A Pen For Your Thoughts

by Lady_Saddlebred

Title: A Pen for Your Thoughts
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Series: Lessons They Never Taught Me in School (archived)

DISCLAIMER: George Lucas owned everything, until he sold it to Disney. We own nothing, just playing in his playground.

Special thanks to Katbear and Merry Amelie, notre betas par excellence!

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Previous fics in series: all on AO3 website:
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Daffodils
Spring Cotillion
Is That a Lightsaber I See Before Me
Ben rummaged in the end table, vainly looking for something to write with. Note to self: buy this man an electric pencil sharpener and a box of Number 2 pencils!

The drawer was full of broken-leaded pencils, pens long out of ink, crumbled post-it notes (some that looked years old), even an ancient chewed-up pipe in the very back. He shook his head and straightened, hands on hips, to mock-glare at his lover, who merely cocked a quizzical eyebrow in response.

“Quinn, you’re hopeless, you know that?”

Quinn grinned. “Your point?”


“Archaeologist.”

Ben gave a rueful laugh. “You wish. This whole place is a friggin’ time capsule. When you pass on, they’ll donate the whole thing to your favorite museum. Or maybe make it a campus artifact and sell tours.”

“And will you weep over my remains?”

The question took him aback. So casually asked, but with layers of hidden meaning underneath. Quinn had turned back to his magazine as he spoke, and it was hard to get a read on whether he was kidding. But Ben sensed his response would be scrutinized from every angle, so he thought before answering.

“Quinn, you know I love you,” he said, deliberately keeping his tone light. “But why ruin a beautiful afternoon with talk of remains and dying, all over a stupid pencil sharpener? Seems just a bit overdramatic, don’t you think? Besides, there won’t be any remains to weep over, don’t you know that? Adele and I are going to donate your body to the Archaeology Department, to be preserved for future generations.”

Quinn smiled benignly. “As you wish, Ben.” He reached into his jacket pocket and pulled out a small hard case. “Use this, why don’t you?”

Ben took the case, read “Mont Blanc” in gold gilt letters. He carries his Mont Blanc pen in a case in his jacket? How utterly… *Quinn.*

He carefully opened the case, revealing an elegant black-and-gold ballpoint pen. This was definitely *not* Quinn’s much used-and-abused fountain pen, which Ben had seen on countless occasions. Holding it up to the light, he saw a small gold script on the side: BWK

Benjamin William Kensington? “For… me?” he said faintly.

“Do you like it?”

“It’s gorgeous. But-”

“Then you’re welcome.” Quinn went back to his magazine, drawing contentedly on his pipe.

“What’s the occasion?”
“No occasion.” Quinn shrugged. “I just thought you’d like a decent pen.”

“Mont Blanc? Didn’t you tell me they were the best around?”

“Did I?” He nonchalantly turned the page. “Look, here’s an ad for that new Italian restaurant I was telling you about. We’ll have to give it a try soon. Oh, and it’s supposed to be the ‘tech’ model, whatever that means.”

Ben studied the pen again and found a small label near the top. 8Gb. He carefully pulled the gold cap off and discovered a USB adaptor. “It’s a thumb drive, too?”

“I suppose. That’s a good thing, right? I hope so, because it wasn’t returnable once I had it engraved.”

Ben heard the hint of uncertainty in Quinn’s voice, the subconscious plea for reassurance that he had safely navigated treacherous and uncharted waters. He leaned over to kiss the silvering hair, inhaling the combination of pipe tobacco, herbal shampoo and Quinn’s own unique scent. “Yes, Professor, it’s a *very* good thing. Very handy. Very twenty-first century. You’re learning. Thank you.” He turned the pen over in his hands, admiring it again. “Did you get one for yourself, too?” he asked casually.

Quinn managed to look simultaneously shocked and pleased that his gift had been so well received. “What would *I* do with something like that? It doesn’t come in a fountain-pen style, for one thing. Besides, I barely trust myself to turn on that shiny monster you chose for me, much less figure out how to make a pen *talk* to it. I have you, what need have I for such… techno-toys?” He shook his head reproachfully, but the cerulean-blue eyes crinkled in amusement.

A private joke between them. Quinn would cheerfully provide his lover with any manner of “toys,” on the condition that he did not have to deal with them personally. In fact, Ben had found himself forced to practice great self-restraint in order to avoid being continually gifted with the latest technological gadgets. Admire something in passing in a store or a catalog and Quinn would immediately offer to purchase it for him, or worse, simply buy it then and there, over Ben’s protests.

Ben had had a disturbing sense of being “kept,” but had slowly come to realize that Quinn simply enjoyed “doing for” those for whom he cared, with no thought of personal reward. He’d wanted to object, but Adele had cautioned him not to make an issue out of Quinn’s generosity, as it would be construed as criticism and feelings would be hurt.

“Cheri, Quinn is a giver, not the taker that so many men are. His greatest pleasure comes from giving of himself to others. It is why he is such a good teacher, n’est-ce pas? And such a good lover,” she had added slyly, laughing as Ben had blushed furiously. “There are no price tags attached, trust me. Just say thank you, and that is enough. You will see.”

The pen was a perfect example: Quinn had used the same worn Mont Blanc fountain pen at least as long as he had been on the Academy faculty. He’d needed some fresh ink for it, and the salesperson (who no doubt worked on commission) had immediately tried to sell him a new pen, which Quinn had politely but firmly refused. But wait, Ben should have a good pen. He could even have it engraved. And the deluxe “tech” model with built-in USB flash drive? No idea what that meant, but it just said “Ben” somehow, and that was reason enough.

Poor sucker, Ben thought fondly. Probably talked him into the multi-year service plan, too.

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