Keep My Heart Captive, Set Me Free
by the_queen_of_rose

Summary

D/s AU - Kurt Hummel had always dreamed of a fairy-tale bond, a perfect, kind and caring Dom. Blaine Anderson had always dreamed of someone who stands out from the boring crowd, someone real, and pure. When their worlds collide, will either of them get what they had dreamed of?

Notes

Hi everyone.
If you think this story looks familiar to you... well you're not wrong :)
It was originally posted on FF, but after a lot of you asked to put it on here as well, we have finally gotten around to doing it.

A few bits of information before we introduce (or re-introduce) you to our world.

1. We are two authors who have met through our individual stories and decided to write this
together. We'll sign our chapters off with A&M which are our initials and how we usually call each other.

2. The story is finished. Over the next unspecified amount of time, we'll be going through our story, editing it and posting it on here. The chapters will probably be coming up every few days. All prompts will also be posted on here and ffnet, those will be sporadic and when we can get around to them.

3. Since AO3 allows us to put links, pictures and such we'll be adding those to the chapters. For everything more you'd like to know about the two of us, the story itself, or if you'd just like to chat, you can visit our tumblr and check out the cool stuff we have over there (character profiles, the trailer, fan art, playlists etc.) http://keepmyheartcaptive.tumblr.com/

And that's about it for now.
If you're new to our end of the crazy spectrum, welcome lovely stranger, and if you're old it's good to see you again :*

A&M
“The pillars of society: a complete guide to Dominant and submissive bonding in a modern civilization” by Dr. Joel Harrington

The essence of every existing thing is balance.

The electrons and the protons in an atom, the two poles of a magnet, yin and yang, a Dominant and a submissive.

Our world and its entire structure is based on the concept of the two opposites balancing each other out and creating harmony; an equilibrium.

Nature itself provided us with a tool to balance our very existence; a Dominant and a submissive mentality in a human.

One incomplete, unbalanced, unfinished without the other; without the bond destined to remain half a person.

The bond between Dominants and their submissives is the key link that joins the two very different
instincts, mannerisms and behaviors that make them up.

On one hand, there is the Dominant mentality in which you see exhibited traits such as; possessiveness, jealousy and sometimes even a propensity towards anger. They are authoritative by nature as one might expect, perfectly suited to meeting the needs of a submissive who craves that domineering attention.

Submissives are the opposite of their counterparts and display deferential behaviors. It is written into their very being, a desire to be dutiful and obedient, a craving for commands in order for them to feel fulfilled and happy.

That’s not to imply that the Dominant does not also acquire something from the bond.

A submissive is a calming presence and as much as they get a sense of purpose out of catering to their Dominant's needs, the Dominant also gains the same in the form of caring for their submissive. It is a fragile balance and by no means one sided.

Submissives have an inherent desire to feel protected and safe and Dominants are designed for this very task. While Dominants struggle with more negative, intense forms of emotion such as anger and their subsmissives provide a calming, soothing presence that dulls the effects considerably.

Physically speaking, there is no difference between a Dominant and a submissive person. There are no physical traits that are characteristic for one or the other.

However there's a way for a Dom to identify a sub and vice versa.

Every Dom has a diamond shaped tattoo on the back of their necks colored in black with a heart shaped, clear space in the middle of it.

Subs, on the other hand, have a heart shaped tattoo on that same space colored in a color that is significant for the sub wearing it.

When the bond between the Dom and the sub is sealed and consummated, the clear space in the Dom's mark gets filled with the color of his Sub's mark, while the subs heart gets a black outline, indicating the connection between them and the completion they brought to each other.

The mark is more often than not the most sensitive and intimate place on their skins and an erogenous zone.

It is considered a taboo, touching somebody's mark without their consent.

An indiscretion of one of the pair will change the look of their mark in various ways; dulling the color, causing white or black spots on the marks, or complete discoloration of the skin on that part (see the chapter on Twisted and Companion Bonds)."

Chapter 1: Balance-the Dominant and submissive mind (pg 3-25)
"As much as it is written into the very core of every human, a bond between two people does not happen by accident.

The Dominants are usually the ones to make a choice of whom they’re going to bond with, because their unique set of abilities allow them to feel the pheromones of a submissive that would suit them the best. After that first contact the Dominant stakes a claim on the submissive using one of the predefined claiming statements.

The claiming statements considered legal are as following, in order of formality from the least formal to the ones used by the highest members of society:

1. He/she is mine.
2. I want him/her.
3. I (name of the Dominant) claim him/her.
4. I (name of the Dominant) chose (name of the submissive) to bond with.

Using one of the above mentioned statements in front of the submissive and at least one other person that assumes the role of a witness, completes the first out of 7 steps of formal bonding called “Staking a claim”.

After the first step is completed the Dom is obligated to prove his ability to care for their chosen sub by, poetically speaking, granting the sub one wish. The sub is allowed to ask for anything, be it a material gift (money, jewellery, real estate etc.), an emotional one (for example; for a Dom to reveal some of his weaknesses or fears which would make him vulnerable), or a so called hypothetical one which implies a promise of something in the future (the sub can ask for their Dom to promise that they will move to another country at some point in their lives or something similar).

If the Dom manages to fulfil the subs request the second step of forming a bond, 'Gifting' is considered complete and the two of them are, from this point onward, required to live together in order to complete the rest of the steps.

Cohabitation is the step that formally begins the moment the Dom and the sub either move in together in their permanent home or chose a place where they will be comfortable and focused solely on each other without the presence of an outside distraction. It should also be noted that subs always move in with their Dom's and not the other way around as it goes against a Dom's very nature to provide for their sub.

This step is created in order to allow both parties to get to know one another and to develop closeness in a way that simulates what it would be like living with one another for the rest of their lives. It is essential at this point to know whether the Dom and sub are compatible and such close quarters provide the opportunity perfectly. Cohabitation in itself does not have an official duration or the criteria by which an outside party can deem it complete. Only the Dom and the sub can determine whether they are ready to move on to the next step while the purpose of the third step can be extended and improved for the rest of their lives.

One of the most vital steps is aptly named 'Bonding'. Cohabitating is the ideal environment for a Dominant and submissive to begin forming their bond and this step makes and breaks many a bond. Bonding is all about getting to know and feeling comfortable with the chosen partner mentally, emotionally and even physically in the form of handholding, hugs and even kissing though often
If a deeper bond than the initial attraction between Dom and sub doesn't form then it is usually realised and broken off at this point, however, if it does then the next step can be achieved. Again there is no time limit to when this step is to be finished and rests solely on the individuals involved to determine the speed of things. It is ill advised to rush this step because it marks the foundations of the bond.

The Presenting Ceremony is a formal, social event during which a young Dom presents his sub to the society.

By doing this the Dominant party is publically announcing the completion of the previous steps, as well as the seriousness of the initial claim. The submissive gets a chance to meet the Dom's extended family and friends, as well as get to know the Dom's workplace in order to garner a complete image of their Dom's life. This is important for a submissive particularly so they can have a chance to determine that they are doing everything that's in their power to assure their Dom has everything he or she needs.

The night of the Presenting Ceremony is also the night where the two parties seal the bond by participating in a sexual relation of whatever kind the couple deems appropriate. Penetration is mandatory for 'Sealing the Bond' and finishing the claiming, but every other aspect is left to their own discretion.

After completing the sixth step the bond is legally and emotionally completed and the parties involved start living their lives as a bonded couple.

However their emotional bond is not everlasting until the last step is fulfilled and in some cases it can take years, or decades, and some couples never get to that stage.

Subspace is one of the most intimate, personal experiences for a Dominant and submissive couple and is the very last on the list of steps. Though never the same experience for every submissive, essentially the rules and guidelines are universal, the most important being safety. It is paramount that a Dom realises that in affect once a sub reaches that higher place they are rendered helpless, offering up control and themselves completely. Natural subspace requires a level of trust which is unparalleled and this is why it is so difficult for Dominant and submissive couples to reach that elusive seventh step however coveted."

Chapter 4: Permanent Bonding (pg 160-200)
If all of the above mentioned conditions are met, the Dom and the sub are required to leave their signatures, fingerprints, and a blood sample confirming their Dominant and submissive genetic markers, sealed in a safety deposit box in the vault of the Registration Services Centre, thus making their bond valid, permanent and unbreakable in the eyes of the law and society.

In order to even approach the process of Bonding both the Dom and the sub need to be of age (in this case at least 16 years old) and consensual.

Chapter 9: Legal procedure (pg 315)

“There are however, some instances where bonds go wrong and are referred to as Twisted.

Usually this is because the steps above were not followed appropriately. For example; if a physical penetrative relationship was pursued right from the start of a claim, or if subspace was forced upon a sub without them reaching it naturally. (See Subspace pg. 156).

Claiming bonds grow in trust and understanding and it is a Dom's duty to ensure they respect their sub enough to wait for the bond to form on both sides.

Twisted Bonds hardly ever affect a Dominant. They do, however, strongly affect a sub. Submissives rely more heavily on the bond than their Dominant counterparts so when it isn't formed correctly there are many negative side effects. Some include; depression, anxiety, trust issues, avoidance to touch, fear of other Dominants. However, because the bond the Dom and sub was involved in didn't manifest properly there is still a chance for a successful, permanent bond to be acquired.

One of the visible signs of a sub that was claimed this way is a mark stained with black spots. It is a consequence that leaves these subs an open target for Doms who are keen on exploiting their vulnerability.

Only a bond with a true Dom who loves them unconditionally will cause the color to clear out and stay bright.

Unlike the Twisted bonds that are constructed upon the idea that one subject in the bond (more often the Dominant one) has the exclusive power to decide the progression of the bonding, leaving the other side emotionally wounded and unprepared, the Companion bonds exist with the sole purpose of balancing a person and providing a healthy, stable environment.

Companion Bonds are different from Permanent Bonds. Whereas a Dom and sub will only ever have one permanent bond in their lifetime, it is possible in the event of a death of a bond partner to be able to engage in a companion bond. Not as intense or strong as the original bond, it does give a Dom or a sub what the other needs in the form of satisfying instinct and giving friendship or affection. The marks of people whose bonded pair passed away turns light gray, staying only as a reminder of the bond they used to share, and does not change after engaging in a Companion bond.

Twisted bonds are usually recognized in the process of registration and the affected party is removed.
from that environment as soon as possible in order to provide as much opportunity to recover as they require. Companion bonds are not required to register and more often than not only complete the steps of bonding that suit both parties involved without severing the bond.”

Chapter 11: Other forms of bonding: Twisted and Companion bonds (pg 316-347)
The Showing
Friday night

Blaine wasn’t ready for it.

After years of waiting and hoping and searching in vain, getting a little more disillusioned as each Showing ticked past he wasn’t ready for the reaction he had to finally finding him.

So different. So out of place. So beautiful.

It was chance that he caught sight of him. Through the throngs of bodies littering the huge room there was a flash of colour that drew his eye. Blue. Bright and brilliant and nothing he had ever seen before and he was helpless but to follow, drawn as if hooked.

A sub. His instincts went haywire with it for the first time in his life. A sub… and he didn’t belong here.

It was shown by the perfectly put together but lower quality clothing that clung effortlessly and complimented expertly. Written in the wary line of his shoulders and closed off body language as he ducked into a doorway trying to be unobtrusive and peeked around the corner at the ballroom floor eyes alight with burning curiosity.

Those eyes.

He was stopped dead in his tracks by the most stunning shade of cerulean surrounded by thick, long fans of lashes, set in the loveliest face he’d ever had the pleasure to look upon and they were awed as they took in the spectacle that so disinterested Blaine- that had forced him into the shadows he was watching from right now. The air literally punched from his lungs as he observed the younger teen and Blaine felt a spark catch somewhere deep inside him and set fire to the blood in his veins as he greedily traced the sharp almost elfin features of this stranger’s face and the long, lithe lines of his body that promised a natural grace and elegance that was enchanting.

Claim.

It was the pounding beat of his heart in his ears.

Blaine was honest to god considering walking over there and pinning the beautiful creature against a wall and marking him for everyone to see and the desire wouldn’t let loose its hold. Instead it dug claws in deeper, almost urgent and Blaine found himself stepping forward once before he managed to take control again.

Fuck.

His shaky hands were gripping his champagne glass mercilessly but he could drag his eyes away long enough to set it down. He was lost in the striking arch of cheekbones and sweeping line of jaw.
A pretty pink mouth that was lush and wide and a nose that was tipped and perfect and god help him a neck that was flawless porcelain skin, exposed from collarbone to ear just inviting him. Offering him.

His cock throbbed in response, filling and wanting.

Mouth dry, breathing heavy, he watched the fascinating war of emotions in micro expressions flick across that lovely face, seeing clear as day despite the distance that separated them and Blaine wanted- no needed- this males scent. He just needed one lungful. Just one and he’d know for certain.

Oh please let this be the one. He’d never seen anyone more perfect.

The music changed to something slower and more intimate and Blaine watched as the sub flushed a pretty pink at the displays both the Doms and the subs were exhibiting at this point. The reaction electrically charged Blaine like nothing he had ever experienced before. This sub was innocence personified. Oh so very pure and untouched and Blaine wanted to walk over there and drag him to his room and never let him leave his bed. But his legs weren’t functioning. Nothing was. All he seemed capable of was staring, catching glimpses around the circling bodies that separated them and so he took full advantage, scanning his eyes back over one more time because he’d never get enough and his brain all but fizzled out of his ears when the sub shifted more around the corner and he saw that.

This sub had the absolute finest ass on this planet and Blaine didn’t give a fuck if he dropped his jaw and growled. Loudly.

Oh god he just wanted to grab him. He wanted to lock him away purely for himself and that feeling of possessiveness only grew until he was physically trembling with it, until it had saturated his pores and for the first time he noticed his instincts going crazy inside his skin. Growling, shouting, demanding, begging Blaine to go and mark, mark, mark.

Claim.

A movement caught his attention just behind where the sub was tucked away and he finally moved his eyes to take in the sight of two burly Dom’s- security- approaching the young sub and he bared his teeth a little.

They were about to speak to him, smell him, lay hands on him and the idea did not sit right with him whatsoever. In fact the sweat running down his back to pool at the bottom of his spine, the furious thrash of his heart in his chest that spiked his adrenaline was testament to just how thin a hold on his control he had at that thought.

That sub was his. There was no doubt in Blaine Anderson’s mind, scent or not, that he had just found the submissive he wanted to permanently bond with.

The larger of the pair of private security guards wrapped ham like fingers around the top of the sub’s arm and Blaine lost it.

His legs kick-started into action and it was a blur actually traversing the short distance between them, pushing past bodies uncaringly in his haste and then he was there and one inhale sealed the deal.

“Release him,” Blaine snapped at the man and he was all loud authority, his voice weighted with the command that had even this Dom following immediately. The other however who had the subs’s other arm wasn’t so quick off the mark. Blaine felt a red veil descending and stepped up to him threateningly. The man was around Blaine’s height with a little more muscle but the younger Dom
was unmoved as he put them nearly nose to nose. The man had his hands on his sub and that wasn’t going to be tolerated. “I’ll say it one more time. Release. Him. Now.”

He let go.

“Mr Anderson, he isn’t allowed to be here,” the man said but Blaine ignored him. Also ignored the fact that the orchestra had ceased playing and the whole hall had turned to stare at the commotion, forming a loose semi circle around the doorway they stood at. He wasn’t surprised really. Anything he did was always under scrutiny and a setting like this only magnified that.

He finally glanced to his left where he’d wanted to keep looking forever and glasz eyes met his for the briefest of moments, recognition flashing there in the swirls of blues, greens and greys before Blaine was grabbing a handful of the shirt at his waist and pulling him nearer. He knew he shouldn’t have, but his body was on fire and he was feeling everything too intensely and he needed an outlet. However the closer proximity only worsened the effects and before he really registered the action he had his face buried into the soft curve of the sub’s neck to a muffled gasp of shock that rippled throughout the room and it was everything.

Heaven.

And the sub’s reaction?

He melted. Arched his neck as if he couldn’t help it whatsoever, a small whimper vibrating against Blaine’s nose and echoing in his ears, so fucking responsive and god damn pliant that Blaine’s eyes rolled back in his head and his still very hard cock throbbed. He smelled of vanilla and springtime and Blaine just wanted to live here forever.

“Blaine…” it was a hesitant almost faraway female voice that sounded so very familiar. “Blaine you can’t—”

He tuned it out.

“You are mine,” Blaine whispered into silky skin under his lips now and heard another strangled gasp of shock only this time from the sub who had been the only one to hear it. That declaration was just for his ears, private and intimate before the Dom pulled back and met the dazed, panicked and hopelessly confused eyes of his chosen sub. He really was far more perfect up close than he could have ever imagined. Blaine was knocked almost stupid with it. He cleared his throat and declared loud for the whole room to hear. “I Blaine Anderson claim him.”

The room broke into chaos but all Blaine could see were watery eyes looking almost heartbroken.

A week previously
Friday morning

“With this year’s Showing only a week away, all eyes are, once again, turned to Dom Dana Anderson and her handsome, yet seemingly unattainable son Dom Blaine.
For those of you who have been living in a cave for the past four years, Blaine Anderson is a senior at Dalton majoring in music and with a business minor which gives him the opportunity to join in on the family tradition and take over one of many companies the Anderson family holds in their possession. Charming looks, dapper demeanour and incredible talent have put Blaine Anderson at the top of our list of the most desirable Doms ever but what makes him even yummier is the fact that Blaine seems to be a bit of a bad boy.

And if there's one thing we can't resist, it's a bad boy reputation with just a smidge of mystery attached.

The mystery of Blaine Anderson lies solely in the fact that he has just turned 22 and he is still not bonded.

Yes you heard correctly!

The reason behind this unusual fact is unknown but there is one thing we can say for sure; it's not for the lack of opportunity.

Blaine has attended several social events in the past year and every time he had a different sub on his arm and even though they vary in age and physical appearance there are a few things all of them have in common: they are all beautiful, unbonded subs from some of the most influential families around.

What is Blaine waiting for we might never know, but sources close to the Anderson family tell us that his mother is slowly losing the patience for her beloved Blaine, especially after the almost textbook perfect bonding of her older son, the famous actor Cooper Anderson, at his first Showing when he was 18 years old.

"Dana is a kind person and a wonderful mother. She stood by both of her sons and supported them unconditionally, but I'm afraid Blaine has used the last of her patience."

Does that mean SHE will find him a sub?

Will he be forced to act interested at this year's Showing as opposed to last three years when he sat at his designated seat, filing his nails and scowling at the world?

Log into our live web show, watch the direct stream of The Showing and find out.

But one thing is for sure: we can expect an interesting week."

Lydia Carr
"The D/s Scoop"-Number one gossip magazine in the country

William McKinley High school wasn’t the fanciest school in the world by any means and the aesthetics of the dilapidated building showcased that spectacularly. Peeling paint that was off white, faded green and dulling red. Broken and flickering lights lined the ceilings inside interceded with chipped, often times missing tiles. Lockers were dented, desks were almost beyond salvage, tattered copies of books rested in beaten shelves. McKinley was the epitome of a by-product for a poor community and so most of the students that went there preferred to be outside. At least the air was fresh and there were a few almost pretty trees over in the far corner to look at.

The backyard of McKinley High was bustling with students in hand me down or worn clothing walking around trying to find a decent place to sit which was pretty much an impossibility of course.

Amongst the almost rotten wooden benches and tables outside, there was a hierarchy; almost a caste system. The jock Doms and their "subs of the week" sitting at the centre table, throwing the scarce pieces of
food the school did manage to provide and yelling uninventive insults at people passing by.

Surrounding them were the inbetweeners. The Doms and the subs that didn't really fit anywhere but were still liked well enough to be left alone and then there were the ones who were willing to get 'friendly' with others just for the fun of it. In actual fact the latter made up quite a lot of the population at McKinley with a lack of options and instincts a considerable driving force.

At the far ends of the yard were the ones that didn't fit in whatsoever, didn't want to stoop so low as to look for their pheromone fix in a one night stand, and the ones who decided to commit social suicide by being friends with 'those kind'.

"God 'Cedes I can't believe you've wasted money on that crap," Kurt huffed in annoyance when his friend finished reading the latest piece of trashy news on the ever elusive Blaine Anderson. That glossy magazine in her hands was probably the newest thing in this place he noted absently.

The friends were sitting at the far table in the front yard of their school, picking through the unidentifiable piles of mush on their plates that their school decided to label food in a sudden rush of optimism. It was anything but food in Kurt's opinion and he was not going anywhere near that wiggly green thing piled at the edge of his tray he swore was an already digested pudding.

"Oh please boo…like I have the money to spend on this," she scoffed incredulously fingering the corner of a page, "My mom got it from the Lester's home. They allow her to take it once they finish reading it."  

"And you've decided to read that out loud because…" he quirked an eyebrow at her and she made a face in his direction mocking his question childishly.

"Because it's good to keep yourself informed," she answered seriously flipping through the glossy pages of the magazine and stopping here and there to point out information she deemed relevant.

"There's so much wrong with that sentence I don't even know where to start," Kurt sighed pushing his tray further away from him because he couldn’t stand looking at it any longer and Mercedes stuck her tongue at him.

"Well I find it interesting," she informed him flippantly and he cocked his head challengingly.

"Really?"

"Yes, Kurt. Really."

Kurt regarded her for a moment or two.

"Okay I'll take my chances and ask. Why is it that you find it interesting?" he asked her and she looked at him from underneath her eyebrows assessing if this was really a discussion she was willing to let herself fall into.

Arguing with Kurt tended to end badly for the person in the argument that wasn't…well…Kurt.

But her friend was giving her the "I challenge you" look and she hated backing away from that so she huffed and slammed the magazine shut crossing her arms on top of it.

"If you must know, the Andersons are the wealthiest, most influential family around. Their companies employ most of the people in this hellhole, they make sure the food we have in our stores
isn't complete trash and we actually have running water..." Kurt quirked a mocking eyebrow at her again and she shrugged sheepishly conceding the point. "Well most of the time anyway."

Kurt laughed at that and Mercedes smiled at the light tinkling sound loving to see him happy like that. It happened so rarely lately and even though she knew why it still pained her to see him look almost defeated most of the time.

She knew how hard it was for him to get by in a school like theirs.

Kids that went to McKinley were practically the lowest of the low; with no money, no prospect of getting a higher education, or a decent job, and worst of all, almost zero chances of permanently bonding to someone.

And for someone like Kurt, someone who spent hours drawing a suit for his Presentation Ceremony, someone who had a box filled with cut out pictures of flower arrangements and sitting charts and invitation designs, it was even harder to exist in a place like that. Somewhere so seemingly hopeless.

"What happens most of the time?" a voice came from behind them and they turned around to see a tall, blonde boy slide onto the bench next to Kurt, the tray he was carrying pushed aside near Kurt’s because he too had no intention of eating the inedible muck.

"Mercedes here was telling me why we should be informed about the life of the Anderson family," Kurt informed Jeff as the blonde picked up his apple like he did every lunch time and leaned his head on Kurt's shoulder careful not to invade his personal space but still close enough for them to get comfort out of it.

"And what did you decide? Should we or should we not be informed?" Jeff asked and Kurt shrugged.

"Well she made a good point with them being pretty important around here and I guess considering most of our parents work for them in one capacity or another we should know what's going on, but it's at the reason for knowing things about Blaine Anderson's love life where I'm drawing a blank to be honest," Kurt informed a giggling Jeff, running a hand through the fringe that fell over his face and smirking at the scowling Mercedes.

"He is gonna take over the Anderson Empire someday you know. Cooper has a career in the movie industry and he doesn't want to be involved with the family business so it all falls to Blaine who is actually interested and capable to do it. But without a sub he's not gonna be the most stable person around. He might ruin everything," Mercedes said flipping her magazine back open to the relevant page. "And from the looks of it, his mother is done letting him run around unbonded."

"I feel sorry for the sub he bonds with," Kurt stated and Mercedes gasped, looking around herself in fear before leaning forwards on her elbows.

"Kurt are you out of your mind? What if somebody heard you? You can't go around talking trash about the Andersons like that!" she hissed at him on a whisper and he shrugged, the poor quality material of his shirt scratching at his sensitive skin as it always did.

"I just call it like I see it. They will tie a poor sub to him and make him wait faithfully while he's prancing around and Doming whoever he wants. Would you want a life like that?" Kurt asked honestly because the idea scared the hell out of him and Mercedes looked at him angrily.
"Some of us don't really have a choice," Mercedes bit out and Kurt jumped at how hurt her voice was.

He knew he hit a nerve with it.

She did have a Dom but their situation was far from ideal. With no money to go through the bonding steps there was no way they could bond permanently and as much as Kurt knew Sam loved his friend he also knew he could find another sub whenever he liked.

"'Cedes I didn't mean…" he tried but she was already on the verge of tears.

"Not all of us have the strength to be alone Kurt. Some of us have decided to grow up and face the fact that fairytales don't exist. I love Sam. And I know he loves me back. And maybe we're not forever but it's better than nothing," she said and Jeff jerked away from Kurt at her last statement looking every bit as insulted as she did only seconds ago.

"You were lucky Mercedes. Sam is a good guy and a good Dom to you. But don't think for one second that having a Dom is always a better option than being alone. You might be surprised," Jeff gritted out and she eyed him in surprise not really knowing what he was talking about and never had she heard Jeff sound quite so fierce before.

"What's that supposed to mean?" she asked and Jeff shook his head warningly at Kurt who was already taking a breath to launch himself into an explanation. And maybe that irked her a little though she always chastised herself for it. Jeff and Kurt were close. Tied together with a thread of understanding that always eluded Mercedes but that didn’t mean they weren’t her friends.

"Nothing. I'm just expressing an opinion." Jeff said tensely as he stared down at the apple in his hand and Mercedes decided to drop it for the time being, noticing how upset Jeff seemed.

"Hey honey. What's gotten you all riled up?" Sam stalked to their table with the same sweet smile he always wore but his eyes were wary, obviously sensing the tension in the air as he approached his sub.

He came up behind her and placed a hand on her shoulder and she visibly relaxed in an instant, letting out a long exhale and melting her back against him as all the tenseness dissolved. She turned her head to the side to catch at least the smallest whiff of his scent, citrus and the distinct scent of a Dom, which made her serene and grounded.

She didn't care what anybody else had to say about them, or about what the future held for them; she belonged to him right now and if that was all she was ever going to get…well then she'll make sure to bask in it while it lasts. Some people didn’t even get to have this so she’d take it with open arms and smile on her face.

Sam supported her as he lowered his head and kissed her behind the ear aligning his lips with the sensitive shell.

"You didn't answer my question pretty girl," he whispered commandingly in a low tone just for her and she craned her neck to look at him apologetically, barely containing the shivers the nickname awakened in her.

He only ever used that name to truly Dom her and she had no power over her body's reaction to the stimulus. The air around her thickened, her mind hazed over, and her heart thumped against her ribs.
as if begging to be let out so Sam could hold it and keep it forever.

There was no way she could let that feeling go; no way she could ever deny it."It's nothing serious sir. We got into a friendly argument about an article in a magazine," she answered hoping she didn’t sound as breathless as she thought she did in front of Kurt and Jeff and relaxed when her Dom nodded; obviously satisfied with the answer he was given when he looked down at the tabletop to find the open magazine.

"Hi Kurt, Jeff," Sam smiled at the two subs and they nodded back in greeting almost hesitantly.

"Hi Sam," they murmured in unison, lowering their gazes as they were taught in class was appropriate in the company of an unbonded Dom.

Friend or no friend, such behaviour was ingrained into their very core; never look an unbonded Dom in the eye, answer his questions politely, never talk back… and as proud and headstrong as Kurt was, he was still a sub and his essence compelled him to give in to the power his Dom friend was letting out with his mere presence. So he listened to his instinct and bowed his head a just a fraction, but still enough to avoid eye contact.

"Guys…I told you a million times. You can act naturally around me. I know 'Cedes and I aren't legally bonded but I still consider her mine so you are free to look at me and talk to me," Sam assured with all the conviction he could conjure into his voice and counted it as a victory when the two subs sitting across from him lifted their eyes shyly and looked at him searchingly before accepting his smile easily.

"Thanks Sam. It’s just instinct to us when you're around," Kurt admitted with a trace of a blush over his own actions and Sam nodded seemingly deep in thought.

"I don't want to make you feel uncomfortable. But I would really like you two to think of me as your friend as well. You mean the world to my girl and she means the world to me. So I want to be able to talk to the people who are so important to her without feeling like I'm pressuring you or making you jittery," Sam said, wrapping his arms around Mercedes and pulling her closer, the flowery scent of her shampoo that he insisted she wore all the time after smelling it on her the first time they got together, filling his nose and making his lips quirk in an involuntary smile.

It made him feel dizzy and in that moment he knew that money or no money she was the real deal for him and no girl would ever take her place. Permanent bond or no.

"That's really good to hear. 'Cedes is a lucky girl," Kurt smiled warmly, looking at his friend and doing his best to show her that he was wrong to judge their relationship earlier.

What they had was so obviously real it stole his breath and he nodded to her gently, making her smile in understanding.

"Well I'm glad we've settled that. Now I promised my girl I'd take a walk with her before class because I won't be around for the second half of the school day, so please excuse us," he smiled at the unbonded two subs and turned to his own whispering gently, "Ready pretty girl?"

"Ready, sir." Mercedes smiled and stood up packing her magazine away in her bag before waving at her friends and taking her place half a step behind her Dom to avoid any misunderstandings with the other kids at school; her position clearly showing she was taken.
With one final wave the pair was gone leaving Kurt with a small smile on his face and Jeff still munching on his apple and leaning against Kurt as the soft breeze shifted their hair.

"You okay?" Kurt turned to his friend jiggling his shoulder teasingly. "You're awfully snuggly today."

"Had a bit of a rough night." Jeff murmured with an attempt of a disinterested shrug but Kurt knew him all too well. Knew that downturn in his mouth and the dullness that tarnished the bright jade in his eyes.

"Nightmares again?" he asked carefully and felt the exact moment his friend tensed against him and started picking at the tiny hole in the hem of his old white shirt.

"Yeah. Not as bad as before though so I guess that's good right?" Jeff glanced up and Kurt pushed his hair behind his ear gently in a soothing manner his mother used to do for him.

"You shouldn't be having them in the first place sweetie," he frowned feeling a pain all too sharp for his friend as Jeff snorted cynically.

"Yes well...that would be nice. But since I do have them the decreased intensity is a welcome change," the blonde muttered throwing the steam of his apple in the trashcan next to them fidgeting in his seat almost like he couldn’t get used to being in his own skin before speaking again almost inaudibly."Thanks for not telling her."

"Yeah...I almost blurted it out I'm sorry," Kurt snorted incredulously at his own inattention to what came out of his mouth and Jeff smiled at him.

"I don't think you'd have told her like that. I trust you."Jeff squeezed his hand and bumped their shoulders together companionably and it made him feel better.

They sat in silence for a long while, sides lined up, just looking at their surroundings, both wondering if things would ever change for them; if it would ever get better. Kurt took in the Dom and sub making out against the wall shamelessly probably just to scratch an instinctive itch. The Dom jock’s ordering the subs around them about like slaves just to feel like they had some sort of power. He saw the threadbare clothing that he loathed, that scratched his skin raw and made him long for things that could never be. But above all he saw the desolation. The *desperation*. And he knew Jeff saw it too. Maybe even understood it better than him.

They hated the thought of spending the rest of their lives struggling to survive without a single percent chance to turn their lives around and become somebody.

They knew each other better than anybody else and as impossible as their dreams seemed to be they were similar and it brought them even closer together; that conviction that whatever they said, however foolish or romantic or unattainable, it would be met with an understanding smile and a shoulder to cry on over the improbability of it all.

"Do you ever envy her?" Kurt asked quietly after a while, knowing that Jeff would understand the question with him having to expand.

"Sometimes," Jeff admitted with a small shrug.

"I do," Kurt said bitterly and swallowed past the lump in his throat as Mercedes previous words
"I envy her, because she managed to make herself stop dreaming of things that she can never have. She could be bitter about the fact that she will probably never be his for real but she's not. She's learned to be happy with it. And I think she really is happy."

"I don't think I could ever truly envy somebody who gave up dreaming," Jeff whispered, forehead creased with the weight of his thoughts and Kurt looked at him with a raised eyebrow a little surprised and a lot confused.

"What do you mean by that?" Kurt asked.

"She lives strictly in her reality because she's accepted the fact that it's the best it gets. And for her that may be true because she does have it good all things considered. But for me…living in reality alone would just mean accepting the fact that I'm broken beyond repair." He shook his head as if against the memories plaguing his mind and the watering in his eyes. “And I can't do that. I can't let go of the dream that I'm still whole and undamaged. That someday someone will really want me. As long as I don't make peace with this reality I can go to that place every once in a while. I can go there and be happy. Even if it isn't real. She can't do that anymore," he explained haltingly and Kurt felt his heart break just a little bit more as he turned on the bench and hugged his friend closer.

"You're not broken sweetie. You're still beautiful." Kurt whispered against his fair hair and Jeff clung to him tighter with clenched eyes wishing that he could believe him just for a moment.

Sunday morning

"Good morning sunshine!!"

The piercing sound of his mother's voice made Blaine stumble and smack his elbow against the doorknob as he shuffled blearily into the dining room barefoot and in his pyjamas. The room was ridiculously large for just the three of them living in the huge mansion style house, but all the rooms were the same. The décor was done in soft shades of crème, with subtle gold accents that fit in wonderfully with the mahogany furniture.

In the middle of the room was a large ornate table that stretched to seat sixteen, with high-backed chairs tucked neatly underneath that were surprisingly comfortable. Various paintings from some of his parent's favourite artists also lined the wall with the customary family renderings and photographs and despite the intimidating size of the place; everything about their house was a home. It was comfortable and functional and not as pristine as people expected it to be and Blaine wanted it no
other way.

Throwing himself into the chair and making grabby hands at the coffee pot until his dad took pity on him and handed it over, he attempted a glare in his mother's direction but, as always, it came out more adorable than angry.

He just had one of those faces.

"Mooom!!" he whined pathetically, voice scratchy as he cradled his cup against his naked chest like it was a precious child and tried to keep his dropping eyes open. "Yelling 'good morning sunshine' at a hung over person to make their head explode is the oldest and the lamest cliché in the world."

"I've decided to think of it as a classic instead of a cliché," Dana Anderson replied regally all false airs and graces and Blaine scoffed at her mockingly.

"If that makes you feel better about being lame…go right ahead," he sassed and she threw a crumpled napkin at him.

"It does actually," she stuck her nose in the air snobbishly making the two men chuckle before turning to look at her son again a glint in her hazel eyes. "Speaking of making me happy…"

"Mom-" Blaine warned knowing full well where she was going with that but she lifted her hand and he was suddenly reminded why the tiny woman he considered his best friend was practically feared in their society. Perfectly put together with a neat chignon, dressed in a soft white chiffon shirt tucked into fitted dress trousers it was deceptive just how intimidating she could manage to be despite her smaller size.

"The Show is next week," she barrelled on as if she was never interrupted, placing a hand upon a trashy looking magazine placed neatly next to her plate and tapping her beautifully manicured nails against the shiny cover, and consequentially, his face that had been splashed there.

"I am aware of that, yes," the young man sighed in resignation knowing that there was no way out of that conversation. There never was.

"Is it safe to assume that my beloved son, the fruit of my loins, the product of thirty five painful hours of labor, will stop making a spectacle of himself and actually show up?" she asked faux innocently and he spat the bite of toast he had been munching on grumpily in a napkin, making a disgusted face at her and a betrayed one at his father who just sat there with no apparent intention to get him out of this mess.

"Okay mom, first of all NEVER say loins in front of me again. Second of all you delivered me via C section. It's Cooper that made you suffer, I was nice even as a baby. And third of all we already talked about it this year, and every year before that, and I'll tell you what I told you every time you asked. I'll make an appearance," he replied succinctly and his mother sighed heavily, rolling her eyes at him.

"Blaine…making an appearance was good enough when you were eighteen, and it was barely good enough when you turned twenty. But now you're twenty two and you're still not bonded and simply making an appearance just won't cut it. The press is already eating us alive; I can't go five feet without a microphone shoved up my nose asking me about you," she ranted in an exasperated voice and her husband frowned at the sense of her discomfort rising from her.
Feeling the natural urge of a sub to make his Dom feel better, Jared shifted his seat closer so their sides were touching and grasped her free hand in his. Doms and subs needed physical contact like they needed air and it was especially pressing when their instincts rose to take the better of them.

The moment he intertwined their fingers Dana sagged into her chair, looking into Jared's eyes lovingly and tugging at her sub until he rested his head in the crook of her neck; a position most comforting for the both of them. The neck was a highly sensitive and vulnerable spot on both a Dom and sub- though more so for the latter- and it could be used in sexual, soothing or claiming manners depending on the situation and emotion at the time.

Blaine eyed their interaction and felt his heart skip a beat.

That's what he wanted; what he craved for.

His parent's weren't just randomly shoved together. They chose each other out of pure love and want. A proper claiming. A proper bonding. They worked together as a team to maintain their fortune and they lived happy, stable, fulfilled lives. And now he had to go and cause trouble. He felt guilt start to eat at him knowing he had caused them such distress. He averted his eyes down at the table and frowned at the plate of food in front of him appetite completely vanished.

"I'm sorry mom," he apologised quietly but oh so sincerely, his heart in his voice and she shook her head at him in dismissal.

"No…no honey I don't want you to be sorry. Blaine…Blaine listen to me," she said when he refused to raise his head. "I know why you hate those things. And I know what you're waiting for, what you're looking for. But sweetie, just sitting there for five minutes doesn't really give you the right picture of a sub."

Previous Showings flashed through his brain and so did a string of rich, entitled subs preening in his minds eye. He shook his head to clear the images.

"Mom they're all the same," he complained finally looking her in the eye with a miserable expression on his face and she laughed sweetly, Jared shifting happily against her un-tucking himself from her neck but staying plastered to her side.

"Do you really think your dad looked any different from the rest of the losers doing back flips and flailing about with inflamed swords?" she asked in amusement and Jared scowled in mock offence.

"I resent that. In my version I swept my lady of her feet with my amazing knife throwing act," Jared declared and his Dom looked at him lovingly.

"Yes honey. I was sitting at my table thinking to myself if only I had a sub who could throw knives at unmoving objects I could die happy." He made a noise of protest but she bumped his shoulder teasingly, kissing his forehead and making him almost purr instead of pout.

"It could come in handy someday you never know," Jared nodded resolutely, refusing to let the subject go entirely, before getting up to get some more juice from the kitchen leaving his wife and son to chuckle amusedly at him.

"If it didn't come in handy in thirty years I doubt it's ever going to," she practically sang to him as he went before turning back to Blaine who was grinning. "My point was, he looked just like the rest of them. And then at the end of the evening he approached me, knelt before me because that was the way back then, and asked if he could have the honor to share one dance with the most beautiful Dom
he had ever seen. I said yes and I gave him my hand to stand up. As he was getting up he gazed up into my eyes and I knew Blaine, I knew that he was the one I wanted. I claimed him as he was kissing my hand at the end of the dance."

Blaine's head had sunk into his hand, elbow propped on the table as he listened intently. "He was special to you," he concluded, tearing up at the familiar story for the millionth time. In his mind the romance of it never got old and it panged his heart because he wanted- no needed- that for himself and he didn't understand what was wrong with him that he couldn't find it.

"He was special to me," she confirmed quietly looking directly at Jared as he walked back into the dining room carrying a pitcher of orange juice mouthing, "It was the knives" to his son who let out a watery chuckle despite his heavy thoughts.

"What if I don't find him?" he asked fearfully after a brief pause where glasses were refilled and Dana got up to stand next to her son.

"Then you don't find him," she reassured adamantly cradling his curly head in her small hand. "Blaine, press be damned you are the most important thing in my life and if I can avoid it I will never make you claim someone you don't want at least a little bit. But I want you to try. I want you to go to the Showing, talk to people, talk to some subs, dance with them, get involved. And if none of them is the one for you then fine. But I want to know you put yourself out there and really tried."

Blaine stared at his hands for a few long minutes, fighting with his own mind as his mother pet his unruly hair soothingly before taking a deep breathe and finally looking back up and nodding.

"Okay…I'll go and I'll try. Really try. I promise." Dana stooped and hugged him tightly just like she did when he was a kid and afraid of thunderstorms or other such silly things before he grew out of them.

"That's all I ask sweetie," she whispered and placed a kiss on top of his head. Blaine squeezed her tighter trying to find the confidence she had in himself.

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*The Showing*
*Friday, late afternoon*

The Andersons had had their fingers in everything for decades. They had the keys to the kingdom in a way and in a society where money was one of the most deciding factors, when you controlled something as vast as the Anderson Enterprises it wasn't any wonder that your name was known across the globe.

Being a child to a legacy like the Andersons really had the potential to feel like having your legs chained to an anchor and being shoved into the churning depths; you either sank or swam if you could wrestle yourself free.

Blaine felt lucky in a way. Lucky that his parents understood and supported him when he saw so many other people in his position drowning under the weight of their parents expectations.
Blaine had always done his best to keep his head above water in the first years of his life and make his mother and father proud. Top grades, achievements, acclaim. He was to set an example for the other Doms that looked to him for guidance from such a young age.

It was part of the reason why he was currently here at the event he dreaded every year. Now twenty two, his excuses weren't cutting it. And in reality Blaine really did want to find a sub. It was an ache deep inside him, a longing for that other half of himself so he could feel whole. An almost primal need by this point to care for someone, to exert a small measure of control to satisfy the Dom in him, to possess and own in the most loving way.

By express request that he had dodged too many times now he had bared the media circus outside, gritting his teeth as camera after microphone after question was thrown his way like he was a movie star on a red carpet. It was… frustrating. The hungry, expectant looks. The demand. Like he was personally insulting all the subs attending and their parents by not claiming that particular sub as his own.

He hated the spectacle of it all. The false masks and simpering. In all honesty Blaine felt disillusioned by it all.

So here he stood, decked out in thousands of dollars worth of Armani getting hammered at the bar but doing it with a smile. I'm trying, he thought in his mother's direction as he threw back another flute of champagne like it was whiskey in a shot glass.

He needed the fortitude before the actual Showing began. The subs had already been given their performance schedules and pretty soon all the Doms would be seated at their tables to observe and applaud the various talents- more outrageous every year in a bid to stand out- and see who took their fancy.

It had never happened for Blaine. In fact there was one too many photos circling of him looking far too bored as a sub did cartwheels through a flaming hoop. It was predictable… which sounded stupid because it was anything but in reality, but the pageantry of it all was always the same. Subs and their families trying to one up one another with feats bigger than the last and it was tiring to watch the utter drama. Nothing felt honest. Nothing was simple.

He scanned too clear, hazel eyes down the bar and motioned to the bartender by cocking his empty glass, a droplet hanging off the rim succumbing to gravity and splashing against the gilt countertop.

Blaine followed its progression leaning forwards on his elbows, trying to look interested just in case Dana looked over. Lazily swinging the empty glass in his grip Blaine peered around the marble inlaid function room at one of the more prestigious hotels here in Westerville with a detachment of someone who had seen this type of thing one too many times before.

Sparkling chandeliers hung from the ceilings catching light and twinkling like stars, the black marble floor was polished to a high shine and the stage was primped and preened to perfection, tables arranged to have the perfect view from all angles and covered in pristine white clothes with flower bowls arranged in the middle as centerpieces. And scattered all throughout were the Doms and subs practically dripping in glitz and glamour, toting designers and smiling perfect white teeth at everyone.

Blaine craned his neck, gazing through the crowd and trying to catch sight of someone he actually liked to keep him company and save his soul from dying out of sheer boredom.

Most of his friends were already bonded and happy but he was certain at least one of his friends from the Warblers was still unattached and mingling around.

"Anderson," a voice to his left snapped him out of his macabre observations and he turned to see the
handsome, tall figure of Kevin Landon next to him a tumbler of amber liquid in hand. He was two years below Blaine at Dalton before he mysteriously transferred and was more commonly known for his first attempt and failure at a bond when he was just eighteen.

The young man had a commanding posture and an air around him that screamed old money, class and aristocracy to everyone who had never met him.

Blaine knew him.

And he didn't like him.

"Kevin, how are you?" Blaine asked politely straightening up his posture, trying to keep his tone in check to avoid revealing his utter horror at being forced to engage in a conversation with the other man.

The man scanned the crowd, more noticeably resting on a pretty little blonde haired sub that ducked her gaze away when it met his. He smirked and turned it on Blaine an almost feral light in his eyes. Having this many subs and Doms in one place always produced strong reactions. "How could I be anything but amazing with this kind of turn out?" he laughed gleefully. "I admit last year I was a bit worried the standards had slipped but the subs are looking pretty damn good from what I've seen." Blaine tried not to show his displeasure at the 'standards' comment. "Everyone looks lovely as always."

He tried not to let himself stress the last word as he pretended to do the exact same thing his companion was doing by scanning the room, when in reality he was looking for someone, anyone to get him out of the unwanted conversation.

He spotted a carefully styled mop of silky brown hair that he could have sworn belonged to one of his best friends Dom Nicholas Duval, and wasn't there a rule that commanded best friends to save other best friends from stupid people?

Kevin gave him snort and look of disbelief. "Surely someone has caught your eye by now? You have the perfect vantage spot here."

Blaine glanced down at his empty glass. He didn't exactly choose it for the view. He felt a jolt to his shoulder and looked back up to see Kevin had his back to the bar and was following someone intently with his eyes.

"What about that one huh? He's got 'fuck me' written all over him," he practically purred and Blaine followed his gaze until it rested on a small redhead that was doing practically unspeakable things to the straw in his drink. It wasn't coy and it was one hundred percent designed to garner attention. Blaine flicked his eyes away and saw that a willowy brunette female was doing to same in a different corner. He rolled his eyes unimpressed.

"Because blowing a straw is suddenly a highly sought after skill now?"

Kevin grinned lavishly. "It showcases other talents that are far more relevant."

"Apparently half the room is showcasing that," Blaine pointed out and Kevin gave him an exasperated look.

"You know what your problem is Anderson?"

"Enlighten me."
"You're too picky."

Blaine frowned feeling his blood rise at the insult and his own mother's words echo around his mind and got defensive. "I don't think having actual standards is called being picky. Maybe you're just too easy to satisfy. Maybe one suck on a straw isn't enough reason for me to claim somebody."

"Wow, touchy subject Anderson? Well I guess it would be for me too if I had gone without a sub fix for so damn long. But luckily, I'm not you. Enjoy the show," Kevin drawled as he tipped his glass back, downing the rest of his champagne before winking at Blaine and scampering away before Blaine had the chance to pull hit wits together, do something beneficial for the entire community and knock him out cold.

"I take it he's not your favourite person in the world?" an amused voice chuckled from behind him and he turned to glare at his friend.

"What gave me away?" he deadpanned and Nick chuckled lightly.

"You had that broody miserable scowl going on. It's both amusing and painful to watch," Nick nodded seriously as he accepted the glass of scotch from the bartender and swirled it around in his hand making the ice cubes clink merrily.

"Yeah well…I don't like him." Blaine said and Nick nodded in understanding.

"I know. Neither do I."

"Why don't you like him?" Blaine asked curiously playing with his still empty glass.

"I don't know. There's always been something about him that irked me. He has a snobbish face that just screams I'm better than all of you and it irritates me. You?"

"He's an ass," Blaine said and Nick laughed, shaking his head at his friend.

"Well it's good to know your hate is rational." Nick laughed and turned to look at the crowd slowly making their way towards their seats.

He glanced at his watch and realized they had about three more minutes before The Showing started.

"Come on grouchy. Let's watch the show. Maybe you find someone who's not an ass."

Blaine growled running a hand over his face miserably trying to pull his shit together. He had to do this. He was doing this. He'd get over himself and actually sit down and evaluate his options like all the other Doms in the room. It was only fair to the subs that actually must have put a lot of effort into their talents and this night despite his dislike of many of the acts.

"We invite the unbonded Dominants and other guests to take their seats. This year's Showing is about to commence," a projected voice came from the stage and Blaine felt his heart speed up. He could be positive about this couldn't he? Maybe the one for him would really step out onto that stage? Maybe they'd surprise and knock him off his feet?

With that resolve and a glass full of champagne once more he moved to his table where his mother and father were already seated right in front of the stage. They were Andersons after all, which was mildly inconvenient for Blaine when all the subs did was stare at him hungrily while they performed. It was as unwelcome as it was disconcerting.

Dana met his eye as he sat down and gave him a small, hopeful smile that he couldn't help but return.
Maybe, he thought as the lights dropped and the thick velvet curtain went up.

"You never talk about it," Kurt mentioned quietly to Jeff on the Friday of the Showing as they lounged on the handmade bench in the middle of the garden behind Kurt's family home.

A tiny, one-story house was positioned at the end of a dusty street and surrounded by a modest, but well kept garden, painted a faint beige colour that long ago turned gray and chipped at the corners. The change of season from summer to fall was obvious in the way leaves in every shade of yellow, red and orange covered the ground, the way the flowers Kurt cared for so much all turned darker and dried and the way the air around them prickled their skin as they both took deep breaths and relaxed after a long day at school.

The brunette male was sitting up, facing the street and leaning against the back of the chair and the wall said chair was pushed up against. He was wrapped up in his favourite knitted vest; dark gray and made out of softest wool over a simple white shirt. His mom saved for years before being able to make a deal with a local tailor to get her the wool to knit it for her son's birthday.

She had the foresight to make it really big so he could gradually grow into it and wear it for as long as possible as she had no idea when she would save enough money to make something so high quality for him again.

He loved the thought of her hands touching the soft wool as she made it, thinking of how happy he would be to have it.

And he was.

The vest was one of his favourite possessions even if he didn't have that many in the first place and he tended to wear it strictly inside the house when he was doing nothing to avoid ruining it in any way.

His friend was currently curled up under a thin blanket with his head in Kurt's lap nose burrowing in his stomach and his fist clutching the end of the blue material under his chin to ward off the chill of the coming Ohio weather.

At Kurt's question his breath got caught in his throat and he stiffened making Kurt squeeze his eyes shut and regret his decision to ask. He knew the week of The Showing would be tough for Jeff so he kept his mouth shut as a general rule but there was something just nagging at the back of his mind.
and he couldn't stop himself.

"Sorry. Forget I mentioned it," he apologised softly, lifting his hand to run his fingers through Jeff's hair. It seemed to soothe him every time he did it.

"Kurt you're my best friend. You know the worst about me. If you want to ask something you're allowed to ask," Jeff replied after a brief pause and turned his head up to look at his friend who was still blushing, obviously embarrassed at his outburst.

"Oh…okay," the brunette breathed out relieved and Jeff smiled at him with a tiny spark in his eye that Kurt loved to see. It lit up the jade and made him appear younger and happier and untroubled for the short minutes it was there.

"I can just choose not to answer," he shrugged with a smirk tugging at the corners of his mouth and Kurt stuck his tongue out at him playfully.

"Oh ha ha. You're hilarious."

"Yeah well. Between the two of us somebody has to be," Jeff sighed dramatically lolling his head to the side and Kurt laughed again twirling a lock of blonde hair around his finger and imagining how incredibly shiny and soft it could be with the right product; product which they didn't have. He refused to think about the state of his own hair. It was no use crying or pining over something you'd never had.

They fell into a short silence before Jeff turned on his back on the bench and looked up at nothing in particular, his head still resting on Kurt's thighs.

"I was prepared for it my entire life," he eventually spoke with a heavy voice and Kurt lowered his eyes to look at him, his heart breaking at the sight of a sad shadow crossing his friend's face.

"Sweetie you don't have to tell me anything if it's making you uncomfortable." Kurt cut in before Jeff could go any further. He remembered how awful it was to watch Jeff break apart when he'd told him his deepest, darkest secrets and he'd do anything to spare his friend more of that pain. Especially if it was just to appease his selfish curiosity.

"No it's okay. I can tell you what you want to know," Jeff reassured sounding determined, like he needed to get it out and prove something to himself and Kurt nodded cupping his cheek and smiling at him reassuringly.

"Just tell me what you feel like you can share. Nothing more than that," Kurt suggested supportively and Jeff nuzzled his hand gently before looking into the distance once more.

"Growing up I thought it was nice. Kind of romantic maybe, I don't know. I was a stupid kid."

Kurt's hackles rose on Jeff's behalf even if it was the person himself that was degrading him. "You weren't stupid, Jeff. I think every sub hopes for the best growing up. There's nothing wrong with that."

Jeff shrugged, brows lowering.

"I guess so. But anyway…I was wrong. It was everything but romantic and nice," he snorted in derision.

"Did you have to train for the showing?" Kurt asked and the cynical laugh that bubbled from Jeff almost scared him.
"It's not training. It's like a lifestyle. Every second of every day is dedicated to learning the new and exciting ways to attract a Dom and satisfy a Dom and keep your Doms interest. Nothing I ever did was important to me. I did what I was told and nothing more. It was like I wasn't even important," Jeff explained harshly and Kurt reached out and took his hand with his own, giving him a reassuring squeeze trying to convey that he was important to Kurt.

"What did you have to learn?" he asked knowing full well that Jeff could clam up like he used to if he touched a sensitive subject.

"How to talk, how to behave in front of a Dom, how to draw their attention…everything," Jeff answered and from the tone of his voice it seemed like they were still in the safe territory.

"That sounds a bit boring. Didn't you learn regular subjects too? And art?" Kurt asked frowning a little and Jeff gave him another bitter laugh that chased chills across his skin. He hated Jeff like this. His sweet, soft, warm best friend.

"Just enough not to be stupid in front of your Dom. And arts were taught just so you could show off at The Showing. If you could call that art that is," he snorted and Kurt frowned harder at him trying to keep up.

"What do you mean?"

"I wanted to dance, or sing. I'm…well I guess I'm decent at that. But they said it wasn't exciting enough. That the whole point of The Showing was to draw attention and to be noticeable so my suggestions were overruled," Jeff explained, sitting up and wrapping the blanket tighter around his body as he sat the right way knees drawn up to his chest.

"So…what did you end up doing?" Kurt asked, a calculating look on his face as he tried to think of something artsy that would be flashy enough to catch attention.

"Frbttntwrlng," Jeff mumbled and Kurt frowned at him as the blonde boy blushed furiously.

"I beg your pardon."

"Don't make me repeat it, Kurt."

"I'm not making you REPEAT it because then I wouldn't understand it again. I'm asking you to say it loud and clear," Kurt smirked, now finally realizing that it was probably a little bit embarrassing.

"I hate you," Jeff declared miserably and Kurt shrugged like he hadn't a care in the world.

"I don't mind. Now what did you end up doing Jeffrey?" he asked sweetly and his friend glared at him.

Silence stretched around them but Kurt allowed it to settle, waiting patiently with an amused smile on his angelic face and then…

"Fire baton twirling."

Kurt clapped a hand across his lips but it was way too late. A snort resembling a smaller earthquake ripped out from his mouth and Jeff smacked him upside the head.

"Shut up!"

"Oh my goooood." Kurt doubled over laughing like an idiot and his friend was unable to do a single
thing apart from sitting there and waiting for him to calm down.

Which he did…twenty minutes later…

"It's priceless. Fire baton twirling. PRICELESS!!"

"Yeah well, didn't really have a choice there now, did I?" Jeff snapped and just like that Kurt's laughing fit ended and the heaviness of their talk made them both curl up tighter.

There was suddenly silence.

"I've never liked the thought of it," Kurt said after a few minutes with a gentle shrug of his shoulder.

"What The Showing?"

"Yeah. I remember the first time my mom took me to the flower shop with her. She was making all these huge arrangements and they were awful. So I asked her why she was making them like that when they weren't pretty. And she sat me down and told me about the event and how people asked for those particular arrangements because they were the most expensive even if they were ugly and I knew that that was wrong. Money doesn't equal beautiful, or good or worthy. Since then I've helped the flower shop make arrangements for The Showing every year. And every year they get bigger, and uglier. But every year they cost more, and every year I hate it more," he explained bitterly and Jeff wrapped an arm around his shoulder "They waste so much money on ugly flowers and people in Lima can't pay for their bonding, they can't afford quality food so they get sick and when they get sick they can't afford medicine. And they waste thousands of dollars on awful arrangements. It shouldn't be that way."

"I know. But I've been on the other side. And let me tell you something…I wouldn't trade your friendship for all the ugly flowers in the world," Jeff said trying to lighten up the mood and Kurt gave a small giggle leaning back against his friend.

"Right back at you," he whispered and together they sat on that bench until Kurt's dad called him to tell him that he met his boss in the town and that she told him to tell Kurt to come to the shop to make 'ugly flower arrangements'.

And if Jeff's amused giggles escorted him down the street…well…that's what best friend are for.

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Ever since he was little and his mother gained permission for Kurt to come in and join her occasionally to watch her work, Mae's Flowers had always awed him. It was one of the prettiest buildings he had actually seen with his own two eyes and not just in grainy pictures or the occasional magazine Mercedes’ mother managed to get for her.

Red brick with white filigree around the roof in ornate patterns, it was classically, beautifully decorated with ceiling to floor windows that sparkled, but what really arrested and held your attention were the beautiful arrangements that could be seen within and from the hangings around the door.
Kurt had fallen in love with the place and was elated when the owner occasionally asked him to take his mother’s old spot when they had big orders.

Mae Pendle was a sub whose Dom had a good enough job that allowed her to pursue her passion and had noticed that Kurt had a passion and flair for arrangements from a very young age. It's why she tolerated him with soft smiles when he joined his mother, never misbehaving, wide eyed and absorbing everything and sometimes if he was really lucky Mae would have some spare stems and drabber flowers he could practice with.

The pay was more than he had ever expected, nothing over the top and never frequent enough to help his situation, but to him it was a fortune. It meant that maybe he could help his father treat his family to a decent meal for once. Maybe with a little left over for a little material to patch up clothes and he never forgot to buy Jeff his candy. The smile that lit up his face was worth every penny and his best friend would hug him tight and split the treat exactly evenly. It wasn't much… but then it was everything at the same time.

Walking inside he took a deep breath inhaling all the different floral scents and feeling his body relax. He was at home here among the roses and lilies and it was always worth the hour bus ride to the better part of town.

"Kurt!" the raspy tone of Mae’s voice exclaimed upon seeing him. He glanced over to the counter and garish clashing colors and winced. This year they had requested large bows and diamantes it seemed and it was all so busy.

Detracting from the natural beauty of the flowers, draining the color away and drawing the eye to the monstrous orange ribbon.

He shuddered but kept his mouth firmly shut on the matter.

"Hi, Mrs Pendle. My dad said you needed me?"

"Kurt, I’ve told you a hundred times call me Ma-hey, Alisa, I told you not the rose petals in the bowl!" she threw up her hands exasperatedly as her attention was drawn. Kurt noticed that she was stressed.
Every year the orders got more ridiculous and more outrageous and the time frame they gave her kept getting increasingly narrower like they just expected her to meet their demands without any trouble or fuss.

The flyaway strawberry blonde hair pilled high on her head and straggling around her beautifully aged face haphazardly said differently. She was frazzled.

"Where do you need me?" he asked approaching the counter that was covered in ribbons and cut stems.

"Please save Alisa from herself? I think she's lost the plot!" Mae begged in a whisper grabbing an armful of lavender.

Kurt ducked his head and laughed quietly as he caught sight of the lost looking sub in the corner. She was the regular girl who worked for Mae, working the counter while Mae filled orders in the backroom. She never was much good with actually arranging but she was a part of Mae's Doms family as Kurt understood it. There was no replacing her unless she was really affecting business—which she didn't.

"Sure. What are we doing this year?"

"I've got the actual arrangements almost done but the centerpieces they wanted were flower bowls. Different colored crystals at the bottom and daffodil petals in the water." Kurt scrunched his nose. How did they even think that would work? At least it wasn't as bad as the arrangements…Mae must have read his face.

"I know," she grumbled as if pained, looking towards the ceiling. "Trust me, I know."

But this was the biggest order of the year for her, if she didn't meet what they wanted exactly they'd go somewhere else and she'd lose money. It could even break her business if they started badmouthing her. After all it was all the families in attendance that actually had the money to buy flowers unfortunately.

"Okay I've got it covered," he assured rolling up his sleeves.

"You're a godsend," she grinned in relief before scurrying back to the backroom.

The hours passed quickly after that and with Kurt guiding her Alisa wasn't as much of a hindrance as she had looked from across the room. She just needed someone to guide her and Kurt was happy enough to walk her through things getting lost in the soft petals. Finally they were done and Kurt was helping load things into Mae's van.

"Okay," the older woman breathed slamming the door shut and wiping her brow. "Kurt would you mind terribly coming with me to help set up? I know you normally don't but it's such a big order this year and I'll pay you for your time."

He faltered for all of two seconds. Go to the Showing? His mind flitted back to his and Jeff's conversation from earlier feeling apprehensive about going there but it all boiled down to facts… Kurt couldn't turn it down. He needed the money.

"I…yeah. Yes I'll help," he managed to stuttered out and Mae beamed.

"Great!" she clapped her hands and before he knew it Kurt was phoning his dad to let him know the change of plans before he was piled into the van next to Alisa on the front seat nearest to the window and he couldn't help but gape as they drove further and further and ended up in Westerville. Kurt had
never, ever been here before and he stared wide eyed at the pristine buildings, well kept establishments and well dressed people scurrying around.

It was nothing like Lima. No litter, no graffiti, no buildings falling in disrepair, no homeless Doms or subs roaming the streets.

Kurt had to blink and pinch himself to make sure he wasn’t dreaming.

And then they were pulling up in front of largest building he had ever seen. It was scary and intimidating and Kurt shrunk in its presence feeling out of place, awkward and completely unworthy. A valet came up to assist them and then they were directed around the back entrance so they could unload and began carrying in the many arrangements into the main function room. Kurt was embarrassed to say he stumbled a step as he took in the place with awe in his gaping expression.

It was rich. It was outstanding. It was like nothing Kurt could ever picture.

He spotted the bare tables, the gilt bar lined with every kind of alcohol in pretty displays, the polished ballroom floor and then there was the stage at the far end taking up and entire wall. God, what would it be like to involved in something like this?

Kurt wasn’t even sure if he liked the effect of the place after the initial shock wore off. He didn't like the oddly tingling feeling in his skin as his brain shouted he didn't belong here. The exaggerated wealth was suddenly distasteful especially when he looked down at the arrangement in his hands. There wasn’t any taste, they just threw money at things and didn't appreciate the effects. They saw dollar signs and not beauty and Kurt wasn’t surprised that Jeff’s naivety had been dashed in a place like this.

Shivering with a sudden want to get home he walked over to where Mae was piling things and helped unload the rest of the flowers and bowls. He took off his vest and placed it carefully on a side table out of the way and pretty soon the monstrosities were set up exactly as asked and Mae was fiddling and flitting about looking from every angle to make sure they were perfect…or well as perfect as something so distractingly ugly could get.

Another hour passed by and it was starting to get late. He knew his father would be starting to worry about him but after a thorough inspection by a few Doms Kurt guessed had ordered them and were
hosting the Showing this year they were finally done.

It was a relief.

Kurt followed the two subs back out to the van where Mae let out a sigh of relief.

"I never thought we'd finish," she admitted with a happy little laugh.

Kurt smiled back at her and she quickly opened the van and rummaged around before turning back purse in hand.

"Thank you so much, Kurt. I really couldn't have done it without you," she grinned handing over a small wad of bills.

Kurt took them with shaky fingers and his eyes widened when he saw the amount. "Mrs Pen-

"Mae!" she cut in with an easy grin. "And I won't hear any of it, you deserve it honey. Now let's get back home, the party was already starting up when we left and we don’t want to be caught in all that bustle."

Kurt turned towards the hotel and wondered just how it would all look in full swing. Would it be just as imposing and yet so distasteful?

Would the guests wear the most expensive yet mismatched and out of style outfits?

Whatever it was he was sure he didn’t want to see it.

They moved towards the van when a chill ran through Kurt and he halted. "My vest!" he exclaimed.

Alisa frowned at him. "Your vest?"

"I left it in the hall."

Mae glanced at her watch. "We'll wait. Hurry back though, we should be able to make it."

Kurt caught the worried look on Alisa’s face. "No, you two go. I saw a bus stop just down the road."

Mae clucked her tongue. "No Kurt, it's late and you're an unbonded sub! Just run and get it. Hopefully they haven't moved it by now."

“I'll try to be as fast as I can.” He said running inside and the older woman leaned against her van tapping her fingers on her hip and shaking off a bad feeling starting to build up inside her.

Her Dom was right…she was a drama queen sometimes.

Entering the ghastly decorated lobby for the second time was somehow even more intimidating because this time there were actually people milling around this time.

They were wrapped in silk and satin, rubies and sapphires dangling from their necks and golden watches snaking around their wrists.

Men were all clean shaven, hair meticulously styled and gelled, their suits neatly pressed and shoes
shined within an inch of their lives and Kurt swore one of the men he saw had diamond cufflinks on his ivory coloured shirt. He may or may not have gulped at the sight. Women were dressed in flowing, cascading and fluttering dresses in every colour and material imaginable, their long hair curled a swept off their faces with golden pins and lacy headbands.

Kurt felt like every single eye in the room was on him and his, albeit clean and well kept, low quality old clothes and he struggled not to fidget and shift and give himself away more than he already did by just being there.

Using the ruckus of people greeting each other in- what he could tell were sickeningly, falsely sweet voices- he swept through the lobby and into the hall to locate his precious vest and scurry away before someone had him arrested just for breathing in the same air.

The seconds ticked passed as he tried to weave unobtrusively through the masses and with every moment the urge to drop to his knees got stronger and stronger. There was a weight settling on the back on his neck making it impossible to raise his head and his heart beat had tripled its speed slamming against the walls of his chest as something had infected his blood. At first he was scared out of his mind, dazed as it was fogging over to be, but then something in him screamed the answer.

Dominants.

He'd never been in a room with so many and with every breath their pheromones were invading his body and sparking reactions, dusting off proper submissive instincts for the first time and he was helpless against the onslaught. It was never like this at school. The Doms and subs were split into separate classes as was standard but even at lunch and in-between them there wasn't enough Doms at McKinley to produce this kind of reaction in him. Whimpering a little in the back of his throat as the bodies swirled around him he knew that he had to get out of the crowd, the epicentre of where the scent of Doms and subs were saturating the air making it thick and heavy.

It felt like wading through water, spinning his head and making him dizzy as his body seemed to light on fire slowly over sensitising his nerve endings, but finally Kurt was on the other side of the room ducking into a doorway and after closing his eyes and breathing hard for a few minutes he managed to control himself enough to at least tilt his head back up even if he did have to grip onto the doorjamb for support of his shaking legs. He wouldn't buckle for them. He refused to degrade himself to such a level and he'd promised himself he'd never kneel for anyone but his Dom. Someone that he trusted implicitly. Someone who cared for him. Not that seemed likely anytime in the near future of course but it was a resolve Kurt held close to his heart anyway.

The orchestra in the corner continued to play and the bodies continued to dance and revel and Kurt could only stare. It was everything he pictured but then nothing of what he expected either as he took it in with wide disbelieving eyes. The pompous entitlement was there in every over exaggerated graceful line of a sub and the hungry judging stares from the Doms. It shattered the small hope inside him that maybe, just maybe there was a little bit of romance to be had here. That it wasn't just money and fancy clothes that mattered but with every fake titter and batted eyelash Kurt felt sicker.

I want to go home.

Glancing down the tables lining the wall on this side he hoped like hell no one had moved or thrown away one of his most treasured possessions. He couldn't believe he had left it in the first place. And just as he gathered up enough courage and fortification to brave the mess of bodies again someone hard and pressing wrapped fingers around the top of his arm on one side and then the other and Kurt stilled completely rendered motionless, unable to move at all as strong Dominant scents reached his
"What are you doing here? You were not invited sub," one gruff voice growled into his ear making his pulse leap in pure panic and then the rest was lost to him in a blur of minutes he couldn't quite believe was real.

Another Dominant had come racing over only this one… well his scent really nearly put him on his knees and he felt like maybe he would be happy to be there. It was all masculine undertones with a hint of sweet apple over the top and Kurt just about kept his whine to himself.

What was wrong with him?

The reaction was powerful and his whole body felt shifted and charged from just that alone. The hands on his arms made his skin crawl all of a sudden and resolve be damned he wanted to drop to his hands and knees and curl up against this unknown Doms in front of him legs. Maybe hide his face in his neck and let him take him away somewhere safe.

It was crazy the distant logical part of him knew. He didn't know this Dom any more than he knew the ones producing the bruises on his biceps, hadn't even seen his face even, but he just felt different somehow and it was impossible to pinpoint. It was like his body knew something he didn't and it was horrifying how it was threatening to betray his heart and mind.

He couldn't raise his head just yet; still felt like someone had a handful of his hair and was forcing him lower, lower and he couldn't keep track of his stuttering inhales. Words passed around him and he heard as if from underwater, registering but muffled enough that he couldn't make sense of any of it and then his arm was let go on one side, then the other and the stranglehold on him loosened enough that he could finally dare to look up again.

What he saw stole his breathe.

Blaine Anderson.

Gorgeous, unattainable Blaine Anderson was standing right in front of him with perfect slicked hair, toned compact body under a crisp black suit and hazel eyes burning dark under a swath of thick lashes smouldering right to the very heart of Kurt.

He knew he should look away. Felt the fierce tug to lower his eyes as was respectful but he suddenly couldn't.

He'd seen this face grace the occasional magazine cover he was able to come across and he had acknowledged that Blaine was handsome of course; maybe the most beautiful man Kurt had ever seen. But this. The sheer presence this man brought with him in the flesh was devastating. And then a hand was grabbing a fistful of the shirt at his waist pulling him in closer, scent heady and cloying now, and Blaine was all he could feel, hear, see, smell though he didn't dare touch. But it needn't have mattered when in the next blink Blaine had his face buried in his neck.

Stars burst in front of his eyes so bright he had to clench them shut and he was lost.

He'd never felt anything like it and all he wanted was more, more, more, closer, closer, closer as electricity chased down his spine and so he arched up into the hot breathes snaking across his overheated skin with a strangled sound he had no idea he had the ability the make, tilting his head as far as it would go to free up as much space as he could while he whole body swayed into Blaine's as
naturally as breathing.

Submit, something begged him. Submit, submit, submit.

He was all racing blood, pounding heart and open nerves and then, "You are mine," was practically branded into his skin, soft as a kiss but heavy with meaning like a bulldozer and it snapped him out of the haze somewhat gasping for a fresh breath, a steady line to hold onto before he was sucked under again. And suck it did. It pulled and realigned him those three words and Kurt wanted to wake up from this dream because it was kind of terrifying how intense every emotion felt, like he was about to fly apart and be put back together different.

Claimed.

It was a vague understanding in the back of his mind that got louder and louder until it was screaming in his head. The Dom holding him pulled back and Kurt could feel tears sting the back of his eyes as the implications set in.

"I Blaine Anderson claim him."

He was ruined.
“What’s taking him so long?” Mae checked her wrist watch for the millionth time since the young sub went back into the hotel to get his vest.

The watch was a small, ornate, silver circle on a plaited, black leather bracelet decorated with white and metal beads; it cost next to nothing and the fake silver parts of it stopped being silver ages ago, but it was the story behind it that counted.

She was a young girl, fresh out of high school but already with weakened hope, who cruised the town looking for something to do to earn some money and help her family out.

She just got rejected at a tiny bakery that rarely had enough flour to make more than a few loaves a day and the owner just couldn’t afford to hire anyone else. Mae understood that deep down but it didn’t mean the ‘no’ hurt any less.

Tired physically from all the walking she did that day and mentally from the repeatedly crushed hopes, she hoisted the tattered bag higher on her shoulder as she made her way home; hungry, but not sure if there will be something for her to eat that day.

As she forced one foot in front of the other, giving herself a mental pep talk for every block she passed, she stared at the floor, way too resigned to actually pay attention to where she was going. Rounding the corner that would lead her to her street she took a step and felt something clink underneath her shoe.

She froze mid step, hoping against hope it was a coin she stepped on so maybe she could pick it up
and buy a loaf of bread for her family. Lifting her foot up she glanced at the mysterious object and frowned when she saw a small, feminine looking wrist watch, the silver clock still whole and unscratched and the leather band intact except for a layer of dust turning the band gray instead of black.

Mae took the watch in her hand and turned around, looking up and down the street for someone who might have dropped the item but she found herself completely alone.

Deep in thought, she clutched the watch in her hand wondering what to do with it; inexperienced with those kinds of things it looked valuable and she figured whoever lost it must be feeling awful. Not once did it cross her mind to take it and perhaps sell it for a little money, she just wasn’t that sort of person.

Turning it around in her hand she squinted at the barely there inscription and placed it so the glimmering street lamp illuminated the plate with the inscribing on it.

To my beloved Anya
for her eighteenth birthday
Love Dad

She smiled down at the small object a little bitsadly, thinking about how she would have felt if her father had given her something like that and she had lost it.

All of a sudden her head snapped back up and she could clearly see that watch on a delicate wrist, could see the fragile fingers on that very same hand taking the bags filled with vegetables from her and a high pitched, gentle voice thanking her for her help with carrying the groceries.

The only Anya she knew was a middle aged sub woman, living only a few houses away from her; a kind woman bonded to an equally kind Dom, and with a Dom son only a few years older than Mae who she desperately crushed on for ages before getting the information that he was to be bonded to a sub his parents chose for him.

With her hands shaking and her throat dry she practically flew down the street and cautiously stepped in front of the closed door, gathering up the courage to knock.

She was psyching herself up when the door pulled open in front of her and a desperate looking Anya pushed passed her, tears staining her face as she muttered about her lost watch under her breath.

Mae stopped her with a gentle hand on her shoulder and gave her the item that was so clearly important to her. The woman gasped and hugged the living hell out of her. She screamed to her family about the kindness of the young girl causing her son to come down from his room and see what all the fuss was about.

He saw the young girl standing in his living room and swore he would never ask for anything in his life if the universe gave him the right to call her his.

And the universe did.

He broke off the arranged preclaim and claimed the young girl his mother liked so dearly. The rest, as they say, is history.

They were happy, they loved each other and Anya gave the watch to Mae a few days before she died, claiming it was only right for her to have it after all the changes the small item caused in her life.
She accepted it and hadn’t taken it off since.

But never has the time gone by so slowly as it did now; as she stood in front of the flashy hotel filled with hormonal, unbonded Doms just waiting to hurt one of the most exquisite young men she ever had the honor to meet.

Kurt was everything she had ever wanted her kids to be, but as luck would have it she never had any of her own. Which could be the reason she took to Kurt and her husband’s niece so quickly. The two of them were like her own kids and as much of a confused little girl Alisa seemed to be sometimes Mae still loved her vibrant personality and infectious smile.

“They must have taken the vest somewhere so he’s looking for it. I’m sure he’ll be out in no time,” Alisa said, reassuringly placing her small hand on the older woman’s shoulder.

Mae tried to take comfort in it. “I just have this uncomfortable feeling in my stomach. I think I’ll go look for him,” she decided to herself with a sure nod and started walking towards the hotel.

“Give him five more minutes. You know Kurt hates when you worry and fuss over him,” Alisa tried to calm her down once again and it seemed to work because she came back and leaned against the front door of her van again, picking at her nails anxiously and grinding her teeth.

One minute passed by, then two, three, four and five crept by but Kurt was nowhere to be seen.

“That’s it…I’m going in. Stay here and keep an eye out for him in case I miss him,” she said and stalked back to the hotel with all the determination a poorer sub could muster when faced with a room filled with upstanding Doms. She and her Dom did fine for themselves and she never wanted for anything, but she didn’t have money to throw around. They had the necessities and lived comfortably but it took a lot of effort and hard work to keep them that way. It’s why she felt so horrible at not being able to offer Kurt a full time job. God did she want to, but she simply couldn’t finance that and stay above board.

As soon as she set foot into the lobby she knew something was horribly wrong.

The tension in the air was almost deafening in its intensity, the voices flittering around were hushed and secretive, but the venom dripping from the words was lethal.

“Who the hell does he think he is…rejecting all the trained, loaded and willing subs for a flea like that...?”

“Did you see his clothes…like it was made from dishrags…?”

“That boy was always an embarrassment to his family…”

“Poor Dana…”

“Poor? This is all her fault…she should have kept that boy on a much shorter leash…”

Mae’s head was spinning with all the information she was getting from the hushed conversations.

Dana? Her son? He claimed someone? Someone poor?

...Kurt?

The thought came and flashed in an instant and wouldn’t let go once it’d taken hold.

Out of her mind with worry she pushed her way through the crowd mindless of the harsh,
condescending glares she was receiving, catching a glimpse of Jared Anderson carrying a glass of water and disappearing with it behind the heavy backstage curtain.

Stilling herself against her own instincts she walked over there determinedly and ducked underneath the curtain flap only to find herself standing in the middle of world war three.

There was shouting, and arguing and screaming and begging and pleading and in the middle of it all, a fragile looking figure sat, curled tightly in a plush armchair, avoiding the eyes of everyone and shaking visibly with fear.

Her heart clenched for him while her ire boiled over her submissive instincts, blanking them out for a few moments. Realizing she was the only ally Kurt had she stood as tall as her tiny figure allowed her and called out to the room in what she hoped was a self assured and confident voice.

“Excuse me?”

The voices around her didn’t even stumble as they continued to bicker furiously back and forth.

“EXCUSE ME?” she gave it another, louder try and this time the effect was immediate.

Silence fell over them like a blanket as they all turned widened eyes towards her, exempting Kurt, eyebrows raised in question.

She shuffled on her feet, nervous under their unrelenting stares but she held her head up and kept her eyes fixed on them.

“Who are you?” a woman Mae knew as Dom Dana Anderson asked, stepping in front of the people in the room. Mae tried not to be intimidated.

“My name is Mae. I’m Kurt’s boss,” she said as she pointed a finger towards the shivering boy who seemed way too out of it to acknowledge her presence at the moment. It was scaring her to be perfectly honest.

“That’s his name? Kurt?” a sudden, breathy voice came from behind her and she turned to see young Dom Blaine Anderson standing there, hair disheveled, tie unfastened and eyes glowing with fear and nerves. He was a far cry from the picture perfect magazine covers that was for sure, though no less handsome, she absently thought.

She eyed the desperate Dom in front of her, pheromones practically leaking from his pores all over the place like he had no control over them, and debated her answer for a few seconds before replying cautiously.

“Yes. Kurt Hummel. We came to deliver the flowers and he forgot his vest, I came to look for him when he took too long. What’s going on? Did he do something wrong?” she asked playing as if she didn’t hear people whispering about the claim, but deep down hoping she heard wrong.

“Blaine claimed him,” Dana said holding back a tired sigh.

“What?” Mae asked, shocked now that rumors became the truth.

“My son claimed young Kurt. And it seems he didn’t take to it all that well,” Dana explained calmly and glanced at the curled figure, admiring her son’s taste despite all the problems he just caused. The boy was absolutely stunning; angelic almost.

“He hasn’t said a word since it happened. He’s just sitting there and shivering, flinching away from
anyone who gets too close,” Jared filled her in on the rest of the story and she nodded, knowing how closed off Kurt could be although this was far more extreme than Mae had ever witnessed.

In moments like these there was only one person he would let in that she knew of.

“Did you call his father?” she asked and they turned hopeful eyes to her.

“We couldn’t get him to calm down long enough to give us the information. Do you have it?” Dana asked and Mae nodded.

“Of course.”

“Then let’s get his dad here. Hopefully he can calm him down.”

Burt Hummel never pegged himself for a smart person.

Sure he knew his way around a car which did next to nothing to his providing abilities since there was a grand total of ten cars in Lima and out of those ten, eight of them had reached the point of unsalvageable. He could also predict football results based on a few, scattered pieces of information he would get from an odd game he saw on his friend’s TV and the statistics in the newspaper that reached their side of town a few days late though that didn't do much to improve their fortunes. But he was a master of surviving with what little they did have and he knew how to stretch money so they would never go hungry; though they were never truly full either.

A man cannot really think of himself as smart based on those traits however.

But there was one thing Burt was sure he did better than a lot of people he had the misfortune to meet day in, day out, working as a repair man around town.

Burt Hummel was an amazing Dom and an even better father.

Ever since Kurt was born he knew the boy would be slightly different from the others. He was a peaceful baby, easily soothed and satisfied. He never cried unless he was hungry or in pain, he started sleeping right through the night when he was five months old allowing him and Elizabeth to get some rest as well, he ate regularly and he was a healthy happy baby.

As he grew older his quirks became more obvious as his personality started to develop; instead of running around, collecting bugs and getting dirty with the other boys, Kurt sang and drew and danced and made sure his clothes were properly fitted and clean regardless of the poor quality and occasional holes in the fabric.

It was disconcerting at first, he had no shame in admitting, but it was that knowledge that Kurt was special right from the very start that allowed Burt to assimilate to his son’s needs and wants so quickly. Instead of getting angry and demanding he did something else, Burt smiled fondly at his son, ready to be the knight to Kurt's trapped princess and to stand steadily as Kurt tried to make him a shirt out of a ball of scratchy fabric the local tailor threw out.

As the years went by the two men got through a lot together, their lives changed, the woman they
both loved more than life itself died and Kurt's quirkiness started to irk some people more than it should. They thought Kurt was silly and foolish for his aspirations. His hope. They thought he was defective somehow for not acting like a 'proper sub' should which in this part of Lima meant throwing yourself around for a fix of a Dominant. Burt was never more proud of his boy despite all the naysayers and one thing would never change.

Burt was there for his son no matter what.

He raised Kurt to always be honest with him, to confide in him and to ask for help if he ever got into any sort of trouble.

But Kurt was a good kid, with respect for others, great grades and nothing but praises from every boss he had worked with when he caught a break and got a job. With an exception of Kurt being secretive about his experiences at school he knew everything about his son; who his friends were, what he wanted out of life, what he dreamed of, where he went...

So when the old clock struck eight and his son was still not home he became restless, an odd sense of dread settling over his shoulders and pushing at his chest until his breathing became shallow and labored.

He started walking to the kitchen window that had the perfect view of the street, pushing the curtains away from the glass and peeking out, praying to catch a glimpse of that proud chin tilted up and that purposeful stride that made it so easy to spot Kurt in a crowd. But every time he looked the street was equally silent and empty and covered in the thick darkness that came from their neighborhood being unable to afford street lights.

He continued to walk to and from the window and soon enough the light, uncomfortable tingle became a loud, insistent warning siren wailing in his mind and making him pace the living room floor restlessly.

It was now well past nine and Kurt was nowhere to be seen.

What if someone got to him and did something to him? What if he was hurt and scared and alone somewhere? What if he was forced to…NO! He wasn't thinking like that. Soon enough Kurt will walk through the front door and then he'll be grounded so much his reincarnation won't be allowed to go out and-

"God, where was he?"

"Burt..." a soft voice sounded from behind his back and he turned around to find Carole looking at him with worry in her warm eyes and a deep frown line etched into the soft skin of her forehead. In two huge steps he crossed the space between them, wrapping her up in his arms and letting her warm presence soothe him and ground his fears, making his head clearer.

"He's still not home, Carole. He left hours ago and Mae said they should be back by six. He's never late. What if..." he started rambling but she wrapped her arms around him, resting her left palm across his heart.

"No, sir. Don't think that. Kurt is a responsible, smart young man and I'm sure whatever's keeping him is business related. He'll be back soon."

The small woman gave her best shot at smiling comfortingly and trying to come up with something reasonable to excuse her stepson but even she knew it was unlike Kurt to be this late.

She looked into her Dom's tense face and did her best to exude some kind of calm for him. Ever
since the moment she saw Burt she knew that he was the man who could give her another chance at happiness.

He was kind and caring and gentle and he loved her and Finn like he was their true Dom and father. And seeing what an amazing job he did raising his own son by himself made Carole love him even more.

Yes their bond was a companion one but they loved each other and they were a family. And as a stepmom Carole was starting to feel herself sink into the worry she felt radiating from her Dom despite her efforts to be a strong reassuring base for Burt.

"What if that's not it? What if he's hurt and he can't call for help? I knew I should have saved money for that cell phone," Burt chastised himself letting her go to start pacing again, wringing his fingers together and striding to the window, lifting the curtains again and glancing out at the frustratingly empty street.

The self deprecation rising was almost cloying. He could have worked harder, longer hours, more clients and he could have made more money to buy that phone and make sure Kurt had a way of calling him if something happened to him. But he had a weak heart and he couldn't do it and now Kurt was-

"You know we couldn't afford that and you also know it's not your fault. You work hard but times are difficult and we get by fine. And I'm sure Kurt will be home soon. Please, sir just calm down," Carole begged with her palms squeezing her Dom's shoulders in, what she hoped, was a comforting gesture.

She felt him tense under her fingers as he lowered his head and rested his forehead against the cool window, his breath fogging the glass and obscuring the street that looked completely unwilling to bring his son home.

"God if something happened to him…" he started but the silence in the room suddenly broke with the sound of their old rotary dial phone ringing mercilessly.

Burt ran towards the battered gray machine, ripping the receiver from the phone with such force the whole thing jumped and fell back onto the very edge of the small cupboard it was standing on, dangling threateningly over the edge.

"Kurt!" he yelled into the receiver in panic feeling Carole's arms wrap around his torso, anchoring him to the floor soothingly.

"Mr. Hummel, this is Mae, Kurt's boss…" the soft voice was laced with panic and Burt tightened his hold on the phone as his mind went crazy with the possibilities, his knuckles turning white and the cheap plastic creaking under his merciless grip.

"Mae where is Kurt? Is he okay? Why isn't he home yet?" he fired the questions at the woman, crazy with anguish.

"He's…he's okay…considering…"

"Considering what? What do you mean?" he cut her stuttering off, his Dominant hormones flaring, making him want to punch through the wall.

Carole sensed his anger and she placed her lips on the partly exposed skin of his bicep, kissing him gently and running her hands up and down his trembling arms.

"Look Mr. Hummel, Kurt is not hurt…but something has happened and you should try and get here
to the Westerville Hotel if at all possible as quickly as you can-” the florist tried again but Burt was having none of it.

"What happened to my son?” he gritted through his teeth, forcing every ounce of Dominant tone he had to seep into his voice, lacing his question with a commanding sound.

She seemed to audibly struggle. "I don't think we should talk about this over the phone-"

"TELL ME!!" he practically screamed at her, forcing her to silence as he listened to her stunned breathing until she took one deep breath and spoke again making his whole world crash around him.

"He was claimed."

His fingers went numb, losing hold of the receiver and letting it crash to the floor, the thin plastic breaking in two and scattering across the floor. His knees gave out underneath him and he sunk to the floor, clutching his head in his hands as he rested his elbows on his thighs.

His son was claimed.

Owned by someone he had never even met and there was nothing he could do about it. He pictured his little boy, bright and confident but so innocent and naive. *God he was probably scared out of his mind…*

"Sir…"

*He was probably crying…*

"Sir…"

*And asking for his dad…*

"SIR!!” Carole shook his shoulders and he jumped out of his fear induced trance looking up at her as she smiled bashfully.

"I'm sorry about yelling at you but you should go. There's a bus leaving in ten minutes, if you go now you should catch it in front of Danny's Café."

He blinked at her stupidly before her words registered in his mind and he jumped to his feet, kissing her on the forehead once before running out of the house and towards the bus station, praying to whatever was up there that his son was unharmed.

_________________________

Kurt was lost in a haze.

*Claimed.*

He didn't want to believe it. Couldn't believe it.

*This wasn't happening right?*

He could hear the buzz of voices around him and something inside him knew that every word that slipped their lips was laced with hatred and disgust towards him.
Worthless.

Filthy.

Unworthy.

Blood was roaring in his ears alongside the obnoxious chatter from the crowd that seemed to be closing in on them and his legs buckled out from under him as he tried to catch a panicked breath.

Before he could hit the floor strong hands caught him under the arms and pulled him closer but he couldn't look up, his eyes were glued to the floor through numbness and basic instinct surrounded by so many Dominant presences.

There was something so comforting about those arms around him, they were strong, and warm and they seemed to fit around his underweight body perfectly but Kurt knew he couldn't allow himself to feel that way.

He had to protect himself from giving in to the urge to submit.

This wasn't what he wanted.

He was taken against his will and his mind fogged over again in desperate panic to be free to go home again.

"Blaine, I think it's best if we go somewhere more private," a strong female voice suggested from close by and Kurt felt himself get pulled closer still, face pressed into a heated chest and that scent of vanilla and apple laced with something strong and masculine fogged his frazzled mind further. There was a beat of silence.

"Blaine!"

There was a low growl that reverberated under Kurt's cheek and his body tensed, trembling violently.

"Sweetheart he's shaking. He needs to leave here," the same, unfamiliar woman repeated and her words seemed to make the man holding him snap back to reality as his grip on Kurt's body relaxed and the frightening, almost feral growl died down instantly, leaving Kurt confused again.

Who was shaking? Was it him? He tried to feel for himself but it was like his nerve endings were fried and weren't relaying the information back to his brain fast enough to comprehend that's he was being picked up bridal style and carried a short distance before being placed back down in a soft armchair without batting an eye or making the tiniest hint of protest.

He was trapped inside his own head rerunning those few minutes on repeat over and over and over again trying to rationalize. Compartmentalize. Something. Anything.

Maybe he should have just left the vest there.

He should have asked for someone to get it for him.

He should have been smarter and not leave it there in the first place.

He should have done anything except for whatever got him into the mess he was in but he knew it made no difference now.
It was no use because he could feel it. The changes. The effects already showing themselves no matter how slow they came under the icy numbness.

Claimed.

It splintered him; cut him in half and left him fighting with his own mind.

On one hand the very core of him that drove his submissive instincts hooked onto that claim. Hooked onto Blaine and it was forceful and unlike anything he had ever felt before. This need to submit and offer himself up and kneel for God's sake. A strange newfound exhilaration had rushed through his blood almost addicting in its intensity and it had hijacked his brain and senses long enough to get himself in this mess.

And then there was a larger part of him, the logically rational part as well as the dreamer in him that was horrified and heartbroken over the turn of events.

He could hear the taunts of the Doms at McKinley.

'C'mon Hummel, it's not like anyone would want to claim you even if you were suitable.'

'What Dom would ever want a submissive like you?'

'Just let us have some fun with you.'

'You know you're running out of time, Hummel. Soon enough your sub hormones will make you beg.'

He'd grown up on the stinging insults once he'd started school and though he never let it show they hurt more and more because as time went on it was only proving to be true.

His submissive nature made him jumpy and edgy lately, craving to have someone take care of him and make him feel safe, but he was painfully aware that it'll never happen the way he wanted it to. His family didn't have the money for a proper bond for him and while he dreamed and hoped and wished upon a star, deep down he had this doubt. This voice in the back of his mind saying it wasn't in the cards for him and he was beginning to get to that point where he was acknowledging it, maybe even a little closer to accepting it if he ever could, and now this had happened.

He'd been claimed… claimed by the worst possible match for him.

God, if he could have laughed without it coming out hysterical he would have.

Blaine Anderson was only settling into a bond at long last because he couldn't get away with not having one anymore, but there was no hope in his mind that Blaine would quit the many subs he was sure to have panting after him. Why would he? A bond like this just didn't mean the same to someone like Blaine. It couldn't.

A small part of him told him that it was harsh and cynical to think that way. Prejudiced maybe. But he was living in a world that was run on those principals and though Kurt didn't agree with that, let alone want to be part of the crowd, it was hard to think otherwise when the facts pointed that way. There was no denying Blaine was handsome. He was rich too, the Andersons practically owned Ohio by this point, so with looks, status, money and power it was pretty safe to assume that he didn't hold bonding in as high a regard as someone who could only dream of having that.

It led to the bigger question.
Why him?!

He was obviously poor. Lower classed. Why the hell would Blaine choose him out of a room full of glamorous rich subs all preening for his attention? Was it a joke? He couldn't be serious surely? Did he think that Kurt would be so swept up in the newly gained riches that he would put up with being treated like garbage?

His body shivered at that thought as his mind accepted that it was probably the most likely of answers.

Kurt was all snarled up in the tangles in his heart and mind. Threads were being pulled every which way and Kurt felt like he was on the edge of snapping.

He wanted to go home. Back to his dad and Carole and even annoying Finn. Back to Jeff and Mercedes and that hell hole school… he started to cry. Could feel the wetness dripping down his cheeks as he stared at the floor in front of him and all he could do was drag his feet up into the armchair and curl around himself as best as he could as he lost himself further into his head and the misery swimming there.

The chill seeping through the windows and under the heavy curtains made him curl up tighter and he wished for the millionth time in the past half an hour that he had been more careful and that he hadn't forgotten his vest.

How he longed for that comforting warmth and softness and the thought of his mom around him. The desire in him was so vivid he could almost feel the warn fabric wrapping around his shoulders and the familiar smell of cheap laundry detergent filling his nostrils.

His fingers acted mechanically, trying to reach for the soft pockets and he felt his entire body tense when he actually found them, slipping his palms inside and clutching the material desperately, prying his eyes open and realizing his vest was hung loosely around his shoulders and there was someone standing in front of him.

Expecting it to be Mae since she was the only one that knew about his vest he chanced a glance up to thank her, breath hitching when his eyes met melted gold and amber.

Blaine.

The Dom was still holding one end of his vest in his palm, fixing the fabric to fit more tightly around his skinny frame.

"I believe this is yours," his voice was confident if a little shaky and Kurt stared up at him, wide eyed and scared out of his mind but unable to utter a single word.

Blaine watched him for a moment, as if he was giving him time to pluck up the courage to talk but Kurt knew his patience was futile.

Exhaling a deep, resigned sigh Blaine looked at him with something resembling desperation creeping into the gold of his eyes and Kurt saw his hand move towards his face, warm fingertips grazing the skin of his tearstained cheek and making him flinch at the feeling of his skin against his own.

At his sudden jump Blaine drew his hand away as if being burned and he looked at Kurt with sadness that left the sub confused and wondering until he heard that voice again, this time void of all the confidence.

"Please…please don't be scared of me…" he begged and Kurt's eyes snapped back up surprised at
the tortured sound that touched his ears.

The feeling of anguish, fear and nerves were rolling off of Blaine in waves and the sub inside of Kurt roared with the need to make him feel better, to fulfil his role and make him happy.

He was about to force himself to say something, anything, when a looming figure darted inside and he felt his world snap back into place, at least partially.

"Dad..." he breathed out his first word in what felt like forever as he jumped to his feet and ran to his father, throwing himself into familiar arms and clinging to him for dear life tears falling freely and lips forming words without consulting his brain before they spilled out.

"I'm sorry...I'm so sorry dad...I shouldn't have walked in there but I l-left my vest and n-now I can't go home with yo-you anymore...p-please take me home..." he sobbed, desperately clutching the worn material of the shirt he made for his dad's last birthday with Carole's help on raising the money for fabric and buttons.

Burt held his son tightly, sending murderous glares at the group of people gathered around Kurt and looking at him in confusion and obvious discomfort.

They let his son work himself up to the edge of a panic attack without moving a finger to help him calm down and Burt wanted to kill them for leaving him to fend for himself in that state.

Picking the teenager up in his arms he made his way towards an armchair in the far corner of the room, away from prying ears and eyes of unwelcomed strangers.

He sat down placing his son on his lap and running his rough palms over his trembling arms.

"Kurt... Kurt, buddy, I need you to calm down, okay?" he whispered into his ears hoping for some kind of response but Kurt just held tighter and cried more desperately, hiding his face from him.

"He's g-gonna take m-me away...d-don't want to go w-with hi-him...d-don't l-let him..." he hiccupped so miserably Burt swore his own heart broke at the sight of him.

"Bud, you know that's not how it works. Kurt, please just stop crying and look at me," Burt pleaded one more time and Kurt shivered in his arms, sniffling for another ten minutes before managing to marginally settle down, snuggled into the safety his father's arms provided.

"He just did it...in front of everyone...and they all laughed and said horrible things about me...this isn't r-right...it can't be...dad, please don't make me stay with him..." he said all of it in a stuttering whisper that left Burt feeling like he was being suffocated by every word that crossed his son's lips.

A carnal rage simmered beneath his skin and he gripped the armrests of the chair to prevent himself from strangling someone.

"It doesn't matter what they said. You're worth more than all of them put together," Burt said and Kurt lifted his head, eyes red rimmed and puffy, his cheeks wet with tears and lips sprinkled with blood drawn by his own teeth.

"Then take me home. Don't leave me here," he begged and Burt closed his eyes willing the tears to go away.

He had to be strong for his son.

A movement caught his attention and he saw who he knew to be Dom Dana Anderson stepping
forwards towards them. Burt made up his mind on an instant and maneuvered himself back to his feet leaving Kurt in the chair clutching the back of his shirt in desperate fingers.

“Dad—”

“Shh,” Burt hushed cupping his head and stroking his hair. “I’ll be right back kid, you’re not going anywhere just yet, okay.”

It was the best Burt could offer as comfort for right now. Watery blue blinked in resignation and fingers uncurled their urgent grip.

He intercepted the woman and they walked a little away from the clustered group though not far enough for Burt to lose sight of his son, only far enough to be out of hearing distance.

His hands were still shaking and the sight of the Dom in front of him, so calm and collected in the face of is world crumbling down made him almost livid.

"Mr. Hummel—"

He cut her off, the gentle, calming tone feeling like an inspiration for his rage.

"Listen, let's get one thing straight here. I don't care if you have all of King Midas's gold, or are the President of these god damned United States, that doesn't entitle your son to mine, okay."

He watched Dana assimilate that for a moment her eyes narrowing slightly; the only visible reaction that what he said had affected in any way before a deep breath was pulled into her lungs, helping her keep calm and reassuring.

"Blaine claimed him. It's not entitlement or ownership papers Mr. Hummel, but the laws are very clear," she managed to say calmly looking at the man in front of her.

She understood his anger, she knew what it must feel like to be so out of control while looking at your child shivering in fear but she also knew that if they only managed to get Kurt to let Blaine in, he could be happy, he could be safe and he could be loved.

Burt clenched his fists and tried to stay reasonable even knowing he was fighting a losing battle here. "I don't give a damn what the laws say when my kid is crying his heart out, scared out of his mind because he doesn't want this!"

Dana flinched on her son's behalf.

"He's an Anderson. I bet a hundred subs here tonight alone would want to be claimed by him, why doesn't he choose one of them and let us go home? We have nothing to offer you that your family would be interested in."

In his opinion Kurt had more worth than everyone here in his little toe but this society wasn't based on what you had inside unfortunately. It was based on the size of your wallet.

Gasping at his words the female Dom narrowed her eyes fighting the anger she felt at the implied insult thrown her way. She had been fighting stereotypes like that her entire life; being looked down by the poor for being rich and by the rich for being richer than them. They hid their hatred by sucking up to her, hoping to gain something from being friends with her, but Dana had few friends she actually trusted. The rest of the people were all fake smiles hiding the exact same opinion the man in front of her had.
"You seem to have a preconceived impression of us Mr. Hummel. And I'm afraid it's a wrong one," she said sadly, chancing a glance towards her husband to keep herself calm enough to go through this.

Burt glanced around the room at the extravagance then pointedly down at the jewelry she was wearing that was worth more than his house.

She felt a sudden need to button up her collar to hide her diamond necklace and stuff her hands in her pockets to stop him from staring at the matching ring on her finger, but she fought it because she knew she wasn't in the wrong.

Yes she firmly believed the society they lived in now was defected and that the money should be distributed evenly, but there wasn't much she could do about it.

"Having money doesn't make us bad people just like having no money doesn't make you so."

It was a fair point that Burt in another frame of mind would have conceded gracefully. Instead he just set his shoulders and looked her square in the eye. "I don't want to talk philosophy with you Mrs. Anderson, I just wanna take my son home."

She sighed. "You know that's impossible."

"Have him relinquish his claim!" Burt growled.

"No!"

The force of it from the small woman made Burt pause and remember that he was indeed talking to another Dominant. A powerful one at that. She seemed to regain control of herself once more trying to make him understand what it all meant for both of their sons.

"Mr. Hummel you don't seem to realize just how special your son is-"

"I know just fine how special he is thank you," Burt snorted crossing his arms over his chest.

"I apologize. What I meant to say is, you don't seem to realize how he appears to other Dominants. Ones outside his family." She inclined her head politely at her miss choice of words and doing her best to explain what she wanted to say.

"I'm afraid I don't understand." Burt frowned again, not realizing where she was going with this.

"I felt the same way the first time I got an offer to make an arranged preclaim for my son. And I felt the same way the next fifty times. I see him as my son and as my son I know he's special to me. But to other subs he's more than that. A friend of mine, a sub, explained that. Apparently Blaine is a strong, attractive Dom, he gives off an air of security and strength that makes subs want to be around him. I always thought it's because we are who we are, but it seems that it's more than that and I think it's the same with Kurt," she explained quietly hoping he'd understand what she was trying to say.

All the Doms had similar qualities that came from their dominant genetics but some of them layered good upbringing, caring nature and just general niceness that made those Dom traits even more prominent to subs whose natures drove them to seek for those who would care for them.

In a way Burt knew that, but he didn't really know what she meant about Kurt. He was a sub.

"What do you mean by that?" he asked and she smiled gently, grateful to notice that he had calmed down and started talking to her with the same respect she was giving him.
"It means you and Kurt's mom did an amazing job and raised an outstanding young man as far as I can see. I'm a Dom, a bonded one at that, and as such I should be able to ignore Kurt's submissiveness just as easily as I ignore everyone else's. But Kurt is so different from every other sub I know. His submissiveness isn't trained, it isn't fake and forced. You raised him to be a perfect balance of everything a sub should be and my son felt it. I did too, but well, I kind of like my sub way too much to claim another," she tried lightening the situation up by cracking a joke like she always did but it seemed to confuse the other man even more.

"Your husband is the only sub you have?" he asked and she gasped trying hard to keep the hurt she felt at bay. She knew the rumors were there and she knew a lot of Doms lived by the rule of trading subs like accessories but her family was better than that.

She wanted to scream at him and possibly slap him across his face but she knew he was only worried about his son.

"I will let that insult slip because I'm aware of what goes down in this circle of society. I claimed Jared thirty years ago and he's the only sub I've had since then. I want you to know Mr. Hummel that I don't condone casual affairs on the side if a person is bonded."

There was a tense silence as they both simmered and regrouped.

"You know Blaine's never even come close to bonding before?" she asked quietly looking over towards her son.

"Hard to avoid hearing it. He's quite popular in the media," Burt said trying desperately to hold on to whatever he could to stop this family from taking his son when he so clearly didn't want it but his defenses were falling short as everything the tiny Dom said made him more and more calm and sure that Kurt would be okay eventually.

Dana clenched her jaw getting slightly tired of accusations thrown her way.

"Yes well, they're not exactly accurate representations of my son." Burt could see where this was going and moved to intercept but Dana held up her hand in a request to continue which Burt let her. "My son is a kind, caring man Mr. Hummel please trust me when I say this and not from any biased mother's opinion. The tabloids and rumors spread by them about Blaine are slanderous and almost always lies in regards to my son's character. They make him into whatever will raise their profits. I read all of them and there's not a trace of the real Blaine in them. Bottom line is, I raised him the way I thought was right and I taught him what a bond should look like. If you trust me and my words then trust Blaine too."

Burt stared at her and saw that she was honest. That she at least believed what she was saying and it gave him pause... and a little hope. He snatched his cap off his head and run an agitated hand over his scalp.

"He's not ready for this." He gave her a final plea knowing he'd lost a while ago but Dana took his hand in her tiny one and made him look at her.

"He's old enough. And maybe rationally he doesn't feel ready but I saw the way he reacted to Blaine. I saw the way he looked at him before his mind kicked in and scared him to death. He's not ready for the kind of bond he thinks they'll have. But Blaine would never harm a hair on Kurt's head," she assured. "He's patient and wouldn't force or degrade him. He won't humiliate him or treat him like a slave. These are all promises I'd stake my life on, Mr. Hummel. He'll worship him and I know it's hard to accept it, but I will not allow you to cause problems with the claim my son has placed on yours. I will not do that to him especially when I see the way he looks and acts towards Kurt
already."

She tugged his hand gently and turned him in the opposite direction.

Burt glanced back towards the armchair that Blaine was hovering around just on the outskirts. He was fussing about like a madman, placing a tea cup and a biscuit and another jacket and a bunch of other things within Kurt's reach, but never once invading his personal space and forcing contact on him. He hadn't once taken eyes off of Kurt and at first it was disconcerting to notice how intensely possessive that gaze was… Burt didn't know what to feel about it now. Couldn't quite decipher the other emotions swirling there alongside it. Caring? Worry? He wasn't sure he wasn't just seeing what his eyes wanted him too, but there was that hope again.

"We don't want to steal him from you."

Burt turned back towards Dana who was staring at him with compassionate eyes. She understood this was hard for him on a parental and Dominant level. He swallowed hard and looked back to his boy who was still tucked away in that chair looking smaller than he'd seen him since he was actually still a child.

"Just make sure he's happy and safe. And I swear if he's hurt in any way I'll find a way to get him away from your son."

"If my son ever hurts Kurt I will personally make sure he's removed from the claim and brought safely back to you. I give you my word."

He nodded his head to Dana, then walked back to Kurt with a heavy heart. There was nothing now but to try to be there for him, try to support and prepare him as best he could in the short time they had left. Dana called Blaine away, well had to call several times for him to actually move, but finally the two Hummel men were alone once more. Kurt seemed to sense the futility as soon as Burt approached and his son's lip trembled. Burt ducked down in front of him and grabbed his hands tightly in his own calloused ones.

"Kurt, if I could I'd tell them all to go to hell and I'd bring you back home. But he made the claim and I'm not allowed to oppose it as much as I want to," Burt whispered sadly and Kurt lowered his eyes knowing that what his dad was saying was the truth.

He was claimed.

He didn't belong to his dad anymore.

He belonged to a stranger who would use him and keep him as a toy for when he gets bored with his high end life. A stranger that held no real regard for him or his thoughts or opinions. It made him want to scream and rage and throw things at the unfairness of it all. What had he done to deserve being picked up like a doll in a shop? Sure the initial eagerness for the new object was high until it started to get worn and the novelty wore off and another newer model hit the shelves.

Another useless tear snaked down his cheek.

His father had done his best for him. He knew that he had fought for him, but this was now unavoidable and it wasn't his dad's fault so he steeled himself and nodded sadly trying to be strong about it even though he felt broken.

"I know. I know you can't get me out of this. I wish you could though," he murmured thickly giving his father a mock smile and Burt hugged him tightly letting his son bask in the comfort of a family for a little while longer.
Kurt shivered in his arms and Burt placed a soft kiss on his hair running his hand up and down his back until he heard him breathe in deeply as he spoke in a quiet whisper.

"I'm so scared, dad," he admitted and Burt felt the tears he fought to keep at bay spill over his eyelids as he glanced over at who was now his sons Dom for better or worse for the time being.

His first thoughts on seeing the young man hadn't been kind. That there was nothing nice about him there apart from his looks and the depth of his wallet. His lips were always stretched into a condescending smirk and his arms decorated with the latest of his sub accessories as he posed for the million disgusting photos in those trashy magazines. But honestly his perception was skewed as Dana had pointed out, though he would never willingly hand his son over to anyone painted angel or devil.

But Burt remembered his face from those photos and it shocked him to see that the young man standing on the receiving end of his stern glare looked nothing like the dapper Dom he saw on the news.

This man…no…boy, looked stressed and fragile and worried and he kept breaking eye contact with Burt to look at the bundle in his arms with gentle but scared and regretful eyes.

It almost seemed like he cared…and it gave Burt more of that illusive hope.

Breaking away from those frantic eyes he cradled his son closer to him and lifted his face up with his broad palm.

"I know you are. But maybe, if you give it a shot, maybe you'll realize that there's no reason to be," Burt said trying desperately to convince the both of them.

"He's gonna hurt me," Kurt whispered fearfully and Burt shook his head hoping to God Dana was honest in her conviction over Blaine's character.

"I don't think he will. Even if it's not the fairy tale you wanted I don't think you'll end up hurt. And if he does something to hurt you, trust me, I'll move mountains to keep you safe," Burt swore fiercely and Kurt nodded, feeling a tiny inkling of something like relief joining the swirling mess of emotions battling in his insides, knowing that his father would always be around to make sure he was okay.

"Promise?" Kurt asked, eyes widening when he looked over his father's shoulder to see the entire Anderson family closing in on the two of them.

He gripped his dad's hand in his and lowered his eyes as he realized Blaine was among them as they did their best to approach him carefully like he was a frightened woodland creature.

"I promise, buddy," Burt said as he noticed the powerful family as well. "Now I want you to promise me something, okay?"

"'kay." Kurt nodded a bit sadly and Burt cupped his face into his wide palms thumbing the last of the tears away.

"I want you to promise that you won't cry anymore. That you'll be strong and brave and try to make this work for you. I know it's not ideal but your mom always said that life is what you make of it. So make something good out of this. I know you can do it," Burt told him with so much confidence and heartfelt warmth that Kurt burst into tears once again throwing his arms around his dad's neck and burying his face into his shoulder.
"I'll try," he mumbled sadly into the fabric of his shirt and Burt nodded hugging him tightly, knowing that Blaine could end up forbidding him from visiting his family despite the hope Dana gave him that her son was a decent human being.

"Good. I'm afraid that we both have to go now, but Kurt, if you need anything, at any time… you know where I am," Burt reassured and stood up, pulling his son after him to his feet just in time to see Dana smile at the boy gently making him lower his eyes and twist his fingers in discomfort.

"Kurt, honey, it's time to go," she said sticking her hand out for him to take; after she won the battle against her son that it would be for the best if he kept his distance until they got home, Blaine stood on the side-lines scowling at everything and huffing at his mother but she paid him no mind. Jared was also beside his son trying his best to soothe him by rubbing his shoulder to ease out the tenseness there.

Kurt eyed his father but he just gave him a final kiss on the head before nodding at him to accept the invitation as he walked to the door.

"Mae is giving me a ride back so I have to go. I love you son," Burt said and Kurt's eyes filled with tears once again as he tried to smile at his dad weakly before his eyes escorted him out the door and into the night leaving Kurt alone with his new Dom and his family.

He looked back down to the hand that was still offered to him and taking a deep breath, he reached out with shaking fingers. She clasped his palm into her own reassuringly and pulled him into a tender hug.

"Don't be scared. I promise we're not as bad as you think we are. Nobody here will hurt you," she offered and somehow her words sounded sincere enough for him to give her a timid nod and follow her out the door, Jared and Blaine on their heels.

The lobby was still filled with curious people scattered around, hungry for a juicy story that would satisfy their need to talk down at someone. There were sneers and whispers thrown their way and Kurt squeezed his eyes tightly to shut them out, managing to avoid them quite successfully until a ghastly dressed woman, with bleach burned blonde hair and disgusting painted on eyebrows cut their way, laughing like a deranged hyena.

"Well, well. The secret's out. Little Blaine Anderson never bonded because he has a thing for filthy strays. How lovely," she mocked in a sickening voice that made Kurt shiver as he lowered his head down in shame.

He felt, more than saw his new Dom trying to rush past him to defend what was his but he was stopped by his mother who was looking at the poorly dressed woman with the sweetest smile the world had ever seen.

Kurt knew instantly that nothing good could come out of a smile that friendly.

"Margaret, darling," she purred seemingly delighted. "Jealousy is not a good color on you. But I do suppose it's expected given the fact that your son is once again, unclaimed. What is this, third, fourth year? How unfortunate. But I guess it's hard for him to convince a Dom he's worth the lifetime of putting up with you. Have a nice night."

She blew her a kiss and with a gentle hand around his waist, she pulled Kurt towards the front of the hotel snickering to herself in glee.
Kurt had a stray thought as he shyly observed the small woman and was pretty sure that even if he never grew to love his Dom, he would adore his new mother in law.

It took everything Blaine had in him not to rip Kurt out of his mothers grasp.

*Kurt.*

Never before had he seen a more beautiful, perfect sub and that he was now Blaine’s? The thought made the pure pleasure running through him freeze over in his veins making him stiff as he continued to walk silently behind the pair in front, his father close to his own side. Because Kurt didn’t want to be his. It was written in every line of his body, every feature on his face, hell, it’d been spoken out loud in the subs own voice.

It made him want to roar in denial. Demand that Kurt accept him, want him, and while he was going crazy with the need for it he couldn’t bring himself to move or say anything of the kind to the ethereal creature that had stumbled into his life by pure chance. He would never force himself upon Kurt be it emotionally or physically and so that left him to trying to be the best Dom he could. Left him with something major to prove and something to fight for.

He swallowed and followed every graceful line of his subs body mirroring his every step only three paces behind. Maybe stumble was a poor choice in words for someone so effortlessly graceful. His mother stopped them when they got outside and Blaine greedily inhaled as the light, biting breeze blew that intoxicating mix of vanilla and flowers towards him with something equally as mouth-watering.

Kurt was definitely unique.

Blaine didn’t know it was possible for a sub to smell innocent. That pureness could be inhaled. That sweetness could be tasted on the back of his tongue. He was used to seductive tints and greedy wafts that were so off-putting to him, but it was like Kurt had been made to suit him. His tastes, his desires, his fantasies. Kurt was everything to him already and that he couldn’t even get close to him drove him to the brink of his control.

Logically he knew that this was the best thing for Kurt. He was confused and scared and *crying.* God did tears in those amazing cerulean eyes slay him already; provoke him into wanting to do *anything* to get them to stop. Someone like Kurt should never be made to cry and that it was his fault? It was an ache inside his chest that simmered and burned like acid when Kurt wouldn’t so much as look his way or respond and when he did there was nothing but sadness there that ran so, so deep Blaine couldn’t hope to find the reason why just by guessing.

Jared walked up to the smartly dressed valet and handed him their ticket and promptly their black Bentley with the tinted windows was pulling up. It was usual in their social circle to have a driver but his father enjoyed driving so much that his mother hadn’t bothered to procure a regular one. In fact she had been talked around by her sub for him to start teaching her and pretty soon she enjoyed sitting behind the wheel just as much as him and if they ever found themselves needing transport usually they used whatever staff was in house.
They stepped up to the sleek vehicle and Blaine caught a glimpse of Kurt’s wide eyed expression. It wasn’t quite awe anymore as it had been in the hotel function room. He was uncomfortable. Blaine wanted to gather him in his arms so much that his fingers clenched into fists as he held himself back.

Dana opened the back door and gestured Kurt inside with a reassuring smile and his sub ducked in stiff as a board as Jared hopped into the driver’s side. Dana moved to walk around the back and Blaine couldn’t help it anymore.

He wouldn’t be pushed aside. Kurt was his. His sub. *His.*

A low growl started in his chest, body coiling up like a cobra and his mother stopped and regarded him cautiously. They stared one another down for a few moments Dominant to Dominant, a million thoughts racing between them, before she nodded and continued on to ride shotgun.

Blaine rushed to the opposite back door and climbed inside, shifting against the leather and god, Kurt's scent was so much heavier in the tighter space. He gripped the seat under him so hard the leather creaked and couldn’t help when his eyes tracked immediately back to the sub sitting one seat away from him. Just one. The need to close the distance and feel that lithe body against his once more was fierce but one look at Kurt’s curled in body language halted that dead in the water as they pulled off and headed for home.

The boy was trying to be as small as possible. It was clear in the way his perfect posture slumped, shoulders caving inwards, not resting against the seat at all and drawn up to hide that long length of neck. Knees were pressed tight and raised from feet on their tip toes while his hands clasped so hard in his lap they were stark white. He was staring at the floor unblinkingly and Blaine's heart broke from what a comparison this was from the bright sub he’d spotted spying in the doorway.

The sound of his parents soft conversing which would normally be comforting made his skin itch with envy and agitation, the car seeming to drag by and all the while Kurt didn’t dare move a muscle and Blaine couldn’t stand it after any longer. He lifted a hand to soothe him, it wasn’t even negotiable at this point, but the flinch he got for his efforts had him retracting the hand swiftly. Scared blue eyes darted up to his face and away quickly and relocated out of the window and he saw Jared glance back at him in the rear-view mirror, his eyes sympathetic.

Blaine clenched his jaw and fought the need to actually cry.

He hardly ever shed tears, it just wasn’t in him. Dom’s leaned more towards anger when they reached extreme peaks of emotion while subs reacted with sadness, but this time… he couldn’t be angry with Kurt. He wasn’t doing this to spite him, but at the same time Blaine couldn’t help but feel his heart breaking which was surprising but not wholly so. He didn’t know Kurt yet but he just knew that this was the one he was waiting for and he vowed he wouldn’t give up on it until there was nothing to hold on to anymore. Right now Blaine had a shred of hope to be able to change Kurt’s mind. Show him that he wasn’t a monster.

Soon enough they were pulling up to a huge mansion styled house and Blaine tried to imagine what would be racing through Kurt’s brain as he stared at his new home. He tried to look at the old classically styled mansion house with an objective perspective but it was hard. He had grown up here. Played out on the perfectly cut grass and rolled on the sprawling lawns. He’d picked flowers from the rose bushes lining the driveway much to the gardener’s disgust, slammed the large ornate doors with no regard to how old or expensive they were, and curled up on the porch swing a million times because it was the perfect spot.
For a second he replaced all the images in his mind to include Kurt.

Chasing Kurt around the gardens, happy laughter he could only imagine the sound of singing in the breeze. Plucking roses to give to Kurt, imagining the beautiful flush he’d caught riding the subs cheekbones after he’d claimed him there for no other reason than that he was happy. Pressing Kurt up against doors with frantic need because they just couldn’t help themselves and waiting longer to find a bed was out of the question. Snuggling together on the swing, Kurt slotting into him perfectly as they kissed lazily, a blanket around their shoulders to fight off the autumn chill.

“Blaine?” Dana called and he snapped back into himself seeing everyone had gotten out of the car, save him.

He scrambled out and managed to catch and hold Kurt’s shy gaze in his for just a few moments longer than he ever had before over the hood of the car and in that moment nothing else mattered.

He was going to earn this angel’s trust and affection if it killed him.

There weren't a lot of places in the world where Kurt Hummel fit.

He was a boy but he was never into sports, girls, burping or whatever it was the 'ordinary' boys did these days. He was a sub but still chose to have his own interests, dreams and goals. He was a teenager with hormones running wild but he never felt the urge to satisfy them with a meaningless Dom who could provide relief for a few days. He was a poor kid with expensive taste but never once had he felt compelled to turn to something illegal or immoral to get what he wanted.

In his short life Kurt had managed to stand out and break all the stereotypes thrown at him.

But sitting in Blaine's room, on a plush, four poster bed decked in Egyptian cotton sheets and a thick wool comforter, he had never felt more out of place. He was alone. Actually alone for the first time
in his life in a too big house full of strangers and he wasn't feeling like himself at all. It scared him so much he felt his lungs constrict and his breathing quicken making his heart thump deafeningly in his chest to try and compensate.

Ever since he could remember his skin felt a little too tight, his limbs a bit heavy and his head just a little bit hazed over. Over the years he had learned to live with it and it had become normality for him; it was the way his body operated, he was familiar with it and he could cope. This…

This was like nothing he had ever felt before and it made him shiver.

Since the second Blaine laid hands on him his skin seemed to fit him, tailoring perfectly around his flesh, stretching over his muscles and covering his bones. His head cleared and it was like for the first time his mind was completely unclouded, his eyes able to pick up the slightest changes in shades of colors around him and every sound that reached him was somehow louder. Sharper.

He wasn't used to it.

He didn't like it.

He wanted his old, poorly fitted skin back and he wanted the colors to dull…he wanted his world back…he wanted to go home.

He didn't belong here in this yawning mansion house, surrounded by the flashy furniture and golden picture frames. His clothes seemed even rattier in comparison to the discarded cardigan thrown across the bed and the seemingly soft material of a pair of pajama pants hanging off the back of the chair. It made his fingers itch to touch. His sensitive skin that always bore the brunt of his limited wardrobe begging for the gentle caress it was bound to bring but Kurt forced that train of thought away quickly before it could take hold. In all honesty he didn't know if he could bring himself to put something like that on. Yes his clothes may have been poor quality but they were his and that was the fundamental difference. He looked down at the very things and frowned when the pristine white of the sheets caught his attention.
Should he even sit on the bed?

Surely his clothes were dirty by now from his flower shop shift and if he ruined something his new Dom could get angry and making him mad within the first five minutes of being in his house surely wasn't the best idea in the world. Would he punish him? What would he do?

The truth was Kurt didn't know this man.

He didn't know the first thing about him other than what he had read about and so who was he to guess whether or not he could be cruel to him? After all, Kurt was entirely at this Dom's mercy with no allies despite how nice Blaine's mother seemed, no clue what to do or expect other than the standard things every sub learned in school. But what if Blaine expected more? What if he couldn't bring himself to give it to him? He thought of Jeff briefly and felt ill. He loved his best friend with all his heart but he knew the damage a twisted bond could inflict and the idea of that happening to him, all that pain his friend held inside, it terrified him to the point where he wanted to crawl out of the window and run all the way back to his dad's arms.

He'd worked himself up again, shaking with fear and confusion as he jumped off the bed to stay somewhere where he couldn't touch anything. His mind was running every worst case scenario it could despite any evidence to the contrary and he couldn't stop himself.

It was a test for his shaking legs but they held as he surveyed the room agitatedly trying to figure out a spot where he wouldn’t disturb the balance of the room the least. He settled on the small, unoccupied space under one of the arch shaped windows with a small wooden bench decorated with a few throw pillows he could sit on if he got tired.

He walked over and turned towards the window facing the garden that immediately made his chest ache as he watched hired professionals mill around the property, finishing up their work; trimming, watering, shaping and forbidding the flowers to grow as they wanted to, instead shaping them into neat little bushes under the powerful beam of the outside lights cutting into the darkness like it wasn't night in late Autumn.

It made him think about his small garden at home with wild flowers and roughly trimmed grass that looked like a hobo would look next to a Wall Street broker compared to the garden in front of him but... Kurt would still be ready to do anything to go back to that messy life that was so familiar and safe.

Wrapping his arms around himself to keep the chill from biting at his skin he sighed and rested his forehead against the cool glass. His clothes weren't exactly made for cold weather and Blaine's room was too big to heat up right away so he curled up into himself, more trying to keep himself warm then hold himself together now. He was a rollercoaster of emotions but now it was somehow blanketing as apathy seeped through. There wasn't anything he could do about this, there wasn't anything his dad could either and the resignation made his chest hurt distantly, but he was far away now and maybe that distance would protect him somehow.

Suddenly his body shivered again but this time not from the cold but out of fear that crept quietly up his spine destroying his calmer mood as the massive wooden door squeaked and grunted when someone pushed it open.

Not just someone, Kurt thought to himself swallowing over a thick throat. His Dom.

The notion was strange and scary now. He'd always pictured his future Dom not as a person with features- blonde hair or green eyes- but as an idea. He was supposed to be the one person that took him for what he was and thought he was perfect despite all the flaws the Doms at McKinley
ridiculed him for. He was supposed to be a person who readily supported his dreams and goals and his fire to make something of himself and not just sit at home. He was supposed to be someone he loved and who loved him back unconditionally.

That had all shattered when Blaine had claimed him.

What if Blaine was expecting him to act a certain way, like all the other rich subs he knew and was angry when he didn't? What if he belittled and insulted him too? What if he expected him to sit by passively and take whatever Blaine gave him? Do whatever the Dom ordered him too? Wait at home while Blaine went out and got his needs met by any number of other subs just because the mood took him or he found Kurt lacking in some area or other? But the biggest fear that had caused most of his distress was simply the last on the list. Blaine didn't love him and what made it worse was that Kurt had this vague sense that maybe he had a real chance of falling for someone like Blaine. The submissive in him was wholly on board with that sentiment and Kurt hated himself for it. Wanted it to stop.

Feeling tears sting again he tried to retreat back to that icy place in his mind and lock himself away again. He didn't turn around to watch Blaine enter the room. He could feel him there with eyes intent on his frame that felt burning despite how cold he felt. That frightening sense of home that he didn't want to feel because he had a home. The feeling of craving that he despised because he taught himself not to want that.

His body betrayed him once more as a soft wind gushed through the frame of the old styled window and he tightened the hold of his arms around his torso.

"You're cold," a soft voice spoke from behind him and Kurt jumped a little, startled by the sudden break in silence and how near it was.

It wasn't a question so he decided to stay where he was and not answer. It felt safer that way and maybe a small part of him was petulant enough to want to ignore this man. He knew he was being difficult on purpose and that he could just be civil about all of it like any other probably would be in his place- hell they'd probably be ecstatic and on their knees by now- but he couldn't fight the feeling of being tricked into being where he was; couldn't stop wishing to wake up and be back home again.

He couldn't help being scared.

"Why didn't you take something to wear? Or my blanket?" Blaine spoke again and this time it was a question and Kurt knew from his friends who had Doms, and the scarce lessons at school, that refusing to answer could mean trouble.

He turned his head and angled his body slightly, not wanting to be completely open but knowing he couldn't be as blatantly disrespectful as to talk at the window, and found Blaine standing in the middle of the room, a tray in his hands filled with a plate of steaming soup, a few thick slices of bread and a glass of water.

"I…I'm okay," he managed to find his voice even if it was quiet because he didn't want to be weak. He didn't want to look like he needed protection and incite Blaine's natural instincts. He had learnt that the hard way at school.

His answer didn't seem to sit right with Blaine as he walked to the table with a frown etched into his forehead and placed the tray on top of it, sighing deeply when he turned back to Kurt, his hands shoved in his pockets which made Kurt relax a modicum.

"There's no need to lie about stuff like that.” Kurt flinched at being called out fearing the worst but
Blaine looked anything but angry... in fact he seemed... upset almost. “If you want to hide how you feel that's fine. If you want to hate me and keep your distance that's also fine for now. But there's no need to be cold or hungry or tired and not say anything about it. I want you healthy,” Blaine sighed but it was stern and if his words caused a scratch on Kurt's heart then the tone in his voice cracked it open.

He sounded so weary and tired and like there was a bone deep sadness inside of him that just wouldn't go away and Kurt knew, somehow, that he's the one that caused it but he couldn't force a word out of his dry mouth as he assimilated.

'For now.' The words replayed in his head a thousand times. Did this mean Blaine was planning this to be somewhat long term? Surely not. He couldn't picture the man who had a different sub for every day of the week to even know the meaning of the word.

His Dom turned away from him and started unloading the tray on the table and he tried to ignore the stirring of his stomach at the sight. He hadn't eaten since this morning. Instead he focused on studying Blaine. He seemed calm and unaware of Kurt's staring but the clanking of the glass gave his shaking hands away and for the first time in all of the mess of that day Kurt realized that just maybe he wasn't the only one afraid. Which was absurd wasn't it?

His mind was going crazy with questions, crashing them together against the sides of his head until he felt ready to explode with them. It gave him a shred of confidence and he opened his mouth and... faltered. One little word but it held almost everything and there was a part of him that was dying for him to say it to this Dom that had claimed him, but it wouldn't come at first, wouldn't get past his stubborn resolve until he choked everything down and pushed the word out.

"Sir..." he called out timidly, fearing that Blaine wouldn't hear him and he knew he had no strength to force himself to say it again despite the faint rush it elicited, a promise of more.

But Blaine heard like he was waiting for the tiniest sound from Kurt and he turned to him with his face perfectly calm and reassuring though his eyes were lit a little darker than what they were before.

"You don't have to call me that if it makes you uncomfortable. Blaine is enough," the Dom answered and for a second Kurt wondered if it was a trick to make him do something wrong right away so he could punish him.

Didn't it say that in the textbook they had at school? That you should refer to your Dom as "Sir" or even in more extravagant cases "Master". Kurt hated the thought of the second one because it made him feel like a slave even when he'd tried the word out in the solitude of his room, but he heard Carole calling his dad "sir" all the time and it always seemed like they both liked it.

He figured it was for the best to keep Blaine happy, and now he was messing with his mind.

"Isn't that against the rules?" he asked a bit harshly and Blaine cocked his head to the side.

"I never cared for rules that much. Plus, I was raised to see bonds as something each couple defines for themselves. So no...it's not against the rules. I know you feel uncomfortable calling me that so just call me by my first name and I'll do my best to show you, you can trust me. Maybe then you'll feel ready to call me sir. Does that sound okay?" Blaine asked softly and Kurt stared at him, eyes wide and disbelieving, but as much as he doubted everything Blaine did, he had no other choice but to go with it and see what happened. He literally had no other option here.

Unable to talk he just nodded, biting at the inside of his cheek nervously but happy for the reprieve from having to force the word out and Blaine gave him a careful smile.
"Now…what did you want when you called me?"

He was being so nice. Why was he being so nice? Kurt wanted to shout at him irrationally for it which was insane, he should be happy Blaine wasn't demanding things of him already, but he was all tangled up and it was exhausting being on the edge of every emotion. He decided to try and shut it down and focus on the now.

"Oh…um…I was…it is actually a little bit chilly in here…" he whispered with his eyes downcast and his arms wrapping around his waist tightly again. It wasn't a request and it wasn't a statement. It was somewhere trapped in the uncertainty of the void in-between the two.

"Oh, right…would you like something warmer to wear or a blanket? Oh how about this?" Blaine jumped into action at his words so eager to please him that Kurt managed to relax enough to stop the anxious chewing of his cheek and let a corner of his mouth twitch into a semblance of a grateful smile just a tiny bit at his Dom when he handed him a huge, fluffy hoodie.

Kurt took the item in his hands and almost melted into it at the first feeling of the soft, smooth fabric underneath his fingers. The pullover was thick and heavy, deep berry in color with a fleecy inside lining and he could already imagine how gloriously it would feel when it warmed his skin. He was about to put it on when he glanced down and remembered his own clothes were not really the cleanest in the world and after being used for so long there was really no way to wash some of the stains off.

Suddenly embarrassed Kurt clutched the hoodie in his arms and chanced a glance up at Blaine who was watching him with patient eyes and a gentle crease between his eyebrows.

"Is everything okay?" Blaine asked fingers twitching like he wanted Kurt to spill his every thought just so he could appease whatever was troubling him, maybe run about the room again, and Kurt jumped a little torn out of his own thoughts.

"Yes…I was just wondering if I could…maybe take a shower…if that's okay?" he stuttered trying his luck just once to see how it went down, an embarrassed blush high on his cheekbones and Blaine smiled again nodding approvingly making the band around Kurt's chest loosen.

"Absolutely. I um…I'll get you some clean clothes. The bathroom is through there," he said as he pointed to the bathroom door and walked towards his closet, pulling out and inspecting random items before sighing in defeat and turning to Kurt. "I don't know what you'd like. Why don't you pick something out for yourself."

Kurt stared at him for a few moments completely baffled by how amazingly sweet and somehow bashful Blaine seemed to be.

There was no trace of the commanding personality they showed on TV and in the magazines. Sure he still seemed bigger than life to Kurt, the dominant vibe bright and conquering around him, but there was something so unusual about the way he fussed around making sure Kurt felt comfortable, something so endearing in the way he would unconsciously reach out every now and then to touch Kurt but ended up stepping away as if afraid of scaring him further.

It made the young sub feel a small part of the weight that was pressing down on him ease up allowing him to take deeper and steadier breaths.

Maybe, just maybe he could learn to be okay living here, with this Dom that he had never hoped of belonging to. Maybe he'll be good to him even if they never fall in love and even if Blaine ends up doing God knows what with God knows who on the side. Maybe Kurt would learn to settle for
second best to his romantic dreams and happy ever afters.

Settled into that partially comforting thought Kurt managed to let himself out of his own mind for a moment to realize that while his brain was very much awake and ready to torture him with every worst case scenario out there, his body was weary and tired.

"Thank you but…do you think I could just get something to sleep in?" he asked, his voice barely above a whisper as his resolve crumbled once more under those eager golden eyes staring at him and he lowered his own gaze back to the floor.

It would have been nice to wash away the days effects but in reality Kurt didn't know if he could bring himself to strip down to nothing, be open and vulnerable with just a door separating them, for an extended period of time with Blaine right outside. He just wanted to crawl into bed and shut himself off for a while.

"Oh…you're tired?" the Dom asked and Kurt frowned a bit, not managing to ignore the disappointment in Blaine's voice.

"Um…a little, yeah, but…I could…I could stay up a little longer…” he started, fidgeting on his feet and running a nervous hand through his hair, wincing at how messy it felt underneath his fingers.

"No…no absolutely not. You're tired and you're going to sleep. We have time to talk and get to know each other." Blaine jumped in place, rummaging through his closet one more time before pulling out a soft looking flannel pajamas in red and black and a red cotton t-shirt. "Here, these are new. I never wore them. And um…there's a new pair of underwear too."

Blaine stuck the little pile of clothing in Kurt's direction and smiled at the blush that crept onto his cheeks and heated them up, making him look even more angelic than he already did.

"Thank you," Kurt murmured quietly as he stepped forward and took the soft items in his hands his fingers accidentally catching Blaine's as he pulled the clothes towards himself.

His skin burned as if being touched fire, his knees weakening and he felt his body shivering with need to wrap himself in Blaine's arms and stay there for good. But his pride kicked in a second later and he pulled his hand back as quickly as he could clutching the sleeping garments to his chest and looking at Blaine through lowered lids.

He really was unfairly gorgeous even with his suit and shirt a little wrinkled and the curls he was hiding underneath a layer of gel escaping from their prison to curl around his hairline in small wisps that begged to be played with. Kurt felt a blush rising as his fingers twitched against the clothes he was holding and forced himself to divert his attention elsewhere. They eventually landed on bright amber eyes, the shade Kurt had never seen on anyone else before, after skimming over the dangerous territory that was Blaine's pouted mouth. He really didn't know what was happening to him. His mind and body were picking up and reacting to the visual stimulation as well as the scent and miniscule cues Blaine's body was exuding naturally and he couldn't help himself.

"Okay so, I'll leave you to it. If you need anything I'm just across the hall," Blaine's rich tenor cut into his inner turmoil and turned to leave the room when a timid voice stopped him.

"B-but I thought this w-was your room," Kurt stuttered fully back by this point and Blaine turned towards him, a look of complete tenderness etched into his face.

"It is," he said carefully and Kurt frowned.

"Then…then w-why are you going s-somewhere else to sleep?" he asked and then flinched when
Blaine took a step towards him, regretting it immediately when the soft smile on the Dom's face fell into a sad frown.

"Because you're not ready for me to be here with you while you sleep," he said as simply as he could, masking the pain that gripped his heart with another smile that Kurt felt looked different than the real one that made his eyes squint and glimmer.

"B-but I thought…" he started but this time Blaine reacted before his body could and took his hand into his own, twining their fingers together and feeling Kurt shiver from their touch.

"I know what you thought," he acknowledged sadly, holding Kurt's hand up and with a reassuring nod he kissed the top of his palm almost lingering. "But not everything you hear in the media is true."

With that he let Kurt's hand go and walked towards the door with a gentle, "Sweet dreams" and a smile that yet again, died before it reached his eyes.

Kurt felt a pang of guilt wash over him at the sight of his new Dom so distressed because of him and the sub in him almost screamed with the need to make it better. Almost torn from the inside Kurt was barely able to stop himself from running after Blaine but he couldn't control his mouth.

"Blaine?" he called after his Dom causing him to freeze and turn to look at him with eyes Kurt was sure, drove everybody crazy with just one blink.

"Yes?" Blaine answered gently and somehow the resolve broke in Kurt.

_What was he thinking, calling out like that? What could he possibly do to make Blaine feel better? And where did he come off thinking that Blaine cared for him enough to be upset about something he had said?_

_Stupid._

"Kurt?" Blaine's voice pulled him back from his own mind and he shifted on his feet again trying to think of something to get him out of this.

"I um…what t-time do I have to get up?" he asked, knowing Blaine would see right through him but still feeling like it was a good question since he knew some Dom's liked to control every miniscule detail about their sub's life.

"When you feel rested and ready. When it's comfortable for you. Kurt, I'm not a monster," Blaine sighed running a desperate hand through his hair and Kurt flinched at the pain his voice held.

"No…that's not what I…I didn't mean…I…" he started to babble hoping to find some sort of an explanation but nothing came.

"It's okay. I'll prove myself to you eventually. Sleep tight," he cut off softly and swiftly left the room leaving Kurt to whisper a soft, "You too" to thin air as he went about his night routine fearing the day ahead of him, knowing that every minute of it will be a new chance for him to mess everything up again.
Hi guys.
Here's a new chapter for you. We wanted to say thank you for the amazing comments we have already received and we hope you keep them coming our way. They mean the world.
Love
A&M

The night he had could hardly be called restful.

In fact, Blaine doubted he’d ever had such a poor nights sleep in his life… if it could even be called that. After all, there wasn’t much sleeping to speak of. He’d slunk into the guest room after leaving Kurt, forcing himself every step like he was a magnet pushing against the same pole- it kept trying to push him back to where he came from.

He did his best to ignore his instincts though.

The ones that were roaring in anger at the distance he was willingly putting between him and his newly claimed sub. They were supposed to be beginning to nurture a bond between them, but Kurt didn’t even want to acknowledge it.

It hurt him, a knife to the chest would have been more pleasant in comparison, but he wouldn’t force Kurt and so he’d closed the door behind him and walked across the hall. Stripping off his clothes, but not his anxieties, he crawled reluctantly into the unfamiliar bed and splayed out on his stomach where his pillow was forced to absorb the growls and shouts of frustration he let out into it. He would have preferred to box the excess emotion out of himself, just fists hitting unyielding leather, but screaming it out was kind of cathartic as a substitute, if more pointless.

The hours dragged in slow motion from that point onwards and Blaine was hyperaware of any tiny noise in the large house. Found himself straining his ears uselessly for any sound of his sub across the hall, skin buzzing with the need to race across, burst through the door and curl around the lithe body in his own bed. Under his sheets. In his clothes, worn or not. He groaned in agony at the thought and fought off his more physical reaction as his heating blood rushed south, having no patience to deal with it. Hell, he didn’t want to deal with it at all. There was only one person he wanted dealing with it and there was no way that was happening anytime soon.

He sighed, feeling a twinge of guilt for already objectifying his sub.

It was just so difficult when Kurt looked like… well like Kurt.
He flipped onto his back for about seventh time, throwing one of the heavy pillows off the side of the bed as he tried to get comfortable. But everything in here seemed too hot, or too cold. Hard or soft… just uncomfortable when he thought about the bed he could be sharing with the most beautiful man he’d ever laid eyes on.

It wasn’t just sexual desire that was keeping him up either. It was all these unanswered questions between them. The assumptions and the fear that was creating this void that kept them apart. Kurt truly looked at him like Blaine would actually try to hurt him and it was pure torment when what he wanted to give Kurt was the exact opposite. He just wanted to care for him. Be there. Look after him… love him.

He swallowed thickly over the thought feeling his heart pound in his chest as he stared unseeing at the ceiling.

He reran the night’s events through his minds eye.

He remembered placing Kurt down in that plush red armchair backstage and trying to do anything to get him to respond. He remembered how numb and lost Kurt looked. How crushed and heartbroken he was as he curled inwards, mumbling to himself under his breath with eyes filled with tears that wouldn’t spill just yet. The Dom remembered finding the vest Mae had mentioned in passing and Kurt had been muttering about hysterically under his breathe. He remembered, viscerally, draping the soft material around his shoulders and Kurt had looked at him… he’d looked at him for the first, but not last time, with haunted frightened eyes and Blaine wanted to sink onto his knees in despair as he begged Kurt not to be scared of him.

And then Burt Hummel had arrived. Had whisked Kurt so effortlessly into his arms and petted and cooed and soothed him and Blaine was a mixture of seething jealous envy and pained longing. The latter emotion only increasing to eclipse all else when he caught snippets of the father and sons conversation. Kurt begging to go home. Saying that he didn’t want him or want to be claimed by him.

Blaine felt like he’d been punched repeatedly in the stomach. Hit with a thousand tonnes as he listened and watched as Kurt cried his heart out all because he didn’t want Blaine. In all honesty nothing had ever hurt more than that moment and it didn’t leave, didn’t lessen, only continued to grow and fester in his chest as the moments passed.

It made him want to destroy things as the Dominant in him refused to accept Kurt’s denial. It had already chosen and claimed Kurt, so in that part of his mind there was no disputing. But it seemed like everyone else was against him including Kurt and through the haze all he saw was his father holding him back at the outskirts as much as possible. His mother reasoning with Burt but not including him in something so important. Burt himself blocking Blaine from even approaching the sub that was his.

‘Sir’ flashed through his mind suddenly, said in that high, angelic voice and Blaine had tried not to react outwardly to the address though it did things to him. Set his blood on fire and sent a rush of adrenaline coursing through his veins.

Kurt wasn’t ready.

It was clear in the hesitant, almost forced tone he used to accompany the word. It was clear in the shy closed off way he kept his body language. It was clear in the stutters and halts in speech. The constant checking and double-checking even the simplest of things to make sure Blaine wouldn’t get mad at him. Punish him. It made Blaine want to tear his own hair out, especially in that one moment… that split second where Kurt had called out to him in a voice that had seemed for the first
time like Kurt’s own. It had a subtle confidence, like Kurt hadn’t thought about what he was saying before it left his mouth for once. Blaine had turned around trying not to get his hopes up, feeling a faint tug in his chest that told him that he did anyway and then the crush of it all when they were dashed of course when Kurt retreated once more behind his walls.

The night time hours drifted by one by one and Blaine managed to doze off a few times despite his racing thoughts only to wake up forcefully soon after, eyes always lighting on the door, ears pricked for any noise of distress from Kurt’s direction. He’d always slump back down with a huge sigh when nothing but still silence greeted him and run weary hands over his face and through his hair, pulling at the still gelled strands painfully.

This feeling sorry for himself was exhausting and he felt a spark deep inside that was fighting to make itself known. He tried to isolate it, but he was forever being sucked into sadness and hopelessness. He pushed harder and suddenly felt the barely there tug he’d felt before he’d left Kurt and soft warmth settled over him and made his muscles relax into jelly.

It took a few moments, but he eventually recognised what this was.

Their bond. New and tiny as it was. Just a start, a link between them, but it was still there. Still tangible. Still something Blaine could grasp onto and say with certainty that Kurt was his in some small way. He’d felt it before when Kurt had put himself out there, maybe he’d given in to a submissive instinct? He didn’t want to hope again but he couldn’t think of what else it could be.

He turned onto his left side and tucked his hands under his head, furrowing his brow and closing his eyes as he concentrated on the feeling, letting it soothe and reassure him only partly. Because after all, bonds and claims could be broken.

Kurt was laying on his right side, curled up with his legs tucked to his chest, hands in loose fists resting against his parted mouth as he stared fixedly at the door to Blaine’s room.

He’d managed to sleep for a few hours, his body shutting down on him as soon as his head hit the pillow, but after the minimum required rest his body needed to simply function Kurt had gasped awake, disoriented and scared out of his mind as he tried to place where he was in the early hours of the following morning. The huge dark room was a yawning, foreign space around him, threatening to engulf him and he’d pulled the cover over his head and burrowed into the sheets faintly picking up a trace of Blaine’s scent on the pillow and ashamedly pressing his nose into it for comfort.

This was all so strange.

The feel of soft fabric soothing his skin instead of irritating it for once. The soft duck down pillows and comfortable mattress on the monster sized bed. Kurt had never known the like of it and instead of finding it luxurious, it kind of put him on edge.

He didn’t want to get used to this.

Didn’t want to learn to be accustomed and then have it all ripped from him when Blaine decided he was done with his little ‘experimental phase’. He shivered when he pictured the curly haired Dom, the air under the thick cover getting stifling now as he poked his head out for a fresh breathe only to
find that there was no escaping the scent that five minutes ago was so enticing.

He didn’t want to get used to that either.

Get used to Blaine and his adorably, curly hair and gorgeous, gold tinged eyes and then have him laugh and thrust him aside like he was utterly disposable. And what was so frustrating about that was that it was hard not to, because Blaine hadn’t yet laid a threatening hand on him. Hadn’t issued a threat. Hadn’t administered a punishment. Hadn’t forced himself on him. He was just so… nice.

Kurt found himself jittery, waiting for the other shoe to drop and unable to do anything to prevent it. He was faced with a choice ahead of him.

Continue to wallow and cry at the unfairness of life, or get on and make the best of it like his dad had told him. He could get along couldn’t he? He was a survivor and he could survive this for however long its shelf life was and all he had to do was guard his heart. Fortify it, something in him warned.

The best he could hope for from Blaine was that he treated him with respect at least. Understood the word no especially when it came down to more… intimate matters. He blushed in mortification feeling unease twist his stomach into knots.

Perhaps that was wishful thinking.

‘I’m not a monster’

The words sang through his mind and had him chewing at his lips almost harshly. The Dom had sounded so sad when uttering that and Kurt had rushed to dispel the notion, but in reality, a part of him really had painted him the devil. The man who ruined his life. The man who would hurt and humiliate and degrade him.

He was knocked out of his own head when he heard the faint sound of footsteps and gasped slamming his eyes shut to at least feign sleep if it was Blaine coming to check on him. His heart was thrumming wildly and he tried to keep his breathing even, but it was useless. Please don’t come in. Please don’t come in, he begged silently. He couldn’t face him yet. He just couldn’t.

He sighed audibly when a door opened and closed and the footsteps continued on and away from the door, after pausing for a moment that had Kurt feeling sick to his stomach, towards the staircase.

He lay there for a few more minutes trying to calm down when a thought struck.

What was he supposed to do now?

He assumed Blaine was heading to breakfast, but was he supposed to join him? The fact that he hadn’t gotten Kurt didn’t seem to point that way, but he couldn’t be sure. Would he be mad if he did join? Would he be mad that he didn’t?

He sat up slowly, feeling lost and anxious as he glanced around the room not really taking in any of it as his mind raced.

He had no clues as to what Blaine wanted from him and guessing seemed like a bad idea. If he got it wrong it could lead to horrible repercussions for him and so he decided to just stay there. He could always feign exhaustion right? Blaine had told him to get up when he felt rested and ready so he could technically stay here right? It wouldn’t be a lie exactly because Kurt was far from rested after all.
But what if Blaine came storming up here?

He drew his knees up to his chest, toes twitching nervously as he kept staring towards the door in indecision.

A knock on the very door had his heart stopping in his chest. He stared wide eyed at the dark mahogany when the soft rap came again making Kurt clutch the sheet under him in shaky fingers.

“Kurt?”

That soft timbre wasn’t Blaine.

“Kurt, are you up?”

The young sub couldn’t find his voice and a few moments later the door pushed inwards gently and Blaine’s father peeked his head in. He spotted him immediately, lost looking in the middle of this huge bed and must have decided something as he walked in, mussed and dressed in his pyjamas still with a dark blue robe wrapped around him, his initials embroidered into the breast pocket and slippers.

He was entirely nonthreatening and something in Kurt relaxed, if only slightly, at the sight of him.

"H-hi," he greeted, attempting a smile in the older man's direction, but even he could feel how forced and artificial it looked. He eyed the older sub as he carefully approached the bed and with a questioning tilt of the head sat gingerly on the edge of the mattress, fixing his robe around himself to keep him warm.

"Did you sleep well?" Jared asked pleasantly and Kurt tried buying more time with picking the soft fabric of his pyjamas with his thumbnail as he contemplated what to say.

He did sleep well those few hours his mind allowed him to, so saying yes wouldn't be a lie. On the other hand, the second he woke up he got caught in a whirl of fear so paralyzing he felt exhausted almost right away. However, the man in front of him eyed him with so much care and consideration that he just didn't have the heart to burden him with his own discomfort.

"Yes, thank you," he offered a simple answer, hoping that Jared didn't expect an elaborate one, but it seemed the man was quite pleased with it since he just smiled and patted his foot, lying next to him on top of the blankets.

"That's good to hear. Now, I know you won't ask but I'm sure you're wondering what I'm doing here?" He winked at Kurt and the young sub tried to cover up the curiosity out of risk of seeming rude, but the truth was he was rather confused as to why Blaine's father of all people came to his room instead of one of the Anderson Doms.

"No I… um… well…" he tried to answer in the most polite manner, but he got himself all tangled up and Jared chuckled at how cute and young he looked like that; sleep flushed and confused.

"It's okay, son. No need to explain. There's nothing wrong with being curious." Jared smiled kindly and looked around the room trying to find traces of his son, but realized pretty soon he hadn’t slept there last night. "Anyway, the reason I came here is because I remember my first morning after my claiming. I was in this new house, with all these unfamiliar people and I had zero idea what was expected of me. I ended up gracefully locking myself into Dana's bathroom for four hours having a panic attack. She's said there'll come the day we'll all laugh at it. For her that day came about three hours after they got me out. I still don't find it particularly funny."
Kurt surprised himself by letting out a soft chuckle and chancing a look over at the kind man he realized he felt pretty comfortable around him despite his situation and knowing the man less than a day. There was just something about him that made him feel lighter than he actually was in that moment.

"How did you get used to it?" he dared to ask, desperate to know how that young, confused sub went from panicking hard enough to lock himself away, to this confident, self affirmed sub who seemed to love his life and his family.

Jared eyed him for a minute knowing full well what he was asking.

How did he get used to the fact that he was away from everything and everyone he knew, that he belonged to an unfamiliar person, that he had no idea what to do or what that other person wanted him to do.

"There's no universal formula or secret recipe. The best advice I can give you is to not think too far ahead. Just take one moment at a time, day by day. And soon, you'll find yourself doing it by instinct. It's a good feeling," Jared said and Kurt mulled it over in his head for a second.

It felt like it could be nice. Relaxing. Knowing someone, no not someone, Blaine, so well that he could just exist next to him without the need to rethink every single move he made. Maybe if he tried he could get there someday? Maybe not today, or tomorrow, or even in a year’s time... but someday?

If he didn’t get dropped before that point of course, a voice sniped out of the dark recesses of his tired mind.

"So what's my first moment?" he asked shyly, ignoring the voice, glancing up at the older sub who grinned at him happily.

"Breakfast!" he exclaimed and Kurt lifted an eyebrow up in question.

"I… I'm not dressed… I mean, I have nothing but what I had yesterday," he tried to weasel his way out, but Jared knew all the tricks a sub could use.

"Saturdays are pyjama days. Even Dana rolls around in hers, though she accessorizes so I'm not convinced that counts." He threw an exasperated look at Kurt who rewarded him with a genuine smile, no matter how small, that meant the world to Jared.

Jared smiled back, sat up and stuck his hand out.

"Come on, I'm kind of starving," he said as he pulled Kurt out of the room, down the stairs and towards the sound of hushed voices and cutlery clinks.

Blaine gave up on the idea of sleep at the break of dawn, unable to get any real rest and finally decided to get up and make breakfast for his family himself that morning.

As Saturdays were traditionally pyjama days in the Anderson household he got located a pair of sweats and a plain white top from the guest room drawers that his mother insisted on having stocked,
because the idea of empty drawers that were made for clothes offended her clothing loving sensibilities. Getting ready for the day in the guest bathroom and washing away yesterday’s gel and worries Blaine haphazardly threw a robe over his sleeping attire before walking out of his room.

Padding across the hallway he had to literally fight with his own body to stop himself from peeking into Kurt's room to take just one look at his angelic face; these few hours away from him seemed so painfully long and lonely, which was insane seeing as he didn’t even know he existed a few hours ago.

Instead, knowing it could scare the sub, Blaine settled for trailing soft fingertips over his bedroom door pretending to caress the soft skin of his sub. Satisfying a tiny portion of his craving, he walked downstairs to the kitchen and bustled around toasting bread and scrambling eggs. He wasn’t big on cooking as a general rule, but making breakfast was always something he liked and felt like it soothed his nerves.

"Nervous?" came a soft voice from behind him and he jumped up, startled at the sudden disturbance of his inner turmoil. He turned around to see his mom, dressed in her pink and black pyjamas with a matching pair of slippers and a pink hair band, standing next to him pointing at the stove. "You only cook when you're nervous."

He looked at her, pain evident in his eyes and his inner struggle taking place in the nervous flicks of his fingers, the gentle downwards curl of his lips and a deep crease between his eyebrows.

"Mom…" He choked back the sob sitting in the back of his throat and held her gaze long enough to make her heart break at the sight of him, so small and vulnerable. “Have I messed up so badly?"

The thoughts and feelings that had been swirling in his mind so incessantly rose up to take him at the sight of his mothers concerned face, make him falter and question. It was such a foreign occurrence for him he wasn’t quite sure how to handle it and it almost unmanned him as he tried to express it.
She could see the silent plea in his eyes to make it better, to reassure him that he had the right to do what he had done if it felt right to him. Dana trusted her son more than anyone else in the world, apart, maybe, for her husband and eldest son. And she tried, all her life to receive the same trust from him by always being honest with him.

"Honey, I'm not gonna lie. Did you make a mess? Yes, you did. Will it be hard to fight the evil tongues and the press? Yes. But do I think you made the wrong choice? No… absolutely not. He's stunning, and exactly what you need," she said, relieved to see the emergence of that gorgeous smile that blossomed on his face after her words, but to her surprise it was quickly replaced by a deep frown.

"He hates me!" he stated petulantly, flipping the eggs in the pan viciously as if they were somehow responsible for all the misery in his life.

"He doesn't hate you, Blaine. He's scared, and confused. But he'll come around, with your help. And mine and dad's of course." She smiled at him gently when he sighed and thanked her, pecking his cheek and walking through the archway with the toast and cutlery on a tray towards the dining room to set the table.

"Speaking of dad, where is he?" Blaine asked, bringing the eggs over to the table behind her and setting them down.

"He's having a little chat with Kurt before he brings him down for breakfast," she informed him calmly as she set the places and Blaine felt a rush of worry hit him from the inside as he absently filled glasses from the pitcher of orange juice he’d placed on the table already.

"What? Why?"

"Because he knows what it feels like to be claimed and uprooted from everything you knew. He can offer some perspective. Now settle down and eat." She eyed him sternly and he pouted at her
command, sitting down and piling food on his plate, all the while glaring at the door as if trying to force them to bring Kurt down faster.

“Have you called Cooper?” Dana asked after the silence stretched too long for her taste and Blaine nodded lightly.

“Yeah I rang him last night before bed. He said he always knew I was an attention whore and that this doesn’t surprise him at all. And then he hung up. I don’t know where you went wrong with him,” he tried to ease the both of their moods by joking and his mom punched him in the arm playfully both as a thank you and a, ‘stop talking about your brother like that’, warning.

Finally, after ten excruciating minutes, his dad walked in, Kurt trailing behind him carefully and whispering a soft, “Good morning,” before sitting down at the table opposite him.

If he was confused, or scared, or worried, he never showed it as he took a tiny bit of toast and butter and started munching on it, eyes downcast and shoulders hunched as he stared in front of himself, trying to present himself as calm and collected as they ate in silence for an excruciating amount of time.

Blaine nearly groaned when his mother stood up and looked at his father sweetly, using her Dom voice to invite him to accompany her to a share holder's meeting. Blaine looked to her incredulously. She didn't have a meeting. She wasn't even a share holder. She was officially ridiculous.

But he knew why she did it and he couldn't help but smile a little in her direction when she gave him an encouraging nod and a wink before taking Jared's hand and walking out of the room, Jared shaking his head softly as he followed her, the morning’s paper under his arm and a spare bit of toast in his free hand.

Blaine turned his head to Kurt who went practically catatonic the minute the two of them found themselves alone and for the millionth time he wanted to scream in agony.

He had claimed a sub over twelve hours ago and he still hadn't held him in his arms properly, he’d slept so far away from him he could've been on another planet and those otherworldly eyes glanced at him only three pathetic times over the table, always skittering away, and he was losing his mind.

He wanted him close, on his lap, in his arms, curled around him and naked and happy and relaxed and right now the young man in front of him was anything but and Blaine felt so lost. Drowning in a pool of indecision he had never experienced before. He was a confident Dom, always had been, but Kurt had this power to make him fall completely undone with just a look.

He lowered his toast back onto his plate feeling his appetite go with his nervousness and took his time to really look at the sub in front of him, heartbroken when he saw that same fear and weariness from last night in every move he made.

There was a tiny piece of toast on his plate with a dot of butter on it and half a cup of tea he’d been sipping on since he’d sat down. Thinking back he couldn't recall Kurt eating anything else and he frowned because the boy skipped dinner last night, knowing somehow instinctively that he hadn’t touched the meal he’d brought up last night and as far as he knew he didn't have anything to eat at the hotel in all the chaos.

Watching him poke at his breakfast, lips tight and fingers shaking, his thin frame curled in as if he were expecting an attack made Blaine's blood boil, fingers clenching at the table edge. And for a second, he felt for the first time, truly scared of himself because he’d never before felt this protective
over someone, he'd never had the insistent want to turn over the world for just one smile.

Kurt woke up every Dominant trait Blaine possessed just by sitting there. It was maddening.

"Aren't you hungry?" he finally broke the silence and Kurt startled a bit, not expecting a sound other than knives scraping the toast and glass cups clinking against the table.

He looked at his own plate frowning at the question because he was eating. There was toast on his plate and it had butter on it which made Kurt quite happy when he saw it since they didn't see much of that in Lima. He also had tea with sugar in his cup and when he tasted it first he could swear there was a hint of cinnamon in it and he felt like he was being treated to a feast. His palette didn’t know what to do with itself and it was feat not to moan over every sip.

Blaine’s question made no sense to him.

"I… I am… why?" he breathed out, pointing to his plate in confusion. Every interaction with Blaine felt like playing a game he didn’t know the rules to.

"You just had half a cup of tea and one piece of toast so I thought you weren't hungry," Blaine said with a shrug, offering his explanation awkwardly.

Kurt stared at him for a moment, not knowing what he meant or what his angle was before his eyes took in the state of Blaine's plate with three pieces of toast loaded with strawberry jam, a scoop of scrambled eggs, a few pieces of bacon and a cup of coffee next to a tall glass of orange juice.

Blaine thought his own breakfast was small and Kurt realized, once again, how different their worlds really were, how different their perceptions on what was 'a lot' really were.

He felt a blush settling high on his cheeks even though he knew there was nothing about his life in Lima he should be ashamed of. His parents were honest, hard working people and they provided for their family the best they could without crossing the line to the "dark side" to make more money and getting themselves in trouble. And if being honest came with a price of seeing sugar in his tea as a luxury, Kurt was more than willing to pay that price.

And Blaine needed to understand that.

"Oh… well, um… this is… this is what I'm used to… it's enough," he said and met his Dom's gaze steadily for the first time, as if Blaine questioning his habits was an attack on his life and he felt the need to defend it even though, somewhere deep down, he knew that's not why Blaine asked. It was always in the back of his mind however. The fear and suspicion that Blaine was just trying to get him to slip up somehow. Prove he wasn’t good enough.

"Are you sure? It's not really that much," Blaine tried again, not quite able to believe that those few bites he took were enough of a breakfast for a… something year old boy. God, it was really dawning on him now just how crazy he had been last night, he didn't even know how old he was!

They needed to talk and they needed to do it fast.

Kurt eyed his plate one more time, contemplating how to answer his Dom without prompting even more questions he didn't have the answer to. Rationally he knew Blaine wasn't the one to blame for the poverty he lived in, but he couldn't help but feel a sting of bitterness at how easily Blaine left his food half eaten on his plate while people in Lima felt blessed if they earned enough money to buy a few strips of bacon every few months.

"It's more than I had back home, so I'm good," he announced and it must have been the firmness in
his voice that made Blaine give a small nod even through the deep frown on his brow and his lips pressed thin with the effort to stop himself from going on with their current topic.

If what Kurt had on his plate now was more than he had at home then it was no wonder he was so thin. That amount of food wasn't enough for a toddler let alone a grown person, and right there Blaine swore to himself that keeping Kurt healthy would be one of his first "tasks" as his Dom should their impending conversation go well.

And Blaine hoped with everything he was it would.

He found Kurt ridiculously attractive right now, thin or not. But he could only imagine what he’d be like when there was more of him. When he was glowing with health? Stunning probably didn’t even come close. This sub was an earth bound angel; there were no doubts in his mind.

He snapped himself back forcefully to the present.

"Okay, just, feel free to either tell me or just take it yourself if you need anything at all, okay? I want you to be comfortable living here," he assured softly.

Kurt stared at him for a long moment after that, his head cocked to the side adorably and eyes flicking over the features of Blaine's face as if looking for a reason not to trust his words. It stung of course, but Blaine held firm under the scrutiny hoping to god Kurt would find something there to put him at ease.

Why was Blaine trying so hard to make himself look like he cared? To make their bond look real when it wasn't?

It confused Kurt so much that his mind span and he lost control of his own mouth for a moment causing him to say something he’d thought a million times over but never would speak aloud if he was in his right mind.

"Why are you being so nice?"

As soon as those words fell from his lips he clapped a hand over his mouth and his eyes widened in terror as he stared at Blaine, body trembling and tears pooling, threatening to fall again. "I… I'm s-sorry, I didn't m-mean…"

He tried desperately to rectify the slip, panic rising to choke the words in his throat, but Blaine just held his hands up, despair clearly written all over his face.

"You did mean it-" he started, but a soft sob cut him off.

"Sir, I didn't… I'm sorry…" Kurt cried out, a million horrible scenarios of punishments flashing through his brain and Blaine stood up, slowly so as to not scare him, and walked around the long table to where he was sitting, crouching down in front of him and with a gentle warning in his eyes prying his hand away from his lips again.

"It's Blaine. And you don't need to be sorry. I won't lie. It hurts to know that you consider me such a vile person, but I do understand," he murmured standing up and offering his hand to Kurt knowing full well that he would most likely be rejected again and bracing himself internally for it. "Let's sit in the family room and talk. I think we have a lot to discuss."

For the first time he laced the suggestion with just a hint of commanding, too little for Kurt's mind to catch on to him, but enough for his body to accept it with gratitude and relax just a tiny bit, allowing Kurt to look up and link their hands hesitantly, soft skin brushing fleetingly at first against his, feather
light. Tapered fingers curled around his palm and Blaine returned the soft pressure with a firmer one, unable to help himself as his heart raced as he looked down at the contrast of their skin tones.

Kurt was willingly touching him and it was intoxicating.

They walked through to the family room, Blaine leading him gently by the hand and sitting them on the plush sofa. Keeping himself bodily at bay Blaine sat as far away from Kurt as he could manage while still holding his hand, desperate for even the tiniest of contacts if he couldn’t actually get as close as he was dying to, physically unable to give it up as he watched the sub fight with himself on the inside contemplating what to do.

To say Kurt was a mess would be an understatement.

He had managed to hurt Blaine again even though he didn’t mean to and now Blaine wanted them to talk. It didn’t help his frayed nerves.

*Maybe he'd messed up enough to be sent home?*

A small tinge of hope woke up inside of him, but he almost gasped in shock when it was squashed down by regret so heavy it almost glued him to his place. How was that possible? *No, no, no,* he denied firmly, almost shaking his head as he trembled. He swallowed past the lump of ice cold fear lodged in his windpipe. Was it possible? Would he…

Would he actually be sorry if Blaine decided he didn’t want him after all?

Could it be that he'd come to peace with belonging to him so quickly he already dreaded the thought
of going home?

No.

That was just his body talking, ridden by hormones and desperate need, Kurt argued with himself and he wasn’t going to turn into one of those desperate subs he so disdained. He wasn’t going to throw away every principal because of money and a too handsome face accompanied with too strong Dominant pheromones.

His heart knew better and his mind knew better.

If Blaine decided to send him home he’d be okay with that.

"I'm not sending you home," an almost amused voice that was just a little strained with something he couldn’t quite place snapped him from his mind and he gaped at Blaine stupidly, wondering if his Dom was able to read minds.

"Wh… how?" he blinked at him and Blaine smiled lightly.

"You argued with yourself out loud. I didn't get much of it but that last thing came out a bit louder," he explained and Kurt blushed in shame.

"Oh…” he said cleverly and Blaine chuckled next to him, but his laugh held a heavy note in it.

"Kurt… we have a lot to talk about, but first thing's first. I want you to know, now and forever, that you can say anything you want to me. No matter how hurt, or angry I get your wellbeing will always be my top priority and you will never, ever be punished for speaking your mind. Okay?" he asked seriously and Kurt stared at him dumbstruck and confused.

Was that possible? He didn’t want to let himself hope but Blaine seemed so… honest. But with every sentence out of his mouth he was contradicting a thousand fears and conclusions Kurt had drawn up for the man. He sat in shock trying to assimilate.

Was that how it really worked?

He could speak his mind without fear of consequences like an equal. It seemed too much but if Blaine said so then, maybe? He couldn’t find a reason why he would lie unless he wanted to purposely trick Kurt into punishments.

The thought didn’t exactly sit right anymore and wasn’t that astonishing.

"Okay…” he whispered a little dazed, at last realizing there was nothing else he could say and realizing it was the right choice when Blaine beamed at him.

Kurt stared stupidly at him blinded by the radiance of it.

"Good. Now… first of all I'd like to know more about you and I'd like you to know more about me so how about you tell me a few things about yourself?" he asked eagerly scooting a little further towards him and squeezing the hand Kurt hadn’t realised was still cupped over his, almost burning now he focused on the area their skin met. He blushed as he looked down at them, then frowned as a thought struck; shouldn't they be discussing… sex stuff and… stuff.

He mentally hit himself, but he couldn’t help it. He’d never been comfortable with… that. Thinking or doing.
"Kurt?" Blaine prompted gently and Kurt snapped his eyes back up.

"Sorry… you just s-surprised me with that… I don't… I don't really know what to say," he stammered and Blaine smiled a bit trailing his fingers in tiny patterns over and around Kurt’s more prominent wrist bone.

"Just the basics about who you are, your family, friends, hobbies… the usual, first date stuff," he joked and despite himself Kurt bit his lip and a small laugh made it past filling the air and rendering Blaine speechless.

"This is a first date?" he asked shyly and Blaine shrugged feeling the fingers under his palm twitching nervously.

"Sure, why not? I mean I wanna take you out on a real date soon, but for now, this will do." He winked laying it on full tilt and Kurt blushed. Actually blushed this perfect shade of pink that climbed high on those lovely cheekbones because of him and Blaine felt like singing from the rooftops.

"You don't have to do that," his sub whispered ducking his head self consciously, long eyelashes casting shadows over perfect skin.

Blaine shifted closer still leaning forwards to try and recapture Kurt’s gaze."I want to. Now, tell me… who is Kurt Hummel?" he asked in a cheeky voice and Kurt felt a little piece of him come back as he lifted his head and rolled his eyes at his Dom.

Blaine was a little taken aback before sheer relief and pleasure flooded him. This is what he wanted to see. Kurt unabashed. A reaction that wasn’t fuelled by fear, but was simply Kurt. And so what if his little sub had a little bit of a diva in him? He loved that. It pointed to him having ambition and goals and a sassiness that Blaine couldn’t wait to witness knowing it would be sexy as hell.

With every passing moment Blaine was falling further and further under Kurt’s spell and the sub had no idea he was doing anything at all.

"He… he’s an eighteen year old sub from Lima, Ohio, he lives with his dad and stepmom, his stepbrother recently moved out to live with his Dom… um… my best friends are Jeff and Mercedes…” he trailed off not really knowing what to say. How did you sum up your life to someone?

It's not like he lived an overly exciting life anyway.

"Do you have any hobbies? Something you like to do in your free time?" Blaine prompted, fascinated by the sound of his voice without the timid stutter and shyness.

He was mesmerizing.

"Reading… and clothes I guess," he shrugged, eyes darting down to the plain cotton tee Blaine had pulled on and the pair of grey sweats against his will.

"Clothes?" Blaine quirked an eyebrow at him.

"I like fashion. Designing and making the clothes if I manage to get some fabric," Kurt answered truthfully offering up a tiny part of himself and Blaine tried lightening the mood even more by gaping at him.

"You've been silently judging my outfit all this time haven’t you?" And his wounded tone made Kurt
giggle against his will once again. Blaine was truly charming once he got started and Kurt was having a hard time staying objective about this.

"Maybe…" he said, a playful tone creeping into his voice without his permission.

"Sneaky little thing aren't we? I'll have to watch what I wear from now on," he chuckled glancing down at his plain attire before looking up again. "What do your parents do?"

Kurt hit him with a, "Really?" stare because seriously, he was from Lima… his parents, along with everyone else in that town, were professionally unemployed.

"It's Lima. Not a lot of options. My dad is a handy man. He goes around town and fixes stuff for people, and Carole, my stepmom is a nurse, when the hospital can afford to have one." He shrugged, sounding pretty much resigned and Blaine felt chills running down his spine.

Was it really that bad?

Could it really be that he was so wrapped in his cosy little bubble that he had no idea people had no jobs and no money or food? He felt like kicking his own ass. He made a mental note to look into that and have a discussion with his mother, scared of bringing it up now when they were talking so nicely and Kurt was actually relaxed in his presence for once. No tense shoulders, no curled in posture, he was simply elegant lines.

"Okay… what were your plans for the future?" he asked at last and flinched at Kurt's cynical smile.

"Again it's, Lima. People don't have plans there. You have crazy dreams to keep you warm at night and a reality to wake up to. My plan was to finish high school without being forced into something I didn't want and then spend the rest of my life trying to help my family survive. That's it," he said bitterly and Blaine regretted asking.

‘…without being forced into something I didn't want…’

It made him go cold.

But he refused to see it as the same thing. It wasn’t the same thing. Blaine had claimed Kurt properly and had more than honourable intentions. He wasn’t a Dom looking for a quick fix and a fuck.

Kurt didn’t think that… did he?

There was no accusation in it, but Blaine felt paranoid. Pushing it aside he tried to concentrate.

"Okay, I get that. What about now?" he asked staring those eyes dead on and Kurt's anger deflated into confusion.

"What do you mean?" he frowned, brow drawing low and Blaine shrugged lightly.

"Well, you live here, with me and as stuck up as I might sound… you have options now. So is there something you’d want to do?” he asked fighting to keep his tone careful and not stress the first bit too strongly.

"You'd let me work?" Kurt gasped and Blaine felt another stab pierce his stomach at the words.

He stood up abruptly, feeling a wave of nervous energy, anger and hurt wash over him as he paced in front of the couch where Kurt now cuddled closer to the edge ready to bolt, obviously disturbed by his sudden outburst.
"What exactly did you hear about me, and my family to make you ask that, to make you hate us so much?" he asked in a broken desperate voice that cracked and Kurt's heart broke because he knew he'd caused him pain again. The sub in him was whining, pressuring him to do something to fix it fast, but Kurt had to take a moment.

Hate?

Did he hate Blaine?

Despite everything… no, he didn’t. He may not trust this man completely, but he had given him no reason to hate him. He hadn’t done anything any other unbonded Dom hadn’t done to an unbonded sub before and really, Kurt could tell Blaine was trying. He was trying so hard, laying himself so open it had taken Kurt aback. Made him question every preconceived idea he had about Blaine.

"No… Blaine, no… I don’t… god, I don't hate you." He raked a hand through his hair and realized that being honest and placing himself on the line like Blaine had done countless times already was the only way to mend what he had broken. "I'm just…” he closed his eyes and took a deep breathe. "I'm scared."

Blaine stared at him for a few long moments before breaking down and stalking over to sit next to him again, only closer than ever. Close enough that Kurt could count every fleck of gold in his eyes and could feel the heat radiating from him.

"Why are you so scared?" he whispered, silently praying for Kurt to answer him honestly so he could start making him believe something else; the truth for a change.

Kurt thought about what to say for a while, trying to put the pieces together in his head in order to figure out how to explain himself, but they were all misshapen and jagged; full of holes and missing parts. He thought back to his parents and their bond. The root of everything. He remembered how perfect Burt and Elizabeth were together. How in love… and then he thought about his time at McKinley. The subs and Doms throwing themselves around. The hopelessness and desperation that clung to all of them.

"Where I come from, people can't afford to bond properly. And… I think that they became the way they are as a protective mechanism. It's easier to believe you don't want something than to want it and know you'll never have it. They s-sleep around and look for a hormonal fix wherever they can get it, and the few who decide to be monogamous are ridiculed and taunted because of it." He paused to push the insults that rose out of his head. "Hearing about the way rich people live and how they treat their bonds only make them more determined to live the way they live. They figure if people with permanent bonds can keep subs on the side and do whatever they want to them, then they should be able to do the same thing to their temporary ones," Kurt explained in a rushed voice, not quite sure he was making sense.

And judging by Blaine's confused look he wasn't.

"I do understand that but what does it have to do with you being scared now?" he asked and Kurt lowered his head, feeling embarrassed that Blaine would find out just how inexperienced he was. Maybe he’d find him inadequate as a sub? The thought didn’t sit right all of a sudden and Kurt didn’t want to think on why.

"I'm one of those few people who… who's never done… a-any of it w-with someone, because I believed in… love I guess, or something equally romantic. I knew I'd never have that, but I was okay because without the prospect of a formal claim they can't force me to be their sub. But now…” he trailed off looking away and sighing deeply and Blaine looked at him with all the patience he could
"Now, what?" he asked gently.

"Now you claimed me and I'm scared of being treated exactly the way I never wanted to be. And I can't say no to you," he whispered and Blaine felt a single tear finally break past his iron control and slip down his cheek.

"How do you think I'll treat you?" he asked thickly and Kurt shrugged one shoulder timidly, picking at his nails nervously.

"You won't let me see my family and friends," he started and Blaine shook his head.

"I wouldn't dream of keeping you away from them."

"I won't go to school anymore."

"Dalton is only five minutes away from my home and they have college classes there if you want a university degree in something."

"Will I be allowed to work?"

"Whatever and wherever you want."

"Will you punish me?" he asked in a broken voice and Blaine felt a tug in his heart at his words, so small and scared, but he had to be honest.

"I probably will at some point. But never before discussing it with you, so you'd know why you're being punished, never to hurt you or humiliate you and never for something we didn't previously establish as a rule. Kurt, you aren't my slave, and I didn't claim you to satisfy my need to torture someone," he said, his voice pleading and sad but he couldn't regret the turn of the conversation really. Not when they were finally getting the heart of the problem.

"Why did you?" Kurt asked, lifting his eyes up in question.

"Why did I claim you?" he repeated incredulously.

"I thought you didn't want to bond. That's what it said in-"

"The newspapers," Blaine finished for him, his tone exasperated and laced with silent fury and he ran a harsh hand through his still damp curls. "I know. I never bonded because I never wanted any of the subs they threw my way. It always felt like they were mass producing them somewhere and making them all exactly the same. Trained to do ridiculous things that are completely pointless, trained to turn everything you say into an innuendo supposedly to make you think they're attractive and sexy. I hate it. And then you came along and I just..." He stopped and looked deep into his subs eyes, sincerity burning in his own. "Kurt, you're so beautiful and so unique and there's something about your submissiveness that feels so natural and free and when I saw you there and felt the pull towards you... I couldn't let you go. I'm sorry I scared you, and I'm sorry if you hate being claimed and being here and me, but please just... just give me a chance. Just a few weeks and... and if by that time you still want to go then I'll... I'll let you," he finished with a choked swallow, not really sure what possessed him to promise something like that.

Something that was hypothetically possible, but never spoken of or done before.

The Dominant in him screamed.
NO! Mine. Claimed. My sub.

He tried desperately to push it back hoping his struggle wasn’t so obvious as to scare Kurt further with the sheer depth and intensity of what he felt for him. But Kurt was sitting there, looking so devastatingly gorgeous, but still wary of him and he knew that he’d never be able to live with those eyes so sad because of him.

"H-How?" Kurt asked in a shocked whisper because he was claimed. He couldn't go home at this early stage of the Bonding unless somebody proved there was something wrong with how Blaine was treating him.

"You know that to complete the second step of our bonding, you need to ask for something right?" Blaine asked almost reluctantly, but forcing the words out and Kurt nodded knowing the three types of things he was allowed to request from his Dom in order to see if he could provide for him.

"I know," he said slowly trying to guess where this was going.

"Well… you can ask for me to promise to let you go if you're not comfortable with me after, say a month?" Blaine suggested and there was something clawing at his heart as he spoke those words, bleeding inside of him as he forced them out, just to make his beautiful sub see how much he wanted to make him happy.

Don’t leave me. Please.

Kurt gasped in shock, feeling his mind spin and his fingers shake.

He could go home after a month, go back to his family and friends and his old job and live the way he was used to living. He could do it because Blaine said he could and…

And then his heart froze for a second because this man in front of him, this Dom who’s every step was followed and commented on, he was willing to allow the press and the rest of the world to rip him apart just to make sure he was happy.

"You really mean that?" Kurt asked like some great epiphany was dawning on him and Blaine felt his hands shake.

He didn't want to lose him.

"Yes… I do," he said swallowing around a lump in his throat, but meaning it despite the devastation he knew it would cause him.

"And the rest of the things you said?" Kurt pushed some more because everything felt surreal to him at that moment.

"What things?" Blaine asked not really sure what he was referring to.

"About not… w-wanting other subs and me being…w-what you said…" He couldn't bring himself to repeat what Blaine had said about him. His cheeks coloured and he trembled, electricity chasing down his spine when he felt gentle fingers under his chin lifting his head up to meet warm golden eyes.

"I meant every word I said. If you'll have me…I'll never want another sub, Kurt," he said softly and Kurt wanted to trust him so badly his whole body shook with the desire.

He was his Dom, his balance.
Why couldn’t he relax and just let him take care of him instead of letting his fears get the best of him? But he did it anyway, thinking of how inexperienced he was and how uneducated he let himself be with his decision not to take the sex ed classes because he felt they made the act of physical bonding sound filthy and cheap.

He didn’t know how to please a Dom, or how to make him interested in being with him like that. He didn’t know the higher society rules or social niceties. He didn’t want Blaine making a commitment that would leave him unsatisfied and regretful that he claimed him over all the other more qualified, willing subs.

God! When had this turned into thinking like this? Had he really been so foolish as to let his guard down after all? Let this beautiful Dom sneak his way past his defences? He thought about it and decided that no. He hadn’t snuck anywhere. Blaine was utterly disarming and had been up front with everything, Kurt was the one that had let him in and now he was taking hold as he feared he would. Nestling deep into a place Kurt felt he could never fully pull out anymore.

The thought terrified him and he whimpered in his throat audibly.

"What if…w-what if I don't know how to…um…y'know…" he asked blushing fire red and looking away in shame, feeling his skin tingle when he heard Blaine chuckling lightly.

"God, you worry about everything don't you?" he asked gently and Kurt gave him a scared nod staring at his feet as if they were the most interesting pieces of art ever.

Blaine eyed him for a moment, preparing to do something for the first time and hoping he didn't scare him. Taking a deep breath he allowed the dam he placed in front of his dominant hormones to fall as he let the commanding tone weave into his voice, giving his sub the first order.

"Kurt, look at me," he growled lightly and Kurt felt his body snap to attention at the rough sound that could so easily become an addiction. Compliance weaved into him on a cellular level and obedience began to flood out of his pores and Kurt gasped at the feeling, never having experienced something so intensely intimate. His stomach took flight with the thrum of his heart as Kurt fought against that pleasing feeling in his body, but there was no helping his reaction. It wasn’t even a choice at this point as his mind dazed over in a cloud of submission. He turned his eyes up and met Blaine's look timidly, not knowing what prompted this shift in his Dom's mood but the sub in him positively enraptured by it.

"Whatever you're insecure or worried about, just let it go. I don't expect anything from you. If you feel like you're ready to try… that with me, or you decide to stay with me and we reach that step in our bonding I want you to know that whatever you do will be good enough for me. As long as you're comfortable," Blaine told him smoother now, letting the dominance bleed out of his voice and grabbing hold of Kurt’s hand and doing his best to keep his stupid, traitorous body at bay.

Damn, it turned him on so much. How innocent he was, how natural it came and how untrained and raw his submissiveness was. Blaine just knew it would make Kurt oh so very responsive when they got to that step in their relationship. How he would probably gasp and shake and whine and arch to everything he did to him because of that wonderful lack of experience. The Dom in Blaine howled in approval at that. Kurt was utterly pure. Untouched in body and mind and that Blaine got to teach him? Got to be his first everything? And, fuck, how deep his first subspace will be when he finally lets Blaine take him there? He tried not to pant, tried to force down the erection that was threatening to tent the front of his sweats, feeling overheated and worked up by only the thought.

Kurt shuddered with the force of Blaine's words, not quite able to believe he was so amazing to him. It felt like a dream. Unreal and hazy. It was like every word he said made Kurt's fears want to
evaporate from his body and for the first time since he was claimed he felt a thread of what he was sure those subs in the romantic stories he liked so much felt.

Like he never wanted to leave.

He shook himself mentally knowing he was getting caught up in the emotion and the compliments no one had ever paid him before. No one had wanted to call Kurt his properly. No one had ever told him was beautiful except from his mother before she died. He was so confused right now and there was just so much he needed to take in. Information he needed to assess and opinions and perceptions he needed to re-evaluate as well as his jumbled mess of emotions.

"What you said about my Gift?" he started quietly and felt the moment Blaine stiffened next to him.

"I meant it… if you're not happy here after a month I promise I'll…. I'll let you go if that’s what you want," Blaine finished sounding like it took everything out of him to say it again.

"I…. can I think about it?" Kurt asked and Blaine sighed out shakily feeling like this was just a suspense of a sentence, but relieved at the same time because Kurt was at least giving them a chance. Hope blossomed in his chest. Before this conversation he was sure Kurt would have jumped at the offer with both hands, but a sort of tentative truce and understanding had been reached here and Blaine was determined to win Kurt over if it was last thing he did.

"You can take all the time you need," he assured. Silently he added, but you’ll want to stay with me, Kurt. I promise.

Kurt eyed him for a moment, as if trying to convince himself to question something more, to find something that would make him hate the Dom because the warm feeling creeping up his spine and making him tremble was not something he was ready to let take over him so quickly. He was sinking fast however, quicksand under his feet and all the struggling seemed to be making it worse; made him sink faster and deeper.

It was terrifying.

Blaine was so close, so strong and caring next to him and Kurt found himself wanting to let go of his fear and trust him, just for a while...just to see what it felt like to really belong to someone, to be good enough for someone to want you like that. Such traitorous thoughts, but the submissive in him spurred them on, the mark on his neck tingling as Blaine edged closer, testing the limits of their new found truce.

He allowed Blaine to tentatively wrap an arm around his shoulders and another around his waist, always slow, always careful with him and then he was being pulled closer. Kurt hitched a breathe knowing that the last time he had been this close to Blaine the Dom had lips at his neck branding words of ownership into his skin. He closed his eyes as a shiver travelled the length of his spine and let his body loosen, let himself give into it just this once. Blaine snuggled him into his side gently and felt a warm palm coaxing his face into the Dom’s neck to breathe him in and help him relax. Kurt got one lungful and felt himself pressing closer instinctually, practically crawling into Blaine’s lap as it assaulted his senses.

Blaine felt shivers race through him at the feeling of his timid, but oh so painfully beautiful and tempting sub curl up into him like that; like he trusted him, like he wanted him back.

He was perfectly aware of the fact that it would take time and patience and gentleness to get Kurt to the place where he, himself, already was, but he was willing to do his best and show the young sub that he truly belonged with him. He was determined to start making him comfortable and happy as
soon as possible so he bit his lip as he considered his options, trying to ignore the affect Kurt was having on him.

*Focus, Blaine,* he scolded himself as the subs nose brushed teasingly, unknowingly, over his pounding pulse point.

*What would make Kurt happy? What would he like to do? What would he like to have?* He frowned deep in thought, glancing down at his sub who was resting, peaceful for the first time, in his arms.

His eyes fell on the soft fabric of his pyjamas...

*Clothes!*

Kurt liked clothes, so maybe he'd feel better if he had his clothes with him? And his clothes were still in Lima where his father lived so going there to pick them up would be the perfect solution since Kurt would get to see his family and get some of his things to make himself feel more at home at the Anderson house at the same time.

"We should get dressed," Blaine started, trying to find a way to make his suggestion without looking like he was trying to buy Kurt's affection in any way. He wanted to show Kurt he was genuine and yes, he wanted to spoil him rotten of course, shower him in gifts, but this was about building trust. He wanted to show Kurt he was true to his word. That he didn't want to steal Kurt away from his family and mistreat him.

Kurt pulled away slightly and Blaine arched his neck back to see his sub frown suddenly, picking at his pyjama pants with an awkward hunch of his shoulders and a quiet mumble that Blaine didn't understand one word of, but it sounded so adorable he had to fight his urge to chuckle at the cutie in front of him.

"I didn't understand a word of what you just said. Do you mind repeating it?" he asked in a gently teasing tone and Kurt glared at him weakly before lowering his eyes onto the palms tightly clasped on his lap.

"I don't have any of my clothes here... do you um... do you think it'd be okay if I washed the clothes I had on last night?" he asked feeling a faint blush colouring his cheeks and he chanced a glance up to find Blaine smiling at him softly.

"I actually had a better idea," Blaine broached with a smile and Kurt cocked his head to the side in silent question wondering what he was talking about.

"Um... okay... what is it?" he asked and Blaine stood up, pulling Kurt by the hand towards the hall that held the stairs leading to the second floor.

"How about we both get dressed and head out to Lima to get some of your things and spend some time with your family?" he asked, faking nonchalance as his heart hammered in his chest in anxiety when Kurt froze in place, hands going limp against his sides, eyes wide and lower lip trembling in the effort to keep the tears from falling.

"Y-you... you'd do that... for me?" he breathed out on an escaped sob and Blaine climbed a step up to stand next to him wrapping an arm around his fragile shoulders, feeling more confident with initiating contact between them.

"I'd do anything to make you smile," he admitted, sincerity lacing his words in a pattern so beautiful that Kurt lost a battle against himself and placed his arms timidly around Blaine's neck.
"Thank you," he exhaled into the crook of the Dom's neck and Blaine gave him a soft squeeze before pulling back reluctantly.

"Anytime. Now...go get dressed and I'll meet you here in twenty minutes. You can take whatever you like from my closet if you don't want to wear the same clothes two days in a row," Blaine rattled off, trying to say what he wanted before Kurt all but skipped into his room, throwing the first carefree word in his direction; a loud, "OKAY" before the door slammed into his grinning face.

Maybe they could have their forever after all.

If he did everything right, if he always made him that happy...maybe he'd get to keep him.

Shuffling into his spare bedroom, Blaine threw on the first thing in sight, a pair of dark jeans and a gray, v-neck t-shirt under a darker gray blazer. He slipped his bare feet into a pair of polished black loafers and checked himself in the mirror, realizing belatedly that his hair had gone crazy as it was drying, but he had no time to tame it so he just shrugged feeling secretly sorry for all the people who had to see him with his Medusa hairdo on a daily basis.

Pocketing his phone and his car keys Blaine decided to let his parents know what he'd planned for the afternoon, so after assuring Kurt was still getting ready, he set off to find them, walking around the house until he spotted them curled up in a rocking chair and watching a silly sit-com on the TV in one of the smaller living rooms.

"Hey, guys. I wanted to let you know that I'll be taking Kurt to Lima today. He wants to get some of his things and see his family," he said shuffling on his feet under their curious looks.

"I think that's a great idea. Seeing them will be proof that you won't keep them away from him and bringing his things here will make him feel more at home," Jared nodded smiling at his son, pride etched into every pore of his face and Blaine knew he did the right thing.

Dana nodded at him with a soft smile colouring her own face as she stood up and wrapped her arms around her son. "I always thought you'd make a great Dom someday. I'm glad to see you're proving me right." She kissed his cheek and stood up straight when an awkward entrance caught her eye.

"Um... Blaine," Kurt called out and Blaine jumped in his mother's arms turning towards that melodic voice calling out his name, making him wish he could listen to him forever…his breath caught in his throat.

Standing there bashfully, dressed in one of Blaine’s black cable knit sweaters, some dark wash jeans tucked into the same scuffed boots from yesterday, was Kurt. The sweater was a little too big so it dipped lower on his shoulders; showcasing that elegant length of neck and delectable collarbones Blaine had the immediate urge to mark up and the colour contrast with Kurt’s perfect porcelain skin tone was striking. He tried to ignore the way his jeans hugged Kurt’s legs like a second skin. Tried to ignore that Kurt was dressed in his clothes. His. Covered in his scent. He swallowed hard.

"Blaine, honey." He felt his mother poke him with her elbow pulling him out of his staring.

"Hmm, what?" He jumped a bit and Dana chuckled at her son whose sub was obviously driving him crazy.

"You're drooling. And Kurt is waiting for you to go," she said in an aside with an amused smile and he snapped out of his haze, casting an apologetic glance to everyone around him and clearing his throat to regain some sort of composure before taking Kurt's hand and guiding him out.

"You look amazing," he whispered and Kurt blushed a deep red as he walked next to him, nodding
in thanks and lowering his eyes to the floor. Blaine opened the door smiling a little at his subs modesty when a bright flash almost blinded him.

He raised his free hand up to shield his eyes, pulling Kurt instinctually behind him as a roar of sound and bright flashes went off in front of him. It was like a bomb exploding. Unexpected and destructive.

“Blaine!”

“Dom Anderson!”

“Kurt Hummel! Look over here!”

Blaine clenched his jaw as the media descended on him for the thousandth time. No respect for his privacy, like it was their right to pry into every facet of his life. He should have expected this really, was stupid and naive for not being prepared for it. Only this time it wasn’t just him they were affecting. He had someone else to worry about now and this wasn’t acceptable. They shouldn’t have even been able to make it to the front door seeing as the property was gated, but a look down the drive showed that it hadn’t been. Of all the days.

“Blaine?” Kurt asked in a small frightened voice from behind him only solidifying his thought pattern.

He squeezed his subs hand reassuringly and glanced through the throngs of pushing reporters towards his car. It wasn’t that far of a distance…

“Stay close to me,” he ordered gently and Kurt nodded a little frantically almost immediately plastering himself to Blaine’s back.

“If you could step back, you’re trespassing and we’d like for you to leave,” he tried for diplomatic as he stepped out. They seemed to converge tighter around them.

“Does this mean you’re no longer seeing Miss Nicola McNab?” One reporter asked, thrusting a microphone closer.

“What about Liam Knightly?” A different one added jostling for position.

“What about Liam Knightly?” A different one added jostling for position.

“Kurt, what’s Blaine like in bed?”

Kurt gasped and flinched away from the balding man trying to grab at him, feeling like he was drowning. Feeling like walls were closing in around him even though they were outside. The claustrophobia got worse as the questions got nastier, more invasive and the steady clicks from cameras were a steady boom, boom, boom in time with his heart.

“Blaine, is it true you only claimed him because he was an easier conquest?”

“Is this all a publicity stunt?”

Kurt felt tears sting his eyes as the words struck home and played tauntingly with all his insecurities.

“What? No!” Blaine hissed in the direction of the interviewer. “All of you need to leave. Now!”

Unfortunately Kurt guessed that most of the reporters were Doms because even though they flinched at the power in his voice they ignored the command, obviously used to it in their profession and pressed in on them forcing them back towards the house.
“Blaine,” Kurt whispered again. He wanted to go back inside. He needed to go back inside. His legs were shaking and his heart felt like it was about to race out of his chest. He wasn’t prepared for this… how could he be?

The Dom turned and looked at him and before Kurt knew it he was being wrapped in strong arms and led back inside. The door slammed behind them and Kurt shook against Blaine, hearing the shouts from outside even still. Hateful, hurtful things spilling from their silver tongues.

“I’m sorry,” Blaine whispered to him, cupping the back of his head, so close to his mark that he quivered. “I’m so sorry, Kurt. I didn’t even think.”

Kurt swallowed, trying to regain control of himself once more. “I-I’m okay. I just… can we not do that again?”

Blaine laughed, but it held no humour. “Not if I can help it. Promise.”

Kurt nodded against his shoulder. “So I take it we’re not going to see my dad?” he asked in a sad voice that resonated in Blaine chest. He hated it.

He searched his mind.

“How about we phone him? Invite your family over?”

Kurt pulled his head back and looked with wide eyes. “Really?”

Blaine smiled at him. “Sure. I can get a driver to pick them up and they can bring some of your things over. I’d love to spend some time with them and I know you miss them and were excited to see them again.”

A smile began to spread across Kurt’s lips and he ducked his head, laying it tentatively on Blaine’s shoulder once more of his own free will. “Thank you.”

Kurt had clung to Burt as soon as he stepped through the door and hadn’t really let go since.

Blaine tried not to let it affect him. After their talk the Dom was feeling optimistic about showing Kurt how great he knew they could be together. How well Blaine would look after him. So blowing it all by snarling and dragging Kurt to his side possessively, while he’d admit deep down was tempting, wasn’t particularly worth it. Yes, he wanted to be the first one Kurt came to when he was feeling out of his depth and overwhelmed. Yes, he wanted to coo and reassure his sub with every fibre of his being. But Kurt wasn’t ready for that and so he clamped down on his control and allowed it. It helped that the other Doms and subs in the room weren’t judging in the slightest with the way they looked at the interaction, like most others would have. In fact, they looked pleased and admiring as he let Kurt get the comfort he couldn’t give him yet without protest.

They moved into the dining room after that, away from the circus that could still faintly be heard outside the doors and he watched Burt and Carole take in the space with growing discomfort though they handled themselves exceptionally, Carole taking her cues from Burt’s strong and steady presence.

Blaine respected that man more and more with each passing second and was especially grateful
when he bent down to Kurt’s ear to whisper something that had Kurt cautiously making his way around the long table to Blaine’s side.

The young Dom held the chair out for his sub and he watched in fascination as a pretty blush stole its way across his cheeks as he lowered with an adorably mouthed, ‘thank you’.

It made him beam inside, even that small little thing because Kurt appreciated it. Didn’t expect it as his right like most everyone he knew and it was so, so refreshing. Like a cool breeze on a summer’s day.

Dana and Jared began bringing in the various dishes and pots, steam curling from some and filling the air with pleasant smells that made his mouth water and stomach pang. He hadn’t eaten properly since the claiming last night, having virtually no appetite whilst under the stress of all the uncertainty and sadness, but things were brighter now. Kurt was a warm presence at his right, casting shy glances at him from under his lashes and quickly diverting when Blaine tried to make eye contact. His mother and father were beaming happily at him, excited and overjoyed for him. And Kurt’s family were across from him, nothing but supportive by the looks of things, though he felt their expectations heavily on his shoulders.

Once it was all laid out and everyone seated, Dana clapped her hands. “Dig in everyone, we’ll just ignore the vultures circling outside shall we?”

“Hard to when you’re the carcass they want to pick apart,” Blaine joked trying to lighten the mood, but felt Kurt tense beside him. Subtly he shifted his body closer, sliding his hand closer to the one Kurt had wrapped around his glass so that their knuckles barely grazed. The sub didn’t notice, too preoccupied in his own thoughts but Blaine smiled secretly when he saw his shoulders relaxing somewhat.

“They’re certainly something else, I’ll give you that,” Burt grunted and Blaine looked up to see that the man hadn’t missed the exchange and was eyeing his son as if to really make sure he was okay.

Carole cleared her throat and looked around at the food a little wide eyed. “Well this is certainly lovely, Mrs. Anderson, thank you for inviting us.”

“You haven’t tasted it yet,” Jared muttered under his breath playfully and Dana smacked him on the arm with her own teasing scowl as the rest of the table laughed.

“Ignore him. I am a master in the kitchen,” she declared nose in the air. “And call me Dana, please. I have enough of the formalities at work.”

Carole smiled her acceptance and they all began to dig in, the Hummels serving themselves noticeably smaller portions than the Andersons though no one commented. Blaine’s mind flashed back to the conversation this morning and he made sure to remember to mention it to his mother.

Teasing aside, the pasta was done to perfection and there were noises of appreciation scattered throughout. Blaine was on a different mission however.

“Have you ever tried garlic ciabatta?” he asked Kurt in an aside, as Burt and Jared discussed sports and Dana enquired about Carole’s job as a nurse, gesturing to the bowl in the centre of the table.

Kurt shook his head; eyes curious as Blaine plucked a few slices out and popped them on a side plate. He tore a piece off and held it out for him.

“You’ll love it I promise.”
Kurt took it between his fingers and eyed it speculatively before nibbling on it daintily. He hummed and it was music to Blaine ears. He grinned as Kurt popped the rest into his mouth and pulled over the plate for him, determined to get him to eat even if it was deviously.

“Tastes even better in the sauce,” he commented taking a piece himself and doing just that to try and be casual.

Kurt followed his suggestion seemingly without even thinking about it and he was revelling when his attention was drawn.

“So Blaine, what exactly is it that you do? I’ve heard a lot but I’ve been informed by a reliable source that things aren’t always true what you read in the papers,” Burt said across the table.

Blaine shifted at the mention of his highly exaggerated, often completely fabricated lifestyle. He saw the offer for what it was however. “Well I’m still at Dalton Academy studying, but I do actually have my own business of sorts.”

Burt raised a brow. “What kind of business?”

“I own a recording studio.”

“You do?” Kurt asked from next to him and Blaine sighed softly at hearing his voice again, especially audibly intrigued in something to do with him.

He turned and smiled. “Yeah. Music’s always just spoken to me, so it made sense. It was my eighteenth birthday present,” he admitted sheepishly.

Kurt gaped. “You got a recording studio as a birthday present?”

“More of a coming of age,” Jared corrected and three sets of eyes looked to him in confusion.

“Every Anderson on their eighteenth birthday begins to get more involved in the family business, but Blaine was never one for office desks or board meetings,” the sub smiled at his son. “We didn’t want to force him into anything that would make him unhappy.”

“But music made him very happy,” Dana continued. “Couldn’t keep the damn singing menace off the furniture when he was younger… a habit he keeps to this day—”

“Mom!” Blaine scowled, feeling the need to blush.

She laughed away his indignation as all embarrassing mothers did. “Anyway, we noticed and bought the space for him to set it up, handed it over and let him run it as he saw fit. No bailing out if it went horribly. No subsidising if he didn’t break even.”

“Big responsibility,” Burt allowed.

They nodded.

“So how is it going?” the man asked Blaine who smiled somewhat proudly, but couldn’t help it. He’d put everything into that place.

"Yeah. It's still early days for it yet, small scale stuff but I want to give it the time it deserves and I can't do that while I'm still studying. But we keep above water and my friends help out." He turned hesitantly to Kurt. "I could show you it if you'd like?"

Kurt hitched a breath visibly. "Really?"
Blaine smiled. "Of course. I want you to see it."

"That'll be great, Kurt loves to sing." Carole beamed and Kurt ducked his head as more than one interested stare came his way.

This was not something he had wanted to share with them. Singing was something his mother and him had in common and she was the first and the only person, aside from his dad later on, to ever tell him he had a lovely voice. He tried out for the school's glee club but was ridiculed and mocked for his high voice. It didn't hurt that they were insulting him, but the thought of them insulting something that his mom said was beautiful made him determined to keep his singing inside his own home and protect the memory of her.

So he never sang in front of people. He dared to sing to Jeff once and his friend said he liked it and that he should do it more often, but he'd kept it hidden for so long he wasn't really sure how to let it out again.

"You can sing?" Blaine asked. He couldn't believe how Kurt could have gone unclaimed for all this time. The boy was an angel… he probably sung like one as well with a voice like that.

"I... I can carry a tune. Nothing award winning." He shrugged turning back to his meal and poking his dad in the knee with his toes when he saw him taking a breath to counter his statement and avoiding Blaine's questioning look, knowing somehow that this wasn't the last time they'd speak of his singing.

Burt scowled at him but relented, switching the subject back to safer topics like school and Blaine's plans for his future after Dalton.

"So I'm guessing you're in school for business then?" Burt asked around a tentative bite.

He hadn't been completely full in a long while and he wanted to remain as dignified as possible in the face of so much food on the table, so he took small portions and even smaller bites. Besides, he knew his stomach wasn’t completely up to digesting such large portions regardless.

"As a minor, yes. Music is my major. Even though I own a studio and it's something that I can see myself doing I'd be the happiest if someday something of my own could come out of that studio. But that's a dream and this business is like a safety net. I have to be able to provide for my future family." He smiled, bashfully looking at Kurt, and Burt admired his maturity and the consciousness he had to assure he gave his family everything they needed.

His respect for the young man grew with every single word he said and with every glance towards his son his heartbeat settled more and more into a comfortable thud, making him aware of the fact that his son could be happy here with this remarkable young Dom who went out of his way to prove them wrong and to make him happy.

And as he watched Kurt blush and shy away but still smile at his Dom's attempts to get him to take a bite of their chocolate croissants from his fingers, he knew deep down that his sadness over losing his son would settle easier now that he saw the potential and the drive Blaine had to make them work. A relaxed smile settled on his face and he squeezed Carole's hand as they accepted an offer of a glass of wine from Dana and settled into the family room to chat amicably.

Kurt watched his new family meld with his old one effortlessly and he had to admit that the Andersons held none of the alleged snobbism and rudeness. They were down to earth, funny, interesting and genuinely interested in their lives without sounding condescending or disgusted at the way they lived and the way their clothes stood out, worn against the glow of the rich furniture.
Cuddled onto a soft sofa Kurt allowed himself to finally relax as he leaned against Blaine who wrapped a tentative arm around his shoulders, keeping him close.

"Thank you," Kurt said quietly, lifting his head from Blaine's shoulder to look him in the eye, as his ears caught the sound of Jared choking on his wine as he listened to the story of a drunk man who came to Burt to fix his spaceship after breaking down in the middle of drawing crop circles. Kurt's heart swelled with joy at the sight of them getting along so well.

"What for?" Blaine asked, lifting his hand carefully and with a question in his eyes as he pushed the lock of hair back from the subs forehead.

"Letting them come here. Being... being graceful about the fact that they are not like you," he said quietly, and Blaine frowned.

"They are like us. They live and breathe and love just like we do. Money doesn't make a person. Your dad is one of the most amazing men I have had the honour to meet and nothing would make me more proud than being able to call him family. So there's no need to thank me or my parents," Blaine said truthfully, with conviction and Kurt nodded gently, cuddling back into his side and letting the laughter wash over him.

All too soon the pleasant afternoon light turned into chilly dusk and then morphed into a dark evening, the autumn breeze finding its way inside underneath the doorframes and windows and the Hummel's stood up to catch the last evening bus to Lima, greeting each other at the door.

"Thank you for the lovely evening, Dana." Burt extended his hand to the woman first, Dom to Dom as customary, before turning to Jared. "And you too Jared. We had a great time."

"We hope this will be the first of many," Dana said kissing Carole's cheeks and giving her a brief hug.

"We do too," Burt said with a soft smile before turning to look at his son's new Dom. "Blaine may I have a word with you?"

"Of course." Blaine jumped, doing his best to ignore Kurt's stunned expression as the two of them made their way to the narrow hallway, his mind spinning with dread and wonder.

"This won't take long, son, and you don't need to look so terrified," Burt chuckled and Blaine let out a nervous sounding laugh in response.

"Sir, I promise I will do everything that's in my power to make him happy. I... swear it on everything I care about," Blaine breathed out and Burt nodded, clamping a broad palm on his shoulder once.

"Good. And it's Burt kid. Not sir." He smiled turning around and joining Carole at the door where he held his son long and tight promising him they would see each other soon and for once Kurt believed that because the Andersons seemed honest in their promises to let him stay close to his family.
A couple of hugs later saw Burt and Carole approaching the fence and the moment of pure joy and hope suddenly shattered under the onslaught of hundreds of flashes and cameras shoved in their faces, questions thrown their way defiling every aspect of their life and making Burt livid.

"Can you tell us what sexual skills have you taught your son to make him interesting to an Anderson heir?"

"Mr. Hummel is it true you arranged this claiming with the Andersons to secure more money?"

"Is it true that you sold your son?"

And it was that last question that caused a vicious snarl rip itself from Burt's lips and were it not for Carole and Dana rushing to calm things down he would have pummelled that sorry ass to the ground.

Mind reeling and fists clenching furiously he was escorted to the car that Dana called in to take them home and he went reluctantly, his mind still compelling him to go back and defend what was his even when they were long gone from the Anderson home, cruising towards Lima.

Back at the Andersons Kurt was sitting numbly in the chair he and Blaine shared so happily just a few moments ago, but now, tears were streaming down his face and his heart was breaking.

He leaned into his Dom heavily, fighting to find that feeling of home and safety within his arms as he carded fingers through his hair and hummed soothingly.

"I can't believe they said that. I...h-how can they be so mean?" he sniffled and Blaine held him tighter.

"I don't think they're mean. They just want something big for their magazines. It's a job. It's easier to think of it like that." Blaine shrugged and Kurt blinked, fighting against that logic because he felt the burning need to hate them all for insulting his father like that.

He knew that it was just the beginning and that he was the shiny new toy they got to tear apart to see what's on the inside and it terrified him.

"They aren't going away are they?" he asked quietly and Blaine sighed heavily.

"In time they'll leave us alone. Until then, how would you feel about going somewhere? Getting away from the circus surrounding us and just being together, getting to know each other better?" he asked and Kurt contemplated the idea for a moment.

As much as it felt scary to go somewhere alone with Blaine it sounded like a good idea to give them a real chance away from all the spectacle they raised.

"Where would we go?" he asked with a gentle frown and Blaine shrugged.

"Wherever strikes our fancy," he said and Kurt smiled gently.

"What about school?" he asked, the idea already growing on him.

"Dalton has a policy of allowing newly bonded couples time away to get used to it. Say the word and I'll file for it," Blaine said and Kurt bit his lip for a second before lifting his eyes up and nodding.

Blaine beamed at him, his eyes lighting up like fire.

"We'll set it up on Monday then."
Us again guys!
A big thank you for all the kudos, comments and bookmarks! We didn't really expect this kind of reaction from reposting the same story so we're really grateful and excited! It's like posting for the first time all over again

We just want to reiterate that all the pictures in this story aren't ours, also, they are the CLOSEST representation we could find, they're not 100 percent accurate to the descriptions in the story so please take them with a grain of salt :D

You'll notice this chapter is a little shorter than the others because its kind of filler-ish. Worry not however, this really is the calm before the storm, for those of you who like long chapters, welcome to the Thunderdome! ;)

Love A&M

"History can often times be ugly and filled with blood and tears. But as a historian and an anthropologist I am a firm believer that, that same ugliness can set grounds for a change; a step forward in the right direction.

A fine example of that is the cruelty and mistreatment of submissive members of society that took place not so long ago. In recent history subs were forbidden to leave the house without their Doms, to work and receive payment for it, to interact with other Doms, and to visit and communicate with their families after their bond was legalized.

In the more extreme cases, the subs were physically abused, tortured, malnourished as they were forbidden to eat anything other than scraps after their Doms and, worst of all, forced into subspace leaving them completely vulnerable and often times mentally unstable.

Today, although still far from perfect, the situation surrounding the life of a sub is much better thanks, for the most part, to the existence of Validators; a legal body formed to assess the wellbeing of a sub in his new environment and authorized to remove the sub from an unhealthy environment if they deem it necessary."

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"Being able to have a certain amount of freedom and being granted all the rights the Doms possess was definitely a step towards creating a well-balanced, on equality based society, however, the work of those who wish to better the world is never finished. The battle continues towards eradicating discrimination based on social and economical status.

While it's not illegal for a rich Dom to claim a sub of lower social status it is deeply frowned upon and considered a taboo, while a Dom of a lower status cannot even place a claim on a rich sub since he's unable to pay the price needed to register the bond."
Nowadays it's almost as if two currents are formed within wealthy families, and each current is backed up with a list of affirmed names giving weight and importance to their cause: one current working towards balancing the society and allowing, even practicing, bonding between social ranks backed up by the Anderson's, the Duval's, Karofsky's, Thompson's, Smythe's and Hughes' to name a few of the more prominent ones, and the other current traditional in their ways opposing the change and forbidding their members to even associate with the lower ranks backed up by the Landon's, Smith's, Lexington's and Radley's.

*The pull of which current will be stronger?*
*Only time will tell.*

**The prologue and the epilogue of a textbook:**
"Being a Dom on the right side of change"
by Elliana Turner
Anthropology professor at The Harvard University

Blaine paced the expanse of his living room early Monday morning as he contemplated what to do next.

His sub was visibly shaken ever since his encounter with the reporters, constantly sending worried glances at the windows and doors and while Blaine understood the need to make money by having the latest scoop of information first, he couldn't help but hate every last one of them for making Kurt close off again and go to bed alone for the second night in a row when all Blaine wanted to do was hold him in his arms and keep him safe.

He knew there was no way the press was leaving by Monday and he got all the evidence of that on Sunday when his phone began to ring restlessly for hours on end, representatives of every magazine and TV show in existence seeking his presence and asking questions about Kurt and his role in Blaine's allegedly wild life.

He ignored every last one of the questions and accusations, struggling to remain polite as he asked them to give him some space to settle in his new role, assuring them he would answer their inquiries when the time was right for it, but they just wouldn't budge. The news of Dom Anderson claiming a sub from the 'wrong side of wealth' was way too big to let slide and they all knew that whoever got to the exclusive first would most likely be able to retire with all the money that story would earn.

Sick of their constant chatter in front of his house, of the infinite row of flashlights going off in their general direction and most of all, of the trembles going through Kurt's body every time the phone rang, Blaine finally snapped and made a decision.

After checking in with Kurt he made a phone call and scheduled a meeting with Dalton's school board to ask permission to take some time off to complete the third step of their bonding. He knew his school had a policy of accommodating newly bonded couples as best as they could and he knew he had a plausible cause for asking for that, but despite that, some formal protocols needed to be followed so Blaine made the appointment and found out that he, as the Dom, was the one they required to see and discuss the topic with.

Kurt could come along but he wasn't allowed to be present at the meeting itself; one of the last archaic rules the Dalton staff was unable to shake off.
He told as much to Kurt and while he seemed uneasy about being left alone in the hallways of an unfamiliar school filled with people he'd never seen before, it warmed Blaine's heart to realize he was even more reluctant to be away from him for a long time and stay at home, agreeing to wait for him in the Dalton lounge with a cup of coffee.

An image of him, sitting there alone, just waiting for someone to come along and spout nonsense insults at him or even attempt to garner his favour made Blaine cringe and scowl possessively and with a little bit of thought he came up with a possible solution.

Nick Duval.

One of his best friends and someone he knew he could trust to keep his sub safe and relaxed while he was away. He hadn't heard from him since the claiming and he had no idea where Nick stood about it all, but he had a feeling, deep down inside of him, that his friend would side with him and his family and support him through and through.

Which is why he felt comfortable suggesting he kept Kurt company while he spoke to the Principal.

Although timidly, Kurt had agreed to meet Nick and spend time with him while Blaine made the arrangements with the board and went to get ready while Blaine, already dressed for the day, stayed in the living room to make the call.

"Well hello there, Mr. Drama. How are you doing this fine Monday morning?" Nick's voice chirped from the phone as soon as he picked up and even as he rolled his eyes Blaine couldn't help but smile at his friend's teasing tone.

Trust Nick to be amused by a scandalous situation.

"Mr. Drama, really?" Blaine asked, amusement evident in his own voice and Nick huffed in mock offence.

"It's early and I had to think fast. Shut up," Nick defended his lame joke to the very last and Blaine chuckled at him.

"Well I suppose it could be worse," he acquiesced before deciding to get to the point before Kurt got back from his room. "But I didn't call you for comedic relief."

"Believe it or not I kind of figured that out on my own. What's up?" Nick asked, voice suddenly serious and focused.

"Kurt and I are coming to talk to the board this morning at ten," Blaine said and Nick made a noise of understanding.

"About his enrolment at Dalton?" he asked and Blaine started pacing again.

"That and taking time off to complete the third step. The press is making him uncomfortable and quite frankly, I'm one camera flash away from suing all of them for whatever the hell I can think off. So I figured taking a short vacation away from it all could be good for the both of us," Blaine explained as he leaned against the window, looking out into the crowd of reporters, scattered in front of his gate, pushing at each other to get a better view of the house, and setting up tents and lawn chairs, obviously making themselves at home in his front yard.

"That's not a bad idea. I saw them in front of your house as I passed by. It's a madhouse, Blaine," Nick informed and Blaine nodded to himself.
"I know. It's ridiculous." He ran a hand through his hair and pulled at his loose curls in annoyance.

"It is. But it's also how the media works. You of all people should both know and be used to that," Nick stated bluntly and Blaine huffed in anger. In any other instance he would be glad Nick was around to keep him grounded in reality, but everything remotely related to Kurt made him a little crazy apparently.

"I am used to it and I couldn't care less what they say about me. But Kurt isn't. They scare him, they make him question my intentions and be afraid of me. I don't... I can't deal with that. I can't look into his eyes and see fear. I just... I can't." He blinked back the sudden angry tears in his eyes and Nick shushed him gently, trying to get him to calm down.

"He's your 'it' then isn't he?" he asked softly and Blaine took a deep breath as he took his time to answer.

"I know it's ridiculous and I just met him but... I want him to be. I think he already is," he admitted feeling his heart pang in agreement and Nick cheered, happy for his friend.

"It's not ridiculous, Blaine. I'm really happy for you and whatever you need, you know you can talk to me and ask it," he said earnestly.

"Actually... there is something I need... the reason I called actually," Blaine broached, wiping his eyes and the almost tears away, happy to have a friend like Nick.

"Okay. Shoot."

"Kurt is coming with me this morning, but as you know he's not allowed to sit in on the meeting with the board and I don't want him alone," Blaine started but Nick cut him off.

"Say no more. I'll be waiting for you in front of the main building in an hour."

"Thanks, Nick," he sighed in relief. "Okay, I'll go see if he's ready and we'll be on our way."

"Any time, B. See you soon," Nick answered and Blaine thanked him once more before ending the call and feeling his heart settle for a moment, soothed by his friend's words.

Kurt had been through the battered suitcase containing his things once... then again... then again before settling himself down in the middle of the small clothes catastrophe he had made, head in his hands.

He had nothing to wear.

Well. That wasn't entirely accurate. He did have things to wear. He didn't have anything suitable to wear. He glanced through his fingers miserably at the worn pieces of material around him, all special to him in some way because of how hard he and his family worked for him to have even this and felt his stomach churn at the sudden inadequacy that crashed over him.

He hated it. Hated that feeling and what it made him do.
He didn't want to feel like who he was and what he owned wasn't good enough for the stuck up world he found himself in. It felt like he was somehow betraying his family and he couldn't have that, not ever.

He began to pick up his belongings he'd so carelessly strewn around, being extra careful when he packed them back away in the suitcase, only sparing a furtive glance at the wardrobe and dresser. It was too presumptuous to put his things in there alongside Blaine's. Much too personal and intimate a thing that spoke too heavily of permanent. Despite Blaine's reassurances and his own desire to latch onto and believe them, there was still a small part of him, growing larger with every incredulous derisive comment slung his way by people like the ones camped outside, that warned him against getting too comfortable. That wanted to shield his fragile heart.

He shook the sad thoughts away and tried to concentrate on the now.

He still wasn't dressed and they were supposed to be leaving soon. Biting his lip he pulled out his best pair of jeans, shimmying them on and then a pale blue button down that he tucked into the tight trousers. He tied a scarf he had made out of a few scraps of fabric around his neck and put on his scuffed boots before he walked to the full length mirror and studied himself.

By Lima standards he looked damn good. By Dalton... he felt sick again. God, he was going to embarrass Blaine so much. Maybe he should just stay home? He fussed at his hair, eyeing the hair products on Blaine's dresser before dismissing the idea immediately with an ashamed blush. They weren't his things to use and he hadn't got permission.

Sighing he did his best, sweeping it to the side in his usual way, wishing he could style it off his face. He frowned when the strands of his hair, now amazingly soft from the quality shampoo Blaine let him use, flopped back down to cover his eyes and with a sigh he turned back to the hair product shelf, running gentle fingers over the bottle of hairspray.

Blaine opened the door and peeked in with an inviting smile as his eyes roamed over him almost immediately, eyeing the way he looked at the product longingly. "You can use whatever you need," he said and frowned at how quickly Kurt pulled his hand away from the bottles; like he would get in trouble for even looking at it.

"N-no... that's okay. I was just looking," he said hastily, flipping the loose hair back again and turning towards Blaine.

Hazel eyes shifted sadly, somehow wishing that someday Kurt would see his things as his own. "Well for future reference, anything in this house is available for you to use whenever you want. Okay?" he asked and smiled when Kurt nodded. "Good. You ready?"

Kurt shifted on his feet. "Yeah... no... I mean... maybe I should stay home?" he rambled out, feeling a blush heat his whole face.

Blaine frowned softly, walking into the room properly. "What's wrong?"

Kurt rubbed his hands against his sides self-consciously. "I don't fit in there," Kurt blurted out. "I just..." He let it trail and stared at the ground, thoroughly embarrassed.

He heard Blaine step closer and then a hand under his chin was coaxing his head back up. He tried desperately to ignore the tingles that set his blood on fire and his mark burning as he met concerned gold flecked eyes. "You're perfect as you are," Blaine said softly and Kurt's breathing hitched.

"They don't think that," Kurt insisted futilely, nodding his chin towards the window. "My clothes-"
"Are lovely," Blaine cut off warmly, dropping his hand. "The colour brings out your eyes and your jeans…" He laughed sheepishly, rubbing the back of his neck. "Well they're giving me ideas that I'm really trying to ignore. So don't let anyone else tell you different, okay?"

Kurt's face was bright red. He knew it was. All he could do was nod dumbly.

Blaine beamed. "I talked to Nick and he's going to meet at the front entrance if you're ready? You can stay behind if you really want to though. No pressure."

"No… no, I'm fine," Kurt decided finally, feeling encouraged and less anxious by Blaine somehow.

"Great, now let's go brave the worst. Stay close to me, alright?" he reminded and Kurt nodded, stepping up, half concealed behind him.

Once they were outside the shouts and taunts started up again tenfold.

Blaine was quick to lead them towards the Lexus, tossing his keys to his driver, opening the door for Kurt and tucking him safely in before climbing in after him, keeping his hand firmly in his own, stilling the tremble of his fingers.

Kurt had blocked most of what they were saying out by will alone and was trying to keep himself calm as he sat in the backseat. Blaine slid in and looked over to him concernedly. "Okay?"

Kurt gave him a faint smile, feeling warmed by the sentiment. "Yeah. Thank you."

"It's what I'm here for," Blaine told him softly. *Meaningfully.*

The car started and sooner that Kurt could utter an answer they were gliding out of the driveway, through the throng of reporters trying to take pictures through the tinted windows and onto the street, heading towards yet another thing Kurt knew nothing about.

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Dalton Academy was an impressive structure.

Not only extensive in the size of the multiple buildings and acres that made up the grounds surrounding it, it was also a beautifully kept piece of architectural history. High arched windows of a
classic design were polished to a high shine, row after row. The brickwork was flawless and large trees framed the grand front entrance doors where masterful filigree was shot through all of the architecture; it was clear just from looking at it that Dalton was the idealistic picture of a wealthy society. It showed no signs of wear. Always well-kept and maintained to the highest standards to keep its clientele pleased.

The grounds themselves were gated, with a long gravel drive leading up to the main building that was the largest of the four structures. Kindergarten, elementary, higher education and then there were the dormitories.

The kindergarten building was the smallest, surrounded by its own fencing and boasting a play area within its brightly coloured walls. The elementary school was also set in its own space and gated off to keep the distinction between years. The only buildings that were attached were they main building which taught from high school all the way up the college students and the dormitories that were provided for them, next to a neat parking lot for visitors, students and staff.

Nick parked his car, a beautiful black Porsche into the student's section of the parking lot, happy that he caught the space away from the trees that shed leaves and the last remains of the summer's fruits all over the vehicle.
Stepping out of the car he waved to a few people on their way to the school and ducked his head trying to avoid a few subs determined to get him to notice them. It was always worse the few weeks after the Showing. He still hadn’t claimed someone so the subs that hadn’t been chosen redoubled their efforts.

He was one of the wealthiest Doms and his reputation of being slightly unusual, a little bit crazy and a lot of fun to be around made him appealing enough for him to find notes in his pockets and phone numbers scrawled on his car windows with lipstick. Nick found it increasingly frustrating because he was sure he came out of his mother’s womb screaming ‘I like dick’ so he had no idea why those girls seemed so determined to be with him; it's not like he would make them happy.

Shrugging and ducking another note curled up in a ball thrown his way- how flying paper hitting his head was considered an enticement he'd never figure out- he made it to a small secluded bench he and Blaine and a few of their closest friends claimed as their own ages ago. Separated from the rest of the school yard by a thick, bushy tree it made for a perfect hiding spot with a vantage of the parking lot.

He flopped down on the bench, pulling his phone out to fiddle with while he waited, when a few minutes later a familiar black Lexus cruised into the parking lot, his best friend stepping out of it along with a terrified looking sub; younger than them that was for sure, but still gorgeous from what Nick could tell of the lithe figure.

He could see his friend turning around trying to find him so he stood up and walked over to them, smiling at how possessive Blaine's hand seemed against the sub's back, how alert he was, ready to defend him if the situation called for it. Nick had never seen Blaine like this; eyes shining with emotion, lips curled up in a gentle smile turned towards the younger boy, and hands clenching with the effort he put into keeping himself in check for the sub's sake.

It was an amazing change and Nick was willing to do whatever he could to keep that relationship safe. With that thought he approached the pair and patted Blaine on the shoulder.

"Hey, man. Nice to see you on time for a change," he teased falling easily into the banter as always and Blaine punched him in the chest playfully.

"Yeah, well I show up on time when it's important," Blaine joked back, obviously alluding to the fact that he was always late for their coffee 'dates' and making Nick pout in mock offense.

"You wound me," he declared dramatically. “But I don't care. What I do care for is this beautiful person over here," he said smiling at Kurt who kept his eyes down, biting his lip and curling the
fingers of his right hand into the back of Blaine's blazer.

Blaine turned around and gently took Kurt's clenched hand in his.

"Kurt, this is my friend Nick. He's gonna stay with you while I'm talking with the board," he introduced in a tone Nick had never heard before from his friend and the beautiful sub lifted his chin up, making Nick's breath hitch at the sight of his stunning eyes he didn't even know where to begin describing the colour of. They made him appear completely not of this world.

*Lucky son of a bitch.*

He shook the amusement off when he saw those lovely eyes were filled with discomfort so he did his best to smile encouragingly as he stuck his hand out.

"Hi, Kurt. I'm Nick, it's truly a pleasure to meet you," he said politely and waited patiently until the younger boy dared to take his hand and give it a shaky but firm squeeze before letting go. "So what say you we run away together?" he grinned and Kurt's eyes widened while Blaine growled softly. Nick laughed holding his hands up. "Kidding. C'mon!"

"Hilarious," Blaine glared, but it wasn't heated so Nick smiled winningly back at him.

"We'll just go grab some coffee while you die of boredom. Sound good to you, Kurt?"

Kurt nodded hesitantly, looking towards Blaine for reassurance and relaxing seemingly without realizing it when he saw Blaine's encouraging smile.

"Go ahead. I'll be as quick as I can, okay?" Blaine said.

"Okay," Kurt agreed and shyly looked back towards Nick who gestured over his shoulder.

"We better get going then before you really are late."

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"Mr Anderson." Blaine was greeted warmly when he stepped into the room after leaving Kurt and Nick walking towards the Dalton longue.

It was a large office with a huge desk placed in front of a floor to ceiling window in the middle of the room, taking up most of the space and drawing the eye. The walls were lined with bookshelves and a side cabinet that held an assortment of collector's items and there were two comfortable chairs placed in front of the desk for guests and visitors. The room itself was done in warm browns and creams, making the area inviting instead of imposing.

Principal Hikaru Montgomery, a tall, stately Dom of Asian descent with greying hair and kind brown eyes reminiscent of one of his closest friends, was sat behind the desk smiling at him and Blaine allowed himself a moment to be surprised.
"Principal," he greeted back, allowing the confusion he was feeling to seep through his tone. "I was under the impression the rest of the board would be present."

The man gestured to the seat in front of him and Blaine walked the rest of the way in and sank down into it gratefully.

"In normal circumstances that would be true," the older Dom agreed, leaning back into the plush green wing backed chair he was seated in and straightening his charcoal suit a little. "But your situation is a little more… high profile."

Blaine sighed. That was the reason they were in this mess in the first place. "So the reporters camped on my lawn say," he responded dryly.

The Principal gave him a sympathetic look. "Yes, well, I thought you'd appreciate a little more discretion than a bunch of old Doms lecturing you."

Blaine couldn't thank him enough. In all honesty, he was dreading meeting some of the board. Not because he was nervous to talk to them, but knowing that not everyone's view was as liberal about the economic divide that defined their society. He had been preparing to fight and defend his relationship, defend Kurt and he would have with every breath in his body. He wouldn't back down to anyone, his instincts wouldn't let him, but this was a pleasant surprise.

"That means a lot to me," he admitted.

The Principal laughed. "Come now, Blaine. You really thought I'd throw you to the wolves?"

Blaine cracked his own smile hearing the familiar friendly tone. He'd known this man for almost all his life in one capacity or another. As the father of his friend. A prestigious Dom in his own right. A Principal. He counted himself incredibly lucky to have such a man on his side.

"But jokes aside, down to business, yes?" Hikaru said and Blaine straightened in his seat. "You've put in a request for Bonding leave."

"That's correct, sir."

Hikaru glanced down at the papers on his desk, grabbing a pair of square framed reading glasses and putting them on. "I've drawn up the paperwork. We haven't needed to grant someone leave such as this in quite a while, but there is a definite precedent for it so we just have to go through the details seeing as I already know from this morning’s paper that there is a fully understandable reason for the time off from your studies. Now…" He looked over the top of his glasses. "…how long would you like? I'm afraid to say we can grant no longer than a week at most."

"A week away from this chaos will be a godsend at this point," Blaine said, nodding eagerly.

The principal smiled and sat the documents and his glasses back down again, regarding him softly. "How are you dealing with all this, Blaine? I understand that the decision to claim was rather… sudden."

Blaine shifted with embarrassment at the reminder of his rash, graceless claim, but couldn't find himself regretting it one bit. That instinct that drove him had gotten him Kurt. The perfect angel nervously awaiting his return just down the corridor. "It wasn't planned, no," he admitted, forcing himself to focus. "I just… I saw him and I just knew I couldn't let him go. I've been waiting for him for so long… I couldn't wait and risk him getting away."

Hikaru nodded and broached carefully, "He's not exactly from the usual circles I hear."
Blaine tensed feeling his temperature rise and his brows draw low. "I don't consider that a factor at all."

The elder Dom held up his hands. "I'm not attacking your sub's character, Blaine, I assure you."

Blaine groaned trying to shake off the anger. "I'm sorry. It's just people are so judgemental of him just because he doesn't come from a wealthy background and it makes me sick! They don't see how wonderful he is, how real he is in comparison to all their fake acts. They just see money signs… or the lack of them."

"We live in that kind of society. I'm afraid it is something you're going to have to get used to," Hikaru told him gently with a hint of sadness.

"It shouldn't be like that," Blaine stated fiercely.

"I agree and yet all I can do is offer you this little time away from it." Blaine breathed deep. "Yes, thank you. Sorry again, I'm just a little out of it right now."

"It's a stressful time for you and holding yourself back from a sub isn't easy on a Dom. Denying your instincts for too long is never a good thing," Hikaru advised and it was like he was seeing straight through him. Blaine wasn't surprised the man could tell all that just from the way he was acting or how he looked.

"He isn't ready yet and I refuse to force myself on him," Blaine said.

"Ah, but it is a two way street, Blaine. Subs need their Doms just as much, it's the nature of a healthy bond, you know this."

The younger Dom stopped to think about that. "So you're suggesting I push him?" It didn't sit right that thought. At all.

"Heavens no!" Hikaru exclaimed. "I am merely saying that you shouldn't let the distance become prolonged. Use this time wisely." He slid the paperwork over. "It only needs your signature and then you're free to leave."

Blaine took the pen held out for him and scrawled his name on the dotted line.

"There is one thing I wanted to ask you before I left," Blaine broached.

"You're concerned about Kurt attending Dalton?" he guessed.

"Yes."

"I don't tolerate misuse or persecution of subs at this school, Blaine. That will include Kurt and his background. I will make sure every teacher and student knows this before he starts." He paused and frowned. "There will be incidents. I can't lie and say there won't, but know that you and Kurt can come straight to me and I will set them right to the best of my ability."

A weight eased off his shoulders with the knowledge. "Thank you, sir. I don't know how to thank you enough."

The man smiled. "Go and bond properly with your sub. I want to see colours on you by the time you get back," he teased and Blaine blushed scarlet as the clear mark on the back of his neck tingled. He stood up and shook the elder Doms hand firmly; mind now racing with the possibilities of his and
Kurt sat in the room Blaine pointed him towards as he waited for Nick to re-join him. Meeting the other Dom had been terrifying at first, but there was something about him that made Kurt feel at ease next to him. Maybe it was the open smile? Or kind eyes? Either way, his aura reminded Kurt a little of Jared’s, non-threatening and easy-going despite the fact that he was clearly a strong Dom in his own right.

The submissive looked around the Dalton lounge, taking in the long, dark wood tables surrounded by plush, red chairs, matching perfectly to the colour of the biggest wall in the room. The rest of the walls were plain white and the contrast the red made against the slightly stuffy and uptight setting of the room was absolutely perfect.

Tapping his fingers against the table top Kurt caught sight of a magazine sitting a few places away, and desperate for some entertainment to keep his mind off things he reached for it, pulling it closer and flipping it right side up.

His breath caught in his throat and his eyes watered in an instant at the sight of the cover, showing Blaine waving an angry fist at the camera and himself hiding behind his Dom, eyes downcast and fearful.

The bold, black letters of the headline cut through the centre of the page making Kurt cringe and look away, blinking the tears back:
"Dom Anderson's biggest mistake!"

Through the haze of his thoughts assaulting him with ways and plans to get out of the world he didn't belong to, he heard footsteps approaching and he turned around to see Nick walking into the room. He pushed the magazine under the table quickly, missing the look Nick gave him as he caught the action and the cover of the magazine.

The Dom decided to let it slide for the time being, opting to, instead, smile brightly and get to know his best friend's new sub.

"Here, I didn't know how you took your coffee and I didn't want to mess it up so I got you some tea." Nick smiled when Kurt thanked him genuinely and cupped his hands around the cup gratefully, cradling it to his chest as if it were a shield that would keep him safe against the unfamiliar place he found himself in. Nick could already see exactly what Blaine saw in him; what made him so appealing to the Dom.

Kurt was so pure, so unspoiled by the uniformed education most subs went through. It felt like his submissiveness came so naturally, like he didn't have to play around to get attention. One look from those blue eyes could get him any Dom he wanted, but Kurt didn't seem like the kind of person who would use that, or even recognised he was capable of it.

The way he clung to Blaine when he realized it was time for his Dom to leave made Nick optimistic for his friends bond, because as difficult he knew things would be for them it seemed as if the young sub was accepting Blaine and his natural, almost forceful Dominance without even consciously knowing it.

It was like they were created for one another; one with a Dominant streak so strong it rivalled his mothers who was thought to be the most influential, commandeering and unrelenting Doms of their time, and the other made to soothe that dominance, and to balance it out with submissiveness so soft and tender Nick could tell they would make the perfect couple if they could work it out.

He watched Kurt take a tentative sip then was surprised when the sub thanked him again, like he had to praise him after every sip.

"Thank you, sir," he said politely, eyes downcast and voice small.

Nick rolled his eyes and dropped down into the chair across from Kurt waving a hand in dismissal as he got comfortable.

"Just Nick. Please. All that 'Sir' nonsense is making me feel old. And I'm way too pretty to feel like that." He winked and Kurt gasped at him, feeling completely thrown off guard by this unusual behaviour.

He had never met a Dom who didn't like being called Sir or Master before being claimed by Blaine. First it was Dana who'd shrugged off the title, then Blaine and he could swallow that because he was technically a part of their family for now and it wasn't like he was calling his dad 'Sir', but an outside Dominant not expecting or wanting it either?

"B-but… you're a… a Dom," he whispered, losing a battle with his own curiosity even knowing that he could be punished for talking to a Dom like that, but Nick merely shrugged.

"I am. And I act like a Dom and the subs around me know that I'm a Dom. So I don't really see a point in making that even more obvious when there's no need for it," he said as if it were the most obvious thing in the world and when he thought about it Kurt could see logic behind his words.
However, it made him warm on the inside when he heard Carole call his father sir. It made him smile when Mercedes called Sam that way too, and it seemed so loving and intimate when Jared called Dana, 'my lady'. Somewhere deep down he knew it would make him happy to be able to call Blaine sir someday and he wondered what Nick's sub felt like if she was forbidden from calling him something that made her happy.

He was barely able to keep the question to himself because it felt like it was eating him on the inside, but he also didn't want to anger someone who Blaine considered one of his best friends. So he bit his tongue, sipping his tea and avoiding Nick's gaze until the older boy chuckled and nudged his foot beneath the table.

"You can ask me anything you want, you know. We have some time before Blaine gets back and I'd like for you to feel comfortable in my presence. From the way he looks at you you'll be around for a long time," he teased and Kurt inhaled a sip of his tea, eyes tearing up and coughing like crazy as Nick's presumption slammed into him.

"Wh… what do you mean?" he managed to wheeze through his coughing fit and Nick barked out a laugh before shaking his head.

"How about you ask what you wanted to ask before and we'll get back to what I thought after that hmm?" he offered and Kurt steadied himself and took a few long breaths before managing to get his coughing under control and his tea going down the correct pipe.

He eyed Nick for a second wondering where the catch was. What he was about to ask was pretty personal and they had exchanged a grand total of fifteen words before that, so it really did seem like he was crossing a million boundaries and breaking all the polite behaviour etiquettes.

But Nick didn't seem to mind. In fact, he seemed to want to encourage rule breaking.

"Oh come on, Kurt. Now I'm all curious and I won't be able to sleep if you don't tell me and then I'll have bags under my eyes and I'll be ugly. Do you want that?" he exclaimed dramatically and Kurt had no choice but to laugh along and shake his head.

"I could never live with myself if I made you ugly," he dared to tease back and it seemed like Nick appreciated it by the way his smile pulled wider at his lips, making his face shine.

"Great. Now what did you want to ask?" he prompted and Kurt lowered his cup down onto the table, the cup's rim leaving a wet circle on the wooden surface.

"Well… doesn't your sub mind?" he asked clumsily and Nick cocked his head.

"Mind what?"

"That she doesn't get to call you ‘Sir’? I mean… subs… well… we, um… we like that," he explained in a hushed tone, already regretting starting on this topic when Nick's face lit up with understanding.

"Oh! That's what you thought. Well… first of all I don't have a sub yet, and even if I did it would be a ‘he’ not a ‘she’. Second, you're not the only ones who like that, because it's a great honour to a Dom to be deemed worthy of that title by a sub. And third, if it made my sub happy I'd let him call me whatever the hell he wanted to call me. Sir, master, dick, whatever struck his fancy," he said with a completely nonchalant shrug and Kurt giggled at the outrageous idea of a sub calling his Dom a dick.

"What I meant with my statement earlier is that I don't like being addressed formally out of some
sense of courtesy and the need to feel above someone else," Nick continued, his arms flailing around him passionately as he tried to express his point but Kurt wasn't sure he understood completely.

"I… I'm sorry I'm not sure I understand it completely," he murmured shyly and Nick nodded.

"It's okay. Hmm…. Okay, let me try to explain it like this. Doms are meant to make subs feel happy and comfortable and safe, yes? While most people think that applies only to your own sub I couldn't disagree more. My opinion is that as a Dom it is my ‘job’ to make every sub in my presence feels comfortable. If my sub felt happy calling me ‘Sir’ then that's what he should call me. But if another sub, mine or someone else's felt merely obligated to do so, but not comfortable, I wouldn't like that. Did you feel the need to call me sir, or did you do it for another reason?" he asked and Kurt was caught flatfooted, still caught up in Nick’s passionate explanation and floored in realising just how different these people were from what he thought they would be.

"I did it because you're Blaine's friend and I didn't want to make you angry by not behaving like I was supposed to," he answered honestly, feeling like he owed it to Nick to be truthful after what he shared about himself.

"Exactly. And I could tell. If I had felt you were comfortable calling me that I wouldn't have said a word. But you didn't. And I want you to feel comfortable around me," he said, sipping his own coffee and Kurt watched him in awe of the beauty his personality held. "And to answer your earlier question, I've known Blaine since I was a little kid and he was always someone I looked up to. I've never seen him this happy, or this determined to make things right as he is since he claimed you. I know you've only been around for a few days but I can tell, he wants you around for a long, long time. You make him whole."

Kurt gaped at him like a fish out of water, unable to believe what he was hearing.

"I… really? You really believe that?" he asked as his eyes widened and he stared incredulously at Nick as he nodded his head in confirmation.

"Really, really. And I'm glad he found you," he said gently.

Kurt lowered his eyes shyly, his heart clenching at the warm words that contrasted so heavily with what was being said about him in the media. All he'd heard before now was a string of people saying he was the worst possible match for Blaine and how wrong they were together, so hearing this from Blaine's best friend of all people left him a little numb from the shock.

"You're the only one," he said bitterly and Nick stood up quickly, rounding the table and taking Kurt's hands in his own.

"Trust me, I'm not. Who cares what they have to say, Kurt. They're wrong about so many things regarding our lives. And fine, there are some Doms in our society that really are like that, changing subs like socks, never caring about anything or anyone but their own fix, but Blaine, myself and a whole lot of others only want one thing. A sub we can love and care for and make happy. We want someone who'll be happy to kneel for us, not feel compelled to do it out of fear. We want someone to trust we have their best interest at heart at all times. Trust me, Kurt, that's the only thing Blaine wants from you," he said determinately, the conviction in his voice forcing Kurt to look up and meet his eyes that were filled with honesty; completely genuine.

Kurt gave him a watery smile. That damned magazine cover the furthest thing from his mind as he assessed the Dom in front of him. Handsome, intelligent, polite, kind, trustworthy, just the right amount of sassy and quirky and unusual. And as he looked at him, inexplicably, the face of his best friend popped into his head; broken smile, dulled eyes, shyness etched into his skin and he wondered
why life had to be so cruel to give Jeff to someone who hurt him so badly when there were Doms out there, practically perfect Doms like Nick, ready and willing to make any sub feel like royalty.

He couldn't help but wonder if Nick would be able to heal Jeff. If he would be able to help him come out of his shell and shine again. He could picture them in his head together so perfectly that he almost opened his mouth to say something, but then reality crashed back into focus. Yes, he could wonder and hope, but he knew it was wishful thinking. Nick would claim a rich, trained sub and Jeff would remain in the mud that was Lima and there was nothing Kurt could do about that. He was half expecting himself to be back there with him any day now after all, so what was the use of getting anybody's hopes up?

They sat in comfortable silence after that, sipping their coffees, lost in their own thoughts and it wasn't too long later that Blaine reappeared with a bright smile that could only speak of good news.

"They agreed I take it from that shit eating grin?" Nick laughed.

Blaine settled into the chair on Kurt's right, shuffling it closer to him almost on instinct and wrapped an arm around the back of Kurt's. It oddly made the sub feel more comfortable instead of awkward and he fought the urge to lean into him just barely. He caught Nick's eyes and blushed at the knowing look there.

"No board, just the Principal," Blaine said like that explained everything and the answering smile of Nick's said that, to him, it did. But Kurt got a flare of hope in his chest anyway. Did this mean he could prolong his start here for a little longer? That he wouldn't have to deal with all the judgemental stares and hurtful comments?

"You're so lucky he likes you, B."

"It's impossible not to like me!" Blaine exclaimed brightly and Nick rolled his eyes heavily before getting up. "You want your usual, Mr Likeable?"

He got another smile in answer and walked off, shaking his head.

Blaine turned to Kurt then and nuded his shoulders gently with his arm. "You okay? He wasn't awfully boring, right?"

Kurt snapped his head up. "No! He was-" he cut himself off when he saw the playful glint in golden eyes and kept from making a fool of himself with a panicked rant about Nick's best qualities. "He was very nice," he said instead, then admitted, "I liked him."

Blaine beamed. "Good, I don't want you feeling uncomfortable."

Nick came back with the coffee soon after and they all sat around and talked for a while, Nick and Blaine sharing amusing banter and trying to one up each other telling Kurt witty anecdotes to get him to laugh the most.

Kurt almost forgot he didn't belong there at all for a time.

"Okay, so, now that the boring part is over... we get to have some fun." Blaine clapped his hands once excitedly as he plopped down onto the sofa, laptop perched on his knees.
He eyed his sub who stood next to him; a soft, unsure smile on his heavenly lips and he just couldn't help himself. He needed to be a Dom to this beautiful creature that now belonged to him, he needed to let him know he could let himself be around him without fear.

Taking his hand gently he allowed his voice to drop and the barely contained dominance he held in check to seep into it carefully, slowly, unnoticeably, but still there, still compelling, still ordering.

"Come sit next to me," he whispered and he could feel Kurt's body tremble at the sound of his simple order, his lithe frame melting into the plush cushions with such grace and ease it made it hard to believe he wasn't raised wrapped in silk and gold.

Feeling how relaxed he was against him he dared to put an arm around his shoulders gently for the second time that day and pull him closer, nosing at his neck and inhaling the scent of the man he so desperately wished to own completely, like a Dominant would. But he knew he had to take it slowly, he had to let Kurt decide what he was ready for as much as it pushed his limits and made him itch on the inside with all that pent up dominance cruising through his veins with no outlet.

Refocusing, he opened up his laptop and placed the device half on his own legs and half on Kurt's so they could both look at the screen directly.

"Um... what are we doing?" Kurt asked quietly, feeling his body tremble with the desire to bury himself closer to the Dom. The last shreds of his command warming his skin, giving it a visibly healthier glow. He didn't want to admit it, didn't want to acknowledge it, but something inside him knew that it was right for him, that Blaine was right for him.

Shaking the heavy thought out of his head he focused on the screen, curious to see what Blaine wanted them to do as he took in the links the Dom was clicking on.

*Travelling agencies.*

"Well, I was thinking you could choose a destination for us to go to. We don't actually need the agency because my family owns a small cruiser, but this could give you some ideas maybe, and we'll need a hotel if we decide to sleep on land," he said casually.

He relinquished the laptop’s controls over to Kurt and the younger man looked at the device with his smile falling and brows drawing together. The last time he used a computer was ages ago when they still had one at the library and every student was granted five minutes on it. They did it in alphabetical order so Kurt got his turn rather quickly while those whose name started with a letter closer to the end of the alphabet never even got their chance because the old machine just stopped working.

And so his knowledge of modern technology like this was practically non-existent and he really didn't want to ruin the sleek, silver laptop he was sure cost more than his family home. He could feel Blaine's worried eyes on him and he realized that he'd completely frozen altogether when his Dom spoke again.

"Is everything okay, lovely?" he asked and Kurt looked down to his lap, cheeks flushing.

"Yes, I just... do you think you could um... manage that?" He pointed to the laptop on his lap gingerly. "I've only used a computer once and I don't want to mess it up." His last sentence came out as a whisper and Blaine smiled at him, gently lifting his chin up with his fingers.

"Don't worry. I'll tell you what to do... you just need to click. Okay?" he asked and Kurt eyed the machine sideways once again before biting his lip and nodding in confirmation, making Blaine
"Okay, so first thing's first, is there anywhere you've always wanted to go?" he asked as he took Kurt's hand and arranged his fingers on the keyboard.

"No… not really… I… I've never allowed myself to wish for something like that," he said quietly and Blaine stroked his thumb across the back of his palm gently.

"I understand that but, c'mon... nobody has that good of a self-control." He winked and Kurt giggled a bit. "There's gotta be a place that your mind wandered off to when you weren't careful?" he insisted and Kurt bit his cheek knowing the exact place, but fearing he'd look silly in front of Blaine. Maybe Blaine has already been there so it'll bore him to death? Maybe it's too expensive? Maybe it's not expensive enough?

"Okay, from the pained look on your face I'm guessing there is such a place and now your mind is working overtime to give you all the reasons why it would be wrong to share that with me. Am I right?" Blaine asked and Kurt felt himself tense a bit before his fingers started picking at his nails and he nodded.

"I want you to stop that."

Another rush of command crashed off of him like a wave off the shore and he relaxed at once fingers splaying immobile against the cool surface of the laptop as Blaine continued to talk. "Just tell me and we can go there, I can make it happen for you. Please, let me."

Kurt lifted his eyes up to find his Dom looking at him with a plea written so clearly on his face he couldn't help but move his fingers over the computer mouse and drag the pointer towards a picture of a gorgeous coast, white sand contrasting the dark blue of the sea and colourful houses littering the cliffs.

"There... I... I've always wanted to go there," he admitted one of his secret desires quietly and Blaine beamed again, guiding his hand over the screen.

"There it is," he announced happily and Kurt stared at him for a whole minute until Blaine turned towards him.

"What?"

Kurt couldn't help but let out a giggle at the confused expression making his Dom look like a kid.

"Just like that? I point and you take me there?" he asked, lifting his eyebrow and Blaine cupped his cheeks with both hands softly, careful not to startle him.

"Every time. Even if you pointed at the stars," he whispered and Kurt blushed, a startled gasp breaking out of his lips as Blaine leaned closer, moving one hand and placing a barely there kiss on his cheek before turning back to the computer.

"We'll need a hotel. Want to help me book one?" he asked and Kurt shook himself out of the trance those lips put him in, eyelashes fluttering and mouth closing, as he nodded and looked back at the screen, allowing Blaine to lead his hand as they clicked link, after link, after link.

"And now we click confirm and we're all set. Want to do the honours?" Blaine waggled his
eyebrows and Kurt allowed himself a small eye roll as he took control of the mouse again, bringing the little white arrow to the yellow painted button reading "CONFIRM" and clicking on it once, black letters popping up and blinking at them a second later.
Shipped

Chapter Notes

Hello everyone.
The next chapter is here and we hope you'll enjoy it. Thank you for all the lovely comments you've sent us so far and please, do keep them coming because they make us all giddy and excited all over again :) There is tags for the warnings on the story but we're gonna put this on here as well in case anyone is triggered, we do not want that at all! So this is the chapter where the non/con warning comes into play! So please be advised while reading. It's the end scene of the chapter

Love
A&M

WARNING: brief description of an abusive situation.

There was no way what he was staring at was real.

Huge and imposing in the darkness, it sparkled as the moonlight reflected off the polished white finish of the yacht as well as the gently lapping sea it sat gracefully upon. There were spotlights dotted around the outside of the boat done in a muted blue that created pretty shades and shadows across the hull, illuminating the scrawled Lady written there in red calligraphy, as well as the shine of the standard lighting up on the deck.
Kurt was struck dumb in the face of it.

The size and wealth it screamed at him with was almost surreal to look upon, alien in a way that Kurt couldn't decide whether he liked or not.

Of course, objectively, it was beautiful.

Sleek and cut in lines and sections that Kurt couldn't properly fathom, but it was that very same foreign fascination that gave him a somewhat sick feeling in the bottom of his stomach. The stark awareness that he didn’t belong began to creep up on him once more, inadequacy and inferiority nipping at its heels. It was a hard thing to shake off in the face of so awe inspiring a sight, but he did his best to simply enjoy the moment. Enjoy the fact that he was in a different country. That he'd flown here on a plane for the first time- a private jet no less- and now he was apparently about to board a yacht for the duration of their stay.

It was like a dream.

A dream he kept forgetting the details to because he barely remembered the trip her. It had all happened in a whirlwind he wasn't accustomed to.

How Blaine had begun packing things for them as soon as they had confirmed their plans and making arrangements in a quick, organized manner while Kurt was left floundering. Panicking and not sure what was expected of him seeing as he'd never travelled further than Westerville out of Lima.

It was funny how Blaine had the ability to relieve every little worry he had however.

*He didn't have anything suitable to wear?*

Blaine asked his size then called his father up to ask him to pick up some things for him and he was back within the hour with bags full. He went on a little tangent about them spending money on him
and how they didn’t have to get him *that much* clothes, but they just waved them off saying Dana spent more window-shopping than they had spent on him and earned themselves a slap on the back of their heads from the petite lady.

*What about the media if they found out they were going to the airport?*  
Blaine informed him that they’d be heading straight for his families hangar and for few minutes Kurt, very dignifiedly, stared at him like a fish out of water because *of course* the Anderson’s had a private plane just waiting for them.

*What about his dad?*  
Blaine passed him the phone to call him and his father thought it was a good idea for them to get away for a while, though he wanted regular checks-ins. He’d glanced at Blaine, hesitantly mouthing his father’s demand and smiled when Blaine said, "Whenever you want," with a cute wink.

They were on their way towards the airport within a few hours and stepping onto the plane soon after that. It was all a blur of movement and gentle commands from Blaine, soft reassurances in his ear and soothing hands on his as he guided him through it. He felt his body move without him directing it to; he felt it relax and unwind and he felt so safe, so protected, so cared for and when he self-examined, the walls he built around himself didn’t seem as tall anymore.

The loss of control was frightening. The realization that he trusted Blaine enough to allow him to direct him that way and ensure his safety whilst doing so even more terrifying.

But was it wrong to cave so quickly? Was it wrong to just go with what his instincts were screaming at him instead of always putting his mind first? Was it wrong to just let go and enjoy being with Blaine for as long as it lasted?

He shuddered out a breath not wanting to dig too deep into that train of thought just yet and instead let the cool breeze caress his overheated skin. He wasn’t used to this type of heat, the humidity and how it seemed to wrap around him like a blanket even though it was nearing on midnight.

"Kurt?"

He tore his eyes off the boat and faced a concerned looking Blaine who dropped their suitcases, which he’d insisted on carrying from the taxi, to the wooden pier under their feet. He took Kurt’s hand and urged him closer. "What’s wrong, lovely? Do you not like it? We can go to the hotel right away if you’d like? I’m sure they could find us a room even if we weren’t due to be there until Fri-.”

"No!" Kurt interrupted, then blushed at his outburst and looked down at his feet. "I don’t want to stay in a hotel."

Blaine made a happy noise. "So you like it?" he asked to clarify and there was an eagerness there that made Kurt glance up to see his Dom staring at him intently waiting for his answer.

"Yes," he breathed, his eyes drawing back towards the yacht. "It’s…” His words fell short of describing what he truly thought. Amazing. Breath-taking. Awe inspiring. He didn’t know how to express it. "I don’t know what to say," he confessed and Blaine cupped his cheek to reconnect their gazes.

"You don’t have to say anything," he assured warmly. "As long as you're happy and comfortable."

Kurt blushed heavily and thanked god that it was dark so Blaine couldn’t see the extent to which his face coloured and heated, because the truth was, he was happy and comfortable. In that moment, with Blaine so close and staring at him with such open affection and caring, Kurt was the happiest
he'd been in a while. More comfortable in his own skin than he'd ever felt.

"Mr. Anderson?" a voice called from the gangplank breaking the moment and Kurt immediately missed the tingle where their skin met when Blaine dropped his hand and turned to face the man dressed in a typical Captain's uniform. It was completely white in colour, pressed slacks and a starched shirt with a small red bird in flight stitched there on the breast pocket, the same which was emblazoned over the brim of his Captain's hat.

"Captain Ericson," Blaine greeted and it was clear he was familiar with the man in the warm tone he used.

They met in the middle of the pier and shook hands. He was tall and sturdy in frame, around late thirties to early forties and he had kind brown eyes set in a tanned face. It was clear to see he was a Dom with how his every move screamed command and fierceness, but at the same time his smile was kind and warm and Kurt felt himself relax slightly.

"You've grown," the Captain said, squeezing Blaine's hand affectionately.

"I was fourteen the last time I was on here and now I'm twenty two," Blaine said dryly. "I should hope I've grown a little in that time frame."

Ericson cocked a brow and eyed him critically up and down, then grinned with easy humour, "A very little."

Blaine scowled and Kurt found it impossible to smother his giggle even with the back of his hand.

"Hey! I'm a sight to behold too!" Blaine exclaimed, offended, and Kurt peeked back up.

"You do make a striking couple," Ericson conceded and Kurt's stomach fluttered at the use of the word before the humour radiating from the Captain shifted into something more professional.

"Well, we'll get you on board and off now shall we? I'm sure you're tired."

Fatigue washed over Kurt like an inbuilt response when he heard the word 'tired' and he smothered the urge to yawn. Bed sounded wonderful.

Blaine seemed to notice his fight with keeping his eyes open and smiled affectionately at him before turning back to the Captain. "That'd be great. This stubborn one refused to get any sleep on the plane," he teased, interlinking their fingers on their joined hands.

"The clouds were pretty. And you didn't sleep either," Kurt pointed out flippantly with an arched brow, trying to ignore the way Blaine's touch made his heart race.

Ericson laughed. "He's got fire, Blaine. You've got your hands full."

Kurt blushed again, eyes widening in realization, thoroughly embarrassed by his outburst.

"That's fine with me," Blaine murmured so low that even Kurt struggled to catch it, but he did and it made his breath catch as he struggled to comprehend the statement.

Blaine liked it when he back-talked him? Surely not. Though, he didn't do it to challenge Blaine at all; the comments just seemed to roll out of his mouth as soon as his mind thought them. It was a
result of his time at McKinley. He had nothing but his words to defy the Doms that much bigger than him with the ability to try and command him to bend or break to their will and so he'd developed a quick mind and a sharp tongue.

He had always thought of it as his biggest strength, but somewhere deep down he knew there was no way he could allow himself to talk to his Dom like that. However, moments with Blaine found him relaxed and comfortable and his diva-ish comments and remarks just slipped from his lips before he could control himself. But instead of a reprimand they were usually followed by an amused chuckle and a look that could only be described as awe from his Dom, making Kurt's insides warm and fuzzy at the knowledge that no matter how much he feared the older boy he obviously wasn't out to hurt him.

Ericson stepped up breaking him out of his thoughts and grabbed their luggage before leading the way back towards the railed gangplank. Kurt stared with fascination at the inky blackness of the water below as they walked over it before the subtle rocking of the boat itself arrested his attention once he stepped foot on deck.

It was the strangest sensation. Like the ground beneath his feet was solid, but not, at the same time.

Before he could grow properly accustomed or even get a proper glance at their surroundings they were off again, Kurt largely relying on Blaine to settle his equilibrium as they descended a set of polished stairs and led down a corridor that split into two rooms at the end.

"The rooms are all prepared for you," the Captain explained setting the suitcases down and turning to Blaine. "You remember where everything is?"

He nodded.

"Okay, well, I'll leave you to get settled and I'll be up on the bridge if you need me. I think the only thing left to say is welcome to Fuerteventura and the Lady. She's very happy to have you." He grinned before leaving completely after Blaine had thanked him.

"Okay, so... there are two rooms on the Lady." Blaine took their stuff and lugged them into the narrow hallway. "A master bedroom my parents use when they're on the cruise, and the small bedroom I sleep in when I come with them. Take your pick."

He smiled at his sub and Kurt backpedalled a step.

He got to sleep alone again? He didn't have to share a bed with him just yet? But... is that just a way to make him look bad? Like should he decline his own room and just jump into bed with his Dom and give him what he wants?

"I...I don't k-know, I..."

"Kurt..." Blaine gently cupped his chin and brought his face up to look his in the eye. "You're not obligated to do anything. We're here to have some fun and spend some time together. Would I like to have you in my arms at night? Absolutely. But as long as you're uncomfortable with it, it's not going to happen. And even if you decide to sleep in the same bed with me, I'll do no more than hold you until you show me you want more."

Kurt's eyes widened and his heart thumped at the thought of sleeping in his Dom's arms, but his body betrayed him, his mind scared him and he shivered, completely sure he wasn't ready just yet. Maybe he was closer than three days ago, but he most certainly wasn't ready yet.

"I... I'll take the small bedroom if that's okay?" he said, feeling like a smaller space might help him
feel more comfortable, be more familiar to him and soothe his nerves. Blaine must have figured it out because he made no move to argue his choice. He nodded and showed him the entrance to the small room to his right.

He carried the suitcase in and stepped aside to let Kurt inside to see the room.

What he saw made him gasp.

Dark wood furniture filling in the small room, with a double door closet to his right and a fluffy looking, huge bed to his left. Directly in front of him, a dresser with a carved framed mirror above it and next to it the door to the private bathroom reserved only for him.

Blaine took in his awed expression and smiled gently.

"Will this do?" he asked teasingly and Kurt turned to him, lips stretched into a smile and eyes twinkling lightly.

"It's gorgeous, Blaine," he said on an exhale and the sound of that breathy voice made Blaine ache to hear it in a different setting, breathing around the letters of his name like that as he lied beneath him, writhing in pleasure.

Feeling his pants tighten he reached out and gave Kurt's hand a parting squeeze before walking towards the door, not only to stop himself from acting on his urges, but also to find the Captain and set one of his plans for tomorrow in motion. He wanted to make this trip perfect for Kurt and that was exactly what he was going to do.

"I'm glad to hear it," he said as he stepped out and pulled the door after him. "Sleep tight, lovely."

"Sleep tight, Blaine." Kurt smiled back and with a gentle click Blaine was gone, leaving Kurt to bask
Kurt stirred and blinked awake from the deep vestiges of his sleep feeling pleasantly warm, almost bordering on too hot. He moved his legs to kick away the soft sheet he had slept under when he noticed that he already had at some point during the night and they were a crumpled pile at the bottom of the bed.

Stretching out catlike on the comfortable mattress, he tried to get his mind to catch up with him as he peered around the unfamiliar surroundings of the room he was to stay the week in. It was almost unnaturally bright in the room from the sun peeking in through the window he hadn't drawn the curtain on, and he slinked from his spot on the bed onto his feet to glance out, almost catching his breath when he saw nothing but stretching crystal-blue ocean in front of him.

Wow.

And just like that he noticed that the steady rock of the boat was still very much in affect and he gripped onto the wall to steady himself hoping to god he didn't get sea sick like he'd read sometimes people did.

A soft knock on the door startled him out of his thoughts.

"Kurt?"

It was Blaine and Kurt was suddenly very aware that he was only wearing a pair of light cotton sleep pants; his torso bare and pale in the sunlight and a flush spreading down his neck and chest at the thought of Blaine seeing him like that.

But the doorknob remained blissfully unmoving and he released the corner of the sheet he had gripped to try and cover himself in case Blaine tried to come inside.

"Yes?" he called back hating how his voice cracked over the word.

"It’s nearly lunch time, I thought I could give you a tour before we eat something?" came the muffled voice of his Dom. The mention of lunch made his stomach gurgle and his curiosity about the boat flamed once again, making him giddy at the prospect.

He was suddenly very eager to see the rest of this amazing vessel and called back a quick acquiescence before hurrying towards the shower. Dried and dressed in a pair of blue cut offs, flip flops and a lightweight white tee with a scooped neckline, he headed towards the door and opened it tentatively.

Blaine was waiting propped up against the wall in the narrow space; dressed similarly in a pair of long swimming trunks and a black vest top showcasing his impressive frame. Kurt tried not to stare, he really did, but Blaine was unfairly appealing.

A smile stretched over his Dom’s face when he spotted him. "Hey, lovely. Sleep well?"

Kurt nodded shyly. "Yes, thank you. You?"
"Yeah, it's nice to be back here actually. I didn't realised I'd missed it until I was here again," he answered sincerely, a hint of nostalgia in his tone. "So, tour time?"

He held out his hand and Kurt hesitated only a moment before sliding his own into it. He was getting better at accepting the contact, but worse at controlling his body's reactions to it as his heart picked up speed and his nerve endings sang.

He swallowed. "Sure."

Blaine graced him with a beaming smile before tugging them off. "So as you know these are the bedrooms." He led them back upstairs onto the deck and Kurt saw now that it was far more equipped than he ever imagined it could be. A small bar just off to the side of the glass entrance to another inside space that looked like a living area, a cream couch that stretched the length of the curve around the left side of the ships railing, a small table in front of it to enjoy meals outside, an impressive looking sound system and a small set up of cushions and a blanket in the right corner. "This is the main deck, it's got a sunroof that can fold back to get more sun if you don't want to head up top to catch some colour," he said with a fully-fledged grin. Kurt was speechless as he looked up and indeed saw an awning that was shielding them from the worst of the midday sun.

He was tugged again and they headed inside to the living space that had more of those cream couches in different sizes, televisions, a chess table, full bookcases and even an exercise bike in the corner. "No one spends too much time in here. It's wrong to spend time inside when the view and the feeling outside is as perfect as it is," Blaine dismissed the room easily and led them through the galley, pointing towards a smaller room where the Captain slept and towards the bridge at the front of the ship.

Ericson nodded to them in greeting from the helm as they passed and headed up towards the very top level which consisted simply of sun cushions. Blaine pointed downwards towards the back of the yacht where there was an area of space just above the water level, apparently used mainly for water
"This is... oh, wow..." Kurt trailed off as he perched himself at the railing on the top glancing all around him with wide curious eyes, wanting to soak it all in.

"I'm glad you like it, lovely," Blaine replied softly and Kurt could hear the smile in his voice.

Kurt glanced coyly over his shoulder at him. "It's perfect."

Blaine beamed then grabbed his hand again. "C'mon, Ericson should be setting out lunch."

They got down to deck level once more before Blaine let go of his hand and let him go on in front of him. Kurt didn't think much of it until Blaine slipped his hands gently around his eyes making him stiffen up.

"Blaine?" he asked questioningly.

"Shh, just keep walking forwards for me," he commanded softly and Kurt felt he familiar tingle in
his blood as he did as asked.

"Blaine, I can't see a thing!" Kurt used his best whiny voice to get Blaine to take his hands off his eyes so he could see where he was going.

He had no idea what his Dom was planning and it was making him both excited and anxious at the same time. They had been on the boat less than twenty four hours and already Blaine was making him all flustered and clumsy.

To prove his previous statement he tripped over something wire-y and proceeded to stumble forward until strong hands helped him regain balance while somehow still keeping his eyes closed.

"Easy, lovely. Watch where you're going," he teased and then chuckled when he could almost feel the eye roll beneath his palm.

"Hilarious," the sub drawled unimpressed, checking himself for possible injuries with his hands. "If I had known you brought me here to kill me I would have let someone know where I was... like the police."

"Ooooh my sub has claws," Blaine sang and Kurt stiffened under his touch only then realizing how relaxed he was being, how free and uninhibited his wayward tongue was running.

He gasped, embarrassed as he lowered his head down, forgetting for a second that Blaine didn't mind his "claws".

"I… I'm sorry," he tried, but the hand on his eyes was joined by another covering his mouth as Blaine shushed his apology.

"Never apologize for that. I love it," Blaine said near his ear, removing his hand from his lips when he nodded and placing it on the small of his back giving him a gentle push.

Kurt took a tentative step forward and then the hand on his eyes was gone and all that left was a blinding beam of sunshine bathing a fluffy blanket piled with cushions, and a basket sitting in the middle of it. Honestly this was nothing he ever would have let himself dream up. They were in the middle of the sea, everything around them blue and infinite and Kurt felt like he was never more alive.

"Wh... Blaine, what is this?" he breathed out and his Dom took his hand leading him towards the blanket, kicking off his shoes and sinking down into the pillows and tugging his hand.

"It's a picnic. Come sit down."

Blaine started to inflict small orders on Kurt to see if he would be responsive to them and while consciously Kurt knew what he was doing and could very well call him out on it, his body seemed to enjoy it and he never mentioned that he had noticed it.

It warmed Blaine from the inside and he smiled when his sub sat on the blanket gingerly, arranging his clothes neatly around himself.

"Nobody can see you here you know. You can look a little bit messed up," Blaine teased and Kurt gave him and appalled look.

"There's no excuse for looking sloppy," he declared and then bit his lip in deep thought for a second. "Unless you or someone you love is in mortal danger," he corrected, paused for a second to assess his statement, before obviously deeming it valid when he nodded in determination making Blaine chuckle.
"Really. Mortal peril is your only excuse to look sloppy?" he drawled and Kurt raised a perfect eyebrow at him as if daring him to disagree. "Well then I guess I'm pushing my luck all the time."

He laughed and Kurt let out a cute little giggle, hidden behind the back of his palm.

"You look good," he said and then widened his eyes, not quite able to believe he said it out loud as he clapped a hand over his lips, blushing.

"You look beautiful as you do every day," Blaine returned simply and turned around to let Kurt get a hold of himself while he took out the food and a stack of pale green cards with bright red question marks printed on them.

He arranged two plates and handed one to Kurt, placing the cards between the two of them in a neat stack, observing for a second before tilting his head and messing them up to form a messy pile and smiling happily.

"What are those?" Kurt asked as he shifted his eyes between his overflowing plate and the green pile of question marks on the floor. "Also I can't eat all this. It's too much."

"You can eat as much as you want. As long as you eat healthy and enough not to be hungry. Okay?" he asked letting another drop of dominance seep into his voice and Kurt smiled nodding and picking up his fork, pointing it at the cards again.

"And that?" he asked and Blaine actually smirked at him, pulling one random card and flipping it over with a smile.

"They're question cards. We'll play a game while we eat. Each of us pulls a random card and before flipping it over to look at the question chooses either to answer the question, ask the other person to answer it, or both," he winked playfully and Kurt frowned for a second, eyeing the cards carefully.

"Are there... um... personal questions?" he asked shyly, knowing full well how embarrassingly lame his personal life was with no experience to talk about at all.

"Anything you feel uncomfortable answering can be ignored. Kurt this is meant to be fun, not to freak you out, okay lovely?" Blaine said gently and the blue eyed boy nodded reaching out bravely and pulling a card from the bottom of the pile.

"Okay um... I'll answer this," he said and flipped the card over, a smile blooming on his face as he read it over. "What's your favourite colour?"

"It's blue, light blue," he answered thinking of the colour of his mark and placing the card to the side, taking a bite of his spinach filled tortellini and looking at Blaine under his lashes, who picked his own card.

"We both answer this one," he declared dramatically and flipped the card over and sighed. "Well this is anticlimactic. Do you live alone?"

Kurt giggled around the bite of his food and swallowed before answering a short, "No."

"Okay, me neither. You go and pick something good," he urged, taking a bite from his own plate and eyeing Kurt as he skimmed his fingers over the cards as if waiting for one to feel right under his touch.
Finally he drew one and decided that only Blaine had to answer before flipping it over and turning beet red, casting the card aside and reaching for another one before Blaine stopped him.

"What did it say?" he bounced curiously and Kurt shook his head, embarrassment clear in his eyes.

"Can I just pick another one?" he asked and Blaine chuckled at how cute he looked with his cheeks flushed and teeth pulling at his lip.

"How about you don't have to read it but I take a look at it and answer it as simply as possible?" Blaine suggested and Kurt flushed again nodding and looking away as Blaine turned the card over and barked out a laugh at the question.

"What's your favourite sexual position?"

"Okay if you don't want me to, I don't have to answer this," he conceded knowing it could make things awkward between them when things were so good.

"Can we... can we keep that one for some other time?" Kurt asked relieved and Blaine smiled taking his hand gently and kissing the tip of his fingers.

"Absolutely. Okay, me now. And this one will be the one you will answer," he said as he picked up the card closest to him and flipped it over. "What was your first kiss like?" he read in his best news anchor voice.

Kurt blushed again looking down and taking a deep breath before answering.

"I don't know yet," he murmured shyly and Blaine gaped at him, equal parts relieved, ecstatic and confused.

"You've never been kissed?" he asked, eyes wide and questioning.

"Um, no." Kurt shrugged, taking another bite of his food to give himself something to do while Blaine stared at him.

"How were they able to resist you?" the Dom choked out and Kurt's head snapped up, frowning at him in question.

"I… I don't… what?" he stammered confused and Blaine shook his head tilting it to the side, having the hardest time in the world trying to understand.

Were they all blind, deaf, stupid and vaccinated against sensing an amazing sub? Because he'd seen millions of them and Kurt was by far the best of them all.

"The Doms in your school... how did they manage to stay away from you when you're... god, Kurt, you're everything," he rasped in a single breath and Kurt lowered his eyes back to the ground picking at the blanket thinking what to say and not really coming up with anything clever.

"I… um… well I'm glad they did manage to stay away..." he let it trail with a frown before shaking his head clear of it. "'Kay, my turn," he rushed out and Blaine decided to let it go for the time being, his dominant streak purring with the knowledge that his angel was truly only his.

"Okay. Pick a card, any card." He flailed his arms over the pile making Kurt roll his eyes again, and Blaine found himself enchanted by that tiny diva trait he liked to show from time to time.

"Okay, um... we both answer this." He flipped the card over and smiled. "It's an easy one. Have you
ever met a famous person?"

"A famous person? Hmm... we've had dinner with the president once. But I was a kid so I don't know if that counts. And, well... Cooper, but he's my brother so I don't know if that counts either?"

Blaine shrugged and Kurt sipped at his juice trying not to faze him into being slightly hysterical because it was only the president of the united states and a famous movie star right?...Right. He shook it off before nodding.

"It counts, sure."

"Cool. Okay, did you?"

He reengaged his brain. "Yes. You," Kurt answered and Blaine frowned.

"I am not a famous person."

"Well it doesn't define what's considered a famous person here and your name is well known, you appear in the media and your family is influential and famous so there. I'll stick by my answer," he said and Blaine pouted.

"You're cheating. And now you have to answer this one on your own," he told him, drawing the card and reading the question. "What is the one thing you'd want to get or do in the next five days?"

Kurt drew his eyebrows, deep in thought as he tried to figure out an honest answer.

There were more than a few things scattered throughout his brain, more and more added with each passing moment in this amazing environment but there was one that had stuck with him from before now. Before the trip and the sea and the sand.

"Um... I... okay it's embarrassing but I'd like to hear you sing," he admitted the desire shyly and Blaine beamed at him, scooting closer and wrapping a hand around his waist gently.

"Don't be embarrassed by it. I'd love to sing for you sometime," he said and Kurt smiled happily nodding in consent before plucking the next card.

"We both answer this one." He turned the card in his hand and read out loud, "What is your most prized possession?"

"Do you want to go first?" Blaine offered and Kurt shrugged, playing with the card in his hand.

"It's a set of books my mom left me. They're fairytales, and they're beautiful," he said dreamily and Blaine frowned trying to visualize the stuff Burt brought for his son. There were no books among them.

"Where are they?" he asked curiously.

"I hid them back home. I...I always thought I would be claimed by someone who'll never let me keep them and I didn't want them destroyed. They're one of the last things I have of hers and I... as long as I have them it's like I get to have her. I couldn't let someone take her away," he whispered, a lone tear sliding down porcelain cheek and onto the skin of Blaine's palm cupping his chin.

"What about now?" he asked quietly and Kurt looked at him, awe and wonder and disbelief written all over his face.

His fear was disappearing so soon he didn't know what to think of that. Every minute was another
moment where Blaine did something to show him his happiness was what mattered. He didn't claim him to play some game of power or to turn him into a slave. He genuinely believed that a Dom's "Job" was to make sure his sub was happy, and it made Kurt's heart sing.

"Right now I feel like maybe I could keep them on a shelf again," he admitted and if someone had said to Blaine that someday a sentence so simple and plain and innocent could mean so much, could make his blood boil and his heart thump wildly in his chest, he would have told them they were crazy.

But he knew nothing was the same and nothing would ever be the same. He had a perfect sub and his life was finally, finally perfect.

"You," he said gently looking into those magical blues and stroking a thumb across his wet cheek.

"What?" Kurt asked searching his face and Blaine smiled.

"The most valuable thing I have. Not a possession but still a prize. You."

Kurt felt his body shiver from the words and he knew Blaine could feel it where he was still holding him by the waist.

It could be so easy to let go, he thought as Blaine's fingers traced nonsense shapes on his lower back.

It could be the easiest thing in the world.

He had already climbed up the walls around himself and peeked over them. There was very little stopping him from just climbing down on the other side and being free; free to embrace his Dom back, free to lean into him and allow the raw strength of his dominance balance the flow of unsatisfied submissiveness pooling inside of him.

Blaine's small, barely there orders kept him at bay but he knew he didn't have much longer before he'd need his Dom to soothe the tide completely and right now he felt it could be so easy to fall into that; fall into him.

He tilted his face into the hand now cradling his head and nuzzled into it before catching himself and he rushed to put his defences up again, glancing at Blaine guiltily and knowing the Dom saw it if the crestfallen look on his face was any indication, but Kurt couldn't be sure of it because only a second later it was replaced with a beaming smile.

"Okay… um do you want to play some more or do you want to do something else?" Blaine asked as he packed their empty plates and glasses back into the basket and set it aside to be picked up at some later point. The small moment where Kurt let go and allowed him in sent him soaring only to crash back down at the closed off look only a second later.

But they had time; he could be patient and wait because Kurt was more than worth it.

"What did you have in mind?" Kurt asked, standing up and helping Blaine fold the blanket and rearrange the cushions into a neat little pile and placing them on top of a folded blanket for someone to put away.

He turned to look at his Dom who reached out a hand and smiled at him warmly.

"Today we're being lazy. We'll go to the upper deck, catch some sun, work on getting a tan, talk a little bit more…"
Sunbathing as a whole was largely considered a relaxing activity. It was all about shutting your mind down for a while, letting your body unwind and rest as the warmth lulled it into that dreamy half asleep state.

Clearly no one had ever sunbathed with the angel that was Kurt Hummel next to them when they were making that assessment.

Blaine was in torment… wonderful, *excruciating* torment.

He thought that maybe if his goal all along had been duplicitous and he was using the practice as a tool in order to see more of Kurt it wouldn't have knocked his brain dead quite so thoroughly, but he wasn't… and so he was wholly unprepared in the face of so much smooth flawlessness.

Kurt had been adorably shy about removing his top as they lazed around yesterday after lunch. He had simply sat underneath a parasol happily enough, knees held to his chest loosely while they made small talk of inconsequential things that still made the Dom light up, never bored because he wanted to hear anything Kurt had to say. And so Blaine hadn't pushed at all no matter how hard he was wishing and pleading and begging internally for Kurt to follow his example, he left it at that for the day.

This morning however, with the morning sun lighting up the sheer radiance of the pink flush that stole over Kurt's face as he tentatively lifted the fabric over his head… Blaine was glad he had been sitting down because he surely would have fallen to his knees to *worship*. He had almost swallowed his own tongue, heart thumping against his rib cage like a hammer, when he first saw that expanse of skin. The lithe, elegant lines of his torso as beautiful flesh over bone instead of taunts beneath clothes. Hipbones he immediately had the urge to bite. Collarbones he wanted to lick. Rosy nipples he wanted to suck.

It took *everything* he had to bank the inferno Kurt set in him.

He wasn't here for that and his intentions were nothing but pure in regards to their immediate future… but he never claimed to be made of stone and so his traitorous thoughts and body reacted strongly to the otherworldly sight. Kurt was stunning, *more so*, and Blaine felt another satisfied, possessive roar of triumph that he was *his*. This beautiful man was his sub and it was worth every lonely day and failed Showing and media article because it brought him here now.

After the initial awe had worn off, after a few hours of trying to subtly stare which he didn't think he pulled off quite as well as he hoped, he noticed something else about Kurt. He noticed that despite his best efforts to stuff him full of food, Kurt was still underweight. It wasn't anything overt, but it was a noticeable stretch over bones at certain angles that made Blaine's heart clench, his instincts roar and his resolve to harden.

Kurt would never want for anything ever again.

He made sure they had snacks easily at hand at all hours after that, some music on the iPod dock that was lazy and easy as a hum in the background and he also brought up some books. He hadn't planned anything specific for today other than soaking up the rays and enjoying one another's company and so he set up the parasol for Kurt again in case he got too hot and made sure, almost obsessively, that they had enough sun cream to practically fill a whole ocean themselves.
It wasn't really a conscious decision.

Blaine was actually pretty oblivious that he was doing it at first, so fixated was he on the ultimate goal. There wasn't anything really on his mind apart from flawless porcelain skin and the almost imperative need to keep it that way. Perfectly untouched like freshly fallen snow. Kurt was a work of art and he didn't like the idea of him golden and marked by anything that wasn't *him*. And that inevitably lead to thoughts about that creamy, white skin plastered against his own olive and tan. His lips trembled with the image in his head, the contrast they would create, the beauty of his subs unblemished flesh against his own, dark and specked with an occasional scar as a homage to his reckless childhood self.

The more he stared though, the more he realised that Kurt wasn’t actually without marks. He had a few teasing freckles on his shoulders that were like a perfect game of connect the dots he immediately craved to play with his fingers, his lips, his tongue and he didn't care if that made him weird, he just didn't want them gone.

He hovered.

It wasn't something he could control apparently. It was a base reaction born of his more dominant instincts, but he couldn't suppress the urge or need any more than he could keep himself from breathing. He made sure he had some factor fifty on hand at all hours of the day, constantly checking in with Kurt that he reapplied, running eyes all over to make sure he wasn't burned either.

"Are you sure you got your back?" Blaine asked for… well he may have lost count.

Kurt arched a brow at him but there was something shifty about his expression that Blaine latched onto. "Yes."

"*Kurt,*" Blaine warned slowly, not unkindly, but firm nonetheless.

The sub blushed and shifted where he was sitting on the cushioned sun loungers built into the floor of the top deck, playing with the edges of the book he was reading. "I got *most* of it," he admitted.

Blaine narrowed his eyes on him. "Define most."

"What I could reach?" he said shrugging those perfect, pale, freckled shoulders and shifting his gaze away.

"Lovely," Blaine reprimanded softly grabbing the bottle from the side and crawling over to him. "You can't just do that. You need to ask me if you need help with something, it's what I'm here for. And especially when it's something that could actually hurt you. I don't want you getting burned."

Thoroughly chastised Kurt ducked his head. "I'm sorry."

In usual circumstances other Doms might give a punishment here... but Blaine found that to be excessive, especially in light of their fragile situation. Kurt was terrified going into this bond; feared punishment and horrible consequences. And while Blaine had reassured that he would only punish when necessary, never anything detrimental to Kurt's health in the process, they had never explicitly sat down and talked through what punishments they would use, the do's and don'ts that would earn those punishments.

They hadn't drawn up a contract yet.

They weren't official documents like in the old days; but it was common in bonds to have a specific guideline that stated one another's boundaries. Usually one would have been done by now because
most subs already had one drawn up in preparation on their end. It made discussions easier and it was only a matter of the Dom looking it over and adding his or hers own pieces and discussing them with the sub that needed doing.

Kurt of course, didn't have one of these because he had never thought he would be bonded. He had never thought he would need one and it left him and Blaine in a place where all of their knowledge of one another was based on instinct and following the other one's lead.

So far it had worked and Blaine decided to keep it that way until they had the time to sit down and talk about the formalities of it all, but it made the subject of punishments tricky.

Blaine inched closer and lifted Kurt's chin up so their eyes connected and waited until he was sure Kurt was completely focussed on him before beginning. "I want you to know you can ask me for anything, lovely. Ask for help, or advice, or even a cuddle if you need one. I want you to talk to me, no lying, no half-truths or omitting. Talk to me about any concerns you have, or if there's any confusion about an order I give or even a punishment I give out. I want us to be open and honest with one another and I know we need to sit down and discuss this properly, draw up our contract, so I won't punish you because I haven't been clear, but I'm being clear now… I don't want you putting yourself in harm’s way just because you're scared to ask me for help and I don't want you lying to me."

He watched with fascination that never seemed to fail as the command washed over Kurt and he sank deeper into his touch unconsciously.

"I'll need you to say you understand, lovely," he reiterated.

"Yes, s- Blaine." The Dom caught the slip but tried to push it out of his mind. They weren't there yet and that was fine, but that single second where Kurt was free enough to even slip and call him that made his heart soar. "I'll come to you if I need help and I won't put myself in harm's way wilfully or lie about anything," Kurt breathed back.

Blaine smiled and ran his thumb along Kurt's jaw for a second before pulling back.

"Good boy." He allowed the praise to roll off his tongue skilfully and he saw Kurt's body shiver, his submissive nature basking in the approval. "Now turn around and I'll finish up for you."

His sub did as he was told and presented his back for him and Blaine tried not to let his hands shake as he lathered them up with the lotion. With a deep breath he laid hands to the hot skin at his shoulders.

It was a miracle he didn't moan out loud.

Electricity raced down his fingers from the tips and Blaine could feel the subtle tremble and deep breathe Kurt drew into his lungs. He tried to detach. Focus. Tell himself that this was a clinical process of helping his sub… he didn't know who he was kidding. There was no escaping how Kurt made him feel and so he did his best to contain it instead. Lock it down as he smoothed palms over shoulder blades and curled fingers around his sides in sweeping movements.

Kurt dropped his head low on his shoulders and Blaine had the perfect view of his mark suddenly, dark, inky black outlining blue the colour of the sky. Like a moth to a flame his greedy fingers travelled upwards.

He barely caught himself in time.

Don't touch, don't touch, don't touch… he chanted in his head to quell the almost overpowering
desire to do just that. He barely managed to tear his eyes away from the temptation let alone his wandering hands when the soft voice of his sub broke through the haze his skin put him in.

"Blaine, I…"

It knocked him out of his stupor and he forced himself to concentrate as he moved his hands down his subs spine to safer territory. "What is it, lovely?"

Kurt arched his back subtly and Blaine bit his lip to suppress a groan at the sight, fanning his fingers out to span the small of his back and pushing just slightly into the sexy dimples there. "I just… I didn't not ask you because I didn't want to ask for help. It's just that… this is so…" Kurt let it trail into a cut off whimper.

Blaine saw the tips of his ears heat from the force of his blush and suddenly got it.

It was the intimacy of the process that Kurt was wary of and why that didn't occur to Blaine before he had no idea. He wanted to give himself a swift kick in the head actually. Of course he wasn't comfortable with Blaine's hands all over him if he was so self-conscious of even taking his top off in front of him to begin with. He couldn't say it didn't sting a little, but he pushed it away, resolving not to be selfish. Kurt wasn't doing this to get back at him, he just needed to go at a comfortable speed, and besides, he had let Blaine touch him in the end and didn't seem to be hating it.

Blaine finished up, going over several spots far too many times than was necessary just to prolong the contact but knowing he couldn't keep it up indefinitely, before taking his hands away. He heard Kurt sigh softly and he hoped that was disappointment he heard in that gust of air and he wasn't just imagining it. He leaned into his ear slowly, careful not to touch, but close enough that his breath ghosted over the sensitive appendage. "Now that wasn't so bad was it?"

Kurt shivered despite the scorching weather and shook his head.

"I'm never going to push you further than you're ready for, lovely," he murmured sincerely and Kurt looked back over his shoulder at him, eyes more beautiful than the ocean surrounding them.

"Thank you."

Blaine smiled at him and moved back to give him some space again as they both settled back down to cool off from the intensity of that exchange of skin contact.

The day passed in a slow, lazy haze after that and pretty soon they had eaten lunch and were lying on the top deck once more when Blaine noticed Kurt had fallen asleep. He was like a cat dozing in a sun spot and Blaine stared at him intently for a moment before making a quick decision. He didn't want Kurt catching the sun on his back while it was at its highest point despite the layer of sun cream.

Blaine finished positioning the parasol over him before lying back down on his side, head propped up by his hand as he ran his gaze along his subs sleepy frame. He was on his stomach currently, head turned towards him and pillowed by folded arms, eyes closed and lashes creating fans on his cheeks.

Blaine smiled dopily at him just because he could without consequences and because he had the most amazing, adorable, beautiful sub even when he was sleeping. Guards dropped, expression smoothed out and serene… Blaine decided he liked this Kurt a lot.

An hour could have passed by, but eventually sleepy blue eyes fluttered back open and brows drew down slightly when they saw Blaine staring at him unashamedly. The sub waited for a moment, blinking and assessing him before he shifted nervously. "What?" Kurt murmured, blushing and
ducking away into the fold of his arms a little as he continued to look at him askance.

A slow, blinding smile was creeping onto Blaine's face again as he continued to stare at the smattering of light freckles over the bridge of his nose, the only tell-tale sign that he'd been in the sun at all and Blaine found he didn't mind that blemish so much actually. In fact, it was so endearing that Blaine's chest felt tight with it. He roamed his eyes over the dusting once more, trying to commit the tiny starburst pattern to memory. They were hardly noticeable at all from far away, only four or five of them, but up close they stood out like a constellation against the porcelain of his skin.

"Blaine," Kurt complained, completely burying his face in his arms in shyness.

The Dom laughed easily reaching over and tentatively running his thumb over the curve of Kurt's ear, his hand framing to back of his head just above his neck and the perfect clarity of blue set in the heart there. His fingers still itched again to brush over it. *Would he gasp? Would he melt into it? Would he moan?* Blaine tried to chase the train of thought that crept up away. He was getting more and more confident with touching Kurt as the days passed, his subs reactions the indicators he judged by, and the way that Kurt turned into the touch now and relaxed into the cushion under him said everything Kurt wouldn't.

"I can't help it, lovely, I just like looking at you," he defended bending down to deliver it on a low whisper directly next to his ear. He found he loved the shivers he could elicit when he did this.

They were interrupted however when Ericson climbed the steps. "Sorry, sir's, I just wanted to enquire if you had any specific requests as to dinner this evening, I'll be anchoring us soon so I can get started on it."

"I was thinking we could go ashore for dinner tonight? You could take the night off?" Blaine inquired at him and got a pleased smile back before the Captain was descending the stairs again to change their heading.

The moment from before was gone however and Blaine sighed before reaching across for one of the books he brought up, seeing Kurt had done the same already, seeming a little embarrassed by the interruption. It wasn't long before it was Blaine who was dozing off in the sunshine and it was a curious tugging sensation on his scalp that woke him. Reluctantly he blinked his eyes open to locate the source of the now quite pleasant sensation curling into his bones.

*He liked having his hair played with,* he thought happily before… *shit, Kurt was playing with his hair!*

He glanced to the left and yes, there his beauty was, reclined next to him by his head and he clearly hadn't realised Blaine was awake yet.

Seemingly without thinking about it Kurt reached over and snagged another one of his wayward curls between his tapered fingers. His face was curious and open as he played in fascination with the strand of inky hair. He curled it around his index finger and pulled it gently taut, making Blaine suppress a shiver and a moan, before letting go of it so it sprang back into shape on his forehead with a little smile Blaine wanted to photograph and frame. Kurt followed its path over his forehead towards his eyebrow and then gasped when he locked eyes with Blaine's wide open ones.

He pulled his hand and body back as if burned, sitting up with fear written all over his face. "I-I'm sorry," he stuttered, scooting away from him and staring intently at the floor.

Blaine bolted up with him and shuffled up to him. "Hey, no, it's fine," he reassured. "Lovely, listen to me," he commanded gently when it looked like Kurt was about to launch into another panic. The
sub snapped his mouth closed and stared at him with wide, worried eyes. Blaine cupped his cheek. "I was awake for most of what you were doing, if I didn't like it I would have told you."

Kurt still looked sceptical, twining his fingers and picking at his nails nervously.

Blaine scooted even closer on his knees. "I said it before. I want us to be comfortable with one another and you have just as much right to touch me as I have to touch you. This isn't one sided, Kurt."

"You don't mind?" Kurt asked quietly.

Blaine smiled. "Not at all. In fact, I'd kinda like you to carry on where you left off."

Kurt blushed, eyebrows rising. "You want me to play with your hair?"

"It's a weakness of mine. My mom used to do it all the time when I was a kid until I started gelling my hair down."

Though she didn't exactly elicit the same sort of reaction in him when she used to do it.

Kurt's gaze trailed back up to his crazy mop top and a small smile hitched his lips. "I like it curly."

Blaine felt his heart jump, he didn't care if it was pathetic or not, and it continued to beat hard as he watched Kurt's hand raise, pause for a moment in indecision, before carrying forwards and tugging at the same curl as before and sweeping it aside.

Blaine almost curled up into a ball and purred.

Kurt didn't do anything more than that, but there was a happier, brighter light to his eyes when he pulled his hand back and met his gaze again. It felt like another small step towards something greater and Blaine cherished it.

They spent the rest of the day in a comfortable laziness, talking in hushed voices to savour the peace of being at the sea, touching gently here and there to reassure themselves the other one was truly there, and feeling more relaxed and happy than ever before as they waited for Ericson to anchor them so they could head out into a marine town for dinner.

Kurt shouldn't have been surprised that Blaine would look like a Greek god.

Toned, tanned and compacted into gorgeous muscle and glistening skin, he was havoc on Kurt's physical, emotional and mental states.

Only two days.

It seemed almost pathetic until he pictured Blaine spread out; fresh lotion applied, hair loose in the wind and then he decided it wasn't pathetic at all. He was already far too used to seeing naked skin, anticipating and craving each deliberate touch or accidental brush, feeling eyes on him and it had only been two days of it. So when Blaine suggested docking and going to shore for dinner tonight he was relieved for the break for his frayed nerves.

But now he was stuck, standing in his room in front of a mirror trying to decide what to wear.

He held up a third pair of denim cut offs that stopped at the knee with a rolled up cuff and a few
deliberate rips and tears included and pulled them on, then grabbed a tight green v neck t-shirt out of a mountain of them that he tucked into them. He added a thin belt and a scarf before pulling on a pair of espadrilles and was finally happy with the result as he looked himself over.

Until something gold caught his eye on the vanity.

He stared at the can of hairspray Blaine had purposefully bought and packed for him and bit his lip before picking it up tentatively and taking another glance at his hair falling over his forehead critically. Humming he exchanged the can for a comb and got to styling experimentally at first before getting more enthusiastic, movements becoming surer as he placed and set the strands of brown off his face like he'd been longing to try for years.

He looked in the mirror and couldn't help the giddy grin and giggle that bubbled out of his throat as he examined the coif and how it transformed his face. It made his neck look longer, his face more open, eyes larger.

A knock on the door broke him out of his study and he checked himself over one last time before walking over and opening it, suddenly worried how Blaine would take the change. Would he like it? Would he hate it and tell him to put it back to normal?

Fingers shaking at the realization that he craved Blaine's approval he grasped the knob and turned it to open the door, revealing his Dom in all his glory.

Blaine blinked at him for a heart stopping second; before those eyes slowly ran all over him from the tips of his toes to the top of his head where they rested.

"You've changed your hair," he murmured almost dumbly, his voice scratchy and rough.

Kurt shifted nervously and raised a hand up, though he didn't quite touch it. "Um, yeah, I just thought... I mean... I could brush it out...?"

Blaine stepped forwards and grabbed the hand near his hair to bring it down between them. "It looks amazing, you look amazing," he reassured warmly, eyes running over his face. A smile began to form on his face, wide and pleased.

The praise made butterflies explode in Kurt's stomach and warmth to spread through his limbs. "You like it?"

"I love it. I get to see even more of your pretty face." He grinned and Kurt bit his lip happily and ducked his head. But Blaine wasn't having any of it and raised his chin with his free hand. Kurt stared at him from under his lashes. "Better," Blaine whispered then leant forwards and Kurt caught his breathe, heart slamming in his chest as Blaine laid soft lips to his cheek, the outline of them branded there when he pulled back slowly.

They caught eyes, Blaine's a shade darker than what they usually were, before the Dom's flicked down to his mouth and Kurt instinctively licked the dryness there away on a reflex he didn't even understand. He heard a muted noise, almost a growl, not quite a groan, that was strangled out in the back of Blaine's throat at the action and Kurt felt overheated all of a sudden. That overwhelming feeling he couldn't name or place rose up strong in him and he felt the need to sit down and breathe deep to quell the emotions that were threatening to black out his vision.

He wasn't ready for this.

He wanted it, his body was in complete agreement with the desire that was pouring out of Blaine's skin, but he wasn't mentally or emotionally at that point yet and so he was terrified. If Blaine leant in
and closed the distance he had no idea how he'd react. Could he deny him? Could he say no? He remembered that conversation the first day at the Anderson's home where the Dom had told him he wouldn't force him into anything of that nature… but they were talking about sex then. Did this fall under that category? Blaine said earlier he wouldn't push him.

Blaine must have noticed his inner turmoil somehow because as soon as the racing thoughts passed through his cloudy mind the Dom was pulling back, closing his eyes and shaking his head as if to shake away something clinging.

"I...I don't..." he tried to explain, but his Dom shook his head gently.

"Everything's fine, lovely. Whenever you're ready," he assured one more time and the sub nodded, still shaken, but much calmer now that Blaine wasn't so close to him.

He tried to control his shaky breaths in extra space he now had, tried to focus on anything other than the feel of lips on his skin and the panicky anticipation of wanting those lips on his. He tore his gaze away from Blaine's face and the temptation there and resettled on his torso, absentely noting that Blaine was wearing a tight fitting white polo and a pair of berry turn-up chino's with oxfords on his feet.

He looked gorgeous of course.

Blaine cleared his throat and Kurt glanced back up tentatively to see that Blaine seemed to have gotten a handle on what he was fighting with as he smiled brightly at him, only a little strained. "You ready? Ericson docked us about half an hour ago."

Kurt nodded and pretty soon the Captain was waving them off as they strode down the gangplank and Kurt couldn't keep his eyes on anything for too long before something else caught his attention. The seafront was lined with hundreds of restaurants and shops, tourists and natives a steady stream along the front and beach that was lit by the slowly setting sun. Kurt allowed Blaine to lead him by the hand as he swivelled his head this way and that, barely noticing the adoring smiles being sent his way constantly by his Dom or the admiring glances both he and Blaine received from the people passing by.
But unlike him, Blaine took notice and he tightened his hold on his submissive’s hand, pulling him closer to gently wrap his arm around his sub’s waist; a loud declaration of possession to those leering at what was his as he guided Kurt to the restaurant he remembered.

The restaurant itself was small and quaint.

Nothing posh or fancy that would intimidate; just a cozy little spot with the perfect view of the ocean. Kurt fell in love with it. The small intimate tables lit by candlelight, the wooden interior that was natural curves and bumps instead of clean cut lines and the soft sound of guitars from the men playing in the corner.

They got a table by the open railing overlooking the water, knees almost touching under the table top, and the constant feeling of Blaine's skin on his made Kurt jittery and dizzy in the best possible way.

They ordered some drinks and then Blaine took his hand over the table and held it, the table being the perfect length to give room but also allow couples to talk in whispers if they so wished.

"So how do you like, Tenerife?" Blaine asked once their waters and menu's had been placed in front of them.

"It's busy," Kurt said before he could really think about it.

Blaine laughed. "Yeah, it's the largest of the islands and has more tourist traffic."

Kurt had a brief flash of worry that someone would recognise them before he fought it back. He didn't want anything to ruin this.

"It's beautiful though, I've never seen black sand," Kurt admitted glancing off towards a stretch of onyx beach in the far distance that curled around into the water.

"They're volcanic islands and most of the beaches on this island are made from the volcanic rocks."
There's golden sand too, but it's imported in, if you dig a deep enough hole you'll hit black again," Blaine explained, stroking calloused fingers along Kurt's as he talked. Kurt tried not to let it distract him.

"But they're not all like that?" Kurt asked remembering white sand when they first arrived in Fuerteventura, even though it was night.

Blaine shook his head just as the waitress came over.

Thankfully the Hispanic girl seemed not to recognise the two of them at all and simply smiled at them and asked them if they were ready to order in heavily accented English. Blaine shot a look over to Kurt and the sub felt a little out of his depth as he coloured.

"I have no idea what to pick," he admitted, glancing down at the forgotten menu quickly and frowning at the many options once he found the English section.

Blaine raised the sub’s hand to his lips, thoroughly derailing any kind of coherent thought process as he kissed the fingers there before turning to the waitress and ordering… in Spanish. Kurt could only gape at him stupidly across the table as the pair conversed back and forth easily. She jotted something down on her notepad with a flourish and a smile then walked away as Blaine turned back to him.

"You speak, Spanish?"

"Among a few other languages. It's a requirement at Dalton to take a foreign language, no big deal." Blaine shrugged modestly.

Kurt shook his head and tried not to let it faze him. "We only got to take a year of French at McKinley."

"And can my lovely boy speak it?" Blaine asked fluently in the language in question, leaning forwards, candlelight catching his eyes and turning them to melted honey.

"Not all that well," he replied breathily and Blaine's smile widened eyes sparkling with... pride? Kurt felt a blush steal across his face.

"Sounds perfect to me," Blaine murmured in English once more, stroking his fingers along Kurt's palm sending tingles shooting up his arm.

"I liked it so I tried to teach myself when they cancelled the class," he said sheepishly, wondering if there would be a chance for him to learn more of the language he liked so much if he enrolled at Dalton.

"You're amazing," Blaine breathed and Kurt tried not to blush again as he held Blaine's proud gaze. "And Dalton has a great French teacher. I'm sure she would be glad to help you catch up."

It was as if he had read his mind and Kurt smiled at him; wide and happy and beaming, making Blaine's heart skip a few beats.

The waitress brought over a large platter a few moments later and Blaine reluctantly let go of his hand so Kurt could take it back to make room between them. She set it down and Kurt was assaulted with the amazing smell of perfectly cooked seafood. After a quick thank you, the waitress was gone once more and Blaine caught his eye.

"I thought we could share some paella," he offered and Kurt bit his lip against the warm feeling that
bubbled up from the idea of sharing food with Blaine.

"It smells amazing," he admitted, mouth watering, but having no idea where to start.

He picked up his fork and scooped some rice up and took a tentative mouthful, unable to keep the moan of approval from fighting out of his throat. He missed the heavy swallow this caused Blaine as he shifted in his seat from the sound alone.

They began eating enthusiastically after that, Kurt eagerly trying oysters and muscles and deciding he liked both despite how unappealing they actually looked.

"Try this," Blaine suggested, holding up a de-shelled prawn. It was clear that he wasn't passing it over and Kurt glanced around the restaurant shyly, seeing that no one was really paying attention to them, too engrossed in their own worlds, before turning back to Blaine. "C'mon lovely, you'll like it I promise," he coaxed.

Kurt swallowed then slowly leaned forwards to meet Blaine's outstretched fingers and gently parted his mouth around the seafood before biting down, lips brushing Blaine's fingers for the briefest of kisses of skin, before pulling back again, heart racing, but eyes never leaving Blaine's.

He almost tasted nothing, so intent was he on Blaine's darkening eyes and then Blaine licked his fingers, right where Kurt's own mouth had been. Kurt almost choked as his stomach jolted almost painfully in reaction. He lost all the air in his lungs, a tiny sound escaping his parted lips. He struggled to get a hold of himself and quickly looked back down, the flush on his face lighting the tips of his ears on fire.

The moment passed.

Neither said anything about it, though it was clear it was on the forefront of both of their minds and they finished their dinner in charged silence, waiting for the electricity to fizzle into something that wasn't liable to shock them if they reached for it again.

Bill paid; tip left, Blaine took Kurt's hand and led him out of the restaurant and along the pier.

They were still quiet for a while as they wandered, until his Dom broke it.

"C'mon," Blaine urged walking towards a little shop, most of its goods on racks outside.
"What are we doing?" Kurt asked curiously, eyeing the printed t-shirts and hats.

"Getting a souvenir."

Kurt stopped dead. "Blaine-" he started. Blaine had spent so much money on him already!

"Nope. You're getting one, no arguments. Now… how about I choose something for you and you choose something for me?" he suggested cheerily, all tension evaporating into the warm breeze coming in off the ocean.

Kurt shook his head in exasperation, then narrowed his eyes. "Nothing expensive."

"Deal."

They split up and began perusing around the various racks and shelves, Kurt's eyes being drawn by a million different things at once. He picked up and discarded a few options, wanting to find something perfect and he was still deciding when Blaine came up behind him, grabbed his wrist gently and held it up. Kurt was about to question why when Blaine's other arm came around him effectively caging him in, in the most pleasant of ways, before something cool slipped over his hand and a new weight settled around his wrist.

It was pure white, dainty shells strung together to form a thin bracelet with a faint shine that seemed to glimmer silver when turned in the light and Kurt fell in love with it almost immediately.

"Do you like it?" Blaine asked into his ear, chest still very much plastered to Kurt's back, a solid wall of heat.

"I love it, thank you," Kurt breathed, unable to take his eyes off of it as he twisted his wrist to see it at different angels, loving the sound of the faint clicks it made as the shells connected with one another.

It also gave him an idea.

Pulling away reluctantly, he headed towards a rack of string necklaces he'd spotted in the corner
earlier and deftly selected one from the top, a single white shell that matched Kurt's hanging from the end. Blaine followed him over and smiled when he saw it as Kurt shyly held it out. He paid the shop owner quickly and led Kurt back outside where he stopped and turned to face him, golden eyes gleaming.

"Put it on me?" he requested and Kurt bit his lip, heart picking up speed before he stepped closer. Blaine ducked his head and Kurt rose on tip toes, careful not to catch anything as he hooked it around his neck before stepping back to admire. His Dom looked down and fingered at the shell briefly before glancing up with a blinding smile Kurt wanted to bask forever in the light of.

Blaine stepped forwards, erasing all the space between them, eyes locked on Kurt's as if to search out any form of hesitance as he slowly, softly, wrapped arms around his waist and pulled him in.

It was the first real full body contact they'd shared, not an inch separating them as even their legs intertwined, and Kurt's head spun with it; with reasons why he should return the embrace, reasons why he shouldn't. The two urges crashed against one another, fighting and tearing until Kurt shut them both off and fell back on pure instinct for once.

He lifted his arms and wrapped them around Blaine's neck and he felt everything else fade away as Blaine only held him tighter. Unaware of the world still blooming with life around them they held each other tightly, basking in the warmth and the feeling of finally being complete.

Kurt turned his head and buried his face in Blaine's neck, smelling the faint traces of his cologne, a tinge of salt from the moist air and something underneath it all that was just Blaine, his Blaine; gentle and caring and more familiar as each day went by.

He was becoming his home and Kurt couldn't help but feel another line of defence around his heart cave and crumble as they parted and walked hand in hand through tiny shops and racks in search for the perfect gifts for each member of their family.

They picked a pair of gorgeous coral earrings for both Carole and Dana, a bottle of homemade wine for Burt and Jared, a small pearl and lace purse for Mercedes, a set of painting supplies for Jeff and a ridiculous looking poncho that Kurt protested over but Blaine said Nick would adore. Not really trusting his judgement Kurt went behind his back and picked a seashell car key chain to add to Nick's gift that Blaine relented and paid for, grumbling how Nick never got him anything that nice all the way back to the yacht.

The dreams they dreamt that night were plagued with each other.

The morning rose; colourful and beautiful and serene when Kurt joined Blaine for an early breakfast, mind still reeling from last night's events.

So many touches exchanged, so much new information on his Dom and so many fights against his own body lost as Blaine did everything in his power to make him relaxed and comfortable. The exact feeling he continued to have throughout the night and that morning and he felt it would stay with him for a while.

Kurt nibbled on a remaining piece of fruit absently, trying and failing to not glance at the entrance to below deck that Blaine had disappeared to right after they had finished eating their fruit salads and toast. He sighed and gave up on the fruit, standing from the small table and padding over to the
railing to stare at the pristine, calm ocean stretched out as far as he could see.

He wished for the hundredth time that he could actually get in. Actually feel the kiss of the warm water on his skin properly and he was lost in this small desire when he heard footsteps behind him. He glanced over his shoulder a smile turning up his lips against his own will, on instinct now, when he saw what Blaine was carrying.

A guitar. It was polished cherry wood, expertly maintained and it was beautiful. Kurt ripped his gaze from the instrument and turned fully to ask Blaine an unspoken question with his eyes.

"You said you wanted to hear me sing," Blaine said a hint of sheepishness in his tone as golden eyes locked on his.

Kurt looked back down to the guitar almost uncomprehendingly then up again. "I do," he whispered.

Blaine stepped forwards with a small smile, grabbed his hand gently and led him over to the cushioned area on the floor in the corner of the top deck. Kurt sank down obediently, never taking his eyes off Blaine as he did the same opposite him, their knees almost touching. His Dom settled the guitar in his lap properly, positioning and toying with it like it came as second nature. It always staggered Kurt how effortlessly Blaine could create this space between them. This bubble where everything was intense and charged and more. And what made him ever more amazed is that he did it without a single touch. Just one look of his melted gold eyes and Kurt's world was shrinking until Blaine was the only thing left; the only thing he could focus on.

Like right now.

He glanced back up at Kurt from under his lashes and Kurt fought to keep his racing heart in his chest and not scurrying across the floor towards Blaine.

"I want to give you everything you want, Kurt."

Kurt blushed and ducked his head, feeling his breathing pick up speed as another wave of shyness overcame him at Blaine's heartfelt words. No matter how often he heard that soft, sincere tone filled with nothing but affection and genuine caring, Kurt couldn't help but be caught off guard every time. Oh so wonderfully off guard. These days away had been like something out of a dream or fantasy and Kurt didn't want to wake up.

"You don't have to do that just because I-"

His protest was cut off with a soft hush and Kurt looked back up to see Blaine smiling at him again, eyes melted honey pouring all over him. "I want to," he reiterated.

Kurt swallowed and nodded slightly, fingers playing with the pillow under him.

"So this song..." It was Blaine's turn to look a little shy. "I thought about what I would sing to you a thousand times over and this... this was the song," he explained haltingly and Kurt frowned a little as Blaine tried to express himself before giving up and sighing. "I talk better through music," he joked then his face got serious as he stared intently at him. "Just listen for me okay, lovely?"

Kurt nodded and gave him a small smile to encourage him, pulling a stray pillow onto his lap to wrap his arms around as he got comfortable. Blaine seemed to take reassurance from him as he began to position his hands and Kurt recognised the familiar tingle in his blood and rush that went through him every time he did something for his Dom.

Since the moment he got to his new home it seemed to him that the only thing he did was breaking
down and having Blaine comfort him and encourage him and make sure he was happy and relaxed. He didn't even think to return the favour and this one thing he did for Blaine, that one nod that made him beam and smile, warmed Kurt's heart, sending his submissiveness flying and roaring in happiness at making his Dom pleased.

It was a feeling he was sure he could get addicted to.

All thoughts went flying when Blaine began to softly strum and Kurt was fixated immediately. Entranced.

*What day is it? And in what month?*
*This clock never seemed so alive*
*I can't keep up and I can't back down*
*I've been losing so much time*

Blaine's voice was breath-taking.

Kurt wasn't prepared for it. Wasn't prepared for the way it made his hair stand on end and his heart hammer even harder as he hung on every word that poured out of his mouth.

That familiar tone was pitched low with a rasp and roughness layered over a perfectly smooth tenor that wrapped around the words like silk and Kurt was in *awe* of him.

Blaine flicked his eyes up from where they were bent over the guitar and Kurt gasped at what was contained there as Blaine sang at him... for him.

'Cause it's you and me and all of the people with nothing to do, nothing to lose
And it's you and me and all of the people
And I don't know why I can't keep my eyes off of you

Blaine couldn't help but smile over the last line darting his eyes all over Kurt's beautiful features, watching the slow pink blush rise over the elegant arch of his cheekbones and nose. It was everything he couldn't seem to articulate properly. The truths burning deep in his chest.

The feeling he had since the moment he first laid eyes on the beautiful sub, in a room packed with people in flashy outfits and even flashier personalities, Kurt was a beacon. He was all he could focus on and even the people blocking him from his view couldn't stop him from following his moves and feasting on his beauty.

And maybe he didn't know how to say it but the song knew.

*All of the things that I want to say just aren't coming out right*
*I'm tripping on words*
*You got my head spinning*
*I don't know where to go from here*

'Cause it's you and me and all of the people with nothing to do, nothing to prove
And it's you and me and all of the people
And I don't know why I can't keep my eyes off of you

And suddenly the words hit Kurt.

'…listen for me…'
He did and it was moving. He listened and fell harder despite every reason not to, despite that voice warning him against giving his heart away so easily. Fell deeper because Blaine was gravity. Blaine was the sun and Kurt just wanted to soak him in, let him warm him through, let him be the constant he revolved around.

Blaine was letting him know he saw him every time he looked at him. Not a poor sub from Lima, not a joke, not a sex toy and not a slave. Just him. Exactly the way he was and he still chose to be there with him. He could see everything about him, good and bad and he still wanted to be the owner of it all, and Kurt couldn't help but realize he already was.

Unbidden tears started to spring to his eyes as Blaine launched into the next verse with a passion that was stunning.

*Something about you now
I can't quite figure out
Everything he does is beautiful
Everything he does is right

'Cause it's you and me and all of the people with nothing to do, nothing to lose
And it's you and me and all of the people
And I don't know why I can't keep my eyes off of you

And me and all of the people with nothing to do and nothing to prove
And it's you and me and all of the people
And I don't know why I can't keep my eyes off of you

Blaine poured his heart, his everything, into that song. Enthused himself into every word, every pass of fingers on strings and hoped to god Kurt would take them in and hold them close. His eyes stung and his chest felt tight but he couldn't stop now.

He searched deep down and concentrated on that bright, burning place in his heart that had branded there the first time he laid eyes on him across that crowded room and let it take him over. He almost missed a chord and had to close his eyes, that's how powerful it was, growing larger and larger as every second passed in this angel's presence, threatening to burst from his chest with its sheer intensity.

He opened them back up to see Kurt had a tear snaking down his cheek, his pretty mouth parted on a silent gasp as he stared intently at him, leaning forwards unknowingly like he couldn't help it. Something was building between them... had been ever since they'd stepped foot on this boat and Blaine welcomed it wholly as it charged the air between them, hooked an invisible tether to bind them. Blaine wanted to tug it closer, wanted to wrap Kurt's essence up so tightly with his that neither would know where one began and the other ended.

*What day is it?
And in what month?
This clock never seemed so alive*

The last note fell and Kurt felt shattered.

Taken apart.

Open and vulnerable but what made it so overwhelming was that Blaine was just as exposed and raw in front of him. Everything was heightened around them, the kiss of the warm breeze on his
overheated skin, the panted breaths from Blaine.

The Dom laid aside the guitar and raised on his knees a desperate kind of urgency to his moves that laid Kurt immobile as he grasped his face and laid their foreheads together. Kurt's eyes fluttered shut as he shuddered out a shaky exhale, feeling a similar sweet breathe hit his own lips in return making them ache for an unknown pressure. The heat rising from Blaine's body was vivid and Kurt was dazed, completely taken over by his emotions, trusting Blaine to keep him safe as his defences lowered.

"You and me," Blaine whispered, his voice a low rasp.

Kurt couldn't do anything but agree in that moment and with all the strength he had in him he fought to open his eyes, his gaze landing on damp flesh of Blaine's lips.

They claimed him so unexpectedly, encouraged and reassured so effortlessly, kissed his forehead so carefully and treated him like he was made of finest lace that would break at a stronger touch and Kurt couldn't help but imagine what it would feel like to have them on top of his own. Inexperienced but so willing to learn, to open up beneath his and let him own everything he was.

It scared him... how deeply he wanted, how much it burned inside of him, the desperate need to be Blaine's overtaking his every cell and he knew there was no going back.

Was it really that bad?

That he wanted him so much when he swore on everything he was he'd never fall. That he felt on fire when he was around. That he wanted to fall to his knees for him and make him happy in every way he could think of.

He didn't know.

But he knew that in a matter of six days his Dom had found his place under his skin and as much as he had wanted him out before, now... now he just wanted him to stay there. He couldn't pinpoint when the desire had flipped. Instead of worrying about letting Blaine in too deep he was now afraid of Blaine not being deep enough. Not having a strong enough hold of him to keep him there.

It was a thousand times more frightening and had the potential to ruin him completely like he always knew it could.

His breath rushed out of his lips and he could feel Blaine shudder next to him; warm palms still holding his face gently, foreheads pressed together as they shared breaths, staring at each other, eyes shining with everything they weren't ready to say out loud yet and Blaine couldn't stop himself.

He allowed himself to lean in until his lips were half an inch away from Kurt's, every exhale tickling the enticing pink of the supple flesh.

"You should tell me to stop, lovely," he whispered, voice rough, low and awakening storms in Kurt's body.

"Why?" he exhaled shakily and Blaine clamped his eyelids tight to allow himself a moment to breathe.

"Because I'm seconds away from kissing you," he admitted huskily and he knew that he should pull back on his own because Kurt wasn't ready, but there was no fear in those pools of blue, just a tinge of nervousness and worry, but nothing more than that.

"I... I won't stop you," Kurt heard himself say and in his heart he knew he was ready. So maybe his
body was shaking, maybe his fingers were clutching Blaine's t-shirt tightly, needing something to anchor him down and maybe his head was filled with all the things that could go wrong if he kissed him.

He could fall even deeper for him. He could want to do it forever. He could ruin everything because he didn't know what he was doing... but he didn't care. Blaine was so close, his breath tickling his skin, hands holding him tenderly and he was ready...so ready to give this to his Dom.

His eyes slipped shut and a barely there whisper of a touch electrocuted his skin when a bustling sound came from behind him and he jumped away, jerking away from his hands in one graceful move.

"Sir, we've arrived," the Captain said sheepishly and Blaine scowled at him, annoyed at the man for coming in the worst possible moment.

Kurt was trying to calm his shallow breaths as best he could but it was almost impossible with the tightness in his chest still very much there, the tingling under his skin still humming despite the severed contact. In fact it seemed to get worse, as if to protest, to force Kurt back into Blaine's arms.

He pressed the back of his hand to his burning face trying to cool it as he looked off to the side, avoiding the other two Dom’s eyes.

"Thanks, Ericson," Blaine mumbled and it sounded petulant at best. The feeling of Kurt's breathe still tingling his lips as if mocking him for the fact that he had yet to taste them.

Kurt cleared his throat and tried to fight down the embarrassment of being caught nearly kissing his Dom for the first time. "Where are we?" he asked quietly, risking brining his gaze back around again.

Blaine stood up instead of answering and offered his hand to him. Kurt looked at it for a second before slowly slipping it into the calloused palm he had become so used to now. He was tugged to his feet gently.

"Go run and put some swim shorts on quickly," he instructed and Kurt frowned briefly at Blaine's avoidance of the question before doing as asked.

They met back on deck and suddenly they were disembarking onto a tiny pier, his hand held gently in Blaine's, the electricity still flickering between them as they walked closer to each other than they did the night before.

Casting shy glances at his Dom Kurt didn't even realize they had reached their destination until Blaine suddenly let go of his hand and made a "ta-dah" gesture towards the mysterious place.

The beach itself was a wonder in its own right Kurt thought as he followed Blaine's motion and took in the small, secluded piece of heaven. Pristine white sand littered the small cove surrounded by beautiful cliff faces that made the area completely sectioned off and private to the usual tourist traffic, given the difficulty to get to it.
Blaine settled the cooler of food and drink he’d brought with them down, as well as another bag stuffed with blankets and other assorted items Kurt hadn’t seen yet, then proceeded to smooth out two large beach towels on the sand.

Kurt looked towards the ocean that was lit by the soon to be setting sun, calm and a perfect clear blue. He felt a presence behind him that made all the tiny hairs on his body stand up on end as if statically charged. He inclined his head that way, shivering when he was met with a pair of golden eyes, only inches away from his own, Blaine's body releasing heat onto his skin and making him dizzy.

"I thought we could go swimming," Blaine said softly stroking a stray piece of hair that had been caught by the breeze, back around his ear. "No one else there, just… us."

*How was it possible that this man knew all his innermost desires?*

He caught a breath and looked back at the glittering, soft waves. It seemed so unreachable up until this point, even when he was on a boat in the middle of the seemingly infinite expanse. And that he got to share that experience with just Blaine? It seemed intimate and special, as silly as that seemed, but this was a first for him, one of many firsts he’d shared with Blaine over these magical days away. Unbidden his mind flashed back to the almost kiss not even ten minutes past and he felt a hot flash jolt through him; pulling at his fluttery stomach and heart. Despite being very much caught in the moment, Kurt still terrifyingly found himself completely ready for Blaine to finally kiss him.

It was a revelation. A culmination of all the days they had spent together reaching a boiling point, a defining moment in his young life.

He caught Blaine's eyes with his own over his shoulder. "I'd like that."

Blaine smiled at him then reached for the hem of his top pulling it over his head in a smooth motion, showing off his sculpted body. Kurt blushed and looked away quickly even though he'd seen a *lot* of Blaine's amazing frame over their time together. He removed his own top slowly, carefully, still not sure how to be smooth and relaxed like Blaine seemed to be. He stole shy glances at his Dom every time he revealed all that toned, tanned skin and caught Blaine doing the same to him, though the looks were anything but shy. In fact they were absolutely obscene in comparison, dark and hungry
and openly wanting.

It made Kurt shiver all over.

They already had swim shorts on so it was a simple matter of walking to the water’s edge and getting in. Which Blaine did without any pause, comfortable and at ease, executing a smooth dive that caused the water to envelope him completely before he resurfaced, hair plastered to his forehead and droplets of water cascading down his chest.

Kurt found it to be another matter entirely, however, as he regarded the water near his feet. He glanced at his Dom, now back at knee depth and looking at him questioningly, before looking back down at the surface hypnotically swelling back and forth right in front of his bare toes.

He exhaled before he took his first step forwards.

The water was pleasantly warm and he smiled involuntarily, wiggling his toes as they sunk into the wet sand and savoured the foreign feeling, before going deeper, and deeper, and deeper following the path Blaine set until he was hip deep in the water and unable to go any further. The deeper he got into the clear crystalline the more the fabric of his swimming shorts soaked up the moisture, flirting with the ocean, the sky blue material playing around his thighs. It felt wonderful against the humid air surrounding them, cooling and cathartic in a way Kurt hadn't expected. The water swelled around him, steadily rising and falling to his waist and hips over and over but he couldn't let himself go further than this without risk.

Blaine noticed.

"Kurt?" he asked, turning around chest deep already. "What's wrong, lovely?"

A blush stole over his face and he thought for a second to keep it to himself and just stay in the shallows when Blaine's words from the day they spent sunbathing crept into his head.

"I can't swim," he admitted and it wasn't as hard to say as he thought it would be... in fact it felt nice to release a piece of himself for Blaine to make better. "Can you…” He took a deep breath and met Blaine's burning gaze. "Can you help me?"

Blaine cut his way back to Kurt immediately, grasping his elbow and wrapping a secure arm around his waist. "Of course, thank you for asking for help, lovely, I'm proud of you," he murmured, the emotion shining in his face and Kurt felt a rush of endorphins soak his brain at the words, body reacting naturally to the praise. He sagged closer to Blaine, hand on the arm that Blaine was grasping clutching at the Dom's shoulder.

"Wrap your arms around my shoulders," Blaine commanded and Kurt followed the instruction immediately, trusting and open, his skin prickling at the feeling of Blaine's cool body against his own, relying on his Dom completely to keep him safe as Blaine began to take them deeper until they were eventually out of both of their depths, treading water.

Kurt took it all in; the yacht in the near distance, stretching water in the rest, the last sun beams caressing the smooth surface and colouring it golden.

Kurt found himself smiling for no reason at all and it felt wonderful. Blaine let them drift for a while until he got tired and took them back inland until he could touch the floor comfortably, water still around their shoulders. Feeling comfortable practically hanging off of Blaine, Kurt let his legs drift instead of placing them on the sand as well, enjoying the weightless feeling far too much as he took in all of their surroundings, trying to commit them to memory.
"Take a deep breath, lovely," Blaine told him suddenly, voice light and playful and Kurt snapped his head back around and opened his mouth to ask why when hands settled more securely around his hips.

"Wh-" Kurt began in confusion when he felt himself being hauled upwards and then pulled downwards.

Kurt wrapped arms and legs around Blaine's shoulders and hips on instinct, barely taking that breath Blaine asked him to and closing his eyes when they ducked under completely, immersing them in the warm ocean. It was scary and exhilarating at the same time and Kurt was sure his heart would give out under the stress when he felt the water swirl around him as they rose up again.

They broke the surface and Kurt gasped a mouthful of air, heart beating wildly in his chest, his death grip on Blaine relaxing only slightly after a few seconds so he sat lower on the Dom's hips. He fluttered his lashes against the water weighing them down then opened his eyes to see Blaine's face inches from his, eyes so dark they could have passed for black in the fading light as his pupils ate up his irises.

This was a different look altogether to the one he had when he dunked him under a few seconds ago.

"Not funny," Kurt managed to get out, but it sounded absent as he traced a droplet that fell from Blaine's droopy curls and tracked across his cheek, with his eyes.

"No," Blaine breathed back, thready and wrecked, like the joke he was going for escaped him as well now in the face of something more pressing. "No it isn't."

One of Blaine's hand's smoothed over the small of his back; fingers splayed out there just over the curve of his ass and it was that moment that Kurt truly realised the compromising position they were in. Damp chests plastered together, one of Blaine's hands half on his bare thigh and half not from where his shorts had slid upwards.

The air around them seemed to thicken as they both became aware of the fact that their skin was glued together, the salty water between them making the slide of bodies easier and softer.

His gaze fell to Blaine's mouth like succumbing to gravities pull.

Blaine felt the change in him. Like his body was in tune with his subs and he could practically feel the energy coming of him, sparks crackling between them. He was fixated on the tiny droplets clinging to long lashes like dusted diamonds, the water making paths through the freckles on the bridge of his nose, the feel of slick skin under his fingertips and pressed up against him.

He skipped a breath seeing those amazing eyes turn a dark sapphire as they stared at his mouth. Unable to stop himself he took the hand that was grapping Kurt's thigh and raised it to his face, he let it trail down Kurt's jaw until he spread it against the pale column of his neck, fingertips teasing just around the back, so close that they tingled, yet so far from the mark there.

Blaine's gaze finally fell to Kurt's mouth as well, moaning internally at the inviting, plush flesh there, petals just after rainfall still slick with moisture. He inched forwards, feeling overheated even as the cooler water lapped at him. It was agonising torture to be this far away even as he was closing the short distance between them and he resisted the urge to drag Kurt closer with the hand on his neck. But at last he was there, feeling hot exhales on his mouth for the second time that day…

He didn't wait for something to interrupt him this time.

With the last shred of sanity he gazed into Kurt's eyes finding nothing but fire there as he trailed his
eyes after a droplet sliding down Kurt's flushed cheek and landing teasingly in the corner of his mouth like an invitation.

His lips captured Kurt's bottom one between them softly and it was like a million sparks exploded in his head and heart, a sense of right that Blaine had always known being confirmed as the tether binding them only strengthened and grew at the contact. He heard Kurt make a soft, little keen that drove him crazy and the hand on his back pulled him closer, fingers curling into the skin. He could taste salt on his tongue and could feel the delicious slide of wet flesh as he kissed at Kurt's mouth a second time, paying homage to his top lip this time.

He felt the faintest of pressures as Kurt tentatively, innocently, returned the kiss and Blaine inhaled sharply at how utterly it shattered his world and pieced it back together better and brighter and brilliant; the sweetness of that innocent, timid, careful kiss rendering his mind incoherent.

Kurt arms tightened around his shoulders, his thighs tightened around his hips and Blaine was fully hard by this point, so hard in fact that it physically hurt. It was almost pathetic that he was this turned on from one kiss, but then he imagined what he would be like when they went further and his brain assaulted him with images of Kurt bare and wanting and HIS. He moaned, unable to not and Kurt responded to the noise by scratching one hand at his back as if trying to find purchase on something stable to ground him. He hissed quietly, feeling the tingle of pleasured pain and kissed at Kurt's lips once more, keeping a tight stranglehold on his desire to simply eat at Kurt's mouth. Nip, suck and tongue at it until they couldn't stand it any longer.

Kurt was in another world.

The first press of Blaine's mouth to his was pure fire; lighting him up, adding more and more fuel so he burned hotter and faster. He was a mess of intense emotion and feeling, raw and laid bare under Blaine's talented lips.

He was vulnerable here, the most vulnerable he'd ever felt, but for once it never crossed Kurt's mind to try and shield himself. Instead, he let Blaine dominate his senses and body and trusted him to take care of him while he gave himself over to what he was feeling.

And he did.

Blaine was sweet and caring underneath the electricity sparking wildly between them, restrained in the face of it and never pushing for more, for deeper contact than what they already had though Kurt sensed the need for more pulsing from the Dom's every pore like a sixth sense.

Blaine pulled away suddenly and Kurt followed at first, eyes still closed and breaths coming in soft little gasps over swollen, tingling lips. But then his Dom's forehead rested against his as shallow pants mixed in the space between them and Kurt tried to calm down from the intensity.

"We need to stop before I can't anymore," Blaine admitted, voice raw and surprisingly vulnerable.

Kurt's heart skipped a beat and he didn't know whether it was from this new sense of arousal or amazement at the newfound knowledge that even Blaine, so self-assured and confident all the time, could be vulnerable in front of him. He did know, however, that he wasn't that ready and so he simply nodded against Blaine and let himself savour this newfound closeness. It was intoxicating and utterly addicting.

They stayed in the shallow water, Kurt refusing to let go of his hold on Blaine and Blaine not minding one bit as he spread his palms on the undersides of his thighs, branding Kurt's skin with gentle touches.
He lost time somewhere because suddenly they were out of the water and Blaine was holding him bridal style, walking them towards the towels. He was set gently down on one before he was handed another to dry with. He did so with shaky hands and barely noticed that it was getting properly dark now.

He didn't want to leave.

The beach was abandoned, quiet and intimate and he wanted to stay there, wrapped around his Dom as they counted the stars together until sleep took over them.

He must have spoken aloud because suddenly Blaine was beside him with that bulging bag from before. He pulled the blankets out from on top and underneath there were two sets of clothes. Blaine caught his eye and his Dom still looked as affected by their kiss as Kurt felt.

"We can stay here tonight if you want?" he suggested quietly. "We've got enough blankets and if the weather turns then the yacht is right there…" He let the suggestion trail.

Kurt hardly had to think before he was nodding. "Yeah, I'd love that."

They got dressed with their backs firmly to each other this time, no peeking, towels wrapped around their waists to provide some modicum of privacy.

Blaine spread the thickest of blankets on the ground and settled himself down on his back placing two folded blankets next to him. Kurt sat beside him, quiet and contemplating something and he decided to allow him time to process whatever was on his mind. After a few minutes of silence the wary sub turned nervous blue eyes towards him and cleared his throat delicately before speaking.

"Blaine?"

"What is it, lovely?" Blaine asked looking into those heavenly eyes, gentleness in his voice that made the sub's heart melt.

"Can I... um... I want..." he trailed off, a frustrating hand sweeping over his face as he realized he couldn't voice what he had wanted.

"Kurt, you know you can ask anything from me," Blaine said with conviction and Kurt nodded with a deep sigh, seemingly plucking up the courage to do exactly that.

Clasping his eyelids together tightly he murmured something to himself before shaking his head in determination as he shifted closer to Blaine, laying down next to him, head on his chest and a shaking arm wrapped around his waist, body tense and trembling.

"Is... is this okay?" he asked quietly and Blaine responded by wrapping his arms around him and pulling him closer, reaching out and pulling a blanket over them.

"It's all I've ever wanted," he murmured back and at his words the lithe body next to him melted into his touch, relaxed and comfortable as they lay in silence, the sound of waves crashing against the shore lulling them to sleep.

"Perfect," Kurt whispered, breath tingling Blaine's neck gently.

"Hm?" the Dom hummed, the sleep haze heavy on his eyes, and the feeling of his sub finally where he belonged intoxicating.

"The answer to that question card. About my first kiss. It was perfect," he said, cheeks burning red
and voice cracking at the end, but his eyes honest and grateful as they stared into Blaine's, rendering the Dom unable to do anything but lean down and peck his lips again, carefully and gently, making his blue eyes flutter shut and his body curl around him instinctively as they allowed sleep to pull them under.

Lima

"Don't say that about him," he whispered.

"What was that, princess?"

Jeff swallowed past the cold lump in his throat and turned to face the jocks that had been heckling and hounding him on his way home from school, always a few steps behind him. "Kurt's not like that. Don't say things that aren't true."

His voice sounded much stronger than he actually felt, but he knew he had to stand up for his friend. He knew Blaine Anderson claimed Kurt, he had found out even before those vultures decided to print lies about one of the most amazing people he knew; Kurt told him himself.

"Hey, Jeff!" he heard the voice of his best friend through the static electricity in their poorly installed phone and he frowned a little bit because they usually just visited each other instead of wasting money on a phone call.

"Hey, Kurt. How come you're calling me? Are you sick? Is something wrong?" Jeff counted the possibilities quickly, hoping it wasn't something bad.

"No, sweetie, calm down. I'm okay. I just…." He trailed off, his voice breaking slightly. "Jeff, promise you won't get mad or sad or be afraid for me, okay? I swear I'm okay," Kurt asked his best friend and Jeff frowned even deeper as he agreed timidly to Kurt's request.

"I… I promise, but, Kurt… you are scaring me… what's going on?" Jeff asked, his voice laced with worry and anxiety.

"I… I was claimed. On Friday," he managed to get out before the shriek from the other side resonated through his head and he had to move the phone away from his ear to keep his eardrums from bursting.

"WHAT? HOW? But you didn't even go anywhere on Friday except… except… oh god… oh my god, Kurt… who…?" he ranted and Kurt sighed knowing how scared Jeff was of that part of society.

"It happened while we were delivering the flowers. I went back in to grab my vest and… and the next thing I know Blaine claimed me," he said, trying to sound like it didn't bother him at all.

"Wait… Blaine… Blaine Anderson?" Jeff shouted and Kurt knew how bad it all sounded. Hell, he thought the same thing Jeff did only a few hours ago.

"Yeah… that Blaine… but… but I swear he's nothing like we thought he was."

Kurt was genuine, and honest, and kind, and moral and he had a family who adored him and
wouldn't ever stoop as low as to sell him to a rich Dom just to get an upper hand in life. And he was always truthful so if he said Blaine was different from what the media presented, Jeff would believe him.

He would always believe him over anyone else in his life.

Robert chuckled, knocking him out of his head. "But it is true? Didn't you see the papers this morning? Hummel went and bagged himself a sugar Dom."

"You're lying," Jeff continued to defend, but his voice was barely audible.

Peter stepped up and reached out to him. Jeff flinched away harshly, but the jock was relentless and grasped him around the back of the neck. Jeff strangled the gasp he wanted to make, not wanting to give the Dom the satisfaction even as disgust rolled through him in waves, making him feel sick as his mark burned at the unwelcome touch. He wanted to crawl out of his own skin. He wanted to scrub himself raw for hours.

"Why the fuck would I lie about that?" Peter sneered in his face pressing harder and Jeff barely stayed upright as pain shot down his spine. "Good riddance to him, Anderson can keep him. But he's lucky I guess, Hummel looked like a good sex toy."

"He's not a toy and Blaine would never treat him like that!" he screamed at them and flinched when one of them leered at him, a feral look in his eyes.

Suddenly he was being pushed and Peter closed him between his body and the cold brick wall, pressing closer and leaning in to bite at his neck.

Jeff placed a hand on his chest and pushed him as hard as he could. He didn’t move an inch.

"Aww, playing hard to get again?" Robert cooed, laughing as his friend crowded the scared sub against the wall.

"Look at me!" Peter snapped, command heavy in his tone.

Jeff felt the compulsion run over his skin like oil. Dirty and thick. He followed helplessly, feeling like crying. His resistance was much weaker than other subs after what he'd gone through and he hated it. "You know you're gonna be all on your own now that he's gone right?" he smirked.

Jeff trembled. "Let me go."

"Demands now? You really are a shit sub you know? No wonder he dropped you."

Jeff found strength from somewhere and pushed out of his grip stumbling away and backwards. "L-leave me alone," he stuttered, but Dominant pheromones were permeating the air around him and he knew he had pushed them too far; that it was not over.

"You know what, I don't think I will. I think it's time someone taught you what it means to be a good sub. NOW TURN AROUND!" Peter screamed a command again and Jeff felt his knees give in under the force of the order, his body way too weak to fight it, his mind spinning as it fought a battle against itself and his mark burning him all the way to his bones.

Closing his eyes against their predatory looks he forced his body around, bracing himself against the wall as he felt a hand come up to tangle in his blonde hair, forcing his head down and exposing the pale column of his neck.
He felt damp breath on his skin before a feral set of teeth closed around his mark making him scream in pain.

He was so damaged, so scared and so broken that the touch that supposed to feel good, burned his skin and branded him with scars he was sure to carry for at least a few weeks.

A hand came down his chest and he was bracing himself for the worst when an angry voice boomed inside the small alley.

"HEY! WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING!?"

Jeff felt his body sag at the sound of that strong, commanding voice that carried so much safety and comfort in it and he basked in that feeling as large arms pulled him into a hug and he felt the familiar scent of oil and pine.

Burt Hummel.

He melted into his arms and hid away from his tormentors, now skittering around after being caught red handed torturing a sub without his consent, and as fucked up as their world was, it was still forbidden. He heard them apologizing and grovelling but the older man ignored their pleas with a promise of reporting them to the police and they ran away like the cowards they were. Jeff felt himself being carried like a baby towards the familiar house and the familiar swing on the porch he spent hours upon hours on, feeling happy and at home.

He didn't even realize he was crying until rough fingers traced his tears and Burt cooed to keep him calm, a cup of warm tea appearing out of thin air in his hand when Jeff finally came to his senses enough to tell him what happened.

"How long has this been going on?" he asked sternly and Jeff shrunk against the armrest of the swing.

"I… since I moved here. It started out small. Name calling, insults, nothing big. Then they started touching my mark, saying I could put out since I'm already used…” he trailed off and Burt gasped at the sound of his words. "They're right you know. I am used…”

"Listen to me!" Burt growled and Jeff snapped his head back up to look at him. "Never say that again. Yes you had something bad happen to you, but you're still amazing and worthwhile and nothing they say should make you feel otherwise, okay?"

At Jeff's hesitant nod he stood up and started walking towards the house extending his hand.

"Now, come on. I know I can't help but Kurt can. Let's give him a call so you can talk."

Jeff widened his eyes and shook his head desperately. "No… don't interrupt him on his vacation. He should have fun, not deal with my crap," he said, determined.

"Nonsense. You're his best friend and you'd do the same for him," Burt protested, but Jeff was adamant.

"I'll do it tomorrow, right now I'm…” He paused and shivered. "I just don't want to talk about it right now."

Burt eyed him for a moment before nodding and leading him back into the house to call Jeff's parents to come get him.
Hi guys!!!

Here's the next chapter. We have to say we are really happy with your reactions to what we have posted so far. You're all so enthusiastic it's making it hard to tell who's reading it for the first time and who already knows what's happening. Which is amazing and we are very grateful for it :)

If you'd like to learn more about us, and tell us more about yourselves feel free to visit our tumblr and check out all the cool stuff we have there (the trailer, fan art, more pics, character bios and lots of other stuff).
Also for all the new readers who have never heard us beg before...we are not above begging for more fan art...so if you are artistically inclined...you know where this is going :) 

Love
A&M

"From the earliest age, parents are instructed to direct their children into proper educational systems.

While all general schools are equipped with adequate materials, study guides and personnel to train a sub and to prepare a Dom for their future life, there are several, high class academies that guarantee the most extensive education possible.

The Dalton Academy Extensive Educational Facility is one of the most recognized and influential schools in the world.

Starting from the earliest age the Dalton Academy staff and curriculum follows a child through its formative years all the way to adulthood and high education while providing a safety net during the bonding to assure both parties involved are well prepared and informed of what's expected."

The Dalton Academy Extensive Education Facility brochure.

Captain Ericson had always been one of the people to enjoy small things in life; dinners with his family, the company of good friends, good food, great books… but more than anything he loved the open sea.

The peace that came with that feeling of being so far from everything bad and stressful and demanding; just you, the soft lilt of waves beneath your feet and that smell of salt and rust working its way into the pores of your skin and remaining there to remind you where you belong while you were away on dry land.
He gripped the railing on the front dock with one hand, a cup of coffee in the other, and stared far into the infinite body of water that had taken so many days of his life and kept him away from home for so long. But he knew he could never resent that because it offered a new home, a sanctuary for him and everyone else who felt the same.

Smiling he lifted his still steaming cup of coffee to his lips and took a careful sip when a sudden, shrill sound made him jump and curse as a few droplets of hot liquid bounced out of the cup and onto the skin of his palm, leaving tiny, red burn marks in their wake.

Practically throwing the cup on top of a nearby table he rushed into the main cabin making it in time to pick up the phone before whoever was on the other side gave up.

"You have reached the Lady, this is Captain Ericson speaking," he introduced himself formally, barely managing to finish the sentence before the breathy voice from the other side of the line spoke up in, what sounded like, a rush of panic.

"Hi… this is Jeffrey Sterling. Can I please speak to Kurt Hummel?" the voice forced out and the Captain frowned in concern.

"Mr. Hummel is not on board this minute. Can I take a message?" he asked and he could hear the other person was disappointed without him even uttering a sound, shattered even by the news.

"Yes… please… please just tell him to call Jeff… tell him… tell him it's an emergency," he stuttered in a deflated tone and the older man felt the need to reassure whoever it was calling that it would be okay, his dominant instincts flaring up.

"I'll make sure he gets the message as soon as possible. As far as I know he's not very far from the dock," he reassured in what he had hoped was a calming voice and the man, well boy was more likely, he was speaking too breathed a breath of relief.

"Thank you so much, sir," he said quickly and the Captain smiled.

"You're very welcome," he answered before the line was cut and he was left standing there listening to the beeping of the phone and wondering what could have happened that was so urgent.

Deciding it wasn't his issue to question he set off to find Kurt and get him to call, who he supposed was, his friend. He didn't know the boy or if there was something really urgent going on, but he didn't want to take any chances so he walked off the yacht and towards the secluded little beach he knew his boss took his new sub.

The Captain couldn't help but smile a little as he thought of Blaine as a little child talking about finding 'the most prettiest sub in the whole world' and he would then give him all of his toys to play with and he could even have the first pick of the cartoon they would watch before it was bedtime. That sweet, curly haired little boy grew up to be one of the strongest Doms he had ever seen and while he was constantly depicted as wild, untamed and spoiled by the media; he was so far from it in the eyes of everyone who knew him.

He was sweet, and caring, and tentative, a great listener and a great friend to everyone around him. He had a genuine care for people in his life and for that reason it was a miracle he was still alone. The moment he saw Kurt and the way Blaine was with him he knew what he was waiting for.

Perfection.

The beautiful, young man Blaine claimed was the best possible match to the Dom. His submissiveness raw and powerful, unbound and free, he was the perfect counterforce for Blaine's
natural dominance.

The way he acted around the Dom showed some fear, insecurity and shyness, but he could already tell he was getting more and more comfortable around Blaine, often times leaning into his touch and sometimes even subtly initiating them.

It was obvious they were still miles away from being completely at ease with one another and he supposed it was Kurt's timidity that was a great cause of that, but it made his heart warm to see the young Dom so patient and understanding and willing to do anything to make his partner comfortable and happy.

He was sure the two of them would be happy together; hell, he was sure they already were, ready to admit to it or not, he thought with amusement as he stepped onto the sandy beach and started turning his head left and right to find the two of them.

Trapped inside his own musings he almost missed the pile of blankets of the ground, covering two figures huddled up together against the morning chill.

Blaine was lying on his back, hair wild and curly, lips slightly parted and pulled into a soft smile as his hands cradled Kurt like his most precious possession, whereas the sub was snuggled close to him, head pillowed on his chest. They seemed so comfortable in their sleep, even more so than they did while awake and he knew that if their instincts were so strong to drive them together as they slept they were really close to being like that all the time; comfortable, relaxed and calm.

He hated the thought of waking them up, but the slight despair the voice of the young man on the phone carried made his decision for him and he bent down to gently shake Blaine's shoulder.

"Blaine. Kurt. Sirs, it's time to wake up," he said in a hushed voice, but it was still loud enough to cause them to stir and blink their eyes open, pupils widening and breaths catching when they realized they woke up all wrapped together still.

A blush settled high on Kurt's cheeks at the same time a proud smile grazed Blaine's face and he could tell they were ready to start apologizing and explaining and talking things out and he just couldn't let them dive into it now when Kurt's friend obviously needed him.

"Kurt, there was a call for you just now. A Jeffrey Sterling?" he said carefully, trying not to scare the boy, but it seemed to be for nothing because his eyes widened and his fingers started shaking in an instant.

"Jeff? Is he okay? Did something happen?" he rushed out, fighting against the mountain of blankets on top of him to get to his feet.

"I'm not entirely sure. He had asked for you and I said you weren't available and promised to tell you to give him a call as soon as possible. He... he did mention it was an emergency," Ericson explained dutifully.

He hardly finished before Kurt tried to dash towards the yacht, but he stopped midstride, turning towards Blaine with a torn expression on his face as his eyes switched from looking towards the boat to looking at Blaine, a silent plea written across his delicate features.

"Go. I'll be right behind you," Blaine said gently and at his soft command Kurt turned around and ran as fast as he could kicking up footfalls of sand, the two Doms close behind him, arriving just in time to see him gesticulating wildly, a horrified look trained to the wall in front of him, knuckles white as he gripped the phone to his ear.
His shoulders were tense, back perfectly straight and face closed off and scared. He’d regressed back to where he was the night of the claiming and Blaine felt an iron grip on his heart at the thought of everything they have accomplished vanishing again.

"Calm down, Blaine. You getting worked up isn't going to help him calm down once that conversation is over. And it seems like he's gonna need you," Ericson advised sagely and Blaine controlled his breathing, barely managing to keep himself in check when Kurt stepped out of the cabin, pale and visibly shaken.

He was near him in an instant hearing the Captain's quiet, "I'll be in my room," before he was gone and the two of them were left alone. Blaine held Kurt's trembling, tense body close, willing the fear and the sadness away as best as he could.

"What happened, lovely?" he asked carefully and Kurt turned his head and hid his face in his neck, the wetness from his tears cooling the hot skin.

"It's… it's Jeff… they got to him again. They… they attacked him and tried to… oh god, Blaine, he's so scared and alone and I… I…" he tried to force the words out but the sobs were cutting his words in half.

Blaine hushed him softly, rocking him soothingly, but it didn't seem to breaking through any of the hysteria. "Breath, Kurt," he commanded firmly. "Breath for me, lovely."

He heard Kurt's stuttered attempt to obey and coaxed and coached him through it stroking at his back and hair. "That's it, you're such a good boy for me, lovely," he praised over and over until the worst passed, leaving hitched breaths and sniffles behind in the aftermath.

"I need to see him," Kurt whispered thickly. "I... h-he doesn't trust anyone else, Blaine. I need to see him and make sure he's alright!"

Blaine made a comforting sound, trying to stem another breakdown gently. He nodded against the top of Kurt's head and placed a soft kiss there. "We'll get a plane tonight."

Kurt pulled back, face tear stained and so sad it made his heart ache. "Really?"

Blaine swiped the drying tears on his cheeks away with his thumbs and framed the rest of his face. "Jeff's important to you, so he's important to me too, yeah?"

"But... you booked the hotel and paid so much for everything and..." Kurt stammered, knowing there had to be a catch somewhere. After the whole week of being nothing but patient and understanding there was no way Blaine could surpass that and become even more amazing by doing this for him.

But apparently, his Dom was as perfect as they got because he placed a gentle finger to his lips to stop his rant and smiled comfortingly.

"Just don't worry about it. We'll call and cancel on the hotel and they'll just keep the deposit and we're good. You just try and calm down. When I get back from arranging our departure I wanna see that gorgeous smile on your face again. Understood?" he said sternly, but with a teasing glint in his eyes and Kurt felt his own sting as he tried his best to fight the tears back and smile, but the image of Jeff alone and scared made him shiver and he wiggled deeper into Blaine's embrace seeking comfort.

More tears fell after that and Blaine smiled sadly at him before kissing his forehead gently, "It'll be alright lovely. I'll make it alright."
Kurt sat on his bed, tear streaked cheeks pale and rubbed raw from wiping away the wetness he kept spilling throughout the day.

In a matter of minutes Blaine had the whole thing settled and they bid Ericson goodbye, after he sailed them to the nearest port with access to an airport, as they walked away from the dock and climbed into a waiting car that took them directly to where their plane was already waiting, fuelled and ready to get underway.

Kurt spent the flight in a fitful, half asleep state clinging to Blaine almost without realizing and when they had finally gotten home it was five in the morning; the darkness and morning dew clinging to the ground.

He was beyond exhausted.

He wanted to rush straight to Lima from the plane, but Blaine, always the voice of calm reason and reassurance, convinced him to come back home for a few hours; shower, change, get something to eat and allow the Sterling’s to start their day at their own pace before they came barging in to see what happened. Kurt protested and threw a mild fit which he was genuinely embarrassed for, but other than a stern, "calm down," from Blaine there were no repercussions and soon he’d calmed down enough to admit that Blaine was right and they headed to the Anderson’s estate.

That's where he was now, with his fingers clenching into his sleeves. He didn't care if he stretched the fabric beyond repair anymore, he didn't care if all he had went to waste if it meant making his best friend safe and happy again.

He glanced around himself, taking in the luxury he was now allowed to call his; the art pieces on the walls worth more than lives in Lima, the dark wood, antique furniture polished to shine and sparkle in the sunlight, the soft, silk sheets and warm comforters designed to get a person through the winter without feeling the chill in your bones every second of every day. He eyed the tea cup perched on the nightstand next to him, the liquid inside sweet and spiced with lemon and honey and tasting like heaven on his lips.

He looked down at the hands in his lap, tears streaming down his face again as he realized all the things he got to have now while his friend was alone, and scared and broken.

*What they did to him…*

He couldn't even begin to imagine how he felt in that moment.

Feeling hands on his skin where he shouldn't have been touched, marked, hearing slurs that weren't true because Jeff was beautiful and he was smart and he was sweet and compassionate and he wanted to love someone so badly but he knew he'd never get the chance to now.

He was so hurt and Kurt had *left* him.

Guilt turned his stomach over. How could he leave him? How could he leave him in that place when he knew how heavily Jeff relied on him? It had taken a lot for the blonde to finally open up and put what was left of his trust in Kurt and the sub felt like he had stomped all over it. Thrown it aside carelessly like that amazing piece of his broken friend was nothing.

A strangled, hurt sound tore from his throat.

He had gotten himself a Dom. A Dom that was sweet and caring and unlike anything Jeff had ever
experienced and the almost *shame* grew heavier, sat like a lead brick inside his heart because what had Kurt don't to deserve this? Certainly not more that Jeff had, a sub that was just as worthy, if not more deserving after what he had endured… and yet here he sat knowing that his best friend would never blame him, would never begrudge him this new life or Blaine. Blaine who kept Kurt safe, kept him warm and happy and he kept making him blush by telling him he was beautiful and that he liked him, *wanted* him.

His Dom held him close and sang to him, took him places and bought him gifts and … and...*oh god!*
His mind snagged on a thread and he yanked until it all came loose, the answer practically falling out into his brain.

*Gift!*

Kurt's head snapped up, his mind fighting through the haze he got himself caught in.

He had a Dom who was kind to him. And maybe it wasn't what Kurt had imagined at first as he read his fairytales, but as the days went by it got closer and closer to it; his heart skipping whenever Blaine touched him, his body shivering whenever he placed an order on him, the desire to kneel in front of him driving him insane with want and he knew...he *knew* he could ask for anything and Blaine would give it to him.

He said so himself.

'*If you're not happy here. I'll let you go.*'

The words were almost non-existent in their world. Claims were not for subs to dispute, they were there to be welcomed and yet… Blaine had offered him an out. Against his very nature he had put Kurt before himself.

Suddenly on his feet, mind completely clear, eyes set straight in front of him, his body strong and determined he fled his room, feet pounding on the floor loudly as he ran through the house looking for the one person who could make things right again.

"*BLAINE! BLAINE, WHERE ARE YOU?*" he called out urgently and rounded the corner leading to the living room crashing into something warm and hard and immediately comforting.

"Kurt...are you okay? I'm right here!" Blaine held him tight against his body, wrapping hands around that lithe form that now felt so familiar in his arms and cooing into his ear as he tried to keep Kurt’s erratic breathing at bay.

Kurt took a few moments to bask in the embrace of his Dom, his smell intoxicating and calming at the same time, before he lifted his head and took his hands pulling him towards the stairs.

"I'm okay. Can I talk to you?" he implored, already starting to climb the stairs and Blaine frowned, following him into his room where Kurt pushed him to sit on his bed, sitting next to him but staying completely silent for the longest time as he tried to find the words to express what he wanted.

"Kurt... lovely, you're scaring me. What's going on?" Blaine asked when he couldn't take it anymore, taking Kurt's hand and running his thumb over his knuckles, the feather light touch raising goose-bumps on pale skin.

Kurt shook his head, giving himself a mental pep talk as he felt the sudden boost of strength seep into his body, knowing he had something important to fight for. *Think of Jeff*, he chanted to himself, steeling his resolve into something utterly unyielding.
"Blaine... um... remember how you said I could ask for anything as my Gift and you'd grant me that wish?" he started and literally felt the moment Blaine's heart shattered like the echo of it splintered in his own chest.

The hand holding his own tightened almost painfully before being snatched back, the body that kept him safe tensed into a ugly line Kurt didn't recognize and an angry breath rushed past those lips Kurt now knew tasted like apples and heaven. His rigidity only lasted a moment before he stood up as if Kurt's proximity burned his skin and strode to the window, gripping the wall so tightly his knuckles turned white, head hanging low on his bunched shoulders.

"We said a month... you... you promised me a month, Kurt. I thought you were happy... I thought I was making you happy... what..." He shook his head, utterly, devastatingly confused. "What did I do wrong?" Blaine pleaded, voice almost dead, tears prickling in his eyes and body shaking as he stood so far away from Kurt.

Kurt frowned at his Dom’s profile, not sure where all of that was coming from, but the words struck him like physical blows making him flinch back slightly. He did make him happy, wasn't that obvious?

He kissed him and held him and commanded him and all of it made Kurt deliriously ecstatic, how could he not see that? How could he not see everything Kurt had tried to hide but broadcasted so loudly in every little action; every smile given away, every laugh and touch handed over without thought? Didn't he know how much of Kurt he now held in his hands?

What was going on?

"But I do remember what I said," Blaine's hoarse voice brought him back. "And if..." His Dom laughed bitterly and it tore something in Kurt to hear it. Blaine ran a hand over his face in frustration before continuing. "If you really want that... I'll let you go."

Kurt gasped; feeling his world tip on its axis and spin wildly out of control, heart freezing and a cry ripping off his lips in the fear of the destruction it was surely to cause him. He wouldn't survive it.

"Blaine, NO!"" He stood up on legs about to buckle, stumbling to him and begging for permission with suddenly watery eyes until a gentle nod from his Dom allowed him to push his body close and snuggle up to him. The tension that had coiled inside released and he trembled in the aftermath, gripping Blaine's shirt in his hands as he burrowed closer running on pure instinct, his body telling him he needed it. Needed Blaine as close as he could get him.

"I don't want to go," he whispered into his chest, an admission that almost stole his breath with the sheer truth that was ringing in it and Blaine gripped his back tighter.

"You don't?" he asked barely audibly, voice shaky and desperate.

"No... I... I want to stay with you," he said shyly as he cuddled closer still, feeling Blaine relax around him which made him mirror the feeling almost as if they were connected. "But I do know what I want for my Gift. And... and you said you'd give me anything, so tell me you meant it. Tell me you were for real." His voice was rushed, desperate, pleading and Blaine placed his hands onto his biceps, holding him at arm’s length to look into his eyes.

"Kurt, I promise. Ask anything and I'll do whatever is in my power to make it happen. I swear to you, lovely." The conviction in his voice was so heartfelt Kurt sighed a breath of relief before placing his demand.
"I'm gonna formally place my demand now. Whatever happens, this is my Gift," he said, making sure Blaine was on board searching his eyes and nodding when his Dom gave him his consent.

"Go ahead," he said, voice nervous but still so hopeful.

Whatever it was it's better than Kurt leaving; anything else, he can find a way to make it happen.

"As my bonding Gift, I, sub Kurt Hummel, want my best friend Jeff to be transferred to Dalton for his own protection, all costs covered," he rushed out and Blaine felt the world around him shatter. Darken and dull.

The demand was more than reasonable in itself.

Jeff was in danger, and he had the means and the connections to get him somewhere safe, but the implications of it were what tore his heart apart. Kurt was giving up his chance to go back home to save his friend. Kurt wasn't staying because he wanted to stay. Kurt was making a sacrifice.

He couldn't... that's not... that's not what he wanted. That would never make either of them happy, so with a pain tearing through him like nothing he had ever experienced before he realized what he had to do.

He knew it was the best thing to do, heart breaking or not.

"I don't want you like that," he whispered and that gorgeous body in his arms stood petrified, everlasting blue eyes hurt and frozen in pain, lips trembling and bitten bloody in the space it took him to say it out loud.

"You... you don't want me," Kurt stuttered, tears welling and then falling and dampening his t-shirt further. His chest constricted and he felt like he couldn't breathe.

After all that. After admitting he wanted to stay... Blaine was already bored of him... already done with him? Was he that horrible of a sub he couldn't keep him interested for a single week?

His heart was already halfway to becoming Blaine's and he didn't want him.

But he promised... he did.

Through heavy breathing and quiet sobs he soon realized were his, he heard his Dom's voice calling out to him and he tried so badly to answer, to obey but... Blaine didn't want to be his Dom anymore. It was devastating and he felt the need to curl up into a ball and sob.

He almost laughed hysterically. The fun of having a Lima lowlife for a sub wore off faster than anyone thought it would.

"Kurt, look at me!"

He would be alone again.

"Kurt, lovely, please."

He would never be called lovely again.

"Kurt, look at me NOW!"

The command was too strong for his body to deny and racked through him, snapping his back straight, head up and eyes on Blaine's as the hazel eyed Dom cupped his cheeks and held him gently;
hands warm and calming on his skin as he spoke, fighting back the panic and turmoil beating at his insides.

"I still want you. I'll always want you. But I don't want you the way you're choosing to stay here. Sacrificing yourself to save your friend. I... I can't do that to you. I will get Jeff to Dalton and he will be safe I promise. But I'll also let you go home because that's what you want. It'll break me into million pieces, but I'll let you go."

"NO... Blaine, please don't!"

What was he saying? Why was he doing this?

He wanted to stay! He wanted to be Blaine's and no one else's.

"Sir." He broke down in his arms crying and clutching at his blazer with desperate fingers as his knees gave out, the grip of his hands barely keeping him upright. "Please!"

"Please what, Kurt... what do you want?" he asked gently, the dominance inside of him aching to please and make happy, roaring with satisfaction at being called, 'Sir', so freely and unrestrained.

"Please let me stay. I want to stay," he begged on a tortured whisper and Blaine broke down into a desperate laugh as he pulled him closer.

"Kurt, I want you to stay too. God, nothing will ever mean more to me than you... just, promise me it's what you truly want. Promise me it's not just out of obligation," he ordered, though his voice was pleading for him to understand, to reassure him that he was his.

"It's not... the past... the past days with you... I... I want more... of, of feeling like that... wanted and happy and e-cherished. I... I know I'm not the best trained sub but I'm willing to learn. I am... just... just please let me stay and show you," he begged again, voice picking up speed towards the end as if he were afraid he'd lose the courage to say all of that.

Blaine shook his head and held him closer, like he was trying to mould them together, one hand rising to cup his cheek. "Of course you can stay. You're the best thing in my world, Kurt. And you don't need to beg or learn anything. I think you're flawless," he murmured, kissing his temple gently, feeling him snuggle closer, body relaxed and pliant and Blaine concentrated on projecting warmth and safety. It wasn't even a choice, he needed to comfort his sub after all the tears and misunderstandings and it made him feel a hundred times better knowing he was doing something right as Kurt's sniffles and hiccups disappeared slowly but surely.

"Thank you, sir," he whispered on a breathy sigh that held a note of bliss as the pressure valve eased off and Blaine shivered at the title.

"You don't have to call me-" he started but Kurt cut him off.

"I want to," he said surely and rested his head back on his shoulder; happy and safe and hopeful.

He could hear Blaine's heart thumping under his ear and he could feel the ecstatic purr of his dominance on his skin now that he finally had him for real.

They embraced each other; pulling comfort from the warmth, knowing they only had a precious few minutes more in their safe, secluded bubble before they had to rip themselves away and head into something that wasn't safe, or warm, or comfortable.

A harsh reality was calling for them and they knew they had no choice but to answer.
The driveway to the small, shabby looking, but still neat and well-kept house, weaved under the wheels of Blaine's Lexus, so out of place in its black, shiny glory. So loud and bragging that Kurt wanted to plead Blaine to let him out so he could walk to his friend's house like he always had before; without the guilt holding his insides in an iron grip, twisting viciously whenever he thought he could learn to get used to it and live with it, as if to remind him that he had no right to be that lucky when his friend didn't get to be.

His fingers clutched at the car seat on either side of him until his knuckles turned white and the wiry muscles in his arms started trembling with exertion.

He could feel the guilt of leaving without making sure Jeff was okay eating him up from the inside, painting his thoughts dark and leaving him lost in the haze as he tried to convince himself that he was doing something now and it was better than nothing. He didn't even believe himself so why should his friend?

And that thought scared him out of his mind. What if Jeff resented him, blamed him, hated him…

What if he never forgave him?

His breath paused in panic and suddenly a warm tide washed over him as gentle fingers snuck underneath his own and forced him to release the death grip he had on the car seat; weaving them with ones that had become undeniably welcome and familiar.

"Lovely, calm down," Blaine said as he stopped the car in front of the house. His voice was soft, quiet, smooth, but there was no missing that urging, pushing, commanding note in it that gripped Kurt's very core and made him melt into the seat, closing his eyes and letting his mind finally do what his body was pleading him to for so long; let go and breathe.

"What's gotten you so worked up?" Blaine asked and recoiled when Kurt bitch glared at him so he
rushed to correct himself. "That came out wrong. I know you're upset because of what happened to him, but you're acting like it's your fault."

Blaine eyed him for a moment before catching the shadow crawling over his face and he gasped, turning in his seat completely and cupping Kurt's face with his guitar rough hands.

"Oh my god, you really think that. Kurt, this is not your fault. How can you think that?" he pleaded desperately and thumbed the tears falling down his cheeks in waves and as beautiful as his eyes looked misted over with salty drops, Blaine never wanted to see him cry again.

The sub shook his head in dismissal, biting his lip and closing his eyes to get himself under control, but it just didn't work and a desperate sob released from his chest loudly as he crashed into Blaine's arms and buried his face into his neck, dampening his collar and chilling the skin with laboured breaths.

"I wasn't there. I left him and I was happy and he got hurt. I should have stayed with him and I didn't," he cried into his arms and Blaine held him tighter, cooing softly and running hands over shaking back as he did his best to push his dominance to the surface and wrap it around the sub to settle him down at least a little bit.

"Kurt you're not making any sense. You can't blame yourself for being happy," he chastised him gently, slowly, making sure not to make it sound like a punishment, but still firm enough for the sub to know it was a rule; one they would talk about later, but a rule nonetheless.

"I… I should have been with him," he sniffled miserably; body completely sagged against Blaine's and hands clutching at his soft cardigan.

"And done what? You would have gotten hurt too, Kurt. Lovely, look at me," he commanded gently and Kurt glanced up, cheek still pressed to the Dom's chest. "It's okay to care for your friends and to want to help them. But Jeff was attacked by a group of Doms. Completely vicious and practically feral. There was nothing you could have done so please, please just wipe your tears and be there for him now because he needs you… but don't ever blame yourself for something that wasn't your fault. Okay?"

Kurt eyed him for a few long minutes before sniffling one last time and nodding slowly. His Dom released enough of his strength over him to make him feel better, stronger, more determined. He felt his body let go of the negative held on the inside and grasp at the hope and the love and the light Blaine offered to him.

He finally understood what it meant to be claimed; how good it could be, how rewarding and calming and beautiful.

"You're right, sir. Thank you." For the second time that day Kurt used the title and Blaine felt his chest expand with pride and accomplishment.

The feelings wafting from his sub were now calm and subdued and gentle and he was the one to make them that way. He protected. He kept what was his safe and the heavy dominance inside him splashed and grew until he couldn't breathe anymore.

He pressed his lips to Kurt's gently, carefully, in tune with how much he could take from him and backing away after only a breath light kiss.

"Any time, lovely," he whispered against the soft petals before unlocking the car and giving the sub a little push. "Go on now. He's waiting for you. I'll wait here."
They had talked about it and realized it would be best if Blaine waited outside since the Sterling's knew who he was and given their past he had no idea how they, or Jeff for that matter, would react to a piece of their old world colliding with their new one.

"Okay. So I can tell him?" he asked as he was already standing halfway out of the car, head turning so he could look at his Dom, eyes hopeful and pleading at the same time.

"You can tell him you asked for it. And that I'm working on it. I don't want to make promises I can't keep and give false hope to someone," he said honestly and his heart broke at the crestfallen look on his sub's face. "But Kurt I'll do whatever is in my power. And I'm an Anderson so a lot is in my power." He winked cheekily to cheer him up and Kurt giggled, not as bright as usual, but still better than the tears. He stepped completely out of the car, grabbing the almost forgotten bag from the floor before slamming the door and waving a gentle farewell to Blaine before he walked over to the small house shielding his best friend, steps graceful and languid and making Blaine fall for him all over again.

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Jeff was curled under the thin blanket, head propped on a lumpy pillow and the sleeves of his pyjamas barely reaching his thin wrists.

Everything hurt.

His skin was too tight, his limbs were heavy and stiff, his head felt like it was filled with foam and his eyes scratchy and dry.

They hadn't been dry at first.

Rivers and oceans of tears fell from them, soaking the clothes he wore and making him even colder. He cried for the life he had before he was claimed, the friends who loved him, and the parents who didn't feel the need to shield him from the world like he was breakable.

He cried for all the nights he spent sleeping tightly, unconcerned and unburdened and fearless because there was nothing to be afraid of.

He cried for all the walks down the street and through the halls of his school he had took never looking over his shoulder, never ducking his head and never flinching at sudden disturbances in the balance of the place.

He cried for the times he spent memorizing books and facts and tricks that would make his future Dom happy and proud; his Dom who would be kind, and handsome, and smart and funny and sweet and who would make him tea in the morning and make sure he wore warm clothes and call him a good boy when he made him happy.

He cried for the man he had never had, but felt like was taken from him by someone who wasn't supposed to touch him the way he did.

He cried because he'd never get any of it back and he was too tired and too broken to believe he still deserved to.

Maybe they were right.
He had never heard of a sub being treated the way he was, never knew someone who was taken away from their Dom because he thought he was worthless and disobedient and ugly.

Maybe it was just him.

Maybe he wasn't loved and cherished because there was nothing lovable about him; there was nothing about him to cherish and to want to keep. It used to hurt so much to think that so he tried to smile and nod when people told him he wasn't in the wrong at all.

He didn't care anymore.

His tears dried out and he didn't think they would ever come back.

They lied to him. He was the one there was something wrong with. If he had been better none of it would have happened.

*Worthless.*

"Jeff!" a voice startled him from his quiet murmuring and before he could pull himself up and pretend that he was okay again there was a body behind him and for the first time in almost twenty four hours he didn't feel the need to vomit at the touch.

Kurt was familiar, Kurt was kind, Kurt was a sub like him and he would never hurt him.

Arms wrapped around him and a kiss was placed on top of his head as he let go and sobbed into his best friends chest, wonder etched into his skin as soft droplets cascaded down his cheeks again. He felt suddenly lighter, emptier, softer and the voice drifting into his skin pieced rough pieces back together; crudely, with the lines still visible and little shards missing, but his skin felt whole again, his head felt clearer and he felt like maybe he was still there somewhere amongst the wreckage.

"Never say that again. You are not worthless. You're my best friend, my brother. You're beautiful, and sweet and you have an amazing voice and you can draw like an artist and you have the most amazing smile in the world and I'd never be able to be okay without you and I'm so sorry I wasn't here..." Kurt rocked them back and forth singing his praises frantically while they cried and Jeff shook his head, seemingly only at his friend's apology, but they both knew he was also dismissing every single compliment Kurt just gave him.

Kurt didn't know what to feel. He was absolutely devastated for Jeff of course and hearing his best friend mumble such hurtful things about himself was like a knife to the heart. But Kurt couldn't help the stirring anger rolling inside his gut. The absolute hatred for the Doms that had reduced Jeff to this and the Dom that had started it all… and it was infuriating because there was nothing he could do about it. The only small comfort he got was the knowledge from his dad that the Doms had been taken in for their crimes… Jeff's ex Dom, however, was as elusive and unreachable as he ever was.

"D-don't apologize. I'm glad you weren't there," the blonde said quietly and Kurt gasped at his words, knocking him out of his own head.

"What? Why?" he asked, tears, angry and sad both, still crawling down his face and he held his friend closer. Jeff craved the closeness and there were scarce few people he'd allow it with.

"They would have hurt you too. That would have been worse than what they did," Jeff said softly, holding on to Kurt, body limp and bone tired.

"How can you say that? How could hurting me be worse than hurting you, Jeff?" Kurt cried out, not knowing what to do to make things better as he carded long fingers through his hair.
"I'm already ruined. I'm already broken and unworthy. You... you're still... pure and, and wanted and I'm glad you were away and happy," he admitted, voice resigned and slurry; so tired, so much pain in it, it made Kurt ache.

"No, Jeff..."

"Tell me about him," Jeff cut him off, a sleepy, pained smile on his face.

"About who?" Kurt frowned, heart breaking at the words leaving his friend's mouth. Jeff thought they could do it to him, had the right almost, because he was already hurt and tainted and that was so far from okay Kurt honestly didn't know where to start.

"Blaine... your trip... tell me about what you saw. Were you happy?" he asked and Kurt couldn't bring himself to talk about something like that.

How do you tell someone who was hurt that badly that your Dom was the most amazing and understanding Dom ever and that so far they had only kissed a few times and he hadn't insisted on anything, hadn't punished him unjustly, hadn't forced him past any boundary?

"Jeff... I... I don't think that's..." he tried but the blonde tightened the hold on his shirt in a gentle plea.

"Please, Kurt. I need to hear it. I need to know there are people out there, Doms, who aren't in it to hurt someone. I need proof that K... that he was an exception and I was just misfortunate. I need to know that it's not bad for everyone and that maybe it wasn't about me... maybe he was the one who was bad, not me," he cried brokenly and Kurt lifted his eyes to the ceiling to hide his own tears knowing that he had to be strong.

"It wasn't, Jeff. It was never your fault. He was, is, the one who is wrong and broken and doing things that aren't right. Blaine... Blaine told me that the Dom's job is to make sure their sub is always safe, and happy and healthy and loved beyond words. And he's not the only one thinking that," Kurt reassured him, voice strong and fierce with the depth of his conviction, but not knowing if his words made him feel better or even worse. It's what his friend had asked for, however, and Kurt didn't know how else to help.

"Who else is that way?" Jeff asked timidly and Kurt hugged him closer, nosing at his fair hair, trying to replicate the many soothing techniques Blaine had used on him and put them together with what he already knew soothed Jeff.

"I haven't met that many people yet, but his mom is the same way. She loves his dad and she's always making sure he's eating enough, and wearing socks. It's cute." He smiled at the memory. "And Nick says he'd let a sub call him a dick if it made him happy," Kurt informed him and Jeff let out a soft giggle through his tears making Kurt light up with accomplishment.

"Who's Nick?" Jeff asked, smiling, but deep down he knew that it wasn't real. Maybe between a Dom and sub like Sam was to them; friendly, but not in any way bonded. But once you were bonded? It was a trap the Dom made to make his sub mess up so he could be punished.

This Nick would never allow his sub to call him that, Jeff was sure of it.

"Blaine's best friend, he seems really nice I can't wait for you to meet him," Kurt said and Jeff went rigid in his arms, skin clammy and body shaking in fear.

"I... no... I don't... I don't want to meet him... o-or anyone. My... my dad says I can be home-schooled for my senior year," he stuttered and Kurt rushed to reassure him that okay, he didn't have
to meet Blaine's friends if he didn't want to.

But home-schooled?

*With what money? And what teacher?* Yes, the Sterling's were obviously educated, but in order to actually graduate high school properly he would still need to adhere to the syllabus and take tests and his parents would have to have the qualifications to teach him. It all cost money and McKinley High barely had enough teachers as it is, let alone managing to find one to home-school him.

Obviously his mom and dad tried to get him to calm down by saying that, but Kurt knew there was no way it could truly work. Which would make Kurt's plans even more heart-breaking if they fell through.

"What if I told you there was a chance for you to come to school with me?" Kurt asked carefully and Jeff tore himself away from Kurt's hands and stared at him.

"That's not funny," he muttered quietly, shocked and offended that his friend was toying with him like that.

"I know and I'm not trying to be funny. I asked Blaine to pull some strings and get you into Dalton and he promised he'll do whatever he can do make it happen," Kurt rushed to explain, now with more conviction and enthusiasm because behind all the fear and disbelief there was hope shimmering in those brown eyes.

"He's not gonna keep his promise, Kurt," he fought, but it was weak, almost forced out, like he was fighting his own mind not to believe it.

"He's gonna have to." Kurt winked, ignoring the sting in his eyes caused by yet another bout of crying he'd done.

"Why?" the blonde sub frowned as he watched his friend.

"Because it's my Gift," Kurt said proudly and Jeff gasped, tears spilling out and fingers shaking like crazy as the sheer magnitude of that statement struck him like a physical blow.

"I… You… you did t-that… for me?" he breathed and Kurt latched onto him, hugging him and chuckling sweetly.

"Anything in the world to keep my best friend safe. Always," Kurt whispered and Jeff allowed himself to laugh with him, knowing that no matter how hard it would be, how scary and how incredibly alone he would be because other than Kurt he didn't want people close. But he knew he'd at least be safe at Dalton. He wouldn't be hurt again. Alone and scared yes… but never hurt again.

The two best friends sat for a while after that, talking, allowing themselves to heal and return to being whole again as the sun changed positions in the sky and sooner than they knew it, it was time for Kurt to go.

He handed Jeff the gift he'd gotten for him while he was away and promised him to give him a call later that day to let him know what happened with Blaine's promise. And as he was walking out he was escorted by a pair of chocolate colored eyes shining with what looked like glee and soft hands clutching the wooden box with painting supplies inside.

His Jeff was back, at least for now.
"Blaine, what you're asking from me is almost impossible to do with all the time in the world at my disposal. Making it happen in less than two days? There's no way I can do this."

"What if I told you the reason I'm asking for this?"

"I thought you promised to keep this a secret."

"Yeah, well, I also promised to do whatever's in my power to make this happen."

"Okay… I'm listening."

"The sub Kurt asked from me to bring to Dalton..."

"Yes?"

"It's Jeffrey Sterling."

"…"

"Hikaru?"

"Jeffrey Sterling as in… Kevin Landon's sub?"

"Ex sub. And yes… him. It's like the universe hates that boy for some reason, he just can't catch a break."

"What happened?"

"Well I don't know the all the details because Kurt wanted to protect his privacy, but from what I understand he's being bullied at school."

"Blaine, I can't move mountains to get him to Dalton because someone called him a bad name."

"It's much worse than that. In fact bullied is the biggest understatement of the century. They… they cornered him, tried to rape him, they bit and scratched at his mark… Hikaru he's not gonna make it long if he stays. He's been through so much already and he means so much to Kurt and I can't, I can't let him down, either of them… please..."

"Blaine..."

"I'm begging you. What if it were Lee instead of Jeff? She's a sub too. Would you let your daughter stay there?"

"That's a low blow."

"I know… but this is important."

"Why?"

"Why what?"

"Why is it so important for you to do this for a sub you've never even met?"
"Because it's what Kurt asked as his Gift. And even if he didn't, after hearing what he went through, I want to do whatever I can to keep him safe."

"You two really belong together. With him giving up on his own Gift to keep his friend safe and you fighting a nearly lost cause to make it happen."

"Wait 'nearly'?"

"Well, I suppose being the Principal has its perks."

"Really, what are those?"

"We're allowed to grant a full ride at Dalton based on special circumstances in their lives."

"I've never heard of that scholarship."

"Well of course you didn't. I just made it up... and would you look at that. Only one person applied so we must give it to him. What a coincidence."

"You're the best, best friend's dad a person can have."

"Yeah, yeah. Now buzz off I have papers to sign and scholarships to make up."

"Thank you so much. I'll see you at school."

"Bye. Oh and Blaine."

"Yes?"

"You're not allowed to ask me to so much as pass you the salt at dinner after this favor. Got it?"

"Got it."

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Monday morning...

"Ready to go, lovely?" Blaine asked as he walked into the room where the sub was getting ready for his first day of school, standing in front of a full length mirror and tugging at the collar of his blazer with annoyed little huffs escaping his lips, brow puckered into a small frown.

He turned to face Blaine and he saw that it was more than annoyance colouring his mystical blue eyes into a darker shade; there was uncertainty, shyness and fear.

Over the past week he’d got used to seeing Kurt relaxed and open. There were moments when he would clam up and try to protect himself from whatever he thought Blaine would do when they pushed at the clearly marked boundaries that had been set, but the Dom made sure he went out of his way to soothe his fears and reassure him that he was perfectly safe and loved and wanted with him. They were making progress, tearing each wall down one by one and Blaine didn't care if it was slow going, they were going and at a pace that made Kurt happy and that's all that mattered.
And it seemed as if Kurt could feel that too because those flashes of insecurity were getting shorter and further apart the longer they were together. His gentle, careful touches were received freely now, with a soft lean into his arms and an occasional nuzzle of the palm caressing his face.

The kisses they shared were timid and careful, but Blaine felt them like they were fire on his lips. His sub apologized each time he nudged a little bit harder into the kiss, each time a small moan escaped him, each time his body shivered and Blaine hated that he thought he had to hold back when every instinctual move Kurt made was setting his insides alight and drove him crazy. He hated that he thought he wasn’t allowed to initiate things when he wanted them; instead waiting for Blaine to realize he wanted to be held and touched and kissed. His innocent, pure sub clutching his shirt and cuddling closer to him as their lips moved together made him want to fly with how good it felt, how right it felt and he shushed every apology, stopped every move to back away and kissed away each blush until Kurt was pliant and relaxed in his arms and under his lips again; fear gone from the oceans held in his eyes.

But that fear was so much different than the one he was witnessing now.

There was something raw and unguarded in the way Kurt looked at him, pleading, and begging him to soothe his mind the way only he could.

"Kurt, what's wrong?" He threaded the expanse of the room between them in three long strides until his sub was tucked safely in his embrace, his face hidden in Blaine's neck and his back arching into the soft touch of Blaine's hand.

"I don't know... I just... I'm scared of Dalton, and the people there," he admitted, realizing that being honest could be the best way to go about what he was feeling at that moment.

"Why?" Blaine asked, tugging his hand and leading them to sit on the huge, plush armchair in the corner of the room.

Kurt was quiet for a moment trying to think of the best way to explain himself. "Growing up I always thought clothes meant a lot. When I saw people at McKinley you could tell who had a better job and whose parents had more money. Don't get me wrong we were all poor, but apparently there are a lot of different stages of being poor. From people who came to school with no coat and blue from the cold, to those who had clothes but they were ripped or too small or beyond repair, to those who had low quality but well-fitting and decent looking clothes. It was hell. People teased and picked at the poorest kids, most likely to make themselves feel better. They would rip what little they had and the next day that kid would come to school with their clothes still torn apart because they had nothing better and I thought... I thought how much easier it would be if we could all just look the same, wear the same. Then nobody would be able to tell who had more money and nobody would be picked on," Kurt revealed, a tear slipping down his cheek and Blaine gasped, horrified that just an hour away from where he slept on silk and satin there were kids walking to school in little better than rags and freezing to death.

He thought of the clothes Kurt wore when he had met him and figured he must have been somewhere in the middle because, although well-kept and cared for, his sleeves were a bit too short and his shoes a few sizes too big. He hoped that was enough to get him out of being bullied then and now he had a uniform. They would all look the same.

"So what's gotten you so scared? Dalton has a dress code for everyone," Blaine said and frowned at Kurt's dejected laugh.

"There's a difference between how I wear it and how you look in it," Kurt said and gestured to Blaine's uniform, different from his own only in the colour of the tie; where Kurt's was red and navy
stripped, Blaine's was a solid red.

"What do you mean?" Blaine asked in confusion, eyeing Kurt who looked absolutely delicious in the navy and red attire, graceful and classy in a way some of his classmates weren't able to accomplish after years of training and living in the high society circles.

"I can wear the exact same thing they do but they'll still know who I am, where I come from. They will know I don't belong there. I thought the uniform would help me blend in but it's going to do the exact opposite. I'm not supposed to wear this. I'm not even supposed to be there and they'll know it the second they see me," he whispered defeated and Blaine's eyes widened at the confession.

Kurt belonged there more than a lot of idiots prancing around Dalton without a grain of brains in their thick skulls. They strutted around in their uniforms thinking they owned the world just because their daddy was a CEO of a multinational company or a famous actor.

None of them could hold a candle to Kurt and Blaine wanted to make sure he knew that so he placed a hand under his sub's chin gently and turned his head to look him in the eye.

"Listen to me. You... Kurt, you're everything. You're smart and beautiful and classy and graceful and elegant in a way a lot of subs at Dalton never get to be despite all the money their parents waste to make them that way. And those that manage to look that way are artificial and trained and programmed to the point where they all look like robots. So yes... you'll stand out, uniform or not, you'll be different. But it's going to be because you're better than anyone else. Everything you are is real and natural and they could only hope to be like you someday; to talk the way you do, and to move the way you do. Kurt, you're magical. And they will all see it. Embrace it. Be proud of it. You'll always be ten steps ahead of them," Blaine said thumbing the tears cascading down pale cheeks away and smiling at his beautiful boy.

"How do you always know what to say?" Kurt chuckled a teary laugh and Blaine shrugged teasingly.

"I'm awesome like that. And it's my job as your Dom to always make sure you're okay and happy." he finished more seriously and Kurt lifted a shaking hand to run his fingertips through gelled down curls.

"I think I'm finally starting to see that," he confessed, running those same shaking fingertips down Blaine's ear and jaw, the gesture feeling so intimate it made Kurt catch his breathe.

"See what?" Blaine choked on a breath as those feather light touches burned a trail of fire his skin.

"That everything I thought of being bonded was wrong. That I can be... no... that I am happy with you," he said and this time it was Blaine who couldn't stop a tear from sliding down and getting lost in the soft material of his blazer.

He should have been surprised by the amount of tears he'd shed since claiming Kurt. Happy, sad, frustrated. But he wasn't. Everything with Kurt was magnified to the point of almost unbearably intense and while he wasn't prone to tears at all being a Dom, he didn't find a weakness in them. He knew other Doms did, but Blaine was all about being honest with himself and how he expressed his emotions.

"God, Kurt, you have no idea how good it is to hear that. I promise you, lovely, everything I do is to make you feel that way. To make you feel happy to be mine," he said and Kurt nodded, biting his lip shyly and contemplating his next move for a second before taking a deep breath, leaning in and touching his trembling lips to Blaine's in a kiss so tiny, so careful, so timid, but still strong enough to
make Blaine lose his mind for a split second before that feeling was gone and Kurt was blushing and looking away and twisting his fingers nervously, an apology ready on his lips.

"I..."

"No... don't apologize. Please, just, don't make it sound like you're sorry for kissing me when my heart is close to jumping out of my chest from happiness."

"I... but... I thought." Kurt started in confusion, convinced he did something wrong when he initiated the kiss, but in that moment he couldn't hold it back. Something else had gripped him tight and refused to let go until he gave in to the desire simmering under his skin.

_But wasn't he supposed to wait for Blaine to do it? Wasn't he supposed to remain passive and allow Blaine to take his pleasure the way he saw fit?_ It was what they were taught at school and it was deeply ingrained even though a part of him was denying and sure Blaine would want any of that. It was hard to know the lines though when they hadn't actively discussed intimacy beyond Blaine promising he wouldn't push him... and he believed that, he just didn't know where the other boundaries lay.

His Dom looked at him like he saw all the way into his soul and Kurt knew he figured him out and that he knew what he was thinking.

"I know... and you thought wrong. You can ask and take whatever you want from me, whatever you need. Always," he assured and Kurt nodded into the hand cupping his neck when Blaine spoke again. "We should get going. Jeff will be waiting for us outside of Dalton in thirty minutes," he reminded and Kurt jumped to his feet, fixing his blazer in the mirror before accepting Blaine's hand and walking out to the car.

He locked his fears away and tucked them safely behind the memories of Blaine's words and his embrace, knowing his Dom created a wall around his insecurities that kept them away from him.

He had to be strong for Jeff.

His fingers wrapped around his tie expertly, forming a perfect looking knot in seconds; a reminiscence of his old days.

He smoothed down his shirt and reached for the blazer laid carefully over the back of his desk chair. Pulling it over his crisp white shirt, he buttoned the front slowly and fixed the lapels before taking a step back and inspecting himself in the mirror.

He barely looked like the boy who moved into that room with three measly boxes of stuff and fear etched so deeply into his bones he wanted nothing more but to lock the door of his new dorm and hide from the world he knew was more than capable of hurting him again. His hair was soft and falling in beautiful blonde whips over his right eye, courtesy of Kurt and a small bottle of hair product he said he saved for him out of the supplies Blaine got him for their trip. His face was pale and freckled but there was a tinge of pink sitting high on his cheekbones, signalling shyness and nerves.

His clothes fit him like a glove and he basked in the surprisingly quality fabric caressing his skin and reminding him of the time when all of his clothes felt amazing instead of scratchy. He ran a hand
over the material and allowed himself a moment of indulgence at that familiar feeling of cotton and silk on his skin before his mind kicked in with logic and memories and warnings.

He took in his surroundings with a laboured breath as he stepped away from the mirror and sat onto the bed to wait for Kurt, ready for the first day of his new life.

He picked on the high thread sheets adorning his new, queen sized bed and glanced around to take in the heavy wooden closet and a matching dresser with an ornate framed mirror hanging over it, catching sunlight and casting bright shapes over the wooden flooring. The walls were all painted a burgundy red; the combination contrasting the vintage furniture with modern colors and lines.

It was a place he had dreamed of being at before his dreams turned to nightmares.

Dalton was the school he was going to attend with his new Dom, before said Dom turned sadistic and decided he was to be home-schooled, therefore effectively cutting him off from the world.

Dalton was where he would join the infamous Warblers and with a little bit of effort become their head choreographer, before HE made him realize his voice was too shaky and his moves were spazzy and not fluid enough.

Dalton was where he was going to take art classes and be a part of the annual exhibition where someone would see his art and ask to buy it, before his Dom tore all of his sketches up because they were childish, stupid and amateurish.

Dalton was going to be his promise land then, and it could be his safe haven now.

All thanks to his best friend and his new Dom.

"Jeff, Kurt is here again," Lillian Sterling called out to her son and he looked up from the empty paper in front of him and she knew he had spent hours with a pencil in his hand, unable to draw a single thing.
No matter how many times they told him Kevin had it wrong, that his talent was still there and that he should draw and paint again, his fingers seemed frozen over the paper and nothing ever appeared on the blank surface.

He still sat at his desk, a sheet of paper and a pencil sharpened so many times it almost disappeared inside of his hand, but nothing changed.

Kevin took away so much from his; his voice, his art, his smile... and Lillian hated him for it, but there was nothing she could do about it but be there for her son and hope that someday, someone would come and show him just how beautiful he was.

He looked up at her and she flinched at the pain in those jade eyes she loved so much.

"Is he alone?" he asked timidly and she shook her head.

"Blaine Anderson's with him. They're with your dad in the living room now. He seems like a nice person," she tacked on knowing how reluctant he was to be close to someone who knew about his old life.

"Yeah, um... Kurt said so," he said, twisting his fingers nervously. Were they here to tell him that they could do nothing to save him? Were they here to shatter his tentative dream once again? Was he going to get broken again?

"Kurt looked happy. I think its good news, honey," his mom told him and he looked up to find her smiling at him gently, pain etched in her eyes and he hated that he was the reason it was there.

"I... I hope so," he whispered and she took his hand careful not to make too many sudden moves and make him flinch.

"Come on... Let's see what they have to say," she said and he nodded, allowing her to pull him out of his room and down to the living room where the beaming face of his best friend was the first and the last thing he saw before he had his arms full of Kurt.

"Oh my god, Jeff, this will be so awesome," Kurt squealed and Jeff widened his eyes at the sight of Blaine chuckling as he watched the two of them almost bouncing from the excitement Kurt exhibited over the news.

But Jeff had a hard time believing it.

Dalton? He was allowed to go to that heaven he had dreamed of for so long? He knew there was nothing left in him that he could offer but still, it was Dalton, it was his dream.

"Really? I... I get to go?" he asked breathily and flinched when Blaine stood up to walk towards them, a gentle smile on his handsome face and eyes full of pride directed at his sub.

"Your friend here is very persistent and determined when he wants something," Blaine said teasingly with a fondness undeniable in his voice and Jeff felt one of the knots in his body unravel and relax at the sound of it; soft and gentle.

"You mean annoying?" he asked quietly, braving against his own fears in case the Dom got angry at him for insulting his sub.

What he received in return was a smack on the shoulder from Kurt and a shrug accompanied by another teasing, "Or that..." from Blaine, making them all laugh as the tension broke slightly allowing them to smooth out the details of his transfer in a friendly atmosphere.
Maybe Blaine really was good to Kurt like he said he was. Maybe his friend really was happy and maybe... just maybe Blaine could really be his friend.

After a long discussion it was decided he would board since Lima was two hours away from the school and if Jeff had any intention of making it in time for his morning classes he would have to get up at four in the morning to get ready and catch the bus which was highly impractical of course.

Realizing he would have to swallow his own fears he agreed and with the help of Kurt and Blaine packed his things and moved into a single room on the second floor of the housing building. Filled with a strange mixture of hope and fear and anticipation he settled to bed knowing Monday would be the day his new life started.

For better or for worse he was never going back to that hell he came out of.

A sharp knock pulled him out of his own mind and he stood up on shaky legs, approaching the door of his new room and turning the knob with numb fingers.

He was greeted with the beaming smile of his best friend and the tentative but confident one of his friend's Dom as he shut the door behind him and took a deep breath to steady himself.

"Morning, Jeffy!" Kurt chirped and Jeff could see a curious smile on Blaine's face as he stared at his sub, bright and chatty as he greeted his best friend.

"Morning, Kurt." He smiled softly because he couldn't deny Kurt much of anything and then turned back to Blaine, eyes downcast and shoulders slumped protectively. "Good morning, sir."

He’d realized Blaine seemed like a truly nice guy and he still hoped deep down they could be friends somehow, but after thinking about it he figured he should probably do his best to make him stay that way.

"Please, Jeff, call me Blaine," the Dom said nicely and Jeff's head snapped up, fingers shaking from the anxiety of this uncharted territory. Of course there was the interaction he had with Sam occasionally, but it didn't seem like quite the same thing here.

If he didn't listen Blaine could get mad... if he did... Blaine could get mad again. This was looking decidedly like a no win scenario and he was on the verge of a panic attack about being backed into yet another corner when a soft hand took his gently.

"It's okay. I call him Blaine most of the time as well," Kurt said with a soft smile and Jeff blew out a shaky exhale and decided he should take it in stride for now and deal with potential consequences later. After all, he trusted Kurt and if Kurt said it was okay then it must be right?

"Okay then," he acquiesced quietly before glancing around and realizing the hallways were still pretty empty. "Are we early?"

"Yeah a little bit. Blaine wanted to show us around a bit and tell us about Dalton before classes start," Kurt said as he tugged at his hand and led him down the hall, Blaine falling into step next to them easily as the Dom talked.

"So, Dalton is a facility that has everything from kindergarten to college. The kindergarten and the primary school have their own buildings while high school and college share the same one but are situated in different wings. Dalton tends to encourage interaction among students to make the transition to college easier by having the high school and college students share the cafeteria, and allowing high school seniors to join most of the college clubs and groups," Blaine explained and Kurt took every word out of his mouth with wide eyes and slacked jaw, obviously so fascinated by
the way the gigantic institution worked.

Deciding he should just keep the fact that he knew mostly everything there was to know about Dalton to himself, Jeff walked alongside them and took in every detail as Blaine gave directions to their classes and titbits about their future teachers.

"...anyway, Markham is an ass. He picks on the people who don't pick up on his subject right away and tends to ask them most of the questions, so if you're not a math whiz I suggest you lay low for a while. Mrs. Carlson on the other hand is really sweet and while she has high expectations she's a great teacher and she's really understanding so I think it's good you have her on your first class on the first day here. She's bound to make a good impression. Let's see who else... oh Denton, the history teacher... the most boring human being alive. I'm serious, he makes a bloodbath sound sleep inducing. But he's nice so everyone let's that slide," he chuckled and Kurt followed suit with a giggle of his own as they rounded the corner and came to a stop next to a huge board filled with colorful flyers and signup sheets; a plethora of students signing up for various things Dalton had to offer and talking excitedly about auditions, try outs and practice.

"Wow what are those?" Kurt asked and Jeff took a step towards the board a curious gleam in his eyes as he looked for the one sheet he'd give anything he had to see his name on.

The art club.

The signup sheet, as the explanation on it suggested, was designed by someone who was a part of the club and then went on to take over the world of visual communication by storm, creating the most recognizable of logos and commercials in the world.

Jeff wanted to be a part of it so badly he could feel his fingers tingling with desire to pick up the pen and sign his name, but there was a voice at the back of his head whispering in a seething rage.

"You think you're some kind of an artist? My dead grandmother can draw better than this."

"I'm not wasting money on supplies for your childish, uninspired doodling."

"You know how most artists become famous after they die? Well not even death will help you."

Shaking his head against the onslaught of fear and resignation he stepped back, stilling the urge inside of him to join and convincing his own mind it was just better to stay away and leave it to people who actually had talent.

"Are you joining?" a soft voice came from behind him and he jumped, startled at the genuine curiosity in the Dom's voice as he stood next to him, waiting for Kurt to finish reading every single one of the signup sheets... even the hockey team one.

"Oh... n-no, I can't really draw that well... I was just... just looking," he said awkwardly, rubbing the back of his neck in a nervous habit as he waited for Blaine to just look away from him.

The Dom continued to study him though, obviously not believing his words after he had listened to Kurt praise his drawing when they bought him his gift, but he had decided to let it go, not wanting to make him uncomfortable.

"No design classes or clubs or anything," Kurt came back pouting and Blaine chuckled at the cute expression, loving how relaxed and comfortable Kurt seemed to be all morning despite the fact that it was his first day of school and he’d had that hiccup this morning. Logically he knew it was because he wanted to appear bright and happy and confident for Jeff’s sake, but there was a small part of Blaine that hoped beyond hope it had something to do with him. A tug on his hand brought him back
from his own mind and he looked back at Kurt who stared at his printed out schedule.

"Okay, so you showed us where the classrooms go but you never said if those are the ones for us or the Doms?" He turned to Blaine in confusion.

"Oh, right. I forgot to mention. Dalton has co-ed classes," he said and both of the subs gaped at him in terror. The blonde hadn't known about that particular detail.

Jeff's skin turned into a sickly white and Kurt shook his head in disbelief.

"But… they can… I…" his sub stuttered and Blaine rushed to his side, sliding a hand around his waist and using the other to carefully take Jeff's into his own.

"Just breathe. This isn't McKinley. This isn't Lima. You'll be okay. PE is held separately and that's the only place you can be caught in a vulnerable position. Nobody will touch you," he tried to comfort them while still keeping the distance the both of them needed to feel safe and he felt his body tremble with the effort to control his urge to protect.

Slowly their breathing evened out and they managed to stand still, Kurt curling into his arms and Jeff straightening his stance as if to make himself seem stronger, more confident.

"Trust me, okay, you'll be alright. Even if there is someone who's rude there will be five others willing to stand by you. I can vouch for that. Okay, lovely?" he asked gently and Kurt nodded into his neck, peeling himself away from his Dom and casting an encouraging smile at his friend as Blaine walked them away from the boards.

He dropped them off in front of their classroom for their first class of the day, English Literature, and with a soft kiss to Kurt's cheek and reassurances to both of them he was gone again. Kurt and Jeff glanced at one another for support before pushing through the door, relieved to see that there wasn't anybody other than the teacher in there at the moment. Blaine must have planned it that way.

Mrs Carlson was a woman around her mid-forties, red hair tied into a neat bun and bright green glasses perched on her nose. She wore a long brown flowing gypsy skirt and a soft white blouse that made her a comforting, soft presence to approach and when she heard their entrance she glanced up at them and smiled, warm and genuine.

"You must be my new boys!" she greeted easily as she rose up.

Kurt cleared his throat and nodded pressing close to Jeff's side and linking their hands together behind their backs for support. "Yes, ma'am. I'm Kurt Hummel and this is Jeffery Sterling.

"Well I'm Mrs Carlson and you happen to be in luck, there's a free table in the back left corner that's all yours." She smiled pointing in that direction. "Go settle down and I'll just grab you the books you'll need."

They did as they were asked pulling their notepads and a pen out each before a few scattered texts were being piled in front of them. "Now I know it's a little into the year but don't look too daunted dears, we were sent your previous work over from you're old school and all your teachers will be happy to accommodate and help you catch up to Dalton's syllabus."

Kurt picked up an anthology of poems curiously to inspect a little closer.

"These are the texts we've been studying, we've already been through a few poems that I've marked for you on these sheets." She held up two copies and handed them to them. "And we've read *Paradise Lost* by John Milton and *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath in class so if you could read those in
your free time then that would be great and we can take the rest of it from there." She smiled.

"We're allowed to take them?" Jeff asked surprised.

She smiled. "Of course, they're yours, scribble notes in them, highlight sentences and paragraphs," she encouraged and waved her hand airily just as the door opened and other students began to trickle in, noticing the new comers with bright curiosity and sometimes recognition when their eyes rested on Kurt.

He shifted in his chair and tried not to be intimidated by their stares and felt Jeff take his hand under the table, like Kurt had done for him earlier.

Mrs Carlson threaded her way back towards the front of the class where the pristine white board was set up next to another screen that looked like it was for a projector as the class slowly but surely filled up.

Kurt and Jeff tried their best to blend in and keep to themselves but it was almost impossible especially when Mrs Carlson hushed the chattering and spoke over them, "Quiet down guys, I want everyone to welcome our two new students before we crack on with where we left off last week. Now, our fresh faces names are Kurt Hummel and Jeffery Sterling." There was some murmuring and frantic whispering immediately upon hearing their names and the teacher clapped her hands loudly. "Enough of that. I expect you to show them the same respect you show everyone else," she said sternly and the voices petered away into nothing making Kurt release a breath he didn't know he was holding. "Okay, so today..."

Kurt kind of zoned out what she was saying which wasn't the best start, but really, he hardly expected to understand when he hadn't read the material anyway. He was just so nervous that he could hardly concentrate. He found he missed Blaine's presence acutely now he was gone and it had only been about ten minutes since he'd left for his own class.

A few more minutes passed before a voice from the table next to them got Kurt's attention. "Psst! Hummel!" was hissed under their breath.

Kurt turned his head and met hard green eyes and a salacious smirk set in a classically handsome face. He was a sub, Kurt could tell that immediately, but he was knocked from any further inspection when the boy opened his mouth again, "So how much did he pay you?"

Kurt felt a cold stab of dread and hurt spear his stomach and chest as he flinched away instinctively, facing back forwards and looking down at the desk with a humiliated blush staining his cheeks. He didn't want to deal with this and the realisation that just because he'd gone away for a week didn't mean the 'scandal' of his bonding wasn't still fresh in everyone's minds and it made him feel like a fool.

"Kurt," Jeff murmured to him squeezing his hand tighter. "Just ignore him."

"Because he can't actually be serious right?" The harsh, mocking laugh made tears spring to his eyes, even as anger coiled in his gut. "I mean, look at you."

"And look at you," another voice drawled and Kurt snapped his head up to see the boy in front of him had turned in his chair and was staring down the other sub that was trying his hardest to tear Kurt down. "Jealous isn't a good look on you, Brad, so how about you rein it in before every Dom in this place comes to his or her senses, yeah?"

"Fuck off, Sebastian, this hasn't got anything to do with you."
"And it stopped having anything to do with you the moment the Bennett's rejected your request for a pre-claim. Boo fucking hoo. Move on already before anyone else catches desperate from you."

Brad narrowed angry eyes and opened his mouth to fire back when the teacher called on him.

"I assume because you're talking you already know the answer?" she asked coolly and Brad stiffly shook his head.

"No ma'am, I'm sorry," he muttered.

She clucked her tongue, peering at him sternly from over the rim of her glasses. "Right, well face front and pay attention please and then maybe you will know, hmm?"

"Yes ma'am," he gritted out.

That seemed to be the end of it and Kurt briefly met the eyes of Sebastian before he turned back around as if nothing had happened at all and he hadn't just defended him. Kurt was left to ponder this for the rest of the lesson until it finished and Sebastian was striding out before Kurt had a chance to say thank you. He watched the tall sub go before Jeff was tugging them to their next class and it was put out of his mind for the time being.

"You sure you don't want me to go with you?" Kurt asked Jeff for the millionth time that day as they walked out of their last class before lunch and headed in the direction Blaine pointed out was the cafeteria.

"I'm sure, Kurt. I'll be fine. You just go and meet Blaine for lunch and I'll see you in biology," Jeff said, trying his best to keep his voice even and steady when everything inside him screamed for protection and comfort.

"I doubt the Principal will keep you for an hour. Why don't you join us for lunch after you're done? I'll grab you something before it's all gone," Kurt offered forgetting for a second that they were now at Dalton and that the food would most likely be available for all the students, not just those who were quick enough to grab something before it was gone.

"Um… I… I don't know… don't you two want some time alone or… or something." He fidgeted on his feet, showing for the first time that he didn't really know if he fit into Kurt's life anymore.

Kurt had a Dom now, a permanent one, and as far as he liked to think things would stay the same he knew they wouldn't spend as much time together as they did before.

Kurt's soft smile brought him back from his musings.

"We spend enough time alone at home and I've missed my best friend in the world. Also Blaine would really like to get to know you better. So please… please join us?" Kurt trained huge blue eyes at him, lower lip sticking out in a pout and his cheeks puffing cutely.

"Oh, fine… you know I can't stand the puppy eyes," Jeff huffed and Kurt bounced on his feet a little.

"Yay! Okay, I'm going now, but I'll see you soon," he said and walked towards the appealingly smelling room to their left, leaving Jeff to collect his thoughts and find his way to the Principal's office.

The bell rang mere minutes ago and the hallways were filled with people rushing to get something to eat, reminding Jeff of McKinley and the everyday battle to get to the cafeteria before everything that was even remotely edible was gone and he tried to curl into himself against the tide of bodies
pushing past him.

He took a step towards the hallway he remembered Blaine pointed out lead to Principal Montgomery's office and he looked up only to have his heart skip a million beats.

There was a boy... well a man standing there, a few steps away from him, smiling at his cell phone and Jeff could have bet money nobody else on earth had a smile so illuminated and breath-taking.

The sensation overtaking was strange and foreign. Ever since his failed bond Jeff refused to allow himself to look at someone like that, to think of someone as something more than a friend, to feel attraction or desire for someone, but this person made everything inside him jump awake after so long, shaking off dust and cobwebs and filling him with awareness.

He looked. For the first time in what felt like forever he took in someone else, not to see if they had a chance at doing damage to him, but to appreciate. Appreciate soft, brown hair that flopped around ears, tips curling and tickling skin. Warm eyes that twinkled and shone with joy and his smile... god, his smile was something that should exist only in fairytales; soft, pink lips stretched over perfect, pearly teeth and Jeff instantly thought of sunshine and warmth. He wanted to know what it would feel like to have that smile directed at him, to be the one to cause it, to be allowed to kiss it.

Gasping in silent shock he mocked his own stupidity for thinking that way.

He was nothing. He wasn't worthy of even looking at him, let alone thinking of marrying him with his touch. He allowed himself one final glance at the magical being in front of him before mentally scolding himself and turning around, rounding the corner and disappearing into the crowd, completely missing the look of longing on the face of the boy with a sunshine smile.

Nicholas Alexander Duval always thought of himself as a simple guy, easily pleased and even more easily entertained.

He enjoyed good movies and books, hanging out with his friends and being a part of the Warblers as music was one of the things that made him happier than anything else. He liked sleeping in, in the morning and waking up to the sound of his sound system gently playing the same record he had fallen asleep to the night before. He liked to talk to people, visit new places and he liked to daydream... about one thing in particular.

Ever since he was a little boy he would talk to his mother about a beautiful boy with golden hair and eyes that will be the same colour as his favourite chocolate and he would be so pretty all the other boys will want him but he will like only Nick.

His mom asked him what he would do if the golden haired boy liked someone else and the tiny five year old pouted, his lower lip trembling as he fought against the tears and declared that he would hold his hand and kiss his cheek and make him smile and then he would stop liking the other person and like only him.

Lucy smiled at her son and said she thought it was a pretty good plan.

Over the years a lot had changed, the music he now liked was different, his favourite chocolate wasn't the same anymore and he rarely cried over anything.
But there was one thing that never changed.

Every time he daydreamed he daydreamed of him, and every time he thought of him he still had golden hair and chocolate coloured eyes. Nick had a type and every time a sub caught his eye it was blonde hair that pulled him in. But for whatever reason not one sub he approached, talked to, took on a date, called out to him or made him want to claim them.

There was always something frustratingly missing and he had no idea what it was.

The tickle of his phone vibrating in his front blazer pocket shook him out of his musings and he took the cell out trying to be discrete, but his efforts proving to be futile because their professor announced that the class for the day was cancelled due to something Nick couldn't care less about because all he heard was 'no class'.

Darting out of the stuffy room he chuckled a laugh at the message on his screen.

From: Trent (9:13am)
Wes caved. Warblers are going to NY to compete. Well if we win Sectionals, that is. Can I get an AMEN?

Laughing goofily he sent back a capitalized, bolded and italicized AMEN and pocketed his phone heading in the direction of the cafeteria to get a muffin or something.

He was about to take the first step towards the exit of the hallway when the air got punched out of his lungs and stomach, his heart skydived to the floor and all coherent thoughts suddenly decided they didn't want to be his friends anymore, packed their bags and left his head... for good.

He was the most beautiful thing Nick had ever seen.

Soft, platinum blonde hair falling like silk down his forehead and partially covering his eyes... eyes the colour of chocolate and honey and so incredibly warm and... something else he couldn't pinpoint but if he had to name it, it would be shy or timid.

His little nose was straight and cute and the redness of the tip, which could be caused by the cold air in the hallway, made him even more adorable and Nick just wanted to cuddle him until he was warm again. He had beautifully full, pink lips that begged to be kissed and the fact that he didn't even know his name or if he was claimed was the only thing that kept Nick from rushing over there and giving in to the unknowing plea and kissing the living daylights out of him.

The blonde beauty was tall, if he was not mistaken he was slightly taller than Nick, but his thin frame and his careful, drawn in stature made him seem small and breakable for some reason. He awakened every instinct Nick had always known he had but never felt before; the need to keep him warm, safe, happy, loved and protected.

The intense desires were jarring to his system.

A quick scan of his clothes told him the blonde was in high school so that could explain the fact that he had never seen him before, but now that he had there was no way he would let him disappear again.

Shaking off the trance the angel in front of him put him in, he took a few bold steps towards him when the blonde turned around and an image smashed into Nick's heart with the force of a thousand nails being driven into his chest.
The back of his neck was marked with a partially outlined heart, the colour that could have once been called green, dull and speckled with black dots and every single one felt like a slap in the face to Nick.

He belonged to someone… someone who wasn't Nick… and someone who deserved to be killed on the spot because that someone hurt him. Everyone knew what marks like that meant.

Almost stupidly heartbroken and feeling defeated he watched the blonde angel walk away, every step between them tearing him apart and he had to rub a hand over his aching chest to try and soothe the yawning pain that was only widening with the distance.

A hand clasped him on the shoulder and he jumped, eyes never leaving that corner the blonde boy disappeared behind as the voice of his best friend drifted to him, muted and distant.

"Nick? Nick, man are you okay?" he could hear Blaine calling but he couldn't force himself to look away; the hope he would come back still raging inside of him.

"NICK!"

Suddenly he was whipped around to face a confused, worried looking Blaine frowning at him and holding his shoulders tightly.

"I... I'm okay, B," he said shakily, craning his neck to look at that corner again.

"What are you looking for?" Blaine asked looking in the same direction over his shoulder but having no clue what he was searching for.

"He... I... I saw someone," he said, his explanation falling short in his own mind, let alone Blaine's.

"Someone you know? Someone you hate? Someone who forgot to return the book you lent them? You'll have to be more specific," Blaine teased hoping to get at least a small smile for his comedic efforts but Nick remained stubbornly serious and deep in thought, eyes faraway, brows drawn low over them.

"How did you know you wanted to claim Kurt?" he asked all of a sudden and Blaine gasped in shock.

"You saw someone you want to claim?"

"Just answer my question," Nick snapped and Blaine held his hands up in a mock surrender gesture.

"Sorry. I don't know, I just knew. I saw him and I felt like I never wanted to stop looking at him again. The thought of him going to someone else, someone else touching him, having him made me sick. I knew I couldn't let him go," Blaine tried to explain as best he could and every shred of doubt vanished from Nick's thoughts like Blaine had switched on a floodlight.

A marred mark or not this boy was not claimed, at least not anymore. There was no way the Validators wouldn't have removed him from the Dom that did that to him and that gave him at least some form of hope. And as hard as it might be, and he was not going to kid himself that it would be easy in any way shape or form, he felt a deep conviction form. He was ready to face everything to be with that sub.

He had teasingly ripped into Blaine for his shocking claiming, but now he finally understood. The decision wasn't really a decision at all, in fact, it was as natural a response like breathing was. Necessary and unavoidable.
"Then yes... I have found someone I want to claim," he answered firmly and turned his back on a stunned looking Blaine, walking towards the corner he last saw him at and trying to retrace his steps to find him again.

The knock on the door was tentative at best; in fact, if he hadn't been waiting for it Hikaru was sure he would have missed it completely.

As it was he beckoned the person inside and watched as the door slowly revealed the infamous Jeffery Sterling, shoulders drawn inwards and eyes set on the floor beneath him.

Hikaru was hardly an ignorant man.

He knew all about the Sterling's 'scandalous fall from grace', the transfer of one Kevin Landon, the bond the two families had tried to forge with the union of a sub and a Dom. It wasn't hard to piece together what had happened in the end and yet, there was nothing anyone could do about the circumstances.

The Validators had shown up one afternoon and took young Jeffrey into their custody, bruised and visibly gone if the dull color of his eyes was anything to go by. Landon's parents had spent their money on lawyers and private investigators, and bribing people into swearing up and down that Kevin was the most amazing of Dom's, managing to contain the rumor mill enough to get out of all of it unscathed.

Jeff's parents on the other hand lost everything they had trying to fight them back while at the same time paying for therapy and treatment for their son, spending everything they had and falling from society the worst way possible.

Everybody knew what happened; but nobody could provide evidence, Jeffery was too traumatised to speak out then and now it was too late, and the case was soon forgotten in light of flashy parties and shiny cars. Yes, he and others could speculate, could even be one hundred percent sure he was right, but Hikaru or anyone else for that matter had no proof, the Landon's had made sure of that.

Looking at the broken, timid shell of a sub in front of him now made him wish that was not so.

"Mr Sterling," he greeted warmly, standing from his seat to greet his student properly.

Downcast, hesitant brown eyes met his own before skittering back to the floor. "Sir."

Hikaru smiled sadly at him though he didn't see it. "Please have a seat, make yourself comfortable," he offered making sure to keep his voice level and without command. He was careful to do this anyway because it was a misuse of power for someone in his position, but something about Jeffery made it imperative for him to seem as least domineering as possible if this meeting was to go well.

Jeff took him up on the suggestion after scanning his face for any sign that he possibly hadn't meant it which told a thousand stories on its own. It was a Dom's job to make sure a sub was cared for and safe and trusted in them to do those things. This poor young sub clearly hadn't experienced any of that and it only solidified what he already knew.

"I want you to understand, Mr Sterling, I didn't call you in here because you are in trouble in any way," he started and wide brown eyes snapped up to his.
"I'm not?" was asked quietly.

Hikaru smiled patiently. "Of course not. I just wanted to check in with you to see how your first day was going."

Jeff opened his mouth as if to say something but nothing came out and he closed it again shrinking further into himself.

"Are you alright, Mr Sterling? If you have any concerns you can talk to me about them freely."

"I don't fit in here," he blurted. "I just... I don't."

Hikaru cocked his head at him. "You're a sub, yes?"

Jeff frowned. "Yes."

He smiled and teased lightly, "Well I happen to be quite sure that this is a Dominant and submissive school. I think you'll fit in just fine." Jeff just looked away, the joke clearly missing its point and Hikaru couldn't even blame him. "Mr Sterling, in all seriousness you have just as much right to be here as anyone else. This is a place for understanding and learning, prejudice and bullying of any kind are not tolerated here."

"That doesn't mean it doesn't happen," Jeff murmured almost to himself, pulling at the cuffs of his uniform agitatedly like he wasn't comfortable in the clothes.

"No, I can't promise you that it doesn't," he conceded and Jeff looked at him with trepidation. "But it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. I do not tolerate it in my school, Mr Sterling," he reiterated seriously.

The blonde swallowed and nodded shortly.

"Now, do you have any questions about your dorm? About your class schedule?"

"No it's fine, I understand where I'm supposed to be."

"Well if you do get a little lost feel free to ask a fellow student or teacher, the staff has all been informed that there will be two new students and they're there to help after all."

Jeff nodded again and Hikaru sighed a little at the tense posture that had hardly eased in his presence. As much as he would like to keep the sub here and quell some of those fears he knew he couldn't keep him from all of his lunch break.

"Please feel you can come to me if anything bothers you, a comment, a look, if you simply need someone to talk to," he offered sincerely with a smile, knowing he was crossing the line of being professionally detached from his students but he just couldn't stay away when this boy in front of him looked so old and worn when he should be smiling and in love and happy.

He knew he was biased.

He knew that his daughter, Lee, softened his sympathies further than he initially felt them, but it was difficult to detach completely when all he was imagining was what if. What if someone did this to Lee? What if she was scared and broken and was facing him right now so lost? He knew it was his job to be concerned but objective, but he found sometimes he just couldn't. The board could do or say what they liked about him but he wasn't changing.
"Thank you."
After all, that soft admission was worth it.

"Blaine!"
The familiar chorus of voices resonated in harmony even while just greeting in sync, making him smile widely at the room full of smartly dressed Warblers as he walked into the large choir room. He should have predicted the barrage of questions that came along with the many limbs grabbing at him in bro-hugs, back slaps and handshakes from the group of guys who, for better or for worse, became his second family while he was at school.

He returned the greetings heartily, glancing over his closest friends and smiling at them, happy to see them after spending almost ten days away with his life completely turned upside down... for the better.

The all-male group was built up of around fifteen guys from senior age upwards, it was predominantly a college choir with a few brave high school seniors and Blaine had been a member since he was seventeen and had just started his senior year. The Warblers were largely populated by Dominants, not through any prejudice on the part of the members, but instead through outside influence.

Dalton on the whole was a very progressive institute in regards to their society and compared to some of its neighbouring counterparts. The families that sent their children there were more open than most, accepting of change, however there was still that percentage of families that were traditional in their thinking. That scorned changes or moves towards lessening the divide between classes and as such, prevented their unbonded sub children from joining something as useless as the Warblers. They believed their efforts were better spent learning ways to please their Doms, signing too common, and attending sub training classes, so it was mainly only bonded subs that were members or subs from progressive families.

Whatever the reason, Blaine loved them with all of his heart and he knew they were the ones he could count on when things got rough.

"You're back!"
"Hear you snagged a sub finally, idiot!"
"Is it true he's from Lima?"
"He's not from Lima."
"The media's been having a field day. Where have you been?!"
"Guys!" Blaine called out holding his hands up and forcing them back a step. His brain could hardly compute all the different voices and opinions.

"Give him some breathing room," a commanding tone admonished and the sea of identical blazers further dispersed to sit down or hover nearby against walls so a familiar figure could be seen.
"Wes." Blaine grinned at the fellow Dom, always regal in the way he talked, seemingly cold and untouchable, but underneath it all a caring person and the best of friends one could hope to have.

"Always a stir, Blaine, always a stir," the Asian sighed with small shake of his head, but there was humour lighting his brown eyes.

Blaine laughed. He'd missed them while he had been away. "You love it, Wes, admit it."

"Well I can't deny it's mildly entertaining," was returned mock snobbishly and Blaine chuckled at his teasing eye roll as he settled himself at the council's desk.

"Okay, enough with the pleasantries I want the inside scoop!" David exclaimed hopping up onto the council desk at the front of the room making Wes scowl and shove him off to prevent the wood from damaging. Blaine kinked a brow innocently in mock confusion and David rolled his eyes. "Your sub, asshole! I want to know about your sub. You can't just go and get your ass bonded and not expect your best friends to grill you about it!"

Blaine opened his mouth fully prepared to gush when he was cut off.

"He didn't get bonded, they just made it up! They make stuff up about B all the time," Trent scoffed from his spot by the windows. "And all that stuff that this subs from Lima is just to exaggerate the story."

Blaine frowned at that, hackles beginning to rise. He didn't like people denying Kurt's existence any more than he liked the implication that saying someone was from Lima would juice up a story to make it into a bigger scandal. There was nothing wrong with where Kurt had come from and regardless, that struggle had made him all the more beautiful to Blaine.

"No," Thad disagreed more timidly, but confident in his own opinion, from the armchair he was curled up on, folder in his lap filled with equations and formulas usually only he was able to understand the meaning of. "I don't think they'd make that up."

"Well I don't believe it," Trent countered crossing his arms over his chest and staring at Blaine with something resembling hope on his face. Like it would make him personally happy if Blaine confirmed his theory; like it somehow affected him.

"Yeah, well what you do believe is that all clowns are evil monsters out to get you so I wouldn't put much stock into your opinion," Sebastian drawled from the couch where he was studying his nails intently, a look of absolute boredom with just a hint of surprise on his face; like he couldn't really believe he was willingly spending time with the rest of them mortals. It was a look he wore constantly, with one exception. When Dave was close to him.

"They are evil! You just don't understand!" Trent wailed, clutching his heart eyes widening in fear and darting around the room like he expected a wild clown to materialize out of thin air and poke his eyes out with chop sticks.

"You didn't do this as some kind of publicity stunt did you, Blaine?" Jon, one of their newer members and a Dom, asked in a deep growly voice and Blaine felt his insides flare at the thought of degrading Kurt like that.

"What? No!" Blaine hissed at him, eyes blazing fully with the depth of his anger now, Jon and a few others backed up. "Kurt is not and never will be some kind of publicity stunt. He's beautiful and amazing and you'll shut up about him right now," he commanded fiercely.

The room went deathly silent and still under that weight of the dominance pouring off of Blaine.
The room was mostly full of other Dominants yes, but Blaine was by far one of the stronger, natural Doms in the room and as such he had a certain power over them still even though they weren't all subs. Even the Doms responded to his fierceness; not in the instinctual, hormone driven way as the subs did, but they could still feel the power in him and they regarded it with respect.

"We're sorry, Blaine," Trent mumbled after a few minutes and Jon nodded his head frantically with wide eyes and a remorseful frown.

David rubbed the back of his neck sheepishly. "Yeah man, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have brought him up so casually, that was bad form."

Blaine inhaled a deep breath to get himself under control and tried to loosen his tightened fists and tensed muscles. He really wanted Kurt right now to hold in his arms; he soothed him with his mere presence effortlessly.

"He's in my English class," Sebastian said breaking the second silence that descended. "He's pretty. Prettier than you deserve," he smirked and Blaine found himself deflating as he quirked a small smile at the younger sub, grateful for the change in the atmosphere the teasing comment caused.

Sebastian was in Kurt's year, a senior and already happily and comfortably bonded to Dom Dave Karofsky for just over a year now. He had a sharp tongue and snarky personality that reminded Blaine a little bit of Kurt when he slipped into that sassy diva he loved to see so much. And for a moment Blaine wondered if hanging out with Sebastian could help Kurt relax even more and return him to his usual personality that he believed to be quite flashy and big in comparison to the uncertain, timid sub he was now.

"He's an angel," Blaine said decidedly, looking around the room as if daring someone to disagree with him.

Wes chuckled and held his hands up. "We believe you."

Blaine didn't even blush, he was not the least bit ashamed of how far gone he was for his sub. He'd sing it to everyone if he had to. *That wasn't even a bad idea*, he thought suddenly, cocking his head to the side, eyes going shiny and dreamy. *Would Kurt like that? He liked him singing before... maybe he should practise and surprise him?*

"Oh no, move the furniture quick before he starts jumping on it!" David declared cutting into his inner planning and Thad giggled while Blaine pouted when he realized what he was talking about.

"I don't do it that often," he frowned.

"Don't make Wes get his recordings out, Blaine, I beg of you," Trent whined plaintively. The rest of the room groaned too while Wes glared at them.

"I like them," Thad piped up, giving up on the mile long math problem he was trying to solve for his 'I'm a smartass and I know stuff regular people don't' club.

"Because you like spotting Ryan's face in the crowd mooning over you," Sebastian snorted but it was fond. Sebastian had been a key factor in getting Thad and his Dom together after six months of dreamy sighs and drooling smiles and whiny solos.

Thad glared at him and it was pretty adorable because the sub couldn't pull off mad if his life depended on it with how small and sweet and messy haired and adorable he was. "Like you don't enjoy it when Dave comes and does the same."
"Dave doesn't moon," Sebastian sniffed haughtily, though there was a hint of a smile pulling at the corners of his lips that ruined his glare as his façade cracked just a tiny bit revealing a boy who was truly in love and happy.

"No he just eyefucks you, which is equally as disturbing when I'm trying to concentrate on my epic one, two step dancing," David stated side eyeing Wes who threw him a look so evil he rushed to correct his statement. "Because swaying side to side is totally hard and that's why we have to practice it over and over and over and o-

"Everyone shut up, I want to know about Kurt," Trent declared, cutting in and Blaine visibly perked up, preening and glowing with pride.

"Someone's changed their tune," Thad sang with a little grin.

The dark haired Dom pointed at him. "You've gotten insufferable since you've bonded you know. Go back to being a nerdy nerd who solves math problems for fun and never talks unless it's about math."

Thad stuck his tongue at him childishly and Trent threw a pillow at his head.

Balance was restored.

"So, Kurt?" Wes interrupted the bickering.

Blaine smiled widely and he knew, dopily. "He's everything I've been waiting for and more. He's sweet and funny and kind and beautiful and..."

His quite pathetic rant was cut off by the loud bang and he scowled at the door because he was just about to describe Kurt's eyes for the peasants present there, having never had the chance of seeing something so magnificent and then Nick stole his thunder by striding into the room and flopping onto the couch.

"Sorry I'm late guys! Mr Henshall overran our class again."

"Dude likes to talk," Trent acknowledged with a solemn wince.

"We're talking about Kurt," Thad said to him happily and Nick dramatically swooned.

"Did Blaine tell you he was an angel? Amazing? Wonderful? A rose amongst thorns?" he asked with a hand over his heart and they all laughed at his display.

"Essentially," Sebastian smirked.

Blaine punched his friend in the arm, not liking the mockery at all. "He is all those things!

Nick winced and rubbed the offended area. "I know, B. I met him you know. He's great, you already know I think he is."

Blaine only frowned harder though, feeling a hot emotion sweep through him. "He's mine."

Nick laughed and so did a few others. "No winning with you is there? But don't you worry your curly head. I've got my eye on someone else so Kurt is safe from my sexy self."

Blaine remembered what Nick had told him about finally finding someone he wanted to claim and calmed down considerably. They shared a knowing look for a moment, breaking it before someone could catch it and ask questions they weren't ready to answer.
"Is it true what the media's been saying then?" Jon asked a bit more carefully this time earning himself a grateful smile from Nick for creating the distraction.

Blaine sighed heavily and propped himself against the desk next to David. "Probably not. But we haven't exactly been reading the magazines or newspapers while we were away so I have no idea what they are saying now."

"Did you have a nice time?" Wes asked and Blaine wasn't surprised that Hikaru had told him about the Bond Leave.

"It was unbelievable, he's so stunning you guys, inside and out. Spending a week with him without any distractions, just learning and bonding with him was like something out of a dream."

Thad hummed in agreement, eyes far away and dreamy, as if he was remembering his own bonding.

"You're never going to shut about him are you?" David asked suddenly. Pre-emptively.

Blaine shoved him. "Suck it up. Kurt's perfect so I have many things to brag about."

"Is he really from Lima?" Trent asked.

"Not that it matters," Blaine said defensively.

Trent held his hands up. "I'm not judging man, I'm sure he's all wonderful and an angel and all that other sappy crap you've been saying. I just find it strange he was at the Showing that's all."

Blaine backed down a little. "He was there doing the flower arrangements with his boss. He forgot his vest and came back to get it while the Showing was in full swing and I spotted him."

"And claimed him right in the middle of everyone like BAM!" Nick interjected gleefully. He understood what Blaine had done better now, but he was still going to rib him for it.

Blaine blushed a little as everyone cracked up.

"Couldn't wait huh, B?" David snickered.

"You did attend the class we had on claiming in like... sophomore year right?" Wes arched a brow.

"I couldn't let him get away!" Blaine exclaimed above the laughing. "What else was I supposed to do?!"

"Oh no you're right. I'll spot someone I fancy and I'll just drop onto one knee and claim her right in the middle of the cafeteria," Trent laughed.

Blaine huffed stubbornly. "It wasn't like that. It wasn't fancying."

His tone must have struck a chord because the laughter petered out.

"Well I think it's sweet," Thad broke the silence and Blaine beamed at him. "And romantic."

"You would," Trent snorted under his breath referring to the fact that Thad and his Dom were by far the cheesiest and the most romantic couple ever, and Thad threw a pen at his head to get him back for that pillow that ended up scrunching his finished math problem.

"It was romantic," Blaine asserted, liking that assessment much better than 'uncouth', which his mother had implied it as.
"Well, when are we gonna meet him?" Wes asked.

"Well today's his first day, I don't want to overwhelm him," Blaine hedged. It wasn't that he didn't want them all to see how amazing Kurt was, he just knew that his friends could be a little full on and had a tendency to speak without thinking. Case in point? Right now.

"Probably a good idea with these idiots," Sebastian teased the room with a well-known smirk.

"Hey!" a few cried out in unison and Blaine smiled at them.

"But soon. Really soon," he said and tuned out their voices as he let blue eyes and shy kisses overwhelm his mind.
Hello everyone!
Here is the next chapter. We hope you'll like it well enough to drop us a comment.
Speaking of which, we're relatively new to the page and have just realized that when we respond to your comments they count as a review. So we're not sure how to feel about that. Some people navigate this site by looking for fics with the most comments and somehow this feels like cheating. What do you guys think we should do?
Keep responding to each of you personally or just say a general THANK YOU in our notes for each chapter?
Let us know please :) 
Love 
A&M

Kurt found himself at a loose end at the end of his first school day.

Blaine had Warbler practise and Jeff had retired to his dorm room to relax in solitude after spending most of the day dancing on the edge of his already frayed nerves.

Kurt knew that if they had known he was going to be alone neither would have left him, but Blaine was under the impression that Kurt would be with Jeff until he finished in about an hour and a half. He had actually checked multiple times and at the time Kurt assumed this was the truth so hadn't lied technically and Jeff didn't realise Kurt was staying behind. It would have been a simple thing to let his best friend know otherwise, but Kurt could always tell when Jeff just needed to be by himself and sitting next to him through History and seeing him getting more and more agitated and uncomfortable Kurt knew it was one of those times.

The first day at Dalton nerves, the stares and the whispers of other students- although mostly just curious instead of mean- got the best of the blonde sub and as the day went on he became more and more agitated and jumpy. So Kurt let him go without a word after their last class and then found himself wandering around Dalton pretty aimlessly.

He ended up migrating towards the library Blaine had shown him and Jeff on their tour and walked inside the huge, round room, still in slight awe at how grand it seemed compared to the dingy one back in McKinley. There were a few students dotted here and there studying and so Kurt tried to be as inconspicuous as possible as he slipped inside, past tables and comfy sofa's and in between a few rows heading for a quiet, hopefully abandoned, corner.
He found one eventually by the foreign languages section and, curiosity piqued, he perused the titles until he found the section he wanted. French. The amount of books was beyond impressive and Kurt's eyes ate them up realising just how much more he could learn from here with proper materials at his fingertips.

He loved the sound of the romantic language, loved how the syllables rolled off his tongue and vibrated against his lips and when he had realized he would be able to take it at McKinley and learn it properly he was over the moon. But like all the things in Lima it all came to an end when their teacher got a better offer someplace else and bolted the first available moment, leaving him craving the knowledge he couldn't absorb on his own.

Grabbing more than a few textbooks he hauled them to a desk right in the corner with a good view of the room and sat down to eagerly flip through, pulling out a pen and paper to jot down little notes now and then. Honestly he was looking forwards to learning with a proper teacher, but he didn't want to be so far behind everyone else like he was in most every other subject he'd attended today. He knew he wasn't stupid, that he had the capacity to learn fast, but the work was already piling up after one day and it was a little daunting. So getting a jump on closing the gap in a subject he really enjoyed seemed like a good place to start.

He was so engrossed in this that he didn't see the figure approaching and looming over him, in fact, didn't see them at all until they cleared their throat.

Kurt snapped his head up, heart jumping, eyes going wide when he saw what could only be described as a huge Dom in front of him. It wasn't the height really that made him intimidating; it was the bulk of this stranger showing through the white oxford shirt, blazer off and carelessly slung over his arm. He screamed muscle and strength without the aid of the Dominant pheromones and Kurt's submissiveness acted accordingly, suggesting he avert his eyes or lower his head. Swallowing bravely, ignoring his instincts yet again, Kurt chanced a swift glance at the Doms face and instead of derision or any number of negative emotions he was expecting, he saw an open friendliness that softened the Doms face and deep brown eyes.

He frowned lightly. There was something familiar about the kind smile and the warmth of those pools of chocolate brown, but he couldn't place it anywhere.

"Hi," the stranger greeted easily.

Kurt glanced around them and saw he was still quite alone which made him nervous, especially when he didn't know this Dom's intentions. "Hello…” He let it trail, not knowing what to say and not wanting to incite any negative reaction.
Was he supposed to say 'sir'? Was he supposed to be lowering his eyes? Being around Doms like Blaine, Nick, Dana and his dad skewed the lines for him which Dalton further blurred. At home when he was growing up with his mom and then when Carol came along it was always different because his dad made it so and he accepted the changes that had to be made very grudgingly when he went to school because outside of their house the rules were different. But then he met Blaine and despite his initial misgivings he was allowed to use the title 'sir' on his terms, was allowed to speak his mind and stare his Dom straight in the eyes while doing so. He expected Dalton to be like McKinley with another line drawn between what was acceptable in private and public. However, no one in the corridors used such titles; the Doms hadn't been ordering the subs around in the shared classes (which were still a novelty to Kurt) whereas back at McKinley all those things and worse were commonplace.

"Mind if I sit?"

That snapped him out of his own head and he realised he hadn't been reprimanded for a slip so Kurt assumed it was okay to leave the formal address for now as his attention was caught by the odd question. This Dom wanted to sit with him? He glanced towards all the empty tables he could immediately see, unconsciously wondering if it had gotten unbelievably busy while he was reading and the look wasn't missed as the Dom chuckled. He didn't know if that pleasant sound made him uneasy or not because it was just disarming enough to have him lowering his defences enough to even talk to the unknown Dom instead of bolting for the door.

"I know you probably think this is strange, me just coming up to you, but I do have a good reason, I promise," the stranger said with a smile.

Kurt arched a brow, kind of doubting that, but not comfortable enough to say it out loud.

The stranger followed the motion with his eyes and smiled wider as if reading his mind through his body language. "Yep, it's definitely you."

Okay. Frowning now. "You know me?" he asked slowly. Warily.

"You went to McKinley right?"

The sub fought not to shrink down, squaring himself for another assault on his character if it would come. He was ready now after that incident with Brad this morning. "Yes."

His tone was almost defiant, but not quite.

The Dom pulled out the chair and sat down gracelessly. "So did I."

Not what he was expecting, but he supposed that could be the only possible explanation of why he seemed so familiar to him. Kurt gaped stupidly for a moment trying to place his face to a particular scene or a moment at McKinley, frowning as he did so, but the Dom just smiled and breezed past the topic like it was nothing. His attention diverted to the textbooks Kurt was reading, leaving the younger boy confused and shocked, but still grateful for the change of subject since he didn't want to insult the Dom by admitting that he had no idea who he was.

"French, huh?" the Dom observed, smile still kind.

"Um..." Kurt shook his head to clear it and looked down. "Oh, yeah... I like it, I suppose," he murmured distractedly, still stuck on the fact that this Dom in front of him had come from the same hell hole he and Jeff had.

The man pulled a face, turning a book to face him and flicking nonchalantly through the glossy
pages. "I hate it. Barely passed it when I was in high school… but then again, I didn't like most subjects." He looked back up and grinned. "Football was always my thing."

Now that was the least surprising thing the man had said and so Kurt latched onto it for sanity's sake before he started blurting a million inappropriate questions at him about just how he came to be here.

"You're on the team then?" he asked.

"Captain of the team," came the immediate smug reply and Kurt's response rolled quick off his tongue before he could think about it.

"Leadership has made you modest I see." Something about knowing this man had the potential to understand what it was like somewhat to feel misplaced and different here eased him in a way no ice breaker could have.

The Dom laughed. "No room for modesty in college football… plus my sub probably wouldn't speak to me if I didn't make captain."

Kurt cocked his head in confusion.

The Dom rolled his eyes in what could only be called a fond way. "He's really competitive."

"So you're saying that if he didn't want you to be, you wouldn't be captain?"

The Dom smirked, brown eyes bright with good humour. "Oh no, I'd still be captain but there's an added incentive there to make the position."

Kurt knew just from this small conversation that this Dom saw things much like Blaine and it made something in him relax even further into the company. "Avoiding the silent treatment," Kurt guessed.

"Among other things."

Kurt rolled his eyes trying to fight off his betraying innocent blush at the obvious innuendo before they snagged on the clock on the wall. He had five minutes before he had to meet Blaine outside the choir room. He hurriedly stood and gathered up the books he'd borrowed, shoving his notes into his bag.

The man held out his hands, observing him with widened eyes. "Woah, where's the fire?"

"Sorry, I have to meet my Blaine… uhh I mean my Dom, Blaine." He blushed at his stumble over his words.

"Blaine Anderson, right?"

It didn't sound derisive, actually it was mainly rhetoric, but Kurt answered anyway. "Yeah."

The Dom smiled saying nothing further and rose to help him, easily toting the books back so Kurt could place them on the shelves. When they were done the stranger saw him out to the door and it wasn't half as awkward as Kurt was expecting it to be. There didn't seem to be any hidden motivations underneath this encounter other than a friendly chat and so Kurt felt warmed that he could potentially have made an ally at the very least in this Dom.

"It was nice meeting you finally, Kurt," the Dom said and it was genuine.

"You too," Kurt replied with a touch of a smile, shouldering his bag as he checked the time which sent him turning on his heel and hurrying off, laughter following him.
It was halfway to Blaine's classroom that he realised the Dom knew his name and he'd not gotten one back.

Blaine was hurrying on his way towards the dorms to pick up his sub, anxious to see Kurt after a day of hardly seeing him at all. He didn't actually realise what a toll it would take on him. Of course he knew from his Dominant Studies classes to expect to feel overprotective and possessive in the beginnings of the bond, but it was one thing to be told and another completely to experience it firsthand.

Right now he just wanted to take Kurt in his arms and snuggle him for the rest of the day. Lave kisses over him. Share heat and intimate whispers. There was a soft buzz right underneath his skin that was never there when Kurt was around and it only intensified as the time went by and now, after a full school day of not seeing him for more than half an hour, it was like an electric current administered directly into his very bones.

He walked faster still, taking the stairs two at a time and faltering only when he heard his name called by an oh so familiar voice. Looking over his shoulder his eyes widened seeing his sub at the bottom of the staircase, framed beautifully by the soft light filtering in from the huge window next to him.

"Kurt! Why aren't you at Jeff's dorm?" he asked, confused.

His sub shifted on his feet and played at the cuffs of his blazer not meeting Blaine's eyes as he descended quicker than he went up if that was possible.

For the first time that day it actually occurred to Kurt that not telling Blaine about the fact that he had spent his free period alone could be a bad idea.

"I wasn't with Jeff," he admitted quietly, eyes downcast and fingers wrapped around each other in an anxious knot.

Blaine frowned and stopped in front of Kurt, unable to stop himself from reaching out for his waist to pull him closer, fingers digging into his sides possessively. He fought not to jump to any conclusions and decided to hear Kurt out. "And why was that?"

Kurt chanced a glance up, guilt swirling in his glassy eyes at the sound of guarded dominance just waiting to burst through. "He was just so tired! He needed some space so I didn't ask him if I could stay with him," he hurriedly explained.

"So Kurt had been where? And all alone? It didn't sit well with Blaine at all.

He sighed, trying to control his reactions so he wouldn't scare Kurt, but reprimanded firmly, "Kurt, you can't just wander off without me knowing where you are, something could have happened to you and I wouldn't have known where to look."

He had to know that this wasn't okay. What if another Dom had approached him? Yes, Dalton was progressive and safer than most anywhere else, but there could be exceptions to the rule. He immediately thought of Kevin Landon and it made things ten times worse as the uneasiness rose to almost choke him.

"I was just in the library," Kurt admitted, forehead creasing and tears springing guiltily as the
realization that what he did was wrong and the looming threat of punishment dawned on him.

"But I didn't know that did I?" he said, a gentle rush of dominance seeping through and demanding he wrap his arms around the trembling sub.

That seemed to strike a chord and the guilt got heavier in Kurt's eyes and while Blaine hated seeing it there he knew that it had to be done because Kurt needed to understand. "I'm sorry, sir."

Blaine couldn't help but melt a little at the return of the address, the Dom in him calming at the use of the title. Rationally he knew that getting angry at something like this was uncalled for because they had no rules set out and there was no way for Kurt to know how to behave and what to do in a situation like the one that just happened.

He pulled Kurt properly into his arms, wrapping them snugly around his waist, his subs own slipping around his shoulders as their chests pressed together. Blaine laid a gentle kiss to Kurt's smooth temple. "We really need to draw up that contract, lovely," he spoke into the skin.

"I am sorry, Blaine," Kurt apologised sincerely, worrying at the Doms blazer at the shoulders with nervous fingers. "It was only in our last period that I saw Jeff wasn't up for company and I didn't want to interrupt your club to tell you. I tried to meet you outside the choir room but I got distracted and was a little late, everyone was gone by the time I got there."

The thought that now would probably be a good time to invest in getting a cell phone for his sub was strong; this situation could have been avoided if he'd had the foresight to before. "We'll sit down and go through things so we both know what's expected of us, sooner rather than later," he asserted firmly, pulling back to meet his subs gaze and Kurt nodded his assent a little hesitantly. Blaine stroked over his cheek before cupping it. "Don't worry, lovely, it'll help I promise."

"Okay," Kurt murmured and Blaine's heart leapt when he turned his face further into his palm.

"How about we get home? It's been a long day," he suggested, his desire to snuggle up from earlier rearing its head again.

Kurt agreed and pretty soon they were in Blaine's car and driving home.

Blaine's parents were still at work until around six so they had the house to themselves for a couple of hours when they arrived and the Dom wanted to take advantage of them. Both changing out of their uniforms and redressing in more comfortable attire they ended up in the smaller family room they all favoured. Curled up under a blanket with the TV on Kurt cuddled into Blaine's side where they lay the length of the couch, the sub's warm weight a soothing presence for the seething dominance still lingering in his blood.

"So how was your first day?" Blaine asked against Kurt's hair after a few moments of just soaking and breathing him in.

Kurt hummed a little lazily, stretching catlike before curling up again shifting downwards, head pillowed on Blaine's chest directly over his heart, fingers languidly clutching Blaine's cotton tee over his navel. The Dom fought the hot jolt that rushed through him from just that innocent touch.

"It was fine."

Blaine looked down at his sub, cocking his head against the rest for a better view of Kurt's beautiful face to judge for himself. "Just fine?"

"I liked Mrs Carlson, she was nice," came the soft reply.
Blaine smiled raising a hand to run gently through Kurt's hair, careful not to accidentally brush over his mark. "Yeah, I had a feeling you would. She's a sweetheart really."

Kurt arched into the touch and Blaine couldn't stop the goofy grin spreading across his face at just how much more relaxed Kurt seemed now. He didn't shy away from these little touches or the contact between them that Blaine craved like a drug.

"So you went to the library, huh?" Blaine asked after another few minutes passed, only the sound of synched breathing and Project Catwalk re-runs playing.

That seemed to animate Kurt again and he propped his chin on Blaine's chest and looked up at him, blue eyes sparking with life. "They have so many books in there, Blaine!"

Blaine smiled back, the excitement infectious. "That's generally the idea of a library, lovely."

Kurt rolled his eyes. "Would you like to take a trip to the McKinley library?"

Blaine cringed and petted Kurt's hair in apology. "You win, baby. What did you end up looking at then?"

"French."

Blaine grinned. "Yeah? You know you're taking it as a class right?"

"Yeah but I wanted to catch up as much as I can before then. There's such a gap in all of my classes I just wanted one where I didn't have to worry about understanding or putting the teachers out," Kurt explained a little frustrated and Blaine hummed understandingly.

"You'll be where everyone else is in no time, lovely. And as for the teachers, they're there to help you, as long as you try your best no one's going to be upset with you," Blaine reassured and Kurt blushed a little and buried his face into Blaine's chest mumbling an, "Okay."

Blaine chuckled. "So French made you forget all about me?" he teased with a pout that Kurt saw when he raised his head again.

"Oh, no. Actually I met someone today! He was really nice and we just got talking and I lost track of time," Kurt explained shifting his legs around happily, missing the tight pull of Blaine's lips and the gentle tension of his fingers on his free hand clenching into the cushion of the sofa under them.

Blaine felt a strange stab of irrational jealousy that made his chest suddenly tight as it tried to make itself known and pushed it down.

Kurt could make friends for God's sake!

Blaine cleared his throat to give himself a few seconds before asking he hoped was neutrally, "Another sub?"

"No, he was a Dom and he used to go to McKinley too! Apparently he recognised me, though I didn't recognise him," Kurt admitted, then he shrugged, still oblivious to the turmoil in Blaine's eyes.

Okay. Breathe, Blaine.

The idea that another Dominant approached his Kurt? That hot, possessive feeling spiked and flared as it was fed, impossible to push aside or ignore now.

"And he just approached you?"

Something in his tone must have tipped Kurt off that he wasn't happy and Kurt's blue eyes searched his face cautiously. "Yeah, he mentioned McKinley and then we were just talking about French and"
football because he's on the team and then his sub…” He paused, expression guarded and careful again. "Are you okay, sir? Was I not supposed to talk to him?"

Blaine sighed out the tension trying to eat at him. He didn't want Kurt to feel like he was on a leash. That he couldn't talk to people or make his own friends. But this feeling, Blaine couldn't really help the way his instincts screamed at him that Kurt was his and no one else's. But Kurt had mentioned a sub. The Dom had a sub already so he wasn't trying to steal Kurt right? Wasn't using McKinley as a convenient excuse for getting himself closer to Kurt so he could potentially steal him away. He shook his head against the thoughts.

"I'm sorry I just… I just want you to be careful when you're talking to Doms when I'm not there, lovely, okay? But I'm glad you met someone you liked," he said, feeling better because his words came out sincere and calm even if everything inside him felt on fire.

Kurt studied him for a few moments more before nodding, bottom lip trembling and eyes shifting nervously. "I will. Are you sure it's okay?"

Blaine crumbled at the face of his sub so small again in his company and he forced all the negative feelings out of his body and slammed the door on them before smiling at his blue eyed beauty gently.

"Yes. As long as you're safe you can make friends with whomever you like." And this time it came out a little bit more convincing because the sub's body relaxed a tiny bit as he returned to his previous position; leaning a head on his shoulder and snuggling closer.

"How was Warbler practise?" he asked softly and Blaine felt his heart jump with love as he held him.

Blaine let himself get absorbed with telling Kurt all about the club and pushed that jealousy into a little box hopefully to be forgotten. But he could feel the tension still hovering beneath Kurt's skin and the newly found comfortableness between them seemed somehow stretched now, forced, and it wasn't long before their conversation lulled and came to a stop, wrapping them both into silence until Kurt snuggled in closer and dozed off; the excitement of the day getting the best of him.

Blaine was warm and comforting beside him and despite the awkward tint in their behaviour since he revealed he had met someone in the library, Kurt still felt better when he was around. He cuddled closer and felt his eyes droop, allowing himself to succumb to sleep as he felt Blaine tracing his fingers through his hair until he lost touch with reality.

The next thing he felt was a chill making his skin shiver and a breath of cold air touching his neck where the crook of Blaine's arm warmed him seemingly seconds ago.

Blinking against the haze in his eyes he sat up carefully, looking around to find the TV still playing, muted and making the characters look foolish as they gesticulated wildly with no sound coming out. He stood up and frowned when a blanket thrown over his feet slipped to the floor and crumbled beside him as he glanced left and right trying to find Blaine. He wasn't in the room with him and his spot on the sofa was cold and smooth like he was never even there in the first place.

That disturbed him more than he thought it ever could have.

The idea of sleeping next to Blaine up to this point had filled him with dread, but not having him there now after napping against him felt like someone had taken one of his limbs and he was left with the phantom pain of knowing what it was like having it there but not being able to grasp for it anymore.
"Blaine?" he called out gently and moved to walk towards the kitchen; the tiles cold and suddenly uncomfortable under his bare feet when he got there. This was far too much like his first days here where everything seemed out of place and harshly foreign to him. As the days had gone by Kurt had forgotten slightly that he was surrounded by such unfamiliar luxury. It was the people here that made the house small and comfortable for him; Dana with her warped, wicked sense of humour, Jared with his soft compassion and understanding, Blaine with his loving care and attention. But none of them were here right now to fill up the gaps, to smooth out the jagged edges and Kurt was suddenly panicking on the inside.

He peeked around the kitchen and found it creepily empty and quiet, his blood now pounding in his ears and his heart beating loudly.

Where was his Dom? Why would he just leave without saying something or asking him to come along? Why didn't he at least wake him up to warn him that he would be away?

…Was he coming back?

The last thought made Kurt shiver in fear as he bolted up the stairs and threw the bedroom door open calling out Blaine's name and running from one room to the other looking for him frantically, the chill in his blood making him tremble.

Their last conversation rushed through his head and he froze, hand on the doorknob to yet another guest bedroom, picturing Blaine walking out of the house and going to find a sub who didn't mess up every other minute by not saying where he went, or by hanging out with other Doms.

He knew he wouldn't be thinking it if he was in the right state of mind, but the thing was his rational mind was falling back fast and the panicked, submissive in him was taking complete control of his thoughts and senses, skewing his perception and heightening every abandoned emotion he felt until it was almost unbearable.

He whimpered in his throat involuntarily, fighting to draw in air as his thoughts spun and crashed like an angry storm inside his head.

Blaine must have thought he had allowed the other boy to dominate him and was now angry with him. He was probably somewhere with a sub who knew how to please him and how to make him happy by being obedient and well trained. He could picture them together in his head, smiling and happy, kissing and touching and it made him feel sick.

Tears streamed down his face and he let go of the metal between his white knuckled fingers and slid down the door to sit on the ground, back against the wall as he buried his face in his knees and hugged his legs tight to his body with shaking arms.

Was he calling the other sub Lovely as well? Did he let him call him 'sir' and wrap him in his arms as he did him? Did he kiss him slowly and carefully or did he enjoy the fact that the other boy was, most likely, more experienced than he was?

His own head had quickly turned into the worst place in the world for him but he couldn't find a way out of the dark maze made up of his tumultuous thoughts.

Through the haze he felt hands on his shoulders shaking him gently and whispered, rushed voices swirling around him but he couldn't come back, he couldn't break free of his thoughts of Blaine's hands on someone else and Blaine's voice commanding someone else after casting him aside to be forgotten.
There was a moment when his body felt weightless and he realized he was being carried, the gentle
bustle of movement making a crack in the bubble he trapped himself in.

"What happened?" someone asked in concern and to his tired mind it sounded like his Dom was
back, holding him, but he knew that wasn't real because he wasn't a good sub and he had made a
mistake and Blaine left him alone.

It broke down like that to him now. Simple thoughts replayed on a tormenting loop. You weren't a
good boy, Blaine doesn't want you anymore, you weren't a good boy...

"I don't know I heard someone whimpering and I thought it was the TV, but when I came out I
found him like this. What's happening?" another voice asked and Kurt managed to peek through his
fingers to look up and see Jared sitting next to him and another someone pacing back and forth in
front of the bed he had no idea how he got on.

"I don't know. I don't know... we were fine, everything was fine before they called me to the studio.
He was asleep and I had to run out for an hour tops. Dad... dad what do I do?" the someone asked
desperately and this time there was no mistaking that voice as it broke through the shadowed haze
surrounding the sub.

"B...Blaine?" he croaked through the tears and shivers wrecking his body and the Dom jumped up at
the sound of his voice, practically pushing his father off the bed and curling around him, enveloping
him in his arms and rocking them back and forth.

"It's me, lovely. I'm here. What happened to you?" he whispered in between soft kisses he placed on
his hair and temples as he held him tighter and despite knowing those lips kissed someone else
minutes ago he couldn't help but arch into them, greedy and wanting as he pressed his face into his
Dom's neck.

"I'm sorry. I'm so sorry, sir," he repeated over and over and over again as the voice in his head kept
playing for him. Jared, seeing they were able to talk to each other, excused himself leaving them
alone.

"Why, baby? Why are you sorry? Kurt, please tell me what's going on," Blaine pleaded, desperation
evident in his voice as he raked his mind trying to understand what had changed so dramatically to
make Kurt act the way he did.

"I m-made a mistake and made y-you leave. And you went to him because he's better t-than me and
I'm s-sorry I wasn't a good boy. I'm sorry..." he cried and Blaine felt his stomach turn in disgust as he
realized what Kurt was saying.

"Kurt... Kurt look at me," he demanded and broken blue eyes looked up into his own. "I got a call
from the studio while you were asleep. A part of our equipment broke down and I had to sign a
check to buy a new one. I didn't want to wake you up because I was sure I'd be back before you
woke. You did nothing wrong and I didn't go to someone else... god, lovely, I would never do that to
you," he said and every word felt like a soft caress on Kurt's skin, soothing him like nothing else ever
could.

"You... you still want me?" he asked timidly, desperately he would realise later, and Blaine turned
around, lowering him onto the bed and lying next to him, pecking his lips softly as he wiped away
the remnants of his tears.

"Only you. Forever," he promised and Kurt let out a forced exhale as his lungs finally expanded and
allowed him to breathe as the voice in his head tapered off to be snuffed out by the soft, gold glow
Kurt swallowed over his sore throat and blinked his swollen eyes trying to regain control of himself again after being sucked under so fiercely by his instincts and emotions. He clutched at Blaine's top unable to help being clingy as he urged him closer, relieved to see Blaine responded effortlessly to his nonverbal cues. Kurt surged forward, not caring about proper sub behaviour as he fastened his lips to Blaine's and wrapped his arms around his neck. Blaine kept his mouth soft and pliant for Kurt, allowing the sub to take what he needed from the contact while softly moving his mouth against his boys, subtly dominating him in small ways knowing they both needed that grounding point.

"I'm sorry," Kurt murmured quietly in between kisses and shaky, hot exhales against tender mouths after he felt he'd gotten a hold of himself once more and wasn't on the verge of breaking down again. It had exhausted him in a way he'd never felt before.

Blaine shook his head, brushing their noses together lightly. "I'm sorry for leaving like that and scaring you," he said, taking up his part of the blame.

He knew that subs needed constant presence and attention in the start of new bonds; he just hadn't realized how true that was until now. Dropping was once of the worst things you could do to a sub and there was a variety of ways it could happen, but Blaine had been naïve enough to believe he couldn’t possibly do that to his sub. This pressure cooker on Kurt’s emotions had been building for a while now and Blaine had ignored it. He felt mad at himself for doing that to Kurt, innocent Kurt who probably didn’t have a clue what had happened to him, so mad he wanted to kick his own ass, but for right now he had Kurt to worry about so he held off on the self-chastisement.

Pulling back Blaine laid a kiss to Kurt's forehead, running a hand through his hair and shifting it off his blotchy face. His sub looked up at him through those amazing glasz eyes and lush lashes, bloodshot and wet now, and Blaine wanted to give him the world in that single moment. Wanted to give him everything.

"Will you... will you stay here tonight? With me?" Kurt asked quiet and shy and Blaine rubbed their noses together again, feeling his heart pick up speed until he was sure even Kurt could hear the loud pounding.

"If you want me to," he whispered, locking gazes and feeling the weight of how important a moment this was for them.

"I really do."

Kurt had just finished his first French class and was feeling great. Yes, he was behind, he didn't expect anything less honesty, but in truth it wasn't nearly as bad as he thought it might be. In fact, Kurt felt very optimistic; he loved his teacher, he didn't have Brad or anyone like him in his class as far as he could tell and he actually understood some of the material, if the speed at which he solved the problems in his workbook was anything to go by.

He felt proud of himself and he couldn't help but smile as he realized he was looking forward to telling Blaine about how well he did in class and maybe making his Dom whisper praises into his ear.

*Good boy.* It made him shiver when he thought of that rough, deep voice saying that to him; proud
and awed and filled to the brim with emotion Kurt couldn't even begin to imagine someone would feel for him.

Yesterday had been a trying day for both of them.

The crossing of wires and misunderstandings had taken their toll in small ways and would continue to until they found a solid foundation for their bond, but Kurt had woken up today wrapped in Blaine's arms secure and safe in the knowledge that despite everything his Dom cared for him. The submissive in him still needed the reassurance, quite obviously from the way he had overreacted-dropped Blaine had called it. It was a harsh lesson for both of them, but rationally Kurt knew that Blaine wanted him. How could he doubt it at this point? Kurt thought that, that was the main thing and the rest could come later as he remembered how the Dom had greeted Kurt with a sleep hazy smile and lazy kiss that filled him with butterflies and wonderment.

Smiling in delight he shouldered his bag and exited his classroom.

It was lunch now and he was hurrying on his way to meet Blaine and Jeff, who hadn't taken French and had gone for Italian instead because he was learning that at home before he had to go to McKinley, for lunch when he heard his name called.

"Kurt!"

The sub looked over his shoulder and saw a familiar hulking frame waving at him through the throng of students and smiled back involuntarily. He hadn't really been expecting to see his mysterious 'friend' again- he used the term loosely just in case it turned into nothing more than a person to smile and say hello to in the hallways.

The football player strode up to him with an easy confidence and the same open friendly demeanour as yesterday, moving them to the side to be out of the way of the rest of the foot traffic. "How are you? How's school been treating you?"

"Fine and… well, the workload has kind of made me its personal slave but there's nothing I can do about that," Kurt admitted with a shrug, looking up at the much taller boy and smiling back when he saw his face.

The Dom grimaced in sympathy hitching his bag properly on his shoulder after it got knocked by a passing student. "Yeah I remember when I transferred. I thought the torture would never end!"

"But it did?" Kurt asked hopefully tapping the heels of his shoes together and swaying gently on his feet.

"Once I got someone to kick me into gear." He grinned, but it was like it was a private joke Kurt wasn't in on yet when his eyes turned kind of dreamy and unfocused as if he was just reminded of something that made him happy.

Kurt was undeniably curious, but he forwent asking in favour of a more pressing line of inquiry. "What's your name?"

The jock chuckled and rubbed the back of his neck sheepishly. "My bad, should have introduced myself the first time I talked to you. I'm David Karofsky, but just call me, Dave."

Kurt frowned as that struck a resonate chord and run the name over in his mind. "Karofsky, Karofsky, Ka- oh my God I do know you!" he exclaimed, performing a tiny, excited bounce that looked impossibly cute to the older boy.
Dave grinned, eyes crinkling. "Yeah?"

Kurt laughed happily still bouncing on his toes a little. "Yeah! You were captain of the McKinley football team in my freshman year! My stepbrother Finn was on the team."

The McKinley Titans, like most of the scarce clubs that managed to stay afloat, was highly underfunded and undermanned. But they got by somehow and though Kurt didn't necessarily enjoy watching football, he enjoyed the cheerful, happy energy that was infectious when standing in the crowds and cheering on someone he knew.

That was exactly where Kurt had first saw Dave Karofsky. The Dom was a junior when Kurt was a freshman and he had disappeared soon after that.

Now he knew why.

Dave thought for a moment. "Tall guy, right?"

Kurt nodded with a roll of his eyes. "Only got taller since then. He drinks Miracle Grow, I'm almost one hundred percent sure of it."

Dave whistled, impressed dark eyes twinkling with his mirth and Kurt giggled back, tilting his head curiously. "Would it be impolite to ask how you ended up here?"

His voice was careful and calculated but the Dom just smiled and shrugged.

"Nothing too exciting actually. My dad inherited some money from his late aunt and since we were used to being without he decided to risk it and invest in some business thing I literally know nothing about. Long story short. The risk paid off." He shrugged like it wasn't a big deal at all but Kurt could tell it changed his life just like being with Blaine changed his.

"Well, that's good to hear. I hope you're happy here," Kurt said sincerely with a soft smile and the Dom returned it kindly.

"I sure am. So you headed to meet Blaine for lunch?"

"Yeah and my best friend Jeff. Um… do you wanna join or are you… heading somewhere or…?"

He didn't know if Blaine would like it, but he had said Kurt could talk to people and make friends, and if he met Dave for himself then he'd see how nice he was, he was sure of it.

Dave smiled. "Thanks but I'll have to say no for now, I've got a standing date with my sub, Sebastian."

Kurt's mind immediately flashed back his first day and the sub that had defended him against that hideous Brad. *It couldn't be that coincidental right? *Your Sebastian doesn't happen to be my age does he?"

"Yeah…" Dave trailed, not really sure how that was relevant.

"Tall, confident, snarky?" Kurt inquired and Dave barked a laugh at the description.

"That's him in a nutshell…" Dawning lit his face and he smacked his forehead. "You're bound to classes with him, I didn't even realize!"

"English so far," the sub provided with a genuine smile. Sebastian seemed sassy and confident and more than a match for Dave's big, slightly cocky personality. "You guys really suit one another," he
complimented. "Sebastian is pretty great from what I've seen so far."

Dave beamed but pointed a finger at him. "There's a story there, Hummel," he teased.

Kurt flushed and looked away briefly towards the passing students.

"I'll swap you a secret for a secret," the Dom bargained and Kurt turned back to him, head tilted in curiosity. Really, it wouldn't be shocking for Dave to hear that he'd gotten a little heat from another person for his background and surely he already knew that Sebastian was a great person who stood up for others, what with being bonded to him? Kurt couldn't actually see the harm, apart from some mild embarrassment on his part, not to tell him.

He felt like he could trust in Dave's kindness so far at least.

"The first day Jeff and I got here, a sub in our class acted like an ass to us, well… mostly me. Apparently, he thought Blaine would claim someone like him I guess…" Kurt started and Dave chuckled.

"Brad has a hard time accepting a no. The guy's an idiot, don't listen to him," he said, pinpointing who it was without needing a name and Kurt nodded.

"Sebastian made sure he let him know that. He stood up for me and made him back away."

"Yeah… my Seb never misses a chance to put Brad in his place. Rightfully so if you ask me. I'm glad he was there to help," Dave said and Kurt smiled in agreement.

"Me too. Okay, now you," he chanted and the Dom rubbed the back of his neck almost shyly. It was a funny sight, watching someone so big and strong fidget nervously.

"You drive a tough bargain but I'll bite," he cleared his throat and a slight flush appeared on his cheeks now. "I may or may not have nearly claimed someone back in McKinley."

Kurt's brows climbed to his hairline. "So Sebastian-"

"Sebastian will always be my everything and I'm really, really glad I waited so I could find him because he makes me so happy and I don't regret not claiming this other sub because I knew he wasn't really for me. I was just young… and swimming in all those Dominant hormones with nowhere to put them, you know," Dave cut in and there was love clear as a bell in his voice as he talked about Sebastian.

"Who was it? Do I know them?" Kurt asked eagerly, coming closer not just because he was so drawn into what he was being told, it felt like he needed to protect this secret Dave was telling him by the close proximity.

Dave smiled sheepishly. "Weell, he's really kinda pretty, I was a little infatuated back then," he said with a playful roll of his eyes.

"You're avoiding the question," Kurt pointed out, mock frowning at him.

They both leaned even closer as they shared this secret, completely missing the pair of narrowed, golden eyes staring at them and the fists clenching in a desperate attempt to regain control.

Dave shook his head with a ghost of a smile running his large hand through his short hair once, before his face grew serious and he locked eyes with startled blue. "It was you, Kurt. I always thought you were amazing and really beautiful. I wanted to claim you."
Kurt gaped and that's about as far as the reaction went as in the next breath Dave was swung around forcefully and pushed hard in the shoulders by none other than a seething, furious Blaine. Dave stumbled back a few steps and Kurt barely ducked out of the way to avoid being trodden on.

"He's mine. You can't claim him because he's mine!" was growled viciously, loudly, proclaiming the claim to the whole school, golden eyes dark and wild and his body tense and coiled like he was ready to snap.

"Blaine-" Dave began, raising hands in surrender and trying to back away.

"Shut up!" he barked back stalking closer to him like a predator, fisting the front of his unbuttoned blazer. But the other Dom wanted nothing to do with his explanations.

He came out of his last class eager to see his sub and have him fly into his arms the way he tended to do lately and what he got instead was a brick wall of a Dom leaning into Kurt's personal space, smiling at him and talking about claiming him. NOTHING, not even the logical part of his brain that knew Dave was with Seb and that he loved him, helped calm him down as he descended onto the other boy, fury personified.

A crowd had gathered by now blocking either end of the hallway, Dom’s shielding subs behind them as they peeked over their shoulders at the commotion. Kurt didn’t know what to do, just stood there paralysed. He couldn’t force his body to move, to react, to comprehend what had just happened. One minute he was talking and laughing with his new friend and the next Blaine was there and lashing out. And before he even had a chance to snap himself out of it he found himself being pulled to Blaine’s side, just behind him, by a firm grip on his elbow. It was a jolt to his system, just enough that he finally found his voice. "Blaine, sir... he... he didn't d-do anything... please. Sir, please, I don't know what to do."

Blaine's hand tightened on Dave's chest and even though he was almost three times smaller than the quarterback, the pure rage and the tide of outraged dominance pulsing around him made him seem larger than life, invincible, terrifying to everyone.

Everyone but a fierce sub that came running straight into the commotion and charging towards Blaine.

"Dave!" was called and Kurt caught glimpses of Sebastian pushing through the gathering until he could reach his Dom's side, pushing Blaine's hands away from what was his and pulling Dave towards him.

"What the hell do you think you're playing at, Anderson," the sub fumed, green eyes flashing dangerously.

Kurt heard Blaine growl in return at being so blatantly challenged and disrespected by the sub, but not loud enough for anyone other than Kurt to hear.

"Seb," Dave reprimanded softly, chancing talking again and giving Blaine a calculating gaze, as if sensing he was right on the knife edge. "Don't."

The sub balked as he stared at his Dom, but the command was there for everyone to hear. "Dave he just-"

The Dom hushed him again, earning himself his own glare. He sighed stroking his fingers over Sebastian's arm lightly to tangle their fingers loosely. "I'll explain later, Seb. Don't push please."

Sebastian gritted his teeth but acquiesced and threw one last bitch face to Blaine before he grabbed
Dave's hand properly, tightening their fingers together and pulled him out of the commotion; away from Blaine and his unleashed rage.

Kurt felt adrift, out of touch with reality as he watched Sebastian drag a still slightly shocked Dave down the, now emptying, hallway after the lash out his Dom just had. He had no idea what to do. Over the years he had seen Carole soothe his father when it all got too much and some other subs catering to their Dom's needs at school, like Mercedes did with Sam, but Kurt just didn't know how to go about it.

*Should he remain calm and not say a word? Should he hug him and hold him until he was better? Should he call someone for help?*

It scared him, the feral look in Blaine's eyes. The almost untamed dominance that threatened to ravage anyone who dared touching what he saw was his. It scared him, but in a way, on a purely submissive level, it also made him feel safe, protected, cherished. If Blaine was so reluctant to even think that someone else might get him it must mean he truly wanted him like he said he did... right?

There was a feeling that was now crawling under his skin, urging him to soothe and reassure. It was the first time since he had come into his own submissiveness that he had truly felt like a sub, like there was someone who needed him to balance them out. It was the first time since he was claimed that he truly felt he had a role in their relationship as well. Blaine's was to protect him, to dote on him and his was to make sure Blaine was happy and calm. And despite the paralyzing fear that coursed through him he realized right away that he wasn't afraid of Blaine.

He was afraid *for* him.

He didn't want him hurt, or angry, or disappointed, he wanted him happy and smiling and teasing and kissing him. So he did what he thought was best and let go of his own doubts for just one second and listened to his instincts that were screaming at him loudly.

He steadied his trembling hands and freed his elbow from the grip of the shaking Dom, placing a hand on his shoulder and leaning in to make his scent drift around him.

"Come on, sir. Let's go home..." he said in a calm whisper right into his ear, proud of his own voice for only lilting a tiny bit when his Dom turned his glare towards him, eyes blazing with anger and head nodding jerkily. He turned on his heel harshly and stalked to the car, leaving Kurt to trail after him, determined to make his Dom feel better and calmer.

They piled into the car and with a forceful slam of the door Blaine started the car and pulled out of the parking lot and onto the road for their short journey home.

Kurt remained silent next to him, observing and assessing what his next move should be. He slid across the front seat carefully, in case his gut was wrong and Blaine didn't want him close. He made it towards his Dom one frustrating inch at a time watching his face shift as the knuckles of one of Blaine's hands turned white from gripping to the stirring wheel so tightly.

Holding his breath tightly Kurt lifted his hand and slid his palm over the hand holding the shift and gently threaded his fingers in between Blaine's tense ones.

It was like magic and a miracle all at once.

The second his skin covered the Dom's the tension seeped from his bones and his shoulders slumped down, making him seem calmer and less intimidating. The Dom eased up on the accelerator and sighed out gustily.
"Sir," Kurt whispered timidly, not really knowing if anything he was doing was ‘right’, or allowed, or wanted. He just knew his body felt on fire with the need to help his Dom and he decided to listen to it even if it made him look like a fool.

His thumb was dancing over the back of Blaine's palm and trembling as he forced himself to stay where he was and not back down now that it seemed Blaine responded to him. Suddenly the hand on the shift flipped over and strong fingers wrapped around his own surely and unbreakably.

When they arrived home Blaine parked haphazardly, turning the ignition off but making no move to get out.

"And you say you wouldn't know what to do." Blaine let out a shaky chuckle making Kurt jump and stare at him wide eyed and bottom lip trembling gently. "I'm sorry, lovely. I'm so sorry I scared you," he spoke to the dash and Kurt continued to stare. His Dom's voice was small and whisper like and Kurt didn't like it one bit. He'd gotten used to Blaine being larger than life when he held him in his arms and scared all his doubts away with just one kiss.

"No... I'm not... I wasn't scared really I just... I didn't know if-" Kurt started but Blaine cut him off with a gentle finger on his pouty lip, gold eyes finally meeting his and that edge of rage was ebbing now.

"Every instinct in your body is right, gorgeous. Everything you've done so far was perfect. You're the perfect sub for me and I'm lucky to have you. That's..." He shook his head and laughed humourlessly. “That's why I went crazy. I was so jealous of Dave... what he said about wanting to... and the thought of him touching your arm and calling you beautiful... I... I know people will think that because... god how could they not, just look at you... but I'm selfish...and I don't want them wanting you, looking at you... you're mine," he breathed passionately, pulling Kurt into his arms by his waist and sliding him across the seat, across the middle console until he was sitting on his lap sideways and Blaine was nuzzling his neck and making him shiver.

"I don't want them... sir I don't," Kurt promised gasping when he felt damp lips on his neck.

"What do you want?" Blaine asked breathily, almost darkly, from where he was nipping at the alabaster skin, nibbling at the hinge of his jaw possessively.

"I... you... just you," he spoke, barely audible, but enough for Blaine to growl and pull him in tighter, threading his fingers through his hair and bringing their faces together.

"You'll be the death of me, lovely. But god, it'll be the sweetest death in the world."

They ended up curled up on Blaine's bed- what was temporarily Kurt's now, or maybe even theirs- in more comfortable clothes, the Disney film playing quietly on the flatscreen hardly watched as Kurt nuzzled into Blaine's neck soothingly. His Dom would hardly let him leave his side for even the smallest of moments since they arrived home and to be honest, Kurt felt the ever pressing need to be as close to Blaine as possible so he didn't mind it whatsoever. He needed to do this as much as he wanted to and it was impossible to ignore the compulsion to crawl as close as possible to make sure Blaine was happy. But the Dom was still a hard line next to him despite having calmed down some from the uncontrollable rage of earlier and so Kurt redoubled his efforts.

Making a gentle beseeching sound in his throat he knew Blaine wouldn't be able to resist as he ran
his nose from where it was pressed into the base of his neck up to the Dom's pounding pulse point, hand kneading Blaine's shoulder rhythmically.

He laid lips there without even thinking about it.

Her heard and felt the sharp inhale from Blaine and arms tightened around his frame; one around his waist pulling him closer and holding him there, the other rising to cup the back of his head, driving greedy fingers into his hair. It gave Kurt an idea. He smoothed his hand from Blaine's shoulder up the other side of his neck into the loosened gelled strands of Blaine's hair—remembering his reaction and confession on their trip away—playing around his ears and nape, temptingly close to Blaine's mark and the knowledge sent a shocking thrill through him.

He hadn't ever really thought about Blaine's Dominant mark before, but now his fingertips were inches away it was hard not to indulge himself in the temptation it created. Dom's marks weren't as sensitive as subs, true, but that didn't mean they weren't sensitive at all.

Would Blaine like him to touch there?

The sub in him instinctively knew that it was a place he could use to help comfort his Dom quickly and effectively, just like he knew that to do it that way would be highly intimate. He blushed heavily at the thought alone. Kurt wasn't sure if they were there yet so he resisted and pushed the thought from his mind for now, locking the desire away as he concentrated on Blaine and his needs.

Slowly, but surely the tension in the room and his Dom's body dissipated under his focused attention. It melted everything down into a relaxed, soft environment that engulfed them like downy clouds with every pet, coo and gentle caress Kurt lavished lovingly upon Blaine's body, encouraged by the deep, growly sighs of pleasure that were coming from the Dom more and more frequently, urging him on.

Kurt was equally as enthralled by the sense of worth that was filling him up to bursting as he was fascinated by the feel of soft skin merging with slightly rough stubble under his lips as he mapped Blaine's neck with his questing mouth, learning him in a completely different way. The length of his neck, the curve where it met his broad shoulder, the sharpness of the hinge of his jaw, the tendons that stood out starkly when Blaine moved his head for him to explore better.

Kurt only wanted to be closer, closer, closer by this point, everything pleasantly dulled and blurred around the edges, tinted in shades of melted gold that settled over his skin hotly. Dizzy, one need morphed into one entirely different without him consciously realizing and Kurt was wrapping a thigh over Blaine's lap and arching up to bite at Blaine's jaw with a needy little whine before he could register the provocative actions.

Blaine's reaction was swift and immediate, he growled in response to the noise like they were communicating on a level Kurt wasn't consciously aware of before sweeping down and capturing Kurt's mouth in his like he had been holding off and he'd just snapped.

At first Blaine had simply been soaking in the balm that was Kurt's presence, allowing him to take the sting of the remaining anger and jealousy, still jagged and raw in his insides, away. Every hush melted him further into Kurt's soft, warm body and every caress relaxed him physically and mentally.

And then Kurt began to kiss him.

It was wonderful at first; Blaine had revelled in the attention, even going so far as to pull Kurt further inwards so it would be harder for him to stop. Then something changed. The more relaxed he got, the more a different kind of tension began to build in him, a different kind of awareness. What had
been so comforting was now torture but Kurt couldn't know what he was doing to him. He couldn't...

The feel of those teeth, his sub’s thigh wrapped sinuously over his hips and that noise was Blaine’s undoing. His heated blood rushed south creating a roaring pound in his ears as all his senses focused down to laser point on Kurt.

They were kissing.

Quick and fast and like nothing they had ever attempted before and it was pure exhilaration to be with Kurt this way; nothing held back for once, everything Blaine felt poured out through the connection of their sliding mouths, heightening every sense. The sub's scent was thick in the air and Blaine felt the pressing urge to taste finally. To know and savour Kurt on his tongue and his runaway body reacted to the desire without consultation as he laved over Kurt's bottom lip, catching his tongue on the seam of the top. Vanilla sweetness assaulted his taste buds and made him want more, the small gasp from Kurt at his actions only driving that need harder in him.

Blaine had licked at his mouth.

It was the only thought running through Kurt's head over and over and it was decadent, made him overheated and opened up places in him he hadn't dared dreamed to exist. Blaine's hard breathing and growled noises were a symphony in his ears making his body tremble in his Dom's grasp and he clutched at Blaine's jaw and ear and hair in an attempt to orient himself somehow.

It didn't work as Blaine used his sinful tongue yet again to lave over his already swollen mouth making it tingle, making their lips slide easier, making him want with a fierceness that scared him. The third time Blaine did it he met him with a tentative lick of his own and tasted Blaine thick and heavy and heady, sending a hot flash straight to his stomach and cock. If Kurt had been more coherent he would have been completely mortified by the reaction, but all he could concentrate on was the slick feel of his Dom's demanding, searching tongue on his curious, innocent one and the moan they created together to fill the air. They met each other again and again, learning one another by twining tongues and lips in an intricate dance Kurt had no idea the moves to, letting Blaine lead him right into the hot cavern of his own mouth.

That more than anything startled him back into some semblance of sense.

The feel of someone else's tongue in his mouth jarringly foreign and while it felt undeniably good, the jolt to his system made him far too aware of other things happening in his body. His chest was heaving from breathes he couldn't quite draw in strong enough through his nose, his body trembling all over and his cock was so, so hard that it ached. One after one the thoughts registered and he was mortified at how he knew it was impossible Blaine couldn't feel his arousal pressed against him when his quivering thigh was still slung over Blaine's lap opening him up, with a very distinct bulge pressing into his leg on his Dom's part as well.

He began to panic, his kisses losing enthusiasm and heat as his mind began to go into overdrive.

He'd started this, he couldn't just pull away now could he?

Blaine tugged at his hair where his hand was still entrenched in the strands, subtly tilting his head to a different angle and Kurt couldn't help but stiffly allow it. He wanted to be good for Blaine. He wanted to give back to him in some small way after everything he’d done for him despite how utterly terrified he was right now that this was going to progress further. This wasn't the way to show gratitude, a part of him screamed. Not ready, not ready, NOT READY!
Blaine hummed sucking at Kurt's lower lip moving his hand down to the subs thigh to stroke and pet as his hips thrust upwards gaining friction against his thigh that made him groan and Kurt was flinching in sheer panic now but unable to utter a single syllable to stop Blaine.

*Be a good boy, be a good boy...*

His Dom must have sensed something was wrong because the flash fire of energy he was burnt out abruptly and he pulled away with a wet, sticking pop, opening blown, golden eyes to meet Kurt's wide cerulean.

"Kurt?" His voice was wrecked.

"Sir," he managed to get out, but his voice cracked over the word. He pushed back forwards and pressed his trembling mouth back to Blaine's with no finesse, just absolute blinded desperation to please. This wasn't what he wanted at all and if he was in his right mind he would never have offered himself up again, but he was just so scared and confused right now, desperate to show how much he wanted to learn and to be better despite all the fear and uncertainty.

But Blaine didn't kiss back; in fact he avoided Kurt's mouth and set him back. "Kurt, you're shaking," he said seriously and the Dom was reminded of that very first night, how his sub had trembled uncontrollably because he was utterly frightened out of his mind. "Tell me what's wrong, lovely."

Kurt shook his head and squeezed his eyes shut tightly, fingers still wrapped around Blaine's shirt and his body still draped half across his own.

"I…I'm not…" he whispered, voice breaking again as his cheeks burned up and his bottom lip trembled on a shaky exhale. "I wasn't ready…"

It hit Blaine all at once.

The sudden change in Kurt and the realization that he had pushed for too much too soon, selfishly happy to gorge on what Kurt was offering without thought and that Kurt felt that he had... give this to Blaine. He shivered.

"Oh my god… oh my god, Kurt..." Blaine jumped off the bed and away from him as if burned, leaving Kurt cold and shaking on the bed wishing he knew what he did wrong this time.

All he ever did was mess up when all he ever wanted to do was to be a good sub to his Dom and he was for a few moments there right? Before the making out he had helped Blaine calm down, but then the kissing had confused the issue, led them to unfamiliar territory and they'd stumbled yet again with no direction.

His thoughts got interrupted by hands cupping his cheeks as Blaine cautiously knelt on the bed in front of him again.

"This… this thing between us… the tiptoeing around in the dark…" He shook his head, then said seriously, “This has gone too far. I should have done this days ago. We need guidelines, Kurt. We need rules… we need a contract and we're gonna get ourselves together right now and work on that,” he said, dominance coloring his words bright red in Kurt’s head and the sub felt his chest tighten at the thought of what was to come.

But he wasn't stupid.

They did need a contract and even if he sucked at everything else then he would make sure he did
this the right way. He nodded to himself in determination and stood up, following after Blaine outside the bedroom and into the brightly lit, posh decorated office.

The white, clear paper was almost glowing against the darkness of the table wood in front of Kurt. Not a single dot on it, but it still pulled and held his attention like the most interesting piece of art in existence.

The promise of what the innocent, inconspicuous object would contain made his throat constrict and his fingers trembled as he held a pen in his hand, the tip hovering over the empty surface.

"Come on, cutie, it doesn't bite," Blaine teased the sub from the seat next to him at the small table, as he watched him examine the paper from all the angles trying to decide what the best way to write the contract down would be.

At the jab the blue eyed angel threw a scary glare in his direction and Blaine felt his smile melt because his baby was mighty frightening when he chose to be.

"I know. I just really don't know what to write it or how to put it or how much of it should there be or…" He started hyperventilating and Blaine jumped in, plucking the pen from his fingers.

"Whoa, whoa, slow down, baby. Kurt, we write what we agree on, things we've already discussed. Whatever we think should go here will and the rest can be added later. Okay?" Blaine said taking his shaking hands into his and looking him in the eye as a perfect rosy blush settled high on those pale cheeks.

"I know but I… I don't really know what all goes into the contract. I just never felt comfortable to talk about it and I never thought I'd have one so… do you think…” he started but he trailed off, looking away shyly.

"Do I think what, lovely?" Blaine asked reaching over and pulling his subs chin towards him gently.

"Do you think you could like… suggest things and then we can discuss them?" Kurt asked and Blaine beamed at him excitedly.

"Sounds awesome. Okay… you ready to start?" he asked and Kurt bit his lip but nodded bravely earning himself a soft, "My good boy," from his Dom that made him preen even though he'd never thought to find himself liking something that he used to think of as derogatory. But he realized it wasn't at all, not the way Blaine used it, so full of affection and praise.

"I feel like we should start with talking about what happened in the bedroom earlier because I never want it to happen again. After we've discussed that we could maybe brush the topic of punishments because behavior like the one you showed will be ground for a chastisement in the future. Do you understand why?" Blaine asked shuddering at the memory of Kurt rigid and confused beneath him with no intentions of saying that he was uncomfortable.

"Because I made you angry by not saying that I wanted to stop," Kurt ventured quietly, hating that he had messed up the first chance he got.

At his response Blaine's head snapped up and his eyes blazed golden and fierce in the soft light still pouring through the curtains. "No… Kurt that's not it at all, it's not about me being angry. You'd be
punished because you kept quiet in the face of something that wasn't pleasing or comfortable or wanted to you. You felt uncomfortable with me touching you like that and by not saying a word you gave me the option of hurting you. I never want that to happen and so every time you willingly do something that's endangering for you or you willingly ignore something that could harm you, you will receive punishment. I want you safe. Do you understand that?" he asked and Kurt's eyes widened because he honestly didn’t realise that was what punishments were about.

He thought they existed solely for reminding the sub to never displease their Dom, it’s the way it worked at school, Dom’s threatening subs who ‘got out of line’. His only other experience with the concept was what Jeff had tearfully revealed to him those times he needed to lance those old wounds about his ex-Dom and that was terrifying enough. His dad didn’t punish Carole as far as he knew, or if he did he never did it anywhere near Kurt, and the ‘punishments’ he had earned growing up from his dad he didn’t think counted as the same sort of thing. But, this, the way Blaine explained it made the idea of punishment sound so necessary; so caring and reassuring a practise. There mainly for the sub's sake instead of the Dom and it made Kurt seriously consider again all that he had learnt or hadn't been taught at McKinley.

"I understand, sir," he nodded surely, feeling like a huge weight had just lifted off his shoulders somehow and Blaine smiled at him lovingly as if he knew that he really had been majorly freaking out over the perceived threat that he saw the punishments as.

"Good. But we’ll talk about concrete punishments later. Like I said, in light of what happened I feel like we should start with safe words,” he decided as he wrote their names on top and then capitalized the sign saying: SAFE WORDS. "Now we could use the generic color system that works really well or something you pick out, but in that case you need to make sure it's not something you'd be likely to accidently use during everyday life or… um… intimate times."

Kurt chuckled at his attempt of censuring and shook his head.

"I am a blushing virgin but you can still say sex in front of me you know," he teased, happy enough in his own skin now that it was true. It wasn't exactly jumping Blaine's bones apparently, given his earlier freak out, but it was so much more than he'd ever thought he'd be doing when he first went into this claim.

Blaine stuck his tongue out at him, pouting like a little kid. "Fine, see if I ever do something nice again," he grumbled exaggeratedly and Kurt leaned in to peck his cheek, in awe of how much freedom he felt around Blaine.

"Stop pouting. And I… I feel like I'd be more comfortable with using the color system. I… I know it works and I think that the fact that I know that would make me feel safer," he admitted glancing at Blaine with questioning eyes, smiling when the Dom nodded.

"Color system it is," he said as he wrote it down turning back to Kurt. "Now recite it for me to make sure we're both on the same page with it."

The soft command in his voice crept under Kurt's skin and with a quiver in his own tone he recited the universal words. "Green means, Keep going I'm okay. Yellow means, Slow down I'm not sure about this. Red means, Stop, this is too much."

Blaine stroked the back of his fingers down his cheek in reward before turning back to the paper in front of him.

"Okay, now that we got that settled how about we write down some general rules I'd like you to follow."
"Like what?" Kurt cocked a head to the side in question.

"Like… I'd like to make it a rule that you make sure you eat and sleep properly whenever possible. You always ask for help when you need it. You don't keep your anger or hurt or any other emotion that has something to do with me away from me," he tried to go on but Kurt stopped him.

"What does that mean? The last one," he asked.

"It means that if you're angry with me you say so. If I'm driving you insane, fight with me. If I hurt you, call me on it. The same goes if I make you happy. Share it with me freely. Let me know because… because I'm gonna need it. I'm gonna need to be sure that I'm doing right by you. So this rule is as much for me as it is for you," he explained, open and honest.

Kurt hitched a breath and nodded, a hand clutching his chest. "Okay… okay I can do that. What else?"

"Let me know where you are and if you're running late so I don't worry about you. Always be honest with me and let me know what you're thinking. Even though we're putting the fact that you're allowed to go to whatever educational program you want and that you're going to work later on if you so wish, let me feel like I'm the one protecting you and providing for you because that's kind of a big deal for me as a Dom. And I want us both to be able to go back and change this contract if we deem it necessary at some point," he finished off and cast a glance at his sub wondering how he was taking it all.

"What about me meeting my friends and family?" he asked, rehashing it just in case it needed to be written down.

"That's your right. That goes without saying," the Dom assured.

Kurt was almost beaming at him; a radiant smile that took up his entire face and took Blaine's breath away.

"I think all of that sounds reasonable but… I um… can there be a rule for you too? Like… from me?" he asked timidly, not knowing if that was possible.

"What would you like to add?" Blaine asked curiously.

"I… I'd like to know that you're safe and well as well. Like… um… the eating and the sleeping and calling me if you're running late. I… I want to know you're okay too," he said on a single breath and Blaine smiled gently at him, feeling his heart thump with love.

"We can definitely add that on the list," he said and wrote the rules down in an organized column on one side of the paper, and then made another one and titled it punishments next to it.

"Are you okay to talk about punishments or do you want to do it another time? And remember the rule of letting me know what you're thinking." He winked, half serious, and Kurt picked at his nails before deciding to be brave. They'd defeat the whole purpose if they kept skirting around it after all.

"I think I can talk about it. If I get uncomfortable I'll let you know. Is that okay?" he checked and Blaine nodded in approval.

"You're doing a great job, lovely, I'm proud of you. Okay, so is there something you're absolutely sure you don't want?"

"Blood," he said immediately and Blaine's hand rushed to cover his mouth.
"What? Kurt, no… god that's not even an option… I would… I'd never cause you any pain," he said in shock and Kurt frowned.

"Well how would you punish me?" he asked and Blaine took his hands in his again.

"Time out, writing lines, standing in the corner I don't know… writing me an essay explaining that you understand why you're being punished. Stuff like that. No pain, no hurting you, no torture of any kind be it emotional, physical, or sexual. I will never use pain or pleasure against you," he said passionately and Kurt nodded, eyes downcast and feeling a bit silly for thinking that Blaine would ever hurt him like that. He didn't actually think that Blaine would, but he couldn't help that they were in his head though. After what happened with Jeff and sometimes what he heard the Doms at McKinley talking about… he shuddered involuntarily.

"Oh… then… I'm okay with all the things you said," he said and Blaine cocked his head at him, gold eyes discerning.

"Are you sure? You can tell me the truth if you're not comfortable with something on the list."

"No I… I think it'll be okay. But just… I've never been punished so if we do one of these and I find it too much I can tell you right?"

"Absolutely. We'll discuss it and after you explain it to me we'll remove it from the list."

Kurt swallowed and nodded. "Okay, good. You can write it down."

And so Blaine did and the punishments found their way into their contract almost too easily.

"Are you… are you okay with talking about some sexual stuff now?" he asked carefully and Kurt blushed. All his jokes from earlier aside this was a big deal for him.

"I… I haven't tried anything so I don't… I don't know…" he stammered and Blaine caressed his cheek gently.

"I know but… are there things that you've thought about or…well, fantasized about and realized that you'd really like to or that you would never ever like to try?" he tried to make it easier but Kurt shrugged again and Blaine chewed the tip of the pen in thought for a second before smiling as an idea struck him.

"Okay, how about this..." He drew three columns on the paper and wrote YES, MAYBE and NEVER on top of them. "I will name some stuff and you can say where they would go for you. Yes would be the stuff you know you like, maybe stuff you're wondering about and you'd maybe like to try them someday, and never being a definite no and I'd never even suggest the stuff you put on that list."

Kurt looked down at the paper and the columns. Put like that it didn't seem so overwhelming. "Um… okay… I can do that."

"I'll start with lighter ones that I suppose you might be familiar with and maybe open to and we'll work our way up. Okay, so… blindfold?" he asked and Kurt imagined himself lying, unseeing and waiting in anticipation on every touch and kiss that Blaine would surprise his skin with and his blood tingled as he nodded.

"Yes," he said shyly and Blaine wrote it down in the first column.

"Handcuffs, or well… restraints of that kind."
"Yes," Kurt replied without thinking as his mind assaulted him with images of Blaine catering to the needs of his body as he saw fit without him being able to touch and feel him under his palms. His body was like liquid now and he almost couldn't sit still in his chair as he imagined how it would all feel and he barely caught the next question.

"Gags?"

"I like the sound of your name on my lips," he answered automatically and then blushed furiously covering his lips with his hands.

"God you'll be the end of me, lovely," Blaine breathed out, eyes a darker shade and pupils lightly blown out and suddenly Kurt realized he wasn't the only one imagining them together like that.

"Sorry." He smiled sheepishly and Blaine shook his head, shifting a little tellingly in his seat as he cleared his throat.

"It's okay. So, no to gags?" He quirked an eyebrow at Kurt and he blushed again ducking his head down.

"Put it under maybe. Just in case." And Blaine wrote it in the second column.

"Okay, um… name calling?" he asked and Kurt jumped, startled and his smiled melted away instantly.

"I don't want to be humiliated. I don't want derogatory names like slut or slave or something… some of them at McKinley do that and it’s… I don’t like it."

"And I agree. It's not a turn on for me at all to degrade you. I was talking more along the lines of names that maybe… um… made you feel good? If there's something like that…” he explained and Kurt thought about it for a second.

"I um… I really like it when you call me lovely but, um… I don't think I'd want to connect that with sex too much because you call me that in front of other people and I… I think I wanna keep that name as… as, um… you know…” He flailed his arms awkwardly between them as he searched for the words and Blaine smiled.

"As a pet name?" he supplied and Kurt beamed at him.

"Yes… exactly."

Blaine nodded. "That makes sense. Is there some other name you like it when I call you?" he asked curiously, but Kurt shook his head immediately.

"It's embarrassing." He blushed and Blaine slid off his chair and knelt in front of him, ducking his head to catch Kurt's full gaze.

"You should never be ashamed in front of me. Just tell me whatever it is and we'll talk about it," he encouraged and Kurt twisted his mouth before taking a deep breath.

"I like it when you call me… your something boy," he rushed out and Blaine let out a soft laugh.

"My something boy?"

"Yeah, um… like your beautiful boy, or… or your good boy… or your sweet boy," he said, cheeks getting redder with every word, his body sinking deeper into the chair like it could make him
disappear.

"I love calling you those names too. Especially since you really are my sweet, good, beautiful boy," he teased and pressed a kiss to the tip of his nose. Kurt let out a soft giggle and Blaine re-seated himself to write them in the yes column.

They were making great progress and the Dom was finally feeling like he could breathe and relax now that he knew what he could and couldn't allow himself to do with Kurt and he believed Kurt felt the same way.

"Okay, um… I think this should do it for now. We can come back and revise this to add or remove stuff as we go along and figure out what works for us and what doesn't. Especially in regards to this last part but I've got a pretty good idea of where our boundaries are now. Is there something else you can think of?" Blaine asked as he skimmed over the paper quickly, satisfied with what they had accomplished.

"Um… I don't think so… no…" Kurt said with a small frown as he raked his mind to find something.

"Great, then we're done," he declared, leaning back into the chair with a happy smile, feeling relieved that things were clearer now for both of them. Clear lines drawn, misconceptions assuaged.

"Now what?" Kurt asked and Blaine took the pen again.

"We sign it and its official then. We start living by it," he explained and Kurt cracked a small smile at that, feeling a soft, warm tingle in his gut at his Dom's words.

"You go first." He motioned with his hand and Blaine winked at him as he scrawled a loopy signature onto the paper above an improvised line.

"There we go…" He smiled and handed the pen to Kurt who took it and pressed the tip to the paper making a barely visible dot before snapping his head up in panic.

"Sir?"

"What is it, lovely?" Blaine asked, voice concerned and tense.

"What about kneeling?" Kurt bit his lip and averted his eyes shyly.

He felt a warm palm cup his cheek and pull his face up to meet his Dom's eyes and his soft, reassuring smile. "I'll be the happiest man alive if I ever earn that honor from you. Now sign that," he ordered gently and Kurt beamed at him, bringing the pen up and signing in a flourish.

Kurt Hummel, sub
Dalton was everything Jeff thought it would be.

From the building; comforting and proud in its rich dark brown and burgundy colours, through the teachers that were all welcoming, understanding and willing to help, to their classmates who were mostly down to earth and kind to him and Kurt.

A small smile grazed Jeff’s features as he thought of his best friend and how he had blossomed under the careful hand of his Dom. His usually careful disposition had been let loose and he had the courage to tease and laugh and joke with the few people that went beyond polite introductions and took to talking to them before and after class.

Admittedly they mostly talked to Kurt since he was still too locked up in his own mind to let go and try to belong the way he had always wanted to, but he was happy nobody pushed him and taunted him.

He had his own room where nightmares couldn’t disturb someone, he had a place to draw without people seeing how he was even worse at it now that he was so rusty and he had a space to hide from everything and everyone when days came where he just couldn’t cope the way he had learned to do.

He was far from well and he knew it.

But Dalton gave him a chance to exist with less fear and less reminders of who he really was. Sure, he still caught glances trained at his marred mark and he still heard whispers, but they were few and far in between to really hurt him. Dalton gave him a sanctuary, a fresh start and a chance to be without feeling like he was bothering someone by purely breathing.

Dalton, and the numerous couples in love and happy, gave him hope that maybe the world wasn’t so bad even if happiness wasn’t meant for him.

Dalton gave him peace.

And it gave him… him.
The boy with hair the color of his favorite hot chocolate and eyes so warm he thought he would melt if they were to ever realize he existed and look at him, like, really look at him like he knew him, like he thought him worthy of the attention.

The boy with a smile rivalling sunshine and flushed cheeks puffed from laughter that came from deep within lighting him up like a beacon he just wanted to go home to. He saw him in the hallways almost every day, but he made sure he was never noticed in return, ducking behind open doors and taller students.

Jeff would track him as he walked, head always turning this way and that as if he was constantly on a quest to find someone and always, for a split second, he felt jealous of that someone. He would sit in the cafeteria with Kurt and he would see him come in, scanning the room just like always and the blonde would always make up an excuse to leave before the mystery guy glanced over him and it was slammed home just how insignificant he really was when those eyes would, inevitably, just look through him.

The boy with the sunshine smile became the best and the worst part of his days.

The sight of him brightened his mood, but it also made him hope for something he knew he'd never have. One look at him would make him feel safe and brave for the barest of moments, but then his face would taunt him as he dreamt at night making his nightmares even worse when he was the one hurting him. One smile from him made him warm, but then that smile would force its way onto his sketch pad over and over and over again, reminding him how bad he was at it because it wasn't even close to the beauty of the real thing.

Sighing in confusion Jeff pulled his paper closer, a pair of warm brown eyes with crinkles in the corners staring up at him from inside that friendly, boyish face. Putting the pencil down he scooped the paper up and opened the drawer to place it inside a binder that went from holding empty, crisp sheets to nearly bursting from piles of crumpled, torn and thinned paper filled with soft smiles, gentle eyes, cute curls of hair tickling a strong neck and ending up with drawings of a full face.

Warm.
Friendly.
Familiar.
Beautiful.
*Unattainable*.

Taking him back to that first day his pencil finally moved across the paper after remaining motionless in his fingers for so long.

The day was way too long for him to stay and hang out with Kurt and Blaine. He was tired from a day spent keeping himself safe from the people slamming into him in the hallways by accident and shutting down not to hear if they talked about him and Kurt. Even though his best friend told him that Blaine was right and that, aside from Brad, nobody even looked at them sideways… he couldn't help it, however.

His mind was scaring him and he could feel his body tremble every time the bell rang and he knew he had to face the open hallways with no teachers to stand up for him should someone decide to hurt him.

It was tiring, exhausting, defeating.

And so when Kurt called him to hang out with him and his Dom after school he smiled in thanks but made his excuses promptly. He cited unpacking still left to do and the fact that he didn't get much
sleep the night before so he would like to catch up on both of those things before the workload became too much for him. They were both true of course. But in reality he just felt overwhelmed and he needed to be by himself for a little while to assemble his thoughts and figure out how to manage this new experience without losing himself in the process.

It was then that Kurt reminded him why he was the best friend a person could ask for. With a knowing smile he said he understood and that it was probably a good idea to get a head start with catching up with sleep, said that he could probably use some himself even though they both knew it was all a pretence for his sake.

Jeff gave him a light hug, trying to show how grateful he was that he didn't feel the need to pry and question him; instead just offering that genuine soft smile of understanding and an embrace that comforted and soothed his nerves.

With a parting wave Jeff stalked across the building and into the dormitories, eyes cautious and muscles on standby, ready to bolt the first chance he felt the need to. He got to his room unscathed and he stripped out of his uniform and into some comfortable yoga pants and an oversized sweater before settling down onto his bed, thoughts of the day past swimming in his mind.

Dalton was everything he had ever dreamed of; magnificent, regal, intimidating and warm at the same time and Jeff felt his heart break at the thought that now that he was finally exactly where he had wanted to be, he just wasn't himself anymore. He wasn't that person who would have dived in and explored every nook of the glorious institution. Now, he was someone letting the tide carry them where it deemed fit and he just didn't have what it took to fight it anymore.

They all said he just needed more time.

But it's been a year and a half since everything happened and he still wasn't who he used to be; he still wasn't sure if he would ever be.

There were sparks of what he used to be like, lighting the darkness inside of him every now and then. When Kurt would do something bitchy and he would laugh at him, when his parents would prepare a family dinner and he felt calm and safe, when he took his charcoal in his hand and held it close to the paper he felt whole even if he knew nothing would come out of it.

Feeling like he needed that sense of wholeness and purpose in life right now he sat at his desk and pulled out a fresh sheet of paper and a piece of charcoal from the kit Kurt got him, that turned into one of his most prized possessions the second he touched it.

Adjusting the table lamp to shed light onto the paper without casting shadows that would disturb him while he tried to get a piece of the old Jeff back, he set the tip of the charcoal onto the paper and closed his eyes trying to find that something that used to move his hand effortlessly. It wasn't there anymore and Jeff knew that, but he still refused to give up. It was the only thing he still desperately held onto, praying to whoever was listening every night to give it back, to just let him have that tiny piece of his former happiness.

He had tried so hard, spending hours upon hours searching for that tingly warmth that would start behind his eyelids and cascade down his arms and into his fingertips, finally spilling onto the clearness of the paper; creating worlds and emotions and strangers and friends that he was able to keep, pinned to his wall for people to see and get to know when they came into his room.

But the warmth was gone.

It didn't tingle anymore, and it didn't rake through his body, aching to create something; there was
just a small feeling resembling the first spring sunbeams on his skin and even if he knew it wasn't
even he still liked it better than the nothing he got since the day he laid hands on him and tainted
him. It was something, something just for him and a small, grateful smile spread over his face when
he felt his fingers move, the scrape of charcoal on paper almost deafening in contrast to the silence
that suffocated him.

He trembled with excitement, not even caring what he was drawing, he just knew that it was
something, the first thing he put on paper in over a year and he welcomed it, revelled in it, allowed it
to seep out of him and find home on the off white surface before him.

Almost too soon the feeling was gone and his hand wilted onto the desk, letting the charcoal slip and
roll away from him, stopping when it hit the box of art supplies. Sighing tiredly the blonde looked
down, almost unable to decide if he was excited or terrified to see what he had done.

A shocked gasp ripped itself from his lips and his heart stammered in his chest when he took in his
own drawing.

Soft lips stretched into a perfect smile… a smile unlike any other.

A smile that held sunshine and summer and warmth and yellow and gold in it. A smile of a boy he
had stolen and hid away in his memories. A smile of a boy he had no right to think of.

Breathing heavily he ripped the paper from the sketch pad and went to tear it in half. But there was
this force stilling his hand, pulling at his arms and pleading for him to leave it be; to save it and keep
it. Running a desperate hand over his face he took one last look at that summery, carefree beam that
made him stop in his tracks and forget about his own fears, and placed the sketch inside the bottom
drawer of his desk resolutely.

Nobody would ever see it.

"All right, mopey. You don't get to mope anymore. We are going out." His door swung open and
since he knew he had locked it there was only one person able to walk in using the spare key he
gave them.

"Kurt!" Jeff jumped, stuffing the binder inside his drawer to keep Kurt from seeing it, but the
brunette had already caught a glimpse of it judging by the radiant smile blossoming on his face.

"Is that what I think it is?" he asked, smile widening and voice reaching heights a human shouldn't
be able to reach as he crossed the space between them and reached for the drawer.

"NO!" Jeff jumped and slammed the drawer shut making Kurt gasp and step back to keep all his
fingers intact, surprised by his friend's reaction. "I'm sorry. I just… I…"

"Jeff, it's okay. I shouldn't have tried to look at it if you don't want me to… I should learn to keep my
nose out of your things." Kurt reached out and twined their fingers together in comfort, blue eyes
searching his face intently. "But just tell me. Are you drawing again?"

The blonde lowered his gaze down, fingers shaking lightly as he shrugged and gave a tiny, barely
there nod.

"I'm trying. And I manage a thing or two every now and then. It's not much," he murmured, but Kurt
cought his other hand too and made him look up.

"It's more than it used to be and that's a good thing. Okay?" he said sure and Jeff smiled gratefully at
him.
"Baby steps, right?" he quoted the line that had become like a catch phrase for them when they talked about him getting better and his friend beamed.

"Baby steps." He nodded. "Now, let's go! You and I are lazing around together today, just like the good old times." Kurt pulled him by the hand towards the door.

Jeff smiled and went after him willingly, only now realizing how much he had missed their 'lazy times' when they would just sit and talk and do nothing for hours on end, never bored, never tired of each other. He had missed having Kurt next to him every minute of every day, maybe that was selfish of him, maybe he had been spoiled for him, but he would swallow his own tongue before saying that now that Kurt had someone as amazing as Blaine as his Dom.

"Where's Blaine?" he asked now that his thoughts had took him to the older boy, stepping off the last stair and continuing to follow Kurt outside into the chilly afternoon air. Thankfully he had put on a thick sweater today because Kurt hadn’t stopped to allow him to grab a jacket.

"Hanging out with some of his friends. I told him I wanted a day with my friend because we haven't been together properly since we got here and I've missed you," Kurt revealed casually, pushing the main gate of Dalton grounds open and leading them to the small woods next to the school property.

"I've missed you too," Jeff said quietly because it was okay to say that now that Kurt had said it first right? That wasn’t selfish… just the truth. He continued to walk after his friend until they reached what looked like an abandoned children's playground and Kurt dropped their joint handhold.

"Last one to the swing is a smelly loser!" Kurt screamed and raced towards a rickety swing set.

"Really, Kurt? What are we, four?" Jeff asked as he caught up with him at a slow pace.

"You're only saying that because you've lost. Now get up and swing with me," he commanded as he kicked his legs and made the swing squeak as it took him off the ground.

Giggling Jeff sat on the other one and kicked off closing his eyes for a moment and wishing he really was four again.

Happy.

Free.

"Oh, hell no. I agreed to hang out, not to be present at the 'My sub is sick and tired of me so he left me to go and do something fun' convention," Nick grumbled sternly, pointing at them as he entered the dorm room across the hall from his own to find Ryan sitting at the desk creating a playlist of whiny, pitiful songs and Blaine cross-legged on the floor and leaning listlessly against the bed with the most epic pout on his face. Neither of their two subs was present of course, so it wasn't hard to guess the reason why they were acting like such sad sacks.

He sighed internally and rolled his eyes heavenwards. These were his friends?

Ryan threw him the saddest look in the history of sad looks at the comment, like he'd just murdered a box full of puppies in front of him, while Blaine just pouted stronger, if that was even humanly possible, resembling a toddler who didn't get a lollipop at the store. Both of them sighed deeply;
dramatic, mournful sounds that he would have scoffed at if coming from anyone else for being completely put on, but as it was he knew these Doms far too well unfortunately.

Nick rolled his eyes, throwing himself in the armchair in the corner and crossing his hands on his stomach.

"Okay… you each get thirty seconds. Use them wisely," he warned and the two Doms perked up immediately both taking a deep breath to start talking but Ryan was just a second faster and he started whining before Blaine could beat him to it.

"Thad said he had to finish up some stuff for his drama club. And he said he'd only take an hour or so but he left at one and its four o'clock now and he's still not back and I really, really miss him. I miss holding him and kissing him and hearing him laugh and I want him to come back because he belongs here where I am… not all the way across campus," he rattled in a single breath frowning the whole time and Nick didn't even had the chance to process all of that before Blaine started his own tirade.

"Kurt said he needed a day with his best friend and that's fine, but he spends every day with him! They share all of the classes and they have lunch together and he wants to hang out with him more than he does with me. And I don't want there to be someone who's more important to him and it's only four o'clock and he won't be back until eight and that's way too long," he sulked and pouted again and Nick looked between the two of them like he was watching an incredibly boring tennis match.

"You guys are both pathetic," he announced on an exhale and the two of them scowled at him petulantly.

"We're not!" came in outraged unison.

"Ryan, you're listening to Mariah Carey," Nick deadpanned at the jock with an arched a brow at him.

"She understands my pain!"

Nick dismissed that with a wave of his hand. "And you, Blaine. You're on the floor sulking like you're five and someone stole your favorite toy."

"Kurt's not a toy," Blaine snapped, then grumbled under his breath, crossing his arms over his chest and staring at the floor. "But he is mine."

Nick threw his hands up. Tough love obviously wasn't working here. "They'll be back soon enough… if you weren't just sitting here counting the seconds then it'd probably go faster."

"The clock's broken anyway," Blaine groused, glaring at the offending object on the wall while Ryan just sighed and went back to working dutifully on his 'song list of woe'.

Nick looked at it then at his phone to compare the time. "Seems fine to me."

"It's broken! Ryan has a stupid, stupid clock and its taunting me with its stupid slow motion face and hands!" Blaine exploded going a little red in the face with all his gesticulating.

"Wooooow," Nick said slowly with a whistle, before a gleeful smile spread across his face. "You really are ass over tea kettle for this sub."

He knew that of course but this was like really hitting him now.
Blaine didn't dignify him with an answer, simply huffed and sunk lower against the bed as *Aerosmith's, I Don't Want to Miss a Thing* blasted out of the speakers. Nick got a sinking feeling in his stomach as he looked over at Ryan and the *expression* on his face.

"Dude," Nick deadpanned at the jock sitting up straighter. "Please don't ruin this song for me. I'm begging you not to ruin the sanctum that is Steve Tyler with that screech of a voice."

He loved Ryan and all but he was made for football, not choir and that was just cold hard facts that they'd learned the hard way.

"I could stay awake, just to hear you breaaaaathing…"

"Ryan," he warned, feeling his blood boil and his ears begin to bleed.

"Watch you smile while you are sleeping, while you're far away and dreaming. I could spend my life in this sweeeeet surrendee-AHHH!"

Nick saw red and launched himself in the next second and they both went tumbling off the desk chair and onto the floor on top of a surprised Blaine. They scuffled around with shoves and elbows and grunts of pain.

"I told you not to ruin my Aerosmith!" Nick yelled shoving at the muscled brunette nearly twice his size.

"But I need to express myself!" Ryan shouted back, muffled by the carpet in his mouth.

"Someone bit me!" Blaine yelped.

They broke apart panting and dishevelled, just staring at one another.

"I want my Kurt," Blaine humphed sadly, feeling ever so sorry for himself and Nick groaned falling back against the carpet in defeat and covering his face with his hands.

"He's really beautiful. Did I tell you Kurt was beautiful, Ry?"

"Yeah… Thad's beautiful you know. He's clever too," came the prideful reply.

"Kurt's so intelligent, he's picking things up so fast here. He's just so amazing and-"

"Okay!" Nick exclaimed sitting back up and facing the pair. "I know he's great and everything, B. You know I think he is, but I will literally do *anything* to get you to stop talking about him for just like, an *hour*. Please fucking Jesus!"

Blaine frowned at him. "Why just me?"

"Because you're worse," Nick told him straight out. "Ryan will finish that emo playlist and then weep silently to himself while murdering the classics we all know and love with that hideous excuse for a voice-"

"HEY!"

"But you," Nick carried on. "You'll go on and on and on and on and on and on and on and oh god it will never end!" he lamented. "So I'm cutting you off right now. Name something in exchange for my sanity."

This idea actually seemed to spark something in his best friend and the curly haired singer cocked his
head thoughtfully. Ryan just rolled his eyes at them and went back to his desk.

"Anything?" Blaine asked to clarify.

Nick didn't like that tone and he sighed resignedly, shoulders slumping. "You're gonna make me look like a twat aren't you?"

"Tomorrow," Blaine grinned evilly. "You've got a date with a certain poncho."

Nick's brow furrowed as he tried to think and then dawning lit and he burst out, "You mean that wasn't a rug?!

Blaine scrunched up his nose. "It had a head hole in the centre… Tell me you haven't been using it as a rug."

"Pfft! No, course not! I mean who mistakes a poncho for a rug, right?" He laughed uneasily and cleared his throat looking away. He made a mental note to send it out for a thorough dry cleaning before tomorrow.

Blaine simply shook his head at his friend. "You know I think the saddest thing is I'm not even surprised," he said in a solemn tone.

"Whatever. Fine, it's a deal, I'll wear it if you stop waxing mournful and poetic. And for the record you're the saddest. Case in point, today."

"Coming from someone who keeps pining over a guy but doesn't have the guts to even talk to him," Blaine jabbed back and Nick deflated slightly as the barb struck home in a way he wasn't used to.

It had been a week and a half since the first time he saw him and since then he had caught glimpses of the beautiful blonde exactly nine times; one of which led him to the realization that the walking perfection lived and slept only a hallway away from him.

Not that he was creepily stalking him or anything…

He walked by that door at least a dozen times pepping himself up to knock and say hi and get to know him, but he had chickened out every time, the image of shattered eyes and tainted marks misting his mind. He had no right to disturb his peace, he had no right to expect things the sub wasn't willing to give, and most of all, he had no right to enter his personal space and make him feel haunted and stalked and preyed on.

Nick chose to be happy for the rare seconds he got to see him and bask in the fact that angels were real. Everything else was his own wishful thinking and he was realistic enough to know it would remain just that.

"It's not about guts," he said and Ryan looked over at him with a cocked eyebrow, attention drawn again, having trouble figuring out what made Nick so reluctant to speak about the boy. So far the only thing they knew was that Nick thought he was beautiful and that the easiest way to notice he had seen him recently was the silence that surrounded the usually bubbly Dom and the faraway look in his eyes; longing and pained.

"Then what is it about?" Ryan asked, knowing full well it wouldn't work.

"A lot of things that aren't really mine to tell because I don't know them for sure. I just feel something is there. Something that's not for me or anyone else to discuss," he said sadly and Blaine scooted over and bumped his shoulder with his own.
"Hey… cheer up. Maybe if you just approached him as a friend… no deeper meaning… maybe that would work?" Blaine suggested, not really knowing what it was about so unable to give proper advice, but still desperate to help his friend.

Nick mulled over the suggestion and realized that it could be worth the shot. It was a tricky situation to navigate though. He didn't just want to be this subs friend and he felt instinctively in a way he couldn't explain that he had to be completely upfront with his intentions in regards to the sub. It was a fine line he would be walking. He would have to try and be non-threatening, but still indicate that this was it for him, he wanted this to lead to something more. But maybe friend's was all they could be? The thought cut deeply when all he could picture doing was taking the blond for himself to care and love and protect… but he'd rather have him in some way than nothing at all. And who knew, maybe in time they could be something more? But for now, being friends could be enough.

The only thing was how could he pull this off?

Approaching him straight out clearly wasn't going well for him given his track record so far, so he had to try something else to let the sub know he was alive. He wanted the idea to be personal to both of them, enough of his crazy and something of the blondes in a perfect mixture he knew they had the ability to make together. But what did he really know about him? A flash from a couple of days ago in the Dalton longue entered his mind suddenly.

"Yeah… maybe that could work," he murmured absently as his mind raced a mile a minute. He tried not letting his hope run wild on him, but he knew he would end up dreaming and hoping anyway. And he knew that if the thought was so stuck in his mind that he would have to go and listen to his own inner self, if only to make it stop keeping him up at night.

The first time it happened took Jeff completely off guard.

The morning found him like many others had, damp with a cold sweat covering his body, the back of his neck aching under the press of cruel, phantom fingers and his chest heaving in shallow pants. It saddened him how when he woke up without the horrible veil of nightmares still lingering over him, he was more surprised than when he did with them nowadays.

He stayed curled up in bed until he couldn't stand the inactivity that gave his mind room to mull over the nights horrors and crawled out from under the covers and into the small bathroom attached to his room. He turned the spray to scalding for both the novelty of once more having actual hot water instead of the tepid, lukewarm spray of home and the desire to wash the night's events from his skin like they were a thick sludge that was clinging to him.

Dried and dressed in his uniform he stared in the mirror tiredly as he knotted his tie trying to pull himself together to face the day ahead. The soft rap on the door made him jump and abandon the task halfway through. He frowned over his shoulder at it, feeling anxiety rise.

Kurt wasn't supposed to meet him here for another twenty minutes.

Swallowing he walked over to the polished wood, laying a palm there and called through hesitantly, "Who is it?"

He got no response and it made his heart beat harder.
It obviously wasn't Kurt, lord knew his friend wasn’t quiet by any means, but Jeff didn't know anyone else. Hadn't interacted with anyone save Kurt, Blaine and the Principal… so who could be seeking his company? He clenched his jaw and took his palm away as if the door were burning. What if there was a Dom out there? They hadn't answered back when he called which didn't exactly scream good intentions to him, but this was Dalton... nothing bad would happen here… right?

He tried to convince himself of that thought every day.

Honestly, he didn't know what possessed him to open the door in the end, where the sudden streak of bravery came from… or stupidity if whatever greeted him on the other side was horrible.

What he was greeted with was nothing at all.

No person stood at the threshold waiting and Jeff allowed the door to open more fully than just the crack he had initially pulled it. He poked his head through to timidly dart it out and run eyes down the corridor to see if he could spot someone.

It was empty.

Frowning in confusion he pulled back and made to close the door, only, his attention got snagged when he moved his gaze downwards. There at his feet, set just outside his door, was a white coffee cup Jeff recognised as coming from the Dalton coffee longue. He stared at it dumbly for several long seconds as if it would start singing its purpose if he gave it enough attention.

Again he moved his head out and scanned eyes, even more unsettled by this strange twist of events, around the hallway, left and right for any sign of life, but it seemed deserted. He chewed anxiously on his thumbnail wondering what to do as his gaze inevitably drew back to the unoffending object at his feet which had managed to rattle the precarious routine he was trying to establish here effortlessly.

*It couldn't be meant for him, right?*

It was a mistake. An accident. Whoever left it must have gotten the wrong room. Or… what if they hadn't? What if this was a joke of some kind? Someone mocking him or playing games? Jeff knew all about those and he had no desire to become a pawn in such a thing again.

He bent cautiously and picked up the cup, the heat soaking into his palm immediately and as he straightened he caught a whiff of steamed milk and chocolate that made his mouth water. Jeff had a sweet tooth. It was a known fact to those close to him and he had found a weakness for the hot chocolate they served here… was this a coincidence? He let his thumb fall from his mouth when a streak of red peeking through his fingers caught his interest. He used his left hand to cup it at the bottom steadily and pulled the right away.

*I think you're beautiful...*
A blush lit his face on fire, butterflies swarming his stomach as he reread the line to make sure his brain wasn't playing tricks on him and he felt foolishness keep it there burning strongly until the fluttering was washed away in a tide of humiliation when he concluded that yes, it probably was a mistake or joke.

He had been reminded forcefully, insistently, that he wasn't beautiful, hardly desirably, only barely tolerable. Even if he hadn't believed it back when it was first told to him… he believed it now. Knew it to be fact now instead of another's opinion.

He backed up inside and hastily closed the door behind him leaning heavily against it and for a brief moment he imagined that he wasn't broken, wasn't tainted and that someone truly thought he was as beautiful as the note claimed. He closed his eyes and imagined someone saying it to him. He imagined believing them. Warmth flickered in a tiny place in his heart before reality pushed back in and he snuffed that little fire out, staring at the cup and those scrawling red words for a long while.

He didn't drink the first one.

He tipped it out into the sink, watching mournfully as the milky brown liquid splashed and drained into the porcelain and though it was the height of foolishness and self-indulgence… he kept the cup.

"I thought you chickened out, Nicky," Blaine laughed at his friend when he power glided into the Warblers hall, a bulging paper bag hanging from the crook of his elbow. His hair was a bit ruffled and his cheeks had a darkish blushing look to them that made Blaine believe he was running before he got there.

"Oh, please. A badass never chickens out," Nick said as he closed the door and dropped the bag onto the floor in front of Ryan who jumped up on it immediately; tearing the paper apart in his haste to see what was so interesting about this poncho. They hadn't told any of the other Warbler's about the bet, Blaine wanted it to be a surprise, but Ryan insisted on being present.

"Why are you late then?" Blaine smirked and Nick averted his eyes and shrugged.
"I had something to do before I got here," he said, evidence of how much he didn’t want to talk about it clear in his voice.

Blaine decided to let it slip because there had been something going on with his best friend ever since the day he saw this ‘mysterious boy’ in the hallway and Nick wasn’t himself at all. They still had no idea who ‘he’ was; his name, age or anything and Nick didn’t talk about him to his friends when they asked. He would just say that it was complicated and leave it at that, making them worried and curious at the same time.

Blaine’s thoughts were interrupted by a howl of hysterical laughter coming from Ryan as he pulled the heavy poncho out of the bag and held it up in front of his face, cackling like a deranged hyena.

"Oh my god... you… you need to... w-wear this, HA… it's... hahaha!" He fell onto the couch clutching the piece of clothing to his chest, tears springing and legs kicking as he laughed his ass off.

"Shows how much you know about fashion. It's beautiful," Nick mocked an offended voice, pulling the poncho out of Ryan's grip and holding it up before throwing it over his head and arranging it to fall just so over his limbs as if that would somehow make it not look like a grandmother's knitting basket threw up on a fuzzy, multicolored carpet.

So what he thought it was a rug at first glance? It was an innocent mistake and he liked the poncho more now than as a rug so Nick didn't see the problem.

"Wow, man… it really brings out your eyes," Blaine snickered as he tumbled down next to Ryan, joining in on the hysterics as Nick struck a pose and catwalked across the room, hands on his hips and nose cutting the air as he hummed, 'Sexy and I Know It'.

"Blaine, dude, get your phone out and take pictures. We'll make him do whatever we want with this," Ryan said, scrambling to get his own phone from his pocket.

"That would be a good plan if he were actually embarrassed by this," Blaine sighed exasperatedly, pointing at Nick who was standing in front of the window, catching his reflection, making duck-faces at it and giving it the, "How you doin'?" eyebrows seductively.

Ryan followed his gaze and rolled his eyes in disappointment.

"Someday, somehow, we will find a way to make him feel shame," Ryan sighed wistfully as Nick came back to them and struck a pose in front of the sofa.

"But that will not be today. Now let's go. I have a student body to amaze," Nick declared with a snap of his fingers and strutted out in the hallway.

Blaine and Ryan jumped up and followed him, still laughing at the faces of their class buddies as Nick walked, head held high through the school, the hideous poncho swirling around him and making him look like something that escaped the confines of a highly secured mental institution.

But Nick couldn't care less.

He was always one to make others laugh and feel better, regardless of the fact that sometimes he made a fool of himself to do so. And his day was a great one so far in his books. He made a plan and he actually stuck to it, making the first step towards something he desperately wanted and he had hope that someday it will pay off.

Someday he will talk to him, and make him smile and make him happy. Someday those warmer than a summer's day brown eyes will light up because of him and they’ll hold none of the sadness they did
every time Nick saw him these days.

Smiling at the thought Nick took a sharp turn to the left to make his entrance into the cafeteria dramatic and then stood in the doorway, leaning against it and kicking his foot up to pose for the giggling crowd. His eyes caught a glimpse of beautiful platinum blonde and he snapped his head to look after it, catching sight of lean body, slumped shoulders and downcast eyes as the boy of his dreams made his way to the last, and the most secluded, table sitting down with a cup in his hands and seemingly building a shield between himself and the rest of the crowd with his jacket and bag.

Nick frowned at the cup in those hands as he did his best to pose for the countless pictures being taken of him in his new poncho.

*Was one cup not enough? Did it get cold until he found it? Did he not take it at all?*

He had worked himself up into a near panic mode, missing the looks a certain someone spared at him through lowered lids and thick lashes.

Jeff had decided to still get his regular hot chocolate before class after stashing the mysterious cup inside his drawer. The ruckus along the way made him jumpy and edgy and he scooped up his beverage and scurried towards the table that he had deemed the safest on his first day. His back was against the wall and there was minimal chance of someone sneaking up on him like that, while the front was secured by a few tables filled with girls that Jeff didn't really feel threatened by.

So whenever he came in to eat he sat at that table, alone or with Kurt and Blaine, but he always felt safe. It also helped that Dalton's student body seemed more subdued and contained and just classier than McKinley. Which wasn’t surprising given the circumstances of rampant poverty and repressed hormones all over the place back in Lima. They made for a toxic combination.

Which is why all the fuss today just made no sense at all.

People were snickering and snapping pictures and hollering and he had no idea what was up with them until he finally looked up and gasped at the sight of the potentially ugliest piece of clothing to ever grace the face of the earth.
It was a poncho, or something that looked like a poncho, made out of strips of different materials and patterns that looked like a five year old had pieced together. Maybe that same five year old had designed it as well? Maybe went a little crazy when they gained access to the crayon box? Because surely there was no way this was a proper poncho? It had reindeers or something to that affect stitched into it!

Maybe a Christmas poncho then?

After all it had baubles. Bright, purple, horrible baubles hanging down from a fringe of bright gold tassels that lined from shoulders to chest in an arrow point and red fluffy balls lining the top of that and oh god... Kurt would surely pitch a fit if he saw this monstrosity. Like full on freak out because it was hurting Jeff's eyes just looking… but… but… it was also making him smile.

It was shocking, but the culmination of the fact that this person was willingly, purposely wearing something as hideous as that as well as the image of Kurt chasing the person around trying to rip it apart with his bare hands… well it was funny and Jeff felt like he hadn't smiled or laughed in so long.

He trailed his eyes over the thing one last time before flicking them upwards, the smile forming fully on his face and stretching it into achy disused lines only to freeze when he met deep, familiar chocolate eyes.

The air caught in his lungs, mouth going dry in an instant as he tore his eyes away from that gaze that seemed trained onto him. There was no way he was looking at him. The boy with the sunshine smile. No. He was probably wondering why Jeff was staring and smiling at him like an idiot. Cursing silently to himself he gathered his things up and hastily left the room via the second exit on the other side of the room fighting himself all the time not to look back.

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*How do you oversleep three alarms in a row?* Jeff thought as he ran around his room realizing, after misplaced his sock for the third time, that there was no way he would make it to his first class of the day.

His body was bone tired from fighting his own demons for the past year and last night was particularly nasty. He had no idea what caused it. He spent the day after spotting him in the morning
going to classes and hanging out with Kurt, he was relatively relaxed and happy so he had no idea where the terror came from. Snuggling into bed that night he realized he was so tired he would most likely fall asleep right on the spot, so he had put a movie into a second hand laptop. Blaine had managed to scrounge one up from somewhere him to help him with his school work since they wrote around a million papers and essays a week. So he’d settled down, letting the soft sound from the speakers lull him into sleep.

The next thing he knew he was running through a maze of tall, dark trees and every branch was coming directly at him, scratching his back and pulling at his hair to try and drag him backwards. He ran as fast as he could towards a patch of sunlight that kept getting further and further away from him until it finally disappeared leaving him alone and afraid to wake up, drenched in sweat and tears and late for school.

He shook his head to rid himself of the vivid reminders and resigned with the fact that he wasn’t making it to first class he decided to take his time and shower and try to make himself look like a human being at least before going out in public.

Warm water cascaded down his neck, sliding over his tainted mark and scar littered back and he revelled in the feeling of his muscles untying and relaxing as he lathered and rinsed his hair, now shiny and silky again after using the conditioner Kurt had gifted him with. He knew what he was doing with all these ‘gifts’, the offhand ‘we have loads of these at home they’ll just go to waste’. Kurt had gotten it into his head that he needed to feel guilty about what he now had with Blaine and it couldn’t be further from the truth, but Jeff knew it made him feel better so he accepted them all with a soft thanks and a smile. He didn’t think he knew how to say the words right now to make Kurt understand there was nothing to make up for.

Not able to spend all his time under the spray, no matter how much he might want to, he stepped out and went about drying off. He opened his closet to pull out a fresh uniform set and got dressed just in time to head to the cafeteria and get something to eat and a drink to warm him up before his next class started. Picking up his bag he rushed out the door and hissed when he tripped. The sound of something wet splashed and he looked down once he’d found his balance again to see another cup in front of his door, luckily not spilling completely all over the marble floor and his pants thanks to the plastic lid.

It was the same as the other one.

White with a brown cup holder and the Dalton logo and smelling strongly of hot chocolate… and the red lettering was there again.

Biting his lip he scooped the cup up and stepped back into his room holding it carefully with both hands, revelling in the residual warmth on his palms. It wasn’t as scalding hot as yesterday indicating it had been out there for a while. Sighing he thought of what to do, but no sudden inspiration came and the clock for his next class was ticking ever downwards so he decided to keep doing the same thing he did before.

He walked into his bathroom and tipped the cup over the sink, watching for the second time as the dense brown liquid seeped into the drain, leaving a murky trail behind it. He rinsed the cup and turned it in his hands nervously to look at the inscription, gasping and closing his eyes, wishing it was real and not a prank he was sure someone was playing on him. He rushed to his drawer and locked it inside, rushing towards his door again to put as much distance between him and it as possible.

The words chased him, however.
**Seeing you smile lights up my day.**

He rarely smiled.

Mostly when he was with Kurt, and lately the only time he was with Kurt was when they were in class so it had to be someone who took classes with them. Right? Maybe Brad decided to pick on him now that Sebastian made it clear Kurt was out of their reach?

Shivering, and not from the cold as he got outside, he thought of the nasty smirk the boy wore every minute of every day and all of a sudden the two cups he rinsed and saved in his drawer seemed stupid and mocking.

But he’d kept them anyway. He knew he would. Even if it was just to pretend his smile made someone's day.

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Jeff was in the furthest, quietest part of the library at a desk crammed into the corner next to a large window and armchair, staring at what he had created and finished for what seemed like hours.

That face. Those eyes. That smile.

It continued to haunt him; waking and unconscious thoughts, in flashes and fantasies and Jeff found himself obsessed with capturing some of that indescribable light the man had exuded on paper. As if, when he got it right he would be able to somehow have a piece of that warmth for himself.

It was a stupid hope. Jeff hardly ever felt real warmth anymore, everything felt fleeting and lukewarm, never reaching his centre, the cold located there always petering it out before it got all the way through.

"Jeff?" was called tentatively and the blonde lifted his head, coming half out of his daze as he recognised the voice immediately.

He stood from his desk just as Kurt and Blaine came around the corner. They made such a stunning couple, the contrast of them, light and dark, really something that drew the eye let alone the raw feeling that passed effortlessly between them like a live wire.

His best friend lit up at the sight of him and Jeff relished the reaction, feeling thawed. Kurt was the exception. He was always able to reach down farthest into him, not all the way, but close enough to heat him up pleasantly like no one else could.

"So are you ready?" he asked.

Jeff cocked his head a little and frowned. "For what?"

Kurt rolled his eyes, bouncing next to Blaine on his toes impatiently. The Dom took in his subs actions with an indulgent, besotted smile that had slowly started to stop shocking Jeff with how genuinely affectionate it was. No pretence or ulterior motive.

"The Warblers! We're meeting Blaine's friends remember?"

"Only if you still want to," Blaine put in, taking the pressure off. Kurt looked to his Dom then back
"We could always do it another day?" he suggested, blue eyes searching back and forth between his own. "We could go and get some coffee or hang out in your dorm or here-

"No, it's fine, I want to meet them," Jeff assured cutting him off and though he knew his tone was timid, it was partly true. He was tired of being scared of everyone and everything. If he knew a few of the unfamiliar faces around here he could at least start building towards feeling more secure in his surroundings. Besides, Blaine had assured him and Kurt that these Warblers were all open and friendly and likeminded as he was.

This seemed like a good and rational starting point if nothing else.

Kurt came forwards and linked fingers with Jeff securely like they always did and the blonde relaxed into the touch. "Good, because I'm not going if you're not," he declared nudging their shoulders companionably.

"What, I'm not enough now?" Blaine asked, mock offended with a considerable pout.

Kurt drew closer to Jeff a teasing glint in his cerulean eyes and a coy smile playing on his lips as he shrugged innocently.

Blaine playfully growled and reached out to drag Kurt back to him and Kurt hardly put up a struggle at all as he went willingly into Blaine's arms, a little giggle on his lips, forcing Jeff to come forwards a few steps as their hands were still joined.

Blaine framed Kurt's small waist with both his hands before leaning forwards and sealing their lips together softly and Jeff was transfixed. It wasn't anything heavy. No major PDA with tongues and moans and groping, but it still made Jeff uncomfortable somehow because it was none of those things.

It was chaste. Just soft lips fitting perfectly into soft lips like they were made for one another and Blaine didn't press Kurt for more, didn’t demand more than he was willing to give, just kept the interaction tender and sweet enough that it caused Jeff's heart to pang with longing to experience something that was cruelly denied him.

Every kiss he'd ever received was hard and forceful and hurt. There had been no affection underlying them, just selfish one sided desire that he had to endure. He swallowed hard against the horrible memories just as the moment broke and Jeff quickly looked away, face burning with shame. He shouldn't keep hoping and wishing for things that could never be his, he should just be happy for his friend.

Blaine cleared his throat. "So, shall we go?"

"Jeff?" Kurt asked gently, tugging a little at his hand and Jeff nodded his head still looking down at his shoes. He barely managed to grab his bag from the table before they were out the door, no one seeing the piece of paper that went fluttering to the ground, forgotten.

They must have looked a little ridiculous walking down the hall. Blaine holding Kurt's hand and Kurt holding Jeff's in a human chain, but honestly, the blonde didn't want to let go and if Kurt and Blaine were fine with it he wasn't about to let go anytime soon as they drew closer to the choir room. Too soon they were in front of a set of heavy doors and Blaine was turning to face them with a slight grimace on his face.

"Just don't believe everything they say, okay? And they may be a little overwhelming at first and
hardly think before they speak, but they're really good guys," he explained to them, gold flecked eyes wide; half in warning, half pleading for them to understand.

Kurt and Jeff frowned identically, nervous energy starting to pour off of them feeding off one another's. His attempt at smoothing potential problems over failed, Blaine sighed and pushed the doors open to reveal a cacophony of chattering voices that broke off at the sound of a fierce banging sound.

Jeff spotted a desk with three students behind it at the front of the room; one of which who had a gavel of all things in hand, sat in the middle.

"Silence!" the gavel wielding Asian boy, who was clearly a Dominant, ordered the room.

"Permission to come aboard," Blaine asked the room cheerfully and all gazes swung their way.

The silence that fell made both subs twitch under the weight of it and the heavy stares laser focused on their heads. Unconsciously Kurt drew closer to Blaine and Jeff went with him on instinct.

"Oh, I don't know," a dark skinned boy finally spoke up, humour lining his mouth and eyes as he regarded them with open curiosity. "You seem to be harbouring stowaways."

The tension shattered and the chattering was back full force, louder if that were possible, as people started rising from their seats. A smaller messy haired boy that had been the third behind the desk came practically skipping over to them and Jeff stepped even closer to Kurt so their sides were glued, squeezing his hand.

"Hi!" the boy beamed at them excitedly, swaying back and forth on the balls of his feet, and looking at Blaine expectantly.

"Thad, this is my sub, Kurt Hummel and his best friend, Jeffery Sterling," Blaine introduced them, but loud enough so the room could hear and he wouldn't have to say it over and over.

"I've been dying to meet you," Thad grinned at Kurt, shaking his hand quickly. "Blaine's been hiding you away."

"Yeah, we were beginning to think B had made you up," Trent teased gaining a few laughs and Blaine scowling over at him.

"It's great to meet you too, Jeff," Thad went on, smiling warmly at the blonde who didn't know rightly what to do or say.

He opened his mouth a few times, but aborted each attempt before his mouth could make a sound, blushing furiously, and just nodding at the other boy to show he had heard and appreciated the sentiment. He felt like an idiot and probably looked like one too, but there was just no way for him to fight it when they were all looking at him.

Reassuring fingers wrapped around his own in comfort and he smiled shyly at his best friend when a voice carried over the rest.

"Let them take a seat before you all bombard them," Wes spoke authoritatively, saving him from further embarrassment and they soon found themselves occupying a vacated black leather couch, Jeff sitting at one end and Blaine at the other with Kurt in the middle as further introductions were made.

Wes, David, Trent, Thad, Jon… the many names swirled inside Jeff's head and he noticed immediately that a lot of the guys in the room were Doms and he tried not to freak out at being
surrounded on all sides by them, but it was hard. His heart was already racing before entering the room, now it felt like he had a jackhammer in his chest as the scent of strong Dom pheromones filled his nose and head.

The last face they got to was one Kurt and Jeff recognised. "I won't bother wasting my breath or our time," was what the snarky sub said instead of his name with a slight smirk.

"Sebastian!" Blaine warned lowly, growling at the sub.

Sebastian glared at him for a moment before he rolled his eyes. "Don't get your panties in a twist Anderson, we've met already."

"We have the same English class," Kurt spoke up, meeting Sebastian's eyes and giving him a hitch of a smile that was a clear, 'thank you' he hoped came across. The airy wave and eyebrow raise he got back seemed to say that his was message was received, though he didn't know if it was appreciated. Sebastian was a complicated character to work out.

"Where's Nick?" Blaine asked, noticing the lack of a decidedly goofy presence in the room.

"He texted to say that Coach Beiste was holding an emergency practise," Wes grumbled, clearly not liking that football was getting in the way of his strict structure and plans. Blaine rolled his eyes mentally at his friend. He really needed to loosen the reins once in a while, but they loved him just the same. He wouldn't be Wes if he wasn't trying to micromanage like a boss while wielding his gavel like a super weapon.

"Dave said they've got a big game coming up next Friday," Sebastian informed them, shooting a hardly disguised glare at Blaine when he mentioned his Dom.

The sub still hadn't fully forgiven Blaine for his jealous rampage even though he had called Dave to apologise soon after he'd settled down and thought about his actions. But part of the reason the two of them were so perfect for each other was the fact that they were polar opposites, balancing each other out perfectly. So where Dave laughed the incident off and invited them for a drink to get to know each other better, Sebastian huffed and refused to talk to Blaine, continuing to glare and sneer and bitch at him any chance he got.

Wes banged his gavel once more to try and gain order, looking straight at Sebastian when he griped back, "We've got the Winter Formal and the annual Dalton charity night to prepare for. They're not exactly small events themselves."

"Chill man, Winter Formal's still just under a month away and the charity thing is after Christmas," Trent said and shrugged carelessly, picking at his cuffs.

"Trent," Blaine warned when he saw Wes' chest expand as he took a deep breath to start his rant, but it was too late.

"And what about competing this year?" Wes pressed, having none of this caviller attitude. They all just groaned as the Dom got started. "You all wanted to get somewhere this year, begged and pleaded and pouted and got on my last nerve until I said we would go and compete but that's not gonna happen if we half ass it like last."

"So, Kurt... Jeff... I think the most important question that we all want to know and you have to answer here is... can you sing?" David asked them; cutting Wes' rant off before it picked up speed with a grin, leaning back in his chair casually from behind the desk.

"No," was replied in perfectly sync, like it was choreographed and they glanced at one another
There were a few chuckles and Kurt saw Blaine duck his head to cover his own smile. The sub hit him lightly on the arm in reprimand, but only got the hand caught in a strong, familiar grip that he didn't fight. In fact, he welcomed that and the press of Blaine down his side as he faced down the daunting task of meeting Blaine's friends… his mostly Dominant friends.

Kurt looked around the room quickly wondering how Jeff was coping if it was so hard for him to relax.

They were an overwhelming group to say the least. In fact, Blaine's warning before entering was made up of severe understatements. But he wanted desperately to make a good impression. To make Blaine proud of him and make everyone see that Blaine was right in choosing him. However, admitting to his secret singing passion when he'd played it off to even Blaine just wasn't something he was comfortable doing, not even for approval.

"Me think they douth protest too much," Trent put in slyly and got a pen thrown at him from Thad.

"Leave them alone, if they don't sing then they don't," he said firmly with a small smile shot at them that Kurt returned, relieved and grateful when he saw Jeff's shoulders drop just an inch in relief.

"And you'd know all about tone deaf other half's," Sebastian jabbed with a well-worn smirk as he looked up from his phone, steering the attention away from the subs skilfully while still managing to look bored to death. There was a murmur of horrified agreement that made Thad scowl like a kicked puppy and go a little pink in the face.

"Leave him alone, he's not that bad!" he said, defending his Dom but knowing it was futile because Ryan was so bad he made people's ears bleed. The worst and most adorable part being the fact that he actually loved music and he loved to sing.

"Oh the wonders of love never cease to amaze me." David fake swooned all over Wes gaining an unimpressed shove for his troubles.

"Didn't you hear?" Trent grinned salaciously. "Love is deaf now, not blind."

This time it was a book that went sailing into his chest causing him to double over with an 'oof' as all of the air was knocked clean out of him.

"Stop throwing shit at me!" he gritted over the ripple of snickers erupting across the room.

"I'll stop throwing things when you quit being a douchebag," Thad huffed adorably.

"That'll be the day," Wes lamented rubbing at his forehead tiredly as he watched his show choir of nearly grown up men behave like a bunch of pre-schoolers on a sugar high.

"Hey," Jon suddenly interrupted loudly looking straight at Jeff and his gaze was almost rudely searching. "Sterling, right? Your father used to own the Sterling Accountancy firm before it went under?"

The blonde stiffened like a board next to Kurt and he shuffled closer to him in support as his best friend dropped his eyes to the floor as more than a few curious and enlightened ones came to rest on him.

"Yes," was acknowledged quietly, breathily, as if he was half expecting to be thrown out at any moment if he admitted to that.
"What the hell happened that you ended up at McKinley!?" Jon burst out and stunned shock quieted the room like a thick blanket as both subs flinched at the inflection.

Awkwardness settled over them, choking Jeff to the point where he had to dig the nails on his free hand into his palm to remind himself to breathe, this wasn’t a nightmare, when a usually bored voice drawled again, this time sounding anything but, "Jesus, Jon someone really ought to buy you a muzzle to keep you from embarrassing yourself with your evident lack of manners!"

It was snapped at him, the subs eyes flashing as they darted between the embarrassed Dom and the scared trembling sub who had all but fled the room for how little space he was now trying to take up to avoid further scrutiny.

The Dom frowned. "Wha- hey, no, I just-"

"Jon," Blaine growled meaningfully, dominance pouring off of him as he met and held his gaze strongly. "Drop it."

The younger Dom slammed his mouth closed, face colouring slightly. Unfortunately the damage was done and Kurt felt frustrated anger burning in his stomach on behalf of his friend more than himself. After all, the main insult had been dealt his way and he didn’t deserve this. This was supposed to be a place for Jeff to escape all that.

"If anyone else has any more questions like that they might as well forget them. We're not answering them and you don't have the right to expect us to," Kurt found himself saying to the room, meeting gazes fiercely, fearlessly, not caring if he embarrassed his Dom or himself, the only thing on his mind being his best friend and the need to protect him.

There was another tense silence after his words before David broke it yet again, grinning at Kurt. "I like him. I may just steal him."

And with just that one line the tension was cracked and the air floated again making breathing easier.

Blaine growled, a low and pleasant rumble in his chest that Kurt felt vibrate into him right down to his toes. "You can try, Thompson."

"Please, Kurt knows a finer specimen when he sees one." David smirked, waggling his eyebrows suggestively as he not so subtly flexed his muscles.

It was all very ridiculous and Kurt couldn't help it… he burst out laughing.

He tried to smother the sound with the back of his hand, but it was next to impossible and pretty soon a few more people were joining in as David spluttered indignantly at the slight to his manly prowess. Kurt even caught Jeff smothering a ghost of a smile as he looked down at his lap and Kurt wished, for a millionth time, that he would just laugh again.

Next to him Blaine was preening and he leant into Kurt and laid several tender butterfly kisses over his temple and ear in reward. "Good boy."

Kurt shivered at the attention and praise, feeling that familiar languid, liquid warmth humming through him as he arched his neck subtly for more. He was almost so lost in the sensation of his Dom around him that he barely noticed when someone else came closer.

Thad decided to come bounding over to them again and perched himself on the arm of the sofa closest to Jeff, his small frame easily fitting and balancing there with no problems.
"So how are you two liking Dalton? Joined any clubs yet?" he asked with a huge smile and Kurt smiled back easily while Jeff tried to, he really did his best, but a small lift of his lips was the most he could offer.

"It's nice," Jeff answered softly, looking to Kurt for reassurance and getting a bright smile that bolstered him somewhat. Thad was a sub. He could talk to him without fear crippling him. "But no, no clubs."

"Aw, shame. There's some really great one's! I'm in the math club and the drama club… and the Warblers of course," Thad rattled off.

That pricked Kurt's interest. "Drama club?"

Thad nodded happily, eyes sparking. "We're doing Rock of Ages as this year's musical. Interested?"

"Uh, I've never seen it… I was just wondering if they had a costume department. There was nothing on the boards when we checked the other day. What I was really after was a fashion design club but there wasn't one listed up there."

It was out before Kurt could check himself.

Thad cocked his head. "Our teacher, Mr Kent, usually sorts out the costumes. But that's as far as this school goes for designing I'm afraid… hey, maybe you could start one!"

Kurt flushed a little. "Uh no, it was a stupid thought—"

"I know!" Thad cut him off excitedly. "I'll ask Wes to talk to his dad about it, ooo, and maybe we can design flyers and put up signs and—"

"You really don't have to, I mean… please don't?" Kurt tried to say as politely as possible, posing it as a question in the most awkward way imaginable. He was not comfortable at all with the idea of running his own club, he had barely convinced himself that he could join one! But at the same time, Thad was being so nice, he didn’t want to offend him out of turn either.

Thad pouted a little, wind taken out of his sails, but smiled anyway. "Well… if you change your mind, I could come up with a killer PowerPoint presentation and recruitment scheme… so if you ever decide you want to…"

““I know the exact person to come to,” Kurt filled in with a shy, relieved smile. “Thank you.”"

"What are friends for?" Thad assumed cheekily then prodded Jeff in the shoulder gently. "That means you too, buddy."

"Alright, I think we have spent enough time talking and Kurt, Jeff, as much as we're all happy to meet you it's time for us to practice," Wes said and Kurt and Jeff snapped their eyes at him not really knowing what that meant.

Should they leave?

"C'mon, Wes, they can watch," Blaine whined, but the Asian boy just fixed him with a glare.

"Our set lists are now, and have always been, secret until the performance. They shall remain that way," he said regally and Thad huffed.

"Nobody says shall anymore, Wes. Not even the drama club."
"I will have you know..." Wes puffed out to discuss this newest insult to his vocabulary, but Kurt had heard so much from Blaine about all of the boys and if he remembered correctly he said they were like Gremlins, as in they had rules you had to obey to prevent them from going crazy.

Never let Thad bring a math workbook with him to coffee shops. Never let David near a vending machine when he's sick. Never let Trent watch a scary movie before bedtime. And the most important one: If you EVER see Wes puff his chest out, breathing in to start talking, say something to cut him off because if he gets going, you'll grow old and he still won't be done.

"That's okay. You guys get some work done and Jeff and I will hang in his room until you're done," he said with a soft smile directed at his Dom. "Pick me up after practice?"

"Absolutely." Blaine smiled and pecked him on the cheek, eliciting a huge 'awwww' from his friends as Kurt led Jeff out of the room, chuckling at their craziness.

Jeff was ashamed to say that after the second cup, though he knew it was stupid and foolish and would probably only lead to more hurt than if he cut it out now… he actually looked forwards to the beginning of his day and the notes left at his door.

More and more, he found himself thinking about the cups, looking around at unknown faces, somewhat familiar ones, trying to get an inkling of who the mysterious sender may be. It was half burning curiosity and half humiliating paranoia that had him constantly on the edge of his seat, head turning, eyes searching. Kurt was getting worried about him he knew, but he couldn't help himself and he couldn't tell his best friend just yet. This felt too raw still. He knew he'd eventually spill; he always did and felt the better for it as Kurt was always a soothing, comforting presence with his best interests at heart, but for right now Jeff was holding this close to his chest.

It had to be a joke.

He knew this, but his traitorous heart wanted so badly to believe that just for a minute someone actually thought those things about him. Saw past all the ruined and jagged pieces that made him up and thought he was beautiful anyway. That the rare tilting upwards of his lips really did make someone's day brighter.

Foolish. Foolish, foolish, foolish.

But still… he was loathe to part with that single bright, searing moment, or the flutter in his stomach when he first read the words before his rational mind kicked in and doused the feeling. The sub in him was starved for attention and comfort, longed for admiration and love and these sweet little nothings fed into that dark abyss to make it just a little smaller every time.

The third day rolled around and Jeff forced himself not to rush out of bed and head straight to the door.

There was an unspoken routine that was stuck too. Jeff would start to get ready for his day and wait for that tell-tale knock on his door that would set his heart pounding in his chest like a drum. He would hesitate only for a moment before walking to the door and pulling it open. No one would be there to greet him of course, but he'd look down and there it would be, sitting innocently, the stupid thing having the power to make the sub lose his mind. He would have to stop himself from snapping it up greedily straight away, but eventually he'd bend down and turn the cup in shaky hands so he
could read the scrawled writing.

I don't care if we talk about absolutely nothing... I just want to talk to you.

Jeff swallowed as his stomach took a familiar swoop and his eyes darted up and around like the person was going to jump out and reveal themselves finally. It stayed silent and still around him like always and there was an actual twinge of disappointment that hit him.

"So why don't you?" he murmured to himself before he could stop the silly thought from spilling from his lips. He shook his head in reprimand. No, it was better that they didn't meet, Jeff couldn't handle more pain… he just couldn't.

He walked back inside and finished the routine. He tipped the drink away, washed the cup and stored it with the rest trying to put them out of his mind.

He knew it was never that easy.

"Nick! ... You know you can't avoid me forever, idiot."

The younger Dom sighed and halted from his speedy retreat around a corner. It kinda sucked that his best friend knew his habits… and his class schedule so well.

He turned around and plastered his best grin on. "B! Didn't see you there, buddy!"

Blaine gave him a flat look and crossed his arms over his chest as soon as he closed the distance between them. "Really? Not even when you used some poor kid in your game of hide and seek when you saw me walking towards you?"

Nick sheepishly rubbed at his neck. "I fell?"

"You're full of shit," Blaine corrected for him.

Nick scoffed, but it was weak. He just felt so tired and antsy lately, like he didn't know whether he was coming or going anymore and it was getting increasingly harder to hide. That's why he had been dodging his friends, mainly Blaine, because the asshole knew just how to read him straight off the bat.

"I've been sending notes and hot chocolate to the sub I want to claim and he doesn't know it's me," he blurted out because they both knew this conversation was heading there and Nick just decided to skip the middle man. Besides, this uncertainty of not knowing if this idea was even working or welcome was killing him slowly. He seemed no closer now than he was at the start of the week.

"Okay," Blaine said slowly and his brows were furrowing as he took in the information Nick had bombarded him with.

"Yeah," Nick agreed lamely, looking down at the polished floor pensively as they stood in relative silence.

"This is the guy I said you should try and be friends with first?" Nick nodded and there was another small silence. "So hot chocolate and notes, huh?"
"He likes it," Nick said defensively, snapping his head back up. "And they're romantic Mr. Hearts and Flowers.

Blaine held his hands up. "I'm not judging, I'm just wondering why you didn't just talk to him?"

"It's complicated," he hedged.

"I've got time."

Nick met Blaine earnest expression and sighed gustily before leaning against the wall throwing his bag down haphazardly at his feet. "He used to be in a bond and I think… no I know, it was bad."

"So you don't want to come on too strong just in case you scare him?" Blaine reasoned out for himself.

"Exactly! I don't want him to reject me before he even knows me because that would just all out suck because he's so amazing, there's no one like him! So I thought this way I could do something nice for him and he could see that he was admired… I don't know, it sounded like a good idea at the time," Nick grumbled at the end kicking at his bag childishly.

"No, I get what you're trying to do. It's very...Nick." He grinned.

Nick rolled his eyes but his mouth tagged up at one corner briefly. "I just didn't factor in the fact that I wouldn't really know how he's taking it."

"What do you mean?"

"Well I pick up the hot chocolate and write the note on the cup before leaving it at his door. But I can't just stick around because that would destroy the whole purpose of doing it!"

"But you don't know if he even likes it?"

"No! And it's driving me insane. I mean, am I just wasting my time here, man? I can't get him out of my head and I feel like I've made no progress at all," Nick vented sadly.

Blaine clasped his shoulder companionably. "Maybe you should consider actually talking to him to find out?"

"Didn't you just listen-"

"I know what you said and its valid, if he did have a bad bond then he mostly wouldn't like some Dom being all over him," he agreed, mind flashing to Jeff before he pushed it away. "But you've been doing this for a few days now, right?"

Nick nodded.

"So he's had a few days to get used to it and you don't have to claim him right there on the spot-"

"You'd know all about that trigger finger."

Blaine glared at him but continued anyways. "Just lay it out for him. Say that you like him and you'd like a chance to get to know him, no strings attached, that you want to go at his pace."

"And you think that'd work?" Nick asked dubiously.

"Well what have you got to lose? The only way is up from where you are right now, man. Maybe
getting his name would have been a better place to start?" he teased, gold eyes lighting up.

Nick punched him in the arm. "Fuck you."

But he felt better about the situation. He only had to decide whether or not to take the advice, but Blaine was right, he really only had up or dashed dreams left as options.

He'd take a few days to think it over and in the meantime he'd continue to send the notes.

An almost identical knock startled Jeff the next day as well.

It was a bad morning on top of a worse night and he was exhaustedly checking his bag to see if he had everything he would need for the day before Kurt and Blaine came to pick him up when three short, sharp raps broke the reverent silence lingering in the air.

*I just want to be left alone.*

Fingers shaking around the clasp of his bag he strode across the room, a single thought on his mind: to find out who was messing around with him. Steady his breath he pulled the knob and with a surge of bravery threw the heavy wood wide open, stepping outside and glancing around.

He wasn't surprised that nobody was there.

The hallways around him were spookily empty and he felt the need to punch the wall behind him as the frustration rose and made him tremble. He didn't find it amusing, it wasn't funny or cute or entertaining, it was cruel and spiteful and petty. But the monster inside him roared and he couldn't fight it. Winning against his logic and rationalization, curiosity sprung alive and made him turn back towards the door and bend down to take the white and blue cup, steam hitting his face and the smell of chocolate dizzying him.

Fearing what he would find this time, he turned the cup around and found the blazing red inscription exactly where he found the other three; right above the Dalton crest on the cup.

*Your eyes are magical.*

He gasped, the cup shaking within his clutch and the liquid splashing on the inside as he walked hastily back into his room before someone could see it. Before he could lose all semblance of normality he sat down, setting the cup in front of him on the table and frowning at the compliment.

There was another option he hadn't considered here.

Maybe the cups and the hot chocolate and the sweet little notes were for someone worthy of them. Maybe there was a person, somewhere near him that was beautiful, with an angelic voice and a sweet smile and magical eyes like the notes said. And maybe that perfect someone was waiting for a sign from someone, but it never came because it ended up in front of the wrong door.

Throwing the beverage for the last time he saved the cup again, sad but feeling easier now knowing that soon they would find their right owner.

He went through the motions of his day on autopilot waiting for the gigantic school to drift to sleep
before pulling the small note he’d penned earlier out of his pocket and placing it in front of his door, the stack of cups with the notes on top of it.

He fell asleep again feeling that sad kind of happiness for whoever would get the sweet guy writing them; someone that was better and more deserving of them than him.

By now he could set his clock by the sound of those sharp, but careful raps on his door.

Every morning at seven; a knock, a rustle and then silence.

That morning wouldn't have been different and the knock wouldn't have startled him had it not been for the note he had left clearing the confusion. He had expected that to be enough of an explanation for the romantic whose efforts had gotten mixed up.

Deciding to ignore the knock Jeff continued getting ready. They'd realize the confusion eventually and maybe they didn't see the cups and note before they rapped on the door? Nodding his head surely to himself he finished buttoning his shirt when another knock, this time louder and more determined echoed through his room and he frowned, fingers pausing on the last button, wondering what could be so important to the mysterious stranger with the cups.

He gave the cups back, he explained what happened, he didn't think he'd done something wrong unless… unless he should have done it the first day and then the person would have made things right with their intended sooner.

And now they were angry.

Jeff flinched and stepped back from the wood as the third set of knocks broke the silence and he realized there was nothing he could do to avoid the anger and the chastisement. They'd probably still be outside his door waiting by the time he was finished getting ready and even if he avoided it today, the person knew where his room was so he couldn't avoid it forever.

He just wasn't that lucky.

Trembling he walked to the door, ready to take whatever came at him as he grasped the knob and pulled the door towards him with hands shaking and eyes downcast. The chill air from the hallway rushed in at him first, bringing the gentle smell of cologne and chocolate into his face.

"Wow," a voice breathed in, what seemed to be, shock and it caused Jeff to lift his eyes slowly, carefully, trailing over a vaguely familiar muscled body, large hands clutching all of the cups and his now crumpled note along with a fresh cup of hot chocolate, a sunshiny smile he would be able to recognize anywhere that made his insides go funny and finally, warm, sparkling eyes looking directly at him with an unfamiliar expression.

Him.

It was him and his first reaction was to grip the doorframe tighter, pulling the door towards him as if it could shield him from the pain in his heart as everything in him broke when he realized that the boy he had been drawing and dreaming off was trying to win someone else with a gesture so incredibly sweet it made his chest tight with want.
His second thought was to scold himself mentally because he had no rights to be hurt by that. He didn't belong to the beautiful Dom in front of him, he had no claim on him or his attentions and the sub that did deserved to know about his romantic gesture without Jeff hogging his gifts as a misguided attempt to have something he could only dream of.

He had no right.

"I... I'm sorry I kept the c-cups... I... I realized they were meant for someone else too late and then I g-gave them back, I'm sorry," he whispered, barely audible, but sincere.

He was sorry.

For the cups and so much more that it was hard to hold it all inside every day and keep going sometimes. He was sorry for being a bad sub, for not knowing how to please anyone, for not being talented enough or pretty enough or smart enough. He was sorry for all of those things, but he couldn't... he couldn't change them and that was what really pained him.

And because of that he could never deserve something like what this unnamed other sub would get.

"Why are you apologizing?" the soft voice broke through the dome his panic spread around him and he looked up, confused with the fact that the Dom was still smiling. He wasn't angry at all.

"I... um... what?" he asked, not really knowing what was going on, still trying to get a handle on what this Dom's mere presence was doing to him. His head was a mess, his rusty submissive instincts were suddenly going haywire and his nerves were shot. It was turning him inside out.

"I don't know why you feel like you need to apologize, or, for that matter, why you returned the cups? And the note you left me? They were... the chocolate and the notes...they were for you," the Dom said and Jeff felt the ground beneath him shaking.

This was unfamiliar territory and he didn't know how to deal.

For him?

The cups were for him... but... how... why? "I don't... I don't understand?" he breathed finally and the Dom's eyes softened in a gentle, warm glow that made Jeff captivated by them once again as the older boy spoke.

"Okay, um... it seems like this worked better in my head than in reality." The boy chuckled and Jeff couldn't help but tilt his lips upwards a bit at the sheer infectiousness in that smooth, rich laugh as their eyes caught and held for a breath-taking moment. "There's that smile that makes me dizzy."

Jeff choked on air as the words settled. Not on a note anymore, no, in actual words, from that mouth. His stomach turned over horribly and he stumbled backwards, heart beating fast as he realized where this was going.

He came to mock him in person. There was no other plausible explanation in his warped mind.

"This isn't funny," he said on an exhale, agony making him disregard his fears as he took another small step backwards, his firm hold on the door, which was still partly obscuring his body, put to good use as he tried to close it.

"What?" the Dom exclaimed. "No, please, please don't go. Look I admit this may not have been the brightest idea but it was the only way I knew how to-" he started hastily but stopped when Jeff shook his head, eyes filling with tears and lip trembling.
Nick had no idea what was happening.

All he could see was his beautiful boy backing away, scared with tears in his eyes that made Nick's heart hurt and obviously misled by his stupid plan that was supposed to make him feel good, not frighten him further. His own hands, filled with his gifts, were shaking as the blonde tripped trying to get away from him, all the while spitting words that cut to the core of the Dom.

"How to what? M-mock me... laugh at me... humiliate me...?" the blonde's voice cracked over the last word, but every word felt like a stab in the gut to Nick and he couldn't take it anymore, couldn't bear to even think about doing something like that to someone.

He had to make him see.

"How to tell you I'm crazy about you!" Nick barely avoided shouting it at him as the desperation and feeling crashed over him. The silence that fell over them in the wake of his bold statement felt heavy on his shoulders as the beautiful blonde stared at him, jaw dropping and eyes wide.

"W-what?" he gasped and Nick closed his eyes against that timid voice, trying to keep himself in check as he transferred everything in his hands to one so he could run a palm over his face and through his hair harshly.

"God, this went so much better in my dreams. Okay... I have a proposition for you," he broached carefully and the blonde said nothing, tilting his head to the side cutely, but his deep brown eyes were wary and discerning from his spot still hiding behind his door.

"Would you consider giving me a chance to talk to you and explain what's going on here with... me and um... this," he said lifting the cups up and begging with his eyes.

He watched the shadows flit across the blonde's face as he stared at him in wonder and with that same ever present timidity that broke his heart.

"M-maybe... I don't know," the sub stuttered out, shaking his head to himself like he wasn't even sure of his own answers.

"Look, please... I'm asking for ten minutes. And we can do it here on your doorstep if you want. Just... please... let me explain at least and then you never have to talk to me again," he offered, begging with his soul not to let that happen.

The sub stared at him for long, tense filled moments and Nick tried to keep himself as open as he could to that scrutiny, so the blonde could hopefully find what he needed in his face. "Okay, I... I guess you can... um... come in," he said, wide eyed, as if his own words surprised him. But still he stepped aside to let him in, pulling the door with him.

"We don't have to," Nick said hastily, not wanting the sub to be uncomfortable or seem like he was invading. "We can stay outside of your private space... the last thing I want to do is to make you uncomfortable... and maybe I should have done this first, but..." He smiled as he extended his right hand. "I'm Nick. Nick Duval."

The blonde looked at his hand then back up to his face then down again for a few moments before he hesitantly reached out and barely gripped it in order to coordinate the barest of shakes.

"Jeff Sterling," he revealed shyly as their skin touched and it was more he allowed Nick to wrap fingers around his own than truly meeting palm to palm, before he was snatching them back to his chest again as if burned by touch alone. And though that made Nick want to punch the Dom who had incited that kind of response in him, because the sheer implications made his blood boil, the feel
of Jeff's smooth as silk skin and the pure zing of connection between them for that split second of contact was enough to have his heart soaring and his head in the clouds for days because he finally knew this angel's name.

Though he could have sworn he'd heard it somewhere before...

Jeff made sure there was a good few paces separating them after that and that the door stayed open before he motioned for Nick to start, arms crawling around his own slight frame to cradle himself as his body hunched in a little and shifted with nerves.

Nick wanted nothing more than to close the space between them and soothe him; replace Jeff's arms with his because he just knew they'd fit perfectly and kiss and pet away all the tension he was feeling. In fact, it was more than mere want; it was like a fierce drive inside him that he fought hard against. There was no way Jeff would be okay with that yet and so he sucked in a deep breath and tried to exude as much calm as he could in the pheromones he knew were pumping out in overdrive at being in this sub's presence before he started.

"Okay, the first thing I want to get completely clear is that the hot chocolate and notes were completely one hundred percent for you and completely one hundred percent not in any way shape or form a joke," he said slowly and concisely just to make sure there were no more misunderstandings. He couldn't stand the look of misery and upset on this beautiful blonde's face, it was made for smiling and happiness, he just knew it.

"But why would you want to send them to me?" Jeff asked quietly, his brow furrowing under the platinum sweep of his fringe as he stared at him dubiously, still not buying it.

Nick swallowed and figured that being completely straight with it and honest was probably the best way to go about it. "Uhh, okay." He laughed mirthlessly and rubbed at his jaw in agitation as he tried to arrange the words in his head into something coherent. "I…" He glanced up into that beautiful face and dredged up the courage from somewhere.

"I like you." Nick repeated like the words were foreign on his tongue.

"Like me," Jeff repeated like the words were foreign on his tongue.

"Yes, really, really, really like you, Jeff," Nick stressed, loving the way the blonde's name rolled off his tongue and because Jeff deserved to know he was appreciated and admired even if he was making an idiot out of himself.

"You don't even know me," he said, still hushed, like if he raised his voice something bad would happen. His hands were shaking and he looked dizzy and all these little details were only confirming theories he wished like hell weren't true.

He swallowed and tried to concentrate on the here and now. "I would love the chance to get to know you. It's why I was sending you all those stupid notes that backfired so spectacularly-"

"They weren't stupid… but why are you doing this? I just… I just can't…understand…" Jeff cut him off softly and Nick heart stuttered in his chest and involuntarily he stepped forwards.

Brown eyes widened and he held a warding hand out, shaking his head as if pleading him to stop. Nick complied immediately feeling awful for having shaken him so much.

"Like I said… I like you. I saw you in the hallway a couple weeks back and I just couldn't keep my eyes off of you. You were… you were so sweet standing there all confused and I just… I just kind of gave in and allowed you to become the only thing I can think of. Thus… the cups…" He chuckled at his own awkwardness and looked at the sub who had backed away even more during his
monologue, shaking his head and clutching a hand against his chest, eyes brimming with unshed tears.

"I… I'm not worth this," Jeff finally said, eyes watering even more; long lashes sparkling like diamonds as they caught the moisture and Nick's heart broke at the sight of him, so beautiful, magical… but so unaware of it, so convinced he was worthless.

God… he wanted to kill that other Dom! He hadn't felt anger like this ever in his life, his dominant side screaming for retribution against the sub it had already claimed as its own, words or no. But then it was also crying out for him to take care of Jeff, to take the trembling blonde home with him and shower him in love and care and affection so that he never felt worthless or unworthy ever again.

"You are… you are worth it, angel. Please believe me. Whatever they told you was wrong," he stressed fiercely, the soft nickname slipping through without his control, unable to keep to his spot as he advanced towards the trembling boy he so desperately wanted to heal. There was something else driving him rather than his rational mind now.

Jeff gasped at the mention of his previous Dom and the decrease in space and the shaking increased.

"Please don't touch me…" he said as he lifted his hands and stepped back to put more distance between himself and this Dom who just had to come here and take away the semblance of peace he had managed to build for himself. "I just... I just want to be alone. I'm not bothering anyone and I'm not causing trouble… so just… please…" he begged and some of the tears escaped now to trace paths of misery down his face. "...Please stop."

It was like someone had driven a stake right through Nick's heart and he halted, unable to catch a proper breath.

"Jeff."

"I don't want a Dom. I don't want a-anyone, okay? I j-just want to be by myself," Jeff told him, voice breaking on the last word, looking down at the floor as more tears dripped to the carpet under their feet.

"Please don't cry," Nick begged, voice raw. "I'll give you your space, just please don't cry. You… you're too precious to be sad."

"Don't say stuff like that to me," he gasped through the tears.

"I only tell the truth. You might not see it now, or believe it… but… you mean more to me than you'll ever know. You're worth more than you could possibly understand. Just… remember that."

Jeff didn't say anything, but Nick knew that this was it. His defining moment and it had all ended in tears. Stunned with the realization of how bad it hurt he backed towards the door and with one last look at the beautiful, broken angel standing there in the room, he shut the door.

Who would have thought the trip from Jeff's room to the library lasted so long, Nick thought as he forced himself to place one foot in front of the other and just keep moving. He knew that if he stopped his body would shut down on him and he would never be able to make it work again.
Jeff's soft voice was like a cure to his lonely soul, his beautiful eyes making his heart sting with the sadness inside of them and those perfect, pretty lips made to be kissed by him showed nothing but pain. God, how he had longed to take him in his arms and make him whole again, repaint the ugliness on his neck and make it shine again, make it show that he was loved, and worshiped and cherished.

Because that was all Nick would ever do to him... love him.

But he wasn't ready and there was nothing he could do but respect that. He didn't want to belong. He didn't want to be claimed and Nick couldn't blame him. With what he had to have been through to get that mark he couldn't insist, he couldn't demand to be given a chance because all he wanted was for him to be happy, even if that meant leaving him alone like he had asked.

'Please, I just...I just want to be alone...'

It cut him to the core.

The pain, the unbarring vulnerability, the fear he saw whenever Nick tried to come closer, so much of his shine buried beneath the darkness others had inflicted upon him. It didn't make him less beautiful in Nick's eyes... god, nothing ever could when he was stood out so brightly; so pure, so untouched in every way that counted.

And no, he didn't count the forcefulness and the ugliness of the touches laid upon his body. He didn't count the scars he knew marred his soul and maybe his skin, and he didn't count the memories that made him tremble and shy away from love. The only thing that counted was if he was ever touched with nothing but adoration and admiration. If he was ever satisfied and held and protected from every single bad thing. And Nick knew he wasn't... that's what made him pure in his eyes.

'I'm not worth this...'

He was, but he would never let Nick show him that, no matter how much he wished for it.

Longing heartthrobbing with pain he entered the library, knowing that he had come there to find some peace and silence and comfort. Passing by a couple of freshmen stressing over a math exam he went all the way to the most secluded area, behind the books on archaic bond rituals and rules that nobody ever checked out anymore and found his favourite spot; a loveseat under a bright window where nobody could see him break.

He sank into the pillows and leaned his elbows against his knees, lowering his head into his palms and digging the heels of them into his eyes to try and stop the tears from spilling. It would do him no good to show so much weakness in front of the others and he knew it, but there was no way he could help himself when everything inside of him screamed with hurt.

He brushed his fingers through his hair and shook his head to clear it a bit so he could figure out what to do next and how to get over the beautiful blonde that would never belong to him the way he wanted to.

Allowing his heart to mourn he lowered his eyes down, frowning when a white flash caught his attention from underneath the loveseat. The crumpled corner of a sheet paper that someone must have forgotten in their haste to leave the huge library.

He reached down and took the paper with shaking hands, breath stuttering at the sight of the signature at the back of it on the clear side of the sheet.

Jeffrey Sterling.
Jeff.

His angel.

Rushing like his life depended on it he turned the paper and felt the world around him gain color again; his mind clearing and his heart jumping with an onslaught of hope that threatened to drown him.

As he raked eyes over the drawing greedily he knew it wasn't over yet; it was only just beginning and if it took him years then he would spend years winning him over, showing him what it meant to be someone's for real, keeping him safe from everything and loving him so much he would never feel unworthy again. Because there was no way someone would make something like what he was holding now for someone they felt nothing for, someone they never thought of. Because there was care, and tenderness and love etched into every stroke made on this paper.

Because it was his face staring back at him.
After the initial bumpy start, Kurt could safely say that he had taken to kissing like a fish to water. It was quickly becoming one of his favorite ways to pass the time. If not *the* favorite.

"Kurt?" Blaine mumbled against his lips trying to break away.

The sub simply hummed back in dazed disinterest, unable to fixate on anything but the feel of Blaine's hands, body and wonderful, wonderful mouth. He arched his neck up in a silent plea for more and Blaine groaned before sealing their mouths again, tongue peeking out to swipe fast and hot against the seam of his lips. Kurt practically purred, lighting up like a flare at the touch of soothing tongue on kiss swollen skin instead of freaking out, tightening his fingers in Blaine's loose curls that were still slightly damp from the shower he took after school. He loved making out with Blaine; the feelings it brought with it still foreign and shocking to his senses, but it was an addicting and fascinating kind of different that Kurt found quickly that he forever wanted more of.

He squirmed happily under Blaine's weight, toes curling into the soft comforter of their bed on the leg that was propped up to cradle the Dom's hip on his right side. Blaine lost a breathe at the action; a hot gush of sweet air into Kurt's mouth as his hand went automatically to the subs thigh to caress and squeeze and knead into the skin under the thin pair of leggings Kurt was wearing, his touch burning through them like a brand and staking ownership.

"Remember when I said…" Blaine started again only to trail off himself as his attention diverted to mouthing down to side of Kurt's face to the hinge of his jaw and lower still, so he could suck marks into the pale perfect taunt of skin that was Kurt's neck. "That we needed to... hmm…." He licked and mouthed over Kurt's Adam's apple and Kurt gasped, baring his neck completely in total submission. Blaine growled low and deep in his chest in approval at the action, nipping swiftly at his chin before removing his hand from the subs leg to run it gently over every inch of skin bared.

"My good boy," he murmured and Kurt felt the words trickle into him like liquid gold, making him whimper a little. He bit his lip at the pulse it sent to his crotch, trying his hardest to fight against the
obscene urge to grind up into the friction he knew Blaine's body would provide him.

Blaine's cell began to ring in that moment, however, taking the choice away.

The Dom detached his lips from where they were currently sucking an award worthy hickey onto Kurt's collarbone, deep and red and blooming against creamy white in the shape of his mouth and god if that didn't do things to him. Ignoring the incessant ringing he swiped his tongue over his accomplishment one last time, the hiss and jolt Kurt gave making his cock beg and plead with him for just a little attention. He pulled back, looking down on his beautiful boy. Mussed and flushed through prettily, eyelashes half-mast over stormy greys and blues, parted mouth which was red and bee stung drawing in the quick breaths that were heaving Kurt's chest up and down. He was decadent perfection.

The phone cut off and a blanket of silence fell over them, not oppressive, but instead comforting.

Kurt's eyes searched his face for a moment as he came back down to earth, expression almost awed and Blaine felt a fierce sting in his chest, a mixture of happiness, love and triumph at having put it there. At having made Kurt feel loved and protected enough to allow himself to be this vulnerable and open to him with what he felt, even if he hadn't uttered a word of it. It was there plain to see and Blaine felt privileged to be allowed that glimpse into Kurt's heart, ecstatic to know that he occupied a part of it however big or small.

"Hi," Kurt murmured to him shyly after a while, biting is lip and looking up at him through his lashes coyly. His fingers, which were still rooted deep in his curls, shifted around creating pleasant tugs and pulls on his scalp.

Blaine was constantly being struck with the fact that Kurt was the loveliest, most adorable sub he'd ever laid eyes on. Everything about him was amazing; his cute little giggles, the sass he ended up showing more and more every day, the cutting sense of humor, the class he exuded naturally, the beauty he didn't even know he possessed. He didn't know how it was possible that he got so lucky as to find the perfect fit for him, his other half, but he was not taking him for granted, ever.

He bent down and rubbed their noses together, making Kurt let out a breathless giggle. "Hi," he replied softly.

His iPhone started kicking up a fuss again and Blaine sighed forlornly before drawing back from Kurt to reach over and grab it off the bedside table, swiping his thumb over the screen once he saw who was calling.

"What do you want, Duval? I'm kind of in the middle of something," he greeted matter-of-factly and grinned slyly at Kurt who blushed and stuck his tongue out at him for the implication. Blaine was oh so tempted to throw the phone and suck that slick exposed muscle into his mouth and pick right back up where they left off-

"Blaine, I…" he heard the crack of his best friends voice over the line, breaking him swiftly from that train of thought with the sheer lost tone of it. One Blaine had never heard from his self-assured friend before.

"What's wrong, Nick?" he asked urgently, pulling back from Kurt completely to sit up on the edge of the bed properly, legs over the side and ready to bolt into action if necessary.

"Can I come over? I just... I need to talk to someone and I'm all over the place right now, B-"

"Hey, you know you're welcome here idiot, you don't even have to ask," he said firmly, cutting in.
"Yeah… yeah, I know. I just… thanks." There was a burst of static that told him Nick had just sighed heavily. "I'll see you in a few."

The line cut off and Blaine pulled it away from his ear, frowning heavily as his mind worked overtime. This had to be about his friends ‘mystery sub’. It had to be. Nothing could have turned his best friend as inside out as that submissive seemed to have in the short time Nick knew he existed.

"Sir?" Kurt asked tentatively, scooting up behind him and wrapping an arm around Blaine's shoulder, his chin hooking over the left. "Is everything okay?"

The Dom leaned back into the embrace and raised his free hand to smooth over the arm holding him, back and forth in a hypnotic motion from elbow to wrist. "Nick's coming round. He seemed upset," he revealed, still frowning worriedly. He had a bad feeling about this.

"Do you know why?"

Blaine turned and nuzzled their heads together, his forehead resting against Kurt's temple. "There's a sub he spotted recently that he wants to claim."

Kurt kissed his shoulder through his shirt and hummed in acknowledgement before saying, "Isn't that a good thing? That he found someone?"

"It's complicated," Blaine sighed, throwing his phone back on the bedside table with a muted thud. "Nick thinks the sub was in a Twisted Bond before."

"What made him think that?" Kurt frowned curiously. It's not like subs who endured something like that went around and bragged about it.

"He saw his mark. It was tainted. It's... well, it's not something you see every day so it stuck out," Blaine said, running a hand over his face tiredly.

Kurt's mind immediately went to Jeff. Scared, heartbroken and jaded through no fault of his own, but the blonde wanted nothing to do with Dominants anymore, that was very clear to Kurt, so if this sub was anything like his best friend then he could see how it was complicated. He felt equally sorry for this unnamed sub who had suffered through a horrible bond and Nick who was obviously suffering in response to it.

"Has he talked to this sub?" he asked.

"I suppose we'll find out when he gets here, but something has happened… something bad. I've never heard him sound quite so lost," Blaine said quietly and Kurt shifted closer, leaning his chest completely along the line of Blaine’s back trying to give him what comfort he could, quietly happy that Blaine seemed to be responding to it.

They were silent again, just soaking one another in until Blaine broke the silence this time.

"About earlier," he started, shifting around so he could face Kurt properly.

"Yes?" the sub asked cocking his head to the side curiously, trying to think what Blaine was referring to.

"Before we got… distracted." He smirked slightly and Kurt blushed.

"Which was entirely your fault," Kurt huffed regally, sticking his cute little nose in the air and making Blaine chuckle.
He arched a brow, gold eyes dipped in mirth. "My fault?"

"Umhm." Kurt nodded surely, trying not to smile or laugh to give up the game so quickly. "I distinctly remember it was your fault."

He doesn’t remember. In fact, all he does recall is lips and tongues and teeth, shifting bodies and hot gasped pants for air with no clue as to how they ended up in that position in the first place. Everything but bright, burning sensation was dim and murky for those passion filled moments.

Blaine tutted, a playful tilt to his lips. "You shouldn't lie, lovely. What did we say about lying?"

He grabbed Kurt before he could even think to move away and had him on his back in seconds, fingers seizing on his sides and pressing in. Kurt was a squirming, shrieking, laughing mess in minutes.

"Blaine!" he cried over the involuntary laughter, trying in vain to push his Dom’s hands away from his tense stomach. "S-stop... no... fair!"

"Be a good boy and take your punishment, lovely." Blaine grinned at him enigmatically, chuckling himself and Kurt scowled as best he could with mirthful tears leaking down his temples and a huge smile spread over his lips as he tossed and turned.

Blaine thought he was breathtaking.

He stopped before Kurt got sore, however, taking his hands away and leaning them either side of Kurt's head watching the sub, yet again, try to catch his breath, color high on his face. He didn't think he could get any more enamored with his sub but Kurt seemed to force it out of him effortlessly.

"You're mean," Kurt told him, poking him in the chest.

Blaine leant his weight on one side and captured the hand bringing it to his lips to kiss and nip at the long, tapered fingers while keeping eye contact with his sub. "I'm sorry, lovely. Forgive me?"

Kurt pretended to think about it. "Maybe."

Blaine shook his head and smiled at him glad the mood was lightened, but reality couldn't be held off forever and there had been something urgent pressing at the skirts of Blaine's mind for a while now that he wanted to get settled before it was put off like their contract had been.

"Kurt, baby, we're gonna be serious for a second, okay?" he ordered subtly and Kurt nodded obediently, face creasing into tiny worried lines as wary blue eyes stared up at him. "Words, lovely. Use your words so I know we're clear."

"Okay, sir."

"Good boy," he praised, savoring the title, before sitting up properly and pulling Kurt up after him so they were sitting in the middle of the bed facing one another. Kurt tucked his legs under him while Blaine sat Indian style and took Kurt's hand, intertwining their fingers loosely in the space between them. "You know all the steps of Bonding, right?"

"Yes," Kurt acknowledged, eyes bouncing back and forth between Blaine's as if trying to work out the answer for to the question Blaine hadn’t even asked yet.

"And where do you think we are with that?" he asked wanting to see if they were on the same page or in completely different books, in different languages, on different continents.
Kurt thought about it for a moment. *Where were they?* It was difficult to answer. He ran through the seven steps that had been drummed into him and everyone else he knew since they were old enough to understand them and tried to think about it logically. Blaine had claimed him, had given him his Gift, they were living together and they were getting to know one another in all the ways that mattered. They were…

"Bonding," Kurt spoke aloud, coming back into the now and refocusing his gaze on Blaine. "We're Bonding. The fourth step."

Blaine smiled and nodded before looking earnestly into Kurt's eyes. "We are and we've been doing a pretty good job of it haven't we?"

"Yes," Kurt agreed slowly, starting to really frown now because he couldn't for the life of him tell where this conversation was heading, or if it was suddenly going to turn and leave him floundering. Blaine reached forward and smoothed out his brow with his free hand before cupping his cheek and Kurt leaned into it naturally, but it didn't assuage every worried feeling in his chest. "Blaine, what's going on?" he asked.

"What's the next step, lovely?" the Dom asked.

"The Presenting Ceremony," Kurt rattled off robotically and Blaine could tell it hadn't quite clicked for him yet where he was going with this.

"And what does that entail?" he asked and Kurt frowned at him, irritated that he couldn't really grasp what was going on.

"Please can we get to the point?" the sub demanded, getting frustrated.

"Kurt," Blaine reprimanded sternly and the sub looked down at his lap, chastised.

"I'm sorry, sir," he whispered, truly meaning it. He didn't mean to snap, he was just setting himself on edge and working himself up and letting it get the better of him.

"Sorry for what?" Blaine encouraged. He wasn't going to punish Kurt for such a small thing, after all he said to Kurt that he could speak his mind, but he wasn't going to let his sub think that it was acceptable to take things out on him when he'd done nothing to warrant such a thing either.

"Sorry for snapping at you and not being patient and trusting you know what you're talking about," he answered feeling like a weight had been constricting him had lifted in those few seconds.

Blaine tilted his chin up to meet his gaze. "I forgive you, lovely."

Kurt sighed out a shuddery breathe letting the words wash over him like a cool stream, leaving him cleansed and calmer.

"Now, I know you're confused but can you please answer my question for me, baby?"

"A Presenting Ceremony is where a Dominant presents his or hers chosen submissive to society, mainly friends and family," Kurt stated from memory and at Blaine's encouraging nod he continued. "It's also where the two in the bond finally-" He cut himself off abruptly, eyes going wide and flush spreading from his face to his neck and further down beneath his top. "You want us to have sex!?" he blurted out in panic, feeling his heart start to lift off.

"What? No, Kurt. No," Blaine quickly rushed to explain, his own eyes wide at the sight of Kurt panicking.
Kurt felt that statement hit his heart funny. A feeling very close to disappointment and hurt settling there, confusing him out of his mind. He just panicked at the thought of having sex with Blaine, but apparently that didn't mean he wasn't offended and hurt by the way Blaine reacted at his question. *Maybe he wasn't attractive enough? Maybe Blaine knew he had no idea what to do?*

"So you don't want to have sex with me?" he found himself saying out loud, unable to mask how he was feeling when it came out in his voice.

Blaine almost choked on his own tongue. "Why did it feel like he couldn't win here?"

"You don't wa-"

"Listen to me," he ordered, cutting in and Kurt snapped his mouth shut. "Good, now breathe. Better baby. Good boy..." he coached until Kurt was somewhat in control again. "Okay, now let's start again shall we?"

"Yeah," Kurt agreed lamely.

"I'll clear up one thing right away. Yes. I do want to have sex with you, Kurt. You're mine and you're stunning and I want you so god damned much, all the freaking time," he told him honestly and passionately making Kurt heat up inside. "But there's no pressure here, lovely. Remember our contract? We're not doing anything until you're comfortable with it and it's my job to make sure you're happy and secure. So no, we're not having sex just yet, but yes, I want you."

The words settled better for Kurt but there was still a few lingering doubts caused by his innocent insecurity in this particular aspect of their relationship. He'd just adjusted to making out and jumping from that to sex was a huge freaking deal. "But you just brought up the Presenting Ceremony and you have to on that night, they told us." Kurt frowned.

"You know I'm not one for the rules, lovely." Blaine winked. "Besides, it's customary to seal the bond on that night, you don't have to. Those rules are antiquated, not to say they don't have merit because they certainly do, but times have changed since they were first written and now they’re seen more like guidelines to getting things right. I know a lot of people who don’t do things in order or take a little more time on certain steps and their bonds are all happy and valid. There’s more wiggle room these days, so we don’t have to have sex that night... we could do something else? Try something out instead of actual sex. We have all the time in the world to get to that step after," he explained and smiled softly.

"Try something out?" Kurt asked hesitantly as he assimilated, heart hammering and throat dry. He licked his lips nervously.

"Sex isn't just penetration," Blaine said bluntly and watched Kurt's whole face completely flame bright pink before he covered it with his hands. There was a reason why he avoided this lesson in school. Why he avoided it in most every conversation.

Blaine seemed to be plucking the thoughts straight out of his head. "Kurt... intimacy can be loads of things. It can be touching," he explained, softly grasping his fingers and pulling them away so he had to look into that molten golden gaze. "It can be kissing..." He laid a soft kiss to his lips, which was as gentle as butterfly wings. "It can be with clothes on, clothes off, clothes half on, half off..." He smirked the last knowing he was painting a picture that Kurt was suddenly, visibly, enthralled with.

No longer was this prospect scary and crass to Kurt, but instead wanted and beautiful. Kurt was sure he wasn't ready for sex, but maybe he was ready for something else. Something closer and intense and magical. He felt all those things hovering in the air when they kissed again; a promise of more
"And you'll teach me?" he asked breathlessly and watched as Blaine's eyes dilated like he'd just taken a hit of something.

"God, Kurt, yes... yes I'll teach you beautiful boy," he said lowly, gravel in his voice, hovering over his lips. Their noses slotted side by side, but their eyes were still intent on one another, so close they could see each individual lash and fleck of color.

"When?" Kurt asked grasping Blaine's collar between needy fingers, body trembling and the now familiar heat of what he knew was arousal pooling low in his stomach. It was a revelation.

Blaine choked and strangled laugh. "You're trying to kill me here." He shook his head and swallowed. Hard. "Soon, but we'd need time to prepare. Give the people we invited notice, order flowers and pick color schemes," Blaine replied. "But soon."

The last was filled with pure need and it spilled over onto Kurt. He fluttered his eyes closed finally, a submissive keen settling in his throat which Blaine answered strongly with his lips until something else caught Kurt's attention.

"Sir?" he asked sweetly and Blaine hummed in response as he nibbled his neck "Can I help pick the color scheme?"

There was a moment of silence and then Blaine growled a laugh, shoulders shaking and white teeth shining as the tension broke.

"I think it's safe to say you can pick that alone since I have no idea what's cool and nice looking. So knock yourself out," he said and Kurt clapped excitedly, making Blaine chuckle as he watched him bounce on the bed happily. He couldn't help but lean in and claim his lips again, lowering him back on the bed and covering his body with his own as he explored his mouth.

The chime of the doorbell rang through the large house, interrupting them after a few moments.

Blaine pulled away, very reluctantly, with a sigh. "It's like he plans it," he grumbled, feeling far too overheated and uncomfortable in his sweats, fire still running through his veins from Kurt's close proximity. His sub was like a supernova.

Kurt swallowed and tried to compose himself, following Blaine off the bed and taking his hand when it was offered. They made their way towards the front door and by the time they reached it, Kurt had found a steadier state of mind and body. They had to help Nick after all, his raging hormones could wait.

The saddened, ragged Dom they opened the door to was not the goofy upbeat Dom Kurt had known from the first time he'd met him. Blaine was right to be concerned it seemed, whatever it was had hit Nick hard.

"Hey guys," Nick smiled, but it was weighted like everything else seemed to be on him.

"Hi, Nick," Kurt greeted and smiled softly at him while Blaine clapped his best friend on the shoulder and ushered him in, closing the door behind him.

They ended up in the smaller living room that everyone favored and Kurt had just come back with coffee for everyone before taking his seat curled up into Blaine's side with his legs under him, cradling his mug in both hands.
Nick hadn't started a conversation yet and both Blaine and Kurt were waiting patiently for him to arrange his thoughts while crappy shows played on the TV. They knew that asking him questions might not end well because as open and outgoing Nick seemed to be most of the time, he just didn't share when it came to this mysterious sub he had obviously fallen for.

"He said no." The sudden voice startled Kurt and Blaine from pretending to watch a silly sit com and they turned to the other Dom.

Nick sat on the sofa, elbows resting on his knees and face hidden inside his palms, muffling his voice, but the soft admission was still like a shout.

"He said no to what?" Blaine asked cautiously. "A claim?"

That wasn't really possible unless Nick accepted it. If there were no witnesses there to enforce it, which he thought was most likely, and the Dom in Nick could accept the denial of the claim then Blaine supposed it was technically possible. Just like it would have been possible for Kurt to opt out of theirs if that's what he had wanted to do with his Gift. Blaine pushed that particular train of thought aside. He didn't want to go there ever again, didn't want to relive just how close he'd thought he'd been to losing Kurt forever.

Nick ran a hand through his hair haphazardly, leaving it standing up in every direction uncaringly as he sunk lower into the armchair he was sat in. "He said no to even trying," he revealed then sat bolt upright a minute later, eyes flashing with the depth of the feelings slamming at his insides. "And you know what kills me the most is that I know we'd be perfect together. I know it! I'd take such good care of him, love him right, treat him like the angel he is. But I can't push and I won't force anything on him. I won't do that to him," he whispered the last and collapsed back in on himself again.

He knew Jeff wasn't indifferent to him. The picture told him that and yes, it gave him a shred of hope, but how was he supposed to deal with the situation? His optimism had swiftly faded into pessimism as the hours ticked on. He wouldn't force attention onto Jeff, make that angel cry again, he couldn't do it. But he couldn't leave him alone either. He was stuck in the worst catch twenty two.

"Nick, I'm sorry man," Blaine said, not knowing what else he could say. Should he tell him to keep trying? Should he tell him there were more fish in the sea? "Are you sure that it's done though?"

"He told me flat out he doesn't want another bond. Doesn't want anything to do with another Dom, he just wants to be left alone," Nick repeated numbly. Kurt furrowed his brow, the words sounding eerily familiar. "He was crying, B. I did that. I made him cry, just like some other asshole did."

"It probably wasn't you, Nick," Kurt told him knowingly. "He probably just panicked and it all came rushing out of him at once. All that hurt, all the pain he'd been bottling up."

Nick stared at him curiously. "How do you know that?"

"Because my best friend is in a similar situation," Kurt said sadly and Blaine laid a kiss to his hair in comfort.

"Jeff's a fighter, lovely. He'll be alright in the end," Blaine told him.

Nick's head almost spun off his shoulders. "Wait. Did… did you just say Jeff?" Kurt blew on his coffee mug then sipped with a hum of acknowledgment. "Jeffery Sterling?"

The way he said it…

Kurt nearly choked on the liquid as it suddenly slammed together inside his head. "You want to
Blaine knew that if any other Dom had said 'my Jeff' then Nick probably would have lost it a little, as it was, his best friend was simply sitting there and staring at Kurt like he was the second coming.

"He's your best friend?" he asked, dazed. "The one you asked to board at Dalton as your Gift from Blaine?"

Kurt was hardly registering what the Dom was saying as he rushed to his feet. "I need to see him. He's probably freaking out!"

Blaine rose after him taking the hot, half full mug and placing it on the side next to his before an accident happened. "Calm down, lovely," he cajoled.

"No, I have to get to him now," he stressed, turning furiously towards Nick and pointing angrily. "I swear to god if you hurt him… I'll… I'll..."

Blaine stepped up at his words, looming over his sub and taking his hand.

"Kurt, sit down," he commanded as gently as possible while still making sure to make the order was noticeable.

The sub’s shoulders hunched and his back tensed as he fought with his own body, torn between going to find his friend and comforting him, and obeying his Dom. Finally he sat back down stiffly, glaring around and looking for a way to break away from them and get to Jeff.

"Okay, Kurt, baby, I know you want to find Jeff and make sure he's okay and I promise, as soon as you hear the whole story from Nick, you're free to go. Okay?" he asked and looked between his best friend who's horrified expression still portrayed the shock of Kurt's outburst, and his sub who was trembling in silent fear and throwing hateful looks at Nick that concerned Blaine.

He felt bad for Nick but at the same time elated. Jeff was an amazing sub, but he obviously did have baggage and issues by the truckload. This wasn’t going to be easy on either of them if they actually went ahead… which seemed unlikely as of recent events.

"I'll tell him everything if he'll give me a chance to explain," Nick said diplomatically and Blaine nodded.

"Kurt?" he asked and the sub looked at him, struggling to remain respectful and calm. His jaw was clenched and his mouth was screwed up on one side.

"Yeah, okay," he murmured finally and both Dom's sighed in relief before Blaine motioned to Nick to explain himself, sitting himself back down next to Kurt and laying his hand over his knee comfortingly.

"Okay, um... Kurt, the first thing I want you to know is that I would never, EVER, hurt Jeff. I… I wasn't lying when I said I just want to take care of him and love him... god, I want to see him smile and sleep peacefully and relax around others. I want him happy, I promise you," he said, despair and bone deep sadness etched into his words and Kurt felt his face soften despite himself.

*This was Nick*, he reminded himself. Kind, idiot, lovable Nick that he had actively thought would be good for Jeff when they first met. And while he might not have known the man for that long, he just knew that Nick didn’t mean harm for his friend, it just wasn’t in the Dom. But that didn’t mean he was completely Team Nick here. Jeff’s interests and feelings would always come first for him in this situation no matter how much he liked the Dominant.
Sighing out the anger, Kurt tentatively reached out a hand to touch Nick's.

"I'm sorry I reacted the way I did... I know you wouldn't hurt him, I do. I just worry about him... I worry about him all the time. He's been through so much... and no, I'm not going to tell you what happened before you ask because it's his story to tell if he so chooses," Kurt said sternly and Nick nodded in quiet acceptance though he was burning with the need to know, to fix, to make it better.

"Now, tell me. What exactly happened between the two of you?" Kurt asked and after taking a deep breath Nick launched into a story; telling him of the first time he ever saw him, of the first time he realized he was everything he had ever wanted, of how his smile made him tingle and how his voice haunted his dreams.

He told Kurt of the chocolate cups and the notes and consequentially, the conversation he had with the beautiful blonde that led to him breaking down and seeking advice from his best friend.

Kurt sat silent, stunned, hopeful and scared all at the same time.

He couldn't count how many times he had wished Jeff belonged to someone as sweet and as laid back as Nick; how much easier his life would be and how far he could come with someone like him. And now the actual Nick wanted Jeff, the amazing Dom who his own Dom trusted beyond anyone else, had fallen for his friend and Kurt knew he had to try and help because he felt, somewhere deep in his bones that they were right for each other.

"I believe you," he said finally and Nick looked at him gratefully, tension draining out of his weary face and hunched shoulders.

"Thank you," he breathed out and Kurt half smiled.

"And I'm gonna try and help you any way I can if I get the feeling there could be something there on Jeff's side," he promised and Nick stood up, wrapping him in his arms quickly, and releasing him as soon as he heard Blaine's growl.

"I don't want to force him to do anything, I... I know he's been through a lot and he already said he wanted me to stay away so I don't know how..." he trailed off sadly, but Kurt shook his head.

"He's scared and he needs time. He's gonna fight this tooth and nail, Nick, and it's gonna be hard. If he says back off you do, if he's pushing you away you don't push back, you stand there strong and take the hits if you truly want him... but don't give up on him. He's amazing... I promise you he's amazing," Kurt said passionately and Nick nodded in consent.

"I'm aware of that. Trust me, I am. So... you think I should keep trying?" he asked when Kurt stood up again to go and meet with Jeff.

"I think you should take it as slowly as possible... but keep trying," he said the last with a hitched smile and Nick nodded giving him a small smile back as Kurt exited the room.

Being on school grounds after hours was just plain weird, Kurt thought as he exited the car and thanked the driver who offered him an approving smile and told him he would wait for him in the parking lot.

Kurt found out rather quickly that people adored the Anderson’s and were happy working for them in various capacities; drivers, maids, gardeners and sometimes even cooks. All had nothing but
words of praise for their bosses and Kurt was reminded of that famous saying stating that your character is judged not by how you behave to those equal to you, but those who are somehow beneath you. Dana and Jared both chatted and joked and hung out with their employees like friends, they knew all about them and their families, often asking about their wellbeing and reminding them that if there was ever something they could help with they should feel free to ask them.

Kurt remembered his first few days at the mansion were marked with stunned silence and half amused, half shocked gazes wherever he went from the staff, until they all got used to the fact that he was around and just proceeded to behave as they usually did. Mark, the driver they always called when they required one, later told him that they had all seen poor subs and Doms coming into money over the years, even just a little, and the result wasn’t inspiring. They becoming rude, stuck up and pretentious, thinking themselves above where they came from, so the staff had all expected him to start treating them with little respect and politeness. Of course, they all felt sorry for thinking that way after they realized he was the opposite of their assumptions and Kurt had made sure to let them know it was okay and that he didn’t hold it against them.

Kurt made his way towards the building that was lit up like a beacon in the darkening sky and walked in with broad, rushed steps, eager to reach his friend and how he was after the Nick bombshell and how much he would be willing to tell him. Kurt himself was still reeling from Nick’s visit and revelation. They had no idea Jeff was the guy Nick was pining after, which now that Kurt thought about it, was incredibly oblivious of them. How many submissives attending Dalton actually had tainted marks? He had only seen or heard of Jeff. All the signs were there, lit up and in bold, but Jeff never mentioned a single thing about a mysterious person who left chocolate cups and cute notes on his doorstep every morning and Kurt didn’t know if that was a good thing or not.

For a moment as he ascended the staircase leading to Jeff’s floor Kurt felt absolutely giddy with the prospect he had imagined on the way over here. His friend wrapped in the quirky Dom’s arms, happy and safe and whole again. Jeff deserved that and Kurt was determined to help see that through if he got any indicator from Jeff that he would want that.

It would be hard to tell, however.

Nick said he had talked to him and Jeff had gotten scared and asked him to leave, which wasn’t wholly surprising, but Kurt knew he had to hear his best friend’s side of the story. He had to make sure first and foremost that he was okay after being so frightened and pulled away from what his familiar routine that he had spent so much time building up was before he let himself get carried away with romantic notions for his future.

He had to make sure he was okay, he repeated to himself as he knocked on the heavy wooden door and waited for the muffled footsteps to approach.

The door in front of him slowly opened to reveal a tear streaked face, pale and tired underneath the dampness, peeking around the corner. Kurt sighed, feeling his heart constrict as he pushed the door gently inwards before scooping his best friend up in his arms, allowing him to break down and sob into his neck as they stood there in his doorway, silently grateful that the hallway was empty right now.

Shuffling awkwardly he managed to drag a limp, sniffling Jeff into the room and push the door closed with his foot before collapsing onto the bed sitting down and pulling his friend to curl into him, hiding his face in his neck again and hiccupping sadly.

Kurt stroked his back gently, worry etched into every line of his face as he frowned and opened and closed his mouth trying to find a way to start the conversation without sounding like he was trying to pry into his friend’s privacy. He couldn’t just jump out and say that he knew about Nick, but he was
never a good liar and he couldn’t fake it and pretend he knew nothing. To top it off Jeff showed no
signs of stopping crying and he had no idea how to make him feel better when he didn’t, officially,
know what the problem was supposed to be.

But Jeff kind of solved his dilemma for him undefinable moments later after crying out all of his
remaining tears and soaking his shirt.

“I knew you’d come,” came the quiet, shaky statement and Kurt tipped his friend’s chin up to look
him in the eye.

“How did you know?” he asked in surprise.

“I… after h-he left… I… I remembered I’d heard his name before,” Jeff said sadly lowering his eyes
to his lap again, hair obscuring his face.

“Nick?” Kurt asked, trying not to make it sound like he knew everything and came to judge. He
wanted Jeff to open up on his own.

“Y-yeah… he… you told me about him. I just… didn’t realize it until he was gone… he’s… he’s
Blaine’s friend isn’t he?” he asked looking up and Kurt nodded in confirmation.

“Nick Duval? Yes, he’s Blaine’s friend,” he confirmed carefully, treading very lightly here and Jeff
narrowed his eyes at him.

“Your acting is horrible, Kurt. I know you know what happened and I know that’s why you’re
here,” he mumbled and even though his voice sounded edgy and frustrated Kurt knew he wasn’t
mad at him.

“Okay, yes. He called Blaine and then came over to talk to him. But I’m not judging or saying a
thing until I can hear it all from you. So why don’t you tell me what happened?” Kurt said in
determination and Jeff slumped in his place, pulling his legs up to cross under him and running a
hand over his blotchy, sore face.

“He left me notes. And cups of hot chocolate... my favorite,” he whispered the last in a way that
didn’t escape Kurt’s notice before shaking out of it. “…it went on for days until I figured it could be
meant for someone else. And so I left him a note and gave the cups back and the next thing I know
he’s knocking on my door, saying all kinds of stuff that I didn’t want to hear and asking all kind of
things I couldn’t give him and then I asked him to leave me alone and he did. That’s all,” Jeff
rambled tightly and Kurt shook his head at him.

“What did the notes say?” he asked and Jeff shrugged dismissively, picking at his nails.

“Just… just stuff…”

“What kind of stuff?” Kurt persisted.

“Stuff… about me…” He swallowed and still wouldn’t look him in the eye. “…it said that… that I’m
beautiful, and that he wanted to talk to me, that m-my smile made his day… lies,” he said quietly in
defeat and Kurt took his hand rolling off the bed and kneeling on the floor in front of him.

“Compliments… not lies, sweetie. He told Blaine he truly likes you,” Kurt corrected him gently and
Jeff shook his head furiously.

“That’s not true. It can’t be, Kurt. Why… why would he…” he stammered, jumping up from his bed
and pacing the room agitatedly.
“Why did Blaine claim me? Why does the sun shine? I don’t know what makes someone like someone else. But I know that it happens and it happened to Nick… with you,” Kurt said, rising to his feet and Jeff glared at him in irritation.

“Well it doesn’t matter because I… I can’t be what he wants me to be. If… god, Kurt, if he knew what happened to me… how used and tainted I am he would have regretted it all. And I… I can’t give him the chance to make me believe stuff that can’t be… I can’t,” Jeff said, a new wave of tears spilling over his lids and staining his cheeks.

“Have you told him that? Did you give him an explanation?” Kurt asked and Jeff froze, wide eyed and shrugging.

“I… I told him I didn’t want it… any of it… and I asked him to go… he left… that’s it,” he said quietly, hunching his shoulders up around his ears.

“Is that what you wanted?” Kurt asked carefully.

“I… y-yes… maybe… I… yes… yes it was,” he stuttered, averting his face and nodding in determination, as if proud of how well he could deceive his own heart.

“Why are you crying then?”

“I... what??” Jeff froze next to the window he was gazing through to hide the tears. But Kurt knew him better that that to let him get away with lying to himself.

“If you wanted him gone… and he’s gone now… why are you crying?” he repeated and Jeff went silent for long minutes, biting his lip and clutching the hem of his shirt, wringing it between white knuckled fingers.

“I… I don’t know…” he breathed and Kurt closed the space between them and hugged him gently.

“Do you think it could be because you feel something for him?” Kurt offered and felt the blonde stiffen in his arms.

“NO… Kurt… I…no I… I couldn’t… I can’t…” he said, panic rising in his voice, trying to put distance between them again like he could outrun this conversation. Kurt held firm.

“I know you think you can’t… but just because you think that doesn’t mean your heart agrees. Jeff, sweetie… Nick is a really nice guy. And I don’t want to push you into anything, but from what I heard he truly likes you. Maybe you could just… get to know him better before you write him off completely?” he suggested and hope blossomed in his chest when Jeff didn’t immediately answer with another ‘no’. He seemed to actually be contemplating it, eyes faraway like he was lost in his own head.

“I… I can’t…” he said finally and Kurt deflated.

“But-”

“Kurt, I can’t…”

“Jeff-”

“No, Kurt!” Jeff snapped loudly, finally pushing out of his hold and Kurt froze like he’d just been slapped.
He’d just been doing what he promised himself he wouldn’t do. Trying to push Jeff into what he thought was best for him… but he couldn’t help this feeling of frustration bubbling up in himself either, at how his friend wouldn’t even attempt to try and be happy.

He watched Jeff pull at his hair agitatedly, wrestling with his thoughts before he said, “I… I like him, okay? I saw him in the hallway and he’s gorgeous and he’s sweet and nice and romantic and funny… do you really think I could stay away and not develop feelings for him eventually? He would make me hope… and then he would realize how much better he could do… he could have whoever he wanted, Kurt. Someone beautiful and easy without the baggage and problems. Someone worthy of a Dom like him. And it won’t take him long to see that.” He shook his head resolutely, brown eyes shuttering. “I can’t have my heart be broken again, not when I’ve come so far. He’s gone and it’s for the best,” he said, passion and strength draining from him as he spoke, leaving him tired and so, so sad.

And Jeff was tired. Tired and heartsick and he just wanted to be left alone with his own thoughts; his dreams where he could have the beautiful Dom and not be afraid.

“Jeff…” Kurt tried again but the blonde raised his hand to stop him.

“Kurt, please… I just… I want to be alone. Please, don’t fight me on this. I’m not ready and I’ll never be ready again. Nick… Nick deserves more that I can offer.”

Kurt bit his tongue on the hasty denial that sprang forth and instead weighed his next words. “Okay… okay I’ll leave you alone if you want me to. You know where to find me if you need me… but… let me just tell you one thing. You said Nick deserves more and I won’t try to convince you otherwise, you know my opinion on that particular subject… but the thing is… he wants you. Nick wants you… hurt, scared and afraid, he’s seen you in all these things and he still wants you… just… think about that. I’ll see you tomorrow,” Kurt said, closing the distance and pressing a gentle kiss his cheek before he went for the door.

A shaky voice stopped him.

“Kurt?”

He looked over his shoulder. “Yeah, honey?”

“Is he…?” Jeff shifted awkwardly on his feet and crossed his arms over his chest, face tensing. “Is he mad at me?” he asked shakily and Kurt rushed to soothe the fear.

“Sweetie, Nick would never hurt you. No… he’s not mad. He’s sad because he’d like to get to know you but he would never do anything to make you scared. If you want him to stay away from you… he will,” he reassured and Jeff nodded looking down at his bare toes.

“I don’t want him to be sad,” he whispered, thinking about that sunshiny smile dulled and gone because of him before shaking it off. He wasn’t important enough to make the beautiful Dom sad for long.

“Maybe just think about being his friend for now? Like you are with Blaine?” Kurt suggested kindly and Jeff attempted a small smile of consent.

“I… I’ll think about it,” he agreed and Kurt beamed at him, not resisting the urge to hug him one more time going for the door again.

“That’s enough for now, sweetie. I’ll see you in the morning.”
“Night, Kurt.”

“Night, Blondie.”

Blaine could hear Kurt shuffling in front of the home office door for the past ten minutes. It still made his heart clench to know Kurt hesitated, doubted and feared what he might say, but it had also started to become somewhat amusing lately.

How his porcelain skin would flush pink making him look angelic beyond belief, how his cerulean eyes would skim over his face looking for any sign of disapproval and how his body would relax and cuddle into his arms when they found none. It seemed more like Kurt did it out of habit these days instead of actually truly feeling that way. The events of yesterday replayed in his mind and he could imagine that Kurt could be a bit thrown off with everything that’s happened with their respective best friends, but he had hoped he could soothe him again like he did the night before.

It settled the rage, which was innate in every Dom, in his bones and soothed his mind to know they were moving forward; they were finding ways to belong to each other and how they fit as one unit. So he decided to let him vent for a while and collect the guts to knock and come in and ask what he wanted to ask. He wanted him to come on his own terms and not because he felt pressured or forced.

Minutes ticked and Blaine chuckled lightly at the muffled muttering seeping through the door, trying to concentrate on the contracts they’d recently acquired for the studio; making sure they were all sorted through and signed. It sounded like his angel was trying to gather up the courage for something and he was giving himself a pep talk. He truly was too adorable for his own good.

Finally a tentative knock broke the silence and his sub’s quiet voice called out his name, making him go warm right the way through when he heard it slip from those soft lips.

"Come in, beautiful," he beckoned, deciding to pretend like he had no idea Kurt was hovering there for the past half an hour. His sub got embarrassed way too easily.

The door creaked open and the face he grew to love and need more than air peeked in, a nervous smile and shifty eyes placed firmly onto it.

"Do you have a moment?" the sub asked and Blaine dropped his files immediately, waving him in and turning his chair towards the other man.

"For you? Always." He smiled warmly and Kurt returned it, his shoulders visibly relaxing and the little crease on his forehead smoothing out as he shut the door behind him and shuffled further inside.

"I... um... I wanted to ask you something, sir," he started timidly and the title, as ever, sent shivers down Blaine's spine, making him close his eyes and practically groan in pleasure at the sound of it. He shook the arousal off, however, and focused on the beauty in front of him.

Kurt stood in front of his heavy, oak desk and picked at the hem of his light brown shirt as he shuffled his feet awkwardly. Blaine wanted nothing more than to feel him close, to have him in his arms and keep him calm and relaxed.

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"Come here," he let the order slip into his voice, velvety and smooth, and Kurt's eyes glazed over as he walked towards his Dom, the shy smile on his lips making him look positively gorgeous.

He stopped, unsure, when he reached the swivel chair and his knees bumped against Blaine's. The Dom wrapped his fingers around Kurt's hand and gave it a small tug, causing him to lose balance
and land perfectly onto his lap, legs on one side of Blaine's thighs and his side pressed against the Dom's chest. Kurt wrapped his arms around his neck on instinct, curling into his body naturally and lowering his eyes when Blaine's hands landed on him, branding his skin and making his eyes haze over further when he snapped them back up to look into golden ones.

"Hi," he whispered shyly and Blaine chuckled, threading a hand through his hair and making him scowl for a second for messing with the style, before all annoyance vanished as the Dom locked their lips together in a heated kiss that left them both trembling and gasping and grasping to find solid ground to hold onto as their world flipped upside down.

Blaine peppered his face with kisses and caresses and he relaxed into his embrace, his head falling onto his Dom's shoulder and his face diving into the crook of his neck as the Dom ran a hand up and down his back, fingers dipping beneath the hem to tease at the warm skin there.

"What did you need to ask me?" Blaine asked after an indefinite amount of time spent in enjoying the feeling of his sub in silence.

"Um… Jeff and I would really like to visit Mercedes. We... we haven't seen her in a while and we miss her. We would take the morning bus and spend the day with her in Lima. I'd be back by nine at the latest. Would… would that be okay?" he rushed out the plan, including the times he would leave and come back to make sure he got the green light.

They were finally able to be in a real bonded relationship, following the rules they have agreed on and knowing what was expected and what was forbidden. But there were things that Blaine said were too sacred to be put in a contract, things like family and friends, things he shouldn't worry about Blaine taking away from him. Not that he was worried about it anyway. Blaine had said that he would always be able to see his family. He would always be able to…

"No," Blaine's voice stabbed through his heart, drenching him in icy numbness.

"Blaine was forbidding him from going? He was… he was breaking his promises already?"

"But…” He snapped his eyes up, blue misted with tears of disappointment and hurt at the rough denial that meant the breaking of a promise Blaine gave to him and he flinched when he saw the pain in Blaine's eyes at his reaction.

"I'm not letting you and Jeff risk being assaulted by the curious reporters and unknown citizens on the bus. Kurt, lovely, you can visit your friends and family whenever you feel like it, I told you that. But you'll do me a favour and take the car to pick up Jeff and go to Lima. Okay?" He smiled at the relief and glee that spread over Kurt's face at his words.

"I can do that!" he hastily said, before biting his lower lip and squaring his shoulders to work himself up to something. Wrapping his arms back around Blaine's neck he bent down and kissed Blaine soundly on the lips in thank you.

"I'm sorry for doing it again," he whispered when he pulled back from the kiss.

"Doing what, lovely?" Blaine asked, eyes still glued to Kurt's lips.

"Doubting you," he said quietly, returning his head to Blaine's shoulder, snuggling closely and sighing in content. The ease in which he relaxed in his arms coupled with the words gave Blaine all the hope and reassurance he could ever need that they would only get better together.

"It's okay. We'll get there with time." He squeezed the fingers still resting in his palm and he smiled when Kurt hummed in agreement as they swayed gently on the leather chair. A gust of wind drifted
from the window and ruffled the papers on Blaine's desk, attracting Kurt's attention.

"Am I bothering you? You seemed busy when I got in," he asked, leaning forwards and fingering the edge of a page curiously.

Blaine shrugged, playing at the belt loops on Kurt’s jeans idly. "I've got some contracts to go over before I sign them and take them back into the studio," he revealed. "Maybe you could come with me when I take them. To see the studio?"

Kurt perked up at that and smiled over his shoulder at him happily.

"I'd love that. When were you planning to go?" he asked.

"I was thinking tomorrow, but if you’re seeing Mercedes that’s fine, we can go another time," he answered with a smile and Kurt twisted his lips in thought.

“It wasn’t set in stone,” Kurt revealed. They’d only made tentative plans because Kurt had still needed to talk to Blaine… they could always go Sunday? They hadn’t even talked it over with Mercedes yet after all…

He said this to Blaine.

“Are you sure, baby? You can go see your friends, the studio’s still gonna be there when you get back.”

Kurt pecked him on the lips because he just had to when Blaine was being so sweet and chivalrous. “It’s important to you and I really want to see it,” he murmured. “Plus, we should probably actually [phone] Mercedes to let her know we’re coming, so giving a day’s notice could be better,” Kurt conceded with a blush, examining his nails.

Blaine chuckled. “You and Jeff were just gonna turn up on her doorstep, huh?”

“We were excited,” Kurt defended them, shrugging gracefully. “We may have skimmed a few details.”

“In favour of studying the bus route,” the Dom teased, making Kurt stick his tongue out at him.

"Okay. I'll leave you to your work then. I've got some homework to get out of the way anyhow and I should probably call Jeff and Mercedes to let them know the plan… or try to confirm one," he said and stood up from his lap making his way towards the door.

"I'll see you later, beautiful," he called after him and chuckled at the faint blush that blossomed on Kurt's face as he pulled the door closed behind him.

“If you don’t stop you’re gonna bounce right out of that seat,” Blaine warned his excited sub as they drove towards his studio the next day. It was about half an hour from the Anderson house in a lesser used part of Westerville which Blaine found perfect. There was less traffic and less attention while they were still finding their feet and creating contacts. They definitely didn’t need a load of media attention putting stupid amounts of pressure on them to deliver right away.

The building itself used to be a small old warehouse before his parents bought it and converted it;
making sure it was structurally sound, rewiring and painting it neutrally before giving it to him, which allowed him to really build it up and make it his own. He repainted how he wanted, choose the equipment, remodeled the layout inside all with the help of his best friends and now business partners, David and Wes.

Warbler Records was born and Blaine couldn’t wait to show his accomplishment to his sub and see his reactions to the place that he’d put so much of himself into.

Kurt glanced over wryly at Blaine in the driver seat and tried his best to cease fidgeting. “I can’t help it,” he pouted before glancing out the window at the unfamiliar surroundings again. “Are we there yet?”

Blaine snorted at how childishly adorable he looked and sounded, before indicating left and pulling into the private car lot they had also gotten with the building to park. “Actually… yes,” he grinned, cutting the engine.

Kurt squeaked happily and tore out of his seatbelt before bolting from the car. Blaine followed him at a more sedate pace, pausing only to grab his folder containing the contracts he’d finished last night. Kurt was leaning against the bonnet of the Lexus, the most attractive hood ornament ever conceived in his dark navy pea coat and light brown skinny chino’s, the light breeze ruffling a few stray hairs in the perfect coif Kurt always styled his hair into these days.

The Dom closed the space between them and grasped his hand but Kurt didn’t seem to properly register the action as he took in the outside of the building with wide curious eyes. Blaine knew it didn’t look like much from this perspective… in fact, much of the exterior still looked exactly like a warehouse, albeit cleaner and slightly primped, but Blaine liked the edgy, natural look of it. The fact that they didn’t need to overdo it on architectural designs or advertising to pull in people, he liked to think they’d do that with the work and passion they put into the place and the music.

“Ready?” he asked, leaning into his subs ear.

Kurt snapped his head around, tearing his eyes away from the grey, almost nondescript building. He was about to ask if Blaine was sure they had the right place when he saw the look of fierce pride on his Dom’s face. “Yeah. Show me what you’ve got, Anderson,” he smiled, a tease to his bright blue eyes.

Blaine huffed a laugh and towed him towards the door, pausing to unlock it then type in the code for the alarm before flicking the lights on.

Kurt caught his breathe.

The space was bigger than it looked from the outside; the wide corridor stretched in front of them breaking off into various different doors and hallways and the color was a vibrant blue shot through with accents of purple and silver. Kurt approved.

“This is the private entrance, we’ve got the public one out the front that leads to a small reception but we’ve just started out and we haven’t got that many artists coming here just yet so no one really uses it,” Blaine explained, his smooth voice carrying in the airy corridor as he moved them along it.

“Blaine, this is amazing,” Kurt breathed, eyes eating everything up from the framed records on the walls to the posters of what was obviously an array of influences for Blaine, David and Wes; Broadway, Rock, Motown, Jazz and the list only continued the further down the hall you went, a mishmash of everything the men loved and it all just somehow fit together, collaborated and vibed to create this energy that was infectious and heart stopping.
Blaine smiled so wide his cheeks hurt, adding to the ache in his heart as it filled to bursting with affection and love for his sub, his pride over this place that had been his baby for so long somehow validated in a way Blaine didn’t think it could be under Kurt’s praise.

They went through a door into a space that looked very much Blaine’s. The guitar in the corner, a Beatles signed vinyl album holding pride of place over a small desk set in the corner out of the way, that Kurt was sure Blaine hardly spent any time actually sitting at considering the amount of junk haphazardly thrown there. There was a laptop concealed amongst that junk and song books and music sheets scattered around every visible surface including the comfortable looking black sofa. Some were other people’s compositions, some Blaine’s himself- Kurt could recognize the handwriting.

“And this is my office, David’s is through that door there and Wes’ after that,” Blaine said as he indicated with his free hand.

Kurt looked to the side to see the conjoined doorway, “I’m gonna go ahead and assume that Wes’ is the only one that looks like an actual office?” Kurt teased with a grin over his shoulder as he detached their hands and walked further into the space. It even smelled like Blaine in here, concentrated and strong, belaying the fact that he spent a lot of his free time here before Kurt came along.

“Hey! I have office-y things in here,” Blaine retorted, walking to his desk and dropping his folder there before rummaging around until he found a stapler of all things and held it up triumphantly, eyebrows raised in an ‘I told you so’ expression.

Kurt sucked in his lips to try and stop himself from laughing, even pressed the back of his hand against his mouth, but eventually it all came falling out.

“Very professional,” Kurt giggled uncontrollably, trying to be serious and failing spectacularly. “It was right under the slinky toy.”

Blaine mock scowled at him throwing the stapler back down before rushing Kurt and throwing him
over his shoulder in one smooth movement.

Kurt didn’t even see it coming and he shrieked a little, fingers grabbing handfuls of Blaine’s black coat at his mid-back. “Oh my God, what are you doing?!”

“Showing you professional,” Blaine said casually walking them back through the open door and along to a different part of the building.

“Put me down, Blaine!” Kurt demanded haughtily, squirming and struggling and he couldn’t help it but he was laughing too, completely ruining the effect of his protests. “Blaine, c’mon,” he whined. How was his Dom this strong? And why was it turning him on so much? He blushed to the roots of his hair, actually happy he could blame the coloring on a blood rush from being upside down.

Blaine laughed, tapping him lightly on the ass. “Aw lovely, I’m pampering you, enjoy it.”

Kurt stiffened up, mouth falling into an perfect ‘o’ at the touch before they were finally stopping and he found himself being slide back off and down Blaine’s body, faces inches apart when his feet hit the ground again. “Um,” Kurt breathed hazily, caught up in Blaine’s eyes, all coherent thoughts destroyed.

His Dom leaned in further still and breathed hot across his mouth. “So what do you think?”

I think we should kiss.

Blaine smiled wide, all perfect white teeth and smile lines as he tugged at Kurt’s tiny waist. “Really now?”

“I just said that out loud didn’t I.”

Blaine cupped his chin gently making the subs heart pitter patter tellingly and Kurt was just about to close his eyes when the Dom turned his face away and the rest of the room finally came back into focus with his confusion.

They were in a recording studio.
"Oh…” was all he could think of to say, like the air had been punched from his lungs as he stared at the huge panel of switches, dials and recording equipment that was the main feature in the large room. Through the glass was an actual studio where a microphone and headphones were set up along with various instruments all in pristine condition. Everything was shiny and new and foreign, it was like stepping into a dream, nothing seemed quite tangible until you touched it and so that’s how he found himself walking up to the massive board and tentatively reaching out a finger for a switch.

“Blaine…” he said, eyes flicking everywhere and never settling, trying to take it all in why still trying to keep his cool.

“Yeah, lovely?” the Dom answered, soaking in Kurt’s reaction like sunlight.

“You have a recording studio,” he informed him quietly like it would be news to him.

Blaine bit his lip to hide his grin as he walked up behind him, settling his arms around Kurt’s waist and his head on Kurt’s shoulder. “What, really?” he mocked surprise, turning wide eyed, and then asked playfully. “Professional enough?”

“Blaine you have a recording studio!” Kurt exclaimed loudly ignoring the jab, his vibrating body finally exhaling the tension as he bounced on his toes and clapped his hands gleefully. “Oh my god this is so amazing! I’m in a studio, I’m in your studio!” he rambled on and on turning around in Blaine’s arms to sling his own around his Dom’s neck and plant a firm kiss on his mouth.

Why didn’t I take him here weeks ago? Blaine thought fuzzily as he returned the heated kiss, trying to keep up with the whirlwind that was his sub as he broke away again to buzz around the equipment.

“What the hell does it all do?” he asked interestedly, turning a dial absently here and flicking another switch there. “You can’t need this many buttons!”

Blaine smirked and sat down in the plush seat, pulling Kurt down on his lap and working around the fascinated sub as he switched everything on explaining a few things as he went, demonstrating a few
others on the screens and letting Kurt play around to his heart’s content.

“So you produce everything here?” Kurt asked, eager to learn about Blaine’s work, fiddling with the pitch controls.

“We have another studio down the hall, but since our client base is still relatively small we use this one mainly,” Blaine told him, leaning back in the chair and running a hand up and down Kurt’s spine. They had shed their heavy coats and Blaine was left in a white shirt and green sweater with his jeans, while Kurt had on a tight cotton, navy, long sleeved top that was a similar shade to his coat, with a simple scarf around his neck.

Kurt already knew that Blaine, David and Wes wanted to finish up school before they jumped fully into the studio, his Dom had told him that they wanted to give it the time it deserved, so they did enough to get by and turn a small profit, but it was nothing ground setting just yet.

“Have you recorded any of your stuff here?” he asked next, looking over his shoulder at his Dom. He knew Blaine was amazing so it was a question at the forefront of his mind, plus, all those music sheets told him he was working on something.

Blaine swallowed as he met that clear blue gaze. “Uh, I might have dabbled a little.”

“He may have dabbled a lot,” came the voice from the door and they glanced over to see a smirking David Thompson propped there, arms crossed over a white tee and leather jacket, dark jeans hugging his long legs with high tops on his feet.

“What are you doing here?” Blaine asked, surprised.

“Well I was actually going to work, unlike someone.” He smirked wider. “You better not have defiled the chair, B. Otherwise I’ll have to inform Wes and he’ll probably lecture you for hours on the seriousness of professional and personal boundaries for the workplace… AKA don’t fuck in the office,” he grinned, teeth gleaming and Kurt almost choked on his own tongue.

“D,” Blaine warned with a frown at the tasteless joke, squeezing Kurt’s hip in reassurance.

“It’s okay,” Kurt promised even though he was blushing like a schoolgirl. “I’m just gonna check out in there,” he said, pointing to the recording booth. “You guys can talk… business.”

He hopped off of Blaine’s lap and headed towards the soundproofed door and slipped inside with a small smile sent in Blaine’s direction. The Dom held up his hand for five minutes and Kurt nodded through the glass waving them off as he took in the new space he was surrounded by.

He walked around the polished area, trailing fingers over instruments idly and daydreaming what it would be like to actually be one of the people who got to record their own music here, allowing himself to get lost in his head.

Blaine scowled at David as soon as Kurt had turned away from him. “Thank you for that, asshole.”

“He knows I was just kidding.” David rolled his eyes, sinking onto the couch at the back of the room, arms slung over the back casually.

Blaine hummed dubiously and flicked on the switch so he could hear what Kurt was doing in the room, muffled because he wasn’t that close to the microphone, but he wanted to make sure his sub was fine. It was stupid, he knew, Kurt was hardly going to get attacked by a piano monster or something, but the protective streak in him constantly reared its head and small things like that kept it sated.
“So work?” Blaine asked curiously.

“Yeah I wanted to check on some things, you know that big contract Wes was talking about?” David asked rubbing his fingers over the leather idly.

“Yeah, I thought he was still working out the kinks before he presented it to us to decide?” Blaine questioned.

“Well I just wanted to do a little homework myself, you know Wes likes to keep inside that little box of his, I don’t want us to miss out on something big because we haven’t covered all the angles,” David grinned and Blaine rolled his eyes back.

“You know who it is don’t you.”

“I may have used some powers of persuasion,” he hedged looking around the room innocently as the sound of tinkling keys filled the room, from Kurt running his fingers over the piano presumably.

“You got him drunk,” Blaine guessed dryly. Everyone knew that the controlled leader of the Warblers council couldn’t hold his liquor.

“It was informative and entertaining.” He threw his hands up. “What more could I ask for.”

Blaine chuckled despite himself, rocking the chair back and forth slowly as Kurt strummed a guitars strings lightly. “You’re not gonna tell me are you?” he guessed again.

David threw him a shit eating grin. “You want it, go wet Wes’ whistle.”

Blaine screwed up his nose at the obvious innuendo hidden there. “I’m good thanks. You keep Wes’ whistle wet plenty, I don’t think I’d be needed,” he snarked back.

“Asshole.”

Kurt walked full circle before sitting himself down on the chair in front of the microphone attached to the ceiling and wet his lips nervously as he stared at it intently.

Just sing something, a part of his brain was chanting to him. They won’t hear, it’s not even turned on.

He shook his head to himself but a part of him was really yearning to express himself. He hadn’t sung since Blaine had claimed him and he missed it. When he was still living with his dad his voice coming from his room was a common occurrence, filling up the house with whatever he was feeling at the time. He hadn’t felt comfortable enough to do it at the Anderson residence at first, but that didn’t change that he wanted to. He wanted to all the time and he was so tempted to try and put himself out there to join the Warblers, but the memory of his one and only audition for Glee club in McKinley held him back. What if they hated him? What if they ridiculed his voice like they did?

Logically he knew they wouldn’t be as cruel about it, but it was still a fear sitting heavy on his voice box and strangling out the sounds he wanted to make. He exhaled heavily and shook his head. He hated himself for letting them win, letting them decide for him what he did in his life. It light a match in him and he lifted his eyes back to the microphone in determination.

He could do it. He could just sing what he was feeling.

A nervous glance at the figures through the window told him they were still deep in conversation, Blaine’s profile to him looking gorgeous in the lower lighting of the studio. He bit his lip and closed
his eyes and just… sang. No thinking, just feeling, letting his heart decide the song that sprang to his lips as he played the music in his head, the tinkling piano keys and slow drum…

*Remember those walls I built?*
*Well, baby they're tumbling down*
*And they didn't even put up a fight*
*They didn't even make a sound*

It didn’t surprise him that Blaine was the song on the tip of his tongue waiting to unfold and he softly smiled through the lines that came quiet at first, before building up into something much more. He thought back to how determined he’d been to keep a fortress around his heart and how easily it was for Blaine to breach it, to disarm him and leave him utterly vulnerable and Kurt had let him. He hadn’t put up a fight, not really, he’d let himself be swept away on a tide of feeling and emotion, sometimes still and sometimes crashing around him intense and powerful, but Kurt didn’t ever want to be rid of it.

*I found a way to let you in*
*But, I never really had a doubt*
*Standing in the light of your halo*
*I got my angel now*

It scared him, he had already fallen way past the point of no return here, but all he could do was trust in Blaine to catch him. All those fairytales he’d read about perfect matches, about true love, and he felt like he was on the cusp of something here like they’d always talked about, but he was almost afraid to push that little bit further to see just what this burning thing he was standing on the edge of was. It felt like it could take him apart, pull one string and make him unravel.

*It's like I've been awakened*
*Every rule I had you breakin'*
*It's the risk that I'm taking*
*I ain't never gonna shut you out!*

Blaine couldn’t describe just what he had felt the moment he heard that soft, angelic voice drift over the speakers to hover in the air around them. Everything stilled, everything focused down to that one single point and Blaine felt *awe* like he hadn’t known the meaning of the word until now. His heart was a jackhammer in his chest and it swelled with every line, every soft rise and fall in tone and pitch that was executed so flawless and beautifully as that voice wrapped around words that were meant for him. Kurt, his beautiful, beautiful boy was singing for him, about him, he felt it as if Kurt had enthused every word into his skin and Blaine could hardly swallow past his dry mouth as he eventually swung to face his salvation. Because Kurt had saved him, he had come along just when he needed him the most and brightened his life to the point where all he wanted to do was smile and laugh and love and it was astonishing.

“Blaine, he…” David trailed off in a similar stated of reverent shock, but Blaine hardly heard him, hardly saw him, he was stuck on Kurt, like the tide was a slave to the moons pull.

He was a vision in there. Eyes closed and pouring out his heart when he thought no one could hear him, making it so much more intimate. And if Blaine could have felt anything negative right now he would have felt bad for listening in on something so private, but it was like Kurt had washed everything else away in that moment.

*Everywhere I'm looking now*
I'm surrounded by your embrace
Baby, I can see your halo
You know you're my saving grace
You're everything I need and more
It's written all over your face
Baby, I can feel your halo
Pray it won't fade away

I can feel your halo, halo, halo
I can see your halo, halo, halo
I can feel your halo, halo, halo
I can see your halo, halo...
Halo, ooh oo-.

Kurt opened his eyes for a split second, feeling the hairs on his neck standing on end, a burning on his face that he found came from two set of eyes laser focused on him. It took him not even seconds to work out they could hear him and he cut off abruptly, a sick feeling jolting through him.

They heard you singing.

“Oh god…” he whispered, face draining of color.

That’s all it took for Blaine to be off his chair, barely hitting off the record button before running into the studio to gather a stiff, trembling Kurt into his arms. He hushed him gently, running his fingers through the back of his hair as his face hid against his collarbone.

“Shh, lovely… what’s wrong? You were amazing baby, perfect, why are you embarrassed?” he asked softly. He pulled back and cupped Kurt’s face so he could look at him and frowned when he saw tears gathering in his subs eyes.

“I didn’t think… I didn’t want you to hear me, I thought you couldn’t… the light wasn’t on in there when I came in here,” he rambled, upset, hands wringing together on top of his lap.

Blaine rubbed his thumbs over the apples of Kurt’s now flushed cheeks. He was happy at least the color was back. “Why wouldn’t you want me to hear you, lovely?” he questioned, trying not to let any of his thoughts leak into the tone. But they were there, screaming to be voiced. Was it because of what the song meant? It didn’t make sense to Blaine. He already knew that Kurt cared about him, so that couldn’t be it… could it?

“I have a…” Kurt trailed off and growled almost angrily to himself before he blurted, “I have a girl’s voice.”

Blaine’s frown increased tenfold and realization dawned. Kurt didn’t like his voice? That was insane! Blaine had never heard anything so unique and stunning. “Kurt,” he started sternly. “You don’t have a girl’s voice. Your voice is your own and it’s unique and wonderful, baby. I don’t think I’ve ever, or ever will hear anything that reaches into my soul as much as your voice just did,” he revealed passionately, with utmost sincerity.

“Blaine…” Kurt breathed, brows scrunching, unsure how to take it in, how to take Blaine saying such lovely things so reminiscent of what his mother used to say about his voice. A tear fell but he couldn’t help it. That sort of validation and praise from his Dom was unbelievable to feel coursing through his veins.
“Why did you say that, lovely? Do you really think that?” Blaine asked worriedly as Kurt swiped the wayward tail of wetness away.

“No… I… I tried out for Glee club at McKinley and they said…” He couldn’t finish it, but the implication was enough for Blaine to guess. “I used to sing for my mom the most, she used to say I was all the things you just said… but then they told me I wasn’t and I just…”

“Believed them,” Blaine filled in.

“Yes… no! I mean I… I got scared,” Kurt struggled to explain himself, eyes faraway. “I love singing, I feel closer to my mom when I do it and they just ripped into that and I couldn’t go through that kind of pain again. It hurt too much… so I hid it away. Safe.”

“Just like your books, the one’s your mother gave you,” Blaine whispered in realization at just how hard Kurt clung onto the things he loved, how fiercely he loved them and fought to protect them. Blaine desperately wanted to be one of those things himself.

Kurt swallowed thickly and nodded, looking down at Blaine’s chest.

The Dom leaned down and kissed him on the forehead lingeringly. “You’re magical, Kurt, never let anyone tell you differently and if they do then don’t believe them, baby, please. You have a wonderful gift and you should share it because it’s beautiful.”

Kurt clutched onto Blaine and allowed just one more tear to snake, hot and wet down his face as if to wash everything else away. All the doubts and fears and insecurities.

The door slid open an undefinable amount of time later and David popped his head in. “I’m sorry if I’m interrupting a moment but if you’re not gonna ask him I will,” he said seriously.

Shit. David had heard him sing too. “Ask me what?” Kurt mumbled and blushed, wiping his face self-consciously, happy that Blaine was mostly blocking him from view like a shield, before poking his head out to look at the Dom properly.

“Wes will flip when he hears your range, superstar, I bet all my money that you’re a countertenor, freaking all of it!” David grinned enthusiastically, pointing at him.

“Ask me what?” Kurt asked again, a bit more forcefully because he was agitated and a little overwhelmed by the amount of praise he was receiving.

David rolled his eyes. “What else, after a performance like that? I almost wanted to get down on my knees and worship at your altar!”

Kurt ignored the compliments otherwise he’d probably die of embarrassment and instead looked exasperatedly back at Blaine, who simply smiled down at him reassuringly. “The Warblers, lovely.”

The sub shook his head immediately even though a part of him was dancing on the inside at the opportunity he thought he’d never get. “No… I couldn’t-”

“We just recorded that stunning rendition already, Kurt. We could just play it for the rest of the Warblers and they could take a vote… you’re guaranteed, trust me, I am an esteemed member of the council and I do part own a recording studio,” David cut in teasingly with a genuine encouraging smile.

Kurt couldn’t help but smile back briefly before he buried his face in Blaine’s stomach with a groan, making the Dom laugh and cup his head.
“Alright there?”

“Mmhmm,” Kurt mumbled back.

“There’s no pressure, lovely. But you really are amazing and we’d be lucky to have you if it was something you wanted to do,” Blaine said tenderly, stroking his hair.

And it was something he wanted to do. It was. But could he really just do it? Throw away his fears and say yes? He thought it over for a few silent moments. He’d done scarier things, faced down insecurities over his and Blaine’s relationship, the misconceptions that arose… god… was he really considering this? The more he thought about it the more it was shifting towards a yes.

He uncovered his face again and straightened up slowly. “I want Jeff with me,” he said suddenly, the feeling hitting him out of nowhere, but sticking and growing.

“He’d have to audition too, but sure, he’s more than welcome,” David said with a shrug and Kurt frowned sadly as that particular spanned got thrown into the works.

He hadn’t thought this through at all, but he wanted Jeff with him, he knew it would be good for him to start getting out more and being active, especially with a group as nice as the Warbler’s seemed to be.

“He’s not going to do it,” he said quietly.

“Why not?” David asked, brow furrowed and Kurt sighed and looked up with heavy eyes.

“I think he could be okay with blending in, and he’s an amazing dancer, but the audition is a solo and he’s… well it’s complicated, but he would never agree to that,” Kurt tried his best to explain without revealing personal information about his friend and the two older Doms stood in silence until David broke into a grin.

“Well if he says yes we could arrange the same thing we did for you. He could audition in front of a few people he feels comfortable around and we can play the recording of him to the rest of the guys,” he suggested and Kurt slowly beamed.

“You can do that?”

“I’m a council member, cutie, and I say yes. Thad is a puppy who can’t shut up about wanting to be friends with Jeff so he’s cool and Wes can’t say no when it’s against the majority. We’re all set,” he smiled and Kurt whooped joyfully, jumping up and hugging Blaine around the neck tightly.

“Is this you agreeing?” David asked eagerly and Kurt gave him a hesitant nod and a small smile over Blaine’s shoulder.

“Baby, are you sure?” Blaine asked, wanting to double check with him.

Kurt pulled back and looked into Blaine’s earnest, concerned eyes and smiled, feeling love fill his heart. He felt stronger with Blaine, like he could really do this. “Yeah… yeah, I want to.”
Jeff couldn't remember the last time he felt so out of place which, considering his daily feeling of drifting around without an anchor, was really saying something.

The huge, ornate wooden door stared at him judgingly as he paced the marble tiled floor in front of it waiting for his name to be called out. The sound of them beckoning would be a signal for him to enter the Warbler hall and offer a piece of himself for someone to judge; like he didn't have enough of that so far, like it didn't scare him to death.

He knew what they would say: that it was a nice try, that he did his best, that it was decent but still not good enough to be a part of something as big as the Warblers. It wouldn’t surprise him in the least if Kurt got in. His best friend had a phenomenal voice, truly something special, but Jeff’s was just… Jeff. How could he ever hope to be good enough to belong with Blaine and the rest of the boys who were just as pristinely perfect as he was?

He just didn't belong there.

And yet… there he was… waiting for the massive door to open and to enter the room that felt warm and familiar to a part of him that still wanted to live and be, but so frighteningly threatening to the other part of him. The one that shut out the rest of the world and built a wall around all of his dreams to prevent them from making him go after them.

He was there waiting to audition for the Warblers knowing exactly how he got there.

"It was amazing, Jeff. Their studio is like… amazing… I know I keep using that word but it is! They have every instrument you could possibly imagine and I got to press all the buttons and hear Blaine and David goof around and record their voices and play with them," Kurt rattled off to an impressed Jeff as he lounged on the sofa in the Anderson's living room.

He was there almost every day hanging around with Kurt and Blaine and he never expected to get so comfortable around a Dom the way he felt around his best friend's. Blaine was kind and kind of goofy and relaxed all the time and he took care of Kurt with so much gentleness and love he just couldn't not like him. Blaine made sure he was safe as well, and as much as it embarrassed him sometimes that he needed it, he was grateful for it and he had learned to trust Blaine the way he never thought he would trust a Dom other than his dad or Kurt’s dad again. He didn’t feel threatened, he didn’t feel unwelcome because Blaine was like an extension of Kurt, the other half of his best friend and so it was impossible not to appreciate the friendship he offered.

The remaining pangs of jealousy have finally melted away and he could now be perfectly happy for his best friend and the happiness the Dom brought him almost daily.

"That sounds really cool. Did you sing?" Jeff asked, properly impressed and curious as Kurt rattled a story about how he had stepped out so Blaine and David could talk business and he started singing because he thought they couldn’t hear. But then they had heard anyway and said he sounded ‘good’ (most likely an under-exaggeration on Kurt’s part) and that they were willing to consider that song his official audition for the Warblers if he would just join, because Wes would flip over having a countertenor and then Kurt said that he would love to join under the condition that Jeff joined as well and they said yes and… wait... What??

"What?" Jeff paled, arms clenching the pillow in his lap and fingers tightening almost painfully around the squishy fabric.

"I said I told them I would join if you did," Kurt repeated and Jeff threw the pillow back onto the couch before standing up and turning towards him, anger and fear and pain etched into his skin.
"I hear you... what I don't get is why would you do that when you know I can't do it?" he asked, tension hunching his shoulders and eyes misting over.

"Because I want to do this with my best friend," Kurt said resolutely, standing up as well and facing Jeff who was close to fainting.

"I can't... Kurt, I can't," he wheezed out and gasped when a warm hand encased his.

"I believe in you," Kurt said softly and Jeff huffed out a bitter laugh.

“There's nothing left to believe in, Kurt. I just... I just want to survive,” he said desperately.

"I know. And for the longest time I was willing to help you do just that. But... it's not enough, Jeff. Surviving, going through the motions. I remember how you spoke about Dalton back when we were stuck in McKinley... how you dreamt of going there and joining the Warbler's and joining the art club and I wanted all of that for you so, so badly. You're here now, honey. You have the chance to do everything you've ever wanted and you've closed off and gave up already and I just can't let you do it," Kurt said and Jeff felt his eyes sting and tears spill over as he listened to what his friend was saying.

He wanted, so badly, to belong the way he had always dreamt he would if he ever got the chance to go to Dalton. His chances were stolen from him by his old Dom and he thought he would never get another chance. It seemed easy to dream those things and say them out loud to Kurt after everything went down when he was sure he would never get them. But it was there, right in front of him now and he could just reach out and grab it if he dared. He was scared, terrified... but what if it was the last chance he would ever get? Was he able to let it go and live his entire life knowing he could have had it all?

"Would you be there with me?" he whispered and Kurt squeezed his hand.

"If you want me to be of course I will. But I talked to Blaine and he said you could audition in front of three people of your choosing. The rest of the Warblers will then listen to the recording and take a vote like they're doing for me," Kurt explained and Jeff felt his heart pound against his ribs almost achingly fast.

"I... I want to... I really do but... but I don't know if I can," he said sadly, hands shaking and voice cracking.

"You can, I know you can... you, Jeff Sterling, are a fighter and you can do whatever you set your mind to," Kurt said in determination and Jeff cracked a timid smile at him in gratitude.

"You said... you said I could chose who to audition in front?" he checked after another quiet moment and Kurt nodded.

"Yup. Blaine and David both said that Wes was the only one who still cared about all the stuck up rules and since he is only one third of the council nobody paid him any attention anyway. So you get to pick," Kurt beamed and Jeff ran a hand over his mark subconsciously, the way he always did when he was afraid.

"Do I pick right now?" he asked and Kurt shrugged.

"If you know who you want then sure."

"Um... okay... Blaine... is... is that okay?" he checked to make sure his friend wouldn't mind him picking his own Dom.
“Of course it’s okay. I expected that. You two get along great and he makes you feel comfortable because you know him. I’m glad my Dom and my best friend get along so great.” Kurt reassured him and Jeff smiled gratefully. “Okay, who else?”

Jeff thought long and hard about the boys he met not so long ago. They all seemed nice and while he was wary and kept his distance none of them ever said a single word out of place.

One face popped into his mind and he smiled gently.

“Thad… he… he’s nice,” he admitted remembering the small, cute sub who had enough energy to power up a small village and was genuinely sweet and caring.

"Awesome. He's a member of the council as well so that makes things even better," Kurt approved and Jeff nodded.

"I don't know who else to pick... I don't know them well enough,” he said, raking his mind and going over their faces swimming in his head.

"Can I suggest someone?” Kurt asked.

"Yeah... I guess." He shrugged, nodding in consent, he trusted Kurt implicitly after all.

"Sebastian," he said and Jeff ran the suggestion inside his own thoughts.

Seb was a submissive with the biggest mouth ever. He was bitchy and sassy and fierce and it seemed his Dom adored that about him. He’d stood up for Kurt and himself more than once and even if he would probably kill you for saying it, he cared about his friends.

He would be a good choice… and he reminded him of a certain best friend of his already.

"Yeah... that's... that sounds good. Sebastian is the third one then,” he confirmed with a nod and Kurt let out a squeal.

"YES!! Okay, I'm gonna tell Blaine and you can audition whenever you want. We need to pick you a song!” He clapped excitedly and Jeff agreed to auditioning sooner rather than later to prevent losing his guts and backing out.

"I already have a song though,” he admitted and Kurt eyed him curiously.

"Really, what is it?” he asked in curiosity and Jeff shook his head.

"It's... it's a surprise,” he answered with a soft, sad smile on his face.

And now came the time to let his walls down and sing and he had no idea what in the world possessed him and made him say yes. He could literally feel his lungs fighting to expand and contract to bring air in and out, his heart pounding deafeningly in his ears and his entire body shaking beyond his control.

Lyrics of the song he had chosen swam inside his head, screaming and scaring him even further, pushing him to the brink of turning around and running away into the safety of his own room.

He knew there were only four people in that room; three people he had chosen and Kurt.

The rest of the Warblers were informed of his audition and while they had agreed to allow him to audition in private they had insisted on being only a few doors down, ready to hear the recording right away and to vote both him and Kurt in or out at the same time.
It terrified him.

Knowing that they were there, even if he wouldn’t have to sing in front of him made his stomach turn in anxiety… what if he could hear them laughing when they listened to the recording? His fingers tightened around the CD with the music to his song Blaine managed to make for him and the plastic rattled against the case with his trembles.

He couldn’t do it.

He couldn’t do it.

He couldn’t…

"Jeff, we’re ready for you," Blaine's soft voice startled him and he snapped his eyes up to find the Dom looking at him from the doorway, pointing to the room where he could see Kurt sitting on one of the chairs and Thad and Sebastian taking the two seats on the Council's table, the third one obviously reserved for Blaine.

"I…” he tried, but his voice failed him, creaking awkwardly and dying out.

"Are you okay?" Blaine asked, eyes squinting worriedly.

"I-I can't..." He shook his head desperately, tears spilling over his lids and lower lip shaking. God, he was so pathetic, he could hear Kevin laughing at him now.

"Yes you can," a new voice came from just a few steps down the hallway and he felt his body both tense and relax at the same time at the sound of it; so calm, so warm, so gentle.

Nick.

"Blaine, can you please give us a moment?" Nick asked and Jeff startled, reaching out to take Blaine's hand and plead for him not to go.

Blaine looked at his friend apologetically and returned the grip, seeing Nick frown and his hands ball up into tense fists. Wary of his friend’s possible imminent meltdown, but mindful of Jeff’s fragile state he redirected his attention to the submissive.

"Jeff, would that be okay? Kurt and I are just behind these doors… along with Thad and Seb. Nothing bad will happen to you," he assured and Jeff made a small whimper in fear as he looked askance at the beautiful Dom that stood just inside the room and called him an angel and offered him things he knew he couldn't even dream of, let alone have.

Nick didn’t move, was careful and still, not posing a visible threat at all, but Jeff knew… he just knew that allowing him to meant being in danger again. He couldn’t relive that, he wouldn’t survive it a second time. But Kurt's words came to mind out of nowhere and he had thought about them. He thought that maybe he could be strong if he just pushed himself a little bit out of his comfort zone. After all, he was on the cusp of auditioning for the Warblers, he was drawing again… making Nick his friend didn’t seem to far above that did it? Maybe he could…

"I promise I won't hurt you," Nick placated quietly and Blaine nodded at him encouragingly, giving his fingers a gentle squeeze.

Jeff licked his lips but didn’t say no immediately so Blaine took that as his cue and released his hand, heading back into the room, closing the door and leaving him alone with the Dom that made everything inside him wake up when all the wanted to do was to let it all rest.
Tension filled silence ruled them and he eyed Nick warily as he took a step towards him and he instinctively pushed his own body back in response; hitting something and startling when he realized he had trapped himself between the wall and the Dom.

Nick stopped and held up his hands, a look of pain pinching lines into his handsome face. "I won't come any closer. Please, angel... please don't fear me," Nick begged and Jeff lowered his eyes to the floor, hating the way his body shivered at the nickname; the way his heart stuttered when he knew he didn't deserve to be called that.

"Don't call me that," the whispered thought broke through his lips and he bit the bottom one to stop himself from saying anything else.

"Because you don't like it or because you think you're not worth it?" Nick asked, voice firm, but still not commanding or scary.

"W-what?" Jeff snapped his eyes up in confusion.

How could he know?

How did he always seem to know when to stop pushing, when to stop approaching and when to reassure him that he meant no harm? How was it possible that he was reading his signals so correctly after one single conversation? He didn't know him, even his own parents didn't know what to do with him half the time. He only one who had ever come close to knowing absolutely everything about him was Kurt.

"Do you want me to stop calling you that because you don't like it or because you think you don't deserve it?" he repeated his question, gauging his reactions intently and Jeff gulped nervously, averting his eyes from that intense chocolate gaze.

"Does it matter?" he asked to buy himself some time, anxiously glancing back at the Dom and Nick smiled at him, making his knees turn to jelly and unable to tear his eyes away again.

"Yes, it does. Because if you simply hate the nickname I'll stop right now. But if you don't want to be called that for the sole reason that you think you're not worthy of it then I can't promise to stop because I think you're more beautiful than any angel that ever existed," Nick answered honestly and Jeff shook his head in determination against the butterflies exploding in his stomach and the telltale flush on his cheeks.

He couldn't listen to these lies about himself coming from this gorgeous Dom. He just couldn't let himself believe the compliments he was paying him when he knew it would only end up hurting more in the end when he took them back.

"Don't... please just..." he begged and Nick's eyes softened as he took another careful step forward.

"We don't have to talk about this now. You have an audition to go to and I don't want to throw you off track," Nick said, trying to weasel a promise of a future conversation out of the blonde sub without scaring him into it.

Jeff felt the ground shake under his feet when he was roughly reminded of the audition he had forgotten about the minute Nick spoke.

"Oh god," he breathed out shakily, fear evident in his voice.

"I understand that you're scared, but I know you can do this. Just breathe, calm down, and do it," Nick reassured in a voice that startled Jeff.
There was something about it. Hard but still soft. Unbreakable but still yielding somehow. It was something he had never heard before and it made his insides warm and his heart settle down easily, giving way to a type of serenity he hadn't felt in a long while.

It wasn't a command.

He knew what those felt like; compelling and binding and rough. This was gentle; a soft caress upon his skin that warmed it and smoothed the ugly wrinkles away. This was comfort and safety and he basked in it as he nodded his head gently and reached for the doorknob to enter the room almost in a daze.

Turning around he saw Nick's back as he too retreated into the room a hallway away, halting all of a sudden before he stepped back out to call softly after him.

"Um... s-sir," he started shakily and Nick turned around to look at him, an inviting smile on his lips.

"It's Nick if that makes you feel more comfortable. What is it?" he asked gently, hands in his pockets.

"T-thank you," Jeff whispered, not even sure it carried to him, insides jumping with how the Dom made him feel with just a few well-placed sentences that settled his mind.

He did. "Any time, angel." Nick smiled warmly and walked into the room, leaving Jeff to take a deep breath and do the same.

He walked in and stood in front of the panel assembled there, handing the CD to Kurt and turning to the "jury" for the day. Thad, Blaine and Sebastian sat at the council table, Blaine's eyes concerned and Thad's questioning and curious, while Sebastian just looked bored as he always did, but he offered a reassuring nod to Jeff when he glanced at him timidly.
“Okay, then. We're here to listen to the audition of Jeff Sterling. By the orders of Head Council Member Wes Montgomery, the council for this audition consists of regular council member, Thad Harwood, and temporary members, Sebastian Smythe and Blaine Anderson. This audition will be recorded and played for the rest of the group to vote on. You may now introduce yourself. State your name, age and the song you'll be singing. The music will start right after that and you can sing,” Blaine rattled the annoyingly formal introduction he hated, but Wes insisted on for posterity, and since it would all be on tape he couldn’t just skip it.

“Okay, um... I... I'm Jeff Sterling, eighteen years old and I'll... I'll be singing a cover of Evanescence’s, *Lost in Paradise,*” he revealed, barely audible and Blaine nodded to Kurt who pressed play on the sound system, the sound of haunting, skin piercing music filled the room in an instant.

Jeff closed his eyes for a moment, hands shaking and heart pounding as his tried his best to find that sense of calm Nick caused just moments ago... but it was gone.

His tongue twisted as his cue came and went and the beginning of the song remained locked inside his throat. "I'm s-sorry...I..." he stuttered, shame colouring his cheeks and bringing tears back into his eyes.

"That's okay. Just take a moment and we can try again," Thad's sweet voice came and he looked over to him, gratitude shining from his face as he nodded slowly.

He took a deep breath when the music stopped and tried to find something to anchor him, to help him through. All of a sudden an image of a sunshiny smile flashed inside his head and he stilled his fingers and took a freeing breath, meeting the music lingering in the air around them and starting the song with a shaky but strong voice; pure, and liberating and emotional.

It stunned them all to silence as the blonde in front of them allowed himself to feel freely for the first time in such a long time.

They let him live through it... not moving a muscle... not making a sound; just listening and realizing they were seeing something beyond special. Something huge for someone who had been so hurt he wasn't even sure of who he was anymore.

It was his moment and they allowed him to have it completely.

*I've been believing in something so distant
As if I was human
And I've been denying this feeling of hopelessness
In me, in me*

The key was much lower, his range nowhere near what the original artists was, but Jeff didn’t choose this song to try something fancy, to impress or wow, he chose it because it spoke to him. It took all those harsh, jagged shards in him that had been taped together so haphazardly and placed them into some kind of order without him having to hurt himself trying to traverse that painful place himself. It was an outlet to pour what was left of himself into, someone else’s words, but now his voice, his pain, his emotion.

*All the promises I made
Just to let you down
You believed in me, but I'm broken*
There was a flash of Nick’s face and he screwed his eyes closed against the hopeful expression he saw there before Jeff had collapsed it. But he had to do it. He had to, before Nick found out for himself and the expression found its way there on its own. Jeff didn’t think he could have handled that sort of rejection again and so he got there first, extinguished the spark before it flamed no matter how bad he hurt himself in the process. Better a little pain now than agony later.

_I have nothing left_
_And all I feel is this cruel wanting_

He almost choked over the words. It wasn’t fair. Why did he have to feel like this? Why did he have to see Nick, why was the universe taunting him with this?

_We've been falling for all this time_
_And now I’m lost in paradise_

_As much as I’d like the past not to exist_
_It still does_
_And as much as I'd like to feel like I belong here_
_I'm just as scared as you_

He had a trail of disaster in his wake and an empty future in front of him; stretching and yawning blackness and he wished that just for a second he could forget it. That he could pretend that he was whole and happy, that being here at Dalton, the place he’d always dreamed of would magically fix something inside him but it didn’t and it hadn’t. He was surrounded by this safe haven, but he’d never felt more adrift amongst the happy masses.

_I have nothing left_
_And all I feel is this cruel wanting_

_We've been falling for all this time_
_And now I’m lost in paradise_

He opened his eyes and stared at the floor as he belted the next line out clutching at his chest.

_Run away, run away_
_One day we won’t feel this pain anymore_

_Take it all away_
_Shadows of you_
_Cause they won't let me go_

He wanted ‘him’ out of his head. He wanted that viscous voice out of his ear, the blackness gone from his heart, the scars of all forms vanished. He wanted to feel warm again, real, true warmth that left no place untouched in him.

A tear snaked down his cheek.

_Until I have nothing left_
_And all I feel is this cruel wanting_

_We've been falling for all this time_
_And now I’m lost in paradise_
Alone, and lost in paradise

The music trailed off, the last airy notes lingering in the air and touching their skin. Jeff stood, eyes downcast and breathe heaving as he came back from wherever the song took him. He felt so exposed, so vulnerable and raw and there was nothing he could do now to protect himself from whatever they threw at him. He chanced a look up and found them staring at him wide eyed and confused in their silence.

"Um...I..." he tried but Thad lifted his hands up to stop him from talking.

"I don't even care what they have to say. Jeff, that was amazing. I've got goosebumps and I swear to god if they don't vote you on I'm quitting and starting a new group with you," he said a huge smile on his cute face and Jeff smiled at him in shy gratitude as Blaine spoke up.

"I don't think I've ever heard something like that. That song... that was perfect and the way you sang it... no the way you lived it... god, there're no words for it. Stunning," Blaine said standing up and giving him a short applause making him blush and hide his face back down when he heard Sebastian's voice.

"I don't usually give praise... most people don't deserve it... but that was superb. It's a brave person who stands up and does an Evanescence cover and the way you fit the song around you and made it your own... I'd definitely vote you on if only to get a chance to hear more from you," he said in a regal voice.

"Well done, Jeff. We'll head into the other room to play this and Kurt's tape to the others. You wait here for the news... but between you and me... there's no way in hell you're not in," Thad said with a conspiring wink and the three of them left the room hastily.

There was a moment of stillness and silence when suddenly there was a squeak and a thump as Kurt hurled himself off his sofa and barreled into him, hugging the breath out of his lungs.

"Oh my god, sweetie. That was the best thing I have ever heard! God, Jeff, why were you hiding that amazing voice all this time?" he asked excitedly and Jeff blushed, looking down again.

"It was not that good, Kurt," he rubbed the back of his neck awkwardly and Kurt scowled.

"You need to stop doing that. You need to stop believing everything he told you. What makes his opinions more valuable than mine or you're parents or you're friends or... or Nick's? We can all see you for who you really are and still you believe him instead of us. Why is that?" Kurt sighed tiredly and Jeff looked at him sadly.

"He was my Dom, Kurt. The one who was supposed to care and keep me happy. He didn't do that and he made sure I knew it was my fault. If I was a good sub, what he always told me to be..." He let it trail off as he swallowed thickly over the memories. “I know now that what he did was wrong... but it's so hard to leave it behind," he finished in a tiny voice that made Kurt sorry for being so forceful.

"I'm sorry, Jeffy. I know it's hard. But... but please just trust us when we say you're amazing, beautiful and talented beyond belief. Okay?" Kurt smiled and Jeff leaned into his touch.

"I'll try," he said and shrugged the exact moment the door creaked open and the three judges came back in.
Both their futures hung upon that one word Blaine would say.

A good word or a bad word.

In or out.

"Okay, guys... we have played both tapes and the boys have voted. For the first time since the Warblers existed we had a unanimous vote," Blaine said and Kurt clutched Jeff's hand tightly in his own as they waited for the news.
“Please hold a second, Miss. Jones,” Theo, the young butler, spoke politely into the phone speaker and turned towards the stairs where two figures were stumbling down, giggling and fighting for a breath as the brunette recounted a story that was obviously hilarious to his blonde friend.

Theo watched them for a second, a small smile on his face as he took in how at ease they seemed with each other, relaxed and trusting, the way they just couldn’t seem to allow themselves to be around others. He remembered vividly the first time both of them had stepped into the house and how wary they were of everything and everyone. It had been getting better, both had come on in confidence visibly and it gladdened Theo to see. He found he, and the rest of the Anderson staff, were quite invested in these two subs.

Kurt was a breath of fresh air at the Anderson Manor; sweet and polite and always butting in and trying to help with the cleaning, arguing that he liked it and that it made him feel better. The house staff indulged him more often than not, allowing him to keep his and the young master’s bedroom clean by himself and letting him help around the kitchen when the mood struck him. It was hard not to give in to those earnest blue eyes, the staff all sympathized with Blaine because the young submissive was infectious when he laughed; so pure and unspoiled by rudeness and darkness of the world he grew up in that he was impossible to resist. He almost seemed like he inhaled all the kindness while the bad just rolled off of his pale skin.

He was a joy to be around and, cleaning or not, they all felt happier when he was there chatting away about his life back in Lima and school and occasionally, very shyly, young master Blaine.

His friend, Jeff, on the other hand was still a mystery to them all; quiet and reserved in front of everyone, but silly and giggly with Kurt by his side. His personality seemed dimmed like the mark on his neck that they all respectfully didn’t talk about, but flashes of it showed that he used to be a prankster; wild imagination and crazy ideas included. Theo wished he would find a way to be that person again, as he seemed like someone who would make an amazing friend, if his wives opinion was anything to go by. She had managed to wrestle a few words here and there out of the blonde
when he stopped by and she swore up and down he was the sweetest thing.

The butler hoped things turned out for the better for him. The laugh he could hear right now deserved to be heard more often.

“Master Kurt. There’s a Miss Jones on the phone for you,” he called out to the sub when he came all the way down the stairs and Kurt reached to take the phone from him scowling dramatically in exasperation.

“For the millionth time, Theo, it’s just Kurt.” He rolled his eyes at the butler who nodded in amused agreement and then put the phone to his ear. “Hi, ‘Cedes. What’s up?”

“Hey, Master Kurt,” she giggled and Kurt stuck his tongue out as if she could see him.

“Oh ha ha. Very clever,” he drawled and she chuckled madly, obviously very impressed by her own wit.

Jeff stood by him giggling lightly as he could overhear what she was saying.

“Anyway… I know we couldn’t met up over the weekend but I was calling to tell you that my dad will be driving to Westerville tomorrow for work so we could meet up at a coffee shop or something so you don’t have to drive all the way here. If you want?” she asked and Kurt turned to Jeff in question.

The blonde mouthed, “It’s okay with me,” and Kurt turned back to the phone.

“What about school? The seniors have tomorrow off because there’s this big math competition, but you still have classes, right?” Kurt asked curiously. Thad had been talking about this competition for a while now, cramming for it all of Monday and Tuesday- Ryan was getting quite put out.

“My dad said I could have the rest of the week off to pack and stuff since I’m moving into Sam’s on Friday,” she explained.

“Oh my god, it’s so close! When did it get so close?!” Kurt grinned, bouncing on his toes for her happily. “Okay, well I’ll have to clear it with Blaine but it should be okay. What time?” he asked eagerly.

“My dad has to be there at around eleven in the morning, so he’ll drop me off at a café near the theatre. We could meet there at quarter to eleven?” she answered and he nodded at Jeff to check it out.

“Sure. I’ll have to inform Blaine, but we’ll be there,” he said and the exchanged a few more words before he hung up the phone.

“Inform Blaine of what?” came a teasing voice from the doorway as Blaine entered the house, stripping out of his coat and striding across the tiled floor to crash Kurt into a bear hug.

The brunette giggled before pecking his lips and wrapping his fingers around Blaine’s. “Mercedes called to tell us her dad has some stuff to do here tomorrow so she would be coming here instead of us driving there. We’re supposed to meet her at quarter to eleven at the café next to the theatre. Is that okay?” he asked and Blaine smiled nodding his head as he played with Kurt’ fingers.

“Of course it is. Whatever works for you, lovely, it’s your day off to do whatever you want to, I’ll be stuck at the studio for most of the day tomorrow anyway. As a matter of fact, there was something that I wanted to give you and now would be a good time to do it so you can use it tomorrow with
Jeff and Mercedes,” Blaine said as the three of them made their way over to the living room and sat down on the comfy sofas.

“What is it?” Kurt asked sounding nervous and curious at the same time.

Blaine reached into his pocket and pulled out a small, plastic, black rectangle and handed it to Kurt who took it a gasped at the sight of it.

“Blaine… w-what….” he stuttered, staring at it in wonder and Blaine smiled. He thrust it back towards him. “I can’t take this!”

“Kurt, it’s my job to provide for you now that you’re my sub. You’re still in high school and I run a business that brings me enough money to take care of you. When you finish school and start working you can refuse to use it all you want but for now, that credit card is yours and you will use it for whatever you like. Got it?” he asked in a mock stern voice and Kurt nodded dumbly, taking his arm back and turning the little plastic card between his fingers deftly.

“So why did you say I could use it tomorrow?” he asked biting his lip.

“Well there’s a really cool, little known mall close by the café you’re going to so I thought you could maybe take your friends shopping. My treat,” he smiled and Jeff’s eyes widened in shock.

“That’s not necessary, sir… I mean, Blaine, I…” he started but Blaine threw him a pointed glare.

“There’s really no use in arguing. I took responsibility for you the moment I had you transferred to Dalton. And even if I didn’t, I want you guys to have fun. Buy some clothes. Be eighteen and spend money on stupid stuff you don’t really need. It’s part of growing up. Just go with it,” he said and Kurt shook his head.

“You’re not gonna let this go until we really do it, are you?” he asked and Blaine beamed leaning over to peck him on the nose.

“My baby knows me so well. Anyway I gotta go, we have a huuuuuge contract to draw up for one of our artists. You two have fun and Kurt, lovely, don’t forget we have dinner plans tonight.” He winked as he pressed his lips tenderly to Kurt once more, only this time on his lips, and then made his way towards the stairs.

“Where are you taking me?” Kurt asked in a burst of sheer optimism, knowing Blaine would never tell him.

“It’s a surprise,” Blaine answered cheekily over his shoulder and Kurt pouted.

“Sure it is,” he scowled and Jeff huffed out a laugh as Blaine disappeared from view leaving them alone in the living room.

“SoOO…” Kurt started, waving the card in front of his friend. “You up for some shopping tomorrow?”

“Well… the man said we had to so… I guess it would be rude not to… right?” He raised innocent eyes to his friend and Kurt laughed loudly, giddy at the prospect.

“I love the way you think mister Sterling.”
The sun was bright in the sky, unusually warm and shiny for late fall, as Kurt and Jeff strode towards the tiny quaint café, squeezed between a huge imposing theatre building and the empty house currently being redecorated into a gallery of some sort.

They both smiled widely when they saw their friend standing in front of their car chatting with her dad through the window of the ratty old Volvo; paint chipped, the metal beat and a little rusted.

“Cedes!” they yelled and slammed into her, sandwiching her in between them as they jumped crazily up and down, earning amused chuckles from by-passers.

“Guys, guys, you are crushing my girls and let me tell you, Sam will not be happy about it…” she joked and the two of them let her go instantly, “ew-ing” exaggeratedly at her girl parts.

“Not something I wanted to hear,” came a gruff voice from the car and all of a sudden the three of them remembered that Mercedes’ dad was still there, listening in to their conversation.

Blushing furiously but chuckling like idiots Kurt and Jeff waved awkwardly.

“Hi, Mister Jones. Good to see you,” Kurt greeted and the man smiled waving back.

“Hi boys. Nice to see you too. Dalton seems to be treating you well, you look great,” he complimented, not a hint of jealousy or malice in his voice and Kurt beamed at him.

“Thank you. So how long can we keep her?” Jeff asked, happy to be in the company of someone familiar and kind to him.

“I’ll be running errands almost all day so you definitely have enough time to catch up,” he answered checking the watch on his wrist. “I have to get going now. Kurt, do you have a phone by any chance?”
“Um yeah. Blaine got me one so we can keep in touch. Why?” he frowned but realization dawned on him when Mercedes’ dad stuck his own phone out the window.

“Could you program your number? I’ll call when I’m done and ready to pick her up,” he explained and Kurt nodded punching his number in and giving himself a ring to save the man’s number.

“Perfect. Okay, kids, you have fun and be careful, ring me if you have any problems,” he advised sternly, rolling up the window and driving away, the dust from the street puffing behind him as the three of them bounced into another enthusiastic hug.

“Oh I missed you guys so much,” she exclaimed. “There’s so much we have to talk about! I don’t want any details missed out either. So… coffee?” she asked, nodding towards the building and Kurt drew back, smirking deviously.

“Actually, Blaine gave me something he really wants us to use today so I was thinking we could…” he trailed off, pulling the small plastic rectangle from his pocket and waving it in front of her. “…buy some stuff.”

Her eyes bugged out and she gaped at him like a fish out of water for a moment before molding her features into a normal expression again.

“Kurt… we can’t just spend his money like that,” she sighed and he slumped down.

“Ugh I know… I was hoping you’ll be the unreasonable one for once and jump at the opportunity so I don’t have to feel bad about this.” He sighed looking down at the shiny thing and she chuckled at him. “But the thing is… he really wanted me to use it. So maybe we could just window shop? And if we see something we really like we could get it? That way he’ll be happy and we won’t feel bad.”

Jeff and Mercedes looked at each other and then back at him, smiles firmly on their faces.

“I hate it when you ruin my morals with your logic,” Jeff grumbled dramatically and they all laughed as they made their way towards a small mall that Blaine suggested arm in arm.

Upon entering they realized what made it so different from the rest of them.

It was in a secluded area, hidden behind larger buildings and the amount of people in it was just enough to make if feel cozy and lively without making it seem suffocating and cramped. The stores were pretty much the same as everywhere, but they found out the longer they spent there that salespeople seemed much less stressed out due to the relaxed atmosphere, which made them ready to help out in the quest to find the right sizes and colors.
And help they did.

The three of the started off timidly, unused to having disposable money to actually contemplate whole outfits and looking at aesthetics rather than practicality and endurance. They browsed the shops at length, trying out an odd item here and there and walking out without buying a single article of clothing. Until Jeff tried a black shirt that made Kurt question his loyalty to Blaine with how hot he looked in it.

Kurt insisted on buying it and after much debate… it kind of spiraled from there.

Jeans to go with the new shirt; Jeff’s renewed love for beanies making him look positively adorable. A new dress for Mercedes to celebrate moving in with Sam in a few weeks that demanded shoes and sexy underwear to go with it; as well as an outfit for Sam to match the beauty that was Mercedes in her new clothes. Honestly, it was easy to find excuses to buy presents for his friends and Kurt’s got more and more flimsy the more things he spotted for them.

He couldn’t help himself, however. It made him beam as he saw his friends happy and excited, perusing the racks and picking out items and holding them up for him to judge and pair with stuff that matched, all the while talking him into buying stuff for himself as well, which he did eventually… kind of.

He bought himself a new pajama set and some face crème at the beauty supplies shop, but he didn’t really need a lot of stuff since Blaine and Jared had pretty much covered most angles at the start of the bond and he felt happier knowing that the money went into something amazing like making his friends happy.

After a bit of a debate with himself as he tried to figure it if it would be rude to use the card and get his parents some new winter clothes, Kurt decided that he would just do it and send the clothes back with Mercedes and deal with the potential consequences when and if they came.

He walked into a store with reasonably priced clothes and picked out a nice dark brown coat with old, gold colored buttons for Carol, combining it with some pastel colored warm sweatshirts and two pairs of jeans he knew would fit her perfectly. He chose a black sports jacket for his fashion frightened father, along with a few winter button downs, as well as some comfy looking pants.
He swiped the card and punched in his pin, a heavy feeling in the pit of his stomach as he thought of how Blaine would react to what he had done. He didn’t think he’d actually be mad, it was just the shred of uncertainty that he knew he had a habit of blowing out of proportion. But the fact was, he just couldn’t pass the opportunity up to buy his family the things they needed and he was ready to face whatever awaited for him when he got home.

Giving his friends a reassuring smile at their concerned looks he stepped out of the shop and distributed the bags so he didn’t have to haul everything on his own, and together they continued on their way.

As they walked they came across a tiny little hole in the wall shop that looked like it had fallen out of another time… a time of cavaliers and smoky jazz clubs with curvy women caressing the microphones in their glittery dresses. The window display showed off top hats and walking canes with engraved handles and a rack filled with ties and bowties in every color and pattern imaginable. A navy blue one with burgundy diamond flecks caught his eye and his mind snapped to the image of Blaine wearing that particular burgundy shirt of his that made him look so sexy and desirable.

He tried to remember the entirety of his wardrobe his Dom allowed him to snoop through and he couldn’t remember seeing a bowtie that would go with that particular shirt…

Almost in a trance he left his friends walking ahead, went in and picked the piece of silk in his hand, marveling at the lightness and smoothness of the material. Smiling to himself he nodded in determination and walked over to the cash register to pay for the tie.

“Excellent choice. Burgundy goes well with your skin tone.”

The voice startled him from imagining Blaine in that drool inducing shirt and he snapped his head up finding lecherous grey eyes staring at him in a way that made him unsettled and wary. He wasn’t so innocent that he didn’t know what that particular look meant and it was much too reminiscent of his days back in McKinley High to be comfortable.
The guy couldn’t be older than twenty five, with a sandy blonde hair flopping around his face in curls almost as crazy as Blaine’s; but they weren’t as nice and soft looking… or maybe Kurt was just biased.

“Wha… oh… no… it’s not for me. It’s a gift,” he explained and offered a weak smile, but taking in the way those eyes raked down his body he stilled himself and pushed his chin up proudly. “My Dom adores bowties.”

The grey eyes narrowed in contemplation and there was a beat of nothing before the man licked his lips suggestively, leaning in over the counter.

“Well… isn’t he a lucky one to have such a thoughtful sub buying him gifts,” he drawled, flashing him a salacious smirk that made Kurt flush uncomfortably a being obviously objectified. “All innocent looking too. That face doesn’t match that body, sweetheart,” the man drawled and Kurt felt his hand shake as he clutched the tie in his fingers.

“I… can you just charge me so I can go. I’m in a hurry,” he rushed out, regretting the decision to go into this store now.

“What’s the hurry? We’re just getting to know each other, beautiful.” The man stood up, no longer mostly concealed by the counter and Kurt realized he was almost a foot taller than he was, bulky and muscly and downright huge.

“My Dom is waiting for me,” he said trying to get him to back off, hoping the repeated mentions of his Dom would turn him away. It seemed to have the opposite effect, however.

“He won’t mind sharing,” the man whispered conspiratorially, like this was a joint secret Kurt was complicit in somehow, and he reached over and touched his finger to Kurt’s cheek making him flinch and his stomach to turn over horribly just when someone else bustled into the store to witness the exchange.

“I think he told you he had a Dom,” a familiar voice interrupted and Kurt whipped his head around to see Ryan towering over them both with his oversized body and a scowl on his face that just didn’t fit onto his, usually cute and friendly, face.
Kurt’s blood froze and he stood there rooted, unable to move.

“Kurt, buddy, you okay?” Ryan asked placing himself between the shocked sub and the creepy Dom who got the point and pulled his wayward limbs back behind the counter, glaring at the tall footballer all the while.

“I j-just wanted to get B-Blaine a gift… I-” Kurt stammered and stopped in his explanation, not knowing how to get the jumble in his head out of his mouth and the name that fell from his lips made the clerk gasp.

“You’re not… Blaine Anderson’s sub?” he asked in dread, realization dawning just how much he’d miscalculated, and Ryan smirked, crossing his arms over his chest.

“The one and only. Boy, I can’t wait to tell him about this. Now pack up the tie and make sure it’s nicely wrapped. Blaine is quite the diva when it comes to his gifts,” Ryan said, laying it on thick as he hugged Kurt around the shoulders and watched in sadistic amusement as the clerk hastily and shakily wrapped the tie in a pretty, dark grey box with a black ribbon around it and handed it to them.

“It’s… it’s on the house…” he started but Kurt snapped back from his shock and handed the card over haughtily, fighting past his fear and managing it like he usually did… with bitchiness.

“That won’t change a thing. I’ll pay for the tie and you’ll pay for what you did,” he informed him and Ryan hollered in laughter as the blonde Dom took the card reluctantly, swiped it and handed Kurt the bill.

“Niiice…” Ryan praised and held a hand for a high five. It was childish but Kurt slapped his hand halfheartedly as they left the store and the desperate clerk who looked like he was on the edge of his nerves.

“Thanks,” Kurt blushed, calming down more the further they got away though there was a huge part of him that was calling out for Blaine right now, urging him to go find him. They got out and he looked around to find Jeff and Mercedes exiting the store next to the one he was just in.

“No problem, man.” Ryan smiled easily, his green eyes warm and Kurt was once again floored by how genuinely nice the huge boy was.

“What are you doing here anyway?” he asked just as his friends joined them and he made quick introductions.

“Thad won his math competition… again,” he tacked on smugly. “He insisted we celebrate so all the college students cut class today. Honestly, you’d think he works for it how much he insists on celebrating, when in reality he just shows up and everybody else just gets frustrated and dies because he knows everything,” he sighed, faking exasperation, but the pride in his voice almost made him glow.

“He was studying pretty hard last time I saw him,” Kurt told him absently rubbing a hand over his opposite arm, concentrating on getting his shivering body back under control.

Ryan shook his head. “It’s how he deals with his nerves, just crams everything a couple days before even though he isn’t taking much in. My boy already knows it.”

Kurt frowned, looking around. “So where’s he now?”

“Oh, he’s with a bunch of other people at the diner on the second floor. I had some family stuff to do
straight after watching his competition so I just got here and I spotted you through the window, thought I might as well say hi and invite you to join when I saw that guy being an asshole so…” He smiled, rubbing the back of his neck sheepishly and Kurt smiled back gratefully, shyly, ignoring the curious looks Mercedes and Jeff were throwing him by waving a hand and mouthing, “I’ll tell you later,” in their direction.

“Well I think we were about ready to grab something to eat as well?” Kurt said, posing it half as question to his friends who nodded their consent.

Ryan beamed. “You should join us, like I said I was gonna invite you anyway because I’m sure Thad would want you guys there. I mean if you want, no pressure,” he explained and Kurt shook his head.

“No it’s okay. Mercedes is here just for the day and-” he started but the girl waved him off.

“I’m cool with it if Jeff is. I’d love to meet everyone,” she said and Jeff nodded slightly, still somewhat intimidated by the tall boy and refusing to meet his eye.

“Okay then, I guess we’ll join you then.” Kurt smiled, dimmer than it would normally be, but still genuine because he wanted to shake out of this and enjoy the rest of his day.

Ryan fist pumped.

“Awesome. Thad will be delirious, he keeps talking about you, Jeff,” he informed the blonde, receiving a brief half smile and a split second of eye contact that skittered away.

“Y-yeah we have classes together so we t-talk sometimes. He’s a great g-guy,” Jeff stuttered out and Ryan beamed at him proudly.

“My little geek is the best,” he boasted, puffing up. “Okay, let’s go. Here… I’ll take that,” he said and snatched all of their bags in one hand before they could even put up a token protest, impressive bicep straining. He led the way and lugged their stuff up the nearest set of stairs, chatting up a storm with Mercedes who was always a football fan so they found common ground right away, leaving Kurt and Jeff to snicker as they walked behind them.

They climbed up to the second floor of the mall that barely had any stores, and was instead littered with food stands and long tables with benches, booths and high chairs and packed with smiling masses enjoying their meals and chatting loudly.

A burst of laughter caught their attention to the far right and they chuckled when they saw the noticeable group of Warblers and a few other people they didn’t know sitting around three joined tables and cackling at Thad who wore a crooked paper crown proclaiming him, ‘Math Nerd King’ to the world.

“Look at the idiot,” Ryan laughed, but the tone in his voice and the love radiating from every pore of his skin made it known he thought the world of the tiny sub.

“You love him though,” Kurt teased and Ryan grinned at him happily.

“You love him though,” Kurt teased and Ryan grinned at him happily.

“More than life,” he said simply and guided them to the tables, careful not to jostle and step on someone.

“Ry!!” said nerd king cried when he saw him and launched himself over his friends, landing straight in the bigger boy’s arms, wrapping arms and legs around him like an adorable koala bear. All the bags went dropping to the floor. “You made it!”
His smile was so happy, so open and thrilled that the rest of their friends looked away to give them a moment of privacy. Kurt had to swallow over the lump that suddenly rose in his throat, frowning at his own reaction. Honestly, the sight made him miss Blaine fiercely, the few hours they’d spent apart making themselves known suddenly with the empty ache in his chest and a hot prickling feeling over his skin. The situation with that Dom didn’t help either and now his phone was burning a hole in his pocket, crying out for him to call his Dom to take him home to rid him of these symptoms.

“For you, geeky? I’d make it to the end of the world. I’m so proud of you,” he said fondly and Thad lit up at the overly dramatic, honeyed words and leaned in to kiss his lips gently, before hopping down and glancing behind his Dom smile widening when he saw a mop of familiar platinum hair.

“Oh, hi guys! I didn’t know you were coming but I’m super glad you could make it too,” he said sincerely and the trio couldn’t help but smile at his friendly face and his obvious excitement.

“We met Ryan downstairs and he invited us to join you. If that’s okay?” Kurt said suddenly nervous as he took in various people he realized he didn’t know.

“Of course it’s okay. Let me introduce you to everyone while Ryan brings another table here,” he said and blinked sweetly at his Dom over his shoulder. “Go. Put those muscles to good use.”

Ryan mock scowled at him and rolled his eyes. “I thought those were for hauling your skinny ass around,” he teased and Thad smiled winningly back at him.

“Well today they’re for hauling tables. Now go,” he waved him off and Ryan threw his arms up in exasperation as he stalked off to drag a table and a few chairs, gesturing to the newcomers to sit down while he sat next to them and pulled Thad onto his lap making him squeal.

“Okay. Guys, this is Kurt he’s Blaine’s sub, his best friend Jeff and I don’t know the pretty girl over there but I’m sure she’ll tell us her name,” he smiled and Mercedes chuckled before nodding to the people around her.

“Hi. I’m Mercedes. Kurt’s friend from Lima,” she introduced, voice faltering as she said where she was from; suddenly very aware of the fact that people around her were wealthy, posh, classy and so not used to hanging out with the likes of her.

“I am so jealous right now,” a sudden whine came from a beautiful blonde girl sitting next to a tall dark skinned boy and Mercedes looked up in surprise, worries of being laughed at chased away in front of a sudden feeling of confusion.

“What?” she asked and the girl waved a hand in her direction.

“What do you mean what? BOOBS WOMAN! And don’t even get me started on your skin. It’s not fair. David, I want boobs like that,” she pouted and the rest of the table roared with laughter leaving the three newcomers to shrug in confusion.

“That would be Corinne. David’s sub. Knowing him you couldn’t have expected her to be any different now could you?” Thad laughed and the blonde girl stuck her tongue out at him.

“That would be Corinne. David’s sub. Knowing him you couldn’t have expected her to be any different now could you?” Thad laughed and the blonde girl stuck her tongue out at him.

“No I guess not,” Kurt said gently and David stuck his hand out for Kurt to high five as Corinne scowled.

“Well fine. See if you get any tonight. Who’s the pretty blonde?” she asked dismissing her Dom and pointing at Jeff and the blonde boy blushed and looked down.

“This is my new friend, Jeff. He’s Kurt’s best friend and he’s in some of my classes,” Thad rattled
off and there was a chorus of, “Hi Jeff’s” around the table before they settled down so Thad could introduce the other girl Kurt was unfamiliar with and to present the rest of the Warblers to Mercedes.

“Mercedes first of all hi I’m Thad,” he stuck her hand at her and she shook it with a chuckle.

“I got that yeah,” she teased and he laughed as he turned to the table.

“You also know my Dom Ryan and Corinne. Her Dom is David, next to him is mister party breaker himself Wes and his amazing sub who we still don’t know why she puts up with him, Miriam. The guy next to her is Trent and then we have Jon, Sebastian and Dave. A few more people should join us at some point I think, though Blaine can’t come but Kurt’s probably already told you why,” he finished rambling off the convoluted introductions that made Mercedes head spin. Regardless, they all said hello and shook hands as best as they could through the mass of limbs coming out at once and ended up laughing when they realized it wouldn’t work. They settled for waving at each other like idiots, that of course, being David’s idea.

“So… you’re the famous Kurt. I have to say you’re even prettier in person,” Miriam complimented when the hysteria had died down and Kurt blushed cutely, ducking his chin. “I can see why Blaine was so taken with you. He always was holding out for someone special.”

“Um… thanks,” he replied, not really knowing how to behave in a situation like this, or how to react when he was reminded of just how big of a deal Blaine claiming him really was. She smiled at him warmly despite his lack of social aptitude, making him suddenly very aware of why she would capture someone’s attention. “Wes got pretty lucky himself.”

At first sight she was average looking, especially next to Corinne who looked like a blonde goddess stepped down from Olympus. Miriam had light brown hair and chocolate coloured eyes, her skin was pale but healthy looking and she was long and wispy in build. All in all she was almost unnoticeable, someone you’d see and forget you saw in five minutes.

But then she smiled and Kurt starkly knew that right there was what made Wes fall for her. Her smile was so friendly, so trustworthy and warm that he couldn’t help but smile back at her and like her instantly. She had the type of smile everyone envied, a Julia Roberts type smile that just lit up the space around her.

“We both did well,” she demurred leaning into her Dom and Kurt almost gasped at the sight of Wes’ usually harder than stone face relaxing as he practically melted into her, kissing her temple and smiling when she took his hand.

“He still did better,” David teased and Corinne caught him in the ribs with her elbow.

“Please. Like I didn’t settle for you,” she huffed and the whole table broke into laughter that eased the nerves that came with meeting new people and before any of them realized they were breaking into smaller groups to talk about various things.

Kurt glanced around the table smiling when he saw Thad scurrying away when Dave and Ryan started discussing tactics for the upcoming game, Wes and Sebastian engaged in an incredibly boring conversation involving stocks and trust funds with Miriam who, apparently, was a finance major and a perspective one at that.

He turned to find Corinne talking to Jeff and Mercedes and he pushed away his antsy feelings to join in talking about fashion and art, the blonde girl doing her best to rope Jeff into talking when she somehow weaselled out the information about him liking to dance.
“I’m the cheerleader captain at Dalton. You should totally help us with choreography. Lana is amazing but after four years it all looks the same. We need fresh ideas,” she said as she bounced excitedly and Jeff looked down trying to avoid answering that question.

It sounded so amazing, but he had stretched himself so far already with joining the Warblers and letting the others see him, as well as taking up drawing again... he didn’t want to jump in too soon, too fast with anything else.

“So, Mercedes, tell us a bit about you,” Miriam asked in a pleasant voice as she took a break from her debate with the two guys and there was no way someone would deny her a thing with how sweet she seemed.

Behind the two of them Kurt could see Corinne trying to show Jeff something that seemed to be a salsa move and smiled to see his best friend interacting more openly and freely.

“Oh…” She flushed as a few interested gazes flickered her way curiously. “I don’t really know what to say. Not that interesting of a person I guess,” she shrugged picking at the corner of the table and Miriam frowned bucking her shoulder into hers.

“I don’t believe that for a second. Now spill. Hobbies? Boys? Girls? Aspirations?” she fired the questions and Mercedes chuckled obviously liking the girl just as much as Kurt did.

“I… I like kids, I guess teaching preschoolers would be something I’d have loved to do. And I have a Dom, Sam. We’re…we’re actually moving in together in a few days,” she admitted, voice careful and quiet as Miriam stared at her attentively.

“Well that’s amazing! When did you guys bond?” she enthused, shifting closer and Kurt gasped silently when he saw Mercedes’ face close off and her fingers clutch the cup of her chocolate shake tightly.

“We… we aren’t. We’re trying to save for it but we’re pretty much aware of the fact that we can’t ever have enough money for that.” She shrugged and Miriam covered her lips with her fingers.

“Pretty much everyone in Lima grows up knowing that,” Kurt told her quietly and Miriam stared between them.

“But how can you…” she started, but Mercedes cut her off.

“I know what you’re about to ask and the answer is I can’t. I can’t know that he won’t leave tomorrow and I won’t have a say in it. I can’t be sure. But it’s… it’s the best we can get and I love him. For now he loves me too. It’s enough,” she admitted and shrugged again because realistically, what else could she do? She had made her peace with that fact, but it was like her words had magical powers if the way the three tables went silent as they listened to her.

Looking around at the various bonded couples it seemed like they all had suddenly became painfully aware that if life went a different route, it could have been them who were poor and unable to bond with the person they loved and it seemed every bonded couple shifted closer to their other halves in voiceless gratitude. Sebastian’s face a hard scowl but Kurt could see him gripping Dave’s hand as if to make sure he was still there, and Thad’s eyes went a little glassy with sorrow as he clung to Ryan in silent despair.

I want Blaine, Kurt thought to himself for what seemed like the hundredth time now as he shivered. What would have happened if he hadn’t been at The Showing that day? It was something he rarely let himself think about anymore, mostly because the way that he had been contemplating it had
changed drastically, but it was brought to the forefront of his mind now.

“That’s horrible.”

It was Miriam who broke the silence, face sad and fingers shaking but something in her eyes struck Kurt as wild and passionate. She shifted from a fragile, sweet girl into a warrior in an instant and whatever caused the change Kurt thanked it, because seeing her like that made it all the more clear as to why someone like Wes would pick her and he could only imagine what a pair like those two could do to change the world.

She looked invincible.

“It’s the way it is,” Mercedes stated, just simple fact, trying to get the attention off of her.

Miriam wasn’t so easily dissuaded it appeared. “A lot could be done and there are ways. Trust me. I don’t know if you knew but I’m a finance major. I am basing my master thesis on the premise that wealth can and should be distributed in a way that would erase castes as we know them now and form a society of equals. It’s nowhere near done but I will use you and Sam as a driving force to make it as applicable as possible. Maybe not tomorrow or in five years but I promise you someday people will be able to live the way they see fit. Not the way their income allows them,” she stated back fiercely, like simple facts, and the group gaped at her in admiration while telling wetness sprang to Mercedes’ eyes.

The atmosphere turned somber and the silence fell over them, weighing on their shoulders and twisting in their gut… until David turned to Corinne and waved in Miriam’s direction.

“Why can’t you do badass stuff like that?”

Kurt gaped, insulted on her behalf, but the cheerleader was unaffected and glared at him for a second before flipping her blonde hair over her shoulder.

“I can do a double backflip,” she smirked and David stared momentarily before nodding seriously.

“We all do our part I guess.”

They all laughed and within seconds the mood changed back to merry as they bought and devoured their meals and joked with each other.

It wasn’t until a familiar mess of silky dark hair appeared from the escalator right in their direct view line that Kurt felt Jeff stiffen from where he had ended up pressed next to him, staring at the small clearing between the tables they occupied. Looking up Kurt gripped Jeff’s hand and whispered encouragements into his ear as the man came closer and closer to the tables.

It hadn’t even occurred to Kurt that Nick would be here, which was stupid considering the greeting he received.

“Nicky!!” Thad yelled and everybody turned to greet the dark haired Dom cheerfully.

But those warm brown eyes only saw one person.

Jeff.

“H-hey guys. Hi, Kurt,” he greeted before his gaze settled gently onto the blonde’s face and he smiled tentatively. “Hi, Jeff.”
His voice was velvet wrapping over his name and Jeff was drowning in it, heart thundering and fingers shaking as he nodded his silent greeting back and returned his eyes to his lap, body tense and shivering. Please stop looking at me, he begged not being able to stand the scrutiny for fear Nick would find all his faults that much faster.

Nick’s face saddened at the sight, brows coming together for a second before he smoothed them out and faked a smile as he sat at the table, as far from Jeff as he could manage, trying to answer the questions and appear casual and happy but his eyes betrayed him; the spark dull and dark.

Peering up through his lashes Jeff noticed the sunshine was gone from his smile again because of him and it made him want to hide away and cry.

“Please, Kurt, can we go?” he whispered shakily.

Kurt glanced once between his best friend and Blaine’s but kept silent and didn’t push. The day had already been tiring and taxing for Jeff being out for so long around so many strangers and he himself was jumping out of his skin anyway. He folded easily, excusing them with a lame excuse and contrite smile and dragging a confused Mercedes away, heavy bags and all, missing Nick’s plea of, “Drop it guys,” and a pair of warm, brilliant eyes shifting between the blonde sub and the distressed Dom at their table suspiciously.

Away from the crowd Mercedes turned to look at them both, hands on her hips.

“Okay, someone explain what the hell just happened?” she demanded with an arched brow.

Kurt looked to Jeff because it was his story to tell after all and Jeff winced before leading them out of the mall and into a small coffee shop next to the theatre to sit down and explain the whole thing in shaking, halting sentences.

After it was done, Mercedes was left a little speechless.

“Are you sure you don’t want to hit that, boo?” was what she said eventually and there was a brief moment of shock before all three of them fell about their booth laughing.

“Mercedes!” Jeff gasped, scandalized and red cheeked.

“What?” she giggled. “He was hot! I was just making sure!”

“I am sure,” Jeff decided and Kurt didn’t comment on the quiver in his voice that told him he was lying. “Nick will find someone else and that will be that.”

The mood got a little somber after that and they finished their drinks, calling Mercedes dad to let him know they were done, happy in one another’s company but all eager to get home for different reasons.

“Blaine?” he called out when he entered the manor, heavy bags cutting off the circulation in his palms and his feet aching from all the walking they did that day.

He had fun with his friends, he had missed them hanging out together so much, but the sudden peace and content spreading through him as soon as he stepped inside the foyer of the Anderson Manor made him realize that now, he would always miss Blaine more; he would always need him closer and it was a quietly terrifying realization.
Still while his mind raced his body relaxed and that prickly, stingy feeling along his spine lessened as he took in the now familiar foyer echoing the comforting steps of what could only be his Dom rushing to greet him. When he came into view the huge smile on his face made him feel immediately welcome and wanted.

“Hi, lovely. Did you have a good time?” he asked, looking gorgeous in some simple, skinny black jeans and a Dalton hoody, as he scooped him up into his arms and, ignoring his surprised squeak and the thump of bags on the floor, carried him into the living room.

“Blaaaine… I can walk by myself you know,” he whined in mock petulance at the habit his Dom had picked up of carrying him around like a baby. Blaine just waved it off of course because he was just that endearingly annoying.

“I like having you in my arms. Deal with it. So did you have a good time?” he asked again and Kurt huffed a smile as he wrapped himself around his Dom on the soft sofa when they collapsed down into it.

“Oh. It was really fun, thank you for suggesting it,” he said trying to figure out how to tell him everything that happened without having him getting mad and blaming him. “How was work?” he diverted.

Blaine shrugged playing at the belt loops on his jeans just above his ass. “Nothing exciting, just a lot of writing and double checking. I’m more interested in what you got up to. What did my boy buy? I wanna see,” he bounced a little in his seat like an eager puppy and Kurt felt his heart constrict at the inquiry.

He bought pajamas and face crème, nothing groundbreaking… plus a bunch of stuff that were on their way to Lima at that exact moment.

“I thought you didn’t like fashion,” he teased weakly to buy himself some time and Blaine stuck his tongue out childishly.

“I like you talking about fashion,” he corrected and Kurt knew there was no way out... not that he exactly wanted to get out of it. He wanted to tell Blaine, he was just apprehensive.

“Oh, um… don’t be mad…” he started and Blaine’s forehead creased in confusion and a little concern.

“Why would I be mad?” he asked cautiously and Kurt curled in on himself as much as he could when straddling Blaine’s lap, picking at the hem of his sweater—well Blaine’s sweater—that he wore every time Blaine wasn’t around him for a long period of time. It kept him grounded and comforted, the idea of being surrounded by Blaine as well as his scent highly appealing to his submissive nature and it seemed to make Blaine so happy he would almost purr when he saw him in it.

“Kurt, baby?” he prodded when the sub remained silent and Kurt lifted his eyes up.

“I… I didn’t get much for myself… I…” He swallowed then launched straight in. “We were walking around and Mercedes and Sam are moving in together so I got them some nice clothes to make the event special for them and I got some stuff for Jeff too because it was the first time in a long time I saw him looking into the mirror and liking what he saw and then we went past this store for adults and it got me thinking about how it’s getting colder and so I got some winter clothes for my dad and Carole because she spent half of last winter with a runny nose and coughing and I know I shouldn’t have used your money for that, but then it was there and I couldn’t not do it so I didn’t get stuff for me,” he paused only briefly to catch a breath here before continuing not taking a chance to look into...
Blaine’s eyes.

“Well… I got new pajamas and a crème but that’s all, so it evened out in the end right? Because you said I could buy stuff for me and Mercedes and Jeff, but I didn’t really get stuff for me so I didn’t spend a whole lot and I also got you a present…” he yammered and Blaine was torn between being amused and laughing his ass off at how cute Kurt was when he ranted like this, his usual diva stance and natural elegance completely forgotten as he babbled, getting red in the face. But then something else hit him that broke through the mirth. The fact that he still feared Blaine would fault him for caring so much about his friends and family.

“I just-

“Kurt, stop. Just stop,” he halted the impending flood of words and Kurt snapped his lips shut tightly, fingers trembling and his bottom lip pushing out just a tiny bit.

“Sorry,” he whispered and Blaine scooted him closer on his lap, arms going around his waist and hugging him tightly to his chest.

“Never, ever apologize for thinking of and taking care of your family, lovely. Now you have the means to do it, you just need to say the word and they will have it. A new house, a car, new clothes, anything. And not because you’re gonna give up the things you want to get them that, but because you’re mine now and that makes your family my family as well,” he explained gently, meaning every word.

“I’m glad you got them warmer clothes to wear and I’m proud of you for being thoughtful and trying to save the money by not buying things for you. But sweetie, we have money… more than enough of it and so far I haven’t given it much thought because it was never a problem around here and I was blind enough to keep myself in the dark about how other people lived… but that’s gonna change. Now that you’re here with me I don’t want you wishing for things that you can have. Okay?” he asked and Kurt stared at him wide eyed for a moment before letting out a loud exhale, slumping into his arms.

“You’re not angry?” he asked in a tiny voice and Blaine shook his head with a smile.

“Not even a little bit. I think the fact that you said you got me something helps,” he joked to break the tension and Kurt jumped to his feet, running over to the discarded bags and coming back with a gray boy, handing it to his Dom with a sharp tinge of nervousness gripping at his stomach as he sat next to him.

*What if he hated it?*

But Blaine was cheering childishly and tugging at the bow with the excitement of a kid on Christmas as he tore of the lid of the box and gasped as he took in the classy, yet playful bowtie.

“Baby…” he breathed out and Kurt shrugged self-consciously.

“It’s, um… to go with that shirt you have… the burgundy one… I… I like…” he trailed off not really sure how to say it without embarrassing himself.

“You like..?” Blaine prompted and Kurt blushed a deep red, looking down at his lap.

“I like it. I like the way you look in it. Your arms…” he admitted quietly, running his hand over his bicep gently and Blaine drew in a sharp breath at the admission, feeling his chest swell with pride at the thought his sub admired him. Desired him. Thought about him and gifted him with a token of affection.
“I’ll make sure to get at least ten more of those so I can wear them all the time,” he teased with a wink. “With this amazing bowtie that I love. Thank you, beautiful,” he said and then frowned in shock when Kurt stiffened at the nickname and jumped away from him as if burned.

“Lovely… Kurt, what’s wrong?” he asked, worry etched into his face as he tried to come closer to his sub who was now full on trembling and wrapping his arms around his middle.

“It’s n-” he cut himself off but Blaine knew what he was going to say, nothing. But they had agreed on no lies between them and he watched Kurt change tracks. “It’s s-stupid,” he said instead.

“It’s not stupid if it makes you react like this,” Blaine disagreed. “Now tell me, lovely,” he commanded gently.

“W-when I went to get you that… there was this… um… Dom working there… a-and he…” he whispered timidly and Blaine face hardened into something that frightened him so much as he talked that he had let the sentence die out on his lips.

“He what, Kurt?” Blaine asked sternly, and Kurt flinched. He wanted nothing more than for Blaine to make it better, but he had to get this over with first before that was even possible.

“He came on to me,” he rushed. “I told him I had a Dom and he said that you wouldn’t m-mind sharing. He… he called me beautiful and t-touched my cheek and then Ryan came and told him off and I s-swear sir, nothing happened,” he got out, fear settling low in his belly as he watched Blaine shove to his feet, fuming and pacing and swearing and downright working himself into a lather right in front of him.

“Blaine?” he ventured timidly.

“Something did happen, Kurt. He scared you, touched you, made you uncomfortable. I’m gonna make him pay for that,” he growled the epitome of silent fury and Kurt reached out desperately and clung to his hand, not wanting him to leave.

“Please sir, don’t go. I… I need you here,” he pleaded quietly and watched in silent awe as Blaine’s features crumbled down into tenderness so deep and entirely meant for him. The Dom sat back down and pulled him onto his lap to hold him close, to protect him as one set of Dominant instincts won out over the other.

“I’ll stay now. But I will cause him pain… and lots of it,” he threatened and Kurt shivered with the power behind those words and grasped handfuls of the soft material of his hoody.

“Don’t cause yourself problems over this, Blaine, please. Ryan threatened him with your name and I think the anxiety of the wait will ruin him more than anything else,” Kurt soothed back snuggling deeper into his lap and it was like a back and forth tug between them, each taking turns with one another.

Blaine chuckled darkly at the knowledge but the knowledge seemed to appease him.

“You’re devious Mister Hummel,” he teased looking down at him and Kurt gave a small smile that just didn’t feel real to Blaine.

“You’re angry at me?” he asked for the second time that evening and Blaine shook his head quickly, hating that there was still this awkward distance between them despite how far
they’d progressed.

“No, baby. Never. Kurt, I can see you and as much as I hate it others can too. I can’t really be angry at you for being beautiful, and please… please don’t associate that word with him. I’m the one who called you that first. Please let that word remain ours. Don’t let him have it,” he implored softly, stroking his fingers through his hair. “Like I said I can’t be mad at you for turning heads and making people want you… as long as I know you’re mine,” he said and Kurt beamed at him, body finally relaxing.

Once again Blaine had proved every one of his fears wrong and Kurt felt ever closer to him because of it, with every passing day Kurt fell harder and faster than ever.

“Only yours, sir,” he confirmed softly and Blaine slotted their lips together hungrily.

They ended up kissing for hours on the sofa, unknowing of the amused, exasperated looks they got when Blaine’s parents came home from work, until their mouths were swollen and they couldn’t breathe anymore. And when they just had to stop Blaine pulled out his laptop and showed Kurt how to shop for clothes online.

And if his bank account thinned exponentially after he introduced Kurt to the lovely world of online shopping that was his own problem, Kurt thought.

“What if they change their minds?” Kurt asked nervously as they made their way to the choir room after school on Thursday for their first official practice after being accepted. Jeff had a class with Thad so he was meeting them there.

Blaine squeezed their joined hands reassuringly. “Lovely, they’re not going to change their minds. You didn’t see the reaction when they heard you singing, Wes looked like he’d seen the gates of heaven,” he chuckled.

And it was only funny because it was true. Wes… calm, together, straight-faced Wesley Montgomery was knocked speechless and giddy by his beautiful boy, along with the rest of the room actually. Blaine was so proud of him in that moment his heart felt like it would burst.

Kurt ducked his head to hide his blush. “But what if I don’t fit in? What if I can’t get the numbers down or remember the words to the songs or-”

Blaine stopped them in the hall and pulled Kurt around swiftly to plant a kiss on his lips.

His eyes closed immediately and his whole body sighed with the release of tension he didn’t know had built to such a level, trembles he didn’t know were racking him ceasing as everything zeroed down to just Blaine. Their lips slid together effortlessly, the drag and friction electric, their combined taste; vanilla and the cherry lip balm Kurt had gotten Blaine addicted to, sweet on their tongues.

“That’s really not fair,” Kurt breathed into Blaine’s mouth when they separated slightly and he felt another playful nip of lips along his bottom one. Kurt pushed into it greedily, body leaning into Blaine’s completely trusting, completely submissive.

Blaine framed his face with his hands and pulled away, damp mouths sticking in the best of ways that made Kurt’s heart flip over and body thrum for more. “You’re gonna be amazing, lovely,” Blaine whispered to him, darkened gold eyes lingering on his every feature and making him feel
“Yeah?” he asked on a murmur.

Blaine swiped a thumb over the arch of his cheek. “Yeah.”

Infinitely reassured the sub settled down and allowed his Dom to lead him the rest of the way and into the room. They greeted the people already present and took seats next to Jeff as Thad got up to take his place behind the council desk where Wes and David already were, debating over something heatedly.

“Hey, blondie,” Kurt smiled at him and received a nervous half smile back as his best friend sunk lower into the cushions.

“Nick,” Blaine greeted amused as the Dom came running through the door, skidding to a halt, bag flying around on his shoulder.

“I’m not late,” he announced out of breathe, looking at his watch. “I have like… thirty seconds to spare.”

“A record for you,” Sebastian commented from his perch against the wall behind him.

Nick beamed. “I know! I’m getting great at this whole timekeeping business, dude.”

Kurt smothered his laugh with the back of his hand as the sub rolled his eyes in disdain and the dark haired Dom grinned over at him before his eyes got pulled, as if against his own will, to fall on Jeff at his right side, who was refusing to look his way.

It was like being unmade every time Nick laid eyes on the blonde… only this time it was different. This time he had the sound of that raw, broken voice singing in his ears, he had Jeff’s pain in his chest as if it was his own, he had a deeper understanding of just what the angel had gone through and he couldn’t stop thinking about it. It was haunting him, just like that wonderful voice was, it was making every protective instinct in him flare up and demand he claim Jeff for himself and it was taking everything he had in him not to.

He swallowed hard and walked over to sit on the sofa next to Trent, directly opposite the object of his affection and admiration, begging silently for him to just glance up but he knew it was futile. Jeff had made himself clear and Nick needed to respect his space and not push until he got an indicator otherwise. He could only continue to be open and honest with him and hope Kurt could work some magic and bring the sub around. He only needed a shot, just one, this was too important for Nick to even contemplating blowing it.

All eyes were on Kurt and Jeff today though, respect and appreciation for their talents clearly shown in everyone after listening to their auditions. Everyone in that room when they listened to those tapes were blown away by both subs. Kurt’s range was stellar and his voice so unique it was a pleasure to hear, whereas Jeff’s story was so powerful it brought forth some very strong emotions in the Warblers that day.

“All right so first order of business,” Wes started the practice off, cutting through the small amount of chatter easily with his clear, commanding voice and trusty gavel. “We’d like to officially welcome Warbler Kurt and Warbler Jeff to the fold through a unanimous vote. We’re lucky to have you.”

There was a smattering of applause and cheers and both subs blushed identical red shades which was slightly adorable.
“Now, we’ll get down to business,” Wes refocused the attention. “Our newest members will need to be brought up to speed on our current numbers as well as our upcoming plans, the item on the top of our list today is the issue of the charity fundraiser—”

There was a ripple of groans.

“Do we really have to do that again?” Trent lamented around the pen in his mouth. “We can’t do anything up to date because the board is there and it’s just so boring swaying back and forth singing the same songs year after year.”

“Well unless they change the tone of the night, we’ll just look out of place doing anything else,” Thad advised. “It’s like throwing Gaga in with a bunch of opera singers.”

“She could totally pull that off,” Kurt whispered confidently and Blaine smirked at him with an eye roll. He’d long ago learned of Kurt’s obsession with the singer.

“So we’re back to singing elevator music yet again,” Sebastian grouched and there was a groan of consensus and griping to match.

Wes called them to order, talking over their bickering. “I’m sorry guys but Thad’s right, we can’t just go completely off book—”

“Heaven forbid,” David muttered and got a scowl before Wes continued.

“-if we want to keep this program running. The board have control over the curriculum and extra curricula’s after all. We have to keep them happy.”

“Maybe changing it up would be good. They might like it and we don’t have to go crazy,” Blaine suggested optimistically. “Different songs and a little bit of advanced choreography isn’t exactly going to scandalize them.”

“It’s still going to look stupid next to that boring ass auction,” Jon stated, fluffing his hair. “I’m not dancing around all happy when everyone’s going to be miserable anyway. There’s a reason people hate and avoid charity night.”

“I hate and would avoid it if I could,” Nick acknowledged the point with a shrug.

“Well what if you change the night,” Kurt found himself saying out loud.

Multiple eyes fell on him and he licked his suddenly dry lips.

“What do you mean, Kurt?” Thad asked curiously.

The sub looked to Blaine for reassurance before opening his mouth again, looking around at the interested faces. “Well… what if you spoke to the people running the night… got them to change it to something more interesting… then you could change your routines… right?”

“Technically,” David conceded looking to Wes who had his brows drawn low as he thought it over. “What would you suggest?”

“Well you have loads of clubs here, couldn’t they get involved too?” Kurt asked looking towards Thad who he knew was heavily involved in the clubs and enthusiastic for making new ones... which gave him a spark of an idea. “Maybe you could have a fashion show?”

Sebastian raised a brow. “A fashion show?”
“Yeah, people could bid on the clothes to raise more money and maybe the art club could sell some pieces if they wanted to? The photography club too even?” he rushed out, getting caught up and excited in the possibilities. “There’s loads of things you could do!”

“That sounds so much better than an auction,” Trent grinned, eyes brightening.

“My mother has her fashion label, Kurt can talk to her about it,” Blaine piped up and Kurt spun on his Dom, mouth gaping. Dana owned… his brain short-circuited. In all his time with the Andersons he hadn’t even thought to ask what Dana and Jared actually did for work, he just knew they owned more than a few companies, businesses and enterprises.

*But a fashion label*?!

“How did this never come up?” he demanded and Blaine smiled innocently.

“Surprise,” he cooed and Kurt wanted to be mad but he couldn’t stop smiling damn it!

“This isn’t over, Anderson,” Kurt warned him, poking him in the chest sternly.

Blaine pecked his nose and mouth and chin in quick succession. “I love when you try to get all bossy, baby.”

“Uh if we could concentrate,” Nick joked haughtily. “Kurt was solving our problems for us, B, so unhand him you fiend.”

Blaine chucked a cushion at him.

“I could run it past the Principal,” Wes murmured stroking two fingers over his jaw absently and ignoring the fighting.

“Your dad,” David deadpanned. “We all know he’s your daddy dearest and you’re the apple of his eye, no need to pretend, Wesley.”

Wes gave him another flat look. “Someone will have to talk to the fundraising committee.”

“Oh I’ll do it,” Thad volunteered cheerily, raising his hand like he was in class.

“And I’ll go with him to make sure he doesn’t go all soft on them,” Sebastian added, straightening his tie out.

“I’m not a child that needs supervising,” he pouted, belaying his point completely.

“So what songs are we singing?” Jeff found his voice.

“Warm enough, lovely?” Blaine asked him for the hundredth time as they made their way outside towards the football pitch and stands, trailing along with the flow of people heading that way excitement pouring off of them and snaking around like a live thing between the many bodies.
Kurt had seen the structure and field from a distance through the windows of the classrooms facing the south, but seeing it getting closer and closer and bigger and grander really brought it home, especially illuminated and teeming with bodies. He wanted to cease being surprised by the sheer contrast between McKinley and Dalton, but he didn’t think that would come about anytime soon. Everything was sleek and new and pristine here just like everywhere else, even the grass on the field that was used regularly seemed to be constantly maintained and replaced. McKinley’s field on the other hand had long ceased being grass and was mostly mud, while their stands were falling apart.

Kurt hummed in answer absently as he continued to turn his head this way and that, raucous students drawing his attention or the floodlights that lined the path they were walking along cutting cleanly through the darkening fall into winter sky. It was all fascinating to Kurt.

The gloved hand holding his slipped away abruptly, regaining his focus as a feeling of emptiness took its place which caused a disquieted noise to escape his throat. Kurt barely turned his head Blaine’s way to inquire why, when a soft, warm weight settled around his neck.

Blaine’s scarf.

It was Dalton colors; stripped red and navy with a little gold crest in the corner with his initials and it smelled delightfully of Blaine, strongly masculine with that constant tinge of fresh apple over the top that made Kurt sigh in lungful’s of the stuff greedily.

His Dom finished settling it around his neck with a pleased, soft smile on his full lips as he smoothed his hands over the material, eyes settling more than once on the corner where the B.A was stitched. Kurt flushed pink when he realized just why Blaine was so pleased to have him wearing his scarf and the pleasant hot swoop in his stomach told Kurt that he liked it just as much.

“Isn’t you going to get cold now?” he asked breathlessly.

Blaine finally lifted his darkened gold gaze to meet his innocent blue. “I’m fine,” he murmured pulling Kurt fully towards him by his grip on the scarf so they were standing flush, the subs hands finding Blaine’s shoulders just as the Dom leaned in to kiss him gently on the lips.
Kurt’s lashes fluttered shut, taking a sharp inhale through his nose as the rest of his limbs went to jelly and the sounds around them filtered out into white noise. Blaine moved his lips sure and confidently over Kurt’s like always, coaxing him into play and making him tingle all over. Kurt’s hands automatically went for his Dom’s curls but found the barrier of the Blaine’s black beanie in the way, a frustrated huff escaped him and Kurt could feel the smile on Blaine’s mouth, as well as feel the chuckle in the hot bursts of breathe between them.

Everything all came rushing back however when Blaine pulled away and Kurt was suddenly very aware that they were surrounded by people that had front row tickets to him and Blaine kissing. He swallowed and ducked his head to hide the vivid blush he was sure was streaking his cheeks and he heard Blaine laugh again against his temple.

“Blaine,” he whined.

“It’s nothing people haven’t seen before, baby.”

Kurt pouted petulantly at Blaine’s clear amusement in the situation and pulled out of his grasp to strut away haughtily, even though he didn’t have a clue where the hell he was actually supposed to be going, only to be pulled up short by Blaine snaking arms around his waist.

“Oh c’mon, lovely, don’t be mad,” he cooed into his ear. Kurt rolled his eyes but a smile was hitching at his lips. He wasn’t really mad, just flustered and his defense had always defaulted to sassy diva when he got like that. “I couldn’t help myself, you look so good with my name on you,” he continued hotly, nipping at his earlobe.

Kurt hitched a breath, head tilting unconsciously as the words went straight to his crotch. He wasn’t even aware that he was pressing his ass back into the curve of Blaine’s groin until he heard a low growl in his ear. “Maybe we should skip the game and go back home?”

“We promised Nick,” Kurt reminded him with a gulp.

They’d gotten increasingly more comfortable with one another since last Thursday. Making out was now a gloriously frequent part of their relationship, it was almost all Kurt wanted to do these days, and the sub was growing bold in the way he initiated the intimacy between them and explored Blaine until his head and senses were drunk on the Dom.

Blaine let out a dramatic sigh against his skin and Kurt couldn’t help but giggle at how overdone it was.

“Fine, fine, let’s go then before I change my mind,” Blaine grumbled, pushing them forwards in their current position, which made for some strange maneuvering.

“Walking and cuddling you,” Blaine explained simply continuing to waddle them up the path.

“We look like idiots,” Kurt stated, seeing the amused glances from some of the onlookers.

“Nah-uh,” the Dom denied squeezing his sides.

By the time they spotted and reached a few of their friends- which consisted of Nick, Dave, Ryan, David and Wes- Kurt was a giggling mess and Blaine was beaming brighter than the sun for making his sub so obviously happy.

“If it isn’t the love birds.” Nick rolled his eyes when spotted them, then tilted his head at the
conjoined way they were travelling. “Or… love crab thingy…”

“I’m not a crab,” Kurt protested, wrinkling his nose at him and a few of them laughed at the amount of disgust written in that one cute gesture.

“Why are you walking like that?” Wes asked exasperatedly. “As if football night wasn’t bad enough.”

“We’re walking and cuddling,” Blaine nodded surely, ignoring the dig.

“So… wuddling?” Nick grinned and they all groaned.

“Ignoring Nick’s stupidity—” David started.

“Hey, B’s the one that was doing the wuddling, not me!”

“we were just wishing these boneheads good luck before the game,” he continued on like Nick wasn’t even there.

“We don’t need luck,” Ryan boasted confidently.

“Says the guy who has to have his sub wearing his jersey and sitting in the front row otherwise he can’t play,” Blaine teased.

Ryan pursed his lips and crossed his arms across his impressive chest, biceps bulging. “You’re gonna be just as bad as me, just you wait.”

“Oh that ship has most definitely sailed,” Nick announced and got a punch in the arm for his troubles.

“Aren’t you supposed to be getting ready?” Kurt asked curiously, ignoring the bickering friends.

“We managed to sneak out for a few minutes, Beiste will probably go all angry mama bear on us but it’s worth it to see everyone before we go out,” Dave grinned at him. “It’s nice to see you again, Kurt.”

Kurt smiled back at him, noticing the slight possessive tightening of Blaine’s grip around his waist. His Dom wasn’t worried about Dave ‘stealing’ him away anymore, but it seemed there was always going to be a slight Dominant reaction from Blaine that the logical mind wouldn’t shut off.

“You too. No Seb tonight?”

“He and Thad refuse to see me and Ryan before games. They say that we have to be focused,” Dave rolled his eyes.

“Actually, Sebastian said that he won’t kiss potential losers. Only winners, so Dave will have to wait until after if he wants to get some,” David smirked at the bulkier Dom who scowled at him. “And Thad effortlessly turns our dear Ryan into a sap who can’t see past the hearts in his eyes if he sees him before games.”

Kurt cooed at that just as Wes’ phone chirped and he pulled it out to read the text, raising an unimpressed brow. “Besite has noticed your absence.”

Nick rolled his eyes and tousled his hair carelessly. “We do it every game, you’d think she’d be use… uh…” he trailed off, eyes fixed somewhere over their shoulders and Kurt followed his line of sight curiously and spotted a certain blonde looking decidedly uncomfortable and a little lost in the
crowd.

“Jeff!” Kurt called over. The sub was surprised to see his best friend seeing as the blonde had said he wasn’t going tonight, instead choosing to have a quiet night in. The brown eyed sub glanced over, relief flooding his face when he spotted Kurt, hurrying towards him. “You should have called and told me you were coming. We could have met you somewhere,” Kurt said, pulling himself from Blaine’s arms to give his friend a fortifying hug.

“It was really last minute,” Jeff murmured back, soaking in the quiet strength Kurt was offering before pulling away reluctantly to face the rest of the group. He stopped dead when he spotted Nick. How had he not seen him there before?

*How had he not seen him there before?* he inwardly berated himself feeling his heart rate go from zero to sixty when their eyes met and held. *Oh god… he knew this was a terrible idea…*

“Hi, Jeff,” Nick greeted softly with a smile.

Jeff swallowed hard and licked his lips nervously as he ripped his eyes away and stared at the ground. “I thought you’d be getting ready,” he almost accused in his flustered state.

The implication struck Nick in the chest, hard. Jeff had only turned up because he thought he wouldn’t see Nick unless it was from a safe distance while he was on the field. He cleared his throat, trying to dislodge the lump of hurt that had settled there, solid and harsh. The Dom didn’t know what he could do anymore, Jeff wanted nothing to do with him and nothing he did seemed to change that fact. He’d never had such a problem with confidence before, he was a Dom after all, but something about Jeff had this innate power to completely unman him in seconds.

“Uh, yeah… I’ll just… go get ready then… see you in a few guys,” he said defeated before turning on his heel and striding away, the set of his shoulders slumped and tense with the weight of yet another rejection.

Watching it was like witnessing a car wreck to Kurt and the rest of the people in the group were tellingly silent also.

“We’re just gonna wait over here for a bit,” Kurt motioned just off to the side to Blaine before turning to Dave, Ryan and looking after a heartbroken Nick. “Good luck guys.”

“Thanks, Kurt,” Dave smiled at him and the sub grabbed Jeff’s hand towing him off a little way away where they couldn’t be overheard.

“Jeff,” he began and the blonde averted his attention down to his feet with a high blush staining his face. “He’s trying really hard here.”

“It’s not about him… I just… I told him to let me be and he’s always around…” Jeff ranted hysterically, brown eyes doleful and sad peeking out from under his platinum fringe.

“He’s not smothering you, Jeff,” Kurt said patiently. “He doesn’t push into your personal space or follow you around all day,” he interrupted and Jeff shook his head.

“I know… I know,” he breathed out, chest deflating and looking so tired Kurt sat them on the nearest bench and wrapped an arm around him.

“What is it then?” he asked and Jeff ran a hand over his face.

“I think… I think I like it when h-he’s around. It’s warm when he’s there. Kurt, I can’t let him in,” he said and Kurt gasped at the admittance, a happy smile stretching his cheeks.
“Jeff, that’s a good thing, sweetie. Why wouldn’t you let him in?” he asked holding him closer.

“It will lead to expectations that I can’t meet,” the blonde stated tiredly. “We both know the reason why he wants to talk to me.”

“Because he likes you,” Kurt told him surely.

“Because he wants to **claim** me,” Jeff refuted, eyes watery when he raised them back up. “Own me.”

“C’mon, sweetie, Nick’s a great Dom, he wouldn’t hurt you like that,” Kurt tried to convince him. “He doesn’t just want you as some kind of possession.”

“And you don’t think he was nice, that he seemed like a great Dom when we first met, Kurt? Why do you think my parents set up that pre-claim in the first place?” Jeff said thickly around the tears clogging his throat. “They all seem nice at first.”

“That’s not fair on the Doms that are caring and loving, as well as on you *yourself*, Jeff,” Kurt told him sadly but straight up. Once upon a time he would maybe have agreed with that sentiment to an extent but now… “Blaine, would never treat me like that.”

“Blaine’s the exception,” Jeff said immediately.

“No he’s not! True they might be a minority for all we know but Blaine isn’t the only proper Dominant out there, Jeff. David, Wes, Dave, Ryan… they’re Doms too and they’re nice, fair people as well. You know that deep down,” he finished softly. “You know Nick would never do that to you, you’re just using excuses to keep yourself from giving in to what we both know you want.”

Jeff looked away, tears stinging his eyes as the wind whipped about them. “I can’t, Kurt. I just… please, I can’t.”

The other sub gathered the blonde close and Jeff buried his cold, wet face into his neck and Blaine’s scarf. “You’re strong enough, Jeff. I know you are. And I don’t want to push you into something you don’t want, but I won’t sit around and let you punish yourself further for something that wasn’t your fault.”

“Kurt-” Jeff tried but Kurt hushed him soothingly.

“Search your heart, sweetie. If Nick’s not in there then that’s fine, I’ll ask Blaine to tell Nick to leave you alone… but if he is, even the tiniest amounts, then I’m begging you to give him a shot to make you happy, prove that you’re worth everything I know you are and more,” Kurt whispered to him with feeling.

Jeff’s silence was more telling than any words ever would be.

The blonde had a chance here to get rid of Nick once and for all, all he had to do was tell Kurt and then it would be over finally… only now that it came down to crunch, Jeff hesitated, stumbled just before the finish line. **He wanted this to go away didn’t he?** Wanted Nick to find someone else… only… he didn’t. Yes, he was utterly terrified. Yes, he was sure that he’d be nothing more than a burden to Nick, one he would grow tired of. And yes, he knew for sure that Nick could do miles better than him… but there was this selfish little spark of his old self, a tendril with a hook that had firmly attached him to the Dom already and refused to let go. He didn’t want Nick to leave and find someone else as much as he kept insisting that he should. The more that he thought about the prospect the sicker and more miserable he felt. He didn’t want the warmth Nick brought with him to wrap around someone else.
“He’s not going to claim you tomorrow. You can be friends first,” Kurt continued to comfort, threading his fingers through Jeff’s hair.

“But I know what he wants,” the blonde admitted in a fearful whisper. Memories of hurt and pain and humiliation making his limbs tremble.

Kurt shook his head and pulled back to framed Jeff’s face in his hands, thumbs wiping away the remnants of tears, blue eyes serious and ever compassionate. “No you don’t, hon. Nick is a completely different person, it’s not right to put all those failings on his head when he hasn’t done anything wrong.”

That resonated for a moment… “That makes it worse.” Not knowing what to expect ever, constantly living on a knife edge wondering what would set him off, second guessing every action…

Kurt smiled at him and poked him in the cheek to get him to refocus. “Nick’s been completely up front with you about everything, what makes you think he wouldn’t still be? He’ll let you know, sweetie. You can’t shut him up on the best of days after all.”

That actually got a small smile from Jeff.

“Throw him a bone, huh?” Kurt suggested, eyebrows raised hopefully.

“I…” He took a deep breath as he settled his mind. “I’ll talk to him after… say I want to try and be… friends…” He paused. “But I’m not ready for more, I don’t know if I ever will be,” he hastily added with wide eyes.

Kurt nodded. “And tell him that. Just be honest.”

Jeff nodded back timidly and Kurt beamed.

“Everything okay over here?” Blaine asked, approaching cautiously.

Kurt let go of Jeff to allow him time to really compose himself and grinned at Blaine. “Yeah, it’s great.” He looked over his Doms shoulder. “They gone?”

“The guys went to finish getting ready and David and Wes went to find us all some good seats,” he explained before looking at Jeff. “You okay, Jeff?”

The blonde scrubbed at his face and nodded. “Yeah, thank you,” he answered softly.

Blaine nodded, knowing not to push and knowing it wasn’t his place anyway. “Ready to go watch some college football?” He held his gloved hand out for Kurt, wiggling his fingers enticingly. The sub slipped his own into the offered one happily.

“Only if I have to,” he lamented.

Blaine pulled him in close to lay a kiss to the corner of his mouth. “It’ll be fine, you can quietly mock the outfits.”

Kurt bit his lip to keep from laughing, heart light with how well Blaine knew him. He looked over his shoulder to his best friend and smiled at him. “C’mon, Blondie. Let’s get the torture over with.”

They ended up in the front row with most of the Warblers; Seb and Thad having reserved the row for them. It was clear from the start that both subs were more than very serious about this football business.
Thad was indeed wearing Ryan’s jersey which came down to his knee’s easily and barely hung onto
his shoulders, in fact, the only thing probably preventing it from pooling at the subs feet was the
jacket he wore over it.

Sebastian on the other hand wasn’t wearing any school apparel but was instead vocally cutting the
other team, the Carmel Shark’s, to shreds, citing weaknesses and failings of the players, coaches and
even the opposing cheer squad.

Kurt ended up between Blaine and Wes with Jeff on the other side of his Dom, next to Thad who
was chatting away endlessly to him and it wasn’t long before the teams took the field after some
impressive acrobats and less impressive rhymes from the cheer girls and boys. Kurt spotted the
gorgeous figure of Corrine in her tight fitting uniform, jumping around with a huge smile on her face
as she amped up the crowds further. Kurt glanced at David to see him wolf whistling her and Corrine
eating it up as her eyes inevitably strayed to him every few seconds, making it clear who she was
really performing for.

Pretty soon the game was underway however and Kurt tucked himself into Blaine’s side, angling his
body and leaning back against Blaine’s chest with the Dom’s arm wrapped around his shoulders for
the duration, allowing the happy atmosphere and the energy buzzing off of Blaine to seep into him…
only after a while, Kurt found he was getting bored.

At McKinley, Kurt went to the games because it was something to do that he didn’t have to pay for
and the atmosphere was light for once. But since being claimed, Kurt found he didn’t need that lift
like he used too, those moments of pretending his prospects weren’t dim… he was already happy.

Of course he knew that already, he still felt like he was in a fairytale some days, but this was one of
the first times he was truly realizing just how happy he was that the idiot holding him so preciously
had claimed him in that function room.

“Throw it!” Blaine called out as some of the students rose from their chairs, shouting similar things
angrily. The ball sailed through the air and someone caught it only to be pummeled to the ground,
which seemed to take the game right back to where they started again as they all lined up.

Kurt frowned and looked around the field once more, trying desperately to try and work out any
logic to this game and came up short again. What the hell was this sport about anyway? They don’t
even play half the time!

“Why are you cheering?” Wes suddenly ranted exasperatedly, throwing his hands in the air. “He
didn’t even get more than two steps, how is making ten steps in half an hour something to celebrate?
Bunch of mindless savages,” he grumbled grumpily at the end.

Finally, someone who makes sense!

Kurt cleared his throat and leaned towards the Dom to admit, “I have no idea what’s going on.”

Wes turned to him with wide, grateful eyes. “I know right?”

“I mean… what are even the rules?” Kurt asked flailing his hand out towards the pile of guys
jumping on top of one another. “They just… run into one another and jump on the floor randomly.”

Blaine snorted overhearing him, but kept his mouth closed and eyes on the field.

“I think they have positions,” Wes admitted. Kurt raised a skeptical brow but the Dom nodded.
“Yeah I know, hard to believe.”
Kurt thought back to all those times sitting, or sometimes standing if all the space was taken, in the stands of McKinley. *Something had to have soaked in right?* “Oh I know one!” Kurt admitted, bouncing in his seat. “There’s a quarterback right?”

He heard Blaine softly chuckle behind him.

Wes shrugged. “Probably?” It was more of a question than an acknowledgement.

David scoffed at them, reluctantly drawing his eyes away from the game. “C’mon the QB’s like one of the most important players on the team.”

“And that’s Dave right? He’s the captain, so that means he’s that position?” Kurt asked trying to get a handle on the logic.

Wes took out his phone and tapped away for a few moments. “Not necessarily. You can be captain without being quarterback. The quarterback just chooses the plays for the offense and other stuff I don’t really get.”

“Is that team one?”

“Team one, baby?” Blaine asked confused.

Kurt glanced over his shoulder at him, then back at Wes, who looked lost still and David, who looked frustrated. “Yeah, the coach keeps putting different teams on the field.”

“I noticed that!” Wes spoke up. “She keeps switching between the two. Why doesn’t she just decide on the best one… that’s poor management on her part,” he lectured.

“There’s not two teams!” David groaned face palming. “We only have one.”

“No you have like three,” Kurt corrected archly pointing at the bench where a multitude of bodies sat.

“That’s the defense and special teams players,” Blaine interjected, gold eyes showing his immense amusement. “The offense is on the field right now.”

“So three teams,” Wes concluded and Kurt beamed at him giving him a little high five. They could do this football thing… it was still boring and he’d rather be doing something else if he could get away with it, but they could totally do it if they wanted to!

Kurt looked back towards the field where the ‘offense’ all lined up again and eventually started playing again once they decided what they were doing. “So the quarterback throws the egg-”

“Ball!” David scowled at him.

“I think you’ll find balls are round,” Kurt stated haughtily and Blaine and Wes cracked up as Kurt continued commentating. “And what does Nick do?”

“Drop the ball,” Wes said as the man in question did just that for the fourth time and everyone scrambled for it to the sounds of the hissing, upset crowd. They were barely holding onto a lead. “And Ryan’s on the defense team who run around and injure people,” he concluded. “What’s that called?”

“An asshole?” Kurt quipped.

“A linebacker,” David corrected crossly.
“Is that supposed to mean something to me?” Wes asked and Kurt snickered in agreement.

“I liked it better when you just sat in moody, confused silence, or ignored the game and planned Warbler numbers,” David grumbled as he say back.

“Ooo, let’s do that,” Kurt lit up, attention caught like a magpie spotting a shiny thing. “Can we do that?”

Wes grinned wide and openly at him before pulling out a folder and scooting closer. Kurt never imagined himself and Wes interacting like this in a million years, but there was a side to Wes that Kurt could definitely appreciate and recognize. “Now that we have you my prized countertenor, it opens up so many possibilities for us…” Wes began to enthuse and Kurt listened attentively.

On the other side of the row however Jeff’s eyes were glued to the field… and a certain body and number in particular. Number 9.

“C’mon!” David yelled as Nick got brought to the floor easily by the Shark’s defense. “What is up with him? He could easily outrun that douche!”

“Something’s wrong,” Blaine acknowledged, absently shifting nervous fingers through the short, soft hairs behind Kurt’s ear. “Nick doesn’t play like this… like ever.”

Jeff felt that statement settle like lead in his stomach.

Was it self-absorbed to think that he might be the cause to this? Nick seemed perfectly fine before he had all but snapped at the Dom, yet again, and now this was happening.

“Get your head out of your ass, Duval!” Sebastian yelled towards the field and Jeff flinched in discomfort.

“Hey, leave him alone, he’s trying his best,” Thad declared waving coyly at Ryan again, who kept glancing over his shoulder and up at him from where he sat on the bench.

“Oh spare me the ‘it’s the taking part that counts’ speech,” the sub sneered with a hearty roll of his eyes.

Thad scoffed at him. “He’s doing fine, isn’t he doing fine, Jeff?”

The blonde blushed profusely at what felt like a spotlight on his thoughts and feelings, like Thad could see what he was trying desperately to deny to himself written all over him. “Uh… I mean, y-yes?”

The sub next to him eyes him strangely for a moment before smirking a little too knowingly for Jeff’s sanity, confirming his fears. “So what do you think of Nick?” he asked going for casual but Jeff wasn’t so naive to know it was anything but. Thad was deceivingly adorable, but there was a very clever mind underneath all the cute that a lot of people probably forgot.

“He’s nice,” Jeff hedged, keeping his eyes on the colliding bodies while licking his lips nervously as he felt the heat of Thad’s gaze on the side of his face.

“He does have a nice bum,” Thad agreed, cocking his head to the side objectively.

The blonde snapped his head around and gaped at him stupidly. “I-I didn’t-”

“Oh of course he’s got nothing on my stud muffin, but I can see a sort of appeal,” the little sub carried
on relentlessly, Jeff saying one thing and Thad hearing something completely different. “How do you two know each other? Nick was a little vague on the details at the mall.”

Jeff looked away again and down towards Kurt who seemed to be pouring over a folder with Wes, unknowing to the blonde’s discomfort. It wasn’t exactly Thad that made him uncomfortable. In fact, Thad was one of the only people here, other than Kurt of course, that he felt like he could actually let his guard down a little with which was refreshing, it was just… Nick. It seemed like he was everywhere and Jeff just couldn’t escape him and the worst part was that, in some traitorous way, he wasn’t sure he wanted to.

Jeff swallowed and picked at his mittens with shaky fingers. “We had a… misunderstanding.”

*Understatement, Sterling. Laughable understatement.*

“Well haven’t we all,” Thad grinned conspiratorially. “You should have seen me and Ryan in the beginning before we bonded.”

Sebastian snorted next to them. “Yeah spare me that, I already had to live through that pathetic show once this lifeti- PASS IT DAVE OR YOU CAN FORGET HAVING SEX EVER AGAIN!!” the sub cut himself off to shout at his Dom, his hands cutting through the air dramatically to emphasize his point.

Jeff was more than a little shocked, though no one else seemed bothered by the strong, personal statement. Thad simply rolled his eyes and Trent on Sebastian’s other side snorted around the mouthful of popcorn he had like it was hilarious. Jeff turned to the field to see whether Dave had heard, even though he doubted it, but there was an immediate fear that flared up in him in the wake of Sebastian, effectively in his mind, disrespecting his Dominant. It was a response that had been drilled into him harshly.

Absently the blonde watched the ball sail through the air, powering from Dave’s hand and Nick pushed past someone and managed to hold onto the pass to score a touchdown. The crowd erupted but Nick didn’t celebrate with his team, instead he just accepted the pats on the back, head down, body language still subdued and tense as the halftime whistle blew. Nick took his helmet off and threw it on the ground before stalking off towards the locker room, hands dragging harshly through his sweat soaked hair.

Jeff couldn’t look at the heartbreaking sight for long, the guilt becoming overwhelming. “What misunderstandings did you and Ryan have?” he found himself asking Thad desperately as the halftime show started setting up. Anything to take his mind off of what he had done.

The sub turned to him with that ever ready smile and warm gaze. “Ryan and I did a lot of dancing around before we got it together,” he admitted which surprised Jeff because the couple seemed so in sync, it was hard to picture them any other way.

“You got it together?” Sebastian sneered with an arched brow.

The little sub ignored him, scooting around completely to block him out pointedly.

“So you weren’t in a pre-claim?” Jeff asked curiously.

Thad laughed. “I wished! No, I was stuck staring wistfully at him from these very stands and ducking around corners for most of my freshman year. Ryan was a senior, on the football team, utterly gorgeous and I fell for him instantly like a good romantic cliché, but naturally I thought he didn’t know I existed.”
Jeff felt his ears light up when he realized the faint similarity to his and Nick’s situation. “So how did you…” he let it trail, the implication clear.

“Turns out Ryan had noticed me,” Thad gushed, biting his lip to try and hide the wide happy grin spreading his cheeks.

“Hiding around a corner?” Jeff found himself actually teasing.

Thad mock scowled at him, though he was laughing. “No!” there was a pause, before the subs cheeks colored slightly. “Though other people might have noticed that.”

Jeff smiled with a little shake of his head.

“Anyway, Ryan had seen me around and liked me too, but neither of us got up the guts to actually talk to one another, so we… danced,” he provided like it was the best word to describe it. “I looked at him, he looked at me, occasionally our eyes would meet and we’d look away,” he sighed off dreamily remembering all the times they had locked eyes across rooms or as they passed in the hall, a spark setting off fireworks between them.

“Be still my beating heart,” Sebastian muttered.

“It was romantic!” Thad declared stubbornly. Sure it wasn’t ‘conventional’, but he would never have changed it for the world, after all, they were still getting to know one another, just in a different way than most.

“But you obviously ended up talking eventually,” Jeff stated. “Who cracked first?”

“Well Dalton had just won another game and that night Dave and Sebastian hosted an after party at their house,” Thad explained animatedly, eyes lit up with the fond memories, body leaning forwards in such a way that Jeff found himself copying the movement as he got drawn further into the story.

“Loads of people turned up of course so I was safe to admire from a distance-”

“And talk everyone’s ears off about, ‘how amazing, Ryan is’, ‘isn’t he dreamy?’, ‘I think I love him’, ‘he’d be the best Dom’, ‘blah, blah, blah’,” Sebastian commentated yet again, putting on a fake high pitched voice that sounded nothing like Thad to be honest.

The sub turned and smacked him hard on the arm. “Shut it, Smythe.”

“Hey! I got you and gigantor together, your geek ass owes me,” Sebastian smirked, though underneath it all you could tell he was a little fond. “And you didn’t have to listen to you wax poetic and whine for months so I’ve earned these digs thank you very much.”

Thad rolled his eyes, but then smiled like he couldn’t help it. “That was the best night wasn’t it?”

“Jesus.”

Thad turned back to Jeff, who was trying to cover his amused grin with his gloved hand, now practically bouncing on the spot. “So we’re both in the garden by the pool and one minute I’m pretending to dance while secretly watching Ryan from all available angles, the next Sebastian is pushing me in!”

Jeff’s brows rose into his hairline.

“And of course I can’t swim and the idiot knows it as well, so I’m full on drowning and then I feel arms around me pulling me to the surface.”
“Ryan?” Jeff guessed, smiling a little.

“My Dom to be,” Thad giggled remembering just how it felt to have those powerful arms around him for the very first time, how Ryan had been frantic for him, checking him over and carrying him straight to the bathroom inside for towels completely disregarding himself. Thad had ended up in some of Seb’s clothes and Ryan’s letterman jacket for the rest of the night, sitting in Ryan’s lap because the Dominant wouldn’t let him out of his sight or grip, not that Thad had complained. No, he may have acted it up a bit to snuggle even more deliriously happy actually. “Dave made sure Ry was close at hand to dive in for me.”

“So they set the whole thing up, that’s what he meant about owing him?”

Thad hummed in agreement. “We would have ended up together eventually though. We were meant to be after all, they just speeded things up.”

“That sounds really nice, Thad,” he said honestly and the small sub nodded, beaming.

It would never stop being jarring to Jeff how it seemed that he was surrounded by these fairytale bonds when his had gone so terribly. How he was constantly being shown these picture perfect Doms that were nothing like he was and it was causing him to reevaluate things that he had previously thought set in stone. It was uncomfortable and confusing for him.

The teams came out again and Thad spotted Ryan as he went to take the field and the small sub was suddenly on his feet cheering loudly. “Wooo, go Ry! Kick their ass’s babe!”

The Dom grinned and saluted his sub before running off, a noticeable spring in his step. Jeff found himself looking for Nick and soon enough number 9 came trudging out behind everyone else, getting encouraging backslaps from his teammates as they passed him, his shoulders still hunched and tense and making Jeff’s insides clench.

The rest of the game was pretty tight, Dalton who should have been running away with it couldn’t quite seem to build up the lead they wanted and it wasn’t just Nick who wasn’t playing to their best. It seemed like the whole team seemed to be lacking fire and nothing Dave or the Coach was shouting at them was working.

They won by a touchdown in the end.

The people in the stands started leaving once the teams were gone and Thad gave him a hug goodbye as he rushed off with Sebastian to meet their Doms and celebrate the win… or in Sebastian’s case, chew his Dom out it looked like.

Kurt and Blaine rose as one and his best friend looked expectantly at him. “Enjoy it?”

Jeff shrugged. “It was a good game.”

“If you say so,” he grinned and Blaine snorted in amusement at his sub, eyes filled with affection as he stared at him. “How was Thad?”

“Chatty,” he admitted feeling a warmth for the other sub and Kurt laughed while Blaine smiled.

“He is that,” the Dom conceded.

“C’mon blondie, we’ll walk you to your building,” Kurt offered but Jeff shook his head.

“No its fine, you two go ahead, I’m just gonna stay out here for a little while,” he said needing the
time to work out what to do, what to say to Nick to make it better.

“You shouldn’t really be out this late on your own, Jeff,” Blaine reprimanded softly, rubbing his hand over Kurt’s waist soothingly.

“I won’t be long, I just want some air before I head back in,” he explained.

“Well we’ll stay with you then,” Kurt shrugged moving to sit down again.

“No, honestly… you guys get home,” he urged and knew his best friend would read into that what he was really saying.

*I want to be by myself.*

Kurt bit his lip in indecision, blue eyes probing into him before he sighed. “Okay… but I’m going to message you on your laptop in about an hour so if you’re not there I’m coming looking for you and there’ll be hell to pay when I get my hands on you,” he warned sternly, pretty scowl on his face and hands on hips. Classic Kurt diva pose.

“I promise,” Jeff agreed softly and rose to hug his friend one last goodbye, before the pair joined the steady trickle of people exiting.

The crowd grew sparser and sparser until there was no one left at all and Jeff found himself stepping down from the stands onto the field itself with his arms wrapped around his torso to ward off the worsening chill of the night air. He welcomed the silence these days. Liked the way it settled onto his shoulders and made him feel safe. No voices came to mean no threats, no orders, no punishments and he reveled in it.

“Is the little lamb lost?” a harsh voice sneered, sickly sweet from behind him cutting through the silence he was basking in like the worst irony.

Jeff spun around and saw it was none other than Brad in the front row, leaning against the divider nonchalantly.

He tried not to let the sub get to him. He could handle this.

Instead of answering he just turned back around and continued looking out at the trampled field hoping that Brad would get bored, but he heard the heavy sound of feet hitting the ground and knew that he had hopped over.

“Think you’re too good to talk to me now, McKinley trash?” was jeered again, getting louder as he came closer. “Think that now you’re going to school with people who matter that somehow that makes you matter too? You and that pathetic friend of yours.”

Jeff grit his teeth hard as the sub unwittingly hit one of the only buttons in him that caused a fight response these days, most of the others had been set to flight long ago. “Don’t talk about him like that.”

“Like what? Like-” he cut himself off. “What the hell is wrong with your neck?”

Jeff felt ice rush through his veins and his hand immediately came up to protectively cup the ruined mark on his neck, spinning around, even though the damage was already done. Brad looked maliciously gleeful and sickened at the same time and it wasn’t a pleasant combination on his face.

He laughed and it hit Jeff like a hammer repeatedly to the sternum, making it hard to breathe, making
it hard to keep from letting the tears gathering in his eyes from falling.

“Oh this is priceless!” the sub grinned maniacally, still guffawing and clutching his sides. “You really are beyond damaged aren’t you? How the hell did you even get into this school?”

“I…I…” he couldn’t talk past the hurt that had lodge itself in his windpipe.

“Was it a charity thing? An “adopt the sub no one wants” campaign, only two dollars a month!” he mocked, green eyes hard and filled with venom.

“Stop,” he breathed, almost begged. “P-please.”

Brad turned his nose up at the request. “You’re so pathetic,” he spat advancing on him and Jeff couldn’t move his wooden legs fast enough to get away. “You don’t belong here, Sterling. Filth like you should stay in Lima where it belongs. You should-”

“HEY! What the fuck are you doing? Get away from him!” a familiar commanding voice filled the stadium bringing on a rush of relief so fierce it made the blonde tremble and the submissive in him want to sink to his knees, crawl over and grip onto Nick’s legs. And that desire was what frightened him most of all. That when it came down to the wire Nick had wormed his way so far past his defenses that ultimately he represented a place of security for Jeff. When had he allowed that to happen? How could he be so careless?

Brad scrambled backwards to obey the unmistakable order but Jeff hardly noticed, he felt like he couldn’t breathe. The tears finally spilled and he sank to the grass, curling up into his knees, confused and pained by the hundreds of thoughts and memories and feelings ripping him apart at the seams.

“N-Nick-” Brad started.

“What did you say to him?” the Dom cut off, growling the question from deep in his chest. He sounded positively livid and Jeff flinched at the voice, the rage frightening him even further.

“N-nothing, I-” Brad stammered and Nick let out a growl of disapproval.

“Don’t lie to me!” he shouted and the sub backed away, now clearly alarmed.

“I saw his neck,” Brad rushed out and the Dom in front of him darkened and became almost feral.

Nick couldn’t explain what he had felt when he first spotted Jeff and Brad of all people on the field. He had stayed behind in the locker room for a while after talking to Coach Beiste. She’d told him straight up that he could never play like that again, her exact words being; ‘Go clear your head, Duval. I don’t want to see you in my locker room again until you’ve got whatever’s biting at ya sorted out.’ He didn’t know where to start though. Someone like Jeff wasn’t someone you just got over, and so he’d headed to the field, too wound up to head back to his room and too wired to celebrate with the rest of his team. It wasn’t like he deserved to either, he’d nearly cost them the game after all. He was almost too lost in his own head to spot them at first, but he only needed one look at Jeff’s deathly pale, agonized face to snap completely, Dominant pheromones pouring out of him and coursing through his system.

Protect, protect, protect. Mine, mine, mine.

And now he was hearing that this person had seen the pain Jeff had gone though and had ridiculed and used that against him?
“I’m only going to say this once,” Nick warned low and dangerously, eyes straying to his angel’s crumpled figure before returning back with even more fire. “Leave. Him. Alone. If I hear you’ve spoken a word about Jeff and his situation to anyone else then you can forget ever finding a Dominant, Brad. I’ll make sure every Dom in the state knows exactly what you’re like. Now go.”

There was a flurry of footsteps and then silence.

Nick approached cautiously and crouched down in front of the blonde. “Angel?” he asked softly, trying to fight down the remaining anger to be there for this sub he wanted so damn badly to be his.

“Don’t call me that,” came the automatic, muffled reply.

“He didn’t harm you did he?” he had to ask. “Didn’t touch you.”

Jeff shook his head, eyes firmly fixed on the ground fingers grasping his knees so hard his knuckles turned white and somehow Nick knew he was trying to stop them from shaking, just like he knew the curled up position was to shield himself and maybe to stop himself from falling apart.

Carefully he reached a hand out and placed it on top of Jeff’s tense one.

“Ang- Jeff,” he corrected himself quickly. “Don’t listen to anything he says. He’s just jealous and bitter, you’re worth one hundred times more than him.”

“He’s right. Dalton… being here isn’t gonna change what I am… I don’t belong here…” his voice shook and Nick’s hands ached to wrap around him and hold him close.

“Brad is a little shit and whatever he said to you is wrong. You’re perfect… in every way, Jeff… I promise you, you are.”

Jeff rose to his feet quickly, as if the words set off a coiled spring in him. He already knew the blonde didn’t want to hear the words. Nick watched as the sub swiped at his eyes with his mitten covered fingers, that were just so endearing Nick wanted to jump off a cliff, and straightened himself up as best as he could.

Nick could feel the goodbye coming and it hurt so badly he could barely breathe.

“Listen, I know you’d rather I just leave now, but please can I walk you to your room?” Nick asked suddenly, rising back to his full height. “Just so I know you got there okay.”

Jeff snapped his eyes to the sincere, concerned one across from him. “I…” He couldn’t even finish a thought, let alone a sentence but somehow he found himself nodding despite himself, instinct ruling him on this one. He didn’t want to run into anyone else and he’d already horribly revealed to himself that he felt at least a little safer, warmer, with Nick by his side than not.

He wasn’t lying when he told Kurt about Nick.

They were walking before he could register and then they were suddenly inside and he realized it was getting closer and closer to when Nick would leave him and this steel band was tightening around his heart making him panic again.

Don’t leave me, a soft voice called from a place deep inside his heart as they stopped at his door. He didn’t dare to give voice to the faint plea, instead locked it away.

“If he bothers you again, him or anyone else, tell me okay?” Nick asked and Jeff simply stared at this wonder in front of him. How was he even real?
Nick read his silence as absolute and sighed before turning and walking away down the hall, hands jammed into his pockets.

Jeff watched him go and immediately wanted him back, Kurt’s voice in his head urging him to just take that chance. *Just do it. Call out his name and ask him if he still wants to be friends…* But could he do that? Just come out and ask? Ask the Dom that wants to claim him-

“Oh god I can’t do this,” he whimpered out loud though it didn’t carry, ready to turn on his heel and scamper all the way inside his dorm with the door firmly shut between them. But the picture of Nick’s devastated face as he threw his helmet down had him rooted to the spot. That was his fault, the cloud of sadness hanging over the Nick’s head was down to him and the submissive in him was dying to make it up to the Dom.

“Nick,” he called out, voice breaking and weak but the Dom heard him right away.

He spun back immediately, face heartbreakingly hopeful underneath his messy hair.

“Friends,” he blurted out, flushing all over and feet twitching around anxiously. *Why couldn’t he do anything right anymore? Why did he have to make everything so awkward?*

Nick took a few steps back towards him, brown eyes fixed intently on him. “Yeah?”

The blonde felt his heart jack rabbit and his stomach lurch under the significance of what he was about to do, but he pushed forwards bravely. “I… want to be,” he admitted on an embarrassed murmur.

“Friends?” Nick confirmed, staring at him like he was a dream.

“Y-yeah, if you want to,” he blushed harder, wanting to look away but unable to break eye contact.

More steps, more frantic heartbeats. “Yes! Jeff, yes, I only ever wanted to be a part of your life,” Nick said sincerely, eyes bouncing back and forth between his like he wasn’t quite sure he was hearing correctly.

“I can’t give you what you… what you want,” Jeff found himself saying, nervously stating the boundaries. “I can only be friends with you, I’m sorry.”

Nick soaked that in before he nodded surely. “I would love to be just your friend. I want you anyway I can have you and if it’s only like this then… I’ll still cherish it and you. And I can wait…”

Jeff’s eyes bugged out at this… surely he didn’t mean…?

“W-what?” he croaked and Nick awarded him with one of those sunshiny smiles of his.

“If you ever feel ready to give me a chance I’ll be here. But I’m not gonna pressure you or bother you. I’ll be the best friend you could ever hope for, well apart from Kurt obviously, but if you ever change your mind… I’ll be here, waiting…” he said honestly and Jeff paled.

“No… don’t… don’t do that… Nick, you should be with someone amazing. You can’t just decide to be alone and wait for me,” he rushed out, and as much as he hated the idea of Nick with someone else his bones were cold from the dread he felt at the thought of Nick wasting away because of a fuck up like him.

“My mom always said if you find perfection don’t settle for less. I found mine…” He smiled serenely and Jeff gasped, flushing pink.
“Nick…” he tried again but the Dom waved his hand stopping him.

“But being friends with perfection is also great,” he beamed, suddenly full of life again and Jeff couldn’t help himself but smile back incredulously.

*Why does he have to say such sweet things?* Jeff thought to himself as he wanted to melt into a puddle. “I might not be good at this.”

“Are you trying to convince me out of being your friend when you only just asked me?” Nick joked and Jeff found himself fighting a wider smile and ducking his head as he shook it “no”.

“So… friends,” Nick confirmed holding out his hand so it was in view. Jeff looked at it, then up at Nick again, as he pulled off his mitten and slowly took it.

“Friends,” he confirmed, about to pull away when Nick brought it to his lips and lay a kiss to the back of it that sent tingles racing up his arm to sparkle in his chest. His mouth parted just enough to let out a soft sigh of awe and then Nick was severing the contact.

“Goodnight, angel,” he murmured, eyes seeing straight into the heart of him.

“Night,” Jeff breathed shakily, feeling like something in the universe had just shifted somehow with the hot feeling of lips branded on his hand and heart.

He was about to enter his room when a voice sounded from behind him again.

“Just one more question and then I’m out of your hair.”

He turned around to see Nick shuffling on his feet cutely.

“Oh, um… okay…” he said quietly, eyebrows scrunching in confusion.

“What made you change your mind… about me I mean?” the Dom asked and Jeff’s heart thudded in his chest.

How could he ever explain the jumble of emotions swimming through him every moment of every day? How could he possibly make him understand his reason when he, himself, was finding it hard? Fingers shaking he grabbed the doorknob and turned his back on the Dom who was confused with his silence as he stepped away from him and took a deep breath.

“It’s warm when you’re around,” he rushed out on an exhale and fled into his room, heart pounding and cheeks coloring with discomfort at letting his brain work against him like that.

He slammed the door shut and slid down to the floor, breath catching and eyes misting over but inside… he felt lighter than he had in over a year. He leaned his head back against the dark wood and sighed as he felt pieces of him fit into place slowly, inexplicably and maybe… just maybe… he allowed his mind to convince him it was Nick’s doing.
Hi everyone!!
We're back with the next chapter and we hope you'll like it. MerikG, hopefully this will help you withstand the pain!

The visual for this chapter is only one pic but let us tell you...it made us sooooo extremely happy we didn't even know how to handle it at first. This wonderful wonderful person contacted us and sent us cover art for this story!!!!!!! How cool is that??????????
Thank you datshitrandom so so so much. You have made our week!!!!

We'll put it before the chapter so feel free to tell us what you think of it? And of course, go send datshitrandom (hyperlink should be under the picture) all the love and support for being amazing! Also, don't forget to visit our tumblr for all the other awesome fanart and stuff we've got going on over there!
Now read on and let us know what you thought.
Love
A&M
Attention to all of our viewers. We are interrupting this broadcast to bring you this emergency message. It has been brought to our attention by the Central Meteorology Station in Ohio that we
are soon to be hit by a storm of proportions unseen in the past few decades. Accordingly we are issuing the following measures to assure the safety of our citizens. The storm is expected sometime between Friday, late afternoon and early Saturday morning; more accurate information will be provided as we receive regular updates.

We advise you to stock up on food and water, warm clothes and extra batteries for electronic devices, not to leave your homes unless absolutely necessary and to make sure you are not alone in case of an emergency.

If anything should happen emergency services will be available at the number displayed below. Do not hesitate to call.

This message will be emitted every two hours until the storm hits.

Thank you for your attention and enjoy the rest of the evening.

"God, would you stop with that stupid message!" Kurt barked in annoyance, throwing one of the pencils he wasn't using from his abandoned attempt at homework at the screen when he heard the emergency broadcast for the tenth time that day alone.

It was like he couldn't turn around without being hit by the words "storm" and "emergency" and "stock up" and yet… he couldn't tear himself away from the room in case he missed something.

As a result his nerves were scraped thin and he had no idea how to control his the rising tide of panic and uselessness whenever that message popped up again and reminded him just what he was trying to stop himself thinking about. The first time he heard it he felt his blood run cold; fear raking his body violently as he imagined tornados and hurricanes and god knows what else, the wrath of Mother Nature herself falling upon them.

His mind immediately went to his parents; picturing them freezing, buried under the ruins of their rickety little home, bruised, broken, afraid. He thought about his friends and their families and even the people he used to hate for taunting him and he felt guilt wash over him because he was now living the high life, protected and safe. He would ride through this storm untouched with all the resources he could ever need at his fingertips while everyone he knew back in Lima would suffer. It made him feel sick to his stomach.

The moment that first message finished he called his dad to warn him and to tell him to spread the word. Forewarning was good right? But despite that his mind wouldn't let him rest. His dreams were plagued with fear; waking him up in cold sweats and hiding it from Blaine and as the days went by he felt his self-control weakening more and more as his frustration rose until every word out of his mouth felt like a sneer. He was tired and worried and guilt-ridden and it was all spilling over onto everyone around him.

He could tell those closest to him who were receiving the brunt of his ire were getting less and less patient and understanding with every biting retort or sarcastic mutter under his breath and he could feel Blaine tensing whenever he snapped at him for just daring to look at him in a way that didn't suit him. He felt horrible and he knew he was behaving even worse, he knew it, but it felt like he was out of control, reverting back to his defensive default which had always been bitchiness bordering the wrong side of rude and it just so happened that his Dom was on the receiving end of most of it.
Dumping all that was going inside of him on Blaine wouldn't help either of them, he knew that too and he hated himself a little every time he did it afterwards. So eventually he just settled in to fume after the first couple of days of letting his mouth run riot, staying stubbornly silent as he twitched and wallowed inside his own head getting more and more debilitated.

There was a turning point fast approaching, he could feel the tension of it about ready to snap, he just couldn't tell the precise time it would hit.

"Kurt, are you okay?" Blaine's voice, so tender and caring every other time he spoke to him, was now laced with annoyance and sounded edgy and forced as he entered the living room where Kurt had set himself up to brood alone under the guise of studying.

Somehow it made Kurt even more agitated than he was before. He didn't know whether it was the tone or the question itself but it rubbed him completely the wrong way.

"Peachy," he bit back sarcastically and crossed his arms across his chest, sinking back into the couch and refusing to meet his eyes.

"Are you sure about that?" Blaine asked again, sarcasm lacing his own words to match and Kurt rolled his eyes with a rude huff.

He cut his eyes Blaine’s way eventually to find him a few steps away from the sofa and glared at the tight expression he found there.

"Yes, Blaine, I'm sure thanks ever so," he drawled insolently and he knew as soon as the words had left his lips he’d pushed it too far this time.

His Dom’s eyes narrowed and he let out a frustrated growl that made Kurt flinch instinctively, the submissive knowing he’d displeased his Dom on the most base levels. Blaine purposefully closed the space between them, making Kurt’s chest constrict but when he reached out it wasn’t Kurt he grabbed. He snatched the remote control that was next to him and turned the TV off, throwing it afterwards with a careless toss that had it clattering on the wooden floor. He turned back to face Kurt who now felt jittery in the wake of that blatant display of anger; pinned under that hazel gaze.

"I'm done with this, Kurt," Blaine stated firmly and Kurt felt his heart stutter to an almost complete halt at those words.

Done?

"W-what?" he croaked out.

He watched Blaine running his hands through his hair, fluffing the luscious curls even further and rubbing the back of his neck as he did every time he felt agitated or nervous.

"For days you've been closed off and snippy and downright bitchy," he stressed to make sure that none of what he’d done had gone unnoticed. “There’s a certain amount I’ll tolerate from you and I've tried to wait and let you come to me with whatever was bothering you, but now I'm just done. You're getting time out," he said, the last sentence steeped in dominance that made Kurt gasp when it wrapped itself around his body.

The sub in him whined, desperate and ashamed at making a mistake and making his Dom unhappy. He wanted to please and kneel in front of his Dom asking for his forgiveness, but there was something in him that wouldn't allow it. Something that made him act out and disobey, testing and pushing at the limits.
"Time out? You're punishing me?" he asked lining his words with incredulity like he had no idea what he was being punished for.

"Yes, Kurt. Time out. Half an hour, starting right now," he ordered, voice firm and menancing and Kurt stuttered in place, breathing heavily and fighting against his own DNA that compelled him to comply.

"I did nothing wrong," he argued defiantly, coming to his feet, knowing it was a load of crap and Blaine was having none of it either.

"Forty five minutes. And if you don't stop defying me this instant it'll be another 5 minutes for every word you say," he warned, eyes hard. "Forty five minutes, facing the wall… NOW, Kurt. And while you're there think about why you're there instead of in my arms. Go!" he raised his voice, pointing at the corner and Kurt knew there was no arguing this time.

His knees buckled threatening to spill him to the floor and his fingers trembled against his thighs as he walked to the far corner of the room shakily, shoulders hunched and bottom lip trembling from the force in that one command that broke across his skin, stinging like a harsh wind.

He faced the dull beige colored wall and closed his eyes to tune out the sound of his Dom sitting back down and for a moment he wondered why he was still there.

Why would he stay there instead of leaving to do something away from him if he was so displeased with how he'd behaved?

The prickly feeling of someone's eyes on his back tickled his spine and neck and he felt his eyes well when he realized Blaine had stayed because he didn't want to leave him alone. He was caring and kind and attentive as always and all Kurt had done these past few days was snap at him rudely and push him away.

Guilty tears leaked down his face silently, obscuring his vision, making him sway gently on his feet and he reached out to place a hand onto the wall to keep himself upright, forehead pressing into the cool surface to try and ground himself. But there was no grounding. There was no comfort to be had.

And as the minutes ticked by excruciatingly slowly and his legs and feet began to ache that anxious feeling he'd carried around like a shield these past days seemed ridiculous. Why hadn't he gone to his Dom for comfort?

'And while you're there think about why you're there instead of in my arms.'

He was as all his agitation and misplaced anger at the world bled out from his body in this corner leaving only sadness, regret and a hint of hope that once the forty five minutes ran out his Dom would still be there, waiting for him, caring for him… wanting him.

He placed the other hand across his lips to stop himself from sobbing as the clock above the fireplace ticked, the sound of it stark and loud to his overdriven senses. He counted them, one by one, until finally it neared the end...

"Your time is up, lovely."

And it was that one word, that one nickname that broke him.

He turned around to find Blaine directly behind him and let out a loud sob as he jumped into those strong arms he knew would always keep him safe and protected.
Through his haze he could hear someone saying, "I'm sorry," over and over and over again desperately and it wasn't until he was sitting on his Dom’s lap and that voice was whispering soft reassurances into his ear that he knew it was him apologizing.

Kurt hid his face and clutched Blaine's shirt in his palm, allowing his body to cuddle closer and seek his Dom out to satisfy the burning need for him deep in his wide open soul. He felt like he had been stripped raw to let all of that hurt and guilt out, completely defenceless and he was counting on Blaine to help keep him safe until he could piece himself back together again.

"It's okay, baby. It's all forgiven now. You're okay. I've got you," Blaine cooed to him and Kurt sobbed into his neck, trying desperately to be that composed, proud sub he was before for Blaine, but there was no stopping his tears.

He'd let his Dom down and the submissive in him hurt deeply at the thought.

"I'm s-sorry, sir… s-so sorry," he hiccoughed and Blaine placed kisses onto his temple; gentle, soft, reassuring.

"Calm down, baby. You did good. So good my beautiful boy. I'm so proud of you," Blaine continued to sooth and Kurt choked back shaky breaths and silent whimpers for a while until his tears and breathing subdued to a more manageable level that didn't feel like he was having a panic attack.

"Sir…” he mumbled out timidly into Blaine’s chest, voice small and broken and Blaine tightened his hold on him urging him to go on wordlessly, but the words got stuck.

"What is it?" Blaine prompted gently and Kurt felt his heart stutter. His voice was tender again, no longer full of anger and it gave him the extra little boost he needed to ask. To clarify as one word still run riot in his brain.

**Done.**

"D-do you still want me?"

He felt and heard as Blaine sucked in a breath, then fingers were underneath his damp chin lifting it up until Kurt’s swollen eyes met Blaine’s sincere ones.

"Kurt, punishing you will never mean that I don't want you anymore. Ever. You've made a mistake and you got punished for it and now it's forgiven. It's what punishments are for, to give both of us closure and make us step away from that particular thing.” His eyes searched Kurt’s for a second. “Do you understand why you were punished?"

Kurt nodded miserably. "Because I was taking my feelings out on everyone else instead of talking to you about them like I promised I would in our contract," he admitted, voice going croaky again with the depth of his sorrow. "I'm sorry, Blaine I-"

"Shh, it's done now, lovely. I forgave you and I still want you. I'll always want you," he said and Kurt felt his eyes tear up as he hiccupped sadly.

"Always?" he asked plaintively, needed to hear it a hundred times before the submissive part of him would fully quieten. Blaine kissed his damp temple with a smile on his face thumbing away the moisture on his face as best as he could as he looked him over.

"Always, always, forever and ever," he declared cheesy as anything and Kurt let out a watery chuckle as he snuggled deeper into his Dom, face ducking to hide in his neck, matted eyelashes
His mind was spinning still as he drew in deep breaths. It was jarring to have actually gone through his first punishment and he felt drained.

"Now... care to tell me what's gotten into you that made you feel so bad?" Blaine asked softly after a couple of minutes of blissful silence and Kurt's shoulders tensed again.

"I... I'm scared," he admitted timidly and Blaine tightened his hold on the trembling sub.

"Why, baby?" he asked and Kurt drew back to look at him through glassy eyes.

"That storm is coming, it's all over the news and my dad and Carole are all alone in not so amazing conditions. The warning on the TV says to stock up on food and warm clothes and stuff but Blaine… people in Lima can't do that. Those people… they don't understand that they don't have food to stock up, or extra blankets to bring out and I… I used to live there and I was... I still am one of them and I'm scared…" He swallowed over the lump in his throat that was making his voice thick again. "Scared for them and what this storm will do to them… I…” he cut himself off, breaking out in weary tears again and clinging to Blaine whose own eyes teared up at the admission.

Truthfully he hadn't, like most of the other privileged people who took things that were such necessities for granted, even thought about the people who had no money or means to get by this stupid storm. His parents had already stocked up on bottled water and cartons and cartons of milk and eggs and flour and meat as soon as the announcement came out. They had extra clothes, blankets and heaters already in the house if it came down to that so he knew they would be safe.

But the people that Kurt grew up with; his Kurt, his beautiful, kind, sweet sub… they would be in danger. Hungry, cold and scared.

And he didn't even think about it. It never even crossed his mind.

"Lovely, I'm so sorry. I didn't even think about that and I'm so sorry," he said honestly, feeling like an idiot and a failure as a Dom for not taking that into account. Of course Kurt was worried about his family and friends! What else would have affected him so strongly?

Kurt glanced up from his spot in his neck. "It's okay, sir. There's nothing you can do anyway," he mumbled sadly and Blaine started into the distance for a second combing his brain for a way to make it right, the Dominant side of him demanding it, before his lips broke into a blinding smile. They’d help Kurt’s family, of course they would see them safe, that was a given. As for the rest, well…

"See… that's where you're wrong. Come with me," he stood up, setting Kurt gently on his feet before pulling him after him by the hand.

"Blaine... what are you doing? Where are you dragging me?" Kurt frowned, rubbing at his sore and itchy face with his free hand, wishing for a cool cloth and some of his moisturizer.

"You and I... and my parents if they're up for it… will do some good," he declared and smiled cheerily over his shoulder before turning his head towards the staircase, drawing in a long breath and yelling, "MOOOOOOOOM!"

Next to him Kurt cringed at the piercing sound before letting Blaine lead him into the kitchen and settle him down with a glass of water and some Tylenol to prevent him from getting dehydrated and help the headache that was building. Blaine stayed by his side throughout, cuddling him against the countertop and stroking the hair behind his ear like they both loved him to do.
It wasn't long before footsteps could be heard on the stairs and Dana poked her head in the kitchen where Blaine and Kurt were already brewing coffee.

"Blaine, darling, I'm fairly sure that you could get even more volume if you shouted from your diaphragm," she deadpanned dryly as she moved to the table and sat while Jared simply chuckled at his son's appalled expression as he followed her in and made to get mugs out for the three of them seeing as Kurt already had a drink.

"Hilarious, mom... really," Blaine rolled his eyes sarcastically, but like always, the older Dom got one up on him.

"Thank you, son. I was thinking of becoming a stand-up comedian," she said with a regal voice and while Kurt giggled into his glass of water, Blaine glared and stuck his tongue out earning himself a slap on the back of his head from his dad in between pouring the coffee.

"Now... why is it that you screamed?" she asked and Blaine perked up immediately, Kurt's eyes growing curious as he stared at him, trying to finally figure out what his Dom was up to.

"Well... my lovely boy here brought something to my attention and I wanted to ask you if you could engage your charity squad to help," he said pecking his sub on his splotchy cheek and Dana raised a perfectly sculpted eyebrow at him while Jared came to settle beside her, handing her a steaming cerise mug. Her favourite.

"My charity squad? Really, Blaine?" she drawled and he shrugged and snatched a cookie from the plate his father had gotten out and took a bite, offering some to Kurt who declined with a little shake of his head.

"Fine... the board," he mumbled over chewing. "It's just... okay... let me put it this way. Ever since that warning ad started broadcasting last week Kurt has been on edge and I know you've noticed," he started and Kurt shrunk into himself a little, cheeks flushed and fingers trembling around his glass from the depth of his shame.

He felt better now that he'd talked it over with Blaine of course, the punishment having the desired effect at helping to resolve the conflict inside him and cleanse it away... but Blaine wasn't the only one he owed an apology to, so some guilt still lingered.

Blaine felt him drifting away and he quickly squeezed, drawing him closer and brushing another kiss on his temple. "It's okay, baby," he whispered gently into the skin, but Kurt shook his head sadly.

"It's not... I-I've been awful. To everyone. I'm really sorry," he glanced up to see Dana smiling and Jared looking at him with eyes filled with understanding.

"We figured there was something bothering you," Jared acknowledged, pausing to sip at his coffee and seeing it did nothing to wipe the pained expression from Kurt's face he offered him a smile and went on to say, "Everyone in this house loves you Kurt and we all know the type of person you really are so these past few days we just ignored it all because we knew there was a reason behind your behaviour."

Kurt sniffled softly before offering a watery smile to the older sub in silent thanks. Both Jared and Dana had noticed Kurt's tearstained and exhausted face, but respectfully, didn't comment or ask any details about any sort of punishment his behaviour had incurred, confident in their son's ability as a Dom.

"Are you okay with Blaine telling us what's wrong?" Dana asked the sub softly and Kurt nodded
turning his head so that he could hide his face in Blaine's neck as his Dom slipped a comforting hand back into his hair to pet.

"Blaine?" she prompted her distracted son.

The younger Dom was increasingly conscious of his subs every move in the wake of his punishment. He knew from instinct and his lessons that aftercare was vital after a punishment and he didn’t want to drop the ball again like he did at the start of their relationship. But this was important too, sorting this issue would do a lot to calm Kurt’s mind so he concentrated on the subject at hand and looked towards his expectant parents.

"Okay, so the reason Kurt has been acting… different, is because he's scared for his family and friends back in Lima. You've seen the warning on TV… it says to stock up with enough food for a few days and warm clothes and provisions for riding it out if it comes to that, which they’re pretty certain now will be the case. But these people, Kurt’s family and friends, they don't have the means to do that. They live one day at the time and Kurt is afraid what this storm will do to them," Blaine said and both Dana and Jared grew silent, worry forming clear as day on their faces as the implications set in.

“I feel… very ignorant,” Jared said first after a few moments heavy silence, pale in the face. “There’s no excuse we can make.”

"You have an idea though? That's why you called us?" Dana asked shrewdly and Blaine nodded eagerly, eyes lighting up.

"We still have a few days until the storm as far as they can tell, right? I was thinking that if you and dad pulled strings you could get people to join together and donate like… care packages or something? Like households in Lima would receive packages with things to sustain them until the storm passes. Just essential stuff… water, flour, blankets, baby formula if it's needed," he trailed off looking at the expression on his mother's face and having a hard time figuring out what it was.

She wore a hard mask of a face most of the time outside of private situations but this wasn’t quite the same as that. The corners of her lips were shaking and twitching and her eyes were misty and unfocused. He felt Kurt stiffen next to him with discomfort, making a small noise only Blaine could hear and he lowered his hand to rub up and down his back soothingly.

"Mom?" he asked softly after he couldn’t stand the nothingness from her anymore and she snapped her head up, looking at him with a love so strong it made him sway into Kurt a little.

She shook her head slightly and laughed a tiny little tinkle of a sound. "I'm so proud of you, B. You grew up into an amazing Dom and an amazing person."

Blaine swallowed hard, not having expected this at all. Praise from his mother and role model for the Dom he wanted to be never lost its potency and he didn’t know how to respond.

“And yes. I will do whatever's in my power to make this happen. I'm sure Dalia will be glad to help since the Smythe Company is doing so well. The Karofsky’s will most definitely be up for it seeing how they used to live in Lima and Hikaru and Daniel will be on board for sure. We should start with them and then expand," she planned rapidly as she hopped up and pulled open a drawer in the kitchen counter and took out a brown leather-bound book and flipped it open. "I'll take the first page, Jared you call your business associates."

"Yes, my lady," Jared smiled and pecked her lips as he passed her to grab his own phone book, pride swelling in his chest at the sight of his family.
"Blaine, you call your friends, they'll be able to help coordinate with their parents. Kurt, sweetheart, you can take a piece of paper and mark how many people we're counting on," she rattled off to the stunned younger couple and not fifteen minutes later their home was buzzing with excited chatter, paper upon paper filled with names of people eager to help.

It was coming together so fast Kurt's head was about ready to fly off, but he figured it was true what they said: money did make the world go round. Before he could blink they had several thousands of dollars deposited onto Dana's charity board account steadily rising every minute, people volunteering to drive the packages in their companies vans and trucks, people offering free canned food, warmer clothes, baby supplies, medicine, and various other stuff Kurt didn't even think to put down onto their list.

He was in awe of how he had underestimated and judged this world he was now a part of. There were far more people here willing to help than he ever would have imagined.

He found himself gazing in admiration at the small Dom that coordinated the gigantic action with a smile on her face and an ease in her voice that made it look like she was doing it effortlessly. And by her side Jared was feeding off of her energy, every inch the business mogul and not the quiet sub that liked to read and drink tea, dialling numbers and gathering money and supplies and volunteers to go shopping and distribute.

Somewhere during the day Kurt rang Jeff to invite him to join them and see what they were doing and the blonde sub did something none of them could ever imagine he would do on his own free will when he arrived. He let the tears fall as he reached out with trembling fingers to hug Blaine around the neck whispering, "Thank you's," into his ear shakily.

Kurt understood exactly where his best friend was coming from. He just realized his parents would be safe and sound. And it made him proud and happy at the way his best friend relaxed around Blaine; how much he trusted him to hug him like that and make himself vulnerable in front of him in that way.

Blaine smiled, shocked but happy, and held him carefully for a few moments before they all got back to work, setting everything up and by the end of the day things were already put into motion, warehouses being filled with supplies and money being wired back and forth between accounts.

Blaine and Kurt found rest late that night, snuggled into bed together, tired and sleepy, but happy to be with each other.

"Thank you, sir," Kurt slurred softly, already half asleep, his head resting on Blaine's chest above his heart and his body tucked snuggly into his side, those strong arms keeping him safe again.

"Anything for you gorgeous. Always," was whispered back before he kissed his lips gently and together they fell asleep, ready to face the flurry of activities the next day would bring.

Kurt eyed the darkened sky with a heaviness settling deep in his guts as Blaine pulled up in front of the school the morning the news said the storm would hit.

They had done everything they could think of; spent days with phones attached to their ears with vans going in and out of their driveway as people stopped by to drop off donations and boxes and offers to help out.
In a matter of two days they had it all concisely organised and there was a sea of people getting ready to go to Lima and deliver the supplies they'd stocked to the people there.

Kurt and Blaine went along of course, getting special leave from classes thanks to Hikaru pulling some strings with the board (a few of which had decided to pitch in to the Lima effort), as well as most of the Warblers and their bonded significant others.

Thad was ecstatic when he bounced in that morning, announcing that his uncle's company had decided to provide a number of disposable cell phones to be distributed as evenly as they could manage in case of any emergencies and David's mom had gathered up her colleagues and set up a medical camp in the small gym McKinley High school had determined to be on call should something happen to the people there.

David and Corinne brought by crates of blankets provided by the girl's mother who was in the export-import business and Miriam and her parents set up an emergency account that was meant to cover any and all damage made by the storm to the tiny town's infrastructure.

Kurt was beaming with pride and his Dom was barely able to take his eyes off of him as he navigated through the parts of town closest to his own home, being enlisted as the coordinator since he actually knew the people living there. He knew where the elderly people lived that required special medication supplies and where the families were who had little children and babies and he was more than familiar with the layout of the few streets surrounding his own home of course. It was done a lot faster with his help. Mercedes had been informed through the grapevine, as well as Sam and their friends from school and sooner than expected there were young people volunteering to coordinate their own streets making their progress even faster.

It was hard work, but eventually, they had all the households equipped with food packages, warm clothes, medical supplies and cell phones, paired up with a list of emergency contacts including Vanessa Thompson as the doctor running the medical camp, Nicholas Harwood as the IT guy with the means to deliver technical help and also Kurt's number as the mediator between two worlds that were brought together by human decency and the willingness to help.

Kurt was worried about the Dom's from his old school; their pride and self-absorbency threatening to put their families in danger if they refused help, but it looked like they were all just scared and grateful for the chance to remain safe in the face of danger.

The young sub was exhausted at the end of it all, but still proud and feeling lighter and calmer now that he knew he used his new life to help others.

He was determined to get his own family to stay with him at the Andersons house, but his dad declined, saying he was perfectly okay where he was thanks to their help and that there was no reason to panic and move them around. After arguing with him for over an hour Kurt had to relent and accept that he got his hard head from his dad and he wasn’t going to budge. It was in the middle of this argument also that it was suggested that Burt be the go between for Lima and Westerville to replace Kurt, taking some of the pressure off the young sub who was feeling the weight of responsibility. Burt agreed easily, he knew practically everyone in Lima through his work as a handyman and he was respected as a good guy and a good Dom. This decision cemented his staying put and Kurt eventually bid him goodbye and allowed his Dom to take him home to get some rest before school the next morning.

And now there they were, in front of Dalton on the day of the supposed storm with the sky the colour of the deepest ends of oceans and the wind whistling through the cracks in the antique building.
He huffed as Blaine pulled over in the parking lot and he caught sight of students trickling inside as fast as they could, their clothes puffed up with wind and wild flyaway hair obscuring their view.

"What's up, lovely?" Blaine asked and Kurt turned to him with a scowl on his face.

"It took me half an hour to get my hair to behave this morning. And now that!" he whined, flailing his hand at the rustle outside making Blaine chuckle from the absurdity of his sub.

One minute he was helping to save lives, the next, his biggest worry was what the wind was going to do to his hair. He didn’t doubt for a second that this was probably his boy compartmentalising, pushing all the bigger fears back to concentrate on something more trivial, but still, it made him hope that the work they’d been doing over the last few days had been enough to lessen those fears that had had him so tied in knots before.

"Well… I think you'll look beautiful with your hair ruffled," he said, a wide, goofy grin plastered on his face and Kurt bitch glared at him sending him into another laughing fit. "Or you could be like those hair product commercials. You know… even in the wind my hair is still perfect," he recited with a ridiculous commercial voice with the appropriate dramatic hair swishes of his curls that had Kurt snorting the tea he'd brought with him in his flask, up his nose.

"I can't believe the press depicts you as suave and classy. I can’t believe people believe it. You're ridiculous," he chuckled once he’d got himself under control again and Blaine stuck his tongue out at him.

"Whatever. I'm cool and you know it. Now… ready to hit classes?" he asked and Kurt threw one last horrified look at the mayhem outside and let out a long, defeated sigh.

"I might as well get it over with. Maybe Seb has some hair spray on him," he mused and Blaine shook his head fondly as he stepped out of the car and ran around the front to help Kurt out. He locked up and the two of them made a crazy dash towards the school giggling and sheltering each other as much as they could.

They ran into the hallway and they set themselves to rights, most definitely not windswept perfection, before Blaine took Kurt's hand to walk him to his first class. They rounded the corner of Geography hallway when he felt a tug on his fingers and the next thing he knew he was being pulled behind a wide pillar, Kurt smiling and pointing ahead of them giddily. He looked ahead curiously and felt his own face break into a grin at the sight of his best friend talking to none other than the object of his vast affections and making him shuffle on his feet and blush cutely.

"They look so sweet together," Blaine observed with a smile and Kurt bounced on his feet, drawing his attention away from the two momentarily.

"I knoooow. I've never seen Jeff like this with someone… this is… this is good. Nick is good for him," his sub gushed and Blaine turned to look at them again just as Nick handed Jeff a cup with a gentle smile on his face.

"Do you think he'll ever be his?" Blaine asked, taking in Jeff’s closed off posture even when he was returning the smile and accepting the cup. He knew a little something about fearing the submissive you’d set you heart on wouldn’t ever want you back that way, even if only for a short while, and he didn’t want his friend to hurt like that.

Kurt was quiet for a few moments, contemplating it as he continued to observe their friends like one would observe rare birds. "I hope so. And… and I think so. Just… I just hope Nick doesn't lose patience before it can happen," Kurt said finally, biting his lip.
"Jeff!"

The blonde peeked over his shoulder from under his fringe and flushed when he saw Nick jogging towards him.

Oh boy.

It seemed that Nick was taking this friends thing very seriously after all and Jeff was a little at a loss on what to do. They hadn't seen one another over the course of the weekend or the start of the school week, paths just not crossing for once, which was sort of strange for Jeff. He was used to Nick appearing everywhere when he didn't want him to, but now he did want him to just turn up, the Dom was nowhere in sight.

He didn't want to admit that he missed him, but there was an empty cold place inside him that spoke for itself, even if he couldn't- wouldn't- give voice to it.

And now here they were, their first meeting after Friday night's revelation and the blonde's heart was skipping so many beats it was like a broken CD player. What should he say? How should he act? Did he pretend that he hadn't admitted something so personal to the Dom?

It was too late however, by the time he'd finished freaking out Nick was already in front of him and the entrance to his first class of the day.

"Hey," Nick beamed, looking bright and sunny and oh so very handsome in his messy uniform; no blazer today, but a deep red sweater over his crooked tie and shirt, like he'd thrown it all on in a hurry. He was effortlessly endearing in his tousled state though and Jeff swallowed over a suddenly dry throat.

"Hi," he managed to get out on a sound that was suspiciously like a squeak.

Just perfect.

"I was hoping I'd catch you," Nick continued to grin before holding something out that Jeff hadn't spotted in his first assessment, far too distracted by Nick himself then to register what he was carrying.

Which was a coffee cup.

He stared at it for a few seconds, feeling his tummy flutter giddily before glancing up at the deep chocolate eyes staring intently at him.

"Nick," he breathed warily.

The Dom recognised the look on that beautiful face and quickly tried to avert it. He was so serious when he promised to himself and the universe that he wouldn't screw up this one shot and he was
trying to hold to it. As such, he wasn't going to push too hard, too fast, but the coffee cups were like a signature now. A part of their complicated relationship that Nick didn't want to lose… so he took the same idea and dialled it back a few baby steps.

"C'mon, I know it's your favourite," he cajoled holding the cup out closer still and the blonde grasped it nervously, spotting the red writing like a neon sign. He was scared and dying to read what it said at the same time. The latter emotion won out, so steeling his jelly-like insides he shifted his fingers.

**What is a bunny's motto?**

Jeff frowned at it slightly, lip turning up in the beginnings of an intrigued smile. This was not what he was expecting at all, and he didn't know whether or not he was feeling a shred of disappointment either that it wasn't an intimate note.

"Turn it," Nick suggested, with the goofiest of looks on his face, eager like a puppy.

Jeff arched a brow, but did as asked and turned the cup to see there was in fact writing on the other side.

**Don't be mad, be hoppy! ;)**

It took him three times reading it through to make sure he wasn't seeing things, but nope, there it was, the punch line. It was the stupidest joke he'd ever read and…

He burst out giggling.

Actual, honest to god laughing because of how ridiculous this man continued to be and it was wonderful. Warmth spread through him like taking a shot of finest whiskey, seeping into his bones and skin, radiating out through his pores.

"Oh my god," he got out using his other hand to cover his mouth as if to trap the disused, unfamiliar sounds escaping his vocal chords.

Nick felt like he was in heaven.

It was the only excuse for how physically dumbstruck this sub had just rendered him, in a completely different way to what Nick had felt when he'd first heard Jeff's voice singing. It was just as powerful, just as soul wrenching, but it was at a completely different end on the scale. That light, airy sound was like happiness in audio and he wanted to record it so he could have it forever.

It was addicting and Nick just wanted more and more and more of it already like he'd been on the stuff for years, the most devoted of junkies.

"What?" Nick prompted, biting his lip and looking dazedly ecstatic as he edged a little closer.

"That's awful," Jeff found himself admitting freely, without a thought for once that he couldn't speak his mind without consequences.

Nick put a hand to his heart, feigning offense. "It's cute!"

The blonde shook his head getting himself a little more under control. "It's so bad, Nick."

Nick licked his lips tracing Jeff's every feature reverently trying not to settle on those perfect pink lips as a zing of awareness went through him as they rounded around his name. "I like when you say my
name."

It was out before he could think.

And that cut the laughter off like nothing else could as Jeff lost all the air in his lungs.

*He likes when I say his name?*

It was like it was on repeat inside his head accompanying the small, *I like saying your name too,* swirling around in there alongside it. He felt his pulse spike and his tummy flip over in… sickness? He didn’t know. He didn’t know what he was feeling, but he wasn't ready for dealing with all of this. He didn't want to.

Nick saw the impending signs and quickly backtracked before Jeff could properly freak out. "So what do you say?" he asked, going for a more casual tone. "Will you let me buy you hot chocolate in the mornings and write stupid things on the cups?"

Jeff blew out a tension filled breathe, wary, but glad for the out as he bit his lip looking down coyly as he tried to get his head space clearer.

Nick knew the action wasn't intentional and that Jeff didn't know what he looked like when he did it. In all honesty it was probably a nervous habit or simply instinct, but *he* couldn't help how it affected him. How it made him want to gently take his chin and tilt his face up and kiss him breathless.

He bit down on the powerful desire, clenching his jaw and flexing his hands as he waited patiently for Jeff’s response.

"You don't have to keep doing that," the blonde murmured.

"But do you want me to?" Nick questioned softly.

Jeff snapped his head back up, eyebrows scrunching and a dusting of pink lighting his cheekbones. "Wha…”

He didn't finish it, he couldn't finish. His mind had taken a vacation and he was just left with the word, *YES."

"Angel, I get coffee before class every day anyway and even if I didn't, I like doing it… but I'll stop if you want me to," he added sincerely the nickname slipping out of his lips on instinct.

*I don't want to stop doing it,* he thought.

"I… I like it," Jeff stuttered, cradling the cup closer to himself, drawn face showing the internal struggle he was having. It served to show how wrapped up in this he was that he forgot to react to the nickname and tell him to stop. "I just don't think… I don't want… we're friends," Jeff finally got out, frustration clear in every line of his body that he couldn't express himself how he wanted, but Nick got it.

"Friends buy each other drinks," he stated simply and held those lovely eyes until they melted.

*That was true wasn't it?* Jeff thought. He could allow himself to have this as long as it didn't go any further, after all, Kurt and he bought drinks for one another, this was no different. He ignored the voice telling him he wasn't kidding himself and instead looked down at the cup currently warming his palm. He could smell the rich chocolate in the steam rising through the gap in the lid and he was taken with the fact that this would be the first time he'd ever actually drank one of the gifts Nick got
for him.

It would probably seem silly to anyone else, but this felt like a moment to Jeff.

Nick watched intently as Jeff raised the cup to his lips and sipped, eyelashes fluttering in pleasure and a hum of delight coming from his throat. The Dom wanted to punch the air with joy. He could feel the electricity of satisfaction with his providing abilities, even for something as small as this, running under his skin making him feel invigorated and invincible.

It was at that moment that Blaine and Kurt approached holding hands, looking one step away from cooing at them.

"Hey, guys! What's up?" Blaine asked, faking an innocent voice and Nick watched Jeff pull back into his shell now that there were people witnessing the two of them together.

He wanted to irrationally scream at Blaine for showing up, but then Kurt sidled up next to his best friend and whispered something into his ear that made Jeff nod, smile and relax and Nick managed to curb the impulse before he did something hormone induced and regrettable.

"Not much. I just brought hot chocolate to Jeff here. It's cold today so I figured he might need something to warm him up," Nick said, going for casual and glanced up at Jeff who clutched his cup close to his chest like he was afraid someone would tell him he has to give it back.

He noticed that there was a soft, hesitant smile playing on the blonde’s angelic face that made all of this worth it. He was already aware he had it bad, but it was moments like these that starkly drove it home like a stake to the heart just how in love with everything that made Jeff he was. There was nothing he could do to hide it from himself or deny it and it made being friends harder, yes, but he would wait and pray until the day Jeff sought him out and curled up willingly into his arms.

He'd be patient.

Nick forced his eyes away from Jeff, not wanting to unnerve him with his constant mooning and found Kurt smiling at him with grateful eyes. He nodded softly in acknowledgement just before the first bell of the day rang.

Kurt turned to Blaine to peck him on the lips, pulling back to gaze at him in the type of adoration Dom’s dreamed about. "I'll see you for lunch?"

Blaine nodded looking damn love struck himself. These subs had them wrapped around their little fingers.

"Wouldn’t miss it, lovely. You both better make sure to be in the cafeteria actually, Wes has important news to share," Blaine reminded them and Nick rolled his eyes.

"Wes always has important news to share, guy needs to learn to switch off,” he commented and Blaine snorted in agreement. Nick hesitated then before locking eyes with Jeff once more. “See you guys at lunch,” he said softly and smiled at Jeff once again.

He didn’t see how the blonde blushed fiercely as the two Dom's walked away and Kurt let them go before rounding on his friend, a spark in his eye. "So, the friend's thing looks like it's going well."

"Uh, yeah. He's nice." Jeff flushed a brighter shade looking down at his cup and the stupid joke there fondly.

Kurt let the subject drop, not wanting to push him into a corner and force him to get defensive. That
would only be detrimental at this point. They all needed to let Jeff go at his pace and only give him a push when he needed it… besides, Kurt didn't want to get too involved anyway, this was Nick's and Jeff's budding relationship after all.

Soon enough Sebastian was approaching the pair for their joint class, Dave beside him holding his hand. They made a striking couple Kurt observed absently, what with how lithe and willowy Sebastian was and how muscled and solid Dave was built.

"Hi, guys," Kurt greeted when they were close enough and he got a wide grin and reserved smile back.

"Kurt, Jeff. How's your families?" Dave inquired sincerely. "We didn't really get to see each other in Lima it was so crazy! I heard your dad is taking over from where you left off."

The sentiment warmed Kurt. "Fine, thank you. They needed someone familiar to go to, someone they trusted and my dad knows just about everyone in Lima so it was a pretty simple decision. They've got everything they should need if it gets bad so hopefully he won't be needed to do much. Fingers crossed the weatherman has been on a two week bender and there's no storm at all though," he joked weakly, looking to Jeff who nodded and smiled a little.

"I heard about your sad little charity project," a familiar voice sneered behind them and they all turned to see Brad glaring at them in undisguised disgust, hair tousled perfectly and uniform crisp. Kurt wished he could find fault with him. Wished like hell.

"Don't say another word if you wanna keep your tongue, dickhead," Sebastian drawled at him dangerously, green eyes flashing warning that Dave backed up by simply crossing his arms across his huge bulk and glaring down at him.

Brad scoffed and flounced right through them and into the classroom knowing he was outnumbered and outgunned, but not taking it gracefully.

"Idiot," Sebastian sneered at his back huffily and Dave could only stare at his sub in pride and awe remembering how that confidence and self-assurance got them together in the first place.

Fitting into Dalton was almost seamless… or so it felt to Dave.

The intense admiration his parents earned upon entering the new world made it easier for him to blend in, to feel like he belonged. His parents set the foundations, but his football talent helped him rise to the top in a matter of weeks, becoming the captain of the team and gaining friends and popularity.

His teammates loved him. He had an understanding of them like few other captains had and he had a way of encouraging the subs who were on the team, making them fearless and undefeatable on the field.

Girls and boys alike threw themselves at him and he knew, come The Showing, he would be sharing the spotlight with some of the most eligible Doms in Westerville. The public were all waiting for him to pick a sub, some even hoping they'd pick someone from their family which was slightly surreal; jumping from no prospects to hundreds in such a short space of time.

Dave knew he wasn't ever going to bond with a girl for almost his entire life and he knew that now that they had come into money, finding a sub would be much easier for him. And in a way it was… somehow… or at least it could have been…

If he wasn't so hell bent on those green eyes and that stylish coif on top of a remarkably beautiful
Sebastian Smythe.

He was everything Dave never knew he wanted. Not until he laid eyes on him.

Gorgeous, snarky, bitchy, confident and strong.

Traditionally they weren't desirable traits in a sub, but he didn't care, they were what he found himself wanting and Dave knew how well he would fit onto his lap, into his arms, under his chin... under his skin.

He knew he would never stop wanting him, so it was done... he just needed to find a way to make it happen.

It seemed he was always seconds away from just talking to him and asking him if there was even a remotest chance he would want to submit to him, belong to him. He knew he would be the best of Doms to the beautiful sub given the chance, but he didn't know how to broach the subject so it always got put off.

So there he was, another day sitting at the same table with the same people, waiting for that slender figure to waltz in gracefully and occupy all of his attention like clockwork. And he didn't have to wait long because as he glanced up, he caught sight of green eyes and that confident smirk that always drew him in entering the cafeteria, the rest of the student body parting like the red sea in front of him.

Dave stared at him, mesmerized for a second before he realized he wasn't headed for the food line, but towards the very same table he was sitting at. His shoulders tensed and he dropped his eyes back to the suddenly foreign teammate next to him as he tried to cover the fact that he was staring. Desperate to join the conversation he realized he was way too late when a shadow fell over his lap and he could feel a presence hovering above him.

He looked up and drew in a sharp breathe unnoticeably when his eyes met those clear emeralds he fell so deeply for the first second he saw them. He raked his mind for something to say, anything to make Sebastian stay when the sub cleared his throat and opened his mouth, the statement leaving his lips enough to make Dave's heart come to a sudden stop.

"Hi. My name is Sebastian Smythe and I want to be yours."

Dave smiled to himself at the memory and Seb noticed.

"What's up with you?" he asked as Kurt and Jeff made their way into class ahead of him, giving him privacy to say goodbye.

"Just thinking of how this started," he admitted over a laugh, grabbing his hand gently. They weren't big on PDA as a couple, so handholding and chaste kissing was usually as hot as it got outside of closed doors. Which said nothing about their depth of feeling for one another, every exchange between them, chaste or heavy meant a lot to both of them.

Sebastian got the implication and raised a haughty brow complete with his patented smirk. "How I swept you off your feet?"

Dave snorted and nudged him towards class before he was late. "I'll see you at lunch, Casanova."

He leant down and pressed a soft kiss to his lips before walking away leaving Sebastian smiling, safe...
in the knowledge no one else was around to see it, before he got the reaction under control. Inside the class he found himself drifting away in his own head, however, mind going back to exactly what Dave had mentioned.

The start of their relationship.

The word about him, about them, spread around like wildfire.

The Karofsky's, until recently, broke and unheard of, rising to power and wealth through a series of well-placed investments and clever business partnerships. They emerged from obscurity and took their place within the Westerville's high class society seamlessly, almost as if they were always there.

Sebastian read about their rise and he couldn't help but admire how gracefully and cleverly they were handling themselves; remaining firmly away from that new wealth syndrome of snobbism and mindless self-indulgence that he so often saw among the people who came into money after having none their whole lives.

Paul Karofsky was a sensible, smart Dom, however, whose decisions led him to become an unofficial advisor to the investors and his sub Margareth was a sweet, caring woman, with an affinity for charity work and organization. Together they were a power couple and a great team.

But they weren't the ones who truly interested Sebastian.

He admired them, sure, and he respected how true they managed to remain to who they were in spite of everything that had changed in their lives... but it was their son, Dave, who wouldn't leave his mind for days after he first realized he was now attending Dalton.

He was tall, strong and powerful, towering over most of the student body and practically leaking dominance wherever he went. He tried out for the football team first thing and before anyone knew it he was their beloved captain; smart, calculated and creative when it came to tactics and caring and protective over them off the field.

The hidden intelligence appealed to him as well as that natural ability to protect and care.

Sebastian eyed him for days as he tended to the subs on his team, made sure they felt confident and strong, building trust between them and himself and he couldn't help but feel a tinge of jealousy whenever that broad palm touched someone's shoulder and those warm eyes mapped someone's face.

He wanted him.

He craved him.

The sub could feel his knees buckling and his face heat up whenever he was close, responses no other Dom had ever gotten from him. He was proud of his control. Proud that he didn't falsely posture and drool pathetically after every Dom in a mile radius, but Dave was a different breed entirely. He had a power over him without even trying, which told him everything he needed to know, even if the Dom had never spared a glance in his direction before to his knowledge.

Sebastian was someone who knew what he wanted and went after it, being a submissive had no bearing on knowing his own mind and desires. Yes, he craved what all other subs craved, but he planned to be more straightforward with his approach to getting it. Maybe he would be turned down, maybe Dave didn't even have a preference for boys, but he was a Smythe and he was confident. He could at least let the Dom know of his existence and of his desires for him and let him decide for himself.
Nodding surely to himself after coming to this decision one day, he wasted no time and strode into the cafeteria to find Dave sitting surrounded by a bunch of his teammates. He knew he could potentially be facing public humiliation here, but his feet were doing things on their own, swallowing up the distance between them and placing him right in front of the Dom before he even knew what to do.

He had a plan, of course he did, because he hated to lose and he didn't do half measures. Walk up to him, introduce himself, ask him if they could talk in private and then tell him he liked him... simple. But the moment he stood in front of him and those sweet eyes were locked with his, he felt the submissive in him rear its head stronger than he'd ever felt in his entire life. It wanted to whine for those strong arms and that rich, mind numbing scent and there wasn't a shadow of a doubt in sight.

He wanted to belong to the Dom in front of him.

The Dom who was now looking at him curiously, tentatively, patiently...

The dam broke and he lifted his chin up proudly before looking straight into Dave's eyes, voice clear and unwavering and uncaring of the audience.

"Hi. My name is Sebastian Smythe and I want to be yours."

Sebastian shook his head clear from the pleasant memories and got back to concentrating on the teacher instead of reminiscing, but there was a smile tugging at his lips and love tugging at his heart.

Outside their windows the sky was pitch black and the wind was picking up in strength, the teachers droning intercepted by thunders and lightning. Their class was half empty seeing how half of their friends decided to just stay at home and get an early start on being locked down. Sebastian smirked when he realized Thad wasn't there and he figured he was safely at home, tucked into his giant of a Dom, warm and cosy.

Lucky bastard.

"Yo, tiny! Hurry up, it's almost here," a holler echoed through the darkness, broken only by a few candles scattered here and there, illuminating the short walk from the bedroom to the kitchen/living room area of a small, cosy, but luxurious apartment. They'd pre-empted the risk that the news broadcasters warned of a blackout by turning off all the lights anyway and setting candles down just in case so they weren't left fumbling around.

The words reverberated against the walls and it was in the exact moment when they died out in the air that a small, messy haired head poked through the door, a scowl firm on the cute face.

"I am not tiny, how many times. Average is not miniature," Thad lectured him with a frown as he entered the room, hands laden with more candles and a lighter. In addition to this he had several bags of snacks jammed under his arms and a bottle of water barely hanging off the tips of his fingers.

He dropped his burden onto the bed unceremoniously and Ryan chuckled at him, eyes trailing down his face lovingly. "Sure you are. I could eat you for breakfast," he said teasingly and Thad quirked an eyebrow at him bitchily as he slipped out of his hoodie and hopped into the bed to get warm from Ryan’s excessive body heat instead.
"You could eat a whale for breakfast, Ry," he deadpanned and the Dom chuckled, scooping him up in his arms and kissing him soundly on the lips as they snuggled into a comfortably familiar position under the covers.

"Maybe so. But you're still tiny. Look, I can lift you with one hand," Ryan declared and wrapped an arm around his slim waist and picked him up to prove his point, placing him onto his lap so he was straddling his hips, face bathed in warm yellow and orange from flickering flames.

"I always thought that skill would come in handy. One day when we travel you can carry me and our luggage in one go. I like that a lot," he said, faux condescending when he patted Ryan on the cheek. In reality he adored how much bigger and stronger Ryan was than him. How he could lift him without even breaking a sweat or wrap around him like a blanket and still have limb to spare. Ryan’s knowing look said he knew as well.

He shifted on his Dom’s lap, hands pressed to his insanely muscled chest. Thad was excellent at math and all that good stuff but even he couldn’t seem to wrap his mind around the physics of his Dom’s body no matter how long he spent ‘studying’.

"Should we pop in a movie?" he asked, glancing to his left to examine the selection of DVDs Ryan picked for them to entertain themselves while the storm raged outside of their little haven. Lightning decided to show up then in that exact moment, spectacularly making his presence known, blasting across the sky and filling the room with eerie, bluish light.

Thad felt Ryan flinch and try to shrink under his hands. "No movie. It's almost here," he said again, this time much more anxious and Thad felt every submissive instinct kick into high gear. Sliding his hands up he threaded his fingers through Ryan’s dark hair lovingly and made a soothing sound.

"It'll take you mind off of it," Thad offered trying to placate his Dom, but the tension in his long, strong body wouldn’t go away.

He ducked down and kissed his temple, mouthing down towards Ryan’s ear – always a sensitive spot for him- and just when he felt Ryan begin to turn into it and his mouth hit the soft skin, a deafening roar of thunder shattered the silence and Ryan let out an undignified squeak and buried his head into Thad’s neck.

"It's here, tiny," he whined and Thad scowled lightly.

"Ryan, call me tiny again and I'm sleeping in the living room. You can deal with the thunder storm all by your lonesome," he threatened, intending to be playful, but Ryan's face tightened, he could feel the tension against his neck and his long arms snaked around his waist and locked him into a fierce grip like he was a favourite teddy or security blanket.

"Don't go," Ryan whispered and Thad suppose he was.

The time for joking was long gone. Ryan was petrified of thunderstorms and as ridiculous as it might have seemed to see someone of his size curling up to his half his size sub, Thad knew it was a very real fear for him. He also felt privileged that Ryan allowed himself to show him this side of him, a rare side that most Doms tried to keep locked down or hidden away. This was terror and Thad was compelled by every submissive instinct in him to soothe and help his Dominant. They’d been through this a few times together since they’d been together, mild storms at most, but this one was set to be of a whole different calibre.

"Not going anywhere, Ry. Ever. I've got you, sir," he whispered against the soft, messy hair and stroked the broad back and shoulders that provided so much comfort to him he felt honoured to be
able to give something back.

"Not tiny. Just don't go," he pleaded and Thad wrapped his arms around his neck in comfort, rocking him. He didn’t ever want Ryan to feel like he had to beg to keep him around.

"Maybe I'm tiny just a little bit. But... I fit really well in your arms so you can keep me forever," he reassured gently, knowing Ryan craved those sort of sappy, heartfelt declarations. Hell, Thad loved them too and he was cheered when he felt those beautiful lips smile against the skin of his neck.

"Forever?" he asked, breath tickling his collarbones.

"As long as you want," Thad answered and there was a kiss tickling his neck before a soft voice broke the silence one last time before they settled in for a long night.

"Forever."

Jeff actually found himself a little soothed by the rain pounding on the window pane outside, he always had liked storms, something about the sheer natural strength of them had always fascinated him. Not that they didn't terrify him at the same time, but he was able to put that aside and concentrate on the beauty of them. And that's how he found himself wrapped in a blanket in his desk chair in front of the window, feet propped on the edge of his bed with his knees drawn up slightly to support the sketch pad in his lap.

He attended the first few classes of his day along with Kurt and Sebastian, but after a couple of hours it was clear that if the people who weren't living on campus stayed another moment they would end up trapped inside the school.

So classes were cancelled, people scattered to the impressive winds and Jeff was left to his own devices after spending almost an hour convincing Kurt that yes he had everything he needed and yes he would be okay and yes he would call if something happened.

He'd heard the warnings of course; on the news, from Kurt when he called to keep checking on him, his parents who asked him if he could come home, the staff at Dalton when they told everyone classes would be cancelled for safety reasons earlier that day… but Jeff found himself content to stay where he was. He didn't want to intrude on Kurt and Blaine and as much as he loved his parents, he didn't want to deal with them walking on eggshells around him constantly. So he made sure he had everything he needed and then prepared to hold up in his room until it passed.

He assumed it wouldn't be anytime soon given the way the storm was getting progressively more angry, wind picking up and lashing the heavy rain around as the sky rumbled ominously, lighting up with cracks of lighting in the far distance.

It was one particular harsh strike when everything suddenly went dark.

The sub dropped his pencil and gasped at the suddenness of it, stomach lurching and pulse picking up a steady frantic beat.

He hadn't once factored this into his outlook for the next couple of days and hindsight was the worst sort of bitch.
Truly at a loss at what else to do Jeff stayed where he was and tried to run through a mental inventory. Did he have enough food and water? Yes. Did he have anything to light the room for now? No. Did he lock the door?

A knock reverberated through the room and he jumped out of his skin.

Did he lock the door? He couldn't think past the panic long enough to remember.

"Jeff?"

That voice was unexpected, but so welcome Jeff could have cried with the relief that was coursing through him. Without a care for how it would look he shakily got to his feet, shoving his art things in the direction of the bed, before trying to navigate himself to the door in the pitch gloom that had engulfed the small room. It shouldn't have been as hard as it was.

Eventually his hands hit smooth wood and he felt for the handle and lock before pulling the door open. A beam of light shred through the murkiness, coming from a handheld flashlight, illuminating Nick's worried face.

"I just wanted to check on you," Nick explained himself immediately, shifting the only light source and Jeff caught a glimpse of a Batman logo on his shirt.

"W-what happened?" he asked pulling his blanket tighter around himself and fighting not to step closer to Nick for comfort. The Dom smelled so good and the sight of that broad chest made him crave to snuggle up against it and seek protection from in those strong arms. He dug his bare toes into the carpet under them as if it would anchor him.

It wasn't his place to be in his arms. It wasn't his place to be comforted and protected by him. They were friends and that was all they would ever be.

"The lightning must have hit something important because the whole school seems to be out from what I could see from my window." The Dom shrugged. "I don't know about anywhere else."

Jeff swallowed and tried to compose himself though he knew he was trembling.

"Hey, it's fine," Nick said sweetly. "The storm will pass and then they'll fix whatever needs fixing."

Jeff nodded and then they were quiet for a few seconds, neither knowing what to do or say to break the surface tension, but neither wanting to leave the other's presence either.

"You have a flashlight?" Jeff stated a little dumbly after a while, just staring at it. "Why do you have a flashlight on you?"

"Uhhh, well," Nick chuckled a little sheepishly, free hand rubbing at the back of his neck over his mark. Jeff tried not to get too fixated on that, but he'd never touched someone else's mark before. He wasn't allowed to go anywhere near Kevin's, while the Dom had actively gone out of his way to do whatever he liked to his no matter how much it hurt or he didn't want it. He shook the thoughts away forcefully and tried to concentrate on the now and what Nick was saying. "I may or may not have a zombie apocalypse survival kit in my room... maybe."

Jeff simply looked at him for a handful of moments before his lips twitched and he had to suck them into his mouth to prevent the beginnings of a smile.

"It's very practical," Nick defended. "You'll thank me when it happens and I come and rescue you."
"You'd rescue me?" Jeff asked, not knowing how coy it came off.

"There wouldn't be anyone else I'd rather fight the hordes of undead with," Nick replied sincerely and it was so absurd and sweet that Jeff found himself melting a little. "But until that happens, what say you that we settle with me saving you from bumping into things in the dark?"

Jeff startled. "You want to come in?" he squeaked.

"Or we could go to mine?" Nick suggested, thumbing over his shoulder. "I just thought we could spend some time together, watch DVD's as long as our laptop battery survives?"

Friends did that right? But then again… so did couples. Jeff answered before he overthought it. They were just friends spending time together. End of story. It didn't have to be anything more than that.

"Yeah… yeah, okay, you can come in… I don't really have that many DVD's though," he said stepping aside, the tiny shift feeling like he was climbing mountains. He was letting Nick into his own space, giving him free reign of his privacy and he was terrified, but the sunshiny smile on the Dom's face made him feel lighter.

Nick would never hurt him... he promised.

"I have loads! Give me two seconds," Nick grinned and then took off down the hall again leaving Jeff in darkness once more.

The sub closed the door, but didn't lock it and felt his way back towards his bed to perch there waiting.

Don't overthink, don't overthink…

Nick returned some time later burdened with a box full of stuff that Jeff raised a brow at.

"I met one of the teachers in the hall, they're going around doing checks on the students," Nick said as he hefted the box down and pulled out a couple of camping lanterns to set up. "They said to sit tight for now and are handing out candles and stuff, but I've got us covered," he grinned smugly.

There was something addicting about this. About being able to provide for Jeff and it was making the blood course quicker in his veins. The Dom inside him purred in satisfaction when Jeff took a step forward and peeked inside the box curiously.

He did good. His sub was safe.

He pulled out extra blankets and pillows and settled them over the floor space along with a pile of random films he'd chosen and the food and drink from his mini-fridge which wasn't running anymore.

Jeff pulled some more pillows and slipped to the floor across from him gently, holding one of the cushions against his chest and looking small and adorable in the soft, dim light.

"Not exactly how I pictured this going. I was gonna invite you to lunch, but a holocaust blanket party is fun too right?" Nick joked with a bright smile Jeff was sure that if you hooked it up to a generator could power this building just fine during this storm.

"Lunch?" Jeff asked curiously, cocking his head the way a little bird would. "Why?"
"Friends get lunch together, right?" Nick smiled guilelessly pulling the laptop down off his bed to settle next to them. "What do you and Kurt do together when you hang out?"

"Cuddle mostly," Jeff mumbled shyly, picking at the pillow against his chest and looking anywhere but him.

He heard Nick swallow. "Cuddle?"

"And talk." He shrugged. "There wasn't a lot to do in Lima."

Nick knew there was something more to it and he left the space for Jeff to elaborate if he wanted busying himself with setting things up around them, instead of asking straight out. Eventually it paid off.

"I don't know, with everyone else I can't be near them without feeling uncomfortable but with Kurt it's different," he explained quietly. "I like being near him, it's nice."

Nick felt privileged that Jeff was sharing with him like this, freely and only because he wanted to. No outside influence, no pressure, just Jeff making himself vulnerable and it put Nick's heart in his throat because he didn't want to screw this up when Jeff was finally opening up to him like he could potentially trust him. The Dom in him stretched and purred under the display of true submissiveness, not just shyness or timidity, but a sub with his guards down for once, even if it was only a glimpse.

Nick didn't care if it took him years to collect up all those tiny, precious shreds, eventually he’d have the whole puzzle to put together and Jeff would continue to be just as beautiful half completed as he was whole.

Besides that, what Jeff was revealing to him was insightful on a whole different level when he pushed past the awe. It showed him some of Jeff's desires; like his need for physical contact, that he liked being taken care of, that he wanted to trust and touch and love underneath all the fear. Because stripped away like it was with Kurt, Jeff was a different person and Nick could only hope that somehow he could be that person that the blonde went to when he was feeling scared or upset or even when he just needed a snuggle.

"You trust him," Nick stated as a fact more than a question.

Jeff nodded without reservation and it was on the tip of his tongue to ask the sub if he trusted him too, but he knew now wasn't the time or place to be putting pressure on him so forwardly, so he swallowed it down.

"So what do you wanna watch first? You can pick," he said pushing the pile closer to the sub.

Jeff eased at the easier change in topic, shoulders relaxing from what seemed like a constantly tensed position. He leant over and picked through the DVD cases, some he hadn't seen before, some he had but eventually he settled on a favourite and hoped Nick wouldn't mind. It was also a safe choice. It wasn't romantic, it wasn't too heavy and it was a classic.

Nick's grin widened exponentially when he saw the choice. "I'm so happy right now, you have no idea."

"You don't think it's childish?" he asked carefully, voice thick and timid as he handed him the DVD case.

"I wore a poncho to school the other day, I'm not exactly the authority on childishness," Nick deadpanned and Jeff bit his lip to smother his immediate giggle at the memory.
"Why did you?" He had to ask. "That thing was awful!"

The Dom shrugged easily enough, not offended in the slightest from the continued smile on his lips and light infectious chuckle he gave. "It was a bet I made with B… but I liked it so it didn't really bother me. And it made you smile so..."

Jeff’s breath stuttered at that and he felt his heart hammer against his chest when Nick said that. He did make him smile, he made him light and happy for a moment but Jeff had no idea he had noticed or cared.

"Y-you noticed?" he asked breathily and Nick smiled at him nodding gently.

"I notice every smile on your face. And I wish there were more of them," he said and Jeff trembled, feeling like they were going down the road that led too far away from friendship he was barely comfortable with, so he smiled back timidly and gestured towards the laptop shakily.

"Um... movie..." he tried, but Nick already knew they went too far and he started setting it up.

The laptop was soon on the title menu of the chosen film and they settled back against the bed, a few inches separating them so they could both see the screen that Nick balanced on their legs down by their knees after checking it was okay.

"This is like my childhood film," Nick revealed excitedly. "I watched it over so many times I think my mother would have thrown out our copy if I wouldn't have been so heartbroken."

"It's always been one of my favourites," Jeff found himself saying softly, offering up a small piece of himself in return for everything Nick was giving to him freely and without reserve.

"Toy Story should be everyone's favourite," Nick decided with a sure nod staring at the screen as he pressed play and Jeff was stuck staring at the Dom's gorgeous profile blown away by him and it was stupid that he was. That such a small thing as Nick not ridiculing a film he liked as 'stupid' or asking 'when he was going to grow up' could worm its way so deeply inside his patchwork heart and light it up like a lantern.

Nick turned his head and Jeff hurriedly looked back towards the screen, thanking god that there wasn't enough light to tell his face was flaming at being caught mooning over the Dom he could never deserve.

The Dom swallowed. Had Jeff been staring at him?

Nick didn't want to raise his hopes too high, but it was undeniable that there was something between them, a tether that was urging him closer constantly and he was sure it wasn't just on his end. There were moments and glimpses when Nick could truly see a future for them instead of what he fantasized in his head. Especially tonight.

That didn't stop him fantasising, however.

He could see late morning snuggling in blankets and pillows like these because he hated getting up and just wanted to hold his pretty sub forever. He could see curling up on the sofa watching TV, simple and boring and perfect because they were together. He could see having kids someday and watching Toy Story with them as a family.

His heart clenched with all the secret, swelling desires that just kept piling up and he had to look away before he did something stupid like try to kiss Jeff or worse, give in to the desire to claim him that was sparking in his blood.
Clearing his throat he leaned over beside him and grabbed a bag of premade popcorn and popped it open for them before settling it in the space between them. "You like popcorn right?" he whispered though he didn't know exactly why… they weren't in a movie theatre or anything, but it felt like the intimate atmosphere would shatter under anything louder and that was last thing Nick wanted to do.

Jeff side glanced him and nodded a little shyly before taking a handful for himself and then they settled in properly to watch the bright animation playing out.

If Nick was honest he spent far more of his time watching Jeff instead of the film, listening to every small giggle or huff of breathe, soaking in every smile while the sub was unaware and completely engrossed with no walls up. It was like catching a glimpse of heaven beyond the pearly gates and Nick only wanted more of it.

Toy Story 1 merged into 2 and then 3 before the little bubble popped up on Nick's screen warning them their battery was low and they had about five more minutes to turn it off.

Nick turned towards the blonde to ask if he wanted to continue watching on his own laptop but found himself looking at the most adorable scene he had ever imagined.

Jeff was cuddled into a mountain of pillows, wrapped in a blanket like tortilla and sound asleep against the side of the bed, his pretty face pouting and frowning as he dreamt of god knows what and Nick desperately wanted to be in those dreams. He reached out, careful not to jostle him and ran just the very tips of his fingers through the silky locks on his forehead. When his fingertips touched sleep flushed skin the blonde boy mumbled and leaned into the touch, turning towards Nick and slipping down until he was resting his head against his chest. Nick could feel his heart thundering under his skin and under Jeff's cheek but the last thing he wanted to do was move and ruin the magic unfolding in front of him.

He was so damn beautiful it almost hurt. Long lashes fanning over smooth, high cheekbones and pink lips pouting and glistening under the lanterns light. He was an angel and Nick would do whatever it took to make him see that.

Unfolding the second blanket when he felt that lithe body shiver next to him he covered the both of them and settled in, resolved to stay as still as possible, if only to savour the feeling of the angelic sub pressed against his chest, sleep warm and beautiful under his fingers. The Dom wasn't sleepy at all, but he didn't mind staying still and letting the sub get his rest. He placed a careful kiss to the top of his head, smelling strawberries and vanilla. He wanted to drown in that scent.

He was so lost in his own fantasy he almost missed the gentle buzz coming from his left. Reaching out he snagged the edge of the pillow his phone was resting on and pulled it towards him. When it was in reach he grasped it, turning it to himself to see who it was.

His heart jumped when he realized it was Blaine and he answered as quietly as possible, careful not to wake the sleeping miracle next to him.

"Flashlights?"
"Check."
"Water bottles?"
"Check."
"Energy bars?"

"Check."

"First aid kit?"

"Check."

"Con… really, David? Condoms? How is that a disaster surviving item?" Corrine asked indignantly, throwing her blonde hair over her shoulder and flicking him over the head with the clipboard she held firmly in her hands; red check signs marking the items they had stored in their apartment as the thunder rumbled outside.

"It's good to be prepared," he said seriously and she threw her hands up in the air spinning on her heels to face him properly.

"David, nobody fucks when they're about to die unless they're in the movies, okay? Dying kind of takes the fun out of it," she said, her voice breaking over the word ‘dying’ just the slightest amount and he suddenly became completely serious, alert and aware as he observed his usually confident as all balls sub.

She was shivering lightly, pen held tightly in her delicate, manicured fingers and she flinched when that thunder broke across the sky like angry drums again.

"Corrine, sweetie. You're really scared?" he asked striding towards her and swooping her tiny frame into his arms. "Nothing is gonna happen to us, okay? We're inside, we're safe and we'll use this time to just enjoy some time with each other without being interrupted. I kind of like that thought. When was the last time we just got to do that, huh? Without Warbler practise or cheer practise or the studio interrupting."

She relaxed gradually as he spoke and was now leaning into him, a small smile grazing her perfect pink lips. "So, that's why you brought condoms?" she asked, the edge of her usual playfulness trickling slowly back into her voice as she sized him up.

David chuckled roguishly. "Well… think logically about it, sweetness," he began, dropping his voice an octave lower and rubbing over her hips suggestively. "We'll be stuck here for a few days with no electricity, no ways of going out and entertaining ourselves… so we'll have to make our own fun. If you know what I mean." He waggled his eyebrows at her cheekily and she rolled her eyes in mock exasperation, but a small, loving smile gave her away.

She loved him. So much it hurt sometimes to think about him not being there, not being hers.

It was a closer call then she liked to think about. What with Gemma Richardson being the most beautiful sub at Dalton and clearly so interested in David right from the start, declaring him ‘her man’ to the rest of the cheer squad freshman’s. She was sure she stood no chance against the fierce, dark haired girl, especially with all the spanners she threw into the works. But as it turned out… David preferred blondes… and girls that were mentally stable.

"I don't think you know what you mean most of the time, honey," she bit back and he pouted; childish and silly, but still her Dom; strong, trustworthy and safe. She grinned up at him and tossed the checklist and pen to one side, sliding her arms around his neck when her hands were free. "But I'm sure you can explain it to me in more detail," she purred the last into his ear and the pout gave way to a sinister growl when he scooped her up and pinned her against the closest wall in their living room.
"Would you like a hands on demonstration as well?" he asked, rough and scratchy and she shivered against him, offering a smirk with the last bit of self-control.

"I always thought I learnt best through practical work. Theory is for losers," she laughed, hooking her legs securely around his waist when he ground into her and attacked her lips, her groan muffled by the storm continuing to rage outside.

"Maybe I should call them again… just to make sure?" Kurt fretted as he paced back and forth in front of their bed.

Ever since that night Kurt had asked Blaine to stay in the room with him they'd progressed into sharing the space completely. Kurt laid claim to the left side of the bed while Blaine had the right. Not that it mattered. Wherever his sub was he naturally gravitated towards anyway. Kurt's steadily accumulating mass of clothes were quickly filling up the gaps in Blaine's wardrobe and dressers, while his beauty products took up space in their bathroom. The little nuances were everywhere; in the old, lovingly kept fairy tales of his mother’s that Kurt had retrieved from his father's house and laid in their bookcase, the new pillows and comforter Kurt couldn't resist ordering for them when he saw it online, the photographs of Kurt's family- now Blaine’s extended family- propped up next to his own.

Blaine couldn't have been happier with the changes. In fact, it felt like he didn't even know all these tiny touches were missing until Kurt crashed into his life and brought with him these stunning splashes of colour to light up his black and white world.

"I mean… it wouldn't hurt to call them again," Kurt continued to ramble, bringing Blaine back into the present.

"Lovely, they're fine. We made sure your dad had everything he and Carole would need, Finn’s staying with them with his Dom and you checked on Jeff and Mercedes just a few hours ago," he soothed moving about the room and placing down more candles on the available surfaces, from tea lights to pillar candles they normally just kept around the house for decoration purposes.

"That was before all the lights went out, Blaine!" Kurt stated, the deep seated worry he was feeling bleeding out into his voice and anxious movements. He ran a hand through his hair, uncaring that he was messing it up for once as he stared down at his phone, thumb hovering over a certain name. "It's just… it's not really my family I’m worried about. Or Mercedes."

Blaine finished lighting the last candle and looked about the flickering gold and orange hued, low lit room. The affect was strangely romantic, the atmosphere it could create calming and sensual and Blaine wanted to draw Kurt into that. The sub wasn't even aware of what Blaine had been doing being so wrapped up in his own head and he was certain that this would appeal to him, they shared a kindred romantic spirit.

"You spoke to Jeff, baby."

"But he’s all alone in that dorm room and that's all I can think about," Kurt revealed miserably. "Everyone else has someone, Blaine. I should have helped his parents convince him to stay home with them."

Blaine walked to the end of their bed and sat on the edge. "The staff there will look after everyone
who's staying there, lovely," he reassured. "But I know for a fact that Nick's still there right now… would it make you feel better if I called him and asked him to check up on Jeff?"

Kurt stopped in his tracks and looked over at him, hope clearing up the grey clouds in his eyes so bright blue skies surfaced from underneath. Blaine lived to make that happen and could hardly focus on anything but how wonderful and compassionate his beautiful boy was as he approached him, finally putting away his phone.

"Really?" he asked and Blaine snagged his wrist when he got close enough to urge him forwards those last few steps because he was craving that vanilla and fresh flowers smell that was completely unique to Kurt. He was craving a lot lately. Not that he hadn't in the beginning because, really, Kurt was this enticing mix of innocent grace that was made up of equally soft and hard lines, culminating in a timeless beauty Blaine was constantly intrigued and surprised by. He found himself watching intently for every micro change in expression on that lovely face to catalogue, every twist of that lithe body into a new shape, or flex of those tapered fingers… it was essentially torture because amongst the admiration there was a burning desire to claim and possess weaving throughout like fiery ribbons tying it all together.

The urge to have Kurt naked and submitting beneath him was getting increasingly difficult to ignore, especially now they were getting more intimate. It was a true test in strength for him not to rip off all of Kurt's clothes when they were heatedly sharing kisses, his sub clinging to him, learning from him and gaining confidence to drive him stupid. Hair tugs, grinding, curious flicks of his tongue...

Blaine cleared his throat and tried desperately to refocus, but his hands found themselves on Kurt's hips toying dangerously with the hem of his tee underneath his open cardigan. So, so tempting. He just wanted those layers gone and full access to all that perfect milky flesh he knew lay underneath. He wondered dazedly if those few light freckles had disappeared from his shoulders the way they'd somewhat faded from the bridge of his nose in their time away from the Spanish sun…

Hands curled into his shoulders and Blaine tugged his sub further into the open vee of his legs, stifling a moan when the material of his jeans rubbed against his already half hard cock when he brought them to close tighter around Kurt like a cradle.

Something had definitely shifted in the air Kurt realised and it had him getting hot all over. It was like the blackout erased inhibitions, like the darkness made it easier to give in to Blaine and just feel.

His mind blanked.

His lips ached to be kissed.

His Dom looked gorgeous and strung out.

Pupils eating up the gold in his eyes, dewy full mouth parted, fingertips dipping and flirting with the sensitive skin at his hips like he couldn't help it and it was making his heart and stomach do somersaults. How could so fleeting a touch feel like it was hardwired straight to his groin?

"Blaine?" he asked unsurely, out of breathe.

One broad palm slipped around towards the back pocket of his jeans, before snaking inside to grab the phone he'd slid in there, the heated brand through the denim igniting shivers across the subs body and doing nothing for the tightening in his groin. Kurt ached in a way he wasn't wholly familiar with, all-consuming like he'd die without it, combustible like he wouldn't survive it if he did.

Blaine pulled the phone out and around, barely looking at the device as he typed in the necessary
numbers before bringing it to his ear and Kurt firmly into his lap. Kurt straddled him with a soft gasp, arms sliding with him and settling loosely around Blaine's neck, wrists folding over halfway down his back.

Eyes locked like magnets and they were so close and it was so statically charged with quiet that Kurt could hear ever ring until Nick picked up, willing the other Dom to be faster so they could explore… this. Whatever 'this' was that felt like being turned inside out in the best, scariest possible way that had him edging forwards instead of backing away.

Nick picked up and the voice came through as if on speaker phone, flustered and hushed. "Shit-uh… hi?"

Blaine frowned briefly, tightening his arm around Kurt's hips and pulling him in tighter until their lower halves were practically fused and the weight of his cock was pressed up against Kurt's ass. Bad idea. Bad, bad idea that felt soooo good especially when Kurt started to wiggle around. He cleared his throat trying to focus on the issue at hand, but… shit… Kurt was just so god damned distracting and he wasn't even trying to be. The effortlessness of it was a major turn on for him and he fought the need to buck up against that sumptuous curve and show him all the right ways to move.

"B?" a confused voice asked drawing him back in.

"Nick," he said because he had to remind himself of what was going on before he lost his shit completely. "Uh, you okay, man?"

Kurt noticed his Dom's voice was pitched lower and almost literally gravelling in his chest from the vibrations he could feel in his own. That coupled with the feel of Blaine pressing against him- his need and desire for him oh so evident- made him flush hot all over. He smothered the noise he wanted to make, the small whine catching in his throat and instead he pressed his forehead against Blaine because he couldn't help it. He needed the contact like he needed air.

"Yeah. Power's out but I've got it covered and the staff are making the rounds," his best friend said hushed and hurriedly like he wanted him off the phone. If Blaine didn't want to be off then he probably would have questioned it further, instead he pushed his head into Kurt's, nuzzling their noses and savouring the smell of the vanilla from Kurt's lip balm. His eyes rested there, wanting.

"Okay, well, d'you think you could check on Jeff seeing as you're there? Kurt's worried about him," he murmured, pretty sure he was saying actual words, but things that weren't the sub in his lap were losing focus fast so he could have been grunting for all he knew.

There was a coughed laugh that was kind of out of place. "I think I can handle that. Now stop calling me when you're sexing up your sub, I've told you before, B. Boundaries."

And then the line cut and Blaine threw the phone somewhere behind them on the huge bed before bringing that hand to smooth up Kurt's strong thigh, feeling drunk on empowerment when Kurt caught his breathe.

Kurt couldn't even find it in him to be embarrassed about what Nick said, it was all white noise at this point so nothing was registering with any real affect other than Blaine himself. Everyone he loved was fine and taken care of and so Kurt allowed himself to sink fully into the moment. For the first time he noticed his surroundings, the candles bathing everything in soft focus in an almost whimsical way. It spoke to the old soul in him, the romantic dreamer.

"This is really nice," he murmured softly, awe in his tone.
Blaine smiled knowingly then leaned forwards and placed a kiss right under his ear, getting him to tilt his head into an appealing arch just to try and get more of it.

"So what's the plan for tonight, beautiful boy?" Blaine asked, voice pitched low again, eyes practically eating him up when he leaned back to look down into them. "We've got all night in the dark."

The implication underlying that sentence fused with the already mounted erotic energy between them and Kurt couldn't help being swept further under the tide. It had him wanting things; acknowledging all the increasing desires he’d forcefully pushed back during intimate moments when his lips were swollen and his head was fussy and he got so hot and bothered he just wanted to climb into Blaine’s lap and do anything and everything. Late nights curled up together with nothing but cotton separating them, Blaine plastered to his body from head to toe. Lazy mornings when all he wanted to do was sink lazily into the mattress and let Blaine lavish him with attention as the sun rose. They all came streaming into the forefront of his mind now, clamouring for notice, and this time Kurt didn’t immediately shut them back away.

"Maybe we could… um…" He flushed deep red, but barrelled forwards knowing that he’d lose his nerve otherwise. "Get more comfortable with one another… with… touching," he murmured tracing the collar of Blaine's tee, following the movement with his eyes before glancing back up through his lashes demurely.

It was nice to feel surer of himself. The feeling that he was growing into his own skin finally, after years of ill-fitting and uncomfortableness. And now he was working out how this fresh new body that Blaine had helped nurture fit into the Dom's own… it was terrifyingly amazing.

Blaine groaned in what could only be described as approval because of the way Kurt's own body reacted to the sound. "I'd love that, but are you sure?"

Kurt nodded, nibbling at his lip, socked feet twitching where they hung slightly off the bed. Blaine leaned forwards and placed a butterfly kiss on his bottom lip that tingled and left the intoxicating taste of cherry behind when he pulled away.

"Words, lovely," he whispered.

"Yes, sir," he breathed back, tingling all over with nerves and anticipation. The arm he’d draped down Blaine's spine sank lower and he grasped a handful of the Dom's top exposing his lower back to his greedy fingers. "I want to touch you… I want you to touch me, please."

"Shit," Blaine cursed, hands grabbing and tightening on his hips as he leant in to place more passionate, almost frantic open-mouthed kisses to his jawline. His cock was hard enough to cut diamonds. "You have… no… idea what you… do to… me," he confessed between presses. "So sexy… so… mine…"

Kurt gasped, turning into that searching mouth to try and get those lips on his desperately, sighing out loud when they finally caught. Tongues snaked out to meet quickly; everything deep and wet and electric.

Blaine pulled them further into the middle of the bed in a show of strength that flipped Kurt's stomach hotly, the feeling burning there only compounded when those capable hands were pushing his cardigan off his shoulders before slipping up underneath his top to frame his waist. Kurt arched into the touch, breaking the contact of mouths and rising up onto his knees so his swollen groin was pressed into Blaine's stomach.
"Blaine, please I..." he begged with his words and eyes, though he didn't know what for. More something, more anything, he just wanted more.

"Shh, I've got you," Blaine reassured eyeing him up and down hungrily. "Take your top off."

The command washed over him like kinetic energy and had him bursting with energy, scrambling to obey, his sensitive skin breathing a sigh of relief once the thing was over his head. Cool air kissed his flushed torso and his nipples tightened into peaks that ached in time with the throb in his cock.

Blaine gave a rumble, looking him over like he was a precious treasure, hands rubbing up and down his sides, pausing now and then to grab a handful of skin possessively. "Beautiful... my beautiful boy."

The next thing Kurt knew he was flat on his back with Blaine looming over him from between the cradle of his legs that were still firmly wrapped around his hips. The actions pressed their straining erections together through their pants and the pressure had Kurt throwing his head back into the mattress and keening while scratching at Blaine's shoulders for a grasp on reality as everything whitened out.

This is what he needed and it was mind-blowing.

Blaine was in awe of the sub underneath him.

The neck on display was too much of a temptation for the Dominant in him and he bent to take the tendon gently between his teeth before sealing his lips and sucking a mark there to state his ownership, Kurt's scent heavy and potent in his nose.

"Ah!" Kurt cried out, grinding upwards without any kind of finesse, heels slipping on the bedding as he searched for friction, but it didn't get him the same feeling trying to gain it for himself as when Blaine gave it to him. The submissive in him wanted Blaine to take control of him completely, hold his hands above his head and decide for him what was best. The stark, deep seated want of it showed Kurt just how deeply he already trusted his Dom.

"Please... sir, again... I want you," he babbled and pleaded heavily, feeling the suction of that mouth from head to feet and every nerve in between. This was the most intimate he'd ever been with anyone in his life and he was drowning in every new feeling and sensation. Everything was blending; he into Blaine from the cherry and vanilla taste on his tongue, to the mix of that appealing apple and masculine scent with his own.

Blaine snapped his hips down with a moan at how good it felt to finally get some relief from the pressure in his groin, to finally be doing this while his sub was calling him 'sir' and raking nails up his back, leaving four stark red lines as he dragged his tee with him to roll up under his arms. Blaine hissed at the erotic sting and pulled his mouth back to look at his handiwork, salvia coating the shiny red bruise blooming underneath that porcelain skin, marking the sub as his.

"This looks perfect on you," he declared, satisfaction making him buoyant and a little out of his head and he used his thumb to press down on the spot. Kurt moaned, eyes dark and Blaine dove back into his open mouth demandingly before the need for skin on skin had Blaine disengaging and ripping his shirt over his head, throwing it before bracing his forearms either side of Kurt's head and sucking his swollen bottom lip back into his mouth. He felt tentative fingers pressing against his collarbones and tensed with anticipation and want when Kurt didn't move further.

"Touch me," Blaine ordered into his mouth, knowing instinctively the sub was waiting because he craved the command.

Kurt shivered at the permission, his submissive instincts unfurling like a flower and he pressed his
hands flat against Blaine's chest, feeling hard nipples poking into the heels of his palms. *Oh God… he was actually touching Blaine!* His flesh was scalding to the touch, skin smooth over firm muscles, but he could feel the prickly scratch of chest hair that he quickly decided he loved. Blaine was all man, all Dom and it made Kurt's desire for him skyrocket.

Blaine moaned and pushed forwards into the contact as well as driving his hips forwards once more. They gasped as one being and then all restraint was lost. Blaine started up a rhythm of their lower bodies that Kurt was hazily trying to follow, eyes rolling back into his head, mouth parted and open to the nips, kisses, licks and sucks that they traded heatedly back and forth.

Kurt locked his ankles at the small of Blaine's back and opened his thighs wider in an invitation for deeper movement that the Dom took greedily. The sub ran his hands down contracting abdominal muscles, feeling every shift and tense on that washboard stomach and he tore his mouth away with a pant for air, wanting to *look* as well as touch. Glancing between them was dizzying, the movement of their bodies hypnotising and driving him steadily closer to that peak he'd hardly ever reached by himself- too embarrassed to properly explore over the years.

Blaine kissed over his cheek and down his neck leaving a trail of fire in his wake as he sucked and bit more hickeys until he reached Kurt's nipple. "*Fuck*… so perfect, baby… I wanna put my mouth all over you," he admitted darkly on a hoarse whisper, hand reaching down to play at Kurt's hipbone and along his waistband.

He glanced up through his eyelashes and caught those dark, almost sapphire eyes now, half-mast and staring at him with such innocent want that Blaine thought he'd come just from that. "Want that?" he asked, almost demanding the answer. "Want me to lick you from head to toe, beautiful boy?"

Kurt whimpered, unconsciously grinding into him, biting his lip in a coy motion that sent Blaine insane. "Yes, please… want you to lick me, sir," he breathed, feeling pre-come soaking his underwear further as it bubbled up from the swollen head of his cock trapped in its denim confines.

The Dom's mouth closed hot, tight and wet over the nipple and Kurt's hand flew up to cup the back of Blaine's head, calling his name while his body bowed off the bed. The fingers of the other hand twitched between them until they grasped onto the nearest thing - the waistband of Blaine's jeans- which the Dom was already straining past what the material could give. The hand moved with the movement of Blaine’s still rolling hips, encouraging it along with tugs that only made him go faster and harder.

All the while Blaine ate at Kurt's chest; suckling at first, then twirling his tongue around the little nub of nerves until Kurt was a mess of whimpered whines. Blaine kept up the assault and the double sensation was quickly driving them both to where they needed, desperately, to be.

Kurt could feel something building in him, tightening his lower stomach and setting him on fire and he knew he wasn't going to last long, this was just all so much sensation, so wonderfully fast. He wanted, wanted, wanted until it was painful and he was sweating all over, pink from face to chest. But even as he was consumed he couldn't find it in him to care as that thing coiled and coiled, snaking through his veins, aided by his racing heart and hit every pleasure point he owned, playing them like instruments.

As if sensing the urgency he felt under his tightening skin, Blaine pulled off only long enough to lock dilated gold eyes on dilated blue to say, "Come," and he exploded into pieces, a flash of colour behind his eyes, brilliant, bright shades he'd never imagined before.

"S-sir," he choked out, hand grabbing a handful of gelled curls, hips stuttering as hot liquid spilled into his underwear and between them, body lighting up like he'd been struck by lightning, jerking all
his limbs and organs. Kurt was knocked stupid by it, felt like he'd been broken apart and remade in an instant.

Blaine released his nipple from his mouth with a wet pop and surged up for his panting mouth, moaning as teeth clashed in the urgency. "Good boy… such a good boy for me, baby," he praised over and over while his hips continued to drive for his own release frantically.

The words settled like warm wine poured all over him and Kurt practically melted into the bed under them, feeling a bright gold glow surround him, feeding the satisfied submissive in him until he was sated and full of love.

Kurt didn't quite know where the instinct came from out of the sweet haze he was basking in, but suddenly his hand was moving from the Dom's curls to that forbidden place on the back of Blaine's neck, driven by the mindless one track desire to please his Dom. It was a place he'd fantasized increasingly about over the past few days; about putting his hands or even mouth on sometimes. Obsessing over thinking about what reactions he would get… would Blaine like it?

His fingers brushed over the diamond and heart shape fleetingly, feeling the tips literally tingle and Blaine roared into his mouth before coming so suddenly and stunningly like Kurt had just flipped a switch.

Kurt went to take his hand back, scared he'd crossed a line though it had felt like the most natural thing in the world at that moment, but Blaine's came up and around to hold it there firmly as he rode out his orgasm pressing his forehead to Kurt's hard, ecstasy written into every tense line on his beautiful face. Kurt was blown away by him, unable to look away, and his cock gave a weak twitch wanting more already at the sight of such abandon.

Blaine was done. Completely fucking done.

The feel of those fingers where no one had ever touched before in passion was like being hit by a freight train and it smashed the release out of him forcefully, bordering on painful. His heart stopped, his whole body throbbed and squeezed over and over like he was one giant muscle and he tried to get air to his lungs, but it felt impossible to draw it in past all those raw open-ended nerves. He was split open. Dragged apart. It was by far the best thing he had ever felt in his existence and he didn't want it to stop. This was months… no years, of pent up frustration and want because he'd been waiting for Kurt all his life and he held on tightly as it crashed over him all at once until he felt like he had nothing left to give.

They lay like that. Stunned silent and swimming in the heavenly afterglow, hips fused together, hands twining fingers on the back of his neck, eyes closed, panted breathes mingled…

"Did I hurt you?” Blaine whispered, concerned. He realised he’d lost his head and all finesse with it. He'd wanted their first time doing anything to be slow and gentle, an ease into the shallows instead of a dive into the deep end, but something had snapped in him that wiped all his good intentions away and he didn’t want his submissive to regret any part of this.

Kurt shook his head, fingers twitching and causing Blaine to whine a little at the sensations those tiny increments of movement caused. He always knew that area was hypersensitive; had read about it, was told by his parents and teachers and even to his own hand it was pretty intense to touch. But this was fucking indescribable.

“Words, baby,” he reminded after he got his head back on straight.

"No," came on a breathy sigh and Blaine didn't want to hear anything else ever again, until, "It was
perfect... did I... um... did you..." he trailed off and Blaine pulled back finally, turning them on their sides, but keeping them pressed just as close so he could look straight into his sub's eyes.

"What is it, lovely? You can ask me anything," he promised softly, voice a little slurred with how satisfied and lazy he felt.

Kurt's eyes drew to their hands in an obvious tell, but Blaine waited patiently for him to ask it. "I know I should have asked first about... but I couldn't help myself," he blurted and if his face wasn't already beautifully high with colour, Blaine knew it would have flared up.

The Dom hushed him, stroking his thumb over the back of Kurt's palm. "It's fine, lovely. More than fine, okay? No part of me is off limits to you."

Kurt smiled in relief, but it dropped slightly as he shifted uneasily, his own mark feeling exposed. It wasn't that he didn't want Blaine to touch it, it was just... he wasn't ready for that just yet. Would Blaine be mad at the double standard?

He seemed to have a knack at reading his mind however.

"Hey, it's okay, we won't go there until you're comfortable, lovely. I want to touch you there, just like I want to touch you everywhere," he confessed making Kurt shiver in anticipation. "But we'll build up to it. I know it's different for Doms and subs so you don't have to worry about it being unfair... in fact, I think it's a little unfair to you because that felt so fucking good, Kurt."

The sub's mouth went dry and he tried to swallow, cock very much stirring in interest again, but mainly he felt a deep seated sensation of accomplishment. He'd satisfied his Dom, made him feel good and that filled his heart up with what felt like helium from the way it was trying to fly from his chest.

"Yeah?" he squeaked.

"Mmhm," Blaine hummed snuggling closer and letting go of Kurt's hand now that he was sure it wasn't going anywhere.

He grabbed Kurt's thigh to hitch over his hip and Kurt let himself be manhandled contently, index finger drawing patterns over Blaine's mark and relishing the little hairs that stood on end at the attention.

"You keep doing that, lovely, and we're never gonna leave this bed," Blaine warned, eyes dark.

Kurt felt a naughty smirk make its way onto his lips, eyebrows rising. "Well, we do have the whole night in the darkness," he quoted.

He squeaked and giggled when Blaine lunged at him, rolling them over the bed and kissing at his mouth.

Kurt could definitely get used to this.

"Dave?" Sebastian called from where his head was resting on his Dom's naked chest, his skin glistening with sweat under the soft light of candles.
The darkness around them felt magical as they snuggled together; dizzy, sated and tired, but so happy to be with each other nothing else mattered.

"Hm?" Dave answered, dazed from their love making and distracted from running a gentle hand through Sebastian's mussed locks; the disarray he would deny having on his head until his last breath. Dave loved him like this; casual and relaxed and just existing. No snark, no sarcasm, no malice in his voice. Just perfect green eyes shining for him and him alone and that honest, trusting smile making him feel like he could fly.

He loved him. More than life.

"If I ask you something promise you won't laugh at me," he said as he placed his arms on Dave's chest and propped his head on top of them to look into the Dom's eyes.

"Of course, babe. Anything." Dave said, forehead scrunching in confusion as he watched his usually composed and confident sub struggle with his words.

"Do you ever wish I was different?" he rushed out after minutes of debate and Dave tilted his head, not sure he heard or understood correctly.

"Not sure I get it. Different how?" he asked and Sebastian lowered his eyes down biting his lip and tangling his fingers.

He looked… he looked nervous and it shook Dave to the core when he realized that.

"Babe, look at me," he allowed the small order to flow from his voice and those emeralds he loved so much snapped back up obediently. "What's this about?"

"I don't know. I just… this whole Brad thing had me thinking. I spend most of my days with Kurt and Jeff now and Thad is usually there as well and they… well, I'm different from them. I can see that I am. They're sweet and caring and like… cuddly and cute somehow and Blaine and Nick and Ryan seem to love that. And then I see what Brad does and how he acts and I think about myself and… I guess I just figured that maybe you'd like for me to be more like that… more like Kurt or someone," he murmured quietly and it broke Dave's heart to hear him say that.

He was nothing like the barely contained anger and viciousness that Brad was. Seb was larger than life, strong and opinionated and gorgeous in his independence… but with every cell he was, he belonged to Dave and he knew it… he could feel it. He would never have him any other way.

"I thought you were proud of who you are?" he said and the sub shrugged in discomfort.

"I am… but sometimes I'm not sure if you are," he admitted softly and Dave's heart picked up speed, hurting from how small he sounded. He hadn't known this was a fear of his sub’s. He was so confident and self-assured most of the time that Dave hadn’t thought he needed to hear something like this. He wanted to kick his own ass for not saying it anyway, not because he had to, but because he loved him and wanted to make sure he knew it.

"Sebastian, listen to me very carefully, okay?" he said and the sub nodded, eyes still flicking around anxiously. "I've never, not for a single second, wanted to change a hair on your beautiful head, or a single thing about your personality. I love your big mouth, I love your strength, I love knowing that you are safe and can take care of yourself when I'm not around. I love that you're a fighter and a bitch and my best friend and the best sub I could have ever asked for. Because when the day is over and you're here in my arms I can feel that you're mine, that you need me, that you can be just as vulnerable as everyone else. And babe, I'm privileged to be the one who's allowed to see you like
that… to protect you and care for you. You’re nothing like Brad and you’re nothing like Kurt or anyone else. You’re you and I wouldn’t want it any other way. So no… I’ve never wanted you to be different. You’re perfect. And I’m so proud of you," he said without stopping, heartfelt and strong and Sebastian let a lone tear slip down his cheek, probably the only one he would allow himself to shed right now, before snuggling back down to his chest to recompose and take comfort there.

"I love you, sir," he said tiredly and Dave stroked his back, admiring the silky skin there.

"I adore you, babe," he said back and they fell asleep to the sound of the storm raging outside.

"Are you warm enough?" Wes asked as he tucked Miriam’s small body closer to his, drawing the extra blankets he’d retrieved from the closet around them.

"Yes, sir," she replied with a gentle smile, hair all swept up into a loose bun that made her seem young and vulnerable. He kissed her forehead.

"Comfortable enough?" he asked again and she pinched his side teasingly.

"Yes, sir."

She pecked the side of his neck in affection and he felt like there was nothing in the world that could ever feel as amazing as she did, lying next to him, tired from the day of running around trying to get the last bits of work done before the lockdown Hikaru had put in place for their household. Nothing in or out after that or else. His father didn't want to take risks when he wasn't able to be there himself, obligated to stay stuck at school and making sure all the students there were safe and comfortable.

"Are you sure you'll be okay without working on something for a few days?" he asked, teasing clear in his voice, but in reality he really did fear for her health.

She did everything one hundred percent committed, all or nothing and every project she started she belonged to it fully until the bitter end. He knew what she was doing was important, that his girl was a world changer, but sometimes it was hard seeing her eyes bloodshot and cheeks pale and face wane. He felt like he was failing her as a Dom by letting her drive herself so far.

But then she would smile at the finished assignment or project that had turned around and she would bounce to him wherever he was, any time of day or night, eagerness to have him acknowledge her work radiating from her. He knew it made her happy and he couldn’t get in the way of that. So he would kiss her and tell her how proud of her he was, how honoured he felt to be with her which was all one hundred percent sincere. He knew she still had qualms about not being as ‘pretty’ as the other girls, about being plain and forgettable and he also knew she used to use her work to compensate for the lacks she thought she had. But to him… she was everything and more. She was his anchor, his strength, his life and he made sure to show or tell her that every day.

He just wanted her to smile that smile that had got him hooked all the time.

"I'll be fine, Wes," she chuckled, bringing him out of his own head. "Besides, it's not like you can talk Mr. Workaholic," she teased back, but it was kind of on point. They had that relentless drive and thirst for knowledge and desire to win in common. But he didn't like the blasé attitude and he hooked a finger beneath her chin to tilt her face up.
"I'm not joking, Miriam. I'm worried you'll overload yourself and end up hurting yourself this time in the process," he said seriously and she scooted up to kiss him on the lips.

"I love that you take care of me like that. And I love that you care. But we've had this conversation, sir. I'm a grown, responsible person and I think I can decide what I can and cannot take for myself. Okay?" she said, no disrespect whatsoever; just a conviction of self and polite assertiveness that he adored on her.

It was a part of their contract. That he wouldn’t interfere in her work unless he absolutely had to because she really had taken it too far. He’d never really gotten close to that point before with her she was right in that respect. She did know the limits of her own mind and body quite well ;it did cause the Dominant instincts in his body trouble, however.

"I know you are just… just promise me you'll stop if you feel like it's getting too much," he said a hint of command in his tone and she nodded in consent.

"I promise. It's just that this is the most important thing I have ever worked on, Wes. I want to find a way for them to have each other for real. To have a chance to belong to someone for real like we do," she said fiercely and he hugged her closer.

"And I have no doubt you will love," he said and she beamed at him, that smile.

"I love you," she whispered as she claimed his lips for another moment before snuggling back down.

"I love you too," Wes replied and stroked her back gently, a silence falling over them as he stared into the darkness of their room, listening to the heavy rain lashing the windows. His eyes began getting used to the darkness after a while and he caught sight of a large stack of folders and binders on the side table.

"You brought your work with you, didn't you?" he huffed out over a tired smiled. He wish he could say he was surprised.

"Yup," she quipped with a sleepy chuckle that ended when he flipped them around and covered her body with his.

The day dawned bright and crisp from the wind and the rain that had tumbled through the city for days.

Gentle sun was peeking through the windows and knocking on the doors of people who stumbled outside, crinkly faced and smiley lips as they breathed in the fresh air, chilled with the storm but somehow cleansed and healthy and pure.

"I always knew he would become someone great," Burt said quietly when Carole joined him on the porch, greeting their neighbours and nursing cups of warm tea.

"He was always great, sir. He's an extraordinary young man and you helped shape him into one. Like father like son," she praised gently and he smiled down at her.

"So did you. Thank you for that," he told her and she smiled up at him, beaming at the praise and snuggling into his arms further.
"It was my pleasure," she said and he held her tighter.

"He… he made sure all these people were safe. He probably saved lives. My little boy," Burt almost chuckled with pride, tears springing from his eyes and Carole smiled warmly at how much her tough looking Dom loved his son.

"He learned from the best, sir. Now, come on. You don’t have to wait up by the phone anymore and I've made breakfast. Do you need to head to work?" she asked as they walked back inside the house and sat at the table.

"Yeah. There will be a lot of work now with repairs. I’ve already had a lot of reports," he said taking a bite of his toast.

"How big is the damage?" she asked as she served him up some extra, preparing him for a long day ahead. He shrugged.

"Not sure on all of it yet. But from what I’ve heard a bunch of roofs got torn up, some cars battered, doors and windows busted. It'll keep me occupied for a while. Might bring some more income too," he said around a hopeful smile and Carole took his hand in hers.

"Just promise me you'll be safe, sir," she said gently and he stroked her knuckles with his broad, calloused thumb.

"I wouldn't leave you alone. Ever," he swore and she kissed his temple as he picked up their plates and set up to wash the dishes as she listened to the sound of the doors slamming shut when Burt walked out to head to work.

Halfway across the town another couple was snuggled under a blanket on the porch, enjoying the freshness of the post storm air and the lack of paparazzi outside their gates.

"Our son chose well didn't he?" Jared whispered and Dana looked up from her place on his shoulder.

"He chose perfection. We always knew that's what he was waiting for." She nodded, prideful of the new addition to their family and they fell silent again, both deep in their thoughts as their town slowly came to life again around them.

Dana had been tense and silent for days after their initiative and knowing her for so long Jared knew he just had to let her come to him on her own when she felt ready to talk about whatever it was that was bothering her. But it had been days and she was still closed off and seemingly deep inside her own head and he was getting worried.

"What's going on inside that beautiful head of yours?" he asked softly and she snuggled closer, her eyelashes tickling the skin of his neck.

"I'm old and wrinkly, Jared," she whined and he shook his head with a fond smile.

"You'll always be beautiful to me, my lady. The most beautiful woman I've ever seen," he stated sincerely and she hummed happily as he kissed the top of her head making her feel loved and safe.

"I just… I've been thinking…" she started and he nodded to let her know he was listening.

"About?" he asked, fingers rubbing gently over her arm and she sighed.

"We need to do something. Something has to change. Those people Jared… they're no less human
than we are and for them to live the way they do... it's horrible. I want it to change," she said starting off small, but her voice grew in confidence and strength and before his eyes she was turning back into Dana Anderson; the most fierce, powerful, respected and feared Dom of their time.

"If there was anyone that could make a difference my lady, it would be you," Jared told her with utter confidence and she straightened up, a proud shine in those golden hazel eyes she passed on to their youngest son.

"Will you stand by me?" she asked and he took her hand.

"There's no place I'd rather be than by your side," he told her honestly and she beamed at him, appearing young and almighty, like she did the first time he ever saw her.

"Then let's change the world."
Hi guys!!!
Sorry for the long wait. But it's the summer and A came up to Cro to meet me again so we had fun and we just didn't have the time to work on this as focused as this story and all of you deserve.
But we're back now with the next chapter.
It's a filler one so it's a bit shorter but still has quite a lot of info so we hope you'll like it anyway.

In case you still haven't done that, make sure to check out our tumblr (http://keepmyheartcaptive.tumblr.com/). You'll find plenty of interesting things there.
Enjoy the chapter.
Love
A&M

All that could be heard in the room was the sound of soft breathing and the soft, wet smack of lips and tongue as Blaine paid homage to every inch of Kurt's torso.

He hadn't gotten the opportunity to properly explore and love Kurt the way he deserved to be loved, he'd let himself get dragged under all his pent up lust and desire for his beautiful boy, but now… he couldn't stop.

Kurt was a work of art, he knew this already, but what was so addicting about him was that he was his. He wasn't off limits, Blaine didn't have to just admire from a distance, Kurt had given himself over to Blaine with trust in his heart and it was the most intoxicating feeling to lay hands on such a masterpiece and know he was the only one who ever had or would.

After their mutual mind-blowing orgasms they'd fooled around a little more kissing and touching giddily before things started to get uncomfortable in their underwear. They'd separated to clean up and change, Kurt shyly slinking into the en suite with a gorgeous flush across his face and chest while Blaine headed across the hall for the fastest strip down of his life, eager to get back to Kurt and take him in his arms again. The anxious, prickly feeling under his skin rode him all the way through washing the excess gel out of his hair ready for bed, under the cold water coming from every tap. No power meant no boiler, so definitely no hot water unfortunately… but he got through it fast and was rushing back into their shared bedroom in just his black boxer briefs to dive right back into bed with his sub.

It was a change.

Blaine always made sure to wear sleep pants and a top to bed once they had started sharing, not wanting to make Kurt uncomfortable, but now… instinct was telling him not to. Forcing him to try and keep as much skin to skin contact as possible and in the back of Blaine's mind the logical part of him was reminding him that it was a side effect of strengthening the bond with physical intimacy, but it was overshadowed by the sheer feeling driving him. The touch, touch, touch playing like a mantra...
in his head.

And that's how he found himself between Kurt's parted legs, petting any and all skin he could get his hands on, despite the fact that Kurt was wearing a thin pair of cotton sleep pants, and mouthing at the subs chest and stomach like he wanted to eat him up.

Kurt felt Blaine's tongue curl around his navel and sucked in a sharp, heady gasp, abdominals clenching tight only to relax again as Blaine kissed the tension away. It was the perfect sort of ebb and flow. Blaine would take him right to the knife edge of working him up again only to shy away just at the right moment. It left him with a constant buzz of arousal, but nothing pressing or urgent, just a pleasant warmth in his veins that had his body set on a languid, low hum.

He thought the intense intimacy that was pulsing between them right now would have scared him to death, or sent him hiding under the covers at least now that the impulsive burn had faded, but Kurt couldn't find a single fault in the way things had played out for them tonight. It was romantic and perfect and it only left him anticipating more rather than dreading it, which felt like a huge weight off of his shoulders.

Sex had always been an uncomfortable grey area for Kurt.

He never openly talked about it in detail and never actively let himself think about it because the idea of letting himself be that vulnerable after a life built around keeping up his defences was terrifying and played on every single one of his insecurities as a man and a submissive. He liked the abstract allusions and pretty imagery his mother's fairy tales gave him instead of the crass, blunt statements in the only Sex Ed class he'd attended. He didn't even make it a quarter of the way through before he'd ducked out, cheeks flaming and stomach uneasy.

But this… this was nothing like he'd expected. It was nothing like the harsh, clinical way the teacher in that class was trying to describe it and it was nothing like the almost insubstantial, fantasy way the writer of his books described it either. In the end, it was something all his and Blaine's. Something they'd created together in the language of their bodies and the meeting of their minds and hearts.

It was real and it felt like the floodgates had suddenly opened, possibilities pouring in.

Humming happily as his mind wandered, Kurt curled and dragged lazy fingers through Blaine's damp, loose curls rhythmically, loving the feeling of the thick, lush strands separating out and springing back to his scalp in clumps. It was intimate and soothing for the sub to be able to feel the contentment radiating out of him at his ministrations.

It was a little surreal looking down at Blaine, skin golden in the burnt, low candlelight; the stark muscles in his back bunching and shifting mesmerizingly as he scooted down to nip at his hip. Kurt didn't want this night to ever end, he didn't want the lights to ever come back on again.

"I love your skin," Blaine murmured, dragging puffy lips back and forth over the milky expanse just under the jut of skin over bone at his hip. He glanced up through his lashes at him. "So soft. So beautiful. I could kiss you all day."

He did just that, before closing his mouth around his hip and sucking.

It pulled Kurt's lower stomach hot and tight once more, but before he could really arch his hips into it Blaine was pulling away, leaving yet another wet, red mark behind. Kurt liked those far more than he was willing to express at this point. But the compliments made him glow from the inside stupidly, the sub in him soaking up the praise from his Dom and urging him to do more to elicit it.
Tangling a ringlet around his index finger Kurt dipped his pinkie down to brush over Blaine's mark, relishing the shiver it got him. "I love your hair like this," he admitted on a whisper.

That got him a slow, gorgeous smile as Blaine rested his cheek to his stomach, eyes lit up with easy playfulness. "Tell me more beautiful boy, what else do you love about me?"

*Everything*… it was on the tip of his tongue and it was like someone poured a bucket of ice water over him.

He loved him.

He *loved* Blaine.


He’d lost count of the moments where he had thought about love in regards to Blaine, quick fleeting thoughts like bright meteors that were gone before you could really examine them and the warmth and awe of feeling it brought. But now… he was finally, truly, acknowledging it and the crater it had made in his heart carved out just for Blaine so quickly and easily. He knew from the start that he was in danger of it… knew for a while that he was falling harder and faster than he could stop himself… *Oh god…*

It *hurt*. It physically felt like someone had smashed their fist into his chest and yanked his heart out to give to Blaine and the fear that came with that realization nearly sent him to hyperventilate. If this is what being in love felt like, this scary, terrifying thing… what would being heartbroken do to him? Because at this point, it was still a possibility. Kurt knew that Blaine cared for him… he didn't doubt that, but *love* him? *Could he love him? Did he even dare to hope?*

"Lovely?" Blaine asked, rising up onto his hands to lean over him, face concerned, beautiful golden eyes worried and Kurt wanted to laugh at himself because he never really stood a chance did he. All that caution, all those walls at the start to protect him from something like this and he'd folded so easily under all the genuine care and affection this Dom showed him.

Blaine was just so *easy* to love.

He was kind, honest, driven, honourable, gorgeous… the list just went on and on in his favour.

"Kurt, baby? What's wrong?" he questioned again and Kurt didn't even think before he was pulling the Dom down to him desperately, needing some sort of reassurance while his insides went into overdrive at the realization smashing through him.

Blaine settled next to him, following his seeking hands easily enough and sharing the same pillow as he wrapped an arm around his waist to hold him close. He was worried about his sub. Confused at the split second of genuine fear that had flickered across his face before melting into those turbulent blue eyes. "Tell me, lovely."

*I…* *love you…*

Kurt couldn't say it. He just couldn't, the fear of rejection crippling him, but the buzz of that softly spoken command was tearing at his insides, insisting he obey and a lone tear gathered and slid hot down his temple to soak into the pillow.

*I… really love being yours,"* he said instead. As close to the truth as he could get and the harsh pull eased off.
Blaine frowned at the tear, wiping away the excess moisture before cupping his cheek on the opposite side. "And I really love you being mine, lovely, never doubt that… is that why you're sad? Because you thought I didn't?" he asked concerned, not letting it go.

Kurt shook his head. "No, I know that... I'm not sad I just…" He blew out a shaky breathe and met his Dom’s eyes. "Tonight was just a lot. I'm processing and being stupid, I'm sorry."

The worry seemed to fade a little at that and Blaine smiled at him. "You're not stupid, baby." He ducked forwards to lay a tender kiss to his still tingling mouth. "And don't apologize, never feel like you have to apologize for having feelings."

*If only you knew,* Kurt thought wryly. But the sentiment did make him feel slightly better regardless and he cuddled in closer to Blaine's warmth, letting him pull away for a second to pull the comforter up and over them.

"Now where were we?" Blaine asked nuzzling their noses together. Kurt sighed, letting that content feeling chase his worries away for now as he fingered delicately at Blaine's strong chin and jaw with the tips of his fingers.

"I was supposed to tell you all the things I loved about you," Kurt replied softly, heart tripping over the word 'love'.

*Where to start.*

"Hmm, well how about you lay there and stay beautiful and I'll tell you all the things I love about you? I'd much rather do that," Blaine admitted, sincerity ringing in his voice and making Kurt smile despite himself.

"How did he get so lucky?"

"How about we take turns?" Kurt asked, taming the screaming of his heart and the hope of being loved that blossomed in his chest, hand in hand with paralyzing fear of not having his feeling returned.

"That's a good idea." Blaine said nipping his collarbones again playfully and Kurt giggled, only half fake, at the silliness of his Dom.

And as Blaine rattled off a million and one things- serious and equally ridiculous- it fuelled this little flame in his heart… maybe Blaine could love him.

The dawn broke dull, grey and foggy in the aftermath of the vicious storm the night before, like that part of the world was taking a break and recovering.

The curtains on the windows were pulled completely away from the glass still, but the light trickling inside was weak and muted, barely enabling warm chocolate eyes to see the figure huddled against their chest.

Nick woke hazily seemingly hours ago to the feeling of warm breath tickling his neck and a set of fragile, pale fingers digging into his sides as they clutched his worn shirt, as if to keep their owner from floating away to someplace he feared, loathed and hated equally.

The Dom had fallen asleep last night holding the sub gently and knowing that, come morning, Jeff would be horrified with where he was and how open and vulnerable he allowed himself to be. But as sleep claimed him and his mind went fuzzy with his intoxicating scent so concentrated and fresh, he
also hoped that he would realize Nick kept him safe through the night and nothing bad had happened to him in his arms.

Maybe it was wishful thinking but... just maybe he'd open up even more and allow him to see Nick for who he really was.

Someone who just wanted to love him the way he deserved.

He felt his lip pull up into a gentle smile when the blonde frowned and pushed his lower lip out a bit when a sudden stream of light hit his eyelids, the sun briefly breaking through the overcast and he buried his face deeper into Nick's chest to hide from the offending shine.

His hair was messed up and sticking out in every direction possible, his cheeks flushed red with sleep and the freckles on his nose even more prominent against his beautifully pale skin.

He was beautiful to Nick.

His warm body aligned with his made every instinct in him flare and roar, desperate to make him happy again and he felt his arms tighten around him without conscious thought. He held his breath, waiting for the sub to wake up and bolt from him but it looked like Jeff's subconscious trusted him enough because he actually snuggled closer, pulling his mountain of blankets after him and making Nick's heart burn with how cute he was as he released tiny, snuffling noises as he fought to stay asleep.

Nick wanted him to stay there forever.

He so desperately wanted to remain cocooned inside their little shelter of blankets and warmth, the sun filtering in and out of the clouds, with Jeff safely in his embrace.

It wasn't as simple as that though.

The lithe body in his arms was slowly tensing, pale fingers were trembling and pink lips disappearing between white teeth... he knew he had to let go and it killed him inside.

Slowly, he pulled his arms from the sub, not wanting to startle him, watching him blink those gorgeous eyes open and rise up from their little nest and away from him leaving the chilled air to assault the skin his body warmed mere seconds ago.

Jeff was awakened from the most peaceful sleep he'd had in ages by a sudden stream of bright light, which went away after mere seconds, but was enough to bring him back to semi consciousness.

He sleepily tried to catalogue and felt his body was pressed against another one; harder, stockier, stronger than his own. There were arms holding him close and his nose was assaulted by the most alluring smell he had ever sensed.

He wanted to drown in it.

Parts of him were waking up one by one and the little hairs on the back of his neck were rising as he felt eyes laser focused and intent on mapping his face, burning through his closed eyes and into the back of his mind where coherent thoughts urging him to flee battled with scorching need to stay right where he was.

He felt himself tense, a natural instinct now and his fingers started to tremble where they were holding onto something soft. He was waiting for the inevitable blow to come, for those arms to suddenly squeeze, gripping him too tightly and that familiar yet hated body to cover his own
forcefully. He willed his body to relax and not to show fear; being openly scared only made it worse, made the pain stronger and the torture last longer. That didn't stop his heart from flying away in his chest, however, the fast beat the miserable song in his ears.

Taking a deep breath he tried his best to relax his muscles, to appear as small as possible, when he felt the grip on his body loosen and before he knew what was happening he was free to pull back. His instincts immediately had him rolling away from the warmth next to him, eyes snapping open before sitting up and turning his head timidly to meet...

The eyes weren't cold.

The lips weren't sneering and spitting insults.

The hands weren't balled into fists or reaching for him.

The Dom who held him moments ago was Nick.

Perfect, sunshine smile and warm chocolate eyes beaming at him in gentle reassurance and he could feel himself melting under that gaze, heart tripping a beat before actually slowing down to a more comfortable pace, still fast, but in a foreign, nice way instead of the panic of before.

"Morning," came the soft, sleep rough greeting and Jeff jumped a bit, pulled out of his own shock at how calm and safe he was feeling… almost serene. The submissive in him was unfurling sleepily and stretching for Nick, lazy and weighted like it had never been before. Like it had spent the night gorging on the physical contact of a Dom, ecstatic after so long without one.

It was unnerving, it was unsettling and he had no idea what to do about it.

"H-hi," he whispered timidly, taking in the image that was Nick still lying down, the mountain of blankets Jeff had thrown off himself piled on top of his thighs. He blushed and averted his gaze.

"Sleep well?" Nick asked casually, showing no discomfort or awkwardness between them and Jeff was grateful for it more than he could ever know.

"Um...y-yeah. Sorry for um... smothering you..." He waved a hand towards his chest, risking another glance at him and blushing harder when he remembered just how comfortable it was to sleep there.

"Don't worry about it. I like cuddling. Also body heat and all that," he winked cheekily and sent Jeff into another blush attack.

"'kay then," the blonde mumbled and the Dom eyed him with a gentle smile on his face. Slow and still a little lax from sleep. Jeff's fingers itched to draw it, capture it on paper so he could have it always.

"So I was thinking… since it's six in the morning and we don't have classes today. Wanna sleep a bit longer?" he asked hopefully and Jeff thought it over feeling his body tingle at the prospect of lazing around… of lazing around with Nick.

He nodded shyly and went to lie back down, but the Dom was still there in the centre of all the bedding where they’d gravitated in the night; all of the blankets were piled on top of him and the pillows were pulled dangerously close to his body. He fidgeted unsurely, mind steaming with the speed it worked at, trying to figure it out how he was going to navigate this midfield of sleep soft skin.

Seeing the indecision, Nick sat up and scooped a few pillows, arranging them further away from his
own before he took the three mussed blankets and aligned them; spreading one back over the floor to lie on comfortably and then leaving the other two for them to sleep separately in.

Satisfied he lifted up one corner of Jeff’s side and smiled encouragingly at him. "Hop in!" he chirped, something powerful but still gentle lacing his voice and Jeff felt his body relax without knowing why, crawling under the blankets and against his own better judgment, allowing Nick to tuck him in with gentle hands before he settled down himself, the room once again quiet and dark.

Jeff lay there staring at the ceiling for a few silent moments before his gaze eventually strayed to the man next to him, mind turning him over. The Dom had his eyes closed, his long lashes tickling his cheeks, laugh lines spreading in the corners of them. His lips were full and pink and there was a tiny hint of a smile on them even when he was half asleep.

Jeff eased onto his side, close enough that every time Nick breathed out his arm brushed his own curled up in front of his chest, but it hardly registered as he was so caught up in his own head.

Nick was a lovely collection of oddness and quirks. Strong and confident, but he was also goofy and sweet and he made Jeff feel whole somehow. He couldn't take his eyes off of him… and he couldn't help himself when his hand crept from under his blanket and snuck up Nick's side where the Dom's hand was resting on his chest.

Fingers shaking and mind reeling, he allowed his heart to take over when his hand touched Nick's and he pushed his fingertips under the Dom's. Friends hold hands, he reassured himself, though it was a faint background murmur at this point, getting weaker and weaker alongside his resolve. His heart was hammering inside his chest and through the deafening ringing in his ears he could feel another frantic beat under his palm.

He chanced a glance up at Nick's eyes, open now, silently begging for him not to turn him down now that he finally gathered the strength to reach out for him. His stupid fingers were trembling and he knew his hand was cold under Nick's, but before he could snatch it away, warmth enveloped it as it was lifted off his chest and a smilling kiss was pressed on the inside of his palm.

He gasped, feeling hot, damp lips and the beginnings of prickly stubble and locked his eyes with Nick's again but the Dom just smiled warmly and tucked their joined hands under his blanket, closing his eyes and snuggling back down to sleep, leaving Jeff to do the same.

The blonde cast a shy smile at the prone form and cuddled into his mountain of pillows, mind and body lighter than he could remember being in a long time. Sleep was almost completely wrapped around him when he heard a soft, honey voice speaking up from across him.

"Thank you."

He wanted to ask what for.

He needed to know what was it that he did right that earned gratitude but he was warm, he was comfortable and for the first time in a while he felt like sleep was his friend and not a torture device, so he hummed a little in response and gave the fingers holding his hand a gentle squeeze before succumbing to a dream that was, once again, in color.

"It has been years since a storm like this hit Ohio. In March of 1983 a storm of similar proportions wreaked havoc close to Lima and Westerville and while the older citizens might remember it as the worst they have ever seen, it was still not even close in magnitude to what occurred mere days ago."
Wind was strong enough to uproot trees from the ground and flip cars, the rain was pouring so heavily most of the streets are still flooded and lightning caused a two days long blackout.

Knowing all this, it came as a bit of a shock to find out that the biggest news after the storm settled weren't ruined streets and homes, weren't smashed cars and injured people.

NO.

The biggest news is the solidarity action initiated and coordinated by none other than Dana Anderson and her family.

A source tells us that a few days before the storm Dana called a group of her closest friends and colleagues and asked for their help in donating essentialities to the people of Lima to help them survive the storm.

Dana reached out to the members of the charity board she's the president of and within moments a plan was set in motion, money was being deposited and food and supplies were being bought. The people of Lima received food, disposable cell phones, blankets, baby supplies, emergency kits and there was a medical camp set at McKinley high gym which all no doubt contributed to the surprising lack of injuries or fatalities on would expect from a natural disaster like this.

While this appears to be a praise worthy action, not everyone seems as happy to hear about it however. The public seems to be divided to those who regret not knowing of the action so they too could help and those who regret not knowing of the action so they could stop it.

Curious to find out what's been on people's minds, we set off to ask the general public what they think of Dana's charity adventures.

You can find the answer in this week's Vox populi.

'I think we should have all pitched in.'

'It's an admirable action. People are people no matter where they come from and they deserve to have the option of keeping themselves and their families safe.'

'As a parent I celebrate people like Dana. I'd like to think that if one day my two girls should need a helping hand someone will be there for them as well.'

'It's ridiculous. If you can't take care of yourself then nobody should bend backwards to hand them stuff for free.'

'It's a waste of time.'

'It's wonderful.'

'I'm happy people seem to become more in tune with the needs of other people.'

'Disgusting.'

Well, you've heard what the people of Westerville have to say about that particular topic.

Dana Anderson and her family have been dragged through the news for months now because of associating with the lower class.

Have they gone too far now?
"I don't know why I'm surprised by these reactions but somehow I really am," Kurt huffed from his place next to Blaine as they lounged on the sofa, drinking coffee and watching the reports of the storm.

As far as they knew, apart from material damage and a few injuries, nobody got severely hurt and they felt proud that they helped keep the people safe. But apparently, that wasn't as important to everyone as it was to people like them. It truly baffled Kurt how some people could be so cold and heartless.

"There will always be selfish and mean people, lovely. No matter how much the world changes," Blaine said, voice thick and sad as he listened to people complain about how much money went into helping Lima.

"It's disgraceful!" Kurt spat passionately, fingers clenched around his favourite robin egg blue mug. "And to think they spit on someone who showed kindness when nobody asked that of her is shameful."

Kurt was getting worked up, rightfully so, Blaine wasn't too impressed himself that people were trying to bash his mother's character again but he also knew there was no point in giving into the frustration. Dana was a powerful Dom and the fact of the matter was, that no matter what she did there would always be someone talking crap about her out of jealousy or spite or sheer stupidity. Being in the spotlight with her throughout the years taught him that and he'd gotten used to it through necessity, but Kurt was still new to all of this. He was frustrated and angry with the world and Blaine hated to see those sapphires of his darken with negativity.

"Don't stress over it, lovely," he soothed, petting his knee with his free hand. "The people who talk like that aren't worth your attention."

Kurt pursed his lips, the barest of frowns inching his eyebrows down, but eventually he sighed it out and Blaine smiled at him approvingly. "Good boy," he praised.

Kurt side eyed him with a smile hitching the corner of his lips. "Hush you."

Blaine chuckled. "You know… I don't think they dragged mom's name through the mud this much since that time she went out in shoes that didn't match her purse," he joked as he flicked off the TV and shook his head for the last time at the ridiculous behaviour of the people in his town.

At his words Kurt gasped in offence and scowled at him.

"She would never do that," he stated surely and Blaine looked at him curiously.

"Um… do what?" he asked in confusion and Kurt rolled his eyes at him exasperatedly.

"Mismatch," he said determinately and Blaine barked out a laugh when he finally caught on to what was going on.
"Well she did… once. And they wouldn’t let her live it down for ages. They still pull that picture up when they run dry on Anderson dirty laundry," he revealed and Kurt pouted, eyes going a little faraway as he assimilated the information.

"I feel like I just found out that Santa isn’t real," he whimpered and Blaine chuckled, setting his mug down on the coffee table before wrapping his arms around him in comfort.

"There, there sweetie. It was the nineties. Nobody matched then," he consoled and Kurt considered for a while before nodding.

"I guess it's okay if it was in the nineties," he relented in mock surrender and Blaine pulled him in tighter by the waist to kiss that adorable pout away from his lips.

There just wasn't any getting enough of him.

Blaine knew since the moment he saw him he would want him forever and he had counted on the constant hum of his dominance at the sight of him. But he was not prepared for this all-consuming need he had to hold him all the time, to kiss him and to make him smile and to just keep him close. It felt like every minute away from him was burning his skin and he hated that pain, so he sought him out and wrapped himself around him again and again and again.

The world fell apart whenever he kissed him and he knew he would never want anything else. Nothing made sense without Kurt anymore.

He let their lips part when his phone signalled a new text and he pulled it out of his pocket, swiping his thumb along the screen, a smile blossoming on his face when he read it.

"I've got good news," he almost sang and Kurt cocked an eyebrow at him in that special Kurt way in question. "Wes says that the school board loved the idea of a fashion show soooo… you get to set it all up."

He beamed at his sub in pride for a while until he noticed Kurt hadn't moved a muscle since the words left his mouth.

He sat there, petrified, eyes wide and lips parted, heart hammering in his chest.

"Lovely?" Blaine asked, taking the mug away from him to set aside with his own in case he dropped it.

Kurt shook out of his stupor with a loud inhale.

"They… they want me to… to do it?" he asked and Blaine nodded.

"For real?"

Blaine smiled a little wider. "It was your idea so you'd know what to do best. I'm proud of you," he gushed and Kurt shivered at the praise, head already swimming with plans and ideas.

He had so much work to do!

"History is trying to kill me," Thad moaned woefully, banging his head down on the desk he, Kurt and Jeff were sharing. "It's reaching out from the past and boring me to death."
They had a free period together at the end of every Wednesday and seeing as Thad and Kurt had to wait for their Doms anyway, they'd gotten into the routine of meeting at the library to complete homework or study.

"No wonder you're in the drama club," Kurt sassed, absently twirling the blue highlighter in his fingers around and around as he stared at the open folder in front of him.

There were color coordinated schemes spread on large sheets of paper; blue marking the ideas he hadn't suggested to other people yet, red marking the ones that were too 'out there' to be possible to pull off in a month and a half, and yellow marking the approved and realistic ideas that he already had people working on. Thad sat back up and shoved his arm playfully, causing him to wrinkle the edge of one of his maps. He scowled at him threateningly, making the small boy cower in mock fear.

Jeff smiled at their antics, shaking his head before flipping another page in his textbook. He was getting used to the bickering subs by this point and the ease with which they carried themselves around each other made him feel lighter; made him think that if he tried to join in and jab and pick at them as a joke they wouldn't snap back at him and hurt him. It was a nice feeling. Safe.

"Just because you've already done the assignment," Thad grouched, pouting up a storm.

Kurt rolled his eyes when he glanced up and saw it. "Save the pout for Ryan, it doesn't work here, sweetie. And it wasn't that hard."

"Ry would have done it for me. It's booring!" he whined petulantly and Jeff giggled at the drama he was causing.

"Says the math geek. You can't get any more boring than math," Kurt teased and laughed when he saw the gasp of indignation.

"You take that back!" he said in mock offence, clasping a loving hand across the notebook he dragged wherever he went that was filled with complex formulas and problems he liked to do in his free time. The weirdo.

Kurt simply raised a superior brow that clearly said bitch please and turned back to the notes he was compiling. Really, he should have been using the time to study, he was still behind in most of his classes after all, but ever since Blaine told him he had the go ahead for his charity night idea he just didn't have room for anything else in his head. Ideas and colors and designs were all swirling around and he'd spent the better part of this hour putting it all to paper. He couldn't wait to get home and talk to Dana about it all when she got in from work; maybe print out swatches of colors, look at the designs she had if she'd let him. Hell if he felt brave enough maybe he could let her see some of the designs he'd sketched over the years.

He had so many ideas he almost couldn't find a way to put them all together, but he was doing his best.

So far he had come up with a way to include everyone: people around the school were designing and sketching and signing up to offer sewing skills for those designers who couldn't turn their designs into reality.

The drama club would take care of the stage and the lighting, the Warblers would provide musical background along with the school band and the entire afternoon before the main event, the school sports teams would organize small friendly competitions to raise money from the tickets, the art club would set up their art for sale and the cooking club would provide refreshments for everyone.
All of this still had to be coordinated and he barely had time to sleep. But he was proud of himself and that’s mattered the most.

"Do you think students would sign up to walk in the show if I posted a signup sheet on the bulletin board?" he found himself asking aloud.

"Definitely," Jeff said immediately and Kurt raised his eyes to his best friend in question. "Every day is like a fashion show to them."

"Hey! Every day is like a fashion show to me too. It's not a bad thing to want to look your best," Kurt argued and frowned a little.

"You and them have a different way of going about it, trust me," Jeff smiled sadly, his voice holding just a hint of panic and Kurt hooked their feet together under the table in silent support to the bad memories he knew his friend was experiencing. Saying without words that he wasn't mad. That he understood as best he could without being in Jeff's head.

"He's not wrong," Thad confirmed with a little shrug, tapping his pencil against the table top. "Some of the boys and girls around here can get brutal."

Kurt pursed his lips in thought. It was true that he was a diehard fashion enthusiast, but he was never outright vicious with it. He appreciated clothes, what they could do to a person's body, how they could lift you up in confidence and self-esteem, how they could be like art… but he also appreciated them as more than even that. He had come from a place where not everyone had even the simplest of necessities in clothes, where the latest trends were far, far down the list of desirable qualities and things like warmth and if they were even whole came first and foremost.

"Well I don't want to turn this into some kind of popularity contest," he said warily. "This is for charity, not so rich kids can fight over who is wearing McQueen and who's wearing Marc Jacobs."

"Why don't you choose people yourself to ask instead of letting just anyone sign up?" Thad suggested. "That way you can keep control on numbers and make sure you're happy with the people."

He perked up at that solution and immediately scribbled it down, creating a column for girls and boys.

"I need another book," Jeff sighed rubbing at his forehead tiredly as he untangled their legs and stood up. "Or five."

"Me too… you can reach the high ones for me," Thad grumbled and they headed off together, leaving Kurt to his frantic scribbling.

The obvious choice for the girl models would be Corrine. That girl was stunning in all the right ways and a sweetheart underneath with all that fierce sass to boot, so she was top of his list. He thought about Miriam for a second… she definitely had the height advantage over Corrine and she was very pretty too in an understated way, but he wasn't sure whether walking a catwalk was her thing. He made a note to ask her and see what she said before he ruled her-

"We can only ask ourselves, have the Anderson's truly lost their minds?" Kurt's head snapped up, train of thought petering off, and around at the sound of that familiar smug tone and his new families name.

Brad was there, hair tousled, blazer buttoned, walking towards him with a vicious smirk on his face and an unsettling light in his green eyes as he read to him straight out of the magazine he was
holding. "The latest incident of the controversial family, the bonding of the youngest son Dom Blaine to a nobody out of Lima of all places, we can only hope is a joke. A tasteless one, but a joke nonetheless."

Kurt flinched visibly at hearing his bonding reduced to that by someone and cursed himself for it when Brad caught the action and his mouth tipped up higher at one side. He hated giving this idiot the satisfaction of getting to him, of letting the ignorant people in that magazine to play on his insecurities, but when he opened his mouth to tell Brad to go to hell… nothing came out.

Brad smiled wider and carried on in his best derisive tone, close enough now to lean his hip jauntily against the desk. "We can only call Dana's authority into question. Has she lost control of her family? It is fact that her sympathies have always leaned towards the lower circles, a weakness that could be ignored by most, but it was never more apparent than it is now that she has welcomed a sub of no breeding or consequence into her home with open arms, snubbing far more worthy candidates. Kurt Hummel must be very pleased with the prize he's managed to snare, highlighting the fact that the Anderson Doms might not be as powerful as we thought if they were so easily taken in."

‘Snare’? It caused his heart to stutter. Did people really think that? That he'd gone to that Showing purposefully to hook himself a powerful, influential Dom?

His throat bobbed over the lump lodged there. "Stop."

"We only hope Blaine comes to his senses sooner rather than later. That he gets this experiment over and done with so he can properly bond with someone of proper standing in society. Our two worlds were not meant to mix and—"

"Shut up!" Kurt hissed at him finally reaching the end of his emotional rope with all those words Brad had purposely stressed crashing against each other inside his skull.


It's like they had lined up all of his buttons and smashed them all at once. Playing on all his weaknesses and not just about himself. He felt responsible for the fact that people were viewing Dana and Blaine like they were somehow less now that he had come along. That they were weak and susceptible instead of the strong, commanding people they truly are and it hurt him to think of the pain he might have been causing without even knowing it.

_Had Blaine seen these articles? Had Dana and Jared?_

It was very likely that they had shielded him from it so far and he felt like a naive fool for thinking everything was fine. That the uproar that had been caused, that had been _camped_ outside their front door for days even, had remotely died off.

He'd been so wrapped up in cotton wool that he forgot there was many people just waiting to tear it off him.

Brad being chief among those people.

"What's the matter, Hummel? I was just reading," Brad asked innocently, but his gaze was cutting. "That's what you do in libraries after all."

"Take your attempts at being clever somewhere else and leave me alone," he gritted, feeling his cheeks go hot, fingers clenching hard around his pen. Brad noticed the action but then his eyes dipped lower and it took him about five seconds to catalogue his color coded scribbles.
"You've got to be kidding me," he burst out disgusted and Kurt self-consciously shut the folder even though it was too late now. "They got you to help with the charity night?" He laughed harsh and short. "The charity case helping the charity cause. Now that's one for the headlines."

"That's rich coming from the billboard face for jealousy," Kurt snapped back trying his hardest not to show how deep this conversation was hitting, but failing spectacularly. There was none of his usual sarcastic bite behind his retorts, they came out thin and defensive instead.

Brad arched a brow and laughed again. The sound grating on every open nerve he'd exposed in Kurt. "Me jealous of you?"

He knew it was true. They both did. Brad had wanted Blaine for himself, that was abundantly clear at this point, but right now Brad was simply better at playing pretend than he was.

"Please… I think this sums up exactly why I don't need to be jealous of anything," Brad finished holding up the magazine before dropping it on the table in front of him.

The cover was a shot from outside of the house that first time they'd tried to leave to visit his family after Blaine had claimed him. Kurt was hiding behind a frustrated looking Blaine, staring at the ground and trying to avoid the cameras, questions and eye contact of everyone surrounding them.

He looked like a scared little boy.

And heading this picture was the title; Anderson's, out of control!

"Take a look. I think you'll find it informative, sweetheart," Brad simpered falsely, then leaned in closer to whisper. "The novelty of you is gonna wear off for everyone sooner or later."

And then he was straightening up and walking away, leaving Kurt staring at the page in front of him with sick fascination, Brad's words echoing in his ears.

He should just throw it away. Throw it away and forget about the whole thing… but somehow he found himself flipping to the three page spread of cutting words and insults maligning not only his character but everyone he cared about. Tears were actually stinging his eyes as they reduced his and Blaine's bond down to nothing more than rebellious lust on Blaine's part and gold-digging on his. It hit harder especially since his revelation that he was actually deeply, truly in love with Blaine. His fears that Blaine didn't love him back were staring back at him now, printed in black and white for the world to read.

This is how Jeff and Thad found him when they came back, arms heavy with books of different sizes.

"Hey, what's that?" Thad asked as they came closer.

Kurt's head snapped up and he quickly shoved the magazine in his bag, panicked. "Oh, nothing… I uh… I was just… researching a few things," he managed to stumble out, feeling his heart going wild in his chest as he avoided Jeff's eyes, blinking the wetness in his own away. He knew his best friend would notice almost immediately there was something wrong with him and he didn't want to weigh him down with his problems when things were just starting to brighten for him.

"That's not researching!" Thad exclaimed as he thumped all the books down and gestured to them. "That's researching."

Kurt forced his mouth into a smile and opened his folder back up, trying to steady his shaky hands and look busy. Jeff retook his seat opposite him and nudged his foot with his own trying to get his
Kurt took a deep breath before glancing up.

"What's up?" Jeff mouthed to him, brown eyes concerned.

Kurt shook his head with another fake smile and mouthed back, "I'm fine."

The rest of the period crawled by with Jeff's gaze hot on him and his heart hurting, a prickly feeling all over his skin. He wanted Blaine. He wanted him to hold him and kiss him and fuck... he wanted him to say he loved him. Loved Kurt exactly as much as he loved Blaine, with his whole heart and soul.

The bell finally rang and Kurt collected up his stuff and shoved it into his bag, avoiding looking at the magazine as best he could. They walked Jeff back to the dormitories and Kurt was grateful for Thad's cheery presence as it prevented his best friend from questioning him on what was wrong any further.

They hugged goodbye, the blonde holding him tighter than usual and whispering a, "Call me," in his ear before they were heading outside to meet their Doms. As soon as Kurt spotted Blaine talking to Ryan by his car he made a beeline for him, hurrying across the lot and flinging himself into his arms, tucking his face into his neck.

"Hey," Blaine breathed out surprised, wrapping arms around his waist. "What's wrong, lovely?"

It was the question Kurt had been dreading and he swallowed hard. "I missed you," he admitted in a murmur.

It wasn't a lie... but it wasn't the truth and it made him uncomfortable, like the truth was trying to push its way forcefully up his throat. He clenched his jaw and pushed himself tighter into Blaine.

"Well I missed you too, baby," was cooed back to him, hand smoothing over the short hairs at the back of his head and Kurt closed his eyes at the endearment, soaking it in.

This wasn't contrived between them. He refused to believe it.

"I'm gonna get trouble over here home so I'll see you tomorrow Blaine. Kurt," Ryan said from next to them holding a dangling Thad by the waist as the sub hung from his neck.

"Bye, Kurt," Thad chimed in and Kurt shot them a soft smile from under Blaine's chin.

"See you guys," Blaine said for them before turning his attention back to Kurt and pressing a tender kiss to his forehead. "As nice as this is, we're gonna have to get you home, lovely. I've got to meet Wes and David at the studio for a little while."

Don't go, don't go, don't go... he thought frantically. "Okay, that's fine. I've got some planning and studying to do anyway," is what actually came out of his mouth.

Blaine laid one last kiss to his head before they climbed into the car and were on their way home. Kurt cursed every green light as they moved closer and closer but eventually they pulled into the driveway and idled, Blaine looking over at him with a smile that Kurt couldn't help but return.

"I'll only be a couple of hours. I'll text you if I'm longer," he promised before leaning over and gently pressing their lips together. Kurt pushed into it with a helpless whimper, desperately needing that deeper connection between them. Blaine gave into his unspoken plea and deepened the kiss, cupping
Kurt's cheek and tilting his face to a better angle to lick into his mouth.

Kurt was leaning forwards so far he would have either fallen onto his face or straddled Blaine's lap – probably the latter- if his seatbelt wasn't still on, but too soon Blaine was pulling back and Kurt was helpless to follow.

"If we don't stop now I'll never leave," he lamented, staring at his lips intently.

"Blaine…" don't go.

He let it die on his lips.

"Hurry back," he whispered and Blaine pecked him once more, quick and hard.

"As quick as I can," he murmured into his mouth.

Next thing he knew he was staring at Blaine's car driving away from the doorway.

"Kurt? Are you gonna stand there all day, honey?" Dana asked from behind him and Kurt turned around startled to see the small Dom, looking pristine in a chiffon blouse and charcoal pencil skirt, her dark hair upswept.

Kurt closed the door behind him. "I didn't think anyone else was home."

She shrugged elegantly and winked. "I had a long lunch and decided to take the rest of the day off. What's the point in being your own boss if you don't take advantage of the perks once in a while huh?"

Kurt smiled a little shyly. He really liked Dana, but he'd been so caught up in Blaine, Blaine, Blaine, that he hadn't had many opportunities to spend one on one time with her.

"Is Jared here too?" he asked.

She snorted fondly and led the way into the kitchen, Kurt trailing her happily enough. He didn't want to be on his own right now. "My darling sub doesn't know the meaning of a day off. I have to force vacations onto him for his own good."

Kurt set his bag down and took off his coat and blazer to hang on the back of the chair for now, before sinking into a seat at the table to watch Dana flit about pulling out mugs and tea bags.

"Tea or coffee?" she chirped.

He wanted something settling. "Tea please, the-"

"Honey one," she smirked over her shoulder, eyes sparkling with mirth. "Blaine made me, Jared and all the staff aware that it had to be stocked at all times because it was your favourite."

Kurt blushed feeling butterflies explode in his stomach and have a party while Dana laughed happily, flicking the kettle on. "No need to be shy… it's lovely to witness."

If anything that made Kurt shyer and the stain on his face worse. She turned around and propped her small frame against the counter, meeting his eye and smiling brilliantly at him. "You're all I hoped for you know… though you took your sweet time getting here mind you," she teased the last with a wink.

Getting such praise from Dana was similar to getting it from his dad, it made him happy and light,
but in a completely different, less intense way then what he experienced with Blaine. "I'm sorry? I was… washing my hair?" he asked it as a question with his own teasing smile on his face.

Dana laughed. Bright and clear before the kettle flicked off and she turned to make them their tea. "He was always looking for that perfect one," she continued pouring the boiling water. "Didn't have a clue what he thought was perfect of course, silly boy, but he was adamant."

The sound of a spoon clinking echoed before she was approaching the table, setting his tea down before settling opposite him, catching his eye.

"And then he saw you."

Kurt's heart jolted and tingles spread from his head to his toes. "I'm not perfect," he said quietly.

She grinned and took a sip of tea. "You are to him. Just like Jared is to me," she said simply and Kurt found himself smiling stupidly despite himself, finally hiding it behind his own steaming cup.

"Blaine's perfect," he found himself voicing out loud. Dana arched a brow. "And not just to me… it's like… universal," he tried to explain.

His Dom was everything that was good, sweet, charming, charismatic, gorgeous… as he thought on the first night of the blackout. His admirable qualities were far too many to list.

Dana snorted a laugh. "You two are meant for each other."

"What?" Kurt asked, knowing there was something more to that laugh.

"Oh mother, Kurt is just so amazing. I'm so lucky I claimed him before anyone else did. I don't know how he managed to go unclaimed for this long, he's so perfect," she quoted in a bad impression of Blaine's voice.

Kurt couldn't help but giggle and gape at her. "He did not say that! And he doesn't sound like that!"

"I birthed the little devil, he'll sound however I want him to," she sniffed faux haughtily, before her sparkling eyes caught his. "And he did say that… almost exactly word for word."

Kurt shook his head, feeling warmed from the inside at both the second hand words and Dana's presence.

"So, how's school so far?" she asked, changing tracks.

"Fine… I'm a little behind but it's not a surprise," Kurt admitted, before jumping in with both feet. "They're letting me plan the charity night."

Dana beamed, all perfect white teeth. "That's wonderful! Blaine mentioned that you wanted to do a fashion show?"

"As the main event but I have loads of ideas to include most of the clubs at school… I was wondering if maybe you'd help me with the fashion show though?"

She leaned forwards intrigued. "Go on."

He pulled out his folder and set it open in front of them, angling it to face her so they could both see before launching into his ideas.

"Oh, Corrine would look lovely in this new piece I just put together," Dana gushed, tapping a
manicured nail against the page, seeing the barely started column of candidates for modelling.

Kurt's brows rose to his hair line. "You… you'd want to put your designs in there?"

He wasn't ashamed to admit that he had thoroughly Googled the hell out of Dana's fashion house, Red, and all her lines thus far.

They were breath-taking.

He could only dream of being as good as her one day, so that she was potentially offering to put some of those wonderful pieces in his fashion show, a show that he may well have been thinking of putting a few of his own designs in, was mind-blowing.

"Why wouldn't I want to put my designs in one of my family's shows?" she asked smiling at him knowingly. "I can't think of a more fitting place. Pun intended."

Kurt beamed at her, bouncing excitedly in his seat. "This is going to be so amazing!" he squeaked and Dana laughed fondly at him. And somehow he forgot all about the horrid article in his bag for now as he began to chatter ideas at Dana enthusiastically.

That's how Blaine and Jared found them when they got back from their respective works. Kitchen table full of swatches, pencil designs, charts and pictures.

The men looked at one another before smiling lovingly at their bonded partners and getting started on dinner.

Dana glanced around herself as she hung her coat on the back of her chair and settled in the middle of a long, square table covered in dark burgundy table cloth and decorated with a rich centrepiece filled with dry flowers and artificial fruit. Jared settled next to her quietly, recognizing her need to arrange her thoughts before everyone else got there.

The room she’d rented provided privacy and comfort for what she was about to do and the money she’d paid out for it more than paid off when she realized the room was completely separated from the rest of the restaurant. Not only was it sound proof, but it came with a private set of waiters that didn't mingle with the rest of the public diners, significantly lowering the chances of them being overheard and the information spreading before it was time for it to be public.

Dana knew what she was about to do was risky at best; completely life ruining at worst and she was already walking a thin line between being worshiped and despised for how she'd behaved lately regarding the social questions they were faced with. But she knew the people she called to meet her were trustworthy and she felt safe in her determination to explain her plan and her ideas to them.

The politics of the world they were living in was complicated, threads binding things that didn't seem connected on the surface and forcing you to fall into a trap of causing a side effect of your actions you couldn't even fathom going into something.

Each bigger city was considered a political unit on its own along with gravitating smaller cities bound to it. The grouping of towns under the same leadership was called a Circle and the biggest town in a Circle, representing the economical, business, political and social "soul", was called the Centre.

Westerville presented the Centre for a few smaller towns surrounding it, including Lima.
While all of the Circles belonged to the same general government and the same president, each and every one of them had their own board consisting of twelve leaders, led by the Head and elected anew every four years.

The elections were democratic and each person wanting to be on the board had to run with a full program they would have to instill during their mandate. The person who won the most votes became the next Head and the twelve people with the succeeding highest number of votes became the Board. The Heads program would then be revised, improved with the best ideas taken from the Board’s programs and then instilled into the Circle for the four years to come.

The General laws clearly stated that anyone over the age of eighteen could run and vote, but the thing was, it was mostly the well-off people that did it. They could afford to hold a campaign, they could afford to self-advertise and travel around collecting votes; they were also the majority of the ones who voted seeing how voting places were usually located in the Centre and most people couldn't travel or afford to travel that far to circle a name.

The entire process was in shambles and no matter how ideal it seemed on paper it just didn't work that way in theory, leaving the less fortunate under the foot of whomever the rich voted for.

It was obvious to someone who wanted to take notice that something had to change and Dana was more than ready to be the one to pull the trigger. She had the means, she had the influence and she had the balls to step out of her comfort zone and fight for what she believed was right.

As the current Head, she was supposed to be facing the elections in less than three months. The campaigns were just about to begin and she believed she had the perfect idea and the perfect people to help her put it into motion.

Back straight and face proud she smiled as the people she extended the invitation to entered the secluded room and greeted her with beaming smiles and friendly jabs at how secretive and "James Bond" she was being.

She shifted to the right slightly to allow the people to settle around the long table and she shook her head in amusement when she realized they were sitting down in a way that made her look like she was sitting at the head of the table.

The power they all saw in her floored her sometimes and she had to remind herself that with it came a huge responsibility to use it to change things for the better.

Which is exactly what she was trying to do.

"Thank you all for coming," she started when the scraping of chairs on the floor died down and the fidgeting of people arranging their limbs, fixing their clothes and falling into the sound of a curious hum in the air around them as they looked at the petite Dom expectantly.

"Well we wouldn't pass up a free lunch," Carmen Harwood winked from her seat earning herself a slap on the shoulder from her wife, Madeline.

How the two loud, rambunctious women managed to raise such a sweetheart of a son like Thad was beyond everyone, but their eclectic, weird little family worked perfectly. Carmen was a real estate agent, loud, outgoing and madly successful while her sub Madeline was an esteemed artist, working mostly with wood in creating her famous sculptures. They'd been together for years before finally deciding to adopt.

They went in dreaming of a sweet little girl with pigtails and freckles, but the moment they laid eyes
on a tiny, two year old boy playing with a calculator in the corner and staring at them with wide, dark eyes they were sold.

Thad With No Last Name became Thad Harwood and grew up into a tiny, cute math genius and theatre geek. Soon bonded with his hulk of a Dom both of his mother's absolutely adored Thad had developed an impressive amount of patience for all the fussing the three of them did over him collectively from what Dana had witnessed.

They loved to embarrass him and he loved them all way too much to complain about it.

"I thought you were on a diet, Car," Vanessa Thompson jabbed from under her husband's arm and he chuckled into her hair as she teased his business partner who always seemed to be on some kind of 'diet' since the eighties.

She'd be successful at it if it weren't for the… well… food.

Carter Thompson and Carmen Harwood had been best friends since they were little kids. Going to the same kindergarten, middle school and high school to end up starting a business together at the age of twenty. It blossomed from there and together they created an empire for themselves, keeping their integrity and trustworthiness in a world of sharks only out there to cross you any way they could.

It was Carmen's, albeit unintentional, doing that he had met Vanessa.

His best friend broke her arm and since Madeline was out of town for an exhibit she had called him to take her to the hospital in the middle of the night. Vanessa was on call and the rest, as they say, is history.

"It's a special occasion, it's cheat day," the blonde declared.

“It’s always cheat day with you,” Carter muttered only for Carmen to shrug causing everybody to laugh at her carefree nature and easy-going personality.

"Besides she's beautiful just the way she is,” Madeline cooed and Carmen smiled at her lovingly, kissing her temple.

"Okay… that's all very sweet but I'm hungry and I'd very much like to eat now," Hikaru said in his usual booming, but regal voice and Tara, his sub, rolled her eyes at him.

"You bought a hot dog off a street vendor not fifteen minutes ago," she said.

"I've got a fast metabolism," he said in excuse and she sighed in exasperation as he rubbed his stomach making them all laugh.

Tara was Hikaru's second sub, a companion bond between them forming after his first wife died in a car accident and her first Dom getting caught in a crossfire between a bunch of muggers and a guy attempting to be a hero and stop them from robbing a liquor store.

He was in the wrong place at the wrong time and she was left alone.

She had met Hikaru when she was admitted into Dalton as the new manager for the tech support team and over the next few months they met each other every day, exchanging simple pleasantries and sharing lunch now and then. What started as a simple friendship morphed into deep, steady affection and even though she was years younger than he was, both their families accepted their bond easily, happy they had found someone again. Wes and his little sister Lee adored Tara and she
completed their little family effortlessly.

"It'll be a while until we order lunch. We're still expecting someone," Dana informed them and Paul Karofsky eyed her curiously.

"Who is it that we're waiting for?" he asked lighting up a cigarette and frowning when his wife plucked it from between his lips and stubbed it against the glass of the ashtray.

"We agreed you'd quit," Margareth said in a sing song voice and he glared at her in defeat.

"No… you agreed," he stated petulantly and she shrugged.

"Me and your medical reports agreed," she bit back and he slumped down in his chair knowing he had lost the battle once again. His coronary report had been horrible at his last check up and she had been on him like a hawk ever since.

"We're waiting for Lillian and Jeremy Sterling," Dana announced, chuckling at the bickering couple, offering no further explanations because she knew most of the present people would recognize the name.

"The Sterling's? I haven't seen nor heard of them in almost two years," Dominic Smythe said seemingly deep in thought, scratching at his chin and his wife Anna nodded.

"It was awful what happened to their son. Just awful," she said quietly, tears springing in her eyes and shocking everyone around her. She was who Sebastian inherited his fierceness from. Red haired, blue eyed and larger than life, she must have been the only sub in the world who could keep up with Dominic as he took the courtrooms by storm. As a paralegal she was the one who had his back for years before he gave up on chasing after damsels in distress and realized he wanted a heroine to save him when he fell in too deep.

There was only one weakness she had and it was Sebastian.

"Nobody knows what happened to him though," Alisa Sanders said quietly. "Miriam mentioned him a few times but it seems like he's not told anyone about his past."

Her sub Jack nodded in agreement, thinking back to a few conversations with his daughter where she mentioned the blonde sub but nothing concrete came up about why his family dropped off the grid so suddenly.

"Of course he's not talking about it, but Corinne said his mark is ruined. There's only one thing that can cause something like that. We all know it," Carla Madison quipped fiercely, feeling her hand tremble where her Dom held it tightly, his heart skipping a beat at the thought of his beautiful girl mistreated like that and Marcus smiled at Vanessa in gratitude that her son treated his daughter like she was made of lace.

"I can't believe someone would do that to someone so precious," Tanya Moore said, sitting with her husband Daniel next to the mothers of their son's sub and thinking of the precious little math enthusiast and unable to imagine someone would ever dare to lay a hurtful hand on him.

"People like that should be locked away. For good. Those Landon folks walked away with their heads held high while that beautiful boy was left to feel like he would never be loved again. It's nauseating," Lucy said with a fire in her eyes that made them all flinch.

"You're awfully passionate about this, Lu," Carmen said and Lucy nodded in affirmation, offering no words of explanation so her husband took it to himself to explain.
"Nick… Nick is in love with young Jeffrey, he would very much like to claim him. He's been trying to get through to him for weeks but the boy is so scared and closed off that he keeps waiting for Nick to hurt him and it's… it's painful to watch your child suffer like that," Andree said in a thick, French accent when a voice came from the door.

"Imagine how painful it is to have a child who went through abuse and not being able to do a single thing to punish the monster who hurt him."

They all jumped and turned to look at a tortured looking blonde Dom.

Once bright, smile scrunched eyes were now dull and pained and the platinum blonde hair he had passed on to his son was streaked with white hairs that were a testimony to the suffering this family went through. His voice was filled with rage simmering under the surface and his sub wrapped her arm around his waist in silent support as the other couples in the room shifted nervously.

Tears in her eyes Lucy stood up and walked to the tiny family offering a hand to the parents of the angelic boy that held their son's heart without even knowing it.

"Please... we cannot even begin to understand what you've been through and how you feel. But rest assured, we will find a way to make that sorry excuse for a Dom pay for what he has done."

Lillian Sterling looked at her for a moment, tired eyes scanning her plump body before taking the offered hand and giving her a delicate squeeze.

"Thank you. But it's not your battle to fight," the petite woman replied tiredly and Andree shook his head coming to stand next to his wife; two families bonded by the love of one boy towards the other.

"Quite the contrary. The happiness of your son is directly linked to the happiness of ours since he's... to put it mildly, quite taken with Jeff," Andree said and Jeremy tensed, fists balling and anger filling his words.

"I will not let my son get hurt again!" he seethed and Andree raised his hands in silent surrender.

"I assure you. Nick is a respectful, caring and sweet young man. He would never do a thing to hurt Jeff. We haven't heard a word other than, "Jeff smiled at me today" and "his hair is so pretty" and "he's everything I've ever wanted" from Nick for weeks. Believe me. If your son ever chooses to accept him, he'll be treated the way he deserves, the way every sub in the world deserves," he said with burning conviction and Lillian allowed her tears to spill, hastily swiping them away.

"It sounds nice, a pretty picture. But we have a hard time believing things that have to do with our son. He's been through too much," she stated honestly and at this Dana rose from her seat and cleared her throat.

"Lillian, Jeremy, first of all welcome and thank you for joining us, I know the request was unusual and you don’t like to venture this far into Westerville. Secondly, if it helps, Nicholas is Blaine's best friend. As Blaine is a Dom Jeff seems to trust the most outside of his family, I assure you Nick has Blaine's complete trust. He won't hurt your son," she said and it seemed as if the mention of Blaine eased the tortured parent's minds slightly because they nodded and took their seats at the vacated places next to Lucy and Andree.

There was still tension in the room, but it wasn’t insurmountable and Dana squared her shoulders, ready.

"Now, allow me to introduce you to everyone before we order our food and I'll tell you why I've invited you all here," she said addressing everyone with a confident ease of an established Dom.
"You have probably heard of the kids Jeff hangs out with so it'll be easier to keep track since all the people here are the parents of Blaine's closest friends. First of all you have already met Lucy and Andree Duval, Nick's mom and dad. Hikaru and Tara Montgomery, Wes' parents, and Alisa and Jack Sanders, Wes's sub Miriam's parents. Vanessa and Carter Thompson are David's parents and, his sub Corrine's parents are Carla and Marcus Madison over there on the left. Carmen and Madeline Harwood are Thad's adoptive parents and his Dom Ryan's are Tanya and Daniel Moore. Dave's parents Paul and Margareth Karofsky and his sub Sebastian's parents Dominic and Anna Smythe. Finally this is Jared Anderson, my husband. Everyone this is Jeremy and Lillian Sterling, Jeff's parents."

Everyone exchanged polite nods and smiles as Dana went around and made introductions and they finally settled down to order food.

"Remember it's all our treat so go crazy," Jared joked and the tension broke just that little bit more, chipping away as they picked their menus and chose their meals in relaxed chatter.

Dana rubbed her palms against her thighs nervously under the table where no one could see and Jared grasped her small hand in his.

"Relax, my lady. It'll go great. I know it," he reassured in a whisper and she leaned in to kiss him gently as the waiters finished their rounds and disappeared towards the kitchen again.

She could feel curious eyes boring into her once more and she knew the moment to confide in them had arrived.

"Okay. I guess now is the time to tell you why I called you. The new round of elections is upon us…" she started but Carmen cut her off.

"Sweetie, there was no need to spend a ridiculous amount of money on us to ask us to vote for you. We will anyway because we believe in you," she said and Dana smiled gratefully but powered through her next statement.

"I'm not running this year actually," she said and there was a collective gasp around the table.

"You're not?" Dominic asked and she shook her head gently.

"Recent events made me realize something. I feel like I have to do something and I was hoping to have your support as I do it," she said and they looked at her in surprise.

"Why don't you tell us what it is first?" Jack said and Dana nodded in assent.

"Having my eyes opened by the young sub of my son's was a rough wake up call for me. We've been in a sheltered little world where money can buy you just about anything and we went with it… I went with it for years. The storm we just had tipped it over for me. I sit at board meetings discussing the future of our Circle and meanwhile people are starving, walking around cold and afraid, unable to bring food to their families, unable to work, unable to fight the bastards who hurt their kids," she stated and looked as Jeremy took Lillian's hand, shame and regret and failure as a parent written all over his too old for his age face.

"It has to stop. Things need to change and I feel like the elections are the perfect first step," she said and Andree eyed her curiously.

"So why aren't you running again?" he asked. "You could do more if you're in power."

Dana shook her head. "I've been at this too long Andree. I've had my shot."
"I assume you have a plan?" he asked and she nodded.

"I was thinking that instead of running we could all donate the money I would use for my campaign to finance the running of someone who can't afford to run a good program. Let's give the chance to someone who can change our Circle for the better for everyone," she said and silence fell over them, thick and opaque.

"I like it," Hikaru broke it after a few minutes. She met his eyes and he smiled wide and young. "It's completely crazy and possibly life ruining, but I like it. I'll help."

Tara shook her head at her Dom’s antics, but nodded at Dana in calm support.

"I'm with you too. I saw enough when we went there during the storm. It's no way for people to live," Vanessa said with the convinced support of her husband.

"I'm in as well. Artists were always the first ones to stand against injustice," Madeline quipped and Carmen hugged her in assent.

"You can count on me too," Dominic nodded regally and Anna squeezed his hand proudly.

"Us too," the Moores added at the same time as Paul and Margareth Karofsky nodded in agreement along with every single person around the table.

The Sterling's watched them in silent awe and shock, still not sure what they were doing there.

"I admire your initiative but… my wife and I have lost everything. We can't support your cause as much as we'd like to," Jeremy said and Dana smiled.

"You're here because we want to know what needs to be changed. You've been a part of both worlds just like Paul and Margareth. We will need that knowledge to pick the right program we can finance. If we do this we have to make sure that the program that passes has all the changes that need to happen to even the scores between our worlds. So tell us," she said and they stared at her in silence until a voice broke it.

"The first thing that has to be done is punishment for those who abuse the sanctity of the trust a sub puts into their Dom. We cannot allow another bastard to get away with it like Jeff's Dom did." And surprisingly, it wasn't Lillian or Jeremy that said it.

It was Lucy.

"My son loves that boy. And I want the person who hurt him then and whose actions are hurting the both of them now punished for it," she explained and Lillian squeezed her hand in silent acknowledgement of the sentiment.

"It needs to make sure that the jobs are assigned based on capabilities, not connections and family names," Paul said earning a fierce nod from Jeremy.

"Schooling. Our kids can't go to a school that's falling apart over their heads with no books or computers or a decent library. Educational equality," he said and Dana hastily whipped out her notebook and began writing it out.

The ideas flowed around them, falling faster and building like an avalanche that was well overdue and pretty soon they had the guidelines for a program they could finance with complete conviction it should, no, would win and make a change towards equality. The world needed this.
Their food went cold beside them as they poured out ideas and suggestions and criticism to the way things were now.

"We need to make sure we put the voting posts into every town. Or to a few places in every town so we can be sure money is not an obstacle to someone voting," Marcus said and Dana added that to her pad, underlining it three times.

"Also we need to make sure we include the finances for the traveling of the person who runs. We need to make sure his ideas are heard everywhere," Andree supplied and the suggestion was written down immediately.

They were getting tired and their heads pounded but as they toasted to each other at the end of it they realized what they did that day was more than worth it.

They were making history.

They were creating a better world.

And that night they slept with smiles on their faces, eager to see what the next few months would bring.
Hey guys!

Here we are with the next chapter, all proud that it didn't take us too long.

There's a warning from us that this chapter is a little skippy, basically we're jumping couple to couple again as they find out the master plan from their parents! So please keep an eye on the breaks with the days because we're also covering a little bit of time as well so we can move plot things along :)

Enjoy!!!!!

______________________________

Thursday

______________________________

The shrill sound of their alarm clock pulled Kurt sharply out of dreamland and he winced at the sound until Blaine un-plastered himself from where he was spooned up behind him to shut it off.

*Go away world*, he thought blearily, feeling the heavy tug of sleep still pulling at him. Sighing happily he felt himself slipping under again only to frown when he felt the light press of lips and the tickle of stubble against his bare shoulder.

"Morning," Blaine sang softly into his skin, sleep rough and deep.

Kurt scrunched up tighter and pulled the blanket over his head trying desperately to hold onto the vestiges of slumber. He found it really difficult to doze off again once his mind started up and running and he was subconsciously sure he didn't want to face today. "No," he mumbled back.

Blaine shook his head at his stubborn sub, a smile hitching his lips. Kurt definitely wasn't a morning person and the fact that he knew that, was getting to know all the little quirks and things that made Kurt who he was, made him feel like he was the luckiest man on earth.

Love swelling his heart to bursting he inched back in closer to his beautiful boy, bracing his weight on his elbow and pulling the cover back down to Kurt's waist. He revelled in the flawless expanse of skin that was revealed. Ever since the night of the blackout they'd stopped wearing sleep shirts to bed, reasoning that they'd just end up off anyway with their newly wandering hands. Subsequently, Blaine lived in a state of almost constant arousal and hardness which was as frustrating as it was intoxicating.

He dragged his eyes to the enticing dip of Kurt's tiny waist to the swell of his hip and almost groaned, what had been a little morning wood turning into a full on erection. "We have school, lovely," he chastised, trying to get them back on track.

"No," Kurt repeated petulantly.

He didn't want to get up. He didn't want his brain to reboot and bring with it memories of the worse
parts of yesterday. He just wanted to stay here comfortable, with the mixed scent of him and Blaine in his nose and their joint body heat warming their bed and just forget there was an awful part of the world outside these four walls.

But he could already feel the thoughts seeping through like poison.

It had been easy enough to put Brad and that horrid magazine out of his mind when he had been so distracted by Dana… but as the night wore on Kurt could feel himself sinking more and more into his own head, rerunning the lines he’d read through his mind and replaying every self-satisfied sneer of Brad's.

Blaine had noticed of course and it was on the tip of Kurt's tongue to tell him everything. Just blurt it out not only because it was a main rule in their contract, but because he just wanted Blaine to make it better. But fear stopped him, the same fear from yesterday, only worse now that he'd let it fester. It gummed up his mouth so the words couldn't pass through.

He was afraid that telling him might make Blaine realize it was true. That he could do better and he was just a phase to get over… which made him feel so freaking guilty because Blaine had done nothing to invoke those kinds of feelings, to make him feel unwanted or like he was a thing to be played with until he got bored. He knew that wasn't true. He knew… but he was just so scared and there was this tiniest flicker of doubt that had remained from when they first met, the unbelieving, terrified side, that Brad was happily feeding, obviously hoping to turn it into a flame to burn Kurt's world down around him.

"Kurt?" Blaine whispered. "You're not asleep again are you, beautiful boy?"

Kurt swallowed hard, letting the endearment wash over him. Tell him, tell him, tell him! his heart screamed as his Dom began to pepper torturously sweet kisses up and down his neck.

"You taste like apricots," Blaine announced randomly, but sounding like that fact had just made him the happiest man on earth. It kind of made Kurt want to cry with how much he loved him and his stupid face and hair and eyes and god damn everything!

"Moisturizer," Kurt found himself replying, hating that his voice wavered.

The soft scratch and hot pressure moved upwards across his jawline and towards the corner of his mouth filing Kurt with warmth and tingles and butterflies.

"A little vanilla," Blaine smiled against his cheek, doing his best to coax him to life.

"Lip balm," he supplied needlessly. Blaine had already told him multiple times that he loved it after they'd been making out.

"Anddd… rainbows."

"Rainbows?" Kurt giggled incredulously, unable to help himself, finally peeking one eye open to look back at his Dom's sleepy, gorgeous face.

"Mnhm," Blaine hummed contently. "Exactly like rainbows, riiight…” he leant in and placed a stupidly tender kiss right behind his ear, "…here... and here," another to his temple before he rolled Kurt onto his back, "…and here." Finally he kissed him square on the mouth before pulling back.

Kurt allowed both eyes to open to a lazy half mast, giving up on obsessing over his own insecurities to instead focus every sense he had on the wonderful man above him that he was hopelessly in love with.
"And what do rainbows taste like?" he murmured.

"Uhh…. Skittles?" Blaine laughed leaning over him properly, forearm braced next to his head.

Kurt smirked back, sliding his hands up into their favorite spot nestled in raven curls. "Are you asking or telling me, Anderson?"

"Telling." Blaine nodded seriously, stealing another kiss. "Your mouth tastes like vanilla and rainbows and rainbows taste like Skittles."

"You're ridiculous," Kurt laughed into his mouth.

"Only for you," Blaine sang, eskimo kissing him and Kurt bit his lip.

"Can we stay home today, sir?"

It just blurted out.

Blaine frowned, playfulness gone as he pulled back to study his subs suddenly pensive face. Kurt had been off since… he thought back and remembered the hug in the car lot and his worry suddenly skyrocketed. *Kurt would tell him if something was wrong, right?* He hadn't wanted to smother Kurt when he'd told him he was fine by constantly pestering him, but now… was there something at Dalton not making him want to go?

"What's wrong, lovely? Has something happened?" he asked seriously.

"No, Dalton is fine," Kurt omitted instead of answering the question and that weight that was holding all these secrets and half-truths was growing on his chest making it feel like he couldn't breathe. "I'm just tired, ignore me."

"Kurt-"

"We're gonna be late if we stay in bed much longer," Kurt cut him off trying to joke, but every cell in him was screaming out for help he couldn't ask for. "And it'll be all your fault."

"Kurt," Blaine said again sternly, not letting him weasel around it and sounding so openly concerned for him that he felt every emotion and thought he was trying to push down and smother build hard and fast like a volcano about to erupt.

*TELL HIM!*

He barely had time to cover his eyes with his hand before he burst into tears.

Blaine was momentarily stunned before every protective cell in his body screamed him into action. "Baby, what's wrong?" he demanded softly, trying not to let the panic he felt seep into his voice. He needed to be strong and calm for Kurt.

His sub simply shook his head, lips pressed into a tight, awful line to conceal the sobs that were shaking his body and the truths he had been hiding. Blaine wanted to be disappointed that Kurt had already broke one of the rules on their contract, but with him so visibly distraught he couldn't find it in him to be anything of the sort.

He just needed to help his boy.

It was clear by Kurt's tensing body language; the knees drawing up, the hunching shoulders with arms pressed tight to his sides, that he wanted to be as small as possible. A natural reaction in all subs
to want to feel safe and Blaine deftly slid on top of his sub, half remembering his lessons and half acting on pure instinct, using his forearms to keep from being deadweight but knowing Kurt would need the pressure for reassurance.

It seemed to work and the hitching draws of breath through Kurt's nose got a little calmer at least. Blaine leant into his ear and nuzzled there for a moment, trying to pour every inch of love he had for this sub into him. "Tell me so I can fix it, lovely. I just wanna help you beautiful boy, will you let me help you?" It was commands wrapped up with sweet questions, but commands none the less. He didn't want to force anything heavy on Kurt in this kind of state, but he did need to get to the root of this.

"I-I can fix it… I c-can," Kurt hiccoughed, through shaky gasps for air.

"Shhh," Blaine soothed, leaning his weight on his left side so he could reach up and grasp Kurt's wrist gently, coaxing him to pull it away from his eyes. "Fix what, baby? Is it Dalton? Is someone harassing you?"

The hand finally fell and a blotchy face was revealed breaking Blaine's heart a little.

*How long had this been going on? Had he missed the signs so terribly?*

"Ugh!" Kurt hissed sniffing miserably through the waterfall falling from his eyes, trying desperately to wipe it away. "I feel so s-stupid!"

Blaine replaced Kurt's trembling hands with his own, thumbing away the moisture from his face and placing soft kisses to every inch of inflamed, puffy skin until the tears finally dried up and Kurt had stopped shaking so badly.

Kurt was hiding in Blaine's caresses, soaking in the affection like a sponge and trying to delay that inevitable moment where he would have to reveal all to his Dom. There was no pretending now. Not after breaking down like an idiot in front of him.

"What do you need to fix, lovely?" Blaine asked gently after another few minutes ticked by, all but the sounds of Dana and Jared pottering around downstairs before work, surrounding them.

Kurt opened his stinging eyes and met the serious gold ones above him, flecks of green and bronze radiating nothing but worry. He grimaced. "I don't need to really fix anything-

"Kurt," Blaine cut off and it was that same no nonsense tone from earlier. He wasn't buying it.

"Don't try to act like nothing's wrong. You were just sobbing in my arms!"

"But that wasn't because of that… not really," Kurt tried to explain.

"Because of what?!" Blaine asked exasperated, eyes and mouth tight. "I don't want to force it out of you, Kurt, but you signed that contract we have saying you'd be honest with me."

"And that's why I was crying!" Kurt burst out, getting teary eyed and thick throated again. "Because I wanted to tell you since it happened yesterday but I just couldn't get the words out and it was killing me inside."

The declaration threw Blaine off track a little. "Why did you think you couldn't tell me?" he murmured trying not to sound so wounded. He thought Kurt trusted him.

"I just wanted to handle it on my own… I still do want that," Kurt told him in a quiet voice, avoiding his eyes to look down at his chin.
"I'm your Dominant-" Blaine began.

"And I'm still my own person!" Kurt cut off, eyes clashing once more. "I love that you're my Dom Blaine and I'm so happy knowing that when I fall you'll be there to catch me and make it better but I need to be able to do things for myself as well."

Blaine fell silent; his jaw clenching and his forehead creasing.

"It's nothing bad," Kurt carried on quietly. And it wasn't really. Just a lot of people talking absolute shit and Kurt letting it play on his insecurities. He just had to get a grip on himself and ignore it and then everything would be fine again. "No one's like… beating me or anything."

Blaine scowled heavier at that insinuation and Kurt realized it was probably one of the worst analogies he could have used.

"You can't… this is…" He paused to gather his thoughts and emotions. "This goes against everything in me, Kurt," Blaine gritted out finally. "And you've not even told me anything. Not really."

"Trust me," Kurt begged, grasping Blaine's shoulders tightly. "Please trust that if it gets too much that I'll come to you. I promise I will, I just… need to prove to myself that I can handle this before you step in to save the day."

"I feel like you're not trusting me though. You can't even tell me what's wrong," Blaine said sadly, some frustration bleeding through now. He thought they had gotten past this.

"I do trust you. I couldn't even last a full day before I broke down because I wanted to tell you," Kurt hastened to assure him, a stray tear streaking hot down his temple with just how much of his heart was in the next sentence. "Please believe me… I trust you with all my heart, Blaine."

Blaine's own heart skipped a beat at that statement. So sure. So felt. Blaine didn't want to read too much into it, but it made him hope that maybe Kurt was as head over heels with him as he was for the sub. He was so confident sometimes that he was, that he saw it there and was reading him right and it was getting increasingly more painful not to shout out that he loved him every minute of every day.

"But you need to do this," Blaine concluded.

"I'll tell you soon," Kurt said, thumbs fitting into the sharp jut of the Dom's collarbones. "I just need to handle this for myself first before anyone else gets involved. It's important to me."

He needed to prove to himself he could do it. He could stand up to people like Brad and those slanderous assholes who hid behind those glossy pages and not let these stupid insecurities get the better of him. And then once he'd done that… maybe Kurt could have the confidence to admit to Blaine he loved him? What would be holding him back after all?

"Is it another Dom?" Blaine asked, bringing him back to the now. "And don't you dare lie, Kurt."

The command washed over him strongly and like a compulsion the truth came blurring passed his lips. "No. It's not a Dom."

Blaine's tensed frame eased out a little. "If it ever involves one you tell me straight away," he ordered firmly. "This is not me trying to control or belittle you, but you don't mess with Doms, Kurt. Ever. I know it's not fair but they do have an advantage over you if they're sick enough to use it and I forbid you to put yourself in that kind of danger to prove a point, I'm sorry."
Kurt melted under him, the commands taking root but the sentiment behind them warming him through. He knew this wasn't Blaine just throwing his weight and Dom voice around. This was genuine concern for his safety talking and Kurt was blessed to have this man this invested in his well-being.

"I know you're not," he assured. "And I promise I will come straight to you if it ever involves Dominants. I've seen how that ends," he finished quietly. Sadly.

Blaine sighed out hard and deep, closing his eyes briefly. "If I see this affecting you, lovely… I can't promise I won't step in."

Kurt nodded. "Okay."

"I mean it," Blaine warned. "One more tear on that beautiful face and you're spilling the whole thing."

"Yes," he agreed because deep down he kind of wanted that boundary as a safety net in case he let himself get sucked too far under.

"And they've not… touched you," Blaine asked, studying his face for any hint of a tell to say otherwise.

"No, not laid a finger on me," he said quietly.

"So it's something someone's said then?" the Dom reasoned out and Kurt could tell this wasn't going to stop.

"Blaine, please…"

The Dom groaned and buried his face in his neck. "I hate this."

Kurt threaded his fingers on one hand through the Dom’s hair and used the other to pet lightly at his mark, tracing along the empty heart shape in the middle of the diamond. "I know."

They were silent for a few tense seconds before Kurt couldn't stand it anymore.

"Are you going to punish me?" he asked in a small voice. He knew now that it wasn't as horrendous as he first thought it out to be, but that didn't mean he liked it. Plus the fact that he already felt he'd gone through a punishment already, his body was rubbed raw and aching after not even a day of trying to keep something from Blaine. It was safe to say he'd learnt his lesson.

He felt the briefest of kisses over his pounding pulse point and relaxed a little before Blaine pulled himself up to look him dead in the eye. "Are you going to try and keep something from me again?"

"No, sir."

"Do you understand why it's important to be honest with me?" he asked searching his face.

"Yes," he whispered. "I'm really sorry, sir."

"Then I forgive you… but if you do this again Kurt it'll be a worse punishment, do you understand?"

"Yes, sir," he nodded seriously, that cleansing feeling from after his first punishment flowing through him at the sound of Blaine forgiving him openly. "Thank you."

Blaine sighed again and kissed him on the forehead. "You're welcome, lovely. I just want you to be
"You make me safe and happy," Kurt murmured to him honestly, gripping handfuls of curls loosely and tipping his chin up in a clear invitation.

Blaine didn't hesitate before ducking down and joining their mouths, morning breath be damned, tongues soon lazily tangling as they sunk back into one another; re-syncing. Kurt melted into alignment, fears and doubts disappearing in a puff of smoke in these moments where Blaine was so devoted to him. Where everything was so much that Kurt was sure Blaine felt the same as him because these feelings couldn't be the result of anything less than the deepest and purest of loves.

They kissed for what seemed like hours, but could only have been minutes, just stilted breathes, wet, slick sounds, choked off moans and shifting limbs against fabric and skin filling the air.

They broke apart only as someone rapped on their bedroom door.

"Did your alarm go off, doves?" Dana called to them through the wood.

Kurt sunk his head back into the pillow feeling hot and flushed all over, dick hard in his sleep pants and pressing teasingly close to where Blaine's own erection was digging into his hip.

Blaine himself pressed up on his hands and hung his head low between his shoulders. "Yes mom, we're up," he called back, voice strained and Kurt hoped to god Dana didn't jump to the right conclusion.

"Well breakfast is on the table, your father and I are heading to work… you don't have plans after school next Monday do you?"

Blaine and Kurt stared at one another, confused. No offense to Dana because Kurt loved that woman, but all he wanted to do was kiss Blaine's face off this minute and maybe grind a little more. He bit his lip at the memory of last time and involuntarily bucked his hips up into Blaine right in the middle of him saying, "Nothing other than WaAARRbler practice."

Burnished gold met darkened blue and narrowed and he whispered under his breath, "Naughty boy."

Kurt sunk his teeth into his bottom lip harder and raised his eyebrows in the perfect mix of innocence and challenge.

"Don't book anything, your father and I would like to talk to you both about something when you're not so… busy," the inference was clear and Kurt blushed down to his toes.

*Oh god, she totally knew.*

"Goodbye, mother," Blaine said pointedly.

They heard Dana's laugh echoing down the hallway.

"I want the shower first," Kurt demanded sliding out from under his Dom and grabbing his clothes before shutting himself away.

Blaine groaned watching him go, all flushed creamy skin and elegant lines… he looked down at his throbbing cock and grimaced before face planting the pillow in frustration.

*Thanks mom.*

But really… his head wasn't in his pants right now despite its insistence for some loving attention. It
was stuck on Kurt and what was going on with him. From what he could gather it was a sub that was obviously saying a few choice things to him. And his desire to want to deal with it on his own was justifiable enough, hell he'd seen Sebastian in action too many times to count to be unaware that subs could more than hold their own, as well as having witnessed the sharper side of Kurt's own personality. It's just… the Dominant side of him was severely kicking up a fuss, demanding he fix it himself and care for his sub properly.

But he'd as good as promised Kurt he'd let him try to handle the situation on his own and he'd try his hardest to live up to that. He loved Kurt too much to lie to him… he'd just have to keep a closer eye on him and if he saw anything out of the ordinary or harmful then he'd act.

He wasn't letting Kurt get himself harmed out of misplaced pride, or allowing someone else to harm him ever if he could help it.

"The soups ready!" Madeline called through from the kitchen.

"I've got the medicine!" Carmen hollered as she bustled through the front door and through to the large living area, a white bulging bag in hand.

"I've got our boy," Ryan chimed in just because and Thad rolled his bleary eyes from where he was snuggled against him on the inside of the sofa under a blanket.

"That's pretty obvious, Ry," he managed to get out before sneezing into his tissue, which then caused a round of coughing that was getting steadily more chesty.

He'd felt the oncoming's of a cold on Wednesday morning, but had powered through the day like he usually did. Math meeting at lunch, Drama club, classes all day as well as that horrendous History project he'd completed in the library with Jeff and Kurt.

His body had promptly shut that right down in a childish fit of, Oh, but I don't wanna!

Ryan had noticed the signs he was trying to ignore; head full of cotton, stuffy nose, tight chest, tickle in his throat, later that night over dinner and had scolded him for not mentioning he was feeling unwell… before doting on him within an inch of his life.

Ryan had declared he was too ill to go to school and while Thad protested- weakly as he was feeling awful admittedly- because he had perfect attendance and things to do- he was overridden by his concerned Dom for his own good. Thad couldn't really grumble at the big lug when he only had his best interests at heart unfortunately.

Which brought them here this morning.

Carmen and Madeline had booked the day off immediately after Ryan had called them last night, the Dom was absolutely set against leaving Thad on his own while he was at school and no amount of coercing could change his mind. It was endearingly ridiculous.

Only… when it came time for Ryan to leave after dropping him off to his cooing parents… well, the Dom didn't even make it as far as the door. He'd taken one look at him snuggled under the blanket with a hot water bottle Madeline had forced on him, looking very sorry for himself and slid under with him saying that he didn't need a hot water bottle if he had him and that was a totally legitimate
reason for skipping school and practise.

If he wasn't feeling so crappy he would have kissed the life out of the idiot.

Carmen poured the bag of medicines that could treat a small town out onto the coffee table and Thad groaned, burying his face into Ryan's chest. He hated the taste of medicine.

"It'll be over before you know it," Ryan whispered into his ear soothingly before pecking soft kisses over the shell, sighing at the red hot temperature he could feel radiating from his skin.

"Can you bring a spoon and drink through for me, sweetie?" Carmen called to her wife distractedly as she opened all the right boxes, before directing her motherly gaze on her little boy. "How you doing, baby?"

Thad uncovered his face to sniff sadly at her and Ryan made a comforting sound, gently stroking over the mark on the back of his neck.

God, even snotty and germy Ryan was still so gone for him. He could feel his own lungs ache with every cough and he wanted more than anything else to take away the pain and hurt instead of him. His tiny body was trembling in fever and sweat was clinging on to him, dampening Ryan's shirt, but the Dom couldn't care less and he held him closer, tighter.

Thad sighed into the contact, a pseudo sort of relief pouring into him from the touch, even though it did nothing to make him better in actuality. "Okay," he murmured, all blocked up and miserable.

He may complain about the attention they piled on him, but he secretly loved it all. He always knew he was safe and loved with them. Always.

Madeline came through a second later with a tray that was steaming. "I made chicken soup, honey, just the way you like. Just gotta wait for it to cool a little, you can take your medicine in the meantime."

"Thanks, mom," he coughed.

"Throat first," Ryan said to the two women and they nodded in agreement.

It was the worst tasting one and Ryan knew he liked to get it out of the way.

Ryan propped him up on his chest a little more and Madeline leaned in to check his temperature with the back of her hand before clucking her tongue in sympathy, stroking through his hair gently. "You run yourself down, sweet boy."

Carmen poured out the right amount, guiding the spoon to his mouth before he could answer that with a negative. He cringed over the taste, the only thing stopping him from spitting it out like a five year old being Ryan's encouraging voice in his ear, his Dom's hand on the back of his neck swirling circles there.

"Good boy, I'm very proud of you," Ryan praised once he swallowed and that rush of pleasantness made it worth it.

He gestured for the glass of weak juice and Madeline hastily handed it over so Ryan could help Thad wash the taste away. Tylenol was next and they hurt a little being swallowed but he choked them down along with a few other medicines before he was allowed to collapse back against Ryan exhausted, not caring that he felt like he was melting, just wanting to be close by.
"Food now," Carmen reminded and Thad shook his head, stomach turning over at the idea.

"A few mouthfuls," Ryan commanded gently and Thad groaned, but complied, allowing Carmen to spoon feed him, body too weak and achy to even care that he was being babied so much.

"We met with Dana for lunch on Wednesday," Madeline commented wanting to distract her son, sitting on the edge of a nearby couch obviously wanting to be close by. Carmen herself was perched on the coffee table itself.

"So did my parents," Ryan said looking at her briefly, before fixing his gaze back on his sick little sub. "They didn't really say what it was about."

"Dana's not running this year," Carmen said around those embarrassing mouth movement's moms made when feeding babies; opening and closing in time with the spoonful she was holding up to try and convince them to copy.

Thad turned his head away from the latest one and exclaimed a throaty, "What!" that had him hacking.

Ryan tutted, rubbing circles on his back until it subsided.

"What is she planning on doing then? Just letting the others take over? Or has she asked one of you?" Ryan asked for his sub.

Madeline laughed loudly and Carmen smirked. "Us? Running?"

Ryan chuckled and conceded the point. They were far too loud for politics even if they had the slightest interest.

"Not my parent’s then surely?" Ryan said, pulling a face.

"No, she has someone and something else completely different in mind," Madeline smiled and Thad knew when his mother's muse had been caught. He'd seen that look a thousand times, he'd seen it when the blackout had happened. She was invested in this, which had to mean it was good.

Whatever it was… it was for the better.

Kurt couldn't actually believe his luck sometimes.

One minute he was meeting Blaine, the love of his life and the next he was getting paired with Brad, the bane of it, on a science project for all of next week.

"Brad and Sebastian are at the head of the class, I thought it'd be beneficial for you to be partnered with them so they could bring you up to speed faster," Mr Matthews smiled at him and Jeff. "You can chose who goes with who," he allowed before walking back towards the front of the class to start handing out the assignments.

"I'll go with Brad," Jeff offered, eyeing the boy at the front like one would a rabid dog.

Kurt looked incredulously at his best friend.
"Uh, no. You go with Seb and I'll handle Brad," he said definitively, hating the waver that was trying to creep in. He wasn't scared of that stuck up asshole... but the idiot knew exactly what buttons to press, which nerves to hit, where to twist the knife for the maximum damage.

However, if it was a choice between him and Jeff enduring that for a week. Well that was a no brainer.

"Kurt… you don't have to protect me or something," Jeff frowned at him from under his fringe.

"Well maybe I just love Brad's company," Kurt sassed, hand on his heart. "Maybe I want him to be my new bestie."

Jeff chuckled under his breath. "Oh no. Help. I've been replaced."

"Yep. I just couldn't resist all that douchebag charm," he sighed dreamily and Jeff shoved him gently making Kurt giggle.

"Okay, so everyone find your assigned partners and you can start your planning!" the teacher announced and the sound of scraping chairs and hushed chatter filled the air.

Kurt shared a reassuring look with Jeff before he got up and approached Brad, slowly at first because he knew the ass wouldn't move for any partner he had, so if he could inconvenience mister 'top of the class' even a little then he would.

But soon enough the distance was eaten up and he was sliding into the chair next to the last person he wanted to see today.

"When Matthews told me I'd be lumped with either you or Sterling I didn't know what was worse," Brad drawled under his breath not even glancing in his direction as he carried on writing in his notepad. "But then I remembered that at least Sterling had some kind of breeding before he became a reject, unlike you."

Kurt hackles rose in an instant like they always did when Jeff was involved. He was like a lioness protecting his cub, no doubt, no fear, just fierceness. "You say another word about him and I'll make sure I ruin you," he hissed under his breathe.

The hard resolve underlying those words actually got Brad's attention, tousled head coming around with green eyes slightly wider from shock he couldn't cover up.

He recovered though. "I'm so far above you Hummel, you can't touch me."

"You know what they say about people and pedestals," Kurt snapped back, eyebrow arching scathingly.

"Please," he scoffed, but he didn't have a smart reply so Kurt counted that as a win for him.

He smirked and sat back in his chair while Brad began to fume. Ignoring him Kurt looked over the assignment and found that it wasn't too difficult, they wouldn't have to spend that much time together at all if they divided up the parts equally. He pulled a highlighter out of his bag and began to color all the parts he knew.

"How are things going with Blaine?" came a few minutes later and Kurt narrowed his eyes on the sub next to him who was leaning into his palm, elbow propped on the desk.

"Like you care."
"Oh no I'm very interested," Brad countered, all his bad intentions written over his skin.

"Sorry what I meant was, no way on earth am I going to tell you so get lost you pretentious ass," Kurt tripped off sickening sweet.

"Cute," Brad ground his teeth over the word.

"I know," Kurt sassed casually, going back to ignoring him. He looked across the classroom and saw that Sebastian was currently explaining some things to Jeff and the blonde was nodding along seriously, taking notes. He looked relaxed and happy and that made sharing the same air as the wretch next to him that much easier to swallow.

"What's he like in bed?"

Kurt lost a breath somewhere and choked on it a second later, anger and indignation boiling up in him. "Okay, listen Craig's list. You are beyond creepy and you need to find a new hobby other than obsessing over my Dom," he spat seriously, mouth a tight line. He had to fight hard not to yell it… or claw his eyes out.

"He's slept with people before… you know that right," Brad carried on relentlessly, sharp eyes discerning his every move for something to use against him.

He found his target.

Yes, Kurt knew that Blaine had slept with people before him. It was always just an elusive, uncomfortable detail in the back of Kurt's head. He didn't hate or really begrudge the experience for Blaine, after all he was a twenty two year old man, not an eighteen year old teenager, but Brad was twisting things in his head again.

The sub leaned in. "All that experience must be hard to live up to. What's your secret, Hummel? Learn some special skills back in the slums?"

"Not everyone is as disgusting as you," Kurt retorted, feeling his whole face flush vividly with the depth of his anger.

Don't listen. He's only trying to get a rise out of you.

Brad grinned slowly. "Oh what's this? Virgin, Hummel? What a shocker!"

"Slut, Brad? Not a surprise," he fired back just as the bell rang to signal the end of the lesson. He gathered up his things quickly not caring that they hadn't even discussed the project. If he knew Brad then the sub wasn't going to just not do anything and ruin his grade point average so at least he was safe from getting a shit mark on it.

He stalked over to Jeff and put on his game face. He wasn't going to let Brad get to him like last time.

"You okay, Kurt?" Sebastian asked, eyeing him first, then over to Brad suspiciously.

"Nothing I couldn't handle," he declared, not knowing who exactly he was convincing.
Corrine came strutting out of their walk in closest- a must have apparently when they were apartment searching- in her third outfit of the day and fifth pair of heels.

It wasn't that David didn't enjoy watching all that hotness, it was the fact that it was getting him hot and there was not enough time to fix that kind of problem. They were already late for meeting their parents at the restaurant for dinner as it was.

"What about these?" she asked, proffering her leg and pointing her dainty toes in the red kitten heels with silver bows on the backs. Yes, he knew what kitten heels were after Corrine had threatened to bury one in his ass in one of their more memorable fights.

"Amazing, babe."

She groaned and pouted, hands going to her hips that were enticingly encased in a formfitting little black dress. "You said that about the last pair!"

David rose from his slump on their bed and approached her, hands sliding perfectly into the dip of her waist and then around and down towards her perky bum. It proved more of a distraction for him than her. She simply raised an unimpressed brow at his unsubtle attempts at manhandling her.

"That's because you could wear a paper bag and still be the sexiest little thing to walk to planet," he purred at her, the honesty in the tone giving it its raw edge. He ducked down to place a light kiss against the corner of her mouth.

She seemed to melt a little into that before she straightened once more.

"Are you comparing my outfit to a paper bag?" she asked deadpan and David winced before pulling back incrementally knowing he had to tread very carefully here.
"No," he drew out slowly, hoping to placate her.

Her brows drew down. "David…"

"Not gonna concentrate on the sexy part are we, babe?" he sighed and she suddenly smirked, full red lips revealing bright white teeth.

She smoothed her hands over his suit jacket lapels and then up over his shoulders. "I guess you're just gonna have to make it up to me, sir," she demurred, fluttering those long lashes, her tongue rolling over the address obscenely.

She knew exactly what she was doing and fuck if it didn't turn him on every damn time. He loved her fire. When she pushed a little, fought a little and stood her ground against him. Status aside, he always considered her his equal. They may have different roles in the relationship, might need different things from one another, but David had always been attracted to the fact that she just didn't take his shit. She was multifaceted like a diamond, completely submissive one second then a lioness the next, but completely beautiful on all her sides and David had never thought to find someone so perfect.

"We have reservations, sweetness," David reminded her before leaning into her ear. "But we'll see about rewards when we get home, hm?"

She full body shivered and David almost said screw it and took her to bed there and then… it was only the serious tone of his mother's voice over the phone when she'd called yesterday to arrange the meet up with both his and Corrine's parents that stopped him, however. Something big was happening and the Dominant in him demanded to know what. If it would affect his sub in any way. If he could help his family.

He pecked his girl on the cheek and pulled back, tapping her cute bum once for good measure. "Go grab a purse and I'll get your coat for you."

She only looked disappointed at the lack of contact for a second before she shrugged it off and smiled at him brightly raising on her toes, because she still didn't reach his head height even in heels, to kiss him full on the mouth. Wiping away the small transfer of lipstick with her thumb she bounded back into her wonderland boutique.

"And the first one you chose you have to stick with, sweetness," he called the command to her gently. His mother was going to lecture him as it was, he'd rather not push the boundaries all the way out and turn up at dessert. She'd probably turn him over her knee, Dom and adult regardless.

"Babe," she whined and he rolled his eyes.

"You heard me, Corrine," he stated firmly, though there was a fond grin and chuckle working at his throat as he headed for the hall closet.

He could practically hear Corrine pout again and he smirked, the curiosity of what his parents were so secretive about still making him squirm in anticipation.

He just hoped it wasn't something bad.

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Saturday
"Nick, sweetheart, do you think you could stop moping for long enough to set the table?" Lucy asked with a smirk as she eyed her son who sat across from her on a stool at the kitchen island.

He’d dropped by for their traditional Saturday family lunch, his usually bright smile replaced with a mean pout and bright eyes darkened and downturned. He’d proceeded to trudge about the house for hours, sighing forlornly like a maiden from a romance novel until he decided he had nothing to do and just slumped into his chair watching his mom prepare their lunch.

"I'm not moping," he denied as he took the offered plates and carried them to the table, the usual spring in his step almost entirely gone.

"Sure you're not," she stated dryly, rolling her eyes fondly at his antics. "Nick, baby, let me tell you something… you can't fool a mother, especially not your mother. Now what's gotten into you?" she asked setting a bowl of salad on the table and looking at her son as he tried to find an excuse before his shoulders dropped and he sighed heavily.

"Jeff went home for a couple of days."

She raised an eyebrow. "That's not against the law, baby. He's spending time with his family."

"I know," he whined. "It's just… I… I miss him," he admitted quietly, staring down at table top resolutely as his face tinged a little pink and she chuckled at him, shaking her head.

"He'll be back tomorrow night, I'm sure you'll survive," she teased and he scowled at her.

"Yeah, but he left Thursday night. I didn't know he had no classes this Friday because of some science fair thing... again... seriously how many of those could you possibly need in high school!?"

"Are you getting close to a point, dear?"

"I brought his hot chocolate and wrote his joke and he wasn't there," he whined and cringed at his own voice as he realized he sounded like Blaine and Ryan put together. The two people he'd mocked incessantly over acting like this; he'd laughed at them and found them ridiculous… But now he missed his blonde angel and he couldn't think of a better way to show it but to whine, maturity be damned. Blaine and Ryan were onto something, clearly.

His mother stared at him with an unsure expression on her face all of a sudden and he looked up at her in surprise.

"What?" he asked and she pulled his hand to get him to sit down next to her.

"Nick… are you sure you're not pushing him? Are you sure you're giving him the space and the time he needs?" she asked gently and he gaped, full on jaw dropping down to his toes.

"Mom… I… of course I am! I'd never do anything… ANYTHING to hurt him, god… I... I love him too much to do that," he said, sincerity lighting his every word and it was strange, he knew he loved Jeff, was surer of the feeling every day, but admitting it out loud was always freeing and disappointing in a way he didn't expect. He wanted to be saying it to Jeff… not everyone else.

His mother she smiled sadly at him.

"I know, darling, I just had to make sure. His parents are afraid for him and I don't want them to have the reason to be… not when it comes to you," she explained cautiously and he frowned.
"His parents? How do you know them?" he asked and she turned to look at her husband who walked in on their conversation just in time to realize where it was going.

Together they tuned him into their plans and he sat there, shocked and disbelieving and proud.

"I… I want in… I want to help," he demanded on an excited exhale and they smiled.

"We figured you might say that. Because of Jeff, yes?" Andree asked his son and he nodded.

"Mostly. I know it's the right thing to do, but I can't lie and say he isn't the main reason. He's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen and he's so broken dad, so scared and hurt and I can't… I can't stand it… even if he's never mine. Even if he chooses someone else… if that makes him whole again… I'll be happy to know I at least made his world a little bit better," he said and they hugged him, praying that he ended up being the one staying by Jeff's side after he was done gluing the shattered pieces of the young sub together.

"They could have told us over the phone," Sebastian scowled at their parents as he sat next to Dave on the couch, the open layout of their apartment allowing them to snuggle in the living room while being able to see into the kitchen at the same time.

Two sets of parents were flitting around the modern looking kitchen, reheating piles of food they dragged with them to their apartment and pouring drinks.

"You're just mad because you had to get out of bed on a Saturday," Dave teased him with a soft tickle under his ribs and the sub swatted his hand, scowl deepening dangerously as he crossed his arms over his chest.
Sebastian was religious about his Saturdays. As opposed to every other day where he was always on full tilt Saturday’s he refused to get out of bed unless he had to go to the bathroom or eat something and demanded that Dave stay with him. The Dom knew that underneath all the crass innuendos he used to entice him his sub just wanted him to stay close and hold him, to have a day dedicated just to them in a way Sebastian wouldn’t let himself be seen in public.

"I was warm. And comfortable," he huffed petulantly and turned a devious look at his Dom leaning in and brushing his ear with his lips. "And horny."

"Babe..." Dave warned him, tightening the hold of his fingers on his thigh as he felt his pulse speed up from the growl in his subs voice.

"I'm just saying. I had a nice dream. You were holding me up against a wall and you were wearing that black shirt I love so much on you and…" He was cut off with a forceful kiss as Dave slanted their lips together, swallowing a whimper the sub would deny with his last breath. Threading his fingers through styled hair Dave tipped Sebastian's head back and pulled back from the kiss enough to be able to speak, stealing breath from between trembling lips.

"You know very well you're not supposed to make me hard in front of our parents. After they're gone, you'll be given five minutes to undress and settle yourself onto the bed. I will do what I please with you, but you won't come. Not until I decide you have learned your lesson," he growled into his mouth feeling that lithe body he worshiped tremble next to him, eyes glassy and reminding Dave of how beautifully his he was every time he fell into subspace.

It surprised him, the first time it happened.

He'd read of the couples who never reached it; never got to the point where the sub's body succumbed completely and his mind shut off so it wasn’t something he was expecting to happen without some considerable forethought and planning on his part.

They were making love, Sebastian's hands tied to the bedposts, his eyes covered and lips curling around delicious whimpers that made Dave crazy.

He praised him, thrust into him, kissed him, bit his skin and marked him and all of a sudden his sub wasn't there anymore. The body under him was pliant, stripes of come painting his stomach as his head lolled to the side, his hands stopping the thrashing they did against his restraints.

Dave had paused in confusion, scared out of his mind before realization dawned on him and he pulled out of his sub, curling next to him, releasing his hands and pulling the blindfold off his eyes before scooping him into his arms and keeping him warm as he waited for him to come back.

He drifted back half an hour later, trembling and a little bit scared but smiling and happy and more adorable than he had ever been when he curled up under Dave's arm, exhausted. It was one of Dave's happiest memories and the look his sub was giving him now reminded him strongly of his boy so far gone because of him. He wanted to just strip him bare and make it happen again and again and again.

He tightened his hold on Sebastian's hair making the sub gasp when he heard a cough coming from behind them. They jumped and sprang apart, finding their parents smirking at them from the kitchen.

"Lunch is ready, boys," Dominic said pointedly and the two of them stood up, trying to cover up the signs of how lost they were in each other as they took their seats at the table and piled food onto their plates to avert the attention from their flustered faces.
"Boys, there's a reason we invaded your ‘sacred Saturday’," Paul began after getting a nod from Dominic, putting air quotes around it teasingly.

"We figured," Dave said cutting up some chicken and Sebastian tilted his head curiously, green eyes flicking from his parents to Dave's in question.

"We met with Dana Anderson a few days ago. We came to some conclusions and decisions and we decided we wanted the kids in the know as well since you’re all old enough," Paul said and Sebastian chuckled, twirling his fork through his fingers.

"You sound like you killed someone and you need us to help you hide the body. You should know better, dad," he teased and their parents laughed.

"No. This is a good thing. Or it will be if it works," he stated and Dave rolled his eyes.

"Maybe while we're still young?"

Paul nodded, taking the light censure as his due for beating around the bush. He took a deep breath before filling them in with the information of their meeting and their plans. Both boys sat shocked in the aftermath, but Dave recovered faster with the beginnings of a blinding smile.

"That is so badass. I want in," he said certainly, the sound of his voice pulling Sebastian out of his stupor. This was unprecedented, this was going to shake the not only their little bubble of a Circle but the country as well.

"Sebastian?" Paul asked, eyeing him uncertainly for just a moment.

"What mister classy over here said," he finally declared. He always liked to mix things up.

Sunday

"Dad? Are you in here?"

Miriam peeked through the door of her dad's office, frowning when she found it empty and quiet. Her father rarely left his desk during office hours in case he was needed and not finding him there, leaning above a stack of papers and pushing his glasses up every minute or two, surprised her a lot. She pushed the door wide and walked in, looking left and right calling out for him again in case he was in the adjoined bathroom or the little nook where he kept his books and file cabinets.

"Dad?"

"In here!" she heard his voice coming from behind the wooden arch separating the main space of his office from the 'library'.

Smiling widely she walked towards it, clutching her brief case in her hand. She spotted him easily from his vantage point up on the ladder he used to reach the very top shelves and he glanced down at her distractedly, descending one step at a time.

"Hey, sweetie. What brings you here?" he asked as he hopped from the last rung, a heavy book in his hand and a coat of dust sticking to the sleeve of his blazer.

"Can't a girl drop by and visit her favourite dad?" she teased as she brushed the dust away from his
suit and smiled sweetly.

"She can, but she usually doesn't. It makes her only dad very sad sometimes," he joked with a mock pout and she stuck her tongue out at him.

"Yes... you're truly heartbroken." She rolled her eyes before poking him in the chest. "Admit that you use the fact that neither mom nor I are here to eat unhealthy snacks instead of a proper lunch. Which by the way... we're going to get... now," she said and he raised his hands in surrender, smiling bashfully at being called out on his workaholic tendencies.

"Fine by me. Lunch it is. Where'd you wanna go?" he asked her as he deposited the book on his desk and took his wallet and his cell phone out of his top drawer, placing them in his pocket and shrugging on his coat.

"How about Marcel's? I'm craving mushroom ravioli," she suggested bouncing on her toes towards the door and he side glanced her.

"That's oddly specific. Are you pregnant?" he asked and she stumbled ungracefully, hitting her elbow on the doorframe.

"What!? Dad, no... just... just no... ugh... stop talking," she stammered, blushing and glared when he chuckled, drawing her close with a hand around her shoulder. He was still laughing like a mad man as they walked around the corner from her dad’s office towards the tiny little family run Italian restaurant they’d always preferred to frequent. It's rather weird location, in the backyard of a building two blocks from Jack's office, made sure that reservations weren't necessary because not many people knew about it. Those who did know however, came back all the time because the space was cozy and warm, the staff friendly and polite and the food was to die for.
They were seated quickly and had placed their orders within minutes, such regulars that they didn’t need to glance at the menu. They were sipping their drinks as they waited for their food to come when Jack decided to cut the polite small talk of ‘How’s Wes’, ‘How’s school’, ‘What was going on at the office’ and get right into it.

"Okay, honey, not that I don't love that you came to drag me out for a proper lunch and that I get to spend some time with you, but you've been jumpy and checking that briefcase is still by your foot since we sat down here, so why don't you tell me what's been bothering you?" he asked with a pointed look at how she was slightly hunched over, one foot wrapped around edge of it to be sure of its continued presence.

She grimaced a smile with a blush on her face. "Am I that obvious?" she said.

He took her hand across the table and smoothed his rough fingers over her knuckles. "I'm your dad. I know every shift and every flicker of emotion on your face and have known them ever since you were a little brat hanging around under my desk while I tried to work.” He laughed fondly at the memory and Miriam smiled too. Then he titled his head at her. “Is there something wrong? Are you ill? Is it Wes? Do I need to kick his ass, because I will, you know. Hikaru's son or not I'll kick him so hard his grandchildren will have bruised asses and…"

"Dad... dad, stop... stop... I'm fine. I'm not ill and Wes is as perfect of a Dom as he was the first day we met so no ass kicking and no bruising the non-existent grandchildren for now, okay?" she cut him off, shaking her head and giggling into her glass of orange juice.

"Oh, good. I'm not much of a fighter anyway," he said and she snorted her agreement; taking in his light brown, floppy hair, gentle face with sweet brown eyes, slim stature that was pretty soft around the edges and kind of clumsy disposition. He was every inch the working scholar, an amazing, gentle Dom too, but he had a point. He wouldn't stand a chance in a fight.

Jack patted her hand before drawing his back, taking his napkin up and spreading it over his lap and arranging his cutlery and glass, patiently waiting for whenever she was ready. She smiled at his exaggerated actions but willingly took a deep breath and twitched her foot against the briefcase at her feet.

"Um... okay, so lately I've been thinking about something," she began and Jack glanced up attentively. “You know I'm trying to write my master's thesis and base it on something that's going to be applicable in real life, not just a good theory.”

He nodded.

“So... I developed this theory of money distribution and flow and the way I see it, it's pretty manageable to fill the gap between social classes and make the money issues of the lower classes almost non-existent. At least within our particular Circle that is. Applying it on a wider scale would take quite a bit more research and number crunching," she started and he looked at her fascinated by the young girl he had, somehow, helped create. Fierce and driven and intelligent, he was so proud of who she was.

"Do you have the draft of this theory? Do you mind if I take a look?" he asked and she paused for a second before she lifted her briefcase, unclipped it and brought out a light blue binder filled with flow charts, diagrams and formulas. She set the empty briefcase aside and clutched at the papers in sweaty, nervous hands before handing them over.
Jack slipped his glasses on and began to peruse the documents analytically.

Miriam chewed on her lip and tapped her foot as she watched him, trying to discern the micro expressions on his face to no avail. "Now I know it's not finished and it's not tested, but just… just tell me if it's worth working on?" she asked anxiously and he catalogued the ideas she had into his mind, financial analyst coming out to play.

Invest in schools, availability for loans as a start-up for small businesses, award scholarships for higher education, built infrastructure via hiring the people from lower casts to enable them to make money while at the same time improving their own living conditions and so on and so on…

He could tell the work was just theory at this point with a lot of speculation thrown in with some of the facts, but what got to him was how meticulous she was, how detail oriented and precise. He couldn't find a single hole in her theory so far that would crash the whole thing outright. The numbers were there but she would need help from experienced people to upgrade and turn theory into an applicable model of a well-functioning system. He was floored. From where he stood his daughter, singlehandedly, had created a workable basis for their future.

"Miriam…" he started but she groaned.

"Did I mess it up… I triple checked everything to coincide with the known theory and it was hard because nobody ever cared about doing this and what is up with that, dad? Why did no one ever try to make it better… and fine, maybe I messed up, but at least I tried to think of something and-"

"And you made it," he cut her off and she blinked in confusion for a moment before his words got to her.

"What?" she breathed out and he smiled proudly.

"You did it, princess. This… Miriam this is a work of a team of experienced, supernaturally intelligent business people that you managed to do all by yourself and I can't tell you how proud I am," he praised, maybe going over the top a little, but he was just so god damned proud of her!

She felt her cheeks redden, her mind immediately going to Wes and how she couldn't wait to tell him she actually did it.

"Really?" she had to check again and her dad nodded, a thought coming to mind.

"Really. Do you mind… would you mind if I show this to Dana and a few other people I trust?" he asked and she nodded, but her face was turning curious until her dad filled her in on the meeting they had and the plans they outlined; plans that would now include her genius theory if she agreed to it.

"Agree? Of course I agree! I never meant for this to remain just ink on paper. I want to see the world change for the better and if my idea helps then by all means show it to whoever you'd like. I've got other things I want to work on while you have that," she stated and clapped her hands happily.

"Really? What have you came up with now?" he asked at the same time the waiter came back with their food and they both dug in with appetite.

"I want to write an article for my blog and the Dalton newspaper," she answered, blowing on her ravioli to cool them down.

"About?" he prompted twirling his spaghetti onto his fork.

"I met this amazing girl the other day. She's a friend of Kurt's… you know Kurt, Blaine's sub… and
she said that she had a Dom and they were moving in together. They’re in love and clearly happy together, but she had accepted the fact that they would never truly bond because they had no money for it. And it made me so sad because what if it were Wes and me? So I called them and asked if they would be willing to meet with me and answer a few questions for the article. I want to raise awareness," she said and he nodded.

"It's a good idea, for sure. You think they'll agree?" he asked and she shrugged sipping her juice.

"Let's hope so," she murmured and they continued eating their lunch in comfortable silence, heads swimming with plans and anticipation of the fight ahead of them.

Coming back to school after spending the weekend at home felt more like coming back from outer space to Jeff as he traversed the semi full hallways from his room to the small cafe to get some tea before settling down for the night; his throat feeling slightly itchy.

He was taking in the gentle noise that wasn't intolerable, but was still inseparable from the gigantic school he now attended. There were always people bustling in the hallways, screaming at one another from their rooms, playing videogames in the common room or listening to music with their doors ajar so the sound drifted outside.

It had unnerved him at first being in the constant presence of so many people. So much noise, so many voices and so many possibilities for him to rile someone up without even realizing it and to get hurt. Slowly he got used to it and the never ending chatter became comforting in the middle of the night when he would wake up from a nightmare.

Dalton was his dream for such a long time and it seemed almost unreal that it was proving to be exactly what he had always hoped for. Like a living breathing thing, offering to be his friend and keeping him safe with its thick walls and fences locked at night.

Which is why talking to his parents over the last few days made him anxious… scared.

They were talking about changing the world, about making it better, but to him this was better than where he'd come from. Dalton and the way it was run and the people here. Sure there were a few individuals that weren't as welcoming or understanding as the majority, but you were going to get that in any society that wasn't some kind of utopia. But they were talking about changing that. Uprooting the new routine and life he'd settled into here and that was terrifying. He was fine where he was right now. A little bit jaded, a lot closed off and scared, but never hurt, never touched the way he didn't want to, never humiliated… and they would change it.

Logically he knew that this was necessary.

This was recognizing the needs of all of the people instead of just superficially enabling the upper class. They weren't striving for that elusive perfection anymore that the rich were so dead set on achieving, because really, there was no such thing. People's perceptions of perfect were so vastly diverse that it was quite impossible to cater to everyone's ideal and so time and money and resources were wasted when it could really be making a difference.

But logic wasn't what ruled him most of the time, he was built on tattered emotion and abused feelings.
Jeff stopped by the window in the hallway and opened up one to inhale some fresh evening air feeling the threat of a panic attack shake his body. He felt like a sailor that set out to the open sea when the water was still as glass and just when he started to enjoy, the storm crashed in and capsized him.

He wanted a better world; for his friends, his parents, his loved ones, Nick…

But for him… this world was enough. He understood this world, he knew who he was here, he knew the things he could have and the ones he couldn't. He trained, conditioned himself, to get used to this world and he didn't know if he had it in him to get used to another one… a different one. He was terrified of tomorrow and what it would bring.

The chill air from outside was hitting him in the face and his skin was prickling when he suddenly heard the voice that made his entire body warm again and he turned slowly.

"Hey, Jeff. You're back! I missed you while you… whoa… Jeff... angel, what's happening?" Nick was positively giddy when he saw the shock of platinum blonde hair in the hallway and he rushed to greet the other boy, but when he turned around it was like someone punched him in the gut.

Jeff's cheeks were pale and sunken, his eyes rimmed with purplish shadow and there was this look of sheer panic on his face that almost made him sick when the blonde refused to answer.

"Jeff… come on tell me what's happening and maybe I can help…I can't stand to see you like this sweetheart," Nick pleaded but Jeff just shook his head and wrapped his arms around his own body, as if he was trying to stop the shivers from tearing him apart completely.

He wanted to let Nick make it better, he wanted him to make it all go away and to make him new and shiny and okay again, but there was no way for that to happen so he kept his head down, quiet and trembling.

He was trying to think of something to say to turn the attention away from what he was feeling, but before he could there were arms around him and his mind kicked into overdrive; body tensing instinctively, heart rate spiking and breathing labouring.

He used to hold him like that in front of people; to show them that he owned him, that he controlled him. And he would tighten the grip just like that every time he thought someone else was watching him, or when he thought Jeff was watching someone else; embrace tight and painful, constricting, suffocating and sending a message to Jeff.

You're mine.

I own you.

I control you.

Nobody else will want you.

Nobody else will ever have you but me.

Jeff hated feeling like that. Hated the toxic sludge it seemed to layer him in inside and out. Hated the feeling of those arms around him again, keeping him caged and owned.

He couldn't breathe.

Not again, his tattered soul begged him. Please.
Panic rushing through his mind he ripped his body away from the one suffocating him and pried the vice like hands away from himself, backing up on shaky legs.

"I…"

_Get something to say, pet? _The taunting, vicious echo in his head simpered at him, taking him back to all those times he tried to fight, tried to run…

"Jeff?" Nick asked concerned.

_You know better than to backtalk me. I own you!_

"I don't belong to you," he whispered barely audible, eyes unseeing as he got lost in his own head.

_I don't think I heard you right, pet. SPEAK UP!_

"I don't belong to you!" he repeated, nearly a shout as he crashed back to the now, quivering violently but ready to fight for his right to belong to himself and himself only.

Without looking up he turned around and fled towards his room like the devil was on his heels leaving behind a pair of warm, chocolate brown eyes, filled to the brim with silent tears and hands clutched into fists at the sides of a shaking body.

Nick messed up.

The sinking hollow pit in his stomach said that without words, but oh fuck he'd messed up so badly, even though he'd promised that he wouldn't and he had no idea how to fix it now.

_Shit… shit, shit, shit!_

His head was spinning with the enormity of what he'd just done.

He'd hurt him… he'd made him scared, he'd made him feel threatened and it pained him to even think that he was the one responsible, but the real twist to the knife was that he _knew_ it was him. He'd crossed clear boundaries letting himself act on a spur of the moment instinct and the fact that he missed the sub so god damned much, instead of thinking it through and now Jeff was hiding from him, terrified.

He wasn't so self-involved to think that it was all him. That sorry excuse for a Dom had done the damage long before he showed up, but Nick had just reopened the old wound.

He wanted to kick both of their asses.

Pushing a hand through his hair he leaned back against a wall and slid down until he was sitting in the middle of the hallway, fingers shaking and heart shattering at the thought of what he had broken without even trying to.

He wanted to run after him. God did he want to. He wanted to make this okay again. They were getting on so well lately, he had really thought they were making progress, he was making plans for them! It took one wrong decision, one _hug_ to bring it all crumbling down.

_Talk to him_, the Dom in him was practically demanding… but he couldn't. Jeff wouldn't listen to him right now and no matter how much it ached and burned under his skin he had to respect his space. Not doing that was what got him into this mess in the first place.

_Would he forgive him? Would he let him close again? Or was that it?_
"For the last time, Trent, we're not doing Eminem!" Wes growled at the Dom.

"But he's sick!" was argued back and Wes rolled his eyes.

"I'm sure the judges would really appreciate our *singing* voices when we're censoring every other word," Wes said dryly.

"He doesn't swear that much," he pouted.

"Fuck off he doesn't," David grinned trying to be clever and Wes smacked him in the chest.

"Ow! Nipple, dude!"

There was a few scattered chuckles across the room until Wes glared them down. None of them were taking this seriously enough… again! This was why they never got anywhere in competitions last year. They all said they wanted to compete, but when it came down to crunch time attention spans were likened to that of a bunch of goldfish, priorities were elsewhere and time grew short. He knew they all had busy lives, hell, he wasn't as invested in the Warblers as he probably should have been last year what with the studio really picking up, but he wasn't half-assing it this time. And neither were they if he could help it.

Sensing the impending rant Blaine cleared his throat. "How about a group song from our wheelhouse… Maroon 5, Katy Perry, Pink?"

"We can't be predictable," Sebastian disagreed from the window seat, the gloomy fall day blustering behind him through the glass. "We need to mix it up if we want to win, they would have done their homework on us if they're not totally incompetent."

"Not everyone's an evil mastermind like you," Nick joked weakly and Sebastian rolled his eyes dismissively at him; the fuck you silently implicit of course.

Their resident comedian was not nearly as bright today as he usually was and it didn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that it had everything to do with a certain blonde sub curled up into Kurt's side trying to be as small as possible.

Jeff had been stuck to Kurt like glue the whole day, clearly upset and troubled, but silent in his sadness, simply seeking out the physical comfort of his best friend. Blaine had stepped back to make room. There was no way he was telling Jeff to get lost, he'd have to be completely unfeeling for that to happen and so when practice rolled around Blaine had left the two on one couch and had taken up with his own sorry looking best friend.

He hoped this sudden rift between the pair wasn't permanent. They all knew there was going to be bumps in the road for them and they looked like they had been making leaps and bounds of progress before this.

*What had gone wrong?*
"I'm here! What did I miss?" Ryan came bursting through the door, out of breathe and phone clutched in his hand, knocking Blaine from his own head.

"The locker rooms are on the other side of the building, Ry, think you took a wrong turn somewhere," Trent snorted as a few of them looked at the built jock in confusion.

"I wasn’t at practise today. Thad's sick and didn't want to miss anything," Ryan shrugged closing the door behind him and taking the spare seat next to Kurt, flashing him a smile which the sub returned.

"So he sent you in his place or you volunteered?" David asked carefully, face suspiciously neutral.

"Does it matter?" Jon sniggered. "He's still whipped either way."

There was another round of laughter and Ryan scowled at them… as did most of the subs in the room other than Sebastian who just looked bored as usual.

"I think it's sweet," Kurt spoke up squeezing Ryan's arm in support, trying not to dislodge Jeff's head too much from the perch on his shoulder. The Dom straightened up under the compliment with a big grin.

"Thanks, Kurt. You're my new favourite," he declared and a few of them fake cried, faux wounded.

There was a growl across from them and the pair glanced up to see Blaine glaring at the point of contact between them. Kurt rolled his eyes but removed the hand. When they were bonded properly this possessive jealousy wouldn't be as bad he was told, but until then Kurt wasn't going to provoke it no matter how hot Blaine looked all broody and dark.

"Maybe we should forget about Sectionals for now and concentrate on something else?" Kurt suggested trying to get his wayward mind and teenage hormones back on track. "We've got the charity night coming up that I wanted to talk to everyone about."

"And the Winter Formal," David chipped in tapping on his scattered notes.

"No more Christmas songs, I beg of you!" Trent groaned, slouching down in his seat and throwing his hands up. "We do that every year."

"That's because it's the Winter Formal," Wes sighed, exaggerating the words for him like he was five.

"I know what it means," Trent huffed, pouting when everyone laughed at him. "I just think it's boring."

"Thad likes Christmas songs," Ryan chipped in not because he wanted to be helpful, but because he just wanted to talk about his sub.

"We'll do a mix… some season appropriate choices and we'll audition a few spots," Wes decided and David nodded his agreement. "Ryan, can you text Thad and ask, we need a full council vote before we put it to everyone else."

"Already ahead of you," the jock said tapping at his phone. The reply was almost immediate. "He said yes… oh and that he wants, Let It Snow. That's his favourite."

"We know," they all said in unison, other than Kurt and Jeff, and Ryan just simply raised his brows at them.
"Warblers?" Wes asked and they all chorused their consensus. Wes banged his gavel with relish. "Okay. Formal is in three weeks so we'll audition on Thursday to avoid clashes with football games and extra practices. Now, Kurt, if you want to take the floor?"

The sub cleared his throat and smiled at them. "Well, basically I've gone through what you guys usually do for the charity night with Blaine and decided to keep the hour set length the same but basically you're gonna be able to sing whatever you want. It'll be after the art show and the fashion show and basically just a good way to keep people happy and high energy as we wrap the evening up so you can go a little wild, no restrictions."

There was a chorus of claps and cheers that followed.

"Hallelujah!"

"You rock, Kurt!"

Kurt laughed and ducked his head before looking at Wes again after a proud, reassuring nod and beam from Blaine. "So maybe we can hold the charity night auditions with the formals?"

David noted it down as Wes nodded. "The council will discuss the number of solo, duet and group spots and text you all over tomorrow so you have a few days to prepare something."

"That just leaves us with Sectionals after Christmas," Blaine prompted.

"These auditions might be a good way to decide on songs and partners," Nick suggested absently, his eyes were firmly on Jeff who had his fixed on his own lap.

"A good point," Wes conceded grudgingly.

David clapped his hands. "Okay, so how about we do some actual singing!"

They all sat and stood more attentively at that suggestion as David began to lead them through their warm up… even Ryan tried to join in much to everyone's distress and amusement.

The only one that didn't open their mouths was a certain blonde sub.

Miriam was already sipping her coffee when she turned around at the sound of the doorbell jingling of the quaint coffee shop next to the mall. She saw Mercedes walk in donned in tight, worn black jeans and a purple top with a confident, good looking, blonde man similarly dressed in denims and a green stretched out Henley that could be no one but her Dom, Sam Evans.

She'd spoke to him on the phone when they arranged the meeting and he seemed very cheerful and polite, if a little wary. She had told them parts of what she would need from them, but she'd kept the bulk of the details to herself, firmly believing that some things were better discussed in person then over the phone.

She had a really good feeling about this when they finally saw her and headed her way.

"Hi, Miriam. This is Sam, my Dom," Mercedes introduced them when they reached her table, smiling at Miriam a little shyly and Miriam felt her nerves calm as she shook the blonde's man hand and received a warm, friendly smile from him as well.
"Nice to meet you," he said. His voice was so obviously Dominant, but at the same time reassuring and calm. It created a nice environment that Miriam could relax into.

"You too. Please, take a seat, I'll go get a refill since I've been sitting here a while. What are you drinking? It's on me since I dragged you out here on a weeknight," she tried to pass her offer to pay as a common courtesy as she knew they couldn't afford to waste money on coffee shops. She would have travelled closer to them, but there wasn't any coffee shops or really any type of establishment in Lima built and sustained for leisure. This place had been Mercedes idea since she knew the location from when she came to visit Kurt.

"Oh, you don't have to do that," Sam objected as he pushed in Mercedes chair for her, but Miriam shook her head.

"You're helping me get my degree. Trust me a coffee is the least I can give you back," she said reassuringly with a sincere smile.

He nodded, gesturing for Mercedes to order what she wanted, wrapping his arm around the back of her chair once he'd taken his seat too. "What's it gonna be, pretty girl?"

Mercedes melted into his arms for a moment leaving Miriam with a sudden urge to scream at the world for how unfair it was that they couldn't seal their bond when they fit so well together. Suddenly she wanted Wes by her side so she slid her fingers around her neck to touch the thin golden chain with a pendant shaped like a dove. Wes had given it to her and he wore the same one around his own neck. He told her to touch it and think of him whenever she needed comfort and that he'd know she thought of him.

She never believed in telepathy, way too analytic for that, but it still gave her the comfort she needed as she walked over to the bar and ordered their drinks along with a plate of biscuits. The place wasn’t really bust so soon she was sitting back down at the table to talk to the lovely couple.

"So, um… you must be wondering why exactly I called you," she started carefully and the couple exchanged a look before nodding.

"We understood that this would be some sort of an interview, but you didn't really mention what for so maybe you could explain it a bit better before we decide what to do?" Sam suggested and his voice was polite, stoic and curious at the same time.

"Absolutely. Well, here's what's happening, or well at least what I'm allowed to tell you at this point in time. Some of the more powerful Dom's in our Circle are rebelling against the system as it is right now. About time if you ask me. They have big plans and things will soon be put in motion to better our corner of the world and while I can't tell you more than that, because it's still not public, I can tell you I have full faith the idea and the people behind it. One of them is me actually. And that's the part I can talk about. I'm the editor of the newspapers at Dalton as well as a decently recognized political-slash-financial blogger. I want to raise awareness of how hard it is to live 'on the other side'," she explained, nimble fingers drawing quotation marks in the air elegantly.

"How do you plan to do that?" Sam asked her pulling his coffee closer to him and she could tell by their expressions they were at the very least intrigued by what she was saying.

"Well, I've already taken some steps to make sure the public knew what my opinion of the inequality we live in is. I've written critiques of the high society and also turned my master's thesis into a project on creating a system where money would be fluctuating and distributing equally towards the infrastructures within both 'classes'."
The two stared at her with furrowed brows, obviously trying to keep up and convert what she was saying into something relatable in their minds.

Miriam cut to the point of why they were there. “I would like my next step to be an interview with someone who’s been through the struggles and the downsides. I want to show the world that love is being tortured and extinguished because of the inequality. I would, naturally, protect your identities, no names, no way for people to reach you unless you want them to. Just my questions and your honest answers to them,” she told them passionately and Sam frowned while Mercedes bit her lip and looked down.

"So, um… let me get this straight. Powerful Doms are rioting, you're rioting and you want us to help you riot?” Sam asked, eyebrows rising and Mercedes glared at him, catching him in the ribs with her elbow.

"God Sam, it's not one of your fantasy novels. They could actually be changing the world with this. Right? That’s what you’re saying you want to do? I want to help,” she said in a single breath.

"No actually, he's right. Simply put, there is a riot coming our way and I want to be a part of it. With your help.”

Sam beamed.

"See… riots," he said like he had just announced he had won a Nobel Prize and Mercedes couldn't help but grin and shake her head at the other girl at her Dom’s antics.

"So this interview, what would we talk about?” Sam asked after his pride ebbed slightly and Miriam took out a notebook from her bag.

"We'd start off with some basic information on the two of you, like when did you meet and things like that, then we'd talk about how it feels like to be in a relationship like that, knowing you can't bond… and finally we'd discuss your opinions on the current situation and what needs to be changed. Basically I want to allow the world to compare your bond to their own, or those around them and realize that they are exactly the same and yet they don't get the same happy ending,” she stated and Mercedes felt her eyes tear up at hearing it stated so bluntly.

She wanted so desperately to show the world how worthy her love for Sam was of a proper bond and she’d resigned herself to that never happening. Come to peace with it because there was no way for her to do it… until now.

"I want to do it," she breathed turning to face Sam who still looked apprehensive.

"Are you going to interview another couple with the same questions? A rich one?” he asked and Miriam's lips parted, forehead creasing in thought.

"I… I actually haven't thought of that, but it's an amazing idea. Like a comparison between two worlds that are actually almost the same. Do you mind if I use that?” she said thoughtfully and wrote the idea down inside her notebook after his confirming nod, thinking about who she could call.

It would have to be a fully bonded, long term, stable couple.

Excluding herself and Wes, it left Thad and Ryan, David and Corrine and Dave and Seb but she figured the last couple wasn't a representative case since Dave wasn't born into wealth so he wasn't a typical 'rich Dom'.

She figured she would have to think about whom of the other two couples would work better and
she flipped her notebook back onto the page with outlined questions as the couple in front of her discussed in silence what their final answer would be.

She knew she had Mercedes on her side and if the look on Sam's face whenever he saw her was anything to go by, he was as smitten with her as Ryan was with Thad, which meant he'd never deny her anything.

As if on cue the blonde turned towards her and smiled.

"We'd be honoured to be a part of this, even if it helps just a little bit. When do we start?" he asked and Miriam almost bounced in excitement.

"Well we can start right now if you'd like and if at some point you feel like you want to stop, say the word and we'll pick it up another time. Sound good?" she asked and they both smiled.

"Sounds amazing," Mercedes said as she leaned into Sam and allowed him to answer the first couple of questions, consisting of how long were they together, how they met and trivial things like that before the questions got serious. Eventually Sam's gentle smile stretched into a frustrated line and Mercedes' excited voice quieted and dulled. Miriam knew it hurt them to talk about it and she hated making them relive the things that burned, but she could tell how proud they were of what they made for themselves and how much they loved each other.

Somewhere in between frowns, anger and spilt tears there was hope shining and Miriam knew they would endure and come out on top. As they wrapped up their meeting with all of the questions answers and written down, the hugs and the thank you's they gave her told her that they were fighters.

And those who fought always had a better chance of winning then those that stepped back or hid.

"I had an interesting conversation with Miriam today," Wes said dabbing at his lips with a light blue napkin and eyeing his dad and stepmom with a challenging smirk on his face.

He was having dinner at his parents tonight having dropped Miriam off at a coffee shop so she could interview Mercedes and Sam. He was planning on swinging back that way when she was done to pick her up, but it was the conversation that led to that journey that he was concentrating on right now. His little sister Lee was having a sleepover tonight at her best friend’s house and he was sad to miss her since he hadn’t seen her in about a week.
"Well, son… I find it concerning that you don't have interesting conversations with her every day," Hikaru said frowning disapprovingly, but Wes was determined not to let his dad’s goofing around sway him from his original topic of conversation.

He was pretty disappointed that they didn't mention a single thing to him about this revolution of theirs when everybody else seemed to know.

After his talk with Miriam he had called David and Corrine and they both already knew, Sebastian and Dave knew as well as Thad and Ryan. Nick was informed and though he couldn't get a hold of Kurt and Blaine he was sure they were pretty familiar with the information as well given who Blaine's parents were. So basically he was the only one who had no idea and it didn't sit well with him because usually, he was the one with all the latest information and he was the one who got to act all high and mighty for knowing something nobody else knew. It may be childish and petulant but that was his thing!

His dad took that change to gloat away from him and Wes was not happy. At. All.

"That is so funny, dad. Really… hilarious even… now, care to tell me why you kept it a secret?" he asked deadpan with a quirked brow and Hikaru sighed putting down his silverware.

"Wes, you're my son. I know you better than you think I know you and that is the reason I didn't tell you," Hikaru said simply before picking up his utensils again and resuming eating.

Wes frowned incredulously. "What's that supposed to mean?"

Tara giggled behind her palm watching the two of them bicker.

"It means that every parent has the right to decide when to tell their child something like this. If you were the first one to find out they’d all know within minutes because you like to gloat. And so we decided it was best to let you find out from your friends," Hikaru said and beamed like he was so amazingly proud of his idea he couldn't contain his glee.

"That's ridiculous. I don't gloat."
He did gloat, he'd admitted it to himself only seconds previously and he knew that flaw in his character pretty well, but it didn't mean it was okay for other people to point it out.

"Yes, you do."

"Maybe I wouldn't this time!"

"Yes, you would," his dad replied, completely relaxed.

"How can you be so sure?" Wes huffed, throwing his hands in the air in irritation.

"Like I said I know you better than you think. And that means that I know you're exactly like me," he winked playfully and Wes allowed himself to smile just a tiny bit.

"Really... so you're admitting you're a gloater as well?" he asked, needing to hear it outright to soothe his wounded pride.

"Oh, son… you've got so much to learn. I've been walking around the school for the past three days looking down at everyone, taking gloating to a whole new level," he bragged, sipping his water and winking at Tara who just rolled her eyes and continued to read her magazine to tune them out.

"Enlighten me please, oh Mighty Gloater," Wes sighed dramatically.

"Gladly. You see, son. You let them know what you know and then you gloat because you knew it before them. I, on the other hand, never even let them know. So I gloat because they never know what I know and they are aware of that fact," he puffed his chest proudly and Wes stilled for a moment before blinking.

"That is actually genius," he conceded and Hikaru smirked.

"Yes… yes it is."

"Blaine!" Kurt squeaked and giggled uncontrollably as the Dom dug fingers into his sides, trying to escape from his seat at the table but he was being boxed in.

"Come here then," Blaine laughed himself, ceasing for a second to let Kurt catch his breath. "I just wanted a kiss, lovely."

Incandescent eyes narrowed on him. "You never just want a kiss, sir."

Blaine grinned lavishly squeezing his waist in a different way, still playful but with a different edge to it. "Well quit being so sexy then and maybe I could control myself."

Kurt flushed a deeper red than he already was from the lack of oxygen. "Your parents are gonna be in with dinner any minute now. It sounded like they had something important to tell us," he tried to deflect.

Blaine wasn't having any of it.

He literally dragged Kurt across his seat and into his lap, surprising the sub again with just how strong and built he really was underneath his fitted red and black polo. It sent shivers down his spine
and settled a warmth low in his belly.

"Better," his Dom murmured pressing a kiss to the hinge of his jaw.

Kurt wrapped an arm loosely around Blaine's neck, tilting his neck into the attention which wasn't his fault. It was Blaine's. It was always Blaine and his stupid sexy ways that got him all hot and bothered and wanting to be naked like all the damn time! Which was shocking in itself seeing as Blaine had never seen him fully unclothed and with how much he loved his clothes, it took something major for him to want to be out of them.

He bit his lips as his Dom continued to suck and bite at his neck, to keep in just how much he liked it. How it was turning him on past a point he could stand and making him shift uncomfortably in Blaine's lap as he felt his cock fill out under his skinny jeans. A strong, familiar grip settled on the side of his neck and angled his face downwards and Kurt was gone by the point lips met once, twice and he groaned before the third; a hot slip of a sound that melted into Blaine's own pleased growl.

"I was thinking-" Blaine tried to say, but Kurt sealed his mouth over the words, tables turning.

"No thinking. Kissing," he stated sternly, but it was hard to kiss lips that were stretching into a smile.

He made an impatient noise in his throat, placing little nips, kitten licks and pecks at Blaine's mouth to try and get it to cooperate with him again. He missed it already. Eventually he decided to use a more effective tactic as well, rocking his hips back and forth on Blaine's groin, creating some much needed friction, all thoughts of being in the dining room flown free from his head.

It had the desired effect and Blaine moaned at the needy attention, grasping his hip tight before ducking that hand underneath his shirt and vest to palm at the overheated skin of his lower back; encouraging the movement.

"I really wanna touch you, beautiful boy. Wanna lay you out and fist your pretty cock until you come, would you like that?" he breathed hotly into his mouth and Kurt whimpered as the dirty words hit him hard, the visuals it was creating in his head making his cock twitch in interest. He could feel a small voice nagging from somewhere that sounded suspiciously like Brad, but he snuffed that spark before it could flame.

"Yes," he breathed, pulling back lips tingling to look into Blaine's pupil blown eyes.

He was sure that if Dana and Jared had not walked in at that very moment, Blaine would have whisked him upstairs and done all of that and more.

"Hands above waists at the dining table please," Dana scolded them, sounding slightly amused as she strutted into the room, hands covered in oven-mitts and toting a crockpot of chili between them.

Kurt yelped and scrambled back to his seat nearly upending their drinks in the process while Blaine simply pouted and glared petulantly at his mother.

"Now don't give me that face, it didn't work when you were five and it definitely doesn't work now," she smirked at him placing the crockery down and removing the mitts before giving Kurt a sympathetic glance. "Don't worry sweetie, I know he must have convinced you into it. It's all his fault."

Kurt actually cracked a smile and a laugh at that as Blaine gaped at her.

"It so was not all me! Kurt wants all up on this too you know," he stated indignantly waving a flailing hand at himself. Jared soon entered the room with a bowl of steamed rice in one hand, a
basket of bread rolls in the other. "Dad, tell mom that Kurt finds me sexy!"

Jared didn't even miss a step, only raised a brow at his son. "Listen to your mother."

Kurt was full on laughing behind his hand at this point and Dana had joined in. She practically skipped over to her sub and laid her ruby red lips against his cheek. He grinned proudly, even after all these years.

"Ugh, you guys suck so much," Blaine grumbled and Kurt cooed over him, running a hand through his curls.

He had gotten into the habit of washing the gel straight out from school when he was home because Kurt loved them so much. Sure it meant more trips to the hairdressers so they didn't get out of control, but it was so worth it to see that content, relaxed smile and feel those tapered fingers against his scalp.

His sub leaned into his ear. "I didn't think you minded if I sucked."

Blaine nearly lost his shit.

He choked on his own spit and turned wide eyes on his coy, innocent, *dirty mouthed*, boy. All fluttering lashes and deep blushes and lip biting and high expectant brows and mischievous, nervous eyes. God he was so turned on he didn't think he'd survive dinner. He might actually die.

"Ah, ah, ah!" Dana called to them, sliding into the seat Jared held out for her before he joined her at her side. The two snapped their heads the elders way reluctantly, sparks fizzling between them almost visibly. "None of that until you hear us out. We have some news."

Blaine paled. "You're not pregnant are you?"

Dana looked at him incredulously while Jared snorted beside her.

"Aww, a baby," Kurt gushed and Blaine's attention caught on just how lit up Kurt was on the subject. They hadn't really discussed the issue of kids of their own place yet, it was all there in abstract, blurry terms but seeing such solid proof that Kurt was pro-baby at least in some form did things to Blaine's heart.

*Don't get ahead of yourself, Anderson.*

"Why is it when a girl says she has important news to discuss, men always think babies?" Dana sighed exasperated.

"So there's not a baby?" Blaine asked for clarification.

"Not that I know of," Jared laughed and Dana rolled her eyes fondly at him. "It's actually to do with Dana and her position as Head."

"Do we need to do some kind of interview again?" Blaine asked as Kurt reached over to spoon out dinner for him and his Dom. It wasn't that he wasn't interested, it was just that he didn't really understand a lot about the dynamics of the whole campaigning for votes. His dad voted, he always liked Dana, but he was part of a very small minority. People in Lima didn't vote because usually they had nothing to vote for, nothing changed, nothing was aimed at them, for them, so they didn't bother.

His parents shared a glance. "Well, no. I'm not running this year."
Kurt cocked his head. "My dad will be disappointed. He voted for you every time."

Dana grinned. "That's great to hear. Your dad seems like a very fair man so to know I had his support means a lot… though I wish I'd come to my senses sooner."

"My lady," Jared soothed her and she shrugged whatever was bothering her off.

"Your senses?" Blaine asked confused. "What's going on, mom?"

She met both their gazes then settled on Kurt. "You inspired me."

Kurt sat back and swallowed a little nervous but relaxed a little when Blaine grabbed his hand. "Uh... I did?"

"Course you did, sweetheart! What you brought everyone together to do when that storm hit."

"That wasn't me," Kurt demurred. "I didn't really do all that much, it was everyone else."

"Who wouldn't have known to help unless you spoke up," Jared cut off softly.

"It's true, lovely. None of us even thought about it," Blaine praised squeezing his hand and Kurt didn't think he could get redder, but at the same time he was literally bursting with pride, their words filling him up and feeding the submissive side of him.

And suddenly Dana was launching into a story of how she had gathered up everyone who had helped and supported the Lima cause in the course of the storm. How she'd convinced them that it was time for change. How they'd decided on their new candidate they were going to back.

"My dad!" Kurt asked loudly. "You want my dad to run for Head of the board?"

Dana grinned. "We think Burt Hummel would be perfect for the position."
Hello everyone.
Here we are with the new chapter. Our lives are getting a bit more hectic now that M is starting a new school year and A is working long hours as well but we'll do our best to edit and post the rest of the story as soon as we can for you guys. Hopefully you'll stick around for a bit longer to see us through.

Enjoy this chapter and let us know what you think.
Love
A&M

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Friday

"Brad," the gym teacher and football coach, Sharon Beiste, called clapping her hands together. "Some hustle please. Seen grazing cattle move faster than you, boy."

Brad sneered at the older sub and remained fussing with his hair next to the bleachers in the gymnasium his whole demeanour radiating displeasure as if the sheer thought of joining his
classmates made him ill.

Kurt watched Beiste frown at him reproachfully. It was always the same since he had started in this class. Brad was constantly slacking and the coach was quite obviously fed up with his antics but kept at it in the face of all that rude derisiveness. Despite her large stature, Kurt had soon discovered that the lady was a real sweetheart underneath all that drawl and muscle and so it made sense that she was a submissive once you got to know her and it didn’t make sense why she put up with Brad at all.

Shrugging, Kurt pulled his eyes back in to where he was currently stretching with Jeff, Sebastian and Thad in a little circle while a few others in the class were scattered around doing the same in preparation for the class. From the looks of things they were going to be playing volleyball and Kurt couldn’t say he was happy about that.

He wasn’t half bad at it, being tall and flexible was a plus, but the thought of sweating and ruining his hair made him cringe. He had hoped he would find a kindred spirit in Sebastian who loved his hair as much, if not more, as Kurt, but no such luck. The bitchy sub was extremely sporty and competitive and loved gym class.

"I don’t know why she bothers with him," Sebastian muttered rolling his eyes as he loosened his hamstrings, casting a glance at the hated classmate and sneering when he saw him sitting on the sidelines now looking at everyone like they were the crazy ones for actually doing the required work.

Thad shrugged pulling his arm across his chest, saying cleverly, "Probably because it's her job."

He followed that by glancing surreptitiously at the door for what seemed like the hundredth time since class began. Kurt followed his gaze to the entrance and found nothing there so shrugged it off just in time to see Seb glare at Thad and roll his eyes sarcastically.

"Thank you. I was unaware of that fact before. Truly Thad, you enrich my life with knowledge," was drawled dryly and Kurt snickered losing himself in this easy camaraderie.

For so long it had just been him and Jeff against the world at school. Mercedes was a steady fixture but her place was at Sam’s side, so often Kurt and Jeff would be left to their own bubble and while fundamentally that would always be true, with the added of addition of Blaine now, it was amazing to feel like he fit somewhere for once. Somewhere that wasn’t his rundown garden on their worn bench snuggled in blankets with nothing else better to do and no bright prospects at all.

They were always the odd ones out, but now they’d found a place where they weren’t because they were all odd.

Sebastian for example. Despite his rough and unlikable exterior on the inside he truly cared and he was an amazing friend to have. Thad on the other hand, was just impossible to hate. He was so sweet, and funny, and kind and sort of clumsy, but still endearing and Kurt adored him all the more when he saw how relaxed Jeff was in his presence. This group of theirs was made up of odds and ends, square pegs for round holes and vice versa, but together they made something that worked.

Thad just beamed at Seb before turning to Kurt. He was over his illness and back full force these days, a little whirlwind of activity, like he was making up for lost time. "What's going on with the charity night? Did you manage the model dilemma?"

He asked it with genuine curiosity and Kurt had learned quickly in their newly formed friendship that he was the person who always encouraged others to pursue their dreams and was sincerely happy when the succeeded; no trace of jealousy or resentment.
Kurt nodded going up a few times on his toes. "Yeah, the girls were easy, I asked Corrine to ask a few of the girls on her squad and I've got Seb, David, Jon and Ryan for the males-

"Ry agreed?" Thad interrupted with a laugh, looking giddy at the prospect of his Dom modelling on a catwalk. For teasing or ogling purposes Kurt wasn't quite sure… probably both. "He kept that one to himself."

"Yeah, I may have said it'd make you really happy," Kurt smirked, a devious spark in his eye that Seb almost grinned at, that ghost of a smile before the sub shut it down. "So that's four… I wanted six to match up with the girls but Jeff said no, Blaine's still on the fence, you're busy with the drama club, Trent's a walking disaster of clumsiness and Wes just gave me this look."

Kurt made sure to smile at his best friend and thread their fingers together to make sure he knew he didn't hold it against him in the slightest. Jeff nudged him back with his shoulder but didn't say anything.

He'd been so quiet for days now that Kurt was really starting to worry. It wasn't just the silence either, it was the purple circles under his eyes that spoke of the nightmares Kurt knew he was plagued with after a few eventful sleepovers at Jeff's over the years. It was the sadness welling in the eyes themselves, deeper and fresher than he'd seen it for a long time. It was the pale skin and thin mouth and tighter than a coil posture.

It reminded him horribly of when he first met Jeff. That first day he'd seen the blonde looking around McKinley so lost and scared and unable to talk about what had happened to him, just locking it all inside to fester. Now it was happening all over again and while Kurt knew the essence of it Jeff refused to let him in on the details and it left him sick with worry.

After school he promised himself he'd try again to attempt to coax something more out of his friend. He hated to see him this way, suffering in silence.

"What about, Nick?" Sebastian suggested with an arched brow, glancing at the door briefly before refocusing so quickly Kurt almost missed it.

What is it with people and that door?

"He's an idiot but you've seen the way he struts around."

Jeff's mind immediately went back to the poncho incident and it felt like a knife in the stomach instead of the pleasant memory it had been only days ago. He bit his lip hard and looked down at his ratty converse, hiding under his fringe and trying not to cry over something so stupid.

Kurt watched his friend flinch and grimaced a little trying not to draw attention to it and deflected, "He never got back to me but I'll chase him on it. I'm going over the designs with Dana this weekend so once I know for sure how many outfits we're having I'll know how many models I need."

"And you can always check out potential runway models at the formal," Thad pointed out helpfully, hopping around on one leg as he pulled the other up behind him to stretch out. "Everyone will be dressed to impress after all, it's taken quite seriously around here. Surprise, surprise!"

Kurt blinked. "Oh god… I haven't even started planning an outfit! This charity night has been in my brain so much that I keep forgetting that's even a thing that's happening!"

Sebastian smirked. "It's not the end of the world. Just go and choose one, you've got another two weeks before the night."

"Just go and choose one?" Kurt deadpanned. "Really? I thought better of you, Smythe."

Sebastian actually looked a little offended and Jeff managed half a smile while Thad just laughed out
"Wanna come shopping with me and Blaine?" Kurt asked Jeff and the blonde looked up at him and gave him a lackluster shake of his head.

"No thanks. I'm gonna sit this one out," he whispered.

"Aw, Jeff," Thad whined. "But you have to come! And the Warblers are performing too so you're kinda needed."

Seb shook his head. "Actually if they choose mostly solo's like they did last year then it's possible for him to sit out. Wes wouldn't be thrilled, but it wouldn't hurt anything."

Jeff looked at him with so much gratitude the snarky sub couldn't help himself when he quirked a gentle smile in the blonde's direction and clasped a wide palm on his shoulder briefly in silent support.

"Are you sure?" Kurt asked quietly in an aside while they debated the point and Jeff met his serious gaze not needing to say anything at all. "Okay, well want me to talk to Wes with you?"

Jeff smiled, relief flooding his face. "Thanks."

Kurt simply squeezed his hand tighter in a silent, I'm here for you.

"Okay, guys, listen up-" Besite started loudly to gain the attention of her class, only to cut herself off when the gym doors crashed open. Every head swivelled that way and Kurt felt a funny jolt in his stomach when he saw Blaine sauntering inside followed by more than a few Warblers; David carrying a docking station while Jon and Trent held massive speakers. The sensation was like this sudden phantom knowing without having a clue what it actually was you knew, hairs rising on the back of your neck and heart tripping over itself as your blood raced faster through your veins.

Suddenly it all made sense why Sebastian and Thad had been watching the doors so obsessively and he sent them the bitchiest, death glares he could manage with all these fluttering anticipatory feelings ticking under his skin and hijacking his body’s responses. All he wanted to do was smile. They just smirked at him and pushed him forwards a few steps, making him release Jeff's hand so he was on his own.

He looked up.

Amber eyes caught and held his, brimming with affection and bright with excitement, accompanied by a charming, toothy smile as Blaine made his way over step by step just as the music kicked in, with the Warblers adding their own acapella twist to overlay it. Kurt recognized it immediately of course; Michael Buble's, Everything and it set his face on fire as all eyes flicked between him and his crazy ass Dom with rapt interest.

"Blaine," he began warningly, but the protest was breathless and weak at best.

And then Blaine started singing, crooning more like, and he really just didn't want him to ever stop.

*You're a falling star, you're the get away car.*
*You’re the line in the sand when I go too far.*
*You're the swimming pool, on an August day.*
*And you're the perfect thing to say.*

He danced his way over, all sliding feet on the polished, wooden floor making it look effortless and
just the right side of goofy until he was right in front of him, Warblers flanking them on all sides.

*And you play it coy but it's kinda cute*, he tapped him on the nose playfully making Kurt scrunch it up adorably and try and fail to bite back a grin, playing right into his hands as he sang the next line right from his heart, eyes gazing over his face fondly.

*Ah, when you smile at me you know exactly what you do.*
*Baby don't pretend that you don't know it's true.*
*'cause you can see it when I look at you.*

*And in this crazy life, and through these crazy times*
*It's you, it's you, you make me sing.*
*You're every line, you're every word, you're everything.*

It almost physically hurt how much Blaine meant every single word.

He just wanted to make sure Kurt knew it too. Knew just how adored and loved he was in the wake of the few bumps they'd encountered of late.

He honestly didn't know how he'd gone so long holding back from doing something like this before. It satisfied so many things in him. The need to declare to the world that Kurt was his. The desire to sing out his love for this beautiful being every minute of every day. The satisfaction of watching Kurt light up under the attention, like a flower unfurling in the sunlight and it was stunning.

*You're a carousel,* he span him on the spot using his hand and Kurt laughed out loud, his cheeks hurting from all the stupid smiling. This was ridiculous in the best possible way.

*You're a wishing well.*
*And you light me up, when you ring my bell,* he winked suggestively and Kurt bit his lip feeling a little hot all over at the implication, eyes darting around to see if anyone else had and catching a flash of amused faces before his gaze inevitably was drawn back to Blaine like a magnet.

*You're a mystery, you're from outer space,*
*You're every minute of my everyday.*

Blaine pressed their foreheads together holding onto his waist and Kurt clutched the Doms biceps with trembling fingers, overwhelmed by emotion. All the love in him bubbling up to the surface and seeping through his skin like it wanted to escape him into Blaine to stitch their souls together for eternity.

*And I can't believe, uh that I'm your man,*
*And I get to kiss you baby just because I can.*

He pulled back but didn't let go, simply sang to him serious and beautiful.

*Whatever comes our way, ah we'll see it through,*
*And you know that's what our love can do.*

Kurt's heart tripped over the word.

Love.

He knew it was just the lyrics to the song but that didn't stop him from reacting strongly to that
perfect word tumbling from those plush lips. Especially the submissive side of him. It ate it up greedily, insatiable like it couldn't hear it or feel it enough, always wanting more, more, more.

Kurt whimpered a little feeling his legs go to jelly, barely able to hold him up at all.

It wasn't impossible was it? That Blaine could actually love him. Screw what anyone else thought or said, it certainly didn't feel that way right now with the way Blaine was looking at him.

And in this crazy life, and through these crazy times
It's you, it's you, you make me sing.
You're every line, you're every word, you're everything.

His Dom started to dance them slowly, rocking back and forth at first before coaxing Kurt to follow his lead, the subs hands slipping behind his shoulders as the Warblers backed him up to sing the next part.

So, la, la, la, la, la, la, la
So, la, la, la, la, la, la, la

He stopped their movement to sing straight to him again passionately.

And in this crazy life, and through these crazy times
It's you, it's you, you make me sing.
You're every line, you're every word, you're everything.
You're every song, and I sing along.

He nuzzled their noses together, smiling bright and wide, Kurt unable to do anything but mirror it as they began to dance again in a low circle. Cause you're my everything.

So, la, la, la, la, la, la, la
So, la, la, la, la, la, la, la

He dipped him as it ended, like something straight out of a black and white movie and Kurt felt like he was actually going to swoon. Especially when soft lips pressed down over his in a butterfly touch of a kiss that made tears spring behind his closed lids.

I love you, I love you, I love you, he thought urgently, branding the silent words into his lips.

Cheers and applause erupted around them as Blaine straightened them up, lips still very much attached as Kurt pushed into the contact desperately, overwhelmed. Blaine was simultaneously grounding and sending him off into space constantly and it made his head spin.

Blaine pulled back eventually and Kurt blinked his eyes open, a stray tear falling from his lashes that the Dom scooped up gently with his knuckle letting out a little happy chuckle. "You okay, lovely?"

"Shut up," Kurt sniffed trying to be mad, but it was kind of impossible right now. "This is all your fault. What are you even doing?"

"Well get on with it, B. We didn't all skip class and interrupt another one for shits and giggles," David called out and yelped when someone presumably hit him to shut him up. It was probably Wes.

"What's going on?" Kurt asked again, eyes searching his handsome face for any clue.

Blaine cleared his throat and stepped back, suddenly looking a tad nervous as he took both his hands. "Kurt..." he started seriously and Kurt had a brief moment of fear.
"Oh my god. You're not presenting me are you?" he hissed under his breath, mortified but at the same time… sort of eager?

*God what even was that reaction?*

Blaine laughed, a few others that had heard joining in as well and the tension seemed to ease out of him with it. "No, silly boy. I wouldn't do that when I know you'd have my ass for you being in your gym clothes."

Kurt flushed, partly because it was true and partly because he may have jumped the gun a little. He heard Sebastian snicker and he turned his head to level him with yet another bitch glare. "Laugh it up Mr just-choose-one."

Sebastian rolled his eyes and Kurt gave him a superior smirk before turning back to Blaine feeling more relaxed when he saw his amused expression at the exchange.

"Finished?" he teased.

"Yep," Kurt beamed.

He laughed again. "Okay. Kurt, my beautiful, lovely boy… I know people just seem to think it's a given that we'd automatically be each other's dates for everything now and while that is true because you're sure as hell not going with anyone else." He winked, playfully serious. "I still feel it's right for me to ask you properly because the last thing I want to do is take you for granted. You really are my everything, lovely," he admitted softly.

Kurt edged closer with every word, nodding along like he was in a trance as realization of just what Blaine was going to ask him dawned on him. "Ask," he whispered.

Blaine smiled, thumbs stroking over the back of his hands. "Kurt Elizabeth Hummel. Will you do me the honor of being my date to the Winter Formal?"

"Yes," he breathed. "Yes, yes, yes!"

Another bout of merriment went around and Blaine wrapped his arms around his waist, lifting him up to spin him around happily, stopping only when Kurt leaned down to join their mouths together. Blaine coaxed his open with his questing tongue, lapping just over the back of his teeth and brushing the subs before pulling back again.

"You're mine too," Kurt whispered against his mouth, hands framing his face as they kissed until Coaches whistle broke them apart.

"Alright, Anderson, I granted you fifteen minutes. You got seventeen. Get lost," Beiste said and he snickered, pecking Kurt on the lips with a smile one last time because he just had to test his luck before running out followed by teasing catcalls from Kurt's classmates and leaving behind a dazed, blushing sub he loved more than life and fuming sub who was looking on with envy.

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Five days.

Five long, painful days.
That's how long Nick went without Jeff's warming presence and he could feel himself crumbling a little, fraying around the edges.

His heart ached constantly, no relief from it and his mind screamed at him to fix it, to make it better, to get him back where he belonged; next to Nick, in his arms. But the thing was, he wasn’t completely certain what he had done wrong. Was it his touch that scared him? His words? The love he knew radiated off of him and poured over the blonde boy in waves, even when he tried desperately to reign it back? After all there was no way it went unnoticed. This depth of feeling couldn’t be contained, it was bound to spill over.

But he'd take it back if he knew what it was. He wouldn't stop loving him, that was impossible, but he'd try harder. He'd tame his Dominant blood and the ache inside of him to own and claim and keep if he knew it would bring Jeff back to him... even in the small, timid, closed-off capacity he was there before Nick blew it up.

He didn't know how to deal with the pain. His skin itched, his hands felt empty even though he had only held his angel once before the horrible hug that wrecked their tentative relationship. He knew what it was like now to have even a small part of him and losing even that was excruciating.

To make the torture worse he still saw him around the school almost every day with dark shadows under his eyes, shoulders slumped down further than he’d ever seen them and a bone deep sadness etched into his skin that tore Nick apart because he’d helped put that there somehow.

He wanted to make it right again, he needed him there again.

So after five sleepless nights, five days of endless phone calls with Blaine and five desperate days of wracking his mind trying to figure out what to do, he realized he couldn't take it anymore.

He was done.

He was tired of the pain and the sadness. He wanted to be happy again and he wanted to make Jeff happy and tiptoeing around the subject and avoiding the talk that was long overdue got them into the mess they were in right now.

So five days after Jeff tore away from him in fear he walked down to the cafeteria, picked up a cup and filled it with hot chocolate; bright, red, messy handwriting soon decorating the side of it like every other time.

Determination obvious in every step, he made his way over to the hallway across the staircase from his own and knocked on the heavy wooden door. The cup in his hand was shaking lightly and he could feel his lungs struggling to draw enough oxygen into his body to function properly as he listened to the muffled steps approaching the door.

The key jiggled and the door knob twisted letting a gentle voice out into the corridor.

"Kurt, I told you I just want to stay in and-"

Jeff pushed the door open and froze when he saw Nick standing there, smile careful but still blinding in its beauty, hands shaking lightly where they clutched a cup that smelled so inviting and comforting and familiar.

"Nick…"

The name came in a huff of breath tumbling from his lips and he gripped the door frame tightly to keep himself from falling into his arms like he had so desperately wanted since the second he ran
away and left the Dom in the hallway that day.

He had come to himself a few minutes too late after the incident, mind settled and registering that it was Nick and he wasn't in danger. His skin was aching and cold, missing his touch, but it was already too late to go back. He had ruined the best thing that had happened to him since the day he met Kurt and he knew Nick must have hated him for it so he stayed away.

Sleep eluded him, his eyes growing heavier and scratchier with exhaustion and tears as the days without his personal sunshine went by. He wanted to go to him and that pull scared him more than any slur or blow Kevin had ever hurled his way. The desire to be close to him, the urge to curl up on his chest again and sleep with no nightmares, no fears, just warmth and safety was almost terrifying by how strong it was.

He saw him every day around the school and he ached to be in his arms again but he knew he wasn't worth it.

He wasn't worth the sadness and the worry he saw on that beautiful face every time he messed up and hurt him. He wasn't worth the time and the patience it took to be around him. He knew he had wasted Nick's time and he was so incredibly sorry for that, so when the Dom had left him alone for five days, a clear message, he’d cried one last time over him and resolved to make his heart let him go.

Nick deserved better anyway and it didn't even matter that he was so close to letting himself fall once again, hoping against hope he would be caught this time before he crashed to the ground. His bruised body had betrayed him, his fearful mind turned against him and Nick was gone.

And he'd thought that was that.

He'd resigned himself to the dark hole he'd dug with his own two hands… until now… when he was in front of him again, an achingly familiar cup in his hand like an offering of a rope ladder. There were traces of red under his fingertips indicating another note… and… and that sunshine smile of his was on him once again igniting him from the inside out and god he couldn't breathe.

"Hi, angel," he greeted softly and Jeff felt his body shiver at the nickname he still couldn't wrap his head around. He was the furthest thing away from an angel there could be and still Nick called him that with so much conviction… like he truly saw him white and pure.

And as always, especially now, he couldn’t stomach the insinuation. "Don't call-" he started, but Nick raised one hand to stop him, the other cradling the cup to his chest; a puff of delicious smelling steam sneaking into the threads of his blazer.

"Stop," Nick said with that distinct lilt in his voice that Jeff couldn't rightly identify just yet, but he still felt his limbs loosen and his tongue tie up as asked. "I came here to lay it all out in front of you. If you can just spare ten minutes of your time and let me say what I came here to say I promise I won't bother you after that. Okay?"

Jeff stared at him wide eyed and in shock and maybe that was why he felt his head bob up and down slowly in confirmation before his brain caught up with what he was doing. As much as his body felt tense and scared, the sub in him purred at the sight of Nick's smile after he had said yes, delirious at the thought that he had pleased the beautiful Dom.

"Thank you, beautiful," he said gently and Jeff lowered his eyes down, fingers wringing together and cheeks colouring in shame at the compliment he knew he didn't deserve.
"This is for you," the Dom extended the cup and nodded in encouragement when Jeff reached out to take it, careful to assess the situation in case it was a trick Nick was pulling just to make him pay for what he had done. Kevin loved playing games like that with him.

But nothing came. Just the warmth seeping through the Styrofoam cup and onto his trembling fingers as he clutched it, careful not to let it drop. And really he did know better than to expect that from Nick and it made guilt bubble in his chest.

"Thank you..." he whispered barely audible and Nick smiled at him colouring his world again after days of it being black and white.

"Read it," he encouraged. "It's the first thing I want you to know," he gestured towards the cup and with a knot in his chest Jeff lifted his thumb from the red note and squinted at the neat letters, a gasp tearing from his lips and his heart *lurching* when he saw it.

**I fell in love with your broken, beautiful soul.**

There was an arrow pointing right so he turned the cup, numb with shock.

**I'm never changing my mind.**

"Nick... why..." he got out, strangled and confused but the Dom shook his head.

"No. You promised you'd let me say what I came here to say and I'm holding you to that. After I'm done I'm gonna go and I'll give you time and space to decide what you want. I won't pressure you or force you to give me an answer. I'm just asking you to hear me out and then think about it. Can you do that for me?" he asked and Jeff felt himself nod again dazed, his thumb tracing the beautiful note on the cup almost unconsciously, like he could soak the words in through his skin.

How could he find his soul beautiful when he knew it was broken? How could he choose to stay when he knew there was nothing left of Jeff to give back to him?

A hand wrapped itself around his own and pulled him back into his room and towards the bed where they sat facing one another in silence until Nick finally spoke up.

"The first time I saw you... you were walking out of a class. I remember stopping dead in my tracks because I'd never seen someone so beautiful. It was as if someone pulled you out straight from my dreams," he started off, a genuine sound of awe in his voice when he recalled it that made Jeff's heart flutter.

"I wanted to talk to you but then you turned around and I saw..." He paused and met Jeff's eyes and the sub knew what it was and fought not to cup his neck self-consciously. "I saw your mark. And I knew you were hurt beyond belief and I wanted to find whoever did that and hurt them back so badly," he confessed, undiluted rage in his tone.

"I knew nothing about you except that you were gorgeous and yet I wanted to make sure you were safe."

He paused again and made sure Jeff was looking straight at him. "It never went away, Jeff."

"Nick," he breathed but got a stern look in return that made him shut his mouth.

"It just grew and grew to the point where you were the only thing I could think of, the only one that mattered to me. The cups... the cups were a way for me to get to you without scaring you away. I left them every morning hoping they made you smile... but I guess I scared you anyway and I'm
sorry about that. And then we talked and you shut me out so quickly I thought I'd never get to be close to you again… but it worked out somehow. You said you wanted to be my friend and I agreed to it, wanting to be close to you whatever way I could."

He thought it would be harder to explain his inner thoughts, but they were all tumbling out of his mouth like water, week’s worth of sentences that had been bitten back finally released.

"And over the past few weeks I felt like… like maybe things have been changing for you too… like maybe you'd find your way to me completely and after the blackout when you slept so close to me and you held my hand I guess I allowed myself to hope, to believe..." He shook his head. "And then I messed up again by holding you when you didn’t want that and I scared you and I regret it so much… not the fact that I had you in my arms because, Jeff, believe me, I'll never forget how it feels to hold you like that. But I am sorry it hurt you, I’m sorry it scared you and pushed you away."

Jeff felt tears sting his eyes, chest heaving from all the emotions he was feeling. *He thought it was his fault?*

"These past few days have been torture and I realized I can't do it anymore. I thought I could just be your friend but I can't pretend I don't love you and I can't pretend I don't ache for you because everything I do is laced with you. I go to sleep wishing you were there. I dream about you. I wake up and I feel empty. I go to get coffee and I want to buy you hot chocolate. I go home to my parents and I just want to show you off to them. You're everywhere I go, in whatever I do so this is what I’ve decided to do. I’ve decided to lay it all on the line and put my heart in your hands. I'm giving you time now. To think about this… about us… and if you decide you want to try us… come to the Winter Formal. I'll wait for you."

He reached across and hesitantly took his free hand, relishing the contact as it soothed every jagged edge.

"If you decide to give me a chance, angel, I promise you… you'll never be hurt the way you were again. I'll be the best Dom I can be to you. I'll keep you safe… and I'll keep you warm and I'll love you the way nobody has ever loved you before,” he finished and turned to see silent tears slip down freckled cheeks and his heart broke as he lifted his thumb to chase them away.

"Don't cry, angel. Whatever you decide I'll respect. I promise,” he said leaning in and kissing the salty skin of his wet cheek before he stood up and walked to the door.

"I truly hope I see you at the formal. I… I love you, Jeff," he admitted softly on an exhale looking over his shoulder, knowing it might be the last chance he'll ever have to say it to him before he slipped out the door and walked over to his own room, tears spilling and fear tearing at his insides.

That was it… his heart was literally a target and Jeff held all the bullets.

He had the power to crush him.

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They'd been at this for a little over two hours now and Blaine could tell Kurt was getting frustrated.

Hell, Blaine wasn't exactly having a picnic either but he could tell that this was important to Kurt, it was one of the first things his sub had voluntarily offered up of himself after all and so he grinned and bared it as they thumbed through yet another rack of suits.
"How about this one?" Blaine held up the classic tux jacket and Kurt shook his head, hardly sparing the thing a glance.

He'd been through stark changes of moods all day.

At first the prospect of shopping for their outfits for the formal had Kurt on the balls of his feet, vibrating out of his skin with excitement. He'd been flicking through magazines circling things in bright markers and bookmarking a few things online ever since Blaine had asked him to be his date a few days ago. But as soon as they reached the high end stores his boy had gotten a little tentative, clearly concerned still about how much everything cost as he subtly checked the tags. It had taken a little persuasion but Blaine had brought him around again, they really did have more than enough money for this lifetime and the next and he knew this was important to Kurt. His first proper social event ever and the sub was very serious about making the right impression, which explained why he was currently hiding in his knitted cardigan and biting at his fingers distractedly, face drawn and tense.

"Lovely, you're gonna look great in whatever you wear," he tried to placate, hooking the hanger back over the metal bar.

"No I'm gonna look like I'm trying too hard," Kurt mumbled around his index finger and thumb.

"Well then how about we just look at normal suits?" he suggested. "You don't have to wear a tux. I usually don't."

Kurt waved him off with his free hand, eyes still fixed on the wall of clothes as he rolled his eyes. "It's a formal, Blaine."

The Dom frowned, really quite confused. "Is there an in between of a suit and tux that I didn't know about?"

Kurt growled in his throat, distressed, the slightly higher pitch perfectly mixed with the low tones and doing things to Blaine that he'd rather avoid in the middle of Versace. He pushed away that thread of desire however, in favour of the more pressing need to make his sub happy again. Walking up behind him he hooked his chin over Kurt's shoulder and slipped his arms around his waist snugly. He waited patiently until his sub relaxed into him, ignoring the looks the assistant they'd sent away when they first entered was giving them, before gently rocking them from side to side.

"Tell me what's wrong, lovely," he commanded lowly, pressing a light kiss to his jaw just under his ear.

Kurt closed his eyes letting the gentle command wash over him, making him melt inside his Dom's embrace. He didn't quite know when he'd let this get away from him. He was working so hard not to let these insecurities gain control and on the whole he was able to ignore them completely because he did know better. He knew that Brad was only trying to get under his skin because he wanted what he couldn't have. That all those magazine writers were ignorant, close minded people.

Only sometimes, when the pressure was high and the stakes even higher like now he felt them all bubble to the surface to taunt him. He needed to make sure he looked presentable enough for Blaine and his family.

He couldn't let them have another thing to put him down for.

"I just want it to be perfect," Kurt confessed, heart in his throat. "I don't want to be embarrassed or embarrass you by looking like I don't belong there."
Blaine snorted, placing his hands on his hips and spinning him around until glassy eyes looked back at him. He moved his hands to rest in the concave of the bottom of his spine, his pinkies brushing the beginning of the curve of his ass teasingly, making him shiver.

"Kurt, you'd never embarrass me, baby. I'm so proud and lucky to have you with me that I think I might explode from the need to show you off and shout to everyone that you're actually mine sometimes," Blaine told him passionately and Kurt knew that, a small smile coming to his face when he remembered how Blaine had asked him to be his date in front of a whole class full of people.

"You just need to be yourself, because he's pretty perfect," Blaine continued kissing his temple when he lowered his eyes down.

"Even when I make you shop with me for two hours and don't choose anything?" Kurt joked weakly, but he was sounding brighter so he counted it as a step in the right direction. Smiling and squeezing him tighter, he cupped the back of his head when he rested his face against his neck, placing a gentle kiss there.

"Especially then," Blaine admitted.

Even when Kurt wanted to make him tear his hair out he still loved him with a strength that could hold up the world. He wished he could say it out loud, not using a song’s lyrics to cover up the deeper meaning and not by using someone else’s words. He wasn’t wholly sure that they were there yet though. He was almost one hundred percent certain that Kurt felt just as strongly for him, this connection that lit up between them couldn’t be anything but. However, he didn’t want to push too soon and damage what they had. He was happy in the silent knowledge for now, the little actions between them instead of the words which already spoke volumes.

"I think you're perfect even when you're not." Is what he said instead.

Kurt swallowed over the lump in his throat, happiness bubbling to the surface as he nuzzled his head into Blaine's, nosing at his Dom's cheek with eyelashes fluttering against his temple.

"Now how about we try this again and you stop trying to look for things that will make you like everyone else, hm? You were born to stand out, lovely," Blaine whispered to him tenderly.

He'd hit the nail on the head of course. The problem they were having was Kurt was trying to find something that would make him blend in. Only it went against his very nature to do that willingly and that's where this inability to choose was stemming from.

"I wanted something..." he trailed off and looked back towards the pristine hanging suits with a critical eye.

"Like what?" he urged, loosening his hold so Kurt could move if he needed to.

Kurt didn't make a move backwards and away from him like he was expecting, however. Instead he dug into his pocket and pulled out a folded piece of paper, spreading it open with shaky fingers to reveal a multitude of rough sketches from lapels, to bowties, braces and vests, to what type of stitching he wanted.

Blaine was blown away.

He knew Kurt wanted to design clothes and he'd seen him curled up on the couch with a pencil and pad a few times before, but he'd never actually seen any of Kurt's work. It was amazing. Detailed even in its roughness with a flair in every pencil stroke that screamed Kurt.

"They're just quick ideas I scribbled down..." Kurt began a little self-consciously, the blush on his
face betraying him as he handed the paper to Blaine.

"Wow... these are amazing, lovely," Blaine praised immediately, cupping his hand over one of Kurt's to bring the paper closer to him to make sure he wasn't missing a single thing. He noticed his name in the corner next to a bowtie with tiny little snowflakes sprinkled over it and grinned stupidly wide. Kurt was designing him clothes? It made him feel ridiculously warm and fluttery inside, his heart swelling ten times its size.

"Are you sure you don't need any help, Mr Anderson?" the red headed assistant approached them again to ask, stilettos clattering on the hardwood flooring.

Kurt regarded her and the form hugging emerald pencil dress she was wearing sceptically. It wasn't that he didn't think she knew what she was doing despite the dollar signs that had been ringing in her eyes since she spotted and recognized Blaine. Clearly she had some taste. But knowing what looked good on you and what looked good on others wasn't exactly synonymous for some people. And besides, he knew what he was doing just fine, he was just having a bit of a crisis of faith today.

Blaine opened his mouth to speak but she cut across him obliviously, walking to the rail with her curls bobbing behind her as she searched for a suit.

"Because I think this one would look great on you personally," she carried on, grabbing it and thrusting it at Kurt, before carrying on to another one still chatting away. "And I know just the one to match. It's for the Dalton formal, right? You're a little late in the game, people were buying theirs a month ago at least, but I think I could be persuaded to help out..."

Kurt tuned her angling for a sizable tip out and pulled a face at the suit in his hands which had Blaine laughing at him. "Be nice," he teased into his ear, hooking his thumbs in the belt loops at his subs hips under the cardigan.

"Have you seen what she's given me?" he hissed back. "This grey will completely wash me out! And it's plain!"

"Nothing wrong with plain is there?" Blaine asked innocently, already knowing the answer of course, but happily baiting his boy anyway to help take his mind off things and get him back to his normal happy, sassy self.

"Classic plain, no. Boring plain? I wouldn't dress like that even for my own funeral," he huffed tugging him along so he could put the suit back on the rail, tucking his designs away before turning in his arms to face him again. "Please save me from her before she comes back with more hideous opinions," he pouted.

Blaine cooed at him, stroking his cheek. "Poor baby."

"I'm serious, Blaine!" he stomped his foot like a child, but cuddled in closer to his Dom anyway, seeing a getaway from the red haired shark who kept piling boring, uninspired outfits on him.

The Dom thought it was adorable, but refrained from saying it out loud, no matter how tempting. Instead he concentrated on the tug in him that was urging him to do as Kurt asked and 'save him'. It didn't matter that it was only from a commission hungry redhead, the Dom in him was raring to go.

"Okay. I think I have an idea," he relented and began pulling them out of the shop just as Miss Pushy came back with an arm full of options. "Sorry. Emergency just came up, gotta run!"

She watched them go with an obvious scowl, but Kurt was very happy to escape, only lamenting a little that they had found nothing. He was surprised however, when he started to pay attention to his
surroundings again that is, that instead of walking them towards another shop in the area, Blaine began leading them back to the car park.

"Where are we going? Are we going home?" he asked as he threaded their fingers, nervous that he had pushed too far and Blaine was sick of this expedition.

Blaine just smiled at him, giving a wink and squeezing his fingers in reassurance. "You'll see."

It wasn't until a short car ride later they were walking inside the lofty, open plan studio that it really sunk in for Kurt.

He was standing in none other than Dana's fashion house, *Red*.

"Oh my god…" he breathed in awe eyeing the racks to their left hungrily. It was full of last season's collection pieces; he recognised them because he'd manage to save up enough at Mae's to splurge on a magazine to see them as a treat for himself. His eyes drifted towards the mannequins a few assistants were fawning over next, getting stunning glimpses of Dana's *latest* line.

Blaine filled with pride as he watched the pure, unadulterated joy and awe washing over his sub as he took in his surroundings. It reminded him of when he first stepped inside his studio when it was finally finished and the magic of that moment that had filled him to bursting. This right here was Kurt's dream, just like the studio was his. It was a life affirming moment. *A, god yes I want to do this forever*, moment and Blaine wanted to have forever to make him this happy and excited all the time.

"Blaine, Kurt!" Dana called as she spotted them from her desk next to the north facing wall that was made of windows from floor to ceiling letting in tons of natural light. She hopped up, dressed to kill in a cap sleeved floral print dress, and made her way over to them in her heels. "I thought you were shopping then heading home for dinner. I was just about to head off myself."
"We need a favour," Blaine told her and both Kurt and Dana looked at him expectantly. "Kurt and I need suits for the formal but all the ones we looked at today were… plain." He smirked at Kurt over the last word and got an eye roll in return that had him grinning and Dana looking at them curiously. "Kurt has some ideas for the designs that he sketched up that are really amazing. It's short notice but I was just wondering if you could maybe whip something up for us using them as a reference?"

"What?!!" Kurt yelped as he realized what was going on, suddenly going pink. "N-no… I mean… they were just some ideas-"

"I'd love to see them," Dana cut in, beaming, which turned into a smirk as she looked back at her son. "Finally letting mama dress you like the good old day's, sweetheart?"

Blaine pulled a, mooom-why-do-you-always-have-to-do-this face and Kurt would have laughed out loud if he wasn't freaking out. He swallowed not knowing what to say back to her, slightly overwhelmed and Dana gestured them to follow her back to her desk. They all took their seats, Kurt and Blaine side by side across from the elder Dom.

"Only show them if you want me to see them, sweetie. If not we can just discuss what you want and I'll see what I can do," she reassured him.

Blaine grasped his hand and laid a kiss to the back of it. "Believe in yourself, lovely," he whispered and Kurt met his calming gaze before reaching into his pocket once more and passing over the paper, his fingers shaking like crazy and internally berating himself for crumpling the paper so much and making it so messy. Presentation was key after all.

Dana smoothed it out on the desk and Kurt felt like the world stopped for a second while she looked it over. It was different than showing Blaine. With his Dom he felt infinitely more comfortable sharing such intimate parts of himself, but with Dana it was a different story. He trusted her of course, but she wasn't his Dom. Plus, she was a professional in this field at the top of her game, not just Blaine's mother, so there was a very real chance she could tell him he wasn't any good and would probably be better concentrating his efforts in a different direction.

"Oh my..." Dana whispered and Kurt jumped in his chair, eyes wide and nervous as he tried to understand what she was thinking.

"Is it... is it bad..." he asked and felt Blaine snort next to him as if he found the mere idea ridiculous.

"And just when I think you can't get any more talented." Dana shook her head, eyebrows rising in pleased surprise as she scanned her well trained gaze over his doodles. "I'm really impressed, Kurt. Truly," she praised sincerely.

All the air rushed out of him at once. "You like them?" he squeaked.

"What's not to like? They're tasteful, fresh takes on classic looks. They scream personality," she observed with a smile, taking in the more elegant, embellished look for Kurt and the more alternative, dapper look for Blaine.

Kurt's pleased, bashful smile spread across his face like a sunrise. Boundless and stunning. He bounced in his seat a little. "I feel like this is one of my dreams again," he admitted giddily.

Dana snorted a laugh but actually looked flattered from the tiny blush that stained her cheeks. "You dream about me praising your design work?"

Kurt bit his lips and shrugged. "Sometimes." Read: A lot.
"He dreams about me more," Blaine put in and it was two parts joking, one part jealousy and another part childish petulance.

Kurt's face bled red and he gaped over at his Dom as images flickered behind his eyes of naked skin and bruising kisses, gasping breathes and growled moans.

*Oh god.*

Dana just rolled her eyes and tapped her manicured nails on the cluttered desk. "You always were a possessive little boy."

Blaine stuck his tongue out at her and didn't look at all remorseful.

"You don't have to make them exactly like that. I know its short notice," Kurt burst in a little hastily trying to get them back on point and his mind out of the sheets.

"I want the bowtie," Blaine demanded right off the bat. "Exactly like that one."

Kurt bit his lip to keep from smiling so wide and Dana didn't even bother to disguise her amusement as she grabbed a notepad and wrote it down, circling it twice. "Okay. I'm thinking that I can take a few of the suits I designed for last season and bespoke them with these elements you have here? Unfortunately it's a bit too late to start two new suits and hand-make them, especially with the workload I'm under right now but we can definitely still make you the hottest couple there," she grinned.

"That would be amazing!" Kurt gushed and hesitated before going on. "And I was wondering if maybe I could pick something up for Jeff? I know he's not gonna do it himself or ask and I really want him to have the option to come if he wants to. But we don't want to put you out-" he tacked on only to cut off as she waved it off.

"I'd be more than happy to. In fact I'm excited! How did you feel about the silk lapels on the navy suit last season? I think that would go lovely with your eyes," she asked and Kurt immediately launched into praising his mothers work and sharing his opinions eagerly, bouncing ideas back and forth like they'd been doing it for years.

Blaine just sat back and watched them interact with a smile.

The pair went through rack after rack of clothes, picking various items up and inspecting them carefully before deeming them unfit for purpose and moving on. After about half an hour Blaine was ready to admit that he had lost track on how many suits they had discarded and he was a enough of a man to also admit he had no idea what they were looking for.

He sipped at his coffee and picked at some snacks he'd found in his mother's drawer for another hour. The amusement at seeing his adorable sub so excited and wide eyed was crushed by the all-consuming boredom when Kurt finally bounced over to him, a garment bag slung over his arm and he perked up at the prospect of going home and maybe...just maybe making Kurt strip for him to try on the new clothes... and then strip again.

"Hi, lovely. Found what you were looking for?" he asked, already making a move to stand up and put his jacket back on when Kurt snorted... an ungraceful sound that would have him blushing and covering his face mere weeks ago.

"This is the one I picked out for Jeff," he said, unzipping the bag and showing his Dom a classic black suit with a silk collar, a dark gray shirt with a black skinny tie.
Blaine groaned at the cheeky smirk on his sub's face because he obviously realized he was tired and wanted to go home. So he played it cool and peeked into the bag with all the interest he could muster. The suit was subtle and ‘doomed to blend in’ as Kurt was worried about, but tasteful and classy and Blaine could tell right away why Kurt had chosen this particular one for his timid friend. He wanted him to look good and feel confident but at the same time not draw too much attention from anyone there.

Blaine knew it was a lost cause because Nick would devour him if he saw him dressed like this and he knew for a fact a few other guys around the school thought the new blonde boy was sexy and would like what they saw if he decided to join them too. Blaine knew neither Kurt nor Jeff knew about the attention the blonde sub had drawn to himself with his lean body, perfect platinum hair and those rare but blinding smiles that lit up his cocoa eyes. But he had heard his college classmates commenting on how gorgeous he was when he smiled, how sexy his body was when he wore tighter shirts, how amazing his laugh sounded on one of his good days when he was relaxed and content.

He also knew it drove Nick crazy to listen to them, but there was one thing he had over every single guy that drooled after the blonde. On his good days, when he would let go and laugh out loud... it was always Nick who made him laugh, always Nick who cracked his walls and peeked inside of him. Nick seemed to be the only Dom who could.

"I love it. He will look amazing in that suit," Blaine said honestly and Kurt perked up.

"Think Nick will like it?" he asked, mischief clear in his voice and Blaine chuckled, knowing he was just given the perfect in for the information.

"I think Nick just loves him. Suit or no suit or a bad suit. But he won't be the only one liking him I think," he said casually and eyed Kurt's reaction as he tensed and frowned.

"What do you mean by that?" he asked and Blaine took his hand to calm him down. He was so fiercely protective over Jeff sometimes it was hard to get through to him when he got into one of his worrying frenzies.

"It's nothing bad, lovely, don't worry. A few guys around school have noticed Jeff and they seem to like him if their comments are something to go by," he said as calmly as he could and Kurt side eyed him suspiciously.

"Are they rude? Will they hurt him?" he demanded and Blaine shook his head.

"No, baby. They're nice guys, I know them. Polite and kind and they seem to think Jeff is quite beautiful. Their comments are always respectful and sweet," he reassured and Kurt nodded, the frown on his face a little less prominent now.

"What are they saying?" he asked just to make sure and Blaine smiled pulling him closer until he stood between his knees with his Dom's hands wrapped around his hips gently.

"I've heard them say he was beautiful. One of them mentioned he liked his hair a lot and then they all agreed. One of them also said he was cute and that if he had a sub like him he would buy him flowers every day to make him smile. All good things," he assured again and Kurt nodded, smiling again.

"Well he is all that. So that's good. But I still want Nick for him," he said in determination and Blaine laughed perfectly in time with an excited scream coming from the depths of clothing racks.

They both jumped and Kurt rushed towards Dana, buzzing with excitement when Blaine spoke up
"Lovely?"

Kurt spun on his heel to face his Dom, a scowl firmly on his face, clearly stating he did not appreciate the interruption.

"What?" he asked in exasperation and then glared at Blaine's raised eyebrow, adding a snippy, "Sir," at the end to make it sound less pissed off. He failed miserably and Blaine almost combusted with the effort it took not to burst out in laughter.

"Wanna know what they're saying about you?" he asked teasingly and Kurt scowled even deeper looking like an angry little kitten, more adorable than intimidating, but there was something suddenly vulnerable in his stance and it made Blaine uneasy.

"No," he said wrapping his hands around his middle and looking at the floor.

Blaine jumped up and came to him, wrapping him in a strong embrace and whispering in his ear.

"They talk about you all the time when they think I can't hear them. How gorgeous you are, how sexy your body is, how magical your eyes are, how they wished they were me... but they aren't, are they my beautiful boy. They aren't me. They don't get to kiss you, they don't get to make you shiver and moan so beautifully. They can look and talk... but you're mine. Mine to please and mine to touch and mine to look at as you fall apart under me," he purred in a hushed voice, his breath curling around Kurt's neck and ears, little puffs of it touching his mark and making him tremble in Blaine's arms. All he could do was nod and hold on to Blaine's shoulders as his pants grew tighter and much less comfortable only from words alone.

They were standing so close, and if Kurt tilted his head to the side their lips would almost brush and it made him tingle all over. Blaine was the one that brought his head back around first and Kurt felt his body rock into Blaine's on its own accord, hips thrusting forward and damp lips parting in expectation.

Blaine was looking at him hungrily, hands sneaking down his back to cup his ass and pull him in closer still, forcing a silent moan out of him when their erections brushed.

"I can't wait to have you all alone with me... in our bed...where everything smells like you. I'm gonna make you feel so good, lovely boy... so, so good," he whispered enticingly, catching his lips and Kurt just broke.

He gasped and clung to him, mind going blank as his fingers dug into soft curls.

Blaine licked into his mouth teasingly at first but it grew so much stronger when he felt his desperation. It felt like the world melted away with his mouth on him and then down his neck, biting and nipping and soothing with his tongue in turns. The strong hands on his back and ass gripped tighter and pulled so they rocked together again... he was lost.

In the back of his mind knew there was a reason they shouldn't be doing this, but he couldn't really recall what it was until a voice broke through the cloud of lust and need around them.

"Kurt, sweetie, are you coming?" Dana called out and as their lips detached with a wet smack he turned desperate eyes towards his Dom; red lips and damp curls evidence of the fact that Kurt turned him on just as much as he did him. It was empowering in a way... to be able to turn someone experienced and so in control into a mess of want.
And god, he was so glad all the other workers had gone home already.

"You can go now. We'll see about you coming later," Blaine murmured and Kurt’s breathe hitched; brain still unfocused and fuzzy. In the end he had to have Blaine turn him around and push him forwards until he was moving himself on shaking legs, moves uncoordinated and repeatedly looking back over his shoulder at his Dom as he tried to collect himself before looking for Dana.

Blaine sat back onto his chair, smug and turned on and desperate, but beaming when he heard excited shouts of joy a few minutes later as Kurt obviously found what he was looking for.

He couldn't wait to see what he had picked out for them.

Eventually happy claps and squeals made him curious enough and he was about to walk towards them to see what they found when his phone went off and he saw Nick's name flashing from the screen.

He swiped to answer it.

"Nicky. What can I do for you this fine afternoon?" he chirped into his phone happily, his day shaping up to be better than he had ever expected.

"B, I... I think my heart is breaking for real..."

"Nick... hey... hey...buddy, I need you to calm down and tell me what's going on," Blaine asked him and he gasped heavily.

"I... can you just come over... I can't... I just..." he wheezed desperately and Blaine cut him off.

"Yeah... yeah I'll be there as soon as I can. Stay in your room, okay?" he said quickly.

"'kay... sorry, B," he answered sadly and Blaine rolled his eyes.

"You're my best friend you prick. I'm always here for you. Just hold on tight. I'll be there in no time."

He tried letting his smile seep into his voice to soothe his friend but he had no idea if it worked because the line broke and Nick was gone.

He sounded like he was basically on the verge of a panic attack. Nick never panicked. He just didn't know the meaning of the word. He went through life happy, daring, brave and strong and there was just one thing that made him this scared.

Jeff.

Worried out his mind he ran into the back room where his mother and his sub were packing stuff away into another two garment bags and he knew how bad he was when he didn't take the time to admire Kurt's flushed cheeks and the excited smile he wore that would usually make him breathless.

"Kurt... Nick just called me. He sounded pretty out of it and he wants to see me. Do you want to stay here and come back home with my mom or do you want me to drop you off?" he asked and flinched when Kurt's eyes darkened with worry and something close to understanding.

"I want to come with you," he said immediately in determination and Dana eyed them curiously.

"Lovely, I don't think Nick-" he started but Kurt cut him off.

"I want to see Jeff. I've never seen Nick out of it unless it's about Jeff. I need to make sure he's
okay," he said and Blaine had to admit he agreed with him.

"Okay, baby. Mom, can you take the suits home with you? And maybe save us dinner? I don't know how long we'll be so don't wait for us," he asked as Kurt put his coat back on and slung Jeff's suit over his arm.

"Absolutely. You just make sure your friends are okay," she said kindly, proud of her son and his sub who was fast becoming a third son to her.

Kurt smiled at her, coming back to give her a hug and kiss her cheek. "Thank you so much," he whispered and she returned the hug gently.

"Any time, sweetie. Now go," she shooed them and they rushed to the car, silent and each in their own thoughts, painting the worst possible scenarios and hoping they were wrong.

The ride to Dalton seemed to last forever with Blaine worrying about his friend and trying to hide it in order to maintain his collected facade for Kurt's sake, and Kurt banging his fingers on his knee repeatedly, body tightly wound and ready to bolt to Jeff as soon as they stop the car. Which is exactly what he did only seconds later when Blaine pulled into the parking lot and turned to him and got the car door slammed in his face.

Silently he made his way towards Nick's room, anxious to check on his friend and all the while wondering what was happening behind the door that hid the cute blonde sub and his own boy from curious eyes and ears.

He just hoped it wasn't too bad.

On the other side of the heavy wooden door Kurt was kneeling next to his friend who was sobbing so hard his entire body shook with the force of it and all he could do was hold his hands, allowing him to get it all out before asking any questions.

He'd walked into the room (the door was unlocked which was a huge warning sign) after bolting from the car to find his best friend in hysterics, pacing the room, running desperate hands through messy hair, eyes red rimmed and cheeks stained with tears. He'd rushed over to hold him tight, to stop him from working himself up even more through the restless pacing and moved them towards the bed, sitting down and allowing Jeff to curl up into him as he cried and trembled and fought for breath to explain what was going on.

Kurt hated that they were here again. That Jeff hurt this much this often.

Fifteen minutes later Jeff's sobs quieted down and his grip on Kurt's jacket loosened the tiniest degree. A glance downwards at his friend revealed he looked calmer, or had just plain exhausted himself, but Kurt thought that he could risk prodding gently to try and find out what was wrong.

"Jeff... honey, look at me," he tried and his friend pulled back from him and glanced into his eyes sadly. "What's happening?"

He tried to keep his voice calm and reassuring, but the way Jeff tightened his grip again and the way his body just pulled back into his shell; shoulders hunched and defensive, made him feel so scared for him.
“Jeff, please. I… I don’t know how to help you if you don’t tell m-”

"He... he told m-me...” Jeff cut him off, looking at his hands gripping Kurt’s cardigan before he risked a glance back up. “Kurt, he... he," he tried to get it out but his words betrayed him as another wave of tears spilled down his pale cheeks and Kurt fumed at the sight of him so broken.

"He who? Nick? He what? Did he hurt you? I'm gonna kill him! Or get Blaine to kill him or, or, someone!” he swore, but Jeff transferred his grip to his hand and shook his head.

"No... no, he didn't hurt me... h-he just... he... he came here... a few hours ago... a-and he t-told me that... that he wanted me to k-know everything..." He sniffled miserably and wiped ineffectively at his swollen, red face and Kurt was pretty much ready to go and beat the crap out of Nick... or well... he could ask Ryan or Dave to beat him because Nick was a gym regular and he had muscles that were hard to ignore so Kurt doubted he would stand a chance against him... but Ryan would... and Dave.

“What did he say, Jeff?” Kurt asked evenly and Jeff finally took a deep breath. Kurt recognised the pattern of 1, 2, 3 he was probably counting off in his head, before he exhaled for the same count.

He stood up shakily after a few more moments of simply breathing and walked to his desk, picking up the cup sitting innocuously there. It looked like the same ones Nick usually brought for him and when it was placed into his hands, still full from the weight and lukewarm, Kurt noticed the red writing. A note. He looked once at Jeff to confirm this is what he wanted him to see and Jeff averted his eyes but didn’t tell him not to. So he did, a huge smile blossoming on his face slowly, but surely as the words sunk in.

"Jeff... sweetie, this is amazing... why... why are you so sad?” he asked shaking his head incredulously, heart melting at the beautiful note Nick left him.

He decided to let Ryan and Dave be for the time being.

"Not sad...” He shook his head. “I don’t know I just... he... he came here earlier, to apologize for that hug that scared me... and...and he said that he’d made a decision,” Jeff stuttered sitting back next to Kurt, pulling his blanket around him looking bone tired and so dejected Kurt wanted to hold him and protect him forever.

"What kind of decision?” he asked instead, prompting his friend to keep talking.

"He said he wanted me to know everything so I could decide. He said he would never hurt me, that he wanted to... um... to keep me safe since the f-first second he saw me... and, um... he said that... he said that he'd be the best D-dom to me he could and then...” He blushed and trailed off picking at the loose thread on his shirt.

"Then what, sweetie?” he asked.

There was a suspended moment where Kurt thought he wasn’t going to say anything. "He said he loved me,” he whispered gently, disbelief obvious in the width of his eyes and the frown on his forehead.

Kurt on the other hand was ecstatic.

"Jeff... oh, sweetie, that's amazing. I'm so happy for you!” He bounced on the bed and Jeff eyed him questioningly as if he couldn't quite understand what was so amazing about what he had just said.

"Why?” he let out on another whisper that stopped Kurt's excitement like a gun shot.
"Why is it amazing?" he asked in surprise and gasped when he saw his friend nod his head timidly.

"Because Nick is an amazing Dom. Because I knew he had it bad for you. Because I know...I am absolutely positive, he will be the best Dom you could have asked for. Because you deserve to be loved the way he loves you... desperately... completely. Jeff, sweetie, that man... he would turn the world upside down for one smile on your face. Don't you think you deserve someone like that?" he asked passionately and Jeff stared at him for a moment before shaking his head; pain and anguish written in every cracking line on his face as his eyes filled up again. Because this was the problem. Jeff genuinely didn't believe any of it. He was so twisted up he couldn’t see himself the way others saw him and it broke Kurt’s heart.

"No... no I don't... y-you deserve that... and Thad... and Seb... and the other subs who aren't dirty and used and broken. I am... I don't... I can't... I can't be worth it... I wouldn't be this way if I was worth it," he cried and Kurt shot up from his place on the bed turning on his heel furiously.

"Stop it! You listen to me Jeffrey Sterling and you listen to me good. You. Are. Beautiful. You're perfect. You're sweet and kind and caring and talented and lovely and worth every single word Nick said to you, every single word he wrote on this cup... every single feeling he has for you. He made an amazing choice falling in love with you because you're everything, Jeff... you're my best friend... you're my family," he said and Jeff twined his fingers in his lap as the words slammed into him, pushing past the sadness and self-loathing.

"He said he wants to be with me... for... for real and that I should think about it... and if I want it... I should come to the formal and h-he'll wait for me. I don't know what to do, Kurt!" he said miserably and Kurt put aside the cup and knelt down in front of him again, taking his hands into his own.

"Do you care about him?" he asked gently and Jeff snapped his eyes up.

"That... that doesn't matter, Kurt... I can't... I can't tie him to me... he deserves better," he said desperately and Kurt shook his head.

"Okay... okay, here's what we're gonna do... I need you to forget the things you think about yourself." At Jeff’s twisting expression Kurt squeezed his hands to get him to focus and persisted, “Nick doesn't see them as something that makes you ‘unworthy’ so you and I... we're gonna try and turn them off and talk like they don't exist. Okay?" Kurt asked.

"But-"

"No buts... just forget about what you think about yourself and answer my questions as if you were never hurt before. Think back to before all of this and just think about what you feel before anything else comes flooding in to confuse things."

“Kurt,” Jeff said warily. “This is pointless. I’m not that person anymore.”

Kurt ignored him and went straight for the heart of the matter. “Do you like Nick?”

Jeff opened and closed his mouth for a minute trying to argue and failing miserably. After a long stretch of silence he nodded his head once, blonde fringe falling over his eyes.

"I need you to say that out loud. Do you like Nick?" he asked again.

"Y-yes," he whispered barely audible, but still resonating around them.

"If nothing had happened to you, would you want to be with him?" Kurt asked again and this time it came without a single moment of hesitation.
"Yes," he admitted, this time his voice had less quiver and less hesitation in it and it made Kurt smile so much.

"Then I think you should go to that formal. Let yourself go. Allow yourself to be vulnerable again because this time... this time you've got someone who won't use that against you. This time sweetie... if you fall... he will be there to catch you," Kurt reassured as best he could with all the sincerity in his heart, feeling odd because wasn't these the fears he himself was wrestling with? The fear that Blaine would let him fall if he admitted to being in love with him?

Jeff let a single tear slide down his cheek as he leant forwards and cuddled into Kurt's chest breaking his train of thought. "And if I hit the ground again?" he asked hiding his blotchy face and shivering lightly.

"You won't... I promise you, you won't," he said, sincerity shining through every word.

"How do you know that?" Jeff asked miserably and Kurt pulled him closer and hugged him tight.

"He loves you. You don't let the person you love fall," Kurt answered honestly, that pang inside him there again. “And you know I love you, right? I’m always going to be there, Jeff. A nice little safety net. No, a fabulous safety net. Top of the line, really.”

Jeff grew silent in his arms for a few moments.

"If I go... and he decides I'm not what he wants after all... what then...?" he asked, fear lacing his words and breaking Kurt's heart.

"That won't happen. We both know he's too far gone for you. I mean, the evidence speaks for itself," Kurt said, voice slightly teasing and playful as he indicated with his head towards the cup on the table.

"He shouldn't be," Jeff said again and Kurt tightened his hold on him.

"Don't go back to that place. Just... get out of your head and stay here... where you're loved and wanted. Please," he begged him and the blonde nodded reluctantly, signalling he was willing to at least try.

They sat in silence for a while, Kurt making himself comfortable on the floor and resting his arms across Jeff's legs, his chin on top of them as he gazed up at his best friend.

"Are you going? To the formal?" he asked quietly and Jeff tensed back up.

"I... I don't know yet... can I... is it okay if I think about it? On my own?" he asked and Kurt nodded vigorously.

"Of course it is. Jeff, I can give you advice, and push you out of your comfort zone sometimes but in the end... you're in charge of your life. If you decide not to go... I'll support you. I'll understand. And so will Nick."

"He said he'd never bother me again if I decide not to come. I... I'm not sure if I want him as my Dom Kurt... but... but I am sure I don't want him to go... what if...what if I don't show up and he just... he just leaves?" he asked fearfully and Kurt could almost feel how much it hurt him to think about losing Nick.

"I don't think he'll do that. I just think that if you don't show up he'll stop trying to make you see you should be together. It'll take some time but he'll be your friend... and just a friend. But let me ask you..."
this... if you're so afraid of losing him... don't you think it's a sign that you should go?" he asked and Jeff shrugged, brows creasing.

"I don't know right now... I feel like I don't even know my own name," he said desperately rubbing hands over his aching face and Kurt nodded, patting his legs comfortingly.

"You still have time until the formal to sleep on it... to think about it and to decide. In the meantime... I got you something... just in case you decide to go after all." He smiled wide as he stood up and walked over to where he slung the garment bag to reveal the simple, but still classy and impeccable, suit for him.

Jeff gasped and stood up to run his fingers over it softly, like a harder touch would cause it to crumble into dust.

"It's... it's beautiful," he breathed out, thinking of the days when he used to have loads of these to spare before they had to sell them all off and Kurt beamed.

"I knew you'd like it. And you'll look breath-taking in it," he crowed and Jeff smiled, holding the garment bag close to him and letting his mind picture all the possibilities of him showing up, of him not showing up... and he knew... he knew he was close to finding the answer. It was just a matter of allowing either his heart or mind to win the argument.

A week later... Day of the formal...

I fell in love with your broken soul...

He shouldn't love me...

If you're so afraid of losing him, don't you think it's a sign that you should go...

I love you...

I'll be the best Dom I can be to you...

I'm not worth it...

He loves you...

He shouldn't...

Loves you...

Shouldn't...

Jeff pressed his hands over his ears trying to tune out the voices echoing around his room and making him even more confused than he already was.

Nick's words came to him and made him feel loved, then his own doubts kicked in and he curled
inside his armchair trying to appear as small as he could, then Kurt's words broke through and he felt a little bit braver, then he was back in his own mind again making him stumble back...

And so it went in circles for hours... days...

Classes breezed past him, voices of his friends blending together in a barely understandable symphony of words and he couldn't answer them, couldn't pull himself out...Nick was all he saw, all he heard, all he felt and all he could focus on.

Nick with his gorgeous, trustworthy eyes. Nick with his smile made of sunshine and warmth. Nick with arms strong and threatening for everybody else but him when they held him and protected him from everything. Nick with his silly jokes and his madness that managed to make him laugh even on his worst of days.

Nick...
Nick...
Nick...

Was it wrong to be so close to letting him own him? Was it wrong to want to belong to someone so desperately after everything he's been through? Was it wrong to want so much, when he knew he had nothing to give back?

He felt selfish.

He was thinking of going to that formal and allowing himself to melt inside Nick's arms and to live forever on borrowed strength and warmth when he knew it would leave Nick cold, wrecked and disappointed.

Faintly, he could already hear the beat of the music coming from the hall where the formal was being held and he knew, somehow, that Nick was keeping his word and waiting for him but he couldn't bring himself to get ready and go.

Fear freezing him in place.

If he could just hold still for another few hours Nick would be free of him; free to love someone worthy, someone vibrant and beautiful... someone completely opposite from him. And he wanted that... in his mind at least. His heart, however, broke into a million pieces, not really glued together properly to begin with to withstand the blow it would sustain seeing Nick with someone else.

He came to his window and opened it, letting the fresh air hit his face and ruffle his hair teasingly; the wind playful and happy and disrespectful towards the tortured boy in front of it.

A slow song was playing now and the breeze carried the light tune with it to Jeff.

So loud, the voices of all my doubts
Telling me to give up
To pack up and leave town

A sweet voice sang the lyrics that made his heart beat faster because he could feel every word of the song so clearly... he was so ready to actually pack up and leave... to give up once and for all...

It was a constant struggle he led, every day for the past two years; listening to his doubts and giving up, or listening to the people around him and fighting another day to keep his head above water. So far, the people who still loved him won and he was still there, but lately he felt like more and more water managed to find its way into his mouth, into his nose, into his lungs.
He felt like he was drowning and he needed to decide if he was going to reach out and take someone's hand or just succumb and sink.

So can you lift me up?
And turn the ashes into flames
'Cause I have overcome more than words will ever say

He chuckled bitterly, starting to feel like the person singing this song knew him and what he had been through.

Could he be lifted up? Could he be saved again? Could he be whole again?

He had no idea...

But in the back of his mind words of love and praise reverberated with every word of the song and somehow he knew that there was a person out there... waiting for him... willing to try and save him...

And I've been given hope
That there's a light on up the hall
And that a day will come when the fight is won
And I think that day has just begun

Nick was hope personified and Jeff was sure that if he truly tried, if he truly let him... he would find a way to fix him...

He just had to be brave and go.

Lost in thought he listened to the song and every single word hit him right in the chest, filling the black hole left there with light and hope and NickNickNick...

Somewhere, everybody starts there
Counting on a small prayer
Lost in a nightmare
But I'm here and suddenly it's so clear
The struggle through the long years
It taught me to outrun my fears

And everything that's worth having
Comes with trials worth withstanding

So can you lift me up?
And turn the ashes into flames
'Cause I have overcome more than words will ever say
And I've been given hope
That there's a light on up the hall
And that a day will come when the fight is won
And I think that day has just begun

Tearing away from the window he stared at the garment bag hanging off his closet door and a rush of something went through him so strong, so compelling he just allowed it to dominate.

He stripped his sweats and hoodie and jumped into the shower quickly. He refused to let himself
think when he towelled himself off, and kept focused on putting on the beautiful suit and forcing his hair not to embarrass him. He tied the knot on his tie and ignored the mirror to stop the fear in the eyes of his reflection from petrifying him into stillness.

A series of upbeat songs had replaced the sweet tune from before, but as he walked through the door he could hear the encouragement caressing his skin...

...a day will come when the fight is won
And I think that day has just begun...

The Winter Formal was one of the most anticipated events of the year for the students of Dalton. It was a highlight for both seniors and college students to mark the end of the year and the start of winter break and so things usually got a little crazy.

Held in the auditorium, the seats were packed away to leave space for a dance floor and tables and chairs to line the walls. It was decorated much the same as it always was, a lot of fairy lights in the shape of snowflakes scattered everywhere, Christmas trees decorated to perfection in corners and enough decorations, fake snow and ice sculptures to make it look like a winter wonderland.

The floors were vibrating with the bass screaming from the speakers and the mass of people singing along to the latest top 40 songs when they walked in.

Never let it be said that all the Dalton crowd was stuffy and uptight.

"Blaine, Kurt," Hikaru greeted them at the door with his wife Tara who was helping chaperone, who looked appropriately stunning in a Chinese style dress that hit the floor and buttoned intricately up
her neck. "Glad you could make it."

"Glad to be here," Blaine responded shaking his hand, smiling at Kurt as he did the same before they both pecked Tara on the cheek in greeting after Blaine introduced them. "The decorating committee didn't pull any punches again this year again."

The Principal rolled his eyes. "Give them a budget and they insist on spending every dime and more besides."

Tara smacked him on the arm in reprimand. "Stop being such a grumpy old man."

He simply grinned at her with a wink. "You knew what you were getting into my dear."

Her own eyes did a lap around their sockets but there was a smile twitching her lips. "You boys look lovely," she complimented instead of firing back at her Dom.

Kurt blushed and preened happily on his arm and Blaine couldn't take his eyes off of him. Hadn't been able to since he'd first glimpsed him in that outfit.
Perfectly tailored to accentuate all the graceful lines of his body, it tucked into his tiny waist and the wide, patterned lapels lengthened his neck in a way that Blaine wanted to spend hours marking up. This was only exaggerated by the upswept hairstyle Kurt had decided on for the event, a little more height than his usual coif and suiting him wonderfully. The shirt he was wearing was pure white with a dash of black on the collar that made it look like he was wearing a bowtie when he wasn't and the colors all brought out the intense creamy, flawlessness of his skin and kaleidoscope eyes.

They weren't even in the room properly yet and he could already see the many admiring stares directed at his sub. It made him feel a little jumpy; his blood moving just that much faster as he tried to fight the rising possessiveness.

Kurt was his. That's all he needed to remember.

"Thank you. So do you. That dress is wonderful, the detailing is so delicate," Kurt praised back sincerely as he moved his eyes over the garment.

She beamed. Tara Montgomery was notoriously hard to please, but it was clear she had taken an immediate liking to Kurt. "Thank you, sweetie. You're a lucky man, Blaine Anderson," she told him.

"Don't I know it," Blaine grinned, feeling pride swell in him.

They said their goodbyes and walked further into the room eyes scanning the crowds for familiar faces. "This is something else," Kurt murmured as he soaked it in. He'd never been to anything like this in his life. In Lima there was nothing comparable to this and the only other thing was the Showing, but that was different. It was structured and strict and proper, whereas this seemed like mayhem in comparison and it was intriguing to watch, exhilarating to experience.

"You're something else," Blaine whispered back to him, straight into his ear and loving the shiver he felt run up Kurt's spine.

"Sir," he breathed, trying to sound stern, but knowing it just came out needy.

"Lovely, you shouldn't say sir like that unless you want me to find us the nearest dark corner," he warned lowly.

Kurt bit his lip and met his Dom's dark eyes from under his lashes. He was becoming very familiar with that look, like they were old friends and it made his stomach twist into pleasant knots. "Is that a promise, sir," he whispered feeling a surge of confidence.

Blaine hooked his hand around the back of his head, careful not to ruin his hair as he pulled his closer to press a hard kiss to his lips. Kurt melted into it, but the Dom was pulling back all too soon to indeed promise, "Later."

He pulled away completely with a naughty smirk and Kurt was left flushed and breathless and wanting.

"C'mon, lovely. Let's go be social," he urged like nothing at all had transpired, tugging him to get him moving.

Kurt narrowed his eyes on him, pouting at being worked up then denied, muttering under his breath the whole while. "The only one I want to be social with is your tongue."

Blaine missed a step and choked on air. "Kurt!"

He raised an innocent brow. "Yes, Blaine?"
It was too late for Blaine to say anything though because they literally stumbled into a familiar face waiting at a table.

"Hey, guys," Dave beamed at them, raising his voice to be heard above the music because they were closer to the speakers here and Kurt noticed that he cleaned up very well in a classic blue three piece suit.


"I'd say you do too if I didn't fear for my face," the jock joked offering a hand out to Blaine who took it with a ghost of a sheepish smile.

"Where is everyone?" the Dom asked glancing around all the energetic bodies.

"Wes called the Warblers for an emergency meeting and Corrine dragged Miriam and Ryan to dance," he informed them, pointing over their shoulders with a shit-eating grin.

The couple glanced back to see why he was so amused when they caught sight of Ryan doing what could be described as an animal dance. One minute he was snapping his arms like a crocodile, the next curling them up like a tiger, waving them around like a monkey, the classic chicken of course and all to the sounds of Kesha's, Timber.

They all burst out laughing. He was completely uninhibited, totally uncaring of just how ridiculous he looked and from glimpses of Corrine and Miriam's faces he could spy through the moving bodies, they were loving it and joining along to the spontaneous dance moves.

"Guess we should go see what Wes wants," Blaine sighed and Kurt nodded looking back wistfully at the dance floor. They waved goodbye to Dave after he pointed them in the direction they were and ended up in the far left corner, all the Warblers sitting around a table bored while Wes stood lecturing.

The Dom's eyes caught and held on them and he cut himself off. "Where have you been? We have to go on in half an hour!"

Kurt glanced at Thad and the sub mouthed, "Stressed," and gestured to Wes with his thumb before miming a gun against his head and pulling the trigger.

Kurt tried to cover his laugh with the back of his hand.

Blaine himself rolled his eyes. "We know these routines back to front, Wes. Let everyone enjoy the night, yeah?"

Wes scowled at him and crossed his arms across his classic tux. "You mean let them all get drunk before they go on? Don't think I forgot about you stumbling around up there last year, Trent," he warned the boy sternly.

The Dom smirked as a few of the others shoved his shoulders good-naturedly. "I wasn't that bad."

"Dude, I had to pull you back by your collar to keep you from walking off the end of the stage in the middle of Frosty the Snowman," David snorted, loosening his skinny red tie that matched the exact shade of Corrine's dress.

"You should have let him brain himself," Sebastian drawled taking a sip out of his glass of punch
and looking like he'd rather be anywhere else.

"Frosty is actually a sad story, it might have been appropriate," Thad mused, head tilting cutely, chin resting in his palm.

Blaine smiled at the boy and his mind turned back to his Dom who was probably still cutting shapes like they were in the eighties. "Is Ryan embarrassing you yet?" he teased gesturing over his shoulder.

Thad followed his direction and simply grinned at what he saw, shrugging carelessly as mischief lit his eyes. "What can I say? He makes up for it by being awesome in bed."

"That's enough!" Wes snapped at them cutting straight through the banter and what was descending into sex talk. "I know you all wanna have a good time. Trust me I'd rather be with my own sub than having to babysit you all or listen to your sex lives. But we have ten songs to get through and I'd like to make sure everyone knows where they're supposed to be."

They all sighed and shut up and Wes nodded happily before pulling a sheet out of his inside jacket pocket.

Ten long minutes later they were all up to speed on what order they were singing in. They had four group numbers that were classic staples of previous formal's and then six smaller groups and solo's mixed up throughout the night that weren't the usual Christmas songs.

The group broke apart well before Wes could even finish the sentence that they could leave and Blaine headed straight for Nick who had been sitting in silence the whole time, fingers tapping anxiously as he kept his eyes trained on the door not listening to a word.

"Hey, man," he smiled at his best friend.

"B," he nodded back eyeing him over and for brief second there was a hint of that old, constant amusement in his eyes again. "That outfits very you. Pretentious. Preppy. Hipst-hey!" he cried out when Blaine punched him on the arm.

He looked to Kurt for sympathy but found none from the sub that was death glaring at him. "I helped pick that out."

Nick shrunk back a little from the fierceness of that statement and Blaine grinned, completely turned on by his sassy, confident boy. He personally loved the outfit Kurt had found for him at his mother's studio. A white jacket and black pants, black shiny dress shoes, a blue shirt and of course, the bowtie his mother made sure she made for him as per Kurt's drawing.
He liked the way they looked together. Blaine in white and Kurt in black.

"I was kidding?" he offered cautiously and Kurt huffed but it was exaggerated so Nick knew he wasn't too mad at him. He was in fact messing around after all because of course Blaine looked like he'd stepped off the cover of freaking GQ or something and Kurt could easily grace the cover of Vogue he was so striking tonight.

It brought his thoughts inevitably back around to Jeff.

What would he look like in a suit? He would bet his families fortune on absolutely breath-taking.

"Hey, um, Kurt… do you know if Jeff's planning on coming tonight?" he found himself asking despite himself, scrubbing hard at the back of his neck because it came out anything but casual. He wasn't sure if he could take the answer but it was killing him inside not knowing whether or not this was the end of the road for his hopes.

Kurt and Blaine shared a look before the sub settled his sympathetic gaze on the defeated Dom in front of him. "I'm sorry I honestly don't know. I left him a suit last week and he wanted to think about it on his own for a while… he didn't tell me his decision."

"But he dropped out of the Warbler numbers," he said dully.
Blaine sighed heavily for his friend and clapped him on the back. "He could still come. Him not performing doesn't mean that he's moved out of state or something."

Nick nodded but he didn't look wholly convinced. "How about we go dance?" Kurt suggested trying to brighten his mood. "Ryan's doing some pretty interesting things on the dance-floor."

Nick appreciated the effort but shook his head. "I'm just gonna find a seat near the door until the first performance. You guys go have fun."

"Nick-" Blaine started.

"Seriously, B. Don't let me ruin your night. Dance with your sub, it's his first formal after all," he gave them another lifeless smile before slinking off into the crowd, head down, shoulders hunched and hands jammed into the pockets of his grey Dior suit. Kurt had seen pictures of it online and the man filled it out impeccably.

"I wish we could do something," Kurt sighed unhappily, watching him go.

Blaine drew him in closer and kissed his temple. "They'll work it out. They were made for each other."

_Just like you and me._

He nodded and allowed Blaine to pull him towards the group in the middle of the room, now larger with the addition of David, Thad and Trent.

Corrine wolf whistled at Kurt when he smiled at her in greeting. "Well _hello_ handsome, where have you been all my life?"

David rolled his eyes and pulled Corrine back into the curve of his hips in possessive playfulness, Blaine doing the same with Kurt. The subs laughed but didn't pull away. They all spent the next half hour or so dancing around and acting like idiots before they had to get up on stage and sing.

It was a success of course. Thad getting to lead _Let It Snow_, and Kurt and Blaine even got to duet _Baby Its Cold Outside_ which was flirty and fun, the audience eating it up.

The first solo slot was David's who lead them out with _Bruno Mars', Locked out of Heaven_ which he dedicated to Corrine who just smirked and put on a show for him like they were the only two in the room. They all continued to dance and sit and talk in turns as well as sing when they were up. Trent of course did end up drunk and fumbled his way through a truly entertaining version of an Eminem song that he had swapped in at the last minute much to Wes’ unending horror.

The punch was spiked very early on in the night, blazers and jackets discarded and the ties loosened, heels swapped for ballet flats and stiff buns lowered to pony tails and bouncy curls across shoulders. Blaine was one of the first to lose his jacket, sweat forming on his brow and soaking his curls as he threw himself around, Kurt laughing so hard his sides hurt and trying to keep up with the erratic, goofy idiot.

They ended up grinding for the first time to a low and dirty beat, something Kurt was initially hesitant about until he saw literally everyone doing it and then relaxed into the feel of Blaine hard and warm behind him, kissing at his neck and whispering sweet nothings into his ear while the lights strobe around them. It was intoxicating and Kurt missed it immediately when the adults insisted the song choice be changed in fear of some sort of pheromone frenzy.

They all took it in turns to sit with Nick at different points in the night as he stared more desolately at
the entrance with every passing moment. But no one knew what to say, most of them didn't even know what was wrong, though they had their suspicions of course.

The evening was winding down when Thad got back up on stage. The first strands of *Passengers, Let Her Go* started playing and Blaine looked at Kurt like he had been all evening, like he'd hung the moon and stars before offering his hand. "Dance with me?"

Kurt nodded and allowed himself to be led into the crush of pairing off bodies, sinking into his Dom when he pulled him close; one hand on his lower back, the other grasping Kurt's and holding it up between them in a classic waltz position.

*Well you only need the light when it's burning low*  
Only miss the sun when it starts to snow  
Only know you love her when you let her go

Blaine swayed them back and forth, nothing fancy just breathing Kurt in and appreciating the feel of him so close. Their cheeks pressed together and he felt Kurt nuzzle into the contact wrapping his arm around his shoulder tighter so that their chests were flush and their joint hands ran fingers to elbow, tucked tight to their bodies.

He closed his eyes.

Nick watched his friends from where he sat on the table nearest the door numbly.

The love between them was like a shooting star, burning so brightly and inspiring people that true love did exist, making them want to wish on them for the same sort of luck and happiness. That magic like soulmates was out there. Someone that was made for you, someone you had been looking for your whole life.

He was sure that was Jeff for him. Absolutely sure… only… it didn't look like he was going to get his happily ever after.

He palmed the folded paper he'd placed in his pocket almost like a safety blanket. It was his one piece of tangible proof that Jeff cared about him. He pulled it out and stared at the drawing of his own face, concentrating on the name at the bottom of the page. He stroked his fingers over it reverently and clenched his jaw to keep from howling out his sorrow.

Kurt caught a glimpse of Nick's miserable, downturned face and his heart wept for him, unconsciously pressing closer to Blaine for comfort. He felt soothing lips against his cheek and turned his face into the contact, seeking more intimacy, more closeness, more **Blaine**.

Lips caught and held, sticking together with the softness of the pressure they used before Blaine snaked the tip of his tongue over the seam of his lips. The kiss became deep and slow and languid as they turned into small circles oblivious to everyone else.

The song began to end and Nick knew it was his turn next. The last performance of the night. It seemed bitterly fitting that it was for Jeff.

His final goodbye.

He walked towards the stage like he was walking to the hangman's noose. Thad sent him an encouraging smile on his way off but Nick hardly saw it, he was too stuck in his own head. To wrapped up in his despair. The loop going round and round in his head.

*He didn't come. It's over.*
Give me love like him,  
'Cause lately I've been waking up alone,  
Paint splattered teardrops on my shirt,  
Told you I'd let them go,

He didn't remember picking up the guitar, not even starting but pretty soon he was singing and he didn't think he'd ever meant something so much.

And that I'll fight my corner,  
Maybe tonight I'll call ya,  
After my blood turns into alcohol,  
No, I just wanna hold ya.

This hurt.

Finally it hurt. It wasn't numb anymore, this was someone ripping open his chest and playing at his insides and all he could do was feel it and stare at the door still. Eyes fixed nowhere else, willing with everything he had that Jeff would round that corner.

Give a little time to me or burn this out,  
We'll play hide and seek to turn this around,  
All I want is the taste that your lips allow,  
My, my, my, my, oh give me love,

My, my, my, my, oh give me love,  
My, my, my, my, oh give me love,  
My, my, my, my, give me love,

Give me love like never before,  
'Cause lately I've been craving more,  
And it's been a while but I still feel the same,  
Maybe I should let you go,

God he didn't want to. How could he possibly let him go when he was so tightly wound into every strand of his being? Letting him go would literally rip him in half.

He couldn't... he knew he couldn't... but he had to...

He had promised him that if he chose not to come it would mean the end, he would never bother him again.

Jeff made his choice. He didn't come and Nick knew, without a shadow of doubt that the song meant to make him see he was loved, was now a song to make him cut the ties that held him to the sub that would never be his.

He would keep the drawing that gave him hope and the memory of the night he held him in his arms.

He would make sure it was enough to last him a lifetime without him.

You know I'll fight my corner,  
And that tonight I'll call ya,  
After my blood is drowning in alcohol,  
No, I just wanna hold ya.
Give a little time to me or burn this out,
We'll play hide and seek to turn this around,
All I want is the taste that your lips allow,
My, my, my, my, oh give me love,

He was on the edge of the final chorus repeat and he realized the entire student body stood in complete silence, watching him fall apart in front of them with no shame, no shield to keep him safe from their pity.

He chanced a defiant glance up at them and froze. Fingers halting on the strings and lyrics trapped in his throat as his eyes locked with terrified, chocolate brown ones, partially shielded with blonde fringe.

The auditorium was wrapped in perfect silence, his classmates unmoving and respectful in the face of a real life angel materializing among them.

Jeff...

He came... he was there...

His feet turned to leave the stage to go to him, but something stopped him; like an invisible hand holding him tight and a friendly voice whispering in his ear: finish your song... sing it for him... not as a goodbye, sing it like you had planned this whole time.

He gripped his guitar and sang his heart out in those few lines he had left as he stared at his blonde wonder and begged him not to leave now... not now when he’d given him all the hope in the world.

He sang like it was the last time he would ever sing...

Give a little time to me or burn this out,
We'll play hide and seek to turn this around,
All I want is the taste that your lips allow,
My, my, my, my, oh give me love,
My, my, my, my, oh give me love,
My, my, my, my, oh give me love,
My, my, my, my, oh give me love,
My, my, my, my, oh give me love.

The chords petered out and there was a half second of silence that descended like a veil over the whole room. Like the aftermath of a shockwave where all movement ceased and you tried to find your feet on the world again.

Only… Nick didn't have that luxury.

He pulled the guitar from around his neck and let it drop to the floor, the drum and twang fading into white noise as it hit. Their gazes never broke and he didn't think he even blinked as he vaulted down from the stage, not bothering with the stairs. Every action was urgent. Every step desperate. Every beat of his heart hopeful as he pushed through the crowd that were applauding now, having recovered. He might as well have been stuck in a silent movie though because he heard none of it, barely saw the rhythmic thump of hands hitting hands through his tunnel vision.

The urge to run was strong for Jeff, courage waning the closer Nick got… but he couldn't move.
He didn't know whether it was turbulent emotions in him that seemed too heavy to drag around anymore that kept him weighted or the song that had left him dazed, but what he did know was that it all revolved around Nick.

He was everywhere.

In his head, in his heart, under his skin. He was in songs, in coffee cups, in red writing and stupid clothing, in smiles and his favourite films.

He couldn't escape him, didn't want to, but there was that vicious voice, that toxic whisper in his ear saying that he must. That he'd promised not to burden Nick with himself and it was the worst sort of pain to be so torn in two; hands scrabbling at him from one side, ripping into his flesh, relentless in its pull no matter how hard he tried to break free from its hold and Nick's gentle tug from the other promising nothing but all he'd ever wanted. Love. Protection. Trust.

He'd come here tonight thinking he knew what he was doing... but now when he was faced with the decision it felt like everything just flew out the window and he was left floundering like a fish on dry land, gasping for breath, struggling for help because he couldn't help himself.

And then Nick was in front of him. Gorgeous and hopeful, so hopeful that it made Jeff want to cry. He didn't know if he could do this... didn't know what he was doing at all.

"You came," the Dom breathed, eyes searching his face.

Nick didn't know what else to say even though a million questions were racing though his head pushing in line for air time. Does this mean we can be together? He turned up... that's what this means, right?

"I..." Jeff left his open to say more than that strangled word, but he found he couldn't. He looked around at all the openly curious and staring faces, all the whispering mouths and clammed up completely.

Nick watched Jeff dart scared eyes around the room before folding in on himself, wrapping arms around his stomach and Nick wanted to gather him up and replace those arms with his. Offer safety and protection and love.

He didn't though. It killed him but he didn't, the memory of last time and its consequences still vividly fresh in his mind.

"We can go somewhere to talk," he suggested gently and Jeff snapped his eyes back to his, looking grateful as he nodded his assent.

This doesn't feel like it's supposed to.

When Nick allowed himself to picture the moment in his mind when Jeff turned up it was because he had wholeheartedly chosen to be the best part of his life, no doubts, no second thoughts... but this Jeff still looked unsure and Nick didn't know if he could take it if Jeff turned up to tell him no to his face instead of simply not coming at all.

Nick led the way outside hands clenching and unclenching in anxiousness, keeping an almost stupidly large gap between himself and Jeff's personal space. The air was biting with winter chill when they stepped out, the surrounding area pitch darkness broken up into circled patches of yellow glow coming from the lights shining through the windows. He knew it wasn't the most perfect place for a conversation but because of the cold it was the only place close enough that they'd really be able to have some privacy.
They huddled by the door in the alcove so there was at least adequate light and a semblance of warmth and stared at each other for a moment or two, neither knowing how to start.

It felt like a lifetime to Nick. A lifetime of watching and pining after someone he couldn't have and it started eating him up inside, slowly killing him because he just wanted him. He just wanted to love him. Why couldn't he have that? Why wasn't he allowed to make Jeff happy?

It flew out of his mouth before he could stop it. "Be with me."

The air hitched in Jeff throat, heart squeezing over the words like a vice trying to keep them inside always. Three little words that had the same shattering impact as the others he had confessed to him on the broken walls he was still trying to hold up inside him.

He wanted to say yes. Needed to… but Nick didn't know what he was asking. Jeff wasn't what he thought he was. He'd been going back and forth on this decision for days but that fact remained the same.

He wasn't this ‘angel’ Nick had somehow managed to make up in his head.

He swallowed past the hurt and forced the words out, wincing as they scraped his throat raw. "I can't be with you."

Nick felt like the world has just fell out from under him, but it didn't hurt like up on that stage like he thought it would, he just felt numb again. In denial.

No, no, no, no…

He couldn't accept it. Not after all this.

He scrambled for his pocket and the folded paper there that he'd looked over a thousand times and ripped it out holding it in between them like a lifeline. "You care about me, Jeff. I know you do. You came here tonight-"

"I know-"

"You can't tell me you don't care about me the way I care about you!" he barrelled on relentlessly, feeling tears prick his eyes as he waved the drawing between them.

Jeff felt hot streams already trekking down his own cheeks as he stared at the paper shaking between Nick's tensed fingers. He was scared of what he might find but he took it for himself, careful to avoid touching skin, knowing that one brush could send him over the edge and opened it up.

His stomach lurched as he stared at the drawing he drew, the one he thought he lost and he was struck by how worn the paper was already. The creases were deep like it had been opened and closed a million times and where he'd signed his name was smudged like someone had run their fingers over it repeatedly. He bit his lip hard over the mental image.

"You care about me," Nick told him quietly and Jeff couldn't deny it.

Another tear fell hot and molten and dripped onto the paper. He raised his eyes again. "Yes… I do."

It felt so much worse having the words in the air though screaming between them in the silence, having Nick know them because it's going to hurt so much more when Nick rejects him when he knows the truth about who he is. But he couldn't take them back, wasn't sure even that he wanted to really because the least he owed Nick was honesty.
Nick was speechless. Struck dumb by actually hearing those words, the confirmation of something he could have made up all in his head confirmed in Jeff's own beautiful voice. Something he'd began to fear would never happen all night long.

He cares about me...

He surged forwards suddenly, fuelled now by the fire Jeff just sparked, fingers closing over Jeff's on the drawing and tingling at the contact. He felt Jeff shiver as well and didn't know whether it was from the cold or him... he hoped it was the latter. "Then be with me," he begged hoarsely. "Be mine, angel."

Jeff shook his head, trying to control the urge to break down and sob. "You don't want to be with me, you don't... what he did... you don't know what he made me!"

Nick felt that self-same spark of rage whenever the sub's ex Dom was mentioned, but he managed to keep his head because Jeff needed him in that moment. He looked so defeated. So lost and devastated while he hated himself for someone else's failings that Nick had to do something to comfort him. It wasn't a choice anymore.

He reached out and cupped the blonde's splotchy cheek, wiping away the tears as best he could and he ached when he felt Jeff leaning into the contact like he couldn't help it. Like he needed him.

It was heart calling out to heart and Dom calling out to sub and Nick reacted on all levels.

"I fell in love with your broken, beautiful soul," he repeated passionately, enthusing himself into the words so much that he felt empty afterwards. He poured everything he is into Jeff's hands long ago.

The blondes face crumpled. "You shouldn't have," he sobbed, hitting at his chest weakly and he wanted to explain why. Tell him everything that happened to him so he could see how wrong he was for him... how wrong for anything else but solitude, but he couldn't seem to find the words. "You deserve better-"

"Shhh," Nick hushed pulling them closer still, so that their arms and hands that were still joined tightly were trapped between their chests. "There's no one better. You were meant to be mine, angel. Heaven sent you," he whispered, stroking his thumb along the smooth arch of his damp cheekbone.

Jeff's closed his eyes, soaking in the warmth of Nick's skin greedily never wanting him to let go. He knew all it would take was a touch. A single point of contact for him to die to give in.

"Do you want to be with me?" Nick asked, soft and gentle.

Jeff kept his eyes closed. It was easier to admit the truth that way. "I'd rather be yours than anybody's in the whole world... but I promised myself I wouldn't. I promised."

"Don't do this for him," Nick beseeched, a tear spilling over and sliding down his face at last. "Don't let him win this way, please. He was an animal and he never deserved you, Jeff. But you're not ruined. You're not what you think you are," he told him desperately, leaning his head in closer so that their foggy breathes mingled.

Jeff opened his watery eyes, in awe of how sincere Nick sounded when he said that. He'd heard the same words in different voices for such a long time but somehow, this time, the words bloomed something in his chest, the small, limp flower there that had been stuck so long in the cold finally seeing a shred of sunlight as Nick reached deep down within him.

"Every second that I'm not with you feels like I can't breathe," Nick admitted, the words skating
across his lips, sounding open and wounded. "Say yes?"

It was posed as a question. No command or demand. Jeff's choice wholly and completely and it was such a stark contrast to what he knows. What he had endured at the hands of someone who just wanted a plaything to own. He was nothing more than a doll to Kevin, not meant to have opinions, not meant to have feelings, only there to please and look pretty and be used by a will not his own.

And here Nick is… how he's always been. Honest and kind, treating him like an equal. Like he mattered and it's all Jeff ever wanted… only he's shying away from it now. Using excuses and barriers to hold him at length, to keep himself suffering for reasons he doesn't rightly understand. He told himself he didn't want another Dom, but Nick isn't just that, Jeff doesn't view him that way. When he looks at him he doesn't see power and ways that he can make him suffer.

He just sees Nick.

Nick who says he loves him, all of him, no matter how scarred or broken. Nick who says he needs him, wants him, desires him above everyone else.

Jeff loves him.

He can't help it. He'd admitted that quietly inside his own mind at least, but now it was really hitting him and it was the most powerful feeling he'd ever felt and the hardest thing to fight against. And why was he fighting? He thought of all the reasons from earlier, all the reasons that made him come here tonight. He thought of the song Nick had sung him. The words he had told him.

He was sick of punishing himself. He wanted to be selfish. Just this once. He could just have Nick right? It wasn't like he wanted anything else, would never ask for anything else. No money. No power. He'd live with him in Lima in a shack and be completely content.

But… "There's things you don't know," he started. "Things that happened to me… I'm really messed up, Nick," he admitted, voice strangled, more tears spilling when he met sad, brown eyes. But… "But I want you. I tried to tell myself I didn't but I want to be with you… that's all I ever want but once you know you'll look at me different, I know you will."

The speech both elated and broke Nick's heart all at once.

He shook his head and framed his face with both hands now, stroking over his cheek and into his fair hair. "Nothing could make me change the way I feel about you. You could secretly be a cannibal and I'd still feel exactly the same," he attempted the weak joke with a small smile but it wasn't funny because Nick's tone and open face were wholly serious.

Jeff's grasped Nick's forearms, drawing crinkling in one hand against his jacket, to steady his legs that felt like they were about to buckle.

The air between them changed, became charged in a whole different way.

Nick swallowed and tried to draw air in and out but his lungs had frozen up. Eyes were drawn down to pink lips against his will and god it was torture. The, should I, shouldn't I debate. Jeff had just admitted to wanting to be with him, to caring for him but he needed it in black and white. Definitive.

"Be mine?" he asked again. One last time.

They locked stares.

Jeff had never felt anything like it before. Something that made him feel scared and yet safe at the
same time. Made him ache with want instead of hurt. His eyes bounced back and forth between the Dom’s finding nothing but affection there, no hidden agendas. It suddenly felt like standing on the edge of a cliff with only two options left. Run away for good or take the leap.

He fell.

"Yes."

It was like a supernova exploded inside of the Dom. "Yes?" he asked dizzily, the beginnings of a smile so wide splitting his face.

Jeff choked a happy sob this time because that's truthfully all he felt right now and he hadn't had this in years. All the dark spots chased away, heat finally warming him all the way through to his bones even though it was freezing out here. "Yes. I've nothing to give you...but..."

"You already gave me the world with that single yes," he promised and pulled him closer still, feeling the lithe body shivering next to his.

"Nick..." he whispered and the Dom raised his head to look him in the eye, awe and pride etched into his skin.

"Can I...can I kiss you?" he asked and Jeff froze for a moment, flashes of bitten lips and drops of blood crossing his mind. The only kisses he knew.

"Please don't hurt me," he pleaded in fear and Nick gasped, aching to find the bastard who made him afraid to be kissed, held, loved.

"Never, angel. I'll never hurt you. My kisses, my hands, my words, they will never do anything to make you hurt. I promise you," he said heatedly and Jeff nodded once, fear still lacing his beautiful features.

He smoothed his thumbs across perfect cheeks and gave him a smile that lit up his soul.

"I love you," he whispered again and then Nick leant in those last few inches and Jeff could feel his pulse hammering in his ears, could smell the Dom's aftershave as he tentatively closed the gap. Their lips barely brushed and their gazes were still locked, the blonde trying to control his ragged breathing and he could feel himself nodding, saying silently that it was alright even as his body stayed alert and ready to close in on the world at the first flash of pain.

It never came.

Nick pulled back to make doubly sure, only to be drawn back down helplessly because he couldn't stay away. Not now. Fuck they were kissing… finally they were kissing and it was better than any fantasy or daydream. God so much better.

Flesh met flesh with the gentlest of pressures, off centre and clumsy, hardly even pressing down at all and it was fireworks and sparks and electricity. Jeff's vice grip on his arms tightened and the most beautiful sound escaped him when he realigned their lips to slot together, once, twice… he lost count of how many times.

Jeff could taste salt on his tongue from where he was still crying, knew that Nick could too which was a heady thought. More intimate than even the tender way he was kissing him… and Jeff had never been kissed this way. With so much passion and care. It was surreal.

They broke apart after an undefined amount of time to gasp in lungful’s of air, Nick resting their
foreheads together as he began laughing giddily. Jeff opened his tingling lips to ask why only to be cut off by his mouth again as it began pecking kisses one after the other.

"You," kiss, "wont," kiss, "be," kiss, "sorry." Three kisses in succession that made Jeff's head spin but suddenly he was smiling, feeling this rush of adrenaline and happiness now that the shock from the initial kiss had worn off. "I'm gonna take such good care of you, angel," he whispered, nuzzling their noses.

Jeff broke from their current hold to throw himself at Nick, wrapping his arms around his shoulders and burying his face in the curve of the Dom's neck. The sub in him purred at this. Finally. A calm washed over him, so strong and sure he thought he could just fall asleep here in his arms. Nick cupped the back of his head and wrapped an arm tight around his waist kissing at his temple over and over like he couldn't get enough, like Jeff was precious.

He shut his eyes and let himself feel for a moment and they stayed like that until someone knocked on the door.

Jeff peeked out from his hiding spot, eyes heavy and spotted Kurt and Blaine watching them with undisguised joy and disbelief on their faces and the strange thing was that Jeff didn't feel ashamed. Didn't feel the need to pull back and defend himself, say it wasn't what it looked like, because he trusted Kurt with his life and Blaine had proven himself twice over that he was worthy too and they just looked so happy for them. No hint of horror on their faces that Nick was seen embracing him, just happiness.

Nick gestured them out, meeting his best friends ecstatic gaze with one of his own. He still thought he'd wake up any moment.

"Please tell me that this is what it looks like," Kurt begged, snuggling into Blaine's arms and biting his lip hopefully as he looked at them.

Nick glanced down at the gift in his arms and leant into his ear saying, loud enough for everyone to hear, but just for Jeff as he channelled his Dominant voice and finally placed the claim he'd wanted to since that first day.

"He is mine."

"I can't believe that happened! Blaine...can you believe that happened? Jeff is Nick's. He's finally loved the way he's supposed to be," Kurt bounced all the way to the entrance to the mansion from the car, giddy and giggly and happy and Blaine couldn't even blame him.

He unlocked the door, trying not to keep scanning eyes up and down Kurt as he leant on the wall next to him. Unknowingly enticing.

"I know, baby. I know. It was amazing to see them both so happy," Blaine replied to his excited sub, smiling as he led him through the darkened house, years spent there teaching him where to step to avoid colliding with things in the dark.

"I'm sooo tired. But I'm so happy I don’t think I can sleep. Tonight was perfect, Blaine," he sighed dreamily, clinging onto his arm as Blaine let them into their room and collapsed on the bed Kurt letting go unfortunately so he didn't come down with him.
Blaine did his best to pay attention to his sub but he was so tired and sore he could barely keep his eyes open.

"I'm glad you had a good time, lovely," Kurt heard his Dom slur and he smiled gently as he took him in, blazer wrinkled and bowtie undone as he star-fished across their bed.

Something inside of him shifted at the sight of him so slumped and exhausted on the bed and the sudden need to make him feel strong and big again made him stumble as he kicked off his dress shoes.

His Dom was larger than life. Confident, powerful, strong.

And like that he made Kurt's submission purr in quiet satisfaction at being safe and protected by him all the time. But like this... he made a different set of submissive instincts perk up; the ones that balanced, the one that paid back what it got from the Dominance Blaine gave him, the one that nurtured and replenished and empowered.

He needed to make him feel better, strong again and a pull from the inside made him cross the room and kneel next to his Dom on the bed, running cautious fingers across his chest.

Blaine snapped his eyes open at the first touch and locked them with hesitant blue ones.

"Lovely?" he asked curiously and Kurt slipped his fingers to the top button of his shirt and popped it open.

"I... I want to make you feel good... I want to try..." he said, avoiding his eyes and Blaine captured his hand in his to prevent him from going further, sitting up and cupping his chin gently.

He recognized the inherent need in a submissive to please, to care for and he wanted to give Kurt the chance to explore that. The Dom in him was practically salivating at the idea.

"Baby, look at me," he demanded and Kurt tore his gaze from their locked fingers and looked up at him through his forest of curled lashes. "You always make me feel good." He reassured but he wasn't going to deny Kurt what he needed. What they both needed at this point. "Tell me what you want?"

Kurt looked at him, trying to figure out how to do this and not fail completely. What could he do to make Blaine feel better and please the Dom inside? Perhaps by simply listening to what his blood whispered to him…

"Lie down, please, sir," he said demurely, every mannerism submissive from his exposed neck, to his kneeling position on the bed and Blaine felt his dominance surge with power as he went to comply.

He was almost down when Kurt spoke again.

"Um... could you... um... the clothes... could you take off the clothes?" he asked biting his lip and Blaine grinned at him, feeling far more awake than ever as his cock gave an interested twitch.

"Naughty boy," he whispered and Kurt blushed fiercely as he watched Blaine rise to his feet beside the bed to shrug off his shirt, then take off his shoes and dress pants before hooking his thumbs under the waist band of his briefs.

"No... leave those on, please," Kurt requested hastily, not knowing he was totally ready for that just yet and Blaine snapped the elastic back onto his skin, sitting lower on his hips to reveal the perfect vee of his groin and the sight and sound made Kurt's stomach knot pleasantly with arousal.
Jumping back up on the bed he settled down, only to flop over onto his stomach once Kurt asked him too, head turned sideways to look at his sub scanning him with gorgeous blue eyes.

"Like what you see?" he teased and Kurt blushed to the roots of his still high and swept hair, nodding shyly and making Blaine chuckle at the cuteness.

"Watcha gonna do to me?" he asked eagerly as Kurt stood up. A plan was forming in the subs mind, as he walked to the dresser where most of his cosmetics were stored. He opened a drawer, pulling out a pale yellow bottle, flushing hotly at the thought of what he was about to do before walking back to the bed.

He dropped the bottle onto the comforter next to Blaine's hip and Blaine only had enough time to read the word vanilla before his attention was well and truly captured as his sub began undressing before his very eyes.

His brain short circuited.

"God, you're magical," he breathed out, thinking he'd never really get over how flawless his sub was. It made him want to put in rules in their contract to make them be naked all day every day… and he was only half kidding.

Kurt finally awarded him with a smile that felt sincere, relaxed and mind numbingly beautiful and it went straight to his heart to keep.

He took off the rest of his clothes apart from his black briefs and with a moment of hesitation, he climbed onto the bed, slinging a leg over Blaine and settling on his hips making him hiss and squirm under his weight. Biting back a groan because Kurt was *straddling him*.

"Am I heavy, sir?" he asked innocently and Blaine smashed his face in the cover for a moment to keep from blowing his load there and then. That genuinely guileless tone, submissive and pure in every facet, was one of his biggest kinks apparently.

Kurt popped the bottle open as he waited for his answer and poured a bit of oil on his hands, the scent of vanilla washing over the both of them.

Blaine hummed underneath him and Kurt could feel the vibration on his knees where they were pressed tight to his sides. "Not at all... love feeling you on my, baby," Blaine said, a breathy lilt in his voice making the sub in Kurt purr.

"Okay... hold still, please," he asked and slathered the oil on his skin, the liquid warmed up on his palm and comforting on his flesh.

Blaine melted into the mattress and groaned when Kurt dug slender fingers into tense muscles on his back and kneaded, releasing the tension and removing some of the aches from his body.

Kurt felt empowered by the pleased sounds his Dom was making under his touch and he spread his palms just above his shoulder blades, digging the heel into the skin and fanning the fingers out to brush his neck and shoulders as he dragged the pressure down and outwards, covering Blaine's back with his capable touch that left him visibly relaxed and calm.

Spreading his legs wider for better access he dipped his hands into the dimples at the bottom of his spine and allowed his thumbs to slip under the band of his briefs teasingly just for a fraction of a second making Blaine growl; a sound that made him shiver.
"Such a tease, lovely," he reprimanded jokingly and Kurt pinched his sides in retaliation a smirk playing unseeing on his lips.

"Sorry, sir," he said, biting his lip to stifle the urge to giggle.

"You don't sound sorry at all you little...ohh..." he trailed off in a soft moan when he felt a pair of lips at the back of his neck, brushing his mark.

His body tensed and arched towards the soft touch as if it was out of his control completely. Fuck. He just wanted Kurt closer, so much closer.

There was another kiss, this time on his shoulder and another one in the middle of his back and it only took him a second to realize what was happening when Kurt started kissing every millimetre down his back, seeming not to want to miss an inch.

He was rock hard by now, trying to rub himself against the sheets but Kurt's weight on him restricted his movement and turned it all into the sweetest kind of torture as rose bud lips neared the bottom of his back and a tentative tongue traced the edge of his boxer briefs, frustratingly far from where it was needed.

"Lovely," he gasped and Kurt kissed back up, laving a hot lick over his mark that made him jolt in pure pleasure before aligning his lips with his ear.

"Yes, sir?" he crooned and Blaine felt like he could die just like that, from the vibrato in his voice and his hot breath on his skin.

"Need you so badly, Kurt. Kiss me," he commanded and Kurt lowered his head to kiss directly on top of his mark again, sucking a little and making him moan loudly, eyes rolling back in his head.

Shit, he couldn't take it anymore.

He flipped over under Kurt, bringing them face to face with, cocks pressed together finally and lips inches away.

"Kiss me, lovely," he said again, dominance seeping out of his very pores and into the words and Kurt shivered, leaning down and locking their lips as his knees gave out and he sprawled on top of Blaine, naked skin burning at the touch and both of them moaning loudly into each other's mouths.

Kurt felt them both so clearly, so strongly, so hard next to each other, so desperate for each other that if he could have fused them into one he would have. Before he could stop himself he rocked down, tentative and unsure.

"Blaine," he whimpered involuntarily, the name dripping with reverence.

This was uncharted territory, he had no idea what he was doing. The last time they did this, Blaine was in charge, Blaine led them, Blaine showed him.

But now he was letting him take the lead.

He was the one responsible for making his Dom feel good and he shivered with nerves and then arousal when Blaine's hands slipped inside his briefs and cupped his ass, pushing him forward, coaxing him on.

"Don't hesitate, beautiful boy. Whatever feels good... just do it," he encouraged low and rough and Kurt buried his head in his neck, nodding briefly before rocking forward again experimentally,
undecided on the pressure or angle to try and use.

"I... I want to make it good for you, sir," he whispered almost whimpered shakily as his hips stuttered on top of him, every brush of their cocks sending electric shocks through his body.

Blaine's whole body tensed at those words and he pushed his hips up towards him instinctively.

"Everything you do is good, baby...anything. Just feel... let go..." he praised, feeling like he'd burn up if Kurt stopped now and his sub lifted his head, capturing his lips again in a searing kiss as he grinded into him with more confidence, drawing desperate moans from the both of them.

They kissed, messy and wet and biting as they sought friction from each other, rushing towards something that kept escaping them somehow and Kurt was getting hot and bothered.

He pushed his hips down, trying to find that feeling Blaine woke in him that tipped him over the edge the last time they did this but it just wasn't there... wasn't enough...

He moaned in frustration, hips coming down faster and harder as he tried to find the same sensations through doing this. It was impossible. "Sir... I... I can't... I want..." he stammered but he couldn't find a way to say what he wanted... couldn't bring himself to voice it.

Blaine squeezed his ass between his palms, eyeing Kurt's discontented expression, the wild look in his eyes that screamed for something, anything. It stirred something in Blaine, strong and powerful. "What do you need, Kurt? What do you want? Tell me!" he ordered darkly and his sub shook with the force of his command, closing his eyes and moaning as it washed over him.

"I want to touch you. I want to see you and make you come, sir," he begged desperately and Blaine rolled him over so they faced each other, resting on their sides panting.

He took Kurt's hand and brought it down between his legs looking at his face intently as his sub licked his lips and fanned his fingers to cup him completely, pressing down cautiously and making Blaine throw his head back and hiss as that delicate hand moved over him, felt him out, explored to his heart's content.

"Sir... can I..." he asked, spider fingers sneaking beneath his briefs and brushing the head of his cock with his fingertips.

His whole body jerked and bowed into that tentative stroke of fingers. "God, fuck... anything... anything you want, baby," he moaned out, hips canting up and into his hand fully as he wrapped it around the heated flesh and moved it timidly.

Oh god, he had Blaine in his hand.

"I don't know-" he started but Blaine surged up to kiss him.

"Perfect, my beautiful boy. You're perfect. Just don't stop. Make me come, baby," he encouraged and praised and fuck he needed to come. This was going to be embarrassingly short but he couldn't even find it in himself to feel embarrassed when it felt so god damned amazing.

The hand on him sped up, encouraged by the words and the moans and Blaine fucked up into his fist unable to help himself as he bit and gasped into Kurt's swollen mouth.

It only took seconds before Blaine was seeing fucking stars, a strangled sound that sounded like his name spilling into the air around them as he spilled into the subs hand, biting down on his plush bottom lip to keep himself from screaming.
And Kurt came untouched, whining high and pitchy, just from witnessing and feeling everything Blaine had to give, what he'd done to him. All that dominant strength flooding out of him because he made it so and sending Kurt to another dimension. It was an intoxicating, heady cocktail that set him on fire.

They collapsed down together exhausted and spent.

"Well look who decided to grace us with their presence," Dana chirped when she saw her son padding into the dining room, wild haired and eyes half opened, his adorably sleep flushed sub clinging to his neck and hips as he gave him a piggy back ride and lowered him onto the chair.

"Mom... please keep it down," Blaine whined petulantly slumping into his own chair and pouted when he realized he'd have to get back up and make some more toast for him and Kurt if they planned to eat anything. It was the only reason they had dressed and got out of bed, because their stomachs were rumbling from all the... ah... activity, last night. Blaine tried and failed to hold back his smug grin at the memory, feeling himself get hard in his pajama pants.

"My everything hurts," Kurt cried quietly, resting his head on his folded arms on the table and Blaine almost jumped up, well as much as he could in his beat up state despite the stellar, sort of aborted massage last night and brought his hands up and onto his shoulders, squeezing lightly and smoothening the knots he found there.

He caught Kurt's eye when he glanced back at him and stuck his tongue in the corner of his mouth cheekily. Kurt squeaked and hide back in his arms, face flushing beautifully.

"How much did you two have to drink last night?" Jared asked chuckling at their dishevelled state, none the wiser of what they'd gotten up to and the two of them shook their heads in unison.

"Nothing. We just ended up dancing like crazy the whole night and now everything hurts so much..." Blaine explained, omitting other vigorous activities and his parents huffed out a laugh.

"Well, have some breakfast and then you can go back to bed until you feel better. Sound good?" she asked and the two of them nodded, eyes shining at the prospect of just going back to bed shutting the light out and cuddling until they felt their muscles unwind and relax once again.

"Awesome... would you mind making us some toast?" Blaine decided to milk his mother's good mood as much as he could but she hit him with her best bitch glare and he cowered.

"Don't push it, darling," she said sweetly, sipping her tea and he nodded letting go of Kurt's shoulders and heaving himself up, turning towards the kitchen.

"Do you want some help, sir?" Kurt answered to the sub inside him to make his Dom happy but Blaine just smiled and walked back to peck his lips gently.

"You just sit and relax. I'll take care of you," he assured, the unspoken, you took perfect care of me last night, unsaid and kissed his forehead before walking back to the kitchen leaving a blushing Kurt to recount their night to their parents, omitting certain details.

He walked back in a few minutes later with a tray of breakfast things for them to find his dad unwrapping the newspapers and his mother and Kurt laughing at Kurt's description of some of the
less successful clothing choices from last night.

He chuckled at a couple of Kurt's descriptions when a gasp from his dad made him jump in his seat and look at him in question.

Jared held the papers out to them and the three of them leaned over the offered page, eyes going wide and blood pounding.

"Oh god," Kurt said but there was a small smile playing in the corner of his lips that told a tale of how proud he was of what he saw.

"Oh god is right," Dana said managing to look graceful but Blaine could almost hear the gears in her head spinning.

"Well... this will cause an interesting reaction, won't it?" he settled for the mildest reaction he could have and his parents laughed at his assessment.

"That's one way of putting it I guess," Jared agreed and they leaned back to read the page to the end, anxious and excited about what was to come from this.
Loosened

Chapter Notes

Surprise!!
In the middle of the night (well for us anyway) we bring you the new chapter!! We really like this one so hopefully you will too.

For those of you who have read the story on FF before you'll notice a few things different or missing. A is a wizard of editing and after going through the chapter we have agreed that the story flows and makes much more sense this way. The scene we left out will most likely be posted as a one shot or interlude chapter because even though it didn't fit THIS chapter, we really like it and want you to read it. So keep an eye out for that.

Again, the pictures used are in no way our own, 100 percent credit to original owners, we're just borrowing them please and thank you :) And PLEASE mind the tags, some non con elements are discussed here that may trigger people. Nothing graphic, or even long, but still present so if you would like to know what they are before you read then feel free to message us!

Love
A&M

Night of the Winter Formal...

They moved inside once Nick felt Jeff shivering in his arms and bid Kurt and Blaine a goodnight as they headed off for home. The Dom had known instinctively that Jeff didn't want to join the dregs left in the formal as it wound down and they were both still reeling after the claiming so Nick led them back towards the dorms. He had taken Jeff gently by the hand, that faint hum between them that had always been there and exploded when they kissed still happily buzzing between them.

It was surreal finally having what he wanted, being able to finally call Jeff his own and there were a million things he wanted to say. More feelings he wanted to express. Just more, more, more. But he let the need settle, pushed it back for another time because they needed this calm after the storm. This port to dock in while they caught their breath, Jeff especially. He couldn't really, truly imagine how big a deal this was for him to have agreed to be his sub, to agree to putting himself in another hands and power again, but he felt an almost equal weight of responsibility settle on his shoulders in response. Nothing was more important than Jeff now.

They ended up in his room.

He didn't really think about it. It was natural to take Jeff into his space now, the desire to begin fulfilling the steps of their bond fresh and strong within him, especially with the Dominant and submissive pheromones still licking through his veins. It was only when Jeff tensed did his mind clear enough to realise that he was on the brink of another hug incident.
He needed to keep better control of himself.

"I can walk you back to your own room, angel," he promised immediately, giving him space as he let the sub take in his room... their room he hoped silently.

He might as well have said it out loud the way the words seemed to crawl out of his head and jump into the air.

Jeff wasn't stupid.

He'd gone through a bond before and he knew very well that after being claimed a sub moved in with his Dom. And that prospect scared him. His walls were felled tonight, Nick burrowing his way further and further into his heart, but he knew he'd throw them back up soon enough and the idea of letting them down enough to share a living space with Nick and all the intimacies that came with that was frightening.

What if Nick didn't like what he saw when he got to know him better? Got to see it for himself.

But god... a part of him wanted this, the rusty submissive part that had been reawakened well and truly after being claimed. He shivered remembering the words, possessive and commanding and hot in his ear, soaking into his very soul to brand themselves there.

Nick heard the blonde's throat click as he swallowed and looked over his shoulder at him, eyes searching every inch of his face for what felt like an eternity before turning back around and walking further into the room cautiously. It was a silent acceptance that filled Nick's heart to bursting as he watched him nervously walk around the space taking it all in.

He seemed to fit so perfectly surrounded by his belongings, the final piece he needed to be complete.

He closed the door and had begun shedding his suit jacket when he noticed the wary, almost panicked look his sub had just settled on him.

He stopped dead.

"I c-c... I mean I don't think..." Jeff began to stutter, tripping over his tongue and feet as he began to edge away like a cornered animal.

The implication hit Nick like a brick straight to the gut and it made him feel sick.

"Angel, no," he hastily soothed, leaving his jacket where it was and approaching in baby steps with his hands up. "I was just gonna get ready for bed."

Chocolate eyes darted that way to rest on the green comforter, still cautious. "Together?" he asked quietly.

He tried to tell his panicked mind that Nick wasn't like that... he wouldn't do that to him, but the reaction to seeing clothes taken off by a Dominant was almost sickeningly engrained into him. He fought hard against it, pushing and shoving those feelings back to the dark space they existed in.

"I was going to take the sofa," Nick admitted to him and closed the rest of the gap between them slowly, taking Jeff into his arms tenderly, relieved when he didn't push him away, only tensed a little. "I am never going to be him," he promised fiercely holding his gaze. "Whenever you feel like you're uncomfortable with anything we're doing, or need a little space then just tell me and I'll back off okay?"
"I know you're not him," Jeff murmured almost inaudibly and it appeared like he was mostly saying to himself but it unstuck something inside Nick, a fear that Jeff wouldn't be able to separate him from him.

"Thank you, angel. That means a lot to me to hear, I don't ever want to be someone you fear."

Jeff shuddered out a breath because Nick would never be the monster in his head, but he couldn't say that, couldn't talk about this any further without feeling like he was going to unravel at the seams. And so he simply nodded and Nick pressed a kiss to his forehead that he basked in, feeling it chase away the cold again as he lingered there for a while allowing him unconsciously to help calm him down.

"I haven't got anything to wear," Jeff whispered after a while, like talking louder would smash the moment.

"You can borrow my stuff... it's all yours now anyway," Nick told him, pulling back.

Jeff stared at him in confusion and wonder, like it was baffling to him that he should gain from this joining instead of give and it was yet another nail in the coffin Nick was going to put that good for nothing Dom into when he next saw him.

It was on the tip of his tongue to ask about it, to bring it up, but he reigned it back. Now wasn't the time to push something like that. He honestly didn't think there would ever be a right time to bring it up, but he knew for sure at least that this was the wrong one. And so he pushed away the anger and ran a hand through Jeff's hair to soothe himself, still in awe that he got to do this now. Got to hold him and touch him and kiss him and love him.

It wasn't all going to be easy he knew, but he couldn't think of a more important or worthy thing to fight for.

He stepped away and led Jeff to his dresser, opening it up. "You can chose anything you want," he smiled at him, grabbing a worn red Dalton Athletics shirt that he'd had since high school and his cotton, grey sleep pants for himself. Jeff licked his lips nervously before stepping up and peering into the drawer like something was going to jump out at him. "I'm just going to get changed in the bathroom," he informed him, not wanting to leave his sub at all, but knowing it was necessary.

He'd never gotten dressed faster in his life... or more messily.

And if he might have knocked all of his toiletries into the sink while trying to brush his teeth and disrobe at the same time and then pulled all his towels to the floor with him when he lost his balance trying to thread his legs through the wrong holes too fast, well, that was his business.

He stumbled out, shoving his suit and shoes out of the way, probably red cheeked for the first time in his life for acting like an idiot because he freaking cared so much what Jeff thought of him. But the sub wasn't staring at him at all. Instead he was staring at the Toy Story pyjama bottoms in his hand, a glaring yellow colour with little Woody's splashed all over them.

Oh shit.

"I can explain those."

A smile began to form on the blondes face and he pressed the knuckles of his free hand there as if to stop it and the little laugh that bubbled out of his throat from escaping as he looked towards him.

Nick wanted to melt into a puddle of loved up goo at the sight and noise, even as he was being made
"They're nice," Jeff cleared his throat enough to say to him, humour underlying the words.

"I didn't buy them. Blaine thought it'd be funny," he explained weakly but there was no getting around this.

Jeff cocked an eyebrow in a very Kurt expression, before tilting his head in the most endearingly mischievous way that was all him. "You've worn them. A lot," he observed, not buying any of it.

It was true of course, the material had thinned and Woody was missing his face or limbs in some areas from wear especially around the knees...

He might as well come clean. "They're awesome, okay? And super comfy and you like Toy Story too so you agree Woody is badass!"

Jeff laughed again, the soft sound lighting up the room. "He is pretty cool," he agreed shyly.

This was the most ridiculous conversation ever but he loved it, loved that they could actually be comfortable with one another still even though the lines had been redrawn.

"They're my favourite," Nick shrugged with a smile, mussing up his hair carelessly.

"Oh. Sorry," Jeff said surprised and hastily went to put them back and Nick's brain short-circuited for a minute because did Jeff want to wear them? The one of only a few items of clothes that really had everything of him enthused into the fibres because generally he didn't care what he was wearing or what he looked like.

Suddenly nothing else in the world mattered more than Jeff wearing those awesome pyjamas, the Dom in him purring possessively at the thought.

"You can wear them," he burst out.

Smooth.

Jeff startled and looked at him wide eyed, hands still on the fabric. "No its fine, I'll take something el-

"Angel, wear them honestly. You'll never want to take them off again," he winked trying to emphasize that this really wasn't a big deal in the sense Jeff thought it was. It was only a big deal now because Nick thought he would die if his sub didn't put them on.

Jeff stared at him for a few moment, assessing him before he hesitantly pulled the colourful fabric out and clutched it to his chest like it was precious. "Thank you."

Nick stepped over and kissed his temple. "You're very welcome, angel. Now there's a spare toothbrush under the sink… uh, ignore the mess in the bathroom, there were some... difficulties."

"Difficulties?" Jeff asked curiously. He clearly hadn't registered the racket he'd made.

"Turns out I'm an ambitious multi-tasker who epically fails at it. But you're stuck with me now so no take backs when you see the mess," he grinned.

Jeff gave him an under the lashes look. "I'm not gonna take it back," he told him softly, feeling utterly selfish but knowing it was true. He wasn't good enough for Nick but he loved him in the most heart wrenching way. He'd come to the conclusion that he couldn't be without him now and so until
Nick recognized just how damaged he was, he was going to hold on as long as he could.

He headed for the bathroom before Nick could reply, shutting himself inside firmly and taking a deep breath.

Nick stared after him for a long while, heart in his throat and words replaying in his head.

The biggest, goofiest grin began to form on his face and he barely managed to keep from doing a giddy little happy dance. Instead he busied himself with making up the sofa with a few spare pillows and his spare comforter- the thinner one he usually used in the summer.

The sofa itself was just long enough to accommodate him, deep enough for his shoulders and was comfy as hell so he wasn't exactly complaining even though deep down he'd rather be spending the night with Jeff in his arms. But they'd get there and he was content in that knowledge, freaking overwhelmed that he even had his angel in his room at all.

Jeff stepped back out, toying with his own undershirt he'd kept on instead of borrowing one, over the loud bottoms and looking adorably small and a little unsure again as he twitched.

"You look so cute I think I'll have to make you keep those," Nick found himself saying his thoughts out loud, satisfaction rolling through him on a primal level knowing that his scent was all over Jeff right now.

His sub blushed an endearing, lovely shade of pink and stared down at his toes too embarrassed to reply, arms wrapping around himself as he shivered once.

"You cold?" he asked concerned. He spotted his Dalton hoody on his desk chair and snatched it up on his way over to his sub.

"A little," Jeff admitted, looking back up at him. "It was cold outside, guess I haven't warmed up yet."

Nick stopped in front of him. "Arms up."

Jeff obeyed the command straight away without even thinking and then warm material was sliding over his head and Nick's scent was surrounding him.

It was perfect.

"Better, angel?" Nick asked, rubbing his hands up and down his arms to warm him further.

"Yes, thank you," he replied, leaning into the touches and soaking them in greedily.

"Good. Now get your cute butt in bed," he grinned pressing a chaste kiss to his mouth.

Jeff jerked in surprise at the kiss, not unpleasantly even as the subtle command seeped under his skin and Jeff hurried over to slide underneath the forest green comforter, feeling fulfilled in a totally new and vibrant way after he'd got settled and Nick eyed him happily.

"Good boy," he praised and Jeff shivered again, only not from the temperature this time. It was intense, like getting shocked in the best way, adrenaline pumping and endorphins spreading and then this blissful calm would steal over him in waves, cleansing him through until he felt pliant and loose. It was doubly as powerful being in Nick's bed too. Surrounded by his scent, thick and concentrated on the sheets combined with the borrowed clothes he was wearing. He shifted around to get comfortable, wondering just what position Nick slept in and blushing at the desire to mimic it just to
feel closer to him.

Nick walked over and flicked the light off before settling in himself on his sofa, shifting around until he found a comfortable position on his side with his back plastered to the backrest and an arm curled up under the pillows.

"Nick?" Jeff breathed into the darkness hesitantly.

"Yes, angel? Everything okay?" he asked softly, ready to jump at a moment's notice.

He bit his lip and considered his words, before closing his eyes and steeling his resolve.

"I just wanted to say goodnight," he murmured shyly, half muffled by the pillow he buried his face into, happy the lights were off to hide his coloured cheeks.

Nick felt a swoop in his stomach and a smile blossoming on his face. "Sweet dreams, angel."

If only they were.

It starts off as just emptiness for a while, dark and quiet and Jeff can handle that, he doesn't mind the silence and he's used to being alone nowadays for the most part. But soon he realizes that he isn't alone.

There's someone in the darkness with him.

He tries to run.

'Pet. There's nowhere to hide, you know better than this.'

He sprints and sprints and sprints until he can't breathe but he doesn't move an inch, like the floor is just rolling out under him and that hidden entity is closing in faster and they want to hurt him, he can feel the malicious intent on his skin like a grimy film.

He calls for help.

He begs and pleads for someone to help him but no one else is there. No one else can hear him except the creature who is now laughing at him, mocking him for his weakness.

'Shut up! No one cares about a worthless fuck up like you. Get on the bed. Now!'

He hurts.

Its painful hands gripping his skin, flesh forced against his own, words taunting his mind and heart over and over.

He cries.

He hates himself for it but the tears always fall, always betray him and the monster grins, licks them up happily, greedily, it's never satisfied.

'Is my pet sad? If you did a better job then you might not be. Spread your legs.'

He wakes up.

Cold sweat drenched his brow and his heart was thumping so hard and fast it was all he could hear. He gasped for an easy breath but it was hard to come by, no matter how frequent his nightmares they
never lost their impact and god he just wanted them to stop.

Lifting a shaky hand he wiped his face free of the tears he knew were there and bolted up knowing he couldn't go back to sleep now. Everything held a tint of panic and he stared into the darkness frantically expecting him to jump out, take him away from Nick and make him hurt again. Rip all his taped together pieces to shreds again because he knew just where to tear.

The sound of Nick's soft breathing broke through the haze and Jeff locked eyes on his blurry outline like a lifeline.

I don't want to go. Don't let him take me away again. Don't let him hurt me. Please, please, please...

"Sir," Jeff choked into the darkness, but it was hardly a sound, more like a strangled whine that died off before it got anywhere near the sleeping Dom and really Jeff didn't know why that word had come out at all. Maybe because he was so open and vulnerable, his submissive instincts right under his skin as they urged him to seek out his Dom and get comfort, get safety, get protection.

Desperate and scared Jeff scrambled out of the bed dragging the comforter with and around him so he was bundled up to his neck, the ends dragging over the floor as he approached the sofa, trying not to trip as his watery eyes adjusted to the darkness.

Nick was laying exactly the way he'd fallen asleep, seeming not to have moved as muscle as he breathed deep and evenly into the night and Jeff didn't even hesitate, feeling as if Kevin was right behind him, breathing down his neck.

The free space was on the outside of the couch where Nick's arm was curled up under the pillow and Jeff eased himself next to him slowly, curling himself down until they fit together, his head on the pillow over the Dom's arm and knees and feet centimetres away from touching. He bit his lip waiting but Nick didn't move a muscle, just continued to sleep on unaware and Jeff didn't know if he was grateful for that or not.

He had all of Nick's thick comforter wrapped around him but he was still shivering, still cold with fear and he slinked closer to the space heater next to him and the easy strength he was giving off even in sleep. This close now he could make out his Dom's features. The relaxed line of his jaw, the parted lips, the smooth brow. He was gorgeous and open before him like a book, no pretence to hide behind, no walls, no face to show to the world. It was calming in its vulnerability, yet at the same time calming because Nick was still strong this way, still able to protect him he knew instinctively.

Reaching out of his blanket nest he grabbed the muscled arm that was curled lax and loose between them and wrapped it over his waist, feeling flushed and shy but his desire for the comfort it would bring far outweighing it.

It seemed to kick-start an unconscious reaction in the Dom, one that the submissive in him had been seeking all along. Nick made a soft grunting noise before his arm snaked all the way around his back pulling him closer, tucked into his body fully, nose to nose, hard body settling half on top of his with legs slotting like they belonged there and it was like Jeff could breathe again despite the weight.

He sighed out in relief, allowing the love he felt to wash over his face as he stared at his sleeping Dom just this once. Even unconscious Nick knew exactly what he needed and Jeff was in awe of him.

His nerves calmed, his thoughts settled, his body relaxed.

Everything was warm again, the harshness easing into the softness, just blankets and pillows and
warm breath and Nick's scent. His arms were trapped inside the cocoon he'd made for himself but it didn't make him feel claustrophobic or pinned down, he just felt safe.

For the first time in a long time he felt safe and he closed his eyes.

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*The morning after…*

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**The Privilege of Belonging**
By Miriam Sanders
for Westerville Daily

To start off this article I'd like to explain myself to you so you can understand my motivation and determination to write this.

I'm a 22 year old girl. I'm a finance major, a part time journalist and a political enthusiast. I'm a shy, completely average girl with a small group of close friends and a supportive family.

I'm also a bonded submissive.

My Dom chose me when we were both seventeen years old and since then we have gone through all the steps of bonding, encouraged and empowered by the balance and completion we provided for one another. Registering our bond, and thus, sealing and legalizing it, never came into question. It was the logical, natural final step of our relationship. I never doubted. I never feared. I knew.

Another thing that never crossed my mind to my shame was the fact that not everyone is as lucky as I am, or as most of my friends are.

An accidental encounter a couple of months ago served as an eye opener and it made me question everything I thought I knew about our world and the way we chose to exist and love. A close friend of mine recently claimed an amazing sub and through them I met S and his sub M; a beautiful couple, committed, in love.

They were moving in together and clearly excited about the prospect. I started asking a million questions about how they met, how long they were together. I was in love with their love, convinced they had the perfect life.

I could not be more wrong.

And that is what brought me here. I asked them to share their story with me, and you as well, and they said yes.

For comparison I have also asked my close friends, T and R, who are equally in love, to answer the same questions.

The interview you're about to read is unedited and every answer is penned down exactly as the subjects involved answered them.
Miriam: Hi, guys…
M: And girl…
(laugh)
Miriam: Sorry… Hi guys and girl, and thank you for agreeing to do this.
S: It's our pleasure.
R: No problem.
Miriam: Okay well if you're comfortable enough shall we get going?
T: I'm ready.
M: Sure.
Miriam: Okay so question number one. How long have you known each other and of that time how long have you been together?
S: We met 3 years ago and we'd gotten together a few months after that.
T: We've known OF each other for about 5 years, and we got our acts together, met and bonded around three years ago.
Miriam: The "you've known of each other" sounds like an interesting detail and it brings us nicely to the next question which is how did you meet?
R: HAHA it's a funny story. I've seen him around the school a couple of times and I thought he was adorable, all tiny and cute and geeky.
T: I resent that.
R: No you don't. Anyway I had no idea he liked me back and we kind of just danced around each other for ages, literally, before a mutual friend decided to take matters into his own hands. He invited us both to a pool party, and then proceeded to throw munchkin over here into the pool. I jumped right after him, pulled him out, cuddled him the rest of the day under the excuse of keeping him warm and then asked him to be mine.
Miriam: That's quite romantic in an unconventional type of sense. (We all laugh) What about you?
M: I hit him in the face.
Miriam: Sorry?
M: It was an accident. I was alone in the classroom and I had my back towards the door. I was singing something, and the next thing I know someone says: You have a lovely voice. And I got so scared I turned around and elbowed him in the chin.
S: She packs a mean punch I can tell you that much.
(laugh)
Miriam: So how do you go from technical knockout to date?
S: I didn't just walk into that room by accident. I heard her sing and I had to see who it was. I saw her and… well… I knew I had to get to know her. I had a moment of second thought when she maimed me but then again… I like that she's fierce.
T: Maybe I should have smacked you on the head. Could have saved us a bit of time.
R: Like you could have reached my head, Tiny.
Miriam: Okay. So where are you now, in your bonding process I mean?
R: Like we said, we were bonded three years ago but we officially registered our bond last year.
(There were a few minutes of silence after R responded, while S and M tried to find the best way to explain where they were.)
S: M and I…we can't afford to register, or to truly fulfil the Gifting so we're trying to complete the steps we can, and love each other as best as we can. We know we're IT for each other and that's what keeps us going.
Miriam: Could you maybe give us a general rundown of what your life looks like?
M: Well, we've recently moved in together, that is, S moved into my parent's house since my family is much smaller than his. We go to school every day, we listen to people make fun of us, subs throw themselves at him, because, in the eyes of the law we're... we're not bonded. We do our best to tune it all out and brush it off, but sometimes... sometimes it's so hard.
S: She gets scared sometimes. That I'll leave her. That I'll have a sub on the side because there are no consequences. But I love her. She's mine, laws be damned.
Miriam: That must be really tough on you. I have to say I admire the way you handle yourselves and how committed you are to one another. T, R how is their life different from yours?
R: Wow, um… after that it seems pompous or arrogant to talk about our life which is pretty much perfect. T and I live together in our own apartment. Like I said we registered last year. We go to school, spend time with our friends, T has his tutoring sessions and I train… for us it's a normal life.
Miriam: How hard is it for you [S and M] to see other couples in your town who were in the same situation and they didn't make it? Does it affect you?
S: It's hard. You always think that you'll be the one to beat the odds. And you truly believe that because you're in love and happy and hopeful. But then you see those other people, the ones that have given up and you realize they used to be like us… in love and hopeful… and now they aren't anymore and well… it could be us someday.
T: But if it makes you feel any better it's the same thing on this side. You see so many people bonding and then keeping subs on the side. And it takes a lot of trust to place it in your Dom and believe he won't do the same to you. What's horrible is that these people have the privilege to truly belong and they don't even appreciate it. They don't even know there are people wishing they could have what they have.
Miriam: It's very interesting to hear both your sides of the seemingly same story. Now, my next question to the both couples. Hearing this… what do you think should change to make things better?
T: The world?
(laugh)
R: It shouldn't be impossible to belong to someone if that's what you want.
M: At this point we would just like to have a way to complete the bonding process. Everything else is probably just wishful thinking on our part.
S: It's true. So to be specific, maybe make bond registration free? I don't know that much about politics so I'm not sure if that's even possible… but it would help.
Miriam: Do you ever wish you could maybe do something to change things?
M: I used to think about it a lot. But I'm an unbounded sub, in the eyes of the law anyway, I can't finish college because I can't afford one, and I have no one to back me up. It's a circle of obstacles that you just can't get out of.
S: And on the other hand… we just have so much to fight and to brave every day. Adding stuff like that in would take away even more time we have to spend together… and we don't want that.
Miriam: I know what you mean. Keeping a relationship alive and healthy is hard work even in the best of situations. Now despite all the rough times you’re in love and here, so why don't we finish this on a high note. What does your other half do to make you feel loved?
T: He doesn't complain when he has to go to my math competitions. He carries me around a lot because I like that. And he tried to learn how to dance for me even though he can't dance to save his life.
R: He lets me call him Tiny even though he hates it. Also I get thirsty a lot during the night but somehow I never remember to take water with me. Despite that whenever I wake up thirsty in the middle of the night there's always a bottle of water on the bedside table because he always remembers to put it there for me. Just the little things other people might take for granted.
S: She does a lot of different things. She hates sharing her comforter but she still does it with me. And when she wakes me up in the morning for school she does it by singing softly until I wake up. It's the best feeling ever.
M: He's looking for a job now and he's away from home a lot. So he's taken to leaving me little notes around the house with cute lyrics or just drawn hearts. They make me feel safe when he's not around.
Miriam: Awww that's really romantic guys. I hope you keep doing that for each other for a long time to come. And thank you so much for doing this for me.

After talking to both couples there was just one thing that stayed with me. How can the same love be treated so differently?
"Wow," Kurt said stupidly after reading the article, Blaine peeking over his shoulder in stunned silence.

They read the interview twice over and somehow none of the four of them was able to say much more than one syllable curses or affirmations. The article was nicely written undoubtedly; on the surface just a series of sweet and caring questions aimed at the two couples who loved each other. But at the same time it was provocative; blazingly daring and bold by suggesting a reform of the current bonding and living situation, citing wrongs in the current system and placing blame. They all knew it would cause an avalanche of reactions.

What they couldn't know was: would they be good or bad? Would this help their cause in the long run or just cause Miriam trouble in her everyday life, both at school and in public with people who were less than open to new ideas?

"Wow sounds about right," Jared said finally with a decisive nod and Dana took a sip of her cold coffee frowning over the article. Out of all of them she must have read it the most, never taking her eyes from it and seemingly deep in thought.

Jared looked at her and leaned in to kiss her temple.

"You all right, my lady?" he asked and she snapped out of her reverie, looking at him with fond eyes and taking his hand.

"I'm okay, just... just wondering if this is the 'it' we've all been waiting for to make the announcement of me supporting someone else in the elections. I think it is," she mused seriously.

Ever since the moment they laid out their plans they have agreed to wait for the right moment to step into the public with the information. They had to tread carefully because they knew there would be people trying to stop them and they needed to make sure their game was spot on before clueing in the rest of the world. You didn't tip your hand early in a game of poker and this political game was very much like that.

"What do you mean by that?" Blaine asked and Dana smiled at him.

"We've been waiting for the right moment to announce our plans to the public. We've been planning something big to do it, something that would kick start people and force them to stand up for what's right. This article is our big something," she explained, tapping a finger nail against it and Blaine nodded in sudden understanding.

He could see what his mother was talking about. The article, while written from a place of caring and the wish for equality, was thought provoking and he knew it would make a lot of people realize how wrong it is to live in a world like theirs, or at the very least question it and shake the foundations a little. Those same people could look up to Dana when she announced her plan and those same people could create the critical mass needed to make a difference and tip the votes in their favour.

It was the perfect thing to kick things off.

"Will you tell my dad now as well?" Kurt asked and Dana nodded.

"But we won't tell him anything, Kurt. We will explain the situation and show him that we feel he would be amazing for the job. But we will not order him around. If he refuses to run it will be
perfectly okay. Don't worry alright, sweetheart?” Dana said taking the subs hand in hers as he smiled slowly.

He had been on edge since the moment they told him about their plan to ‘change the world’ and to have Burt be the face of that change.

His dad was still recovering from his heart attack last year and as much as Kurt craved a better world, he'd still rather live in one where his dad was just an hour drive or a phone call away from him in good health. However, he also knew his dad and he was pretty sure he'd say yes to their suggestion because he was kind hearted and driven like that. He wanted a better life not just for his own family but for every family under the sun and if he found out there was something he could do, there was no way he'd say no to it.

"He'll say yes,” he said on a sigh. “But please… make sure you don't drive him too far. I just... he'll do anything you ask from him to help and I can't lose him," he said, fear evident in his eyes and Blaine cuddled him close, glaring at his mother who rolled her eyes at her youngest son.

"If he says yes, I promise we'll keep him safe. No after hours and no over exertion. Trust me, honey,” she reassured and he smiled at her. He trusted her because she was family too now, so he had to trust her with this.

"When will you tell him? Can I be there?” he asked and she nodded.

"We were thinking of inviting your family over for Christmas. We can tell him then,” she said and he beamed at her, the prospect of having his dad and Carole over for Christmas suddenly becoming the best present he could have asked for.

"Thank you,” he exclaimed. “I can't wait for Christmas now!” He clapped his hands giddily and the rest of them smiled at him lovingly.

"Have you picked out your presents?” Jared asked curiously.

Blaine shrugged and said he was still deciding on the perfect one; he was thinking of getting Kurt a tablet with all the latest design software on it but he was still shopping around.

Kurt, however, blushed and looked down.

"I already have Blaine's," he admitted quietly and his Dom gasped.

"You do? Tell me what it is!” he jumped in his seat like an over excited four year old and Kurt rolled his eyes at him.

"It's a surprise," he deadpanned and Jared and Dana laughed at their son's appalled expression. They’d been through this since he’d been old enough to talk.

"I'll be surprised on Christmas I swear, I'll pretend I didn't even know. Tell me, tell me, tell me!” he whined, but Kurt tuned him out and turned his back on him, as he bounced up and down, pouting and pleading.

"So… can I help with Christmas dinner?"

"KURT, TELL MEEEEEEEEE!"
He was tiny against him. Tiny in comparison to his actual height. Tiny wrapped up in his Dalton hoody, fingers tucked away under the cuffs, hood up over his blonde hair and clutching Nick’s blanket to his chest, the dark material partly obscuring his lower face.

He always made himself small Nick had noticed.

It was a defence mechanism for him. Trying to escape notice… only he was entirely noticeable to the Dom, the brightest part of his world. He couldn't have missed him in that crowd of Dalton students, looking so lost and out of place.

His beautiful, broken angel.

He was so much more than he thought of himself. So much more than Nick could have ever hoped for and he only wished for Jeff to see that. He'd spend an eternity trying to prove it.

It was shock to drift awake to his angel in his arms and a mountain of blankets drowning him and it took him a few seconds to really register it, the feeling and then the questions it provoked. What had happened? Why had Jeff squeezed onto the sofa with him to sleep? It wasn't like he was complaining because this was like having a wish come true, but he was concerned as to the motivation behind the move. It did make him happy, however, that whatever it was Jeff had sought him out instead of running away and so he allowed himself to drop it for now at least.

He shifted more onto his side from his spot on top of Jeff, though leaving their legs relatively tangled in the many, many blankets, careful not to jostle his sub awake as he scooted his head gently closer on the pillow, drawn like a magnet as he propped himself on an elbow and studied the gorgeous lines of Jeff's face. The slightly parted lips letting loose the occasional breathy sigh, the long lashes swept down over sharp cheekbones.

He was struck by just how relaxed he was in sleep.

No worries. No haunted look in his eyes that made Nick's own chest pang. He was utterly vulnerable
in Nick's bed, in his room, surrounded by his things, but he had trusted Nick enough to let his guard down here and that made Nick's heart swell with the love he tried so hard not to smother Jeff in. He knew Jeff couldn't handle that much so soon. He needed to go slow, which was fine. He'd plant himself like a tree if it meant that he got to have Jeff with him in one form or another while he did it.

Unable to help himself he reached out and gently traced his thumb down Jeff's nose, smiling so wide his cheeks hurt when he saw him screw it up in protest, lashes fluttering as his brows turned down slightly.

He was utterly adorable.

Nick drew his hand back and shifted as close as the sofa would allow until he could feel the heat Jeff was giving off and sighed in contentment. They stayed like this for a while. Jeff sleeping on unknowing that he was the object of such devoted admiration and Nick trying very hard not to be creepy, but the blonde was far too lovely to take his eyes off for even a second.

The sub made a little sound in his throat after a few more minutes and curled closer to him as if he sensed he was there. His face buried into his chest, fingers letting go off the blanket to instead curl into his sleep shirt as if to keep him there.

Nick was still throughout it all basking in the actions, but knowing not to push things when Jeff wasn't aware of himself… which suddenly changed with his subs breathing pattern.

There was a few seconds after Jeff fluttered his eyes open that he curled even closer making Nick's heart jump in hope and exhilaration before the blonde pulled back as if burned, overriding any of his natural instincts as he came back to himself. Nick watched as his face flushed bright red before he grabbed one of the many blankets and brought it up to his face to hide behind. He was saying something, but it was muffled by the fabric and sounded nonsensical.

Momentarily disappointed, but infinitely heartened by the fact that Jeff hadn’t freaked out so much as to remove himself completely from their current position, Nick decided to test his boundaries a little. Reaching out, careful to move slowly and telegraph exactly what he was doing, he toyed with the hood of his sweatshirt, gently playing with the blonde hair he could get his hands on trying to soothe him the best he could without pawing at him like part of him wanted to.

"Jeff," he called softly. "C'mon, angel. Don't hide away from me."

Jeff slowly pulled the blanket back and down to reveal wide brown eyes, so shy and reserved as they gazed at him apprehensively.

Like he had done something wrong.

"What's wrong?" he questioned equally as gentle, running fingers over Jeff's as they gripped the blanket tight, wanting to ease the tension out of them. He made his posture relaxed and easy and his face open as he stared at his sub. He was trying to make it a point to try and get Jeff to work through these things with him when they cropped up, he was determined to show him what it was supposed to be like between a Dom and sub.

"I just… I didn't mean to… crawl all over you without your permission," he admitted ashamedly, eyes downcast.

"Hey, no, angel," Nick begged ducking his hand under the hood to cup his head and bring them closer though the barrier of the blanket was still between their lower faces. "Feel free to crawl, climb… hell, dance on me if that's what takes your fancy," he smiled and Jeff's eyes turned up like
he was smiling too.

"I just want us to be comfortable with each other and you know when I said you only have to say if you need some space or want me to stop something we're doing?"

Jeff nodded hesitantly, all vulnerable innocence, the edges of his blush only partly visible over the material covering it.

"Well I'll tell you the same. No yelling, no punishment. I'll just let you know and we'll talk about it like this alright? So I don't want you to worry about it, just do what feels natural to you," he whispered leaning down and in closer still. "Okay?"

"Yes," Jeff murmured and Nick ran his thumb over his ear wanting desperately to look at him properly. To kiss him.

"How about we get rid of this so I can see that beautiful face properly?" he suggested tugging on the blanket and it slipped slightly to reveal the perfect slope of his nose.

Jeff's grip got tighter as his shyness reared its head once more. "I'm not… I mean…"

"Shh," Nick cooed, ducking his head and soft as a feather rubbed the tip of his nose against his subs. He watched fair lashes flutter like wings before closing and heard Jeff's breath hitch as he let himself feel.

It was intense and drugging watching him fall apart and Nick very gently started to pull the blanket away completely until it was gone. He continued to nudge his nose gently against Jeff's until the tension was gone, as they shared breathes and space and everything in that one point of contact.

Jeff, apparently needing something to hold on to, grasped his top once more and Nick knew he could feel how fast his heart was pounding there. Closing his eyes too he leaned down, slotting their noses side by side before, in the softest press, captured Jeff's lips in a chaste kiss. He felt the heat of Jeff's blush on his own cheeks, endearing and warming him through to his core.

He felt those three little words rising again, sitting pretty at the tip of his tongue and eventually the need got too great and he had to pull back to say, 'I love you.'

Jeff whimpered at the declaration letting them wash over him like a drug that he wanted more and more of far more frequently than was healthy. It was just so bizarre hearing them in this way though, not from his parents and not from Kurt. Kevin had never told him he loved him. Not once. And Jeff was actually glad about that, glad that the Dom hadn't tainted those words too like he had done everything else.

He felt the words too, felt them and meant them and though he couldn't say them back right now he knew Nick didn't hold it against him. Didn't expect anything in return for the affection he so freely handed out and Jeff allowed himself to selfishly bask in that glowing, burning feeling.

If only for a little while.

__________________________________________________________

Christmas day...

__________________________________________________________
"Dad," Kurt admonished, exasperated. "Just sit down would you. I've got this."

"Kurt, honey-"

"And don't even get me started on you," Kurt warned his too-kind-for-her-own-good stepmother, brandishing a wooden spoon in their direction. "Get out of my kitchen and go and enjoy yourself! Right now."

There was a mixture of reactions that rippled across the room, but amusement seemed to be the most prevalent as Kurt bossed them all around. It had only become 'his' kitchen yesterday and today when he had been prepping and cooking their Christmas dinner, taking the task very seriously. The house staff all had families of their own so of course they weren't required to work the holiday and so that left cooking to the Anderson’s themselves. In the past when Cooper was still in the house they had just ordered in a pre-cooked meal, then Dana went through a phase of wanting to cook it herself a few years after Coop had bonded and flew the nest. They ended up usually splitting the tasks between the three of them and more often than not the end result wasn't stellar, though they all still had a good time making the mess of food they eventually set on the table.

The addition of Kurt to their little number this year was a revelation.

He was organised and completely competent in the kitchen unlike Blaine who could manage an awesome breakfast, pancakes his triumph, but a cooked dinner with all the trimmings not exactly in his wheelhouse. Dana had always been a bit too busy to learn all the tricks of the trade and usually just trailed Jared who was the best out of the three of them as he gave her jobs to do.

Burt raised his brows at his son under his cap, arms crossing over his plaid chest. "I thought you'd grow out of this you know."

Kurt snorted, giving him a deadpan side glance as he checked the steaming vegetables. "And let you cook?"

"He has a point, sir," Carole smirked at him.

"I can cook just fine!" Burt exclaimed and everyone laughed at the sheer level of indignation there.

"How about Burt, Carole and I lay the table?" Dana suggested cheerfully, wiping her hands off with the dish towel before heading for the silverware drawer.

Kurt gave in, bending down and opening the oven to check the turkey. "Fine. This will be ready in about ten minutes. We just need to start putting things into dishes and bowls."

"More than enough time," she chirped handing out her good plates for Carole to hold and wine glasses for Burt before the three disappeared.

Kurt straightened up to watch them go before turning off the heat on the stove because the vegetables just needed to be plated up now.

Blaine came up behind his sub after retrieving the asked for bowls and placing them down on the counter beside him. He wrapped arms around his waist and kissed the side of his neck, careful to avoid the blue heart standing out in stark brilliance against his skin.
"You're amazing, lovely."

He felt the tension that had been building all morning bleed out as his sub relaxed into the curve of his body.

"It's just dinner," he murmured back, playing it off, but deep down the submissive in him was eating it up. It felt unbelievably good to have taken care of his Dom this way, as well as their families too, even if it had been quite stressful.

"Don't be modest," he teased giving him one last kiss before walking to where his dad was spooning the food out of their pots and pans.

Eventually they were all sitting down and eating together, talking and laughing. Carole was telling a story of how Finn had reacted that morning when she had given the second hand games console she had saved literally all year round to buy for him, beaming with pride and joy.

"Finn is an overgrown child at heart," Kurt said and nodded sagely sipping at his water, making them chuckle.

The quiet sound of knives and forks clinking against plates and people eating reigned for a few moments before Burt sat back in his chair, hand rubbing his full stomach. "You've outdone yourself this year, bud. This is great."

Kurt preened at the praise.

"The vegetables taste good too," he not so subtly nudged back, looking pointedly at his father's meat filled plate. The only reason he was getting away with it was because it was Christmas.

Burt rolled his eyes but reached out for the steamed broccoli and carrots.

"This really is divine," Dana carried on the praise. "Blaine should have found and claimed you sooner, we could have missed out on last year's burnt incident."

Jared chuckled refilling everyone's wine. "And that had nothing to do with you, my lady."

She stuck her tongue out at him before looking over to her son who wasn't paying attention to anything other than shovelling food into his mouth, moaning around bites. She smirked and remembered the first meal Jared had ever cooked her, just a simple pasta and meatballs, but everything tasted like heaven when your sub made it for you.

"Breathe, Blaine," Jared teased and his son groaned and leaned an elbow on the table.

"I think I'm gonna pass out," he whined.

Kurt laughed, gazing at him with barely concealed delight. "Well stop eating then."

"But it just tastes so good! This is the best thing I've ever eaten in my life," he declared seriously, spooning another mouthful in.

And that flashed warmth through Kurt's entire body, a bubble of contentment and happy feelings that made him feel like he was filled up with helium.

"Well, while my son eats himself into a food coma I'd like to talk to you a bit more seriously, Burt," Dana choose that moment to broach the elephant in the room. Kurt let out a sigh, feeling a little anxiousness blend into his happy cocktail.
Blaine actually stopped eating and grasped his hand in reassurance. Kurt gave him a grateful smile and leaned more into his side as he watched his dad put down his silverware and raise a brow at her. "Everything okay?"

"Yes, everything's fine," she assured as she leaned forwards, her brown eyes bright. "I don't know how well you pay attention to the politics around here but re-election is swiftly approaching."

"Well you've got my vote. Have done since you started running against all those other schmucks."

She smiled and shared a quick look with Kurt who shrugged. He told her his dad always voted for her. "I very much appreciate that but I'm afraid I'm not canvassing for votes right now. Actually, I'm not planning on running at all this year."

There was a second's pause before Burt frowned. "You're getting at something here," he stated. He wasn't stupid and he didn't like to beat around the bush.

Dana smirked. "Changes have been a long time in coming, Burt."

The man snorted. "You can say that again."

"I'm not the only Dom in Westerville that thinks that," she prompted.

"All the help your friends gave during the blackout was a step forwards," Carole interjected with a nod.

"We want to do more than that," Jared said. "It's all well and good lending assistance when there’s a crisis, but now that it’s been addressed we can’t all step back into ignorance and pretend that there’s something fundamentally wrong with the way we live."

They were bold words. Fighting words.

"How you going to do that if you're not running?" Burt asked Dana, adjusting his cap absently the way he always did when he was feeling too much of anything.

"I've had my time and to my shame didn't do a lot with it. We need someone new," she stated and Jared leaned in and kissed her on the cheek to comfort her.

"I think you're selling yourself short. You may not have done anything radical to change the way things were but there were some candidates that definitely wanted to make things worse that you prevented from doing so," Burt said strongly.

Dana inclined her head in thanks. "A concession I can live with I suppose."

"You keep saying 'we'," Carole pointed out shrewdly.

"It's quite a revolution we've amassed," Blaine jumped in with a grin. "Everyone that helped during the blackout and basically all of their children. My business partner and friend’s sub Miriam has already been stirring up more support at Dalton."

"I still feel like the other shoes about to drop here," Burt sighed.

Kurt caught Dana's eye who nodded at him, then turned to his dad. "They want you, dad. They want you to run."

It took a solid second to sink in and then Burt was removing his hat and rubbing his scalp with his palm.
"They been putting something in the water over here?" Is what he eventually said.

Dana laughed. "We may be crazy but I promise you we're a hundred percent serious. We need someone to run who's authentic. Who the people we're trying to help can look to and relate. Someone who is a pillar of your community and is trying to make it better instead of a rich snob who's handing out charity."

"I think you'd be perfect for it, dad. The way you helped when the blackout hit, everyone looked to you for guidance. We came up with the idea and provided the resources but they didn't feel comfortable until you were there explaining things to them. But I don't want you to feel pressured to say yes, we can find someone else," Kurt assured him softly.

They locked eyes for a moment. Father and son.

"Politics, huh?"

Kurt shrugged with a half-smile. "It's going to be stressful. You're going to be working all the time and with your heart."

"My hearts fine, kid," Burt interrupted.

"Now it is," Kurt protested, frowning. It wasn't that he didn't want his dad to do this, after all he **did truly** think he was perfect for it. He was just so worried what the consequences could be.

"He'll have people helping him the entire time," Blaine reassured him. "They'll make sure he doesn't push himself if he does take it."

"I always wanted better for you, bud," Burt began with a small smile. "Ever since your mom passed but I just didn't think I could do that for you. Then you went and did it for yourself and showed your old man up." He laughed and shook his head. "But really, it doesn't change the fact that you shouldn't have had to find this by chance or fate or luck or whatever it was," he said gesturing to Blaine and everything in the room. Kurt felt tears sting his eyes at the mention of his mom and snuggled closer to Blaine's side as Burt turned to Dana, mind made up.

"I'll do it."

"Are you sure?" Kurt asked, big blue eyes anxious.

"They're not gonna know what hit them, kid," he smiled and Kurt shook his head but was smiling too. This was his decision and he'd trust his dad to know his limits this time and trust Dana to place people around him that knew when enough was enough.

He sighed and nodded.

The relief at the table was palpable and pretty soon the adults were leaning closer and talking intently of the details they needed to make this revolutionary scheme work. And with that settled, the anxiousness fading away as things began to fall into place, Kurt only had one other thing on his mind that day.

It had been something he had been thinking about for a few days now.

Waking him up in the middle of the night breathless, hard and longing, Blaine's arms and strong, powerful scent around him. It was a growing ache inside him that was that was demanding attention the longer he pushed it down. A seed that had been planted long ago and was now growing and tangling around everything because it wouldn't be pushed aside. Instead it was spilling over into
every thought, every action, the submissive in him yelling and begging and pleading him in turns. It wanted it. It needed it.

And Kurt came to realise that he did too.

He was ready.

"May Blaine and I be excused?" he asked politely, taking his napkin off his lap and placing it on the table beside his plate. "I want to give him his present."

Blaine perked up considerably in his chair and whipped his own napkin off, knife and fork clattering onto his plate.

"Of course, boys," Dana agreed after giving Blaine a stern look at his treatment of her chinaware. Burt nodded too, understandably distracted anyway.

Kurt hurried out of his seat and pulled Blaine along with him, heading for the larger living room that no one ever used in the back of the house where they wouldn’t be immediately discovered or disturbed.

"Lovely," Blaine started, confusion and eagerness high in his voice, but Kurt simply shushed him stopping them by the door, turning to lean back on it and face his Dom.

"Close your eyes?" he asked sweetly.

Blaine arched a brow and his eyes narrowed suspiciously but didn't close. "What are you up to?"

Kurt stepped into his Dom, arms wrapping around his neck and feeling muscled ones snaking around his waist in return automatically. Kurt inwardly smiled and didn't answer only leaned in and pressed his lips softly to the ones in front of him. He didn't deepen it; simply pressed their mouths together tenderly, over and over coaxingly, pulling back and taking longer in between presses when he saw Blaine's eyes were indeed finally closed.

Reaching back with one hand he turned the handle and pushed the door open with his foot, leading Blaine slowly into the room with kisses and soft encouragements and cajoling hands tugging at his shoulders.

"Keep your eyes closed?" he asked again into his lips.

Blaine hummed an affirmative, seemingly appeased, allowing Kurt to pull away and lead him to the sofa and sit him down.

"Stay there please, sir," Kurt instructed, feeling his stomach knot up as he raced to the door to shut and lock it. He tested the door just in case, making sure it firmly held.

He had considered going to their bedroom to do this, it was the proper setting for something this intimate and it was their private space, but the plans he had didn't work with their bed being so high off the ground. He’d considered his options from that stalling point very seriously; where he would feel comfortable, where Blaine would feel comfortable, where it would be out of the way. This seemed like the most logical place since all the beds in the guest rooms were also of a similar height.

He’d been counting on their parents being caught up in the ins and outs of what his dad running would entail so he could have this window, but the walk to the middle of the room seemed like it took forever when in reality it was only five or so steps. God, Kurt felt himself trembling already as that urge, that plaguing impatient urge, pushed and pushed its way upwards. Kurt closed his own
eyes and for once, let it have its way, let it manoeuvre him where it wanted.

The next thing he knew he was sinking to his knees on the carpet.

It was like being submerged for a second, pressure surrounding him as he held his breathe… but strangely, he didn't feel panicked like he wanted to come up for air, he just let the feeling wash over him, warm and suspended in time.

Every wall he had, had come crumbling down with him hitting the floor, leaving him open with raw nerves and vulnerable insecurities and exposed flaws, everything on display. And the one thing he felt most when everything was stripped back, the one thing he felt like he was broadcasting like a signal to Mars which was his love for this man in front of him.

It was freeing.

There were no ugly voices in his head right now. No doubts. Just pure instinctive bliss guiding him through, wrapping itself around him like a blanket. And though his heart was pounding, breathe was stuttering, limbs trembling and mouth dry, he had never felt more comfortable in his own skin as he did at that moment. Giving in to what he submissively wanted had never felt so good and there was only one thing that could make this better…

"You can open your eyes now," he said softly, barely even a whisper as he averted his own gaze to the floor and neck to the side.

Blaine heard it all the same and blinked his eyes open eagerly only to give a startled gasp at the sight of him. It took a stuttered second to fully register just what he was seeing. His heart began pounding and his palms got sweaty. He felt like he'd been hit forcefully over the head with every fantasy, dream and imagining he had ever had of Kurt in this exact position. On his knees. Neck bared. For him.

Oh god…

He felt dazed and struck and powerful. More powerful than the Dominant had ever felt in his life. Having Kurt presenting like this was like he'd hooked a line into Blaine and pumped strength right into his very bones. And the weight of that responsibility, of knowing he had to control himself, had to do what was best for his submissive that had handed over this control and trust was staggering.

He was utterly still for a charged moment, taking in every elegant line, every deferential detail in his sub’s posture as he realized the depth of what Kurt had gifted him with. It was better than any material gift ever could be. It was a complete physical sign of Kurt's trust in him, of his regard for him and it blew him away.

"Lovely," he breathed, broken and low and heard his beautiful, beautiful boy whimper in his throat in answer, head still tilted down and to the side to expose the long, flawless column of his neck that he wanted to mark.

"Lovely, look at me," he ordered, the command in his voice almost in overdrive.

Kurt’s head snapped up to obey, eyes dark and pupils dilated and god Blaine wanted him. Wanted to take him apart in the best possible way, make him whine and arch and beg underneath him. He could smell the sweet pheromones Kurt was pumping out in response to his own heavy scent that was saturating the air and it made a heady cocktail that he could taste on his tongue. His cock was throbbing and straining the zip of his jeans by now, painfully so, but he ignored the insistent ache and instead concentrated all his attention on his boy.
"Look at you on your knees for me, beautiful boy," he rumbled, making no attempt to hide just how pleased he was. "Have you been planning this for a while, lovely? God, you’re perfect."

Kurt made a noise in the back of his throat at the praise and began to shift restlessly, fingers twitches on his thighs and rocking on his toes back and forth like he wanted to move forwards but needed something else, something more.

"Sir..." he let it trail, high and reedy, face flushing and eyes desperate.

Blaine knew exactly what he needed.

"Come here."

Kurt sighed out blissfully, eyes fluttering with the order before dropping to his hands and coming up on his knees and fucking *crawling* towards him like he’d given him the key some invisible shackles he didn’t even know were there. He immediately began moving towards him, every movement instinctually slow and sensual and Blaine growled as he watched him move; the dip of his shoulders, the roll of his hips. He felt close to blowing his load there and then. He clenched his jaw and yanked that white hot feeling back, however, until finally Kurt was there, in front of him and Blaine opened his legs to allow Kurt closer, so close in fact that his sub rested his head against the inside of his thigh with a dreamy sigh, looking up at him through half-mast eyes and lashes.

He strangled out his moan and placed his palm on the side of Kurt's neck, fingers curling up around his ear and into his hair possessively, his thumb dabbling at the edge of his plump mouth.

"You look so beautiful, baby," he complimented, watching the way the praising words skittering under Kurt’s skin, making him shiver and squirm like it was alive. "So pretty on your knees. I knew you would."

Kurt was breathing heavy, body hypersensitive to every touch and every word and he only wanted more. More touching. More words. More Blaine. He gripped a hand into what he could of Blaine's jeans, wishing the material far away so he could feel bare flesh under his palms. He could feel Blaine pressing his thumb into the corner of his mouth, gently stroking there in a tease of skin and Kurt didn't even think about it as he turned his head and took the digit into the warm cavern of his mouth, suckling and wrapping his tongue around the appendage as he held it prisoner. It eased something inside him.

Blaine jolted. His hips bucking upwards as Kurt pulled his dick out through his thumb. That was literally what it felt like and Blaine's eyes rolled back in his head for a second, making him lose his grip on reality. Fuck it. He'd lost that the moment he’d spotted Kurt across that room at the Showing. He wasn’t so out of his mind, in fact, was so hyper focused on Kurt that he noticed that something was off a while in the way his sub seemed desperate now, sucking hard and whining his distress. Blaine glanced down at him, immediately concerned. "What do you need?" he asked, depressing his tongue to get him to stop sucking.

Kurt let go with a gasp, unable to think straight enough to articulate anything. This didn't feel at all demeaning, he knew he could get to his feet at any moment without a word of protest, but he wanted to be good for Blaine. Wanted him to love what he saw, he ache for that. Ached to please him the way his Dom pleased him every minute of every day and that desire had manifested itself into a hungry ache inside him.

Blaine bent double and kissed at his temple, pulling his head up enough so he could mouth at his neck and jaw as well, sending sparks shooting through him. He arched into the contact, lifting his
head fully and coming up taller on his knees so Blaine could get better access, hands braced on his Dom's legs.

"Sir," he begged, turning his head to try and catch his lips for himself, the cooling dampness on his neck making him shiver as their mouths caught and held. It exploded. All teeth and tongue and gasps for more and harder without words and all the while Kurt edged his right hand upwards until it finally reached its prize and cupped Blaine firmly. He purred deep in his throat in satisfaction.

The Dom ripped his mouth away to swear; sweat beading on his forehead already this was all so intense. Kurt hummed and nudged at his lips again, fingers tracing, Jesus Christ. Placing his own hand over his sub's he pressed down into his rock hardness and hissed at the feeling.

"So this is what you want?" he asked against Kurt's flushed cheek. "You want my cock, greedy boy?"

Kurt whimpered, his own hips thrusting against the base of the sofa wantonly at the words. He did. He did want that. Fuck, he wanted it so badly he felt like he would catch on fire from the desire boiling in his veins. But suddenly his hand was being pushed away and he was crying out at the loss.

"You've gotta ask if you want it," Blaine told him, pulling back to look into his eyes. He was so compelling and Dominant up there above him that if Kurt weren't already on his knees he would have dropped there in a heartbeat. "You can have anything you want, but I want to hear you say it."

"I want your cock, Blaine," he complied immediately and Blaine grunted happily at hearing it said out loud, putting his hand back on his dick as a reward. But this was just the start of what Kurt wanted. Just the tip of the iceberg and having his Dom's length in his hand only fuelled the fire. "I want… I want…"

"What do you want?" Blaine pressed, cupping his cheek tenderly.

It's that single action that decides it in Kurt's mind. Decides that he is ready to try this, ready to share what he wants and trust that Blaine will always help him get it and look after him while does.

"I want to suck your cock… I want it, sir, I want-" he was a little hysterical trying to explain the force of his desires.

"Shhh," Blaine cut him off shakily, kissing his bee stung lips because he had to do something with the energy that was pouring out of him, all the while thinking, oh fuck, oh fuck, oh fuck. His dick was practically jumping in eagerness against Kurt's palm and the little minx had already started rocking the heel of his hand up and down against it while they chased tongues, making it fucking difficult to form a sentence in his mind past: Kurt wants to suck my cock, oh fuck, Kurt's begging to suck me off…

"Blaine," Kurt whined against his mouth. "Please."

Kurt was getting impatient now, he was so ready for this he felt he might spontaneously combust if they didn't move forwards soon.

"If you want to stop at any moment then just stop okay, lovely," Blaine said seriously. "I won't be mad or disappointed. You've already been so good to me."

"Yes, sir," Kurt sighed in relief and sat back on his heels at Blaine's instruction.

"Take off your shirt," he commanded soft and low, whipping his own top up over his head revealing all that gorgeous tanned, toned skin. "Then I want you to unbuckle me."
Kurt shivered at the prospect, feeling a hot flash of desire that bled red into his skin as he removed his shirt, unbuttoning then pushing it off his shoulders. Blaine hummed in delight at the sight of him, murmuring sweet words of praise as he reached forwards with shaky hands for Blaine's jeans button and zipper.

"My good boy," he hissed out as the teeth unclipped from one another and the pressure was removed from his throbbing erection. "I've dreamed about you doing this. When I was sleeping in that guest room all alone I'd think of you in my bed and all the things I wanted to do to you. All the things I wanted you to do to me."

He helped Kurt pull his jeans down over his ass and to his ankles, boxers soon following and then Kurt was sighing happily at the sight of him exposed, resting his cheek on his inner thigh again for a second as he caught his breath.

Blaine tried not to buck upwards. Tried not to think about the warm exhales skating up towards his balls. Tried to forget about the fact that his cock was an angry red and leaking pre-come all over his stomach. He forced himself to sink back against the sofa, head on the headrest and hand gripping the cushions next to him as the other played in Kurt's hair, waiting for him to be ready.

The first kiss was so feather light Blaine wouldn't have known it was there at all unless he wasn't so worked up and sensitized to everything Kurt did. The second was harder as Kurt lifted his head and pressed fully into his inner thigh making the Dom hold his breath and grunt in turns as he moved higher and higher, closer to where he was dying for him to be.

Kurt eyed Blaine's cock in awe for a split second.

He was aware that it was big and he offhandedly thought that he was pretty too, perfectly proportioned… the only problem was, would those proportions fit in his mouth? Sure he had thought about this before… but the actual physics were quite another thing entirely!

He was feeling a lot of things at once right now. Anxious, curious, turned on, but one glance up at Blaine's wrecked expression, the love he thought he saw there plain as day, bolstered him completely. His curiosity won out as he took the base in his hand and kitten licked the head and Blaine's reaction was swift and immediate, the moan that drew out of his parted lips obscene. It was empowering. To know that he was the one doing this, he was the one making Blaine this happy, taking care of him and with a surge of confidence he licked a broad stripe up the underside of his cock, tasting Blaine so concentrated and thickly here that it was drugging.

"Oh god baby, just like that," Blaine panted and it got Kurt hot all over. He loved when Blaine talked to him during sex, it made him feel safer and more connected to his Dom. It also helped him to know he was doing something right.

"Tell me what to do, sir," he begged, gripping Blaine's thigh with his free hand and looking up through his eyelashes. "Talk to me. Please."

Blaine got a better hold of his hair, not painful, but firm. "Put me in your pretty mouth," he commanded, feeling lightheaded already. A familiar coiling low in his stomach told him that this was going to be over embarrassingly quickly and Kurt had barely done anything yet.

Kurt followed the order and leant forwards, carefully wrapping his lips around the tip, already breathing heavily through his nose because he had Blaine in his mouth, against his tongue and the taste was incredible. Bitter with a tinge of sweetness and Kurt whimpered in time with Blaine moaning, fingers digging into his Dom's thigh with the same force that was being used on his hair.
"Fuck… move… please, lovely, move," was implored of him and he bobbed his head experimentally.

It took everything Blaine had not to shove forwards, sweat was trickling steadily down his chest now and he released the death grip he had on the cushion to feel the corner of those perfectly stretched lips around his cock.

Fuck, he wanted to come so bad he threw his head back against the seat and just felt Kurt tentatively bob, gradually getting more adventurous, more confident as he wrung Blaine out. He didn't care that he was being loud, that potentially his parents and Kurt's family could have heard him, his world was a focus of Kurt, Kurt, Kurt and the perfect, moist, warm cavern of his mouth.

Kurt should have been appalled at how much he loved this; the weight of Blaine on his tongue, the taste of him he couldn't get enough of. He couldn't find it in himself to even care. He was bucking his hips into the sofa in time with the bobs of his head, the friction a much needed relief on his own aching cock, but as he'd found out pretty soon into their sexual explorations, pleasing Blaine was a bigger turn on than anything else he'd encountered.

Getting Blaine off got him off and it was that simple.

So to say he was close to coming in his pants was an understatement, he felt coiled tight and ready to spring at any moment, primed and ready and wanting Blaine to go first, so he redoubled his efforts. Cataloguing everything Blaine seemed to love and what drew the biggest reactions and then using them mercilessly. Like pressing his tongue hard to the vein on the underside of his cock as he pulled up. Or twirling his tongue around the head. He knew it was clumsy and inexperienced, but Blaine seemed to think his enthusiasm was more than enough from the look and sound of him and that made Kurt unbelievably happy.

His sub started taking more now, deeper and faster and wetter and Blaine's toes curled in his shoes. "So good, you're so good at this," he moaned, eyes following his every movement with hot intensity as he carded his fingers through his hair restlessly. "My good boy. Made for my cock."

Kurt felt the words like a caress on his skin and he purred his approval.

Blaine's stomach tightened painfully at the vibration, just on the edge before Kurt was pulling off and kissing at the head of his dick. He was seeing white spots in his vision from being so close, but he was still in heavenly torture and he couldn't take his eyes off this wanton creature between his splayed thighs who was pointing his tongue and dipping it into his slit to chase his taste before closing over him again and that was it, Blaine had reached his sensory and visionary limit.

"Kurt," he choked out, trying to warn him, but Kurt didn't pull back or off, he wanted it, he wanted everything Blaine had to give him and that was what tipped Blaine over, coming so hard he was no longer on this planet when it careened into him.

He heard Kurt whimper from what felt like miles away and when he came back to, bod buzzing and shaky, his boy was slumped between his thighs still; flushed pink, damp and mused, resting on his thigh again right next to his spent cock with his eyes closed and a euphoric expression on his face as he caught his breathe.

Blaine realized belatedly that his fist was very much still is Kurt's hair and straightened it out, smoothing over the soft strands lovingly as he tried to even out his breathing and form some sort of anchor back on earth.

"Lovely?" he called gently and watched as those eyes he adored flutter back open. "There you are,"
he smiled, the reality of what just happened crashing over him and he grinned wider, satisfaction pouring out of his skin.

Kurt smiled back, blushing a deeper shade as he recognized the look he was giving him and turned his face into his skin to hide adorably.

Blaine laughed softly. "Hey, no, come here," he coaxed and managed to arrange them on the sofa together laying down. Blaine got rid of his shoes, socks and jeans pulling his boxers up and cuddled up to Kurt in his light pants that had stain on the front from where he’d come too. Blaine was a little disappointed he couldn't reciprocate, in fact a lot disappointed, but he knew that he'd get the chance soon enough to wrap his lips around Kurt so he let it lie; let them bask in the afterglow so he could shower kisses and praise on Kurt for being so amazing.

"So it was okay?" Kurt asked once he was situated on the inside of the sofa, legs tangling with his Dom's.

Blaine leant in the tiny distance that they're separated by and kissed him strong and sure, pouring every ounce of love he felt into it as he swiped his tongue inside to taste himself heavy on Kurt's own tongue. It was heady and dirty and he only wanted more of it: forever.

"It was perfect. God, lovely… you're perfect," and I love you.

He didn't say it, but he hoped it didn't need to be said. He hoped that sometime soon he could give voice to the silent three words, but for now they were content.

Kurt beamed at him shyly, running his hand over Blaine's chest. "Yeah?"

"This was the best gift I've ever gotten," he admitted sincerely.

"A blowjob?" Kurt asked with an arched brow making Blaine burst out laughing.

"No! Though that was pretty great-" Kurt pinched his nipple and Blaine yelped wrestling him until he let go and was under him completely grinning up at him looking stunning as always. "You trusted me enough to kneel for me and that… Kurt, I can't even put it into words, lovely. It's... it's an honour to have you kneel for me, Kurt. To be deserving of that."

"I trust you with everything I am," Kurt replied simply, but the simpler answer was: I love you.

Blaine stared at him for a quiet moment and Kurt was sure he could read the words in his skin, in his eyes and when his Dom leant down and kissed him again, it felt like an answer. It felt like an: I love you too.

And for now that was enough… that was perfect.

"You miss him?" Lillian asked as she hugged her son from behind and hooked her chin on his neck.

He was so tall now, lean and strong and so unlike the little blonde baby she used to carry around on her hip. That little boy was vibrant and loud and always up to something; be it climbing on the coffee table and singing his little lungs out or painting the walls with crayons claiming to be making art. He
was full of questions, of dreams about his future and the Dom he would have that would say his pictures were pretty and his dancing was awesome.

Her heart ached because he got exactly the opposite of that. He got someone who poured a bucket of water over the fire burning inside him.

She hated Kevin Landon, she loathed him, she wanted him away from any human being alive, but instead he was roaming around free, attending Showings and obviously picking his next victim. It hurt… to think that another parent would have to stand and watch their child turn into a shell of his old self; scared, closed off and broken. But now, as she stood there, arms wrapped around this new person that she still loved more than life, that was still her little boy despite the passing of years and his towering over her petite frame, she saw something in him.

Something she thought was long lost.

As he turned to look at her and nod in confirmation to her question, there was a spark in his eyes. A spark that just might end up being enough to set that fire blazing again with the right care and attention.

"Um… I… y-yeah…" he stammered, blushing, and she smiled tickling his side a little bit.

"You don't have to hide it. It's okay to miss him," she said with a smile.

He looked down to his entwined fingers, a nervous habit he'd picked up in the worst of times for him that he'd not shaken yet, then back upwards, brow furrowed and bottom lip caught between his teeth. "But… isn't it weird? I saw him two days ago, I shouldn't miss him… I…" he started and didn't finish.

She reached out and stroked his fair hair soothingly. "Sweetie… if what you told me about him is true it's no wonder you miss him. It's natural and normal to feel this way about your Dom and he'll be here any moment so don't fret. Do you want to help me set the table?" she asked, but he looked at her sheepishly under his fringe and she rolled her eyes chuckling. "Or you can just remain glued to that window until he gets here, no problem."

"Thanks, mom," he murmured with a smile and for a moment he was her Jeff again, the bright little boy who waited by the window for the ice cream truck to pass by even though they had three boxes of the stuff in the fridge.

She entered the kitchen and took out the plates to set them on the table thinking back to only a few days earlier when Jeff had visited home and asked them both to sit down so he could talk to them.

"Mom, Dad… I… do you… um… do you have a minute? I need to tell you something." He broached timidly as they were packing their things away from lunch.

Lillian exchanged a quick look with Jeremy before they turned their concerned gazes on their son. There had been a code of silence over their house for so long now, Jeff refusing to talk of anything that had come before and they both too guilt-ridden already to push him, so this was uncharted territory. She immediately noted his hunched shoulders and trembling fingers and she could feel their hearts aching at how skittish he had become.

"Sure, sweetie. Is there something wrong?" Lillian asked as they settled in the living room, her Dom pressed against her side in comfort as their son sat in front of them, fingers tied together and eyes downcast.

"No… no it's good I think I just… I don't… I don't want you to worry… or be scared for me like I
know you are all the time… I… I don’t want to be a burden anymore and this-” he started rambling but Jeremy raised his hands to cut him off.

"Jeff, you are not a burden to us. Even if nothing had ever happened to you we’d still worry and fuss over you because that’s what parents do. It’s in our job description, okay?” he said with a caring smile and his son returned it carefully, relaxing a bit more.

"’Kay, um… well… the thing I have to say to you it that… um… I… I’m c-claimed again…” he whispered finally and dead silence settled upon them.

Lillian knew they were staring at him; wide eyed, mouths open and disbelief written on their features so heavily that it made him stumble back in his chair like he was scared, or like they’d just confirmed whatever fears he had already placed in his mind and she wasn’t fast enough to correct it, too stunned by the news.

"Mom… I’m sorry… I’m sorry…” his breath was coming out short and he couldn’t find his voice. He was on the edge of hyperventilating and Lillian felt every motherly instinct in her snap her back to attention.

She came to her feet and approached her little boy, wrapping her arms around his shaking form. "Jeff… Jeff, honey… look at me… baby… baby, breathe… you’re okay… just breathe,” she coaxed and coached him, trying like hell to keep him from just tearing apart at the seams.

"M-mom…” he sobbed brokenly, the panic attack throwing everything out of proportion. “I'm sorry… so sorry.”

"No, baby… you have nothing to be sorry for,” she promised, cupping his beautiful blonde head and laying kisses there. “We were just surprised, your dad and I, because we didn't think you'd ever be ready to belong to someone again… but, honey this is good news… it really is, we’re not mad at you,” she hastily comforted him and he looked up, eyes wet and red rimmed and so broken she ached inside.

"It... it is?” he whispered and she kissed his forehead gently.

"Are you happy with him?” she asked and he looked down again, fiddling with his Dalton uniform he hadn’t had the chance to change out of.

"He… he’s safe I think… warm… I mean… when he holds me… it’s warm again,” he tried to explain and ended up passing a hand over his wet face, hiding there for a few moments.

Lillian exchanged another look with her husband over Jeff’s head and his strained expression said that he didn’t know what to say or how to react. She could tell he was struggling with the urge to go and confront this unknown Dominant but she was proud he was holding it together for their son’s sake.

She swallowed and stroked his hair again as she looked for the right words. "That's a good thing, baby. You deserve that,” Lillian said because he did and she felt Jeff turn further into her in surprise. It had been a long time since he had allowed her so close and she was fighting tears as she clutched to him.

"Is it Nick?” his dad asked suddenly and both hers and Jeff’s eyes snapped up in surprise.

"H-how did you know?” he asked on an exhale that had his entire body shaking as it got used to getting enough oxygen to function properly again.
Jeremy worked his jaw. "When we were at that dinner with Blaine's parents… Nick's were there too. They talked about how much he cared about you, assured us he'd never hurt you… so if you're bonded again… it's reassuring at least to know it's him," Jeremy said as neutrally as possible and Lillian smiled as she watched Jeff gape at him.

"So… you're not mad… at… at me..." he asked in a small voice and Lillian sniffled quietly.

"We'll never be mad at you for being happy, baby. If Nick makes you feel all that… if he really cares about you..." she said, the question every bit as leading as it sounded. She needed to know.

Jeff looked down again. "He said he does... he said he loves me," he admitted, stumbling over the word, then shrugging.

"You don't believe him?" Jeremy asked and Jeff tilted his head to the side.

"I'm... I just don't know if I can... not yet, but... I think I could someday... if he stays..." he said and both his parents put arms around him, holding him tightly.

"He'll stay," Lillian whispered and he nodded, unsure still she knew, but she was hopeful for the first time in a long time.

Jeff smiled to himself gently as he stared at the street, compelling it to bring Nick to him faster… now.

He wasn't lying when he said he missed him.

Nick had headed for home two days prior from Dalton to spend Christmas Eve and morning with his parents. They had planned for Nick to come to his for lunch and spend the night and he couldn't wait to have him close again. It had been surprisingly hard to say goodbye to him. It was strange and a little scary just how dependent he had become on Nick in such a short space of time, but he didn't want to change it surprisingly. The Dom eased the weight on his shoulders and he made him feel free for the first time in a while; no continuous nightmares, no harshness that belittled, no pain or fear…

It was just Nick.

Jeff pushed the curtain further away to scan further up the road and jumped in place when he caught sight of a familiar flashy red BMW pulling up to his driveway, the bright colour standing out against the murky neighbourhood.

He was half excited and half terrified to have Nick in his home. On one hand the sub in him craved his Dom, the newfound balance he had found within his arms and he couldn't wait to be there again; leaning against him, safe and protected with his doubts silenced and pushed aside. On the other hand though, it was frightening because his home wasn't exactly up to the standards Nick was used to. His family lost everything trying to protect him and their house and the furnishings inside reflected that. Their lunch would be humble, the gift he got for Nick practically had no monetary value at all and he just couldn't shake off the fear that after this Nick would see how different their worlds really were and he'd be gone.

The engine shut off and the door slammed, bringing Jeff out of his Nick induced stupor as he ran into the kitchen, nearly crashing into the counter, out of breath and vibrating with nerves.
"He… he's here, mom," he struggled to get it out when a knock reverberated through the small house. Before Jeff could even find his ground again his dad's voice came through the hallway.

"I'll get it!" he sang and rushed past his son who scowled as he threw the door open and ushered his Dom in.

He could hear the hushed voices and he saw his dad turning his back on him to block his view of something. He took a step forward to peek at their hands curiously, but his dad was faster and he dashed upstairs before he could get a glimpse. Nick's beaming smile soon filled up the space.

"Hi, angel," he chirped and Jeff pouted at him.

"What's that?" he asked pointing to the stairs where his dad was disappearing, giggling like a mad man.

"What's what?" he mocked innocently.

Jeff scowled at him petulantly and crossed his arms over his chest. "Funny."

"Funny enough to get me a kiss from an angel?" Nick whispered gently as he reached for him. His arms wrapped around his stiff form and Jeff fought to relax, still unused to hands on him being gentle and loving instead of harsh and bruising.

"Maybe," Jeff let himself smile shyly as he looked into his Dom's eyes, tipping his head in timid invitation. His entire body shivered as Nick closed the distance between them, catching his lips with his own, the feel of them cold and chapped from the biting wind outside, but infinitely gentle. He melted now, body relaxing and uncoiling as he found strength in his arms.

Their lips brushed silently, slowly, perfectly for a few undefined moments. Jeff never knew kissing someone could feel so much like being loved, cherished, but Nick made it so every time he touched his lips and he relished in it.

Nick pulled back just enough to rest their foreheads together. "I missed you, angel," he whispered and when he spoke their lips still touched and it made Jeff tremble.

He offered him one of his rare smiles in return, eyes lighting up and crinkling in the corners; the last evidence of the fact that he used to be happy.

"Only been two days," he tried to be coy, but he knew it didn't work on Nick because he kissed the tip of his nose playfully and jabbed his finger into his ribs tickling him.

"My boy should be telling the truth," Nick pouted and Jeff almost collapsed at the way his Dom called him his so lovingly.

"I… I missed you too," he whispered, eyes downcast and words careful, but Nick's hands on him continued to just support him effortlessly.

"That's good to hear," he said with a wide grin, then his eyes tracked around. "Can I meet your mom now?"

Jeff took a deep breath, nodding more surely than he felt as he grasped Nick's hand in his tentatively. He was improving in the whole initiating contact… at least, he was trying to. "Um… yeah… she's… she's finishing lunch," he said and pulled his Dom after him into the little kitchen.

They entered the room and found Lillian putting finishing touches on their food, arranging it on
plates and making sure everything was in order.

Nick felt slightly uncomfortable because the lunch looked pretty big, certainly more luxurious than he was expecting and he didn't want to think how they managed to pay for that. Feeling especially bad with the thought that they went through all the trouble for him when all he wanted to do was to love Jeff.

"Hello, Mrs Sterling," he greeted when she turned around, the beaming smile on her beautiful face making her look young again.

"Please, call me Lillian," she smiled as she rounded the counter and offered her hand to him. He watched her eyes dart to his arm and how it was protectively curled around her son, but she kept her silence which Nick took to be a good sign.

"Okay, Lillian. I'm Nick Duval," he introduced himself and she nodded.

"I know. Jeff talks about you all the time," she said slyly and winked.

Nick could feel Jeff stiffening in his arms, cheeks heating and eyes turning down as he wound his fingers together. Nick felt his discomfort like it was his own and it was instinctive and necessary to make him relax again. He had to make him see that every little thing he felt for Nick was returned wholeheartedly.

"Do you, angel?" he leaned in to whisper in his ear and Jeff tensed even further, fingers shaking and knotted painfully together, but his head bobbed up and down once, answering the question.

"I talk about you all the time. Since the first moment I saw you, when you had no idea how loved and admired you were and still are," he reassured him softly and Jeff turned his eyes back up, pushing closer to him on instinct, the sub inside him purring in contentment when Nick wrapped both arms around him and offered him his own strength once again. He buried his head into the crook of his Dom's neck, braving his own demons and placing a gentle kiss on the soft skin there.

Lillian was looking at them with a crease between her brows, regretting her decision to tease her son when this was all so new and scary for him. He'd made so many steps forward she'd assumed too much and overstepped. Still, watching how Nick interacted with her boy, calming him with such genuine care had a few of her lingering fears evaporating and tears pricking the back of her eyes.

Jeff peeked upwards and mother and son caught and held eyes. She watched a blush begin to bloom across his face and wanted to squeeze him to her like he was two again.

"You boys go sit down. I'll get our food out now," she instructed, coughing to clear her thick throat and Nick pulled back kissing Jeff's temple in the process.

"Do you need some help?" he offered politely, reaching out for one of the heavier looking plates.

"Thank you, sweetie. You should look up to the younger generation's darling," she mock scolded her husband who had just re-entered the room, who in turn mock scowled at Nick.

"Well, thank you for coming here and showing my wife she could do better," he grumbled petulantly, a twinkle in his eye that Nick smirked back at good-naturedly.

Jeff felt his heart warm at the easy way they just slotted together as they set the food on the table and sat down to dig in, the conversation coming easy and the bantering in high form and good spirits. It was almost as if Nick had never not been there with them and it was a revelation to the blonde.
They finished the soup quickly and started on their chicken breasts in mushroom and mozzarella sauce; they hadn’t had a traditional Christmas dinner since they’d moved here because of cost, but they always managed to scrape something nice together for the day regardless. Jeff had been anxious that maybe Nick wouldn’t like it… a glance at his nearly empty plate put an end to that train of thought rather quickly, however.

"So, Nick… Jeff's told us a lot about you, but we'd like to hear something from you as well," Jeff’s dad broached conversationally and Nick smiled, wiping his lips with a napkin politely.

"Ask away, please," he encouraged, sipping his water.

"You're a Literature major right?" Jeremy asked and Nick nodded, squeezing Jeff's hand under the table when he felt him twitch at the prospect of the interrogation his father had obviously planned.

"Literature and philosophy, sir, yes," he answered respectfully and Jeremy nodded.

"There's no need to call me, sir, Jeremy is enough, son. And that's an interesting combination. Any thoughts as to what you'd like to do with your degree?" he asked, leaning forwards on his elbows indicating his genuine interest.

"I always wanted to teach. I used to play teacher around the house and I'd prepare pop quizzes for my mom and dad and then if they failed I could have an extra scoop of ice cream because they hadn't been studying," he revealed with a casual shrug, not in the least bit embarrassed and they all shared a laugh at the cute story. Jeff was imagining tiny Nicky passing out F's on purpose to get ice cream.

"What do your parents think about you career choice? What with them being business people and all," Lillian asked and Nick shrugged easily.

"They’re really supportive. I think they always knew I wouldn't follow in their footsteps. I was always bored to death when it was bring your kid to work day and I'd usually just end up sneaking into the break room and drinking all their juice. That isn’t to say that I didn’t test it out… I had a placement there over the summer when I was seventeen but it quickly became apparent that it wasn’t for me. Teaching is what I love so they want that for me," he answered and they all nodded in approval.

"It's a good thing you knew what you wanted to do since you were little. Jeff here on the other hand…” Lillian started with a snort and Jeff blushed to the roots of his platinum hair.

"Mooooom!" he whined, but Nick shushed him gently, a grin growing on his face.

"I wanna hear about little Jeff. I told you all about me," he nudged his shoulder playfully and Jeff sighed in resignation.

"Fine. But you asked for it," he mumbled and stabbed his fork into his pasta, scowling. On the inside though he was smiling. This banter and even the many little, constant touches were all adding up to something Jeff never wanted to go away.

"I did. Okay, what did Jeff want to do when he was little? Give me all the dirt on him," he demanded eagerly, almost bouncing in his chair, excited that he would finally learn more about his angel.

"He wanted to be a sunflower," Jeremy snorted and Nick almost inhaled his bite of food.

"A what now?" he giggled and Jeff pouted.

"I was two!" he whined and his mom laughed, ruffling his hair gently.
"We drove passed this sunflower field, beautiful place and stopped the car to take a picture. We were there to see them turn towards the sun and he was fascinated by them so much he decided that's what he wanted to be when he grew up," she said with a soft smile and Nick could almost see little blonde boy, buzzing with excitement as he saw the beautiful flowers turn their faces towards the warmth and deciding that's what he wanted to do for the rest of his life.

He felt his chest tighten at the thought that his inner sun was dimmed so early on, leaving him in the cold all alone and it was so clear he wanted nothing more than to be warm again. A sentence suddenly rushed into his mind... one he didn't think he understood at the time but now made perfect sense to him.

'It's warm when you're around.'

Jeff meant it when he said that, in a way he couldn't comprehend the depth of until now. He almost told Nick that he was his warmth, his sun and at that moment nothing could mean more to him.

He loved him so much it hurt and he swore to himself he'd never let him be cold again.

"I can see that. Golden hair, beautiful face. He'd make a great sunflower," Nick said gently, tone suddenly serious instead of teasing and Jeff pinched his arm in an attempt to distract him from his blush and the way his body shivered at his words.

If he was a sunflower then Nick was his sun and he knew that. There was a tingle at the back of his neck, almost a white hot split second burning sensation where his mark rested and he lifted a nervous hand to rub the itch away as his parents continued talking to his Dom, clearly enchanted by the young man.

They shared funny stories and his parents embarrassed him a little bit more, causing Nick to share his own secrets in return making Jeff love him even more for his quirks and silliness. They enjoyed a rich chocolate cake his mom made for desert and as Jeff stood to help his mom clear the table his dad ushered Nick into the living room.

"You don't think he'll scare him away do you?" he asked his mom with a frown on his face and she smiled placing some of the dishes in the sink.

"I don't think he could if he tried, baby. That boy loves you so much, Jeff," she said thumbing a fallen tear away and he wrapped his arms around her.

"I'm sorry I caused you so much pain, mom," he whispered into her shoulder and she frowned, holding him at arms distance.

"You listen to me, Jeffery Sterling. You did nothing wrong. If anyone's to blame apart from that monster it's us, Jeff... your dad and I. We thought we were doing the best for you, setting that pre-claim. We thought he was a nice, respectful Dom. But look what he did. If anyone should be apologizing it's us baby. I'm so sorry," she said, tears slipping down her cheeks and eyes closing as he hugged her again.

"It's okay, mom. I'm okay," he whispered to her and she sniffled in his arms.

"Are you okay? Really?" she asked at the same time Nick's bubbly laughter rang through the house, making Jeff smile in reaction to it.

"I think... I think maybe I will be... with him..." he said, blushing and she kissed his cheek.

"I think you can if you let yourself," she agreed gently and he smiled nodding.
"I'll try."

Across the hallway Nick was laughing up a storm with Jeremy as they talked about football and some of the funny moves Nick had pulled in his career.

"-and then he threw the ball... and I was sooo busy checking my helmet it hit me square in the head and I couldn't even finish the game," Nick wheezed out and Jeremy clutched his sides, doubled over as he laughed.

"How did you ever make first string with that track record?" he joked and Nick threw his head back in laughter.

"To be honest if I didn't know my dad I'd say he bribed the coach," he said seriously and the two of the chuckled again before falling into a comfortable silence; not even the usually busy streets providing background noise.

"I prepared questions to grill you, you know?" Jeremy spoke up after a few moments and Nick nodded in understanding.

"I'd understand if you felt the need to use them. I'll answer anything you ask of me," he said honestly and Jeremy smiled.

"I don't think I need to. I saw... I saw the way you look at him. Like he makes you alive, like he gives you meaning, the way it's supposed to be. And I saw the way he lets you in… lets you close. He hasn't been like that in so long. The only one who could even seem to rustle a smile out of him was Kurt when he came along, but now... with you it's like I can catch glimpses of my son, the way he was before," he said and Nick leaned towards him covering his hand with his in comfort.

"I don't know the full extent of what happened to your son, Jeremy, I want Jeff to tell me that when he's ready. But I'm not an idiot and I know what it takes to taint a mark. I will never be like that. Since the moment I saw him I knew he'd been through a lot and all I wanted to do was make it better for him. I... I love him... from the moment I saw him I loved him and if you have tests and like, tasks set up so I can prove myself I'll gladly take them all. I'll slay a dragon and bring a golden apple and whatever else you can come up with I promise. He's worth it all," Nick explained passionately, trying to ease the tension, but at the same time convey how honest he was and how loved Jeff would be with him.

Jeremy took a moment to inspect the young man in front of him.

He was kind and open where Kevin was made of fake smiles and tight responses. He was ready to joke at his own expense and laugh at his own shortcomings where Kevin belittled the ones around him to make himself look greater. He leaned into his son whenever he sought comfort instead of sneering at him and making him feel like it was wrong to do so. He loved Jeff instead of using him as a status symbol and it made Jeremy relax for the first time since he found out his son was claimed again.

Nick was trustworthy, there was no doubt about it.

"I don't think you need to slay any dragons. To be honest just the fact that Jeff let you in is enough evidence that you're worthy of him. We took that choice away once and look what happened… no, if he feels safe with you then we’re going to trust him. But I am going to warn you, if you ever lay a hand on him in a way he didn't agree on... I will not hesitate to make your punishment tenfold," he warned, trying to show that yes, he did like Nick, but his son came first and nothing would ever change that. If Kevin Landon was still within his reach he would have no qualms in wringing his
neck with his bare hands.

"Jeremy, if I ever hurt him, I'll do my best not to, but if I ever do I swear it won't be on purpose and it won't be the way he did. I plan on staying with him forever and we're bound to fight or mess up, but his safety, his happiness will always be the first thing on my mind," Nick said earnestly, meeting his gaze squarely and Jeremy knew, in that very moment, that this was the boy to make his son whole again.

"I like you, Nick. And I didn't think I would," Jeremy admitted and Nick chuckled at the frank honesty.

"I didn't think you would either. I was prepared to grovel. Wore my old jeans and everything," he joked and the older Dom smiled at him, shaking his head.

"No need for that. Just keep doing what you're doing."

Nick nodded, glancing towards the kitchen where his sub's sweet voice carried over the clatter of dishes.

He wanted him by his side and he wasn't even gone longer than twenty minutes.

"You can go kidnap him and give him his present if you like," Jeremy said with a smug expression on his face when he caught Nick eyeing the doorway longingly, like his sheer will could make Jeff appear next to him.

The boy jumped at his voice and beamed at him.

"I can?"

"Yeah... yeah you can," he chuckled and Nick jumped up, rushing towards the door when Jeremy's voice stopped him.

"And Nick?" the older Dom called and he spun on his heel to face him again.

"Yeah?" he asked in confusion and the blonde man smiled, twirling his glass of water in his hand.

"Thank you," he said gently and Nick's face softened, heart clenching as he nodded.

"Anything for him," he answered, exiting the room and walking towards the kitchen, catching sight of his sub and stopping dead in his tracks.

Jeff was standing at the counter, closing a plastic food container with one hand and licking the chocolate from his fingers on the other as his mom washed the dishes behind him. The pink tongue darted out and swiped between the slender digits and Nick was half amused by his sub's love of all things sweet and half turned on by the erotic sight in front of him, however unintentional.

His pants tightened dangerously and he craved the feeling of Jeff's lips on his, that sweet tongue he hadn't had the chance to even taste yet because Jeff was timid and careful and afraid of it and he understood with all his heart. He did. But at the same time he wanted him. So badly it felt painful sometimes to be around him and not just shower him in kisses and caresses. To look at him, so beautiful, but not know what was hidden beneath his clothes. To know that there was someone who saw him vulnerable and pliant and who used that against him when he wasn't sure he was even allowed to think about having the sub like that.

*God he loved him*, he thought when he saw his pink lips stretch into a small smile at the taste of the
dark treat as he put the container into the fridge and turned to his mother.

"You need help with anything else?" he asked and she shook her head.

"No, sweetie. Why don't you go and save your man from your dad's clutches. If that poor thing is still alive," Lillian joked and at Jeff's horrified expression he made his presence known, rapping on the doorway frame.

Two blonde heads swivelled towards the noise.

"Alive and well don't worry. But I was wondering if it would be okay to steal Jeff to give him his present now?" he asked jokingly and Jeff's eyes lit up.

"Sure thing. Jer and I usually nap after lunch so you two can go up to Jeff's room and spend some time together," she smiled and Nick nodded at her, grabbing Jeff's hand and tugging him out.

"Ready to see your present, angel?" he asked as they climbed the creaky stairs and Jeff lowered his head with a soft smile.

"Y-yeah, but you didn't have to get me anything," he mumbled and Nick paused and turned on the step in front of Jeff, towering over him and tipping his chin up with his finger.

"I want to spoil you. I want to see you smile all the time. So please let me, okay?" he asked in a hushed voice and his boy nodded once, blush sitting high on his cheeks and Nick was torn once again. Between wishing he was relaxed enough to stop blushing and wishing he never lost it because he looked angelic with that pink tinge on his cheeks.

They walked up and through the small hallway before stepping through the first door on the left, leading into Jeff's room; small and humble, but Jeff's smell lingered in the air and his art supplies were strewn on every flat surface and Nick's hoodie was on the pillow.

Nick smiled when he spotted it and walked over to run a finger over the worn material.

"Did you sleep with this?" he asked and Jeff stared at him, mortified as he tried to form words. Embarrassment washed over him, but the truth was, he did sleep with it. It smelled like Nick and it made the nightmares go away and it eased the ache of separation. Nick was never meant to see it though... he wasn't supposed to know how weak he was, how needy.

"I..." he started, but when he glanced back up he saw Nick smiling gently at him, eyes warm and loving and with no trace of malice in them.

He decided to tell the truth.

"It smells like you. It... m-makes me sleep better. No bad dreams," he said, but with every word his resolve thinned and his voice weakened and by the end of it he was whispering barely audibly and looking everywhere but at Nick.

Nick scooped him into his arms softly as he sat them down onto the bed, leaning back and allowing Jeff to cuddle closer.

"I miss having you in my arms at night too. I don't have your clothes but I do have that picture you drew of me. It's under my pillow every night," he said and Jeff looked up from where his cheek was resting on Nick's broad chest.

"It is?" he asked, wide eyed and so unaware of the power he had over the older boy.
"Every night. Now... do you want to see your present?" he asked reaching for something and Jeff did his best to hide the fact that he was buzzing with excitement, but he failed miserably. He made grabby hands towards the big box he'd missed perched on the end of his bed that Nick was dragging over.

"What is this?" he asked when he was transferred bodily to the bed and the box shape, which was more of a rectangle actually, was placed across his lap.

There was gentle rustling from the inside that made him frown curiously.

"Lift up the cover and take a look," Nick said with a smile and Jeff reached for the cloth and pealed it off revealing a cage with a water bottle attached to the furthest side, a bowl full of food and a small log climbing frame next to the corner piled high with hay. Looking closer he saw that within that hay there was a tiny, gray something, shivering and hiding its face with its fuzzy, floppy ears drawn low.

"Nick... this... this is a bunny," Jeff whispered, trying not to scare the poor fella even further.

"It is, yes. He's a dwarf rabbit so he won't get too big and he's baby still, just able to leave his mother. I thought the two of you would get along great. You're both cute and cuddly and a little bit timid around new people. Why don't you take him out?" Nick said pointing at the small animal huddling inside the cage, now looking at them with beady black eyes, button nose twitching curiously.

Jeff placed the cage aside and opened the cage door eagerly, feeling the instinctive need to mother the little darling. The bunny was dark grey, with a white belly and there was a small black patch on his tiny bum that became visible when Jeff reached in, slow and steady to take him out. He fought a little initially, trying to evade the hands coming for him, but Jeff kept his hold firm and navigated him safely through the gap.

He was small enough that he could cradle him in his hands easily, just over the size of his palm and its tiny body shivered as Jeff scooted backwards on the bed, bringing the little thing close to his chest, over his heart, somehow thinking maybe it would calm him down because he could feel his little heart hammering against his palms almost frantically. He ran soft fingers between his ears, feeling baby soft fur as he caressed his head and cooed at him gently.

He knew what Nick meant when he said they would get along, he was already smitten.

The bunny cowered a little from his unfamiliar touch in fear, skittish and new at being handled, but Jeff did his best to show him he wouldn't hurt him, that he was safe. Just like Nick did with him. And just like the bunny wasn't all that convinced just yet, Jeff knew he would prove it to him with time and then they'd cuddle and play and be happy and he had Nick to thank for it.
"Thank you," he whispered gently, glancing over to his Dom next to him and trying not to jostle the tiny fluff ball any more than necessary.

"I had a hard time picking one out. They are too cute, all of them. I swear they do it on purpose, they just want you to buy a hundred! But that one... that one looked like it belonged to you," Nick smiled, reaching out and petting the small, furry head, making the bunny tremble even more. Jeff swatted his hand away playfully, making him chuckle.

"Why do you say that?" he asked curiously, bringing the bunny up to place a soft kiss on his head and cuddle him closer.

"The black patch on his butt... looks like you smudged charcoal on his fur. Made me think of you right away," Nick admitted not caring he sounded like a sap, especially when Jeff laughed though it made his new pet cower and kick his little legs strongly in panic.

"Sorry, bunny...no sudden moves again. Promise," Jeff whispered to the animal and Nick smiled at the cute sight in front of him.

"He might need a name if you're gonna talk to him, angel," he teased and Jeff blushed, but bit his lip in thought for a moment before beaming at his Dom.

"Poncho!" he said happily and Nick gaped at him.

"You want to name the poor bunny Poncho?" he asked incredulously and Jeff nodded surely.

"It's cute. He can be called Cho for short and um... it... it reminds me of you," he said shyly at the end and looked at Nick under his lashes, as if waiting for him to laugh or taunt him.

But Nick beamed as he realized the meaning behind the name and leaned in to peck Jeff's lips.

"I love it," he assured then bent down so he was eye level with the newly named bunny. "Hi Cho!" he petted the tiny head again and this time the bunny seemed less upset by his touch as he munched on a loose strand on Jeff's shirt.

"I got you something too," Jeff admitted after a moment and Nick looked up.

"Baby, you didn't have to..." Nick tried but Jeff shook his head.

"It's not much... and I don't... I didn't know what to get so I just... um... it's right there," he pointed towards the white rectangle facing the wall.

Nick shuffled off the bed and walked over to it, turning it around and gasping when he saw it. It was a water colour painting, soft shades and gentle lines swirling to shape the two of them, cuddling on the leather sofa of what looked to be the Warbler hall. Their faces were close together and there was so much between them in just that one look it floored Nick to the ground.

"Angel..." he tried, voice hoarse and shaky as he stared at the work of art that he had just been gifted.

"It's okay if you don't like it. Kurt... um... Kurt took that picture a while ago and I got it after we got together and I didn't know what to give you and then I had the idea, but it has me in it and I didn't want to draw me in a gift to you... so I tried to draw just you but then it looked like you were staring at the wall and smiling at it and so I drew myself too and I don't..." he rambled and rambled until a soft pair of lips cut him off gently.
The kiss was just a little bit stronger than the rest of them, there was something more behind the press of their lips in that moment, something raw and powerful that Jeff just couldn't name, but he felt it burning him all the way to his bones.

He returned it as best as he could, still not used to how loved Nick's kisses made him feel and he prayed he made Nick feel at least a fraction of what he felt. They broke apart, breathing each other in and when Jeff opened his eyes there was already a pair of warm, brown ones looking at him in awe.

"Apart from getting you... this is the best gift I've ever gotten," he whispered, words falling heavy on Jeff as he clutched Nick's jumper with one hand and cradled a distressed Poncho with the other, the tiny animal clearly not happy with the sudden disturbance.

Jeff cuddled himself into Nick's chest and Cho to his own, eyeing the piece of art he had created.

Kurt had suggested printing the picture and putting it into a frame at first, but Jeff had wanted to paint it, feeling the phantom itch in his fingers for a pen or brush. He had set up his supplies and tried to work, Nick coming easily, but every time his brush crossed the canvass he just felt wrong with painting himself next to Nick who was smiling and caring and beautiful, when he himself was so obviously flawed. Whatever he tried to do to put himself out of the painting didn't seem quite right either though and in the end he just forced his hand and painted them both sitting on the sofa together, him looking at the ground with a careful smile on his face and Nick looking at him with so much in his eyes Jeff didn't think he'd ever get used to all of it. There was so much love and gentleness and caring there that he had a hard time believing was all for him and an even harder time capturing in watercolour. But there it was... clear in the photo Kurt took and clear in the painting Jeff made and maybe... just maybe he'd learn to love himself in that painting as well. Maybe he'd look at it one day and see not a boy broken, but a boy on the way to becoming whole again and next to him a boy who pushed him that way.

It should have been just Nick in it... but maybe... maybe it wouldn't be right like that.

"Should have been just you in it," he voiced aloud again, looking down and petting Poncho's straight ear that was lying close to his back, making it twitch.

Nick shook his head in determination, chocolate eyes soft and his broad hand cupping his cheek.

"It should always be you next to me. That's what makes it perfect. Both the painting and my life. You," he stated and Jeff looked up, eyes filled with tears and lip shaking, body curling around those words to keep them close so nobody could ever take them away from him.
Hi everyone.
Sorry it took us so long but life is suuuuuper crazy right now.
In any case we bring you the next chapter. You'll notice that, while still fairly long it's MUCH shorter than most of them. It's because this is a scene that was previously a part of a chapter and while we ADORE it, after reading things over we just felt it didn't fit very well with the flow of the story. So we took it out.
But then we really wanted you to see it...so we put it back. Only as a separate, interlude chapter.
For those of you who read this on FF you'll notice the part after the line break is actually Champagne kisses one shot which we decided to add here. It made sense.
This whole chapter has very little to do with the actual plot but it's light and fun and silly and we felt you guys deserved something like that before we hit the last stretch of the story that's....well....kind of angsty.
So have fun and we'll see you soon.
Love
A&M

New Years Eve...

"I'm excited!" Kurt beamed from the passenger's seat of Blaine's car as they drove towards Dave and Sebastian's home for the traditional Warbler New Year's party.

"I can see that, lovely," Blaine chuckled as he took in the sight of his sub bouncing in his seat in excitement.

He looked the epitome of perfect tonight; cheeks a healthy gorgeous pink, hair swept up in his usual quiff that made his angelic face look even more beautiful, topped off with a mouth-watering outfit that made his own pants just a tad bit tighter. Black skinny jeans clung to his long, slim legs almost sinfully, the bottom half of them covered in elegant, knee high silver boots that laced at the front. His toned torso was covered with an obscene, silk black shirt that was a little bit see-through; just enough to make Blaine crazy because he knew what was hiding behind the slinky material. He'd opted to loosely tie a skinny, shiny, silver tie around his neck and on top of it all he tossed in an extravagant waist long black jacket with short feathers on the shoulders making him look out of this world. Nobody could dress in an outfit like that and make it work the way Kurt could from his own personal perspective... and if his mother's words were anything to go by and Blaine trusted her expert opinion on fashion.
Kurt was a trendsetter, not a follower and the outfit tonight more than proved that fact.

The last details that were there to catch the eye and torture him personally was the thin glittery streaks in his brown locks, just on top of his quiff and the same, silver-ish hue he applied around his already magical eyes.

He looked like a magnificent, fairy-tale creature and once again Blaine had no idea how he got so lucky to be the one to call him his.

"Do you think I'm overdressed?" Kurt questioned pulling one of the feathers on his jacket delicately.

He had found it buried within one of Dana's back wardrobes while searching for their Formal suits and he fell in love with it on sight. Dana had told him how she'd designed it and she'd felt excited about the piece but her models just didn't seem to be able to pull it off and in the end the piece never made it into the official male line. Kurt had tried it on at her insistence and the rest, as they say, is history. His slender waist made the jacket hem wrap perfectly around him and the feathers made his broad shoulders look even broader. Upon seeing him Dana clapped, happy that her piece finally found a worthy owner and she insisted he took it with him.

"No… I think you look very sexy," Blaine said in a low voice and Kurt blushed, but the sub in him preened. Blaine could tell by the way he straightened his back and squirmed in his seat a little.

"You have to say that 'cause you're my Dom," Kurt tried to play it cool, fiddling with his hair needlessly, but there was no way he was hiding how good it made him feel to know Blaine thought so much of him.

"Maybe so. But it's still the truth. Besides, wait until you see Corinne. She's always dressed to the nines whatever the occasion. There was this one time we decided to have a pajama party and she showed up in a Victoria's Secret silk pajama set with Swarovski crystals on her slippers. And don't even get me started on Seb. That guy can act tough all he wants but he's a downright diva when it comes to clothes. You'll fit right in," he winked at him and Kurt giggled, more relaxed and sure of himself after being reminded that he wouldn't have been the only one who spent hours getting ready.

"So I didn't even think to ask but… we're going to Seb and Dave's… apartment?" he questioned, turning in his seat more to face him and Blaine let out a snort at that.

"Apartment? Try penthouse with more rooms than a couple of college kids could ever need," Blaine corrected dryly and Kurt gaped at him.

"Penthouse? Seriously?" he asked and Blaine nodded, side eyeing him with amusement.
"Yup. Seb… diva… remember? When they decided to move in together Dave found them this really sweet, two bedroom apartment but he pitched a fit, saying how he didn't have enough room to put all his crap and where will the pool table live and whatnot. Dave, whipped as he is, caved and bought them the penthouse in that same building instead."

Kurt was still trying to wrap his head around it all. "A pool table?" he double checked.

The Dom laughed. "Among other things, but I can't tell you more because he threatened to kick me in the balls if I told you too much and spoiled the tour. He's like a really overgrown, scary, threatening baby sometimes," Blaine said faking a shudder and Kurt snickered.

"Will there be just the Warblers?" he asked and Blaine nodded, indicating a left before turning off.

"Mostly it's just us and our subs or Doms so you'll know everyone there. Have you heard from Jeff?" Blaine asked as he took a sharp right turn and pulled up in front of an impressive, fifteen story high building, the top floor clearly radiating light and shine from the decorations.

The cars parked outside were all flashy and luxurious and once again Kurt felt like he didn't belong; a firm hand on his thigh the only thing keeping him grounded.

He shook his thoughts clear. "Um, yeah, I spoke to him earlier. He and Nick were already on their way so they should already be here," he answered as they got out, the winter air biting at their cheeks as he swivelled his head around to see if he could spot Nick’s car. Blaine locked the car and together they entered the building greeting the posh doorman and being directed towards the separate elevator leading to the penthouse.

Blaine led Kurt by the small of his back and the look of his ass in those jeans of his, the smooth curve of his hips under the hem of that jacket and the way the silver of his tie and the glitter in his hair sparkled in the lobby lights made him crazy with desire.

He cast a jealous possessive look around and narrowed his lids at the sight of the receptionist eyeing his sub appreciatively. He ushered Kurt into the elevator and pressed the button to take them to the top floor, all the while staring the lustful receptionist down threateningly.

Kurt noticed the impromptu staring match, wondering what the hell had triggered it. He found out the second the doors closed on them Blaine crowded him against the wall, assaulting his senses with his smell and that gruff voice that made the sub in him desperate to kneel. Since that first time on Christmas day Kurt had been fantasizing about doing it again increasingly more.

Blaine's palms spread wide on his hips, his lips breathing damp curls of air against the shell of his ear as he spoke to him. "I want you to remember that you're mine tonight when they are looking at you and how beautiful you are. Remember that only I get to touch you, lovely," he growled low and attacked his lips in a fierce kiss that had them both panting and breathless when the elevator dinged and the doors opened up to complete sensory overload.

Sebastian went all out on decorations this year. Silver and blue fairy lights were twinkling from every visible spot around the room. Artificial snow clung to the flat surfaces, shimmering and giving the place a magical sort of look that Kurt loved. There were helium filled white balloons dancing just under the ceiling, silver tinsel hanging from them, reflecting the light onto the cheerful crowd.

The place was already fairly packed, people nursing their drinks politely to start them off before they all went crazy. The music was a low hum of chilled out songs to start the evening off.

"Hi guys. Welcome," Dave greeted them wearing a nice white shirt and black slacks. He made a
point of eyeing Kurt up and down to tease Blaine who just glared at him, blushing a little at his own continued possessiveness even while in the throes of it. “Can I take your coats?”

"Thank you. This place looks amazing," Kurt smiled back and handed Dave his coat along with Blaine's as they stepped out of the elevator and into the spacious living room.

It was a huge open plan design, the white leather couches pushed to the walls with little tables for drinks strategically placed around. Every other piece of unnecessary furniture seemed to have been removed to create a huge space in the middle of the room for dancing or other activities.

"Seb will be glad to hear that. He'll be here to give you a tour in a moment and I'll get these somewhere safe," he said pointing to their coats before he slunk through the archway and into the next part of the apartment.

"Looking for Jeff?" Blaine asked knowingly as he caught Kurt craning his neck to peer over the people crowded in the middle of the room.

"Yeah. I can't see him," he hummed, stepping down from his tiptoes and looking at his Dom imploringly.

"Right there," Blaine pointed towards one of the cushy looking sofas and a beautiful smile spread over his sub's face when he took in the sight before them.

Nick was sitting on the sofa, holding what looked like a cocktail that was bright green, complete with bendy straws, fruit garnishes and a little umbrella in an obnoxious pink colour.

Jeff was cuddled on his lap, looking content and relaxed to be there as he took the tip of one straw between his lips and sipped at the drink carefully. Kurt watched as Nick eyed his friend’s lips hungrily as he drank, before pecking them gently when he released the straw. Nick's hand came up to stroke his cheek lovingly and his friend snuggled closer, kiss timid and slow but Kurt could tell he wanted it.

"He'll heal," Kurt said, tears in his eyes from the sheer relief he felt and Blaine hugged him around the waist and pulled him closer.

"He will. They'll be beautiful together," he assured and Kurt smiled just when someone clapped them both on the shoulder.

"Are you done being sappy or do you want another moment?" Sebastian asked coolly but his eyes
flicked to the happy couple and his lips stretched into a soft smile before rearranging into his usual 'I don’t really care' expression.

"Oh I don't know, I'm sure we could manage more," he sassed back gaining himself an eye roll and a soft kiss to his neck from Blaine. "Show us around?" Kurt asked with a knowing smirk and together they made their way through the apartment after the preening peacock that was Sebastian showing off in all his glory; Kurt getting more and more excited the more he saw.

"Blaine, that's a hot tub."

"He's got a dancing studio…"

"…and a library…"

"…and a game room…"

"Blaine, that's a walk in closet!"

"Lovely, we have that at home."

"Yeah, but his is bigger than yours."

Sebastian actually choked on his drink at that, laughing as Kurt watched them both not knowing what he said wrong; Blaine's blush finally clueing him in.

"Oh… OH… that's not what I meant! NO… ugh…" he spluttered, cheeks flaming. Blaine was more than adequately sized obviously, but both his Dom and the other sub continued to laugh at his expense as Blaine took his hand and led them back to the living room to greet their other friends.

Wes was holding court in the kitchen near where all the drinks were being stored, probably micro-managing because he had to be in charge of something. Miriam was tucked under his arm comfortably, looking pretty in a simple knee length dress and typing away at her phone. Thad and Ryan were sticking close to the iPod dock and makeshift dance floor chatting away with Trent and Jon, other Warblers scattered here and there. They eventually ended up in front of Nick and Jeff, the best friends all laughing and smiling at one another.

David and Corrine arrived last of course, always late and after they had their drinks the party truly started. Corrine claimed Kurt the second she walked in and noticed that the two of them matched with their black and silver glitter attires, leaving Blaine and David to fend for themselves.

"I'm not sure if I should be glad or afraid your sub is so taken with mine," Blaine commented watching them go, sipping on his beer and nudging David.

Corrine literally forced Kurt to sit down where a bunch of people had just set up to play truth or dare and his sub blushed prettily at the questions that were being thrown around straight off the bat, no warming up, reminding Blaine of their time on the boat when they played the question cards. He still didn't know what Kurt's favourite sexual position was, but he sure as hell hoped he would get to find out soon.

He cleared his mind of all the images beginning to swell there and tried to concentrate.

"I don't even know what to tell you, man. I love her but that girl is batshit crazy," David laughed around the rim of his bottle as he watched her stand up and lift her glittery black top to show off her belly ring, the little pink heart that matched their marks catching the light. He'd been a little dubious about the colour of his mark at first, pink wasn't exactly his colour of choice, but in the end it was
Corrine and the colour represented her so he loved it regardless. And screw anyone who said he couldn't pull it off right in the face. He rocked that shit.

"Aaaaaaand that's our cue to join in Blainers," he laughed downing his beer before grabbing another one and the two of them joined the game, Blaine sitting down and placing Kurt in his lap so his back was cradled against his chest.

"Hello again," Blaine whispered into his ear and Kurt tilted his head back and smiled at him.

"Is it always like this?" he asked, eyeing the circle that had only grown with bodies, Bruno Mars' album playing in the background.

"Mmm, they'll play it until the more hardcore drinking games come out," Blaine advised him, offering him a sip of his beer.

Kurt stared at the clear bottle for a second, the amber liquid and lime wedge inside not looking too horrible. He'd never drank before, not having the money to waste or really the inclination for it, but he was always up for trying something new. Turning so he was sitting more sideways on Blaine's lap he took the offering and placed it to his lips, sipping before pulling a face and handing it back quickly.

"Ugh!"

Blaine laughed. "Not a beer person then, lovely?"

Kurt shook his head emphatically, swallowing and running his tongue around his mouth to try and get rid of the bitter aftertaste faster. "I'm not kissing you if you taste like that," he declared and Blaine arched a brow and leaned closer.

"Oh really?"

Kurt smiled and lifted his brows. "Yes really."

"Okay, Kurt. Truth or dare?" Trent hollered and Kurt snapped his head around to see all the expectant faces looking his way.

"Um…"

"C'mon, Kurt!" Corrine encouraged excitedly from next to them, sipping on something out of a silver solo cup.

Kurt pondered the question, lip tightly between his teeth. This wasn't his type of game at all. He didn't feel that relaxed to share things with the people around him but Corrine insisted and he… well… maybe he just felt like being a proper teenager for once. He felt his Dom, solid and comforting behind him and once again he felt the need to be just a little bit crazy for him… just a little bit wild and uninhibited instead of second guessing every move he made.

"Dare," he declared bravely and the crowd went crazy as Trent stroked his chin threateningly.

"I dare you to… drink four shots of tequila… in a row," he announced with an amused smirk and Kurt shrugged, eyeing the small glasses they set out in front of him. They didn't even make for a decent sip so he should be just fine. After all, it had to taste better than that beer did right?

"Lovely… that's quite a lot of liquor. Are you sure you want to go through with this?" Blaine asked as Trent poured the shots. Dom’s had the power to veto dares or truths for their subs if they felt it
was past their comfort zones, it was built into the rules of the game.

"If I back out of it I'll have to forfeit and that means I have to get naked. And I didn't even show off my outfit yet. I'll drink," Kurt nodded surely and Blaine decided to just let him have his first experience as a tipsy person. It built character.

Kurt braved his shots like a soldier, following the instructions set out; licking up the salt off the side of his hand, downing the gold liquid and biting on the lime from the bowl. The first was a shock to the system, the alcohol harsh as it went down and making him cringe a little over the lime he hastily shoved into his mouth. Okay that was way worse than the beer. There was a cheer that went up as Kurt eyed the second dubiously and it took a bit of working up before he reapplied the salt and took the second and third in quick succession to get it over with.

"Fuck, Kurt. You're showing us all up!" Dave laughed and Kurt snorted a giggle, hiding it with the back of his hand feeling a little lightheaded, like the liquid had gone straight to his head.

"Maybe that's enough?" Blaine asked, trying to get a read on him.

Those lovely glasz eyes locked on Blaine's teasingly, mischievousness brewing there as he reached for his hand, kitten licking over the dip where his thumb and forefinger met before pouring the salt there. Blaine bit his lip to keep from voicing his approval at the slick sensation.

A roar went up, people wolf whistling and cat calling and Blaine smirked, feeling incredibly turned on when Kurt grabbed the shot and lime wedge. He leaned back on one hand, the other still held out in offering and met Kurt's eyes, opening his mouth in a naughty suggestion.

"I'm so turned on right now," Corrine said matter-of-factly as Kurt placed the wedge gently between Blaine's lips, sucking the excess juice from his sticky fingers. Blaine groaned around the fruit and the sub felt like whimpering himself, mind exactly where his was, back on Christmas day with his Dom's hard length between his lips.

He flushed.

"Get on with it!" Sebastian called impatiently. "Not all of us are interested in watching your sexual tension all night."

Kurt ducked his head and laved over Blaine's hand, humming at the taste of Blaine's skin in his mouth again under the salt and if he spent longer there than was needed then he could just blame it on the alcohol.

The shot was next and Kurt threw it back as quick as he could before diving in for his Dom's mouth. The excuse of the lime was long forgotten as their mouths clashed, the sharp slice of fruit just in the way before Blaine reached up and pulled it away throwing it somewhere.

"Corrine, stop filming them!" Miriam laughed.

"It's hot!"

"Send that shit to me."

"What the hell, Trent?"

It was all background noise.

"You'll be the end of me, baby," Blaine groaned, pulling back a little, the taste of tequila and Kurt
thick on his tongue. It was an intoxicating combination. His sub hummed against his mouth, kitten licking his lips and the stickiness there away completely uninhibited for once.

The game continued; people stripping, yelling insults, answering embarrassing questions and getting progressively more drunk as the time went on.

"Blay..." he heard Kurt giggle against his chest just as Ryan came back from streaking a lap around the penthouse, hands cupping his modesty before a laughing Thad covered him back up, crawling onto his lap and kissing him.

He knew the alcohol had caught up with his sub properly now, those shots doing their job along with the glass of champagne Sebastian had handed him and he was currently sipping happily from. He seemed to actually like the taste which Blaine wasn't even surprised at, Kurt had expensive taste after all.

He himself was well on the way to being tipsy, more than a few beers and a few Sambuca shots under his belt and he was glad they were sleeping over tonight because there was no way either of them were making it home when it was only ten o'clock now.

"B? Blaine? Blaaaaine!" Kurt whined at him, pulling on his face to make him pay attention to him.

"Yeah, baby?" he asked, looking down on him with a soft smirk.

"You're pretty," he said with a sure nod and smile as he reached up into his loose hair to tug and play with. "And curly. Pretty and curly and... pretty."

Blaine had to stifle a laugh at how adorable he was.

"You're prettier."

"Am not," Kurt sang before taking another sip of expensive bubbles. "This is nice," he declared licking the tingle away from his lips happily.

"Should be for fifty dollars a bottle," Blaine smirked tracing fingers over Kurt's ear and neck. "And that's relatively cheap for champagne."

Kurt raised his brows and peered into the flute. "Has it got like gold dust in it!?"

Blaine laughed out loud. "Something like that."

Kurt finished it off and presented the empty glass. "More please!"

"How about we wait a few minutes and then I'll get you another, hm?" he suggested instead, pecking him on the nose to distract him. Kurt followed his lips like he was magnetized, it had become very clear early on that drunk Kurt was equal parts affectionate as he was silly and sassy. Blaine liked the combination a lot. After all it was all Kurt in his usual state, only magnified now he was drunk and had no care about his inhibitions.

He was about to kiss his flushed cheek, heading for his lips when his lap was suddenly void of Kurt and he saw Corrine dragging him up and away from the group again, whispering something in his ear that made Kurt wide eyed as they disappeared into the nearest bathroom, Corrine deftly snagging a bottle of champagne on the way.

Blaine watched them go with a pout and David clapped him on the back. "They'll be fine. C'mon, let's go smash Trent and Wes at beer pong. The undefeated champions need to show up these
Blaine smirked and followed him up to where the pair were setting the game up in the corner.

Across the room from the mayhem of truth and dare and beer pong, Jeff was still tucked safely against his Dom, his soft fingers stroking his hair and damp lips placing loving kisses against his cheeks and temples every once in a while.

The blonde surveyed the room, now considerably more rowdy than when they first arrived, and realized that everyone was engaged in some sort of game or dancing with their friends or other half's.

Thad had decided that Ryan had to learn how to dance properly, again, and now the two of them stomped around avoiding bodies and smashing everyone's feet as they tried to waltz, the height difference and the fact that Ryan was sadly uncoordinated outside of football field making the whole thing worthy blackmail material.

Sebastian had clearly decided he was host-ish enough because he'd given up his cool facade to attack Dave with kisses in the corner of the room. Jeff watched with wide eyes as he jumped up and wrapped his legs around his waist.

Come to think of it… Nick was the only one that hadn't even moved from this spot since they got there; he'd said hi to his friends, they chatted a bit and then he pulled Jeff into his lap and they stayed there.

All of a sudden Jeff tensed and looked down, shame washing over him.

His Dom was unable to have fun because he had to stay and babysit him all the time. He was the one ruining the night for his Dom and he hated it. He wanted him to enjoy, unwind and relax and he couldn't do that because Jeff was a screw up and he just spoiled everything. He didn't feel comfortable getting drunk and playing games that would potentially push his boundaries, but that didn't mean Nick couldn't. The type of person Nick was he must enjoy those sorts of things and yet here he was sat with him.

He wiggled out from his lap to stand up but Nick caught him around the waist, eyes warm, concerned and beautiful under the twinkling lights. “Where're you going, angel?”

"I… um… I'm just gonna run to the bathroom and see if Kurt's around. You should… you should talk to your friends,” he rushed out and his heart skipped when Nick pouted.

"But I only wanna talk to you," he whined and Jeff forced a smile not really understanding. He'd just given him an out.

"P-please, Nick. I just… I hate to see you wasting the night with me when everyone else is having fun… just please…” he said, eyes downcast and words heavy on his lips.

"Angel, look at me," Nick let out that voice again. The one that did things to Jeff… made the sub in him unfurl and preen with joy to hear it.

What was that? He wondered as he lifted his eyes up to look at his Dom. They couldn't be commands, they didn't sound like the harshly barked orders Kevin used to give him.

"Spending time with you is never a waste. I'm with these people every day and you… I just got you. And I want to be next to you all the time because it's what make me happy. You make me happy, Jeff," he said gently and Jeff felt himself melt at those words.
Nick said the sweetest things and even if he still had trouble believing any of them they still made him tremble. He braced himself and leaned forward, praying not to mess it up as he placed a careful, clumsy kiss on Nick's lips that made his heart jump.

"Thank you for saying that but... but, please, just... just mingle for a while. I'll... I'll find you when I get back," Jeff asked, desperate to make his Dom have the same amount of fun he would've had if he wasn't around.

Nick brushed a lock of hair from his forehead and nodded. "If that's what you want, sure. I'll be around so find me when you come back," he agreed, eyeing him carefully for any sign that he wasn't okay and Jeff nodded in relief, pushing a smile onto his face and slinking away to give his Dom some space.

He tried looking for a bathroom to perhaps have a quiet moment to himself away from the pounding music, but the one meant for the guests was occupied and there were loud giggles coming from inside. He backed away from the door and looked around a bit lost before he tried walking out onto the balcony to breathe some fresh air and waste some time while Nick mingled. That's when he heard a familiar voice that stopped him just before the open glass door.

"-it suits you," Wes said and there was a gentle chuckle Jeff would have recognized anywhere.

"I feel amazing," his Dom's voice drifted through the crowd and Jeff leaned forward, as if he wanted to be closer to it.

"I can tell. I don't think I've ever seen you this happy, Nicholas," Wes teased and the smile in his voice was painted into his words.

"I don't think I've ever been this happy, Wesley," he fired back before he got quiet for a second or two. "He...Jeff makes everything in my world better. I've always thought you guys were exaggerating when you claimed your subs but... now I understand it all. I want to sing all the time... I want to just make the rest of the world go away so I can just be with him constantly. Its mind blowing," he finished off and there was another round of gentle, accepting laughter.

"You love him," Wes stated simply and Jeff felt his heart jump in his throat. Hearing this from someone else, not just to placate him because he was so fragile, and from Wes of all people, the Dom who didn't sugarcoat things for the sake of it settled something in his mind. That loose screw finally being tightened over the idea that Nick did truly care about him. He might deserve better, but Nick truly did care about him... love him.

"I do. And I can't believe he's mine," he said and Jeff threw his caution to the wind. He rounded the corner and walked to his Dom, wiggling his way inside his arms and burying his face inside his neck so he wouldn't do something as stupid as cry.

"There you are. Everything okay? Did you find Kurt?" Nick asked in surprise as he hugged him close, arms strong and protective around his lithe frame.

"The bathroom was locked... someone was giggling inside," he mumbled.

Wes laughed. "Well... that's a Warbler party for you. They're all posh and collected until you bring out the liquor!" He looked through the glass where Blaine and David were cheering and high fiving after Blaine sank another ball into the cup at the end of the table. Those two were dangerously good at that game, he didn't know why every year he went against his better judgment and agreed to play against them. He supposed it was tradition. And the Warblers were big on traditions.
"Do you think someone was hooking up in there?" Nick asked wide eyed and obviously ready to gossip like the little old lady he was.

"I don't think so," Wes said pointing amusedly towards the bathroom door that now revealed Kurt who was wearing eyeliner and had the buttons of his shirt almost halfway undone. Corrine stumbled behind him, champagne bottle in hand, clearly pleased with her handiwork as the two of them sashayed across the room towards their Dom's who hadn't noticed them yet as they were celebrating their latest win.

_Corrine has the best ideas ever._ Kurt thought hazily as he walked across the room towards his Dom.

He got behind him and snaked his hand up and under the material of Blaine's cardigan and loose tee, pawing at his abs and happy trail as he leaned into his ear and _licked_.

Blaine grunted in surprise but was on board in a second flat, immediately imagining that tongue _other_ places. "There's my beautiful boy," he grinned.

Corrine walked around David, trailing a hand over his back before hopping up on the cleared side board crooking a finger at him. He went to her happily, slotting between her legs.

"Wha'ya doing?" Kurt whispered.

"Kicking people's asses because I'm awesome," Blaine shrugged humbly before detaching and dragging Kurt to his side, feeling hands slipping back under his top as his sub settled into his side. It was then he noticed the additions and _subtractions_ to his subs wardrobe.

He trailed a finger down the length of that pale, perfect chest wanting to put his mouth there and mark it up. "This is interesting," he commented darkly.

"Mm," Kurt agreed with a coy under the lashes smile as he leaned into him. "Like?"

"I might," Blaine considered, looking him up and down slowly, loving when he felt Kurt shiver.

"How about we make this more interesting?" Trent suggested across the table, swaying a little on his feet, eyes hazy.

"Man, we won. Suck it up," Blaine told him with a sloppy grin and a shake of his head, getting distracted when Kurt began nibbling along his jaw absently, hands and now _nails_ still doing interesting things under his tee.

"One game. One shot," he pressed bouncing the ball on the table back up into his hand, almost missing because his coordination was so off with the amount he'd drank already. He just didn't know when to quit.
"Why would they do that when my sexy's team already won," Corrine slurred from her perch, legs still cradling David and bottle soon reattaching to her red lips.

Sebastian came strutting over with an armful of liquor bottles himself, setting them down and beginning to evenly fill up two cups to the brim with everything from Vodka to Whiskey to Midori. "Loser has to drink that," he said, finishing with a flourish and a smirk.

"Fuck that," Ryan declared, throwing his hands up.

"Babe, do you want to be cleaning up sick in the morning?" Dave asked in exasperation following him over. His devious little minx was such an enabler.

"I won't be cleaning it up," he shrugged, sending him a superior smile that had Dave grabbing him by the wrist and pushing him up against a wall to resume showing him who was boss the best way he knew how.

The only time they were openly affectionate to this degree with one another was when they were drunk and so it seemed like they were always making up for the other ninety percent of the time.

"Ry, did you win yet? I want to dance some more!" Thad called across the room, standing on the sofa to be able to see over the crowd gathering around the beer pong table.

"Oh no you don't," Trent declared glomming onto his drinking partner as he made to move that way automatically.

"You know that's not doing anything right?" Ryan asked curiously and everyone laughed. He began to step away easily and in sheer desperation Trent sank down to his knees to wrap his whole body around Ryan's leg… subsequently being dragged along the floor as everyone continued to crack up.

"Bro! You can't leave me like this. Ryaaaaann!" he begged not letting go even though Ryan was making good progress.

Thad came hopping over, not drunk but hyped up on sugar and good vibes. He looked down at Trent and poked him with the toe of his converse. "Get your own."

"One throw!" the Dom on the floor continued to whine. "It'll take a few minutes!"

The Dom shook his head. "What do you think, tiny?"

Thad sighed dramatically. "Fine!"

Trent let go and sprang up like a jack in the box. "Sweet!" He rushed back to the table.

Ryan leant forwards and placed a sweet kiss on his boy's lips. "Hot tub later?" he asked suggestively. "It's tradition after all."

"Dancing first, then we'll see about upholding traditions," Thad grinned coyly against his mouth before they made their way over to where Trent was antsy and waiting.

"Okay so one throw each-" Trent started only to be cut off.

"If we're doing this then we're going first. We won fair and square so you can just suck it," David stated and Blaine nodded. He wasn't risking that Trent would luck out on his first go and then one of them would be stuck drinking that nightmare waiting to happen on the table.

"Fine we get to pick the person then," Trent argued back. "Anyone in the room."
"Screw you. You're playing against me and D so you choose between us," Blaine said before turning back to Kurt who was mouthing at his neck quite contently. It was seriously fucking with his concentration and grip on reality. "Baby, I neee- oh fuck," he moaned as Kurt bit down where he shoulder met his neck sending sparks straight to his cock.

He was about to say screw this shit and get him and Kurt a room when David, the monumentally cocky idiot, shot them in the foot.

"Fine whatever. We'll still win. Choose away."

"Okay we choooooose…. Kurt!"

The sub wasn't even paying attention and continued sucking his love-bite unawares, Blaine's eyes practically crossing as he sucked particularly hard, cupping the back of his head. Whether to pull him away or keep him there he had no idea.

"He's hammered. Choose again," David demanded.

"He's not hammered," Corrine defended, hitting his chest. "He's just happy to see Blaine."

"Oh really. And are you happy to see me, sweetness?" David drawled and got his face pushed away when he leaned in.

"Not really," she sassed with a little laugh.

David pouted and scowled.

"Look can we get this done?" Ryan asked amused.

"Okay, okay," Blaine said breathlessly and reluctantly detached Kurt from his neck. His sub made a noise of protest that did things to his insides, Jesus, no one should sound so god damned good.

"Baby, I need you to do something for me quick," he asked, taking in his swollen, pink lips and flushed face. \textit{Oh shit did he need him to something for him, like get naked for one.}

"And then we can kiss and dance and stuff?" he demanded, looking adorably put out.

"Yeah of course."

"And champagne," he added to his list of demands.

Everyone laughed. "And you can have some more champagne."

"I have some, Kurt," Corrine called and Kurt lit up, going to head that way before Blaine caught him around the middle.

"What, Blay?" he asked exasperated.

"That thing I needed, lovely," he reminded.

"Oh yeah."

"He's gonna regret drinking that much tomorrow," Thad busted up, leaning on Ryan.

"Now I need you to take this ball and throw it in that cup over there," Blaine told him grabbing the ball and placing it in his palm, gesturing over. He was having trouble with seeing things straight by
now, so he had no idea if his boy even knew where he was talking about.

"Why?"

Blaine shrugged, coming up behind him and wrapping his arms around his waist. "Because it's the game," he mumbled into the side of his neck, not even caring at this point if they won. He just wanted to drag Kurt somewhere private and relieve the throbbing ache in his boxers. Besides, he realized it was David's turn to drink so he wouldn't have to down that god awful thing anyway.

"Seems like a stupid game," Kurt told him matter-of-factly and Blaine laughed while David groaned.

"Just throw it please… and try to get it in?" David pleaded.

Kurt sighed huffily. "Fine."

He hardly even looked as he half-heartedly chucked the ball; it made an arch before plopping into the drink completely cleanly.

The only sound that could be heard was Flo Rida in the background and they all stared at the bobbing white ping pong ball in the silver solo cup.

"That means I won right?" Kurt asked all the shocked faces before turning and snuggling up to his Dom. "I won right, Blaine?"

He glanced at the ball for a second more, back to Kurt, back to the ball…

He didn’t think he’d actually do it.

"Uh, yeah."

"I'm going to tell Jeff," he said before breaking free and heading towards the balcony completely forgetting about his rewards. "JEFF I WON THIS STUPID BALL GAME…"

Kurt's voice drifted off and Ryan looked down at their cup. "Did that just happen?"

Trent was gaping.

"Kurt! You fucking legend!" David exclaimed joyously before turning a shit eating grin on the pair across from them. "Drink up, Ry. It's your turn."

Ryan scowled down at the cup of death then right at Trent who sheepishly grimaced at him, backing away from the huge jock. "Chin, chin," he offered.

"I hate you. I am so getting you back for this, like so bad in your face," he warned before picking up the cup and sighing.

"I'm gonna go put the pizzas in," Thad said knowing they were going to need some starch to soak up some of the alcohol as Ryan began to down the cup, a horrible grimace on his face.

Corrine hopped down and placed a kiss to David's mouth before following Kurt outside… they were only out there for about five minutes before she came barrelling back in with a laughing Kurt both promptly pushing a table and then climbing onto the sturdy, low surface in the middle of the living room.

"Ladies and gentleman. What you're about to whi..wit…winess…wis…what's that called?" Corrine slurred and Kurt giggled stupidly as they tried to keep their balance together.
"Whiness is fine…” he said eliciting rounds of laughter from everyone around them as he helped his partner in crime completely butcher the word.

"'kay good. So Kurt and I… here… we t-talked and decided this party is bo-ring…” she snapped her fingers twice to emphasize her point and Kurt nodded along, eyes glassed over and a smile on his face so silly it made even Jeff giggle into Nick's shoulder as they followed them in.

"Rin said we needs naked," he clapped his hands in glee and in an instant Blaine was running to the edge of the table trying to pull him down.

Yeah he wanted naked Kurt. Like, hell yeah. But that was for him. Not everyone else's viewing pleasure!

"No, no, no, Blay. The room needs naked," he laughed, evading his grip, bouncing away and the music suddenly changed to the low, bass filled tune of Jason Derulo's, Talk Dirty To Me. Corrine took Kurt by the waist and started twirling them around, the both of them rolling their hips and running hands all over each other.

For being so plastered the way the pair moved was surprisingly sexy and Blaine was transfixed by every pop, drop and roll of Kurt's hips, his ass on perfect display in front of him, all the coy and blatantly inviting looks Kurt was giving him getting him hotter and hotter.

All the Warblers gathered around them as they showed off, making every move dramatic and dirty Corrine egging them on further and further until she had her dress over her head and was throwing it to David, shimmying in her sparkly bra and matching panties.

She reached for Kurt's shirt and managed to get it unbuttoned all the way and pushed off before Blaine grabbed Kurt's hips and pulled him down to him, unable to take it anymore. Corrine pouted and objected but Blaine was already carrying Kurt off towards the closest spare room.

"Fuck you're so hot baby… couldn't take it anymore," he groaned pressing the door closed with his body on Kurt's, feeling those long legs wrapping around him as mouths met tasting of champagne and beer and them.

They fell in a tangle of panting, desperate limbs on the bed, tearing at clothes and kissing frantically, Blaine running hands all over his subs bare torso before following with his mouth to mark it up as he'd wanted to.

Kurt gasped and arched into the wet heat, shivering when he felt the sharp bite of teeth on his nipple and fingers unzipping his straining fly.

"Blaine," he moaned high and needy, head spinning with a combination of alcohol and need. He drove his fingers into his Dom's curls before grasping at his red cardigan, tugging to get him to remove it.

Blaine sat back up on his knees, unbuttoning the garment before throwing it over his shoulder groaning at the sight of Kurt spread out underneath him, glitter sparkling and beautiful, before reaching for the hem of his top when there was a knock on the door.

"Go away!” Blaine growled, glaring at the wood.

"We're about to countdown to New Year lovebirds! So cease defiling my guest bedroom for a few secs yeah?” Sebastian drawled through the wood and Blaine groaned in defeat, head falling to Kurt's shoulder.
Begrudgingly they made their way out into the crowd of their friends, all gathered around the plasma screen about to watch the ball drop in Times Square. Blaine kept Kurt close and shielded from any more prying eyes, he’d made the sub put on his cardigan for now, which didn’t help his erection one bit, because it was still open at the front showcasing his now marked chest.

Suddenly people began to shout and count down in time with the TV and pretty soon it was, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1…

Blaine looked into Kurt’s sparkling eyes, ignoring the commotion around them as he framed his face lovingly, leaning in to whisper against his lips, "Happy New Year, lovely."

"Happy New Year, Blaine."

They kissed.

“You know New Years was like… five minutes ago right?” Jon’s voice broke through the haze of bubbles in Kurt’s head and stomach: the pleasant warm feeling that was racing through his veins as he and Blaine continued to slowly lock mouths over and over in the middle of the room.

Kurt just made a small dismissive sound in his throat and pushed closer to Blaine and his magical tongue. That thing was his new favourite part of his Dom… or maybe his curls… or maybe his…

“Kurt!” Wes reprimanded and the sub pulled back startled with a wet smack of lips to meet the Dom’s amused eyes.

Blaine protested vehemently at the distraction and began mouthing at the hinge of his jaw and Kurt nearly melted into a puddle of hormones and desire.

God the room was spinning.

“Maybe you shouldn’t be putting your hand down B’s pants in front of everyone?” Wes continued with a superior inflection.

Someone was putting a hand down Blaine’s pants?? Who was it?? He would kick someone’s ass for sure for touching his....

Kurt furrowed his brow and flexed said hand gaining a very vocal groan from his Dom and found it to already halfway past Blaine’s waistband.

Oh. Oh okay…his hand…down Blaine’s pants...he could work with that...

He laughed and met Blaine’s heavy lidded gaze when the Dom pulled back slightly. “Well hello,” he demurred, biting his swollen lower lip and not moving his hand an inch either way, but he could feel his rock hard erection along the tips of his fingers.

“He says hi back,” Blaine purred back at him with a self-satisfied grin, tightening his hold around his
waist.

Kurt laughed and arched a brow, the alcohol inhibiting any embarrassment from the fact that he was talking to Blaine’s dick effectively. “Oh really?”

He flexed his hand again and his Dom hissed and arched his hips into the teasing touch, looking wilder and wilder around the eyes.

“Definitely,” was gritted out before he leaned in to join their mouths again hot and hard as the music switched tracks.

Kurt pushed in a little further, the tight band of Blaine’s jeans digging into the back of his hand but he didn’t pay it any mind as his Dom groaned again like he was being taken apart. The kiss broke wetly and Kurt led a messy trail over his cheek.

“Well tell him I kinda missed him,” Kurt simpered into his ear before darting to lick a wicked stripe along the shell suggestively.

He was backed into a wall before he knew which way was up and moaned in approval as their mouths clashed again, tongues first.

“It’s seriously like I’ve stumbled into the penthouse forum,” Jon declared, glancing around the trashed room. The music was still blaring, the lights were dimmed and there was cups and bottles and random objects all over the place. Like really… who brought the blow up elephant? “B’s doing Kurt against one wall while Dave’s got Seb against another. Corrine is pretty much lap dancing for D and don’t even get me started on Ryan and Thad in the hot tub! He’s so smashed I don’t know how he hasn’t drowned himself yet let alone fu-”

“Just go get a drink, Jon, it’ll all go away… or at the very least you may drink enough to black out and forget tonight entirely,” Wes cut in archly with a smirk just as Miriam came bounding over with a few drinks in hand for them. She really looked amazing tonight, it made ignoring what all his idiotic friends were doing far easier.

She handed the drink over and raised impressed brows at the couple making out heavily against the wall… and oh… now they were grinding. She actually felt herself flushing a little as the intimate scene unfolded before her eyes.

“I think Blaine’s trying to drill Kurt through the wall,” Wes said dryly as he took a sip of his beer. Miriam cleared her throat and looked away from the writhing figures pointedly to stare at her Dom.

“Maybe you should suggest they take it somewhere else?”

“I’m not getting in the middle of that pheromone fest,” Wes declined and she rolled her eyes.

“Fine. I will.”

“Wait-”

She ignored the half command and walked over to tap Blaine tentatively on the shoulder. “Your bedroom is still free.”

Blaine hummed a vague, distracted sound and pressed in closer to Kurt and away from her, their mouths making obscene, wet kissing sounds this close up. She flushed again from the combination of smelling and seeing and hearing their passion for one another and cleared her throat, hand rising to her throat to cover the area for the weird feeling that she was exposed instead of them somehow.
Blaine hitched a hand under Kurt’s thigh and dragged it over his hip, sinking deeper and she felt Wes pull her back to his chest with a possessive little rumble. He leaned down into her ear and said, “I thought I said wait?”

She shivered and tilted her head back towards him. “You can punish me later if you deal with this now, sir.”

“My little negotiator.”

There was affection and amusement in his voice before he sighed and let her go to step up to the necking couple.

“Swipe a bottle of champs and go find somewhere else to fuck.”

It was crude and normally Wes wouldn’t sink to talking like that, but at this point it seemed filth of porn star levels seemed to be the only thing registering with them.

Kurt rolled his hips and detached their swollen mouths to the sound of Blaine’s moan as the sentence slowly made sense. He flushed with want and looked at Blaine through half mast, lust filled eyes and adjusted his grip around his shoulders with his arms to press their chests closer. “Can we?”

“Please do,” Wes muttered and faded back into the background to leave them to it.

Blaine ignored the requests, not necessarily on purpose he was just busy, and diverted his attention back to Kurt’s neck now that his subs mouth was occupied with things that weren’t his mouth. It annoyed him because Kurt’s mouth should only be occupied with body parts of Blaine. He should make some rules about that. He was willing to beg for it to be put into their contract.

“Blaaay! You’re not listening to me,” Kurt whined, licking up the side of his face in punishment but Blaine liked it. He felt distantly that he shouldn’t really like someone licking his face but Kurt’s mouth was on him again so he wasn’t going to complain. Obviously the person who made up the rule that people shouldn’t lick each other’s faces hadn’t had Kurt doing it to them… and damn right too because he’d kick their a-

“Blaine!” Kurt huffed again, pawing at his spine and pulling him in closer with his leg.

“You’re like a cat, lovely,” he decided, mouthing at the hinge of his jaw.

Kurt laughed. “Wha..? I’m not a cat!”

“Yes you are. With all your licking and pawing and-” he nibbled at Kurt’s ear and the sub made one of his favourite sounds. “-purring,” he finished smug and hot into his ear, squeezing the thigh that was still under his hand.

Kurt grasped a handful of his hair and yanked so that he had to lean back and meet his demanding subs eyes. It was hot. So, so hot. It riled up his dominant instincts and Kurt looked so fucking pretty when he was demanding attention and trying to boss him around.

“Get kitty what he wants and then we’ll see about more purring,” he suggested naughtily, biting his lip and coyly glancing through his lashes and fuck. Blaine was sunk. Done. Finished. And his cock was talking up a litany of; yes, more licking, more pawing, more purring, moremoremore!

He let go and reluctantly pulled himself back, feeling lightheaded and faint with the depth of need coursing through his blood, sparking up now and then like little balls of electricity were running through his veins.
“Go to our room,” he commanded, firm and low and he loved that Kurt shivered before turning to go, looking back over his shoulder and squeaking in surprise, then laughing in delight when Blaine slapped his ass and pushed him off.

Blaine laughed and grinned like an idiot back and practically skipped- actually stumbled- over to the nearest sideboard to hunt for the requested alcohol. He spotted a half full bottle in a bucket of ice and snatched it up before hurrying back towards Kurt like his life depended on it.

It felt like it did.

Kurt fell through the door laughing, checking back over his shoulder to make sure Blaine was following before stumbling inside the darkened room that was lit lowly by the moon, senses hyperaware of his Dom even though they were dull to everything else. There was a coil of anticipation building hot and low in his stomach and he really didn’t think he could stand anymore drawing this out.

He heard Blaine come in behind him, closing and locking the door, and Kurt made quick work of unbuttoning Blaine’s cardigan with clumsy fingers. He threw it across the room uncaringly, feeling decadent as he fell onto the bed with arms up over his head, displaying his pale chest and the blooming marks Blaine had put there deliciously.

He lifted one booted foot up and wiggled it obnoxiously and Blaine rolled his eyes before approaching slowly, taking a gulp from the bottle he’d acquired that was still sweating then passing it off to Kurt’s grabby hands and getting to work on removing his subs footwear for him.

“You’re a spoiled brat you know that?” he teased as he fumbled with the laces. He probably should have stopped drinking a while ago, but that reasoning was a fuzzy background thought that fizzled out as quickly as it came.

“Am not,” Kurt declared petulantly with a pretty pout as he rested the bottle by his side. “You’re s’posed to like taking care of me anyway.”

Blaine laughed and tugged the first boot off, it hit the floor with a resounding thump. “I do, lovely,” he admitted before bracing an arm and knee on the bed, leaning over his sub to murmur into his lips. “Doesn’t mean you’re not spoiled though.”

He pecked a slow, drunken, languid kiss on his full mouth and had to pull back from pitching over when he closed his eyes, fingers closing around the bedspread hard as he laughed breathlessly at how little control over his basic functions he had.

Kurt preened under the attention, completely missing his lack of finesse as he squirmed happily and curled his free hand into his hair, then lower to brush heavy handed against his mark.

Blaine moaned predictably loud and obscene and Kurt giggled; face bright despite the haze they had dipped into, eyes wide and beautiful even though they were a little glazed. “I like when you spoil me,” he admitted a little shyly.

It was a revelation Blaine had already guessed at, but one Kurt would never have admitted out loud in a sober state of mind. Kurt was independent and proud and strong on his own and in a world such as theirs he held onto those things like the rare armor they were… but hearing that he was the one to get under that shield and under his skin… the joy couldn’t be translated into words.

“You deserve to be spoiled lovely. I’ll give you everything, anything you need beautiful boy… but right now-” he swallowed another moan as Kurt’s fingers continued their petting, sending sparks and
aborted jolts of pleasure through his entire body. It was maddening. “- shit… you’re spoiling me right now, baby.”

Kurt hummed a pleased assent and coaxed him down for another kiss which he was all too happy to provide. Hell. He would have been led anywhere at this point. Off a cliff. Into fire. As long as it was Kurt doing the leading then he didn’t care, not even the Dom in him did at this point.

He tongued at Kurt’s lower lip, suckling on it because he couldn’t get enough of the rich taste of Kurt tinged in champagne, before he swept inside his warm, willing mouth where he dueled out dominance that his sub eventually gave up with a whimper.

It sent a rush of endorphins and adrenaline coursing through his body and he knew he had to be putting out bucket loads of pheromones at this point. It was saturating the air around them thoroughly and mixing with the knee weakening scent Kurt was giving off that was driving him wild and keeping him painfully hard.

The urge to simply rip Kurt’s clothes off and sink into to him was frighteningly strong and he tore his mouth and body away before he could give into the primal desire. He wasn’t so far gone that he didn’t know that actual sex right now was a huge no, no, despite what either of them said to the contrary.

“Blaine,” his sub whined, reaching out for him and the sound was hardwired straight into his cock, appealing to every instinct he had to please his sub.

He shook his head to clear it as he perched on his knees facing him, tense and sweating on the very edge of the bed. “Let me just…” he trailed off as he closed his eyes and tried to regain some form of composure.

His sub apparently didn’t like that idea and lifted his socked foot up to press into his groin.

“Oh fuck!” he gasped, eyes slamming back open and hands wrapping around the delicate ankle but not pulling it away as Kurt began to massage his aching erection with little undulations and gently curling toes. “Kurt, d-uhhh-” he cut himself off on an embarrassing groan as Kurt pressed down again.

The technique was all wrong, the weight a little too heavy and the angle awkward for Kurt to maintain despite his flexibility, but it was perfect. It felt like they’d been working up to this for hours and the friction, Jesus fuck finally some friction, had him panting. Echoes of pleasure reverberating through his body in white hot waves and he curled forward until his open, moaning mouth was pushing against Kurt’s bent knee.

Kurt was flushed rosy from chest to face, breathing heavy and feeling wanton as he watched his Dom fall apart in front of him, because of him. His fingers twitched with the desire to touch, to run his fingers through those loose curls and muse them further, to get back to that magical place on the back of his neck which sent tingles through his fingertips, to touch every inch of bare skin he could.

Instead he contented himself with the heady feeling he was getting from touching Blaine, even if it was through layers and with his foot of all things. The hard, pulsing length of Blaine’s cock under his ministrations was nothing to scoff at.

“Oh god, Kurt I… baby I’m…” he didn’t even know what he wanted to say, instead he ran a hand up Kurt’s flexing calf, then down over his thigh to squeeze and pet and feel Kurt’s muscles working to please him.
“Mm, Blaine,” Kurt coaxed encouragingly, his tongue wrapping around his name wickedly and he really needed to grasp some hold on this situation. He was out of control and spiraling faster and faster-

“Stop,” he commanded and Kurt went immediately still in his lap. The Dom shuddered out a shaky breath, tasting his heart in his throat and a fierce ache in his balls from just how close he came to coming. He didn’t want this to be over so quickly, but more importantly he didn’t want this to be all about him.

He wanted to take Kurt apart. He wanted him strung out and needy. Messy. Begging.

“Sir?” Kurt asked confused but pliant, looking him over with lust blown pupils and lush, red lips that were nearly his undoing.

Removing himself he stood on shaky legs and reached for Kurt’s other foot determinedly. “Let’s get you out of these clothes, beautiful boy. Then I’m gonna lick you all over, how’s that sound?”

Kurt’s breathing hitched and his dizzy brain got the implication well enough as he dropped his head back down to the mattress. “Oh god.”

It was embarrassing to admit to himself, other than when he was completely wasted apparently, that he thought about Blaine doing those types of things to him all the time. He wanted Blaine to master him and his body over and over again. He wanted his back pressed into the mattress and legs wrapped around thrusting hips unable to do anything but cry out for more and faster and harder and deeper.

His cock throbbed anew with the thoughts and he rolled his hips to try and alleviate the pressure.

Blaine smirked, licking his lips hungrily at the taut expanse of neck exposed that was littered with his markings, watching as Kurt desperately tried to grind into thin air.

God he was stunning.

“I asked you a question, lovely,” he admonished tickling the arch of Kurt’s foot through his sock as the other boot was discarded.

The sub twitched and met his eyes from under his long lashes. “That sounds amazing, sir,” he breathed and Blaine grinned, all white Hollywood teeth.

“You going to drink that?” he asked nodding towards the forgotten bottle in his hand and Kurt made a pleased sound at seeing it again.

He had to rise on one elbow to sip without choking but he awkwardly managed it. He could have sworn his centre of gravity was far more balanced than it felt like but it wasn’t exactly the most pressing concern when suddenly his feet were bare and Blaine was reaching for his fly.

He choked after all at the feeling of hands on him so suddenly and champagne went spilling down the sides of his mouth, his chin and neck, running in sticky paths to the bed and down his chest.

Blaine watched the progression of the golden liquid with open fascination, frozen momentarily with his fingers on Kurt’s now open jeans. Before he even thought about it he was leaning forwards and licking a slick line through the sticky mess on his subs chest, hearing a gasp and revelling in it, following the lines up, up, up, over the liquid pooling in his clavicle, over his Adam’s apple, nipping at the droplets clinging to his chin before finally trying to steal the remaining alcohol directly off of his lips.
“I like this game,” Blaine murmured, slipping inside Kurt’s gaping mouth and sucking on his tongue making him *whimper* back. He let go and smiled, slow and sensual, his heart pounding with excitement. “A lot.”

Kurt didn’t have the words to answer. He could only stare, laying panting and pliant with his heart in his mouth and his cock throbbing in time with the frantic beat, as Blaine moved about him.

He sank into that safe space he’d found on Christmas day. Letting himself dip into the rising pool of his submissive instincts and give himself over. Give up control and it still felt *amazing* and *right* to let Blaine hold the cards, hold that sort of power over him.

His jeans were properly peeled off his legs this time and discarded, leaving him open and exposed in just his tight boxer briefs. Kurt plucked at Blaine’s top between needy fingers as the Dom straddled his legs, perching on his thighs. The scent of sex and pheromones was already permeating the heavy air around them and keeping him as dazed as the alcohol still running through his veins.

“Oh please, sir;” he breathed, eyes fixed on the gaping collar and the tanned skin it revealed.

“I love when you beg. You sound so pretty, lovely;” he praised and spared a moment to whip the top up and over his head, his muscles flexing and jumping as they were revealed. Kurt rose to touch but was pushed firmly back down by the shoulders and the bottle plucked out of his hand.

“Arms above your head, baby;” he commanded and Kurt complied swiftly, arching his back as it swept over him in little shocks and shivers.

“Look at you,” Blaine breathed, eyes raking hungrily over every inch of him. He was ethereal in the moonlight, a beacon of loveliness and he ran a possessive hand down his flank to cup his hip. “So beautiful.”

He raised the bottle high and tipped it just so-

Kurt sucked in a sharp breathe, stomach swooping hotly as the chilled alcohol struck his sweaty skin just above his navel, making the liquid gathering in the dip spill over his sides a little. Blaine stopped pouring and ducked down greedily to fit his mouth over the area and *suck.*

Kurt cried out seeing literal stars, fingers twitching desperately with the urge to grasp Blaine’s head and push him closer, especially when he felt his tongue working wonders, making his insides flip and twist with mind numbing pleasure.

“Oh god, Blaine… please…sir… I wanna touch you,” he whined shakily as the Dom continued to worship the area to devastating effect. It was like he had tossed him a hand grenade and now he was trying to deal with the fallout and pick up the pieces.

He bucked his hips to gain some much needed friction which frustratingly did nothing seeing as Blaine was still very much a warm, heavy weight on his thighs, even hunched over as he was. Thighs that quivered in anticipation. These small teasing touches were nowhere near enough to satisfy his boiling want and his underwear was scratching him, what felt like *raw,* with the need to take them off.

“Mm, no. Stay,” Blaine mumbled into his skin, shaking his head and peering up at him with those burning gold eyes through his forest of lashes. He looked sinful and yet again the command washed over him in white hot waves, making him writhe on the damp sheets but do as he was told.

Blaine raised his head with one last swirl of a kitten lick around his navel that had Kurt’s brain bleeding out of his ears and looked him over head to toe. “Such a good boy for me.”
Kurt nodded frantically, the praise giving him a head rush of endorphins and blowing his pupils out wider than ever. “I am, sir. So good. Please.”

He didn’t even know what he was begging for anymore. This intensity of feeling and yearning was all linked to male covering him and it was driving him insane but he didn’t want it to ever stop.

“But you weren’t so good earlier were you, baby?” he asked darkly and Kurt frowned up at him, close to being devastated. “Trying to take your clothes off and let everyone see you.” He splayed his hand out over his sternum possessively. “Did you want them to see you, lovely?”

Kurt shook his head urgently. “No. No, only you, sir. I only want you. Please.”

He was close to getting hysterical.

“You’re mine,” Blaine reaffirmed strongly, shifting his hand just so and pressing his thumb against his nipple.

He cried out, trembling from the force of pure pleasure that struck him like lightning. “Yours. Yours! I’m yours, sir. Oh god…”

Blaine sucked in each declaration and held it like smoke in his lungs. The initial drag heady and cloying, leaving behind an addicted buzz even after it was gone.

He raised the bottle to his lips and took in a mouthful that he held and didn’t swallow, instead he leant down to the nipple he was still pressing on and replaced his thumb with his mouth, champagne spilling everywhere before he tightened the seal.

Kurt keened. The combination of the cold alcohol and Blaine’s warm tongue was enough to nearly tip him over the edge. That wicked muscle flicked and circled and pushed at the straining nub strapped between his lips, the swishing liquid that was warming up now through their combined body heat a weird and wonderful sensation.

Blaine swallowed as much as he could before pulling back to survey his handiwork. The whole left side was gleaming in the low light, slick and wet and red.

“You were made for this,” he complimented, unable to tear his eyes away. “Made to stay in my bed.”

He idly began to run a finger around the mess and Kurt jerked.

“Blaine, please. Touch me… I can’t… I need it,” his sub begged urgently, twisting his hips and Blaine looked down to see his darling boy straining at his underwear, a clear wet patch soaking the front.

He shifted a little more down and Kurt clenched his fingers in the material over his head as Blaine began to run rough hands up his thighs, arching his back into an obscene line and rutting his hips against nothing, but it was a clear invitation. A take me. Use me. Love me.

He moaned at the thought alone, feeling his cock give another pulse of pre-come.

“It’s okay, baby. I know what you need. I said I’d give you what you wanted didn’t I?” Blaine soothed, leaning back and to the side awkwardly to discard the bottle over the side of the bed. It dropped and clattered loudly but didn’t smash so he didn’t care beyond that.

“Yes, sir.”
And Kurt knew those words to be true. He trusted and loved Blaine with everything he was so he stayed where he was and let his Dom set the pace.

Blaine leaned up and down and captured Kurt’s lips in a slow, languid meeting of mouths, coaxing his subs tongue out to play wet naughty games with his before pulling back only a little to whisper, “You’re gonna love this, beautiful boy.”

From there he kissed a path downwards; tongue marking hot, wet trails and teeth indenting his ownership. He stopped to pay homage to the sharp wings of Kurt’s hips before licking a stripe down the valley of his pelvis to the edge of his boxer briefs.

He wasted no more time in teasing and instead simply pulled them roughly down, revealing the beautiful, red length of his sub that sprang to rest against his stomach. Kurt whimpered, closing his eyes and pressing his head back against the mattress hard, the muscles in his arms jumping as his hands closed into tense fists.

Blaine mouth watered at the sight and he said one last thing before jumping straight into it. “You can move your hands now, lovely.”

Kurt’s eyes snapped open and his hands immediately dropped to Blaine’s head, a high pitched moan escaping his throat as Blaine went down on him.

“Fuck… oh my g-aah… Blaine…” he panted and moaned wildly like the only the best of porn stars could, voice hoarse and strung out. He thought he might pass out from the pleasure and surrealism of the moment.

He was off the planet with how good he felt. Nothing had ever felt this good, this earth shattering. It was like an epiphany. An awakening.

The Dom moaned back in answer, loving the feel of Kurt’s length in his mouth as he slowly sucked down every inch. The taste and smell of him so much more potent here that it was drugging him. He raised back off reluctantly and pushed and pulled at Kurt’s legs until he could settle in between properly, coaxing him up the bed until he could settle on his stomach, propped up on his elbows. If he had his way he was going to be spending hour’s right here.

Blaine took him back into the warm cavern of his mouth and Kurt’s eyes rolled back into his head, legs spreading so wide he felt everything pull in the most wonderful way, his stomach tightening dangerously. This was all just too much and not enough and he didn’t know what to do with himself as he thrashed his head back and forth moaning Blaine’s name in reverent prayer.

The chant was music to Blaine’s ears, the Dominant in him puffing up in pride at how well he was taking care of his sub, giving him what he needed. He suckled at the tip for a moment, looking up and catching Kurt’s pleasure hazed eyes before pulling off again, dark sinful promises written into every compact line of his body that he fulfilled on when he stuck his tongue out and dragged it down Kurt’s slit, making the move slow and obscene so he could catch every second of his reaction.

Kurt went to rock up, yanking on his hair probably more harshly than he intended, but Blaine held his hips down with a chuckle. “Like that?” he asked, voice already rough and scratchy.

“Mm, love,” Kurt corrected dazed, pulling again between needy fingers. “Love, love, love.”

“You taste amazing, baby,” he told him huskily, pressing dirty, open mouthed kisses to the head of Kurt’s cock.

He could come like this so easily, he thought dizzily. Just like this. Kissing and licking at Kurt’s
cock.

“Blaine, I’m gonna come,” Kurt admitted high and reedy, mirroring his thoughts, his whole body shaking with it.

“Can you be my good boy and hold on a little longer for me?” he asked.

Kurt moaned in pleasured pain but nodded his head. Anything to please him and it gave Blaine a rush of power.

Saying another big fuck you to delicacy he took Kurt all the way down, and wasn’t that a ways he thought on a moan, and then he was relaxing his throat and his nose was pressing against skin and Blaine decided he wanted to do this all the time. He pulled back sucking obscenely, hollowing his cheeks and tonguing at the hot length. Up and down he worked his mouth loving every second. Loving what he was doing to Kurt. Loving that he could feel the desperation from his sub, the scratch of nails over his shoulders, the bite of them against his mark and scalp. He began rocking his own leaking cock against the bed, groaning because he had already been on the precipice for so long.

He cupped Kurt’s balls and pulled off long enough to say, “You can come,” before sinking back down, not wanting to miss the finale.

It didn’t take any time at all for Kurt to go careening over the edge into star space, grinding up into Blaine’s mouth, still desperate to keep going. It was like a drug. The sweetest addiction.

“Blaine, Blaine, Blaine,” he babbled tossing his head, eyes blacking out as he sucked him through it, never letting up, never giving him a break and it was destructive bliss. His toes curled, his fingers drew blood on Blaine’s shoulders and then he sank into the mattress completely spent.

Oh my…

Blaine gave one last kiss to his oversensitive, softening cock before crawling up to settle at his side and pull him in. Kurt snuggled instantly, burying his flushed, sweaty face in his Dom’s neck, useless jelly limbs trying to get closer.

“Good boy,” Blaine roughly whispered and he shivered, hand moving down that amazing, now sweat damp, chest to slip into his jeans and underwear determinedly.

His fingers met wet warmth and he hitched a breath.

“You…”

Blaine had already come. Already come just from sucking him off and if Kurt wasn’t so lethargic and utterly done from a combination of afterglow and drunkenness he might have gotten hard again just from that thought alone.

Blaine hummed a sleepy assent, pulling him closer. “You tasted really good.”

Kurt would have blushed if he wasn’t so close to passing out already.

“I liked that game,” he mumbled instead.

Blaine gave a slow laugh and that’s the last thing Kurt heard that night.
Hello everyone, here is the new chapter. Something funny happens, then something fun, then something emotional and big but all in all we're happy with it and hope you'll all find something to like about it.
Simply amazing fanart used in this chapter done by this lovely person, http://freakingpotter.tumblr.com/ Go check her out! :)

We'll try and get the next one out faster but as usual, real life happens so we make no promises. We love you though.
So tell us what you think.
Love
A&M

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New Year's Day...

The first thing Blaine noticed upon waking, of course, was Kurt.

It was like his entire being was now hardwired into his subs; wants and desires, his moods and happiness, the feel of his skin and scent of his hair. So it wasn't too surprising that the delay on his hangover came until he'd pulled his boy closer and sluggishly pried his fused lashes open.

He regretted that choice immediately.

"Oh fuuu…" he groaned, slamming his eyes back shut and his hand over his face, as bright, blinding sunlight stung his eyes and drilled sharply into his skull.

Closing the curtains last night hadn't exactly been high on his priority list. Actually, his memory was considerably fuzzy, not exactly a huge surprise, but midnight onwards was just a blur of wanting naked skin, greedy gasping mouths and the expensive, somewhat dry now, aftertaste of champagne.

A sudden flash of golden liquid drenching the enticing, decadent dip of Kurt's navel shot before his eyes and despite the way his head was pounding out its own rhythm and dance, he smiled, feeling an answering stir in his groin.

He flopped his arm back down and risked his eyes open again to squint down at the heavy weight on his chest. What he saw made his heart swell stupidly. Kurt was not just simply sleeping. Nope. He was officially passed the hell out; mouth open, drooling, with heavy, snuffling breathes across his bare chest and hair plastered in a million different directions.
Blaine was so in love it hurt.

He reclosed his eyes and shuffled a little to try and get a more comfortable position and resume circulation to his right arm so he could possibly doze back off, but he quickly found that wasn't going to happen. The room was far too bright, his head hurt far too much and Kurt was dead weight in the jut between his shoulder and chest, the little puddle under the corner of his mouth hitting just above his nipple.

It should have been disgusting. Or annoying. Or something other than how adorable he found it but Blaine couldn't help it. Smiling wider he dragged his free arm over from where it was sprawled across the bed and wrapped it around Kurt's bare waist, shifting his bare legs which was weird because he couldn't remember having taken his pants off and... oh.

*That's a lot of naked.*

He peeked further down the bed and raised his brows appreciatively at the swell of Kurt's ass barely covered by a scrap of white sheet, the rest of him completely open to his gaze with smears of glitter dotted here and there across the pale expanse of his back and hips in the shape of fingers.

*His fingers.*

Little Blaine decided he liked that mark of clear possession very much and twitched to try and gain attention and Blaine was pretty impressed at his ability to get it up when he felt so god damned awful. He took another long glance down his sub's body and decided that maybe all the credit shouldn't go to him at all.

There was a clamouring from beyond the door that he suddenly picked up on that redirected his attention, signalling that he wasn't the only one awake. A quick glance at the clock on the bedside table told him that it was approaching close to midday.

*Not surprising.*

"Ryan? Sweetie? Do you feel better?" Thad's distinctively bright tone came distantly from beyond the door and the answering, pained moan was pitiful in response.

"I'm dying, tiny. And I'm taking Trent with me 'cause it's his damn fault!" Ryan shouted for the benefit of the whole penthouse before there was a clear retch with an undertone of Thad's cooing.

Blaine chuckled quietly and Kurt jerked, kicking his legs out from within their snaked tangle with his own before settling back down with a very displeased noise.

"Oh baby, you're going to hate waking up," he whispered to him, rough like gravel, drawing sleepy designs on his waist with his forefinger as his eyes drooped.

"Ryan Moore. Shut. The. Fuck. Up!" Sebastian growled, voice rising and falling in volume as the sub walked passed their door. He was the *worst* for hangovers, they accentuated every bad quality Sebastian was capable of by like a zillion.

He could only sigh as what could only be Dave's heavy footfalls followed the sub. No one else voluntarily went near him when he was like this for fear of either getting the nearest inanimate object shoved up their ass, or giving in to the desire of finding the nearest window to push him out of.

"It's not my fault," Ryan whined back. "It's Trent's!"

"*Hey!* How the hell was I supposed to know Kurt was fucking awesome at beer pong? Jesus." Trent
tried to dodge, his own voice muffled by the door and the fact that he was just as hung-over as everyone else.

Blaine gritted his teeth against the rising noise and activity in the penthouse. What had been convenient and awesome in a room so close to where everything was happening was now totally the worst thing ever!

Knowing he wasn't going to be able to go back to sleep, and envying Kurt's ability to sleep through anything when plastered the night before, Blaine began to talk himself into getting up.

He needed to get him and Kurt some water and painkillers to start and then their overnight bag from the trunk of the car. In retrospect he should have carried it up last night but hindsight was a bitch and a half. Cursing up a streak in his head he untangled his legs from his sub's octopus limbs, then eased Kurt back to the pillow, sitting up after. His boy kicked up a little fuss of course, brow puckering cutely and more little noises escaping the back of his throat, but he soon fell back into his coma.

Ignoring the uncomfortable sensation of blood rushing back into his arm, he leant over and laid a kiss to Kurt's brow before glancing around the room for his clothes. He spotted the squashed up bundle of his jeans and boxers at the foot of the bed, confirming his suspicions that he really did just drunkenly shuffle and kick them off before passing out.

Reluctant and painfully, he eased off of the mattress; muscles aching and head spinning for a second or two until he managed to find some form of equilibrium. Shuffling towards the window he yanked the curtains shut and sighed in relief at the dimness.

At least Kurt wouldn't wake up to having his eyeballs burnt out.

Back at the bed he grabbed only his jeans, knowing that the dried mess inside his boxers left much to be desired, he scanned the floor for his top and grimaced when he spotted it… in a puddle of stale champagne from the tipped over bottle he'd carelessly dropped to the floor.

"Fucking genius move, Anderson," he muttered and now that he'd realized it, the smell of the alcohol was pungent in the air making his stomach turn.

"Seb was going to kill him."

He scanned again and spotted his cardigan hanging half off the dresser in the corner where Kurt had tossed it. Now that made him smile. The thought of Kurt relaxed and needy enough to just take what he wanted, to just act with no boundaries or questions.

He'd loved it.

He grabbed the cardigan and with one last lingering look at his slumbering sub he exited the room and ran straight into a tired looking Thad.

"Oh sorry, Blaine," the sub apologized skating around him on his way back to the still suffering Ryan from the sounds of the dry heaving.

"I got you some water, Ry." Blaine heard him say gently and he smiled at how well attuned to each other they were.

The large Dom groaned and spit before he complained, "I just got finished getting rid of all the liquid in me, I don't wanna put more in!"

"I know, but being dehydrated will make you feel even worse so please take a few sips. For me?"
Thad said sweetly, coercing his Dom into cooperation.

"Fine. But only 'cause it's for you," Ryan slurred and gulped a few sips of water.

Blaine grimaced again and hurried off before he had to shove Ryan over for a spot at the altar of the porcelain gods.

"And he shows his face," Dave grinned, dressed in clean jeans and a fresh black tee, as Blaine stepped tentatively into the ruined living area.

In the light of day it looked worse than the chaos of last night and Jon was acting like a new piece of furniture, passed out in the corner hugging a pathetically deflated elephant.

"Jesus. We really outdid ourselves didn't we?" he asked, tired, but impressed, stepping over a slice of cold pizza covered in silver confetti.

What the hell.

Dave put his large hands on his hips and looked around, far too wide eyed for someone who should have a hangover.

Asshole.

"It was definitely… different," Dave laughed and gave him an amused, knowing glance.

Blaine felt like he should blush under it, but either his blood was feeling too terrible to make the trip to the surface of his face, or he really was that unabashed.

"Don't act like you didn't have Seb pushed into a wall half the night," he pointed out, nudging a solo cup with his toe as he pulled his cardigan on. He couldn't actually explicitly remember seeing it, but from past experience it was a safe assumption.

"But I wasn't as, ah… loud?" the football captain smirked.

Blaine froze with his arm halfway in the sleeve. "Bullshit. There was music playing!"

"Yeah. There was," Dave chuckled, eyes dancing.

"Fuck," Blaine breathed. Kurt was gonna kill him. He didn't much care about anyone hearing him. But the idea that other people, other Doms, had been listening to Kurt at his most vulnerable; the sighs and gasps and moans that were supposed to be only his? Well that made him damn right surly.

He fought the urge to go back to the room and barricade them in for the rest of eternity and instead headed for the door. "I'm gonna go grab mine and Kurt's stuff."

Dave waved him off going back to clearing away the rubbish and not teasing further like some people might have. Maybe he recognized the look on his face from where he'd flown off the handle before? Who knew? Blaine was just grateful he had quit while he was ahead.

The elevator ride down was enough to cool his heels, even if that old woman had looked at his bare feet and what you could see of his bare chest and neck covered in love bites, disapprovingly.

Back in the penthouse he tossed the bag down and headed for the kitchen, noticing that Sebastian was out on the balcony, swaddled in a blanket up to his ears and attempting to sleep on one of the chairs out there. Blaine made sure he didn't draw any unnecessary attention to himself as he edged passed. Pissing a hung-over Sebastian off was something only Dave could get out of alive.
The damage was more limited in the kitchen, though there was a questionable orange stain on the wall, and Miriam was bustling around washing dishes while Wes manned the frying pan.

Blaine took a deep drag of the smell of bacon and sighed in relief.

Miriam spotted him first; hair gathered up into a messy bun on top of her head, no make-up, dressed in comfortable sweats and Wes' Warbler tee, with soap bubbles all up her forearms. She looked lovely, especially when she smiled at him welcomingly.

"Painkillers are on the side and I put a few bottles of water in the fridge to chill," she said nodding towards the items helpfully.

"I love you," Blaine groaned and headed that way like a moth to a flame.

"None of that. You've got your own now," Wes told him, giving him a look over his shoulder. Miriam just snorted at the Dominant posturing and went back to the dishes.

"Don't get jealous, babycakes," Blaine grinned, ignoring the voice that was shouting, *you hypocritical shit!* "You give me some of that bacon and I'll love you too."

Wes rolled his eyes and went back flipping the spitting meat and Blaine downed two pills before grabbing a water to wash them down blessing the medicinal gods as he did so. He put aside two more and another bottle for Kurt while finishing up his, then leaned his elbows on the island in the middle of the room and put his face in his hands.

"I feel so shit," he mumbled.

"Not surprised," Wes laughed. "That was some hardcore drinking last night, B. Even for you… and Kurt? Where the hell did he put it all?!"

"I think he drank me under the table," Blaine admitted pulling his hands away to rest his chin in them and the couple laughed at him, Miriam turning as she put the last glass down on the draining board and wiped her hands on the dish towel.

"Has he ever drank before?" she asked curiously, blowing a stray bit of hair away from her eyes.

"No," Blaine said, shaking his head fondly.

"Good luck with his hangover," Wes smirked, plating up what was in the pan, then putting more in and gesturing with his spatula, "Just hope he isn't like Satan out there on the balcony."

"He's cute when he's passed out," Blaine mused out loud, thinking of his drooling sub with a besotted smile.

"Hope you're not talking about Seb," Wes deadpanned, looking around for Dave.

"No! Kurt's the only person who's adorable when they're passed out. He's like a sleepy kitty," he explained, dopey smile growing wider.

Dave came walking in with a full bag of rubbish and shook his head at hearing the last line. "You're so weird."

"He's in love," Miriam corrected with a winsome smile of her own and Blaine snapped his spine straight, heart picking up speed as he stared at her wide eyed.

*Was he that freaking obvious? Fuck. Did Kurt know? Was it written across his forehead? Half the*
time he felt like it was, like he was broadcasting it like a neon sign, and most of the time he was hoping Kurt was seeing it at least subconsciously. But the idea that he might actually know...

The three in the room stared at him in shock.

"Please don't tell me this is news to you?" Wes asked slowly, a look of total exasperation on his face.

"No! It isn't... I just... I mean... is it that obvious?" he finished lamely, looking out at them behind what he knew to be pathetic puppy dog eyes.

"Well... yeah," Dave admitted rubbing along the back of his neck, perplexed. "You haven't told him yet?"

"I don't wanna scare him off! Things are going so well between us now," he told them, raking a shaky hand through his seriously out of control hair. *Jesus, that woman in the elevator might have had a point.*

"Blaine... that boy loves you back. Anyone could see it," Miriam smiled at him reassuringly, lecturing like only the best moms could. "You should tell him. He's probably waiting for you to."

"You think?" he asked unsurely, brows drawing low.

"The decisions yours, B," Wes said shrugging his shoulders, going back to his breakfast at midday making. "But my opinion? Man up, buttercup. You tell me you love me for *bacon.*"

Blaine rolled his eyes, but really, they'd given him a lot to think about... not that those three little words hadn't been on his mind and on his *tongue* about ready to fall out on their own through impatience for what felt like the first second he laid eyes on Kurt.

"I'm gonna go check on him," he murmured, grabbing the pills and water, making his way back through the obstacle course of trash and random items to grab their overnight bag.

Inside their darkened room Kurt was in the exact same position he left him in.

He shuffled over to the side of the bed, avoiding the sopping champagne/clothes puddle, and placed everything on and by the side of the bedside table before settling back onto the bed on his side, propping his head on his hand. He reached over and combed his fingers softly through Kurt's tangled locks, thumb rubbing against his temple up to the ridge of his eyebrow then back down over and over.

His mind immediately cast to his friends words.

'*He's in love.'*

"I..." He took a deep breath and scanned Kurt's beautiful features. The long lashes smeared with glitter, the elegant arch of his cheekbones, the cute tip of his nose, his full wide mouth and the pureness of his soul under the lovely exterior.

'*He's probably waiting for you to.*'

'*Man up, buttercup.*'

*I love you."

It was a whisper, but it was heavy in his mouth, weighted in the air and Blaine felt so much lighter for having *finally* said it out loud in the way that it was meant to be said to the person it was meant
for even if he wasn’t conscious for it. The rush of it surged in his blood. The importance of it was carved into his heart for eternity.

He didn't know how long he lay there on his side just staring at his sub in awe, but after a while Kurt made a distressed noise in his throat, eyes fluttering and mouth pursing tight as he began to wake.

"Lovely?" Blaine asked softly, knowing his boy was going to be delicate as a new-born right now.

Kurt gave a groan of pain and buried his face into the pillow. "Go'way."

Blaine smiled and sat up properly, turning so he could grab the supplies he'd brought in. "You need to drink some water and take some pills and then you can go back to sleep, baby."

"Sumoneranmeova."

He chuckled incredulously. "Come again?"

Kurt shifted his head to reveal a slither of his face so he could open one bleary eye and glare at him. "Someone ran me over."

Blaine sucked his lips into his mouth to keep from laughing. He cleared his throat and got himself under control. "Pretty sure that wasn't it. This was more self-inflicted, lovely."

"Stop laughing at me!" Kurt whined and turned back into the pillow again. "UhhhI'mgondie."

Blaine was able to work that one out.

"You're not going to die, baby. C'mon. Take these, you'll feel better I promise." He let a hint of command seep into his voice and Kurt flopped over forlornly, staring up at him with sad, blue doe eyes. Blaine just wanted to snuggle him and pamper him and make everything alright.

"Sit up," he encouraged and it seemed like the commands were helping rather than wearing on his sub which made Blaine stupidly happy, his own hangover fading into the background.

Kurt propped up on his elbows and opened his mouth for the pills. Blaine appeased him, placing them on his tongue then uncapped and eased some of the water into his mouth, making sure not to choke him with a rush of it.

Kurt swallowed then let himself sink back into the bed, curling on his side closer to Blaine's warmth like a kitten. See! He was a kitten! The Dom cooed and lay next to him, gathering him closer in his arms and laying his lips to his forehead repeatedly in gentle pecks. Kurt sighed out, the hot exhale hitting his neck and chest.

"I never want to drink again," he mumbled.

Blaine smiled against his skin and ran his hands soothingly over his bare spine. "But drunk me and drunk you got on so well," he teased suggestively.

He practically felt the heat of Kurt's blush and felt smug satisfaction well up.

"Oh god…" He shifted his legs then froze. "And I'm naked!"

"Mm, I noticed," he grinned.

Kurt pulled back from him to look him the eye, face completely flushed with embarrassment. "And sticky."
Even Blaine choked at that, his cock twitching fully in interest now that he was feeling more human. "You don't remember the champagne bottle?"

Kurt furrowed his brows then realization dawned across his features and they unknotted. He shoved at Blaine's chest. "This is all your fault!"

Blaine leaned in and kissed him, cupping the back of his head. "Says the champagne fiend."

There was a soft knock on the door.

"Blaine? Did you want some of this breakfast… well… lunch?" Miriam asked.

Kurt groaned at the mention of food and not in the good way.

"Yes, please. Kurt doesn't want anything though."

"Oh. He up?"

"Unfortunately," Kurt called and she laughed.

"I'll fix you a plate, Blaine."

"You're a star!" he sing songed to the door.

"Pay more attention to me," Kurt complained sleepily, pawing at his face to turn it back around. "This is your fault after all."

Blaine laughed, surprised and charmed by Kurt's childish petulance and jealousy. He was in such trouble with this ethereal creature in his arms. He kissed his nose. "Oh I'm sorry. I'll make it up to you, lovely."

"That sounds nice," he purred and Blaine couldn't help the shiver that raked his body at the sound.

"If you get dressed we can snuggle on the coach," he suggested.

"We're snuggling right now. I like it in here," Kurt said curling his arms further into his chest, and it was clear from the way he was dragging his words out that he was falling back to sleep.


Kurt was torn between wanting to stay exactly where he was, the dull ache in his limbs and head fading out, or appeasing his Dom's needs. Eventually the last, more important won out. "Dress me."

Blaine grinned and pulled away to grab their bag. He changed himself, letting Kurt doze for a while longer as he pulled on new boxers, a pair of navy Fred Perry sweats and a red plain tee. He grabbed underwear and a different pair of sweats, light grey and also his because he was a possessive asshole, and the exact same Warbler tee Miriam had on for his Kurt. Because he was an overly possessive asshole.

Kurt was pliant as a doll as Blaine helped him dress, then he was letting himself be hoisted into Blaine's arms and carried. The Dom left the cover, stained with god knows what, where it was and headed for the living area.

Dave had cleared a fair bit by now, black bin liners filled with rubbish lined up by the door, and it made the room more habitable. He headed straight for the free couch he saw earlier and double
checked it for more sparkle pizza or something similarly weird before laying Kurt down.

"Stay here, lovely. I'll just grab you a new cover and some breakfast and then we can snuggle the rest of the day away until it's safer for me to drive," Blaine told him. Because hell yes he was so far over the limit right now it wasn't even funny.

"Unless you're moving me I'm not going anywhere," Kurt stated dryly, his eyes still closed. Blaine shook his head amusedly then gave him a peck on the lips before heading off for the kitchen. He ran into Dave coming back in from the balcony, probably checking on Sata- uh- Seb.

"Have you got a spare comforter anywhere?" he asked.

Dave raised a suspicious brow. "Why?"

"I'd rather not say."

The Dom rolled his eyes in exasperation. "There's a few spare sets in the closet in our room. Top shelf."

Blaine clapped him on the shoulder in thanks just as Miriam peeked out of the kitchen. "Can you see if anyone else is awake and wanting food please? Yours is ready when you are."

His stomach growled louder and she smirked hearing it. "Sure thing."

He hurried off, poking his head first into the main bathroom. Ryan was leaning his forehead on the rim of the toilet and Thad was on his knees behind him, rubbing the massive expanse of his bare back.

"Hey, you guys want food?" he asked carelessly.

Ryan heaved on instinct and Thad cooed at him and glared at Blaine. "Nice."

He winced. "Yeah. Sorry man."

Ryan waved him off.

"I'll have something later," Thad told him with a wry smile and Blaine nodded, heading for the next door.

A knock yielded nothing so he peeked inside and nearly had his retinas burnt out. He slammed the door closed again. "Fuck me."

He didn't need to see that much of Thompson's bare ass. Ever.

Trent headed straight for the food when located, coming out of his hiding space and Blaine couldn't find Nick or Jeff anywhere on his travels to the main bedroom. He grabbed the comforter, then his food from the kitchen before heading back to Kurt, slouching up against the arm rest with Kurt laid out long ways on the inside, head pillowed on his stomach and covers up to his neck.

"Give me a sec and I'll help clear up," Blaine told Dave through a mouthful of toast and eggs and sausage and bacon and every damn thing he could fit in there, as the football player continued to bustle about the trashed room.

Dave smiled at him, then down at Kurt. "No worries, man I've got it. And it looks like you've got your hands full."
"I'm not a handful," Kurt sassed tiredly.

Blaine and Dave shared a look and a silent laugh.

"Don't think I don't know you're laughing at me. You guys are awful!" he complained, slitting his eyes open and pouting.

"Aw baby," Blaine soothed. "You can't help it."

Kurt huffed. "Where's Jeff? Jeff'll be nice to me."

"They headed out a little after midnight," Wes said walking into the room with a few dishes. He swept the table Kurt and Corrine had been shaking their stuff on with his foot to clear the rest of the junk and laid them down. Miriam followed with Trent at her heels, trying to steal things off the plates.

"I don't know how sanitary eating off a stripper platform is, but oh well," Wes laughed, giving Kurt a pointed look.

Kurt pulled the cover over his blushing head. "Kill me now."

They all laughed.

"You were something last night, honey," Miriam teased lightly.

"It wasn't my fault. I was led astray," came muffled from under the comforter.

And speak of the devil, Corrine came stumbling around the corner dressed in only David's top from last night. It reached mid-thigh because of how tiny she was and her make-up and hair was all over the place. She yawned big and loud, rubbing at her eye before surveying her audience.

"Sup."

They all rolled their eyes at her.

"Oh. Sausages!" she cheered and flopped down Indian style next to the table, digging in. "So last night was fun," she grinned, around a mouthful, manners gone completely out the window.

"Kurt doesn't think so," Trent joked.

"That boy is a legend!" she exclaimed. "Wouldn't have been half as fun without him."

"He's hiding under the covers of shame."

The group laughed and Blaine felt Kurt tense against him. He finished his plate and set it down on the floor before sinking into the couch with his sub and burrowing under.

"Don't be embarrassed, baby. Right as we speak Jon is in the corner doing unspeakable things to a blow up elephant. You're not the only one and I'll happily tell you drunk stories about each and every one of these guys if it'll make you feel better," he whispered to him, holding him close.

Kurt sighed and began drawing patterns on Blaine's top, not meeting his eye. "I know they're just teasing, sir."

"Good boy. I can get them to stop if you want though, lovely?"
He shook his head and mumbled, "Everything's just grating on me. I just want to snuggle you and sleep."

"That's fine." He kissed his forehead. "You sleep."

He poked his head back over the covers. "Kurt's not feeling too good so he's gonna try and get some more sleep," he said casually, not making a big deal about it and they all nodded easily, changing the subject.

He felt Kurt relax and lay a kiss to his sternum in thanks and Blaine began a soothing run of fingers through his hair for him, feeling more than content.

This, he thought.

With his friends all around him, his sub in his arms, his parents at home preparing for their New Year's dinner with Kurt's family.

This was how it was supposed to be.

New Year's Day...

Golden fringe hung over wide blown eyes getting in the way, and white teeth worried plump, pink lips until they turned cherry red and swollen. Pale fingers shook as they plated piles and piles of food and arranged it carefully on the tray lying next to the stove.

Just get this one thing right, he coached himself internally.

Jeff turned back to the counter and proceeded to whisk eggs, fry bacon, squeeze oranges and toast bread: his body trembling all the while with silent anguish.

He had woken up this morning, New Year's Day, the time of fresh starts, shivering and painfully aware of his new status. He was a claimed sub now. Of course, he knew this when he accepted Nick, but it seemed like today was the day when the shock period had worn off and he'd really been hit in the head with just what that meant.

Wide awake with arms around his waist that were warm and non-threatening, yet still terrifying because of power they had over him, he fully realised the weight of his situation. He had given up the last shreds of his tattered control once more into someone else's keeping and he was coming to terms with what that meant. He had duties again. Obligations. There were expectations to be met and he was almost nauseous from the feeling that he would fail once again.

He'd eased out of bed, careful not to wake his sleeping Dom and headed straight for the kitchen in their wing of Nick's parent's house anxious to get started. Start proving himself as worthy of the time and attention Nick so selflessly gifted him.

He had a list as long as his arm of things he knew were expected of him but an even longer list of things he didn't know about Nick. It made him even more anxious to think about all the information
he needed but didn’t have in order to complete these tasks and all of it was spinning round and round his head getting him more worked up by the second.

*For starters, he didn’t know when Nick usually woke up. Did he have a usual wake up time? He didn’t know what he liked to eat or drink in the morning. Did he put sugar in his coffee, or milk… did he even drink coffee? Maybe he drank tea… what if he drank tea?! Did he like fruit flavours, or something else. With sugar? Without it?*

Those thoughts and others were still creating a maelstrom in his skull an hour later. He swallowed and tugged at his hair in agitation, so sharply he actually winced in pain, but it did nothing to pull him out of his black hole of panic as he looked down at the inadequate tray in front of him.

*Nick’s dad was French. What if they had completely different breakfast habits and he’d passed them on to Nick and Jeff didn’t know about them? Nick would wake up in a few moments and he wouldn’t like any of the things he had prepared for him… he wanted to be a good sub but he would fail again…*

With a whine in the back of his throat he prepared and piled new mountains of food on top of the already existing ones on the tray, fighting to find space, but there was a lingering feeling that he was missing something as he picked it up. Always missing something.

The cups clattered against each other when another horrified shiver wrecked through him and a choked off gasp ripped from his lips when the little jug containing milk tipped over the edge of his tray and hurled towards the floor. The crash and clatter of the light blue jug shattering on the floor echoed loud enough to wake up half the state and Jeff knew he had moments, seconds before someone came to reprimand him.

He watched in silent desperation as a white puddle spread over the dark brown wooden flooring as if in slow motion, as if it was teasing him… trying to make him believe he could fix the mess before anyone saw it but he knew he had no time.

A faraway creak of the door proved him right and he startled into action, lowering the tray on the counter with another clatter and grabbing a clean dish rag from its nearby hook as he fell to his knees in front of the puddle and started soaking the white liquid as quickly as he could.

The cloth picked up the milk fairly quickly but the scattered porcelain around him was more of a problem for him as he piled piece after piece into his hand, not caring about the sting the sharp edges left when they pierced his skin or the specks of red that began to appear. It was like he was on autopilot. Numb to everything else but the need to make this mess, this *failure*, disappear.

He just had to clean the mess before Nick saw it.

He had to make sure everything was spotless before someone saw how much of a lost cause he really was. He tried to be good for Nick. He wanted to be good for the kind Dom so badly but it wasn't even a few weeks of them being bonded and he was already letting him down.

Steps echoed behind him, making his entire body shake with fear as he started picking up the jagged splinters faster, reckless, ignorant of the pain.

The steps were louder now… closer… he could hear the person yawning and their clothes rustling. He was out of time, he knew it when the shuffling sound stopped and the person approaching came to a halt behind him.

He’d failed again.
It was so frustrating! Why couldn't he do this right? Why did things always fall apart when he was starting to believe they could work out? He felt salty tears brush against his lips as they slid down his cheeks and he gasped when a tiny droplet hit a cut on his palm and stung him. His hand flinched and the tinkling sound of porcelain in it felt so out of place with how playful and happy it reverberated through the silence.

"Jeff?" Nick's gruff voice came from behind his back and he dropped everything in his hand on instinct watching helplessly as it seemed to coalesce into an even bigger mess.

'Worthless sub. Why the hell did I agree to a pre-bond with you?'

He cringed at the vindictive voice from his nightmares that made him want to apologize. To kneel and bow his head and ask for another chance like he had done all that time ago, the echo of sensory memory harsh in his muscles.

He couldn't seem to get passed this and if he couldn't then Nick was wasting his time with him.

A choked off sob left his lips at the thought of separating and he tried his best to at least appear strong and not let himself be seen crying. Dom's hated subs who cried like babies, he knew that. He bit his lip forcefully and stared down at his hands keeping himself as still and as quiet as he possibly could… waiting for the blow, for the harsh words and hurtful touch to be laid against his skin, to bruise him and ruin him further.

But…

But like everything else with Nick it just… it never came.

Of course it never came.

"Oh my god, angel…" the soft whisper broke through his panic as gentle arms wrapped themselves around his shaking body.

"Sir…" he sobbed, trying to get the apology out, but his throat seemed to be able to mutter only that one word… the one word that showed he was below Nick; submissive, weak, an object. He kept repeating it, trying to make it mean everything he couldn't say… that he was sorry, that he wanted to do good for him, that it wouldn't happen again, that he was horrible for even entertaining the thought that Nick could hurt him.

But there were soothing lips pressed against his temple, his body turned around so warm palms could cup his wet cheeks and chocolate eyes, infinitely sad, locked with his. That sunshiny smile, strained now, but no less breath-taking, forced onto his beautiful face and Jeff broke down into him, hiding his face in his chest and clutching the soft fabric of his shirt between scarcely bleeding fingers.

"Sir… so sorry, sir…" he gasped desperately.

"Shhhh, angel. It's Nick. It's just Nick… just me, beautiful. Don't fear me. Everything's alright. Please Jeff just don't be afraid of me," he whispered into his hair and Jeff shivered in his arms wishing with all he had that he could just believe him straight off the bat… take his words for granted and let himself be peaceful for once. But everything was a struggle. He trusted Nick. He did. But that trust was just as shaky and fragile as he was and he'd feared he'd never stop questioning it, just like he'd never stop questioning himself.

"Sorry… sorry…" he cried again, feeling guilty and wretched and Nick just held him closer through it.
"Why are you sorry, angel? What do you have to be sorry for?" Nick asked and there was an edge to his voice… but not the kind Jeff expected. It wasn't anger… it was despair and confusion and pain.

He wanted to explain. He owed him an explanation at the very least but it was hard to force it out past his thick throat. To admit his failures out loud. "I… I wanted… you… breakfast… failed," was all he managed to choke out over his shaky breaths and hiccups like he was a mewling child and he sighed in frustration, his fingers balling up into fists against Nick's chest.

"Just breathe. Deep breaths in an out," the Dom spoke calmly, words washing over him and Jeff actually felt the pressure ease on his chest somewhat after a few moments.

"Now… you wanted to make breakfast?" Nick clarified and Jeff nodded, still.

"For you," he whispered as a fresh line of tears made its way down his cheeks and onto Nick's shirt. He felt Nick breath in deeply at his words like he was surprised. He kissed his crown gently, running fingers through the hair behind his ears.

"And you did, beautiful. There's enough food here to feed an army and it all looks and smells delicious so why are you sorry? Why are you so scared, angel?" he asked calmly, rocking him back and forth gently where they were kneeling on the floor together next to the remains of that stupid jug Jeff could still spot out the corner of his eye.

"Broke the jug. Spilled the milk. I made a mess, sir," Jeff answered quietly pressing his head harder into Nick's chest, wishing he could just disappear into him, safe and warm and happy. His bottom lip trembled.

"Nick, Jeff. You never have to call me sir if you don't want it," the Dom reminded him gently. "And so you broke the jug. So what. I break at least a dozen of those and more cups, plates and glasses besides because I wave my hands like an idiot when I talk. We have another one here somewhere I bet and even if we didn't have one, Jeff… it doesn't matter," Nick said holding the distressed sub closer and rubbing his hands over his back soothingly.

He had an idea what this was about; the lack of structure, the questions marks left in their relationship, Jeff's past. But there was no way to be sure about it unless Jeff talked to him.

"You won't punish me?" came his subs tiny voice after tense moments of silence and Nick felt like someone had punched him in the chest. He closed his eyes resolutely against the idea that he had been punished for so little, the images of a hurt Jeff that flashed in his mind.

"For what? For getting up at the crack of dawn and not getting enough sleep so you could make a feast just for me? I don't think so," Nick said trying to ease up the tension, not rage and get into how much he wanted to kill the other Dom, but the lithe body in his embrace wasn't relaxing one bit. "I messed up," he whispered.

"No… you broke a jug. That happens to everyone. My mom burned down the kitchen the first time she tried to cook for my dad and has since been banned from it forever after that. She's only allowed to eat the food now. My dad cooks," Nick chuckled, reaching under and raising his chin so their eyes could meet finally, but there was a weight to his voice that Jeff didn't like.

That was his fault too… and he knew it. He was burdening Nick, making him sad and unhappy with his emotional outbursts. He wanted to do better. He wanted to be able to do simple things like this. He wanted to please Nick desperately. Make him happy and not regret that he'd chosen him.
"You should eat. I'll clean this up," he said, voice tight and barely audible. Eyes still avoiding his Dom’s.

Nick made a low noise of dissent and shook his head, wiping his thumbs over Jeff's cheeks to rub away the moisture there.

"I have a better idea," he murmured, staring from one eye to the other. "I'll clean this up since you're the one that cooked, and then we'll enjoy this delicious breakfast together."

He didn't wait for an answer, instead rose to his feet and pulled Jeff up after him, still snuggled in his arms, a firm frown on his pretty, splotchy face.

"But… that's not…" he stared and shook his head in confusion. That wasn't how it worked. He was supposed to fix his own mess and wait until Nick was finished with his meal before taking food for himself. It was what was polite, well-mannered subs did.

"That's not what, beautiful?" Nick asked him and Jeff raised his eyes carefully and shrugged, trying to make himself disappear.

"It's not how… how he…" he started but cut himself off when Nick's arms around him clenched and tightened.

"I'll stop you right there. I'm not Kevin, angel. I'll never be him. What he did to you…" He grit his teeth and took a calming breath before continuing. "What he did to you, although I feel like I don't know half of it just yet, was wrong. And I want you to forget about all of that and let me show you what you're supposed to be treated like. Let me show you how precious you are," Nick pleaded, Jeff's shaking hands gripped tightly in his own as he tried to show him he was nothing to be afraid of.

"I'm not…" Jeff started, ready to deny the compliment but Nick shook his head.

"You are. Precious, and priceless, and worthy and beautiful and sweet and you are safe, Jeff. You're safe with me."

He placed a hand underneath his chin again to lift the still slightly tear streaked face to his own. Jeff breathed out in shock but his eyes found Nick's as if on pure instinct and there was nothing but warmth and care in them. It floored him to the ground once again. How amazingly safe and right he felt in Nick's arms. How easy it was to believe him. How insignificant his past seemed when his future looked to be bright and happy with Nick in these scant moments where everything else fell away.

He knew he was a long way from being okay, from being whole and healed. This episode right here was evidence enough of that. But Nick made him believe, over and over again, that he would be there for him every step of the way and it made the journey seem easier, shorter.

Nick was his Dom now and outside of his flashbacks Jeff knew he wouldn't be hurt again. Not by Nick.

"Sir…" Jeff breathed when the thought, the feeling that he truly wanted to belong to Nick washed over him.

"Only if you want to call me that, angel," Nick amended once again, lifting his hand to brush his fringe away from his face, that sunshiny smile of his warming Jeff from the inside out.
"I… I want to," Jeff said timidly, locking eyes with his Dom whose face lit up.

His hand came to cup Jeff's cheek and his eyes had a wet sheen over them. "God, beautiful. You have no idea how much of an honour that is. To earn that title from you… just, thank you," he whispered, awe and wonder in his voice and Jeff smiled in response, hand coming up to cover Nick's on his cheek.

"Y-you deserve so much more than I can give you. But… but I'll try…" he started but Nick stopped him with a gentle kiss on his lips that left him tingling and breathless.

"I just want you. You safe and happy and smiling at me and this…" he said looking down to where they were entwined, shards scattered around them but neither of them paying it attention with Jeff's breath tickling Nick's lips and Nick's hands on his skin.

Jeff lowered his eyes and bit his lip, but despite that his mouth curved into a shy smile and his heart jumped in excitement for the first time in so long. He nuzzled Nick's hand and shaking but determined, he turned his head to place a small kiss into the centre of Nick's palm.

"I love you," Nick breathed and Jeff felt the back of his neck tingle like it had once before; sharp and prickly and sort of uncomfortable but not too much. He powered through, refusing to let Nick see there was something going on. He wasn't going to make a big deal out of nothing and cause his Dom even more pain.

His decision was final as they broke apart and in the end cleaned the mess and ate their breakfast together.

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Five days until Charity Night...

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The rest of the holidays passed too quickly for Kurt. He saw a lot of his dad and made a ton of once in a lifetime memories, but soon enough he was back at Dalton with all his friends and reality.

It's not that he didn't like it at school. Yes, it was still challenging because of how far behind he had been, but he was thankfully catching up with the help everyone seemed eager to provide. It was just that everything seemed to be catching up with him at once too.

His schoolwork alone took up a large amount of his time. Add that to planning his Presenting Ceremony and this Charity Night? He was up to his eyeballs in swatches and colour schemes and headaches over seating. As the days passed he found the Ceremony planning took more and more of a backseat which was disheartening and the Charity Night that he was initially so excited for was approaching faster than he could prepare no matter how hard he tried, how many hours he spent at it.

He had taken to carrying around the massive binder he had filled up with everything from numbers for designers he'd gotten from Dana to double check on their donations, the floor plan for the art club to show off their work, the numbers and times for the Warbler arrangements, the florist orders, the list went on and on. Anything and everything under the sun you could think of and Kurt probably had a hastily scribbled, colour coded copy of it in that massive pain in the ass folder.
And this is how Kurt found himself, with five days to go until The Night, pulling his hair out in a quiet corner of the library as he scanned over his own sketches for his evening gown. He'd started making it weeks ago and it was practically finished, just needing a few more sequins sewed on, sitting on its mannequin in the work space Dana had at home and let him borrow. He had one here as well that Hikaru had put aside for him and he often shuffled it between the two spaces.

But he was having second thoughts.

He scanned the list of designers Dana had got on board, along with Dana herself and chewed anxiously at his thumbnail. Could he auction off his own design next to something from Red? Would anyone actually bid or would it stay woefully silent as the poor girl he'd chosen to model it walked down the runway?

It was a sobering thought.

Dana might like the sketches on paper, but he hadn't let her see his work in reality. What if it was awful?

He looked back down at the paper in front of him. He loved his design. It was one of the best things he'd ever come up with yet... but could he execute it? He thought back to the finished product at home and scrunched his brows. He liked it. It was exactly what he envisioned on paper... better even. When he'd had the opportunity to head to a proper fabric store and choose out what he wanted he'd been like a kid in a candy store and seeing something he thought up in his head come to life was beyond amazing, but-

"What'cha scribbling, Hummel?"

Kurt's spine stiffened as the distinctive voice of one Brad the Asshole made an appearance.

"Clearly I need to stop coming to the library," he sighed, trying to ignore him as he began putting his things back in his behemoth folder. He didn't need another Brad headache on top of the headache he already had thank you.

Lately all Brad seemed to be doing is following around behind him making snide comments, telling him he was doing everything wrong, the first to jump on him and kick him when he was down when things didn't go to plan.

The sub rounded the table, fingers fiddling vainly with the already perfect knot on his tie. "It wouldn't happen to be the disaster of a design you're going to be putting into the fashion show would it?" he asked sweetly.

"Don't listen, don't listen, he chanted to himself.

"It wouldn't happen to be any of your business," Kurt threw back in the same tone. He didn't bother wondering how he knew, it wasn't exactly a secret and news travelled fast around here. Besides, Brad had a way of finding things out anyway. "Don't you have better things to do?"

"Then bandy words with my favourite charity case?" Brad asked, holding a hand to his heart as if offended, green eyes flashing. "Certainly not."

"You're pathetic," Kurt snapped and stood up, chair screeching behind him as it was forced back to accommodate.

"Last time I checked I was still good looking, rich and higher class than you. I know your lower education wasn't much but at least know the meaning of words before you say them," Brad said,
flashing him a vindictive smile that was all shiny white teeth.

"And last time I checked I was still bonded to Blaine and you had no one, so I don't think I need to check the meaning of my words at all, sweetie," Kurt smirked back closing the binder with a resounding thump.

He was thrilled to see he struck a nerve by the way Brad's eyes narrowed and his mouth pursed and he was about to flounce away in victory when…

"Bonded to him for now."

Kurt furrowed his brow but didn't speak.

Brad reached into his messenger bag and pulled out a glossy magazine and Kurt felt his stomach drop as de ja vu swept over him.

*Leave. You don't need to read something like that again. Just go.*

"Word on the street is that you haven't even set a date for your Presenting Ceremony. Haven't called any of the known vendors, haven't sent out invitations," he pouted, as if sad for him and dropped the tabloid onto the table.

**Is Blaine Having Second Thoughts?** Was the headline.

He refused to let it get to him. They had discussed their Presenting Ceremony, Blaine was letting him plan it. They were both just busy right now.

Apparently he said all of that out loud.

"Doesn't sound like he's bothered at all," Brad laughed harshly. "Well… he was obviously bothered about the sex if he brought it up and then didn't set a date. And let me guess? You've been giving it away ever since he mentioned it? The promise of Sealing the Bond unlocking those thighs."

No… that wasn't why. It wasn't.

He wasn't letting Brad poison his relationship with his lies. Kurt knew the truth, knew that Blaine wouldn't do that to him. He had purposely brought up the subject because he wanted to make sure Kurt was comfortable and aware of where their bond was heading and since then he hadn't pushed for more than Kurt wanted to give. If anything, *Kurt* was the one making more sexual advances than his Dom was lately.

**But what if he was having second thoughts?** the small insecure part of him piped up. *He hasn't really asked or mentioned the Presenting Ceremony lately.*

*He hasn't even told you he loves you yet.*

Kurt felt like he was drowning all of a sudden.

"I don't have to listen to this. You're just lonely and bitter and horrible and I feel sorry for you," Kurt ranted shakily, feeling overwhelmed and suffocated by the depth of hate and contempt Brad clearly had for him.

He went to walk away but was grabbed forcefully by the arm. He cried out in shock, dropping his binder and found himself pushed back against one of the bookshelves.

Brad let go and dusted himself off as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened. "See you around,
Hummel. And make sure to read up."

He flashed another awful Hollywood smile and strutted away leaving Kurt feeling shaken and hurt, cradling his arm to his chest. It wasn't that it was painful, it was the shock that another sub had laid hands on him. Gotten so violent.

He stooped down and picked up his folder with numb fingers, cursing and feeling his eyes stupidly water as he saw some of the papers inside were bent out of shape.

"Stupid, stupid, stupid," he chastised himself as he rose, refusing to give in and cry.

His eyes inevitably strayed to the table…and he walked out of the library with the magazine tucked inside his folder at the very back like a dirty secret.

"Stupid," he choked to himself once more.

="Four days until Charity Night…"

"Jeeeff, I have so much to do," Kurt complained as his best friend dragged him from shop to shop.

Normally shopping would have been the perfect distraction, but looking at racks of clothes and the mannequins modelling them just continued to reinforce what had been stressing him out for the last… well what seemed like forever now.

"You need this break, Kurt. You're driving yourself crazy," the blonde informed him for the millionth time. He was seriously getting worried. All Kurt seemed to do was work himself harder with every passing day, like he had someone whipping him to go faster and do better.

"What I need is to finish hemming."

"Ah, ah, ah!" Jeff cut him off sternly. "No hemming. No measuring. No 'should I have gone for a red colour scheme'." He rolled his eyes. "Relax."

"How can I relax when everything here reminds me of what I should be doing?" Kurt huffed, brow puckering as he looked at the various window displays.

Jeff pursed his lips. He had a point after all. He then tugged on his hand. "C'mon. I've gotta pick up some more food for Poncho. No clothes there but doggy vests."

"Which are hideous ninety nine percent of the time," Kurt shuddered… though he could totally make something that would be totally cute if he just had- Shit. Turn off brain! Taking a breath he refocused and instead smirked. "And I still can't believe you named him that."

Jeff refused to blush… but the heat on his face said otherwise. "It suits him."

"The name Poncho doesn't even suit the item of clothing it's named for, so how does it suit a dwarf rabbit?" Kurt asked teasingly and his friend’s blush worsened.
"Oh look, there's the shop!" Jeff exclaimed and hurried inside, ducking his head and evading the question. Kurt knew the name was because of Nick and his crazy poncho stunt but he didn't want to make Jeff uncomfortable so he just trailed after him into Petco with a smile.

The staff was made up of a team of happy subs that greeted them as they entered, the job and most jobs involving animals; such as veterinarians, zoo keepers, animal trainers, was largely made up from the submissive side, it was a big lure to their natures because it largely involved nurturing animals most of the time and even the more vicious animals reacted positively to them.

The store smelled like clean animals and sawdust; everything at the front appeared to be your usual cleaning and feeding supplies, with toys and accessories that were more for the owner than the pet it seemed in a little further. Jeff grabbed the bag of rabbit food he needed easily enough but then he was heading deeper into the store and Kurt followed behind him bemused.

That turned out to be a mistake.

Back there was where they actually kept the animals. It was spacious with glass cages, fish tanks, pens and various areas where you could sit and get to know the animal you picked out. Jeff headed straight for the girl next to the rabbit hutches, dressed in the employee green with her short brown hair pulled back off her face with a headband.

"Hey there," she smiled at them and Kurt read her name tag that proclaimed her 'Amy' and that she was 'Happy to help'. "Can I help you?"

His best friend was chronically shy with newcomers, this was already a fact, but it seemed like he'd swallowed that down suddenly as he opened his mouth. "Yeah. My Dom just got me a dwarf rabbit and my friend wanted to look at some."


"Sure thing! We had some cuties this time around that's for sure, they've been selling like crazy so I'm not surprised," she laughed, rich and genuine, before she began leading them into a pen that was colourful; red posts with mesh all the way around so nothing could escape and a big huge sign that proclaimed it 'Bunny Corner'. Before he could get too horrified at that, he was sitting on a green beanbag of all things, trying to look graceful and to fold his legs carefully as to not wrinkle his pants. Unfortunately, there seemed to be no way to sit on a beanbag and look graceful so he sighed and looked after Amy who'd left to get the rabbits.

Kurt leaned over to hiss at his friend, "What the hell? I'm not interested in getting a rabbit."

Jeff shrugged innocently, shifting in his seat, the insides sifting to fit his shape. "I just thought we could pet them for a bit, get your mind off things. You liked 'Cho after all and you don't have to really buy one."

That mollified Kurt a little. He was touched by his friend's thoughtfulness actually, so he sucked it up and sank lower into his own seat. Because Jeff was right after all. Once he got past the potential shedding on his clothes aspect, he had happily cradled Poncho in his lap and fusssed over him… not as much as Blaine had of course, but his Dom was unnaturally drawn to pets. He'd coo over a goldfish till the sun went down if he could and Kurt would to his shame, still find it stupidly endearing and love him the more for it.

"We've got three dwarf's left, they're hugely popular like I said before," the assistant said stepping into the pen again and pulling them out of the box she used to transfer them, placing them down on the floor one by one. "These three are all boys."
There was a classic black and white, a tan coloured with slightly floppier ears and a single pure white cotton ball of a thing, smaller than the other two with huge dark eyes that Kurt couldn't take his own off.

"Would you like to hold one?" she asked.

"No, no I'm fine," Kurt denied but Jeff gently grasped the exact one he couldn't take his eyes off and was placing it in his arms before he could escape. "No… Jeff!"

"There… not so bad is it?" the blonde grinned at him guilelessly, brown eyes so soft and cheerful that Kurt couldn't deny them. *Damn it.*

He switched his attention back to the rabbit before his best friend got him to do something else with those puppy eyes and then it hit him.

He had a baby rabbit in his hands.

"Oh my god," Kurt breathed looking down to where he had that pure white fluff ball in his hands, against his chest, hiding it's scared, twitchy little face. "He's so adorable."

Jeff grinned back at him and leaned forward to stroke his back with his forefinger. "You have to get him."

Kurt gave him a look. *What happened to just petting huh, you little… "I can't just get a rabbit!"* he said instead.

The assistant laughed. "I'll just leave you to get acquainted and decide." Then she was stepping outside of the pen easy as you please.

"She has no shame," Kurt grumbled. "Do they get commission here? She doesn't even have to earn it herself! This is like… baby bunny labour! Getting them to suck people in with their fluffy tails and twitchy noses."

Jeff was biting his lips to hold in his laugh, but his cheeks were twitching and his eyes were filled with repressed humour.

"I don't know why you're looking at me like that," Kurt huffed, readjusting his grip on his little bundle gently so he didn't spook, fitting him into one palm so he could free the other hand up to stroke his silky soft fur.
"Oh give it up. You loved 'Cho. You want one."

Kurt shrugged, then grinned as a thought occurred. "Blaine would die over this one here… well anything with fluff. But this one's extra cute."

Jeff raised a brow, hand absently petting the tan bunny that had gotten curious and hopped over to him. "Just Blaine?"

Choosing silence and nuzzling the baby in his hands on that particular- maybe accurate- assessment they sat for a few more minutes, just basking in the relaxation that animals could bring them.

"I can't believe I'm sitting in Bunny Corner," he finally said out loud.

His best friend laughed and Kurt lit up like he always did when he heard it. It was far too rare, but lately it was getting more frequent and Kurt couldn't thank Nick and Dalton enough.

"What are you gonna call him?" the blonde asked.

"I'm not getting him!" he stated firmly but then he glanced down at those big eyes that screamed; name me, adopt me, love me.

Un-fair.

"Well I think he looks like a… Snowflake."

Kurt held the bunny closer at the offending suggestion. "He's not a Husky."

"I don't see you coming up with anything," Jeff challenged back.

He hummed and held the precious fluff up to his face, careful to keep a tight hold just in case he squirmed or kicked out. But the dwarf was perfectly content to be manhandled and just let his back legs hang.

"What's your name huh angel?" Kurt cooed at him, titling his head as if that would held shake an idea loose.

His attention caught however when Jeff coughed- well, more like choked. He brought the rabbit back to his chest and looked at his friend and saw red cheeks. "What's up?"

Jeff contemplated playing it off but... he kinda wanted to talk to Kurt about it. He was his best friend, the one person in the world that knew the most about him. "Nick… he calls me that."

Kurt smiled. No. Beamed, wide and delighted, his voice drawling teasingly. "Does he now?"

"Shut up." Jeff pouted, regretting his decision to give his friend teasing material.

"But Jeeeff-" Kurt whined childishly.

"Kuuuurt!" the blonde complained back in the same tone but there was an uncontrollable smile on his face.

"He thinks we don't know," Kurt whispered to the bunny seriously. The bunny twitched his nose and ears in agreement.

Jeff scoffed at them and ran his fingers through his fringe to hide the fact that he was still smiling. "You're the worst."
"But you love me anyway," he sing songed back.

"Mm," the blonde hummed, indulging him, but they both knew it was true.

"And you," Kurt said to the bunny in a baby voice. "Are you gonna make Papa love Daddy?" He bounced him a little. "Huh, little cupid?"

Another nose and ear combo twitch that he took as a yes.

Jeff started a little, a frown beginning to form because there was something else, something much more serious under that ridiculous put on voice. "Blaine doesn't tell you he loves you?"

It blurted out before he could stop it.

Kurt froze stiff, eyes shuttering over the flash of deep hurt and fear Jeff glimpsed. "No. He hasn't said it," his friend eventually revealed, voice cold and detached on the surface but Jeff knew him too well to buy it.

And this confused the hell out of Jeff because even he; cynical, fearful, jaded person that he was, could see that Blaine worshipped the ground his best friend walked on. There was no one more in love with someone than Blaine was with Kurt. It defied logic.

"Even when you say it to him?"

He had to check.

Kurt licked his lips and glanced away to the other two sleeping bunnies that had curled up together in the corner, perfectly content to just snooze the day away. "I haven't said it to him either."

That struck a chord. And so did the fear behind it.

"I haven't said it to Nick," he confessed, almost inaudibly. "He says it to me all the time and I just… say nothing."

"Sweetie," Kurt sympathised. "You'll say it when you're ready. You don't have to if you don't feel it yet."

"But I don't know how I feel," Jeff worried, drawing his knees up and wrapping his arms around them protectively. "Nick makes me feel... more. More than anything I've ever felt but I don't know what it is. Sometimes I'm sure I do... but I don't know if this is the way love is supposed to feel. It scares me," he finished in a small voice.

"It scares me too," Kurt nodded, petting his little cupid bunny and drawing comfort from the little breaths he took and the little brushes of his whiskers along his wrist and palm as he nuzzled around. "Not in the same way as you. I think it's different for everyone. I don't think it would be love if it was so easy. But you don't have to worry about Nick. He's not expecting you to say it back when he tells you that, he just wants you to know you're loved."

Jeff soaked that in, feeling calmer and more settled just like he always did when Kurt sat and broke things down with him. There was no judgments or pressure or expectations with Kurt so it was easier to push through his feelings and find stable ground.

"Why are you scared? Blaine loves you Kurt, I know he does," Jeff told him with conviction.

Kurt eyes got a little wet with hurt and frustration. "But why doesn't he say it?"
Jeff didn't really have an answer. Blaine was so confident and outgoing and said pretty much whatever was on his mind, no filter involved. So why hadn't he told Kurt those three words?

"And I can't say it first," Kurt said and shook his head. "We're not in the same situation as you two. And what if he doesn't? There's got to be a reason why he hasn't yet right? And what if that's it?"

"Kurt, no-" Jeff said, shocked by the words his friend was saying and not wanting to listen to them because he knew they weren't true.

"What if he's having second thoughts about us?" Kurt finally asked, the articles Brad gave him flashing before his eyes; the cruel, bolded words of rejection, of failure that he just couldn't help but wonder if they were true.

That statement rang in between them like a gong. Loud and brash and reverberating. Jeff gasped and cupped the hand Kurt lowered to his side as his other cupped the bunny to his chest.

"I think you're scared and stressed and under pressure and that there are things making you doubt Blaine. But I also think that if you calmed down and looked deep inside yourself you'd find that you trust him and that you know you're his forever," Jeff said and Kurt blinked a lone tear away as warmth washed over him.

Because yes, when he dug deep enough he always found the silver of conviction that he was Blaine's for good… but then the icy realisation followed… what if he’ll always be Blaine’s, but Blaine would never be his?

"How are we doing over here?" the assistants chirpy voice broke into the moment and Kurt pulled himself together, tucking away all his insecurities back into that box in the back of his head and heart.

_God, what was he doing repeating those stupid magazines?_

"I think my Dom is going to kill me for the amount of money I'm probably going to spend," he replied, faking a smile and he could feel Jeff's eyes boring holes into the side of his head.

"You can't put a price on love," she grinned and Kurt felt that like a knife in the chest.

_If only. Some of us would like to know what we're up against._

"So am I boxing him up for you?" she asked obliviously.

"Yes, please. I'll need everything else as well," he managed to get out.

"Super!" she chirped and rang up the mountain of things bunnies apparently needed to have.

Soon enough Kurt was being dropped off at his house by Nick's family's driver, now Jeff's as well, though he seemed as awkward as Kurt had been about that when he'd seen the Anderson's one. He was helped to the door with all his stuff- and there was a lot- setting most of it down just inside to be taken up later. He hugged Jeff goodbye tightly, both subs nuzzling each other's necks a little in that old familiar way of theirs. He knew his friend wanted to say something else, talk out that last ringing statement more with him, but he was tired and emotionally drained so the blonde left him be… for
now.

And despite the shaky end this trip really had been a stress reliever and exactly what he didn't know he needed. He resolved to put all that negativity from his mind and be optimistic. If giving Blaine a baby rabbit as cute as this one didn't get the Dom to love him then he didn't know what would!

Cradling the carrier with his little cupid in, he shut the door with his foot and listened out for signs of life. Dana and Jared were supposed to be gone most of the day for their weekly date together, which Kurt found totally cute that they still upheld a tradition they'd had since first bonding, but he couldn't hear Blaine anywhere.

He knew he was doing work at the studio this morning, leaving shortly before Jeff had arrived to pick him up, but his Dom had said he was just checking on things. Surely he'd be back by now? He'd been at least two hours.

"Blaine?" he called.

Nothing.

Humming he took to the stairs heading for their bedroom and peeked inside the door. What he saw made him smile and shake his head in exasperation simultaneously. Blaine had decided to attempt to change their bedding.

Attempt being the correct word choice. Fail would be appropriate also.

He was currently trapped inside the cover for the duvet, frantically trying to find the corners and keep his balance at the same time, concentrating so fiercely that he obviously hadn't heard him call. Kurt had to bite his lips to keep from laughing out loud. The way he was stumbling about with his arms outstretched made him look like a ghost on drugs or something.

"Hi honey, I'm home," he cooed sweetly and Blaine jumped, knees knocking into the bed frame and causing him to curse loud and colourfully.

"Kurt!"

"Behind you, sir," Kurt snickered and Blaine twisted the right way, tangling his legs up dangerously.

"Why is this so hard?!" he whined from inside his cloth prison.

Kurt finally giggled loudly and felt the bunny in his box startle and shift his weight to another corner at the vibration from his chest. "You're twenty two and you don't know how to replace the sheets?"

"No one can! This is impossible!" the Blaine shape blob huffed, flailing his arms again and tilting to the side.

He rolled his eyes indulgently. "You're hopeless."

"I'm not!"

He was pouting under that cover. Kurt knew it.

Placing the carrier carefully on the nearest flat surface, which happened to be the dresser, he walked over and began to untangle his Dom, tugging the sheet from over his head.

Blaine gasped in air like coming up from underwater, his face red and a little sweaty and his curls out of control from the static. He was bare chested, all muscle and hair in the right places, in just a pair of
sweats that were riding sinfully low on his hips.

Kurt tried not to gape or get any ideas.

"How long were you in there?" Kurt asked instead to switch his mental track, shaking the sheet out.

"Too long, lovely. Much too long," Blaine said sadly, flopping down on the bare mattress exhaustedly. "Now come snuggle me. I'm traumatized."

He laughed and realized that he thought it was impossible to fit any more love in his heart for this man but he was constantly being proved wrong. He was just so god damned endearing and charming and gorgeous.

"I've got something better than snuggles," he announced getting back on track.

Blaine raised a skeptical brow. "Nothing's better than snuggling you…" he paused and thought about it, a wicked light lighting up the gold of his eyes and a decidedly naughty smirk working its way onto his full mouth. "Well except maybe when we're suck-"

"You don't need to finish that sentence!" Kurt cut in with a blush.

"You're so cute," Blaine cooed reaching out for him with grabby hands. "Come over here, lovely. I've missed you all morning. The only reason I decided to get swallowed by that evil monster sheet was because I was bored waiting for you to come home."

Kurt heard the gentle command and resisted it just long enough to grab the carrier before he was hurrying over to perch on the bed next to his Dom who came up on his elbows and stared at the box curiously.

"And what have you done now, beautiful boy?" he asked with a smile.

Kurt shrugged feeling anticipation coil in his stomach, settling it in the space between them, glad that the carrier didn't have any distinctive logo's or pictures on. It was just a plain brown. "Got you a present."

"Why is it that every time you go shopping you come back with something for me instead of you?" Blaine asked exasperatedly.

"Is this you complaining?" Kurt questioned back archly, ready to take his presents right back but Blaine was sitting up and leaning across to kiss him stupid in a matter of seconds.

"Not a bit," he pulled back to say after a sufficient amount of time spent reacquainting himself with Kurt's lips and unique taste.

Kurt hummed languidly, licking his lower lip lightly. "Good. Now open it please, sir."

"Well, since you asked so nicely, lovely," Blaine grinned and then eagerly popped the lid and froze staring straight into the dark box.

"Is that…?"

"I knew you wanted one when we visited Nick and Jeff," Kurt explained, studying his face intently for any signs of deeper feelings, any glimpse that this had sparked something.

Blaine reached into the box and after a bit of manoeuvring, finally got the scuttling bunny into his hands and up and out, settling him on his lap in awe. The shock of white was a lovely contrast to the
natural tan of Blaine's skin. "Oh my… he's so soft and fluffy and…" He looked up at him with something so frustratingly undefinable on his face. "You got me a rabbit."

"I did," Kurt agreed cocking his head with a little smile, trying with all his might to just work this man out. "He's a boy."

"This is the best thing ever!" Blaine exclaimed like a happy five year old, petting the shaking bunny.

Kurt smiled wider, the submissive in him exceedingly pleased with himself and preening under the praise. "Jeff and I were discussing names in the store… I thought I'd let you name him… as long as it isn't stupid," he tacked on. He wasn't having his baby named something ridiculous.

Blaine met his eye and then glanced back down at their new pet considering. "Name, name, name… uhhh, okay I've got it! I hereby officially and forever more dub thee…. Marshmallow… the third."

Kurt's jaw dropped in horror. And he thought Snowflake was bad!

"No. No way. You can't name him that! Also did you actually have Marshmallow the first and the second?"

Blaine raised his brows innocently and ran his fingers along the bunny's ears. "Well… no… but he looks like one. And besides, I said officially and forever more. No take backs."

Kurt reached across and rescued his baby from his derange Papa and cradled him to his sternum, just under his chin so he could lay soothing kisses to his tiny head and glare at Blaine at the same time. "I forbid it. I said I had veto rights so, no."


"He's ours. I'm his Daddy and you're his Papa and as his Daddy I'm not letting him get even more of a complex about being eaten than he already has instinctively."

"But it's cute."

"But I don't care," he shot back with a smirk.

Blaine huffed thought there was nothing much in it but amusement… then something dawned. "Did you just call yourself Daddy, lovely?"

Kurt coloured considerably and buried his face in the rabbit. "I hate you so much you dork," Kurt complained. I love you so much you dork, he shouted internally.

Blaine laughed, delighted and scooted closer to him, pecking him on the temple then nuzzling into his cheek, mindful of their adopted bunny child.

"I adore you, lovely," he whispered and even thought the words were warm, full of affection and sent a thrill down Kurt's spine, they weren't the three words he longed and ached to hear.

Disappointment put a lump in his throat that he couldn't speak around for a moment.
Blaine for once, didn't seem to notice, too enthralled with the latest addition to their family. "So what do you wanna name him then?"

Kurt looked down at the pure white bunny. There was a name in his head that just stuck for him. "I was thinking… Cupid?"

Blaine smiled and kissed his cheek. "Cupid Marshmallow Hummel-Anderson the third. Perfect."

Kurt rolled his eyes but leant his head on Blaine's shoulder, soaking in his light and warmth. Maybe it would take a little more time for Blaine to tell him he loved him. Or maybe fall in love with him. He could wait. He could.

He hated that it was getting harder to believe that each time he said it.

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One day until Charity Night...

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A gentle knock on the door disturbed Kurt’s manic pacing up and down his sewing room.

The charity fashion show was tomorrow...TOMORROW... and one of the girls wearing one of the three spectacular dresses they had lined up had called in sick and wouldn't be able to be in the show. He was on the verge of a nervous breakdown of epic proportions and the last thing he needed was someone coming in to find him falling apart. He could almost see Brad's smug face when the entire event fell through and his chest tightened with the thoughts flashing in his mind.

"I'm really sorry, Kurt. I just... I haven't been feeling well for days now so my Dom insists that I get a check-up and the only time the doctor can take me is tomorrow and they said I might need to stay at the hospital overnight for observation and..."

"Whoa, Chelsea, Chels... calm down, sweetie. You getting better is way more important than the show," he interrupted, trying his best to sound honest and reassuring, but inside he was breaking apart and he had no idea how to pull himself back together.

"I know but I feel awful leaving you one person short a day before the show. I just..." she said, tears in her eyes and bottom lip shaking.

"I'll be okay," he smiled, trying to be upbeat. "The show will be okay. I'll find someone else or if not that I'll pull one dress out of the line-up," he told her pushing her towards Charlie, her Dom, who stood anxiously by his car waiting for her.

"I'm sorry," she sniffled once again and he hugged her tightly. She was a real sweetheart and she knew her fashion well enough for Kurt to consider shopping with her and that said a lot.

"Stop that. Just focus on getting better. Let me know what the doctor says?" he asked, glancing at Charlie who nodded, a grateful expression on his face as he helped her in the car and pulled out of the parking lot, leaving Kurt alone with his thoughts that rang loud enough to tune out the noise of
cars coming in and out around him.

He was close to a breakdown and he just wanted to sit down and close his eyes and pretend like he
didn't even exist because there was no way he would ever be able to make everything right by
tomorrow night.

He would let Dana down, and Hikaru, and the models and the Warblers, but most of all, he would
let Blaine down.

He would finally prove what the press had been saying since the moment he stepped into the picture;
that he was stupid and incompetent and pitiful and just a huge failure. Why the hell did he sign up to
do this whole thing in the first place?

"Well, well, well..." a dreaded voice snickered from his right side and with a frustrated sigh he
turned to see Brad, leaning against his bright orange Porsche and smirking in spiteful glee.

"Brad... just what I needed," Kurt rolled his eyes sarcastically as he attempted to get into the school,
their last encounter ringing in his ears loud and clear, as well as the light bruise his fingers left on
his forearm.

However, the taller sub jumped into step with him easily, the smile on his face looking friendly and
interested to anyone who passed by. But Kurt could see his eyes, and the chill in them made that
smile look sinister.

"What is it that I hear? Trouble with the show? I can't tell you how incredibly surprised I am to find
out that you're fucking things up," he said with that trademark, evilly bored tone of voice.

"I don't know what you think you heard, but everything is under control. I think your ego is starting
to affect your senses. You should get that checked," he answered but the shakiness in his voice just
didn't deliver the insult as well as he had wanted to.

"Sooo... I'm wrong and Chelsea didn't just back out and you didn't just lose a model a day before the
show. My bad," he said with a chuckle that sounded like it was coming straight from the deepest pits
of hell to Kurt.

"I've got alternate solutions. You just mind your own business," he tried to dodge him to enter his
workroom, but he cut his way by putting his hand against the doorframe.

"I hope one of them is pulling that god awful thing you call a dress out of the auction. That way,
Blaine can see how incompetent you are but not how deluded about your own talent you are.
Maybe, just maybe, you'll manage to cling to him for another week or so like that," he laughed.
"Think about it, Virgin Princess," he called out over his shoulder as he sauntered away with joy in
his eyes so rotten and corrupt it made Kurt's stomach rise and his skin prickle.

He knew he was far passed the point where he was supposed to tell his Dom about what was going
on; with the name calling, the taunts, the magazines and the latest bruise he had on his arm. He'd
promised him. But he didn't want to be a burden, a casualty...

He wanted Blaine to be proud, but it was staring to dawn on him that it just might not happen.

Now, an hour after his last encounter with Brad he was still thinking of Blaine.

Blaine... sad and disappointed and ashamed of his failure of a sub. Maybe this was why he hadn't
said I love you yet? His hand ran into his hair without him noticing and he pulled tightly, trying to
use physical pain to wrench himself out of his own head.
Another knock reverberated against the walls and he walked towards the door on shaking legs and lips pressed tightly together to keep the desperate tears in.

He laid an open palm on the smooth wood and called out quietly, "Who is it?"

"Kurt… its Miriam," the gentle voice answered back and some of the tension left his body. He knew she wouldn't judge or make fun of him.

He turned the key and pulled the knob towards himself revealing a small, worried face and fingers clasped tightly together as her eyes darted all over the place, seemingly refusing to look at him. It shocked him enough to focus him out of his own misery for a second. She seemed uncomfortable and scared and he didn't like that look on the gentle book warm a single bit. He opened the door wider and invited her in before locking them both away from the rest of the world.

"Is everything okay?" he asked after she'd settled into the soft armchair and the silence around them stretched an uncomfortable amount of time.

She jumped at the sound of his voice and offered a timid smile as she nodded softly. "I should ask you the same thing," she said gently and he frowned.

"What do you mean by that?" he asked defensively, arms crossing over his chest.

She shrugged in a silent apology. "I was going home and I accidently overheard you and Brad. He was making fun of you?" she ventured tentatively.

He looked down to his feet, sighing and pinching the bridge of his nose. "Yeah. He's been on my case about this Charity event for a while now. But today he actually hit a nerve because Chelsea backed out and I'm officially in deep shit about it all so..."

She nodded in understanding. "I know I heard it. That's why I'm here actually. I wanted to talk to you about something. And it's… it's a bit embarrassing so I'm nervous."

She chuckled awkwardly and he walked to her, perching himself onto the armrest of her chair and taking her hand in his.

"Miriam, I've grown to see you as a friend, a close friend. You were so nice to me when I first got here and everything you've done, for Lima and my dad and Mercedes and Sam? If there's something I can do for you… anything… just let me know, okay?" he asked with what he hoped was a reassuring smile and she smiled back, this time the stretch of her lips wider and more confident.

"I… okay.. Um… can I start with an explanation first?" she asked.

"You can start with whatever you like. I'm here to listen," he told her easily and she took a deep breath, standing up and wrapping her hands around her middle as she walked past a huge mirror.

"Wes and I met ages ago. At a science camp no less." She shot him a wry smile. "We were always workaholics the both of us. If you ask him about how we met and how he came to a decision to claim me he'll tell you the same thing every time: he loves my brain, my drive, my intellect. I love that about him too. And I love that he respects the traits I value over other things," she explained and Kurt frowned trying to make sense of where this was leading.

"But?" he prompted and she turned towards the mirror, twirling a lock of hair around her finger.

"But sometimes I think there wasn't a moment when he stood in a room full of people and thought to himself that he has the best looking sub of all," she said and the younger sub gasped in surprise.
"Miriam," he tried but she lifted her hand.

"No it's… it's not what you think. I'm not convinced I'm ugly or repulsive or something like that. I don't have a complex. I'm okay looking and I know Wes loves me. But there are times I see the way David gapes when Corrine enters the room, or the way Ryan nearly drools over Thad… and… I wish… I wish I could have a moment like that. Maybe just once? Where he won't be rationally attracted to the deep and meaningful things about me. I wish there was a moment where he looked at me and lost his mind for a moment, you know? I wish I could give him a chance to brag the way Blaine does about you. It seems stupid when I say it out loud… it sounds stupid in my head even but… I figured… you're missing a model and Chelsea and I are the same size so fitting shouldn't give you too much trouble. So, um… what do you think?" she locked eyes with him through the mirror and he blinked in disbelief.

"You want to be in the show? Wear the dress?" his eyes lit up with glee and she smiled softly at him.

"I want you to turn me into someone beautiful for him. Just for one night before I go back to being sweet, smart Miriam," she answered and somewhere deep down Kurt could understand where she was coming from. "And after what I just heard it'll help you too."

She wanted to make her Dom proud. He could so relate. She was wrong about one thing though.

"We can definitely do that. But Miriam?" he said and she cocked an eyebrow at him.

"Yeah?"

"Every time you walk into the room Wes lights up. He loves you. And he is proud of you all the time," he said and she smiled teary at him as he stood up and picked up a garment bag to hand her the dress.

They had a lot of work to do.

Charity Night…

"What do you mean the flowers are not here yet?" Kurt hissed into the tiny little microphone attached to his headset.

He had originally pitched a fit for having to wear it because it was sooo not working with his outfit and it was messing up his hair completely- hair and clothes it took him many sleepless nights trying to sort out- but then he realized how much easier it was to bark orders at people while still having your hands free to fix the table cloths and straighten the wrinkles on the clothes set to be worn that night.

Multitasking was seriously underrated.

"I don't know, Kurt. I called them an hour ago and they said they were on their way." Thad who
was, for the lack of better word, his assistant for the day, said in a rush as he approached, biting the skin around his thumb nervously.

He’d wanted to help but he was way too small for any of the donated clothes and also, he said he wanted to ogle Ryan on the catwalk so he’d volunteered to help with the preparations. Kurt was grateful for him for more reasons than one. He knew all about stage lighting and all that fun stuff so he was a great coordinator for the drama clubs efforts. In reality though, they needed about seventy of both of them with the amount of work still left to be done.

"The flower shop is five minutes from here," Kurt ranted pulling his phone out to check the time, then replacing it again. "They should have been here by now. The show starts in a few hours." The tone was more than a little desperate and Thad nodded trying to appear somewhat outwardly calm, but there was a scared glint in his eyes that showed he understood what kind of trouble they were in.

"What do you want to do?" he asked him and Kurt sighed, clutching the clipboard closer to his chest with one hand and rubbing the bridge of his nose with pinched fingers on the other.

A few of the bigger donators demanded the flowers and the food to be ordered from the 'good part of the city' and as much as Kurt tried to argue that it defeated the purpose of the charity, he couldn't argue with them. He ordered the flowers from the posh, but utterly tacky, flower shop down the street that believed bigger was better, doing his best to describe what he wanted the arrangements to look like.

The employees had eyed him like he was out of his mind when he went for the less expensive but beautiful centrepiece for the front of the catwalk and picked matching, smaller pieces to scatter around the tables. He was happy with what he had chosen in the end, however and he couldn't wait for them to deliver it so he could complete the decorations for the night. But now they’d left him hanging and he had an ugly feeling they’d done it on purpose. To make the poor, pathetic, gold digging sub from Lima look incompetent in front of his Dom, his new family and basically most of the higher society of the Westerville Circle that was said to be attending.

And now he had absolutely no idea what to do… unless…

"Kurt?" Thad called him timidly and he snapped out of his own head, giving him a reassuring smile.

"I have an idea. It might piss some people off but it's our only option," he said and Thad eyed him with a small frown on his face.

"You think they're doing it on purpose, don't you?"

"Do you have another explanation?" he asked, raising his eyebrow and Thad tilted his head contemplatively.

"It does make sense now that I think about it. They were way too adamant about ordering the flowers from them and now they've failed to deliver on such a big social event? They wouldn't do that unless it was on purpose. Damn… I'm sorry, Kurt. But… you have an idea?" Thad asked hopefully and Kurt nodded, taking his phone and dialling a number.

"Just pray to God this works," he said as he waited for the person on the other side to pick up, a smile lighting up his face when he heard a familiar voice.

"Hello?"

"Mae… Hi… it's Kurt. I really need your help," he greeted her and Thad listened to their conversation, admiring the ease with which Kurt handled stress. He might have been collapsing on
the inside for all Thad knew but on the outside he was collected, calm and organized to perfection.

"Tonight would be amazing and it would show to all the haters what an amazing person Kurt was," Thad thought to himself as he made himself busy again, determined to make things as smoother as possible for his friend. After participating in theatre for so long, he wasn't a stranger to last minute disasters.

About an hour later the hair and makeup crew showed up, arms laden with cases and bags of supplies as they set up their beauty studio backstage. Just a few minutes after them the models arrived and Kurt pointed them all to their garment bags that had little tags hanging off of them.

The tag contained the description of the outfit, the designer that made it, the name of the model, and Kurt's instructions on what type of hair and makeup he wanted to complete the look. With that level of organization things backstage ran smoothly from the first moment and Kurt was free to leave them to their work as he went to point the artists to their assigned areas where they could place their art work for sale.

As the final artist placed his sculpture onto its assigned stand Kurt ticked the artist's name on his clipboard and sighed in relief.

"Everything okay?" he heard a voice coming from behind him and smiled when he saw Sebastian in his clothes for the catwalk.

He looked stunning.

Black leather pants hugged his long, toned legs perfectly, making them look twice as long, and a dark green, cashmere sweater made his eyes pop and sparkle. His hair was an artful mess on top of his head and his eyes were framed with a tiny bit of eyeliner, making the 'preppy boy next door' look take on a note of decadence and sin.

"Wow. You look amazing," Kurt said, pleased with his choice of clothes for the snarky sub. The outfit suited him like a second skin, completed of course with his perpetually condescending smirk.

"Don't I always?" Sebastian asked with a wink and Kurt rolled his eyes playfully.

"I would say yes but I don't think we have enough room for your ego in here," Kurt bit back and Seb threw his head back and laughed.

"Dave was right. Kitty does have claws," he smirked and Kurt lifted his chin proudly.

"Yup. And I'm not afraid to use them. Speaking of Dave… has he seen you looking like that?" he asked curiously.

"No, not yet. I'm trying to be good because I have a feeling these won't stay on me long if he sees me," he said confidently and Kurt faked a shudder.

"Too much information. Just keep yourself presentable until you walk off the catwalk. After that I don't care what you do. I have enough problems without my models being ravaged thank you very much," he sniped at him, glancing at the clock and realizing he was an hour and a half away from the beginning and there were still no flowers.

"Shit.

"Thad told me about the flowers. Did you manage to fix the mess?" And all of a sudden the cold, snarky Sebastian was gone and replaced by the true friend Kurt had found in him.
"I hope so. I called my old boss and told her what happened. She said she'll do her best to help me out so the only thing I can do is wait," he said tiredly and Seb nodded. "She does the order for the Showing every year. She would have been my first choice if I wasn't told explicitly to go to elsewhere. And look how well that turned out!"

"Some people are pathetic, Kurt. The only thing you can do is be better than them and hey," he looked around. "Looks like you're succeeding to me, with or without flowers."

"It wasn't supposed to be without though. It shouldn't have to be," Kurt frowned, trying not to let it get to him. If he did he knew he'd crawl into a dark corner and not get out again ever, because it did hurt. Hurt that people thought so little of him, tried to hurt him over and over for something so petty as where he came from.

"I know. But look, if she manages to make it on time, great… your vision is fulfilled, but if not… you still did a kickass job and everything looks absolutely amazing. Everybody will have too good of a time ogling us in sexy clothes to worry about the flowers or anything else in this room. Trust me," he said, clamping a hand on his shoulder and Kurt smiled at him ruefully.

"Your form of cheering up is very strange. Half of it is mockery," Kurt told him frankly.

Seb shrugged, lips tagging upwards. "You work with what you've got."

Kurt rolled his eyes. "Well I suppose I should say thanks?"

He inclined his head regally. "Insults and pity don't come free you know."

Kurt smothered an amused laugh. "Thank you, Seb."

A large frame over the taller teens shoulder caught his eye.

"Okay I think I see Dave looking for you. Go and hide and whatever you do, do not, I repeat, do not have sex until the pretty clothes are sold and taken away from you, okay?" he lectured pushing him towards the heavy curtains and away from his Dom's searching eyes.

He and the rest of the jocks had just finished playing their charity game against a competitive school that Hikaru had managed to get on board. Seemed they'd gotten showered in time for those who were in the show to hurry backstage to be dressed from the looks of all the letterman jackets disappearing on the other side of the stage.

Sebastian allowed himself to he pushed but the snark kept up full force. "I make no promises. Besides, when Dave sees me in this he'll buy these clothes himself just so I can model them for him, and him alone. Private shows are always the best," he winked and scurried away from Kurt's threatening glare, chuckling like a mad man.

"Idiot," Kurt huffed, but it was affectionate and warm as he turned towards the main entrance and his face split into a huge grin.

"Mae!" he squealed and rushed towards her, taking the heavy flowers off her hands. "Oh my god you are a life saver. Thank you so, so, so much for this."

The lines etched into her face fell into an indulgent, happy expression. "Don't you worry about a thing, dear. It was my pleasure to help you out and show those rich assholes what true class is. No more making horrendous arrangements for once," she grinned, hugging him awkwardly over the mountain of flowers between them.
Kurt released her after a moment and looked at the arrangements in his hands. They were perfect.
Youthful, discrete enough not to draw too much focus, but lovely and playful explosions of colour
to lift up the spirits and show that the event was organized by the young people, for the young
people.

"You truly outdid yourself this time," he praised her happily as he walked towards the empty spaces
on the tables and deposited the smaller bouquets there, before carrying the main piece onto the end of
the catwalk, brightening the stage and rounding off the look of it perfectly.

Kurt had a brief jolt of nostalgia as he was setting everything down in their proper places. He hadn't
worked in the shop since he was claimed and he kind of missed it. The floral, fresh smell, the
 camaraderie he found there in Mae's little shop, the way it always made him feel closer to his mother.

"I only followed your instructions. You always had perfect taste," she complimented right back,
eyeing the room approvingly with her experienced eye.

It lacked the usual tackiness and exaggeration she hated. Instead it was sophisticated and happy
without being childish or over the top. The main entrance was decorated with floating lights and
lanterns and black wreaths, following the main theme for the entire room. Black tablecloths with a
trim, white plates and crystal glasses, heavy, white drapes separating the backstage area and
providing contrast for the beautifully sparkly, white and silver catwalk. The catwalk was framed with
rows upon rows of black chairs, intricately designed and adding a whimsical feel to the rest of the
room.

The only other thing standing out were the flowers Kurt had requested, without a hint of black or
white, just pure joy, the arrangements looking like fireworks among the monochromatic
surroundings.
They marked the entrance to the stage and hung from modern looking, square shaped light fixtures
that resembled art pieces more than just simple chandeliers. The room looked breathtaking.

"Thank you so much, Mae. I couldn't have done this without you. And I have your payment right
"Kurt, dear, this is far too much! I can't accept this," she exclaimed, a little out of sorts when she saw the number.

Kurt waved her off firmly, stepping back when she tried to force the cheque back to him. "I talked it out with my Dom and his family. They are among those financing this event and I have a pretty big budget to work with. Since I didn't go over the top like they usually do I managed to save a lot of it. Consider it my thank you for tonight and for taking a chance on me when nobody else would." He swallowed and gave her a warm smile. "Sometimes the money you gave me meant not going to bed hungry for me and my family. It's the least I can do."

There were tears in his eyes that he blinked hastily away and she hugged him again, proud of the young man she had watched grow up from just a boy.

"Your mom would be proud of you, sweetie. I know she would," she whispered to him sincerely and he let out a small sob into her neck before pulling himself together again.

"Thank you so much. Are you staying for the event?" he asked and she shook her head apologetically.

"I would love to dear, but I'm afraid I have more work to do for a wedding tomorrow so I'll have to go back home, make sure Alisa isn't putting lilies where carnations should be," she grinned and Kurt shared it.

"She still getting them mixed up, huh?" he laughed.

"I don't know how, bless her heart," Mae giggled. "She's determined to get it right though so I can't fault her too much."

"Tell her I said hi?" he asked and Mae nodded then pointed at him sternly.

"You try to have some fun in between stressing over this whole thing you hear?" She kissed his cheek warmly and then was swooping her long, flowy cardigan out the main door, leaving Kurt smiling after the trace of his old life that was still a part of him. He knew he would always be a part of Lima, a part of the poor, ruined town with good, hardworking people in it. Housing kids with dreams tucked safely under their pillows with no chance of coming true and surrounded by air thickened with a mixture of despair and resignation.

He may be living in this new, flashy and rich world, but he was still just a boy from Lima and as he looked over at the flowers and realized how much work Mae had put into helping him out, he had never been more proud of where he came from.

Because as small and poor and neglected the people of Lima were, they still had his back.

Ticking the last box on his clipboard he made his way over to the security team and ushers they'd hired for the occasion and they opened the gate, letting the awaiting guests in as he approached Thad who was directing them towards the buffets and the art work that was for sale.

He looked amazing in dark grey suit pants and a grey and red checkered blazer Kurt had picked out for him, playing to his nerdy side while still managing to make him look sexy if Ryan drooling from behind the stage was anything to go by.

Kurt winked at the huge Dom teasingly and took Thad's hand, leading him away to make the last
round to see if everything was in place before the show began and there would officially be nothing more they could do.

Jeff was already here, sitting in his reserved seat in the front row next to his parents and chatting quietly. He had wanted to help more, had continually asked if there was something he could do, but there was too many people, unknown people, backstage and it was chaos and shouting orders everywhere else and Kurt didn't want to put stress on his friend when he didn't have to. He'd rather have him safe and content and spending time with his family. They both didn't get to see them as often as they were used to now that they were here, so it was extra special when they could merge the two worlds.

Burt and Carole were coming tonight as well and had seats in between the Sterling's and Anderson’s. Their presence was going to no doubt cause a stir but Kurt couldn't care less what the stuffy 'upper class' thought about them being there. They had just as much right as anyone else. The only thing he was anxious about though was if they made them feel uncomfortable or unwelcome, he didn't want his family in that sort of situation. The same situation he'd found himself in ever since he'd been claimed.

Kurt slipped backstage after checking on the school band to make sure they were all set up to start when the show started. He spotted his Dom getting his curls pulled and combed through, his face the picture of discontent at the heavy handed touch of the guy over him. Blaine loved people playing with his hair, but this guy was clearly going for efficiency which left no room for a scalp massage. Kurt couldn't help but be secretly pleased about that. He didn't really want anyone playing with Blaine's hair like that but him.

"Kurt!" he called when he spotted him in the mirror.

So far he'd been avoiding his Dom most of the day, other than to give him instructions before he had to stop to start getting ready for the show. Blaine was just too big of a distraction for him on the best of days, let alone when he was having what he had privately took to calling the; I Love You, Do You Love Me? Crisis.

Everything was as done as it was going to get now though so he headed for him, feeling relief sweep over him with every step, tension uncoiling in his limbs.

"There's my working boy," he beamed at him, offering out his hand.

Kurt smiled back and took it, linking their fingers.

"Did Mae show up? Seb let me know what was going on," Blaine asked concerned.

"Yeah. The arrangements she brought were actually better than the originals so, panic over!" he half smiled hoping to play off just how affected he was.

He watched as the stylist run mousse through the midnight curls to tame the frizz better but Blaine was still frowning. "There shouldn't have been a panic in the first place. I'm going to phone them first thing tomorrow and make them apologise to you… probably with expensive flowers."

Kurt rolled his eyes. "You don't have to do that, sir. I don't even like the flowers from there anyway."

"Lovely, you've been worrying yourself sick over this for weeks. Not sleeping, not eating right, crying-"
"That was once," Kurt cut in lamely.

Blaine gave him a quelling look and he knew he was busted. "If I didn't know how important this was to you then I would have pulled the plug well before now," he told him sternly. "But it is so I've let you keep at it. But I'm still looking out for your best interests, baby."

Kurt thought back to the last few weeks. The little snacks Blaine had started carrying and leaving around for him so he'd eat more. The patience he had when Kurt was snapping at him left and right. The stern commands that brought him back from the edge when he felt like he was going to collapse from exhaustion.

"Thank you, sir. I know I've been… difficult lately," he managed.

"You know I'm here for you, lovely. Thick and thin. Tantrums or no tantrums," he smirked and squeezed his hand. "You can tell me anything."

I know, but I just can't seem to say it, he thought miserably.

"I've gotta go check on a few more things, but I'll be back to watch you do your thing up there," he chirped with false cheer, changing the subject. He leant down and gave him a peck on the lips.

"Don't fall off the stage."

"If I did I would still look fierce!" Blaine called after him.

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Despite the fact that he had convinced himself he would not enjoy the night (he'd been attending these things before he was even enrolled here so the shine had long since faded) Wes had to admit Kurt had done an amazing job with the charity event as he sat in his assigned seat in the front row and peered around him. The auditorium looked equally as stunning as it did on the night of the Winter Formal, transformed into something well beyond the scope of Wes' imagination. Food and drinks were flowing, the people invited were all having fun… and the models that were strutting their stuff on the catwalk in front of him… well…

Kurt outdid himself in that department.

Sure he had enlisted several Dalton's guys and girls to do the hair and makeup for the models, as well as a few seasoned hairdressers and make-up artists who had offered their time free of charge (mainly drawn in by the opportunity to style alongside some of the biggest fashion names). But he had personally picked the styles for them to match the clothes they would wear and as far as Wes could tell he hadn't made a single mistake so far.

Wes’ inner control freak was happy as a clam.

What he was really sitting here for however hadn’t yet appeared through that heavy curtain. He was anxious to see Miriam wearing one of these dresses. He could hardly believe when she asked him what he thought about it when one of the girls had to drop out of the show. She wanted to help Kurt out because the two of them got along perfectly, had done since they first met, but she wanted his opinion on it first.
He told her what he always answered when she would ask something like that. That he was okay with her doing whatever made her happy. And so there he was, sitting by the side of the catwalk, giving discrete thumbs up to his fellow Warblers and classmates on their walks and poses as he waited for his beautiful sub to step out and walk the stage.

"Now the next dress is really interesting… it was both designed and hand made by our very own organizer of this event, Kurt Hummel. The model wearing it originally dropped out of the show at the last moment but never one to panic and lose his cool, Kurt fitted the dress for a substitute model in no time at all and let me tell you… the results are to die for," the commentator for this event, a perky guy from the drama department, hammed it up. "Ladies and gentleman prepare your wallets because I assure you, you don't want to miss the chance to add this beauty to your wardrobe. In an original, dark green Kurt Hummel design, please welcome, Miriam Sanders!"

The announcer made a 'ta-dah' gesture with his hand as the beat changed and soft, instrumental music started to play.

The curtains were pulled back revealing a lone figure standing at the beginning of the catwalk, head bowed and shadows playing on her pale skin. She stepped forward, the silver straps of her high heels catching the twinkling lights and casting playful specks onto the green mesh flowing around her long legs.

The bottom half of the dress was see-through; dark green and fluttering around her, specks of the glittery silver and dark green leafy, swirly pattern climbing up the backs of her legs and covering her thighs and hips, playing peek-a-boo with her skin.

Her tiny waist was hugged by a strip of green and from there it just got more mesmerizing as the upper half of the dress crisscrossed over her chest and crated a sinfully deep vee on her torso. The sleeves of the dress were a bit puffed out on her fragile shoulders and strands of her long, curled hair were touching them teasingly.

But her hair looked different.

Wes could hear the collective gasp when she stepped fully into the spotlight and she became more confident and secure in her steps on the stage.

She was magnificent.

Her hair was dyed an electric orange, cascading down her back in rich, voluminous curls, bringing out the beauty of her brown-green eyes, framed with eyeliner and thick eyelashes, the blush on her face doing nothing to hide the cheekiness of her freckles and there was a shy smile pulling at her plump pink lips.

Her usually tiny and wiry body was somehow hugged by the sexy, see through dress making her look like a goddess and even though to Wes she had always been that, the difference between his old sub and this new luminous creature on stage was accentuated by the catcalls and whistles from the audience as she twirled in front of them.
His blood boiled and every possessive instinct he had ever had soared to life, compelling him to jump onto the stage and whisk her away so she could continue being only his beautiful sub, only for *his* eyes to rake over and *his* hands to touch and *his* mind to picture in throws of passion, needy and desperate for him and him alone.

Somewhere in the distance he heard the announcer opening the bidding on the dress, the price starting at two hundred dollars but skyrocketing quickly to over a thousand as hungry eyes feasted on his sub, wanting her, seeing everything he saw in her a long time ago. He was growing crazy with jealousy and the need to shield her from them.

He glanced up and saw her finishing her twirl before she locked eyes with him, the look on her face questioning and uncertain, like she didn't even care that everyone else in the room wanted her, craved her, admired her… like his was the only opinion that mattered to her.

She placed a hand on her hip, jutting it out a bit, the dress swirling around her and hands around him shot in the air, bidding on the item of clothing she was wearing.

His hormones flared up, his chest tightening as a thought entered his mind. Had he been composed and balanced he would laugh at himself for being crazy and acting this way but he couldn't help it. People around him were shouting and offering money to buy the dress she was wearing and there
she stood looking like something from a fantasy movie; a fairy, an angel, like magic itself.

And people wanted that dress, her dress.

The dress that touched her skin, wrapped around her like a summer breeze and caressed her body the way only he was allowed too. And if they won someone else would touch the dress that touched what was his. In his lust and jealousy ridden mind, it sounded like someone else would touch her.

She did another graceful twirl, camera's clicking away and her curls bounced, revealing the mark on her neck: a dark almost black purple, barely distinguishable from the black frame of his possession, but he knew it was there… the outline on the heart she bore on her neck that made her his.

She turned back to him, her face closed off and careful as she waited for him to react and he didn't even control it when his hand shot up in the air, the auction paddle flashing bright green as he spoke up over the voices shouting their offers.

"Eight thousand dollars!"

There was a moment of stunned silence, the soundtrack of music the only thing making sound.

The announcer gaped at him, the guests stared in shock and Miriam was frozen on stage, looking at him wide eyed and uncertain as she took a step back to follow the protocol and walk off the stage to change and put the dress onto the hanger to be taken to the buyer.

"Well… um… eight thousand dollars going once… going twice?… sold to Dom Wes Montgomery. Thank you, Miriam," he finished, forcing a casual smile and she bowed gently, making a hasty exit off the stage.

Her disappearance behind the curtain snapped Wes out of his numbness and he jumped into action, rising from his seat and pushing through the crowd towards the backstage area.

He found Thad keeping guard on the entrance to the backstage but the petite sub said nothing as he watched him charge towards him. He just stepped aside, pushing the curtain for him to duck under it. Wes fought his way through a few racks of clothes and before he could realize it he was face to face with his sub… her green eyes wide, bottom lip between pearly teeth, long hair catching light and blazing like fire and that sinful green dress still dancing around her.

God she was beautiful.

"Sir…" she started, fingers twined painfully in front of her and her voice small. "Sir, I'm sorry."

The words hit him like a slap in the face and he took a good look at her, shocked as he realized she didn't see the admiration and the fierce urge to protect her in his eyes. She was insecure and vulnerable and his Miriam was never like that. She was strong and independent and sure of her own value. She wasn't this… this timid person he was looking at and he feared he was the one that made her act that way.

"Miriam, there's no need to be sorry. Why would you apologize?" he asked, fighting to keep his hormones in check as he approached her and pulled her to sit next to him on a plush sofa away from the ruckus of the improvised changing room.

"I… I don't know really… I just… the look on your face wasn't a happy one… so… I thought…" she started, her sentences jumbled and rushed as she tried to get a read on him.

"I was surprised sweetie that's all," he assured her gently and she nodded, hands pulled from his and
placed delicately onto her green and silver covered lap. "You didn't tell me you'd change your hair so… I was shocked."

"I just… I did it for you… sort of…" she admitted, taking a deep breath and looking up at him, a spark of bravery and her usual fierceness coming back slowly.

"What do you mean by that?" he asked, frowning in confusion at her words.

"I just… I feel stupid now to be honest," she said ruefully, huffing a self-depreciating laugh and he cupped her cheek gently.

"There's no need for that. I just don't understand what you meant by saying you did it for me?" he questioned and she nuzzled his hand for a second before realizing she would just have to explain like she did to Kurt.

"Okay… um… just hear me out and don't interrupt please. Okay?" she asked biting her lip again and he nodded, scooting closer to her and closing his eyes at the whiff of her familiar perfume that she, luckily, didn't change for this.

"I know you love me. You make it so painfully obvious and there's absolutely no way for me to not be aware of it. I also know you find me good looking and um… desirable is the right word I guess. But… I… I don't even know how to say it…" she chuckled and he allowed her a moment to compose herself before she continued.

"Okay, it's like this. A lot of your friends have subs that are absolutely gorgeous. Like David who has Corrine and let's be honest she's the prettiest girl in Dalton. Dave has Sebastian and he's hot as hell. Blaine chose Kurt who, on the worst of days, looks like an angel, and Nick has Jeff now and don't get me started on that blondie."

Wes inclined his head to concede the point and show he was following her train of thought. It was true enough he supposed, he hadn't really thought about it before.

She continued. "And sometimes I look at them when they walk with them and I can see that, like, David is proud of how envious people are of him for being bonded to Corrine, and then I know some guys who have talked about how Nick got so lucky and Nick beamed at that… and I just… you've never had that. I know you find me good looking, but I also know you're biased. I'm not ugly but I'm not… I'm not someone who turns heads and draws attention and I guess I wanted… I wanted to give you one night where people would envy you and you could be proud because you'd know I only ever wanted you. So I went to Kurt and this happened," she gestured to herself with an embarrassed smile and he couldn't believe what she was saying.

How could she not know he was envied openly by people whenever he walked by holding her hand. How was she not aware of what her smile did to Dom’s and how much attention her fragile body combined with her intelligence and strength drew?

"Miriam…" he said on an exhale and she stood up, trying not to step on the hem of the dress.

"I know it was stupid okay. I'm going back to being just Miriam in an hour and we can forget this ever happened," she said quietly and he stood up too, standing behind her and wrapping his arms around her waist.

"You look beautiful, love. And people saw it and they were jealous of me. But I want you to know one thing." He kissed her shoulder. "You look beautiful every day of your life. When you want to look cute and you wear makeup, when you exhaust yourself with work and you fall asleep at your
desk, glasses askew and drooling, when you wake up in the morning with pillow wrinkles tattooed on your cheeks... every moment of every day you look amazing to me. And every time I hold your hand in public I feel like a smug little caveman because it's me who gets to hold you, and it's me who wears your color on my neck. I love you. And I'm proud to be with you. Tonight when you look like everyone's fantasy and every other night when you are my fantasy,” he told her, turning her in his arms and kissing her cheeks, her nose, her lips.

"So should I keep the hair colour and the contacts?" she asked him with a gentle, carefully proud smile that widened into her bright effortlessly beautiful one when she saw how Wes reacted to seeing it.

"I like the hair and I love the dress. But I do miss the glasses. You're very sexy with them. So can we keep the dress, the hair and the glasses?" he asked her bumping their noses together.

"We can keep anything you want," she said wrapping her hands around her neck and he kissed her lips again.

"Just you," he whispered when he lifted her off the ground and twirled her around once, making her giggle and he fell in love with her all over again.

Kurt was frantic backstage, checking and double checking people before they went down the runway, making last minute alterations and spraying hair with hairspray or glitter to catch the lighting.

He was so involved in fact, he hardly noticed that it was Miriam and his dress that was suddenly standing in front of him for last touches.

Kurt gaped at the power of her transformation even though he was the one to sit down with her and plan it out. "You look stunning."

She ducked her head modestly and smoothed her hands gently over her hips. "Thank you. This dress is certainly more than half the reason why. It really is amazing, Kurt."

Kurt forced himself to focus, using a critical eye to spot anything amiss. It was hard to be objective though. He was really proud of himself but still totally scared shitless that people weren't going to respond to it like the well-known names.

"I think I might pass out," he confided to her feeling faint.

She grimaced and joked, "Fill me with confidence why don't you."

He blew out a deep breath and bent to fiddle needlessly with some of the lace. "You're right. You're gonna be amazing and the dress is gonna be amazing and everything will be amazing."

"Keep repeating that I think I may start to believe you," Miriam smiled weakly, looking straight ahead and breathing deep herself.

"Miriam, you're up!" someone called.

"Oh god," she whimpered, composure falling completely away. "What if I fall on my face? This was
the most stupid thing I ever signed myself up for and I was in the stamp collectors club as a kid."

Kurt had to laugh at that as he moved up with her to the darkened entrance and exit of the catwalk. The music was louder here, the thump, thump slamming into their chests. "You'll be fine. You won't fall. Just concentrate on Wes. He's on the left side, tenth chair down okay?"

She nodded shakily. "Okay. Okay. I've got this."

And then she was walking out just as Ryan came back from his walk, grinning big and wide and rushing off to change for his next outfit.

Kurt nervously watched her walk, saw the reaction from the crowd, the uproar and almost died from a heart attack because people… loved it. Were actually looking at what he had made with admiration and yearning and interest and-

_Eight thousand dollars?! Wes must have been out of his ever loving mind!_

He wasn't proud enough to deny that he nearly fell the hell over.

He was running on an adrenaline high for the rest of the night; his memory hazing through the rest of the fashion show, the congratulations and praise he received as he walked out on the catwalk himself under the glare of the lights and the flash of the cameras. Blaine ran out with a bouquet of flowers, Hikaru shaking his hand and thanking him in the speech he prepared.

There was no time to rest and bask however because next were the Warblers performances as they sang quirky renditions of One Direction's, Best Song Ever, Destiny Child's, Bills Bills Bills and a few classics from Sam Cook and Stevie Wonder to entertain the crowds as they mingled and drank and loosened their pockets even further.

Every last piece of clothing was sold, just like the art pieces and the Valentine's Day album the Warblers had recorded a few months earlier making use of the studio. Nothing had earned more money than Kurt's dress though and he was oddly proud of himself as he walked through the room and shook hands left and right, accepting compliments and praise for the work well done both on the show and the dress.

Finally though, the chaos and drama came to an end, everyone filtering out to head home and Kurt was hugging his proud and happy father tightly.

"You did good, kid. Real good," Burt grinned down at him, patting him on the back.

"Thank you," he murmured into his chest knowing that his dad's opinion would forever be the most important one in his life… right up there with Blaine's.

"And your dress!" Carole exclaimed for the tenth time when he finally pulled away. "It was so beautiful, honey."

"It was certainly that," Dana agreed wholeheartedly, eyes twinkling. "I think I have some very serious competition in the fashion world."

"I'd be careful if I were you, Dana. He just might steal your throne with designs like that," a voice came from behind them and they all turned to see Tara and Hikaru making way towards them, happy smiles on their faces.

"I wouldn't mind being overthrown by someone as talented as Kurt to be honest," Dana said gracefully, but Kurt smiled shyly and clasped her hand, shaking his head.
"I don't think there's anyone in the industry who could overthrow you. Trust me," he demurred, because she was still one of his fashion idols at the end of the day. She smiled indulgently as she leaned over and kissed his cheek, catching Burt's proud gaze and giving him a small nod.

"Kurt, I know I thanked you in my speech but I just wanted to say personally that you did an outstanding job on the event tonight. I'm very proud of the positive light this will shed on Dalton, let alone what we raised for a good cause, with the help of my impulsive son of course, and it's all thanks to you," Hikaru complimented with a bright grin, eyes laughing and Kurt ducked his head as his family's hands found their way to his back and shoulders in silent pride and approval.

They all laughed at his sudden modesty when earlier he was barking orders left and right to anyone and everyone. Kurt coloured a lovely shade of puce at the praise, happy when Blaine pulled him into his side.

"I'm so proud of you, lovely, you don't even know," Blaine whispered into his ear and Kurt turned into the sound and words and touch, seeking and searching for more, more, more. Feeling drugged from the endorphins the compliments had wrought in him.

"I think it's time to head home guys. I've got an early job tomorrow at Schuester's house," Burt announced offering his arm to Carole who took it with a smile of gratitude.

"I'll call the driver and make sure he's ready for you," Jared said pulling his phone out.

"Let's go collect our coats," Dana suggested leading them off.

"Oh crap," Kurt said suddenly, stopping in his tracks and trying to pull himself away from Blaine.

"What's up?" Blaine asked, tightening his hand on his waist.

"I think I left my folder backstage on one of the tables," he frowned, eyes shooting to his dad and Carole who were pulling their coats on to leave, laughing at something Dana was gesturing.

Blaine realized the inner struggle he was going through, knowing that his sub had been so busy he’d hardly got to talk to his family at all during the course of the night. "Go see them off. I'll grab it for you and meet you back here," he offered, pecking him on the cheek.

When Kurt beamed at him Blaine knew he had said the right thing. He got an enthusiastic kiss on the lips that made the tiny detour worth it a thousand times over and hurried off, wanting to get back for hopefully more of the same. In the distance he could hear Kurt joking with his parents and he felt a smile tug at his lips when he looked over his shoulder and saw him leaning into his dad; content, smiling and beautiful.

The backstage area was like a ghost town compared to what it was like earlier, discarded items and rubbish strewn all over. He felt sorry for the cleaners. Glancing about he saw what he wanted quickly enough: that huge red folder with bits and pieces sticking out of it at all angles a neon sign in the semi-darkness. He was surprised Kurt could carry it around it looked so heavy, or that it hadn't fell apart yet it was so overused.

Striding over he grabbed it… only to have severely underestimated the weight. Jesus! What the hell, Kurt!

The thing went toppling to the ground, narrowly avoiding crushing his toes, papers flying everywhere and Blaine winced and sighed, "Great."

He knelt down and began gathering everything back up, hardly paying attention to what he was
stuffing back into the folder until his hand brushed something glossy and smooth. Frowning he looked properly at what was hiding under a spreadsheet of some kind and picked it up, flipping it to face him.

The headline; *Is Blaine Having Second Thoughts?* screamed out at him with an old picture of himself on the front cover in a beanie and sunglasses, looking glum and haggard.

At first he thought it was an old magazine. It was an old picture after all, he hadn't worn that beanie in about a year now, but it was dated to last week.

*Why did Kurt have this?*

Feeling something nagging at him he looked back to the open folder and began thumbing through the pages. Most of it was hastily scribbles notes, sketches or purchase orders but then he got to the back and his stomach dropped at what he found.

There was two more magazine with equally awful headlines questioning and belittling his decision to be with Kurt and a bunch of clipped out, highlighted paragraphs from articles online, blogs, newspapers tearing into Kurt, citing Dana Anderson had lost her mind and ability as a Dom, heavily insulting Lima and the people there. On the back of every single one was Kurt's name scrawled in the same handwriting and the creases in them told him that they were definitely passed to him as notes. They all seemed smoothed out and re-read hundreds of times and he could feel his blood starting to boil under his skin, his heart picking up speed as a mixture of adrenaline and testosterone filled his system.

Brad.

The cretin that was always hanging around, causing problems for his fellow subs. Nick had told him that he caught him giving Jeff a hard time and he was constantly hearing from Seb how much he hated having the guy in his classes. Classes that Kurt shared with him too. He knew it was him, he felt it deep in his gut and that he was picking on *his* sub? Hurting him with false words and false information? He was furious enough to want to immediately go and find him and *destroy* his pathetic ass for doing what he had been doing for a while now, submissive or not.

But there was a deeper, more pressing rage he found simmering inside of him, fuelled by the sting of betrayal.

It was the rage of a fooled Dom. The rage of a Dom whose sub deliberately hid things from him, made false promises and effectively put himself in danger wilfully.

*Oh he was going to deal with Brad,* he thought darkly as he got up from his knees and clutched the binder inside his arms, the article clippings tucked safely between dark red covers. But first, he would make sure his sub never disobeyed him like this again.

He strode out of the backstage area, whipping the curtain aside forcefully in time to see Kurt waving to his parents and he had never felt more grateful for amazing timing as he did in that moment. Hands shaking from the thunderstorm inside him and the binder threatening to just break apart under the barely restrained weight of it, he approached his sub who turned at the sound of his steps.

The smile on his face wilted instantly at the sight of the anger and disappointment he knew was plainly written across his tight features. Blue eyes flickered down to the binder in his hand, then back up with fear and recognition and the visual conformation of his assumptions was *maddening.*

"Sir..." Kurt started, voice thin and wary,
It was clear he was painfully aware of what was about to happen, but for the first time since he had seen him at the Showing, Blaine didn't feel floored to the ground by those sad blue eyes and that plump, trembling bottom lip. He felt insane with fear and worry, the emotions twisting his insides into knots as thoughts of what else Kurt had been keeping a secret stormed through his mind, and everything else just fell second to that suffocating panic.

"Don't 'sir' me, Kurt. What is this?" he said pushing the binder in front of his face, the tone in his voice making the sub shiver.

"It's... it's my binder..." he tried lamely but Blaine scoffed angrily at the stalling.

"I can see that. I also dropped it by accident and saw what you've been hiding inside. Is this your way of 'handling things', Kurt?" he waved the binder and Kurt flinched visibly at the reminder of their conversation when this all started.

"I was… I am…" he shook his head trying to clear out the haze that wouldn't let him form a sentence.

"Funny. Because hiding problems in the back of a folder doesn't seem like handling it to me at all," Blaine snapped. "Why didn't you tell me? Why, Kurt?"

The accusation in that hurt. Actually physically made Kurt's heart slam against the walls of his chest, making it hard to draw in breath.

No. No. He had his reasons, he just needed to get them out. Blaine just needed to listen.

"I… I wanted to do it on my own... not to bother you..." he tried to explain but Blaine's raised voice and the rage in his eyes made him take a few steps back, feeling very small and young. It was easy to sometimes forget with Blaine because he acted so carefree and childish most of the time, but there was a four year age gap between them and it was never more apparent than now.

He didn't fear Blaine. Not in that sense of fearing getting hurt. But the look in his eyes was scary in itself, the power radiating off of him in heavy waves making him want to kneel and bare his neck and beg for forgiveness. And that reaction sparked his own flame of anger that his physiology was made to bow down to appease Blaine's biologically no matter the situation. He knew Blaine never used it against him on purpose but anger felt like his only shield right now when he felt so open and exposed.

Blaine silently watched Kurt's internal struggle for a few moments while trying to find a thread of calm. He felt like he was burning up.

"What else haven't you told me about, Kurt? What else have you been lying about?" Blaine gritted out after taking a deep breath.

"I haven't been lying!" Kurt yelled back at him, voice shaking and weak, arms curling around his torso protectively. He wasn't lying. He wasn't.

"Keeping this a secret when you told me you'd say if it got out of hand is lying to me. Telling me you were okay every time I asked even though you knew you weren't is lying!" Blaine stressed loudly, on the verge of losing it and shouting. He couldn't remember ever being so out of control.

Kurt opened his mouth but words wouldn't come out as the weight of Blaine's sunk into his skin.

"What else did he do?" Blaine demanded stepping closer.
Kurt could hardly breathe. Black spots were starting to creep into his vision.

"He's been bullying you for a while now. Sending those notes. Harassing you… did he hit you?"
Every question was followed by a step forward towards him, bridging the space he had put between them.

"What?! No!" he choked.

"Kurt," his Dom growled.

He swallowed hard, feeling the ghost of fingers on his arm once more, the solid press of the bookshelf behind him. "He shoved me. That's it. I wasn't hurt," he said hastily.

Blaine cursed. "Jesus, Kurt! What happened to trusting me, huh? What happened to promising me that you'd come to me?"

The guilt was building up brick by brick into a castle built on the foundation of his wrongdoings and they made his excuses seem like pitiful ruins in comparison.

He shook his head in denial. No. No. No. "I had it under contr-"

"This!" He pulled out the crumpled notes and magazines and threw them on the floor between them disgustedly, closely followed by the whole folder. "Is not the definition of under control. Not on any planet, Kurt. Fuck!"

He kicked at the mess and sent it scattering and Kurt flinched, feeling the hot sting of tears welling in his eyes. He'd done this, he realized with a sick feeling in his gut. He had reduced this happy, kind, generous Dom to this angry, shell of a person.

"Blaine, honey, is everything okay?" Dana peeked through the door, breaking into the tense atmosphere, but Blaine raised a hand to stop her.

"Not now, mom. You and dad can go, I'll take Kurt in my car," he ground out, his tone almost daring she refute it.

She hesitated for the briefest moments before she realized it wasn't her place to meddle: she trusted her son, trusted that he loved Kurt with his whole heart so she gave Kurt an encouraging, fortifying nod and slipped through the door.

"Get your coat on, we're going home," Blaine commanded when she was out of earshot and Kurt jumped at the order, pulling the coat he had in his hands on, sniffing back his tears and trailing after Blaine in a dead silence that seemed to weigh a ton on his shoulders.

The car ride was stifling, the air inside barely able to circulate through the tension, reminding Kurt very much of how he felt the first time he'd ever gotten in a car with Blaine. Devastated, fearful, inconsolable. All for different reasons now of course but still the same bleak, ragged spectrum of emotions cutting him up inside.

From the side of him Blaine fumed and the pheromones rolling off of his skin threatened to choke him with their power in that confined space. He welcomed the fresh air when they finally got home but he knew his relief would be short lived when Blaine slammed the door after them and led him up the stairs, passed their bedroom and into his study.

"Sit down," he ordered tersely and Kurt folded himself into the leather chair as if mowed down. This was excruciating, he felt like a single touch would shatter him with how tense he was sitting.
"I told you it would be a worse punishment if you lied to me again, Kurt," Blaine said, in the same hated calm voice. No inflection. Just command.

He slapped a notepad on the desk and a pen and Kurt flinched, swallowing hard past the heart in his throat.

"One hundred lines. No talking. No stopping. I will not lie to my Dom and get myself hurt again. Start now," he said, pushing the pen towards him and turning towards the second chair in the room to settle and wait.

"Blaine-" Kurt started but he knew it was futile.

"One hundred and ten lines," Blaine interrupted.

"But..." he tried again for reasons he himself didn't know. He just wanted this cold, unforgiving creature gone and replaced with his loving Dom again; warm and comforting and safe.

"One hundred and twenty, Kurt, don't make this harder on yourself," Blaine cut back and Kurt started at him for a moment, tears welling again as he wished those eyes to twinkle and those laugh lines to hug them, but his Blaine was gone for the moment and he knew he was the one to blame for it.

Maybe that was the hardest thing to swallow about the whole situation.

He looked searchingly at his Dom's face for a moment more, desperate to find something familiar on that blank, pinched profile but he found none. Blaine was sitting in the chair in the corner, eyes shuttered and distant, face hard and his hands flipping the pages of a random book Kurt knew he wasn't actually reading. His shoulders were tense and drawn up and the posture of his body gave away just how angry and affected by it all he still really was.

"I can't hear you writing, Kurt. Ten more sentences and start now," his voice rang, icy and biting into the chasm separating them and Kurt winced, fingers closing around the metal pen on instinct as he pushed it across the paper and wrote the line for the first time.

*I will not lie to my Dom and get myself hurt again.*

He didn't lie.

He just withheld certain information because he wanted to be strong for himself. There wasn't anything wrong with wanting that. He didn't want to be the scared little boy who cried himself into a panic attack when he was claimed. Who freaked when his Dom was gone for more than five minutes. He didn't want to be the sub who clung to his Dom for protection from everything on this Earth.

He didn't want to be every nasty thing people were saying about him.

The richest thing Kurt had ever owned back in Lima was his identity and he felt like people were constantly trying to box him up. Make assumptions. He was a gold digger. He was Lima trash. He was a prissy virgin, a whore, a con artist. The list went on and on and he just wanted to prove them wrong.

He was so used to standing up for himself alone. Of retreating back behind his walls to protect himself when he was being attacked like that.

*I will not lie to my Dom and get myself hurt again.*
He pressed the pen harder into the paper, grinding his back teeth.

And who was Blaine to get so angry at him anyway when he was the one that said he loved his fierceness? That he admired his strength and the fact that he refused to just roll over and be stepped on? He was such a hypocrite!

But... thinking that didn't ring true and made him feel even worse for being so wilfully spiteful.

_I will not lie to my Dom and get myself hurt again._

He stared at the last words of that sentence, finally, _truly_ reading it instead of just following the orders set down automatically.

He forced himself to admit that he understood where Blaine was coming from. And Blaine could help him if he were in real danger, but this thing with Brad was something he was sure he could handle on his own. He could. He had been.

_I will not lie to my Dom and get myself hurt again._
I will not lie to my Dom and get myself hurt again.
I will not lie to my Dom and get myself hurt again.

The lines kept going, one after the other, reinforcing each word and branding it in him.

Denial was a fickle friend.

He did lie.

It slammed into him like a blow to the head and made him dizzy.

Maybe it was omitting, hiding instead of outright lying to his face, but Blaine was right. He knew what he was doing when he hid those magazine for god knows what reason. He'd known what he was doing when he failed to mention every single instance Brad stepped over the line. He had promised he would tell Blaine if it got out of hand and... well... words turned into very real bruises on his skin and that sure looked like getting out of hand. So maybe he didn't need Blaine's protection all the time, but he did promise he would tell and he broke that promise...

So maybe... maybe he did deserve the cold stare and the harsh words.

The tears finally fell, hot and fast down his cheeks and he bit his lips to keep from making a sound and kept writing.

_I will not lie to my Dom and get myself hurt again._
_I will not lie to my Dom and get myself hurt again._
_I will not lie to my Dom and get myself hurt again._

His hand started cramping a bit as he filled line after line on the paper with the same words that slowly started sinking in... into his mind, into his skin, into his heart...

The bruise on his upper arm started stinging purely because he thought about it and he slowly began to understand that he shouldn't have gotten bruised in the first place. He shouldn't have been brought to the verge of tears time and time again. He shouldn't have been forced to doubt the love of the man who sat in the corner stiffly: so hurt and betrayed by his actions.

As he concentrated Kurt could still feel the thrum of his pheromones in the air... possessive, protective, nurturing. It said more than words could. Blaine couldn’t fake something like that. He
only wanted the best for him, that's all he ever wanted and Kurt had snubbed all of that. Taken it for

granted.

He shouldn't have been hurt.

He shouldn't have been scared.

And he wouldn't be any of those things if he hadn't broken his promise to Blaine.

I will not lie to my Dom and get myself hurt again.
I will not lie to my Dom and get myself hurt again.
I will not lie to my Dom and get myself hurt again.
I will not lie to my Dom and get myself hurt again.
I will not lie to my Dom and get myself hurt again.

The lines bore into his mind like a beacon, scaring and burning his skin and he felt his eyes glass

over. Tiny droplets fell onto the paper and smudged the lines he had managed to finish and he pulled

the sleeve of his shirt down to soak them in before he had to start over.

He continued like that, getting more and more remorseful with every shaky press of ink, miserable

with guilt as everything came into focus for him. He wasn't alone anymore, he was part of a

partnership and he'd cut Blaine out and broke their contract and trust all in one fell swoop just

because he was stubborn and blinded by his insecurities- one's that were still very much plaguing

him even now.

He didn't even know how to start saying sorry; hoped maybe one hundred and thirty lines would be

enough.

He had counted them twice to make sure he didn't make another mistake but the tears made it so hard

to focus and he kept miscounting, having to go back again and again and again to make sure he did

everything as Blaine said. The submissive in him, now very much in control of his instincts and

amplifying his raw emotions, was demanding perfection from him.

He wanted to do good.

He wanted so, so badly to do good this time around. Make Blaine happy again. God, it was no

wonder Blaine didn't love him when he failed at everything he did. He wasn't a good sub and he

wasn't a good person and he just wanted to apologize and promise he'd do better.

He lowered the pen back onto the table and resisted the urge to stretch his fingers and relieve the

tension in them. He didn't deserve the relief it would bring so he kept them flexed and aching, balled

into a tight fist. He chanced a glance up and found Blaine staring intently at the book in his lap, the

distant look on his face telling him that his Dom was somewhere else entirely in his mind. He hoped

against hope that he wasn't trying to think of ways to leave him: deciding that this was too much for

him.

Panic was making him crazy.

Please don't go. I love you. I love you.

He stood up as quietly as he could manage, crossing the short distance between them carefully, tears

slipping down his cheeks as the pull towards his Dom strengthened as he approached. He got within

reach of him in mere seconds, but to him each and every one of them felt a year long as he reached

out to touch him. In a moment of fear he clutched the hand back to his chest shaking his head and
blinking away the wetness.

Was he allowed to touch him again? Was he forgiven? Would he ever be forgiven and held and kissed by Blaine again? The sub in him had him whimpering at the thoughts. He felt shivers rake through his body and in the surge of that submissiveness that was riding him his knees gave out and he fell to the floor in front of him, head bowed and eyes stinging.

"Sir," he choked out and immediately the huge book was closed, those amber eyes were on him and they were warm again... caring again... hands were cupping his wet cheeks... his scent was wrapping around him as if he were worthy of it.

He was there again.

"Don't cry. I never want to see you cry," Blaine's voice sounded from a distance but he felt it as it tickled his skin and he shivered, shuffling closer involuntarily, wanting, no needing, it.

"Sir, I'm sorry. I... I made a mistake and I'm so sorry..." he choked through his sobs and the next thing he knew arms were wrapping around his waist and he was hauled off the floor and into his Dom's lap where he instinctively curled up, starved for Blaine and the safety and affection he provided.

"I know you are," Blaine whispered, kissing his temple repeatedly. "I know, lovely."

"I didn't mean to lie, I swear," he pleaded with him to understand, clutching at his dress shirt collar and burying his face under Blaine's chin to reach the soothing space underneath, desperate for it. "Please."

Blaine petted his hair. "Shh," he hushed him. "You don't have to apologize anymore, baby. You understood what you did right? Why I punished you?"

Kurt nodded frantically, his tears wetting both their skin. "I b-broke our contract and our agreement," he whispered brokenly. "I lied to you and got myself hurt, sir. I r-really didn't mean to. I'm sorry-"

"Hey, hey," he hushed him again, holder him closer and tighter. "That's why the punishment was there, lovely. It's over now. We move on from this," Blaine told him, but instead of relief, Kurt still felt wretched. There was no wave of cleansing, no peace to find in the tangled thorns of his mind, he felt displaced in his body, lost at sea.

"Do we... do we move on t-together?" he whispered his fears and felt Blaine flinch under him at the question.

"Kurt... lovely... of course we move on together. You're mine, baby, always mine. Tell me you know that?" he pleaded into his hair, voice desperate and hurting.

"I... I just...he said you didn't... they all say..." he started but he couldn't say it. Didn't want to admit to the foolish weakness of letting what other people said dictate how he acted or felt. Admit that he had unconsciously or consciously been seeking that sort of validation. How could he say that Brad and all those anonymous writers made him believe he wasn't wanted or loved by his own Dom when everything inside him screamed the truth he feared to accept?

"He said what? It was Brad right? He's been hassling you and Jeff since you got to Dalton," Blaine asked, seeing and cutting to the heart of the matter.

Kurt looked down into his lap knowing he had to answer, his fingers stressing and pulling agitatedly at Blaine's shirt still.
"Yes. He said you'd grow tired of me and t-the fact that I don't... um... p-put out. Said you d-don't really want me..." he hiccupped the words out, finally calming down now that he was in his Dom's arms, but not quite there yet.

He could feel Blaine tense more and more under him as he went on and he lifted his eyes at the almost inaudible curse coming from Blaine, pulling back from his safe little nook to meet his amber gaze.

Blaine held it unrelenting and fierce as he span the words in his head, trying to find a way to reassure his sub without showing how absolutely ready he was to murder that little shit. Brad was filling Kurt's head with stupid ideas, making him doubt himself and what they were working towards together. He'd made him insecure and scared and doubtful of Blaine’s intentions and feelings for him. It made him see red, so angry that he was vibrating with it… but... somewhere deep down, Blaine knew that it was his fault Kurt had room to doubt and that’s what made him really angry. There was a space in his submissive that he had failed to fill with the words of love and affection that hung heavy and silent between them and instead, words more sinister than his own filled that space.

"Did you believe what he said to you?" he asked sadly.

Kurt flushed guiltily and he quickly tried to cover. "No, sir... no I... I know you're not like that and that you care and want to keep me safe and I believe that in my heart... just..."

"Just what, lovely?" Blaine asked gently.

"Sometimes... sometimes words hit too close to home," he said quietly averting his eyes to stare at Blaine's chin instead. "You're an Anderson. Powerful, desired, gorgeous... and I'm... I'm the exact opposite of what you were expected to want and people see that and the words hurt me. They make sense, Blaine and they make me wonder and, sir... deep down I know you're mine and I'm yours and that you have no interest in ditching me and that maybe someday you'll maybe even start loving me but then-"

"I already do!" Blaine said cutting into his frantic ramble and Kurt clapped his mouth shut, eyes bugged out and shocked, heart stuttering to a stall.

He felt the world tip on its axis and fall into the sun.

"W-what?" he stammered and Blaine took his hand into his own knowing he wouldn't get a moment more perfect than this to say what he had wanted to say. Yes, it could have been more romantic. Yes, it could have been better and Kurt deserved better. But it was never more important.

He braced himself and looked at his sub who sat there, gaping like a cute, flustered little goldfish and the words suddenly seemed less intimidating.

"I do love you. I have loved you since the moment I saw you," he said sincerely, his whole heart in his words and he hoped to god it showed.

Silence fell over them for minutes that ticked by... loud and painfully slow as Blaine waited for a reaction. Any reaction other than shock.

"Y-you... um... you l-love me?" Kurt finally stuttered out, eyes blown wide and hopeful and Blaine wanted to kick himself in the throat for not telling him sooner.

He cupped Kurt’s cheeks in his palms. "I do, lovely. I've loved you since the moment I first laid eyes on you and I'll love you until the very last one," he said passionately, thumbing his cheekbones gently and watching as his skin grew pinker and warmer. Those beautiful eyes glinted and his smile,
that beautiful, beautiful smile, stretched his perfect lips.

"Sir," he breathed out hand shaking where he pressed his trembling fingers over his lips in surprise. "Sir, I... I love you too."

Blaine couldn't stop himself from diving into a frantic, urgent kiss and he felt like everything they had been, everything they had the potential to become was all wrapped up in that one perfect meeting of lips.

They still had a lot to sort through, but Blaine felt like they were invincible in that moment as he stood up, their lips still locked, and carried Kurt into their bedroom.
Brightened

Chapter Notes

Hi everyone! We know, we know...we've been away forever.
BUT WE'RE BACK. Thank you all so much for all the kind words you sent our way.
We don't have the time to reply to your comments individually right now but we'll get to it as soon as possible, we promise.
So while you wait for proper gratitude, enjoy this chapter of big and important things.
Also happy Easter to everyone who celebrates.
The two of us are spending it together because M is visiting A in the UK so we are SUUUUPER excited.
Hopefully we'll get to read your amazing comments while hanging out.
So leave us some...pretty please??
Love
A&M

P.S see end notes for the trigger warning!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Kurt sighed blissfully and leaned into the gentle stroke of fingers through his hair, adoring when they drifted lower making careful brushes over his nape, outlining his mark, but oh so diligently not touching it without permission. It made him long and ache for the phantom brush of those strong fingers, a slip of the hand maybe, so he would finally know what it felt like to be possessed in that way while taking the burden of asking for it off his shoulders.

He knew it wouldn't happen, however. Blaine was being extra gentle with him right now, measuring every move and calculating every touch and while on a smaller, more reasonable level he knew why, the larger submissive part of him was desperate for that extra affection even if a distant voice was telling him it was unwise to jump into something like that.

He curled in tighter to Blaine's heat and tried to fight the impulses off, concentrating instead on the feel of his Dom beside him on the soft mattress. The trip from the study to their bedroom hadn't been long at all, the only pause being just inside the door to remove shoes, ties, belts and pants before snuggling under the covers in a cocoon of safety, but to Kurt it felt like forever. He just wanted to feel that wave of dominance washing over him and melting away the tightness in his chest and the weight on his shoulders.

He buried his face deeper into the curve of Blaine's neck, soaking up his warmth and smell as he trembled still in the aftermath of the night. The Dom responded immediately; kissing over his head, over his forehead and temple, anywhere he could reach in their current position curled into one another and all the while he whispered soothing endearments amongst a litany of I love you's that still had Kurt's head spinning in space.

I love you.
Finally.

The words he had dreamt of and bled for on the inside and they were finally his. The most precious gift he had ever gotten in the form of three little words that would be locked up forever in his heart and soul. Always with him. Always safe and sure in their spot deep in the left side of his chest, replacing the words he had gifted Blaine in return, a perfect fit.

But even amongst the elation and awe he couldn't find peace yet… there was still too many things unresolved between them, more words that needed to be said and he had to say them now or else they would grow and grow until they choked him alive.

"Blaine," he murmured, barely a sound coming out at all but his Dom heard him.

He was kissed tenderly over his eyebrow and Kurt soaked in every drop of loving poured into the gesture. "What is it, lovely?"

He opened his mouth then closed it again, swallowing so hard his throat clicked. Something didn't feel quite right with him. He'd done his punishment but he didn't feel settled like he had done with his first one and it was a twisting, gnawing live thing knotting up his stomach.

"C'mon, beautiful boy. Talk to me," Blaine entreated, stroking over his hair and cupping the back of his head.

"I am sorry I didn't tell you… about Brad…" he stuttered briefly but pushed on bravely, "…the articles-"

"Shhh," Blaine cut him off, pulling him even closer into the line of his body and really Kurt felt like he was never quite close enough. If he could crawl inside Blaine and live there he would do so happily. "You're forgiven, baby, totally forgiven. You don't need to apologise anymore, okay." He paused and he heard him swallow. "Me on the other hand…"

This forced a frown onto the sub's face and he fisted his hand in Blaine's shirt right over his heart. "I lied to you, not the other way around, sir."

Again Blaine was struck by the height and depth of Kurt's compassion and his heart swelled at just how much trust he seemed to have in him. Not a flicker of doubt that Blaine had handled the situation correctly, just pure submissive trust in his Dominant to know where the line was and what was best.

Only… the sick feeling in his stomach made him sure that he had crossed that line today.

Blaine stared at the opposite side of the room as he sorted through his thoughts and guilty feelings. "I yelled at you. I should have kept my calm and been a good Dom for you, but I lost my temper completely and dismissed your side of the story and how you were feeling… I punished you in anger and I didn’t even stop to think why you felt like you had to handle this alone," he finished off the list quietly. That last one stung because he knew he was half to blame for it.

"Blaine-"

"I didn't want you to ever think I didn't want you… didn't love you with all my heart every single minute of every single day since I first saw you, lovely," he said passionately, pulling back so he could look straight into those big, incandescent eyes. "You're it for me, Kurt. My everything. My beautiful, beautiful, beautiful boy and I’m sorry I didn’t tell you every minute of every day."

Deep down somewhere Kurt thought that he must have known these things already, but a bigger part
of him had needed the words so badly and now that he had them he couldn't help the few tears that trickled out the corner of his eyes. A further release of the last of the stress from his punishment, the insecurities that had been plaguing him since his claiming and the immense love in his heart for this man holding him so tenderly.

"I love you," he almost whimpered because he needed to say it. Needed Blaine to know it like something woven into the very fabric of the universe. And after holding back for so long it was the first thing on his tongue every time he opened his mouth and it felt so freeing to unburden his cluttered brain of every aborted attempt at saying them first.

Blaine's kisses strayed down to the arch of his cheekbone and Kurt arched back enough to tilt his chin up in a plea for more. Blaine obliged, rolling Kurt onto his back and following after before capturing his lips in an urgent kiss.

"I love you," he pulled back to say before diving back down.

Kurt made an insistent little noise as their mouths met again, desperate and languid in turns like they were still straddling the line between the raw emotion from before with their punishment and the savouring awe of their confession after.

Blaine responded to that noise like nothing else before in his life. Kurt wanted, no, needed him, that one sound telling a thousand words and every cell in his body was frantic with the drive to give him anything and everything. To make up for leaving him in a drowning pool of doubt for all this time when all he needed to do was man up and say something.

"I'm so sorry, baby… I love you… love you so much," was reverently branded into his lips for the thousandth time and Kurt couldn't get enough of it. Hungrily wanted more of the drugging words and the way they sent him spiralling into the stars.

He tightened his thighs around Blaine's hips, fingers reaching out urgently for that special place on the back of his Dom's neck as the declarations kept washing over him in waves, filling up every hole in his soul and all the empty spaces in his heart.

Blaine grunted as his fingers connected with the sensitive marked skin, kisses getting fiercer, bruising his already numbing lips and it was heaven. Kurt could feel how much Blaine wanted this. Him. Could feel it in the hungry possession of his mouth, just shy of biting, the hands clutching his flushed, sweating skin under his shirt.

Clothes were shed, the need for skin to skin contact a prickling, driving force for both of them and in-between every article of clothing they came together again with lips and tongues and hands, gasping their love into each other's mouths and branding it into their skins.

Hard, aching cocks aligned, no finesse and a lot of desperate, urgent fumbling before they were rocking together like wild things. Everything hazed over in lust and want and love making them primal.

"Don't let me go," Kurt gasped, begged, head thrown back into the scattered pillows, eyes dark and lips bee stung. He was the picture of wanton, the epitome of need and Blaine was punch drunk on it, lowering his head to lick up ever bead of sweat that rolled down his neck, capture every sigh or moan into his own mouth.

"Never. Never going to let you go, beautiful boy. You're perfect, oh god… I love you… such a good boy," he panted, distantly aware that he was babbling nonsense but it was working for both of them as they gyrated their hips in tandem, pre-come smearing their abdomens and Blaine needed to come
now. Needed to mark Kurt as his in the most primal way he knew how without actually getting inside him.

He groaned in a mixture of frustration and pleasure as the image popped into his head and pushed him closer to that knifes edge.

Kurt coming and the throaty, high, keening noise he made- fuck that noise was going to be locked away in his memory of best things ever for the rest of his life- whilst doing so was what pushed Blaine finally over into star space.

Warmth spread between them, coating their stomachs and Blaine pulled away, jerking and shaky as fuck, to look down at the pearly liquid with a purely Dominant sense of satisfaction.

"Oh god, oh god, oh god," Kurt was chanting throatily, eyes clenched shut and fingernails digging crescent shapes into his shoulders. He absently realised that they stung a lot more than just that initial press and wondered how much damage Kurt had done while he had his head pretty much in his cock. The idea of it made him grin stupidly wide as his arms finally collapsed and he sunk into Kurt completely, who was shuddering in the afterglow and made a happy noise at his weight. Blaine was aware that he really wasn't holding any of it though and as soon as he felt like his toes had uncurled, his breath was back and his eyes had straightened, he went to roll away.

"No, no, no. Stay," Kurt murmured pleadingly into his ear, arms and mile long legs tightening around him.

Blaine recognised the need for closeness and the submissive desire to be completely surrounded by their Dom so settled his weight carefully so he wasn't crushing Kurt, but could still maintain this heavenly position flush against him, their joint slickness sealing them together. He buried his face in Kurt's neck, his pheromones giving him a high like no other and he decided right then that he didn't want to move ever again.

Kurt practically purred once they were settled, arching into his nuzzling and both shuddering with aftershocks now and then. Something was still weighing on Blaine's mind though. "Do you forgive me, lovely?" he asked into his skin, laying a kiss over his thumping pulse point.

He felt fingers shift through his hair and massage at his scalp. "Of course I do, sir," came soft and sure. "We were both… wrong."

Blaine nodded, his hand running over Kurt's side and playing at his hip bone. "I don't ever want us to get back to that place, baby. I know it's not logical because at some point one or other of us is going to do something wrong again, we're not perfect, but I hate fighting with you."

"So do I," Kurt agreed quietly, heart in his voice.

Blaine kissed him again on the underside of his jaw. "I love you."

He felt Kurt smile against his temple and tighten the grip of his legs. "I love you too."

"I'm really proud of you," Blaine said pulling back on the pillow a little and coaxing Kurt's head down so they could lock eyes, nearly going cross eyed from how close they were. "This Brad thing doesn't erase that. What you did tonight was amazing, lovely."

"Yeah?" Kurt smiled, feeling himself flush pinker then he already was.

Blaine ran the back of his knuckles gently over the coloured area. "Yeah."
"I can't believe Wes spent that much money on my dress," Kurt laughed softly, cupping his hand over Blaine's on his face.

"I can. It was stunning, lovely. Everyone wanted it," he praised and Kurt felt warm and melted inside.

"They wanted Miriam," he countered embarrassed.

"She was stunning as well," Blaine conceded, running a finger over his ear. "A perfect match to your vision."

"You're full of it," Kurt laughed.

Blaine made a hurt noise and eskimo kissed him. "You're supposed to swoon at my sweet talking."

"Maybe you should be better at it then, sir," Kurt sassed.

"Minx." He leant in and they kissed for a blissful moment, everything settling in the aftermath, the buzzing of their bodies quieting down to a nice little hum. "I can't wait to see what you design for our Presenting Ceremony outfits."

Kurt pulled back. "Really?"

"Of course. You think I'd want to wear anything but a Kurt Hummel original design?" Blaine grinned, honey eyes sparkling.

Kurt swallowed, searching his eyes. "I just thought… we haven't really talked about the Presenting Ceremony since last time—"

"I love you," Blaine cut him off tugging him closer again and planting a firm kiss on his mouth. "I love you and I want to bond to you for the rest of my life."

Kurt nodded, his breath hitching. "I want that too."

"I shouldn't have left everything up to you, made you feel like I wasn't interested, but it won't be like that anymore. We'll plan this together, okay?" Blaine reassured him and Kurt smiled wide.

"I'd like that." They kissed again because neither of them ever wanted to stop until Kurt separated their mouths for the briefest moments. "I still get to make the executive decisions though…. right?"

Blaine laughed, loud and happy into his lips. "Don't ever change, lovely."

"Why do I feel like I've signed my life away?" Burt grumbled as yet more papers were shoved under his nose.

He had gotten a call from the Anderson’s literally a day after the Charity Night and him and Carole were invited to lunch with them. It was becoming a regular occurrence these days for him to be passing the lines from Lima to Westerville these days. His life had taken a very funny turn ever since Blaine walked into Kurt's and that wasn't to say it was a bad turn. Just strange.

He never thought he'd be rubbing elbows in a borrowed suit from a fashion designer with the high society big wigs of their Circle at a charity night. He never thought he'd actually have a chance to make a difference to the people of Lima other than occasionally coming around to fix a washing
machine or have a look at a boiler. But he had the opportunity now. The chance to do some good and make a difference and he was damn well gonna do his best to make that happen.

"It's all for the greater good," Kurt chirped as he re-entered the room with a full tea tray after they had eaten enough to feed a small army.

Blaine was an excited eater and ever since Kurt commandeered the kitchen he shoveled in food like he had never eaten in his entire life and it was pretty visible on the tiny little belly his shirts started to show. Burt quite like how the young Dom treated his son. It made him sleep easier knowing his only boy was taken care of and happy.

"The greater good is a pain in my ass… and there better be cookies on that tray." Burt said, knowing that, by Kurt's standards, cookies were pretty much equal to suicide.

Kurt narrowed his eyes at him as he set it down. "Eat more than two of them and you're dead."

Dana laughed at them, as she tottered around on her heels grabbing more folders and more print outs. "Here's the prospective polls so far, they haven't officially gotten my resignation so to speak yet so I'm still on the list, but we're mainly sizing up the competition before we drop our big bombshell."

"You sure the shock and awe approach is the way to go?" Burt asked, taking the proffered page and scanning over it while idly scratching at his stubble.

"The less time there is for them to protest the better for us, plus, while they're busy bitching and writing stupid articles we'll be laying down groundwork," she smirked.

"And we already have a head start," Kurt smiled, pouring two cups of honey tea out since Dana was on her way out to work. Jared and Blaine had already left for theirs after eating, followed by Carole who had been called for an emergency shift she just couldn't say no to because they needed the money. Both father and son were looking forward to spending some time together, just the two of them.

"They're all planning to win the seat against Dana, not you, so their house of cards should come tumbling down pretty quick." Kurt said, nibbling on a cookie himself, all the while scanning Burt for how much he had eaten.

"Ever considered a career in politics, sweetheart?" Dana grinned at him wickedly and Kurt flushed. "There's some big names on this besides the ones that always run," Burt commented. "Looks like that's gonna split the vote too many ways to make a difference though."

"That's exactly what I was thinking. They have me winning for right now simply because I'm already Head, but that's not reliable figures we can count on," she speculated grabbing her purse and coat from where she'd thrown them on the spare sofa.

Burt grunted in agreement and shoved a cookie in his mouth whole.

"I've got to run but we've got that meeting in two days," she reminded him, pulling her arms through the sleeves.

He waved her off. "I didn't forget… between you, Kurt and Carole you've got it covered so I couldn't even if I wanted to."

"Go team!" she cheered on her way towards the door, throwing them one last smile before she was gone.
"She is one heck of a woman I'll give her that," Burt mumbled throwing the papers down with the rest of them and reaching for another cookie.

Kurt smiled. He loved that his and Blaine's family got on so well that it felt like they were just one big one most of the time with no dividing lines. There was the missing factor of Cooper, the Anderson he had yet to meet face to face, but he'd been assured that that particular Anderson would love him on sight so he wasn’t too worried.

"So," Burt began, swallowing before continuing. "How's things, kid?"

Kurt furrowed his brow a little and pulled his legs up to tuck them elegantly underneath him, his cup resting on his knee. "We talk every day, dad. You know how things are."

"Yeah, but it's easy to lie over the phone, bud. I can't see any of your tells," he grinned, leaning back and putting his arm over the back of the sofa.

"I don't have tells," Kurt denied nervously, thinking back to how his eyebrow twitched and how he picked the skin on his left pinkie whenever he had to lie. There was just no way his dad knew about those.

"Yes you do and you're my son so I know each and every one," he said smugly reaching for another cookie. Kurt slapped his hand away and Burt pouted.

"Everything's fine," he stated. Burt studied his face and raised a brow beneath the brim of his worn cap. "Ugh, okay. Blaine and I may have had a situation to sort out after the charity night last night, but that's all dealt with now."

His dad nodded slowly. "You wanna talk about it?"

Kurt flushed bright red and put his cup down on the table for something to do. "No!"

Burt narrowed his eyes. "Is this because it's about-"

"La la la la," Kurt immediately sang over him, cupping his hands over his ears.

"A Dom and sub thing?" Burt finished relentlessly and Kurt halted and stared at him.


*If we have the sex talk I'm gonna die.*

Burt hummed. "Okay. As long as you're sure?"

There was something in his tone. Something that was unmistakable and Kurt ended up smiling a little at the concern. "Yeah, dad, I'm sure. We had a… miscommunication but we worked it out. Blaine takes really good care of me."

"I know that. The love struck idiot’s wrapped around your little finger," Burt chuckled and Kurt beamed because he knew that one hundred percent now and it was the most amazing thing in the world.

"Oh I know that look," Burt pointed at him.

Kurt flinched back a little in surprise, fingers raising to his face but not touching. "What look?"
"The post I love you look." Burt grinned teasingly, but in reality he was over the moon happy for his son and his Dom.

Kurt gaped, hand dropping to his lap. "There is no such look."

Burt smirked, the laugh lines around his eyes deepening. "Well you're wearing it right now."

"Am not!"

"Are too."

He pursed his lips and looked away, though his mouth was twitching a smile. "You're such a child."

"Says the child," Burt bit back.

Kurt threw his hands up in surrender. "Fine! We said it. Happy?"

Burt smiled, slow and wide. "Are you happy?"

Kurt stared at him like he was an alien. "What kind of question is that? Of course I am, I couldn't be any happier right now."

Burt shrugged and finally reached for his cup of tea, settling back into position once he had it. "Then I'm happy."

Kurt felt a rush of warmth and love for his dad overtake him in that moment and had to seriously fight down the urge to throw his arms around the man. To compromise he shuffled over and snuggled into his side instead, taking in the smell of motor oil and cheap detergent happily. He'd missed him. More than he had actually realised.

"How have you been?" Kurt mumbled into his flannel shirt after a while of simply silently enjoying one another's company.

"Getting by just fine… especially with all the packages you keep sending our way," Burt grumbled, his voice a deep, pleasant growl in his chest.

Kurt smiled, patting him on the belly. "Don't pout old man."

He snorted. "Wouldn't change anything even if I did. Stubborn is what you are."

"And where would I have learned such a trait?" Kurt faux wondered.

"It's a mystery to me," Burt faked utter confusion.

The sub rolled his eyes, then got serious again. "This campaign stuff though… you're okay with it, right? I mean you don't have to do it if you don't want to. They wouldn't think any less of you."

"I wouldn't be doing it if I didn't want to, Kurt. We've got a chance to make a real difference here so I'd be the biggest of fools if I turned it down," he explained.

"I know. I just don't want you to feel pressured just because it's Blaine's family and-"

"I've got this, bud."

Kurt let out a relieved breath he didn't know he'd been holding. "You've got a plan then? That's your I've got a plan voice and you know you have to run those ideas past me since Christmas that time."
"Never gonna live that down," he grumbled.

"Dad," he warned pulling back to look him in the eye.

"Alright, hold your horses," he joked pulling off his cap and running a hand over his head. "I was just thinking... those polls. They're stats from all the upper class areas, right?"

"Most likely. You know they're the only ones that vote other than weirdo's like you," Kurt smirked.

"But what if it wasn't just weirdo's like me?" the man latched onto.

Kurt frowned and cocked his head. "What do you mean?"

"Those rich sons of bitches don't target Lima or places like that to canvass for votes, but legally, every single one of them are allowed to vote, yes?"

The sub began to follow. "And with the upper class vote so split..."

"It might be the edge we need," Burt mused. "They won't campaign for 'lesser' votes, they never have, but if we can get the people on board we can stick it to those elitist asswipes."

Kurt bit his lip in excitement, eyes bright. "I think this could actually work. Dad you came up with a plan that could actually work!"

"Not bad for a prospective Head, huh?" Burt grinned waggling his eyebrows.

"For what it's worth I think you'd be great," Kurt said truthfully. His dad was fair and honest and didn't take any crap from anybody, rich or poor. With the right team around him he could be something great. Exactly the hero Kurt always saw him as, shiny position or not.

"Oh yeah? Why's that?" Burt smiled.

Kurt smirked. "Stubborn."

Their afternoon together ended up filled with reminiscing the good old days and the even better ones ahead of them, laughter and the sense of comfort you could only ever get from your family.

The next day...

Blaine knew his name held a certain power, brought certain privileges with it, but he had never even thought of using that for personal gain until now, when the most precious possession he had ever had was threatened: hurt.

He had never even entertained the thought of throwing his widely known heritage around to get his way, but this... this was Kurt; his heart, his love, his world...

His thoughts were swamped with images of pale skin and frightened cerulean eyes as they stared at him in defeat after he had found out about Brad and what he was doing to him since the day he
moved to Dalton. Fuck. All that time and Blaine was so blind to it, but he promised it wouldn't happen ever again and that promise came with the need for immediate action because Kurt feeling anything less than loved and happy wasn't an option.

Nothing was off limits when it came to achieving that.

So he put all of his moral dilemmas to the side and asked his mom to throw the name around and get him information. She had given him only a cursory glance and a word of caution at the strange request and he knew it was because she trusted him so implicitly. It stung that he was considering proving her wrong and shattering that easy trust, but he pushed that to the side with the rest of it.

A phone call was all it took for him to get a slip of paper with an address written on it along with some advice and now he was three blocks away from reaching it, trying desperately to find that rage within he had felt the moment he saw the hidden contents of Kurt's binder. But his sub was extremely clever, luring him in with the promise of love and heat and the sweetness of his kisses and some of that burning, all-consuming rage had already edged away, leaving him rational enough not to do something to land him in trouble. He supposed it was for the best.

As much as he would have loved to just pin Brad to the wall by his neck and break every bone in his conniving little body he knew he had to keep himself in check. He was a Dominant with all the responsibilities that entailed and as such he had no rights under the law to attack a sub no matter what the reason behind it was. But even more than that he was a bonded Dom and whatever he ended up doing would be reflected on Kurt and he couldn't bring himself to hurt him by being reckless and irrational.

He wasn’t that person. He wasn’t someone like Kevin. He wasn’t abusive.

He would talk it out with Brad with all the dignity and grace his last name granted, he would get his elegant revenge and walk out of it all a bigger man after it was done. It irked. Fuck, it itched under his skin like a rash he couldn't get rid of. He hated being the bigger man in a situation like this when every instinct was screaming; fight, protect, yours, but he wasn't too big of a man to admit that.

He pulled up in front of a gigantic, Victorian style house, painted a dark beige with deep brown trimming and window frames in the same shade making it look classy and sophisticated. The perfectly manicured lawn rounded up the exterior look of the house and Blaine knew he was at the right place. Brad bragged about his wealth often enough and the home in front of him more than fit the description he gave to anyone that would listen to his boasting.

Blaine shut the engine of his car down and gripped the steering wheel so tightly his knuckles turned white and the veins on the backs of his hands popped out, an angry blue against his tan skin.

He ran the conversation he’d had with Kurt this morning through his mind to convince himself that he was doing the right thing by going in there cold headed instead of swallowing a ball of rage and having it explode upon Brad and his family that clearly raised him completely wrong: principals and morals all stuck in the dark ages.

"Lovely?" he called out as we walked to the living room, finding Kurt curled up with a stack of Presenting magazines surrounding him, post-it's in different colours marking things he obviously wanted to look into further.

He looked up and Blaine smiled at how cute he looked dressed in his old oversized Dalton hoodie and what looked like black yoga pants underneath it, hair a cute mess on top of his head and the
naked expanse of his forearms covered in colourful sticky papers.

"Yes, sir?" the sub asked gently, a clear sign that it was way too early for him to be up but he was so excited to go shopping with Jeff he barely slept at all. "I found some great stuff I wanted to show you," he tacked on because he obviously couldn't keep it in.

Blaine smiled wider. "That's great, baby. I look forwards to you showing me it all… I actually need to talk to you about something though," Blaine finished, smile vanishing on it's own as the tone got more serious. He sat down and lifted Kurt's legs to put them on his lap, rubbing the soles of his feet gently.

Kurt took one look at him and knew exactly what it was about.

"You're going to see him, aren't you?" he asked, voice low and worried and it made Blaine's heart sink sadly at how small he sounded.

"I've waited a day to cool off a little and I know you don't want me to, beautiful. But as your Dom I have to do it. I have to make him understand that what he did was wrong and make sure it never happens again," he said passionately and Kurt sighed, fiddling with a post it.

"I… I just don't want you to do something that'll take you away from me," he whispered and Blaine cupped his chin, lifting his head to look at him.

"I promise you, baby, that won't happen. I will behave and I'll come back to you. I will always come back to you."

After that promise Blaine knew there was no way he could make his fantasies of bashing Brad's stupid head in with a sledgehammer real, but there were other ways to make him understand what he had done and to make him pay for that. At least by being punished by his parents, even if they didn't agree they were under an obligation to do so regardless of their personal opinions.

He took a deep breath and stepped out of his car ignoring the chill in the air, making a quick jaunt up the stairs and knocking on the door. It only took a few moments for that now hated face to show up in the glass upper part of the door and that familiar sneer made itself known when the sub saw who was standing on his front porch.

The sub yanked the door open and smirked in Blaine's direction impolitely.

"Well, well, well… what brings you here, Anderson?" he mocked and Blaine felt his blood boil in an instant at the sheer disrespect.

"It's Dom Anderson to you, Brad," he snapped back, dominance lacing his every syllable. He was a step away from demanding his rightful dominant title but the thought of being called "sir" by his beautiful angel and then having that title tarnished by this vile person in front of him left a sour taste in his mouth. So he settled for the most official thing he could come up with to show Brad he was in charge.

"Whatever you want, Dom Anderson," the sub answered in a sickeningly sweet drawl that rivalled Sebastian's and Blaine clenched his fist in an attempt to stop himself from punching the smug little bastard in the teeth.

Temper well and truly flared up, it took every ounce of self-control he had in him to keep his cool and to stay on top of the situation.

"I want to talk to you about what you did to Kurt, actually," Blaine said icily and he could feel the
cold exterior of the boy in front of him harden even further in automatic defence and the scowl on his face magnified by a thousand.

But Brad was known for getting back on his feet quickly.

"I don't think there's something to talk about. Now if you'll excuse me, I have work to do," he said stiffly, pushing the door closed.

Blaine felt his resolve snap in that moment. He was doing his best but slamming doors into his face wasn't something he was okay with.

He squared his shoulders and just let go of all the inhibitions in his body, his natural power flowing and crackling beneath his skin as he spoke. "You will let me in and talk to me," he roared and the moment his voice reverberated off the walls around them Brad broke down, falling to his knees and bowing his head in submission.

Blaine eyed him, fire in his eyes, and the feral part of him was deeply satisfied by the victory he had just won… only… the picture was wrong.

Brad on his knees looked defeated, unnatural, ugly.

His mind went back to Kurt on his knees for him willing and trusting and he felt a rush of love and affection rake through him. He didn't want to taint the image with this one so he stepped past the kneeling sub and walked in.

"Get up. And get your parents. Legally they have to be present for this," Blaine said, remembering what his mother had warned him about when she had given him the address.

No settling the issue with Brad alone.

He was an unbounded sub and as such still belonged to his Dominant parent. Talking to him alone meant influencing the sub with his dominance to do as he wanted and was giving Brad the opportunity of taking the issue up with the Validators. Not something Blaine was willing to risk after his promise to Kurt.

"My parents are not around, Dom Anderson," Brad answered as he stood up and as much as Blaine's dominance affected him there was still enough struggle in him that allowed for that perpetually mean and vindictive tone to linger in his voice making Blaine shake with the urge to just make him cave.

There was something telling him the sub wasn't telling the truth and it made him furious.

"I want the truth, Brad," he ordered and the subs shoulders sagged as he stared angrily at Blaine; the look in his eyes staying hateful despite the dominance Blaine reigned over him.

"I live with my grandparents," he finally admitted, tone being dragged through gravel by its hair.
when the command started threatening to snap him in half if he ignored it any longer.

Blaine stared at him for a while longer, not sure what to make of the new discovery. He had no idea what Brad's life situation was like and he had no idea what his family was like. *Maybe his parents had died?* It would make sense for him to act out if that was the case but Blaine was so angry with him he had no intention of giving him the benefit of the doubt, or the gift of his empathy. He wanted to call him out and to make sure he never behaved to another human being the way he acted towards Kurt. Abandoned, neglected or otherwise hurt, he had no right to do what he had been doing to his sub and that was the end of the story. He didn't care if it was lashing out or simple not caring, Blaine wasn't tolerating it.

"Fine. I want them in the living room with you in the next five minutes," he said sternly and then fixed the sub with a nasty look as he went to protest. "*Now, Brad.*"

The sub jumped at the harsh command and scurried away, the look on his face portraying just how much he hated his body for making him look and act weak in front of the Dom. As he walked away Blaine straightened his jacket and remained firmly in spot, raised well enough not to roam other people's homes without permission. A few minutes ticked by and the rustling of three pairs of footsteps snapped Blaine out of his head.

He looked up to see Brad walking behind a tall, intimidating woman and an equally tall, but slightly less intimidating man. Both in their late sixties, they had greying hair and wrinkled skin, but other than that looked incredibly agile and youthful. Their faces portrayed deep worry and hints of anger and Blaine knew it was their grandson who put it there.

Currently, Brad was walking behind them with his face stern and scowling, however, Blaine could tell he was at least a little bit intimidated by their reaction from the way he was hanging back.

"Young, Dom Anderson. I'm Esther Robson and this is my sub Dale," she said regally, shaking hands with Blaine and stepping aside to allow her sub to do the same.

Blaine accepted their offered hands. "It's a pleasure to meet you. Sadly, it's under less than pleasant circumstances, but still," he said remaining cordial at least and they ushered him to the left, through a wooden arch that led into their living room.

Blaine settled into a plush, dark green armchair, facing the love seat Brad's grandparents claimed and leaving Brad to position himself on the huge sofa by himself.

"Brad tells us you wanted us present for something?" Esther said, eyeing him speculatively and Blaine nodded in affirmation.

"That's right. I'm afraid I've been introduced to some rather unsettling information about your grandson's behaviour and I had to come and discuss things with you," Blaine started them off as Brad seethed on the couch. His face had the potential to be handsome, but right now it was twisted by anger making him look revolting.

Esther turned to her grandson, disappointment evident in the way she looked at him and Blaine realized there was so much more to his story than what he knew so far.

"Tell us what he did," Dale spoke finally, his own eyes softer than his wife's, but somehow sadder… defeated.

"No. I think I'd like him to tell you himself," Blaine said sitting back and raising a brow at the sub, his vindictiveness coming out to play. No, he couldn't hurt him like he had wanted to… but he *would*
make this as difficult for him as he could.

"Bradley?" Esther prompted.

Brad scowled. "Don't call me that," he snapped at her, because apparently his disrespect wasn't limited to Blaine which was interesting, and she frowned threateningly.

"Young man you tell me what this is all about right now," she ordered and suddenly it was obvious to Blaine he was dealing with a Dominant woman almost as powerful as his own mother.

Brad, apparently, knew it too because his sass flitted away and he started talking. His voice, however, was what made Blaine's skin prickle… he didn't sound ashamed or sorry… he sounded fucking proud.

"He claimed a sub at the last showing. From Lima," he emphasized like that said it all and Esther snapped her head his way.

"We're well aware of that as we were there. What does that have to do with anything?" she asked calmly and the corner of Brad's lips turned up, like he was about to smirk.

"I made sure to let him know where his real place is," he answered smugly, completely full of himself and his actions and Blaine saw Dale pale, looking sick.

"What did you do to him?" he asked quietly, like he didn't want to hear the answer.

Brad rolled his eyes.

"Oh nothing much. I just introduced him to some of the magazine articles he was mentioned in and such," he waved his hand airily. "It was easy since the whole world knows exactly what I've been saying to him. He needed to know he didn't belong here and what he's worth," he finished, looking Blaine dead in the eye and Blaine lost it.

He jumped off the chair and lunged at Brad, fist in the air and his upper lip pulled back in an almost animalistic snarl. But before he could connect and get that longed for crunch of flesh and bone so he could finally get the satisfaction he wanted, what Kurt deserved as retribution, someone was pushing him back and settling him back into the chair.

Brad was sitting in his place still, eyes wide, visibly scared and shaken by the close call.

"Mister Anderson, we do not allow violence in our house. As much as I do agree with you that my grandson has deserved a good punch for a while now I'm afraid I can't allow it. For your safety more so than for his own," Esther said, hitting Brad with a look so icy Blaine shuddered in his seat. She walked back to hers like she hadn't just pushed a Dom more than half her age back into place.

"I apologize, Mrs. Robson. I lost it for a second there," Blaine said, feeling ashamed for losing control so spectacularly after all the effort he put into not turning this into a brawl. His mother raised him to be better than that and Kurt was counting on him, both of their trusts on the line here.

"It's understandable. He was bad mouthing what's yours after treating him, from the sounds of it, abominably, the fact that you've been sitting there so calm up to now is commendable young man. Now, why don't you tell us what he did? I don't want to hear him utter another word," Esther demanded and in short snaps Blaine told her.

About the insults, about the articles, the taunts, the bruise, the insecurities… everything. And with every word she became more and more restless. Dale on the other hand, got quieter and closed off,
like every word he said stabbed him right in the heart.

"He made Kurt feel like he didn't belong into this world, with me and he almost cost me my sub. And though I accept partial blame for not paying enough attention, you understand why I had to come and talk to you about it. I have to protect what's mine," he finished and Esther nodded looking at her grandson with an expression that made Blaine feel sad for this couple that clearly loved their grandchild despite everything he put them through.

It was like she knew he was capable of doing something like that, but maybe, somewhere deep down she had hoped he wouldn't. But even with that foolish hope flickering in the distance, the fact that he did do it couldn't surprise her. Blaine guessed it was awful to know someone you loved so dearly was capable of hurting someone like that.

"I'm afraid what you just told me doesn't surprise me," Esther said confirming his train of thought and Blaine snapped his eyes up to her stoic green ones.

Brad was still sitting still, frozen in place after Blaine's outburst, but his eyes were what unsettled Blaine as they remained just as still and emotionless. Scary. Detached. Dead.

"Brad is our daughter's son. We..." she grasped her sub's hand in hers, like she was both drawing and giving the comfort they both obviously needed. "We don't keep in touch with her. We did everything in our power to raise her right but she insisted on a certain lifestyle... I'm sure you're aware of the ideals shall we call them, of certain members of our circle?"

Blaine nodded and she smiled wryly.

"We couldn't see eye to eye. She kept subs on the side, broke bonds left and right, commanded everyone and misused her position... finally she decided to move away and we told her we wanted nothing to do with her if that was the life she was going to lead. She laughed in our faces and left."

"We didn't think we'd see her again," Dale admitted, still obviously affected by her absence despite all the strife she had caused them. It seemed to be an admirable failing of his if his reaction to Brad could be counted as the pattern.

"That must have been difficult," Blaine sympathized. He wasn't heartless and losing a child in any way was horrible.

Esther inclined her head to acknowledge the fact. "I heard from her next when she gave birth to Brad but had no idea who the father was. She said she didn't want a child and we insisted she let us raise him instead of letting him become a part of the system. We gave him everything we possibly could... maybe we didn't learn from our mistakes the first time around... because as it turns out he is very much his mother's child," Esther said and Dale shrunk even further into his seat, now refusing to look towards his grandson.

"He will be punished, Mister Anderson. We assure you. I think it's time we reminded him how close he was to not belonging into this world either," the older woman continued and Brad snapped his eyes up, finally, fully horrified, finally, fully scared.

"What the hell do you mean by that?" he asked and she jumped to her feet, pointing a finger to his face.

"You watch your tongue with me. I have had it with you and your behaviour. We gave you the world, loved you unconditionally despite everything you continue to do to bring us shame but it seems like you won't get better until you've hit rock bottom," she near enough growled at him, so
upset that she was hanging by her own thread of control.

"From now on, you will continue living with us but your monthly allowance will be cut completely. Henceforth, your car privileges will be revoked, no cell phone or computer or any other tech gadget you just had to have," she hissed threateningly and with every word Brad got smaller and smaller, sinking into the sofa in front of her.

"Y-you can't do that!" he tried to find the last shred of fierceness he had but his voice cracked under the strain of his punishment.

"Oh that's not all. I've had this idea for a while now. I kept telling myself you'd come around… grow the hell up maybe and be at least respectful of other people." She shook her head. "All it took was one more strike from you and I'd do it and now you crossed that line. Starting next week, you'll be transferring to a public school outside of Westerville. How long you stay there depends on how you behave," she finished and the finality in that statement had Brad paling, the whole room dead silent under the weight of her power.

"WHAT? YOU CAN'T DO THAT. THAT'S INSANE. I CAN'T GO TO SCHOOL WITH THOSE FILTHY Ghetto OUTCASTS!" he screamed at her but she remained perfectly unmov ed against his outburst, going back to sit next to her husband who looked shaken and on the verge of tears.

"I can do it and I just did. Now apologize to Mister Anderson and go to your room. I'll be with you shortly to discuss the details of your new schooling arrangements," she barked the order at him and he fought it for almost a full minute, face red and contorted, fingers tightly balled into fists and veins on his neck pulsing in rage.

But she was too much for him. The weight of her command heavy on his back.

"I'm sorry," he squeezed out like it was physically painful, not even looking Blaine in the eye before turning on his heel and stalking out of the room in an impressive fury. Blaine looked after him not quite able to believe what had occurred and how fitting he thought the punishment was for the snobbish sub. Let him learn some humility the hard way.

"Forgive me, Mister Anderson. We had no idea what was going on," Esther said after her grandson finished stomping up the stairs and slammed the door to his room shut.

"It's not your fault. Clearly you're doing the best you can. If anything I'm sorry for making your life even harder with this," he said diplomatically as he stood up to leave, not wanting to impose on whatever they had to do to make Brad's punishment work.

"It was only a matter of time really. We can't quite figure out where we went wrong. Clearly his mother's behaviour got passed on to him… but that sounds like a cop out," she sighed shaking her head. "The fault lies partly with us. We didn't learn from our mistakes, we just gave them whatever they wanted when they wanted it."

"You can't take all the blame," Blaine argued. Brad's actions were his own, he was old enough to understand what he was doing was wrong.

"I am responsible for him so I must."

They walked him to the door, facing him as he stepped out.

"I hope things get sorted out for you… and for him. It's not healthy to live with that much rage inside," he said. Blaine really felt for them.
Dale shook his head. "He wasn't always like that. He used to be sweeter, kinder. I mean, he was always sarcastic and high maintenance but he didn't quite turn into who he is until he set his eyes on a Dom he could never have," he explained and Blaine frowned when Esther nodded in confirmation.

"Why isn't he bonded with her then?" Blaine asked and Dale smiled sadly.

"Because he is straight and Brad is very much not a girl. We lost him around then. The news of our daughters exploits range far and wide, it wouldn't have been hard for him to look to her for an example when he felt most vulnerable," Dale sighed, running a hand over his chest like it hurt.

"We have an offer for a pre-claim for him though, it's been on the table for a while now. Maybe it's time to accept it," Esther said and with that she nodded her head goodbye and closed the door, leaving Blaine satisfied on one hand, but even more confused on the other.

Inside the house Dale walked to his grandson's bedroom slowly, knocking three times short and two times long before opening the door and entering.

"I didn't say you could come in," Brad snapped petulantly from where he was sitting on the bed, back against the headboard and knees touching his chest. There were clothes and possessions strewn around everywhere like Brad had pitched a silly fit when he got here.

"You never denied me entrance before though," Dale said, sitting at the edge of the bed carefully.

"That was before you decided to side with her and get rid of me. You used to be on my side," Brad accused angrily and Dale smiled, sad and tired.

"I will always be on your side. I will always love you and be here for you. But what you did was wrong, Brad. That boy didn't deserve what you said to him, how you terrorized him just to make yourself feel better. It's not his fault that young Dom doesn't care for other boys that way. You need to find yourself, not define who you are by other people and your grandma and I think this will be a good wake up call for you," Dale tried to explain patiently like he always did when Brad got into one of his tantrums.

He was always the better one to bring him out of them. Esther, though he loved her dearly, wasn't perfect and she had little patience when it came to Brad's histrionics. This time was different however. Brad looked up at him with so much rage Dale was taken aback.

"You think being poor is going to teach me a lesson?" he spat and Dale stood up tiredly recognizing that not even he could get through to his grandson and that broke his heart.

"Maybe it will, maybe it won't. But I miss my grandson and I'm willing to do whatever it takes to get him back. Get some rest, I'll get Esther to cool off for right now but we have a lot to talk about in the morning," he said and walked out, flinching when he heard a lamp crash against the wall behind him.

Nicholas Duval did not get nervous. He did not.

Mostly.

Usually.
Well, okay, he did lately.

It seemed that everything about who he was changed after he had fallen for the blonde beauty that was currently learning to live again with the credit card Nick shoved into his hand before he pushed him inside a car with Kurt and sent them on their merry shopping way. Kurt had blossomed under Blaine's care and it seemed he had accepted the fact that he could now afford things so the young Dom had high hopes he would be able to explain it to his own sub and make him buy things that would make him smile.

God, Nick wanted him smiling… always… all the time.

And the first step in making sure Jeff felt safe enough to smile all the time was starting right that moment as he walked up a narrow driveway and lifted his hand to knock on the door. As soon as the slew of sharp knocks reverberated through the air Nick felt his fingers starting to tremble so he twined them together behind his back to try and hide it. Jesus, he was sweating through his shirt, his throat was dry and every possible bad scenario that could happen, ridiculous and outrageous included, was running through his head on an endless loop, making him feel lightheaded.

He thought his plan was fool proof when he came up with it, but now… he had no idea. What if it backfired? What if it cost him everything? What if it cost him Jeff?

"Nick?" a soft voice called his name, snapping him out of the haze and making him realize that whatever fear he might be feeling would be worth it if it made Jeff feel happy again.

He squared his shoulders and looked up to find Lillian standing in front of him, looking fond and worried. She had grown to like him so much in such a short time and Nick was floored by that unconditional affection and trust she had placed in him.

"Hi Mrs Ster… I mean… Lilly…" he corrected himself when she hit him with a stern look at his attempt to be formal with her.

"Much better. Hi, sweetie. What brings you guys around?" she asked, craning her neck to look for her son who usually stayed glued to Nick's side.

"Oh, um… it's… it's just me I'm afraid," he said, scratching the back of his neck shyly.

"Is everything okay? Is Jeff okay?" she started panicking immediately and he shook his hands to stop her from freaking out.

"Everything is fine. He's with Kurt at the moment. I asked him to try and coerce Jeff into spending some money on himself… art supplies, clothes, whatever he wants, so I dropped them off at the mall before coming here," he smiled at her reassuringly. She returned the gesture, visibly relaxing before ushering him into the house where they settled with Jeremy in the living room.

"So… spoiling my son?" Jeremy asked putting down his paper, having heard their conversation.

"Pretty much, sir," Nick said, no shame evident in his voice, and the smug, self-satisfied look on his face made Jeremy chuckle fondly.

Nick was good for his son, he could feel it in his bones.

"Well at least you admit it," Lillian smiled as she brought coffee to the table and sat next to her husband.

"I'd never deny something like that. I made it my mission to make him happy and spoiling him is a
part of that," he said gently and the parents felt warmth envelope them at the thought of their son
finally being treated the way he deserved.

"So, Nick. Is this just a social call or did you need something?" Jeremy asked after a few more
pleasantries were exchanged, their coffee cooling on the tray.

"I um… I actually had something I wanted to talk to you about before I brought it up with Jeff," he
said, his nerves returning full strength and threatening to choke him. If this went wrong he had no
idea where he would go from there in order to protect Jeff as best as he could.

"You can talk to us about anything you want, Nick. You know that," Jeremy said carefully, eyeing
the younger Dom with worry in his eyes, curious to know what got the usually perky and happy man
so concerned.

"I know. Thank you…" he said nervously twisting his fingers in his lap but still not finding his
tongue on the subject.

"What is it, sweetheart?" Lillian asked edging towards him in her seat and taking one of his hands in
hers.

"I've been thinking lately and I've come to a decision regarding Jeff and our contract," he started and
Jeremy tensed suddenly.

"Have you changed your mind?" he asked sternly and Nick's eyes widened in horror.

"What? No… oh my god no… never… never think that. He means the world and the decision I
made is solely to keep him as safe as I can. I've decided to ask Jeff if he'd be willing to sign the
Validators Contract with me," he explained, expecting reactions ranging from shock, to surprise, to
disbelief and denial… confusion was not one of them.

The two parents sat there, eyes wide, heads cocked to the side and deep frowns etched into their
foreheads as they tried to grasp the obviously unfamiliar concept. The silence between them stretched
for an indefinable amount of time and Nick just didn't know how to go on from there. He had
prepared for approval and fear and distrust. But he did not prepare for them not knowing about the
existence of something he was already putting so much faith in.

"You don't know about it?" he asked them to clarify and they shook their heads in perfect sync.

"What is it?" Jeremy asked and Nick took a sip of the water Lillian brought out along with coffee.

"A long time ago, the Validators had perfected a contract for newly bonded couples. It's rarely used
anymore because Dominants are believed to take good care of their subs. We have proper mandatory
classes for teaching and trying to ensure that sort of thing and both the Doms and the subs have the
right to create a contract that suits them best. For that reason the Validators contracts are almost never
used anymore, even though they still exist and are the safest way I can think of to protect Jeff and to
make him feel safe," Nick said in a roundabout way and Lillian frowned.

"What makes them different from a regular contract?" she asked and her husband nodded in
agreement with her question.

"It's created to be followed step by step as the relationship progresses and the pace of it all is
completely under the sub's control. Signing it would mean that I'm giving away most of my
Dominant power in order for Jeff to be able to decide what, when and how we do anything," he said
and the parents of his sub seemed to relax just a tiny bit.
"Does that mean you can't give him orders or punishments?" Jeremy asked and Nick shook his head.

"Not completely. I'm allowed to try and push him out of his comfort zone… in this case in order to help him move forward from his pain and fear. But how far I can push is completely up to him. If he says it's too much and too far… I respect that and to ensure it the contract binds me legally. As for punishments its sort of the same thing, I'm limited to very light punishments and only ones that Jeff signs off on and he can opt out of a punishment if he needs to," he answered and the two of them grasp each other's hands tightly, gratitude evident in their eyes.

"Nick, that sounds amazing, but… why would you need us to confirm this for you?" Lillian asked and Nick took another deep breath.

"There's one more thing about signing that contract," Nick said and the Sterling's tensed again.

"What is it?" Jeremy asked carefully.

"It's the reason I wanted to bring this up with you first. If we sign the contract it gives the Validators the right to pop in and check up on us whenever they feel like it until the Bonding is complete and we decide that they are not needed anymore. And I don't know if that would make Jeff feel safer or freak him out and cause him stress. Because at first the visits are pretty close together to make sure the sub doesn't live in a bad environment for a long time. If anything bad is going on in the bond the sub can be pulled out within a single week that way," Nick explained as best as he could with the information he had and he could feel them melting and warming up again.

"I think… I think what you want to do here is absolutely amazing, Nick. I think it will make him feel safe and relaxed if he knows nothing bad can happen to him and… he already trusts you so much… I think this will be the cherry on top. You should definitely bring this up with him," Jeremy said, standing up and placing a hand on the younger Dom's shoulder.

Lillian watched them both and there was a thought tingling the back of her mind as she thought back to her son's relationship with his new Dom. Jeff had accepted Nick when there was no chance he would ever let someone else in. He was hurt beyond belief and his walls were so high and so thick she was surprised Kurt managed to weasel his way in the way he did. Letting Nick in? It was a step so big she felt it would all come crumbling down on her son again and this time there would be no pieces big enough to put him back together. Nick though, Nick took care of his scars, he smoothed out the rough spots one caring word at a time and he made him shine again, after knowing him for such a short time. He made Jeff feel safe enough to melt inside his arms and to admit his feelings freely without the fear of being turned down and mocked for feeling it; the need for Nick, the craving for his closeness, the joy of having him around. Every emotion was more than welcomed by the Dom and day by day her son got brighter and more confident.

So as much as she loved Nick's idea there was something she had to bring up and tell Nick.

"Nick, darling. I love what you want to do," she said and he smiled at her questioningly.

"But?" he asked and she chuckled at how well he knew her already.

"You're right for him. You love him. And as scared as he is, I think he knows that. And… I think there's a chance he trusts you enough not to need that kind of safety net," she stated gently and trembled when tears began to fill Nick's eyes that he quickly tried to blink away.

Shit. The emotions those words brought about were intense to say the least and he wanted for them
to be true so much. He wanted to be the person Jeff came to when he felt scared and alone. There was nothing he craved more than for his beautiful boy to let go and be his completely.

But he was ready to do whatever it took to make him feel safe.

If that meant allowing his life to be dissected and observed and intruded into whenever the legal service felt like it then he would be glad to do it. But hearing Lillian's words made his heart soar with hope that someday… someday his word would be enough for Jeff to believe him and to feel good and loved.

"I'd be the happiest man alive if that happened… but for now… I'm ready to do this for him," he said determinedly and Lillian hugged him.

"I know you're ready. And I think that'll be enough to make him see what he's got in you. What he is to you," she whispered into his ear and he smiled through the threat of tears, thinking of his blonde angel and hoping he was doing the right thing.

Nick was sitting on the couch in their dorm room having a staring contest with the thick Validator contract he'd gone out of his way to pick up before he got home from the Sterling's. It really was an iron clad example of legally keeping a Dom in check and Nick was happy to sign himself away to it. To giving Jeff the breathing room and security he needed. Of giving up a lot of his power so that Jeff could feel safe with him.

He'd sign it in a heartbeat as soon as Jeff gave him the green light.

He heard the door handle turn and quickly folded and stuffed the contract down the side of the sofa just in time to see Jeff walk in, dressed in a soft white cotton tee with a red hoody zipped over the top and skinny jeans with vans to top it off. He looked adorable and it was all new. A product of some of the bags he was carrying no doubt.

"Hey, angel. Shopping went well I see," he grinned at him.

Jeff looked up through his fringe and flushed, a small smile on his lips. "Kurt's gotten better at convincing me to buy things."

Nick laughed. "I can believe that. Come over here and show me what you got."

The tiny command was obeyed immediately and Jeff looked lighter and happier for it he noticed. The sub in him was starved for a Dominant touch that wasn't overbearing and hurtful and Jeff seemed to like having a direction given to him instead of getting himself worked up over what he should and shouldn't do.

Jeff sat down next to him with a cautious bit of space between them. Nick wrapped an arm around his shoulders and nudged a little for him to slide closer, picking up his legs and slinging them over his own once he did. He pressed a kiss to his cheek and nuzzled a little, breathing him in. "I missed you."

He felt the heat of Jeff's blush before he pulled back to see the lovely shade creep across his cheeks.

"I missed you too, sir," he admitted quietly, settling in and relaxing, and Nick felt the rush from the title. "I got you something."
Nick smiled, rubbing his hand over the blonde's knee soothingly, the other wrapped around the small of his back. "You spoil me, angel."

"You gave me your credit card to buy it on," he pointed out with a little laugh, brown eyes bright from a day shopping and spending time with his best friend.

"There is that. So I'm spoiling myself then?"

"I think that's what they call being self-indulgent?" Jeff suggested innocently and Nick burst out laughing, deliriously happy that Jeff was teasing him.

"Cheeky boy," he smiled leaning in to peck his beautiful treasure on the lips, leaving it chaste but letting it linger just for the sheer pleasure of it. "Okay, so show me what you got for the both of us?"

"And 'Cho," Jeff quipped as he buried his hands inside the bags, never once leaving the position of being draped over Nick, just twisting and reaching with those long limbs of his.

"You got something for 'Cho, too?" Nick chuckled and Jeff sprang back up, holding a tiny, bright green sweater in his hands a huge smile on his face.

"Look what they had in the pet store! It's a sweater. For a bunny. It's a bunny sweater," he beamed, so excited about the damn bunny sweater he was practically vibrating with it.

"I can see that, angel," he said indulgently.

Jeff folded the little item and placed it on his lap. "You think he'll like it?" he asked looking over to the quiet cage. Poncho was curled up in his little hay pile, only the tips of his ears visible.

Nick nodded seriously.

"I think he'll love it," he chuckled brushing his fringe out of his face to be able to look into his beautifully shy eyes undisturbed. God he loved him so much it hurt.

"Kurt got Cupid a little vest too so they can have dress up play dates," he informed him with a silly smile that said he was very much looking forwards to that. "Also... I got you this."

He reached into a separate bag and pulled out a soft piece of colourful fabric, handing it to Nick shyly. "It's, um... it's 'cause I stole yours."

Nick unfolded the clothing item and found a brand new pair of Toy Story pyjama bottoms. He threw his head back and laughed and how amazingly adorable his sub was.

"Now we can match when we go to bed," he grinned happily, knees bouncing a bit and Jeff flushed and nodded, mumbling something to himself that Nick couldn't really hear.

"What was that, angel?" he asked and Jeff lowered his eyes and plucked at his fingers.

"That's why I got them. I... um... I wanted us to have the same ones and well... I took yours so..." he trailed off awkwardly and Nick couldn't really believe how absolutely, ridiculously sweet he was.

"I absolutely love that idea and I can't wait to wear them tonight," he reassured, before he gathered the items to put back into the bags for now. At the corner of his eye he could see Jeff preen softly at the praise he absolutely deserved but was deprived of for so long and felt proud and happy he could do that for him.

"So... what did you get for yourself besides the obvious?" Nick asked finally and Jeff pointed to
"More of the same kind of stuff. I stayed in my new clothes right away after trying them on... it made me feel... um..." he started but suddenly his ears flushed and he went quiet completely making Nick worry.

"Made you feel what, angel? Is everything okay?" he asked concerned and Jeff nodded slowly looking back up at him.

"Fine, sir. I just... this outfit...it's the kind of thing I used to wear... before... before him and... and today I just... I felt enough like the old me to wear it again," he rushed out, stuttering and tripping over his words but looking fairly proud of himself in the end.

Nick felt his heart jump, sing and yell happily at the words coming out of his mouth.

"Angel, that's amazing. I'm so proud of you my gorgeous boy," he said honestly and Jeff unhooked his legs and stood slowly, shaky and unsure but brave and determined, peeking at Nick through his eyelashes.

"Sir? Do you... do you like it?" he asked in a whisper and it struck Nick to the core how much of a risk that must have been for him. How incredibly brave he must be to stand there in front of him, trusting him enough not to put him down, trusting him to judge him after being hurt and humiliated for god knew how long.

He stood up and wrapped his arms around his waist gently, slowly, feeling the tension of his body against his own and lending him some of his heat as he whispered into his ear.

"You always look beautiful to me, angel. But the red of that zip up looks amazing against your skin and I love those jeans on you. They make you look really lean and tall and handsome and those Vans are just too cool. My baby's got taste," Nick complimented easy and honest and felt the natural submissive in Jeff purr at the effusive praise. His body sagged against him, drawn into him and his entire energy changed from a nervous, pulsing red to a deep and serene dark green and Nick couldn't believe someone would deny Jeff that.

He couldn't fathom someone having Jeff and not bending over backwards to make that beautifully submissive boy thrive and grow and bloom under them. Well he would make up for all of that, he swore fiercely as he pulled him back to his lap on the couch and kissed his rosy lips softly.

"How was your day, sir?" Jeff asked when he'd pulled back and that sobered him up a little.

"Ah… it was eventful," he deferred, trying to get his thoughts in order before he brought up such a difficult topic for his sub. It was time and he knew it. There was no point in delaying it any longer if he wanted to do right by Jeff, but finding a way to broach such a delicate subject without stressing Jeff out was eluding him.

Jeff cocked his head adorably. "Do you... do you want to talk about it?" he asked nervously, clearly worried he was going to overstep his bounds.

"I want to talk about everything with you, angel. You don't have to worry you'll upset me by asking a question. If either of us don't want to answer then we'll just say and take it from there, okay?" he asked patiently and Jeff nodded quickly, clearly absorbing the information like it was gospel and it broke his heart a little… and hardened his resolve.

"I went to see your parents today actually," he revealed and watched worry and confusion fight for space on Jeff's face. His entire posture stiffened and his eyes turned off again, that bright light he had
managed to ignite for a moment dying out in an instant.

"M-my parents? Did I do something wrong? Sir, I didn't..."

"No, angel," Nick cut in quickly squeezing him closer. "You've been perfect, sweetheart. I just wanted to run something by them and get their advice on something important for us."

"For us, sir?" he asked, trembles calming down at his words and body curling back into the Dom's.

"I've been thinking about a contract for us," he said slowly, reaching around behind him to pull out the paper and placing it on Jeff's knees, not wanting to disturb the peace he had found in his lap.

"You want a contract," Jeff said numbly, eyes going far-away as he stared at the paper like it was about to burn through his jeans and leave scorches on his skin.

Nick's brow furrowed and he let the paper fall onto Jeff's legs completely so he could cup his sub's cheek.

"What's wrong, angel? I was thinking it would be good for us to know where each other's boundaries are. I just want you to feel safe with me and this could be a good way to do that," he said, trying to understand the broken boy in his arms as best as he could so he could piece him back together.

"I never had a contract," Jeff admitted in a small voice, eyes still not meeting his.

"With Kevin," Nick clarified, hating that Jeff flinched still at the name, but he'd been doing some quiet research online and everything said that disassociating or hiding from the problem wasn't healthy so he was determined to talk it all out, as painful as he knew it would be for the both of them.

"He said he didn't believe in them. Why would I need a contract when I had a Dom now," he repeated almost robotically, a phrase that was branded into his mind like a mantra to keep him from questioning the horrors he was going through.

"Jeff, please look at me," Nick half pleaded, half ordered and haunted brown raised upwards, still no traces of that bright light from before. Nick could have kicked his own ass, but really, this was a conversation they desperately needed to have and if Jeff was now willing to open up to him then he was damn well going to listen and support him through it.

"He…" he couldn't finish, actually choking up and Nick hushed him bringing their foreheads to rest together.

"We don't have to talk about this now if you're not ready, angel. There's no pressure here," he reminded him softly. "But I'm not gonna lie and say it's not a conversation that we need to have."

Jeff nodded, shaky hands clutching at his shirt and eyes clenching shut.

"I'm here for you, sweetheart. Every step of the way, okay? He can't get you here." Nick assured him, keeping that thin and tired body close.

"He… Kevin," Jeff strained out the word in the small space between them and Nick tried to take it in to himself so it wouldn't hurt Jeff anymore. "Was my contract. He was the small print at the bottom of the page that I never got to read."

The words hit him like a hammer to the chest.
"Some days I want to hurt him so badly, angel… I can't even describe it to you," Nick admitted hoarsely.

"Some days I want to, too," Jeff whispered like he was confessing the deepest of sins and that was just what made Jeff so good. Still so pure and beautiful after everything that had happened to him. That he'd find the idea of wanting revenge or justice for all the torture he'd obviously been through from a man that belonged in the deepest reaches of hell something to be ashamed of was amazing beyond words.

"How can you wonder why I call you an angel?" Nick asked in disbelief. "You're too good for this world, Jeff. You really are, sweetheart."

"I..." He looked up in confusion and disbelief but the look on Nick's face was so sincere and so loving that he couldn't even find the strength to argue with him. He just stared at him, curled into his body, warm and safe and he knew, at that defining moment, he knew he was loved with no more doubts in his mind.

"We can... we can make a contract... I... I want to... but... will you... um... can I..." he huffed in frustration when the words just remained glued to his throat and Nick cupped his cheek gently.

"Ask anything. Anything, Jeff. You're allowed everything with me," Nick encouraged and Jeff took a deep breath before speaking again.

"Will you let me... please...will you let me say what I... what I don't like?" he started but when he saw Nick's horrified expression he managed to misinterpret it again and he started rambling. "I mean I'll do what you want me to, sir, I will, I just... Kurt told me that Blaine let him name some things he didn't like and I figured that maybe..."

"Angel... Jeff, stop. Please stop." Finally Nick cut him off and Jeff snapped his mouth shut, cheeks red and eyes twitchy with nerves. "There is no way I would ever, ever dream of making you do something you don't like. You will state every last thing that you feel even the least bit apprehensive about and I'll never push it until you feel like maybe you're ready to try that. Okay?"

"I... really?" the blonde breathed in surprise, brown eyes carefully hopeful like he didn't want to get his hopes up too soon.

"Really. However I need to tell you why I went to see your mom and dad before we do anything else. Okay?" Nick asked and Jeff nodded silently.

The Dom placed his fingers onto the stack of paper on Jeff's knees. "This here, is the Validators contract. I went to see your parents to ask them if they thought signing something like that would be something you'd consider," Nick said and as he spoke Jeff's eyes got wider and wider.

He had assumed that since his parents had no idea what it was Jeff wouldn't either, but his reaction seemed to suggest otherwise. Nick allowed him to process it all, keeping quiet and waiting patiently.

On the other side Jeff was struggling to understand.

They had learned about the Validators contracts in class and as far as history went there hadn't been a single one signed in decades. They were stiff, strict and unbearably restricting for the Dom no matter how beneficial they proved to be for the subs. They deprived the Dom of his natural need to make decisions and to lead, by obliging him to follow his sub in everything all the while agreeing for someone to check up on the pair and question his authority further to make sure the sub was treated fairly.
Rationally, Jeff knew it was for his own good. He could sleep peacefully knowing that if Nick did anything wrong, Jeff could be taken away from him in a matter of days. He would be guaranteed safety. He knew that... rationally.

"You'd do that? For... for me, sir?" he questioned timidly, voice shaky and fingers gripping the papers tightly.

"For you... anything," the Dom promised with a conviction in his voice so strong Jeff trembled in his arms and he knew... he knew his rational side had no clue.

His heart knew better.

"I... thank you sir, but... I don't need that. I know I get scared easily and that it's hard on you too but... I... I know it in my heart that I'm safe with you... I know it," he said and startled when a choked off sob left Nick's lips and Jeff could only stare as his strong Dom crumpled in front of him head falling to rest on his sternum.

"I... I'm sorry, but, god, angel, you have no idea... no idea what it means... what it means to hear you say that. And you are safe with me. You always will be. Even without the Validators contract we'll make our own to keep you safe." He raised his head to meet his eyes solemnly. "Are you sure?"

He had to ask one more time and Jeff plucked up all the courage he had and leaned in slowly, checking if he was allowed before tilting his head up minutely and touching his lips to Nick's. A barely there brush of soft lips that sent the Dom flying.

"I'm sure," he whispered when he pulled back, face burning.

Nick nodded, taking a stack of empty paper and a pen out of his school bag he had left by the side of the couch and turning to Jeff. "Okay... let's make our own contract. I have to tell you sweetheart that... for this to work I'm gonna need you to be a good boy like you always are to me and be open and honest. And if at any point you want to change your mind we can sign the contract I picked up from the office. Just say the word. Okay?" Nick asked and Jeff bit his lip knowing this could be the moment Nick let go of the hope he could be fixed.

It was the moment he would learn everything and this embrace could very well be the last one he ever got. So he burrowed deeper into his arms and hid his face.

"Just... just hold me once more like this before we start... please, sir," he pleaded and Nick cuddled him impossibly close.

"What do you mean once more, Jeff?" he asked and Jeff shivered pressing closer still, almost as if he were trying to find his way beneath Nick's skin.

"You're about to learn everything and I... I won't blame you if you don't want to... don't want me... after..." he whispered scared and quiet. He knew that Nick loved him, but Nick didn't know everything about him. This might be a game changer. A deal breaker.

"Nothing you say today will make me give you up. I love everything about you and whatever you say will just make me love you more," Nick shot those fears out of the sky and Jeff curled his fist into his shirt, gripping tightly to both him and the promise of those words.

"I don't know how to do this?" he whispered and Nick kissed his temple.

"There are no rules to this. However feels the most comfortable to you," Nick encouraged and Jeff nodded slowly, deep in thought.
"What needs to be in there?" he asked looking down at the paper. He’d never gotten to the lessons about writing your own contract.

"Rules we both need to follow, your safe words, kinks and absolute taboos, also forms of punishment you’d feel comfortable with are the standard parts. Everything else is up to us," Nick explained and Jeff frowned.

"What sorts of rules?" Jeff asked warily.

"Well to be honest I'm not much for rules. I'd say healthy food, enough sleep for you and on top of everything absolute honesty with me about anything and everything that concerns your welfare both physical and mental and emotional. As far as I'm concerned I don't need much else. You're allowed to call me whatever feels comfortable to you, you're allowed to wear what you like, go where you like as long as I know where you are and that you're safe, pick your own college and job and whatever else," Nick listed and with every word Jeff got more and more confused.

"What about like... housework and cooking and cleaning... and..." he asked and Nick made a face.

"Blah I hate cleaning. You can clean if you feel like cleaning and you can cook if you feel like cooking. If you don't feel like it you don't have to do it," Nick said simply and Jeff gaped at him.

"Just... just like that?" he asked weakly and Nick smiled.

"Life is pretty simple if you don't make it complicated for yourself," he advised cheekily and Jeff couldn't really disagree on that.

"Okay. I... I think I'm okay with having those rules," he said and Nick noted them down onto the paper.

"Right. I also promise to always be open and honest with you. Now... the next parts are harder and Jeff, if you want to stop at any point just say so. I need to know what you're okay with and what not and I need to know why? Do you understand?" Nick asked carefully and Jeff stiffened.

"I... I don't know if I can... I..." he started trembling wildly at the thought of reliving it all again.

"Shhhh... we'll take it slow, sweetheart. Just take your time and remember that I love you... so, so much," Nick soothed and Jeff breathed in his scent, fresh and calming.

"I... can I just tell you... how it was... how it was with him and then you write it in there?" Jeff asked desperately and Nick was ready to let him do whatever to make it easier.

"You can do whatever you like, baby... anything you want. I'm here for you," he reminded him and kissed his pale cheek.

Jeff took a few moments to ground himself, to find the right words before he spoke.

"I... I had rules. Make breakfast before he got up, prepare his things for the day, make sure his clothes were clean and the food was ready when he got back. I... I wasn't allowed to go to school. I gave up art and singing b-because he said I wasn't good enough. He gave me orders. I hate orders. I don't want them," he stated passionately and Nick frowned in confusion.

Jeff's body would positively glow after he got a command and he would always seem lighter and happier after it... like the sub inside him had been fed and satisfied.

"I... I don't understand, Jeff... I thought... you respond so well to orders from me. I didn't know you
didn't want them..." he said apologetically and Jeff frowned.

"You didn't... you never gave me an order, I don't... I don't remember..." he said, fear in his eyes and Nick ran a hand over his face.

"Angel... I give you orders all the time. And every time I do you seem so relaxed after it... most subs do because it makes them feel good. It's biology. It's how we’re naturally wired. Just a few moments ago when I told you to show me what you got... that was an order," Nick explained patiently and Jeff gaped at him.

"But... no... that's not how it feels... I don't... it's..."

“How does it feel?” Nick prompted.

“Sometimes you’d tell me something and I'd feel lighter and more... just... more... but… you were giving me commands?” he asked quietly.

Nick nodded in confirmation.

"It hurt... before... with him... it hurt all the time... he'd order me and it ached... I thought... I thought it had to because I was no good," he whispered, tears welling and sliding down and making Nick's heart break for him all over again.

"No baby, it's not supposed to hurt. From what I know from my mom and the other subs I know... obeying an order from your Dom feels good. It’s supposed to feel good, angel," Nick told him, reaching over and wiping the moisture away.

Jeff lowered his head after. "Then... can we have them... like you did them so far? I... I don't want it to hurt," Jeff mumbled, heart in his throat and Nick shook his head.

"We can have them exactly like we’ve done so far. It only hurts if I order you to do something you fear or that you know will hurt you. I don't ever want to do that. Is it okay if I write it down?" Nick asked and Jeff nodded as Nick penned the agreement down.

"Okay, sweetie. What else don't you want?" he asked and Jeff twined his fingers.

"You said... the night we bonded... that... that sometimes you'll have to punish me. I don't...I don't like blood, and... I... I'm afraid of being alone in the dark for a long time so I... if you... if you can, I don't like that..." he choked out and Nick dropped the pen pulling him closer and hating the way his body shook in fear.

What did that animal do to him?

"Blood, baby? Dark?" He asked because he had to, had to know these triggers in order to look after him properly and Jeff froze.

"He... he liked using his whip on me. And if I cried he'd... there was a room... on the bottom floor... and it was dark and he'd... lock me inside for hours... I don't... I don't like being alone in the dark with no way out," he whispered, low and thready, clinging Nick's hand desperately as the Dom held him and rocked him, tears threatening as undiluted rage stormed inside of him.

"Never, baby. Never, ever, ever would I do something like that to you. Writing lines, or an essay on why you were wrong is the only punishment I'm okay with giving you. I'm never going to lay hands on you in a punishment. There will be no pain and no blood... god Jeff, I can't even think about it... and no dark places. Ever. Are you okay with those?" he asked, blood boiling as he contemplated to
what happened to his beautiful boy.

The images in his head would probably give him nightmares and it just proved to him how strong Jeff was truly. To be able to even attempt this again with another person after his experience was a miracle in itself and Nick wasn't ever going to take him or the trust he laid in him for granted.

"Y-yes I...I am," Jeff said and another thing found its way onto the paper.

"Now... I know this might be the hardest part so let's brave through it together in the nicest possible way," He steeled himself. "Sex? What do you think you'd be comfortable with physically?" he asked and Jeff lowered his head knowing there was no going back now. He would have to say everything.

"I... can I say what I like with you?" he asked slowly and Nick smiled, nodding.

"I like, um... when you hold me. Like... tightly so... so I know you're there and... kisses... I like when you kiss me. You're slow and gentle. And you... you let me kiss you back like... like you like it," he whispered the last part and Nick knew it was time to stop being shocked but he just couldn't.

"Jeff... when you kiss me back... that... that's the best part of everything for me... knowing that you want me back. I crave your kisses, angel and I never want to be without them. I don't even want to know what kind of an idiot it takes not to like the way you kiss," Nick said with fever and Jeff hid his face in his neck for the part he knew was coming.

"He said... he said pleasure was for the Dom's only," he repeated the phrase he had heard so many times over the time he spent with Kevin and he could feel the anger rolling off of Nick.

"He said..." Nick shook his head, not even able to repeat it because of what it implied. Of course he knew logically that this was something that was most probably true to whatever extent it ranged, but hearing it was something else altogether. He manned up though and set his jaw.

He thought it was hard for him? Jeff must be going through hell just reliving it.

"Tell me, Jeff... tell me what he did?" Nick demanded and even though Jeff didn't want to say it, it still didn't hurt to be ordered because deep in his core he wanted Nick to know everything so he could help him somehow. Heal him.

"I wasn't... I wasn't allowed to..." he swallowed hard against the bile rising in his throat. "To feel good like... like that... he'd come into bed with me and he'd... do things and he ordered me to do things but it never felt good," his voice broke on the last word, tears falling hot down his cheeks. Nick went to open his mouth, face looking beyond angry, beyond hurt for him, but Jeff needed to get this out otherwise he might not have the courage to do it again.

"Nick, sir, can I... can I have a safe word... like when I want to stop if I say it you stop... please, sir," he rushed out, hands shaking without control and Nick stood up suddenly startling Jeff and making him curl into himself on the sofa as the Dom paced the room furiously hands harshly pulling at his own hair as he panted.

"Oh god... oh my god, Jeff please...oh please tell me he didn't... order you to... please, angel," he said the last words falling to his knees in front of the blonde and laying his head on his lap, hands gripping his waist in despair.

Please, please deny it angel! He begged in his head but he knew he wouldn't. He knew it was the truth when he glanced up and saw Jeff nod his head, small and broken in front of him but so precious to him in all his tortured glory.
Nick ground his teeth and raised his head. "You won't need a safe word. Just say no to me and I'll
stop whatever we're doing. No orders in our bed. If you don't want something, if you never wish for
anything but for me to hold you and to kiss you we'll never do more than that. Ever beautiful," he
choke through his tears, heart ripping to shreds and mind completely sure that, that would be it for
the day.

Jeff looked tired and worn and he himself felt frayed and ready to burst at the seams.

"I'll put what we talked about in the contract and we can add things to it as we go along if you don't
have anything else to add right now," Nick said needed something to occupy him before he walked
out of here and found Kevin to smash his fucking disgusting head in.

Jeff bit his lip nodding his head once before changing his mind, shaking it and looking up. "I don't
want to go into subspace!" he blurted and Nick started at him in shock, blinking the last of the tears
away from his stinging eyes.

"I... a lot of people never go to subspace, baby. That's not going to be a problem for me," he
reassured softly but Jeff shook his head.

"I don't want you to make me do it," he whispered and Nick froze as the realization dawned on him.

"He... he commanded you into subspace?" he gasped and Jeff nodded.

"He... he commanded you into subspace?" he gasped and Jeff nodded.

"I'll kill him. I will murder him!" he raged and Jeff shrunk back in shock as he watched Nick rise,
walk towards the wall and punch it with all the strength he had in him, scraping his knuckles and
putting a dent in the wall.

"I... I'm sorry, sir, I didn't mean to make you angry..." Jeff despaired, curled into the corner of the
sofa, trying to be as small as he possibly could when Nick turned those eyes at him.

He flinched when the Dom reached him and sat next to him, but relaxed when familiar arms found
their way around him, holding him close to his chest where he could hear his heartbeat racing.

"I'm sorry for scaring you," he apologised at once and Jeff nodded into the fabric of his shirt.

"Baby... listen to me. This is what I'm putting into our contract. We have to be honest with each
other at all times. Anything that makes you feel even the slightest bit uncomfortable or nervous is
something I won't do until you ask it of me when you feel like you might want it. I will never cause
you pain or make you feel scared of me. We are together in this bond and I want you happy. For
now...that's all I'm putting in. We'll fill in the rest when we get there," he listed and Jeff lifted his
eyes, not quite able to believe what he was hearing.

"What if... what if I'm never there?" he asked timidly and Nick kept his chin from falling with his
fingers.

"I still get to hold you and kiss you. I'll consider myself a lucky guy," Nick stated surely pecking his
lips slowly and giving him time to respond. After a few moments the petal like lips parted beneath his
own and Jeff kissed him back, slow and careful and scared, but there... his... and it was more
grounding than anything else at a time when he felt like he was going to fly apart with his need to
protect Jeff when he was this vulnerable.

"How about we sign this and then we can cuddle back here again?" Nick asked and Jeff nodded as
Nick took the pen and signed his name on the improvised line. He passed it over and Jeff leaned it on
his own legs, fingers shaking but the look on his beautiful face was determined and it gave Nick so
much hope he could almost fly with the strength of it.
A gentle flick of his hand and Jeff found himself looking at his name beneath Nick's on the line, curvy and artsy and pretty and light somehow. It made him whole again. A true sub to a real Dom this time. He traced his name on the paper and the back of his neck burned stronger than it ever had before, making him gasp silently and hunch a little and he knew Nick saw it.

"What is it, angel? Are you in pain?"

Jeff shook his head slowly. He had just signed the promise he'd be honest at all times and he knew he already had the chance to put the rule to the test. *Tell the truth? Or disobey so soon after promising honesty?* "Sometimes my mark burns a little bit..."

"Burns?" Nick asked, eyes wide with worry for his sub.

"It's more of a tingle. And I... I hate seeing it because it's... it's him... still on me and I want to forget it's there but lately I feel it and I don't know what's happening," he explained brokenly and Nick had to ask for one more act of trust that day.

"Would you... would you let me take a look at it for you? I won't touch it, I just want to know if we need to see a doctor or something," he asked softly and Jeff contemplated for a moment, clearly scared out of his mind, but in the end he gave a tiny nod and Nick brushed his fingers over his cheek in a silent thanks and reassurance.

He guided Jeff to turn around, bracing for the worst when the most unexpectedly beautiful sight he could have hoped for made him gasp in delight. He blinked once, twice, just to make sure it wasn't a figment of his imagination before he could find his voice. "Oh my god, baby. Oh god, sweetie I want you to see this on your own," he exclaimed and Jeff shook his head in horror.

"No... no I can't... don't want to see him..." he whispered frantically and Nick took his shoulders gently pushing him up and leading him to the mirror in the bathroom.

"He's not there anymore," he said and Jeff startled.

"What!"

"Take a look, angel," he said turning him around and what met Jeff eyes wasn't a muddy green specked with ugly black dots and bad memories and pain.

His skin was clear, unblemished, and the heart that was broken just like the one in his chest stood a light, vibrant, lively, whole, yellow against his flesh.

Just a tiny drop of colour, but it was clear.

Yellow.

"Yellow, angel?" Nick asked and he looked back into his eyes, happy tears lacing the gorgeous brown as the sub wrapped his arms around him tightly.

"Because it's warm when you're around."
TRIGGER WARNING: there are discussions of past non cons and abuse of a character in this chapter. It doesn't go into a lot of detail but it does give an idea of what was going on so please, thread carefully.
Hi everyone.
At this point, is it even necessary to say we're sorry for taking this long to edit and update a new chapter? Yeah we guess not XD

In any case we're very grateful you're still around, waiting, reading and sending us amazing feedback on this story. It means the world.
Hopefully you'll like this chapter as much as the rest of them and it will make you stick with us for a while longer.
Love
A&M

"What do you think, Cupid?" Kurt murmured into the baby bunny's downy head, eyes considering the magazines before him. "The green would bring out your daddy's eyes, right? But the blue… that colour would match the table centrepieces we liked."

Cupid shifted against his chest, a little agitated at being kept so still.

"I know… it's a dilemma," Kurt nodded sagely placing him down on the floor in the living room.

The bunny contently stretched his legs by hopping around in a few slow circles before heading straight for the little log structure Kurt had taken from his cage so he could cut his teeth on it. Kurt smiled at him before he grabbed his phone and sent a quick text to Blaine who was at the studio with David and Wes. He was getting better at having a phone these days, grasping onto the concept easily enough and liking the freedom and convenience it gave him.

To; Blaine

Blue or green? x

He knew the answer before the reply came a few seconds later, but still smiled and blushed happily when he read it.

From; Blaine

You look so pretty in blue, lovely xx

"Maybe blue and green… pastels?" Kurt mused out loud as he considered it, chewing on his lip absently.

Presenting ceremonies were usually done in heavier colours, or more popularly, in gold or silver as a display of wealth. Which was exactly why Kurt didn't want to even consider them. It wasn't so much about making a point as much as doing something unique for him and Blaine. All the gold Kurt
needed was in his Dom's eyes and while silver was a good accent he wasn't about to splash it over everything in some tacky display of 'look at us, look how much better we are than you'. It just didn't sit right with him and the way he had been brought up.

The distant knock on the front door was what brought him out of his introspection and he heard Jared call, "I've got it!" to the rest of the house.

There was a pleasant mumble of low voices getting louder as the seconds passed and then the door was opening to the living area and Jeff's blonde head was poking into view.

"You're early!" Kurt grinned at him in surprise but jumped up onto his feet to greet his best friend with a tight hug.

With all the changes in their lives right now it was harder to come by the best friend time that had once been such a huge part of everyday; but they were conscious to always make time even though now it had to be planned instead of just expected. And with Blaine working late at the studio and Nick working on stuff for school it was pretty much the perfect time to schedule a much needed sleepover.

"I'll just set this down here for you, Jeff," Jared said and Kurt looked over his shoulder to see the older sub placing Poncho's cage down on the floor. Cupid noticed the ruckus and abandoned his chewing to hop over and investigate.

"Thank you," Jeff said shyly as they detached, running a nervous hand through his fringe. "You really didn't have to, I could have kept hold of it."

"Nonsense, it was no trouble. Hardly weighs a thing," Jared smiled kindly, dusting off his hands. "Can I get you boys anything before I go?"

"No I think we're good, thank you," Kurt deferred, glancing at Jeff who nodded as well.

"Okay, well have fun and don't stay up too late," he winked at them before retreating, closing the door softly after him to make sure no bunnies escaped.

"You've been busy," Jeff commented as he set down his overnight bag, looking at the magazines and notes strewn all over the floor.

"Mm," Kurt hummed. "Cupid and I are trying to narrow down a colour scheme."

Jeff laughed as he glanced down at the curious rabbit that was sniffing around the base of Poncho's cage. "I'm sure his insights were very helpful."

"He has impeccable taste of course," Kurt sniffed, lips twitching and eyes sparkling with humour.

"Oh, of course," Jeff agreed mock seriously as he crouched down and opened up 'Cho's cage, reaching inside. "Come here, fluffball."

The bunny kicked his legs a bit, he was still a little skittish here and there but he soon settled into Jeff's familiar hands.

Kurt sat back down on the floor and scooped up Cupid into his lap who went easily, largely unbothered as he had ever been at being manhandled. He was always filled with so much energy when he wasn't sleeping and he loved to explore and be petted and cooed over. "You're your daddy's little boy, that's for sure," he smirked down at him, stroking his snow white ears.
"You think they'll get along?" Jeff asked, cradling his bundle to his chest.

"There's only one way to find out… if they start getting antsy with each other we'll just separate them," Kurt decided.

Jeff nodded hesitantly before placing 'Cho down on the floor in the gap of space between them. Kurt did the same a second later and the bunny's regarded each other for a few moments, neither moving a muscle except for their twitching noses. Cupid of course was the first to make a move and he hopped over. Poncho didn't seem to like that and hopped away a few feet but Cupid Marshmallow Hummel-Anderson III wasn't to be deterred and he made chase.

They ran small circles around each other for a while before Cupid finally got what he wanted and snuggled his face into 'Cho's side. Poncho paused at the touch and seemed to settle after that allowing Cupid to smother him in cuddles until they were a pile of white and grey fur, twitching noses and ears.

"Oh my god, that is the cutest thing I have ever seen in my life," Kurt squealed grasping for his phone and taking a few pictures before sending them to Blaine.

To; Blaine

Guess who made a friend! X

"Best friends already," Jeff smiled placing his elbow on his knee and propping his chin in his hand, eyes fixed contently on the bunny pile.

"Well of course they are," Kurt declared like he hadn't secretly been worried they might start scraping.

"Aren't you glad I forced you into buying a rabbit now?" Jeff grinned at him when he placed his phone to the side.

"Yeah, yeah, Sterling," Kurt rolled his eyes. "And besides, I bought him for Blaine."

Jeff scoffed. "Looks that way."

"Shut up you."

His phone buzzed and Kurt picked it up and laughed at the message.

From; Blaine

My baby boy's got game! xx

"What?" Jeff asked curiously.

"Blaine seems to think that Cupid is making moves on 'Cho," Kurt informed him with raised brows.

Jeff looked to the two again, where Cupid was resting his head innocently on top of Poncho's.

"They're babies."

"Yeah… oh, oh, oh! Maybe we can betroth them… oh my god I can plan a cute little ceremony and-"

Jeff burst out laughing.
"What?"

"Only you would think something like that up," Jeff told him.

Kurt pouted. "It'd be cute."

"I think you should concentrate on planning one thing at a time," Jeff suggested sagely with a quirky head tilt.

Kurt sighed dramatically. "Fine."

"What are we having for dinner?" Jeff asked to change the subject.

"I was thinking order in?" Kurt suggested, then chuckled a little. "Which is weird to say. Our sleepovers have got very extravagant all of a sudden, Mr Sterling."

"As long as there's dessert, I don't mind what we have," Jeff shrugged happily.

"Don't worry, sweet tooth, I've got you covered," Kurt smirked, getting to his feet and heading for the coffee table that was packed full of various chips, dips, cakes, popcorn and candy. He picked up the take out menu's that were by the side of it all.

Jeff's face brightened. "Skittles!"

He left the bunnies cuddling and crawled over, brown eyes wide and awed like a child as he took in the impressive spread.

"How about Thai food?" Kurt suggested wiggling his brows and flapping a menu. "Might as well go really exotic now that we can."

"Sure. I'll just go get changed into my pyjamas," Jeff said grabbing a handful of Skittles for the journey to the bathroom because... well, just because it was a long walk okay? "Are we sleeping in here?" he asked through a mouthful.

Kurt pulled a face at the rainbow coloured mess in his mouth, nose wrinkling up. "No, we'll head up to the guest bedroom if we don't pass out down here first."

Jeff nodded and grabbed some more Skittles from the large bowl before heading off.

He came back into the room to see the menu's abandoned and Kurt scrolling through something on his phone, tongue poking at the corner of his mouth as he concentrated. "The other place isn’t open tonight so I've pulled up the menu of another place nearest us... I'm just trying to decide what sounds good... and the least greasy."

"We can be naughty for one night," Jeff said and Kurt glanced up at him, mouth open to say something when he paused entirely. Eyes scanning him up and down.

"That's... an interesting outfit," he finished curiously.

Jeff shifted on his feet a little, a flush crawling up his neck and cheeks to rest at his ears as he fingered at the hem on the Dalton hoody he wore over his Toy Story pants. "They're Nick's... well mine now I suppose."

He still made Nick wear the hoody on occasion to make it smell like him, but other than that Nick had completely given them over to him. Apparently he liked when Jeff was in his clothes... and that wasn’t a guess on Jeff’s part, Nick made sure to tell him at least three times every time he wore
something of his.

Kurt smiled widely. "That's adorable. Is that why you bought Nick the same pyjama pants the other
day? Those look older…"

Jeff spared a glance at the sleeping bunnies before stepping over them and approaching Kurt, settling
down next to him. "They were his favourite and I kind of stole them… so I bought him some
more…"

"So you could match," Kurt finished knowingly.

"Shut up," he blushed furiously trying to hide his face away and Kurt giggled pulling him into a
cuddle.

"It's sweet, silly. Don't be embarrassed. I wear Blaine's shirts all the time. Why do you think this is so
big on me?" he stated pulling back to pluck at his plain white top that was barely hanging onto one
pale shoulder over his yoga pants and a little short in the body. "I think it might be a submissive
thing."

"Maybe," Jeff agreed. They didn't exactly cover that specifically in their submissive classes but it
was easy to assume from the information they were given about scents and pheromones.

"Now… what do you want to eat?" he changed the subject for him seamlessly, going back to his
phone. Jeff could only smile gratefully at his best friend who knew him so god damned well.

They decided on a few dishes of various things. Neither had tried any of it before so hopefully
something within the mess would be palatable. As they waited they ended up on their stomachs in
front of all of Kurt's notes and post-it covered magazines, music playing softly in the background.
They'd put the bunnies in 'Cho's cage and they were scuffling about playing on the various play
things as well as taking turns ducking under the hay.

"Maybe you could go for a turquoise colour? You know something in between? And have simple
silver accents?" Jeff suggested, still munching on the bowl of Skittles, legs kicked up behind him.

"That is very spring time, and classy," Kurt nodded, biting at his thumbnail as he flipped through a
book of swatches putting a turquoise one on top of a silver one to see how they went together. "What
about you?"

Jeff side eyed him and swallowed. "What about me?"

"Don't play dumb, blondie. I know you've at least considered your Presenting Ceremony," Kurt
tezed, removing his thumb from his mouth so he could poke him in the side.

Jeff stilled and looked down, hair hanging softly around his face and obscuring it from view.
"Honestly… I never thought I'd get that far… not after…"

It broke Kurt's heart but there was a silver lining to this and the fact that Jeff was talking in the past
tense raised his spirits considerably.

"And now?" he pressed softly, leaning his cheek on his hand so he could regard him comfortably.

"Now…" Jeff swallowed and let the idea overtake him for a second. Of him and Nick declaring
themselves to everyone they loved, of Sealing their bond. The flash of panic was nothing compared
to the deep seated longing that took a hold of his heart. He loved Nick, he trusted him, he was in for
him and allowing himself to consider a longer future for them wasn't as terrifying or farfetched as it
had once seemed. He smiled tremulously and faced Kurt. "Now I would like to."

Kurt gave him a blinding, brilliant smile and tackled him into a crushing snuggle that landed him flat on his back. "We can totally plan together! Maybe we can have a joint one! I'm so happy for you… I knew Nick was the one. I just knew it!"

Jeff started giggling as they wrestled around on the floor with Kurt gushing all over him in an entirely undignified display of affection.

"You're crushing me!"

"Hey! That's not very nice," Kurt frowned at him mock seriously which gave Jeff the advantage to push his friend off him.

"You're crazy," Jeff wheezed over another laugh, a happy flush to his skin.

"Blaine's rubbing off on me," Kurt grinned, getting his breath back and Jeff knew it wasn't an innuendo, but the blonde couldn't help as he blushed deeper and averted his eyes. "Not like that gutter brain!" Kurt squeaked, hitting him with the back of his hand gently.

"I'm pretty sure that's not true," Jeff managed to get out and Kurt burst out laughing, eyes widening.

"My, Jeffery. What has that scoundrel done to you?!"

"Nothing," the blonde squeaked, face heating red and hands coming up to hide his eyes.

Kurt drawled a dry, "Sure."

"No, really," Jeff insisted, uncovering his eyes and licking his lips nervously.

Kurt's brows drew down in mild surprise. "Oh."

Jeff looked away in embarrassment. Maybe there was something wrong with him? Maybe Nick didn't want to go there now that he knew the truth? He knew at once he was being harsh and overdramatic with his judgment of the situation. Of sweet, selfish Nick who only ever thought of his comfort… but it was hard to shake such deeply ingrained insecurities.

Kurt cleared his throat. "I mean… I get it. After… Kevin." They were getting better at mentioning him these days and though it made him flinch, probably always would, the sting of his name lessened the more it was spoken and that could only be a good thing. "And I know you told Nick about everything so of course he wants to be careful with you and respect your boundaries," Kurt reasoned out for himself and Jeff felt a million times better just hearing someone laying it out calmly and rationally.

"You think that's it?" he asked anxiously and met those warm blue eyes squarely.

"Jeff. Don't be obtuse, darling," he teased playfully. "You really think the guy who was sending you cups of hot chocolate with romantic notes on them so he didn't overstep his bounds is really going to try and push something as important as that without the explicit go ahead from you?"

He rolled on his side, closer to his best friend and rested his head on his arm. "No," he mumbled.

Kurt examined his face for a quiet moment. "Do you want to give him the go ahead?" he eventually asked.

He hid his face in his other arm and Kurt half gasped, half squeaked. "You do. You totally do! Come
Jeff groaned and reappeared but he didn't say anything.

"It's okay to want him like… that," Kurt assured him, briefly stumbling over it. They hadn't really ever had the cause to talk about sex before in this context so this was completely new to both of them.

"I know… I just feel weird. Like… shouldn't I not want anyone like that ever again after what happened?" Jeff asked quietly, his own emotions confusing him deeply.

"No, no, no, sweetie. He doesn't get to dictate your life like that. As long as you're comfortable and trust the person you're with then I don't think there's a rule to it at all. It's perfectly natural to find someone desirable. And Nick's not exactly hard on the eyes," Kurt tacked on with a little quirk of his lips.

Jeff bit his lip to keep from sighing out just how not hard on the eyes he really was.

"But like I said… he's not going to start anything without either asking you or having you tell him first… probably the latter with how careful he is with you," Kurt advised.

"How did it start with you and Blaine?" Jeff blurted out and Kurt flushed to his roots.

"Uh… well… he kind of brought it up and we said we'd start slow and… try things," he tried to explain.

"Just like that?" Jeff asked, a pang on jealousy rearing its head at how easy it sounded for his best friend. He pushed it down, telling himself that Kurt deserved it and that he truly was happy because of his happiness.

"Well, when you get into the moment it doesn't seem like it's sudden," Kurt started hesitantly. Tried to convey how time seemed to stand still when Blaine hands were on him, his dark eyes focused intently on every inch of him. He shook his head and cleared his throat to get back on track, toes scrunching into the carpet under them with the effort to fight off the shudder of pleasure that wanted to shoot down his spine. "It doesn't make it any less scary, I'm always scared I'm gonna mess up somehow and embarrass myself, but Blaine loves me, I know he wouldn't hold it against me. We're learning each other and it's... beautiful." He covered his face with his hands. "That sounds corny and stupid."

But Jeff didn't laugh at him. When he removed his hands he found that his friend was looking at him with an intensity that was startling. "That's what I want. Corny and stupid and all the in-between."

"It's unbelievable," Kurt confessed, biting his lip. "Sometimes I think I'm going to explode with how good he makes me feel. There's days when all I want to do is stay in bed all the time."

Jeff giggled, his legs squirming around. "Have you… you know?"

Kurt shook his head shyly. "Uh, uh."

Jeff reached out and started playing with Kurt's fingers absently, ever tactile with his friend even though he now had Nick to sate that eager submissive desire for physical contact and attention. Neither boy paid it any mind it was so commonplace by now. They would always be like this.

"I've knelt for him," Kurt revealed in a whisper.
He hadn't found the time to broach this subject before with his friend but now the secret just jumped off his tongue.

Jeff's breathe hitched, flashes of crawling around, the humiliation heavy on his shoulders, swirling in his mind and making his chest tight. "You d-did?"

Kurt squeezed his fingers reassuringly. "It was my choice. I gave it to him as a Christmas present and it was... amazing. Freeing," he finished breathily.

"Really?" Jeff asked in awe, hungry for the knowledge. He wanted to replace every horrible memory he had with a new one, he wanted the reassurance from his best friend that it could be so much better than what he knew.

"Yeah," Kurt admitted shyly, rolling to his side too so they were nearly nose to nose as they spoke their minds and hearts. "I just knew that he'd take care of me so it was easy to let everything go, you know?"

"Because you trust him," Jeff murmured, eyes bouncing back and forth between those bright blue ones.

Kurt squeezed his hand again. "Like you trust Nick."

His heart stuttered and then so did his mouth. "I don't think... I mean I do trust him, I do, b-but..."

Kurt smiled softly. "That's okay. You don't have to rush it. You'll know when it feels right I think."

"I hope so. I want to do all these things, it's just hard sometimes even thinking about some of it," Jeff said sadly with a hint of frustration.

"Don't pressure yourself, sweetie," Kurt advised softly. "You'll know when it feels right I promise... and you know Nick will wait for you until he's grey and old and don't you tell me he wouldn't. I have a self-sacrificing idiot of my own you know," he tacked on with a fond roll of his eyes.

Jeff smiled with a pleased little flush of pink.

It was true. Pushing insecurities aside and basing it on what he knew of Nick and his unending sweetness, Jeff knew that Nick would be more than happy to wait

"I wouldn't wait that long though," Kurt said.

The blonde began to furrow his brow a little; half worried, half curious.

"He might not be as pretty then," Kurt smirked, a devious sparkle making his eyes shine and Jeff gave a startled laugh.

"You're terrible!"

"Truthful," Kurt corrected. "And you know you were thinking it too."

"I was not!" he denied with a hot blush, raising his hand to push at Kurt's chest but it was still tangled with his friends so he didn't get very far before they were wrestling back and forth on the floor again, giggling for no other reason than that they were silly and happy. They gave up after a while and landed in a heap of tangled, snuggly limbs; a perfect mirror to their furry pets in their cage and Kurt sighed contently as he nuzzled Jeff's hair. He smelled like cinnamon.

"I missed this," Jeff admitted, twitching their toes against one another.
It didn't feel quite like it used to; like he needed the physical contact like he needed air because he was so touch starved, and it was nice not feeling like he was using Kurt. They were close because they wanted to be, not because one was doing a favour for the other, even though that had never been the whole reason of course. It was just freeing to be able to get out from under the shadow of it. The submissive side of himself was actually already contented for the day with this morning's cuddles and chaste kisses from his Dom and so he could just relax and be.

"Me too," Kurt murmured.

Jeff kept silent for a while pondering over his next words. He wanted Kurt to know about his mark, about how quickly he was healing under Nick's dominance but he just didn't know how to phrase it. It was a good thing though, so it shouldn't be that hard to just say it.

"I um... there's something else I need to tell you," he started and Kurt hummed to show he was listening.

"My... my mark has cleared," the blonde almost whispered and Kurt jumped up on his elbows in surprise, eyes wide and torn between shock and happiness.

"What?! How? When?" he fired off questions, rolling to his knees and straining his neck to see the back of Jeff's as the blonde blushed.

"It started slowly after Nick claimed me, I just didn't realize it was happening. And the day we came back from that shopping trip... when we signed the contract it... I felt like... this tingle on my neck and I didn't know what it was so I got scared. Nick checked it for me and I... I have a new colour now," he murmured and Kurt squealed and clapped his hands, face getting flushed with excitement for his friend.

"What colour is it? Was it painful? Is it permanent? Can I see? Are you..."

"Whoa, Kurt stop, stop." Jeff raised his hands, laughing as he watched him bounce on his folded knees waiting to get some answers. His enthusiasm was infectious.

"It's light yellow, it was more of a short sting than pain, I hope it's permanent and yes... you can take a look," he rattled off the answers and turned his back to Kurt, tugging the collar of his shirt down so he could take a look.

He could pinpoint the exact moment Kurt saw it because he choked out what sounded like a cross between a gasp and a sob and he flung his arms around Jeff, hugging him for all he was worth.

"Oh my god, Jeff, I am so, so happy for you. It looks amazing and the colour is so you somehow and... I want to ask why yellow but I don't want to pry so..." he yammered and Jeff huffed another laugh looking back over his shoulder at him.

"Kurt, you know everything about me. I... when I first agreed to be Nick's friend, after the game we went to... he asked me why I said yes and I... I blurted it was because it was always warm when he's around. And I believe that. It's like he's my own personal sun. And I think that may be the reason it's yellow," he said softly, cheeks growing red at Kurt's increasing flood of squeals and swoons.

"Oh god you guys are so perfect. I'm gonna die of all the cute," he cooed and Jeff shook his head at his silly friend as he turned back around, heart warm and light.

"Well I have you to thank so..." he trailed softly.

Kurt cocked his head. "What do you mean?"
"Kurt... you gave up your Gift to bring me to Dalton. If you hadn't... this never would have happened," he stated surely and Kurt frowned.

"Jeff... first of all... I didn't give up anything. I wanted my best friend here with me and I wanted him safe and happy. Second, you and Nick... you were written in the stars. You would have met sooner or later and you would have ended up just as in love as you are now. I'm sure of it," Kurt said and Jeff smiled from under his fringe, flushing over the wording his friend chose to use.

"Either way... thank you," Jeff said and Kurt kissed his cheek.

"Any time, blondie. Now you can repay me by helping me pick my napkin holders before the food gets here!" he said teasingly and Jeff rolled his eyes but followed as Kurt flopped back down and dragged his colour coded notes over.

Okay, Warblers. I just got the information package with the details for the competition so please settle down so I can read it to you," Wes said from the council's desk, holding a large manila envelope and waving it in the air to emphasize his point.

"Yes, Our Lord." David gave him a small bow from his right and then ducked lower to avoid said envelope colliding with his head.

Thad took the third seat at the council table giggling at how easy it was to get a rise out of their fearless leader: ever composed and regal even when he was trying to bludgeon someone with paperwork.

Kurt and Jeff took a loveseat together; their Dom's were running late from the studio and class respectively. They had told Wes they would be late and he was predictably less than happy about it, something that Nick tested every single practice. Well, at least until Jeff came along. Now Nick arrived with seconds to spare and Wes couldn't help but be grateful to the blonde for how grounded and calm Nick seemed to be since he came into the picture.

Sebastian took a seat on the chair next to the two of them so the only person the tight group of subs were missing from their circle was Thad. The four grew closer and closer with each passing day and more often than not they could be seen bickering and giggling and just generally enjoying their newfound friendship during breaks between their classes. It made their Dom's happy as well, to see them so comfortable around each other.

The rest of the Warblers just sprawled wherever, taking up armchairs, sofas, windowsills and the floor. The practice room was like their second home and they were more than comfortable there.

Wither everyone now paying attention Wes opened the envelope with such dramatic movements that a lot of the boys lowered their heads to stop their leader from seeing them snicker. He skimmed the page and then looked up at them, picture perfect poker face tight in place, revealing absolutely nothing. He took a deep breath to make his announcement when the door crashed open and Blaine almost fell in on his head.

"Sorry I'm late, I got stuck at the studio. Also I saw Nick through the doorway on the way here and it looks like they're stuck with a pissed off Mr. Robinson and a surprise pop quiz so I doubt he'll make it until the end of practise," he rushed out as he flailed to find a seat, eventually settling for a spot on the floor, back leaning on Kurt's knees. The sub immediately began running his fingers through his hair gently as he reached out his free hand and squeezed Jeff's in comfort.
The blond smiled gratefully and sank into his seat a bit deeper.

"Kurt already informed me of your whereabouts and it is unfortunate about Nick but we'll get by... I was about to read the information we got from the organizers," Wes said, surprised at their quiet snickers and unaware of David pulling faces of him behind his back.

Or so they thought…

"Or I would read them if my fellow council member stopped behaving like a five year old," he said dryly with a smirk.

David paled at being caught, settling down and muttering a quiet, "Don't tell Rin," as Wes gloated at the small victory.

"Take it away, Wes," Trent heckled excitedly and Wes took the paper back in his hand.

"Okay, so... we're up against four other schools. Vocal adrenaline, Crawford Country Day, The Unitards and Oral Intensity," he read off and there was a stunned silence.

"Excuse me?" Sebastian frowned at the last name, voicing what everyone else in the room was thinking.

"The hell kind of a name is that? Oral intensity." Trent shook his head in disbelief.

"I'm not sure if I should laugh or get hard," David said matter-of-factly and the boys roared with laughter, all apart from Jeff who still didn't really feel too comfortable with jokes like that, and Kurt and Sebastian who just didn't roar. They laughed politely. Because they had manners. Yep.

"That's actually tame compared to what the glee club at McKinley is named," Kurt said as an afterthought and got laser focused attention from all of them that he raised a brow at.

"Spill!" Jon said excitedly.

"New Directions," Kurt answered with the correct name, knowing how it sounded when you pronounced it a little faster.

"Duuuude…" Riker wailed as he collapsed in a fit of giggles on the floor.

"Nude Erections. Are you serious?" Matt spluttered through attacks of laughter and Kurt nodded at him.

"It just sounds like it. It's New… the pause is important… Directions. But well… I guess they didn't think about the fact that people don't really have the time to take a minute long pause while saying their name. So… there you go," he said with a shrug.

Sebastian chuckled. "I just love the people who don't think."

Even Wes cracked a smile at that.

"Yes… that's quite humorous and all but back to the matter at hand." They all groaned and he gave them a quelling look that had them zipping their lips like a class of kindergarteners. Wes rolled his shoulders, pleased, then cleared his throat and looked back down at his sheet. "Out of the four choirs Vocal Adrenaline is very good if the three consecutive titles are something to go by and the Crawford girls are supposedly pretty tough to beat. I don't know much about the other two but if we bring our A game we won't have to worry."
The laughter suddenly gave way to fierce determination and eagerness to win.

"We will, Wes. For sure," Thad fist pumped and earned nods of confirmation from his teammates.

Wes smiled. "Excellent. Now, they sent a theme and according to this we have to have a set of three or four songs and one of them has to be a clean group number while the rest can be solos or duets depending on what we decide. We can either sing all of them acapella or have a music background to some of them. Personally I vote against music because we are an acapella choir, but, as always, it will be up for vote once we pick the songs," he announced and for once everyone listened with undivided attention, excitement for their first competition almost palpable in the air.

"What's our theme?" Blaine asked.

"Change," Wes said simply and there was a startling silence as every Warbler rolled the word around in their mind trying to see if they liked it or not.

"Change? That's weird," Trent said and a few guys nodded.

"It says here it's open to interpretation. We need to pick the songs we think fit the theme and our idea of it needs to come across in our song choices," he explained and realization started to dawn on a few of the boys.

"I think it's a good one. We can take it in different directions and still remain within the idea. It's flexible," Sebastian stated.

"What do you mean?" Matt asked, brow furrowing.

"Change can mean a lot of things. A person can change, seasons change, landscapes change… we just need to see what kind of change we want to take and pick the songs to fit. But it's a pretty wide theme which gives us space to play with it," he explained and all of the boys nodded in understanding, suddenly the idea much more relatable.

"Excellent explanation, Seb. That's exactly what I thought when I first saw it. Now… you're all getting the task of brainstorming songs you think would work and the next meeting we'll try and compose a list of ten to twenty songs we like the best. Then I'll try and pick a few combinations that could work as a tied story within the theme we got and we'll vote again. Everybody okay with that?" he asked and there was a murmur of "yes, Wes" echoing through the room that was music to his ears.

"Great. One more thing. The judges will be assessing our dancing as well. And the truth is… our routines are a bit monotone and simple," he managed to grit out, evidently taking it very personally that he had to admit to it.

"Nooo, really?" David mocked and Thad snickered behind his notebook.

"Yeah, boss. We noticed it," the tiny sub chimed in and Wes glared at his fellow council members a little flustered.

"Yes, well… we're stepping up our game. If he'd be okay with taking that task… I would like for Jeff to choreograph for the competition," Wes announced and the entire room fell silent as the blonde sub gasped and shrank inwards at the attention: his brain already going into overdrive with anxiety.

"Him… doing this for everyone... for the competition…? How could he? What if he failed? What if they laughed at every suggestion he gave?"
Sure he had been a Warbler for a few months now and there were a few instances where he would shyly bring a clumsy looking step up with Seb, or Kurt, or Thad and they would casually mention his suggestions to Wes who accepted them with ease every time, admiring how much smoother the routine would look afterwards.

The Dom had found out it was all Jeff when Thad brought it up at one of the council meetings when they were signing up for the competition. The idea of Jeff choreographing was a natural leap. He had no idea the blonde would be so frightened by the prospect and hadn't factored in a refusal to the proposal at all. Maybe he should have waited for Nick to be here first?

Jeff had worked himself into an internal frenzy when a hand landed on his. He jerked and looked up to see Wes standing in front of him.

"Jeff… I'm sorry I sprang this on you. You won't have to do it alone but the final decisions would be yours as well as the final look of the routine."

Jeff worked his mouth but nothing came out.

Wes smiled at him reassuringly. "We've noticed the tiny changes you have made so far, all the little ways you've made our routines better and all of them suggest you truly know what you're doing. You could give it a go? There's no pressure to continue if you feel it's too much but we'll all help you out," he suggested being careful not to give any commands when he was addressing him.

Jeff took all that in and assimilated it slowly. Having it explained and broken down calmly like that really helped to settle that ball of panic in his chest and the blonde was about to nod when he realized his Dom wasn't there and he wasn't sure if he was allowed to accept something like that without his consent.

"I… um… I don't know if Nick will agree-" A loud bang cut his sentence off and a ruffled looking Nick ran into the room.

"If Nick will agree to what?" he asked out of breath and Wes saw the traces of fear in Jeff's eyes.

"Guys… let's give them some privacy to talk. The meeting is over, please think of the songs you think fit the theme and you'll share your ideas on Thursday. Jeff, let me know what your decision is when you discuss it with Nick. Dismissed," he said and the group of boys piled out of the room leaving Jeff alone with his Dom.

"So that sounded very official," Nick joked but then saw how worked up his angel seemed to be and ducked down in front of him, resting his hands on his knees. "What's going on, sweetie?"

"Uh…"

He didn't rightly know where to start.

Nick got up and sat next to him drawing him into his arms easily, smiling when Jeff relaxed against his chest immediately.

The blonde let out a loud sigh as his body decompressed. "Wes, um… wants me to choreograph for the competition. Says everyone will pitch ideas but the final decision and combination will be mine."

Of all the reactions he didn't expect Nick to whoop happily… and then he realized he was stupid not to.

"That's great news! You do know your dancing angel, so we'll look much better than we usually
"do," he praised happily, not mentioning that it wasn't really that hard to make choreography better
than shuffling left and right while snapping your fingers sassily.

"So um… I can do it?" he asked and Nick frowned, realization dawning on him.

"Wait, baby. Did you think I wouldn't let you do this?" he asked and Jeff shrugged, biting his lip and
looking down.

"I just… it'll take time… and um… I didn't know if you'd… be okay with it…" he trailed off
uncertainly and Nick hugged him impossibly close.

"Angel… I have no right to forbid you from doing something you want to do, that you love to do. I
would never think of doing it. If you want this and you feel like it would make you happy, then you
should do it and I'll help out any way I can and be there to support you all the way," he said earnestly
and Jeff couldn't believe how lucky he was.

He snuggled into his arms tightly and nuzzled his neck.

"Thank you, sir. I… I think I want to try…" he said, incredulous at himself and Nick smiled against
his temple before kissing the warm skin there.

"I'm proud of you, my beautiful boy. So, so much."

"Ready for bed, lovely?" Blaine asked as he came behind Kurt at the dresser he had bought for him.
He wrapped his arms around his waist, inhaling the scent of the honey Kurt's latest skin moisturizer
consisted of. He kissed the back of his neck tenderly, just below his mark, before disentangling and
walking towards the bed, picking up the bottle of lotion with the intention of giving his lovely boy a
massage.

They had been running lines and steps for tomorrow's competition almost all day long at Kurt's
insistence and Blaine had to admit he was dead tired and happy to finally cuddle his precious boy
into his arms and sleep the night away. But Kurt… Kurt had been tense and agitated all day.
Running through his song over and over and getting increasingly frustrated at, what he deemed, were
mistakes in his performance even if Blaine couldn't find a single fault in him.

"Yeah. I'll be right there, sir," Kurt said as he recapped the jar of his night facial crème and went to
pull his sleeping shirt over his head.

"Leave it off, gorgeous," Blaine's voice sounded from the edge of their bed and Kurt felt a shiver
rake through his body at the undercurrent of unguarded dominance.

The shirt slipped through his fingers like water and just like that the air around them thickened, got
stuffy and warm and sticky. Kurt liked the way it clung to his naked skin and the way Blaine's voice
made his insides burn with need. The look he had in his eyes as he watched him approach the bed
was nothing short of predatory.

It was exhilarating to be this wanted, this desired.

He closed the distance in seconds and Blaine met him with arms outstretched, the smile on his face
gentle and loving despite the banked fire in his eyes. Their fingers twined together and Kurt felt
familiar tingles run up and down his arm as Blaine swept his thumb over his knuckles.
"Feeling better?" he asked and Kurt sighed when Blaine's other hand cupped his cheek gently.

"I'm... a bit. I'm still tense and nervous about tomorrow though. I really, really don't want to mess up," he confided honestly and Blaine zeroed in on the way his shoulders were slightly hunched instead of their usual elegant line and his posture just a tiny bit more rigid than it usually was.

He could literally see the nerves on his body and it made every instinct in him flare, wanting to make it right again.

"You won't mess up, beautiful. I believe in you. You need a good night's sleep and you'll feel much better in the morning," the Dom said, stroking his cheekbone softly and Kurt leaned into the touch on instinct.

"Not sure if I'll be able to sleep though. Too wound up," he murmured and Blaine pulled him to the bed, gesturing for him to lie down on his stomach.

"Why don't you let me deal with that? I promise you'll sleep like a baby afterwards," Blaine boasted confidently and Kurt smirked that impish little smile he had grown to love as much as the bashful, blushing one it morphed into as he looked over his shoulder as he did as asked.

"You talk big, Anderson. I hope you can deliver," he teased settling his cheek on his crossed arms and Blaine bit his shoulder blade in retaliation making him squirm against the cover and kick out a little as a jolt of heat hit his lower stomach.

Blaine took in the reaction and filed it away hungrily. He loved to catalogue Kurt's body's reaction to what he did to him, it was the most satisfying time he spent these days.

"Don't worry about that. Just relax and enjoy," he instructed sliding off the bed and lighting the few candles that had been left over from the blackout before clicking off the bedside lamp. Everywhere but the bed was immediately cast into darkness, the glow of candlelight bathing Kurt's porcelain skin with warm orange tones. The scent of vanilla curled thick into the air.

Kurt felt Blaine get back onto the bed as the mattress shifted, his heart jumping in anticipation as powerful thighs bracketed his hips. The next thing he knew he was hissing as the chill trickle of body lotion trailed down the middle of his back, kissing skin that was still overheated from the hot shower he took moments ago. The cool feeling didn't last long, only a second later Blaine's warm, broad palms were splayed on his shoulder blades, thumbs hooking together on the knobs of his spine and his long, rough fingers tickling Kurt's sides. He groaned lightly when Blaine slid his hands down, bracketing his narrow waist almost completely within his fingers before running them up again, the movement eased by the rich lotion smelling of honey and milk.

Everything was a mass of sensations from that point onwards. There was the heavy but satisfying weight of Blaine sitting on Kurt's ass as he dug the heels of his palms into the warm flesh of his back and Kurt rolled his eyes back at how good it felt to have the knots in his muscles break and melt under Blaine's careful touch.

"Oh that feels so good," he practically moaned as the motion of his Dom's hands turned to a circular one, spreading the lotion up towards his neck and down to the small of his back as he dipped the tips of his fingers into the dimples on the bottom of his spine.

"I love your skin," Blaine complimented in a low, rough voice that screamed sex as the answer to his comment. Kurt hummed in his throat when he felt Blaine lean down and kiss the middle of his back and then another a little lower. "It's beautifully white, and creamy, and kissable."
"Kissable?" Kurt chuckled quietly, not daring to speak up and risk breaking the tingling tension building between them.

"Mhm… so very, very kissable," Blaine whispered against the small of his back as his whole body shifted lower to compensate, plump lips dragging across his damp skin in the sweetest of teases.

Kurt shivered full body when he felt Blaine's mouth on his dimples, the light stubble of the day tickling the skin right above the waistband of his pyjama bottoms. Suddenly Kurt wasn't laughing anymore, he was fighting the rush of blood that leaked from his brain all the way down to his swelling length pushing against the mattress and demanding he move, just to get a little friction.

Kurt moaned at the continued light, teasing touches, trying to shut off his brain and just allow himself to feel the gentleness of his Dom, but his body worked against him, his spine straighter than he'd want it to be from a mixture of left over tension from the day and anticipation of what Blaine would do next. His muscles were still wound up tight and the fluttering in his stomach was far away from the pleasant, all-consuming one Blaine's kisses usually invoked. The undercurrent was there but it was hard to make room for it amongst the nervous coils and knots from before.

He just couldn't find peace, he realized.

Couldn't get himself to that same headspace he had when he was on his knees. That blazing place of light and trust and freedom where he could shake every chain, cut ever rope and just let Blaine take him over. His mind was being tortured with a list of all the things that could go wrong up on that stage tomorrow and there wasn't a single relaxing technique he could remember that would help him reach that state of mind.

"Relax, beautiful boy," he heard Blaine whisper from where he had slid back up and covered the entire expanse of his back with his own naked skin, not quite a command but so close to one it made his breath hitch with want, desire stirring in him like molten lava.

"I wish I could, sir. But… I can't stop being worried about tomorrow. What if I forget the words? What if I trip? Has anyone ever stage dived, face planted into the floor and broke their neck before? Because I think that might happen to me and-" he started rambling and Blaine barked out a laugh at his silly boy as he rolled away from his back and sprawled on his side, one hand still caressing his naked back and the other supporting his own head.

Their eyes met in the low, flickering light and Blaine could see that Kurt's pupils had almost eaten up his beautiful irises. "Lovely… oh my god what am I gonna do with you? You're not forgetting the words and you're not falling down. On or off stage…and-"

"But… like… what if I do, Blaine?" Kurt cut him off and Blaine rolled his eyes, tracing a star over his bare skin with the side of his thumb.

"If you do, I promise I'll jump right after you so it'll look choreographed," he said darting in and pecking his lips. Kurt squirmed.

"Promise?" he asked breathily as Blaine trailed his kisses down his jaw and to the hollow of his throat. The sub followed the hot trail helplessly and rolled over onto his back.

"If you relax… I promise," Blaine murmured and Kurt carded his hand through his curls as his Dom sucked a gentle mark onto his collarbone, where it would be covered by the uniform and the only person knowing it was there would be him.

Blaine had long since come to terms with the knowledge that he was a possessive asshole where
Kurt was concerned and so he sucked just a little bit harder until he felt Kurt's fingers tighten and he wrenched a sweet little whimper from the back of his throat.

"Ah. W-well, this isn't exactly… oh, Blaine…exactly… um… h-helping me relax, is it?" he stuttered, mind blinking in and out against the waves of tingles forming where Blaine's lips touched his skin and spreading in concentric circles all over his body.

Blaine smiled smugly against him, undeniably pleased by how undone he was making Kurt come. And as he was worrying his teeth on his skin an idea popped into his head firing his blood. He released the suction of his mouth with a wet pop and Kurt's hips jerked upwards. Blaine took a moment to admire the deep, blooming purple mark he had left before he pulled back to look into his subs beautifully flushed face, swollen lips parted and damp, eyes closed and fluttering.

So fucking beautiful.

"I have an idea… if you'd be willing to try something with me, beautiful boy," Blaine said lowly and Kurt hummed in agreement, not really willing to open his eyes just yet as he let up his grip in his hair and began to stroke through the thick mass again. "Kurt, lovely. I really wish you'd look at me and pay attention just for a second, baby. I need you to be focused on what I'm saying so you can make an honest decision," Blaine ordered gently, hoping that his suggestion would help Kurt relax and tap into his natural submissiveness. Blue eyes opened and Blaine felt like the ground beneath them was shaking with the force of their beauty. He was a slave to that look and he never wanted to escape.

"Sir?" Kurt asked, voice high and throaty and Blaine shook out of his thoughts.

"Sorry baby, those eyes of yours. I'll never get tired of looking into them," he whispered and Kurt felt his cheeks heat up.

"Sap," he teased but there was an underlining of warmth and deep rooted satisfaction his words brought. He felt loved and admired and the sub in him thrived on it, only hungry for more, more, more.

"Only for you, lovely," he smiled, all white teeth, hand stroking up his side slowly. "Now the thing I wanted to suggest… how would you feel about exploring some of the things we put in our contract?" he asked carefully and felt relief wash over him when Kurt's only reaction was genuine curiosity with no fear or discomfort present.

"Um… tonight, sir?" Kurt asked and waited for the response while his body burned with anticipation of what could happen.

They did some things, sexually, and Kurt had loved every last one of them. Blaine was attentive and gentle and caring and he had no doubt he would be taken care of and kept safe throughout everything they tried.

"Yeah," Blaine murmured as he held his eyes seriously, looking for any hint that he didn't want this. "You've been wound up tight these last few days with everything you've had on your plate and tomorrow has been looming over you like this giant cloud of stress. I've noticed you're not as settled lately, like you want orders from me more."

Kurt licked his lips and nodded, hands coming down to rest of his shoulders and knead like a cat. "My head feels too cluttered to be calm and I'm… restless, more and more lately and I don't know why."

"To be honest I've been restless too, lovely. My dominance had been acting out." It had been
latching onto Kurt's need to be ordered and wanting to go into overdrive. Only an iron will had stopped him from abusing his power, but he didn't like feeling that on edge. “And if I’m being brutally honest, I feel like it’s been building up since we met and that night… the night of your punishment I know it contributed to how much I lost it.”

“I’m sorry,” Kurt apologised immediately.

“No, lovely, no. It’s not your fault I can’t keep myself under control. I just feel so much with you and I’m still trying to adjust to the increase in hormones and instincts now that you’re mine.” He smiled. “We’re both learning new things right now.”

"Can I do anything, sir?" Kurt offered immediately and it soothed the beast inside and made him purr because Kurt was just so naturally submissive without even knowing it and it did things to him on a level he didn't wholly understand.

"Of course you can, beautiful boy," he praised, feeding into his need to take care of him and watched a small smile bloom on Kurt's face. "I think it's time to try kinks from our contract out, I believe it would help both of us and you'd feel more relaxed and subdued and I'd feel more in control knowing I helped you feel that way so… what do you think?" he asked softly and Kurt bit his lip gently as he thought about it.

It did make sense. They hadn't explored the true dynamic of their sexual relationship and though he had actively avoided the submissive sex ed classes he did know that incorporating kinks into the bedroom was a very large part of maintaining harmony in a bond. And truthfully Kurt could almost feel the thrumming of his submissiveness beneath his skin fighting its way to the surface so that it could get closer to Blaine and all that he was offering. If he had any further doubts then his experience whilst kneeling was all he needed to think about to banish them.

"What did you have in mind?" he asked quietly after a while, making sure he had thought about it properly like his Dom would want him to. Blaine brushed a stray lock of hair from his forehead.

"Nothing too much for our first time. Considering where your discomfort comes from I was thinking a blindfold? And maybe we could play with some light restraint... maybe just for your hands? Not tied or cuffed for our first time but you could hold on to the bedpost like the good boy I know you are for as long as you feel like you can take it?" Blaine said honestly, voice getting heated towards the end and Kurt could already feel his skin tingle with the prospect of being completely submissive for Blaine.

He wanted it. The sub in him craved it. And he knew that if he felt uncomfortable Blaine would stop right away. "Okay," he whispered finally.

"You sure, baby?" he checked one more time, defying the blood rushing south to harden him fully, rendering him almost unable to think coherently.

"Yes… I want to try it with you," Kurt said honestly and Blaine swept in to kiss his lips soundly before he got out of bed. He headed over and opened the small chest on his desk Kurt knew contained the toys he had bought for them. Kurt wasn't allowed to look in so it was always a torturous mystery as to what the box really contained and his over active imagination had come up with a lot of possibilities.

Blaine pulled a silky looking, burgundy blindfold out of the lined case and ran his fingers over the soft fabric, blood boiling as he imagined how it would look against that porcelain skin. He groaned quietly, cock throbbing at the mental image that was about to become a reality and walked back to the bed, licking his lips when he saw his beautiful sub, loose limbed on his back just waiting for him,
creamy skin of his chest exposed and flushed down to his rose bud nipples and the bulge in his pajama pants quite obvious as he stared at Blaine with lust filled eyes.

"Remember you're free to stop whenever you feel like it okay?" Blaine said as he knelt on the bed next to him.

"I know, sir. I trust you," Kurt responded and Blaine leaned to kiss his lips.

"And you remember our system?" he checked as he pulled away.

"Green for keep going, yellow for unsure and red for stop," he repeated for him obediently and Blaine's head spun with just how perfect his boy was.

"Ready, baby?" he asked and Kurt whimpered gently as he nodded his assent.

Blaine lifted his head carefully and fastened the blindfold over his eyes, the knot on the back of Kurt's head small and soft enough not to cause discomfort when he pressed down on it.

"Is this okay?" he checked once again.

"Yes, sir. I can't even feel it," Kurt said squirming as his sight was taken away from him and he was left in the darkness, Blaine's scent surrounding him as well as the heady smell of honey and milk left over on his skin.

It was exhilarating just how heightened every other sense got when one was taken away and Kurt bit his lip hard to prevent the whimper that was building in his chest from escaping his mouth. He really was trusting Blaine completely here and it felt heady and new and thrilling.

There was a light motion from where his Dom shifted on the bed and he curled his fingers into the cover underneath him.

"Arms up, lovely," Blaine's voice drifted to him, his cadence so much deeper and richer than he'd realized, laced with gentle dominance and Kurt shivered as he obeyed instinctively. He lifted his hands up and felt Blaine's fingers guiding his own to wrap around the cool metal of the headboard of their bed.

"Hold on and don't let go unless you start feeling uncomfortable. In that case you're free to let go at any point and use yellow or red to tell me whether you want me to keep going," Blaine instructed and Kurt gave him an affirmative nod, his body flushed with dancing nerves and the desire he felt for Blaine to touch him.

The sensory deprivation made it so that every move Blaine made translated as a phantom touch on his skin and it was almost provocative with how it made him want to let go of his hold already and grasp onto that hard muscle and pull his body so it was covering his completely.

The bed shifted and suddenly there was a warm breath tingling on his lips. He strained his neck up blindly, trying to kiss his Dom but he denied him, pulling back just enough so that Kurt could feel the coy smile sitting there before he lowered his head down ghosting his breath over the heated skin of his neck and all the way down to his chest.

Kurt gasped when he felt a lightning fast lick on his left nipple followed by a puff of cool air that made the sensitive bud harden and his back arch up at a sharp angle to try and chase the heat of Blaine’s mouth.

"You look so beautiful like this," Blaine praised, hand gliding from his navel, up the middle of his
It felt like lightning on his skin, the frustration of the pseudo restraint only heightening the sensation.

"You still holding on for me, baby?" he asked low and sultry and Kurt nodded frantically, tightening the hold on the metal almost painfully. "Good boy."

And as a reward he curled his fingers into the sides of Kurt's pyjama pants and briefs to pull them off in one fluid motion.

Kurt groaned at the kiss of cool air on his now exposed, heated body, feeling absolutely decadent at having just a blindfold on and nothing else while Blaine was still half clothed. His back hit the mattress again with a muted thump and his toes curled into the coverlet as he waited with bated breath for what Blaine would do next. Everything else had suddenly floated away from him like wisps of smoke except that dizzy drive to submit and obey. There were no worries about set lists, no cares about singing, just a simple eagerness to please his Dom and make him happy and proud of him.

"I should just keep you like this, tied to the bed and waiting for me," Blaine mused darkly, feathering the lightest of kisses over the jut of his hip bone before nipping at the tight skin. "You look so pretty spread out. Would you like that baby?"

Kurt opened his mouth to reply but all that fell out was a moan.

He felt Blaine shift up the bed again and then he felt a hot exhale against his ear that was pure Dominance. "I asked you a question."

"Yes, sir," Kurt gasped out immediately, so quick to try and please. "I want to be a good boy for you."

Blaine rumbled his satisfaction deep in his chest, the Dominant side of him eating it up and craving more; always hungry, always wanting.

"You are," Blaine praised and licked his way down the side of his neck, liking the way Kurt's skin shined with *him* when he pulled back. He wanted to mark him all over. "You're my best boy."

The words went straight to his aching cock that was leaking pre-come all over his stomach and Kurt bared his neck shamelessly for more attention, greedy and wanton as he writhed on the bed and readjusted his grip on the now warmed metal in his hands.

Blaine mouthed at his jaw for a little while, stubble scraping the skin a little red and raw before he moved his attention back down again, sparing a second to kiss the impressive hickey he'd left on his collarbone, and took Kurt's right nipple into his mouth and began to massage the bud with his tongue.

Kurt keened pulling down hard on the bed frame at the first prolonged touch he'd given him since they started this.

"Blaine… sir… oh god…” he choked out as the Dom continued to suckle at his chest without mercy; hard in turns, soft in others and Kurt felt close to passing out or coming there and then, he wasn't even sure at this point.

Blaine pulled back with a scrape of teeth that had Kurt giving a full body shudder and a little cry of loss, hips rolling upwards into nothing but air as his arms strained. He was wrecked already, muscles bunching in his arms, lips bitten and bee stung, color high on his cheeks and spread downwards over
his marked body, cock an angry red and twitching as it leaked.

God he was stunning.

The Dominant side of him delighted in seeing him like this. Completely under his control, trusting him to see him through to the end implicitly.

"Sir?" Kurt asked shakily and Blaine smoothed a hand up his now damp flank from the beginnings of sweat.

"I've got you, lovely. I'm gonna take such good care of you," he promised as he leant over him to kiss down the center of his chest. "You're doing so well."

Down, down he went, bracing his hands on either side of Kurt's hips, dipping his tongue into his navel which had his sub sucking in his stomach and then he was at the promise land and licking a thick strip up the underside of Kurt's throbbing erection.

Kurt bowed off the bed with a loud cry.

The yearning he felt to let go of his self-restraint and grasp at his Dom was almost too much to bear but he wanted to be good for Blaine and that undercurrent of wanting to please got him through the burning need.

It didn't stop him from whimpering and begging, however.

"Please, sir… please, please, please," he chanted, turning his face into the inside of his bicep and pressing his teeth against the skin as he felt the very tip of Blaine's tongue lapping at the end of his cock where he was leaking. Tasting him.

His eyes rolled back inside his head beneath the blindfold.

"Mm, I could taste you forever," Blaine rumbled contently against his sensitive skin, the vibrations making him go insane in between little kitten licks. "Would you like that? Do you like my mouth on you baby? I've been dreaming about doing this since seeing you on your knees for me at Christmas. You were so beautiful then. Such a good boy, you took it so well I almost lost my mind."

Kurt managed a strangled moan but his mouth was so dry from the force of his panting that he physically couldn't get out a word. He shifted his legs restlessly, the slid of silk under his feet heating up fast.

A broad hand grasped his thigh and coaxed it to spread wide and Kurt unabashedly followed the silent command fervently and moaned from his chest when he felt Blaine slip his body in-between them. He felt like he was going to lose his mind.

Blaine settled on his haunches, pulling Kurt closer so he was practically spread over his lap, his arms pulling taut and the bedframe creaking.

"Look at you," he breathed, feeling like he'd been knocked in the gut by the picture Kurt made. His cock was hard enough to cut diamonds at this point, every little thing Kurt was doing was driving his need to sink between his thighs higher.

He took Kurt in his hand, holding him at the base. "Keep holding on," he commanded fiercely before diving straight in.

Kurt screamed his name, legs clenching around him hard. Blaine loved the weight of Kurt on his
tongue and ignored the awkward angle he had to bend over to get him in his mouth. He began a vigorous pace, rewarding Kurt for his patience for teasing him so long beforehand.

"Oh god, oh god… Blaine… ah…” Kurt rambled before biting his lips to keep the sounds in. He had to be waking up the whole house and he felt a flash of heat twist in his gut at the thought that was so, so wrong but felt so good.

Blaine pulled off briefly. "Scream my name. I want to hear you," he ordered roughly and Kurt did just that, helpless to do anything else but follow Blaine's lead.

That scalding, wet heat surrounded him once more and Kurt keened, fingernails digging into his palms around their hold as his pictured just what Blaine might look like. His plump perfect lips stretched around his cock, his dark, golden eyes staring up at him intently from behind those thick lashes. He moaned and tried to shove his hips upwards, the only bit of movement he could get in this position but then Blaine was holding him down, making him take it how he wanted to give it and it was the ultimate show on control that had Kurt's head spinning, his submissive purring.

"I need to come… please, sir… I need it, please, please," he begged feeling like he needed that permission as much as the feeling itself.

Blaine continued to suck him in tightly at a relentless pace, his tongue finding the most knee weakening place under the head of his cock and playing there.

"Blaine," he pleaded again feeling like he was going to cry with how much he needed it. He was sweating all over, body a ball of tension and heat, insides a mess of pleasure fired nerves.

Blaine pulled off for a split second to mumble, "Come."

He was gone in seconds.

There was no room in his stratosphere for any embarrassment over how fast he'd come undone, no room for anything but the mind numbing pleasure he felt that made him black out for a few seconds in the hardest orgasm of his life.

When he came to he could hear the quick slap of hand on flesh, the familiar grunt and gasps of Blaine as he brought himself to completion while all the time he continued to lap at Kurt's softening erection.

The oversensitivity had him squirming but he said nothing, just revelled in finally hearing Blaine moan loud and deep as he reached his own orgasm and then he was pulling away and flopping down beside him breathing hard.

Blaine's world had just been thoroughly fucking rocked.

He had the taste of Kurt still thick on his tongue, the sound of his cries in his ears and his Dominant side was quiet for the first time in weeks. He hadn't realised just how much he needed this until right this moment. Everything seemed so much clearer. Looking to his left he saw Kurt still splayed out beautifully against the cover, chest heaving, pulse thrumming in his neck and he was still holding on.

Fuck. It was best thing he had ever seen.

He rolled over and scooted up the bed smoothing his hands up Kurt's shaking arms until he reached his white knuckled hands. "You can let go now, lovely. You were so good for me. Such a good boy," he praised softly.
After care was one of the most important things to remember when playing with this sort of sex and he wasn't about to let Kurt drop. No way, no how. He'd already messed up once already in their relationship, he was trying desperately not to let that happen again.

Kurt did as asked and feeling began to return to his fingers, the appendages tingling with the rush of new blood. Blaine guided his arms down to his sides and reached for his blindfold, whispering sweet nothings to him all the time.

"We're going to take this off now okay, baby?"

Kurt made a small noise of assent and then gentle fingers were peeling it off and Kurt was blinking damp eyes into the low light of the candles.

"There's my lovely boy," Blaine smiled at him and Kurt blushed and smiled shyly back feeling incredibly mellowed out and clingy all of a sudden.

Blaine searched around the bed for a second before holding up the bottle of moisturizer he had tossed earlier and squirted some in his palms. He reached for Kurt's arms and hands and began to massage out every knot or ache that might have been left over, making sure to concentrate on his hands.

Kurt sighed as Blaine's thumb made circles into his palm over the half crescent indentations he'd left there. He pulled the hand up and placed a tender kiss to the middle of it and Kurt smiled again.

"Love you," his Dom mumbled against his skin, kissing again.

"I love you too," Kurt replied, words coming out sleepy and sated as his eyes drooped. "Can you hold me, sir?" he requested. He didn't want to fall asleep without Blaine around him, it was very important to something in him all of a sudden.

"Of course, lovely. Whatever you need," Blaine acquiesced, taking his other hand into his as he laid down beside him and urged him to snuggle closer with his head on his chest. He continued his massage once they were settled and Kurt hummed in contentment.

"I liked that," he mumbled, nosing at his chest, half asleep already.

"Yeah?" Blaine smiled, turning his head so he could kiss him on the forehead. "It wasn't too much?"

"Uh, uh," he denied, giving in and closing his heavy eyelids. "Just what we needed. You can be clever sometimes."

Blaine laughed quietly. "You're adorable."

Kurt hummed again but it was clear he was hardly with it anymore.

"You were so good, baby. I love you," Blaine whispered to him, sending him off to dreamland with loving words and heavy praises and soon enough he was joining him.

Burt hadn't been in a theatre before in his life.

The closest he had been was that charity shindig his son helped throw which was an eye opening experience to say the least, but it wasn't something that had ever bothered him before or even now. He definitely didn't lose any sleep over it for himself, but there were times when he wished that money wasn't so scarce and hard to come by, that he wasn't fighting to put food on the table every
damn day so that he could satisfy another's curiosity of the place.

It had started with Elizabeth.

His Lizzy who never complained and always got on with it come hell or high water with the brightest smile and steeliest inner strength he had ever seen. There were times though whenever they had the opportunity to travel by Westerville, which admittedly was few and far between, that they'd walked past this same theatre and she'd slow down with a look of hungry curiosity and almost longing settling in her lovely features.

He knew that's where Kurt got it from, the love of show tunes and theatricality was all Elizabeth and it made his chest ache sometimes with just how alike they were. And just like his mom, he never complained about not being able to see a show, never demanded he be taken here even though it was clear that he was dying to. Burt was silently glad his son had gotten his chance to see the world he was always so curious about.

He glanced over the foyer towards his son who was practically vibrating out of his glowing skin as he peered around him with round almost childlike awe. Blaine who was next to him, staring at him with an awe all of his own, seemed to realise too how much this meant to Kurt and Burt shook his head at the Dom with a smile.

Poor kid was whipped.

"Burt, you remember Lucy and Andree Duval. Nick's parents," Dana interrupted his musings to introduce and Burt turned his head to greet them.

Andree cut as sharp a figure as he did at the Charity Night, his swarthy skin tone standing out amongst the crowd and his pale purple shirt under his charcoal suit. Lucy was the picture of elegance at his side in a floral maxi dress that kissed the floor and tied around her neck under the curls bouncing on her shoulders.

"Carole, it's lovely to see you again. And Burt, you cleaned up well once more, mon ami," Andree teased with a wink. Dana preened in the corner of his vision, obviously pleased that her taste was being recognised as she was the one to pick Burt's suit ignoring his protests of him being comfortable in his flannel.

Burt tugged at his collar irritably and ignored Carole rolling her eyes at his insistent fidgeting. "All this suit wearing's gonna start giving me fancy ideas."

"Like running for Head?" Jared joked coming up to the group and catching the tail end of the conversation. He leant down and bestowed a gentle kiss on Dana's dark head almost unconsciously.

"Exactly that," Burt grumbled and pointed at him to emphasise and they all laughed. "Dunno what I'm thinking."

"Oh hush," Carole admonished with a grin, putting her hand on his arm before facing the others. "He hasn't stopped talking about it."

"I won't go far in politics if you're selling out all my secrets so easily woman," Burt teased and Carole laughed with a light blush.

"This idea for your campaign is inspired though," Andree complimented. He hadn't been available to come to the last meeting and so had caught up from the minutes taken. "Such a simple thing and yet we've never really considered it before."
Burt coughed a little, not used to compliments from such a high powered businessman but he took it in stride. "It's definitely an untapped resource. Could count on one hand how many people voted last year and I was one of them."

"Well if we're lucky that'll change this year," Dana nodded. "And we don't need one of our competitors getting wind of what we're doing before we have everything in place."

"A few of them will copy the idea eventually," Jared pointed out.

"But they're not relatable," Lucy argued. "They're not going to listen to someone who doesn't know what life is like for them. Who isn't offering them anything with a drive to follow through on it."

"The key is to make them believe things are gonna get better. Aint none of them gonna vote if they don't believe it," Burt said plainly.

"Paul has been running some numbers for me during the week. We'll be able to get an idea of just how many people we'll need to convince on top of the supporters we know we have already," Dana said.

"Which isn't too high a number right now and the election isn't that far away. Five months," Jared sighed.

"It'll get better," Andree nodded surely, clapping him on the arm. "People are adverse to change but they can be brought around when it is the right thing to do. Oh, hi you two!" he greeted someone behind Burt's back and they all turned to see the Sterling's.

Jeremy and Lillian walked over to the group a little hesitantly but relaxed once they saw all the easy smiles they were greeted with.

They were dressed nicely in casual jeans and Burt was immediately envious of how comfy they looked. Jeremy had a white shirt without a jacket but instead had a grey jumper over the top and Lillian had a pretty blouse that ruffled around the cleavage.

"The boys are about to go backstage," the blonde man announced, thumbing over his shoulder.

"That's our cue to take our seats then," Dana nodded, the serious conversation being put off as they got back into parent mode. She blew a kiss and threw a wink towards her son and his friends. "Good luck boys!"

"Go sit down you embarrassing woman," Blaine called back immediately and all the parents laughed.

"And to think I taught that boy manners," she faux lamented loudly.

"He was always a trouble child," Jared sighed, laying it on thick.

"I can hear you, you know. And it was Cooper. I was the nice kid," Blaine grumbled, giving his parents a glare as Kurt tried and failed to hide his giggled behind his hand.

Blaine growled playfully and grabbed Kurt around the waist, hefting him up and walking off with him backstage as he flailed and smacked at his back demanding to be put down amongst his laughing.

Nick smirked at them and then followed with Jeff at his side, the blonde shyly linking their fingers and tucking in close to his Dom to avoid the crush of other people around them. Jeff spared one last
look at his parents who gave him encouraging and reassuring smiles before he disappeared.

And slowly but surely the rest of the other Warblers began to follow. Dave squeezed Sebastian's hand and leaned in close to whisper in his ear before walking away leaving Seb with a secret smile on his face before he masked it. David kissed Corrine goodbye as lewdly as ever and Miriam pecked Wes on the cheek, her now almost orange hair standing out amongst the others from where it was pinned haphazardly with a pencil of all things in a bun on top of her head.

"Knock em dead, tiny," Ryan called after Thad who turned on his heel and took a running jump at his Dom, arms wrapping around his neck and smacking a kiss on his mouth before hopping back down and running off again leaving the burly football player dazed in his wake.

Burt smiled seeing it all. How in love and happy all their kids were and it hardened his resolve to win this damn election so everyone else had the opportunity to get this lucky.

He thought back to how miserable and hopeless Lima was. How the Dom's around McKinley weren't stable or grounded and were always lashing out, how the subs were lost and starved of proper attention and structure. It should never have gotten this bad and he knew that it wasn't an overnight problem, that he couldn't fix it with a magic wand even if he did win Head, but it was a start in the right direction and that's all they needed. Just a little push, some momentum to get them going.

"Carter should already be in there holding our seats. Vanessa couldn't make it, she couldn't change her shift at the hospital so I've been charged with taking enough pictures for the two of us because, and I quote, 'Carter just doesn't do it right'," Lucy informed them with a smirk that had them laughing, bringing Burt back into the now again as the small group began to move in the direction of the queue at the main doors.

"How's he managing to reserve that many seats?" Burt asked. "He beating them off with a stick?"

"I wouldn't put it past him," Dana grinned and her sub rolled his eyes fondly at her desire to incite chaos even though she knew otherwise.

"Hikaru reserved them. He's in there too already with Tara, they're making nice with the other schools faculty," Jared informed them.

"His favourite job," Lillian laughed remembering the last time they'd met and how he'd complained on and on about how pretentious Dalton's nearest rivals Crawford Country Day's, which was an all-girls boarding school, Principle was.

"Wait for us!" Carmen called, rushing over and they looked over their shoulders to see the blonde woman rushing towards them with a flushed Madeline trailing on her heels; phone, purse, camera and programme all juggling in her hands.

"Why are we not surprised?" Andree jeered at them good-naturedly.

"Bite me," Carmen huffed, screeching to a halt and almost ploughing into Jeremy who reached out a hand to steady her. She beamed at him. "Thanks, doll."

"I like how I get to carry everything!" Madeline grumbled as she joined them, barely holding onto her programme.

"Sorry, sweetie."

She reached out to grab the camera and got her hand smacked away.
"My camera."

Carmen rolled her eyes and faux whispered, "Artists," over her shoulder and got a hearty glare in return from her wife when she faced her again.

"Fine, fine," the blonde laughed and grabbed the programme and stole a quick kiss in reward. Madeline fought the smile but it eventually drew across her full lips.

"There she is," Carmen beamed.

Madeline flashed the camera in her face.

___________________________________________________________

"Let's go through it one more time," Wes said, clapping his hands together.

"God noooooooooo!" Trent lamented amongst a million and one groans.

They were in their own dressing room backstage. It wasn't the largest space to move about in with that many bodies but they managed the fundamentals as well as putting finishing touches on hair and uniforms, Kurt going crazy with lapel straightening and hair spray wielding.

"That's a little dramatic," the Dom said dryly looking at all of them with a stern eye.

"No offense man but I have to agree with the masses," David spoke up, wiping the beginnings of sweat from his temples away with a towel he always kept in his bag. There were too many bodies in here and the room was getting muggy.

"Yeah," Thad agreed sheepishly. "I hate to say it, and don't tell Ryan, but there is such a thing as over practising."

"The council has spoken!" Nick cheered and Wes scowled even harder.

"You can bet your sweet asses Vocal Adrenaline will be practising all the way to the stage," Sebastian countered from where he was teasing stray strands of his hair to stand upright with the rest in the mirror.

"Aw, you think my ass is sweet?" Blaine simpered and met that death glare reflection head on.

"I hate your face."

Blaine grabbed his sub and pressed said face into the side of Kurt's. "Lovely, he's being mean to me."

"Don't run your smart mouth then, sir," he replied easily, turning into him and smirking, fingers raising and curling around his ear.

"Rude. You were much nicer to me and my mouth this morning," he said sadly, with oodles of suggestion dripping all over the fake tone.

Kurt flushed bright red as the expected jeers and whistles came their way and he could feel Blaine's own smirk against his cheek. He tried to pull away but Blaine was having none of it and only curled in closer. It wasn't helping that now all he could picture was this morning when Blaine had woken him with a blow job that had him seeing stars. It seemed like once he had started he didn't want to stop and now Kurt didn't know what to do with himself.
"You're such a jerk. An exhibitionist jerk," Kurt complained trying to bat him away.

"But you love me anyway," Blaine grinned, kissing over his cheekbone.

"Not if you keep broadcasting our sex life I don't."

"Lies!"

Wes cleared his throat pointedly. "If we could get back on topic?"

"But this is far more interesting," Jon complained from his sprawl on the floor.

"I think everyone's got the choreography down," Jeff said quietly, not wanting to rock the boat. "And there isn't really much space in here anyway."

"That's why it's looking shit," David said. "And big foot over here keeps stepping on my toes."

"I resemble that remark," Trent grumbled.

"We know," Nick chipped in from one of the only chairs in the room he had commandeered for him and Jeff. "My pinky toe is never going to be the same again thanks to your elephant feet."

"Low blow, bro. Low blow," he pointed at him.

"I don't think I can run through this all again. Every time we do it my stomach just knots again," Kurt admitted, the anxiety making his heart flutter like a hummingbird was trapped in there.

"You're going to be amazing, baby," Blaine reassured him on a low whisper, hands massaging over his hips and lower back soothingly.

Kurt caught Jeff's eye across the room and he looked as sick as he felt. He managed to throw his friend a weak smile and Jeff threw one back, their eyes speaking silently.

Oh my god I'm gonna have a heart attack.

I'm gonna throw up on stage.

Shall we just run away together now?

Would they be able to find us before the curtain went up?

"I can hear you thinking," Blaine said in his ear, amused.

Kurt broke eye contact and turned back to his Dom, feeling himself begin to shake with the amount of nervous energy racing through his veins. He felt like he needed to do laps to calm down. "I can't help it. This is different from performing at school."

"Why?" Blaine asked softly, nuzzling their noses. "It's basically all the same people."

Kurt gave him flat look. "No it isn't! It's basically the crème of all Ohio, not just Westerville."

"Not exactly all, its only Sectionals. And besides, you're better than every single one of them anyway," Blaine said with conviction. "You're going to dazzle all of them with how beautiful you and your voice are."

Kurt's heart warmed but it didn't quell the uneasy feeling upsetting his stomach. "You're biased, sir."
"Doesn't make it any less true, lovely," Blaine countered before pressing a soft, lingering kiss to his lips. Kurt hummed and settled into it, wrapping his arms around his Dom's neck as their mouths melted into a familiar back and forth, a slow give and take that was intoxicating and strangely calming at the same time.

They broke apart on a soft inhale of breath and Blaine stroked his knuckles over his jaw.

"Now take a few deep breaths," he commanded gently and Kurt allowed himself to sink under Blaine's steady care as he followed the instructions. In. Out. In. Out. "Good boy," he whispered only for his ears and Kurt preened under the address, shuffling closer and tightening his hold around his neck.

"Okay, fine! If we're not going to practice then let's at least go and watch the competition," Wes folded under the sheer amount of discord. Even he knew when to back off when he was beat and he had to admit that there was no point pushing them too far and then having an unhappy group walking onto that stage. They didn't get extra points for best scowls.

They began to file out of the door: Nick and Jeff bringing up the rear.

"I know you're worried, angel. I wish you wouldn't be," Nick whispered in his ear as they walked. Jeff gave him a side glance before ducking his head and biting his lip. "I can't help it, sir. I'm sorry."

"Don't apologise for being nervous, angel. I didn't mean it that way." Nick hastily corrected, squeezing the slim fingers that were linked through his and leading him safely around backstage. Nick cherished all these little unconscious moments that showed him how much Jeff trusted him to take care of him. "I shit my pants every time I step out there. I just think that you're worried about more than that and I just don't want you to be. The choreography you did is amazing."

"The dances before that basically consisted of side stepping and a little walk-running," Jeff deferred modestly.

Nick stopped them and let go of his hand so he could cup his face tenderly and Jeff was now familiar with the mixture of love and sadness on Nick's handsome face as he stared at him seriously in the near darkness of backstage. "I'm going to spend every single day of the rest of my life making sure you think more of yourself, angel."

Jeff swallowed past the lump that formed in his throat and cupped his hands over Nick's wrists, leaning into his left palm. "I'd…" he took a deep breath and followed through. "I'd like that, sir," he finished shyly and Nick smiled slow and wide before leaning in and capturing his top lip between his.

"I love you," Nick whispered against his lips and Jeff nodded frantically feeling it down to his bones, clutching him so tightly his nails were digging into the thin skin around his wrists.

"Guys?" David whisper-called back to them. "You okay?"

"Yeah," Nick nodded against him, the word coming out a little breathless. "Yeah," he repeated a little stronger and Jeff giggled a little that now Nick needed a minute to get himself together.

"Well stop making out before Wes makes you sit in the naughty corner for not paying attention."

They pulled back and looked at each other for a moment before smiling, Jeff ducking his head as they re-joined the group feeling much more grounded and in tune with each other.
Maybe they could really do this, Jeff thought hopefully for once.

He tried to keep that mantra in his head as he stepped up to centre stage with Kurt on his left, his heart pounding a beat he was sure everyone would be able to hear, his stomach rolling in waves and his throat so constricted he was afraid nothing was going to come out.

Blaine's solo of, _Where is the Love_, with David helping to fill in on some of the rapping parts had the crowds hyped up and eager for more. The Dom just had an effortless charisma to him that spoke to people and left them wanting more as well as an amazing voice and Jeff didn't know how they were going to be able to follow that.

He caught Kurt's eye and could see his friend was just as scared as he was as the applause died down in anticipation for the next song.

A song that they had decided on and that had come about completely by accident.

Kurt, Jeff, Nick and Blaine had decided to eat lunch in the choir room on the day Wes had set aside for them to suggest song choices for their theme for Sectionals and Blaine was messing around at the piano, playing anything and everything that came to his fingertips as Kurt fed him pieces of fruit and stole sticky kisses in between from his perch on top of the glossy instrument.

Nick and Jeff were tucked into each other in the corner of the love seat that they had turned to face the piano, the blondes legs slung over his Dom's and face tucked into his neck while he played with his fingers.

It was after the laughter had died down from Blaine's truly appalling rendition of _twinkle, twinkle little star_ that the curly haired Dom took a moment before the song began to take shape in the air. There was a telling moment of silence as the haunting music played, an iridescent burst of knowing for all four of them and then Kurt began to sing.

It was so soft at first, barely even audible as words, more like a hum or lullaby that soothed all of them and Jeff found himself joining in gently without even consciously wanting to, their voices finding a harmony that joined not only as sounds but as souls too and there was no going back from finding something like that.

The lights behind them dropped suddenly so that the rest of the Warblers were cast in shadow and two harsh spotlights fell on both of them, making Jeff squint and come back into the present with a thundering realization of, _oh god this is really happening_.

He wanted the floor to swallow him up. He wanted Nick to take him home so he could crawl under their covers, in their bed, surrounded by their joint scent and just breathe it in safe and secure.

He closed his eyes as the first keys of the song played and tried to picture he was back there. Back in bed with his head resting on Nick's bare chest, his heart a steady thrum under his ear as strong fingers sifted through his hair.

He pictured that they were just practicing. That no one was there to tell him he was doing it wrong, that he wasn't so vulnerable, that there wasn't any pressure. His skin loosened, fists unclenching and his heart soared with every note tinkling from the piano. He could do this because Nick was right there, behind him physically, but holding his hand in his mind.

He pictured Nick's smile. His voice in his ear. His hands on his skin… and opened his eyes and
began to sing.

You've got the words to change a nation
But you're biting your tongue
You've spent a lifetime stuck in silence
Afraid you'll say something wrong
If no one ever hears it how we gonna learn your song
So come on, come on
Come on, come on
You've got a heart as loud as lions
So why let your voice be tamed?
Baby we're a little different
There's no need to be ashamed
You've got the light to fight the shadows
So stop hiding it away
Come on, Come on

Kurt felt like he was under the strictest scrutiny. Like he was back to that headspace where he was cowering from the clamour of people literally camped outside Blaine's house after his claiming, all of them waiting for a chance to claw off a piece of him. That every cell that made him who he was, was being put under the microscope and studied and analysed.

The first keys of the piano introduction started and Kurt truly didn't know if he was ready to be this open with a room full of people, half of which hated him on principle alone. The urge to go down on his knees and crawl back to Blaine was terrifyingly strong but he fought back the instinctual response because he was strong enough to do this.

He heard Jeff begin to sing and it hardened his resolve and doubled his inner strength. His once broken best friend was shining in this moment, stronger than he had ever seen him in so many years. They were more than these people thought they were and they would prove it too for this small moment on stage.

And without any further reservations Kurt joined his voice to Jeff’s for the chorus facing out into that crowd of people and all their preconceptions.

I wanna sing, I wanna shout
I wanna scream till the words dry out
So put it in all of the papers,
I'm not afraid
They can read all about it
Read all about it, oh
Oh-oh-oh
Oh-oh-oh
Oh-oh-oh
Oh-oh-oh

Kurt took the next verse with feeling, stepping out towards the edge of the stage while he poured his heart out. Completely naked on stage without any armour.

At night we're waking up the neighbours
While we sing away the blues
Making sure that we remember yeah
‘Cause we all matter too
If the truth has been forbidden
Then we’re breaking all the rules
So come on, come on
Come on, come on,
Let’s get the TV and the radio
To play our tune again
It’s ‘bout time we got some airplay of our version of events

Kurt strode up to Jeff and grasped his hand, singing right at him with all the love and feeling that was threatening to shatter his heart.

There’s no need to be afraid
I will sing with you my friend
Come on, come on

They faced outwards, still joined at the hand. A wall of naked emotion but so, so alive and unyielding as they stood together against the rest of the world.

I wanna sing, I wanna shout
I wanna scream till the words dry out
So put it in all of the papers,
I’m not afraid
They can read all about it
Read all about it, oh
Oh-oh-oh
Oh-oh-oh
Oh-oh-oh
Oh-oh-oh
Oh-oh-oh

Yeah we’re all wonderful, wonderful people
So when did we all get so fearful?
Now we’re finally finding our voices
So take a chance, come help me sing this

The lights came up behind them and the rest of the Warblers joined in, a wall of sound, an unstoppable message to give.

Yeah we’re all wonderful, wonderful people
So when did we all get so fearful?
And now we’re finally finding our voices
So take a chance, come help me sing this

I wanna sing, I wanna shout
I wanna scream till the words dry out
So put it in all of the papers,
I’m not afraid
They can read all about it
Read all about it, oh
Oh-oh-oh
Oh-oh-oh
Oh-oh-oh
Oh-oh-oh
Oh-oh-oh
Oh-oh-oh

Jeff felt his voice get hoarse with emotion as he took the next few lines on his own again, eyes stinging and heavy with the threat of tears as he finally spoke. Nothing had ever felt more true to him than these words and he faced Kurt, his amazing best friend who wouldn't let him fall right before the end.

I wanna sing, I wanna shout
I wanna scream till the words dry out

Kurt gave him a tremulous smile as he finished off the last lines of the song for himself and it felt like cleansing his soul, like he needed to get it off his chest before he could be completely free of it. All those horrible slanderous articles, all those people like Brad who thought they knew better.

So put it in all of the papers,
I'm not afraid
They can read all about it
Read all about it, oh

The moment between the end of the song and the moment people started clapping and rising to their feet seemed to span an eternity. And then the Warblers were coming up beside them and launching into their final number that was all acapella, Wonder.

It rounded up their story of change perfectly. From them coming to the realization of how broken their world was through the lyrics of "Where is the love", to the heart-breaking bravery and determination and strength "Read all about it" brought and coming back to full blown optimism of young people believing it could and it would get better with "Wonder".

They were escorted off with a standing ovation and a numerous white tissues dabbing at moist eyes from the audience and they knew, whether they won or lost, they would be the talk of this competition.

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The rush of coming offstage to that much applause was out of this world.

Kurt felt like his blood was made up of pixie sticks and he was going to bubble over any minute, unable to think of a way to calm himself down when Blaine was right next to him with the same insatiable energy pouring off of him in drugging waves.

The two caught eyes, sweating and panting and he didn't know which one reached first but they were suddenly tongue deep in each other's mouths riding out the high together physically because words wouldn't come, just fell completely short of how they were feeling in that moment.

Jeff got a glimpse of his best friend and his Dominant and immediately blushed and looked away to search for Nick in the crush of blazers. He jumped in surprise when arms wrapped around his waist but settled down once familiar lips found the hinge of his jaw.

"Didn't I tell you you'd be amazing, angel?" he whispered huskily.
Jeff bit his lips and blushed as a pleasant shiver overtook him, glad that everyone else was so preoccupied that they were paying them no mind. He tilted his head almost unconsciously to give Nick a little more access. "Thank you, sir."

"That duet won it for us, baby. I swear to god I nearly cried," Nick continued to praise.

"You mean you didn't this time? Must not have been as good as every other time I practiced it," he joked lightly, running his hands over the backs of Nicks where they rested comfortably over his stomach.

"I told you it was raining inside… directly into my eyes… on all those separate occasions… these things happen," he nodded against him and Jeff had to laugh at how ridiculous he was being. "But seriously… it was like you two transformed out there. I can't even describe it."

Jeff turned in his arms and nibbled on his bottom lip as he met those deep chocolate eyes. He rested his hands lightly on his chest. "It felt like… like I could finally talk."

He flushed because that sounded so stupid but Nick was regarding him with nothing but rapt attention so he risked continuing.

"For a few minutes I didn't have to worry about stuttering over every word or worry if I was saying the wrong thing and it felt like people were listening," he stressed. "That they were looking at me and not just seeing some broken… thing."

"Do you feel like that?" Nick asked softly. Carefully. "Like no one listens to you? That you can't talk to me?"

Jeff shook his head urgently. "No! No, sir… that's not what I meant-"

"Shh," Nick soothed him, running a hand through the soft strands of his hair. "You're not in trouble, angel. I just wanted to make sure because I never want you to feel like I'm not hearing you."

Jeff's heart ceased its frantic beat and he exhaled hard. "You and Kurt and the Warblers… you hear me," he said surely.

"And they heard you tonight," Nick nodded, understanding, and Jeff felt his eyes sting and his throat close up. His Dom pulled him close and held him there as he got himself back together, pulled his emotional walls back up that he had completely let crumble during those life changing few minutes on stage.

"I love you," Kurt gasped into Blaine's mouth.

"I love you," Blaine groaned back pulling him closer with one hand on his hip and one spanning his lower back apparently in agreement. "I love you, I love you, I love you," he continued to mumble over and over between wet presses of lips, teeth and tongue.

"I don't even care if we win," Kurt pulled away on a hard inhale to murmur breathlessly as he rested their foreheads together, eyes still shut, finally finding a string of words to try and explain what he felt burning inside his very soul. "I just feel… we did some good tonight didn't we? That we spoke to people you know? Even if they didn't understand it."

Blaine was silent for a moment and Kurt fluttered his lashes open to find hazel gold eyes already
staring at him almost *reverently.* "You are just… stunning. I can't even…"

Kurt flushed a deeper red but he didn't look away. Couldn't.

The Dom’s hand cupped the back of his head. "I'm so lucky to call you mine, lovely. So lucky. You’re everything that is good and right in this world and I never want you to lose that glow. That desire to see the good in things and help others without a thought for yourself… god, I just…"

He cut himself off because his voice was getting thick with emotion and he could see Kurt's eyes were getting a little watery too and if they weren't careful they'd turn into a crying mess all over each other.

"Hey!" David called over to them. "Why so glum chums? We just killed it!"

"Let's take the celebrations back to the dressing room while we wait for the deliberations?" Wes suggested leading the way and they all followed, practically falling all over one another.

"We'll win," Blaine said confidently. "We will."

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They did.

The announcement felt like it took a lifetime to come. They were standing up there in their protective huddle, subs clinging to their Doms, Doms clinging to their subs and there was just silence. A huge chasm that would be filled by one name only and it was between them and Vocal Adrenaline. The powerhouse of show choirs and…

They won.

Kurt couldn't remember Wes striding up to collect the trophy. Or him giving it to him and Jeff to hold as the others behind them pushed them forwards. He only remembered all those faces in the crowd. The ones on their feet despite knowing exactly who they were, where they came from, what they were singing about and still clapping and cheering for them.

Kurt had never felt more proud of something he had done. This wasn't the same somewhat selfish feeling of accomplishment that came with making his dress and it selling for such a high price at the Charity Night. This was about sending a message, not winning, and he felt like these people who were standing understood.

Jeff caught his eye and he knew that they were sharing the exact same thoughts.

"A very well done to the Warblers and a round of applause for the rest of our teams, you were all fantastic," the announcer bid and the crowd replied with another rigorous smattering of claps. "Now before we leave you there are a few more awards to give out. Best Song Choice in regards to our theme, Best Choreography and Best Costume."

"For Best Song Choice we have… another win it seems for this powerhouse. Wesley Montgomery from the Warblers!" he read off a separate card and the Dom's eyes widened just a little before he managed to pull himself together and step up to shake the guys hand and receive the small, gold trophy in the shape of a music note.

"He doesn't deserve it. He gets all his stuff from his iTunes shuffle," David heckled and there was a ripple of laughter across the board as Wes gave him a monster glare.
Hikaru was on his feet in the next moment whistling and cheering for his son and Wes ducked his head away from the embarrassing scene and melded back into the crowd of his friends.

"For Best Choreography… wow, I'm beginning to think we're going to have a full sweep. It's the Warblers again, come on over Jeffery Sterling," the man bid, giving the group of them a friendly smile and Jeff was glued to the floor.

"Angel, you won!" Nick cheered gripping him around the waist and squeezing him hard in congratulations. The blonde was dumbstruck and didn't even know where to put his own hands in return.

"You deserve it, blondie," Kurt grinned at him pecking him on the cheek and Jeff shook his head in bewilderment as the compliments kept coming from his friends.

"Uh…?"

"Someone's a little shy it seems," the announcer joked and picked up the trophy and walked it over to him instead.

Jeff took it numbly and looked down at it in awe. He'd won? He hadn't won anything before in his life before this competition and especially nothing on his own.

"You deserve it, baby. I don't want to hear anything to say otherwise," Nick whispered in his ear, nosing at his jaw gently until Jeff turned into him a little overwhelmed, shaky fingers grasping the metal of the trophy so hard his fingers were going white.

"He's my sub," Nick declared to everyone proudly and Jeff pushed in closer unable to comprehend just what was happening as the audience swooned over the cute blonde and the Dom who was obviously mad about him.

"Yeah, yeah, Duval," Trent laughed giving him a friendly jab from behind.

The announcer laughed too. "We’ve got a proud Dom over there. And now, last but not least, the award for Best Costume goes to…" he paused to look down at the card again and Kurt's heart stuttered a beat. Best costumes? "Oral Intensity!"

The team ran up and collected the small trophy together, smiles not quite blinding but wide enough to say that the consolation wasn't that bad in the end. Of course Vocal Adrenaline, Crawford Country Day and the Unitards were looking at both the Warblers and Oral Intensity with barely disguised disgust but that was their issue.

What Kurt was suddenly struggling with was something much more minuscule in detail.

Costumes were his thing. Clothes and sequins and god damned stitch patterns thank you very much! And mother of god he’d had the same argument with Wes a hundred times leading up to now, the same damn frustrating conversation that gave him heart palpitations and headaches the size of Africa.

UNIFORMS WERE NOT COSTUMES!

They were clapped off stage and Kurt huffed and strode off to get a small sulk in before he shrugged it off. After all, he wasn't a certified diva for nothing! He just needed a little time to get himself together before he bit Wes' head off.

"Lovely?" his Dom called after him and Kurt could hear the confusion laced heavily there. Blaine caught his hand and easily span him around to meet questioning gold tinted eyes under those heavy
brows. "Where are you running off to superstar?"

Kurt frowned and pursed his lips. "We lost."

Blaine's face morphed into the picture of disbelief. "Uh, we won, lovely. You were there, I distinctly remember kissing these lips," he teased, cupping his chin and rubbing his thumb over his wide bottom lip to get it to smooth out again.

"Not everything," he pointed out as the rest of the Warblers came barrelling over, all smiles and laughs and fighting over the winner’s trophy.

"That's very unSPORTSMANLIKE of you, baby. What happened to 'I don't care if we win'?" Blaine admonished and teased without a hint of meaning it from the smirk on his face. Kurt groaned in frustration at the back of his throat, barely stopping himself from stamping his foot like a five year old because that was true and he really wasn't that angry about it at all. It wasn't about the trophy in the end or winning. It was the principle of the thing.

"Warbler huddle!" David cried and suddenly there were arms and legs everywhere, Kurt ducking into Blaine to avoid most of the crush. "We kicked ass fellas! I'm so happy I could almost say I liked you bunch of sad sacks."

"The feeling is entirely not mutual fuck you very much," Trent grumbled from where he was being choked by the taller Dom.

"And a special well done to Jeff for his ability to make it look like we were doing more than just shaking our jelly up there," Jon winked at the blonde who blushed bright red and tucked his face into Nick's neck, small trophy curled into his chest like he could hide it under his blazer. The Dom beamed and stroked a hand through his hair.

"So modest, angel," he grinned kissing his temple, literally beaming from ear to ear and puffed up in pride.

Kurt was so happy for Jeff, he deserved the recognition and more. It drove the point home however that they Kurt could have contributed a little more though if he was allowed. It wasn't like Oral Intensity's costumes were anything spectacular after all! The hemming alone on those red dresses was horrendous and block colours was so uninspired and predictable.

"Wes should get a hand I suppose for changing his god damned mind about the set list a thousand times," Blaine mocked good naturedly and Wes rolled his eyes.

"Say that to my trophy and then stick it up your ass."

They all laughed because now that it was over the beast had subsided and their friend was far more chilled out.

Kurt just pouted harder feeling like he was about to explode.

"Why the rage face, Kurt?" Thad noticed and questioned.

"Uniforms are not costumes!" he announced loudly to everyone, it just falling out of his mouth, and there was a beat of silence before David snorted and smacked the back of Wes' head.

"Yeah fearless leader. We could have had tens across the board."

"I'm not the sole leader of this group. We have a council!" Wes defended indignantly.
"That you lead," Thad piped up, trying to look innocent when that glare was rounded on him.

"And you were the one who talked my ear off about having us stay professional. I had to agree just to shut you up!" David continued relentlessly loving that he was fuelling the fire. Kurt angry was hilarious as long as you weren't on the receiving end and then it was just plain scary.

"Its tradition!" Wes exclaimed.

"It's stupid!" Kurt countered on a huff.

"I have to agree with that," Sebastian drawled. "It's a little embarrassing really. It's bad enough that we have to wear these all the way through college as well as high school."

"Exactly!" he pointed at his friend.

"Aw baby, don't be mad. You can have creative control over costumes for Regionals," Blaine consoled him kissing over his jaw to try and coax him around. Kurt hated sometimes that the man knew all of his weak spots.

"There has to be an official-"

Kurt cut Wes off with his best bitch stare.

"-I guess it's decided then," he grumbled and Kurt nodded in satisfaction, a smile blossoming on his cherubic face.

"We can go celebrate now," he smiled at them, bouncing on his toes.

They all laughed at him in wonder.

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"I can't believe we won!" Jeff cried happily as they trudged through the door to their shared dorm, holding a tiny replica of the actual trophy every singer got to take home in his right hand.

He placed it on his side of Nick's desk and stepped back to observe it critically before moving back in and placing another trophy right next to it, this one slightly bigger and a bit more ornate than its companion. It had a small figure of a person mid movement and a tiny little plaque with his name and the award on it.

_Jeffrey Sterling_
_Outstanding Choreography_

He still couldn't believe it.

He found his fingers were still shaking as he traced the cool lines of the trophy, places still lukewarm from where he clutched at it, refusing to let it go in case it turned out it was all a dream and the thing vanished in a puff of smoke the moment he let the metal out of his grip.

His ears were still ringing from the uproar of his fellow Warblers when they realized they had collected not one but three awards, but more than that, when they exploded because of him, happy for him.

His heart had thundered when he turned to Nick, hope etched in every line of his face as he waited for the one person whose opinion mattered most to him to react now that they were alone. Nick
whose face was almost split in half with the size of his smile when he first heard the verdict. Whose hands had found their way around his waist easily like they had always been there and held him together. Who kissed his cheek and turned to the crowd, hollering 'he's my sub' to everyone willing to listen.

Nick who was proud of him.

Nick who loved him and whom he loved back.

He found that same blinding smile and that same pride looking at him from chocolate coloured eyes and he braved the sea of his inner demons standing between him and his Dom, walking to him and cuddling into his side, into his rightful place without a single thought.

"I can't believe I won that," he whispered, face in Nick's neck and the Dom wrapped his arms around him gently, lovingly, just like every other time.

"I can. You are so talented, angel. The Warblers have never looked as good as they did tonight. And the duet between you and Kurt was what won the whole thing for us, I'm sure of it. I'm so proud of you my beautiful boy," he whispered against his temple, feeling Jeff's body shiver in his arms at his praise.

He had noticed this reaction a few days previously as they sat wrapped in each other, reading assigned books for their respective classes. Jeff was snuggled between his thighs, resting back against his chest and flipping through his math's book calmly until he frowned in confusion and asked Nick for help with understanding differentials. Nick had explained to him and the blonde grasped the concept in no time making Nick praise him for his good work as he went ahead and began solving the problems for himself.

But it was like a switch had been flipped.

Jeff's body had trembled noticeably and he cuddled closer like a cat, almost purring in satisfaction at the praise. Nick realized how much it meant to him in that moment. How good it felt for him to be praised finally after being denied and neglected and put down for so long. He had decided, then and there in that very second, that Jeff would be nourished back to being a fully confident, healthy sub under his careful touch if it was the last thing he ever did. If he needed five thousand 'good boys' then he'd gladly bestow them.

And tonight, watching him receive the well-earned acknowledgement he'd worked for, served as proof he was doing it right.

"Thank you, sir," Jeff hummed from his spot on his shoulder, wrapped around Nick.

The Dom smiled against his soft hair. "For what my sweet?" he asked and Jeff lifted his head up to look him in the eye.

"Being there, being patient with me, um… I-loving me. Letting me do this for the Warblers," he listed, cheeks growing hotter and hotter with every new thing added and Nick raised his hands to cup his face.

"Never, ever thank me for loving you or supporting you. I'm your Dom, Jeff. And as your Dom it's my job, my duty and my biggest pleasure to make you happy. As happy as you make me," he said and Jeff leaned into his touch, closing his eyes and kissing his palm tentatively.

His head was swimming, his heart was swelling and he just couldn't wrap his head around what his life was right now. He was bonded, he was protected and loved, he'd sang again for a competition
audience no less, he painted, he danced, he felt safer than ever, his mark was clear and it was all thanks to Nick.

He turned his head slowly, timidly, but there was determination burning in every bone in his body as the submissive in him started to unfurl under the gentle ministrations of Nick's dominance. He thought back to his conversation with Kurt about letting Nick know what he was thinking, that he was ready to push himself a little maybe. His lips trembled but he braved the space between them and brushed them against Nick's in a feather light brush that was barely there at all. He exhaled hot and shaky as his eyes searched his Doms nervously and their noses bumped.

"Can I… can I kiss you?" he whispered and Nick sucked in a breath as he pulled him closer, fingers curling around his hips under his blazer.

"You never, ever have to ask permission to do that. Your kisses, your touch, you are always welcome close to me," he said passionately and Jeff stared, wide eyed and disbelieving but happy and safe as he allowed his lids to slide over his eyes as he pressed his lips to Nick's carefully.

He never knew if he was doing it right, but his mind seemed to refuse cooperation when Nick was kissing him. He felt so out of control it was almost frightening but there was a thrum somewhere beneath his skin that let him know he was protected somehow. That he didn't have to worry about loosening the reins on his control and maybe handing them over.

Nick's hands came up to cup his cheeks, angling his head and suddenly the press of their lips got harder, the warmth radiating from Nick's lips got scalding and he shivered with something he couldn't even recognize. It settled low in his stomach as their mouths moved together, fluttering and tingling and making him push his body closer to Nick's, desperate to get deeper under his skin where he belonged. Nick inched backwards until he sank into the plush sofa and Jeff froze for a moment when their lips disconnected and he realized what his Dom was trying to do.

White hot panic splashed inside of him and he rushed to get his walls up but Nick grabbed his hands tightly into his own.

"I just want to kiss you beautiful, just like you wanted," he reassured calmly, his voice the picture of serene and Jeff drew on that steady tone as he tried to collect his frayed nerves. "I don't want us to keep standing up because we're both tired and I know you'd be uncomfortable if we were on the bed. This way I get to hold you and kiss you but you'd be on top and able to just get up and stop whatever we're doing if you feel like it's too much," he continued to explain in the same tenor and Jeff eyed his position, thinking how to sit down without making it overly sexual. He wanted to push himself yes, but he wasn't ready to jump in that far just yet and just hop on and straddle him.

"Just… just kissing?" he clarified again and Nick smiled up at him warmly as he ruffled his already fly away hair.

"If you're comfortable with it. If not, just holding you," he said sincerely and Jeff nodded slowly, taking another step towards the chair.

"How should I… um…" he gestured towards Nick's lap awkwardly and Nick pulled him forward gently, easing him down with his legs slung over his lap and his body fitting against his chest like they were moulded to fit together like that. It was a position they both knew he was comfortable with and Jeff relaxed into it.

"I love you," Nick sighed into his hair and he could feel him tense underneath his fingers as he struggled to find words.
But Nick knew... he knew that just by being there with him, his mark now coloured a light yellow for him which meant more than any words could. Jeff's body spoke languages and sang songs without him ever uttering a word. Which meant he knew he was loved back, every time Jeff let him in, trusted him to take care of him, and he didn't need Jeff to struggle and hurt himself by trying to force words he already knew in his heart out.

He knew all he needed to know from the way Jeff's lips parted for him and the way his whole body reacted to his presence.

"I..." the blond started, breath short and laboured.

"I know, angel," he revealed softly with feeling. "Believe me I know. You don't have to say it, just... just kiss me again? Please," he asked and Jeff gasped, lips searching upwards until they connected with Nick's and the world fell into place seamlessly.

Nick's hands were in his hair and around his waist, his own clutching the half unbuttoned shirt covering Nick's chest and somehow, the broken pieces of him realigned and started fusing back together as Nick's gentle tongue swept over his lower lip.

He startled for a second, not sure what he was supposed to do when Nick whispered against the damp flesh.

"Just let me in, angel. My perfect boy..." he crooned and Jeff felt another layer of his walls crumble down as he parted his lips slowly, Nick's tongue slipping past them to caress his own.

Fire broke loose inside him and every cell in him was alight with Nick's soft kisses that descended from his lips to his flushed cheeks, over his hanging jaw and down to his neck. He tilted his head and Nick's lips touched the soft skin behind his ear.

The fear came barrelling down on him again and he began to pant.

He was so vulnerable like this. So open and inviting danger and Nick was... he was tearing him apart, reaching past the strongest and tallest walls he had built around himself and there was no way to get him out now. He was there and it was Jeff who'd let him in and he didn't know if he wanted him out or just closer... deeper under his skin.

Nick's lips came dangerously close to his earlobe and he snapped back into reality, body recoiling and tensing in Nick's grasp. This was just... different from every other time Nick would graze his lips over his neck or jaw. More intimate with just the two of them and the weight of anticipation and expectation heavy in the air.

The Dom sobered immediately and pulled back to look up, pupils dilated and lips red and swollen.

"Baby... is it too much? Do you want me to stop?" he asked a little roughly and Jeff bit his lip, shaking his head in a motion that conveyed nothing to Nick.

"Did I scare you?" Nick asked again, confusion written all over his features as he watched his sub run a hand over his face in frustration as he struggled to tell him how he felt.

"No I don't... I'm not... I'm not afraid of you, Nick... it's just..." he tried with all he had but he couldn't for the life of him explain how he felt when he didn't even know himself.

It felt good.

Nick felt good wrapped around him, kissing his skin, touching him... at least he thought so. But was
he supposed to feel like that... like his insides were burning... like he was melting and losing his mind?

"Jeff, baby, I need you to talk to me... tell me if I'd done something wrong?" Nick pleaded and Jeff startled at the sound of his voice, remorseful and sad for him.

He didn't want to hear Nick like that but it was so hard to open up and tell him, so hard to explain that he had never felt like this and he didn't know if it was normal, or allowed. He steeled his thoughts and figured that maybe explaining how confused it made him feel would be a good start... maybe.

"I... I don't know what I'm feeling, sir... w-what I'm supposed to feel when you... um... with you and I... I get scared that it's wrong or that I'm not feeling what I'm supposed to and..." he rambled himself in circles as he disentangled himself and stood up to pace the room.

Nick shook his head at him. "You're not supposed to do anything, there are no expectations you have to meet here. You're with me... we're kissing and whatever you feel is right. If you like it, it's right. If you don't, it's right. Everything you do is right, angel," Nick said as he stood in front of him and cupped his face to still his movements and make him relax.

Jeff kept his eyes closed and for the millionth time Nick wished he could just peek inside his head and see what he was so afraid of so he could destroy every shred of it, but he couldn't. Jeff was still a mystery despite how well he could read him sometimes and all he could do was wait for him to show him who he really was.

"What if... what if I do something I shouldn't?" he whispered and Nick brushed his hair off his forehead his heart shattering into jagged pieces.

"You won't, because there's no such thing. If I don't like something you do to me I'll let you know just like you'll do for me. And then we'll go from there... but sweetie, just because we're talking about this now doesn't mean we have to do anything at all. We can just put on a movie or something. Cuddle. Relax. Unwind," he said carefully, not wanting to agitate him even more but Jeff shook his head furiously.

"I... I want to... to try. I've um, been thinking about it... and I want... want you to feel good... with me..." he trailed off lamely, eyes downcast and lips pressing into a thin line but he was talking, he was fighting to stay ahead of his fear and to let Nick in and it was more than the Dom could ask of him right now.

"Okay... okay, baby, come here. Come with me," he commanded gently and pulled him towards the bed instructing him to take his shoes, blazer and tie off then lie down and relax for a moment.

Nick watched him follow the instructions perfectly, seemingly happy for a bit of direction and then followed him down and sprawled next to him, guiding that beloved blonde head onto his chest so he could cuddle him close, humming softly as he waited for the shivers to subside.

They lay there, tangled together for an indefinable amount of time as Nick caressed Jeff's hair; his neck, arms and back, all the while humming a pretty, slow tune that travelled through Jeff's body, wrapping around his hurt insides, unwinding every knot and bone, careful of the healing cracks and old wounds littered there from before.

He lowered his head to kiss his forehead, the top of his head, his temples and his slightly damp cheeks and Jeff turned his head up towards him like a sunflower chasing the sun and Nick knew that's how Jeff saw them and he loved it... loved the analogy and the meaning behind it.
He pecked the tip of his nose and smiled when he blushed cutely, eyeing Nick's lips with renewed interest.

Nick breached the distance between them, leaving the last few breaths of space for Jeff to close and Jeff knew he was giving him the option to back out or to kiss him and take things further. He was scared to death but it felt almost too good to have Nick's warmth so close to him, Nick's arms around him, strong and potentially dangerous but not for him… never dangerous for him.

So he stretched up and connected his mouth with Nick's, this time stronger, bolder, earning himself a small moan from Nick that encouraged him to part his lips for Nick's tongue once again.

Nick's lips danced on top of his, infinitely gentle and warm and caring and the heat in the pit of his belly reawakened making his head spin and his vision blur around the edges. He kept his eyes open, trying to see Nick, see what he was doing, copy his movements and do his best to make it enjoyable for him even if he was tainted and broken. Nick deserved to feel good and Jeff was his sub, it was what he was supposed to do.

So he kissed back and waited for Nick to take what he needed from him, but the force that he linked with where this was leading never came. Hardly there kisses that were more like biting attacks on his sensitive skin never made appearance. Touches that bruised were non-existent. It was just Nick and his soft lips, his caring arms and his unending well of patience that Jeff could barely fathom.

Once again Nick lowered his lips to his chin, the edge of his jaw and his neck and Jeff felt himself squirm when gooseflesh rose on his skin. He tried to remain still and passive but the gentle little bite Nick delivered next made his back arch off the bed on instinct and he froze when he realized he was pushing himself closer to his Dom.

"Beautiful boy. So responsive…so gorgeous…my angel," Nick whispered soothingly against his neck and the tension bled away again, leaving him open and peaceful but also… confused again.

Responsive?

Was that...was it a good thing?

Surely it couldn't be...it never was before...

Stay still

Don't move

Don't make a sound

Nick bit his collarbone this time and as deep as he was inside his own head he couldn't help himself when he whimpered softly, just the tiniest of sounds that had him freezing dead in his tracks and clamping his eyes shut, biting hard into his lip to stop the sounds from coming out.

But it felt so good, to be held like that, to be kissed like his own pleasure mattered... but maybe it was a trick? To make him hot and squirming before the order to stay still and quiet came. It had never really been a problem with Kevin. He'd never felt pleasure with him, not once. Never felt like he was going crazy in his own skin, never felt like he wanted to moan and whimper and breathe out sighs of how good he was feeling.

All Jeff had known before was pain. Lying there like he was a doll, being manipulated and used up until Kevin grew bored of him and trying not to scream because that only made it worse. He tried to do that now. It was a built in defence mechanism and he willed his body to go limp and
unresponsive, but the moment he did Nick's lips returned to his.

"Do you like it baby? Does it feel good?" he asked and Jeff's eyes snapped open, wonder etched into every fleck in his irises.

"I… y-yes?" he posed it as a question, not sure what his answer should be. The truth was he did like it. It was just like Kurt said; fire and heat and want.

Logically he knew that this was how it was supposed to be. How Kurt described it, god, he wanted that so badly but he was just too caught up in re-running old thought tracks.

"Angel if you don't like it I'll stop," Nick prompted gently, rising up onto the arm that was propped next to his head and Jeff's mind spun with how careful he was around him. How he was making sure not to smother him with points of contact by holding himself back. And hold himself back he was, Jeff might not know a lot about how healthy sexual relations were conducted but he recognized desire when he saw it and Nick was a picture of barely restrained want.

It both excited and frightened him equally.

"I do… I just… wasn't sure if I should," he stammered and Nick bore his eyes into his in determination for a moment before ducking down and kissing behind his ear, earning himself another choked off gasp that was soon trapped behind bitten lips.

"You absolutely should. You're being amazing to me baby. So sweet, so gorgeous. But I don't want you to hold the sounds in," he beseeched, biting softly on his earlobe and smiling when he heard a tiny moan. "Let me hear you, sweetie. I love the sounds you make."

His words cascaded upon his skin like summer rain, warm and nourishing and welcome after the day's heat and Jeff couldn't help it anymore. He broke to pieces, whimpering Nick's name as he wrapped his arms around his neck, threading fingers through his dark hair and willing him to just keep touching him forever.

Because the only time he felt whole was in his arms and he never wanted to be away again.

His back arched as Nick unbuttoned the top of his shirt and snuck his hand in, warm palm splaying over his chest and making him unravel at the seams as his lips continued to worship his neck, his collarbones, his shoulders as the pale skin was revealed.

"Nick…" he gasped when the Dom eased some of his weight on him, pressing him into the mattress but instead of feeling caged in, it was the most freeing feeling he had ever experienced.

Nick nearly lost his shit over hearing that breathy, reverent exhale of his name and he tamped down on his answering groan barely. Instead he began to babble as he explored the wonderland Jeff was offering up to him, beyond words from how fucking perfect he was.

"Gorgeous… my angel… my amazing boy…" the Dom cooed as his hands wandered and Jeff couldn't help it anymore.

His insides were burning, everything he thought good subs had to do in bed went out the window and were he in his right mind he would have felt ashamed of his own reactions but the more Nick praised him, his heady dominance rolling over him, he let go completely.

He could hear gasps and moans and he knew he was the one making them. He could feel his body writhe and twine around Nick's almost greedily but there was nothing he could do to stop himself. Nick's hands were everywhere. On his stomach, sliding down his back, only fluttering over his ass
briefly before coming to rest on his thigh as Nick pulled his leg around his waist, sinking into the vee of his legs and brushing the very core of him, hard and hot and shameful and Nick felt it now… he knew how terrible of a sub he was… needy and disobedient.

It was like he was chained to a runaway train, no chance to jump off and save himself from the fiery destruction awaiting him.

"You're hard baby… my boy…" Nick's voice was still husky and rough with want but Jeff heard something completely different.

He gasped and tensed, tears rolling down his cheeks as he shook his head left and right apologizing over and over and over again.

"I'm sorry, sir… so sorry… I'll control it better… so sorry… sorry…" he was stuck, the slew of apologies going round and around and around in his head like a broken record and he couldn't stop.

Until hands forced his head to stop spinning and a single voice drifted through the cacophony of others screaming at him.

"Jeff… baby look at me… listen to my voice, Jeff… open your eyes and look at me, angel," Nick pleaded then ordered gently and Jeff did his best to go back… to get out of his darkness once again and find Nick and his light.

"Sir…" he whispered and Nick kissed his temple.

"What happened baby? Did I hurt you? Did I push too hard? Why were you scared and apologizing?" Nick asked and Jeff knew he had no choice but to tell the truth. Nick noticed anyway when he lied.

"I couldn't… couldn't control it sir… I should have but I didn't… I didn't know I'd feel like this… and I… I got…" he trailed off, pointing down his body where his uniform slacks were still slightly tented and Nick felt his blood boil.

Was Jeff apologizing for being turned on? For enjoying what hedid to him?

"You got turned on, sweetie," Nick said and Jeff looked mortified at that.

"Sorry," he whispered again, voice choked and Nick hitched a breath.

"No… baby… Jeff… That's nothing to apologize for. I want you to feel like that when I touch you," he said and Jeff dared to look him in the eyes.

"I'm not… not supposed to. Should be good for you, sir… not me," he said through muscle memory, like he was parroting something back he'd heard over and over again and Nick felt the urge to drive a fist through the wall with anger at what was done to this perfect sub beneath him.

But he reined his rage in and turned back to Jeff, determined to make him see how things should be.

"He told you that. He was wrong. About everything. When I kiss you I want you to kiss me back."

He punctuated the words with a languid, sincere kiss to his lips and Jeff responded, sighing against his warm mouth because he couldn't help it.

"When I hold you I want you to hold me too. To pull me closer," he said as he wrapped Jeff's arms around his neck to demonstrate what he was talking about.
"When I tease you... and touch you... I want you to do exactly what you did a moment before. Arch into me. Moan. Call out my name. Show me you like it. I want you turned on. I want you out of control and craving me. I want you to lose yourself in the pleasure I bring you because you look beautiful like that," he whispered passionately and with every word Jeff's arousal hit him like a fireball, flaming in his gut, heavy in his lungs, molten lava whizzing through his veins and he broke when Nick's hand cupped him through his uniform slacks and it was enough.

"Let go, baby. Let me please you. Come for me," Nick coaxed seductively and the edges of his vision turned white with pleasure as he slipped away from reality.

It was embarrassing and fast but he didn't know what else to do. He hid his face in Nick's neck as he gasped out hot and reedy and trembling, his entire body shivering with a mixture of deep seated pleasure and confusion over how he was allowed to feel so good.

He must have asked that aloud because Nick shushed him with a kiss.

"You were made for it angel. To be pleasured and cherished and unravelled. Look how beautiful you are like this," Nick cooed at him, staring at his flushed cheeks, his body still trembling against his own and he couldn't help but preen at the thought that he had done it to him. He had showed him what it truly felt like to be loved like that. Fuck it was like the biggest high.

"I didn't...I didn't know I..." Jeff gasped as he came down to earth and Nick kissed him on the lips gently.

"I'll show you. I'll make you feel so good beautiful. You deserve it."
Okay people!!! Not such a long wait this time we think :)

A few words to say about this chapter. It introduces a new character. A character that just kind of happened without us planning on it and it gave a new dimension to an already existing character in the story. We both love him a lot and the story he brought forward so we hope you'll like all of that as well.

A lot is happening in this chapter so take your time reading it and we hope you enjoy it :)

Love
A&M

Warning: the use of a safeword (out of a poor communication kind of thing, not because someone is hurt or abused...you'll see)

'With elections right around the corner we didn't think anything would be able to draw our attention away from the potential runners and the general excitement that always follows the political race for the top spot.

But this station has another exclusive that is sure to create its own stir.

Confirmed through sources we are able to tell you that the controversial union of our own Blaine Anderson and Lima's Kurt Hummel is set to be finalised in a Presenting Ceremony on the eleventh of May!

A month out from the big day we're surprised they've been able to keep it quiet this long. There had been a lot of speculation that they wouldn't be sealing a proper bond at all but these confirmed rumours seem set to put an end to that.

All this reporter has to ask is this: Publicity stunt gone too far or are we really looking at a radical movement here?'

TV1 News

"I don't think I can do this," Blaine moaned into his hands, elbows braced on the smooth surface of the bar they were having a quick drink in.

It was Saturday night and both Nick's and Blaine's sub's had banished them while they did ‘secret Presenting things’. It was happening more and more the closer they got to the big day and both
Doms were missing their subs dearly. When they weren't at school they were whispering back and forth or off to Dana's studio or shopping, so naturally the Doms were feeling a little neglected.

To try and rectify that they had agreed to a best friends night out just the two of them like old times. So far they were having an amazing time but the need to be close to their better halves was weighing down on them more and more.

Nick took a drag of his cool beer and regarded his woeful best friend. "If you say you can't bond with Kurt properly then I'm going to punch you in your face. Repeatedly. That boy is the best thing that ever happened to you!"

"That boy is the best thing that ever happened to the planet. Period," Blaine corrected, uncovering his face but still looking miserable.

Nick frowned. "Okay. I'm confused."

"Two weeks!" Blaine whined and his friend eyed him like he had lost his mind.

"Yeeees?" Nick prompted slowly. "I'm sorry, my mind reading abilities are a little off today. How about you use these helpful things I like to call words."

Blaine skipped over the smartassery in favour of ranting. "How am I supposed to wait that long, Nick? I can barely stop thinking about it and when I'm not thinking about it I've got my hands on him and I'm almost doing it and then when I'm not doing it or thinking about it I'm asleep and dreaming about it!"

Nick began laughing uncontrollably after a brief pause to let it all sink in and Blaine scowled before letting his head fall onto the bar, the picture of pathetic.

"Wow, bro. Sexual frustration never looked so needy," he got out between guffaws.

"Screw you. I'm going to laugh my fucking ass off when this is your needy ass," the Dom muttered into the polished wood.

Now that jolted something deep inside Nick. He had barely allowed himself to think extensively on the subject of their eventual Presenting Ceremony and what that would bring with it, not because it wasn't a constant hum at the back of his mind, but because he knew that if he started he wouldn't want to stop and he wouldn't push that on Jeff when he wasn't ready for it. But the idea. Fuck. Him and his angel taking that final step, sealing their bond in the most beautiful way. It made his heart race just thinking about all the ways he would lay worship to the blonde's body and soul. How he would kiss him how he deserved to be kissed, how he would whisper every endearment known to man and make up some of his own, how he would love him to the stars and back.

"Oh you asshole," he cursed, mind whirling now, just picking up speed.

Blaine rolled his head to the side and smirked up at him. "Sucks doesn't it."

Nick drained his beer and signalled to the barman. "We're gonna need something stronger."

"We show back up at the house drunk and I think Kurt may castrate me," Blaine mumbled.

"He stressed again?" Nick asked after ordering two fingers of whiskey for them both.

Blaine sat up like a normal person and rubbed his hands over his face. "Beyond."
Nick thanked the barman after he'd poured their drinks and slid a few bills over. "Have you tried Doming him to take some of the stress away?"

Blaine dropped his hands and gave him a deadpan look. "No. It never crossed my mind."

Nick held his hands up. "Chill man. Just trying to help."

Blaine blew a heavy breath out of his nose before taking his tumbler in hand and draining it. He winced at the burn but otherwise carried on like normal. "We just never seem to have time lately. I mean, to keep up with his stress levels."

Nick snorted a snicker. "Stamina not up to it, bro?"

He expected the punch in the arm he got. He figured he deserved it.

"It's not that. Though I can't say that it's improved," he conceded with a wry smile. "Kurt just does things to me and my control falls apart when he's under me looking all gorgeous and submissive and perfect."

Nick clicked his fingers in his face. "Earth to Blaine in the gutter."

Blaine blinked then cleared his throat. "Maybe drinking is a good plan." He tapped the bar and signalled for two more.

"Give me a chance to catch up there, Hennessey," Nick laughed, taking a sip of his own drink. "And I sympathize on the whole stamina issue actually."

"Yeah?" Blaine asked in surprise, impressive eyebrows raising. As far as he knew his best friend was set upon taking things glacier slow with Jeff for obvious reasons.

Nick felt something like a flush crawling up his neck. Jesus. Could he be more whipped? "Jeff let me… you know… take care of him, for the first time a few weeks ago."

Blaine searched his face intently and Nick refused to squirm under the scrutiny like he had done something wrong. He had never felt self-conscious before in his life… well before Jeff. But that beautiful angel was the exception. No way was his asshole best friend going to get that much of a rise out of him.

The moment passed and a smile began to stretch its way across the Dom’s face. "That's great, man. First his mark clearing and now this. I mean, I'm a little offended that it took you this long to tell me you dick, when you're relentless with getting inappropriate details about me and Kurt. But I'm happy for you all the same."

Nick rolled his eyes and snorted a laugh. "Not my fault you and Kurt are so damn entertaining. Who the fuck needs reality TV with all the shit you two get into on a daily basis?"

"Ha. Ha. You're starting to sound like those sycophants on TV," he grumbled taking another drink. This one went down his throat with a lot less burn and that should have told him to take a break but he felt himself relax a bit so he just ignored it.

"They still hounding your ass hard huh?" Nick asked,downing his own drink and ordering one more.

"Did you not notice the idiot in the corner with the camera?" Blaine asked dryly, not even looking.
Nick peered over his shoulder and saw a middle aged man looking completely out of place in the younger crowd the bar attracted. He wasn't even being subtle about the way he was snapping pictures away. Wow. Blaine had spidey senses for real. The man pointed the camera in their direction again and Nick blew him a kiss making the man actually seem a little taken aback.

He laughed at the reaction and Blaine grabbed his neck and forced him back around. "Don't encourage him. He'll end up calling his buddies if you start doing something interesting."

Nick made an affronted sound. "I'm always interesting I'll have you know. I'm a fucking riot."

"You're a fucking something alright," Blaine quipped, hazel eyes sparkling with humour.

"You wound me good sir. Now you must pay reparations in the form of libations! Toot sweet fellow." He waved his arms in the air flamboyantly and Blaine eyed him in amazement.

"Do you even hear the shit that falls out of your mouth?" Blaine asked seriously but signalled the bartender again. They were lucky it was pretty quiet in here so they were served relatively quickly.

They did a couple of shots because Nick declared only tequila slammers would do to soothe his wounded pride. After shaking away the aftertaste they were back sipping on their whiskey and feeling a little looser.

"So…" Blaine asked after a beat. "How was he with it all?"

Nick didn't play stupid and pretend he didn't know what he was referencing. Instead he turned back to the amber liquid in his glass and swirled it a bit before taking a contemplative sip. "He... shit I don't know, B. He seemed to be into it you know? Like, he asked me to kiss him and things got a little heated because fuck. He's so responsive. How can he be so responsive?"

"Join the club. Kurt lets go in a way that I can't even describe. Like he just gives everything over to me. Every part of himself."

Which was how it was supposed to be, but not how it was for ninety nine percent of bonds these days. Sub's that came from money were far too used to getting their own way and having some form of control. They didn't like to let go of that even for their Doms which was why it was so rare to get a sub to subspace. Brad came to mind as a prime example of a sub that fought against his own nature far too much. But Kurt, his lovely boy, he embraced his submissive side and their bond so wholly without losing any of his identity in the process so naturally that it drove Blaine and the Dominant inside of him wild.

Nick nodded. He could see, feel, that Jeff was dying to let go in that way too but he was far too terrified to even attempt it. But fuck. He came without even a proper touch. He didn't even know that was possible until his angel surprised him yet again. "He got off on me praising him."

"That's not an uncommon kink," Blaine nodded. Kurt liked it too. "And not very surprising after... you know."

Nick gritted his teeth and inhaled deeply to keep himself in check. "He got off just on that."

Blaine was doing the surprised eyebrow thing again. "Wow. Okay." That was a bit less common. But again, not surprising after how Jeff was treated.

Nick was silent for a beat and Blaine was unsure what to say. What Nick wanted to hear from him. He decided to take a stab in the dark and see if he hit anything.
"Look… you didn't force him-

"Of course I didn't!" Nick spat, feeling rage bubble up in him at even the implication.

_Bingo._

Blaine kept his gaze steady. "I know."

Nick growled but felt that white hot feeling simmer down. He sighed out and took another sip of his drink. "Sorry."

"You don't have to apologise, man. You're my best friend so I'm here for you."

Nick rubbed his hand over his mouth agitatedly. He didn't know how much this stuff was plaguing him until he got started and now it seemed like he couldn't stop. "I just don't know what I'm doing. Not really. I'm afraid I'm gonna fuck it up beyond repair and Jeff deserves more than that after everything he's been through." He ran a frustrated hand through his hair and eyed Blaine in desperation, pleading for him to reassure him that he wouldn't hurt Jeff more than he was already hurt. His friend seemed to understand what he needed right away.

"Nick. You love that boy more than life, you're not going to fuck it up. And even if you make a mistake it's not going to be on purpose to hurt him so he'll understand," Blaine comforted him.

"But I don't want to make a mistake," Nick argued. "I shouldn't make a mistake."

"I'm afraid that's not possible. Trust me." He'd had his fair share of rocky moments in his own bond and what he'd learned is that whatever it was they could always get through it because they loved each other. Everything else was negotiable. "As much as you'd like to wrap him up in cotton wool and hide him away from the big bad world that's not possible. And actually not healthy for Jeff. You have to let him realize that even if you fight and mess up it's not his fault and it won't make you stop loving him."

"I don't want him to be scared of the world, or me..." Nick conceded quietly. He wasn't going to be another Kevin and keep him locked away for the rest of his life, terrified of chasing his dreams or even stepping outside the front door.

"It was never going to be easy," Blaine said comfortingly clapping him on the back a few times. "But I know you're the best thing to happen to Jeff. The best Dom to make him happy again."

He believed that most of the time. But there were times when the doubts would creep in...

"Kevin fucked him up so bad, Blaine," he whispered in agony.

Blaine clenched his own jaw. "I know."

"And I want to fucking rip his spine out through his mouth, but even that doesn't seem good enough to make him pay for what he did. How he made Jeff scared to even feel like he deserves to have a fucking orgasm for fucks sake!" Nick turned to him with fury and despair lighting his usually kind brown eyes. "He apologised for even being hard, Blaine. How fucked up is that?"

"Jesus." Blaine had no idea about the specifics of what Kevin had done to Jeff but he could imagine from all the half spoken sentences, the implications that hung heavy in the air. But hearing something like this out loud made him feel sick to his stomach. "I swear to fucking god, Nick. He'll get his. I _promise_ you."
If he had to destroy the man and his family then he fucking would. Happily. Laughing while he danced on their ashes.

The air was thick with tension as they finished their third… fourth… drinks? He didn't even know anymore, but the bartender had left them the bottle.

"I haven't really touched him since that night. I'm a little afraid to without him asking me to and he hasn't brought it up again. I mean… does he even want me to take it further?" Nick admitted some time later, his voice calmer but no less lost. "What should I do, Blaine?"

Blaine swallowed and winced at the utter faith and hope Nick was putting in him to help him fix his problems. "He might be waiting for you to make the next move, man. You are the Dom after all and he has issues with voicing his own desires. I don't know if he'd just come out and ask you for something like that."

"But if I bring it up then he might think I'm pushing and give in just because he thinks it's something I want," Nick argued.

"Then you sit down and explain it to him. Honestly a lot of shit could be avoided if we just sat down and talked with our better halves. They don't teach that in Dominant class," he grumbled. It was all order, order, order.

Nick sighed heavily then nodded. "I'll talk to him. I'm shit-scared to, but I will."

"I don't want this to come out wrong but maybe Jeff needs a little push now and then? You know, just a nudge in the right direction when he's too scared to do it on his own. I know you've been giving out those soft commands and not so subtle to anyone but Jeff orders," he smirked.

Nick huffed a laugh and rubbed the back of his neck sheepishly. "I told him I do it and I still don't think he notices half the time."

"He looks better for it, man," Blaine complimented. And it was the absolute truth. The blonde hardly looked like he was lost in the middle of the ocean without a sail or paddle anymore.

"Thanks," Nick murmured then blew out a heavy breath, rubbing over his forehead. "Fuck. I feel like I've just had an intense session with my diary or some shit."

"Diary's don't talk back and offer amazing advice dickface," Blaine corrected primly in his best Kurt voice.

Nick gave him a sly smile then threw his arms around him. "Aw Blainer's you're my agony aunt."

Blaine narrowed his eyes and fought the limpet off. "Don't even go there... and don't touch me there… that's off limits, its Kurt's you heathen!"

Nick laughed out loud and pulled back, taking his wandering hands with him, and Blaine smiled to see his good humour back, the brightness around his edges lighting up again.

"These boys have turned us inside out, dude," he declared, pouring them another drink.

"Well here's to irresistible subs sent here to destroy our sanity… and lasting time," Blaine held his glass up and Nick clinked it resolutely.
"Two weeks! I can't do this in two weeks!" Kurt lamented, blowing at the loose strands of caramel hair that had escaped from the confines of his hairspray.

Jeff glanced at his friend who was sitting on his bed surrounded by fabrics and centrepieces and notes and magazines and swatches. He looked like a cute, ruffled sparrow in a patchwork nest.

He covered his smile with his hand and resumed counting the replies for the guest list and jotting their names down. "You can do anything in two weeks, Kurt," he said reassuringly.

"Not this!" he refuted, pouting like a five year old as he crossed his arms over his chest. "And we have like fifty guests-"

"Fifty seven," Jeff corrected softly.

"-oh god. I don't even know fifty seven people. Who invited fifty seven people, Jeff?"

The blonde set down his clipboard and made his way to the bed. "Dana handled the guest-list remember? Maybe the Anderson's have a lot of extended family?"

Kurt shook his head looking on the verge of hyperventilating. "Blaine's told me about his family. He has an Aunt and a few cousins but that's it. His grandparents passed away a few years ago and Dana was an only child."

Jeff pushed some fabric away and some pointy looking thing that Kurt had ordered on too little sleep and too much coffee so he could sit down. He grabbed his friend's hands in his and squeezed. "You're going to be fine. You've ordered more than enough of everything and Mae's doing the flower arrangements. The only thing you should be worrying about is yours and Blaine's outfits, not changing everything last minute."

"But what about the-"

"Kurt."

"But the-"

"Kurt."

"But maybe I should-"

"Kurt!" Jeff laughed.

Kurt groaned dramatically and flopped backwards. "This is going to be a disaster and then Blaine will never want to seal our bond and I'll be alone and a spinster and I'll have to get a cat or something!"

"It's going to be amazing and you and Blaine will seal your bond and live happily ever after," Jeff countered assuredly.

Kurt looked at him through his lashes. "No cat?"

Jeff giggled and shook his head. "What would Cupid think of that huh?"

Kurt's eyes went to the corner where 'Cho and Cupid were hopping around and snuggling in turns. "Okay, no cat. I'll be a creepy rabbit man."
Jeff rolled his eyes and jabbed him in the stomach playfully. "Happily. Ever. After."

"Okay. Okay!" Kurt squeaked and rolled away only to yelp. He pulled out another pointy thing from under him and glared balefully at it. "Why did I buy this monstrosity?"

"You actually bought twenty of those," Jeff smirked.

Kurt gaped in horror and flung it away where it thumped to the floor with a clang. "Alright. No more buying things. Ever. I'm banned from internet shopping until I can redeem myself."

Jeff snorted and Kurt gave him a look.

"What? It's horrendous! I must be punished!"

There was a soft knock on the door and Jared poked his head in. "Who's being punished?" he asked cheekily.

"I did a bad thing," Kurt said solemnly, sitting up from his sprawl and pointing at the ugly twisted metal on the floor.

Jared cocked his head and came in closer to see. He frowned. "What's that thing?"

"Honestly… I don't even know," Kurt admitted sounding completely miffed and Jeff and Jared shared a look before bursting out laughing.

Jared picked up the metal thing and held it close to his face, inspecting it. "Um… napkin holders?" he tried but Kurt just shook his head in defeat. He truly had no idea.

The pout was back in full force. "Did you want anything, Jared?"

The elder sub stifled his chuckles. "Just wanted to let you know that the circus on our lawn was gone. So if you needed to head out you can probably do it without being mobbed. I know you wanted to swing by Dana's work at some point."

"Really?" Kurt perked up and sprung to his feet, rushing out of the room to the front facing rooms. They rushed after him and found him practically hanging out of the window. "Finally! It's like they have nothing better to do."

"They actually don't, it's kind of their job. And your Presenting Ceremony is the biggest thing to happen since… well… Blaine claimed you," Jared told him and Kurt pulled his upper body back inside, closing the window after him.

"Whoever said being noticeable was great clearly wasn't," Kurt huffed, eyes blue tempests of irritation. He was Ceremony-zilla on the warpath, ten times worse than he was when he was planning the Charity Night.

"The election's soon. That'll keep them busy," Jeff consoled.

"That's after my Ceremony and my dad is the one running for Head," Kurt pointed out, going a little red in the face. "That's not going to stop them from coming around. It'll probably prompt them to buy a house together across the street!"

"Uh. There isn't one," Jared comforted.

"Well they'll build one then. With the money they made from taking awful pictures of my awful hair that won't quit it!" Kurt raged batting at the wayward strands uselessly.
Jeff and Jared exchanged another look. "Okay, I think we've had enough for today," the elder said.

The blonde hooked his arm around his best friends and pulled him from the room towards the stairs. "I think some therapy is in order."

"But we have to go to Dana's. I need to hem Blaine's trousers," Kurt protested.

"Hemming can wait. Right now we're putting on some form of tooth rotting Disney film, eating chocolate and popcorn until it's coming out of our ears and languishing the day away in blankets like good subs everywhere need once in a while," Jared said surely with a decisive nod of his head.

"You're taking a day off," Jeff told him seriously as they descended the stairs. "Before your head explodes."

"My head wouldn't dare explode," Kurt scowled, a thundercloud appearing above his ruined hair with lightning strikes to boot.

"The patient is critical," Jeff said to Jared who nodded seriously.

"Jeffery, chocolate and popcorn, stat!"

The blonde rushed off to do as bid and they met again some minutes later to snuggle up on the couch together. Kurt resisted, heavily at first, but eventually exhaustion had him slumping against Jeff's side, face in his neck while the blonde combed his fingers through his hair. Kurt was too gone to even process it.

They were a quarter of the way through Tangled, having already sang their way through Beauty and the Beast because it was surprisingly Jared's favourite and Toy Story because it was Jeff's, when they heard the front door.

"Kurt, my one true love! I'm hooooome!" rang obnoxiously loud into the air, drowning out the DVD and Kurt perked up at the sound feeling a little better already. Jeff and Jared looked at one another over his head and the elder rolled his eyes, pressing pause on the remote.

"Of course he went out and got tanked."

Kurt un-plastered his face from Jeff's neck, red spots bleeding into his skin high on his cheek and forehead. "He's drunk?"

"You can't tell?" Jared asked with an eyebrow lift.

Kurt gave him a frank look. "He does stuff like that all the time."

Jeff snorted a laugh on his left and Kurt turned to him just as deadpan. "Nick's just as bad. Those two are peas in a very sappy pod."

Jeff blushed and Jared tilted his head in acknowledgement. "Touché."

There was a few sounds of bumps and muffled laughter getting ever closer and Kurt suddenly couldn't wait to get a glimpse of his Dom which was a little out of sorts for him. Now they had settled into their bond he wasn't usually as clingy as he had been when they first got together.

"I think I gave that cab man all my money," Nick's bemused voice said, drifting easily through the open doorway. "How did that happen?"

"Looks like his pod friend is right there with him," Jared chuckled, shaking his head before
unpausing the film.

"Shouldn't we take care of them?" Kurt asked. His instincts were screaming at him and he could feel Jeff shifting restlessly beside him like he felt it too. It was strange. He had never seen Blaine drunk when he wasn't also under the influence.

Jared gave them a reassuring smile. "They'll need babying soon enough. Ride out the buzz for a little while, it'll probably be entertaining if nothing else."

"I think it's coming from upstairs," Nick said.

"No. It's this way idiot," Blaine countered.

"Bro, upstairs-

"It's my house. I know where noises are in my own house!"

"It's your parent's house, dude."

"Now you're just crossing the line."

"I live beyond the line motherfucker."

There was the sound of scuffling and weird, choked off noises as if they were trying to strangle one another for a few moments before it stopped and then-

"I'm sorry. I shouldn't have tried to bite you. I love you, man."

"I love you too, bro. I'm sorry I pulled your curls, that wasn't cool."

They fell through the doorway in a tangle of loose limbs on the carpet a second later.

"Jeff!" Nick trilled happily from beneath Blaine's elbow. "You're still here!"

"Having a snuggle party without us. No fair," Blaine pouted, rising sloppily to his knees, probably having decided his feet were either too far or too dangerous an objective to reach.

"Hello, sir," Jeff greeted shyly but with a sweet little smile that made everyone in the room happy too.

"Blaine Anderson. Are you drunk?" Kurt asked his Dom with an arched brow even though all he wanted to do is run over there and smother him in kisses. He got a hold of that wayward impulse and shut it down. Be mad, Kurt. Focus on that. "Have you been enjoying yourself while I've been slaving away over our Presenting Ceremony?"

"I think it may be a trick question," Nick whispered to his friend in an aside that everyone could hear.

Blaine blinked. "Uhh... no?"

Kurt rolled his eyes and huffed to hide how amused he was.

"Aw, lovely. Don't be like that," Blaine whined crawling over to his feet and resting his head on his knee. Kurt could only stare in shock and flush at how submissive the whole thing was and the Dom couldn't have cared less. "Nick made me do it."
The other Dom spluttered in indignation. "Did not! I didn't, angel. You believe me right?"

"Uhh..." The blonde didn't know where to even start.

"It was Kurt's ass that inspired B's alcoholism, not me," he continued, stumbling to his feet and wandering over to perch on the arm of the sofa nearest Jeff, almost falling into his lap.

"It is a very nice bum," Blaine nodded solemnly, looking up through his thick lashes. "It destroys my life."

"Oh my god," Kurt choked in embarrassment.

Jared laughed his head off next to him and Jeff was smothering a giggle and trying to keep Nick from overbalancing.

"If it's such a life ruiner I can always take my bum elsewhere, sir," Kurt managed to recover primly.

"Noooo," Blaine cried forcing his way in between Kurt's legs to smoosh his face against his stomach, hands sliding their way under his thighs and upwards until-

"Blaine let go of my ass right now we are in company!" Kurt screeched, hands pushing at his shoulders and biceps but it was no good.

Blaine shook his head, the material of his top catching and bunching around his forehead and nose. "It's mine. You're mine. I do what I want," he mumbled, trying to sound Dominant but it came out childish.

Jared shook his head at his son. "Maybe I should go clear your bed after all. He's farther gone than I thought."

Kurt huffed and squeaked when Blaine squeezed. "Thanks."

Jared waved him off and ambled to his feet. "Be back in a bit. Make sure he doesn't throw up on the carpet or something."

"M'not gonna be sick. God dad."

Jared chuckled at the pouty tone of his youngest. "Oh I'm sorry, son. My mistake."

"Bye, Jared. Love you," Nick called after the man. "Just not as much as I love angel. Sorry!"

"I'm sure I'll survive the heartache," Jared quipped dryly over his shoulder.

When he was gone Blaine snuggled in closer. "Stroke me."

Kurt's eyebrows nearly flew off his face as he stared down at that curly head. He hadn't gelled today so his curls were springy and loose and wild. "Is that an order, sir?"

"Yup. I want strokes and cuddles."

And so it ended up that Blaine was nearly asleep in his lap as he gently ran his hands through his hair and massaged the nape of his neck around his mark and shoulders, slipping his hands underneath his shirt now and then to pet at the soft, toned skin there. Something settled within him with the actions. That jumpy, awful feeling from before when he was stressing in his room vanished at the sight and touch of his Dom. He sunk himself into looking after Blaine, giving him what he needed and had asked for and it was calming beyond all reason. He so rarely got to look after Blaine this way. It was
addicting.

Jared poked his head in after he had cleared Blaine and Kurt's room and declared that he was going to pick Dana up from work and maybe stop off for a bite to eat so it was just the two young couples in the house left. Some indefinable minutes later Rapunzel started singing her heart out in the middle of the ocean, making Kurt wonder where the time had gone, and Blaine perked up like a dog pricking its ears.

"Tangled? Lovely, you're watching Tangled without me!" he gasped, highly offended as he looked over his shoulder.

"Have you just noticed?" Nick laughed. He had slowly sank off the arm of the sofa and had switched places with Jeff so the blonde was on his lap under the blanket. He wasn't really paying attention to the film, he was just content to breathe in the sweet fragrance at Jeff's neck as he dozed against him contently.

"Well Jeff watched Toy Story without you too," Kurt teased and Nick gasped just as horrified as Blaine.

"We are watching all three when we get home to make it up to me, angel," the Dom told his sleepy blonde who simply nodded, too comfortable and half asleep to really register much as he murmured a soft, "Yes, sir," that made Nick coo.

"This is our song, lovely!" Blaine said happily and looked up at Kurt. "You're missing your bit."

Kurt laughed at how serious he seemed.

Blaine frowned. "It's not funny! You're missing it!"

Kurt rolled his eyes and opened his mouth to softly sing along.

-at last I see the light
And it's like the sky is new
And it's warm and real and bright
And the world has somehow shifted
All at once everything looks different

He tapped Blaine on the nose who was staring up at him avidly, golden green eyes hazy with alcohol but full of love for him.

Now that I see you

Blaine scrambled precariously to his feet and whipped the blanket off of Kurt.

"What are you doi-"

"Dance with me," Blaine grinned big and bright, holding out his hand.

Kurt stared at it in horror. "Uh. No. Sit back down, Blaine."

For all his drunkenness Blaine was still a Dom and still stronger than him so it was no trouble at all for him to reach down and pull Kurt to his feet despite any protests or squirming.

"Jeff. Help!" Kurt yelled, shrieking in laughter when Blaine used his ticklish spot against him to get him to comply.
The blonde simply laughed at him as he watched the weird back and forth of Blaine pulling Kurt closer to try and get him into a proper dance hold and Kurt thwarting his efforts at every turn by twisting his body into wacky angles that were not conductive to the activity proposed.

"Kurt, stop being so difficult. I'm being romantic," Blaine told him frankly and Jeff noticed that not once did Blaine use his Dom voice or order so Kurt would have to do as he said. That was the main difference between Doms like Kevin and Doms like Nick and Blaine. They didn't just take because they wanted something and they didn't use their biology to their advantage. "Now shh, it's my part."

"Siiiiir," Kurt complained, giving up and sinking into his chest because resistance was futile.

The Dom crowed in triumph and wound his arms tight around his waist to make sure he couldn't escape or push out as he began to rock them side to side singing loudly.

All those days chasing down a daydream
All those years living in a blur
All that time never truly seeing
Things, the way they were

He smiled at Kurt and pressed a quick kiss to his lips before readjusting his hold, grabbing his hand a raising it up to make him turn on the spot.

Kurt groaned as he spun and heard Nick cackle in the background. "This is so embarrassing. You're not allowed to watch this film ever again!"

Blaine only pulled him close again and sung louder in response, over exaggerating every line and getting fully into character.

Now he's here shining in the starlight
Now he's here suddenly I know
If he's here it's crystal clear
I'm where I'm meant to go

Kurt rolled his eyes and joined in, much softer than Blaine and the Dom lowered to match him.

And at last I see the light

He pressed their foreheads together and Kurt wrapped his arms around Blaine's neck as they traded lines in the song.

And it's like the fog has lifted

And at last I see the light

And it's like the sky is new

And it's warm and real and bright
And the world has somehow shifted
All at once everything is different
Now that I see you

The song wound to a close and Blaine leaned in until their lips were as far apart as the onscreen couples were going to be.

Now that I see you
And unlike the animated pair, lips touched softly to the sound of scattered applause from their friends.

"Bravo!" Nick called as he watched the kiss turn more passionate. "You win the award for most sickening couple in the history of the world. Now shove over, me and Jeff are doing You've Got a Friend in Me next."

"Sir," Jeff protested on a blush. He was still shy about performing even if it was in a room full of people he trusted and felt safe with.

Nick looked down at him and kissed his forehead a few times like he couldn't decide which spot he liked best. "You're right, angel. We're too good for the likes of their uncultured ears. We'll save it for when we get home. Now tell me. Did you have a nice day? I missed you. Did I tell you I missed you? And I gave all my money away. Did I tell you that?"

Jeff shook his head at Nick and his endearing drunken babble. He had expected to feel scared the first time he saw Nick drunk. Kevin was always a special kind of horrible when he was drinking. And he wasn't stupid enough not to know that Nick avoided drinking for that very reason, that he didn't want to risk doing something to hurt him or make him feel uncomfortable.

He'd been avoiding a lot of things lately to make sure he didn't feel uncomfortable.

Well, at least he hoped it was that. A larger part of him worried that Nick hadn't approached him in a sexual way since their encounter after the competition win because he had proven himself undesirable or something. At the time Nick had seemed to be happy with him right? The things that he'd whispered in his ear that got him so hot and bothered were nothing like the insults and slurs Kevin used to throw his way when he wasn't doing things right. Everything about Nick had been perfect even though he had been scared and shaking throughout the whole experience, totally overwhelmed.

Jeff blushed when he thought about how far he had let himself go. Coming untouched and after so short a time. Maybe that was what was wrong? But no, Nick had told him it was alright to reach for his own pleasure.

He was completely confused.

Half of him was glad that he wasn't being pushed into something physical so soon, but the other half, the more predominant one, craved the touches. He was a mess and he needed help sorting out the tangles in his head and body. He looked towards his friend, who was now giggling and fending off the kisses Blaine was sloppily placing down his neck, and bit his lip.

Maybe he could call him later and ask him about all the doubts praying on his mind? They'd talked candidly before and Kurt had told him about kneeling for Blaine and what that felt like. So far Jeff hadn't had a chance to bring up his encounter with Nick to his best friend. Kurt was just so busy with organising his Presenting Ceremony that it never seemed like the right time… but deep down he knew that Kurt would always make time for him no matter what, he was simply avoiding it.

"Angel?" Nick called and he turned back around to face him. He was unprepared for the kiss that was smacked right between his eyebrows. "Love you," his Dom declared and grinned at him when he pulled back. Jeff blushed a darker colour as the words settled warmly into his skin. They smoothed over his prickly fears for now and Jeff tucked himself under Nick's chin to breathe him in.

He let his actions speak for him and Nick pulled him closer as if he understood.
"Okay, I think you should go lie down now, sir," Kurt told his Dom. He could feel his Dominant leaning on him more and more like he couldn't properly hold himself up and all the handsy touching was getting out of hand in front of guests no matter how much he loved them.

Blaine frowned and growled his disapproval into Kurt's jaw, hands clenching his hips where they had snuck under his top to find bare skin. He'd been doing this more and more lately Kurt had noticed. Being more domineering and possessive of him and in turn Kurt was perpetually more submissive and needy. It had spurred their first dip into the kink pool into a full on dive lately as they couldn't seem to get another of each other day or night.

"I'll come with you if you want?" he cajoled sweetly into his ear and Blaine hummed in contemplation, following when Kurt began leading him towards the door. He locked eyes with Jeff over Blaine's shoulder and mouthed, "I'll be back down in a minute."

Jeff nodded and Kurt left the room and made his way up to their room with Blaine nipping at his neck and distracting him at every turn. It seemed that in the time it took for them to leave the room and get upstairs the silly, I want to sing along and dance to Disney songs, Blaine had evaporated and in his place was something else entirely.

"Blaine," he sighed against his Dom's lips when he pushed him against the wall next to their door. The only answer he got was in the form of a tongue sweeping to roof of his mouth making his toes curl as heat flashed through him. He whimpered and clutched a fistful of dark curls, leaning into the plundering wholeheartedly, thoughts of why they shouldn't be doing this flying from his head as rapidly as they came.

Heated, searching hands framed his ribcage then swept swiftly down and up to drag his top with them and bare his skin. Kurt pushed into the contact and ground his hips in a figure eight against the thigh Blaine shoved between his legs. They moaned into each other's mouths hotly and Kurt felt like he would burn into cinders at any moment from just this small amount of teasing. It was ridiculous how sensitive and on edge he was feeling all the time lately.

Blaine detached their mouths with a slick sound and swept his polo over his head in one swift movement baring miles of tanned, delicious torso. Ugh. Kurt would never tire of looking at him but the sight of the Greek god before him knocked some sense into his fried head unbelievably.

"I'm supposed to be helping you to bed," Kurt stated breathlessly.

Blaine smiled lavishly before he bent and licked a hot trail up his neck to his ear. "You are."

Kurt shivered at the implication and his greedy fingers found the loops on Blaine's jeans to drag him closer even while his mouth said, "Not like this."

"Yes like this," Blaine asserted, pure dominance underscoring the words and actions as he grasped Kurt's thighs and lifted. The sub could barely contain his gasp of delight at being manhandled so strongly by his Dom and he ducked down to beg for another kiss, fingers tangling in midnight curls for leverage.

Blaine granted it; hot and dirty and fast in a way that made his head spin and his chest heave, before he tore away to walk them into their bedroom and straight for the bed. They fell down on it, Kurt pressed into the mattress by their combined weight and he moaned obscene and loud when gravity ground their pelvises together. Sparks shot through his body and he arched up into the contact shamelessly, trying to get some relief for his hardening erection.

Mouths clashed once more and all Kurt could taste was the faint aftertaste of cherry when he sucked
on his Dom’s lips and a mixture of bitter alcohol when Blaine battled and twined their tongues. His hands scrabbled for purchase on Blaine's sweaty skin, raking his nails along his back and shoulders because suddenly he was desperate for it. Desperate to crawl beneath Blaine's skin. Desperate to let Blaine take him over.

And take him over he did. The Dom wasted no time in going to his knees between Kurt's splayed legs and getting his jeans undone, moaning as he freed his leaking, red cock from its confines. Kurt's mouth went dry at the very sight of it, ideas of what he wanted to do with it flashing through his brain. He was so out of it that he barely noticed Blaine forcing his yoga pants and briefs down just below his ass, baring his own pulsing erection to his hungry gaze. The Dom pushed at his loose top, raked it up again until it was wadded under his arms and then dipped down to take a pebbled, rosy nipple into his mouth like he would die without it.

Kurt cried out sharply at the wet, heated suction that was causing the most wonderful sensations to course through his blood and he arched into every tug or nip with enthusiastic passion.

"Blaine," he moaned and the Dom lifted his head much to his distress and met his eyes darkly, pupils blown out and face flushed through from a mixture of alcohol and lust.

"Sir. You call me sir," he corrected in an unmistakable command and Kurt felt his tummy flip over. Blaine had never ordered him to use that exclusively while they were in bed together before and he found he strangely liked the intensity it brought. The way it made his heart beat faster and his skin to feel tighter to his bones and he wanted nothing more than to yield completely to this incomparable strength that was rolling off of Blaine in heavy waves.

He bit his lip and watched Blaine's eyes track the movement. He shivered in pleasure and released it to sigh the wanted, "Sir."

Blaine rumbled his approval and braced his weight of either side of Kurt's head so he was looming over him completely. Kurt loved how that made him feel, having Blaine box him in on all sides.

"And what does my lovely want in reward for being such a good boy?" Blaine asked him lowly even while teasingly lowering his hips into Kurt's so their bare cocks brushed together. Kurt moaned his approval open mouthed, eyelashes fluttering as his legs shifted restlessly on the bedspread.

"T-that… anything… please, sir," he babbled, grasping at Blaine's sides with his hands, squirming impatiently still. He just needed.

Blaine smirked, eyes liquid gold as he fed off of Kurt's desire and want. "Okay, baby. Take us in your hand."

Kurt looked into his eyes in surprise. "Me?"

"Just for that you're not allowed to come until I do," Blaine ordered and Kurt hastily reached down between them as the reprimand washed through him. Shuddering he took first himself then Blaine into the curve of his palm, clenching his jaw to keep from crying out at the touch of hard, heated skin against his.

His Dom ducked down to his ear and nipped at the lobe on the verge of painfully. "Don't keep your sounds from me, lovely. I want the whole of Westerville to know that only I can do this for you. Get you this hot. You're hot aren't you, baby?"

Kurt whimpered his answer and his hips bucked into his own hand. He gasped and choked off his groan, free hand clutching at the side of Blaine's neck for an anchor. His Dom bit at his ear again.
"I said I want to hear you, Kurt," he ordered roughly and god did Kurt want to give in. To scream himself hoarse at Blaine's command, but people were still in the house and he didn't want them to hear him. He only wanted Blaine. The command was strong though and his willingness to do anything Blaine ever asked of him was even stronger.

He turned his head in a silent plea for kisses that could drown out any noise that could escape him but Blaine seemed to know the game he was playing and denied him; skating their lips together and licking at his mouth dirtily in teasing torture but never sealing them.

And then he began to thrust his hips and Kurt couldn't have shut up for the world.

White hot spikes of lust and euphoria drowned out everything else as their erections slid together, Kurt picking up the fast paced rhythm from his Dom and trying to hold on for the ride. There was something decadent and desperate about getting off together half clothed and the feel of Blaine's jeans against the small bit of exposed thigh he had on show sent him wild.

"Oh god, sir," he moaned uninhibited into Blaine's open and panting mouth and it seemed to drive Blaine harder. He was fucking into Kurt's hand like a man possessed and Kurt could already feel his release curling in his stomach at the sight of him sweating and forceful above him, god, the sight of them as he peered down between their writhing bodies. He imagined what it would look like if they were ever to make love in front of a mirror, or even if they recorded themselves and he keened at the imagery it presented. "Sir, please. I need to come. Please," he begged shamelessly.

"No coming until I do," Blaine growled. "You want to be my good boy don't you?"

Kurt nodded and moaned. "Yes, yes. I want to be a good boy."

Blaine kissed at his open mouth, thrusting his hips again and literally forcing him up the bed. The slide of material under his ass was unbearably hot and he shifted his grip on Blaine's neck restlessly. By accident he stroked fingers over Blaine's mark and the Dom roared his approval double timing his hips. Kurt's hand ached but he held on, feeling fireworks shooting through his tension filled body and then, finally, something hot and wet splashed between them, coating his hand, stomach and cock and Kurt barely had to thrust once more before he was adding to the mess with a scream.

Flushing from head to toe he turned his mouth towards Blaine's ear. "Sir?"

"Hm," the man hummed sounding on the edge of passing out and it made Kurt want to roll his eyes and cuddle him closer at the same time.

"I need to go and say goodbye to Jeff and Nick."

Blaine grunted his disapproval and turned his mouth to suck at his skin. Kurt gasped at the tugging sensation and groaned as it mixed wonderfully with the aftershocks he was feeling.

"Please, sir?" he cajoled a little breathless as he felt teeth join the party.

In all honesty he didn't want to go anywhere either. The idea of getting out of bed and walking away from Blaine made him feel cold and funny inside but he had responsibilities to their friends. He couldn't just leave them down there without a word.
"I'll be back in a minute and then we can cuddle and I won't leave again until morning," he pressed, arching his neck.

_Famous last words_, he thought with a flush.

Blaine sighed heavily, then after one deeper suck released his hot, wet skin and rolled onto his back, uncaring about his state of dress or the drying come on his stomach. God he looked edible and Kurt was very tempted to lock them in this room forever.

Fighting his natural urges he forced himself to get up and move towards the bathroom. He cleaned himself up and then took a warm, wet cloth to do the same for his Dom who was now fast asleep and breathing deeply.

Kurt smiled down at him lovingly as he got to work, flushing a little when he tucked Blaine back into his underwear. He pulled his shoes, socks and jeans off so he could be more comfortable and draped a blanket over him before retreating from the room quickly ignoring the itch under his skin with every step away.

He walked back into the living room on somewhat shaky legs to find Nick snoring on the couch, laid out lengthwise with his head in Jeff's lap. The blonde was running fingers through his hair looking softly down at him. Whether or not Jeff realised it himself Kurt knew that he was in love with that sleeping, goofy-ass Dom.

"I see you got yours to pass out too," Kurt commented and Jeff glanced at him with a twitch of his lips.

"You probably didn't get Blaine to sleep the same way I did Nick."

Kurt flushed a little and rolled his eyes. He knew he looked freshly debauched, there was nothing he could do about that. "Such cheek, Sterling. I don't know why I hang out with you now that you've got so sassy."

"They say imitation is the highest form of flattery," Jeff smirked and Kurt stuck his tongue out at him grabbing a handful of popcorn from the bowl before settling in the armchair. The film was very nearly at its end so he'd let the last of it play out before seeing his friends off.

After a few minutes he could feel Jeff's eyes on him and he turned with a raised brow. "What's up?"

Jeff didn't say anything immediately and Kurt got a little twitchy.

"Are you staring at the hickey on my neck?" He raised a hand to cover the area. "He does it all the time. Blaine was a vampire in another life I swear."

Jeff blushed and shook his head. "It's not that… though that thing is pretty impressive."

"Vampire I tell you," Kurt asserted, but then cocked his head. "But if it's not that then what is it?"

_Okay, Sterling. Just take the plunge._

"You know the night after Sectionals?" he started nervously and if his fingers weren't already occupied he'd be twisting them. Kurt nodded. "Well Nick and me… well, we sorta… um…"

"Oh. My. God," Kurt gasped, jaw dropping to the floor. "You and Nick were together? Like in a sex way together?"
Jeff nodded, glad Kurt had caught on so quickly so he didn't have to say it out loud. His face was on fire.

"How was it?" he asked eagerly, scooting to the edge of his seat and Jeff glanced down at this snoring Dom quickly to confirm he was in fact asleep before looking back up shyly.

"I don't know… I think good," he said unsurely and Kurt frowned a little.

"You think?" he asked. "Did you not… you know…" He blushed when Jeff continued to stare at him and then went for it because who were they kidding? He was just upstairs doing it himself after all. "…come?"

The blonde buried his face in his free hand, embarrassed. "Yes. Nick did too."

"Okay. Well that's a good sign I would say unless… well he didn't force you to did he?" Kurt asked carefully trying to hit on the source of Jeff's discomfort.

"No!" Jeff denied emphatically, brown eyes wide. "Nick wouldn't do that."

Kurt held his palms up and nodded. "I know. I'm just trying to work this out, Jeff. You're not giving me a lot to go on, sweetie."

The blonde took a deep breath and took the plunge. "I liked what we did together. I was scared at first and you know who was in my head a little, but Nick got me through it," he explained.

"That's great, honey. I'm super happy you're letting Nick take care of you," Kurt beamed.

"But he's not anymore. That's the problem," Jeff confessed avoiding his eye and concentrating of shifting strands of brown through his fingers.

"What do you mean?" Kurt asked confused.

"He hasn't touched me like that again since that night and I don't know whether it's something I've done or maybe he was put off-"

Kurt cut off the beginnings of his ramblings. "Now listen… Nick loves you, sweetie. Nothing you could do would put him off."

"But I wasn't very good at it," he bemoaned, looking wretchedly back up at him. "I didn't really do anything for him at all. I just lay there and he did everything and I… I came really quickly."

He was beet red at the admission and Kurt gave his friend a reassuring smile.

"You think I lasted my first time with Blaine? Nope. I came in my pants almost immediately," he admitted a little red faced himself. "It gets better with practise."

Jeff was silent for a tension filled moment before he confessed almost inaudibly. "He didn't even have to touch me, Kurt."

Kurt studied him for a second as he let it sink in. "Not even once?"

Jeff shook his head miserably. "Not really. He was just saying all these things… saying how good I was and how much he wanted me and I just…"

He waved his hand lamely to emphasize his point.
"Him praising you gets you off," Kurt translated for him and Jeff met his eyes surprised. "Don't look so shocked, sweetie. I like that too."

"You do?"

He nodded. "Everyone has kinks, Jeff. I know it can feel a little embarrassing because of how much they strip you down, trust me, but they're nothing to be ashamed about as long as you're not hurting anyone with them and everyone is consenting."

Jeff nodded as he soaked up the information. Both he and Kurt were woefully undereducated when it came to matters such as these… well more him lately rather than Kurt now that he was learning first hand from Blaine. But in school Kurt had avoided any and all classes that dealt with Sex Ed for subs and Jeff's experiences with Kevin had warped his perception far beyond any logic.

"I think you should ask Nick to try some stuff if you're open to it," Kurt suggested, resting his cheek on his palm and tucking his legs up under him.

"But what if he doesn't want to practise? And what if I'm not good at it even if we do? What if… Kevin… what if what he did made me like this forever?" Jeff worried, feeling tears sting at his eyes. It was so frustrating being held back like this. Having to tackle chain after chain in order to move forwards.

"I refuse to believe that, Jeff," Kurt told him so strongly Jeff had to pay attention. "I mean look at how far you've already come, yeah? There's nothing you can't do and sure, it might take a little more time but you'll get there because you're amazing and stronger than anyone I've ever known. Kevin can't take what you and Nick have away from you. You've already beaten him, sweetie. Please believe that."

Jeff choked over the lump that had risen in his throat as the words printed on his heart. Had he really beaten Kevin? He looked down to the happy Dom snoozing in his lap, the person who told him a hundred times a day he loved him and who had cleared and coloured the mark on the back of his neck fresh and clean.

His heart began to flutter wildly, the blood it was rushing pounding in his ears. God what was this monumental feeling? Relief? Hope? Whatever its name it was like a cool breeze sweeping through him, carrying away fears and pain and doubts for now.

"I've beaten him," he whispered out loud. He refocused and found his friend staring at him with tears in his eyes.

"You have. He hasn't got a hold on you anymore, Jeff," Kurt told him surely. "I see it in you every day, healing yourself and letting Nick in to take care of you and I'm so proud of you, blondie."

Jeff felt a few tears leak from his eyes as he laughed softly. "Oh god." He didn't even know what to say he was so overwhelmed.

"So about the whole sex issue. Just bring it up with him and talk it out. So what if you haven't exactly gotten stamina just yet? This is your first real relationship and Nick didn't exactly last any longer than you from what I'm interpreting," Kurt stated logically and Jeff sighed out. That was true. "Like I said the last time we talked about this. He doesn't want to push you, so until you give him the okay he isn't going to be jumping your bones at every turn."

And just like that Kurt had untangled the snarls in his mind oh so effortlessly. "I love you, Kurt. I want you to know that," he found himself telling his friend from the heart. Kurt beamed at him and
rushed over to smack a kiss to his cheek.

"I love you too, silly blonde."

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**Lima.**

*One week later...*

Was it possible to still feel that familiar coil of anxiety in your stomach after being called to the principal's office, even after years of being out of school as a student and back as a teacher? Was it just a reflex? An instinctive thought of: what have I been caught doing now and how can I get out of it?

And truly, being called to the principal in a school like McKinley definitely meant something big was about to happen. Because in these ruins of an institution you didn't get called up to talk about your feelings or to be told you were getting a bigger budget… or a budget at all.

With his thoughts following him like a dark cloud above his head, he came to a halt in front of the office and knocked once; the sound sharp, decisive and determined, showing none of his inner turmoil. He was strong and confident, and he radiated that image on the outside.

Having been invited in he pushed the door open and stepped inside the suffocating space, coming face to face with Principal Figgins. His round face was stretched into an insincere, almost manic smile that made him want to roll his eyes. But there on the ratty sofa by the side his chipped desk was an elderly couple whose clothes most certainly didn't belong in a place like McKinley.

"Ah, Mr Leviev. Thank you for joining us at such short notice," Figgins said in an unnervingly sweet voice and the young teacher almost cocked an eyebrow in shock at how chirpy the usually dejected and glum older man seemed to be.

"It wasn't a problem, sir," he answered calmly, deciding to keep his wonder for himself.

"Wonderful!" He clapped his hands, then gestured, "Now these here are Mr. and Mrs. Robson. They wanted to discuss something with you if you are amenable?"

He nodded in silent assent, curious. There wasn't a lot around here that could break the monotony of his usual schedule and though he preferred it that way, the rigidity of structure in his life and work, he was known to branch out now and again.

"I'll give you some privacy," Figgins said and slunk out of the office leaving him confused and slightly uncomfortable. What was it that they needed to say to him that required privacy?

He managed to remain still and dignified in spite of it, taking pride in his strength as a Dom to hold his own in most situations.

"Please, have a seat," the woman spoke and it surprised him how gentle she sounded when it was quite obvious she was a strong Dom herself.

"Thank you, Mrs. Robson," he answered politely and took a seat close to them, his back upright, and hands clasped in his lap.
"Please, call me Esther. And my husband's name is Dale," she introduced and the man next to her smiled a friendly, but not overly cheerful, smile. It made him wonder again what they were doing here.

"I'm Danai. Danai Leviev," he said, extending a hand and shaking both of theirs briefly before settling back down in his chair.

"That's an unusual name," Esther commented and he shrugged, having already been used to the questions about the origins for almost all his life. However in this particular instance it seemed like the most bizarre thing to discuss.

"My father was of Russian descent," he explained shortly, not feeling the need to go any deeper but the couple didn't seem to need any more than that. He, on the other hand, was dying to know who they were and why he was there with them.

"Ah, well. That explains that. How long have you been a teacher?" she asked and he took a breath to answer but then his temper flared slightly and he decided he wasn't going to answer any more of her questions until he knew who she was.

"With all due respect Mrs. Robson, Esther, I'd like to know why I'm here before I answer any more of your inquiries about my life," he said politely, but determinately, voice firm and commanding, driving the air around them to thicken.

She eyed him for a minute before stretching her lips into a huge smile as she turned to her husband.

"I think he'll be great," she said and he coughed pointedly, making them both turn back to face him.

"Do you mind clueing me in?" he asked and she nodded.

"We don't mind at all, dear," she said like she was doing him a favor and it actually threatened to make him amused of all things. "Here's the thing. We have a grandson. A young sub who didn't have the best life with his mother. Our darling daughter, as much as we tried with her, just wanted to lead a life filled with bad people and even worse habits. Brad, our grandson, has a lot of her in him, and we love him dearly but we have reached the end of our wits with him," she explained and Danai noticed that as calm as she had seemed, Dale was getting more and more subdued and sad.

He tried to feel empathic but he just didn't understand what it was that they wanted from him. He didn't need to question much longer as Esther continued speaking.

"A year or so ago, he had developed a liking for a certain Dom in his school. The boy was and is unfortunately straight as an arrow however and Brad, well…he didn't take it well. He got even worse from that point. Rude, disobedient, he even went as far as to insult another sub and try to ruin his bond. You may have heard about them in the news? Blaine Anderson and Kurt Hummel? He went to this very school we believe."

Danai nodded. He hadn't actually ever had Kurt in his class but he remembered seeing the sub around school. He was friends with Sam Evans, who was in his class, and Mercedes Jones. The news of his claiming had set McKinley alight for weeks after the fact and it was still buzzing to this day. To hear someone had tried to ruin that bond, a sub no less, was quite shocking to say the least.

Esther seemed to be reading his mind because she gave him a grimace in acknowledgement. "It was then we had realized that we have to do something drastic to turn him around. He might never be a sweet, nice, cuddly sub, but we want to try and turn him into a decent human being," she finished, sounding for all the world, exhausted.
Danai felt sorry for the couple. They clearly loved their grandson very much and they blamed themselves for the way he behaved. "I'm really sorry to hear that but… what can I do for you?" he asked after the silence stretched way longer than he was comfortable with.

"We have enrolled Brad here. As I said, Kurt comes from here and somehow Brad convinced himself that he was better than that boy just because he has a wealthy family. We didn't raise him that way," she stated firmly. "So we want him to go to school here and see what it's like to be without the privileges he was born into."

He eyed her with interest. Her answer was the last thing he had expected from a rich Dom such as herself. Admitting to thinking of the poorer part of society as worthy of respect as the rest of them were and willingly sending her grandson to a public school to show him that. He admired that, he had to admit.

"It's a good idea. Still doesn't give me a clue as to what my role in this is," he said and she nodded once again.

"We have talked to Principle Figgins about it and we asked for Brad to be placed into a class with a strong, unyielding Dom who can keep him in check. You came in highly recommended," she revealed and as shocked as he was about her request he knew he was the strongest Dom in their school.

The only teacher whose class was always on time, had the highest testing scores, and actually allowed him to teach instead of just screaming and making a mess of the classroom. He knew he would be able to handle a privileged, snotty little brat and make him obey.

"He's a senior?" he asked and she nodded.

"Yes. He is actually a really good student and I'm sure academically you'll have no problems with him. His behaviour, on the other hand… I apologize in advance but that's something that will cause a ruckus. He's volatile when he's in the best of moods and after all that happened… he's angry," she said and the young teacher felt a bit unnerved at the easy way she admitted her grandson's shortcomings.

He understood why she wanted someone strong to keep her grandson in order and he truly wanted to help her but he was scared for his own class. He had worked hard and long to get them to cooperate and respect him as an authority figure. The last thing he needed was a spoiled little rich kid ruining everything he had worked for.

But on the other hand, one of the reasons he had wanted to be a teacher was so that he could help young kids find themselves and grow as people. And if he used his skills both as an educator and as a Dom to get through to this kid, it could be highly rewarding for his efforts.

"I understand where you're coming from. And I have dealt with angry students before, it's quite common in an area like this. I don't know how much Principal Figgins has told you about me, but I am a pretty strict teacher and a pretty strict Dom. My class behaves well and studies and works hard. I hope your grandson will come to be the same after some time," he said confidently and they both smiled at him.

"We hope so too. We have a potential claim offer for him and we would like for him to learn how to respect his Dom before he meets him. Now, there was something else we would like to talk to you about," she said and the young teacher nodded for her to go on.

"Sure thing but my first class starts in twenty minutes so mind the time, if it's not a problem. Will
"It won't take long. And yes, he will be there for your first class. Now… if we're being honest here, we don't really have a lot of confidence in your Principal. He seems like a nice man, but one who doesn't really have all the reins in his hands. We would like to make a donation to this school and we wanted to know what would be the most useful for the kids? Any ideas?" she asked and Danai gaped at her in surprise.

"You don't need to do that. Your grandson will be treated the same as the rest of my students," he said and she smiled at him.

"I have no doubt about that my dear. But we would still like to do something to improve the quality of this institution. What do you feel is the biggest priority?" she asked again and he gave it a moment's thought before settling for an answer.

"The library. The books we have are tattered, outdated and insufficient. We only have one old computer and spotty internet connection at best. If something can be done to improve the library that would be amazing," he said and she nodded in understanding.

"Absolutely. The library should be the heart of the school. We will see what can be done about it. Thank you." She glanced at her wristwatch. "And I believe it's almost time for your first period so we don't want to keep you any longer," she said and he stood up, shaking their hands politely before walking towards the door.

"Oh… one more thing, Mr. Leviev," Esther called and he turned on his heel to find her extending her hand with a white card in her fingers.

"We'd like to be informed of Brad's behaviour by you personally. Would that be a problem?" she asked and he took the card nodding his head at her.

"Not at all. I'll call you once a week. More often if he's misbehaving in a way I can't deal with on my own. But let's hope it won't get to that." With a final nod he exited the room and walked toward his classroom, forehead scrunched with curiosity about the boy that was moments away from becoming a part of his class.

He walked into the room to the sound of the bell, to find his students sitting in their seats, chattering quietly among themselves, creating no mess or noise. They spotted him and chirped a polite, "Hi Mr. Lev" to him as he set up for class.

His chest puffed proudly as he watched them, thinking back to the loud, disrespectful bunch of kids that had entered that very room years ago and how far they had come with his guidance.

He just hoped Brad would find a way to be a part of them somehow. And just as that thought crossed his mind a bored looking voice drifted from the hallway in front of his door.

"Thank god I remembered to bring disinfectant. I wouldn't want to catch something in this dump."

The door slammed open to reveal a whirlwind of honey blond hair and green eyes decorating a sharp face and pink, full lips which were forming those crude words. And Danai's world flipped upside down.

He was… he was his.

His energy was radiating in pulsing waves and Danai was accosted with a strange mix of defiance, stubbornness, confusion and fear. It made him want nothing more than to scoop this sub up in his
arms and take him away from the prying eyes that devoured him as he stood in the doorway.

Which was just absurd!

He had never had a reaction quite like this one towards a sub. His former bond, not a Permanent one, had been all soft angles and subdued want that left both of them content but never truly happy. They spent five years together in peace and serenity until they had sat down one day and agreed that none of them was living their life to the fullest with each other. They kissed and held each other close before parting ways for good.

He had found a good Dom, Danai heard a few years back. He was happy and Danai was happy for him. But for him, no sub had ever felt right like everyone said it should. He had had flings and short term test relationships that never went further than that. He hadn't wanted any of them to stay. Not like he wanted this insolent little brat that sneered at his class and glared from high up on his imaginary pedestal.

It slotted into place in his mind; acceptance and resolve following swiftly after. Well, his sub would not be allowed to behave that way.

"Brad Robson I presume," he said with an icy voice and the boy turned his stunning hazel eyes towards him, their beauty ruined by the disgust he had found in them.

"Ah… good thing you know your superiors," the sub said with a sarcastic turn of his lips and cold dread went through Danai's body. Why the hell was he responding this way to such a crude person? What did he do to deserve a brat like this?

But as his class gasped and glared at him for his insulting words he felt that pulse of panic and fear and he knew there was more to Brad than being an outright asshole. Someone so far gone wouldn't care, would probably relish being hated and hate them back all the harder. There was something else fuelling all of this he suspected, he would just have to dig deep.

"Yes… and my superiors had warned me about having an uncultured little child in my class so I used my vast intelligence, put two and two together and figured that must be you. Take a seat," he said, voice hard and his face betraying none of his desire to just take him away and keep him for himself.

Brad took a step back at his tone and the feel he gave off turned defiant again.

"I don't think I want to sit here. Who knows what's touched those desks," he turned his nose up in disgust and the rest of his class, although quieted by shock, looked at him in anger as he insulted them.

Danai decided to use his best working tactic and just ignore his comments. Once he realized he would get no reaction for behaving like that he would most likely stop.

"The seat in the front row to the left is free. You can sit there." He just went on like he hadn't been rudely interrupted and Brad scowled, his aura turning angry and confused.

"I don't think you got my point. I will not sit next to the filth you call students," he said, really testing the limits and Danai saw red.

He could take defiance; disobedience, rage, pride and spite directed at himself. But he would not allow his students to be insulted by someone who had a misguided sense of greatness. He turned ice cold, grey eyes at the sub, letting all of his dominance seep through his pores and he felt a rush of pleasure at the way it made the blonde boy reel back and away from him.
"SIT. DOWN," he ordered and watched in perverted pleasure as the young sub just folded his lanky body into the nearest tattered chair, eyes wide and confused as he stared at him.

"Now let me explain how this is going to work. In my classroom I have the last word. I make the rules and if you, or anyone else has a problem with following them, there are consequences. You will behave like a well raised person and respect me, and everyone else in this class because for the time being… you are exactly the same as everyone else. I don't use dominance in my class a lot… but I have no problem with using it either. You'd be best to remember that," he stated unequivocally and turned away from his class knowing they were all stunned into silence as they always were when he unleashed his power in front of them.

In between the usual admiration, shock, joy and pride he felt radiating from his students he felt something completely different.

He felt defiance, denial and the tiniest hints of desire.

He felt a sub fighting against knowing that his Dom was in the room.

Westerville.
Three days out...

The days passed in a rush of fabric and stress and well, stress relief and then suddenly it was three days until he was due to be bonded to Blaine. Three days until they became official and they could shut up those vicious, vindictive mouths for good that swore up and down Blaine would get tired of him before they sealed their bond.

Kurt didn't care about them talking anymore. He knew he was loved; treasured, cherished and wanted beyond a doubt and that in three days time he would sign his name next to Blaine's on the dotted line. He would finally share everything he was with him and his mark would be lined with black.

It made him shiver to think about.

He'd belong to Blaine completely and there was nothing he wanted more than that. But there was something tingling in the back of his mind and he hadn't been able to shake it off in the last couple of days.

As the date of their Presenting approached the two of them got increasingly… feral? Kurt didn't even know how to describe it, he just knew that every moment spent in Blaine's presence made his knees ache with the need to kneel before him. Every kiss turned desperate and had him begging for his Dom to just take him. His wrists were lined with soft pink marks from restraints Blaine put him in to ease him off the edge and he knew Blaine's back was covered in thin red lines from his nails.

He had been insatiable for days and it scared him so much because he didn't know what had changed inside of him so suddenly. What switch had been flipped to turn him into this… well… slut? There was no other way to describe the way he was panting after Blaine like a bitch in heat even though he balked at the implication in his clearer minded moments.
Blaine had felt good to him since the moment they started taking things further, but lately, lately all Kurt could do in his proximity was feed off of that natural, powerful dominance that seemed to ratchet up higher and higher with every hour and slither to him invitingly. All submissive whines and obedient ‘sirs’ rolling like liquid off his tongue. And his Dom always responded, so eager and so frighteningly strong.

Kurt knew they were playing with fire this close to the actual bonding night and they were barely able to contain the need they felt for each other. It was weighing on his mind and he wanted someone to talk to but he had nobody who would understand. His dad was a Dom and while strong he was nowhere close to Blaine's overwhelming power. Jeff was in a completely different situation and even if he felt this same need for Nick, his past prevented him from losing his control and giving in like Kurt had been doing. The rest of his sub friends either weren't virgins when they entered their bonds or their Dom's weren't as strong as Blaine… was...

His mind struck an iceberg.

Oh!

Oh how did he not thing of this sooner?

He threw his robe on over his pajamas- which were actually Blaine's- and rushed down the stairs into the living room where a soft light cast a warm glow over the lone figure reading a book in the armchair.

"Jared?" he called softly and the older man lifted his eyes, marking his place with a well-worn bookmark before smiling questioningly at him.

"Kurt. Up so late?"

The younger nodded, padding over on bare feet and sitting on the sofa closest to his father in law. "Waiting for Blaine," he answered, fidgeting a little. Eventually he just tucked his legs under him and arranged the robe on top to keep his feet warm.

Jared balanced his book on the arm of the chair. "Still in the studio?"

"Yeah. They're pretty busy with signing new people and stuff so he's there a lot," Kurt said, tucking his palms between his knees to prevent himself from biting the skin around his nails. It looked tacky and he did not want to have massacred cuticles on his Presenting day.

He thought back to the first time Blaine had left him alone to go to the studio and how different the feeling he had right now was from then. It was right at the start of their bond; when he was feeling his most vulnerable submissively and he had been scared of being left, abandoned and not wanted all hours of the day. Waking up to his Dom's absence had felt like a confirmation of what everyone else knew. That he wasn't good enough. That he didn't measure up. That Blaine was tired of him. His reaction that day was extreme, he understood that now. Submissive instincts going into overdrive and sending him into a mini meltdown until Blaine had come back to calm him.

Now… now he just missed his Dom and he knew, whatever Blaine was doing, that he missed him back. It eased his mind being that certain of Blaine coming back to him and it was pleasing to look back and see just how far they'd come in their relationship. To know for a fact that Blaine loved him and wanted to be with him always.

Kurt just wanted him to come back sooner.

As he continued to shift restlessly, he just couldn't help it, Jared eyed him curiously wondering what
was bothering his son's sub.

"Kurt? Are you okay?" he asked and Kurt startled, jumping slightly up in his seat and turning guilty blue eyes on Jared.

"Yeah… well I think so?" He frowned to himself, the itching under his skin getting worse it seemed by the second. "No… um, well that is to say… not really…" he babbled forlornly and Jared chuckled warmly.

"Well how about you decide which one it is and let me know if I can help okay?" he smiled, eyes bright with good humour.

But how to start? How to say, oh yes Jared I want you to please help me stop lusting after your son. I really, really, really want him to take me to bed and finish the job. What would you suggest?

Kurt bit the inside of his cheek to keep the thoughts strictly inside his head and Jared gave him a moment more before picking up his book again to crack it open.

The minutes ticked past slowly; the only sounds in the room their soft breathing, Kurt's incessant moving and the crisp turn of pages.

He did come down to talk to Jared, after all. It couldn't hurt to ask for advice could it? There was no one else he could ask… well maybe Google, but that was pretty ridiculous and not strictly reliable. He sighed and the corner of Jared's mouth twitched.

The old man was just waiting him out. And damn if he didn't crack.

"I just…" He paused, wincing at how loud his voice suddenly seemed. Jared looked up again and cocked a brow patiently. "Well, I wanted to talk to you… about something," he said carefully.

Jared put his book aside again and leaned forward in his chair, chin cradled in his hands and elbows resting on his knees.

"I guessed as much," he grinned and Kurt flushed. "Anything you need, Kurt. You know you can come to me with any concerns," he assured him and Kurt shifted in his seat in discomfort.

Again, talking to your Dom's father about wanting to sleep with said son was probably a pretty stupid idea but hey… he was here already now so…

"I just… I… there's been something on my mind and I don't… I didn't know who else to talk to?" he asked it like a question before continuing when he saw Jared nod. "Um… Dana is as strong of a Dom as Blaine and um… I figured… you'd know…" he let it trail clumsily and flushed.

God this was embarrassing. Pulling my teeth out may be less painful.

"You figured..?" Jared prompted.

"Um… Blaine and I… we…" he started and then stopped not really sure how to finish that sentence and not sound creepy or horny or needy or just plain weird. Shit, he should just slink away now with the last scraps of his dignity intact. But no. He wasn't a coward… much. "Something feels different lately. I don't… I don't know why, or how… we just…" he tried again with the same result. He ran a frustrated hand through his hair and sighed, annoyed with himself.

Jared looked at him warmly and decided to help him out. After all he knew what was going on and watching the poor kid fumble around broke his heart a little.
"You feel like you need Blaine all the time?" Jared finished surely and Kurt snapped his eyes up in surprise.

"Yeah," he said on an exhale.

"Feel like you want him around all the time and you're restless when he's away? Like now?" Jared elaborated further and Kurt felt like the words were being pulled out of his own mind and voiced by this endlessly kind and patient man he now had the luck to call family.

"I… yes… I don't know how to… I feel like I can't… um…" he trailed off, hoping Jared would once again help out and finish his sentence.

"You can't get enough of him?" Jared lived up to Kurt's expectations with a teasing spark in his eyes and Kurt felt himself blush under that look. Tomato red.

"Something like that..." he muttered quietly, drawing his shoulders up a little coyly and Jared chuckled at his shy son in law.

"It's nothing to be ashamed of, Kurt. It's normal and expected at a time like this," the older man assured him gently and Kurt searched his face to find nothing but sincerity written into the lines there.

"It... it is?" he asked timidly and Jared stood up, crossing the space between them and sitting next to Kurt on the sofa. The younger sub twisted his body around so he could keep eye contact, sitting with his back to the armrest and knees drawn up loosely so his feet rested in the small space between them.

"Of course it is. Kurt, what Blaine and you have together... it's not that common," he said and Kurt frowned.

"What do you mean? A lot of my friends are bonded already," he said and Jared shook his head.

"None of your friends are as strong of a Dom as Blaine. And, apart from Jeff whom the circumstances turned into a more submissive person than he would probably be naturally, you are the most responsive, pliant sub I have had the chance to meet. Combine that and you get the recipe for a strong, perfect bond. Like Blaine and you have. Without someone like you... he would have spiralled out of control," Jared said and Kurt stared at him in surprise.

"What... how? Why?" he stuttered in shock.

"He's powerful, Kurt. I'm sure you feel that. Dana and I were getting increasingly worried about him the longer he left it. And then you came along you wonderful thing. Anyone less submissive than you wouldn't have been enough to balance him out. You are the perfect match for him. You're what he needs to be able to function," Jared told him just like that and Kurt felt himself smile against his will.

The sub in him thrived and preened and blossomed at knowing he was so essential to his Dom. Though that didn't help him control his latest problem. In fact that only made it worse. Made the desire to greet Blaine on his knees when he got home all the more potent. Or maybe he could somehow tie himself to the headboard? Blaine liked it when they played that game after all...

"Shit. He could feel himself responding to the naughty imagery and he was mortified beyond all belief because Jared was sitting inches from him and the only thing stopping him from knowing what exactly he had been side-tracked by were his knees. He drew them tighter to his body and held his robe around himself, trying to pretend he was suddenly cold.
It probably didn't work.

"I…” he cleared his throat to get rid of the strangled quality. “I need him too."

*Like right now.*

"That's the beauty of it, son," Jared smiled unawares just how immediate his advice was needed. "The need you feel is mutual. And I know it's hard to resist but that will make your bonding even more perfect."

Kurt huffed at the almost foreign word. *Resist?*

"If we can make it until then," he scoffed and Jared snorted out a loud laugh, startling Kurt in his seat.

"Are you worried about slipping?" he asked and Kurt wrapped his arms around his knees, as if he wished he could keep something so personal to himself, and stared down at his toes.

Because the truth was he *was* worried.

"A little… yes."

Jared nodded. "Yeah that can be a bit difficult, I admit. But there are ways to make it easier," he said and Kurt looked up hopefully.

"There are?" he asked, perking up considerably.

"When Dana and I were waiting for our Ceremony we had a similar problem. We… um… well to put it bluntly we almost didn't make it one night. After that… we decided to sleep in separate rooms for the remaining few days we had left until our Presenting. Maybe that could be your solution? No need to keep temptation in bed with you right?" he said and Kurt frowned picturing three nights of sleeping without Blaine's arms around him; without his strength to soothe him, without his natural dominance lacing his voice and making him shiver.

He wasn't sure if he could sleep *at all* without Blaine next to him. God, things had changed so much. From being afraid to even be close to his Dom to being terrified of being away from him.

"I don't… I don't think I can…” he said sadly, a whine already weaving its way into the undertones and Jared took his hand.

"I know it's terrifying, Kurt. But in my opinion a few restless nights are a lot better than struggling against your very nature. Maybe… talk to Blaine about it?" he suggested and Kurt finally caved and bit at his thumb, so deep in thought he didn't even see Jared standing up, feel him clasp his shoulder or hear the sound of keys jingling from the front door.

Jared retrieved his book just as the front door closed. Kurt snapped his head up at that sound and he felt his skin crawl with the need to attach himself to Blaine and never let go.

"Talk to him," Jared said and stepped towards the exit, headed for the stairs.

"Jared?" Kurt called and the man turned around with an amused smile on his face.

"Yeah?"

"Thank you," Kurt said and he smiled; soft lines webbed in the corners of his wise eyes, face warm and comforting.
"Any time, Kurt. Night," he said and disappeared from view, quiet like a shadow.

He blew out a breath and looked down to his toes again, watching himself wiggle them absently as he mulled over everything.

"What are we thanking him for?" a gentle, raspy voice came from the door and Kurt snapped his head up. All talk of resisting or talking evaporated from his head like they had never been there at all as a wave of longing swept over him. He'd missed him, and now he was only feet away. So, heart hammering in his chest, he jumped up and strode across the room determinedly, throwing himself into his Dom's arms and knocking the breath out of him.

"Sir," he breathed, hiding his face in Blaine's neck, arms wrapped around his shoulders and legs secured tightly around his waist. He inhaled deeply and almost moaned at the sweet, heavy scent which was uniquely Blaine's.

"Whoa, lovely… hey…is everything okay?" Blaine asked as he held Kurt tightly against his body, surprised at the enthusiastic welcome from his sub but more than happy to receive it. He had been going crazy at the studio, half his mind home here while the other half tried to function to make himself useful. Wes and David simply shook their heads at him and picked up the slack he was leaving without a word… well, not too much mocking? Okay, they fucking hammered him with jibes but they were good natured. They'd both been where he was after all.

"Missed you," Kurt whispered, nuzzling his neck and breathing him in over and over until he felt drunk with it, desperate in his need to crawl under Blaine's skin. To just mould himself into his body and stay.

It sparked a primal reaction in Blaine and he rumbled deep in his chest; not quite a growl but enough to make Kurt squirm and he loved it. The reaction that Kurt never failed to give so naturally to even the slightest hint of dominance.

"Missed that too," Kurt purred back and he felt him squeeze his thighs oh so tightly around his hips and he almost lost his cool. Fuck. This minx didn't even know what he was doing to him.

"Oh, baby," Blaine murmured; kissing his temple, running his fingers through his hair and down his back as he walked them to the armchair. He sat down with his koala of a sub firmly on his lap.

"I missed you too, beautiful boy," he said and that got Kurt to lift his face and look at him finally.

"You did, sir?" he asked beaming and Blaine cupped his cheeks, bringing their lips together and kissing him softly.

He fully intended on keeping it light and teasing because there was a fire in his blood that was impossible to put out once he got going and anything more these days set him off like a firework. But the best laid plans were ashes in the face of Kurt's pliant mouth that tasted like peaches. Did he chose a different lip balm every day to torture him? And his lithe beguiling body lay waste to all his good intentions as it shifted on top of him; all elegant, stunning angles and liquid movements.

The kiss went deep. Blaine shifted his head to the side and laved his tongue over the seam of his lips and Kurt opened readily for him with a content little noise that was far too sexy for his own good. The tips of their tongues met, danced teasingly before Kurt retreated and Blaine pressed the offensive, forcing Kurt's head back with how hard he pushed forwards all of a sudden. Kurt whimpered against his lips, gluing them together as he clutched Blaine's hair in his fingers.

He broke off and touched their foreheads together to try and get some breathing room. "Of course I
did, lovely boy," he said softly, trying to ease the tension between them. There was a reason they couldn't be doing this… if only he could grasp a hold of the elusive thought pattern…

They fell back into each other's mouths.

"Blaine… I want you," Kurt moaned as Blaine's hands found his hips and guided him even closer even though there was no space left between them in the first place.

"Beautiful…" the Dom sighed when lips descended on his neck and bit lightly, Kurt's lithe body rocking in his lap, shivering and needy for him.

He knew he had to stop them… he knew it wasn't right, but god did it feel like the most perfect thing he had ever felt. His sub on his lap, desperate for him, begging for him, trusting, open and craving. He wanted to flip them onto the carpet and pin Kurt's arms over his head. Lick him head to toe until he was dizzy with pleasure and begging him to come, to fuck him.

He went hot all over, vision nearly blacking out with the depth of his desire… but it wasn't right somehow. It was too soon. And he knew it deep down, a niggling ache at the back of his head.

"Kurt… Kurt, baby, we need to stop," he said, his body screaming and hating him. Kurt whined, clutching him tighter and hiding his face against his shoulder.

"Don't want to," he said petulantly and Blaine chuckled, trying his best to still his ragged breathing and get his rebelling body under control again. They shouldn't be this desperate! He and Kurt had traded blowjobs this morning and frantic hand-jobs when he told him he would have to leave for the studio which made him twenty minutes late. This insatiable need, while impressive and fucking awesome, was still a little crazy.

"I don't want to either, gorgeous. But we have to," he said and Kurt half sighed, half whimpered knowing he was right. He pulled away, running a hand through his messed up hair and touching his fingers to his bruised lips when he felt them throbbing almost painfully.

He removed his fingers and ran his tongue over them, startling when Blaine groaned at the sight, hips bucking him upwards.

"The things you do to me, lovely," he moaned and Kurt had the audacity to blush! Acting all bashful when he was mauling Blaine mere seconds ago!

Kurt shivered as he thought about how out of control he felt when he saw Blaine and he knew, in that moment that Jared was right. They had to think of something.

"It's getting harder," he said softly and Blaine flicked an eyebrow up and looked down at their laps. "I should hope so."

Kurt smacked him on the chest in reprimand but the joke eased some of the rawness of the atmosphere.

His Dom put on his serious face and reached up to tuck a stray piece of hair behind his ear. "What is, lovely?"

Kurt took his hand, twining their fingers.

"Resisting you," he admitted.
Blaine sighed, nodding in agreement. "I know. I can barely keep my hands off of you."

Kurt took a deep breath, settling for the fact that he just had to say it. "I... I've been worried about what's happening to me when you left tonight. I'm not used to... being this... this out of it and I... I talked to your dad about it," Kurt said and Blaine frowned, not sure if he should be worried about it.

"What did you talk about?" he asked, determined not to jump to any conclusions. He'd been there and learned his lesson not too long ago so he wasn't in a hurry to get back there.

"Um... we... we're out of control, sir. Both of us are... I mean, I can't speak for you but I feel like I can't get close enough to you. Like... I can be glued to you and it's still not enough and it scares me. I don't want us to slip and do this the wrong way. I want it to be right," he explained haltingly and Blaine ran a hand over his face tiredly, head tilting back against the seat.

"I know, baby. I've been feeling the same way. You drive me insane and I can't resist you but I want this to be perfect for you," Blaine said and Kurt nodded. His hands moved automatically to Blaine's shoulders to try and knead out some of the stress he could hear in his Doms voice.

"Your dad... he said it was the same for him and Dana."

Blaine dropped his hands. "Oh eeeeeeeew. I don't wanna know that, Kurt," he whined and Kurt smacked his chest again in warning before going back to his massage.

"Well I don't care. He had a good suggestion. And after what just happened here I think we need it," Kurt said.

Blaine tilted his head in question, hazel eyes blinking up at him. "Okay fine... what was his suggestion?"

"He said that he and Dana slept apart the last few days before their Presenting," he broached and watched a slow frown begin to work its way across Blaine's face with every word. He had to keep going though, there was nothing else he could think of that would work. "I think... I think it would be for the best," Kurt finished, voice barely making it out of his tight throat.

Blaine's eyes widened and he looked properly alarmed now.

"Sleep apart? No," was his immediate response, all strong unwavering dominance that made Kurt shiver.

"Sir," Kurt beseeched, biting his lip as Blaine's hand gripped his ass and hip possessively.

"That's out of the question. Think of something else," Blaine said.

"But there is nothing else that I can think of!" Kurt exclaimed. "Please, sir."

"But... but I don't want to," he said in a whiny voice after a beat, completely clashing with his empowering dominance and Kurt smiled at him lovingly.

"I don't want to either, sir. But... but we can't... I don't think we can be trusted to be alone," Kurt said wryly looking pointedly at Blaine's hands and the way Kurt was rocking into him a little even now and Blaine knew he was right. They were helpless around each other. Hungry. Desperate.

Blaine growled, glowering at the space over Kurt's shoulder and tightening his grip on Kurt before easing off in defeat. "I know. God dammit. I know. You think it will work?" he asked and Kurt shrugged his shoulders.
"I don't know. I just... I think we should try at least?" he said softly, wanting conformation from Blaine that he agreed. This was too important to both of them and it wouldn't sit right if he didn't get confirmation from his Dominant that he was on board.

"Fine. But you better go now before I can't let you go," Blaine suggested releasing him and slinging his arms up and over the back of the armchair. Kurt only hesitated a moment before scrambling off his lap, feeling the loss keenly. "You take our room and I'll sleep in the guest one across the hall."

Kurt bit his lip, toeing at the floor anxiously. "Do you really think being across the hall is best?"

"You're pushing it with getting me to agree to this at all, lovely. If I'm not across the hall I'm in bed with you," he said frank and honest.

"Okay," he breathed softly... and then didn't move. Shit.

Blaine smiled at him. "Go to bed, lovely," he ordered and Kurt released a sigh of relief as his muscles unlocked.

"Night, sir."

With one last fleeting look at his Dom; all stretched, bunched, delicious muscles and curly mop top, he made his way upstairs and into their bedroom. Shutting the door behind himself he wondered why the hell the room seemed so much bigger and colder now.

The ache and itch for Blaine seeped back in slowly and he made a hurt, needy sound before sucking it up and moving towards the bed. He threw his robe on the end and slipped beneath the covers on the too big bed in the too cold sheets. The fabric scratched his oversensitive skin and he closed his eyes, trying to pretend that the sheets touching him were Blaine's fingers tracing the smooth expanse of his flat stomach and thighs. No. No. Don't think about that. But it was like a slippery slope; that first step over and down he went, tumbling and sprawling into the thick sludge his submissive hindbrain had been dredging up for weeks now.

He rolled over onto his stomach with a groan. God he was so hot. So desperate despite his logical reasoning. Still hard. And there was no relief to be had, even when he rolled back over and tugged Blaine's shirt over his head. This was not something he had been counting on. There was something about being denied Blaine that made this lust all the more difficult to endure. Flopping back onto his back he closed his eyes and tried to will himself to sleep, but all he saw behind his closed lids were bodies intertwined and he lost his breath to the fantasies playing across his mind's eye.

His hand slipped down his body without his really registering the movement at all and with a soft bite to his lip he palmed the ache between his legs, whispering a soft, "Sir," into the night as he sunk into that soft, submissive place more deeply than ever.

In the other room Blaine gasped as an electric shock went through his already tightly wound body.

How had he ended up back here?

Scowling fiercely at the door like it was somehow its fault that he was banished to the guestroom Blaine burned inside. Itching and writhing inside his skin and feeling need right down to his very bones as he lay on top of the covers on the bed.

He was going to kill his father and his bright ideas.

So what that he couldn't keep his hands to himself! It wouldn't really be that bad if they sealed their bond ahead of time would it? If he simply snuck into their bedroom and crawled on top of his sub.
Kurt would welcome him with open arms; his beautiful, lovely, responsive boy. *God was he responsive,* he thought with a growl. He'd never known the like of it and it drove him crazy with every whimper and sigh of his name. Every 'sir' that crossed those plump, pink lips.

Groaning Blaine looked down at his tented underwear, the only thing he was wearing seeing as he couldn't grab anything from their room. Clothes felt far too restrictive these days anyways, especially when he found himself in a perpetual state of arousal. Work didn't distract him. School didn't distract him. Nothing he had tried had helped and really, why should he be fighting this feeling so hard? Kurt was his already, mark change or not, ceremony or not, so why *shouldn't* he go across the hall, break out the silk ties and maybe a few other naughty toys and have his way with his beautiful submissive?

It got harder and harder to hold onto any sense of reason as to why he was in this room at all. Everything just seemed more and more illogical as the seconds ticked by and his want ratcheted higher.

He licked his bottom lip and moaned when he could still get a faint taste of the peach of Kurt's lip balm. It was torture. Just a few minutes ago he had Kurt sprawled across his lap trading wet kisses and keening his name for fucks sake. He could still feel the rush of endorphins and adrenaline from the moment coursing through his blood like it had never really dissipated, just lain dormant. He wanted to order Kurt in here. Command him to his knees. He'd look so pretty; obedient and ready for him, looking up through that curtain of lashes, iridescent blue peeking through.

"Fuck this," Blaine rumbled and rolled to his feet. His cock was throbbing in its cotton confines and his mind was soaked in Dominant pheromones.

Striding towards the door he was surprised when it swung inwards and the very siren on his mind burst through and into his arms.

"Kurt," he gasped, pulling him back inside when he realized with a painful twist in his gut that his beautiful boy was *naked.* Flushed and sweaty, hard and shivering all over as he coiled around his body like he was searching for all the right angles to lock them together permanently.

"Sir... please..." Kurt begged, pawing at him urgently and it flipped a switch that was already half way pressed in the first place.

Blaine slammed the door shut and twisted them around, gluing Kurt's back to the wood and pressing his half naked body against his sub. He dived in, kissing already red bitten lips and slid his hands down his subs sides, feeling perfect, smooth skin under his palms. He reached his thighs and cupped the backs of them, lifting Kurt up and moaning loudly when those long legs wrapped around his waist without a word. Like they belonged there.

"God baby, the things you do to me... you drive me crazy... Kurt..." he growled out between wet, sloppy kisses as he grinded his hips against Kurt's, his sub whining and panting against his lips in response, no longer being able to even kiss back properly. It made the Dom in him roar in satisfaction. He was completely out of control, beyond the point of return and he knew he was done for. It's just that he didn't care.

His fingers clutched Kurt's back, digging in, sliding down sweaty, slippery skin and marking him as his all the way. He reached the swell of Kurt's amazing ass and with a moment's hesitation he dipped his finger between his cheeks, greedily pressing lower until he was rubbing the tip of it over his puckered entrance.

Kurt gasped when he felt Blaine's fingers on his most intimate place, his insides turning and desperate fingers gripping damp, tangled curls as he brought his Dom's lips closer to his neck. Bites
peppered his skin, the stings of it making him crazy and he arched into every one, shamelessly pleading for more. For harder or deeper or anything. He just needed it.

He felt himself melt when Blaine's other hand pulled him away from his curls and grabbed his wrists pinning them above their heads. He keened at the strength. The utter control Blaine was able to wield over him with so little effort. He was held against the door with Blaine's torso as his Dom's other hand spread butterfly touches to his core and he felt like he was going to catch alight any second. It was so intoxicating... hearing Blaine's praise, feeling his touch, filing his nostrils with his smell and tasting sweaty skin on his lips.

Somewhere in the back of his mind there was something screaming at him to stop, to make it right by staying away but this... Blaine... this was right wasn't it? Making his Dom feel good. Giving in. Like he was being torn apart but not to be destroyed, to be rebuilt even better, brighter. Complete.

When Blaine's lips found his again he kissed back forcefully, rolling his hips and tongue against his Dom's and whimpering.

"Sir," was the only thing that could form in his lust filled brain and he didn't even know what he wanted, he just needed to say it, needed Blaine to read him like a book and give him... something. Anything to calm the storm in his veins his touches awakened.

"That's it, baby. Mine... you're all mine. So good for me," Blaine whispered against his flushed cheek as he pushed his finger against his hole, barely breaching the tight ring of muscle there but Kurt's eyes snapped open at the unfamiliar sensation.

A silver hue caught his gaze and he gasped at the sight of a gorgeous dark grey suit hanging off the closet door, pristine, crisp and perfect. The suit he would wear when he finally bonded with Blaine for real. It got him hotter. He wanted to bond to Blaine as soon as was humanly possible. Right now. He wanted to be his right now. But... but... his mind was snagging, tripping, falling.

He shook it to try and free it up, moaning when Blaine rolled into him again and he lost focus.

"Sir..." he choked out, not even sure what he was asking for anymore as Blaine continued to touch him. Stroke him. Kiss him. "Sir," he tried again and Blaine just buried his face in his neck, lips bruising and hot against his skin as he began to suck.

"I want you so much, Kurt," he growled when he broke away. "Mine... all mine." And it vibrated into Kurt's very cells.

"I..." he inhaled hard and Blaine pressed his finger in just that little bit more. "I..." There was a word forming on his lips, coming from somewhere deep down beneath the haze of lust and love and passion. Pressed far under every submissive urge that was screaming at him to bear down and get that finger deeper to pave the way for something much more. He moved his mouth to Blaine's ear, panting hard and unsure as the world turned on its axis. "R-red," he whispered almost inaudibly like the tiny word wouldn't fit into his mouth right. Oh god. Then stronger. "Red. Red. Red!"

It felt like the air around them froze.

Blaine went rigid against him, like someone had just come behind him and stabbed him. But Kurt could hardly concentrate on that. He was reeling in his own head. Shuddering from head to toe like he'd been dropped into an icy lake and numb. Just, numb, as every single feeling that had been burning him up before melted away into nothingness and left him a little hollow.

Did he just safeword out?
The question was ringing in his ears alongside his pounding heart. He felt like the last few minutes had been happening to someone else and he had stumbled upon the scene, deciding to end it in the most abrupt way he could possibly think of.

Blaine's horrified face answered his question for him though as he pulled back.

He looked seconds away from fainting. Normally tan skin pale and clammy, eyes wild and regretful and hands turned ice cold as they slipped from his body.

"Lovely...oh my god...I'm sorry..." he started, lowering him to the floor and jumping away from him as if he had been burned. He held his hands up in surrender as if he wanted to give Kurt the chance to strike back in revenge if he so desired and it was unsettling how small he looked in that moment. How shaken to his core he was by this one word.

Kurt wanted him to be his strong, confident Dom again. He needed him to be with a force that threatened to make him break down in sobs because he felt so fragile, so lost with what he had just done and where it had truly come from and he needed his arms around him to keep him from falling apart.

"Sir... Blaine, no... you have nothing to be sorry about I just..." Kurt tried, choking over every word ineffectively but Blaine already looked broken...so broken that he just shook his head and turned away crossing his hands on his chest as he sank into the armchair in the corner and stared at the floor.

"Don't make excuses for me, Kurt. Just don't," he whispered shakily and Kurt shivered at the tone, making him realize he was still very much naked. He glanced around and spotted a robe hung over the bedpost and quickly scrambled to put it on. Tying it closed he padded towards the chair and came to a stop in front of Blaine, taking his head between his palms and forcing him to look up.

His heart broke when those honey coloured eyes locked with his. Usually vibrant and full of life they now seemed dull and dimmed. He couldn't stand it and everything he was feeling got pushed aside as the new desire to take care of his Dom took its place.

"Take care of him and he'll take care of me, he chanted over and over in his head.

"There's nothing to excuse, sir," he said surely, trying to put as much conviction he could into it while still feeling shaky.

Blaine let out an icy laugh in response that made Kurt shiver and want to back away.

"You... lovely, you safeworded out of what I was doing to you," Blaine said sounding like it scraped his throat raw coming up. Kurt blinked at him and swallowed, the magnitude of what he had done still sinking in.

I did. I did do that. I did that because... because...

He looked towards over his shoulder towards the suit that had derailed him in the first place and felt his chest hitch.

I did that because we're supposed to be getting bonded in three days.

Blaine was unaware to his inner epiphany, however. "I... I've pushed you so much these past few days, I know I've been doing it. Wanting more from you. Being more dominant and I get so lost when I'm like that but it's not an excuse and you're trying to justify what I've done. God, don't do that, Kurt," he pleaded, working himself up into such a state in the aftermath of this huge thing that tears were dripping down his cheeks.
Kurt realized what was in his head finally. Blaine thought he had hurt him. His pain came solely from the thought that he had done something Kurt didn't want that made him use his safe word for the first time in their relationship. He was so far gone into regret and self-hatred that Kurt knew words wouldn't suffice to get him back. No words would ever be as strong as what he, as his sub, could do for his frayed mind.

Letting go of Blaine's head he replaced it with his Dom's fingers, twining them between his own as he sunk slowly to his knees in front of him. It was a huge gesture. Especially given how truly vulnerable Kurt was feeling right now.

Blue eyes looked up and found hazel ones wide and scared and confused.

"Kurt..." He shook his head forcefully, Adam's apple bobbing as he swallowed hard. "I don't deserve this," he whispered brokenly and Kurt took one of Blaine's palms, cupping his own cheek with it and pressing a small kiss to the center.

"Take care of him and he'll take care of me." he asked, willing his voice to remain calm and collected. The traces of what they did earlier were still humming beneath his skin but he had a Dom to placate and everything else fell secondary to that primal submissive need to help.

"You said it... you said 'red' because of what I did," Blaine said and covered his mouth with his other palm to quiet a half growl, half sob that was threatening to escape. Equally angry and upset with himself.

Kurt smiled gently and shook his head.

"I said red because of what we were about to do, Blaine," he said slowly, willing his Dom to understand. But Blaine seemed too far gone to be able to logically process information. Smothering a whine, Kurt dropped his head onto Blaine's knee and nuzzled. He closed his eyes and thought desperately, take care of him and he'll take care of me.

And somehow he must have telegraphed what he was thinking and feeling because the next thing he knew he was being lifted up into a bridal hold and carried back into their bedroom. Away from the scene that had scared both of them and into the comfort of home.

Kurt let a few of his own tears slip free as he buried his face into Blaine's neck, desperately holding on to him when he tried to place him on the bed. Now that the dam had broken he couldn't contain himself and Kurt needed Blaine close. He felt like he couldn't breathe with the thought of him moving away.

Blaine managed to get him on the soft mattress with a soothing hush and then his body was settling over him like a blanket. An instinctive Dominant response that had always worked wonders on Kurt. He wrapped his arms tightly around Blaine's bare back and encouraged him to drop all his weight down as he buried his face in his shoulder. His Dom continued to coo at him, stroking his ruined hair and telling him he was a good boy.

Eventually he settled.

"I've got you, beautiful boy. You're so good. I've got you. I'm so sorry, lovely," Blaine was whispering and kissing into his temple over and over as he came back into his senses properly and Kurt whined in response. For this beautiful man whose biggest fear was hurting him.

"It wasn't because of you, sir," Kurt managed to repeat hoarsely. "It wasn't."
"Kurt, please be honest with me, lovely. I won't punish you, I swear to god I won't," Blaine begged, with a hint of an order underlying the words.

"I'm not," he pleaded feeling raw and open, on the verge of crying again as he pressed his nails into the skin of his Dom's back. "I'm not lying, sir. I'm not."

"Shh," Blaine hushed, ducking his head to nose at his forehead and press a series of kisses there too. "Okay, lovely. I believe you. Thank you for telling me the truth."

"I just… everything was so much and I really wanted it and it felt so good and I just… said it," Kurt hurried to get it out, to try and explain before Blaine started blaming himself again. "When I was younger my dad… he talked to me about what it meant to be a sub in Lima. He told me to see myself as worthy and not to throw myself around because I mattered. And I promised myself I'd give myself to my Dom properly for the first time. I want you, sir. Madly. But… I want to wait until the Ceremony so we can do it right," he finished softly, as much a telling for himself as for Blaine.

Blaine stilled for a moment and then he felt him pull back, coaxing his face to face his. Kurt fluttered his eyes open and saw that Blaine's were a little clearer. A little hopeful. "So… that's why…"

He nodded frantically. "I opened my eyes for a second and saw my suit and remembered what we both wanted. Neither of us were going to stop and I didn't want to… but I guess I did deep down and I was saying it before I even knew I was saying it," he explained lame and sad, babbling a bit.

"I didn't hurt you?" Blaine asked to be sure, face serious as he searched his eyes.

"No, sir. Absolutely not."

He nodded and then a full smile began to break across his face like sunshine on a cloudy day. "You're amazing you know?"

Kurt's eyes widened. "For colouring out?"

"For being strong enough for both of us," Blaine corrected and he kissed him between the eyes, then followed down the slope of his nose. "And I love you so much more for that my perfect, wonderful, lovely boy."

It was all the assurance he needed to hear and he snuggled his face back into Blaine's shoulder with a relieved, happy sigh. "Can you sleep in here tonight?" he mumbled.

Blaine stroked a hand over his hair and kissed his head. "Of course, lovely. We'll talk about the bedroom thing again tomorrow so don't worry about it anymore okay? I've got you and I'm not going anywhere."
Hi everyone!!!!
Here we are with the next chapter. We are very sorry about the loooong long pause since the last one. Our lives got a bit more crazy recently so editing had to take a backseat.
But here we aaaaare yaaaaay!!!!

We think it's the most important chapter in the story so hopefully you'll like it. Also, as always the pictures we use are not ours and they are approximations of the things described in the story or just the inspiration we used :)

Thank you for all the kind words you keep sending our way. They mean the world to us so keep them coming.

Love
A&M

They forgot the curtains.

That was the first thought Kurt had when he pealed his eyes open and got attacked by insolent sun beams that threatened to burn his retinas if he didn't show them the respect they deserved and look away. He groaned and buried his face into Blaine's chest, mind fuzzy and unfocused. There was an unusual heaviness deep in his bones that urged him closer to his Dom, a need for him that he just couldn't completely understand yet as his mind tried to reboot for the day.

Blaine was sleeping soundly on his back, his arms cradling Kurt to his chest and curls falling into his face as he snored lightly. Their skin was glued together and while sleeping fully dressed was something that happened less and less, Kurt was still caught off guard by the amount of skin on display. They were both naked head to toe, pressed together and clinging to one another as if afraid the other one would disappear if they let go for a second. He wanted to look up, to wake Blaine up and kiss him and mould his body with his own but he couldn't bring himself to move because it would mean unwinding his arm from around Blaine's waist, lifting his head from the crook of his neck, moving his lips from the skin of his shoulder and losing the taste of him and he wasn't okay with it.

He didn't want to let go. He wanted to stay; close and warm and safe.

"Lovely?" Blaine's voice sounded sleep rough and broken but the endearment made him whimper and push closer to him, the space between them always too big for him, but seemed like a chasm now for some reason.

"Sir," he whispered back into his skin, a little unsure, a little lost and felt the arms around his back tighten and hold him closer in response.
"Are you okay?" Blaine asked when he realized his sub wasn't exactly acting the way he usually did. He was shaking and clawing at his chest, like he was trying to seep into his skin and it alarmed the Dom. Kurt was calm when they went to sleep the night before. Serene after all the drama of them almost losing their minds.

And then it hit Blaine.

Kurt was having a setback reaction to what happened because Blaine was so freaked out he couldn't deal with himself. His sub took the responsibility of caring for him directly after the event and he forced himself to be okay. But now that it was done, now that Blaine was once again in control, his body had recognized, caved and allowed him to seek out the comfort he needed.

Blaine was more than happy to provide.

"I… I don't… don't go…" Kurt begged softly and Blaine held him tighter, kissing his forehead and running his fingers up and down his back in comfort.

"I'm not going anywhere, beautiful. Just relax and let me take care of you. Breathe." He laced the gentle words with just a hint of command and Kurt's body responded instinctively, curling around him and gulping air into his lungs.

"Sir," Kurt whimpered one more time and it seemed like that was the only word he could push off his lips.

"What do you need, gorgeous?" he asked him, body aching to please him, to make him comfortable and relaxed again.

Kurt gasped but nothing came out of his mouth except a small whine as he clutched him desperately, practically on top of him by now.

"I'll do anything baby, just tell me what you need, huh?" Blaine pleaded, stroking a soothing hand through his hair as he listened for any sound from Kurt that would help him understand what he wanted.

"Y-you," Kurt stuttered after a while and Blaine kissed his temple, pulling the comforter tighter around them, up and over their heads. Cocooning them in darkness and warmth and each other, cut off from the rest of the world.

"I'm here. I'm right here. You have me," Blaine said earnestly but Kurt shook his head and breathed deeply once again.

"Talk," he gasped and Blaine realized what he wanted. He wanted to listen to his voice. To sync his beating heart to the rhythm of his words and ground himself with the sound. He knew that's what made him calmer last night. Listening to Kurt talk to him.

"Okay… um well…" He racked his brain and just decided to wing it and see what fell out. "Wes thinks we should try and find someone who could be big we could sign. Says that now that the three of us are almost done with college we should start thinking about becoming relevant in the music industry. Start a record label to go with the studio. Find someone amazing," he whispered into his hair, brushing his lips against the skin of his forehead and feeling him shift with every move he made, making sure there was never an inch of space between them.

"David thinks we should make a drinking game out of it and take a shot every time Wes says the word 'relevant'," he chuckled and Kurt made a sound deep in his throat that might have been a giggle had it not been for the way his body was too tight, coiled and tense against him. But his voice
seemed to be doing the trick since the nails digging into his pecs were now gone and replaced by Kurt's palm, relaxed and warm on his skin.

"I think Wes is right but I don't wanna admit it because it'll make him even more obnoxious. We can't have that, honestly," he joked and it kept going like that. His voice steady and soft in the silence of the room and with every sentence a part of Kurt unwound. His lips fell flat against his neck, his back stopped arching desperately towards him, his legs untangled from his own. He was coming back and Blaine could feel him.

"You are so good to me. So perfect my lovely boy. I'm so proud of you Kurt you have no idea. That's it. Just let it roll off," he cheered him on as he calmed more and more and finally came down, soft and pliant in his arms, face still buried deep in Blaine's shoulder. There were soft kisses there now and Blaine could swear he felt a tiny hint of a smile against his skin.

Finally after a few more minutes Kurt peeled his face from his neck, pushed the cover back to reveal the day again and looked up, flushed and a little shy.

"Hi," he said cutely and Blaine arched his neck down to peck his nose.

"Hey you. Feeling better?" he asked and Kurt looked away, a blush sitting high on his cheeks.

"Yes. Sorry about that," he said bashfully and Blaine tipped his head back up with a finger under his chin.

"No. You never apologize for something like this. Kurt… what you did last night was… it was beyond amazing. It took so much strength and will and you made it. Against your own instincts you got us both out of a potentially bad place, so I'm proud of you colouring out. And I know it must have taken a lot outta you so you take all the time you need," Blaine said and Kurt tilted his head.

"Is that why… I was… like this just now?" he asked.

Blaine nodded knowing that Kurt was still undereducated about his submissive status and instincts despite the classes he was actually taking at Dalton now. "My best guess is that your body realized I was okay and allowed you to seek out what you needed from me last night. I was in no state to provide it at the time though so it was like a delayed reaction. I'm sorry too," he finished sadly.

Kurt shook his head. "If I don't get to apologize neither do you. Don't you see?" he asked, a smile on his face.

Blaine watched him in confusion. "See what?"

"You and me. We really are perfect for each other, people keep telling me but I didn't really see it. We take care of each other and we balance each other out. You needed me last night and I was there for you so that you could do the same for me now. We work, sir," he said and Blaine returned his smile gently but it didn't reach his eyes and Kurt knew… he knew he was still beating himself up over what happened.

"Kurt… about last night." he started but a cool finger sealed his lips and Kurt shook his head.

"No… what happened last night was not bad, or unwanted, or in any way hurtful for me, sir… I need you to know that. I stopped us because I want to do it… have sex… on our Presenting night. That is the single reason. I wasn't hurt and I wasn't afraid of you and I…” he trailed off a shy blush on his skin.

"You what, baby?" Blaine asked, the knot in his chest loosening as Kurt confirmed everything he
had said last night. In his most submissive state he still sought him out, curled next to him and trusted him to protect him. He trusted him with everything he was and Blaine loved him for it even more.

"I… I want you." He blushed harder and Blaine smirked at him teasingly.

"You do? I didn't notice," he joked and laughed when Kurt smacked him on the chest.

"Shut up, sir," he sassed and Blaine smiled to see him coming back into himself. There were still some things to clear up though.

"About the sleeping situation…"

"I hated when you weren't here. It made it worse," Kurt admitted immediately.

Blaine nodded his agreement and traced his thumb over Kurt's ear idly. "Maybe what worked for my parents just doesn't work for us, lovely."

Kurt hummed his agreement, but twisted his mouth worriedly. "But what can we do instead, sir?"

"We're mostly fine during the day… we could take sleeping pills at night? I'm sure there's something we could research to help. We can't be the only couple with this problem," Blaine thought out loud.

"Jared seems to think we're more Dominant and submissive than most couples though. What works for them might not work for us," Kurt pointed out.

"Don't stress, lovely. We'll figure it out," Blaine reassured.

"Yes, sir," Kurt murmured, trusting in him completely and Blaine was about to kiss him senseless when a knock came from the door.

"Kurt… Kurt, your dad is here and he wants to see you," Jared called softly and Kurt frowned. He didn't remember his dad mentioning a visit today. And as much as he loved to see his dad the prospect of parting from Blaine so soon after his submissive episode this morning didn't sit well in his chest at all.

Blaine seemed to sense his hesitation and sat them up so he could kiss him on the lips properly. It was chaste and closed mouthed but it still took Kurt's breath away. Strong hands skimmed down his arms soothingly as he pulled back.

"I'm going to be in the house the whole time," he reassured and Kurt nodded, licking his lips anxiously.

"O-okay… I'll be right down," he called back a little shaky, but resolve firming. He'd like to see his dad, he didn't get to enough these days.

"Why don't you just go down and see him while I grab a shower so you can have the bathroom to yourself for hours after like I know you like," Blaine offered.

"Fine… but don't think you're off the hook for the teasing earlier just because my dad is here," he mock threatened, pushing aside his jumpy sub instincts as he pulled his pyjamas on and tied his robe around his body, rushing through his bathroom routine in a record time for him.

"Come down when you're ready?" he asked and pecked Blaine's lips on the way out of the door. He was out of the room before he heard his Dom's response.

He found his dad in the living room, sipping coffee and flipping through the morning newspaper.
"Morning, old man," he greeted and laughed when Burt fixed him with an offended glare.

"Keep it up and the first thing I do when I become Head is outlaw Black Fridays," Burt deadpanned and Kurt covered his heart with his hand dramatically.

"You wouldn't dare."

Burt lifted an eyebrow. "Try me, son."

He delivered the cheesy line with all the finesse of an action movie hero and Kurt couldn't keep a straight face anymore. He burst out laughing and as he went to throw himself in his arms something in his body recoiled and he stopped midway, giving the man an awkward pat on the back before jumping away quickly. He frowned at the weird sensation and looked to his dad, tilting his head when he found him chuckling.

"Dad?"

Burt smiled. "It's the bonding, Kurt. You won't feel comfortable being touched by other Doms. Not even your old man," Burt said simply and it triggered a memory of learning that fact in one of his mother’s old books.

"Oh… right. Forgot that for a second. So… what brings you here?" he asked sitting across from his dad.

"I have some stuff to go over with Dana in the office. I just stopped by on my way there to… um… well to give you something," he said a little awkwardly and Kurt noticed a small brown bag sitting on the couch next to him.

"Dad… you know gifts are not necessary for the Presenting. You didn't have to get me anything," he said and Burt shook his head.

"I know and I didn't actually spend money on this… well I did but not now… I mean… why don't you just take a look at it?" he said handing the bag over.

Kurt took it, peeking inside and finding a dark wooden box with a simple cooper lock. He pulled the box out and set it on his lap, glancing at his dad in question.

"Open it," Burt gestured and Kurt flipped the lid open, gasping at the sight of two cuffs sitting on a small cushion. Kurt picked up the smaller one and turned it around, eyes misting with tears as he realized what he was holding.
"Dad…” he sobbed and Burt ached to hug him but he knew his touch wouldn't really be a comfort for Kurt.

"Do you like them?" he asked and Kurt nodded, numbly turning them between his fingers.

They were soft and worn, made out of buttery brown leather. One smaller than the other but both equally beautiful in their simplicity. Each had a small cooperly hoop with a charm hanging off it. The smaller one had a small B on it and the bigger one was decorated with an elegant E.

They were his parent's cuffs.

"I… I love them. I didn't know you had them," he said, hooking the smaller one around his wrist and loving the way it felt against his skin. The B settled close to his pulse point and the placement of it felt so intimate to Kurt.

"Cuffs are not common. They're outdated mostly. But… for us lower class, they are one of the only ways of showing that you… well, that you belong. That you're committed." Kurt nodded understandingly. "Eli made them for us. We saved to get the material and the charms for so long but she wanted to make them herself. We wore them all the time," he said looking at Kurt's wrist sadly.

"Why… why are you giving them to me? Don't you want to keep them?" he asked and Burt shook his head with a small smile.
"I want you to have them. To remind you that… even without the Presenting Ceremony, the bond can be real. I know the gossip columns get to you and that you think this will change things but what you and Blaine have is already real, Kurt. You're already bonded. Just like your mom and I were," he said and Kurt forced his instincts down to hug his dad tightly finally. It wasn't as comforting as it usually was but this meant the world to him and he wanted to show him that.

"Thank you, dad," he sniffled into his shoulder and Burt nodded, patting his back.

"You're welcome, buddy. I have to go now or I'll be late but we'll see you for lunch, okay?" he stood up and Kurt nodded, still running his thumb over the soft leather of his mom's cuff.

He couldn't believe he hadn't known about them. How had he never seen them on his parent's wrists? Then again he was only a child when his mom died. Maybe he just forgot about ever seeing them. And his dad never really liked talking about her too much. He tried, for Kurt, but it was always so difficult for him that eventually Kurt stopped asking and just waited for his dad to feel ready to share stories of her.

But this… this was the ultimate gift for Kurt. Solid evidence of the love his parent's shared other than himself of course. The kind of love he wanted for himself… and the kind he had found with Blaine.

If only…

"Lovely?" his Dom spoke from the doorway and he lifted tear stained cheeks towards him, making Blaine frown immediately and rush to him, hugging him to his chest.

"What happened? Is your dad okay?" he asked and Kurt nodded.

"Yeah. He's okay. He… he actually stopped by to give me these. As a gift," he revealed quietly and Blaine nodded towards the cuff still in the box, asking for permission to see it.

Kurt allowed and Blaine lifted the leather into his hand, realizing what he was holding after only a second.

"Your mom and dad's?" he asked gently and Kurt nodded, thumbing the remaining tears away.

"Yeah. I… I don't even remember them wearing the cuffs. Dad says that they were a way for the lower class to show their bond. My… my mom made them," he said tracing the B with his fingers.

Blaine watched him, lost in thought as he caressed the soft leather and he could see how much they meant to him. They were a part of his mom and it was such a precious gift to receive this close to his own bonding.

He watched as Kurt caressed the dangling letter and his breath caught in his throat.

B for Burt.

Or…

Or Blaine.

"Lovely?" he called and Kurt looked up to him in question.

"How would you feel about… about this?" he asked, cuffing the leather around his own wrist and aligning it with the one Kurt still had on his. He watched blue eyes widen as he realized what he was implying.
"Sir… you… you want to…?" he tried but his words got trapped in his throat as a fresh wave of tears made its way down his pale cheeks.

"I want us to wear them, yes. You already have a B on yours and we can hook the E next to it so you have a part of your mom with you all the time. And we can have the K made for mine," he suggested, not really knowing what Kurt thought about it.

The sub watched his Dom in awe, disbelief etching itself into his words as he tried to speak up. "But sir… they are so humble and not really expensive… why would you…?" he tried to explain his fear of Blaine being mocked for wearing something so common and cheap but his Dom cut him off.

"They represent the love of two people who gave me the best gift of my life. You. They are humble. But to me, they are priceless and I would be honoured to wear this on my wrist for the rest of my life," Blaine said with fierce conviction and Kurt couldn't hold it in anymore. He threw himself in his arms and wrapped his own around his neck, kissing every inch of his Dom that he could reach.

Kisses rained on his forehead, temple, cheeks, nose, ears, neck and finally lips as Kurt smiled through his tears and whispered a litany of, "I love you's," into his mouth.

"I love you too, lovely. So much," Blaine answered unhooking Kurt's cuffed hand from around his neck and lining them together, the leather slotting perfectly and the letters shining lightly against the morning sun.

"Perfect," he said and Kurt nodded, kissing him once again.

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Presenting Ceremony

He was happy. Unbelievably, incredibly, unexpectedly happy.

It was a feeling Jeff had long forgotten and had long lost the hope of ever finding again. But he was here now. Living with his new Dom, an amazing, caring, loving, gentle man who showed him what it meant to truly submit to someone every day. The feeling of serenity and calm finally filtering back in, like his own skin fit him again.

Currently he was getting ready to attend his best friend's Presenting Ceremony and the idea of it, of that many Doms concentrated in one place, that many people who knew his 'story', didn't affect him as much as it once would have. He would be there to support his best friend, the first person he had let in after Kevin, whom had picked him up and put him back together enough for Nick to find him and finish the job.

He was truly happy for Kurt. And with all the planning the blue eyed diva had put into organizing the ceremony Jeff was sure it was going to be the classiest, most tasteful presenting ever. Helping Kurt put the finishing touches on the plans for the next step in his bonding made Jeff think about his own life and his own bond. It was only natural to be curious, to drift into a daydream of what it could be like right? And it had made him realize that going forward was what both he and Nick deserved.

He was the one holding back. He was the one afraid to broach the Gift subject and ask for something to seal the next step. He was afraid. And as much as he had settled next to Nick seamlessly, as safe as he felt in his arms at night, there was still something deep inside of him that made him hide behind his walls and hold that small part of himself away from Nick… just in case.
But seeing Kurt move forward, as afraid as he too had been at first, made him want to be brave… for himself, for his family… but most of all… for Nick. So he had decided that tonight, before they went to Kurt's ceremony, he would talk to Nick about his Gift. He had no idea what to ask for. He didn't want to ask for too much and offend his Dom by being greedy… but he also didn't want to ask for too little and not satisfy the Bonding step requirement.

Nick would know. Just like always, he could lean on Nick.

With that thought in mind he crossed the narrow hallway of Nick's parent's house from their room to Nick's study and knocked gently. They had been staying with Nick's parents for a few days; both for Nick who wanted access to his private library as he tried to finish a huge project in time and his parents who wanted to get to know Jeff a bit better and wouldn't back off until they got their way.

Jeff found he didn't mind. He’d become more than fond of the pair and he couldn't be more grateful to them for raising a son and a Dom like Nick.

He waited for a mere moment after his knock to hear Nick's soft voice calling out for him to come in and he gently slipped inside the cozy room; made up of predominantly beige walls and brown leather. His Dom was sitting in a brown leather swivel chair, facing the door and smiled at him as he entered; that warm, loving, sunshiny smile of his that made Jeff melt.

"Hi, sir. Are you busy?" Jeff asked quietly and Nick shook his head.

"Not at all, angel. I was just about to call it a day and come find you," Nick answered, piling his papers in a messy binder and chuckling at Jeff's scowl. The blonde just loved organizing Nick's stuff, which was part of the reason he always left them slightly dishevelled. In no time he heard a soft, annoyed huff and footsteps before slender fingers pried his papers away from his own.

"I have no idea how you manage to find anything… ever…” he said and then his eyes widened when he realized how rude and outspoken he had sounded. He turned his head up towards Nick and hastily tacked a sharp, panicked, "Sir," at the end of his sentence.

Nick just did what he learned worked best for the two of them; he smiled and shrugged up at his frozen sub.

"To be honest I have no idea how I managed anything until you came along. Seriously… I wouldn't know where my head was without you," he said sweetly and Jeff's shoulders dropped in relief without them having to make a big deal out of his short panics.

Jeff smiled back at him and continued stacking the papers neatly as he gathered up the courage to talk to Nick about his Gift. He was needlessly straightening the edges for the fifth time when he decided to just come out with it.

"Sir… I… I came here because, um… I wanted to talk to you… about something…” He twined his fingers as he leaned against the desk with his head hanging a little on his shoulders, making the Dom tilt his head up and under further to be able to look at him.

"Sure, baby. Anything," Nick said, making sure his voice was laced with a little bit of command to reassure him. He had found a little went a heck of a long way with his angel and he always made sure not to pile it on too hard unless he really needed it.

Jeff took a steadying breath before looking up into his eyes, drawing strength from the love he found there. "It's about… um… well… y-you know how Kurt and Blaine are moving f-forward tonight? Another step in their bonding?" he started shakily.
"Yeah I know," he said gently. “It’s pretty great, I’m excited for them. Blaine has been waiting for this forever.”

Jeff nodded, swallowing the lump in his throat forcefully. "I just… it… it got me thinking and I… I realized that I… I was holding us back."

Nick inhaled sharply in surprise, jumping in to reassure him, "Jeff, no-" He reached over to put his hand on Jeff’s but the blonde held his hands up in a silent plead to let him continue.

"Please, sir, just… just let me say what I have to say… I have it all figured out and I'll lose the guts to say it if you stop me," he smiled a bit sadly, finally letting his Dom get a grip on his hand. Nick brought it to his lips, kissing the pale skin on the back of his palm, nodding and encouraging him.

"Go on, angel," he said softly.

Jeff took another steadying breath before starting, words falling over one another and sounding rushed and jumbled, “I was so scared when you claimed me. I thought there was no way you could be all that you seemed to be. There was no way you could be that kind and caring and protective. And I had no idea that a Dom could use his strength and not be hurtful. I… I still am... scared that is. But lately…”

He shook his head and Nick squeezed his hand to let him know he was still here.

"Lately you calm me down in a second, and I… I wake up next to you h-happy and I feel safe and I want to make you see that you do that for me. You make me feel like I'm not messing up everything I do and it means so much, you have to know how much, because for the longest time everything was my fault and I just… I don’t feel like that with you… ever… and I like that. I like being with you… and I… I want to show you that I want to stay with you… stay yours… for as long as I can," he ranted himself breathless.

"Jeff," Nick whispered in awe but the sub couldn't stop now.

"I want to ask for my Gift… I want to move forward…” he finished, wavering and closed his eyes against the shocked expression on his Dom's face.

He knew Nick wasn't expecting it. He was always soft spoken and timid and the tide of words that he had just said probably went beyond whatever Nick expected him to say but he didn't care. He just wanted to stay… to belong.

The silence around them stretched thick and suffocating and all the strength Jeff managed to cumulate in his joints just seeped from his body as he listened to his heartbeat drum out the seconds passing with no reaction from the Dom.

_Had he messed up again? Was he wrong again?_

"N-Nick… please, sir, say something… am I wrong..?" he pleaded, voice broken and small. The fear in it snapped Nick's heart near in half. He surged up from his chair and came around the desk to wrap his arms around that trembling body he loved more than life.

"NO… no, Jeff, angel… I… I am so incredibly happy right now I can't even begin to explain. Just… ask anything you want. It's yours," Nick said as he peppered his face with tiny kisses, gentle as raindrops on his skin.

Jeff hid his face in his neck, inhaling his scent and letting it wash over him, calming his frayed nerves with an incredible ease.
He was safe. *Always safe with Nick.*

"I…I don't know what to ask, sir. I'm… I'm afraid I'll ask for too much… stuff that I have no right to ask-" he stammered and Nick took his shaking head between his broad palms gently, making their eyes meet.

"You are entitled to the world, baby. Anything you want," he said again and Jeff stared pleadingly at him, brown eyes begging him to help him think of something.

"I just don't know… you. Sir, you're everything I could have asked for. I… I just can't think of anything," he said and Nick kissed his red bitten lips gently, smiling into it.

He pulled back. "Well… I have a suggestion actually but I don't want you to think you have to accept it. It's just an idea," Nick said slowly and Jeff looked at him, head tilted cutely and eyes curious and awed. Awed because once again, he was proven that Nick truly wanted him to stay with him. He truly wanted to move towards sealing their bond and even after everything, all the soul-searching and self-revelations he just had a hard time wrapping his head around that.

"You… you've thought about this?" he whispered and Nick smiled as he looked at him lovingly, warming the deepest, coldest corners of his existence with just that one stretch of his lips.

"You staying with me for as long as I'm alive is the only thing I've thought of since the moment I first saw you. Jeff, darling, I know you're still having a hard time realizing this but you… Jeff, you made my life complete, you made me complete and I can't think of another person who could ever make me feel the way you do," Nick said, brushing Jeff's hair from his forehead to look into his eyes unobstructed by golden strands. They were glassy with unshed tears but Nick wasn't worried, not this time.

This time he knew Jeff was happy and that he wanted to stay with him.

Jeff curled himself into his side and Nick felt his body tighten minutely as he braced himself to place a barely there kiss onto the skin of Nick's neck. He was still so closed off when it came to anything physical, so careful, so wary. Nick could see the desire in his eyes sometimes but it took coaxing him and encouraging him and praising him to get him to make the first move. He would tense and shift closer to Nick so slowly, shoulders hunched and head bowed down as if he was waiting to be pushed away, told he wasn't wanted. And every time Nick would return the embrace, every time he would return the kiss, he would let out a relieved sigh and melt into his arms.

Nick knew he was scared to want, to *show* that he wanted him, but he was doing so well and right now, when those honey flavored lips pecked his neck and trailed upwards to claim the tiniest of kisses from his lips he knew they could overcome anything together.

"So… do you want to go check out what I thought could be your Gift?" Nick asked after they had detached and Jeff jumped with a beaming smile on his blushing face.

"Right now?" he squeaked and Nick giggled at how cute he was, bouncing on his toes and looking a step away from clapping his hands excitedly. It was perfect. His body language loose and opened, the complete opposite from the anxious squirming he did a few moments ago.

Nick calmed him. And he loved it.

"Yes, angel. Right this moment," he answered and Jeff practically dashed towards the door, hand already gripping the knob when he froze and turned around, eyes wide and guilty.

"Kurt's Presenting Ceremony. I… I don't want to be late," he said and Nick reached him, twining
their fingers as he pulled him down the stairs, stopping barely to grab a couple of jackets before he was tugging them out the door towards his car.

"Sweetie, its noon. We have about three hours before we have to be there. I will get you there on time," Nick teased as he mock pushed the blonde into the passenger seat and rounded the car to hop in as well. He started the engine and pulled out of his driveway going south. They drove for a little while, Jeff recognizing most of it from the time he used to live in Westerville with his parents. Nick turned off at the expensive dry cleaners that was opposite the park and proceeded up a small hill Jeff knew held the newly built apartment complexes that were still waiting for the Westerville elite to be sold to.

They were short buildings, only a few stories high; light beige with dark red, almost purple rooftops and round windows on the attic floor that looked like boat cabins, adding something interesting and unique to the look of them. Jeff had liked them since they started building them a few months back, admiring the speed in which they seemed to sprout out of the recently empty ground.

He was wondering who would get to live there, who would get to stare through those round windows at the posh town below and sip coffee before greeting another day with a smile and a kiss from a loved one. He was so deep in thought he didn't even realize Nick had pulled in front of one building that was a bit higher up on the hill than the rest of them. It was surrounded with tall trees, branches now bare and dry but come full spring, Jeff knew they would create wonderful shade and cast inspiring patterns on the walls of the building they were shielding.

He loved the place.

He just didn't really know what they were doing there.

"Sir…um… why are we here?" he asked as they got out of the car and reached the entrance of the building.

"Well… I kind of want to show you first and then explain okay?" Nick asked over his shoulder. At Jeff's confused but trusting nod he punched in the entrance code to open the door.

He led the blonde inside and Jeff saw it was a lobby area, every wall and floor flawless in white and beige. Nick didn't stop moving so Jeff barely had time to take in the entryway before he was faced with a pair of elevator doors. Nick smacked the button to call it and Jeff peered over his shoulder to locate the staircase against the furthest left wall. The doors slid open and they stepped in and pressed the button to the top floor after Nick swiped a plastic card on a reader. It rumbled into life and Jeff felt a small somersault in his belly and he wasn't sure if it was because of the elevator's jump or the fact that he was seconds away from finding out what his Gift might be. He gripped Nick's hand tighter and his breath caught when the silver door opened.

The clear, empty, completely open space in front of them took his breath away. The floors were light brown and wooden, matching the ceiling beams perfectly. It was just waiting for someone to come in and give real life to it and Jeff tried to push away the desire for he and Nick to be the ones to do that. The side walls were an off white colour, bare and empty, but Jeff could see the potential there, the amazing things that could decorate them; family portraits, photos from trips and so, so much more.

The wall opposite him however was what made his head spin.

A dark red colour, intercepted only with one of those beautiful round port windows that showed the clear sky and the tips of branches from outside. The soft beams of light from outside shimmered on the floor and Jeff wished for his paper and charcoal so he could paint that beautiful space and Nick in it. Smiling and looking happy and a little bit proud of himself for some reason.
"Do you like it?" he asked and Jeff stared at him in wonder.

"Yes… it's beautiful. But what are we doing here?" he asked, slinking towards Nick and cuddling into him, uncertainty making him feel cold.

"Okay, um… here's the thing," Nick began rubbing his hand over the back of his neck sheepishly. "I… a few months back I came here to look at an apartment. And I wanted to buy one. For us. If you ever accepted me," Nick said and Jeff gasped staring at him wide eyed and awed.

"Wait… you… you bought this… for us? This is our apartment?" he asked incredulously and Nick barked out an amused laugh.

"Well, not exactly. There's not exactly plumbing up here is there. See the stairs there?" he asked pointing to the corner to Jeff's right where, indeed, stood an end of a spiral staircase in dark brown wood, polished and shiny.

"Y-yeah." Well he saw them now. He had completely missed them before.

"The apartment is down there, if we decide to keep it that is. I'll show you around in a moment, but let me just tell you this, even if you don't like this apartment… I want us to live together somewhere that isn't at school. I want us to find a place of our own," Nick said sincerely and Jeff felt his eyes water as he stared at the beauty that was his Dom.

How did he end up being so lucky when his life was so miserable? How did everything turn so right when he was sure he was destined to be alone and scared forever? He didn't know but he was so, so happy that it did.

"I… I want us to live together too. And I know I'll love the apartment. I knew you'd know what my Gift could be. I knew you'd know," Jeff said quietly wrapping his arms around Nick's neck, careful of his mark, and gluing himself to his side.
Nick held him close and rumbled a soft laugh.

"The apartment is not a Gift for you, Jeff. We'll both live in it. We'll both use it," Nick said and Jeff tilted his head in question.

"Oh… but then… wha-?" he tried to ask and Nick untangled them, took his shoulders and turned him to look at the attic room again.

"This room… I, um… I thought this could be your art studio. We could put easels, shelves to hold paints and canvases. We could frame your art on the walls and stuff… um… you can decorate it however you like. I just thought-" Nick rambled and then stopped when he saw Jeff's expression. "Baby…we can think of something else… I just thought that you'd li-

"NO!" Jeff gasped and Nick almost jumped in surprise at his tone.

"Angel?" he asked and Jeff shook his head urgently, fighting to get the words out.

"No I don't want anything else. Nick… sir… this… god this is the most beautiful place in the world," he said awed and Nick broke into the biggest smile ever.

"You like it?" he asked and Jeff launched himself in his arms, face hiding in his neck and arms tightening around him as he nodded.

"I adore it. I love it so much. We… we get to live here… together… and… and I get to paint here… and I… I get to stay with you..." he exhaled the last part and looked up, his entire face illuminated with happiness and awe and gratitude. "I get to stay with you," he repeated as if that was the first time it had really sunk in. Like it was the first time it made sense to him.

Like it was the first time he knew for sure… he was Nick's irrevocably.

"I love you," Nick said in answer and Jeff felt the fire burn in the pit of his stomach.

His breath caught, heavy and burning and his fingers closed into his fist, the desire to touch and taste making him mad. He had never felt that way, he never knew he could, he never thought he was allowed to.

But he was, wasn't he?

He was allowed to want, to feel, to touch. He was allowed to take if he wanted to.

He wrapped his arms around Nick's neck again and with a final questioning glance he pushed his lips against his Dom's, gasping at the warmth. He shivered when Nick circled his waist with his strong hands and pulled him in, their bodies flush together from head to the tips of their toes.

Nick's broad palm spread on his lower back and he moaned softly when tips of his fingers grazed the swell of his ass. Tongues met in the middle and the heat rose, thick and sticky, beads of sweat breaking their skin. Jeff's body felt on fire as Nick pushed him backwards gently until he was pressed against the wall.

The weight of his Dom's body made his head spin and he gasped for desperately needed air, threading his fingers into Nick's hair pulling gently when those sinful lips cascaded down his jaw and neck as he panted.

"Sir..." he breathed and Nick's hands tightened on him in response.
"My beautiful angel… god I love you like this… I missed you like this," he groaned and Jeff closed his eyes at the sound of praise that loosened his insides and made him pull at Nick's hair harder.

His Dom ground his hips against his own and Jeff knew… he knew he could feel him, hard and wanting against his thigh. He tensed for a single second before Nick's voice stopped his inner battle before it started.

"My gorgeous boy. So hard for me. Let me hear you, baby," he whispered and his hand slid down, cupping his ass and squeezing, pulling his aching cock to grind against his own, his lips never leaving the pale skin of his neck.

Jeff moaned, so much louder this time because feeling Nick's palms on his ass had felt like nothing ever had before and he just couldn't keep it in anymore. Pleasure rippled through him and a small part of his mind was screaming. Told him to shut down, to get away, to rein his desire in and make sure Nick was satisfied like he was supposed to. But his body responded to what Nick was doing and he knew he couldn't stop anymore. He didn't want to stop. If there were consequences to be suffered he'd suffer them later. But now… now he just wanted to feel.

Nick's lips on his collarbones. Nick's hands on his ass, his thighs. Nick's chest against his own. Nick's warmth enveloping him and swallowing him whole. Nick's hips swaying with his in tandem. And Nick's voice, in his ear, praising, encouraging, loving…

…and then another voice.

"Well boys. Does this mean you're taking the apartment?" They jumped away from each other as if scalded; Nick smug and chuckling and Jeff hiding behind him, red as a tomato and willing the ground to swallow him whole.

A tall, dark haired man, dressed in a smart suit and sporting the biggest, smuggest smirk in the world winked at them in greeting from the top step of the stairs.

"Oh... hey, Grant. Jeff, baby this is the real estate agent I've been talking to about this place," he introduced easy as you go as if he wasn't still sporting a semi.

Jeff just whispered a short, "Hi," as his cheeks burned at being caught debauched like that.

But the other man seemed completely unconcerned by what he saw.

"Nice to meet the man Nick talks about so much. But to the point… taking it or not, Duval? I have people waiting to look at this place," he said.

Nick reached behind him and hooked his arm around Jeff’s waist, pulling him forwards and close.

"As a matter of fact we are. Right, baby?" Nick turned to Jeff and the blonde just nodded, mortified, making the other two chuckle as the other whipped out the folded contract from his suit jacket.

Before Jeff could even comprehend what happened signatures were being penned and he had a new place with Nick… his Dom.

They had a home.
The day of his son's Presenting Ceremony found Burt at the doors of the Westerville Hotel on meet and greet duty.

It wasn't a task that had been asked of him or expected. In fact, he received many odd looks for his conduct when there was a perfectly good army of employees milling around, as well as frantic valets who were hired to do the exact same thing. Burt liked feeling useful however. What was he gonna do inside after all? Sip champagne and look pretty? He snorted at the very thought.

He'd arrived early himself with Carole, wanting to make sure Kurt was alright and settled because he knew his son and he was bound to be shaking out of his skin. He found him exactly like that and had done his best to try and put him at ease though it was a difficult task. He’d stayed until the guests were timed to arrive and now he was seeing them in with handshakes and smiles. Carole had stayed up in the room with his anxious son as Jared switched back and forth between both Blaine and Kurt.

Some guests he knew. Some he didn't and it was the latter, smaller group that were grating on his good mood. He persevered though and grinned and bore it, after all, this was what politics was all about right? He should get used to playing this game.

"Burt!" Dana called out to him as he fidgeted in his suit for the billionth time; felling stuffed and uncomfortable and itchy. He was lucky it was spring and the weather was clear and breezy today, otherwise he could have been melting too. Thank god for small mercies.

He turned towards the source of the voice and smiled when he saw the petite Dom, looking fierce in her stunning burgundy gown, coming up the steps while a steady stream of cars and people flowed behind her. She was dragging a tall, curly haired man behind her that made Burt cock an eyebrow in interest feeling a faint stirring of recognition he couldn't place. She had had a few things to sort out for the big day so couldn't come early with Jared. Maybe this person was what she had to sort out?

"Hello, Dana. You look wonderful this evening," he greeted warmly. Both her and her family had become good friends to him and he couldn't be happier about the fact that his son was now a part of it, joining their families together.

"Why you old charmer you. Don't let that wonderful sub of yours hear," Dana teased, a sparkle in her eyes and Burt huffed out an amused laugh, admiring Jared for having the guts to approach the ball of life and endless energy that was Dana Anderson. She truly was a handful.

"I wouldn't worry about that, Carole's not the jealous type. She knows she's the one for me," he grinned.

The gentleness in this rough looking man's voice was so genuine and soft that it made Dana smile warm and happy.

"Where is Carole? I swear to god if I don't have a conversation with a decent female person in the next five minutes I will murder someone. And blood does not come out of silk," she said and Burt laughed, full bellied and loud, attracting looks of disdain and disapproval from those who held themselves too classy for such displays of emotion.

"I believe she's trying to save the buffet from Finn and April, his Dom," he said and Dana looked around with interest.

"Oh Finn is here? Delightful. I can't wait to meet him," she said clapping her hands happily and Burt nodded.

"Got here about ten minutes ago and the snack table was put out not too long before that so you'll
probably have to wait until all the food is gone and he is forced to find other forms of entertainment. I'm afraid," Burt joked and Dana laughed just as freely as he did a few moments ago, proving once again that she was real and free of the confines of what society wanted her to be.

"It's a 'light buffet'," she teased and wrinkled her nose up in humour because they both knew better. It was basically fancy finger food. "And I am a patient woman, I can wait. In the meantime let me introduce you to Cooper. My eldest son." She tugged the hand of the man who stood behind her, looking carefree and happy as he threw winks and shook hands left and right as people still streamed into the entrance, being directed by the staff now Burt had given up his position. They actually looked relieved, less like lost sheep.

At the mention of his name Cooper turned around, a blinding smile radiating from his face and his eyes twinkling with mischief. He was Dana's son, alright.

"Cooper Anderson. Pleasure to meet you." And it suddenly hit Burt. *He was some kind of newfangled movie star right?* He extended his hand and Burt took it, his grasp firm and determined. Not only a celebrity but another powerful Dom in the family. Poor Jared.

"Burt Hummel. Nice to meet you too, son. I've heard a lot about you," he said, returning the grasp and smiling at the man in front of him.

"I'm not even gonna ask what you've heard because it might hurt my feelings," he said teasingly and Burt chuckled. He liked the man already. He seemed like a fun, easygoing person despite the fact that he was clearly in the spotlight, evidenced further by the woman who came up to him and asked for his autograph.

"I'm sure your massive ego will protect your feelings you twat," a voice came from behind them and Burt turned to find Nick sticking his tongue at Cooper as Jeff hid behind his shoulder shyly. They definitely scrubbed up well and together they made a handsome picture.

"Nicholas Duval. I have to say I was hoping to avoid you tonight. It's just not my lucky day," Cooper said loudly and the woman scurried off looking a little put out he wasn't paying her any more attention but happy with her prize. Burt got confused for a moment, not sure if they were joking or if a fight was about to break out. Dana's amused smirk made him feel a bit better but the look on Jeff's face made it clear that he didn't notice that detail. He slid next to the boy and clasped his shoulder gently, feeling him relax minutely as he watched the weird exchange.

"Your day got lucky the moment you saw my gorgeous face, Cooper. You're not fooling anyone," Nick said and there was a moment of silence before Cooper jumped and scooped Nick up in a bear hug of epic proportions, lifting him off the ground and giving him a small twirl.

"Did I miss something?" a female voice interrupted this time as a tall, blonde woman showed up next to Dana, head quirked to the side and a teasing smile gracing her pretty face. She wore a champagne coloured, lacy dress that did wonders for her olive complexion and warm green eyes.
Dana twined her hand through hers and shook her head.

"I'm sorry you had to find out like this, darling. But now you can go and find yourself a normal Dom," Dana replied dead serious and the girl nodded.

"Can I hit him on the head first?" she asked, the posh sounding, British accent making the statement a lot funnier than it actually was because of how formal and classy it sounded wrapped around such a blatant threat.

"Oh I insist that you do," Dana replied as Nick and Cooper finished their enthusiastic greeting and turned back towards their half stunned, half amused audience.

"An explanation would be nice," Burt huffed and Dana threw her head back as she laughed at the scene in front of her.

"Absolutely. I think it's time for some introductions. Burt this gorgeous creature is my son's sub, Alexandra. Alex, darling, this is Burt Hummel, Kurt's father," Dana introduced them and Burt took the girls hand in a gentle squeeze as she smiled politely, a picture of grace and sophistication.

"It's absolutely lovely to meet you, Mr. Hummel. From what I have heard of Kurt and your family you are truly a Dom to look up to," she said and the older man blushed at the compliment. He was
nothing special. Just a man trying to do things right by his family. He told her as much and she shook her head.

"It takes a great Dom to raise a sub the way you did Kurt from what I hear. Trust me, I would know," she said and there was more to her statement that met the eye but Burt figured it wasn't his place to pry so he just smiled and nodded.

"Thank you. And please, call me Burt," he insisted and she inclined her head gracefully.

"I will do so. Now, who is the man who cost me my Dom?" she asked as she turned to Nick who had the audacity to wink at her and throw an arm around Cooper, stretching onto his toes to do so because of their height difference.

"Nicholas Duval. The long-term joy of Cooper Anderson's life," he said puffing his chest proudly.

"I see. It is peculiar how I've never heard of you before now," she said and Nick clutched at his chest in mock betrayal.

"Cooper, how could you? I thought what we had was special," he cried in outrage, releasing his hold on the older man and slinking back to Jeff, wrapping himself around the blond like an octopus.

"Comfort me, angel. I think my heart was just broken," he wailed and Jeff stared at him not quite sure if he should laugh but feeling the need to all the same. The events of the day had made him loose and happy however so he naturally felt a chuckle slip through his lips gently and wrapped his arms around Nick's neck.

"You still have me, sir," he said timidly, not sure how his joke would be received but Nick beamed and stuck his tongue out at Cooper.

"Ha! I win," he declared and Cooper laughed as his attention turned to Jeff.

"So you're Nick's Jeff?" he asked and Burt watched as the blondes face paled and he shrunk back into himself, nodding and looking everywhere but at Cooper. The older Dom was ready to protect Jeff from Cooper if he needed to but Blaine's older brother seemed like a kind man despite his huge personality.

"Yes," he confirmed shyly, still not meeting his eyes.

"Blaine's been telling me you've got our Nick tied into knots. Good for you. He needed a sub to take him in hand," Cooper said easily, not caring that his sentence was completely backwards. It snapped Jeff's eyes up to his in surprise however.

"Him take Nick in hand?"

Nick saved him from answering when he laughed and pecked Jeff's blushing cheek. "He's got me tied around his pinky finger and I love it, so there."

Jeff felt warmed through with the admission and he hid his pink face in Nick's collar making the people around him coo.

"Has the ceremony been changed to outside and no one informed me? I would have put more hairspray on my hair," Sebastian drawled as he and Dave came up behind the group; the Dom looking smart in a simple black two piece and Sebastian showing his flair for style in a patterned three piece suit. They were joined by the hand, Seb's free one slung in his pocket in a blasé way that was still elegant and Dave's bulky arm was wrapped around a perfectly wrapped present in green
and silver.

"Subtle as ever, babe," Dave lightly reprimanded him and Seb huffed but didn't fight it.

"Always lovely to see you, Seb," Nick joked and Sebastian simply cocked an eyebrow that said; Yes it is. I know. "You know that you weren't supposed to bring a present right?"

"I wouldn't advise going there," Dave warned, but too late.

"Well I knew how it felt not to get so much as a card on my Presenting day and I'm sparing Kurt the horror," Sebastian said matter-of-factly. Nick opened his mouth to comment but he was cut off swiftly. "And if you make one joke about already getting the best present of all by bonding to Dave then I will get my lovely gift of a Dom to punch you on the nose."

Cooper burst into guffaws, clearly impressed with Sebastian.

"Seb," Dave reprimanded and the sub screwed up his mouth but did as he was told when his Dom ordered him to, "Play nice."

There was a brief second of silence around the group which Jeff broke awkward and innocently. "Hey, Seb. You look nice."

The sub smiled, going significantly softer around the edges like he tended to do around the likes of the blonde, Thad and Kurt too. "Thank you, you too. Armani right?"

He nodded. "Kurt helped me choose it."

"So are we going to head inside so I don't have to get strange looks for carrying this anymore?" Dave questioned.

"They're just jealous they're not as refined or thoughtful as us, sir," Sebastian waved off airily.

"He makes a good point though. We should really get in there," Dana commented and Burt nodded in agreement.

"I should be seeing you guys in then getting back to greeting the other guests."

"You know they have people to do that?" Cooper commented as Burt waved him off but realized he should probably stop bothering the kind people who were just trying to do their jobs.

"Hurry up, sir. If we miss my Kurt's fine ass getting married to Blaine's fine ass then I will not be a happy sub," Corrine's distinctive voice could be heard next, getting closer.

"Okay. We should definitely go in. It's getting crowded and we're causing a bit of a jam," Alex said and the group nodded, moving towards the wide double doors.

Burt fell into step beside Jeff and Nick. "Jeff, you mind going up and seeing Kurt? He's a little nervous and he'd like to have his best friend there I bet. Same goes for you with Blaine, kid."

The couple nodded dark and light heads in sync. "Sure thing. Where are they?" Nick asked.

"Kurt's in the penthouse and Blaine's hired out the whole floor below."

Nick snorted. " Possessive much?"

"You talk to me when it's your guys' ceremony," Burt stated candidly and Jeff stuttered a step, face
going up in flames while Nick simply looked dazed and immensely pleased all at once for the subject to have been brought up.

The older man hid a smile and shooed them off towards the elevators across the lobby.

"Burt," Dana called from the front of the group. "Don't go back to loitering in the doorway, I've just seen someone I wanted to introduce you to. The staff will be fine seeing the rest of the people in."

Burt huffed and he met the conciliatory look Cooper threw him over his shoulder. There was nothing to do but obey the word of Dana Anderson. And so he ended up making nice in the lobby for quite a while, Dana introducing him to person after person before she excused herself to go upstairs and check on everything and see the rest of her boys.

Jobs taken from him Burt had nothing to do but enter the main room and try and make himself useful in there.

Stepping inside the function room for the first time since they had finishing decorating it to the very specific instructions and standards Kurt had laid down, he could see that Kurt had outdone himself.

It wasn't a surprise to Burt exactly that his son would have come up with something this elaborate without it feeling overpowering, and all despite where he grew up. It was a testament to their political campaign and just the sheer strength of talent that could be found in anyone regardless of their background.

The venue was the same as the stuffy, gaudy one Burt had rushed to all those months ago to comfort his son on the day of The Showing, but today it was transformed. Gone were the tacky crimson carpets that served to stroke the egos of the rich and the mighty. Along with them went the awful flower arrangements and golden spoons and crystal wine glasses. Instead, the room was the picture of class; the kind of class you couldn't buy with all the money in the world. The kind that looked expensive purely because it was so clean and simple and elegant in its subtlety. The kind that the harpies who loved to put his son down would never have and Burt felt a rush of primitive satisfaction at that thought as he inspected the room.

The stage was draped in a backdrop of soft turquoise fabric, which hung from above like a waterfall with real flowers and vines of ivy woven in. Scattered over the floor were the petals of a hundred different flowers, making up a stunning rainbow carpet, the only bare spot the perfect circle in which Blaine and Kurt would stand to give their vows.

The front section of the main floor nearest to the stage was empty completely, leaving room for the gathering of people to stand and bear witness to the union and the back half was made up of tables. No offensively bright and tacky table centerpieces or flower arrangements were in sight, everything was natural with a slight twist and perfectly in place. Clear fishbowls sat in the middle of every table, pretty blue and green stones at the bottom and an arrangement of lilies dusted with silver and turquoise glitter on the insides hanging over the edges thanks to Mae's brilliance. Classic silver cutlery was arranged on every table, a cursive B & K scrawled into every set. The napkins were the same turquoise as the drapery's and chair ribbons and they added lovely, bright spots of colour throughout the room making it feel airy and light instead of sterile.

All the stressing and pulling his hair out seemed to have been worth it in the end and he watched as all the guests that had turned up cooed and appreciated the tasteful display of beauty. It was mostly friends that made up the guest list. Both the Hummel's and Anderson's were low on immediate family, but that was fine. Everyone who meant anything to both Blaine and Kurt were in attendance. Even Blaine's elusive older brother who Burt had the fortune to meet a few minutes earlier.
"Burt Hummel?"

Snapped out of his head he turned around to see a tall thin man in an expensive, probably Italian or something, suit. He had salt and pepper hair cut into a classic style that showed his age, few lines around his eyes and mouth that showed he rarely smiled and a champagne glass held in one hand like it was a frequent accessory. He was so obviously old money that Burt was cautious, but not impressed. It took a lot more than posturing to gain his respect.

"That's me," he acknowledged and squared his feet. He'd let the man come to him.

He closed the short distance between them with an easy grace and stood before him all elegant lines to his rough edges. They couldn't have been more opposite if they tried.

"Forgive my interruption, I just wanted to introduce myself. I'm Richard Decroux," he said smoothly, green eyes dull but confident. He held his hand out to shake and Burt took it strongly. He was showing no weakness here because he could feel this Dom sizing him up.

"Nice to meet you," he returned gruffly though he didn't mean it. There was something about this man, something that screamed self-satisfied and cocky that Burt wanted to wash off of his skin. There was a few of those types here, high society Dom's and subs that Dana was unfortunately obliged to invite to her son's bonding.

"You have no idea who I am do you?" Richard said, almost amused.

Burt raised a brow. He'd learnt from Kurt that scathing little inflection. "Sorry, Dick. Not a clue."

A faint crease furrowed Richard's brow for a second before he smoothed it out and recomposed. Burt almost smirked in triumph that he had ruffled him at least.

"I would have thought since you were running for Head you would have checked out your competition," the Dom commented, taking an idle sip from his glass.

The shock of what he revealed took a minute to sink in. This man knew he was running? They hadn't even made the announcement yet!

"Yeah, well apparently I have people for that so… sorry, bub," he played off nonchalantly and Richard frowned deeper this time at his flippant attitude.

"Quite."

"Anything else? My only son is getting bonded today and I've got things to do," he said pointedly.

"Oh well don't let me keep you from your son. He is a special talent isn't he? I heard he came up with this whole spread himself," Richard commented gesturing to the interior with a lazy, thin finger.

"He knows his way around flowers and fabrics yeah," Burt said neutrally. The Dom was so straight faced that he couldn't even tell if that was an insult masquerading as a compliment or actual praise. He wasn't going to fall into it either way.

Richard nodded. "Well wish him luck from me. And I imagine we'll be seeing each other a lot more from this point onwards."

"Sure thing, Dick."

He watched Richard clench his jaw at the nickname but smile and shake it off. "May the best man
win as they say."

And then he was gone, melting into the crowds and Carole was stepping up beside him. "Sir?" He turned his head and smiled down at her, hand automatically rising to rest on her hip. She looked especially lovely tonight, her green dress fitting and flattering all her best angles and bringing out her eyes. "Everything okay?"

He nodded, trying to put the incident out of his mind. Today wasn't the day for any of that crap, this was for Kurt and Blaine and nothing was going to ruin it. "Just meeting the locals. Kurt alright?"

She laughed a tucked a stray strand from her up-do away from her face. "Yes. Just jittery still but Jared's got it covered. He says he misses Blaine and he wants you to go and check on him for him."

"On Blaine?"

"I think he's scared he's going to run away," she chuckled.

Burt rolled his eyes. "He think he's gonna jump out the window or something? My boy is smart but damn is he stupid sometimes."

"It's his hormones, he can't help it. And I'm just relaying the message, sir." Her eyes were sparkling with mirth.

"Fine, but then I'm going to find that son of mine and shake some sense into him," Burt grumbled as he headed off towards the elevator of the hotel.

"Oh and Kurt said to tell you if you scare him off then he will never forgive you," Carole called lightly after him and Burt shook his head in despair. He'd be glad when this day was over and all those jumpy submissive hormones that had been going rampant for days were finally settled.

He reached the second from top floor, Blaine had gifted the penthouse suite to Kurt to get ready in of course, and stepped out into the hallway. Dana was there a little way down the corridor going over some last minute instructions with the older woman they had asked to officiate the bonding. Mellissa Vandair had been a Validator for many years so was more than used to any special requests in regards to the ceremony, not that Blaine or Kurt had wanted anything wildly out of the box anyway. Despite the back and forth and the what if's Kurt had settled on a traditional ceremony and Blaine was happy to go along with anything Kurt wanted as long as it got them bonded faster.

He walked up to the two slowly, hands slung in his pockets. "How's things?"

"Fine. Kurt just asked me to double check everything," Dana said and Burt almost laughed out loud. Christ this was ridiculous. He wondered idly if his Elizabeth would have been like this. Kurt was a spitting image of her in so many ways that he could imagine it alright, and it made him smile sadly. They'd never gotten to officially bond. Oh they were scrimping and saving up for it once upon a time but then Kurt came along unexpectedly and then Elizabeth got sick and every dime they could get their hands on went towards that. It just wasn't meant to be. But he was happy in the knowledge that official or not it had been a Permanent Bond to them all the same.

"That menace. He has me checking that your son is still in the building," Burt commented wryly.

"As if you could get him to leave even with strapping a rocket to his back," Dana scoffed. "He's been unbearable for weeks! Moping around and sighing like lovelorn sap before snapping at me for the silliest things. 'When can I bond with, Kurt?' 'Is it time yet?' 'I'm gonna die if I can't bond with him in the next second'. It's like having that pouty five year old again who threatened to hold his breath until I bought him that Star Wars Lego set, then when that didn't work rammed a skateboard
into a teddy display!"

"I have no problems believing that," Burt snorted, lips twitching. "They're made for each other for sure. I'll have to tell you about the tea party incident of 2001."

"I have a feeling this will be an eventful ceremony," Mellissa commented almost to herself after watching the back and forth like a tennis match. They suddenly turned to give her the most beseeching looks she'd ever seen.

"Please excuse them their flaws and bond them," Dana begged, clasping her hands in front of her chest as if in prayer.

"I know they seem crazy," Burt continued.

"But they're only crazy about each other!"

She began to laugh and held up her hands to stay any more. "I'll bond them don't you worry. If only for your peace of mind."

Dana blew out a gust of air in heavy relief. "I love those boys I do. But I can't stand another moment of the hormones or whining."

"Here, here!" Burt grumbled.

"I mean, I wasn't as bad as this. I have no idea where he gets this flair for the dramatic from," Dana declared and the Validator gave her a frank look. Every couple was like this before bonding, it couldn't be helped. Of course the degrees varied, but still.

Burt cleared his throat and thumbed over his shoulder. "I'll just go check he hasn't built a ladder and tunneled up through the floor."

"I wouldn't put it past him. He was pretending his cutlery was him and Kurt last night at dinner and made them bond over dessert," Dana informed them seriously.

"That's… new," the Validator admitted. She had thought she had seen it all. She shouldn't have jinxed herself.

When Burt finally made it to Blaine's room he found the young Dom exactly as he thought he would.

"You don't stop smiling kid you're gonna have an aneurism," he commented from the doorway and Blaine span around away from the mirror he was absently staring into while thinking about Kurt.

"He's been practically purring like the cat that got the cream for about half an hour now," Nick said dryly from the gold chaise he was sprawled on near the window, uncaring if his suit got wrinkled even though Kurt would have a meltdown when he saw him. He had to have some rebellion after the sub made him wear this damn bowtie… though, he had to admit, he looked pretty damn sharp and Jeff had been throwing him secret admiring glances. Kurt was kind of a genius at this whole clothing thing, but the principle of the thing was the same!

Blaine span on his heel and pointed straight in Nick's face. "You shut your face, Nicholas. This is the second best day of my life and I'll freaking be on cloud nine if I want to be."

He asserted the sentiment so strongly Nick had to hold up his hands in surrender.
"Second best?" Burt questioned, closing the door behind himself.

"Well when I saw him for the first time was the best," Blaine flushed a little and Burt rolled his eyes at his cheesy soon to be son in law.

"Uh, bro… you do know he was like crying all night because of that," Nick interjected.

Blaine scowled at the reminder, glaring with murderous intent towards his best friend and Burt stepped up to him to squeeze his shoulder and prevent a homicide. Kurt would never forgive him if he let his intended be arrested on his big day.

"He doesn't feel like that now, kid. Don't let Chuckles get to you. Kurt's a floor away practically vibrating outta his skin to bond with you. If you asked him about that night now I'd bet he'd have a different opinion on it."

Blaine smiled a little and huffed a sigh of relief. "Thanks, Burt."

"No problem, kid. But if you make him cry like that again I will come after you and there will be nowhere on this earth you can hide," he finished almost casually and Blaine was left staring wide eyed at him. Even Nick was inching away from the elder Dominant a little.

"Uh. Got it?"

Burt nodded and clapped him on the shoulder again, harder this time. "Good. So… you ready?"

Blaine composed himself from the threat and nodded his head. "I was ready about two seconds after I claimed him right here in this building."

Burt could believe that alright.

"Dana told me you were playing dolls over your dinner last night, practicing for the big day. Were you the knife or the fork?" Burt smirked trying to lighten the mood and Blaine flushed bright red while Nick cracked the hell up.

"Oh. My. God," he choked out clutching his stomach over guffaws. "The spoon! I bet he was the spoon!"

"Shut up, Nick!" Blaine shouted at him walking over and punching him in the arm repeatedly which only added fuel to the fire. Burt felt the spike in the Dominant hormones that were already saturating the air and knew the younger Dom was barely hanging onto his control right now.

Maybe joking hadn't been the best idea.

"Okay, break it up," he ordered, grabbing Blaine by the arm and yanking him back. "You mess up that suit and Kurt's not bonding with you. Now go fix your hair in the mirror… no more gel though, it's like an oil slick on your head right now." Blaine growled, pupils dilated, but did as he was told. "And as for you," he said to Nick who was still laughing. "Shut your yap or get out."

"B-but… spoon."

Blaine rumbled again, ready to spring but Burt beat him to it. "Right. Out you go."

"Oh… I'm sorry. I promise to behave!" Nick whined as he was dragged to his feet and across the room.

"Behave yourself outside the door."
He shut it behind him with a resounding click.

"Dana! They're being mean to me," they heard on the other side and Burt rolled his eyes.

"Why are you friends with him again?" he asked the younger Dom.

"Lack of judgment and willpower," Blaine stated forlornly, fiddling needlessly with his lapels before clenching into fists. He fell forward and rested his head against the cool mirror. "I'm going out of my mind, Burt. I don't think I can wait anymore. One minute I can't wait to get down there and then the next everything in me just wants to go upstairs and lock us in a room together, official ceremony or not."

Burt took the statement quite calmly for someone listening to a Dom talking about wanting to defile his submissive son. He heard Elizabeth's sweet voice in his head admonishing him. *Make love and bond with him permanently, Burt. Don't be so crass.*

He rubbed a hand over his face.

"Listen, Blaine. I know I haven't really said it before but... I respect the hell out of you, kid. You're strong, kind and have good principles. Everything a good Dom should have and be, so I'm not worried okay. I know you'll do right by my boy. You'll go down that elevator and stand in front of all your friends and family and those random people we don't even know and do this thing properly."

Blaine turned around and looked at him in shock. "You really believe all that?"

"I aint in the habit of sayin' things I don't mean, kid," he said frankly, crossing his arms over his chest and Blaine swallowed still looking shaky. Sweat was beginning to bead on his forehead and his pupils were still blown out wide. "You love him right?"

"Of course!" It was almost a bark.

"Well then you'll take a deep breath and get a hold of yourself. For him," he told him calmly, stepping up and pulling out a handkerchief for him to wipe his brow. "He's feeling just as antsy as you but the difference is he's gonna be relying on you for support. You're his Dom and are going to be for the rest of your life after today, so start as you mean to go forward."

Blaine took the offered fabric and sat down heavily on the bed, wringing it between white knuckled fingers. Burt watched him with assessing eyes.

"Want me to see if I can step things up? Kurt might not be happy about it but I'm sure he'll get over it once he realizes that you'll be bonded faster this way," he offered.

Blaine looked up at him with hopeful doe eyes that had no right being on a Dominant this far gone. The stare shuttered after a moment however. "But even if we do bond earlier we still have to wait all night before we can..." he flushed and avoided Burt's eye wisely. There was only so much a Dominant father could take after all. "This is torture. Who came up with this system?"

"You can thank all your fancy friends for that. Bonding never used to be as big of a spectacle as it is now," Burt shrugged. "Now, I'm gonna send your stupid friend back in and try not to kill him while I go check on my son."

"No promises," Blaine grumbled but then perked up and got to his feet. "Can I go with you to see him?"

Burt gave him a look. "You think I came down with the last shower of rain, kid?"
Blaine scowled, something hot spiking inside of him at the refusal. "I just wanna talk to him. I don't even have to see him, I can stand outside the door."

"And you'll talk to him in about an hour. I'm sure you can wait."

Blaine growled low and deep, body tensing as if ready to spring and Burt knew they were now treading in dangerous waters. He was a young, stupidly strong Dominant hyped up on too many hormones and with a deep desire to seal his bond. Nothing could be more volatile than that combination and Burt didn't want to set him off.

"How about I give him a message?" he suggested cautiously.

Blaine worked his jaw for a moment as he considered it. He just wanted Kurt. Kurt was his. Why was everybody trying to take away what was his? It made the fire that was burning in him flare brighter and hotter.

"Blaine, you know better than this," he said, not willing to pander to him fully. "I'll pass along a message but you're not going up there with my son when you're like this. You haven't got a scrap of control in you to keep from pouncing him and that ain't happening before you get yourself bonded properly. I will string you up if I have to."

"He's mine!" he burst out darkly, advancing on Burt. "He's mine and no one else's."

"He isn't yours yet and he won't be unless you get a hold of yourself," Burt growled back not backing away an inch. He just held his ground even though he knew, age or not, experience or not, Blaine was simply the stronger Dom here.

Blaine flew into a rage at those words but instead of attacking Burt he walked over to the free standing mirror and smashed it to the floor where it shattered on impact. It showed that he still had some of his senses at least but he was giving in to his Dominant urges a little too much, which made the decision of not to let him near Kurt so soon firmer in his mind.

Dana and Nick came rushing into the room a few moments later. "What the hell!"

"Blaine's a little worked up," Burt told them dryly, keeping his eyes on the panting Dom standing over the mess he had just created.

"Blaine Devon Anderson I did not raise you to be a spoiled little brat... Cooper has that area well covered thank you," Dana said sternly, hands on hips.

"You're all trying to keep him away from me," Blaine accused them hotly, moving forwards to make his way out the door. All three Doms blocked his way.

"We are doing no such thing you ridiculous boy. Now sit down," she ordered using the full effect on her Dominant voice to overpower him. He snarled at her with actual teeth but did as he was told. In years to come she wouldn't have a chance in hell of getting him to listen to her, her son was destined to be a far more powerful Dom than her, but for right now she held the authority in the room. Happy he was subdued at least for now she then turned to Burt. "Go check on, Kurt. I'll deal with him."

Burt nodded then looked back to Blaine. "I still got faith in you, kid. Don't prove me wrong."

Blaine either didn't here or didn't register those parting words. He was stuck staring down his mother challengingly, probably waiting for her to waver so he could jump on the weakness. And it looked like Dana knew the game he was playing too.
"Blaine, you need to get a hold of yourself right now. This is no way for you to behave minutes before you bond to that wonderful boy who's counting on you to do the right thing," Dana almost growled, looking between her son and Burt who still hung by the door, torn between wanting to see his son and helping her keep the almost feral Dom in check.

At her furious tone Blaine slumped his back against the bed, shoes crinkling over the broken glass as he deflated, eyes desperate and pleading, his hands shaking where he had them fisted in his pockets.

"Just need to see him. Need to know he's there," he started repeating over and over again and Burt realized there was no one but Kurt who could reach into his mind and ease it now that he had spiralled so far.

"Would a phone call help?" he asked and Dana's head snapped up towards him.

"What?" she asked and Burt walked towards the dresser, taking Blaine's phone and handing it to her, a plan forming in his mind.

"I'm gonna go to Kurt's room and call Blaine's phone from his. Make sure he answers it would ya?" he asked and she nodded, clutching the phone in her hands and staring at her younger son who was still repeating Kurt's name under his breath, craving but unable to get his fix.

With a final nod he rushed out of the room.

"Kurt?" Jeff called softly and the brunette slowly turned his head towards the sound as if in a daze. He was perched on the Italian leather sofa and hadn't moved for about ten minutes. It worried the blonde despite Jared assuring him that it was normal for a submissive to fall into this kind of sub headspace this close to a bonding. That he had gone through the exact same thing when waiting to bond to Dana.

"Is Blaine still here?" he asked for the thousandth time, voice worried and needy.

Jared stroked his hand over the back of his neck, just under his mark. He was very careful not to touch the actual mark because the skin there was hypersensitive in the time leading up to the
bonding. Kurt's body readying itself for the change. "Of course. He's right under us. Your dad is going to go check on him remember?"

"Mm," Kurt hummed absently, staring at the floor like he could somehow develop x-ray vision.

"Now. Are you gonna get out of Blaine's hoodie so we can get you dressed?" Jared asked patiently. Kurt had barely gotten out of the shower and into some underwear before he'd lost focus and crawled back into the hoody they had struggled to wrench off of him in the first place when Jeff arrived not too long ago.

They watched Kurt toy with the sleeves before bringing them up to his face to nuzzle, curling his body further into the sofa and tucking his knees inside the oversized sweater; Dalton emblazoned over his knees now.

"I think that's a no," Jeff said glancing at the ornate clock hanging over the fireplace worriedly. This suite of rooms really was all kinds of ridiculous and it reminded him heavily of Sebastian and Dave's place. "We're going to be late."

Jared waved the concern away. "No good Presenting Ceremony starts on time. If it's on time then it's not a very good match."

"Blaine's a good match. He's the best match," Kurt mumbled into the fabric still in front of his face. His pupils were still far too blown out for him to be clear headed but at least he wasn't completely ignoring them anymore.

"Yes he is. So do you want to get dressed in that suit you worked so hard on so he can be your match?" Jared coaxed and Jeff hurried over to grab the suit in question.

Kurt frowned over at the expensive fabric hanging from Jeff's hands. "Why can't I see him? I want to see Blaine."

"You can if you get dressed, Kurt," Jeff told him softly. "Come on. You've been planning this forever."

"I want Blaine," he whispered again, hiding his face and trembling all over, flinching when Jared's hands touched his skin again and making the man step back and away from him.

"He doesn't want to be touched by anyone anymore. I'm afraid we'll have to find a way to get him dressed and down to the stage faster than I thought because if we don't..." he trailed off and Jeff stared at him, wide eyed and scared.

"If we don't... what?" he asked timidly and Jared shrugged, face pinching a little worriedly.

"I don't even know, son. Let's try and get him out of this funk, huh?" he said striving for optimistic and upbeat, approaching Kurt as slowly as he possibly could.

"How do we do that?" Jeff asked again, trying to think of something to help his friend but the sight of him so distressed and out of it made him tremble and he could almost taste the flashbacks lingering in the back of his mind.

He remembered being so far gone for all the wrong reasons and as much as he knew Kurt was just aching to be close to his Dom again, and it was the exact opposite of what Jeff wanted back then his mind refused to see logic. He forced himself to close the gate in front of his subconscious so he could make sure his friend was okay, but his muscle memory fought so hard to make him bolt to safety somewhere.
"I might have an idea," a voice sounded from the door and both subs turned to look at Burt while Kurt just burrowed further into his nest made out of Blaine's clothes.

"I'm assuming Blaine is in a similar state?" Jared asked, reaching for Jeff and wrapping a comforting arm around the frightened sub. The blonde calmed minutely showing just how starved for a comforting touch he was and Jared made a note in his mind to go and find Nick as soon as they snapped Kurt out of it.

"He smashed a mirror with his fist and is now trying to convince everyone to let him come and see Kurt," Burt answered frankly, rummaging through his son's bag and coming out with a phone held in his hand triumphantly.

"What was your idea?" Jeff asked quietly, his heart calming down at the sight of Burt so collected and level headed. If Kurt's dad knew there was nothing wrong he should believe it too. Kurt was just anxious to be with his Dom.

"Have them talk on the phone," he said as he dialled the number and pressed the phone to his ear.

"Dana? Okay... I'm here...no... he's not really doing well so... put Blaine on," he said and watched as Kurt's head shot up at the sound of his Dom's name.

"Blaine? Is he here?" he asked, watery eyes imploring just like when he was a kid and asking why his mom wasn't going to be coming home. Burt pushed the phone into his trembling hand, closing the slim fingers around the device.

"No, buddy. He's on the phone," he answered and flinched when Kurt gasped and the tears that had been collecting there spilled from those gorgeous blue eyes.

"He's not here? He left?" the pain in his voice was so strong, so concentrated the three men felt their own hearts badgering inside their chests as they looked at the young sub shaking in the armchair, wrapping the beloved hoodie around himself tighter as tears spilled down his cheeks.

Burt had never seen Kurt so utterly taken over by his submissive side. His son was just naturally so in sync with the sub in him that it didn't really register for Burt anymore after all these years but this… this was an extreme to which he had never witnessed and it made him ache as a father and a Dom to fix it.

"No... Kurt, no. He didn't leave you. He would never leave you. Just talk to him and you'll see, bud." Burt realized his choice of words was miserably misleading for his son and his reassurance seemed to do nothing to ease Kurt's mind. He was just rocking in his chair, looking broken beyond repair.

"Put it on speaker for him. Maybe if he can hear his voice," Jeff suggested tentatively, fighting the urge to cuddle with Kurt to try and soothe him. Burt fumbled with the state of the art device for a moment before finding the speaker button and touching it gently.

Immediately Dana's voice broke through the speaker.

"Son, you need to be strong for your sub... he needs you right now," she said on the other end and Burt lifted the phone up, closer to his lips.

"Dana? You're on speaker," he told her and she sighed.

"Tell me things are better on your end."
"'fraid not. Kurt's out of it, convinced Blaine's left him and I can't get him to calm down so please... you need to make Blaine talk to him," he said desperately and for the next few endless minutes the only sound in the room was her insistent whispers heard over the phone and Kurt's soft little hiccups and gasps until a voice broke through the silence.

"Kurt?" Blaine called, voice shaking and edgy but it looked like he was winning the fight against his own nature for the sake of his sub.

Kurt flinched at the sound of his Dom's voice but felt drawn to it all the same as he snatched the phone out of his father's hands and pressed it to his ear in despair, not caring that it was still on speaker.

"Sir..." he gasped and his voice broke on a quiet sob that left his mouth.

"Kurt, lovely, don't cry. Why are you crying?" he asked and every single person in the room could tell just how tortured he was, how desperate to hold and comfort his sub.

"Why don't you w-want me anymore?" he struggled to get out and the room got breathless with the sound of Blaine's outraged cry.

"Who told you that? Lovely... I'm the floor below you, waiting to be bonded to you forever. Kurt... I will always want you," he said fiercely and the pain in his voice was so clear. The struggle so loud and resonating it made Kurt sniffle and cower inside his hoodie, desperate to feel his Dom close.

"You're not here. You're not with me and I can't... I don't like it... I..." he broke off as he continued to cry into the phone, trying futilely to express himself but he was so far under that it was almost impossible. Blaine took a deep breath on the other side, making it obvious how hard it was for him to stay on the phone when he sub was so distressed, right within reach but impossible to get to if he wanted to do this right.

"Shit, Kurt, you're killing me, lovely. Just... it's just for another few minutes, baby. Then we can be together all the time. Forever," he said, almost begging him and Kurt thumbed the tears from his cheeks but more fell to take their place.

"How?" he whispered, gnawing at his thumbnail in anxiousness. How was he supposed to do this when all he could think about was Blaine? Everything else was very far away.

"You need to get dressed and meet me on that stage. We get to bond, baby. That's what we wanted right? And then we never have to be apart again," the Dom promised, a hint of a command lurking under it all and Kurt's eyes cleared a little from the submissive haze they were mired in response.

Burt was damn proud of Blaine, for him to be pushing through everything, all that rage and the control issues and stepping up for his sub. He was proving every single thing he had said about him true already and it filled Burt with a quiet sense of warmth that his only child would forever be so looked after and loved.

"You... you still want to, sir?" he asked around the digit in his mouth, small and timid and it broke Burt's heart to see him like this but as he looked at Jared the man mouthed how normal it was for them to behave that way so close to their bonding.

"I will always want you my lovely boy. Now, Kurt?" he said gently, but there was an obvious hint of dominance lacing his words and twining around Kurt's tightly wound body, relaxing it effortlessly.

"Sir?" he answered, almost a relieved sigh.
"Go get dressed and meet me downstairs. You have half an hour," he ordered and Kurt's mind came back from his haze, body jolting and alive and ready to please.

"Okay, sir," he said gently and Blaine hummed happily on the other side.

"Good boy. I love you baby. See you soon."

"It is time," a soft voice spoke from the stage and the command in it was so crystal clear, so compelling, so effortlessly there that the entire crowd just turned towards her and fell silent. The lights dimmed around them on her cue, leaving only a beautifully iridescent circle that lit up the edges of the petals on stage where she stood, dressed in the usual Validator garb; a smart pantsuit with the Validator logo emblazoned on the breast pocket.

Dana, Jared, Burt and Carole stood closest to the stage, their hearts beating almost in sync as they waited for their children to take one of the most important steps in a person's life together. Dana and Jared knew how it felt. They knew what it meant to stand next to each other, in front of the Validator and swear their love for each other, promise the eternal belonging that they felt from the moment they laid eyes on each other. They knew how entirely calming and overwhelming the experience was. Knowing that the person you wanted was now completely yours and if you gave it your all they would be yours forever.

Jared took Dana's hand and gave it a light squeeze, feeling his Dom grip back immediately and loving the way the gentle interaction soothed and reassured him of the fact that she was right there next to him. It was exactly like this on their Presenting day. He didn't think she let go of his hand once.

Burt wrapped his arm around Carole's shoulders, leaning into her and relishing the comfort her presence brought. They weren't each other's first choices as life rudely reminded them both how unfair and unpredictable it could be by taking away their loved ones. But they were each other's support and balance and strength now after all the ugly things, and the thought of Kurt having that same someone made his heart burst with joy.

If only his mom was there to see him now, he thought as the Validator on stage spoke once again.

"The Presenting Ceremony is the most important step in the life of both the Dominant and the submissive person. All the steps they take since the moment the claim is laid lead to this. Their bonding. Their promises to each other in front of the most important people in their lives. Promises to love, respect, obey and protect each other for as long as they shall live. Promises to follow what comes to them instinctively; fundamentally making each other happy."

There was a murmur of agreement throughout the room, every bonded couple and hopeful single Dom or sub listening to her words with rapt attention.

"So without further ado… allow me to call Dom Blaine Anderson to the stage," she said and the crowd watched in awe as Blaine stepped out into the gentle circle of light in front of her, body tense and tightly wound but his eyes were blazing; radiating with desire, want and most of all love.

He was dressed in a light grey suit, the jacket snug and accentuating his slim waist, with black trimmed pockets and lapels made out of an interesting, slinky, watery looking black material going down his torso and creating a deep vee that revealed a crisp white shirt and black tie. His legs were
hugged by the soft grey suit pants and his feet clad in the latest Italian leather oxford shoes, giving him that old school, old charm sort of look that suited him best. His hair was styled with gel but not glued to his head, as per Kurt's request, so it kept a little bit of curl and the look of power and strength he gave off was enough to make the silent room seem even quieter as he took his spot in front of the Validator.

"Dom Anderson." She turned to him and Blaine faced her, a look of quiet determination set firmly on his face.

This felt so surreal but he was going to be strong and he was going to endure and be a support system for Kurt. He was going to behave and control the urge to just scoop him up and hide them away from everyone like his body was screaming at him to do. He was going to do things right.

"Yes," he answered, proud of how levelled his voice came out.

"You are here to make your bond to submissive Kurt Hummel official?" she asked and he nodded his head, pride evident even with only a part of his face visible to the audience.

"Yes," he repeated the same answer.

"Call him to you," she instructed and his body shivered visibly at the thought of having that delicious warmth, that calming presence next to him again after almost a full day away.

"Kurt, come," he commanded, shoulders square, an audible dominance lacing his words and wrapping around everyone who heard it, making the subs squirm and the Doms acknowledge the presence of a force stronger than their own.

The silence that accompanied his command settled heavy and demanding over the hall making the approaching steps echo hollowly as Kurt stepped out into the light, head bowed and hands clasped before him demurely.
Blaine stared at his beauty, mesmerized by how entirely natural it all seemed, how unforced and untrained his posture was. Completely submissive… and of his own will. Instinctively he knew how to position his body to appeal to his Dom and Blaine felt the earlier desperation to take him in his arms return full force as he clenched his fists against his thighs.

Even more so because Kurt looked stunning.

He always looked stunning, but the subdued look he sported tonight made him seem ethereal. A submissive god come down to walk among lesser beings and he could hear the rumble of approval. The ripple that spoke of just how affected people were by just his mere presence and it both satisfied and burned in him at once.

Kurt's suit looked like a plain, black suit at first but in true Kurt Hummel fashion it had an interesting twist. His jacket was splashed with patches of that slinky, black material that tied his look perfectly with Blaine's without them matching at all. He wore a simple white shirt and a black skinny tie and his long legs were made to look even longer by a single shiny stripe of that same watery material down his sides. He finished it all off with silver oxford shoes, finding another detail to make him and Blaine truly look like a unit.

Blaine couldn't believe his eyes. He hadn't seen Kurt in his outfit and the sight of it made his knees weak. He looked like an angel. A gorgeously submissive, sinfully beautiful angel made just for Blaine and the thought made him delirious.

The Validator's words barely reached him as he stared at Kurt wishing for those impossible eyes to look at him, to ground him, to anchor him to reality because right now he felt like he would drift away.

"Look at me," he whispered and the ground beneath his feet shifted when the weight of never-ending blue swept up towards him.

"Sir..." Kurt exhaled when he saw the look Blaine was giving him. His entire skin flamed and he felt himself shaking as Blaine closed the remaining distance and took his hands in his, thumbs running circles over his knuckles. Even that small touch had him smothering a cry; moan or sob he didn't even know at this point. He was wound so tight, all in knots and he needed Blaine to ease him while at the same time he could feel the deepest desire to do the same for Blaine. It was an
exhausting state of being, trapped between here and there and ordered not to move.

"My lovely boy," he heard his Dom say and he squeezed his hands tighter as his body screamed for him to meld itself to Blaine's. He whimpered and shook his head slightly. No. No. No. We have to bond. I want to bond. Blaine wants to bond.

He repeated the mantra in his head, hoping to find some stable ground. The Validator turned to them after addressing the audience and he wasn't ready but he knew it was time to be strong and to follow the rules Blaine had explained to him.

"Dom Anderson and sub Hummel. You are now going to validate and confirm your bond with each other. As is customary you can say your vows before we move to the formal section of the Presenting. Dom Anderson?" she gave him first word and he lifted his hand up to cup Kurt's cheek, watching in fascination as Kurt turned immediately into the contact like he was desperate for it.

He took a deep breath and blew it out through his nose as he composed what he wanted to say in his head, pushing and fighting for room against the pheromone drunk part of it.

"Kurt, my lovely boy, the first time I saw you was right in this room." He wanted to glance at that spot where he stood when his life found purpose but he couldn't tear his eyes away from the beauty in front of him who had refocused at the sound of his voice and was staring at him with big blue eyes full of rapt attention.

"Of all the shiny, sparkly, flashy people trying to get my attention you… you were the only one who did. And you didn't even try. You just had to be and I fell for your beauty first and when you gave me the chance, for the unbelievable person you are." He skated his thumb over the sharp, lovely arch of his cheekbone before continuing, "I know our start was rocky but I can promise you the only thing you'll ever have to do is be, and I will love you… fiercely, irrevocably, eternally. You will always be the best part of what I am," he finished heartfelt and passionately and Kurt felt his hand shake in his own, palm clammy against his skin and he knew he was just as desperate for the completion of this ceremony so their blood could cool down.

"Sub Hummel?" the Validator gave him the word and Kurt looked back to Blaine, blush high on his cheeks and insides squirming with the need to give in and just be Blaine's completely. Finally. It was like he had been working up to this moment all his life. Every time he sat with his mother and she would read him fairytales of faraway, happily ever after bonds. Every time he looked around McKinley and felt a little more hopeless each day. Every time he comforted Jeff after the hell he went through… it was all leading to Blaine finding him and tipping everything he thought he knew, believed, hoped for on its head. And in its place was this. This man, this life, this happiness, this love. He was truly blessed and he didn't think he could rightly do justice to the way he felt in words but words were all he was allowed here so he would have to try.

"Sir, the first time I stood in this room I was so frightened. Of who you were, of what you wanted from me, of how I felt for you," he whispered, but he knew his Dom could hear and that was all that mattered as he cupped his hand over the back of Blaine's where it still rested on his cheek. "I… I guess I never really told you this, but, even through the fear and uncertainty… I knew I was meant to be yours. I'm so grateful you took a chance on me. So grateful you never listened to the people who told you I wasn't good enough, because, sir… I promise I am. I will do whatever I can to make you happy and I'll love you forever. You'll always be the best part of what I am," he finished softly, glancing through his lashes and smiling, suddenly feeling so shy underneath all the burning desire for Blaine.

There was a pull from deep inside his stomach and he took an involuntary step forward and swayed on his feet, Blaine's hand settling on his waist to hold him close and steady.
"Sorry…" he muttered blushing, but his vision was still swimming, trying to suck him down into that headspace from earlier and Blaine shook his head, trying to brush it off but the closeness was getting to him too. More and more, the longer he stood next to his beautiful sub and he was sweating with the force it took to keep himself standing there and follow this through to the end.

"Don't worry, lovely. I'm here for you." he reassured him and Kurt nodded, swallowing against the burn in his chest and taking a deep, grounding breath. It helped and didn't at the same time. The air was heavy with the weight of the scent Blaine was putting off in waves and it both soothed and inflamed him at the same time.

"It is time to start the formal part. Are you two calm enough for it?" she asked knowing how out of it partners could get at this point and the worried look she was giving them didn't exactly speak of how well they were doing at this point. Kurt's fall into his Dom spoke more than words, but they were determined. They could do this.

"I am. Lovely?" Blaine asked, fighting for every scrap of control he could get his shaky fingers to and Kurt braced himself with a palm splayed over his heart, seeming to take strength and comfort from that.

"Please sir," he whispered desperately and Blaine nodded to the Validator.

"You can commence then," she instructed after assessing them for a second and Blaine turned back to Kurt pupils flaring and every cell in his body going wild.

"Kneel," he commanded and it felt like Kurt was a puppet whose strings were cut suddenly. He just collapsed to his knees, head bowed and body relaxing minutely, knowing he didn't have to be strong anymore.

Blaine felt like roaring out loud his approval.

The moment his knees touched the ground Kurt felt liberated. He didn't have to fight anymore, he didn't have to push himself. He was Blaine's. He could just be. Just like his Dom said. He could be, and Blaine would take care of him.

"Good boy," Blaine praised him and he felt as well as heard the gasp of their audience as his body shivered visibly at the praise. He was so responsive and Blaine couldn't get enough so he stepped closer and carded his fingers through the hair above his ear.

"Dom Anderson, before you kneels your strength. Your balance, your sanity. Do you accept his offer?" Mellissa asked and he felt Kurt tense minutely under his fingertips.

"I do. Completely," he said and that lithe body relaxed as if he had doubts that he would be accepted. Silly boy.

"Before you kneels the one you're supposed to protect and cherish and love. Do you promise to do so?" she asked again and he nodded, eyes trained on that gorgeous bowed head he loved so much.

"I promise with all my heart," he whispered but his voice was so sure, hard like steel. So convinced and underlain with such dominant confidence that gasps could be heard around the room.

"Before you kneels the other half of who you are. Your completion. Do you recognize and worship that?" came next and he forced his voice to be the most dominant, the most powerful, the most honest he had ever had it because this… this was the promise he was giving with every last atom of his body.
To worship the best part of him. Kurt.

"I'll worship him for the rest of my life," he said reverently, the words etching on his soul, and hitched a breath when he saw a crystal glint of a tear drop to the ground. In that moment he had no idea if it was his or Kurt's but he knew they were both feeling the same. Complete.

"Sub Hummel. Before you stands your strength. Your balance, your sanity. Do you accept his offer?" she asked the same question and Kurt shivered with the power of it.

"I accept it," he said, quiet and shaky, but more sure than he ever was before.

"Before you stands the one you need to calm, soothe and love. Do you promise to do so?" she modified the second question for the sub and he nodded.

"I promise it with all my heart," he said, mind clearing a little with every line that was binding him to Blaine and felt his Dom's fingers slip from his hair to his cheek, thumb brushing his heated skin.

"Before you stands the other half of who you are. Your completion. Do you recognize and worship that?" she repeated and Kurt felt the dying urge to look up. He needed Blaine to see it. He needed to say it to him.

So he took a deep breath and turned his head up, time freezing when their eyes locked onto each other. The air electrified, tensed and sparked around them, the rest of the world fading to nothing as they fed off each other's energy.

"I'll worship you for the rest of my life," he said and somewhere behind them they could hear the Validator instructing them on what to do next but they both knew it without her.

Their bodies knew it. Their souls knew it.

Blaine's fingers slipped back into his hair, over his scalp and down to his neck as he leaned forward. Kurt tensed, not in fear but in anticipation. He wanted it. Oh how he had longed for it and he fought the urge to bow his head and arch upwards into the touch he knew was coming. It was the very tips of Blaine's fingers that lingered for only a moment before gliding down over that pale blue heart on the back of his neck, like lightning hitting a raw nerve as they brushed the sensitive skin, and their lips met in the most mind numbing of kisses. Drowning out the strangled whimper that Kurt couldn't have kept inside.

They could both feel the stares on them getting more and more bewitched by what they saw. The bonding of two of the strongest of their kind. The most powerful Dominant they had ever seen, bonding with his perfect counterpart. They could all feel them… but nothing touched them as they existed in their own space. Their cells rearranging themselves to fit the other one into their very core.

Blaine's fingers were still so light on his mark, barely there, but at the same time the strongest touch he had ever felt and Kurt trembled and clutched the lapels of his jacket to beg him to bend further into him as he kissed back and allowed his soul to twine with Blaine's. Their mouths met like they had never done before and Kurt's body shivered under the onslaught. The untamed dominance pouring off Blaine, that beautiful fire that raged and burned so brightly inside him, found its home within the confines of Kurt's chest, the cool stream of his submissiveness eating up the flames.

"Mine," Blaine rumbled, mind barely aware of the need to round up the bonding.

"Yours," Kurt breathed back unashamed and the tension in the air scattered and eased with the admission. A sense of calm flooded in all of a sudden, an abrupt lift from the fog that was blurring their vision and the quicksand that was tugging them under.
Kurt's eyes fluttered open in surprise to meet burnished gold and their mouths slowly pulled apart, wet and swollen.

"Dom Anderson, sub Hummel in the eyes of the law your bond is complete. May you live a long and happy life respecting and keeping the promises you have made in front of each other and your loved ones. Thank you," Mellissa finished bringing them back to reality and Blaine removed his fingers from his mark.

Kurt prevented himself from crying out at the loss and instead took the hand Blaine offered to him, pulling him to his feet and his arms. Kurt sighed at the full body contact finally, his head resting on his Dom's shoulder as they shared a single breath, a single heartbeat, two souls binding, forever.

It was like he could feel it. The fibres that made him up reaching for Blaine's and tangling in infinity knots across their bodies and he never wanted to not feel this way, so tangled up in Blaine. It made him wonder how he was ever able to function without this for so long. Something that felt so essential to his existence.

It was a long stretch of time before they moved.

The lights had come up and the Validator had stepped back to allow them some privacy in the middle of the petal circle to calm down and bask in each other as their bond settled. It was also respectful and customary for all other guests, excluding family, to remain where they were to give the newly bonded couple a few moments to calm down before they met them.

And Kurt and Blaine definitely needed that time.

"How are you feeling?" Dana asked when they came shakily off stage.

Kurt was still clinging like a limpet to Blaine and never wanted to let go. Was sure that if he even attempted it then his legs would give out anyway, because his mind might be clearer now but he was still very much too close to the submissive edge. The way Blaine was clutching at the material of his shirt under his suit jacket to keep him glued to his side suggested that he was in a similar mind-set.

"Like there's too many people in this room," Blaine eventually said, voice a little hoarse.

The Validator came down the steps after them and made sure to step around to face Blaine to show she wasn't a threat. "That was the strongest bond I've ever officiated in all my long years of doing this so it's going to take a little longer for your hormones to settle and you'll find that the calm probably won't last as long as is typical," she warned.

"How long?" Dana asked.

"You'll be able to get through the blessings on your bond and dinner no problem, but as for any longer you'll have to play it by ear," she addressed to Blaine even though it was Dana who asked. It was a simple technique to transfer the power and authority in the conversation to Blaine to settle him further by making him feel less threatened.

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Kurt whimpered and buried his face in Blaine's neck. It seemed like such a long time before they could be alone again and he hated the prospect. Blaine turned his face into him in response and began kissing at any skin he could reach to soothe him. Dana and Mellissa backed away discreetly to give them space.

Time melted into an indefinable haze, Kurt only aware of the heady pheromones Blaine was giving off and the hand that had raised to his neck, tracing a torturous pattern around the hypersensitive mark on the back of his neck. He shivered every time he came close to actually touching,
remembering the earthshattering feeling of fingertips brushing it so lightly during their bond.

"I want to see what this looks like," Blaine whispered to him, hot into his ear, skirting another slow heart shape around the edges. "I bet you look so good with my mark on you."

Kurt could only nod urgently, feeling the words deep in his chest and stomach.

"I can't wait to get you upstairs, lovely. You look so beautiful. I can't believe you're finally mine. All mine."

"Sir," Kurt sighed breathlessly, pushing in closer and nosing at the tendon in his neck.

Blaine kissed his temple softly and breathed him in as he steeled his resolve. "We've just got a little longer to go. A few more hours and then it'll be just me and you, lovely boy."

Kurt made a noise of discontent and Blaine hushed him.

"Can you be a good boy and do this for me?" he asked and Kurt felt a fierce desire to do anything Blaine asked of him, the request taking over his body and washing through him like cool water over his prickly skin.

"Yes, sir."

"You are perfect," Blaine hummed happily, the pride and satisfaction there bleeding that happiness into Kurt as well. It felt euphoric.

They detached somewhat until they were as they were before, with Blaine's arm at his waist under his jacket and Kurt tucked as much as he could into his side. They came forwards towards the crowds like this.

Burt smiled gently at his son as they walked over. "Okay, bud?"

He didn't trust his voice to speak just yet so simply nodded.

"That was quite a show you put on there, huh?" he joked and Blaine gave him a tight, sheepish smile while Kurt just blushed.

"I'm so happy for both of you," Carole gushed from his side.

"We're getting the line ready for when you are," Jared came over to say softly. He gave the newly bonded couple a gentle smile. "I'm proud of you two."

"Thanks, dad," Blaine murmured, squeezing Kurt's waist in reflex like he was making sure he wasn't a dream or something.

"We better go get a spot in line then," Burt said. "Be good you two."

They watched them go and were about to move to the appropriate spot to receive the line of blessings when they were interrupted by-

"Squirt!" Cooper's obnoxious voice rang in Blaine's ear as his arm snaked around his neck to hold him in a pseudo chokehold. Blaine let go of Kurt and the sub took a few steps away from the commotion even though he hated to be parted. "I never thought I'd see the day but, here we are! And I must say that you do not deserve him. He is far too good for you."

Blaine began a steady growl, not only from the challenge to his strength, joking or not, but also from
the way his brother was talking about his newly bonded submissive. The ceremony had certainly calmed the raging fire within his chest for the time being but Cooper was always able to get a rise out of him.

"Cooper, I swear to god-" Blaine gritted his teeth.

"But I missed you, and you missed me too. I know you did. Kurt took all your attention away and you never call me anymore," he whined, trying in vain to cuddle strangle him while Blaine tried to find a hold that could throw him off.

"I never called you in the first place jackass!" Blaine bit back.

Kurt simply watched the back and forth with wide eyes.

"Sir, please stop hanging on your brother on his Presenting day," a classic British voice said from behind the struggling Anderson's and Kurt craned his neck to see a beautiful submissive walking towards them. She smiled at him warmly. "Hi, I'm Alex."

Cooper's submissive and she was not what he was expecting.

Kurt had heard many a tale about the eldest Anderson; the antics he got up to, the way he drove Blaine crazy to this day, but hardly any about his submissive. And seeing her now, clean cut and elegant next to Cooper's apparent childish, brashness was a startling contrast.

"Kurt," he managed to remember to get out.

"You planned a lovely ceremony and Dana told me you designed your suits yourself?" she inquired and Kurt licked his lips nervously. It was obvious that this woman had style and taste so he really wanted her to like what he had put together.

He kept getting distracted by his Dom however. He felt so adrift without his skin touching his and he didn't like the feeling at all. "Y-yeah… um… she let me use her studio and helped me put them together in time," he eventually murmured.

"And here my only talent is being able to roll my tongue two ways," she joked, grabbing his attention momentarily, enough time to see her teasing smile and Kurt felt a little tension ease out of him and he smiled back.

"That's one more than me so bravo."

She laughed and they watched as Blaine managed to fight his way out of Cooper's clutches and shove him backwards. Kurt rushed to his side and snuck under his arm again, arms wrapping around his waist to make sure they weren't separated again.

"If you know what's good for you Coop you'll go to the very back of that line," Blaine gritted out, eyes flashing, but the fire in them banking at the touch of his sub.

"Aw don't be sore, baby bro. I was just playing. What else is a big brother supposed to do on a day like this?"

Blaine gave him an incredulous look but a tiny spark of humour was threading back through. It was hard to be serious or mad in the face of Cooper's sheer ridiculousness. "Literally anything else other than trying to choke me!"

"It was a hug," he said indignantly.
"Sir," Alex broke in softly, laying a hand on his forearm and Cooper sighed. More like huffed.

"Fine! You've ruined our reunion, squirt. I hope you're happy," Cooper whined petulantly and Blaine stuck his tongue out at him.

"It was too much to hope that old age would make you more tolerable," Blaine fired back, lips twitching at the corners.

"Old age!?" he spluttered. "I am in my prime you whelp!"

"Cooper Anderson. Are you annoying your younger brother again?" Dana's unimpressed voice came from behind him and Coop winced.

"Now look what you've done," he hissed at Blaine accusingly, the younger smirking triumphantly, before turning to his mom. "Of course not mother dearest. I was simply congratulating him."

"Don't even try it young man. Now get here and leave him be," she ordered and Cooper pouted but did as he was told. "Take your places, boys. This won't be that painful," she said to them with an encouraging smile before following her eldest.

"So that was Cooper," Kurt said.

"That was Cooper," Blaine agreed, voice exasperated. It was clear that he was glad to see his older brother though.

Kurt leaned into him and kissed at his jaw soothingly until he felt Blaine relax again.

"You ready, lovely?" Blaine asked softly.

"As I'll ever be, sir," Kurt replied and Blaine nodded before he steered them to the front of the stage. One nod from Blaine and the first of the guests were waved over.

Most of it was like a conveyor belt of the same praise in different voices and a different word order but the couple appreciated the sentiment coming from their nearest and dearest. Blessing their bond was an old school practice that was said to bring prosperity, happiness and harmony to the Dom and sub and though neither of them really believed in it because they made their own, it was still nice.

"Oh, Kurt, that was so beautiful!" Mae exclaimed as she approached, checking with Blaine as was custom before moving in to embrace him. Kurt squeezed her back just as tightly.

"It would have been nothing without you, Mae," Kurt whispered back to her and he was struck by just how true that was in both senses of the word. Yes, the ceremony and room wouldn't have looked nearly as lovely without Mae's practiced eye, but the more prominent realization was that if Mae had never hired him to help her set up The Showing then he would never have met Blaine.

He couldn't even comprehend it. It was so hard to remember his life pre-Blaine when he was so wrapped up in post-Blaine and all the wonderful things that came with it.

Mae waved him off as she stepped back. "Nonsense. I was just following my client's very exact specifications."

Kurt blushed a little. He was aware he had turned into a bit of a nightmare during this whole planning thing.

Mae noticed his embarrassed discomfort and laughed it off, easy and free as always. "Sweetheart,
you have a great eye. I was happy to follow orders for once."

She winked at him and Kurt laughed remembering all those late nights, early mornings and long days of creating horrendous display after horrendous display and how they had spent equal amounts of hours complaining and bitching about it.

Blaine finished talking to David's parents and turned to greet Mae properly with a big smile. "Mae, I'm so happy you could stick around for the ceremony. I know we had you up early this morning."

She smiled back at him warmly and Kurt couldn't have been happier as he was shown yet another display of Blaine fitting seamlessly into his life, Lima or otherwise. He sunk further into his Dom's side, stopping just short of laying his head on his shoulder and burying his face in his neck.

"I'm used to it," she smiled, waving him off. "It was very nice of you to hire me a room so I could get changed. I'm sorry my Dom couldn't make it but when business comes up we can't afford to turn it down," she explained and Blaine shook his head kindly.

"You don't have to apologize for that. We'll meet him another time I'm sure."

"We'd like that," Mae agreed happily. "And I have to say it, even though I'm sure a hundred and one people will tonight. But you two… you two are just perfect for one another. Watching you up on that stage was like watching the origins of why we have bonding's for Doms and subs, it was that powerful and I'm privileged to have witnessed it."

Kurt and Blaine were lost for words momentarily. It had felt like that to them but they were so caught up in one another that they didn't realize just what impact it had had on everyone else in the room.

Mae smiled like she knew exactly what they were collectively thinking. "Now, I'll stop holding up the line but you mister, better get your butt back in my shop pronto. We miss you," she said pointing sternly at Kurt and the tension broke as he grinned.

"Love to."

Mae nodded and gave a quick kiss to Kurt and Blaine's cheeks before she was gone and the next in line came forwards to congratulate them.

Finn and his Dom, April; a pretty amazon of a girl that was more than a match for Finn's height, with curly caramel coloured hair and dark eyes were next. She was one year older than them and had set her sights on Finn as soon as she saw him towering above all the other subs at McKinley, so gangly and awkward and unsure of how exactly he fit as a submissive. It took April to show him that he didn't have to try and be something that he wasn't. He didn't have to try and lead just because he looked like he should and take everything on his shoulders. That he didn't have to try and fill the Dominant spot his father had left in their family. He could let someone take care of him for once and guide him through.

The hulking sub came bounding over like an excited puppy. "Dude! You got bonded little bro!" he cheered and April smiled, dimples revealed in her cheeks as she came up behind him.

"Did I?" Kurt joked back with a fond roll of his eyes as he accepted Finn's bone crushing hug.

"Your vows were lovely, Kurt. And it's nice to finally meet you, Blaine. Welcome to the family officially," she winked.

Blaine smiled and squeezed Kurt's hip in his hand. "No getting rid of me while this one is around. Sorry."
Kurt flushed happily and bit his lip to keep from smiling stupidly.

"I'm not sure how these brother to Dom conversations are supposed to go but once I work it out I'll give you a call," Finn said seriously to Blaine and the Dom did well to keep from laughing as Kurt huffed in exasperation.

"They're already bonded, dummy," April laughed at her sub, clearly endeared by him still after all this time of listening to things like that fall out of his mouth. It was love.

Finn cleared his throat and rubbed the back of his neck. "Right. Well… on principal I'll still have to do it. Sorry, dude."

"I'll look out for that call," Blaine chuckled and Finn nodded, happy that all had been arranged to his satisfaction.

Kurt shook his head in amusement. "It's your guys turn next, I'll help plan it of course."

Blaine gave him a flat, incredulous look. "You want to plan theirs after nearly killing yourself over ours, lovely?"

"Killing myself is a little of an over exaggeration, sir," Kurt countered with a blush.

"Our Kurt is a perfectionist alright," April grinned. "But we would love his help if we ever save up enough money for our ceremony. Right, Finn?"

Finn smiled at his Dom, then back down at Kurt. "Yeah, man. You know I'm no good at all that stuff and this room looks pretty cool… you know, if there were less flowers."

Kurt shooed them away after that in case he flipped out over the fact that there was the perfect amount of flowers! He made sure there were, so there.

It carried on like that for a time; faces such as Captain Ericson and his family pleasantly coming out of the woodwork, making Kurt and Blaine think nostalgically of their time spent away on that magical boat trip. He declared that there was no doubt in his mind that he'd see them right here the first time he met them and they were all smiles for each other.

Eventually they got through everyone and they were seated for dinner. Kurt, Blaine, their parents, family and Nick and Jeff seated on the table in the middle of everyone else's and the rest seated in groups that knew each other.

Blaine pulled his seat so that there was no space between them, an arm thrown over the back and curled around his sub's shoulders. In return Kurt sunk down a little and turned sideways so he could throw his legs across Blaine's to be as close as possible, damn table decorum.

A couple of bottles of chilled champagne were set in buckets of ice on each table and Kurt made grabby hands for his favourite beverage as soon as he saw the gold bubbles starting to be poured. His dad caught his eye, a clear one glass written there as Blaine poured some out for both of them into simple flutes with delicate, spiralled stems.

"To you, lovely," Blaine toasted in an intimate whisper right into his ear and Kurt shivered pleasantly, turning into the contact and brushing their noses together.

They locked eyes and Kurt whispered back. "To us, sir."

Blaine's smile spread slowly across his face like a horizon. "So smart."
They sipped to seal the toast and then Kurt chased the taste on Blaine mouth after, feeling drunk and lightheaded already from how happy he was.

"Get a load of the love birds PDA'ing it up at the table," Cooper catcalled across the table and got a smack upside the head from Jared.

It knocked Kurt and Blaine out of their bubble as was intended and they found themselves facing the table with red faces. Because they were at a table with other people. Like civilized humans. That was a thing that was happening right now.

"Don't mind his manners everyone. I dropped him one too many times when he was little," Dana joked and got a scowl from Cooper and a laugh from everyone else.

"I am an impeccable human being. I have no idea what you're inferring mother," he said, swirling the champagne in his glass lazily.

"Impeccably stupid," Nick snickered and Jeff smothered a giggle in his napkin.

"I always feel so sorry for you, Alex," Blaine consoled the beautiful blonde woman and she gave him a cheeky quirk of her mouth.

"Oh he's not all bad," she demurred, giving her Dom a wink and he puffed up under her attention, leaning in to smack a kiss on her full lips.

"We will give birth to a superior species," he declared when he pulled away.

"Second to ours," Blaine countered.

"You wish, squirt. Kurt's pretty as all hell, yeah. But you?"

"I don't know. The curls are cute," April pitched in.

"Those eyebrows though, man," Finn said.

"I like his eyebrows," Kurt defended fiercely, laying a few kisses over the left lovingly. Blaine purred happily under the attention.

"Hey, don't count me and my angel out!" Nick piped up.

"Why are they talking about this like its actually possible?" Burt questioned incredulously and Carole chuckled.

"Kids."

"So competitive," Jared sighed, rolling his eyes but sharing a knowing smile with the rest of the parents.

And the chatter carried on like that for a while, the families getting to know each other and laughing like they were old friends already. The only lull came when Nick and Jeff excused themselves to the bathroom.

"Sir?" Kurt frowned glancing around the room where scattered tables were now filled with their friends and family as they enjoyed the array of starters the waiters were beginning to bring out.

Well, they were filled with their friends five minutes ago, at least, he thought they were? He had been kind of wrapped up in all things Blaine but he could have sworn everyone had been seated not
too long ago. Now however, it seemed like half the people were gone and Kurt worried his bottom lip as he tried to figure out if their party was boring the guests and if there was something he could do to fix it.

But they were just starting the dinner and there was no way people were bored with eating when they had hardly even started yet!

"Yes, lovely?" Blaine asked, lifting the arm that was still wound around his shoulders, bending it at the elbow so he could reach his mark. It was like now that he was allowed it was suddenly his favourite thing to do, drawn to it like he was completely done with resisting the impulse. Kurt was not going to complain about that when it felt so damn good.

"Um… is there something wrong with our party?" he asked and Blaine bugged his eyes out, not understanding what his sub was talking about. He did an amazing job organizing the whole thing and people were clearly enjoying every bit of it.

"No, baby. The party is amazing. Why would you think there was something wrong?" Blaine asked and Kurt looked at the empty chairs, eyebrows arched pointedly.

"The number of chairs matches the number of guests. So if they are empty that would mean our guests are running for the hills. What other explanation could there be?" he said sadly and Blaine looked around to find that he was right. There was a number of vacated seats scattered through the room and he was trying to figure out who left and why.

His eyes snagged on Nick and Jeff's next to them and dismissed it because they'd excused themselves to the bathroom… ten minutes ago. Frowning he glanced around again and noticed an emerging pattern.

Those pesky…

He was just about to make the connection and speak it out loud when a familiar voice sounded from the stage.

"Ladies and gentlemen if you could please look away from your plates that would be appreciated," David laughed, voice loud and clear over the din suggesting he had a mic on him somewhere. Both Blaine and Kurt glanced towards each other trying to figure out if the other one knew what was happening. The matching confused expressions had them turning towards the stage in trepidation.

David was dressed in tight black jeans, a black and white striped shirt and a black leather jacket. Gone was his posh, charcoal suit and the newly bonded couple was even more confused by that fact.

"Now we all know that giving gifts to the bonding couple isn't customary… unless you're Sebastian Smythe apparently. But the Warblers have always been like family and well… when we talked about what we would like to give to our two brothers… a song seemed like the best choice. So Kurt, Blaine this is for you. We hope you like it," he smiled and while his words were gentle and kind, that god-awful smirk of his made Kurt's stomach turn at what he was about to hear.

The lights dimmed and the bass line started up a strangely familiar tune but Kurt had no idea where to place it. He glanced at his Dom and found him equally confused as he shrugged his shoulders and bobbed his head in time with the drum line.

The spotlight came up gradually and revealed a pair of people that could not have looked more pissed off and uncomfortable than they did in that very moment.

Wes and Sebastian stood on stage, dressed in complete ski equipment; their fluffy ski suits making
them look like marshmallows. The goggles and thick knitted beanies hid parts of their scowls but everyone in the room knew there would be hell to pay for making them do this.

And it got even better when the intro melody faded into their cue to start singing.

*Oh, I just wanna take you anywhere that you'd like*
*We could go out any day, any night*
*Baby I'll take you there, take you there*
*Baby I'll take you there, yeah*

They alternated between the verses and the crowd suddenly jumped up, recognizing the song and roaring with laughter as the two uptight divas delivered ridiculous lyrics dressed in even more ridiculous outfits.

"Oh my god, Blaine," Kurt breathed out, catching the eye of his usually fashionable friend and realizing Sebastian would never forgive the person who came up with the idea for their present. The thought of it made him grin like a maniac and clap his hands as more and more Warblers came up to the stage to join in singing backup.

"I know, this is gold. I hope someone's recording this. Oh… Corrine is," he chuckled gleefully when he spotted the blonde sub holding her phone up and recording the performance just as Thad took over the next line, alternating it with David.

*Oh, tell me, tell me, tell me, how to turn your love on*
*You can get, get anything that you want*
*Baby just shout it out, shout it out*
*Baby just shout it out, yeah*

They included some really bad dance moves and had every single person (who wasn’t stuck up) in the room rolling on the floor with laughter as they watched them shake their asses and pull the most ridiculous presenting dance moves they could possibly come up with.

But the biggest surprise of all came when a hulking figure stepped up on stage, wearing the most colourful Hawaiian shorts on the planet, flip flops and sunglasses, taking a dramatic pose at the edge of stage and inhaling deeply.

An inhuman wail left Ryan’s throat and the audience froze in between shock, horror and amusement as he delivered the next lines in a terribly off key falsetto that had the glasses vibrating and ear drums threatening to shatter.

*And if you,*
*You want me too*
*Let's make a move*

The rest of the boys swamped to the stage taking the chorus but the echoes of Ryan singing just wouldn’t fade.

"What the hell was that?" Kurt asked, eyes wide and terrified as their friends boogied on stage.

"An Uruk-Hai on his death bed," Blaine answered equally horrified. He was pretty sure.

"I don't know what that means," Kurt said and Blaine fixed him with a look that clearly read, *this will be discussed later.*

*Yeah, so tell me boy if every time we*
To-o-uch
You get this kind of ru-u-ush
Baby, say yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah
If you don't wanna take it slow
And you just wanna take me home
Baby, say yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah

Wes stepped out to sing the single line, and it was no coincidence that he was staring straight at a certain fiery orange head either.

And let me kiss you

It seemed like it was Jeff and Nick's turn next and Kurt held his breath as the blonde opened his mouth to go first. And of course, like always, Jeff managed to surprise him with his sheer strength. The blonde bopped about just like every other sub on that stage, staring at Nick instead of the crowd, but it was a minor detail as he had fun and sang it out, looking like he was playing a dance-y version of tag with his Dom as they weaved around the other Warblers.

Oh, baby, baby, don't you know you got what I need
Looking so good from your head to your feet
Come on come over here, over here
Come on come over here, yeah

Nick took the next verse and he was clearly very into the lyrics as he chased his sub around and definitely showed him off to the room by twirling him and snaking arms around his waist to pull him close as Jeff laughed freely and uninhibited.

Oh, I just wanna show you off to all of my friends
Making them drool down their chinny-chin-chins
Baby, be mine tonight, mine tonight
Baby, be mine tonight, yeah

Ryan took the high notes again but it was tempered a little when Thad joined in to take some of the edge off. The tiny sprite had thrown away the hat, goggles and jacket and jumped up onto the jocks back.

And if you,
You want me too
Let's make a move

Wes again and he motioned for the room to come forwards towards the stage. The people were out of their seats like their bums were on fire and rushing towards the dancing Warblers, Kurt and Blaine at the head of the pack.

Yeah, so tell me girl if every time we

To-o-uch
You get this kind of ru-u-ush
Baby, say yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah
If you don't wanna take it slow (c'mon)
And you just wanna take me home
Baby, say yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah

And let me kiss you
The crowd, mainly made up of the younger guests, started jumping around to the beat and Blaine wrapped his arms around Kurt's waist and pulled him into his chest snugly as they stared up at their friends who were now singing directly to them with big, goofy smiles on their collective faces. Dave was on their left failing to suppress a smirk at Sebastian's expense and Corrine was on their right, her pink phone still clutched tightly in her hand and pointed at all of them, though mainly more at David's ass than anything else. Miriam was next to her covering her face with her hands as Wes grinded in front of her and Kurt couldn't stop giggling.

C'mon
Na na na na na na na na
Na na na na na na na na
Na na na na na na na na

Yeah, so tell me, girl, if every time we

To-o-uch
You get this kind of ru-u-ush
Baby, say yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah
If you don't wanna take it slow
And you just wanna take me home
Baby, say yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah

Every time we to-o-uch
You get this kind of ru-u-ush
Baby, say yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah
If you don't wanna take it slow
And you just wanna take me home
Baby, say yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah

And let me kiss you

The place erupted in cheers and applause at the end of the song and the guys on stage took a theatrical bow to acknowledge it before rushing back off stage.

"You guys are insane," Kurt exclaimed as their sweaty bodies came ambling over to them, still hyped up on performance endorphins. Wes headed straight for Miriam who Kurt only just noticed was dressed in none other than the dress he designed and looking just as stunning as the first time she wore it.

Talk about tunnel vision.

Corrine practically jumped all over David and Sebastian was pouting and scowling so hard Dave led him off to get changed into his suit again immediately.

"You loved it!" Thad grinned at him and Kurt couldn't keep the smile from his face so nodded enthusiastically.

"I'm a bit put out that I wasn't invited to join in but impressed at your ability to keep a secret for so long," Blaine chuckled.

"Well we didn't tell Nick or Jon until like, yesterday. To cover that angle of course," Wes explained and they all laughed as Jon pouted and Nick looked aghast.

"I can too keep a secret!" Nick looked affronted.
"Nick you couldn't even keep quiet about knowing we were throwing you a surprise birthday party. You literally ruined your own celebration," David laughed.

Kurt rolled his eyes and met the smiling brown ones of his best friend. "C'mere you scheming blondie," he urged, opening his arms wide and Blaine let him go reluctantly so that he could embrace his best friend.

"Thank you guys," Kurt murmured to all of them over Jeff's shoulder. "That was amazing. Really."

"It was Thad's idea," Riker supplied and Kurt turned to the small math nerd in gratitude.

"I loved it. And I'm guessing Ryan singing was another brilliant idea of yours?" Kurt arched an eyebrow at Thad who snuggled into his giant's arms and giggled.

"Actually... that was all him," he said proudly and Ryan nodded.

"I wanted to be a part of the gift for you guys and well... I like singing," Ryan said happily and while every single Warbler looked torn between amusement and annoyance Thad wrapped himself tighter around his Dom and smiled at him lovingly.

"And we love having you sing with us," he said gently making every one of them huff as they clapped both Kurt and Blaine on the shoulder and scattered to change before the next course came out, most of them hadn't even tasted the first.

Back at the table Blaine coaxed Kurt into his previous position, maybe urging him a little further into his lap even, and Kurt purred his approval. Completely happy to stay soaked up in Blaine and ignore the food he'd so painstakingly picked out with his Dom one evening.

Back at the table Blaine coaxed Kurt into his previous position, maybe urging him a little further into his lap even, and Kurt purred his approval. Completely happy to stay soaked up in Blaine and ignore the food he'd so painstakingly picked out with his Dom one evening.

The curly haired Dom started pushing kisses to his jaw and Kurt arched into the caresses, tightening the hold of his arms around his neck.

"I don't wanna interrupt kids, but you should eat something. As far as I'm aware you haven't eaten since yesterday," Burt piped up.

"And Blaine wasn't really eating so much as… playing," Jared put in slyly which set Nick off immediately on another fit of giggles gasping, "Spoons," in between chuckles, that made Blaine growl, but not lose it like he had before. What a difference bonding to the love of your life made.

"You'll probably want to keep your strength up too, what with the busy night you've got ahead of you," Cooper tacked on, not bothering to hide the heavily laced innuendo there.

It was clear Blaine wasn't interested in their opinion from the way he carried on kissing every inch of skin he could get his hands on and blanking them. Kurt was much in the same boat until Dana said, "I bet Blaine's starving, Kurt."

It struck a nerve with the submissive in him and a deep blooming desire to look after his Dom surfaced strongly, making him look towards the food on the table. Platters of all sorts of food were served as starters; from soup to shrimp and Kurt picked up one of the latter to bring to Blaine's mouth.

The Dom paused his tender ministrations and looked at it for a moment, before flicking his eyes up to lock with Kurt's. His pupils were still blown and Kurt imagined his probably were too but the Dominant seemed to like the idea of taking food out of Kurt's hand as much as Kurt did so he leaned forwards and bit.
Kurt made a distinctively happy sound and started the process of feeding Blaine bite after bite, taking some for himself when Blaine ordered him to do so. It was intimate and satisfying to feed Blaine by his hand and the only thing that would have made it better would have been him actually preparing the food himself.

Maybe next time.

By the time dessert had rolled around both Kurt and Blaine were suitably stuffed and still very much glued together, giggling and whispering sweet nothings into each other's ears. Everyone around them observed their infatuated devotion with huge smiles, happy that this couple that were so right for each other, so obviously in love, were happy themselves.

When the last of the plates were cleared away Kurt and Blaine got up to socialize and headed over to Sebastian in particular to thank him for the gift he had brought them. The sub simply waved it off with his usual sarcastic deadpan.

"I must say that you've done a reasonable job, Hummel," Sebastian said. He had changed back to his suit, hair impeccable as he looked around the room with a critical eye. It was high praise indeed coming from this particular individual and Kurt preened like a peacock.

"I know," he said smugly.

Blaine shook his head at his ridiculous sub and laid a kiss to his temple because he just couldn't help it. The driving need to be close had never gone away exactly, but it was manageable after they bonded. The calmness from earlier was fizzling away as the night wore on though and Blaine could feel it rising up in him again, digging its claws in. He was sweating through his shirt with the effort it took to control and rein in his impulses and he'd discarded his suit jacket a while ago, top button already undone.

"There is the matter of the vermin however," Sebastian continued.

Kurt gaped. "Vermin?!"

Sebastian nodded to the corner and Kurt followed his gaze until he lighted on the table they had set up especially so Cupid Marshmallow III and his boyfriend Poncho could join in the ceremony. They had a member of staff checking up on them regularly and they'd be taken away soon now that everyone was up and moving around. But they had placed a bright bow the same colour as the chair covers on the top of the cage and they looked adorable okay.

"How dare you insult my children?!" Kurt gasped and Seb raised a brow dryly.

"One of them is Jeff and Nick's," Blaine reminded his sub. "But I agree with your overall point."

"When they get bonded he'll be our son-in-law," Kurt told him matter-of-factly before turning back to Sebastian. "And I would rather have them here than some certain other people I don't even know the names of," Kurt stated superiorly, nose in the air.

Sebastian smirked and looked to the table that sat all the highbrow Doms and subs that had been too good to get involved when they had been performing earlier and generally stuck up the whole evening. They were the obligatory invites that were business partners and important persons that they needed to get on side if they wanted Burt's campaign to go well. They had a lot of pull in the community and so snubbing them would have been career suicide.

"I could understand that," Sebastian conceded.
"We should probably get them taken to one of the rooms though," Kurt worried, looking to Blaine. "Someone might knock into them now that we have the open bar."

Blaine nodded. "I'll go ask someone to take care of it, lovely."

"Thank you, sir," Kurt beamed and tilted his lips for a kiss that Blaine easily gifted to him.

"Ugh, you guys are too much," Sebastian faked gagged and they could hear his footsteps leading off. Kurt pulled back and looked after him, only to snag his eyes on a table.

"Jeff's all alone," he frowned.

Blaine squeezed his waist in both hands. "Go check on him and I'll meet you there."

"Hurry back," he felt compelled to say.

"As if I could stay away," Blaine murmured, giving him on last kiss before walking off to find an employee. Kurt watched him go a little dreamily before shaking some sense into himself and heading the opposite way after his apology to Sebastian ended up drifting in the air when Dave showed up and proceeded to kiss the living daylights out of his sub.

"Where's that goofball Dom of yours?" Kurt asked with a smile sitting down at their table next to Jeff. The blonde was sipping the light punch they had served for those not too keen on alcohol or were underage.

"He went to the bathroom. Needed to change his pants into his suit ones again because he ate so much he couldn't button the ones he had on," Jeff chuckled and Kurt joined in on the laugh, his insides warm with how happy Jeff had seemed.

"Well… the food was magnificent."

"It looked like you were enjoying it," Jeff quipped, a sparkle of mischief in his eyes and Kurt flushed a little. He couldn't help it, it seemed like his blinders were on to everything but Blaine and it was only getting worse as the night wore on.

"Are you having fun?" he asked instead of retorting, changing the subject swiftly and Jeff nodded enthusiastically.

"Everything is amazing, Kurt. You did a great job," he said and Kurt preened in pride. He did love how everything came together in the end.

"Thank you," Kurt said gracefully but it really wasn't what he wanted to talk about. His friend had a different glow about him than usual he'd noticed despite his single-mindedness and he wanted to know what caused it.

"You looked great up on the stage. Very happy. Relaxed," he said gently and Jeff smiled that beautifully shy smile of his that had everyone around him melting with how unconsciously gorgeous he looked when he was happy.

"It's… it's because I am…" he said and Kurt leaned closer, propping an elbow on the table, eager to hear what it was that made his best friend feel so good.

"Spill, blondie."

"I… I got my Gift," he leant forwards and whispered and Kurt almost jumped out of his seat and into
his arms hugging him for all he was worth. Jeff blushed when it attracted looks from other people. He still wasn't okay with being the centre of attention.

"Oh my god. Oh my god, Jeff, why didn't you tell me sooner? When did it happen? What did you ask for?" he fired off his questions left and right and Jeff felt his cheeks heat up more and more with every word.

"Just before we came here. And I… I didn't ask for anything in particular because I didn't really know what to ask for. So I just… I told him I wanted to move forward and get my Gift and if he could help me find something. He said he had an idea," Jeff explained and Kurt nodded eagerly.

"And? What is it?" Kurt asked and Jeff smiled softly, fingers circling the rim of his glass with nervous, excited energy.

"You know those apartments up on the hills? The new ones?" he asked.

"He got you an apartment?!" he squealed and a few more heads turned their way.

"He got us an apartment there but it's not my Gift," he answered lowly, trying to provoke his best friend to lower the decibels but it wasn't working. Kurt looked to be almost exploding with anticipation.

"Jeff, please I'm dying here," he whined and Jeff smacked his shoulder lightly.

"I'm trying to you big baby but you keep interrupting me," Jeff laughed and Kurt pouted.

"Sorry. Go on," he said, mime zipping his lips and staring at him with huge blue eyes.

"Okay so… the apartment he got us is on the top floor and there is this attic room with a huge round window and it's beautiful, Kurt… so beautiful… and Nick… Nick said it could be my art studio. He said he would get me the shelves and easels and paint and that I could decorate it however I want and that if I wanted it, it could be my Gift," he said, voice quivering and getting more and more excited and awed as he talked about his Dom.

Kurt stared at him and his respect for his own Dom's best friend grew with every word. He knew Nick was perfect for Jeff, he knew he was good to him. Attentive and loving. And that he had healed him more than they ever thought would be possible for someone as hurt and wounded as Jeff. But Nick proved to be everything a sub could wish for and his actions towards Jeff were mending the cracks in his skin and Kurt loved him for it.

"Did you say yes?" he asked teasingly and Jeff rolled his eyes at him.

"What do you think?" he deadpanned and Kurt launched forward again hugging him tightly.

"Jeff, I am so happy for you. And that Gift is perfect for you," Kurt said happily and Jeff smiled widely.

"I know. God, Kurt… I…" he tried but he got choked up and his friend squeezed his hand gently.

"Take your time, sweetie," he encouraged softly and Jeff nodded, taking a deep breath.

"I… Kurt, I get to stay with him. He… he wants me to stay," he breathed out and Kurt's eyes softened knowing what it meant to have Jeff finally realize that fact for himself. Knew what it had meant for him when he had finally, truly believed Blaine could want him forever.
"Oh sweetie he wanted you to stay since the moment he saw you," he said gently and Jeff nodded.

"And I think I finally know that too," he whispered and Kurt beamed, feeling like crying.

"Good. Because you deserve to be happy and I can tell just how happy he makes you," he said and Jeff smiled back bashfully.

"He does."

"Good. But the most important thing here is… can I help you decorate the studio?" he winked and Jeff laughed, full bellied and free.

"Something funny, angel?" Nick took his seat next to Jeff and quirked a loving smile to his chuckling sub, looking so pleased to see him so happy and relaxed.

"Just Kurt, sir. He's being silly," Jeff said through the last of his giggles and Blaine wrapped an arm around Kurt's back as he took the seat on Kurt's other side, stroking the edge of his mark again, making his sub shiver and cuddle closer.

"What were you silly about?" Blaine asked him as Nick and Jeff seemed to be too far gone in each other to continue with the conversation.

"Just best friend stuff, sir," Kurt said teasingly and Blaine cocked an eyebrow at him in challenge as he coaxed him closer still.

"Is that so?" he asked.

Kurt giggled. "Yes, sir."

"And I'm not allowed to know?"

"No, sir," he answered.

Blaine threw him a mock threatening look before sweeping forward, catching Kurt around the waist and pulling him into his lap. His round butt settled right on top of his thighs, the cleft of it rubbing against his cock that twitched almost as soon as he touched his sub. He smothered the moan that threatened and tried to concentrate on something else. The scent of him, warm and happy filled his nostrils and he nuzzled his neck as he squirmed in his arms.

He cradled him close and kissed the side of his lovely boy's lovely face and neck, trying hard to reach more of his skin but his suit jacket was still in place and he wanted it off.

"It's not nice to keep things from your Dom, lovely," Blaine admonished into his ear and Kurt pretended to be scolded but his breaths were coming faster and his heart sped up when Blaine's fingers started pushing his jacket down his arms.

"But… but… um… sir… what…" he tried to articulate lamely, to keep the game going but Blaine's lips were making him crazy. The broad palms that dragged his jacket down were dizzying and he was losing his grip on reality. He just wanted Blaine and all this holding off was finally getting to him.

Hadn't he been good for long enough?

"Sir," he gasped and Blaine growled low in his throat when his jacket got stuck on the creases of his elbows and he couldn't get it out of the way.
"Take it off," he ordered and Kurt whimpered and hurried to obey, draping his jacket over his vacated seat far more carelessly than he ever would in his right mind. Blaine was on him in an instant, unbuttoning the top of his shirt and freeing a sliver of his skin, attaching his lips to it.

Kurt whimpered and it seemed to be the final straw. Blaine surged them to their feet and Kurt's found the floor very shakily indeed. They were headed to the exit without a single bye or leave and the blurred guests watched them go without a hint of protest.

In the elevator Blaine crowded him up against the corner before the doors had even shut.

Kurt whimpered in delight, eyes closing as his head tipped back at the force and weight he put behind the action. He had hard steel behind him and sinuous muscle in front of him and he just wanted him closer. God. *This.* This is what he had been craving. The scent of heavy pheromones in the air, an intoxicating mixture of both of them, was driving him crazy and he couldn't help all those desperate, wretched sounds from escaping his parted lips as Blaine moulded them into one being *finally.*

Needy fingers grasped at the back of Blaine's shirt, scrabbling for purchase against his shoulder blades to get it off even though that was impossible with how tightly they were pressed. The material was sweat soaked and Kurt realized with a hot jolt that it was from the effort his Dom had been going through to keep his instincts in check all day. The knowledge turned Kurt inside out, his stomach fluttering and pulse hammering. He wanted to sink to his knees. He wanted to bare his throat. He wanted to slam the emergency break on and have Blaine fuck him right here.

The urge should have shocked him but every romantic notion he'd ever had about their first time, all the pain they had gone through these past few days was crushed under the weight of this *need.* The submissive that was so closely intertwined within him clawing its way up and refusing to relinquish control until it was satisfied this time. It wanted Blaine. Any way. Anyhow. All evening and night he had battled with it. This live thing inside him that was screaming out for his Dominant and now that they were finally alone, finally together, it wasn't letting him breathe, let alone think.

He felt heavy breaths panting against his cheek and a steady vibration, a constant almost growl that was humming against his chest and making him want to purr back in response. He arched into the noise and their lower bodies rubbed just barely, but enough to send shivers up Kurt's spine.

“Mine. You’re finally gonna be all mine,” Blaine's hungry mouth descended before he even got the last word out, smearing it across Kurt’s lips like a brand.

Tongues duelled, Kurt always giving way and loving the feeling of Blaine claiming ground in the wet cavern of his mouth. He mapped the roof of his mouth. Laid claim to the backs of his teeth. Staked ownership on his lips, each caress a little flag being put down that left him with the feeling after he had pulled away again.

Blaine couldn't have waited another second to have this. He just snapped. One minute somewhat level headed, the next just done. Gone. It was Kurt. Having him so close all at once destroyed the tenuous grasp on his control, that desperate hold on the frayed edges that bonding had given him. Because he was suddenly all too aware as the night passed that it wasn't quite completely finished. He didn't have Kurt completely. And he just couldn't have that anymore. It ate at him. The knowledge that there was more. *Oh,* there was more. The stuff of his fantasies and dreams all rolled
into something much better. Something transcendent of this world.

There was a faint ping that announced their arrival at the topmost floor.

Blaine grasped Kurt's chin between his forefinger and thumb and detached their mouths with a slick sound. Kurt tried to chase as he knew he would and he held him at a distance firmly as he pulled back to run hot eyes all over his flushed face. Kurt's lashes fluttered like wings before opening and Blaine breathed out at the brilliancy they revealed.

"You are so beautiful, lovely boy," he murmured and Kurt's cheeks darkened. Soft, tapered fingers crawled their way up his wrist, not tugging his hand away, but holding on like he needed the stability. "Come," he half ordered, half coaxed and they made their way into the penthouse rooms which had been cleared and cleaned again during their ceremony ready for them.

Blaine grasped Kurt by the cheeks once they were out of the elevator and safely locked behind the door and they fell into the same urgent rhythm as before, heads twisting into angles to push closer as they kissed and kissed and kissed until they were both drunk on it.

Shirt buttons were undone in the small space between them, feet and toes stepped on as they blindly made their way towards the bedroom. They tumbled through the door when Blaine finally managed to get a hold of the handle and Kurt's hands tugged at his shirt when it tangled in the crook of his elbows and he could hear the faint clicking of buttons when they landed on the ground from being ripped off impatiently.

He pulled away just as the material slid to the floor. "You just cost me my shirt, lovely boy. For that, you're gonna strip while I get what we need. Start now," Blaine ordered, a sultry whisper in his ear.

Though Kurt's feet stayed glued to the spot, his head chased Blaine as far as it could go as he removed his hands and walked away somewhere behind him. It felt like torture to be so far away, in front of the bed no less, its wide inviting expanse like a cruel taunt. He ached for Blaine. His touch, his smell, his taste. He missed him and he'd only been gone for mere seconds but he still felt on the verge of tears because of it all. So open and exposed and reliant on Blaine.

"I can't hear you stripping, lovely. Don't make me have to punish you for disobeying," Blaine admonished, voice light and playful so Kurt knew he wasn't really in trouble as his fingers jumped clumsily and started tugging the clothes away from his body. Urgent, needy, careless, desperate. They were all words he had once looked upon with scorn: now he embraced them as part of himself.

Blaine himself wasn't faring too much better, but something was driving him that just wouldn't let up and so he let it all go and followed his instincts. Let that voice that had been yelling at him to; take, dom, order, command, lead the way as he ran his hand over the smooth polished wood of their toy chest that he'd brought from the house.

He'd spent the last few days making sure they would have everything they would possibly need in this chest, obsessively checking and rechecking and ordering more things off the internet as he lost himself in fantasies of his submissive completely strung out under his knowing hands.

He opened it up and felt his cock twitch at the sight of the mostly pristine toys and other play things held within all in neat rows and compartments. They were all in tasteful colours; toys in blues mainly and restraints and such in black and silver.

They'd hardly made a dent in this chest at all in their usual day to day play, mainly just dabbling with restraints so looking at it now he felt like a kid in a candy store. Overwhelmed with the sheer variety of choice. What was he truly hungry for? What would be the best? Did he just want a little bit of
everything? And what about Kurt, what would his lovely boy like best?

"Sir?" Kurt asked, sounding upset and raw and Blaine made a hushing, soothing sound over his shoulder as he checked on him quickly. He was still standing right where he left him, trying not to move a muscle despite his distress and desire to do just that.

Blaine was consistently floored by just how perfect he was. He was now rid of all his clothes and his alabaster skin shone in the faintest light from the moon peeking through their window. He was unreal and Blaine couldn't wait to get his hands on him.

"I'll be right there, baby. You're doing so good, just a little longer," he praised sincerely, voice pitched low.

He turned back to the box quickly and drew the restraints out of their separate compartment and felt a rush of heat flash through him as the cool, buttery leather slipped through his fingers. No need to mess with a good thing and they both loved this kind of play a hell of a lot. Also something deep within him wanted Kurt to be comfortable as they got heavier into this so easing him in with something he knew and liked was imperative.

He moved to the bathroom door and tested to see if the latch was sturdy enough to use without having to find one that locked from this side. A few strong tugs saw that the metal held and Blaine hummed happily as he pulled it open and fitted the hooks of the restraints over the top, spacing them out before shutting it again.

The hanging wrist cuffs that were left hanging there certainly raised his blood pressure and he moved back to Kurt immediately, pressing his naked torso to Kurt's naked back and winding his arms around his waist. He felt Kurt let out an audible sigh as he leant back into him, drooping like a ragdoll.

The feel of Blaine's still half clothed body against his was even more pronounced now and it took Kurt's breath away, goosebumps breaking out all over his skin.

"You ready, lovely?" Blaine asked into his ear and Kurt licked his dry lips, nodding shakily, anticipation making him weak. He had no idea what Blaine had in store for him but he wanted it. So bad.

"Say it," Blaine ordered.

"I'm ready, sir," he said, immediately complying and Blaine kissed the shell of his ear in reward.

"Go to the door and lean back against it facing me. Arms above your head."

Kurt's feet were moving before the instructions really registered and his mind caught up. The press of the cool wood against his bare, flushed skin was a shock but he followed his orders and raised his arms over his head feeling self-conscious but trusting Blaine.

His gorgeous Dom stepped up to him slowly, all slinking grace like a predator and hungry roaming eyes and Kurt felt small and vulnerable under his gaze. His chest heaved and he wondered if Blaine could see the skittering thump of his heart under his too tight skin.

When they were breathing the same air again, noses nudging, he felt Blaine's hands skate softly up his sides, up, up, until he had followed the lines of his arms to his wrists. There he let go and reached for something else and it was only when he felt the distinct texture of leather against his skin that he broke eye contact and looked up.
What he saw made his breath hitch.

Restraints. Black leather with polished silver buckles and he let out a shuddering exhale as fantasies of what Blaine planned to do to him took over. He felt damp lips against the hinge of his jaw, teeth nipping at the curve of his chin as leather was rubbed against the sensitive skin of his wrists in a mock tease of what was to come.

"Sir," Kurt sighed on a breathy whimper and he felt that delicious mouth smile against him before pulling back and looking up to attach the restraints properly. The slide around his wrists and the clink of metal made Kurt shiver but he couldn't look away from Blaine's face for the life of him. The utterly pleased, carnal light that blew out his pupils and melted his irises into honey.

Kurt was completely pliant in his grip, allowing him to move him wherever he wished and that unequivocal trust fired his blood just as much as the act of placing his boy in restraints. The soft leather curved perfectly around Kurt's delicate bones and he made sure there was a finger of space for him to move in, not enough to escape, but enough so that they didn't rub uncomfortably or cut off the circulation.

He was actually hurting from how hard he already was, stretching out the seams of his suit trousers but he wasn't going to give into the impulse. He had too many plans. Too many fantasies and urges to satisfy first. But Kurt didn't make it easy. God, he looked gorgeous and flawless against the backdrop of the mahogany door and the sight of all that pale skin made him want to mark him up, throw him on the bed and finally sink into him.

"Does that feel alright, lovely?" he asked him instead, meeting stormy blue eyes. He was never going to be too far gone to forget to check in.

Kurt swallowed, dry throat bobbing. "Yes, sir."

Blaine's hands fell away to his hips, thumbs playing at the sharp ridges there and down along his vee line. Kurt's head fell back against the door as his hips tilted forward and up for a little relief. Blaine glanced down at the full erection on display between them and made an appreciative sound before bending forwards and taking his mouth in a filthy kiss. Kurt would have been delighted if it hadn't been for the Dom making sure to keep that frustrating distance between their lower bodies.

Blaine pulled away completely and Kurt went to reach out for him only to be drawn up completely short by the restraints. The most leverage he could get was a little bend in his elbows and about a half step away from the actual door and it was such a painfully sweet surrender to be so trapped this way.

"Blaine, please… sir," he begged, not knowing exactly what he was asking for.

Blaine hushed him again and ran his thumb over his swollen bottom lip as his eyes tracked up and down his body. "You look so gorgeous like that, you don't even know. I should set up mirrors in our room at home so you can watch me take you apart all the time."

The very idea had Kurt's stomach flipping hotly, his cock leaking pre-come and Kurt ran his tongue over the edge of Blaine's thumb because it was the only thing he could get a hold of and he needed him. Just any part of him.

"Now don't be naughty, Kurt. Naughty boys don't get what they want," Blaine warned listening to the restraints jingle a little as Kurt tested them as he tried to touch and drew his thumb away despite Kurt's noise of protest. "I asked them to sort this out a little earlier," Blaine explained walking over towards the corner of the room where he hadn't noticed a bucket of ice and champagne had been set up.
Blaine brought it over, including the small table it sat on and Kurt watched the play of muscles in the low light of the lamp almost hypnotically. Next to the bucket he sat their chest, open now even though he still couldn't see into it, and his heart raced.

"Do you remember New Year's Eve?" Blaine asked into the heavy, tension filled silence that had descended between them. He was running his fingers over something in the box and it was killing Kurt not knowing what it was but he was helpless to do anything but watch his Dom with rapt attention.

The words however still took a moment to settle in his hazy mind. "Y-yes, sir. It was fun."

Blaine left whatever he was contemplating in the box still and instead moved to pluck the champagne bottle out of the bucket. He popped the cork, watching as it fizzed up and spilled over his hand. His eyes met Kurt's and he licked it up, such an obviously taunting tease and Kurt worried his restraints again but they held as firm as ever.

Blaine watched the action and smiled as he approached with the bottle in hand. "Do you remember that night, baby?"

Oh god did he. He still got off to it those rare occasions where he was left on his own to take care of himself.

"We played a game," Kurt breathed.

Blaine hummed in assent, stopping in front of him. They locked eyes. "Would you like to play another one?"

Kurt's knees felt weak. "Yes, please. Anything. I need you, sir."

Blaine pressed the bottom of the bottle to Kurt's stomach, watching as he sucked it in with a hiss at the cool wetness of it. He rolled the curved edge back and forth a few times and delighted at the raised goosebumps that broke out over his skin. There was a certain light in Blaine's eyes when he looked at him again and removed the stimulus and Kurt couldn't guess at what was going on in there but he had electricity dancing over his skin already from the many possibilities.

"You've been such a good boy for me," Blaine praised and Kurt soaked it in like sunlight. "Good boys get rewards."

The lip of the champagne bottle was suddenly pressing at his mouth and Kurt's eagerly opened up to receive the bubbles over his tongue. He swallowed a few times, savouring the taste before it was taken away and Blaine came back without it in hand. He was a little disappointed that they weren't going to be playing that game again until Blaine kissed him silly. He lost himself in it for a moment before he felt something much colder than the bottle had been pressing against his hip where Blaine cupped it in his palm. He gasped into Blaine's mouth and the Dom ate the sound right up while his hand moved around to the small of his back and what could only be ice melted and skated easily across his skin.

The contrast of warm mouths clashing and cold ice pressing into his skin was heady and he moaned when he felt the chilled water dripping down over his ass and between his rounded cheeks. Blaine kept up the assault until the ice had completely turned to liquid again, then immediately drew back to drag the table closer so he could grab another.

"I dreamt about this a long time ago," Blaine admitted to him roughly as he pressed a cube to the spot just above his nipple. He drew it around the perked nub slowly as he talked. "Back when we were
on the boat and we were lounging on the deck and it was so fucking hot out and you looked so god
dammed lickable. I wanted to do this to you then."

"Y-you did?" Kurt stuttered trying to reconcile that in his mind. They were so innocently awkward
back then, dancing around one another, but there was definite tension there the whole time. Kurt just
hadn't realized just how deep it ran for Blaine before now.

"Of course I did, lovely. You are the sexiest god damned thing in this universe," Blaine said and bent
his head to take his nipple into the warm cavern of his mouth. Kurt turned his face into his arm but it
did nothing to smother his moan of pleasure or his pants of want as the Dom continued to suckle. He
began to move down, ice cube leading the way as he dragged it over his sternum, stomach then back
and forth over the base of his cock.

"Blaine," Kurt moaned urgently, tugging at his restraints even harder and making them dig into his
skin. He felt like crying again. "Please, sir. Please touch me, I can't stand it anymore."

Blaine was balancing on his haunches in front of him, inches away from his red and aching erection,
but still he didn't touch. "You can hold out longer than this, beautiful boy. I know you can."

"But it's been so long," he whined, fingers curling around the straps that hooked to the door and
raising on his toes to try and get a little closer. Blaine backed away again and got to his feet. Kurt
truly did look wild and frayed around the edges, actual tears were pooling in his eyes from how
desperately he needed just a little Dominant contact and Blaine couldn't fight instincts that strong.

He turned Kurt on the spot so he was now facing the door, adjusting the restraints so that they were
comfortable still and then he pressed himself along the length of him, feeling Kurt's sigh of content at
the weight. Blaine nosed at him a little while he settled, reaching between them to unbutton his fly
and push his suit pants off finally. He stepped away for a second to remove his shoes and socks and
kick them away then plastered them together again naked save his underwear.

And it was then that he got his first real look at the mark on the back of Kurt's neck and the small, yet
significant difference there. It sent a wave of heat crashing through him, a fierce stab of
possessiveness and satisfaction and he couldn't have helped from leaning in to lay a bigger claim on
the space that marked Kurt as exclusively, irrevocably his.

Kurt shivered and moaned into each and every touch of the brush of lips and trace of tongue that
followed the black outline that marked their bond as permanent.

"I love this," Blaine said raggedly. "Me on you this way. I want to worship it with my teeth and
tongue. Take you from behind and bite at it."

He ran another nearly melted cube down his mark, making his boy keen with sensation as he let it
slip down his flawless back and over his right ass cheek.

Kurt gasped.

"Would you like that, lovely?" he whispered straight into the sensitive skin and Kurt's hips jolted into
the wood, a strangled moan escaping his parted lips as he yanked down with his crossed arms.

Blaine hummed in pleasure at how obviously gone he was and removed his lips from his neck with
one last kiss that had Kurt whimpering and sweating and curling his hands harder into the leather.
The ice cube melted into a trickle of water on his hip and Blaine bent down, almost all the way down
to his knees as he lapped it with his tongue.

"Answer me, Kurt!" he ordered and Kurt moaned desperately.
"Y-yes, sir," he managed and Blaine turned back towards their toy chest.

"Yes what?" he asked teasingly, the Dominant inside him going mad with pride at how gone his boy seemed to be already even as he edged him further on still.

"I… I'd like t-that…" he gasped, trying to peek over his shoulder and see where Blaine had gone to but he was so far gone into his own head that he just couldn't focus on taking his surroundings in.

"Like what?" Blaine smiled as he took something from the table and walked back to his shivering sub.

"Y-you… sir… touch me… k-iss me… take me… anything… please sir…" he babbled and Blaine couldn't take it anymore. He placed a hand on his hip and gasped at the reaction the simple touch provoked. Kurt moaned brokenly and pushed into his hand like a starved man seeing food for the first time in weeks and his entire body seemed set on fire.

"Good boys get what they want. We'll play a game now beautiful so I need you to keep your eyes closed for me. Can you do that?" he asked and Kurt shivered, but his head bobbed up and down in confirmation as his lids slid over the sky blues of his eyes.

"I'm gonna tease you. And for every minute you manage to stay perfectly still and quiet, you get a minute of me doing whatever you want to you," he said and Kurt moaned in want, his hands now almost limp in restraints as he relaxed into Blaine's touch.

He didn't care what happened anymore. Blaine was there with him, pleasing him so much he thought he was going to faint and he just let himself respond to it instinctively. He almost jumped away when something light and smooth glided over his left calf but he remembered to stay silent and still.

It was maddening though.

The sensation climbed up over his thigh and this time he couldn't help it, his body twitched away and he could hear Blaine's chuckle.

"Your minute is reset, darling. Let's start over," the Dom smirked gleefully when his sub froze in place, concentration on his gorgeous face so obvious as he fought against his own body and the pleasure Blaine was inflicting on it.

The long, dark grey feather in his hand fluttered in the cool air around them as he brought it up and ran it over the sex dimples at the bottom of Kurt's spine.

Kurt's heart soared when gooseflesh rose on his skin and a light shiver coursed through him but he remained glued to his spot, lips bitten red from keeping the moans in as he tried to make his Dom proud.

Blaine ran the feather up, tracing the ridges of his spine and counting in his head, not wanting to rip his beautiful boy off his well-earned prize. In the end Kurt asked for a hug. Shaky voice delivering the tame request as his body jerked in pleasure from the contact. The hug lasted a full minute, strong, gentle, loving, before Blaine pulled back leaving a whimpering Kurt to find firm ground and stay strong.

It went on for what felt like hours.

With Kurt making it all the way through the minute and asking for kisses and touches, with Kurt barely making it ten seconds before stumbling back and crying out, with Kurt making it almost all the way through before breaking down from pleasure. Blaine watched in silent fascination how his body
seemed aware of where he was at all times as he angled towards him. He ran the feather over the crease between Kurt's upper thigh and hip and kissed the back of his neck, breaking the rule just a tiny bit.

"Minute's up, lovely. Well done. Name your prize," he said coming closer and Kurt surged back, gluing his back to his front and opening his eyes, the fire inside them so desperately strong it floored Blaine to the ground.

"Sir… sir please… I can't… not anymore…" he cried and this time there were actual tears tumbling down his cheeks. His cock red and leaking from excitement and his entire posture screaming for Blaine to finally take him. Make him his completely.

"What do you need, lovely?" he asked even though he knew the answer. He needed to hear it. Needed to know that it was okay. That he was allowed.

"You sir… please, no more, just you," he begged and Blaine jumped into action, reaching into the chest and taking out a brand new bottle of lube.

He came back with his fingers wet with the sticky substance and kissed his boy on the cheek, proud of how amazingly he was coping. "Spread your legs."

Kurt complied immediately and Blaine pressed up behind him, clean hand running over his flank and lower to smooth over the perfect, pert curve of his ass.

"Colour?" he demanded, not soon to forget about the last time he had attempted this.

"Green," Kurt whimpered into the wood in front of his face.

Blaine kissed at his shoulder, lips sticking against his sweaty skin while his thumb dipped in between the crack of his ass. "Relax for me, lovely."

It felt like he was saying that as much to himself as his sub.

The pad of his thumb brushed that tight ring of muscle and they both inhaled sharply. "Wider," he coaxed and Kurt could do nothing other than what he was told. His ability to think clearly or independently had completely abandoned him and he needed Blaine to guide him.

Blaine switched hands over, the clean one holding his left ass cheek, the slick one moving to replace the pressure of his thumb with the touch of both his forefingers. He rubbed them up and down, in tight little circles, as much as a tease as a way to get things wet enough so it would be easier and hurt less.

Kurt's eyes already were rolling to the back of his head he was just that sensitive right now. All the play. All the waiting. He was a bomb just waiting to go off and it was like Blaine had located the button to make him explode. He let out a broken moan, clenching and unclenching when his middle finger caught right where it needed to go. The urge to push back was so strong and he wanted to, god he wanted to, but the signals got lost in the cotton of his mind before they ever got a chance to transmit.

"God, Kurt," Blaine gritted, eyes fixed on the intimate spot they were joined. Tan against rosy pink.

He slipped the tip in just slightly and he heard Kurt gasp; that gorgeous, lovely gasp that always told him go further, show him more. He pushed in up to the first knuckle and clenched his jaw at the tight heat that was surrounding him. His cock throbbed in its cotton confines, leaking and screaming at him.
"Colour," he asked, rougher this time like he had swallowed gravel.

"G-green. Green, green, green," Kurt chanted back, sagging a little more with each word like it was taking everything out of him.

Blaine moved his free hand around to his hip and pushed in close to his side to encourage him to hold himself up. He felt the awkward stretch on his wrist at the angle but he held still and placed a few more kisses to Kurt's strained arm and shoulder.

Kurt turned his flushed face towards him and Blaine lost his breath at just how gone he looked. Pupils fully dilated, face a pretty pink, lashes beautifully wet, perspiration lining every pore.

"You are so lovely," he praised and pushed his finger in further because that possessive monster in him had to see Kurt's reaction to a part of him being inside his sub.

It didn't disappoint.

The perfect 'O' Kurt's kiss swollen and teeth bitten lips made would forever be engraved in his mind's eye. The way his lashes fluttered involuntarily. The choked, obscene sound he made into the silence when he pulled out a little to push in again.

He moved back around behind him, a newfound fire and energy driving him as he prepped his beautiful boy for him. One finger turned into two that were stretching him out, stroking along his walls and then they encountered something that made Kurt lose it completely.

He cried out like he had been struck, knees trembling to hold him up and more tears from how overwhelmed he was spilled down his cheeks. He needed to come. He needed it. He had to. But he couldn't. Blaine hadn't said he could yet and he wanted to be a good boy.

Blaine hushed him and dripped sweet endearments and praise into his ear like nectar, kissing and licking at it and the sensitive skin around it. And all the while the Dom kept the pressure on, paying extra special attention to that magical place inside him that lit him up like the sun itself.

"Blaine," Kurt gasped, barely able to get it out over his constant hoarse moans. His legs and arms were truly shaking now and he blinked hazy eyes over and over to try and come back around but he was liquid. Everything about him was just so hard to get a hold of as he floated further and further into a warm, safe place he couldn't name. "I'm going to… I can't hold it… sir…"

A third finger and Kurt felt like he was going to pass out.

"Just hold on for me, lovely," Blaine encouraged, pushing against his prostate to hear that moan again. "Just a little longer, baby. I know you can do it for me, you're almost stretched. You feel so good around me, beautiful boy. I can't wait until I can be inside you."

Kurt rolled his head against the door, trying to find a cool spot to chill his overheated skin but everything was so hot. Everything burned. He held on though. He balls were high and tight, his cock was on fire, but he held it together until Blaine declared him stretched enough and reached for his restraints. The only thing that prevented him from spilling to the floor like a dropped cloth when they were both unbuckled was the sturdy arm around his waist. Blood rushed to his abused extremities with pins and needles in its wake and he felt Blaine's mouth at the hinge of his neck as he carried him over to the bed.

He was laid on the silk sheets on his back in the middle of the massive bed like the most precious of things and Blaine was on him in a second, underwear removed, finally bare. Their skin pressed together and Kurt felt like he was stripped down past skin to raw, naked nerves. It felt electric and on
the verge of pleasured pain to get this full body contact after what felt like hours of touches here and there. Never enough. Never satisfying.

Blaine slipped between his thighs and Kurt wrapped them around his waist like a clamp, ankles locking over his ass. He didn't want him going anywhere ever again. Their mouths met in a wet kiss that was more tongue than lips, a parody of what was to come as Blaine's hard length slid over his slicked and loosened hole, catching but never slipping in fully.

Kurt moaned into his open mouth when it happened the third time and Blaine broke away almost violently to grab the lube on the bedside table. He reached between them and slicked his aching erection, hissing at how close to the edge he was from that one simple touch. He couldn't wait anymore.

"Sure, lovely?" he asked roughly, meeting blown eyes with intense heat.

"Yes, sir. Please. It's been so long," Kurt begged, fingers grasping at his shoulders intently, nails biting into skin.

"I love you," Blaine reminded him tenderly. Despite the pressing desire and Dominant pheromones making everything unbearable urgent, he had to stop and say that.

"I love you too," Kurt whispered back as Blaine lined up and pressed forwards.

This stretch ached but Kurt couldn't feel anything but pleasure in the act as his body welcomed him in eagerly. Muscles unwinding instead of locking up, mind screaming more, now, instead of wait, slow down. This was them taking that final step, locking themselves together for an eternity and it couldn't be fast enough for Kurt.

Blaine let his jaw hang off its hinges as he bottomed out into that tight searing heat, heart in his throat, lungs seized. It was indescribable. The feeling of himself coming apart for the second time that day, pathways already forged being set in stone. More ties morphing into infinity knots. The back of his neck tingled sharply and he knew it must be the faint colour that was already there finally bleeding through completely marking him as Kurt's as much as Kurt was his.

"I love you," Blaine declared as he pulled out to the tip. He couldn't be still now, there was only instinct left and it told him to finish them both now. Seal the bond in that spectacular way.

Kurt was only light and sound and Blaine. He had lost himself into the feel of skin on him, in him. Everything heightened like he had just taken a hit of something and was on a trip. Each plunge of Blaine's cock only made things brighter, louder, more out of sync with that world and leading him into another where it was safe and warm and nothing could ever get to him. It smelled like Blaine here. Felt like his arms around him. Tasted like him on the air he breathed in.

He winked in and out.

One minute Blaine was there, moving over him and then the next he couldn't see anything but bursts of light and color but he could feel the whole time. That simmering burn low in his stomach, the throb of his cock, the jolts of pure sensation that felt like lightning strikes every time Blaine hammered his prostate.

Blaine couldn't hold out. Couldn't get a proper pace started when his hips just wanted to fuck and fuck and fuck until they were one person. It couldn't have been five minutes. Five wonderful, unearthly minutes of that indescribable body milking him, fitting him like a glove and Blaine knew he was going to explode.
"Come, Kurt. Come with me," Blaine ordered him into his ear and Kurt did. Just like that. Always on command. Always. And it was heaven. Everything. A spectrum of colour flashing behind his lids, his body washing under the wave of pleasure. He heard Blaine grunt, curse and then felt him come as well and it was all he had ever wanted.

He drifted off into that safe space with a smile on his face. His body let go of reality and for the single, miniscule moment he felt afraid of the shiny nothingness he was heading towards but his mind told him to give in. He was safe. He was protected. He was loved.

He let go.

He floated.

Blaine felt utterly drained. Shaky forearms struggling to hold his weight off of Kurt as he grinded the last of his aftershocks into Kurt's willing, beautiful body. Sweat was dripping from his curls as well as the rest of him.

Fuck.

Sex had never felt like that. Never that good or right or earthshattering.

He pulled his face away from Kurt's neck and looked down at him only to find Kurt's head lolled to the side. He frowned briefly.

"Kurt?" he said softly, wondering whether he had simply fallen asleep. There was something in him that was screaming something else though. Kurt looked like he was sleeping but his body was still trembling and the softest of involuntary noises fell from his lips.

Was this...? It couldn't be. "Kurt? Lovely?" he called again, cupping his chin and bringing his limp face back around.

His features were smoothed out, mouth parted like he was in sleep but he still had this instinct that he couldn't shake. This crushing need to take care of him past what he would normally feel. He pulled his softening erection free of Kurt's tight sheath and he watched as Kurt's face screwed up in displeasure. A whining sound emitted from his throat that shot straight to the heart of him.

He hushed him and gently turned him on his side so he could play the big spoon. The sight of Kurt's mark, now fully, darkly rimmed in black caught his eye and he found himself pressing his lips gently to the spot. Kurt sighed into it and Blaine knew he was on the right track.

"You were so good, Kurt. Such a good boy for me. So amazing. I love you," he found himself whispering along with a million more inconsequential things as he waited for his sub to come around from... dare he say it... subspace.

Fuck. It made his head spin. This was almost unheard of. His mind was still turning it over as his body reacted naturally to Kurt's and eventually he could feel Kurt was a little more lucid, a little more there in the present. He ran his hands over him, keeping him safe and warm for what felt like forever before he felt him tense and shuffle in his arms, breathing picking up again and hands gripping his fingers as he came to.

"Tired?" Kurt could hear the voice of his Dom drifting through the haze in his mind, coaxing him further back.

He was lying on his side, a loose end of the silk sheet tangled between his legs and covering up his core, giving off the vibe of modesty even when his back and ass was on display for his Dom who
was all but glued to him. Their skin was covered in a thin sheen of sweat, making the kisses Blaine lavished on him sticky and salty.

His body was back in the same reality Blaine existed in, but it seemed like his mind didn't want to give up the thrill of this floaty, easy feeling he had.

He mumbled something that he had hoped was good enough of an answer for Blaine, but even as he heard him chuckle gently he knew he didn't actually manage to produce words. The truth was he was exhausted. They were at it for hours. Ages. Teasing, drawing pleasure out and then cooling off to prolong it even further until Kurt swore he was losing his mind, drowning, dying, only to be resurrected and made to go through the rollercoaster once again.

The final slip had him release the last strands of pent up energy and his body was still liquid in Blaine's embrace.

"God, I can't believe how gorgeous you are." Blaine whispered against his neck and he wanted to turn around and capture his lips but he just didn't have control over his own movement. Blaine's fingers skimming the naked skin of his back and sides weren't helping that case at all. He moaned when he felt calluses on his sides, skirting the ridges of his ribs and setting his body aflame again.

"Your skin is perfection. So soft… creamy…it's like you're glowing." The sub inside him unfurled at the praise.

He never thought it would be like this. Being one with his Dom. Being tied to him as they moved together in passion, in need, the craving for each other, to join, eating them both on the inside. His stomach turned in pleasure when he felt the touch on his hip, Blaine's fingers dipping into the vee on his front as his thumb brushed the globe of his ass. He didn't understand how it was possible for him to be turned on again, after being torn apart in pleasure for so long and after a release that had him almost fainting but there he was.

His eyes closed, fingers wrapping around the corner of his pillow and he made an effort to try and push his body back into Blaine's. So needy but the need was somehow muffled by the bone deep exhaustion that left him craving but unable to ask and take.

He tried to talk again… he wanted to ask for Blaine to hold him tighter. He wanted to tell him he ached for him. That he wanted him again. That he needed him.

"Sir…" the soft, barely there gasp was all he managed to push out past his lips and before he could even try to speak up Blaine was there. Leaning over him as he splayed his palm on his lower belly and brushed the shell of his ear with his lips.

"Lovely?" Blaine asked and Kurt could almost pinpoint the exact moment Blaine's eyes ventured down his body and found him flushed and hard and leaking again.

His breath caught in his throat and his hips finally surged forward, his equally hard cock trapped in the cleft between his cheeks, making Kurt sigh in relief.

"My beautiful boy. You want more?" he asked and Kurt moaned softly. He did. He wanted him ferociously but he couldn't move and the only sign he could give was the barely perceptible tilt of his hips that brought the head of Blaine's cock right there, against his well-used entrance.

"Cheeky little thing. You want to play some more?" he heard Blaine ask but he knew he wasn't capable of being like that right now. He just wanted him inside, taking him slow and making him fall apart.
He shook his head with a quiet whimper and felt Blaine frowned against his temple in confusion.

"Are you in pain, baby?" he tried to guess what Kurt's practically non-existent body language was trying to say but Kurt didn't want him to go to that place of worry and concern when he was so close to where he wanted him to be.

He pulled the last shreds of his strength and pealed his lids open to look into those golden orbs he loved so much.

"I-in me, sir…w-want you…" he whispered, voice rough from screaming earlier and the gold in his eyes gave way to the black that, without fail, made him realize Blaine's blood boiled.

"Insatiable, baby. I love you for that. And I need you to be a strong boy for me for just one minute longer and tell me what you need? How you want me?" he praised as he petted Kurt's stomach, his hips still circling against his ass deliciously.

"Like this sir…j-just this. Slow," he managed and the realization he saw on Blaine's face made him sigh in relief.

He made it. He said it and he would get it. Blaine would be there in just moments and he moaned when he felt fingers between his cheeks. Testing him lightly. Slipping in slowly and brushing his spot for just a split second before Blaine pulled his finger out and lined up.

"I love you so much. God Kurt, you don't even know. I love you," he whispered.

Arms went around his body. Lips attached themselves to his already completely lined mark. His back was pulled flush against the heated skin of Blaine's chest.

"Love you…" he gasped as his Dom slipped in and pleasure took him over again.

The next morning

Kurt was convinced he had gotten used to seeing magnificent, ornate buildings since he moved to Westerville but as it turned out the morning after his Presenting… he had not.

The Registration building was probably the most magnificent, most ornate, most amazing thing Kurt had ever seen before and he found himself stumbling after his chuckling Dom as he pulled him along towards the entrance.

It loomed above them, casting an imposing shadow almost all the way across the street. It was beige, with detailed carvings in the walls, making each flat surface look like a separate masterpiece and dark brown, wooden doors and windows that gave warmth to the otherwise cold looking exterior. Kurt noticed there were no plants around it and for one, illogical moment it made him feel better because it took away from the perfection of the building and in consequence it made him less scared.

Blaine had told him what was going to happen in there so he knew he had nothing to be scared of but somehow he knew he wouldn't be at peace until they got it over with.

He almost flew into the building and Blaine held his hand more firmly.
"Lovely, slow down. We're early anyway," he said and Kurt pouted at him in annoyance.

"They won't let us in right away?" he whined cuddling into Blaine's side needy, still high from their night together. His skin felt less tight and hot since their bonding but traces of Blaine's hands and his power still tingled on him and he felt it all the way to his core.

"No, baby. We need to wait for about ten minutes more," Blaine said as he led them into a wide hallway, the lush brown carpet on the floor muffling their steps.

They approached the huge, beige loveseats and cuddled into them, Blaine reclining in one and Kurt almost draped over his lap. There was nobody else there and Kurt didn't feel the need to be proper and elegant, he just stuffed his face in Blaine's neck and nuzzled there.

"Then why didn't we stay in bed for ten minutes longer?" He brushed his lips on the skin of his Dom's neck and felt him shiver in response.

"Because if we had I wouldn't have been able to detach myself from you and you know it, you little tease," Blaine smiled, pecking his lips and Kurt giggled shyly before stealing another kiss from his Dom.

"I am not a tease. You just don't have a lot of self-control, sir," he said batting his eyelashes smiling cheekily causing Blaine to gasp in mock offence and tickle his little minx.

They were giggling like little kids and too busy being wrapped up in each other to notice a young woman laughing silently from the office door.

"Khm..." she cleared her throat subtly and they jumped to their feet as if burned, blushing and fidgeting as they tried to compose themselves into the adults they both were.

"Relax, boys. Every couple that comes here is drunk on their bond. You two are actually very subtle." She laughed and waved a hand at them to enter, smiling to herself all the while.

"Good morning. And it helps to hear we didn't embarrass ourselves completely," Blaine said, recovering his ground a lot faster than Kurt who was a step away from spontaneous combustion with how red his face looked.

"No embarrassment to be seen. Now, have a seat please and let's get you registered. That should shut the haters up, right?" she chirped and Kurt felt his tension break thanks to her carefree disposition.

Her words, though… they made him tilt his head in question at the same moment Blaine spoke up.

"What do you mean by that?"

She smiled at him gently. "I didn't mean to insult you or put you in an awkward position, Dom Anderson. I just meant that it was impossible not to see the headlines in the paper since you claimed your sub and I, personally, never believed a single word they said about you. I'm happy you two are proving them wrong, is all," she said and Kurt felt his own lips pull up into a smile at her words. She didn't even know them and she believed them over those vultures.

She was rather young for a Validator, which could have been an explanation as to how informed she seemed on current events. Or maybe it was just part of her career choice, to keep track. She was in her late twenties with dark brown, shoulder length hair, warm cocoa colored eyes and a smile that was just a tiny bit too big for her small face but it made her look friendly and trustworthy somehow. Kurt figured that was a good look to have in her line of work.

He took a seat next to Blaine as she shuffled around and gathered all sorts of papers and equipment
in front of her before turning to them again her smile warm and open and it made Kurt relax even further… so much he chuckled softly making the other two look at him in question.

"Something funny, lovely?" Blaine asked and he shook his head, cheeks tinted pink.

"No…I just… I'm sorry, I just always thought Validators were scary, mean old people," he said and she threw her head back laughing freely. "I mean I know Melissa wasn't that scary or old but she wasn't like… well… you."

"Yeah… you wouldn't be the first one to think that, surprisingly enough. But… as far as experience shows, people respond better to young, friendly, not 'mean’ Validators," she countered with a wink and he nodded in understanding.

"I guess I haven't thought of it that way," he said.

"We deal with subs who are in a really delicate state. We have to tread carefully and earn their trust. Being mean wouldn't really help us do that. But rest assured. Dealing with abusive Doms brings out a whole different side of us," she said, voice darkening at the end of her sentence and face closing off, eyes clouding and Kurt could see it.

She was nice and friendly… until she had to stop being that.

It made him feel oddly safe.

"So… ready?" she asked clapping her hands and both of them nodded, eager to get it done already.

"I assume you know what happens during a registration so I won't waste your time explaining it. Just answer the questions honestly and if you feel the need to, ask me to stop," she said pressing a button on her recorder as it was common to document the registration process on audio tape and taking a pen between her fingers, her face morphing into something serious and professional.

"Registration number: 496, Validator present: Tasha Turner. Date of registration: May 12th. Please state your name and status," she recited in a clear voice, void of all emotion and previous friendliness, obviously following protocol very strictly.

"Blaine Anderson, Dominant," Blaine said firmly, not a hint of doubt in his statement and Kurt felt emboldened by it as he leaned towards the table.

"Kurt Hummel, submissive."

"Are you both here of your own free will?" she asked again, simultaneously filling the form in front of her with their answers to file along with the recording.

"I am," Blaine answered first.

"I am," Kurt repeated after him as Tasha marked their answers on the form.

"Dom Anderson, did you respect your sub's boundaries and completed the steps acknowledging his pace?" she asked turning the sheet of paper to get to the next question.

"Yes, I have," Blaine answered and Kurt reached out to brush his fingers along his Dom's forearm earning a smile in return.

"What are your current living arrangements?"

"We live at the Andersons estate since we're both still in school and college. We will most likely
move out after that," Blaine said feeling awkward that he was the one who had to answer all the question as the system was fairly outdated.

"You're obligated to inform the office of your address change when it comes to that. Are you aware of that?" she asked and Blaine actually looked a little bit uncomfortable at her question.

"Oh… no actually. I didn't know that," he said and she nodded.

"Most people don't. We keep track of our bonded couples and we need to make sure that we can reach them as soon as we can in case something happens. Having the correct address at any given time is mandatory. I'm sure you understand," she explained and it made perfect sense when she put it that way.

"Yes. Absolutely. We will let you know as soon as we move," Blaine assured and she nodded.

"Thank you. Sub Hummel, have you received your Gift and found it satisfactory?" was the next question.

"I have. Um… do I need to say what it was?" he answered trying to figure out a way to make his responses a bit more elaborate and eloquent but there wasn't really much room for that with the dry cut questions she asked.

"That won't be necessary, thank you. Has your Dom given you a contract to sign?" she asked next and Kurt realized that this set of questions was obviously to make sure he was taken care of.

"Yes. We have a copy for you. It said on your website that it's a good idea to bring one," he said, pulling the copy of their contract from his satchel and passing it to her.

"It's not a must but it's always a good idea to bring a copy. Thank you. I won't be reading it right now to respect your privacy. Is the contract made regarding your desires too, sub Hummel?" she asked and he nodded.

"Completely," he answered in a voice that left no place for doubt. She jotted his answer down and glanced over the paper. The last item on it was a question about subspace and she hovered her pen over the NO box as usual as she recited the question.

"Have you reached subspace since you got together?" she said and her pen already scratched the beginning of the tick in the box when a voice shocked her to a stop.

"Yes I did," Kurt said, almost a whisper as he stared into his Dom's eyes, remembering the morning after as they cuddled in each other's arms, sated and happy, but almost unable to believe what had happened.

"My beautiful, lovely boy. Subspace, baby. You… I can't believe that happened," Blaine gasped, awed and disbelieving.

It took people years, decades, lifetimes to reach it and sometimes it never happened. And here was his beauty, his perfection, giving in to him so freely, so completely on their first real time together. He was so grateful for him. So proud that he was his.

"Was it… was it not right, sir?" Kurt asked softly and Blaine rolled them swiftly so that Kurt was on his back and Blaine hovered over him on his elbows.

"Perfect. It was perfect. You were perfect Kurt, you have no idea how that feels," he said, eyes watering with emotion and pride.
"How did it feel for you?" Kurt asked curiously and Blaine shook his head, almost as if he was trying to chase the images away so he could focus on reality.

"It was... incredible... I was... I actually got worried at first because I wasn't expecting it but... you looked so gorgeous, so uninhibitedly mine that my mind just blanked. The only thing I felt was the need to hold you, to protect you, to keep you safe. Because you... Kurt you were so deep under and I... I just needed to make you understand that you had nothing to fear, that you were safe with me," he said, desperate for his boy to tell him that he was okay, that he was free and relaxed and that he knew his Dom was there for him all the way.

"I did know sir. I... I don't think I would have been able to let go if I hadn't," he said softly and Blaine leaned in to peck his lips before turning over and taking him into his chest again.

"What was it like?" he asked curiously and Kurt shivered as the memory washed over him.

"I don't think I can explain it, sir. There was nothing... material there... no smells, no sounds no touch... but at the same time I could hear and smell and feel everything... I could feel you... holding me through it. I was like... floating through stars and wind and the salty seaside air... and you were there. All around me. Just you," he said quietly, trying to convey the unearthly feeling but knowing words would never be enough.

"It sounds incredible," Blaine said as he watched him, eyes wide and lips curled into a gentle smile.

"It was, sir. The best thing I've ever felt. Thank you," he said snuggling closer, eyes slipping shut as he grew tired again.

"Oh, baby. Thank you. For giving me that," he said softly but his boy was once again sound asleep, not a care in the world when he was in the arms of his Dom.

"Wow guys. Congratulations," the cheery voice pulled them back and they blushed and thanked her as she beamed at them in wonder.

"You truly are one of a kind couple. One last thing. Can you please turn around so I can inspect your marks?" she asked and they rose awkwardly, turning around to show her their marks.

Blaine's was filled with light blue and a thin black line framed Kurt's. There wasn't a spot or a blemish on either of them as they had realized when they looked at them in awe that very same morning.

"Perfect colouring. Taking everything into account I deem this bond valid, registered and permanent. Congratulations." She beamed and turned the recorder off, her face breaking into that huge smile again and Kurt felt his shoulders relax as Blaine's hand found his and clasped it between his warm fingers.

They were forever now.

"Thank you so much," he whispered and she nodded at him.

"It's my job. But I have to say you two are adorable together. Now... just a drop of blood for the files and your signatures on the form and we are officially done here." She took two small needles and two tiny vials gesturing for them to give her their hands.

"You afraid of needles?" Blaine asked Kurt worriedly.

"What? Oh... no... no I'm not," he answered and in a matter of moments she disinfected and pricked
the tips of their pointer fingers, collecting a few drops into the vials.

"The chemicals lining the inside of the vials will colour in response to the pheromones in your blood. Blue for submissive, red for Dominant. It only works when there is a lot in your system so we generally do it afterwards when the Doms and subs are coming down instead of building up. Less casualties and tears that way," she said shaking the small vials and nodding when indeed, the liquid inside coloured blue and red.

She deposited both vials into a small case and locked it, smoothing a white label with their names on it onto the lid. "Everything is in order. Place your signatures here while I put these in the freezer and we're all done."

She handed them the documents she was filling earlier.

Kurt signed the papers first and handed the pen to Blaine, looking around the office with interest. It was completely different from what Kurt imagined it would be. He pictured something sterile, cold and lifeless, but Tasha clearly gave the space her own signature, potted plants lining the window sill, photos of family and friends framed on the wall and papers in messy piles on her desk.

A bright red colour drew his attention. Most of the files were in boring, beige folders, blending together, nondescript and bland.

Which made the red one stand out out that much more.

Tasha moved to take the forms from Blaine and her elbow jostled the small pile of papers making Kurt's stomach clench in dread as his hand shot out to grip his Dom's fingers when his eyes lighted on a single name.

"Blaine…"