...you know...in the bedroom, since they're two guys and all that. I wish I hadn't asked."

"I know, it's gross isn't it?" Melody asks.

"You know what they do?"

"No, but I know what my mom and dad had to do to get me and my sister."

"That means your parents have done it twice," Liv says. "At least mine have only done it once."

"Nu-uh," Libby corrects them. "According to my daddy, they do it all the time, even if they don't
want babies. They just do it because they want to."

"Are you serious?" Liv whispers in shock.

"Yeah, and it must be true, cause papa and daddy couldn't have me together, could they?"

"My mom told me how you were made," Liv nods, "and I have to say, that is so much better than how I was made. My story is just gross."

"Yeah, same," Melody agrees. "And now you're telling me they do that for fun?"

"Yep. And daddy seemed very proud of that too."

"Your parents are disgusting," Melody says, slumping back in her seat. "All parents are disgusting."

"Pretty much," Libby agrees.

"So what do they do? Your dad's? Cause..."

"I know, I know. They've both got the same parts. But there are ways and means, daddy said. And he told me what those are but he also told me I'm not allowed to tell you because you have to ask your parents. Oh! But I am allowed to tell you that we went shopping on Saturday, and look!" she squeals excitedly, pulling her bra strap out from her top to show the girls, who all shriek.

"Oh my gosh, it's the same as mine!" Melody says, "I'm not wearing it today but I have the same one!"

"Being half Asian sucks," Liv sulks, sliding down in her seat. "I have like, nothing there. Nothing!"

"You will," Libby reassures. "Anyway, you'll beat Jamie, that's for sure." And Liv can't help but laugh, resting her head on her best friends shoulder for the rest of the ride.

They don't get to really talk to Jamie properly until lunch, when they sit at their usual table in the far corner of the cafeteria. It's easier there, because although they have to endure the usual taunts as they walk over there of 'gay' and 'faggot kid' or in Jamie's case 'girl,' which he's still baffled by, once they're seated they're left well alone and the four can talk in peace and quiet. So Libby tells Jamie every detail of her weekend, and he too asks Libby exactly what it is two guys do, but she remains true to the promise she made her dads, and tells him he has to ask his mom or uncle for details which he promises to do at the first opportunity.

"So what was the bra fitting like?" he asks Libby as he steals the remainder of her sandwich. "Embarrassing as hell?"

"Well...."

"Aw little Lib had to have her daddies help her!"

Libby looks up to see the girl from the store- Karen, standing over them, smirking. "They were in there with her, helping her into her bra!"

"Shut up," Libby mumbles, turning bright red.

"Got no momma to do it, have you?" she sneers.

"Fuck you," Jamie snarls, which makes all the girls draw a sharp breath, having never heard him
"You know what? Libby's dads are sweet and the best dads ever!"

"You would say that, you probably want to have sex with them," Karen laughs as her friends laugh along with her. "But they don't like girls, they're gay," she taunts as Libby's hands ball into fists of anger.

"Shut up!" Liv yells, rising to her feet. "Don't speak to my friends like that!"

"Or is Jamie a gay boy too?" Karen sneers. "Is that it? You want Libby's daddy to have sex with you? Too bad he's too busy with his hands all over Libby's boobs."

No one is entirely sure what happens next; Blaine and Kurt only know they receive a phone call to say they're needed at school as Libby has been fighting, and when they arrive they find Melody and Jamie's moms, and Wes comes screeching in moments later. "What the hell's been going on?"

"I have no idea," Blaine says, worried. "I just know they said Lib was fighting."

"They wouldn't have been fighting each other, right?" Ellen Foster asks. "Jamie adores those girls. I can't see him ever striking out at them."

They're led into the Principal's office, where she looks sternly at all five of them over the top of her glasses. "As you know, Mr's Hummel-Anderson, we had to think very long and hard about allowing Libby into this school. We know the type of trouble which surrounded her at elementary school, and we are dismayed to note that it seems to have followed her here."

"Excuse me?" But it is Wes that interrupts, not Kurt or Blaine. "How dare you! No trouble surrounded Libby in elementary school, far from it. Ignorant people decided to try and make a fuss about what was a lovely, tolerant and accepting school community. That was dealt with and we all carried on our time there with no problems whatsoever."

"That's your opinion," the principal sniffs. "But between your four children all we seem to get is murmurings of dissent from other parents. I've had parents refusing to send their children here because I tolerate Ms. Foster's ridiculous insistence that her son be allowed to dress in female clothing. I have numerous parents telling me how disgusting it is that I allow a same sex couple to send their daughter here, and now I get reports of all four of your offspring launching an attack on a fellow student!"

"Well they must have been provoked," Stephanie- Melody's mom, tells her. "No way would any of them attack someone randomly. Quite the opposite, in fact. They try to hide away because they're endlessly taunted. Have you spoken to them? Can we see them?"

"They're being held in a room within the school," the principal says haughtily. "They will be questioned in due course."

"What is this fuckery?" Blaine flares, despite Kurt's warning hand on his arm. "Don't give us some bullshit like the four of them are in a police cell, just bring our children here right now."

"They need to be dealt with in the proper manner."

"Bring me my daughter," Blaine growls. "Now."

The four children file in looking extremely contrite and they fly to their parents side. Until that point, Kurt had been wondering if maybe Libby had suddenly snapped, turning into this ball of Blaine-esque anger, but when she clutches him tightly around the waist, sobbing against his chest he knows that whatever happened, these kids really did no wrong. "I'm so sorry papa," she sobs,
trying to catch her breath. "I'm so sorry. I didn't...she...didn't...daddy, oh daddy...."

"Shh, baby girl," Blaine whispers, wrapping his arms around the both of them and ignoring the startled glare of the principal. "Shh, it's okay. Whatever happened," he says, glancing around to note all the children are crying, "Whatever happened it's okay."

"Perhaps Mr. Fisher can enlighten us," the principal offers, "seeing as he was supervising the lunch room at the time?"

"Uh, yes ma'am," Mr. Fisher says, stepping forward. "So uh...these four were over on their usual table, and I noticed another pupil, Karen Prescott, standing there with her friends. The next thing I know, Oliva here is on her feet yelling and screaming and then...well, Libby and Melody just launched themselves on her. The girl's lunch tray fell to the floor, and Jamie Foster picked it up and started trying to hit the girl with it, but we intervened at that point."

"So in your eyes it was an unprovoked attack from these four?"

"I..I wouldn't say unprovoked, ma'am. Karen Prescott has quite a reputation for teasing other kids, and I can't imagine any of these four would ever be so cruel as to hit on someone for no reason."

"But did you actually witness her being unpleasant?" the principal persists, and Mr. Fisher has to shake his head.

"I was over the other side of the cafeteria," he admits. "I couldn't hear what was being said."

"I am disgusted," the principal says, looking sternly at the children as well as their parents. "Fighting like animals in the middle of the school cafeteria? Who do you think you are? As for you, Jamie, just because you choose to act like a girl doesn't mean you are one, and it is not acceptable for a male to hit a female with her lunch tray."

"Oh you...." Ellen starts, but Jamie is on his feet.

"No mom, let me. You know what? Imma lay some stuff on the line here. Firstly, I don't know how many times I need to explain myself or even why I need to, but I'll say it one more time. I am not a girl, I don't want to be a girl and I am well aware of the differences between guys and girls. Yes, I choose to wear girls clothes. So what? Doesn't make me a girl. If a girl wears pants is she a guy? I am fed up with morons in this school calling me a girl like it's some kind of derogatory, offensive term. And it's not just the guys either, the girls say it too. Sneering at me as I walk down the halls. What are you teaching them?" he implores. "Girls are beautiful. They shouldn't be made to feel like it's an insult to be called one. And you know what? Yeah, I acted out of turn, and I apologize. But Karen stood there, taunting Libby over and over because she dared to go underwear shopping with her dad's. Well what the hell else is she supposed to do, huh? When I get my first wet dream am I supposed to wait three weeks for my uncle to return from Reno before I tell him my sheets need changing?"

"Oh my god," Ellen whispers, mortified.

"Or do I just suck it up and tell my mom, cause she's the only adult in the house? You make do with the family you get given. And you know what else? I am sick of Libby getting shit in this crappy school. Sick of her getting called gay, or a faggot just because she has two dads. I'm sick of Karen Prescott and other mindless idiots parading these halls and ruling us through terror. I'm sick of all of us being taunted, day in, day out because we don't fit the norm, and most of all, it makes me sick to know that you all know what we're going through and yet not one single member of staff does a damn thing about it. I'm not gonna sit there and listen to some whiny bitch throw slurs
about Libby's parents. She implied the most vile things about Blaine and Libby and there's no way any of us were willing to tolerate it anymore. So I'm sorry for upsetting my mom, cause I know she's disappointed in me, but am I sorry for defending someone as beautiful as Libby? Not one bit."

He sits down in his chair, feeling shaky and out of breath as the adrenaline courses through his body. He doesn't dare look up, knowing full well the steely glare from the principal is boring right through him, but he glances to his right to see Libby smiling softly at him and unable to resist, he reaches out to hold her hand.

And that was the moment that Libby Hummel-Anderson fell in love with Jamie Foster.
"So what now?" Wes asks. They stand in the school parking lot, five parents totally at a loss for what to do. Over by Kurt's car, four pre-teens huddle together, scared witless at having been suspended for two days and wondering what's to come from their parents.

"I don't know," Kurt sighs. "I feel like we have to punish Lib for this, but I don't want to be unfair to her. What are you guys going to do?"

"Why don't you all come for dinner?" Ellen suggests. "The kids can all go in the basement with some pizza and we can all talk about them in the kitchen. I agree with Kurt, any punishment we give should all be in line with each other, seeing as they were all at fault. Although, I might gag my son too."

"Actually, I thought he spoke really well," Blaine admits. "I kinda wanted to applaud him."

"I kinda wanted to throttle him...and then high five him," Ellen admits.

"Okay, well I have to go tell my wife about all of this," Wes says with a heavy sigh. "So assuming she doesn't throttle me, we'll see you later?"

"Around six," Ellen agrees.

Not a single word is spoken between the Hummel-Anderson's for the drive home, and Libby goes directly to her room without being asked when they step inside, while Kurt and Blaine sneak into the den to flop on the old worn leather couch and hold each other tight.

"Hugs make everything better," Kurt murmurs into Blaine's collar.

"They do," Blaine agrees, rubbing his hands over Kurt's back. "And kisses?" he asks hopefully, and Kurt leans up, smiling as he cups the back of his neck and draws him close.

"Always."

They both sigh contentedly at the feel of their lips together, and Kurt likes to tease Blaine, drawing back before diving in for more, nipping at the bottom of his lip then claiming him in a deep, open mouthed kiss which gradually slows to soft little featherlight kisses on each other's lips. "This is what Libby needs," Blaine says quietly, his eyes still closed.

"Someone to make out with? Blaine, she's twelve."

"No! Kurt! As if. No, hugs, I meant. She needs us to go up there and just hold her, let her know that we're not mad at her."

"You're right. C'mon," he says, pulling Blaine to his feet.

Libby is in her favorite 'feeling sorry for herself' position, under the covers with her pillow over her head, clutching her bear tightly, so she doesn't hear Kurt's knock, or the whispered sound of her name. She only emerges from her pillow when she feels a dip in the mattress and she looks up to find Kurt sitting there, Blaine kneeling at the side. "We uh...we thought you could use a hug," Kurt offers, and the force with which she falls into his arms confirms it. "C'mon," he huffs, shifting up to sit against the headboard. "I used to hold you like this when you were a little girl," he smiles as Libby settles on his lap and he cradles her to his chest. "Make room for daddy."
Blaine sits next to them on the bed, wrapping his arms around them both and kissing into Libby's hair. "We're not mad at you, Lib. We just wanted you to know that."

"You're not?"

"No," he says, lifting her chin gently with his finger to get eye contact. "What you did was wrong, and you know that. But what she did was also wrong. Papa and I understand why you acted as you did. I mean, I'd rather not get called into school because you've been fighting, but most of all I'd rather you weren't being bullied because of us. I'm so sorry. I feel like I'll spend my life apologizing to you for ever having brought you into this world."

"Daddy, no! You can't be sorry," Libby cries, distraught. "I love you and papa more than anything, and I wouldn't want any other parents, ever! I don't care that people call me gay, at least they don't say my dresses are ugly, or that my shoes aren't nice. Those are the things that matter. If they want to call me gay then let them, I don't care. I know enough gay people to know that it's not an insult at all. Like Jamie and the girl thing. Really, it's kinda annoying to hear it all the time but it's also funny, you know? Why is it an insult to be called a girl? But today, when they were saying Jamie wanted to do stuff with you, and laughing because you helped me in the fitting rooms....it was too much. I couldn't listen to it anymore. You're my daddies. You're not creepy or wrong, you're funny and kind and dumb and you're always kissing each other. You're also the best daddies in the whole world...and so I just wanted her to stop talking, that's all," Libby says, becoming upset and angry as she speaks. "I just needed for her to stop talking."

"I don't think that's unreasonable," Kurt says, trying to comfort her as she cries. "I just think you went the wrong way about it, that's all. Me and daddy aren't entirely blameless, you know? We know you don't have it easy at school, but without ever making a conscious decision about it, we've just kind of left alone because you always seem happy. Maybe we should have talked to you more about it."

"I am happy," Libby sniffles. "We are happy. All of us. We don't need a massive group of friends to feel good about ourselves, and we enjoy school really, it's just...them. Them and their stupid comments."

"So, I have to ask, Lib," Blaine says, tucking her hair behind her ear, "Would you want to leave? Go to a different school somewhere? Private, maybe?"

"Not without my friends, no way," Libby says firmly. "I'm really sorry I let you both down, and I promise not to do it again, just don't take me away from the only friends I've got."

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"So we're all in agreement that there needs to be some form of punishment?" Melody's dad Bob asks later that night.

"Yeah, I mean, for us, this isn't the first time Liv has been caught fighting," Wes says shamefully. "She's always been a feisty thing, and she bit that boys ear in elementary school."

"Yeah, because he called Libby a faggot kid," Ellen chips in. "Who can blame her?"

"Even so, that's really not how we're trying to raise her."

"Speak for yourself," Kathy interrupts. "I know physical violence isn't the answer, but defending your best friend? Don't tell me you wouldn't do the same, Wesley, because I've seen you in action when Blaine's vulnerable."
"Well yeah, but he's all...Blaine, isn't he?" Wes asks, gesturing towards his friend and his puppy dog eyes.

"And she's all Libby!" Kathy cries. "But anyway, yes, we are all in agreement that they need to...I don't know, get grounded, or something."

"Grounding sounds fair," Stephanie agrees. "No Girl Scouts or softball for Melody will just about finish her off, I think. Plus I'm going to take away her iPad for a week. If she can't FaceTime with your three she'll know this is serious."

"Agreed," Blaine says. "Grounded and no technology, yes?"

The others all nod, and then it falls to Ellen to say what they're all thinking. "I do think the school needs to face up to this though, and I think we should go to the board with a complaint."

"Couldn't agree more," Bob says. "Our kids are getting bullied because of ignorance. At Emerson they took great pains to teach acceptance in all their year groups, despite the objections from other parents and teachers. Heritage just seem to think if they ignore the problem it will go away, well that's not going to happen. I need my daughter to be safe when she's in school, that's the bottom line."

"I'm so sorry," Blaine says quietly. "None of your kids would be in this situation if it weren't for us and I'm just....really sorry, I guess. I don't blame you if you want to distance yourselves from us a little bit."

"Oh shut up, Blaine," Wes snaps. "Don't be so dumb. You know I'd never desert you."

"I know you wouldn't," Blaine says quietly. "But..."

"Oh, what? Seven years of friendship counts for nothing?" Stephanie asks. "As Wes said, don't be so stupid. Bob and I count all of you here as our closest friends. We're not going anywhere."

"Same," Ellen agrees. "And if you ever try and distance yourselves then we will hunt you down. Jamie would never forgive me if he didn't have Libby in his life."

"You know," Bob tells Blaine, "I'd listen to the women if I were you. Melody is bullied because of who she chooses to hang out with, but she's never once wanted to choose any different, not since the very first day of kindergarten. And to be honest, even though I find myself with a suspended daughter and having to face the school board, I wouldn't want to stop hanging out with you guys either. So you can quit with that, and we can talk about what we do if things don't improve. We've got four kids who are all as thick as thieves. Do we withdraw them, and risk having to send them to separate schools?"

"If we do withdraw Libby we'll be sending her private," Blaine says determinedly. "I went private to escape bullying, and actually I wanted Libby to go private right from the start."

"Private school doesn't guarantee no bullying, Blaine," Kathy points out. "Dalton had, and still has a really strict anti-bullying policy, but it doesn't mean all schools are the same."

"Well there's no way I could afford for Jamie to go private," Ellen says quietly, and Stephanie nods her agreement.

"Same, and even if we could, we'd have to do the same for Skye, and we simply couldn't afford to put two kids through private education."
"So that's decided," Kurt shrugs. "Because Libby asked that whatever happens, we don't separate her from her friends, so my suggestion would be to persist with the school board, demanding better anti-bullying policies and more teaching around the subject."

"I think they should be taught about sexuality too," Bob puts in. "Times have changed since I was at school, and they need to realize that. Kids need to be taught that it's not all black and white, and that it's okay to be...I don't know...rainbow, I guess."

The discussion continues for another two hours, but by the end of the evening they have a letter ready to be delivered to the board the next day, and they all feel like they have a goal and a purpose- to ensure that children are educated in the areas of acceptance and tolerance to all. Blaine and Kurt are the last to leave, and Kurt calls down to Libby to say her goodbyes.

"I have to go," Libby says to Jamie, feeling suddenly shy though she can't work out why. "I'll see you tomorrow?"

"Suspension, remember?"

"Yeah," she sighs. "Thursday then."

"Friday," Jamie admits sheepishly, "I got an extra day for talking back to the principal."

"Jamie! Oh my gosh I'm so sorry!"

"What?" he frowns in confusion. "Why are you sorry? It's not your fault."

"Because you were defending me," Libby says sadly.

"Yeah? Well...some people are worth defending," he says with this funny lopsided smile which makes Libby blush pink. At a loss for words, she flings her arms around him, hugging him tight.

"Thank you," she whispers, kissing his cheek before running up the stairs.

She takes her punishment surprisingly well in Kurt and Blaine's eyes. They were expecting an enormous fuss, and a whole new level of screaming tantrums, but aside from a little moaning at having to do chores, Libby is generally happy. She spends a lot of time in her room, and Blaine tries to get out of her exactly what she is doing, but she's secretive, airily declaring that a girl has to have some secrets.

Truth be told, she's busy thinking. Thinking about Jamie, and how wide his eyes went when she kissed his cheek. Thinking about how, when she caught one last glimpse of him from the top of the stairs, he was tugging on the hem of his flower patterned sweater as if unable to comprehend what had just happened. And she thinks about what future Jamie will be like. Will he still wear girls clothes? When he was younger it had all been Strawberry Shortcake or My Little Pony, and Jamie did look like a girl. He would often wear skirts too, though he hadn't worn them to school for fear of the repercussions. The skirts had stopped though, once he realized it was damn near impossible to maintain your dignity when climbing trees. So now he had his own style going on. Usually it was a mixture of male and female clothing, like it had been the night Libby kissed his cheek. Black skinny jeans, guy ones, with bright pink boots and a floral sweater. Libby finds it...cute, she thinks. She's never really thought too much about the implications, because he's always just been Jamie, but now she realizes she might very well be crushing on a gay guy, which just about figures, she thinks with a roll of her eyes. Still, Jamie is one of her very best friends, so in the end she comes to the conclusion that she will keep this quiet, not wanting to ruin what they already have.

The parents battle with the school board rumbles on for months, and in fact the children are in
seventh grade by the time they finally win the appeal, meaning that all Westerville schools must teach sexual diversity in schools. The anti-bullying had been fairly easy to win, but unfortunately that was only because Jamie had been beaten up by three eighth graders on the last day of the academic year. The sight of him with a bleeding nose, stumbling down the hallway as he clutched his ripped yellow cardigan and daisy print t-shirt to his chest had made Libby's heart lurch in pain, and her and Melody had ushered him into the girls bathroom where Libby cradled his head tenderly against her chest as he cried, and Liv ran to find the most accepting teacher in the school to come to their rescue.

Things did improve after that. The school were, to their credit, horrified at the attack on Jamie, and the three boys were dealt with very firmly. Libby knows they still don't have any friends except each other, but she really couldn't care less. She feels a smug sense of satisfaction when she's given two solos in the choral holiday concert, and no less than twenty six friends and family arrive to watch her sing. One of which is the huge Hollywood star Joe Mackenzie with his wife and children, and the rest of the choir kids look on in amazement as he picks her up and twirls her around. Her dads both cry (naturally) and afterward they take everyone out for dinner to celebrate what they deem to be her professional debut.

"Daddy?" Libby asks late that night before she goes to bed.

"Hmm?"

"I know what I want to be when I grow up," she says with a determined look on her face.

"Oh?"

"I want to be a classical singer."

And Blaine stares, and stares some more, and then he blinks and stares for a little longer before his whole face breaks into the biggest grin of pleasure Kurt thinks he's ever seen. "Really? You do? Libby....oh....yes!" he cries, hugging her fiercely. "Yes!"

"You think I can?"

"I know you can darling! Oh, this is....this is wonderful. You'll have to study though, and train really, really hard. Maybe spend some time in Italy with Riccardo and Lucia. And...oh Libby!"

"I think it's fair to say he's a little pleased," Kurt laughs, kissing Blaine's cheek. "Bless you."

"Our baby," Blaine says, wiping proudly at his eyes. "Our baby girl is gonna set the world on fire."

He's still waxing lyrical about their wonderful daughter by the time he and Kurt head to bed, gushing endlessly even through the bathroom door about how successful she's going to be. "And she'll have guys falling over her feet," he says proudly. "But none of them will stand a chance against us."  

"Girls," Kurt points out. "She could like girls."

"Nah, she talks about guys all the time. Bands and stuff. I don't think she likes girls. I mean she might, but they won't stand a chance against us either."

"Honey," Kurt says kindly as he slides under the covers, "Firstly, one day, there's quite a good chance that Libby will become an adult and not want to live with us anymore. Secondly, I don't think she will appreciate us refusing to allow her to date anyone ever, and thirdly; as much as I love her, and I really do, please, for the love of god, shut up."
"Oh."

"It's just...you've been talking about her for the last three hours," Kurt says with a laugh, pulling him close. "And now it's time for you to belong to me," he breathes, slipping his hand into Blaine's pajama pants and squeezing lightly.

"I always belong to you," Blaine says, closing his eyes and smiling blissfully. "Especially if you keep doing that."

"Good," Kurt whispers as he strokes him to hardness, "cause I know exactly what I want and I intend to take it."

"I'm amazed she's not more moody," Blaine says suddenly as Kurt groans and slumps his head onto his shoulder in defeat. "I thought that by now she would be all slamming doors and eye rolling, but she's still so sweet and loving."

"Blaine!" Kurt snaps. "Concentrate."

"Sorry. Sorry. Yes."

"I demand attention."

"Don't you always?" Blaine laughs as Kurt rolls on top of him.

"Yes," he replies, smiling at the feel of Blaine's hands rubbing firmly over his bare back. "But right now I demand attention from all of you, if you know what I mean."

"I'm tired though," Blaine murmurs, kissing along Kurt's neck. "So you can have me, but be gentle. I'm old, you know."

"You're not old," Kurt laughs, turning them both onto their sides and sliding Blaine's pajamas to his ankles as he scoots behind him. "I still see you as that beautiful thirty one year old musician, with the bright eyes and dark curls."

"Gray now."

"Silver," Kurt corrects, kissing across his back as his fingers trail lower. "And still with a healthy amount of dark curls too. Actually, if I'm honest, I prefer your hair now than I did then. It's more...tamed. And sexy. You've got this whole silver fox vibe going on, and I love it."

"Silver fox?" Blaine asks, snorting into the pillow. "You're an idiot."

"And you want my dick in your ass so shut up," Kurt quips, pulling him close and laughing into his neck. "I love you, old man. So much."

Craning his head around, Blaine captures his lips in a deep kiss, murmuring happily as they part. "I love you too, gorgeous boy. Now shut up and get your dick in my ass."

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The next day dawns bright and cold, and Kurt and Blaine are both up early, cleaning the house in preparation for their holiday guests. Libby surfaces before ten, which is some kind of miracle on weekends, and pads into the kitchen, her hair tied in a messy bun and Kurt's favourite old gray sweater hanging off her small frame. She rolls her eyes at the sight of Blaine, furniture polish in one hand and a rag in the other, pressing Kurt against the counter as they kiss fervently, breaking apart as Libby sidesteps them to get to the fridge.
"Do you two never stop?"

"Nope," Blaine grins. "And good morning to you, beautiful," he smiles, kissing her cheek as she gulps orange juice from the carton.

"Prettier each day," Kurt says, handing her a glass which she ignores and sets on the side. "Hurry up and get dressed, we need to run to the store."

"Actually, I'm going ice skating with Liv, Jamie and Melody. Ellen's picking me up at eleven."

"Uh...no you're not," Kurt says, glancing at Blaine. "Not today. Taylor and Jules will be here at noon."

Libby shrugs, pouring cereal for herself. "So?"

"So you need to be here," Blaine tells her. "It's Benji's first visit."

"Why does that mean I have to be here?"

"To make him feel welcome."

"He's one," Libby reminds them both. "My being here will make no difference at all."

"Well I'd like you to be here," Blaine tries again.

"And I'd like to go ice skating."

"Libby," Kurt stands in front of her as she eats, head down. "You will be here when Taylor and Jules arrive. And I won't have you being rude to daddy like that. Apologize please."

"Why?" she flares, pushing back from the table, her eyes flashing with anger. "Why do I have to be here when some sucky baby arrives just because he's never visited this house before? What's so special about Benji that he needs some kind of welcoming committee? I know what will happen. They'll arrive, set the kid in my arms, then Jules will go out to the office with you and dad and Taylor will sit at the table drinking coffee while I'm left alone to babysit Benji. Well I'm not doing it! I'm going ice skating and you can't stop me!"

Turning on her heel she marches out of the kitchen, stomping up the stairs as loudly as possible before slamming her bedroom door for good measure, leaving Blaine and Kurt to stare at an empty doorway, stunned.

"What the hell was that?" Blaine asks, completely incredulous and pointing down the hall as if some unexpected being had just passed through.

"That, Blaine," Kurt sighs "was, I believe, our first glimpse of Libby the teenager."
Chapter 38

Blaine storms up the stairs, a man on a mission as Kurt hurries after him, saying something about going easy on her but he's not really listening and Kurt settles for sitting on the bottom stair to wait instead.

"Consider this knocking, Libby!" Blaine yells as he storms down the hall. "I'm coming in!"

"Go away!" she screams back, but her door is flung open anyway and Blaine stares her down from where she lies on her bed.

"Sit up please, I want to talk to you."

"No."

"You have two options, Libby, either sit up and listen or be grounded for the entire holiday season. Thank you," he says as she sits. "Now, do you mind telling me what that was about?"

"I just want to go ice skating, that's all. And you're making me do family stuff."

"Because we are a family, Lib. I don't mind you seeing your friends, you know that. God knows I drive you all enough places. But I do mind it when we already have plans, plans which you knew about, and you go and ignore that and make other arrangements. Not cool, young lady."

"What plans though?" Libby persists. "I mean, I know you said Taylor and Jules are coming, but other than that, what actual plans are in place? I know Uncle Cooper and Aunt Clare are coming for dinner, and I'd be back for then, but why do I need to be here between the hours of noon and seven just because Taylor and Jules are here?"

"It's not just them though, is it? It's Benji too," Blaine says, excited at the thought of having his great nephew in the house for a week. "He's gonna need a playmate..."

"I am twelve!" Libby shrieks, horrified. "Nearly thirteen! If he wants a playmate get Jacob over! Maddie and Joe will be here in two days, surely he can survive until then? Jayden will keep him entertained all Christmas. What the hell does he do at home? There aren't any other babies there- or nearly thirteen year olds."

"Okay, I phrased that wrong," Blaine says, trying to placate her.

"Playmate. Really?"

"Yes, okay, sorry. What I meant was it would be really nice if you were here to show him around and stuff."

"Well tough, because I won't be."

"Oh you will," Blaine says with a laugh of disbelief.

"What?" Libby screeches, her voice impossibly high with indignant rage. "Why?"

"Firstly, because as I have already told you, we are a family and we do stuff like this together-always have done. Secondly, because you are now grounded for the entire weekend for the way you spoke to us and for not checking your attitude when asked and thirdly, and most importantly, because I say so."
"You're mean, daddy!" Libby yells, even more enraged when angry hot tears begin to fall. "Mean!"

"And you sound like a five year old. Now stop it. You can stay in here until you're ready to apologize and if that takes you all day then so be it. I'll call Ellen and tell her you're not going."

"Daddy!" Libby screams, "I ha..."

Blaine stops in the bedroom doorway, whirling about to face her. "Think very carefully about what you're about to say, young lady," he warns, pointing at her in anger. "Because once they're out there, some words can never be taken back."

"I wanna go ice skating!" she cries, stamping her feet in frustration.

"And I said no!" Blaine roars loudly, and finally having lost his temper completely, he storms from the room and down the stairs, leaving Libby to flop onto her bed and sob at the unfairness of it all.

Blaine keeps walking until he's in the music room where he sits heavily on the piano stool and bows his head onto the cool wood of the lid. "I handled that really badly," he mutters, knowing Kurt is behind him.

"Oh, hey now," he soothes, sliding his arms over his shoulders and kissing the top of his head. "It maybe wasn't the best, but these things happen."

"I just...she...she talks back to me and it annoys me, but she talks back to you and I get so angry and hurt on your behalf, like how can anyone talk to you that way? And I just get all defensive."

"Sweetie....I'm a big boy now," Kurt says softly, sitting next to him. "And she is only twelve, going on thirteen as she likes to remind us. It's sweet that you want to defend me, and by all means feel free to do so, but....okay...look at it from the other side here. You say you hate it when she talks back to me, but think how much it hurts me to hear you yelling at her. If you walked in the door and heard that conversation you just had, you'd be straight up those stairs to defend her, right?"

"Ugh," Blaine moans, letting his head fall forward onto the piano once more. "You're right. I'm sorry."

"Don't worry about it," Kurt says, rubbing a soothing hand over his back. "Let's just....chalk it up to a lesson learned, I guess. You know, you were so good at explaining puberty to her....well now she's hit it head on, hasn't she? And I think we're both gonna need to remember that."

"It's gonna keep happening, isn't it?"

"Yeah it is," Kurt sighs. "And it will no doubt get worse once boys enter the equation. But she will still have those moments where she's just wonderful to behold. It's just that she'll also have these devil child moments too."

"I should go apologize to her."

"Uh...no. Not yet, anyhow. Give her some time to cool off, and remember that she needs to apologize to us too. Don't let her think this was all your fault because it was absolutely her doing. She made you that angry because of her attitude and she needs to recognize that."

"So what do I do?" Blaine asks sadly, at a total loss.

"You make out with me."
Blaine tries to make amends later, when Kurt goes to the store. Knocking on Libby's bedroom door he receives no reply, so he enters timidly, not really sure how to proceed.

"I uh...made you some tea," he tries, but Libby, curled up on her side with her back to the door, doesn't reply. "I said I made tea."

"Go away."

"Fine."

"Leave the tea."

Blaine tries to hide his smile even though she's not looking at him, and he sets the tea down on her nightstand, running a hand over her hair and pleased when she lets him. "I'm sorry for yelling earlier. I hate fighting with you, Lib. I lost my temper and that wasn't cool. So...I'm sorry, I guess."

"Whatever."

"Okay. Well, Taylor and Jules will be here soon. You gonna come down and say hi?"

"No."

"Suit yourself," Blaine shrugs. "I won't pretend that I'm not disappointed. Maybe later you'll find it in yourself to apologize to me and papa and be sociable with your cousin. I'll see you later."

Taylor and Jules arrive, both beyond excited at their first Christmas with their adorable little boy, whom they've had for five perfect weeks now. Blaine and Kurt are both entranced by him and his dark, inquisitive eyes, the way his little hands run over their faces as he gets to know them, having only met them once before. Jules heads out to the office with Kurt, both on the promise that this will be their one and only business talk over the holidays and Taylor and Blaine settle in their familiar spots at the kitchen table, with Benji on Taylor's lap.

"Weird to think we've both ended up being househusbands," Taylor remarks as Blaine sets the coffee down. "Would you have had it any other way?"

"Nope. You're like me, you'll still work a bit but you'll get to spend a lot of time with this little guy," he says, cooing at the baby. "And that's the best job satisfaction you can ever get. Until they hit twelve nearly thirteen, apparently," he says to Benji who smiles and holds his arms out. "What? You want cuddles from Uncle Blaine, huh? Oh yes, I think so. I do." Taking Benji into his arms, he kisses his round cheeks and bounces him up and down, laughing as he attempts to stand. "Are you gonna walk soon? Are you? Oh Benji. You are just too adorable. Wanna swap for a teenager?" he asks Taylor who shakes his head and laughs.

"I'm good. It took three years to adopt this little guy, I think we'll stick with what we've got."

"You got a perfect one."

"Oh we did," Taylor grins. "So...Libby?"

"Ugh." Blaine’s face says it all as he shifts Benji to one side so he can take a mouthful of coffee. "Actually, given all the times you’ve asked for my advice, I think it’s only fair that I get to ask for yours," he says, and quickly fills Taylor in on all that took place that morning.
“So she’s still up there?”

“Yes. And she won’t come down. Mind you, that’s nothing new. She comes in from school and whereas she used to come right to me, or out into the yard to find Kurt, she just goes upstairs. She doesn’t even offer a hello unless I call out to her. She does her homework and all that, which is great, but then she’s either down the stairs and out to Liv’s, or the doorbell goes and Liv is here, and again, they’re shut away in her room.”

“Can you remember me when I was twelve?” Taylor asks, laughing when Blaine frowns.

“Okay, let me fill you in. Maddie was loud, outgoing and prone to these wildly passionate outbursts and I was…not. I spent so much time in my room that mom threatened to take everything out of there unless I started interacting with the family. I used to eat dinner in silence and return to my room to play video games. I just about came out of hiding when you and Kurt would visit.”


“Girls mature quicker than boys,” Taylor points out. “Do you think maybe this is nature’s way of giving you a little warning of what’s to come? Maybe Libby is testing the waters a bit, seeing how much she can get away with before you snap, which apparently is not much.”

“Yeah, make me feel better why don’t you?” Blaine laughs, turning toward the hallway as the front door is thrown open. “Santana,” he explains to Taylor.

“Were you expecting her?”

“No. She just suddenly appears like a bad dream,” he says with a smile, turning to greet her as she comes into the kitchen and stops dead.

Santana looks at Benji, who stares back with his big brown eyes. She takes in the way he blinks like an owl, the way his hair tumbles into thick dark curls and she looks to Blaine in astonishment before looking back to the baby then back to Blaine once more. “Did you procreate and not tell me?”

“No,” Blaine laughs. “This is Benji, Taylor and Jules’ son.”

“Did you donate to this project?”

“We adopted him from a children’s home in New York,” Taylor explains. “He’s fifteen months old.”

“Blaine…were you in New York two years ago?” Santana asks, still fixated on the baby. “And if you were did you accidentally sleep with a woman?”

“No!” he laughs.

“He is you!” Santana says in disbelief as she crouches down to greet Benji who smiles happily. “He looks so much like those pictures that used to be on the walls in your parents house. Oh my god!”

“Actually,” Taylor says with a grin. “He looks like he could feasibly be the product of both of you. Are you sure you two never…”

“Get out,” Blaine snaps at the same time as Santana pulls a face.

“That’s why you’re here?”

“Yes.” pouring herself coffee, Santana sits at the kitchen table giving Blaine the death glare until he crumbles.

“I said I was sorry! Did she put you up to this? Ask if you’d come around and talk to me?”

“No,” Santana says with a small incline of her head. “But she did call me quite upset. Not about you yelling at her, because she can see that she talked back to Kurt and made you angry. She’s upset because you wouldn’t let her go ice skating.”

“It’s not that I wouldn’t let her! She can go anytime, but she couldn’t go because Taylor was arriving and I wanted her here for that. I don’t get what the big deal is.”

“The big deal, Blaine, is that Libby wants to feel like an adult here.”

“Well she’s not one.”

“I know,” she says, reaching out for his hand. “But she is nearly a teenager, and you can’t expect her to want to do family stuff all the time. She said she would be here for dinner, so really, what difference does it make if she’s not here when they arrive?”

“But...I don’t get it,” Blaine cries in frustration. “That’s what I don’t get. Lib’s always done everything with us. She’s always come grocery shopping, helped do the dishes, come for ice cream...anywhere we go, one or other or both of us, she always wants to come too, even if it’s just to the post office. Now suddenly she doesn't want to do any of that stuff at all, and when I ask her to it’s like it’s the end of the world.”

“Bottom line, Blaine?” Taylor says with a sigh, “Parents are embarrassing. Even ones as awesome as you and Kurt. Libby doesn’t want to drag around everywhere with you because that’s not seen as cool. Having the freedom and independence of being able to go out with her friends is what’s important to her right now, and you just have to use your judgement on that and pick your battles. Sure, sometimes, like dinner tonight, you want her here but you do know that we wouldn’t have minded if she’d been out when we arrived. We haven’t seen her yet anyway.”

“Yep, what the nephew said,” Santana adds, taking Benji in her arms. “You’re lucky, Libby adores you and Kurt. She’s never gonna run away, or take drugs or do anything that she knows would upset you because she respects you both so much. You have to look at this as lots of separate things here, not just one big mess. Libby is pushing boundaries because she’s growing up. On top of that, her hormones will be all over the shop right now. She’ll start her periods soon if she hasn’t already.” As Blaine hides his head in his hands, Santana laughs and ruffles his hair, “And on top of that, she is- despite the growing up- still a little girl. A little girl who doesn't know how to really express all she’s thinking and feeling and so she ends up seeming petulant and rude. She doesn’t mean to be, Blaine, but you do have to accept that from now on, she’s not gonna want to be glued to your side all the time.”

“But...”

“Were you? Did you follow your dad everywhere he went all the time?”

“Well...” Blaine thinks back trying to remember. “I did, actually, yeah. Or Cooper. I didn’t have any friends so... And Kurt,” he adds as he thinks back. “Kurt has said time and again how he always used to be in his dad’s garage.”
“Yeah, and yet by the time you knew him, which was only three years later, the only way he would set foot in there was if Burt paid him to work there. Plus you went to boarding school when you were fifteen- you were always around your friends then, when you made them.”

“I hate this,” Blaine moans. “I don’t want a teenage daughter.”

“Go upstairs and talk to her,” Santana urges gently. “She needs you.”

Blaine wonders if Libby has actually moved all day, seeing as she’s still not dressed and is lying in the exact same position as when he left her room two hours ago, but then he notices the tea is gone and a neat pile of homework sitting on her desk and he sits down on the edge of her bed and reaches for her hand.

“I just came to say sorry again,” he says quietly. “I was maybe a bit unreasonable. It wouldn’t have been that much of a problem for you to go, I guess. Certainly Taylor and Jules would have understood. I’m just... I don’t know. I don’t ever want you to be ashamed of me, or embarrassed. And I look at you growing up and I just think...not yet. Please don’t let my baby grow up so fast. I don’t feel ready. And yet you are, whether I like it or not. And I know it’s a big deal for you to be allowed some freedom and not be tied to being with family all the time. I’m really sorry I yelled, Lib. I just got angry and I should’ve walked away and...”

“I love you daddy.” Libby flies into his arms with a sob and he holds her tight, trying not to cry with relief. “I’m sorry too,” she mutters into his shirt. “I don’t ever want to fight with you. I know I was out of line the way I spoke to papa and I just...I’m really sorry. I’m not embarrassed by you at all though, so please don’t think that. I just want to be able to see my friends on the weekend, that’s all.”

“I love you, Libby, don’t cry, sweetheart,” Blaine says, smoothing her hair as he holds her. “It’s okay.”

“I don’t know why I’m crying!” she wails, pulling back to rub her fists into her eyes. “It’s dumb to cry just cause I couldn’t go!”

“It’s not dumb...It’s...”

“I just feel all bad inside,” she continues over him. “Like, bad for being horrible to you and papa. Bad because I was about to say something awful to you earlier but you stopped me.”

“I didn’t stop you,” Blaine corrects. “You stopped yourself, and that’s important. You could have carried on despite my warning but you didn’t, and you should feel proud of that.”

“I don’t feel proud of nothing,” Libby pouts. “I feel sad for making you sad.”

“And I told you it’s all okay. There’s a very cute little boy downstairs waiting to see you when you’re ready- and Santana.” Cuddling her close once more he kisses into her hair. “Would you like papa to come up?”

“Yes please,” she sniffles. “I need to apologize and I don’t want to do it in front of everyone.”

“Okay. And would you like to see your friends tomorrow?”

“Can I?” Libby asks excitedly.

“Sure. Liv will be here for brunch anyway, but you can do what you want in the afternoon.”
“Can I see if Jamie wants to go to the mall?” she asks. “I need to get christmas presents for you and papa. Oh, and I’ll need your credit card. And a ride.”

Blaine laughs, disentangling himself from her limbs and standing up. “Yes. Just Jamie?”

“Uh...yeah, if that’s okay?” Libby says, and Blaine thinks maybe he imagines the faint blush on her cheeks.

“Sure,” he smiles. “Call him now and ask.”

A week later and Blaine and Kurt stumble into bed, slightly tipsy after their New Years Party, but respectfully so, not wanting to get sloppy in front of Libby. Still, Blaine pulls out a bottle of champagne and two glasses once Kurt has kicked the door closed, grinning like a fool.

“Where d’you get that?” he asks, sliding under the covers.

“Um...the fridge?” Blaine laughs.

“Will we need glasses?”

“Oh Kurt,” Blaine moans, the very idea making him swell in his pants. “Fuck, I love you.”

“Ha! I love you too.” He squeaks when Blaine lets the cork go, and ducks as it hits the opposite wall and flies back onto the bed. “Oh my god!”

“So, Libby’s better, don’t you think?” Kurt asks as Blaine swigs from the bottle.

“Hmm, well, I don’t know about better, I think she’s gonna be swinging back and forth but she’s been okay for the holidays, yes.” He passes the bottle to Kurt, eyeing him warily. “Why are you laughing?”

“Swinging,” he giggles. “That word always makes me laugh.”

“You’re insane,” Blaine laughs. He takes another mouthful of champagne before pulling Kurt’s lips against his, running his tongue into his mouth until Kurt feels the fizz on his tongue too. “I like it when you suck me with champagne in your mouth,” Blaine says, a mischievous grin appearing on his face.

“I know you do,” Kurt grins back. “Which is exactly why I said no glasses. And also...” He trails off, jumping up to rummage in the closet. “We may be parents to an almost teenager,” he says, his eyes darkening as he holds up a pair of handcuffs and a vibrator, “But we’re not to old to play with toys.”
“What do you want for your birthday, Lib?” Kurt asks brightly one morning.

Libby sighs, collecting her glass and plate and heading to the dishwasher. “Your promise that I will never again, in all my born days, find daddy handcuffed to the headboard.”

“That was three months ago!” Kurt protests.

“And it’s still with me!”

“We fell asleep! Anyway, I told you, it wasn’t what it looked like,” Kurt huffs, trying not to blush as he thinks of all the lies he had to tell to spare the poor girl any more trauma. “We were a little drunk and I decided to play a trick on him. That’s all there was to it.”

“I know that, but even so, it was disturbing. I don’t even get why you have handcuffs anyway? What for? Are you gonna play the same trick on me? Am I gonna wake up one morning and find you’ve handcuffed me to the headboard?”

“Erm, no,” Kurt stutters, face on fire. “That wouldn’t be...no. No. I learned my lesson. Just...tell me what you want for your birthday.”

“My own laptop for my room, with no parental controls.”

“No. You can have a laptop, but there will most definitely be parental controls in place.”

“Ugh, fine,” she huffs, “I’ll ask daddy about the parental controls when he gets back from Chicago.”

“You will not,” Kurt laughs. “I am capable of making these decisions, and I know he would agree with me anyway.”

“Can we go shopping for it today?”

“No, we can go Friday, when daddy’s back.”

“And I can have it Friday?”

“No, you can have it Sunday, your actual birthday.”

“That’s forever away!”

“Four days!” Kurt cries dramatically, making Libby roll her eyes. “How will you ever cope?”


* 

“They think I’m like...six,” Libby moans to Jamie as they walk to math together.

“He’s still giving the line about it being a game?”

“Yes.”

“You do know what was really going on there, right?”
“Well you told me that they were...”

“Having sex? Yeah. Sorry Lib, they probably were. They weren’t playing cops, that’s for sure. Or I hope not, anyway.”

“I still don’t get why you’d want to do that anyway,” Libby says as she takes her place in class.

“Sex?”

“Yeah. I mean...it just grosses me out,” she admits.

“Same,” Jamie confides. “I hear my mom moaning to Stephanie about never having it, and I think ‘be grateful,’ but it seems a really big deal for her.”

They stop talking as a boy enters the room and walks to the front of the class, handing a slip of paper to Mr. Brown who reads it and nods. The boy stands awkwardly while Mr. Brown writes something in his register, then turns to the class. “Everybody, this is Dylan Rydell, he’s just transferred here from Cleveland. Make him feel welcome please. Take a seat, Dylan.”

To Libby’s amazement, Jamie raises his hand with a flourish. “Here! There’s a spare seat next to me!”

The boy, tall, with shaggy brown hair which falls into his blue eyes, makes his way down the aisle and sits next to Jamie, smiling his thanks and either not noticing or not caring that Jamie is wearing a lilac cardigan and pearls. Libby doesn’t know which, but she does know that when Jamie turns to her and mouths the word “Cute!”, her gut twists unpleasantly and she spends the rest of the day feeling very close to tears.

*

"She won't talk to me," Kurt moans to Blaine later that night. "I know something is up, because she barely ate her dinner and she's been locked in her room all night, but I'm damned if I know what it is. All she will say is that it's not bullying."

"Has she fallen out with Liv?"

"No, Liv came home with her after school."

"Hmm. Well....I'd try and talk to her but you say she won't come to the phone so..."

"Her exact words were 'tell daddy I love him but I'm not interested.'" Kurt sighs.

"Interested in what?"

"Beats me. Interested in discussing how her day's been? In discussing what's wrong? I don't know. Anyway, how has your day been?"

"Pretty excellent."

"You and Riccardo sat Benji, didn't you?"

"Yes," Blaine admits with a laugh. "Ooh he's so cute."

"Riccardo, or Benji?"

"Oh haha. Where are you now, anyway?"
Kurt smiles, knowing full well what's coming. "In bed."
"Door locked?"
"Yes."
"Hands roaming?"
"Your voice suddenly drops about six octaves," Kurt laughs.
"Kuuuurrt...."
"Hmm?"
"Are they roaming?"
"You know Libby's still on about New Years, and the handcuffs."
"Oh kill the mood why don't you?" Blaine cries desperately. "Jesus."
"Sorry, sorry. It's just... I don't know if she buys the whole me playing a trick on you thing, that's all."
"She didn't see anything though, just me asleep with my wrists attached to the headboard. The covers were over us both. She's used to seeing us in bed with no shirts on anyway. She would have assumed we had pajama pants on like always. How was she to know you had a dildo resting between your butt cheeks?"
"You're disgusting," Kurt laughs.
"And she's innocent. Now leave her out of this and get it out for me."
"My cock?"
"The dildo!" Blaine laughs loudly before clearing his throat. "Say cock again though. That's hot."
"You never change, do you? Aren't you going to tell me what you've been doing with your day? Or even why you're in Chicago to begin with? And how come Riccardo just happens to fly in from Italy at the same time, and his wife doesn't know why either?"
"He came to see his grandson."
"Without his wife?"
"Um..."
"Blaine?"
Blaine clears his throat nervously, dreading the interrogation because he usually ends up snapping at Kurt when he's trying to keep secrets. "Yes?"
"I'm stroking my cock and thinking of you."
"Oh....fuck. Yes."
A loud crash ensues, followed by mumbling a until Blaine reappears on the phone, breathless. "Sorry, sorry."
"Are you okay?"

"I dropped the phone in surprise and then fell out of bed trying to retrieve it," Blaine admits sheepishly. "Okay. Stop laughing. Talk to me some more."

"I can't now!" Kurt cries, doubled over. "I'm laughing too hard!"

"Kurt! Please! Don't make me watch porn. I'm too old for that now."

"You're too married for that now," Kurt points out. "Tell me what you want me to do."

"Umpff."

"That's not helpful."

"I want you to...to...fuck yourself on that dildo, and tell me how it feels."

"I can do that." Kurt retrieves the toy and quickly settles back in bed, setting the phone on speaker. "You want me to imagine it's you? That you were here fucking me?"

"Yes," Blaine moans. "Oh god yes."

"Hmm, it feels good Blaine, feels good pushing at my ass."

"Oh shit...go for it Kurt."

"I am. Oh Jesus," he moans as the toy slips inside. "It's stretching me Blaine. Stretching me open for when you get home tomorrow."

"Yes," Blaine whispers, impossibly close to the phone as he works a hand over himself frantically. "Damn Kurt, I bet you look so good."

"You wanna take this to FaceTime?"

"No. Your voice...your voice turns me on so much...I just..."

"I'll make you watch tomorrow then," Kurt says, breathlessly as he works himself on the toy. "I'll...ugh... I'll suck your cock as the toy fucks me. Yeah? You like that?"

"Fuck, Kurt! Yes," Blaine whimpers, perilously close to the edge. "I'll take you deep, so your cock hits the back of my throat everytime, let you pull my hair as you come in my mouth."

"Kurt...I...oh..."

"Then I'll jerk myself off over your face."

"Can't...fuck....fuck... Kurt..." Blaine loses it, gasping for breath as he comes while on the other end of the line Kurt moves a hand to his own cock and finishes himself off, biting into the pillow to keep from yelling too loudly.

"Holy shit," he moans weakly. "You okay?"

"I just...yeah," Blaine pants. "I haven't...fuck....I haven't done that to myself for so long. Fuck that felt good."
"Don't lie," Kurt laughs. "You're always jerking off in the shower."

"I'm not, honestly," Blaine laughs weakly. "I don't have as much stamina as I did, so I'd prefer to save myself for you."

"Oh." Kurt grins happily, carefully removing the toy before reluctantly padding to the bathroom to clean up. "That's nice to hear."

"It's nice to do," Blaine laughs. "And just so you know? I'm holding you to every word of that tomorrow. Every damn word."

"Please do," Kurt laughs. "Just no handcuffs involved."

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“Hey Lib!” Jamie calls, running down the hall to catch up with her and Liv. “Can Dylan come to your party tomorrow?”

“It’s not a party, is it?” she snaps. “It’s you three coming to hang out and eat pizza.”

“Okay...well, can Dylan come hang out with us then?” he asks again with a bright smile.

“Why?”

“Um...because I thought it’d be nice to ask him? No one else has really spoken to him except us.”

“That’s because you were glued to his side all day yesterday,” Libby grumbles. “I don’t see why I have to invite him to my birthday.”

“Suit yourself,” Jamie shrugs. “But don’t go whining on to me that you never make any friends.” And with that he turns on his heel and walks off in the opposite direction, even though it's the wrong way to homeroom.

“What is with you?” Liv asks, taking her best friend's arm and steering her into the girls bathroom. “You know he’s probably gay, we’ve been saying that for months. Can’t you just be pleased that he’s found a guy to be friends with?”

“He thinks he’s cute,” Libby pouts.

“So? Let him. It’s okay to crush on someone- you’re doing just that. But it’s not okay to throw away a friendship with someone you’ve known all your life just because his sexuality doesn’t suit you.”

“Ugh,” Libby sighs, leaning back against the wall and blinking to stop her tears escaping. “You’re right, I guess. He’s unobtainable and I just need to get over it.”

“You will,” Liv says kindly, rubbing her arm. “I got over crushing on Liam.”

“He moved to Oklahoma.”

“And I’m over it,” Liv says firmly. “Jamie isn’t the only guy in the world, but he is one of your best friends. Be happy for him, Libby.”

“Do you think I should invite Dylan?”

“Yeah I do,” she nods. “Because otherwise you’ll regret it. You’ll spend the whole evening feeling
bad about it. I know you, remember? Better than..”

“I know myself,” Libby finishes for her, smiling and hugging her tight. “C’mon. Let’s find him before the bell goes.”

Libby is much brighter that evening. Liv was right, she did feel better for having invited Dylan, particularly as his whole face had lit up and he accepted instantly, instead of wrinkling his nose and saying no way as Patsy from the softball team had done when she invited her. Her dads had been pleased too, when she told them she had a new friend; she could see the surprised yet happy glance they shared before they composed themselves and said of course he could come. They had gone laptop shopping right from school too, then out for burgers which daddy complained about but papa said something about burning it off. Libby stopped listening, pretty convinced it was sex talk again and she decided they are possibly the most embarrassing parents ever, but then they had just bought her a macbook pro, and a printer too, so she decides to let it slide this once.

Papa sets the laptop up for her and she's online right away, chatting with Melody and begging her parents for a facebook page which they reluctantly allow, but her daddy is very firm in insisting that she only befriend people she knows, and when he tells her he’ll be checking, Libby has a feeling he most definitely will.

“You’ve been trusted with this,” he tells her, watching as she finds Kurt’s profile and clicks add friend. “And somehow you’ve managed to end up with it today instead of waiting until sunday like we said initially. But turning thirteen doesn’t mean you know everything, or that you’re an adult. Don’t abuse the trust we’ve shown you here, okay? Or else it will be taken away.”

“Yes, yes.”

“And if you see anything that worries you, you come right to us, do you hear?” Kurt adds. “The parental controls are set but that doesn’t stop people trying to contact you via IM or facebook. And don’t make any of your pictures public. And make sure your profile picture isn't inappropriate. No swimwear pictures please. And never reveal anything about yourself to anyone you don't know.”

“Okay, papa!” Libby cries. “I’m not a complete idiot! I have used computers before.”

“I know that, but we’re always around to supervise. Daddy and I just want you to be safe, that’s all.”

“I am safe,” she sighs dramatically. “Now go! Leave me to it please. Oh, and thank you for the gift.”

“Okay, we’ll go,” Blaine says, taking Kurt’s hand and leading him toward the door. “If you need anything we’ll be in our room.”

“Whatever.”

And happy that she is distracted, Blaine and Kurt run down the hall, locking the bedroom door behind them.

Libby’s birthday celebrations begin the next day, when she’s up and out early to head to the mall with Santana, Kathy, Rachel and Liv, returning later on with so many bags that Blaine seriously regrets giving Santana his credit card. She spends hours in her room with Liv getting ready for her party which Kurt and Blaine are expressly forbidden from calling a party, on account of there only
being four guests. They had worried over this initially, but Libby insisted it was all she wanted, not letting on about the few others she had invited who had all turned her down.

So Blaine and Kurt find themselves playing host to five teenagers who lounge around in the den watching a movie, only venturing into the kitchen when Kurt yells that the pizza has arrived.

“Can we eat in the den?” Libby asks hopefully, but Kurt wrinkles his nose.

“Can’t you eat out here? At least pretend to be civilized.”

“Ugh, fine,” she huffs, pulling out chairs for everyone to sit.

“Thanks for the pizza,” Jamie says cheerfully.

“Yeah,” Dylan agrees. “And thanks for inviting me.”

“Welcome,” Libby smiles as if it was all her doing. “Daddy!”

“What?” he shrugs, stealing two slice of pepperoni. “We have to eat!” Taking the pizza he goes back across the kitchen to where Kurt leans against the counter, eyeing the pizza warily.

“It’s all greasy,” he moans.

“So? You love pizza.”

“I do, but we had burgers yesterday.”

“Last night’s meal is null and void,” Blaine grins, making Kurt blush as he thinks of their sweaty exertions in the bedroom. “C’mon Kurt...Pizza,” he teases, dangling a slice in front of his face. “Pizza good.”

“They are so embarrassing,” Libby mutters, but everyone ends up watching them as Blaine bites the end of the pizza before feeding some to Kurt then pulling him in for a kiss, and Dylan’s eyes go wide.

“Oh.”

Libby is on him immediately, eyes flashing fire as Kurt pulls back from Blaine, embarrassed and on edge. “You have a problem?” she snarls. “Never seen people kissing before?”

“It’s not that,” Dylan stutters. “I just...not two guys, no.”

“They’re always doing it,” Melody says knowledgeably.

“Yes, and if you have a problem with it, you can leave,” Libby snaps. “They’re my daddies.”

“No I don’t...no. No problem,” Dylan says with a laugh. “I’ve just never seen parents being all in love, that’s all. Mine were always fighting, which is how come I moved here with my mom. But I don’t have a problem with you having two dads, Libby. I’m gay.”

Kurt and Blaine exchange a glance and Kurt shrugs his shoulders, and it falls to Liv as always to break the silence. “How do you know?”

“I’ve just always known, that’s all,” Dylan shrugs. The way it is said, without fear or embarrassment makes Libby suddenly glad he is her friend after all and she glances at Jamie who stares at the kitchen table and says nothing.
“Just like I’ve always known I’m not gay, I guess,” Liv nods, and Libby agrees.

“Same.”

“Oh,” Blaine says, coming to life. “You’re not gay?”

“No,” she says, a small smile on her lips. “Why? Are you disappointed?”

“No,” he bristles. “Actually, I had sorta realized you weren’t. I just didn’t know you’d decided, that’s all.”

“My dad says yours is the only family where you have to come out as straight,” Liv announces, making everyone laugh.

“Your dad is right,” Kurt tells her.

“I mean, I’m pretty sure I’m not gay,” Libby carries on. “I might experiment a little when I’m older.”

“Oh god,” Blaine moans. “I’m leaving. I’ll be in the music room.”

“Good plan,” Kurt laughs. “I’m gonna go to the office then. Will you guys be okay?”

“No papa, we’re gonna burn the house down. What do you think?”

“Okay, okay, I’m gone! And well done, Dylan, for being so brave,” he calls, dodging the balled up napkin Libby tosses in his direction, and all the while, Jamie says nothing.

Libby chooses not to dwell on this though, figuring Jamie will come out when he’s ready and though she does feel jealous sometimes, overall it's quite nice to see Jamie with a guy friend, and Dylan is a welcome addition to their group.

Libby decides she loves being a teenager, it is wholly different to just being twelve as she tells Liv repeatedly, who moans that June second is so far off. But it's not really, and soon enough she becomes the final one of the friends to reach that elusive thirteen, just in time for the summer break.

Several things happen to Libby in the first few weeks of summer. The first is that Blaine takes a two night visit to Chicago again, and Libby sobs almost uncontrollably in the airport when she and Kurt drop him off, and nobody can figure out why.

"It's okay," Blaine whispers, holding her tight. "I'll be back Thursday, my darling girl, I promise."

"I know," she wails pitifully. "It's not that."

"What then?"

"I don't know!" she cries. "I just don't want you to go!"

"I'll look after you," Kurt tries. "I always do."

"I know that, but I just want both of you, that's all," she sobs, and she's still sniffling when she goes to bed, which ends up with Kurt sitting on her bed smoothing her hair until she goes to sleep.

For the rest of the week she alternates between being clingy and solitary. When Kurt tries to take her to the movies to cheer her up she refuses, opting to spend the entire evening in bed which
baffles him completely. Then, the next day when he calls up to her that he's going to take some tools back to grandpa, she flies down the stairs and into his arms, informing him that she's coming with him as she doesn't want to be alone. She's overjoyed when Blaine returns too, throwing herself into his arms with such a loud squeal of joy that other people in the airport stop and turn around, their hearts warmed to see a young girl so happy to be reunited with her dad, not knowing he's only been gone less than forty eight hours. She doesn't leave them alone all that evening either, settling between them on the couch to watch the Wizard of Oz, and not even bothering to hide her tears at the end.

"You're very emotional, Lib," Kurt comments offhandedly as Blaine cringes.

"So? What's wrong with that?"

"Nothing," he says, holding his hands up. "Nothing at all. I was just commenting."

"Well don't comment," she snaps. "If I want your opinion I'll ask for it. I'm going to bed."

"Here we go again," Blaine sighs as she stombs up the stairs.

"I heard that!"

Libby's bad mood then lasts the entire weekend, until Monday morning when Kurt and Blaine are woken by the most almighty scream. "Libby!" Blaine gasps, sitting upright.

"Oh my god!" Kurt tears from the bedroom with Blaine hot on his heels, bursting into Libby's bedroom where the bathroom door is shut. "Libby? Are you okay?"

"What do you think?" she yells back tearfully. "No I'm not okay! Call Santana or Rachel. I need them."

Blaine looks sadly at Kurt, who squeezes his hand gently. "Libby, sweetie, it's six in the morning. They're not going to come now."

"Then I'll wait."

"Lib, Kathy took you and Liv shopping for this, didn't she?" Blaine reminds her gently. "You have all the stuff you need."

"I know! But it's all in the cupboard and I'm on the toilet."

"So you just need to get something," Kurt encourages. "We can call Rachel in an hour or so if you want."

"How?"

Blaine frowns in confusion. "How what?"

"How do I get something?"

"Well you can't be bleeding so bad you can't get up and go to the cupboard," Blaine says, trying not to laugh at her dramatics.

"I can't move, daddy! I can't move! I'll just sit here until Rachel comes. Can someone pass me my iPad?"

"Let me in, Libby," Kurt tells her. "I can get your stuff for you, and I promise not to look."
"I don't..."

"You're not sitting on the toilet for an hour, Libby," Kurt says firmly. "Now let me in."

"If you look I'm never speaking to you again," she says, unlocking the door.

Kurt sidesteps her like a crab until he's at the sink unit. "Which cupboard?"

"The one under the sink."

Crouching down he opens the doors and is faced with so many sanitary items he doesn't know what to do. "Uh...I don't know which you need."

"Just a pad," she sniffs, making Kurt's heart lurch as he realizes she's crying. "And...and I need some underwear."

"Okay. Blaine!" Kurt calls, "help me out here. Bring Libby some underwear."

"This is mortifying," Libby moans.

"Why?" Kurt asks as Blaine's hand extends around the door holding a pair of clean panties. "We wash it all anyway. "Blaine? These are all different. Any idea which one she should be using?"

"Nope. Hold on, I'm coming in."

"Please, no..." Libby says, sighing when Blaine walks toward Kurt, eyes closed and arms outstretched. She gives up in the end, laughing at his stupidity instead. "Daddy, it really doesn't matter," she tells him. "Just a pad. Any one will do. Rachel can help me figure it out when she gets here."

"Here." Blaine turns, eyes closed once more, and thrusts a pad out towards her.

"Not that one. That's a nighttime one."

"But you said...nevermind. Here then. Try this. How do you open it?"

"I know what to do, Kathy showed us."

"Oh, okay, well you just...do what you've got to do and we'll wait in your room for you."

Kurt closes the door behind them, sighing heavily as he makes to sit on her bed before he notices.

"C'mon," he says, gesturing to the sheets. "Let's do this before she gets out."

"She's all upset," Blaine whispers sadly.

"It's embarrassing for her, that's why," Kurt whispers back. "Poor girl. I mean, it shouldn't be, but it's a taboo subject, isn't it?"

"So I guess it's official," Blaine says over the tears lodged in his throat. "She's not our baby girl anymore. She's all grown up."

"Oh honey. She'll always be our baby," Kurt says, wrapping his arms around him and pulling him close. "Whatever happens now or in the future, even when she's got babies of her own, she'll still be our baby, I promise you."

Libby emerges ten minutes later in her pajama top and underwear, pajama pants balled up on her
hands as she looks at the floor. "I uh...I didn't know what to...."

"I'll wash them for you," Blaine says, taking them without fuss and tossing them in her hamper.

"Thank you," she mutters. "My sheets...."

"Are all done," Kurt says, ushering her back to bed. "You wanna sleep some more?"

"No. But I want to stay in bed a while, if that's okay?"

"Of course. Can I get you anything? Some tea? Painkillers? Do you feel okay?"

"I feel fine," she mumbles, getting in and pulling the covers over herself. "I just...." and her voice gives way to huge, gigantic sobs which rack her tiny frame as Kurt rushes to pull her into his arms and Blaine wraps his arms around them both. "I don't know why I'm crying!" she sobs. "I never seem to know why I'm crying anymore. I just...I know it's growing up and all, but I didn't want it to happen and now it has and my whole summer has been ruined!"

"Oh hey," Blaine soothes. "It's not ruined, sweetie. Not at all. You can still have as much fun as you always do, and I know Kathy explained that to you, cause you were worried you couldn't still swim."

"I don't... I can't... I can't trust my body though!"

"You can," Kurt tells her, shifting until she's cradled tight against his chest. "You just have to learn to listen to it that's all."

"Yeah, like right now," Blaine says with a smile.

Libby rubs at her red eyes as she stares at him. "Right now?"

"Yeah. Right now, I think your body is telling you that you should find a Disney movie while I make French toast, and then the three of us should curl up in this here bed and watch the movie together before calling Rachel."

"Thank you," Libby says as her tears start afresh. "Thank you for helping me, and for changing my sheets and for making me feel better. I don't know if you know, but I love you both so much."

"And we love you, Libby Darling," Kurt says as he kisses her cheek.

"Yep," Blaine says, making them both laugh as he kisses them in turn. "I love you both too."

"Daddy? Papa? Will I always be your baby girl?" Libby asks fearfully. "Even though I'm becoming a woman?"

"Oh Libby," he sighs, kissing her forehead. "Yes you will. Always."
Libby Darling Hummel-Anderson is fifteen and she knows it all, as she frequently reminds her parents. She knows she's had a crush on Jamie Foster for well over two years now, despite Liv and Melody telling her she'll get over it. She knows she can't stand it much longer, with her making heart eyes at him, him making heart eyes at Dylan and Dylan making heart eyes at Cory, a junior who will now be a senior.

She knows that being a sophomore is going to be so much better than being a freshman, and she knows that high school is infinitely more preferable to middle school. The bullying, when it comes from a bunch of moronic juniors, is worse, but it's also easier to blend in, to stay hidden. When Jamie isn't with them, that is. To be honest, it's him and the way he dresses which has brought them the unwelcome attention during the past year rather than Libby's parents, but not one of them would ever abandon Jamie or try to convince him to change, so they push on through, the five of them now, and try to ignore the name calling.

Libby does choir now, and softball, and actually for the first time in her life, has more friends. Friends who invite her to parties and the movies. Friends who text her, add her on Facebook and who actually want to sit next to her in class. But they are also friends who she never asks back home, or tells she has two dads, because their friendship works on a different level to that which she has with Melody, Jamie and Dylan, and certainly different to the friendship she has with Liv, because they're more like sisters. The school friendships she has are far more superficial, they usually discuss upcoming competitions or matches, or which boys they have a crush on. When that happens Libby usually gives the name of some random jock. She would never dare mention that Jamie has had her heart since seventh grade. Only Liv and Melody know that, and if Libby has her way, they'll be the only ones who ever know.

Libby knows that her parents are still as crazy as ever, and she still loves their own brand of crazy even if it does embarrass her sometimes. She loves that they are so in love. She never has to worry, even on the few occasions she has heard them fighting she knows that they'll make it up soon enough and they always, always do. She knows what they get up to as well, but she would prefer not to think about that as it completely grosses her out. She remembers, years ago, telling them that she would never be ashamed of them, and she's not. Embarrassed by them, sure. It's hard not to be when your papa suddenly serenades your daddy in the middle of Target and then kisses him full on the lips, or when your daddy cheers you on in your softball game by yelling "Go on baby girl!" very loudly. But ashamed? Never. She explained to them that she doesn't really announce that she has two dads, not like she used to do when she was little, and she was worried their feelings would be hurt. But they understood, and said as long as she didn't lie if asked, then they didn't see the problem. That, and the fact they buy her designer shoes and purses, makes her love them even more.

Kurt Hummel-Anderson is thirty nine, and knows a lot about everything except, still, why his husband goes to Chicago "on business" but won't tell him what that business entails. Sebastian and Santana take great delight in teasing him, saying he's got some young bit on the side, but Kurt knows full well that would never be the case. Some things would never happen in life, and Blaine cheating on him is one of them. Still, it drives him completely insane, not knowing. Especially as this has been going on for two years now. Initially he thought it was just his way of getting more time in with Benji, but Taylor assures him that while they do see him, most of the time Blaine keeps himself to himself, and whatever it is he's doing, Riccardo is somehow involved too, and the pair go to great lengths to keep it hidden.
Kurt knows that his daughter is possibly the most beautiful young lady on this earth. Her hair is still long, but chestnut now - a shade or two lighter than his own. Her blue eyes sparkle with mischief and delight and really, he couldn't be prouder of the woman she is becoming. He would quite like the mood swings to improve though. He and Blaine are both acutely aware of her cycle, and in fact Kurt has been known to schedule visits to New York when he knows she will be at her worst, and then feigning innocence when Blaine realizes.

Kurt also knows that every one of his eighteen years of marriage to Blaine has been better than the one before. He knows that the twenty three years they've known each other have been perfect. Not without their ups and downs, of course, but perfect nonetheless. And he also knows that right now, with Blaine in Chicago until tomorrow, he misses him intensely and can't stop thinking about him, even though he's supposed to be sketching designs for next year's spring/summer range.

Blaine Hummel-Anderson is fifty four, and he knows that right now, sitting at the piano in his Chicago apartment, he misses his family like crazy. He misses Libby, the way everything is either awesome, totally unfair or embarrassing, and he misses his gorgeous Kurt, who makes him instantly feel like a teenager in love again when he gives him that special smile he seems to keep just for him, the one which makes both their hearts flutter until one or other of them looks away with a smile while Libby rolls her eyes and tells them to stop whatever it is they are doing.

He knows that there's only one week until Libby returns to school - and this year she will be a sophomore which makes Blaine feel a whole range of emotions, because that was the year Kurt was in when they met. There aren't any boys on the scene for Libby yet though, that much he does know. He asks her occasionally, if anyone has caught her eye but she tells him no and changes the subject quickly, and in truth he's quite relieved. But he knows it won't be long, and just like Libby doesn't like to think about what he does with Kurt, Blaine doesn't like to think of the things she discusses with Liv, or Santana when she goes to visit her for the weekend.

Blaine also knows that while he loves Riccardo with all his heart, right now he's ready to kill him as he dodges another pen hurled at his head and wonders why he's putting himself through all this. "I tell you Blaine! Be spectacular!" Riccardo cries, tearing up the sheet music in front of him. "This is not spectacular! Now. Again please. Let me hear some passion when you play."

So Blaine brings to mind Kurt and Libby, thinking of how good it will be to get home to them tomorrow, and how amazing it will be when he can finally reveal exactly what he's been doing these last two years, and closing his eyes, he starts to play again.

* 

Libby comes skipping into the office, making Kurt smile at her exuberance then frown at the ridiculously tight- and short- shorts she is wearing as she sets a can of soda on his desk and kisses his cheek.

"Libby..."

"Legs, papa, that's all," she remarks, sitting on the second desk which always makes Kurt wince.

"Don't sit there. Sit in the chair."

"I'll sit on the couch."

"Not the couch," Kurt says, perhaps a little too quickly if Libby's face is anything to go by.

"You know what? I'll stand," she informs him. "I only came to tell you I'm going out."
"Out where?"

"To Jamie's."

"Okay. Be back by six, grandma and grandpa are coming to dinner," Kurt says, turning back to his work.

"I will," Libby says brightly, kissing his cheek. "Love you."

"Love you too."

Stopping in the doorway, Libby turns back to look at him, smiling at the way he chews the end of his pencil like a little kid. "Oh, papa?"

"Hmm?"

"Could I please put some highlights in my hair?"

Kurt looks up, studying the way her hair swings in its ponytail. "I don't see why not. But keep it classy though, yeah?"

"I will papa," she smiles. "Thank you."

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"So he didn't mind?" Jamie asks as Libby brushes her hair in his bedroom mirror and starts dividing it into sections. "You're so lucky to have cool parents."

"Hey, your mom is super cool," Libby smiles. "There's not many parents who'd let their kids dress like you do. What did she say about the hair thing?"

"I didn't tell her," Jamie shrugs. "She's at work all day."

"Still, didn't you ask her before?"

"Nope. She'll see it when she gets back, and she'll roll her eyes and put it down to a Jamie thing."

He smiles when Libby laughs, and rummages in his drawer before holding out an old t-shirt to her. "Here, put this on. I don't want you getting hair dye on your clothes."

"Thanks." She pulls her own t-shirt over her head and reaches out for his, making him cry out and close his eyes.

"Libby! Oh god! Here," throwing the top in her direction, he turns his back, staring at a spot on the wall and trying to compose himself.

"It's just me, Jamie," Libby says as offhandedly as she can, though she feels suddenly embarrassed. "I've spent all summer by the pool with you. What's the difference in a bra and a bikini?"

"N-nothing it's just..."

"It shouldn't make any difference to you, anyway."

"No, it doesn't it's just...I like to be respectful," he manages. "C'mon," he says, turning around and taking her hand. "Let's get this done."
They chat as light heartedly as they always do while Jamie gets everything ready, then Libby hops up onto the counter while Jamie sits on a stool between her legs and she gets to work. "I like your hair short," she muses as she rubs the color in, pulling his hair into little wet spikes.

"Yeah, me too, although it was hardly long before."

"I know," she says, pausing for him to turn to face her. "But it was...floppy. Shaggy, I guess. It's a lot lighter from the sun too. Almost blond. It opens your face up a lot more. Yeah," she says, giving a shy smile. "I like it."

"Thanks. I like your hair," he says, his voice suddenly dropping into a low whisper as he reaches out and runs a strand through his fingers. "I always have."

It's as if all the air has disappeared in the room as Libby stares at him and tries to work out exactly what the hell is going on here, and Jamie stares back, his gaze flicking between her eyes and her lips, but this can't be, Libby thinks. He can't be because...

"Do you ever wish you had a mom?" Jamie suddenly blurts, and the moment is broken as Libby clears her throat and picks up some more dye.

"Yeah...and no," she admits. "But...I don't know. I wouldn't ever tell my dad's that."

"Why?"

"Well...I wouldn't want to hurt their feelings, for one. I know that for daddy, particularly, whenever things get tough his biggest worry is always over whether they were fair to have me. He's said before about his selfish wish to have a child. I mean, I don't think it's with him all the time or anything, but it's his go to thing when things go wrong. Like with the bullying and stuff. He thought that was their fault for having me."

"That's sad," Jamie says quietly.

"Yeah. So I just wouldn't ever want to upset them over something that really doesn't matter anyway. I mean, I wouldn't swap them for the world. And those moments when I do wish I had a mom? They're like...fleeting. I have like, so many people. I talk to Santana about boys, and Kathy is like a mom to me about so much stuff. Aunt Rachel's easy to talk to as well, and obviously she has two dads so she knows where I'm coming from. It's just....there's been moments when I've wished one of them was female," she says with a laugh.

"Like when?"

"Like when we went bra shopping, and I couldn't get one on," she says, turning pink. "And they had to help me. I guess that was the biggest thing, cause that's when Karen saw me. Weirdly enough, when I got my period for the first time it wasn't as awkward. Don't get me wrong, they've been amazing over this whole raising a girl thing, and there is so much I can talk to them about...but I'd never discuss boys with them."

"Why not?"

"It's just..." Libby sighs, twisting his head this way and that to check she's done before they switch positions. "Like...okay," she says as Jamie starts to comb dye through her hair. "You know the stereotypical over protective dad and all that? Well I have that, but double. If I was to tell them I liked a boy, it wouldn't be 'Is he cute?' or 'What color hair does he have?' It'd be all 'How old is he? Does he respect women? What are his family like? Where does he want to go to college? Invite him for dinner so we can interrogate him but it doesn't matter anyway because no one will ever be
good enough to date our daughter."

"Wow."

"Yeah, pretty much," Libby laughs.

"And do you?"

"Do I what?"

"Like anyone?"

A pause, where Libby looks down at her hands which seem to twist and turn of her own free will in her lap as Jamie fiddles with her hair and then... "Yeah."

"Who?"

"I'm not telling," she says primly, straightening her back.

"Ah go on," he says, smiling down at her as she turns on the stool. "We tell each other everything."

"I can't tell you this."

"I'll bet Liv knows."

"Of course Liv knows," Libby snaps. "She knows everything. It's different."

"I'd never laugh at you," he tries, but Libby is having none of it.

"I know that, but I just don't want to talk about it. Anyway, why did you ask me if I wished I had a mom? Do you wish you had a dad?"

"Same as you really," he shrugs. "I wouldn't swap my mom for the world, but sometimes I wish I had...not a dad, necessarily but...I don't know. Someone. Someone other than my uncle who drops in and out. I love him so much, and he's great, really, but..."

"It's like Santana," Libby says, tipping her head back to look at him. "They're good in the place of what's not there, but they're not a complete filler."

"I guess."

"But then I wouldn't ever actually want anything to change. I mean, imagine if daddy announced some woman was moving in to be my mom? Even if it was Santana. Nu-uh, no way. Not ever. I'd freak. I love my daddies more than anything."

"Yeah," Jamie nods, pleased that she gets him. "Exactly. I don't actually want my mom to meet anyone and say, 'Jamie, this is Rob, he's your new dad' or whatever, it's just...I might have thrown the whole 'I wish I had a dad' thing at her last night in an argument."

Libby sighs, turning to look at him once more. "Oh Jamie, no."

"I know. I feel really bad. I just..."

"Why? I mean, your mom..."

"It's like you said. I tell her so much...too much, possibly. She often asks me to be quiet," he
laughs. "But last night it started as a bit of a joke, you know? And then we got onto the subject of whether I had a crush on anyone and I just...I got embarrassed."

"You?" Libby laughs in surprise. "You got embarrassed?"

"Yeah. And she wouldn't let it go. She was asking me all these questions and in the end I told her to mind her own business, and that I wish I had a dad to talk about this stuff with."

"I hope you apologized."

"I did, yeah, but I know I hurt her. I apologized again this morning, but I think she cried last night, and that's the worst feeling in the world, to know I made her cry."

"You know what though?" Libby says brightly. "You probably don't wish you had a dad. Cause what if you had a dad who wouldn't let you dress how you choose? The skirts, the my little pony sweaters, the floral...your mom takes it all in her stride."

Jamie sighs, picking up the dye to finish her hair. "I know. You're right. So do you, comes to that. I mean, Liv and Melody too.....but...uh..."

"Because you're just Jamie to me."

"Just Jamie," he mutters under his breath. "Great."

"No, I didn't mean it like that! You know...this crush you have? You can always talk to me."

"Uhh...thanks, Lib, but no, I can't."

"Sure you can," Libby says brightly, ignoring the upset inside. "I have two gay dads, remember? I know where you're coming from."

"It's not like that," Jamie frowns. "I can't."

"Dylan then, talk to him."

"Nooo," Jamie laughs. "Have you seen him? He's all...Cory'ed up."

"Ew. Cory is gross."

"Yeah, well..." Jamie mutters again before stretching his arms above his head. "Okay. You're done."

"Great," Libby laughs, looking in the mirror at her hair which hangs in damp clumps. "I've never looked better."

"Oh come on," Jamie says as he hops from the counter and gestures to his own hair. "Besides. You always look beautiful, Libby, you must know that."

"Do I?" she asks quietly, her eyes going wide as Jamie walks slowly toward her.

Resting his hands either side of her on the counter, Jamie leans in close, enough to let his forehead rest against hers briefly as he closes his eyes. "Always," he whispers. "You always look beautiful to me."

And suddenly Libby is terrified, because while kissing Jamie might be all she ever dreams of, she's more than certain that for him, it'd be a huge mistake, and she doesn't want to be the one he makes
that mistake with; so she pushes gently at his chest until he opens his eyes, blushing furiously and backing away with a mumbled apology before he runs from the bathroom, saying something about fixing lunch while they wait for the dye to take hold.

"The fuck was that?" Libby mutters to herself, fumbling in her shorts for her phone where she fires off a quick text to Liv instructing her to call her ASAP.

The atmosphere lightens during lunch and stays that way for the rest of the afternoon, and Libby wonders why such things as unrequited crushes, and sexuality and just...life, has to get in the way and complicate everything. Because alone with Jamie, it's easy to forget about his crush on Dylan, and that they'll be back at school in a week where Libby is always frightened to say too much about Jamie in case someone picks up on her feelings. It's just the two of them, laughing at their matching hairstyles, cooing over puppies and kittens on the internet and giving each other pedicures before Libby realizes the time and reluctantly heads home.

"Hey papa."

Kurt glances up from his work briefly, offering a distracted smile before looking down again and altering a line by just a millimeter until he's happy. "Hey baby girl. Have fun?"

"Actually I did," she says, smiling as she thinks about it. "Yeah."

"Good, good. Hey, when you go in the house can you turn the oven on? I'm nearly done here and then I'll be in."

"Okay."

"Oh, and also, can you aahhhh!" he screeches, looking up and staring at her in horror. "Your hair!"

"You like it?" Libby asks, shaking her hair for emphasis.

"It's...what...what....what the fuck happened?"

"Papa!"

"It's like...a rainbow," Kurt stutters, his voice several octaves higher than normal as he stares at her hair with its streaks of red, orange, yellow, green and blue.

"I know," Libby grins happily. "Good, huh? Jamie matches."

"Not good, no! Oh my Christ, Blaine's gonna kill me," he mutters, distraught. "He will actually kill me. It'll be divorce for sure."

"What are you talking about?" Libby laughs. "It's just a bit of color. You said I could."

"It is NOT a bit of color," Kurt cries. "It's...five," he says, counting quickly. "And you said highlights, not that!"

"Well whatever, I like it."

"You won't get to like it for long," Kurt snaps, "You and I will be at the hairdressers first thing tomorrow to get it dyed back to its original color."

"We will not!" Libby pouts, setting her hands on her hips in defiance.

"Oh we will! School goes back in a week. There's no way you'll be allowed back with hair like
"Yes I will, I'll tie it back."

"You won't! And people will still see it anyway! What will your teachers think? The principal?" Kurt shouts, his eyes wide with disbelief at her attitude.

"What does it matter?"

"They'll thing we've....we've...gay pride branded our daughter!" he cries, flustered. "You'll dye it back, young lady."

"I will not! And so what if it's gay pride colors? I'm proud of you and daddy."

"Oh don't you dare!" Kurt says, laughing in disbelief. "Don't even think of turning some petty teenage act of rebellion into a noble statement."

"But..."

"Just...go to your room," Kurt snaps. "I just...I can't believe you've done this, Libby. And then to try and make out like I gave you permission...that's just low. Does Ellen know what you've been up to?"

"She was working."

"Oh, so I can expect a call from her later then. Great."

"Papa, I'm..."

"No!" he yells. "Room, Libby, now."

"I'm fifteen years old!" Libby screeches, losing her temper entirely. "You can't tell me what to do!"

"Yes I can!" Kurt yells back. "News flash, Libby, being fifteen doesn't make you an adult. You're still a child, and you still have parents who dictate to you."

"Oh yeah?" she asks cockily. "We'll just ask grandpa about that then."

"What are you talking about?"

"I'm talking about how when you were my age you were doing exactly what you wanted, with daddy, who was twice your age!"

"That is very different," Kurt gasps, stunned at her audacity. "For a start, grandpa had no clue what I was up to..."

"Yeah? Well maybe you don't know all I'm up to either, papa. Have you ever thought of that?" Spinning on her heel, she storms from the office, across the yard and into the house, purposely not turning the oven on as Kurt had asked. Flouncing upstairs, she picks up her phone to call Liv and moan, but a text from Jamie is waiting.

So my mom wasn't thrilled about the hair. Something about asking for trouble and looking like a walking gay pride flag. Anyway, if you don't hear from me it's because she's grounded me and taken my phone. Whatever. I want you to know that I had a really great time today, and I meant what I said, Lib. You're beautiful. X
Kurt holds his head in his hands for the longest time, blinking back tears as he tries to comprehend all that was said. In the end, deciding he'll hold off on calling Blaine until later, he calls the one person he thinks might be able to help.

"It's me," he sighs, when Santana answers the phone.

"Well don't you sound thrilled?"

"I hate having to do this, but I need your help."

"Sure, is everything okay?"

"Not really, and I need to know...does Lib ever talk to you about boys?"

"She does, yeah. Why?"

"Cause...cause I'm scared," he admits, giving in and letting himself cry. "I'm scared she's growing up too quickly and I don't know what to do."

By the time Kurt has divulged everything, he has a small pile of tissues sitting next to him, and he knows it's likely his dad and Carole have already arrived but he really can't bring himself to cut this conversation short, so he listens as Santana clears her throat and sighs.

"Well, I don't think I'll be betraying her confidence if I tell you that there aren't any guys in Libby's life right now, not that she's told me about, anyway. She definitely hasn't been kissed, anyway. Or anything else for that matter."

"Oh thank god," Kurt rushes out. "I mean, I'm not expecting her to announce it or anything, it's just when she said I don't know what she's up to I just...thought..."

"Kurt, I think she just said that for effect. Libby is a smart girl. She knows what's what. She knows she can use this against you. You want my advice? Ignore it. Play it cool. Tell her that yes, you did keep things from your dad but so what? It wasn't a smart thing to do because he flipped when he found out and you and Blaine were confined to months of dating with him not even being allowed in the house. If she tries again with the whole 'you met daddy at fifteen' thing then walk away and tell her you're not prepared to listen. You're the parent here, Kurt."

"I know," he sniffs. "I do know that it's just...she threw me, that's all."

"I understand that," Santana says kindly. "And as for the hair...yeah. That's just... Well that's your teenage act of defiance right there. You'll need to get that fixed for school, but you could let her keep it for the rest of the week, couldn't you?"

"What? No!"

"Meh. Whatever. Just don't turn into one of those boring dads, Kurt. You've always has sass and spunk. Don't be annoyed when your kid does too."

When Kurt walks back in the house he's surprised to smell food cooking, and he's even more surprised to find his dad standing there, supervising the steaks while a salad sits in a bowl on the table which is neatly laid for four. "You're cooking dinner?" he asks with a laugh as Burt holds his arms out.

"It would appear so," he laughs. "Now c'mere and let your old man give you a hug."
"She's spoken to you then."

"She has, and Carole's with her now, which is why I figured I'd cook."

Kurt sinks into his arms, grateful for the strength and reassurance that only a hug from a dad can bring. He doesn't even move when Burt has to flip the steaks either, making them both laugh as he attempts to reach around his clingy son. "'Y'know, Libby is just testing you. You did it to me so many times I almost lost count. The clothes you wore, the people you dated..."

"People," Kurt scoffs. "You mean Blaine."

"I do. But imagine how I felt, Kurt. You can see now, can't you, why I was so wary?"

"Yeah I can. But for her to throw it at me like that..."

"Because of course, you never threw anything at me in an argument at all. Never," Burt says sarcastically. "Never once told me you wished your mom was still here, or that you could do what you liked since you were gay and therefore I didn't understand. No."

"Point taken."

"She's a teenager," Burt reminds him, setting the pan to one side and gathering plates. "She's doing exactly what teenagers do."

"Ugh. I know."

"When's Blaine back?"

"Tomorrow. I have to call him later to forewarn about the hair."

"Well while you got him on the end of the line, please find out what it is he's doing in Chicago. It's been two years, Kurt, and I can't stand it anymore!"

Kurt laughs, breaking away from his dad to steal some salad. "You and me both, but Blaine will tell when he's ready."

"It doesn't annoy you? The old Kurt I know would be going insane."

Kurt shrugs as he chews. "Dunno. He only goes every six weeks or so, and I do ask him each time, but he just smiles and says he'll tell me eventually. Whatever it is, it's a good thing, and he's happy. So...no. It doesn't bother me."

"Well it bothers me," Burt says decisively. "This old man doesn't like secrets. So tell him, when he calls please, that I need to know."

"I will do," Kurt laughs.

"Good. Now go talk to your daughter while these steaks rest a while."

Libby is sitting in the living room, with Carole holding one of her hands while the other holds a tissue. As ever, Kurt's heart lurches to realize she's been crying and he hovers in the doorway until Carole notices him there and kisses the top of Libby's head before leaving them to it. Sitting next to her tentatively, Kurt tries to think what to say but Libby beats him to it, flinging her arms around his neck and crying onto his shoulder.

"I'm sorry," she whispers. "I'm so sorry for what I said, and the hair, and the...everything. I'm sorry.
And I'm not up to anything, I swear."

"I know, it's okay," Kurt says as he hugs her tight. "I won't say it didn't hurt. But you know something? I met daddy one month before I turned sixteen. I didn't tell grandpa because I knew how he would react. And, when he did eventually agree daddy could date me, we pushed the boundaries set and grandpa punished me for it. Know why? Because however adult I thought I was...and I really did...I was still a kid. A grown up teenaged one, but a kid nonetheless. At the time, I saw it as my dad being strict and trying to spoil my fun but now, sitting in this position, I can see it was actually his way of loving me. Because that's what parents do, you see. They love. They don't go out of their way to be unkind or to ruin your lives, they just try to protect you and keep you safe.

Now you can keep the hair until next Saturday when you and I will go the the salon together and get it back to its original color...and maybe you can have a few streaks put in if you really want. But not a whole freaking rainbow," he adds with a smile.

"Thank you papa," Libby whispers.

"And you can smile," he says with a dig in her ribs. "It's okay."

"Grandpa cooked dinner, didn't he?"

"Well yes, but that's no reason not to smile," he says, tugging her to her feet. "C'mon, let's go eat."
"Come on! For the love of god, Blaine! This has been going on long enough, now spill!"

Blaine laughs down the phone, his breath puffing out in clouds of white as he trudges through the snow. "Burt, I told you, I'll tell Kurt and Libby first, then you."

"You'd better do, cause if I find out Wes knew of this first..."

"Don't worry about it," he chuckles. "I promised you, and I won't go back on my word."

*

"All I want for Christmas is my daddy," Libby whines pitifully to Kurt, who rolls his eyes.

"Not again. We've been through this," he says as he tugs her toward yet another store. "He's home tomorrow."

"But this has been going on ages now, and I've really had enough. When it was just occasional I could understand but this past month he's flown to Chicago every week."

"Believe me, baby girl, I share your frustrations," Kurt says distractedly. "Now tell me which cologne daddy likes best."

"That one. I thought daddy was supposed to be retired."

"He is," Kurt sighs, turning to face her. "And honestly? I'm days away from losing it with him altogether. Everytime he returns he's off again, or that's what it feels like, anyway. But he's daddy, and he's our everything. Whatever this thing is that he's doing, it clearly means a lot to him."

"More than us, it seems like."

"Never more than you."

Kurt and Libby both whirl about in surprise to find Blaine standing behind them, bundled up in a thick woollen coat and scarf, his arms outstretched and a huge grin on his face. "I love you both."

"Daddy!"

"Hey Libby," he laughs, squeezing her tight before extending an arm for Kurt to come in too. "My two favorite people shopping for my favorite cologne, must be Christmas," he grins, kissing Kurt lovingly on the lips while Libby tries to escape from his embrace.

"It was supposed to be a surprise," Kurt grumbles.

"It's never a surprise," Blaine teases. "I get it every year. But talking of surprises..."

"Yes?" Kurt asks hopefully.

"We're flying to Chicago on the twenty sixth," Blaine announces, "You'll find out then."

*

It's a surprise on Christmas Day, when everyone opens an envelope from Blaine with plane tickets
to Chicago. It's a surprise when Jamie calls Libby in complete confusion and says that he and his mom have also been given air tickets, as has Melody's family, all with no instructions other than they're spending New Years in Chicago and formal dress is required.

It's a surprise when Kurt and Libby step into the Chicago apartment and find nothing out of the ordinary, especially as Kurt thought Blaine had maybe been planning the world's most elaborate party, and it's a surprise on New Year's Eve, when they're woken bright and early and dragged into the living room where Blaine has laid out breakfast for them.

"So...I said you two would be the first to know..."

"Finally," Kurt says, rolling his eyes.

"Over the years, I've been writing a lot, as you know. So, I had all these bits of music, some were complete, others just a few bars, but all needed work. When I feel stuff, I write it. When dad died, when Libby was born, when I've just been so overwhelmed with my love for you two that I don't know what else to do. When I see a nine year old Libby go skipping down the drive to the bus stop, the sunlight shining on her hair, when I see you, Kurt sniffing a flower I've given you and you look up and my heart skips...all of those things drive me to the piano. You two are what drives me. And so I write, or I have written.

These last two years, Riccardo and I have worked together to build two pieces of music, both of which will premiere tonight. Concerto for Kurt," he says with a shy grin as he hands over a flyer. "And Libby's Dreams."

"Huh?" Libby asks, coming to life. "You....you wrote for me?"

"Yes. I've composed all the piano stuff, and Riccardo has worked with me to add all the orchestral movements. So...the reason you're here, the reason everyone is here but especially you two, is because I'd like you to be my guests of honor tonight at the Chicago Symphony Hall as I play for one last and very special concert."

"Papa is really crying," Libby points out as she swipes at her own tears. "Damn. I'd marry you if you weren't already my daddy. I hate you," she sobs as she falls into Blaine's arms. "Thank you."

"Well naturally I hate you too," Blaine jokes, squeezing her tight. "Which is why you'll hear all my love and devotion to you played out on that stage tonight. Kurt? Kurt, are you okay?"

"I hate you as well," he says, swiping at a never ending stream of tears. "I really hate you so much."

"Same," Blaine laughs, tugging Kurt off the couch and down into his lap where he cups his face and kisses him lovingly.

"Can I call Jamie?" Libby booms, trying to get them apart. "Can I? Who cares? No one. I'm calling Jamie."

She flounces off to her bedroom and Blaine takes the chance to lift Kurt back onto the couch, settling his weight over him and kissing along his jaw. "I knew this would guarantee sex," he murmurs.

"This guarantees you pretty much whatever you want," Kurt gasps as he feels himself getting hard under Blaine's touch.

"Thank you for being so patient with me," Blaine continues, quickly pulling Kurt's pajama top off and throwing it to one side. "You've never pushed, never asked and...mmm your skin tastes so
"Because I knew whatever it was...right there...fuck...was important to you," Kurt says, breaking off with a moan at the feel of Blaine's tongue flicking over his nipples. "Fuck. Can we risk it? Where did Libby go?"

"I don't know. Shower, I think," Blaine mutters, kissing along Kurt's side as he moves lower. "Christ I want you so bad... Bedroom or here?"

"I wanna say here but...we...oh Jesus Blaine, your mouth! We should..."

"I forgot my food," Libby announces suddenly.

"Move," Kurt finishes weakly.

"You two are disgusting. I have to sit there." Libby gathers as much food and juice as she can, sighing heavily and refusing to look in their direction. "Just...no. You know what? Gross. Gross gross gross gross gross. Disgusting," she says as she marches back down the hall. "Heinous. Vile. Repulsive. Gross!"

Her bedroom door slams and Blaine looks at Kurt, laughing before he falls down on top of him and sighs, kissing just below his ear. "Well that kinda ruined the moment."


"Well...I have to be at the hall for six, and the concert starts at eight. Your concerto is around forty five minutes, then an intermission, then Libby's piece is around a half hour. After that there's a quick reception then back here for champagne and to see in the New Year."

"My concerto," Kurt grins. "I can't... I mean, why?" he asks, taking Blaine's hands as they sit together on the couch. "Don't get me wrong, naturally I deserve to have a concerto named after me but...what made you want to do this? And now?"

"Well...for years, too many years, really, I've had all these bits of music around, reminding me of you. Of our life together. I told you, you two are my everything. You have driven me, kept me going and inspired me. I would pick up this sheet of music and start to play and I'd think 'ah yes, I remember I wrote this the day Libby walked for the first time', or 'this piece came about when I was upset after we'd argued and you came and kissed me until I felt better'. I just...Wanted to put them all together, to form this little montage to say thank you to both of you. As for why now...well...you'll think this silly but... I've always missed the performing. You know I feed off the attentions of an audience, and when Riccardo and I played together all that time ago at the Lima Bean, he said then that he would consider playing a one off with me for the public sometime. So it was partly down to wanting to do it before the arthritis in his hands gets too bad, and partly wanting to get it done so I can focus on spending the next few years with you and Lib before she skips off to college. I don't want to look up suddenly and she's gone. I want to cherish the time she has left with us because I've a feeling the next two and a half years will fly by."

"I don't want to think about it," Kurt says settling into his husband's embrace. "Losing her. I can't."

"On the plus side, we won't get interrupted," Blaine points out, and Kurt can't help but laugh.

"This is true." He stops, looking up and kissing Blaine's lips lightly. "In case I forget later- or get too overwhelmed, which is most likely- thank you, I loved every second."

"You haven't heard it yet," Blaine smiles.
"I know. But I know it will be incredible, and I know I'm gonna be so proud, because I always am when it comes to you."

*

Libby is beyond excited when a town car pulls up to take her and Kurt to the Symphony hall, and when she sees everyone there to support her precious daddy, she is almost moved to tears. All the men are in tuxes, the ladies in evening gowns, and Libby herself is in a long purple dress Kurt had made for her fifteenth birthday, but having refused to go to the school dance that year she still hadn't had an opportunity to wear it. Cut on the bias and tailored to her specific measurements, Kurt had even incorporated a slit which ran to just above her knee, making Libby feel very grown up indeed as she walks into the hall on his arm.

"Don't let go," she whispers to him as she smiles and waves to Melody and her sister. "I don't trust myself in these shoes."

"As if I'm letting go anyway," Kurt whispers back. "I've never had a more beautiful date. Oh, apart from daddy."

"You've only ever had me and daddy as dates," Libby giggles.

"Good point. See? I'm fussy. I only choose the very best."

"Guests of honor," Wes says with a smile as he greets them both. "He's a good one, isn't he?"

"Yeah. He's...yeah," Kurt grins, unable to say more, but Wes knows. Libby and Liv are happy in the corner with Melody and Skye, all gushing over each other's dresses, and Santana joins them, kissing and hugging Libby tenderly and making Kurt smile at the special relationship they share.

"You look so beautiful," Santana says, fussing over Libby's hair. "Obviously that's because I carried you."

"Of course."

"Libby always looks beautiful."

Santana turns to find Jamie and Dylan standing there, and if it wasn't for the two high spots of color on Jamie's cheeks she wouldn't have known who had spoken. His voice sounds so much deeper than it had the last time she had seen him. In fact, even though that was only six months ago, Jamie has grown considerably taller and broader. Santana notices an earring and nose stud, and that his light brown hair is pulled into spikes with red tips, but that's not the main thing she focuses on. That would be the way he looks at Libby, somehow making it seem like he is still completely engaged with the entire group, but the whole time, his focus is her.

"Well," Santana says, her eyebrows raised. "Don't you scrub up well?"

"Thanks," he says shyly as he tugs on his tux jacket. "It's uh...I had to borrow it from my Uncle," he admits. "Hence the uh..." Opening the front of the jacket he gives a brief flash of a very bright pink garish lining and laughs.

"You wouldn't look like you if there wasn't a splash of color...and sparkle," Libby says as she notices the sparkly shoes. "Don't ever conform, Jamie. It wouldn't suit you."

"I uh...thanks," he says, then stands awkwardly, not entirely sure what to say until Santana comes to life.
"Well I'll leave you to it. Enjoy your night, Libby," she says, kissing her cheek before heading over to where Finn and Rachel stand with their son who looks less than impressed with the whole event.

"Just..." Jamie starts, at the same time as Libby smiles brightly and attempts to hide the awkwardness.

"Did you have a good Christmas?"

"Oh, uh, yeah. Thanks," he nods.

"Sorry, you were saying?"

"Oh. Uh...just...you..."

"Can we all sit together?" Melody asks Libby.

"I have to sit up front with papa," she says sadly, glancing at Jamie. "But I'll find you all in the intermission. And you're coming to my apartment after, right? To see in the new year?"

"Yes!" Liv cries. "I couldn't not! I'm so excited. Will there be any cute boys?"

"My cousins?" Libby tries, making them all laugh.

"It's a whole other world that you live in," Jamie says in awe. "Fancy ball gowns, an apartment in the city, more money than you could ever spend..."

"I'm still me," Libby says, a little hurt. "I don't...we don't...try to live like rich people."

"No, I didn't mean that, oh gosh, I'm sorry. Not at all." Jamie is panicked he's upset her, but then she smiles and looks at the floor.

"That's okay. I just...I'm a little sensitive when it comes to my dads."

"I've known you since you were three months old. I'd never..."

"No, I know. Anyway. What did you..."

"C'mere." Tugging gently on her elbow they step away from the group, who are so busy talking they don't notice, and Jamie leans down to whisper in her ear. "I was only going to say wow. Because that's about all I can say. You look incredible."

"Thank you," Libby says, smiling shyly.

"Can I escort you to your seat?" he grins, offering his arm.

"Why thank you, Mr. Foster," Libby says with a giggle.

"Lib! Come on, honey! We need to go take our seats."

"Fucking parents," Libby grumbles as Kurt calls to her and Jamie laughs, trying not to look too forlorn as she takes Kurt's arm instead.

"Come on, sunshine," Santana announces, appearing at his side. "You can escort me instead."

* 

In all their years together, there have been many times that Kurt has been proud of Blaine. Tonight
though, has to top them all. After- long after- when all the fuss had died down and they were back to humdrum domesticity back in Ohio, Kurt and Blaine would sit together one evening, listening to a recording of the concert, and Blaine would explain exactly where each bit of music had come from, the event that inspired it, and how he was feeling at the time.

And Kurt would guess each one correctly.

Because he knows, as Blaine closes his eyes and the music changes from a light melody to mournful, slow and sad, that they've moved from when they found out they were expecting a baby to when Sara died. He knows when it gets angry and emotional that he's raging about the way they've been treated as parents at times. He can hear from the tinkling high notes and the deeper rumbling of the bass instruments that it's them laughing together, and when Blaine plays beautiful, glowing and poetic music over a small group of strings, he knows it's their lovemaking being detailed on that very stage and he smiles as Blaine glances up, knowing he can't see him but sending a message all the same. "This is my favorite part of us."

The evening ends with the most beautiful piano duet between Riccardo and Blaine, both looking across and smiling at each other, happy to be playing together for the girl they adore, who sits proudly in the audience holding tight to Kurt's hand and wiping away a tear. She is first to her feet when the concert ends, cheering wildly as Kurt joins her. They know Blaine can see them because his face changes from a fixed, polite smile to an all out joyful and loving grin, and then Riccardo is giving them both the thumbs up and blowing wild kisses in their direction, and to his wife who stands with their grandson in her arms.

They enter the reception to rapturous applause, but Blaine only has eyes for Kurt and Libby, bypassing the long line of dignitaries waiting for him with a polite excuse and promises of being free to talk in a moment, he almost crushes Libby in his arms but she doesn't care, squeezing him back just as hard and kissing him over and over before making room for Kurt, who cups his face lovingly and tenderly kisses his lips.

"I love you," he murmurs softly, so only Blaine and Libby can hear. "I love you so very much."

"You were awesome, daddy," Libby says as she snuffles and buries her head into his neck. "Sometimes in life, things happen and I think 'yeah, I'll remember this when I'm older' and this...this is the thing I think I'll remember most of all, that you did this for us, wrote all that beautiful music for us."

"For you, Lib," Blaine says gently. "And because of you. I love you both, and I'm so happy you were both here tonight."

"Well we wouldn't have missed it," Kurt says with a nudge. "Now go, mingle."

"Are you sure?"

"Of course. We'll wait here for you. Oh, but please let my dad hug you before you disappear, he's been waiting all night."

The friends and family gradually depart, heading on back to party in the Hummel-Anderson apartment and wait for their return while Blaine does the rounds with Riccardo, who is only too happy to boom about his young protégée who now isn't so young and also to proudly introduce Libby and Kurt, citing them as the inspiration for the work to anyone who will listen. In the end Kurt politely excuses himself, taking time out alone with a glass of champagne to watch as Blaine chats animatedly with a bunch of guys that Kurt can only assume are from the classical world. Libby stands with Riccardo and Lucia, no doubt making plans to see them in Italy in the summer he
thinks to himself with a smile, before he lets his attentions wander back to Blaine.

"He always did know how to pull focus."

Kurt whirls around, recognizing the voice immediately. "Edward Roberts," Kurt says with forced brightness. "To what do we owe this pleasure?"

"I heard he was playing again, and I couldn't resist."

"I thought you lived in Europe now?"

"I did," he nods. Standing side by side with Kurt, neither looks at the other but rather both look across at Blaine, watching him as he talks. "I do," Edward carries on. "Germany right now. Thanks to Riccardo."

"Excuse me?"

"There's not much he wouldn't do for you, is there?" Edward asks, rocking on the balls of his feet. "Or Blaine, rather. It's funny, all these years...whenever my contract is due to expire, suddenly another job offer presents itself to me. Always in Europe, always ridiculously well paid and always mine if I want it. I never even have to interview. The strange thing is...they all seem to know Riccardo."

"I don't know what you're talking about," Kurt says in confusion, looking over to where Riccardo now stands with his back to them, gesturing wildly to Libby and Lucia, who laugh at something he says.

"Okay, if you want to play that game," Edward says with a small smile before a long silence ensues. "I didn't think you two would last," he admits as he goes back to watching Blaine.

"Really? That proves how little you actually knew him," Kurt says smugly. "Because I never had my doubts."

Libby walks over to Blaine then, leaning her head on his shoulder and smiling up at him. He's proud, Kurt notes as he slips an arm around her waist and introduces her to the group. So damn proud of his family it could make Kurt cry right there and then if it weren't for this idiotic man standing next to him.

"Is that your daughter?"

"Yes."

"She's all grown up. Beautiful."

"Thank you."

"Is he happy?"

"He is," Kurt nods. "We all are. Ridiculously so. I think it's fair to say we fall deeper in love with one another every day, and Libby completes us."

"I can see that," Edward says after a while. "It was good to watch him play again," he says, patting Kurt's shoulder. "I wish you all every happiness for the future."

From across the room, Blaine catches Kurt's eye, raising one eyebrow and pointing to the door through which Edward has just left. Kurt nods, then shrugs and finally smiles, and with a huge,
relieved slump of his shoulders, Blaine smiles back too.

The party is in full swing by the time they arrive home with Riccardo and Lucia. Libby finds her friends immediately, Lucia heads off to where Taylor and Jules are and Blaine kisses Kurt's cheek before going to find Wes.

"Champagne!" Riccardo declares, and Kurt follows him to the kitchen.

"Riccardo?"

"Yes, boy husband?"

"Can I just ask you something?"

"But of course," he grins, shoving two glasses into Kurt's hands before pulling a bottle from the fridge.

"Edward Roberts was there tonight."

"He talk to you?" Riccardo says, stopping dead. "I told him..."

"It was fine," Kurt shrugs. "He didn't go near Blaine or Libby. He um...he seems to think you might have something to do with keeping him in Europe all these years."

Riccardo stiffens, his jaw hardening momentarily before he fires the champagne cork across the room, and not bothering to retrieve it, pours them both a glass. "I know nothing," he says eventually.

"Oh, I think you do," Kurt says lightly, assuming Riccardo will cave and admit all but he doesn't. Setting the bottle down, he breathes in sharply through his nose before looking Kurt square in the eye.

"Along with my wife and son, Blaine and his family are my everything. I need to keep you and Liberty safe, because Blaine couldn't live without you. I love you all, and it is a man's job to protect those he love. Now, do you have any slim jims? I'm hungry."

Kurt rummages in the cupboard in silence, knowing exactly where Blaine always hides his stash of the snack which Kurt finds disgusting. "Here," he says, unable to resist hugging Riccardo tightly. "And thank you."

*

Jamie Foster feels like he might be going steadily insane. If he is forced to stand across from Libby and watch her laugh much more...the way her whole face lights up and her blue eyes sparkle...and if he has to suddenly avert his gaze when she bends down reach the snacks on the coffee table and inadvertently flashes her cleavage in his direction one more time, he might very well explode. In fact, if he doesn't act on this soon, he will either cry, fall to her feet and admit all, or loudly proclaim his undying love in front of the whole party, and none of those options are really viable, so even though she's mid sentence in a conversation with Dylan, Jamie walks across, takes her arm and steers her toward the large glass balcony doors.

"Libby, I..."

"Hey, you wanna know something?" Libby asks animatedly. "Out there?" she says, pointing to the balcony. "Is where daddy proposed."
"Cute. Okay. So,"

"But!" she carries on, oblivious to his anguish. "He had been planning it for ages, but papa beat him to it. He proposed four days earlier, on navy pier! But daddy proposed anyway, because he wanted to give papa the ring, and to like...declare his love. Isn't that sweet?"

"The sweetest," Jamie says through gritted teeth. "Lib, I was wondering, do you have any plans for the weekend?"

"Other than lying in bed, lamenting the fact that we're back in Ohio and school starts on Monday?" she jokes. "Nope. Why?"

"I was wondering...um...if you...if you'd like to go to the movies, maybe?"

"Oh, sure!" Libby grins. "That sounds good."

"Really?" Jamie's whole face lights up at the thought. "Oh thank fuck for that. You can pick the movie, I don't mind. We can see anything," he declares. "Whatever you want."

"Excellent!" Libby laughs, clapping her hands.

"What is?" Liv asks, suddenly appearing at their side.

"Jamie says we can pick the movie on Saturday," Libby tells her as Jamie closes his eyes and lets his head thump back against the glass door. "So I'm thinking chick flick!"

"Oh yes," Melody chimes in. "There's a new one with...what's her name? The girl from that Marvel thing we saw? We can see that. Dylan? Chick flick on Saturday, okay?"

"What? No! Dude!" he says with a friendly punch to Jamie's arm. "What were you thinking, letting the girls decide?"

"Libby sweetie?" Santana suddenly asks, stepping between them all. "Can I talk to you?"

"Sure."

She takes Libby down the hall to her bedroom, closing the door behind them and gesturing for Libby to sit on the bed where she joins her. "Libby, honey, please put that poor boy out of his misery. I can't stand it anymore."

"Huh?"

"Jamie," Santana explains. "He's desperately trying to ask you out, and you won't let him."

"What are you...? No, Santana, you've got this all wrong. Jamie's gay."

"Uh...no, he's not."

"He is," Libby insists. "He has a crush on Dylan."

"Sweetie, I don't know what Jamie is, but one thing he most definitely is not, is gay."

"He is."

"I knew this would happen," Santana laments, pinching the bridge of her nose. "Living with them. Not everyone is gay, my darling girl. I mean, in your life, to be fair, most people are. But there are
some who aren't. He might like guys too, but Libby, he adores you, can't you see that?"

"Oh, only as a friend," Libby says sadly. "I mean..."

"You like him, don't you?"

"I've liked him since I was twelve," she finally admits, her eyes filling with tears. "He's just...gosh, he's everything. I can't... I look at other guys and I just...none of them match up to him. Liv and Melody keep saying I'll get over it, and I hope I do because he's completely unobtainable but in the meantime, I've had guys ask me out at school and I just say no, because I have like...zero interest in dating anyone else. I want him to be my first date, my first kiss but...he wants all that from Dylan. It's fucked up," she sighs, giving in and letting her tears fall. "Just completely fucked up."

"Has he come out and told you he's gay?"

"He doesn't have to. He's always thought Dylan was cute."

"Yeah but that..."

"Look at him, Santana. I don't mean this unkindly and you know it doesn't bother me, but what straight man goes around dressed in women's clothing? You know what I got him for Christmas? A blouse. His mom got him two pairs of Levis, one pink, one lilac. He accessorizes with women's hats, scarves, jewelry. It's...it sounds terribly narrow minded to say, but that's just not how a straight guy acts."

"You're right," Santana sighs. "It does sound terribly narrow minded, and I'd have thought better of you. Your dad's have worked so hard to raise you to be accepting, and yet here you are, deciding something for someone else based on how they dress. I'm telling you, Libby, he likes you. He's completely besotted with you and he hasn't taken his eyes off you all night. Get out there, find him and kiss the hell out of him when that ball drops. He won't turn you away."

Libby returns to the party, where Liv and Melody are on her right away, demanding to know what the chat was for, so Jamie walks away to find his mom and Uncle instead, and Libby fills the girls in.

"Santana insists he likes me," she whispers into their little huddle in the kitchen.

"That's ridiculous, he's gay. Doesn't Santana realize that?" Liv asks.

"That's what I said too, but she told me I was being too judgemental, since he's never actually said, and we only think that based on the way he dresses."

"Yeah, and the fact he's said more than once that Dylan is cute," Melody reminds them. "And that he joins in with all our talk about bands, and who's hot."

"Yeah, I mean, no offense to Santana," Liv says quietly. "But she doesn't exactly have a lot of experience with guys."

"Well neither do we," Libby points out.

"What's going on?" Dylan asks, stealing Melody's cupcake and taking a bite.

"Santana thinks Jamie has a crush on Libby," Liv explains, and Dylan's whole face drops.

"Oh," he says around a mouthful of cake. "That's...um...um.... I'll be..." he trails off gesturing
vaguely with his hand. "Yeah."

"See?" Melody says as Dylan walks away. "Dylan didn't have a clue, and Jamie would have told him for sure."

"Yeah, you're right," Libby says, forcing a smile even though she feels completely deflated. "Of course he doesn't have a crush on me."

So when New Years rolls around, and Jamie positions himself next to Libby, she tries not to get her hopes up. When the ball drops and everyone cheers, she sees her dad's locked in a passionate embrace, she sees all around her hugging and kissing, and then she sees Jamie, looking at her tenderly as he leans down and places the softest of kisses to the very corner of her mouth. "Happy New Year," he whispers. "I hope this one brings all you're hoping for."

And Libby sighs heavily, not noticing how he doesn't kiss anyone else, just hugs them all, and she wishes that the coming year really could bring him into her arms at last.

"Remember how we used to sneak off at parties?" Kurt asks, his fingers playing with the curls at the base of Blaine's neck as they slow dance together.

Blaine hums, smiling happily at the memory. "Hey, we still could?"

"I think people would notice."

"We still need to finish what was started this morning," Blaine points out. "If you're up for it."

"Up for it? I've been waiting all day," Kurt smiles, leaning in close to tease along Blaine's collar with his tongue. "I really want you."

"Then we are skipping out on this here party and locking ourselves in our room," Blaine declares, tugging him eagerly down the hall.

"Daddy? Where are you going?"

They stop in surprise at the sound of Libby's voice, and Kurt bows his head in defeat, waiting for the inevitable trail back into the living room, but Blaine pulls Kurt against him, subtly stepping closer to the bedroom.

"Oh, um, papa is having a bit of trouble with his contact lense so... I'm just gonna help him with that and then I'll be right out."

Libby glances between them both and Kurt gives a none too convincing rub of his eye. "Okay," she shrugs, walking off down the hall. "Don't be too long."

"Mine," Blaine growls, closing and locking the bedroom door. "All night long."

"You just told Libby we'd be back," Kurt protests weakly as Blaine starts to undress him.

"We won't be."

"But..."

"Kurt." He drags him into a passionate, raw and desperate kiss which sends them tumbling back down onto the bed before he breaks away to kiss down Kurt's throat and across his now bare chest. "I've been waiting. I intend to kiss every inch of you. And then I want to...mmm..take you, make you mine."
"I'm always yours," Kurt whimpers, rising off the bed when Blaine nips lightly at his side. "Yes...Blaine....oh..."

*

Wes glances up at the clock, noticing it is after one. He seeks Libby out in the kitchen where she is filling a bowl with popcorn, seemingly nowhere near as ready for the evening to end as he is. "Have you seen your dads?"

"Oh, they went to sort papa's contact lense."

"Um-huh, and when was this?"

"About...oh," she says in surprise, noticing the time. "About an hour ago."

"So they're not coming back then, are they?"

"Huh?"

"Libby, neither of them wear contact lenses," Wes points out.

"Oh yeah. That's.... Oh! No! Ew! Gross! Oh, oh, vile, oh god. No. Not...Ew. Ew. Just...gross."

*

"Take me, Blaine," Kurt whimpers as Blaine's tongue pushes deeper inside him."Please."

"Yes," Blaine whispers, positioning himself between Kurt's legs and sliding inside. "Yes, Kurt. Always you...always."

"You complete me," Kurt says with a soft smile as Blaine rests his forehead against his temple. "You just...make me."

Blaine kisses him tenderly, lovingly as he slowly drives his hips back and forth, filling Kurt up, bringing them together until neither one can hold off any longer and trembling on his arms, Blaine spills deep into Kurt who comes with a soft cry before eagerly accepting the weight of Blaine onto his chest.

"I'm not moving," Blaine mutters into Kurt's neck.

"Good, cause I don't want you to. Sleep inside me."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah. I love you, old man."

"You too, gorgeous boy. Happy new year."
February.

"Libby!"

Jamie races down the hall, skidding past a group of disgruntled cheerleaders as he trips over his own feet and stumbles to a halt in front of her locker, panting and grinning happily. "You're alone!"

"Uh...yeah?"

Libby turns back to her locker, shoving books inside and paying no attention to her usual orderly system as she fumbles around to find her math books. She hopes and prays Jamie will take the hint and walk away, but no, he seems hell bent determined to linger, as he has done a lot recently. Libby wouldn't mind so much if it actually meant something, but although he now always seems to position himself next to her at lunch or in home room, or in any and every class they have together, he's still the same as ever. Friendly, smiling and kind hearted Jamie, who is always asking her plans for after school that day or the weekend, then suggesting things they could do. In fact, Melody had called him out on it the other day, telling him it would be nice to let others decide. He had started to reply, looking unusually flustered and annoyed for him, but Dylan had dragged him away to god knows where.

That's another thing that annoys Libby, she thinks as she makes a big show of applying Chapstick in her mirror. Jamie and Dylan have gone from being just friends to being super close. She had caught them in the hall the other day, Dylan was hugging Jamie tight and smoothing a hand over the back of his hair- and when Libby had approached, Dylan had whispered something to him quickly before they broke apart. She guesses it's only a matter of time before happy-go-lucky, completely oblivious Jamie breaks her heart entirely.

"Do you like...want something?" Libby snaps eventually. "Why are you lingering?"

"You're alone."

"You've already said that."

"Where's Liv?"

"She had to stay behind in French to talk about her grade."

"Ooh. Ouch," Jamie laughs. "Melody?"

"Is in the library. I'm going to meet her."

"Okay, and Dylan's on the field so..." He takes a deep breath and gives a dazzling bright smile. "Do you have any plans for Friday night?"

"Dinner with my grandparents. It's a tradition, Jamie, which is why I'm never free on a Friday night in case you haven't noticed."

"Oh." Crestfallen, he clears his throat before trying again. "Saturday, then?"

"Yeah I'm free."

"Okay. Good. Good! Yes. Right. Um...I was thinking we could go bowling together, maybe? Then
"If you want. Yeah."

"Really?" Jamie cries, and Libby struggles to work out why he looks quite so elated. "That's great. I'll um...I'll pick you up at seven?"

"Sure," Libby shrugs, closing her locker and giving a tight smile. "Oh, and Liv is sleeping at mine Saturday so you won't need to make an extra stop for her. See you later."

And Jamie is left alone, wondering how many more times he's going to end up banging his head against the nearest available hard surface.

Things are no better two weeks later. He hasn't bothered to ask her out again- given the mood she's been in recently he hardly thinks he could handle her answer. Things come to a head when they're sitting in the cafeteria for lunch, and Dylan announces what he thinks will be a great plan. "So...the formal...let's go."

"No way," Libby snaps instantly.

"Are you out of your mind?" Liv demands. "Why would we want to do that?"

"Because it'll be fun to get dressed up and dance together, that's why," Dylan says with a pointed glance at Jamie who is studying his sandwich intently and trying not to blush.

"We don't have any dates," Melody moans.

"We can go as a group, then," Dylan pushes. "Since we seem to do everything together anyway. Come on, it'll be a good time. And if it isn't we can always blow it off and go get burgers in our ball gowns and tuxes."

"It's the week after my sweet sixteen," Libby moans. "I'm not gonna want two parties in a row."

"News flash, Libby Darling, they're not holding the formal just for you," Dylan grins as she laughs and throws a napkin at him. "Come on girls, please?"

"Okay," Liv sighs. "If it'll shut you up."

"Cool. Jamie?"

"Yeah, I'll go," he says quietly. "Uh...if Lib promises me a dance."

"Whatever," she grumbles, standing up from the table. "You'll probably spend all night with Dylan anyway. I have choir. See you later."

* 

"Libby?" It is the night before her sixteenth birthday and Libby is curled up in bed by nine, not wanting to talk to anyone. Seemingly her parents have other ideas though, as Blaine knocks timidly on the door and Kurt follows him into the room with three bowls of ice cream.

"I don't have my period so go away," she snaps, turning over.

"I know that," Kurt smiles, ignoring her and sitting on the edge of the bed. "That was last week. Daddy and I keep track."
"Gross."

"Necessary."

"Anyway," Blaine carries on, sitting next to Kurt and reaching for her hand. "We just...you know, it's your birthday tomorrow and you're so sad at the moment. We just wondered...well...why?"

"I'm not sad."

"You are, sweetie. You've been getting steadily more angry and upset with everyone and everything for a while now. Is it...are you being bullied again?"

"No," she sighs, looking up at the ceiling and blinking back tears.

"Is it a boy?" Kurt tries, and from the look on her face he can tell he's found the problem. "One specifically, or boys in general?"

"One," she whispers, letting her tears escape and roll down her cheeks. "It's always been one. One who doesn't even know I exist."

"Well he's not worth it then," Blaine says decisively as Kurt tries to silence him. "If he can't see how wonderful you are then he doesn't deserve your attentions anyway."

"Blaine, honey, be quiet. Libby? Have you liked him a long time?"

Libby sighs, pushing herself up to sit against the pillows. "Yes."

"And have you spoken with him?"

"Yes papa," she says. Deciding sitting upright is too much to bear she lies down again, her head in Blaine's lap. His hands automatically play with her hair, and she offers him a sad smile as she looks up, and Blaine decides that this is the kind of comfort he can give, he'll leave the practical advice to Kurt. "I talk with him all the time," she sighs. "He just doesn't notice me in that way. He's a good friend but...but that's all he sees me as. And I think that's all he'll ever see me as."

"Libby, sweetie, this might not be what you want to hear..." Kurt starts.

"It probably isn't."

"No, well, anyway. Just...give it time, okay? You're only just turning sixteen."

"But you'd met daddy!"

"But daddy hadn't met me when he was sixteen," Kurt points out.

"He's right," Blaine tries. "I didn't date properly until I was in college. I know you want all this stuff to happen to you, Libby, and it will, but it just takes time."

"Guys are often completely oblivious, especially at sixteen," Kurt informs her. "You know, the only reason Uncle Finn dated Rachel was because she was bossy enough to almost force it upon him. He didn't even realize she liked him until she launched herself at him."

The thought makes Libby giggle, and this time when Kurt holds out the bowl of ice cream she sits up and takes it, making room for them to join her on either side.

"I'm not very good at this stuff," Blaine admits after a time. "But maybe, for now, just be happy..."
with his friendship. He might come to realize, he might not, but right now you say that you talk with him a lot and you're friends so just...appreciate that, I guess. And try and forget that you want to kiss him until you can't think straight."

"Daddy!" Shocked, Libby stares at him open mouthed before laughing in disbelief.

"What? It's what we used to do," a nostalgic Kurt says with a smile. "We used to sit in the car making out until grandpa would yell at daddy to put me down."

"It's what you still do," Libby points out. "Only now it's me yelling at you."

"True." Kurt laughs, reaching around the back of Libby to play with Blaine's hair. "Do you remember? I used to stumble from your car feeling drunk on kisses."

"And I used to drive home with such a big grin that my face ached. Ah. Those were the days. Mind you, Libby is right, you still make me feel that way."

"Only now we suddenly have a sixteen year old daughter."

"With a car?" Libby asks hopefully.

"You can but dream," Blaine laughs, dipping his finger in her ice cream to smear it on her nose. "Are you looking forward to your party tomorrow?"

"I wasn't...but...yeah. You've made me feel better," Libby admits shyly. "So thank you."

"We have?" Kurt asks excitedly. "You feel better because of the things we said?"

"Yeah, okay, don't go getting all excited," Libby says, rolling her eyes, but it's with love and affection and Kurt knows. "And don't tell anyone, either."

"Wouldn't dream of it."

*

Libby is out of bed at the crack of dawn, rushing into wake Kurt and Blaine, but she pulls up short when she opens the door and takes a moment. It's been a long time since she's been first up, and longer still since she's actually run into their room without knocking, and she realizes that she's not really seen them sleeping like this for a long time, but it's how they always lie. Kurt sleeps on his back, his arms wrapped protectively around Blaine, head turned to bury into his hair. Blaine lies so peacefully, his head resting on Kurt's chest, arms disappearing below the covers to where Libby knows they'll be wrapped around his waist. She takes a tentative step forward and touches Blaine's shoulder, making him give a snuffle of surprise and bury himself tighter into Kurt's side.

"Mmm, love you," Kurt says, his voice raspy with sleep. He gives the softest of kisses to Blaine's hair then goes back to sleep once more. Libby finds herself suddenly completely overwhelmed with love for her daddies and their relationship, and her eyes fill with happy tears as she backs slowly from the room and decides to let them sleep some more.

She is back twenty minutes later though, not quite so forgiving this time. "Get up!" she yells. "It's my birthday!"

"Huh? Wha?" Blaine sits up, rubbing at his eyes as Kurt stretches to life.

"Oh," he smiles, "Happy Birthday baby."

"I made you breakfast," Libby says proudly.

"Hey? No, it's your birthday!" Kurt protests. "I'm sure we're supposed to do that for you, and generally make you feel like a princess."

"Well, as cheesy as it sounds, you always make me feel like a princess," Libby declares, setting the tray onto Blaine's lap and climbing on the bed. "But you do have to do what I want all day. And what I want is to have breakfast with you guys."

"Don't you want your gift?"

"Later," she says, her face momentarily clouding. "I already looked outside, so I know I didn't get a car."

"Honey, we just thought..."

"It's okay," she shrugs. "I still get other gifts, right? And papa said he'd make me my dress for the formal so."

"We do have gifts," Kurt says as he swallows his toast. "And actually, I have something for you which I've kept for a very long time. I've always wanted to pass it on, and daddy and I figured today would be a special day and the perfect time to do it." He rummages in the nightstand drawer, handing her a square jewelry box and he looks on proudly as she opens it and pulls out a charm bracelet.

"Papa, this..."

"Daddy gave it to me on my seventeenth birthday," he says through his proud tears. "And he added various charms to it over the years. I used to wear it all the time, but then I had this little girl who used to tug on it all the time and I was worried it would get damaged, so now I only really wear it on special occasions. But ever since you were born I've wanted you to have it, and...I don't know, today seemed appropriate."

Libby turns it over and over in her hands, examining all the little charms, the music notes, the heart with the diamond inset, the theatre masks, and her fingers come to rest on another heart, similar to the first but instead of courage inscribed, it simply says Libby, and a small pink diamond is inset too. "I love it," she whispers. "I really couldn't care less if there are no other gifts," she says, holding her wrist out for Kurt to fasten the bracelet around it. "I just love it. Thank you."

"You're very welcome," Kurt says, leaning over to give her a kiss. "Blaine?" he asks, looking to his husband who wipes desperately at his eyes. "Are you okay?"

"Fine," he nods. "Just..."

Kurt and Libby laugh, finishing his sentence for him. "Leaky eyes."

* 

An army of caterers arrive mid morning to set up for what promises to be a very elaborate and ostentatious sweet sixteen party, and Blaine and Kurt take Libby to the mall to find shoes which she apparently desperately needs to go with her outfit that night. After, they drive to Burt and Carole's on the premise of visiting as they won't be attending the party, and Carole is indeed waiting on the porch steps, proudly holding a birthday cake, and Libby seems so happy that she is
oblivious to Blaine glancing at his phone most of the time.

"Why did we leave so early?" Libby asks on the way home. "It's only three. I don't need that long to get ready."

"You might," Kurt tells her. "Better to have too much time than too little."

"I guess," she muses as they turn into their small road. "But I...what the hell is that?!

Libby pulls open the car door the second Kurt stops and runs up the driveway toward where a sleek black Audi convertible is parked, tied with a huge pink bow. Sebastian and Santana stand on the porch, laughing as Libby screams her delight and points at the car excitedly. "Is it my car? Is it? Is it mine?"

"Yes it's yours," Blaine laughs, catching her as she leaps into his arms.

"Happy birthday, Libby Darling," Kurt says as she crushes him in an over excited hug.

"Oh my GOD!" Libby screams. "I have the best daddies ever! Thank you, thank you, oh thank you! Oh wow. Thank you! Can we take it out now? Can we? Can we please?"

"To the end of the road and back," Blaine says as Sebastian unlocks the car for her.

The short trip turns into a whole afternoon of driving with Sebastian after Blaine and Kurt decide their nerves can't stand it, and deem Santana too reckless. But Sebastian has all the patience in the world with her, and they take the time to cruise to each one of her friends houses to show off the car, ending with Jamie.

"It's uh...wow," Jamie says as Sebastian uses his intuition and goes inside to see Ellen, leaving them alone. "It's really smart. I love it."

"I do too," Libby squeals. "I thought I didn't have one, cause it wasn't outside this morning, but Seb went to collect it while we were out so..."

"Better than mine," Jamie says, smiling ruefully at his old ford.

"Actually, I like your car," Libby says, but they both know it can't compare. "Jamie?"

"Yeah?"

"Before you come to the party tonight I just want to say...I don't know if I've really been very nice to you recently, and I just wanted to apologize for that."

"Lib," Jamie sighs, making her heart race as he takes a step closer and backs her up against the car. "I want to say that you've nothing to apologize for but...yeah. You've been a little weird around me lately, and I'm sorry too."

"Huh? What are you sorry for?" Libby asks, frowning up at him.

"Well because I've probably been a bit...and that's made you...Bottom line, Libby, is that you're probably the best friend I have, and I don't want to ever lose that friendship, okay?"

"Okay," Libby says, trying not to let her hurt show. She swallows hard, focusing on all Kurt and Blaine had said the night before about keeping the friendship and hoping that one day Jamie will wake up a little bit. "Yeah, I agree, we shouldn't let anything complicate our friendship."
"Oh. Well I didn't mean..." Jamie starts, but Libby ignores him and blithely carries on.

"I mean, pretty soon I might start dating someone, or you might, and you know, things will change...but we'll always have our friendship, yes?"

"Libby, I...oh Jesus, I'm gonna really regret this if I don't act now," Jamie mutters, and boldly takes one step closer, letting his hands find their way to cupping Libby's face, his fingers tangling into her hair and slowly, he tilts her lips up to his.

"Okay Lib, let's go!" Sebastian calls loudly as he and Ellen step out onto the porch.

"Oh fucking HELL!" Jamie yells, breaking away and running a hand exasperatedly through his hair. "Just...fuck."

"Jamie!" Ellen admonishes. "Language. Apologize to Libby, please."

"Sorry Lib," he mutters, completely mortified as he stares at his shoes.

Her hand comes into his line of vision, touching his fingers briefly and when he looks up it is to find Libby biting her lip in such a way that he almost tries to kiss her again, right there in front of everyone. "Actually," she says quietly, "I really don't think you have anything to apologize for at all. I'll see you later?"

"Later," Jamie agrees, tearing into the house before he can squeal like a little kid.

"See you later Ellen!" Libby calls brightly as she pulls open her car door and decides that for now, having your almost first kiss against your brand new convertible will do nicely.

*

"So maybe he's not gay after all?" Libby says, having filled Liv and Melody in on it all. "I really didn't get things wrong. He was definitely about to kiss me."

"I don't know," Melody says warily. "I mean, no offense, Lib, but I've never seen him actually try anything on with you before. Maybe he just got carried away in the moment and wondered what it would be like to kiss a girl."

"Yeah, Libby, I want this to work out for you," Liv sighs, "but Melody is right. Jamie's never given any hint that he likes you before. Hey, Dylan!"

Dylan pauses on his way to find more punch, always slightly intimidated when he sees them huddled together like the three witches of Macbeth. "Huh?"

"Have you ever seen any indication that Jamie likes Libby as more than friends?"

Dylan stares, and stares some more. "Are you kidding me?"

"There you go, see," Liv says as Dylan walks off in the opposite direction. "Proof. Those two are always in talks. He would know."

Jamie is late to the party, much to his mom's chagrin, having taken an age trying to decide what to wear. He wants to look good, but he wants to feel good too. In the end he decides on black skinny jeans with knee high boots, and his favorite fox sweater, which Ellen hates because he bought it in a women's small, meaning it hugs his frame and exposes his midriff. His hair, now with pink tips regardless of school policy, is pulled into sharp spikes, and he swipes his mom's eyeliner for good
"Must you?" she mutters as they walk up to the house.

"You always say dress how I want."

"I know that. I don't have an issue with that, it's this," she says, tugging on his sweater. "All this flesh being exposed. I don't want people to think you're cheap."

"So the issue isn't that it's a girls top?"

"Don't be ridiculous, Jamie," she says in surprise. "The issue is you dress like you're nineteen already, and you're not. You're my little boy."

"But do I look good? I mean, if you were...potentially interested in me, say, would you look at me and think good things?"

Ellen stops, the realization suddenly hitting her that he's doing this to impress someone, and she smiles. "Well that's a very difficult question for a mom to answer without sounding slightly perverted, but yes, if I liked you like that, I'm sure I'd be impressed."

"Dude!" Dylan is out the house, backing Jamie down the driveway as Ellen laughs and leaves them to it. "Dude, we have a crisis."

"What? Why?"

"Man, people always say guys are clueless, but those girls...those girls are...ostriches, I think."

"What?"

"Heads buried in the sand, Jamie. They've been huddled together since we all got here, and then Liv calls me over and asks if I've ever seen anything to make me think you like Libby."

Jamie's eyes go wide. "And?"

"And I said- and I quote- are you kidding me? Which Liv takes as definitive proof of you not having a crush on the girl."

"Oh no," Jamie moans. "No, no, no. This afternoon went so well too. Except for Sebastian's interruption."

"Look, Jamie, you want my advice? Stop trying to be smooth now, and just lay it all on the line. Ask Libby to be your date to the formal, your proper date. Spell it out for her cause god knows those girls are never going to catch on otherwise."

Despite the girls warnings, Libby can't help but grin when she sees Jamie, because boy does he look hot. They're shy around one another for most of the evening, not even speaking to each other for the first couple of hours. Libby looks sensational in a cute little blue and white sailor dress which Kurt has obviously made for her as it hugs all her curves and Jamie has to try desperately not to stare whenever she walks past, and he feels a flush of guilt when he thinks about when he finally gets to be alone in his bedroom later. So he forces himself to think pure thoughts, watching as Libby mingles with family and friends from school and he keeps over to one side with Dylan, both pretty much ignored on account of them being different.

"We repel women," Dylan laments as they watch the dancing.
"You're gay."

"We repel guys too. Oh! Here she is," Dylan says, giving his friend an almighty shove. "Get her to dance. Go on!"

"Hi," Libby laughs as Jamie stumbles into her path.

"Hi."

"You look good."

"Thank you," Jamie says, suddenly feeling ridiculously shy. "So do you."

"You look hot," Libby blurts, her face colouring. "That probably doesn't mean much but..."

"It means a lot, actually, seeing as I spent hours trying to look hot for you so...yeah."

"Really?"

"Yeah."

"Oh." Libby looks down, pleased if not a little confused, and then suddenly Jamie has her hand.

"Dance?"

"Sure."

*  

"Aw, they're dancing together," Kurt says to Ellen. She turns to see Jamie holding Libby in his arms, but just as she starts to wonder, he turns so his back is to their parents, and all they can make out is Libby's forehead pressed into his shoulder.

"Cute," Ellen smiles. "You know, Jamie told me he was trying to impress someone tonight, but I haven't seen him talk to anyone other than Dylan, and I'm sure there's nothing there."

"Same. Libby likes some boy, but I've been watching all night and she's only talked to girls. Ah well. She seems to have had fun, anyway."

"Dance with me, husband," Blaine says suddenly, holding his finger in the air as the music changes to Bruno Mars. "Tis law."

"Ugh, the shame," Libby moans as Jamie looks into her eyes.

"Huh?"

"My parents are dancing," she explains.

"Yeah," he says with a smile, watching as they fall into hold and Kurt closes his eyes, almost seeming to inhale Blaine as they melt together. "They're cute. They're always going to be completely embarrassing, you know that?"

"Yep. And your mom is dancing with Dylan."

"Yeah, same goes for her," Jamie laughs, tugging Libby that little bit closer. "I like our height difference," he muses as they almost stop dancing and take to standing together looking into each other's eyes. "You're like...a portable chin rest," he teases, pushing her head down so he can rest his
"Made just for me."

"What does that mean?" Libby asks, looking up again in shock.

"Exactly what I think you want it to mean," he says softly, and then they're trapped in one of those moments they seem to have, where nothing else seems to exist but the two of them, until Kurt comes crashing through their bubble, taking Libby's hand and declaring it's time to swap partners.

"Oh no daddy, don't make Jamie dance with you," she moans as Kurt spins her away, but Jamie just laughs, twirling Blaine under his arm and even dipping him, and Libby thinks there's a pretty high probability that if Jamie were to propose marriage right this very second, she'd happily agree.

"Did you have a good night?" Ellen asks Jamie as they start to walk home.

"I really did," he says in surprise as he realises that even though nothing happened, plenty of progress was made. "Mom, wait here a second," he says, tearing back up to the house. "I forgot something." He runs back inside, breathless, and finds Libby talking with Santana and Liv, and deciding it is really now or never, he walks over and doesn't even bother to wait for Santana to finish her sentence. "Monday," he says to Libby, whose whole face seems to be dancing with joy. "I'll pick you up for school."

"I uh...I usually ride with Melody," Libby says weakly as Liv stares and Santana digs a finger into her ribs.

"Well tell her you're not," Jamie says firmly. "You're riding with me." And turning on his heel he saunters away, looking far more confident than he actually feels, and providing Libby and Liv with hours of conversation and analysis for the rest of the weekend.

Of course, when he does pick her up on Monday, he's far too overwhelmed to actually do or say much other than light conversation about the party, or their upcoming science project, but then he also wants to keep their friendship side alive too. He doesn't ever want to lose the ease and familiarity they have with one another, even if right now it's accompanied by shy glances and soft smiles. But she's waiting by his car after school, with no one else in sight, thankfully, and Jamie thinks that's a sight he could definitely get used to. The ride home is silent after the plesantries exchanged, the atmosphere between them heavy with what Libby thinks may be desire, or fear and desperation, or maybe a mixture of all three. He pulls across the end of her drive and cuts the engine, then turns and takes her hand in his.

"So...uh...the dance on Saturday. Are you going?"

"Yeah. I thought we all were?"

"Yes. Yes. Yeah. We...uh..."

"Are you going?"

"Yeah. I just wondered if...if you would go with me?"

"Sure," Libby says brightly. "Do you want to drive? Or will Dylan? It probably makes more sense if you drive, then you can get Melody first, then Liv and.."

"No," Jamie interrupts, staring at the steering wheel "I mean..." Taking a deep breath to steady his nerves, Jamie somehow manages to look Libby square in the eye. "Would you come to the dance with me as in...just with me. Like...a date?"
"A date?"

"Yeah."

"Um..." Libby pauses, seconds away from losing it altogether but not wanting to get this terribly wrong. "I just wanna get this really clear," she says with a shy smile. "Are you asking me out on an actual, proper date? Or are you just asking me to go to the dance with you?" she rushes on. "Because there's a whole world of difference and..."

"No. A date, Libby. Me and you. An actual, proper date."

"A real one?"

"A real one. I've kinda been trying to ask you out on a date for a while now, but you keep dragging everyone else along too," he says with a laugh.

"Oh. Huh. Well that's..." Libby stops, her face breaking into the broadest smile Jamie thinks he's ever seen her give, and he also thinks he's never seen her look more impossibly beautiful. "Yeah," she breathes, her whole face alight with joy. "I'd...yeah. I'd love to, thank you."

"Oh thank goodness," Jamie rushes out, allowing himself to relax and return her smile. "That's good. I'll uh...I'll pick you up. I mean, I'll see you at school before then but uh..."

"Sure. Yeah."

There doesn't seem to be a lot left to be said, so they waste a good few minutes grinning inanely at one another before Libby reluctantly tears herself away. "I'd better..."

"Yeah."

"Um, Jamie?"

Jamie looks up to see Libby biting her lip, her hand resting on the door handle. "Can I ask...cause I never have but maybe now I need to...do you like girls? Cause I always assumed you liked Dylan."

"No Lib," he says, leaning right across to whisper in her ear. "I like you. An insane amount."

"Heh," is all Libby can manage, pushing open the car door.

"I mean.." Jamie starts, but Libby shushes him instantly.

"No! Don't...just don't speak. Don't say anything else cause that's...yeah. Just...have a really great evening!" she trills, hopping from the car. "And thank you!"

"Ha! Believe me, it was my pleasure," Jamie says before driving away, grinning all the way home.

Libby closes the front door, the picture of poise and decorum before she finally allows herself to lose it altogether, stamping her feet up and down and squealing like a child. "Daddy!" she calls, tearing through the house. "Daddy! Papa!" She runs out into the yard and bursts into the office, not even caring that she's quite obviously caught them making out as Blaine straddles Kurt, their faces turned in surprise. "Daddy! Papa! He asked me out! I have a date! I have a date!"
"D-date?" Blaine stammers weakly at the same time as Kurt pushes him to his feet.

"Libby that's wonderful!" Kurt cries, hugging her tight.

"I know!" she squeals. "Papa, he was all shy and nervous when he asked and it was so cute...he is so cute and...oh my gosh! I have to call Liv. Like...now."

"Date?" Blaine says again, and Libby rolls her eyes and kisses his cheek.

"Relax, daddy. It's just to the formal, that's all. But, oh, can my curfew be midnight?"

"Midnight?" Blaine asks weakly, before swallowing all his fears and misgivings and forcing a bright smile. "I don't see why not. Just make sure you have your phone. I'm really happy for you Lib," he manages, kissing her forehead.

"Thank you! Okay, I'll be in my room!" she cries, skipping away happily.

"Date," Blaine says as he sinks into the chair. "Our baby has a date."

"Cute, huh?" Kurt smiles. "She's so happy."

"I wonder who he is?" Blaine says, making to stand, but Kurt is on him.

"Sit."

"I just want to ask her if..."


"We should invite him to...

"Blaine! Sit down! I have been preparing for this moment for sixteen long years now, because I knew you'd be like this. You will not be inviting the boy to dinner before she has this date, you do not need to know his aspirations for the future or his GPA, and you will not be meeting his parents. If you want any sex of any kind at all in the next month you will sit back down and leave our daughter alone to have this moment for herself. And also, when she goes on this date on Saturday, you will not, and I repeat will not, grill the poor guy on the doorstep. You will smile, say a polite hello then wish Libby a pleasant evening. Capiche?"

"No sex?" Blaine asks weakly, and Kurt shakes his head. "For a month?"

"A whole month."

"I hate you."

"I hate you too," Kurt smiles. "Now let's pick up where we left off."

Kurt's phone rings the next day while he is working, or rather, while he is trying to eat a donut and not get grease on his new designs. Snatching it up, he assumes it's Blaine calling as he does every week from the aisles of Whole Foods, confused about something.

"Whatever it is, just get it and get home. Your ass is mine, boy."
"Um...it's Ellen?"

"Oh! Ellen! Gosh. I'm sorry, I just..."

"No wonder you always seem so happy to be working," she laughs. "Anyway. I'm calling to ask a favor."

"Go ahead."

"Could Jamie possibly borrow a suit from you? He has a date to the formal, apparently, and according to him, the suit he wore to Chicago absolutely will not do."

Kurt laughs, "Sure, I'll make him a suit. Can you have him call by after school so I can measure up? Libby has softball so won't be here to tease him."

"Oh no, you don't need to make him one, if he could just borrow..."

"I don't mind," Kurt shrugs. "Every guy needs a good suit, and Jamie is hardly an off the peg guy, is he?"

"No but..."

"Really, it's my pleasure."

"But I can't..."

"You can pay me by coming here and sorting out these rose bushes," Kurt muses as he looks out of the window. "Blaine and I are hopeless, and the gardener doesn't seem to know what he's doing with them."

'Roses are easy,' Ellen laughs. "And sure, I'll help you, if you're sure."

"I'm sure. Really."

"Thank you, Kurt. This will mean so much to him. I'll send him to you the second he gets home."

"No problem. Libby has a date too, apparently. Our little ones are really growing up."

"Aren't they just?" Ellen agrees. "I'm part happy, part scared and part intrigued. You?"

"Same. More scared than anything," he admits. "But I'm trying to play it cool- for Blaine's sake."

"Ah, well we always knew he wouldn't take it well."

"Exactly, so I'm trying to keep him distracted, you know?"

"Um, yes, Kurt. I gathered that when you answered the phone."

*  

Jamie stands awkwardly in Kurt's sewing room, arms outstretched as he measures him this way and that. It had been a good day, though he had barely said two words to Libby, but it didn't matter. It was out there. The shy declarations of their intentions had been given, which cleared the air in the best possible way and it made it okay to share those secret smiles and little brushes of fingertips in the lunch line. For now, neither one needed more. All the friends knew of course, but none of them acknowledged it either, wanting to give them time and space to deal with this themselves before
they could tease them about it.

And then, when he had arrived home, his mom had told him Kurt would make him a suit. He had driven over in a complete panic, but it was obvious that while Kurt knew Libby had a date, he clearly didn't know who it was with, and Jamie was filled with relief, not ready to meet Kurt as Libby's potential boyfriend just yet, and certainly not ready to meet Blaine in that capacity—actually, he's not sure he will ever be ready for that.

"So what color are we going for?" Kurt asks as he works. "I'll have to go with the material I have in, but I have a nice dark green, or purple..."

"Oh no, uh...just a regular black tux please," Jamie says shyly. "I uh...I have a date and I don't want to embarrass them."

Kurt finishes measuring his inside leg and looks up in surprise. "You sure? That doesn't sound very Jamie to me."

"No, but...like I said, I don't want to embarrass my date. They're pretty popular at school and I've been wanting to date them for...for years, actually. Now I have that chance and I don't want to mess it up."

Kurt sits on the edge of his desk with a sigh as Jamie stares at his toes awkwardly. "Jamie, can I say something?"

"I guess."

"This person has agreed to go out with you, because you're you. It was Jamie who asked them out, Jamie who they said yes to. They're not going to expect you to turn up with your hair all slicked down and in a boring black tux. They're going to expect you to look like Jamie."

"Yeah, but...I don't know," he says, shaking his head in confusion. "I mean, I need to find a job for the summer, and pretty soon it'll be college apps...I'm tired of people judging me on my appearance."

"Jamie, they're going to do that anyway, whether you dress as you do now or whether you dress like Blaine. I've had people telling me I dress like I'm gay, whatever that's supposed to mean. Blaine's had it too, saying he dresses like a grandpa just because he likes bow ties. But you...one of the things I admire most about you is your determination to always be true to yourself. Don't change because some crappy fast food place doesn't like your earrings, or some stuffy college can't understand your fashion choices."

"I dress like a girl," Jamie says quietly. "That's what they all say."

"You do not," Kurt says firmly. "You dress like you. You see something you like, you wear it, end of. You know, Libby would be horrified to hear you talk like that," he carries on as he starts pulling bolts of material from the racks. "She is always so proud of you, and she's always going on about how amazing you look."

"She is?"

"Yeah. It's always 'Jamie wore this blouse today, he totally killed it' or 'You should've seen Jamie strutting down the halls in his high heels. He was sensational.' And she's right. You own your look, boy. And you know what else? It makes you so much more of a man than those ignorant jocks who tell you you're a girl. And I'll bet your date said yes to you because they think just the way Libby does. Now. I refuse to make you a black tux, so what'll it be?"
Jamie grins, feeling everything sliding into place once more. "Uh...are you making Libby's dress?"

"Yeah. Powder blue, she's having, but I don't recommend you go for a suit in that. This isn't the eighties."

"No," Jamie says as he looks at all the fabrics and tries to decide which will match her best. "Um...how about red?"

Kurt shrugs and smiles, picking up the bolt of fabric and hoisting it onto his shoulder. "Red could work."

*

"Sit," Kurt tells Blaine for at least the tenth time in as many minutes.

"But I just..."

"Sit."

"Santana might need some help with her hair."

"If she does she won't be asking you," Kurt laughs. "Nice try."

"She might need help getting into her dress?" Blaine offers lamely.

"And this is why Santana is up there with her. Now sit."

"I wonder if midnight curfew was a bit extravagant."

"Blaine...."

"It's just..."

"No sex for a month, Blaine."

"No, right okay. I'll shut up. Sorry."

Finally the doorbell rings, and all hell breaks loose as Blaine bursts out into the hallway with Kurt trying to restrain him, and Libby comes screeching down the landing with Santana hot on her heels. "Don't open the door!" Libby yells. "Don't! Not yet, hold on!"

Stopping at the top of the stairs, she lets Santana arrange the beautiful light blue dress Kurt has made her, complete with tiny crystals hand stitched over the bodice. Her hair is sweet up into an elegant bun with a few curls artfully pulled loose, all secured with a diamond hair clip, and a matching diamond necklace hangs around her neck.

Until that moment, Kurt was completely composed. Now he finds himself reaching for Blaine's arm, clutching him tight for support and his vision blurs with tears that he does nothing to wipe away. He wants to pause this moment forever. To take Libby just as she is now, smiling down at them and so excited, and lock it away in his treasure chest of memories. Blaine is saying something about her looking amazingly beautiful, and he knows he manages to nod, and then Blaine is taking pictures and the doorbell rings again.

"Door!" Kurt stutters to life, pulling the door open to find Jamie standing there looking about ready to turn tail and run, but then his eyes alight on Libby walking slowly down the stairs and he grins broadly.
"Hi," he manages, his voice slightly higher than normal but then he is aware of two dads staring between him and Libby in utter disbelief, and Santana behind Libby on the stairs with her thumbs up. "Libby, you look beautiful," he says proudly as Blaine and Kurt still stare.

"Thank you," Libby says, smiling shyly. "Daddy, papa, you can close your mouths."

"But this...Jamie is your date?" Kurt asks.

"He is," Libby smiles, never taking her blue eyes off Jamie's.

"Jamie's the boy you've been pining over all this time?" Blaine blurts.

"Yeah, thanks for that daddy," Libby says with a laugh.

"I uh...I got you this," Jamie suddenly remembers, offering the wrist corsage, and Libby feels a flutter of pleasure at how much his hands shake as he ties it on, and she also notices he's obviously had a manicure.

"I like this," she says, gesturing to the suit. "And these," she says, grabbing his hand and examining the matching nails.

"Well Kurt made the suit," he says shyly. "And I didn't know about the nails cause I didn't want to embarrass you, but Liv offered to..."

"Liv did them? That's sweet," Libby smiles.

"It's not too much?"

"No, and you could never embarrass me," she says, keeping a hold of his hand. "Unlike these two," she laughs as Kurt and Blaine still stare. "We're going," she announces. "Santana, thank you for your help."

"Anytime, sweetie," she says, kissing her cheek. "Have fun."

"Yes, yeah," Blaine says, coming to life at last. "You know, I did not see this coming but thank goodness it's Jamie. I had visions of some Neanderthal showing up and I wouldn't be happy, and I wanted to be happy for your first date, you know? Phew. And now I can be, because I know Libby will be safe with you, Jamie. Thank you," he says, shaking his hand warmly. "And you, my darling girl, have fun. Be home by midnight and for the love of god, behave. You know, I'd rather you two just came back here if you..."

"Daddy! It's our first date!" Libby cries, her cheeks matching the red of Jamie's suit. "Please stop talking."

"Don't worry," Kurt says, forcing a smile. "I'll keep him under control."

The door closes and without a word being said, Blaine pulls Kurt tight to his chest, letting him cry for as long as he needs while Santana rolls her eyes at their hopelessness.

"Did you know?" Blaine asks Santana over the top of Kurt's still shaking shoulders.

"Of course I knew. But I don't think it's my place to tell you stuff like that. If she was in trouble, or I was worried then I'd divulge, but she has been wanting to date him for so long. It's hard not to be happy for her."

"I agree," Blaine says, kissing her cheek as she comes to fuss over Kurt. "And I'm so glad she has
"Because she is beautiful. Inside and out," Santana declares.

"She is, and I'm glad Jamie is the one who gets to appreciate that, you know? He's a good kid."

"I thought he was gay," Kurt sniffles, and Santana can't resist teasing him.

"Is that why you're crying?"

"No, I'm crying because my baby has gone on her first date and she's all grown up," Kurt wails before his tears start afresh. "Blaine! It hurts me! It hurts my heart!"

"I know, darling, I know," he soothes. "You're always so calm and composed until it actually happens. Kindergarten, first grade, second grade, third..."

"Yeah, okay, I'm outta here," Santana declares. "Have a wonderful evening alternating between crying and worrying over your daughter. You can be sure that whatever it is she's doing, she's not thinking of you while she's doing it. Love you both!"

*

Libby knows all eyes are on her and Jamie. She knows that no one paid any attention when Dylan walked in with Melody and Liv on his arms, they just rolled their eyes at the fact the weirdos obviously couldn't get dates. But when Jamie and Libby had arrived it had been different. They were holding hands for a start, and things had noticeably changed. Jamie kept his arm protectively around her waist while they got punch, and tenderly tucked a strand of hair back in place while they chatted with their friends, gazing down at Libby in such an adoring way as to make it obvious that their feelings toward one another had been declared.

Regardless of being stared at, Libby has fun. Sometimes it's like nothing has changed, when the five of them are dancing and talking, but then there are moments when Jamie twirls her under his arm, and she catches him smiling at the way she is smiling, and her breath catches in her throat at the way his blue eyes seem to shine. All in all, a lot of smiling, catching and shining going on, Libby thinks to herself as she excuses herself to the bathroom...still smiling.

"Libby?"

She emerges from the stall to find three girls from her softball team lined up, arms folded as they lean against the sinks. "Hey girls," she smiles brightly. "Are you having fun?"

"Libby, are you like....dating Jamie Foster?" Sophia asks.

"Um...well...no, not dating, since this is our first date, but I hope to be soon," she grins as she washes her hands.

"Excuse me?"

There is no mistaking the undercurrent of threat and disbelief in Sophia's voice, and Libby glances up into the mirror, her eyes meeting the other two girls who stare back menacingly.

"I said I hope to be dating him soon," Libby repeats calmly, even though her heart is hammering in her chest. "I've liked him since middle school."

"You want to date Jamie?" Amy asks.
"Yeah, why? What's the big deal? You know I hang out with him." Libby dries her hands quickly and makes a show of reapplying her lip gloss, hoping and praying they're not about to ruin her night.

"Hanging out with him is one thing, though that's weird anyway because he's weird. But dating him? Nu-uh, Libby. No way."

"Um...I don't really see how this affects you?" Libby says, all politeness and smiles when underneath it all she is seething.

"He's gotta be gay, hasn't he? I mean, come on. He wants to be a girl."

"Sexuality and gender are two very different things," Libby says, straightening up and turning to face them. "And you are wildly inaccurate in both your assumptions. Jamie does not want to be a girl, and he is not gay. Not that I think it's any of your business. So if you'll excuse me, I need to get back to my date."

"If you choose to date him, Libby, we can't be friends," Sophia declares.

Libby looks at her, the way her face is twisted into a grimace of displeasure as she looks down her nose haughtily at Libby, and she comes to a decision. They won't ruin her night, or any other night comes to that, because she simply won't let them. So she shrugs, picks up her purse and smiles. "Okay."

"What did you just say?"

"I said okay," Libby repeats. "If you choose to end our friendship, which was always tentative at best, over who I choose to date then you're even more shallow than I thought. Have a nice evening."

Jamie is waiting for her when she emerges, and she offers a dazzling bright smile and takes his hand. "You okay?" he asks as she tugs him back into the gym.

"I'm good," she says brightly, and fuelled by a burst of self confidence, she stops him in the middle of the room and steps closer, running one finger down the buttons on his shirt. "So...are you gonna dance with me when it goes all slow and mushy?"

Jamie manages a nod, entirely distracted by the close proximity of her body to his and the feel of her hand on his chest. "If- if you want me to?"

"Oh Jamie," she sighs, going up onto her tiptoes to whisper in his ear. "There's a lot of things I want you to do."

A kind of choked off groan escapes Jamie as Libby saunters to the dance floor where Liv and Melody are waiting, and as she dances and notices Jamie still staring, she realizes what her daddy means when he says about the kind of power hold papa has over him. And boy, does it feel good.

*

"I win," Kurt declares triumphantly and Blaine looks up from the scrabble board and laughs in disbelief.

"You do not win! Mascruz is not a word!"

"No, but it's over a triple word score, and it uses my Z, so I win."
"That is not how scrabble works, Mr. Hummel-Anderson. How many years have we been playing this game?"

"Feels like a hundred," Kurt quips, pushing the board to one side and climbing onto the dining room table. "And you know what? It's only nine thirty. Libby won't be back until midnight."

"Oh," Blaine grins, reaching up to fist Kurt's shirt and pull him closer. "Any idea how to fill the time?"

"Yeah." Kurt slides into his lap, his hands raking through Blaine's hair before he captures his lips in a deep kiss. "I'm gonna ride you and then, when you come deep in my ass, you're gonna eat it all back out again."

"God, I think I might've come already," Blaine gasps as Kurt grinds down into his lap. "I'll...I'll do whatever you want," he whimpers, bucking upward when Kurt nips just below his jaw.

"Oh sweetie," Kurt laughs, his voice dark with desire. "I know you will."

*

"You're really distracted," Libby notes as her and Jamie dance together. "Something wrong?"

"Yeah, no, it's just...those girls," he says, nodding over to where most of the softball team are gathered. "They're like...glaring at us."

"Eh, let them glare," Libby shrugs. "My dad's didn't raise me to worry what other people think. Is anything else wrong?"

"No," Jamie says, taking his eyes off the girls and turning back to Libby. "Just hungry."

"Didn't you eat dinner?"

"Not much," he admits shyly. "Too nervous."

"You wanna get out of here then? We could go get waffles?"

"I thought you wanted to slow dance?"

"Meh. We can do that anytime. Time alone sounds better, don't you think?"

"It's...that...yeah," Jamie says, stammering to life and grabbing Libby's hand. "Yeah. Let's go."

*

Kurt's forehead thumps onto the dining room table at the feel of Blaine's tongue circling his rim. Pushing backwards, he revels in being able to yell as loud as he likes as Blaine works his tongue inside, moaning his pleasure.

"Fuck, Blaine! Just...yes...yes..."

And suddenly he is being turned around, and Blaine's mouth, slick with his own come is sinking down around him as two of his fingers push into Kurt's still open hole, stroking over his prostate until he is a gasping, trembling wreck and spilling hard down Blaine's throat.

He sinks backwards into the chair, where Blaine falls on the floor and rests his head weakly against his knee as they survey the wreck of the room. Scrabble tiles are everywhere, two wine glasses are
on their sides and clothes are scattered randomly around the room. Blaine tilts his head back at the feel of Kurt's fingers running through his hair and he offers a smile as Kurt looks down at him. "Scrabble," he mutters weakly. "A dangerous game."

*

"You should have told me they were being unkind to you," Jamie says over a plateful of shared cinnamon waffles.

"I just did."

"No, I mean at the time."

"If they'd upset me then I would have," Libby shrugs. "But they didn't, so I didn't. Simple as that."

"That's what you're gonna get all the time though, being with me."

"So? Wait a minute...am I with you?"

"I'd like you to be," he tells her honestly. "But I also don't want your life to be a misery because your boyfriend dresses like a girl."

Leaning over the table, Libby flicks him hard on the forehead. "Ouch!"

"Right. Shut up. Yes, I want to be your girlfriend, I've wanted to be with you since we were twelve. You don't dress like a girl, I keep telling you. You dress like a Jamie. Not many girls I know would wear a red suit to a formal- even if they did have matching nails. And also, if I honestly gave a shit about what people thought, don't you think I'd have stopped hanging out with you long before now? I'm always going to be different, Jamie, simply because I have two dads. But my parents, your fashion sense, Dylan's gayness...it's what makes all of us, us. And I like us just the way we are.... Except I'd quite like to be your girlfriend too," she adds with a soft smile.

"Come on," Jamie says decisively, throwing some bills down on the table. "Let's go."

"It's like...eleven," Libby says, looking at her phone. "My curfew is midnight."

"Yeah, and I can't kiss you in the middle of a Waffle House," he says as her eyes fly wide and he grins smugly. "Uh-huh, now it's your turn to shut up."

*

"What do you think she's doing?" Kurt asks, lying half on top of a still naked Blaine as they cuddle on the couch.

"Dancing, mooning over Jamie."

"How cute, that it's him."

"Yeah. I'll tell you, it's a weight off my mind. My only worry is the grief she's gonna get at school over dating him."

"I think she'll handle it," Kurt shrugs, closing his eyes and nuzzling in under Blaine's jaw. "I'm so proud of her."

"Same," Blaine smiles. "She's wonderful. She gets it from her papa."
"Flattery won't get you round two," Kurt murmurs. "Not a chance."

"Really? You think I'd be capable?" Blaine asks and they both laugh. "We should clean up though. The dining room is a mess, and Libby will be home soon."

"Five more minutes," Kurt says, kissing into the hollow of his throat. "Just five more."

* 

"Have you really liked me since middle school?" Jamie asks as he parks up overlooking a field.

"Yes."

"Cause remember that day when we got suspended?" he asks and Libby nods. "I remember feeling so angry about what that girl said to you, and afterwards, when I looked at you crying, I knew it wasn't just because she had upset my friend, it was because she had upset you, and I remember thinking you were too beautiful to cry."

"That's what did it for me," Libby admits. "That's what made me view you differently. Ever since that day, you've always called me beautiful, and you can never know how much that means."

"So we're gonna do this then?" Jamie asks, turning to her in the darkness. "Us? This is gonna be a thing?"

Libby shuffles across the bench seat so she's closer, looking up with what she hopes is beguiling charm. "Kiss me and I'll let you know."

Jamie kisses her gently, filled with more nerves than he can ever remember as he closes his eyes and lets his lips brush softly over hers. Pulling back, he sees that she's smiling, her eyes still closed as she whispers "yeah, we're gonna do this," and then he kisses his girlfriend again.

* 

"Eleven fifty five," Blaine says, beginning to pace the living room.

"You said midnight," Kurt points out. "And here they are, anyway."

"Oh good." Blaine makes for the door but Kurt jumps up from the armchair, dragging him back into the room and pinning him to the wall.

"No. Don't you dare. He will want to kiss her goodnight."

"He....what?"

"Oh behave," Kurt hisses as the porch light comes on, telling them Jamie and Libby are standing outside. "You dated me and others. Your memory isn't that bad. Now leave her out there to come in when she's ready."

"It's silent," Blaine notices with alarm, and breaking free of Kurt's hold he rushes to the blinds to take a peek. "Oh my god," he gasps, looking away. "Some things should never be seen."

"You're hilarious," Kurt laughs. "What are they doing?"

"Making out," Blaine moans. "I have two teenagers on my front porch making out. Get a room."

"I think you'd rather they didn't," Kurt laughs. "Leave them be. Let her have these stolen kisses. It's
the best part of those early days of dating. You must remember that."

"I remember feeling horny as fuck whenever I left you," Blaine smiles, tugging Kurt into his arms and kissing the tip of his nose. "And being relieved when we finally got to do more. Oh my god!" he cries as he realizes.

"Leave it," Kurt says, pulling his attention back again. "Libby is a sensible girl and Jamie has a heart of gold. You were respectful of me and I know he'll be respectful of her. Now kiss me goodnight like you used to when we were young."

"I still do."

"Good point," Kurt concedes. "Kiss me like you always do then."

The front door flies open and Libby bursts through, hair slightly dishevelled, lips swollen and a huge grin on her face. She doesn't even care that her parents are making out in the middle of the living room, she just pushes the door closed, kicks off her shoes and grins as they pull apart. "Hey you two, guess what? That's just what I've been doing too."
The afternoon is hot. Blaine pulls himself from the pool and flops down on a sunlounger between Cooper and Kurt, who grimaces at the drops of water getting showered over him and turns back to his book.

Blaine sighs heavily, looking up at the back of the house. "I'll be glad when school starts back next week," he grumbles. "And I don't have to put up with them being locked in her room doing god only knows what."

"I highly doubt she's doing what you think she's doing," Cooper says with a smile. "It's a bit hard to get laid when your dad keeps yelling up the stairs every five minutes."

"She's...you think she's trying to...do you.." Blaine starts, but a firm hand on his chest from Kurt stops him from getting up and running inside.

"No I don't," Cooper laughs. "She's sixteen, Blaine, and she's not dumb. She's listened to you and Kurt enough to know all about respect for herself and waiting until the time is right. You know, Maddie was sixteen when she started dating Joe, and boy did I find it tough. But Clare told me time and again to trust her, and so reluctantly, I did. And you know what? She didn't disappoint me, and neither did Joe. I don't think teenagers are the rampant, horny beasts we all take them for."

"They are," Kurt laughs. "It's just that actually, they respect themselves and each other a whole lot more than we give them credit for. Jamie is a good kid. He's been here practically every day during the summer and he makes her so happy. I couldn't ask for anything else, really. Especially with Liv in England for the last month. We'd have been driven insane otherwise."

"What do you think they're doing then?" Blaine asks, and is rewarded with Kurt sitting on his stomach to prevent him moving.

"Making out, fooling around. Just leave them be."

"Fooling around? What does that mean?"

"What you and I do when we think Libby isn't looking," he grins, leaning down to kiss his lips. "Hmm, I do love you, even if you are neurotic."

"Is anyone thirsty?" Blaine tries, but Cooper and Kurt only laugh at him, so he bides his time until he uses the genuine excuse of needing the bathroom as a reason for heading inside.

"I'll be listening for that flush!" Kurt calls, and Blaine flips him off with a laugh.

* 

"Libby?"

"Ugh." Libby screws her eyes shut and thumps her head down on the pillow.

Jamie pauses, his hand trembling and eyes wide. "Is that your dad again?" he whispers.

"Just...ignore him. Carry on."

"No way!" Jamie laughs, carefully tugging her blouse back into place.
"Fine," she huffs, rolling off the bed and stomping out into the hallway. "What?" she snaps from the top of the stairs.

"Just wanted to check you were okay," Blaine says with what he hopes is a relaxed smile.

"I'm no different to how I was five minutes ago."

"Ten, actually," Blaine says smugly. "It's been ten minutes."

"Whatever, daddy, leave us alone, please."

"Are you being safe?"

"I'm not being anything!" Libby screeches. "Look at me! Fully dressed! For the love of god, daddy, just...trust me, can't you?"

"I trust you, it's just..."

"Oh what, it's Jamie you don't trust?" Libby asks, hands on hips as she challenges him.

"No...I mean, yes, I trust him. It's just together you're..."

"Daddy. Don't. Just...don't." Turning on her heel, Libby storms back into her bedroom, slamming the door shut behind her. "Is your mom at work?"

"Until six, yeah," Jamie says as he sits up straighter.

"Fine. Let's go."

"What? But you have a pool!"

"Which we won't be going in with my parents and Uncle sitting there watching our every move," Libby snipes as she gathers her purse. "If we go to your house we can be alone to do what we want."

"But I thought we agreed to wait?"

"Jamie, you've spent the last two hours just trying to get your hand under my blouse. I'm not about to ride you into the middle of next week, but I would like you to actually touch me somewhere on my body before I die. Now come on."

"Aren't you going to tell them where you're going?" Jamie asks anxiously as he hurries after her down the stairs.

"No."

"I think you should, Lib," Jamie tries. "Just because...well...if there was an accident or something..."

"Fine," she says with a glare, and stalking through to the back of the house, she slides open the patio doors. "I'm going to Jamie's house to get pregnant," she calls to Kurt. "Blame daddy."

Ignoring Blaine and Kurt's yells of protest, she storms through the house and pulls opens the front door, climbs into her car and waits for Jamie to join her. Blaine comes charging through the house, but Kurt and Jamie reach him before he can get to Libby, and Jamie places a restraining hand on his arm. "Blaine I just..."
"Don't," he barks. "Don't tell me what to do regarding my daughter. She's coming back inside right now and that's final."

"Um...actually, I think you'd be better to let her go and cool off a little," Jamie says quietly.

"Oh I'll bet you think that," he snarls. "Of course you want her to go back to yours, especially now you know she's only got one thing on her mind."

"Blaine," Kurt warns. "Hear him out."

"I would never...no," Jamie says, aghast. "I'd never take advantage of her when she's like this, and anyway we've never even...no," he says again, clearly uncomfortable.

"You've never even what?"

"Never... Kissing is where it's at," he mumbles, staring at the floor. "Nothing more. So....yeah. I'm not about to do what....what Libby just suggested. I just think it might be better for me to take her home and talk to her, cause I don't like it when she's like this."

"Hmm, I wonder where she gets her feisty-ness from," Kurt says with an eye roll. "It's up to you, Blaine. This is your gripe with her, so you decide."

"I guess she can go," Blaine says reluctantly as Kurt smoothes a hand over his back. "But tell her she needs to be back for dinner."

"I will do," Jamie says with a nod. He stops in the doorway, turning back as if unsure whether to say something, but in the end he decides to go with it. "You know? Libby is....she's a wonderful girl with such a good heart. I don't think she means to be so angry at you Blaine, I think she just wants you to show that you trust her."

Libby drives to Jamie's house in silence, and as he unlocks the front door she pushes past him and storms up to the bedroom without even looking back, leaving Jamie to momentarily wonder why he ever became involved with someone as headstrong and willful as Libby Hummel-Anderson. Sighing heavily, he kicks off his shoes and follows her up the stairs to where she is lying in the center of his bed in just her underwear, her blue eyes challenging him to object or turn her away. Wordlessly, he takes his own t-shirt off and lowers his shorts, crawling onto the bed in just his boxer briefs to lie beside her.

"Ready?" he asks, and Libby nods, though he's no fool and can see the way she swallows nervously.

"Yes. Absolutely."

"Good. I take it you are on the pill? Cause y'know, I have condoms but they're not always effective...and I think a baby at sixteen would somewhat hamper your plans to study in Italy for a year."

"I uh...no, I'm not on the pill."

"Oh. Okay. Well we'll risk it," Jamie says, rolling his weight on top of her.

"Wait!"

Jamie rolls away immediately, sitting cross legged on the bed and encouraging her to sit against the pillows.
"I don't think I can," she admits in a small voice. "I don't think I'm ready."

"I know you're not ready," Jamie says, taking her hand and kissing it. "And that's okay. This, right now, is the most naked we've been around one another. Now please, quit with this and talk to me."

"I don't feel comfortable," she starts, and Jamie reaches for a blanket. "No, I don't mean...actually, I feel strangely at ease with us both being in our underwear," she admits with a shy giggle. "I mean I don't feel comfortable using you just because I'm angry at daddy. It's not fair on either of you, and I'm sorry."

Jamie nods, kissing the back of her hand again. "Thank you for admitting that. And I've gotta be honest, I wouldn't want you anyway, not like this. If and when we take that step I want it to be because it's the most natural thing to do, not because you're trying to prove a point."

"I just want him to...to trust me."

"I think he does," Jamie says, reaching out to tuck her hair back into place. "I just think he finds it hard to let go. You're his little girl, Lib."

"I'm not!"

"You are. And it's just really tough for him to relax knowing that at some point, pretty soon, you're going to be having sex."

"I am?"

"Well...yeah," Jamie says with a small smile. "I'd like to hope so, anyway."

"So you do want me then? Like that?"

"Ugh." Jamie rubs a hand over his face. "Yes," he groans. "Of course I do. You must...ahem...notice that? When we're making out?"

"I do," Libby says, her cheeks turning pink. "But I remember daddy telling me it can happen for no reason at all so...."

"It can, but the fact that it happens all the time when we're making out must surely tell you something. It's you, Lib. I'm seventeen next month. My hormones have settled down somewhat. When you kiss me it makes me horny. Simple as that."

"What about...when you... Do you watch porn?" Libby blurts as Jamie suddenly becomes fascinated by the pattern on his duvet.

"Um... It has been known."

"Gay or straight?"

"Fine," he sighs, looking her directly in the eye. "We've not had this discussion, so let's get it out the way now, shall we?"

"What discussion?"

"My sexuality."

Libby frowns, genuinely confused by the turn of events. "Jamie, I couldn't care less what you identify as, as long as you want to be with me."
"I think the closest term to describe me is pansexual," he says, still holding eye contact with her.

"No, I think the closest term to describe you would be giant idiot," Libby corrects. "I really don't give a damn, Jamie, which is why I've never asked. Why do you have to identify as anything? Why can't you just identify as Jamie?"

"I do," he says with a heartbreakingly sweet smile. "But that doesn't seem good enough for some people."

Libby shrugs, leaning over to kiss him lightly on the lips. "It's good enough for me."

"Really?"

"Really. Like I said, as long as I figure in the equation somewhere...."

"Oh you do, Lib. You very much do."

"Good, cause I really like this. Us," she says, gesturing between them.

"Do you though?" Jamie asks, worried. "Will you? Sometimes I wear women's underwear," he admits suddenly, turning scarlet. "Does that make me a transvestite? I don't find many women attractive, but there's lots of famous guys who I really like. Am I more gay than straight? Bi? Pan? What am I Lib? Who am I? And are you going to want to stick around to find out?"

"You are Jamie Foster," Libby declares, startling him somewhat when she suddenly straddles his lap. "Soon to be seventeen year old junior, all round hottie and my boyfriend. You could be more up than down, more left than right. Why should I care? You make me happy. I want to be with you and...ah hell...I'm just gonna admit it... When we make out and I feel you against me...hard... It feels good to know I've had that effect on you. Wear what you want to, wear what makes you feel good and what makes you happy. Crush on who the hell you want but cheat on me and I'll break your balls. But please, Jamie, don't ever feel forced to identify as anything other than yourself, because you really shouldn't have to. Those that love you, love you for you."

"I love you, Libby."

And there, he's said it. Simple, heartfelt and with complete sincerity. For a split second, he panics, but then Libby smiles, shuffling forward so her legs are wrapped around his waist and their foreheads pressed together.

"I love you too," she whispers, then kisses him passionately, because Libby always likes to prove her point.

*  
Both Libby and Blaine's solution to their trust issues seem to be to ignore it, and Kurt, snowed under with work, finds himself so grateful for the tentative truce that he doesn't even bother to try and make them talk it out, though somewhere in the back of his mind he knows this is only storing up more trouble for later on.

Libby starts her junior year, and it is pretty much hell from the start. Clearly word has spread over the summer regarding who she is dating, and suddenly she starts finding hateful notes in her locker, hearing girls whispering about her in the bathroom and finds slurs about Jamie written on the stalls. Jamie fares no better, and he is endlessly apologetic to Libby for the trouble he seems to attract, and though she reassures him time and again that it doesn't affect her feelings toward him at all, he can see how much it really upsets her.
"Uh...Jamie?" Liv asks with wide eyes as she looks over Libby's shoulder. It is two weeks into the new semester and they're standing by their lockers before the first bell. Melody turns around, and her eyes go wide too, so Libby gives in and spins on her heel. Jamie walks toward them, dressed...completely boringly, Libby thinks to herself. Chinos, boat shoes and a plaid shirt neatly tucked in, his hair devoid of color or product, it falls neatly to one side and there's not a piercing in sight. He looks....like her dad, Libby thinks to herself, except nowhere near as quirky.

"What the hell happened to you?" Libby asks incredulously as Jamie stops by her locker and shrugs.

"Just wanted to look a bit better for you," he says quietly.

"Jamie, if there's one thing I am, it's fashion consciously shallow. You've met papa. Don't ever let me see you dressed like this again," she snaps. "You don't look like you. We both have second period free, we'll go home and get you changed."

"No, I'm...this is how I'm gonna dress for school from now on," he says firmly. "I'm tired of you getting shit for dating me. So...I can stop that, by blending in a bit more. And that's what I'm gonna do."

"Oh Jesus," Melody mutters in alarm. "Libby's gonna blow."

"I'm not gonna blow," Libby says haughtily, slamming her locker closed. "I'm not gonna blow him, that's for sure."

"What?" Jamie cries. "Since when has that even been on offer?"

"Doesn't matter," Libby snaps as she storms down the hall. "Because nothing's on offer right now, if you give in to the mindless idiots and let them win. I refuse to date you if you're not going to be yourself. End of."

*

"You're naughty," Blaine laughs as Kurt's hands travel down into his pants and squeeze his ass roughly, making his intentions clear. "A bad, bad boy."

"I fantasize about this all the time," Kurt breathes as he pushes Blaine's shirt from his shoulders and bites into the soft flesh. "Fucking you against the office wall, feeling your legs wrapped around my waist. I sit in that chair over there and imagine how good you'll look."

"Yes," Blaine moans as he pushes both their pants to the floor and pulls Kurt closer, the feeling of their erections rubbing together through their briefs driving him wild. "Oh Kurt..."

Hooking one of Blaine's legs around his waist, Kurt grinds against him, their bare chests flush with one another and cocks perfectly aligned. "Gonna fuck you," he pants in a dirty whisper, reaching into Blaine's briefs to slide a finger down to his entrance. "Gonna fuck you so hard...."

"I have had the worst possible day!" Libby declares, throwing open the office door. "I got... OH HOLY FUCKING CRAP!" she screams, as Blaine and Kurt tear apart, think better of it and press themselves together again in shame.

"Libby..."

"DON'T!" she yells, turning tail and running back to the house.
"Libby!" Blaine charges after her, pulling on his jeans as he stumbles across the yard and into the kitchen. "Libby, my baby girl, it wasn't..."

"Don't tell me it wasn't what it looked like, because it was exactly what it looked like!" Libby snarls in a mixture of anger and embarrassment. "Why? You know I come home at this time every day. So why? Are you that damn horny? Is papa that irresistible? Just...keep it in your pants dad, for god's sake, at least until I've gone to bed, or you know I won't be home."

"Sweetheart..."

"Don't sweetheart me," she snaps. "You know what pisses me off? I'm not allowed five minutes alone in my room with Jamie, and I have to leave the door open at all times, yet it's perfectly acceptable for me to wander home in the middle of the afternoon to find my middle aged parents fornicating against a wall."

"Baby girl, it's very different..."

"I AM NOT YOUR BABY GIRL!" Libby screams loudly, losing it altogether. "I'm sixteen, dad!"

"Daddy," Blaine mumbles. "You always call me daddy."

"Not anymore I don't. I've had it with you. I am not your baby, I'm an adult- or as good as, anyway. And you're my dad. Jesus Christ," she moans, running her hands through her hair. "To think that all day I've been waiting to get home to see you both- and I get confronted with that."

"I'm so sorry," Blaine says sadly. "But please, Lib, you are my baby, you always will be."

"Just...you know what? I can't wait to be done with all this. Done with going to a crappy school where everyone laughs at me, done with you two all over each other all the time and done with guys who have no backbone. I can't wait to move to New York and never have to look back!" And she storms from the room and up the stairs, slamming her door shut for good measure.

Kurt sits on the back porch, waiting for the screaming and yelling to stop before he takes himself inside to where Blaine sits at the table, crying. He takes him in his arms and kisses the top of his head, handing him a tissue before he climbs onto his lap as he always does, and smooths his hands over his bare shoulders.

"I always cry," Blaine says quietly, his voice hoarse, "but I feel even more dumb crying over the things my daughter said to me."

"You're not dumb," Kurt tells him firmly. "She was incredibly hurtful. I wanted to intervene but I had a feeling it would only make everything worse, so I stayed away. I'll go up and talk with her in a moment though, because she was way out of line. I just wanted to check you were okay first."

"I'm not," Blaine answers honestly. "Why do we always clash like this? It's always her and me, never you."

"Hmm, well, we have our moments." Kurt draws him close and kisses him again. "But I know exactly why you two clash, and why we don't really, and that's because she is just like you."

Blaine lets a small laugh out through his tears and shakes his head, but Kurt lifts his chin and looks him in the eye. "She is. And you know what else? I love her to bits, and I know she loves me, but she's a daddy's girl at heart. Just like I'm a daddy's boy."

"Are we talking about your dad here, or me?"
"Both," Kurt says with a smile. "You know why I fell for you, why I feel so safe and secure with you...because you're just like my dad. And you know why Libby's fallen for Jamie too, because he has the same morals, the same sweet and caring attitude and he reveres her just as you do. She was angry and upset with what she saw, Blaine, and that was both our faults- probably mine more than anything," he admits ruefully, "but she laid all the blame at your door because she sees you as the head of our family, you're the one who keeps it all together and so for her to see you like that...it upsets her."

"Don't say that," Blaine frowns. "I'm not the head of anything. We're a partnership. Equals. Always have been. You saying that makes you sound weak and I don't like it. And anyway. You're the bossy one," he pouts, burrowing into Kurt's neck.

"Well, yes I am, and I know we're equals. But I didn't mean it like you're in charge, I just meant you make us feel safe. You're like...our protector, or something. And that doesn't make me or Libby weak, it makes us strong, to know that you'll always keep us safe."

"New York, Kurt," Blaine whispers as his tears start afresh. "She said she wants to move to New York."

"I know," Kurt sighs, kissing into his hair again. "I know."

"And she doesn't want to be my baby anymore, or call me daddy, and she's growing up so fast and I...I don't know what to do," Blaine cries, clinging tight to Kurt. "I don't know how to let her go and not be hurt and upset in the process."

"Well...she has to stop speaking to you like she does," Kurt says firmly. "If she wants to be an adult then she has to learn to think like an adult and that means watching what she's saying, even in anger. I think, from the sounds of things that she's probably going through a tough time right now at school, and with Jamie. I'm gonna go talk with her."

"No, I'll go," Blaine sighs. "I think it's time we had this out properly. I need to tell her myself how much her words hurt, and I also need to listen to whatever it is she's trying to say through all this anger. So I'll do it."

"Okay," Kurt agrees, kissing his lips. "Blaine? Do you think we should give in? Tone our affection down a bit?"

"No." Blaine's voice is hard and resolute as he stands up and hugs Kurt tight. "I'm prepared to compromise on a lot of things but I'm not prepared to compromise on that. I mean...okay, catching us in the middle of sex maybe isn't the best thing, but I'm not going to stop kissing you or holding you in front of her, because I love you. She used to let me be that affectionate with her too, once upon a time."

"She still does sometimes," Kurt tries.

"Rarely. She gives me a kiss before school and before bed, that's it. If she wants something she might give me a quick cuddle."

"So go up there and tell her all this, explain how that makes you feel. Cause I still cuddle with my dad, and I expect you'd do anything to cuddle with yours. She needs to appreciate all this."

"I can't make her, though."

"No you can't, but you can explain your side. Now go. I'll make a start on dinner."
Blaine knocks quietly on Libby's door, pushing it open just a crack. "Hey, can I come in?"

Libby looks up and offers a cold shrug. "I guess."

Blaine walks into the room, standing awkwardly for a moment before sitting on the edge of her bed. Libby looks up from her study, eyeing him warily.

"So I uh...I just wanted to um...apologize, I guess. For whatever it was I did, or said, to upset you."

"Okay."

"Libby? Could you look at me, please?"

Libby looks up, swallowing hard when she realizes that he's incredibly upset, and that it's all her doing. Still, she manages to hold his gaze, and he nods his thanks before continuing.

"I know we should have realized the time, and I can only apologize. Maybe I should ask that you knock in future, but I'm not going to do that since papa's office is not a bedroom and...anyway. I promise we'll be more careful in future. But I love papa very much, Lib."

"I had noticed."

"Well...I'm not sorry for that. I know you're always saying none of your friends parents are kissing and stuff, but...I don't know. I can't explain. I just love the feel of him in my arms, and I kiss him because I love him so damn much that I can't not kiss him, if you know what I mean. I'm guessing you kiss Jamie a hell of a lot?"

"Yeah but...not in front of you."

"You could," Blaine shrugs.

"I could not!" she laughs, incredulous. "You'd hit the damn ceiling."

"At some point in time grandpa had to get used to papa and me, you know. He didn't find it easy, but he did it because he loves papa so much. I'd do the same."

"You wouldn't," Libby sighs, turning back to her books.

"Libby, I um...I really didn't mean to make you mad. But it seems like you have a lot of anger directed toward me at the moment and I'm going to be honest with you here...it hurts. I try really hard not to be one of 'those' parents, you know, the ones who are always on your case about stuff, and I'm aware that I'm not necessarily as young and with it as some of your friends parents but...I try, Lib. I really do try."

His heart lurches when he sees Libby swiping at tears, and her voice comes trembling and unsure. "It's not that. The sex thing. I mean, gross, but that wasn't what made me flip out. It's...I don't even know what it is a lot of the time," she admits honestly. "I think that sometimes, I just want to feel like I'm an adult, you know? I know I'm lucky, because you and papa give me quite a lot of freedom compared to my friends, but I just always get the feeling you don't trust me, like you're waiting for me to mess up. And then you call me baby girl and I feel like a little kid again, but...I don't want to stop being your baby. Ever."

"Oh sweetie. I've told you before and I'll tell you again. You'll always be my baby even when you've got babies of your own. Libby Darling, it's hard for me too. I want to let you grow, to be
your own person but sometimes I look at you and I still see this tiny scrap of a baby, who papa and I watched being born into this world and now...here you are, this wonderful young woman who makes me so proud and it's...it's hard for me to reconcile that. I do trust you though. And I trust Jamie too. I know you're not some dumbass teenagers who are going to fool around and get into trouble, and I know you're not going to have a different boyfriend every week."

"It's not just that though, is it?" Libby asks, reaching out to hold his hand.

"Not just what?"

"It's not just me growing up, is it?" she asks again, softly this time. "It's because you were sleeping with papa when he was my age."

Blaine stares, surprised at her forthrightness. "That's um...how did you..."

"Well...I know you started dating when he was sixteen, and you were thirty one so...I don't know," she shrugs. "You must've had...ahem...needs." She blushes furiously but doesn't back down, looking him square in they eye. "And that's why you want to keep me as your little girl, because you don't want to face up to what I could actually be doing. Which I'm not!" she adds hastily. "Oh my god, this is terrible."

Blaine manages to laugh, leaning across to kiss her forehead. "Okay. Since this seems to be honesty hour... Yes, that's why I like to still see you as a little girl. But I wasn't sleeping with your papa when he was your age. We were dating though. Just."

"When did you then?"

"Libby," he frowns. "I don't think that's really any of your business."

"I'm not asking to be nosy I'm asking because... Daddy, this is all such a mess. I think I accidentally broke up with Jamie today, and I don't know how to make it better."

"You broke up? Why?"

"He wore chinos," Libby wails, before the floodgates open.

It's funny, Blaine thinks to himself as he holds Libby in his arms, listening while she tells him all about school, and how Jamie had refused to change, certain that this would be better for her, and how Libby had yelled and told him it was all over, and how she hadn't seen him for the rest of the day, and he was clearly ignoring her calls. It's funny how it takes a problem for them to move forward. But here she is, telling him everything- including how she thinks she's ready to move beyond kissing- curled up with her her head on his shoulder, holding tight to his hand as if she were a little girl.

"The day before his seventeenth birthday," Blaine says after a time of silence.

"Huh?"

"Papa and I. That was when.... And we uh...we had been y'know...doing 'stuff' before then. We didn't just jump right in and...so...yeah. This is excruciating."

Libby laughs, leaning up and kissing his cheek. "What do I do, daddy? About Jamie?"

"You call him and apologize. Ask him to come over after dinner and talk it out. You know why he dressed that way for you Lib, even if you didn't want it or ask for it. He loves you, doesn't he?"
"Yeah," she admits with a smile. "He does. And I love him too."

"I know you do. Which is why you need to be the one to make this better. You know, don't you, that if you keep dating him you're gonna get this crap for the rest of high school, right? That's why he wants to blend in, to save you from all that."

"I know, but he doesn't seem to get that I'd rather take all the crap and have Jamie just as he is. You know, he tried to define his sexuality the other week, like it even matters or like I care. But he's always so worried about other people's opinions, and I wish he wouldn't be."

"He's only worried now though, because he has you to consider. He didn't give a damn before, but he wants to keep you safe, just as I want to keep you safe, and just as when papa was in high school I worried if I should break it off to keep him safe."

"And did you?"

"No. Papa scared me too much," he jokes. "He'd have killed me. But you need to explain all this to Jamie, my darling girl. He needs to know exactly where you're coming from."

"And then?"

"Well..." Blaine sighs, stretching his arms above his head before pulling her back into his hold. "I'm taking papa away for the weekend for his birthday next month. I was going to ask Santana to stay here with you but...provided Jamie has Ellen's permission, and I hear that for myself, direct from her, he can stay with you instead that weekend."

"Really? Daddy, you don't mind?"

"Of course I mind," he shrugs. "But I told you, I trust you and I trust him. You've been dating for nearly six months, I know you're not going to rush into anything you're not ready for. I would um...I would like to take you to planned parenthood before that though, so you're safe."

"I told you, I'm not ready to go all the way yet."

"No, but things happen. You might end up suddenly feeling ready or...um...you know?"

"No, daddy. I don't know."

"Sperm gets everywhere," he blurts, turning more red than Libby has ever seen.

"You are gross!" she cries, swatting him over the head with a cushion. "Ugh. Fine, take me to get the pill," she huffs, then gives him a sly smile. "And thank you."

"Welcome," Blaine says, nudging her shoulder affectionately. "You can't be dragging a baby to New York."

"Daddy, about that..."

"It's okay," he says with a nod. "I always knew."

"How?"

"Well...you want to be a classical singer, don't you? So you need to train in the best place."

"Juilliard."
"Exactly. So...I don't know, maybe after the holidays we could take a trip one weekend, visit the school, take a look around. Riccardo knows a lot of people there. He knows a lot of people everywhere."

"I'd like to study in Italy too, after my degree."

"That would be a wonderful experience," Blaine agrees. "But you need work hard Lib, so hard."

"I will," she nods. "But if I move to New York..."

"We will visit you all the time," Blaine smiles. "Maybe we'll even keep a small apartment in the city which we can use when we visit. Who knows? But you'll be so sick of the sight of us you'll be begging us to stay in Ohio."

"And will you still call me your baby girl?"

"Not if you don't want me to."

"I do though," she cries, flinging her arms around his neck once more and kissing his cheek. "Don't ever stop, and if I get angry and tell you not to, just know that I don't mean it. I love you so much, and I'm sorry for being hurtful, daddy. I'm just dealing with so much right now and I don't know whether I'm coming or going. But I feel so much better now I've talked with you."

"I'm glad," Blaine says, squeezing her tight. "And I love you too. So much. Now call Jamie and apologize, tell him about the weekend and have Ellen call me. I'll go check on dinner and your poor abandoned papa."

"You won't check on dinner," Libby laughs. "You'll make out with him and the chicken will end up dry."

"Same difference."

Kurt is in the kitchen, biting his lip anxiously but when a much happier Blaine comes into the kitchen he smiles and holds his arms out. "It went well?"

"Very well," he grins, kissing above Kurt's collar.

"And what was the outcome?"

"Well... I said we would take her to planned parenthood, pretended like New York was no big deal and told her we would buy an apartment in the city. Oh, and I also more or less gave her our blessing to have sex in the house."

Kurt rolls his eyes, and clips the back of Blaine's head for good measure before turning his attentions back to the stove. "Next time, I'll do the talking."
Chapter 45

Jamie stretches out, smiling even before he's opened his eyes at the thought of what's waiting for him when he looks, and sure enough, it's a sight he could definitely get used to. Libby lies in his arms, her small frame tucked into his larger one, her mouth slightly parted as she dreams. She looks like the picture of her as a newborn which sits above the fireplace in the living room, Jamie thinks to himself as he smoothes her hair gently. All pink cheeked loveliness in her blue plaid baby doll pajamas, her fingers curled into a little fist resting under her chin. He lies still until she wakes with a matching grin, stretching until her top rides up and shows her stomach, which makes Jamie feel all manner of things.

"Mornin," she says, kissing his lips. "This has gotta be the best way to wake up."

"Yeah. Maybe one day we can do it all the time."

And wow. Libby is suddenly definitely awake, sitting up with wide eyes as Jamie falls into a state of complete panic. "Shit! I'm sorry. No. Forget I said anything. Please."

"I'm not likely to forget that in a hurry, am I?" Libby laughs. "And yeah," she adds shyly. "Maybe one day we can."

And Jamie relaxes, letting Libby hold him as his head rests on her shoulder, face perilously close to....look away, Jamie. Look away. "I wonder what your parents are doing," he says in a high pitched wavering voice as he tries to distract himself.

"Oh god. They'll be...well, you know what they'll be doing. They're always doing it."

"Good. That helped. Good."

"What are you talking about?" Libby asks with a laugh, kissing into his hair.

"Nothing," he answers, deciding resistance is futile and letting his gaze move downwards. "Nothing at all."

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"I can't," Blaine moans into the pillow. "I can't come again, Kurt. There isn't anything left."

"Yeah you can," Kurt says, draping his body over Blaine's back and sliding between his legs. "You can still orgasm, even if nothing comes out. C'mon, Blaine," he coaxes, "feels good."

"It does," Blaine agrees, opening his legs for Kurt's cock to slide into his still stretched hole. "But the last time we had this much sex must've been our honeymoon. I was considerably younger then."

"But now you're hotter," Kurt pants, his hips snapping back and forth as he drives deeper inside. "And I will never tire of this."

Blaine feels as if he might actually cry as he feels another orgasm approaching, and when Kurt rolls them onto their sides and strokes over Blaine's cock, it's more pain than pleasure as his orgasm tears through him and he clenches his teeth. "Fuck...fuck...just....no more. Please, no more."

"I can't stop," Kurt groans, unable to stave off his own impending pleasure. "I can't...." Kurt comes
weakly, and he knows there's no evidence as he withdraws and falls onto his back. "I think....I think we pushed it too far. I'm sorry."

"Don't be," Blaine smiles, kissing his lips and curling up in his arms. "That was fucking awesome."

"Blaine?"

"Hmm?"

"Before I fall into a sex induced coma...I love you, old man."

Blaine smiles against his husband's chest and yawns, closing his eyes. "You too, gorgeous...."

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"Well."

"Well." Libby rolls onto her side, tucking her hands under her chin and looking up at Jamie with wide eyes. "Are you okay?"

"Am I..." Jamie trails off with a laugh of disbelief. "Yes, Lib. I'm more than okay. That was...that was amazing."

Libby laughs, her blue eyes shining with love for him as he kisses her forehead and then ruffles her hair for good measure. "Maybe we could do it again sometime?" Libby teases, and Jamie grins, pulling her close to hold her in his arms.

"Maybe we could."

* 

Blaine resurfaces late in the day. Every part of him seems to be on fire as he stretches, particularly his ass. When he booked the luxury cabin in the woods for Kurt's birthday, he had envisaged long walks through the forests, relaxing in the hot tub with champagne, playing board games by the open fire. But Kurt had been upon him the second they walked through the door yesterday evening—which was fine and all he wanted. Except they hadn't stopped. Completely drunk on each other and being able to do anything they wanted as loudly as they liked, they had both been completely blinded by their lust for one another, quite simply bringing each other hour upon hour of pleasure until their exhausted, almost broken bodies had given way at around three in the morning after four orgasms apiece. And then three hours later he'd woken up to Kurt's mouth around him and that, followed by the sex which he thought he'd never survive had all conspired to make him sleep most of the day away. The perils of having a young husband, he thinks as he stretches once more with a huge smile on his face. He may be sore and aching, but Blaine thinks he can accept those perils very happily indeed.

He finds Kurt in the kitchen, making omelettes and making Blaine's heart race in the best possible way when he turns to him and smiles. "I think we should take a lodger when Libby moves to college," he teases as Blaine wraps his arms around his waist and kisses his neck. "It's the only way we'll make it to old age."

"I feel a little sad," Blaine admits. "Like we've wasted the day."

"We haven't. It's only three. We can eat then take a walk, if you want."

"I can't walk far."
Kurt laughs, handing him a plate and a mug of coffee. "Then we'll cuddle. That's never a waste of time."

"What do you think Libby and Jamie are doing?" Blaine asks as he sits down at the table very carefully.

Kurt raises an eyebrow as he settles opposite. "Do you want my honest answer?"

"No."

"Then I expect they're playing monopoly and eating chips."

"Ah. Good."

*

"We should eat," Jamie says into the warmth of Libby's neck. "I promised your dad I'd look after you, and so far we haven't emerged from bed all day."

"I call that being looked after very well indeed," Libby says, and Jamie laughs and rolls away, suddenly shy at having to pull his pajama pants on.

"It's three in the afternoon, and I'm starving. I'm going to check out your fridge."

"Okay," Libby says happily, reaching for her phone the second he's out the door. "There's loads in there, I think papa was worried we would starve."

She waits until Jamie is down the stairs, then quickly sends a text.

LIV!!!!!!!

OMG!!!!!

I KNOW!!!!!

WAS IT GOOD?

Well we didn't...you know, like all the way but we did stuff. And stuff is amazing. Stuff is my new favorite word. Stuff is like....the greatest thing in the whole entire world.

Lol. Bless you. Have you heard from your parents? Dad is getting worried. He always worries if he doesn't hear from Blaine on a daily basis.

I haven't heard from them but I'm guessing stuff isn't the only thing they're doing, so I'm leaving well alone.

Your parents are the most disgusting people in the entire world, you know that?

Yep. But they're my daddies and I love them.

And they're my Kurt and my Blaine and I love them too. Enjoy the rest of your weekend, and Melody and I want the FULL details on Monday, okay?

YES!!!!

*
But in fact, having done more than just stuff several times over, Kurt and Blaine spend the rest of the weekend wrapped in one another's arms, sharing sweet kisses and cuddles and generally enjoying time away from all interruptions. They do call Libby, later that evening, and much to Blaine's ecstatic relief, her and Jamie are out with Dylan at a roller disco in Columbus.

"But you're having fun, yes?" Blaine calls loudly over the music.

"Yes!" comes the shouted reply. "I'm having like...the best time. I love you daddy, papa too. Thank you for letting Jamie stay."

"You're welcome," Blaine answers with a smile. "We'll see you tomorrow around six."

"See?" Kurt says when he's off the phone. "All it took was a bit of trust on both sides. I haven't seen either one of you this happy for a long time."

"I still don't like the thought of what she's probably doing when they get home tonight."

"Then don't think of it," Kurt says with a laugh. "Think of me instead."

"Don't you dare come near me," Blaine laughs, wrestling Kurt away as he tries for a kiss. "Get off. You're barred from touching me in any way at all."

"Barred, huh?" Kurt laughs, screeching when Blaine tries to tickle him.

"Yep. I'm getting a restraining order and everything."

"Okay!" Kurt says, making his move and tackling Blaine around his waist. "No more sex ever."

"No!" Blaine cries desperately, giving in and rolling onto the floor where Kurt sits triumphantly on his chest. "I surrender! I do! Don't take your body away from me, please!"

So he doesn't, and even for the journey home the next day, Kurt is tucked up as close to Blaine as he can get, resting his head on his shoulder and wondering what he ever did to get it this good. Their house is still in one piece too- though neither one imagined for a second that Libby would waste her weekend partying when she could be alone with Jamie- who is now seemingly unable to look them in the eye.

"I uh...I looked after her," he mumbles as he picks up his bag.

"Yeah, I'll bet you did," Blaine grumbles, but he goes quiet when Kurt kicks him.

"Thank you, Jamie."

"I am capable of looking after myself," Libby says, rolling her eyes.

"I know, but it's still nice to know you have company in the house," Blaine says, surprising them all. "Even if it is him."

"Daddy!"

"He loves me really," Jamie tells Libby with a wink, and Blaine can't help but laugh.

"Alright. You got me. I do like you. Gosh, I used to bathe you in the tub with Lib when you were babies."

"Daddy, that's really embarrassing," Libby sighs.
"I did! Ellen used to bring Jamie here when you were little, and we would all have dinner, then you and Jamie would have a bath and go to sleep in your bed, and she would drive a sleeping Jamie home later that night."

"So why did you have such a problem with us sharing a bed then?" Jamie asks with a poker face. "You basically encouraged us right from the start."

"Drop your bag," Blaine laughs, swatting him around the back of the head. "You're staying for dinner."

The happiness continues, and Libby feels like she is floating on cloud nine when she’s around Jamie- especially when she sees how well he is getting on with her beloved parents. In fact, life is going great- with a trip to New York booked for right after the holidays, and an appointment to view Juilliard also lined up- and then her daddy goes and makes everything even better by announcing that Jamie can come with them and Libby feels like life can’t get any more fantastic....except for school.

School is awful.

Now a social pariah for daring to date someone different, Libby is either ignored or ridiculed everywhere she goes. Liv and Melody don’t care and of course, stand right by her side throughout. Dylan serves as Jamie’s protector, but still, she knows it worries him, and she also knows he’s talked to Kurt about it, as his interference caused their first proper couples fight which was eventually resolved when Blaine patiently explained Jamie's side to her.

So she tries to act nonchalant, and pretend like it doesn’t bother her when she is the last to be picked in gym- a class she has always excelled in- or when her bag suddenly finds its way into the trash can when she sets it down for a second.

She asks Liv and Melody to pretend like they don’t see the vile slurs written about her and Jamie on the bathroom walls, and begs them not to breathe a word about all the times she cries. On the other side of the coin, Jamie- when not with Libby- spends his time talking to Dylan, lamenting over having ever gotten involved with Libby in the first place.

“I don’t get it,” Dylan says, setting his game controller down and turning to face him. “Why, when you two were just friends, was it okay, and now it’s not?”

“I don’t know,” Jamie sighs. “I guess because now it makes me real. Before we were together, I was just that weird guy Libby talks to- easily ignored. If she was invited to a party, the worst person she was going to bring was Liv, and apart from having a big mouth she’s harmless. But I’m...a freak, I guess. And now she’s attached to me.”

“Because she wants to be,” Dylan points out. “And she would bust your balls if you tried to change again.”

“Yeah,” Jamie says with a sad little laugh. “She would.”

"I'm just gonna ask it, J. Why do you wear women's clothes? Or what I really mean is, why do you wear a mixture of women's and men's clothes? I mean, you're not a small guy. You're tall and broad. You'd make a good football player if you could actually throw the ball in a straight line."

"I guess....I just don't see things a black and white as 'that's for guys and that's for girls',” Jamie explains. "I see a top in the store and if I like it and it fits, I buy it. I've just always been that way,
and I don't see why we have to stick to these norms just because society tells us we do. If a girl likes to dress and look like a guy then why can't she? It's no different to how Lib likes to wear those cute little dresses. Oh man." He breaks off, a huge grin cracking out on his face. "Those dresses. Her legs."

"See, that's what I think freaks people out."

"Libby's legs?"

"About you, you fool!" Dylan laughs. "If you dressed completely like a girl, and wanted to be a girl, I think people would find it easier to accept. Being different scares people. You look like a guy, sound like a guy but dress like a mixture of both, and you're straight with a girlfriend. It confuses people, and people don't like to be confused."

"I'm not straight, Dylan," Jamie says quietly. "I've never been straight."

"Oh. See? I didn't know that. What are you, then? If you don't mind my asking?"

"I don't mind, but the answer is I don't really know. Libby doesn't think I should have to define myself and as long as she's happy, I'm happy. I just know that for me, it's not just girls. At least, I don't think so. I mean, I've only ever been with Libby so...I've never even kissed anyone else."

Dylan shrugs, picking up his game controller once more. "I've never kissed anyone at all, but I still know I'm gay. I wish I would meet someone though. And just so we're clear, if you ever do decide to experiment, it's never gonna be with me, okay?"

"Ew, no way!" Jamie laughs. "Not a hope in hell."

*

Six weeks later and Jamie's wish comes true in the form of Ryan, a freshman at the University of Ohio, based in Columbus. They meet on New Year's Eve when Ryan, late to meet friends, runs around a corner and quite literally floors Dylan, who hits his head and rolls into the road. Ryan doesn't make it to meet his friends. Overcome with guilt, he insists on driving Dylan to the ER, and nine hours later they share their first kiss as they see in the New Year together.

Dylan is elated, and Libby really wants to be happy for him- except Ryan clearly dislikes Jamie. He's friendly to everyone else, but whenever his gaze happens to fall on Jamie, or Jamie himself says anything, Ryan frowns and mumbles something, or just plain blanks him.

"We're not double dating," Libby announces as their flight heads toward New York. "We're just not."

"Really Lib, it's not an issue. It'll make Dylan happy if we all go to the movies so..."

"It's not so much the movies," Libby snaps as she reclines her seat. "It's the inevitable pizza afterwards, or ice cream. The part where we have to make conversation. And you'll be your usual charmingly funny self, and he'll roll his eyes and make me want to punch him."

"You think I'm funny?" Jamie smiles. "I make you laugh?"

"Yeah," Libby nods. "You have the same sense of humor as daddy. Immature."

"Hey!" Blaine objects, turning around from the seat in front and flicking her forehead.
Libby rolls her eyes and looks at Jamie, who is laughing. "See?"

"I'll get you for that," Jamie laughs. "Why are you getting so worked up anyways?"

"Because I love you, and I don't like it when other people don't appreciate your awesomeness."

"Well you do, so that's all that matters," he says, kissing the back of her hand. In the two seats in front, Kurt squeezes Blaine's hand as they listen in, smiling softly at the sweet conversation between these young lovers. Blaine raises his glass of champagne, clinking his glass with Kurt's and giving a wink.

"By the way," Libby carries on. "I'm wearing some very sexy new underwear, and I can't wait for you to see it."

Kurt chokes hard, champagne spraying everywhere. "Oh my god!" he cries. "THAT was why you and Santana went shopping?! Libby!"

Blaine holds his head in his hands, mumbling something about Santana never being trusted again, then turns around, flicks Jamie and Libby both in the forehead before settling back in his seat once more.

"Daddy, I..."

"Nope!" he cries, holding his hand up. "There's nothing you can say to make it better Lib. One of the curses of being like me, sweetie. You never know when to keep it quiet."

Kurt snorts, thinking back to their first visit to Cooper in LA, when Blaine's mom had asked him to keep the noise down.

"Yeah, you might well laugh," Blaine mutters, though his eyes are twinkling as he too reminisces, then lowers his voice as he leans in. "I can still make you scream," he whispers darkly.

"Daddy!" Libby screeches. "I heard that!"

"Yep," Jamie says smugly, leaning back in his chair. "She's a loudmouth like you."

* Jamie sees the obvious panic and fear in Blaine's eyes as they exit the airport and look for a cab. He notices also, the way in which Kurt never leaves his side. Holding his hand, rubbing his back, whispering sweet words of reassurance when he thinks nobody is looking.

It warms Jamie's heart, as they whizz toward Manhattan, to see the way their relationship plays out. Yes, they tease, they flirt, they make very loud and public declarations of love which embarrass Libby no end, and it's blatantly obvious that they have sex like, all the time. But it's these private moments, when they think no one is watching, which makes it last, Jamie realizes. Their love and affection for one another runs so much deeper than anyone can ever see, but to Kurt and Blaine, it is very much noticed, very much felt, and clearly very welcome.

A little kiss from Kurt, into Blaine's hair as he rests his head on Kurt's shoulder, has Blaine looking up, making eye contact and knowing it will all be okay. Jamie would like to hope that one day, he and Libby could be the same.

The Plaza is like nothing Jamie has ever seen. In fact the whole damn city, which he only caught glimpses of, seems to be an entirely different world. Libby takes it all in her stride, used to a lifetime of hotels and the five star treatment. They find their room while Kurt and Blaine head up
two more floors to theirs, but Libby only throws the bags down and uses the bathroom quickly before tugging Jamie back out again to find her parents.

"I wanted to explore," he pouts.

"Me, or the room?"

"Little bit of both, maybe," he says with a grin, quite unable to get enough of this girl who slides his arms around his waist and looks up for a kiss.

"So we find daddy and papa, and tell them we'll meet them for dinner," Libby declares. "We can unpack....explore, and then take a walk, see a bit of the city, visit Central Park. What do you say?"

"Sounds perfect."

Libby knocks on her parents door and waits. A lot of noise is heard, scraping, shuffling and a few grunts and growls, followed by Kurt's hysterical laughter before the door is opened.

"What are you doing?" Libby asks with an eyeroll.

Kurt stands there, stripped to the waist. His hair stands in a hundred different directions, his cheeks are pink and his eyes are sparkling. "Pillow fight," he grins. "Come in and help me get daddy."

"No thank you," Libby laughs. "Though I'm thankful you're just being morons as the alternative could have been so much worse. We just came to tell you we'll meet you for dinner."

"Okay," Kurt nods, glancing over his shoulder to check attack from Blaine isn't imminent. "Just make sure you take your phones if you're going out. And don't ride the subway, daddy doesn't like it."

"We won't."

"Have fun!" Kurt calls, screaming when Blaine launches a stealth attack and swats him with a pillow. "Right, husband! You're going down!"

"Best not to ask what that actually means," Libby explains to Jamie as she closes the door. "Come on, let's go exploring."

* 

"This hotel is incredible!" Jamie cries, his eyes wide as he walks around their enormous room. "And I am so thankful your dad put us on a different floor."

Libby laughs as she arranges her products in the bathroom, more than a little thrilled by his over exuberance. "Believe me, you should be. They can get loud."

"You hear your parents having sex? Gross!"

"No, I've never heard them, but Santana and Sebastian can tell you some tales. Bless them, I think that's why we're two floors down. They have to keep it down at home so they make the most of it when we're away."

"You three have such an amazing relationship," Jamie calls, flopping on the huge bed. "You're so open with each other. It's like you're friends more than parents and daughter."

"No." Libby comes out of the bathroom, kicking her shoes off before falling onto the bed next to
him. "They're still like my parents, trust me. But they've just always been honest about their love for one another, they both see physical affection as a big part of that, and I agree. Wanting to make love to the person you love isn't anything to be ashamed of, it's a really beautiful thing. If I curse at the dinner table, or if I was to get a D they'd be on my case so hard, but they know I love you, and I know they love each other. And it works the same for me with them, you know? I'm not ashamed of loving them, and they're not ashamed of me. Consequently, I like holding their hands, or kissing them goodnight. One day, I'll be here, and they'll be there, and those are the memories I'll treasure."

"That's beautiful," Jamie says, rolling onto his front so he can kiss her lips. "But it saddens me to think you won't have anyone to kiss you goodnight."

"Well... about that," Libby says, suddenly ridiculously nervous. "I was wondering if you had any plans for college yet? What you wanted to do?"

"Because you want me in New York, with you?"

Libby takes a deep breath, steeling herself to lay it all on the line at last. "I do, yeah. I want us to live together."
"So...we're seniors next week," Libby starts, and Jamie groans, rolls onto his side and lowers his sunglasses to frown at her.

"Not again."

"Jamie, I..."

"Libby." Jamie's voice is firm as he slides his sunglasses back in place and turns onto his back once more. "I told you we would discuss college when we were seniors. There's still one week of summer left, your parents have been kind enough to bring us on vacation now please, can we just enjoy it? You've been on at me ever since the damn plane landed and I've had enough. I just want to enjoy being in Hawaii with you."

"I need to know, Jamie," Libby persists. "I've waited and I've waited since January, when you mumbled and blundered your way into saying that you hadn't decided. But it's not just me. It's you, too. You need to start applying to colleges, thinking about what you want to do, where your future lies. I told you, if you don't want to go to college in New York that's fine, but I would like to know if you think we have a future together."

"I love you," he offers by way of reply, but Libby turns away, focusing her attentions on the ocean and the figures of her dads swimming out in the deep water.

"I know you do. I just don't know if that's enough."

* *

"They're fighting again," Kurt says with a sigh.

"Well can they please stop? My legs are tired and I feel like we can't go back in until they've sorted it out."

Kurt turns onto his back, floating on the water. "I hate this."

"Hmm. I agree. It's like history repeating itself."

"It is, only if Libby gets into Juilliard there's no way I'd advise her to transfer somewhere else."

"Do you regret it?" Blaine asks as he floats alongside.

"Not for one second. Our life, it twisted and turned, sometimes fast, sometimes slow but we always got to where we were meant to be. And where we were meant to be was Chicago. If we hadn't ended up there I'd never have met Joe. You'd never have been a symphony musician, never met Riccardo, it goes on and on....and we would never have been truly happy."

"It's not done yet," Blaine laughs reaching for his hand. "Not by a long shot."

"No, I know. But now, with Libby a year away from college I feel like you and I are entering our...I don't know. I was going to say twilight years but..."

"You're forty two!"

"Exactly," Kurt laughs. "But what I mean is...I'm heartbroken that she will be flying the nest, but so
happy that I get you all to myself again. We can just retire and take it easy, enjoy being together."

"You're selling?"

"Not selling. Gifting. To Jules. Libby has no interest in the company, which is fine, but he does. Taylor supports him, and Benji is already obsessed with drawing outfits and designs. It seems like it's the right place for it to be. But it'll stay as Anderson's, and I'll be a silent partner."

Blaine laughs, splashing under the water then coming up, still laughing as he treads water. "You will never be silent!"

"Yes, thank you," Kurt replies dryly, flicking water at him. "Okay, I'll be pretty much silent, but I'll attend board meetings, how does that sound?"


"Come on. Let's swim back."

"But what if they're..."

"Nope. You know what? The one thing I regret is that you and I spent my entire senior year wrapped up in negativity and fear. I don't want that for her. So..."

"Oh no," Blaine groans, shaking water from his hair.

"Yes. I'll talk to her, you talk to him."

"I'm not his dad!" Blaine cries as they start to swim to the shore.

"Exactly. Your parents were incredible, just like Ellen is with Jamie. But if there's one person I know you've listened to more than any other over the years, it's been my dad- even though I'm pretty sure it's supposed to be me," Kurt says with a pointed look.

"Oh, yes. Of course," Blaine nods, and they both laugh.

* 

Things are strained between Libby and Jamie for the rest of the afternoon. It's not as if they're not talking, but there's just a tense atmosphere that no one seems able to shift, and in the end Libby announces she's going back to her room to take a nap before dinner, leaving Jamie sitting in the shade by the pool alone with his drink.

"Now," Kurt hisses at Blaine from his sunlounger. "Go."

"But Libby said she's going to take a nap."

"She's not going to take a nap," Kurt whispers. "She's going to lie on her bed and cry."

"What?"

"Trust me. Now go talk to him. And for goodness sake be nice. He's just as scared for the future as she is, probably even more."

"You know, uh...my dad and Kurt...." Blaine starts awkwardly as he sits down next to Jamie. "Whenever we used to go on vacation, they'd spend hours together playing chess."

Jamie looks at him, unsure what to do or say with this information, so he settles for offering a
vague smile and looking out to the pool. "Right."

"He always said Kurt was his favorite."

"And was he?"

"Hmm," Blaine shrugs. "No, I don't think so. But I do think that after raising two sons to adulthood, they were both more than thrilled to suddenly have a teenager in their lives once more. Someone to fuss over."

"Kurt doesn't strike me as that type," Jamie says with a smile. "To be fussed over, I mean. To let someone do that."

"Oh you'd be surprised," Blaine smiles. "Don't get me wrong, he's a strong independent black woman who don't need no man, but I know he secretly loves to be pandered to."

"We all need a little looking after from someone," Jamie mumbles, fiddling with his straw.

"You need Lib?"

"Yeah," he admits softly. "Or my mom. Anyone really." He breaks off, wiping at the tears he knew had been threatening all day. Embarrassed to be crying in front of Blaine, he turns his back but then Blaine is sitting by his side on the same sunlounger, pulling him into his arms and damn if he isn't offering the hug Jamie has been so desperately craving.

"It's okay to cry," Blaine whispers as he holds Jamie tight, and that's all the permission he needs. The floodgates open, and though very few people around the pool actually notice or care, Jamie is mortified. "C'mon," Blaine says quietly, pulling him to his feet. "Let's go back to my room."

He keeps his arm around Jamie throughout, a fact which Jamie finds he is eternally grateful for as he feels light headed, a combination of the sun, the tears and the stress of the situation no doubt. It's better in the cool of the room though, and he sits on the couch and lets his tears subside to occasional hiccuping sobs while Blaine fixes him a glass of iced water. "Thank you," he says, looking up with red rimmed eyes. He sips the water, grateful for the shock the coldness brings to the back of his throat, then sets the glass down and holds his head in his hands. "I don't want to lose her, Blaine," he says in a shaky voice before he starts to cry again. "I love her so much, and I just don't want to lose her from my life."

Blaine sits next to him, rubbing one hand between his shoulder blades. "So what's the problem?"

"The truth is, I don't even know what I want to study at college, let alone where I want to go. I don't think my mom can afford for me to go out of state, you know? But right now I feel like New York is the only option. And..."

"Tell her that," Blaine urges. "You have to explain to her, Jamie. She will understand. She'll blow up initially, maybe, but she will soon calm down about it and you can work it out. Don't do what Kurt and I did. I know Libby's told you all about that. We buried our heads in the sand and tried to pretend this wasn't happening. You know, Kurt's junior year, we went to Chicago and while we were there, he asked me about college then. He had just turned seventeen. I mumbled something about it being too early to talk about it, but I knew, even then. I knew I'd never go."

"You did eventually though," Jamie points out.

"I did. But only because I knew I couldn't live without him in my life. We were apart through my own fault and I had to be the one to remedy that. In fact, as you know, it all worked out for the best
with Kurt transferring to Chicago and stuff, and I'm glad. Truth be told, I would never have been happy in New York."

"I would be though," Jamie admits. "When you took us there back in January, I loved it. It's an amazing place. That's just it," he says, becoming more animated as he speaks. "I can see us there. I can see us living together, exploring all these quaint little coffee shops and bars, dancing through the night then spending the next day curled up in bed. I can see me finally being accepted and tolerated, and Libby not getting shit over who she dates. I can see more too, in the future. I can see her, pregnant with my child," he says, ignoring Blaine's uncomfortable wince. "I can see us in a little house in the suburbs, happy and content, I can see all that."

"But?"

"But I'm just not sure if ultimately, my future lies with a woman."

"Ah."

"And I just don't know how to...how to even begin with getting my head around that. It's like there's two of me, you know? There's this Jamie that wants to stay by Libby's side for the rest of our lives. I want to marry her, settle down and just be hers, forever. Then there's this Jamie that wants to rebel. To break with conventions and expectations and go wild. That part of me wants to sleep with guys and girls, to experiment with whatever and whoever. That Jamie wants to travel the world, meet new people, get out there and see it all and try it all for myself."

“So...you’re not straight? You want to finish it with Libby? What?”

“I’ve never been straight.”

“No, I know.”

“But I don’t want to finish things with Libby, no. That’s exactly what I do not want to do.”

“Well, neither her nor me will sit by and let you fool around with other people while you’re still with her,” Blaine says firmly.

“I know that,” Jamie sighs. “I’m not asking for that. I don’t know what I’m asking for or what I’m trying to say really. I just don’t know. I mean, I’ve known Libby all my life. Can you really be with one person all your life through?”

“I don’t know,” Blaine says with a small smile. “Why don’t we ask Kurt?”

“Very funny,” Jamie says with a laugh. “You know, you guys are great, and the kind of love you have is all I want for Libby and myself but...Libby kinda expects it, you know? She has you two in front of her, this picture perfect romance, this great epic love story and that’s all she knows. I know of a father who left when I was two weeks old. I know a mom who worked her ass off to give me a decent upbringing, and I know a mom who has spent eighteen years putting her own happiness on hold for my sake. I don’t want to be the bastard that does that to Libby, who suddenly, ten years down the line, walks out of her life without warning because I can’t stand to be contained any longer. Libby deserves so much better.”

“Yes she does,” Blaine agrees. “But so do you. And you know, Kurt and I, we haven’t been without our fair share of problems. There’s been a few times when we’ve come close to being over, but at the bottom of it all, beneath all the turmoil and the hurt and the anger, there’s this deep love for one another that has never gone away. If you want my opinion,” he says, surprised when Jamie nods unlike his headstrong daughter who usually walks away, “well, it sounds to me like you
need to loosen up a bit. Let things play out. You’re panicking that you’ll turn out like a man whom you know nothing about. Let’s face it, his role in your life has been nothing more than the egg donor has been in Libby’s. You know how similar to me she is. It’s the people who raise you who shape you, and the woman who raised you did a fine job.”

“She raised a transvestite.”

“Is that what you’re identifying as now?”

“I don’t know. Technically, yes. But I don’t like the word, because so many people use it incorrectly, or as a term of abuse.”

“Then I strongly suggest you continue to identify as Jamie, because if that’s good enough for my daughter, it’s good enough for anyone else.”

“Do you think we are the happy ever after?”

“I don’t know,” Blaine sighs as he leans back on the couch. “You and Libby would have the clearest idea, but does anyone ever really know? For sure? When Kurt and I married, he was twenty one and just graduated. It felt as if the world was ours for the taking. A year later we nearly split for good, and now, twenty one years on from that, it’s as perfect and wonderful as can be. You only make it if you work at it, Jamie. But you know what? You’re seventeen years old.”

“I’m eighteen in two weeks.”

“And perhaps still a little young,” Blaine says, smiling at his comment. “If you and Libby don’t make it right now, if you have a break during college, there’s nothing to say you won’t gravitate back to one another at some point in the future. Maybe you need these coming years to both find out who you really are before you think about whether you want to settle down. I have a feeling that whatever the future holds, you will always love each other.”

“This is so messed up,” Jamie moans, holding his head in his hands again. “I don’t want to date anyone else. I don’t want her to either. I just don’t know if I can go my whole life through never knowing...never having given myself the chance...and I know she can.”

“You see, that’s where she is like Kurt. Because Kurt never wanted another, never had that urge or need. But if I’m brutally honest here, if Kurt and I had both been sixteen when we’d met? I’d have broken his heart. I wasn’t exactly a whore, but considering I didn’t start dating until I was eighteen, I got about a bit. I’m easily swayed by flattery, Kurt isn’t. We’d have got to college and it would all have gone wrong.”

“That happened, didn’t it? Some guy tried it on with you?”

“Yeah, when Lib was small. Difference was, I was mature enough to walk away. I didn’t need anyone else’s attentions emotionally or physically because Kurt gives me all I need.”

“Libby and I...we haven’t even...you know. What if I’m monumentally crap at it?”

“Um...” Blaine pauses, trying to digest the news that his teenaged daughter really hasn’t been doing everything he’s been assuming all this time. “Well...Kurt, you know, I was his first. Like I said, I’d been about a bit before that, but it was never as good as it was, or is, with him. Simply because he’s the only one I’ve ever been in love with.”

Jamie turns to him, the pain and anguish he’s going through clearly written in his blue eyes. “I do love her, Blaine. I hope you know that.”
“I know,” Blaine nods. “Which is why you must talk to her, Jamie. Get it all out now, before everything blows up in your face.”

*

“Libby, sweetie?”

“I’m napping,” comes her response, but even though she has her back turned, Kurt knows she is crying.

“I know you are,” he says as he sits on the bed next to her. “I just thought we could talk while you nap, that’s all.”

“Did daddy put you up to this?”

“Actually, no. I put him up to talking with Jamie, so now I can’t go in our room because they’re in there.”

Libby rolls over, resting her head in Kurt’s lap. “He doesn’t want to go,” she whispers, her voice breaking as she cries. “He doesn’t want to go to New York with me and I don’t know why.”

“Oh Libby Darling,” Kurt sighs as he plays with her hair. “Rewind twenty five years and this could be me, crying over daddy.”

“Daddy had a reason!” Libby cries desperately as she sits and turns her tear stained face towards him. “He might not have gone about telling you in the right way, but at least he had a reason for not wanting to go back!”

“Have you asked Jamie his reasons? Has he said he’s not going?”

Libby pauses, biting her lip. “No,” she admits quietly.

“Well I think that should be your first step, don’t you?”

“But I’m frightened of hearing him say the words. I’m scared, because if he says he’s not coming with me, that makes it all real.”

“It does,” Kurt agrees. “And then you both decide what you’re going to do, together. Whether you’re going to do the distance thing, or have a clean break, or what. Don’t do what daddy and I did, Libby. Please don’t.”

“I just want him though, papa. I only want Jamie for my whole life through. Marriage, babies, those things are all way off, yet talking about them, admitting I want those things with him, it doesn’t scare me at all.”

“And what about Jamie? Is that what he wants?”

“I don’t know!” Libby cries again. “I don’t ask, he doesn’t say...I know he loves me,” she says with a firm nod. “I definitely know that.”

“A blind bat would know that,” Kurt laughs with a playful shove. “Libby, listen to me. If you want my advice, you two will talk this out right now. Tonight. Lay all your cards on the table, ask your questions and don’t hide from the answers, even if they’re not what you want to hear. I knew daddy would never come to New York with me, yet between us both we kept putting it off and putting it off. Then, when he finally said no, I didn’t want to know. I was convinced I could make him
change his mind. You will lose Jamie forever if you don’t talk to each other and decide how you’re going to go forward, whether that’s together or separately. But whatever you decide, just keep in mind that you’re both still young. You have your whole lives ahead of you.”

“I want that life to be with him,” Libby whispers as she rests her head on Kurt’s shoulder. “But I don’t think it will be.”

*K*

Kurt retreats gracefully as soon as Jamie returns, informing them both that he and Blaine will be going up to the main hotel for dinner- his polite way of saying they are leaving them alone to talk. The atmosphere is strained as soon as he closes the door behind him, with Libby sitting awkwardly on the edge of the bed and Jamie standing in the center of the room, wishing he wasn’t six foot tall with broad shoulders as it might make it easier to disappear.

“Did you want us to go for dinner with your parents?” he asks after a while, hating the way his voice sounds so loud in the room.

“No,” Libby replies quietly. “I’d like us to take a walk along the beach, maybe? We need to talk.”

“We do,” Jamie agrees, moving to kneel on the floor by her feet. “But I really don’t want to.”

“What do you want to do then?”

Jamie smiles, reaching up to tuck her hair back into place. “I want to take you to bed,” he whispers, kissing her forehead softly. “I want to make love to you and then hold you in my arms all night long.”

“Papa told me less sex more talking,” Libby blurts, and Jamie huffs out a laugh and kisses the tip of her nose. “I didn’t have the heart to tell him we haven’t yet.”

“We haven’t talked either though,” Jamie points out. “Maybe your papa is right. As much as I’d like to, it isn’t the answer, is it?”

“Not right now, no,” Libby says, wrapping her arms around his neck to hug him tightly. “Come on. Let’s take that walk instead.”

“It’s a no, isn’t it?” Libby asks as they step out onto the sand.

Taking her hand in his, and as ever, marveling that they fit together so perfectly, Jamie looks towards the sun, now turning a deep red as it starts to set. “Actually, it’s more of a ‘I don’t have a fucking clue,’” he admits, and Libby laughs loudly.

“Oh god we’re a mess. Why is it that?” she asks as they walk along the shore.

“Well, let’s start with the easy stuff. I’m not sure I can afford to go to college out of state, and I have no clue what I want to study. So there’s that.”

“Okay.”

“But,” he carries on, “I loved New York when we visited. It’s incredible, and I can see us there. I can see it would suit us, as a couple and as individuals.”

“So...I don’t know. You could get a job? Work around your degree? I could get a job too, we could support each other.”
“There’s more than that though, Lib,” Jamie sighs.

“The hard stuff,” she states, stopping and sitting down on the sand where he joins her.

“Yes.”

“You’re going to leave me, aren’t you?”

Jamie takes a deep breath and forces himself to look her in the eye. “I don’t know. I told your dad earlier, there’s two of me right now. The Jamie I want to be, is the Jamie that will move to New York with you, that will support you every step of the way, and marry you when we’re out of college and one day have kids with you.”

“I like that Jamie,” Libby admits, making his heart lurch when she smiles. “But I know what you’re going to say.”

“You do?”

“You want to see what it’s like to be with a guy, don’t you?”

“No, not necessarily,” he counters.

“Someone who’s not me, then.”

“Not true,” he says quickly. “Lib, I’m so confused. I don’t know what I want. I just don’t know if I can stay with you, knowing that one day I might break your heart. I want to go to college to do something, because I want a good future, and I haven’t worked this hard at school to throw it all away. I want to make my mom and you proud of me, but that could potentially mean us spending the next four years apart, and I don’t know if I can promise myself to you for the rest of my life. If I was twenty five or something, yes. But the way I feel right now....I’m more attracted to you than anyone else, but setting you aside for a moment, girls are beautiful, but guys are beautiful too, and I think possibly more where it’s at for me.”

“Right,” Libby says, nodding slowly as she looks out toward the ocean. “So...”

“So I want to be that guy I said about, the one that you deserve. I’m just not sure if I can be, and I don’t know if it’s fairer to let you go now.”

“I’d rather you didn’t.”

“Really? But what if...”

“Jamie, I need to know some answers to some stuff, okay?”

“I’ll try.”

“Ultimately, regardless of what happens in the next few years, where do you see yourself when you’re thirty?”

“With you,” he responds without hesitation. “You are so damn beautiful,” he murmurs, lifting her hair to kiss her neck. “And you only get prettier. I want to wake up next to you every day, to kiss you good morning and goodnight. I want to hold you when you’re sad, to care for you when you’re sick, I want us to laugh together, to dance together, I want...god...I want to see you pregnant with my baby. I want to hold him or her in my arms and know that we made a beautifully perfect child because we are perfect together.”
“And now answer me this,” Libby says, trying not to cry with the beauty of the picture Jamie has just painted. “Do you want to live your life as a woman? As a gay man? As a transvestite?”

“What?” he cries, pulling back from her. “A woman? What the fuck are you on, Libby? I’ve never wanted to be a woman,” he cries, getting to his feet. “You of all people should know that. Jeez!” Throwing his hands up in despair, Jamie storms off down the beach with Libby hurrying behind him.

“I’m sorry! Jamie! Wait up, please! I didn’t mean it like that!”

“Then how did you mean it, huh?” Whirling about to face her, he wipes angrily at his tears. “I’ve told you I don’t want to be female, and I’ve told you I’m not gay. I’m just...I’m just fucked up in the head is what I am!”

“No, no, you’re not,” Libby cries, rushing to hug him tight. “You’re my Jamie, that’s all. Just my Jamie.”

“Then why did you ask that?” he moans into her shoulder. “Just...why?”

“I only asked because this vacation it’s like...I don’t know, like you’ve been more free with your dress sense, that’s all. Like this,” she says, gesturing to his outfit of white shorts and a floral halterneck.

“I have guy’s shorts on,” he mutters.

“I know you do,” she says. “But you could get away with girls hotpants, you know. But the halterneck...some of the stuff you wear is a bit ambiguous these last few months, or it’s like one item of girls clothing with the rest all really masculine and I just wondered if something had changed, that’s all.”

“Nothing’s changed in my outlook on all that,” Jamie tells her as they sit on the sand once more. “But away from Ohio I feel so much more freedom. Like I can completely be myself, cause your dads don’t mind and I know you don’t either.”

“Actually, despite you being kinda sad and snotty right now, I’ve never seen you look hotter,” Libby tells him, and his jaw almost drops with the sincerity of her words. “I mean it. You look so good because you feel so comfortable, and that’s great. I don’t want you to hide who you are, Jamie. Way back when we first started dating you told me you sometimes wear girls underwear, but you never have with me.”

“No,” he says, blushing red in the evening dusk. “But that’s...I wasn't sure if you...”

“I want you to be happy,” she says, straddling his lap and locking her hands behind his head. “I want you to feel good about yourself because I’m telling you, confidence is sexy. You used to be, and I know those jerks at school and your need to protect me has made you think more about what you wear, but don’t let it. I have days where I put on sweatpants and a hoodie, much to papa’s horror. But I also have days where I want to dress all girly and flirty, and if you have those too, that’s okay.”

“So....you wouldn't mind?”

"I wouldn't mind, because I know you'd be sharing more of yourself with me, and I'm pretty sure you know I find you attractive. Does that make me more gay than straight? Does it make me strange? To want to be with a guy who dresses as you do? Who gives a shit? Don't you see how pointless it is, Jamie? To spend your life wondering what other people think? All that matters is
what happens between you and me."

"And what do you want that to be?"

"Well...answer me honestly here. Do you want to end things between us?"

"No," his answer is immediate and definite and Libby doesn't need any more than this, but he offers it anyway. "I love being with you. I mean, physically, yes, of course but also, we just have a ton of fun together, don't you think?"

"I do," Libby smiles.

"And I don't want that to end. But I'm not sure if..."

"Jamie." Libby cuts him off quickly, one finger on his lips as she looks into his eyes. "Here's what I think we should do. We carry on, just as we are. That might be for three weeks, three months, three years or the rest of our lives. When we get home we can start looking into college courses for you, maybe even scholarships. I've a feeling you'd be happier out of Ohio but...we'll see. Whatever happens when college comes, we'll take it in our stride. If we decide to stay together I think my one rule will be that if either of us wants to go with someone else that we're upfront and honest enough with each other to break it off first."

"I want to say yes," Jamie starts slowly. "But what if I break your heart?"

"You won't," Libby says, wiping at a few tears. "It's yours for the keeping anyway."

"Really?"

"Really."

"Because you have mine too, you know. For the rest of my life, no matter where that takes me, I'll always love you the most," Jamie offers with a sad smile.

"So we'll battle on? And you'll visit me in New York?"

"Well I'll need to get laid so...."

Libby laughs, smacking his shoulder before kissing him soundly on the lips. "Jerk."

"I love you," Jamie whispers in response, sliding his hand into her hair and kissing her deeply.

"I love you too," Libby replies as Jamie gently lies her down on the sand.

* 

"That was a good dinner," Blaine remarks, patting his stomach as they walk back to their room. "I'll need a long swim tomorrow to burn that off."

"Or something else," Kurt teases as he takes his husband's hand.

"I like that option better."

"Do you think it's the running and swimming or the sex that's kept your figure all these years?"

"The sex," Blaine laughs. "I'm under no illusions. Although my waistline is significantly bigger now than when we married."
"Two inches, Blaine," Kurt scoffs. "You've gone up two inches in twenty one years. Hardly significant at all."

"Two inches can make a lot of difference to some people," Blaine says, laughing when Kurt sticks his tongue out.

They walk on a while, stopping to make out under a palm tree in the darkness, giddy as always with the freedom of being on vacation and the after dinner cocktails they shared. "C'mon," Kurt whispers against the hollow of Blaine's throat. "I think we should take this inside."

"I'm all yours."

"I know you are," Kurt says smugly, tugging him along the beach.

"Do you think Libby and Jamie will be okay?" Blaine asks suddenly.

Until that point, neither one had seen the figures on the beach, but Kurt suddenly catches the moonlight shining on Jamie's shorts, quite possibly because his daughter's hands have just moved down the back of them. His eyes fly wide as he steers Blaine from the sand and back up to the path. "I'm pretty sure they're fine," he says as lightly as he can.

"Is that them?" Blaine asks, twisting his head around, but Kurt turns him back the other way.

"That's them, and we very nearly did the same thing on this beach so many times I can't count."

"Ugh. True."

"But unlike them, we are not now teenagers in the flushes of young love, so we will be dignified and return to our room to make love quietly and sedately," Kurt carries on, but when he turns to look at Blaine they both have the same gleam in their eyes. "Race you."

* Jamie groans as he grinds down against Libby, before he reluctantly pulls back to gaze into her eyes. "I think we should go back to our room," he breathes against her lips, but she whines and closes her eyes in protest. "No, we should," he persists.

"Why?"

"Because I don't want our first time to be on a public beach where anyone can walk past, including your parents. Plus, I've heard sand can sting like a bitch."

Libby laughs and lets Jamie pull her to her feet. "Yeah, okay. Since you mention it, it will be a weird story to tell the kids one day. I lost my virginity on a beach with your grandads looking on....hey," she says, taking Jamie's hand as he swallows hard. "You okay?"

"Terrified," he admits quietly.

"Me too," Libby whispers as she wraps her arms around him. "But it's me and you, that's all."

Jamie nods, scooping her tiny frame into his arms and laughing as she shrieks. "Let's do this then," he grins as he carries her back up the beach. "Practice makes perfect, I guess."

"Oh, and we will perfect it, Jamie," Libby smiles as she rests her head on his shoulder. "Don't you worry about that."
Chapter 47

December

"So, Dylan got into Boston," Libby tells Kurt as she sits on the kitchen counter and watches him cook.

"Really? That's great," he smiles.

"And he broke up with Ryan."

"Ah. Not so great."

"Well he didn't seem all that bothered if I'm honest," Libby shrugs as she steals a carrot. "Something about neither one wanting to commit. I think Dylan wants to sow his wild oats and all that."

"Hmm, well, not everyone is like you and I. Still, it's good he got into Boston though. You'll all be relatively close, with Liv in Hartford and Melody in Philly."

"Yeah, and Jamie here."

"Aw honey," Kurt sighs, stepping between her legs and leaning up to kiss her cheek. "You'll get used to it. I know that sounds awfully harsh, but you will. You'll be so consumed with college, and being in a new city that you'll forget about pining for him and just think more about being really excited to share it all with him when he comes to visit."

"Just like you forgot about pining for daddy?" Libby asks with one eyebrow raised, and Kurt sighs and turns his attentions back to the stove.

"That was different. Daddy was refusing to come visit for a start. You know, if you don't want to go, you don't have to. No one is making you. Your audition is next week, you could still cancel if you wanted and look for something closer to home."

"I can't," she says with a firm shake of her head. "I know Juilliard is where I'm meant to be. And I love Jamie with all my heart, but I can't live my life reliant on a man. Plus, if I don't go? If I don't give myself this chance? I'll spend my whole life wondering 'what if?' And Libby Hummel-Anderson doesn't do what if's."


"You two work so hard," Libby comments as she slides off the counter. "You should just be lazy sometimes."

"Lazy doesn't get you fed, or give you clean clothes," Kurt laughs as he sets the plates on the table. "And lazy doesn't put any more dollars in that college fund of yours. Now go call daddy."

*  

Jamie sits down next to Kurt at the back of the Juilliard auditorium, shaking with nerves and feeling more sick than he can ever remember. To be fair, Kurt doesn't look much better, pale, clammy and swallowing nervously.
"Jesus she looks small from back here," Jamie whispers as Kurt nods his agreement. "And petrified."

"Yeah," he whispers back. "I'm guessing you didn't get much sleep last night either?"

"No. I mean, we were talking a long time but then it just seemed like we spent most of the night lying staring at the ceiling. I'll say one thing though, I love the noise of this city, you know? It feels so calming."

"All the sirens and car alarms?" Kurt laughs. "Yeah, very comforting."

"Blaine still hates it here, doesn't he?"

"Yes, though I think that's more to do with him being used to suburban life than anything else now, because he doesn't even like being in Chicago for long periods anymore. His lack of sleep last night was nerves for today though."

"Oh. Here comes the panel."

Jamie and Kurt fall silent as the panel file in and take their seats and Libby stands center stage wringing her hands nervously.

"Good afternoon, Miss Hummel-Anderson," the music principal calls up to her. "Can you introduce yourself please, and tell us which two pieces you will be singing for us today?"

"Um yes," Libby says in a voice which carries strongly, despite being fraught with nerves. "My name is Libby Darling Hummel-Anderson," she states, and Kurt can't help but smile at the pride in her voice which has always been evident when saying her name. "I'll be singing two songs for you today, 'O Holy Night', which I figured was appropriate given the time of year, and 'Nessun Dorma,' which is my all time favorite song."

"Thank you," the principal says with a firm nod. "And I see you have your own accompanist?"

"Oh, yes," she says, relaxing as she smiles. "My daddy. This is Blaine Hummel-Anderson."

Blaine gives a timid wave, more petrified than he can ever remember as he settles behind the piano and waits for the nod from his daughter, who is about to have her whole future decided on just a few bars of singing.

Blaine is astounded. He's heard her before, of course; they've been practicing for weeks, but he's never heard her just...let go like this. Her voice soars as she loses herself in the music, and by the time he picks up his violin to accompany her for Nessun Dorma, he can barely see the music through his leaky eyes.

She finishes, clearly pleased with how it has gone, but Blaine sees her shoulders slump when all she gets is a curt "Thank you, we'll let you know."

"It okay," he whispers into her hair as they exit the stage. "Really. You did good, sweetie. So good. They always say that to candidates, honestly."

"Yeah, I know," she nods, trying not to cry. "I do know. I'm just...a dreamer, I guess. And I had this scenario in my head where he would get to his feet, wildly applauding and offer me a place on the spot."

"Head out of the clouds, Lib," Blaine laughs, putting an arm around her shoulders. "Dream by all
means, but don't live your life submerged in fantasy. You know, sometimes I think papa and I have
been too fanciful and whimsical with you."

"No you haven't," Libby says, smiling up at him. "You and papa have encouraged me to reach for
the stars, and you've been the most wonderful parents I could ever have wished for."

"Stop it," he frowns, blinking hard. "I have,"

"Leaky eyes," she finishes for him with a kiss to his cheek. "I know."

"Miss Hummel-Anderson!" a voice calls, and they both turn to see the music principal hurrying
down the corridor toward them. "Sorry. Hi. I just wanted to introduce myself properly. I'm
Matthew DeLaine, musical director here at Juilliard."

"Oh, um, hi," Libby says politely shaking his hand. "Well, like I said, I'm Libby and this is my dad,
Blaine."

"Oh I know," Matthew smiles as he shakes Blaine's hand warmly. "I've seen you in concert many
times, sir. Plus we have heard from Riccardo Annunci, whom I understand is a very dear friend of
yours?"

"He is," Blaine says with a laugh. "Yes, he's quite excited about Libby possibly coming to study
here."

"Yes, we kind of got that impression," Matthew says, thinking back to the several over exuberant
phone calls and emails he had received. "I think the last message I received was 'don't ruin her
because when she's done being American I intend to turn her into a great Italian opera star'."

"He wishes," Libby laughs. "I want to spend a year in Italy after my degree, honing my craft, you
know? Riccardo won't let me out of his sight, I'm sure, and will then claim all credit for any
success I might have."

"Oh I'm sure you'll be very successful indeed, Libby," Matthew says with a smile as she squeezes
Blaine's hand excitedly. "He did confuse me though," he carries on with a frown. "Because he
called you Liberace throughout our entire conversation."

Blaine closes his eyes and pinches the bridge of his nose. "I can only apologize," he mutters.
"Riccardo is....special," he finishes lamely. "He's been calling Libby that since birth, and she got
her own back aged two when she started calling him Rick."

"Well it's lovely to see you all have such a unique bond," Matthew says, patting Libby's shoulder.
"And now I must run. It was lovely to meet you, Libby, and you sang beautifully. I'll see you again
soon, I'm sure."

"He...I...he said..." Libby gasps as the man walks out of sight. "Daddy...he...does that mean?"

"It means he was obviously impressed," Blaine says, hugging her tight. "But there's still such a long
way to go, Libby. I mean it, don't let this all run away with you. It's not his choice and his alone."

"No, I know. I do know," she repeats, to herself more than anything, but then Kurt and Jamie round
the corner and amid squeals of joy and loving hugs and kisses, Libby allows her mind to run away
with her once more.

* January.
"Libby not home?" Blaine asks as he pulls into the driveway late in the afternoon one Saturday.

"Is she ever home on weekends? She's at Jamie's overnight, remember? His uncle is in town so they're having a family dinner."

"Right. I forgot. We should have made the most of that."

"I know," Kurt sighs as he steps from the car and unlocks the front door. "But I guess we're both just a little exhausted right now. We can get takeout, if you want?"

"I'll carry all your bags, Kurt, don't worry about it!" Blaine calls as he struggles to close the trunk with his hands full. "Jeez."

"Yeah, thanks," Kurt says distractedly as he steps inside, confused as to why he can smell food. "Hey, did you put the crock pot on this morning?"

"I don't think I did, did I?" Blaine frowns, dumping all of Kurt's new purchases in the hall.

"I don't know, I'm asking you," Kurt laughs. "Maybe Libby is home after all. Lib?" he calls, but the house is silent, so he makes his way down the hall to the kitchen while Blaine checks the living room. "Blaine! Come see!"

Blaine arrives in the kitchen, his jaw dropping in surprise. The crock pot is indeed on, as is the oven. Looking through to the dining room, Blaine can see the table is set for two, with candles waiting to be lit and an enormous bunch of flowers sitting in a vase. On the kitchen counter a bottle of champagne sits in an ice bucket, with a note propped up alongside. Kurt picks it up, and Blaine looks over his shoulder to read too.

"For no reason at all, other than I love you. You two are amazing to me, now it's time for me to give something back. All the laundry and ironing is done. The beds all have clean sheets and I vacuumed. Yes, daddy, I do know where it's kept. The bathrooms are cleaned, the trash is taken out (I made Jamie do that though) and papa, I washed your car. Enjoy the rest of your weekend together, I'll be home Sunday at three, when all nakedness must cease.

Love you millions,

Libby xxx"

"Good god," Kurt says quietly, setting the note back in place. "She did all that for us? Without being asked?"

"How did she get that champagne?"

"Blaine!" Kurt admonishes. "Our daughter has just done something wonderful and you're worried about how she managed to buy alcohol? It's probably ours anyway," he says, looking at the label. "Yep. It's expensive, it's definitely ours."

Blaine laughs, taking Kurt into his arms and kissing his cheek. "She did do something wonderful," he agrees. "Gosh. I don't know what to do first."

"Eat," Kurt grins.

"You? Or..."

"Very funny. Come on. You know, we lose track sometimes. We tick along just great I know, but
this is so unexpected and welcome, to sit and share great food and just be in each other's company."

"Great food," he frowns, lifting up the crock pot lid. "We don’t know if she can cook. She's never tried."

"Oh come on, she makes waffles and pancakes."

"Oh yes," Blaine says dryly. "Silly me."

But it turns out Libby can cook, and actually the majority of their meal passes in silence as they are too busy devouring all she has prepared for them to talk. Blaine finally remembers they should probably text her to say thank you, and then Kurt appears with a bowl full of peanut butter crunch ice cream and suggests they head to the den, where Blaine follows willingly.

“TV, or music?” Kurt asks.

“Music, I think.”

Blaine settles back in the corner of the couch where Kurt falls happily between his legs and to the faint strains of Beethoven, they share their bowl of ice cream.

“I want that bit,” Blaine says, pointing into the bowl. “It’s got loads of crunch in it.”

“Um, I’m pretty sure that’s supposed to be ‘you have that bit, Kurt. It’s got loads of crunch in it’. ”

"Nope," Blaine says with a laugh, "it's all mine." But he takes the spoon and shares it with Kurt anyway, who playfully smears ice cream on his nose and cheeks before kissing it away again.

"So Libby should hear from Juilliard soon, surely?"

"It's been six weeks, so yes."

"And if she gets in, do you think she'll live on campus?"

"She's supposed to," Blaine says, reaching for his champagne. "But knowing her..."

"I think we should make her get a job."

"What? Why?" Blaine asks indignantly. "We have money."

"And I think that's exactly the problem. Jamie works, and he works hard. Libby's never had to work for anything. Not her grades, her signing and not for money either. If she asks for twenty bucks for this or that we just hand it over, we keep her car going, pay for her phone....we indulge her."

"You're right," Blaine sighs, kissing into his hair. "We do, I know. It's just....in my head she's always this little girl, and she's not, is she?"

"No she's not, but you're not the only one who thinks like that. I know I do, and Libby is more than happy for that to be the case when it suits her too."

"I stopped short of suggesting we buy her an apartment in New York though, did you see?"

"I did, and I'm impressed, but actually, I was going to suggest we do buy her her own place."

"Really? Why?"
"Well, because we know she will be safe, for one. Two, if Jamie does decide to go with her then they have somewhere to live rent free and three, we will buy for her at some point, so why not now? Which is where the job comes in. I think we tell her she has to make her own allowance money. Whatever she makes, she can spend on herself. We'll cover rent and utilities and maybe give her a small sub for food, but only a small sub. No students can afford to shop exclusively in Whole Foods, and she needs to learn that."

"Hmm, I think you possibly have a point about the apartment," Blaine muses. "But nothing too elaborate."

"Yeah, well just you try and remember that when she's begging you for a penthouse overlooking Central Park," Kurt says with a laugh. "Wow. It's gonna be weird without her."

"It is, yeah," Blaine says as he ponders having a college age daughter. "It's hard to remember a time when we didn't have to take her into consideration."

"I know what you mean. It's like we've always had her."

"I'll tell you what's weird for me," Blaine says, sighing contentedly as Kurt curls closer to him. "I've spent the last...ooh, I don't know...couple of years, I guess, thinking 'she's not ready for college, she would never survive' and now, just recently, I've seen more and more how mature she is and now I think that actually, she'll be okay."

"She will," Kurt smiles. "And you and I will have so much time together...it's another chapter again. We should take off and travel the world."

Blaine laughs, making Kurt smile as he feels it reverberate through him, and as Blaine plays absentmindedly with his hair, he lets his own hand wander up under his cardigan and polo, seeking out his stomach, softer with age now but still completely perfect as Kurt's fingers trace patterns over it, writing I love you and making Blaine murmur his happiness when he realizes.

"Hey, you know, we could," Blaine says suddenly.

Kurt looks up, resting against the crook of Blaine's arm. "Could what?"

"Could travel the world. I mean, I know we've been about a bit, but there's still a lot left to discover."

Kurt laughs his disbelief, shaking his head and settling back against Blaine's chest once more. "So what? We say 'okay Libby, have fun at college, we're off to travel the world, see you in a year?' We still have her, Blaine, still have responsibilities to her."

"I know that," he replies as he straightens up, turning Kurt so they're facing each other, legs slotted together. "So we do it slowly, in stages. Maybe we explore the US first. Head off for three weeks to the west coast, visit Joe and Maddie, explore California, Arizona, Nevada...do Vegas," he adds with a smile. "Then we come home again. After that, I don't know, we book a trip to Mexico? Whatever we decide. Just...trips every now and then to places we haven't been before. Three weeks in Asia, exploring Japan, head to China...I just feel like...like this is a new chapter, you're right, and it's up to us to make it brilliant. I love Libby more than life itself, but I love you as well. Remember all those years back, when you told me that I was absolutely your favorite person to spend time with? Well that stayed with me, and I don't even have to ask you if it still stands, because I know when we're together, just you and I, it's just as good as it's always been. I'm...well, I'm not going to say I'm getting old because I'm in denial," he smiles. "But I'm not as young as I was. I want to do this now, before grandchildren come along, and porch rockers."
"We might have grandkids Blaine, but we will never have porch rockers," Kurt laughs. "As for the traveling...." he pauses, lips twitching before they break out into a huge grin. "Yes."

"Yes?"

"Yes!" Kurt replies, laughing and trying to kiss his husband who is now grinning broadly. "Gosh, yes. I can't wait. I mean, we have to wait, because it's only January, but we could start planning, couldn't we?"

"We could," Blaine agrees. "Now?"

"Hmm, in a minute, maybe. Kiss me first."

Blaine smiles again, sliding down the couch and tugging Kurt on top of him. "With pleasure."

His hands slide into Kurt's soft hair, tilting his head to just the right angle for their lips to meet perfectly. It starts chaste, as always, but then he feels Kurt's tongue run along his bottom lip and he can't help but open his mouth wider, whimpering softly when Kurt takes full advantage and kisses him deeply.

"Kissing you still blows my mind," Kurt gasps as he breaks the kiss and pulls back. "Wow."

Blaine tugs his bottom lip between his teeth, flushed with pleasure at the deep arousal in Kurt's eyes. "Kiss me again then," he whispers, and Kurt needs no more invitation, falling on top of him and devouring him, both of them groaning as they subconsciously begin to grind together.

"Damn jeans," Blaine mutters as he tries unsuccessfully to get his hands down the back of Kurt's pants. "Stand up. Let me undress you."

"I thought we were going to plan our trip," Kurt says weakly as he's tugged to his feet, but then Blaine kisses down his neck and all coherent thought is lost.

"Tomorrow," Blaine whispers, fiddling with the intricate buttons on Kurt's shirt. "Tonight belongs to us."

Kurt sighs his pleasure as slowly Blaine undresses him, kissing over his body and savouring every inch. He makes to remove his own clothes but Kurt stops him, returning the favour and then, when they're both naked, they fall together once more, sharing soft, intimate kisses before holding each other, right there in the middle of the den. They stay that way for the longest time, with their hands just smoothing over one another's skin, both happy to be held until Kurt feels Blaine gently nudging at his jaw and turning his head, he captures Blaine's lips in a passionate kiss and the flame of arousal is ignited once more.

Guiding him backwards, Blaine straddles Kurt as he settles on the couch once more, their erections rubbing together and making them both gasp, and when Blaine pushes his fingers into Kurt's mouth, he moans around them happily as Blaine uses his other hand to work over Kurt's cock, teasing him by leaning down and licking around the head.

He kneels, taking Kurt deep in his mouth as he withdraws his fingers and starts trailing them back over his entrance instead, pleasuring himself while Kurt watches, tangling his fingers into Blaine's hair and bucking upwards. "Holy shit you look good," he whispers almost reverently as Blaine pushes a second finger inside himself. "Get up here."

Blaine climbs across his lap once more, expecting kisses but what he gets instead is Kurt's fingers in his mouth, and he sucks them as he fingers himself until Kurt looks up at him, his hair wild and
cheeks flushed. "Together," is all he says, taking his fingers and pushing two swiftly inside along with Blaine's own, who cries out in a mixture of shock and pleasure.

"Shit, Kurt! Oh my god, yes!"

One of Kurt's hands grips Blaine's waist as he rides their fingers, moaning and writhing almost uncontrollably until he has to stop, panting hard. "I don't wanna come yet," he explains, "wanna ride you."

"By all means," Kurt grins, and a quick slide of a slick palm over him is all he needs before he's pushing into Blaine, sighing contentedly as his husband locks his hands at the base of his neck and presses their foreheads together.

"Love you," he murmurs, rubbing their noses together in a tender moment of sincerity. Kurt nips at his bottom lip in reply, looking up with a smile.

"I just might love you too." Pushing up, he is rewarded with a moan of pleasure from Blaine, overwhelmed as he always with at the feeling of Kurt inside him, completing him. They kiss heatedly as Blaine rides him until they can't take it anymore, breaking apart to cry out and moan each other's names.

"Kurt," Blaine whimpers brokenly as he brings a hand to his cock and begins to jerk himself off. "Kurt I..."

"Nearly there," Kurt gasps, his eyes screwed shut as he meets Blaine thrust for thrust. "Yes...Blaine...yes...." And they come together, Blaine decorating Kurt's stomach with splashes of come which he quickly collects on his finger, offering it to Kurt who eagerly sucks it clean while still riding out his orgasm. "Fuck...fuck....ugh....just...."

"Fuck?" Blaine offers, laughing softly as he falls forward weakly, landing happily in Kurt's embrace.

"Yeah. That."

Kurt shifts, pulling out of Blaine gently until he's lying the length of the couch where Blaine happily snuggles into his arms, kissing his chest. They don't move, because there isn't any need and damn if they're not going to make the most of having an empty house.

"Do you think Libby and Jamie will last?" Kurt asks musingly.

"Do you want my honest answer?"

"Yeah."

"No."

"Oh," Kurt says in surprise. "I'm intrigued. Tell me why?"

"Well, I think they're meant to be, and I'm sure he's who she will end up with. I love the kid, you know? He's fantastic. To be fair, when Libby was small I never envisaged her marrying a cross dresser, or a guy with tattoos and piercings, but Jamie is both of those things and yet also incredibly sweet and kind."

"But?"
"But I think Jamie needs to discover things for himself, about himself, that he just can't do with Libby at his side."

"Sex with guys?"

"That's part of it, yeah," Blaine sighs. "Though I think it's more like...like he needs to discover that there are others in the world who like him, and who will accept him for who he is. They've all been in this little bubble of misfits all through school. Dylan is already branching out, making new friends, joining LGBT groups and stuff, but the girls don't seem to need to branch out in quite the same way. Libby just doesn't care if people don't like her, end of. She's confident enough in herself to handle it, but he's not. And I think he needs to take a bit of time to work out how to handle life before he tries to handle Libby for the rest of that life, if you get what I mean."

"I do," Kurt says, kissing his forehead. "I'm just sad, because I think you're right, and I think that pretty soon we're gonna have some heartbreak on our hands."

"Well, yes. But I think that actually, Libby knows this, and she's just enjoying the here and now. I also think she knows their paths will inevitably lead back to one another further down the line."

"Does Jamie have a college place yet?"

Blaine sighs, "No. And I think Ellen is just about at her limit with him on that."

"Poor boy. He's trying to deal with so much."

"Hm. Well, at least he has Libby for now," Blaine says, closing his eyes.

"Are you getting sleepy on me?"

Blaine smiles at getting caught out. "A little."

But his peace doesn't last for long, and both startle at the sound of his cell phone ringing from his pants pocket. "Libby?" he groans when he snatches it up. "It's really late."

"Daddy, it's eight thirty," Libby says with a giggle. "Anyway. Listen. Matthew DeLaine just called me!"

"The Juilliard man?"

"Yes the Juilliard man!" she cries, "Put me on speaker so papa can hear."

"Okay, shoot."

"Well...I knew we lived in the back end of nowhere," Libby starts.

"You live in one of the best towns in all of Ohio," Kurt points out.

"Whatever, it's mail service is crap, but that's okay, because he was calling to apologize. Somehow my acceptance letter had been returned to them today."

"He was..." Kurt stops, his hand covering his mouth in surprise.

"Libby," Blaine gasps. "Does that mean...."

"Yes!" she squeaks excitedly. "I got into Juilliard!"
Chapter 48

Libby wakes on the morning of her eighteenth birthday, a whirlwind mixture of emotion. Happy. Of course, she's happy because it's her birthday and that means gifts, and getting fussed over, and who doesn't enjoy that? She's also more than happy that her birthday has coincided with Riccardo and Lucia's visit, meaning they get to share in her day too, and she's happy papa and daddy let Jamie sleepover last night after her party, meaning he's currently sprawled out on his back next to her, snoring lightly.

Scared. So scared, and really, that's the emotion she's been feeling the most of recently. Scared in a good way for New York, excited at what's to come and the chance to be able to spend the next three years of her life doing what she loves best. Scared in a sad way, to leave her daddies behind. In fact, she's so scared about that, that she ended up crying in the middle of French the other day and Liv had to take her to the bathroom to calm down. But scared most of all, for Jamie.

He's been....weird, Libby thinks to herself, inwardly cursing at not being able to think of a better adjective. He had flatly refused to apply to college, then muttered something about having completed an online form for Columbus community college, which Libby can't understand at all. And as for the way he is with her, well.... Libby sighs, rolling over in bed to trace a finger lightly along his collarbone as her eyes fill with tears.

There hasn't been any arguments, there hasn't been any missed calls or ignoring of messages. The opposite, in fact. Jamie has been treating Libby almost reverently, as if afraid she might break if he lets her anywhere near real life. In fact, he has been so intense recently that the other day she had pleaded with him to take a step back and just let her go and get coffee with Liv on her own for once, instead of trailing along too.

What scares Libby more than anything, is she knows what's to come, but then what's the point in being just like your daddy if you haven't inherited his knack for hiding from all your trouble and pretending everything is normal? So as Jamie wakes and reaches for her, she smiles and falls willingly into his embrace.

*

Kurt stifles his moan of pleasure into a pillow as Blaine moves inside him, his body spooned in tight against him, his hands resting over Kurt's heart. He moves slowly, keeping them both teetering on the edge for as long as he possibly can before they come quietly, with Blaine biting into Kurt's shoulder in an effort to keep quiet.

"Good morning," he smiles as Kurt tries to catch his breath in his arms.

"Hmm, mornin'. That was a good way to wake up." Taking Blaine's hand, he kisses each of his fingers in turn, biting his pinky lightly.

"Birthday girl will be along soon, no doubt," Blaine murmurs as he reaches around to wipe at his hand and Kurt’s stomach. "But I'm sure we have time for a quick cuddle. Door's locked, anyway."

Kurt laughs, but turns in Blaine's arms to rest their foreheads together. "You're a whore."

"Excuse me?" Blaine asks, his eyes going wide.

"Cuddle whore!" Kurt clarifies, laughing loudly and trying it hide in Blaine's neck. "I'm so sorry. I meant cuddle whore. Oh my goodness."
"If I had any energy left I'd get you for that," Blaine teases, kissing his cheek before they rest easy in one another's arms. "Kurt?"

"Hmm?"

"Are you happy? Like...y'know, satisfied?"

Kurt frowns slightly, letting his fingers find the curls at the back of Blaine's neck, still damp from their lovemaking. "Are we talking sexually here?"

"Yeah." Blaine bites his lip, looking down with embarrassment. "I'm just aware that we don't seem to get to it as often as we did, and when we do it's much more sedate than it used to be."

"Blaine, honey, we're forty three and fifty seven, if we hadn't slowed up we'd be dead by now."

Blaine laughs but still keeps his head bowed, and Kurt senses it's one of those moments he has, where his age seems to swamp him in fear and negativity and as always, Kurt knows how to make him feel better. "Listen," he says firmly, lifting his chin. "So we maybe get to it three times a week instead of five, who cares? Sometimes we get to it twice in a day then nothing happens for a week. No one's keeping a schedule, and no one has any expectations except us. And the only expectation I have from you, is that you love me. Blaine, when we make love, whether it's in a stolen moment because the house is unexpectedly empty, or against the shower wall or long, lazy and languorously, it's perfect because you love me—every inch of me. When we fall into bed and we're too tired to do anything other than turn out the light and fall asleep, I do so contentedly because I know that you're beside me, loving me even as I sleep. Please don't ever worry, okay?"

"I do though," he mumbles. "I don't worry that you'll leave me, or whatever. I worry you'll just carry on as if nothing is wrong, but underneath it all you'll be left feeling dissatisfied, because when I was your age we were at it like rabbits."

Kurt laughs, but lifts his chin once more, kissing his lips softly. "Rabbits have nothing on us. If I was not happy with how things are going, I think I know you well enough now, after twenty eight years of togetherness, to let you know."

Blaine closes his eyes, allowing himself to smile as he realises quite how silly he sounds. "Yeah. Yeah, I think you would. Gosh. I love you, you know? Have I ever told you that?"

"Nope," Kurt grins, happy that his goofball husband is back again. "You haven't. All these years I've been waiting...."

"I'm sorry, it must've slipped my mind," Blaine teases, kissing his cheeks. "I love you, Kurt Hummel-Anderson, and now I really must take a shower before Libby arrives."

Kurt moans his protest but lets Blaine out of his arms, deciding to give himself a quick wipe over and pulling on some pajamas while he waits for his turn in the bathroom. The inevitable knock comes, and he unlocks the door to see Riccardo standing there in a pair of bright turquoise silk pajamas, his hair looking for all the world as if he's just been electrocuted.

"Boy!" he cries happily as he barges into the room. "Lucia is making breakfast. She tell me to go wait in bed."

"Not my bed!" Kurt cries, but Riccardo is in already, tucking the cover neatly around his waist and patting the other side with a smile.

"Come join me."
"In bed with an Italian," Kurt mutters as he climbs in alongside him. "This is a first."

"So," Riccardo starts. "You and Blaine....you travel, yes?"

"Starting in September, yes."

"You come to Italy, yes? I need you come visit. I plan this," he carries on, pulling a crumpled piece of paper from his pocket. "We meet in Rome. Fabulous. Then we all have vacation in Venice and Lake Garda. Then to Tuscany, which is where I live, Kurt. That is where I live."

"Yes I know that," Kurt says with a laugh. "We've visited you there many times, remember?"

"I do. So. We book your flights now, yes?"

"No," Kurt laughs, shaking his head. "I need to talk to Blaine first, anyway, and we said we would explore the US to start, so maybe Italy next summer, when the weather is better."

"Okay," Riccardo says cheerfully, clearly not offended but excited. "May. Next May, you come. Then Liberace fly out when her semester ends. I ask Blaine. Where is he?"

"Oh, he's taking a shower but he won't be...." But Riccardo is off, pushing open the bathroom door. "Gay Blaine!"

"I'm in the shower!" Blaine cries desperately.

"Yes, I can see. But your baby makers are hidden behind the screen. Will you visit Italy next May?"

"I'll do what you want, but just leave," Blaine moans.

"Excellent," Riccardo says triumphantly. "Settled." And he climbs back into bed alongside Kurt who wonders if this morning could get any more bizarre.

"Good morning," Santana purrs as she sticks her head around the door. "Lucia said to wait up here."

"Oh god no," Kurt moans, but her shoes are already kicked off and she's under the covers next to Riccardo. "They have gay sex in this bed all the time," Riccardo says brightly, and Blaine shakes his head in despair.

"They have gay sex in this bed all the time," Riccardo says brightly, and Blaine shakes his head in despair.

"How do you put up with him?" he asks Lucia, who just laughs as she hands a plate of French toast
"Ah Blaine, nearly forty years of marriage, you get used to it. Riccardo is like a puppy. He needs exercise, attention, praise and love. Simple."

"It's my birthday!" The door is flung wide open as Libby jumps up and down on the spot, and Kurt is pushed unceremoniously onto the floor as Riccardo's arms fly open.

"Liberty! You are an adult! Come, have breakfast with us."

But it is her daddies she runs to first, kissing them both before making her way around everyone else, eventually settling on the bed with Riccardo's arm protectively around her shoulders as Lucia hands her a plate. She looks up, suddenly remembering Jamie who stands awkwardly in the doorway, not really knowing what to make of the five adults all sitting in one bed sharing breakfast, with Libby in the middle of them all.

"Come on," she says cheerfully, pushing poor Kurt out of the way once more. "Come sit by me."

"I um...I don't really..." Jamie starts, but Kurt- who is now settling himself in between Blaine's legs, points at the empty spot.

"I've been pushed out of bed twice now, Jamie. Don't make me feel like the trauma I've suffered wasn't worth it. Get in."

"Aw baby," Blaine coos. "I'd never kick you out of bed."

Kurt grins smugly, settling back against his chest. "I know."

Jamie settles uneasily on the bed, his posture tense until Riccardo leans over Libby to kiss the poor boys cheek. "Do not be scared, Jason."

"Uh...it's Jamie."

"That is what I said. It's Liberace's birthday, and we are just going to celebrate all day. Wesley will be here soon, no doubt."

"They can't all fit in here too?" Jamie asks, aghast.

"No," Blaine laughs. "You're good, Jamie. Don't worry about it. We just thought we'd have an open house all day for people to drop in and out when they want. Your mom will be over later."

"Anyway," Riccardo booms, bringing the attention back to himself. "Jackson..."

"Jamie," he says weakly.

"Joshua. Liberty tells me you no go to college?"

"Rick, please," she says quietly, and for once, Riccardo senses he's said too much.

"I am so sorry. Ignore me," he says, kissing her forehead. "Let me tell you about next summer instead. Your daddies are coming to Italy, my beautiful Bella, and when your semester ends you will join us. Yes? Yes you will. Good. Jason too, no doubt."

"Um..." Libby starts, but Jamie squeezes her hand.

"That sounds good. Provided I can save up enough money I'd love to join you," he says with a
polite smile. "Thank you."

"We would pay," Kurt says immediately, but Jamie shakes his head.

"You pay for everything," he sighs, "and that's great, and I appreciate it, but..."

"You're as good as a son to us, Jamie," Blaine states firmly. "So that's how we want to treat you."

"Right." Jamie stares at the pattern on the duvet, wondering why on earth Kurt and Blaine's generosity makes him feel so close to tears.

* 
"My Bella, are you no happy?" Riccardo asks that evening. Libby sits alone on the porch swing, while inside the house Burt and Carole, plus Finn, Rachel and Jacob make small talk with her increasingly worried parents and boyfriend.

"I'm happy, I think," she sighs, straightening up to look at him. "But I'm also sad. Is it okay to be both?"

"But of course," he says softly, putting an arm about her shoulders. "All the great pieces of music have all the emotions."

"Ah. If only my life really were a symphony," she says with a wry smile.

"It can be, if you want it to be."

They sit in silence for a while as Libby pulls her jacket tighter around herself, shivers and moves a little closer to Riccardo.

"I'm going to let him go."

"Jamie?"

"So you do know his name then," Libby says as her eyes fill with tears. "Yeah."

"Libby," he sighs, then pauses. "I think that maybe, for now, that will be best. But he loves you, do not ever doubt that."

"I know, but...ugh. He just doesn't know where he fits, you know? I don't mean with us, like in the bed this morning. To be honest, I think the way I've been brought up is probably different to most people, and this mornings breakfast was weird for anyone not used to you lot. But in life. He hasn't worked that out yet, and he's clinging to me because he doesn't want to face up to that."

"So he need to find that out, and then find you again, maybe?"

"Oh I'll be waiting," Libby says wiping at her eyes. "I'll always wait for him."

"Libby?"

"Yeah?"

"Would you like for me to get your daddies?"

"Yes please," she sniffs, before her tears really start to fall, and Riccardo gives a little kiss into her hair, patting the back of her hand before wandering off in search of Blaine. It is Jamie who arrives on the porch, however, after Blaine forces him out the door to confront the conversation they've
both been avoiding.

"It's cold," he says, as Libby settles in his arms without questioning why her parents didn't come out. "Do you wanna go inside?"

"Is everyone still here?"

"Only your grandpa and grandma. Rachel and Finn just left. Jacob was tired. Everyone's in the den."

"Yeah," Libby sighs, wiping at her eyes. "Let's go to my room."

"I have a gift for you, anyway," Jamie says shyly, and he can't help but smile when Libby's eyes light up.

"Oh. Well, yes, then. Definitely. Let's go inside."

"It's not that type of gift!"

"No, I didn't mean...oh god," Libby cries, breaking off with a laugh. "Just...don't be a goofball. Go inside," she giggles, pushing him through the open door.

It's better in her room, the atmosphere lightened by their giggles at sneaking inside, even though everyone hears their footsteps, and they sit side by side on Libby's bed as she looks at him expectantly.

"Gifts."

"Yeah, okay, okay," he sighs, reaching for his bag. "Um...the thing is," he says, clutching his bag nervously. "It's like...ah, you may as well just have it," he says nervously, placing what is unmistakably a ring box in her hands.

"Oh Jamie...no..." Libby whispers, feeling all manner of desperation and panic. "Please, I can't...."

"No it's not..... I'm not proposing," he clarifies, shaking his head. "Sorry, I didn't mean to worry you. Just...open it first, and see if you like it."

Libby beams when she opens the box and sees a diamond and sapphire eternity ring nestled inside. "It's so pretty," she whispers. "And it's blue! It's all blue...."

"It's real diamonds," Jamie says proudly. "I've been saving since like...well, I wanted to get you a ring for your sweet sixteen, but I only had fifty bucks so...two years," he says shyly. "And I wanted it to be diamond and sapphire because of your eyes so...."

"Why a ring, if you're not proposing?" Libby asks bluntly, then curses herself inwardly, thinking back to all those times papa had tried to explain tact to her.

"A promise," Jamie says, and Libby almost sobs out loud when she sees his eyes swimming with tears. "I just...I want to promise you that I'll always be yours, Lib, forever. My heart will always be in your hands and just...look after it, yeah? Wherever life takes us now, I want you to wear that ring and remember you have a hold of my heart."

"Oh Christ," Libby cries, choking on a sob. "I can't do this, Jamie. I can't wear this ring."

"Yeah you can," he urges, taking it from the box. "Please, Libby, it means everything to me."
“I can’t, Jamie, because this is isn’t right, for either of us anymore. I love you so much,” she says, crying freely as she lets her fingers trace gently over his cheek. “But we can’t be together.”

“No,” he whispers, shaking his head vehemently. “No, you don’t mean that, Libby, really. I’ll try harder, I swear. I’ll...I’ll...I’ll stop dressing like this. I’ll apply to college, I’ll get a job, I’ll do whatever you want but just don’t walk away from me Lib, please don’t.”

“Jamie, stop,” Libby begs, clutching his hands. “This isn’t about any of that, and you know it. I need to let you go Jamie, I need to let you go now because I don’t want to lose you from my life altogether and I’m afraid that’s what will happen if I don’t let you have this time to explore who you are, or who you want to be.”

“And what if that’s not what you want me to be?” he asks desperately. “What if I break your heart?”

“If it’s who you’re meant to be, then that’s always going to be good enough for me,” Libby says softly, though she feels as though her heart is shattering right there and then. “And if your future lies with someone other than me, then I’ll always be right by your side as your friend to love you and support you no matter what.”

“Please, Libby, wear the ring.”

“I can’t.” Libby shakes her head sadly, leaning across to kiss his tears away. “I don’t want you to make a promise that you can’t keep.”

Libby sees the denial slowly change to acceptance as Jamie bows his head and gives a tiny nod, his tears splashing down onto their joined hands. “I’m so sorry,” he whispers, his body shaking with sobs. “I’ve let you down so badly and you don’t deserve that.”

“No, Jamie, you have given me the happiest two years of my life,” Libby says, her voice shaking as she tries to comfort him. “You have given me all my firsts, and each one of them has been beautiful so please, don’t be sad that this is ending just...I don’t know, be thankful it ever began.”

“I’m not ready to say goodbye,” Jamie admits, looking up to give a heartbreakingly sad smile.

“Then don’t. Stay with me?” Libby offers. “A final farewell, maybe?”

Jamie blinks and swallows hard. There’s no mistaking the meaning behind Libby’s words, and he knows, that as they’re both highly emotional right now that he should shake his head and walk away....and yet suddenly they’re locked in a fiercely passionate embrace and all thoughts of walking away are forgotten.

* * *

“It’s nearly three in the morning,” Kurt notes as he falls into bed alongside Blaine. “If he was going home he’d have gone by now.”

“I hope they’re okay,” Blaine murmurs, turning out the light and finding his place on Kurt’s chest. The pair had spent the whole evening sitting in the den, waiting to hear footsteps on the stairs, even long after Riccardo and Lucia had retired to bed they had waited, but eventually, when Kurt fell asleep on Blaine’s shoulder, they had trudged wearily up the stairs and into bed.

“Maybe she didn’t finish it after all,” Kurt offers.

“Maybe. We’ll know in the morning, I guess. The door is unlocked, anyway, in case she needs us.”
“I hate this,” Kurt says sadly. “We can protect her from so much but we can’t protect her from this, and that makes me feel like a failure; and you know I don’t like failing at things, Blaine.”

“I do know that,” he says with a soft laugh. “But you know what? Actually, we’re not failures, because we shouldn’t want to protect her from heartache.”

“Shouldn’t want to? Why?”

“Because then that means she wouldn’t ever fall in love. Do you realize how lucky she has been? Whatever happens now, between her and Jamie or to her as a person in her own right, she knows how it feels to love someone the way we love each other, and that’s the most precious thing I could ever have wished for her.”

Kurt is silent for a long time, so much so that Blaine assumes he has fallen asleep but then suddenly he kisses the top of Blaine’s head, and speaks into the darkness. “You are completely right.”

“Finally,” Blaine sighs, snuggling into his side and closing his eyes. “I’ve only been waiting twenty eight years.”

*

Jamie leaves in the early dawn. Libby kisses him goodbye on the doorstep, wrapped up in his Rolling Stones hoodie which she has come to love so much. “Your sweater...” she starts, but Jamie shakes his head.

“Keep it. Please.”

“Thanks.”

“Libby...last night...I hope you won’t think of it as a mistake.”

“I won’t,” she says, managing somehow to look up at him with a smile. “I promise.”

“So...Monday, at school. I don’t know,” Jamie mutters with a frown. “Like...are we friends? Should I stay away? What do you want me to do?”

“Just carry on as always, I guess,” Libby says with a shrug. “It’s fine. We’ve been sitting together for lunch since first grade, it’d be weird without you there. Plus you’re as much friends with the others as I am so...”

“Okay,” Jamie nods. “Well, if it gets too much or whatever just...”

“Yeah.”

“So I guess I’d better...” He trails off, gesturing toward his car and Libby folds her arms tight about herself.

“Sure.”

“I love you, Libby. Just remember that.”

“I know,” she whispers as he kisses her cheek. “I love you too.”

She stays waiting as Jamie drives around the corner and out of sight, and she is completely unaware that he stops the car almost immediately, to cry and cry until he feels like nothing is left. For
Libby’s part, she sits down alone in the corner of the porch, ignoring the cold chill of the early March morning which bites through her hoodie and thin pajama pants. Her tears are silent and wracked with heartache as she bows her head and sobs.

“Baby girl,” Blaine sighs, pulling her into his arms and rocking her back and forth. “My sweet baby girl.”

“It hurts, daddy,” she wails, clutching at his robe. “It hurts so bad.”

“Oh honey,” Kurt soothes as he helps them both to their feet and into the house. “Come on. Let’s get you back to bed. I’ll make you hot chocolate and cinnamon rolls, how does that sound?”

“I didn’t want to let him go,” she sniffs as he leads her up the stairs. “I told him to stay with me last night and then it was even more painful than if he’d gone right there and then.”

“Oh we’ve all made that mistake,” Kurt says as he tucks her up in bed and looks at Blaine with a sad smile. “Trust me.”

“You know, sweetie,” Blaine says, settling on the bed next to her and taking her in his arms once more. “If you didn’t want to let him go, I’m pretty sure you could go get him back.”

“No,” Libby is firm as she shakes her head. “This isn’t right for us just now, and I know I’ve made the right decision it just...hurts,” she says as she starts to cry again. “Why does it hurt so much, daddy? Why?”

“Because you love him, Libby,” Blaine replies, comforted by the familiar weight of Kurt’s body pressed in behind his. “And love is amazingly fantastic and wonderful and true....but damn, love hurts.”
“So how are things?” Wes asks two weeks later as he and Blaine head out across the golf course.

“Awful.”

“Still?”

“Yeah. I mean, it’s expected, isn’t it?” Blaine sighs. “Teenage angst over a boy and all that. But...I don’t know She’s always been feisty you know? And now it’s just like that’s disappeared. I made pad Thai for dinner last night. She hates it. I only made it to see what her reaction would be. Instead of the normal moaning or yelling, all we got was a mumbled thank you, and she picked at bits of it before she disappeared upstairs to talk with Liv online.”

“Liv says Libby and Jamie are good though, I think that’s what’s freaking her out,” Wes tells him as he lines up his first shot.

“I think that’s what’s freaking Libby out too,” Blaine sighs. “This forced air of normality, when in reality they’re both miserable.”

“So why did they split then?”

“In short, because Jamie swings more ways than a barn door.”

“He plays around? With Libby’s knowledge?”

“Don’t be stupid.”

“Ah. I was going to say, I mean firstly he’s still alive and also, you actually seem quite fond of him.”

“I am, yes,” Blaine admits. “But I am with Libby on this. They need time apart.”

“They’re not apart though are they, really?” Wes points out. He pauses a moment before taking his aim then stepping back for Blaine to have his turn. “I mean, he might not be in your house the entire time, but as a group they’re still together as much as they were before.”

“I know. Ugh. And of course, he still has no clue about where he wants to study. It’s probably too late now anyway. Ellen thinks he’s just being lazy, but I think his reluctance is more to do with the fact that he desperately wants to go to New York.”

“Then why doesn’t he?” Wes asks in confusion.

“They can’t afford for him to go out of state.”

“Oh.”

“Yeah. Kurt and I offered to pay half, but Ellen wasn't having any of it. I don’t think we offended her- she knows us well enough by now, but she was adamant that she didn’t want to be beholden to us in case things went sour between him and Libby.”

“She has a point,” Wes remarks.

Blaine takes his shot and they walk onto the next hole, appreciating the warmth the early spring
sunshine brings. “So did you hear Melody came out?” Blaine asks as they set their shots up.

“Yeah,” Wes nods. “Apparently Liv and Libby have known for months. I saw Bob in Wal-Mart and he told me.”

“How did he take it?”

“Good,” Wes says musingly. “Yeah. He said he was so grateful to have you and Kurt in their lives, because he’s met so many other gay people through you two- and if he never had then he wouldn’t have been so understanding.”

“Hmm, well, it’s nice to know we’re good for something.”, Blaine laughs. “Libby tells me Melody has her eye on a cheerleader who is decidedly bi-curious,” he chuckles.

“Ha! Well, good luck to her. She should have a bit of fun before she goes off to college and the hard work really starts.”

“Yes. Sometimes I wish Libby was more like Melody and Liv, you know.”

“Really, Blaine? My daughter is slowly working her way through the entire senior year,” Wes says as he watches Blaine take his swing. “The only thing I can be thankful for is that she is- as far as I know or care to find out- still a virgin. She just has a million different boyfriends.”

“Nothing wrong with that.”

“Blaine, she could commit a triple homicide and you’d still defend her. She finished with some guy last week because she didn’t like his shoes! I mean, how shallow is that?”

“I did that once,” Blaine confesses.

“Why doesn’t that surprise me? Anyway, if there’s nothing wrong with dating all eligible eighteen year olds in Ohio, then surely there’s nothing wrong with giving your heart away to just one guy?”

“She’s sleeping with him though, or was, anyway.”

“She’s looking for a love like you and Kurt share. She didn’t give herself away easily.”

“No, I know. But I’d just gotten to the stage where I could see that she was ready to leave home and right now she seems so vulnerable, so hurting. She needs us.”

“So be there,” Wes tells him, putting an arm about his shoulders. “College is five months away, still. Use this time to help her get back on her feet, and then, when she moves away, let her go. Liv will only be a couple of hours away. You just know they’ll be together all the time in Libby’s swanky apartment.”

“Do you think we did the wrong thing there?”

“Not at all. Libby has always appreciated the finer things in life, and as you pointed out, you would have bought for her at some point anyway. She might find some really good friends at Juilliard and want them to move in too.”

“That’s what I’m hoping,” Blaine admits. “I don’t like to think of her living alone.”

“You know...it’s just an idea, but why doesn’t Libby ask Jamie to move in? That would cut his college costs almost in half.”
“Because little miss stubborn won’t tell him we bought her an apartment for her birthday, that’s why.”

“Why not?”

“She says that if Jamie decides to head to New York she wants it to be his own decision and not influenced by the offer of somewhere to live, plus she doesn’t want him to feel like he couldn’t date anyone if they were roommates.”

“Ah. Well, she has a point I guess.”

“She always has a point,” Blaine moans. “And she likes to labor that point continuously until everyone takes notice.”

“Poor Blaine,” Wes teases. “Anyway, you’ll miss her when she’s gone.”

“I will,” Blaine sighs. “I really will.”

* 

Jamie can feel his heartbeat quicken the moment he sees Libby standing by her locker. She’s alone for once too, so he picks up his pace and arrives slightly breathless. “Hey,” he says softly, and she turns in surprise. For just a second her whole face lights up but then it immediately clouds with sadness once more and she looks down, breaking the eye contact again.

“Hi Jamie.”

“You uh...you look really pretty today,” he tries, blushing profusely and then kicking himself for it. Why is it so hard to pay your girlfriend a compliment? Ex-girlfriend, he reminds himself. Ex.

“Thank you,” Libby says, her voice and posture stiff and formal. “So...how are you? I see you all the time but never to...”

“Talk to,” Jamie finishes for her. “Or not properly, anyhow. Yeah, I’m good. Yeah. You?”

“I’m um...okay,” Libby replies, lying through her teeth. “I have a job.”

“You what?”

“Yeah,” she says, smiling at the expression on his face. “I know, right? Me, actually working.”

“No, that’s great. What made you decide to do that?”

“I didn’t decide, Jamie, this is me we’re talking about. My parents told me I had to get a job here until college starts, and then when I get to New York I’m expected to get one there too.”

“I’m sensing you’re not entirely happy with this turn of events?” Jamie teases, enjoying the ease of their conversation.

“I work in a pet store, Jamie, what do you think?”

“You have a cat.”

“Martin is a fossil. He’s eighteen already. He won’t go on forever. And Martin aside, I don’t even like animals all that much.”
“Ha! Well, I have a job too, you know. A different one.”

“You quit the bookstore?”

“No, I kept that on, but I’m also working at the children’s library in Columbus. Every Wednesday and Saturday. I do the kids storytimes,” he says proudly. “It’s cute. You should come and watch some time.”

“Yeah, I might just do that,” she smiles. “Damn. Both your jobs are better than mine,” she pouts. “No fair.”

“Turn that frown upside down,” he jokes as he always used to, but rather than making Libby smile, it makes her heart ache instead.

“I have to go,” she mumbles. “I have stupid science class. I mean, what good is science to anyone, anyway?”

Jamie opens his mouth to give a witty retort but what actually comes out is: “You’re so beautiful. I wish I could kiss you.”

And Libby takes one step backward ready to walk away but makes the fatal mistake of making eye contact instead. “You could,” she admits. “I wouldn’t mind at all.”

“What’s the point of science anyway?” Dylan moans to Liv as they walk down the hall. “Who ever uses it?”

“Are you kidding me?” Liv asks with a laugh. “You’re insane. Science is all around us, you fool. Biology, the study of humans, animals and other living organisms, tells us things we need to know for treating diseases or sickness with medicines made from people who study chemistry.” She breaks off abruptly when her and Dylan see the unmistakable pairing of Libby and Jamie making out against the locker. Normally she would hit the idiotic girl who calls out “Get a room!” as she passes, but this time she has to admit, the girl has a point. “And that’s an example of great chemistry right there,” Liv finishes up lamely.

“Oh wow,” Melody notes as she joins them. “They’re really going for it.”

“Fuck,” Jamie breathes as their kiss eventually breaks. “I’m...”

“My house is empty,” Libby blurts quickly. “My parents are out with Sebastian all day. Do you wanna skip?”

“Yes,” Jamie answers immediately, and taking her hand and ignoring the stares of the other students they hurry down the corridor toward the doors.

“My guess is we won’t be seeing them in science,” Dylan notes as they walk away.

* 

“I love that we can see a movie in the middle of the day,” Kurt babbles happily as he pulls into the driveway. “I love that that’s a thing we can do now, you know?”

“I agree. Though next time Seb doesn’t get to pick. I don’t like action movies.”

“Okay. We’ll take him to a rom com. Or a musical,” Kurt laughs. “It was fun. Lunch was good too,” he carries on as he unlocks the door. “And now we have a spare hour or so before Libby
returns,” he continues, beckoning Blaine into the house with his finger. “Whatever shall we do?”

“Hmm,” Blaine grins, his hands sliding around Kurt’s waist. “Let me....hang on.” He breaks away with a frown, pulling open the front door again to check and sure enough, he did see Libby’s car on the driveway. “LIBBY!” he bellows through the house. “Libby! Are you home?”

“Oh holy shit,” Jamie whispers in a tangle of bedsheets and limbs. “Fuck, fuck, fuck.”

“Get dressed,” Libby hisses at him. “I’ll go talk to them.”

The scurry of footsteps along the landing has Blaine standing at the bottom, waiting expectantly. Libby appears in a t-shirt and a pair of boy shorts, with her hair mussed and what is undoubtedly a hickey standing out on her neck.

“Um hey daddy, yeah, I’m home. I had a headache so...”

“Mmm-hmm,” Blaine says tightly as he glares at her. “So?”

“Oh, so uh...Jamie brought me home so I could rest.”

“I see,” Blaine nods as Kurt tries to disappear into the wall. “And yet you still managed to drive your car.”

“Jamie drove?” Libby offers.

“Right, so where is he now? Back at school, presumably, since he’s seen you home safely.”

Jamie appears next to Libby on the top step, offering a timid wave. “Hi,” he says sheepishly. “I was just...”

“Save it,” Blaine snaps. “You’re both adults,” he says, raising his hands in defeat as he walks off down the hall. “Stupid ones, but adults nonetheless.”

Kurt stares up at them, and it’s the disappointment written on his face that Libby finds hardest to bear before he shakes his head sadly and heads to the kitchen to find Blaine. “I think you’d better go,” she says quietly, not able to look Jamie in the eye.

“Lib...does this...what just happened, does it...”

“No,” she whispers, full of shame. “I’m sorry, Jamie. It shouldn’t have happened, I should have walked away when you complimented me, but you calling me beautiful was always my biggest weakness.”

“Okay,” he says, leaning down to kiss her cheek. “I'm not going to listen to you blame yourself though. We both let it happen. Maybe we shouldn't have but...yeah. We did. So there's that, I guess. I shouldn't have called you beautiful but...you are. So..."

"So it can't happen again," Libby says, her voice shaking with the tears she knows she will shed once he's out the door.

"If that's what you want," Jamie says, trying to disguise his hurt through the shrugging of his shoulders. "I'll see you at school."

Kurt looks up when the front door slams, and Blaine squeezes his hand. Sure enough, Libby arrives in the kitchen, looking contrite and sorry as can be. Blaine wants to reach out for her, but Kurt, in a surprising burst of anger, is on his feet.
"Would you mind telling me what sort of dumb stunt that was?" he yells, making Libby take a step backward.

"Papa, I..."

"Not only did you skip school, right before your finals, but you came back here to fall into bed with your ex boyfriend!"

"Papa, I know," Libby says weakly. "But..."

"But nothing!" Kurt yells, even louder this time as he tears at his hair in frustration. "Goddamn, Libby! Do you realize how stupid this is? Once I could understand but twice?! Have you no respect for yourself? Daddy and I didn't raise you to behave in this way, Libby. I am so disappointed in you!"

"You're...you're..." Libby breaks off, distraught at hearing her beloved papa so angry and upset.

"Disappointed, pissed off and wondering when you got so dumb!" Kurt cries, and with that he is gone, out the back door, across the yard and slamming the door to his office while Libby stands in the kitchen, her bottom lip trembling.

"I don't want papa disappointed in me," she whispers, sounding so small and childlike that Blaine rushes to cradle her in his arms.

"Oh hush, baby girl. Shh. It'll all be okay. He's upset, that's all. Come on." He tugs her into the den where she curls up on the couch and cries in his arms. Blaine does nothing except soothe, kissing into her hair and holding her tight until she fishes in his pocket for a tissue and looks up at him.

"I'm so sorry if I've let you down."

"You haven't," he tells her honestly. "And you haven't let papa down either. It's just...self-respect is very important to him, Libby. You know that. It comes from Grandpa. You know, he was so good with your papa when he was growing up, at telling him how much he mattered and that he shouldn't give himself away easily. Papa and me have both tried to pass that on to you, and I think papa feels like maybe you slept with Jamie again because you feel worthless, and he doesn't want you to feel that way, simply because you matter so much."

"But it was Jamie," Libby says in confusion. "It's not like I went and picked up some random."

"I know that, but Libby, you can't keep sleeping with him, honey. Trust me, you're both setting yourselves up for more heartache in the long run. Friends with benefits never, ever works out."

"But why can't it? I mean, Jamie and I...being together isn't gonna work right now but there's still that spark, that pull."

"Which you have to ignore," Blaine says firmly. "Okay, look at it this way. You two carry on hooking up, but nothing more, then one day Jamie comes to you and announces that last night he slept with a guy. You can't come back at him for cheating, because you two aren't together. What if he keeps seeing the guy? You have no claim over him, Libby, and your heart will be broken all over again. It's been two weeks since you guys broke up. Give yourselves time to heal. If you want my advice...."

"I don't."

"No, you never do," he grins, giving her a playful shove. "But I always give it anyway. If you want
my advice, you'll take a clean break altogether, not even see him as a friend. Just for a month or two, until things settle down."

Libby shakes her head, folding her arms across herself. "I can't do that. It's not fair on our other friends. We're one big group and we always have been. I can't expect them to choose, or feel like they can't invite me somewhere if Jamie's going, or vice versa."

"Okay, well you know what? You're an adult now, I can't tell you what to do or how to act. Just...look after yourself, first and foremost, Libby. Papa and I have spent eighteen years doing just that, and now it's up to you to put all we've- hopefully- taught you, into practise."

"I will daddy, I promise," she says, kissing his cheek. "I'm gonna go apologize to papa."

“No need,” Kurt says from the doorway, making Libby and Blaine startle. “I heard all that, and daddy’s right,” he says, coming into the room and sitting down next to Libby. “I want, no, I need for you to respect yourself, because you are so precious to me. I’m not saying Jamie doesn't respect you, because he does, but this is about you. However much you want to feel that closeness to him, a quick...y’know...isn't the way to go about it. I agree with daddy, you two need to take a break from each other, and then start to slowly reconnect as friends.”

“I know,” Libby sighs. “And I’m sorry for messing up.”

“You made a human error,” Kurt says, pulling her into his arms and kissing into her hair. “It’s happened, and you both have to deal with the consequences, just don’t let it happen again.”

*

The trouble is, Libby thinks to herself a week later when she falls back breathless and panting on Jamie’s bed, is that when he looks at her just so, the whole conversation she had with her parents flies right out the window.

It’s even worse the following week, when the friends all score fake ID and hit a club in Columbus. How is anyone expected to dance next to their hot ex boyfriend all night when they’re slightly the worse for wear, and not make a pass at him? Granted, sex in a car is massively difficult, but by that time they’re both a giggling hot mess, so even though it’s not perfect, the moment still stays with Libby for days afterwards.

“I’m gonna give it another go,” she tells Liv as they leave English and head to the cafeteria.

“Give what another go? You and Jamie? You never really broke up in the first place.”

“Yeah we did,” she says cheerfully. “But we just can’t stay away from each other, so I figure we might as well pick up where we left off.”

“Okay,” Liv stops and turns to face her, frowning with concern. “I love you, so I’m going to be brutal. You’re both being idiots.”

“Excuse me, what?”

“You heard. As painful as it was for you to let him go, you made the right decision. You both know he needs some time to get his shit together, but you know what? Actually, so do you. You and Jamie are not my Blaine and Kurt. They’re the exception, Libby, not the rule. Talk to anyone who knows them and you hear the same over and over; they were always meant to be, as I’m sure you and Jamie are.”
“Libby’s whole face lights up as she squeezes her best friends hand. “Really?”

“Really, I do,” Liv smiles. “But when Kurt met Blaine he was fifteen, sure, but Blaine was...what? Ancient, anyway.”

“Thirty one,” Libby laughs. “He was thirty one.”

“Ancient,” Liv confirms. “So he had the patience to let Kurt grow and become his own person before they settled down. He could smile at Kurt’s naivety, or foolishness because he’d been there and done all that. You and Jamie are both going through life changing stuff right now. He’s having a crisis over his...everything, and you’re confident in what you want to do, but still taking the very scary step of going it alone. I’d love nothing more than for you and him to be together in New York, because it would make me feel a whole lot better knowing you weren’t alone in such a big city, and it warms my heart to think of you two exploring everything as a couple, but you can’t even entertain doing that until you both know your own selves.”

“But we could discover that, surely, as we went along?”

“Libby, if he came home to you one day after you’d been living together for two years and announced he was going to leave you to explore his sexuality, you’d be crushed. What’s more, you know this, which is why you let him go in the first place. You took the pre-emptive strike, as it were. I love the friendship my dad and my Blaine have, Libby, and I love that we have the same, but I don’t want to have to save your life because Jamie breaks your heart.”

“Let’s just...go get lunch,” Libby says, and Liv sighs, knowing all she can do is wait.

*L* 

Lunch passes as normal, except everyone notices how flirty Libby is with Jamie, but when Melody catches Liv’s eye she shakes her head and Melody knows not to pass comment.

“So sleepover at mine on Saturday?” Melody asks brightly. “Guys, if you want to come my dad said it’s okay as long as you sleep in the basement. Which is ironic considering I’m a lesbian, but nevermind.”

“Thanks, but we can’t anyway,” Dylan laughs. “Me and J are heading downtown again.”

“To a club?” Libby asks.

“Yeah. There’s a new gay club opened called Dragon’s Kiss, so we thought we’d try it.”

“Oh,” Libby is stunned, and she feels an uncomfortable stirring in the bottom of her stomach, but she gives a tight smile and tries to catch Jamie’s eye. “Can we come?”

Dylan looks between her and Jamie, who suddenly seems very interested in his soda can. “Um...”

“Actually, Libby,” Jamie says boldly. “The reason we planned it for this weekend was because we knew you three were busy. If you don’t mind, this is something I’d like to try for myself.”

“I see.” Libby nods, tears prickling behind her eyes as she realizes she has no come back; Jamie is only doing exactly what she has been telling him to do and oh, weren’t her daddies right? “Well, I’d better...” she trails off before taking off at breakneck speed. Liv makes to follow her, but Jamie stops her.

“I’ll go. It’s...we need to....”
“Just keep it in your pants,” she snaps as she sits down again. “I’ve told her and I’m telling you, you’re both idiots.”

“Libby!” Jamie catches her in the hall, one hand poised on the bathroom door. “Libby, I’m sorry. It’s...I need to know, Lib. I need to see how I feel about all this.”

“I know you do,” Libby sighs. “And really, it’s okay. Don’t feel bad.”

“Sure?”

“I’m sure,” she replies, hoping she can hold it all together. “But I can’t keep doing this.”

“The hooking up?” Jamie asks as he lowers his voice. “Yeah, I know. We need to stop.”

Libby takes a deep trembling breath and looks him in the eye. “No...any of it,” she says. “I can’t be friends with you right now, Jamie. We need a clean break so we can understand our feelings a little better. We’re never going to get over each other if we’re always hanging out together, and I will never get used to seeing or hearing about you dating people if I have to look at you every day. The temptation of falling into bed together is always there, and nothing will ever work itself out. I know this fucks up our friendship group entirely, so I’ll back down gracefully and stay away at lunchtimes and whatever, but I just can’t be around you right now, I’m so sorry.”

She runs down the corridor, not stopping until she’s out in the spring sunshine and at her car. Fumbling for the keys, she drives home as quickly as she dares, where she falls into Kurt’s arms. He doesn’t dare reprimand her for running out of school again, not when he can see how upset she is, he just holds her, and listens while she confesses all, and then again when Blaine comes home. Eventually their night ends with the three of them sitting on the couch eating pizza and watching Bambi before Kurt and Blaine tuck her into bed as if she were a child once more.

“I’ve lost him, haven’t I?” she asks as Kurt turns out the light.

“You’ve not lost him, no. You let him go. There’s a difference,” Kurt smiles as he gives her a kiss goodnight.

“Maybe he’s misplaced for a while,” Blaine offers, stroking her hair back from her forehead. “but you’ll never lose us, Libby. Whatever happens.”

“Thank you. I love you both.”

“And we love you too, baby girl,” Blaine whispers as he hugs her tight. “For always.”
"I can't do this."

"You can," Kurt says firmly. "Whatever happens, just keep smiling, okay?"

"I don't want to do this."

"I know honey," he soothes as he picks up a bow tie and heads toward the mirror. "But it's just her graduation, that's all. It's another three months before she moves. Now come here and let me tie this for you."

"She can't be graduating, she just can't," Blaine murmurs as he looks in the mirror at Kurt. The bow tie tied, Kurt drapes his arms over Blaine's shoulders and makes eye contact, blowing a kiss at their reflections.

"I'm still struggling to work out when she stopped being a stroppy teenager and became this wonderful, loving and kind young woman instead."

"I know," Blaine says with a smile, thinking back to the last few months. Although undoubtedly tough, Libby has pulled through. Open and honest at all times about her feelings, and actually letting Kurt and Blaine advise her and help her through all this, Libby has been a true joy to live with, and though Blaine sometimes finds himself wondering where his little girl went, he can't say he really misses the tempestuous outbursts at all.

"It's just a shame...her and Jamie...you know," Kurt sighs. "I can vividly recall sitting in Ellen's yard watching them play when they were about three, and we were saying how cute it would be to get a high school graduation picture together, and now they're not even talking."

"Can I come in," Santana announces rather than asks as she marches into the room and sits on the bed.

"You are in," Kurt points out.

"I know. I have something to say. Libby is ready, and you will cry, but then that's nothing new, and also," she pauses, sitting a little bit straighter and Blaine turns back from the mirror when he notices how she's trying to keep composed. "I can vividly recall sitting in Ellen's yard watching them play when they were about three, and we were saying how cute it would be to get a high school graduation picture together, and now they're not even talking."

"Can I come in," Santana announces rather than asks as she marches into the room and sits on the bed.

"You are in," Kurt points out.

"I know. I have something to say. Libby is ready, and you will cry, but then that's nothing new, and also," she pauses, sitting a little bit straighter and Blaine turns back from the mirror when he notices how she's trying to keep composed. "I actually wanted to thank you guys. You know, when I offered to be your surrogate, I never in the world imagined I would fall in love with your kid as much as I have. I've never wanted my own, but Libby has fulfilled something in me that otherwise would have been missing all these years. So thank you, really, for letting me share in her life like you have. It's...well it's an honor really, that you've asked me to talk with her about stuff, to dress her for proms or to take her out when she's feeling down. I love that she has a room at my place and I love that you've let me share in today like I was part of your family. Naturally, if you tell anyone I will kill you, but I love you all so much. So yeah. I've said that now, and I'm just gonna go downstairs and cry a little bit."

"No you're not," Blaine laughs, pulling her into his arms. "You're gonna let me cuddle you."

"Get off," she mumbles against his suit jacket. "I hate you."

"I know," he smiles. "Thank you for your words." He gives a kiss into her hair as Kurt comes over and squeezes her hand. "You know we love you, and it's not as if you were a part of this family; you are, as simple as that."
"You're smothering me," Santana moans.

"Shut up," Kurt teases as he hugs her from the other side. "Let us love you."

"Is anyone coming down?" Libby bellows up the stairs, and they all pull back, righting their clothing and dabbing at their eyes.

"So I guess we'd better..." Blaine starts, and Kurt holds out his hand.

"Come on," he says with a smile though his eyes swim with tears. "Let's go watch our baby graduate."

*

"Oh dear god I'm gonna cry," Wes murmurs as he tries to hide in Blaine's shoulder. "Who's dumb idea was it to get the girls together for a photo?"

"Your wife's."

"Oh."

Libby and Liv stand arm in arm, grinning and laughing as the wind threatens to take their mortar boards away and they clutch them tightly as Kathy takes yet more pictures.

Melody joins them, then it's the turn of proud parents to pretend like they're super happy and not really panicking about their girls heading out into the big wide world.

"My Blaine," Liv hisses as Wes snaps a photo of them together. "I have to tell you something."

"Oh god. You're not pregnant, are you?" he asks with concern. "Because I am not telling your dad for you."

"No I am not," she snaps, steering him to one side. "It's about Jamie. What he's been doing."

"Liv, I don't think I want to hear this, do I?"

"Yeah you do, trust me. So, he's been going to like...every gar bar within a fifty mile radius."

"Mildly insulted," Blaine tells Liv in astonishment. "But more shocked that he's not... So what? He wants to be alone? He doesn't want to be alone?"

"He wants to be with Libby, Blaine. Just Libby."

*

Libby stops and stares when she sees Jamie walking towards the auditorium with his mom and Uncle. Only Jamie would have the audacity to wear bright pink pants under his navy blue gown, she thinks to herself with a smile. The wind blows and she can see that he has a regular smart shirt and black tie on but the pants...the pants say it all.
Despite them both wearing sunglasses, the moment of eye contact is very real and tangible to both. Jamie's step falters, and Libby is quite sure that Melody is saying something to her, but despite not having spoken to each other for six weeks, their feet carry them toward one another, and Libby finds herself smiling up at him.

"Hi."

"Hi," he says, reaching out to tuck her hair behind her ear but then thinking better of it. "You look..." he starts, but stops himself again, remembering the road that particular compliment always seems to take them down. "....funny in your hat," he says instead, and Libby pouts, making him laugh.

"So do you."

"I know," he smiles. "I just thought... Anyway. How are you?"

"Um...good, actually," Libby says, though in reality she feels ridiculously faint and very close to tears.

"Still working?"

"Yeah." She gives a small laugh.

"You don't sound thrilled," Jamie says, his heart beating unreasonably fast at the soft smile on her face.

"I got bitten by a parakeet last week," she admits, ducking her head in embarrassment. "Yeah, go on, you can laugh, I know you're dying to."

"That's not...no, I wouldn't....well." He stops, giving in and laughing out loud. "Yeah okay, that's funny. Sorry Lib."

"I have a whole summer of it too," she carries on, more relaxed now. "My parents won't let me quit until August first."

"Well if it makes you feel any better, I'm working all summer too."

"At the bookstore?"

"No," and suddenly Jamie is animated in a way which Libby hasn't seen for a long time and his whole face seems to sparkle with delight as he steps a little bit closer. "The children's library run day camps in conjunction with some schools in the area, and they've asked me to be a counsellor and lead story time each day."


"Yeah. I love it. I mean, when the library first employed me they didn't seem bothered by my appearance, you know? They did warn me that parents might have issues, but they said they'd got my back. Which was great, obviously, and I know there are adults out there- like your parents- who don't care either. But the kids....it's like they don't see it, you know? They don't see gender, they don't see sexuality and they don't ever question my choices. They're amazing. It's what I've been waiting for my whole life through."

Libby swallows over the sudden lump in her throat and looks down. "I tried to give that to you too, you know."
"I know you did," Jamie says quickly as he realizes his mistake. "Oh gosh, Libby, I didn't mean that, I...you know...I didn't..." He breaks off, running a hand through his hair in desperation. "You gave me the happiest two years of my entire life," he says honestly. "And I've hated that you've just disappeared these last six weeks. Liv tells me you're okay, but that's all anyone will divulge. It's killing me, Libby, not speaking to you. It breaks my heart that you turn up for class last and leave first, and then you blocked me on all the social media sites...."

"Because Jamie, equally it's breaking my heart to watch you running around experimenting!" she cries, perilously close to bursting into tears. "I know it's what I told you to do, and I still believe it's what you should do, but I don't want to see or hear about it, that's all. Why can't you understand that? I asked Dylan not to tell me anything and he's respected that, so please, just...."

"But Libby...."

"Don't," she says curtly, holding a hand up to silence him. "Please don't. This is our graduation, and I really want for all five of us to enjoy this day together."

"Together?"

"Together," she repeats. "But just for today, okay?"

Jamie shrugs and stares at his feet, blinking back tears. "If that's what you want."

"Okay! I'm gonna ask it, since none of your parents will." Santana bellows as she strides over to them. "Will you two have a picture together?"

Jamie looks sadly at Libby and makes to decline, but Libby puts a hand on his arm. "Yeah," she says bravely. "Yeah we will. Start with a group one, maybe?"

* *

"Libby," Liv hisses as they all stand arm in arm. "I have to tell you something."

"No," she whispers back. "Please Liv, not now."

"Yeah, I do, it's about Jamie. He's...."

"Liv," Libby sighs, turning to face her. "Please. I don't wanna hear it. I just want to enjoy today."

"Okay," Liv nods. "Yeah, okay. But talk to your dad tonight, yeah?"

"My dad? What's he got to do with anything?"

"Okay!" Santana calls, clearly having decided she is official photographer. "Libby, Jamie?"

"Sure," Libby smiles, and moves closer to Jamie, who makes her shriek when he scoops her up into his arms. "What are you...?"

"I'm still madly in love with you," he whispers, and daringly, in front of everyone, he kisses her gently on the lips, pulling back to smile at her.

"I love you too, Jamie," Libby admits, trailing her fingers over his cheek. "And I always will. But nothing's changed, has it? You're finding out who you are, and I'm learning damn hard life lessons about who I am and where I'm meant to be and...shockingly, that I'm not everyone's princess," she hugs him tight, kissing his cheek warmly. "Come back to me," she whispers in his ear. "You'll know, if and when the time is right, and I'll be waiting."
"This is a disaster," Kurt moans as Ellen dabs at her eyes. "I knew this would be awful."

"I wanna put them in a room and demand they stay there until it's all sorted," Ellen admits, "And I also want Libby to force Jamie to go to college, but it'll all be on their terms, I guess."

"He's still not done anything about college?" Blaine asks in surprise.

"Nope. And the stupid thing is, last month I sold my car and cashed in a savings bond, plus my brother suddenly surprised us all by giving Jamie a check for ten thousand dollars. He's been saving since he was born, apparently. So if he now wanted to go out of state, he could. I mean, he'd have to work, but most college kids do these days. The world is quite literally his oyster; or the US, anyhow."

"You're right though," Blaine sighs, taking Kurt's hand and putting his other arm around Ellen's shoulders. "They'll figure it all out in their own time."

*

The summer is long for Libby. She works, she spends time with Liv and Melody and she steadfastly, resolutely avoids any talk of Jamie Foster. Melody is the first of the friends to leave for college, and on a bright July morning Liv, Libby and Dylan wave a tearful goodbye; Jamie having made his farewells the day before.

"Wanna go get breakfast?" Dylan offers, his arms around the two girls.

"Sure," Libby gives a tight smile. "Beats going home and sobbing for hours over everything changing."

"It's me next," Dylan notes once they're seated in the diner. "Ten days to go."

"Yep, then Liv the following week and me two days after."

"We should all do something," Dylan says decisively. "The four of us, I mean," he adds with a pointed look at Libby.

"Yeah...no."

"Libby," Dylan and Liv chorus despairingly.

"Right, I've had it with you," Liv snaps. "Tell her, Dylan, and Libby, you're gonna listen to this or else I'll bite you, and I'm worse than a parakeet, believe me."

"But I..."

"Yeah, shut up," Dylan says, leaning across the table to take her hand. "Libby, you keep telling us not to talk to you about Jamie, not to tell you where he is and what he's doing, and I get that. But the thing is, he's not doing anything you think he's doing. He's been out a lot, to bars and clubs. He's been to gay bars, trans nights, crossdressing nights, the lot. He's gotten drunk, he's stayed sober. He's danced, he's not danced, he's talked to guys and girls and people with no discernible gender whatsoever. He's had attention, sure, from all over. He's a good looking guy, and I've had to pretend to be his boyfriend on more than one occasion to get him out of a tight spot, but listen to this. He has not kissed anyone, slept with anyone...even danced provocatively with anyone. Wanna know why? All he wants is you, Libby. Only you."

"Thank you," Liv cries. "So now can you two put us all out our misery and just get back together?"
But Libby shakes her head, poking at her eggs with her fork and trying really hard not to cry. "I won't pretend that's not nice to hear," she says softly. "But it's still not the right time for us. I'm about to move to New York for three years, and then Italy for a year right after. Jamie is staying here, and as far as I know, working and not going to college. It wouldn't work."

"Ugh. Libby...it will work, if you two want it to work," Dylan cries. "Really!"

"No, you know, it's not...ugh," she cries in despair. "This is not, and never has been about Jamie's sexuality; or not totally, anyway. It's more about both of us, you know? I'll always love him, and he knows that, but we just...we're not in that place, guys, I'm sorry."

Ten days later, when Jamie and Liv wave goodbye to Dylan this time it's Libby's turn to not be present. Liv tries to urge Jamie to contact Libby, but he's evasive, muttering something about promising to contact her before she goes to college but not wanting to be drawn on anything else.

"I know you mean well, Liv, I do," he says with a soft smile as he squeezes her shoulder. "But with all due respect, the only people in this relationship are Libby and I."

He heads out that night, to a bar he has now frequented many times with Dylan. He's sad, lonely and as desperate as can be, he thinks to himself as he nurses his beer. With no direction or purpose he wonders how low he can possibly fall before something, somewhere starts to make sense.

"Hey stranger, can I buy you a drink?" Jamie turns to see Ryan, Dylan's ex-boyfriend, leaning against the bar and smiling. "Even though you're too young?"

"Beer," Jamie nods curtly, "and who really gives a fuck? You're not twenty one either," he points out, and Ryan nods his concession.

"So, what brings you to a place like this?" Ryan asks, sliding the beer across to him. "Last I knew you were so far in denial you were practically Egyptian."

"I've never been in denial about anything," Jamie snaps.

"You were pretending to be in love with a girl."

"She has a name," Jamie snarls, "Libby. And I was in love with her and I still am, thanks, we're just not together right now, that's all."

"Ah," Ryan smiles, and he sits on a stool and moves it closer. "So you're a free agent, then?"

"Yeah," Jamie sighs heavily. "This is me," he carries on, his bitterness evident. "Experimenting, finding myself, whatever you want to call it. I call it getting drunk in bars and trying to forget."

"Well what a sad picture you paint," Ryan jokes. "C'mon man, let's dance."

"Oh, I don't really...."

But Ryan is resolute, taking his hand and tugging him from his stool. "Yeah you do. It'll be fun."

* 

"Good morning baby girl," Blaine says as brightly as he can. "Two breakfasts left, and today falls to me, I'm afraid, so we have bacon, pancakes and maple syrup."

"Nice," she says, cuddling him from behind and reaching up to kiss his cheek. "But I'm cooking tomorrow. My final farewell. Where's papa?"
"Behind you," Kurt replies, coming into the kitchen. "Someone seems cheerful today."

"I am," Libby nods. "Even though Liv's gone. I have plans today which involve doing absolutely nothing except spending time with you two."

"As delightful as that sounds," Blaine says as he serves the pancakes, "yesterday you were crying in your room. Are you really okay?"

"Yes," Libby says with a firm nod. "I know I had a blip yesterday, but I've come to the realization that what will be will be, so that's it. I'm focused on New York, on my degree and on myself."

"That is so good to hear," Kurt says, hugging her tight. "Now let our day of nothingness commence."

But as soon as Kurt raises his fork to his mouth, the doorbell sounds and he frowns, wondering who could be calling at eight in the morning.

"It's Jamie," Libby says, even though there's no chance of her being able to see from the back of the house. She pushes her chair back so quickly it falls to the ground and rushing out into the hall she pulls open the door.

Jamie stands there, bathed in early morning sunlight. His smart navy shorts are set off with a pink 'hot lips' t-shirt which has always made Libby laugh, and his nails are painted a matching color. But all of that is not what Libby notices at all. It's the open, honest and endearing smile on his face which makes her stop and stare, and the way in which he seems suddenly invigorated with an energy she has not seen in him since they were both sixteen.

Opening her mouth to say something, she is swiftly silenced by a finger on her lips, and Jamie's eyes sparkle as he smiles down at her. "Let me speak," he says quietly. "I need to say some stuff, and I want you to hear me out. When I'm done, I'm walking away, I promise."

From behind the kitchen doorway, Kurt presses closer to Blaine, who is trying to become one with the wall in order to hear. "What's he saying?" Kurt whispers, but Blaine shakes his head.

"I don't know, but sneak a quick look into the hall," he commands. "Look how happy he is. Oh my god, he better not propose. He hasn't asked my permission," he whispers in alarm, wincing when Kurt kicks him.

"Our permission," he corrects. "But oh my goodness, he'd better not be. They're nowhere near ready."

"Says the boy who got engaged at nineteen."

"Entirely different," Kurt declares, giving Blaine a haughty look. "And quit with that if you ever want to get laid again."

"Listen," Blaine says with a nudge. "He says he has stuff to say."

Jamie takes a deep breath, puffing the air out through his cheeks and bouncing slightly on the balls of his feet. "A couple of weeks ago I ran into Ryan at a club," he says, and Libby blinks and stares. "Dylan's Ryan?"

"Yeah, the night Dylan left, actually. Anyway. He bought me a few drinks, and we danced together. For all his hatred of me when he was dating Dylan, we actually had a really fun night."
"Great," Libby nods tightly as she feels all her hopes vanishing.

"Yeah, and at the end of the night, he asked me out on a date."

Libby says nothing, only pinches the bridge of her nose as she braces herself for what's coming.

"I said no."

"Huh?" Libby looks up sharply, her eyes wide. "You said...."

"No," Jamie repeats. "Partly because he's an ass, but also partly because at that moment, everything fell into place."

"What do you....what does that mean?"

"Hear me out," Jamie says patiently. "This might sound like me just standing here, telling you what's what....and actually, that's exactly what is, I guess, but no doubt you'll give me your opinion in time" he shrugs with a smile. "I got into college by the skin of my teeth. I start in two weeks."

"Jamie that's great!" Libby cries, genuinely pleased for him as she realizes his happiness comes from having a path at last. "What are you studying?"

"Ahem," he says, shy yet proud. "I'm going to take gender studies and childhood development. My boss at the library thinks I have what it takes to become a child counsellor, and I think that's something I'd really like to do. I'd also like to explore gender more. I've done a lot of reading around it recently, so...yeah. That's what I'm going to be doing."

"Fantastic," Libby grins. "Really. I'm...."

"One more thing," Jamie says, holding a hand up. "When Ryan asked me out that night it made me realize something which I think I probably always knew anyway, but he confirmed it. My sexuality doesn't matter, Lib. What matters is who I want to be with, and that's you. I don't want to see what it's like with anyone else, ever. So that's it, I guess. Almost everything has fallen into place for me," he says with a soft smile. "I'm in college, and taking a degree which I know I'm gonna love. I have plans for a career path, and I also know that the person I will love for all eternity, is you. One more thing..." he rushes on, "and then I swear, I'm walking away to let you think all this over in your own time. I don't know if you can see us getting back together anytime soon, but I want you to know that I'm ready. You said I'd know when the time is right, and I do. And I know what you're thinking, will the distance thing work for us, right?" he asks, and Libby nods sadly. "Thought so. Which is why I'm studying at NYU," he says with a grin. "So if you feel like getting together anytime to talk, well....I'll be there, waiting." Jamie backs away slowly, blowing a kiss at a completely astonished Libby before he turns and walks down the porch steps, heading to the end of the drive before looking back. "I love you, Libby Darling," he calls, walking backwards down the road. "Just remember that."

Libby stays standing, staring at the figure of her Jamie as he walks down the road. Head held high, shoulders back, he's Jamie and he's proud, she thinks to herself, and that's the man she's going to spend the rest of her life with.

"Libby, honey," Kurt says softly over her shoulder. "If you don't chase him down that street right now, I think daddy will on your behalf, and he's crying and can't really see where he's going so...."

"Libby," Blaine says in a decidedly wobbly voice. "Go get your man."

*
"This is all my closet space," Libby says with a huge sweeping motion across all the shelves and rails. "And that's yours."

"No way," Jamie laughs, shoving her out the way and setting his favourite pair of black boots on a shelf. "We share, Libby."

"I'm a girl!"

"And I'm a Jamie," he says proudly, hanging a lilac tank top on a hanger. "And I need just as much space as you do."

"No way!"

"Blaine!" Jamie calls from the walk in closet. "Help me out here."

"Well," Blaine says, smiling as he lounges in the closet doorway. "Jamie is right, sweetie, you need to share equally. But then, Jamie, you did choose to take her on, knowing what she was like so...

"Share!" Kurt calls from the bedroom where he's busy putting nightstands together.

"No fair!" Libby pouts, though her eyes are sparkling with merriment. "You two like Jamie more that me."

"He's my favorite," Blaine confirms, putting an arm around his shoulders.

"Yeah, thought so," Libby laughs as she pushes past them, but not before she's kissed both their cheeks. "Fine, have half the closet, but I rule the bathroom."

Picking up her toiletry bag, Libby makes her way to the bathroom in what is now her and Jamie's Manhattan apartment, sticking her tongue out as she walks from the room.

"Good luck, Jamie," Kurt mumbles as he heaves a night stand into place. "You're gonna need it."

"Oh, I've a feeling we'll be just fine," Jamie grins, bouncing up and down on the edge of their bed. "I still can't believe all this is happening," he says in awe as he looks around him. "I'm never gonna be able to thank you guys enough for...."

"You can look after her," Blaine says seriously, setting a hand on his shoulder. "That's how to thank us. I'm only saying that because she's not in the room, otherwise she would be having a fit about how she doesn't need looking after but.... You have her heart, Jamie. Treasure it."

"I will," he says sincerely as Kurt comes to sit next to him. "I promise you."

"This isn't gonna be easy, you realize that, right?" Kurt asks with concern. "I mean, Blaine and I...we had so much fun, living together...."

"Had?" Blaine cries with a laugh.

"Have," Kurt corrects. "Have. Sorry. We do still have a lot of fun, yes, but when we first started out... It's tough, you know? You two know each other so well, but there's still so much more to find out. Enjoy doing that, make the most of it. And try not to yell when she's blown all her wage packet on a scarf. She's still learning about money," he sighs. "And scarves are so pretty...."

"Actually, I wanted to ask you about that," Jamie starts, adding hastily, "not scarves. Libby," he smiles, rubbing the back of his neck shyly. "I just...I hope you both know that I'm so happy how all this has worked out, and that I will always love Libby and take care of her, just as she will take care
of me too, no doubt," he laughs. "And I was wondering...not yet, but sometime in the future...if I were to ask her....if I could have your permission to propose to her, when the time is right."

Blaine finds Kurt's hand and squeezes it as they both wipe away a tear, and Kurt nods, trying to compose himself. "Yes you could ask and yes you can," Blaine manages at last as Kurt is now useless. "Thank you for asking."

"Well...I just...you know, I love her," Jamie says, embarrassed. "And I...you two are....y'know. Well, I love you both as well. You're awesome parents and Libby is so wonderful because of you two so...even though Blaine still scares me slightly, I'm glad I get to have you both in my life," he finishes, cheeks pink. Blaine pulls him into his arms, ruffling his hair and hugging him tight.

"Definitely my favorite," he says gruffly.

* *

"So this is it," Blaine sighs as he slams the trunk shut. "Just an eleven hour drive to look forward to now, but we have the Les Mis soundtrack so..." he breaks off his rambling, looking desperately between Kurt and Libby, who stands on the sidewalk with Jamie's arm around her. "I know papa said no more money, but I put a little in your account because I didn't want you running out. And don't take the subway, okay? Take a cab. I don't like the subway so..."

"I'm sorry I chose New York, daddy," Libby says, reaching out for his hand.

"Don't be sorry for following your dreams, Libby," Blaine tells her with a soft kiss to his forehead. "Never apologize for that because it's all I've ever wanted for you."

"I don't want to say goodbye," Libby admits, suddenly bursting into tears and falling into Blaine's arms. "It's like... I want this, I want to live here with Jamie, I want to go to college but...."

"Sweetie, it's okay," Kurt soothes, stepping in when Blaine lets him know with his eyes that he can't reply. "You're right, you do want this, and it's what you're ready for. Two weeks, okay? Two weeks and we'll be here for the weekend with you before we travel around the east coast. You'll see us all the time, I promise. And you can call too, you know? Call all the time," he says, choking on his tears. "Even if you haven't got anything to say, just so we can hear your voice."

"Papa? Daddy? I just want to say....well....thank you, I guess. You two are the best parents anyone could ever wish for and you know, that's why I'm so sad, because it's going to be so hard without you there to make me laugh, or hug me. I'm gonna miss your eye rolling papa, and the way daddy always looks to you to check before he says yes to anything I ask," she giggles. "But most of all, I'll miss your love. Not just the way you love me, but the way you love each other. You know..." She pauses, wiping at her eyes and giving a trembling smile. "I can remember getting groceries with you guys, I must have been about seven. There was this woman and her husband glaring at you, and as we passed she muttered something about 'those people.' I remember thinking 'why me?' Why did I have to be the one with the gay parents, and I was embarrassed, you know? And then we saw them again, and they were arguing over whether to buy chicken or pork, and I looked at you two, goofing around, and papa you were holding the smelly French cheese that daddy likes high above your head so he couldn't get it in the cart. Daddy was trying to reach it, and you were both laughing but in the end he kissed you, and you smiled and let him put it in the cart. That was it for me, you were worth every single embarrassing kiss, in appropriate comment or ridiculous joke, because watching you two love each other is the best thing in the whole world."

Blaine cries freely as he takes her tight in his arms, their precious baby whom they have spent the last eighteen years devoted to. "I love you," he whispers. "God I love you so much. You have
turned into the most amazing young woman, Libby, and papa and I are so proud of you."

"Well if I have, it's only because you two have done such an amazing job," she smiles, kissing first him and then Kurt. "So thank you."

"I think we're gonna go," Kurt says brokenly. "As we're quite the disgrace. We'll call you tomorrow when we're home, okay?"

Libby nods, and Jamie comes over, hugging both Blaine and Kurt before taking Libby in his arms. "We love you, Libby darling," Blaine calls as he starts the engine. "For always."

* 

Epilogue

"Back to where it all began," Kurt says as they close the door behind them.

"This is crazy," Blaine says in quiet disbelief, roaming through the house to emerge onto the back porch where he sits on the swing and waits for his husband to join him.

"What is?"

"All of it," he says, staring out across the yard. "Our daughter at college, Kurt. I mean, she's eighteen already. Where did all that time go? Twenty one years of marriage. You're forty two, and I'm nearly sixty for heaven's sake. I mean... How?"

"So I can legitimately call you an old man now," Kurt laughs, bumping their shoulders together. "And you can probably drop the gorgeous boy."

"Do you want me to?" Blaine asks in surprise.

Kurt turns to look at him, shaking his head, his eyes full of unshed tears. "No."

"Thank god. Because you will always be that to me, my darling, gorgeous boy. You're my first, my last and everything in between."

"We'll be okay, you know," Kurt says with a nod. "Without her. Because we still get to watch her grow, but most of all, we get to spend the rest of our lives together, and since the first time I saw your face, that's all I've ever wanted."

Blaine cradles his face tenderly in his hands, kissing his cheeks, eyelids, nose and finally, gently and lovingly, his lips. "Forever," he whispers with a soft smile as Kurt kisses him tenderly.

"Forever."

To our darling Libby,

If you’ve found this letter it means you have actually unpacked all your stuff, which in itself is a minor miracle. Either that, or Jamie has done it for you, which wouldn’t be a surprise at all.

Over the years we’ve been lucky enough to share our lives, and yours too, with some amazing people. Somehow, you have managed to take all the best bits of these people, and sometimes the worst, and become your own person in your own right, and we couldn’t be more proud.

The diva tendencies of Aunt Rachel, but also her wide eyed appreciation of the world. The snappiness of Santana, teamed with her wit and sass. The loyalty of Sebastian and thankfully not
the promiscuity, the loving kindness of Wes and Kathy and the honesty and sometimes brutal forthrightness of Grandpa. We see it all, Libby Darling, reflected in you.

We see us too, of course. All the fantastic bits of daddy’s flawless personality,

Hey! Libby, ignore that. That was daddy giving himself an ego boost. You are like him. Stubborn, weepy and whinging.

I DO NOT WHINGE!

You do. But on the plus side, Lib, you have my tremendous sense of grace and style.

Kurt. Get out.

No.

Go.

Make me. :P

....Well hello again, Libby, it’s daddy again. It’s the next day now. We got um...distracted yesterday. Anyway, basically, what we were trying to say was this....(and papa has to write the next bit because I’m crying...)

Daddy is a fool. That’s not what we were trying to say, I just thought I’d let you know. Anyway...

You

Are

Wonderful.

Don’t let anyone ever tell you otherwise. Not only are you the most beautiful woman in existence (my genes) but you are smart, funny, kind and caring. Watching you grow has been our greatest pleasure, Libby Darling. You have brought us more joy than you will ever know.

It’s not always been easy, but it has always been worth it. This is only the beginning of your adventure, my darling girl. The whole world is yours for the taking, and you know what? I just know you’re gonna seize it with both hands.

And now it’s daddy’s turn because papa is an emotional wreck. Libby, when I first held you, all those years ago, all I hoped for, all I wished for, was your happiness. I think...no, I know...you have that now. That doesn’t mean my job is done, of course, and nor would I ever want it to be, but now that you’re flying the little nest we created for you, I want to offer you a few words of advice.

Have fun, because nothing is more important. I am convinced that what makes mine and papa’s relationship so strong is the humor we share.

Live your life according to you. Not anyone else. Jamie will always love you, and you will always love him. So be the person you want to be, because that will always be good enough for him.

Be kind. You know why you’re so beautiful? Because beauty radiates from within. Smile and the whole world smiles with you, Libby. Think happy thoughts, accept those around you even if their thoughts and opinions differ from your own and be kind to those you love.

For you and Jamie: remember, relationships need work. They don't stay fantastic of their own
accord. For every ounce of effort you put in, you stand to gain so much more. Don't be afraid to walk away from an argument, but equally don't be afraid to talk through the hard stuff. However difficult that may be to do at times, it will always be so much easier than the alternative.

So that's it, I guess.

Live, laugh, love.

Always and forever, Libby Darling, we love you,

Daddy and papa xxxx

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