Poison to Panacea

by chirusse

Summary

Modern AU: Alois Trancy is living a rather boring life in foster care, waiting to age out of the system and becoming absolutely nothing, just like he always thought he would be. Life is boring. People are boring- that is, until he meets a certain Claude Faustus at the local library. Claude is uncomplicated, but somehow interesting all the same. And that look he gives Alois... well, sometimes people want to try and play with fire.
Tepid September air whipped Alois Trancy’s flaxen hair with each gust of wind—sending tendrils of the golden locks to merge with the breeze. The harsh, yellow button-down shirt his foster mother had entreated him to wear did nothing to break the breeze against his skin—something that Alois both loved and hated. The color of the sweater was invariably awful, making his skin sallow and sick. The wind was chilly, but something that kept him awake and moving. Alive.

The old bat never did much to improve his wardrobe, no matter how he complained. (The old bat being his foster mother, of course.) With plenty of other brothers and sisters in the house, Alois was merely one head out of many. An empty number on a page to be processed. That’s how Child Services treated him.

And that was how he felt most days, anyway.

He shrugged the strap of his violet messenger bag over his shoulder and continued walking with a blank stare fixated on the ground.

Alois’ history teacher for freshman level "social studies" (idiotic name, in Alois' opinion) had assigned the first essay of the year, and although Alois was loathe to finish any of his work out of fear it appeared he actually cared, an excuse to escape from home would be taken at any opportunity. So, here he was, trudging down to the public library for research. Foster siblings stuffed into one home had a knack for hogging all of the resources he needed, the computer included. Even if he had wanted to stay at home, it was unlikely he’d get anything done.

Not that Alois cared much about whether he worked on the idiotic assignment at home or at the library; but home he would be subjected to supervision to ensure that he completed his work. So, the library it was.

Alois did enjoy one aspect of the library: the people inside. It was fascinating to watch them, wondering what they were thinking about and what kind of person they were. He had found a word for that feeling some time ago on the Internet, while browsing some stupid blogging website: sonder. It had a nice sound to it.

Of course, there were many things about the library that Alois didn't like. One of them was the smell of old books. Decaying, obsolete material did not appeal to him—rather it reminded him of worse times.

With him.

Funny how even people could carry that same smell of death. He wondered if it was something that came with old age, or just a smell that developed from someone’s rotten insides. If that was the case, he supposed he should smell just as bad as that old man...

Alois pushed open the doors of the library carelessly, letting them slam closed again in a dramatic entrance. A few students turned from their work to glance at the source of the noise.

An older lady at the reception desk inquired if Alois was looking for something in particular, and in response earned a gruff “history.” Alois was directed to the appropriate area with the point of a wrinkled finger and an accompanying smile.

He never understood why older people always smiled. Either that, or they wore a perpetual scowl on their face. Perhaps some of them were pent on getting into heaven, and the others were content
on dying in lonely disgust? He smiled at that.

Once in the history section, Alois dropped his bag on a table and sat in the center of the designated area, surveying his surroundings. A few female (college, he assumed) students were in a corner, bent over a large book.

Boring.

A younger boy, probably in elementary school, was one table away from him, scribbling in one of the library’s books. Supposedly that was against the rules, but Alois had known classmates to rip pages of the monthly magazines and bring their “daring feat” to share at school. Usually they were pictures of scantily-clad women in bikinis, posed so that their breasts were out on display for all to see.

Boring.

The lady from the reception desk was peering over at him, likely curious if he had found everything on his own. Alois waved and smiled with due geniality, but his motions remained for show, without effort or emotion, to back them. To keep the lady off his back, he rose and began to peruse the shelves with feigned interest in the titles.

The report assigned was on feudal Japan, and he scanned through the rows of books until he found something moderately interesting. Several shelves down from his table, a collection of samurai poems appeared to be a tolerably relevant and enticing read.

Alois returned to his table and opened the book to a random page. His eyes skimmed over the first few lines of the text without processing any material. The blank paper beside him grew ever more attractive, and soon was covered with scribbled butterflies, rather than notes.

Alois’ head rested in his palm. Boredom weighed down his mind.

What good was finishing his work when there would be more later that he couldn’t finish? It seemed to him that he ought to keep the bar of expectation low, so that complete assignments became a commodity. Maybe his teachers would give him higher grades if he showed “improvement.”

His eyes drifted away to a new arrival to the section. A handsome man (man being an arbitrary word- Alois estimated him to be around 20) with dark hair and rectangular glasses sat three tables down and opened a laptop from his bag. There was nothing particularly odd about him, besides being attractive, but what Alois liked was that the man noticed him staring, unlike all the other unobservant occupants of the library.

A pair of golden eyes rose from the laptop’s luminescent screen and locked with Alois. The man’s eyebrow rose, as if he were about to ask a question. Then his eyes flicked back to the screen, never sparing Alois a second glance.

Boring.
Thanks to the previous unproductive day of “research,” Alois Trancy dragged himself back to the library for a second attempt at his essay. The frustration of it all was blamed on his foster mother, who had asked to see his progress on the assignment. Which amounted to nothing. Surprise, surprise.

Alois’ previous records in education (apparently) had warned her to watch him carefully. Sometimes Child Services was just too conveniently efficient. They always did their job when it was most problematic for Alois.

He’d barely been in the system for two years, and already he knew that much.

Begrudgingly he reentered the building and was greeted by the same receptionist, who was all too pleased to see him again. That overly cheery attitude was becoming sickening to Alois.

However, much to his chagrin, someone else occupied the seat he had taken the previous day: the spectacled man from the day before. His laptop was open, shining light onto his glasses.

Alois frowned and stared at him.

He didn’t care much for change. Change meant that he would have to adapt. He would have to learn a new color to add to his coat, a new direction on the merry-go-round. Things had changed when he lived with that man. Things changed again when Child Services found him and threw him into foster care with all the other forgotten kids. Things changed again when he was pushed into an overstuffed home with an overworked foster mother.

That chair was his and he intended to use it again, silly as it was.

He grumbled and dropped his bag across from the man- louder and more harshly than necessary. The man glanced up, visibly annoyed at the disturbance, but did not say anything.

“Ahem.” Alois cleared his throat.

The man looked at him again and replied in a deep baritone, “Yes? Can I help you?”

“That’s my seat.” Alois’ lip curled and he pushed his voice to sound assertive, but the effort was too obviously forced to be intimidating. Rather, the words were childish. Bratty.

The man pushed up his glasses and emotion cleared from his features.

“This is a public library. Seats do not belong to anyone.”

“I was sitting here yesterday. You saw me.”

“I’ve never seen you here before. If it is your seat, I would have noticed.” The man seemed amused with Alois’s frustration, and had returned to his work. He wasn’t listening to Alois as he spoke, and that pissed off the boy.

“How would you know?” Alois crossed his arms.

“I come here almost every day,” the man replied, sparing Alois one final glance. The angularity of his eyes and hair served to deepen the cold, cruel nature of his response, though the tone of his voice rested in a deep monotone, producing an air of calm arrogance.
Alois sat down across from the man and dragged his bag over. He retrieved a pencil and some paper for writing and began to doodle furiously.

The man across the table glared at the offending scratching noises.

“There are plenty of other tables,” he informed the boy.

“I like this one. It’s in the center of the shelves, so I can see everything. The entrance to the library is still visible, and I can see all of the people working in the area. I don’t want to change seats because that one is perfect.” Alois’ lip formed a pout as he drew, never looking back at the man. Finally, he dropped his pencil to return the glare of his tablemate.

“Did you know all of that, Mr. Library-glasses-man? Did you?” Alois may have been fourteen, but his angry speech shaved five years from that number.

Yes, he was childish. But childish things were all that concerned him.


“It’s the only table with an outlet for my laptop,” the man said. He paused for a moment, and then added another thought, "Besides, shouldn't you been working in the library? If you wanted to people-watch, there are plenty of alternative places."

Alois’ angry stare lowered to the table.

“Well.”

The man said nothing and continued typing.

Alois resigned himself to sharing the table, as long as the man didn’t bother him anymore.
Chapter 3

On the third day, Alois was *once again* ordered to give an honest effort and work on his idiotic history assignment. The previous day had proved less fruitless than expected, though Alois had managed to scribble some notes and write a load of nonsense to pass as English homework. He wondered how long into the assignment his teacher would realize that “readrisification” was not a word, and was, in fact, complete and utter bullshit with a copyright held by Alois Trancy.

The man was back again in Alois’ seat, though the boy didn’t make a fuss this time. He did, however, move to sit next to the man at the table. He leaned over to see what the man had been working on, and found himself surprised.

“Mr. Library is writing about… spiders? Why the hell are you in the history section?” Alois smirked and continued, “Didn’t you know? There’re signs. Or are you blind because of your glasses?”

“It’s quiet here.” The man’s eyes remained on his screen. “Or, rather, it *used* to be.”

Alois frowned.

“It’s a public library,” he retorted, mocking the way the man had spoken to him the previous day.

“Public or not, it’s supposed to be quiet.” A tawny eye flicked to the corner of its lid and peered through jet black jagged hair. “So, if you don’t mind…”

“I don’t.” Alois smiled and remained seated. Clearly the man had meant for him to leave, but Alois was perfectly comfortable where he was. Besides, he was beginning to like this man. Just a bit.

Alois pulled some paper from his bag with a pen. The book on samurai poetry remained on the shelf where Alois had left it, and was brought back to the table.

The man stopped his typing to look at Alois’ book, and reached to turn the title towards him. The fingers of his hand were long and spindly with carefully manicured nails which glided over the letters of the book.

“What are you writing on?” He asked. He returned the book to Alois, who then began to flip through its pages.

“I have to write a paper on feudal Japan. It’s horrible.”

“That doesn’t sound so bad. Are you in middle school?”

Alois scrunched his face. “I’m not a kid! I’m in high school.”

“Right.” The man’s hand rose, and Alois first thought he was going to touch him, but instead the man moved to push up the wire frame of his glasses.

“How old are you? 30?” The estimate was exaggerated, but Alois’ annoyance was conveyed well enough. He repeated over and over in his head, *I’m not a kid, I’m not a kid, I’m not a kid.*

“I’m studying at a university. You’re off by a few years.”

Not just because his grades were piss-poor, but because foster care and Child Services would never pay for higher education once he was out of the system. Likely he’d end up doing what he was forced into before…

“It’s an opportunity for the future. You need an education to succeed.” The man resumed typing, stopping every few minutes to skim through an online article for information.

“Well, whatever.” Alois brushed blonde hair from his eyes, exposing aqua eyes and girlishly long eyelashes. The man turned his head to look at the boy with a clear spark of interest.

Alois recognized that interest. That look. This man wasn’t the first man to be interested in him (assuming that his guess was correct), and likely wouldn’t be the last.

He examined the man’s face more closely: the angular curvature of his eyes, the sharp, defined point of his nose. The man’s mouth rested in a line between plush lips. Not bad at all. Alois certainly didn't mind looking at it. He was handsome, and his face remained interesting even after careful study.

“Say,” Alois’ eyelids slid downward, shading his eyes in the blonde eyelashes. “What’s your name?” His lips stretched into a coy smile.

The man didn’t react to the obvious flirtation, but provided a monotone response.

“My name is Claude.”

“Claude. Cuh-law-duh.” The word rolled off Alois’ tongue and he dragged the syllables out with emphasis.

“Please do not call me Mr. Library-glasses-man again.” Claude pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose.

“I’m Alois.” Alois’ hand crept closer to Claude’s computer.

“What’s so interesting about spiders?” He brushed a finger over one of the keys.

“I’m working on a report for a class,” Claude informed him. Alois sunk back in his chair, pouting that Claude had not responded to his advances. Maybe he wasn’t interested after all? It wasn’t as if Alois was complaining- but the attention pleased him. Though he failed to figure out if it was something he wanted or not.

“Don’t you have some work to do, Alois?”

The way Claude’s tongue lolled out the “I” in Alois’ name sent shivers into the boy. It was long, drawn out… and calming. His monotone voice was uninteresting, yet Alois liked that. Somehow. He ceased pouting and smiled.

“Can you help me with it?”

“I really don’t know the first thing about feudal Japan. That’s what you’re writing on, correct?” Claude’s answering tone was curt.

“You probably know more than me. Please? Help me write the paper?” Alois’ bottom lip quivered. “Please?”

Claude’s eyes gazed at the boy without emotion. He removed his hands from the keyboard and set
them on his lap.

“I’ll make you a deal, Alois. Take down some notes today, let me finish my own assignment, and
tomorrow I will help you with the essay.”

Alois took a moment to consider the deal, and then nodded an affirmative.

“All right.” With this agreement, Claude's hands returned to his work, typing the next few
sentences of his work. Alois watched him for a few moments, and then, for once in his life, Alois
Trancy put effort into his schoolwork- but only with the promise of someone being there the next
day.

Of course, promises had always been arbitrary in his life. Easily forgotten or abandoned as easily
as they had been made. He knew that well enough.

Hope was what moved his pen across the page.
Eagerly Alois waited for Claude the following day at the library. He had left his previous seat open, not as to note conceding defeat, but as a gesture of good faith. In all honesty, he didn’t know why he was so eager to see Claude and start on work. The aspect of work repelled him. Claude’s argument with him was irritating. He didn’t know the man very well, and he gave very few intriguing details for Alois to munch on.

And yet, his monotone voice was somehow boring and alluring. His serious nature was bland and a mask for his feelings. Alois found that interesting.

And he didn’t quite respond correctly to Alois’ flirtation.

Was it wrong to use that tactic? Alois thought perhaps it was, and deep down it left him uneasy. It was reminiscent of… that other man. The same hungry looks and depraved smiles. But Claude didn’t smile, at least. There was only that one look of perpetual irritation that he wore, disguised as vague disinterest.

All the same, the attention was what Alois craved. An attractive prize to monopolize. For that reason, he had dressed himself in his favorite blue butterfly blouse and shorts, despite the cold, windy weather outside. A scarf woven with some kind of glittering yarn kept his neck warm, at least.

After ten minutes had passed waiting for the man, Alois’ eagerness waned to annoyance, and then a panic of abandonment. He was just about to forget the entire affair and go home when Claude appeared, black messenger bag slung over his shoulder.

“You’re late,” Alois ground out, frowning.

Claude raised an eyebrow at the boy’s tone and set his things on the table.

“Class ran over the usual time.” His reply was effortless, without care.

“I thought you weren’t coming.” The words were simple enough, but vocalized the very fear that constantly ate at Alois. Abandonment, even from a stranger. No matter the circumstance.

“I said that I was helping, yes?” Claude tucked a pen behind his ear and adjusted his glasses. “Let’s see what research you’ve come up with.”

A smile found its way onto Alois’ face with Claude’s reply, and he dug through his bag to find his notes. He handed a piece of paper to Claude, slightly crumpled, with the same enthusiastic smile.

“I did my best! What do you think?” Perhaps he was overdoing it in acquiescing to Claude’s responses and being a bit too pliable, but something in the back of his mind wanted the man to praise him— to like him.

He would crack the case that was Claude, even if it was a miniscule discovery in the context of his life.

In retrospect, there was really nothing else to Alois Trancy; just the people he lived around for the time being. Their personalities filled him and gave him substance. His life wasn’t even an "after-school special," like his classmates who lived for the afternoons out of the classroom and out with their friends. Alois didn’t have any friends, and he never tried to make any.
Claude looked displeased at the work and attempted to smooth the paper against the table.

“I can barely read this.”

“It’s all about the samurai poems. I’m going to write about them for my paper.” Alois reached into his bag for more paper and a pen to begin.

“I see.” Claude rubbed his forehead while peering down at the scrap, deciphering the handwriting. “We have work to do. Find the book you are working with and bring it to me.”

Several hours of scribbling, scratching, and rewriting, something of a rough draft was formed between the pair. Frankly, it was about as far as Alois had ever gotten with any essay, and he felt it was quite the accomplishment. Claude was not as amused, pressing that there was still revising and typing to do.

“Screw revising, this is the best paper I’ve ever written in my life.” Alois laughed and tucked the paper into his bag.

“Your expectations are not high,” Claude commented, pushing up his glasses.

“I barely ever finish schoolwork. So what? Teachers pass me anyway. It's not like they care if I learn anything.”

“How are you doing in your other classes?” Claude seemed genuinely curious, and Alois liked that. No one asked him about how he was doing- at least, not seriously.

“English is fine, math sucks, like just about everything else,” Alois replied, shrugging his shoulders. It wasn’t that he was unintelligent, just that the subjects and work bored him, so he never completed his work or studied.

“Perhaps you ought to come to the library more often and work on that.”

Alois’ azure eyes flicked to the man.

“Do you mean that literally, or that you might… help me?” A grin spread across his lips.

“I will be here, if you need help.”

“So… like a tutor?” Alois was slightly confused, and Claude’s even voice proved only more cryptic.

“A resource. I’ll work on my own work and will be available if you have questions.” Claude folded his hands in his lap and cleared his throat.

“Type that paper tonight and have it ready for editing tomorrow.”
Chapter 5

Today, Alois skipped to the library with music on his mind. Since it was Friday, he would have the weekend free, and that meant plenty of time to himself (though also plenty of time to be bored). His foster mother was so pleased with the progress on his essay, thanks to Claude, that she had promised a surprise over the weekend. Alois hoped it was fried fish for dinner one night.

And he would be seeing Claude again today.

He entered the library and waved to the lady at the front desk, beelining to the history section. Claude was already seated, waiting for him. Alois pulled out the typed copy of his essay and laid it before Claude.

“Ah, so you did end up finishing it. Well done,” Claude praised, while flipping through the pages. He gestured to the seat beside him, beckoning for Alois to join him.

“It will be easier to show you problem areas when we edit if you sit beside me.” Claude pushed the draft between them and Alois sat down. They both began to read, Claude stopping every few sentences to make a notation and explain it to Alois. Alois hardly listened, more focused on the sound of Claude’s voice and the movement of his lips than the words being spoken. After a few more lines, Claude noticed Alois' lack of attention to the essay.

Underneath the table, something brushed against the boy's leg and wrapped itself around his upper thigh. He looked down to find that it was Claude's free hand, resting comfortably while its owner worked.

Alois had his suspicions about Claude the other day, when he had given him that look…

It was easy for Alois to make a connection between the man before him and that other old man, but Claude was not so very far apart in age from Alois, and Alois wasn’t… that young. Or so he told himself. They weren't the same. Claude's hand on his thigh was nothing like the old man touching him.

He shifted closer to Claude, opening his legs. Just a bit of encouragement.

If the man was surprised at his reaction, he didn’t allow any emotion to distort his face. Instead, the tips of his fingers brushed the hem of Alois’ shorts, dancing around the fabric with the lightest touches. All the while, Alois was amazed to see him droning on about providing an explanation on the use of a particular quotation.

The man wasn’t missing a beat.

“Claude,” Alois interrupted, letting his eyelashes shade those eyes that he knew were so alluring. “I’ve done so well with this essay, don’t you think? Can we go for a treat after finishing today?” He licked his lips, dragging his front teeth over the flesh. Claude stopped his reading, but his eyes remained fixated on the essay.

“I don’t see why not. Did you have something particular in mind?” Claude’s gaze removed itself from the paper and flicked down to Alois’ crotch. The boy could have laughed, if not for the fact that increasingly he was feeling attracted to this man. Wasn't this just a bit too easy? No doubt Claude wanted him. The hand on his leg felt hot and sweaty. One of the fingers twitched.

“I want ice cream,” Alois whined. This time, a snicker rose from his throat as Claude’s mouth parted slightly and an eyebrow rose. Clearly it was not what he had in mind.
How easy it was for Alois to play around with him. Could he really be that simple?

“All right.” Claude leaned back in his chair, removing the hand from Alois’ thigh. “If that’s what you want.”

Oh, that was boring. No teasing in return. Nothing.

“I know a place not far from here. After we finish.” Alois’ essay reclaimed the man’s attention, and he said no more.

“This is me.” Claude gestured to a black sports car parked in the corner of the library’s lot. He pushed a button on the keys and it lit up, unlocking the doors.

“Are you rich or something?” Alois ran his hands over the black metal of the passenger door before opening it to sit inside.

“I bought it from a friend who didn’t want it.” Claude placed his bags carefully into the backseat before getting in, while Alois just slung his bag behind the chair. “I suppose that you could say my friend is wealthy, yes.”

“That’s lucky for you, I guess. It’s nice.” The car held some kind of masculine cologne-like odor that stuck to the seats. Much nicer than Alois’ foster mother’s beat-up suburban. Alois’ mouth suddenly went dry.

“So, ice cream…” he said, pulling on the sleeves of his sweater, “…and then what?”

Claude stared out the window of the car.

“We’ll see.” His tongue peeked out to moisten those lips. He started the car and pulled out of the lot. Alois’ attention diverted to the immaculate dashboard. Not a speck of dust could be found, nor any personal items to decorate the car. He began to look through the glove compartment.

“Do you have any music in here? CDs, or something? What music do you listen to?” His search was proving fruitless, unfortunately.

“Not much.” Claude’s hand moved to turn on the radio, and he fiddled with one of the knobs on the control panel until a random station turned up. An older song was playing, something that Alois thought his foster mother and father might have liked.

“What, you don’t like music? Nothing at all?” Alois smiled and crossed his arms. “You’re so serious. I guess that’s typical of you, huh?”

“And what music do you like?”

“You know, just general stuff. Popular music on the radio. Is that bad? I guess it maybe is. Kind of juvenile, right?” Alois fidgeted in the seat.

“It’s all right if that’s what you like.” Claude’s answer relieved Alois, and he settled down into the seat.

“So you don’t like music at all?” Alois really wasn’t going to believe an answer as simple as that. Was it possible for someone not to like music at all? Claude was so… weird. He couldn’t think of any other adjective to apply to the man.
“I listen to a little classical music occasionally.”

“Ugh, really? I thought just old people liked that stuff.”

“Not at all.” A small smile crept its way to Claude’s mouth.

“Well, okay, I guess. At least you like something.” The car pulled into a shopping area and they parked across from an ice cream shop. Alois hadn’t come to this area very often, mostly because he didn’t like to go out with the family when they went out somewhere. It was embarrassing to be seen with them, honestly.

But right now it was just Claude, so he supposed that was fine.
Chapter 6

Alois sat down with an ice cream cone heaping with some kind of chemically dyed cobalt blue concoction. He had urged the worker at the register to fill the bottom of the cone with rainbow sprinkles, and then mash sprinkles into the ice cream to create an artistic food abomination. It looked delicious to Alois, at least. Claude joined the boy with a cup of plain vanilla soft serve after paying for their treats.

Alois leaned over the table to look at what Claude had ordered.

“Just vanilla… really?”

“This is all I wanted.”

“So weird.” Alois shook his head and licked his own ice cream. “And you even wanted to eat it in here. I thought you were going to take me somewhere for a drive or something.”

“The car might have gotten dirty.”

“Hmpf. ‘The car might have gotten dirty.’” Alois lowered his voice and mocked Claude’s way of speaking. The man didn’t respond to the teasing, so Alois flashed him a smile.

Still nothing. Under the table, Alois nudged Claude’s leg with his foot.

“I don’t get you at all,” he said, tracing a line down the man’s jeans and then pushing his foot between Claude’s shoes.

“I’m surprisingly uncomplicated,” Claude replied. “Where would you like to go after this?”


“The park? Who goes to the park anymore, Claude?” Alois scoffed at his suggestion.

“I do. It’s another quiet place.”

Alois began to laugh. Clearly the man didn’t understand what Alois was giving him invitation to. After a quick glance at the counter of the store, which was now without a cashier, Alois’ foot inched up Claude’s leg until he brushed his inner thigh. Claude glanced down.

“We could just park somewhere for a while,” Alois whispered.

“We could do that.”

After the ice cream, the pair returned to the car and began to drive until Claude pulled aside and parked.

They were in an old lot behind a store, safely hidden away by some bushes. Somewhere in the back of Alois’ mind, he thought this would be a perfect scene in a movie where a John picks up a hooker, but Alois was not a cheap strumpet. He wanted this, and Claude hadn’t really paid him to do anything. He was in charge… right?
He looked at the man in the driver’s seat, who was checking his phone for something, as if they were waiting at a red light.

Claude’s phone was nice, too, Alois noted, but that didn’t tell him anything about the man. Just about everyone had nice phones; regardless of what standing they held. It was black, plain, fairly boring. No trinkets hanging off of it, no stickers, and no noticeable cracks or scratches to be seen.

Yet somehow that phone was more interesting than the boy in Claude’s passenger seat? Alois frowned.

“Hey, Claude.” Alois put his hand over the phone. “What were you thinking about doing here? And when we were eating ice cream? And back at the library?”

Claude glanced at the boy and set his phone down on the dashboard. “I don’t know.”

“Liar,” Alois whispered. He took Claude’s hand and placed it on his thighs. “You’re a liar. Don’t lie.”

Claude’s hand was warm and soft. It gripped the boy’s flesh greedily, as if he wanted to pull him closer. Alois complied, unbuckling his seatbelt and moving into Claude’s lap.

He hadn’t really given thought to their size difference before, but sitting on the man’s legs accentuated just how much bigger Claude was than he. The driver’s seat was pushed back, so that they wouldn’t bump the horn and call attention to themselves. Alois prepared himself for the man to begin stripping him of clothing, but instead a hand cradled the back of his head. His mouth was met with Claude’s lips, which just brushed the bow of Alois’ upper lip.

That was something new. Nothing like the infrequent, bruising kisses the old man had always given him.

Alois wanted more.

He pushed his body into Claude’s chest and forced his mouth back onto the older man, who responded with a small grunt of surprise, and then more kisses. The hand at the back of Alois’ head was firm, encouraging, but not forceful. He realized that he could move if he wanted. He could stop, or instigate something else.

With that newfound freedom, he moved to lick and suck on Claude’s chin. His lips and tongue brushed something rough—missed stubble from Claude’s morning shave. That tidbit also explained the very faint scent of cologne that clung to the man: probably aftershave or the smell of his shaving cream. It was a nice, clean smell.

Claude shifted under him and let out a rough breath. Alois moved lower to Claude’s neck, where he was met with opposition.

“That’s enough.” He pulled Alois’ face back and pushed their lips together, this time running his tongue across the boy’s bottom lip. Alois allowed him entrance, immediately wrapping his own tongue with Claude’s.

Claude’s hand moved from Alois’ head to the small of his back and held the boy in a vice grip against his chest. The pressure wasn’t quite in the right place, so Alois squirmed until his crotch was pushed against Claude’s abdomen. He could feel Claude smirk into their kiss, and then Alois was pulled down to push against Claude’s (oh!) erection.

“Just from a kiss? You must have been thinking about something good,” Alois teased. His fingers
moved across Claude’s zipper and danced to the top of his jeans. The solitary button there was unfastened, and then the teeth of the zipper were slowly spread apart. His small hands slipped easily into Claude’s boxer shorts, and felt around for the half-hard cock. Claude removed his grip from Alois’ back and guided the boy’s hands in how he should be held and touched until they were swatted away.

“I know what to do,” Alois grumbled. He pulled out Claude’s cock and began to pump it in his hands. It really was something to be seen, and took him two hands to work properly.

That was another thing. Claude wasn’t extraordinarily big, nor was the old man, but he was heavy and thick in Alois’ hands. Was strong a cliché word to use to describe it? The old man’s had been… old. That was the nicest word he would summon for description. Claude’s wasn’t as unpleasant looking, though Alois didn’t think penises were very pretty in general. Vagina’s weren’t either, for that matter.

But he must have been doing something right with his hands, because Claude let out another soft groan. Maybe this was the only way to elicit any sounds from the man. Eager for more, Alois sunk into the floorboard and took Claude into his mouth.

A gasp of shock followed, and then pressure at the back of Alois’ head. Claude’s hand was back, urging him to swallow as much as he could take. Alois laved his tongue around the head, but didn’t sink lower until Claude groaned, “Can you take more?”

Alois hummed and swallowed, allowing the man to push as much into his face as he liked. A quick glance to Claude gifted him with the sight of the man red-faced and hazy-eyed. This was definitely the most emotion he’d ever seen in the stoic man, and every movement of his lips and throat only rewarded the boy more of the sight. It was incredibly powerful feeling, being able to push Claude to the edge like this.

After several minutes of his ministrations, Claude pulled him back, and then reached for a tissue in the glove compartment with shaky, sweaty hands. Alois would have pouted at him, but he didn’t want to stop moving until Claude was coming beneath him. He really was planning to swallow it, if Claude had wanted to come in his mouth…

Alois watched Claude's eyebrows knit together; his eyes squeeze shut until there wasn’t anymore the man could take. Claude’s breaths began to come more erratically, and his chest heaved until release spilled from his cock with one long groan. He didn't say Alois' name, but he hadn't been very communicative during the entire act.

Alois gave him a moment to rest before putting Claude’s hand on his own erection, painfully confined in his shorts.

“Me too,” Alois whined, rubbing himself and allowing a dramatized moan to fall from his lips.

Claude’s composure was back and he instructed Alois to climb into the backseat. With some difficulty in maneuvering, he soon followed. The driver and passenger seats were pushed up as far as they would go.

Alois had already stripped off his shorts, revealing pink panties that he has swiped from a foster sister’s wardrobe. Claude wasted no time in removing those, and then immediately moved to lick Alois’ cock. Much smaller than his own, he could fit the whole of it in his mouth without difficulty, much to Alois’ enjoyment, which was copiously vocalized.

“Fuck, Claude, fuck, yes! There, oh please!” He scratched at the fabric of the backseat and pushed his hips into the air. The old man had hardly ever done this, and when he had it was only to
prepare Alois to take something much more painful in the near future. There didn’t seem to be anything terrifying in the car, so he'd be enjoying this all he could. Claude's tongue on his skin felt heavily, like each lick and caress was coaxing his orgasm from hiding.

“Claude, don’t stop. Suck harder, it feels so good.” Alois’ fingers knotted into Claude’s dark hair and kept him close.

“Please don’t stop. Don’t stop, don’t stop, don’t stop…”
Chapter 7

After the pair had finished, not much time was spent parked in Claude’s car. He insisted that Alois needed to get home soon and would not stand to hear otherwise, despite Alois’ objections about the loose rules of his foster family’s household. He hadn’t said anything about the fact that he didn’t technically live with any real parents, but once Claude pulled into his neighborhood, Alois figured it would be best that he didn’t see his home.

“You can drop me off down the street. I’ll just walk.” Claude seemed not to have any objections to that, and didn’t push him further. Though Alois ordinarily would have disliked a seeming lack of interest, he appreciated that Claude took his requests at face value.

The car slowed to a halt on a curb up the road from Alois’ house. Alois fidgeted in the front seat, fiddling with the seatbelt.

“So… I’ll see you again on Monday?” That tone of desperation was back, though the boy fought and fought it from breaking his voice.

“No-“ Alois’ eyes flinched at this, until Claude finished his reply. “I will be back at the library for some time tomorrow.”

“And I can come see you?” Alois was nearly bouncing in the seat.

“If you would like, yes. However, my invitation functions under the assumption that you will be working as well.”


Something about what Alois had said was apparently funny to Claude, and the smile that had left Alois was now spreading across Claude’s lips, albeit in a much less noticeable fashion. Claude’s smiles weren’t very pronounced, Alois noted. Just small twinkles of amusement.

Claude ignored the question, and instead responded, “Don’t you think it would be beneficial to get ahead in your other subjects? As I recall, you said you weren’t doing so well in them.”

“Yeah, but I’m not stupid. I just don’t like doing homework. It’s useless busy work and I don’t feel like wasting time on it.”

“If that’s how you feel.” Claude’s smile flattened into its usual expressionless state.

“Do you want me to come to the library tomorrow?” Alois was probing, trying to find that spark of interest once more. “Maybe we can go to the park like you wanted afterward?” The enunciation of “park” was enough to send a clear suggestion to his companion in the car, but Claude did not betray anymore emotion than the brief amusement that had since escaped his features.

“Perhaps, yes.” He pressed the lock on the door, as if he were suggesting to Alois to go ahead and leave. Alois did so, collecting his bag from the back with slight nervousness. Claude didn’t seem particularly enthusiastic about seeing him again after all, though he had promised to tutor him at the library in the future. Was the arrangement something only for the weekdays? Alois wondered if his insistence was too pushy, as if he were begging for too much of Claude’s time.

The old man would never have complained at Alois showing interest.
But Claude was nothing like the old man. Alois assured himself of that. He stopped a step away
from the car, pausing to draw out the goodbye.

“So… tomorrow?”

“Yes.”

“Are you gonna pick me up?”

Claude paused for a moment and his eyebrows drew together in thought. “I can come by in the
morning, I suppose.” His lips moved slowly, as if something was troubling him.

“You can wait here. I’ll meet you. What time?”

“Nine. However…” Claude leaned over to the glove compartment and retrieved a scrap of paper
and pen. He scribbled a number on the paper and gave it to Alois.

“If I am late, you can reach me at that number.”

“Is this your cell phone?” Alois clutched the paper tightly and grinned.

“Yes.”

“Can I call it other times? Just to talk?” He was nearly bouncing. This development completely
changed the situation- clearly Claude was just a quiet guy. He didn’t say more than necessary and
let Alois do all the talking, which was fine. But giving Alois a private number surely meant that he
was interested…

“I suppose that would be fine.”

“Right. Okay! I’ll see you in the morning!” Alois’ thighs made an odd slapping noise when he
jumped to turn around, and skipped down the street. Claude turned over the engine and drove
straight away.
Chapter 8

Claude’s car was parked and waiting for Alois the next morning, just as he had promised. Alois had thought to complain about the early morning and how difficult it was for a fourteen year old to get up and dress before noon, but thought better of it considering Claude had kept his word.

Claude wasn’t smiling in the driver’s seat, but he was clean, dressed, and alert. Alois took that as a good sign. He must have thought something of the boy if he continued to show up.

“Good morning. Aren’t you cold?” Claude gestured to the shorts Alois has selected for the day: a bright purple number with jewels sewn into the pockets.

“No. I like these. It’s fine, don’t worry.” Alois grinned. No, please continue to worry, Claude. Worry all you like. Perhaps if he was lucky, Claude would give him his sweater, like in all of those stupid chic flicks his foster mother and sisters watched on the weekend.

“I would be cold. It’s autumn.”

“I know what season it is. I said I’d be fine. Besides, isn’t this all the more reason for you to warm me up?” Alois brushed his hand against Claude’s sweater, pretending to pick lint from the woven fibers. Claude did not respond to the touch. Instead he unceremoniously started the engine of the car and cut on the heat.

“By the way,” Claude began, “I made an error with the day’s plans.” They began to drive, Claude checking every few seconds that the air blowing from the car’s vents was warming up.

“Ooh, Claude’s messed up. I’ll alert the media,” Alois teased. Claude’s eyes darted in the boy’s direction for a silent reprimand. He cleared his throat and continued.

“The library is hosting a reading circle for preschoolers today, and I doubt it will be suitable for any kind of work.”

“Does that mean we’re going to do something actually fun?” Alois’ eyes lit up and color rose to his cheeks.

“I thought we might relocate to my apartment. I had no way of reaching you to tell you before, though I gave you my number…”

“Sounds fun!” Claude turned the car into a small, forested road leading away from the larger intersections outside of Alois’ neighborhood. They continued on, and the road seemed to grow even more isolated. There was no development around, only trees and forest and quiet, empty road. Something dark began to grow in the pit of Alois’ stomach.

Wasn’t this how so many episodes of Law and Order went? A kid goes with an older man to some lonely spot and gets murdered?

Alois wanted to laugh.

Was this how he was fated to end? Claude had been kind enough the day before- was that just a part of his trap? After so long with that other man… Alois glanced over at Claude… perhaps dying by the hand of a man like this would not be so terrible. At least he’d gotten a decent orgasm the previous day. He could likely milk another before he died, too.

Alois bit his lip and they drove in silence until Claude pulled into a small apartment complex,
apparently hidden in the middle of a forest. The man must have been rich, because the buildings looked extremely well kept and the privacy of the area could not have come without high expense.

If it came down to it, Alois supposed he could run home. Or maybe he’d stay and give the useless police and Child Services another mess to sort through. That could be a decent legacy. Maybe they’d even make a movie about him, one of those cheap TV productions on the network his foster mother liked to watch.

A beautiful garden of flowers was planted by the parking lot. To Alois’ delight, some butterflies flitted by. One of them caught its wing in an invisible snare- a spider’s web between two trees. He was about to help the creature when Claude tapped his shoulder.

“My apartment is in Block C,” Claude said, and pointed to a group of buildings in front of them. “Did you eat before you left?”

That was awfully nice of him. Alois wanted to remark upon what a nice murderer Claude was. Very polite. Very cordial.

And very neat, once they entered the apartment. The front room was nearly empty, as if someone had just moved in, or was about to move out. There were no personal belongings to be seen, nor any signs of dirt or tread marks in the floor.

“Did you eat?” Claude repeated his question once more.

“No, I’m fine. But some water would be nice.” Alois’ foster mother had taught him this routine if potential adoptive parents asked to meet with him. They never did, of course. No one wanted an older child, and especially not one who was soiled and broken.

Claude brought him the water and invited him deeper into the house. They entered Claude’s bedroom, which was just as empty aside from a bed, desk, and side table. Claude set his keys on the desk and pulled out his laptop from one of the desk’s drawers.

“Make yourself comfortable. Did you bring something to work on?”

Alois was ashamed to answer no, but he had not thought he would be at Claude’s apartment. Had they been at the library, he could have read a book or used one of the community computers. Instead he reclined on the bed.

Alois face broke out into a strange smile and he asked:

“So, is this where you’re going to do it?”

“Do… what?”

“Kill me.”

Alois’ expression remained stagnant, making sure that Claude knew he was not trying to be funny. He watched as Claude’s own expression grew bewildered.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Alois closed his eyes and laughed. After the peals of laughter subsided, he whispered:

“How disappointing.” He rolled onto his side, so that his back was facing Claude, and stared at the wall with dead eyes.
“I think I would be okay with it if it was you. At least you’re hot, and you got me off yesterday.”

The turn in conversation somehow amused Claude, despite the morbidity of the subject, and Alois heard him step towards the bed.

“As I recall, that was reciprocated.”

“Yeah, and you don’t have an old dick.” A giggle rose from Alois’ throat. “No, I mean you’re not old. Well, you’re older- but your dick isn’t ugly yet.”

Alois felt Claude sit on the bed and he turned his head just for a second to see the man sitting at the foot of the bed, staring at him with a peculiar look, as if Claude were attempting to pick him apart.

“Thank you, I suppose. I’ll remember that next time I look in the mirror.”

“They get ugly when you’re old. And it doesn’t work right.”

“Yes, I know.” Alois could feel the unspoken question hovering: But how do you know? It wasn’t as if he was a little kid- he was old enough to know such things. But still. Claude could think he had looked at dirty things on the Internet or in books, and that was supposed to be bad. Or Claude could be thinking about exactly what had happened.

Alois didn’t know if he wanted Claude to ask. He didn’t know if he wanted to answer.

“My dad told me,” he quickly added. “So if you’re going to kill me, let’s get it done.”

“I’m not going to kill you, or whatever it is you’re imagining. I’m going to work on some things for my classes, and then we’ll see what happens next.”

“Okay. I’m just going to go to sleep, then,” Alois mumbled into Claude’s pillow. “Guess you won’t do anything…”
Alois dreamt of butterflies on Claude’s bed. There were four of them: one on each corner. The lightest butterfly, a bright white and yellow, landed on his arm. A cool breeze rushed by, following the path of the butterflies’ wings. The brown butterfly crawled past on the sheets and a vine of blue flowers sprouted across the fabric.

The blue butterfly landed on Alois’ nose, and cool rain from an overhead cloud sprinkled the boy with a soft shower. The final butterfly, a bright orange, landed on his chest, and a fire sprouted. He was burning. Everything was burning. The bed and other butterflies crumbled in the flames. His body was covered in soot and ash. A shrill scream pierced his eardrums. It must have been himself, he thought, but when he covered his mouth, thick blood spurted over his hands and he discovered that his tongue had been cut out.

Someone shook him awake.

Claude was leaning over him, saying something, but Alois’ ears had not yet ceased ringing from the screams in his dreams. He rubbed the sleep from his eyes.

“What…?”

“I’m finished for today. It’s nearly noon. Do you need to call anyone?”

“No. They don’t expect me back until later.” Alois’ shirt had crumpled between Claude’s mattress and his body heat. He fussed with the material before giving up and wiping his eyes with the sleeves. Alois was certain his hair was a mess from rolling around in sleep, but perhaps Claude liked that disheveled appearance. He hadn’t yet complained at having Alois in his bed.

“All right. Would you like something to eat?” With the offer, Alois clutched his stomach. He glanced at the forgotten glass of water, which was sitting on a coaster on Claude’s desk, sweating from the warm room. Alois rose and took a sip of it before answering.

“Yeah, okay.”

“What would you like?”

“I don’t know. It doesn’t matter- whatever you’re having.”

Claude paused before going to the kitchen and Alois scratched his head. Rather than resting, somehow his nap had only tired him more. He reclined once more on the bed and stared at the ceiling, listening to Claude moving in the kitchen. After a few minutes, Claude returned to the room with a bowl of salad and pasta. He handed the pasta to Alois and sat down at the desk with the salad.

“I didn’t think you would be interested in this,” he explained, and took a bit of dark green lettuce.

“You thought correctly.” In truth, Alois didn’t care much about what he brought- just that the man had thought to offer. He ate a few mouthfuls of pasta, and then set the bowl aside. He laid his head back down on Claude’s pillow and watched the man eat.

Claude’s bed was much larger than his own, and far more comfortable. It had a nice smell, clean, with a hint of cologne. Briefly Alois wondered how often Claude masturbated in this very spot, and a sputter of laughter broke through his lips when he tried to imagine what Claude’s face
looked like while he pleasured himself.

“Is something funny?” Claude put down his fork.

“Claude, you have to be honest to me about something.”

“All right.”

“I’m gonna ask you a question.”

“Yes?”

“How often do you masturbate?” Alois’ face scrunched with another fit of laughter. Claude did not seem the least bit amused, and waited for the boy’s fit to pass before answering.

“Usually once a day, to promote good penile health.”

Alois’ eyes widened.

“Penile health. You just said ‘penile health’ without cracking a smile. You’re unbelievable.” He took one of Claude’s pillows and pressed it to his face, as if to suppress more laughter.

“Don’t you do it because it feels good? In the least you could admit to it helping you sleep.” Alois slapped to the pillow to the side of the bed and snorted.

“Those are added bonuses to the activity, yes.”

Alois lurched forward, hunched his shoulders, and lowered his voice to a mocking baritone, “Those are added bonuses to the activity. I’m Claude and I masturbate because it’s healthy, and not because I’m bored and my cock’s hard.”

“I really don’t see what is so amusing about my answers.”

“You’re so serious. It’s hilarious.” Alois reached for the man and brushed his hair with his fingers. “What’re you playing at, talking to me in such a way? Trying to seduce me? Ensnare me in a clever trap?”

“Goodness. You’ve caught me.” It was the closest thing to teasing that Claude had ever offered. He leaned down to the boy, lips slightly curved into a smile.

“Tell me, is it working?”

“Better than what most other men try.” Alois regretted his reply and bit his lip. He shouldn’t have let Claude know he had been through this charade before…

Often with that other man, Alois would have to play like a precocious virgin. His acting was really something to be seen. It had to be, so that the man would think Alois enjoyed their time together.

Claude’s smile flattened into a line, but otherwise did not show any obvious displeasure.

“You aren’t the first to show interest, you know,” Alois clarified.

“I figured as much when you informed me that you ‘know what to do.’ Yesterday in the car…” Claude removed his glasses and set them atop the desk.

Alois licked his lips, exaggerating the gesture, and tugged on the flesh of this mouth to leave a tempting spot of moisture.
“Do you mind that?”

“It makes the arrangement easier, so I don’t mind.” Claude’s hands were at the base of Alois’ top and pulled it over his head. He continued with the rest of the boy’s garments, peeling them away from the boy and tossing them to the opposite wall.

Meanwhile, Alois puzzled over the use of “arrangement,” unsure of what Claude meant. Were they already a couple? He’d had no previous relationship experience to use as reference. This seemed a tad quick… but he pushed the thoughts away for the time being.

“Wouldn’t you like to see what else I know how to do?” Alois brought his face to the crotch of Claude’s trousers and kissed the zipper. Ass in the air, he wiggled his behind as practiced hands tugged down the man’s fly.

Claude’s hands clutched Alois lower back and he murmured, “Is it all right?”

“You can put it in if you want,” Alois answered, losing his breath as he moved Claude’s trousers down. Claude’s hands suddenly gripped him, and Alois thought for a moment that something would be shoved into his mouth, but instead Claude guided Alois’ back to the bed and placed his head on the pillow.

A hand splayed across the boy’s chest kept him flat on the bed, while the other hand brushed skin and massaged Alois’ thighs. He relaxed, and Claude began to kiss down his body, his tongue peeking out every few pecks to lick a nipple or patch of skin.

“C-Claude, you don’t have t—“

“Does it feel good?” The man pulled off his sweater and unbuttoned the collared shirt underneath. Both joined the pile of clothes across the room. Claude’s voice was barely above a whisper, but Alois was too entranced by the shape of his arms to answer. They were lightly muscled and wonderfully corded with a dusting of hair. He looked down to see the same dusting of hair trailing from Claude’s cock to his belly button.

“Do you like it?” But Claude wasn’t talking about his chest. He was asking if Alois liked the way he was being touched.

Unbelievable.

“Yes, bu—“

Alois could not finish his protest before the man’s mouth descended upon him once more.
Chapter 10

Claude resumed his work and left the bed to Alois when they were finished. Alois thought it odd that he didn’t want to cuddle, but Claude also didn’t seem the type to be interested in that.

Craving a bit more attention, Alois languidly stretched his limbs in the bed and asked, “Was it good for you?”

Seated at this desk, typing away on his laptop, Claude hummed an affirmative.

“It was good for me too.” Having an orgasm from being penetrated was a treat in this instance, and Alois wanted to savor the moment. Claude had been so gentle. He had asked permission. He had been kind, soft… loving.

The caresses left on Alois’ skin had been the closest glimpse of love the boy had ever happened upon. He stared at Claude and grinned.

“If you were a butterfly, I think you’d be one of those rare breeds that only scientists know about,” Alois whispered suddenly. He felt as if he were literally beaming, a small sun growing on the earth, and traced butterflies into Claude’s sheets.

“Perhaps I should be a monarch. I admire that species.”

“Silly Claude. They’re poisonous, you know. Birds won’t eat them.”

“Really? I didn’t know.” Claude seemed to muse over this information for a moment before returning to his work.

“Spiders can eat them, though. I think that’s what the book said. If you were a spider, what species would you want to be?”

Claude paused from typing.

“I wouldn’t want to be a spider at all.”

“Why not? You like them so much!”

“Male spiders are frequently eaten by their female counterparts, or they castrate themselves after fertilizing her eggs. In more fortunate cases, the males are simply smaller, weaker, and die faster than females. It’s not a world I would enjoy living in.”

“But to die for love, doesn’t that seem a good end to a life?” Alois looked at the man with wide, sparkling eyes.

Claude turned to him and smiled.

“There’s no such thing as love, Alois.”

The boy’s eyes broke. Years of practice gave him the talent of cloaking tears, but Claude’s emotionless eyes and cold smile were ripping straight through every mask he could conjure.

No such thing as love.

“I think it’s time you went home. I’ll drive you.”
Chapter 11

Claude didn’t speak a word on the drive home, nor did Alois have any desire to have him speak. He desperately tried to hide the anguish on his face by averting his gaze out the window, but Claude had noticed.

He just had chosen not to speak a word about it.

The car came to an abrupt halt down the street from Alois’ house, and Alois’ hands quickly flew to the seatbelt to free him from the situation.

“You’re horrible,” he hissed as he slammed the car door.

Claude stared at him, bewildered, through the window. He opened his mouth as if to say something, closed it, and then backed away. Alois had already turned to leave.

He entered his house and went straight for his bedroom, ignoring the calls of his foster mother, asking about his day.

*Stupid, stupid, stupid, stupid, stupid.*

He buried his face into the pillow and sobbed once before breaking out into a hysterical laugh.

He couldn’t help it. It was all so funny. The utterly repulsive nature of his entire existence. He was wrong. Claude was wrong. Claude was a butterfly. A wonderful, sparkling butterfly- and Alois was a dancing flame in which the butterfly was attracted to.

And now. Now he wanted to burn him so very badly.

Take back that weakness inside of himself.

Avenge all of his wasted years to men just like Claude. Men worse than Claude.

Alois ceased laughing.

Who was he kidding? He was hopeless. There was nothing to lose anymore, was there?

So much had been taken- initially from that man, and then the rest snatched up by Claude without the slightest warning. Somehow he has wormed his way into Alois’ trust, gotten him comfortable with such principles as love, and then exposed the rotten hole he had eaten through the boy’s body.

“Repulsive,” Alois whispered to his pillow. “That’s sickening.”

But he would see the man again the next week. He would find the most horrible way to make the man suffer, and then he would go. Break free of the nightmare he was forced to live.

Monday afternoons were busy at the library with the end of the weekend bustle. Students crammed in corners, hunched over books and journals with dark circles lining their eyes.

Alois wondered what it felt like to drink socially, and if all these students knew the joys of having a good time at a party. The least he had ever felt was the sickness that came in the morning after drinking enough bourbon to make himself pass out in dreamless sleep.
Claude was in his usual spot, typing away at his laptop. Alois sauntered over and slipped into the chair across from him.

“Hey,” he drawled out, tucking some hair behind his ear. Claude’s fingers stilled on the keyboard and his eyes rose to meet Alois.

He did not say anything for a moment while wordless questions passed behind his eyes. Finally he cleared his throat.

“Hello.”

“Still have a lot of work to do?”

“Some, yes.” Claude paused, his eyes darting around Alois’ face.

“I thought you said I was horrible, or something of the sort.”

“You are,” Alois chuckled. “You’re absolutely the worst, but let’s get out of here. I want to get fucked.” He spat the word out at the man, who in turn looked as if he would choke.

“Come on, I don’t have all day. My mom’s expecting me soon, so let’s just do it quick.”

“…Please keep your voice down.” Claude closed his laptop and put it away.

“Yeah, yeah. Let’s go. I need to cum.” Alois stood and grabbed the man’s hand, pulling him out of the building. He didn’t care who saw them. Let them see. Let them remember. All the better for him.

“Where’s your car?” He demanded impatiently as they rounded over to the parking lot.

“Over in the corner of the lot.”

“Good. I don’t even want to go anywhere. Do you hear me, Claude? I want you to give it to me good. Bury your cock all the way inside me. Got it?”

“Yes. I’d like that very much.”

“Don’t kiss me. Don’t touch me. Just fuck me. Just use me.” They were at the car now, and Alois was undoing Claude’s belt in plain daylight, desperately grabbing and rubbing his crotch.

“I want to feel it all week, Claude. I want to feel you inside me every time I sit and stand, got it?” Alois felt the cock under his hand twitch.

“Do it. Give it to me so fucking good. I want it. I want you. You got it? Just fuck me.”

Fluids dripped from the boy’s anus as he laid in the bathtub later that afternoon. His ass was worn, nearly bruised, and he couldn’t have been happier.

Claude was nearly crying when they fucked. He could see it. He could feel it. There was no holding back. Alois was a wonderful, beautiful, willing toy for him to destroy.

The bathwater was tinged pink with dripping blood.
Chapter 12

Claude, you are so very stupid.

He had turned out as boring as the rest of them in that library. As useless and horrible and downright revolting.

Alois had been to see him thrice more that week, letting him use his body in the back of his car as he liked.

Then he went home and sat in the bath for an hour. The tears had long since dried up.

I wanted you to love me. I wanted you to save me.

Stupid, stupid, stupid, stupid.

No such thing as love.

He wanted to make the man suffer. But more than anything, he wanted to cease his own suffering.

“You couldn’t have saved me,” he whispered in the bath, blowing bubbles into the soapy water. “No one can save me.”

I’m already dead.

A vast, consuming, horrid emptiness was swallowing him inside. It had eaten through his heart, made a bloody sludge of his brain and stomach.

“I wish I was a spider. I would eat you to fill myself up. Then I could have your disgusting children and die.”

He stood from the bath, dripping with dirty water, and wrapped up in a towel. From the hallway he could hear his foster siblings playing outside, running and laughing like he would never know how to do.

“Claude, it’s all right. I’m also horrible. I think you probably know.” He dried himself off in his room and dressed. A piece of plastic on the ground caught his eye, and he picked it up.

The trash bag in his hands was matted. He stared at it, not knowing what to do.

Suddenly, it all became very clear.

He knotted it around his face and fell back on the bed. Waiting. What was he doing? Taking out the garbage.

That man’s garbage. Claude’s garbage.

Garbage is used and thrown away.
Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

Haha, what? I thought I was done with this fic... I thought wrong...

It had only taken two weeks for Alois to convince the doctors at the hospital that his mental condition was stable. Of course, the internal damage to his intestines – the tearing he had goaded Claude into ripping through his anus – that was harder to explain to the doctors, and would take a bit longer to heal. His foster mother was horrified when the nurses recounted his injuries to her, and she cried over him as if he were a beaten puppy left in the ditch. Child Services was hassling her for not watching over him more carefully and for having too many children to watch at once.

Alois maintained that the tears were self-inflicted, but the way his psychiatrist stared at him was indicative of her distrust in his story. But what would they do? Question the suicidal patient on his abuse? After a week in the psychiatric ward he was visited by a group of social workers, who informed him that he would not be moved from his current home, but some of his siblings would be moved to different homes so that his foster parents could spend more time monitoring his condition.

How wonderful.

It was all so laughable.

Alois just wanted out of this miserable place. The doctors were pumping his veins full of painkillers for his internal injuries and antidepressants for his suicidal tendencies, but the most he wanted to do was go home and sleep in his own bed. The insisting prodding of the doctors and the nauseating attention of his mother was suffocating. Pun intended.

Dying was such a hassle. The psychiatric ward was a bore. He colored pictures of butterflies until he thought his brain would turn to mush and leak out from his ears. If he knew being melodramatic would lead to such a mind-numbing turn of events, he would have kicked himself.

After another week of butterfly pictures, he was discharged, with orders to see a therapist regularly. How dreadfully exciting for his life. He might have vomited there and then.

His foster mother had left his room untouched while he was in the hospital, aside from clearing away the garbage bag he had used to try auto-asphyxiation. His siblings tiptoed around him, as if he were made of broken glass, while his parents checked in every few minutes to be sure that he hadn’t offed himself.

Really, how stupid. He wanted to get out of the house, but they wouldn’t let him without a chaperone.

“Can I go to the library?” He asked his mother, internally cringing when images of the past month were conjured up.

Was it guilt that made him taste bile in his throat? Guilt at snapping at Claude? Or irritation at himself, for his own hasty behavior? Either way, there was no reason for him to avoid going to the library if he wanted to sit somewhere quiet and watch people walk by. It was a public building.
He could very well waltz around the place if he liked.

His mother agreed to it on the condition that she accompanied him, and so the two of them set off for the library, parking close to the building. Alois fought the urge to scan the parking lot for his car.

That damn, disgusting man. I’ll bet he’s just laughing his ass off about now.

Alois’ foster mother hovered behind him while he strode up the steps of the library and walked through the door with a determined look – or as determined as he could muster – and forced a smile when the library’s receptionist greeted him. He informed his foster mother of where he would be if she needed him… and made his way to his favorite table.

Claude was nowhere to be found.

Fucking good.

Alois scanned the shelves in front of his favorite spot before sitting down, selecting a book on European wartime uniforms over the years. He flipped through the pages for a few moments before returning to people-watching, chin resting in his palm.

To his far right, an older man was reading a book on World War II. He looked far older than Alois’ foster father, and briefly Alois wondered why the man would bother coming to the library when he could just buy books like that at the store. Weren’t libraries for kids and college students? At least, that was what he always observed.

Boring.

At another table, there was a lone girl, bent over a notebook, tapping her pen. Her hair was messily tied up in a bun and she occasionally scratched her neck with her long, painted nails.

Boring.

Then, just out of the corner of his eye, dark hair and a navy sweater caught Alois’ eye. Claude was at the library… only he was looking at books, rather than typing on his computer as he usually did. Alois shrank down in his chair and wondered if the man had seen him come in. He continued to stare, and Claude continued to read, his back to Alois, leaning slightly on the shelf beside him. His hip was braced against the shelf and one long leg was bent so that his dark trousers hugged his ass in just the right place.

Damn it.

Damn it, damn it, damn it.

Alois hated him. And he wanted to lick his cock.

And he wanted to make Claude want to lick his cock. Wasn’t that the most delicious part of the game? The spark of want in his eye when he stared down at the boy… and Alois couldn’t see it because he was turned away, reading the damn book.

Damn it.

But should he give him the satisfaction of seeing Alois again? It was possible that he had already seen him… just he would have probably already confronted the boy by now.

No, let him wonder. Let Alois know all about Claude’s whereabouts and let Claude have no idea
about his own. The idea of that made him very happy. He still had Claude’s cell phone number scribbled on a slip of paper in his room. He could call the man if he wanted. Tonight.

Alois dared not let his eyes wander from Claude’s form out of fear that the man would move and see him sitting there. He continued to watch him; relishing each time Claude adjusted his glasses and turned the page of his book, or tucked a loose hair behind his ear.

*Oh, Claude. How is it that you don’t feel my gaze on your back?*

After fifteen minutes, Alois wondered why Claude didn’t go and sit at a table. Had he seen him? Was he deliberately snubbing Alois to make a point? Surely not. Surely not with how happy he had been at their last encounter.

Oh, yes. Alois remembered the way Claude’s face had contorted in pleasure when he came. He remembered the expression he made when Alois told him that he didn’t have to hold back. It was *blissful*. Agony. And blissful.

From behind one of the shelves, Alois heard his foster mother call out his name, and he jolted from his thoughts. His eyes snapped to Claude, whose head was turned in the direction of his foster mother, following her path. Alois quickly stood from the table, but Claude heard his movement and glanced over, locking eyes with the boy.

What was that emotion Alois detected? Claude could not hide it for long. Concern? Surprise? It had been weeks since their last meeting. Surely he had been wondering where Alois was.

A sly smile crept onto Alois’ lips as he slid his book back onto the shelf. Claude continued to stare at him, eyes finally devoid of emotion. The smile melted as soon as Alois’ foster mother rounded the corner and informed him that they needed to be going soon. She led him out to the car, but Alois paused just once to turn his head and glance over his shoulder and Claude, who was still watching him from the edge of the shelf.

*My, my. Who is jerking who on the chain, now?*
Chapter 14

On the car ride home, Alois’ foster mother chattered aimlessly while he stared out the window, seething. With each passing minute he remembered the look on Claude’s face and he desperately wanted to make him suffer. Make him pay for every drop of blood spilt. Alois knew very well that he had encouraged Claude to fuck him so roughly, but Claude should have known better. He does know better, else he wouldn’t have treated me so gently before.

Once the car was parked, Alois went straight to his room and scoured his desk for the slip of paper with Claude’s cell phone number written on it. He found it crumpled under his schoolbooks, which were carelessly stacked one atop another.

Should he call him? Briefly he wondered if the man would be expecting a call. Waiting for it, even. Probably not. For all he knew, Claude had moved on to someone else in the few weeks he had been gone. It certainly wouldn’t surprise him if that were the case.

Fuck it. What more could this man do that he hadn’t already done?

Alois went out into the living room and took the house phone, dialed the number, and retreated back into his bedroom. The phone rang four times before he answered.

“Hello?”

That voice that once enticed Alois now put his teeth on edge.

“Hello.”

There was a pause.

“Alois?”

“Yes.”

There was a longer pause before he spoke again.

“I was surprised to see you today.”

“One of the few emotions I’ve seen you make. Laughable, actually.”

“You stopped coming to the library.”

“Way to state the fucking obvious.”

“You’re angry.”

“You couldn’t tell?”

“Why don’t we meet somewhere and talk about it?”

Alois could almost detect the exasperation in his voice. Or was it desperation? The man was in boiling hot water and he knew it.

“No. We can talk now.”

“I think it might be better to discuss it when you’ve calmed down a bit.”
“Calmed down a bit? Ha! *Fuck you.*”

“Alois…”

“*Claude*…”

He drawled out his name in a mocking tone, relishing in the thought that the man on the other line was growing more agitated with every passing second.

Claude sighed and paused.

“Alois, if you are angry with me then we will speak about it when you’ve taken some time to collect yourself. I’ll come wherever you would like.”

“Fine. Come here, to my house. Tomorrow, at two o’clock. Got it?”

“Yes.”

“And don’t fucking be late.”
Chapter 15

It was difficult to explain to Alois’ foster mother exactly what relationship he had to Claude, which was necessary when he told her that he had a friend coming over the next day for a little bit to visit. Alois didn’t have friends. His teachers made sure to note that on all of his reports home. Actually, what they wrote was, “Alois prefers to play on his own than with the other children. This might possibly lead to emotional immaturity later in life,” or some bullshit like that.

He never played with the other children because he didn’t grow up playing with other children. He didn’t know what games to play or how to share. So he didn’t try.

“Claude is my tutor at the library,” he explained to his foster mother finally. “He didn’t know what happened when I stopped coming to lessons.”

“Oh, I’m sorry. I wish we had known you had a tutor, we would have contacted him and told him when you were coming back.”

“It’s fine. It doesn’t matter. He’s coming over for a little bit tomorrow to talk about stuff I missed.” To his relief, his foster mother did not press for any other questions.

The following afternoon the doorbell rang early – 1:45pm. Alois almost felt nauseous, but the venomous bile he wanted to spit up would be better suited directed at his guest. His foster mother answered the door before he could reach the entryway. Instead of meeting him at the door, he shrunk back up the stairs and watched as Claude entered the house.

“Oh, Claude! It’s lovely to meet you. Thank you so much for coming by, it’s so kind of you.” Evidently this was not the reaction Claude expected, but he received Alois’ foster mother’s warm welcome all the same and stepped inside.

“Thank you,” Claude said, a little stiffly.

“I really wasn’t expecting to hear that Alois had a tutor, but I suppose that’s just as well. Please, take your shoes off. I’m sorry about the mess there, I really can’t help it will all of the kids running around here.” She gestured to a pile of shoes of all sizes at the door, thrown together in a heap. Alois never left his shoes there because he knew they would never be found again – instead he carried them up to his room and shoved them in his closet, where they were sometimes found again.

“I don’t recall Alois mentioning having any siblings… at least, not this many.” Claude removed his shoes and started down the hall. Alois was hiding behind one of the banisters on the stairway to the upstairs.

“Oh, they’re not all mine, heavens no. We’re foster parents. Alois is a bit older, so… unfortunately older children are less likely to find homes. He’s been living here a bit longer than the other children.”

Not that he wanted to be adopted, anyway. Probably shoved in some soccer mom’s Christmas family portrait the second he walked in their house. Disgusting.

“I see. And where is…?”

“Upstairs. I’ll fetch him for you.” His foster mother craned her neck up the stairs and shouted for him: “Alois! Claude is here to see you!”
Alois rose from his hiding spot and attempted to appear as innocent as he could, as if he were coming out of his room. He came only halfway down the stairs and glanced at Claude, then waved for him to follow.

“Come on, then. We can work in my room where it’s quiet.”

Once inside his room, Alois dropped his cool demeanor and glared openly at his guest.

“Sit.” Claude glanced around the room until he found Alois’ cluttered desk, and pulled the chair out. Across the room, Alois situated himself on his bed. He crossed his legs and folded his arms, running his eyes up and down Claude’s form. The man had chosen another plain sweater for the day, this one a shade of dark green, and paired it with dark trousers. He certainly looked the part of a tutor.

“Well? Start talking, then. I haven’t got all day.” Alois flipped his hair out of his eyes with a toss of his neck.

“You are still irate.”

“You thought one night would calm me down for our talk?”

“No. I did not.” Claude crossed his ankle over his knee and leaned back in the chair. “All the same, I’d like us to talk about… this.”

“What is this?” Alois spat the word out, leaning forward as he did so. He was positive he was quite the sight, cheeks flushed in irritation, eyes alive with energy. Was Claude aroused by the sight of him right now? He hoped so. It would make this entire conversation so much more painful for the man and that much more delicious for him.

“Our arrangement.”

“There’s that fucking word again. You know, I was so confused when you first used it, but I know why you did now. I get it.” Claude tilted his chin forward and his eyebrows rose at Alois’ admission.

“Do you? Why don’t we talk about that first?”

“No. I don’t think we will. I don’t much feel like it right now.” Alois snapped his eyes down to his nails and began to groom them, picking the dirt out from under them and flicking it in Claude’s direction.

“…very well. Would you care to tell me where you went for the past few weeks?” At this, a nasty grin spread across Alois’ face.

“You know, I think I will. I’d like to see how emotionless you keep your face when I say it.” Alois stood and stepped toward Claude, stopping just a foot in front of him. He glowered down at the man, arms crossed, searching his eyes.

“I came home one night after you fucked me particularly hard, took a bath, and drained the water in the tub that was pink from blood. I went into the kitchen and got a trashbag and tied it around my neck, so tight I thought I might cut my windpipe in two from that alone. And I waited. And waited. And I couldn’t breathe.” Claude’s eyes were still expressionless, gazing evenly up at Alois. He continued.

“Then I woke up in a hospital bed with painkillers coursing through my veins because when my
foster mother had found me and brought me to the hospital, the doctors found all of the wonderful tearing you had done to my backside. It’s still healing. I have to say what a favor you did me, though, since those first days in the psychiatric ward would have been torture if I hadn’t been high on Vicodin while I colored butterflies day-in and day-out.”

Claude looked as if someone had frozen the muscles in his face. Another new expression for Alois to memorize. He found it fascinating that this is what it took to draw it from the man.

“You… are you all right?”

“Ha! What a question to ask! What the fuck do you care? Last time I checked, you were perfectly happy shoving your cock in me so hard it tore me up. You were nearly crying with pleasure.”

“Alois… the doctors, did they ask you where you got your injuries?”

Oh. So that’s what he’s afraid of… the repercussions if someone finds out that it was him. The grin on Alois’ face widened and he moved back to sit on his bed.

“Of course they did.” Claude looked somewhat stricken, in his expressionless way. It took him a few moments to speak, instead sitting with his eyes focused on a corner of the room, glazed over in thought.

“What did you tell them?”

“Wouldn’t you like to know?” Alois’ eyes flashed, triumphant. He tucked a piece of blond hair behind his ear and leaned back on the bed, resting his weight on the palms of his hands.

“Alois, I’m asking you to be serious. Answer my question.” Oh, he was certainly getting desperate now. Alois could see the way he was leaning forward again, staring intently as he thought about just how to put his words together. I doubt Claude is one to beg, but it would be lovely to see him do it.

“You’ve no right to ask me anything. Did you know they took pictures? They told me after the fact, but the idea of it was awfully strange. Taking pictures of my asshole while I was unconscious….” It was now that Claude stood from his chair and approached the bed.

“May I sit?”

“No. Floor is open, though.” Claude seemed to prefer standing to the floor.

“I will remind you that you offered yourself to me. You told me that I could have you as I liked and that you wanted to be used.” Alois admired the subtle smug look Claude was giving him. He thought he had won, didn’t he? He thought that pointing this out would make Alois feel guilty and forgive him all over again.

“I never told you to tear me a new one. You knew better. That’s why you were always gentle with me before. You were always sure that I enjoyed myself and that you weren’t touching too roughly.” Claude’s self-satisfied smile melted away at that.

“Alois, does anyone know?”

“Maybe.” Claude’s eyes narrowed.

“What should I take that to mean?”

“It means you need to behave. My foster mother expects me to get tutored now, so there’s no
escaping that. I can come to the library after school, stay for a session, and come straight home.”
Alois’ eyes narrowed into slits to match his companion.

“So I want you to behave, Claude. Understand?”
All of this was such a hassle. Watching Claude squirm under his glare was satisfaction in itself, but the rules imposed by Alois’ foster mother restricting his whereabouts after school were tiresome. He could go straight to the library, stay for a session, and had to be home within twenty minutes of the lesson ending. Clockwork.

That was boring.

Alois supposed that he could bide his time, wait until his foster family trusted him enough to allow him more freedom once again, but how long would that be? Weeks? Months? There was nothing for him to do at home unless he agreed to play with his siblings or actually spent time doing his homework. If he was bored before it was nothing compared to the state he found himself in now.

At least he had his meeting with Claude to look forward to. He wondered just what kind of reaction Claude would mask when he realized how seriously Alois used the word *behave*. No touching. No teasing.

He opened the library door quietly, closing it behind him before he started down the rows of shelves to the table he ordinarily occupied. Alois passed through much of the library unnoticed.

Claude was already seated at the table, typing away at his laptop. When he noticed Alois approaching he closed the device and put it away in his bag before freeing the seat beside him. Instead, Alois sat down across from him, his face impassive. Claude’s mouth jerked and turned down but he otherwise did not betray any emotion at Alois’ snub.

“What did you bring to work on today?” Claude folded his hands on top of the table.

“Math. I’ve fallen farther behind.” To anyone watching, they really did look like a tutor and his student. Alois passed his makeup assignments to Claude, who sifted through the papers for a few moments.

“We will have to be sure that you study and keep up. Most of these are not difficult concepts, however. You should be able to solve them with time.” He gestured to a problem from one of the earlier papers and pushed it towards Alois.

“Try and solve this one.” Alois spent a few minutes worrying over the problem and scribbling until he had an answer and passed it back to Claude, who looked over his work.

“You understand the concept, but you made a calculation error.” He rose slightly from his chair and bent over the table, one hand resting on the paper between them. From his new position his face was close enough that Alois could nearly peer down his button-down if he adjusted in his seat. All the same, his voice was even, pointing out where Alois should revise his work. *Too close.*

Alois wanted him, in a sick way, but he was too close. *I want to touch him. But I don't want him to touch me.*

“Here. You see?” Alois had stopped paying attention for a moment and Claude had taken his hand, the one holding the pencil, and moved it over the paper. His hand twitched when he realized that Claude’s fingers were still wrapped around his hand. With his sudden, nearly panicked movement Claude released his hand but remained hovering over him for a few more moments, his scent filling the air. *Much too close.*
Alois sat back in his chair knowing that contempt was written plainly on his face.

“Yes,” he ground out, staring down at the paper.

“Continue. It was only a problem with the arithmetic.” Claude sat back down again, still expressionless. Alois corrected his mistake and looked over another problem, working it until he could no longer find an answer.

“I don’t understand it. I don’t know how to do this.” He pushed the paper towards Claude and crossed his arms, pushing his seat back away from the table, only far away enough to put some space between them, but not enough to invite Claude to move beside him.

“You do know how to do this. You have nearly solved it.” Claude circled a large section of Alois’ writing and wrote out the next few lines to get him started.

“You can solve it from there. It is the same problem as before with a few extra steps.”

“Fine.”

The process continued like this for a few more problems, only broken when Claude left for a few moments to use the restroom.

“Continue working and I will take a look at what you finish when I get back. If you have a problem, move on to the next assignment.”

Alois had already worked four problems before he felt Claude peering over his shoulder. His pencil slipped out of his hand and the older man was leaning over the table, his frame hunched over Alois. Much, much too close. Alois could smell his cologne and the detergent used to wash his clothes.

“Rework this area. I will start another line for you. This one as well.” Alois didn’t dare turn his head to try and move – out of the corner of his eye he saw Claude’s collar right in his path… and his arm holding him close on his other side. But the man wasn’t missing a beat.

He’s doing it again. He’s surrounding me and trying to swallow me up.

Finally Alois moved his hand from the table and wrapped it around Claude’s bicep, his nails digging into the flesh.

“Get back,” he hissed. “I know what you are doing.”

Only after a few moments of Alois scratching his skin did Claude step back, his eyes wary.

“I told you to behave. You know what will happen if you don’t.”

That seemed to get Claude’s attention right away, and he adjusted his glasses before returning to his seat. The two of them sat in silence for a few minutes, staring at one another.

“It is difficult for me to teach you when I cannot read the paper.”

“That’s not my problem. Just deal with it,” Alois spat. “You can read it just fine when I pass it across the table.” I’m not an idiot. He’s pushing me to see how far he can go.

“I cannot catch a mistake the moment you make it and help you learn if I cannot see the paper.” Claude’s eyes were set on Alois’ glare, assessing his mood.
“I’m not moving. And I’m not talking about this right now.” Alois’ glare darkened and he began to gather up his papers. “Session’s over, anyway. I need to get home or my foster parents will start to worry.”

At this, Claude’s icy stare somewhat softened and he reached for his bag. “My car is parked in the front of the lot.” Alois nearly laughed at this presumption.

“What? I’m not riding with you. I asked my foster mother to come and pick me up.” Claude’s eyebrows drew together in thought as he watched Alois stuff his work into his bag.

“There isn’t any need for her to go out of her way to come get you. I can take you on my way home.” *What a flimsy excuse.*

“It isn’t *going out of her way.* She’s supposed to take care of me, so that means picking me up when I need a ride.” Alois slung his bag over his shoulder with a huff. “She’s already here, anyway.”
Chapter 17

Alois returned the following day with more completed problems for Claude, he checked over them, and this cycle continued throughout the week until they had exhausted the makeup work Alois’ teacher had given him.

“You learn fast,” Claude commented one day, and Alois had to admit that he was a good tutor... not that he would say it aloud. *He’s smart, so it’s only natural that he’s a good teacher.*

“It’s not hard stuff. I just needed practice, I guess.” He was reluctant to have these normal bits of conversation with Claude, which had been happening increasingly with their sessions. He repeated to himself time and time again not to trust the man, that something terrible would happen eventually, and that he couldn’t deal with *that* again. Not like with the old man again.

Depleted of math problems, they had turned to English work that Alois needed to makeup. Since Claude very well couldn’t force Alois to read, he had to come up with an alternative way to encourage him to read the books the teacher had assigned, so he brought Alois’ favorite candy to the library and put small pieces over the pages as Alois read over them. Positive reinforcement, he called it. A strange study strategy in Alois’ mind, but it was working to get him to read some of the material.

Alois thought he could be clever and skim through the pages to get to the candy, but Claude had begun to ask questions about the book, and so that method was quickly shot down when he couldn’t remember the names of important characters or what happened in different parts of the book.

So, loathe as he was to admit it, Claude was an excellent tutor. Alois had nearly forgotten about making him suffer a torturous fate of threatening *telling* and dangling a prize in front of him. Nearly forgotten. The problem was that Claude had made no further efforts to entreat on his personal space. He hadn’t even offered to drive Alois home since the boy had reacted so badly.

By the second week of their English tutoring, Alois’ teacher had assigned a Shakespearean play, and the pair was having difficulty coming to an agreement with how Alois’ positive reinforcement should be divided amongst the pages.

“It’s too difficult. Can’t you put more candy down or something? It’s so hard to read,” Alois whined, staring down at the book, nearly pouting. It was too frustrating to try and read something like this and he was near giving up.

“It is not too difficult. You don’t like the language and that is why you are thinking like this. Read a bit more and we can talk about it.” Alois could see that Claude was trying his best to be encouraging, but the situation was proving difficult as Alois grew more defeated.

“Read it to me, I can’t understand any of this.” Alois laid his head on the desk, mentally exhausted, and Claude adjusted his glasses.

“Come sit over here. I will read aloud, but at least follow along. I do not want you falling asleep.” At this, Alois was silent for a few moments. Finally, he pushed the book towards Claude and heaved himself out of his seat.

“Do I at least still get the candy for following along?” Alois sat down beside him, sulking at the book.
“We will split the difference. You can have half of it.”

“Okay, fine…” He flicked his eyes in the direction of the other man, assessing the change in situation, but Claude was focused on the book, setting down a few bits of candy for Alois to eventually pick up. When he began reading Alois found the play a bit easier to follow, but the language was still difficult.

But most disturbingly, Alois enjoyed hearing Claude reading the play aloud because it was his voice gliding over the words, his voice providing the monologues, and his voice speaking with something that almost resembled emotion. It was beautiful and terrifying, as Alois sat beside him, wondering and dreading the thought that his hand might wrap around his thigh or brush his belly. But it never did.

Was he not interested anymore? Or was he truly heeding the warning and doing his best to behave? Alois was afraid to act in a way that might test his suspicions. So much. He’s so much all at once.

“Alois…” That snapped him to attention, and he was staring right at the man, who stared right back. Those eyes. He’s never afraid. “You didn’t take the candy. Are you listening?”

“Yeah. I… have a stomach ache.” He hoped the excuse would pass well enough. It was plausible, given all the candy he had eaten with their studying.

“I see.” Claude traced the outline of his lip with a finger and then continued. “Should we stop? Are you ill?”

“I’m okay.” He put his hand on his belly and performed a well-practiced smile: feigned nausea and slightly apologetic.

“Studying in that state is not optimal. Do you want to use my phone and call your foster mother?” Claude was already unzipping one of the pockets of his bag to get his phone. For a moment Alois felt guilty, both for seriously he was taking this “stomachache” and for the weight of his own personal cell phone shoved in his pocket on silent. His foster parents purchased it after he was released from the hospital and insisted that he keep it on him at all times when he was out of the house. He had yet to tell Claude he had a cell phone because he was positive that Claude would want his personal number… and that was one piece of information he hoped to keep to himself a bit longer for leverage.

“I’m fine, really.” Claude glanced over Alois’ face and down to his stomach before he put his phone away again.

“As you say.” He returned to the book and resumed reading, pausing every few pages to explain what was happening to Alois. He also suspected that Claude was stopping to assess how he was feeling, but he couldn’t be sure.

He has no reason to be that concerned. He has no reason to fake it to that degree, at least. Maybe he doesn’t want me vomiting all over the library books. That would be disgusting.
Finishing the Shakespeare assignment required for the pair to work twice as long than the usual assignments, but Claude forced Alois to keep trying until he had finished the play and understood the plot as well as possible.

“Glad that’s over. I don’t want to look at something like that ever again,” he declared when they closed the book, and Claude let a small smile play across his features.

“I can guarantee you will be reading more Shakespeare in your later years of high school,” Claude said, watching as Alois packed away the notes they had taken on the play. Since the fiasco of Alois’ “stomachache,” he had restricted the amount of candy Alois was allowed to have when he finished pages of the assignment, much to the boy’s annoyance.

“Damn it. Why can’t we just pick what we want to read for class?” It would certainly make my life easier. Granted, I wouldn’t need Claude to help tutor me for something like that…

Was he enjoying these sessions? They were productive, at least. Alois disliked doing schoolwork in general, but Claude rewarded him for putting in the effort.

“I doubt you would select very challenging material for yourself, and that is the point of learning this material,” Claude chided.

“Yeah, yeah. I’d rather read something I want to read than this. It’s too hard to focus when I’m bored to death.”

“Give it time and I think that you will come to appreciate some of these texts.” Claude’s expression was curious and Alois was having difficulty interpreting it. He wasn’t so expressionless as normal, with his cold, blank stare – rather he seemed to find amusement in their current banter. He flipped through the pages of the book, running a finger down the edge in one languid motion. If Claude knew Alois was staring at his hand, he pretended not to notice.

He manicures his nails. The cuticles have been trimmed neatly back and he’s buffed them to a shine. Alois looked to his own nails, which had been grown out a bit and filed into fashionable rounded tips, amused.

“Is it about time for you to go home?” Claude was looking back at him now, the smile gone. Ordinarily Alois would leave around this time, but his foster parents had agreed to allow him some leeway with his curfew, given that he complied with a few rules.

“It’s fine. I just need to call and let them know I’ll be a little late.” Without thinking, Alois retrieved the cell phone from his pocket, and realized his mistake when he felt Claude’s stare on the device. He dialed the number anyway, ignoring Claude for the moment, and told his foster mother that he would be home later than usual. Once he hung up the phone he slid it back into his pocket, keeping his face blank.

“You never told me that you had a cell phone.” When Alois’ eyes rose to meet Claude’s, the man’s face was impassive. He’s only stating a fact. It’s true that I never told him about my phone. I wonder…

“My parents got it for me when I got out of the hospital. Sort of annoying that I have to call them all the time now, and they check up on me constantly.” Alois flipped his bangs out of his face, almost making a show of the motion. He tucked a piece of hair behind his ear and Claude’s eyes
followed his wrist, jerking back to the boy’s face when he spoke again.

“Anyway, it’s no big deal. Why?” Alois had purposefully shortened his question, but he very well knew why Claude was seemingly so offended by this. *Why do you care, Claude? What is it that you want?*

As if to answer him, Claude’s hand trailed to his back pocket and he froze, still thinking. He halfway pulled out his own phone, staring at the table with faraway eyes, and opened his mouth to speak.

“Would you—“ He stopped, and his eyebrows drew together. He pushed his phone back into his pocket and folded his hands on top of the table.

“Never mind.” *My number. He wanted my phone number. It’s not like I would give it to him… but… is he really going to give up that easily? Disappointing.*

*That’s how safe he’s going to play it. He isn’t even going to try.*

Alois frowned. This wouldn’t do at all. Saying that Claude was like a beaten puppy wasn’t the correct metaphor to use, but he certainly wasn’t fighting back anymore. The feeling of Claude’s hands around his middle he could do without, but he missed the hungry, lustful stares that fed him. Gave him some kind of power, knowing that he had what the other man desired. Watching Claude’s eyes rake over his legs and abdomen during their sessions – that was what fueled him before.

Claude wouldn’t dare coax his phone number out of him now, afraid that he wasn’t *behaving*. He was behaving. But he was *boring*.

“Claude, I need a ride home.” *This* pulled a reaction from the man, whose eyebrows rose in astonishment. He quickly covered this response with his usual façade, and answered.

“I thought you told your family that you would be late.”

“ Doesn’t matter. Just give me a ride.” What was so difficult about this? Alois was practically telling the man that he had loosened his leash, and he was still being difficult? *Idiot.*

“All right.”

The pair made their way to his car and Alois climbed into the front seat, still admiring the cleanliness of the dashboard and faint scent of cologne that clung to the upholstery. Claude immediately started the car and turned on the radio, turning to a station that played some of the latest popular music and started out of the parking lot. Alois began to hum along, every so often glancing at Claude.

“You like this station?” He asked finally, tapping a beat with his foot.

“Not particularly. I thought that you might.” Claude continued to drive, his eyes glued to the road. Alois seemed to remember mentioning a while ago the kind of music that he liked, but the didn’t expect Claude to actually remember, much less play it in *his* car.

“You can change it y’know.” Alois turned to him and tilted his head, watching Claude’s reaction, but the man was focused, one hand on the steering wheel and the other in his lap.

*He could reach over and touch me if he wanted. I’ve made it so easy for him. Doesn’t he want to anymore?* Almost panicked at that thought, Alois’ eyes jerked down to Claude’s hand and back to his face. *Why does that even matter to me- whether he wants to or not?*
But when Alois thought back to the first time he had ridden in Claude’s car, and the first kiss Claude had given him, he didn’t have to think very hard as to why that mattered to him. *I don’t… I just want a brush against my cheek or for him to touch my hair. I want another kiss.*

Claude’s hand lifted from his leg and Alois thought his heart might burst, but he was only adjusting the volume on the radio. *He isn’t going to do anything.* Alois worried at his lip with his teeth and ran his tongue over the skin when he finally broke it, licking up the blood that welled up. When they pulled up at his house he offered a polite, but short, goodbye to Claude, and darted out of the car to his bedroom and closed the door, stopping only to greet his foster parents and give them the appropriate greeting for the day.

For whatever reason, he was so hard.
Alois tried every possible excuse to avoid going to tutoring, but Claude already helped him show such improvement in his classes that his foster parents were adamant in his going to lessons. In retrospect, he should have tried faking illness earlier so that they didn’t immediately shoot him down as trying to get out of his lesson.

He spent the previous evening in his bedroom with his hand wrapped around his cock, trying desperately to get off without thinking of Claude’s mouth enveloping his shaft. When he was finally able to cum it was because he allowed himself to think about Claude’s hands, but when he thought about his hands he began to think about those hands wrapped around his shaft, pulling him to completion.

Fuck.

His ass still ached where the doctors probed inside of him, checking for damages and repairing the tears from over a month ago. Fuck, fuck, fuck.

As he sat beside Claude in the library, it was becoming increasingly difficult to focus on the lesson with every passing minute.

What the fuck is wrong with me?

Instead of looking at the paper he was staring at Claude’s hands, holding a pen and pointing to a few math problems Alois was assigned for homework. He wasn’t listening to what Claude was saying, but the way he was saying it. I miss the few sounds he used to make when I would touch him.

Fuck, what am I saying?

Alois sighed and ran his fingers through his hair, his face and neck feeling too warm. My cheeks are flushed, I’m sure.

He glanced back at Claude, and down to his legs, which were slightly open under the table. The trousers he wore bunched in the groin when he sat down, giving Alois quite the view of his package. His eyes trailed up the man’s trim waist and chest, over his arms, and briefly Alois flirted with the idea of reaching out to touch him.

“Alois, are you all well?” Claude’s body was turned towards him, and his head was tilted to the side, staring down at the boy. “You look feverish.”

“I… don’t know.” Alois bit his lip, averting his gaze to a nearby shelf where an older lady was looking through the book titles. Suddenly, something blocked his view and pressed against his forehead. He flinched in surprise as Claude felt his forehead with the back of his hand. While the touch was unexpected, it was not unwelcome.

“You feel warm, but not enough for alarm.” He put his hand down and looked over Alois. “Are you experiencing other symptoms?” Claude was staring at Alois almost clinically, and he couldn’t help feel he was under a microscope, especially given his current state.

I want him to touch me again.

“My heart… is beating fast,” Alois whispered, breathless. Claude nodded once and took his wrist, feeling for his pulse. At his touch, Alois felt his heartbeat flutter… but it wasn’t enough.
“Not… there.” He couldn’t believe he was saying this. Alois took Claude’s hand in his own and pressed it against his neck. “Touch… feel it here.”

There was a glimmer of recognition in Claude’s eyes before he set to work.

“You want to be a doctor?” As Claude counted the beats he nodded, and it occurred to Alois that he had never asked Claude what he was studying at university. No wonder he’s so smart.

“You’re pulse is a bit fast, but, again, not high enough to cause alarm.” He paused, carefully selecting his words. “Are those all of your symptoms?”

“My legs are shaky.” He was exaggerating, but in his arousal his thighs were quivering.

“Involuntary muscle spasms.” Alois nodded, but he didn’t have to move Claude’s hands to his thighs this time. He bit his lip and opened his legs as Claude’s fingers brushed over the skin, testing his sensitivity. They didn’t move high enough to touch the hem of his shorts, but didn’t stray low enough below the knee.

“I see.” He removed his hand too soon, and Alois fought back a whine. No. No, please.

“I need to pee,” Alois choked, standing at once. He pushed in his chair and nearly fell on his way to the bathroom.

Inside the men’s room he brace himself against the wall, hunched over on his side, as far away from the door as he could stand. No one was in the stalls or at the urinals, but he would be damned if he pulled his cock out and started to beat off in a public toilet.

No. No, no, no. But it hurts. His hand gripped the bulge in his shorts and he grimaced.

Don’t stoop this low. He knows what you’re doing. With shaky hands, Alois unfastened the singular button at the waistband of his shorts just above the zipper. Stop.

Someone might come inside. They might see. He threw his head back and groaned, frustrated. You can’t even do it without thinking of him, and what good comes of that?

It hurts. Hurts. Alois backed into one of the stalls and slammed against the side of the metal separating each of the toilets. He bit his lip and closed the stall door. He stared down at himself for a few minutes, the mess that he was, considering his options.

They won’t see now.

Don’t do it.

He ran his hand over his crotch and shuddered, arching into his own touch. It’s not enough through the fabric. I need to touch it. It’s not going to go away if I just stand here. I’ve been waiting for so long for it to go down. He felt like crying of embarrassment and pure need.

The door to the men’s room opened, and Alois tried to pay no attention to it. Hand still clutching his bulge, he worried over his situation.

Now there’s someone here. Doesn’t matter. Just get it done with and go back out there. If you get rid of it you should be fine for the rest of the lesson, at least. You’ve already been in here for too long.

But to his horror, the person who had entered walked up to his door and knocked.
Alois.” This time, he didn’t swallow down his responding whine of desperation.

“… open the door.” Claude’s voice wasn’t threatening… it almost sounded kind. “It’s all right.”

Is it? Alois reached for the lock to the door and pushed it. Claude opened the door and slipped inside, relocking the door.

The stall was almost too small for the two of them, but there was enough room left that they could move if need be. There was still a path so that Alois could reach for the door if he wanted, but Claude’s legs were entangled with his own in the cramped space, and he was brazenly staring down at Alois’ erection. At this point, Alois really didn’t care.

“You haven’t taken care of it yet?” His arms were loose at his sides, making no movements to indicate that he was going to touch Alois.

“It hurts.” Alois’ lower lip quivered and he stared up at Claude, tears forming in the corners of his eyes. He grabbed Claude’s right hand and pressed it into his abdomen, just below his belly button.

“… come here.” Taking this as invitation, Claude motioned for Alois to stand in front of him with his back pressing into the older man’s stomach. He made quick work of Alois’ zipper and pushed down his shorts, finally relieving the pressure on his erection.

“Your shorts were too tight.” His hands rested on Alois’ hipbone, his cock pushing the panties he was wearing up and away from his body. “You see?” Claude’s thumbs brushed over the skin in experimentation, and when Alois let out a whimper, he began to play with the lace on Alois’ panties. In response, Alois reached around and grabbed Claude’s sweater in one hand, the other occupied playing with his tongue and mouth.

“Do you want more?” Claude was so close to touching his cock. Alois whimpered again and pushed his cock into Claude’s hand, scrunching up his eyes. He felt the panties being pushed down and then a large hand enveloping his shaft. Finally.

“You’re leaking. You waited this long? Look.” Alois opened his eyes, already drunk off the heat of Claude’s hand around him, and saw his thumb brush a pearl of precum from the head and rub it down the shaft. It’s so good.

“Ah—Claude…” Alois dropped his fingers, moist with saliva, and threw his head back to look up at his companion. “I want to cum.”

“I just started to touch you and need to cum already?” Claude’s hand tightened around Alois’ cock and stroked harder.

“It’s too good—ah—kiss my neck,” Alois groaned, and fist some of the older man’s hair when he leaned down to comply. He nibbled at the skin and then sucked on the spots his teeth had run over, licking the hollows of Alois’ collarbone and pressing kisses behind his ear. His mouth combined with the movements of his hand were what pushed Alois over the edge, spurting his pleasure into Claude’s palm.

He sank back into Claude, panting, and immediately felt the hardness of the man behind him. It was difficult to discern whether he was aroused, nervous, or disgusted.
Chapter 20

Neither Claude or Alois had spoken about the incident in the bathroom since it happened. *Good. That keeps things uncomplicated for now.*

At least, that was what Alois told himself. Things were complicated enough between the two of them – which only worsened when Claude knocked on his door one evening and his foster mother answered.

“Excuse me. I don’t mean to intrude. Alois left this at the library.” It was one of his schoolbooks that he needed for the following day. *Fine. Kind of Claude to drop it off. Very thoughtful.* He had come dressed in a button-down with a sweater pulled over in the chilly weather. *Just like some kind of honors student. They’re eating that shit up.*

But it was unnecessary for his family to invite him inside for dinner. Furthermore, Claude didn’t need to accept the offer.

So when all of them sat down at the table together, Alois was seething, staring down at his plate of spaghetti as if he was plotting the murder of the meatballs.

“Claude, we’re so grateful that you’ve taken the time to help Alois. His grades have improved so much in school, it’s amazing.” Alois speared one of his meatballs with a knife and scraped it across the plate. Claude’s eyes flicked over to him and back to his foster mother.

“It’s no trouble.” Claude had atrocious manners. And by “atrocious” Alois meant that his manners were *perfect.* He knew exactly what to say, where to put his napkin, how to hold his fork, how to sit, how to speak. It was nauseating. Alois slaughtered another meatball.

He could almost hear Claude’s thoughts running through his head. *You’re being childish. Sit up straight. Use your utensils properly. Be polite, your family prepared this meal for you.*

“What do you study in school? Alois hasn’t talked much about you.” *For good reason. It’s none of your damn business.*

“Medicine, for now.”

“You must be smart. But we already knew that, since you’re working as a tutor.” To this, Claude did not reply.

Dinner passed in this manner, with Claude answering questions and Alois pouting into his plate of food and mutilating what he didn’t put into his mouth. *I didn’t invite him in.* While everyone would usually clean their dishes, Alois was allowed to take Claude up to his room to talk, since he never had guests over. It was a *special occurrence.*

*They’re just kissing his ass.*

“Your mother is kind,” Claude said, once the two of them were situated in Alois’ room. Unlike the day they had their *talk,* Alois agreed to let Claude sit on his bed, although the older man was sitting on one corner while he sat cross-legged near the headboard.

“My *foster* mother,” Alois corrected. His tone indicated that he was annoyed, and Claude picked up on it right away.

“Is something the matter?” He leaned back and rested his weight on his hands.
“You’re not supposed to be here. It was weird having dinner with you.” And you make me...

“I was invited to stay. Regardless, we have shared a meal before.” Claude almost seemed amused with Alois’ irritation. They both knew it was him pouting, wasn’t it? When I’m around him, I act… I can’t think straight.

“I didn’t invite you.” Alois clarified, crossing his arms. Claude did not reply to this. His mouth flattened into a line and his eyes roamed over Alois’ form. At home he usually wore pajamas, and so the cut tank he chose exposed much of his sides and his entire collar. The loose shorts he wore fell around his body as he moved, and when he pulled his knees up, cold air rushed to hit the back of his thighs.

“Are you cold?” Gooseflesh prickled across Alois’ upper arms, and he rubbed them. Why does he care? He thought back to when Claude asked that very same question a month ago. He’s making an observation. That’s what he does. It’s just a comment, nothing more.

“A little. I can get under the covers.” Before Alois could pull the duvet out from under him, Claude pulled off his sweater and held it out.

“Here.” Why is he thinking of giving this to me now? But... it would be covered in his smell. Sure enough, when Alois pulled the sweater over his head, he was enveloped in Claude’s cologne. The sleeves hung past his hands and the neckline exposed his collarbones. He was certain that if he stood it would hang halfway down his thighs, but Alois was too enamored with the feel and smell of the fabric to care about how large it was. Cashmere? It’s so soft.

“You smell so good.” He said it before he realized that it was an idiotic thing to admit to someone he wanted to manipulate. Claude moved closer to him on the bed, his hand tentatively reaching out to brush Alois’ bangs from his eyes.

“Do I?” His tone was teasing, and he had the smallest play of a smile on his face. They were close now, only about a foot apart, and already Alois felt himself nearly purring into Claude’s touch. I want to look at him. To touch him. I'm making it too easy. I was mad at him just moments ago. He closed the distance between them and began to unbutton Claude’s shirt, pushing the fabric out the way when he finally had the garment open.

“...keep your hands to yourself.” Alois said, and Claude sat back, balancing his weight on his palms. His smile had melted away, but he was watching Alois, curious as to what he would do next. His chest is so lovely.

Alois used his index finger and traced from Claude’s neck to his belly button, only ghosting over the skin. At the waistband of Claude's trousers were a few wisps of dark hair leading up to his belly button and he traced those as well, which elicited more of a reaction to Claude. His body went slack under Alois’ hand and he shuddered. Does it tickle? With that, Alois was prompted to touch more, massaging feathery circles into the skin.

“Stop,” Claude said, swallowing thickly. His breaths were deep and he was relaxed under Alois’ touch, but there was no doubt he was aroused. He sat up, his eyes half-lidded with desire. He stared at Alois, unsure of what to do next. He doesn’t know if he’s allowed to touch me yet.

“Kiss me,” Alois whispered, sitting up on his knees. Claude’s hands took both of his cheeks and pulled him closer before his lips pressed against Alois’ mouth. He did this again and opened his mouth, almost sucking on Alois’ lower lip. Claude’s tongue peeked out and tasted his companion’s lips with a low grunt, his hands moving to weave into Alois’ hair.
Yes, Claude. This is what I want. More, more, more. Kiss me. Love me.

Alois’ arms wrapped around Claude’s neck and he moaned into his mouth, encouraging the man to continue. Claude broke the kiss, and for a moment Alois thought that it was over, but then he repositioned himself at Alois’ neck, teasing the skin of his throat and down to his collar with his lips and tongue. Alois felt something fumbling at his stomach and then a rush of cold air, quickly replaced by Claude’s mouth on his stomach. Oh.

“Lie down,” Claude instructed, and he pushed up the sweater only a bit past Alois’ stomach. His mouth sucked on the skin of his hips and Alois pushed him farther down with frantic insistence. He could almost feel Claude smile into his skin. The pajama shorts were pulled down along with his underwear, revealing his arousal. This is a familiar scene, isn’t it, Claude?

Claude ran his tongue up the shaft and then swallowed him, glancing up as Alois fought back vocalizing his pleasure. He pulled his lips up the shaft and then descended back down, sucking, all the while his tongue working on Alois’ head. Alois opened his legs further and was rewarded with Claude reaching down to cup his balls as he sucked him off.

“Feels… amazing,” Alois breathed, clutching the sheets under him. Claude moved to lick the underside of his cock and then his balls, showering every inch of him with special attention. When he returned to his cock, Alois could feel his orgasm building and the base of his cock beginning to twitch. As he came, Claude’s throat closed around the shaft as he swallowed.

It took several minutes for Alois to recover enough to speak, and by that time Claude had graciously pulled his panties back on his softening cock. He stared up at the man with tired eyes and smiled. Surprisingly, Claude smiled back at him and tucked some of his hair behind his ear. At least he isn’t chiding me for being angry with him earlier. But that smile… Alois almost wanted to reach up and touch his face.

“Alois… it’s my turn.” And there he breaks the magic. The harsh reality of what Claude was looking for set in as Claude pressed Alois’ hand against his groin. He sat up, his smile gone, and unzipped Claude’s trousers. When he felt for his erection and pulled it out, he considered whether or not he wanted to reciprocate. I do have a choice, whether he likes it or not. Speaking of, a hand was pressing on the back of his head, pushing his face down into Claude’s crotch. No. He squeezed Claude’s erection a bit too hard, which stopped the pushing, and shoved the hand on his head away. Of course. There’s always something he wants in return.

“You call that behaving? You’ve got to do better than that.” He glared up at Claude and moved his hand up and down, relishing how the man still couldn’t help but groan at the contact. His grip on the erection was loose and careless and he moved sloppily, but Claude attempted to enjoy it anyway, somewhat frustrated and obviously too aroused to do anything about his situation. After a while of this he finally came, spilling all over Alois’ hand, who wiped the semen on a tissue.

“If this is how you’re going to treat me and you don’t expect me to tell anyone what’s happened between us, you’ve got another thing coming.” Alois pulled off the sweater and threw it at Claude, fuming.

“What is it that you want, then?” Claude tucked himself back into his trousers and took a moment to compose his face to the expressionless mask he regularly wore.

Chapter 21

It began with opening the door for Alois when Claude would drive him home. From there, gradually, Claude would slip his hand under Alois’ and set it comfortably on the armrest as he drove.

Alois was bewildered.

It wasn’t that he didn’t know what Claude was doing. Claude had figured it out. He needed to care. When Alois whispered for a kiss in his bedroom, he wasn’t asking for a kiss. He wanted more – and Claude finally riddled it out.

And was, at least, pretending.

Disgusting.

But Alois didn’t push away his hand when their fingers wove together, and he certainly didn’t object when Claude pressed a goodbye kiss to his cheek one afternoon as he exited the car.

“See you tomorrow,” he said.

Very worst of all, when Alois got a particularly high mark on his math test and showed it to Claude, Claude surprised him the next day with a butterfly phone-charm. It was a rubbery monarch attached to a long chain with glittery beads. Just his taste.

“For your hard work,” he said.

And besides the handholding and kisses, he hadn’t touched Alois since the incident in the boy’s bedroom, not unless prompted. Alois was almost frustrated to constantly be the one to initiate, but he wasn’t going to fault Claude for behaving.

Behaving suspiciously, at that.

Alois wasn’t stupid. He knew it was all an act so that he would lower his defenses again. He had to set his eye on the prize. It was he punishing Claude, dangling treats over his nose. He wouldn’t be led astray by any foul play, even if Claude was giving him exactly what he wanted.

One Wednesday afternoon Alois came down with a fever and his foster mother brought him home early from school. Within a few hours his symptoms worsened with chills, achiness, and a runny nose. He missed his session with Claude, but was too ill to call and forgot to remind his foster mother of the session.

The house phone rang, disturbing Alois’ rest, and he heard his foster mother down the hall:

“Yes, I’m so sorry, he’s very ill right now. We forgot to call you…”

“…it’s just the flu, so please don’t worry.”

“… I think he might be awake. Just a moment.”
His foster mother brought him the phone, smiling, and informed him that Claude was on the line.

“Hello?” Alois’ voice cracked, his throat dry from sleeping.

“Ah… I’m sorry. Were you asleep?” Claude’s voice was soft and patient.

“I’m awake now. Sorry for not calling. I got home and went to bed.”

“Don’t apologize, it’s all right. I just… didn’t know what happened.”

“Oh…” Alois shuffled under his covers, pulling them closer.

“I thought something might have happened to you.” Was that… genuine concern rising in Claude’s voice?

“I’m okay, besides… the obvious.” At this, Claude laughed a little.

“Do you need anything?”

“No, I’m okay.”

“Medicine, herbal tea, soup?”

“Would you make the soup for me?” Alois sniffed, his nose stuffed up.

“Yes. Homemade soup is the best remedy for this case.”

“Haha. It’s okay. I don’t need it. I’m mostly sleeping.” He sunk back into the bed and curled up.

“You should eat a bit and drink more fluids.”

“Mm.”

“Are you sleepy? I won’t keep you.”

“Mm.”

“Okay. Sleep well.”

Alois hung up the phone and went back to sleep, only waking up again to eat some dinner and drink water and juice at the behest of his foster mother. He fell back asleep and when he awoke the next day, Claude was sitting beside his bed.

“I won’t be long, I have class this afternoon.” Alois opened his mouth to speak, but his throat was so sore that he reached for water instead.

“Here.” Claude met him halfway and handed him the glass. Alois gulped down the liquid and sat up in bed, his head propped up with four large pillows. Claude laid the back of his hand against Alois’ head, feeling for a temperature.

“There’s still a fever… I brought some soup, herbal tea, and honey for you. Your foster mother can give you some a bit later if you’re hungry.” Alois nodded, his throat too sore to speak clearly.

“Let me know if you need anything. You have my number.” Claude brushed the hair from Alois’ sweaty forehead. “I’ll wait to kiss you until you’re better.”

“I’m diseased,” Alois joked, pulling the covers up to his chin.
“Contagious,” Claude corrected. He turned to leave and was almost to the door when Alois stopped him.

“Um. Wait. Paper and pen.” He gestured to his desk and Claude brought over. Alois scribbled something on the paper and pushed it into Claude’s hand before hiding his face in the pillow.

“My phone number.” Claude stared down at the paper for a moment before folding it into his pocket.

“I’ll call later today. Rest now.”
A week later, Alois’ symptoms subsided and he returned to a normal schedule of going to school and then the library for his tutoring sessions. With his absence from school Alois had yet more makeup work, as if his teachers didn’t think he had enough to do with keeping up with current lessons.

Recovery from his illness spurred a whirlwind of thoughts from Claude’s behavior in the previous week. Bring medicine and soup, calling to check on him, and his concern… Alois wasn’t sure what to make of it. Claude easily could have left him alone with the initial call to his house, but for him to come all the way over and bring gifts for his recovery… it was puzzling.

Midday on Saturday Alois’ cell phone rang, registering the caller as Claude. He picked up, perplexed and more than slightly happy, and spoke.

“Hello?”

“Alois. Are you doing anything this afternoon?”

“Uh… no. Why?”

“Why don’t we go for ice cream?” A date? Alois wasn’t sure what to think, but he wasn’t doing to turn down the offer.

“Okay… What time?”

“I’ll pick you up in a little bit.”

Claude knocked on the door a few hours later, dressed in a pair of tight-fitting trousers and a grey button-down. Alois answered after alerting his foster mother as to where he was going, and started out the door.

“I’m supposed to be back in a few hours. Homework and all.” Alois wrapped his scarf tighter around his neck and threw it over his shoulder.

“Of course. We’ll be back soon.” Claude opened the passenger car door for Alois and closed it behind him. Once in the driver’s seat, Claude turned on the radio to a pop station.

“Claude, is this a date?” Alois stared at the man, waiting for his response. His companion’s face did not betray any emotion, but instead he started the car.

“Of sorts.” Alois pouted at this answer, but he wasn’t annoyed.

“Of sorts? You know, we got ice cream a while ago. Do you remember that time?” He could lean over and tease the man, to really test his behavior. Claude hadn’t touched him since recovering from the flu, but if Alois really wanted to see if he would revert back to his old ways, all he had to do was lean over and lay a hand on the man’s thigh.

“I remember.” Alois decided that he wouldn’t spoil the outing just yet. Claude had behaved himself thus far, and there wasn’t any reason to intentionally ruin his good behavior.

“You’re quiet today, Claude,” Alois said, humming with the music and tapping his fingers on the armrest. His companion remained silent for a moment, focusing on the road.
“Am I?” Claude’s hand moved from the wheel and took hold of Alois’. “How are you feeling?”

“Hm. Better.” He squeezed Claude’s hand with pleasure, reveling in the dusting of hair over the base of his thumb. “Why? Were you worried about me?”

“You were very ill. I wanted to be sure you were all right.”

“It was just a little flu.” All the same, Alois’ heart fluttered with Claude’s admission.

“There might have been complications.” Claude’s eyes flicked down to their entwined hands – something that did not escape Alois’ notice.

“Complications. Right, Dr. Claude.” Alois grinned and turned up the music.

The ice cream shop was busy, with several families taking up the tables inside. When they arrived, Alois grumbled about people eating ice cream when the weather was already so cold, and gave a few children the stink eye, but otherwise put up with the noise. Unfortunately, the only empty tables were outside, and he wasn’t keen on freezing his ass off.

“There’s nowhere to sit. Should we come back later?” Claude shook his head in response and paid for their treats, leading Alois back out to the car.

“You said it would get dirty last time,” Alois said, wary. Claude glanced at him and cleared his throat.

“It’s fine. I’ll clean it up if anything spills. Besides, the car is warm. You don’t need to catch a cold.” He flipped on the heat for both of them and settled into his seat. Alois busied himself with the strawberry-hot fudge mixture he ordered, swirling the flavors together in his cup until they were indistinguishable. Claude watched him lick the spoon with slight interest before turning to his own cup of ice cream.

“So…” Alois pondered over the silence between them, shifting in his seat. To his irritation, Claude seemed quite comfortable with the lack of talking, and wasn’t likely to inspire any conversation. “…how are… classes?”

Claude glanced over at him and raised an eyebrow before smiling. “Fine. I don’t suppose you’re very interested in them, however.”

“You never talk about them, so I thought I would ask.” Alois crossed his legs and tapped one foot midair.

“I’m taking a biochemistry course and an ecology course with a few labs. There isn’t much longer until I graduate.”

“I see. So the spider research… was for your ecology class?” Looking back, Alois couldn’t recall Claude ever mentioning that project again.

“Yes. I did well on the presentation. I’m surprised you remember.”

“Course I remember.” Alois blew up his cheeks, half-indignant. “I’m not stupid.” Did you think I would so easily forget?

Claude looked amused, either from Alois’ expression or his words, and smiled. “No, you aren’t.” His hand rose up and touched Alois’ cheek, brushing the skin next to his mouth.

What the...
Alois froze, staring at his companion, before softening into Claude’s touch. Claude’s thumb pushed against the corner of his mouth and then the touch was gone, replaced by the weight of Claude’s gaze.

“There was ice cream on your lip.” He licked his thumb clean, still staring at Alois, who bit his lip.

“Oh. Thanks.” What was I hoping for?

Alois set his half-eaten ice cream in the cup holder and returned to his companion, heart racing. It’s fine. I’m allowed this if I want it.

“Is there any more?” He sat up in the seat and brought his own fingers to his mouth, playing with his bottom lip. “It’s sticky now.” Claude’s eyes moved down to Alois’ fingers and subconsciously he moistened his lips.

“There may be a bit more, then. Should I clean it up?” To this, Alois only nodded, and his breaths quickened.

Claude leaned forward, bringing his hand to cup Alois’ cheek, and then pulled the boy’s mouth flush against his own. Alois gripped at Claude’s shirt, fisting the fabric as his lips were licked and sucked hungrily. He let out a whimper and his scarf was pushed aside as Claude repositioned his head, pressing kisses down Alois’ jaw and neck.

“Ah, Claude…” It had been so long since he had been touched, and every kiss was traveling straight to his cock in waves of ticklish pleasure. “More kissing… I want to taste you.”

The driver’s seat was pushed back and he climbed in Claude’s lap, wrapping his hands around the man’s neck as he sloppily kissed him in return. Claude’s hands held him comfortably at the small of his back, allowing Alois to move freely. His tongue touched Claude’s and for a second he could taste Claude’s vanilla ice cream, but the flavor quickly melted away as his companion leaned further into the kiss. Finally he broke away, panting, his jeans painfully constricting his erection.

So good. He tastes wonderful.

And… it’s hurting again. He fought the urge to grind himself into Claude’s leg. Don’t be shameless.

“We should… go. The car windows… someone might see.” Claude was as breathless as he, staring up at Alois with bleary eyes. Alois nodded in agreement and climbed back in the passenger seat. His ice cream still sat in the cup holder, melted and forgotten.

The drive back to Alois’ house was silent and the tension in the car was nearly palpable. When they parked in front of the driveway, Alois was unsure of how to proceed.

“I’ll see you Monday, then.” It was Claude who broke the silence, offering parting words. He’s giving me a way out.

Alois’ cheeks were burning, and he almost couldn’t bear to look at his companion. Why was that? Alois was never shy before about invitations…

It’s because of how strange he’s been. Just ask him already.

“Claude… I have some questions on my homework. Can you… help me?” He should have laughed at himself, at how pathetic he sounded. He couldn’t look at Claude. Alois stared down at
his feet, fingers picking at his sleeves.

“All right. If it isn’t an intrusion.” Claude parked the car and Alois led him inside. Before going to his room he offered an excuse to his foster-mother about studying and that Claude was there to answer a few questions… and that they shouldn’t be disturbed.

“She’s very kind,” Claude informed Alois, once inside his bedroom. “Your foster mother, I mean.”

“Mm.” Alois was turned away from him, slowly unwrapping his scarf. He let the fabric drop to the floor and unzipped his sweater with shaky hands, letting that follow suit. He could feel Claude’s gaze on his back, confirmed when the man approached and pressed against him. He held Alois’ hand and brought it to his lips, laying a kiss across the fingers.

“It’s… hurting,” Alois whimpered, staring down at himself. Claude’s hand covered his groin, feeling for Alois’ erection underneath his clothing. “Please…”

That was all he needed to say for Claude’s fingers to loosen the zipper and push down the jeans, relieving some of the pressure. Long digits slipped under his panties and wrapped around his shaft, pumping up and down.

“That’s it… that’s good…” Alois’ arm wrapped around his companion’s as he was touched, and he let out another whimper.

“Look at me,” Claude whispered, and when Alois’ head tilted back into his stomach, he leaned down to kiss him.

“Lie back on the bed,” Claude said, breaking their kiss. He led Alois over to the mattress and laid him down before descending on his erection. He enveloped the sensitive head with his lips and sucked before swallowing down, his tongue lapping at the sensitive underside. It did not take long for Alois to cum, spurting up into Claude’s mouth as he struggled to muffle a cry.

“Better now?” Alois nodded, eyes heavy and turned downcast, before gripping Claude’s collared shirt and pulling him onto the bed. Claude’s trousers were tented at the crotch, and Alois gazed down at him with a hungry glimmer in his eyes.

Before Claude could protest, Alois was at his belt buckle, undoing the leather and pulling it free, followed by the button of his trousers and the teeth of the zipper. He pulled Claude’s pants and boxer shorts down to the man’s ankles before settling beside him.

“Alois…” Claude’s voice was hesitant, but melted into a groan when a tongue touched the tip of his glans, licking away the precum that had gathered. He pulled up his shirt away from his belly and sat up on his elbows, watching as Alois sucked on his cock with fervor.

“Right there…” he encouraged, opening his legs further and letting his head fall back when Alois found a good spot to lick just under the glans. The pressure of the boy’s thumb was added against the spot, rubbing small circles while Claude all but thrusted into his mouth.

One hand rubbing the shaft and the other busy at that spot, Alois sucked on the head of Claude’s cock while he moaned, unable to further contain himself. Within minutes he came, pumping thick semen into Alois’ mouth, who eagerly swallowed the liquid.

“It was more than usual,” Alois observed as they both redressed, and Claude adjusted his glasses.

“...I waited. I haven’t ejaculated as much since that day. I’ve been waiting for you.”
Chapter 23

He waited.

He waited for me.

Alois repeated the words over and over like a prayer; afraid they would slip away if he did not say them.

It must be true.

Claude isn’t just pretending.

There’s no way in hell that a man would willingly build up so much sexual tension. Not to play around. Not for kicks. Especially not Claude.

Across from him at the library, Alois could only stare at Claude, pouring over his thoughts in desperation. His eyes were blankly fixated on Claude’s hands while he thought, but his companion either didn’t notice or didn’t care.

He is so, so gentle when he wants to be.

But the thought of how Claude also could be made Alois’ stomach turn and he pushed the thought aside.

No. I have control of this situation. He is mine.

The library’s interior had taken on a cheerier mood with the coming of the holidays. Halloween decorations long torn down by the children, the volunteer staff decorated the shelves with plastic holly and Christmas wreaths. The welcome desk was covered in a display of candy canes and ribbon, complete with a dusting of snow.

Alois sighed.

I want to go on a drive with him.

I want to spend the holidays with him.

The holidays were romantic – nauseatingly so – but Alois wanted to experience, at least once, buying a present for a significant other. He had no idea what he would get Claude – he had no money and surely couldn’t offer much more than a small trinket, but… it was supposed to be the thought that counted, or something of the like.

He paused and puzzled at the realization that Claude was now staring back at him.

“What?” Alois worried at his bottom lip.

“You’re distracted today. Perhaps we should end the session early.”

“I’m just thinking.”

“About…?” Claude closed his book and ran a digit over the spine.

“Nothing, really. You know, about the break coming up.”
“Does your family have something planned?”

“No. But there won’t be any school.” No reason to come to the library and see you, that is.

“It goes without saying that you are happy about that.”

“Well, yeah.” But still… I’d like to see you. Maybe.

Alois rested his chin in his palm on the table. Claude stood and put away his book before returning to the table. He waited a few moments, watching Alois, before continuing.

“Shall I take you home for today?”

“Sure.” A glance at the clock told Alois that he wouldn’t be expected home for at least another half hour, so if they went somewhere to park…

“It’s still pretty early,” Alois added, hinting at other intentions. “You want to go somewhere for a bit?” A small smile played across Claude’s features.

“That is fine with me.”

Claude parked the car far in the back of a movie theatre lot with sparsely parked cars and a scarcer amount of people. He turned off the engine and put his hands in his lap before looking over at Alois, as if he were waiting for instruction.

*He wants me to make the first move.*

Alois unbuckled and crawled into the backseat. Claude said nothing in return, but checked to see if anyone was around the car before getting out of the car, pulling his seat up, and moving to the back with Alois.

*Following me like a good dog. I guess that’s what it has come to. Boring.*

Alois pulled off his sweater and discarded it, watching his companion. Claude’s eyes raked over his chest looking utterly ravenous. For encouragement, Alois took his hands and placed them over his chest, using his own fingers to rub Claude’s thumbs over his nipples.

“Claude, do you want me?”

“Yes.”

Alois was pleased. He moved closer to the man, almost crawling onto his lap. He kissed his jawline and sucked on his earlobe.

“Do you want to be inside me?”

“Yes.”

Claude’s hands grasped at Alois’ ass and pulled him onto his lap and flush against his chest. He covered Alois’ mouth with his own and sucked on his lip while rubbing circles into his flesh, greedy.

Alois was beyond pleased. He was delighted. He giggled and ran his hands through Claude’s hair, lightly scratching the man’s scalp. *More, more, more.* He stretched and ground his abdomen into
Claude, looking for every bit of friction he might squeeze. His partner’s hands moved up his back and to his shoulder blades, holding him close.

A low groan. Claude was aroused and Alois could feel a touch of desperation in the way he was holding the boy so close. He’s afraid I’ll sprout wings and flutter away.

“Claude,” Alois whispered, touching his companion’s cheek, “take off your clothes. No one is going to see us.”

Shuffling in the backseat – and clothes were piled in the floorboard while Alois settled on his back.

“Touch me, Claude. Touch me.” Alois spread his legs, revealing a leaking cock.

“You are dripping wet.” Claude lightly touched the tip of his erection, spreading the clear liquid, and brought it to Alois’ face. “Look at this.”

“Please, Claude.”

He didn’t have to be asked again. A wet, hot sensation covered Alois’ cock and he groaned in appreciation. As his partner’s head descended upon him, he could already feel his body tightening, his spin rotating and raising to meet Claude’s mouth.

“So good. Yes, yes. There.” Claude bobbed his head in time with Alois’ moans, slurping and sucking on the boy’s cock.

“Inside of me. Put it inside of me.” Alois was on his belly now, ass in the air, looking back at his partner and pleading. Claude loomed over him, palming his cock.

“Look at how it is twitching for me. You want it so badly.”

“Yes, I want you so badly. Please do it.” He was panting, pushing his ass onto Claude’s cock so that the head rubbed against him.

“Finger yourself.” Claude’s hand rubbed the boy’s back, encouraging. He leaned down and pressed a kiss to the back of his neck. “I will watch.”

“Claude…” Alois groaned, but finally complied, slipping one of his fingers into his asshole while the man watched every movement.

“Move faster. You are swallowing it up hungrily.” Claude took Alois’ hand and pushed the finger deeper inside. Alois moaned in response and added another finger.

“I don’t want my hand, I want you, Claude.” He thrust the fingers in and out, nearly crying for his partner. Claude hummed, satisfied with Alois’ show of pure need, and rubbed his cock on Alois’ ass.

“All right. I will give it to you.” Alois moved his hand and Claude positioned his cock at the boy’s entrance.

He pushed inside and Alois felt it. A sting of pain where the stitches once were. He wasn’t ready
for something this large to enter. Flashes of discomfort in hot pangs sparked up his spine and right to his neck.

“Claude, it hurts.”

“Just wait.”

“Claude, you’re hurting me.” Claude pulled out slowly and pushed in again slower yet, but the same stings of pain shot through Alois’ body and he whimpered.

“Claude…” His nails dug into the seat and he groaned, but not in pleasure.

“Wait a bit longer. It will feel better soon.” But it wasn’t. It hurt. He muffled a cry by biting his lip, but blood welled up from the wound as the pain in his ass increased.

Behind him, Claude let out a pleased sigh. There was a wet, slapping sound between them. It was making Alois feel sick.

“Stop. The stitches…”

“They are gone already. Shh… just feel me, Alois.” Claude reached around to, supposedly, pull on his companion’s erection, but Alois was already soft.

“You’re hurting me!”

Finally Claude stopped and pulled out, looking down at Alois. The boy wiped a few tears away and scooted from his partner. He couldn’t look over at the man. He didn’t want to know what expression he was making. Or if he was making one at all.

“I want to go home now.”
Alois sat in the bath for hours – for so long that his foster mother knocked twice to see if he was still breathing and hadn’t drowned. Because he would be so lucky.

Initially Alois had thought about Claude. Sitting in ice-cold water certainly grounded him with looking at the day’s events.

But then he began to think about that other man. He hadn’t thought about the old man in weeks. How long had it been since he was taken from that place? He couldn’t even remember. He remembered all the other boys at the old man’s place and the dingy basement they all slept in. Full of rats and roaches. He remembered the disgusting mattresses they slept on and the way they were scrubbed raw before they went to visit dear father who was so afraid of disease. All that money and he couldn’t bother to properly house all of his dolls, only continue to worry about infection. Alois always found that incredibly funny.

And then Alois had found a way to get in good with the old man. He learned to seduce. The old man didn’t need the other boys when he had Alois, and in return Alois was given good food, clothes, and a nice bed. Payment, like some kind of prostitute.

He would hurt me. He would beat me and laugh. Then he would fuck me so hard that I bled or cried.

Claude hurts me too. Just not in the same ways.

Alois drew his legs up to his chest and hugged his knees.

Who knows if he enjoys it.

Claude was supposed to be different. He just wants something from me.

He’ll do whatever necessary to get it.

Like the old man.

Alois stared down at the water and played with the soapy bubbles, pushing them all together into a white heap. When he was living at the old man’s house he would cover himself with all of the bubbles like a makeshift shirt, or shape a beard on his face.

I can’t stand him.

“I’m so stupid,” he whispered. I thought I could change him – fit him what I wanted.

There’s no changing him. He wants me his way, just like the old man. His way. His terms.

I can’t see him anymore.

He’s no good.

Alois got out of the bath and wrapped up in a towel. Once he dressed, he dialed Claude’s number.

“Hello?”

“Claude.” His voice was even, neither irritated nor pleased.
“Alois. Your… how are you feeling?” It was evident that Claude was struggling to proceed with the conversation

“I’m fine. I’ll be fine.”

There was a pause.

“I am glad.”

“Claude.” Let him go.

“…Yes?” Think of something. Anything.

“My family is taking a trip over the holiday. I won’t be around for a while.”

“I thought you did not have any plans.”

“Plans changed. They just told me a little while ago.”

“I see.”

“Yeah. Listen, I have to go. I’ll try to keep in touch.” Yeah, right.

“All right. We will talk later, then.”

The break passed without incident and Alois did not call Claude. He had no desire to subject himself to more of the man’s pushing for sexual gratification, which was sure to result in more pain.

If there had been thought of plans, surely his phone call had squashed that thought out of Claude. A week passed. And another week. Alois could keep up with his schoolwork after break. He didn’t need Claude if he put some effort forth in his classes. His foster parents didn’t care as long as he showed the grades they wanted. No questions.

And they thought he was stupid.

They should know that grades aren’t everything. They can’t measure my intelligence. I’ve made it this far, haven’t I?

Claude calling to ask about the missing lessons was quite another matter, however.

That was playing dirty.

He’s threatening me. Trying to tell me that he has something against me. That he can make me dance and squirm to his whims if he wants.

Eat shit.

“Alois, is there a reason that you have not shown up to our tutoring sessions?”

“I’m busy. That’s all.” Busy with shit other than you.

“You said that you would keep in touch. I have not heard a word from you in weeks.”
“I said I’d try. Not that I would.” Alois sneered, wishing that the venom lacing his words might actually poison the man on the other end of the line.

“…How is your schoolwork going?”

“I can do it just fine.” *Translation, Claude: I don’t need you anymore.*

“I’m glad.” Claude’s reply was clipped and followed by a long pause.

“Alois, shall we go out for ice cream this weekend?”

“I don’t want to. I have stuff to do.”

“I see. Then what about next week sometime?”

“I don’t know. Maybe.” *Can’t you get a hint?*

“I would like to see you again.” Alois’ heart fluttered. He wanted to slap himself for such a ridiculous reaction.

“Why?”

“To talk. I would also like to apologize, if that is all right with you.” *Beg for my forgiveness until I let him put his hands all over me, more like.*

“Fine. But only a talk.”

Alois trudged to the library, kicking gravel and threatening to squash every insect that crossed his path. Claude was parked and waiting for him, looking at his phone as the boy approached.

*How irritating. He can’t even bother to read the mood on a day like today. I’m not surprised in the slightest.*

He knocked on the car door before sliding in and buckling.

“I thought you were inside,” Alois said, his eyes flicking between Claude’s phone and his face.

“I finished early and thought I would wait for you here. Did you walk here from school?” Claude turned off the device and put it away. He fiddled with a few knobs on the dashboard, evidently controlling the heat. “I anticipated that you might be cold.”

“Yeah. A little. Maybe it’s too cold for ice cream.” *A little cold* was an understatement. The December air outside had prickled Alois’ skin into gooseflesh and he regretted not wearing a heavier coat. Claude started the car and began to drive, turning to an unfamiliar route.

“Where are we going to talk, Claude?”

“I thought we might park somewhere private for a while.” Alois’ eyes narrowed.

“I’m not in the mood for anything else, you know.”

“I know.”

“I mean it.”

The engine was off. Claude’s chosen location for “the talk” was a secluded mountain overlook – a
popular place for couples to travel for midnight rendezvous. Over the half-wall was a steep drop-off over a forest of winter trees. Beyond the forest was the city, just at sundown. *Picturesque.*

*He’s really laying it on thick.*

“Alois, how are you feeling?” Claude was turned towards him, hand brushing his cheek. Concern was something Claude had not learned to fake quite perfectly.

*It doesn’t reach his eyes. They’re utterly empty.*

“Claude, let’s be honest with each other. Can we do that?”

“Of course.”

“I’m done with you. I don’t need you anymore.”
Chapter 25

Chapter Summary

I would like to thank everyone who has stuck around to read this for as long as it has taken me to write it. It's really been a wild ride and I think I can honestly say that this is the fic I am most proud of. I started this spring break of my freshman year of college and I am finishing it spring break of my senior year of college. That is an amazingly long amount of time to write this fic and I'm sorry to everyone who has waited to read it, but (again) I'm also thankful for those who have stuck around.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Claude’s apartment was silent and clean. Just the way he liked it. He sat at his desk, novel in hand and cup of coffee steaming in a mug, basking in the pleasure of the day.

He put down his novel and sipped at the coffee, relishing the flavor. He loved the start of a day with a fresh cup of coffee, inviting vigor to his tired limbs. Once there was a time when he disliked the bitterness, but now he welcomed it. He supposed it was just something that came with age. That was what his father would have said.

_Missed me, missed me now you've got to kiss me_

Alois wouldn’t like it, though. It was unfortunate that they did not share the same taste in things. He really would have liked to introduce so many flavors and feelings to Alois.

_If you kiss me, mister, I might tell my sister_

It was terrible that evening. Alois was so very angry with him and would not listen to any reason.

_If I tell her, mister, she might tell my mother, and my_

He hadn’t wanted to break things off with him, but there was no other way. It was what Alois wanted. And, of course, Claude always gave Alois what he wanted.

_Mother, mister, just might tell my father, and my_

It wouldn’t have done for them to break things off in such a bad mood. Claude did not desire to leave things so distasteful between them.

_Father, mister, he won't be too happy and he'll have his_

Of course, there was little to be done about how angry Alois was with him when Claude was being perfectly compliant with his wishes. He gave him everything that he delighted in and learned what he disdained, all for the benefit of their relationship.

_Lawyer come up from the city and arrest you, mister_

He thought back to that night and how Alois was shouting, just after he proclaimed that he no
So I wouldn’t miss me if you get me, mister, see?

“I’m done with you. I don’t need you anymore.”

“Alois…”

“No. Save it all. I’m done with your shit. Do you know how tired I am of all of this?”

If you miss me, mister, why do you keep leaving?

“Alois, please. I wanted to talk to you about what happened. It was not my intention-“

“I know what your intention was. I know what you want. I’m not a fucking idiot. You’re only nice to me because you want to fuck me. You don’t love me. You won’t ever love me the way that I want you to.”

If you trick me, mister, I will make you suffer

“I understand that you are angry, but it will not help to-“

“I told you to save it! Don’t you understand your position? Don’t you know that I can still tell everyone what you’ve done to me? What you like to do to me?”

“Alois… you aren’t thinking clearly. Please calm down.”

“Don’t you fucking tell me to calm down. Shut the fuck up.”

And they’ll get you, mister, put you in the slammer and forget

“…”

“I only came out here to tell you that I’m done with you. I’m done with all of your shit. I’ve wiped myself clean of it. I don’t need you to be happy. I can live on my own.”

You, mister, then I think you’ll miss me. Won’t you miss me?

Claude closed his eyes in annoyance, remembering all of the rudeness that had passed between them. He hated to use the word unsightly to describe behavior, but he supposed that his behavior was unsightly. He deserved those words that evening. Truly, he did.

Missed me, missed me, now you’ve got to kiss me

“Alois, how many times have I apologized since then? Little one, I am sorry.”

If you kiss me, mister, take responsibility!

Blue eyes stared back at him, dully. Mocking, almost.

I’m fragile, mister, just like any girl would be

“I know, little one. Should we have a dance to prove my sincerity? I have welcomed you into my home yet again, sharing with you my life. You must know by now how much I care for you.”

And so misunderstood (so treat me delicately!)
Claude picked up the oversized jar of ethanol solution. The contents bobbed with his movements, swaying with each step.

“You were always beautiful, but now… even more so.”

_Missed me, missed me, now you’ve gone and done it!

Blond hair floated, distended in the liquid, as azure eyes stared blankly from half-lidded eyes.

“Lovely eyelashes. It is a shame that I could not preserve more of you.” Claude continued his dance for a few turns and then slowed, holding the glass close.

_Hope you're happy in the county penitentiary!

Alois was so much quieter this way… and Claude could enjoy his beauty as he pleased. Really, it was a stroke of brilliance on his part.

“I’m sorry, little one, I told you. It was so unsightly of me to behave in such a way, but you would not close your mouth.”

_It serves you right for kissing little girls… but I will visit if you miss me!

“I certainly could not have you blabbing to your foster mother about me and ruining all that I’ve worked for. No, no.” Claude set the jar down on his desk and looked at the submerged head. He clicked his tongue in disapproval.

_Will you kiss me through the window?

“I did warn you not to do anything rash.” Claude turned the jar so that the head was turned towards him and he pressed a kiss to the glass, smiling.

_Will they ever let you go?

“It is no matter. Now you are utterly mine.”

_I miss my mister so.

End.

Chapter End Notes

Song lyrics © “Missed Me” by The Dresden Dolls

While I was writing this story I shared a lot of ideas with a friend about the future of the story and she showed me this song which fit almost perfectly. I decided that I would put it in the last chapter, since I knew this is how I wanted it to end. (I had been planning this ending for a while, so if you are unhappy about it... sorry.) I don't typically write happy endings.

If it is any consolation, my goal in this fic was to have Alois complete a great
emotional arc, and I feel that I accomplished that somewhat. The ending was supposed to show that he has gotten past Claude and that he realizes what is wrong with the relationship and where he can grow. He is more independent and self-reliant. That's the kind of growth I wanted to see with Alois. Claude, on the other hand, couldn't handle Alois' outburst because of the legal implications. It was too dangerous for him. Alois, in his eyes, was a loose cannon.

Will I write anymore Kuro fic? Maybe. Like I said earlier, I'm just really happy to have finally finished this fic and have something good to show for it. In the future I might challenge myself to write a novel-length fic with a happy ending, haha.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!